

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

ZACHOR

*Daniel Schubert on his grandmother,
Martha, and being the only Jewish
student in a Coquitlam high school*

FALL 2022

UBC AND THE VHEC PARTNER TO GIVE
GRADUATE STUDENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY

BUT I LIVE: PRODUCING A SURVIVOR-
CENTRED HOLOCAUST GRAPHIC NOVEL

EXPLORING PROPAGANDA
IN THE VHEC COLLECTION

VANCOUVER
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Kristallnacht Commemoration

NOVEMBER 9, 2022 • 7 PM

CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL
989 W 28TH AVENUE, VANCOUVER



FEATURING REMARKS BY

**The Honourable
Irwin Cotler**

CANADA'S SPECIAL ENVOY ON
PRESERVING HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE
AND COMBATTING ANTISEMITISM

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.

VANCOUVER
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FALL 2022

ZACHOR

Zachor is the Hebrew
word for remember.

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Dear readers,

With Fall and the promise of a new year on the horizon, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre looks forward to a season of engaging students and community through an array of inspiring offerings.

We are exceptionally proud to partner with the University of Victoria on *But I Live*, a graphic novel featuring the illustrated account of local survivor David Schaffer, co-created with artist Miriam Libicki. In her article, Professor Charlotte Schallié details this significant survivor-centered project. Our engagement with post-secondary partners is further highlighted in Professor Richard Menkis' contribution to this issue, about his UBC students' interactions with the VHEC during a course on public history. We are proud to support the innovative work taking place at local universities and share with our community the book, research guides and podcasts created during these projects.

We hope that you will join us for our forthcoming programs, including the High Holidays Cemetery Service featuring Daniel Schubert, the grandson of survivors. In his contribution to this issue, Schubert writes about being a descendant confronted with antisemitism, both overt and subtle, at school in the pre-internet era. Reflecting on how dynamics have changed with the proliferation of online hate, Schubert suggests: "This is why Holocaust awareness and education is more vital than ever; so that when kids eventually hear the well-established tropes and lies of antisemitism, they'll have an armour of knowledge with which to fend it off."

The impact of antisemitism on young people that Schubert describes has motivated our upcoming exhibition on Nazi-era propaganda. Featuring materials from the VHEC's collection, this timely project will foster students' critical engagement with imagery and language, both historical and contemporary. Young Canada Works research assistant Jasmin Ghorbani writes about her explorations of this topic, while local scholar Sebastian Huebel shares new research on the gendered nature of Nazi propaganda. This fall, we also look forward to re-presenting our 2018 *In Focus* exhibition—about the Holocaust through the VHEC collection—highlighting a number of new acquisitions.

We are honoured that Professor Irwin Cotler will be joining our community for the upcoming Kristallnacht commemorative lecture, presented in partnership with Congregation Beth Israel. Please mark your calendars for November 9 and we hope that you will join us.

Finally, we are thrilled to announce that, thanks to matching contributions from the Krell family and a group of committed donors, we exceeded our fundraising goal for our 2022 Annual Campaign. Thank you to you all, our community of members, for your support—we truly could not do our work without you.

Wishing you all a meaningful and healthy New Year ahead, from our team to your families.

Sincerely,



Nina Krieger
Executive Director

VANCOUVER
HOLOCAUST
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HIGH HOLIDAYS

CEMETERY SERVICE

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2022 • 11 AM

SCHARA TZEDECK CEMETERY
2345 MARINE DRIVE, NEW WESTMINSTER



Photo by Birdie Hamilton

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Daniel Schubert

DIRECTOR OF THE AWARD-WINNING SHORT FILM, *MARTHA*,
AND MEMBER OF THE THIRD GENERATION

PRESENTED BY THE VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE, SCHARA TZEDECK CONGREGATION, AND JEWISH WAR VETERANS.

Typical Ignorance

BY DANIEL SCHUBERT



Daniel Schubert wearing a shirt belonging to his grandfather, with his grandmother, Martha Katz. Film still from *Martha*, 2020. Used with permission.

I was about five years old when the tattoo of numbers and letters on my grandmother's arm first piqued my interest. I asked my mom why Grandma Martha had a tattoo. She said that back in the Second World War, she and Grandpa Willie were both in something called "concentration camps." In my youthful naïveté, I literally thought concentration camps were camps where people went into tents and "concentrated" on something really hard. (Don't judge me too harshly; my only exposure to the word "concentrate" was watching reruns of the Alex Trebek daytime game show, *Concentration*.)

As I grew older, the reality of what my grandparents went through was shockingly normalized. I accepted that this

thing my family called the Holocaust, was simply part of the fabric of my family's history. They talked about it semi-regularly and I gradually became aware of the unfathomable, horrific trauma that my grandparents and their families endured. The craziest twist is that, if not for the Holocaust, I wouldn't exist today. My grandparents were from completely different parts of what was then known as Czechoslovakia, and met in Vienna after being liberated by US troops. They would most likely never have met and my mother, Sharon, would not be alive, if not for the Holocaust.

Growing up hearing my grandparents' awful stories of evil made me highly sensitive to any sort of antisemitism

at school. My mom told me about when she was in elementary school in Winnipeg in the 1950s; kids would throw rocks at her and call her a “dirty Jew,” among other things. To her, anti-Jewish sentiments didn’t just happen in the 1930s and 40s in Europe, they happened here in Canada—the very place her family came to run away from antisemitism. Sadly, her story is not uncommon; the Holocaust may have ended, but Jews around the world were, and are, still subject to insidious attacks.

When I was in Grade 3, a kid in my class named Josh had a fascination with drawing swastikas. He’d show these drawings to classmates and me. Although I was only eight years old, I felt very hurt by this. To add insult to injury, I considered Josh a friend. One day I worked up the courage to confront him about it. He shrugged me off and kept drawing the swastikas. When I got home from school I was upset and told my mom. The next day she talked to the teacher. The teacher, in turn, spoke with Josh and asked him not to draw these swastika symbols anymore. Josh stopped drawing them, but not before telling the other kids in class that I was “a momma’s boy” and ceasing to be my friend. I felt sad and embarrassed, but knew what I did was right. My grandparents didn’t go through all that for nothing. Looking back, I don’t think Josh was evil or even a racist, because, really, how could you call an eight-year-old kid a racist? Antisemitism has to come from somewhere; maybe he heard it from his parents, the media or things he heard around the house. He probably didn’t know what the Holocaust even was. But back then, losing Josh as a friend was a seismic event that for the first time made me feel different from the kids around me. Probably the same way my mom felt when her classmates threw rocks at her and called her a “dirty Jew.”

When I was in Grade 9, *South Park* emerged as a comedy phenomenon. “Oh my God, they killed Kenny!” t-shirts were ubiquitous around school and kids obsessively quoted the show. The popularity of *South Park* produced an unfortunate side effect, at least in my high school: an increase in antisemitic jokes. I would be willing to wager many other Jewish kids around this time noticed

the same thing. On the show, Cartman, a loudmouthed jerk and one of the four main characters, would often rip on his friend Kyle for being Jewish, usually calling him a “dirty Jew.” Cartman was a purposefully racist and ignorant character and adults who watched the show knew this. But did the kids my age know? I’m not so sure. At my Coquitlam high school there were around 1,500 students. Out of all those kids, I knew of only one girl who was Jewish like me. And the trouble was, though I “got” the character of Cartman and knew co-creator Matt Stone was himself a Jew, other kids at school started parroting his racist taunts, only without the irony. I heard kids say to each other, “quit being a Jew” and “cheap Jew.” And like Cartman, and Josh, these kids probably didn’t know anything about Jewish history or the Holocaust; it was just typical ignorance.

