

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF RESCUE AND  
ALTRUISM IN THE HOLOCAUST

---

*Light One Candle*

A Child's Diary of the Holocaust

Exhibit Specifications,  
History and Background

**Exhibit**

**Curated by Eric Saul**

September 2006

[candle.exhibit.prop.doc]

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to provide background information for individuals and institutions interested in showing the “*Light One Candle: A Child’s Diary of the Holocaust*” exhibit based on the recently published book by Solly Ganor.

This document can be used by all parties interested in promoting the “*Light One Candle*” exhibit.

It is our hope that this exhibit will inspire people to remember the Holocaust, its victims and survivors. This exhibit has been designed for a younger audience. Many of the photographs that show scenes of Jewish life in the Kovno (Kaunas) ghetto depict young people. This exhibit is an important opportunity to educate young people and students.

## **Background**

In 1941, Solly Ganor, a ten-year old boy, found himself caught up in the Holocaust. He was the same age as Anne Frank. For the next four years, he miraculously survived numerous Nazi actions, dangerous life in a ghetto, two concentration camps and a death march. Most of the members of his extended family perished. Through Solly Ganor’s life, we experience the lives of millions of Jewish children.

Because of the war, Solly Ganor never had a Bar Mitzvah. In September of 2001, Solly was the guest of honor at a Bar Mitzvah in Detroit, Michigan. This exhibit premiered as part of the commemoration of Solly's Bar Mitzvah.

In 1995, *Light One Candle* was published by Kodansha America, Inc. This book was based on the childhood diary of Solly Ganor (Zalke Genkind). The book was a wartime diary kept throughout Solly’s imprisonment in the Kovno ghetto in Lithuania. It is a poignant story of a young man’s survival against the odds. More than 97% of the Jews of the Kovno ghetto were murdered.

This book recreated the lost diary of Solly Ganor. It was written over a period of more than 30 years. Many Holocaust historians and educators consider this book a sensitive and poignant story of a child surviving the Holocaust. Some reviewers have compared Mr. Ganor’s work to Primo Levi and Eli Wiesel.

*Light One Candle* has appeared in English, Japanese and German. Over 100,000 books are now in print. *Light One Candle* has been adopted in the German and Japanese school systems as part of an educational curriculum on the Holocaust. For the last ten years, Mr. Ganor has done speaking engagements throughout the United States, Europe and Japan.

### **The Exhibit – *Light One Candle: A Child's Diary of the Holocaust***

An outstanding photographic exhibit based on the Holocaust experiences of Solly Ganor and of the survivors of the Kovno ghetto has been prepared. The exhibit depicts the life of Solly Ganor as he represents many Jewish children who were victims and survivors of Lithuania.

The exhibit was made possible by the remarkable number of photographic images that have survived depicting the lost community of Kovno, Lithuanian.

It took Solly Ganor more than 30 years to heal from the painful memories of the Holocaust. It took an additional ten years to prepare and edit his wartime diaries.

### **The Text**

The text of the exhibit is based on poignant passages from the *Light One Candle* book, based on Solly Ganor's wartime diaries. The exhibit chronologically depicts the story of Solly Ganor and the Jews of Kovno, Lithuania, and the aftermath of the Holocaust.

### **The Photographs**

Only because of the wealth of the surviving photographs depicting the Jews of Kovno, the Kovno ghetto, the concentration camps, the death march, liberation and the post-war era in Israel, is this exhibit possible. We have many photographic collections to draw upon for this exhibit. These collections are:

#### *George Kaddish Photographs:*

George Kaddish was one of the most important and yet least known Jewish photographers of the Holocaust. Between 1941 and 1944, Kaddish took hundreds of photographs of daily life in the Kovno ghetto. Most of these

photographs were taken, developed and printed secretly by Kaddish. This is perhaps the most historically significant photographic collection taken by a Jew during the Holocaust. There is virtually no other collection like this in the world.

The George Kaddish collection was recently acquired by the Simon Wiesenthal Center Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. This exhibit will showcase a portion of this magnificent collection.

