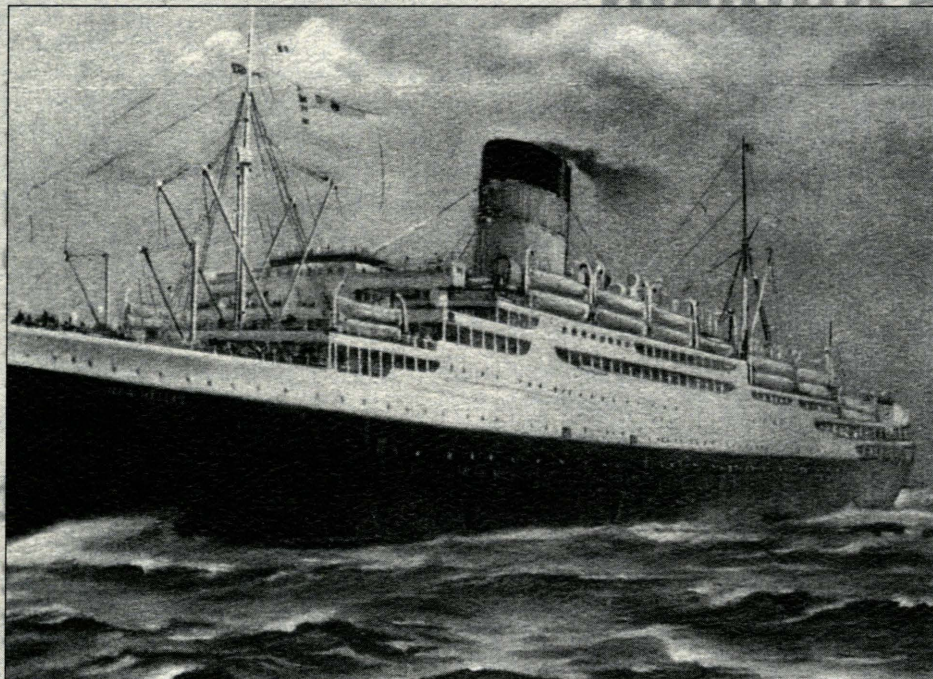


50 - 950 West 41st Avenue  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7  
tel. (604) 264-0499  
fax (604) 264-0497


# Zachor

"Remember"

Number 4  
November 1997



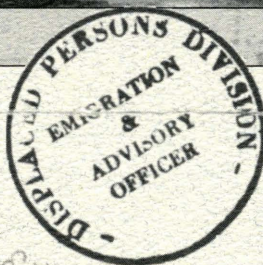
GENERAL STEAM NAVIGATION Co., Ltd. of GREECE  
GREEK LINE

 s/s NEA HELLAS *MARCH 28/1948.*

*Pasport RECEIVED*  
*FEBRUARY 23 at 5pm 1948*

*THE SHIP LEFT ITALY*  
*MARCH the 10th 1948 at 6 P.M*

*ARRIVED to HALIFAX*  
*MARCH the 22nd 1948*  
*ARRIVED TO VANCOUVER*  
*MARCH the 28th 10.AM. 1948.*



**Open Hearts – Closed Doors**

November 16 – March 31



## ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

**You are invited to attend a special reception for the war orphans group of Vancouver and the opening of the exhibit**

### ***Open Hearts – Closed Doors***

An exhibit marking the 50th anniversary of the arrival in Canada of 1,123 Jewish children orphaned by the Holocaust

**Sunday, November 16, 1997**

**3 to 5 pm**

at the Holocaust Education Centre  
#50 - 950 West 41st Avenue

A program to honour war orphans  
and the agencies that assisted them

Refreshments will be served

### **Is Shanghai In Your History?**

In January of 1999 the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre will create an exhibit and public programs in partnership with the Chinese Cultural Centre on the Jews of Shanghai and Shanghai as a refuge. If you or any of your family have connections to the Jewish community in Shanghai or took refuge there during the Holocaust, please contact Roberta Kremer at the HEC.

### ***In This Issue...***

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### **Survivor Drop-in**

The next survivor drop-in will be November 18th at 2 pm. Ruth Sigal will present a video documenting her trip to Lithuania. Refreshments will be served.

Upcoming drop-ins are scheduled from 2 to 4 pm on Tuesday December 9th and Tuesday January 13th.

### **Jewish National Fund of Canada "From Ashes to Rebirth"**

On April 26, 1998 the JNF Dinner, *From Ashes to Rebirth*, will honour Holocaust survivors in our community as well as celebrate the 50th anniversary of the state of Israel. This gala evening of acknowledgement, honour and thanks is being sponsored by the Jewish National Fund. Survivors wishing information on this event should contact the JNF directly by calling 257-5155.

### **Sponsors Needed**

Sponsors are needed to support future publication of teachers' guides and to fund re-publication of some of our more popular teachers' guides from past exhibits. *Visas for Life*, an exhibit from the spring of 1996, was very popular with both the Jewish and Japanese communities resulting in a great demand for the teacher's guide, written by HEC Education Coordinator, Frieda Miller. We have had requests from teachers for the guide since that exhibit, and we would like to re-publish and advertise the new edition.

Sponsors would be credited in the guide and would receive a tax receipt for the full amount. Upcoming teacher's guides in need of funding include the multimedia exhibit based on Art Spiegelman's graphic novel *Maus*.



**Zachor** *"Remember"*

Tel. (604) 264-0499  
Fax (604) 264-0437  
The Newsletter of the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society 50 - 510 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6Z 2B7 October 1997

Editor: Roberta Kremer  
Layout & Design: Leanne Nash  
and Graham Sharpe



## ANNUAL COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM



Keynote Address by DR. RUDOLF VRBA

### MONEY AND THE HOLOCAUST:

The Role of the Holocaust in German Economic and Military Strategy, 1941-1945

**Sunday November 9 at 8pm**

**T**his year's Kristallnacht commemoration in the Vancouver community will feature a keynote address by Dr. Rudolf Vrba, a distinguished biochemist and Holocaust educator who is also renowned as one of only five Jews who ever escaped from Auschwitz.

