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VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE
NEWSLETTER NUMBER 4 | OCTOBER 2007

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ERRATA:

Docent: Rina Vizer's name was
inadvertently omitted on the list of
volunteers for the last two issues of
Zachor as a Docent.

Our apologies for any omissions or errors

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KRISTALLNACHT COMMEMORATIVE LECTURE

DAILY LIFE AND DAILY STRUGGLES: JEWISH WOMEN AND FAMILIES IN NAZI GERMANY

KEYNOTE SPEAKER — PROFESSOR MARION KAPLAN, NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2007 AT 7:30 PM

BETH ISRAEL SYNAGOGUE, 4350 OAK STREET (PARKING IN REAR)



THE ANNUAL KRISTALLNACHT LECTURE in Vancouver 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 Nazis' anti-Jewish program, which eventually culminated in the Holocaust.

Marion Kaplan is the Skirball Professor of Modern Jewish History, New York University and the author of *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (1998), *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945* (2005) and *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family and Identity in Imperial Germany* (1991).

The keynote lecture will be preceded by the traditional candle-lighting ceremony in memory of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis. The program also features Cantor Arthur Guttman.



VANCOUVER
HOLOCAUST
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JEWISH
FEDERATION
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VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

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Cover: Three local survivors featured in the *Lawyers without Rights Exhibit* (see page 9-11)

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BETWEEN DIGNITY AND DESPAIR: JEWISH LIFE IN NAZI GERMANY

BY MARION A. KAPLAN

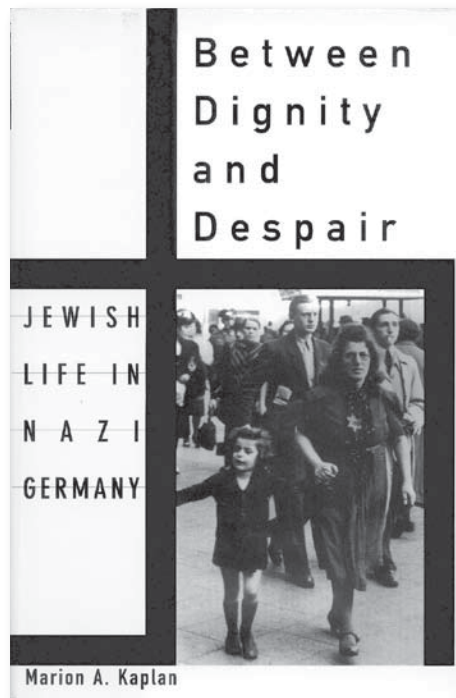
REVIEWED BY DR. KRISTIN SEMMENS, UVIC

During the Nazis' 1933 boycott of Jewish shops and businesses in Germany, a ten-year old Jewish girl read signs such as "World Jewry Wants to Destroy Germany. Germans, Defend Yourselves". Yet two years later, her father was honoured for service in the Great War with a special citation signed by Berlin's chief of police. Well into the 1930s, graduates from a Jewish high school in Breslau were awarded diplomas adorned not only with a Star of David, but also a swastika. A photograph from 1942 captures a smiling bride and groom on their wedding day, both wearing yellow stars. Examples and images such as these abound in Marion A. Kaplan's excellent study of how Jews lived under Hitler's rule, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford University Press, 1998). They typify the mixed signals German Jews received once Hitler came to power, and the strange conflation of normality and extreme suffering that marked their experiences in the Third Reich. Kaplan's book provides myriad examples of just how ambiguous, contradictory, vacillating and incremental Nazi policy on the so-called "Jewish Question" really was. This is why, she emphasizes, so many Jews did not leave Germany sooner, and why many were still caught off guard when that horrific turning point, Kristallnacht, the 1938 November pogrom, occurred. Only then was the writing clearly on the wall.

The tale of the Nazis' gradual, but relentless assault on German Jews is by now a familiar one, but Kaplan examines it from an intimate, grassroots, "everyday" perspective by using memoirs and other personal stories as her sources. It is a moving account of the "social death" that Jews suffered long before the deportations began. The book focuses largely on women's lives during those years. But men are never neglected in *Between Dignity and Despair*. Indeed Kaplan's work reveals just how differently Jewish men and women bore this tragedy, even though, the author reminds us, it affected them first and foremost as Jews.

As the Nazis' noose tightened around the Jewish community in Germany, women's lives were transformed. In the public sphere, female professionals lost their jobs en masse, while some men held onto their positions, for the time being, as war veterans. Women were suddenly ignored or even openly insulted by shop

owners, landlords, acquaintances and most heartbreakingly, long-time friends. Privately, in the home, gender roles were reversed. With their husbands arrested, wives now had to find work, make appeals for their husbands' release, secure emigration visas, etc. Women also did much to mitigate the psychological blow of the Nazis' assault, dispelling the increasing doom by maintaining some semblance of normality at the day-to-day level.



One of the most distressing chapters recounts Jewish children's daily lives under Nazism. Barred from school events, excluded from viewing Nazi films (but not the ensuing class discussions), denied school subsidies and prohibited from swimming or sleeping in dormitories during class trips, Jewish children were made aware early in the Third Reich that they did not belong. "It was not because she was denied going to the show that my little girl was weeping," recalled one mother, "but because she had to stay apart, as if she were not good enough to associate with her comrades any longer" (95).

Once the war began, the situation of German Jews quickly deteriorated, especially with the introduction of forced labour. Of course, worse was yet to come. As the deportations from Germany to the extermination camps in the East began, "social death" now became actual physical annihilation. Some Jews managed to survive the war years by "diving" – going into hiding or attempting to "pass" as Aryans. Once again, gender coloured Jews' experiences during these years. But even for those German Jews who surfaced in 1945, there were no "happy endings". The Nazis had destroyed too much.

Throughout this book, Kaplan carefully constructs the larger relevant contexts for the personal stories she retells, which makes the book accessible for non-specialists. At the same time, she touches upon key debates within historical scholarship on the Holocaust, using women's memoirs to shed new light on how the Third Reich functioned through a lethal combination of "normality" and terror. *Between Dignity and Despair* is now almost ten years old, but it recreates the daily struggles – and triumphs – of German Jews under Hitler with an academic rigour and poignancy seldom matched since. It is an unforgettable book.

Marion Kaplan is the 2007 Kristallnacht Keynote Speaker (see opposite). Her book is available in the VHEC library.

