Elisheva Gray Interview 10.12.2019 – Defying Hatred Project

Stanger-Ross: So at the beginning of each of these I always just indicate that this is Jordan Stanger-Ross with the Defying Hatred Project at UVic and I'm here with Elisheva Gray on December 10th -- we decided -- 2019 at her house in Victoria to talk about Holocaust memorialisation. Just in case this audio file gets lost or something. So I told you that these discussions I've been having about who's been doing Holocaust memorialisation in Victoria and why, really since the 1980s and including more recently as well. Usually the interviews have a biographical dimension, they have a kind of nuts and bolts type finish where we're talking about well what precisely has been done, what have you been involved in, and then we can talk about what you hope it's for, what you think is accomplished in memorial work and education work around the Shoah. And then within that framework, I'm looking forward to having a wide-ranging conversation on wherever the conversation goes, really. So can I ask that first biographical question, how you came to be involved in Holocaust memorialisation?

[00:01:32]

Gray: Yeah. I became quite involved at Congregation Emanu-El in the early-2000s and by about 2007 or '08 I began to participate in the commemoration events that we had for Yom HaShoah and for Kristallnacht [redacted].

Stanger-Ross: How did you come to have that interest?

Gray: I think my earliest memory was being a teenager and watching a program that was a program about a Jewish family, but a Jewish family in the Holocaust, and being quite impacted by it and asking all those questions that we ask: how could this happen? What can we do to make sure it doesn't happen? And then over time I started to read more about the Holocaust and of course studied it in high school. And just always felt like if I could help in some way to, first of all, educate myself about it and, second of all, educate others about it, that somehow that would be my contribution to honour all of those whose lives were snuffed out by the Shoah.

Stanger-Ross: Did you grow up here in Victoria?

Gray: I was born in Edmonton and lived there my first twenty years and then did quite a bit of travelling. I don't know how much of my geography and travelling history you want, but I met my late husband Ron in Spain. He was Canadian as well. And then we moved back to Montreal where we were married, lived there a number of years. Then I lived in Vancouver for a number of years, and we lived on the Greek island of Crete for two years and eventually ended up here in Victoria.

Stanger-Ross: And when did you come here?

Gray: The winter of the blizzard that everybody remembers in '95 -- was that '95? [*clarification: the blizzard was in 1996*]

Stanger-Ross: Okay. A blizzard here?

Gray: Yeah.

Stanger-Ross: So it would have been in Edmonton in your youth that you saw this story --

Gray: Yes, it was. At home, growing up, that I saw this program.

Stanger-Ross: What would have been your awareness before seeing that?

Gray: Not much. I was a teenager and that was really -- you know, it would come up I think a little bit in school before that, but it was basically around that high school age that these things would be more a part of a social studies curriculum for instance. And so I was about that age.

Stanger-Ross: Right. And this would have been in the...?

Gray: '70s. Yeah, mid-'70s.

Stanger-Ross: And it was something you were encountering in school as well?

Gray: We did -- I don't remember too much serious study of the Holocaust at school. As I said, it would come up as part of history and a social studies class but we didn't have a dedicated -- Now, high schools are I think, do a better job of having a dedicated Holocaust studies chapter of their curriculum. I certainly didn't have that exposure.

Stanger-Ross: Right. As you became more connected with Judaism, was this a central --

Gray: Always, it was always there. Always there. Yeah.

Stanger-Ross: So how do those go together? I'm just, you know...

[00:06:08]

Gray: Well I think that there's a time and a place for everything and I think on my own I was always reading about it and trying to learn about it and trying to understand it but when I became much more involved in the Jewish community here and had more opportunities to get involved in a more active way through these commemoration events, I think that's where it really happened for me. And then my dear teacher and friend and study partner, Gidi Nahshon, was a second-generation survivor himself and was involved also in helping at these events. As I learned about his family background and began to help him try to find traces of his family, it was a little bit like that lost family of his in a very small -- and I say this with the greatest humility -- in a very small way they became my family and it brought me closer to seeing somebody actually have to live through that experience of being a descendant of a survivor, and what that's like helped me to appreciate not having any relatives, not knowing who any of these relatives are. Gidi has a sister Anna who I'm very close to as well and, for both of them, it was very difficult. And in fact, I'm sure you've heard about epigenetics. Anna and her daughter Maya and Maya's two children now… The two children would be the fourth generation and, you know, I wonder and I look at them both as they're growing and I wonder how it will manifest in them

these traces of such a serious trauma that can be passed from generation to generation and what will they do?

Stanger-Ross: Can you tell us more about that -- about Gidi and your relationship with him to give a bit of a background on all of that?

Gray: Sure. Gidi read, devoured everything he could about the Shoah because in a way it was his way of trying to… For him, reading the books was like you looking at a family photo album of your relatives. This was the closest he could get to, you know, who were these people in his life. The closest he could get was this is what they went through. So he was always trying to find any kind of trace of any connection or to trace back into his family and I began to help him with this just by doing my own searches online. His father lost everyone in his family and was the only survivor in his family. His father was from a town called Bardejov in eastern Slovakia, very near the Polish border. So one night I happened to be trying to put in different combinations of things in Google like we all do now, and I came across a blog by a young man of the name Peter Hudak and he was doing his Master's thesis on this community of Bardejov Jews that had virtually disappeared, no trace, except for remnants of this -- what they call Jewish suburbia, which was the Jewish enclave of Bardejov, with a synagogue and a mikvah and a beth midrash, all in terrible shape. And Peter and his father… His father also helped him quite a bit, and they took it upon themselves to try to dig out some of this lost history and one survivor from Bardejov, Emil Fish, also began to come back to Bardejov and he eventually started the Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee and Peter teamed up with him and that led eventually to a reunion in 2012 of survivors from Bardejov, their descendants, and people like me, friends of the families or somehow associated with some of these people. So we kept in touch with… We sent Peter an email and began to have regular conversations with him and eventually were invited to this reunion in 2012. And the theme of the reunion was to reverse the walk that the Jews… The Jews, when they were rounded up, they were rounded up in the town square and walked, you know, very crudely and vulgarly to the train station and put on the cattle cars and sent off to the camps. So the idea of the reunion was to reverse that walk. And we went to the train station, gathered at the train station, had a very moving ceremony at the train station, and made our way back to the town square. It's still very emotional to talk about because it was so powerful, especially given the fact that there are no Jews living in Bardejov anymore. And to suddenly have this group of Jews walking the streets again and going to these places, and we went to services in the Shuls and these Shuls wouldn't have had services for years, so all of it was very very powerful. And the one Shul… There were two of them. One was in very poor shape and the other smaller one, the Bikur Cholim synagogue, was actually protected by a woman who wasn't Jewish and she made sure all through the Shoah and afterwards, she had the keys to the place, she would guard it, she protected it, and kept it -- it was in amazing condition given all that had happened in the town and to the Jewish community.

Stanger-Ross: And so, what was Gidi's experience of that return?

[00:13:38]

Gray: Tremendously emotional, for he and his sister Anna. I think one moment I remember very vividly was we had a gathering sort of conference space where we would come. We would do

things during the day. Then we would gather in the evening at this conference ~~base~~ space and one evening anybody who was a survivor or a descendant could get up and show pictures in case somebody recognised who the person was and talk about who they were and who their family was. And Gidi got up and showed a photograph of his father and talked about the family and talked about all of the siblings that his father lost and Gidi's grandparents were also murdered. And to do this and just wait for somebody to say "oh I recognise that person" and it doesn't happen -- so it was a positive opportunity in one way and in another way it was profoundly sad because there still wasn't that connection, something they could latch onto. Somebody, just to have that moment and say "oh yes I recognise who that person is." So it was hugely emotional. I think even for Gidi when we went back two years later, in 2014, was even more emotional because by then… When we were there in 2012 they showed us what was called Jewish Suburbia but it was still in very very poor shape, very poor condition. The beit midrash, ~~and~~ the house of study, had been a hardware store. The synagogue had some of the supplies of the hardware store in it. So over time, through this Bardejov Jewish Preservation Committee, they began to restore and build a memorial right near where this is. So we were all invited back in 2014 for another event at the memorial and part of the memorial has stone tablets with the names of all of those that they know were killed in the Shoah. And some blank tablets in case they begin to gather more documentation and are able to add more names to that. We had a ceremony at the memorial and it was a real turning point for Gidi because he felt, I think -- to try to get as close to his words as possible -- he felt like finally they didn't die in vain, that they were being honoured, that they were being given at least some dignity by having their names out there and on this permanent memorial, having it as a place that people could come. And the other very powerful component, for him and for everyone, was how the Bardejov community became involved in this. These are descendants of people who turned a blind eye when this was going on. And because of all of the efforts of Peter and his father and the committee, they began also to relearn this part of their history, of their town's history, and they came to these events. So for them it was also a process, a healing process, and really quite moving to see them, to see how many of them would turn out for these events. And there was a moment back at the 2012 event that had most of us in tears because along this route when we were walking back to the town square, high school children… It wasn't a planned part of the event, but high school children were planted sort of along the route singing, playing violin, Jewish songs, all along the way. So it was really very moving.

Stanger-Ross: Huh. That is the high school students had sort of organised that aspect themselves?

Gray: Yes, yes.

Stanger-Ross: Aha.

Gray: Yeah.

Stanger-Ross: And during this time you'd already been involved for a while in doing some memorial work here.

Gray: Yes.

Stanger-Ross: Maybe we'll start with the beginnings of how you became involved in that work here.

[00:19:05]

Gray: Yeah. I think the first couple of years we were asked by the people who ran the [local organization] [redacted] to do readings or to participate in some small way in the two commemoration events, Yom HaShoah and Kristallnacht. And then over time, a group of us… We were noticing that the numbers of people coming to these events were getting quite minimal and it was really making us sad and making us feel like maybe we need to think about is there a different way to do these events that will bring more people back and help us be a stronger collective remembering together. So a group of us met with the heads of the [local organization] [redacted] and discussed with them the possibility of taking over the two commemorative events [redacted] and this would allow them to put more of their time into that and give a new group a chance to maybe put more new energy and different energy into organising these other two commemorative events. So we did branch off and become the Victoria Shoah Project and the group is made up of survivors, descendants of survivors, and people like me who are interested and feel Holocaust education is important and/or have friends who are survivors or descendants of survivors.

Stanger-Ross: And when you were first invited to do readings and such at the memorial events in the mid-2000s, how had that invitation come about? Why were you someone who was looked to to do readings do you think?

Gray: Oh, partially because I was already doing this work with Gidi and he was often asked each year to be in -- he would often read the Kaddish of the camps at these events and I think it was through that connection that I also then began to be asked.

Stanger-Ross: And do you remember what you would have read or what your thinking was around those events?

Gray: It was… Sorry, I can't remember the name of the reading, but it was like a long long reading, historical reading, of certain events that happened in the Shoah. A focused reading of certain events that happened in the Shoah. And it would be divided among a large group of us.

Stanger-Ross: I see. It was a text --

Gray: It was a text, yes.

Stanger-Ross: I see.

Gray: Yeah.

Stanger-Ross: So almost a ceremonial -- you weren't choosing readings, it was more of a set --

Gray: No, no. We were given what we would be reading, yes.

Stanger-Ross: I see, okay. And that was for Kristallnacht or Yom HaShoah?

Gray: That was for Kristallnacht...I believe at Yom HaShoah there would usually be a central speaker and some music and always Kaddish of the camps.

Stanger-Ross: What was it like to do those readings at those events?

[00:23:06]

Gray: It was always an honour to be able to participate. I think what was happening for a number of us was we were feeling like we were doing the same thing each year and that it might be important to change that, to begin to change that. Because we could tell the audience was also thinning out and becoming tired of these same readings.

