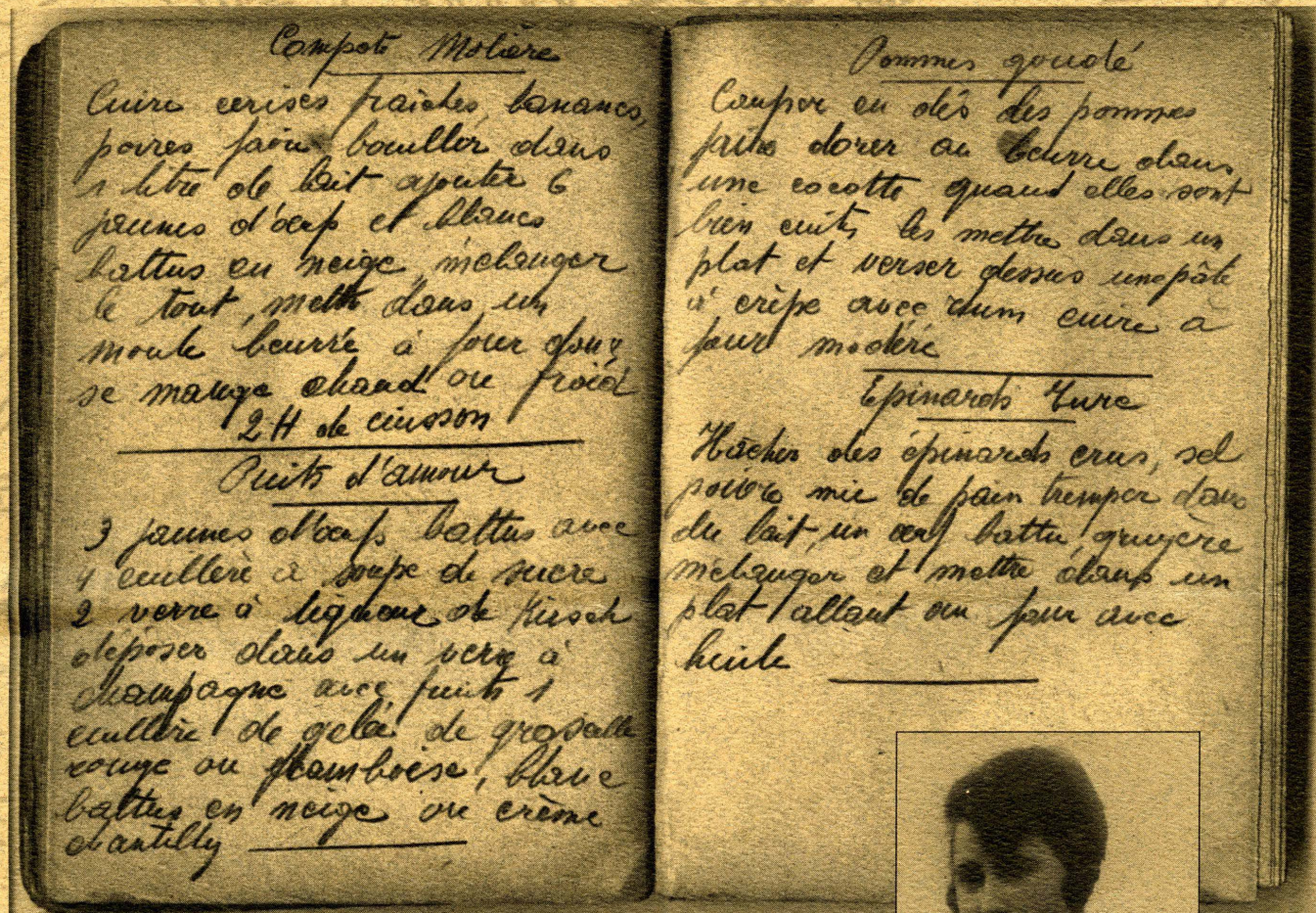


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# Zachor

"Remember"

Number 1  
January 1998



Rebecca Teitelbaum

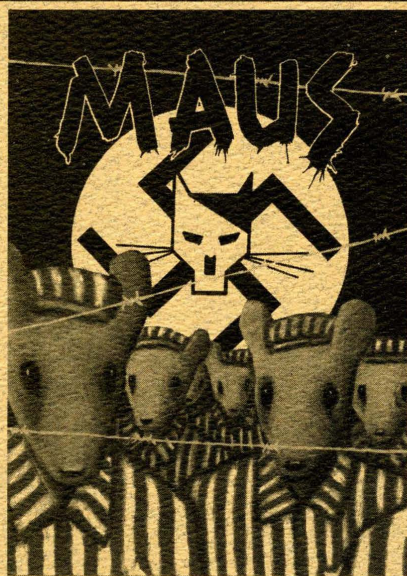
## RECIPES FROM THE CAMPS

The Unknown Legacy of Women of the Holocaust



# ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

## Coming Fall 1998



### The Exhibit

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre will host the comprehensive exhibit of Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize winning comic-strip *MAUS*, a memoir of the Holocaust from October 15 through December 15, 1998. The exhibit traces the genesis of *MAUS* from the original three page comic to its final incarnation in comic book form. Spiegelman's central metaphor – where Jews are represented as mice and Nazi's as cats provides a chillingly effective means for communicating the disturbing events of the Nazi period. Recognizing the quality and serious message of this work, the 1992 Pulitzer Prize jury created a special category to honour Spiegelman's two volumes *MAUS A Survivor's Tale I: My Father Bleeds History* and *MAUS A Survivor's Tale II: And Here My Troubles Began*.

## Jewish National Fund Dinner

Holocaust Survivors will be honoured for their contributions to Jewish life by the JNF as part of its annual Negev Tribute Dinner. "From Ashes to Rebirth" will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel on April 26th, 1998. Much planning is taking place for this prestigious event honouring the Holocaust Survivors of BC for their numerous and varied contributions to our community and to Israel. This joyous occasion will also mark the gala 50th anniversary celebration of the State of Israel. We hope that the entire community will join us for this very moving and memorable evening. From a tiny seed of hope grows a legacy of purpose, tenacity, and mettle. *If you are a Holocaust Survivor, the JNF needs your name by February 13th to be included in this special tribute, or if you would like more information, please contact the Jewish National Fund office directly by phoning (604) 257-5155, or by faxing (604) 257-5188.*

## Second Generation Group

For information regarding the schedule of meetings for the 2nd Generation Group please contact Deborah Ramm at 325-2208.

## Gesher Project

The Gesher Project is looking for Holocaust survivors to participate in a storytelling, writing and painting group. No particular artistic experience or talent necessary. If you are interested in being involved or in finding out more about the project, please contact Alina Wydra at 733-4312.

## Survivor Drop-in

Drop-in's are scheduled from 2 to 4pm on the second Tuesday of each month. Upcoming dates include February 10th and March 10th.

## Announcements

*S.T.A.R., Survivors of Terezin Association of Remembrance*, was founded by Inge Aurbacher and Gabriele Sifton specifically for child survivors of Teresienstadt. If you were born between 1926 and 1948 and were in Teresienstadt please contact: Ben Wasserman, 12518 Mooreknoll Lane, Houston, Texas, 77024 USA.

*Great-grandchild seeks Terezin Survivors.* "I am looking for anyone who knew my namesake Sigmund Alexander Jellinek. Before being transported to Terezin he was the main cantor and spiritual leader of his congregation Ober Hollabrunn, outside Vienna." Please contact Alexandra Hayah Jellinek Perloe, 412 Berkeley Rd, Harverford PA, 19041 if you have any information.

*Generali Insurance Company*, which operated throughout Central and Eastern Europe, has established a fund of \$12 million to be distributed to families of policyholders who perished in the Holocaust and to organizations and public bodies dedicated to the eternalization of the memory of the Holocaust. If you or your family members held insurance policy with Generali please call 1-800-456-8174 for further details.

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Tel. (604) 264-0499  
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The Newsletter of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society 50 - 510 West 11th Ave, Vancouver, BC V6Z 2B7 October 1996

# Zachor

"Remember"

Editor: Roberta Kremer

Layout & Design: Graham Sharpe



### In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezin to the Women of Vancouver

The memory so deeply etched in the minds of survivors who spent time in the camps is that of extreme hunger – “obsessive hunger, furious hunger that never dies down and gets even worse at mealtime.” This relentless craving for food was shared by all, experienced by women as fiercely as it was by men. But for women this hunger produced other reactions.

Women in the camps report that their daily conversations and their nighttime dreams were most often of food. Hallucinations of foodstuffs were common. Their dreams of food and the constant debilitating hunger produced an understandable passion to talk about and record cooking recipes. Some survivors describe “talking recipes” for hours until they could almost taste the imaginary creations – talk that even caused their dry mouths to fill with saliva. “Each of us would recite the foods that we would like to eat if suddenly we had the possibility.”

***“The recipes that some of us exchange  
and talk about incessantly does not  
numb our hunger”***

The recipes they dreamed of became richer with cream and butter as time went on; they were a mechanism to resist hunger through dreams of abundance. Often women would elaborate the great menu that they would prepare for their husbands and families when they were reunited thus seeing food preparation as a loving gift, they would give to those they loved.

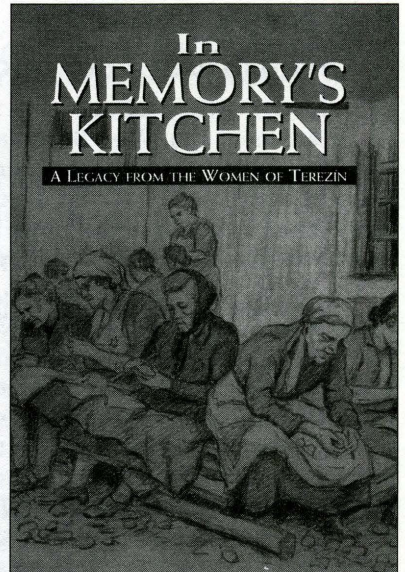
Beside talking about recipes, women in the camps struggled, despite the lack of resources and at great personal risk to create recipe books. One survivor describes how at Ravensbruck each prisoner had her cookbook in which she scrupulously entered recipes given her by her friends. “They fill pages and pages of their little notebooks, even depriving themselves of a half-ration of bread to “buy” a bit of pencil. This little book of recipes is her wealth and fortune, and she will not consent to loan it to anyone.”

These cookbooks form a genre of Holocaust literature whose existence is largely unknown. Few were produced and even fewer survived. *In Memory's Kitchen* is a story of one such cookbook and the convoluted journey the recipes took from the hands of women in the Terezin camp to their present published form. A collective memoir in the form of a cookbook, the manuscript was produced by women in the Czech concentration camp of Terezin. The book contains traditional recipes that were destined neither for stove nor table but committed to paper by malnourished hungry women with the hope that they would survive to make these dishes, to teach their daughters. In our own community, such a rare cookbook was recently discovered.

Bianca Steiner Brown, Terezin Survivor, former editor of *Gourmet Magazine* and translator of this collection of recipes, will bring the story of *In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the*

*Women of Terezin* (Jason Aronson Inc., 1996) to Vancouver as part of a special evening event.

The informative and commemorative event will take place in the Norman Rothstein Theatre on Sunday, February 15, 1998 at 7:30pm and will include a presentation by Bianca Steiner Brown and a special reception which will include food prepared by Jewish organizations in Vancouver from the recipes in *In Memory's Kitchen* and some from the Ravensbruck cookbook of Rebecca Teitelbaum, mother of Vancouver child-survivor Alex Buckman.



### In Memory's Kitchen

A Legacy from the Women of Terezin  
to the Women of Vancouver

Sunday February 15th at 7:30pm

A presentation will be given by the translator of *In Memory's Kitchen*, Terezin Survivor and former editor of *Gourmet Magazine*, Bianca Steiner Brown.



A special reception with food prepared from these unique recipes by local Jewish groups will follow.

\$15 HEC Members / \$18 Non-Members  
To purchase tickets, call 264-0499

The Norman Rothstein Theatre  
950 W. 41st Avenue

Generously Sponsored by Fraidie Martz



### Rebecca's Legacy: A Ravensbruck Cookbook

This is a story about the fierce attachment that Alex Buckman has for the woman he calls his mother, Rebecca Teitelbaum. It is also a woman's story about resistance and hope bound up in a tiny and fragile book of recipes.



In 1941 as the events of the Holocaust threatened to engulf Brussels, a two year old Alex was hidden by his parents, Dwora and Isaac Buckman, in a convent run orphanage along with his three year old cousin Annie, the daughter of Rebecca and Herman Teitelbaum. The two children were hidden as siblings to ensure that they would remain together. Tragically as Alex and Annie awaited their parents' return at the end of the war, only Herman, who had been interned in Buchenwald, returned. Dwora and Isaac Buckman both perished in Auschwitz in 1943, and at the time Rebecca's fate remained unknown.

Rebecca Teitelbaum had been deported to Ravensbruck, one of the largest concentration camps in Germany established especially for women. It is estimated that from 1939 to 1945, 132,000 female prisoners, many of whom were accompanied by children and newborn infants, spent time in the camp. Practically half of all of those imprisoned in Ravensbruck died from hunger, medical experiments, executions, gassing or from the massive death marches at the end of the war.

Rebecca spent seventeen months there as a slave labourer in the office of the Siemens Factory, which produced

ammunition. She recalls how she and the other women in her barrack would gather at night time to find solace in each other's company. Exhausted, cold and hungry they would talk endlessly about the food they longed for, about the family meals they had shared and the dishes they planned to make if they survived the war. Rebecca recounts how each woman in turn would share recipes in a paradoxical effort to stave off hunger.

It would appear that this was not an uncommon occurrence. A book published by the association of Ravensbruck internees entitled "Les Françaises à Ravensbruck" corroborates Rebecca's experience: "Nothing could replace the non-existent rations, nothing could calm the stomach pains or stamp out the enormous void. We were hungry day and night, without respite. The recipes that were exchanged abated the pain only temporarily."

It seems as though these oft-repeated recipes and stories about family meals served as a talisman, sustaining their humanity and hope in a time with little hope. In an act of enormous courage Rebecca hid away small pieces of paper and an indigo pencil and set about recording these recipes, so lovingly retold. In her clear, measured and even script Rebecca filled one hundred and ten pages. The pages are meticulously hand stitched as a little volume that can rest comfortably in the palm of one's hand. The space is so parsimoniously apportioned that usually two recipes share each of the tiny 4x6" pages. The recipes themselves are quite extraordinary and elaborate as though only the most special of recipes had the power to transport these women from their grim reality. Rebecca explains how upon the book's completion

each of the women would take turns reading from its pages: mousse au chocolat, gelée de groseilles, gâteau-neige, plat hongrois, oeuf hollandais, sabayon italien, soufflé à la confiture.

When this book was completed Rebecca went on to produce two more as gifts for the other women as well as another thin volume containing poems and resistance songs. In a world where the least infraction was met with immediate punishment and even death, these books can only be seen as an act of spiritual resistance. One can only wonder at the determination and spirit that drove Rebecca to forgo the much needed rest in favour of producing this collective legacy, giving voice to the memories and longings of the women of Ravensbruck.

As the Allies approached in late March 1945 the order was given for Ravensbruck to be evacuated. Twenty four thousand prisoners were sent on death marches to Mecklenburg. Rebecca was among some of the more fortunate prisoners who were handed over to the Danish Red Cross. During the evacuation process, the Red Cross trucks were halted and everyone ordered to jump for safety into a nearby ravine. Rebecca hesitated before complying but some of the other women who remained behind were killed in the ensuing bombing attack. Shrapnel from the explosion maimed part of Rebecca's left arm but the precious book which she clutched in her right hand was saved. All that remained of the women that were lost were the fragments of their dreams, preserved in blue pencil.

Rebecca Teitelbaum, who is the only mother Alex has ever known, is now eighty-eight years old and lives in Ottawa. The collection of recipes from the women of Ravensbruck is now brittle and yellowed with age, though surprisingly intact. Recently this fragile, hand-crafted volume was passed on from Rebecca to her son Alex and will be on display at the Holocaust Education Centre as part of the evening program **In Memory's Kitchen**. ☼



*Alex Buckman (second from right at front) with his parents, Aunt & Uncle and daughter, along with a family friend.*



### Learning and Sharing . . .

*Throughout the past year members of our board and staff have traveled to symposiums and conferences in their quest to learn, to share their experiences and to connect with the larger community of Holocaust survivors and educators. In the following articles some of these travel experiences are shared.*

#### L'Enfant Caché – Belgian Child Survivor Conference

by Dr. Robert Krell, President VHCS

Several years ago I received an invitation to speak to the Belgian Child Survivors Association, L'Enfant Caché (The Hidden Child).

It is important to note that nearly all Belgian children who survived, did so in hiding. Very few children survived the camps. Of 4,918 children to age 15 who were deported to Auschwitz from Belgium, 53 came back.

The objective of the Association was to offer a one day conference with a keynote lecture and workshops to draw together the first generation child survivors and their children, hence the conference title "Relations Between First and Second Generation." My particular topic was "The Psychological Challenges to Being a Child Survivor of the Holocaust, Hidden or Otherwise." My address was preceded by an introductory speech by Eliane Feld, a Belgian psychoanalyst who spoke on the transmission of trauma from the first to second generation. Her title was "Nos yeux reçoivent la lumière d'étoiles mortes" (Our eyes received the light of extinguished stars).

The conference was primarily conducted in French and Robbie Waisman kindly translated into French my introductory remarks offered in both French and Dutch. The basic text was presented in English with simultaneous translation for the audience of 170 persons. Dr. Feld and I then stayed with approximately 40 children of survivors over lunch time to facilitate discussion. The afternoon workshop for small groups were led by local therapists / facilitators and everyone returned to the auditorium of the university for a concluding question and answer period.

The entire day was emotionally complex, as are most of these encounters. I was struck again by the basic decency and warm personalities of "the children." How did it come to pass that despite such a horrible beginning, so many functioned so well and so thoughtfully? Every day they struggle with their memories. Every day they struggle to do their best.

Sophie Rechtman, the President, and David Inowlocki, Secretary-Treasurer, who acted as our hosts were absolutely astonishing in their commitment to healing the wounds they know to exist in themselves and their colleagues.

Some questions asked were: Knowing what we know, how do we pass on a "happy" Judaism? Is it possible for there to be a transmission of trauma without inflicting trauma on our children? Why do we again become so vulnerable as we grow older? How is it possible that some second generation are in therapy, while others seem to live as if the parental experiences are none of their business? I too had a question. What was it like for you to live in the country from which your parents and half of the children were taken away to be murdered? Are we who left the countries of persecution better off?

Their answer in part, is that they do suffer having to deal daily with concrete reminders. They worry; "Is the elderly Belgian over there perhaps one of those who betrayed us? Could those nuns be among those who saved us?" There was a convent where approximately 40 Belgian Jewish children were hidden. Each child was told they were the only Jew and to keep quiet about it, at risk of discovery. After liberation, they were dispersed. Through L'Enfant Caché, some have discovered they spent years together in hiding in the same place. Such a reunion took place at the conference. Can you imagine the strength of the bond that develops between such soul mates and how healing such a meeting can be? That alone makes child survivor conferences a necessity for those of us who have the privilege to be together from time to time, to witness or participate in a variety of reunions of people who truly understand each other's life experiences.

While being together in such serious discussion implies at first glance a somber and sober commitment, at the same time everyone seemed acutely aware that participating in the conference was really a celebration of life.

What a privilege to meet with the Belgians! ♪

#### International Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust Annual Conference

by Louise Stein Sorensen, President  
Child Survivor Group of BC

The survival rate of children was considerably lower than that of adults. While 1,500,000 perished, it has been estimated that approximately 100,000 children survived the Holocaust. The remaining few represent the last witnesses of this crime against humanity. These children who were robbed of their childhood have over the past several years formed local and international groups to support each other and to ease the trauma experienced in their childhood, and to meet long lost relatives and friends. The Vancouver group meets monthly at the VHEC.

From 1991 the "children" (now adults age 55 - 69) from Canada, USA, Europe, Israel and Australia gather annually to support each other, to cry together, dance together and to attend workshops and other sessions. Some are camp survivors, many were hidden, and some escaped death in a variety of other ways. This year's conference took place in Miami, Florida. Prior to the sessions, which typically last from Friday night through Monday morning, a founding meeting of the International Federation was held. I attended the meetings as a BC representative. It is estimated that the Federation to date represents nearly 4,000 Jewish Child Survivors worldwide. Vancouver has been invited to organize the conference for the year 2000. This is an exciting challenge for our group. Not only because it is the millennium year, but it also will be the tenth conference to be held since its inception.

While the conference's program is generally of excellent quality, I believe that the most significant and moving experience continues to be the ongoing miracle of finding friends, kindred souls (and sometimes even relatives). Next year's conference will be held in Washington DC, and Prague is the scheduled venue for the 1999 conference. ♪



## Topographies of Terror Tour

by Roberta Kremer, Executive Director

In the summer of 1997 I was invited to go on a tour in Germany being held in September for Holocaust museum directors. With a subject so vast and disturbing as the Holocaust, I saw this trip as an opportunity to examine issues that Holocaust Centres confront daily in Holocaust representation. This would be an opportunity to learn more directly about the sites and their history and the dimension and extent of Holocaust education in Germany today.

The tour was produced by the *Topographies of Terror Foundation* of Berlin, sponsored by the German government. With German unification and the proliferation of Holocaust memorial sites, there was the need for an organization to co-ordinate activities among the various sites. This tour was an outcome of the foundation's mandate to foster communication and interaction among those working at sites in Germany and with the international community of Holocaust museums.

In addition to tours, symposiums and conferences the foundation has produced a guide to the Memorial Sites. At present the foundation coordinates the work of 65 Memorial Museums in Germany. These sites see over 2.5 million visitors annually. There were 20 museum professionals in the group from 13 countries including Germany, Italy, Belgium, Norway, the United States, Israel, Romania, Russia, Poland, Austria, and Holland.

*I was surprised to realize that this was not a "Jewish" group. It is only in North America, Israel and South America where Holocaust education is firmly in the hands of the Jewish community – in places like Belgium, Italy, Sweden, Germany, Austria, the Holocaust museums and memorial sites are not staffed by Jewish survivors – they are no longer in these populations. In many places non-Jewish Directors, researchers and educators have spent their entire adult lives dedicated to the history of the Holocaust. The Jewish participants were a minority. No one came forward to*

*say Kaddish at sites, the few who placed stones were conspicuous.*

In addition to visiting 17 sites the tour would also include presentations by each participant on the museum they represented.

Beginning in Frankfurt with an orientation, we then traveled to Hadamar located close to Koblenz. Between 1939 and 1945 almost 200,000 people fell victim to the Nazi project of euthanasia: people who were diseased, mentally ill, orphaned, those considered mentally inferior or even "ugly," those with disabilities, and "judische Mischlingskinder" (Jewish half-breed children). Hadamar was a place designed initially to help people.

After the Nazi regime came to power in 1933 the public health service became complicit with the acting out of "racial hygiene policies." First was discrimination, followed by forced

sterilization and then the systematic seizure and murder of the inmates of asylums, and nursing homes. This elimination policy for those deemed racially inferior had been planned by the Nazi's

since 1935. The killing took place within six gas chamber sites within Germany, each murdering between 9000 and 13,000 people. Hadamar was one such Nazi euthanasia site where 10,072 people were killed. Besides the gas chambers, physicians and nurses killed patients with overdoses of medication or by starvation. Later in the "Nazi euthanasia project" even those found mentally disoriented after air raids, or forced laborers suffering from tuberculosis or exhaustion were routinely killed. Ill or retarded children were kept in special "kinderfachabteilungen" (infant wards): first observed, examined for scientific reasons, and then poisoned.

At Hadamar the group was taken through the site which consists of the memorial mass grave area, the cellar with remains of the gas chamber, dissection table, incinerators, euthanasia exhibition, a seminar room, and library. We were given a tour of the educational exhibit and given an overview of the

educational work done at the site by the director Dr. Christine Vanja.

*It was a chilling and sobering first site for our group to visit. These were "other victims" and for the most part they were Germans – a group we do not think of as also being victimized by the Nazi regime. I found it inconceivable that this "site" is still in use as a mental institution, albeit a "modern" enlightened one. The longevity of these buildings may not be a positive European inheritance but rather a historic burden that doesn't allow enough distance for change.*

The Hadamar exhibit covers the role of psychiatry under National Socialism; the phases of euthanasia; the attitude of the people; post war trials; and reconciliation and commemoration.

*Besides school groups, health care workers employed by the government also attend programs. I wondered how the knowledge of the history of the site and viewing the exhibits in their midst affects those patients at the institution today. I personally could not undergo successful treatment in a place with this history without developing extreme paranoia!*

On day two we went to the Breitenau Memorial Museum, the site of Breitenau (Arbeitserziehungslager) an early "educational" concentration camp. Originally built as a Benedictine Monastery with an old Romanesque basilica, it became a prison for destitute people in 1874. During the Nazi period even the chapel was used as part of the prison. It was divided into two sections by a large wall, inmates were kept on one side, while weekly congregations sang hymns and heard sermons on the other.

During the Nazi period the prison was used for those who opposed the Nazi regime. The early prisoners (trade unionists, communists, and social democrats) came from the district of Kassel; later Roma and Sinti people (gypsy's), vagrants and Jewish citizens from the immediate area were also interned here, when Breitenau served as a transit camp for inmates destined for deportation to death camps. Today the site has an exhibition space and an archives which contains the custody files of the Gestapo prisoners interred in Breitenau. The primary research work being carried out is the recording of oral histories from former prisoners. The educational staff employed at the Memorial deliver programs to 25,000 German school children each year. Each group spends a minimum of three hours at the site whose mandate is to teach about discrimination, and issues of violence and exclusion.



*The international group in Germany.*



## CONFERENCES AND TRAVEL

After visiting the site I wandered into the "church" side of the building and was surprised to find a small booklet near the front of the church which listed all the Jews of the town of Guxhagen that were murdered or deported. The church had taken this on as an independent project of remembrance. Birth dates and even addresses of Jewish families have been recorded. I asked for and received a photocopy of this handwritten document from the church custodian who told me that many of the small town churches in Germany have done this. These books are a valuable genealogical tool, in a place that one would not think to look for this information.

Our next site was Wewelsburg Castle. With its unique architecture and history it attracted the interest of Heinrich Himmler who rented the castle in 1943 for the symbolic fee of one deutschmark. The Nazi leadership planned to use this facility as a centre to promote the Nazi ideology and to immortalize National Socialism as a military order. Part of their plan included the establishment of a pseudo-religious sacred shrine for deceased S.S. leaders. The cellar was converted into a crypt and the former chapel was rebuilt into the "Hall of Supreme Leaders." In 1939 a concentration camp (Niederhagen) was established nearby to ensure a source of slave labor for the elaborate renovations of the castle. The finely crafted wood inlay roof is decorated with ancient occult symbols, swastikas and other ideologically "decorative" elements. On display are the glassware, silver chalices, and linens designed for the use of high ranking leaders of the Third Reich.

*I cannot say that these objects are not beautiful. The design, ornamentation and fine craftsmanship does not reveal the destructive ideology behind their existence. The egomania and sense of self glorification is however, very apparent.*

The next site we visited was the Mittelbau-Dora concentration camp and memorial museum. At this site we had to prepare ourselves to go into the dark and wet tunnels as so many prisoners had done fifty years earlier, except they remained, worked, slept and starved there. Camp Dora was established in 1943 as a sub-camp of Buchenwald, built as the primary site for the production of the V2 rockets within the secret Kohnstein tunnels. In total over 60,000 people from over 40 countries were deported to work at Dora. One-third died from their mistreatment.

*The tunnels remain barren, cold, wet, dark and dank. We were all cold and even*

*though the tunnels are amazingly huge – a hollowed out mountain, we all felt claustrophobic and as though we were in danger. I am aware of my own internal dialogue – fill them in, get rid of these awful sites. No, preserve them, use them to educate. It felt so liberating to walk out of the tunnels, how do we also come out of this dark history?*

Before going to sites in the former East German area such as Weimar and Buchenwald the group heard a presentation titled, "Overcoming the Consequences of the SED Dictatorship during the Process of German Unification" on the memorial policy of the German Federal Government. The treatment of sites in former East Germany is very contentious and has presented many museological challenges.

Large permanent monuments, such as those erected at Buchenwald are monuments to the "Russian liberators of fascism" and are framed in an ideology not embraced by Germany today.

*The next day we "toured" Buchenwald. We could readily see the remains of a National Socialist Camp and how it has changed since the war. Instead of "layers" of history I envisioned a constant erasure of earlier histories – layers erased if they do not fit some official version or if they are in conflict with current ideologies. At what point in time is one historical moment privileged and the site frozen in time. Some violence is done to the memory and experiences of other times. This site was used as a prison by the Soviets after it was "liberated" – then others had to be liberated from the liberators. I found this site one of the most difficult. I kept thinking about Robbie Waisman and his time here, about his age and that of my own son. It was difficult to walk across the stones and see the outline of now sanitized barracks. The sites are so changed – softened by time. I have mixed feelings about the "upkeep" of the buildings – so cleanly painted and pristine, so softened by grass, flowers and repairs.*

During the tour we were taken to an area where a recent reburial had taken place. 703 urns with individual ashes had been discovered just two months earlier. The list of 703 new names not previously

known were uncovered in 1997! How could this be? This was startling to all of us. How could they have remained hidden in a roof for so long, untouched, unknown? The lids of each urn contained a metal cover with each name, birth and death date carefully in-scribed. It was thought that these deaths occurred near the end of the war and that the urns were sealed in an attic area where, until repairs to the roof were needed, they were not discovered. As I read through the names many were familiar – on the list were Vogels and Wajzman's.

The other startling evidence was the archaeological work being undertaken at the site where the dirt is literally being sifted through for any pieces that reveal the events and daily routines of



Urn discovered at Buchenwald.

both the inmates and the perpetrators. Tables are covered with pieces of cups, handmade combs and fragments of photographs.

I was struck with the enormous burden of history that these young Germans carry and with the "quality" of those in Germany involved in Holocaust education. Their task, though different from our work with survivors is also a difficult one. The group left Buchenwald showing signs of "museum" fatigue. Next stop Berlin.

In addition to the sites of the past week we had benefited from many evening presentations from our fellow travelers, presentations on the Norwegian Resistance Museum, Westerbork in Holland, Babi Yar in Ukraine, San Sabba Camp in Italy, Houston Holocaust Museum, Washington Holocaust Museum, Ghetto Fighters House in Israel, Auschwitz in Poland and others. There had been ample time to visit on the bus and in the evening hours. Our discussions focused on the issues, material was exchanged, and personal connections made. (Brochures and books from each site visited have now been deposited in our HEC library).

Outside Berlin we traveled to the Sachsenhausen Memorial Museum which was conceived by the SS architects as the "ideal" concentration camp. Over

*Continued on page 12*



### Building History: An Educators Conference

by Frieda Miller, Education Coordinator

Last November I attended a conference in Munich called "*Building History: Art, Memory and Myth*," which brought Canadian and American Holocaust scholars and educators together with their German and Austrian counterparts. It was this unique feature of the conference and the connections made across cultures that taught me much about the experience of teaching the Holocaust in Germany and Austria and also provided me with insight into our own teaching practices here in Canada.

Although officially in Munich, the week long event took place in several locations including Dachau and the small town of Augsburg. Each of these places held enormous promise as significant sites, imbedded with the events of the Holocaust. Unfortunately the conference made little attempt to capitalize on the power and educational potential of these locations.

On the first day we were bused to Dachau and ushered from our air-conditioned luxury coaches, through the gates of Dachau to a meeting room within the main administration building. No acknowledgment was made of the site. The day proceeded as though Dachau was a mere conference centre. It was not until almost twilight that a "quick run-through" tour was offered to the group. As a daughter of survivors this seemed like an unbearable indignity. As a museum educator I railed against the denial of site as a missed educational opportunity. As a result I found myself lagging behind and absenting myself from some of the proceedings in order to spend some time alone, responding to the camp with the respect that I thought it deserved.

Playing hooky from the conference proved a useful technique on more than one occasion during the week. It was in this way that I came across the old Jewish synagogue of Augsburg. Entering through its ancient wrought iron gates which concealed its presence from passers by, I found myself transported in time within a sheltered courtyard. Inside the shul I sat with a group of young German school children on a guided tour and marveled with them at the blue domed ceiling painted with a canopy of

golden stars. I could not help but be struck by the painful irony of watching six year old German boys wearing paper kippahs. Together we listened to the tour guide's explanation of Jewish culture in the absence of Jews. My ability to understand and speak Yiddish served me well on that occasion as it did many other times during my stay. And yet each time I was left with the uncomfortable feeling that my use of Yiddish was in some inexplicable way, a clandestine act.

The conference itself featured many



In the synagogue courtyard

exceptional and noteworthy presentations including those of Irving Abella's discussion of "*Switzerland: A Shattered Myth*," Jean-Jacques Van Vlasselaer's presentation on "*Music, Memory and the Camps*," Jackie Feldman of the Hebrew University's critique of "*Youth Pilgrimages to Holocaust Sites*," Robert Katz's presentation of Holocaust art projects and Ronald Headland's indicting presentation "*Einsatzgruppen Leaders*."

