



BEYOND **NEVER AGAIN**

HOW THE HOLOCAUST SPEAKS TO US TODAY

COURSE RATIONALE

The Holocaust is the singular event of the last century that most marked the face of contemporary Jewish life. It was a shocking example of what cruelties are tolerated by modern civilized states. It devastated the Jewish people, destroying the existing structures of their society. And as Jews struggled to rebuild from the rubble, they were forced to confront their deepest beliefs about what it means to continue to live as a Jew.

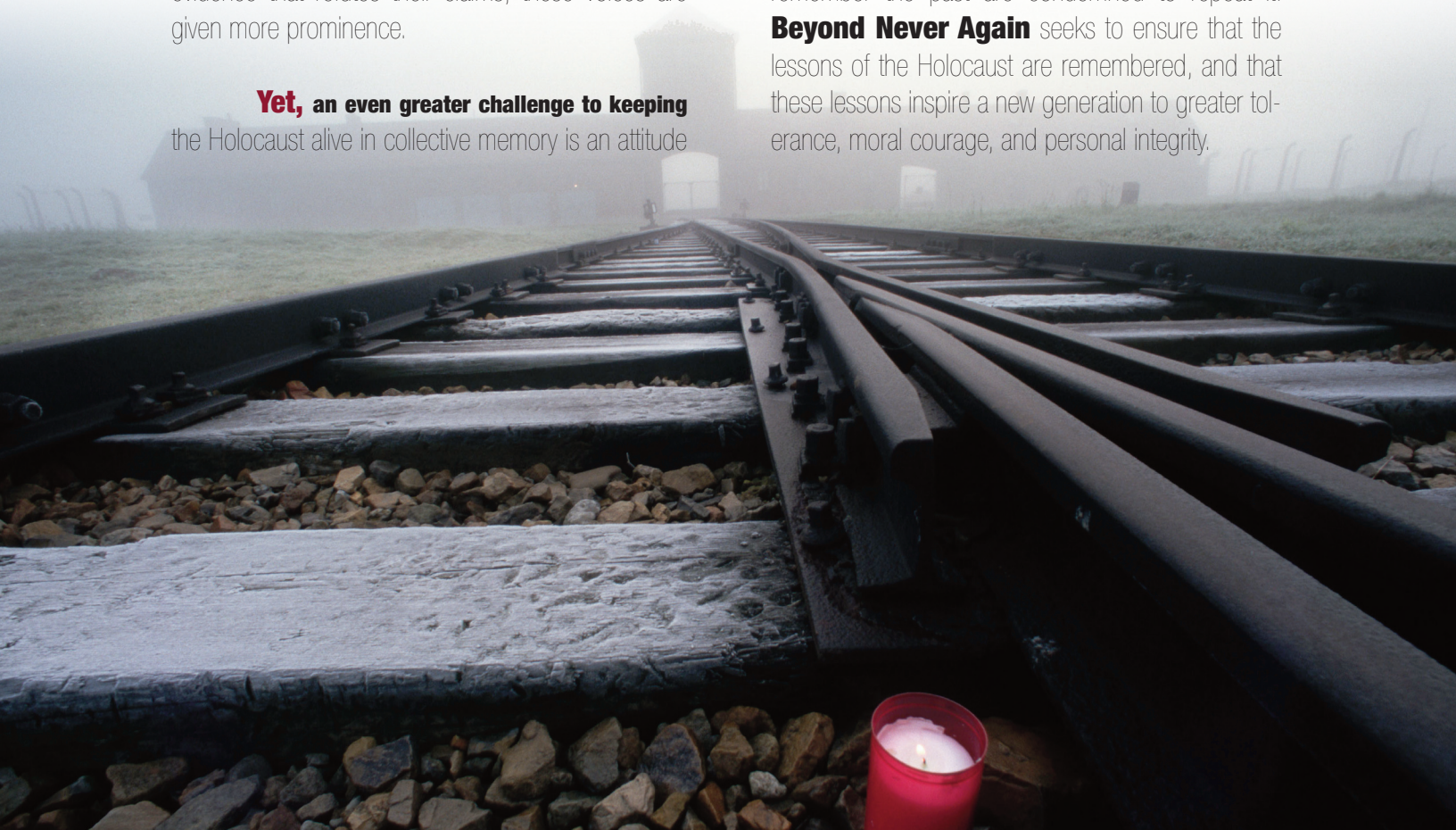
Three generations later, many Americans do not know anyone who personally experienced the Holocaust, and are shockingly unaware of even rudimentary information. At the same time, there is an ever-growing flurry of Holocaust deniers spreading their falsehoods. As fewer people are aware of the evidence that refutes their claims, these voices are given more prominence.

