Winter 2012

ZACHOR

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE
**Vancouver Raoul Wallenberg Day**

**2012 Marking the 100th Birthday of Raoul Wallenberg**

**The Visas That Saved Lives**

**The Story of Chiune Sugihara, Japan's Hero of the Holocaust**

Japanese Film with English subtitles | 18 years +

**Sunday, January 15, 2012 | 1:30 PM**

Vancity Theatre | 1181 Seymour Street, Vancouver

The story of the extraordinary Japanese diplomat, Chiune Sugihara, who sacrificed his own career during the Second World War to write the precious visas that saved an estimated 6,000 Jewish lives. Working day and night, he hand-wrote an estimated 1600 transit visas, permitting Jews to escape the Holocaust.

**Admission by Donation**

Reception to follow

Swedish Charitable Association, Liberty Bakery

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**ZACHORI** Remember

**Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre**

Editor: Frieda Miller
Design: Kazuko Kusumoto
Editor No Longer Alone: Lillian Boraks Nemetz
Copy Editing: Rome Fox

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Cover Image: Child selling goods in the Warsaw Ghetto.
- The Ghetto Fighters Museum (Israel)
When my father’s family moved from Bialystok in 1926, he left behind an extended family. We know they were all murdered in the Holocaust but had no idea when or where or under what circumstances. Until now. Now I know about the deaths of three of my father’s cousins: 11-year old Dasha Goelman, 10-year old Lebel Goelman, and his brother, 9-year old Shaya Goelman. Their Yahrzeit is the ninth of Tishrei, and the eve of Yom Kippur. This is how and why they died. I single them out not because their deaths were more horrific or more tragic than the other 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Holocaust or the 6 million Jews in total who were murdered. I single them out because they are my own strongest link to the Holocaust and because their deaths were avoidable.

In February, 1943 a telegram was sent from the German embassy in Sofia to Adolph Eichmann with a request to liberate 5,000 Jewish children. Eichmann’s response was horrific in its content and its reasoning. He said “that the emigration of Jewish children must be rejected on principle, and the departure of 5,000 children will be possible only in exchange for German prisoners abroad, four Germans for each child. This would mean the return of 20,000 fertile Germans up to the age of 40 to the German Reich.” Aside from this, the negotiations must be conducted swiftly, because “the hour is drawing near when as a result of our activities against the Jews, the
emigration of 5,000 Jewish children from the East will be impossible for technical reasons. The technical reasons were that they were already murdering Jews, children and adults, and there would be none left to complete any kind of deal.

And so from February, 1942 to August, 1944 there were on-again, off-again negotiations conducted, sometimes through the Bulgarians and sometimes through the Swiss. Negotiations became stalled over questions such as:

- Should Jewish children be exchanged for German soldiers?
- If so, what will be the exact ratio of Jews to soldiers?
- Jews from where? The east or the west?
- How would they leave Nazi controlled territory: by road? By boat? By train?
- Where would the children go?
- And finally, exactly how many Jewish children were still alive in Poland?

Against all odds, it appeared that a deal to save the Jewish children had been worked out. In August, 1943, after the Bialystok ghetto had been destroyed, a total 1,260 Jewish children were placed on board a special transport to Theresienstadt along with adult chaperones. One of the historians of these events wrote the following:

“At Theresienstadt the children from the Bialystok ghetto were placed in a special camp called Crete, which had been built outside the citadel. Fifty-three doctors and nurses, inmates of the camp, were assigned to the children, The children’s camp was completely separated from the other prisoners, and all contact with them was forbidden. The entire arrangement was shrouded in mystery.

The children were carefully examined by doctors, and those who were found to have infectious diseases were separated from the rest, taken to the small fortress and murdered. The remaining children received excellent care, special food and good clothing. The children’s health soon improved and they learnt once again how to smile and be happy. The prevailing rumour at the time was that they were to be sent to Palestine or Switzerland on the basis of some sort of exchange agreement. The doctors and nurses who were assigned to them were obliged to sign a secrecy pact in everything related to the conditions at Theresienstadt, and all signs indicated that the Germans did indeed intend to send the children abroad.”

