



Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society

For Education and Remembrance

Volume 1, Number 2

Fall 1989

Editor: Barry Dunner

We wish to stay in closer contact with our members and friends and will continue to provide this Newsletter as a means of communicating current information about The Society and other activities of interest on the local, national and international scenes.

We welcome and encourage your suggestions on how we might better serve the survivor and second generation community.

Please feel free to call our office at your convenience, at 261-1180.

Annual General Meeting Reaffirms Commitment to Build Holocaust Program Centre

June 19, 1989, VJCC

Robert Krell, President

The Annual General Meeting was held with seventy-five persons in attendance. Three highlights of the evening were unanimous endorsement to proceed with the creation of an Exhibition/Administrative complex to house all Holocaust-related programs and education; election of the new Board of Directors; and a showing of the one hour audio-visual tape featuring Robbie Waisman (survivor of Buchenwald) and Leon Bass (a liberator of Buchenwald.)

As part of the President's Report, I briefly outlined the long and accomplished history of Holocaust education programming in Vancouver dating back to the formation of the Standing Committee on the Holocaust in 1975. This committee, co-chaired by Graham Forst and myself, organized this year's 14th Annual Holocaust Symposium for nearly one thousand students. From 1979-1983, the audio-visual Holocaust Documentation Project recorded the accounts of seventy survivors and continues to this date having taped the 84th account last year. In 1981, the Second Generation Group of Vancouver formed to encourage and enlist the support and vitality

of the younger generation in the awareness and planning of Holocaust related activities. You may recall that the Second Generation Group was instrumental in negotiating the plaque in honor of Raoul Wallenberg at the Waterfalls of Queen Elizabeth Park.

With an eye to the future, The Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society was formed in 1985, to act in liaison with or as an umbrella for the many and varied Holocaust educational and outreach committees already in existence. With a Centre, replete with an exhibition area, lecture halls and library, the institutional strength necessary to continue Holocaust programming for years to come - our ultimate goal - would finally be realized. Programming would be coordinated and administered more effectively through one facility, and at the same time minimize the burden placed on survivors.

Initially, the Society embarked on a campaign to raise funds for the building of a Holocaust centre and by May of 1986 a Functional Programme, outlining the components necessary for the proper organization of the proposed Centre, had

been completed. However, in response to the wishes and needs of our community, we turned our attention to the building of a Memorial - to finally provide our loved ones with a symbolic resting place after all these years. The Holocaust Memorial at the Schara Tzedek Cemetery was unveiled in 1987.

Since then, the Society has focussed its attention on the building of a centre - our original goal. Ongoing negotiations for a Vancouver Holocaust Centre were undertaken with consecutive Vancouver Jewish Community Centre boards in 1986, 1987, and 1988 and our proposal was endorsed in principle by all boards.

With the advent of Federation, VJCC construction was halted after Phase II in order to plan a com-

bined expansion of facilities for various organizations including your Society.

We are poised to undertake this momentous task and to provide permanent facilities which will allow continuity of Holocaust awareness through remembrance, education and exhibitions far into the future.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the VJCC and the JFGV will have completed a feasibility study of the Phase III expansion program of which we are a part.

With this project in mind, we will expand our outreach to membership and prepare to raise the necessary funds for this endeavor. We will keep you well-informed as the proceedings develop.

VHCS Board of Directors: 1989-1990

The Nominations Committee [David Ehrlich (chair), Bill Gluck and Robbie Waisman] presented a slate of fifteen persons as Board of Directors for the 1989-1990 year. It was accepted unanimously. At the first meeting of the new board, the executive was set: Robert Krell, President; Leon Kahn, Vice-President; Dave Shafran, Vice-President; Mariette Doduck, Secretary; Robbie Waisman, Treasurer. The members at large are: David Ehrlich, Bill Gluck, Paul Heller, Chaim Kornfeld, Leo Lowy, Arthur Pouchet, Susan Bluman, Micha Menczer, Kit Krieger and Rubin Pinsky. We thank departing board members Freda Kaplan (Secretary), Rome Fox and Jack Kowarsky for their many years of dedicated service to the Society.

VHCS Reports

Barry Dunner, Executive Director

We have opened an office at the Vancouver Jewish Community Centre

Since our last Newsletter there is much to report. We opened an office at the Vancouver Jewish Community Centre, sharing space with the Jewish Historical Society of B.C. Much work lies ahead as we plan for the Holocaust Centre. Therefore, operating out of the VJCC is an important step in our development, as it gives us a community presence and visibility that we will need to draw upon in negotiating for our inclusion in Phase III of the VJCC development plans.