We had access to George Kaddish's original 35-mm negatives in preparing this exhibit. The photographs were printed directly from his outstandingly preserved original negatives. The visual quality of these photographs is absolutely stunning. This is the first time these photographs have been printed from these negatives in nearly 40 years. More than 60 of these Kaddish photographs are part of the *Light One Candle* exhibit.

*Consul Chiune Sugihara Photographs:*

Solly Ganor was befriended by the Japanese Consul Chiune Sugihara in Kovno, Lithuania, in the summer of 1939. Sugihara issued thousands of visas to Polish Jews stranded in Lithuania. This action was taken on his own authority, for which he was later punished. The decision to issue the visas may have been influenced by Solly Ganor and his family. The Ganor family received a Sugihara visa, but was unable to use it. The project was given access to original Sugihara photographs from the Sugihara family archives depicting the heroic diplomat issuing visas to the Jewish community in Lithuania.

*Landsberg-Kaufering Concentration Camp Photographic Collection:*

The survivors of the Kovno ghetto were sent to the Landsberg-Kaufering concentration camps, part of the Dachau camp near Munich, Germany. These 11 camps were solely for Jewish slave laborers. Thousands of Lithuania men died in these camps in the spring and fall of 1944-45. The project has obtained an important collection of photographs taken at the time of the liberation of these camps of Dachau by the United States Army. The project obtained direct duplicate negatives of these important photographs. Solly Ganor survived more than a year in these camps.

*Death March Photographs:*

On April 24, 1945, thousands of Jewish men and women from the Landsberg-Kaufering-Dachau camps were taken on a death march. We have a collection of six extremely rare original photographs of this death march, which Solly

Ganor survived and describes movingly in his book. The project had access to the original prints of these photographs to make exhibit prints.

*Liberation of the death march by the 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion (Japanese American) Photographic Collection:*

Solly Ganor was liberated by an all-Japanese American artillery battalion. Ironically, many of these Japanese American soldiers volunteered from America's relocation camps. On May 2, 1945, the men of the 522<sup>nd</sup> liberated the last remnants of the Dachau death marchers and the survivors of Lithuania. One of these liberators was Private First Class Clarence Matsumura. Matsumura personally liberated Solly Ganor in a snow-covered field in Waakirchen, Germany. Ganor feels that Matsumura saved his life on that day. The project has access to original photographs, taken by these Japanese American soldiers, as they liberated Solly and his fellow Jewish survivors.

*Solly Ganor Returns Home to Israel:*

After the war, Solly Ganor briefly served with the US Army intelligence, helping to bring Nazi war criminals to justice. During this period, his widowed father met and married a Canadian woman who was in charge of the refugee agency UNRUH. Solly's father and stepmother moved to Canada to start a new life.

After the outbreak of the War of Independence in Israel, Solly moved to Israel and volunteered to fight for the new state of Israel.

We used a small collection of Mr. Ganor's photographs showing him in the Israeli army 1948-49.

*Photographs of a Return Trip to Dachau by Solly Ganor and his Liberator, Clarence Matsumura:*

In April 1994, Solly Ganor and Clarence Matsumura returned to Waakirchen, Germany, to remember their chance encounter and Solly's liberation. These photographs show these two men, one a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust, another a liberator who was also a victim of prejudice. These photographs are a poignant postscript about memorial and remembering.

## **Organization of the Exhibit “Light One Candle”**

The exhibit is organized by historical period. Each of these sections is approximately 500 words and gives historical context, weaving Solly and his family’s story into the narrative. There is one text panel for each of these sections. The sections are:

1. *Introduction to exhibit*
2. *Short history of the Jews of Lithuania and in particular, Kovno*
3. *History of Solly’s family and his early childhood in Kovno*
4. *Sugihara and his life-saving visas*
5. *German occupation of Kovno, atrocities and Ninth Fort massacre*
6. *The Kovno Ghetto, 1941-1944*
7. *The Landsberg-Kaufering concentration camps*
8. *Closing the Landsberg-Kaufering concentration camps and death march*
9. *Liberation of the death march by the Japanese American 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion*
10. *Solly returns home to Israel and fights in the War of Independence, 1948*
11. *Epilogue, 1948-present*

There are 11 text panels, which were written by Solly Ganor specifically relating to the events and sections in this exhibit. Each of these sections is approximately 500 words.

## **Exhibit Specifications**

The *Light One Candle* exhibit is comprised of 85 photographs. The photographs are captioned with text from the *Light One Candle* book. The captions are built in to the bottom mat of the photograph.

The photographs are beautifully framed in black wood with white mats. The photographs are printed on the finest photographic paper using original source negatives and prints. The photos are 11x14, 16x20, 20x24 and 24x36.

There are 11 text panels and 4 quote panels.

**Exhibit Shipping Weight:** Approximately 350 pounds.

**Shipping Information:** Four oversized cartons, 24x24x36.

**Shipping:** To be paid by museum. Exhibit will be shipped out of Los Angeles, California.

**Insurance:** Included in the rental fee

**Installation:** The photographs are numbered.

**Wall space required:** 200-250+ feet of running wall space.

**Rental Fee:** to be determined

### **Exhibit Sponsorship**

The exhibit was created by Holocaust Educational Traveling Exhibits, Eric Saul, Curator. The exhibit was premiered in Detroit, Michigan, in September 2001. The exhibit was shown at the Center for Jewish History, New York City, sponsored by YIVO, in 2003. The exhibit was shown at the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre in 2004.

### **Solly Ganor**

Solly Ganor is available to open the *Light One Candle* exhibit. Mr. Ganor has appeared in a number of documentaries and has been involved in Holocaust education for many years. He is an excellent and moving public speaker. Mr. Ganor is available to speak in Russian, Lithuanian and German, as well as English and Hebrew.

Mr. Ganor presently lives in Herzlia, Israel, and La Jolla, California.

### ***Light One Candle* Book**

Solly Ganor's book, *Light One Candle*, is available for sale in trade soft-cover edition. These books can be purchased at wholesale and can be resold at retail for fundraising purposes. Solly can sign the books as part of his personal appearance.

### **Light One Candle Educational Material**

The Light One Candle exhibit has a very nice exhibit catalogue and educational booklet. This can be obtained from the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

## **Slide Show**

There is a slide show available comprised of photographs that were used in the Light One Candle exhibition.

## **Exhibition Sites**

The *Visas for Life: The Righteous Diplomats* exhibit is designed primarily for museums, historical societies, gallery settings or public spaces. No original photographs or archival material are used in the exhibit. Nonetheless, due to the fragile nature of the photographs and frames, it cannot be exhibited outdoors, or in any environment that might damage the photographs or the frames.

It is recommended that while the exhibit is being shown that it be protected by minimum to medium security from vandalism and from theft.

## **Exhibit Installation**

Eric Saul is available to personally supervise the installation of the exhibit. Depending on the site and the size of the exhibit, installation can take between one and two days. Eric Saul can help you in your planning of exhibit opening ceremonies.

## Appendix

### *Light One Candle: A Child's Diary of the Holocaust*

Solly Ganor's 1995 autobiography *Light One Candle: A Child's Diary of the Holocaust* is a chilling and heartbreaking story of Ganor as a young boy during the Holocaust.

*Light One Candle* has been translated into English, German and Japanese and has been adopted in the German and Japanese school systems as an integral part of their educational curricula on the Holocaust. Some have compared *Light One Candle* to the literary works of noted Holocaust survivors Primo Levi and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel. Solly's writing has also evoked comparisons to the Diary of Anne Frank.

*Light One Candle* is based on Solly's re-created lost diaries which he began writing at age eleven soon after the Nazis marched into Poland in 1939. Not long after his arrival at the Stutthof German concentration camp near Danzig in July of 1944, Solly disposed of his treasured diaries. Immediate death awaited him if his writings were discovered by the Nazis. Solly and his father were soon deported to Dachau.

