

Editorial comment/ letters

Make Holocaust, anti-racism education mandatory

Manitoba's Department of Education and Training is doing a commendable job of providing information for teachers about the Holocaust.

But it could be doing considerably more to ensure as many Manitoba schools as possible actually teach their students about the Nazis' mass murder of six million Jews.

Those conclusions can be drawn from a Jewish Post & News investigation into Holocaust education in Manitoba, published in this newspaper last week.

The two stories followed a complaint teacher Hersch Zentner made at a symposium B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights sponsored here last March on fighting racism.

Chair since 1993 of the Winnipeg Jewish Community Council Holocaust Awareness Committee's Education Outreach Committee, Zentner alleged that Manitoba's Department of Education and Training relies too heavily on his committee to teach students about the Holocaust.

Although Zentner, Holocaust survivors and others in the Jewish community are glad to speak to students on this topic, he feels teachers are "often left to their own devices", when it comes to teaching about that genocide.

Zentner would also like teaching about the Holocaust and about the dangers of racism in general included in the curriculum guides the Department of Education and Training issues to schools, outlining skills and knowledge teachers are expected to pass on to students.

Asked by *The Jewish Post & News* what they're doing in the way of Holocaust education, Department of Education and Training officials pointed to extensive lists of books,

videotapes, films and other material the department makes available to teachers, and that teachers can get on request.

Among her many other duties, a multicultural education specialist with the department has also been going to schools regularly for the past few years, offering teachers and students workshops on the Holocaust, on invitation.

But department officials couldn't provide figures, when asked exactly how many teachers are using the resources they make available on Holocaust education.

Of 12 workshops the department specialist gave on that subject from April 1994 to April, 1996, an average of only three per year were to students. Zentner, in contrast, has given about 116 workshops on the Holocaust to students since 1994, along with survivors and others on his committee. The sharp difference in numbers gives rise to questions about the long-term future of Holocaust education here, once survivors and other experts like him are no longer around to push for and provide it. And of all history textbooks the department has designated as "approved textbooks" for classroom use in Grades 8, 9 and 11, only one has any references to the Holocaust.

The Department of Education and Training now is reviewing curricula in key areas like language arts and social studies, where the Holocaust is most likely to surface. It's encouraging that Zentner and other experts on Holocaust teaching will be called on for input in that review.

The Holocaust is the ultimate example of the horrors racism can lead to. Teaching about that genocide and racism in general should be mandatory in Manitoba schools.

Dry Bones



KIRSHEN JERUSALEM REPORT Cartoonists & Writers Syndicate

Torah orbited Earth, housed at synagogue

NEW YORK (JTA) - The Torah has joined the growing list of earthly objects that have traveled in space. "Wherever Jews have wandered, they have taken the Torah with them," said Jeffrey Hoffman, a Jewish astronaut who carried the holy scrolls during the space shuttle Columbia's trip from February 22 to March 9. "Astronauts are human beings and when we travel, we take with us our culture and heritage," he said. The Torah now is housed at Congregation Or Hadash in Houston.

LETTERS

Family thanks JWC students, teacher for help in building dike

On April 19, about 15 Grade 11 students from Joseph Wolinsky Collegiate spent a wet, snowy afternoon helping pass sandbags along at a private property on Scotia Street. The students and JWC physical education teacher Kevin Abrahams joined students and teachers from other North End high schools in building a dike there, to protect the home from the Red River's rising floodwaters.

Last week, the family responded with the following letter of thanks, addressed to JWC Principal Jerry Cohen and the student council. It is reprinted here with the family's permission...

My husband and I, along with our three small children, would like to extend our sincerest thanks and gratitude to all the students and teachers who came to help lay down the 4,000 sandbags needed on our yard on Scotia Street.

You were a Godsend to us - we never could have done it without all of your hard work and support.

Your kindness and willingness to help strangers in their time of need is so greatly appreciated - we will never forget how you all helped out our family.

We are proud to have met such kindhearted volunteers and we hope that our children will grow up to "Love Thy Neighbor" as much as everyone in your school has. God bless you all!

DENISE & RALPH DAWERT & FAMILY
Scotia Street
Winnipeg

Gelatin unsuitable for kosher cheesecake

The April 17/96 edition featured cheesecakes in the "Kosher Cooking" column by Jill Kirshenbaum. They all sound wonderful, but I have a problem with the Tropical Cheesecake. In my experience, gelatin is a meat by-product, and unsuitable for use in cheesecake. If Ms. Kirshenbaum is aware of a pareve equivalent for unflavored gelatin, I would be delighted to hear about it, as I have been unable to find one myself.

In the meantime, please scrutinize your recipes more carefully!

MARILYN SINGER
Winnipeg

Books/ community news/ comment

Wolodarsky family letters a "window" into immigrant experience

Winnipeg's Roz Usiskin has organized early correspondence between her father, aunt and grandmother into a vivid book

By MATT BELLAN

"My dearly beloved son! You should have a long and healthy life!

"I can write you, dear son, that Sunday when Feter (Uncle) went to Shul, Sholom delivered your letter to him. When Feter brought it home, you can imagine how we have waited and longed for his letter. As I began to read it, the whole street was suddenly filled with people who had heard that you were, with God's help, well and safe on the other side..."

Chaya Rivka Forman wrote those words in Yiddish in 1913, from her home in the small, heavily-Jewish town of Rizshe, Ukraine to her son, Joseph Wolodarsky, a newly-arrived immigrant to Winnipeg.

They're near the beginning of Roz Usiskin's book, *A Lifetime of Letters: The Wolodarsky Family, The Period of Separation, 1913-1922*. "The story of all immigrants at that particular time,"

A work the Jewish Winnipeg sociologist published on her own late last year, the 191-page soft-cover volume has been described as a "window" into the Jewish immigrant experience in the early 1900s.

It consists of correspondence Usiskin came across in the early 1980s between her late father, Joseph, his late mother, Chaya Rivka, Joseph's late sister, Pesel, and other members of the family.

The eloquent, often heartrending letters focus on Wolodarsky's efforts to bring his family over to Winnipeg from the Old Country, starting in 1913, and his relatives' unsuccessful attempts to emigrate, just before the First World War broke out.

A second section includes correspondence with family

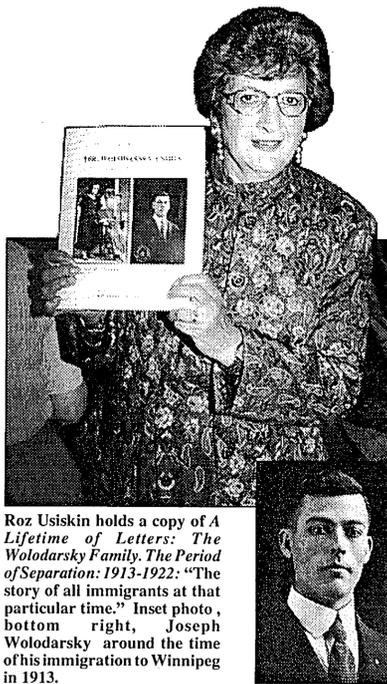
"They travel from 1 market to the next"

Following is an excerpt from Roz Usiskin's book, *A Lifetime of Letters, The Wolodarsky Family, The Period of Separation, 1913-1922*, reprinted with permission: It is part of a description by her father, Joseph Wolodarsky, of his hometown of Rizshe, in what was then the Ukrainian part of Russia. He wrote this years after emigrating to Winnipeg in 1913...

"Jews are occupied mainly with trade. Most of the businessmen are shopkeepers who own large drygoods stores. Those with smaller stores cannot rely solely on sales from our town.

"They must travel to the numerous markets found in every small town. The poorest are those without a store, those who travel about with a pack on their back and a kerchief tied around their heads. Generally these are the poor widows, who are desperately trying to make a living for themselves and their children.

"They travel from one market to the next in the heat of summer and on the most bitter winter days, trying with heart and soul to entice and interest a customer with their meager wares..."



Two of Roz Usiskin's nieces and a nephew read excerpts from the book at B'nai Abraham Synagogue April 28. From left: Elaine Swirsky, Dr. Harvey Chochinov and Faigie Lazarek.

wrote from England to relatives already in North America, after he joined the Imperial Army's Jewish Legion in the waning days of the First World War.

And a third section has Wolodarsky's renewed correspondence with family

members in the Old Country after the disruption of the war, letters to them from his new wife, Florence, and other documents. The exchange of letters ends with a description for a Detroit relative of his joyful reunion with his mother and sister at the train station in Winnipeg in August, 1922, ending a separation of nine years.

"I remember my dad sitting at his desk, writing on current events and philosophical issues" and about his children, Usiskin, vice president of the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada, told about 80 relatives, friends and other interested onlookers April 28. She spoke at a program at B'nai Abraham Synagogue where her nephew, Dr. Harvey Chochinov, and nieces Elaine Swirsky and Faigie Lazarek read some of the letters included in the book.

"We were unaware of

these earlier letters," she told the crowd at the event, co-sponsored by the Jewish Historical Society of Western Canada and the United Jewish Peoples Order. "It wasn't until 1983 that I discovered this treasure, dating back to 1913."

Usiskin was researching a paper she was writing about Winnipeg's 1919 General Strike, that began with the Sheet Metal Workers' Union. Her father, Joseph, who died in 1965, had been a sheetmetal worker, and spoke to her of the time he joined the strikers.

"I was sure he would have written about his impressions of this major historic Canadian event," she writes in the book's introduction.

FOUND LETTERS BY ACCIDENT

Instead, searching through the bottom drawer of her dad's bookcase, she found a "haphazard collection of scattered and tattered pages" - correspondence between her father, mother and sister that he'd saved over the years.

Over the years, Usiskin sorted the sometimes undated letters into the correct chronological order, re-wrote many of them in the original Yiddish to preserve them, and translated them into English.

That work and the book, which includes family photographs, interviews with relatives and other documents, was a "labor of love."

The book is intended as a "wonderful legacy" for the 47 direct descendants of Joseph Wolodarsky and his late wife, Florence.

But it also offers others a detailed look at life in the heavily-Jewish town of Rizshe in the early 1900s (see excerpt at bottom left of this page), insights into the poverty and frustrations of Jews in the Old Country, waiting for relatives to bring them to the New World, accounts of the impact of the First World War, the Russian Revolution and the Balfour Declaration, and other fascinating information.

Although the book had a limited initial print run, copies are still available from Usiskin, who lives with her husband, Larry on Scotia Street.

"I'm sure there are many similar stories you have of your parents, grandparents," Usiskin told her audience at B'nai Abraham in a parting message. "This tells the story of all immigrants at that particular time, rather than just being a portrayal of a particular family."

Lazar commends police for arresting Internet hate monger

By MYRON LOVE

Michael Lazar, chair of the Midwest region of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada, is commending the Winnipeg police service hate crimes unit for laying what may be the first Internet hate crimes charges in North America.

On Wednesday, March 27, the unit raided a house in north Winnipeg and arrested a 17 year old (his name cannot be revealed because he is under 18) known on the Internet as "Inbred Jed". The youth was traced through his Internet account after a gay activist in Winnipeg named Mark Zoldy received a message on his Internet calling for "Death to Homosexuals" as "prescribed in the bible!"

The teenager greeted police at his door with a loaded pellet gun. He was unsuccessful in his efforts to erase the incriminating data from his computer. Among the items found in his room were Nazi and anarchist paraphernalia and a club with "gay bat" written on one side of it and "Jew bat" on the other.

Despite claims by the teen's father that it was all a "childish prank", police have laid charges of uttering threats to kill and possession of a weapon dangerous to the public peace against the youth. They are examining his computer contents to determine if more charges can be laid.

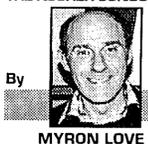
"Inbred Jed" had a previous brush with the law just last fall when he was charged with fraud, theft and counterfeiting (the charges have not yet been dealt with). He was offering plans on the Internet on building bombs and advice on carrying out crimes.

"This is going to be a very interesting prosecution," Lazar observes. "Generally when dealing with hate on the Internet, there are jurisdictional issues and questions of enforceability. In this case, the perpetrator was in the local jurisdiction. We still have to find solutions to the broader problems."

Kashrut the essence of Judaism

This is the first in a series of columns that will be appearing in *The Jewish Post & News* on kashrut and what a hechsher (kosher symbol) tells you about the contents of that product.

THE KOSHER CONSUMER



By MYRON LOVE

only allowed to eat the flesh of animals that have split hooves and chew their cuds. We are not allowed to eat the blood of these animals nor certain other portions which are consecrated to the Lord.

In addition, the animals have to be slaughtered - or shocked - in as humane a manner as possible so as to cause them minimal pain. We are not to eat roachkill nor animals we have killed in the wild, nor the flesh of any animals with impurities or disease in them.

The fish we can eat must have fins and scales. Seafood such as lobster and crab are out of bounds. So are birds of prey and most crawling creatures.

The Torah admonishes us from "scething a kid in its mother's milk". From that, generations of rabbis have developed a complex system of separation of dairy (milchiks) and meat (fleishiks) products, including a completely separate set of dishes, cutlery and cooking utensils and, in some cases, separate sinks to wash them in and even separate kitchens in some households. Products that are neither milk nor meat are called pareve and can be eaten with milk or meat products.

In Torah times, life was simpler. Today, we live in an increasingly complex time. The number of chemicals and compounds being added to foods to keep them fresh and longer lasting is growing exponentially, and not all the ingredients are listed on the side of the package.

Therefore, it is more important than ever to check those labels for the telltale hechsher that means a kosher seal of approval. That hechsher might be MK or COR or U or any number of others in a circle on the container.

"I'm sure there are many similar stories you have of your parents, grandparents," Usiskin told her audience at B'nai Abraham in a parting message. "This tells the story of all immigrants at that particular time, rather than just being a portrayal of a particular family."

I do not claim to be an expert on kashrut. I will be relying on a variety of rabbis and other informed sources in our community for my information.

Please stay tuned. Next time, the question will be "tuna or shark meat?"

By MARTIN ZEILIG

Writing in the newspaper *Yedioth Aharonot*, Israeli journalist Sylvie Keshet termed Mordechai Vanunu "the forgotten prisoner in the black hole."



Mordechai Vanunu arriving in court in 1986: "The forgotten prisoner."

VIEWPOINT

Since 1986, Vanunu has been in solitary confinement in Israel's Ashkelon Prison for revealing to Britain's *London Sunday Times* details of "a secret nuclear weapons plant" at the Dimona nuclear facility in the Negev Desert where he worked as a technician.

Vanunu was not paid for his disclosures to the news-

paper. Vanunu's subsequent kidnapping by Israeli secret agents in Rome, after he had been lured away from London by a female Mossad spy, is told in gripping detail in *Triple Cross: Israel, The Atomic Bomb & The Man who Spilled The Secrets* by Louis Toscano (A Birch

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