They waited in Theresienstadt for six weeks until October 7, 1943. They were led to believe that their decent treatment – food, water, medical attention – meant that they would soon be liberated. They permitted their hopes to rise. They believed that they would be saved.

And then, on October 7th, the 9th of Tishrei the day before Yom Kippur, all 1,260 children were shipped from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz. Upon arrival they were taken to the gas chambers and murdered. These 1,260 children were the last of the 39,000 Jews who were alive in Bialystok before the Nazis invaded. The children from the Bialystok ghetto were among the last surviving Jewish children in Poland.

The telegrams, proposals and negotiations could have saved thousands of Jewish children. They could have saved the 1,260 children from the Bialystok ghetto. They could have saved the lives of Dasha, Leibel and Shaya Goelman. But the plague of Nazism so infected the brains of our oppressors that not a single Jewish child was saved. The children were abandoned.

We read of other abandoned children on Rosh Hashanah; of Ishmael who was abandoned to die in the desert and of Isaac who was abandoned to die on the altar of sacrifice. In both of those biblical narratives these abandoned children were saved but the children of Bialystok in particular and of Poland in general were abandoned. I learned this story a few years ago when I was perusing the Yad Vashem website where I found the list of all 1,260 children from the Bialystok ghetto. I read the list hoping, on the one hand that I would find my cousins and hoping on the other hand that perhaps they escaped this journey of ultimate cruelty. I found their names and at that moment they were no longer abandoned. I now light their Yahrzeit candles every year on the 9th of Tishrei.
INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

MONDAY, JANUARY 30, 2012 | 7 PM
Annette & Norman Rothstein Theatre | 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver

50 ITALIANS
The 50 men who saved 50,000 Jewish Lives

English and Italian with English subtitles

FREE ADMISSION | RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED

Contact the Istituto Italiano di Cultura:
iicvancouver@esteri.it or 604.688.0809 ext. 21

CANDLE LIGHTING MEMORIAL CEREMONY

604 264 0499 | INFO@VHEC.ORG | WWW.VHEC.ORG
Bearing witness to the memorialization process of one of humanity’s darkest hours has had an astounding impact on me. My experience with the University of Victoria’s month-long I-witness Holocaust Field School this past spring has woven itself into the fabric of my very being. Visiting former concentration camps that only just over sixty years ago formed the backdrop to some of the world’s most appalling tragedies was emotionally challenging, but revealed an extraordinarily engaging discourse surrounding Holocaust memorialization.

The first memorial that I witnessed was embedded in a Berlin sidewalk. Stolpersteine, or stumbling stones, are diffused throughout former Nazi territory outside the last known residence of many deportees. They provide information such as a deportee’s name, birth and (if known) death dates. I stumbled upon the Jacoby family’s Stolpersteine and found that all four family members had been deported to Auschwitz, where three of them perished. I could not help but wonder what their family dynamic had been, not as victims, but as people. I felt sorrow; they did not get to tell me their story themselves, about what defined them as people. They formed but a minute part of the commemoration of six million.

At the former Ravensbrück concentration camp, I experienced an uneasy dichotomy. It was so beautiful and tranquil, with the sun shining brilliantly off the lake. However, this sense of beauty eroded as we moved through the former camp. The cobbled road built painstakingly by prisoners was particularly disheartening. With such vast open spaces where the former (now mostly destroyed) penal blocks once stood, I encountered a wholly new memorial narrative. Rather than focusing on an interpretation of a dedicated memorial structure, the focus was on what had once stood there. It was a memorialization of the absent. It let my imagination wander. I was afforded my own memorial space.

At the former Auschwitz camp, victims’ photographs lined the halls of several buildings. Baffled, bitter, and bereaved faces stared back at me. The images not only personified the tragedy, but demonstrated the brutally short life expectancy for inmates, which was seldom longer than three months. A fairly nondescript facility at the fringe of the former camp was where incoming prisoners were forcibly shaved and stripped of their belongings in an attempt at dehumanization. I found myself yearning for memorials which focused more on victims’ humanity before persecution.

Thus, I found it thoroughly gratifying that in the final room of this facility known as Kanada, for its perceived “riches,” the belongings stolen from incoming prisoners contained just that – riches in the form of stories, poems and photographs of the victims’ earlier lives. In the place where the Nazis had attempted to dehumanize their prisoners, we stood decades later, to commemorate their victims as human beings.
This past May I travelled to Europe with twenty-three students. However, we did not pack our bags for the same reasons that most young adults do when exploring the world. Instead of going to ‘discover ourselves,’ we went to discover a part of Europe’s darkest history.

We were part of a three-week field study, unique to the University of Victoria, which focuses on the memorialization of the Holocaust in Central Europe.

Our itinerary included sites of memorialization such as monuments, former concentration and labour camps, ghettos, slave labour workshops and cemeteries. We learned about Jewish culture, genocide, antisemitism and racism, topics that gave us a deeper understanding of the Holocaust, but often resulted in raised eyebrows or an inquiring “why are you studying that?” from both residents and other travellers.

Looking through my journal I am reminded of one night in particular, a night when I was reminded of my privileges and how lucky I am to live free of hatred, intolerance, and war. My friends and I had linked arms, trying to dodge the bustle of Unter den Linden in Berlin’s city centre. We found what we were looking for—the memorial commemorating the Nazi book burning of May 10, 1933. By coincidence we were there seventy-eight years later on May 10, 2011. We gathered around translucent glass set into the cobblestones under our feet. Beneath the glass, rows of empty bookshelves wrapped around a room. It was lit, allowing a pale whiteness to illuminate our faces as we peered into the void. I was overcome by emptiness and despondence as my eyes surveyed the room. I became aware of the quiet.

I remember having seen photographs from that night in 1933 showing a mob of thousands of Nazi supporters saluting Joseph Goebbels during his “end to Jewish intellectualism” speech, a mass of books ablaze in the background—in the very place that we found ourselves standing. Among the books burned were the works of Sigmund Freud, Charles Darwin, Ernest Hemingway, Bertolt Brecht, Heinrich Heine and Karl Marx, intellectuals who have shaped our understanding of the world.

It was about the loss of more than just books. It was about the loss of individual freedoms, schooling, jobs, owning a home, or the freedom to walk down the street. It was about taking away the freedom to educate oneself and to explore those works of literature, which contrasted with Nazi ideology. I do not think we know how lucky and blessed we are not to have lived through something like that.

My reflection stared back at me from the glass. Through it, the vast emptiness of the room reminded me of what had transpired. From where I stood on the outside, life, blessings and opportunities were filled with promise—on the outside the shelves were full.

We stayed until midnight when the doors to the State Opera House opened, letting out a sea of people into the night. A woman came up to us, curious.

“What are you looking at?” she asked.

“Liberty,” we replied.

Auschwitz-Birkenau, 2011. - Courtesy Shawn Burns
I can still see the day replay itself like a silent movie. October 1954. West Germany. We were headed east. I am sitting in the back of my parents’ car behind my mother who wears a prim white blouse. My father is driving. Upon mother’s insistence that I, newly arrived from sandal footed Africa, would be cold, am sporting the much hated thick, grey, below-the-knee stockings.

Everything seems acutely sharp and orderly, contrary to the dark undertone of fear. I gaze at perfectly shaped hills, immaculate autumnal trees, verdant pastures and clear blue sky. Cobble stoned streets in the tidily organized villages pass by. I cannot understand the mounting tension, slow and insistent, rather like Ravel’s Bolero. It began at breakfast when my manners had momentarily slipped; surely that sin could not be responsible for the mounting anxiety now inside the car. My mother sits up very straight. Shoulders almost seem to touch her ears. My father unusually engrossed in the road, grips the steering wheel so hard that his knuckles are white. Is this because of the tension I sense? Neither parent speaks. I dare not.

Warning signs for a border crossing appear. The road narrows. Apprehension grows inside our car. Soon barbed wire snakes along the top of a high fence and ends at a small wooden building. Smartly uniformed border guards jump out; perhaps to prevent us from running the border? German is spoken, tersely by my father; authoritatively by the soldier. Documents are handed over. We sit and wait.

I remember feeling petrified that something awful could happen, but I did not know what. After an interminable time, our documents are back in our possession. Ours being the only car, we drive slowly between the threatening barriers through no man’s land. My mother’s shoulders relax a little. My father still looks impassive, unreachable. At the next building, different guards scrutinize our papers and wave us through. Only then does my father quietly pronounce that we are now in Austria.

At ten years of age, I, who had only a smattering of the adults’ emotions, felt undercurrents of unease through their body language. No explanation was forthcoming so this unpleasant experience hid deep inside my psyche and never surfaced again until my daughter, wanting to work in Europe, asked me to locate her German great-grandfather’s typewritten death certificate which would provide her with German citizenship. For the first time ever, I noted that in March 1945, Leo Masur had died at Mauthausen, just weeks before the end of the Second World War. Suddenly, everything clicked into place with shocking clarity. On that particular October day when I was ten, we had passed close to Mauthausen concentration camp en route to Linz, Austria. The last time my father would have come that way was in 1936, he was a German Jewish refugee, disguised as a blue eyed, blond Hitler youth.

An unwilling audience, I did not want to comprehend the story, nor did I grasp the ghastliness of it all. Finally, I understood those past, deep, unspoken emotions my parents had shared that day; but not with me. In their wisdom to shield me, they had deemed the knowledge inappropriate for me. I had been left in complete ignorance because my parents chose to protect me from the horrors of the Holocaust. Anxiety and fear are the second generation child’s inheritance.
The VHEC Archives and Collection received a number of unique and interesting donations during 2011. We are currently accessioning a number of new items into the Collection, including photographs, documents and correspondence from a number of donors.

The Archives and Collection was recently the recipient of a collection of German prayer books from the late 19th and early 20th centuries as well as a series of *Trauer* books belonging to the same family. These books were accompanied by a number of family photographs and documents, including a memoir. The family photos and documents provide rich context for the books and speak to life in Germany prior to the war and early post-war life in Canada.

Additionally, the Archives and Collection received the donation of a set of four cooking pots (with two lids) dating from the early part of the twentieth century. The pots were brought to North America from Europe by the donor’s family, who left Vienna in late 1939. The donor, Debby Freiman remembers her grandmother making sweetened carrots in one of the smaller pots, as well as Friday night soup in the pots. Items such as these are an invaluable addition to our Archives and Collection as they speak to pre-war life in Europe. That such everyday items made their way to North America and were part of ongoing family traditions, is rare.

Many thanks to all of those who generously donated items to the Archives and Collection.

**DO YOU HAVE ARTEFACTS YOU WOULD LIKE TO DONATE TO VHEC?**

In order to continue to document the Holocaust accurately, authentically and powerfully, the VHEC seeks original materials about the onset of Nazi terror, persecution and atrocities, the Canadian and world responses, armed and spiritual resistance and rescue, liberation and the reestablishment of life after the Holocaust. If you have materials that you would like to donate to the VHEC collection please contact Frieda Miller at 604-264-0499.
TRIBUTE CARDS

July 15, 2011 – December 1, 2011

GET WELL

Barbara Buchanan, Easy and speedy recovery. Frieda Miller & Danny Shapiro

Howard Ehrlich, Speedy and full recovery. Karen & Jack Micner

Suzanne Ferera, Good and speedy recovery. Rosa Ferera, Lisette, Nora & Families

Margaret Fraeme, Speedy and easy recovery. Art, Sam & Al Szajman, Gloria Waisman & Gerri London and your friends at Survivor Drop-In

Fryda & Margaret & Jack Fraeme, Speedy and full recovery for Margaret. Amalia Boe-Fishman & Family

Jack Amar, Speedy recovery. Peter & Marla Gropper

Lisa Kafka, Wishing you well. Mollie Korsch

Martin Osipov, Speedy recovery. Susan & Joe Stein & Family, Karen & Jack Micner

Riva Puterman, Happy Special Birthday. Heather Wolfe, Naomi Wolfe, Phillipa Friedland, Mark & Gerri London

Rita & Ben Akselrod, On the opening of your exhibit. Robbie & Gloria Waisman

Sidney Alperstein, On your 80th Birthday. Frances & Gustav Grunberg & Family

Bessy Altman, On your 90th Birthday. Harry & Mary Klonoif, Vita Kolodny & Mel Krajden, Jack, Melanie, Lauren & Talia Bailey, Art Hister & Phyllis Simon, Edie Reiman, Larry Shafer & Michelle & Family, Michael & Marion Elterman, Bruce, Diane & Danny Frederic

Mayer & Heather Aronson, Happy Birthday. Lana & Mendy Landa

Shirley Barnett, On your Special Birthday. Aaron & Diane Fineman, David & Cathy Golden

Elaine Benton, On your 75th Birthday. Jocy Lowy

Nancy Benyaer, For a Special Birthday. Shoshana & Moshe Fidelman

Rosa Baerwald, Happy Birthday. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg & Family

Charles & Isabelle Diamond, On Amanda’s Engagement. Beth & Leon Bogner


Irving Glassner, Happy Special Birthday. Ethel Bellows


Fred Gumprich, On your 80th Birthday. Susan Albersheim & Steven Barer, Selma Albersheim

Paul Heller, Happy 100th Birthday. Ethel Bellows

Paul & Edwina Heller, On your Big Occasion. Gloria & Robbie Waisman

Al Hersh, On your 95th Birthday. Gail & Gerry Goldstein & Betty Whitney

Ron Imerman, On your 60th Birthday. Marilyn & Perry Ehrlich

Brian & Elana Jacobson, On the birth of your son, Benjamin. Ricki Thal

Basil Kallner, On your 70th Birthday. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg, Shoshana, Shawn, Mattea, Julian & Charlie Lewis

Mitzi Kanee, Happy 85th Birthday. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg


Levi Karasz, Happy Birthday. Peter & Joan Karasz

Robert Krell, Happy Birthday. Angela Mammon

Robert & Marilyn Krell, Happy 40th Anniversary. Rhona & Steve Schneiderman, Beatrice & Lew Lewis

Corinne Margulius, On receiving your Bachelors of Science and Nursing. Les & Karen Cohen & Family

William Nicholls, On your 90th Birthday. Rosa Ferera, Lew & Nora Ferera-Pullmer

Klara Noik, Happy Birthday. Andrew & Betty Karsai

Manuel Roothin, Happy Special Birthday. Gustav & Frances Grunberg & Family

Syd Shafron, Happy Special Birthday. Peppa, Cole, Parris, Arielle & Shea Martin

Lyliane & Larry Thal, On your Special Anniversary. Rhona & Steve Schneiderman

Josie & Dan Wolfson & Family, On the arrival of your twins. Rome & Hymie Fox

THANK YOU

Rob Krell & Family, Thank You. George & Frieda Wertman

David Ehrlich, In honour of your 85th Birthday, Thank You. Mr. Michael Northy, Principal

Susan Mendelson & Jack Lutsky, Thank You & Shana Tova. Peppa Martin

Robbie, Waisman, In appreciation of your visit to my class. Richard Menkis

MAZEL TOV

Melvyn Yochlowitz, On your Special Birthday. Thyrza Cohen

Jana Abramson, On your Mother’s 100th Birthday. Janice Masur & Tom Szekely

10 | TRIBUTE CARDS
Mickey James, On the loss of your brother, Abe Jampolsky. Lana & Mendy Landa, Beth & Leon Bogner, Rob & Marilyn Krell

Howard Jampolsky, On the loss of your Father. Susan & Joe Stein

Ida & Odie Kaplan, In memory of Sherie. Ruth & Bud Wolochow

Yona Laks, Sorry to hear of your loss. Gloria & Robbie Waisman

Phillip Landsberger, On the loss of your father, Karl. The Miedzygorski & Coleman families