Nothing Takes Long, But Everything Takes Time

Perhaps you are wondering what actually goes on in our office on a day to day basis? Opening and maintaining an office is a time consuming affair. Buying supplies, creating filing systems, correspondence, preparing for Board meetings and keeping membership and mailing lists up to date are but a few of the many essential duties and responsibilities that any administration must deal with. Besides keeping up with these 'mundane' activities, we have also found time to be creative. As you read on you will see some of the interesting events and programs we have been involved in over the past few months.

One last word about the office. If you would like to see where we are and what we do, please call or visit. I would be more than happy to meet with you and fill you in on our activities and future plans. However, as I only work for the Society on a part-time basis, please call before you drop by. Our telephone number is 261-1180. If I am not in, please leave a message on the answering machine and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

Design and Layout by the VJCC PrintShop

Correspondence

Our office receives correspondence on a myriad of topics from far and wide - from information concerning restitution claims, to aid in searching for Righteous Gentiles and missing persons, to requests for information about the Society from the Texas State Technical Institute at Waco and how we might assist them with educational programming. Let me share with you a sample of correspondence received lately.

July 10th, 1989

Dear Barry:

My wife and I have just returned from a trip to the Soviet Union, four days of which we spent in and around Lvov, a city in the Ukrainian S.S.R. The main reason for coming to this part of the country was to visit the town of Zbarash, the birthplace of my parents and grandparents, but Lvov was of interest to us because it was there that my parents had attended school around the turn of the century (when it was known as Lemberg and was the Galician capital of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire). When the German forces occupied Lvov in 1941 there were 140,000 Jews in the city, more than a third of its population - today there are fewer than 1600 out of a total population of 565,000.

During the last afternoon of our stay in Lvov it was our privilege to meet Mr. Jack Vogel, now an American citizen, born in Lvov in 1923, a survivor of the Holocaust who had returned for the first time since his escape in 1941. Jack introduced us to Mr. Julius Sterenberg, the President of Lvov's first Jewish community organization since the German occupation, sanctioned "officially" in early May and which held its first assembly just the day before our meeting!

Mr. Sterenberg kindly presented me with a photograph of the bas relief sculpture dedicated to the memory of Sholom Aleichem that had been affixed to a house in Lvov where the playwright once lived. The ceremony had taken place a few days earlier, attended by the Mayor and other civic officials. The photograph is signed by the artist. I believe that the Holocaust Centre's archives is the proper place for this memento and it is my pleasure to enclose it herewith.

With all good wishes, Stanley H. Winfield

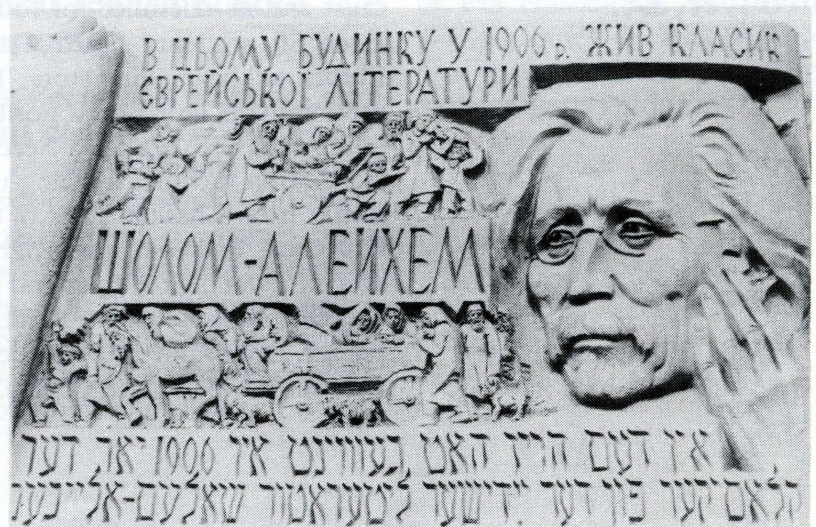
VHCS Holocaust Memorial Inscriptions

Schara Tzedek Cemetery

Tuesday, May 2, 12:00 noon

The memorial unveiling of the names of 84 persons who perished in the Holocaust took place at the Schara Tzedek Cemetery on Yom Hashoah. This now brings the number of names inscribed to over 1000. Surviving family members and local Rabbis participated in the moving ceremony.

