



Montreal Holocaust
Memorial Centre

Newsletter

Fall 2011

MHMC Features: Holocaust Education Series 2011

The Holocaust Education Series will be held from October 26 to November 6, 2011 and feature 10 days of testimony, readings, films and discussions that put memory at the heart of our future. We have organized some 21 activities, and we can safely say that there will be an event which will appeal to everyone! Learn about how Holocaust denial and antisemitism are manifested today with international experts in the field, moderated by Todd van der Heyden, on Thursday, October 27 at 7:30pm at Marianopolis College. Listen to Deborah Lipstadt and Olga Sher while they discuss the Eichmann Trial, on Monday, October 31 at 7 pm. at the Gelber Conference Centre. Discuss the challenges and barriers faced by refugees in Canada today, with Rivka Augenfied, Rick Goldman, Michael Chervin and Delice Mugabo on Thursday, November 3 at 7 pm. at Armatta. Meet the witnesses to history and understand the Holocaust through the stories of those who survived it, Sunday, October 30 and November 6 during the day. Greater knowledge about the Holocaust and current human rights issues leads to action promoting respect for diversity and harmony. Each day, the Centre sees this in individual commitments to better intercultural understanding. The Centre will bestow a first award recognizing individual action at the opening of the Series, on Wednesday, October 26 at 20:45 at the Segal Centre ArtLounge, just after the film *The Last Survivor*. We look forward to seeing you.



Teacher's Conference:

The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre is proud to announce a second edition of its professional development day for teachers to be held on October 27 under the theme **"Teaching the Holocaust and Other Genocides: Opportunities, Challenges and Successes"**. Nearly twenty speakers from universities and schools will share their experience with around one hundred elementary and high school teachers.

A Look Into our Collection:

The Lukacs-Vadasz collection consists of photographs, documents and military medals belonging to Sandor Vadasz and his wife Julianna, born Lukacs; two Hungarian Jews who left their homeland to escape antisemitic persecution in the late 1930s. Some of the couple's documents and photographs are on display until October 2011 in a showcase at the entrance of the Museum.

Sandor Vadasz was born on May 12, 1895 in Budapest, Hungary. During the First World War, he fought in the Austro-Hungarian Army and received the 1915 War Medal, an award of merit for his part in the Battle of the Dardanelles (Ottoman Empire). As a veteran, he received the Prussian Commemorative Cross for combatants and the commemorative medal of the World War created by the Regent, Admiral Horthy. After the war, Sandor became an engineer and worked in Brazil. In 1929 he and Julianna, born in Budapest in 1900, got married in Hungary.

In 1938 the couple, along with Julianna's mother, Bertha, left Hungary and settled in Istanbul (Turkey) where Sandor worked on irrigation projects. Sandor's career and world events lead them on to Iraq (1939-1940) and Kenya (1940-1942c). During the Second World War Sandor joined the East African forces of the Commonwealth.



He was discharged after a year and was then forced to join his wife and his mother-in-law in a civilian internment camp in Entebbe (Uganda). The couple was interned because they were Hungarian citizens. In 1948 they were finally able to leave Uganda; they sailed up the Nile to Cairo and, after a stopover in Italy, settled in Paris for almost a year before leaving for Rio de Janeiro (Brazil). With the help of the Canadian Jewish Council they immigrated to Montreal in 1949.

The couple managed to preserve many documents despite their journeys, which took them to many countries. Some are identity cards, for example passports, visas and residents' cards; others are certificates attesting to their conversion to Protestantism in order to escape antisemitic persecution in the 1930s.

Beside these official documents, the Center also received photographs taken by the couple throughout their voyages. It includes images of ancient ruins in Turkey, a mosque in Basra in Iraq, Masai warriors in Kenya, civilian internment camps in Uganda and military shipwrecks sunk during the war along the Nile. All these documents provide a glimpse of the impact that world-wide conflicts had on Africa and the fate of individuals from countries belonging to the Axis powers who were living in the Commonwealth during the war. They are a rich source of documentation on the life and the difficulties experienced by the Jews of Hungary in the inter-war period.

The Centre wishes to thank Ms. Edith Uditsky, a close friend of Julianna Vadasz, for the gift of this collection. The Centre also thanks the following people for their recent donations to the collection: Barbara Cieply, Marcia Shuster and Ruth Ellen Sharp.

The Centre is actively looking for objects, documents and photographs for its collection in order to pursue its work of remembrance and Holocaust education to a wider audience and to meet the demands of researchers, historians and other interested museums. If you would like to contribute to the Centre's collection by donating an object or document, please contact the MHMC's Museum & Collection Coordinator Julie Guinard at (514) 345-2605 ext 3022 or by email julie.guinard@mhmc.ca.



Top right: Julianna at her Bookshop in Hungary. Bottom Left: Sandor Vadasz soldier WWI on a horse, 1915.

Video Testimonies: Life stories for future generations

The MHMC is pursuing its mission of collecting the video testimony of Holocaust survivors with renewed vigor. We are training new interviewers to reach more people interested in giving a testimony in order to increase the number of testimonies recorded. We are seeking survivors of ghettos, labour camps, death camps, forced labour brigades as well as hidden children, partisans, liberators and rescuers to tell their stories.

These testimonies will allow generations to come to understand personal stories of prewar life, survival and resilience, as well as the history of the Holocaust and learn to be sensitive to the universal perils of antisemitism, racism, hate and indifference.

Our testimonies are mainly recorded in English and French, but thanks to the variety of languages spoken by our interviewees, those who feel more comfortable in German, Hungarian or Romanian and would prefer to give a testimony in that language, can also do so.



To watch excerpts or the survivors' testimonies, click on the photos.



If you or someone you know would like to give a video testimony and thus ensure its long-term preservation, please contact the MHMC's Remembrance Coordinator, Eszter Andor by email at eszter.andor@mhmc.ca or by telephone at 514 345 2605, ext. 3093.



Equitas Day:

This year again, the MHMC partnered with EQUITAS for its "International Human Rights Training Program". On June 12, we hosted 64 human rights educators working in 26 countries. They visited the museum and then shared a meal with a Holocaust survivor. The day concluded with a discussion on the role of life stories as a tool for human rights education. It was a day very much appreciated by all.

New Teaching Tool:

The MHMC has created a new educational tool on the teaching of the Holocaust and the genocide in Cambodia. The tool specifically develops the issue of Canada's response, from the government and citizens, during both events. It is designed for Secondary 5 students following the course Contemporary World. Six teachers will be testing it this fall, and next year, it will be available to all Quebec students.

Human Rights Committee:

As many of our members are already aware, last year the Centre founded a new Young Adult committee focusing on Human Rights and Advocacy issues. This committee, now composed of 11 young adults under the age of 35, has established an action plan and is scheduled to host 6 events in the coming year. In March, 2011, a subcommittee of this group developed and provided genocide education programming for 200 grade 11 March of the Living Participants. The Committee's next project is a panel event on refugee rights as part of the upcoming Holocaust Education Series.

Committee members represent a diverse range of young people who are sensitized to broad issues of human and social rights. They are focused on advancing the aspect of the Centre's mandate that includes promoting respect for religious, cultural and racial diversity and to developing programs that educate and sensitize other young adults to the human rights related mission of the Centre. **We wish a warm welcome to Louis-Philippe Jannard**, our new Human Rights Coordinator who has been working with Julie Shugarman since the beginning of the month.

Book Fair

The MHMC held the 2nd edition of its Book Fair on Sunday August 21, with much success. Over 140 people showed up to meet Holocaust survivors and discover their memoirs. Eighteen authors took part in this event, where The Azrieli Foundation also presented some of the books from their new series.



From top to bottom: Sabrina Moisan, Education Coordinator, Leslie Vertes, Holocaust Survivor, with participants of the EQUITAS workshop; Book Fair 2011; Simon Wajcer with his mother's book *So You Can Tell* at the MHMC's Book Fair

In other news...

- Jamie Benizri, a young volunteer at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, will be running the **Montreal Oasis Full Marathon** in memory of his late grandfather, Isak Cieply, who survived the Holocaust. Through this initiative, the **Run 2 Remember**, Jamie has committed himself to raising funds to promote, sustain and develop essential Holocaust education and remembrance work. He recently brought together 50 friends and family members to raise awareness, through a visit to the Museum. Go Jamie!!!
- The Centre, a member of the **Zachor Coalition for the National Holocaust Remembrance Day** organized a day trip to Ottawa for our members to participate in the Yom Hashoah Commemoration held on June 14, 2011 in our nation's capital organized this year thanks to the leadership of the Canadian Society for Yad Vashem.



Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre

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