None of this racist language was directed at me, because I told few people I was Jewish. Like my mom before me, I was a little afraid of telling people about my background, in case they aimed their jokes at me. So I kept quiet. Gradually people found out and the situation climaxed near the end of the school year when a kid in my class drew a swastika on a piece of paper and proudly held it up for me to see, laughing with his buddy. I felt very sad and very “other.” Just like that time in Grade 3, there was, yet again, a drawing of a swastika thrust in my face. My grandparents and their families went through unimaginable horror and persecution because of their religion. Fifty-five years later, I was face to face with the same language and the same symbols. But I knew, even at 14, that these kids probably weren’t bad people and didn’t really hate Jews. Antisemitism can be nebulous. Back when I was in high school, the internet was still in its infancy. Now, as we all know, the internet has become a rabbit hole portal to whatever misinformation you need to support your beliefs. This is why Holocaust awareness and education is more vital than ever; so that when kids eventually hear the well-established tropes and lies of antisemitism, they’ll have an armour of knowledge with which to fend it off.

Daniel Schubert is a writer and director based in Vancouver. His film *Martha*, about his grandmother’s experiences at Auschwitz, can be viewed online at nfb.ca.

UBC and the VHEC Partner to Give Graduate Students a Unique Opportunity

BY RICHARD MENKIS

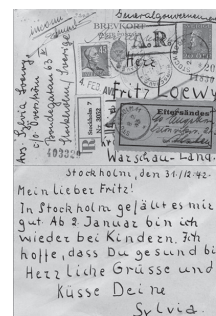
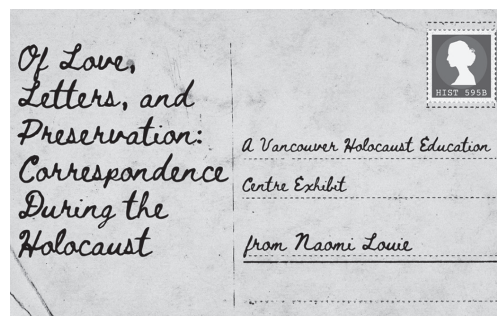
In the Fall of 2021, I had the opportunity to introduce seven graduate students from the UBC Department of History to the VHEC. The course, in a department that focusses on the academic training of historians, explored the theory and practice of public history. Part of the rationale for the course was practical. Not all graduate students will search out and find jobs in the academy, and this course offered students a chance to think of the alternatives, such as museum or public-facing media work.

But the heart of the course was the exploration of what it means to be a historian. Should the historian become involved in public debates of the issues of the day, and how? From the readings, and from our discussions, we emphasized how historians engaged in public history should not consider it a simplification of academic history. As historians, we must learn to listen to the questions of the public, and pay close attention to the witnesses of history, whether they give interviews or donate documents and photographs. Historians, in short, must learn to share authority in the creation of historical narratives.

The course was structured to give students a chance to read about how historians have become involved in public-facing work, and why. We studied the history of certain museums, how they presented their narratives, and visited

three museums and spoke to curators. The students followed up the visits with responses to the narratives of those museums. We also studied another form of public history, the podcast. Its history is much shorter than the history of museums, and podcasting is more nimble than a museum exhibit because it can deal with issues in a timely fashion and is less costly to produce. Here too we read about the history of specific podcasts that focus on history, listened to several episodes, and wrote up responses by answering a series of prompts.

The challenges of public history became more concrete to the students with the creation of their own public-facing work. The students had two projects. In groups, they created three research guides, one on personal documents such as diaries and correspondence, another on Holocaust photography and a third on Nazi and antisemitic propaganda. These research guides, reviewed and edited by me and Caitlin Donaldson, are now up on the VHEC's online collections catalogue for its users. For their second projects, the students drew on their research guides and created individual projects exploring the topics of their guides, with three students creating podcasts, and four students creating PowerPoint exhibits. These projects have also been posted on the VHEC's blog: vhc.org/latest-news/.



UBC student Naomi Louie and her slide show exhibit about correspondence in the VHEC collection.



the drafts, and edit the guides and individual projects. The Department of History provided the support to hire Georgia Twiss as a research associate and podcasting consultant. The Department also provided funding for visits—real and virtual—to the BC Sports Hall of Fame and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, and allowed for the hiring of Shelley Butler, Letitia Henville and Danielle Barkley for seminars on museological dreaming and career directions and resources.

Selected student reflections:

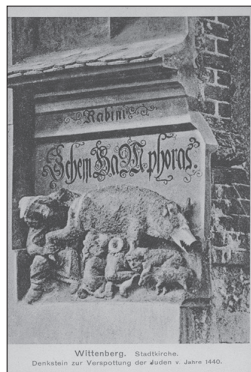
“The whole process, from viewing several digital archives and collections available on the VHEC website... made me think very hard about the little details that make a big difference in public history projects... It was both refreshing and productive to work with highly knowledgeable people at the VHEC, outside of the university, to create an exhibit that has the potential to benefit and educate audiences beyond the institution that we are trained in...”

“I am particularly impressed by the VHEC, especially their archives. I appreciated the opportunity to work with the Centre through our class. It allowed me to build my own connection with the Centre and to explore and learn from them at my own pace.”

“I hope that I have helped provide a useful tool for researchers at the VHEC and I feel like I have pushed myself to work out of my comfort zone, which I appreciate and has helped me grow in my professional life.”

“This class has prompted me to further examine the role of the historian in approaching histories of trauma, or narratives surrounding cultural trauma and contemporary legacies of inequity. The bulk of this class has been a creative and personal exercise in drawing out better practices in navigating the relationship between empathy, history and public education.” ■

Richard Menkis is a historian of the Jewish experience and teaches in the Department of History at UBC.

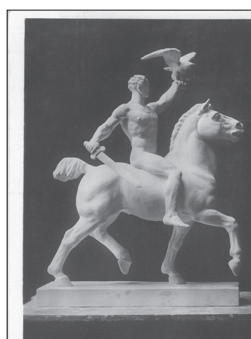


Old antisemitism, new age

A souvenir postcard from 1915 depicting the Judensau sculpture engraved into the walls of Stadtkirche Wittenburg. It depicts a Jewish rabbi and children sucking on the teats of a female pig. The caption reads “Memorial stone for the mockery of Jews v. Year 1440.”

Antisemitic Judensau souvenir postcard (Germany, 1915). Kit Krieger antisemitic literature collection, [2020.045.007](#)

To this day, the sculpture remains on the walls of the church, which has been a World Heritage Site since 1996.



Souvenir postcard from Kunsterhaus, Vienna, 1941-1945

A postcard depicting a sculpture by Otto Hofner at the Kunsterhaus in Vienna. It is an example of Reich-era neoclassicism.

The Reich drew heavily on Ancient Greek aesthetics in its art and architecture. There was particular interest in sculptures of the male body. The toned, chiselled, and muscular bodies represented Nazi ideals of “Aryan beauty,” which would become a major feature of pro-Nazi propaganda.

Peter N. Moogk Second World War history collection, [2018.016.315](#).

UBC student Shehroze Ahmed Shaikh and his slide show exhibit about propaganda in the VHEC collection.

The course received the financial and personal support of many agencies and individuals, including the Government of Canada’s Innovative Work-Integrated Learning program¹ and CEWIL Canada’s iHUB. The students and I are especially appreciative of the coordinating and conceptualizing done with the VHEC’s Nina Krieger and Caitlin Donaldson, who worked closely with the students to point to resources, comment on

¹ The opinions and interpretations in this publication are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Government of Canada.

But I Live: Producing a Survivor-Centred Holocaust Graphic Novel

BY CHARLOTTE SCHALLIÉ

Four Holocaust survivors and three graphic artists worked tirelessly to co-create a series of three autobiographical graphic novels about one of the darkest times in human history. This multi-year global effort culminated in a beautifully rendered, one-of-a-kind book that frames the enduring lessons of the Holocaust: *But I Live: Three Stories of Child Survivors of the Holocaust*.

