

VOICES

Remembering
the past, inspiring
the future.



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

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Cover: Volunteer Dan Korn pictured with an image of his father, Wilhelm Korn in Italy, 1946. Wilhelm’s concentration camp jacket is on display in *What They Carried: Objects of Survival*. Photo: Jarrod Freedman.

Melbourne Holocaust Museum

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From the Presidents:
A Season of Engagement
and Advocacy

The past six months have been among the busiest in recent memory for the Melbourne Holocaust Museum.

We have welcomed many school groups through our doors, delivered a growing calendar of corporate programs and expanded *The Space Between* (our immersive workplace program). This work reflects our broader mission: to foster tolerance, compassion and critical thinking, and to inspire people to become advocates for positive social change.

We were delighted to host our second Parliamentary and Consular Breakfast, bringing representatives together to discuss the role Holocaust education can play in strengthening social cohesion. This formed part of a broader strategy of engagement, with the museum welcoming a number of diplomats and politicians keen to understand our work and engage with our museum.

In July we welcomed Commissioner Virginia Bell AC SC and 15 other commission members to the museum. They were shown throughout all exhibitions and experienced a snapshot of *The Space Between* program. We were pleased to hear the Commissioner positively reference her visit, and the impact it had on her, later in July when our CEO Dr Breann Szczepanik gave evidence. She ensured in her evidence that the museum’s expertise and voices of survivors were heard directly in this vital conversation.

We farewelled Aviva Weinberg, who leaves after five years as Head of Engagement and Philanthropy. We thank her warmly for her contribution to MHM and wish her every success ahead.

MHM is delighted to invite you to our newest special exhibition, *What They Carried: Objects of Survival*, running until 31 January 2027 in the Alter Family Special Exhibitions Gallery.

Drawn from MHM’s own collection, many objects on display are being shown publicly for the first time, revealing how everyday items, a spoon, a handmade *hanukiah* and a letter from a loved one sustained survivors’ bodies, identities and relationships. We encourage you to visit and bring family and friends.

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

Chag sameach, and we look forward to welcoming you to the MHM.

Sue Hampel OAM and Mike Debinski OAM
MHM Co-Presidents





From the Editor

Lina Leibovich

Welcome to this issue of *Voices*, published at a moment when the work of Holocaust memory feels more urgent than ever. Our CEO, Dr Breann Szczepanik's evidence before the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion sits alongside reflections on what it means to teach, and to inherit, this history today.

Objects anchor many of these pages: the new special exhibition *What They Carried: Objects of Survival*, and a moving new acquisition, remind us how ordinary items carried extraordinary weight. Elsewhere, we meet the people carrying memory forward: a young guide honouring his grandparents, a volunteer following her mother's Tuesday shift, second-generation writers examining what they've inherited, and the descendants whose donor stories preserve family histories that might otherwise be lost.

We also celebrate Mary Slade's Life Governorship, six book launches, and Janusz Korczak's enduring legacy. Together, these stories affirm our founding survivors' conviction: that remembering is how we build a tolerant world.



Feature

by
Dr Breann Szczepanik
MHM CEO

Hope in the Hearing Room

Royal Commissions are often associated with difficult truths. They are established to examine complex problems, hear challenging evidence and consider how Australia can respond.

“Hope” is not usually the first word that comes to mind.

Above: Commissioner Virginia Bell AC SC and members of the Royal Commission team visiting the MHM.

Yet as I left the hearing room after giving evidence to the Royal Commission into Antisemitism, hope was the overwhelming feeling I carried with me. Not because the challenges facing our community have become any smaller. They have not. Rather, it was because the day reinforced something deeply encouraging: thoughtful education, grounded in evidence and lived experience, has an essential role to play in Australia's future.

The hearing room itself was quieter than expected. There was no theatre or confrontation, only careful listening and a small crowd. The Commissioner's questions reflected a genuine curiosity about what works. They explored the role of survivor testimony, the challenges teachers are facing in their classrooms, the rise in Holocaust denial and distortion, and the contribution education can make to social cohesion and democratic resilience. Having recently visited the MHM, the Commissioner also spoke about the impact of the Treblinka model. It was a reminder that this conversation was grounded not only in policy, but in an understanding of the power of authentic Holocaust education.

The evidence presented reflected more than four decades of work by Holocaust survivors, educators, historians, researchers, volunteers, staff and supporters.

The evidence presented reflected more than four decades of work by Holocaust survivors, educators, historians, researchers, volunteers, staff and supporters. It drew on the experiences of approximately 30,000 students who visit the museum each year, teachers participating in professional learning, and workplaces engaging with *The Space Between*.

At its heart was a simple idea: Holocaust education is not only about understanding the past. It is about preparing people to navigate the present.

During the hearing, democratic resilience was described as a muscle. It cannot be developed once and then left alone. It must be strengthened throughout life through education, respectful dialogue, critical thinking and opportunities to engage with perspectives different from our own. Preserving memory and strengthening democracy are inseparable.

The most memorable part of the day, however, came after the hearing had ended. Messages began arriving from Holocaust survivors, volunteers, donors, teachers, colleagues, friends and the general public. Some simply wished the museum well. Others said they were proud that Holocaust education had been represented in such an important national forum. As one message said:

“

I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for the evidence you recently gave to the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion on behalf of the Melbourne Holocaust Museum. Your emphasis on the vital role of Holocaust education in fostering understanding, empathy, critical thinking and democratic resilience was compelling. As you noted, this work is not only about remembering the past but about equipping people with the skills to navigate the present and help shape a more inclusive future. It was encouraging to hear the experiences of many who have been involved in the museum's work over the years.

Messages like these were a powerful reminder that while one person may sit before a Royal Commission, the work being represented belongs to an entire community.

Every answer reflected the courage of survivors who continue to share their testimony, the expertise of educators developing innovative programs, the dedication of staff and volunteers, and the generosity of supporters who have sustained the museum for more than 40 years.

Walking out of the hearing, there was a renewed sense of optimism. Not because the work is complete, but because meaningful change is already happening. Tomorrow another school group will walk through our doors. Another teacher will leave with greater confidence to facilitate difficult conversations. Another workplace will begin thinking differently about respect and belonging. Another visitor will stand before the Treblinka model and gain a deeper understanding of the consequences of hatred and of the responsibility each of us shares to ensure such histories are never repeated.

This is how democratic resilience is built.

Appearing before the Royal Commission was more than an opportunity to present evidence. It affirmed that the work undertaken every day at the MHM has an important contribution to make to Australia's future.

That is why I left the Commission Hearing with hope that education will be uplifted as one of the most powerful tools we have to build a more informed, compassionate and resilient society.



Above: Members of the Royal Commission team visiting the MHM.

Life Governorship for Mary Slade

After 13 years as a Director and four years as Secretary of the museum, last year Mary stood down as a Director of the museum.

To honour Mary's significant contribution as a Director, and as a volunteer, the Board has made Mary a Life Governor of the museum, a recognition reserved for those who have made an exceptional and lasting contribution to this institution.

Mary's contribution to the museum spans more than a decade as a dedicated volunteer, an education guide, a Board Director, and as Secretary of the Board. Across all of these roles, she has brought not only commitment, but deep integrity, wisdom, and a strong sense of purpose.

As a Director, Mary represented the voice of the volunteer guides and played an important role in the governance of the museum over many years. Drawing on her professional background as a lawyer, she made a significant contribution to strengthening the museum's governance, including work on modernising the

Constitution and providing wise counsel when it was most needed. In particular, when the time came to change our name from the Jewish Holocaust Centre to the Melbourne Holocaust Museum. Mary navigated this with extraordinary care and skill, ensuring that every voice was heard.

Mary has also played a key role in shaping the life of the museum community. From organising meaningful events, including the first morning tea at Government House bringing survivors and the Governor together, to supporting important fundraising initiatives. Her generosity as both a donor and advocate has further strengthened the museum's work and sustainability.

Perhaps most importantly, Mary has been part of the museum's journey, from its earlier days as a largely volunteer-run organisation, to the remarkable institution we see today. She has given her time, her expertise, and her unwavering commitment through both the challenges and the successes.

It is our great pleasure to acknowledge Mary's extraordinary contribution and to congratulate her on being appointed a Life Governor of the MHM.

Feature

by
Sue Hampel OAM
MHM Co-President

Right: A view of the updated Częstochowa room.

Below: A view of the updated 'The World That Was' display case.

Photos:
Simon Shiff.

Refreshing Everybody Had a Name

Museums are dynamic and fluid spaces. At their best, they intentionally respond to their audiences and the environment in which they are situated. They elegantly change to reflect their visitors and contribute to the social discourse, while holding fast to their foundational message and mission.

This year, we undertook the first phase of a multi-year refresh for our permanent exhibit, *Everybody Had a Name*. A number of loans were expiring on items in our 'The World That Was' display case and this provided a meaningful window to consider how this section could be improved. The Judaica on loan from the Jewish Museum of Australia evoked broad experiences that cut across religious, domestic, and social life in pre-war Europe while also introducing audiences to distinct elements of Jewish culture. We aimed to keep this orientation while also uplifting the storytelling elements of the area.

We recognised that the foundational premise of the exhibit, articulated so beautifully by its title, was understated in this display of artefacts. Across the room, portraits and family pictures give credence to the idea that everybody had a name, but we wanted to activate the display case of material culture in a manner that would reinforce this central tenet. Furthermore, in the years since reopening, we've begun to acquire materials that made it possible to tell more robust stories about pre-war Jewish life.



Our curatorial and design decisions were thus focused on enhancing the aliveness of objects through telling family stories, holding firmly to the exhibition title as our guiding light. Rather than placing items in categories—like “religious” or “cultural”—we displayed them as they related to the biographies and histories of the former owners of these artefacts. Two families were chosen: the Vienna-based Weiss family and the Cossens of Hamburg. They were selected, in part, because of the robust assortment of pre-war items we have in our collection related to these families. Curatorial decisions could lead audiences to an understanding of Jewishness that was sequestered by their religious or ritual life.

The Weiss and Cossen collections pointed to families that observed the Sabbath and participated in secular activities, had robust political lives, and participated in sports. This rendering of Jewish life in the pre-war era will be meaningfully accessible to audiences of all backgrounds. And by keeping items in relationship to their owner rather than their “use” category, every artefact provides insight about specific people and the diversity of their singular experiences.

Between the stories of these two urban families is a display we're calling *Remnants*. The artefacts in this area point directly at the absence of personal context. They provide a glimpse into *shtetl* life, which was almost entirely destroyed by the violence of the Holocaust, indicating that the items belonged to people whose names we may never know.

The stark contrast between the abundance of urban middle-class heirlooms and the absence of objects from *shtetlach* gives our audiences their first glimpse of the disparity of experiences of violence. *Remnants* serves in this way as a preview of following sections, while still attempting to tell the story of what pre-war life was like in these unique, decidedly Jewish, linguistically Yiddish spaces.

We also use the fact that many items are disconnected from personal stories to give non-Jewish visitors an understanding of items like a *tallit* and *tefillin*. We tap into the relationship between these artefacts to contextualise them and generate greater access to their meaning. For example, both the *tallit* and *tefillin* are placed on a mannequin to indicate how they would be worn by a person. Regardless of an audience's background this display will enable an understanding of the human use for these ritual articles.

The revised visual language, enhanced storytelling, and renewed commitment to the foundational concept of *Everybody Had a Name* will guide our process over the coming years. Our goal, as ever, is to honour what has come before by learning from it, adjusting to the realities of the present moment, and responding with our best effort. My team and I could not be more excited by this next step in the evolution of our museum.



Above: A view of the updated antisemitism display. Photo: Simon Shiff.

Adas and Roma Perelberg
with Justin.



FutureGen: Carrying Their Stories Forward

The challenges our Jewish community has faced over the past few years are undeniable, yet every Monday after returning home from the MHM where he works as a guide in the secondary schools' programme, Justin Perelberg tells his family stories of the bright, intelligent students and teachers he has met that day, the insightful questions they have asked, the way they have engaged with the often difficult material, and their compassion. His work has buoyed his belief that our future in this country is in "good hands".