The Society gratefully acknowledges everyone taking part in coordinating and participating in the unveiling. Special thanks to Mrs. Renia Perel for her efforts in gathering the names and coordinating the program.



Holocaust Educational Programming

Annual Membership Dues

The Board of Directors has fixed the amount of membership dues at \$5.00 for the 89/90 year. This is simply a means to register individuals as members for purposes of affiliation. Membership is open to the entire community. In order to carry out the important task of updating our membership list, please fill out and detach the form below, and send it and a cheque for \$5.00 made payable to:

**The Vancouver
Holocaust Centre
Society**

**950 West 41st. Avenue,
Vancouver, BC
V5Z 2N7**

The VHC has been very active over the past few months planning and co-ordinating a variety of remembrance, educational and support activities and services for the community.

Voices of Survival

Thursday, April 13, VJCC

The VHCS premiered this film derived from the Canadian Jewish Congress Holocaust Documentation Project, initiated by Dr. Robert Krell and coordinated by CJC National. Two of our local survivors, Vera Slymovics and Murray Kenig, were featured in the film and were present that evening. Over 50 people attended the program.

The Holocaust: Transmitting Its Legacy

Sunday, April 30, VJCC

This educational program was presented for members of the 2nd and 3rd generation - children and grandchildren of survivors. Moderated by Kit Krieger, a high school educator who has been teaching the Holocaust for over 10 years, its purpose was to discuss the Holocaust and its relevance for today. Over 50 students heard David Ehrlich tell his moving story. The program concluded on a positive note with Gisi Levitt, a Second Generation member, reading two stories from Chasidic Tales of the Holocaust. Following the program everyone was invited to attend the opening of the Holocaust Remembrance Exhibition of Ilse Kleinman at the VJCC Zack Gallery.

Yom Hashoah Educational Program: Talmud Torah

Monday, May 1

Several days prior to Yom Hashoah, I received a call from a teacher at Talmud Torah requesting that The Society prepare an educational program for the upper classes. On a moment's notice, Vera Slymovics graciously offered to participate, telling her story and answering questions to approximately 100 students.

Holocaust Outreach Program of British Columbia

1986 - Present

Community Support

In January of 1986, Kit Krieger and I contacted fifty high school teachers at random throughout British Columbia, to determine if an interest in establishing a Holocaust Outreach Program existed. Twelve of the teachers contacted (25%) responded favorably to our initial communication.

Objectives

The main objectives of the program are to expose high school students, through eyewitness accounts, to the Holocaust; to stimulate interest in and discussion of the historical, ethical and legal implications of the Holocaust; and to establish contact with, and to provide guidance, support and materials to educators interested in teaching the Holocaust.

Project Description

A survivor of the Holocaust and a support person attend secondary schools outside the Lower Mainland addressing students in one to two hour presentations, suitable for either small or large groups. The core of these presentations is the survivor's eyewitness account followed by student questions. Whereas the survivor speaks of his or her personal experiences, the support person addresses the more universal aspects of the Holocaust such as causes, legacies and lessons of the Holocaust.

Community Need

Recent incidents in Canadian history, most notably the Zundel and Keegstra affairs, confirm the fact that an accurate perspective on the Holocaust is desperately lacking in most rural areas of Canada. In an initial effort to ameliorate this situation we are working to bring Holocaust education to the outlying areas of this province, so that historical truths be acknowledged and common myths be dispelled.

If not for a project of this nature, outlying communities will receive no Holocaust education as they have no access to outreach programs.

Sources of Funding

The encouraging responses prompted us to seek funding for this project. To date we have secured sufficient funds from The Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society and private donations to plan five to ten trips per year.

The Holocaust Outreach Program of British Columbia, acts as a sub-committee of the Standing Committee on the Holocaust, who provide administrative assistance and educational and programming support.

Achievements

Since the program was initiated, public high school students and teachers from such diverse communities as Comox, Courtenay, Campbell River, Salmon Arm, Grand Forks, Kelowna, Victoria and Mallardville have learned about the Holocaust by survivors David Ehrlich, Vera Slymovics and Robbie Waisman and support persons Kit Krieger and myself. As well, each summer we participate in Camp Hatikvah's Holocaust Awareness Day program by ensuring that a survivor is present to relate their story to the campers.

If you wish to participate in this program or would like more information, please contact our office.