Yet, an even greater challenge to keeping the Holocaust alive in collective memory is an attitude

of apathy or resistance toward hearing about the Holocaust. Many see no benefit to dwelling on the painful past, and are uncomfortable with the conflicted emotions it arouses. It is this second challenge that the course primarily seeks to address.

Rather than focusing on history, the course focuses on the continuing relevance of the Holocaust in a new century. We address themes such as altruism, the nature of anti-Semitism, the existence of evil, and the search for meaning in the face of suffering. While the course is open to all who wish to attend, it examines the Holocaust through the lens of classical and contemporary Jewish thought.

It has been said that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. **Beyond Never Again** seeks to ensure that the lessons of the Holocaust are remembered, and that these lessons inspire a new generation to greater tolerance, moral courage, and personal integrity.





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COURSE METHODOLOGY

The course is designed as a facilitated discussion, encouraging participants to articulate their personal responses to the Holocaust, and encouraging the consideration of multiple perspectives. By introducing participants to an alternate way of thinking about the Holocaust, we hope they will find that the subject has new relevance to them, and that they will be encouraged to explore this topic further on their own.

Each lesson centers on a question that will be explored in the course of the one and a half hour session. Students are encouraged to reflect on this question before class, so that the study will be more focused. During each class, students will critically examine 10-15 classical and contemporary texts relating to the class theme. These texts will serve as the basis of class discussion. Classes incorporate reflective exercises, audiovisual aids, paired work, and

small group discussion in order to help spur meaningful interaction.

The student source book contains supplementary readings in addition to the core readings. Students are encouraged to read these after class to deepen their understanding and appreciation of the course material. In addition, students are encouraged to participate in an online forum in which they will be able to share reactions to readings and to the issues raised.

A unique feature of this course offering is that it will be offered simultaneously worldwide at over 300 Jewish Learning Institute affiliate centers this fall. Thus there is the possibility of registered students engaging with a broader community of learners if they wish.





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SUMMARY OF COURSE THEMES

Lesson 1

WRESTLING WITH G-D

Why do evil people prosper? Why does G-d permit the suffering of the innocent? Moses, Jeremiah, and Job asked these questions, and we still grapple with them today. A non-believer may consider world events as random, requiring no explanation, but the believer is forced to struggle with these questions. Judaism believes in a benevolent, omnipotent, and omniscient G-d, and that ultimately, there will be a time when all suffering ceases. Thus, there is no easy answer to explain the Holocaust, nor do we seek one. For if we were to explain suffering, we might accept it. Our response to global suffering must be to decry its existence and fight for its eradication.

Lesson 2

THE VOICE OF YOUR BROTHER'S BLOOD CRIES OUT

We cannot hear the universal message of the Holocaust unless we appreciate the particulars of its evils. While people of many nationalities suffered during the war, we must recognize that the Holocaust was disproportionately a war against the Jews. Each of the six million Jews who perished has a story that deserves to be told. Their stories remind us that every lost life represents the loss of an entire world.