Above: Adas Perelberg.

A history and politics graduate from Monash University, Justin was recently drawn to volunteer, yet his connection to the museum runs deep. His paternal grandfather Adas (Adam) Perelberg, who was in the Polish Army at the outbreak of World War II, was a founding Vice President of the Jewish Holocaust Centre and provided funds for the acquisition of land upon which the museum now stands. His grandmother Roma jumped from a Treblinka bound train and hid in the forests of Poland and Justin's maternal grandparents Helen and Stan Grosman, also of Polish descent, were intimately involved in the Sydney Jewish Museum, where, for more than 30 years, they acted as guides to school students.

He describes his motivation to guide as "visceral".

“

I felt deeply compelled by my family history and personal relationships to volunteer as a guide. I was the first grandchild for all four of my grandparents, who were all survivors. The Shoah has been ever present in my life alongside a wish expressed by all my grandparents, directly, to "never forget". Every time I stand in front of young Australians, I'm anxious to ensure I honour that wish.

The small section in the permanent exhibition entitled *Resistance* is the area Justin finds most evocative. "We all know the horror, the numbers, the suffering, the degradation and humiliation. But sometimes I feel that amongst the names of death camps and ghettos and incomprehensible numbers and laws, the humanity of it all is also burnt. It's alienating and hard to comprehend."

He says resistance has many facets, simple or heroic, Jew or Gentile, larger-scale like the Warsaw Ghetto uprising or Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler or smaller-scale like his maternal grandmother who, while in Auschwitz, made sure to wash her hands whenever she could.

“

All resistance is about maintaining one's humanity, our humanity. It is where Tikkun Olam begins. The stories are incredible, captivating and outrageous in the risks taken and luck involved.

When he tells the students these incredible tales even the most disengaged become absorbed.

Similarly, he finds a small toothbrush held throughout the camps and kept by a survivor very touching. "To be caught with that toothbrush would mean death. Maybe the risk of death, for that survivor, was far outweighed by a desire to remain a person and to feel the simple pleasure of clean teeth?"

All his grandparents have passed away and Justin, like many who are involved in Holocaust education, has pondered a world without eyewitness. He believes that the very fibre of the Jewish people is what will enable their stories to live on. "Our people, the Jewish people, are defined by our language, culture, faith and history. And the thread that connects these cornerstones is our devotion to storytelling. To pass our story from generation to generation," he says.

"It is very sad to know that one day survivors will no longer walk amongst us, but I know that we can and will share their stories."

While he does feel his involvement with the museum keeps the memory of his ancestors alive, his personal aim is to guide according to the program's intention, which is to assist the students to ask questions and discover for themselves, rather than telling them what they "need" to know.

"I have only been a guide for two terms. In that time, I have met students from all different walks of life. Every time my hope is that a student will ask a thoughtful question or make an insightful comment. I have yet to be disappointed."



Teaching the Holocaust Isn't Easy:

And That's Exactly Why We Must Keep Doing It

The suggestion that Holocaust education is becoming too difficult to teach gets one thing right: these are difficult conversations.

They always have been.

Holocaust education asks students and teachers to confront some of the darkest chapters in human history. It requires engagement with questions of prejudice, discrimination, propaganda, moral courage, human rights and the devastating consequences of hatred. In today's climate, where social cohesion is being tested and discussions about identity, conflict and discrimination can feel increasingly fraught, some educators understandably worry about saying the wrong thing or navigating difficult classroom discussions.

But difficulty is not a reason to avoid these conversations. It is precisely why they matter.

At the MHM, we see every day what happens when young people are given the opportunity to engage with difficult histories thoughtfully, respectfully and in a structured learning environment.

Every year, the museum educates tens of thousands of students from schools across Australia, the overwhelming majority from non-Jewish backgrounds. What we see is not a generation unwilling to engage with challenging subjects. Rather, we see young people eager to understand how prejudice develops, how ordinary people become bystanders, and what role they themselves can play in creating a more inclusive society.



Above: Heritage College students in guided experience of *Everybody Had a Name* exhibition.

Photos: Simon Shift.

In a recent ABC Religion & Ethics article, MHM CEO Dr Breann Szczepanik wrote: "Holocaust education is far more than historical instruction. At its best, it develops the civic virtues at the heart of a functioning democracy: empathy, critical thinking, moral reasoning and an understanding of how social conditions can gradually shift towards exclusion and dehumanisation. These are not simply educational outcomes. They are civic capacities."

For many students, a visit to the museum is their first opportunity to hear firsthand testimony from a Holocaust survivor. These encounters transform history from something distant and abstract into something deeply human.

A student from Preston High reflected: "The museum had a profound impact on me, and I wanted to express my gratitude and share some of the reflections I had after learning about the Holocaust. Although I was unable to hear from Joe in person, I felt it was important to let him know how much the visit opened my eyes and changed my perspective on the world. My visit to the museum was one of the most meaningful educational experiences I have had and as I said before, has left a lasting impression on me."

These responses capture something educators often underestimate. Students are capable of grappling with complexity. When given the right support, they do not leave difficult conversations feeling defeated or overwhelmed. They leave feeling challenged, informed and empowered.

The evidence supports this. In 2025, 97% of students who participated in MHM educational programs indicated they would change their behaviour positively following their visit. Students also reported growth in character strengths that sit at the centre of the museum's educational approach, including hope, bravery, kindness, perspective, fairness and good judgement.

This matters because Holocaust education is not only about understanding the past. It is about understanding the choices people make in the present.

Dr Breann Szczepanik has spoken publicly about how her own experiences, both professional and personal, shaped this belief. Having worked in Holocaust education for more than a decade and learned directly from Holocaust survivors, she has observed the transformative impact these stories can have on students, educators and communities.

She also wrote of the survivors who influenced her life and work:

“

What they taught instead was responsibility. They taught that memory carries obligations. They taught that democratic societies depend upon ordinary people recognising their responsibilities to one another.

Of course, teachers should not have to carry this responsibility alone.

One of our most important roles is supporting educators to teach difficult histories with confidence and care. The museum works alongside schools every day, providing curriculum-aligned resources, professional learning opportunities, guided programs and survivor testimonies that help teachers navigate complex subject matter.

Recent public discussions about social cohesion, including those prompted by the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion, have highlighted growing concerns about division within Australian society. While policy responses are important, education has a unique role to play in strengthening democratic resilience.

Holocaust education teaches students how prejudice can become normalised, how democratic institutions can be weakened and how ordinary individuals can either contribute to or challenge injustice. These lessons are not confined to the past. They remain profoundly relevant today.

The MHM was built for moments like this. When difficult histories are contested and meaningful dialogue becomes harder to sustain, the answer is not to step back from Holocaust education. It is to deepen our commitment to it.

Because education is not about avoiding difficult conversations. It is about preparing young people to meet them with knowledge, empathy and courage.

by
Melanie Attar
MHM School Programs Manager
Dr Breann Szczepanik
MHM CEO

A Duty to Remember

In 1947, the Central Committee of Liberated Jews issued an announcement, disseminated on manifold posters throughout the American Zone of Occupation in Germany. Written in Hebrew and Yiddish, it was an urgent plea for Jews to “Collect and Transcribe”! Their memories will not forever be their memories, and if they are to be recorded for posterity, people need to commit them to writing.

This is—of course—far more easily said than done.

As people who interviewed liberated Jews at the time would later attest, many who had survived lacked the stamina or the motivation to recount their experiences. To share one’s experience of trauma at such a time as action might be taken to end the Holocaust is one thing, but to share one’s experiences after the war is already over and the damage has already been done is another.

As if in answer to that question, the posters were emblazoned with a large quote taken from the Torah: “Remember What Amalek Did to You”, it declares. A religious obligation, we have not the right to shirk our responsibility. If we are to remember the crimes of Amalek, we need to write those crimes down—and we need to do so while the memories are fresh.

But who—or what—is Amalek?

According to the Torah, Amalek was the name of a tribe that attacked the Israelites in the wilderness after their miraculous escape from Egypt. Presented in the text as an eternal nemesis, the Israelites are subsequently commanded to completely wipe them out (to “blot out all memory of Amalek from under heaven”), but also to remember them (“do not forget!”). This curious contradiction (to erase all remembrance and to always remember) has been fertile soil for much philosophical speculation over the ages.

Rav Ephraim Oshry, in a postwar publication of his wartime responsa in the Kovno Ghetto, remarks upon this with an injunction: we have an obligation as survivors (he says) to ensure that the crimes of the Germans are not forgotten. Eradicating the memory of Amalek is tied to remembering what they did. Only by preserving a memory of persecution does one annihilate the factors that cause it to occur.

In the earliest generations, people thought of Amalek as a specific group of people. On Purim, when we refer to Haman as an “Agagite” (as in Esther 3:1), the Talmud tells us that this is because he was descended of Agag, who according to the Book of Samuel was the last Amalekite king. Today, however, people think of Amalek not as a people but as an *ideology*.

It was Rabbi Moshe Soloveitchik, writing in the years immediately after World War II, who first made this association. The reason that the commandment to eradicate Amalek still exists is not because there is a group of people somewhere that we are supposed to always be fighting, but because Amalek is an everlasting ideology.

The Germans, in other words, were not Amalek. Even the Nazis were not Amalek. *Nazism* (their ideology) was Amalek. Destroying Amalek means combatting the spirit of prejudice and discrimination that so animates that ideology—as it so animates certain others as well. And as Rav Oshry observed, this is combatted through testimony.

Elie Wiesel once remarked that survivor testimony is a new genre, bequeathed to the world by Jews, but there is actually nothing new about it. We have been recording survivor testimony from the very earliest generations. Whether it be martyrologies from the First Crusade in the 11th century, accounts of the exile from Spain and Portugal in the 15th century, or records of the Ukrainian pogroms from the beginning of the 17th century, recording and preserving a history of trauma is part of how we fulfil this particular obligation.

In 1984, when survivors established the MHM, they did so with the intention that by teaching the world about the crimes of the Nazis and their collaborators they would contribute to the establishment of a just and fair society, with greater empathy and tolerance for difference. In the years since this museum was established, studies have repeatedly reinforced the idea that Holocaust education has a positive impact on emotional and social well-being.

Over the last few years, many have questioned whether or not education is the silver bullet we always hoped it would be. How does one combat hatred and intolerance, when such prejudices are delivered directly to the smartphone, by means of algorithms catered to the user’s interest? How does one educate people who otherwise inhabit echo chambers, in which one view is amplified and opposing views exaggerated and made ridiculous?

The answer to this, of course, is not through less education, but through more. We have an obligation to step up and combat the proliferation of hatred—not with anger, but with understanding.

It is through sharing the experiences of our survivors that we help to eradicate the pervasive spirit of racism and antisemitism, and it is through sharing their experiences that we make real the promises that our survivors made in 1984: an eternal obligation, but one as important now as it has ever been.



Above: “Remember What Amalek Did to You”. Postwar poster, urging Jewish survivors to record testimony.

Right: New special exhibition *What They Carried: Objects of Survival*. Photo: Simon Shiff.

What They Carried:

Objects of Survival

31 July 2026 – 31 January 2027

Since 1984, the MHM has collected more than 17,000 objects, each entrusted to the museum by Holocaust survivors and their families. Individually, they hold deep personal meaning for those who owned or inherited them. Their stories are often profound, even when they are incomplete. Collectively, however, they attest to the realities of the Holocaust, particularly as it was experienced by those who ended up making Melbourne their home. Caring for these objects is central to the work of the museum's Exhibitions and Storytelling team. We research their histories, preserve them for future generations and, whenever possible, share their stories with the public.

