HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION IN VANCOUVER, B.C., 1943-1975

by

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this thesis is the development of Holocaust commemoration in the city of Vancouver, British Columbia in the period between 1943-1975. In much of the current literature, the two decades following the Second World War are considered to have been a time when the Holocaust was virtually absent from the public discourse of North American Jewry. Commemoration, according to this view, is said to have been a private affair limited to survivors, a situation which changed only after the appearance of neo-Nazism in the early 1960s, the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961, and particularly in the wake of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973.

Based on my own study of the oral and documentary materials pertaining to Warsaw Ghetto memorials in Vancouver, I argue that these assessments, which are largely based on the official announcements and priorities of the national Jewish leadership, are of limited value in a community context, where there is evidence of a considerable variety of responses to the murder of European Jewry long before the awareness-raising events said to have initiated "Holocaust consciousness".
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NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

As many scholars have pointed out, the now-common term "Holocaust", as used to denote the murder of approximately six million European Jews during the Second World War, did not enter into popular usage until the mid 1960s, Vancouver being no exception. A great deal of recent work has also been devoted to the origins and potential implications of the word, but this is a debate which I cannot grapple with here. In the attempt to make my argument the least cumbersome possible, I employ the term throughout my study as pointing to the wartime events in Europe as distinctly experienced by Jews. While the term itself did not enter popular culture in the immediate war and postwar years, I feel that the evidence confirms a fairly well-developed public concept of what had taken place, whether or not there was one specific word to describe it.

Turning to my use of the term "commemoration", I have, unfortunately, had to limit my study to public demonstrations of remembrance: ceremonies, newspaper tributes, religious services, performances, mass meetings, or permanent fixtures intended as memorial gestures to the victims of the Holocaust. Where possible I have included mention of private ritual, but this was not a subject that I raised systematically in my research.
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It goes without saying that I am solely responsible for any errors or deficiencies in the text.

I would like to dedicate this work to my extraordinary and dearly missed Grandma, Ottilie Andrews.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Historiography:

Despite increasing social and academic scrutiny, the subject of Holocaust commemoration remains largely unexplored at the community level, particularly in Canada, particularly in the West, and particularly in the period before the early 1970s. This lack of systematic attention however, has not stopped numerous historians from making rather broad assessments in matters relating to the development of Holocaust memory, ranging from mild concern about its contemporary prominence to accusations that the entire discourse is not only recent but entirely manufactured and exploitative.¹ Yet, on a local scale, commemorative acts and their past have seldom been examined in their own right, nor in relation to how one community has negotiated commemoration over a sustained period of time. Thus far research pertaining to this field has been subsumed into three main categories: studies of survivor groups, studies of memory in a national context, and studies of monuments, museums, and institutions devoted to Holocaust remembrance.

For Canada, there are only a handful of works that examine the survivor experience as it relates to commemoration. Two of these deal exclusively with Toronto and Montreal, where the number of survivors was proportionally quite high, between 15-20% of the local Jewish population as compared to the roughly 5% represented by the 400 or so survivors who settled in Vancouver between 1945-1956.² The much greater number of survivors and the larger size of the host communities in Toronto and Montreal entailed a dynamic
not present in Vancouver, namely, "landsmanschaften", Jewish mutual aid societies set up by immigrants from the same town or region in Eastern Europe to help integrate newcomers and maintain a link to the past. As Myra Giberovitch's interview-based study of Montreal survivors demonstrates, these organizations were crucial, if somewhat insular, vehicles for commemoration in the postwar period. Among other things, such groups held annual ceremonies remembering the destruction of their homes and families, often building small monuments or publishing Yiskor (Remembrance) books in their memory. Based on her qualitative study, Giberovitch finds that commemoration was frequently the first and longest-lasting activity undertaken by these groups.

According to the similar findings of Leslie Anne Hulse for Toronto, likewise based in large part on interviews, survivors joined or created their own groups, commemorating amongst themselves, if at all. Only in the early 1960s did this change with the creation of more politically-active bodies such as the Association of Former Concentration Camp Inmates, raising the public stature of survivors and their concerns and leading to the expansion of commemoration among the wider community. Like "landsmanschaften," though, these survivor organizations do not appear to have had a counterpart in Vancouver. Thus, my thesis provides an analysis of a medium-sized Jewish community where two major factors maintaining early Holocaust discourse and commemoration elsewhere in Canada were absent.

As for the experiences of survivors who settled in Vancouver, the only existing study is Jean Gerber's 1989 Master of Arts
thesis, Immigration and Integration in Post-War Canada: A Case-Study of Holocaust Survivors in Vancouver, 1947-1970.\textsuperscript{3} In approaching this subject, Gerber collected membership data from various communal organizations in order to trace the residential, occupational, and ideological affiliations established by Holocaust survivors as they arrived and settled in Vancouver. She also qualified this evidence with a number of interviews. Based on her findings of shared social and economic networks, a jointly-held commitment to Zionism, and the institutional ties created by the mechanisms of immigration, Gerber concludes that despite some admittedly very painful experiences, local survivors generally merged into the host community rather than create or join a separate set of institutions, as was the case in Toronto and Montreal. In addition to providing this important framework for the Vancouver situation, part of her study also includes certain commemorative projects undertaken by survivors. This aspect of the research however, remains largely undeveloped, skimming only the surface of the community's overall activities devoted to Holocaust remembrance.

Other than these city by city studies of survivor groups, numerous scholars have touched on commemoration at a countrywide scale, as, for instance, in a collection of studies edited by David Wyman, The World Reacts to the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{4} Each of these essays focusses on a particular country and its Jewish community, including Canada, to trace the development of various responses to the Nazi extermination of European Jewry. However, such an approach has both its positive and negative attributes in regard
to early forms of commemoration. On the positive side, these works provide a wider context against which responses must be viewed, for instance, the available news from Europe, immigration policy, and domestic anti-Semitism. There is likewise a standard attempt to document the "trail of commemoration", as one work calls it, sometimes pointing to memorial events organized while the war was still being waged. Perhaps most importantly, this type of approach emphasizes that attitudes toward the Holocaust have been evolving over time, particularly with each new generation.

Partly for this reason, unfortunately, most "national" analyses tend to be very general in their scope, some covering a time-frame of almost one hundred years or more, dealing with Jewish populations of thousands, sometimes millions, living in various parts of their respective countries. By necessity, such studies do not allow for extended analysis of factors such as the ethnic press, rabbinic influence, or regional differences in response, rather, the analytical focus generally lies with the organized Jewish leadership at the national level of a given country. In this regard, the task of making a country-wide appraisal in many ways puts writers at a disadvantage. Based on my own research, an individual community setting such as Vancouver provides an ideal backdrop for the study of commemoration and all of its nuances, some of which confirm assessments made of an entire country, others which challenge these findings.

In this regard, some of the drawbacks of approaching the development of Holocaust memory on a nation-wide scale are
especially evident in two recent books on this topic, Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life*, and Franklin Bialystok's *Delayed Impact: The Holocaust and the Canadian Jewish Community*. Both of these authors attempt to document the dynamics involved in the entrenchment of Holocaust awareness in the North American context, yet their historical models break down when applied to an actual community setting like Vancouver.

Although Novick's work *The Holocaust in American Life* does not deal with Canada per se, his findings can nonetheless be examined in a Canadian context as the postwar Jewish population in both countries shared many of the same characteristics and concerns. Political developments such as the Cold War and McCarthyism likewise had similar effects on both the Canadian and American Jewish communities and their leadership. Moreover, during the period of my study, the great majority of the rabbis who served in Vancouver were American-trained, while the local Jewish press depended in large part on the Anglo-Jewish news services emanating from the United States. Many of the materials used for commemoration were also American in origin. Thus, despite the differences in context, the general assertions made in *The Holocaust in American Life* can be raised in a study of Vancouver.

In the main, Novick argues that the conduct of commemoration, like all matters related to invocation of the Holocaust, was dependent on the patronage of the American Jewish leadership and its changing agenda. According to this thesis, "the Holocaust" as we know it today was not a distinct event in the popular
imagination during and immediately after the war. This argument is extended into the 1950s and early 1960s, when, he asserts, the Cold War environment was such that it was actually detrimental to invoke the Nazi atrocities against Jews. The shift, in Novick's view, occurred after the 1967 and particularly the 1973 Arab-Israeli wars, when Jewish organizations reacted to the threat to Israel by actively promoting "Holocaust consciousness".

While parts of Novick's basic outline for the postwar years are sound, his argument is driven by the belief that the concerns of the Jewish public were determined mainly by what people were told. He therefore examines the subject in most part through the carefully-selected public and private statements of major Jewish organizations such as the American Jewish Congress and the National Community Relations Advisory Committee. Because the latter were not promoting Holocaust awareness in early years, including commemoration, he postulates that very little took place outside of survivor circles and certainly not among religious bodies. Having ruled out spontaneity and local initiative, it does not appear that Novick ever verified this hypothesis by examining what was actually taking place in Jewish community centres or synagogues during these years, nor what was being printed in smaller-scale Jewish publications. Unless Vancouver is totally unique in this regard, which is highly unlikely, these were often common sites of Holocaust memory and commemoration, even during the Cold War and long before 1967 or 1973. In attempting to show that consciousness of the Holocaust was dependent on a national agenda, Novick overlooks evidence
suggesting that it already existed.

Similarly, the thesis of Franklin Bialystok's *Delayed Impact* is that "historical memory of the Holocaust evolved as a by-product of the changing circumstances of the Jewish community." Based largely on the official pronouncements, or lack thereof, of the Canadian Jewish Congress and its affiliate body the Joint Community Relations Committee, he asserts that for the first twenty years after the war, not only was there a general Holocaust amnesia among Canadian Jews, including the Jewish press, but "the community, as represented by its leaders, did little to instill knowledge of the catastrophe, and there was no grassroots desire for this to change." He attributes this lack of attention not so much to the Cold War but rather to a general sense of ethnic comfort and the leadership's preoccupation with other issues such as support for Israel. He does not pursue any of the factors which may have been sparking memories of the Holocaust, nor the fact that the CJC itself was issuing programming aids for commemoration as of 1954. Similarly, the existence of Warsaw Ghetto uprising commemorations in a number of Canadian cities during the 1950s notwithstanding, he adheres to his thesis by discounting such gestures as "a perfunctory effort". The turning point according to Bialystok developed in the mid 1960s when survivors in Toronto and Montreal grew increasingly frustrated by what they perceived as the Canadian Jewish Congress' timid stand toward neo-Nazism and agitated to make their voices heard, eventually gaining positions of power within Congress itself.

While Bialystok's approach, despite its omissions, sheds
light on the concerns of some of the CJC's national leaders and the tensions that developed with survivor groups, these findings, like the findings of studies of survivor organizations in Toronto and Montreal, do little to illuminate the situation in Vancouver, where again, these dynamics were not present. Moreover, in making a Canada-wide survey, Bialystok's basic premise is similar to Peter Novick's in the belief that awareness of the Holocaust and its legacy required some sort of official endorsement and that the latter was not forthcoming until the mid 1960s when it was deemed to meet community needs. Very early into my own research focussing on Vancouver, I found that while current concerns certainly shaped the tenor and volume of Holocaust discourse, there was a continuity in the existence of commemoration itself. Early acts of public remembrance had various initiators, necessitating a broader definition of community leadership than the framework developed in Delayed Impact, which ignores, for example, the role of local rabbis, editors, or community civil servants. In this regard, both Bialystok and Novick divide early forms of commemoration from the public discourse when in fact, as I hope to show, these gestures and events were not necessarily marginalized.

Herein, the third category of works related to commemoration, namely, studies of Holocaust monuments and memorial institutions, provides much more nuanced methods of viewing Holocaust memory and acts of commemoration on their own terms. Several books dealing with the construction of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, for instance, have broached important issues pertaining to
the group conflicts and politics involved in Holocaust commemoration, as well as many of the aesthetic challenges raised by the representation of such events. In his study of the sites of memory, James Young has developed several important approaches to this subject, one of them being the concept that both permanent and performative acts of commemoration have their own biography, a past just as crucial as their current form. He has similarly pointed out the crucial role of an event's placement on the Jewish calendar, not only in anchoring it in the rhythms of annual observance, but also in lending meaning to the events surrounding it and vice versa. A further important notion raised by Young is the distinction between collective memory and collected memory, for, as he points out, those who participate in commemoration all bring to bear their separate memories of the events, yet, for all but the survivors present, these experiences are vicarious.

For the purposes of my study, I have attempted to heed a number of these ideas, particularly the notion of using the available oral and documentary record to "re-invest" an event, in this case the local commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, with its own past. Special focus on the Jewish calendar also yielded insight as to how Holocaust memories were being evoked during and after the war, not only on the anniversary of the revolt but on numerous other occasions through the year. Finally, considering the very eclectic groups that were involved in local commemoration, the concept of "collected memory" provides an alternative view to Peter Novick's evaluation that "there was something for everybody in the Holocaust."
Given the impact of the tragedy and the many factions that made up the postwar Jewish community in Vancouver, it is inevitable that different groups drew different messages and focussed on different aspects of the events. What I seek to show in my work is that this was taking place well before some of the awareness-raising events thus far used as explanations for the development of Holocaust memory and commemoration. Memorial events did not necessarily entail a unity of memory, rather, those who participated all drew their own personal meaning and memories, resulting in a variety of perspectives and manifestations of remembrance.

Sources:

In my approach to this material, I have sought to examine a wide variety of the available sources, beginning with the administrative records that have been preserved pertaining to the local Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Committee, including memorial programs, press releases, general correspondences, and some minutes. Much of my focus was also directed to the programming aids, art work, speeches, and dramatic works which were used in conjunction with commemoration, particularly in terms of their content and themes. Wherever possible I further attempted to find the source of these materials and to identify the national and international connections involved in Holocaust remembrance during the time period of my study. Rich background information for local and international concerns was also provided by the Jewish Western Bulletin, Vancouver's then-only regular Jewish weekly, as
well as the city's two leading mainstream dailies the Vancouver Sun and Vancouver Province. All three newspapers provided not only factual information regarding commemorative events but also an indication of public response, Jewish and non-Jewish.

In addition to this documentary record, I was fortunate to interview or listen to existing oral histories with many of the individuals directly involved in establishing and conducting local acts of commemoration. This group included the organizers and sponsors of events, but also some of the individuals who were relied upon year after year to provide their dramatic and musical talents. What soon emerged from many of these interviews is that Vancouver has had a significant number of people whose commemorative activities have been virtually ignored on the one hand, or taken for granted on the other. In the former case, I refer to the individuals involved with the local Peretz Shul and the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO). Both groups will be dealt with later, but it bears mentioning here that thus far Vancouver's Jewish left wing and their personal and collective efforts to perpetuate the memory of the Holocaust have received almost no attention outside of their own circle. At the same time, as far as the community's more mainstream commemoration is concerned, there has been scant recognition of the sheer level of volunteerism required to organize and promote annual memorial evenings. Thus, as with my approach to the documentary source material, I attempted to include a wide circle of the people who were involved.

Of course, given the fact that some of the activities in
question took place more than fifty years ago, a number of key witnesses have since passed away, and of those remaining, the inevitable problems related to human memory must be considered. Although they were in the minority, a number of the individuals whom I contacted based on their documented involvement simply could not remember, at least not in any great detail, while others recalled certain aspects quite vividly but could not pinpoint exact dates, often expressing genuine surprise when shown a document revealing their participation to have preceded their own estimates. I should add that in our casual conversations, numerous members of the community at large took it for granted that when I invoked "the early years of local commemoration", I was speaking of the 1960s or later. One or two even quoted Peter Novick. In other instances, I found that some of the oft-repeated dates associated with this history were slightly less than accurate. Given the timeframe and highly sensitive nature of this subject, these misperceptions and vagaries of memory are to be expected, and they offer all the more reason to document this history while the opportunity remains.

Methodology:

The wider dates of my study correspond to what I have identified as the inception of local acts of public commemoration in 1943, during the war itself, and, in the case of 1975, a major turning point with the establishment of a Standing Committee charged with Holocaust education and a Holocaust Committee under the auspices of the Pacific Region of the Canadian Jewish
Congress. Thereafter, the level of community activity related to the Holocaust expanded quite rapidly, with increasing numbers of survivors and their children taking an active role. Rather than focus on these later developments, however, I have chosen to deal with the decades during which local knowledge and response to what took place in Nazi Europe were just emerging. For the most part, my analysis centres on those Jewish residents of Vancouver, new or established, who were attuned to events in Europe during and after the war and who struggled to respond in an appropriate manner.

To deal with the period in question, I have divided my chronology into segments of several years, based on identifiable shifts in the growth and conduct of local commemoration. I commence with 1943-1955, when news from Europe began to filter through in increasing detail, initiating the community's first major responses, followed by several postwar efforts to commemorate. The 1956-1963 period featured the establishment of a Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Committee and the institutionalization of commemoration, marked by wide-ranging attempts to find the appropriate means to convey the importance of the events. For 1964 I provide a brief chapter dealing with what was arguably Vancouver's first permanent Holocaust memorial, Arnold Belkin's mural "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising". Finally, for the years 1965-1975, I examine the further development and broadening of the community's impulse to commemorate.

For each of these periods, I have sought to outline the following factors. Each chapter begins with background of the more notable political and community events that were raising
awareness of the Holocaust, either directly or indirectly. Then turning to the various acts of commemoration, I examine the events and gestures themselves, as well as the individuals who became involved and their personal motivations for doing so. This analysis also consists of a discussion of the materials that were used and the messages being presented. Lastly, I include community reaction and the ongoing concerns of those promoting commemoration.

While these divisions in historical time and theme are of course in large part imposed, this approach allows for an examination of many of the previously overlooked aspects of commemoration. Whether or not Vancouver's Jewish community is representative of others in these matters, it does not hold up to the assertion that the twenty years following the war were a period of amnesia or suppression of the murder of European Jewry followed by a sudden change in policy and the infusion of support on the part of the Jewish leadership. Throughout the postwar years other community priorities were certainly paramount, but they did not preclude the memory of the Holocaust; in fact, the two became irrevocably tied from a very early time. Thus, the Vancouver experience presents an opportunity to examine on a small scale the ways in which many of the now familiar rituals and symbols of Holocaust remembrance developed over a sustained period of time.
Notes

1. For example, in Branching Out: Transformation in the Canadian Jewish Community, (North York, Ontario: Stoddart, 1998), Gerald Tulchinsky presents a lengthy list of the various activities presently devoted to Holocaust remembrance and awareness in Canada, and, without analysis of these events or their development, he concludes that such memorials are perhaps excessive and detract from the "real" issues facing Canadian Jewish communities. In a much more extreme analysis of Holocaust awareness in the United States, Norman Finkelstein's The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering argues that commemoration is simply one component of manipulating the Holocaust's memory for the self-serving ends of those wishing to exploit it.


5. In Wyman, see Milton Shain, pp. 670-689, on South Africa's National Days of Mourning, called by the Jewish Board of Deputies in 1942, or Dalia Ofer's excellent essay on Israel, pp. 836-923, which coins the term "trail of commemoration" in its description of early responses by the Yishuv, such as literary projects of commemoration initiated in 1942, the preliminary discussion for Yad Vashem that same year, and the eventual fusion of aspects of private and public commemoration.


7. Franklin Bialystok. Delayed Impact, p.3.

8. Ibid. p.6.

Holocaust is vast, but little touches directly on early forms of commemoration.


11. See in particular the chapter "When a Day Remembers: A Performance History of Yom HaShoah," The Texture of Memory, pp.263-281.


13. I was able to perform this search only through the long-distance assistance of several extremely gracious archivists: Ina Remus at the American Jewish Archives, Adina Wachman at the American Jewish Historical Society Centre for Jewish History, Nachum Lerner at the Workmen's Circle (New York Branch), Gunnar Berg at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York Branch), and Janice Rosen and Eiran Harris at the Canadian Jewish Congress Archives. All of these institutions hold important repositories of documents related to commemoration during the period of my study.

14. The exception to this are two works by Faith Jones: "The Vancouver Peretz Institute Yiddish Library: A Social History of a Jewish Library," (MA Thesis, UBC, 1999), and "Between Suspicion and Censure: Attitudes towards the Jewish Left in Postwar Vancouver," Canadian Jewish Studies, 6 (1998). Both studies provide brief mention of Holocaust commemoration in the context of the ideologies and community relations of the two groups, but not at any length.

15. In addition to the inauguration of a highly successful annual symposium for highschool students in 1976, a second and somewhat different commemorative evening was established in 1977, on the yearly anniversary of "Kristallnacht". That same year a local audio-visual project was initiated to record survivor testimonies. The early 1980s saw the emergence of a Second Generation and Child Survivor group, both of which began sending representatives to conferences and gatherings in Canada and around the world. These various developments and the growing initiative of local survivors then culminated in the founding of a Vancouver Holocaust Centre Society (VHCS) in 1986, the construction of a monument to Holocaust victims in 1987, followed seven years later by the long-awaited opening of the Centre itself. The VHCS has also become the major sponsor of commemoration.

16. This chronology differs from the one identified by F. Bialystok in Delayed Impact. Bialystok divides his study into three segments: the war years until 1960, during which he feels the Holocaust made little or no impact on the Canadian Jewish community, 1960-1973, as awareness began to grow out of renewed fears of anti-Semitism and the politicization of survivors, and
1973-1985, when the Holocaust became what he calls "a marker of ethnic identification for most Canadian Jews."
CHAPTER 2: 1943-1955

Background:

The Second World War had an immense impact on Vancouver and its Jewish community. Hitherto tucked away on the West coast of British Columbia, the city of 300,000 people became a hub of wartime activity and mobilization, particularly with the onset of the Pacific conflict. Along with the industrial shift to war production, thousands of service personnel flowed into Vancouver from all parts of Canada, including many Jews who later chose to stay in the city. The local Jewish population, which would more than double before 1951, was approximately 2800 in 1939. In addition to its rapid growth, this period was also marked by a residential and occupational transition in the Jewish community as it gained in affluence, shifting its locus from the East end immigrant district of the city to newer suburban areas further West.

Pre-war communal facilities included a Jewish Community Centre and Orthodox synagogue, the Schara Tzedeck, built in 1921 to accommodate the entire community during the High Holidays. A Conservative congregation was established in 1932, Beth Israel, but it was not until 1948 that its synagogue was built. A new Schara Tzedeck was opened at the same time. A number of different rabbis served in Vancouver during these years, but the figure generally considered the community's spiritual leader between 1919-1948 was Rabbi Nathan Mayer Pastinsky, or "Father Pat" as he was known among non-Jews. In 1943, a second highly-respected religious leader arrived, Rabbi Chaim B. Ginsberg, an eminent
Talmudic scholar who fled Poland after the Nazi occupation. Ginsberg assumed the spiritual leadership of Beth Hamidrash, a small ultra-Orthodox synagogue that was established shortly before his arrival.

Otherwise, community life was marked by high degrees of membership in various organizations, particularly the B'nai Brith, numerous Zionist bodies, and the National Council of Jewish Women. Between 1934 and 1949, Vancouver was part of the Western Region of the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), the representational organ of Canadian Jewry; it was not until the latter date that a separate Pacific Region of Congress was established, eventually assuming public relations primacy within the community. Local fundraising was conducted by a Jewish Administrative Council, mostly through a small group of influential professionals and businessmen who volunteered their services. Until 1962, the Council also subsidized the community's only weekly newspaper, the Jewish Western Bulletin (hereafter JWB or Bulletin), thus maintaining editorial control. In fact, throughout these years, the caption just below the paper's title declared it to be "Official Organ of B.C. Jewry\ Controlled and Published by the Vancouver Jewish Administrative Council."

Given the Eastern European background of the majority of Vancouver's Jewish residents, albeit one or even several generations removed in many cases, events in Europe were a major concern long before the outbreak of war. Although both Peter Novick and Franklin Bialystok have emphasized the physical and psychological distance between North America and the "Old World", 19
even a seemingly remote city like Vancouver reveals that reverberations of developments in Europe were experienced quite strongly at the local level. While it was by no means the only issue on the community's agenda, Hitler's 1933 assumption of power in Germany and the ensuing escalation of anti-Jewish measures were the source of frequent coverage in both the Jewish Western Bulletin and mainstream press, often breaking into front-page headlines, and, at times, into local response.

The latter occurred twice before the outbreak of war, once in April 1933, when the Nazis declared a nation-wide boycott of Jewish stores in Germany, and then again five years later, on the heels of the November 9-10, 1938 "Night of Broken Glass", during which hundreds of Jewish businesses and places of worship throughout Germany and Austria were destroyed and thousands of Jews arrested. Both of these developments prompted mass demonstrations in Vancouver, with attendance ranging from 1500 to 1700 people. Meetings included speeches by various political, religious, and lay leaders from both the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. While the 1933 event ended with a single resolution to urge the Bennett government to intervene on behalf of German Jews, the 1938 meeting concluded with three separate resolutions: firstly, the participants joined the Jewish people in mourning the innocent victims of this persecution; secondly, heartfelt sympathy was expressed, especially toward those who had been rendered homeless and destitute; and finally, it was resolved to press the Canadian government to help solve the refugee problem and to open its own doors to "an appreciable number of refugees".
Canada's actual immigration policy vis-à-vis Jewish refugees during these years was an altogether different matter; suffice it to say that it had perhaps the poorest record of the entire Western world. Nonetheless, numbers of Jews did manage to reach Vancouver, if only in transit to other destinations. The task of providing hospitality and material aid for these individuals fell entirely on the city's small Jewish community, which mobilized for the effort. Between 1938 and 1940, hundreds of Austrian and German refugees arrived by train on their way to Australia. They were greeted by representatives of the community and placed with Jewish families, staying on for anywhere between a day or two up to several months and even years. Before Japanese shipping was halted, groups composed mostly of Polish Jews who had managed to reach Shanghai or Kobe also began arriving at Vancouver's port, where they were met and billeted with families by Rabbi Pastinsky and Bessie Diamond, the local Jewish Refugee Committee's Chairman of Port and Dock Work.

Thus, before and throughout the war, a large part of the community was engaged in some aspect of refugee relief and personal contact, in addition to many other forms of war aid work. There was also a sizeable number of Jewish refugees passing through or residing in the city, all desperately attuned to events in Europe. With this growing movement of people also came the flow of information and rumours, adding to the increasingly grim news being reported in the media. Certainly by mid-1943, the outline and details of an extermination policy were not only clearly available but also evoking a response, as evidenced by the
holding of the community's first commemoration in July of that year. From the available records, it appears that this memorial was at least partly prompted by the June 1943 visit to Vancouver of Judge Bernard Rosenblatt, a prominent American Zionist, as well as the publicity given to reports of mass killings being issued from London, all of which emphasized that two million Jews had already been murdered by the Nazis in Poland. 

At about the same time, belated news also broke of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the forty-two day revolt that began on the eve of Passover, April 19th, 1943, when German and auxiliary troops entered the ghetto to liquidate the approximately 35,000 Jews who remained out of an original population of close to half a million people. Although the detail and accuracy of local reportage varied, the uprising was described at length even in the mainstream Vancouver press, particularly the heavy casualties that the desperate and poorly-armed Jewish civilians, fighting back block by burning block, managed to inflict on the Germans, who brought to bear tanks, flame-throwers, artillery, and even airplanes. Several reports compared the revolt to the Battle of Stalingrad, an analogy that induced understandable pride among the editors of the Bulletin. If one had, in fact, to identify a key shift in the local awareness of events in Europe, it would seem to lie in the few months surrounding the doomed uprising and the subsequent reports of mass deportations.

Certainly by the end stages of the war, there could be no mistake about the fate of Jewry throughout Europe. Issue after issue of the Jewish Western Bulletin carried articles describing
the extent of the destruction in regions once occupied by Germany. An early May 1945 edition, as example, carried a front-page headline that the Jewish population in liberated cities was 1% of its prewar numbers; below this were two smaller articles "Nazis Slew 1000 Per Day in Lodz" and "450,000 Killed in Hungary". Each new list of survivors that was compiled in Poland and other European countries was announced in the Bulletin and immediately posted at the Jewish Community Centre. By December of 1945, the figure of six million Jewish dead had been firmly established through local coverage of the Nuremberg trials. Once the term "six million" entered the community's vocabulary, it required no clarification or explanation for readers. Thus, while some scholars feel that what became known later as "the Holocaust" was not seen as an entity unto itself in these years, the fact that this oft-used term was taken for granted as a universally-understood reference suggests otherwise.

Even with the war's conclusion, reminders of the tragedy abounded. The Jewish refugee crisis that developed between 1945-1948 in the "Displaced Persons" camps was frequently featured in the news. It bears mentioning here that in Delayed Impact, one of Bialystok's extended examples of the gulf between the Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) leadership in Montreal and survivors still in Europe was the fact that most of the findings of the two-man delegation Congress sent to Poland were not even translated into English or read. Yet, when Sam Lipshitz, one of the two delegates, came to Vancouver in March 1946 to speak about life in Poland under the Nazis and afterward, his lecture at the Jewish
Community Centre was attended by an emotional, capacity audience.\textsuperscript{17} This turnout should perhaps not be exaggerated, but it confirms the pitfalls of assuming that the actions of the national CJC leadership necessarily reflected the attitudes and reactions of the entire Canadian Jewish community.

As for the arrival of survivors in Vancouver, aside from the few sponsored by relatives living in the city, approximately fifty young survivors arrived between 1947-1948 under the auspices of the CJC's "Orphan Project", followed a short while later by unspecified numbers of "tailors" from the DP camps, likewise brought to Canada through Congress.\textsuperscript{18} In late 1949, hundreds of the remaining Jewish refugees in Shanghai were taken to Vancouver on a temporary basis, though a substantial number of them chose to remain.\textsuperscript{19} As with previous arrivals, it fell on the Jewish community to provide for the residential, material, and occupational needs of all these individuals, many of whom were placed directly in the homes of local families. Although it has been well-documented that many survivors did not wish or feel comfortable enough to speak about their experiences, their mere presence, I would argue, made a silent impact that is clearly detectable in many of the community's oral histories, particularly those individuals who were the age peers and acquaintances of the younger survivors. At the same time, as Jean Gerber demonstrates in her study, the task of finding work for the survivors was energetically taken up by some of the community's leading businessmen and professionals, many of whom took a heartfelt interest in the lives of the refugees, opening their own homes to
all. While there was certainly an imperative for the survivors to look to the future, these personal connections and contacts all had a distinct impact on the support given to Holocaust commemoration as it developed.

Similarly, although the community's mammoth efforts to support the creation of the State of Israel in many ways overshadowed memories of the Holocaust, the two issues were very much linked in public discourse long before 1967 or 1973. Palestine, in the first place, was seen as the natural destination for the survivors still trapped in Europe, both for practical and philosophical reasons. This was expressed in a JWB declaration only a few days after the war ended by the President of the Vancouver Zionist Organization, M. Freeman, who wrote: "For the Jews who have managed to survive this holocaust, Palestine and Palestine alone stands out as their only refuge. Only in Palestine can they start their broken lives anew with hope of ultimate restoration." During this period the paper also frequently featured page-wide captions such as "Out of the Camps\Into Productive Life\With Histadrut", or "Remember the 6,000,000-\Let Us Fight to Save Those Remaining!" Campaign funding for the United Jewish Appeal in these years invoked similar connections. Often, the occasion of Israel's anniversary prompted commentary to the effect that if the State had only existed in 1939, millions of Jewish lives would have been saved.

Moreover, soon after 1948, a deeper causal nexus developed between the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in particular and Israel's independence. By 1949 editorials began appearing stating that the
spirit and example of the ghetto fighters had imbued the Jewish pioneers in Palestine with the strength to rise up against what had become the empty promise of a Great Power: "their death with honor was translated into dignity and nationhood for Israel." This link was reiterated again and again in these years, taking many forms, but it became enunciated most clearly around Passover each year, when themes of freedom fighting in Jewish history flowed naturally into invocations of both the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and its perceived ties to the Israeli War of Independence. In the 1951 Passover issue, for instance, the editorial asserted that the greatest lesson to be drawn from the uprising was spiritual in nature, namely, that it was a demonstration of the weak prevailing over the strong, revealing a source of hidden power in Jews that was fundamental to Israel's creation.

Thus, although Israel was the community's main focus as of the latter part of the 1940s, many issues directly tied to the Holocaust were deeply intertwined with this support. Renewed concerns about Germany also came to the fore in the early 1950s, inevitably raising memories of the Nazi era. Beginning at this time, reminders of the millions of Jewish dead often appeared in the articles condemning West Germany's rearmament and the rapid rehabilitation of war-criminals in all sectors of German society, as well as condemnation of the fact that ex-Nazis were being permitted to enter Canada. The fear that many such individuals who had escaped abroad were now planning revenge against Jews and Israel also emerged. Some of the most heated of community debates
during these years arose over whether or not Israel should enter into direct negotiations with the Bonn government over reparations, the initial feeling being negative, even invoking comparisons to the Jewish councils which were appointed during the war and which were thereby widely seen as complicit with the Germans.¹⁴

Within the Jewish community, all of these emotional issues were made doubly contentious by the onset of the Cold War. Although frequent denunciations of Germany were made by community leaders in these years, even some of the local rabbis expressed how delicate it was to protest subjects like rearmament without being labelled a Communist.²⁵ The fear of being tarred with this brush was particularly acute in Vancouver given the prominence of a branch of the United Jewish People's Order (UJPO), a left-wing, Yiddish-oriented cultural and political organization based in Toronto. Despite not being officially affiliated with the Communist Party of Canada, membership between the two organizations tended to overlap, and certainly the local perception of the UJPO was that it adhered to the Communist line on all matters, including an anti-Israel stance. Whether or not this was accurate (in many cases it was not), the political awareness and activism of members of the UJPO rendered them profoundly attuned to the events and aftermath of the Holocaust, and they were not adverse to raising these issues in debate.

In 1951, for example, when the Jewish Administrative Council voted on a motion to expel the group on the charge that it subscribed to views inimical to Jewish interests, as had already
been done in all but the Pacific Region of the CJC, one of the spokesmen for the UJPO argued that "conformity by compulsion was the path chosen by Hitler."\(^{26}\) A similar plea was made two years later, during a second attempt to have the group expelled, when a UJPO supporter stated that such a measure was "contrary to the tradition of our people and to the historic lessons of the Warsaw Ghetto fighters whose tenth memorial we will soon be observing. The heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto learned in the face of death the need for unity when confronting a common enemy."\(^{27}\) This sentiment notwithstanding, the UJPO was in fact expelled from the Council at this meeting, the result of several years of simmering McCarthy-era tensions and resentment on the part of the community's Zionist organizations. The UJPO was thereby denied the use of the Jewish Community Centre and JWB. Although this rift never fully healed, it is interesting to note that those attempting to mediate the dispute also frequently invoked the need for community unity—including unity in support of Israel—by pointing to what they saw as the example of the Warsaw Ghetto fighters.\(^{28}\)

By the early 1950s then, contrary to the findings of scholars asserting its near-total marginalization, the events of the Holocaust had directly and indirectly entered the community's public discourse and activities in various ways. It was not a dominant issue by any means, but the course of its effects can be followed in the extensive media coverage and response going back to Nazi anti-Jewish policies beginning in 1933 and radicalizing in mass murder, to the efforts to aid and absorb the refugees and survivors of these policies, and in the early 1950s, to the
connections being made between the Holocaust and Israel and current events in Germany. Although the Cold War did influence the course of public debate related to the wartime events, it by no means silenced it. In fact, all of these factors laid the ground for various forms of remembrance.

Commemoration:

Vancouver's "trail of commemoration", as mentioned, begins on Sunday the 25th of July, 1943, when members of the city's three Jewish congregations were joined by numerous non-Jewish citizens at a gathering at the Schara Tzedeck synagogue at Heatley Avenue and East Pender Street to memorialize what was then believed to be the two million Jews already murdered by the Nazis in Poland. In the prelude to this commemoration, the following editorial appeared in the Jewish Western Bulletin describing the upcoming meeting as an opportunity to

...express, as a group, the admiration which each holds in our heart for the Polish Jews who have been sacrificed to the hatred of Hitler. It may seem superfluous to suggest that any organized tribute should be paid by our small Jewish community in Vancouver when each of us knows that our thoughts are ever with these people who have contributed all that life can give.

It is only fitting, however, that this tribute be made as it will serve not only as simply homage to the Polish Jews but will help to keep before each and every one of us that we are not alone as individuals in our admiration for our people but are part of a great torrent which is surging forward to wash forever from the face of the earth the scourge that is Hitlerism.

As we gather together this Sunday each of us will recall the individual sufferings of the Polish Jews which have been reported to us, but in the larger sense the individual cases will be exemplified by the horrible tortures, death and forced suicides of so many of the Jewish leaders in Poland. It is our constant duty to carry before us the pictures of those people whose noble but painful death is making possible the groundwork for the new world toward which we are surely approaching. 29
Thus, as one of the earliest local calls to commemorate, this event was remarkable for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the fact that it enunciated a duty to remember what was seen even then as the martyrdom of Polish Jewry, twenty months prior to the end of the European war. From subsequent reports, it appears that attendance was very good, although exact figures are not given. The gathering was chaired by David Cherktow, a stalwart member of Schara Tzedeck and B'nai Brith, while the key organizer of the event was Jack Kalisky, a prominent Warsaw lawyer who had arrived via Kobe, Japan in 1942. Kalisky had recently become the president of a "Polish-Jewish National Committee" composed of twenty-five or so of the Polish refugees in the city. Other memorial participants included Bjenton Brown, the Polish consul in Vancouver. Each of the community's rabbis was also involved, including Rabbis Pastinsky and Ginsberg. Prayers for the dead were tendered in English, Polish, and Yiddish. The audience subsequently joined in prayer for an early victory and just retribution for the Nazis.

For his part, Jack Kalisky's speech on this occasion invoked the "heroic stand made by the approximately 4000 Jews in Warsaw who fought and resisted the Nazis but who were finally annihilated." Thus, the tendency of those commemorating to emphasize heroism and martyrdom evidently developed early; in fact, these themes can be deduced even in the JWB's above-quoted call to pay tribute to the "sacrifice" and "forced suicides" of so many Polish Jews, as well pride in the perceived role that Jewish martyrs were playing in bringing about a "new world". All of
these themes and their variations later emerged as staples of commemoration. It bears pointing out, however, that Kalisky and many of those present were from Warsaw. They were memorializing the confirmed destruction of their homes and families, and this event was, in the first place, a somber act of mourning. Perhaps its long-term significance should not be overstated. On the other hand, nor can one discount the fact that while still in the midst of a world war, a small Canadian Jewish community, including local leadership, refugees, and non-Jews, organized an event in memory of the Jewish victims of an ongoing, unprecedented mass murder.

In the years immediately after the war, community response to the Holocaust consisted in most part of material aid and the absorption of refugees. Nonetheless, commemoration did take place in various forms. In 1945, on the second anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the JWB ran a long tribute article that had been written for the occasion one year earlier by Pierre Van Paasen, a prominent non-Jewish Zionist writer and journalist who lived in Canada.33 This particular tribute reaffirms how quickly the details of the uprising had attained a near-legendary status. Van Paasen provides a vivid description of the battle, with the might of the German army pitted against workers, shopkeepers, rabbis, men, women, and children fighting with their bare hands. He calls it the greatest act of courage ever, to be reckoned with Masada, Verdun, and, of course, Stalingrad.

He then describes how the end came for two separate ghetto groups, the first, a band of fighters who, having depleted their ammunition, stood together—one wrapped in a flag of Zion—and,
singing the Hatikvah, destroyed themselves and any nearby Germans with a grenade; the other group, a party of worshippers, made their final stand in a Shul, reciting the Shema.\textsuperscript{34} He writes, "Thus they died as they lived, as Gideon, as Judah Maccabbee, as Bar Kochba, as Akiba." And they did not die in vain according to Van Paasen, they died so that Judaism could live and that Jews everywhere could hold their heads high, so that Jewish children could grow up in the safety of Eretz Israel, and ultimately, they died "for freedom of the spirit and the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of God."

Here then, is an early text which reveals many of the themes already connected with the uprising in the imagination of some, in this case, a Christian of Calvinist background who was deeply philo-Semitic and Zionist: Jews from every walk of life uniting in a desperate battle of liberation and human dignity in proportion to the greatest military feats of ancient and modern history, in the spirit of Judaism's legendary religious and military leaders. There is also a clear link between this struggle and a Jewish state in Palestine, which, in turn, is linked to a better world in general, in fact, no less than the "Kingdom of God". To this end, Van Paasen bestowed equal degrees of martyrdom on those who died fighting and those who died in prayer, all having performed Kiddush haShem, the sanctification of the Divine Name. The latter, at least, can be inferred from the poem which concludes the article:

\begin{quote}
For all the saints who from their labors rest,
Who Thee, by deeds, before the world confessed,
Thy Name, Adonai, be forever blest! Amen!
\end{quote}
The inclusion of this piece in the JWB was clearly an act of homage timed to coincide with the uprising's anniversary. Despite the passage of two years of world war, the impact of this event evidently continued to be felt. A similar type of tribute was made in March 1946, when the JWB published the text of the symphonic poem "The Warsaw Ghetto" by Harry Granick and Sam Morgenstern, which had premiered a few weeks earlier at New York's Carnegie Hall. The excerpted text of this powerful work also refers to the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto as heirs to the "Barkochbas" and the Maccabees, beseeching them to "Praise God with battles!" As with the Van Paasen text, the poem concludes on a universalist note, though, one less religious in character:

To the last man,
To the last woman,
To the last flag-defiant child, they are consumed.
The ash is cold.
But the incandescence--the incandescence will not fade!
It hangs in the air of time
A clarion flame against all oppressors,
A glowing handclasp to all common man,
A beacon on the bridge to the belonging together of all humanity!

The final three lines of the poem bind past, present, and future Jewish generations in a perpetuity of memory: "Jews of Warsaw, you live!\You live in us!\Forever live!" Thus was the Jewish identity of the ghetto fighters retained and to some extent internalized, though their freedom-fighting legacy remained directed to "all humanity". This assertion of both universality and an inherited Jewish duty to remember was also expressed in a poem printed on the anniversary of the uprising in 1949, this time by Canadian Jewish writer Nathan Cohen. After invoking "Ancestral heroes sired in sorrow," Cohen calls on the memory of
the fighters to animate the present with their "sacred light":

Make us recall!
Now hear my prayer, hear my plea,
You humble builders of liberty,
Guide us forever on our way
To mankind's brighter, better day,
But if we to truth turn weak deaf ear
Surrendering to coward's fear,
Should we diminish, or worse forget,
Make us recall our matchless debt—
Make us recall!

Such literary tributes were perhaps not very high-profile, particularly when compared to the local fanfare which accompanied the anniversary of Israel's establishment, but as one of the first expressions of commemoration they reveal a continued sense of awareness as well as pride in the focal point of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Judging from the themes of these pieces, the JWB editors who included them were sympathetic to what they saw as the historic significance of the uprising, as well as the articulated importance to remember. This was certainly the case with Abe Arnold, editor of the Bulletin from February 1949 to July 1960.37

Previous to coming to Vancouver, Arnold was involved with the Anglo-Jewish press in Toronto, giving him early exposure to not only the reports from postwar Europe, but also some of the survivors and war correspondents who had witnessed the devastation first-hand. All of these factors, he feels, contributed to his positive view of the importance to commemorate.38

Evidently, these convictions had a considerable effect on what appeared in the Bulletin. In this regard however, it is important to bear in mind what one longtime community official described as the "supervisory relationship" between the paper's editor and the Jewish Administrative Council.39 The latter
maintained a sometimes tight hand on what appeared in the Bulletin, particularly if members felt that something that was printed was not reflective of community opinion or best interests. This occurred on several occasions during Arnold's time in Vancouver as editor, but never over issues involving commemoration or, for that matter, any articles related to the actual events of the Holocaust. There is thus little indication that any form of self-censorship or suppression was taking place in bringing attention to Nazi atrocities, even if, as Peter Novick has asserted, it was contrary to the political climate of the times. Nor was Arnold the first or the last JWB editor to give prominence to these issues. His successors, Sam and Mona Kaplan, who were decidedly more right-wing and under no constraints from Council after 1962, were staunch supporters of community commemoration.40

As for the period of Arnold's tenure, in addition to his own editorial encouragement, the paper would regularly feature the writings of Dr. Isaac I. Schwarzbart, an ardent Zionist and former member of the Polish government in exile and perhaps the leading advocate of commemoration in the postwar period. As head of the World Jewish Congress' (WJC) Organizational Department, Schwarzbart published voluminous commentary and reports about the state of Warsaw Ghetto commemoration around the world, all of which were widely circulated to the Jewish news services and interested bodies. His writings appeared sporadically in the JWB in the late 1940s, becoming regular features of coverage by 1953 onward until his death in 1961. Parts of his reports were often quoted verbatim in the Bulletin, one example being his 1954 call
on affiliates to "launch a major project of enduring educational or cultural value that will perpetuate the traditions of Judaism," for instance, a travelling Warsaw Ghetto library.\textsuperscript{41} 

At the national level, the Canadian Jewish Congress resolved to "sponsor the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising annually" at its October 1953 Plenary Session.\textsuperscript{42} Between 1954 and 1958 the CJC's Adult Education Programming Services issued four extensive programming aids toward this end, parts of which were sometimes featured in the \textit{JWB}, such as the stated purposes of commemoration in 1954, the first of which was to: "Deepen the conviction in the cause of freedom everywhere in the world, and support and preserve the rights of all people to life and liberty."\textsuperscript{43} The \textit{Bulletin} also faithfully announced the date set by the CJC and WJC alike for each year's commemorations, which both organizations based on the date set by the Israeli government, namely, the 27th of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar; in its program aids, the CJC added the instruction that groups wishing to commemorate could do so at any time between April 19th and July 22nd, as those were the dates during which the uprising lasted. Once regular commemoration did begin in Vancouver, it was always held, as far as possible, on the Sunday closest to the revolt's anniversary, irrespective of these guidelines. Nor was this ever commented upon in the \textit{Bulletin}; both dates would be announced side by side. It was not until the early 1980s that this occasion was observed on Yom HaShoah.

At any rate, well before any of these developments, the events of the Holocaust also stimulated a different form of
commemoration in Vancouver. Although the city's Yiddish-speaking population was not large, the wartime and postwar influx of Jews from other parts of Canada, particularly Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto, brought a sizeable number of highly dedicated Yiddishists to the city. In 1945, a group of these individuals established a Peretz School, a small afternoon shule where the community's children could experience secular, progressive Jewish education. According to those involved, the driving impetus for this development was the Holocaust. The mass murder of the great majority of the world's Yiddish-speaking population presented a tremendous void to fill, a fact the founders were acutely aware of.\textsuperscript{44} Or, as expressed in September 1945 by the school's first principal, Ben Chud, "The best monument that we can build to the six million Jewish dead is to enlarge the I.L. Peretz School in our city."\textsuperscript{45} The school's very reason for being was thus grounded in a living, activist form of remembrance. When a long-awaited new building for the school was opened in January 1962, it was officially dedicated with a plaque to "Our Six Million Martyrs" by survivors and Peretz members Kiva and Mary Knoop.

The school began commemorating on a yearly basis in 1948, when members invited the entire community to "a memorial evening for the heroic dead of the Warsaw Ghetto".\textsuperscript{46} Program features included a banner that read "We shall not forget", the singing of the Partisan Song (then referred to as Song of the Vilna Ghetto), poetry readings, violin renditions, and two speeches.\textsuperscript{47} In his address, Principal Ben Chud declared that "We have come together to take the flag of freedom under which they struggled and which
they passed into our hands," while the president of the shul Sol Wyne asserted the need to not only remember but to fight the fascist forces still alive in the world. At the conclusion of the evening, as the JWBi relates, "the audience stood with bowed heads and took the vow never to forget the fallen heroes of the Ghetto and the six million Jews who were murdered by the Nazi beast."46 This type of commemoration became an integral part of the school's yearly calendar.

