



Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society

For Education and Remembrance

Volume 1, Number 4

Fall 1990

CONTENTS

WE WILL BE TOGETHER	
Bill Gluck.....	1
FIRST THE TRUTH THEN JUSTICE	
Rozanne Kipnes & Geoffrey Druker.....	3
CARRYING THE MESSAGE	
Tali Hyman, Stacey Huberman.....	4
DIRECTOR'S REPORT	5
VHCS PROGRAMMING	5
NOTICES	6
NEW INFORMATION	6
PHASE III UPDATE	6
DONATIONS	7
RECENT GIFTS	7
TRIBUTES	8

PHASE III A GO!

VJCC receives a major grant & gift.

VHCS Education and Program Centre to be a reality.

see Page 6

We Will Be Together

by Bill Gluck, VHCS board member.

A report on the Oxnard Child Survivors meeting

When the opportunity came to attend *We Will Be Together*, the third national conference of Child Holocaust Survivors in Oxnard California (June 29 — July 1, 1990), I decided to join them. I was interested in meeting other survivors my age or younger, people who had been in concentration camps like myself, those who might have been hidden or were saved by false papers or conversions for the sake of survival.

I have heard more than my share of concentration camp survivors' experiences and I had naively assumed the more one suffered, and the longer one suffered, the bigger the "peckele" (baggage) likely to be carried afterwards. I therefore believed that this was going to be a different gathering, lighter in spirit, easier to listen to. Because of their youth, I thought, they probably don't remember all that happened to them. Besides, all they did was to survive the best they could. What could be more natural than that, right?

Wrong! What I found instead were people from many parts of the world, heavily laden with guilt and pain, still raging against the world for having subjected them to the suffering they had to endure, resentful of the indignity they were forced to experience. Most were embittered

for not having parents, relatives or homes to return to when the war was finally over.

There were many small workshops, each on different topics. One such group discussed the possibility of introducing a special prayer into every Jewish prayer book for the six million of our people who perished in the Holocaust. This prayer would be read simultaneously on Yom Hashoah by Jews all over the world. The leader of this group asked for ideas and opinions on how to achieve this monumental task he has undertaken, no matter how difficult or how long it will take him.

In other sessions I was amazed at how eager everybody was to speak of their experiences, how willing they were to reach deep into their still painful wounds in the hope of finding common ground with others, perhaps to be able to learn together to find a way that would make it easier to cope with their problems.

A woman in one such session told us how she, as a child, was hidden in a convent in Poland during the war and how she had been constantly pressured to convert to Christianity. She was able to withstand this pressure for some time and refused conversion until much later. A priest finally convinced her that

it was all right; after all Jesus was a Jew also. Sadly, this woman is still trying to put her life together.

I would have liked the opportunity to tell her that I had friends my age who roamed across Italy after the war. Many times Christian clergy eagerly offered to pay them for converting, and thus they converted over and over again. They were happy, their pockets were full of money and they were spending it freely while waiting to get to Palestine.

Another time, a blond woman read to us a story about a little blond girl hidden by a farmer in Poland. She was forced to live separately in the barn winter and summer. The farmer had a daughter about her age and they played together, but only outside for, the little blond girl was not allowed to enter their home. She had to manage on leftover food from the farmer's table. On one occasion, while playing in the snow, the farmer's daughter, who did not know the little blond girl was Jewish, suggested they should pee in the snow in front of another barn where an old Jewish couple were also being hidden. The little blond girl refused at first but was told by her friend, "It is all right, they are only Jews!" She became frightened of being found out if she did not cooperate so she also peed in the snow with her little friend. A short time later the Germans came, and while the two girls watched, took the old Jewish couple away. The blond woman's voice as she read the story was not very steady.

There was also a man, son of a Jewish father and German Christian mother, who lived in France during the war. The father perished, together with other Jews. The mother was able

to save her son and herself, only to experience a deep hatred from her son for being German, and for not saving the father as well. For a long time the son harboured plans in his mind to kill his mother. Eventually the boy grew up. He became a psychiatrist specializing in dealing with disturbed children. Only recently has he been able to accept his mother's explanation that she did everything possible to save his father as well, but dared not jeopardize their own safety.



L-R: Cecil Sigal, Bianca Gordon, Ruth Sigal, Rob Krell

Listening to these stories, and others, from my background in Birkenau, Auschwitz, again Birkenau; and Muhldorf, I suddenly realized there are other survivors beside concentration camp survivors, other people who are still suffering the effects of the Holocaust. I was not aware of this before.