Special exhibitions have become a defining part of the museum's program. They bring together diverse artistic, historical and cultural responses to the Holocaust, while also providing opportunities to showcase and interpret works from the museum's collection in new and engaging ways. Our latest special exhibition *What They Carried: Objects of Survival* opened on Friday 31 July, marking an important milestone for the museum. It is the first special exhibition since the museum's redevelopment to be conceived, curated and designed entirely in-house. It also marks the first time many of these objects have been displayed publicly and their stories shared with a wider audience.

What They Carried brings together 55 objects and excerpts from 28 survivor testimonies, many of which are being presented to the public for the first time. The exhibition is based around a simple premise: every object on display belonged to someone targeted by Nazi persecution during the Holocaust, and every object played a role in that person's daily survival.

Organised around four interconnected themes—Body, Relationships, Ingenuity and Self—the exhibition offers different ways of understanding how material objects shaped people's experiences during the Holocaust.

Some objects supported physical survival under impossible conditions: a spoon, a hat, or a blanket helped sustain life. Others protected identity and dignity, including a handmade *hannukiah*, a handwritten poem and a simple comb. Letters, a hand-embroidered tablecloth and a locket of hair are amongst the items that speak to the enduring importance of family and friendship. Other objects demonstrate the ingenious ways in which people applied creativity and practical knowledge in extraordinary circumstances, such as a doctored identity card or a handmade knife.

The four themes offer visitors different points of understanding, however no single object belongs exclusively to that category. Many objects resonate across multiple themes and are interconnected through views across the exhibition space. Rather than presenting survival as something fixed or easily explained, this exhibition invites visitors to consider its complexity. Survival was always uncertain and often fleeting. These objects reveal the many ways people carried possessions, but also the burdens of loss, hope, memory and belief.

Colour plays an important role in challenging expectations of what a Holocaust exhibition should look like. We often imagine the past through black-and-white photographs, making it feel distant and disconnected from the present. Yet the people represented in this exhibition lived lives rich with colour, music, humour and connection before the Holocaust transformed their worlds.

Drawing inspiration from the objects themselves, including the vivid embroidery of a tablecloth and the colourful portraits depicting a lively group of friends, the exhibition uses colour to create moments of warmth and humanity that are not far removed from our own contemporary experiences. Colour is more than a design device; it reminds us that these objects belonged to people whose lives extended far beyond the circumstances of persecution.

At the heart of the exhibition is a new video installation featuring the voices of 28 survivors, whose testimonies are drawn from the Phillip Maisel Testimony Collection. Their reflections on the physical and material significance of specific objects reinforce that every object, even those that have not survived, carries a deeply personal story. These stories also remind visitors that there are no simple answers to the question of why some people survived and others did not.

Ultimately, *What They Carried* is an exhibition about our shared humanity. At the heart of the museum's work is a commitment to identity, community, and remembrance, both within the Jewish community and beyond. These objects are far more than inert historical artefacts. They reveal the profound ways material objects can anchor memory, sustain hope and dignity, preserve relationships and illuminate the human capacity to endure when humanity is pushed to its limits.



Left: Locket of Gilah Vanderhoek's hair, kept by her foster sister Joop Zwanikken, Laren, Netherlands, c. 1943–1945. Courtesy Gilah Leder. Photo: Simon Shiff.



Above: Jacket worn by Wilhelm (Will) Korn, Breslau-Güntherbrücke concentration camp, Germany, 1942. MHM 96 / Wilhelm and Lilly Korn Collection. Photo: Simon Shiff.

With special thanks to the Victorian Government and Pearce Family Foundation



Rupture & Repair:

The Importance of Storytelling

On 23 June 2026, the MHM FutureGen Committee hosted a sold-out event entitled *Rupture & Repair*. The evening featured a panel discussion facilitated by Dr Daniel Haumschild, Head of Exhibitions & Storytelling, with three essayists from the anthology *Ruptured: Jewish Women in Australia Reflect on Life Post-October 7* (Lamm Jewish Library of Australia and Gefen Publishing House).

FutureGen committee member Romy Moshinsky, who played a key role in the *Ruptured* project, opened the night together with Tamar Paluch, *Ruptured* co-editor. The panellists, all descendants of Holocaust survivors, included: Jemima Montag, Australian Olympic race walker and medallist; Ruby Kraner-Tucci, former deputy editor at *The Jewish Independent* and currently national health reporter at News Corp; and journalist Julie Szego, who writes for *The Australian* and at Szego Unplugged. The following is an edited extract of Tamar's speech.



Above: Romy Moshinsky and Tamar Paluch.

It's a real honour to be here tonight. I have long had a deep connection to this museum and its tradition of sharing stories. It began when I was a young school student—the granddaughter of survivors—wandering through these halls that told their story, our story. Later, my father and my late mother became volunteer guides, training a new generation to carry the survivors' testimonies forward.

As I reflected on tonight's theme of *Rupture & Repair*, I was taken back almost three years—ten days after October 7, just days after the Voice referendum was defeated. We sat with our hearts in shreds as Lior brought to life the musical work *Ngapa William Cooper*, in honour of the Yorta Yorta man who, after Kristallnacht 1938, spoke out against the persecution of Jews.

On that night the rupture that gave our book its name was raw. The full horror of the massacre and hostage crisis was still unfolding, and a dark shadow of hate was spreading. Already then, Australia's geographical isolation offered no protection. The divisions exposed by the referendum foreshadowed deeper fractures to come. For those of us present, the pain felt almost as aching as the time-old wounds we had come to honour.

Returning here as co-editor of *Ruptured*—a book about the resurgence of Jew-hatred in our lifetime and the unravelling of our sense of safety and belonging in Australia—feels surreal. Born from those early weeks of rising hate, *Ruptured* and the platform that preceded it, *A Year Like No Other*, were created so Jewish women could reclaim our voices from misrepresentation and denial. The Bondi massacre and the ensuing Royal Commission have laid bare the depth and darkness of this rupture and forced a speaking-up, by Jews and non-Jews, which was a long time coming.

Ahead of International Women's Day 2024, a grassroots coalition of Jewish women was mobilising to advocate for the hostages and protest the silence of women's groups. Against the backdrop of the organised antisemitic doxxing of Jewish creatives, academics and lawyers, and the proliferation of online and real-life hate, we realised we needed to speak up about what was happening locally too. We planned a video campaign about the strengths of Jewish Australian women. The night before the shoot, the production house called to say the camera crew had cancelled. They had "political reservations".

That blow planted the seeds for what came next. We pivoted and started bringing women together to connect their voices, and that grew to a community-wide writing platform called *A Year Like No Other*. Under the motto, "Write for your heart, Write for the future", the platform sought to capture the reflections of Jewish women as the grounds were shifting, locally and globally; and capture what we knew was a profound moment in Jewish and Australian history. We received close to 160 incredible reflections from across Australia, which have been preserved in the National Library of Israel October 7 archive and, locally, at the Lamm Jewish Library of Australia.

Thirty-six of these essays became *Ruptured*. The book tells the stories before the bullets—how the foundations were set for the violence that later shocked Australians at Bondi. It's hard to shake the feeling—if only the defiance that powered the book had been enough. If only we had been listened to. And yet, a year on, we are proud to share that our voices have been heard. *Ruptured* is in its third print run. Jewish readers say they feel seen; readers beyond the community say it has offered them a window into our lived experiences and illuminated blind spots.

Feature
by
Tamar Paluch
Ruptured Co-Editor



Right:
Ruptured Panel
and FutureGen
Committee.
[Front]
Tamar Paluch,
Lee Kofman,
Julie Szego,
Jemima Montag,
Ruby Kraner-Tucci,
Romy Moshinsky,
Aviva Weinberg.
[Back]
Georgia Rath,
Natalie Bassat,
Simonne Whine,
Mel Raleigh,
Ashley Moss.



Recently we signed an international publishing deal that will make the stories available in Israel and North America. While telling the Australian story, the themes are universal as Jewish communities everywhere confront the normalisation of hate, a shifting sense of belonging, and the resurfacing of intergenerational trauma.

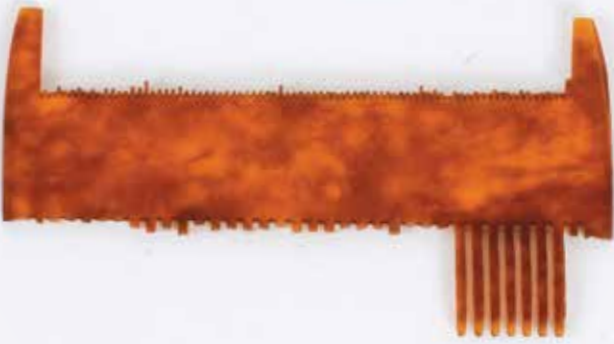
Further, *Ruptured* is the first post-October 7 anthology told through a dedicated female lens, highlighting how women mobilise for their families, communities and themselves in crisis. It was the abandonment of the feminist movement after October 7 that turned assumptions about sisterhood and solidarity on their head, and this led us to keep the lens exclusively female.

We are often asked if there will be a second book. That question brings me back to tonight. Are we still in the rupture? How do we climb out? What does the fragile work of repair look like, and who are our partners on this long path?

The three essayists on the panel tonight took it upon themselves to speak up when doing so publicly still felt lonely, risky and disruptive. They will reflect on what that felt like and what repair looks like to them, in their various orbits. Each drew on the strength of the women who came before them to find the words and the tenacity to speak. Because it was the survivors who learnt, and then taught us, that we must face the rupture, and from that wound, grow, share testimony, and repair.

So tonight, in this special space, I invite us all to draw strength from those whose footsteps and memories this museum honours. If you have come as an ally, welcome—your presence means more than you can imagine. And if you are here as a member of our community, especially a second-, third- or fourth-generation descendant, invite your ancestors into your heart as you listen. Let them know we are carrying their strength forward. We are telling their stories and ours. We are speaking up. We are reaching out. And together, we are beginning the work of repair.

Right: Comb used
by Blanka Polak,
various locations, c. 1941–
1945. MHM 2480–1 /
Blanka Wise Collection.
Photo: Simon Shiff.
[Inset] Blanka, c.1965.



What They Carried:

My Grandmother's Story

As a little girl growing up in Czechoslovakia, Blanka was so adept at finding four-leaf clovers that her mother called her “the lucky one”. In 1942, when Blanka was given the opportunity to escape from the Kolomyja Ghetto in Poland, where her family had been deported, her parents insisted she leave. She was the lucky one, they believed, and it was incumbent upon her to survive.



Armed with false papers and photographs of her parents hidden inside her shoes, 16-year-old Blanka spent the rest of the war in Budapest, mostly alone. She survived through wit and determination but lived in constant fear. Years later, she reflected simply, “You can’t imagine what I saw.”

Blanka was meticulous about her appearance. Among her few possessions was a tortoiseshell comb. “That comb saved my life,” she said. “I never had lice. I was lucky I didn’t look like somebody poor.” She also credited a tweed coat with helping her survive. Its herringbone pattern disguised dirt, and thanks to her careful mending she was able to maintain an appearance of respectability. As she explained, “It was very dangerous to be dirty.”

After the war, Blanka returned to Bratislava, where she met the love of her life, Jeno Wise. They married, and their daughter Zorita was born in 1948. The family migrated to Melbourne the following year, and in 1955 their second daughter, Diana, was born. Together, Blanka and Jeno founded the successful clothing business Zora Fashions.

Blanka died in 2024 at the age of 99. She is lovingly remembered by her many descendants as a woman of extraordinary strength and impeccable style. Her guiding principle was to “always look tip top”—and she always did.

Notes: (1) The Kolomyja Ghetto was liquidated in 1942, and it is likely that Blanka’s parents Rosa and Lazar Polak were taken to the Belzec extermination camp. Three of Blanka’s five siblings were also murdered in the Holocaust. (2) Blanka’s comb and the photos of her parents have been donated to the museum and are featured in the *What They Carried: Objects of Survival* exhibition.



Above: Photographs of Blanka’s parents, Rosa and Lazar Polak, location and date unknown.