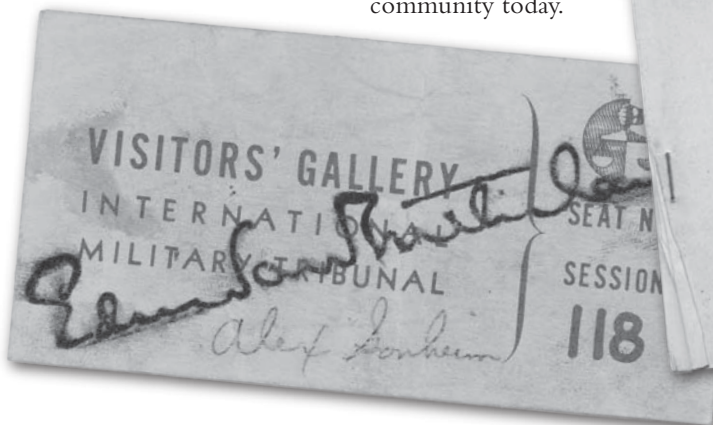
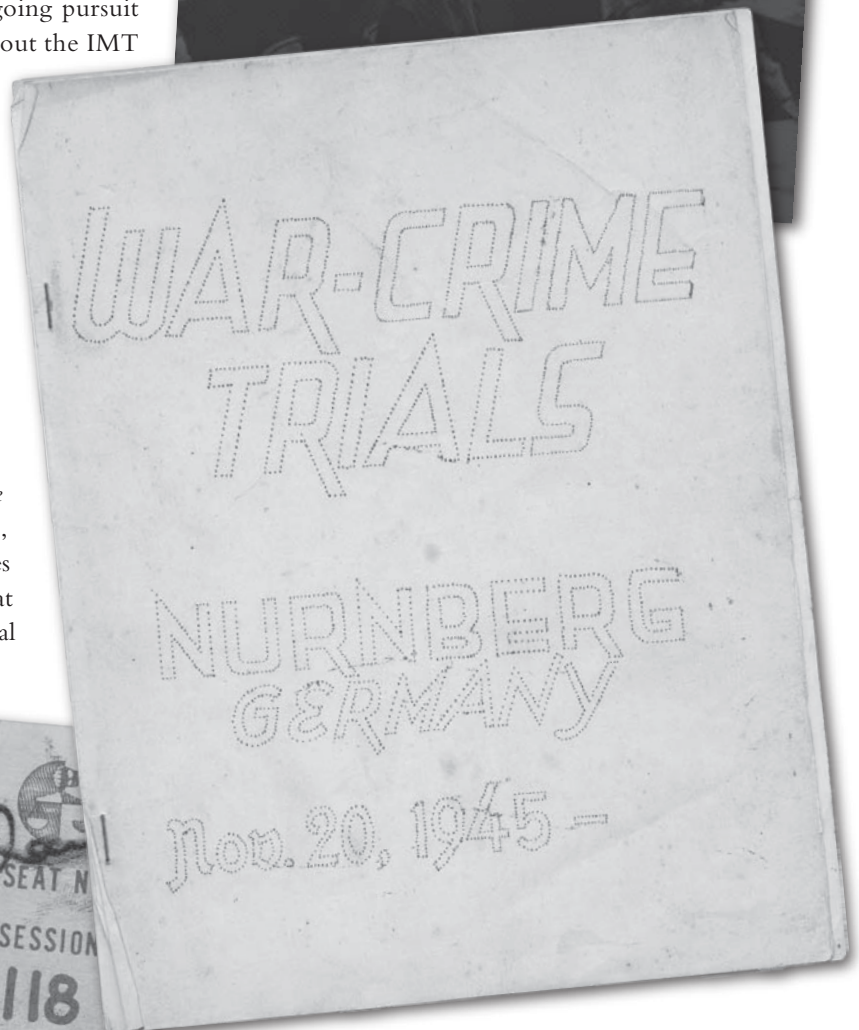
VHEC PRESENTS NEW EXHIBIT
NUREMBERG: JUSTICE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE HOLOCAUST
BY VANESSA SORENSON

In October 1945, twenty-one Nazi leaders filed into a courtroom in Nuremberg to stand trial for their roles in the systematic murder of millions during the Holocaust. The men were charged on four counts: Crimes against Peace, War Crimes, Crimes against Humanity, and Conspiracy to commit these crimes. One year later, twelve of the men were sentenced to death, six were given prison sentences and three were acquitted.

The International Military Tribunal (IMT), established by the Allies for the purposes of this trial, represented the first time that the international community held a country's leaders responsible for violating international conventions of war. It was also the first time that individuals were charged with crimes against humanity – the inhumane treatment of civilian populations during a war.

Today, more than sixty years later, the Nuremberg trials continue to stand as a watershed moment in the ongoing pursuit of international justice. One could argue that without the IMT there would be no Universal Declaration of Human Rights nor Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. One could argue that without the IMT, war criminals from the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda would not have been held responsible for their roles in those countries' genocides. And one could argue that without the IMT there would be no International Criminal Court investigating and charging suspected war criminals in Darfur today.

The Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre's exhibit, *Nuremberg: Justice in the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, traces the history of the Nuremberg trials, highlighting their accomplishments, controversies and legacies, and considers human rights issues that demand response and resolve from the international community today.



IMAGES:

Top: Introductory Panel of *Nuremberg: Justice In The Aftermath of The Holocaust*

Centre: Mimeographed program of the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, 1945. VHEC Archives.

Bottom: Visitor's pass to the International Military Tribunal, 1945. Courtesy of the USHMM.

The exhibit builds upon primary documentation from the trial, photographs of key participants, reproductions of evidence and trial artefacts from the VHEC's own collection. Designed and curated to resemble the setting of the original courtroom, the exhibit will also act as a backdrop for the school program *Nuremberg: A Student Mock Trial of Julius Streicher*, in which visiting classes will reenact the trial of one of the most notorious defendants.

As Research & Program Assistant at the VHEC, I found my days consumed by the Nuremberg trials once we began the exhibit development process in April. Some days were spent reading the eloquent and inspiring words of the trial's chief prosecutor, Justice Robert H. Jackson, who opened the trial with this poignant truth: "The privilege of opening the first trial in history for crimes against the peace of the world imposes a grave responsibility." Other days were spent sifting through the evidence against the Nazis used at trial. Those days were difficult to say the least.

By the end of the research process, almost as many questions had been raised as had been answered. For example, it is clear that the Nuremberg trials and subsequent international tribunals have ensured that at least some perpetrators have been held accountable for the atrocities that they committed. However, has the world witnessed fewer human rights abuses as a result? And, in the wake of such trials, why have some countries not yet recognized the authority of the International Criminal Court? Some of these questions will undoubtedly be raised for the exhibit's visitors as well.