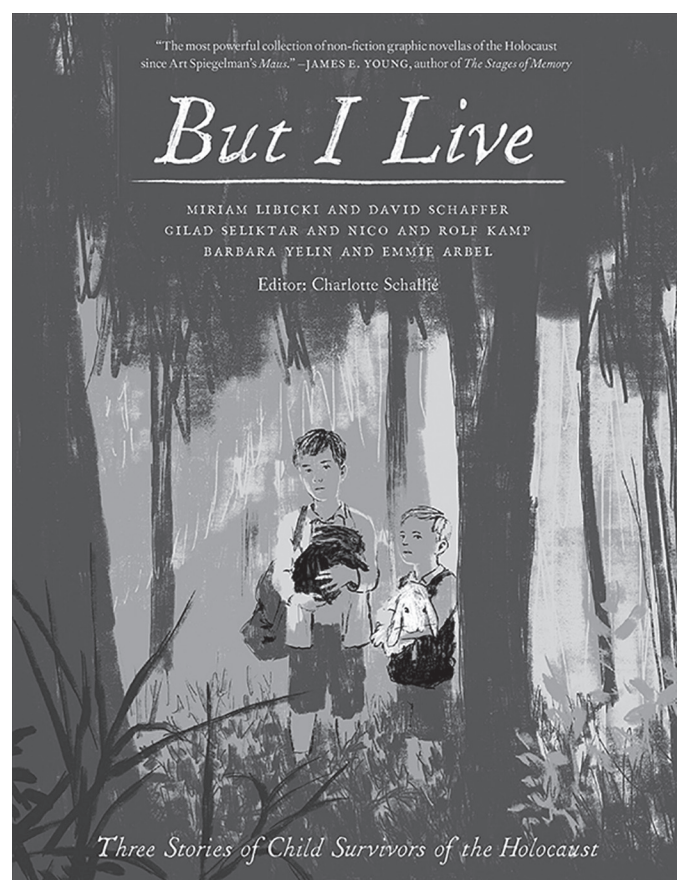
Many people in North America have learned about the history of the Holocaust through survivor stories that are repeated in popular culture, which largely focus on survival in the concentration camps or experiences of hiding in Nazi-occupied territory. The three stories in

But I Live complicate these mainstream narratives by exploring complex topics such as the burden of memory, the need to testify, the ripple effects of trauma and the impact of the Holocaust on descendants of survivors. As historical documents, they are also important for centering the survivors' experiences and enabling them to tell their own stories.

The enormity of the crimes committed during the Holocaust is well documented, yet the majority of records that we have were largely produced by the Nazis and their collaborators. These are important historical sources, but a sole focus on documentation produced by perpetrators ignores the value of survivors as living knowledge keepers. Grounding the history of the Holocaust in the knowledge and living memory of those who survived helps show its relevance and urgency for understanding the gross human rights violations of the current moment.

The survivor-centred approach exemplified in *But I Live* honours the integrity and humanity of lived experience while respecting a person's right to tell their own story. Building on the foundational research of oral historian Henry Greenspan and other survivor-centred projects, we developed a community-engaged, collaborative and trauma-informed approach that focused on ethical testimony collection practices and arts-based co-creation. We were extremely fortunate to work with Miriam Libicki, Barbara Yelin and Gilad Seliktar, three wonderful artists who treated the four survivors and their life stories with compassion, care, tenderness and love.

Eliciting experiences and memories of extreme human suffering from the survivors necessitated a research process and practice that privileged their safety by



minimizing the risk of re-traumatization, managing potential triggers and providing sustained support for all participating project partners. This approach ensured that we—the stewards of survivor memories—honoured what we felt was our obligation and duty to amplify the voices of the Holocaust survivors.

In Canada, where teaching and learning about the Holocaust is not mandated in high schools, we hope that the visual storytelling work in *But I Live: Three Stories of Child Survivors of the Holocaust* will appeal to youths and young adult readers, and elicit within them a deep sense of empathy that leads them to think critically about the historical past and present.

Together with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, and the Ravensbrück Memorial in Fürstenberg/Havel, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is one of three community partners facilitating our work with four child survivors: Emmie Arbel, Nico and Rolf Kamp, and David Schaffer. We are very grateful to Ilona Shulman Spaar, who generously supported the work of Miriam Libicki and David Schaffer throughout the co-creation process. We gratefully acknowledge the support of the VHEC as a partner of this project. *But I Live* was launched on September 14, 2022 at the Sidney and Gertrude Zack Gallery. ■

Charlotte Schallié is chair of the University of Victoria's Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies and lead of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada-funded UVic-based project, Narrative Art and Visual Storytelling in Holocaust and Human Rights Education (holocaustgraphicnovels.org).



Charlotte Schallié (centre) with David Schaffer and Miriam Libicki at David's home in Vancouver, January 2020. Photographed by Mike Morash.

Site: Yizkor to Make Its Canadian Debut

BY HOPE FORSTENZER AND JESSICA GUTTERIDGE



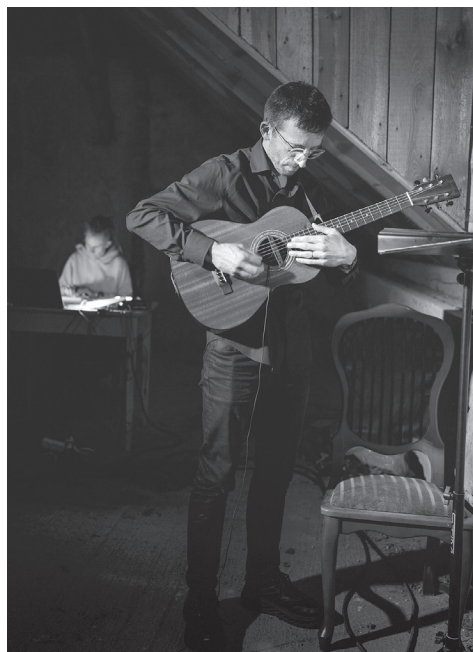
Site: Yizkor performance, Krakow, Poland.

Canadian-American artist Maya Ciarrocchi and American composer and musician Andrew Conklin have collaborated to create *Site: Yizkor*, an interdisciplinary project that explores the physical and emotional manifestation of loss through text, movement, video and music. Ciarrocchi and Conklin explore questions like: Who honours the spaces left by the dead? How and why do people, cultures and identities disappear? Its source material includes architectural renderings of demolished buildings, memory maps of vanished places, field recordings and prose remembrances both from project participants and *Yizkor* books (memorial books commemorating a Jewish community destroyed during the Holocaust). *Site: Yizkor* will run November 14 through 19 in Vancouver, presented by the Sidney and Gertrude Zack Gallery and Chutzpah!, with the welcome participation of the Vancouver Holocaust Education

Centre, which will provide some of its *Yizkor* books for display in the gallery as part of this event.

Existing in three modes of presentation, *Site: Yizkor* allows audiences and viewers varied forms of engagement. It is an autonomous multi-channel video/sound installation, an evening-length musical performance in an immersive projected environment, and workshops where participants are invited to create their own *Yizkor* books as a way to mourn and commemorate lost people and places.

The project began at LABA: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture in New York while Ciarrocchi was a 2018–19 fellow. The impetus came from Ciarrocchi's previous work, which centered on lost and forgotten people and places. These projects, rather than resurrections of



Site: Yizkor performance, Poland.



specific individuals, investigated the how and why people and cultures disappear. In *Site: Yizkor*, Ciarrocchi and Conklin continue this line of inquiry by paralleling the effects of historical acts of erasure with acts of erasure happening now.

