



Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society

For Education and Remembrance

950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver B.C. V5Z 2N7 (604) 261-1180

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Below is a poem by a Dutch Child Survivor of the camps, Gabriele Silten, an executive member of the Child Survivor Group of L.A. and a co-editor of its newsletter. Last October she and six other women in their fifties, cheated of an important rite of passage by the Shoah, shared a Bat Mitzvah in Los Angeles. The poem, dedicated to Robert Krell in response to his talk at the Oxnard child survivor gathering last spring, speaks for her generation; the generation who lost its childhood, who hid its pain and who are just now permitting themselves to discover and be who they are.

SURVIVOR'S SHEMA

R. Gabriele S. Silten

G-d said: "Let there be light",
and there was light.
G-d saw that the light was good,
and G-d separated the light
from the darkness.

The Fuhrer said: "Let darkness reign",
and darkness reigned.
He saw that the darkness served his purpose,
and he tried to banish the light
for all time.

Though we were children,
yet, in order to survive,
we were determined to resist,
with all our heart,
with all our soul,
with all our mind
and all our might,
that force of darkness.

We carry in our hearts
a wound which does not heal,
which pains us still
when we lie down
and when we rise up.
We teach our pain to our children,
we speak of it in our homes,
it is inscribed upon the gates
of our memories.

It is a brand so searing
that it smoldered
for forty years;
we dared not scream
lest our scream
reverberate throughout the world
for forty days and forty nights.
The echo would rupture the world.

Our eyes have seen such horrors
that they have gone purblind.
We repressed our tears
For forty years;
we dared not cry

lest we shed tears
for forty days and forty nights
The flood would drown the world.

Our minds are a conflagration of rage
burning for forty years -
our primary emotion -
a rage so great
we dare not lose our temper
lest we burn without restraint
for forty days and forty nights.
The blaze would shatter the world.

Our voices were silent
for forty years -
our silence was rewarded:
with life, during the war,
with praise, after the war
since we did not bother people
with our stories.
For forty years
we kept a silence so profound
that, even today, we dare hardly speak
lest our words pour forth
for forty days and forty nights.

No matter what age we reach,
we will always be children:
the children of the Holocaust,
forged in flames,
tempered in tears,
hardened in pain,
yet now seeking justice
rather than vengeance.

Let the Holocaust be
a symbol before our eyes
of such darkness as must never be repeated;
let our tattooed numbers be
a sign upon our arms
of such evil as must never happen again;
so let us consecrate ourselves
to bearing witness
from generation to generation,
so that no-one will forget.

VHCS SPRING IN REVIEW

AUDIO/VISUAL DOCUMENTATION PROJECT: The VHCS has received a \$23,100 grant from the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism to produce ten teaching length videos compiled from the tapes in our documentation project. Tamara Genesove will co-ordinate the project.

PHASE III DEVELOPMENTS: We are on schedule with our planning and development of the VHCS Holocaust Education Centre and Museum under the guidance of board members: Paul Heller, liaison to VJCC Building Committee; Arthur Pouchet, chairman, Design Advisory Committee; Robbie Waisman, chairman, Negotiating Committee; and Robert Krell, VHCS president. For further details see *UPCOMING* on page 3.

SUNDAY SERIES: The Sunday Series concluded this year with a thought provoking panel, *Literature and the Holocaust*, with Graham Forst, Fraidie Martz and Lillian Nemetz. Plans are under way for next season's series co-sponsored with the VJCC Adult Education Institute.

CHILD SURVIVOR GROUP: This new group has met four times since its formation late last fall. Gatherings are held in private homes. For information please call Lillian Nemetz at 738-8260 or Ruth Sigal at 261-5233.

YOM HASHOAH UNVEILING and COMMEMORATIVE ADDRESS: The unveiling of over seventy new names on the Holocaust Memorial at Schara Tzedek cemetery was held on Yom HaShoah, April 11 in conjunction with the annual memorial service. Survivor and Holocaust education activist Gerda Frieberg of Toronto addressed the community at the Beth Israel synagogue on the evening of Yom HaShoah.

OUTREACH: Survivors Bronia Sonnenschein, Vera Slyomovics and Lillian Nemetz participated in outreach programs in North Vancouver and Abbotsford recently. David Erlich and Mrs. Tessler, VHCs director, travelled to Comox and Courtenay in April to address several high schools there. They were hosted by the local Jewish community.

COLLECTIONS COMMITTEE: New gifts and loans are being received regularly (see listings on back page). Storage and display are being investigated for the teaching Museum in our new Education Centre.

ANNE FRANK IN THE WORLD EXHIBIT: Organized by a coalition of multicultural groups, this important teaching exhibit will take place Oct/Nov 1992 at the Chinese Cultural Centre. The VHCS is represented on the steering committee.