Holocaust Education to be Incorporated Into Local Jewish School System

The Community Hebrew Education Council (CHEC) is forming a lay advisory committee to assist in the administration of educational programs and curriculum for all Jewish schools in the Lower Mainland. The Society was asked to appoint a member to this committee, to advise on issues relating to Holocaust education.

Future Plans

Holocaust Documentation Project

This most important project has been dormant as of late due to technical difficulties including faulty recording equipment and lack of proper office space to conduct interviews. We hope to have these setbacks out of the way by the early Fall, at which time interviewing will recommence.

If you wish to have your story recorded and documented for future generations, please contact our office.

Film Series

A Fall educational film series is being planned. Please call our office if you wish to assist in coordinating this program.

Community Events

Yom Hashoah Annual Community Commemorative Observance

Tuesday, May 2, 1989

Always searching for thought-provoking speakers for various educational and commemorative events, our President, Dr. Robert Krell, has corresponded with many noted Holocaust scholars and survivors over the years. Rob had often asked Lilli Kopecky - survivor, lecturer at Emory University, editor of *The Voice of Auschwitz Survivors* - to participate in Vancouver's Yom Hashoah commemorative observance, but her busy schedule had never permitted it. This year Mrs. Kopecky planned to spend several weeks with her son in Los Angeles and agreed to participate in the Holocaust Symposium at U.B.C. She kindly agreed to give an address on Yom Hashoah as well.

Lilli Kopecky has been an untiring and outspoken advocate for survivors and for the rights of survivors for decades. She has negotiated compensation for victims, helped to establish memorials and education programs, even in Germany. Her "chutzpah" is legendary.

Some six hundred persons attended Beth Israel to hear Lilli speak on "Auschwitz and its Implications for the Future."

We thank the many dedicated volunteers and professionals whose participation made this evening possible and memorable.

14th Annual Vancouver Holocaust Symposium

May 3 & 4, 1989 UBC

Over 900 public high school students learned about the Holocaust this year through films, educators and survivors' personal accounts. This brings the total number of students educated through these symposia to over 30,000!

Lilli Kopecky, the keynote speaker, touched the students with her passion and outrage; passion concerning her experience, outrage at how the Nazis attempted to degrade their lives while the world stood silently by. Students sat riveted to their seats listening to Lilli's story. Following are some representative comments taken from the questionnaire filled out by students on conclusion of the program:

- Lilli Kopecky has given me a better understanding of the agony and pain Jewish people went through. As someone who experienced such a thing, she really opened my eyes to the extreme persecution of the Jews.
- The holocaust survivors are beautiful, true and courageous souls. They have shown us how to survive in the face of the brutal reality of the Nazi atrocities and still remain true.
- Nothing can replace the opportunities provided by a symposium like this. Your presenters and panelists are so eminent and qualified to speak. It is a fantastic opportunity for students to have access to all these people in one place at one time.
- Please, invite more survivors.

Thank You

Many thanks to The Standing Committee on the Holocaust and Canadian Jewish Congress, and the coordinators, survivors and educators, whose enduring commitment to Holocaust education have made and continue to make the symposium the success it is. This years' participants included: Rene Goldman, Klara Forrai, Lillian Nemetz, Bronia Sonnenschein, Ernie Forrai, Rabbi Cahana, Derek Grant, Jennifer Beairsto, Louise Sorenson, Rubin Pinsky, Elsie Dunner, Chaim Kornfeld, Erwin Nest, Sam Znaimer, Graham Forst, Ted Hill, Hilary Nicholls, Serge Haber, Bertha Fraeme, Dan Sonnenschein, Barry Dunner, Sheryl Davis, Micha Menczer, Michael Elterman, Bill Gluck, Robert Krell, Kit Krieger, Faye Davis, William Nicholls, David Ehrlich, Peter Parker, Vera Slymovics, Helen Karsai.

If you wish to participate in next years symposium, please contact our office or Congress at 261-8101.

Danzig '39 Exhibit

Vancouver Museum

May 2 - July 23

There was excitement and anticipation in the air this past Spring as the opening of Danzig '39 drew near. Would the community rally behind the exhibit? Would it be successful? Now it is official. Hundreds of visitors attended the museum daily to see the exhibit and learn about Jewish history and heritage. Congratulations to the Vancouver Museum and the many dedicated volunteers on a job well done. Special thanks are due Harriet Wolfe and Donna Bryman for their exceptional dedication and effort in bringing this magnificent exhibit into fruition.