Yet...I could not understand how innocent acts by very young children, done in order to survive another day, should still linger heavily on their conscience. I tried once to explain, from my perspective, why these acts of survival should not bother them. I had hoped that in some small way I could help. I told them how happy I would have been if someone had offered to convert me temporarily instead of being

taken to Auschwitz. However, my words were misunderstood; they thought I was trying to minimize their feelings by comparing them to mine. But of course, this was not my intention.

Looking back, I must say it would have been difficult to find a more open and friendlier group of people genuinely curious about each other. Endless questions about how they have managed since the end of the war, where they live, what they are doing for a living. An artist's response: "I am supporting my husband so he can support us both." And so on. Everyone was encouraged to write their memoirs, and to have them stored for future generations. Most people I spoke with have grown-up children, and with the luxury of newly-found time have decided it is time to reflect back and sort out things long neglected in their own lives. There were reminders to "Plant a tree, have a child, write a book."

A joint decision was made to have the next conference in 1992 in Spain and Israel to coincide with the anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain five hundred years ago. Marvellous timing; we thought our presence at this time would make a statement to both countries. Would any Child Survivor from this area care to join us?

Shalom and L'hitraot,

Bill Gluck

**The definition of a Child Survivor is anyone who was not older than approximately sixteen at the end of the war. Those interested in forming a local Child Survivor group call Ruth Sigal at 261-5233 or Bill Gluck at 594-1285.*

The Survivor's Legacy and The Second Generation

FIRST THE TRUTH - THEN JUSTICE

by Rozanne Kipnes and Geoffrey Druker.

Adapted from their article on a visit with Simon Weisenthal in Vienna, September 1989

A story is told about Wiesenthal: A friend asked, 'Wiesenthal, why don't you go back to building? You could be a millionaire.' Wiesenthal replied, "You are a religious man, you believe in G-d and life after death; I also believe. When we come to the other world and meet the millions of Jews, they will ask us, 'What have you done?' There will be many responses; one answer will be, 'I became a jeweller', another, 'I built houses'. I will say, 'I did not forget you'."

In planning their trip to Israel in the fall of 1989 Rozanne Kipnes and Geoffrey Druker of Vancouver discovered they could stop over in Vienna. They FAXed Mr. Weisenthal on a Friday afternoon asking for an interview and the following Monday had his positive reply. Wiesenthal and his wife Cyla lost eighty-nine relatives in the Holocaust, therefore at their meeting the couple asked him how he felt about living in Waldheim's Austria. "First you get evidence, then you accuse!" was



L-R : Simon Weisenthal, Rozanne Kipnes, Geoffrey Druker

his response, referring to Waldheim. "Forty-four years ago when I started I said, 'First the truth, then justice', and never inverted, never. I'm proud that I never accused an innocent man."

"What is your message to the Second Generation?" they asked him. "Young people hear me and ask, 'How can we help you?' This is a false request. You should ask, 'What should we do so that we ourselves don't become victims?' The guilt of my generation stems from our belief in the progress of our century. We (should not have

given) a chance for a man like Hitler, in such a country, with these crazy ideas.... we ignored the beginning, we did not mobilize friends. Later when the crisis came it was too late.

We are living in a world of injustices; small and big injustices. You hear something, but you can do nothing. But you in North America live in a democracy, you have relationships between you and your (M.P.) and

Senator. If you see something you feel is an injustice - send a letter, or go talk to him. You as young people cannot fight against big injustices (alone), this is a matter for the politicians

As Rozanne Kipnes and Geoffrey Druker concluded in their article, "One man can make the difference - Simon Weisenthal has set the historical example."

*The VHCS wishes It's
membership a Shana
Tova; may you be
inscribed.*

The Survivor's Legacy and The Third Generation

CARRYING THE MESSAGE

"RESPECTING LIFE AND DEATH AND REMEMBERING"

*Comments by Tali Hyman of Vancouver as published in Reflections, a journal of the
1990 March for the Living to Poland & Israel*

Initially going to Poland, for me, was intended to be strictly educational. It was only the emotional aspect for which I was preparing. I expected to gain new perspective on the "Shoah". Indeed, I gained this new perspective...however, not only on the "Shoah", but on life in general. After seeing death, after death, after death, I learned to not only appreciate my good fortune in being healthy and alive, but that death, as sad as it is, is still a part of the cycle of life.