Given the left-leaning orientation and social concerns of the Peretz School, there was a fair degree of overlap between its members and members of the United Jewish People's Order. The latter became involved in Holocaust commemoration soon after 1948, particularly through the UJPO Drama Workshop, a sub-section of the organization dedicated to theatre with a message.49 By the early 1950s the Drama Workshop was putting on a Warsaw Ghetto memorial evening, renting a space at the Peretz School for the occasion. The theme of these memorials was "Never to forgive, never to forget," and in the early days commemorations were kept fairly simple, something like a sketch, slide show, or dramatized reading to background music, as well as speeches in English and Yiddish. The rendition of the Partisan Song was a central and moving highlight of any memorial.50 The UJPO's priority in finding materials for these evenings lay with anything produced by witnesses and victims themselves; many works were obtained from survivor committees in Poland and the YIVO Institute in New York, or from Yiddish literary journals and anthologies. Interestingly, two other important sources of material in these early years were
the CJC programming aids and World Jewish Congress reports mentioned above.\textsuperscript{51}

Another work often used by members of the Drama Workshop in the early 1950s was "Genesis", a powerful poem by Jules Alan Wein that takes the Biblical text as its point of departure to incorporate the events of the Holocaust—"In the beginning there were\ transports," and so on. At certain points the narrative opens to the voices of the perpetrators, always emphasizing the cold, scientific nature of the killings: "The human infant\ Passes sixteen fluid drams of urine,\ If wrested from its mother\ punctually,\ German Fascist Time..." The crescendo of the poem is reached with the Warsaw Ghetto revolt—"And the sixth day dawned, defiant\ Kidush Hasham". The conclusion of the work reads thus: "And it was evening, the seventh\ day,\ And death was but the birthcry of\ the morrow."\textsuperscript{52} Thus, here again are the themes of sanctifying the Divine Name and a new world as the result of the uprising, though meant here in the secular, revolutionary sense, what the poem calls "the brotherhood of blood and\...battle!" In keeping with the simple, raw tone of the text, "Genesis" was always presented with the lights dimmed, a single candle illuminating the scene.\textsuperscript{53}

While works like Novick's \textit{The Holocaust in American Life} suggest that left-wing involvement in Holocaust discourse was to some degree political posturing in line with Communist policy, this hardly seems the case with UJPO members in matters pertaining to commemoration. Being Yiddish-speaking often meant that their families had arrived more recently than others, rendering the loss
of extended family in Europe more profound. The latter was a pronounced motivating factor in the case of Claire Klein Osipov, a well-known Yiddish singer and stalwart of commemoration for over fifty years. For her, the Yiddish songs of Holocaust victims lent a sense of the deeply human tragedy involved; though they could no longer speak for themselves, singing the songs of those lost was her way of ensuring that their memory would not be forgotten.\textsuperscript{54} Another longtime contributor to the Drama Workshop, Oscar Osipov, always approached commemoration with what he feels was dignity and reverence. Both as an actor and as a Jew, he found the Holocaust a deeply moving subject to undertake, as was the perpetuation of Yiddishkeit. Even the performance of Yiddish theatre totally unrelated to the events of the war was seen as a form of commemoration.\textsuperscript{55}

Politically speaking, it is true that underlying these UJPO activities was an urgent feeling that the message of the Holocaust was not being understood, that message being that it could happen again, that Germany continued to be a potential aggressor, and that the nuclear threat made it crucial to take an activist stand against the ever-present forces of fascism and imperialism. The basic lack of popular knowledge about the Holocaust in these years was also a problem. Oscar Osipov, for one, would often speak about the events after a performance. Numerous members of the group recall being ready and willing to perform anywhere, accepting any invitations that came their way. Some of their early venues even included the community halls of the local Ukrainian and Russian Federations, where they would present works...
related to the Holocaust to the left-wing factions of these groups. Otherwise, the UJPO's commemoration during most of the 1950s appears to have been rather insular, attracting mainly those who were already involved with the organization, particularly after their 1953 expulsion from Council. On the other hand, members feel that they filled a real need for those who believed remembrance was important, particularly when, as they accused, the mainstream Jewish community was oblivious to the issue.

This perception, however, was not quite accurate. Commemoration of an ostensibly more traditional nature, that is, religious memorials, began as soon as the war ended, when special Sunday services were held at each of the synagogues following "Victory in Europe Day", to "offer thanks for those of our faith found remaining alive in Europe," and to offer prayers "for those of our faith lost previous to that period." It is most probable, of course, that prayers for the Jews of Europe were often said throughout the war as a part of sermons and regular worship. Certain festivals such as Purim would surely have evoked parallels with the genocide taking place in Europe; in the immediate postwar period the analogy between Hitler and Haman was a commonplace feature of the rabbinical columns written for the Bulletin on this occasion. Rosh Hashanah was another natural Jewish holiday during which to offer prayers or religious commentary about delivery from the Nazis, as witness by the 1943 message from Rabbi Ginsberg. After invoking the need for increased prayer and study, he wrote, "May the Almighty G-d speedily bring victory to the United Nations. May a deliverance come to our persecuted brethren
during this year. And may we see, in the coming year, the true establishment of our Jewish National Home."58

Unfortunately, the available record does not allow for a more detailed view of postwar rabbinical involvement in commemoration until 1952 and onward. In the meantime however, a significant religious gesture of remembrance was made on the part of those involved in the construction of the community's Conservative synagogue, Beth Israel. A plaque on one side of the sanctuary doors of Beth Israel reads as follows:

In a spirit of humility and reverence and deeply conscious of the immortal continuity of Jewish religious life, we dedicate this building to the sacred memory of all synagogues in Europe destroyed by the rage and fury of Nazi hate and oppression. 5709 - 194859

It is not immediately apparent what may have influenced this particular dedication. Conjecture points at least in part to the rabbi of Beth Israel, David C. Kogen, a future vice chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Kogen served Vancouver's Conservative congregation between 1946 and 1956. In the introduction to the synagogue's 1949 Dedication Book, he asserted that the plaque was not a mere formality but rather a promise to the dead of Europe: "We have taken up the torch of Judaism from the place where your failing hands have dropped it. We are holding high this torch. It is we who must realize your dreams, hopes, and aspirations for Judaism."60 On a personal level, Kogen's experiences as head of one of the committees charged with settling the community's younger Holocaust survivors also appears to have had a major impact on him, at least judging from the prominence given to this group in his 1951 M.A. thesis.61 Again
though, whether or not Kogen's personal contact with survivors or historical sensitivities played a role in the dedication of the synagogue is difficult to establish.

In 1952, all three Vancouver rabbis were involved in the first community-wide commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, part of which consisted of the use of a special memorial service for the six million prepared by the Synagogue Council of America. Each rabbi conducted a portion of this service and then spoke of the significance of the uprising. Rabbi Ginsberg, it seems, took a personal approach, speaking of the loss of his family. Rabbi Mozeson of Schara Tzedeck asserted that there were times when one had to make exceptions to the Ten Commandments "in the interests of survival and human welfare." He went on to say that fighting back was a great virtue, a lesson carried out by the Jews in Israel. Rabbi Kogen suggested that a special addition to the Haggadah be composed for the uprising since it had begun on Passover. In recalling the event, he emphasized that not only was it the first time that Jews were united, but it was also the first time other than in Soviet Russia that the Germans were forced to withdraw from the field of battle. He concluded that the struggle demonstrated "the desire of the Jewish people to 'live with honor and die with honor'," adding that it was much more difficult to live with honor.

Based on these comments, the community's rabbinical leadership was well attuned to the history and perceived lessons of the uprising, religious and otherwise. On the tenth anniversary of the battle in 1953, Rabbi Kogen devoted his weekly
sermon to the subject of "Ghetto Uprising in Retrospect". In 1954, all three synagogues announced the following special services on the last day of Passover: Rabbi Goldenberg of Schara Tzedeck would use a special prayer and ritual dedicated to the Warsaw Ghetto martyrs; Rabbi Ginsberg would honour the heroes who battled for their lives and ideals against overwhelming odds and who wrote another chapter in Jewish history; and Rabbi Kogen would dedicate his sermon to the "heroic Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto". Thus, even if the events of the war were by no means a dominant part of the community's discourse during these years, in both the rabbinic and popular imagination, the Jewish calendar itself had become infused with the historic parallels and imagery of the revolt. Each Passover season and anniversary of the uprising, followed so closely by Israel's Independence Day, these memories and ties were in clear evidence.

This was certainly the case with coverage in the Jewish Western Bulletin. Aside from occasional articles throughout the year, often in connection to issues like German rearmament and restitution, almost all reflection devoted to the Holocaust appeared around April or May. In 1952 and 1953, this interest was especially manifest in the covers of the Bulletin's Passover issues (see Figures 1 and 2). Both of these feature a Jewish family seated for a Seder meal, metaphysically surrounded by the heroes of Jewish history. The 1952 cover involves prominent Biblical motifs as well as a figure who could be either a partisan\ ghetto fighter or a soldier defending Israel. In a vivid example of how inter-connected these themes had become, the
editorial that follows the front page, in fact, makes specific reference to Israel being once again threatened by enemies, among them modern Egypt, whose army was being trained by "German nazis".67

Figure 1:
Passover, 1952

Figure 2:
Passover, 1953

The 1953 cover, though it does include Exodus motifs at the very top, is dominated by the imagery of armed resistance and destruction, save for a glimpse of a plow and field of wheat. This picture was drawn specially for the Bulletin by Arnold Belkin, then twenty-two, an artist from Vancouver who would later donate the community's first permanent Holocaust memorial. Belkin
was visiting at this time in conjunction with his one-man show at the Vancouver Art Gallery. In the editorial describing Belkin's depiction on the 1953 Passover cover, emphasis is laid on the wheat field as a symbol of renewal, with the assertion that the fighters could have been either from the ghetto, the Palmach, or Haganah, indeed, "the quest for peace and hope for a better tomorrow agitated the materially hopeless struggle of the ghetto fighters as much as it did the victorious resistance of the Israeli Army."  

Given these popular linkages and the political issues that were being debated at this time, it seems hardly coincidental that 1952 also marked the mainstream Jewish community's first official Warsaw Ghetto Memorial, held at the Schara Tzedeck Synagogue. The event was sponsored by the Jewish Community Council, whose president Dr. J.V. White gave a speech recalling that Jews had been the first to fight for their beliefs and freedoms. As mentioned, all three Vancouver rabbis also participated. The committee in charge of arrangements was headed by Sam Tenenbaum, a local businessman and community activist originally from Poland, and one the most active and personally-involved of the individuals who had helped to settle Holocaust survivors, including several members of his own family.

The dramatic piece chosen for the event was actually one of the first works to treat this subject, Morton Wishengrad's radio play "Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto", which was first aired in October 1943 on NBC's "The Eternal Light", a hugely popular program of the Jewish Theological Seminary. Although this work
emphasizes the heroism of the battle, as its title would suggest, it also pays considerable tribute to the cultural resistance manifest in the ghetto, including its socialist aspects: "In the cellars of the tenements the children went to classes; and wherever there was a patch of dirt the older boys studied agriculture; carpenters taught their trade to clerks with thin chests; the watchmakers and the leather makers opened trade schools; the artists taught their art. And all of this was free." Themes of martyrdom are also prominent, especially considering the early date of its composition; as the play opens and El Moleh Rahamin is chanted, the narrator declares of the ghetto dead: "let him sing and hear him with reverence for they have made an offering by fire and an atonement unto the Lord and they have earned their sleep." For the Vancouver memorial in 1952, this work was performed by a group of amateur Jewish actors involved in theatre circles. According to the Bulletin, the meeting was attended by 250 people and described as a "solemn and impressive evening". The publicity preceding this event is also significant in that the following comment was made:

For many years now it has been felt that there ought to be an appropriate recognition by the community of the heroic struggle of the Jews of Warsaw who went down fighting against the nazi hordes; some event to recall the rich cultural life of the Jewish community of Europe destroyed so utterly. The Warsaw Ghetto is considered a dramatic symbol of the destruction of six million Jews by the Germans. It is anticipated that a community-sponsored memorial meeting will become an annual event.

Considering the fact that it was not until 1956 that commemoration of this nature did become institutionalized, it is
difficult to judge if the sentiments expressed in this particular announcement were based on local realities or if they were prompted in part by the positive reinforcement of Dr. Schwarzbart of the WJC, who, as mentioned, was championing just such commemoration in this period through the Anglo-Jewish press. At the local level in Vancouver, whatever momentum had built up to prompt the event in 1952 was not carried over for another four years. This did not mean that commemoration ceased; ironically, as described above, in addition to Abe Arnold at the Bulletin, the two groups that continued to be most active during the interim were the community's rabbis on the one hand and the United Jewish People's Order and Peretz Shule on the other. Soon though, the absence of a community-wide commemoration was clearly being felt on the part of some, leading to important changes.
Notes


2. See Jean Gerber's "Immigration and Integration in Postwar Canada". Also the Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia's (hereafter JHSBC) Interview Tapes of Morris Saltzman (December 1984-January 1985).

3. Leonoff, p. 128; also JHSBC Interview Tapes Morris Saltzman (1984-1985) and Ben Pastinsky (1972), Rabbi Pastinsky's son.

4. Ibid. All three sources indicate an unusually high per capita involvement in organizational life in the Jewish community.


6. This record is detailed at length in: Irving Abella and Harold Troper. None Is Too Many: Canada and the Jews of Europe, 1933-1948, (Toronto: Lester and Orpen Dennys, 1982).

7. JHSBC Interview Tapes of Bessie Diamond (May 1974), Jeanette Chess (August 1971), and Ben Pastinsky (May 1972). All three describe how on a given night there might be any number of newcomers in their homes. Aside from the coverage of refugee arrivals in the JWB, both mainstream newspapers sometimes displayed considerable sympathy for the Jews forced to leave Europe, see for instance, "150 Jews Sail From City, Flee Hitler's Wrath," Vancouver Sun, November 23, 1938, p.1.

8. Personal interviews with Paul Heller (December 2000 and February 2001). As an active member of both the Polish emigré and general Jewish community from November 1941, Mr. Heller recalls that word of mouth played an important role in the transmission of news from Europe.

9. "Zionist Hopeful for Post-War Era," Vancouver Sun, June 5, 1943 p.27; "Jews May Go To Palestine," Vancouver Province, June 5, 1943; "Seventh of Jews Exterminated," Vancouver Province, June 11, 1943, p.4. The latter article gives a country-by-country breakdown of Jewish deaths, concluding, "The Germans have transformed Poland into one vast centre for murdering Jews." Judge Rosenblatt's speech, given at a grand rally at Hotel Vancouver, outlined the proposal that Palestine could absorb the two to three million
European Jews who would survive the war.

10. Estimates as to the actual length of the revolt tend to vary. Sporadic fighting among the ghetto ruins continued well into the summer months of 1943. The forty-two day figure represents the period of heaviest resistance, culminating in the total destruction of the ghetto itself and the murder or deportation of the remaining inhabitants. A small number of the resisters were able to escape.


12. "The Ghetto Fights Back," JWB, June 1943, missing exact date. Unfortunately, the existing archive of the Bulletin lacks much of the coverage for this period. What does exist, however, shows that the uprising made a lasting impact. See, for instance, "Nazis Used Poison Gas in Warsaw Ghetto," JWB, September 24, 1943, which re-invokes many details of the battle based on a report delivered that week to the World Jewish Congress.

13. JWB, May 3, 1945, p.1. On June 8, 1945, the Bulletin also published the written report of Senator Leverett Saltonstall, one of the party of twelve American senators who was sent to Germany to view some of the liberated concentration camps at the request of General Eisenhower.


15. A local connection to these events was provided by the reportage of Lottie Levinson, a Vancouver nurse who was sent to Europe as a relief worker with the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. Levinson's letters home, addressed "Jewish Community Centre", were prominently featured in the JWB.


18. Gerber, "Immigration and Integration in Post-War Canada." A country-wide book-length account is also available: Fraidie Martz. Open Your Hearts: The Story of the Jewish War Orphans in Canada, (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1996). The majority of these young people were aged between fifteen to twenty-one. Many of the refugees admitted as tailors did not exactly meet that definition either; certain allowances were made by CJC representatives in Europe however, as before 1948, both the orphan and labour projects were among the only avenues of bringing Jewish refugees to Canada.

19. "178 Jewish Refugees from Shanghai," JWB, October 6, 1949, p.1. According to Roberta Kremer, the current director of the
Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, thirty-three local Jewish families with roots in wartime Shanghai were successfully identified during research for a recent exhibit.

20. M. Freeman. "Our Solidarity is Within Palestine," JWB, May 11, 1945, p.1. Note that Freeman's use of the term "holocaust" was still rare during these years. That said, in the synagogue's 1949 Dedication Book, Beth Israel Men's Club President Allan Gold also wrote, "The men, women, and children who have survived Hitler's holocaust must be helped to reach the promised land now. They cannot wait any longer."


24. JWB, April 9, 1952, p.2. For an extremely vivid example of local outrage also see letters to the editor for June 5, 1952, p.2.


27. JWB, March 19, 1953, p.2.


29 JWB, July 23, 1943, p.2. The headline on the front page read "Memorial Services for Martyred Polish Jews This Sunday Evening at Schara Tzedeck Synagogue." Announcements for the meeting also appeared in the city's two leading mainstream newspapers, the Vancouver Sun, July 24, 1943, p.8, "Memorial Service for Murdered Jews", and the Vancouver Daily Province, July 24, 1943, p.5, "Plan Memorial for Dead Jews".


31. Personal interview with Paul Heller (February 2001) and Susan Bluman (December 2000). According to Mr. Heller, Jack Kalisky was unable to practice law in Vancouver, but he eventually became a legal counselor to Vancouver's Polish community and a kind of liaison between the city's Jewish and non-Jewish Poles.


34. This type of description, namely, of Jews going to their deaths singing Hatikvah or reciting the Shema, which became a popular motif of early commemoration, was assumedly based on news reports printed during the war, a local example being "Jews Sang Hatikvah on Way to Death Camp of Treblinka," JWB, March 3, 1944, p.1.

35. JWB, March 1, 1946, p.2, "Strictly Confidential" column.


37. All personal information pertaining to Abraham Arnold was acquired through several phone conversations and personal correspondences between February and April 2001.

38. According to Mr. Arnold, the Vochenblatt carried pieces about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising every year, including the above-mentioned "To the Ghetto Heroes". In fact, the author of this poem, Nathan Cohen, preceded and succeeded Arnold as editor of the English section of the paper. Cohen went on to become a prominent theatre critic and television personality. On a personal note, a further important factor in Mr. Arnold's awareness of these issues was his rapid acquisition of the 1946 work The Black Book -- The Nazi Crime Against the Jewish People, one of the very first compilations of evidence documenting the Holocaust.


42. CJC National Archives, Series ZA, Box 1\ File 1A.

43. "Commemorating the Ghetto Fighters in H-Bomb Era," JWB, April 15, 1954, p.3. These early CJC programming aids were based on materials published by the Jewish Welfare Board in New York beginning in 1951.

44. Personal conversation with Sol Wyne (March 2001), the first president of the Peretz School and one of its original founders.
45. JWB, September 15, 1945, p.4. According to his widow Gallia, Ben Chud had planned to enter medical school after his wartime service in Europe. He was so affected by the destruction he witnessed however, that he simply could not refuse the job of principal when it was offered to him.

46. "Lest we forget\ Commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising," JWB, April 22, 1948, p.3.


48. Ibid.

49. Information about UJPO commemoration was gathered through personal conversations with Sylvia Friedman, Claire Klein Osipov, and Gallia Chud, and interviews with Sol Jackson, Harold Berson, Oscar Osipov, and Clive Kaplan. All of these individuals have been involved in Holocaust remembrance for over fifty years.

50. The Partisan Song, "Zog nicht keyn mol" (Never Say), was written by Hirsh Glik, a popular poet from Vilna incarcerated in that city's ghetto at the time of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, news of which inspired the song. It soon spread to other ghettos and camps and became the hymn of Jewish partisans throughout occupied Europe. In the postwar period it became an integral part of commemoration, and in many cases, the only Yiddish song that many North-American Jews, regardless of background, were familiar with.

51. Personal interview with Harold Berson (November 2001). As the UJPO representative unofficially in charge of gathering materials for commemoration, Mr. Berson acquired a sizeable file of works and programming aids pertaining to commemoration. I am most grateful to him for allowing me generous access to this material.

52. Personal files of Oscar Osipov.

53. Personal interview with Oscar Osipov (November 2000).

54. Personal conversation with Claire Klein Osipov (January 2001). As a member of the UJPO musical group the Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, Mrs. Osipov participated in one of that city's first Holocaust commemorations in 1948. This event, apparently, was not attended by most of the mainstream Jewish community because of the UJPO's involvement.

55. Personal interview with Oscar Osipov.


58. Rabbi Ch. B. Ginsberg. "Penitence, Prayer, and Charity,"
59. I am most grateful to Jean Gerber for bringing this plaque and dedication to my attention. It bears pointing out that Vancouver's new 1948 Orthodox synagogue, the Schara Tzedeck, was dedicated as a memorial to the Jewish community's war veterans and casualties.

60. David C. Kogen, "Holding High The Torch," Beth Israel: Dedication Book, 1949, unpaginated. Kogen's introduction also includes an anonymous poem to this effect, with the martyrs proclaiming: "We leave you our deaths,\ Give them meaning.\ Our deaths are not ours.\ They are yours.\ They will mean what you make of them."

61. David C. Kogen. "Changes in Jewish Religious Life," MA Thesis, (University of British Columbia, 1951). Kogen relates the story of the arrival and integration of these survivors in a segment describing the new, non-religious meaning of "a Good Jew", which features a long section devoted to the community's efforts to help settle the orphan group, including an update of their activities and concerns. The latter was a subject with which he was clearly sympathetic and familiar.

62. This prayer was actually composed in 1944, on the first anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, to be used in conjunction with a U.S. country-wide day of commemoration and prayer.


64. "Ghetto Uprising in Retrospect," JWB, April 9, 1953, p.3.


66. I am grateful to the Jewish Western Bulletin for permitting me to reproduce these covers here. They originally appeared on April 9, 1952 and March 26, 1953.


68. "Historic Inspiration," JWB, March 26, 1953, p.2. According to Abe Arnold, he convinced Belkin to do the cover after they were introduced in 1953 and discovered a mutual interest in the uprising and related issues.


72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3: 1956-1964

Background:

As in the immediate postwar decade, Vancouver's Jewish community continued to grow and diversify in the late 1950s and early 1960s. A new wave of refugees arrived from Hungary in 1956 and 1957, over 260 in number, necessitating another flurry of mobilization and absorption. The city's entire Jewish population in 1960 was a little over 7000 people.¹ Despite complaints of community "sluggishness" by some of the leadership, a fundraising drive of unprecedented proportions took place in this period, culminating in the opening of a new Jewish Community Centre in November 1962. Support of Israel throughout these years continued to occupy a prominent role in community affairs, as did anti-discrimination work, often in conjunction with other minority groups. Although it does not appear that anti-Semitism was an ongoing problem, it did erupt into the media subsequent to certain incidents, to be discussed. On the whole though, these years appear to have been a forward-looking period of growth and opportunity.

That said, a number of factors also worked to keep Holocaust-related issues not far from the surface of community life, some of which emerged into public discourse and others which did not. Unlike the bitter debates that developed over German-Israeli reparations, for instance, securing restitution on an individual level was to a large extent a behind-the-scenes process, despite involving a tremendous amount of administrative work on the part of local Canadian Jewish Congress personnel and volunteers. As of
1959, the CJC had helped to process claims for some 250 Vancouver survivors, resulting in the collection of over $115,000. By December 1961 the sum had risen to $345,000. Very little publicity accompanied these activities, but the documentation involved required of applicants to recall—and share with others—the full horror of what they had been subjected to during the war, in the most minute of details. This process, one can only assume, surely had a significant impact on survivors and community officials alike. At least this appears to have been the case with Morris Saltzman, the CJC staffperson who administered many of the early claims and who showed great sensitivity to survivors and issues of remembrance throughout his years of public service.

Aside from restitution, there were also more public triggers for memory at this time, as in late 1958, when a local theatrical company called "The Barnstormers" obtained the rights to produce the stage version of "The Diary of Anne Frank". Despite the success which the play enjoyed in New York and around the world, the initial response in Vancouver seems to have been lukewarm. The situation became so bad, in fact, that a reporter from the Vancouver Sun took it upon himself to champion the play, stating that it had been hailed as "penance for the world's sins and hope for its future." The reviewer for the Vancouver Province likewise called it "A human interest story that ranks with the greatest documents to come out of World War II." The JWB was slightly less enthusiastic, but concluded that "Generally speaking, we would say that the cast succeeds in conveying the proper Jewish feeling." Others were not so sure. One letter to the editor complained
that, "This book, which is a brutal and tragic story, has been turned into a cozy little tale of a girl who goes to a rest camp in the country." He added, "The legitimate theatre in Vancouver will enjoy financial success only when history is told exactly as it happened and not whitewashed." To which another reader replied in disagreement that the play was "a moving drama, heartbreaking and heartwarming."

Emotional objections of a different nature were also voiced about the play's publicity by one K.G. Schmidt, who complained in the *Vancouver Sun* that all Germans were being linked to atrocities when these acts were committed by 0.0001% of the population while the rest did not know. This same reader, incidentally, also complained that West Germany was supposed to be an ally, though you would not know it from the Vancouver press. This response, in turn, elicited an angry letter from a former War Crimes Investigator whose memories of Bergen-Belsen remained as strong as ever. This reader called the claim that Germans didn't know "pure nonsense", while he asserted that the atrocities were a subject that should be brought up daily so as to prevent them from happening again. As it turned out, the play was attended by more than 2000 people on its last two nights, a significant audience considering the city's notorious lack of support for the theatre.

At the political level during this time, little of note took place until an October 1957 annual convention of the B.C. Social Credit League, during which a Dawson Creek delegate named Percy Young took to the floor—unchallenged—to espouse his views that Zionism controlled everything from Communism to Nazism and was
undermining the foundations of Christian civilization. The too-familiar tone of this attack, to which Abe Arnold responded with a front-page headline reading "Hitler's Disciples in British Columbia," caused understandable anger in the Jewish community. One individual who responded with a letter to the editor invoked the work of Joseph Goebbels and Julius Streicher, stating, "If this delegate, whatever his name is, had any Christianity in his heart, he would think of the six million men, women, and children gassed during the Hitler era. You don't dominate the world by gassing half of your people." 

This was by no means the first time that a member of the Social Credit party had made anti-Semitic remarks, but the episode fueled further controversy because it exposed the fissures within Vancouver's Jewish community over the appropriate way to respond to such attacks. The United Jewish People's Order, for its part, circulated a pamphlet-petition to the community entitled "It Happened HERE! Socred Hits Jews", calling on B.C.'s Premier Bennett, the provincial leader of the Socred Party, to make a public statement against anti-Semitism and racial discrimination.

The body officially charged with public relations, the Joint Public Relations Committee, preferred to meet privately with Bennett to discuss the matter, resulting in the desired public statement one week later. Thus, unlike in other Canadian cities where it was mainly groups of Holocaust survivors who emerged to protest what was called "sha shtil", or "hush hush", the leadership's policy of behind the scenes advocacy rather than public demonstrations, in Vancouver this role was to some extent
played by the UJPO.

In any case, more worrisome than the Percy Young episode was a world-wide wave of vandalism and anti-Semitic incidents in late 1959 and early 1960, which, according to the World Jewish Congress, occurred in 240 centres.19 Vancouver appears to have escaped the brunt of these attacks, save for at least one swastika daubing and a threatening phone call made to Abe Arnold and a local radio station. For several weeks the topic dominated the pages of the Bulletin, oftentimes invoking comparisons to the pre-war situation in Europe and the "illusion" that it "couldn't happen here."20 The role of the leadership became once again the source of criticism among those wishing for strong public statements, including, naturally, the UJPO, which issued another pamphlet-petition, "Statement to Our Community on ANTI-SEMITISM". In addition to castigating the local Jewish leadership, the pamphlet took the opportunity to condemn West Germany as the main source of neo-Nazi activity, alluding to the many ex-Nazi military figures who had been rehabilitated and were now commanding NATO, apparently hoping for revenge and sabotaging disarmament talks.21 On the home front, the Canadian government was accused of letting in more and more fascists, thus strengthening the country's "fascist corps".22 The pamphlet included a detachable petition addressed to Prime Minister Diefenbaker, urging that he press the United Nations to officially condemn anti-Semitism.

To a certain degree, then, it is clear that the UJPO shared some of the same concerns as the community's leadership, particularly where anti-Semitism, German rearmament, and Nazi war
criminals were concerned. The leadership, however, lacked the freedom to protest these issues quite so openly without invoking the specter of Communism, particularly as Cold War tensions increased. Common action was rendered even more unlikely by the heavy persecution of Jews under the Soviet regime, a subject tacitly avoided by the UJPO. The question of support for Israel remained another major stumbling block, as the local UJPO was held accountable for any criticisms of the State that appeared in the Vochenblatt, the publication associated, though not officially, with the UJPO and Communist Party. Thus, despite several requests in the late 1950s on the part of the UJPO to be re-admitted to the Community Council, this never took place, which continued to mean that the group was denied any coverage in the Bulletin and the use of the Community Centre. The UJPO's isolation was such that even issues of common concern simply led to further deterioration of relations.

At any rate, soon after the neo-Nazi outbreaks faded from the media glare, news broke that Adolf Eichmann, the SS officer who had played the leading role in organizing the Holocaust, had been located and brought to Israel. From his capture in May 1960 to his execution in June 1962, the Eichmann trial became a dominant subject of coverage in the JWB and at times in both mainstream dailies. In the initial stages, the Bulletin's coverage was to some extent defensive, often reiterating Israel's right to try Eichmann. Articles in the mainstream press, despite a fair amount of sensationalism, were more limited to descriptions of the proceedings. Some of the public response to the trial, however,
was extremely pointed and emotional. One woman who had lost her entire family to the Nazis wrote a letter to the *Vancouver Sun* in which she stated that she and many like her had found time to be a great healer; giving Eichmann the spotlight would "reawaken the nightmares of hundreds of thousands." Another letter-writer complained, "What with the show 'Exodus' and Eichmann trial, I think it's time we got off this Jew Nazi kick. Not only is the arrest and trial illegal, but if we are to dig up the wrongs of the past why only Jewish martyrdom?"

A similar sentiment was voiced by a reader named G.F. Scholtz, who protested against Eichmann being portrayed as the arch-sadist of all time when "thousands of bomber crews also burned, gassed, suffocated, buried alive, and blew to bits millions of civilians, systematically, deliberately (3.5 million in Germany)." To which another local resident angrily replied, "The whining and squirming of Eichmann's fellow nationals and their boot-licking companions, under the accompanying glare of present publicity is evidence of their mental and moral affinity with the despicable and degrading acts which are the cause of the trial." He added that such comparisons of guilt were an insult to every man and woman in uniform and all those who died under the "triumphant rampaging Axis". In another response to those criticizing the trial, a letter-writer invoked the need to realize that this was no ordinary crime and that many "twisted minds" still entertained the idea of a master race: "The trial is to make sure that the world can see, hear and judge and never forget that it can happen again."
Thus, there is no question that the Eichmann trial was a major catalyst in enhancing the existent local awareness of the Holocaust, both in the Jewish and non-Jewish communities. The word "holocaust" itself came into common use at this time, slowly becoming interchangeable with the mostly literal definitions used up to that point, such as the mass slaughter or murder of six million European Jews during the Hitler era. Within the Jewish community, a committee was established on the eve of the trial by the CJC, the United Zionist Council, and the B'nai Brith to explain the proceedings to those with questions; this measure was apparently taken to deter anyone else debating the issue publicly or "causing a stir." On numerous occasions the trial was also the subject of community lectures by local legal experts and rabbis, suggesting that the latter may have discussed it from the pulpit as well. For those still unfamiliar with events, frequent articles throughout the press featured vivid descriptions of the documents and evidence presented by the prosecution.

Aside from the trial and occasional reports of extremist groups from abroad, rumblings of domestic neo-Nazism were also felt during the early 1960s, when the existence of a "Nazi Party of Canada" was divulged during a controversial interview with American extremist Lincoln Rockwell on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Although such activity was widely seen as being restricted to Quebec and Ontario, in March 1964 a department store in Victoria was flooded with anti-Semitic pamphlets, which, as it turned out, were distributed by a highschooler who had gotten the materials through the mail. In the meantime, the plight of
Soviet Jewry increasingly occupied the headlines, as did the issue of Israel's safety in light of reports that Egypt had acquired the services of many Nazi scientists, purportedly to build missiles for the destruction of the Jewish State.\textsuperscript{31} As the German statute of limitations approached in 1965, the topic of Nazi war criminals worldwide became particularly acute. For the first time, the Bulletin began printing advertisements for local survivors with potential information about specific war crimes to come forward.\textsuperscript{32}

Such developments, of course, must be considered in the context of the day-to-day life of the community, which went on as usual regardless of events in the news. Nonetheless, between 1956 and 1964, numerous reminders of the Nazi era intensified the public discourse related to the events of the Holocaust, often revealing deep wells of emotion and no small measure of controversy. The Eichmann trial and the publicity that it generated were by all means a significant turning-point in stimulating further awareness and interest in aspects of the wartime genocide of European Jewry, including its commemoration, but the foundations of the latter were well in place several years before these developments.

Commemoration:

The trail of Vancouver's commemoration picks up once again in 1956, when a small, tightly-knit circle of acquaintances, almost all of whom were originally from Warsaw, became determined to perpetuate the memory of the destruction of European Jewry through an annual, community-wide Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Evening. Towards
this end, they formed a committee that met with Lou Zimmerman, then Executive Director of the Jewish Community Council and Executive Secretary of the Pacific Region of Canadian Jewish Congress. Although it is not quite clear who approached whom about establishing the event, Congress and Council were certainly involved from the beginning, co-sponsoring the evening with the Committee until 1965, when the new Jewish Community Centre took over Council's sponsorship role.  

As for the Polish Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee itself, as it was called in these early years, members included: Jack Kalisky, the Warsaw lawyer who had arranged the community's 1943 memorial; Sophie Waldman and her husband Isaac, both of whom had survived the war in hiding; Dr. Ludmilla Zeldowicz, a psychiatrist who had been trapped in the Warsaw Ghetto before escaping into hiding; Stephan Heyman, an engineer who came to Vancouver via Japan during the war, as did another member, Dr. Henry Fischaut; and Sam Heller, who had fled Poland with some of his family after the Nazi attack, arriving in Vancouver in 1941. Sam's brother Paul also became very active in the Committee's work at a slightly later period, as did Susan Bluman, another Warsaw native who came to the city via Japan in 1942. In addition to their similar background, the group's members found themselves in the same position of having lost most, if not all, of their family. Commemoration was in one sense a much needed act of mourning. Ensuring that the Jewish community did not forget the wider tragedy was also a positive assertion of action in the face of an otherwise helpless situation.
Although the exact chain of consequence is impossible to determine, the Committee's formation also came at a time when some of the Jewish leadership became vocal about the importance to commemorate. Rather than being absent from the community agenda, as Franklin Bialystok has stated was the case throughout the 1950s, this was precisely the period when commemoration was emerging and being encouraged. At the national level, even Dr. Schwarzbart of the World Jewish Congress took note of what he called "a gratifying change of attitude toward commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising by the CJC", citing the 1953 plenary resolution to sponsor Warsaw Ghetto events as well as the personal assurances of Saul Hayes, the CJC's executive director, to actively support memorial exercises. In 1955, Schwarzbart was even invited by Hayes to be the guest speaker at that year's memorial in Montreal, though he had to refuse. In the meantime, as mentioned, the CJC's Adult Education Programming Services began to issue extensive programming aids for commemoration which included resource materials and dramatic works. These materials were made available to the public free of charge.

In Vancouver, announcements for the 1956 and 1957 events included special appeals for the community to attend signed by Morris Saltzman, who was then active in the Jewish Community Council, and Hy Altman, the chairman of the CJC's Pacific Region. Altman, like Saltzman, had been very active in settling Holocaust survivors, and announcements for these early memorials read: "The entire Jewish Community is urgently invited to attend." Altman gave the evening's opening address in 1956, stating, "The affair
showed that the Jewish people are prepared to respond in large numbers to an appropriate commemoration affair of this kind. "37 That same year, the community's B'nai Brith lodges also arranged their first and only Warsaw Ghetto evening at the Jewish Community Centre, consisting of, according to the announcement, a dramatic presentation with choral and cantorial music.38 The community's Labour Zionist organization was also marking the uprising's anniversaries in these years through its weekly radio show "This is Our Story", which would feature a special memorial program with an underlying emphasis on the link between the revolt and the establishment of the State of Israel.39

It is difficult to fully account for this expansion of the impulse to commemorate, or at least invoke commemoration. The latter carried over into 1958, when several articles appeared in the JWB hailing the prospects of the new community centre as a fitting monument to the spirit of the Warsaw Ghetto heroes, on the condition that it would "not only boast of gymnasiums and steam rooms but also of Jewish literary circles and musical groups and other stimulating Jewish activities. "40 Furthermore, as these articles went, such a centre could only be true to the survivalist ideals of the ghetto resisters if it was inclusive of all factions in an "all-embracing spirit recognizing that Jewry in our own community is an intra-inter-cultural family. "41 This particular type of advocacy appears to have stemmed in part from some of the widely-circulated writings of Dr. Schwarzbart of the WJC, most of which in these years were devoted to themes of commemoration and what he called "repairing the cultural losses".42 Local realities
being what they were, though, such invocations must also be seen as reflective of an attempt to ease some of the community tensions and rally further support for a new community centre.

Coincidentally or not, a slightly similar campaign was launched in 1958 on the part of those involved with the ultra-Orthodox Beth Hamidrash, the smallest by far of the community's synagogues. The spiritual leadership of Beth Hamidrash, as mentioned, had been assumed in 1943 by Rabbi Chaim B. Ginsberg, a highly-regarded scholar and refugee from Poland who soon developed a small but extremely devoted following in Vancouver, as well as the respect of the Jewish community as a whole. In the Bulletin he was sometimes described as one "saved from the fires of Hitler pogroms." Most of Ginsberg's family did not survive though, which partly explains the attempt in 1958 by the congregation of Beth Hamidrash to enlarge the synagogue and have it renamed Beth Haknesset as a "monument to the six million Jewish martyrs under nazism." For reasons which are unclear, this attempt appears to have failed; instead, an arrangement was made whereby Rabbi Ginsberg would be available to a wider segment of the community. This in no way deterred him from Holocaust commemoration, in fact, he indelibly impressed even members of the United Jewish People's Order with his tremendous dedication to dealing with this subject.

As for the programs organized by the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee in this initial period, the 1956 evening was held at the Schara Tzedeck synagogue and featured, yet again, Morton Wishengrad's radio play "Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto", as well as
the cantor and choir from the Beth Israel congregation and guest speaker Wendel Phillips, a former press representative to the United Nations Commission on Palestine, who emphasized episodes of Jewish sacrifice and achievement throughout history, Israel chief among the latter. The 1957 memorial consisted of a showing of the very successful Polish film "Border Street" at the Park Theatre, preceded by the rendition of El Moleh Rahamin by one of the community's younger survivors, Murray Kenig, and what was described as "an appropriate reading in English from the 'Hurban' literature" by Ben Kopelow, the local actor-producer who went on to stage "The Diary of Anne Frank". Both the 1956 and 1957 evenings appear to have been fairly well-attended and received.

The 1958 memorial entailed ambiguous elements. A preliminary announcement stated that in light of the tenth anniversary of the State of Israel and the related mass events taking place in those weeks, the Warsaw Ghetto memorial would resume in 1959, save for a special service and dedication at the Schara Tzedeck synagogue on the last day of Passover. This decision was clearly not unanimous however, as the Committee did in fact organize a memorial that year at the Jewish Community Centre, under the auspices of the Centre Adult Committee. The program featured a speech by committee member Dr. Ludmilla Zeldowicz, who spoke of the historical events leading to the Holocaust, concluding with a warning of the dangers of extremism and fanaticism and a tribute to the human spirit. The candle-lighting for the ceremony was conducted by Rabbi Ginsberg, while the Schara Tzedeck choir performed two ghetto songs, including Ani Maamin, the proclamation
of faith that had become associated with the victims of the Holocaust. The memorial concluded with a short film about the "Martyrs Forest", a remembrance project in Israel that was promoted in Vancouver through the B'nai Brith.

An estimated sixty-five people attended the 1958 evening. In this regard, however, the week's most vaunted community event, a lecture by Robert Briscoe, the first Jewish Lord Mayor of Dublin, also drew a much smaller audience than expected. One week's notice for the memorial may have also contributed; ordinarily, the event was advertised at least three weeks in advance. Whatever the case, it is apparent that in matters relating to the community calendar, Warsaw Ghetto commemoration had not quite established itself firmly, particularly when it came to the primacy given to Israel-related events. Most likely as a response, it was at about this time that the Committee began seeking to widen its base by involving "interested people" from different segments of the community. Seeing as there was no group more interested than the UJPO and its Drama Workshop, it was not long before its members were approached by the Committee.

Prior to this development, the UJPO had continued holding its own Warsaw Ghetto commemorations, generally along the lines mentioned earlier, with dramatic presentations and songs written in the ghettos, often with a slide show. Although some of the materials used were not of an outright political nature, the group's deeply-held ideological beliefs clearly shaped the tenor of their remembrance. A pamphlet produced to accompany the uprising's commemoration in 1957, for instance, reveals some of
the group's preoccupations herein. Central to the narrative is the fight against fascism and its many contemporary manifestations, those listed being the Padlock Laws, McCarthyism, and the rehabilitation of Nazi officials. In the choice of material and short description of the uprising itself, special attention is devoted to denouncing the Judenrat (Jewish Council) and other perceived collaborators, including the Polish government in exile, while the left-wing (rather than Zionist) composition of the Anti-Fascist Front that fought the Nazis is brought to the fore. At one point, a female partisan was quoted as saying that the Ghetto heroes "died with two songs on their lips--the 'Internationale' and 'Hatikva'." The overall message of the work is that the martyrs to fascism were being betrayed unless the fight against fascism continued.

Given some of these views and the group's estrangement from the mainstream Jewish community, not to mention the tenor of the times, the Warsaw Ghetto Committee's invitation to the UJPO was a significant gesture. In the event, politics, including their own, were less important to the Committee than the fact that another group of Jews was dedicated to commemorating the uprising. Whether or not it was their pre-war environment in Warsaw or experiences as a result of the war, Committee members simply showed greater tolerance. Judging from numerous accounts, mutual relations between the two groups were very good, which is certainly borne out by the fact that half a dozen or so of the UJPO members remained involved for several decades thereafter. Although some of the latter recall incidents of being made to feel
unwelcome by other community members at large, this was apparently never the case with the Committee itself. To the contrary, an amiable working relationship developed whereby Committee members tended mainly to organizational matters while the members of the UJPO handled many of the artistic and musical components of the programs. It is important to note, however, that UJPO members participated in an individual capacity. The organization, as such, was not acknowledged in the printed programs or publicity.\textsuperscript{54}

The first major collaborative effort put on by the newly-expanded group took place for the 1959 memorial. The evening was held at the Talmud Torah Auditorium, filled to capacity according to reports.\textsuperscript{55} The program included a slide show, dedications by Rabbi Ginsberg as he lit the six memorial candles, a series of songs from the ghettos performed by the Vancouver Jewish Folk Singers, and a rendition of the poem "Genesis". According to a CJC report, the meeting was considered "one of the most appropriate and interesting ever offered on this occasion."\textsuperscript{56} The 1960 program was similar in some respects. The event took place at the Oakridge Auditorium, attended by about 450 people.\textsuperscript{57} Rabbi Ginsberg gave the dedications, the Jewish Folk Singers performed a musical program while the Drama Workshop did "Genesis", and Dr. Ludmilla Zeldowicz spoke again of her experiences in the Warsaw Ghetto. New participants included children from the community's Jewish schools and youth organizations, all of whom carried lit candles symbolizing "the link between the generations."\textsuperscript{58}

Inadvertently perhaps, the one standout feature of the event was a dramatic work called "Never to Forget", by author Howard
Fast. Fast had been prominent in the American Communist Party until a very public break in 1956-57. This particular work of his deals with the Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto, lending another example of how Jewish religious themes were often adapted in leftist materials. In this case, the narrative of the piece is interwoven with Biblical episodes of freedom fighting and a variation of the Shema: "Hear, Oh Mankind, Men are Brothers, Humanity is One." The central theme of the work is the image of the Jewish partisans, that is, Jewish partisans operating with a red star on their caps, in other words, with some sort of adherence or loyalty to Soviet ideology. This twinning of Jewish and Communist symbols is repeated throughout the sketch. Speaking to the ghetto fighters, one line reads, "Tomorrow we will be at thy side,\ The red flag by the blue\ The six-pointed star by the five-pointed star." As with other works treating the uprising that used the metaphor of a torch being passed from the fighters to subsequent generations, so too does the Fast work conclude with the sacred duty to take up the battle against oppression:

Comrade, take the weapon I hand you and use it well.
When all men are free,
Lay it down reverently.

When will our ancient greeting have portent?

Peace unto thee,
And unto thee peace,
But until then, no rest; no rest until then!

Even many decades after the staging of this piece, those involved recall that it precipitated the one and only time that the Committee expressed disagreement with the subject matter of the materials performed by the UJPO members. The symbol of the
red star was just too much. Interestingly, there does not appear to have been any negative public reaction to the presentation; it was reviewed as usual as "dramatic and sincere" and no angry letters ensued. Nor did it cause any real harm to the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee's inner relationships. Subsequent programs were most often joint projects; moreover, numerous UJPO members joined the Committee itself. After a short while, it was simply taken for granted that certain people could be counted upon year after year to provide their time and expertise, resulting in consistent, high-quality memorial evenings.

Notable program features in the early 1960s included the showing of several documentary films of footage from the Nazi concentration camps and extermination centres, including Alan Resnais' powerful "Night and Fog". The ceremonial lighting of six candles and chanting of the El Moleh Rahamin were features of every memorial. Following the death of Rabbi Ginsberg in 1961, synagogue representation was for a time limited to cantors and youths involved in the candle-lighting. On the artistic side, "Genesis" continued to be an oft-used, high-impact piece, as was a dramatic monologue based on "Night and Fog" which was performed by Searle Friedman at the 1962 and 1964 events. The 1963 evening featured a musical program inspired by the music of the ghettos, performed by local violinist Gideon Grau and his string orchestra, the Vancouver Chamber Players. In the following year, a large cast which included Norman Oreck, a prominent community judge, staged several scenes from John Hersey's book The Wall.

Although the records are incomplete, some of the speeches
given during these years are indicative of the concerns of the day. In 1963, presumably with the Cuban missile crisis still in mind, the visiting guest speaker Dr. Avrum Stroll spoke of how the dangers and lessons of bad government highlighted by the story of the resistance of the ghetto fighters had become even more acute in an age when humanity trembled on the brink of nuclear disaster, warning that the entire world could become a crematorium if apathy to bad government were allowed to reign. The perceived ties between the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the establishment of Israel also remained a regular theme. As part of the lecture he gave in 1961, Dr. Moses Steinberg, a professor at the University of British Columbia, recounted how the ghetto fighters forged an attitude and will that helped to build the Jewish state in Eretz Israel. In his speech at the 1964 event, Rabbi Goodblatt stated that the creation of Israel gave meaning to those who were martyred, asking "How much greater would the tragedy have been had the Jewish state not come into being to reclaim the saved remnant?"

Despite a change in editorship in the summer of 1960, publicity in the Bulletin preceding the annual memorials likewise continued to emphasize the links between the two events. As it turned out, the paper's new editors, Sam Kaplan and his wife Mona, proved to be extremely staunch supporters of the Warsaw Ghetto memorials. Like Abe Arnold before him, Sam Kaplan devoted many of his editorials to the subject of commemoration, once even taking on the persona of a child "guest columnist" to give a "first-hand" account of the revolt which concludes, "it doesn't matter if we do
not win. Our fight will always be remembered by other people in other countries. I hope that other Jewish people will remember us. "Kaplan also travelled to Israel for the Eichmann trial, visiting Yad Vashem during his stay. His articles around the time of the uprising's anniversary frequently invoked the lessons to be learned from the Holocaust and the need to commemorate. Passover issues also continued to carry a special "Seder Ritual of Remembrance", an addition to the traditional Haggadah which invokes the Warsaw Ghetto and the martyrdom of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis. Wherever publicity was concerned, both Kaplans lent the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee their full cooperation.

Coverage in Vancouver's two mainstream dailies was a different matter in these years. Although the Committee purchased small advertisements for the evenings in both papers beginning in 1956, along with numerous ads in the smaller local papers, it appears that it was not until 1961 and the Eichmann trial that the Vancouver Sun sent a reporter to the memorial. Even then, the review which appeared was neither tactful or accurate in its choice of title: "Jews Told They Can't Rely On Good Will of Others." The latter purported to be the subject of the evening's keynote speech by the above-mentioned Dr. Steinberg when, in fact, this statement was taken completely out of context and bears little resemblance to the spirit of his lecture, which did exhort the need for Jewish self-reliance but also acknowledged and praised the minority of non-Jews who had helped in wartime rescue. To his chagrin, in the days that followed, the Sun
headline became the butt of fun among some of Professor Steinberg's colleagues, even eliciting phone calls from members of the Jewish community--several of whom had not even attended the memorial--criticizing his public relations.68 He then protested to the editor in writing, only to have his letter published weeks later, buried on an inside page under the caption "Error Alleged".

Commemoration itself sometimes drew angry reactions from some members of the community. In the same letter in which she protested the Eichmann trial for dredging up the pain of survivors, one woman also denounced the annual Warsaw Ghetto memorials. She wrote, "Those who want to remember always will do so. I do not believe in the unnecessary whipping-up of outbursts of emotional weeping, etc. My child will learn from me about how her grandparents died, but why expose her and thousands of other youngsters to unspeakable horror?"69 This particular letter was then challenged by another reader who wrote to the editor in favour of the memorial services precisely because she felt it was not enough for survivors and their descendants to know. Such evenings were important for educational purposes, as "young people all over the world need to be told over and over about what fascism, fanaticism, racial intolerance, and political dictatorship can lead to, and have in fact led to in the past."70

Some of the most emotional written criticisms of commemoration followed the 1962 showing of the film "Night and Fog". One individual who had been in the audience agreed in principle with memorial services for "our dear ones and national heroes" but strongly objected to the showing of such films.71 A
veteran who wrote in to the JWB had a similar response. Although he commended the Committee for its efforts, he felt that "those attending leave with broken hearts and without courage for the future. The entire evening is so morbid that it's surprising that people come back again yearly for more punishment." He asked that the Committee prepare more uplifting programs, adding that he had joined the forces to fight back against Nazi inhumanity. Another letter from "A Jew from Warsaw" protested that a film so masochistic could hardly fulfill the announced purpose of a sacred memorial--"surely this is not the way to identify ourselves with the martyrs who gave their lives 'Al Kiddush Hashem'?” After criticizing the Committee for lack of original ideas, this writer went on to suggest that an exhibit of paintings or other cultural creations from the Warsaw Ghetto would be infinitely more appropriate.

Judging from these letters, it is clear that commemoration could be the source of tremendous pain. A non-Jewish woman who wrote to the editor about the 1962 evening described the deep impact of the film on the audience, especially those sobbing quietly all around her. For those who had been trapped elsewhere in Nazi Europe, even the focus on the Warsaw Ghetto was a potential irritant. A letter signed "A former refugee" stated, "My people only died in the streets and camps, violently or just by starvation. They, too, were heroes." This writer went on to suggest a more permanent memorial to the victims, such as a library in the new community centre or a room in a local hospital. The letter ended, "Each year, on Yom Kippur, on
Passover in synagogue, and at the seder at home, we remember." Based on these sentiments, it seems that numerous individuals still felt more comfortable commemorating the events of the Holocaust in the more traditional framework of Jewish ritual or in private. Even the latter, however, could be the cause of tension. At the extended family seders of at least two individuals who were UJPO members, the political divide was such that mere mention of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising was not permitted.

Despite these various objections, the memorial evenings were attended by an average of 300-500 people as of 1959. Very little about these events confirms their dismissal as insignificant to public discourse or their assessment in *Delayed Impact* as a "perfunctory effort". In 1961, on the eve of the Eichmann trial, attendance reached 725, with 100 or so people turned away. This was also the first time that the presence of substantial numbers of non-Jews was noted. Otherwise, it appears that audiences were composed of sizeable numbers of survivors and their families, as well as those who had lost family and loved ones. It also bears pointing out that certain performances required the participation of several dozen people from the community at large, for instance, if synagogue choirs or expanded drama groups were involved. By 1961-1962, Congress reports were hailing the memorials as "one of the most successful annual events of our community". This was actually in contrast to other cultural series which the CJC tried to organize, poor attendance being a chronic problem.

Although some administrative help was forthcoming, particularly from the JCC's Assistant Program Director Lou
Hilford, the brunt of organizing Warsaw Ghetto evenings fell on the Committee itself. Each memorial represented the cumulative effort of hundreds of hours of volunteer work. Five or six meetings a year were necessary just to plan each evening, the first one being held in the autumn to allow enough preparation time. Rehearsals for dramatic pieces likewise began months in advance, taking place on Sundays or at night. A considerable amount of time and work was also necessary to coordinate the different aspects of the memorials, including publicity, correspondences, and sound and stage requirements. Each element of the memorials had to be developed by careful trial and error; evaluation meetings took place soon after the events, including discussions of the program for the following year. Finding suitable materials was also a constant process, necessitating a sub-committee of its own. Needless to say, all of this activity was performed in addition to jobs and family obligations.

This dedication to remembrance likewise extended to establishing a solemn atmosphere at each memorial event. The question of applause, for example, was considered at several meetings, the final verdict being that although applause enabled the audience to give vent to its feelings, it was also a show of approval that took away from the solemnity of the program: "The lack of applause makes the evening different, i.e., it remains a memorial program." All written programs requested that the audience refrain from clapping, while program reviews in the JWB often noted how this "added to the reverent atmosphere which was religious in true sense of the term." Announcements for the
memorials also asked that audience members be in their seats before the start of programs so as to not detract from the nature of the evenings. Another ongoing issue pertained to whether or not a silver collection be taken. Committee members felt strongly that such a measure was inappropriate, yet expenses sometimes dictated that it be included regardless, with Congress picking up the difference.

Many other concerns were also raised at Committee meetings. Within a few years of its formation in 1956, the Committee's goals evolved somewhat, from an initial intent of ensuring that the Jewish community not forget to a wider mandate of educating and attracting the community as a whole, beginning with the expansion of the Committee itself. In addition to the numerous UJPO members who joined, other diverse members of the community began taking part. By the early to mid 1960s the Committee had grown to about twenty people, though the core group remained the most active. Attracting a wider audience also necessitated changes in approach, such as more English and advertising in both the Jewish and non-Jewish press. Moreover, it was decided that programs had to be non-political, non-religious, and non-sectarian.80 Such guidelines were not without their difficulties, however. In planning the 1964 event, for instance, the guest speaker Rabbi Goodblatt struggled over whether or not the Kaddish would be appropriate, finally deciding that he would say it alone because of the probability that most heads in the audience would be uncovered.81 Similarly, although the increasing emphasis on English worried some of the Committee members who felt that this limited the
Yiddish atmosphere of the memorials, the reality was that Vancouver was not necessarily a Yiddishist community. The Committee was responsive to community trends in other ways as well. For example, in the aftermath of the local proliferation of hate literature, it was suggested at one meeting that the group act as a "watch dog" against such material. From its inception the Committee was also concerned about involving more youth in commemoration, particularly through the Jewish schools. Despite some efforts however, youth involvement in these early years was fairly minimal, other than participation in candle lighting. As indicated by a few of the letters critical of commemoration, there was still an undercurrent of reluctance to expose children to the full horrors of the Holocaust. The Committee members were clearly aware of these misgivings. In his speeches at the memorials, Sam Heller, then Chairman, often reiterated the purposes of commemoration. At times the message was universal, with reference to other genocides and mass slaughters and the need to understand the political forces at work in the world so as to not repeat the tragedies of the past. Other times the lessons were pointedly aimed at the Jewish community, such as Heller's 1963 address in which he decried the individuals who worried about reinvoking memories of the Holocaust for fear of standing out rather than maintaining pride in their Jewish history.

This debate lingered on for a time, punctuating the controversy over the Arnold Belkin mural which will be discussed in the next chapter. As painful as the subject was however, it
appears that by the early to mid 1960s, commemoration had become a fixture on the community's calendar. Support from the leadership was one element of this success, but the determining factor was clearly the efforts of the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee, including the members of the UJPO. By that time, numerous Committee members, the Hellers and the Waldmans in particular, had themselves risen to positions of considerable respect in the community, further facilitating cooperation in matters related to commemoration. Developments such as the growth of neo-Nazism, hate-literature, and the Eichmann trial also spurred Holocaust awareness, reinforcing the feeling that memorials were necessary as not only homage to the victims of Nazism but also as forums for education--Jewish and non-Jewish--and vigilance.

It should be repeated, though, that these factors were not prerequisites for commemoration. The Committee's formation in 1956 occurred at a time when there was very little discernable sense of threat in the community. This development also challenges the theory that the Cold War, still at its height, in effect snuffed out the official promotion or discussion of Holocaust memory. There is absolutely no indication of hesitancy on the Committee's part to advertise widely in the non-Jewish press. The heated exchange of letters prompted by the 1958 Vancouver production of The Diary of Anne Frank took place not within the confines of the Jewish Western Bulletin but rather in the Vancouver Sun. The latter also carried updates about the fundraising campaign for a new Beth Hamidrash in honour of the six million Jews murdered during the last war. The Cold War, it
seems, did not preclude the raising of such issues. One might even argue that with the addition of the UJPO's participation as of 1958-1959, the Cold War actually informed the conduct of commemoration itself. In any case, even before the worldwide wave of swastika daubings and the Eichmann trial, this was clearly not a period of silence about the Holocaust but rather one of impassioned debate and activity in these spheres.
Notes


4. Saltzman was later instrumental in the 1975 establishment of the Standing Committee on the Holocaust. He was renowned in the community for his commitment to Holocaust awareness.

5. Personal conversation with Ben Kopelow. According to Abe Arnold, a local radio adaptation of the play had also been put on in 1954 or 1956 in conjunction with the Vancouver JCC's first Book Month Festival. The script used came from the "Eternal Light" program.


7. Vancouver Province, December 9, 1958, p.23.

8. "'Diary of Anne Frank' Given Classic Drama Performance," JWB, December 12, 1958, p.3.


12. Ibid.


15. "Hitler's Disciples in British Columbia," JWB, November 1, 1957, p.1. One of Arnold's emphases in this article was the similarity of Young's slanders to the notorious anti-Semitic tract "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and how the latter was a keystone of Nazi propaganda.


17. Personal files of Harold Berson.

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18. JWB, November 15, 1957, p.1. Part of the JPRC's statement on the matter included the assurance that, despite the UJPO's name, it was in no way affiliated with the Community Council and its members spoke only for themselves.


20. JWB, January 22, 1960, p.2.

21. Personal files of Harold Berson. A copy is also available in CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 14a\ File 149.

22. Ibid.

23. "Time Heals," Vancouver Sun, April 16, 1961, p.4. The letter was signed "No Reminder".


28. "Preparations Completed for the Eichmann Trial," JWB, April 7, 1961, p.2. This may or may not have been directed at the UJPO.


31. See "HALT NAZI SCIENTISTS!," JWB, March 29, 1963, p.1. A quote attributed to one of the engineers involved stated that the projects "employ former leading Nazis who are aiding Nasser with a plan to liquidate the survivors of Hitler's terror and the State they built in Palestine." In this vein, Soviet Jews were also often referred to as survivors of Hitler.

32. "Can You Testify?," JWB, May 10, 1964, p.2. Those wishing to do so were told to contact either the Bulletin or the World Jewish Congress.

33. All subsequent Congress reports take the position that it was in fact the CJC, Lou Zimmerman in particular, who called together the group of Polish emigres for the purposes of forming a memorial committee, whereas oral histories and personal interviews with some of the founders of the Committee suggest that the initiative was taken on their part. Regardless, the establishment
of an annual memorial was clearly a meeting of minds in this regard.

34. Memo from Dr. Isaac Schwarzbart to unnamed recipient, March 29, 1954. World Jewish Congress Files, Series F, Box 9\ File 20.

35. Sam Levine to Dr. Isaac Schwarzbart, March 7, 1955. World Jewish Congress Files, Series F, Box 3\ File 23; Schwarzbart to Levine, March 10, 1955, same source.

36. JWB, April 20, 1956, p.5. A regular feature of the JWB's press build-up toward Warsaw Ghetto memorials included mention that Canadian Jewish Congress at the national level had undertaken to promote the anniversary, in addition to the ceaseless calls of Dr. Schwarzbart and the World Jewish Congress for all Jewish communities to mark the occasion.

37. JWB, May 4, 1956, p.3.

38. "Warsaw Ghetto Meeting at BB Meeting April 3," JWB, March 2, 1956. There are almost no available details concerning this event or what may have prompted it. Minutes from a February 13, 1956 executive meeting of the Lion's Gate Lodge say only that a program had been suggested, consisting of "3 parts Hillel Kel and Folk Singers." These documents are stored at the JHSBC.

39. Personal conversation with Ben Kopelow. Kopelow and fellow actor-producer Max Pawer did a number of these programs in the early to mid 1950s.

40. JWB, February 28, 1958, p.2.


42. All of Dr. Schwarzbart's reports from this period elaborate on the theme of establishing permanent cultural memorials in memory of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt. See particularly "Remembering and Rebuilding," 1955, available at the American Jewish Historical Society in New York. A copy of this report was also provided to me by Mr. Harold Berson.

43. Beth Hamidrash was established by a small group of men, led by A. Max Charkow, who wanted to provide the elderly members of the community with an orthodox synagogue within walking distance of their homes. Several members of the founding group, Sam Tenenbaum and A.M. Charkow among them, were actively involved in resettling Holocaust survivors. Charkow was instrumental in securing Rabbi Ginsberg to lead the congregation in 1943.

44. JWB, April 23, 1954, p.1.

45. JWB, April 11, 1958, p.1; see also "Rabbi Ginsberg Makes
Other announcements for the campaign repeatedly refer to the
victims as "Kedoishim", or holy ones.

46. "Beth Hamidrash re-organized, Rabbi Ginsberg Given New
Status," JWB, December 12, 1958, p.3. Ginsberg died three years
later; he was interred in Israel in a service attended by many
dignitaries and religious figures. For some years after his death
the synagogue was called Beth Hamidrash Rabbi Ginsberg, but the
congregation itself dwindled almost completely within a decade, due
partly to age and partly to the lack of Ginsberg's charismatic
personality to attract new members. In keeping with his wishes to
have Beth Hamidrash maintained as a place of Jewish worship, in
1975 the last surviving founders passed the synagogue to
Vancouver's small Sephardic congregation.

47. Personal interview with Sol Jackson (January 2001).


49. JWB, April 25, 1957, p.1. "Hurban" (sometimes "Churban"),
meaning destruction or catastrophe. The word "Churban" was used in
the Bulletin on occasion to denote what is now called the
Holocaust, but mainly when quoting World Jewish Congress
publications which used the term on occasion.

50. "Ghetto Survivor Speaks at 15th Anniversary Memorial," JWB,
April 25, 1958, p.2.

51. JWB, April 25, 1958, p.7.

52. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 511. This report is

53. "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorial," 1957, published by the
City Committee of the United Jewish People's Order, Vancouver, B.C.
Personal files of Harold Berson.

54. This lack of acknowledgment was something of an issue for
some UJPO members, who felt that their contribution was diminished
by the lack of public recognition of the UJPO as an organization.
It should be noted that after their 1953 expulsion from the
Community Council, not even the UJPO's name could be printed in the
Bulletin. Groups like the UJPO Drama Workshop were forced to
change their name to the Vancouver Drama Workshop to receive any
publicity whatsoever.

55. JWB, April 24, 1959, p.8. In the "Between Ourselves"
column, attendance is given as 200. The Committee minutes put the
figure at 280: CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 514.

Files, Box 39\ File 738.
57. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15/ File 511. See also "Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Moves Capacity Crowd," JWB, April 29, 1960, p.4.

58. JWB, April 4, 1960, p.1.

59. Personal files of Harold Berson.

60. JWB, April 29, 1960, p.4. The review even includes a photo from the Fast sketch.


62. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15/ File 535.

63. JWB, April 17, 1964, p.3.

64. "Let Us Remember," JWB, April 19, 1963, p.2. Publicity preceding the memorial in 1963 twice featured the proclamations of John F. Kennedy, quoting his praise of the uprising as "a chapter in the annals of human heroism, an inspiration to the peace-loving people of the world, and a warning to would-be oppressors which will be long-remembered."

65. The "Seder Ritual of Remembrance" was written in 1953 by Rufus Learsi, a pseudonym for historian-writer Israel Goldberg. It was widely circulated in the Anglo-Jewish press to encourage its home use. The ritual made its first appearance in the JWB in 1959. It was also featured in the 1954, 1955, and 1956 Canadian Jewish Congress Program Aids for Warsaw Ghetto commemoration.


67. For the full text of the speech see "Message of the Martyrs," CJC Pacific Region files, Box 15/ File 535.

68. Personal conversation with Dr. Moses Steinberg (January 2001).


70. Vancouver Sun, April 22, 1961, p.4.


72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

75. "Asks a Lasting Memorial," JWB, May 4, 1962, p.4. One should note that the eventual donor of a new JCC library was Sophie Waldman, a founder and active member of the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee. The library bears the name of her late husband Isaac.

76. Vancouver Sun, April 10, 1961.


78. Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee Minutes, April 28, 1964. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 505.


80. Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee Report, June 21, 1961. CJC Pacific Region files, Box 15\ File 511.

81. Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee Minutes, February 27, 1964. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 505.

82. Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee Minutes, April 28, 1964. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 505.

83. Ibid.

84. "Why Perpetuate the Memory?," JWB, May 25, 1962, p.2. This particular re-cap of Sam Heller's speech prompted an Osoyos resident to send a heartfelt poem to the Bulletin, printed on June 29, 1962, p.2. The poem reads in part: "These hideous deeds in our minds will ever remain,\ We pray that it will not, must not happen again", and, "Our hopes that all nations will follow the cross of God,\ To dram men closer in the comfort of God's staff and rod."

Background:

In late December 1964, Lou Zimmerman, who was then Executive Director of Vancouver’s Jewish Community Centre, received a letter of inquiry from a representative of the Edmonton, Alberta Jewish community in which the latter asked for information pertaining to Vancouver's Warsaw Ghetto commemorations. In his response, Zimmerman briefly described the activities and success of the Memorial Committee. As for fixed structures, he wrote:

It was never our intention to create a permanent memorial to those who died at the hands of the Nazis. However, we do have one. This is a mural in the lounge of the Jewish Community Centre, painted by Arnold Belkin, and donated to the Jewish Community Centre of Vancouver in memory of his father who lived here. The mural depicts the horrors of the concentration camp, the glory of the battle of the Warsaw Ghetto. I do believe it is generally considered to have merit as a work of art.¹ [my emphasis]

This note of ambiguity caps the protracted, oft-heated
struggle to install what became Vancouver's first permanent, large-scale work invoking the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Although a few of the community's new buildings already bore Holocaust dedications inscribed on modest plaques, the Belkin mural, "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising", (see Figure 3) presents a stark contrast to these earlier gestures. The three-paneled, darkly-coloured oil painting measures approximately eight feet by sixteen feet, covering a total area of about one-hundred square feet.\textsuperscript{2} As a memorial though, its size, in the end, proved to be less of an issue than the mural's particular depiction of events, and the process by which it finally came to be hung at the Community Centre illustrates many of the tensions still involved in Holocaust commemoration during this period.

The mural's creator, Arnold Belkin, was born in Calgary in 1930; his family moved to Vancouver when he was about five or six years old.\textsuperscript{3} Both of Belkin's parents were immigrants, his mother from England and his father from Russia. The household was decidedly left-wing, though the extended Belkin family in Vancouver spanned the ideological divide. One of Belkin's uncles was among the community's most prominent Jewish businessmen, whereas a cousin edited a local labour newspaper called the Pacific Tribune. His own parents became involved with Vancouver's Peretz School soon after their arrival. As for their son, Belkin knew early that he wanted to be an artist. He won a B.C. Labour Guild art competition at the age of fifteen with a drawing of workers on a street car. He then studied for a time in Banff with
A.Y. Jackson of the famed Group of Seven. Landscape painting, however, was not in his future.

Attracted by the proletarian and revolutionary murals being created by painters like Diego Rivera, at age seventeen Belkin moved to Mexico. These artists appealed to him, he later described, "because their paintings dealt with people, politics, and with social historical events." In Mexico, he initially trained with D.A. Siqueiros, a Spanish Civil War veteran and one of the leading muralists from this school. Siqueiros had a lasting impact on Belkin, who asserted that, "For me, he was a model, the artist as hero, the artist as public orator, the artist as political activist." Belkin himself often lectured about the role of artists in society, including a 1955 talk in Vancouver to the literary groups of the National Council of Jewish Women. In the early 1960s he and fellow artist Francisco Icaza founded "Nueve Presencia", an aesthetic movement which, according to its manifesto, championed art that was "real, raw and eloquent". In a further description of the motivation behind his work, he stated, "to express the human condition is and always has been my aim and preoccupation in art. Especially the heroism inherent in man."

A great deal of Belkin's work also dealt with Jewish themes and figures, for instance, his largest mural "Kehila", a 158 foot long and 22 foot high portrayal of the Jewish holidays commissioned by Mexico City's new Jewish Community Centre in 1965. His frequent letters home to his parents in Vancouver often mentioned smaller pieces including etchings from the Bible and
paintings called "Jews in a Synagogue" and "Tzaddik", while his set design work likewise involved some classic Jewish plays such as "The Dybbuk" or "Tevie der Milchiker" (Tevye the Dairyman). According to his longtime friend Dr. (Rabbi) William Kramer, with whom he often discussed these matters, Belkin was deeply interested in Jewish history and spirituality; his politics and humanism were inseparable from his Jewish concerns.10

Many of these preoccupations and elements can be discerned in his "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising". The left-most panel of the mural features images of patriarchs, looking skyward, just above pyramid-shaped rows of doomed, gaunt figures staring outward, at the viewer. The pyramid, with its blackened visages towards the top, also invokes a pyre in flames. The flames follow the mural's largest figures, the ghetto fighters, into the centre panel, where they reach out, not skyward exactly but forward, ostensibly to the future, but also toward a just barely-visible menorah. Below them lies a tumult of twisted and emaciated bodies that evoke images of the documentary footage taken at the close of the war from some of the Nazi camps. These destroyed figures overlap into the third panel of the mural, where they merge into the long lines of adults and children looking outward and forward again, symbols of regeneration.

In Belkin's own words, in painting the mural he had attempted to depict:

an historic moment of great drama which I wished to express in a spirit of struggle, of resistance, the fight to preserve human dignity. I did not want to use obvious symbols such as guns, flags and grenades. Instead, I used gestures and faces of people...of children who are the hope of the future
generations, those that live and are a remembrance of the thousands of children killed—the broken stem.\textsuperscript{11}

Belkin's description of the mural's motifs is of particular interest considering the cover he had drawn in 1953 for the Jewish Western Bulletin's Passover Issue (see Figure 2). Although both works portray the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the 1953 depiction is quite unlike the later mural. Guns and weapons are a central element of the Passover cover, lending it an almost military tone. Children and other victims are absent. There is also a marked difference in the facial expressions and gestures of the fighters, who are palpably animated by revolt and defiance. While the mural also conveys a sense of outrage, its representation is more subtle. Even the bodies and faces of the resisters are slightly contorted, their less defined countenance varying from despair to anger to almost no expression. Unlike the Passover cover, the presence of children is a key element of the mural, both those who perished and those who survived. Belkin's own children were born in 1953 and 1957, which perhaps influenced this more complex rendering. Heroism does not disappear as a theme in the mural, but it is somewhat muted.

At any rate, judging by his correspondences, Belkin began painting "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" sometime in late 1958 or early 1959. By the end of 1959 he was already pondering appropriate locations for the piece, including a Jerusalem museum or the new Jewish Community Centre planned for Vancouver.\textsuperscript{12} In the meantime the mural was displayed at the Jewish Sports Centre in Mexico City, under the Spanish title "El levantamiento del Ghetto de
At some point in 1962, Belkin offered the work to the Vancouver Peretz School, where, as mentioned, his parents were active. It is quite possible that his father's October 1962 death played a role in this decision. The members of the Peretz School, for their part, were duly honoured by Belkin's offer, but they felt that such a piece needed to be seen by the entire community, which they still believed was not doing enough to remember the events of the Holocaust.

While Belkin was in Vancouver for his father's funeral, he was also approached by Sam Heller, Chairman of the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee, who had heard from others about the mural and Belkin's indecision as to where to donate it. Heller added his voice to those in favour of the Community Centre, and upon Belkin's return to Mexico, he received a letter from Heller reconfirming these views. The letter read in part:

> it is my sincere and unbiased opinion that a mural of such high artistic value (especially now that I have seen a reproduction of it) would be lost in the Peretz School. It would be there in view of the children who are too young to appreciate its beauty—maybe it would be viewed from time to time by a few parents who might come to a P.T.A. meeting, but that is all. If you were to decide on the new Community Centre, it would be hung on the light wall to the right of the main entrance; it would be in full view of anyone in the vestibule, and it would be seen day in and day out by hundreds of people entering the Centre—be it Jewish or, as is often the case, non-Jews.

> It is my feeling that this mural would add very much to the appearance of the Centre. It would give the finishing touch as right now, it is nothing but a modern concrete box, designed by the architects. The mural would bear a bronze plaque at the bottom, with a proper inscription to be designated by you..."}

This letter, as it turned out, tipped the scales for Belkin, who wrote back agreeing to donate the mural to the Centre. Soon
after receiving Belkin's approval, Sam Heller brought the proposal to the Executive Committee of the Jewish Community Centre. A photo of the mural was circulated, followed by a long discussion as to the appropriateness of a depiction of so somber a topic in a location like the Centre. Nonetheless, it was agreed to recommend to the Centre's Executive Board that they accept Belkin's offer.  

The minutes of the ensuing Board meeting in mid November 1962 likewise indicate that there had already been "considerable controversy concerning the suitability of the painting for placing in the Centre due to the theme that it represented."  

Although the exact nature of this "controversy" is not elaborated in the minutes, some of the individuals involved recall that the main, inter-locking objections of those against accepting the mural lay not so much in having a work dedicated to the uprising but that Belkin's painting would be too graphic, morbid, and unpleasant for those entering the building, and that it might somehow emotionally damage the children who played in that area.  

It also appears that some may have worried that the mural would invite anti-Semitism rather than stand as a monument against it, while it is also possible that Belkin's leftist views may have worked to the mural's disadvantage.  

Those arguing in favour of the work, several of whom were themselves artists, asserted that it was a tremendous piece of art by an important artist portraying a crucial historic event and that the Centre was an ideal location for it, indeed, that it should have been considered an honour.  

As for the contention that it was better not to expose children to
such things, these individuals argued that it was nonsensical to try and shield young people, particularly Jewish young people, from the world's realities.

In the end, after another long discussion and some "interpretation by Mr. Heller", the Board agreed to accept the mural on the condition that they could hang it where they thought most suitable. This stipulation however, proved unacceptable to Arnold Belkin, and on that note, the matter seemed closed. Not having heard back from the Centre by February 1963, Belkin all but gave up and contemplated re-approaching the Peretz School until he was reassured a month later that the Centre was still "in discussion" over the matter. That spring the Board had received a petition signed by seventy-five community members requesting that they re-open negotiations with Belkin about the painting. Although they agreed to do so, for reasons which are not clear, this debate was not taken up again until a September meeting.

In the interim, reverberations of some of the issues raised by the prospect of hanging the mural in the JCC lobby were in evidence at the 1963 Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Evening. As part of his opening address on this occasion, Sam Heller made the following statements, decrying:

the voices in our community who would like to forget and not be reminded; who object to our bringing back memories, gruesome memories of days past; who are afraid that this gruesomeness of our past, our history and heritage will affect their children. Those are the people who will die in submissiveness if such a day should ever happen again. They bury their heads in the proverbial sand hoping that if they forget, it will ease their existence in the Gentile world.

By some accounts, emotions also ran high at the September
1963 JCC Board meeting when the matter of the mural was once again raised.26 Sam Heller and two other Committee members, including Dr. Ludmilla Zeldowicz who was a psychiatrist, appeared at this meeting to ask that the question of the painting be reconsidered.

The small party presented coloured slides of the mural and its various aspects, followed by yet another long discussion about whether it should be mounted in the lobby or whether alternate arrangements could be made. Both Dr. Zeldowicz and a University of British Columbia child psychologist who was present made statements opposing the view that children could or should be protected from such images.27 Finally, a motion to hang the mural in the lobby, as desired by the artist, was passed by a vote of fifteen to nine with four abstentions.28

As part of this agreement, it was also arranged that the painting would be unveiled during the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Evening for 1964. Even aspects of this process proved troublesome. For its part, the JCC's insurance company refused to insure the mural against "malicious damage" unless a three foot fence was built around it at a distance of three feet, or, alternatively, if the work was hung in the far corner of the lounge area above the staircase.29 Rather than rehash this argument perhaps, the JCC's president Albert Kaplan agreed to leave the mural in the lounge uninsured. Chrome stands linked by a cord were installed in front of the piece as a compromise. One related item that remained permanently unresolved however, was the Committee's suggestion that some sort of mimeographed
"interpretation" of the mural's symbolism be mounted close to the painting so that teachers or youth leaders could discuss it with their classes or groups. It does not appear that this measure was ever taken; the only text accompanying the mural was a plaque dedicating the work to Belkin's father. Any other impressions were left wholly to the viewer.

Figure 4:
Mural unveiling, 1964

In spite of this sequence of eventualities, the unveiling itself was quite successful. Publicity preceding the event was enthusiastic, quoting reviews such as "the artist has created a mural which has a message for everyone, a message for all humanity. The distinctively Jewish and the universal, are blended
together into a great work of art." The memorial and unveiling ceremony were attended by over 500 people, including Arnold Belkin, who introduced his work (See Figure 4). The evening concluded with a small reception organized by the Committee to thank the individuals who had helped with the program. In subsequent JWB coverage, it was mentioned that Belkin was "well-known in Vancouver as an artist" and that his work was part of collections all over the world. While he was in the city for the unveiling, Belkin was also invited to the JCC to speak about the role of artists, doing several interviews on various radio programs as well.

In the ensuing years, Belkin continued to gain considerable prominence as a muralist and painter, particularly in Latin America, but also in Israel and the United States. His life's work in murals alone numbered twenty-eight major projects. Some of his later commissions included a large mural in an urban New York City neighbourhood as well as works depicting the student shootings at Kent State University and the massacre of Vietnamese civilians in the village of My Lai. When Belkin died of lung cancer in 1992, his body was laid in state—with rabbinic blessing—at the Modern Art Museum in Mexico City. Much of his work is still highly lauded in the Spanish-speaking world, in fact, some critics insist that his international reputation is higher than that of any other Canadian artist.

The fate of Belkin's "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" mural, on the other hand, has not been as auspicious. Despite the high hopes of
the Committee, it did not become a focal point for remembrance. Aside from the occasional photo opportunity that it provided for visiting community notables, the mural seems to have more or less faded into the background of the hustle and bustle of the Community Centre. A series of JCC renovations resulted in its being relocated or temporarily covered over many times, until finally, it was removed from sight altogether. It was only rehung in the Centre in the mid 1990s, this time high at the back of the building's Wosk Auditorium, where it continues to stir the passions of only the relatively few people who notice it, either because they still believe it is a most significant artistic contribution and deserves far greater prominence, or because they feel it is bad art, disturbing and out of place, or simply ugly.

In any case, it is clear that Belkin's "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" was not the permanent memorial that much of the community wanted or was ready for. This is attested to by the fact that very shortly after its installation new efforts began to build an altogether different type of Holocaust monument, to be discussed in the next chapter. Leaving aside all debate over the piece's aesthetic merits, the Belkin mural lacked a place in the rhythms of the community calendar; after 1964 it was not a feature of the annual ceremonies or any other form of ritual remembrance. For the next decade, the community's public Holocaust commemoration continued to take the shape of the yearly memorial evenings organized by the Warsaw Ghetto Committee, also taking on several new attributes and formats.
Notes

1. Lou Zimmerman to Morris Stein, January 6, 1965. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 13a\ File 366.

2. Minutes of the Jewish Community Centre Executive Committee, November 19, 1962. These records are the property of the JCC itself; I owe thanks to Joyce Whittaker and current JCC President Gerry Zipursky for allowing me to use them.


9. Arnold Belkin to parents, November 1965. Belkin's personal correspondences are the property of his widow, Patricia Quijano Belkin. Copies of these letters were generously provided to me by David Pettigrew, a local writer-filmmaker who researched Belkin's life for an as yet unproduced documentary film.


13. William Kramer. "Sr. Arnold Belkin," p.244. One of the Mexican reviews from this showing later quoted in the JWB, April 3, 1964, p.5, said of Belkin: "Jewish artist and artist of humanity, possesses the greatness of combined profundity and superb mastery of techniques."

14. Personal conversation with Sylvia Friedman, a very active longtime member of the Peretz School.
15. Sam Heller to Arnold Belkin, quoted in a letter from Arnold Belkin to his sister, November 5, 1962.

16. Ibid.

17. JCC Executive Committee Minutes, November 19, 1962.

18. JCC Executive Board Minutes, November 28, 1962.

19. Personal conversations with Gertie Zack, then Vice-President of the JCC, and Paul Heller, Sam Heller's brother and an active member of the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee.

20. Personal conversation with Dr. William Kramer.


22. JCC Executive Board Minutes, November 28, 1962.


27. Personal interview with Paul Heller.

28. JCC Executive Board Minutes, September 24, 1964.

29. Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee Minutes, April 7, 1964. CJC Pacific-Region Files, Box 15\ File 505.

30. Ibid. The matter of an "interpretive" plaque for the mural was raised again at the January 27, 1965 Committee meeting and perhaps several times thereafter. For whatever reason, the idea was eventually abandoned.


32. Photo taken by Searle Friedman, April 12, 1964. My sincere thanks to Sylvia Friedman for providing me with a copy and allowing me to use it. Arnold Belkin can be seen in profile on the far right of the picture.

33. JWB, April 17, 1964, p.3.
34. Personal conversation with Dr. William Kramer.


36. Statements as to the whereabouts of the mural over the last 25 years tend to vary. By some accounts it was covered over on a regular basis until finally it was simply left that way. Others have mentioned an obscure hallway or storage. This uncertainty itself suggests the degree to which the mural was eventually ignored.

37. In an interesting parallel to the story of the Vancouver mural, another of Belkin's works which he painted shortly after "Warsaw Ghetto Uprising" suffered a somewhat similar fate. This particular work was a large mural commissioned by the Children's Welfare Institute in Mexico City, a home for disabled children. Only a few months after the mural was completed in 1963, the wife of the Mexican president deemed it "too sad" and had it covered over with paint, a decision that later prompted Belkin to comment, "Maybe the disfigured children looked disfigured. Maybe the neglected children looked neglected." Quoted in: William Kramer, "Sr. Arnold Belkin," p.237.
CHAPTER 5: 1965-1975

Background:

As of 1971, Vancouver's Jewish population had risen to about 9000 people. Although the community's core remained situated near the two largest synagogues and Community Centre, movement away from the city also increased, resulting in the creation of several suburban Orthodox and Conservative congregations in this period. Further diversity was provided by the incorporation of a Reform group in 1965, a Sephardic congregation in 1973, and a growing Lubavitch presence after 1974. Several new Jewish day and afternoon schools were also established. By this point, the Canadian Jewish Congress' Pacific Region had become the community's leading agency and umbrella organization, particularly in terms of public relations, adult education, and multicultural outreach. Local interests aside, the plight of the State of Israel and Jews living in the Soviet bloc and Arab lands were the dominant community concerns during these years, prompting unprecedented levels of social and political activism. Ongoing issues from the Holocaust years also continued to make an impact, often merging with and shading current affairs and vice versa.

According to Frank Bialystok in *Delayed Impact*, one of the most influential factors in thrusting the Holocaust into Canadian-Jewish discourse during these years was the growing rift between organized groups of Holocaust survivors and the CJC, caused mainly by what survivors saw as the weak Congress response to neo-Nazi groups operating in Central and Eastern Canada. A chapter of his
work is devoted to the 1965 Allan Gardens riot, an episode during which members of the more radical survivor groups physically clashed with neo-Nazis at a rally in a Toronto park. Bialystok cites this event and its aftermath as a major turning point in putting Holocaust-related issues on the Canadian-Jewish community's agenda. But Allan Gardens was far away from Vancouver; its impact was limited to a few articles in the JWB. There were no affiliated survivor organizations in Vancouver at this time, at least not operating in a political framework, though many survivors were members of their local B'nai Brith. Nor is there evidence of a strong undercurrent of survivor dissatisfaction with the Pacific Region's handling of public relations. Nonetheless, even lacking this stimulus, an increasingly vocal Holocaust discourse continued in Vancouver during these years.

Local Jewish sensitivity to the war's legacy was in clear evidence throughout the JWB's coverage of events between 1965 and 1975, a good deal of which scrutinized any manifestations of neo-Nazi activity in Germany itself. Although antipathy toward the Germans had subsided to the extent that Israel and West Germany's 1965 exchange of ambassadors went largely unprotested in the paper, careful watch was kept of the Bonn Republic, particularly of its leadership and elections. The rapid but ultimately short-lived mid-1960s political rise of Adolf von Thadden and his Nazi-reminiscent National Democratic Party was viewed with particular alarm, eliciting large headlines such as "VOTE SIGNALS NAZI REVIVAL." In Canada, von Thadden (sometimes called "Adolf II" in
the JWB) became even more notorious after giving a somewhat innocuous-sounding interview with the CBC, which was compounded in Vancouver when he was invited to speak at UBC. This invitation was quickly withdrawn, but the fallout spurred numerous angry letters, most of which emphasized the imperative to take heed of the lessons of the past.\textsuperscript{5}

These lessons, however, could be somewhat problematic, as demonstrated by the April 1967 official visit of a German Navy ship called the "Deutschland". The visit, along with City Council's plans to greet and entertain the German sailors, appears to have been intended as a goodwill gesture. This was by no means the view taken by the United Jewish People's Order, though, who protested publicly that the ship was a symbol of German militarism and a desecration of the memory of Canadian veterans and all victims of Nazism.\textsuperscript{6} Because these statements were made to the non-Jewish press, Congress was thereby placed in the rather uncomfortable position of having to not only, once again, disavow any connection between the UJPO and the representative bodies of the city's Jewish community, but to also assert that "Vancouver Jews bear no malice against the visiting Germans although they will never forget Nazi atrocities inflicted against their people and other races."\textsuperscript{7} The statement added that the city of Vancouver was entitled to extend official welcome to any and all visitors.

Unlike the case in other parts of Canada, local incidents of neo-Nazi activity were fairly infrequent in this period, one exception being the August 1970 spray-painting of swastikas on the Beth Israel and Schara Tzedeck synagogues, in tandem with the
handing out of anti-Semitic pamphlets at a nearby beach.8 Otherwise, the media glare pertaining to the legacy of the Nazi era was focussed mostly on events abroad, usually in brief accounts of various war-crimes trials, restitution delays, or the activities of "Nazi-hunters" like Simon Wiesenthal and Beate Klarsfeld. There were times when these issues did hit closer to home, as in March 1971, when Wiesenthal created something of a stir by accusing Vancouver resident Ivan Dimitrevich Chrobatyn of being a former Ukrainian police chief responsible for the wartime murder of hundreds of Jews. The non-Jewish press, interestingly, seized upon this story, whereas both the JWB and community leadership remained considerably more circumspect in their approach, particularly in light of the lack of definitive evidence.9 The internal advice given to the Pacific Region's Executive Director on this matter was to emphasize that Wiesenthal and the mainstream media were responsible for the allegations, and as such, should be the ones to answer for it if Chrobatyn was innocent.10 It does not appear that the latter was ever determined however, and the story quietly faded from the headlines.

More than any other issue, it was the perception of Israel's situation on the world stage that summoned the strongest evocations of the destruction of European Jewry, particularly as the Israelis fought two dramatic wars in less than six years. Given the long-held belief that there was a causal and redemptive connection between the Holocaust and the existence of the Jewish State, any threat to the latter naturally elicited fears of a "second Holocaust" or a "Middle East Munich". The Munich analogy
was driven home by frequent Jewish Western Bulletin articles emphasizing the similarity between Israel's perceived abandonment by the international community and the ceding of parts of Czechoslovakia to the Nazis in September 1938 as a lead-up to the war. One front page headline, in fact, read "Israel Is Not Czechoslovakia."¹¹

Even some of the Holocaust-related book reviews given prominence in this period reinforced the image of Israel as standing alone in a hostile world, such as Arthur Morse's While Six Million Died, a highly critical view of U.S. wartime immigration policy toward Jews, or printed excerpts from Chaim Kaplan's Warsaw Ghetto diaries, given the caption "'The people are asking--Why is the world silent?'"¹² In September 1971, similar issues were raised during the Vancouver visit of Gideon Hausner, the prosecutor of the Eichmann case and recent author of the book Justice in Jerusalem. In keeping with the tone of his book, Hausner's speech on this occasion likewise emphasized the world's inaction during the Holocaust.¹³

The recurrent theme of much of this coverage was that Israel's existence depended on learning the lessons of the still-recent past. According to one editorial, the Jewish people had been sold out once before; they would have only themselves to blame if they let it happen again.¹⁴ Or, as the title of another editorial asserted, "Arafat Seeks a Holocaust," the subhead reading "Negotiating with the PLO is suicide."¹⁵ In her JWB description of a 1975 trip to Israel as a member of the Canadian National Women's United Israel Appeal Mission, Vancouver resident
Ancie Fouks reported that, "For Israelis, the Holocaust is not history—it is a warning." She went on to rebuff those voices in the community urging that Jews not dwell on the Holocaust by saying that such events were not in the past; they themselves were living in an era when "Jewish men, women, and children by the millions are again facing annihilation and despair." Middle East coverage was further tied to memories of the Holocaust by not infrequent articles about ex-Nazis shifting their base from postwar Germany to work for Israel's neighbouring enemies. In addition to the afore-mentioned Nazi scientists in Egypt, other pieces alluded to the activities of Nazi propagandists in Syria or Nazi soldiers in Jordan.

Nor were the Arab states and former Nazis seen as alone in their quest to destroy Israel by force. A good deal of reportage placed culpability squarely with the Soviet Union, the major military backer of Arab aims and the very nation that was widely seen as perpetrating its own form of Jewish destruction, both within its borders and throughout its satellite states. In terms of political outlook, JWB editor Sam Kaplan was right-leaning to begin with, and seldom did an issue of the Bulletin appear without at least some mention of Soviet or Polish persecutions of their Jewish minorities. Vancouver's non-Jewish press also provided fairly extensive coverage of repressive Jewish policies in the Communist bloc, though drawing far fewer analogies to the events of the Holocaust.

Within the Jewish community, on the other hand, the suffering of Soviet Jews was often held up as one more reason making
rememberance of the Holocaust more necessary than ever. In the words of one writer, a Soviet Jew whose parents had been murdered at Babi Yar, the Jews who suffered both forms of tyranny were "symbols of two lost generations, one the victim of Nazi genocide, and the other the victim of Soviet cultural genocide." In recalling the one, she wrote, "we must stand in solidarity with the other." Toward this end, presumably, the JWB introduced a second addition to the Seder ritual in 1970, the "Matzah of Hope" remembering "the Three Million Jews of the Soviet Union and the Jewish Remnant Living in Arab Lands Today", which was printed back-to-back each year with the "Seder Ritual of Remembrance" for the Warsaw Ghetto and the Six Million.

To the dismay of many, invoking the Holocaust could also be a double-edged sword. A great deal of the reported Soviet and Arab anti-Jewish propaganda in these years accused the Israelis and their supporters of Hitler-type treatment of Arabs, a bitterly-resented analogy that was taken up by a number of Canadian detractors from both right and left of the political spectrum. This situation prompted the CJC's Pacific Region to establish a branch of the Canada-Israel Committee, an educational body providing the Israeli point of view in these matters, a task made no easier by the 1974 United Nations recognition of the PLO and subsequent resolution equating Zionism with racism. This debate sometimes entered other arenas, such as the academic sphere, as when a University of British Columbia professor was quoted in the school's Ubyssey magazine comparing Zionism and Nazism during a lecture. The incident initiated a flurry of letters, one of which
was printed in the JWB. The author of this letter, a UBC graduate student, categorically rejected any similarities whatsoever between Israeli and Nazi policy. He went on to describe the Israeli people as "three million Jews who sincerely want peace, but who, this time, will not go quietly to the ovens."20

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, another factor that worked to maintain the Holocaust in popular discourse was the change in attitude toward Judaism among some Christian circles, largely due to the wartime genocide itself. Perhaps the most dramatic of these shifts occurred within the Catholic church, including removal of some of the anti-Judaic language in the liturgy and a 1965 declaration that Jews were not to blame for the crucifixion of Jesus. These developments also entailed unprecedented public acknowledgment and criticism, both Christian and Jewish, of the role of religious anti-Semitism in fostering violence toward Jews for nearly two millennia, culminating in the Holocaust. For the first time, the JWB began printing book reviews and editorial discussions about the role of the churches, and Pope Pius XII in particular, during the Holocaust.21 Even the community rabbis engaged in some of this debate, such as a 1964 column written by Rabbis Ephraim and Levy in which they invoked past anti-Jewish inequities encouraged by the church, "paving the way for the massacre by Hitler of 6,000,000 men, women, and children of us Hebrews merely because of who we are."22

Not all such discussion of the war years was necessarily condemnatory; it was at about this same time that occasional prominence in the JWB was given to "Righteous Gentiles", a term
coined by Yad Vashem to honour non-Jews who had saved Jewish lives
during the war. The story of Oskar Schindler, for example, was
featured in a 1962 editorial.23 In 1966, Vancouver residents Henry
Hulstein and his wife Grace were honoured by a special committee
of survivors and others for their role in a Dutch rescue network.
Reporting on this gesture, which included the assumption of the
Hulsteins' mortgage, Pacific Region Executive Director Roy Waldman
stated, "Nothing we have done in recent years has so warmed the
hearts of our Jewish community...This project, with all its public
relations ramifications and human aspects, has left a glow with
all who were associated with it and did credit to Congress."24 A
similar gesture was made by about sixty Jewish youth at UBC's
Hillel House in November 1968, when they presented a
representative of the Danish community and former resistance
member with a silver Kiddush cup in honour of the twenty-fifth
anniversary of the rescue of Denmark's Jewish community.25

At the local level, there was also an expansion of Christian-
Jewish dialogue through the Vancouver branch of the Canadian
Council of Christians and Jews (CCCJ). Events sponsored by the
group sometimes opened the door for acknowledgment of Christian
persecutions as a precursor to the Holocaust, as was the case with
a speech made by B.C. Lieutenant-Governor George Pearkes, who used
a 1968 CCCJ banquet in his honour to address the history of
Christian anti-Semitism leading to the acts perpetrated by Nazi
Germany.26 A number of Vancouver theologians and scholars were
also highly attune to both the events of the Holocaust and the
importance of Israel to postwar Jewry. In late 1974 a group of
these individuals issued a statement to the Vancouver media declaring their support for Israel's claims to secure and recognized borders, also asserting that "We repent our past indifference to the suffering of the Jewish people, in particular the holocaust of the six million during World War II." It bears mentioning, though, that this sensitivity was not universal. In their personal assessments of two local CCCJ dialogue sessions in 1975, several participants felt that the Christian representatives had far to go in confronting the "theological denigration of Jews and Judaism, through the period of the Crusaders up to the Auschwitzes of our time," similarly lacking an appreciation for the sense of urgency with which Jews entered the dialogue.

As discouraging as such developments may have been, it is clear that there was an expanding interest in the events and scope of the Holocaust during this period. Interfaith debate aside, the JWB began printing regular reviews of movies and historical works documenting various aspects of Jewish experience during the war years, often exploring or reassessing topics that had been hitherto taken for granted or neglected. The concept of resistance, for example, was broadened to include the day to day cultural and spiritual existence of Jews living under Nazi rule, while even the role of the "Judenrate", the Nazi-appointed Jewish councils in the ghettos, was treated with more sympathy. Extended articles were likewise devoted to the growing body of Holocaust literature and theological speculation of a post-Auschwitz world. It was during these years that survivors and their individual stories also began gaining prominence, as exemplified by the
dramatic impact made by Elie Wiesel when he spoke at the Beth Israel synagogue in 1970. Wiesel's lecture on this occasion enunciated the duty to bear witness, not only for those who suffered under the Nazis but also as a way to protest on behalf of Soviet Jewry and the prevention of a nuclear holocaust.29

Thus, the community's growing public activism and concerns often impacted the way that the Holocaust was remembered, while the Holocaust likewise informed the way in which current events were being viewed. At the same time, this period was marked by a considerable expansion in the public discourse of different aspects of the Holocaust and the types of groups openly engaging in that discourse. Over time, many of these factors came to be reflected in the community's commemoration.

Commemoration:

That said, to a certain extent the rituals of the community's annual Holocaust commemoration between 1965 and 1975 remained similar to those used from the mid-1950s. Each observance began with a solemn candle-lighting ceremony, a moment of silence, the rendition of El Moleh Rahamin, and opening remarks by a member of the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee. Often a guest speaker would also be invited to give a brief lecture. Music and poetry written during the war continued to be performed at almost all gatherings. The Committee itself remained composed in large part of the same individuals who had established the event in 1956, as well as the UJPO members who had joined them as of 1958-1959. Co-sponsorship of the memorial evenings continued to be provided by the CJC's
Pacific Region and Jewish Community Centre; it became matter of course for the executive directors of both organizations to sit on the Committee during their tenure.  

In one sense this stability made planning easier, but as the ten-year mark of the Committee's work came and went, the imperative to involve the community's youth was felt more and more strongly. Discussions often turned to the need to ensure the event's continuity by attracting new leadership and representatives from all Jewish groups. More often than not, the role of lighting the six memorial candles was assigned to school children spanning the community's religious and social spectrum. At times this special task was also bestowed on a single child active with the Committee as a performer in the plays or through the participation of parents. Some of the artistic materials that were used also emphasized the experiences of children during and after the Holocaust. The 1965 program, for instance, featured excerpts from the play "One Hundred Children", a fact-based account by Dutch survivor Lena Kuchler-Silberman of her efforts to settle Jewish war orphans in Israel. In 1966, an exhibit of children's poetry and drawings from the Terezin camp was held at the JCC, followed in 1968 by the Warsaw Ghetto Evening performance of the play "I Never Saw Another Butterfly", which incorporates many of these poems and which, in its final scene, dramatizes a child-survivor's determination to show her own daughter that "in the midst of death, the children never stopped believing in life. I shall let the children speak for themselves."

In addition to these program features, the Committee also
hoped to raise youth interest through an annual essay contest, launched in 1968 to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. According to the many Committee letters mailed out to youth leaders, one of the purposes of researching Jewish life during the Holocaust was to refute the "unfounded accusations against all of our Six Million Martyrs who were allegedly led like cattle to the slaughter." Themes to be dealt with were "The Significance of the Warsaw Ghetto" (1968), "Life in the Warsaw Ghetto or Jewish Heroism in the Twentieth Century" (1969), "Victims into Warriors" (1970), and "Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto or The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and Its Impact Today" (1971). Not surprisingly given these subjects, the majority of essays turned in stressed how the ghetto fighters had indeed broken the mold of Jewish victimhood, showing the world, in the view of one participant, that "we are not just a people of the book, but rather a people of action...That we are worthy of our ancestral heritage; of the Jacobs, the Davids, the Maccabees, the Bar Kochbas." Almost all of the entrants also made at least one, if not several, allusions to how the uprising inspired the Israeli Defense Forces in 1948 and again in 1967, defeating their enemies against all odds.

On a different note, one of the winning works submitted in the junior division reflects a more left-wing interpretation of the uprising, and, considering the writer's age of eleven, betrays a certain degree of adult help. The author, after describing the Jewish people as "a group of humanists left to wander from country to country", asserts that resistance made the fighters realize
that the Messiah was a part of themselves, which they had forgotten "in search of something more materialistic." The dark side of human nature is then said to be a fact that Jews would have to put up with "until a warm sense of brotherhood covers the earth." A pair of first-place poems entered by a university student in 1970 suggests more of the disillusionment of the times.

One deals with the backlash of anti-Semitism generated by the radicalization of the civil rights movement, reading in part: "That's right man, those bastard capitalists deserve what they get. --pogroms are IN". The other raises a pessimistic view of Israel's status, and for that matter, the entire Jewish experience:

Tears for the six million
We remember them NOW
Limbs torn from children
eyes plucked like roses of yesterday.
Shema Y'Israel
No one cares that Warsaw is with you today.
At least they had a ghetto for a while-
those persecuted Jews
Now there is an Israel for a while-
you bleeding Jews
Shema Y'Israel
Perhaps someday we shall hold a memorial for you.

Despite this variety in the entries and a measure of initial success, the essay contest was abandoned by the Committee after four years, the latter citing the "not entirely inspiring" cooperation of the community's Jewish schools and youth groups as a factor in the contest's demise. Ongoing Committee efforts to encourage commemorative afternoons in the community's schools also met with limited success, as Congress felt that this should be a decision left to individual principals. It is thus very difficult to ascertain the level of youth exposure to the
Holocaust through the Jewish schools, particularly for the early period of my study, which, as described in the previous chapters, was marked by a reluctance among some to subject their children to such horrors. A number of survivors were engaged as teachers and principals with the community schools, but this did not necessarily translate into curriculum inclusion or general discussion of the Holocaust outside of a narrow historical context.

The Peretz School appears to be the exception herein, both in terms of annual commemoration, which began in 1948, and a general philosophy among the staff and P.T.A. that Jewish youth should be exposed to the events of the war. In the view of one longtime member, a number of the survivors who were active with the school were also motivated to speak more openly about their experiences because they saw them both in political terms and as a personal tragedy. Though no less worried about causing children psychological harm than anyone else, their acute political sensibilities pushed them to speak out and warn a new generation. In the late 1960s, the Peretz School also introduced a secular Seder service commemorating the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising to which the whole community was invited. The group that implemented this event called it the RCMP--Radical Community Maintenance Passover. The rituals and materials that were used for these occasions emphasized the role and experiences of children.

One other youth organization that developed its own form of commemoration by at least the early 1960s, if not sooner, was the Vancouver chapter of Habonim, a movement associated with the
Labour Zionist philosophy but independent of an adult counterpart. In addition to the group's firmly-held belief that the anti-Semitism that culminated in the Holocaust was the catalyst as well as raison d'être for the existence of State of Israel, many of Habonim's members in these years had their roots in Eastern Europe and had personally lost family during the war. The thriving pre-war European Habonim movement itself had been all but wiped out. Commemoration was incorporated into the organization's summer camp Tisha B'Av activities, taking the shape of plays or tableaux whereby participants would assume frozen positions depicting Jewish suffering under the Nazis while other campers marched by in a torchlight parade. Other themes of destruction would also be included in some of these activities, not all necessarily Jewish, such as Hiroshima and Vietnam. The Holocaust, though it did not dominate the group's educational cycle, had its definite place. However, Habonim tended to be a fairly insular organization, and it does not appear that there was much contact between the group and the Warsaw Ghetto Committee.

Youth involvement aside, it is clear that the community's Holocaust commemoration was taking on a higher degree of politicization during this period. As in previous years, this was especially evident in the speeches given at the memorial evenings. Although parts of these lectures continued to justify commemoration from a universalist standpoint, emphasizing themes of freedom and political liberty, or warning against indifference to the suffering of others, the memorials also offered an opportunity to vocalize the specifically Jewish concerns of the
day. As guest speaker in 1968, local lawyer Dave Freeman enunciated the duty of Jews to be the conscience of the world by not allowing others to forget: "At the risk of sounding chauvinistic and alarmist, we must compel our non-Jewish countrymen to recall the terrible facts of twenty-five years ago." He went on to describe how the recent persecutions of Polish and Russian Jews signalled a rebirth of Nazism and racism, presenting the possibility of another large-scale pogrom. "We must not," he stated, "allow the mistakes of the 1930s to be repeated in the 1960s." Similarly, in his speech at the 1970 event, Vancouver barrister Isidore Wolfe pointed to the parallels between the situation of European Jewry during the Holocaust and the current threat to Jews in Soviet and Arab lands. The only difference, according to Wolfe, was that other Jews were now in a position to help by supporting the United Jewish Appeal.

Although authors like Peter Novick have been critical of the invocation of the Holocaust in conjunction with fundraising for Israel—and it was sometimes crude indeed—these appeals reflect what many Jews sincerely felt was a responsibility to the Jewish State bequeathed to them by history. While Novick asserts that this sentiment was to some extent whipped up by communal groups and the pro-Israel lobby to meet the needs of the day, I would argue that the dramatic response of North American Jewry in 1967 and 1973 would have been far less feasible had the connection between the Holocaust and the State of Israel's existence not been already ingrained in the popular imagination for two decades. This was not a sudden analogy created by Vancouver's Jewish
leadership but rather a widely-held perception going back to the late 1940s.

This relationship was carefully articulated by local immigration judge Norman Oreck at the community's 1969 memorial. In drawing the connection between the uprising and the 1948 establishment of Israel, Oreck emphasized that the latter could not have been foreseen by those who died in the Warsaw Ghetto and could not therefore have demanded their lives as a sacrifice. In Oreck's view, the Holocaust as a whole had stabbed international conscience and generated the contrition that made a Jewish state possible. He declared, "That was the proudest legacy bequeathed--however anonymously--by the souls who were lost, a legacy which every Jew in the world is in some way a beneficiary thereof." With this legacy came a trust to guarantee that "what they created not be allowed to anguish or perish" lest that trust be tarnished. In this vein, Oreck also asserted that this duty in no way detracted from other political concerns or Canadian citizenship; he asked only that in times of crisis some priority be given to Israel's security.

While speeches of this nature reflect some of the Jewish community's broader concerns, particularly the high degree of consensus in matters pertaining to Israel, commemoration in these years could also expose some of the rawer nerves of communal politics. One such controversy ensued from the 1965 event, part of which included an opening address by Warsaw Ghetto Committee Chairman Sam Heller, who expressed regret that some of the community's spiritual leaders appeared to be more interested in
Kashruth (Jewish dietary law) and the sale of Coca-Cola at the JCC during Pesach than in remembering the victims of the Holocaust during Yiskor services or in attending the memorials. These comments, not surprisingly, sparked a number of letters to the JWB, among them a refutation from Rabbi Marvin Hier of the Schara Tzedeck Synagogue. Hier, who would go on to found the Simon Wiesenthal Centre—one of the largest Holocaust institutes in the world—had arrived in Vancouver in 1962 as an associate rabbi, assuming Schara Tzedeck's full rabbinical duties in 1964.

In taking Sam Heller to task, Hier pointed out that his congregation honoured the martyrs not once but four times a year during Yiskor services, also complaining that neither he personally or the Schara Tzedeck had been contacted to help with the memorial. He then asked what was the finer and more enduring way to commemorate, to give a speech, or to "live in a way that the martyrs could proclaim: Judaism lives, Jewish children learn Torah, Ani Maamin is alive." Another letter-writer protested that the subject was hardly a matter to be discussed at an open community event, making him question whether the purposes of the memorial were to inspire Jewish youth, make Israel strong, and to strengthen the bonds of Judaism, or whether Mr. Heller wasn't using commemoration to provide cathartic emotional release for the many survivors in the audience and as a platform to criticize religion. A third writer voiced her support of Kashruth in general, asking whether giving up Coca-Cola for eight days was so hard when "the martyrs gave their lives because they thought being a Jew was worth dying for?"
Given the opportunity to reply, Sam Heller apologized that he'd been mistaken about the Yiskor services, also clarifying that his criticisms had in mind some of the former community rabbis rather than Hier or Rabbi Wilfred Solomon, who had taken over the Beth Israel congregation in 1964 and who was actually in the audience that evening. Heller maintained that rabbinical support of the memorials in previous years had been lukewarm; moreover, the Committee did not feel that special invitations needed to be made given the event's widespread publicity. His comments had not been intended to offend anyone, he wrote, but rather to bring these concerns into the open. The latter intention, though, was precisely what rankled some. This was still a period of self-consciousness among much of the Jewish community, which did not invite open self-criticism on any subject, much less Jewish law or the perceived failings of the local rabbinate. But this was just one thread of the debate, the issue being one of what constituted the most "appropriate" response to the Holocaust and to what end it was to be remembered. As the opinions in these letters would suggest, the answers depended very much on one's personal belief system. Perhaps, as James Young has suggested in his work, the debate itself helped to animate commemoration and keep it responsive to community needs, as local rabbis did indeed become more involved over time.

As for the complaint made by Heller about poor rabbinical support of commemoration prior to the 1965 evening, this is difficult to determine. Once the Warsaw Ghetto memorials were established in 1956, the JWB ceased to announce special Yiskor
services in the synagogues, though it is quite likely that these continued without interruption. Certainly after Rabbis Hier and Solomon arrived, various forms of commemoration in addition to the Yiskor prayers were implemented at both large synagogues, along with heightened discussion of the Holocaust and its impact on community concerns. The smaller Reform group, Temple Sholom, also engaged in memorial activities. At Beth Israel, Yom HaShoah was marked by six survivors lighting memorial candles, special prayers, and a Kaddish adapted to incorporate the major destruction centres of the war and other sites of Jewish martyrdom in history. On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, major emphasis was also given to the Holocaust, using both special prayers and readings from authors such as Elie Wiesel and Nelly Sachs. Rabbi Solomon introduced the congregation to another adapted Passover Seder ritual as well, this one composed by Rabbi Morris Silverman of the Jewish Theological Seminary, which Solomon used in his own home and at Pesach workshops and model seders in the religious schools.

The increase in synagogue activity commemorating the Holocaust notwithstanding, discussion of the role of religion in the community-wide Warsaw Ghetto memorials remained an ongoing point of debate. The matter was raised at a 1968 Committee meeting by Murray Kenig, who had survived Auschwitz and other camps as a teenager, and who felt, as he said others did, that the memorial evenings should be more religious in tone and would be more fitting if held in a synagogue. Though sympathetic to these views, Committee members raised various objections, one being that
the synagogues were already holding religious services to commemorate. Others emphasized that the evenings at the JCC were for all Jews, "above politics, and above religion with a view to reminding everyone." It was felt that attendance at a synagogue would be limited, while the dramatic material currently used made a definite impact. One member stated, "I don't mind which way we present it, in music or dramatic presentation—as long as the people will come and learn." Thus, this matter remained somewhat unresolved, though Murray Kenig himself joined the Committee in 1970. Five years later, the Kaddish was incorporated as a regular feature of the memorial program, with the Committee providing extra yarmulkes for the audience.

One final point of conflict in this period involved the United Jewish People's Order, which marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1968 with a photomural display held at the Peretz School. The exhibit consisted of eighty-two enlarged photographs, mounted on panels arranged in a zig-zag pattern, forming a wall. Approximately half of the photos featured scenes of Jewish destruction from World War II, while the other half, placed in juxtaposition, included shots of mushroom clouds, neo-Nazi headlines in West German newspapers, Napalm bombings, and numerous scenes of heavily-armed American soldiers in Vietnam confronting groups of women and children. Given the insularity of the UJPO and Peretz School alike, perhaps nothing would have come of the event, but for some reason the Vancouver Sun decided to send a reporter to the exhibit, who then contacted Rabbi Marvin Hier for comment. Hier, for his part,
declared in no uncertain terms that the UJPO, which took the Communist line on everything, was not associated with the Jewish community.  

Over the next few weeks, this debate shifted to the JWB, where John Mate, one of the local leaders of Habonim, wrote in to criticize Hier's tactics of discrediting what Mate felt was the UJPO's very valid comparison of German and American atrocities by labelling the group as Communist for the sake of maintaining respectability among non-Jews. Mate added that to be silent about Vietnam was to commit the same crime as wartime bystanders. Rabbi Hier countered that to equate so sacred a part of Jewish history with just U.S. actions was playing politics, otherwise the display would have included the plight of Russian Jews: "For make no mistake about it, if napalm is a gas that smothers the breath of innocent people in Vietnam, then so is the poisonous gas of spiritual genocide used by the Soviet Union, smothering the hopes and aspirations of three million innocent civilians."

Similar views were expressed by R.S. Ratner, a UBC professor, who accused the UJPO of "updating" the Warsaw Ghetto uprising as a way to attack American foreign policy while ignoring the Jewish purges in the Soviet bloc. To his mind, no purpose could be less suitable for a memorial event; such tactics exploited the memory of the ghetto martyrs rather than enshrining it. In this vein, one of the people most upset by the affair was the same Murray Kenig mentioned above. Writing to the editor, Kenig repeated his belief that the only proper venue for a Holocaust memorial was a House of Worship, stating that it was bad enough to turn the
tragedy into a political and social controversy, "but when it divides Jews it desecrates the memory of our dead and makes a mockery of all memorials." 65

As for the UJPO, supporters wrote in to say that the organization had in fact made several protests to Communist governments about the treatment of Jews, and in any case the photos were meant to show that genocide was the concern of all. According to Harold Berson, the display's creator, the group honestly felt that the exhibit was "in line with the traditions and heritage of our forefathers who pursued a path of justice that encompassed all humanity." 66 Another member argued that the exhibit had succeeded in bringing the history of the Warsaw Ghetto from out of the confines of the 400-odd people who went to the memorials each year. In his view, the legacy of the uprising was "never to forgive, never to forget," a slogan of vigilance to be applied not just against anti-Semitism but against war in general. 67

Thus, as with the earlier debate sparked by Sam Heller's comments, the issue of what represented a legitimate response to the Holocaust's legacy had clearly not found a consensus. Although most of those who complained about the display asserted that they did not object to the principle of universalizing the Jewish experience during the war, this clearly had its limits. How then, in a public forum aimed in part at the non-Jewish community, was the significance of the destruction of European Jewry to be conveyed? Given the fact that many of the same people attended each year, how were the memorials to be made interesting
and original?

These dilemmas were central to the decisions faced by the Warsaw Ghetto Committee as members planned programs year after year, the aim being to educate and stir the audience while preserving the solemn and dignified mood demanded by the occasion. Choosing suitable materials was part of a lengthy process that included writing countless letters to international organizations of every political stripe requesting information or possible works to perform. Over the fifteen year period between 1959 and 1974, letters went out to institutes as various as YIVO, the Workmen's Circle, Jewish Theological Seminary, the Polish Historical Institute, Yad Vashem, the Theodor Herzl Institute, the Jewish Welfare Board, and Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot, a kibbutz and museum built by Holocaust survivors and resistance members who settled in Israel. Even Mike Wallace of the CBS program "60 Minutes" was sent a query about a segment of interest. Along with copies of some of the works that were actually performed, the Committee files include thick folders of poetry and literature of unspecified date or origin.

Judging from their centrality to the memorials by 1968 or so, it seems that the Committee settled on plays, often set to music, rather than more varied programs or films as the most effective means of making an enduring impact on audiences. Some of these works, as mentioned, focus on the wartime experiences of children. On occasion, the Warsaw Ghetto revolt itself was the central subject, as in 1970 when Morton Wishengrad's "Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto" was performed again, and 1974, when a large cast put on
stage adaptation of Yiddish-Russian writer Itzak Fefer's poem "Shadows of the Warsaw Ghetto". The latter, according to the JWB review, was "a moving symbiosis of dance, song, and narration", conveying, "the spirit-soaring thought that the heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising remain, their values and their heart remain." At least two of the plays used in this period dealt with the struggle for faith, as the characters, in their suffering, demand an accounting from God. The 1971 production, "Survival of the Last Rabbi", involves a rabbi trapped in the Warsaw Ghetto who must choose whether to accept an offer to be smuggled to safety and thereby preserve Judaism or whether to die with his people. The 1975 production consisted of an adaptation of Elie Wiesel's work "Ani Ma'amin" (I Believe), which depicts the Jewish biblical patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, moving through some of the Nazi camps.

The State of Israel, to a large extent, was not only a presence in many of the plays, but, in the traditional Jewish paradigm of destruction and rebirth, was also an answer of sorts to the theological questions being raised in this period. An example of this type of dramatic material was the work produced for the 1969 memorial, Bernice Green's 1960 play "Resistance and Redemption", subtitled "Warsaw Ghetto Commemoration--Israel Independence Day". Rich in biblical analogies and hymns, the piece moves back and forth between the two poles of Jewish history: triumph and pain, beginnings and ends. After describing the ghetto revolt and its culmination in the War of Independence, the narrator asks, "Who shall not say that the true beginnings of
Israel as a nation. Was that Passover season of 1943? This continues, "From an alley in Warsaw\ To the limitless sands of the Sinai desert\--A little span as time and space are reckoned\ In the long spiritual calendar of the Jews." This nexus between the uprising and Israel's creation, it bears repeating, was by no means always placed in a religious framework. In another early work, "To Live with Dignity--To Die with Honor", written in the mid-1950s but used many times, the two events are said to be "symbols of our national survival--links in the historical development of our thinking", or, put plainly, "In Kishinev we died quietly, in Warsaw we fought, in Jerusalem we survived."

The one other theme that emerged very strongly in the plays used at commemorations in these years was the survivor experience. This was especially true of the pieces written by playwright Marjorie Morris, a Montreal native who moved to Vancouver in 1971. Soon after her arrival, Morris was asked by Warsaw Ghetto Committee co-Chair Sophie Waldman to put together a dramatic piece for the memorial, a request repeated many times in ensuing years. After much trepidation and research, for the 1972 and 1973 events Morris wrote and produced two original works, "A Testimonial to Suffering" and "The Survivors", both of which featured starkly-lit sets and characters who had managed to survive the war and yet lived with one foot in each world, their Holocaust experiences and losses never far from the surface of their nonetheless successful lives. As for Morris, knowledge that she was writing for an audience composed of large numbers of survivors was key. Emotionally it was no easy task, but it was the only contribution
that she felt she could make. She did it because, in her words, she wasn't there. Some of the plays Morris created for the memorials later aired on CBC Radio or were performed at the Vancouver Public Library. Between 1965 and 1975, two highly dedicated non-Jewish Vancouverites also directed plays for the Warsaw Ghetto evenings: Dorothy Davies, a well-known figure among theatre circles, and Don Mowatt, a writer-producer at the CBC.

Throughout this period, small, often ad hoc, committees of survivors also began to commemorate publicly through various other channels. The 1966 tribute made to the Hulsteins for their wartime rescue work was in large part arranged by such a group, in conjunction with the Warsaw Ghetto Committee and numerous other community members. By the mid-1960s, many of the teens who had been brought to Vancouver as part of the CJC's "Orphan Project" were established and had families of their own, turning thoughts back to their wartime experiences. It does not appear, however, that local survivors organized out of political concern with neo-Nazism or disquiet with the leadership's response; rather, joint activities in this period mostly involved acts of appreciation. On the twentieth anniversary of their arrival, the "Orphan Group" held a tribute dinner in honour of Sam Tenenbaum, one of the most active and involved of the volunteers who had helped settle the young survivors, and, probably not incidentally, the organizer of the first community-wide memorial in 1952. A similar tribute was made to Jean Rose, a much-loved social worker who had helped many of the youth and in whose name they established a scholarship at UBC. Other projects initiated by the group included various
charitable donations to Jewish and non-Jewish causes.

While many of the community's survivors attended the annual Warsaw Ghetto commemorations, the pressing need for a permanent memorial began to emerge during these years. Preliminary discussions and correspondences between survivor-members of the B'nai Brith Lion's Gate Lodge and the Schara Tzedek Cemetery Board in late 1966 indicate a strong desire on the part of some survivors to have a site, be it a plaque or memorial monument, where they could hold Yiskor services and say Kaddish for their murdered loved ones. Several individuals were ready and waiting to begin the fundraising. The Cemetery Board and its chairman Jack Diamond endorsed the project almost immediately after hearing from the concerned delegation, and by May 1967 the project as a whole was scheduled to be completed within a year. World events then intervened with the Six-Day War and subsequent Middle East tensions, and renewed discussion of a memorial did not begin until 1974, when another ad hoc committee began meeting to resurrect the proposal. Again though, despite the endorsement of several prominent community members, the project did not go beyond the planning stages. While the desire to erect a monument as soon as possible was nearly unanimous, the momentum and full agreement as to site necessary to push the project through was lacking.

In the meantime, a growing of number of Vancouver survivors were becoming involved with the Warsaw Ghetto Committee, among them Elizabeth Wolak, who had been deported from Poland to Russia during the war. Ms. Wolak became the director of the JCC Choir in 1962, joining the Committee a year later as a member and frequent
music director. Another new member was Leon Kahn, a former partisan and the sole survivor of an extended Jewish family. Kahn was among the first of local survivors to speak publicly to small church groups or non-Jewish classes, around the late 1960s by his reckoning. In their ongoing efforts to attract more youth, in 1972 the Committee invited Leon's teenage son Mark to relate his father's story at the memorial, a feature which all involved felt made a great impact. Perhaps based in part on this success, in 1975, the Committee decided to make a JWB appeal to the community's survivors at large to come forward with their stories, stating that the call was not a contest but rather an honest search for personal accounts and new ideas, as well as an attempt to involve more people in Committee work. Subsequent memorials, as a result, placed even greater emphasis on the wider survivor experience, not only in terms of speakers and dramatic materials, but as time passed, on issues involving the second generation.

The evolution of some of the artwork that was used for the memorial's printed programs offers an interesting parallel to this broadening of themes. Going back to the late 1950s, the earliest of the programs were very plain, often just one sheet with text only. In the early to mid 1960s, the Committee expanded the programs into multiple folded pages and began incorporating graphics taken from the newsletters of the Theodor Herzl Institute in New York. These included cut-outs of both sides of the famous Warsaw Ghetto memorial monument in Warsaw sculpted by artist Natan Rapoport, one side featuring the heroic fighters and the other the martyrs being taken to their deaths. Other regular graphics
included rough sketches of a partisan figure and buildings in flames (See Figure 5). In 1974, new program shells were obtained from the CJC in Toronto, featuring stark black, white, and red covers with a sundered six-candle menorah in a background of barbed wire and scorched earth (See Figure 6). Although these shells retained a photo of the Rapoport monument on the back, the partisan and burning ghetto sketches were discarded while the words "Holocaust Remembrance" replaced "Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Evening" on the front cover.
Thus, by 1975, local commemoration was in a clear state of transition. Over the next ten years, most of the original Warsaw Ghetto Committee and UJPO participants slowly withdrew from helping to organize the memorials, often due to ill health. Responsibility for the event passed to new groups consisting in part of survivors who had not yet been involved, as well as their children and others interested in the subject. The community's Holocaust mandate as a whole was broadening considerably in these years. Within the Pacific Region of the CJC, two important bodies were created in 1975: a Holocaust Standing Committee charged with Holocaust education in the public schools, and a Holocaust Remembrance Committee, under whose rubric the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial evenings fell. Within a short time, there was also movement to observe the day on Yom HaShoah, the 27th of Nisan, as decreed by Israel and observed by much of world Jewry. By the late 1980s, the memorial returned to the community's synagogues, bringing it, in a sense, full circle. At the time of writing, the yearly event, though no longer linked so much to the focal point of the uprising, continues to be an integral part of the community calendar.
Notes


3. In terms of fundraising alone, an emergency United Israel Appeal campaign in 1967, in the wake of the Six-Day War, is indicative of these priorities, resulting in donations of $1,250,000. Up to that point, the average sum raised by the community for both local and overseas drives for the entire year was between $300,000-$450,000. See: "Report to National Executive Committee," November 1967. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 39\ File 738. The CJC files pertaining to this period also include dozens of letter-writing campaigns and petitions addressed to Soviet leaders.

4. JWB, November 25, 1966, p.1. The article itself was a reprint of comments made by Saul Hayes, National Chairman of the Canadian Jewish Congress.


7. Dr. Roy Waldman, Executive Director of CJC Pacific Region, quoted in "Jewish Congress Disowns Anti-German Splinter Group," Vancouver Sun, April 15, 1967.

8. JWB, August 21, 1970, p.1. The culprits were apparently four young men who were part of a group calling itself the "National Socialist White People's Party". Although disturbing, the incident appears to have been quickly forgotten.

9. A folder containing various press clippings and correspondences pertaining to the Chrobatyn case is in CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 5\ File 2.


12. The Morse review appeared in the JWB, April 25, 1969, p.9, while long excerpts from Kaplan's diary were featured over a period of three weeks: March 8, 1973, p.5; March 15, 1973, p.5; and March 22, 1973, p.8.


19. "Pacific Region," *Pathways to the Present*, p. 95. The 1975 UN vote, Resolution 3379, was passed with 72 countries in favour, 35 against, and 32 abstentions. It was repealed in 1991 by a large majority.


23. *JWB*, May 18, 1962, p. 2. Part of the Schindler article reads, "The Jewish people will never forget him. The world would do well to remember and study him."

24. Roy Waldman. "Report to National Executive Meeting," November 1967. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 39\ File 738. One example of the enthusiastic press coverage of this gesture is a November 12, 1966 Vancouver Sun article called "For Courage and Compassion," part of which reads: "Canadians will applaud both the Hulsteins and the Jewish community. And part of that applause will be for helping to restore their faith in human decency."


27. "Statement of Solidarity with Israel," December 1974. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 5\ File 8. The signees of this document included several prominent members of the Vancouver School of Theology and the head of UBC's Religious Studies Department. In a similar vein, an April 1971 gathering of the CCCJ featured a lecture entitled "Israel's Destiny as Found in the Scriptures."

28. Dr. Lloyd Gaston. *JWB*, March 14, p. 6; Dr. Marvin Weintraub to Dr. Peter Jones, July 4, 1975, CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 5.
29. "Wiesel Makes Unexpected Impact on Record Crowd," JWB, April 3, pp.6, 13. Over 700 people are said to have attended this event, giving Wiesel a "thunderous" standing ovation.

30. Member List of Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee, 1966. CJC Files Pacific Region, Box 15\ File 506. At least two of the community's most active Labour Zionists also became members as of 1966, Ben Garber and Joshua Checov. In 1967, the Committee was assigned a secretary in the person of Anne Zimmerman, the wife of JCC Director Lou Zimmerman and a part-time Congress staffperson.

31. Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee Minutes, 1966. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 506.

32. In 1969, for example, this task was entrusted to Danny Osipov, the son of commemoration stalwart Oscar Osipov, while the 1974 candle lighting was conducted by Tammy Claman, the daughter of frequent performer Gerry Claman. Tammy was described in the subsequent Committee report as "an eleven-year-old backbone of the Warsaw Ghetto evenings" for her four-year involvement with the memorials. See CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 484.

33. The script of "I Never Saw Another Butterfly" is in CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 531. The play originally aired in 1965 as an "Eternal Light" radio program. For the 1966 Vancouver JCC Terezin exhibit, see "The Spirit of the Children of Terezin," Vancouver Province, November 18, 1966, p.4. The Terezin camp (Theresienstadt in German) was a transit station in occupied Czechoslovakia established by the Nazis in 1941 as a so-called "model camp" for purposes of propaganda to the outside world. Hence the availability and survival of some writing and artistic materials. Of the 15,000 children who passed through Terezin however, about 100 remained alive at the war's end.

34. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 490.

35. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ Files 509, 519.


37. Ibid.

38. Anne Zimmerman. JWB, March 10, 1972, p.5. The Beth Israel afternoon school is singled out as the exception to this appraisal.

39. Letter to Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee from CJC Pacific Region Education Committee, December 21, 1968. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 508.

40. In a study of Vancouver's Talmud Torah, the largest of the community's Hebrew schools, Rozanne Kent writes that although the
Talmud Torah's educators who survived the Holocaust were certainly imbued with the impulse to keep Judaism alive, the Holocaust itself was not discussed openly or in-depth at the school during the postwar decades. See: Rozanne F. Kent. Educating Vancouver's Jewish Children: The Talmud Torah, 1913-1959 and Beyond, (Vancouver: Dacher Printing Limited, 1995).

41. Personal conversation with Gallia Chud.

42. Personal interview with Harold Berson.

43. All information pertaining to Habonim's commemorative activities was provided by John Mate, who was extremely active in the movement throughout the 1960s, as well as George Mate and his wife Noni, also very active members during the late 1960s and early 1970s.


47. Judge Norman Oreck. Speech delivered at the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Evening, April 13, 1969. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 495.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid.


54. I would like to thank Rabbi Solomon for providing me with information pertaining to Beth Israel's commemorative activities via e-mail.

55. This Kaddish was originally written in 1955 by author Soma Morgenstern as part of his novel The Third Pillar. In 1972 it was incorporated into the High Holiday martyrology of the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative movement. Several hundred well-worn copies of the prayer can be found among the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee files, suggesting that it may have also been used at the
community-wide commemorations.

56. Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee Minutes, November 7, 1968. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 500.

57. Ibid.

58. Ibid.

59. Program, Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Evening, 1975. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 100\ File 6.

60. Personal interview with Harold Berson. My thanks to Mr. Berson for also providing me access to the proofs of these photographs.


62. "Rabbi's Stand Criticized," JWB, April 19, 1968, p.2. It bears mentioning that this particular foray into community politics cost Mate his job as the summer camp counselor for Habonim that year.


66. JWB, April 26, 1968, p.2.


68. Morris Saltzman to Mike Wallace, February 13, 1973. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ F487.

69. JWB, April 26, 1974, p.12.

70. Bernice Green. "Resistance and Redemption". Script, CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 531. The play was originally written in Yiddish and performed at the Cleveland JCC.

71. "To Live with Dignity--To Die with Honor," Script. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 535. There are many variations of this particular work, one of which appears in the 1956 "Program Helps" issued by the Canadian Jewish Congress. At least two slightly different versions are in the possession of Harold Berson. All of the versions incorporate pieces of Morton Wishengrad's 1943 work "Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto".

72. My thanks to Marjorie Morris for providing me with this information through several conversations. An anthology of Ms.
Morris’ works is available at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. She is also the co-author of the memoirs of Vancouver survivor Leon Kahn, whom she interviewed for two years to produce the book No Time to Mourn: A True Story of a Jewish Partisan Fighter, (Vancouver, Laurelton Press, 1978.)

73. See CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 13\ Hulstein File. Lou Zimmerman is generally credited as the individual who first brought the Hulstein case to the community’s attention, while Bill Simmons organized much of the fundraising. Otherwise, it appears to have been a collaborative effort on the part of numerous survivor-volunteers and donors.

74. My thanks to Dr. Robert Krell for providing me with copies of letters from his personal files pertaining to these discussions.

75. Schara Tzedeck Cemetery Board Minutes, February 5, 1967 and May 9, 1967. I am most grateful to Kim Baylis and Jack Kowarski of the Cemetery Board for providing me copies of the minutes pertaining to discussion of a memorial.

76. Minutes, meeting of an ad-hoc committee of Vancouver Holocaust survivors, October 17, 1974. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 15\ File 487. The meeting was held at the home of Leon Kahn and was attended by various survivors, Rabbis Hier and Solomon, and Morris Saltzman and Lou Zimmerman.

77. Personal interview with Leon Kahn, December 2000.

78. Ibid.


81. Personal interview with Dr. Robert Krell, December 2000. According to Dr. Krell, who pushed strongly to have the event observed on Yom HaShoah, Israel had the moral authority when it came to commemoration and it behooved other Jewish communities to fall in line, particularly so the day could become a more fixed part of the calendar.
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

Summary:

If the development of commemoration in Vancouver is any indication, some of the common academic assumptions regarding this history are in need of re-examination. As described in the first chapter, two recent works attempting to trace the emergence of Holocaust memory in the United States and Canada have asserted that the fifteen to twenty years following the war were a period during which the Nazi mass murder of European Jewry was almost completely marginalized in Jewish public affairs. In Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life*, this is ascribed to the Cold War environment and the generally optimistic mood of those years, while Franklin Bialystok's *Delayed Impact* also points to a level of ethnic comfort as well as other priorities on the community agenda and the lack of a dialogue with survivors. Both writers establish these findings in large part on their appraisal of the Jewish leadership's pronouncements and what they see as the absence or even suppression of Holocaust discourse.

Based on my own analysis of the oral and documentary record pertaining to Vancouver's Jewish community and commemoration in these years, I have argued that although both of these works provide valuable insights into some of the dilemmas faced by Jewish leaders following the Second World War, they offer an incomplete and often inaccurate picture of the landscape of Holocaust memory and ritual remembrance as they developed at the community level. While both of these authors concentrate on the
factors which limited the Holocaust's impact in these years, I have taken the opposite approach of emphasizing how this period was marked by a series of events keeping memories fresh. In terms of international developments alone, for instance, my account highlights how the end of hostilities in Europe did not initiate a period of near-silence, but rather how the denouement of the war itself was followed by the Nuremberg trials, the plight of Jewish refugees, the arrival of survivors, the creation of the State of Israel, reparations, and the rapid rehabilitation of West Germany on the world stage.

Numerous factors specific to Vancouver also contributed to maintaining a higher degree of Holocaust discourse and awareness. Throughout these years the community's only Jewish newspaper, the Jewish Western Bulletin, was edited by individuals with a deep personal interest in the events of the Holocaust and the need for commemoration. Abe Arnold's tenure from 1949 to 1960 was marked by manifold editorials and news items about the Nazi genocide and its aftermath. Ample coverage was also given to the writings of Dr. Isaac Schwarzbart of the World Jewish Congress, a tireless promoter of commemoration during the 1950s. There is no question that commemoration was part of Jewish public discourse in these years. Arnold's successors Sam and Mona Kaplan were likewise dedicated supporters, often going above and beyond their advertising duties to encourage public interest. Even Vancouver's two mainstream dailies bear evidence of having taken occasional interest in the events of the Holocaust and their commemoration. The Vancouver Sun, as mentioned, became a forum for debate during
the 1958 production of The Diary of Anne Frank, and again in 1961 with local reactions to the Eichmann trial and Warsaw Ghetto commemoration. The Jewish community's 1966 dedication of a scroll and pension to Dutch rescuer Henry Hulstein was front-page news.¹

The activities of the Jewish left wing are another important and neglected factor in the development of Holocaust memory that I have emphasized. Vancouver's Peretz School appears to have been the city's first organized body to hold public commemorations on the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. Despite the later assertions of some CJC Pacific Region documents laying claim to 1948 as the date that Congress-sponsored memorials were initiated, this was in fact the year that Peretz School commemorations began and not vice versa.² The 1945 founding of the Peretz School itself was perceived as a living form of commemoration by those involved, the motivating factor being the perpetuation of the Yiddish cultural world and ethos destroyed by the Nazis in Europe. This concern for activism and remembrance was shared by the members of Vancouver's United Jewish People's Order, many of whom were associated with the school. By the early 1950s the UJPO was also commemorating the ghetto uprising, sometimes even in non-Jewish venues. Granted that both the school and the UJPO in particular were somewhat forced to the periphery of community affairs, their commemorative activities did receive some publicity, and they represent important early gestures of remembrance that warrant further recognition and study. The UJPO's political outspokenness about Germany, neo-Nazism, and anti-Semitism was also a significant factor in these years.
A third very important early avenue of commemoration that appears to have been almost completely ignored by scholars of Holocaust memory is the activity of community rabbis. Although the Vancouver records are incomplete, it is clear that at least some of the postwar rabbinical leadership sermonized about the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the events of the Holocaust. The Conservative Beth Israel synagogue which opened in 1948 was dedicated to "the sacred memory of all synagogues in Europe destroyed by the rage and fury of Nazi hate and oppression." As described earlier, one of the community's most charismatic spiritual figures in this period was Rabbi Ginsberg of the Beth Hamidrash congregation, himself a refugee who lost his entire family during the war. Not only was Ginsberg an active proponent of remembrance, but in his physical appearance he was the living embodiment of the "Old World". During these years there were already prayers available written specifically for the purposes of commemoration, at least one of which was used by all three Vancouver rabbis for the community's first 1952 memorial. Cantorial music recalling the tragedy was likewise being performed by synagogue choirs in these early years. Thus, although Peter Novick for one has cited the seeming lack of theological confrontation with the role of God during the Holocaust until the 1960s as an indication of the earlier absence of any religious activity or discourse about these events, this view is misleading. Rabbinic sermons and synagogue services may well have been among the earliest Holocaust exposure that some community members experienced.
In this regard, the importance of the Jewish calendar in perpetuating memory and meaning is especially revealing in the study of a community context like Vancouver's. Judging by some of the commentary in the *JWB* during the war and after, certain Jewish holidays such as Purim easily lent themselves to analogies placing Hitler at the top of a long list of Hamans. At times, ritual remembrance of the two events was also linked, as in a 1958 Purim editorial stating, "As a result of Hitler and the nazis, there is a new date on the Jewish calendar. It is not a festival however but a solemn commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto and the six million martyrs who fell at nazi hands." The traditional Yiskor prayers recited throughout the year were likewise natural anchors for the invocation of Holocaust victims, particularly on Yom Kippur and the last day of Pesach, the latter of which served as an officially-announced occasion for Warsaw Ghetto commemoration in the early 1950s and which assumed its own synagogue rituals by the early 1960s, if not sooner, as did the Holocaust-related additions to the Yom Kippur martyrology. The "Seder Ritual of Remembrance" written by Rufus Learsi in 1953 was printed in the *JWB* every year as of 1959, providing a home ritual for the commemoration of the six million victims and the uprising. Other variations on the seder ritual became available in the 1960s. For their part, the members of the United Jewish People's Order certainly viewed commemoration of the revolt's anniversary each year as something akin to a religious rite. Among some of the community's youth groups, Tisha B'Av served as a day of ritual commemoration in this period. Even in these early years then, the
traditional calendar and many of its days of remembrance had become infused with the imagery and memories of the Holocaust.

This was nowhere more true than in the popular perception of the ties between Pesach and the anniversaries of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising and the creation of the State of Israel. While James Young has analyzed this development in Israel itself as it relates to the "nationalization" of memory, a similar phenomenon is discernable in Vancouver. As described in chapter two, the period from roughly March to May each year was characterized by an intensification of Holocaust discourse in community affairs, much of it linking the biblical story of liberation with the uprising and the Israeli War of Independence, both in terms of linear time and in a deeper, "spiritual" nexus of one having inspired the other in various ways. In April 1953, a front-page JWB article took this relationship for granted in stating that, "This is a time of special remembrance in the Jewish community. We have just concluded the celebration of Passover and now we are observing the tenth anniversary of the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto. In little more than a week we will be celebrating the fifth anniversary of Israel's Independence."6 One year previous, in an article entitled "Warsaw Ghetto and Israel Independence Day", it was announced that "Two major commemorative events are taking place in the Jewish community this week...both merit the widest non-partisan support and have a vital relation to each other."

Even the artwork of Passover issues sometimes reflected these perceptions (See Figures 1 and 2). Again then, while there is no question that support of Israel dominated the community agenda, in the
minds of many, the annual celebration of Israeli Independence was irrevocably tied to the memory of the Holocaust.

At the everyday level of human relations, one further element in the early development of commemoration that I have attempted to highlight is the impact of the encounter with survivors. Of the community leaders and civil servants who were the most active supporters of Holocaust remembrance, almost all had played an important role in the settling of survivors who came to Vancouver. These included Rabbi David Kogen, Sam Tenenbaum, and Morris Saltzman and Lou Zimmerman, the last two being individuals who at various points headed or administered many of the community's major organized bodies such as the Pacific Region of the CJC and the Community Centre. The exact connection between their personal involvement with survivors and their belief in the importance of commemoration is impossible to determine, but it could not have been a coincidence. Moreover, the permanent establishment of the community's Warsaw Ghetto evenings in 1956 was a collaborative effort involving survivors and former refugees and the sponsorship of Congress and the Jewish Community Council. This particular scenario is quite unlike the one described by Novick in The Holocaust in American Life or Bialystok in Delayed Impact and the available theses about "landsmanschaften", all of which emphasize the initial remoteness of the established Jewish community and leadership to survivors and commemoration alike.

Considering the findings of others, in fact, it is quite possible that had organizations of survivors or "landsmanschaften" existed in Vancouver as outlets for commemoration in the postwar
years, the development of community-wide memorials might have been much delayed. In the event, this task was undertaken by the relatively small group that formed the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Committee specifically in order to bring the events of the Holocaust forward to the broader community and ensure remembrance. Given the timing, this development cannot be attributed to any of the factors generally ascribed to the emergence of commemoration, such as the renewed sense of threat created by local manifestations of neo-Nazism or the awareness raised by the Eichmann trial. Nor does the Cold War appear to have been a deterrent. The situation was more complicated, consisting in large part of the extreme dedication of the members of the Warsaw Ghetto Committee, all of whom, it bears repeating, were still mourning their own losses. The inclusion of UJPO members added yet another dynamic, as did the afore-mentioned support of community leaders. These relationships established through commemoration in the mid to late 1950s lasted, in many cases, for well over twenty-five years.

Thus, while there is no question that Holocaust discourse increased and intensified in Vancouver as it did elsewhere after the late 1960s, it cannot be said that the landscape of memory prior to this period was virtually empty. The community's "trail of commemoration", after all, begins in 1943, at the very height of the Holocaust. The memorial held on this occasion indicates that even during the war itself, there was enough information available to discern a sense of the specifically-Jewish tragedy taking place. The vivid coverage given to reports of the Warsaw
Ghetto uprising also clearly had an impact on the popular imagination, introducing the dual themes of heroism and martyrdom that became the signature motifs of postwar commemoration. Another early theme that spanned the ideological divide was the symbol of a torch being passed from the victims to future Jewish generations, be it the torch of religion, secular Judaism, Zionism, freedom, or revolution. Plays like Morton Wishengrad's 1943 "Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto" mixed both socialist and religious elements in homage to the victims, as did many of the literary tributes or poems later used for memorials, "Genesis" being the most prominent locally. The concept of a new and better world emerging from the sacrifice of Jewish lives also emerged very early in these materials, made even more resonant by the creation of the State of Israel in 1948.

It was not so much a matter of lack of response, then, but of different types of response, or, as James Young has framed it, a matter of "collected" memories rather than a monolithic "collective" memory imposed from above. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, the community rabbis drew their own particular meaning, as did the members of the UJPO and Peretz School. For many Zionists, the most pressing response was to build a strong Israel. For many of those engaged in settling refugees and survivors, material and occupational aid were paramount, though among them individuals such as Sam Tenenbaum felt strongly enough about remembrance to organize a memorial. In the years following their arrival, some of the community's survivors dedicated themselves to providing public forms of commemoration, others attended each
year, while others remained aloof. By the early 1960s, the Warsaw Ghetto memorials sometimes elicited vocal community reaction on the part of those who felt that different types of responses would be more appropriate, or others who altogether resented the effort to stir memory. The fate of the Belkin mural is another example of community response. Although many survivors were positive about the piece, it did not satisfy their needs as a permanent memorial, eventually disappearing from the landscape of Holocaust memory. In the meantime, the community's ritual remembrance became increasingly encompassing of religious needs and the wider survivor experience.

The variety and evolution of response manifest in Vancouver tends to confirm the inadequacy of approaching "Holocaust consciousness" as something that the Jewish leadership chose to promote or suppress according to the perceived needs of the community. The community had views and priorities of its own. In the Vancouver experience, support from the leadership was only one factor, and contrary to the models developed by Novick and Bialystok, it was forthcoming in matters pertaining to commemoration, even during the 1950s. Nonetheless, the phenomenon as a whole appears to have been much more complex, the consequence of individual motivations rather than the impetus of anonymous organizations and leaders. Likewise, while major events such as the Eichmann trial and the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973 were important catalysts for Holocaust memory, the impulse to commemorate predated these developments and cannot be said to have ensued from them. As stated earlier, it seems unlikely that the
politicization and invocations of the Holocaust as a response to threats to Israel would have been quite so intense had there not been a long-held popular perception of the one as the sole redemptive outcome of the other.

The Vancouver experience also tends to confirm the need to assess the responses of each community individually rather than as part of a broader, countrywide theory. There were clearly important factors in Toronto and Montreal that did not have an impact in Vancouver and vice versa. Commemoration developed in Vancouver irrespective of the absence of "landsmanschaften" or increasing tensions between survivor organizations and the CJC over the response to neo-Nazism. Nor was there an identifiable "turning point" such as the Allan Gardens riot. Although the Vancouver media closely followed episodes of neo-Nazi activity, local incidents were relatively few. The Jewish press, nonetheless, was extremely supportive of commemoration from very early on, as was the local rabbinate and the Jewish left wing, followed very shortly by the Warsaw Ghetto Committee and its community sponsors. Yet, in the existing literature, there has been a tendency to discount Warsaw Ghetto commemoration in this period as somehow inconsequential.

Based on my own study, I would submit that Vancouver's Warsaw Ghetto commemorations represent precisely the type of grassroots responses that some country-wide analyses claim did not exist. This being the case, I would further suggest that an understanding of community reaction to an event as significant as the Holocaust might be best conducted on a city-by-city basis through a model
such as the one that I have attempted to develop for Vancouver, where extensive use of the local records and resources yielded a wealth of information about this important period.
Notes

1. "Jews Honor the 'Quiet Man'," Vancouver Sun, April 18, 1966, p.1. In addition to local coverage, the Hulstein File, CJC Pacific Region Files\ Box 13, contains clippings about the dedication from newspapers Canada-wide.

2. See, for example: Pacific Region Plenary Report, April 1977. CJC Pacific Region Files, Box 39\ File 739. This report includes an update regarding the community's Warsaw Ghetto commemorations which, like other similar documents, asserts that the CJC Pacific Region had sponsored the event "for 29 consecutive years". Somehow the 1948 date had become appropriated in the mind of whomever was submitting these reports.

3. Several of the UJPO members with whom I spoke fondly recalled how in his appearance Ginsberg was the very epitome of the East European shtetl.

4. JWB, April 24, 1952, p.1. The prayer in question was issued by the Synagogue Council of America. See chapter 2, note 59.

5. JWB, February 28, 1958, p.2.


8. In his work, Young is very encouraging of the promotion of a multiplicity of meanings in Holocaust commemoration, which he feels keeps memory responsive to changing needs and prevents it from becoming rigid and authoritarian.
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