Six months younger than Anne Frank, the story recorded by Solly is similar to that of the young girl who became world famous for her agonizing and poignant diaries written while in hiding from the Nazis in Holland. Betrayed along with her family, Anne Frank died at the age of 15 in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

Solly's story of survival offers a different voice...brutal and painful, filled with an almost daily recounting of terror, torment, and death. Solly is one of the last witnesses to the dehumanization and murder of the Jews of Lithuania. Yet despite everything, Solly remains an optimist and feels compelled to share his story of survival with the world.

Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania is little known to most Americans but looms large in the memory of Solly Ganor. For over 500 years, Kovno was one of the most enlightened communities for Jewish life in all of Europe.

On the eve of World War II, Kovno had a population of 120,000 and was one of the few places in Europe where its Jewish community lived and prospered in relative peace. The 30,000 Jews of Kovno who were merchants, professionals, and scholars had become essential to the city's economy and cultural life.

When the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939 Jewish refugees began streaming into Lithuania. The country became a temporary refuge for Jews desperate for escape. Kovno was flooded with thousands of desperate Polish refugees.

In the spring of 1941, Hitler's army overran Lithuania and the Jews of Kovno were immediately subjected not only to the barbarity of the 'SS,' but the persecution of Lithuanian collaborators. Within hours of the Nazi invasion, a murderous fury was unleashed upon the Jews by people who had been their neighbors and friends for generations. The killing in the streets of Kovno began even before German soldiers arrived in the city.

At the age of thirteen trying to escape from the city with his family, Solly was an eyewitness to a mass execution. Men, women, and children... Jews... Including his teacher... Shot dead into a stream by Lithuanians.

In August of that year Solly, his family and the remaining Jews of Kovno were imprisoned in the confines of the Slabodke ghetto. More than 75 percent were eventually starved and murdered behind its walls and in the city's dreaded old forts used as execution sites.

In July of 1944 the Nazis emptied the ghetto and burned it down. Solly and his father were deported to the concentration camps near Dachau, Germany. Separated from his mother and sister, Solly went with his father and worked in a slave labor camp in the German town of Utting.

As Allied troops approached Dachau in April 1945, Solly, his father and hundreds of other Jewish prisoners were sent on a death march. On May 2nd at Waakirchen, starved and semi-conscious, Solly's first vision of freedom occurred when he viewed the face of Private Clarence Matsumura, a Japanese American soldier from the U.S. Army's 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, among many of the soldiers from this unit. Solly was 16 years old and free.

Because he could speak four languages Solly worked with U.S. Army Counterintelligence searching for Nazi war criminals in displaced persons camps.

During this period Solly's widowed father met and married a Canadian woman who worked for a U.N. relief agency in Munich. They planned to start a new life in Canada. Solly decided instead to go to Palestine and fight for Israel's independence in 1948.

As a teenager in the newly formed state of Israel, Solly was engaged in a life and death struggle for the biblical land of his forefathers. He was soon defending his homeland with a German machine gun in the Golan Heights.

Solly was discharged from military service in 1949 and went to sea where he sought refuge as a merchant marine sailing around the world. He left after 'twelve good years' and married his wife Pola. Solly then spent three years at London University studying languages and English literature.

Solly and Pola returned to Israel where he managed a textile business owned by his wife's family. Solly retired after 15 years and since then the couple has divided their time between La Jolla, California and Herzlia, Israel. They have a son and daughter, and three grandchildren.

As for the family of his youth, Solly's older brother Hermann disappeared in 1941 and was seen a year later marching with a group of Russian prisoners of war. That was the last Solly heard of him.

Solly's mother died of typhoid fever on Christmas Day in 1944 at the Stutthof death camp. It was also his father's birthday.

### **Chiune Sugihara: A Special Hero**

Known as the 'Japanese Schindler,' Chiune Sugihara was Japan's Consul General in Lithuania who defied his government and issued thousands of visas in July and August of 1940 to help Jews escape the Nazis and almost certain death.

Sugihara and young Solly became friends when they met by chance at his aunt's gourmet food shop that catered to the city's foreign diplomats. Impressed by 'the kindness in his eyes' Solly quickly warmed to Sugihara and invited the diplomat and his wife to the family home for a Chanukah party.