A natural death, after a fulfilling life, is a prayer that wasn't answered for so many. How many? I lost count. The evidence I saw in Poland graphically showed me that my people had not only their lives robbed, but their right to die as humans as well. I learned a lot about life and myself. As I continue to prioritize my life's activities since I've returned, I find my Jewish identity popping up more and more, and being Jewish means respecting life and death and remembering the slaughter.

The Israel portion of the trip was, for me, like coming up for air while swimming. I had been in one of the deepest darkest places of humanity – drowning, knowing that Israel was my "oxygen" supply, enabled me to continue. This feeling "crescendoed", and by the time I was on the runway at Ben Gurion, I had surfaced. I had risen out of the gloom and even airforce bases were "welcoming" me now. Although Israel helped heal my fresh spiritual and emotional wounds, upon returning home, in Vancouver, I discovered that I have a scar, a scar that will be with me forever, just to remind...

Dear VHCS,

As I get ready to leave for one of the biggest adventures of my life, I thought about how much more difficult it would have been to go on the USY Eastern European Pilgrimage without the assistance of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society. I want to thank you very much for your generous scholarship which has made my trip possible.

I am very excited about leaving and all that I will encounter during the summer. This trip is something that I very badly want to do – to satisfy my curiosity, to learn, to meet people and to see new places, and most of all, to try to help the Jews of Eastern Europe, both while there and through sharing my experiences when I return.

Sincerely,
Stacey Huberman

*We must never let this happen again or the generation to come
will be marching for us.*

Winnipeg participant in 1990 March for the Living

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

MRS. RONNIE TESSLER

"SHREIBT UNT FARSCHREIBT"*

My remarks in this issue are confined to two of the Society's most important goals; preservation of the record and education. One of our most significant projects over the past eleven years has been documenting audio/visually the testimony of Survivors of the Shoah. This past June we added to the scope and depth of this project by hiring Ms. Tamara Genesove (B.S.W. Hebrew University, M.S.W. Carlton University) on a grant from the Federal government.

The grant is allowing Tammy to view and summarize the nearly one hundred tapes we now have. She has also been co-ordinating more tapings of Survivors and other eyewitnesses to the Holocaust. Shortly we will be able to publish a guide to the tape collection for educators and researchers. Our future plans include the production of short teaching videos on specific themes drawn from our collection. This will be an invaluable resource to teachers as well as to Survivors themselves; a short video relieves the Survivor/educator from retelling, and thus reliving their story, over and over again.

With education still in mind, this is the time to mention briefly several other projects the society is involved in. First, our new VHCS Sunday Series of films and lectures. You will find a leaflet with the details in this mailing. Second, the VHCS, along with other Jewish and non-Jewish groups in the city, is participating in bringing the important educational exhibit, *Anne Frank in the World*, to Vancouver in the fall of 1992. Finally, with great excitement and pleasure that we can announce that Sir Martin Gilbert, one of the pre-eminent historians of our day and author of *Churchill and the Jews*, will give the Kristallnacht Commemorative Address this year at Beth Israel Synagogue on November 6.

*"Write and record." These words were spoken by Jewish historian Simon Dubnos before being shot to death in Riga, December 1941. The words survived, their teller did not. *"To ensure that what happened to the Jews will survive in the most powerful form possible, we need the continuing publication of the testimonies of those who witnessed the terrible events at first hand."* (Sir Martin Gilbert)

VHCS FALL PROGRAMING

As is our custom, a MEMORIAL SERVICE at the monument in Schara Tzedek cemetery was again held this year on September 23 between the High Holidays. The arrangements were made by Society member Mr. Leo Lowy.

THIRD SUNDAYS SERIES. Beginning Sunday, October 21, 1990 VHCS Sunday will feature a series of five public lectures, panels and films on the evening of the third Sunday in the months October through March. For details please see the colorful flier included with this newsletter or call the Society office at 261-1180.

KRISTALLNACHT Commemorative Lecture, Tuesday November 6, 1990 at Beth Israel Synagogue, 4350 Oak Street. The featured speaker is Sir Martin Gilbert of London England, biographer of Sir Winston Churchill and Anatoly Schcharansky. He has also written the definitive book on the history of the Holocaust and a book on Refuseniks, *The Jews of Silence*. For details call the Beth Israel at 731-4161, Canadian Jewish Congress at 261-8101, or our office, 261-1180.

THE SYNAGOGUES OF PRAGUE, an exhibit of photo reproductions of pre-war synagogues in Prague, Czechoslovakia. This exhibit is co-sponsored by the VHCS, the Jewish Historical Society of B.C. and the JCC Cultural Arts Department and produced with the generous help of Mr. Paul Grunberger, whose original material forms the exhibition. Mr. Grunberger will give two public slide talks during the course of the showing October 18 -November 7. For information call 261-1180 or 266-9111.