Feature
by
Romy Moshinsky
Granddaughter of Blanka Wise

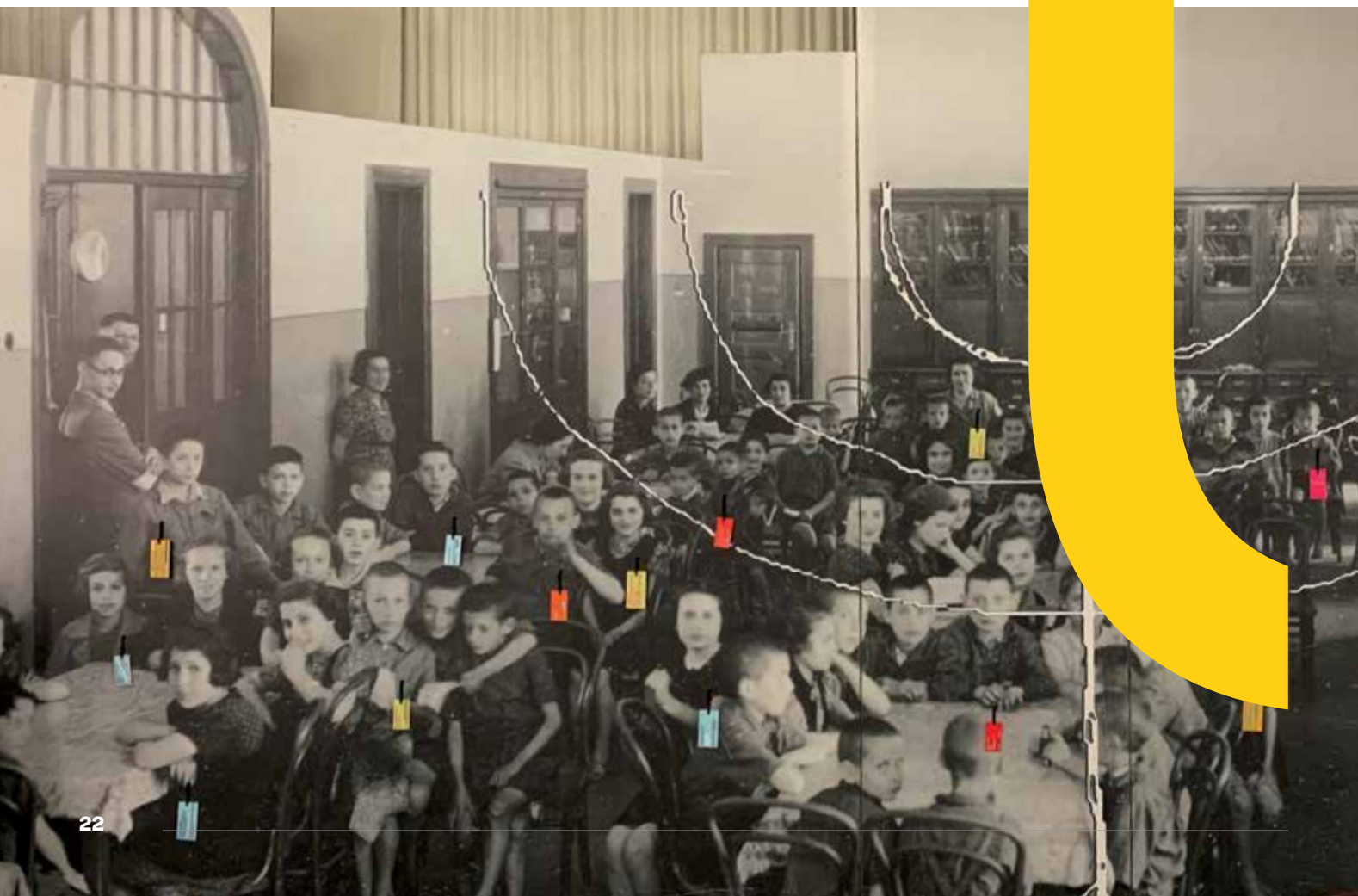


J Korczak:

“One should not leave the world as it is.”

Why is Janusz Korczak unknown to so many in Australia? If more people not only knew about him but lived their lives according to his philosophy, words and actions and educators lived and taught these, how different would life in Australia be?

Below: Janusz Korczak with the children in the orphanage. Photo: Courtesy of Karin Morrison.



Janusz Korczak was the pen name of a prolific author whose books for young people greatly engaged children then and now and whose articles and books for all ages are inspirational, timeless and continue to be the core of understanding and learning about children in education faculties in many countries worldwide.

Janusz Korczak was his pen name, but his birth name was Henryk Goldszmidt. He was a Jewish Polish educator, paediatrician, humanitarian and an inspirational teacher who cared passionately about the rights and welfare of all children and was also known as Pan Doktor or Stary Doktor. His books were well known before the outbreak of the World War II.

He developed groundbreaking views on raising children, urging adults to treat them with both love and respect.

He worked in orphanages and during World War II, when life became dangerous for all Jewish people in Poland, he lived in the orphanage in Warsaw that he ran. This children's home operated according to Korczak's philosophies on raising children. Everyone in the home had duties and rights, and different roles too, including creating their own newspaper, *The Little Journal*. All living there, including him and his colleague Stefa, were responsible for his/her actions.

Everyone was equal and young people made the rules for their home. If rules were broken by anyone in the home, including Korczak, the young people's court would make a decision about consequences. When, under German occupation, the orphanage was transferred to the newly created ghetto, Korczak maintained the custom of having the orphanage newsletter produced and read to his children, much as was the custom before the war, and he did everything he could to find food for children and care for the sick.

Korczak was offered assistance from the Polish underground many times, but he refused to leave the orphanage he ran for his children. When the SS ordered all inhabitants to the trains, he walked with his orphans in perfect formation—hand in hand, calm, and brave. Eyewitnesses said he carried the smallest child in his arms. None of them returned. He could have survived, but he chose not to abandon them.

After the war, survivors wrote about that final walk—the silence, the dignity, the love that defied terror. To this day, Poland honours him not as a victim, but as a guardian of lost children.

Korczak's work formed the basis of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, and in many parts of the world he is regarded as an outstanding educator and humanitarian whose work is timeless, inspires educators, carers and parents and is also regarded by many as a hero.

“

Children are not the people of tomorrow, but people today. They are entitled to be taken seriously. They have a right to be treated by adults with tenderness and respect, as equals. They should be allowed to grow into whoever they were meant to be—The unknown person inside each of them is the hope for the future.

Janusz Korczak

Karin Morrison, daughter of Holocaust survivor, Dunera Boy: Hans Neuwahl/Johnny Newall Z'L. Karin is an active Children's Rights advocate and was honoured to be elected as a Board Member of The International Korczak Association at the last AGM.



Above: Janusz Korczak captured with sculpture in a park in Warsaw. Photos: Courtesy of Karin Morrison.

Remembering More Than Loss:

The Story Behind Simon Kahn's Painting

As fewer and fewer survivors are around to share their experiences of the Holocaust, and even fewer remain with strong memories of life before the war, every object that captures that forgotten time becomes increasingly precious. Among them is this painting, recently acquired by the MHM.

This artwork was given to Dutch Jewish textile worker Simon Kahn as a retirement gift in 1924. His coworkers at De Vries van Buuren & Co, a Jewish-run textile wholesaler, all chipped in to purchase it, expressing their gratitude and friendship after nearly 40 years working together. Simon passed away the following year, at 70 years of age.

But this painting doesn't just contain the story of Simon's long and happy career, and the warmth he shared with his coworkers. Its very existence acts as a window into the lives of those coworkers, into the De Vries van Buuren family and their business, and into the Jewish world of Amsterdam's textile industry.

Painted in the early 1920s by Dutch artist Jan Hillebrand Wijsmuller, this work shows Prins Hendrikkade, a major street in Amsterdam, home to the offices and warehouses of many of the city's import-export businesses. In the foreground, boats bob on the Singel canal, a key thoroughfare for goods moving in and out of the city. Among them were the textiles and clothing produced by the factories of De Vries van Buuren & Co, just a kilometre away.

De Vries van Buuren itself was a microcosm of a Jewish world. The company began in 1829 when Mozes De Vries van Buuren opened a small haberdashery shop in Amsterdam's Jewish Quarter. His business became a successful wholesaler,

expanding across several buildings, including a garment factory. It serviced not just the Jewish Quarter, but businesses across the Netherlands, becoming a household name.

As it grew, the company continued to be run by the De Vries van Buuren family, and maintained a strong Jewish identity. The offices and factories closed on Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and most of the 300 staff were Jewish. For them, De Vries van Buuren was not just a workplace but a community. It was somewhere friendships formed and relationships blossomed, with some marriages even starting with a meeting on the factory floor. It was a place where people were not just employed, but cared for, with a generous pension fund, and money set aside to support staff and their families facing unexpected hardship. Like Simon, many employees would remain there for decades.

In May 1940, Germany invaded the Netherlands, and this world was torn apart as Jews were subject to public humiliation, antisemitic legislation, and then deportations. After failing to escape to England, Mozes' grandson Max De Vries van Buuren—now running the family business—died by suicide, alongside his wife Henriëtte, and sons Carel and Paul.

In late 1942, most of the Jewish employees of De Vries van Buuren & Co were rounded up and taken to the Hollandsche Schouwburg, a former theatre



Left: Untitled painting of Prins Hendrikkade, Jan Hillebrand Wijsmuller, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, c.1924. MHM 2482-1 / Kahn Family Collection.

now being used a holding site for those awaiting deportation. Tens of thousands of Jews passed through its doors between 1942 and 1943. After waiting hours, days, or even weeks, most were deported to transit camps, and ultimately to the gas chambers of Sobibor and Auschwitz. The Hollandsche Schouwburg served this purpose until late 1943, when Amsterdam was declared *Judenfrei*—free of Jews.

Although in reality many Jews remained in hiding, the vibrant Jewish world of prewar Amsterdam, the chatter on the De Vries van Buuren factory floor, the warm camaraderie amongst its workers, were no more. Of Amsterdam's 70,000 Jews, only 10,000 would survive the Holocaust. Today, a memorial in the city's Jewish Quarter bears the names of 102,163 Dutch Jewish, Roma and Sinti people who were murdered. Many of the employees of De Vries van Buuren, along with Simon Kahn's daughters Rachel and Rosalie, are among them.

Simon's painting may not immediately strike a viewer as something that the

MHM would collect—painted by a non-Jewish artist, and given to a man who died almost a decade before the Holocaust began. Yet it is through this artwork that the workers at De Vries van Buuren can become more than just victims, more than names on a memorial. In a document accompanying the painting, Simon's colleagues each wrote their signature—their names not on a deportation list, but as the mark of beloved coworkers wishing a friend a happy retirement. With so few eyewitnesses to tell us not just of the horrors of the Holocaust, but of the joy and the love that came before it, objects like this one become more and more important.

Simon's son Salomo survived the Holocaust, settling in the USA. His descendants now live in Australia, and have donated this painting to the MHM. Their generosity ensures the preservation not just of their family story, but the remembrance of a vibrant Jewish world.



Above: [Top] Simon Kahn with his wife Sarah Wijnberg. [Bottom] Simon's children Salomo, Rosalie, and Rachel Kahn.





Above: Front Covers for *Do Not Forget Me Street*, *The Watchmaker's War*, *Out of the depths*, *Ruptured*, *Irmgard*, *Miriam's Light*.

A Year of Stories: MHM's 2026 Publication Events

Over the past few months, the MHM hosted six publication events, drawing hundreds of attendees into conversations about survival, memory, resistance and inheritance. Together, these events trace a common thread; that Holocaust history is not static, but continually being uncovered, translated and passed on to new generations.

The program opened on 14 May with *Do Not Forget Me Street: Remembering Budapest*, launched in partnership with Melbourne Jewish Book Week to an audience of 189 people. Author Erica Frydenberg was born in Budapest as the Hungarian regime began implementing Hitler's "Final Solution", and her book returns to that city to confront both its atrocities and its acts of courage. Central to her account is her uncle, the enigmatic Nandor Eichel, the "Budapesti Schindler" who saved her life before she turned one, yet refused to speak of it. Piecing together his hidden story, Frydenberg explores how memory can wound, illuminate and heal across generations.

On 4 June, 60 guests joined author Danny Ben-Moshe for an in-conversation Question and Answer on *The Watchmaker's War*, a novel based on the true story of a Holocaust survivor turned Nazi hunter in post-war Melbourne. The book follows Yakov Holtzman, a former resistance fighter who rebuilds his life as a watchmaker in St Kilda—only to find old enemies resurfacing on his new suburban streets. Blending real history with fiction, the novel probes the trauma that outlives war and the impossible calculus between peace and revenge when justice fails survivors.

On June 14, 139 people gathered for the launch of *Out of the depths: The First Collection of Holocaust Songs*, co-presented with the Australian Centre for Jewish Civilisation and Kadimah. The book brings to English readers, for the first time, the contents of *Mima'amakim*—songs composed and sung by Jewish people in Nazi camps and ghettos, documented by researchers in 1945 and now surviving in only a handful of its original 500 copies. Ethnomusicologist Dr Joseph Toltz, drawing on a copy rediscovered in 2013, provides new translations, composer biographies and historical essays, restoring what its editor called "a memorial stone for Polish Jewry" for a new generation.

On 23 June, the museum turned to the present with *Rupture & Repair*, built around the essay collection *Ruptured: Jewish Women in Australia Reflect on Life Post-October 7*. Three of its 36 essayists—Julie Szego, Jemima Montag and Ruby Kraner-Tucci, all descendants of Holocaust survivors—joined the museum's Dr Daniel Haumschild, alongside over 150 guests, to discuss their contributions and their experiences since publication. Their candid conversation moved between intergenerational trauma, navigating antisemitism, and the duality of fear and pride, affirming storytelling's role as both testimony and repair.

On 19 July, the museum honoured the legacy of the late Irma Hanner OAM with the launch of *Irmgard: The Girl from Dresden* by Fiona Kelmman, herself the granddaughter of four Holocaust survivors and a former MHM Education Officer of twelve years. Drawing on Irma's testimony, the book traces her childhood in Dresden as Nazism tightened its grip, the terror of Kristallnacht, her survival of Terezin, and her arrival in Australia as a refugee. Interwoven with Kelmman's reflections on inherited memory, it stands as a tribute to the two decades of witness Irma gave at the museum she helped shape.

The program's most recent event, on 26 July, celebrated Jonathan Kanat's debut memoir, *Miriam's Light*, telling the story of his mother, Miriam Kanat, a child survivor born in Poland in 1939 who was separated from her parents and hidden in a Catholic convent during the war. Drawing on Miriam's own words, family testimony and historical context, Kanat traces a life shaped by silence and watchfulness—and ultimately by the love and family she went on to build in Melbourne, reflecting on memory and intergenerational trauma carried forward across generations.

Across six events and hundreds of attendees, the MHM's 2026 book program has shown that Holocaust memory is a living, communal project—carried forward by survivors, their children and grandchildren, historians, novelists and educators alike. Whether recovering a rescuer's silence, a songbook thought lost, or a mother's untold years, each of these books extends the museum's work beyond its walls: ensuring the stories of the Holocaust, and the courage and love that endured within it, continue to be told.

Whose Memory Is It?

The Rise of Second-Generation Holocaust Consciousness

Yom HaShoah Keynote Address

As the keynote speaker for the MHM's *Yom HaShoah 2026—What We Inherit: Trauma, Memory and the Power of Resilience* symposium, historian and author Dr Margaret Taft explores the emergence of second-generation Holocaust consciousness and the complex ways memory, identity and resilience are passed between generations. In her keynote address, *Whose Memory Is It? The Rise of Second-Generation Holocaust Consciousness*, Dr Taft examines how the children of Holocaust survivors came to understand their parents' experiences, the responsibilities they feel to preserve these stories, and the enduring role of Holocaust memory within contemporary Jewish life.

Today we explore the emergence and shaping of second-generation Holocaust consciousness, how it manifests itself through the broader context of Jewish history and memory and how it has been shaped within contemporary society.

Take yourself back to 1970, a time of general awakening of a sense of self. Throughout the 1960s, stories of oppression were being articulated and validated. In America, we have the heightened interest in the heritage of African-American slavery. We experienced women's liberation, the civil rights movement, Vietnam anti-war demonstrations, we believed we were entering a whole new era. Oral histories were now taking their place in the history of humanity. New audiences were emerging to hear stories of minority groups and victimisation, giving us permission to speak about ourselves in a way that had never, ever happened before.

Now we come to the work of Helen Epstein, born in Prague in 1947, but grew up in New York City. She became a distinguished, well-known journalist, who first and

foremost was the child of survivors, who was always conscious of her difference. She described herself as living in two worlds, her home with its own particular conversations, its silences, its unspoken pasts, the fact that when she was five, she knew her mother had a number on her arm, but never ever dared ask her why, or what that number meant. And the different world she encountered when she left that home and entered the American world of baseball games, school proms, homecoming queens, people with vast extended families. She had none of that. So, in 1970, at the age of 23, as a young fledgling journalist, she set out on a journey to understand other children of survivors who, like her "were possessed by a history they had never lived". Were they the same? Were they different? And over seven years, she travelled extensively, interviewed hundreds of children of survivors. Some would not speak to her, some couldn't stop speaking to her, and mostly they said they had never spoken to anyone.

From these interviews she arrived at five distinctive commonalities.

Number one, a sense of isolation. They were unlike any other American families.

Number two, shared affinities. Everyone she'd interviewed, including herself, was named after a dead person. Not just any dead person, but people who died because they were murdered. That's some legacy. She also understood that these children of survivors had an affinity with the pain and suffering of their parents. "You can't say that about my mum. You don't know what she went through when she was in your age." She heard so many of those comments.

Number three, a legacy of anxiety. Survivors were already, in the 1970s, forming their own social networks, their own self-help groups. The children of survivors, however, still existed in a social vacuum.

Number four, the "challenge". Would we, the children of survivors, have survived if we were in their position? Were we as tough? Did we have the same ingenuity? Their survivor stories loomed large over the head and heart of every single child survivor. Some went on to try to prove that they could survive. One challenged himself in the jungles of Vietnam. Another challenged himself after the Six-Day War by volunteering on a border town kibbutz. All of them felt diminished rather than enlivened by their parents' experience.

Finally, the obligation to speak, to preserve that which had been destroyed. "Our parents were not like other parents. We children were not like other children. We were possessed by a history we had never lived." That is Epstein's statement of affirmation. That is who we are.

Let's jump forward to 2003 and the work of Eva Hoffman. Born in 1945 in Krakow, Eva immigrated to Canada at the age of 13 and received her PhD from Harvard University. She is also the child of survivors. In her book, *After Such Knowledge*, Hoffman calls us "second generation survivors". "We are the hinge generation in which received, transferred knowledge of events is transmuted into history or into myth. It's also the generation in which we can think about certain questions arising from the Shoah with a sense of living connection. We are the living connection." How do we transmit this knowledge and why do we feel compelled to do so?



Left: Yom Hashoah.

Below: Eternal flame at the MHM.

Photos: Jarrod Freedman.



For the Jewish people, this sits within a much broader framework, and the work of the great professor of Jewish history, culture and society, the late Yosef Chaim Yerushalmi, whose meditation on the tensions between collective memory of a people and the factual record of the past is particularly important for providing us with greater context. This intergenerational Holocaust consciousness is all part of something far greater.

Dr Taft's keynote offers a powerful insight into the ways inherited memory continues to shape generations of Holocaust survivor families and the broader Jewish community. Read the full keynote speech online or scan the QR code.



Feature

by
Dr Margaret Taft



Remembering the Victims and Survivors:

The Renards and The Wises

The Renards

My parents, Mundeck and Iza (nee Holzer) Ehrlich (later Renard), migrated from Krakow, Poland to Paris in 1924. Three years later, determined to leave Europe, they emigrated to Australia. My sister, Lilian, was born soon after. Unlike those who remained in Poland, they were fortunate in that much of their immediate family survived the Holocaust.

On my mother's side, her brother, Henryk, was murdered by the Nazis, but her older brother, Leon, a heroic figure as a soldier/intellectual, a Socialist candidate for Parliament, a Nationalist and a proud Jew, survived. He was the only Jewish officer in a German POW camp until shortly before the end of the war when he was sent to Auschwitz. He survived only to learn that his wife and two children had been murdered by the Nazis. His sister, Dosia, with her non-Jewish husband, Mietek, and son, Andrew, together with grandmother, survived in a village outside Krakow living as non-Jews. Their daughter, Yola, was born while in hiding.

Rachel Holzer, my mother's eldest sister, arrived in Australia in 1939. She was an extraordinary Yiddish actress and director who entertained audiences in Melbourne for many years. My maternal grandfather, the socialist head of the painter's union, died of natural causes shortly before the beginning of the war.

My father's twin sister, Genia, her husband, Szymon, and young son, Jerzy, like many others, fled east to the Soviet Union. During the war they managed to arrange

for Jerzy to escape through Persia and India to Palestine. Tragically, having survived, while on their way to join him, they received notification that he had died of meningitis on Kibbutz Degania Aleph.

My father's parents, who were living in a nursing home as my grandfather was blind, were murdered there by the Nazis.

The survivors of my family arrived in Australia in 1947 and from then, as a mere seven-year-old, I began to be aware of the magnitude of what had occurred. Initially talking to my quietly spoken uncle, Leon, he recounted that he would regularly rebut outbursts of antisemitism in the Paris-based expatriate journal, *Kultura*, after the war. I saw horrific newsreels of liberated death camps and, as a teenager, I was exposed to the first books about what had occurred. Later, I met Bono Wiener in the Australian Labor Party and was impressed that an individual of great integrity and strength, someone who had lost so much of his family, could still see a future with hope and optimism while always remembering what had happened.

All this had a searing influence on me and led ultimately to my support for the work of the MHM. For me, the museum stands as a beacon in educating, remembering and preserving, honouring both the victims and survivors. My wish is that in these difficult times, not just my generation, but those who follow shall continue to support its valuable work.



Opposite: [Top] Ralph's parents, Mundeck and Iza Renard. [Bottom] Ruth's mother, Etki Wise, with her family.

Left: Ruth's parents, Daniel and Etki Wise.

Below: Ralph's mother, Iza Renard, with her family.

Photos: Courtesy of Renard family.



The Wises

My parents, Daniel and Etki (nee Kolin) Wajcberg (later Wise), were born in Czestochowa, Poland. My father was not allowed to attend university in Poland owing to the *numerus clausus* restrictions, so he began his medical studies in Bratislava, which was then in Czechoslovakia. After his third year there, the same restrictions prevented him from continuing and he eventually finished his course in Pisa, Italy.

My parents had been childhood sweethearts, so when my father qualified, he returned to Czestochowa so that they could marry. They applied for visas to go to the USA or Australia and, to my great relief, the visas to Australia arrived first. They arrived in Sydney in 1938.

My father had five brothers and sisters: Sala, Shmuel, Emmanuel (Moteck), Bala, and Basia. Sala had left Poland for Palestine in 1921, married there and raised her family on Kibbutz Ginagar. Moteck also left Poland before the war, travelling to Aruba, Netherlands West Indies, to join an uncle in business there. His parents and three other siblings and their families met their deaths in Treblinka, we believe in 1942.

My mother was the eldest of four. By 1938, her brother, Yaakov, and her sister, Jadzia, had left for Palestine.

Her youngest sister, Regina, remained in Czestochowa, while their parents were smuggled out of Poland to Siberia. Grandfather was killed in a train accident, and grandmother spent the war years in Siberia. She eventually made her way to Palestine and then to Australia in 1947. Regina was spirited out of the ghetto and spent the war years hiding and, after many traumatic experiences, finally made it to Israel.