The VHC Society provided funds for this project. As well, the Vancouver Museum requested the Society's representation on its Advisory Committee for the exhibit. Robbie Waisman was appointed.

Multicultural Celebration

Vancouver Museum

June 11

The Vancouver Museum hosted a multicultural event in honour of the Danzig exhibit, inviting all ethnic communities. The Society was invited to participate in planning, and President, Dr. Robert Krell, to deliver the keynote address, *The Holocaust and its Implications for Contemporary Canadian Life*.

Exerpts from Dr. Krell's Speech

"Before the Holocaust it was not possible to imagine a Holocaust. For your safety and for all citizens of this bountiful land, you must learn about the Holocaust. When you see Danzig '39, do not think of it only as an exhibition reflecting a piece of Jewish life and culture. Think about Canada in 1989 and whether your community and your ritual treasures are safe. Think of the unthinkable, believe the unbelievable, and then perhaps you will understand the meaning of the Holocaust. Although Jews were the primary victims, know it did not stop there. It never will."

"When you see Holocaust denial, or anti-Semitism, or United Nations resolutions condemning only the Jewish state, or biased media reports, when you see lies about the Jews - I assure you, others are not far behind. If they succeed to erase our history, surely they will rewrite yours - in blood. You must remember the Holocaust as if it were yours. Then, together, we will have a fighting chance to prevent importing a product we don't want - the machinery of Auschwitz."

Youth and the Resistance Movement During World War II

Leon Kahn, Vice-President of the Society, was recently interviewed by CBC Radio, Toronto. He was asked to comment on his personal efforts in combatting the Nazis and on his knowledge of the resistance movement of Eastern Europe in general. The program was aired on CBC AM Radio, Sunday, September 10th.

On a related topic, perhaps you noticed Mr. Kahn's conspicuous absence from the Yom Hashoah Annual Commorative Observance on May 2nd. That evening, Mr. Kahn was the keynote speaker at the Portland, Oregon, Yom Hashoah Commorative Program. He spoke about his participation in the underground and the resistance movement.

University of Victoria Sociological Study

Professor Mary Galant, of the University of Victoria, is studying the effects of the Holocaust on identity - *Challenged Identity*, as she refers to it. Funded through the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada, Dr. Galant came to the Society for assistance in this project. After meeting with Dr. Galant and being satisfied as to the validity of the project and the confidentiality with which the information gathered would be used, we provided names of survivors to her for interviewing. In return, copies of all taped transcripts will be given to the Society, adding to our already substantial Holocaust documentation collection/library.

Holocaust Memorial Special Service

Sunday, October 8, 12:15pm

In keeping with the age-old tradition of visiting the graves of departed loved ones during the High Holidays, the Society has scheduled a memorial service Sunday, October 8, 12:15pm, at the Holocaust Memorial at the Schara Tzedek Cemetery.

This service is being held in addition to the Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) program, held each spring in Vancouver and at cemetery sites around the world.

The service is open to all survivors, members of Second Generation and the community at large. Transportation will be provided by Schara Tzedek for those unable to drive to the cemetery on their own.

The bus will leave the Schara Tzedek Synagogue at 10:30am and the Louis Briar Home at 11:00am. For more information contact Leo Lowy at 272-0068.

Children of Holocaust Survivors

An exciting, ground-breaking researcher speaks on the transmission of the effects of the Holocaust on 2nd and 3rd generations.

Tuesday, Oct. 24, 7:30pm
Temple Sholom, Chapel
Sponsored by the Jewish Family Service Agency

Speaker: John Sigal, Author of *Triumph and Rebirth: Intergenerational Effects of the Holocaust*.

For more information please contact Marilee Sigal at the JFSA, 266-2396.

History of Antisemitism

VJCC Institute Lecture Series

*Tuesdays, 7:30-9:00 pm
VJCC (12 sessions)*

Instructor: Prof. William Nicholls

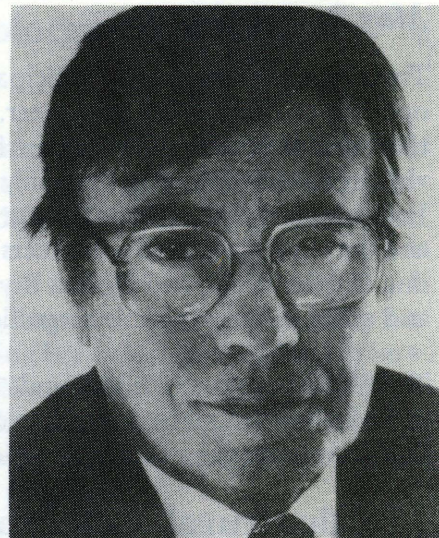
Beginning Sept. 19th, the course will explore the origins of ancient, medieval and modern anti-semitism building up to the state-organized anti-semitism resulting in the Holocaust. Anti-semitism in its modern forms of anti-Israel and anti-Zionist philosophies will be discussed, as will the role of the Church and Christian community in fueling and deterring anti-semitism through the ages. For more information please contact Karen Knie-Cahana at the Jewish Community Centre: 266-9111.

AMCHA

A Non-profit Support Group to Holocaust Survivors and their Families in Israel

The Society invited Manfred Klafter, President of AMCHA, to Vancouver to discuss the aims of AMCHA and how we could offer support to the organization.

AMCHA was initiated by a group of dedicated volunteers, all Holocaust survivors and Second Generation, aiming to give much-needed psycho-social support to survivors and their families living in Israel.



Our office arranged for Mr. Klafter to give two presentations: to the VHCS Board of Directors on Thursday, May 18; and the following evening to those in attendance at the Friday night services at the Beth Israel Synagogue.

Mr. Klafter gave informed presentations that inspired many into action. Rabbi Cahana, assistant Rabbi at Beth Israel, accepted the challenge, and with the administrative assistance of the VHCS, is now in the process of establishing a Vancouver Friends of AMCHA chapter. Donations to this most worthy cause may be sent to the Canadian Friends of AMCHA office in Toronto: Lili Fournier, Canadian Friends of AMCHA, 165 Lascelles Blvd., Toronto, Ontario, M5P 2E7. Tax receipts will be issued. For more information, please contact Rabbi Cahana at 731-4161, or the VHCS office.

was evident that for many, this was the first opportunity they had to deal with the Holocaust.

The forum was a first step towards establishing a network of Canadian child survivors for contact, communication and support. A North American listing of child survivors exists. If you wish to be listed to receive information and newsletters, or want more information, please contact our office.

The Emigration of Child Survivors to Canada

by Fraidie Martz

The world now has a literature of Nazi destruction. We know it well. As this century nears its end the dark shadow cast by the barbarity of recent history is lifting sufficiently to reveal the reservoirs of human goodness that lay within those quiet people who were unshakeable pillars of morality. Of late many books have been written in countries like the United States, France, Holland and Italy honouring those who risked their lives to save others, and those who did everything in their power to destroy the Nazi evil.

Canada's efforts to subdue the forces of Nazism has been fully reported; its checkered record in welcoming desperate refugees also well documented. What has not yet been recounted is the story of how the Canadian Jews, finally, in 1947 succeeded in persuading the Canadian Government to admit 1,116 Jewish war orphans; and how the collective energies of that Jewish community of 40,000 met the challenge of receiving these young survivors. The story remains to be told of the men and women, the families - some rich, many poor - who made a place in their lives for

The National and International Scene

Canadian Jewish Congress Plenary

Reaffirms Commitment to Holocaust Awareness

May 7-9, Montreal

The CJC Triennial Plenary is the forum in which the national agenda of Congress, and as such all Canadian Jewry, is set for the next three years. Some of the important issues discussed included Canada-Israel Relations, Human Rights, Anti-Semitism in Canada.

Holocaust and related topics were woven into the fabric of the conference in many forms including *Workshops*: Survival & Continuity, which discussed how survivors adapted to their new life in Canada and their contributions to Canadian life; *Speakers*, including Beate Klarsfeld ((Nazi-hunter), Irwin Cotler and Judge Rosalie Abella (Second Generation), each of whom addressed the general assembly; and *Films*: Voices of Survival, the CJC holocaust documentary.

An interesting development at Congress and throughout many communities in North America, is the 'coming of age' of the Second Generation. Incoming CJC National President Les Scheininger and President of the National Executive, Moshe Ronen are both Second Generation.

Special Forum

Child Survivors of the Holocaust

Tuesday, May 9, Montreal

Dr. Krell coordinated this forum and moderated a panel of speakers including Krisha Starker, a child survivor and Director of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, who gave an overview of post-war children who came to Canada; Fraidie Martz of Vancouver, a psychiatric social worker, who spoke on Greta Fischer and her work; Nathan Leipziger, a child survivor and a founder of the Toronto Holocaust Memorial, discussed the value of child survivors as educators; and Sarah Moskovitz, founder of the Child Survivor Association of Los Angeles, talked on the adaptation and coping of child survivors.

The conference room rapidly filled to capacity with nearly two hundred child survivors waiting for the program to begin. One of the purposes of the forum was to gauge the interest of child survivors in forming an association. The workshop provided an opportunity, in a safe environment, for child survivors to share their experiences with their peers. It

in Canada, be it in the Prairie or Maritime towns or the cities of Montreal, Toronto or Winnipeg. What is known is that a veil of silence was imposed on them not to speak of their past sufferings; and contrary to the fear that they would never be capable of ever attaining self-sufficiency, have achieved not only productive lives, but many have distinguished themselves in the professions, the arts, business and community life. This story of the human triumphs of the child survivors who came to Canada is a vital episode in Canadian history, which now lives only in the memories of people growing old. If not told, it will be lost forever.

Fraidie Martz has done extensive research, both locally and in Ottawa, with a view to writing a book on the history of child survivors who came to Canada.

A Tribute to Greta Fischer

**Child Welfare Officer
for UNRRA,
1945-1949**

by Fraidie Martz

With the death of Greta Fischer we have lost a remarkable woman who made a great contribution to restoring sanity and love to the world in the bleak landscape of 1945. Greta, a young Czech refugee, had been selected by UNRRA to become a member of Team 182, a Special Child Division, assigned to search in Germany for what was described as "unaccompanied or stolen and lost children." Ten kilometers from Dachau, Kloster Indersdorf, a neglected 19th century monastery, was soon converted by Greta and her co-workers into a haven for children. As word quickly spread far and wide children began to emerge from hiding places and

distant villages, from basements and nailed-up cupboards. On many nights, the hollow halls of the monastery echoed with the knocks on its huge wooden door, which opened to clusters of children searching the eyes of the receiving adults. Greta would say, "The children soon realized that everything possible would be done to help them." Greta and her fellows tried to be everything to their children: mother, father, doctor, nurse, and teacher, all the while knowing that a vital part of their work was to help the children talk about what had happened to them; the unspeakable stories of pain and suffering that a mind could not comprehend but which had to be told for the world to know.

Greta radiated an inexhaustible and vitalizing energy that made her an inspiring force of hope. Her deep-seated faith in the child survivors' inner resources helped them to realign their shattered lives. Greta also had a remarkable talent for seeing the potentials within people and things that could be used to serve life. She was especially proud of the bright red children's overalls she had made from Nazi flag material, for lack of anything better. And Greta always found occasion to laugh. The absurdity of requisitioning baby bottles and training potties from the American military was always a good source of laughter for her. On behalf of her children there was no bureaucracy too strong to be bent.

In the context of the history of World War II it can be said that something very small happened at Kloster Indersdorf under the influence of Greta Fischer. However, he grandiose language of victories and defeats does not apply here. We seem to lack the term to describe the victories of restoring

goodness and trust when the battles are over. This struggle for victory over despair was lead by Greta and her co-workers in the warmth of the kitchen where the children were fed, in the dormitories where the presence of a comforting hand subdued the spectre of evil, and in the fun celebrating holidays.

Greta and the children expected their stay at Kloster Indersdorf to be short, merely a necessary processing step before moving on homeward or to new lands. But there were no homes for the Jewish children to return to and no new lands wanted them. It took until April 1947 for the Canadian government to be finally persuaded by the Canadian Jewish Congress to allow 1,116 child survivors to enter the country. And it wasn't until January 1949 that Greta arrived in New York aboard the S.S. Rodnick, bringing with her one of the last groups of child survivors to come to Canada under the War Orphans Act. Greta stayed close to her young people until they were settled and the Refugee Youth Program came to an end.

Those of us who had the great privilege of knowing Greta Fischer can never forget her unshakeable belief in the power of human goodness and her deep commitment to the welfare of children. Greta Fischer's life is immortalized through the lives of the child survivors of the Holocaust.

Fraidie Martz was a colleague and personal friend of Greta Fischer and is writing about her life and work.

Upcoming Events

First Annual Holocaust Education Days

Sunday, November 5, UBC

The Standing Committee on the Holocaust has formed a subcommittee which is planning an adult oriented Holocaust educational and outreach program for the general community. Contact Canadian Jewish Congress at 261-8101 for details.