NOTICES

Tapes of the **TRIBUTE EVENING** are available from Producer Bonnie Elster. Two hour program \$25, one hour highlights \$20, in a storage case. Bonnie can be reached at 224-5151.

PHOTOS OF THE TRIBUTE by Robert Edel. The album is in the Society office, 261-1180. The cost is \$1.50 per print.

HIDDEN CHILD GATHERING: May 26 - 27, 1991 at Hebrew Union College in New York City. Call the office, 261-1180 for information on this international gathering.

KINDERTRANSPORT REUNION: New York State, November 9 - 11, 1990. Contact Eddy Behrendt, 340 East 51st Street, Apt. 9E, NYC, NY 10022.

The **WESTERN ASSOCIATION OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR-FAMILIES & FRIENDS** cordially invites you to their 2nd Annual Dinner - 6:00 pm on Sunday, November 11, 1990 at the Schara Tzedek Synagogue Wosk Auditorium. Musical program by Cantor Arye Katzir and Barry Kaplan. Information and reservations: (co-convenors) Sharon Altman, 736-5096, Sylvianne Feder, 275-4951.

NEW INFORMATION

FORT ONTARIO REFUGEE CAMP IN OSWEGO, NEW YORK: A 'Safe Haven Museum' is being constructed at the site of the only refugee camp in North America for Jews during World War II. One thousand European and North African Jews arrived in 1944. If you are interested in participating or know of memorabilia related to the camp contact Sanford Resnick or Eli Rapaport at the County Office Building, 46 East Bridges Street, Oswego, N.Y. 13126

A campaign has begun to build a **NATIONAL HOLOCAUST MONUMENT IN BERLIN**. The committee is composed of German Jews and non-Jews. The monument was first proposed in 1980 by the Social Democratic Party. The plan is for a German version of Yad Vashem.

This past winter the Globe and Mail published information on **NEW DOCUMENTS** made available by the raising of the Iron Curtain in the USSR and Warsaw Pact countries. Researchers are now cataloguing 50,000 pages of documents never before seen in the West. Amongst the East German documents are the names of people who perished, fresh insights into the Nazi bureaucracy and personal accounts, eg. a handwritten log of the day-to-day activities of a Leipzig synagogue. Much of this material is now in the archives of Yad Vashem.

EAST GERMAN APOLOGY: In April of this year speaker of the E. German parliament, Sabine Berman-Pohl, for the first time on record declared, "East Germany's first freely elected parliament admits joint responsibility on behalf of the people for the humiliation, expulsion and murder of Jewish women, men and children. We feel sad and ashamed. We ask the Jews of the world to forgive us."

PHASE III UPDATE

The Vancouver Jewish Community Centre has announced that Phase III is a "go" thanks to a one million dollar "GO" grant from the provincial government. At its Gala Dinner in June, MLA Russ Fraser presented JCC president Sid Segal with a ceremonial cheque and the government's best wishes for the continued development of the Jewish community in B.C. It is expected that within two to three years the Society will be moving into its new 4000 square foot education, exhibition and program centre located at the Forty-first street entrance. Also housed here will be the library, archive and tapes carefully collected over the past fifteen years. VHCS members involved in the Phase III process are: board members Paul Heller, building committee, Leon Kahn, architect selection committee, and Barry Dunner.

DONATIONS

April 15 - August 15, 1990

Trudi Ben Ami
Susan Bluman
Sheila Anzarut
Myra Elson
Barbara Bluman and F.A. Shroeder
Olga Schwartz
Lori Seeman
Bernard and Vera Rozen
Ted Zacks
Frances Hoyd
Norman and Sandra Miller
Celina Lieberman
Jacques Kneller
Hilda Lourie
I.D. Laskin
Gisele Warren
Dr. Roy Slakov
Marianne Tatar
Harry Lipetz
Bob Bluman and Nancy Newman
Gordon Diamond
Susan Quastel
Inge Manes
Paul Heller
Herb and Evelynne Loomer
Freda Kaplan
Carole and Lucien Lieberman
Carol Herbert
Marv Granek
David Youngson
Fraidie Martz
Esther and Larry Brandt
Michel Mielnicki