My father's degree was initially not recognised in Victoria (the British Medical Association, as it was then, was notoriously anti-foreigner and particularly antisemitic). He began to work in Sydney but was eventually permitted to practise in country Victoria.

As a child, growing up in the country, I knew next to nothing of the war in Europe and nothing of the Holocaust, presumably owing to my parents' wish to protect their children from such things. My own visit to Treblinka and to various concentration camps in Poland and Germany several years ago made an indelible impression of horror. I strongly believe that the MHM plays a vital role in commemorating those who were murdered and have no memorial, and as an important tool in the education of current and future generations of Australians.

Gifts in Will

We acknowledge the following people for leaving a gift in their Will to the MHM or MHMF. May their memory be a blessing.

Regina Adelfang	Abram Goldberg	Gerda Rogers	Raymond Schiller
Kitia Altman	Jakob Frenkiel	Abram Malewiak	Marianne Schwarz
Erika Bence	Rita Greiner	Abram Malewiak	Helen Sharp
Joseph Brown	Arnold Hacker	Janina Marcus	Otto Shelton
Peter Boss	Eugene Hacker	Don & Sonia Marejn	Marianne Singer
Abraham Benedykt	Bessie Heiman	Anna Mass	Sara Smuzyk
Elza Bernst	Mendel Herszfeld	Sonia Mrocki	Oscar & Lisa Sokolski
Susan Blatman	Jack & Ethel	Victor Muntz	Mary Starr
Gitla Borenstein	Goldin Foundation	Albert & Lena Newmann	Georgette Steinic
Jakob Frienkel	Anita Jaffe	Kalman & Elka Parasol	Samuel Stopnik
Peter Boss	Sabina Jakubowicz	Elizabeth Peer	Berta Strom
Hyman & Malka Brown	Betty Janover	Edith Peer	Geoffery Tozer
Joseph Brown	Basia Kane	Esther Poelman	Joseph Tyler
Majer Ceprow	Thea Kimla	Kenneth Ray	Chana Annette
Jenny Chaenkel	Lola Kiven	Lilian Renard	Uberbayn
Richard Charlupski	Leslie Klemke	Gerda Rogers	Emanuel Wajnblum
Vera Dorevitch	Eva Rivka Knox	Joe Ronec	Claire Weis
Magda Hornung	Otto Kohn	Beatrice & Rose	Piry Weiss
Bertha Fekete	Izabella Krol	Rosalky	Kathe Weisselberg
Chaim Feldman	Pinek Krystal	Szymon & Hadasa	Ludvik Weisz
John Fox	Elizabeth Laszlo	Rosenbaum	Jadwiga Wiener
Jakob Frenkiel	Nona Lee	Shmuel Rosenkranz	Pinchas Wiener
Cecilia Freshman	Ivor Leiser	Szmul Rostkier	Ludwik & Rita Winfield
Sara Frucht	Ruth Leiser	Bencjan Rozencwajg	Chaya Ziskind
Walter Geismar	Willy Lermer	Ben-Zion & Rosa	Sophia Zitron
Paul Gere	Charlotte Lesser	Rozenswajg	
Fania Gitein	Kurt Lewinski	Ignacy & Irene Rozental	
Chaskiel Glikzman	Sara Liebmann	Leslie Sandy	
Samuel Gnieslaw	Julek & Ada Lipski	Josef Scharf-Dauber	

For all gifts in Will or general fundraising inquiries, please contact Shani Ben Hur at Shani.benhur@mhm.org.au

by
Abigail Gilroy-Smith
MHM Memberships & Individual
Giving Specialist



Left: Harvey Harris at the MHM with CEO Dr Breann Szczepanik.

Turning a Simcha into a Mitzvah

When Harvey Harris stood before family and friends to become Bar Mitzvah, he did more than mark a milestone, he set an example that others in our community can now follow.

Harvey’s great-grandparents were Holocaust survivors, and that personal connection shaped a decision that gave his celebration extra meaning: instead of receiving gifts, Harvey chose to raise funds for the MHM.



To me, becoming Bar Mitzvah means I’m growing up and will take on more responsibilities.

Harvey Harris

It’s a simple statement, but one that captures exactly what a Simcha gift represents: young people stepping into Jewish adulthood by choosing to give back.

Thanks to Harvey, the generosity of his family and friends is now helping to preserve survivor testimony, protect precious artefacts for future generations, and bring the lessons of the Holocaust to other young people to learn the dangers of hatred and prejudice.

Harvey later visited the museum, where CEO Dr Breann Szczepanik presented him with a certificate in recognition of his commitment.

Harvey’s story is a reminder that a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, milestone birthday or wedding can be about more than one day, it can be an opportunity to make a truly meaningful impact. Every Simcha gift, large or small, helps ensure that Holocaust survivor stories continue to be told for generations to come.

Whether you’re planning a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, birthday, wedding or another special occasion, consider dedicating your celebration to the MHM.

If Harvey’s actions have inspired you, and you would like to help hope shine brighter than hate, please get in touch.

To find out more, contact Abigail Gilroy-Smith at abigail.gilroy-smith@mhm.org.au or call 03 9528 1089.



Above: Harvey Harris celebrating his Bar Mitzvah. Photo: Courtesy of Harris family.

Help Abe's Story Live On

Abram (Abe) Goldberg OAM was a beloved member of the MHM family. From the museum's earliest days in 1984, Abe dedicated more than 40 years to sharing his story and his message of acceptance, understanding and respect for difference with thousands of students, teachers and visitors.

September 2026 marks one year since Abe's passing, and his presence is deeply missed.

Despite the horrors he endured, Abe lived with remarkable gratitude and optimism. He often reflected on the last words his mother said to him:

"Abram, you should do everything humanly possible to survive. When you will survive, wherever you will be, where you should find yourself, you should tell people what was happening to us and what was done to us."

Abe honoured that promise for the rest of his life.

His commitment to education extended well beyond the museum. Abe was a passionate supporter of Jewish and Yiddish education and had a longstanding connection with our neighbour, Sholem Aleichem College, where he served on the College Council and regularly shared his testimony with students.

This year, to honour Abe's extraordinary legacy, we want to ensure his story continues to be told.

We are raising funds to support five teachers to undertake specialised Holocaust education training in Abe's memory.

Through this program, they will deepen their knowledge of the Holocaust, learn about Abe's life and legacy, and gain the skills and resources to bring these lessons to hundreds of students—this year and for years to come.

Your donation can help turn five teachers into hundreds of students reached, and thousands of future conversations about courage, humanity and the consequences of hatred.

Please make a gift in Abe's memory and help us fulfill the promise he made to his mother: **to keep telling the story.**

Together, we can ensure Abe's voice continues to educate, inspire and be remembered.

Donate via the QR code below.



“

We all should remember that we all belong to the same human race... What hurts one human being, hurts also another. You should always respect other people [that] are different from yourself.

**Holocaust survivor
Abram Goldberg OAM**



Above: Abram (Abe) Goldberg OAM.
Photo: Simon Shiff

Philanthropy

by
Rochelle Daboush
Head of Engagement & Philanthropy

In Conversation with: Rhonda Lipshutz

Every Tuesday, Rhonda Lipshutz walks into the MHM and feels at home. It's a feeling that might seem unexpected in a Holocaust museum, but for Rhonda, MHM is a place of warmth, connection and purpose.

Rhonda has volunteered at the museum for almost two years, following in the footsteps of her late mother, Rosa Krakowski, who spent more than 20 years volunteering as a guide and survivor speaker. Her mother had long encouraged her to become involved, although Rhonda knew at the time that volunteering was not for her.

Then, almost two years ago, she saw an advertisement for volunteers. "I thought, this is the time," Rhonda says. By then, her daughter Natalie had also become involved with MHM, serving on the museum's Board. Joining the volunteer team felt like a way of connecting the two women who had shaped Rhonda's relationship with the museum. "I felt good volunteering like my mum did and helping like my daughter does," she says. "It fits into those beautiful women in my life."

Today, Rhonda volunteers in Visitor Experience, welcoming visitors and helping create the warm and inclusive environment she values so deeply.

“

Considering that it is a Holocaust museum, it is still very warm and embracing. I feel appreciated. I feel like I am giving something back and doing something to help.

Rhonda Lipshutz

Her Tuesdays are particularly significant. They were once her mothers' day volunteering at the museum.

Her work also places her at the centre of one of MHM's most important responsibilities: connecting people with the stories of the Holocaust. For Rhonda, education is central to ensuring Holocaust history survives beyond the lifetime of those who experienced it. "If they learn something from here, they can take it into their lives and families," she says.

By welcoming visitors and helping create an environment where people can engage with difficult history, she contributes to the ongoing transmission of memory.

The question is not whether the stories will survive, it is who will carry them forward. For now, Rhonda continues to return each Tuesday. Her mother's story is part of the history preserved at MHM, and so are the stories of every survivor who has shared their experiences.



Above: Rhonda Lipshutz.

Volunteer Spotlight

by
Jessica Mansfield
Volunteer Coordinator/
Administration Assistant

Somewhere to Belong

For Sue Hoffman, the decision to dedicate a Memorial Star wasn't about finding an answer. It was about finding somewhere to sit with her father, Harry Hoffman, a Holocaust survivor who lost his mother and two sisters in Auschwitz, before arriving in Fremantle in 1949 to build a new life.

When Sue first visited, something about the Memorial Room felt instantly familiar. "I felt an instant peace," Sue says. "It is an amazing space, I saw the stars and started thinking about dedicating one to my father."

Sue sat with the idea for a few weeks. Harry had built his life and legacy in Perth; he had no connection to Melbourne. And then it became clear to her: she was the connection.

Dedicating a star has given her somewhere to sit quietly with her father, to contemplate his life and hers, and to feel gratitude for the time she'd had with him.

A Name, and a Place

Every Memorial Star is linked to a short dedication, helping visitors find them by name in the digital kiosk. Harry Hoffman's star now stands permanently in the Memorial Room, a name Sue can find, sit beside, and return to whenever she needs to.

The Memorial Room offers not only a way to remember what was lost, but somewhere to belong to that memory.



Above: Sue and Harry sharing a special moment at his 90th birthday celebration.

“

I think that people should spend time in the Memorial Room. It is a sacred place, a special place of contemplation, love and peace, and connection and belonging. I feel that my decision to dedicate the Star in Dad's memory was just the right thing to do. The space resonated immediately, and now I have my Dad with me in Melbourne. It is sitting so comfortably in me.”

Sue Hoffman

Dedicate a Memorial Star

If you have a loved one you would like to honour in the Memorial Room, we'd love to help you decide if it's right for you.

To arrange a personal visit or to donate a Memorial Star, contact Abigail Gilroy-Smith at abigail.gilroy-smith@mh.org.au or call 03 9528 1089.

Feature

by
Abigail Gilroy-Smith
Membership & Individual Giving Specialist



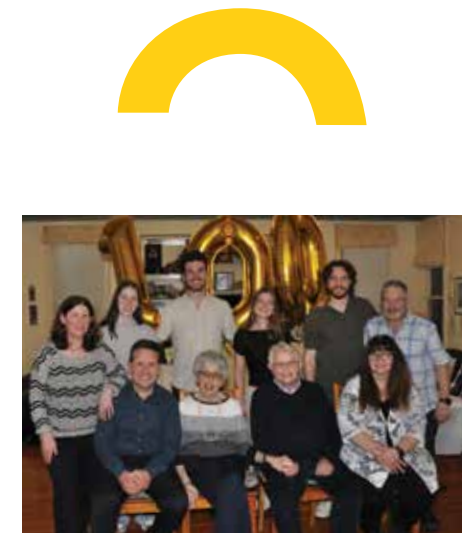
In Memory of Wolf Deane

It was with great sorrow that we farewelled our beloved husband, father and grandfather in June this year at the age of 100.

Wolf Deane (Fabiszewicz) was born on 3rd September 1925 in Lodz, Poland, the only child to Jakub and Sura Laya. His idyllic childhood was shattered with the outbreak of World War II.

During the war, Wolf was interned in the Lodz ghetto for four years with his parents, living in a single room. Wolf initially attended a "Ghetto High School" until it was closed when the Nazis commanded all "able-bodied" Jews into forced labour. In August 1944, the Lodz Ghetto was liquidated and Wolf and his parents were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. His mother was immediately sent to the gas chambers and, soon after, he was sent with his father to a metalworking factory in Vechelde, Germany. Wolf's father died of illness just five weeks before his liberation at Wobbelin on 2nd May 1945, a date he often described as his rebirth.

After his arrival in Haifa on the Enzo Sereni ship as a refugee in January 1946, Wolf lived in Israel for three years and was thrilled to be there when it was declared an independent state. Driven to honour his parents' wishes to complete a university education, he put himself through night school while working as a labourer during the day.



Left: Wolf and family at his 100th birthday.

In Memoriam

by
John Deane

Despite an onerous application process and relying on English as his fifth language, he was accepted into the prestigious Imperial College in London, completing his civil engineering degree in 1955 before emigrating to Australia. Wolf had a successful career initially in a steel fabrication business, then later as a property developer.

Wolf married Asya in 1961, a loving and devoted partnership of almost 65 years and he was enormously proud to create a family with two children and ultimately four grandchildren whom he adored.

Wolf was also a longtime volunteer at the MHM. His message to future generations will continue to resonate:

"The horrors and suffering that I experienced in my youth made me realise that family, love and affection are the most important things in life. We should cherish and appreciate this every day. People in society should be more tolerant and understanding."

May his memory be a blessing.

צענדליקער יאָרן איידער דער קאַרטוניסט אַרט שפּיגלמאַן האָט פּובליקירט „מאָס“ האָבן עטלעכע ייִדישע פֿרויען — מערסטנס לעבן געבליבענע פֿון די נאַציסטישע קאָנצענטראַציע־לאַגערן — געשאַפֿן אַלבאָמען בילדער וועגן די אייגענע גרויליקע איבערלעבונגען. אַ נייע אויסשטעלונג אין בראַנדייס־אוניווערסיטעט, „ווער וועט צייכענען אונדזער געשיכטע: ווייבערשע וויזועלע דערציילונגען פֿונעם חורבן, 1944-1949“, פרעזענטירט צען פֿון די דאָזיקע בילדער־ביכלעך. דאָס ערשטע האָט געשאַפֿן אַ קינסטלערין וואָס איז אַנטלאָפֿן קיין ארץ־ישׂראל בעת דער מלחמה. זי האָט באַזירט אירע ווערק אויף די אַכזריות־באַריכטן וואָס זענען אָנגעקומען אינעם ייִשובֿ. די אַנדערע אַלבאָמען זענען געמאַכט געוואָרן באַלד נאָכן חורבן — אַ מאָל בעת די וואַכן און חדשים נאָך דער קינסטלערינס באַפֿרײונג. די אויסשטעלונג, געשטיצט פֿונעם הדסה־בראַנדייס־אינסטיטוט, איז די ערשטע וואָס באַווייזט אַ גרופּע ווייבערשע חורבן־אַלבאָמען צוזאַמען. עטלעכע פֿון זיי זענען קיין מאָל פֿריער נישט אויסגעשטעלט געוואָרן. לעצטנס האָב איך באַזוכט די גאַלעריע און געשמועסט מיט דער אויסשטעלונגס קוראַטאָרשע רייטשל פערי, וואָס איז אַ קונסט־היסטאָריקערין און פּראָפֿעסאָרשע פֿון חורבן־לימודים אין חיפהר אוניווערסיטעט. זי האָט מיר דערקלערט אַז די פֿרויען וואָס האָבן געשאַפֿן די בילדער־ביכלעך זענען זייער אַ פֿאַרשיידנאַרטיקע גרופּע. זיי זענען געבוירן געוואָרן אין פּוילן, אונגערן און דייַטשלאַנד אין פלערליי סאַציאַלע, עקאָנאָמישע און רעליגיעזע באַדינגונגען. אַ פנים האָבן זיי זיך קיין מאָל נישט געטראָפֿן, און האָבן געמאַכט די אַלבאָמען אומאָפהענגיק איינע פֿון דער צווייטער. עטלעכע פֿון די פֿרויען זענען שוין פֿאַר דער מלחמה געווען פּראָפֿעסיאָנעלע קינסטלערינס. אַנדערע זענען געווען יונגע קונסט־סטודענטקעס וועמענס אויסשולונג איז איבערגעריסן געוואָרן פֿון דער דעפֿאָרטירונג. אַ טייל האָבן אַנטדעקט אַ טאָלאַנט צו צייכענען אָדער מאָלן אין די געטאָס און לאַגערן — וווּ צוליב דער סיסטעם פֿון שקלאַפֿן־אַרבעט איז אַזאַ פֿעיקייט אַ מאָל געקומען די נאַציס צו ניץ. דאָס מאַכן קונסט איז געוואָרן אַ קיום־סטראַטעגיע. פערי האָט מיר אויך דערקלערט אַז ס׳רובֿ פֿון די ווייבערשע בילדער־אַלבאָמען זענען נישט לאַנג נאָך דער מלחמה פֿאַרגעסן געוואָרן. אַ פֿאַר פֿון די פֿרויען האָבן אויסגעשטעלט זייערע ביכעלעך נאָך דער באַפֿרײונג, אַ מאָל אין קונסט־אויסשטעלונגען אַרגאַניזירט פֿון לעבן געבליבענע אין די לאַגערן וווּ זיי זענען אַ מאָל געווען אַרעסטאַנטן. ס׳רובֿ אַלבאָמען זענען אָבער פֿאַרשווונדן געוואָרן אין אַרכיוון, וווּ מען האָט זיי קנאַפּ אויסקאַטאַלאָגירט — למשל אַן דעם נאָמען פֿון דער שאַפֿערין. (לויט פּערין איז אַזאַ טענדענץ אַ מאָל אַ סימן פֿון אומדריך־ארץ צו פֿרויענס ווערק.) אַנדערע אַלבאָמען זענען געבליבן בײַ דער קינסטערלינס יורשים. אַ וויכטיקער אויסנעם איז „אוישוויצער טויטלאַגער“, געמאַכט פֿון זאָפּיאַ ראָזענשטראַך (1920-1996) אין 1945. דער דאָזיקער אַלבאָם — וואָס איז איבער 30 פֿוס די לענג און צעעפֿנט זיך ווי אַן „אַקאָרדיאָן“ — איז געווען איינע פֿון די ראיות אינעם פּראָצעס פֿון אַדאָלף אייכמאַן אין 1961. אויף דער וואַנט אין דער אויסשטעלונג קען מען זען אַ ווידעאָ פֿונעם פּראָצעס, וווּ אַ פֿרוי באַשטעטיקט דעם אמת פֿון די אילוסטריטע סצענעס.

ראָזענשטראַוכס אַלבאָם געהערט הײַנט „יִד־ושם“ און איז גוט באַקאַנט אין ישׂראל. פערי האָט אַנטדעקט די פֿאַרגעסענע ווייבערשע אַלבאָמען צופֿעליק, ווען זי האָט זיך אָנגעשטויסן אין איינער פֿון זיי אין אַן אַרכיוו. „שוין 20 יאָר וואָס איך פֿאָרש די וויזועלע קולטור פֿונעם חורבן, און ביז דעמאָלט האָב איך נישט געוויסט אַז אַזעלכע אוצרות עקסיסטירן אין די אַרכיוון“, האָט זי געזאָגט. דאָס געפֿינען מער איז געוואָרן אַ שליחות. „איך האָב זיי אַרומגעזוכט אין ניו־יאָרק, ישׂראל, פּוילן, אונגערן, דייַטשלאַנד און אַנדערש וווּ. אַ מאָל האָבן די יורשים מיר געהאַפֿן אָדער מיר אָפֿילו געשאַנקען מאַטעריאַלן, וואָס זענען געווען בײַ זייערע משפחות.“ אַט זענען אַ פֿאַר בײַשפּילן פֿון דער אויסשטעלונג. מען דאַרף אָבער האַלטן אין זײַנען אַז די דאָזיקע אינדיווידועלע בילדער זענען טיילן פֿון אַלבאָמען וואָס דערציילן אָפֿט כּסדרדיקע מעשיות: — „אויסרוף־שטראָף: אוישוויץ“ פֿון ראָזענשטראַוכס פֿריער־דערמאָנטן אַלבאָם (וואָס מען זעט אין בראַנדייס אין אַ גוטער פֿאַקסימילע צוליב דער דעליקאַטקייט פֿונעם אַריגינעל). פֿילצאָליקע אָפּגעצערטע פֿרויען קניען אינעם רעגן פֿאַר אַ קאַזאַרמע מיט די הענט אין דער לופֿט, בעת מען רופֿט אויס זייערע נעמען. אַ הויכער, גראַבער נאַציסטישער אָפּיציר גיט אַ פֿרוי אַ בריקע אין די ריפּן. אויבן איז אַ באַשרײַבונג פֿון דער סצענע אויף פּויליש. — אַ בילד פֿונעם אַלבאָם „1939-1945“, געשאַפֿן פֿון רעגינע ליכטער־ליראַן (1920-1995) אין 1945 אין אַ דײַפּי לאַגער אין איטאַליע. דאָ זעט מען נאָקעטע פֿרויען און מיידלעך וואָס קלאַמערן זיך איינע אין דער צווייטער אויפֿן ראַנד פֿון אַ מאַסן־קבר בײַ נאַכט. זיי זענען אַרומגערינגלט פֿון נאַציס מיט ביקסן וואָס וועלן זיי באַלד אויסשיסן. אויף רעכטס ברענט אַ גרויסע שרפֿה וואָס האַלט די קרבנות נאָענט צום קבר. — „מוטער“ פֿון „זיי האָבן נישט דערלעבט צו זען...“, פּובליקירט פֿון לובאַ קרוגמאַן גורדוס אין 1949. דאָס בילד פֿון אַ מוטורפֿדיקער פֿרוי וואָס פּרוווט אומזיסט צו באַשיצן איר יונג קינד רעפרעזענטירט אַ סך ענלעכע אילוסטראַציעס אין די ווייבערשע אַלבאָמען. די אָפּזונדערונג פֿון זייערע קינדער און די אוממעגלעכקייט זיי צו ראַטעווען איז בײַ די מאַמעס אַוודאי געווען אַן אומדערטרעגלעכע טראַוומע. „אַ קליינע שפּיל“ פֿון „דעפֿאָרטירונג“, געמאַכט פֿון עדית באַן קיש אַרום 1950, אָבער באַזירט אויף פֿריערדיקע נוסחאות (איין נוסח איז געשאַפֿן געוואָרן אין ראַוונסברוק לאַגער און איז חרובֿ געוואָרן). צוויי נאַציסטישע היטערינס לאָכן אַ סאַדיסטישן געלעכטער בעת זיי וואַרפֿן קאַלט וואָסער איבער אַ נאָקעטער, סקעלעטישער פֿרוי. זי שטייט פֿאַר אַן אָפֿענעם פֿענצטער מיט אַ שניייקן פֿעלד אין הינטערגרונט. זי פּרוווט זיך צו באַהיטן פֿון קעלט און פֿון זייער זילזול מיט די מאַגערע הענט. פערי האָט מיך דערמאָנט אַז נישט געקוקט אויף די שוידערלעכע בילדער זענען די אַלבאָמען אויך ביישפּילן פֿון ווייבערשער פֿעסטקייט און אַלייך־באַשטימונג. „דער נאָמען פֿון דער אויסשטעלונג, 'ווער וועט אויסצייכענען אונדזער געשיכטע'? איז אַ פּראָגע וואָס די קינסטלערינס ענטפֿערן אַליין. זיי האָבן שאַפֿעריש רעאַגירט אויף זייער פּערזענלעכער און קאַלעקטיווער טראַוומע. דורך זייערע בילדער רעדן זיי אין נאָמען פֿון אַלע ייִדישע פֿרויען וואָס האָבן דורכגעמאַכט אַזעלכע גרוילן.“

