THE HOLOCAUST

A NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER'S RESOURCE

FEATURING THE NARRATIVES OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS WHO BECAME NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTS

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON THE HOLOCAUST

North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

www.ncpublicschools.org/holocaust-council/

THE HOLOCAUST

A NORTH CAROLINA TEACHER'S RESOURCE

FEATURING THE NARRATIVES OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS WHO BECAME NORTH CAROLINA RESIDENTS

North Carolina Council on the Holocaust
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
2019

Cover photographs. (front)
Top: Zev Harel, Morris Glass, Barbara Ledermann Rodbell.
Bottom: Gizella Gross Abramson, Abram Piasek, Susan Eckstein Cernyak-Spatz.

Cover photographs. (back)
Top: Jack Hoffmann, Walter Falk, Renée Laser Fink, Gizella Gross Abramson, Rachel Giralnik Kizhnerman, Barbara Ledermann Rodbell.
Middle: Rena Kornreich Gelissen, Hank Brodt, Morris Stein, Shelly Weiner, Julius Blum.
Bottom: Zev Harel, Simone Weil Lipman, David & Edith Neuberger Ross, Esther Gutman Lederman.

Reproduced by permission.

This guide is available for free download, in its entirety and by individual narratives and chapters, at the Council website: www.ncpublicschools.org/holocaust-council/

The first-person accounts in this guide are those of Holocaust survivors who became North Carolina residents. The Council expresses deep gratitude for their contributions to Holocaust education.

Gizella Gross Abramson
RALEIGH

Julius Blum
ASHEVILLE

Hank Brodt
HIGH POINT

Susan Eckstein Cernyak-Spatz
CHARLOTTE

Walter Falk
GREENSBORO

Renée Laser Fink
CHAPEL HILL

Rena Kornreich Gelissen
HENDERSONVILLE

Morris Glass
RALEIGH

Zev Harel
GREENSBORO

Jack Hoffmann
GREENSBORO

Anatoly Kizhnerman
GREENSBORO

Rachel Giralnik Kizhnerman
GREENSBORO

Esther Gutman Lederman
CHAPEL HILL

Simone Weil Lipman
CHAPEL HILL

Elias Mordechai
GREENSBORO

Esther Politis Mordechai
GREENSBORO

Abe Piasek
RALEIGH

Barbara Ledermann Rodbell
CHAPEL HILL

Edith Neuberger Ross
CARY

Morris Stein
CONCORD

Shelly Weiner
GREENSBORO

- ***This is going to end up being something quite awful and everybody better pay attention.***

  __Barbara Ledermann Rodbell

- ***People ask how I survived such hell [Auschwitz]. I have only one explanation that makes sense to me. I learned to accept the nightmarish camp as the real world and coped from one minute to the next. Blind luck also played a part.*** **__Susan Eckstein Cernyak-Spatz**

- ***I have often wondered how the Palaschuk family had such strength and bravery to do what they did [in hiding us]. I am not sure how I would react in the same situation. I don't think that many of us would know how we would react.*** **__Shelly Weiner**

- ***How can I describe the jubilation I felt when I first glimpsed that tank flying an American flag? There is no way to describe the joy in my heart—the joy of being free! I ran outside and embraced the first soldier I saw.*** **__Morris Glass**

- ***People have to believe that it happened to the Jews and it can happen again. I love America and I love democracy with all my heart, but how can people defend it if they don't realize it can be threatened?***

  __Gizella Gross Abramson

■ TABLE OF CONTENTS ■

—■ ■ ■—

This guide is available for free download, in its entirety and by individual narratives and chapters, at the Council website: www.ncpublicschools.org/holocaust-council/

*Images from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum have the credit line USHMM/Provenance at the top of the image. See Photograph Permissions for complete information.

___ACKNOWLEDGMENTS___

The North Carolina Council on the Holocaust is pleased to present this expanded and revised edition of *The Holocaust: A North Carolina Teacher's Resource*, available at no charge on the Council website (www.ncpublicschools.org/holocaust-council/). In addition to lesson plans and supplemental materials, this edition presents the narratives of 21 Holocaust survivors who became North Carolina residents.

The North Carolina Council on the Holocaust was established in 1981 and is currently an agency within the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. It is comprised of 24 members. Eighteen are appointed by the Governor, the Speaker of the House, and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate (six appointments each). Six are elected to the Council and must be Holocaust survivors or lineal descendants of survivors.

Through its instructional and commemoration programs, the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust educates North Carolinians about the systematic program of mass murder by the Nazis and their collaborators of six million Jews and millions of other targeted groups including Roma (gypsies), homosexuals, handicapped persons, and religious and political dissidents, from 1933 to 1945.

The Council gratefully acknowledges the dedication and contributions of its members and supporters over the years, as well as the longstanding support of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and the North Carolina General Assembly.

The Council gratefully acknowledges the past chairmen of the Council: Rev. Dr. B. Elmo Scoggin, William Shrago, Dr. Bramy Resnik, and Dr. David Crowe. The Council also acknowledges the past chairmen of the North Carolina Holocaust Foundation: William Shrago, Joe Woodland, Steven Ellsweig, and Alan Novak. Funding for the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust and the continued success of the Council would not have been possible without the expert management and guidance of Richard Schwartz, Vice Chairman of the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust since July 1999, and Mitch Rifkin, Chairman of the North Carolina Holocaust Foundation since 2012.

The Council gratefully acknowledges Henry and Runia Vogelhut for the creation of the State Holocaust Commemoration in 1982 and for their annual management of the Commemoration through 1998. The Council thanks the current and former members of the Commemoration Committee for continuing to plan the Commemoration since 1998.

The Council offers its sincere gratitude to Holocaust survivors Gizella Abramson, Irving Bienstock, Julius Blum, Hank Brodt, Susan Cernyak-Spatz, Suly Chenkin, Renée Fink, Morris Glass, Zev Harel, Rebecca Hauser, Henry Hirschmann, Manfred Katz, Henry Landsberger, Simone Weil Lipman, Elias Mordechai, Esther Mordechai, Abe Piasek, Bramy Resnik, Alfred Schnog, Shelly Weiner, and Walter Ziffer for their countless speaking engagements on behalf of the Council to teachers, students, civic groups, and the military about their Holocaust experiences and lessons learned from the Holocaust.

The Council remembers with fond memory and deep appreciation Holocaust survivor Gizella Abramson for her endless dedication to educate others about the Holocaust. For almost 38 years, from autumn 1973 to spring 2011, including 20 years as the Council's principal speaker at its workshops and throughout the state, Gizella Abramson served as an inspiration to thousands of North Carolina teachers, students, and other audiences.

The Council recognizes the dedicated educators who have led the Council's teacher workshops across the state for almost three decades. The workshops were initiated in 1991 by Gizella Abramson and educator Linda Scher, both of whom continued with unflagging perseverance until their retirements in 2011 and 2013. The Council thanks those who have carried on the workshops: Lynda Moss (2013-2015), Audrey Krakovitz (2016-2018), and the current co-directors Karen Klaich and Juanita Ray who, with the workshops committee, have significantly expanded the workshop offerings provided by the Council. The Council also expresses appreciation to Dr. David Crowe, Dr. Joseph Hoffman, Dr. Karl Schleunes, and Dr. Peter Stein, who gave generously of their time and talents over the years as distinguished Holocaust scholars at the teacher workshops. By educating nearly 12,000 teachers about the Holocaust, the workshops have directly impacted millions of North Carolina students through the past 28 years.

The Council gratefully acknowledges Linda Scher for writing the original Council teacher's guide, *The Holocaust: A North Carolina Teacher's Resource* (1989, rev. 2005) and thanks Marianne Wason for updating and expanding the guide to this new 2019 edition. Over 22,000 copies of the guide have been distributed to North Carolina teachers attending Council workshops. While the guide is now online, the Council will continue to distribute a publication of guide selections and Holocaust teaching materials to workshop participants.

The Council also wishes to thank Marianne Wason for contributing her editing and publishing expertise to the Council's printed and digital resources. In addition to this revised and expanded teacher's guide, she has created numerous printed materials and Power Point presentations for the Council's events and outreach since 1997. She created the Council's original website and serves as the Council's website liaison with the N.C. Department of Public Instruction.

Sincerely,

Michael Abramson
Chairman, North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, 1999-present
April 2019

I ■ A HISTORY OF ANTI-SEMITISM ■

_____OVERVIEW_____

■ ***"The anti-Semitic episodes from my childhood, painful though they were, were just the prelude to the horror that was to follow. Nothing in the experience of the European Jews prepared us for the destruction that was to come."*** **___Morris Glass**

The roots of anti-Semitism—prejudice against Jews—go back to ancient times. Throughout history, the seeds of misunderstanding can be traced to the position of the Jews as a minority religious group. Often in ancient times, when government officials felt their authority threatened, they found a convenient scapegoat in the Jews. Belief in one God (monotheism) and refusal to accept the dominant religion set the Jews apart from others in pre-Christian times. At first, Christianity was seen as a Jewish sect, but this changed as Christianity developed and became a powerful force in the Roman Empire.

CHRISTIANS EARLY TARGETS OF ROMAN PERSECUTION In 63 BCE, the Romans conquered Jerusalem, center of the Jewish homeland. During the early period of Roman rule, Judaism was recognized as a legal religion, and Jews could practice their religion freely. The early Christians, however, were subject to Roman persecution since they were considered to be heretics (believers in an unacceptable faith). Once Christianity took hold and spread throughout the empire, and after several Jewish revolts against Roman power in the first century CE, Judaism became the target of Roman persecution.

CHRISTIANITY BECOMES STATE RELIGION IN ROMAN EMPIRE In 380 CE, the Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire. The Church demanded the conversion of the Jews because it insisted that Christianity was the only true religion. The power of the state made Jews outcasts when they refused to renounce their faith. They were denied citizenship and its rights. By the end of the fourth century, Jews had been stamped with one of the most damaging myths they would face. For many Christians they had become the "Christ-killers," blamed for the death of Jesus. While the actual crucifixion of Jesus was carried out by the Romans, responsibility for the death of Jesus was placed on the Jews.

NEW LAWS SET JEWS APART The Justinian Code, compiled by scholars for the Emperor Justinian (527-565 CE), excluded Jews from all public places, prohibited Jews from giving evidence in lawsuits in which Christians took part, and forbade the reading of the Bible in Hebrew (only Greek or Latin were allowed). Church Council edicts forbade marriage between Christians and Jews and outlawed the conversion of Christians to Judaism in 533 CE. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council stamped the Jews as a people apart through its decree that Jews were to wear special clothes and markings to distinguish them from Christians. Although the Church passed four decrees concerning Jews, it was up to individual states to impose the new decrees. Some rulers willingly accepted the restrictions while others did not.

"Burning of the Jews," woodcut, 1493, depicting the massacre of Jews accused of using Christian blood in their rituals ("blood libel")

The Council of Basel (1431-43) established the concept of physical separation in cities with ghettos. It decreed that Jews were to live in separate communities, isolated from Christians except for reasons of business. Jews were not allowed to go to universities. They were required to attend Christian church sermons.