Gary and Diane Averbach
Ronnie Tessler
Al Szajman
Mel and Gerri Davis and Family
Robert Krell
Len Daniel
Dr. H. Klonoff
Jack Lutsky
Helene Ehrlich
Thomas Szekely
Allan and Bonnie Belzberg
Dr. Michael Elterman
Dan Sonnenschein
Henry Glass
Michael Moscovitch
Morris J. Wosk
Tony and Ruth David
Tibor and Agi Bergida
Klara Forrai
Marilee Sigal
Leon Glassman
Ida Green
J.Wall
Dr. Art Hister
Risa Levine
Bernard Goldberg
Berl Gempel
Tom Wollner
Grigory Paller
Malka Pischanskaya
Edgar and Anne Krieger
Margaret and Jack Fraeme
Daniel Wollner

Norman Archek
Joel and Renee Bellas
Jana Abramson
Dr. Andrew Seal
Mr. & Mrs. H. Leiren
M. & Mrs S. Winfield
Helen Berger
Henry Gelfer
Errol Durbach
Jeffrey Bernstein
Dr. & Mrs. A. Hayes
Rosa Junger
Richard Ames
Joe & Miriam Eisner
Bill Gluck
Sophie Waldman
Alan Farber
Fred Rabiner
Gerry Zipursky
Susan Krug
Bronia Sonnenschein
Dr. Sherold Fishman
Dr. S.J. Rawin
Ben and Rose Folk
Harry Herman
Robert Schwartz
I. Wolak
Paul Grunberger
Clifford Margolis
Ester Krell
Jack Kowarsky
Rene Goldman
Myrna Kolberg

Shirley & Ted Cohn: in memory of Arpad Fulop

RECENT GIFTS

The Society is the recipient of a copy of a personal album compiled by Stanley H. Winfield, LLB, president of the Jewish Historical Society of B.C. Stan served with the Canadian Air Force in Bergen Belsen following its liberation. The album documents the work of a great Canadian humanist and peace advocate, Ted Aplin, known as the "Angel of Belsen". Against the wishes of the top brass, Aplin, aided by Winfield and others co-ordinated the delivery of food, clothing and mail to Survivors left in limbo in the camp after liberation. Included in the album are personal letters, documents and unusual photos of convicted S.S. personnel and staff.

TRIBUTES

April 15 - August 10, 1990

IN MEMORY OF:

Mr. A. K. Croll
Esther Rosenblatt z'l

Rose Lewin's sister & brother
Sam and Lola Haber
Lyliane and Larry Thal and family
Esther Kaufman
David and Regina Feldman

Asya Feldman
Art and Terry Szajman

Pauline Fox
Molly and Hector Ross

Father of Avi Nightingale
Ed and Debbie Lewin

Alice Grodsky
Sarah and Abe Bialoglowsky

Esther Rosenblatt
Art and Terry Szajman
David and Regina Feldman
Herschel and Rachel Wosk
Izzy and Bertha Fraeme
Mindell Kagna

SPEEDY RECOVERY:

Maury Wiss
Marilyn and Perry Ehrlich and family
Molly and Hector Ross

Etta Newstone
Esther Rosenblatt z'l
Grace and David Ehrlich

Aaron Szajman
Sarah and Abe Bialoglowsky
Bertha Fraeme

Regina Feldman
Bertha and Izzy Fraeme

Abe Bialoglowsky
Art and Terry Szajman
David and Regina Feldman

BIRTHDAY:

Robert Krell
Lil and Dave Shafran and family
Yvette and Hershey Porte
Jack, Susan, Soleil and Mira Lutsky
Lyliane and Larry Thal
Judy and Arthur Dodek
Michael and Kristina Berman
Elayne and Howard Shapray

Tribute Cards

Your generous contributions, through tribute cards for congratulatory and condolence purposes, help the Society fulfill its mandate of Holocaust documentation, education and remembrance. For cards, please contact Grace Ehrlich at 327-8064, Regina Feldman at 327-3358, or our office at 261-1180. An answering machine is on at all times for your convenience.

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

VHCS FILM AND LECTURE SERIES

October 21

GERMAN REUNIFICATION: ISSUES OF CONCERN
PROFESSOR L.E. (TED) HILL

December 2

ART AND THE HOLOCAUST
NOMI KAPLAN, artist
MALA ZILBERMAN, artist
ANNE ROSENBERG, art historian

January 20

LITERATURE OF THE HOLOCAUST
LILLIAN NEMETZ, writer
FRAIDIE MARTZ, writer

in the

VJCC Zack Gallery
Sundays at 7:30 P.M.
950 West 41st Avenue

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FOR EDUCATION AND REMEMBRANCE
261-1180

SPRING SEASON TO BE ANNOUNCED

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE