

False news and Freedom of speech

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New Zealand's Holocaust Centre strongly supports the concept of free speech, but works to make young people question what they read online and be aware of the dangers of false news, the Centre said on the occasion of its tenth anniversary.

Holocaust deniers and falsifiers have no barriers to publishing false news through the Internet and other digital media.

“We aim to teach young people to go back to the source material that we can provide through survivor testimonies and links with databases, such as the one collected from the concentration and death camps by the International Red Cross. The 30 million records housed at Bad Arolsen in Germany, and now available online, are indisputable evidence recorded by the Nazi perpetrators themselves,” the Centre said.

In its ten years the Holocaust Centre of New Zealand has provided programmes for over 15,700 visitors, most of them school groups.

A feature of these programmes is to make people, and especially the young, aware of the reality of what happens when hate speech turns into hate actions, through the history of the world's largest ever state-sponsored genocide.

The Centre's aim is to empower individuals to stand against prejudice and apathy.

“We teach about the Holocaust from a New Zealand perspective, through the lives of the survivors and refugees from Nazi-dominated Europe who came to our country and made new lives here,” the Centre explains.

Steven Sedley*, the Centre's founding Chairman, survived the final days of the Holocaust in the Budapest ghetto, as a ten year old boy. The broad interest by the general public in the commemoration of the liberation of Auschwitz in 2005 brought home the realization that the Holocaust touched the lives of a great many New Zealanders. All those who had been murdered need to be remembered, and the stories of survivors who settled in New Zealand had to be recorded and preserved. The Holocaust was the great tragedy of Western civilization and the lessons about prejudice, bigotry, and the perversion of human rights that made it possible had to be disseminated

Most recently Steven has instigated an [Adult Education programme](#), in conjunction with Victoria University. The forthcoming six week interdisciplinary programme will explore various aspects of the Holocaust and its impact on New Zealand. It will be held in Wellington, at the Holocaust Centre, from 7 May to 11 June.

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**Steven can be contacted for comment or interview through the Holocaust Centre office by contacting Sarah at officeadmin@holocaustcentre.org.nz*