Lesson 3

IN THEIR DEATHS THEY WERE NOT PARTED

Judaism affirms the value of life and forbids suicide. And yet the mitzvah of *Kiddush Hashem* (Sanctification of G-d's Name) involves the willingness to face death under certain circumstances. How are these two values reconciled? In this class, we take a historical view of both individual and collective martyrdom, considering examples like King Saul, Rabbi Akiva, the martyrs of the Crusades, and those who perished in the Holocaust. We will explore the religious context within which martyrdom takes place and consider how these ideals impact our modern world.

Lesson 4

OUT OF THE DEPTHS I CALL TO YOU

While we must never be complacent with regard to the suffering of

others, we can learn to find meaning in the face of our personal challenges. Life's purpose unfolds on many levels, and it is impossible to know the true impact of a given event. While we cannot always know why something happens, by fostering our appreciation that G-d is intimately involved with the universe, we can learn to use every experience as a catalyst for positive transformation. Faith is not a crutch for the weak, but a scaffold for life constructed with inner strength. Trust in G-d is not born of simplistic denial of harsh reality, but of profound humility in the presence of the divine plan.

Lesson 5

A TREE OF LIFE TO THOSE WHO CLING TO IT

Halachah (Jewish Torah law) serves as a guide for life, even in the most trying of times. In this class, we will examine actual halachic advice sought during the Holocaust. The responses have much to teach us about Jewish values, but the more astonishing fact is that these questions were asked at all. Some of these questions reveal the sacrifice Jews were willing to undergo in order to observe mitzvot. Some reveal the moral courage of Jews who debated whether they were permitted to save their own lives at the expense of others. All are testament to an inner integrity and strength that transcended the horrors of that time.

Lesson 6

WHEN NIGHT WILL SHINE LIKE DAY

When examining human behavior in light of the Holocaust, we are presented with a number of paradoxes. The most culturally and scientifically advanced society on earth used its sophistication to create the most efficient genocidal machine the world has ever known. And many of the righteous gentiles who sacrificed their own safety and well-being were poor, uneducated, and provincial in their worldview. What can we expect of humanity after the Holocaust? Can we prevent human progress from falling prey to moral bankruptcy? How can we retain faith in the future of the universe—and what we can we do to ensure a brighter tomorrow?





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ENDORSEMENTS

PROFESSOR DAN MICHMAN

Chief Historian, Yad Vashem: Israel Holocaust Memorial Museum; Chair, Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

"The Holocaust changed the Jewish world, Jewish life and the self-understanding of many Jews. It is therefore impossible to understand present-day Jewry and Judaism without learning about the Holocaust and the moral and religious questions it raises. The planned JLI course, "**Beyond Never Again**," is a most valuable contribution to the effort to have the knowledge about and implications of this enormous event made accessible to youngsters, and lead them to positive Jewish awareness ..."

SIMON WIESENTHAL

"My friend Rabbi Jacob Biderman has brought to my attention the course, "**Beyond Never Again**," which The Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) is planning to offer. I strongly support this course, as information is our defense against the repetition of history, and keeping memory alive is our moral obligation."

FRED S. ZEIDMAN

Chairman, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC

"I was pleased to receive word of the upcoming new series offered by the Jewish Learning Institute, "**Beyond Never Again**," which will provide a unique learning opportunity for people from all walks of life to explore the meaning and message of the Holocaust. I applaud your efforts to create and offer this insightful, outstanding program to the wider community. By bringing great minds, hearts and souls together in learning, reflection, and commitment, the victory of the bright flame of sacred life over evil and tyranny is much strengthened. I look forward to hearing of its great success."

RABBI MARVIN HIER

Founder and Dean, The Simon Wiesenthal Center, Los Angeles, CA

"Sixty years after the Holocaust, anti-Semitism is again rampant in Europe and throughout the world. In Germany, neo-Nazi skinheads are singing songs beseeching the return of Adolf Hitler. Suicide bombings are a fact of life anywhere in the world. In times such as these, studying the Holocaust has never been more important. I commend the JLI for undertaking a course of study on the Holocaust and I encourage all who can attend to do so."

A. ROMI COHN

Author, The Youngest Partisan; Recipient of the Milana Rastislava Stefanika medal from the government of Slovakia

"In my youth, I personally fought the Nazis with the partisans in Tatra Mountain and Pressburg. We fought for our survival; we fought for Jewish survival. I applaud the efforts of the JLI because the fight for Jewish survival and continuity goes on. I urge anybody to whom the future of the Jewish people is dear to join these courses and take part in this magnificent opportunity. Securing Jewish continuity today requires character and courage. These courses talk to the heart of who we are as a people today, and provide the necessary tools to secure a strong Jewish tomorrow."

DR. PAUL B. WINKLER

Executive Director, New Jersey State Commission on Holocaust Education

"The Commission is pleased and completely supports your effort in this course...It is efforts like this that will help to eradicate prejudice, bias, and intolerance wherever and whenever they exist."





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AVI MIZRACHI

Executive Director, Holocaust Memorial of Miami Beach

"The Holocaust Memorial-Miami Beach enthusiastically supports your efforts in offering an outstanding six-lesson seminar, **"Beyond Never Again"**. Even today, 60 years after the last camp was liberated, we grapple with unanswered questions about G-d, Judaism, and the Holocaust. We appreciate your courage in confronting this important part of our history."

RICHARD S. HIRSCHHAUT

Executive Director, Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois, Skokie, IL

"The Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois welcomes the newly established course, **"Beyond Never Again,"** offered through JLI. This unique learning opportunity will provide a forum for in-depth discussion on many of the complex and enduring issues raised by the Holocaust, including moral courage, the endurance of faith, and contemporary religious intolerance. We are pleased that JLI acknowledges the imperative and urgency of Holocaust education and is seeking to bring these lessons to a wider audience."

MAXINE COHEN

Director, Holocaust Education Center & Memorial Museum, San Antonio, TX

"The Holocaust Memorial of San Antonio welcomes the new course offered by the Jewish Learning Institute as a meaningful addition to the educational services available in our community. **"Beyond Never Again"** seeks to bring new understanding of the Jews' personal and collective reaction to suffering during the darkest period of their history."

DR. GEORGE HALASZ

Holocaust Educator, Department of Psychological Medicine, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia; Co-Author, Children of the Shadows:Voices of the Second Generation

"The six lessons outlined are a solid introductory foundation to some key questions and issues related to the Holocaust."

SYLVIA WYGODA

Executive Director/Chairman Emeritus, Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, Atlanta, GA

"The Georgia Commission on the Holocaust was pleased to receive word of the upcoming new series offered by the Jewish Learning Institute, **"Beyond Never Again,"** which will provide a unique, quality learning opportunity for people from all walks of life to explore the meaning and message of the Holocaust. The Commission applauds your efforts to create and offer this insightful, outstanding program to the wider community. Through this course series, citizens should be able to rededicate themselves to the principles of human rights and equal protection under the laws of a democratic society."

TOVA WEISS

Director, Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC), Scranton, PA

"I am very excited to hear about the planned JLI course **"Beyond Never Again"** and look forward to partnering with JLI in this endeavor. . . . Having participated in past JLI courses, I can personally attest to the excellence of those offerings."

DR. LILLY FILLER

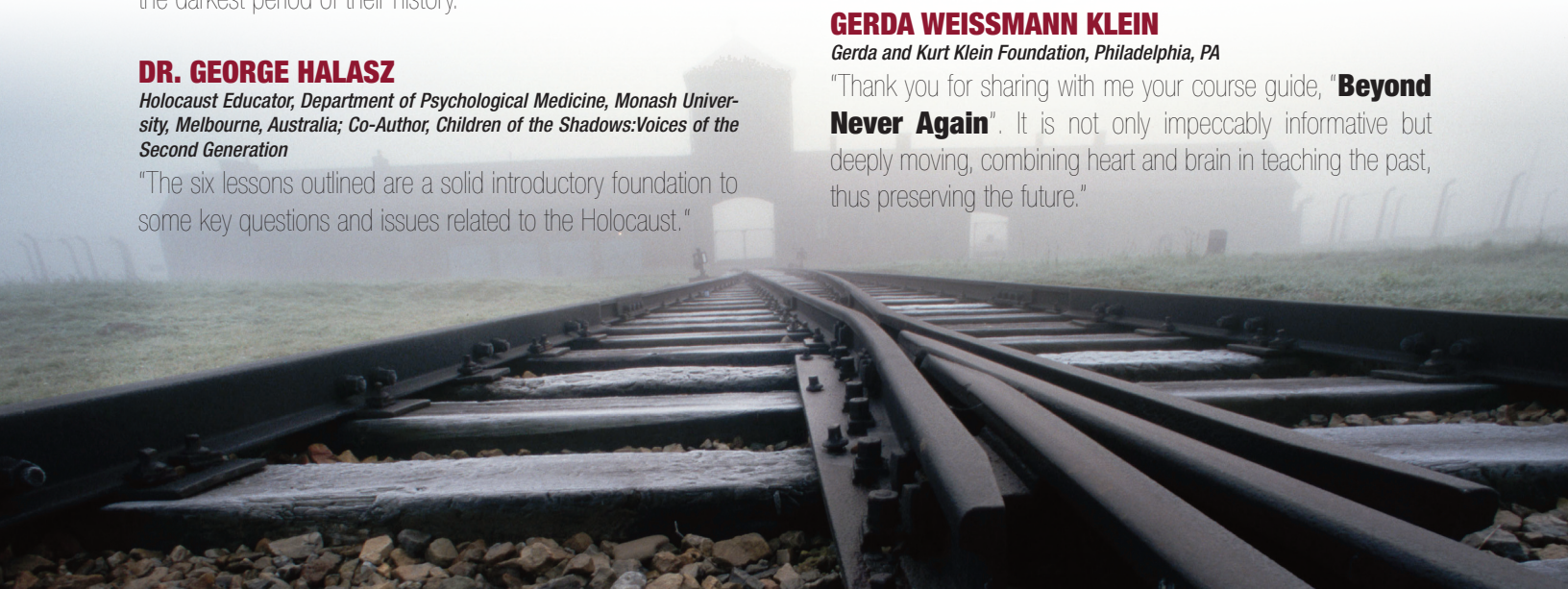
The Columbia Holocaust Education Commission, Columbia, SC

"The Columbia Holocaust Education Commission applauds JLI's effort to create and offer this insightful and exceptional educational program to our community. This course will create an awareness of the enormity of the crimes of prejudice and inhumanity and will create a vigilance to prevent their recurrence."

GERDA WEISSMANN KLEIN

Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation, Philadelphia, PA

"Thank you for sharing with me your course guide, **"Beyond Never Again"**. It is not only impeccably informative but deeply moving, combining heart and brain in teaching the past, thus preserving the future."





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DR. EDIE NAVEH

Director, Holocaust Center, United Jewish Federation, Pittsburgh, PA

"The Holocaust Center of the United Jewish Federation is pleased to be able to collaborate with the Jewish Learning Institute and Yeshiva Schools to host the 6-week course, "**Beyond Never Again**." This series takes a look at the theological, moral, and ethical issues surrounding the Holocaust and explores how we, as a society, can build a better world. We are certain that this course will be of interest to many in the Pittsburgh Community."

DR. RISTO NURMELA

President, The Finnish Society for Yad Vashem, Helsinki, Finland

"The Holocaust taught mankind a lesson in many respects. Today we know that if we start burning books, we will eventually burn humans. We know that all forms of anti-Semitism and racism are very dangerous and should never be tolerated. Knowledge about the Holocaust and reflection on its consequences is today a part of general education. I therefore urge everybody who is concerned about the respect for human rights to participate in the course, "**Beyond Never Again**."

RICK MANN

President, Friends of the New England Holocaust Memorial, Inc., Boston, MA

"JLI's "**Beyond Never Again**" attempts to address some of the most troubling religious and moral questions raised by the Holocaust. Maintaining faith in G-d after the Holocaust, finding meaning in the inexplicable, halachic responses to the dilemmas faced by the victims...all are explored in six riveting sessions. This course is gratefully welcomed as a significant supplement to the available avenues for Holocaust education in Boston."

ROMAN WROBLEWSKI, PH.D.

Second Generation, Swedish Holocaust Memorial Academy

"SHMA, the Swedish Holocaust Memorial Academy, welcomes the "**Beyond Never Again**" course as a meaningful addition to all previous courses and discussion forums. The second and third generation of postwar children were raised in a "conspiracy of silence," lest their parents transfer their own war experience, suffering, and trauma to the next generation. Yet many of us are still questioning, "Why?" Thus, there is a need for another approach, a second step to understanding the darkest period of our history."

DR. MORDECAI PALDIEL

Director, Yad Vashem Righteous Persons Project, Israel Holocaust Memorial Museum

"The Bible teaches us that man was created in the Divine image. The Holocaust raises serious questions with regard to this statement. That is why we need to confirm our belief in the goodness of creation and of man's ability to differentiate between good and evil. ...I welcome this Holocaust education initiative and urge community-wide participation."





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HOLOCAUST CENTERS

Partial Listing of

Holocaust Centers

offering, endorsing, or co-sponsoring

“Beyond Never Again”

Yad Vashem: Israel Holocaust Memorial Museum/Jerusalem, Israel

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum/Washington, DC

The Simon Wiesenthal Center/Los Angeles, CA

Yad Vashem Righteous Persons Project/Jerusalem, Israel

Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research/Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Birmingham Holocaust Education Committee/Birmingham, AL

University of Denver Holocaust Awareness Institute/Denver, CO

The Jewish Federation Association of Connecticut/Hartford, CT

Bnai Brith/West Hartford, CT

Holocaust Memorial of Miami Beach/Miami Beach, FL

Holocaust Museum of Southwest Florida/Naples, FL

Georgia Commission on the Holocaust/Atlanta, GA

Holocaust Memorial Foundation of Illinois/Skokie, IL

The Holocaust Educational Foundation/Skokie, IL

The New England Holocaust Memorial, Inc./Boston, MA

The Holocaust Center Boston North, Inc./Peabody, MA

Hatikvah Holocaust Education Center/Springfield, MA

University of Minnesota Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies/Minneapolis, MN

St. Louis Holocaust Museum and Learning Center/St. Louis, MO

Holocaust Memorial Park/Brooklyn, NY

Center for Holocaust Awareness and Information (CHAI)/Rochester, NY





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“Beyond Never Again”

Holocaust Memorial Committee of Brooklyn/Sheepshead Bay, New York

New Jersey State Commission on Holocaust Education/Trenton, NJ

Sperling Resource Library for Holocaust Study and Kronberg Media Center/Las Vegas, NV

The Governor’s Advisory Council on Holocaust Education/Las Vegas, NV

Dayton Holocaust Resource Center/Dayton, OH

The Dayton Jewish Education Commission/Dayton, OH

The Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation/Narberth, PA

The Holocaust Center of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh/Pittsburgh, PA

Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC)/Scranton, PA

Columbia Holocaust Education Commission/Columbia, SC

Dallas Holocaust Museum/Dallas, TX

Holocaust Museum Houston/Houston, TX

Holocaust Education Center & Memorial Museum/San Antonio, TX

Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre/Vancouver, British Columbia

The Finnish Society for Yad Vashem/Helsinki, Finland

Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies of the Dutch Government/Amsterdam, Netherlands

The Holocaust Education and Memorial Centre of Toronto/Toronto, Ontario

Association of Holocaust Survivors in Sweden/Stockholm, Sweden

SHMA: The Swedish Holocaust Memorial Academy/Stockholm, Sweden

Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust/Stockholm, Sweden

