

## Australian-Canadian Studies

*A Journal for the Humanities and the Social Sciences*

### Feature Articles

**Tamsin Solomon**

Antisemitism as Free Speech: Judicial Responses to Hate Propaganda in Zundel and Keegstra

**Paul R. Bartrop**

Canada, Australia and the Holocaust: Comparing the Refugee Record of the Two Largest Dominions

**Barnett Richling**

Applied Anthropology and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, 1910-1939

**John Benson**

Penny Capitalism in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Canada

**John Jenkins and T.W. Maxwell**

A Comparative Study of Tourist Organisations in Australia and Canada

**Larry Gray**

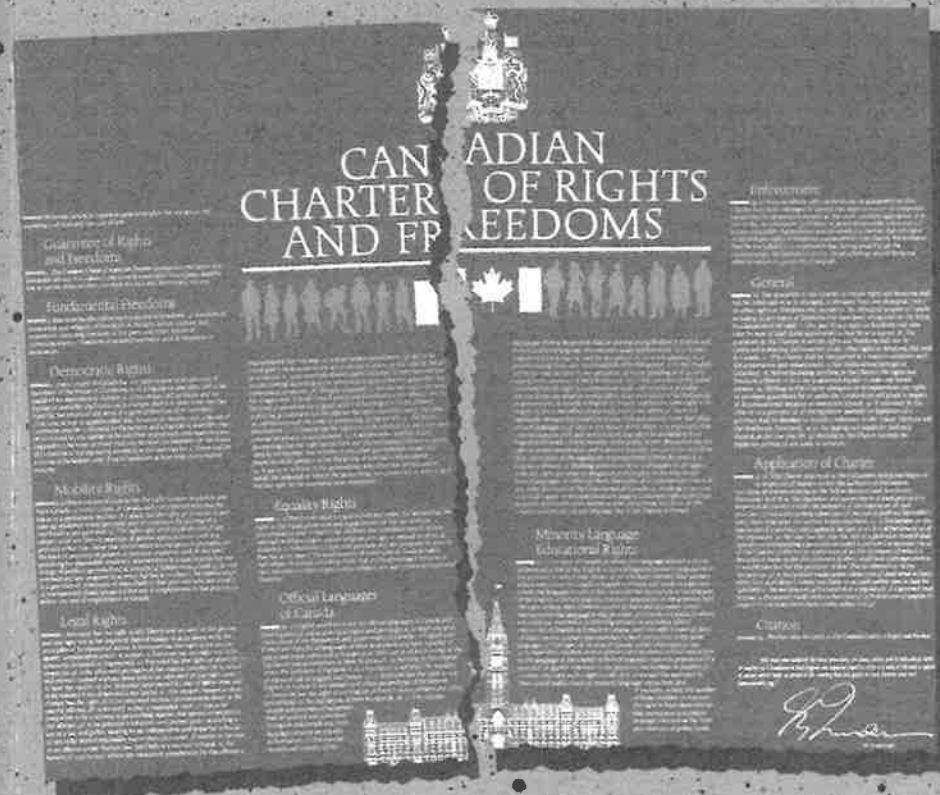
School Accountability: Lessons from British Columbia

**Feature Review  
Paul R. Bartrop**

Judy Chicago's *Holocaust Project*

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Vol. 13, No. 1, 1995

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

VOL. 13, NO. 1, 1995

<b>EDITORIAL</b>		v
<b>FEATURE ARTICLES</b>		
TAMSIN SOLOMON	Antisemitism as Free Speech: Judicial Responses to Hate Propaganda in <i>Zundel</i> and <i>Keegstra</i>	1
PAUL R. BARTROP	Canada, Australia and the Holocaust: Comparing the Refugee Record of the Two Largest Dominions	33
BARNETT RICHLING	Applied Anthropology and Aboriginal Peoples in Canada, 1910–1939	49
JOHN BENSON	Penny Capitalism in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Canada	63
JOHN JENKINS	A Comparative Study of Tourist Organisations in Australia and Canada	73
LARRY GRAY and T.W. MAXWELL	School Accountability: Lessons from British Columbia	109
<b>FEATURE REVIEW</b>		
PAUL R. BARTROP	Judy Chicago's <i>Holocaust Project</i>	129
<b>REVIEWS</b>		from 133
CHRISTY COLLIS	<i>And Their Ghosts May be Heard....</i>	
RICHARD W. IRELAND	<i>Rough Justice</i>	
PATRICIA E. ROY	<i>A Sensitive Independence</i>	
SONIA MYCAK	<i>Strategies for Identity</i>	
DOUGLAS BARBOUR	<i>The Cave after Saltwater Tide; This World/ This Place; Acoustic Shadow; Anima</i>	
HEATHER MACFADYEN	<i>Myth and Milieu</i>	
PAUL SHARRAD	<i>A Grain of Truth</i>	
REBECCA ALBURY	<i>The Nature of their Bodies</i>	
GEOFFREY SYKES	<i>Dependency/Space/Policy; Rethinking the Future; Where to Now? Australia's Identity in the Nineties</i>	
ROBERT NICOLE	<i>Readings in Pacific Literature</i>	
T.L. CRAIG	<i>Literature as Pulpit</i>	
LOIS FOSTER	<i>Australia and the Holocaust</i>	
<b>NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS</b>		179

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## COVER PAINTING:

by

GERRY TURCOTTE, ©1995.

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COMPUTER GRAPHIC—COLLAGE & PAINT  
INCORPORATING A PHOTOGRAPH BY  
SCOT MAGNISH/ OTTAWA SUN, FROM  
WARREN KINSELLA,  
WEB OF HATE: INSIDE CANADA'S FAR RIGHT NETWORK  
(1994. HARPERCOLLINS).

The Photo Caption reads:  
"A young skinhead sporting a swastika armband  
poses with an unidentified child in August 1992  
at La Plaine, Quebec."

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**Peephole into the gas chamber**

Companies competed for the contract to build equipment for the gas chambers and crematoria. The successful enterprise displayed its name on this peephole.

Graphic and caption from *Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light*

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## FEATURE REVIEW

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**JUDY CHICAGO, *HOLOCAUST PROJECT: FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT* (with photography by Donald Woodman). New York: Viking, 1993.**

Memorialising a phenomenon such as the Holocaust usually takes one of two forms, public or private. Public memorialisation can include the establishment of Holocaust museums, the mounting of exhibitions, the laying of plaques, the unveiling of statutes, and the religious or secular commemoration of certain anniversaries. Private memorialisation, a process more intimate and for many thus less accessible, can include the creation of works of literature, memoir or art. *Holocaust Project*, by American painter Judy Chicago, fits into this latter category. This book is not the project itself, but rather a record about a project, an immense undertaking in which Chicago, through art, is attempting to create for herself an understanding not only of the Holocaust but also of the evil that can be unleashed against any human beings at any time.

Chicago's interest in her subject is expressed through her art, but the medium, as she sees it, is not the message. Very early in the book she provides us with a glimpse of how she views her brief:

Within the Jewish community, there is an intense dialogue about this subject and an understandable commitment to create monuments and institutions to commemorate it. But outside the organized Jewish community, there is incomplete knowledge, indifference, and ignorance about the Holocaust, a "blame the victim" attitude, a lack of

understanding about the importance of confronting this subject, and/or the widespread attitude, "what does the Holocaust have to do with me?"

Answering questions such as this is the task Chicago has set herself. Her project, several years in the making, has involved widespread travel to as many of the places where the Holocaust occurred as possible. Her purpose? To penetrate the depths of the experience as seen from the perspective of both the perpetrators and the victims, sniff the air, appreciate the landscape, and thus obtain a "feel" for the total environment in which the Holocaust was played out during the years between 1933 and 1945.

With her husband Donald Woodman, an artistic photographer of note, Chicago has also located and absorbed many of the ways in which the Holocaust has so far been presented visually by those who have gone before. Her conclusion is that, whereas in the past the Holocaust has been depicted through text, photographs or artefacts, none of these have been truly able to help her make a personal connection with the human side of the experience.

Convinced that she could achieve this through painting, Chicago set herself the task of creating a major exhibition of artworks which would combine both photographs and interpretive paintings in a vision of the Holocaust which was simultaneously intimate and outreaching. The result is a stunning and magnificent onslaught both on our senses and our sensibilities.

Chicago and Woodman prepared themselves intensively for the project, and were, long before a single brush stroke had been made or lens shutter had been clicked, already experts in the many ways the Holocaust experience had been dealt with previously. The artworks reproduced in this book demonstrate brilliantly their skills at integrating all these approaches, so that we see more than just artistic representations of the Nazi extermination of the Jews. We see—and read—Chicago's attempts at coming to terms with her own fears and concerns, and we learn how she came to a position of understanding. Through this, we are also exposed to the fears and understandings of many others, as well.

This is not a book which is easy to describe or review, as its power is essentially visual rather than literal. Nonetheless, for those who can obtain a copy and spend some time working through it, I can offer no higher praise than to say that it is a book that will leave readers with an altogether different view of the meaning of the Holocaust for the contemporary world than they previously possessed. It did for me, and I

have been studying, teaching and writing about the Holocaust for some twenty years.

We are left with one more tantalising hope. On the fly-leaf we are informed that the fruits of Judy Chicago's intellectual and artistic journey will be exhibited in museums across America throughout 1997. The hope is that this *tour de force* might one day come also to Australia, so that people in this part of the world may be exposed to its brilliance. The subject-matter of *Holocaust Project* might be among the most shocking ever to assault the human mind, but in my view this project is one of the finest explorations of the attempt to come to terms with it that has yet been produced.

Paul Bartrop  
University of South Australia

Sign on road near  
Sachsenhausen  
showing route of  
death march



Graphic and caption from *Holocaust Project: From Darkness into Light*

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# ACSANZ 1996

UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

SUN. 7 JULY — WED. 10 JULY 1996

ACSANZ '96 will be held at the University of Tasmania, Hobart and like all previous ACSANZ Conferences will involve an academic program with contributions in all areas of Canadian Studies. In keeping with traditions set by previous conferences a full social program will complement the academic sessions. This social program will give conference delegates a taste of Tasmania's fine food and drink and hopefully whet appetites for further exploration of the island.

The conference is being organised by a committee convened by  
Dr Marcus Haward and Dr Robert Hall.

#### KEY DATES

October 1995 Second call for papers  
May 1996 Abstracts Due  
June 1996 Program available

If you would like to offer a paper, or attend ACSANZ '96, please contact:

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