The dinner conversation included Polish refugees who informed everyone of the systematic persecution of the Jews in Poland. There were roundups and executions. Sugihara was dismayed. Solly's family was shocked, disbelieving.

Sugihara would eventually disobey the orders of his government, and issue transit visas to Jews trying to escape Lithuania. The Japanese consul issued visas for Solly's family, but they were unable to use them. Solly's father had waited too long, trying to sell his business. Time had run out.

But the memory of Sugihara's kindness... His 'shining moral example'... helped guide Solly through the darkest moments of the Holocaust.

## **Old Friends**

Today, Solly maintains close ties with his friends from pre-war Kovno. This close circle of friends from Lithuania and survivors of the camps see each other often. When all of them join together for birthdays and holidays, they are not only a symbol of survival, but of the 2,000-year history of European Jewry that was almost obliterated. It is a loss that remains a heartbreaking legacy of the Holocaust. But Solly and his friends are a living reminder that good can triumph over evil.

## **A Bar Mitzvah and an Exhibit Honoring the Life of Solly Ganor**

In September 2001, Solly Ganor participated in a Bar Mitzvah ceremony with a young man who adopted Solly's story for this ceremony. Solly gave a moving speech as part of this coming-of-age program.

As part of this Bar Mitzvah, this exhibit on the life of Solly Ganor and the children of the Kovno ghetto was created.

## **A Tearful Reunion**

Like most survivors, Solly Ganor wanted to forget the Holocaust. He wanted no reminders of the bitter past that haunted him and the Jewish people.

In April of 1992, Solly was jolted back to his past when he was invited to a gathering of Japanese American veterans of the 522<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion who were visiting Jerusalem. Among them was Clarence Matsumura. It was the first time Solly and Clarence had seen each other since the war ended. It was an emotional reunion between the two men... One a survivor of the Holocaust, the other a survivor of American injustice.

A tidal wave of emotion swept over Solly's 'second liberation.' He wept as never before. Photos of this extraordinary reunion will be used in the exhibit.

To Solly's 'enduring sorrow,' Clarence died in 1995. But Solly's kinship with his liberator and other members of the 552<sup>nd</sup> remains to this day. A small collection of poignant photographs of Solly's reunion with his liberators is included in the exhibit.

For the last ten years, Solly has lectured all over the world on his story and on the children of the Holocaust. He remains committed to ensuring that their memory is not forgotten.

## **Conclusion**

As with the diaries of Anne Frank, the objective in telling the story of Solly Ganor in the *Light One Candle* exhibit is to try once again to put a human face and voice to an unthinkable tragedy. Solly's story offers new lessons for tolerance, understanding and compassion.

*Light One Candle* is the story of a vanished life, but also a search for meaning.

## **The Ship of Doom**

by Solly Ganor, Dachau-Landsberg survivor

We sailed upon oceans of blood,  
And the captain's name was death,  
The wind in our sails were the winds of hate,  
And the world just couldn't care less.

We called on each port to let us get off  
We cried, we begged, we moaned,  
But our cries and tears fell on deaf ears,  
'Cause their hearts were made of stone.

The crew of the vessel, they sang the Horst Wessel,  
While we prayed to God in fear,  
We called to the world to save our souls,  
But the world just wouldn't hear.

We sailed into darkness where time had no meaning,  
We were murdered in millions without pity or feeling,  
They worked us in pits where no one could last  
And when we were finished we were to be gassed.

They didn't use coal to stoke their fire,  
The fat of our bodies forced the flames higher,  
The sky in the darkness it glowed purple red,  
The war was soon over but we were all dead.

When they finally knew that they lost the war  
And Europe lay ruined from shore to shore  
They were at least proud in having caused,  
The death of our millions and the Holocaust.

But on the oceans of the eternal night,  
There was Sempo Sugihara's single light,  
He gave out visas from morning till late,  
To thousands of people who stood at his gate.

He was the man whose soul shone so bright,  
Who lost his career to do what was right,  
He never asked for praise or pay,  
He did it all in his modest way.

We came to the land of the rising sun  
To pay tribute to its illustrious son  
To a man whose spirit was noble and kind,  
And showed an example to all of mankind.