(צוזאַמענגעשטעלט פֿון: אַלעקס דאָפֿנער)

זכרונות פֿון אַ יונגער קוריערין אין וואַרשע בעתן חורבן פֿון מיכאל קרוטיקאָוו "פֿאַרווערטס", 19 מאָרץ 2026

„פֿון ביידע זײַטן געטאָ־מויער“ באַשרײַבט ווי וולאַדקע מיד האָט געשמוגלט געווער פֿאָרן וואַרשעווער געטאָ־אויפֿשטאַנד. „הײַנט וועט זיכער עפעס פֿאַרקומען.“ אַזוי רעדן צווישן זיך ייִדן, וואָס האָבן זיך צוניפֿלגעזאַמלט אויף אַ ראַג גאַס אינעם וואַרשעווער געטאָ. איינער פּרוווט זײַן אָפּטימיסטיש: „ייִדן, שרעקט זיך נישט, איר וועט זען, מיט גאָטס הילף, וועלן מיר די נײַע גזירה אויך איבערקומען.“ דאָס איז געווען דער 22טער יולי 1942, דער ערשטער טאָג פֿון דער „גרויסער דעפֿאָרטאַציע“, ווען די דייַטשן האָבן אַרויסגעפֿירט אַרום 250 טויזנט ייִדן אין די אומברענג־לאַגערן. מיט דער סצענע עפֿנט וולאַדקע מיד איר בוך זכרונות „פֿון ביידע זײַטן געטאָ־מויער“ וועגן איר לעבן אין וואַרשע בעתן חורבן. לכתחילה זײַנען זיי אַרויס אין המשכים אין „פֿאַרווערטס“ גלייך נאָך איר אָנקומען קיין אַמעריקע אין 1946. אין 1948 איז דאָס בוך דערשינען בײַ דעם בילדונג־קאָמיטעט פֿון אַרבעטער־רינג. אין 1977 איז דאָס בוך אַרויס אויף ענגליש מיט אַ הקדמה פֿון אלי וויזעל. איצט איז פּובליקירט געוואָרן אַ פֿאַרברייטערטע אויפֿלאַגע באַגלייט מיט הקדמות פֿונעם היסטאָריקער שמואל קאַסאָוו און פֿונעם איבערעזצער, וולאַדקעס זון סטיווען (שלמה) מיד. וולאַדקע מיד ברענגט דעם ליענער גלייך אַרײַן אין דער אַטמאָספֿער פֿון האַפֿענונג, שרעק און ייאוש וואָס האָט געהערשט אינעם וואַרשעווער געטאָ. זי לאַזט דעם ליענער הערן דעם מישמאַש פֿון שטימען פֿון ייִדן, דייַטשן און זייערע אוקראַינער מיטהעלפֿער, פֿון וועלכע עס שאַפֿט זיך די טראַגישע געשיכטע פֿון די לעצטע צען חדשים פֿונעם געטאָ. צום גליק האָט זי אויסגעמיטן די טעגלעכע „אַקציעס“, ווען די „מונדירן“ — דער נאָמען פֿאַר דער ייִדישע פּאָליציי אויפֿן געטאָ־לשון — האָבן געכאַפּט ייִדן פֿאַר די דעפֿאָרטאַציעס. באַלד איז זי געבליבן אַליין: „די מאַמע, ברודער און שוועסטער זײַנען אַוועקגעפֿירט [געוואָרן] אין דער פֿינלעכער אומבאַוווסטקייט“. וולאַדקע האָט אָבער געהאַט אַ גוטן מזל צו באַקומען אַן אַרבעט אין איינעם פֿון די וואַרשטאָטן וואָס האָבן באַדינט די דייַטשן. נאָך דער צווייטער „סעלעקציע“ אין סעפטעמבער 1942 האָבן די געבליבענע ייִדן זיך גענומען צוגרייטן אַ ווידערשטאַנד: „אויב שוין אומקומען, זאָל זײַן מיט ווירדע, זאָל כאַטש דער שונא באַצאָלן אַ טײַערן פּרײַז פֿאַר אונדזער לעבן!“ יונגעהייט האָט וולאַדקע זיך באַטייליקט אינעם „ייִדישן אַרבעטער בונד“, און די דאָזיקע פֿאַרבינדונג האָט איר געהאַפֿן בלייבן לעבן בשעתן חורבן. חוץ דעם, האָט זי געהאַט אַ „גוטן אַרישן אויסזען“, גערעדט פּויליש אָן שום ייִדישן אַקצענט. די בונדיסטישע אונטערערדישע פֿירערשאַפֿט אינעם געטאָ האָט איר פֿאַרגעלייגט צו ווערן אַ קוריער צווישן דעם געטאָ און דער אַרישער זײַט. אַזוי איז דאָס ייִדישע מיידל פֿייגעלע פעלטעל געוואָרן אַ פּוילישע פֿרוי וולאַדיסלאַוואַ קאָוואַלסקאַ, בקיצור — וולאַדקע. בהדרגה ווערט זי אײַנגעגלידערט אינעם „נאַרמאַלן“ לעבן צווישן קריסטלעכע פּאָליאַקן. צוערשט איז זי געווען אָפּטימיסטיש: „איך האָב געוואַלט גלויבן, אַז בײַ די פּאָליאַקן איז דאָ אַ שטאַרקן אינטערעס צו העלפֿן זייערע באַקאַנטע ייִדן.“ אָבער באַלד האָט זי דערזען, אַז מען וויל גאָר ניט וויסן וועגן דעם, וואָס

עס קומט פֿאָר אויף יענער זײַט געטאָ־מויער. די אויפֿגאַבע פֿון וולאַדקע און אירע חבֿרים אויף דער אַרישער זײַט איז געווען צו קריגן געווער פֿאָרן געטאָ. קיין דערפֿאַרונג און קיין גוטע באַצײונגען מיט דער פּוילישער אונטערערדישער אַרמיי האָבן זיי אָבער ניט געהאַט: „גאַנצע טעג לויפֿט מען אַרום איבער דער שטאָט. מען זוכט און נישטערט. ממש צו יעדן באַקאַנטן פּאָליאַק, וואָס רופֿט נאָר אַרויס צו זיך אַ ביסל צוטרוי, הײבט מען גלייך אָן צושטיין און בעטן: העלפֿט אונדז שאַפֿן געווער, מיר וועלן גוט באַצאָלן!“ אָבער לרובֿ באַקומען זיי קנאַפע הילף. אָפֿט מאָל נעמט מען בײַ זיי געלט און גיט זיי גאָר נישט, אָדער, נאָך ערגער, מסרט מען זיי צו די דייַטשן. און אָפֿילו ווען זיי קענען יאָ קריגן אַ רעוואָלוער, מוזן זיי געפֿינען אַן אויפֿן, ווי אַזוי אים אַרײַנצושמוגלען אינעם געטאָ. דאָס בוך איז אַ געשפּאַנטע לעקטור. וולאַדקע מיד איז אַ באַגאַבטע דערציילערין, וואָס דערקלערט פרט נאָך פרט אַלע אַספּעקטן פֿון איר געפֿערלעכער אַרבעט. יעדער טאָג קען זײַן דער לעצטער, ווען מען ווייסט ניט, צי מען וועט דערלעבן ביז אָוונט. זי האָט אַ סך מער מפלות איידער דערפֿאַלגן, און אין אַ סך פֿאַלן איז זי געראַטעוועט געוואָרן דורך אַ גליקלעכן צופֿאַל. קאַסאָווס הקדמה באַשרײַבט דעם ברייטערן היסטאָרישן קאָנטעקסט פֿון יענער תקופּה, און מיד גיט צו פּערזענלעכע פרטים וועגן זײַן מאַמעס לעבן פֿאָרן חורבן אויפֿן סמך פֿון אירע אינטערוויען אין דער אַמעריקאַנער פרעסע. ביים איבערזעצן האָט מיד אַרײַנגעשטעלט אין קלאַמערן קורצע דערקלערונגען, וואָס העלפֿן בעסער פֿאַרשטיין דעם קאָנטעקסט. ער האָט באַשלאָסן אָפּצוהיטן ייִדישע ווערטער פֿון דער ספּעציפֿישער געטאָ־שפּראַך, אַזעלכע ווי „אַקציע“, „מונדירן“, „בלאָקאָדע“. דאָס שאַפֿט דעם עפֿעקט פֿון עכטקייט, אָבער אין אייניקע פֿאַלן רופֿט די דאָזיקע סטראַטעגיע אַרויס פֿראַגעס: צוליב וואָס האָט ער „איבערגעזעצט“ דאָס וואָרט „קריסטין“ אינעם ייִדישן מקור ווי Shikse? בכלל איז די איבערזעצונג זייער פֿרײַ און צו מאָל ווייט פֿונעם ייִדישן טעקסט. אין אַמעריקע האָט וולאַדקע מיד געווידמעט איר לעבן דער חורבן־דערציאונג, און די נײַע אויפֿלאַגע פֿון איר בוך איז ממשיך דעם דאָזיקן שליחות. דאָס איז אַ וויכטיקער צוגאַב צו דער וואַקסנדיקער ביבליאָטעק פֿון דאָקומענטן און פֿאַרשוונגען וועגן וואַרשעווער געטאָ. צום באַדויערן איז די געשיכטע פֿונעם ייִדישן ווידערשטאַנד קעגן דער דייַטשישער אָקופּאַציע נאָך ניט געהעריק איינגעשלאָסן אינעם אַמעריקאַנער „האַלאָקאָסט עדוקיישן“, אָפֿילו אין ייִדישע טאָגשולן. ווען איך דערצייל למשל די געשיכטע פֿון וואַרשעווער געטאָ אין מײַן קורס פֿון דער ייִדישער קולטור־געשיכטע אין מזרח־אײראָפּע ביים משיגענער אוניווערסיטעט פֿרעגן אַ סך פֿון די סטודענטן: „פֿאַר וואָס האָט מען אונדז דאָס ניט דערציילט אין אונדזערע קלאַסן וועגן דעם חורבן? דאָס איז אַזוי וויכטיק צו וויסן!“ עד־היום זעט מען אָפֿט מאָל די חורבן־געשיכטע דורך דעם שפּאַקטיוו פֿונעם מאַסנמאַרד. וולאַדקע מידס בוך אָבער, שרייבט קאַסאָוו, „האָט דערווײַז, אַז איר קאַמף צו בלייבן לעבן, אויף צו להכעיס אַלע שונאים, לייקנט אָפּ די סטערעאָטיפּישע טענה, אַז די ייִדן זײַנען פּאַסיוו געגאַנגען צו זייער אומקום.“

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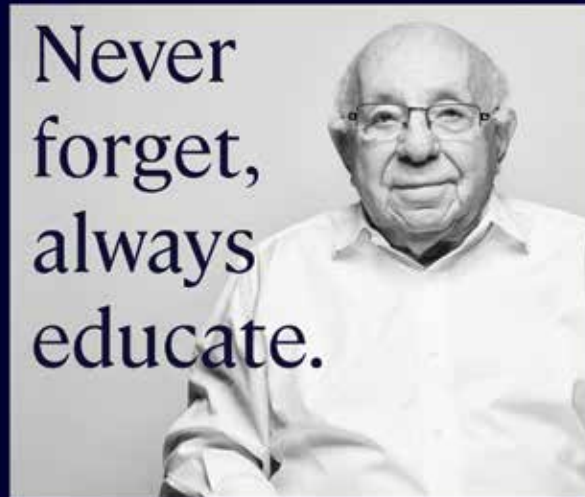
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Contents of medical kit used by Helen (Hela) Kasman in Auschwitz infirmary,

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