INTRODUCTION

Jack Jedwab, Executive Director, Association for Canadian Studies, June 2009

Former director of the Parkes Institute, Tony Kushner, has observed that: "…as we cross the threshold into a new millennium, interest in the Holocaust continues to escalate. At an artistic and cultural level, representations of the Holocaust, especially in film and literature have never been so intense and pervasive". In our information age, there are extraordinary opportunities to exchange and expand knowledge. New technologies make it possible to reach greater numbers of people across the globe. We can engage in dialogue across borders and boundaries in ways not imagined only a decade ago. Education over considerable distances is become increasingly common.

Although opportunities for expanding knowledge of the Holocaust may seem limitless, those so engaged face ongoing obstacles in pursuit of their important objective. As we go forward the global dialogue around holocaust education will become increasingly important if its universal lessons are to be conveyed to a world that struggles with discrimination, racism and anti-Semitism. The hope is that this edition of Canadian Diversity will contribute to this critical global discussion by identifying some of these obstacles. Several essential questions are raised by the experts from various countries that were invited to share research and ideas about holocaust education and awareness of genocide. Ideally the collection of essays will encourage further binational and multinational collaboration in identifying the best practices for expanding knowledge about the Holocaust education and genocide awareness. It is our view that to do this effectively some baseline information will be needed to permit a needed assessment of what is currently known about the Holocaust in various countries. Thereafter it will be important to understand how the Holocaust's universal lessons are understood by those segments of the population that are most informed about it. Before briefly reviewing the texts included in this publication, I want to thank Citizenship and Immigration Canada for supporting the publication.

My essay examines the responses of some 1500 Canadians to a public opinion survey on knowledge of the Holocaust, awareness of genocide and attitudes towards discrimination and diversity. One of most of the detailed surveys conducted to date on Holocaust knowledge, the results show strong correlation between greater reported Holocaust knowledge and concern over genocide and higher recognition of anti-Semitism as a societal problem. But greater reported Holocaust knowledge did not consistently correlate with greater acceptance of diversity.

Eva Fried of the Living History Forum discusses a rare survey of teachers in Sweden in order to assess their attitudes towards work related to the history of the Holocaust, and their views on the prospects of successfully accomplishing such work.

Paula Cowan examines Scotland's engagement with Holocaust Memorial Day and reports on findings from research on public awareness of Holocaust Memorial Day in the UK. She concludes that Scotland's participation in Holocaust Memorial Day has facilitated its teaching in some primary and secondary schools. Jeffrey Allan Ellison points out that rather than viewing the Holocaust as an isolated it has become increasingly integrated into the broader study of genocide or human rights. He contends that despite the abundance of materials on the Holocaust at the secondary level, too often these materials are not congruent with the reality of teaching in today's schools; even more important, there is a paucity of materials that link the Holocaust to the general topic of genocide.

In his essay, Thomas Fallace reviews the research on the extent of Holocaust education in the US at the secondary and higher educational levels and the effects that learning about the event has had on students. This research reveals that, although Holocaust education has made remarkable gains, the potential of teaching about the Holocaust may not yet have been realized. Ian Davies and Paula Mountford offer some practical suggestions for what could be done in universities and schools to help with the development of initial teacher education around the Holocaust.

David Linquist looks at various instructional frameworks that allow the topic to be confronted in ways that are interesting and academically challenging while observing various sensitivities that are inherent in studying

the Holocaust. Thomas Misco explores the issue of curriculum implementation and the ways in which teachers' use of new curricular efforts provides obstacles and pathways to educational change with regard to gaps in historical knowledge and cursory coverage of topics. Carol Clyde examines the result of an experiential learning program, the March of Remembrance and Hope (MORH), on the development of civic leadership.

Daniel Gerson points out that until recently in Switzerland information about the country's role in the Holocaust has either been suppressed or has been the cause for controversy.

Geoffrey Short examines the challenge of teaching the Holocaust in schools with a largely Muslim population. He shares observations from a small-scale investigation involving 15 secondary school teachers that was recently undertaken in Britain. Alice Herscovitch et al. focuses on specific challenges in teaching about the Holocaust and the potential and challenges for Holocaust education within the Quebec education system. Doyle Stevick looks at the Estonian non-implementation of its Holocaust Education policy is examined in order to elucidate the importance of historical and cultural context in attempts to advance Holocaust education in post-communist societies

Richard Freedman points to the need in South Africa to help educators understand the reason for the inclusion of the Holocaust, as a case study of Human rights abuse, into the National Schools curriculum.

Zehavit Gross analyzes a holocaust discourse between a jew and a non jew while visiting the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum. It addresses the issue of ownership when it comes to the memory of Auschwitz. Tine Brondum examines how education in post-genocide Bosnia-Herzegovina is influenced by the nationalistic logic of the war, and how this has resulted in three ethnically based school systems where students are divided according to ethnic or national background. Furthermore, the article shows how the Holocaust, the war in Bosnia and the concept of genocide are dealt with in Bosnian history books. Finally, Yair Auron points out that the struggle about knowing and remembering the acts of genocide has a unique significance in the case of the State of Israel – a country of people who were the victims of the Holocaust. Auron points out that there is little knowledge about the Armenian genocide. He points to some valuable private initiatives in Israel aiming to expand awareness about the Armenian Genocide.