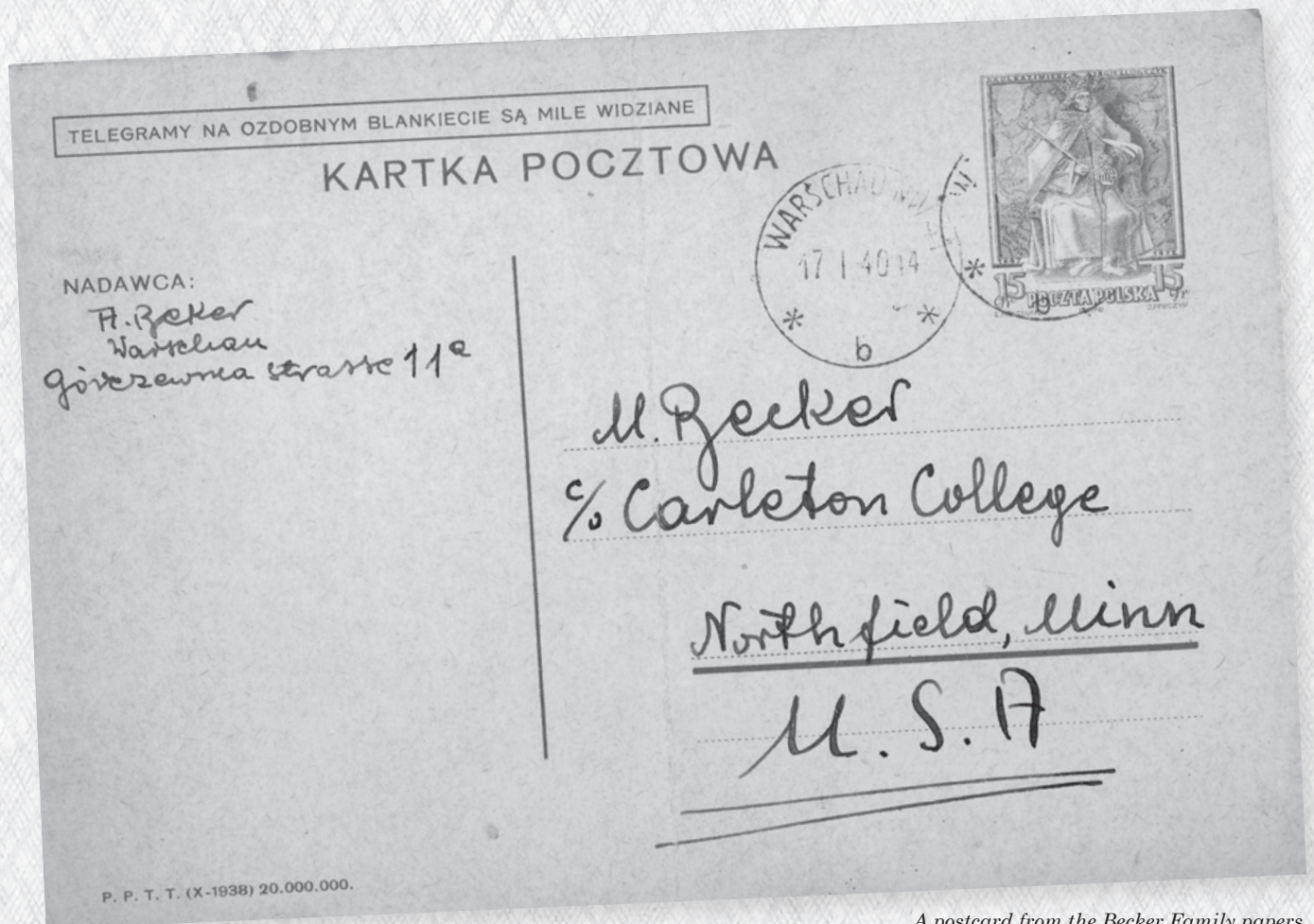


ידינו YADEINU

HOLOCAUST CENTER OF
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA 

WINTER 2008



A postcard from the Becker Family papers

HCNC Opens New Exhibit

During the years of the Holocaust, letters were often the only contact between loved ones — those who left Europe and those who remained behind. *Letters: 1938-1946*, the Holocaust Center of Northern California's current exhibit, tells the true stories of men, women and children trapped by dangerous events in a terrible time. Using letters and postcards selected from six separate archival collections, the exhibit provides an intimate view into the events of those years. The postcard above is from the Becker Family papers. Its text, in Polish and in English translation, appears on page 4.

