

Victoria is many kilometres, and many years, from the horrors of the Holocaust.

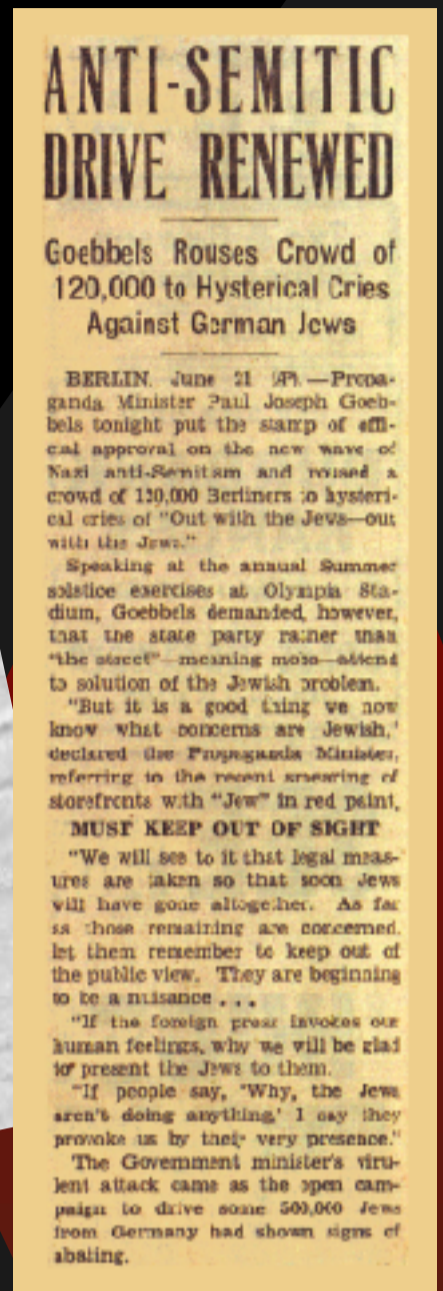
For most of us, the murder of six million European Jews between 1933 and 1945 is an event whose sharpness is now blurring into the sepia-toned images of a history lesson. Yet, our parents, our grandparents, our great-grandparents, witnessed what happened.

The Holocaust —

the destruction of European Jewry, of Gypsies, homosexuals, the physically and mentally challenged — is an event that reverberates in history. It calls upon us all to examine our values and actions. The persecution and murder of so many is a constant reminder of the need to educate our community to resist hate and intolerance.

The people of Victoria knew what was happening in Europe.

Accounts of anti-Semitic riots and attacks on Jewish businesses and places of worship were printed in large type in our local newspapers during the 1930s and 1940s.



INTRODUCTION

MR. GARDNER (age 22) at left, with his friends in his village of Stry Sambor Poland, in 1934. Nearly all of the 1300 Jews in this village were killed.



JACK GARDNER (Poland)

When the Nazi-Soviet pact was broken by the Germans, they occupied [my] town three days later. We weren't prepared, it was so fast. We had no idea. I was retreating with my [Red Army] unit. On the Friday was the last time I saw my sister. When I came back in '44, I came to the town right after liberation; one man in our town survived. He had been hiding out in a forest. Twenty-five Jewish boys and girls were hiding — a group. This one man who was from my town who was with this group, he told me approximately what happened in our town. My sister and brother-in-law and parents had been taken away to concentration camp in Belzec, my two nephews had been shot in town. My other sister with the two nephews perished. I don't know the details. Of the whole town of three thousand people, that one man survived and we who run away or left somehow by the Russian government. The Germans gave the Ukrainians twenty-four hours free hand when they first occupied. The Ukrainians killed fifty Jews that first day.

What we wanted to do when we came away from that bloody land was raise a new Jewish family and name our children after my mother and father and after my wife's mother and father — that was our main objective and what we fulfilled. All our children and grandchildren are named after the relatives who were exterminated.