



Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society

For Education And Remembrance

Volume I

VHCS NEWSLETTER

Winter 1989

We are looking forward to a full year of VHCS programming and activities. As well, many Holocaust related events are being planned locally, nationally and internationally. We have prepared this newsletter so that it might serve as a vehicle for communicating current information about the VHCS and other activities of interest to our survivor community. The VHCS Newsletter will be sent to Society members and friends four times a year.

VHCS NEWS

The Vancouver Holocaust Centre

Each and every one of us, as survivors and members of the Society, should be extremely proud of the Society's many achievements during its brief tenure. We have assisted other organizations with documenting, preserving and memorializing the Holocaust; we have provided funding for special projects; and we are especially proud of the Holocaust Memorial that we dedicated in eternal memory to our loved ones who perished during the Holocaust.

At the same time, the Society has been actively seeking an appropriate location for a Holocaust Centre through which our true mandate — educational and remembrance programming — may be realized. Perhaps the rapid pace of these and many other developments, as well as planning for the future, have made us lose sight of the immediate needs of our survivor community. We sincerely hope that this is not the case.

Recently, meetings of survivors have taken place under the co-chairmanship of Mrs. Renia Perel and Dr. Helen Karsai to explore the needs of our survivor community. Indeed, there are many things we can do, and some we must do.

The VHS Society welcomes suggestions for programming and personal initiatives. However, these can all be supported through existing organizations. Similarly, over the next few months our new Executive Director will be working closely with our board and other survivors to integrate this kind of programming into our community.

A note of caution is in order. With several major projects to be negotiated in the very near future, including the building of the Holocaust Centre, and with two years of negotiations already behind us, it is imperative that we speak with one voice through one society.

You may recall that the proposed plan for the creation of an exhibition centre and museum was submitted to the Vancouver Jewish Community Centre Board of Directors approximately two years ago.

The concept was accepted in principle and recently reaffirmed in writing, but developments at the VJCC are awaiting Federation plans for Phase III. Indeed, a Phase III construction is planned for the near future to house the offices of Federation, Canadian Jewish Congress, and other organizations including ours.

At this crucial stage of discussions with other major organizations we can hardly afford to give the appearance of divisiveness from within our own community.

The VHCS Board welcomes your helpful comments and suggestions regarding this matter. We look forward to an exciting year of community development.

VHCS NEWS

First VHCS Executive Director Hired

At this time we wish to welcome Barry Dunner to the Society as its first Executive Director (part-time). Barry has been active in Holocaust studies and programming in our community. He is a member of the Second Generation Group and the Standing Committee on the Holocaust, for whom he co-ordinates a Holocaust Outreach & Education Program targeting high school students in the outlying regions of B.C. Barry has taught with many Society members including David Ehrlich, Bill Gluck, and the late Sid Eibschutz.

Barry brings a wealth of community experience to this position, having worked in various capacities with Canadian Jewish Congress, Federation, The Vancouver Jewish Community Centre and the Jewish Historical Society. Among other achievements, he has secured provincial and federal grants for major projects related to Jewish communal activities. Barry may be contacted through the Congress office at 261-8101.

Holocaust Memorial Inscriptions

Yom Ha'Shoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) Tuesday, May 2, 1989

Names for inscription at the Holocaust Memorial are being accepted until March 1st, 1989. Space is still available for up to 200 names.

Those wishing to inscribe the names of their loved ones who perished in the Holocaust between the years of 1933-1945 will find the forms for inscription available at the Canadian Jewish Congress office, or by telephoning 261-8101 or 876-9592 for more information.

The unveiling of the new names is planned to take place on Yom Ha'Shoah, Tuesday, May 2nd, at 12:00 p.m., at the Schara Tzedeck Cemetery: 2346 Marine Drive, New Westminster, B.C.

The cost of inscription is \$100 per name and tax deductible receipts will be issued. Cheques should be made payable to the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society and mailed along with your Memorial Testimony form to: Renia Perel, Chairperson, Memorial Inscriptions, 591 W. King Edward Ave. Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 2C4.

Holocaust Memorial Maintenance

Bill Gluck has undertaken to chair a committee that will, on a regular basis, inspect and repair any structural defects that may develop to the monument over time.

Donation Cards

There have been many requests for congratulatory and condolence cards in recent months. We are now in the process of developing a system of cards for many purposes. Please contact Barry Dunner for details.

Annual Membership Fees

At our last Annual General Meeting it was decided that a \$5.00 membership fee will be implemented. This is simply a means to register individuals as members for purposes of affiliation, not fund-raising. Membership is open to the entire community. Please send in your dues at your earliest convenience to Robbie Waisman, Treasurer, Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society, 782 West 52nd Avenue, Vancouver, B.C., V6P 1G4.

New VHCS Letterhead

A revised letterhead is coming soon to reflect the Annual General Meeting and elections of our new Board of Directors. If you wish to be included as an advisor or to work on special projects, please contact Barry Dunner.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Partisans of Vilna : Documentary Film, February 10th — February 16th ***The Ridge Theatre: 7:00 & 9:30 pm, nightly***

Partisans of Vilna leaves the viewer with a sense of awe and respect for the Jews who died fighting and an even greater amazement and respect for the people who lived to tell of their partisan resistance movement. This riveting film carefully documents the bravery of the men and women who formed the Jewish partisan movement in Vilna, Lithuania during World War II. Unlike many Holocaust documentaries, *Partisans of Vilna* contains no more violence than is normally seen on the evening news.

Elie Wiesel Visits Vancouver, February 20th

The Canadian Friends of Hebrew University are sponsoring a dinner and lecture in tribute to Sam And Sella Heller. The event will take place on Monday, February 20th at the Four Seasons Hotel, with Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel as special guest speaker. Couvert: \$100.00. For more information, please contact Dvori Balshine at 263-0413.

Nazi War Criminals: Vancouver Trial, March 1st

As many of you know, the Luitjens proceedings are being heard in Vancouver. These historic hearings, aimed at revoking Jacob Luitjens' Canadian citizenship, are open to the public and will resume on March 1st, 1989.

Danzig 1939 : Exhibit opens at the Vancouver Museum, April 3 — June 18

On July 26, 1939, ten huge crates, weighing over two tons, were delivered to 122nd Street and Broadway, New York City—the home of The Jewish Theology Seminary of America. These crates contained ceremonial objects, books, scrolls, tapestries, textiles, and memorabilia—the precious possessions of a community that was about to be destroyed, the Jewish community of the Free City of Danzig. In the early spring of 1939, the elders of the Jewish community, realizing that life in Danzig was becoming increasingly restricted by the Nazis, undertook a heartbreaking project to sell Jewish communal property, including the Danzig Synagogue and the Jewish Cemetery. The funds from the sale would finance emigration of those members of the community still permitted to leave the city.

This exhibition and its programs will provide very special opportunities to enlighten the general public about Judaism and about the Holocaust era. In addition to the exhibition, the Museum has planned a number of special community programs to highlight aspects of Jewish culture and its relationship to the religious and ceremonial objects presented.

At this time the Vancouver Museum is seeking members of the community to participate in the educational program complementing the exhibit.

As well, the VHC Society was invited to select a member of the board to sit on the Vancouver Museum advisory committee for the exhibit. Robbie Waisman was appointed.

For further information, please contact Donna Bryman, Exhibition Curator at 736-4431.

14th Annual Vancouver Holocaust Symposium, May 3 & 4

Lilly Kopecky, Founding Editor of *The Voice of Auschwitz: Survivors in Israel*, will be the featured guest speaker at the Holocaust Symposium for high school students at UBC this May. (We hope that she will also speak at Yom Ha'Shoah, on Tuesday, May 2, 1989. More details as they become available.)

Video Documentation Project (Ongoing)

Some eighty survivors currently living in Vancouver have already participated in this most important project by retelling their personal accounts on video tape. Copies of these tapes are being sent to Yale University's Sterling Library, which houses the most complete collection of survivor testimonies. For proper documentation procedures, however, it is necessary to resign the consent forms issued to all participants at the date of taping. Over the next few months, participants will be contacted and asked to sign these forms. When this is completed, recording of survivor testimonies will resume.

THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SCENE

Kindertransport Reunion! Fiftieth Anniversary

Tuesday, June 20 & Wednesday, June 21, 1989

A two day reunion of refugee children who arrived in Britain, unaccompanied, from early December 1938 until September 1939, will be held at the Harrow Leisure Centre in London, England. For more information, please contact: Mrs. Bertha Leverton, 50 London Road, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 4NW, England.

Photo album of Monuments and Memorials to the Holocaust (Yad Vashem)

Yad Vashem is considering the publication of a comprehensive album of photographs from all over the world, of monuments and memorials to the Holocaust. To this end they have requested that we submit to them photos of any such memorials in our area. To comply with this request we will be sending two sets of photos of: 1) the Holocaust Memorial at the Schara Tzedeck Cemetery; and 2) the Memorial plaque dedicated in honour of Raoul Wallenberg at Queen Elizabeth Park.

Pages of Testimony (Yad Vashem)

Yad Vashem in Jerusalem has been gathering the names of those who died in the Shoah for many years. There are approximately three million names currently on record at Yad Vashem. Each name is recorded on a "Page of Testimony" in the Hall of Names. One may read who they were, where they were born, and when they perished. Often there are photographs. The work of completing the gathering of the missing names is one of the most important and urgent tasks facing Yad Vashem. If the work is not completed soon, it is doubtful that it will be possible to complete this memorial to the individuals whose lives were ended so abruptly and so cruelly.

Please help. If you know of anyone who died during the Holocaust, please get in touch with Barry Dunner or the Congress office. We will supply you with as many "Pages" as you need.

American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors

National Executive Conference, Washington D.C., February 19-21, 1989

Many important issues face survivors in the United States and Canada over the next several years. The National Executive Conference will address these and other projects that demand immediate attention. Dr. Robert Krell, Regional Vice-President of the National Executive Committee, has been invited to attend the conference.

Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies

You may be interested to know that the many worthwhile activities carried out here in Vancouver do not go unnoticed elsewhere in the world.

During the course of our regular correspondence with *Dimensions*, we have been asked to submit a list of Holocaust related programs and events that occur in Vancouver, for the purpose of inclusion in their calendar of events.

United Restitution Organization for Canada

The United Restitution Organization is trying to get in touch with Mr. Beno Katzevman in order to locate his mother's death certificate. If you know of his whereabouts, please contact the Canadian Jewish Congress office at 261-8101.