UPCOMING

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE HOLOCAUST: UBC, May 8th and 9th. With the participation of over twenty survivors, the symposium is again oversubscribed. Special guest, Lili Kopecky of Israel and Los Angeles.

BOOK LAUNCH: *Keeping the Memory: Fifteen Eyewitness Accounts from Victoria Holocaust Survivors*, collected and transcribed by Rhoda Kaellis. Publishing was initiated by Barry Dunner and carried out by the VHCS. The book will be launched with a Victoria opening honouring the contributors.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

June 3, 1991, 7:30 p.m.

in the Sidney & Gertrude Zack Gallery

VJCC, 950 West 41st Avenue

Special agenda: report on the Federation Mission to Poland and Israel

And

First public presentation of the architectural plans for
the VHCS Holocaust Education Centre and Museum

(to begin construction this fall)

NEWS

YIZKOR BOOKS: *Yizker bikher*, written and published by survivors after the war, available from The National Book Center, P.O. Box 969, Old East Street School, Amherst, MA 01004 and J. Robinson & Company Booksellers, 31 Rehov Nachlat Benjamin, Tel Aviv 65162, Israel. Large collections located at Yad Vashem, and in NYC at the YIVO Institute, Bund Archives of the Jewish Labor Movement, New York Public Library and Yeshiva University Jewish Theological Seminary. In San Francisco over 400 are kept by the Holocaust Centre of Northern California, 639 14th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94118 (415) 751-6040. For information on out-of-print volumes, lists of sources and a resource book on documenting family history contact Miriam Wiener at 136 Sandpiper Key, Secaucus, NJ 07094.

REQUESTS

A book on American victims of the Holocaust is being prepared by Mitchell G. Bard, Editor, Near East Report, 8201 Sixteenth Street, #408, Silver Springs, MD 20910, in co-operation with the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Anyone with firsthand knowledge of American citizens in concentration camps, including captured soldiers, please contact him. He is interested in the treatment of American Jewish soldiers in POW camps (particularly Berga) and eyewitness accounts of their mistreatment or deportation to concentration camps.

GIFTS AND DONATIONS

Your generous contributions help the Society fulfill its mandate of Holocaust documentation, education and remembrance. For Tribute Cards call 261-1180, or Grace Ehrlich 327-8064, or Regina Feldman 327-3358.

DONATIONS

Dr. Ron Braunstein, Dr. A Greenberg, Paul Heller, Helen Hooper, Leon Kahn, Maria Pishnitskaya, Sofia Preisman, Olga Schwartz, Dave Shafran, Elizabeth Stern, Jack Kowarsky, Arthur Pouchet.

ERIC SONNER SPECIAL BIRTHDAY TRIBUTE: to the Audio-Visual Documentation Fund - Trudy and Dan Pekarsky, Carol and Richard Henriquez, Cornelia and Peter Oberlander; for the purchase of a display case - John Feigel.

TRIBUTE CARDS

IN MEMORY OF: Leon Ratner by Marilyn and Robert Krell; mother of Miriam Eisner by Jocy and Leo Lowy; mother of Renée Lifshus by Jennie and Rubin Pinsky; Leon Karp by Harriet Permut and Ian Baker; family Stelzer by Emmy Krell; daughter of Rosalie and Alfred Joseph by Rubin and Jennie Pinsky.

BAR MITZVAH: son of Gerry Zipursky by VHCS Board, Steven Meltzer by Dan Sonnenschein.

SPEEDY RECOVERY: Leah Balshine by Esther Kaufman, Larry and Lillian Thal; Yvette Porte by Larry and Lyliane Thal and family; Ben Novak by Jocy and Leo Lowy; Spike Abramson by Jocy and Leo Lowy, Grace and David Ehrlich.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY: Jennie and Rubin Pinsky by VHCS Board; Mr. and Mrs. H. Ross by Grace and David Ehrlich.

SYMPATHIES TO: Dr. Max Nacht by Jocy and Leo Lowy; Dr. Roy Waldman and son by Jocy and Leo Lowy, Grace and David Ehrlich; Harry Lipetz by Marilyn and Robert Krell.

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY: Joe Lewin by Babs, Ted Cohen and family, Irene Abramson, Helen Weiss; Ben Folk by Babs, Ted Cohen and family, Irene Abramson, Helen Weiss.

RECENT GIFTS

Stanley Winfield - Austrian exit passports with "J" stamp, wife "Sarah", husband "Israel"

Dave Fishman - artifact

Suzanne Hirschmann - family correspondence

Ronnie and Barry Tessler - books

Robbie Waisman - video

Eva Berger - manuscript

Bernard Goldberg - copy of family photo

Limud Foundation - gift of a book

REQUESTS

For gifts or loans of archival material, please call collections chairman Rubin Pinsky 873-9842. Donations of new books, videos and journals are tax receiptable; for information please call 261-1180.

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