Dr. Vrba recently retired as a faculty member of the University of British Columbia, where his research on the chemistry of the brain and other topics achieved international recognition. But Dr. Vrba is also well known as a passionate author and lecturer on the Holocaust. His Kristallnacht lecture, which will reflect both his personal experiences and his lifelong study of the Nazi's aims and objectives, is entitled "*Money and the Holocaust: The Role of the Holocaust in German Economic and Military Strategy from 1941 to 1945.*" The Kristallnacht program will take place at 8 pm on Sunday, November 9 at Beth Israel Synagogue.

Dr. Vrba was a prisoner in Auschwitz for almost two years before he and a companion escaped from the death camp in April 1944. Eventually they reached Vrba's home community in Slovakia. The report they submitted to Jewish leaders describing the situation in Auschwitz has become one of the most famous documents in the history of the Holocaust. Historians continue to debate whether those who saw the report paid sufficient attention to Vrba's warnings about what was happening in the Nazi death camps.

During the last months of the war Vrba fought against the Germans as a soldier in the Czechoslovak partisan army. After the end of the war Vrba studied chemistry in Prague, receiving his doctorate in 1951. After spending some years engaged in biochemical and medical research in Israel and Great Britain, he came to Canada in 1967 and was appointed associate professor of pharmacology in the UBC Faculty of Medicine in 1976.

In addition to more than fifty professional papers based on his biochemical research, Dr. Vrba has published extensively on the Holocaust. His autobiography, originally published in London in 1963 under the title *I Cannot Forgive*, has appeared in twelve

editions in five different languages. Dr. Vrba has also published a number of specialized articles related to the history of Auschwitz and has appeared in six documentary films dealing with the Holocaust, including Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah*. He has testified as an expert witness in the trials of SS officers in Germany and Holocaust deniers in Canada. A forceful and uncompromising speaker, Dr. Vrba has frequently lectured on the Holocaust in communities in both North America and Europe, including Germany.

The topic of Dr. Vrba's Kristallnacht lecture reflects his conviction that the theft of Jewish property was one of the major motivations for the deportation and murder of six million Jews by the Germans between 1941 and 1945. His lecture draws both on his personal observations as a slave labourer in Auschwitz and on his extensive research of the origins and implementation of the Holocaust.

The Kristallnacht program commemorates the "Night of Broken Glass" of November 9, 1938, when synagogues and Jewish places of business all over Germany and Austria were destroyed by Nazi hoodlums – an event which is generally regarded as a major escalation of the Nazi's anti-Jewish program which eventually culminated in the Holocaust. The keynote address will be preceded by the traditional candlelighting ceremony in memory of the six million Jews killed by the Nazis. Following the program, members of the audience who wish to do so may gather in Beth Israel's Maccabee room to meet Dr. Vrba.

The Kristallnacht commemorative program is sponsored jointly by the Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society and by the Adult Education Committee of Congregation Beth Israel, with funding from the Combined Jewish Appeal of the Jewish Federation of Greater Vancouver and Congregation Beth Israel.

For more information, call the HEC at 264-0499.

**Chris Friedrichs**

*Chair, Kristallnacht Committee*



## Rudolf Vrba — A Tribute

by John S. Conway

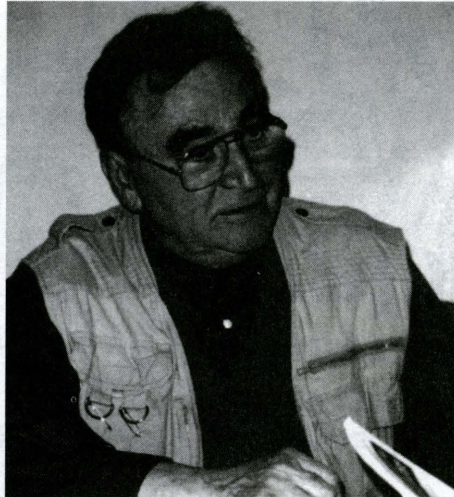
University of British Columbia

On April 7th 1944, two young Slovaks, Rudolf Vrba and Fred Wetzler, succeeded in escaping from Auschwitz-Birkenau and lived to tell the tale. They succeeded in eluding their pursuers, crossed the mountains between German-occupied Poland and Slovakia, and finally reached their homeland. Here they quickly contacted surviving members of the Jewish community, were provided with new papers and disguises, and eventually joined the Slovak partisans.

This whole epic story was later recorded by Vrba during his stay in England in the 1950s, when, with the help of a talented journalist, he wrote his account *I Cannot Forgive*, which has since appeared in several re-issues, the latest being given the title *44070: The Conspiracy of the Twentieth Century*.

The significance of Vrba's escape, however, lay not so much in his fortunate personal survival, but rather in the fact that, for the first time, two eye-witnesses were able to provide graphically horrifying and accurate details of the mass murders taking place every day in Auschwitz on a scale unprecedented in history. The revelation of these atrocities shattered the tight secrecy surrounding what was happening in Auschwitz.

The importance of the report jointly composed by Vrba and Wetzler immediately after their arrival in Slovakia at the end of April, which is sometimes referred to as the Auschwitz Protocols cannot be overestimated. For the first time the details became known of the camp's structure and operation, the methods of mass murder used in the gas chambers, along with a breakdown of the numbers and classification of the prisoners and their treatment. At the same time the report contained a careful estimate of the number of Jews gassed in Birkenau during the period from April 1942 to March 1944. The publication of these shocking revelations, first in the Swiss and later in the western press in June 1944 alerted the world as never before to the atrocities which were subsequently to make the name Auschwitz notorious around the globe. Whereas before only unsubstantiated and unverifiable rumours had circulated about terrible things happening in unreachable parts of eastern Europe, now the truth was out, largely due to Vrba.



It is for this reason that we owe him an immense debt of gratitude and rightly now seek to pay tribute to this striking accomplishment.

It was highly significant that the whole Nazi operation of the "elimination" of European Jewry took place in an atmosphere of tight secrecy. No written order has ever been found where Hitler ordered the "Final Solution" to begin, but historians agree that the summer and fall of 1941 saw a radicalization of the measures taken to segregate, deport and finally murder all of Europe's Jews under Nazi control, and thereafter to extend these steps to include the Jewish populations in the still remaining so-called neutral countries, such as Hungary, Slovakia and Romania. The siting of the mass murder camps in Poland, where the Germans had abolished all legal institutions and where their reign of terror was unchallenged, was most important. In April 1942 Auschwitz, largely because of its favourable railway connections, was selected as the pivotal place and largest centre for these nefarious crimes. From that month onwards, deportation trains, almost every day, brought Jews from all over Europe to be gassed with horrifying efficiency and expedition. For two years this whole operation remained a closely guarded secret.

Vrba was deported from Slovakia in April 1942. He was first sent to Maidanek, but in August he was transferred to Auschwitz, where he met Fred Wetzler. Vrba was able to establish his usefulness to the camp authorities and later became a block "registrar." He was also put in charge of recording the vast amount of goods, clothing, jewellery and money stolen from the incoming deportees and transferred to a large barracks known as "Kanada" —

because here everything the heart desired could be found.

From these vantage points, and because of his excellent memory, Vrba was able to begin to keep a tally of the deportation trains arriving in Birkenau, to establish their place of origin, and to estimate the number of the victims, both those transferred into the camp as slave labourers, and those immediately gassed after arrival. By March 1944 this latter figure had amounted, Vrba carefully calculated, to 1,765,000 men, women and children. This list, by nationality, was appended to his Report and was later used as evidence at the Nuremberg Trials.

The impulse which determined Vrba and Wetzler to escape at this particular moment was, however, far more immediate and menacing. They had observed massive preparations in Birkenau for expansion of the whole killing machinery. This could only be for the mass murder of the last surviving sizeable group of Jews in Europe, namely those in Hungary. In mid-March 1944 German troops entered Hungary and effectively took over control. Shortly afterwards Adolf Eichmann and his henchmen arrived in Budapest and obtained the Hungarian government's agreement to implement their devastating plans for the rapid round-up and deportation of the Hungarian Jews. The need to warn these people of their impending fate was a burning concern for Vrba. The Slovakian Jewish leaders were similarly convinced. They promised to translate the contents of the Vrba-Wetzler Report at once into Hungarian, and also to supply a copy to the head of the Hungarian Relief and Rescue Committee, Rudolf Kasztner, urging him to make the information widely known to the hundreds of thousands of Jews whose lives were now at stake. Vrba was then, and still is, convinced that, had these victims been aware of what their fate would be, they would have done everything possible to resist and oppose the Nazis' plans.

In fact, however, no such warnings were given. Survivors, such as Elie Wiesel, deported from eastern Hungary shortly thereafter, have recorded the fact that they were totally unaware of what would happen to them. Nearly 437,000 Hungarian Jews were in fact deported and murdered in the shockingly short space of two months, May-July 1944.

What went wrong? To this day, dispute continues as to why the graphic details of the Vrba-Wetzler Report were never disseminated, no alarm was raised, and no



effective resistance mobilized. Suspicion has long rested upon the activities of the Hungarian Relief and Rescue Committee, and upon Kasztner, who, it is known, were actively participating in negotiations with Eichmann to seek to rescue a limited number of Jews from Budapest — a venture that actually succeeded. But the fate of the much larger number of Jews in the rest of the country would seem to have been ignored. At the same time, requests sent by the Slovak Jewish underground to the west calling for the bombing of the railway lines to Auschwitz were equally ignored.

To his horror, Vrba himself, while still in hiding in northern Slovakia in May, learned that deportation trains were rolling from Hungary across Slovakia to the death camps in Poland. He could only presume that his report had not arrived in time, although later he was to learn that it had instead been suppressed by the Hungarian Jewish leadership. As the distinguished historian Randolph Braham commented, this amounted to a “conspiracy of silence.”

Realising that his message had not reached its intended audience, Vrba resolved to seek other means to spread the knowledge he possessed. Secret copies of the Report were made in Bratislava and sent out. One of these reached the Papal Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Burzio, who ordered a member of his staff to interview the escapees. Subsequently the whole report was sent to the Vatican, but because of the Allies' capture of Rome at that moment, it arrived much too late. Nevertheless a telegraphic summary was also sent, and led at the end of June to a public remonstrance by Pope Pius XII to the Regent of Hungary, Admiral Horthy.

At the same time, the contents of the Report reached Switzerland in late June through two independent sources. Immediately the Swiss press published extensive extracts, and the same information was transmitted to Britain and other western newspapers. At last the news about Auschwitz had reached the outside world. A few days later the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, expressed the widespread feelings of outrage; “There is no doubt that this is possibly the greatest and most horrible crime ever committed in the whole history of the world.”

In response to these revelations, and after the Allies had threatened reprisals by bombing Budapest, Admiral Horthy in early July ordered the deportations of

Hungarian Jews to stop. But, in October 1944, he was overthrown by Hungarian Fascist extremists and the surviving Jews in Budapest were obliged to begin forced marches towards Austria, during which many perished. It was then that Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat, who is suitably recognised by a plaque in Vancouver's Queen Elizabeth Park, was engaged in trying to rescue as many of these victims as he could. But the failure of the Hungarian Jewish leadership to establish contingency plans was now evident. In the view of some later commentators these men were powerless to oppose the overwhelming oppression of the Germans and their Hungarian allies, were themselves divided by the lack of cohesion amongst the various factions in the Jewish communities, and thus became hostages to the Nazis.

There are however other interpretations. The records now show that at least some of these Jewish leaders were engaged in schemes to save at least some Jews. One of these proposals was the much disputed “Europa Plan” whereby Eichmann was to be induced, by suitable bribes, to halt the deportations. Whether or not these illusory negotiations were the key to the suppression in Hungary of the Vrba-Wetzler Report is still a matter of heated controversy. One may surmise that, for Eichmann, it was nothing more than a deliberate deception to sow dissent among both the Hungarian Jews and the Allies, to demand the maintenance of silence about Auschwitz, and to complete his plans for the removal and mass murder of Hungary's Jews while he could.

While these events were going on in Budapest, Vrba himself joined the partisans in eastern Slovakia and took part in the campaign to regain freedom. When the war was over, he registered for the newly re-established University of Prague, and despite his lack of academic qualifications, did brilliantly in his course of studies in chemistry. His career subsequently has been in pharmacology. After some years as a researcher in Czechoslovakia, Israel and Britain, Vrba joined the Department of Pharmacology and Therapeutics at the University of British Columbia where he served with distinction until his recent retirement. His pharmacological research resulted in numerous academic publications and received much professional recognition, including a medal bestowed by the Czech Academy of Science in 1993.

But throughout these years, Vrba was

also slowly coming to be recognised as an exceptionally important witness to the history of the Holocaust. Not until a decade later did the world begin to be fully aware of the full significance of Auschwitz as the central organising point of the mass murders of the Holocaust. The word Holocaust only came into general use in the late 1950s, but Eichmann's sensational trial in Israel in 1961 focused world attention on the scale and operation of these German crimes. Vrba himself was to play a star role in the so-called Auschwitz trial of various guards in Frankfurt in 1964, where his testimony proved invaluable in the resulting convictions. It is only in recent years that adequate acknowledgement has been made of his singular contribution in the revelation of the crimes committed in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Historical research, using other surviving documents, has only confirmed the accuracy of his observations of 1944. The value of his eye-witness account is now becoming ever more widely recognised, as can be seen from the growing number of invitations he has received to speak on this subject, not only from Jewish organizations, such as the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, but also from audiences in Germany, such as his recent address to the Police Academy in Berlin. Jokingly he reminded these policemen that the order issued for his apprehension immediately after his escape — a copy of which he was able to produce — has never been officially revoked! Rudolf Vrba remains with us as a man whose epic escape and unique record of his experiences assisted in the mobilization of the world's conscience against the pernicious tendency to regard human beings as expendable objects, whose slaughter could be justified for reasons of state.

If today we are resolved that such events must never happen again, we do so because we are all, both Jews and non-Jews, determined that such iniquitous ideologies must be repudiated and their root causes attacked. Both the infamous designs of the perpetrators, and the shameful indifference of the bystanders, have to be resolutely and consistently opposed. The Vrba-Wetzler Report, by breaking the wall of silence in 1944 about the extent of the Nazi atrocities, and by successfully challenging the disbelief and scepticism of the wider world, deserves its true place as one of the key documents of the Holocaust. ☛



## And Peace Never Came

by Elisabeth Raab

Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996.

Reviewed by Lucien Lieberman

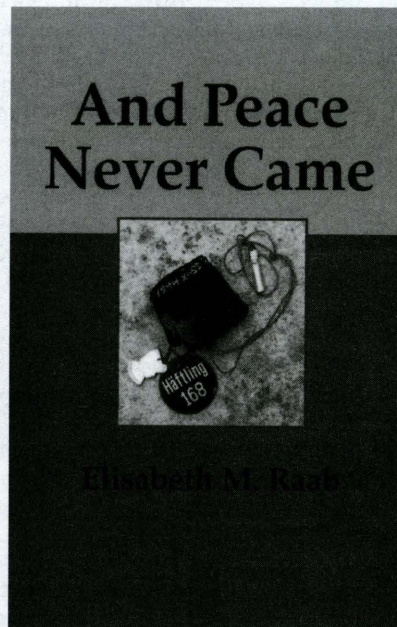
History has taught us that where the German Army gained control during the period 1938 to 1945, the SS soon followed and the fate of the Jews residing in those areas was sealed. When reading the numerous accounts written by Jewish survivors of that period, my interest lies in three areas. Firstly, assuming the person was old enough to consider alternatives, what strategy did s/he formulate to escape the widening net? Secondly, once confined in the roundup, the concentration camp or the forced labour camp, how did s/he cope with the mental degradation imposed by the system and surroundings? Thirdly, following liberation, what steps did the survivor take to return to a life of normalcy?

In her concise, well written narrative, Toronto resident, Elisabeth Raab scores well in enlightening the reader on the first two questions and falls down on the third.

Elisabeth Raab is 24 years of age and married with a young child in 1944 when the German Army enters Hungary in the last year of the war. Physically separated from her husband, she seeks the company of her parents in her home town of Szemere. Although aware of the fate of the Polish Jews, the strategy of the family is to persevere, stay together and hold out for the Allied victory which is expected soon. Just as in the case of the Hungarian family of Elie Wiesel, the Raab family gives no thought to hiding individuals or dissolving into the forest.

Raab provides a wrenching description of the familiar process of roundup, transport and total dehumanization at Auschwitz. She survives the first selection. Separated from mother, father, aunt, grandmother and daughter, she is left alone to deal with hunger, taunts, physical blows, dysentery and loss of esteem. Her salvation is a chance reunion with two school mates, Hanna and Eszter who instill in her a will to live. *"My strength lies in Hanna and Eszter. Their unselfish friendship, their endless moral support and understanding, are what help me through. And not just once, but many times."* A familiar theme is reinforced here, especially amongst female inmates: the knowledge that one is not alone, that there are those close by who care, who regard each other with human concern and tenderness. Conversely, the desire to be of assistance to another provides a reason to live.

Raab and her two friends have luck on their side. Their health holds and they are assigned to Kanada Kommando where they are given easy labour and sufficient food to survive. This is followed by a transfer to a munitions plant within Germany where the labour is 12 hours per day, six days per week, but contact with non Jewish laborers who enjoy slightly better conditions provides hope that the end is near.



Liberty comes to Raab and her friends during a forced march to Bergen-Belsen extermination camp. Near the town of Gutersloh, suddenly the guards disappear, white flags appear at windows of nearby homes and tanks of the American army appear. *"A hollow moment devoid of feeling or understanding holds us inert and confused. Is this the miracle we have hoped for without ever believing in it? Is this the phenomenon called freedom that has unexpectedly arrived? Is it reality or a dream?"*

The American soldiers are generous in their greetings, throwing a variety of wrapped confections from their tank turrets. Raab is unable to read English and is totally perplexed when she takes her first bite of what turns out to be chewing tobacco.

Liberation is not easy – it is followed by three years of homeless, rootless and meaningless existence in German DP camps. Raab attempts to resume a normal life in Hungary. In order to return she must depend on false papers and illegal means. She finds a brother and her husband. She agrees to a divorce from the latter. Unable to find the pre-war Hungary of her dreams and fearful of the communist government, she again uses illegal means to steal out of Hungary and resume co-habitation with a Polish-Jewish survivor, Nathan. Her story ends with her emigration to Ecuador and eventually Toronto. She says nothing of her life in these countries where she raises two sons, except to express gratitude for being accepted into their free and productive societies.

Perhaps the most meaningful passages in the book include photos and descriptions of mementos kept from the period, a recipe book, a numbered tag which provided identification for her taskmasters, half of a comb, a mezuzah provided by an American chaplain after liberation, a locket in the shape of a child's head made in the munitions factory by Hanna. Simple things, but possessions to be kept for a lifetime and passed on.

Instead of providing meaningful details of the rest of her life including how she and her husband dealt with past horrors and the education of their children, the author devotes several chapters to visits to Hungary in 1969 and 1987. A description of the lives of distant relatives in Hungary who survived the war years provides little interest to the reader. Revisiting cities and towns in Hungary which once held happy memories for the author now bring little satisfaction and perhaps the reason for the title of the book. This brings to mind the quotation ascribed to Maurois, *"It is in vain that we return to the places we loved; we will never see them again because they were situated not in space but in time, and the person who looks for them will be no more a child or an adolescent who embellishes them with his/her imagination."* ❀



## Castles Burning: A Child's Life in War by Magda Denes

W.W. Norton & Co., 1997.

**Reviewed by Sally Rogow**

**C**astles Burning is a stunningly powerful book in which Magda Denes reveals the desolation of childhood for Jewish children trapped in Nazi-occupied Europe. There was little stability for children whose families were forced to flee their homes and hide in the homes of strangers. Denes' father, an anti-Nazi newspaper editor and publisher, fled Hungary, leaving his wife and children to fend for themselves during the Nazi occupation. Denes presents her chronicle through the eyes of a young child to whom the actions of desperate adults made little sense.

Magda Denes vividly portrays the daily life of Jewish families who struggled to maintain a semblance of normality under oppressive conditions. There was no escape from the daily deprivations and the frequent and random intrusions by Hungarian Nazi police and constant humiliation. Denes was five years old when her family was forced to move from their luxurious home into her grandparent's crowded apartment. While Denes's mother is making brave but futile efforts to maintain her independence, the young Denes is left feeling lonely and displaced. Her world has become unpredictable. Stricken with tuberculosis, Denes is brought to a hospital and this is the first in a series of painful separations from her mother and brother on whom she relies for emotional safety and who both disappear from her life. After her release from the hospital she is hidden with friends who are afraid of being discovered hiding Jews. Denes is shunted from one place to another as her mother tries desperately to keep her safe. In the small child's eyes, her mother's efforts seem only to be a way of ridding herself of a burdensome child.

The sheer boredom of having to hide in darkened rooms all day weigh heavily on the spirited rebellious girl who has few outlets for her anger and frustration. Denes withdraws into a world of make believe to console herself. Yet, despite her confusion and despair, Denes does not let go of her love for her mother or the will to help make life bearable for others.

Even after the defeat of the Nazi's, Denes and her family knew no peace nor restitution. Hungary was dominated by Russia and the communist regime seemed almost as heartless as the German's. Denes's family left Hungary with the assistance of a Jewish Zionist organization. A deep sense of homelessness pervades the young girl's consciousness, as languages change as rapidly as landscapes. Life continues to be drab and uncertain in a camp for displaced

persons, and then in France, where the then twelve year old Denes still feels herself to be an outcast. Life becomes more bearable as hope becomes a reality. The book ends with the journey on a ship bound for Cuba. In *Castle's Burning* Magda Denes offers rich insights into the vulnerability of children as well as their resilience and inner strength as she charts her own survival in a cold, uncaring and destructive world. ❧

## Jack and Rochelle: A Holocaust Story of Love & Resistance Edited by Lawrence Sutin

Greywolf Press, 1995.

**Reviewed by Susan Bluman**

**J**ack and Rochelle is a story of one couple's love and experiences as Jewish Resistance Fighters in the forests of Poland during the Nazi occupation. The book, edited by their son, Lawrence Sutin, tells the story of his parents in their own words.

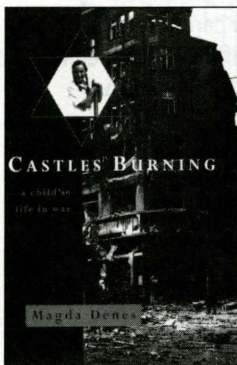
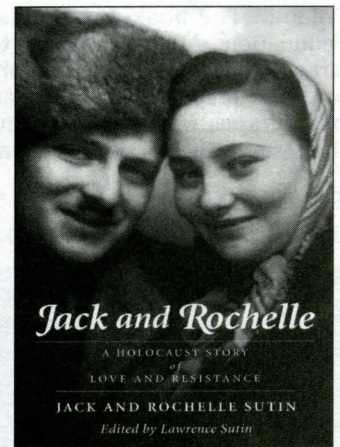
It is a touching romance of two people, whose love for each other helped them survive under horrendous conditions. This memoir is also a very important and startling document of the Partisan Groups and Jewish Resistance. It describes the survival of a young couple and their companions in a bunker in the forest — a hole in the ground five feet deep, 15 feet long and 12 feet wide — at times housed for 40 or more partisans. It is a frank description of humanity during the most inhumane times of recorded history.

Sutin not only captured the events of his parents lives, but also their spiritual and poetic substance. Jack and Rochelle, children of middle-class parents, whose mothers were dentists and fathers businessmen, grew up in a nearby towns of Eastern Poland close to the Russian border; Rochelle in the city of Stolpce and Jack in the city of Mir. Before the German-Russian war they were attending the same high school in Rochelle's town of Stolpce and they met during one of the school dances. Both of them endured the confinement and degradation of German Ghettos, Jack in Mir and Rochelle in Stoplce. Jack and his father, Julius, were among some 300 Jews who escaped from Mir after learning of the German plan to liquidate the Ghetto and its people.

Jack's group and some other escapees made their first stand in an underground bunker they dug for winter, deep in the Polish forest. Inside they stored mainly flour, potatoes and roots, mostly found during their nightly raids on neighbouring farms. Basically they lived like squirrels hiding in a hole. The air in the bunker was repulsive. As Jack recalls: "The object was to survive the best way they could, even resist." They had a limited amount of arms and they were prepared to fight and to die rather than be captured. Jack always had a dream, that some day Rochelle would come and join him in the bunker, and by some miracle, the dream came true.

Rochelle and her two friends escaped to the forest after the liquidation of the Stolpce Ghetto and one of her friends led her back to Jack's bunker. Rochelle recounts meeting Jack in the stinking bunker and how they both suffered from the ravages of tenacious parasites and festering infections. Having joined a larger partisan unit, their growing love sustained them during their days and nights spent in the battle against the enemy and nature.

Jack and Rochelle is a beautiful and inspiring story of love, courage and resistance. ❧





## BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS

Our library is a wonderful source of information, knowledge and inspiration. New books are constantly being donated. One of the most beautiful books to come to our library recently was donated by David Shafran and family in honor of Lil Shafran. The large format picture book is titled *And I Still See Their Faces: Images of Polish Jews*. The book is informative and deeply moving and will be of interest to anyone whose ancestors came from Poland. The book was published by the American Polish Israeli Shalom Foundation. A plea was made to people across Poland, the United States and Israel to send their personal photographs of Jewish life in Poland before the war. The response brought glass plates, old postcards and treasured family photographs which are reproduced in this stunning volume. This book is on the reserve shelf in our library and can be viewed at the Centre.

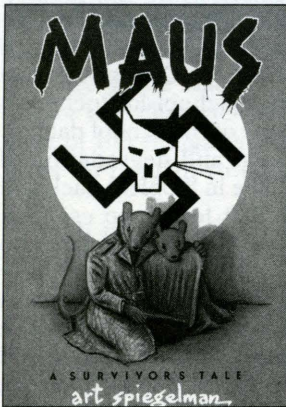


### ***And I Still See Their Faces: Images of Polish Jews***

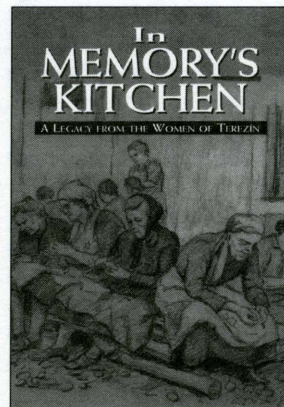
*"The book is a lament for a lost world which nowadays returns only in old photographs. Those in the photographs do not know yet that their houses will be deserted, the streets of their towns covered with the black snow of fluff from slit eiderdowns, that the wisdom of the Book will be able to save no one. Photographs, intended to seize the moment, are the evidence of the era."*

## Now Available at our Bookstore

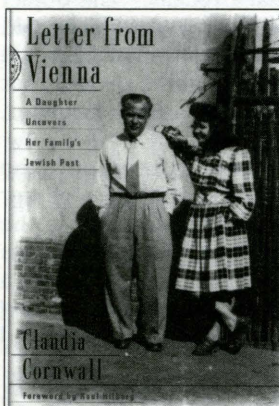
Our book sales area has many fine volumes available. Books can be sent as gifts by simply calling the Centre. Members receive a 10% discount on book purchases. If there are books you would like us to carry please call Deborah at the Centre. If we get enough requests for a title, we will consider ordering it.



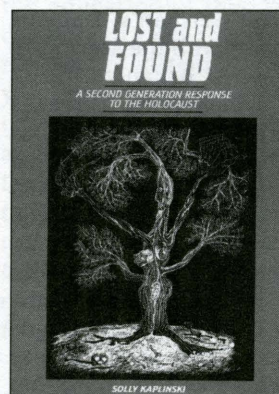
**Maus: A Survivor's Tale** is the Pulitzer prize winning graphic novel by **Art Spiegelman**. This two volume set is a powerful memoir about Vladek Spiegelman, a Jewish survivor of Hitler's Europe, and about his son, a cartoonist who tries to come to terms with his father, his story, and history.



Written by women in the Czech ghetto of Terezin, the recipes give instructions for making beloved dishes in the rich, robust Czech tradition. Reprinting the contents of the original hand-sewn copybook, **In Memory's Kitchen** is a beautiful memorial to the brave women who defied Hitler by preserving a part of their heritage and a part of themselves, edited and written by **Cara De Silva**.



**Letter from Vienna: A Daughter Uncovers Her Family's Jewish Past**, is a precise depiction of a family facing the Holocaust. It is a sensitive report that teaches us a lesson from the past – so that we might yet be able to do something to make our future better. It is written by Vancouver author **Claudia Cornwall** and published by Douglas & McIntyre.

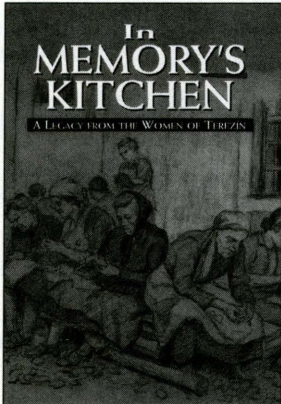


Second generation writer and principal of Talmud Torah School, **Solly Kaplinski** wrote this collection of poems after an eight day trip to Poland in 1988. In this collection the most striking messages revolve around the importance of, and pride in, one's Jewish identity as a mechanism for successful survival in the world at large.



# In Memory's Kitchen

Sunday January 4th at 7:30pm



The Holocaust Education Centre will bring Cara De Silva, the award winning journalist and author of *In Memory's Kitchen* to Vancouver. De Silva will present the story of the cookbook, produced in 1939 by women interned in the Terezin Camp for their daughters and grand-daughters. A reception will follow, featuring food prepared by Jewish women from various organizations in Vancouver using the recipes in this unique book. This will be both an informative and a commemorative event.

**Tickets On Sale Now!**

\$15  
HEC Members

\$18  
Non-Members

Call 264-0499 to  
reserve your tickets

Norman Rothstein  
Theatre  
950 W. 41st Avenue



**A LEGACY FROM THE WOMEN OF TEREZIN  
TO THE WOMEN OF VANCOUVER**





### **The Offering**

My mother lived in a small village  
In the year of nineteen forty-one  
Pregnant with much more  
Than the uncertainty  
Of a young married woman

Her heart pounded like the train  
She took to town  
Without a permit

She travelled for an abortion  
That didn't happen

She came to see a physician  
Who wasn't there anymore  
Who as a matter of fact  
By then  
Was no longer among the living

Whose white ashes  
Changed to snow  
Like January:  
Unnoticed

It wasn't by chance  
That she returned  
To the same village where no one else  
Dared to get pregnant  
Except the cattle

Did I absorb her guilt  
When I finally arrived?

Or was it the silent sky  
Which descended on top  
Of Oswiecim ovens

And she made an offering  
An offering to G-d  
Who played hide and seek  
With unspoken fervor  
And unspoken cruelty

An offering of suicidal hope  
And conditional loyalty

And the Almighty's servant  
Came with a hot iron bar  
And burned a distant star  
Inside my chest

Of course I was speechless  
At that time  
And couldn't do anything  
But scream

Charging the air  
With the warm parabola  
Of urine

### **Thousands of Children**

Thousands of children hid  
Inside a tear drop  
Below the ground  
(They were not allowed  
To cry  
The tear drops  
Were death)

That's where we came from

You and I

While arsonists on the payroll  
Marched proudly  
Behind the music band  
Ready  
For the patriotic job  
Of child murder

We came back

We came back pure  
We came back fragile  
We came back blind  
We came back warm

Like the artesian spring  
Accidentally tapped

We burst into dawn

**Andrew Karsai was born in Czechoslovakia.  
He is a civil engineer living in Vancouver.**

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

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

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



# Cards & Donations

RECEIVED SEPTEMBER 1 TO OCTOBER 20

## Donations

In Honour of Henry Kohn from Cathy Golden.

*And I Still See Their Faces: Images of Polish Jews* has been donated by David Shafran in Honour of Lil Shafran.

The video *A Place To Save Your Life* has been donated by Stan Winfield.

In Memory of Katalin Spiro from Leslie Spiro.

In Memory of Rachel Samuel from Leslie Spiro.

In Memory of Lil Shafran from Leslie Spiro.

To the Child Survivor Group, from Louise Sorensen.

## Speedy Recovery

Henry Zimmerman, from Mariette & Sidney Doduck, Bernice Neuwirth, Larry, Lylane, Todd & Ricki Thal.

Cantor Nixon, from Larry & Lylane Thal, Esther Kaufman, Cathy, Dave, Tyler & Shane Golden.

Celina Lieberman, from VHCS Staff, Frieda Miller & Danny Shapiro, Ruth Kraminsky, the Child Survivor Group.

Rubin Pinsky, from Ronnie & Barry Tessler.

Dave Braverman, from Ronnie & Barry Tessler.

Norman Margolis, from Aaron & Terry Szajman.

## Mazel Tov

Edgar Krieger, On Your 80th Birthday, from Norman & Sheila Archeck.

Dr. Victor Dirnfeld, In Honour of Your Appointment as President of the CMA, from Ethel, Mathew, Michael & Jordan Kofsky.

Rabbi Imre Balla & Har El Congregation, On the Opening of the New Shul, from VHCS Board & Staff.

Jody and Harvey Dales, On the Birth of Your Son, from VHCS Board & Staff, Bronia Sonnenschein, Susan Bluman, Peter & Joan Karasz.

The Fleischer Family, On the Occasion of Your Family's Birthday, from Harley, Karen & Ben Felstein, Danny, Vera, Kathy, Adam, Cheryl, Tom & Alexander Wollner, Robert & Susan Hector, Jody & Harvey Dales, Nadine, Allan, Sam & Eli Landa, Peter & Joan Karasz, Chaim & Susie Micner.

Suzie & Mark Kierszenblat and Family, from Lisa, Alan & Mathew Boroditsky.

Mr. & Mrs. Ted Cohen, On Your 50th Wedding Anniversary, from Ben & Rose Folk.

Leo & Jocy Lowy, Congratulations On Richard's Nomination, from Ronnie & Barry Tessler.

Abe & Goldie Miedzygorski, On Your 50th Anniversary, from Sally, Sid, Alex, David, Harry and Sid Coleman.

Don & Gloria Hendin, On the Marriage of Your Son, from Ruth & John Campbell.

Kit Krieger, On Your Election as President of the BCTF, from Andrew Schroeder & Barbara Bluman.

Shirley Klieman, On Your 70th Birthday, from David & Regina Feldman.

Norman Gold, On the Occasion of Your 50th Birthday, from Solly & Arleen Kaplinski.

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



## In Sympathy

Larry and Lylane Thal and Family, On the Loss of Your Father, Myer, from Ida Kaplan, Sam & Lola Haber, Herb & Barbara Silber, VHCS Board & Staff, Brian,

Sheryl, Mathew & Marni Ross, Leo & Jocy Lowy, Charles & Dora Davis, The Bakonyi Family, Sam, Randi, Adam & Alana Winter.

Mr. & Mrs. G. Zipursky, On the Loss of Your Beloved Grandmother, from Brian, Sheryl, Mathew & Marni Ross.

Mrs. Helen Parker & Family, Our Heartfelt Sympathies, from Leo & Jocy Lowy.

The Waisman and Lyon Families, On Evelyn's Passing, from Benny and Myra Goldstein.

David Shafran, In Honour of Lil Shafran, from Robert Mann.

Miklos & Andrew Horvat, On the Loss of Your Wife and Mother, from Paul & Edwina Heller, Ethel Bellows, Daeniela & Stephen Berne, The Hirt Family, Bea Berger.

Eva Hoffman, Alina Wydra & Alan Posthuma & Family, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Gayle Myers, Jan Cooper & Family, Dr. Joan Pinkus, Paul & Edwina Heller, Susan Bluman, Professor Shia Moser, Andrew Schroeder & Barbara Bluman, Phil, Evie, Josh & Sarah Levine, VHCS Board & Staff, Hymie & Rome Fox.

Mrs. T. Kemeny and Family, In Memory of Your Sister, from Leonore and Milton Freiman.

The Schwartzberg Family, On the Loss of Your Mother & Grandmother Wadja, from Sam, Randi, Adam & Alana Winter.

Mr. N. Samuels, On the Loss of Your Mother, from Larry & Lylane Thal, Esther Kaufman.

Lori Lasley, In Memory of Sally Yates, from Art Hister & Phyllis Simon.

## Thank You! To Our Recent Volunteers

*Special Projects*  
Daniel Fromowitz  
Irit Sorokin  
Teresa Ho  
Arleen Kaplinski

*Work Study*  
John Welfley

*Library*  
Ruth Fraser

*Assisting Survivors*  
Stan Winfield

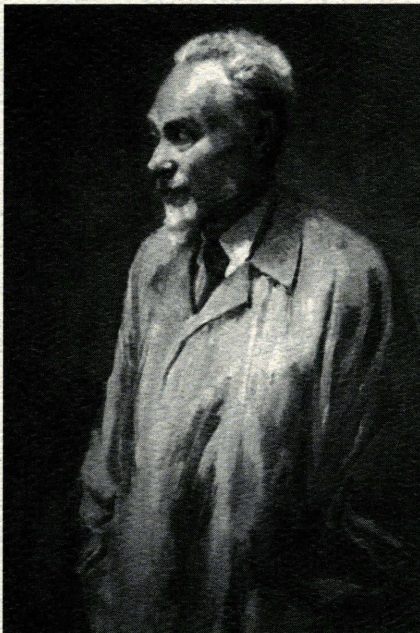
*Newsletter & Mailings*  
Micheline Camu  
Bob Seligman  
Inez Levitz  
Liliane Fryfield  
John Bernard  
Regina Feldman  
Susan Bluman  
Rome Ritter



### Portrait of Primo Levi by Stefano Levi Della Torre donated by the Italian Cultural Institute

On Wednesday, October 8, 1997 a special presentation was made to the VHCS by Dr. Gabriella Bianco, Executive Director of the Italian Cultural Institute.

The gift of a portrait of Primo Levi done by the recognized Italian Jewish painter and cousin of Levi's, Stefano Levi Della Torre, was made by the Italian Cultural Institute on behalf of the Italian Government. It was made to the Holocaust Education Centre in tribute and support for our work in Holocaust education and our interest in the work of Primo Levi. Levi was one of the most eloquent of Holocaust witness-writers, producing one of the first powerful survivor accounts, *Survival in Auschwitz*. The presentation was preceded by a lecture on Levi by Professor Alfredo Luzi of the University of Macerata, Italy.



### From our new Volunteer Coordinator Rome Fox

After serving as a volunteer for the VHCS myself for the past ten years, I am very pleased to inform you of my new position as Volunteer Coordinator of the Holocaust Education Centre.

As Volunteer Coordinator I will direct our present and future talented volunteers to tasks that they will enjoy and be successful at. This will assist our staff and allow them to use their time efficiently. I will also be keeping track of our significant volunteer hours, which will assist us in grant applications for funding the unique programmes that we offer.

Due to the acquisition of my new position, I have requested a leave-of-absence from the Executive and Board of Directors of the VHCS.

I look forward to working with many of you at the Centre, and at various events throughout the coming year.

Please call me if you can donate your time to our worthwhile and important organization.

### Planned Giving ... A Message from David Ehrlich

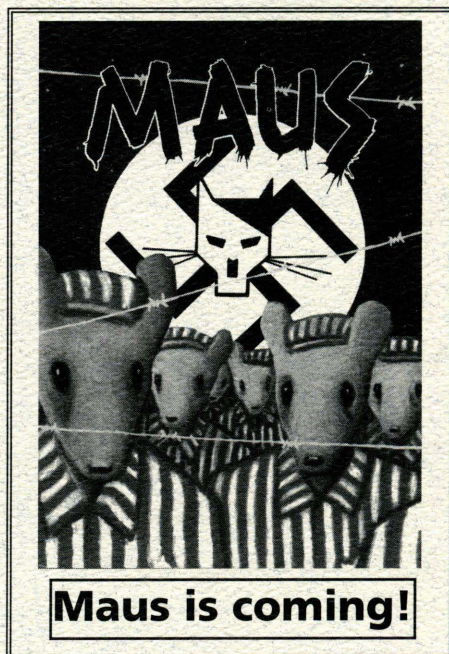
People from all walks of life reach a point in life, some sooner, some later, when they review their life's history from the beginning to the present. Needless to say we've all had high and unfortunately low points in our life. As a survivor of the Holocaust my tragedy, and that of the Jewish people, is predominantly on my mind. How could it happen? Why did it happen? Could it happen again?

The Holocaust was all about racism. To everyone's disappointment racism still exists today on many levels. Jewish people, and Holocaust Survivors in particular, should fight racism whenever and wherever it shows its ugly head. More importantly we must use our experience of bigotry and our resources to educate the young.

The Survivors who spearheaded Holocaust education in B.C., and Vancouver in particular, did a great job creating an education centre and finding dedicated people to run it. The accomplishments of the VHCS are too many to mention as it might be the most active centre in Canada. How can we make sure that all the planning, all the work, all the thousands of meetings, and all the accomplishments are not wasted, but instead continue for many years to come?

Two positive plans that the VHCS Board has implemented in the last few years will hopefully assure first, that young children of survivors and others get involved on all levels at the VHCS, and secondly that we set up an endowment fund that will take care of the finances on a long term basis. The endowment fund has been started and it is well on its way; what better legacy can we leave for future generations than to assure that Holocaust education will continue. Those of us who are committed to this cause hope every Survivor will participate in the planned giving program.

For information on planned giving please call Ken Sanders, 264-0499.



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