In hearing the presentations of the German and Austrian educators, I was impressed with the complexity of their roles within their respective societies and struck by the differences between their teaching practices and ours in Canada. In both Germany and Austria, Holocaust education seems largely the domain of their High School history programs. In Germany eleven hours of Holocaust instruction and a visit to a Holocaust site are mandated at the High School level. By contrast, Austria's

greater societal reluctance to address its past history is reflected in its less stringent teaching requirements. Austrian educators discuss quite frankly what they referred to as "everyday fascism," or Austria's attitudes towards its guest workers and recent east European immigrants.

My presentation on "Teaching the Holocaust: A Canadian Experience" was primarily directed at the European audience in that it described the Canadian multi-cultural context and its impact on the direction of our Education Centre. I cited our partnerships with community groups and our emphasis on anti-racism and moral education. I described the way our Nuremberg student mock trial program was used as a vehicle for debating issues of hate speech and hate literature. I also outlined the common practice of integrating history with other disciplines such as literature and the arts and the hands-on use of artifacts and documents as an entry point into the larger history. Many of these practices were greeted with some astonishment by the European educators, accustomed to the more traditional historical approaches. It all made for some lively exchanges.

In the end it felt good to come home. It was good to leave the smoky Munich pubs, serving bread and smaltz, and to return to Vancouver's smoke-free environmental bubble. Next year the conference organizers hope to host a reciprocal conference in Ottawa. It will be intriguing to watch the exchange with German and Austrian colleagues continue to unfold. ♥

#### The following are a selection of conferences taking place in 1998.

*Israel and the Holocaust: From Diaspora to Dwelling Place* will take place on February 23 - 24, 1998 at the University of Memphis, Memphis, Tennessee.

*The 28th Annual Scholars Conference on the Holocaust and the Churches* will take place on February 28 - March 3, 1998 at the University of Washington, Seattle, Washington.

*The Legacy of the Holocaust, Its Meaning in Today's World* will take place on April 22 - 24, 1998 at the University of Nebraska, Omaha, Nebraska.

*Annual Convention of the Association of Holocaust Organizations* will take place on June 7 - 9, 1998 in Skokie, Illinois.

*The Fifth Biennial Conference on Christianity and the Holocaust* will take place in Lawrenceville, New Jersey on October 18 - 19, 1998.





## A Former Resident By Irene Kirstein-Watts

Returning to Berlin  
what do I hope to find?  
Something, someone to tell me who I was  
or am.  
The house where I was born still stands  
as I stand waiting to be admitted.  
She lets me in, the concierge, knows  
without words I lived here once. Eyes  
very cold, unsmiling mouth, she points  
the way outside to the yard, as I remember it.  
She turns away, resumes her rhythmic  
washing of the floor. Scrubs her dislike  
of alien persons into the ground.  
I am not of that place.  
When I walk the grounds of the Tiergarten  
next day, I try to remember family days  
Sundays perhaps? Nothing remains, it is  
unfamiliar, strange foreign grass and  
earth and stones. I am not of that place and  
long for Canada.  
Outside the subway stands a monument.  
Graceful memorial for the non citizens  
slaughtered without a second glance by  
these people hurrying by, busy about their  
daily lives. They do not pause to read the words  
inscribed, leave that to the tourists, let them pay  
respects.  
A threatening guard in uniform, with vicious German  
Shepherd at the ready, waits by the ticket booth.  
Is the dog trained to tear out the throats of  
anyone who fails to pay?  
My grandfather's German Shepherd was called  
Wolf. They always met us at the door,  
Grandfather's hand on Wolf's collar. Inseparable  
until one went to Terezin, the other put down  
in a less celebrated place — a ditch somewhere  
perhaps?

When we arrive, this year's quota  
of former Jewish residents, they pour  
Champagne. Dine and wine us, line us up  
to hand out "Tages Geld" — the spending money  
for which we show our Passports. The document  
is not stamped with a J. We take their money, complain  
how little it buys, jostle in line for smoked salmon  
at the groaning buffet, before the tour.  
We herd onto the coaches, eager to see the former  
Jewish district. There is nothing there. The  
dome of the new Synagogue is guarded night  
and day by a policeman, machine gun poised.  
In deference to our visit he has been notified

to lower it. Protection is necessary, we are told —  
There have been incidents.  
Did we really go as willingly, as easily as this?  
I am not of this place.  
After five days of goodwill, celebratory speeches  
of congratulations — For what, surviving, forgiveness,  
and who is forgiving whom?  
I leave appropriately on a train. But this train, brand  
new, is gold and blue and called THE SCHINDLER WAGEN,  
bound for Switzerland.  
The woman seated opposite says,  
"Your accent is wonderful, when did you leave?"  
Is it written on my forehead for all to see?  
"I knew a charming Jewish gentleman. We did not  
know you see. "There are tears in her eyes.  
Are the tears for herself, or for the Jewish gentleman  
who must have disappeared quite early on. She leaves  
the train after more cordialities —  
"So nice to speak with you. It was all so long ago.  
Auf wiedersehn." I cannot answer her, or  
myself, for being here, a former resident. I am  
a person displaced, not of any place.

## A Memory By Celina Lieberman

After the war I came down with typhus, a dreaded war-time  
disease carried mainly by lice, and weeks later my hair started  
to come out by handfuls.

By then it was 1946 and a large group of us Jewish orphans  
lived in Struth, Bavaria. Some of my girlfriends thought that I  
might go bald unless they were to take steps to avoid it and so  
they dragged me, kicking and screaming, to a German barber  
who used electric clippers to shave my head. My friends came  
armed with a kerchief and a knitted ski cap and although both  
items gave me nightmares, I wore them all the time including to  
sleep.

My group was Shomer Hatzair. We sang a lot of "Anu Banu  
Artza" and everybody was happy except me. I could not cope  
with hairlessness. It so happened that our enclave was next to a  
group of religious Mizrachi women, who would point to my  
kerchief and snicker that one as young as I would be married  
already. My humiliation was complete: I neither wanted to be  
married nor bald.

And then there were the hateful glances of people on the  
street. After all, everyone knew that female Nazi collaborators,  
when caught, were shaven....

The Child Survivor Page welcomes submissions.

Send to the Editorial Committee: Louise Stein-Sorensen,  
Irene Kirstein-Watts & Lillian Boraks-Nemetz.



# LIBRARY NEWS AND DONATIONS

## Donations to Our Library

### VIDEOS

**Blood Money: Switzerland's Nazi Gold**, donated by Charles and Dora Davis.

### BOOKS

**A Partisan's Memoir: Woman of the Holocaust**, by Faye Schulman donated by Graham Forst.

**In Honour of Our Grandmothers**, donated by Greg Young-Ing of Theytus Books.

**After the Smoke Cleared**, by Jack Kuper; **Plays of the Holocaust: An International Anthology**, edited by Elinor Fuchs; **The State of the World's Refugees**, by the United Nations High Commissioner; **Escape or Die**, by Ina Friedman, donated by Fraidie Martz.

**Partners in Hate: Noam Chomsky and the Holocaust Deniers**, donated by Dan Sonnenschein, In Memory of My Grandmother Emily Schwebel.

**My Century: The Odyssey of a Polish Intellectual**, by Aleksander Wat, donated by Alex Dimant, In Memory of Solomon Ravin.

**Lost in Translation**, written and donated by Eva Hoffman.

**Of Blood and Hope**, by Samuel Pizar; **The Shtetl Book**, by Diane and David Roskies; **The SS; Au Nom de Tous les Miens**, by Martin Gray, donated by Michel Mielnicki, In Honour of My Parents.

**Nazi Gold**, by Tom Bower.

**Echoes of the Holocaust**, edited and donated by Solomon Robinson.

**Postscript: A Collective Account of the Lives of Jews in West Germany Since the Second World War**, edited by Karen Gershon; **The Holocaust Curriculum**, by Dr. Sidney Bolkosky et. al.; **The War Against the Jews**, by Lucy Dawidowicz, donated by Louise Stein-Sorensen.

**Souvenirs de la Maison des Morts - Le Massacre des Juifs - Documents inedits sur les camps d'extermination; Minorities and the Democratic State**, by Jan Masaryk; **The Jews in the Post-War Settlement**, by S. Brodetsky; **Treblinka**, by Jean-Francois Steiner; **Blessed is the Match**, by Marie Syrkin; **Faith After the Holocaust** by Eliezer Berkovits, donated by Reva Malkin, In Honour of Saul Malkin.

**We Were Children Just Like You**, edited by Yaffa Eliach, donated by Ben Akselrod.

**Young Moshe's Diary**, by Moshe Flinker, donated by Dorothy Cole.

**A Time for Trumpets - Not Piccolos**, by Frank Eiklor, donated by Regina Feldman.

**Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story**, by Lila Perl and Marion Blumenthal Lazan, donated by Saul Cohn.

**The Spirit That Moves Us: A Literature Based Resource Guide**, donated by Prof. Robert Katz.

**If I Should Die Before I Wake**, by Han Nolan.

**Kibbutz Buchenwald**, by J.T. Baumel.

## Reflections on a Bar Mitzvah

As I was preparing for my Bar Mitzvah I realized that close to 200 people would be gathering at this Synagogue to be part of my special day. I thought about the preparation for this day that took almost a year, this made me think of how lucky I am.

There is a group of kids that did not get to celebrate this day, these are the children of the Holocaust. I wanted to share my Bar Mitzvah by honouring the memory of a child who did not get to celebrate his Bar Mitzvah. Through the process of trying to find a relative to speak about their family member who died as a child in the Holocaust, I found out that although many were honoured by my intentions they just could not bring themselves to talk about the past. I then realized how hard it is to bring these memories back to life.

I would like to end my words by saying that although I did not get a chance to honour one particular child, today let us remember them all.

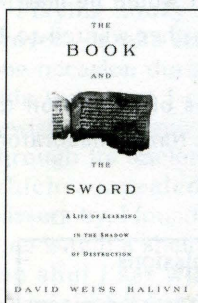
Thank you,

Daniel Beck

★ In honour of his Bar Mitzvah, Daniel made a contribution to the Holocaust Education Centre, and asks others to join him in this support. The Holocaust Centre is extremely grateful to Daniel for his thoughtful contribution.

## These Books Will Be Reviewed In Upcoming Issues

**The Book And The Sword: A Life of Learning in the Shadow of Destruction**

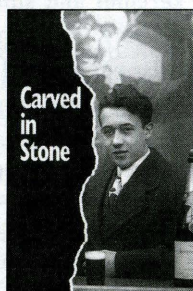


by David Weiss Halivni, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1996.

"Painful, beautiful, and passionate, this memoir asks: What can the Holocaust mean for persons who have devoted their lives to God? At the same time it is a unique look into the world of Talmudic

learning, millenia old and still vibrant."

**Carved In Stone: Holocaust Years – A Boy's Tale**

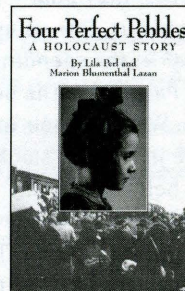


by Manny Drukier, University of Toronto Press, 1996.

"His narrative, prompted by his first visit back to Poland after 50 years, begins with his childhood, follows him in and out of various hiding places and to the labour camps, and describes his day of

liberation and his later emigration to North America."

**Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story**



by Lila Perl & Marion Blumenthal Lazan, Greenwillow Books, 1996.

"If she could find four perfect pebbles of almost exactly the same size and shape, it meant that her family would remain whole. Mama and Papa and she and Albert would survive Bergen-Belsen. The

four of them might even survive the Nazi's attempt to destroy every last Jew in Europe."



# Cards & Donations

OCTOBER 21 TO DECEMBER 15

## Donations

In Memory of Moishe and Rachel Gechman, from Jack Gechman.

In Honour of Chris Friedrichs, from Lucien & Carole Lieberman.

Mrs. Dorothy Goldenberg, Just Thinking of You, from Gerri & Mark London.

From Hayden Kremer.

## In Sympathy

Yetta Schickman, On the Loss of Your Husband, from Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Miklos & Andrew Horvat, On the Loss of Your Wife and Mother, from Ben & Barbara Berger, Wanda Melamed, Leonore & Milton Freiman.

Dr. I. Dubinsky, In Memory of Your Mother, from Anette, Michael, Adena & Jared Altman.

Mrs. A. Gelman, On the Loss of Your Sister, from David & Grace Ehrlich.

Mrs. J. Kagna, On the Loss of Your Sister, from David & Grace Erlich.

Mrs. Sylvia Polsky, Condolences on the Loss of Your Brother, from George & Frieda Wertman.

Mrs. Ina Hoffman, In Memory of Mrs. Gretel Windmiller, from Dennis & Joyce Hoffman.

Mrs. Judy Zack, In Memory of Your Mother, Mrs. Vleeschhouwer, from Derek & Marilyn Glazer.



Alina Wydra, Allan Posthuma & Family, In Memory of Maria, from Susan J. Bardet, Joe & Ina Auerhahn.

Mr. & Mrs. Ian Milne, Our Condolences on the Loss of Ian's Mother, from David & Grace Ehrlich.

Heather Korbin, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Lyliane, Larry, Ricki & Todd Thal.

Lyle Thompson, In Memory of Your Beloved Wife, from David & Regina Feldman.

Edna Schwartz & Family, In Memory of Your Husband & Father, from Leonore & Milton Freiman.

Mike & Pearl Millman, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

David Shafran & Family, In Memory of Lil Shafran, from Sharon & Irving Kates.

Larry and Lyliane Thal, On the Loss of your Father Myer, from Joe & Ina Auerhahn.

## Speedy Recovery

Sheila Herstein, from Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Celina Lieberman, From the Child Survivor Group, Helen & Isaac Parker, Ruth Kraminsky, Sheila & Izzy Moskovitch.

Mr. Barney Vinegar, from Harold & Bella Silverman, Eugenia Wertman.

Jack Fraeme, from David & Regina Feldman, Art & Terry Szajman.

Walter Groschler, from Susan Bluman.

## Mazel Tov

Daniel Beck, In Honour of Your Bar Mitzvah, from Marian Rev & Tom Ross, Tracey and Simon Jaques, Micha Menczer & Sandy Wheller, Phil and Sharona Beck, Steve Andrews.

Bente Thomsen, Mazel Tov on the Birth of Your Great Grand-daughter, from the Child Survivor Group.

Elaine Klein & Glenn Laufer & Family, Happy Hannukkah, from Joan Lyndon.

Olga Schwartz, Happy Birthday, from Mircea and Margaretta Ruse, Monica & Aaron Berant & Children, Lily Kemeny-Letay.

Mr. M. Strahl, Congratulations Great Grandfather, from Batia Karton.

Art & Terry Szajman, Mazel Tov on Albert's Promotion, from Leo & Jocely Lowy.

Edgar Krieger, On Your 80th Birthday, from Derek & Marilyn Glazer.

Harvey Moster, In Honour of Your 75th Birthday, from Judy Mate.

Dr. Jeffrey and Robyn Blicher, In Honour of Your New Born Daughter, from the Karasz Family.

Dr. Roy Weiss, In Honour of Your Birthday, from Jack & Karen Micner.

Roy & Fay Weiss, Wishing You a Joyous Anniversary, from Jack & Karen Micner.

Josephine & Gary, In Honour of the Announcement of Your Engagement, from Saul & Linsay Isserow.

Abe & Goldie Miedzygorski, Wishing You a Joyous 50th Anniversary, from Jack & Karen Micner, Art & Terry Szajman, Bob & Helen Coleman, Sally, Sid & Alex Coleman, David, Harry & Sid Miedzygorski.

Izzy & Bertha Fraeme, On Your 50th Wedding Anniversary, from David & Regina Feldman, Art & Terry Szajman.

Judith Forst, Congratulations on Your Extraordinary Performance, from Frieda Miller & Danny Shapiro.

Eadie Meyer, In Honour of Your Birthday, from Paul Meyer.

Paula Saltzberg, On Your Outstanding Work, from Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Leslie Spiro, In Honour of Your 70th Birthday, from HEC Staff, Sheila & Izzy Moskovitch, Stewart, Sharon, Irv, Debbie & Family.

## Thank You

Mr. Paul Cope, For Your Generous Contribution, from the Board of the VHCS.

Rita Akselrod, With Gratitude, from the Holocaust Education Centre.

Susan Bluman, With Gratitude, from the Holocaust Education Centre.

Arlainna Waisman, With Gratitude, from the Holocaust Education Centre.

Regina Feldman, With Gratitude, from the Holocaust Education Centre.

John Munro, In Honour of Your Effort and Hard Work, from Michel and Fredericka Mielnicki.

## Donations In Kind

Omnitsky Kosher Ltd, 5866 Cambie St.

Save-On-Foods, Richmond.

Starbucks Coffee Company, 3820 Oak St.

Jody Dales.



## FROM THE BOARD AND STAFF

*Continued from page 7*

200,000 people were imprisoned in the Sachsenhausen Camp between 1936 and 1945. Tens of thousands died of starvation, disease and mistreatment. Thousands of others died on the death marches near the end of the war. Eventually liberated by Russian and Polish troops, by 1945 the camp was again in use, this time by the Soviets. By the time it closed in 1950, over 60,000 people had been interned there, at least 12,000 died of malnutrition and disease during the Soviet occupation.

There are so many layers of history within this site; it is extremely difficult to keep the two perpetrators' periods separate as you traverse the site. Prisoners from the two distinct layers of occupation painted images and designs on the walls of the windowless kitchen in which they peeled potatoes and prepared soup. One can feel history here also in various stages of fading away.

The last day of the tour we went to the Wansee Conference Building, to the very room where the S.S. had drafted the "final solution." The building now houses a research centre (with 6000 videos), a library, exhibition and an education area. The exhibit, with an excellent English guidebook focuses more on the perpetrators than other exhibits we viewed.

Later that evening a dinner was held for our group hosted by the City of Berlin and the Jewish Community of Berlin. Discussions with the Jewish community proved very interesting. It appeared from our discussions that they are less obsessed with the Holocaust than we are in North America. One man commented that he had returned to Berlin, had his home and business returned by the Americans and had lived for fifty years now under a democratic Germany. He went on to say that he had not suffered the second insult of immigration. He served on Holocaust memorial committees and was proud of his involvement with the Jewish community of Berlin. He saw his history in Germany stretching out before the Holocaust and continuing after it.

On our final day, the group dispersed to see a variety of additional sites in Berlin. I went to see the newly restored Organinburg Synagogue and the Brandenburg gate, others went to the 1939 Olympic Stadium or the Reistag Building. It was enough, I was ready to come home. I was beginning to feel that the entire landscape, the sidewalks and the stones in the buildings were all somehow complicit in the crimes. Most of the significant sites remain invisible, have been torn down or are in other uses. Of those that remain, most are unrecognizable – converted into "museums," the events of the Holocaust now becoming artifacts, exhibits, "authentic" sites, and monuments, the institutionalization of memory. ❧

### THANK YOU! TO OUR RECENT VOLUNTEERS

#### Exhibit Research & Programing

Daniel Fromowitz, Julia Zarankin, Ethel Kofsky,  
Craig McAdie, Gloria Levi, Ruth Hess-Dolgin,  
Baruch Weise and Shani Levin.

#### Exhibit Opening

Regina Feldman, Susan Bluman, Rita Akselrod  
and Arlaina Waisman.

#### Exhibit Docents

Bonnie Belzberg, Fay Davis, June Earnshaw,  
Leonore Freiman, Daniel Fromowitz, Frances  
Grunberg, Sheryl Kahn, Gabriella Klein,  
Kirsten Lind-Pedersen, Craig McAdie, Romy  
Ritter, Sally Rogow and Baruch Weiss.

#### Special Projects

Arleen Kaplinski, David Zack, Stan Winfield,  
and Andrea Jordan.

#### Library

Ruth Fraser, John Welfley, Carla Campbell,  
David Schaffer, and Sheila Barkusky.

#### General Assistance

Hayden Kremer and John Morrison.

#### Newsletters & Mailings

Micheline Camu, Steven Cynader, Lyliane  
Fryfield, Molly Goodson, Pearl Minkoff, Bob  
Seligman, and Blooma Tadman.

#### Survivor Drop-In

Louise Sorensen, Lillian Nemetz, Ruth Sigal,  
and Regina Feldman.

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*If paying by credit card, please fill out information above. If paying by cheque, please make payable to Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society and mail with this application to #50 - 950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7*

**"Remember. For there is, there must be, hope in remembering" — Elie Wiesel**