Marilyn Moss, On the loss of your Mother. Peter & Marla Gropper

David Newson, On the loss of Christie. Marc Lieberman & Family

Ruth & Harry Nolan & Family, In memory of Evelyn. Debbie & Ed Rozenberg & Family


Resia Nortman, On the loss of your grandson. Joel. Sally, Sid & Alex Coleman & the Miedzygorski family, Joan & Peter Karasz, Rome & Hymie Fox & Family, Julie & Henry Gutovich & Family

Jack Nortman, On the loss of your nephew, Joel. Sally, Sid & Alex Coleman & the Miedzygorski family

Riva Puterman, In memory of your husband, Izzy Tischler. Heather Wolfe, Naomi Wolfe

Vera Rosenbluth & Family, On the passing of your father, Gideon. The Oberlanders, Birgit Westergaard & Norman Gladstone

Albert Rosengarten, In memory of your mother, Ruth Rosengarten. The Boxer Family

Michael & Revital Ross, On the loss of your mother, Helen Synenko. Doreen & Bill Horwitz

Norm & Evelyn Schayer & Family, In memory of Norm’s mother. Deb & Ed Rozenberg

Dick Scherer, On your loss. Mendy & Lana Landa

Jerry Schwartz & Family, In memory of Fay. Debbie & Eddie, Mira, Naomi & Aliya Rozenberg


Leonard Sherman, On the loss of your spouse, Diane. Mendy & Lana Landa

Jane & Randy Soifer & Family, In memory of your mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, Dawn. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg & Family

Dan Sonnenschein, In memory of Bronia Sonnenschein. Susan Homewood

Robyn Segal & Stacey Levin, In memory of your Mother. Jocy Lowy


Leonard & Brenda Wall, In memory of Brenda’s mother. Beth & Leon Bogner, Peter & Marla Gropper

Isaac Wolfe & Family, On the loss of your Father. Susan & Joe Stein & Family


Jane Shatsky, Dee Goldberg & Lis Zlotnik & Families, On the loss of your mother. Ethel Bellows, Estika Hunnings & Family

Lis Zlotnik & Family, In memory of July Shatsky. Beth & Leon Bogner, Talya & Mark Rozenberg

Thank you to our outstanding Volunteers:

OUTREACH SPEAKERS
Janos Benisz, Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, Alex Buckman, Marion Cassirer, Mariette Doduck, David Ehrlich, Bill Gluck, Serge Haber, Kay Hughes, Chaim Kornfeld, Robert Krell, Inge Manes, Bente Nathan Thomsen, Peter Parker, Claude Romney, Louise Sorensen, Peter Suedfeld, Tom Szekely, Robbie Waisman; Coordinator: Rita Akselrod

DOCENTS
Chris Biasutti, Rajiv Cowasjee, Haley Davis, Reva Dexter, Myriam Dinim, Debby Freiman, Phillipa Friedland, Belinda Gutman, Arlene James, Dodie Katzenstein, Sarah-Jane Kerr-Lapsley, Lisa Kirchner, Joel Kohm, Uma Kumar, Shoshana Lewis, Lucien Lieberman, Ivan Linde, Ellen Millman, Michael Perla, Cynthia Ramsay, Adriana Reynoso, Gita Silver, Rina Vizer, Stevie Wilson, Heather Wolfe

SPECIAL PROJECTS
Chelsea Bailey, Ari Dales, Eli Dales, Sarah Falik, David Feldman, Amalia Boe-Fishman, Gerri London, Sharon Meen, Joni Persad, Adriana Reynoso, Laura Saxton, David Schaffer, Brynn Shaffer, Wendy Stuart, Stan Taviss, Gloria Waisman
SAVE THE DATE

ROAUL WALLENBERG DAY

The Visas That Saved Lives: The Story of Chiune Sugihara, Japan’s Hero of the Holocaust

Sunday, January 15, 2012 | 1:30 pm
Vancity Theatre | 1181 Seymour Street, Vancouver

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

50 Italians: The 50 Men Who Saved 50,000 Jewish Lives

Monday, January 30, 2012 | 7 pm
Annette & Norman Rothstein Theatre

CURRENT EXHIBIT

Janusz Korczak: and the Children of the Warsaw Ghetto

December 15, 2011 - April 12, 2012
Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre