

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

ZACHOR

*Honouring 1,700 Years of Jews
in Germany: An Update about the
Hahn Family Collection and Legacy*

FALL 2021

A NEW WORKSHOP EXPLORES THE UPSTANDERS OF
THE PAST TO SHAPE THE UPSTANDERS OF THE FUTURE

WE ARE HARMLESS: AN ARTS-BASED EXPLORATION
OF HOLOCAUST MEMORY IN DRESDEN

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE
CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

KRISTALLNACHT

COMMEMORATION

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021 | 7 PM

LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY DETAILS TBA

VANCOUVER
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EDUCATION
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FALL 2021

ZACHOR

Zachor is the Hebrew word for remember.

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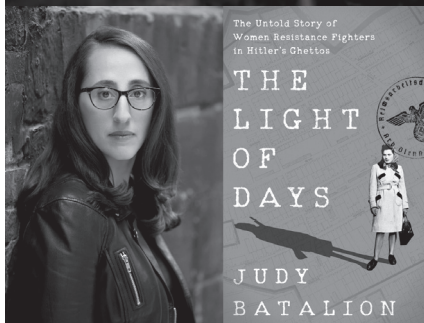
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Judy Batalion

Granddaughter of Polish Holocaust survivors. Author of the international and indie bestselling book: *The Light of Days: The Untold Story of Women Resistance Fighters in Hitler's Ghettos*.



"These were women who acted with ferocity and fortitude—even violently—smuggling, gathering intelligence, committing sabotage, and engaging in combat; they were proud of their fire." —Judy Batalion, The Light of Days

Presented by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre in partnership with Beth Israel Congregation.

This program is funded through our community's generous contributions to the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver Annual Campaign. Supported by the Robert and Marilyn Krell Endowment Fund of the VHEC.

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Dear readers,

As we welcome visitors to view the *Treasured Belongings: The Hahn Family & the Search for a Stolen Legacy* exhibition, now extended through June 2022 and featuring a newly published companion catalogue, we are pleased to provide an update to readers about the Hahn family collection and legacy. Historian Sharon Meen's article speaks to the significance of the materials featured in the VHEC's original exhibition, and the family's ongoing pursuit of restitution and reconciliation.

We are proud to publish an excerpt from an important new acquisition for the VHEC's collection, the memoirs of Austrian Holocaust survivor Anna Helen Aszkanazy. Thanks to artefact donors, translators and the professional team at the VHEC, invaluable documents such as this are being made accessible in support of research, learning and remembrance.

This issue also highlights recent achievements and previews upcoming programs. As we launch a timely new online workshop for students, *Antisemitism – You Can Make a Difference*, we are developing a follow-up workshop on Holocaust rescuers. In her contribution to this issue, our Young Canada Works summer research assistant, Avrel Festinger, offers an insightful perspective on the value of exploring the motivations and implications of the actions of bystanders and upstanders, both during the Shoah and during the present day.

In commemoration of *Kristallnacht*, we invite you to join the VHEC and our partner, Congregation Beth Israel, for a talk on November 4 by Judy Batalion, about her acclaimed New York Times bestselling book, *The Light of Days: The Untold Story of Women Resistance Fighters in Hitler's Ghettos*.

The book's publisher notes that the book is: "One of the most important stories of the Second World War, already optioned by Steven Spielberg: a spectacular, searing history that brings to light the extraordinary accomplishments of brave Jewish women who became resistance fighters—a group of unknown heroes whose exploits have never been chronicled in full, until now." Batalion's research explores the story of Jewish women in the resistance, and probes why their courageous actions have remained virtually unknown. This very special lecture promises to illuminate the exceptional bravery and remarkable survival in the face of unlikely odds. We hope that you will join us.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to our membership, who embraced and supported our 2021 Annual Campaign, featuring Joe Gold's intergenerational memoir, *Two Pieces of Cloth: One Family's Story of the Holocaust*. Thanks to your generosity and the matching gift provided by Joe and his family and friends, the VHEC exceeded our campaign goal and raised \$100,000 in support of our programs. Thank you all for your tremendous support.

On behalf of the VHEC, my warmest best wishes to you and yours for a happy and healthy New Year. Shana Tova!

Sincerely,



Nina Krieger

Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



It has been an extraordinary year as the world continued to face the unprecedented disruption of COVID-19. As you read the pages of this edition of *Zachor*, I hope, first and foremost, that each of you and your loved ones are healthy and safe.

Over the past 17 months, we have been challenged in many ways, both individually and as a community. Persevering through these challenges helped us grow, and now, as we enter a new year, we can look back on our last with gratitude.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend sincere gratitude to Executive Director Nina Kreiger, and to her talented professional staff, for their efforts in working seamlessly in a virtual world. Innovative VHEC programs continued to meet the needs of educators during the pandemic, while new partnerships produced meaningful remembrance of the Shoah.

The Board of Directors also had a busy year. We developed a Privacy Policy which underscores our commitment to respecting and protecting the personal information of all those who walk through the doors of the VHEC, as well as those who access our website (or join our zoom meetings!). We worked together with the VHEC's professional staff to realize a successful annual fundraising campaign. We established the position of Honourary Legal Counsel to the Board of Directors, and I am thrilled that Ed Lewin (Past President) accepted our invitation to be the first to serve in this important role. We convened strategic planning sessions to ensure the VHEC is well positioned to move forward in a world that increasingly requires Holocaust-based anti-racism education. I extend my thanks to the directors of the Board for their continued passion, commitment and hard work.

My gratitude extends to all of you, as well, for your continued support of the VHEC. Truly, it is thanks to you that the VHEC has engaged the hearts and minds of generations of students, and has grown in its eloquent dedication to Holocaust remembrance.

Wishing you and your families a new year of health, joy, meaning, and of course, gratitude. May 5782 be filled with blessings.

Corinne Zimmerman
President

Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society for Education and Remembrance

Honouring 1,700 Years of Jews in Germany: An Update About the Hahn Family Collection and Legacy

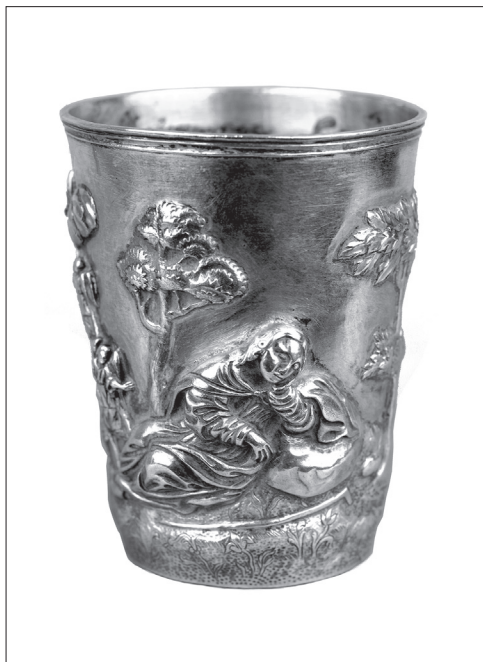
BY SHARON MEEN

Hahn family members and their collection of Judaica, the subject of the VHEC's current exhibition, *Treasured Belongings: The Hahn Family & the Search for a Stolen Legacy*, are featured in events marking a key anniversary in Germany this year. In the year 321, residents of Cologne sent a letter to Emperor Constantine the Great requesting permission to admit Jewish residents to the town's city council. Constantine replied "yes" and issued an edict permitting Jews to hold municipal office throughout the empire. This document survived and is the earliest written source found to date affirming the presence of Jews north of the Alps. 1,700 years on, Germany is commemorating the anniversary of this edict.

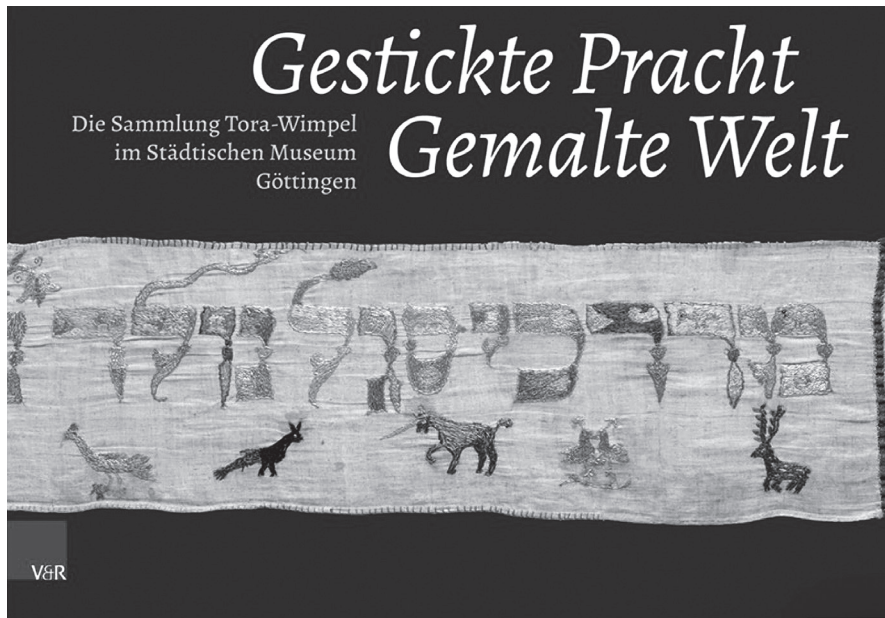
On July 18, 2021, *Gestickte Pracht und Gemalte Welt* (Embroidered Splendour/Painted World) opened at

the Göttingen city museum, Städtisches Museum Göttingen. This exhibition displays eighteen Torah wimpels, or mappahs, from the museum's collection; several are over 300 years old. The museum acquired the wimpels before 1917 from people in the city or surrounding towns or villages, and knowledge of the wipel owners and their families makes this collection internationally significant. One of the wimpels collected by this museum was owned by Raphael Hahn, but has since been restituted and is not part of the Göttingen exhibition.

However, Raphael Hahn's mappah is present at this exhibit through its absence. Dr. Ernst Böhme, former museum director and co-curator of the exhibit, told the story of the mappah and its restitution to the



Left: Silver gilt kiddish cup adorned with the story of Jacob. Presumably Germany, 1757. After its identification in the collection of a Hamburg museum, the cup was returned to the Hahn-Hayden family in 2018. Right: Marianne Haas (née Hahn), Max Hahn, Gertrud Hahn, Hermann Hahn. Bad Neuenahr, 1938. Photograph from the Hahn Collection; reproduced with permission.



Exhibition catalogue cover, Städtisches Museum Göttingen.

Hahn-Hayden family at the opening, and the exhibit catalogue includes a summary of his remarks. The artefact was identified in the collection by Michael Hayden in 1986 and returned to the family with the help of Artur Levi, then mayor of Göttingen. It now resides in Vancouver, has been used in naming ceremonies, and is currently on display at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

In September 2021, an exhibition featuring two Hahn family objects—a horn comb and the Jacob's Cup—will open at the Kolumba art museum of the Archdiocese of Cologne. The Hahn artefacts will join some 100 other objects from German and international institutions and individuals, including the oldest surviving copy of Constantine's edict of 321, courtesy of the Vatican Library, and the Amsterdam Machsor, an Ashkenazi festival prayerbook jointly owned by Amsterdam's Jewish Historical Museum and MiQua, a new Jewish museum planned in Cologne's Archaeological Quarter. The Jacob's Cup, currently on loan to the VHEC, will be returned to the family and the *Treasured Belongings* exhibition adapted to note its absence for the duration of the run.

The Cologne exhibition is a cooperative project between Kolumba and MiQua. MiQua is part of a much larger project; since 2007, archeologists have ripped open 6,000 square meters in front of Cologne's town hall and unearthed fabulous finds from Roman and medieval times. MiQua will extend underground beneath the Rathausplatz to the old synagogue, the Mikweh, the mediaeval Jewish Quarter and Goldsmiths' Quarter.

The museum will house permanent and temporary exhibits above and under ground. One exhibit will feature the life of Hermann Hahn,

Max Raphael Hahn's older brother, whose antiquarian shop at Unter Goldschmied 10–16 was located in Cologne's Jewish quarter. When Dr. Christiane Twiehaus, Head of the MiQua Department for Jewish History and Culture, first wrote to us about this project, she defined a larger context for Hermann's life than was previously known by the Hahn-Hayden family. Not only was Hermann a "very impressive person for the history of the Jewish quarter," she writes, "but also for Jewish history in Cologne. For example, he worked as a curator at the Pressa exhibition in Cologne in 1928, and set up the so-called medieval study room here."

A photograph of the brothers, Hermann, Max and Nathan Hahn, pictured in Germany in December 1939, is currently on display at the VHEC. When MiQua opens to the public, the opening ceremony will include the laying of a *Stolperstein*, a commemorative stumbling stone marker, at Unter Goldschmied 10–16 to honour the life of Hermann Hahn. His great-nephew, Michael Hayden, plans to be in attendance. ■

Dr. Sharon Meen is the research administrator for the Hahn Collection and worked as a historical consultant on *Treasured Belongings: The Hahn Family & the Search for a Stolen Legacy*.

NEW ONLINE WORKSHOP

Antisemitism – You Can Make a Difference

<https://vhcprograms.thinkific.com/courses/antisemitism-you-can-make-a-difference>

We are pleased to announce the launch of the VHEC's online workshop: Antisemitism – You Can Make a Difference. This workshop was developed in response to the rise of antisemitism in British Columbia, Canada and globally. It provides a detailed overview of the history of antisemitism and its current forms. Through practical step-by-step guidelines, students and the general public are encouraged to become upstanders against antisemitism and other forms of racism. This workshop emphasizes the importance of media literacy and provides participants with the necessary tools to assess the reliability and credibility of sources when encountering misinformation and antisemitic tropes online. Through accompanying activities, the workshop invites participants to reflect on the dangers and implications of historical and present-day antisemitism and to decode historical and contemporary antisemitic propaganda.



BC MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Anti-Racism and Diverse Cultural Experiences Learning Project

The VHEC's Education Director & Curator, Dr. Ilona Shulman Spaar, is honoured to be part of a diverse advisory team of educators for the Anti-Racism and Diverse Cultural Experiences Learning Project funded by the BC Ministry of Education. The goal of the project is to develop specific resources aligned with BC's K-12 curriculum that improve the representation of racialized communities and promote a more comprehensive understanding of anti-racism, human rights and diverse cultural experiences, histories and contributions in BC classrooms.

SCHOOL PROGRAMS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the VHEC transitioned its in-person and on-site school programs to online delivery via Zoom over the 2020/21 school year. Thanks to the VHEC's flexible and dedicated team of Holocaust survivor speakers and volunteer docents, nearly 4,500 students and teachers were reached through 55 online survivor speaker sessions and 41 online Pigeon workshop sessions. Some sessions were presented to students, teachers and administration in direct response to antisemitic incidents which occurred at their schools. The programs engaged students attending grades 6 through 12 in public, private and alternative school settings in Vancouver's Lower Mainland, northern and interior BC, as well as Alberta and Ontario. ■

What it Takes to be a Hero: A New Workshop Explores the Upstanders of the Past to Shape the Upstanders of the Future

BY AVREL FESTINGER

Recently, I have been watching a lot of superhero movies. My dad cajoled me into the Marvel Cinematic Universe, where I became instantly familiar with Spiderman, Captain Marvel, Black Panther and many other heroes that grace the screen. My entry into this cinematic world raised the question: what makes a hero? These individuals have super-powered brains and bodies, fighting crime supposedly like no ordinary person could. They have the tools, power and influence to make a true difference in their fictional societies. I, personally, do not have a magical hammer like Thor, or an indestructible shield like Captain America. It would seem that I do not have the skillset nor the tools of a hero. Even in the non-fictional world, I don't have the sway of a powerful politician, or the funds of a generous philanthropist. Therefore, I'll leave the saving and rescuing to others who do have those resources. Right?

Many bystanders of the present and the past subscribe to this mindset. Evidently, most do not believe that a superhero will save the day, but they may think that someone else will. They may question whether helping someone is their responsibility or whether they have the tools and skills to provide adequate help. This summer, in my role as a research assistant with the VHEC, I explored bystanders' perspectives in and beyond the Holocaust context. I learned that when someone needs help, we often question whether we are the right person for the job.

Meanwhile, the person who needs our help is left alone to fend for themselves.

The concepts of bystander inaction, heroes and upstanders (those who speak up in support of others), are the subject of a workshop currently in development under the supervision of Dr. Ilona Shulman Spaar. From Bystander to Upstander – You Can Make a Difference educates students from grades 6 to 12 about the courageous individuals who helped Jews during the Holocaust.

The workshop is divided into three parts. It starts with an introduction to the Holocaust, then is followed by a study of Jewish survivor Marion Cassirer's and non-Jewish rescuer Jan Verkerk's experiences. In the final

part, students are invited to consider the psychology of rescuers and bystanders and learn about the bystander effect.

Throughout the 90-minute presentation, students adopt the perspective of rescuers in order to understand why rescuers did what they did, what obstacles they had to overcome and what choices they had to make. Students do the same for bystanders, those who simply looked on and did nothing as millions of Jews were systematically murdered.

Students have the opportunity to reflect on bystander and rescuer actions during the Holocaust, as well as in their daily lives. For example,



Holocaust survivor Marion Cassirer, photographed at age nine. Reproduced with permission of Naomi Cassirer.



Students will learn about Jan Verkerk, member of the Dutch Resistance. Screenshot from the testimony of Jan V., 1995. AVT #112. Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. <https://collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/708>

in one activity, the presenter describes a hypothetical contemporary scenario: students find themselves in a group chat where an antisemitic message is shared. Students are asked to come up with an upstander response to this situation and suggest different ways they could stand up against antisemitism in the group chat. Students are encouraged to think about the impact of their decision to intervene or not. For example, how might the decision of a bystander affect the Jewish person in the group chat? How might an upstander influence the future actions (or inactions) of the people in the chat? Students learn that the bystander's choice to do nothing is in fact not a 'nothing' at all; their inaction has real consequences.

Throughout the workshop, students not only explore upstander and bystander perspectives, but are encouraged to identify the differences between the two perspectives. What makes one person watch Jewish persecution and another act against it? Spoiler alert: although there are some characteristics shared by rescuers, research suggests that anyone can be an upstander. However, there is a phenomenon that often gets in our way, preventing us from standing up for others: the bystander effect.

We often hear that we are our own worst enemy. When considering how bystanders think, this cliché seems to hold validity. The bystander effect dictates that the

more people there are around us, the less likely we are to help someone in need. This occurs for three reasons. The first is known as *diffusion of responsibility*. We often think that it is not our responsibility to aid someone in need. The second reason is known as *evaluation apprehension*, which means that we are concerned that if we help someone, others will think of us negatively. The third is *pluralistic ignorance*, which is when we convince ourselves that because people around us are not helping, the problem is not severe and the person in need does not actually need our help. All of these considerations illustrate that when it comes to helping others, we are indeed our own worst enemy. We come up with excuses and reasons as to why we should not be involved. It is a form of self-sabotage, hindering us from acting morally.

In our workshop we pose a question to the students, which I pose to you: how do we overcome the bystander effect?

Since the root of the problem seems to be ourselves, the best way to solve it is to alter our mindsets. We have the power to stand up for others, to help and to offer what we can. It does not matter if we do not have swords, magic, influence or power. Another cliché that I have found to be true through my research is this: anyone can make a difference. We all have both the power to be a bystander and the power to be an upstander. It is a choice, admittedly at times a difficult one. The bystander effect suggests that we like to take ourselves out of the equation and place responsibility on others. But in looking at the words and actions of rescuers of the past and countless upstanders today, we can come to understand that we have the power in ourselves to fight injustices. The VHEC hopes to leave students with this realization and a feeling of empowerment from the knowledge that anyone can be an upstander.

Just like in a superhero movie, the true power and influence to make a difference has been living inside us all along. ■

Avrel Festinger is the granddaughter of four Holocaust survivors. She is currently in her second year at McGill University where she majors in English literature and communication studies. Her position was funded by the Government of Canada's Young Canada Works in Heritage Organizations program.

We Are Harmless: An Arts-based Exploration of Holocaust Memory in Dresden

BY CAITLIN BURRITT

I lived in Dresden from 2015 to 2016. While there, I saw no artwork or statements from refugees or local Holocaust survivors. Instead, I saw anti-immigrant sentiment in the posters and protests of the anti-refugee group, Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA). I thought about the layers of history and memory in the city. What was being covered? What was being uncovered? Whose opinions were visible, whose were not? Often, the most marginalized voices were missing. As an auto-ethnographer and an artist, I wanted to use my privileged position to elevate the missing voices who were not given a platform and examine the platform provided to PEGIDA. When I returned to Canada, I studied in the University of Victoria's Holocaust Studies program and wrote "*We Are Harmless: An Arts-Based Autoethnographic Graphic Novel on Holocaust Memory in Dresden.*"

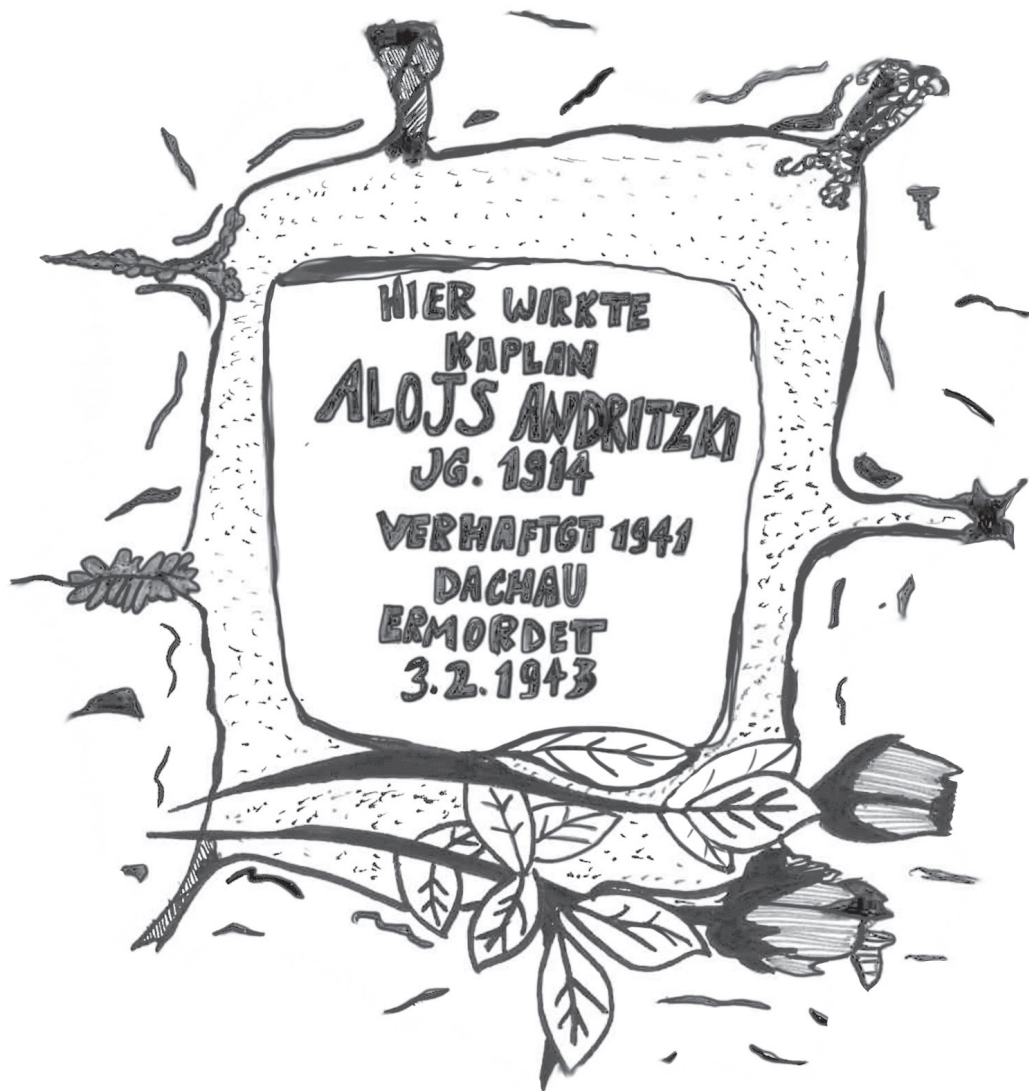
Holocaust survivor art played a major role in shaping my project; I was inspired by the hundreds of artworks I studied during a practicum at the Ravensbrück Memorial near Fürstenberg, Germany. The women who were imprisoned there created art in secret under the most brutal of conditions, as a form of resistance and at great personal risk to themselves. While the art ranged in subject matter, from the realities of life in a concentration camp to recipes and nature studies, the works were similar because of their single-page structure. These drawings, despite the limited resources that went into their creation, conveyed sequence and meaning within one image. Representing that artwork within my thesis was an act of witnessing; I chose the same single-page format for my panels. In doing so, I considered several questions regarding my method of representation. How can a place be represented through art? How does the history of the Holocaust connect to a landscape of memory in a city?

The narrative of *We Are Harmless* begins in 2015 and is structured along three themes: immigrants' experiences of Dresden, Holocaust memory in the city, and expressions of anti-immigrant responses and movements within Dresden. Part of *We Are Harmless* focuses on my Dresden roommate, Piruz, a PhD student who spoke English, German and Arabic fluently. We talked about feeling othered as immigrants in Dresden and trying to assimilate into German culture. One day Piruz asked me, "Do you know what is *Spitze*?", while stepping forward and forming a point with his hands, as if preparing to dive into water. I decided to draw Piruz's thoughts as well as his gesture as he offered his perspective on the Germans. "*Spitze*" evokes the moment I understood that although Piruz was more integrated into German society than I was, the colour of my skin allowed me to move through daily life in Dresden without harassment in a way that he never could. In that moment, we laughed together over our observations of typical German behaviour. What we interpreted as a harsh German gaze was turned back on itself. By visualizing my experience with Piruz, I attempted to provide a counternarrative to PEGIDA's anti-immigrant, racist claims.

Internationally, Dresden is known for being bombed by Allied Forces for three days in 1945. Whereas the bombing of Dresden is heavily integrated into the memory culture of the city, the legacy of the Holocaust is not. In 2018, I found one *Stolperstein* (stumbling stone) dedicated to Alojs Andritzki in front of the Dresden Cathedral. *Stolpersteine*, small brass plaques installed into the ground by artist Gunter Demnig, commemorate the lives of individual Holocaust victims at their last voluntary place of residence. Discovering Alojs' plaque, and looking at the information from the *Stolpersteine* website, I realized that most of the *Stolpersteine* in Dresden are in residential neighborhoods, unlikely to be seen the majority of the

For a long time, I was convinced there had been no Stolpersteine in Dresden when I lived there. That turned out not to be true. This was the only one I ever saw during a return trip.

A Stolperstein dedicated to Aloys Andritzki now lies at the entrance to Dresden Cathedral. He was chaplain there until he was arrested for criticising the Nazi regime. Aloys was beatified by the Catholic Church, in Germany he's called "Blessed Aloys."



During the commemoration ceremony, both German and Sorbian were spoken. Blessed Aloys was of the German Slavic minority, which likely did not help him when he was deported to DACHAU concentration camp. He was murdered there by lethal injection.

He is revered by east German Sorbs to this day.

city's population. This creates a minimal and difficult-to-find memorial landscape. I intended to visit Dresden again to search for memorials and finish gathering field notes, but the outbreak of the coronavirus prevented my return. "Blessed Alojs" was created by using Google Maps' satellite feature to find, witness and reproduce Alojs' Stolperstein from my home in Canada.

The third theme in *We Are Harmless* deals with expressions of anti-immigrant responses and movements within Dresden. I link these anti-immigrant sentiments to the absence of public memory and commemoration of the Holocaust. Besides the *Stolpersteine*, the only other commemorative effort I saw in Dresden was Rainer Opolka's 2016 public art exhibition, *Die Wölfe sind zurück?* (The wolves are back?), installed at the gathering place for PEGIDA's regular anti-refugee marches, euphemistically termed 'evening strolls' by participants. I was stunned



Stolperstein dedicated to Alojs Andritzki, Dresden Cathedral. [CC-BY-SA-3.0], via Wikimedia Commons.

by Opolka's work, suddenly faced with dozens of huge, iron wolf sculptures. As I moved through the installation, the sculptures progressed from wolves classified as "blind soldiers" and "haters," representing bystanders and low-level perpetrators, to increasingly anthropomorphic wolves with human qualities. These upright, violently posed wolves were called "Attack" and "NSU man," after the German extremist group National Socialist Underground. The exhibit guided onlookers to a wolf entitled "the leader," painted gold, with its arm raised in an unmistakable Nazi salute. Information panels explained that the wolves represented the pack mentality encouraged by PEGIDA, a mentality which led to an increase of violence against immigrants in Dresden.

From the earliest stages of planning my graphic novel, I knew I wanted to include Opolka's wolves, to have them represent the Nazi past being ever-present in Dresden. I created a visual persona, a self portrait, which allowed me to roam back and forth in time through the book, employing a technique I first discovered in an interview with Bernice Eisenstein.¹ I also created visual personas for the wolves, an antagonistic force in my graphic novel, not only because of what their physical forms represent, but because of their effort to confront and confuse my visual persona with a barrage of the phrase, "We are harmless." In this panel I use text to portray the overwhelming feeling I experienced when walking through Opolka's iron wolves. My visual persona is barely visible from behind the wolves, who take up the center of the panel.

The microcosm that is Dresden as represented in *We Are Harmless* serves as a cautionary tale of the dangers of letting the memory of the Holocaust go largely unaddressed. A lack of reckoning with the Holocaust can contribute to an environment where anti-refugee sentiments thrive. Encouraged by Opolka's use of

¹ Bernice Eisenstein, "Memories Seeded in Longings": An Interview with Bernice Eisenstein. *Studies in Canadian Literature*, interview by Ruth Panofsky, 2016. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/SCL/article/view/26275/1882519021>.



Caitlin Burritt, "Spitze," from *We Are Harmless*, 2020.

action-art to understand and confront an uncomfortable social reality and to advocate for better treatment of refugees, my graphic novel facilitates a dialogue about the legacy of the Holocaust and connects that legacy to contemporary issues of racism and prejudice in Dresden. Addressing uncomfortable truths and conversations is necessary within the field of Holocaust Studies, and in Holocaust education, especially in a time where the Holocaust is passing out of living memory. The passing of survivors will change the access we have to in-person eye-witness testimony, as after a certain point, there will be no more new spoken accounts or writings. However, there are thousands of artistic representations of the



Caitlin Burritt, "We Are Harmless," from *We Are Harmless*, 2020.

Holocaust drawn by those who experienced it, which could contribute immensely to the meaning and impact of traditional testimonies already gathered. As can be seen in the multiple layers of meaning in the panels of *We Are Harmless*, and its use of artistic representations to reflect upon research and lived experience, art, autoethnography and graphic novels are useful tools with which we can mediate important discussions and reflections and engage a diverse audience. ■

Caitlin Burritt is a recent graduate of the University of Victoria's master's program in Holocaust Studies. She is passionate about the use of art-as-testimony in Holocaust Studies, particularly regarding the sharing of underrepresented Holocaust experiences within the field. She worked for the VHEC as a research assistant in 2019, where she had the privilege of assisting with the creation of *Treasured Belongings: The Hahn Family & the Search for a Stolen Legacy*.

COLLECTIONS NEWS

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Archivist Shyla Seller presented a clip from a videotaped donor interview at the Association of Canadian Archivists' (ACA) annual conference in June 2021. In the early 1990s, Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society volunteers conducted interviews with donors to the VHEC's archival and museum collection. These interviews are important sources of information for our cataloguing and descriptive work today. In the clip presented to the ACA, Holocaust survivor Michel Mielnicki spoke about photographs and documents he donated to the VHEC. This interview, and the donation, occurred shortly after he had reunited with his brother, fifty years after they were separated at Auschwitz. After liberation, Michel found and reunited with his sister, immigrated first to Paris, and then Canada. They looked for their brother, unsuccessfully, not discovering that he had also survived and was living in Ukraine until after the fall of the iron curtain. Materials donated by Michel Mielnicki document his experience during and after the Holocaust, his attempts to locate his brother and their subsequent reunion. Description and cataloguing of these items is in process.

FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

The VHEC is pleased to announce it is a recipient of a multi-year grant from the Library and Archives Canada Documentary Heritage Communities Program. This grant will fund the enhancement and migration of Filemaker Pro catalogue and accession records describing diaries, photographs, ephemera, clippings, posters, identity and travel documents and correspondence, and other documentary residue of the lives of Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors who immigrated to Vancouver, BC.

The VHEC will standardize, expand and migrate its Filemaker Pro data into its web-based content management system: collections.vhec.org. Translation, transcription and digitization of key items will support

that work. The resulting finding aids and related records, time-coded summaries, translations and media representations will be made accessible in collections. [vhec.org](https://collections.vhec.org) and the data exported to community partner portals operated by memoryBC and the European Holocaust Research Institute networks.

A complete list of grant recipients is available here: <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/services/documentary-heritage-communities-program/Pages/funding-history-2021-2022.aspx>

REFERENCE AND OUTREACH

Students in UBC's German Representations of the Holocaust (GERM 426) course taught by Dr. Uma Kumar read memoirs and autobiographies and learned about Holocaust survivors who are associated with the University of British Columbia.

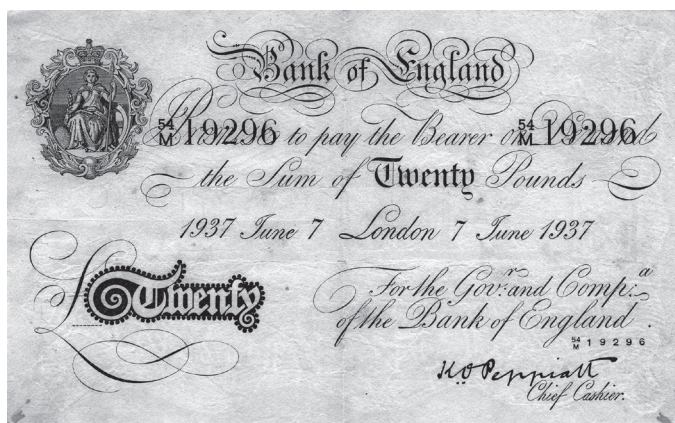
The students researched the lives of survivors based in Vancouver and discussed their numerous contributions to UBC and the Vancouver community. During the research process, students consulted materials from the VHEC's archives, library and testimony collections and conducted personal interviews.

Final essays written by students about Martha Salcudean, Robert Krell, Iza Laponce, Peter Suedfeld, Lillian Boraks-Nemetz and Gina Dimant are available to read on the course blog: <https://blogs.ubc.ca/holocaustliterature/>.

NEW IN FINDING AIDS

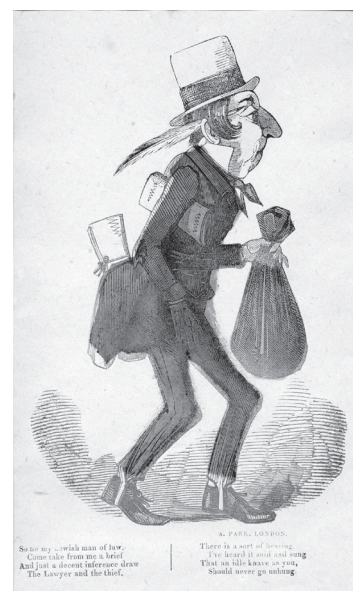
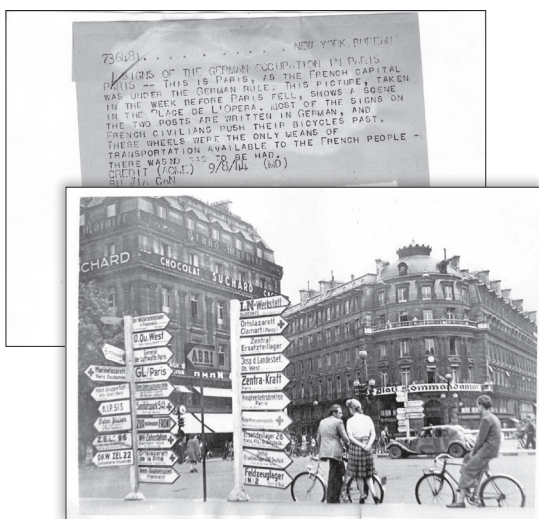
Newly described, translated and digitized materials are now available for research in the VHEC's online collections database at collections.vhec.org. These include postcards and other Nazi paraphernalia collected by Ronald Brown, antisemitic flyers and

postcards collected by Kit Krieger, Second World War-era propaganda posters, photographs, currency and other items collected by Dr. Peter N. Moogk, including a counterfeit British 20-pound note produced by Nazi Germany using the forced labour of concentration camp prisoners. Cataloguing of these items was prioritized to facilitate student access to antisemitic archival materials in support of the VHEC's newly released educational workshop on antisemitism. Irina Liberov has recently completed the translation of two letters donated to the VHEC by Asya Zozulya in 1993; the letters, written by her father, Pichos Zozulya, report eyewitness accounts of atrocities in Chudnov, Ukraine. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

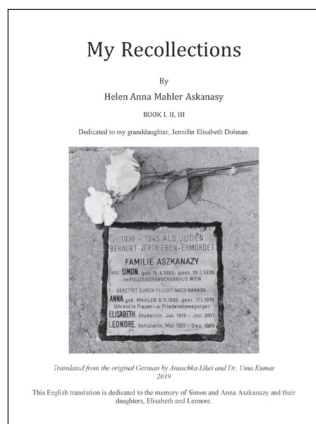
- 1 Propaganda poster displayed in the occupied Netherlands, circa 1940 to 1945. Donated to the VHEC by Dr. Peter N. Moogk in 2016. Item 2016.003.039.
- 2 Print engraving depicting a caricature of a Jewish lawyer, circa 1840. Donated to the VHEC by Kit Krieger in 2020. Item 2020.045.012.
- 3 Photograph of signs of the German occupation in Paris, Acme Newspapers, Inc., 1944. Donated to the VHEC by Dr. Peter N. Moogk in 2018. Item 2018.016.155.
- 4 Counterfeit British 20-pound note produced by a concentration camp prisoner as part of Operation Bernhard. Donated to the VHEC by Dr. Peter N. Moogk in 2019. Item 2019.081.001.



“My Recollections”: An Excerpt

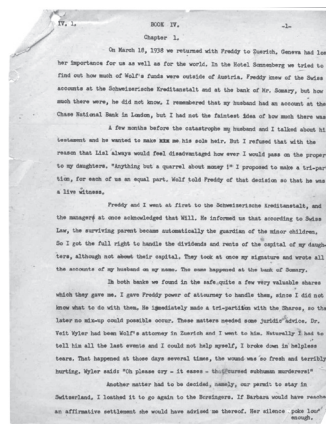
BY ANNA HELEN (NÉE MAHLER) ASZKANAZY

Vancouver resident Jennifer Elizabeth Dolman Roosma, granddaughter of Holocaust survivor Anna Helen Aszkanazy, donated her grandmother's memoirs, personal documents and photographs to the VHEC in March 2021. Aszkanazy wrote in her native German and in English; her memoirs are detailed and engaging stories of life in Vienna, her family, school and religious activities growing up, Viennese society, her marriage to Simon (“Wolf”) and their children, the family business, her travels, friendships and advocacy work on behalf of women's education, birth control and the rights of the stateless, and increasing antisemitism, fascism and Nazi terror. The memoirs were never published, and are publicly available for the first time through the VHEC's collections management database, courtesy of Jennifer Roosma and the translators she worked with who prepared a faithful, annotated translation of books one through three of the memoirs. Events described in the following excerpt, from book four, take place in Switzerland in late March 1938, shortly after Aszkanazy fled Vienna with her daughters.



Left: The translation of books I through III of the memoirs of Anna Helen (née Mahler) Aszkanazy. Translated by Anuschka Elkei and Dr. Uma Kumar. <https://collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/9347>

Right: A page from the manuscript of Book IV of the memoirs of Anna Helen (née Mahler) Aszkanazy. <https://collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/9348>



stared into emptiness and now and then shook his head. I explained, I must have a permit to stay. Weeks ago I had been at the immigration office, but Chief Eichberger had rejected me.

Now Consul Forster got up. “Have you a few hours to spend? I shall take you with me to Berne.” Quickly I said yes. “Then come along,” he said and went ahead. We took his elegant American car, a chauffeur in livery at the wheel and away we went, silent and quick. I knew Switzerland from many railway trips, not from the view of a motorcar. Mixed up by my quick decision, at first I did not look out the window but thought and thought about what I should say to Eichberger when he saw me again; he had told me distinctly enough: “We don’t want you here!”

Another matter had to be decided ... namely, our permit to stay in Switzerland.

So I went to the Austrian consul. In case he is a Nazi, I thought, then I’ll tell him what I am thinking of him. If he is a decent man, he will assist me. Consul Forster received me and I had to tell him what had happened to my husband. Again my nerves were too weak to hold my tears back. The consul did not say a word. He

Suddenly I was frightened. In which direction were we going? Maybe the consul is a cursed Nazi and planned to bring me back to Vienna, or at least to the Austrian border. I had not told Freddy or the children where I was going! Frozen in fear, I sat, my fists clenched. Desperately I tried to find out from the fleeting road signs where we were, whether we went north or south. I had not been enabled to drive our car; I was not trained to find out the direction from the sun. The way

went endlessly, but at last I recognized the deep abyss around which the city of Berne was built; I saw the hospital where I had once visited a friend. Relieved, I sank back. The consul up to then had sat silently next to me. When we halted in front of the immigration office, he said to me: "Please stay here for the time being. I'll try to straighten it out without you, only in an emergency will I call you, but be ready then." With that, he alighted.

I also exited the car and ran up and down. After an endless time the consul returned, smiling for the first time. "Everything is fixed! You and your daughters have permit to stay here for good." Crying was nearer to me than laughing. "Come along, we have to eat something," he said. I said, "I want to pay something for your assistance." He answered: "Well, if you like, give me twenty Swiss francs for my expenses which I incur for the other poor devils whom I have to help and who have nothing." I took 400 francs from my purse and gave them to him. "Masses of refugees are coming, please help them and if you need more, phone me." We ate our lunch and I told him what had happened in Vienna. His appetite stopped. "Unbelievable," he repeated again and again. "One is ashamed to be an Austrian."

He brought me back to Zurich and when I told the children and Freddy of my venture, we felt our first joy. But in spite of the success my fury against Eichberger had not abated, for I knew that it was our bank account which softened him, nothing else. A few days later I learned that Consul Forster had returned to Vienna. Months later we heard that the Nazis had put that most decent man into concentration camp Dachau! Those accursed murderers!

I had no time for sorrow. Just as it had been in Vienna, so the flood of refugees found me in Zurich. From where had they got hold of my address? Very likely one passed it on to the other. Five lads had passed over the Alps on skis; border officers got hold of them and imprisoned them. Now, they were in danger of being returned to Austria. They could obtain transit visas for France

if allowed to go to Zurich. One came to me and said Luhai had given them my address. "Oh, a Commie," I thought. But, I bought them five tickets for France. If a house burns, one does not ask when people rush out of it who is who. One helps. Period. On every corner I met acquaintances or refugees who accosted me and wanted help.

One day I ran into Baron Hans Groedel, an old friend. We both cried out. "In black?" he asked, aghast. I had bought a black cape which covered all my dresses. I told him what had happened and he shook my arms. "Don't cry and don't despair! We must stay alive, we must live to see those murderers hang! I'll go to France, I'll enter the army there. We MUST finish those bandits!"

I had to think of the poor democratic politician, Marie Elisabeth Lüders, who with those same words said she had to see the Nazis hang—she was herself now in a concentration camp. I had also to think of France and of that anti-Semite Claude Emile-Lorrant. I did not say anything to Baron Groedel. Everything seemed to me useless.

.....

That Nazi-messenger, whom Freddy had paid and sent to Vienna, returned with smuggled letters, documents and news for us given to him by Wolf's secretary, Thea Stiller. He told us a Nazi commissar was in our office and had taken everything away. In our apartment in the Neulingasse, an SS commander was living. He also brought us a letter from our brother Leo. Then he told us that Wolf had been condemned to be transported to Dachau on March 18, took his tie and—*krtch*—made a choking gesture, a look of sadistic glee in his eyes.

I knew that insane look. So many visitors to our peace exhibition had looked similarly at the atrocity pictures of World War I, which we thought to exhibit to frighten onlookers and imbue them with a loathing of war. After that experience we stopped, to avoid these perverted lust-feelings.



Anna Aszkanazy (left) and her husband, Simon ("Wolf") and their two daughters, Lisl and Lore, photographed near Vienna in 1937. Reproduced with permission from Jennifer Elizabeth Dolman Roosma.

Well, that particular Nazi-swine did not profit anything. As helpless as I used to cry sometimes, at that moment I looked through him into emptiness, cold and impassive, with a deadpan face. He returned to brass tacks. But I advised Freddy not to employ that dangerous and loathsome fellow again.

Leo's report about the end of my husband was terrible. Wolf had been found packing by SS agents who brought him to the police. A dozen storm troopers had returned with him to our apartment to look for "treasures," and although Wolf had told them there was no money there because everything was in the banks, they cut open all the easy chairs, tore out the wool and all the stuffing. The next day, Leo saw four trucks in front of our house and they took almost all our valuable furniture away.

Wolf had carried with him a little book with all his foreign accounts and that was taken away by the police.

Leo also wrote he had seen Wolf dead and that he had been suffocated. But Thea Stiller wrote she had also seen him dead but had not seen any signs of choking; his face had looked peaceful. He had been in the police prison in the ninth district of Hahngasse together with seven other victims in a cell made only for two people. How could he possibly commit suicide in such narrow space? She was told he had suffered a heart attack. Two months later we got the death certificate in which suicide was given as cause of his death. We read in the papers that the Nazis imprisoned all the clerks of the Jewish community and let them free again after two months. How could they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

Tuesdays Are the Most Wonderful of Days

BY JOY FAI

Tuesdays are the most wonderful of days. I look forward to them in a way that is difficult to express. Each Tuesday I hear a chorus of hellos back and forth on a Zoom call shared by child survivors of the Holocaust. The voices saying hello are dear to my heart. In 2019, I was blessed to have helped Robert Krell and Mariette Doduck organize a massive global gathering, under the auspices of the World Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants. Organizing this gathering was a year-and-a-half long process; I helped however I could. Along the way, I had the opportunity to speak to and meet many of our local Vancouver survivors. I worked with the children and grandchildren of these same survivors—the second and third generations. That gathering changed my life. It felt like I had somehow found my home. My niche. So much so that I am currently exploring Judaism and considering conversion.

Vancouver's child Holocaust survivors have met regularly for more than 30 years, but the pandemic has woven them together in an unbreakable way. Having survived the Shoah—the most unimaginable time in the history of our world—they again were isolated, hidden away from the world. These men and women survived death camps: Buchenwald and Auschwitz, Terezín and Ravensbrück; survived living in the Warsaw ghetto, survived being hidden with Christian families, in convents, forests, barns and caves, wherever they could find some semblance of safety. They suffered what is beyond a non-survivor's capacity to even imagine. One survivor told me that during this pandemic she keeps her front door wide open, so she always knows that she can go outside, that she is free. Another survivor still calls me regularly just to talk, the loneliness at times being impossible to bear. He hopes his experience will not be forgotten or lost, that what happened in the Shoah will be remembered. I am touched when I hear

his voice; the memory of his phone calls brings tears to my eyes even as I write this.

The child survivors meet weekly via Zoom. Children during the Shoah, they are in their late 70s, 80s and 90s today. Zoom has been a life saver; the technology was a bit of a struggle at first, muting, unmuting, all talking at once or no one talking, the strangeness of it. But their conversations have grown far more intimate this last year than in the past three decades of monthly in-person meetings. I have seen Robert light candles to commemorate Kristallnacht and Yom HaShoah with his fellow survivors. I have been there when a special meal is delivered to his door and he and the others remotely celebrate Passover or observe Hanukkah. I have seen tears fill Robert's eyes as he talks about what these weekly meetings mean to him.

Recently, the survivors have begun to share their stories on their calls. Though they have known each other for years, there is always something new, something deeper, to explore: the cruelty, the loss, the panic. The rage that remains. Most importantly, they talk about their need to ensure their stories are not forgotten. Somehow COVID-19 has provided them with the time, at last, to write down their experiences and share them with each other and their families. And hopefully, eventually, to share them with the world. I am not sure if these stories would have been written had we not all been living through a pandemic. Before, these survivors were busy living their best lives possible, many still working, teaching, attending commemorations and spending time with their children and grandchildren.

These survivors grew up to become successful authors and teachers, doctors and lawyers, business owners

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

then have known in all the terrible mix-up what really happened to Wolf? However it happened—about this we all are agreed—it was murder. How? That we don't know up to now.

After hearing all this I wrote through the whole night a long and detailed report for Lotte Whyte in London. I knew she had contact with English newspapers, I wanted to let the public know what horrid acts those subhuman monsters were perpetrating. So that all the surrounding countries should break off relations with them. I knew also that millions of victims cannot draw one single tear from people, because they cannot imagine what really was happening. But one single case, dramatically exhibited, can cause millions of people to help. How terrible were, for instance, illegitimate mothers treated by patriarchy. Murder and assassination were their lot, and infanticide, they never could hope for mercy. Came Goethe and with his fictive figure of Gretchen, he caused the whole of Europe to revise the laws about illegitimate motherhood, and also about infanticide. No girl was since put to death because of Gretchen. Although Goethe himself, as minister of state in Weimar, had put his signature on an infant's death sentence!

I hoped Wolf's terrible end would help to open the eyes of the people in the West and induce them to help. Chief of all it should be prevented that more victims should fall at the hands of the Nazi-monsters. In my naivety, I should have better learned something of Peachum's beggar-wisdom: that no true suffering could possibly impress people... only faked pains draw money from passers-by. ■

Anna Helen (née Mahler) Aszkanazy was born in 1893 in Vienna, Austria, and was active in writing, feminism and political activism. She immigrated to British Columbia with her two daughters in 1938.

and entrepreneurs, recipients of awards and recognition for their dedication to speaking out for social justice, against hatred and antisemitism, so future generations will never again have to face what they and their families faced. Working with Robert these past years, I have learned so much about the Holocaust and its atrocities. But I have also learned about the resilience and strength, courage and commitment that Holocaust survivors have within them.

I only wish that someone was recording these weekly Zoom calls, for they are a part of our history. It is a film that must be seen; a story that must be told. This story is important not just because the Vancouver child Holocaust survivors are important, but because their conversations are a testament to the history of the Shoah and its life-long reverberations. These survivors must continue to be heard and witnessed, for in witnessing we have the duty and responsibility to carry their stories forward. For now, I am grateful that these meetings continue.

Each week, when Robert reappears after his weekly Zoom call to face the workload on his desk, he is somehow renewed. I believe that being able to share his most private thoughts with others who deeply understand helps him to continue to heal. He will sometimes tell me briefly about another remarkable story he heard on the call. And while I want to ask him all about it, I respect his privacy and the privacy of the other survivors. These meetings are giving him something that no one or nothing else can. And I am blessed to know that it is Tuesday once again. ■

Seventeen years ago, Joy Fai walked into an interview for a job as assistant to Dr. Robert Krell. He gave her a copy of *Night*, by Elie Wiesel, to read. Thus began her Holocaust education, which continues today.

Two Poems

BY ANDREW KARSAI

glass of water (for my sister)

retreating germans
paused for a breather
in the same house
where we were hiding

they cursed the war
while the wounded moaned *wasser wasser*
wasser wasser the wounded moaned

a nine-year-old girl
fetched them a tiny *lebensraum*

she did not ask
why did you come
she did not ask
how many women and children
did you murder in the east
or how many in the north

they did not ask
what religion this girl
with dark braids
belonged to

suddenly
it wasn't important

numbers (reflection)

in the tiny jewish prayer house
in the spectacular slovak village
my father sat in seat number eight

my mother also prayed
at seat number eight
in the women's section

being practical
she asked the almighty
to stop playing hide and seek

some years after the war
my father died
the calendar showed march fourteenth

three decades later
the creator picked march fourteenth
for my dear mom

I carry sorrow in my heart
march fourteenth¹ and double eight²
few others
still carry hate

Andrew Karsai's sister Judita Gaborava, pictured here at eight years old, remembers being slapped by a man because the placement of her star, partially hidden by the lapel of her coat, did not comply with regulations. Judita lives in Bratislava, Slovakia. ■

Andrew Karsai is a retired civil engineer who immigrated to Canada in 1968. From the fall of 1944 through the spring of 1945 he and his sister Judita lived in hiding with relatives of Pavel Hronec. Karsai's parents survived the Shoah in the mountains; his mother lost five siblings and their families, and his father lost his older brother.



¹On March 14, 1939, following talks between Hitler and the Nazi collaborator Jozef Tiso, a new state called Slovakia was created and put under Nazi protection. This paved the way for the rapid genocide of the Slovak Jewry.

²Fourteen and 88 are numbers used by neo-Nazis as coded signals of their ideology.

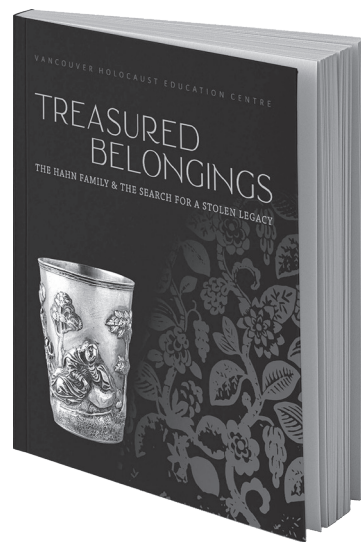
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Catalogue supported by the Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany in Vancouver, Diana and Benny Kanter and family, and the Azrieli Foundation. With profound gratitude to the Hahn-Hayden family for entrusting the VHEC with their materials and memories for the purpose of advancing Holocaust education and remembrance.

Just One Step Ahead: A Story of Survival

BY LOUISE STEIN SORENSEN

I was born in a large mansion in Rotterdam on a very cold night in February 1929, the second of two daughters. My mother's family had resided in The Netherlands for at least 300 years; my father's family was originally from Brody, Galicia, though my father, Isidor Stein, grew up in Vienna. He immigrated to Holland after the First World War and started a fur coat factory.

The earliest memory I have of the looming Second World War is from sometime after 1933. My father and I were sitting in the living room, listening to a man on the radio yell in barking, Austrian-accented German "Sieg Heil, Sieg Heil," to a noisy crowd. My dad hissed and swore furiously, stomping his foot hard on the floor.

In June 1942, our home was confiscated, and we were taken by bus to the Amsterdam Jewish ghetto. On the way, we were driven to a team of Nazi doctors waiting to examine us for venereal diseases. Of course, this was only intended to humiliate us. The men and women were separated, and my mother and my sister both had to strip. My mother looked sternly at the doctor, pointed at me and said, "Do not touch her, she is too young." Surprisingly, he complied.

By September, raids and deportations increased in the ghetto. Armed and helmeted police dragged individuals of all ages out of their homes and carted them away in trucks. The fur industry was on a Gestapo exemption list that temporarily protected us from being taken.

One bad night, we learned that virtually our entire extended family had been deported. At that time, we did not yet know about the slave labor camps and gas chambers, but we realized something awful was going on because even elderly people and little babies were taken.

By the end of January 1943, the exemption list was eliminated. We had to hide. But where could one go? How could one get forged identity papers? My father found temporary refuge in the home of a colleague on the canals. We stayed together in one room; I remember late one night, in desperation, my father saying, "We should do away with ourselves." He thought that my sister and I were sleeping but we had heard him! My mother said we must try harder to find a way out.

They managed to contact a man outside of the city with connections to the underground. The four of us were snuck out of Amsterdam one at a time. The railway station was heavily guarded, many people were stopped and checked. We evaded these controls and, for more than two and a half years, ended up in different hiding places, always just one step ahead of the pursuing Nazis.

At my first hiding place, I stayed with a family with five sons aged nine to 18. I was not made to feel comfortable, and felt disoriented after seven months of turmoil. The family did not understand my condition; they only saw an ordinary teenage girl. The boys bullied me and did not believe the cover story they'd been told. I had to clean toilets and perform other housekeeping tasks. There was not much food. One day, when the rest of the family was away, the father of the family said to me, "I bet you would like to take a real bath." It was an unusual opportunity; I gingerly replied, "yes." With no hot water in the house, we filled the tub with cold water, and added several kettles of boiled water. He offered to wash me. Feeling embarrassed, I started to laugh, and said "No, of course I am 13 and I can wash myself quite well." I locked the bathroom door leading to the hallway. But when I tried to lock the other door leading to the master bedroom, he said, "No, that lock is broken." Luckily, I was saved

NO LONGER ALONE

from whatever ugliness which might have happened when, at that exact moment, the rest of the family returned home. I was lucky; some teenagers were sexually assaulted while in hiding during the war.

We had a price of 7.50 guilders on our heads and changed hiding places several times to avoid being sold off. I hid in around six or seven spots, and in some ways, the struggle of puberty was on my mind more than the fear of being discovered. When you are that age you don't really believe in your own demise.

In the fall of November 1943, my parents were put in contact with a man in the resistance, Hoogendoorn, who was associated with a group connected to the Christian Reformed Church of Apeldoorn. Through Mr. Hoogendoorn, our family arrived at the home of Jan de Pater and his wife. The de Paters had been married for only five years when they took us in; both had previously been widowed. They fought constantly, which caused us great concern. At the height of their fights, she would threaten to leave him and go to her sister, a terrifying prospect. With bright blue eyes consumed by fury, she would yell, "You only married me for my house and furniture!" He would yell back, "Your man has hung himself! You have the devil in your eyes!"

Mrs. de Pater belonged to the mainstream Dutch Reformed Church, while Mr. de Pater adhered to the small, fundamentalist Gereformeerde Gemeente. He wore only black, was poor, barely literate, and all he ever read was the Bible. He never showed any fear about what could happen to him for helping us. Hiding us became the de Pater's main source of income. They lived in a farm worker's house

on a small lot on the outskirts of Apeldoorn, the small house and barn were under the same roof. Above the barn was a hayloft and, adjacent to it, a small attic room divided in two sections that could be accessed via a door in the far corner of the living room. The door led to a staircase and our hideout. We were in constant fear of being detected and denounced to the Nazis, so my father and Mr. de Pater dug a hole in the dirt floor of a closet in the corner of the barn. It had a camouflaged lid that closed with a hook, and was just large enough for the three of us to slip into.

Most of that time I sat on the floor, daydreaming. My mother read the Bible from cover to cover and kept repeating, "There is no God." Whenever someone dropped over for coffee, we had to be very, very quiet.



The house where Louise Stein Sorensen hid in Apeldoorn, photographed in 1946. Donated to the VHEC by Louise Stein Sorensen in 2019. Item 2019.047.038. <https://collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/7744>



The Stein family pictured after the war, September 1945. From left to right: sister Eleonore, mother Marianne (Jeanne) van Dam, Louise and her father, Isidor Stein. Donated to the VHEC by Louise Stein Sorensen in 2019. Item 2019.047.037. <https://collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/7743>

If we needed to cough or sneeze, we dove under the blankets on our bed to muffle the sound. Once, a young tailor with his wife and six-year-old daughter arrived at the de Pater home. There was no way of knowing whether these people could be trusted. After trying to hide for an entire day, we realized that continuing was impossible. We took a chance and let them in on our secret. Luckily they were anti-Nazi and played along.

Mr. Hoogendoorn came to visit us occasionally. He would bring money, forged ration cards, as well as news from the war effort. The winter of 1944–45 was very cold, and food became even more scarce than before. For a time, our only sustenance was the syrup and pulp from sugar beets. Mr. Hoogendoorn was a wonderful source of strength, and gave us hope for a day of liberation. We learned of D-Day in the summer of 1944, but unfortunately, had to remain hidden until

Canadian troops showed up on April 17, 1945. On that day we snuck outside and hid in a trench that my father had dug in the field, while Canadian artillery shelled the area around the house. Eventually, we were liberated.

By mid-May, my parents and I finally managed to reach the home of my mother's uncle Abraham who had survived and still lived in his Hilversum home. We had nowhere else to go. I remember the day his only daughter, a physician, returned home. She had barely managed to survive Auschwitz. The only other relative who returned was one of my mother's aunts, a registered nurse, who survived Theresienstadt. All our other relatives, on both my father's and mother's sides, were murdered. ■

Louise Stein Sorensen is an active Holocaust remembrance speaker in Vancouver's Lower Mainland. She speaks in memory of her family. Her sister, Eleonore, is 98 years old. A longer version of this story is forthcoming in the ADL Hidden Child Foundation newsletter.

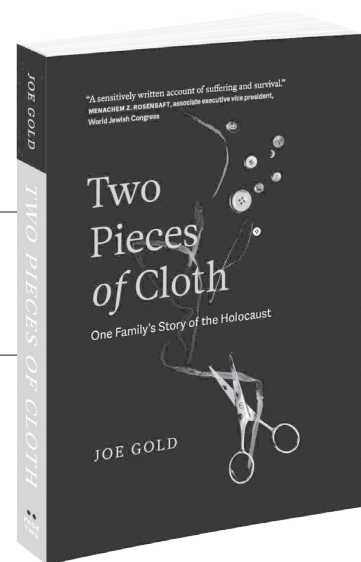
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Throughout the last year, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre has seen a significant demand for our programs. Your generous donations support us in expanding our reach and making available new and flexible teaching resources, allowing us to engage more young people, educators, researchers, and members and the broader community.

Our heartfelt thanks also go out to Joe Gold and his friends and family for their generosity in raising matching funds for this campaign.

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Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions.

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Ryan Chapman, Eyal Daniel, Mark Figuera, Stephanie Henderson, Lindsay Hutchison, Dale Martelli, Kit Krieger, Andrea Webb, Anna-Mae Wiesenthal, Emily Winckler.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Fran Alexander, Alex Buckman, Valerie Levitt Dolgin, Noah Duranseaude, Bonnie Elster, Chris Friedrichs, Debby Freiman, Norman Gladstone, Sharon Handelsman, Helen Heacock-Rivers, Ethel Kofsky, Chris Kowal, Shoshana Krell Lewis, Kit Krieger, Rachel Lando, Ella Levit, Robert Levitt, Mattie Lewis, Irina Liberov, Janice Masur, Herb Mills, Agnieszka Stadnik, Al Szajman, Ronen Tanne, Stan Taviss, Marg Van Wielingen, Peter Zetler.

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

TREASURED BELONGINGS

THE HAHN FAMILY & THE SEARCH FOR A STOLEN LEGACY



EXHIBITION ON VIEW UNTIL JUNE 2022



**OPEN BY APPOINTMENT
WEDNESDAYS
10 AM TO 1 PM**

We have implemented visiting procedures and physical distancing measures for your safety, and ours. We ask that all visitors review and follow the procedures and code of conduct outlined on our website and onsite.

CONTACT INFO@VHEC.ORG OR 604-264-0499 TO SCHEDULE A BOOKING. LIMIT 4-6 PEOPLE.

SAVE
THE
DATE

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST SOCIETY
FOR EDUCATION & REMEMBRANCE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2021 | 7 PM

LOCATION & ACCESSIBILITY DETAILS TBA

Everyone welcome to attend. Must be a member in good standing to vote.

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE
50-950 West 41st Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7 Canada