Ciarrocchi and Conklin met at a residency at Millay Arts in Austerlitz, New York. While there, Ciarrocchi worked with texts she gathered as part of a performance lecture where she read selections from *Yizkor* books and prompted participants to describe vanished places of importance to them personally. She created a series of drawings in response to their reflections and informed by her research on shtetl life in Eastern Europe prior to the Second World War. Conklin responded musically to the drawings and words and the artists brought their work together in a composed work comprised of music, animated drawings, and sung and spoken text.

Since their initial collaboration, Ciarrocchi presented aspects of *Site: Yizkor* as part of the Reimagine Festival in New York City and at the Sichów Educational Foundation in Sichów Duży, Poland. This iteration projected images onto the surface of a manor home formerly occupied

by Germans and Russians during and after the Second World War, while dancers from the Gdansk-based Amreya Theatre performed inside. Ciarrocchi and Conklin presented a new music ensemble performance of the work at the Center for New Music in San Francisco and at the Block Gallery at the Bronx Museum of the Arts. They returned to Poland in June of 2022.

Through its performance and workshop model, *Site: Yizkor* makes space for commemoration, healing and empathetic connection. The version that Ciarrocchi and Conklin will bring to Chutzpah! features local Vancouver musicians and readers, with multiple workshops in the Sidney and Gertrude Zack Gallery. The narratives shared during *Site: Yizkor* performances and workshops may be personal, but the themes of loss and displacement are universal.

Site: Yizkor will be presented by the Sidney and Gertrude Zack Gallery and the Chutzpah! Festival from November 14–19. Visit chutzpahfestival.com or jccgv.com/art-and-culture/gallery for more information. ■

Hope Forstenzer is director of the Sidney and Gertrude Zack Gallery and Jessica Gutteridge is artistic managing director of the Rothstein Theatre and Chutzpah! Festival.

Gender and Propaganda in Nazi Germany, 1933–39

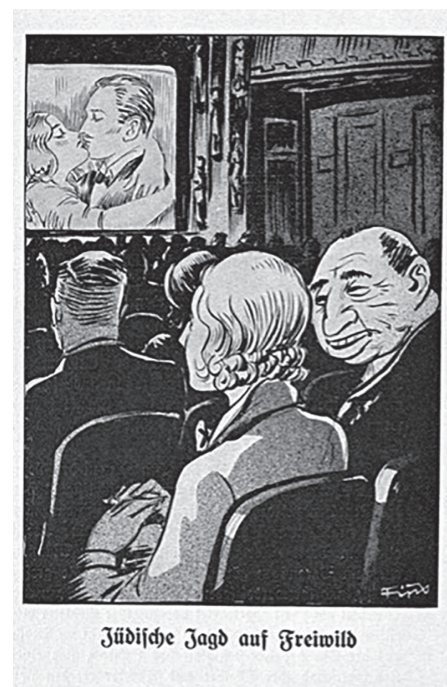
BY SEBASTIAN HUEBEL

The omnipresence of Nazi propaganda in the Third Reich and its effects have been well documented and studied. Antisemitic publications such as the infamous *Der Stürmer* or films like *The Eternal Jew* are well known examples, however, Jews were denigrated, ridiculed and depicted as existential threats to the German people even in seemingly innocuous media such as children's books, local newspapers and advertisements. Such concerted efforts by the state (and its willing participants) had the common goal of stereotyping Jews, by presenting them as instantly recognizable through their dress, facial features and demeanors, which were depicted as innately evil in character. In my study of German-Jewish men in pre-war Nazi Germany, I highlight the strikingly gendered nature of Nazi propaganda and how Jewish men were presented as the Jewish threat. To inhibit further harm on the German people (on their race, culture

and economy), Nazi propaganda made use of the crudest visual and textual language to make it easily discernible to every German citizen how to recognize a Jew by his looks and behaviour. Such efforts had serious repercussions on the targeted victims themselves: Jewish men and their families.

In his virulently antisemitic *Der Jude als Rassenschänder* (translated as *The Jew as Race Defiler*), Nazi professor Kurt Plischke pondered:

Who does not know him, the oriental youth with his flat feet, dark curls, the cigarette in his flabby lower lips under a crooked nose—dressed too colorfully, who with his brazen smiles wanders on the streets of the big city? He is lurking for blonde, young girls; once he has found one that is appealing enough for his oriental appetite, he starts his attack.



Left to right: *Der Stürmer*: Nürnberger Wochenblatt Zum Kampf Um Die Wahrheit. Donated to the VHEC in 2018 by Kit Krieger. *Deutsche Frau* Poster. Historisches Museum Hannover. From *Der Jude als Rassenschänder* by Kurt Plischke, 1934.



A staged photograph of Oskar Danker of Cuxhaven, July 1933. The sign around his neck rhymes: "I, the Jew Boy, only take German girls to my room." Photo: Institut für Stadtgeschichte, Gelsenkirchen.

This fictitious threat on the German race emanated primarily from Jewish men, and it was German (Aryan) women who needed protection from these allegedly sexually aggressive, lecherous Jewish males. Consequently, Nazi propaganda was not only highly gendered in nature, but so were Nazi race laws. German women under the age of 45, for instance, were forbidden to work as maids for Jewish families as of 1935.

What effects did such an obsession on Jewish male perpetrators have on German Jews? In *Fighter, Worker and Family Man: German-Jewish Men and their Gendered Experiences in Nazi Germany, 1933–1941*, I demonstrate that propaganda not only intended to emasculate Jewish men and portray them as devious, ominous and abnormal, but that such cultural discourse resulted in a tangible increase of terror experienced by German Jews.

Denunciations of race defilement—often completely fabricated—were common, and Jewish men, besides social ostracization, shame and slander, faced police investigations and court hearings. In 1935, sexual relationships between Jews and non-Jewish Germans were outlawed. Consequently, between 1936 and 1939, over 400 men received prison sentences for the crime of race defilement. Max Augenreich was arrested by two SA men when they spotted him and an "Aryan" girl in a movie theatre. He was sentenced to six months in jail in 1937, followed by forced labour assignments. Another Jewish man was convicted for glancing at a young "Aryan" girl across the street. The court ruled that although the man had no physical or verbal contact with the girl, his glance had a clearly erotic basis.¹

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22

¹ Sculptor Alfred Hrdlicka as quoted in James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 110.

Exploring Propaganda in the VHEC Collection

BY JASMIN GHORBANI

This fall, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre will remount its successful collections-based exhibition, *In Focus: The Holocaust Through the VHEC Collection*. *In Focus* traces the story of the Holocaust from pre-war Jewish life, through the Holocaust and its aftermath, highlighting artefacts and experiences from survivors who emigrated to Vancouver. Alongside the remount of *In Focus*, the VHEC is planning a companion exhibition highlighting Nazi propaganda, its tactics and impacts. I spent the summer as a research assistant where I worked in collaboration with the exhibition development team, conducting research in support of this exhibition and exploring documents, photographs, artefacts and testimony in the VHEC collection.

Our research focuses on drawing connections between specific pieces in the collection and contemporary manifestations of propaganda. We aim to illuminate parallels between historical and contemporary examples of racism, antisemitism and emotional manipulation in propaganda. This will provide audiences with a foundation of historical knowledge to help them navigate the contemporary and increasingly

insidious use of propaganda to perpetuate antisemitism and other forms of racism and bigotry.

An artefact of particular interest is the “Een gezonde jeugd werkt voor Nederland,” or Healthy Youth poster. The poster reads, “A healthy youth works for the Netherlands” and depicts an idealized portrait of Aryan youth. It is a striking visual representation of Nazi racial ideology through its depictions of “ideal” young men and women. The poster references common themes in Nazi propaganda such as the importance of youth to the Nazi cause and the appeal to feelings of national pride and a desire for belonging that was frequently used to persuade and mobilize the masses.

This poster also connects directly to the contemporary landscape of propaganda; the image of youth in this poster was seen at the Unite the Right white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017. Demonstrators were photographed with a poster depicting these same Aryan youth along with the phrase, “We have a right to exist.” This resurgence of Nazi imagery is a clear illustration of the importance of learning about the history and consequences of antisemitic propaganda.

Another artefact that we’ve highlighted for its contemporary relevance is the “Ensemble nous l’ecraserons!” poster. Reading “Together we will crush them!,” this poster shows two large Aryan men towering over a Jewish man. The Jewish man’s jacket has the Star of David and the flags of the United Kingdom, United States and the Soviet Union on the lapel. The suggestion that Judaism is linked to these enemy nations of the Nazi regime is a common motif in Nazi propaganda. This is related to a broader antisemitic conspiracy theory linking Judaism to a secret plot for world domination which can be traced back to the 1905 publication of *Protocols of the*



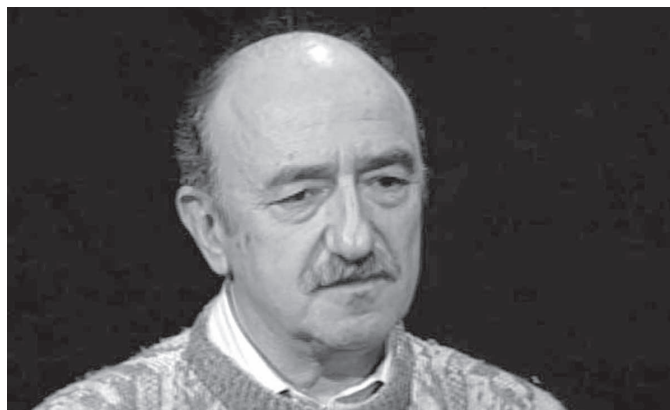
Een gezonde jeugd werkt voor Nederland. Item 2016.003.038, donated to the VHEC by Peter N. Moogk.

Elders of Zion, a document presenting details of a secret meeting of Jewish leaders plotting to take over the world. This antisemitic publication was debunked as entirely fabricated, designed to incite hatred toward Jewish people. Despite being debunked, this conspiracy theory has persisted throughout history and into the present day in varied permutations.

Our research also looks at testimony from Vancouver Holocaust survivors detailing their personal experiences with Nazi propaganda. From the hours of testimony held at the Centre, we are looking at moments which address the topic of propaganda from a variety of perspectives. We are selecting excerpts which reveal survivors encountering social isolation, internal conflict and violence as a result of the proliferation of Nazi propaganda in European daily life. We will present testimony to visitors as first-hand accounts of the impact of Holocaust-era propaganda on victims of Nazi persecution. Placed throughout the exhibition as companion pieces to various artifacts, the testimony clips will address the impact of antisemitic propaganda on survivors' self-image, their experience of social isolation and the violence individuals faced from their non-Jewish peers.



Video still from the donor interview video of Michel Mielnicki, 1993.



Video still from the testimony of Serge Vanry, 1990.

"Propaganda was everywhere: posters, movies, it was on the radio, it was in the papers... You found it everywhere you went. I even remember being taken, I don't remember by whom, to see a movie and there was propaganda for about 15 or 20 minutes before the film was shown. I can remember seeing it and saying to myself, are my people really like that?" —from the 1990 testimony of Serge Vanry, AVT #101.

By integrating testimony clips alongside artefacts, this exhibition aims to create a clear relationship between Nazi propaganda and its impact on individuals, communities and cultures while fostering empathy for those affected.

The disturbing resurgence of Nazi symbolism and century-old conspiracy theories in increasingly insidious forms has made the topic of propaganda extremely relevant, especially for young people, who have a particularly powerful relationship to media. My own experience during the research process has been one of reckoning with this unsettling reality and of envisioning ways forward. We hope to empower our audience with tools to think critically about the information they consume, to understand the role propaganda plays in their lives and to challenge harmful rhetoric when and where they see it. In this way, students, and the general public, may gain a sense of agency in an otherwise chaotic media landscape. ■

Jasmin Ghorbani was a Young Canada Works research assistant at the VHEC. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in History from the University of British Columbia.

COLLECTIONS NEWS

SHARING ACCESS TO OUR COLLECTIONS

The VHEC has loaned seven of its artefacts to the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The pieces will be rotated on display in their Examining the Holocaust gallery from 2022 through 2024. We are proud to share these artefacts from our community on a national stage.



1. Metal cup from Ravensbrück, donated by Irene Fleischer Klein. Item 1997.001.001. 2. Thimble from the Warsaw ghetto, donated by Gina Dimant. Item 2019.004.009. 3. Ring from HASAG forced labour camp, donated by Sarah Rozenberg Warm. Item 1996.005.001. 4. Star of David badge, donated by Inge Manes. Item 1996.020.003. 5. 'Jewish Enterprise' window sign, donated by Charles Spica and Arnold Szpicak. Item 2008.009.001. 6. Star of David badge, donated by Duifje van Haren. Item 1993.060.003. 7. Star of David badge from the Netherlands, donated by the Estate of Sol Malkin. Item 1996.032.004.

CATALOGUING UPDATE

Newly described and digitized materials are now available for research in the VHEC's online collections database at collections.vhec.org. These include photographs and correspondence donated to the VHEC by former outreach speaker, David Reed; photographs of war orphans donated by Fraidie Martz, and liberation photographs donated by Beverley Abbott and Robert Krell. Also available are descriptions and scans of notebooks recording children's testimony and related items donated by Professor Shia Moser. The testimonies, collected by Moser in 1945–46 at an orphanage in Lower Silesia, are some of the first recorded accounts from child survivors of the Holocaust. These descriptions are funded with support from the Library and Archives Canada Documentary Heritage Communities Program.

NEW ACQUISITION

The VHEC has received a significant donation of materials related to Red Army captain of medical service Dina Golovanevskaya, from her daughter, Erika Galinskaya. Dr. Golovanevskaya was born in Odessa, Ukraine and provided surgical support during the Battle of Stalingrad. Erika donated photographs, family papers, publications, writings, medical equipment and militaria owned by her mother. The materials are evidence of Dina Golovanevskaya's life before, during and after the war, and her community service after moving to Canada, where she was an active member of the Jewish community and the Shalom Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. Dina fought against instances of antisemitism throughout her life, particularly against Holocaust denial and distortion. Her daughter, Erika, is preparing translations of Russian-language memoir writings which will contribute to a greater understanding of her mother's life and contributions to the community. ■



Left: Press photo of a large crowd of people listening to an address from Col. Gen. Heinz Guderian outside a building in Posen, Poland. Donated to the VHEC by Beverley Abbott in 1998. Item 1998.001.004. Right: Erika Galinskaya wearing her mother's veterans' uniform and Red Army medals.

From the Writings of Dr. Dina Golovanevskaya

DONATED AND TRANSLATED BY ERIKA GALINSKAYA



Dina Golovanevskaya and her husband, Jakob Galinsky, circa 1942.

I lived in the centre of Odessa's city core, Lenin Street, which leads to our famous Opera House. Lenin Street was always busy, crowded with pedestrians and foreign tourists. From open windows, you can hear music, loud happy voices talking, singing—the typical flavour of a southern resort town. The Odessa seaport is one of the largest in the country. But dark clouds of war gathered in the peaceful skies.

The arduous year began on June 22, 1941. At the beginning of war, I was on a practicum in the city hospital, and all fourth-year students were given a temporary accreditation, “doctor-to-be,” as a substitute for a diploma.

In August, when Odessa was near besiege by the Nazi German Army, my parents and I left the city by foot in the direction of Nikolaev. Transportation was not functional. We crossed Varvarovsky Bridge, under missile attack every single minute. The Medical Institute of Odessa was evacuated to Rostov and we aimed to go there, but no direct trains were available. The train let us out at Sosuka

station, in the Krasnodar region. I was not permitted to enter Rostov; the authorities told me, “You will graduate medical school after the war is over, and now, you go and work in a *kolkhoz*.”¹ Thanks to my accreditation as a doctor-to-be, I worked in a hospital as a doctor-therapist for the next two months, until the German Army slowly began to approach the city of Rostov.

In light of the relocation of the Medical Institute south, close to the border with China in a city named Alma-Ata, we made a second attempt to evacuate there. In August 1942, I received my medical diploma with the degree of Doctor of Medical Service. With 120 other classmates, by order of the Military Office Committee, I was sent to Moscow.

After two months of military training we were scattered on different fronts. I was given an assignment to reach the Stalingrad front, in the “hottest” month of November. Working as a surgeon in the front-line hospital, I moved as the hospital moved on. From Stalingrad, to the fourth Ukrainian front, through Ukraine and Poland until we reached Berlin, Germany.

After one year serving in Stalingrad, working in the hospital, a new staff member arrived. This man captured my heart, and he married me. In spite of all of my reasons to refuse, he believed that every woman needed protection in the army during wartime. He not only married me but insisted on having a baby girl soon afterwards. To my biggest regret and sorrow afterwards, the child did not survive and is buried in the Russian military cemetery in the city of Cottbus, Germany, near Leipzig.

In 1947, after our demobilization, we returned to Odessa where, later, I had my second child, a baby girl. Odessa looked unrecognizable. The whole city was in ruins,

¹A collective farm of the former Soviet Union.

crumbled, many streets broken and damaged. But with one foot inside my city, on my return, I had only one question: “Has my beloved Opera House, the theatre, survived?” That’s all I was worried about. Only later did I ask, “and my house?”

Because in Odessa, the Opera House is our pride, the trademark of our city. During wartime, every day, I prayed for the preservation and survival of my beloved Opera House. The repertoire of the theatre is varied and interesting, consisting of modern plays by Soviet and foreign playwrights and classical Ukrainian, Russian and international dramas. Slowly, Odessa mended the wounds of war.

But, too many doctors like me, after the end of the war, returned to Odessa and had difficulty finding jobs. I had to take additional coursework for six months, specializing in clinical laboratory work. There was a shortage of clinical lab doctors, they were in high demand. The situation gave me the opportunity to work double shifts to earn more money and give my daughter a proper musical education. Lessons were private and expensive.

I started a new job as head of the clinical lab ward in the hospital at 15th Station, in the resort area of Bolshoy Fontan. I worked there for seventeen years. Bolshoy Fontan occupies a strip of land along the Black Sea from Arcadia to Zolotov Bereg, and a part of Perekopskaya Visizia street. At all resorts the doctors have the most effective medicine at their disposal. Our hospital was situated in the centre of that region.

In 1963, being Jewish, my daughter could not continue her musical education in Odessa. She had finished seven years of music school. The restrictions stated that only five percent of Jews were allowed to be admitted; it was common knowledge. Even bribery was not enough, so the situation was hopeless.

After considering what to do next, I made a decision to leave Odessa and relocate up north, where the Jewish question was not as relevant or important. Five cities

in the Soviet Union presented opportunities for me to work and for my daughter to study music: Norilsk, Khabarovsk, Magadan, South Sahalin and Murmansk.

I chose Murmansk, in the European part of Russia, close to Leningrad and Moscow. Due to its harsh climate, six months of nighttime and six months of daylight (sometimes called White Nights), we were permitted to reserve our rights to our apartment in Odessa until my contract with the hospital ended and my daughter graduated music school.

During those years, my medical education as clinical lab doctor shifted into new areas. I moved into oncology with an interest in serology and cytology, testing for cancer by looking at blood cells under a microscope. For ten years I worked as head of the oncological clinic in Murmansk, then for all Murmanskaya Oblast. I constantly researched and took additional courses in Leningrad and Moscow during those years.

The number of cancer patients increased dramatically in the post-war period, due to a lack of nutrients and vitamins from food. Produce, like citrus and fruit, was not delivered up north. Food shortages affected babies born during the winter months, and pregnant women. All citizens of the northern region rushed south for holidays at resorts like Crimea and Caucasus, on the Black Sea, to enjoy the sun. Then, too much sun contributed to the development of skin cancer, and back in Murmansk new patients were diagnosed for treatment.

Every year I had two months of vacation, and together with my daughter we spent it in Odessa. She graduated from music college in 1968 and left to continue her education in the Vinnitza region. Myself, arriving by train in Odessa every year, my heart would beat quickly and I would be overwhelmed with emotions and the happiness of returning to my beloved city that I missed so much. ■

Dina Golovanevskaya emigrated to Vancouver in 1977, and was a member of the Shalom Branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. She fought against antisemitism throughout her life. Cataloguing of her artefacts and records is currently in progress.

Cataloguing an In-house Periodical Unearths Deep Community Connections

BY SHANNON LABELLE



The VHEC has published *Zachor* (Remember) since opening its doors in 1994. The magazine communicates with VHEC members and the wider public about programs, events and exhibitions and current issues related to human rights, social justice and Holocaust education. It is an important resource for the stories of local Holocaust survivors. *Zachor* features original writing from BC Holocaust survivors and their families, teachers, students and other community members.

This spring, the VHEC library completed the cataloguing of past issues of *Zachor* and these records are now available in the collections catalogue: collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/8860. This work is significant because it makes it easier to search for and find specific content published in *Zachor*. Ninety-six issues are now fully catalogued, allowing researchers to more easily find and stumble upon information about people, programs, events, exhibitions, objects and places mentioned in *Zachor*.

The catalogue record for the Spring 2022 issue of *Zachor* illustrates how this cataloguing work supports research and access: collections.vhec.org/Detail/objects/10778. Highlighted on the record for the Spring 2022 issue are 75 entities (persons and organizations) who contributed or are related to content in that issue, as well as 17 places, five exhibitions and six books mentioned in the contents of that issue.

The following four examples from our catalogue reveal how this work helps researchers and students:

“Small Insights: Revisiting the VHEC’s Shanghai Oral History Project” by Ryan Cheuk Him Sun

Zachor catalogue record includes:

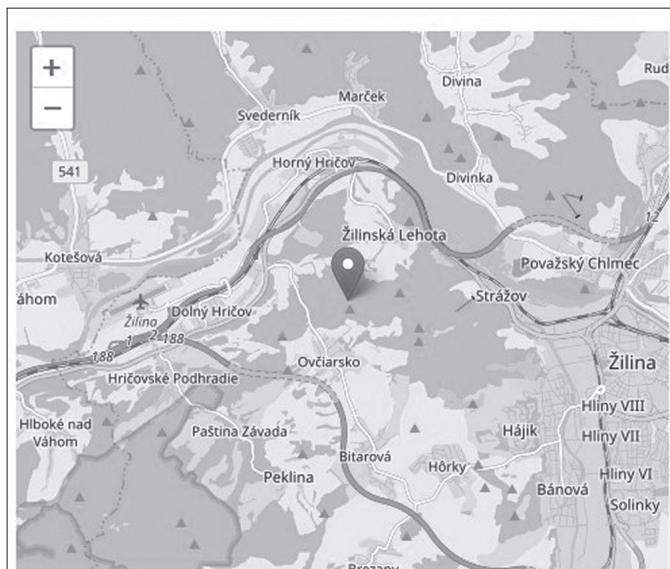
- A link to the place record for Shanghai, allowing deeper research into the Shanghai Jewish survivor community.
- Relationships to Roberta Kremer and Dan Fromowitz, the leaders of the VHEC’s Shanghai Oral History Project, making it easier to view their other contributions to the VHEC.
- Links to the exhibition records for *Shanghai: A Refuge During the Holocaust* and *Visas for Life: The Story of Feng Shan Ho*.
- Relationships to members of Vancouver’s Shanghai Jewish survivor community, including Gerda Gottfried Kraus and Lore Marie Wiener, making it easier to locate other relevant material in the VHEC collection related to these individuals and their families.

Related			
HOLDINGS	PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONS	PLACES	EVENTS & EXHIBITIONS
Canada	British Columbia	Vancouver	United States
Shanghai	Hongkou	Slovakia	Žitina
Auschwitz Concentration Camp Complex (camp)	Auschwitz II-Birkenau Main Camp (camp)	Austria	Vienna
England	London	Theresienstadt (ghetto)	Victoria
Belgium			

“Secrets of My Native Town” by Dr. Helen Karsai

Zachor catalogue record includes:

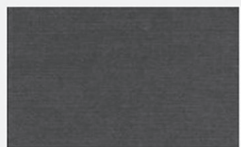
- A link to the place record for Žilina, Slovakia, which includes a map and a link to another book with some content related to Žilina.
- Relationships to individuals mentioned in the article, including Rudolf Vrba, Alfred Wetzler, Arnošt Rosin and Czesław Mordowicz, making it easy to locate more information and other material in the collection related to these escaped Auschwitz prisoners and their eyewitness reports and warnings to the world.



Žilina, Slovakia
CITY

Related

HOLDINGS PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONS



Holocaust journey : travelling in search of the past



Zachor. 2022 : [Issue 1] (April)

“A New Acquisition: Letters from Vienna, 1938”

by Lise Kirchner

Zachor catalogue record includes:

- Relationships to Elspeth Rogers Cherniavsky and her social connections, allowing researchers and students to easily find Elspeth’s digitized letters and more information about her family and friends.
- A link to the place record for Vienna, highlighting four museum works, 55 archival items, 31 library resources and 32 survivor testimonies related to Vienna.

Cherniavsky, Elspeth (1900–1984)

ALSO KNOWN AS: ROGERS, ELSPETH

BIOGRAPHY

Elspeth Cherniavsky was the daughter of Benjamin Tingley and Mary Isabella (née Angus) Rogers [father born in Philadelphia; mother born in Eccles, England]. Elspeth's father founded the British Columbia Sugar Refining Company, Limited, in 1890. Elspeth married the Jewish pianist Ian Cherniavsky in 1927; they lived in Vienna and Finland [read more](#)

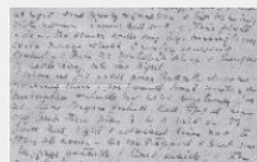
NOTES

Source: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/201674822/elspeth-tingley-cherniavsky> and note written by Janey Cherniavsky Gudewill filed in Cherniavsky research file.

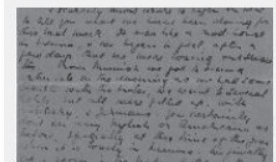
Related

HOLDINGS PEOPLE & ORGANIZATIONS

CREATOR



Letter from Elspeth Cherniavsky to her mother [June 6, 1938]



Letter from Elspeth Cherniavsky to her mother [May 29, 1938]

RELATED



1938 : warum wir heute genau hinschauen müssen



Zachor. 2022 : [Issue 1] (April)

“Mademoiselle Andrée” by Alex Buckman in the No Longer Alone section of Zachor

Zachor catalogue record includes:

- A link to the entity record for Andrée Geulen-Herscovici, revealing four other sources in the collection about Andrée as a rescuer.
- Relationships to Alex Buckman and other members of Alex's family, including his aunt Rebecca Teitelbaum. From their entity records, researchers and students are able to learn more about the Buckman and Teitelbaum family by viewing digitized identity cards, photographs, letters and more.
- A link to the place record for Belgium, revealing nearly 60 other holdings at the VHEC related to Belgium.

Geulen-Herscovici, Andrée (1921-)

ALSO KNOWN AS: GEULEN, ANDRÉE; FOURNIER, CLAUDE

BIOGRAPHY

Declared Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem on August 2, 1989

Related

HOLDINGS

RELATED

Afraid of the dark : the memoir of Alex Buckman

Zachor. 2006 : [Issue 3] (September)

Zachor. 2022 : [Issue 1] (April)

SUBJECT

Alex B. testimony 2008

A simple way to access these catalogue records is to type 'zachor' (without quotation marks) in the keyword search box on the top right corner of this page: collections.vhec.org. From the main record describing the Zachor publication as a whole, researchers and students can click on individual issues of the magazine to uncover the wealth of relationships introduced here.

Zachor. 2022 : [Issue 1] (April)

LIBRARY COMPONENT

PARENT RECORD

Zachor

CALL NUMBER

REF Zachor and Online - click URL below for access

SUB-COLLECTION

Reference Collection

DATES

Spring (April) 2022

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY

Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre ; Editor, Nina Krieger ; Managing editor, Shyla Sella ; Editor, "No Longer Alone," Lillian Boraks-Nemetz ; Design, Ilene Yu.

CREATORS & CONTRIBUTORS

Krieger, Nina (editor)

Sella, Shyla (editor)

Boraks-Nemetz, Lillian (editor)

Yu, Ilene (designer)

Sella, Shyla (contributor)

Ricciardi, Georgia (contributor)

Sun, Cheuk Him Ryan (contributor)

Karsai, Helen (contributor)

Kirchner, Lisa (contributor)

Buckman, Alex (contributor)

Ross-Grayman, Deborah (contributor)

Boe-Fishman, Amalia (related)

Lederman, Marsha (related)

Twigg, Alan (related)

Krell, Robert (related)

Suedfeld, Peter (related)

We anticipate that this cataloguing work will lead to more research requests and library visits. The VHEC library is open to everyone for browsing during the VHEC's open hours. Research appointments are recommended and can be booked by emailing library@vhec.org or calling 604-264-0499. VHEC members and BC teachers may borrow library materials. Library materials are available to everyone to use on-site at the VHEC. ■

Shannon LaBelle has been Librarian at the VHEC since 2007.

Nazi propaganda and legislation had far-reaching consequences that went beyond denunciations, arrests and prison sentences. Both led to a marked change in social relations between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans in pre-war times. The Nazi agenda of polarizing and separating both groups was gradual but effective, over time. In his memoir, Alfred Wolf evoked the effect Nazi propaganda had on him:

Nazi newspapers excelled in dirt and filth. They talked about circumcised pigs. It is very difficult to imagine the level to which these people descended and the atmosphere that surrounded us. The feeling of being isolated, watched, avoided is utterly depressing... Once a gentile lady stopped me on the street, which was as kind as it was courageous. I said you don't have to talk to a circumcised pig.²

The centrality of race in Nazi propaganda and law in the endeavor of constructing a utopia defined by racial purity and health is evident. Of course, antisemitic

propaganda in the Third Reich was not exclusively about Jewish male sexuality and racial defilement but drew deeply on other historic antisemitic discourses that were political, economic and cultural in nature. Yet, even in non-sexualized propaganda, Nazi propaganda was never gender neutral. To manifest images of the evil Jew, the Nazis clung to Jewish men, hoping to deconstruct Jewish masculinity but also denigrate Jews as a whole. What followed was the brutalization and arrest of 30,000 Jewish men in Germany's pre-war concentration camps following Kristallnacht in November 1938. A focus on gender in Nazi Germany demonstrates that while in the end, the Nazis did not distinguish amongst their victims and sent millions of innocent men and women, old and young, to their deaths, Nazi genocide should be understood as an evolution of radicalizing tactics and measures in which gender and propaganda featured prominently. ■

Sebastien Huebel is the author of *Fighter, Worker and Family Man: German-Jewish Men and their Gendered Experiences in Nazi Germany, 1933-1941*, available for borrowing at the VHEC library. He teaches at the University of the Fraser Valley.

² Silana Fritz Offenberger in *The Jews of Nazi Vienna, 1938-1945: Rescue and Destruction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 43.