Kristallnacht Commemorative Evening

Tuesday, November 7, 8:00pm, Beth Israel

Guest Speaker: Rabbi Professor Emil Fackenheim

Topic: Kristallnacht 1938: Legalized Crime and its Contemporary Implications

Contact Canadian Jewish Congress at 261-8101 for details.

Kristallnacht Cultural Program

Thursday, November 9, 8:00pm, Temple Sholom

Days of Endurance: Voices for Survival

In keeping with the tradition of commemorating Kristallnacht on its actual anniversary date (Nov. 9), this special cultural program of remembrance in words and music, is being planned. Presented by local community performing groups, including: The Renat Choir, The Peretz School Drama Club, and the SFU Drama Department.

Contact Canadian Jewish Congress at 261-8101 for details.

VJCC Showcase of Jewish Writers

Sunday, Nov. 12, Monday, Nov. 13

Burning of the Book:

A Prelude to the Holocaust

November

This fascinating educational exhibit of books burned by the Nazis during the 1930's will be on display throughout the month of November. Curated by the Jewish Festival of the Arts Society in cooperation with the Vancouver Public Library. For more information, contact Eleanor Braude at 266-9111.

NOTICE

Canadian Jewish Congress Memorandum

War Crimes Investigation

Canadian Jewish Congress received a request from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, War Crimes Investigation Unit, for assistance in providing them with the names of people who may have been interned, or know of someone who was interned, at Oswiecim-Brzinka (Auschwitz-Birkenau) 1941 - September 1944, Hirtenberg, September 1944 - March 1945, or Mauthausen March 1945 - May 1945.

Persons who can assist with specific information may contact the Royal Canadian Mounted Police by telephoning collect to 613-957-8628, or writing to:

The Commissioner, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 1200 Vanier Parkway, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0R2, Attention: War Crimes Investigation Unit.

All contacts will be treated in confidence.



Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society Tributes

June 15, 1988/August 15, 1989

In Honour of

**David & Grace
Ehrlich's
Wedding
Anniversary**

*David & Regina
Feldman*

Robert Krell

Charles & Dora Davis

**Chaim & Susie
Micner's Wedding
Anniversary**

*David & Regina
Feldman*

**Avi Novik's
Special Birthday**

*David & Regina
Feldman*

Get Well

**Marvin
Weintraub**

Robert & Marilyn Krell

In Memory of

Sid Eibschutz

Robert & Marilyn Krell

David & Lil Shafran

Fanka Gaerber

Robert & Marilyn Krell

Harold Grunfeld

Rachel & Harry Wosk

Chaim & Susie Micner

*David & Regina
Feldman*

*Arthur & Terry
Szajman*

Leon Kaufman

Joseph & Rosalie Segal

Robert & Marilyn Krell

*Mark & Tracey
Shoenfeld*

Gary & Nancy Segal

Lola Apfelbaum

*Management & Staff
of Bank of BC*

*Norman & Sandra
Miller*

Benrose Holdings

Leon & Evelyn Kahn

Herb & Barbara Silber

Danny & Lisa Weinstein

Mel & Perry Sprackman

Joseph & Rose Lewin

Ben & Rose Folk

Fleisher Holdings

Mark & Gerry London

Ida Kaplan's Catering

Art & Terry Szajman

Corrine Woodrow

*Henry & Sally
Zimmerman*

Harvey Greenberg

David & Lil Shafran

Lili & Izak Folk

*David & Regina
Feldman*

Peter & Hildy Barnett

Mel & Gerry Davis

Myer & Mary Thal

*Peter G. & Donna
Berger*

Julius & Shirley Balshine

Martin & Maja Mindell

Stan & Janet Levy

Ida Green

Genia Wertman

Harry & Rachel Wosk

Sam & Lola Haber

Netty Prosterman

Alan & Shana White

Shlomo Shafran

David & Lil Shafran

Zev & Elaine Shafran

Larry & Lyliane Thal

Danny & Lisa Weinstein

Irvin & Celia Lerner

Tribute Cards

Tribute cards for congratulatory and condolence purposes are here. Your generous contributions help us fulfill our mandate, by continuing our educational and remembrance programming events and activities. The beautiful cover was taken from a painting of Renat  Dollinger of Salem, Oregon, who kindly permitted us to use her work for our cards.

Please contact Regina Feldman 327-3358, or Grace Ehrlich 327-8064, for further information.

Remember, for there is, there must be, hope in remembering.

Elie Wiesel