Stanger-Ross: Do you remember how those conversations started about doing something different?

Gray: Yeah, we were gathered around a table and we -- the group of us who had the thought of perhaps taking on these two events met with [local organizers] [redacted] and made the suggestion and we talked about it and they accepted the idea. So we began to branch off and take over those two events.

Stanger-Ross: So then what happened once the group, the Victoria Shoah Project, was coordinating these events? This was in 20--?

Gray: Oh, I should remember shouldn't I? This was about -- uh -- would've been 2014, 2013. 2014. Because I do recall that one of the first things I talked about -- yeah, 2014, 2015 -- was I spoke at one of the first ones after we took it over and it was about the trip to Bardejov, so. We began to meet as our group and brainstormed initially and came up with our name and I think it's important to talk about that for a second because we really liked the idea of being called a project because we really felt like we were ongoing. We felt like, especially because, as you know, we're losing the survivors, we're losing that first generation, and so all of us were questioning what do we do now, how do we do this now? It was clear to us that in order to connect to a larger audience and to do the commemoration and education that we wanted to do, we were going to have to find new ways to ask those questions and new ways to help people see the importance of remembering and the importance of honouring these difficult moments in our history. So I think the word project really encompassed who we were then and who we continue to be because it's an evolution, we're learning each time we do one of these events, we're learning. And we're not just learning from each other but we're learning from the wider community and we're learning what works and what doesn't work. I think what is very meaningful and heartwarming to us is to see that we went from maybe 25-30 people turning out for these events to having standing room only audiences, from the whole Victoria community, not just the Jewish community. For instance, this year at our Kristallnacht event, we were there an hour early to open the doors in case there were people who may come early and there was already a lineup waiting to get in at

the door. So I think that speaks for itself, that, you know, if you find ways to engage people they do want to come and collectively remember with you and learn together what we can do to make sure these things don't happen again.

Stanger-Ross: Was it immediately that way? So 2014 --

[00:27:45]

Gray: No, it was a gradual build as we did these events.

Stanger-Ross: Gradual.

Gray: And I think part of it was just that a lot of people didn't want to come out to see the same thing but once they began to hear "oh it was different this year, you should've come" or "this happened and I really took something from this." So a lot of it was word of mouth and we did have some media begin to cover our events as well.

Stanger-Ross: Aside from kind of, let's say, refreshing the program -- so doing different readings and so on -- were there other differences in approach between the older events and the direction that the Shoah Project went?

Gray: Yes, yes there were. We took away things like a slide presentation, you know. Images showing the corpses from the concentration camps. These are terrible and horrible images. They are important teaching tools in the right context but we didn't feel that was how people would connect and we didn't feel that was how we could pass on the messages that we wanted to pass on, which is: "What can we do now in our communities and societies today? How can we use these terrible moments in our history to incorporate into our own lives stronger values, stronger sense of not remaining silent when we see injustice? What can we learn from the survivors and their descendants?" We also felt the personal stories were important. So as much as possible, we would involve multiple generations. We would have third generation teenage children of descendants of Shoah survivors talk about their experiences with their grandparents, what they knew about their grandparents and what Holocaust education meant to them. So we were trying to really engage through dynamic events, much more dynamic events. Not just being taught *to* but actually being a part *of* the event. And this took time, you know again it was an evolution. And we would try to involve as many people as we could, as many generations as we could.

Stanger-Ross: Do you think your objectives were different from the prior events or just your approaches?

Gray: I would say approaches more than objectives. I think that all of us, regardless of which group we're talking about, have a goal of wanting to carry forward the education about the Shoah because it's important that people understand it and it's important that people remember it in order to learn from it and we -- I think we feel today nearly -- it's a different responsibility. I won't say a larger responsibility but it's a different responsibility. Because when you are not those eyewitnesses to that history, it's very humbling to think, you know, how do we continue to tell that story when we're not the survivors but we know it's important to carry it on. So there are

a lot of questions asked at our meetings. We don't claim to know a better way. We ask the questions and we often ask the questions even at our events and gain insights from the process of putting the event together but also from the people who come to our events and talk to us after the events.

Stanger-Ross: Maybe I'll ask a couple of questions. Is there anything there that you wanted to...?

Gray: No.

Stanger-Ross: I guess I'll ask a couple of specific content questions. You mentioned slides of corpses. You touched on this a little bit, but why was that something that the Shoah Project wanted to remove from the ceremonies?

[00:33:22]

Gray: Well we didn't feel that it was… We felt like it was pushing people further away rather than bringing them closer to wanting to understand. As you know, they're difficult images to look at. And that's not to say that we shouldn't look at them and that we shouldn't accept that they happened, because it can be very impactful too. But we felt that there were may many other avenues that may connect particularly younger generations to understanding the Shoah than just that.

Stanger-Ross: And was that an issue that you raised with the [organizers] [redacted]? Was there discussion of that when you were in the process of moving from being one group to two groups.

Gray: I think more of that discussion took place once we were… You know, they had accepted the idea that we would take over these events and we began to talk about what did we like and what didn't we like and what ways did we feel may connect with more people.

Stanger-Ross: And was there anyone in the Shoah Project group who said "no, I really think those images are essential." Was there any disagreement on that?

Gray: Not that I recall.

Stanger-Ross: What about comparison to other histories of genocide or injustice? Has that been something that's been up for discussion in Shoah Project meetings?

Gray: Very much so and in fact I think it was two years ago at Kristallnacht… We usually have… Part of our ceremony is a candle-lighting ceremony, and we had a representative of the Roma community light a candle. So definitely it comes up and we try to bring that in. Our goal, as I say, we are evolving but I think something that remains present in all of our events is we want it to connect to helping people think about how they can contribute to their communities today and we don't want to isolate ourselves as Jews. This happened, the Shoah happened to Jews but it also happened to other people. I think we want to just show how we can use the event to learn about remaining active, about retaining strong values of justice and compassion and

empathy for others, all others. So we try to be inclusive in that sense and we try to make that the broader message.

Stanger-Ross: In being broader do you think there's any risk of losing the specificity of the particular harm against the Jews?

Gray: We hope not. We try very hard not to. We try very hard to always have that at the core, have that at the heart of any event that we do but then, you know, around the periphery of that talk about these larger issues and bring in the fact that, you know, hatred against anybody is not something we want.

Stanger-Ross: I'm thinking for example of Rick's introductory talk this year at the Kristallnacht. Do you remember that? He drew this analogy between the residential schools and the kind of ghosts of the residential school system and the ghosts that his Dutch family still lives with. And so, I don't know, have there been discussions within the Shoah Project about making those kind of linkages, or the advantages, disadvantages extent?

[00:38:16]

Gray: It comes up in our discussions, yup. But when we ask somebody to speak like we did for Rick, Rick has his family history and he has what's important to him and we like people who are going to speak to have that freedom to speak their minds and to speak from their hearts. I think being at risk is part of being in process, you know. There may be people who are upset by it and if there are, we'd like to hear from them and understand why and take that back to our meetings and talk about it. But I think it's important to every one of us in the group that, as I said, that the heart is always what happened to the Jews and that we want that to be what everything else pivots around.

Stanger-Ross: I have the same question but this as the kind of images topic, which is did this question of focus or other histories come into discussion at meetings prior to the split between the [local organizations] [redacted], or is it more something that...?

Gray: Yeah, more something -- if I recollect properly, much more something that came up in our own discussions once we started to talk about how we might do things differently.

Stanger-Ross: And I guess another topic that sometimes comes up is Israel. So what role does Israel or Hatikvah -- I know there was a discussion of whether to have Hatikvah at Yom HaShoah or Kristallnacht or both. What was that discussion?

Gray: Yeah, it comes up as well. As I say, I think that's why our name is so appropriate. We're a project because we're in process and we have these discussions. I think there are different opinions on that and we try to, you know… For instance, sometimes it will be tried one way and we may go back to doing it the other way because we talk about it after the event or we hear from other people in the community. And through their sharing how important it is and why it's important to them, we may say: “Let's do this again.”

Stanger-Ross: And so what are the considerations in thinking about Hatikvah or the role of Israel in these events?

Gray: I can't speak for everybody, but I think that if you're a survivor, hearing Hatikvah is reminding you of just the significance of having Israel and having a place to go at a time after the Shoah when, you know, people were being turned away. To actually have a homeland and a place that you could go and be and be the Jewish family that you are, was hugely important and I don't think I could ever understand how powerful that could be because I'm not a survivor. But I certainly, from where I sit, can understand that it is important. And yet, other people may feel that it's not necessary anymore. That for their own thoughts of the political situation, they may not feel comfortable with doing that anymore. So I think there are different opinions on it and we try to work together as a group to share our thoughts and our opinions and come to these decisions and as I say, nothing is set in stone each year. We may go back to that, we may change it. And even people's opinions in the group may change because of somebody's feedback.

Stanger-Ross: And so currently the events don't include Hatikvah or other kind of overt nationalist symbols, I guess. And that's because of the questions around the present politics of Israel you'd say?

[00:43:36]

Gray: As I say, I can't speak for others but I believe that that is the people who feel more strongly about not including it, that that's where it's coming from. For me, I feel like we need to separate -- we need to appreciate and separate the politics and try to empathise and understand how it felt for post-Shoah Jews who were able to go and re-establish a life in Israel and the importance of hearing Hatikvah.

Stanger-Ross: And when you think about these types of things or generally think about the commemorative events or if you're reflecting on one afterwards, what are the things that are really important to you that an event should have accomplished?

Gray: I think one thought is a memorial -- I'm not so sure it's the memorial itself, just speaking of memorials first, as much as it is what can happen around that memorial. You know I take the Bardejov example again. That began a healing process not just for the Jews and the descendants of the Jewish families from that village, but for the Bardejov citizens themselves to the point that there's a young group of students who from that first event in 2012, they were music students and their teacher taught them a Jewish song to play at this event, and they took this on as a challenge and they did it and now they ask to be a part of any event that takes place at that memorial. They will come to the preservation committee or the organising committee and say "we want to be a part of this." So to me that is something that's connected for those students and it can only help in their understanding of the Shoah and carry on. I think it's important that if there's a goal, that it's reverberating, that it's remaining dynamic, that people leave an event and really take something from it that they can apply to their life right now today or tomorrow or smile at the grocery clerk. You know, the small things. But just that we're showing how we can take such a difficult and horrible part of our history and continue to learn from it and continue to educate about it. I think that increased awareness can translate into a more tolerant and understanding society. And that's

one thing that's at the heart of what we do. Doing the work also offers us lessons in how we don't want the world to be. You know, by learning about these events we help people to see -- we hope -- to be clear about what we don't want as a society as well as what we do want. And Eli Wiesel said having survived he always felt he owed something to the dead and that not remembering is like betraying them again, so I feel like in my own humble small way I want to keep doing that work and keep doing that tikkun olam as a way of not betraying those who died so crudely and to continue to learn myself and to educate.

Stanger-Ross: That's a beautiful thought I think. I'm thinking I guess about the Jewish and non-Jewish people who come or who are involved in the commemoration. A lot of what you said sounds like -- although not necessarily I suppose. I guess I wonder, are you thinking mostly of non-Jewish audience or participants?

Gray: I'm thinking of people. I'm thinking of people next to us. I think the more we can unite rather than divide, the more strength we have as a kehilla, as a Jewish community, as a community, as a city, as a country. You know, as Rabbi Harry has talked about recently, in a world that just seems so fragmented and divisive, one thing each of us can do is put out more kindness and I think it is… That's the world we want.

Stanger-Ross: I guess I wonder, for example, the Yom HaShoah events have typically been more internal.

Gray: Yes.

Stanger-Ross: Whereas the Kristallnacht have typically been more inclusive.

Gray: Yes. If you're talking in that sense, yes.

Stanger-Ross: So I'm just wondering if the purpose or goals, the effects that an event like Yom HaShoah has, or even the approaches that the Shoah Project might take to that event -- because it's more inward, whether they might differ somehow or are they the same as the ones from Kristallnacht where it's more broader, more inclusive, the Premier's there and all that.

Gray: I would say that the Yom HaShoah one is, as you said, it's a more internal event. It is more for reflecting as a Jewish community.

Stanger-Ross: And so does that differ, is it a different kind of reflection that would then occur internally? Or are the aims and objectives the same, just the kind of people brought together in the room are a little different? Although Yom HaShoah's actually outdoors.

Gray: Yeah -- uhh. It's a little bit like a Jew would say kaddish for somebody who dies. A non-Jew wouldn't say kaddish but they would have their own things that they do around death and around remembering the death of a loved one. So I think it's that difference. It's essentially a much deeper reflective time for us as Jews. We want to come away from it remembering and carrying on good deeds in honour of our loved ones and at heart bettering our society. I think that occurs at Kristallnacht too but it's not to that deeper Jewish level that Yom HaShoah would be.

As I say, it's the difference between saying mourner's kaddish as a Jew and a non-Jew doing what they would do to honour their loved ones who have died.

[00:51:52]

Stanger-Ross: That's an interesting way of characterising it. I wonder, you know, if we envision students who come across this audio in their classrooms or something, can you convey to them what the significance of that term kaddish would signify in this context?

Gray: It's a prayer that we say, a very old prayer, an Aramaic prayer, that is stating god's presence in our life and stating -- the word death never appears in this prayer, but it's more a prayer of accepting that there's something more than us and it's a powerful moment of getting as close as possible to that person we've lost and expressing it through this unique prayer to our tradition.

Stanger-Ross: And does that difference between say Yom HaShoah and Kristallnacht, does that sort of prayerful or spiritual dimension of Yom HaShoah by comparison with Kristallnacht come out in the program or is it just in who's there? Are there differences in how the event is organised that would reflect that dimension of Yom HaShoah in particular?

Gray: I think just given that we have it in the Jewish cemetery already has changed the atmosphere. Because we're standing among all of these lives of multiple generations, many of whom are survivors or descendants of survivors of the Shoah. So already there's a different sense in the air about the event.

Stanger-Ross: Okay. Is there anything else on those topics?

Gray: I don't think so.

Stanger-Ross: I was gonna ask -- well we've talked a little about this in kind of preparatory discussion. And, you know, whatever level of depth seems comfortable to go into is the level of depth you should go. Maybe already you've done so. But the split between the two organisations in Victoria. From our discussion so far you need to be a subtle listener to know that there was any acrimony, that there was any serious disagreement that occurred in this context. But it was a somewhat acrimonious process as I understand. So I wonder if you have thoughts on why that was the case, why do people sometimes argue and in this case argue about these issues? Or is that something you'd rather not bring into the interview?

Gray: I don't think I have more to say than I've said about that process.

Stanger-Ross: Okay, sure. Is there anything else in general that you'd want to add? I think I've come to the conclusion of my questions.

Gray: Just to say that it's really an honour to be a part of Victoria Shoah Project as somebody who isn't a descendant of survivors. I'm always so humbled and have such admiration for the people in our group and for being able to, in a small way, help with carrying on. I feel like I'm

doing it for Gidi's family and I'm doing it for all of these people who were lost. The people who never became the family photographs that Gidi never had and that many others never had. So if I can do a very small tikkun olam, repair of the world, in this respect, then I'm honoured to do it.

Stanger-Ross: Wonderful. Okay, well thank you so much for your interview. I'll turn off the recorder now.

--END OF INTERVIEW--