Nuremberg: Justice in the Aftermath of the Holocaust will run from October 15, 2007 to Spring 2008. It runs concurrently with *Lawyers without Rights: The Fate of Jewish Lawyers in Germany after 1933*, a travelling exhibit produced by the German Federal Bar and the German Jurists Association and on display in Vancouver at Harbour Centre Tower Atrium, from November 1 to 25, 2007, and in Victoria at the University of Victoria, from November 28 to December 9, 2007.

The two exhibits complement each other well. *Lawyers without Rights* demonstrates what can happen when the rule of law and the rights and freedoms of citizens are undermined by the state, while *Nuremberg* demonstrates the potential for justice, based on the rule of law, that can be found in the resolve of the international community.

Nuremberg is designed to travel, making it possible to share the exhibit with other museums and communities across North America. Currently, seven of the VHEC's past exhibits are travelling regularly, and it is exciting to know that the story of Nuremberg and its legacy will also be circulated in this way.

Vanessa Sorenson is the past Research & Program Assistant, VHEC

NUREMBERG: Justice in the Aftermath of the Holocaust
Produced by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre
October 15, 2007 – Spring 2008

with funding from
THE LAW
FOUNDATION
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

BROKEN THREADS:

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JEWISH FASHION INDUSTRY IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA

EDITED BY DR. ROBERTA S. KREMER

REVIEWED BY DEBBY FREIMAN

Among the episodes of childhood that stand out in my memory is one of me standing very still with pins pricking my sides as my mother and our dressmaker hovered around, poking me here and there. This was a regular occurrence in our household. Whenever we needed a new outfit for a special occasion or when returning to school, the dressmaker was called in. To this day, the outfits I remember most fondly are those dresses and skirts that my mother oversaw for me.

What I didn't realize when I was younger, was that my mother, Leonore Freiman, had seriously studied to work in the fashion industry. She had attended design school in Vienna, but her training had been cut short as a result of the Anschluss in 1938, when she was let go from her practicum due to what her employer referred to as a "lack of work". At the time, this explanation had puzzled my mother, who could clearly see that the factory was very busy and that she was the only one being dismissed. My mother rarely spoke about her experience and it was only many years later, when she was interviewed for an exhibit at the VHEC that we learned of this event.

In 1999, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Center presented the groundbreaking exhibit "*Broken Threads: From Aryanization to Cultural Loss – the Destruction of the Jewish Fashion Industry in Germany and Austria*," curated by Roberta Kremer, Claus Jahnke and Ivan Sayers and based on Jahnke's unique and wonderful clothing collection. While focusing on the contributions of Jews to the fashion industry, the exhibit led us to consider the cultural loss brought about by its destruction and the metaphor it provided for the Holocaust.

In the wake of the exhibit the companion book *Broken Threads*, edited by Roberta Kremer has now been published. This work, featuring essays by historians and specialists in the field, adds depth and nuance to the themes raised in the exhibit. In reflecting upon the horrors of the Holocaust, it is perplexing to think that the fashion industry would have held any interest for the Nazis. However, as *Broken Threads* documents, fashion was a prosperous industry dominated by Jews, and therefore, a most likely target for Nazi anti-Semitism and greed.

In the first essay, Chris Friedrichs outlines an historical perspective and context for Jewish involvement in the German cloth-

ing industry. In an essay on architecture, Christian Schramin documents how Jews were at the forefront of building department stores including the first "modern" one in Berlin. Ingrid Loschek describes the instrumental role of Jews in innovating *Konfektion*, or, ready-to-wear clothing. This clothing marked the first appearance of standardized sizing and it appealed to the young and to the middle classes – people who wanted to appear fashionable, but who could not afford designer clothing.

Berlin and its mainly Jewish-owned department stores became the fashion centre of *Konfektion*.

The Jews were prominent in all areas of the clothing industry: as textile manufacturers, clothing designers and producers, distributors, and merchandisers. In her essay, Irene Guenther eloquently and evocatively charts the brutal destruction of the fashion industry in Germany. The idea that German fashion should only be Aryan designed and manufactured escalated in April 1933, to boycotts, sanctions, violence, liquidations and forced transfers of businesses. From that point on it took the Nazis only six years to destroy the Jewish presence in the industry and eventually, the industry itself.

The fashion industry could not survive the realities of war and in her essay, Charlotte Schallie describes how Jews were refused clothing cards and then ordered to give up first their warm clothing and then all of their clothes. In concentration camps such as Ravensbruck where as slave labour they were forced to sew clothing for the Nazis, their wives and camp commandants.

In the final essay, Gloria Sutano writes of the fashion industry in Vienna which although not as prominent as Berlin was still a very important part of the culture and of the economy.

One cannot write about *Broken Threads* without describing its layout and sumptuous appearance. Designed by Susan Mavor, every page holds something of interest, whether it be an excerpt from a clothing catalogue, a designer illustration, or labels from the fashion houses of the day. The photos, their informative captions, the time line and the definitions in the margins make it possible to read the book on a graphic, illustrative level.



Broken Threads is dedicated to Paul Meyer and to my mother, Leonore Freiman. For this reason, the book resonates for me, providing the historical and background information to place my mother's experiences within the events of the era. This is a volume of essays that informs us about an aspect of the Holocaust which most of us have never considered. I am proud that my mother's name has been identified with *Broken Threads* in the dedication and I highly recommend this book.

LENORE FREIMAN, FASHION DESIGNER

Having left Austria in 1938, my mother was fortunate to reunite with her family in Chicago and use her skills to find work in the fashion industry there. Eventually, she became part of the design team at the *Doctor Dress Company* and had two of her dress designs used in the company's advertisements in *Harper's Bazaar*. While at work she became very good friends with another refugee from Europe whose training and experience were similar to hers. When my parents were getting married, my mother designed and planned to sew her wedding dress. However, my grandmother decreed that according to superstition, a bride could not sew her own wedding dress. Thankfully, my mother could turn to her friend who not only sewed the dress, but also prevailed upon her employer who donated the fabric as a wedding gift. This dress took on added history when my sister and I each wore it at our own weddings.

THE MEYER FAMILY'S LACE BUSINESS

In 1874 Max Meyer established a successful lace business in Cologne, Germany, which eventually grew to 300 employees and moved to a new building, M. Meyer & Company in 1906. When the Nazis came to power, Max's grandson Paul could no longer attend school or the local cafes. Following Kristallnacht in 1938, Paul was arrested and sent to Dachau. A month later, Paul's brother secured his release by buying him a visa.

The Meyer family left for Canada in September 1939.

Although, the Meyers never resumed their lace business in Canada, Paul saved the family's lace samples

for sixty years. In 1954, Paul returned to Cologne and found the family's building demolished, but the basement still intact. Paul retrieved numerous blue sample books which he brought back to Vancouver to show his father, who was both excited and saddened to see artefacts that recalled the collapse of the family business and the family's escape from the Nazis.

Paul received some compensation for the losses suffered by his family, and at the age of 50, used the money to return to school. He attended Vancouver City College and graduated with a certificate in Financial Management. With a scholarship he continued his education at UBC where he received a Bachelor of Arts. Paul passed away September 14, 2003.

***Broken Threads* is available for purchase from the VHEC bookstore.**

IMAGES:

Top Right: Fashion and fabric designs by Lenore Freiman
Bottom Left: Lace samples from M. Meyer & Co.

LAWYERS WITHOUT RIGHTS EXHIBIT

BY LEO ADLER



Given lawyers' current powerful status in the West, the phrase "lawyers without rights" may sound strange. But that is precisely what occurred in Nazi Germany. It has been said that one of the hallmarks of a democracy is "the rule of law." The rights of citizens, restraints upon unreasonable government actions and the impartiality of the courts are all seen as being essential underpinnings of our way of life. The judiciary is often portrayed as the last bastion of our collective freedoms, as the defender of our individual liberties and as a bulwark against governmental and legislative excesses.

Unfortunately, such ideals are not often reflective of reality. Courts and justice systems are just as susceptible to the machinations and extremism of political and social ideologies as any other entities.

In January, 1932, following the democratic election of the Nazis as the largest political block, and the democratic appointment of Hitler as German Chancellor, there was a campaign to restrict Jewish participation in various professions, especially within the judicial system. Jewish lawyers and judges became targets of discrimination within the campaign to delegitimize Jews. By Sept. 30, 1933, all Jewish lawyers were expelled from the Civil Service. As of Nov. 30, 1938, Jews were banned from practicing law.

"Lawyers Without Rights" is a collaborative exhibit put on by the Israeli and Federal German Bars and Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center For Holocaust Studies to commemorate the lawyers who were persecuted and to describe the consequences of their accompanying isolation and murder. All lost their profession, most lost their country and many lost their lives. Through biographical portraits, the viewer gains new insights into the historical and legal events.

One of the more interesting focuses of the exhibit is how non-Jewish lawyers, judges and legislators strove to ensure that the five-year process of excluding Jewish lawyers, judges, court officials and law professors was carried out "legally." Definitions of what it meant to be "Jewish" had to be drafted. Doctors and scientists were consulted about how much "blood" it took to be a Jew. Racial purity proponents met in committee, and staffers re-wrote the proposed laws until all were satisfied.

At the January, 1942, Wannsee Conference where the "Final Solution" was finalized, the bureaucrats present undertook to amend the prior legislation defining a Jew in order to clarify that no amount of "Jewish blood" would now be tolerated.

At the time, international outcries were generally muted and ignored. Given the general acceptance of anti-Semitism as a then valid political philosophy and the restrictive and discriminatory immigration policies of most of the nations of the world, it was not surprising that the Nazis could afford to shrug off any criticism that did make its way to Germany.

While passing the laws may not have posed much of a hurdle, the real issue was what the courts would do. Would prosecutors, lawyers, the Bar and, most important, the judges, allow such draconian legislation to stand? The short answer is that, not only was there virtually no opposition, but the profession enthusiastically welcomed these laws. As for the Constitution of the Weimar Republic which was in force until the Reichstag fire of Feb. 27, 1933, it was conveniently disregarded.

Racism, bigotry, anti-Semitism and prejudice are still prevalent and still know no cultural or educational bounds. The possibility of the general public happily endorsing discriminatory laws is still there.

Living in a world dominated by acts of terror, we must cope with the realization that governments are caught up in the tension between security of the public and the preservation of the integrity of personal rights. Even in today's democracies, public perceptions may lead to the call for the implementation of draconian laws.

Equally, we should recognize that constitutions and noble-sounding charters or bills of rights are absolutely no bar to the trampling of the very freedoms enumerated therein. There is a special need for the legal profession to instill a fearlessness within all advocates so that they will never again allow laws such as those of the Nazi-era to exist. However, ultimately, it will take the courage of all of us to stand up to the excesses and the demagoguery of those who seek to shut down our freedoms "for the betterment of society." Only we can prevent future lawyers – and others – from being stripped of their rights.

© National Post 2006 Tuesday, October 31, 2006

Leo Adler is the Director of National Affairs, Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Center For Holocaust Studies

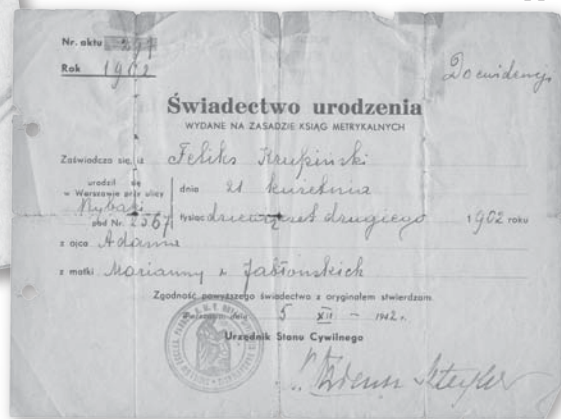
For exhibit details see page 15

LAWYERS WITHOUT RIGHTS — VANCOUVER STORIES

BY LILLIAN BORAKS NEMETZ



**STANISLAW
BORAKS
(1903 - 1949)**



My father, Stanislaw Boraks, a prominent lawyer in pre-war Warsaw, survived the Holocaust, only to die a few years later a shattered man both in body and soul. He lived long enough to save our family from a life in Communist Poland, just as he had saved us from death during Nazi occupation.

In 1930s Poland my father's life was on course to success and prosperity. He became a respected and well-known lawyer who sat on a bench in Falenica, a position that was enviable for a Polish Jew even before the Nazi invasion of Poland. He attended the Universities of Warsaw and Geneva, before obtaining his law degree, an achievement that was not easy in those days due to rampant anti-Semitism. In addition to his law practice, he managed the family estate consisting of two apartment buildings and a villa outside of Warsaw.

We lived in a large handsomely furnished Warsaw flat with a cook, a maid, and a nanny. Life was good for us, an assimilated family, who nevertheless respected and honoured our Jewish roots. But it all came to an end on September 1, 1939, when the Nazis invaded Poland.

"The General Government which was set up in Nazi occupied Poland, was comprised of four districts; Warsaw, Lublin, Radom and Cracow. Eventually Galicia was added as well, bringing the total Jewish population under their jurisdiction to over two million. Hans Frank (1900-1946), a veteran Nazi politician and lawyer, was appointed Governor General. Frank initiated and instituted the anti-Jewish decrees in occupied Poland and was responsible for the mass murder of Polish Jewry. He was later convicted and executed at the Nuremberg trials."

It must be noted that the fate of European Jews, professionals, business people, academics and others had been determined much earlier in Germany, shortly after Hitler came to power in January of 1933. Throughout the German judiciary system, Jewish lawyers, judges, professors and civil servants were disbarred and stripped of their rights to practice law. Under Nazi ideology, social justice and the rights of minorities became known as "Jewish perversions" that had to be eliminated. Not surprisingly, these anti-Jewish laws were subsequently implemented in Nazi-occupied Poland.

It was a collective tragedy for a people to be deprived of everything that is known to be just and humane in society. It was also a tragedy for an individual like my father, who suddenly loses the ground under his feet, his livelihood and his ability to take care of his family. He loses everything he

has worked for, his pride, his honour, his identity, and his right to justice in a world that becomes an antithesis to everything that he has come to know and respect. He starts groping in the liquefied darkness for a concrete place to fasten his feet so as not to drown. He looks into himself and finds despair. He looks out and sees only terror and confusion. He is forced to shed his former self and become another, a persona who must cope with an unprecedented order of an alien world. How is he to survive?

Others, like my father, also lost their grounding. Shortly after the blitzkrieg, their fate was decided by the Nazi banishment of Jews into the ghettos and death camps. The few who survived did so under despicable conditions, using false documents and suffering immense losses. Jewish lawyers from Poland who emigrated after the war to other countries were seldom able to resume their professions, due to the barriers of language, age, and different legal systems.

A few years ago, I found notes written by my father in a file that I previously didn't know existed. Here is a quote from these notes, which I translated from Polish:

On the ruins of primordial evil, a temple of humanity will rise, its religion will be the right of man; its catechism - freedom, equality and brotherhood. It will become the brain and the shoulder of the afflicted millions abused by nightmarish torturers, and a sweet dream of cherry orchards blossoming on the wounds of the tortured.

IMAGES:

Stanislaw Boraks, 1945

Falsified birth certificate used to escape the Warsaw ghetto in 1942

LAWYERS WITHOUT RIGHTS — VANCOUVER STORIES

BY FRIEDA MILLER



**DR. FRITZ
OBERLANDER
1889-1953**

Peter Oberlander was a 15-year-old student, away on a school ski trip, when Hitler entered Austria on April 11, 1938. Peter and the other Jewish boys were immediately segregated from the group, locked up for two days and made to travel in a separate rail car back to Vienna. Two days later, Peter's father Dr. Fritz Oberlander, a prominent and respected criminal lawyer, was arrested and was not seen by the family for 4 months. The change to the family's circumstances was immediate and devastating. His arrest represented the end of the family's life in Austria after more than 3 centuries.

Severely wounded twice during WWI, Fritz Oberlander was decorated for his service in the Austrian Imperial army. In 1919, he opened a private practice and became recognized for his human rights work. With others, he initiated the idea of issuing identity papers to those who had become stateless after the war. This led to the creation of the historic Nansen Pass, which placed stateless people under the protection of the League of Nations. Oberlander was also the first to offer an articling position to a woman, Dr. Frieda Willig. He was prominent in the Jewish community and rose to Master of Vienna's Masonic Lodge, Plato.

On July 10, 1935 he was awarded Austria's highest civilian honour, *das Ritterkreuz*, the Knight's Cross of Austria for his *pro bono* work on behalf of army widows and orphans seeking pensions and legal redress.

Upon his arrest Oberlander was taken to Vienna's Gestapo headquarters where he was interrogated and severely beaten.

Scars and missing teeth were evidence of the brutality he experienced. Some of the interrogators that he faced were his former legal colleagues and friends. His Doctorate of Law and *das Ritterkreuz* were abrogated. His law office was ransacked and other Jewish staff members arrested. He was jailed and then taken to Mauthausen to build the camp.

Fritz's wife, Margaret Oberlander, became ill with stress and hospitalized. In desperation, she sought help from Fritz's colleagues. Remarkably, Peter Sippl, then Vienna's Deputy Minister of Justice and a close friend of Fritz's, intervened at great personal risk and succeeded in having him released. Sippl was subsequently removed from his position.

As a condition of his release, Fritz Oberlander forfeited all his assets to the Nazis and was given 48 hours to leave Austria. The family fled to London in September 1938. In December 1940, Fritz, Margaret and their younger son George left for New York, but

without Peter, who had been arrested as an enemy alien and detained at camps in England.

Peter was sent to Canada during the summer of 1940 and interned there for two years. Fritz Oberlander enlisted the help of an old friend and prominent Montreal lawyer, Ben Robinson, who secured Peter's release and subsequently with his wife Tony, welcomed Peter into their home.

Fritz Oberlander's prominence and liberal views made him an immediate and obvious Nazi target. Although the family survived, Oberlander suffered both physically and emotionally from the humiliation, brutality, the injustice of his experiences and the loss of his professional career.

Peter Oberlander is Professor Emeritus of Community and Regional Planning, at UBC and an Officer of the Order of Canada, as is his wife Cornelia. They live in Vancouver and have three children and four grandchildren.

With thanks to Peter Oberlander.

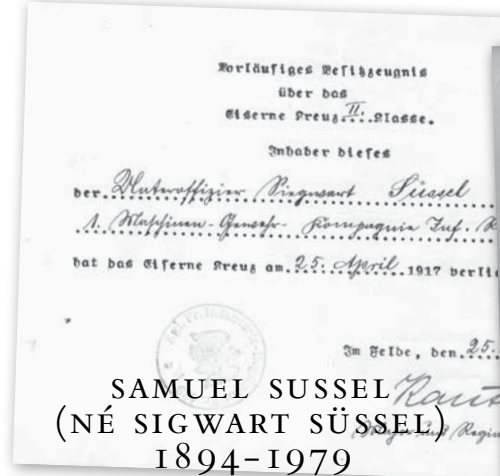
IMAGES

Fritz Oberlander with his wife Margaret and son Peter age 7, Baden bei Wien, Austria, 1930.

Austria's highest civilian honour *das Ritterkreuz*, the Knight's Cross of Austria, was awarded to Fritz Oberlander in 1935 and revoked in 1938 after the Nazis entered Vienna.

LAWYERS WITHOUT RIGHTS — VANCOUVER STORIES

BY NINA KRIEGER



After serving in the German army during World War I and completing his Doctorate of Law at the University of Heidelberg, Samuel Sussel was called to the bar of Mainz in 1923. In 1928 he married Anne, a physician with a specialty in paediatrics. They had a son, Walter, in 1931 and a daughter, Hannah, in 1933.

When the Nazi party came to power, Sussel was one of 18 Jewish lawyers in Mainz. Because of his service during the First World War, he was not disbarred but was nonetheless prohibited from appearing in court. Because of Nazi racial policies, Anne was no longer allowed to treat patients in hospitals, signalling an end to her career as well.

As the situation for German Jews worsened, the Sussels visited the Netherlands and Palestine to find a temporary home, with the thought of eventually returning to Germany. This changed when Samuel learned from a local judge that his name appeared on a deportation list. The family's goal shifted to seeking permanent refuge.

In 1935 Samuel and Anne, avid hikers, began walking regularly near the French border so as not to arouse suspicion of their planned escape. At a pre-determined time, they walked across the border without looking back, leaving their two children behind in the care of a governess. This was an agonizing decision but a necessary one; Samuel and Anne risked being detected by Nazi surveillance and shot.

After arriving safely in France, Samuel sent a coded message to the governess, who took Walter, age four-and-a-half, and Hannah, age two, to the border. The children were pointed down a path

and simply told to keep walking. They were met by an uncle and reunited with their parents in Strasbourg.

The family left France after several weeks and temporarily lived with Anne's parents, who had by this time moved to Holland. The Sussels left their home and professions behind in Germany. They were eventually permitted to ship their furniture out of Germany after negotiating the surrender of their bank accounts to the Reich.

Anne's sister and brother-in-law had settled in Canada and encouraged the Sussels to join them.

In 1937, at a time when Canada was not welcoming to Jewish refugees, an Edmonton law firm sponsored Samuel as a fellow lawyer. The firm, Friedman Lieberman & Newson, asked Samuel to join them, however he would have had to article for three years before being able to practice law. With a family to support, which by this time also included Samuel's mother and Anne's parents, he decided instead to start a business importing tools from Europe.

Following the outbreak of hostilities with Germany during World War II, all Germans living in Canada were classified as "enemy aliens". Samuel had to report periodically to police to confirm his address and occupation. The war also halted trade and the Sussels had to search for a new livelihood. On a road trip through British Columbia in 1940, Samuel and Anne were struck by the beauty of Chilliwack. They purchased a 25-acre farm in the Fraser Valley. With no experience in agriculture, the family reinvented themselves as farmers.

Due to the political influence of Friedman Lieberman & Newson, the Sussels received their naturalization papers several months prior to the end of the war in 1945. It was a very emotional and proud moment for the family. Samuel's neighbours soon began to rely on Sussel's legal and accounting background for assistance with their taxes. He gave up farming and set up a full-time accounting and tax consultancy in 1950. Samuel Sussel passed away at age 85. His son Walter lives in Chilliwack with his wife Beryl. One of Samuel's granddaughters currently practices law in Vancouver.

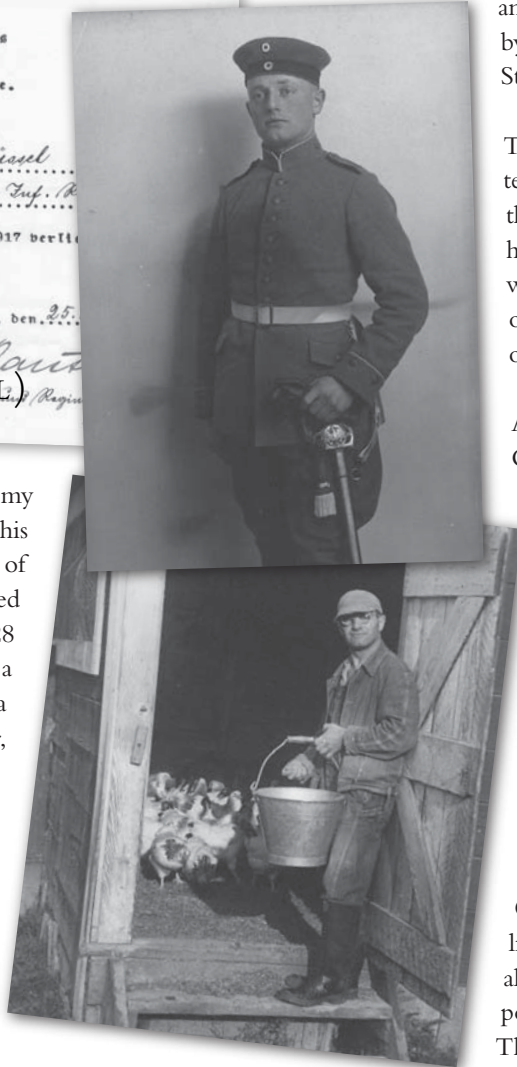
With thanks to Walter and Beryl Sussel and Sharon Meen.

IMAGES:

Samuel Sussel, in his army uniform, circa 1916.

Iron Cross certificate awarded to Samuel Sussel for service during WWI.

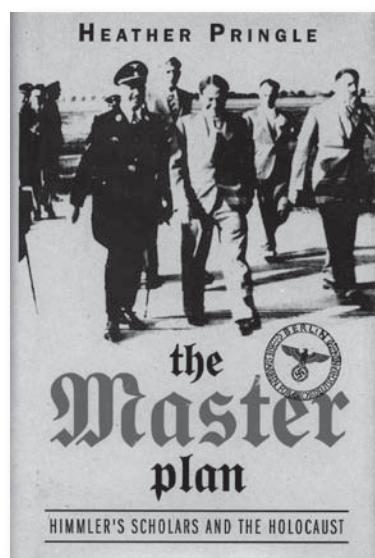
Samuel Sussel as a farmer, Chilliwack, BC, circa 1944.



THE MASTER PLAN: HIMMLER'S SCHOLARS AND THE HOLOCAUST

BY HEATHER PRINGLE

REVIEWED BY ADRIAN MYERS



of dominant beings. Their descendants were the supposed Aryans so esteemed in Nazi Germany.

Heather Pringle's work is a careful study of Heinrich Himmler's *Ahnenerbe*, an ostensibly scholarly organisation that aimed to prove, through anthropological and archaeological research, the global superiority of the Aryan race. Though maintaining a facade of legitimacy until the very end, the *Ahnenerbe*'s true role was to turn former scholars into liars, looters, spies, and abettors of genocide.

Pringle begins with young Himmler, a man always interested in history and archaeology. After Germany's shame and outrage at the Treaty of Versailles, he became an early conscript of Hitler's fledgling NSDAP. He was a born organiser, and a passionate and loyal supporter of Hitler. One of the few Nazis to actually read *Mein Kampf*, he was a true believer. The racial ideal of the party and Himmler's own interest in the past were a neat combination, for despite the patent irrationality in much of their doctrine, the Nazis were always intent on maintaining the pretence of reason. For Himmler, who was bent on proving a theory of a hierarchy of races, the distant past held urgent contemporary relevance.

Himmler and his acolytes believed that nearly every important advancement in world history was owed to an ancient "Northern" race – if it was "great" and in the past, they endowed it with "Aryan" status. In their view, Rome was founded by "migrants from the North", modern Japanese nobility were descendants of European immigrants, and Cro-Magnons (the early *Homo sapiens* believed to have outlived Neanderthals) "had blond hair". Opposing views were bluntly labelled "Jewish science". In the pre-war years the *Ahnenerbe* searched for ancient Nordic texts and petroglyphs, and recorded folk songs, witches'

incantations and legends. They founded their own publishing house to avoid outside academic peer review.

Pringle details how the *Ahnenerbe* became more intertwined with the goals of its parent organisation, the SS. Researchers doubled as spies, and kept keen eyes on the political as well as the prehistoric. They embarked on impressive expeditions – most famously to Tibet and Nepal, where hunter and adventurer Ernst Schäfer studied flora, fauna, geology and, most importantly, the local inhabitants: armed with callipers, and skin and eye colour charts, the team's *Rassenkunde* or "racial studies" expert Bruno Beger took notes, as well as full facial plaster castings.

As anthropologists and "racial experts", *Ahnenerbe* scholars fretted much over the supposed differences between races. In their quest to scientifically identify Jews – to classify "as many varieties of Jewishness as possible" – they spearheaded the now infamous Jewish Skeleton Collection project. It took Beger about 45 minutes to select 115 prisoners at Auschwitz to be shipped to Natzweiler camp in Alsace. Here they were measured and studied, then gassed. Due to repeated delays and supply problems, the original plan – to remove the flesh from the corpses and preserve the skeletons – never came to fruition.

That the work of the *Ahnenerbe* was flawed science is an understatement, and Himmler's goal of writing a "glorious new history of the Aryan race" – like the larger project of Nazism itself – was a fraudulent endeavour. Pringle weaves the raw product of keen original research into careful, readable prose. An impressive attention to detail runs throughout, and every new person, place, and object is accompanied by relevant contextualisation. Simple but effective maps, interesting images, and a useful "Guide to the Most Important Personalities" ensure the reader's lasting attention. In what are perhaps the most powerful pages of the book, Pringle interviews Beger himself; surprisingly, she found him alive and well, living inconspicuously in a small town in Germany. Beger's thinly veiled bigotry is a testament to the lasting effect, and indeed the continuing relevance, of that time and place.

In an irony surely lost on Beger, just as the Nazis looked to the past to shape their present and future, we now look to the Nazis themselves as the ultimate historical catastrophe; a past we never want to see repeated. Pringle's contribution towards further exposing the Janus-faced Nazi academia is a worthy contribution towards this goal.

Adrian Myers is the Research and Program Assistant, VHEC

The Master Plan is available in the VHEC library

PLEASE JOIN US



Editor's Reading & Book Launch

Broken Threads:

The Destruction of the Jewish Fashion Industry in Germany and Austria

EDITED BY DR. ROBERTA S. KREMER

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26, 2007 AT 8:00 PM

Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

Program to include remarks by:

Prof. Chris Friedrichs, Debby Freiman, Susan Mavor, Dr. Charlotte Schallié

Reception to follow

Presented by the 20th Annual Cherie Smith JCC Jewish Book Festival

Sponsored by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre



Author's Reading

Kasztner's Train

BY ANNA PORTER

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2007 AT 7:00 PM

Dayson Board Room, JCC

Moderated by Janos Mate

In her chilling new book, Canadian author Anna Porter chronicles Zionist leader Rezső Kasztner's controversial struggle to cut a deal with the notorious Adolf Eichmann

Presented by the 20th Annual Cherie Smith JCC Jewish Book Festival

Sponsored by the Lövi Memorial Endowment Fund of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre



Illustrated Slide Lecture

Nazi Archaeologists:

Rewriting the History of the World and Planning the Future of the Third Reich

SPEAKER: HEATHER PRINGLE

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2007 AT 7:00 PM

Museum of Anthropology, UBC

6393 N.W. Marine Drive, Vancouver

In 1935, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS in Nazi Germany, founded a research institute whose goal was to revise human history to conform to Hitler's racial theories

Admission by donation. Proceeds to benefit the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

Presented by the Museum of Anthropology as part of UBC Holocaust Awareness Week



TRIBUTE CARDS

JULY 1, 2007 — SEPTEMBER 11, 2007

MAZEL TOV

Dovrat & Jason Putterman, Mazel Tov. Pola Nutkiewicz

Rosalie & Joseph Segal, On your 60th Wedding Anniversary. Ida Kaplan

Rose & Ben Folk, On your 50th Wedding Anniversary. Pauline Babins, Les, Karen, Courtney, Bailee & Brayden Cohen

Isaac Thau, On your Special Birthday. Neri & Aron Tischler

Mr. & Mrs. Morry Singer, On your 60th Wedding Anniversary. Rose Jordan

Mark & Gerri London, Congratulations on this milestone Anniversary. Happy Belated Birthday to Mark. Jack & Jenny Rootman

Evelyn Charach, Mazel Tov. Les & Karen Cohen & Family

Earl & Adele Moss, Happy 60th Wedding Anniversary. Esther Brandt

Anna & Neal Nep, Congratulations on the engagement of your Daughter. Susie & Mark Kiertszenblat

Derek Glazer, Happy Special Birthday. Grace & David Ehrlich, Gloria & Robbie Waisman

Chaim & Aliza Kornfeld, Congratulations on the birth of your Grandsons. Susie & Mark Kierszenblat

Rose Lewin, On your Granddaughter's wedding. Alisa & Marty Charach & Family

Sheldon Franken & Lisi Rosenberg, Happy 1st Anniversary! Hymie, Rome, Aylee, Danya & Aiden Fox

Leona Pinsky, On your amazing accomplishment. Jody & Harvey Dales

Ed Krieger, On your 90th Birthday. Marilyn & Derek Glazer

Graeme Stacey, Congratulations on becoming new parents. The VHEC Board & Staff

Frieda Ullman, On your Special Birthday! Rosa Ferera, Hymie, Rome, Aylee, Danya & Aiden Fox

Michelle Brewer, Mazel Tov. The VHEC Board & Staff, Rome Fox

Claude & David Romney, On the arrival of Benjamin Jacob. Lisa Kafka

Jody Dales, Congratulations on your appointment. Susie and Mark Kierszenblat

Harvey Dales, Mazel Tov. Susie and Mark Kierszenblat

Alissa Horii, On your new position. Art Hister & Phyllis Simon

Mendy Wineberg, On your upcoming Bat Mitzvah. Evelyn Kahn & Family, Ben & Rita Akselrod

Stella & Tito Salzman. For your new home. Rosa Ferera, Lisette, Michael, Nora Ferera & Lou Pullmer

Stan Taviss, In celebration of your 75th Birthday! Jody & Harvey Dales, Shelley Nitikman & Family, Ben & Rita Akselrod, Rob & Marilyn Krell

GET WELL

Rose Folk, Get Well. Mark & Susie Kierszenblat, Debby & Mark Choit, The VHEC Board & Staff

John Grunau, Get Well. Izzy Fraeme & Leonore Etkin

Rose Lewin, Get Well. Ida Kaplan, Odie Kaplan, Debby & Mark Choit

Grace Ehrlich, Get Well. Agi & Tibi Bergida, Ben & Rita Akselrod, Art Szajman & Sons, Gloria & Robbie Waisman, VHEC Board & Staff

Esther Scholsberg, Get Well. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg & Family

Ruth Sigal, Get Well. Gerri & Mark London

Michelle Casado. Get Well. VHEC Board & Staff

David Ehrlich, Get Well. Ben & Rita Akselrod

Shannon Etkin, Get Well. VHEC Board & Staff

Allan Hanson, Get Well. Les & Karen Cohen & Family, Susie & Mark Kierszenblat

Art Szajman, Speedy Recovery. Izzy, Murray & Jeff Fraeme & Leonore Etkin, The VHEC Board & Staff

Lisa Kafka, Get Well. Rosa Ferera, Nora Ferera-Pullmer & Lew Pullmer, Bluma Tischler, The VHEC Board & Staff

Peter Parker, Get Well. The VHEC Board & Staff

SYMPATHY

Ed & Debbie Lewin & Family, On the loss of your Mother, Joyce Clodman. Ida Kaplan, Jody & Harvey Dales, Odie Kaplan, Uncle Ignac & Auntie Lila Folk, Alisa & Marty Charach, Les, Karen, Courtney, Bailee & Brayden Cohen, The VHEC Board & Staff

Sari & Adam Markowitz & Family, On the loss of your Mother & Grandmother, Joyce. Les, Karen, Courtney, Bailee & Brayden Cohen

In memory of Henry Nutkiewicz. Pola Nutkiewicz

Riva Mackoff, With Sympathy. Jocy, Gary, Stephen & Richard Lowy

David & Sonia Bickman & Family, Our condolences on the passing of your Mother. Shoshanna & Moshe Fidelman

Larry, Eva & Aidan Flynn, On the loss of your Wife, Mother & Grandmother, Anne. Mark & Gerri London, Stan & Reena Taviss, Robert & Marilyn Krell, Jack & Margaret Fraeme, Henia & Jack Perel, Anita & Avie, Caren & Tom, Liza & Joel & Families, The VHEC Board & Staff

Basil & Selma Kallner, In memory of Basil's Mother, Roma. Debbie & Eddie Rozenberg & Family

Jack & Cindy Behrmann, Sorry to hear about your Father. Esther, Rochelle, Samantha & Aaron Brandt

Becky Adirim & Family, Sorry for the loss of your Brother. Lili & Izak Folk

Luis Guincher, On the loss of your Wife, Kela. Evelyn Kahn, Neri & Aron Tischler

Karen & Jack Micner, Tamar & Mimi, Condolences on the loss of your Mother, Grandmother & Mother-in-law. Gisi & Bob Levitt, Neri & Aron Tischler, Robert & Marilyn Krell, The VHEC Board & Staff, Rose Lewin, Karen & Les Cohen & Family, Rome & Hymie Fox, Lili & Izak Folk

Clara Prizant & Famliy, On the loss of your dear Husband, Father & Grandfather. Goldie, Irwin, & Frieda Miller & Danny Shapiro

Mona Packer & Family, In memory of your Husband & Father. Debbie & Ed Rozenberg & Family

Anne Philipp, Our condolences on the passing of your dear Husband, Hans. Rosa Ferera, Nora Ferera & Lew Pullmer, Robert & Marilyn Krell & Family

Robbie Philipp & Family, On the passing of your dear Father. Robert & Marilyn Krell & Family, Neri & Aron Tischler

Lotti Smith, Kitty & Robbie Phillip & Families, On the loss of your dear Father & Grandfather. Rosa Ferera, Nora Ferera, Lew Pullmer & Family

Andrea Milmann, With deepest sympathies on the loss of your Mother, Jill Woolfson. Speedy recovery for your niece. Jody, Harvey, Rebecca, Arie & Eli Dales, The VHEC Board & Staff

Etty Mizrahi, In the blessed memory of Victor. Rosa Ferera

Tami & Issac Osiel & Family, On the loss of your Mother & Grandmother, Joyce, Les, Karen, Courtney, Bailee & Brayden Cohen

Merle Ross & Family, On the loss of your Mother & Grandmother. Rachel Wosk & Family

Lil Saperstein & Family, On the loss of Manuel, Husband, Father, & Grandfather. Lili & Izak Folk

Mr. Aaron Silberstrom, On the loss of your Mother & Grandmother. Rachel Wosk & Family

Vanessa Sorenson, In memory of your Grandfather. The VHEC Board & Staff

The Family of Leila Vennewitz, On the loss of your Mother & Grandmother. Susan Quastel, The VHEC Board & Staff

THANK YOU

David Mazlia, Thanks for all your kindness and help. Rosa Ferera & Family

Eddie Rozenberg, Thank you for your help. Tamar Kafka

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VICTORIA EXHIBIT

Nov 28 - Dec 9, 2007
University of Victoria, Student Union Building
Michele Pujol Room

FREE PUBLIC FORUM

6:00 – 8:30pm, Thursday, November 22, 2007
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Simon Fraser University Harbour Centre
Fletcher Challenge Theatre
515 West Hastings Street (at Richards)

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AUTHOR'S READING

A Soup Kitchen In The Warsaw Ghetto

Seymour Levitan will read from his translation of Yiddish author Rokhl Auerbach, who ran a soup kitchen in the Warsaw Ghetto and included a chronicle of her experience in the famed Ringelblum Archive, a collection of documents which bore witness to daily life in the Ghetto.

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