The Becker Family papers were donated to the Holocaust Center by Martin Becker, in memory of his mother Zelda, "a devoted wife and a loving mother who grieved and suffered with the knowledge that her husband, Abraham, and two of their sons, Tadek and Lolek, perished in the gas chamber of the Nazi concentration camp at Treblinka."

WINTER-SPRING EVENTS

JANUARY 15

The Unknown Soldier:

Film screening at the Jewish Community Center of the East Bay

JANUARY 24

International Holocaust

Remembrance Day program with the Istituto Italiano di Cultura

FEBRUARY 28

Lecture by Deborah Dwork, Ph.D.

at the Holocaust Center of Northern California

MARCH 2008

Shalhevet ("flame" in Hebrew):

A once-in-a-lifetime experiential learning opportunity for Bay Area Jewish teens in grades 11 and 12. Shalhevet includes formal classroom learning about the Holocaust and the birth of Israel and a two week journey to Poland and Israel.

APRIL 13

Day of Learning in San Francisco

MAY 1

Yom Hashoah Observance

at Congregation EmanuEl in San Francisco

For more information,

visit us on the web:

www.hcnc.org/events.html

YADEINU

yadeinu (Hebrew = our hands)

The future of Holocaust education and remembrance is in our hands.

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The Holocaust Center of

Northern California is a beneficiary of the Jewish Community Federation

Lecture by Deborah Dwork, Ph.D.



Deborah Dwork, the Rose Professor of Holocaust History and Director of the Strassler Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University, will present a lecture on **February 28th, 2008**. Dwork's most recent book, *The Poesie Album of Marianka Zadikow in*

coming soon!

Theresienstadt, investigates the importance of art and creativity to the inmates at Theresienstadt. Dwork

is also the author of *Children With A Star* and co-author of *Holocaust: A History* and *Auschwitz*, which won both the National Jewish Book Award and the Spiro Kostof Award.

The Alfred Manovill Memorial Lecture is made possible by a generous gift from the Tauber Family Foundation.

HCNC Community: Around The Bay

Knud Dyby

Danish rescuer Knud Dyby was named a Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Authority. In a ceremony at the Israeli Consulate in San Francisco on September 6, 2007, Dyby was honored for his courageous acts during World War II.

As a youth Knud Dyby's favorite hobby was sailing, but he never imagined that his skills as a sailor would later prove so valuable. As a member of the Danish resistance, Dyby arranged the clandestine transport of more than 30 Allied airmen downed behind enemy lines to freedom. His heroic efforts enabled 2,000 Jews, saboteurs working for the Allies, and refugees to be ferried across the water from Denmark to safety in Sweden.

Dyby emigrated from Denmark to the United States after the war, eventually settling in the Bay Area. For more than 20 years Knud has told his story in countless classrooms throughout the region as a member of HCNC's Survivors Speakers Bureau. His testimony was recorded for future generations by our Oral History Project.

HCNC joins Yad Vashem in paying tribute to Knud Dyby, a true hero.



Knud Dyby (left) with HCNC Board member Bill Lowenberg

George Heller

Recently, Common Ties, a story-telling website, put out a call to Holocaust survivors to submit their stories for possible publication and posting. Menlo Park survivor George Heller responded by submitting his story, "The Top of the Wall." Heller's story was published. You can read it by going to www.commonalties.com/blog/2007/08/03/the-top-of-the-wall

In his Internet post George recounts his experience as a slave laborer in Austria and Hungary, a death march, internment at the Mauthausen concentration camp and liberation. In March 2007 George accompanied 23 Bay Area teens on Shalhevet, a journey to Poland and Israel, sponsored by HCNC and the Bureau of Jewish Education.



Oral History Project Strives to Keep Oral Histories Alive

The Oral History Project is working to preserve and facilitate access to our collection of interviews with Holocaust survivors and witnesses. Around 1700 of the OHP's collection of interviews exists on videotape, and we hope to eventually digitize the entire collection. We need to take this next step to allow future migrations since technology and equipment changes over time, so the collection will exist beyond the life of our current videotapes.

We surveyed other Holocaust oral history projects and repositories, including the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Shoah Foundation and the Yale-Fortunoff collection, to learn what solutions they have found to the same digitization issues. We found that these organizations are also seek-

ing the best way to move forward; some are at the same point in the process that we are.

In the interim, we are creating a short-term solution to meet the need for short digital excerpts of our interviews that can be used in school curriculum, presentations, on our website, and other situations in which full-length interviews on videotape may

not be appropriate. We're happy to say that the OHP strives to keep up with larger technological changes, and is keeping pace with some of the largest Holocaust testimony collections. We do so carefully, so that we can practice good stewardship of our collection and to take steps today that will preserve the collection for future users.

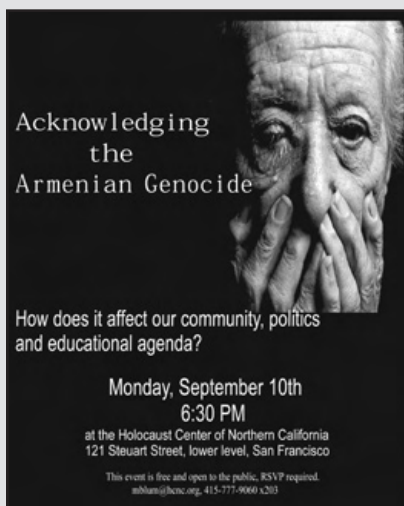
HCNC's OHP Shows Strong Presence at the International Oral History Association Conference

Two HCNC staff members, Anne Grenn Saldinger and Debbie Kahn, attended the annual conference of the International Oral History Association this October. The theme this year was about transforming community through oral history.

Debbie Kahn shared our experience with audio digitization in her presentation, "Digital Preservation and Access: New Directions for Curators of Oral History."

Anne Grenn Saldinger drew on her research for her presentation on a panel exploring the therapeutic benefits of oral history. Dr. Saldinger also chaired the panel on using oral history to study the problem of place in post-Holocaust Jewish life. The practical and intellectual exchange was very productive and keeps us on the cutting edge of scholarship and technology.

Armenian Genocide Panel Draws Large Crowd to The Center



Do politics affect whether we teach the history of the Armenian genocide in our schools and how we teach it? National headlines about the Anti-Defamation League's decision to recognize the Armenian genocide and pending legislation in Congress calling for recognition of the Armenian genocide provided the impetus for a program at the Holocaust Center addressing those questions.

On September 10th more than 60 people attended a panel discussion featuring Yitzhak Santis, Middle East Affairs Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, and Professor Stephan Astourian, Director of the Armenian Studies Department at the University of California, Berkeley.

The program began with a brief history of the Armenian genocide by HCNC's Director of Education Morgan Blum. Using slides to illustrate, Blum recounted the events of 1915-1918 when Armenians were systematically murdered by Turkish forces, a genocide acknowledged by leading Holocaust scholars Yehuda Bauer and Elie Weisel.

The audience engaged in lively discussion with the panelists and their questions were moderated by HCNC Executive Director Leslie Kane. Astourian and Santis addressed denial, genocide education and the balance between taking a moral position and realpolitik. There was candid dialogue between the speakers and audience about how Jews and Armenians deal with the issues of denial and recognition when feelings about these matters differ widely in the two communities. The panel was co-sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council, The Genocide Education Project and Bay Area chapter of the Armenian National Committee of America.

LETTERS: 1938-1946

Warschau 18.1.40

Mój drogi!

Wyobraź sobie, że obecnie mieszkamy w Warszawie. Słoty piasek do nas przez czerwony krzyż na adres Edzi:

U Lipidzki
Warschau
ul. Górczewska 11a

Sytuacja nasza jest tego rodzaju, że musimy nam natychmiast, bez żadnej zwłoki prysłać papiery i karty oszczędnościowe, gdyż w przeciwnym razie jesteśmy przeszkodą pomostu na wszystkich najgorzej, jakie tylko istnieją. O papiery i karty oszczędnościowe teraz b. Tatuś (to mi mówił w konsulacie U.S.A.) i dużo osób tak pocięli na p. Orzechowski z Warszawy. Pamiętaj, że to jest nam ostatacja czasu naturalna i jedyną szansą do życia. Skonsumujmy je natychmiast z wyprzedzeniem i niech oni robią wszystko co tylko możliwe, by umożliwić nam życie. Niech z niczym nie zwlekają, każdy dzień jest oszczędnością. Papiery i karty oszczędnościowe przysyłajcie dla nas do konsula amerykańskiego w Warszawie, ul. Ujazdowskie 29. * Nigdy nie odpisywać o to pomostu na ul. Górczewska 11a. Karta tego jest b. ważny. Głównie jest teraz kluczem? Karty nam wręczyć przez Czerwony Krzyż (tak najłatwiej). Już nie list do myślenia w naszej sprawie. Odeślaj ten list do myślenia nie dociągajcie do niego. Wistony oszczędności i dla wszystkich chętnych.

Tadek

During the years of the Holocaust, as avenues of escape from Nazi persecution in Germany and occupied Europe disappeared, many European families found themselves separated — on one side were family members safely living in the United States or England — on the other side, family and friends subject to ever-increasing dangers were living under Nazi rule and the threat of extermination.

Warsaw, 18 January 40

My dear!

Just imagine — we are presently living in Warsaw. Write and send your letters via the Red Cross to Edzia's address:

M. Lipidzki
11a Górczewska Street
Warsaw

Our situation is such that you have to send us right away, without any delay, the papers and boat passes. Otherwise we are simply destined for the worst fate that is possible. It is very easy to get papers and boat passes (this is what they told me in the U.S. Consulate) and many people left Poland that way, for example Mr. Orzechowski from Warsaw. Remember that this is our last resort and the only chance to survive. Contact our uncles right away, to tell them that they should do all that is possible to save our lives. They should not procrastinate about anything. Each day is priceless. Send the papers and boat passes for us to the American Consul in Warsaw, 29 Aleje Ujazdowskie. We are begging our uncle, simply falling on our knees, with tears in our eyes. The cost of all of this is very low. Where is Mom right now? Write to us about all of that via the Red Cross (this is the simplest way). Write a letter to our uncles right away about our case. We will not pull through much longer than spring.

Regards from all of us to all of you,

Tadek

Translation by Ewa Basinska and Jeffrey Miffin



Communication was difficult. Letters were delayed; letters were opened by censors on both sides; and later, letters were returned to the sender. Delays meant that letters crossed each other, and family members on both sides waited anxiously for word — word about the safety and well-being of their loved ones; word about the prospects for visas, boat tickets, and the means to escape Nazi-ruled Europe.

These letters were the only means of contact between parents and children, husbands and wives, friends and relatives who had been cruelly divided. As time passed and the hope of rescue grew remote, the letter writers continued to reach out to those they loved through letters and postcards.

The letters in HCNC's current exhibit were written by family and friends trapped in Nazi-occupied Europe. The love, anguish, persistence, courage and heartbreak they express are a testament to each individual, the lives they led and those they lost.

The Letters of the Becker Family

The Becker family of Poland was divided both by distance and by increasingly limited opportunities to emigrate. Martin Becker and his mother Zelda were living in the United States by 1938; father Abraham and brothers Tadek and Lolek lived in Warsaw.

Postcard after postcard to Martin and Zelda pled for assistance in obtaining exit visas and boat passes. But they were helpless to rescue the father and brothers who remained in Poland. Despite the terrible obstacles to escape and the deteriorating conditions in Warsaw, in one postcard Tadek reassured his mother that they were managing well and asked her not to worry. Abraham, Tadek and Lolek Becker perished in Treblinka.

Letters: 1938 - 1946 is made possible through the generosity of the Tauber Family Foundation.

How to Donate Papers to the HCNC Archives

In order to fulfill its mission of education, research and remembrance, the Holocaust Center of Northern California Archives accepts additions to its collections and holdings — especially personal papers and records such as correspondence, diaries, photographs, scrapbooks, and artifacts — that document the events of the Holocaust.

It is crucial to collect and maintain primary source material relating to the Holocaust. In addition to their historical and intrinsic values, primary source material confirms and illustrates the events of the Holocaust and is a valuable weapon in the battle against Holocaust denial and revisionism.

The HCNC Archives collects rare and scarce books, Yizkor books, personal papers (correspondence, diaries, scrapbooks), government records, pamphlets, broadsheets, periodicals, journals, newsletters, photographs, artifacts (clothing, banners, medals, personal effects) and Holocaust-era ephemera. The Archives does not collect photocopies, clippings, theses, term papers, or family genealogies that are not part of a collection.

For more information about donating to HCNC's Archives, contact Archivist Judy Janec at 415.777.9060 ext. 206 or jjanec@hcnc.org

Comité International de la Croix-Rouge
Pais de Conseil Général, GENÈVE (Suisse)
AMERICAN RED CROSS
Washington, D. C.

91503
Civilian Message Form
SENDER — ENVOYER
RECEIVED
MAR 23 1942

Name — Nom: WENTZLOER
Christian name — Prénom: Mlle
Street — Rue: 725 O'Farrell Street,
San Francisco, Ca
City — Localité: California.

State — Province: California

Message to be transmitted — Message à transmettre —
(not more than 25 words, family news of strictly personal character) (25 mots
ou maximum, nouvelles de caractère strictement personnel et familial)

Des p-Parents: 211
No letters since October
Anxious about you - don't lose hope.
Write through Red Cross. Peel and I will
and happy love
POLISH CHRISTIAN LEAGUE
Date: March 12, 1942
Signature: Mrs. Mendelsohn

Chapter: San Francisco
2015 Market Street
ADDRESS — DESTINATAIRE
BIRTH — NAISSANCE
Polish Name: WENTZLOER
Place and Date: Lublin - Poland
Christian name (Prénom): Zelman
City of Birth: 1872
Street: Polna 17
Name of Father: HERZICK HANSEN
Locality: Olszowek
Relationship to recipient: Father
Province: DEER HARBOR
Country: Poland
28 97-100
Write very legibly

HCNC TRAVELS TO PO

by Anne Grenn Saldinger

My trip to Poland was filled with juxtapositions and contradictions — it was an intense, deeply emotional, visceral learning experience. Immediately the images confronted me: the kiosk in the town square selling cigarettes and tickets to Auschwitz, Polish college students singing Shalom Aleichem, beautiful green pastures bordering desecrated cemeteries.

The Polish hosts of the “Legacy of the Holocaust” conference at Jagiellonian University were welcoming and deeply committed to Holocaust education. They taught us about intriguing and relevant topics: the aftermath of

the Holocaust in the lives of children who were in transit camps, the legacy of tombstone epitaphs, and the literature of the displaced. I learned that one million people visited Auschwitz last year, 90% of them non-

“THE JOURNEY GAVE ME
ADDED INSIGHT
AND STRENGTHENED
MY COMMITMENT
TO PRESERVE
HOLOCAUST MEMORY..”

Anne Grenn Saldinger, HCNC Oral History Project Director, was a recipient of Jewish Family and Children’s Services Zisovich Award for Holocaust Education. Anne’s award enabled her to present a paper at the international conference, “The Legacy of the Holocaust: The World Before, The World After,” during May 2007.

Jews, and that all Polish school children are required to visit the infamous site. Polish scholars are examining the impact of becoming a homogenous society and losing its Jewish as well as other ethnic cultures, while simultaneously hosting a revival of Jewish culture.

One of the highlights of the conference was meeting a survivor whose oral history is preserved in HCNC’s Oral History Archive and who now lives in Krakow. He took a group of conference attendees on a tour — which turned out to be a walking testimony of his life. He showed the places he lived in the Krakow Ghetto as a young boy, places I would have passed without a moment’s thought or hint of knowledge of what went on there.

We saw the remains of the ghetto wall. It is now the boundary of a playground. But it stands as evidence of the evil of the Holocaust — the wall unmistakably mimics the look of headstones in a graveyard — and as an eerie reminder of its legacy.

The conference gave me the opportunity to create cross-cultural legacies. I met a Polish colleague who teaches at Jagiellonian University who shared my interest in oral testimony. Together we are planning a project to combine the testimonies of Polish witnesses and Jewish survivors from Galicia to bring a fuller understanding of the life that was in that region.

My trip to Poland was moving, heartrending, overwhelming. There are not enough words to capture the feelings of trying to grasp the enormity of what happened there. The journey gave me added insight and strengthened my commitment to preserve Holocaust memory because while survivors are alive, it is possible to do so.



Remains of the Krakow ghetto wall bordering a playground

Photo by Anne Grenn Saldinger

LAND

by Morgan Blum

JULY 4. From Berlin I took three buses, two flights, and a taxi, to Lodz, Poland. Before World War II, Lodz had the second largest Jewish community in Poland, second only to Warsaw. Much of pre-war Lodz remains and the city has the largest Jewish cemetery in Europe. It covers many acres and as far as the eye can see there are elaborately adorned headstones incorporating classic Jewish themes, symbols and folk art.

JULY 6. I took a train to Krakow, Poland, for the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) Auschwitz Seminar. I joined 30 other participants, including Professor Deborah Lipstadt, Polish historians and lecturers, and other Holocaust scholars.

JULY 7. We took a walking tour of Jewish Krakow guided by one of the few Jews who lives here today. We visited Kazimierz, the heart of Jewish Krakow, established in 1495, and the Isaac Synagogue, namesake of a famous Hassidic legend.

Our day concluded at the Remuh Synagogue where we met members of Krakow's small Jewish community for Friday evening Shabbat services. As I joined in a familiar tune to "Lecha Do Di" and the congregation rose and turned towards the building's foyer to welcome the Sabbath bride, I could feel the spirit of those who prayed in the synagogue centuries before me come through the crumbling but beautiful doorway.

JULY 8. A day trip to Auschwitz-Birkenau, the infamous death camp. This was an experience unlike any other I've had, and this is my fourth visit to Poland. Walking through the camp, I was surrounded by experts who engaged us in examinations of history and memory, and the future of genocide prevention.

JULY 10. I arrived in Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and joined 400 participants for the IAGS bi-annual



Photo by Morgan Blum

Headstone in Warsaw Cemetery

Morgan Blum, HCNC Director of Education, was a recipient of Jewish Family and Children's Services Zisovich Award for Holocaust Education. Morgan's award underwrote her attendance at the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) Auschwitz Seminar and the IAGS bi-annual Conference in Sarajevo during July 2007. Morgan's article is taken from her travel diary.

Conference. Sarajevo's streets bear the scars and burns of recent conflict. A decade ago this city was under siege. However, the Bosnian people are resilient. They have painted over the shelled exteriors of their homes, renewed the Muslim faith for which they were persecuted, and continued to rebuild this city and their lives.

JULY 11. Conference participants joined 30,000 people, mostly Bosnian Muslims, to attend the annual memorial service at the site of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre where 7,000 Bosnian Muslims were murdered by Serb forces.

JULY 12. The Conference's formal sessions gave me an opportunity

to present a paper about Holocaust education in the Bay Area as part of a panel that featured papers on the state of local and international Holocaust and genocide education.

One of my fellow panelists was a professor at the University of Sarajevo. He spoke about the challenging process of developing a standardized classroom curriculum to teach local students, many of whom were victims, about the Bosnian experience of intolerance, violence and loss.

JULY 14. Tomorrow I depart. I've already begun to plan how I can incorporate what I've learned and experienced in curriculum I will write and classes I will teach in the coming year.

"I COULD FEEL THE SPIRIT OF THOSE WHO PRAYED
IN THE SYNAGOGUE CENTURIES BEFORE ME..."

Words from Our Interns

by **Annie Brown**, HCNC 2007 JVS Kohn Summer Intern

As a senior at Mills College, I wanted to do something productive with my last college summer. Through working at the Holocaust Center, I have gained valuable professional experience.

I was assigned to work on a project involving Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names. HCNC is a local sponsor of the Yad Vashem Shoah Victims' Names Campaign. Since 1955, Yad Vashem has worked to preserve the memory of the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust by collecting their names, the ultimate representation of a person's identity. The untold stories of millions will be lost forever unless their names, pictures and biographical details are submitted to Yad Vashem before the generation that remembers them is no longer with us. Over three million Jews killed in the Holocaust are

recorded in Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names. I organized a mailing to spread this message around Northern California.

I have found that my time at the Holocaust Center has changed my perspective a great deal. I no longer feel scared of learning about the Holocaust, but rather I feel lucky that I have had the opportunity to experience so much through the eyes of those who lived through it.

For more information on the Shoah Victims' Names Project, visit www.hcnc.org/yadvashem.html

by **Simone Wolk**,
HCNC 2007 JVS Kohn Summer Intern

I entered the basement of 121 Steuart Street for the first time with a great sense of excitement. Wall-to-wall books welcomed me with their secrets of World War II. They sat on the shelves like precious treasures, waiting for me to discover. Although the pictures and content which I found in these books were very intense and unnerving, working at HCNC motivated me to learn more and throw my fears aside. I realized very quickly that this time machine in the basement is something everyone should explore at least once, and embarking on this journey would change me forever.

One afternoon, Judy (HCNC's archivist) entered with a big box and placed it gently on the table beside me. I tried to focus my eyes on the screen in front of me, but I no longer had control over my eyes and began to focus on the Nazi flag unfolding on the floor. A chill spread down my spine and with that Judy kindly invited me to see what else she had in the box. She then



Simone Wolk (left) and Annie Brown, two of our summer interns hard at work.

brought out a medical kit from World War II, clothing from the Nazis and many other interesting artifacts. It was as though I was being transported to Nazi times. I had gone to Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, but this was better: I could touch things and see it without a glass separating me from the past. One begins to see the power of the past when it can move those who did not even experience it.

by **Yelena Tsurkan**, HCNC 2007 JFCS Youthfirst Summer Intern

Last summer, I translated a Holocaust survivor's memoir from Russian to English, and contacted HCNC to find out where I could get it published. This summer, I applied for an internship with Jewish Family and Children Services and was placed at HCNC.

My on-going project was to watch and translate Russian videotaped interviews of Holocaust survivors. Choosing at random from a pile of seven tapes, I recognized the man on the screen but I could not figure out who he was. As the interview proceeded, he mentioned familiar names of people and places. I looked at the

tape cover and the name "Naum Veltman" was written and looked familiar. I had a relative named Naum, but I did not know his last name. As I continued watching, I become convinced that he was a relative. The interview, taken in 1991, showed a younger Naum, but with features still recognizable to me.

When I came home, my mom verified that it was indeed my relative. My grandmother even knew the exact length of the interview (4 hours and 30 minutes). Naum is my grandmother's second cousin.

HCNC Takes Its Lessons Behind Bars

by Doreen Reinhold, HCNC 2007 Fall Intern

Last August, HCNC Education Director Morgan Blum received a phone call from a staff member at the Youth Justice Institute, an education provider to San Francisco's Juvenile Hall. She reported that one of the incarcerated youths had requested a copy of Adolf Hitler's book, *Mein Kampf*. When questioned why he wanted the book, the youth responded that he was an admirer of Hitler. Alarmed by this response, the staff member called HCNC asking for help.

Armed with lesson plans about anti-semitism and the importance of tolerance, Morgan and I arrived at Juvenile Hall. As we entered the building we saw a poster that underscored the need for our visit. It read: "California: Number One in Incarceration,

Number 41 in Education."

The youths assembled in classroom for the lesson. We were surprised to find that some of them already knew about the Holocaust. But it was not a surprise that nearly every youth was engaged by the curriculum and was genuinely interested in the Holocaust.

A few of the teens were able to draw parallels from history to the present day, connecting examples of Holocaust-era intolerance and racism to their own experiences. As they learned how stereotyping during the Holocaust led to mass extermination, the students discussed how they saw themselves and how they believed they were seen by others.

The girls in particular spoke openly about resistance, discrimination and

misuse of sexuality during the Holocaust. As Morgan engaged them in discussion following a film about female Jewish partisans, I found it hard to believe that these young women were serving time. Were it not for their uniforms and their classroom behind bars one would not have known that these teens were juvenile offenders.

Teaching about the Holocaust at such an unusual location is part of HCNC's mission. Educating Bay Area teens about the Holocaust — whether they attend public, private or parochial schools or they attend school behind bars — illustrates the importance of the work that HCNC does on a daily basis.

Doreen Reinhold is a student from Berlin, Germany. Her internship at HCNC was sponsored by Humanity in Action

Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland

Mayer Kirshenblatt was born in Apt, Poland in 1916 and immigrated to Canada in 1934. At age 73 he taught himself to paint. Since then, Kirshenblatt has made it his mission to remember the world of his childhood in living color.

His daughter, folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, interviewed Mayer over a 40-year period. Their collaboration created an extraordinary record of a Jewish childhood in Poland before the Holocaust.

During September, Bay Area residents were treated to an intimate, humorous, and refreshingly candid account — in both words and images — of pre-Holocaust Jewish life in Poland. Kirshenblatt's lively paint-

ings were woven together with marvelous conversation between him and his daughter. Together they drew audiences into a lost world, the details of daily life, and the stories of the Jews who lived in Apt: the pregnant hunchback, the khayder teacher caught in bed with the drummer's wife; and the cobbler's son, who was dressed in white pajamas all his life to fool the angel of death.

The Kirshenblatts' moving collaboration was a unique blend of memoir, oral history, and artistic interpretation. The Holocaust Center co-presented the exhibit, *They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland Before the War* at the Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley.



"The Cracow Wedding" Purimshpil, by Mayer Kirshenblatt

Center Honors Members of the Survivors Speakers Bureau

Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame was the site of a festive tea honoring members of HCNC's Survivors Speakers Bureau. The survivor speakers were honored for sharing their stories of survival during the Holocaust with over 13,000 Bay Area students and members of the community during the 2006-2007 school year. The September 23, 2007 tea brought the Center's volunteer speakers together to nosh, schmooze and give tips on making classroom visits and gave HCNC an opportunity to thank these eyewitnesses for continuing to tell their stories.

