

Centre News

APRIL 2019

The magazine of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, Melbourne, Australia



Continuing the legacy of Holocaust survivors

Registered by Australia Post. Publication No. VBH 7236

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Photo: Joe Lewit

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

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

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Sun & Public Hols: 12pm–4pm

Closed on Saturdays,
Jewish Holy Days and
some public holidays



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accept or reject material. There is no automatic acceptance of submissions.



From the Presidents

Pauline Rockman OAM and Sue Hampel OAM

// History doesn't repeat itself but it often rhymes //

— Mark Twain

The events of this summer illustrate that xenophobia, extremism and antisemitism are on the rise. We were deeply disturbed to see the symbols of Nazism openly displayed in Melbourne, which has served as a safe haven for one of the world's largest Holocaust-survivor communities. As our mission states, the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) plays an important role in reminding Australians of the need to combat antisemitism, racism and prejudice and to foster understanding between people.

We have continued to present a wide range of events. A highlight was the exhibition 'Registered, Persecuted, Annihilated: The Sick and Disabled under National Socialism', which attracted a wide audience. Other functions included the launch of *Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II*, a collection of testimonies compiled and translated from Yiddish by JHC volunteer Freda Hodge; a conversation with clinical psychologist Moshe Lang titled 'Discussing 50 years of working with Holocaust survivors and their families'; and a seminar given by Sue Hampel for the Young Friends of the JHC on antisemitism in the 21st century and lessons from the Pittsburgh synagogue attack. The annual Betty and Shmuel Rosenkranz Oration was delivered by Dr Michael Berenbaum, Professor of Jewish studies at the American Jewish University in Los Angeles and director of the university's Sigi Ziering Institute, who spoke about *Shifting Narratives of the Holocaust in Contemporary Society*.

Our first function for this year was the United Nations Holocaust Remembrance Day (UNHRD) commemoration held in conjunction with the JCCV on 27 January. Keynote speaker was Professor Marcia Langton AM, whose address was titled 'Australian standards on racial, ethnic and religious discrimination and vilification: do we have sufficient protection against the global rise of far right hate movements?' You will find articles featuring some of these events in this edition of *Centre News*, with others appearing in September 2019.

In November 2018, we attended the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) plenary held in Ferrara, Italy. Australia's progress towards full membership is proceeding and we recently joined Australian delegates in Canberra to brief the

Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. It was an excellent opportunity to ensure that parliament gained a broader understanding of IHRA.

We farewelled Executive Director Warren Fineberg who retired at the end of 2018. We would like to express our gratitude to Warren for his wonderful service over the past eight years, which has put the JHC in a strong place for the future. We also farewelled Director of Community Relations and Research, Dr Michael Cohen who organised hundreds of successful events during his time at the JHC. We wish Warren and Michael well for the future.

We are delighted that Jayne Josem has accepted the new position of Museum Director and look forward to watching the Centre thrive under her leadership.



Editor's note

Ruth Mushin

Over the past few months, the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) has hosted – among other events – a lecture on the Haredi narrative of the Holocaust; the exhibition 'Registered, persecuted, annihilated: the sick and disabled under National Socialism'; the launch of Freda Hodge's book *Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II*; and the Betty and Shmuel Rosenkranz Oration on 'Shifting Narratives of the Holocaust in Contemporary Society'. This rich array of subjects has made my job as editor relatively easy, as they have yielded a number of in-depth articles for this edition of *Centre News*.

Jayne Josem has unearthed correspondence between Holocaust survivors, the late Georges Mora, Director of Tolarno Galleries, and the late Saba Feniger, Curator of the Jewish Holocaust Centre museum, written in the 1980s. The letters were triggered by Saba's invitation to Georges to participate in the exhibition titled 'From Holocaust to New Life' held at the JHC. It is a poignant exchange, brought to life with samples of their own handwriting. We also bring you Andy Factor's story of escaping from Europe and building a new life in Australia centred on music, art and family, and a moving poem by child survivor Paul Kraus.



Director's cut

Jayne Josem

To paraphrase the ancient Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu, every journey begins with a single step. And so I begin the journey of leading the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) through this pivotal moment in our history. We are 35 years old, an important stage in any life. No longer an unsure adolescent or young adult wondering what the future holds. We have a clear direction and purpose, we have achieved a level of maturity and success. We are still learning, and part of my responsibility is to ensure our team – staff and volunteers – keeps learning and growing. There is always new knowledge to take in, room for improvement. We all need to evolve and adapt, for the world around us is ever-changing. We are blessed to have so many elders to show us the way, to pass on their knowledge and to nurture and support us.

We are living in times where the truth, and therefore the historical truth, is under increasing threat. Our most important role here is as guardians of the truth. Our archives hold the physical and documentary evidence of the Holocaust. Our testimonies have captured the recollections of the survivors who experienced the Holocaust. Our museum presents a display of the history of the Holocaust – as much as can fit into a small exhibition space. Our education program expands on this and includes the opportunity for visitors to meet Holocaust survivors, hear their stories and ask them questions. Week in, week out, we guard the truth and present it as it has been entrusted to us by Holocaust survivors themselves. And as the Holocaust passes from living memory, our work becomes even more vital.

I am first and foremost a historian, secondly a curator and now I have a new role as guardian of the legacy of the survivors in the form of this incredible organisation. Each of these roles informs the next, so it was a natural progression after 18 years to take on leadership of the JHC. I know this place inside out and I understand its importance to both the Jewish and the Australian community.

Please join us on our journey as we expand and rebuild, inspired by the overwhelming popularity of our education programs. We hope you will support us in whatever way you can. Help us defend the truth.



Education

Lisa Phillips

As Professor Michael Berenbaum said on his visit to Melbourne last November, the greatest thing that could happen to Holocaust museums would be that they become irrelevant. Sadly, as we approach the 80th anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War in September this year, the work of Holocaust museums and their education programs has become more urgent and relevant than ever before.

The demand for Holocaust education programs is reflected by the ever-increasing numbers of students attending the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC), whether for the Nona Lee Secondary Education program or the 'Hide and Seek: Stories of Survival' program for students aged 10-14 years, supported by Gandel Philanthropy. In 2018 the JHC broke previous records of attendance with 23,000 students participating in our programs and 12 new schools participating in the Hide and Seek program.

Quality Holocaust education is not just about numbers, but about its impact on our visitors. At the JHC, educators and volunteer guides aim to deliver the best quality experience for our visitors, linking the program to topics the students are studying and striving to make meaningful connections with all our visitors. Our goal is to achieve those intangible moments when our message – the dangers of hatred, acceptance of difference and the importance of making a difference – has been heard.

At the end of 2018 we were sad to farewell Fiona Kelmann from the education team. We have been grateful for all that she has contributed and look forward to her continued involvement in our Custodians program. At the beginning of 2019 we welcomed two excellent educators, Soo Isaacs and Ilana Steinhart, to the team. Both Soo and Ilana have come to us with a wealth of education experience and passion for Holocaust education. Their employment will assist us to cope with the heavy demand for our education programs, and provide the opportunity to work on developing programs for the changes that will come with the museum redevelopment.

As much as we would love the need for Holocaust education to decline, we are ready to meet the demand and ensure that we can deliver the best quality programs to all students and other visitors to the JHC.

Welcoming the new JHC Museum Director

In her 18th year at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC), Jayne Josem has become Museum Director, bringing to the role a passion for the work of the JHC as well as her extensive work experience.

When Jayne volunteered at the JHC in 1997 – then run almost entirely by Holocaust survivors – she assisted Phillip Maisel with information management for the Testimonies Project, which Phillip still heads today. Jayne says: ‘Phillip Maisel is one of the many survivor volunteers who inspire me to work that little bit harder to ensure that the survivor stories and lessons from the Holocaust reach as far and wide as possible.’

Jayne left to complete a Master of Arts in Public History at Monash University, which led her back to the JHC. She first volunteered with museum curator Saba Feniger and then, in 2001, took over as curator. Initially working part time, her hours increased to full time as she became involved in the redevelopment of the permanent exhibition and the staging of many temporary exhibitions.



Photo: Joe Lewitt

▲ Jayne Josem and Phillip Maisel OAM.

‘We have a wonderful cohort of survivors, staff, board members and volunteers working together to achieve our aims. I am privileged to be working here at this pivotal moment in the Centre’s history, as we embark on our anticipated redevelopment, fully supported by our community,’ she says.

Our new building will include an upgraded Permanent Museum Display, dedicated Children’s Museum, Temporary Exhibition Gallery, expanded research, library and resource facilities, flexible learning spaces, and enhanced contemplative and memorial spaces. The projected budget, including relocation during the building phase, is \$16 million.

The Capital Campaign ‘Remember the Past, Build the Future’ is co-chaired by Helen Mahemoff and Phil Lewis. They have commenced fundraising and have been very heartened by the response. Over the coming months, the JHC will take the Capital Campaign to the wider community.

‘Although raising this amount is a significant challenge, we are confident of success in the months ahead. The vital message of the Holocaust Centre is so relevant in today’s world and we are proud that, with the community’s support, the legacy of our Melbourne Holocaust survivors will continue,’ they said.

Helen Mahemoff has been Chair of the JHC Foundation – a permanent endowment which ensures the on-going financial security of the JHC – since its inception in 2003. Helen continues as Foundation Chair as well as co-chairing the Capital Campaign. Both Helen and Phil Lewis are members of the JHC Board.

For more information about supporting the Capital Campaign please contact **Helen Mahemoff** on 0417 323 595, **Phil Lewis** on 0418 318 983, or **Leora Harrison**, JHC Director of Development, on 9528 1985.

Photo: Joe Lewitt



▲ Phil Lewis and Helen Mahemoff

JHC redevelopment update

Last year the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) announced plans for a major redevelopment. The need for this significant communal project is the direct result of the success of our Holocaust education program, which is attracting increasing student numbers, coupled with the widespread recognition of the importance and relevance of our message.

Reflections on the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting

Michael Berenbaum



▲ (l-r) Sue Hampel OAM, Leon Goldman, Dr Michael Berenbaum, John Lazarus, Terri Lazarus, Pauline Rockman OAM and Jayne Josem

Dr Michael Berenbaum gave the keynote address at the Betty and Shmuel Rosenkranz Oration, held in Melbourne in November 2018. As well as discussing shifting narratives of the Holocaust (which will appear in the next edition of Centre News), he provided insights into the aftermath of the Pittsburgh Tree of Life synagogue shooting. This is an extract from his address.

There is a significant gap between how Jews perceive themselves in both North America and Israel and how they are perceived by others. In North America Jews are perceived as a privileged part of the white majority, the ultimate insiders – an odd situation for a community that is perhaps a 2% minority and considers itself an outsider. Many Jews in America have forgotten the quota systems, housing discrimination and worse that plagued the community until they successfully asserted their rights and were perceived by others as having earned those rights following the Second World War. Many American Jews see themselves as conditionally white. They are perceived by others as privileged whites.

Israel is perceived by both friend and foe alike as a major regional military power and a significant and growing economic power in a globalised, knowledge-based economy. Despite a significant gap between the haves and have nots, Israel's per capita living standard is on a par with Switzerland, which is hardly seen as a country in need. Israel is also perceived by many to be the oppressor of the Palestinians. Yet most Israelis see their country as one of modest means surrounded by enemies committed to their destruction, as a biblical David instead of a contemporary regional Goliath.

There is a consensus among Jews that antisemitism is on the rise, a perception reinforced by most measurement tools, specifically the number of antisemitic incidents and the recent murders. Incidents of antisemitism are on the rise, yet the number of antisemites is on the decrease, as are the major institutional supports for antisemitism.

Two examples should suffice: the Roman Catholic Church has changed its teachings regarding Jews. Nostra Aetate eliminated

the charge of 'Christ killer', Pope and now Saint John Paul II recognised the State of Israel, and Pope Francis indicated that no missionary activity is required toward Jews. Liturgical changes have reinforced these attitudes and Jewish-Roman Catholic relations are the best they have been since the advent of Christianity.

The fall of Communism eliminated a second source of antisemitism and Russia itself is headed by a leader who, however difficult, and perhaps even dangerous to Israel, has a warm feeling toward Jews, a product of his childhood memories of Jewish neighbours whose gracious hospitality he enjoyed.

In 1980, Earl Raab, an astute observer of Jewish life, wrote that if one were to ask Jews if antisemitism was on the rise, the answer would overwhelmingly be yes. But empirical evidence indicated antisemitism was declining, meaning that a smaller segment of the population was antisemitic and that their hatred of Jews posed little to no obstacle to the advancement and safety of Jews.

How then can one account for the perception that antisemitism is on the rise? Raab indicated that for decades after the Holocaust, antisemitism was self-censored even by antisemites who were reluctant to express their feelings because they did not want to be associated with the social approbation that comes with antisemitism. By the 1980s, that barrier was broken, first by segments of the African American community who targeted Jews because they were familiar and white, and later in response to the oil crises and the war in Lebanon, which made Israel, and by association all Jews, fair game. It was less an increase in antisemitism than an increase in the social permissibility of expressions of antisemitism that triggered the feelings of insecurity, even as barriers to Jewish advancement were broken in academia, industry, banking, insurance, government and the media.

Today Jews again believe that antisemitism is on the rise; their perception is supported by the media and the general public and yet there is ample evidence to the contrary. What is to account for the discrepancy?

Three factors seem persuasive. First, the expression of all hatred is now more permissible. Beginning with the election of President Barack Obama, the expression of racism has increased dramatically, whether masked as criticism of the president or direct racism. In the 2016 election, anti-immigrant, anti-Mexican and anti-Muslim expressions of hatred fuelled the election of Donald J Trump and weakened the general sense of civility in American national discourse. This has continued and the vociferousness of White Supremacists has only added to the disquiet. Events at Charlottesville, where Nazis marched, a woman was murdered, a synagogue was surrounded by AR15-carrying thugs, and a black man was beaten, only deepened the feeling of angst. And President Trump said there were good people on both sides, while blaming protesters against racism for the violence.

Secondly, social media and the world wide web have given these hatreds a megaphone, so that these voices are heard as never before, and are reinforced in their views by the communities they form with mutual support systems. Social media also empowers vitriol and the opportunity for anonymous expression. It has particularly affected journalists and writers who are subjected to vitriol online and by email.

Thirdly, because Jews are now perceived as a privileged part of the white majority, expressions of antisemitism are no longer disqualifiers of people from taking leadership positions in social movements. The refusal of the Women's March leaders Tamika Mallory and Linda Sarsour to disavow the rabidly antisemitic Louis Farrakhan is but one example. And since Jews are perceived as privileged by many, and Israel as an oppressor by the left, criticism of them is fair game. With restraints off, criticism is expressed in concrete actions.

What is the good news – yes, the good news – of the horrific events of Pittsburgh?



▲ (l-r) Dr Michael Berenbaum, Jayne Josem and Lisa Phillips

Civil Society held. The mayor was there, police went into the building to save Jewish lives and Pittsburgh protested. The Major League Baseball World Series began with a moment of silence in memory of the Pittsburgh 11. The Pittsburgh Penguins, the hockey team, and the Pittsburgh Steelers, the football team, wore Jewish stars along with their traditional logo. One hundred members of the team, football players, owners, coaches and

management came to the funeral of the brothers Cecil and David Rosenthal to express solidarity. Priests and ministers came to the synagogue. Joanne Byrd Rogers, the 90-year-old widow of Fred Rogers, the towering moral figure in American society, came out to defend Mr Rogers' neighbourhood, Squirrel Hill. Newspaper editorials condemned the crime, journalists who had left Pittsburgh came home with their writing to defend civil society, and the *Pittsburgh Gazette* headlined the front page with the Hebrew words of the Kaddish.

Perhaps most importantly, American Muslims contributed more than \$200,000 towards the Tree of Life Congregation and the victims' families, giving one hope that a moderate version of Islam may yet develop in the United States and that these Muslims understood that civility is the cornerstone of interreligious discourse and a basic requirement of mainstream American religious life.

The message was clear: Jewish lives matter, hatred cannot win out, we are better than this – we must be better than this.

Dr Michael Berenbaum is Professor of Jewish Studies and Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust, located at the American Jewish University.

Registered, persecuted, annihilated:

the sick and disabled under National Socialism

Michael Robertson
Photography by Rozanna Nazar



On Tuesday 25 July 1939, a four-month-old boy named Gerhard Kretschmar was administered a lethal dose of the barbiturate phenobarbitone in a paediatric clinic in Leipzig. Born blind and with malformed or absent limbs, Gerhard was a sickly boy who suffered frequent seizures. For the duration of his short life, Gerhard's father referred to him simply as 'that monster'. Gerhard's parents had appealed directly to Adolf Hitler's Chancellery for permission to grant the baby a *Gnadentod* (mercy death). The Kretschmars were pleased to be liberated of what they saw as the burden of their disabled child and rejoiced in later birthing so-called normal children for their beloved Führer and fatherland. Gerhard Kretschmar's would prove to be the first of 300,000 murders of adults and children in a crime that is now known as the *Krankenmorde* – the murder of the sick.

Five years earlier, the new National Socialist regime enacted hereditary health legislation that would enforce the sterilisation of 400,000 people. Up to 5,000 people died from complications of these procedures, while the hundreds of thousands who survived lived with the affront of this assault on their body and personhood. The infanticide of Gerhard Kretschmar pushed the persecution and exclusion of people living with disabilities and illnesses into a new phase of unrestrained mass killing. Special children's killing centres called *Kinderfachabteilung* would murder 5,000 children with disabilities by 1945. Tens of thousands of other people would be murdered in gas chambers in a network of killing centres, under a medically supervised and coordinated program known as 'Aktion T4'. Equal numbers of people living in asylums in Poland and the USSR would be killed throughout the war by gunshot or mobile poison gas chambers mounted on modified trucks. These sporadic massacres by Einsatzgruppen and the Wehrmacht were often at the request of the victims' doctors. So proficient were these murderers of the sick and disabled that they would be tasked with implementing the killing of concentration camp prisoners too weak to work, and ultimately the attempted genocide of Poland's Jewish population in the Reinhardt death camps of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka. Many of the Shoah's most barbaric criminals began their careers in Aktion T4. After the summer of 1941, the responsibility of cleansing the *Volk* (the people) of those deemed 'life unworthy of life' would be handed to psychiatrists, nurses and functionaries in a network of hospitals that became the new factories of death. Jewish patients in hospitals and care institutions in Germany and its occupied territories were murdered regardless of their clinical state. The Jewish patients of hospitals in the Berlin area who perished in 1940 in the gas chamber at the Brandenburg-an-der-Havel euthanasia centre were among the Holocaust's first victims.

The history of the *Krankenmorde* is littered with accounts of psychiatrists and other health professionals (mis)using positions of power to persecute violently and abuse people entrusted to their care. Far from the ideas of a 'mercy death', so-called 'euthanasia' was a violent crime of which many terrified victims were aware. Ludwig Schlaich, the director of the Protestant mental hospital in Stetten wrote: 'A great number of them knew of their peril. They wept, they begged not to have to go, they resisted. One ... asked everyone for forgiveness, told our head nurse we will meet again in Heaven, and said to a housefather, "Our blood cries out for vengeance".'

Sigrid Falkenstein wrote of her Aunt Anna, who was murdered at the Grafeneck killing centre: 'The records say that Anna cried a lot

during her first weeks at Bedburg-Hau and wanted to go home. Who could blame her? She is then described as an increasingly difficult patient. Notes about her include that she "refuses to work", that she "encourages disobedience in other patients", that she is "unhygienic", and that she "has to be disciplined". Just how treacherous language can be is shown in remarks like "she blubbers; she is foolish". The worst of all these callous comments is the note that describes Anna as "a burden". At the end of her time at the mental hospital, she bore clear signs of malnourishment and of tuberculosis.'

People with mental illnesses, disabilities, or otherwise deemed 'unworthy of life' were starved, gassed, electrocuted, lethally drugged or died in the course of tests of other killing methods, after which their bodies were exploited or defiled before being disposed of in crematoria or mass graves.

German psychiatry had a particular pathway into this mass criminality. The profession's reputation had suffered through its incapacity to heal the legions of traumatised soldiers from the 1914-18 war. After the imposition of the Nazi *Gleichschaltung* (reorganisation) and the extirpation of Jewish doctors from practice, the profession lost many of its brightest minds and moderating influences. The denigrating of psychoanalysis as the 'Jewish Science' meant a mindless form of biological psychiatry could flourish, providing a welcome home for eugenics and racial hygiene. The German community came to view psychiatric asylums as much reviled drains on the public purse.

A reform movement in German asylums sought the introduction of new physical treatments for mental illness such as insulin coma therapy, malaria therapy and crude forms of electroconvulsive therapies. While barbaric to modern sensibilities, such physical treatments helped many and enabled them to return to 'productive' lives. It also served to highlight a group of people so disabled and



▲ Associate Professor Michael Robertson.

impaired by their illnesses that the recovery of their fellow patients created a form of therapeutic nihilism that was embodied in the notion that came to define mid-century German psychiatry – ‘cure or annihilate’. This was not a case of uniform perpetration by the profession. There are numerous instances of resistance or refusal of psychiatrists to participate in the selections of patients for death. The majority of the profession, however, were either bystanders or beneficiaries of the crime. In our research work we have encountered innumerable instances of psychiatrists during the National Socialist period going about their work, oblivious or indifferent to the murder of patients by starvation, overdose or gas.

The privations and human rights abuses in German mental health institutions in mid-century were to be found in all developed nations. As Isaac Deutscher observed of American psychiatric institutions in his 1948 book, *The Shame of the States*, ‘We are not like the Nazis. We do not kill off insane people coldly as a matter of official state policy ... We do it by neglect’. In light of what we know in this country about the morbidity, social deprivation and reduced longevity faced by people living with severe and persistent mental illness, intellectual and physical disability, little has changed. In June last year the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health observed:

Forgotten issues beget forgotten people. The history of psychiatry and mental healthcare is marked by egregious rights violations, such as lobotomy, performed in the name of medicine. Since the Second World War and the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

“The *Krankenmorde* highlights our responsibility to identify ableism in our public policy, our language, our institutions and our personal thoughts.”

together with other international conventions, increasing attention has been paid to human rights in global mental health and psychiatry. However, whether the global community has actually learned from the painful past remains an open question.

After the war, most of the perpetrators of the *Krankenmorde* returned to their professional lives, many receiving acclaim at the time of their retirement or death. Transcripts of the final judgement in the ‘Doctor’s Trial’ in Nuremberg in 1947 appear to indicate that the judges took the view that the state had the right to end the lives of those deemed appropriate for ‘euthanasia’ and that such killings did not constitute a crime, unless based on racial grounds or perpetrated against citizens of other nations. It was not until the 1980s that a series of Social Democratic governments in Germany sought to acknowledge these ‘forgotten victims’ of National Socialism. Even then, the *Bundestag* agreed to a one-off 5000 DM payment to sterilisation victims to put an end to the matter. The stigma of mental illness, genetic vulnerability, intellectual and physical disability continued to silence the victims of the *Krankenmorde* or their families for many decades.

In 2009, Frank Schneider was elected to the Presidency of the German Society for Psychiatry, Psychotherapy, Psychosomatics and Neurology (DGPPN). Schneider’s main priority as president was to bring his profession with him in engaging with its past, not only to atone for the crimes perpetrated by psychiatrists in the Nazi years, but also to document them. Schneider sought to embark on a process of education and research about the lessons of this time in the history of his profession and work towards a formal apology for the crimes of psychiatrists in the Nazi period. Schneider prevailed ultimately on both the question of an official apology and modifying the DGPPN’s constitution to acknowledge the historical significance of the Nazi period. Schneider delivered the apology in Berlin in November 2010 stating: ‘In the name of the German Association for Psychiatry and Psychotherapy, I ask you, the victims and relatives of the victims, for forgiveness for the pain and injustice you suffered in the name of German psychiatry and at the hands of German psychiatrists under National Socialism, and for the silence, trivialisation and denial that for far too long characterised psychiatry in post-war Germany.’ The exhibition ‘Registered, persecuted, annihilated: the sick and disabled under National Socialism’ held at Melbourne’s Jewish Holocaust Centre in 2018 was another product of Schneider’s project and was developed in

▼ Associate Professor Michael Robertson, Beth Wilson and Susan Feldman.





▲ (l-r) Jayne Josem, Shirley Glance OAM and Michael Debinski.

cooperation with the Topography of Terror Foundation and the Foundation Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

In 2013 we began our project at Sydney Health Ethics to study the complex relationship between the medical profession and the state, focusing on the lessons of the *Krankenmorde*. Since then we have been privileged to partner with the Sydney Jewish Museum in a fruitful collaboration of community and academic events such as the 'Registered, persecuted, annihilated' exhibition. While conducting fieldwork at the Grafeneck memorial site in Germany in 2015, we were able to see this exhibition on display at a psychiatric hospital in Gunzburg and observe the impact it had on the local community. Inspired by our experience in Germany, we resolved to bring the exhibition to Sydney and Melbourne and we are grateful to the many people who have enabled this.

As the Holocaust inculcates us to reject and abhor antisemitism and all forms of racism, so does the *Krankenmorde* highlight our responsibility to identify ableism in our public policy, our language, our institutions and our personal thoughts. The recent massacre of Jewish men and women in Pittsburgh remind us that the antisemitic crimes of the mid-twentieth century remain a reality. In October 2018, the NSW Ombudsman tabled a special report to the NSW Parliament in response to 206 reports of alleged abuse and neglect of adults with disability. The findings of his enquiry were deeply disturbing and inform us of a darkness in our species we thought banished to other times. In the Australian Senate in September last year, Senator Jordan Steele-John read out the names of dozens of adults and children with disabilities who had died in circumstances of abuse and neglect, stating, 'These are the human beings, the loved ones, the mothers, the fathers, the sons, the partners who need justice, who demand justice, whose lives were worth living'. These words were spoken just over a month after the words 'Final Solution' were used in the same chamber.

Ableism, that is, the discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities, exists in an arc from human rights violations – such as court mandated involuntary sterilisation of young women with intellectual disabilities; laws that allow for the

indefinite civil detention of people with cognitive disabilities; and systems that have enabled the over-imprisonment of people living with mental illness and disabilities and their widespread abuse when in jail – through to subtle patronising acts or misplaced pity for people living with disabilities. The 2015 report of an Australian Senate inquiry found that violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability is 'widespread and takes many forms'. It stated: 'Throughout this enquiry, the evidence presented from people with disability, their families and advocates, showed that a root cause of violence, abuse and neglect of people with disability begins with the de-valuing of people with disability.'

The most malignant form of ableism is invisibility, which is shamefully rampant in our health system and our public

policy. In all its forms, ableism avers that people living with disabilities have lives of lesser value than others. Leo Alexander, the physician who advised the prosecution of the Nazi doctors in Nuremberg, noted that the introduction of utility or functional capacity as the defining metric in health care – and the relative valuation of life that follows – was the fundamental moral misstep taken in the crimes of the Nazi doctors. The compelling question we are left with is what form does this take now?

The legacy of the *Krankenmorde* demands our sophisticated engagement with questions about our culture and our values. We must do so in a manner that avoids facile comparisons with 'what the Nazi's did'.

Questions such as: How do we value people? Have our professions engaged with their past as a means of reflecting on their future? Do our social institutions operate on resilient value systems that would prevent the kind of collaboration with a malignant political influence seen in the National Socialist period? Are we a community that can reflect on latent racism and ableism? Does our health system value all life intrinsically? Does well-intentioned end of life legislation safeguard future abuses? Are reproductive rights inalienable?

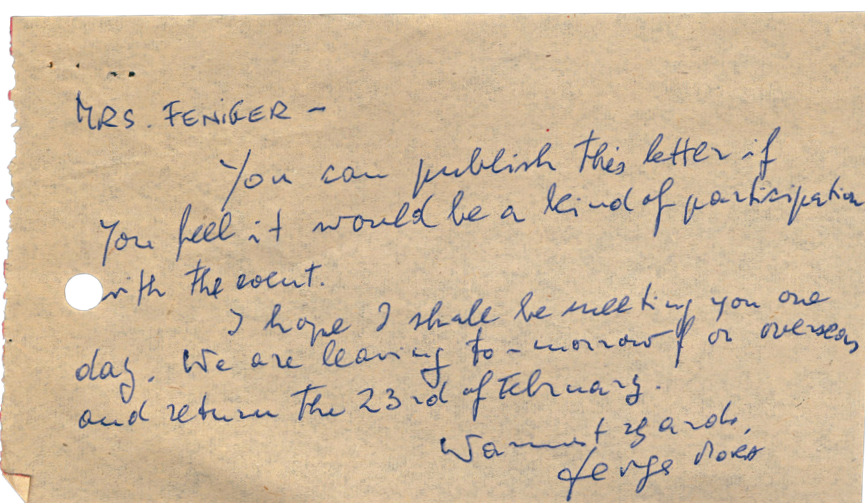
We might take comfort that we remain vigilant about another Hitler hijacking our social institutions and professions. In doing so, we must not neglect the series of small steps taken by others (unwitting or otherwise) that made that possible. It is our hope that initiatives such as the 'Registered, persecuted, annihilated' exhibition and the public programs around it will help to contribute to this reflection.

This is an edited version of the address given by **Associate Professor Michael Robertson** at the launch of the exhibition 'Registered, persecuted, annihilated: the sick and disabled under National Socialism' held at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in November 2018. Dr Robertson is a Clinical Associate Professor of Mental Health Ethics at Sydney Health Ethics and a visiting Professorial Fellow at the Sydney Jewish Museum.

A touching exchange between two Holocaust survivors

While going through correspondence files from the 1980s and '90s I was moved to tears by a story contained in a letter from Georges Mora, Director of Tolarno Galleries, to the Jewish Holocaust Centre Curator, Saba Feniger. Saba had invited Georges to participate in an exhibition titled 'From Holocaust to New Life' celebrating survivor achievements in Australia. Georges describes why he felt he had to decline, the invitation alone causing him sleepless nights. I was further taken aback by Saba's touching response. Attached to the first letter is a note which politely notes 'I hope I shall be meeting you one day'. After Saba's heartfelt response Georges wrote back, saying 'I like your letter. When can we meet? Not "one day" but perhaps next week...for instance sometime next Wednesday 30th?' It is an exchange to treasure.

– Jayne Josem, Museum Director



GEORGES MORA'S LETTER OF 28 DECEMBER 1987

Dear Mrs Feniger,

On receiving the invitation to participate in your exhibition *From Holocaust to New Life* I felt very honoured indeed.

However after the torment of two sleepless nights I have decided to decline.

It is true that I am proud to be an Australian now but my contributions are negligible, especially in the context of the history of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust was a tragedy of such proportions for all of us Jews that I personally cannot be cheerful about my survival, let alone celebrate it. Yes, indeed, quite often I cannot believe that I am alive, I am ashamed of being happy.

I worked for OSE (Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants) in France right through the war. One morning I had to meet one of the regular messengers. She was a plump little dark-haired girl waiting for me on a bridge at Lyon. I never knew her real name, but we all knew her laughing and bragging. I arrived at the other end of the bridge and we glanced at each other. At this second two Gestapo agents seized her, she looked at the sky and I into the water. We never saw her again.

It was at this moment that my heart broke and I have been living with half a heart ever since.

I am happy now but my life has to be lived in the shadow of my lost friend, the dark-haired girl from Lyon.

With my best wishes

Sincerely yours, Georges Mora

Saba

14.1.1988

Dear Mr. Mora,

I would like to thank you very much for your letter, for the prompt notification on the eve of your departure. Your withdrawal was a great disappointment to me. I would have loved to have you take part in it.

As a survivor of the Holocaust I fully understand your sentiments, so beautifully expressed in your letter. It is not my right to argue, in any case feelings can not be argued.

There is however one point on which I will take the liberty to disagree with you: "It is true that I am proud to be an Australian now but my contributions are negligible especially in the context of the history of the Holocaust".

Your consideration of your contribution is very subjective. The committee was under the impression that you were one of the first, if not the first, post-war promoters of European art. We are not looking for heroic deeds but for contributions in a variety of aspects, even in food. Yes, the introduction of different foods and the considerable change of Australian habits is also an aspect that someone thought of and had worked hard to achieve but

SABA FENIGER'S REPLY WRITTEN ON 14 JANUARY 1988

Dear Mr Mora,

I would like to thank you very much for your letter ...
Your withdrawal was a great disappointment to me.
I would have loved to have you take part in it.

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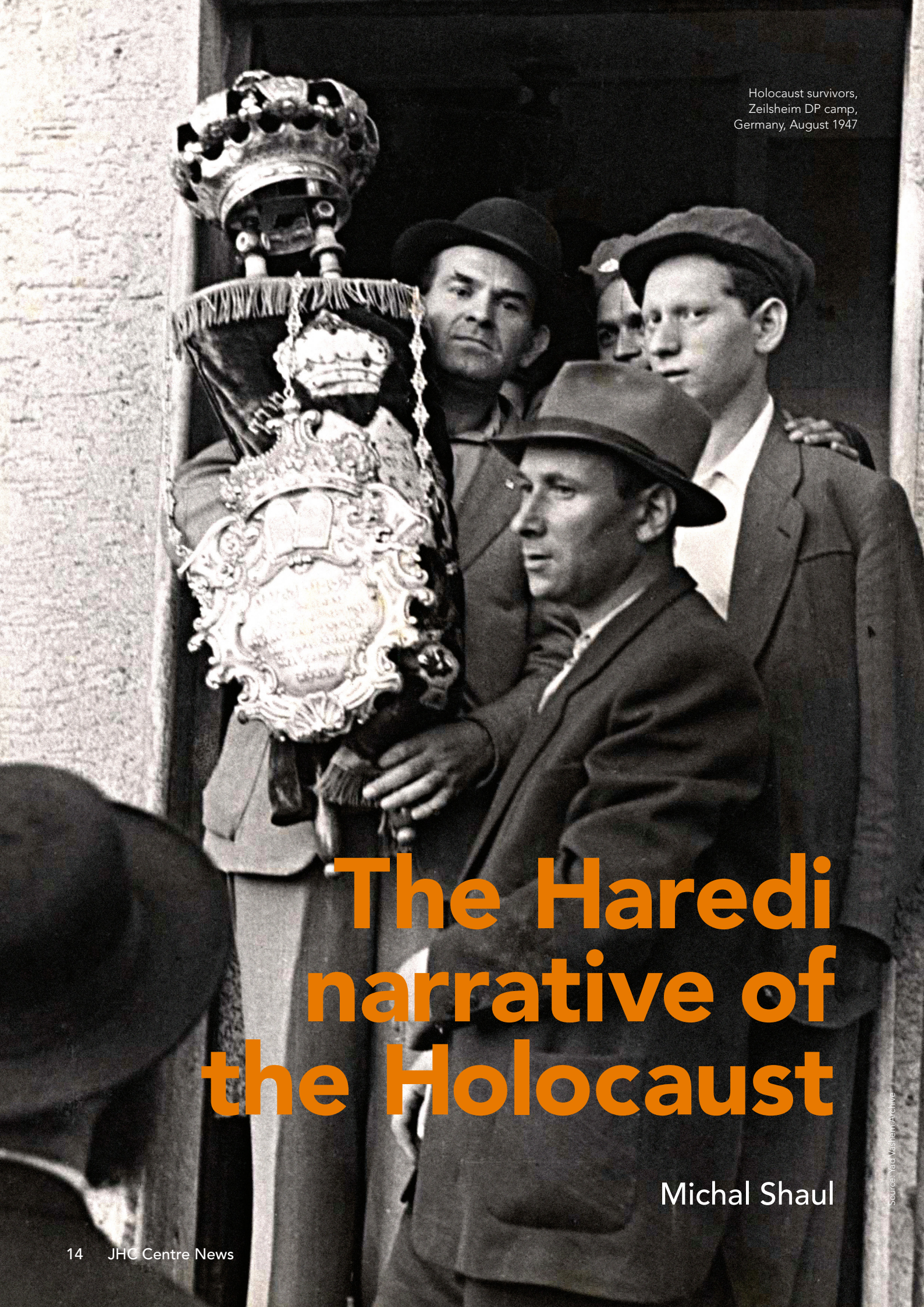
Your consideration of your contribution is very subjective. The committee was under the impression that you were one of the first, if not the first, post-war promoters of European art. We are not looking for heroic deeds but for contributions in a variety of aspects, even in food and the considerable change of Australian habits is also an aspect that someone thought of and had worked hard to achieve ...

What we are endeavouring to show is that although we were so shattered and are still full of scars, we are defying the Nazi ideology of annihilation by surviving and being useful and contribution members of any society we find ourselves in.

The thousands of high school students who come to the Centre were made aware of what did and what could take place. Awareness is the first step to prevention. We are the living witnesses; the link and the communication between us is vital.

Sure it hurts to open up. The questions about why one individual survives and not another daunts most of us. Each individual's survival is a miracle. Miracles, dear Mr Mora are told and retold by generations. Please believe me that I am not pontificating. These are my true feelings which I share with you.

Thank you for sharing with me. Your letter has moved me to tears and does so each time I read it out aloud ...



Holocaust survivors,
Zeilsheim DP camp,
Germany, August 1947

The Haredi narrative of the Holocaust

Michal Shaul

During one of the first meetings I attended at Melbourne's Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC), the then-Executive Director, Warren Fineberg, expressed his disquiet that members of Melbourne's Haredi¹ community do not generally visit the Holocaust museum, and a concern that they may not be interested in the Holocaust.



There is indeed a general assumption that Haredim do not commemorate the Holocaust in the belief, as it were, 'that they have pushed the subject of the Holocaust to a corner'. This is because the Holocaust raises a number of theological problems, challenges and questions, such as: Where was God in Auschwitz? Where were the rabbis, and why did they abandon their communities? Added to this is the fact that most Haredim do not watch television and have probably not seen the movies and television series that have formed the mainstream western collective memory of the Holocaust. In Israel, many Haredim do not stand in silence to commemorate the dead on Yom Hashoah VeHagevurah, Holocaust and Heroism Day, when sirens are sounded throughout the country. Similarly, Haredim never speak about the link between the Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel. Furthermore, unlike other Israelis, most do not experience the 'milestones of Israeli Holocaust memory' such as visiting Poland during high school, and certainly not as part of the Israel Defense Forces officers' Holocaust-based course. In light of this, one might assume that Haredim do not commemorate the Holocaust at all and do not care to visit Holocaust museums.

Why, indeed, do Haredim not visit Melbourne's Holocaust museum? It is a truism that when photos are displayed of an event that people have attended, or of historical events involving their forebears, they invariably look for themselves or for those with whom they identify. Thus Haredim, whose families also experienced the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust, would also seek representations of their world in the displays at museums such as Melbourne's JHC. If Holocaust museums wish to attract Haredi visitors and to take part in shaping Holocaust remembrance, photos of the pre-Second World War Haredi world need to be displayed and the Haredi part in the Holocaust narrative recorded.

I would challenge the perception that Haredim do not deal with the Holocaust and argue, rather, that they are constantly preoccupied with the Holocaust, perhaps more than any other sector within the Jewish world. In a nutshell, I believe that the need to cope with the Holocaust – the greatest crisis faced by the Haredim – is necessary for their rehabilitation and the consolidation of their beliefs.

This process is now in train. Holocaust museums worldwide have recently come to accept that the Haredim have their own Holocaust

narrative and that Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox Jewry constituted a significant sector of European Jewry with unique responses to the Shoah, responses that merit serious study. Interestingly, over the past two decades, Ultra-Orthodox Jewish society, both in Israel and in the United States, notably New York, has been adopting several modern memorial mechanisms. We have also recently witnessed the emergence of Holocaust historiography from the Ultra-Orthodox Jewish world. The 2007 work of Esther Farbstein² is a case in point. Additionally, many Haredi Holocaust survivors have published their memoirs and autobiographies. In Brooklyn NY a faith-based museum was founded. In Bnei Brak, an Ultra-Orthodox town in Israel, an attempt is currently being made to establish a museum which reflects the experiences of the Haredim during the Holocaust. Haredi survivor testimonies are being preserved on video and are presented on websites, and teachers' seminars and colleges are developing curricula about the Holocaust for Israel's Ultra-Orthodox school system.

The Haredi narrative of the Holocaust differs from that of the secular narrative.

The primary foundation stones of Ultra-Orthodox Holocaust memory are essentially threefold: the religious uniqueness of the Jewish people; Kiddush HaShem (sanctification of God's name through holiness as well as martyrdom); and the Ultra-Orthodox rescue operations. All three are not usually mentioned – neither in academic history books nor in exhibitions mounted in Holocaust museums.

Connecting the Holocaust to the continuum of Jewish history is one of the most important fundamentals in the perception of the Holocaust in Orthodox and, particularly, Ultra-Orthodox historiography. According to the traditional narrative, there is a constant metaphysical war between God and His people – the People of Israel – and their ever-changing enemies. First came Pharaoh, then Haman, followed by Titus, Khmelnytsky, and then Hitler. The Haggadic phrase 'bechol dor vador om'dim aleinu lechaloteinu' – 'in every generation they rise up against us to destroy us' – resonates with the Haredi approach to the Holocaust, a view which holds that the Jews are attacked because they are representatives of the Torah. This perspective is reinforced for the Haredim by the fact that it was the synagogues and Torah scrolls, destroyed by the Nazis in Germany and Austria on Kristallnacht

¹ The word 'Haredi' (pl 'Haredim') is often spelled 'Charedi' (pl 'Charedim'). Haredi Judaism refers to a broad spectrum of groups within Orthodox Judaism, all characterised by a rejection of modern secular culture. Its members are often referred to as 'strictly Orthodox' or 'Ultra-Orthodox'. The term derives from the Hebrew word *chared* (trembles) and connotes an awe-inspired fear and anxiety to perform the will of God.

² *Hidden In Thunder: Perspectives on Faith, Halachah and Leadership during the Holocaust* (2 Vols.)



Ponevezh Yeshiva, Bnei Brak, Israel.

Source: Wiki Commons

in November 1938, which were first targeted, to be followed immediately by the persecution and humiliation of the rabbis.

Academics dispute this view, arguing that the Holocaust should be perceived in an historical context against the background of post-Enlightenment modernity and the emergence of the race sciences. They eschew religious motives to the genocide, noting that the Nazis targeted non-observant Jews, assimilated Jews and those who converted to Judaism by non-halachic procedures. This view endorses the belief that racial determinants underscored the Nazi program to exterminate the Jews.

The difference between these two viewpoints is marked. One can deal with the Holocaust if, like the Haredim, one perceives it as part of the centuries-old suffering of the Jewish people and holds the view that the Jews had 'emerged from the ashes', as it were, on numerous occasions. The Torah text puts it pithily: 'The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad.'¹³

Unlike the picture drawn by Ultra-Orthodox writers, according to which European Jewry was mostly Ultra-Orthodox on the eve of the Second World War, historians claim that Ultra-Orthodox Jews were in the minority. However, historians agree that during the Holocaust Ultra-Orthodox Jewry suffered an extremely severe blow, reflected in the destruction of the centres of Ultra-Orthodoxy in Poland, Lithuania, Hungary and Germany. This reduced the number of Ultra-Orthodox Jews significantly and decimated their rabbinic and scholarly leadership, which was seemingly irreplaceable. The traditional organisational foundations (communities, yeshivot, various types of Jewish colleges, girls' schools, teachers' seminaries, and more) were destroyed. As a result of the Holocaust, Ultra-Orthodox Jews no longer constituted a core demographic unit anywhere. Moreover, the cultural and linguistic environment in which this society was rehabilitated was

entirely different from what it had been prior to the Holocaust. That is, the Holocaust destroyed both Ultra-Orthodoxy's human and geographic world as well as its ideological and theological world. However, for post-Holocaust Ultra-Orthodox society, which sanctifies the tradition passed down through the generations, perhaps the greatest tragedy was the breach in the generational chain. Thus, during the second half of the 1940s and during the early years of the '50s, Ultra-Orthodox Jewry in toto suffered inordinate trauma at every level. Many from within the Haredi world and beyond doubted whether the Ultra-Orthodox movement could recover. Yet, unexpectedly, and in defiance of the historical circumstances ranged against the movement in almost every sense, Ultra-Orthodox society succeeded in coping with the challenges it confronted in the wake of the Holocaust. These challenges included the desertion of youth from its ranks. Yet, within several years after 1945, the Haredi stream began to flourish unprecedentedly – even when compared with the so-called golden era of Ultra-Orthodox Jewish life prior to the Holocaust.

The reemergence of Ultra-Orthodox society on the historical landscape after the severe blow it suffered during the Holocaust has proved to be an enigma. How did the Haredi movement chart a new path after it had lost the core of its future generation and having been deprived of its best leaders and rabbis? How did the miraculous revival of this group come to pass in the secular Zionist State of Israel, of all places, where it constituted a demographic and ideological minority? And how is it that the process of recovery, which took place with surprising speed, was led by Holocaust survivors who had personally experienced the inferno and emerged from it broken and mourning their dead? Furthermore, not only did Ultra-Orthodox Jews lose their lives during the Shoah, but an entire cultural Haredi world composed of oral traditions, customs, niggunim⁴ and more, went up in flames. How could Ultra-Orthodox society rehabilitate itself?

After the Second World War, the remnants of European Jewry sought to return to normal life. However, the scope and depth of the catastrophe made it impossible to reconstruct the Jewish life that had existed in Europe before the war. Preeminent Israeli historian, Hanna Yablonka⁵, has argued that those Holocaust survivors who championed the Zionist cause wished to leave their past behind. They focused, rather, on rehabilitating their lives in Israel, based on an ethos that sees itself as something new and different from Jewish life in the Diaspora. Haredi survivors, by contrast, wished to build their future by resurrecting the past and by what they viewed as the direct continuation of traditional Jewish way of life, even though they were no longer living in Europe but living, instead, in Israel.

Source: Yad Vashem Archive



Teacher and pupils at the Agudat Israel Kinderheim, Ulm, Germany.

Haredim perceive themselves as the most authentic heirs of a world that was destroyed and hold that their movement's mere existence, together with its proliferation, are the most worthy and significant forms of commemorating the victims of the Holocaust. The Haredi doctrine on the subject is clear: if the Holocaust was yet another historical variation of the war against the Torah and its votaries, and the major catastrophe was the murder of rabbis and yeshivah students together with the destruction of synagogues and places of Torah study, then the best means of taking revenge on the Nazis and commemorating the victims' 'legacy' is to strengthen the world of Torah. Mir, Ponevezh, Slonim, and Telz, inter alia, were well-known East-European shtetls that, in addition to their other institutions, were homes to fairly average-sized yeshivot of a few hundred students. The post-bellum re-establishment of yeshivot bearing the names of the original shtetls recruited not hundreds but thousands of young men whose desire was the perpetuation of Torah learning, despite the devastation wreaked by the Holocaust. The successes of these yeshivot, and their impressive numbers, are the basis for Rav Kahaneman's⁶ famous saying that 'the matzevah is greater than the dead'. They are living matzevot – living monuments.

Rather than remembering the Holocaust as the darkest period humanity had ever known, Haredi society has preferred to tell a story of continuity. For if Hitler wanted to annihilate both the body and the soul, then the younger generation, all those grandchildren named for parents and grandparents, dressed in the garb of their forebears, speaking Yiddish, the same language as the earlier generations, fighting for the same way of life that others had

followed before them, paying frequent visits to the same Hassidic courts frequented by their grandparents – these are the most clear-cut, honest, and authentic proofs for them of who ultimately won this terrible war; they are deemed to be everlasting proof of revenge and the ultimate victory for the Haredi world.

Haredi society offers its 'miraculous' rehabilitation as irrefutable proof of the justice of its path. In this context, the Haredi survivors of the Shoah are perceived as representatives of a lost world, one that Ultra-Orthodox society depicts as idyllic – the worldview and values for which Ultra-Orthodoxy has cultivated nostalgia. The heroes of Kiddush HaShem stories were Hasidim, rabbis, and ordinary people who sacrificed themselves in order to maintain their faith and their religious lives during the Holocaust. Examples include crying out Shema Yisrael as their dying words, singing Ani Ma'amin on their way to the death camps, or observing the Sabbath, Kashrut and holy days under the harshest circumstances. It is this legacy that the contemporary Haredim perpetuate. They need no museums, perceiving themselves to be 'living monuments'. Thus, the major role of Holocaust memory in Haredi society is to build a rehabilitating narrative of continuity and to overcome the paralysing and destructive effects of the narrative of crisis.

Despite deep differences, secular and Haredi historiography and memory of the Holocaust share certain common characteristics, such as the emphasis on heroic behaviour and the effort to repress fears and anxieties. The tendency to determine an appropriate pattern of behaviour during the Holocaust – that is, the imperative to observe the Torah under all conditions and the focus on spiritual heroism – made survivors unwilling to tell their stories, which sometimes contained elements that did not accord with such exemplary conduct. Some of the survivors are ashamed to tell their own children that during certain periods they had not been able to observe all the mitzvot. Thus, both the dominant western public discourse and that of the Haredim has compelled Haredi survivors to explain, to themselves and others, that not only had they survived as decent people; they had not abandoned their loved ones who had perished in the Holocaust and who had not forsaken their values in order to save their lives. Nor had they abandoned, even for a moment, the Torah and its commandments. By means of such stories, Haredi society has sought to endow the deaths of the millions with religious and ideological meaning and to perpetuate the narrative of the survival and strengthening of the Haredi way of life after the Holocaust. The question is whether we can call this approach a unique recollection of the Holocaust or whether it is, rather, a dangerous repression or even a denial of the greatest tragedy the Jewish people has ever experienced.

Dr Michal Shaul is the Chair of the History Department and the director of 'Amital' Holocaust studies program at Herzog Academic College in Israel. She is the author of a prize-winning book about the Ultra-Orthodox community and the Holocaust, published in Hebrew. She was a scholar-in-residence at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in 2017/2018.

³ Exod.12.1

⁴ A niggun is a form of Jewish religious songs or tunes, often wordless. Some nigunim (pl) are sung as prayers of lament, while others may be joyous.

⁵ Hanna Yablonka, a Professor of Holocaust Studies at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev and staff historian for the Ghetto Fighters' House, is author of *Survivors of the Holocaust: Israel after the War* (Israel, 1948-52, New York University, 1999).

⁶ Rabbi Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman (1886-1969) was an Orthodox rabbi and Rosh Yeshivah of the Ponevezh Yeshivah. He was a renowned Torah and Talmudic scholar and a distinguished member of the Council of Torah Sages of Agudath Israel.

Tragedy and Triumph

Konrad Kwiet



▲ Professor Konrad Kwiet and Freda Hodge

Bringing the Yiddish testimonies of Holocaust survivors to an English-speaking audience

I recently returned from Eastern Europe, my eighth journey to the 'blood lands' of the Holocaust. My journey was undertaken for a large-scale research and exhibition project designed to depict the 'landscapes of death' or, to use the term coined by the Austrian historian Martin Pollack, 'contaminated landscapes'. Tracing and exploring the murder and memorial sites is part of a new, steadily growing sub-field of Holocaust scholarship dealing with the 'topography' or 'geography' of the German genocide – an approach that integrates the Holocaust into the disciplines of landscape, museum and environmental studies.

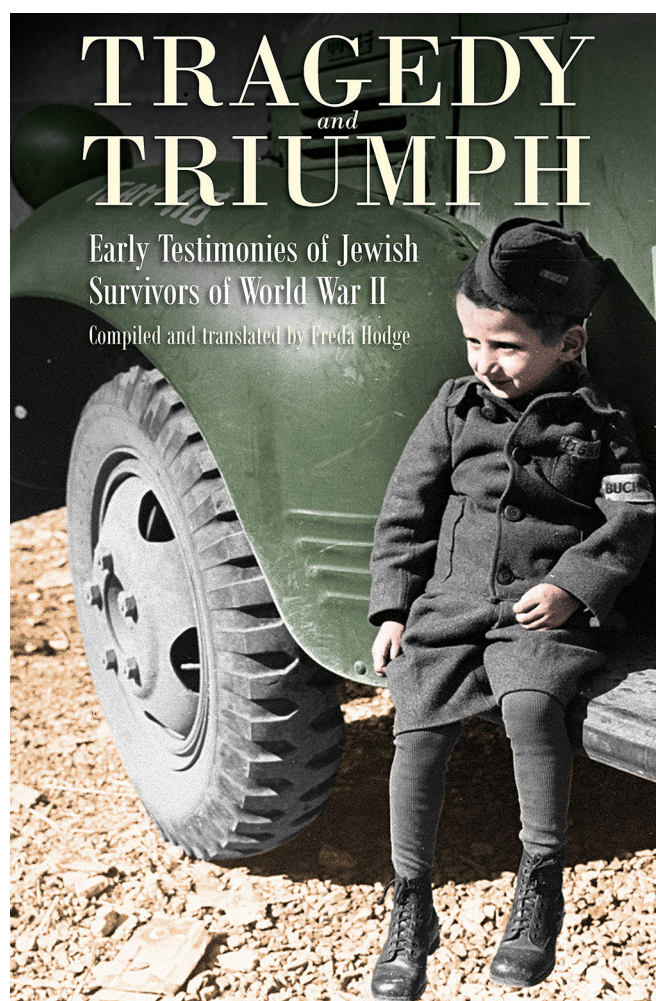
I visited Treblinka, Sobibor and Auschwitz – industrial death factories that facilitated – to use the phrase introduced by the French priest Patrick Desbois – the ‘Holocaust by Gas’. I visited vanished shtetls – the sites of ‘open-air shootings’, where Jews were killed in broad daylight by bullets; I visited Bialystok in Eastern Poland; and I visited Vilnius and Kaunas, the Lithuanian epicentres of the Holocaust. Stopovers in Belarus included Asmiana, Novogrudok and Mir. In the Ukraine I passed through the districts of Dubno and Tarnopil, Braslaw and Zhitomir on my way to Kiev and Odessa. With the help of local guides, I traced remote and secluded sites in forests, where Jewish fugitives joined the partisans, continuing to fight for survival and revenge. The Bielski Brothers set up their last family camp – called Jerusalem camp – in the beautiful Naliboki primeval forest, rescuing 1,236 men, woman and children.

These journeys left an indelible mark on my memory. To be more precise: what I had once researched and written about, within the confines of my academic cocoon – in archives, universities and museums – I was now studying through the embodied experience of being present at the very sites of the horrific crimes perpetrated by the Germans and their local collaborators. It was an experience that left a powerful impression, the kind that cannot be gained through mere academic investigation.

Freda Hodge’s collection, *Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II*, is a compelling, harrowing and most important book. Its title points to the dual nature of modern Jewish experience: tragedy refers to *khurban* (destruction), the Yiddish term common after the war for the destruction of European Jewry, while triumph relates to the *She’rit Hapletah*, (surviving remnant), the remnants of European Jewry who, with few exceptions, succeeded in rebuilding their shattered lives. Freda Hodge has compiled and translated 30 testimonies, 24 written by adult survivors and six written by child survivors. Most of them experienced the horror of the Holocaust at the places I have just visited, some survived Treblinka, Sobibor and Auschwitz and two recalled the ghetto liquidation of Bialystok and the transport of 1,200 Bialystok children to Theresienstadt. Others witnessed the mass murder in the Ponary forest at the outskirts of Vilnius, and the killings in Kaunas at the walls of its massive fortresses. Several survived the ‘Aktionen’ in Asmiana and other ghettos dispersed throughout Belarus and the Ukraine. A few escaped into the underground or the forests, and one found refuge in the Naliboki family camp of the Bielski partisans.

These testimonies share distinct features: they were written in Yiddish, the lingua franca of many survivors and were published between 1946 and 1948 in Germany, the country of the perpetrators, in *Fun Letzten Khurban* (From Last Destruction), a journal launched by the Munich-based Jewish Historical Commission. To my knowledge, Freda Hodge’s compilation and translation of these early eyewitness accounts is the first edition of its kind. The authors were Yiddish-speaking refugees from Eastern Europe who had found temporary refuge in DP camps established in the American zone of occupation. Stateless, and classified as ‘Displaced Persons’, they were waiting for travel documents and visas in order to continue their long journey to freedom.

While in the DP camps, they were asked to tell their story of survival, and many did. The voices retrieved by Freda Hodge recall the destruction family ties and communities, cornerstones of Jewish history and culture. They reveal episodes and



▲ *Tragedy and Triumph* front cover

experiences of deportation and ghettoisation, of forced labour and death camps, of living in the underground and in forests, of death marches and of liberation. There is no mention of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising – the most significant act of Jewish resistance and heroism – nor any reference to the underground activities of Jewish youth organisations. No voices are recorded criticising the *Judenrat* (Jewish councils). Emphasis is placed on smaller ghetto rebellions and Jewish partisans fighting in forests. The centrality of Yiddish-speaking Jews excluded the incorporation of eyewitness accounts from Jews persecuted in Western Europe or other occupied territories. Only two testimonies from a German and Hungarian survivor are included. Finally, there was no place in this collection for recollections of Jews who, on the eve of the Holocaust, had been deported by the Soviets to remote settlements or labour camps in Inner Asia, many of whom arrived after the war in Germany as ‘Displaced Persons’. Labelled by some survivors at the time often as ‘Asiatic Jews’, they formed the largest group among the Yiddish-speaking DP population. Research on the fate of this distinct survivor group has recently commenced.

However, these omissions do not detract from the significance of the early survivor accounts in this collection, as the few historical vignettes I shall address illustrate.

In August 1944 a handful of survivors established a Jewish Historical Commission in the liberated Polish city of Lublin, on the doorsteps

of the deserted Majdanek death camp. Its first and most important task was to collect eyewitness accounts and other material, documenting the Jewish catastrophe which was still unfolding. In the summer of 1944 the 'Final Solution' reached a new peak with the mass murder of Hungarian Jews in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau. What had started in Lublin continued in Lodz, Warsaw and other cities. From August 1944 until December 1945 some 1,500 testimonies were collected. By the end of 1947 the number had risen to 7,300. A country-wide network of historical commissions and branches, a group of officials and volunteers, among them the *zamlers* (collectors), created archival depositories preserving survivor accounts, German and Polish documents, Jewish records, letters and diaries, books and papers, pictures and photographs, songs and sayings, religious objects and other items. Relying on these sources, Jewish historians began to document and reconstruct the history of the Holocaust, focusing on the annihilation of Polish Jewry. Having survived in ghettos and camps, or in hiding on the 'Aryan side', they followed the patterns of their predecessors who had once established a flourishing Jewish historiography in Eastern Europe and fulfilled the ancient obligation of *zakhor* (remember) – to keep the memory alive.

After liberation survivor historians in Poland, the driving force in developing a new distinct historiographical genre, termed at the time *khurban forshung* – the Yiddish for 'destruction research' and *Vernichtungswissenschaft*, the 'science of destruction' in German. Filip Friedman introduced this term to indicate that the persecution and murder of the Jews was a specific German crime. Indeed, the perpetrators never used the term 'murder'. The Germans instead spoke of *Vernichtung*, as Dan Michman puts it, turning the Jews into *nichts* – nothing. Laura Jockusch defines the *khurban forshung* as a Jewish 'historiography in transit' that provided the basis for the emergence of the modern Holocaust research. The first empirical cornerstone was based on the early voices of survivors.

Survivors in Munich also quickly established a Jewish Historical Commission urging survivors to collect documents and write and submit their stories of survival. Within a short period of time massive archival depositories emerged containing 28,000 German documents, 1,081 photographs, 1,074 antisemitic books, 284 items of ghetto and camp folklore, 2,500 testimonies and 10 volumes of the journal *Fun Letzten Khurbanen*. As the collectors and custodians of this treasure trove saw no future in Germany, the material was placed in storage at the end of 1948 and later shipped to Israel to be preserved at Yad Vashem.

With the passage of time survivors have served many purposes. First and foremost, they have been a response to Nazi persecution,

offering a window into the destruction of Jewish life and recording the experiences of suffering and survival. At the same time they have been testament that the German murderers and their collaborators did not entirely achieve their ultimate aims – to annihilate all Jews, to eradicate the 'Jewish spirit' and to erase the evidence of the heinous crimes committed. Testimonies created, in Elie Wiesel's words 'invisible tombstones, erected to the memory of the unburied'. Murdered Jews were denied a place in a Jewish cemetery, or in any cemetery. Survivor accounts functioned not only as 'substitute gravestones' but also as a 'lighthouse' providing guidance for Holocaust research, remembrance and education. Names and places contained in early eyewitness

accounts assisted the search for missing relatives and friends, a search which continues to this very day. Descendants of survivors relied on this data when tracing their family history. Testimonies supported claims for compensation and restitution. Statements and affidavits made in police investigations and war crimes trials played a vital role in tracing perpetrators and bringing them to justice. They were also crucial to combat the never-ending Holocaust denial campaigns unleashed by antisemites. Jewish historians shared the view that the documentation and writing of the Holocaust should not be left in the hands of non-Jews, let alone Germans, as they could not – or would not – reconstruct the Jewish history and reveal the Jewish dimension of the Holocaust.

Wherever survivors were liberated and registered in DP camps or refugee houses, in Jewish communities or relief organisations, they were asked to tell their stories. Altogether, almost 30,000 testimonies were recorded in the immediate post-war period – in Lublin and Warsaw, Bucharest and Budapest, Bratislava and Prague, Paris and Amsterdam, and Berlin and Munich. It took half a century to challenge the powerful myth surrounding the post-war silence of the Holocaust.

The eyewitness accounts edited by Freda Hodge represent only a tiny fraction of the huge, largely unexplored, dispersed and fragmented body of early testimonies. Yet, as with all early recollections, they graphically reveal the brutalities, barbarism and extreme terror survivors encountered. In their immediacy and rawness, they often show their authors' aggression and anguish at their recent suffering and loss. They are also testament to courage and endurance, resilience and resistance. The eyewitness accounts collected in the immediate post-war period constitute, as the Polish historian Feliks Tych points out, the most important body of Jewish documents pertaining to the history of the Holocaust, at a time when memory was still fresh. These features make the early voices profoundly different – and historically more significant – than later recollections gathered in oral history programs or in the

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Having survived in ghettos and camps, or in hiding on the 'Aryan side', they followed the patterns of their predecessors who had once established a flourishing Jewish historiography in Eastern Europe and fulfilled the ancient obligation of *zakhor* (remember) – to keep the memory alive.

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▲ Freda Hodge

monumental Spielberg audio-visual project. Today more than 100,000 testimonies have been collected. No other historical event has left behind such magnitude of eyewitness accounts, paving the way for what has been termed 'memory cult' or 'memory work'. One outcome is clear: soon there will be no living witness to testify to the horror of the Holocaust. The existing testimonies, recorded over more than 70 years, will be preserved for Holocaust research, remembrance and education, some in their original forms in archival depositories, others transformed by modern technologies such as virtual reconstruction to make them more easily accessible, or even more attractive.

More than 31,000 Holocaust survivors have rebuilt their shattered lives in Australia, at the edge of the Diaspora. In proportional terms, Australia welcomed more Holocaust survivors than any country, except Palestine/Israel. (Although most recently Canada is claiming to have more survivors welcomed than Australia.) Upon arrival in Australia, a few survivors began to tell their stories, especially in Melbourne, in the milieu of Yiddish-speaking Jews. As elsewhere, they encountered a wall or a code of silence set up by a society which showed little or no interest in listening to their stories. However, many years later, the end of the cold war sparked an explosion in Holocaust history and memory, encouraging many

survivors to tell their stories. The Spielberg Foundation collected more than 2,500 testimonies from survivors living in Australia and more than 1,300 video testimonies have been recorded here in Melbourne, largely at the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) by Phillip Maisel OAM, a survivor from Lithuania. Several hundred are kept at the Sydney Jewish Museum and the number of Holocaust memoirs published in Australia amounts to over 500.

The JHC has been, and will continue to be, the custodian of the voices of survivors. Freda Hodge presents 30 accounts of Yiddish speaking survivors, retrieved from the largely unexplored depths of Holocaust history. They bear witness both to the destruction of Jewish life and to its continuity.

This is an edited extract of the address **Emeritus Professor Konrad Kwiet** delivered at the launch of *Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II*, held at the Jewish Holocaust Centre in October 2018. Professor Kwiet is Resident Historian at the Sydney Jewish Museum and former Pratt Foundation Professor in Jewish History and Holocaust Studies at the University of Sydney.

Book review:

Tragedy and Triumph

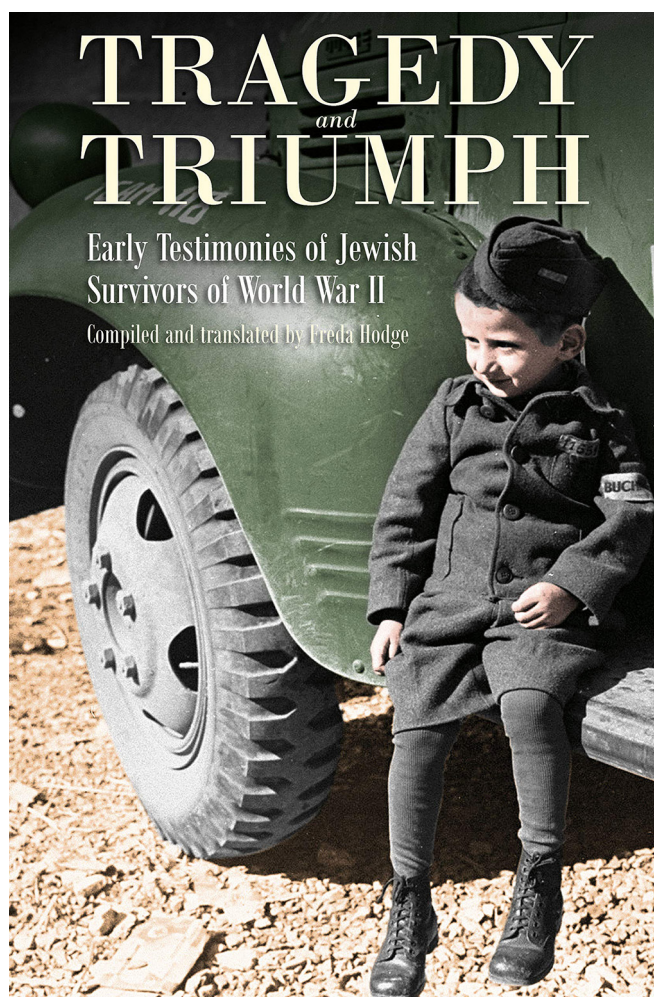
Andrew Markus

Freda Hodge's book *Tragedy and Triumph: Early Testimonies of Jewish Survivors of World War II* is a compilation of her translations of Holocaust survivor accounts published in Germany between 1946 and 1948 in the Yiddish journal *Fun Letzten Khurben* (*From the Last Destruction*). The book includes a fifteen page Introduction by Hodge and a detailed Foreword by Emeritus Professor Konrad Kwiet which discusses the collection of survivor accounts from August 1944 onwards by Jewish Historical Commissions. Wherever there were survivors there were attempts to collect testimonies. Kwiet notes that in Polish cities by the end of 1947, 7,300 testimonies had been collected, and in total across Europe close to 30,000 were recorded in the immediate post-war years.

Survivors in Munich, which was in the American Zone of Occupation, established a Central Committee of Liberated Jews to represent their interests. At the end of 1945 it formed the Munich Jewish Historical Commission, headed by Israel Kaplan, a historian and survivor of the Kovno Ghetto and Moshe Feigenbaum, a survivor from the Polish town of Biala Podlaska. They urged survivors to collect documents and write their stories; they stated that it was the duty of survivors, the 'witnesses of the tragedy,' to 'document everything'. By the end of 1948, when the Munich Commission ceased its activities, 3,500 testimonies had been collected, together with 'hundreds of thousands' of documents and photographs.

Historical Commissions hoped that testimonies and documents they collected would be used by the Allies in trials of Nazi perpetrators. They also aimed to provide sources for historians documenting Jewish experiences from their own viewpoints. There was concern that the documents being collected by the Allied Powers would only provide perpetrator records, that in the words of Feigenbaum they would 'show only what the murderers' attitude was towards us, how they treated us and what they did to us', hence conveying only 'a fragment of our tragedy'. It was necessary to collect true accounts of the atrocities committed to provide full insight into 'our suffering and painful lives'. There was a need to provide documents for the historians of the future 'from which ... to create a clear picture of that which happened to us and between us'; 'we Jews alone must document this bloody epoch.'

In August 1946 the Munich Jewish Historical Commission launched the historical journal *Fun Letzten Khurben*, edited by Kaplan. Published alongside scores of other survivor periodicals and camp newspapers in Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish and German,



the journal eventually achieved a circulation of 12,000 copies. It was sent to all Displaced Persons camps in the American Zone and to Jewish communities in other regions of Germany and overseas. Over more than two years of publication ten editions of *Fun Letzten Khurben* were issued, totalling more than 1,000 pages. The contents focused on Poland, Lithuania and Belarus, and included testimonies, documents, photographs, folklore such as songs, poems, and expressions, reports on current activities of the Central Committee, and bibliographical lists. The journal grew from 36 pages in Volume 1 to 185 pages in Volume 10.

The selection comprises thirty testimonies of men, women and children, covering ghettos, labour and work camps, concentration and extermination camps, and forests; the testimonies include discussion of Mielice, Dubno, Radun, Siedlice, Braslav, Kovno, Volozhin, Myadel, Stanislavov, Bialystok, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz, and Balkenheim.

Hodge's translations provide an important contribution to Holocaust studies by enabling access to a diverse sample of historical sources that Professor Kwiet describes as a 'huge, largely unexplored, dispersed and fragmented'. These testimonies are of special significance for historians as they were recorded at a time close to the events described.

Review by **Professor Andrew Markus**, Pratt Foundation Research Chair of Jewish Civilisation, Monash University.

The IHRA meets in Ferrara, Italy

The central issue we are facing today is not Holocaust denial, but Holocaust distortion. We have to remember that we have a tremendous responsibility to safeguard the historical record of the Holocaust – a responsibility to ourselves, to our future, to our children, and to our grandchildren.

– Professor Yehuda Bauer, IHRA Honorary Chairman, in his address to the Ferrara Plenary.

On 29 November 2018, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) successfully concluded its second bi-annual Plenary Meetings. The meetings were chaired by Italy and held in the beautiful Teatro Comunale in Ferrara, where more than 250 experts and government representatives met to discuss the Holocaust as a contemporary political issue. All

members of the Australian delegation, comprising Angus Acton-Cavanough (delegation leader), Pauline Rockman, Dr Steven Cooke, Dr Donna-Lee Frieze, Suzanne Hampel, Prof Suzanne Rutland and Dr Andre Oboler, were in attendance. The exciting news is that the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has submitted Australia's formal application for membership to IHRA International and we hope to take our place as a full member at the Luxembourg plenary in June.

During the meetings in Ferrara, Heads of Delegation chose to focus on the topic of antisemitism – a shared challenge for all member countries. The IHRA Strategy identified countering distortion as the key challenge requiring IHRA's attention over the next five years, and Ferrara provided an opportunity for the exchange of ideas about Holocaust distortion as a form of antisemitism, among other topics.

Remembering William Cooper's legacy

On 6 December 2018, members of the Victorian Jewish community joined a walk in remembrance and appreciation of indigenous leader William Cooper and the march that he led to the German Consulate in Melbourne on 6 December 1938.

In 1938, William Cooper set out from his home in the inner-city suburb of West Footscray to deliver a petition to the German Consulate. A compassionate and concerned man, he was horrified about the events that had taken place on Kristallnacht when nearly 100 Jews were killed and more than 30,000 arrested and incarcerated in German concentration camps.

In 1938, indigenous people did not have Australian citizenship or the right to vote, and were not counted in the census. However, William Cooper, a 77-year-old Yorta Yorta elder and Secretary of the Australian Aborigines' League, protested against the Nazi regime's treatment of the Jews at a time when many in the international community were still seeking appeasement with Adolf Hitler.



▲ 'Walking Together' march, 6 December 2018

Eighty years later, staff and volunteers from the Jewish Holocaust Centre joined the commemoration organised by the William Cooper Legacy Project and the Jewish Community Council of Victoria. William Cooper's grandson, Alfred 'Uncle Boydie' Turner, addressed the 500-strong crowd before the marchers stopped at the site of the former German Consulate in Collins Street where William Cooper attempted to deliver his petition. Michael Pierce, the Honorary German Consul, spoke to those gathered before the march concluded with a Smoking Ceremony and Chanukiah lighting.

From Plauen via Paris to Melbourne

Roxanne Lambert

Adolf Faktor (now Andy Factor) was born in Plauen on 18 January 1924 to Chiel and Dora. His brother, Helmut (Henry), was born a year later and his sister, Ruth, in 1932. The family lived in Falkenstein, a town that allowed residency to ten Jewish families. The children went to the German state school, played soccer and enjoyed going to dances and swapping stamps with their neighbours. Theirs was a strict German upbringing.

Chiel, a successful manufacturer of womenswear, worried about assimilation, so he employed a *melamed*, a religious teacher, from Poland whose name was Birnbaum. It was Birnbaum's job to establish a *cheder* (Jewish religious school) to teach the Jewish boys *Yiddishkeit* (Jewish culture and values).

When Hitler came to power in January 1933, Adolf changed his name to Abraham Josef. Within a year, he found himself ostracised at school and shunned by the boys he used to play with. The teachers would make him sit at the back of the class at a desk designated for naughty children – he was no longer allowed to sit next to a German child. Soon after, he was told that he could not play sport with the other children or go swimming. Signs at the pool read 'Jews and dogs not allowed'. This was Andy's first encounter with discrimination.

Der Sturmer, the weekly Nazi newspaper, espoused the belief that the Jews were responsible for Germany's terrible economic situation and for losing the First World War. In Year 9, Andy was called to the front of the class and made to stand on a box while the teacher took a cane and described the typical features of a Jewish face to the rest of the class.

Andy's parents continued to assure their children that the political situation would not last, but Andy was miserable at school. One day he was accosted by a classmate called Wolfgang, who punched him. Andy defended himself by giving the boy a black eye in return. The next day, Wolfgang was given six lashes at the front of the class for being beaten up by a Jew – a punishment for bringing shame to Germany.

Andy was completely isolated but continued to excel academically. Left alone in the classroom he would read, draw and do his homework for the next day. As a young boy, Andy's hobbies were sketching and music, particularly geographical drawings as geography was his passion. He was fascinated by the shapes and contours of geographical illustrations and would



▲ (l-r) Henry and Andy Factor

laboriously copy them in intricate detail. His teachers recognised his talent but were too frightened to give him credit.

Chiel bought his sons violins and before long they were invited to play at functions. They were called the *Wunderkinder*, playing Strauss waltzes and making up their own arrangements for the music of the time. It was suggested that Andy be sent to Leipzig to attend the conservatorium, but his application was refused on the basis that he was Jewish.

On *Kristallnacht*, 9 November 1938, Chiel and Andy were arrested by the SS and led through the town. Neighbours looked out their windows cursed them, and one woman even spat on them. Andy was only 14 years old and was incarcerated at the Plauen prison with his father. One week later, Andy was pulled from the cell and put in a room with a doctor who marked him unfit for a concentration camp. Chiel was sent to Buchenwald and remained there for six weeks before his relative, Max Factor, the then Hollywood makeup artist, intervened to have him released on the condition that he leave Germany with his family within 14 days.

Max Factor died in 1936, leaving provision in his will that anyone in his family wanting to leave Germany would be given funds to cover their fares. As a result, Andy and his family were granted temporary visas to France, where they lived well with family in Paris, supported by the Max Factor fund. Andy became Andre and took up the violin seriously, practising eight hours a day under the tutelage of two teachers – one for the right hand and one for the left. His uncle Max, Dora's brother, gave him drawing lessons and taught him the basics of making photographic reproductions of drawings, cartoons and caricatures.

Despite their relative good fortune, the family's status in France was temporary and they did not know where to go. They were unable to join their American family as the US had introduced a quota for European refugees. So, in December 1939, the family left France and sailed out of Genoa on the SS *San Remo*, bound for Australia. Thinking that Australia would be a primitive island with nothing but anhilts, sheep stations and wild animals roaming around, everyone onboard bought helmets and safari outfits in preparation for their uncivilised destination.

When they arrived in Fremantle in February 1940, a Jewish Welfare Society representative met them on the pier and told them to take off their ridiculous outfits. They were happy and relieved to see proper buildings and streetlights.

When they arrived in Melbourne, the family settled into life in Carlton. Newly arrived refugees had to work hard to make a living but the Jewish community went out of its way to support new arrivals. Andy's mother worked as a machinist and his father ran a clothing factory in the city. Andy completed his matriculation and studied commercial art and signwriting at Swinburne Technical College, after which he was employed by the Myer Emporium (now Myer Melbourne).

In 1942, when Andy was 18, he was drafted into the army where he served as a 'friendly alien'. Demobilised at the beginning of 1946, he changed his name by deed poll from Abraham Josef Faktor to Adrian Factor. In 1949 Andy met Betty Farb at *Habonim*, a Jewish youth group. They married, moved to Carnegie and had their two daughters, Myra and Elena.



Andy's day job was to help his father run his clothing factory, but he also became an Associate of Music at the Conservatorium of Music, with a degree in violin. In 1961 he landed a job with the Sadler's Wells Company, then the lead orchestra for most musicals that came to Melbourne. He also worked for the Melbourne Symphony orchestra, the ABC Showband, ballet and opera and led orchestras for legendary performers such as Sammy Davis Jnr, Dionne Warwick, Cleo Lane and Shirley Bassey.

Andy enjoyed a stellar career and taught music for 40 years. Today, at the age of 94, nothing interferes with his two-hour practice a day, when he composes new pieces and plays his favourite Bach violin sonatas. He also volunteers at the Jewish Holocaust Centre where he speaks to students and other visitors, in memory of his relatives in France and Germany who were murdered during the Holocaust.

Roxanne Lambert is a volunteer at the Jewish Holocaust Centre.

Become a Friend of the Jewish Holocaust Centre & support the activities of the Centre.

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

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

For further information please contact Elly Brooks on (03) 9528 1985 or email ellyhbrooks@gmail.com.

Jewish Holocaust Centre Friends
REMEMBRANCE EDUCATION MUSEUM

Thank you Barbara Sacks

Michael Cohen

Barbara Sacks is passionate and indefatigable. Shortly after migrating to Melbourne from South Africa, she attended a Limmud Oz program and was deeply moved as she listened to the testimonies of four Holocaust survivors. While Holocaust commemoration was a seminal event in Jewish life in South Africa and Holocaust memory remains integral to the identity of South African Jewry, comparatively few South African Jews had had the privilege of a personal connection with Holocaust survivors.

And so Barbara embarked on a journey – to offer the opportunity to her expatriates who had migrated to Melbourne to meet survivors.

Introducing herself to the panellists of Holocaust survivors at Limmud Oz, Barbara met the indomitable Kitia Altman (Z"l) which, she has said, was a genuine turning point in her life. Kitia was to become her dear friend and mentor. In 2009, with encouragement from Kitia, and with the support of former Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) executive director, Bernard Korbman, Barbara became involved in a project with Katy Meltzer and Max Wald at the helm, to invite speakers to address audiences at Kadimah and, subsequently, at the JHC. Fortnightly meetings of Club JHC were held initially, followed by lunch. Max would arrange transport for the elderly and frail, and organise outings.

The project morphed into the very successful JHC Social Club, which Barbara ran from 2012 until 2018. To augment her knowledge of the Holocaust, she completed the JHC Guides' Course, and subsequently served for several years as a guide in the Centre's museum. At the same time, she organised many an outstanding speaker to address what became a regular monthly meeting, often attended by a packed auditorium. From small beginnings – initial

▼ Barbara Sacks (standing 4th from right) with speaker Ephraim Finch (seated centre) and Club JHC members and volunteers, 2010



▲ (l-r) Barbara Sacks and Sue Hampel OAM

attendance by 16 Holocaust survivors – the Social Club became a regular feature in the JHC calendar, bringing together survivors, retirees and many others. Barbara's enthusiasm and energy proved very infectious.

Barbara's commitment to supporting Jewish causes, especially those which focus on Israel, is unremitting. With the JHC's decision to end the monthly Social Club gatherings (the auditorium is needed to accommodate the increasing number of school groups attending JHC education programs), Barbara has become involved with ZDVO-Beth Halochem Australia, which focuses on the support, care and rehabilitation of injured IDF veterans. She also works to support the Haifa-based Rambam Hospital.

Barbara continues to maintain close contact with Holocaust survivors and to serve as a Custodian of Memory to her special friend and survivor-guide, Lusia Haberdorf, with whom she meets regularly.

The JHC, together with all who have been involved with the Centre, owe a sincere debt of gratitude to Barbara Sacks for her unstinting dedication and commitment.

Dr Michael Cohen is the former JHC Director of Community Relations and Research.

The Chance of Home

Paul Kraus



Paul Kraus was born in October 1944 in an Austrian labour camp, where his mother Clara and brother Peter had been imprisoned. In July 1944, Clara and Peter had been sent to Auschwitz from their home in Subotica, Serbia. When the train stopped and the prisoners were grouped into two lines, Clara managed to escape from the Auschwitz line and was sent to the labour camp. Clara and her two very young children miraculously survived and, after liberation, they made their way to Budapest. Months later, they were reunited with Paul's father, Emery (Jim), who had survived Mauthausen Concentration Camp. The family migrated to Sydney in 1948. Paul is a survivor of mesothelioma, metastatic prostate cancer and a brain tumour. He has written a number of books on health and healing, as well as writing about refugees in Australia.

Seventy years since we arrived, a biblical lifetime,
then so far from the only world we knew.
Hope in its fullness was fervent as we were
carried away from the Horror in which our lives
recently turned. Yet somehow we survived.

How could our minds and bodies suppress,
negate, this ransomed past in our provincial land?
We scarcely outlived a Nazi racial law.
These people welcomed us, yet leering looks
brought bitter thoughts. Yet somehow we survived.

New language, new reality, a new epiphany:
indefinite seasons, harsh colours, new bird song.
Weird conformities, conjured by cultural sympathies,
like unexpected distorted tunes.
A little embittered. Yet somehow we survived.

We found a small brick suburban house,
quite different from the city we had known
with its rich history, yet lacking in humanity.
This gentle little house became our home
as incrementally we changed identity.

Exiles, for a long time foreigners
in this land, like precious raindrops
in a drought, our love grew more and more.
Gratitude – the guiding light for those early years
and far beyond, since we arrived on these shores.

Old world's values slowly swept away,
some inevitably held in Time's command.
Food, friends and family, the primary sway
that recounted our need to understand.
Good times piqued our yearning to repay.

Home: abiding, turbulent, tender,
open to redemptive love, overshadowed,
foreshadowed by goodness, grace, security.
Inclusiveness brought an abiding faith,
An irreplaceable support, a simple joy.

Each season of the heart came and went
through this great, tremendous odyssey.
Echoes, mainly beautiful, struck endlessly:
you are, you are, you are, a confirmation
simply stated in a transcendental way.

Farewell Warren Fineberg

Sue Hampel OAM

I first met Warren Fineberg in 1999, when I was teaching at Mount Scopus College and Warren assumed the role of headmaster of the secondary school. From the outset it was clear that he had a passion for education. I found an old Scope magazine from Warren's first year at Mount Scopus and, in the editorial, he wrote: 'Our success will be measured by our ability to reflect on the past and to anticipate and respond to the future.' Those words are so appropriate to the work of the Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) that it is almost as if Warren wrote them in relation to the role he was to assume.

Warren took up the role of executive director in 2010 and, from the outset, he understood the importance of reflecting on the past, on preserving the legacy of the Holocaust survivors whose experiences are the fabric of the JHC. He always cared deeply for the survivor guides who told their stories and shared their testimonies.

In order to respond to the challenges of the future, Warren employed many of the exceptional staff who work at the JHC today. With his encouragement and support, the Centre's education programs have been expanded and now include the 'Hide and Seek' program for younger students in Years 5 to 8. And today over 23,000 students attend our education program each year.

Under Warren's leadership, the JHC has had an impact on both the Jewish and the wider community. Warren introduced several significant initiatives, among them the commitment to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and



the establishment of the Australasian Association of Holocaust Organisations (AAHO). It is through Warren's efforts that the international profile of the Centre has increased.

Warren understood the importance of anticipating and responding to the future, and he leaves the JHC in a strong position to embark on our planned rebuilding project. He has served the JHC with dedication and distinction and we are indebted to him for his professionalism and commitment. We thank you for helping the Centre go from strength to strength and we wish you well in your retirement.

Sue Hampel OAM is co-president of the Jewish Holocaust Centre. She spoke at Warren Fineberg's retirement in December 2018.

Phillip Maisel Testimonies Project

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

If you would like to give your testimony or know of someone who is interested in giving a testimony, contact Phillip Maisel. Phone (03) 9528 1985 or email testimonies@jhc.org.au.





Remembering through the next generation

Pola Hoppe, together with her son and daughter-in-law, Jack and Norma Hoppe, wanted to mark the occasion of the bat mitzvah of their first great-grandchild and grandchild, Jenna Hoppe, by doing something meaningful. After speaking with a friend at Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, Israel, Jack became aware of Yad Vashem's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Twinning Program. This program connects children who are going to celebrate their bar or bat mitzvah with a child who was murdered during the Holocaust and who was denied the opportunity to celebrate this milestone in his or her life.

Jenna Lee Hoppe was named by her parents, Adam and Angie, after Leah Hoppe who was murdered during the Holocaust and was never able to celebrate her bat mitzvah. Leah was the sister of Jenna's late great-grandfather,



▲ (l-r) Norma Hoppe, Allen Brostek, Jenna, Jack and Pola Hoppe
▲ Leah Hoppe

Icek Hoppe. It seemed natural to 'twin' Jenna with Leah.

After a bat mitzvah ceremony mid-year at Caulfield Shule, Jack and Norma hosted a function for Jenna on her birthday, 8 December 2018. There Allen Brostek, on behalf of Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC), presented Jenna with a certificate acknowledging the donation Pola, Jack and Norma made to the JHC in honour of Jenna and in memory of Leah.

'It is a way of bringing the memory of the Holocaust into the next generation,' said Jack and Norma when asked about their thoughtful donation.

If you are considering donating to the JHC in honour of a special occasion, please contact Danielle Kamien, Marketing Manager, on 9528 1985.



Seen around the centre

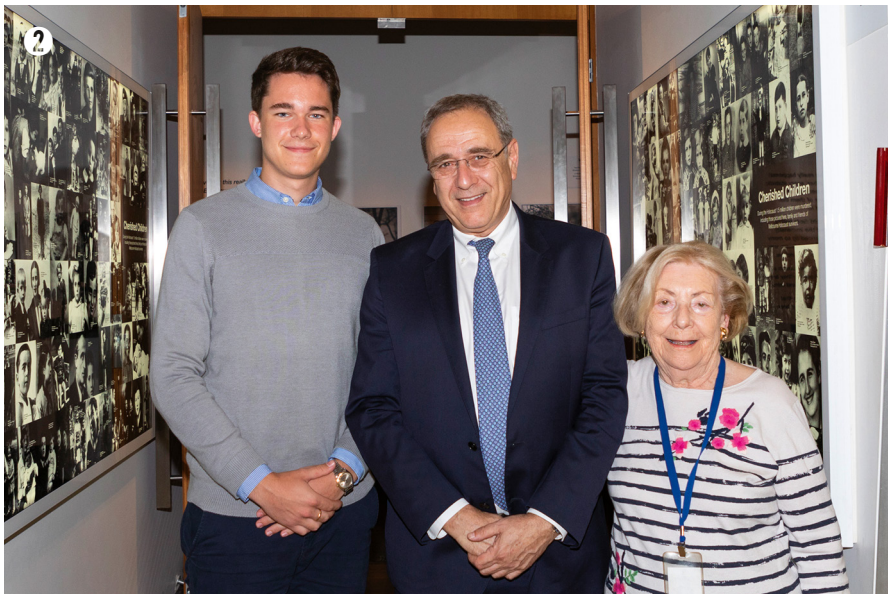


Photo: Rozanna Nazar





Photo: Joe Lewit



Photo: Vanessa Sharnbrook



- ❶ (l-r) Michael Rose, Helen Mahemoff, Jayne Josem, Sue Hampel OAM, Ambassador Mark Sofer, Abram Goldberg OAM, Mary Slade, Ely Brooks, Anita Frayman, Pauline Rockman OAM and Dr Michael Cohen
- ❷ (l-r) Michael Rose, Ambassador Mark Sofer and Lusia Haberfeld
- ❸ (l-r) Kenneth Arkwright OAM, Rabbi Kim Ettlinger, Rabbi Fred Morgan AM and Rabbi Dr John Levi AM
- ❹ (l-r) Mary Slade and Viv Parry
- ❺ (l-r) Susan Glass and Rae Silverstein
- ❻ (l-r) Uri Rosenberg, Michael Debinski, Tully Zygier, Tamara Henschel, Dr Dov Degen and Shirley Glance OAM
- ❼ (l-r) Rabbi Gavi Kaltman, Viv Parry, Leonie Drummond and Uncle Boydie Turner
- ❽ (l-r) Alice Nelson, Barbara Sacks and Dr Leah Kaminsky
- ❾ Graduates of the Gandel Holocaust Studies Program for Australian Educators with Dr Ephraim Kaye, Mr John Gandel AC and Mrs Pauline Gandel AC
- ❿ Dr Brendan Nelson AO and Mary Slade



◀ A section of the Fagenblat parochet

A parochet from the Czestochowa New Synagogue

Anna Hirsh

the *parochet* to his school, Mount Scopus College, for safekeeping. For unconfirmed reasons, the synagogue textile was never on show; and this lack of exposure to light is what has preserved the richly decorated silk and couched metallic embroidered curtain to a relatively good condition. The curtain was returned to the Fagenblat family, who have very generously offered it to the JHC as a loan for the new museum.

An article by Greer Fay Cashman in the *Jerusalem Post* in April 2018¹ featured Alon Goldman, Chairman of the World Society of Czestochowan Jews, discussing historical details about the *parochet* from the New Synagogue, including it being made from flags featuring the Polish eagle symbol carried by the Polish Legions that fought alongside Napoleon's Army against Russia in the late 1700s. He discovered that there was such a *parochet* in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem, with few provenance details. However, Alon was soon contacted by Mark Fagenblat in Melbourne, who contributed information about the missing piece to the story, the second *parochet*, which his parents had brought with them to Australia.

On a recent visit to Israel, I was fortunate to meet both Alon Goldman and Gioia Perugia, Collections Manager at the Israel Museum. Alon Goldman has generously contributed historical information and voiced support for our proposed exhibition.

After many years of storage in non-ideal conditions, the *parochet* is showing its historical scars, with some stains and tears in the delicate silk fabric, and some discoloration to the metallic thread. Along with Sztajer's model of the Old Synagogue, it needs professional loving care in the form of conservation treatment, so we shall be investigating funding sources for the preservation needs of this rare historic artefact.

With thanks to the Fagenblat family, Alon Goldman and Gioia Perugia.

Dr Anna Hirsh is Senior Archivist at the Jewish Holocaust Centre. If you wish to donate original Holocaust artefacts, please contact Dr Hirsh at annah@jhc.org.au

An exhibit featuring the Polish town of Czestochowa as a template of a Jewish European town is planned for the new Jewish Holocaust Centre (JHC) museum and will feature the model of the Old Synagogue created by Chaim Sztajer. It was a very exciting moment when we heard from JHC curatorial volunteer Hannah Fagenblat that her husband Mark and his brother Len had a *parochet* – the curtain that covers the *Aron Kodesh* (Torah ark) – that originated from the New Synagogue in Czestochowa. This is now being offered to the JHC on long-term loan.

This religious textile had been in the possession of Chaim Fajgenblat, who had been a forced labourer in a Hasag (metal goods manufacturer *Hugo Schneider Aktiengesellschaft Metallwarenfabrik*) camp in Czestochowa during the

Holocaust. The New Synagogue was destroyed by the invading Nazis soon after the outbreak of war, on Christmas day in 1939. It is unclear how Chaim came to retrieve the hidden *parochet* after the Holocaust or where the sacred item had been hidden; in the immediate post-war period, 1945 or 1946, he was photographed in a march, holding the *parochet* as a flag. Chaim and his wife Bluma, another survivor from Czestochowa, immigrated to Australia in 1949. Tragically, both died prematurely from ill health, Bluma in 1957 and Chaim in 1963.

Their orphaned teenage sons, Mark and Len, went to live with relatives. As they cleaned out their former home they discovered the box containing the *parochet*. Recognising its historical and sacred significance, but unsure what to do with it, Mark brought

¹ <https://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Grapevine-Quick-change-act-547929>

Dr Maria Shenfield

née Dolinski

(1929 – 2018)

Photo: Simon Shiff



Maria was eleven when the Second World War came to Poland. Her father, who had read *Mein Kampf*, realised that life as they knew it in Lodz would no longer be possible, so the family left Poland and travelled progressively further into the Soviet Union. There they endured extreme hardship and starvation. Her mother, who had been a teacher in Poland, struggled to obtain even sporadic work, including working in a factory peeling potatoes.

When Maria was still an adolescent her father died of typhoid. Despite being separated from her mother for stretches of time, somehow both mother and daughter survived the war.

Maria would recall that as a teenager living in the Soviet Union, towards the end of the war she heard an announcement about the German Army's practice of putting people in trucks with their exhausts turned inward. Later she would say, 'It never occurred to me that this might be my family.'

After the war, Maria and her mother returned to Poland to see if any of their relatives had survived. Her mother was one of seven siblings and her youngest brother, who had been imprisoned in Auschwitz, was the sole surviving immediate relative. The only other surviving family member on her mother's side was a nephew who had been in Soviet camps for much of the war, and

who credited his survival to the food parcels that Maria's mother had sent him.

Maria studied medicine in Lodz and specialised in paediatrics. She met Ignacy, who was a filmmaker in Lodz, and they married in 1954. Their daughter, June, was born in 1956. Realising that antisemitism was still rife in Poland, they decided to leave, ultimately arriving in Melbourne by boat in 1958. Their second daughter, Ann, was born in Melbourne in 1959.

In the early 1960s Maria recompleted her medical degree at the University of Melbourne and became a GP. Her medical practice mainly served the immigrant community. In 1964, Ignacy, or Jack as he was now known, died suddenly of a heart attack and Maria's life was once again thrown into turmoil.

Maria redoubled her focus on her medical practice. Despite facing discrimination on the basis of her gender, she was an 'old-school' family doctor. She had an unflinching work ethic and her compassionate nature meant that she would never have considered the contemporary practice of timed consultations. She worked seven days a week and attended numerous house calls most evenings. Maria had no administrative help other than from her immediate family. Her proficiency in Polish and Russian meant that she was an essential support to many, especially when the wave of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union came to Melbourne in the 1970s.

Known for her intellect and compassion, several former patients continued to visit Maria in her retirement. The death of her elder daughter in 2004 to breast cancer was a devastating blow.

Maria continued to read widely and with great insight. She volunteered at the Jewish Holocaust Centre, translating documents in the Archives until the age of 87. She also continued to write letters for Amnesty International to governments considered oppressive, something she had done for much of her life.

A critic of successive Australian governments' treatment of asylum seekers, Maria strongly opposed offshore detention. She saw herself as a refugee and considered that people did not risk their lives and those of their children without good cause.

Maria is survived by her daughter Ann, and her grandchildren, Lucienne, Odette, Kyd and Tamara.

This tribute was written by Ann, Lucienne and Odette Shenfield, and Andrew McGregor.

School visits 2018

Over 23,000 students from schools and universities across Victoria, as well as some from interstate and overseas, visited the Jewish Holocaust Centre last year. These are the schools that visited:

Aitken College
Albert Park College
Alexandra Secondary School
Antonine College
Assumption College
Auburn High School
Ava Maria College
Avalon College
Avila College
Ballarat Clarendon College
Ballarat Grammar School
Ballarat Secondary College
Balwyn High School
Bayside P-12 College
Bayswater Secondary College
Beaconhills College
Belmont High School
Bendigo South East College
Bentleigh West Primary School
Berwick Secondary College
Beth Rivka College
Bialik College
Billanook College
Birchip P-12 School
Blackburn High School
Boort District School
Boronia P-12 College
Box Hill Secondary College
Braybrook College
Bright Secondary College
Brighton Grammar
Brighton Secondary College
Broadford Secondary College
Brunswick Secondary College
Buckley Park College
Carey Baptist Grammar
Camberwell Girls Grammar
Camberwell High School
Canterbury Girls Secondary
Carawatha College
Caroline Chisholm College
Cathedral College Wangaratta
Catherin McAulay College
Catholic Regional College Melton
Caulfield Grammar
Caulfield Junior College
Chairo Christine College
Charlton Secondary School
Cheltenham East Primary
Cheltenham Primary School
Cheltenham Secondary College
Chisholm Institute
Clonard College
Cobram Anglican College
Coburg High School
Copperfield College
Cornish College
Craigieburn Secondary College
Cranbourne East Secondary
Cranbourne Secondary School
Croydon Community School
CRC North Keilor
Damascus College

Dandenong High School
Daylesford Secondary
De La Salle College
Dimboola Memorial SC
Donald High School
Doncaster Secondary College
Donvale Christian College
Dromana Secondary College
Drouin Secondary College
East Doncaster Secondary
Echuca College
Eltham College
Elisabeth Murdoch College
Elwood College
Emerald Secondary College
Emmanuel College
Echuca College
Firbank College
Fintona College
Fitzroy High School
FJC College
Flinders Christian Community
Fountain Gate Secondary College
Frankston High School
Gardenvale Primary School
Geelong Baptist College
Geelong Lutheran College
Geelong North Secondary
Genazzano FCJ College
Gippsland Grammar
Girton Grammar
Gisborne Secondary College
Gladstone Park Secondary
Gleneaon School
Gleneagles Secondary School
Glenvale School
Glen Waverley S C
Good News Lutheran College
Goulburn Valley Grammar
Hallam Senior College
Hawkesdale College
Hazel Glen College
Heathdale Christian College
Heathmont College
Highvale Secondary College
Highview College
Hillcrest Christian College
Holy Rosary School
Horsham College
Huntingtower
Ivanhoe Grammar
John Paul College
Kardinia Memorial School
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Keysborough Secondary College
Kilbreda College
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Kings College Warrnambool
Kolbe College
Koo Wee Rup Secondary
Korowa Anglican Girls School

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Lalor North Secondary
Lara Secondary College
Lauriston Girls School
Lavalla Christian College
Leibler Yavneh College
Lilydale High School
Little Yarra Steiner School
Loretto College
Lowther Hall AGS
Loyola College
Lumineer Academy
Luther College
Lyndale Secondary College
Mackillop College
Macleod College
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Manor Lakes College
Marcellin College
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Marsden High School
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Mooroolbark College
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Mount Erin College
Mt Hira College
Mount Lilydale Mercy College
Mount Ridley P-12
Mount Scopus College
Mount St Joseph's College
Mount Waverley Secondary
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Naracoote High School
Narre Warren South SC
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Neerim District Secondary
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Northern College
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Oakleigh Grammar
Oakwood School
Oberon High School
Officer Secondary School
Our Lady of Mercy College
Our Lady of Sion College
Oxley Christian College
Pakenham Secondary College
Padua College Rosebud
Padua College Mornington
Padua College Tyabb
Parkdale Secondary College
Pascoe Vale Girls College
Peninsula Grammar School
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Surf Coast Secondary College
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Sydney Road Community College
Tarneit Senior College
Templestowe College
The Grange P-12 College
The Knox School
Timbarra P-9 College
Timboon P-12 College
Tintern Grammar
Toorak College
Trafalgar High School
Trinity College
University High
Upper Yarra Secondary
Upwey High School
Urrbrae Agricultural High School
Vermont Secondary College
Victoria University Secondary
Victory Lutheran College
Viewbank College
Wallan Secondary College
Wanganui Park Secondary
Warrnambool High School
Warrandyte Secondary College
Warragul Regional College
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Werribee Secondary College
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Western Heights College
Western Port Secondary College
Whittlesea Secondary College
Wonthaggi Secondary College
Woodleigh College
Wyndham Central School
Xavier College
Yarra Hills Secondary
Yarra Valley Grammar
Yarram Secondary College
Yarrowonga College
Yea secondary School
Yeshiva College
Yishun Town College Singapore

Mazal tov

Engagement

To Viv Bolaffi on the engagement of her son Reuben Bolaffi to Elyse Cherny

To Peter Cherny on the engagement of his daughter Elyse Cherny to Reuben Bolaffi

To Sue and Phil Lewis on the engagement of their daughter Aimee Lewis to Ricky Cahn

To Clara Weis on the engagement of her grandson Jesse Strauch to Sara Isman

Marriages

To Joy and Nathan Bloumis on the marriage of their son Simon Bloumis to Janine Nissen

To Susan Glass on the marriage of her daughter Chaya Esakoff to Brendan Cilia

To David Prince on the marriage of his grandson Jeremy Prince to Victoria Spernat

To Estelle and Geoffrey Rose on the marriage of their son Stuart Rosen to Maureen Maserow

To Judy and Joe Szwarcberg on the marriage of their granddaughter Olivia Szwarcberg to Daniel Kitay

Births

To Mish and Yehuda Blacher on the birth of their grandson Arlo Blacher

To Viv Bolaffi on the birth of her grandson Gil Rochman

To Pearl and John Buchanek on the birth of their granddaughter Maya Buchanek

To Anita and Peter Frayman on the birth of their granddaughter Ava Mordech

To Anna and Ralph Glezer on the birth of their grandson Braxton Glezer

To Sue and Alex Hampel on the birth of their grandson Finnegan Hampel

To Irma Hanner on the birth of her great-grandson Kobi Hanner

To Elinor and Bez Hasenfrantz on the birth of their son Lev Hasenfratz

To Nicole and David Herzog on the birth of their granddaughter Ariella Herzog

To Fanny and Keith Hoffman on the birth of their grandson Aaron Hoffman

To Susie and Stephen Kleid on the birth of their grandson Alon Zohar

To John Lamovie on the birth of his great-grandson Shneur Zalman Jedwab

To Jeff Meyer on the birth of his grandson Dov Brochin-Meyer

To Leonie Nossbaum on the birth of her grandson Gabe Szafran

To Avi Paluch on the birth of his granddaughter Rahni Paluch

To Fryda Schweitzer on the birth of her great-granddaughter Lily Schweitzer

To Tamara Shneier on the birth of her granddaughter Olivia Schneier

To Bronia and John Witorz on the birth of their granddaughter Ivy Collins

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

To Leora Harrison and Anthony Goldman on the bar mitzvah of their son Zac Goldman

To Sarah and Paul Grinwald on the bat mitzvah of their granddaughter Ariella Ben Porath

To Rhonda and Tom Lipshut on the bar mitzvah of their grandson Joshua Nirens

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

To Robbie and Tamar Simons on the bat mitzvah of their daughter Ella Simons

Birthdays

To Ariella Leski on her 30th birthday

To Elyau Golshevsky on his 70th birthday

To Malka Silver on her 70th birthday

Condolences

To Judy Berman on the death of her mother Dina Berman

To Warren Fineberg and Dr Vivienne Elton on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Annie Fineberg

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

To Gary Gray on the death of his wife Stephanie Gray

To Carol and Harry Kamien on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Regina Kamieniecki

To the family of Suzie Nozik on her death

To Elaine and Mark Jacobs on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Cecelia Silverman

To Ann Shenfield on the death of her mother Dr Maria Shenfield

To Mary and Graeme Slade on the death of their mother and mother-in-law Mela Groch

To Claude Winograd on the death of his mother Paulette Winograd

To Susan and Eileen Wright on the death of their husband and father Harry Wright

Many thanks

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Oscar Baum 95th Birthday
Fran and Stan Levine Wedding Anniversary

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We acknowledge the Jewish Holocaust Centre and Foundation bequestors for their generosity and vision.
May their memory be a blessing.

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פֿאַרווערטס: פֿון דניאל גלאַי

5.02.2019

פערזענלעכקייטן ביי נתניהו — זענען געווען די ישראלדיקע פֿאַרשטייערס ביי די פֿאַרהאַנדלונגען מיט די פֿאַליאַקן ביים צונויפֿשטעלן דעם דאָקומענט. ווי ס'האָט זיך אַרויסגעוויזן האָט אַפֿילו יד־ושם אויך געהאַט אַ האַנט אין דעם פּראָצעס. פּראָפֿ' דינה פּורת [פּאַראַט], די הויפּט־היסטאָריקערין ביי יד־ושם, האָט לכתחילה ניט רעאַגירט אויף דער בשורה וועגן דער דעקלאַראַציע. נאָכן פֿאַרזאַמען איר רעאַקציע האָט זי, סוף־פּל־סוף, אויך אויסגעדריקט איר אַפּאָזיציע.

ווען די פֿאַליאַקן האָבן אויסגעדריקט פּעס, הלאַמי מע רעדט וועגן „פּוילישע“ אומברענג־לאַגערן און „פּוילישע“ קאַנצענטראַציע־לאַגערן, און מע זאָגט ניט, אַז זיי זענען אויפֿגעשטעלט געוואָרן דורך די דייַטשן אויף דער פּוילישער, אַקופּירטער ערד, האָט מען עס געקאַנט פֿאַרשטיין. אָבער ניט אַנערקענען דעם אַינגעוואָרצלטן, פֿאַרשפּרייטן אַנטיסעמיטיזם אין פֿאַרמלחמהדיקן פּוילן און די באַדייַטיקע פּוילישע קאָלאָאַבאָראַציע מיטן נאַצי־אָקופּאַנט, אַט דאָס איז שוין ניט־דערטרעגלעך און דאָס פֿעלט טאַקע, צום באַדויערן אין דער אויבן־דערמאַנטער דעקלאַראַציע.

וואָס האָבן געטויגט אַלע באַרעכטיקטע פּראָטעסטן? האָט מען די דעקלאַראַציע זינט דעמאָלט געענדערט? דערווייל האָבן מיר גאַרניט געהערט דערפֿון. די סיבה איז וואָס אַט דער דאָקומענט שפּיגלט אָפּ די מלוכישע אינטערעסן פֿון ביידע מדינות און ניט דווקא דעם היסטאָרישן אמת. אין צוויי פּונקטן פֿון דער דעקלאַראַציע, 3 און 5, ווערט באַשטעטיקט די פֿולע פּרייהייט אין וועלכער אַקאַדעמיקער נייטיקן זיך, פּדי צו פֿאַרשן דעם חורבן,

אַן קיין חשד, אַז זיי וועלן געשטעלט ווערן פֿאַרן געריכט. עס ווערט אויך אונטערגעשטראַכן דאָס בשותפֿותדיקע ישראל־פּוילישע אַחריות אַפּצוהיטן דעם אַנדענק פֿונעם חורבן, די גרעסטע טראַגעדיע אין דער יידישער געשיכטע. ס'ווערט אָבער ליידער קיין וואָרט ניט דערמאַנט, וועגן דעם שפּראַך־און קולטור־געביט. דאָס איז אַ גרויסער, ניט־צופֿעליקער בלויז פֿון אַט דער דעקלאַראַציע, וואָס האָט געזאָלט, כאַטש פֿאַרמעל, אויסדריקן אַזאַ ווונטש.

ווי ס'איז באַקאַנט, האָט דער פּוילישער פֿאַרלאַמענט מיט אַ האַלב יאָר צוריק אַנגענומען אַ געזעץ, אַז ווער ס'וועט באַשולדיקן די פֿאַליאַקן אין טראַגן אַ טייל פֿונעם אַחריות פֿאַרן חורבן, קאָן באַשטראַפֿט ווערן ביז דריי יאָר תּפֿיסה. נאָך די שאַרפֿע פּראָטעסטן, וואָס דער אַ געזעץ האָט אַרויסגערופֿן אין ישראל און אין דער מערב־וועלט, האָט דער פּוילישער פֿאַרלאַמענט אַרויסגענומען דעם קאַנטראָווערסיאַלן שטראַפֿפּונקט אָבער פֿאַרט באַשטעטיקט דעם געזעץ־פֿאַרשלאַג דעם 27סטן יוני 2018.

דערנאָך איז אַ צווייטע זאַך געשען. די פּוילישע רעגירונג האָט, פּלומרשט אָן ישראלס הספּמה, פֿאַרעפֿנטלעכט אין דער פּרעסע אין ישראל, דייַטשלאַנד און אַמעריקע אַ דעקלאַראַציע צווישן פּוילן און ישראל וועגן די פּריינדלעכע באַציאָנגען צווישן ביידע מדינות און דערביי מינימיזירט די פּוילישע קאָלאָאַבאָראַציע מיט די דייַטשן. דער ברייטער עולם האָט בכלל ניט געוואוסט אַז אַזאַ דעקלאַראַציע איז אונטערגעחתמעט געוואָרן דורכן ישראלדיקן פּרעמיער מיניסטער נתניהו, און מאַטעווש מאַראָויעצקי, דער פּרעמיער פֿון פּוילן. ווען דער עולם האָט זיך דערוואוסט וועגן דעם האָט עס ווידער דערוועקט אַ כּוואַליע פֿון שאַרף קריטישע רעאַקציעס ווייל ס'האָט זיך געשאַפֿן אַ רושם, אַז מע האָט זי פֿאַקטיש אַרויפֿגעצווונגען אויף דער ישראל־באַפֿעלקערונג.

די העכסטע אַקאַדעמישע אויטאָריטעט צווישן די קעגנערס איז געווען דער פּראָפֿעסאָר עמעריטוס פֿון העברעישן אוניווערסיטעט ישראל ברטל (באַרטאַל), וועלכער האָט באַטאָנט אַז די בשותפֿותדיקע דעקלאַראַציע פֿאַרמינערט די ראַלע וואָס די פֿאַליאַקן האָבן געשפּילט אין דער ייִדן־פֿאַרטיליקונג. דער מדינה־פּרעזידענט ראובן ריבלין האָט באַטאָנט, אַז אַזאַ דעקלאַראַציע דערמוטיקט דאָס לייקענען דעם חורבן. נפֿתלי בענעט, דער דערציאָנג־מיניסטער, האָט דערקלערט, אַז ס'איז אַ חרפה און אַ בושה, און אויך אַנפֿירערס פֿון פֿאַרשידענע פּאַרטייען האָבן זיך קאַטעגאָריש אויסגעדריקט קעגן דער דעקלאַראַציע. ד"ר יוסף טשעכאַנאָווער, אַן אַדוואָקאַט, און יעקב־נאַגעל, אַ פּראָפֿעסאָר אין נטכניון, ביידע פֿאַרבונדן מיטן אויסערן־מיניסטעריום און פֿאַרטרוילעכע

צוויי היפוכדיקע צוגאנגען צום פלאנירטן ווארשעווער-געטאָ מוזיי

צווייטער טייל פֿונעם אויבנדיקן אַרטיקל: די ישראל-פּוילן-דעקלאַראַציע און דער ייִדיש-סעקטאָר פֿאַרווערטס: פֿון דניאל גלאַי

12.02.2019

ער גיט נאָך צו אַז ס'מוז ניט זיין נאָר איין קוק אויף דער געשיכטע, נאָר ס'איז פֿאַראַן אַן אָרט פֿאַר פֿאַרשידענע אינטערפּרעטאַציעס. ברטל וואַרפֿט אָפּ קאַטעגאָריש אַז מע דאַרף אָננעמען אַלגעמיינע, אוניווערסאַלע שטעלונגען און דערביי אָפּוואַרפֿן די לעגיטימקייט פֿון אַ סוביעקטיווער, ייִדישער פּערספּעקטיוו. ס'הייסט, אַז די ייִדישע דימענסיע, נישט אויטאָמאַטיש די ישראלישע, האָט פֿאַר אים אַ גרויסן באַטייט. בקיצור, מיר שטייען דאָ פֿאַר קעגנזייטיקע באַשולדיקונגען, אַז יעדער איינער דינט אַן עטנאַצענטריש-מלוכישע קאַנצעפּציע — אַ ייִראַלדיקע צי אַ פּוילישע — און ניט דעם ריינעם, היסטאָרישן אמת. „אויב מע פֿאַרנעמט זיך מיט ייִדישער געשיכטע — האָט ברטל געשריבן אין „האַרץ“ — איז עס ממילא אַן עטנאַצענטרישע ייִדיש-ציוניסטישע, נאַציאָנאַלע פּערספּעקטיוו.

ברטל שרייבט, אַז די ישראלישע היסטאָריקער דאַרפֿן אַרויסזאָגן בֿפֿרהסיא אַז זיי נעמען ניט אַן די פּויליש - נאַציאָנאַליסטישע היסטאָריאָגראַפֿיע. לויט בלאַטמאַנען, באַטאַנט דער אָפֿיציעלער נאַראַטיוו פֿון ישראל מער דעם אַנטיסעמיטיזם אין פּוילן, איידער דעם צוזאַמענלעבן פֿון ייִדן און פּאָליאַקן. צו דערגאַנצן דאָס בילד דאַרפֿן מיר דאָ דערמאַנען, אַז ביידע פּערזענלעכקייטן דריקן אויס אין דער עפֿנטלעכקייט זייערע שטעלונגען לגבי אַקטועלע, נאַציאָנאַלע פּראָבלעמען.

ברטל האָט, למשל, אָנגעשריבן אַן אַרומנעמיקן אַרטיקל, טענהנדיק, אַז יהדות קאָן ניט ווערן דער מאָנאָפּאָל פֿון געוויסע פּאָליטישע סעקטאָרן, און אַז אין העברעיִשן אוניווערסיטעט איז פֿאַראַן אַ ים מיט וויסן און פֿאַרשערס אויף די געביטן פֿון געשיכטע, פּילאָסאָפֿיע, שפּראַכן, פּאָלקלאַר און קונסט וואָס שפּיגלען אָפּ די פּילזניטיקייט פֿון ייִדישקייט. ערשט ווען מע וועט דערעפֿענען דעם נייעם מוזיי אין 2023, און ניט פֿריער, וועט יעדער איינער קאָנען משפּטן, וואָס איז דער רעזולטאַט און צי עס שפּיגלט אָפּ בנאמנות דעם לעבן און טויט פֿון דעם אַרױפֿגעצווונגענעם, מטורפֿדיקן נאַציִגיהנום, וואָס איז געווען דער וואַרשעווער געטאָ.

צוזאַמענגעשטעלט דורך אַלעקס דאַפֿנער

דער מוזיי וועט אָפּמערקן 80 יאָר זינט דעם וואַרשעווער געטאָ־אויפֿשטאַנד. די אינסטיטוציע האָט אַ וועבזײַט מיט היפּשער אינפֿאָרמאַציע וועגן דעם פּערסאָנאַל, סטרוקטור און ריכטונג פֿונעם מוזיי. דער ייִדיש־פּוילישער היסטאָריקער אַלבערט סטאַנקאווסקי איז נאָמינירט געוואָרן ווי איר גענעראַל־דירעקטאָר. אויף די שפּאַלטן פֿון „האַרץ“ האָט מען לעצטנס געקאָנט פֿילן דעם שטאַרקן צוזאַמענשטויס צווישן צוויי היסטאָריקער, ביידע פֿון העברעיִשן אוניווערסיטעט אין ירושלים, מומחים אויפֿן געביט פֿון דער געשיכטע פֿון מזרח־אייראָפּעיִשן ייִדנטום: פּראָפֿ' ישראל ברטל (באַרטאַל) און פּראָפֿ' דניאל בלאַטמאַן. דײַר בלאַטמאַן איז אין יאָר 2018 נאָמינירט געוואָרן ווי דער הויפּט־היסטאָריקער פֿון נייעם געטאָ־וואַרשע־מוזיי. אויפֿן שטח פֿון דעם געוועזענעם „מאיר בערזאָן און באַומאַן קינדער־שפּיטאַל“, וואָס האָט פֿאַרן קריג געדינט דער ייִדישער און ניט־ייִדישער באַפֿעלקערונג, האָט די פּוילישע רעגירונג באַשלאָסן צו שאַפֿן אַ נייעם מוזיי, וואָס זאָל פֿאַרשטעלן דעם טראַגישן גורל פֿון וואַרשעווער געטאָ. די רעגירונג האָט דאָך געקאָנט באַשליסן עפּעס גאָר אַנדערשס ווי, למשל, צו פֿאַרקויפֿן דעם שטח צו פּריוואַטע קאַמערציעלע אינוועסטאָרן און דערביי אפֿשר פֿאַרדינען פּראָפֿיטן פֿאַרן וואַרשעווער שטאַטראַט. איז דאָך גוט. דאָס וואָס מע האָט נאָמינירט אַ ייִראַלדיקן פּראָפֿעסאָר ווי דער הויפּט־היסטאָריקער, דאַרף אונדז דערפֿרייען. נאָר דווקא דאָ קען מען שטעלן די פּראָגע: צי וועט דער מוזיי ניט פֿאַרשטעלן אַ פּוילישע פּערספּעקטיוו, מער ווי אַ ייִדישע, פֿונעם בילד און ווירקלעכקייט אין וואַרשעווער געטאָ? דײַר בלאַטמאַן האָט איבערגעגעבן אַז ביז אַהער האָט ער קיין אויסערלעכע השפּעה און דרוק ניט געפֿילט אין זײַן בײַטראַג אויפֿצושטעלן דעם מוזיי. דײַר ברטל, פֿון דער אַנדערער זײַט, האָט זיך אַרויסגעזאָגט אַז דער ייִראַלדיקער היסטאָריקער בלאַטמאַן, וועט פֿאַקטיש דינען אַ פּוילישן נאַראַטיוו און קאַנצעפּציע פֿון דער געטאָ־געשיכטע. האָט דערויף בלאַטמאַן געענטפֿערט אַז ווער ס'אַטאַקירט אים איז אַליין אַ פּליִ־משרת פֿון דעם ייִראַלדיקן נאַראַטיוו וועגן דער ייִדיש־פּוילישער געשיכטע.

צענטער נייעס

APRIL 2019

The magazine of the Jewish Holocaust Centre, Melbourne, Australia

The first time
I understood the
holocaust
- Luke

BRAVE!!

Thank you so
much Joe! Your
words inspired
me!

thank you
so much

We have experiences
everyday and most
of them leave us,
but your story you
shared today will
never leave me.

Thank-you!

I really appreciate your
courage in being willing to
share your incredible story
with us.

I can't imagine
what you had
to go through.
You are an
inspiration to
me. Thank you
Paul

Thank you for
re-living your
trauma in order
to educate us,
what you had to
endure is something
our generation will
fight to eradicate.
Thank you, Abe.

You're really strong
for sharing your story.
Thank you and I hope
you live in peace.

Truly
inspirational

Thank you
for sharing
your story
- Shakira

Thank you for telling
us your story and
showing me how
being grateful can change
how you remember your
past!

It was an honour and
a privilege to listen
to your story and your
continued positivity and
faith in our world
despite the trauma's
you've gone through.
Thank you so much.

^ Comments from Victorian school students
after attending the Jewish Holocaust Centre
education program and hearing the
testimony of a Holocaust survivor