

The Newsletter of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

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Zachor

"Remember"

Number 3
July 1999



The Gesher Project

Healing Holocaust Trauma Through Writing and Painting



Staff Changes at the Holocaust Centre

What makes goodbyes difficult is not the leaving, so much as it is the process which enables you to go. It is a process, however, that I have had to begin these past few weeks. Many of you were already aware that my long-term partner Sally and I are to be wed the 24th of this month. While we are looking forward to the opportunity to celebrate back east with family and friends, this positive step in our lives has precipitated a series of changes. Among them is the pursuit of our desire to move back to Ontario. Consequently, I will be finishing my work at the HEC as of August 13th, followed by our move to Orillia, Ontario shortly thereafter.

Knowing about the possibility of these changes these past months has led to a long process of reflection. I've come to realize that I haven't always taken the opportunity to express to others, or even myself, how significant my three-plus years at the HEC have been. While there is the obvious ethical, moral and educational satisfaction in this work, it is the individual relationships which have made my stay so truly rewarding. There are so many of you among the survivors, volunteers, membership and community at large that I have gotten to know so well. I am pleased to call many of you my friends and hope I have responded in kind. And so the process of goodbye affords me the opportunity to tell you how tremendously important you have been to me through your caring and trust. Perhaps working in an environment where life is a 'fragile commodity' has only led me to appreciate these relationships more. To tell you that I care deeply about you seems inadequate to the scale to which this is felt. I have valued your support, kindness, honesty and humour.

I wanted also to thank the staff and board of the HEC. They have provided me with confidence and support to succeed in my work, and have allowed me to take on new challenges, develop new skills, and to prove myself 'on the fly.' My thanks in particular to Roberta and Frieda for their daily presence. We have a strong and cooperative staff at the HEC. Along with Jennifer, Rome and Dan, we have a good team which I have been proud to work with.

When I first started working at the HEC I was hoping to offer my skills in a positive environment with a sense of community. In the end, I seem to have found a collection of people drawn together like family, who share a common strength and vision. It has truly been a rewarding experience to work with this family, and to help in strengthening our foundation, and building the vision.

My sincere thanks to you all.

— Graham Sharpe

BID GRAHAM A WARM FAREWELL

Thursday July 15, 5-7PM

Please join us.

Refreshments will be served.

This month's cover is a detail of Gabriella Klein's painting, entitled "Growth," as part of the Gesher project.

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Layout & Design: Graham Sharpe

THE GESHER PROJECT: HEALING HOLOCAUST TRAUMA THROUGH WRITING AND PAINTING

The Geshher Project was a unique, innovative, multi-disciplinary intergenerational Holocaust project carried out in Vancouver. Last January Holocaust survivors, child survivors and children of survivors embarked on a five-month journey of intergenerational healing through creative expression – through writing, painting and discussion. Participants included survivors: Bernard Goldberg, Frances Hoyd, Rosa Marel and one survivor who wishes to remain anonymous; child survivors: Marion Cassirer, Lillian Boraks-Nemetz, Malka Pishanitskaya, Sidi Schaffer and Louise Stein-Sorensen; and members of the second generation: Mary Adlersberg, Jean Adler, Barbara Bluman, Nurit Fox, Robert Grosz, Andrew Jordan, Gabriella Klein, Deborah Ramm-West, Marianne Rev and Elsa Weinstein. The nineteen participants listened to each other's stories, and produced the writings and paintings currently on display in the gallery in the HEC.

The facilitators, writer, Dale Adams-Segal, artist, Linda Dayan Frimer, and psychologist and member of the second generation, Dr. Alina Wydra, conceived of the project five years ago. Having worked with survivors of trauma in the First Nations Community, Alina decided that it was time to use her expertise in working

with survivors of trauma in her own community. Having been introduced to Dale Adams-Segal's healing writing techniques, she approached Dale to begin a group. Together they approached Linda Dayan-Frimer to illustrate a book, which would follow their work. Linda suggested that she would rather facilitate the participants' creation of their own works of art. The facilitators chose the name Geshher, the Hebrew word for "bridge," because it symbolized what they set out to do – to use creative approaches to bridge generations and as a means of healing Holocaust trauma.

Exploration in The Geshher Project was thematic and chronological. The group began by creating a collaborative piece of artwork, representing a symbolic "bridge" between the past, the present and the future. The lives of survivors prior to the war were discussed so that the context of "normal life" became the backdrop to the beginnings of the Holocaust. The aftermath of the Shoah, with its period of hope and expectations became another theme for discussion. The effect of the past on the present was the focus of the intergenerational exchange.

Themes of survival, guilt, significance of names, importance of family, Judaism, ambivalence, normalcy, numbing of

emotions, secrets and silence were chosen for their intergenerational relevance. The exploration of "names" evoked different responses. For survivors it evoked memories of those who had been lost and could not be mourned. A child survivor expressed a familiar sense of responsibility: "I am driven to be her voice." Second generation members expressed their sadness over not having family: "I don't even know their names" stated one of them as she was about to pay tribute to her lost relatives on a memorial piece of artwork. The interdisciplinary and intergenerational approach to the theme of "names" resulted in discussion, individual writings and a collective wall mural.

The Holocaust is generally remembered in black and white archival photographs and documentary film. In truth, the victims experienced the events in all shades of colour and emotions, and in images and experiences often too difficult to capture. The interweaving of psychological exploration, painting, and writing provided group members with three different ways of expressing these multi-layered shades of emotions. Each form impacted the others; the discussions enriched the writing, the writing enriched the painting, and the painting the discussions.

Continued next page



"My Tree of Life" by Nurit Fox

DEBORAH

Devora—
The name of my grandmother,
The woman,
My mother confessed
(Secretly, whispered in the night),
To be told to me only
After her
Death,
The woman,
My mother left behind,
When she
Ran.

Poem by Deborah Ramm-West



"The Warsaw Ghetto Wall" by Lillian-Boraks Nemetz

Dale Adams-Segal describes the individual and collaborative writing of Gesh: "This inspired writing emerges from the profound substance of the human spirit, from all the knowing that was hidden behind the horrific, behind the need to justify, to silence, to understand – and blazes forth with legitimacy and veracity: fierce words which bring us out of the past into the present and home to our own reclamation."

Linda Frimer describes the art: "The artistic expression of The Gesh Project issues forth from a life affirming urge to change and transform the darkest

shadows of Holocaust trauma. The resulting art, born from a place of truth, has the ability to confront the silence and to gain entrance into the most intimate and horrific of historical legacies. The experience of family losses, known and unknown, can never be assimilated or abandoned. The artistic process offers participants a bridge from the dark unconscious to the releasing light of awareness."

Gesh was a therapeutic group at its best. Very early in the process, a participant said, "In one word, it is 'healing!'"

Dr. Alina Wydra wrote about the psychological process: "I was fascinated and gratified to watch moments of real connection, real understanding, and the resulting sense of emotional relief, as evidenced by the psychological progression that occurred for one of the second generation members, who said, "My silence is because it is too much." Later in the process she said, "It's actually not so much pain – it's a cathartic release, finally I can feel connected"; and still later "En-visioning the other side of the bridge is really seeing the possibility of love."

Participants broke the silence between the generations, releasing long held pain while increasing self-awareness and

understanding. Reisa Schneider, scribe, witnessed the process during meetings. She recorded such profound moments, as, when one survivor said to a child of other survivors: "I can say to you what I cannot say to my daughter," and the child of survivors responded: "I hear you as I cannot hear my mother."

Facilitators and scribe, together with project administrator, Joan Fromowitz, are in the process of producing a book, which will include a section on the methodology involved in leading "a Gesh group." The multi-disciplinary, creative approach of The Gesh Project has far reaching implications for other survivors of trauma. The publication will include The Gesh Project members' paintings, poetry and prose and serve as a lasting legacy of the project for future generations.

The merging of deep painful memories and self-awareness during the Gesh project sessions resulted in evocative artwork and poignant writing. Bringing this artwork and writing to the public is another step in the healing and educational process. Individual and collective poetry, writing and paintings created by The Gesh Project participants will be on display until September 17, 1999 at the Holocaust Education Centre.

Themes of Personal Relationships in Second Generation Holocaust Survivors

a talk by

Dr. Hadas Wiseman

Thursday July 15, 1999

7:30PM

at the

Holocaust Education Centre

Dr. Hadas Wiseman is currently completing a study on central relationship themes among the second generation. This study, which was conducted in Israel, consists of interviews and questionnaires with a random sample of Israeli-born sons and daughters of Holocaust Survivors. The evening will include time for an open dialogue with those in attendance.

Dr. Wiseman is an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education, University of Haifa, Israel, and is a clinical psychologist in private practice. She is currently a visiting scholar in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University.



"My War and Post War Diaries" by Rosa Marel



A Story by Malka Pishanitskaya

"Some men strive after wealth; some would like to be strong and healthy; others again wish for fame and renown. But the wise ones apply their hearts to knowledge, so that knowing, they may understand the purpose of their lives and work out their destiny before the night cometh."

— Moses Maimonides

I would like to acquaint the reader with several special, very good and wise people, whose kindness and compassion helped my mother and me survive total destruction and loss.

I, the 10-year-old Malka witnessed two mass executions and one imprisonment. Prior to the mass destruction of our community, Jewish people were forced to live in mostly inhuman conditions in a ghetto, that cut off Jewish people from the Christian world. This existence brought on disease, starvation, fear and other psychological problems.

Miraculously my mother and I escaped death. We were constantly on the run, absolutely alone and lost among anti-Semites who took pride in killing Jews. Darkness, silence, hunger, emptiness — those were our "possessions and luggage" we carried from village to village. These were the places of our survival located 5-6 miles away from Romanov, Ukraine — the town where I was born and where I witnessed these massacres.

The first village we approached was Yasnograd. We spent the winter of 1941 there hiding mostly in haystacks and cattle-sheds, only getting out at night and knocking on doors of strangers, begging for the mercy of warmth to thaw our pained bodies from frostbite and starvation. These wanderings involved high risk of encountering a village policeman or some Jew-hater, who wouldn't hesitate to kill us.

In the spring of 1942 I decided to try my luck in the next village, called Monasterok, where I met Lidia Kononchuk — a righteous Christian woman who could see through the curtain of time, the rebirth of Israel, the gathering of the surviving Jews in the Holy Land. She was almost the only one who made my mother and me feel that we were People with a future. She made us believe that there was a purpose in surviving, that one day God would have mercy on the Jewish People, and give them the long Promised Land that was lost to them centuries ago.

Lidia Kononchuk was so poor that she couldn't give me a single grain of bread, but I sensed that she would help to hide my mother. She kept us in her home for about 8-10 months, until a villager gave her name to the police in Romanov.

We came to Lidia's home at night so nobody would see us, because we couldn't trust anyone. My mother hid in Lidia's attic, while I would get up and be off before dawn to the neighbouring village, where I would beg for food in exchange for work in people's gardens till dusk. Then I would return home after dark and bring in the "crop" of the day.

Lidia had three children: two sons, and one daughter, Alexandra, who was 17 at the time. The family was starving so Lidia's daughter had to work in Romanov as a housemaid for wealthy people. She seldom came home to see her family. Once, in the autumn, the Nazis came from Romanov to Monasterok to recruit youth for labour in Germany. We didn't know about this and remained in the house instead of the usual attic. Lidia's niece Verka knew by then that Lidia was hiding Jews in her home and she also knew what consequences her family would face if Jews were found in the house. She ran to her aunt in great panic to see whether there was a chance for us to escape. But there was no such chance. The Nazis were moving from house to house fast, and the danger was growing. When they finally entered Lidia's house, we could see their boots and spurs from our hiding place under the wooden bed. Then all of a sudden Lidia's daughter Alexandra appeared out of the blue; she just happened to come home that very moment to see her mother! Alexandra gave herself into the hands of the Gestapo officials and with other boys and girls she was taken to the railway station to be deported to Germany for labour. It was a mere coincidence that she came home that day to visit, thus saving our lives as well as those of her family. Had she not come that day, they would have searched the whole house for her, which meant that they would have found us. They would have killed all of us and burned the house to ashes.

What a miracle, what a happy ending! For saving our lives Alexandra was blessed by the Almighty, who guided her as she managed to run away from the railway station and thus was able to escape the German labour camp.



Above, photo of Lidia working on the farm. Top left, Malka's painting for the Geshar Project entitled "I Was the Mother to My Mother."

The Child Survivor Page — "No Longer Alone" welcomes submissions.

Send to the Editorial Committee: Leo Vogel and David Reed

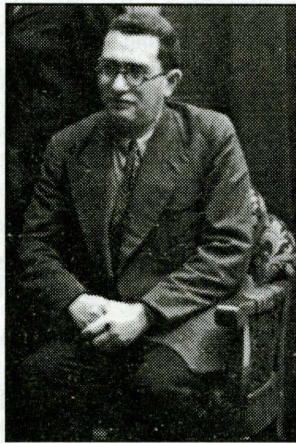
c/o Holocaust Education Centre 50-950 W.41st Avenue, Vancouver BC V5Z 2N7

A Warm Home, A Wise Teacher: A Tribute to Dr. Shia Moser

A rare and touching collection of childrens' Holocaust testimonies, handwritten in Yiddish by Dr. Shia Moser between 1945 - 1946 have been generously donated to the HEC archives. Dr. Moser, while acting as their teacher in the Peterswald Orphanage after the war, urged the children to tell him of their Holocaust experiences. He carefully transcribed them into individual notebooks. Dr. Moser kept these journals and the students' pictures and letters safe. He has cherished them for the past fifty years and now has deposited them into our archives. This collection of personal human dramas has now been faithfully translated into English by Sheila Barkusky and David Schaffer under the guidance of Dr. Moser, retaining the original character and intentions of the childrens' compelling stories. These stories allow us a window into the terrible tragedy experienced by these orphaned children. They survived, even though most of their families did not.

PETERSWALD CHILDREN'S HOME

The Peterswald Kinderheim (Jewish Orphanage) located in the Lower Silesian area of Poland was one of the most important Jewish orphanages at the time. It was established and run by the Jewish committee of Lower Silesia. Dr. Moser tells us that it was called a "home," rather than an orphanage, in an effort to make it seem as welcoming as possible. In 1946, approximately 100 Jewish orphans found refuge there. The conditions were basic by today's standards but were good for the time. Most of the children were from Poland, though a few were from other places such as Romania and Lithuania. Some of the children eventually emigrated to Palestine, or South Africa. A few were eventually reunited with a parent or sibling.



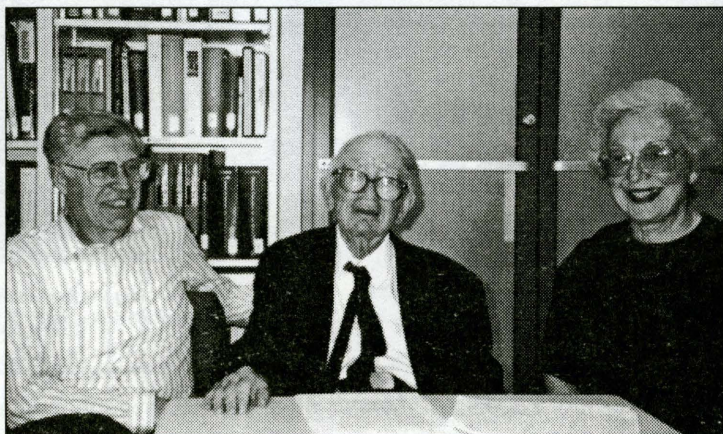
Shia Moser, c. 1945

"The children seemed remarkably normal to me, considering what they had gone through, either in hiding or in the concentration camps. The majority had come from lower-middle class homes in central Poland, spoke Yiddish and ranged in age from six to teenagers. It was for me, a very exciting time, though the word exciting is not exactly the right one. Perhaps I mean uplifting. It was being with the children who had survived, and teaching them. I taught them Yiddish, Hebrew and history. Sometimes I would give a special talk about a topic like the French Revolution. I still remember

so many details, their names and their faces.

"I stayed at the children's home for almost a year. I wanted to preserve the memories of the surviving children. They went through so much, such a tragedy. Each child had been so close to death that I thought [everyone] should know about their experiences. The Jewish Historical Institute of Warsaw made me an official investigator. The children would come into my room and talk to me while I transcribed their stories into notebooks. They seemed glad to tell me about their parents, their families and all that had happened to them. I think it made them feel very close to me afterwards."

— Dr. Shia Moser



David Schaffer, Shia Moser, Sheila Barkusky.

THE STORY OF FELIA SHERMAN

Born on 5th December, 1935 in Sosnowetz near to Vlodava. Daughter of Yaakov and Sarah. The father was a barber; the mother, a dressmaker. When the war broke out, the family remained in Sosnowetz. Later, the Jews were driven to Vlodava. On the next day, there was an "aktion" (killing). They [the captured ones] were taken to Sobibor. The father's family was taken away. Felia was with her mother, father, and with her six year old little sister at the mother's family. All of them had hidden during the aktion. Her father remained in Vlodava and Felia with her mother and little sister were hidden in the near-by little town Adampol. There, her mother worked on the estate of a German. They got a place to live and the father also came there. He worked there as a barber. After seven or eight months, the father became ill and the mother took him to Vlodava. The next day there was an aktion in Vlodava. The father was killed on the spot and the mother was taken to Sobibor. Felia remained in Adampol with her little sister and her mother's sister. Later, Germans came to Adampol and there was an aktion. Felia, her sister and her aunt, ran away to a forest cabin where another aunt of Felia's was hiding. After a few months it was said that there would be an aktion, so they fled into the forest, called Ochorze. In the forest, there was a group of Jewish partisans. The partisans used to go to the village and bring food. From time to time there used to be raids. The partisans used to resist the enemy. They also went to lay mines on the roads. Once, during a raid, Felia and her little sister ran away. A bullet than injured Felia in her hand. (Felia's hand is still not healed.) Then the partisans forced a Polish peasant to take Felia into his home; it was already snowing and Felia was barefoot. Felia, being wounded, was given to the peasant; the aunt and little sister remained in the forest. The aunt left the little sister to sleep outside (she was badly dressed and barefoot) so the child froze to death. Felia was

hidden behind the stove in the peasant's home. On one occasion, the Germans came but even they did not see her. The peasants gave Felia the same food as they themselves ate. Later on, the partisans moved Felia over to another peasant. This one was richer; he was on good terms with the partisans; Felia enjoyed better conditions there. Later she was at a German peasant's home in the same village; and later at another peasant in another village where she tended the animals. Felia remained there until the Red Army came. Felia stayed for several months with the peasant. Later acquaintances took her to Partchev. At the beginning of 1945, Felia arrived at the Children's home. She had had no education at that time.

AN EXCERPT FROM THE STORY OF MENDEL TSENKI

Mendel Tsenki son of David and Miriam, born in 1931. He attended 3rd & 4th grade. His family lived in Voyin near Radzin. Already several days after the arrival of the Germans, they dragged out Jews from their houses, told them to lie down in the mud and they trampled over them laughing. A German woman from Voyin pleaded on behalf of the Jews, and they left them alone. At that time they cut beards and side-locks. They beat them. They caught people for work, but they did not shoot anyone. In the house the material conditions deteriorated because the father who dealt in grain could no longer conduct business as before.

Later they used to force people to work, even when there was no need to do anything. For example, they used to drag boards from one place to another, without any purpose. They had to wear arm bands. The Germans used to come to the Judenrat, to make demands and to threaten.

The second year, the Germans once demanded 3 kilos of gold from the Jews.

They arrested the richest Jews of the town and threatened to shoot them and other Jews if the gold was not made available to them.

One man who had "pull" with the Germans, pleaded with them and they lowered the demand to 1 1/2 kilos.

The Judenrat, to some extent, deceived the Germans and gave the jewelry made from other metals. Then

they ordered the Jews to surrender all their furs. They arrested all the furriers and threatened them and others to be shot, if they didn't receive the furs. Apart from the furs of the furriers, one had to

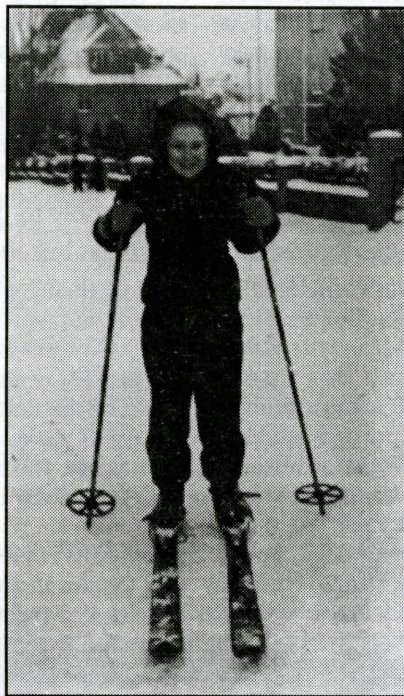


Photo inscribed for Shia Moser: "As a keepsake from your 'not-so-good student,' from Felia Sherman, Piotlesie, 21/03/47."

deliver another 300 furs. When they delivered all the furs to Radzin, the Gestapo said that if they could bring together 300 furs, they could also acquire another 200 furs. This number they could not reach. The Germans then came and shot the Rabbi and two of the arrested furriers. The other two bought their way out with gold. Mendel and his family and almost all the Jews of the town, concealed themselves outside the town. At night Mendel's father sent him to see what was going on in the town. The Germans had already left, and the Jews returned to their homes in the shtetl. Many Christians showed that they enjoyed the situation and informed on the Jews to the authorities.

In that area, there was already before the war strong anti-semitism. Soon they decided that Jews are not permitted to go beyond 1 kilometer out of the town on pain of death. Then there came an order from Radzin to arrest all Jewish Communists; a local German had informed about the Jewish Communists. (This German was the husband of the German

woman who had pleaded on behalf of the Jews when they were trampled on by the Germans). He was a carpenter who became a translator for the Germans, and later in Radzin acquired a high position with the Gestapo, he was in general a great bandit (evil man); he killed many Jews. His wife was taken to Posen as a "Volks Deutsche" and was settled there. The arrested Communists, 16 in number, were held for two days; then they were tied one to the other and they were led to the Jewish cemetery. One of them passed by his house, where his little children smiled at him, not knowing what was happening. Their father shook his head to them as a farewell gesture. At the same time, they caught some Jews and led them to the cemetery to dig graves. The graves were dug in the presence of those to be shot. Then they were shot one by one. The Jews who then came back from the cemetery looked like the dead. Later a German policeman found a goat skin at a Jew's house (the Jew already had grown-up great-grandchildren). He was shot to death in his bed at the same time that the goat skin was found.

Mendel used to stand guard for days on end to look out whether a carload of Germans was approaching. The children no longer played. Polish children used to shout "Jude" and say that it was a sin to play with Jewish children. At the beginning of the occupation, Mendel still used to study at the "cheder" (Hebrew religious school). Later, one could not do so. Every Gestapo man used to demand something else: boots, suits, and so on. One German was going on leave, so he demanded to get 30,000 zlotys by the next day or else he would shoot the Judenrat. The Judenrat went around collecting the money; the Jews cursed them, but they were not to blame. They had been forced to become members of the Judenrat. In the Judenrat, there were people who were not bad people. The Jewish militia also did not try to do harm, but later they had to apprehend Jews.

The people used to console themselves with the thought that the Germans would not anymore bother the Jews, because America would not allow Jews to be killed in this way. They used to say that perhaps the Russians would come. On Shabbat they still used to get together in a private house (at Mendel's grandmother) for prayer and at the same time discuss politics and to find

Continued on page 9

Yizkor Books from the HEC Archives

by Dr. Roberta Kremer

Described as the single most important act of commemorating those who perished in the Holocaust on the part of the Jewish survivors themselves, and often overlooked in writing about the Holocaust and by researchers who may not have the Yiddish or Hebrew language skills to access the material, are the hundreds of yisker-bikher, or memorial books. The majority of these books have been compiled by the remaining survivors of Jewish towns or communities. These books are devoted to preserving the history of people and town life, and recording the demise of entire Jewish communities in eastern Europe. There are hundreds of these Yizkor books, each devoted to one place. They vary in size and content. Some were produced in DP camps shortly after the war. Some are quite old, modestly printed, quickly assembled with few pages, while others are works of historic memory consisting of multiple illustrated volumes where literally thousands of people participated in their making. A few are just now coming into print after years of writing, researching – an effort on behalf of the memory of a community. In some cases the number printed was quite small and they remain quite rare, others have gone through multiple printings, a few are even finding their way into English translation.

For readers who want a glimpse into the contents of these rich books, the best source is Jack Kugelmass and Jonathan Boyarin's study *From A Ruined Garden: The Memorial Books of Polish Jews*, first published in 1983 and reprinted in an enlarged edition in 1998 (in the library of the HEC). Communities with as few as 350 Jewish families have produced yizkor books, as have larger communities like Lodz, with its 200,000 Jews. Some of the larger cities contain chapters on smaller adjacent communities.

Generally, fewer than 1000 copies are printed with the initial audience being the writers and survivors themselves, fellow landsman and their descendants. We are very fortunate to have in our archives a sizable collection of these rare and sacred books, each documenting one village, town or Jewish community primarily in Poland. The collection of Yizkor books

in the HEC archives have come to us from diverse sources, the most recent a donation from the Peretz library. The list of towns or shtetls that have produced these books number nearly 900.

Some Yizkor books contain excerpts from diaries, letters, poems and reprinted literary items by important writers from the towns. Biographies of important people, how people made their livelihood, drawings and paintings, maps and photographs, even poetry are included. Most of the books begin with a history of the town from the time of its first Jewish settlement. Genealogy and folklore of the town generally occupies a large part of the book. The majority of these memory

books were written and distributed to people from the same town. The writers, and those participating in the collection of material, are also the audience and therefore the books have an honesty and insider quality.

The index of one such Yizkor gives you an idea of the typical contents of these books as well as a sense of the cultural and religious life. The first chapter is a history of the town, then comes chapters about the rabbis and their court, the synagogue, prayer houses and their trustees, cemeteries and burial societies, the community and officials, the town council and the Jewish representatives, charitable institutions (free loan, free shelter, and dowry for poor brides), the "common folk" and their way of life, Jewish economic activity and the town market, shabbes and holy days in town,

Yeshivas, day schools, teachers and tutors, political groups, Zionist and labour parties, libraries and theatre groups, parties, youth organizations and their leaders, other activities, relations with non-Jews and finally Jewish life under the Nazis, deportations and life in the camps.

The desire to create memorial books became one of the primary cultural forces of the Landsman-shafn groups. In DP

camps, meetings would be held with all the people remaining from one community. They would begin the process of recalling and carefully recording the history of the town, details of families, and drawing detailed maps of the location of houses and landmarks. Town stories, local folklore, recipes and even stories associated with the community were documented. Committees were established to continue this "commemorative work." Committees would circulate to former residents, now scattered over the landscape, the proposed table of contents for their town requesting articles, stories and information on

"Survivors felt obligated not only to bear witness to the Nazi destruction but to the world the Nazi's sought to destroy."

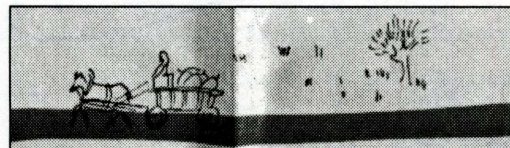


Detail of a map from the Yizkor Book in Memory of the Jewish Community of Yanova

the topics listed. These projects bound communities together – “recreating on paper the community of the past.” Physical reconstructions of the town, where people lived, walked and gathered, specific maps giving the houses where families lived are common. The landscape used as a mnemonic device to further support memory.

These books grow out of a long sacred tradition of “mourning” books – “The memorial books are the fruit of the impulse to write a testament for future generations. They constitute an unprecedented, truly popular labor to record in writing as much as possible of a destroyed world.” In returning to their home towns the survivors realized how completely the rupture was with their place of origin. Not only were people destroyed but a way of life – the Nazis had destroyed all traces of Jewish life. Jewish archives, collections of books, artworks and synagogues disappeared during the Holocaust. Valuation of historic memory is a vital act incumbent on every Jewish person, it is a cornerstone of Jewish consciousness. Another term used to refer to these books is pinkas or a community chronicle. Some of the books are referred to as sefer zikoren, a vessel for memory – or a surrogate tombstone. The most frequent illustration is that of a tombstone. With cemeteries destroyed and tombstones desecrated, the memorial books

came to be seen as substitute graves, a place to say Kaddish. Recording the names of those



who perished became central to the commemorative effort. There is a place at the end of each book for the names and even blank pages for the owners of the book to add additional names.

These books are valuable sources of genealogical research. There are Yizkor books from Poland, the Soviet Union, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, Czechoslovakia (Slovakia and Bohemia) and Hungary. Comprehensive collections of Yizkor books can be found at the YIVO Institute and at Yad Vashem.

Yizkor books in the HEC archival collection include books from the following Polish communities: Wlodava, Czortkow, Ratne (Ratno), Mlave, Szollos, Tsisho Schools, Vishnevetz, Praga, and Virushuv. There are two Yizkor books from Lithuania, from the towns of Yanova and Lite. Additional Yizkor books include: Vanished Jewish Cities, Album of Polish Jews and Jews of the Carpathian Marmors (Marmaras).

Continued from page 7

consolation. They used to think “maybe, maybe.” Often Gestapo men came from Radzin and shot whomever they wanted. Once, they came, got drunk and shot eight men of the Judenrat. The secretary of the Judenrat, a young boy, hid in the barn at the home of a Christian; but a Christian boy informed on him. On the second day, Mendel’s father who was a very pious Jew, and twenty to thirty other Jews went to the cemetery to bury those of the Judenrat who had been killed and others who had been shot. They also gave a eulogy. At that time, someone came to say that the Germans were coming from Radzin to see where the dead were; they were told that they had been buried. They travelled with the sledge to the cemetery. Some Jews succeeded to run away from the cemetery; others were shot in the cemetery – among them Mendel’s father. Women in the cemetery were not harmed. Later the “aussiedlung” resettlement started in Mezritch and Partshev. In Voyin it was still quiet at that time, but the fear was very great. Every Shabas they would recite psalms for a few hours. Once they held a fast. In Voyin they found out about the terrible slaughterings in Mezritch and Partshev. The Germans did the resettlement in Partshev in two days. They said that those who would willingly co-operate in the resettlement, would be

saved. Those who will hide would be shot. At the same time a slaughter took place on the spot. After Partshev they did the resettlement in Mezritch. At the resettlement, a young boy from Partshev ran away and at night came to Voyin. He spent the night at Mendel’s grandmother. From him we learned more accurately about Partshev. Already before that, they knew something because the Judenrat of Voyin had phoned the Judenrat of Partshev, about another matter, but they didn’t get a reply. From the post office they answered that there was unrest in Partshev. In Voyin at that time, there was no resettlement. They took the Jews to work on the estate and in a camp in the village of Ostrov.

A few months later the resettlement began in Voyin. They ordered all Jews to move to Parchev. The Gestapo men took an oath on the lives of their wives and children that in Partshev it would be good for them. Perhaps about 800 people left. Among them were also Mendel’s mother, a young brother of 6 - 7 years old and a little sister. In a few days time there was a resettlement in Partshev. Mendel’s mother and his siblings were saved at that time. His mother and the children hid in a cellar where there were other people. The door to the cellar was clearly visible. It was incomprehensible that the Germans did not see the door. They searched very thoroughly; they broke the oven and the walls and did not find

anything. In the evening, somebody ripped out with difficulty the door and shone a light. In the cellar, they saw a person with white hair putting his head in. He said nothing and went away. Mendel’s mother thought that this may have been an unnatural apparition. Mendel thinks to this day, that it was something unnatural.

A few days later Mendel’s uncle rented a cart and looking like a Christian, he travelled to Partshev, and brought Mendel’s mother and his siblings back to Voyin. Soon after the “aussiedlung” resettlement, many Jews had bribed their way, so as to be able to remain in Voyin. Mendel’s uncle and grandmother did the same. But Mendel had been hiding at his uncle’s when the mother and the siblings came back from Partshev. They also went into hiding. Mendel used to sometimes look out through a little window, and see how the Christian children played freely, and he was very envious of them. The same Germans who shot Jews, gave sweets to the Christian children.

These stories were originally written in Yiddish. Translation by Sheila Barkusky & David Schaffer. Additional stories by Rivka Weinberg, Pinchas Zaients, Alla Oppenheim, Musia Vechter, Dvora Dulman & Helman Basi were also recorded by Dr. Moser and are part of the collection of notebooks donated to the HEC.

Cards & Donations

MARCH 6 TO JUNE 18

Donations

In Memory of Katalin Spiro, Lil Shafran & Rachel Samuel, from Leslie Spiro.

In Recognition of Susan Bluman, from Canadian International College.

In Recognition of Alex Buckman, from Keith Lynn Alternate Secondary.

In Recognition of Peter Parker, from Cloverdale Learning Centre, Otter Elementary, L.A. Matheson Secondary.

In Recognition of Bronia Sonnenschein, from Johnston Heights Secondary, Carson Graham Secondary, Walnut Grove Secondary, St. Thomas Aquinas.

In Recognition of Irene Kirsten-Watts, from Tomsett Elementary.

Thank You

Linda Frimer, In Appreciation, from Robert & Marilyn Krell.

Jill Charkow, In Appreciation, from Lili Folk.

Mr. Henry Orenstein, Thank You For the Thoughtful Gift, from Batia Karton.

Mr. & Mrs. Stanley Golvin, What A Wonderful Week I Had With You, from Ruth Brody.

Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Golvin, For the Wonderful Seder, from Ruth Brody.

June Mielnicki, With Much Appreciation, from Irene Dodek.

Robbie Waisman, Thank You for Making Our Trip to Victoria so Pleasant, from Klara Forrai.

Mazel Tov

Josh & Bella Abramson, On Your 60th Wedding Anniversary, from David & Regina Feldman.

Susan Ackerman, On Your Birthday, from Eddie, Debbie & Naomi Rozenberg.

Rabbi Balla & Iris Cohen, On Your Engagement, from Chaim & Aliza Kornfeld.

Aaron Altman, On Your Recent Graduation, from Herb & Barb Silber.

Dr. Leon Bass, In Honour of Your "Champion of Caring" Humanitarian Award, from Gloria & Robbie Waisman.

Mrs. Judy Breuer, On Your Birthday, from Ellen, Barrie, David & Cathy Yackness.

Mr. & Mrs. Bob & Helen Coleman, On Your 50th Wedding Anniversary, from Abe & Goldie Miedzygorski.

Gabe Davis, On Your Graduation, from Larry, Lyliane, Todd & Ricki Thal.

Hymie Davis, In Honour of Your Birthday, from Elie & Rosa Ferera.

Gordon Diamond, On Receiving Your Honourary Doctorate from Simon Fraser University, from Robert & Marilyn Krell.

Mr. & Mrs. Derek Glazer, On Your 35th Wedding Anniversary, from David & Grace Ehrlich.

Lipo Guincher, On Your Special Birthday, from Abe & Goldie Miedzygorski.

Oscar Jason, On Your 90th Birthday, from Dr. Robert Krell.

Mr. & Mrs. David Johnson, Wishing You a Lifetime of Happiness, from Batia Karton.

Mr. & Mrs. Alan Khazam, On Your Anniversary, from Gerri & Mark London.

Doreen & Cecil Kline, On Your 50th Wedding Anniversary, from Danny, Frieda, Jesse & Rebecca Shapiro.

Matthew Kofsky, On Your Graduation, from Hymie & Rome Fox & Family.

Jocy Lowy, On Your Special Birthday, from Regina & David Feldman.

Leo Lowy, Happy Birthday, from Harley, Leslie, Darren & Nicki Mackoff.

Mrs. Judy Mate, On Your 80th Birthday, from Suzanne Galazka, Larry, Miri, Oren & Kayla Garaway.

June & Michel Mielnicki, On Your Granddaughter's Bat Mitzvah, from Susan Bluman, David & Gerry Kline.

Chaim Micner, On Your Special Birthday, from Sally, Sid & Alex Coleman.

Dr. Robert Krell, On Your Recent Honours, from Rita & Ben Akselrod, Richard & Darlene Ames, Jeffrey & Hildy Barnett, Michael & Kristina Berman & Family, Bob & Helen Coleman, David & Grace Ehrlich, Tamara Frankel, Michael Geller, Norman Gladstone & Birgit Westergaard, Pearl Groberman, Mel & Marlene Hershfield, Jack & Evelyn Huberman, Odie Kaplan, Gerri, Mark, Dana & David London, Florence & Harold Morris, Harley & Leslie Mackoff, Craig McAdie, Frieda Miller, Isser & Debra Rogowski, The Romalis Family, Howard & Elayne Shapray, Bronia & Dan Sonnenschein, Malcolm & Judy Weinstein, Shana & Alan White, Reta & Michael Wolochow, Barrie, Ellen, David & Cathy Yackness.

Sandra & Norman Miller, On Your 30th Anniversary, from Herb & Barb Silber.

Mr. Izzy Moskovitch, On Your Special Birthday, from Leslie Spiro.

Leanne Nash, On Your Recent Achievement, from Dr. Robert Krell.

Rabbi Abraham Postone, Happy Father's Day, from Marilyn, Neri, Barbara & Jessica Moss.

Elana Rosenberg, On Your Graduation from Queen's University, from Hymie, Rome, Aylee, Danya & Aiden Fox.

Reisa Schwartzman, On The "N'shei Chabad" Honour, from the Golden Family.

Howard Shapray, Congratulations, from Esther Kornfeld, Joe Blumes, & Jacob & Jedidiah.

Michael Silber, On Your Graduation, from Larry, Lyliane, Todd & Ricki Thal.

Ronnie & Barrie Tessler, On The Birth of Your Grandchild, from Susan Bluman.

Grace Eiko Thomson, On Your Recent Appointment, from Frieda Miller.

Michael Wall, On Your Graduation, from Lyliane, Larry, Todd & Ricki Thal.

Donations not included because of the printing deadline will appear in the next Zachor.

Shana White, In Honour of Your Birthday, from Herb & Barb Silber.

Heather Wolfe, In Recognition of Achieving Your Master Degree in Counselling, from Irvine Wolak.

Hershel Wosk, In Honour Of Your Birthday, from Regina & David Feldman, Aaron & Terry Szajman.

Dr. & Mrs. David Zack, On Your Granddaughter's Recent Bat Mitzvah, from Sally Rogow.

Chaim Zbar, On Your 80th Birthday, from Norman & Sheila Archeck, Jack & Henia Perel, Ellen & Barrie Yackness

Ernest Forrai, from Izzy & Bertha Fraeme.

Irving Goldenberg, from Rita & Ben Akselrod.

Gail Heller, from Haya Heller.

Paulina Kirman, from the HEC Staff & Board, Child Survivor Group.

Leah Levitt, from Jack & Karen Micner & Family, Susan & Joe Stein & Family.

Celina Lieberman, from HEC Staff & Board.

David Shafran, from Sharon & Irving Kates, Robbie & Gloria Waisman, HEC Staff & Board.

Marilyn Berger, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Frieda Miller.

Dr. Rebecca Bergmann, On the Loss of Schimon, from Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Mr. Stan Chark & Families, On the Loss of Your Wife, from Leo & Jocy Lowy.

Mr. Brian Davis, Our Thoughts Are With You, from Cathy & David Golden.

Richard Eggener & Family, In Memory of Your Mother, from Lisa Kafka.

Dorris & Rick Freeman & Family, In Memory of Your Father & Grandfather, from Izak & Lili Folk.

Janice & Richard Freeman, In Memory of Your Father & Grandfather, from Ignac & Lili Folk.

Mrs. Zoe Gropper, On the Loss of Your Beloved Brother, Chaim & Aliza Kornfeld.

Ruth Hollander, In Memory of Your Husband, from Andre Blitz & Anita Gans.

Ida Kaplan, In Memory of Your Sister-In-Law, from Helen Berger.

Ida Kaplan, Sherri, Odie & Jordan, In Memory of Polly Wosk, from Eve & Dr. Arthur Camerman.

Mrs. Queena Klein, In Memory of Your Mother, from Sarah Rozenberg-Warm.

Debby Koffman, On the Loss of Your Father, from Susan & Joe Stein.

Robert, Jackie & Sons, In Memory of Your Father & Grandfather, from Ignac & Lili Folk.

Pat Laimon, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Paul & Edwina Heller.

Mr. Moe Litman & Family, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Marilyn Moss & Family.

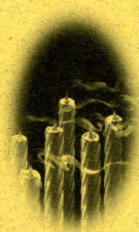
Mr. & Mrs. J. Lowenstein, Wishing You Our Deepest Sympathies, from Cathy, David, Tyler & Shane Golden.

Debbie Maki, On the Loss of Your Grandmother, from the HEC Staff.

Mr. E. Matuck, On the Loss of Your Wife, from Emmy Krell.

Mr. Abe Oberlander, Our Thoughts Are With You, from Leo & Jocy Lowy.

Zoe Oreck, In Loving Memory of Babe Oreck, from Elie & Rosa Ferera.



Speedy Recovery

Diane Averbach, from Esther Kornfeld, Joe Blumes & Jacob & Jedidiah.

Agi Bergida, from Rita & Ben Akselrod, David & Grace Ehrlich.

Mrs. Joe Cohen, from Ida Kaplan.

Dena Elias, from Hymie & Rome Fox & Family.

Mrs. Regina Feldman, from Lola Apfelbaum & Family, Izzy & Bertha Fraeme, Haya Heller, Harold & Bella Silverman, Regina Wertman.

Sharon Freedman, from Susan & Joe Stein & Family.

Henry Gelfer, from Helen Berger, Regina & David Feldman, Aaron & Terry Szajman.

In Sympathy

Paul & Rahel Aleman, In Memory of Sheila, from Serge & Brenda Vanry.

Baila Abrahamson, On The Loss of Your Beloved Sister, from Dorothy Goldenberg, Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Fred Aqua & Family, On the Passing of Harry Aqua, from Susan & Joe Stein.

Mayer Aronson, On The Loss of Your Sister, from Daniel Wollner.

Ethel Bellows, On the Loss of Your Brother-in-law, from Paul & Edwina Heller.

Mrs. W. Blustein, In Memory of Willy, from Mary, Mark, Sylvie, Lenny & Edward Epstein.

New Acquisitions to Our Library

A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881-Present by Zvi Gitelman, donated by the Isaac Waldman Library.

Pathways Through the Holocaust: An Oral History By Eye-Witnesses by Clara Isaacman donated by Michel Mielnicki. Opowiesci Chasydow by Martin Buber, Adama Czerniakowa dziennik getta warszawskiego edited by Marian Fuks, Biedni Polacy Patrza NA GETTO by Jan Btonski, and Dzieci Syjonu by Henryk Grynberg, donated by Gina Dimant in memory of her late husband Alex Dimant.

Delta: A Review of Arts Life and Thought in the Netherlands, a special issue on Netherlands and the Holocaust, and The Yellow Star by Gerhard Schoenberger donated by Arnold deRoode.

There Once was a World: A 900 Year Chronicle of the Shtetl of Eishyshok by Yaffa Eliach donated by Leon Kahn.

Booklet on Yad Layeled – Museum and Memorial to Jewish Children who Perished in the Holocaust, On the Edge of the Abyss by Ella Lieberman-Shiber, Spiritual Resistance: Art from Concentration Camps 1940-45, 4 Stories of Hiding and Saving: Testimonies of those who were children during the Shoah, a video in Hebrew with English subtitles donated by Irina Trampolski, member of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum.

Trains by Miriam Winter donated by Louise Stein-Sorensen.

Cards Continued Next Page

FROM THE BOARD

New Life Fellowships Awarded at the AGM

PETER PARKER participated on the Board of Directors from 1996-98 and is one of the Centre's most active outreach speakers. Since 1982 he has spoken regularly to schools in the Fraser Valley and Lower Mainland, as well as to groups at the Centre and at the yearly Holocaust Symposium.



MICHEL MIELNICKI has been involved in Holocaust remembrance since the late 1950s in Montreal. Since coming to Vancouver he has regularly spoken to students as part of the Outreach Program and at the Holocaust Symposium. He has been a witness at a successful war crimes trial and most recently has written a manuscript of his experiences.



LOUISE STEIN-SORENSEN has been an active member of the Society for many years. Apart from her current work on the Board, which she joined in 1995, Louise has readily made herself available to speak to schools, and at the Holocaust Symposium. She is also an active member of the Child Survivor Group, and served as President from 1996-97.



New Board List

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Louise Stein-Sorensen

Rysta Osten & Family, On the Loss of Your Beloved Husband, from Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Alf Price & Family, In Memory of Your Mother, Ed & Debbie Rozenberg.

Zena Rebak, In Loving Memory of Asher, from Elie & Rosa Ferera.

Mrs. Gladys Rose & Family, In Memory of Your Beloved Husband & Father, from Chaim & Aliza Kornfeld, Norman Gladstone, Birgit Westergaard & Yosef, Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

George & Yvonne Rosenberg, In Memory of Annie, from Leonore & Milton Freiman, Thomas Gussman, Henry & Julie Gutovich, Hymie, Rome, Aylee, Danya & Aiden Fox, Evelyn, Jack, Stacey, Carrie, Tamar & Frances Huberman, Josef & Karen Laufer & Family, Ed & Debbie Rozenberg, Dorothy Ullman & Sammy & Benjy Fogell.

Mrs. Sarah Sair, On the Loss of Your Mother, from David & Cathy Golden.

Eugene & Dana Schwartz, On the Loss of Your Dear Mother, from Rita & Ben Akselrod, Izak & Lili Folk.

Mrs. Rae Shapiro, With Deepest Sympathy and Love, from Sarah Rozenberg-Warm.

Barry & Joyce Silverman, On The Loss of Your Mother, from Dorothy Goldenberg, Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Mitchell Snider & Family, In Memory of Your Wife & Tova, from Irvine Wolak, Leo & Jocy Lowy, Joe & Susan Stein, George & Frieda Wertman.

Mr. Mel Sprackman & Family, In Memory of Your Mother, from Stephen & Rhona Schneiderman.

Randi Winter, On the Loss of Your Father, from Esther Kaufman, Lyliane & Larry Thal.

Ethel Staniloff, On the Loss of Your Husband, from Dorothy Goldenberg, Robbie & Gloria Waisman.

Beryl Woodrow, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Odie Kaplan.

The Woogman Family, On the Loss of Your Father, from Leo & Jocy Lowy, Robbie, Gloria & Howard Waisman.

David & Sheryl Wosk & Family, In Memory of Your Mother & Grandmother, from Izak & Lili Folk.

The Wosk Family, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Esther Kaufman, Lyliane, Larry, Todd & Ricki Thal.

Linda & Mel Young, On the Loss of Your Father, from Norman & Sheila Archeck.

Matilda Zaltsman, On the Loss of Your Husband, from Rosalie & Saul Dimant.