HCNC Board President Dr. Steven Sloan opened the afternoon by thanking the speakers for their contributions to Holocaust education in the Bay Area. An "open mike" for the survivors followed. All expressed the desire to reach greater numbers of students and teachers and the need to recruit second and third generation family members to continue their legacy.

Rachel Isquith, HCNC Director of Community Outreach, was delighted to host the tea. "My absolute favorite part of the day was watching members of the Bureau greet one another," she said. "Speakers Bureau members live as far north as Novato and as far south as Salinas, so this annual event is one the few opportunities they have to see each other."

The Holocaust Center is grateful to all of our volunteer speakers for their dedication to Holocaust education. "I know our speakers will be the highlight of thousands of students' studies this coming school year, so I'm thanking them in advance," said Isquith as the tea concluded. HCNC looks forward to honoring Speaker Bureau volunteers again next September.

If you are interested in speaking or sharing your family's Holocaust experiences, please contact Rachel Isquith, Director of Community Outreach at risquith@hcnc.org or 415.777.9060 x204.



From left to right: Jeannette Ringold, Paul Schwarzbart, Rachel Isquith



From left to right: Regina Keenan, Alicia Appleman-Jurman, Paul Schwarzbart, Sharry Schwarzbart, Steve Sloan

Give HCNC Your Oral History!

Recording your oral history is one of the best ways to preserve your stories for your family and future generations. We believe that each personal testimony will be a legacy to be appreciated and learned from. If you know someone, encourage them to talk to us about the possibility of doing an interview.

Please contact the Oral History Project at 415.777.9060 x202 or by email ohp@hcnc.org to talk further about an interview.

ACTION ALERT!

California State Assembly Remembers the Holocaust

The California State Assembly will once again honor Holocaust survivors during California Holocaust Remembrance Week in April 2008. The project includes student interviews and a ceremony in Sacramento.

If you or someone you know is a survivor of the Holocaust era and has not had the opportunity to participate in this project in the past, Ira Ruskin's office would be honored to have you participate now. Please contact Nicole Fernandez in Ira Ruskin's district office at (650) 691-2121 or email Nicole.Fernandez@asm.ca.gov

Donate your vehicle to HCNC! Call 415.777.9060 or email the Center at info@hcnc.org.
Our "car guy" David Spieler makes it easy for you to support us!

Gifts and Donations

The list below reflects donations from June 15, 2007 through October 31, 2007. Thank you for your support of the Holocaust Center of Northern California. We apologize for any omissions. Please contact us if there is an error so we can correct our records.

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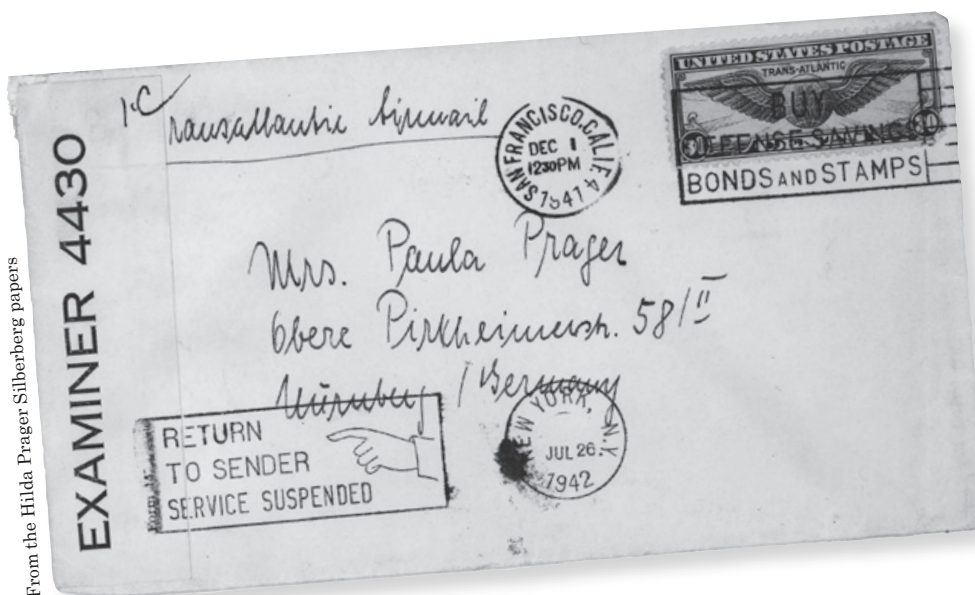
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