THANK YOU TO OUR DEVOTED VHEC VOLUNTEERS!

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR SPEAKERS

Janos Benisz, Amalia Boe-Fishman, Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, Alex Buckman, Miriam Dattel, Mariette Doduck, René Goldman, Serge Haber, Raoul Korngold, Robert Krell, Claude Romney, Louise Sorensen, Peter Suedfeld, Tom Szekely, Peter Voormeij.

TEACHER ADVISORY

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

DOCENTS

Reva Dexter, Sylvie Epstein, Kieran Forry, Belinda Gutman, Helen Heacock-Rivers, Gloria Joachim, Dodie Katzenstein, Lise Kirchner, Ethel Kofsky, Lucien Liberman, Ellen Millman, Herb Mills, Cathy Paperny, Gita Silver, Laurie Simpkins, Lotti Smith, Rina Vizer, Anita Willson.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Carly Arrotta, Gurjiv Dhimi, Joy Fai, Daniella Givon, Yotam Ronen, Michaela Sawyer, Aurelia Sedlmair, Olga Yefremenkova.

Our sincere apologies for any errors or omissions.

Excerpt from *Boy from Buchenwald*: The True Story of a Holocaust Survivor

BY ROBBIE WAISMAN AND SUSAN MCCLELLAND

Jews had been in Poland for more than a thousand years, living through periods when we were relatively free to times when we were persecuted. At the start of World War II, Poland had the largest Jewish population of any country in the world. About 2,500 Jews lived in Skarzysko-Kamienna. Our community of Jews was called a *shtetl*. In all of Poland there were more than three million Jews living in many *shtetls*.

When my papa bought our house in the early 1920s on Maya Tziejo, which translates to “Third of May Street” in English, the Jewish communities in Poland were relatively accepted and lived in peace. Under Polish leader Jozef Pilsudski, Jews had rights. Jews could own land and businesses and hold positions in politics, the military and in universities. Skarzysko-Kamienna flourished in the first few decades of the twentieth century and attracted a lot of Jewish immigrants, including Papa, who came from Russia. The first synagogue in Skarzysko-Kamienna was built in 1910. A few years later, the Jewish cemetery was erected.

In 1935 Pilsudski died. Things weren’t the same after that. I didn’t know much of this back when I lived in Poland, though. To me, Skarzysko-Kamienna was forests and bird-song; winds that carried the warm, smoky aromas from our chimney; and cooking fires and the scents of our mamas’ borscht and beef briskets.

Papa was a haberdasher and tailor. That meant he made hats, mostly the black hats called *shtreimel*, a very wide-brimmed fur hat that Jewish men in Skarzysko-Kamienna would wear, but also city hats. He made suits, too.

Papa, whose name was Chil, had a wide face and strong shoulders and stood about six feet tall, just like

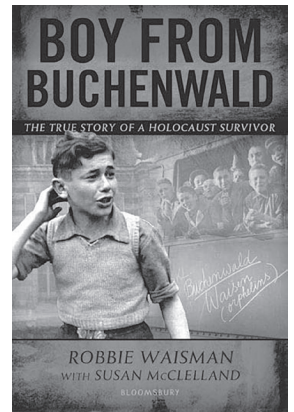
my older brothers Chaim, who was twenty-two in 1939, and Moishe, who was seventeen. My two other brothers, Motel, fifteen, and Abram, twelve, were slowly stretching up toward them too. And there was one girl, my sister, Rachella, who we all called Leah. She was eight years older than me.

While Papa’s presence was large, his voice was soft. He was well-liked by everyone. The elders of Skarzysko-Kamienna and visitors to our small town would come to our home to hear Papa recite passages from the Torah; tell stories like Tevye the Dairyman; and seek his advice on politics, religion and philosophy. Most of all, Papa adored Mama, whose name was Rifka. He would hold her hand when they would walk along the river, while I ran alongside them, trying to catch butterflies and skip stones in the water in the summer. In winter, I would skate on the river, looking up to see Mama and Papa still holding hands, still walking, but this time huddled close together underneath a knitted shawl draped across their shoulders.

To me, Mama and Papa and Skarzysko-Kamienna were love, laughter, and goodness.

I was born on February 2, 1931, and I was the baby of my family. Our house was small, made of wood, with a shingled roof. I shared a bed and a bedroom with two of my brothers.

Mama’s cooking and quiet singing lulled me to sleep at night, but Papa’s snores would often wake me up.





Jewish youth liberated at Buchenwald wave from the window of a train, as it pulls away from the station. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Robert Waisman.

My brothers were strong, able to outrun everyone in town during cross-country races and soccer matches. My two oldest brothers were also handsome, so handsome that all the girls would swoon. Even as a child, I could see and understand—the girls' blushing cheeks, the way they turned a toe inward and bent a knee, their heads slightly cocked to one side whenever one of my brothers passed. I was so proud to be part of my family. I knew I was going to grow up to be just like my brothers, especially Moishe, who had applied to university to study engineering. He liked to tinker with wires and was making a radio that he said would be able to reach all the way to America. I wanted to be an engineer, too.

Mama always had chicken soup warming on the top of the coal oven ready for me when I would come in from chores. I helped Papa, sweeping up the fabric pieces scattered on the floor of his shop and holding his measuring tapes and devices while he fitted customers. I was responsible for carrying the wood to the woodshed, too, which my brothers would chop. I also gathered kindling from the forests for fires and swept the walkway to the street that led into the main center of Skarzysko-Kamienna where there was a cinema, my favourite place to go.

Oh, we had great dinners at our house. My family, as well as various guests, would sit at the long oak table Papa had carved himself, sipping wine from glasses that Mama would bring out for only such occasions. When the conversations turned serious about what was happening in Poland, the females would leave the men and my older brothers to themselves. My Jewish community was very conservative. Even at synagogue, the women would sit in the balcony while the men would be on the main floor.

One of my fondest memories was when my brother Chaim married Golda, the most beautiful woman I had ever seen. She had jet-black curly hair, one curl of which would flop down on her forehead like an upside-down question mark. Golda's hands were slender and fine, and she would dance around the room when she sang Yiddish folk songs or told stories. She reminded me of a swan. I had a crush on Golda. I wanted her for myself and even asked Papa if one day when the *schadchen*, a marriage broker, went to arrange my marriage, my bride could be Golda. But I was just a child, and Chaim was a man. He had finished his mandatory two years in the Polish Army and had kept on as an officer while he worked various odd jobs, like building fences and repairing homes. Chaim could offer Golda more than I could, Papa told me. I sighed and choked back tears, but eventually became happy enough with the idea that Golda would always be in my life as Chaim's wife.

At their wedding, I ate and ate—challah, gefilte fish, cabbage rolls, and stewed chicken. I then danced the hora, around and around, before breaking away to eat some more, only to pass out from fatigue at the table, my head sinking down into a bowl of sweetened fruit and smetana. When I woke up, the bangs of my hair sticky from the honey, everyone was dancing outside in the back garden. So I leaped right back up and joined in. When I looked to the sky, it was like the stars were dancing along with everyone. ■

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WE REACHED OUR GOAL

THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTRIBUTIONS TO OUR 2022
ANNUAL FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN.

Your gift will help fund these vital initiatives for this coming year:

- **Our new interactive workshop** on moral courage teaches young people how to make moral decisions and stand up to injustice by exploring the heroic actions of Holocaust rescuers, ordinary people who made extraordinary choices to save lives.
- **We are producing new digital content to preserve,** document, ensure accessibility of, and most importantly, prepare for the time when there are no longer eyewitnesses to the Holocaust.
- **Our upcoming exhibition on propaganda** and companion teachers guide will help audiences understand the key role of propaganda in the Holocaust. Through teaching media literacy we are committed to putting truth and fact forward against a rising tide of disinformation.



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY
AND SUPPORT!

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