RELIGIOUS MINORITIES HARSHLY TREATED IN THE MIDDLE AGES In Europe**,** during the Middle Ages—from 500 to about 1450 CE—all religious nonconformists were harshly treated by ruling authorities. Heresy—holding an opinion contrary to Church doctrine—was a crime punishable by death. Jews were seen as a threat to established religion. As the most conspicuous non-conforming group, they were often attacked. At times it was easy for ruthless leaders to convince their largely uneducated followers that all "nonbelievers" must be killed. Sometimes the leaders of the Church aided the persecutions. At other times, the Pope and bishops protected Jews.

CRUSADES The Crusades, which began in 1096, led to increased persecution of Jews. Religious fervor reached fever pitch as the Crusaders made their way across Europe toward the Holy Land. Although anger was originally focused on the Muslims controlling Palestine, some of this intense feeling was redirected toward the European Jewish communities through which the Crusaders passed. Massacres of Jews occurred in many cities on the route to Jerusalem. In the seven-month period from January to July 1096, approximately one fourth to one third of the Jewish population in Germany and France, around 12,000 people, was killed. These persecutions caused many Jews to leave western Europe for the relative safety of eastern Europe.

MANY OCCUPATIONS CLOSED TO JEWS In western and southern Europe, Jews could not become farmers because they were forbidden to own land. Land ownership required the taking of a Christian oath. Gradually more and more occupations were closed to them, particularly commerce guilds [business and merchant groups]. There were only a few ways for Jews to make a living. Since Christians believed lending money and charging interest on it—usury—was a sin, Jews were able to take on that profession. It was a job no one else wanted. It also provided Jews with portable wealth if they were expelled from a region or nation.

BLACK DEATH LEADS TO SCAPEGOATING The Black Death, or bubonic plague, led to intense religious scapegoating in western Europe. It is estimated that between 1348 and 1350 the epidemic killed one third of Europe's population, perhaps as many as 25 million people. Many people believed the plague to be God's punishment for their sins. For others, the plague could only be explained as the work of demons; this group chose as their scapegoat people who were already unpopular in the community. Because Jews followed religious laws of hygiene (including not drinking from public wells), they tended to suffer less from the plague than their Christian neighbors. Yet rumors spread that the plague was caused by the Jews who had poisoned wells and food. The worst massacre of Jews in Europe before Hitler's rise to power occurred at this time. For two years, a violent wave of attacks against Jews swept over Europe. Tens of thousands were killed by their terrified neighbors despite the fact that many Jews also died of the plague.

Pogrom in the Jewish ghetto of Frankfurt, Germany, 1614

Not only were Jews blamed for the Black Death, but they were also accused of murdering Christians, especially children, in order to use their blood during religious ceremonies. The "blood libel," or ritual murder, as it is known, can be traced back to Norwich, England, where around 1150 two clergymen charged that the murder of a Christian boy was part of a Jewish plot to kill Christians. Despite the fact that the boy was probably killed by an outlaw, the myth persisted. Murdering Jews was also justified with other reasons. Jews were said to desecrate churches and to be disloyal to rulers. Those who tried to protect Jews were ignored or persecuted themselves.

Medieval illustration depicting Jews (wearing yellow badges) being burned at the stake (Schilling, *Bildchronik*), 1515

Luther's *On the Jews and Their Lies*, 1543

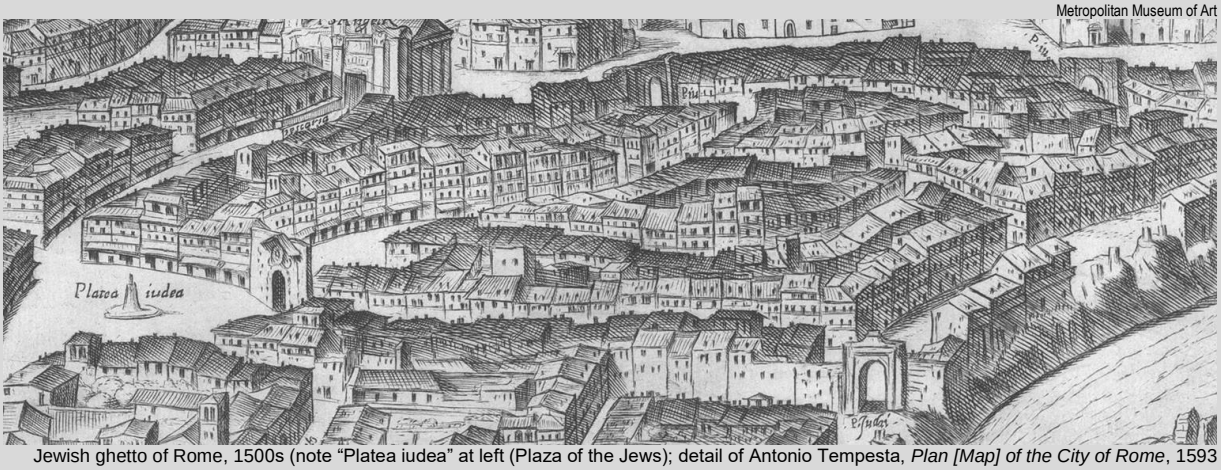
EXPELLED FROM WESTERN EUROPE By the end of the Middle Ages, fear and superstition had created a deep rift between Jews and Christians. As European peoples began to think of themselves as belonging to a nation, Jews again became "outsiders," expelled from England in 1290, from France in 1306 and 1394, and from parts of Germany in the 1300s and 1400s. They were not legally allowed in England until the mid-1600s and in France until the 1790s after the French Revolution.

GOLDEN AGE AND INQUISITION IN SPAIN Unlike Jews in other parts of western Europe, the Jews of Spain enjoyed a golden age of political influence and religious tolerance from the 11th to the 14th centuries. However, in the wave of intense national excitement that followed the Spanish conquest of Granada in 1492, both Jews and Muslims were expelled from Spain after the unification of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella. Unification had been aided by the Catholic Church which, through the Inquisition, had insisted on religious conformity. Loyalty to country became equated with absolute commitment to Christianity. From 1478 to 1765, the Church-led Inquisition burned thousands of Jews at the stake for their religious beliefs.

PROTESTANT REFORMATION The Protestant Reformation, which split Christianity into different branches in the 16th century, did little to reduce anti-Semitism. Martin Luther, who led the Reformation, was deeply disappointed by the refusal of the Jews to accept his approach to Christianity. He referred to Jews as "poisonous bitter worms" and suggested they be banished from Germany or forcibly converted. In *On the Jews and Their Lies*, Luther advised:

> First, their synagogues or churches should be set on fire. . . Secondly, their homes should likewise be broken down and destroyed. . . They ought be put under one roof or in a stable, like gypsies. . . Thirdly, they should be deprived of their prayerbooks. . . Fourthly, their rabbis must be forbidden under threat of death to teach anymore.*

* Since the end of World War II, most Lutherans have denounced the views of Luther toward the Jewish people, and many Lutheran denominations have issued official statements condemning anti-Semitism. In 1982, for example, the Lutheran World Federation stated that "We Christians must purge ourselves of any hatred of the Jews and any sort of teaching of contempt for Judaism."



Jewish ghetto of Rome, 1500s (note "Platea iudea" at left (Plaza of the Jews); detail of Antonio Tempesta, *Plan [Map] of the City of Rome*, 1593

SEPARATED IN GHETTOS Religious struggles plagued the Reformation for over 100 years as terrible wars were waged between Catholic and Protestant monarchs. Jews played no part in these struggles. They had been separated completely during the Middle Ages by Church law, which had confined the Jews to ghettos. Many ghettos were surrounded by high walls with gates guarded by Christian sentries. Jews were allowed out during the daytime for business dealings with Christian communities, but had to be back at curfew. At night, and during Christian holidays, the gates were locked. The ghettos froze the way of life for the Jews because they were segregated and not permitted to mix freely. They established their own synagogues and schools and developed a life separate from the rest of the community.

ENLIGHTENMENT AND FRANCE In the 1700s, during the period known as the Enlightenment, philosophers stressed new ideas about reason, science, progress, and the rights of individuals. Jews were allowed out of the ghetto. The French Revolution helped many western European Jews rise above second-class status. In 1791 an emancipation decree in France gave Jews full citizenship. In the early 1800s, most German states including Bavaria and Prussia, and many western European countries passed similar orders, but they did not eliminate their restrictions on Jews. By 1871, virtually all legal restrictions on Jews had been removed in Germany.

Although this new spirit of equality spread, many Jews in the ghetto were not able to take their places in the "outside world." They knew very little about the world beyond the ghetto walls. They spoke their own language, Yiddish, and not the language of their countrymen. The outlook of thinkers of this period shifted from a traditional way of looking at the world, which stressed faith and religion, to a more modern belief in reason and the scientific laws of nature. A new foundation for prejudice was laid, which changed the history of anti-Semitism. Now pseudo-scientific reasons were used to show differences between Jews and non-Jews and set them apart again in Europe.

NATIONALISM IN GERMANY In the early 1800s, strong nationalistic feelings stirred the peoples of Europe. Much of this feeling was a reaction against the domination of Europe by France in the Napoleonic Era. In Germany, many thinkers and politicians looked for ways to increase political unity. Impressed by the power France had under Napoleon, they began to see solutions to German problems in a great national Germanic state.

The French intellectual Joseph Arthur de Gobineau was an early proponent of "scientific racism"—using pseudo-science to justify theories of racial supremacy and the "Aryan master race." Writing in the mid-1800s, Gobineau blamed the decline of civilizations on degeneration resulting from the interbreeding of superior and inferior racial groups. He cited the white race, or

Aryans as he called them, as the superior race from which all civilizations were formed. The term "Aryan" originally referred to peoples speaking Indo-European languages. Racist scientists distorted its meaning to support ideas that pointed to those of German background as examples of "racially superior" Aryan stock.

RACE REPLACES RELIGION AS BASIS FOR PREJUDICES The word *anti-Semitism* first appeared in 1873 in a book entitled *The Victory of Judaism over Germanism* by Wilhelm Marr. Marr's book marked an important change in the history of anti-Semitism. In his book Marr stated that the Jews of Germany ought to be eliminated because they were members of an alien race that could never be fully a part of German society.

USHMM/Library of Congress

"Nordic Heads of All Ages and Nations," slide in a Nazi lecture extolling the ideal "Aryan," ca. 1936. *Top row*: Augustus Caesar of the Roman Empire, Prospero Colonna (Spanish military commander), Admiral Gaspard de Coligny of France, King Otto the Great of the Holy Roman Empire. *Bottom row*: Duke of Wellington (English military/political commander), King Gustav Adolf of Sweden, King Frederick the Great of Prussia, Charles Lindbergh ("American flyer").

USHMM/Hans Pauli

"The German Face," Nazi eugenics poster depicting three "Aryan facial types," ca. 1935

ARYAN SUPERIORITY Marr's ideas were influenced by other German, French, and British thinkers who stressed differences rather than similarities among people. Some of these thinkers believed that western European Caucasian Christians were superior to other races. Although the term *Semitic* refers to a group of languages, not to a group of people, these men created elaborate theories to prove the superiority of the Nordic or Aryan people of northern Europe and the inferiority of Semitic people, of Jews. Houston Stewart Chamberlain, a German of British descent, wrote of the superiority of the Germanic race and his fears of its dilution through mixture with inferior races. His work also stressed the incompatibility of the Jewish and Germanic "races." Others promoted racial theories based on the ideas of Sir Herbert Spencer and the Social Darwinists, who applied Darwinism to cultural change, proposing that cultures evolve through natural selection and the survival of the fittest. Chamberlain argued that cultural groups with superior physical and mental traits would eventually dominate inferior groups. Some saw the struggle for racial purity as a battle between the "racially superior" Germanic peoples and the "inferior" races, including Jews.

RUSSIA AND FRANCE IN THE LATE 1800s In other parts of Europe, anti-Semitism took different forms. In Russia, massacres of Jews—pogroms—were ordered by the czars; in parts of Russia these savage attacks on Jews continued into the 20th century. In Ukraine, from 1919 to 1921, between 100,000 and 200,000 Jews were massacred in an estimated 1300 pogroms. In France from 1894 to 1906, the Dreyfus Case revealed the depth of anti-Semitism in that

country. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish captain in the French army. was falsely accused of giving secret information to Germany, and was convicted in two highly divisive trials. Although Dreyfus was cleared of all charges, the “Dreyfus Affair” brought strong anti-Jewish feelings to the surface in France.

Until the late 1800s, anti-Semites had considered Jews dangerous because of their religion. They discriminated against Jews because of their beliefs, not because of what they were. If Jews converted to Christianity, resentment of them decreased. After Marr’s book and other anti-Semitic publications appeared, Jews were thought of as a race for the first time. Being Jewish was no longer a question of belief, but of birth and blood. It was claimed that because Jews were a race, they could not change, and they were considered deeply different from everyone else. That single idea became the cornerstone of Nazi anti-Semitism. Under the Nazis, traditional Christian-based anti-Semitism would combine with pseudo-scientific racism, economic depression, and political instability to set the stage for the Holocaust.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)
  - Anti-Semitism encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/antisemitism
  - Video: “European Antisemitism from Its Origins to the Holocaust” (13:44) www.ushmm.org/confront-antisemitism/european-antisemitism-from-its-origins-to-the-holocaust
  - Jewish Life in Europe before the Holocaust encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-life-in-europe-before-the-holocaust
- Resources from Facing History and Ourselves
  - The Ancient Roots of Anti-Judaism (video: 11:26, with transcript) www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/ancient-roots-anti-judaism
  - The Roots and Impact of Anti-Semitism (lesson) www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/roots-and-impact-antisemitism
- Challenging Anti-Semitism: Myths and Facts (Anti-Defamation League, ADL)
  - Lesson www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/challenging-anti-semitism-debunking-the-myths-and
  - Text (46 pp.): *Challenging Anti-Semitism: Myths and Facts* www.adl.org/sites/default/files/documents/assets/pdf/education-outreach/CAS-Myths-and-Facts.pdf
- Strategies in Facing Anti-Semitism (Yad Vashem and the Simon Wiesenthal Center) www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/educational_materials/strategies.pdf

- **SEE the online Holocaust teaching resources recommended by North Carolina Holocaust educators.** www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/holocaust-council/resources/teachingresources.pdf

.

LESSON ■ ANTI-SEMITISM IN PREWAR EUROPE

▪ Narrative: Morris Remembers the Threat

Many people think the virulent anti-Semitism that led to the Holocaust was unique to Nazi Germany—that the particular circumstances of Germany's defeat in World War I, the economic hardships of the 1920s and '30s, Hitler's hatred of Jews, and his ability to channel German public opinion, all created a singular explosion of lethal anti-Semitism. But while the scale and organization of the Nazis' mass murder of the Jews and other hated groups are unprecedented, the history of violent anti-Semitism in Europe is not.

Have students view and discuss the online video "European Antisemitism from Its Origins to the Holocaust" (13:44) from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, at *www.ushmm.org/confront-antisemitism/european-antisemitism-from-its-origins-to-the-holocaust*. The site includes a transcript and discussion questions.

Then lead students in a discussion of the Pyramid of Hate (in Supplemental Materials). What levels of the pyramid have they witnessed in their school, community, and beyond? (Which have they done themselves, perhaps?) How have they responded?

Introduce the North Carolina survivor whose narrative is presented here. **Morris Glass** was born in Poland in 1928, the youngest of four children in a close family within a strong Jewish community. While he has warm memories of childhood, he also knew the daily threat of anti-Semitic taunts and attacks—usually accepted and even promoted by non-Jewish adults.

Have students consider these questions as they read Morris's narrative. Remind them they're reading about Poland in the 1930s, when Morris was a boy in elementary school.

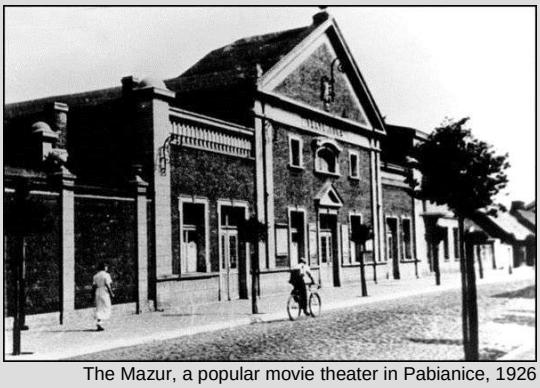
1. What anti-Semitic insults and attacks does Morris relate in his narrative? How common were they? How did he and his friends respond?
2. How did a policeman respond when asked to help a Jewish boy who'd been beaten? How does Morris characterize the policeman's response?
3. How is it apparent from Morris's narrative that most non-Jewish adults would respond the same as the policeman?
4. What guidance did Morris's parents give him about reacting to anti-Semitic acts? What advice did his father give him? How did his mother try to reassure him?
5. Why did Morris think the post-Olympic festival would be free of anti-Semitic attacks? What happened?
6. Why do you think Morris and his friends still felt "proud to be citizens of Poland" despite the anti-Semitism they experienced?
7. How does Morris's experience reflect the history of European anti-Semitism as presented in the video?
8. Why, despite his experience with anti-Semitism in his childhood, does Morris say that "we could not have forecast or even imagined the destruction that would be visited upon us"?
9. How are Morris's experiences similar to the problem of school bullying today? How do schools and communities work to counter the problem?
10. How can childhood bullying escalate to acts further up the Pyramid of Hate (p. 187)? How can communities work to stop the escalation?

ANTI-SEMITISM ■ MORRIS REMEMBERS THE THREAT

Born in 1928 in Pabianice, Poland, Morris Glass was the youngest of four children in a close-knit Jewish family. While he fondly remembers his growing-up years, they were clouded by the rampant anti-Semitism that had prevailed in Europe for centuries. Everyday activities like playing soccer and going to movies carried the threat of anti-Semitic bullying and attacks.

The happy times, and there were many, occurred within the context of my family and the Jewish community. My experiences in the larger Gentile [non-Jewish] world were quite different—it is difficult to describe the heartaches that I experienced as a child. Anti-Semitism was in the air, and I encountered it in many forms. Verbal taunts like "Dirty Jew," Christ Killer," and "Go back to Palestine" were the most common expressions of anti-Semitism. But violence was also routine, and little children were not exempt from it.

Morris's home town, Pabianice, Poland, in 1926



The Mazur, a popular movie theater in Pabianice, 1926

One of my favorite pastimes, going to the movies, was often spoiled by anti-Semitic acts—names, threats, and beatings were common. Nevertheless, my friends and I looked forward to going to the movies every week even though our excitement was tempered by fear. Often as we approached the theater we would see groups of older Gentile boys waiting to bait us. We would try to hide our identity by taking off our hats with our school number emblazoned on them, and we would call each other by Gentile names like Valdi or Steffan. Despite our efforts, the Polish boys would still recognize us, and they would force us to pay them a bribe to enter the theater.

But the worst treatment would come after the film was over. Because of this we learned to sense when a movie was ending, and then to move quietly toward the exit in hope of escaping before the Gentile boys left. Once outside, we would run away as fast as we could. Sometimes this strategy worked but often it didn't. I could run fast, but others, like my friend Abraham, who was quite heavy and very slow, were not so fortunate.

One time after a movie, when I was about nine or ten, some Gentile boys caught Abraham and beat him badly. He had blood all over him. We hurriedly wiped away the blood and ran from the side street where the theater was located to the main street. Here we saw a policeman. Since the Polish boys were still following us, we went to the policeman and told him what had happened.

"Why did you beat him up?"

"Well, he is a Jew boy."

"Oh, well, that's okay."

"Who did this to you?" he asked, and we pointed to the group of boys. The officer then asked them, "Why did you beat him up?" They said, "Well, he is a Jew boy." "Oh, well, that's okay," shrugged the officer. This was a response we heard or intuited many times; it was just the way it was growing up a Jew in Poland.

In her kind way my mother would try to comfort me. She would tell me that only a few individuals were so cruel. I wasn't so sure that she was right.

Much like going to the movies, playing soccer also had its dangers. Whenever we played soccer, we would have one eye on the ball and with the other watch for Polish boys. When even two or three approached us, we would grab everything and run for our lives. We wanted to stand up to them, but we realized that it was hopeless; we knew that no one would protect us or come to our rescue. Usually, I ran fast enough to get away, but occasionally I was caught and beaten. When this happened, my mom would calmly take cold towels and lay them on the hurt places to lessen the pain. In her kind way she would try to comfort me. She would tell me that only a few individuals were so cruel. I wasn't so sure that she was right. I do know that even at a very young age, I felt fear. It was a feeling that was reinforced many, many times.

Running when provoked was a response which my friends and I learned from experience; it was also drummed into us by every adult. My dad explained that not responding was a way of protecting myself against greater violence. He said that if I fought back, I might be killed. We wanted to fight. We weren't cowards. But we were told not to, and furthermore, we knew that no one would come to our rescue. So we ran away—at the first sign of trouble, we ran as fast as we could. That's the way I remember it, and it is something that has stayed with me the rest of my life.

There were many more anti-Semitic episodes in my early life, but two in particular illuminate the pain and humiliation that I experienced. When I was nine, I wanted a real soccer ball, one made of leather. A ball like that cost a lot of money, so I saved and saved until finally I could buy the ball of my dreams. I was so happy and so proud of my beautiful new soccer ball. Unfortunately my happiness was short lived. One afternoon, not long after I had bought the ball, Abraham and I were tossing it back and forth as we walked home from school. Suddenly, one of us dropped it, and my precious ball rolled into the street. Before I could retrieve it, a wagon with two horses drove by, and I saw the driver deliberately take his whip and move the ball so that the wagon would run over it. My beautiful ball was crushed beneath the wagon's wheels! The driver laughed and laughed; he thought it was very funny. He knew that I was Jewish. I was broken-hearted; I cried and cried and cried. It was a small act, but it broke my young heart.

While the destruction of my soccer ball hurt me, another incident which I cannot forget is one that humiliated all of the Jewish children of Pabianice. This incident was connected with a celebration of the 1936 Olympics, and it illustrates how widespread and deeply embedded anti-Semitism was. After the Olympics were over, some of the outstanding Polish athletes toured the country. Several were scheduled to come to Pabianice, and a huge festival was organized to honor them. All of the elementary students were asked to march and perform gymnastics during the celebration. We were all required to wear the same outfit—black shorts, white shirts, and white hats.

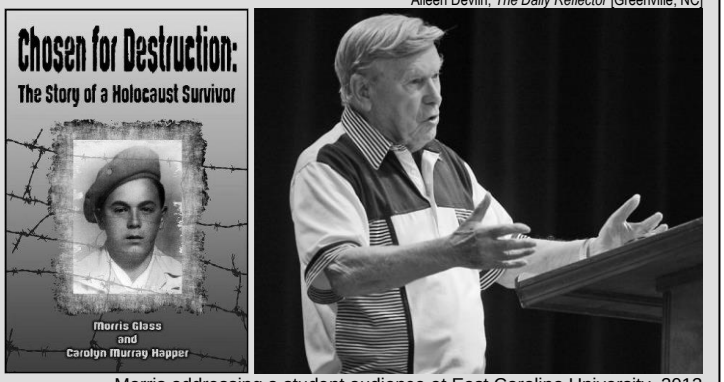
USHMM/Sports & Tourism Museum, Warsaw, Poland

Several Jewish Polish athletes competed for Poland in the 1936 Summer Oympics in Berlin, Germany, including swimmer Lezjor Ilja Szrajbman and fencer Roman Kantor. Both died in the Majdanek concentration camp in 1943.

I was so excited to be part of such a big event, and, since our school was Jewish, we were very anxious to do ourselves proud. We practiced and practiced so as not to make even the smallest mistake; we wanted to be perfect. We took our performance very seriously because we knew

that the Jewish community as a whole would be judged by what we did. During the rehearsals with the other schools, the Gentile students jeered, called us names, and spit on us when we marched onto the field. Practices were excruciating, but I was certain that on the day of the ceremony it would be different. Yet even on that day, a day when we were so proud to be Polish and when we were all dressed alike, the taunts and spitting persisted. Thankfully we performed perfectly, but our pride was mingled with humiliation Despite being treated in this manner, we loved our country and were proud to be citizens of Poland.

The anti-Semitic episodes from my childhood, painful though they were, were just the prelude to the horror that was to follow. The Nazi conquest of western Poland in 1939 and of eastern Poland in the summer of 1941 was accompanied by terror and murder on a scale unprecedented in history. Nothing in the experience of the European Jews prepared us for the destruction that was to come. We could not have forecast or even imagined the destruction that would be visited upon us.



Morris addressing a student audience at East Carolina University, 2013

Morris was 11 when Germany invaded Poland in 1939, beginning World War II. He and his family endured four and a half years in the Pabianice and Łódź ghettos. In August 1944 the residents of the Łódź ghetto were sent to Auschwitz, where Morris, his father, and his brother were separated from his mother and two sisters, whom he never saw again.

Of 42 members of his family, only Morris, his brother, and a cousin survived. While in a Displaced Persons (DP) camp in Italy, Morris learned that his brother had survived and was in a DP camp in Germany. Through an uncle's sponsorship, they came to the U.S., arriving in New York City in June 1949. Morris settled in New Jersey where he bought and expanded a coat manufacturing company. There he met his wife Carol; they have seven children, 18 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. In 2000 they moved to Raleigh, NC, where three sons lived. For years Morris spoke across the state to school, military, and public groups about his Holocaust experience. In 2011 he published his Holocaust memoir, Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*, co-written with historian Dr. Carolyn Murray Happer.*

[Read the continuation of Morris's narrative in Ch. 4 (The Holocaust: Ghetto) and Ch. 7 (Liberation).]

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Video: Morris Glass's presentation with Carolyn Happer (co-author of Mr. Glass's memoir, *Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*, 2011), Raleigh Weekend C-Span, 16 May 2013, 28:56
  www.c-span.org/video/?313006-1/chosen-destruction
- Video: Morris Glass's presentation to the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, April 2013, video possibly taken by the U.S. Dept. of Defense, uploaded on YouTube by the *Jacksonville Daily News*, NC
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSkq-kYl__o
- Jewish Life in Poland before the Holocaust (Facing History and Ourselves)
  www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/resistance-during-holocaust/jewish-life-poland-holocaust

II ■ HITLER'S RISE ■

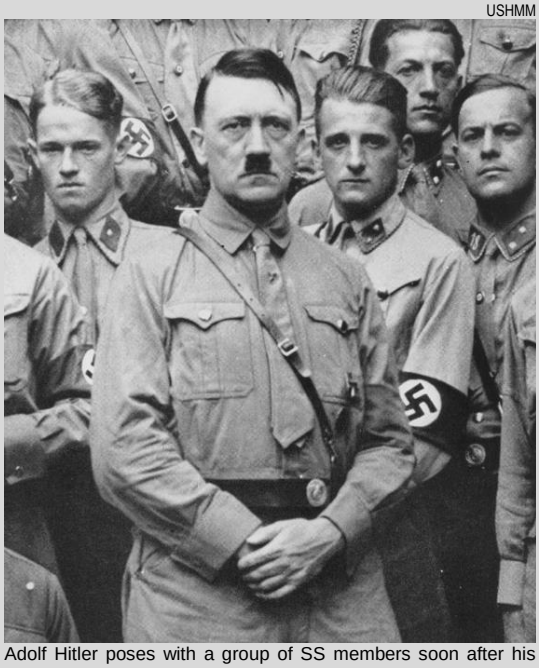
_____OVERVIEW_____

■ ***"This is going to end up being something quite awful and everybody better pay attention."*** **__Barbara Ledermann Rodbell**

In the century and a half before 1933, the people of Germany created enduring literature and music, profound theology and philosophy, and advanced science and scholarship. Germans were highly cultured and literate. Their universities were the most respected in Europe. And yet it was in this country that Nazism developed.

Many factors played a part in Adolf Hitler's rise to power. Hitler's arresting personality and his skills as a public speaker and propagandist contributed to his political success. His ability to attract followers can also be attributed to the bitterness many Germans felt following their country's defeat in World War I, resentment of the Versailles Treaty, weaknesses of the Weimar Republic, the Depression, and the growth of extreme nationalism in Germany.

USHMM



Adolf Hitler poses with a group of SS members soon after his appointment as chancellor, February 1933.

WEIMAR REPUBLIC BLAMED FOR GERMANY'S DEFEAT In 1919 after defeat in World War I, Germany set up a republic. The Weimar Republic was created during the period of general exhaustion and shock that followed the war. The Kaiser, Germany's ruler, fled to Holland and although the military had lost the war, the new government was blamed for the defeat.

Germans were not prepared for a democratic government. The country had always known authoritarian leaders and had been ruled by an emperor since 1871. Many Germans saw the Weimar Republic as an interim government. When Germany held elections, it became a "Republic without Republicans" (i.e., citizens who supported a republic as their form of government). It did not have an elected majority and was disliked by many sides.

RESENTMENT OF VERSAILLES TREATY At the end of World War I, the Weimar government signed the Treaty of Versailles. The treaty fostered feelings of injustice and made many Germans want revenge. Article 231, known to many Germans as the "war guilt" clause, declared that the Central Powers had begun the war and were, therefore, responsible for the destruction it caused in the Allied nations. Germany was forced to give up land and pay reparations which Germans considered excessive and unfair.

HIGH INFLATION IN GERMANY Following Germany's defeat, the German mark became almost worthless. In 1914 $1 was equal to 4 marks; in 1921 $1 was equal to 191 marks; by 1923, 17,792 marks; and by 1923, 4,200,000,000 marks. Hitler benefited from the country's economic problems. Economic uncertainty and the fear of communism after the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia offered a rich soil for the seeds of fascism.

HITLER'S EARLY YEARS The fourth of six children, Adolf Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, in Austria. His stepfather, a customs official, died when Hitler was 14. His first years at school were successful until he entered a technical school at age 11, where his grades became so poor that he left school at 16. In 1907 Hitler's mother died, and he moved to Vienna. While there he applied for admission to the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, but was rejected for lack of talent. In 1913 he moved to Munich, Germany, and in 1914 joined the Bavarian army as a dispatch runner. In World War I, he took part in heavy fighting; he was wounded in 1916 and injured with mustard gas in 1918. He was recovering in a hospital when the armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. Hitler's wartime experiences reinforced central ideas he pursued later—his belief in the heroic virtues of war, his insistence that the German army had never been defeated, and his belief in the inequality of races and individuals.

NAZI PARTY FORMED In 1919, at age 30, Hitler returned to Munich, where former soldiers, embittered by their experiences, had formed political associations. Many groups blamed Germany's defeat on Jews who, they said, had "stabbed the army in the back." Hitler joined the German Socialist Workers' Party and within a year had transformed it into the National Socialist German Workers' Party, or Nazi Party. By 1922, he was well known in Munich. He rented beer halls for meetings and gave speeches repeating his basic themes—hatred of communists and Jews, the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, the betrayal of the German army by Jews and pacifists, and the need to acquire enormous amounts of land for German settlement.

HITLER WRITES *MEIN KAMPF* On November 8, 1923, Hitler and his followers attempted a takeover of the government in Munich. The failure of this attempt resulted in a five-year jail sentence for Hitler. He served only nine months due to a sympathetic judge. During this time he wrote the first of the two volumes of *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*). This book became the bible of the Nazi movement. It clearly spelled out Hitler's program. In it, Hitler announces his intention to manipulate the masses by means of propaganda, forecasts a worldwide battle for racial superiority, and promises to free Germany from the limitations imposed by the Treaty of Versailles.

Released from prison in 1924, Hitler realized the Nazis must come to power legally. "Democracy must be defeated with the weapons of democracy," he said. His task was to reorganize his outlawed party and work toward his goals. The popularity of Hitler's racist ideas coupled with his remarkable gift of oratory united the disillusioned of every class—the bankrupt businessman, the army officer who couldn't adjust to civilian life, the unemployed worker or clerk, and the university student who had failed his exams.

PROFESSIONALS AND WORKERS ATTRACTED TO NAZI PARTY Hitler's ideas found support among all classes from lawyers, doctors, and scientists to factory workers. Among his

USHMM/ W.O. McWorkman/J. Sanders

Followed closely by a bodyguard, Hitler greets supporters at the 4th Nazi Party Congress, Nuremberg, August 1929.

Hitler leads an SA unit in a Nazi party parade, Weimar, 1931.

earliest supporters were members of the lower middle class—small shopkeepers, farmers, clerks, and tradesmen. Generally, young Protestant men favored the party, while women, Catholics, and older socialists and democrats (i.e., supporters of democratic government) opposed it. Hitler offered something for everyone—the return of the glories of Germany, racial war as a normal state of life, the Jew as the common enemy of the German people, the German race as the saviors of the world. Hitler's racist appeals attracted anti-Semites, but most Germans were more attracted by other aspects of his program.

DEPRESSION BRINGS NEW SUPPORTERS Hitler's chance came during the Depression years. After 1929, many people blamed the Weimar government for the country's economic problems. By the early 1930s, Germany was in a desperate state. Six million people—one third of the work force—was out of work. Hitler's program appealed to a cross-section of the German public who perceived the Great Depression as a unique German phenomenon rather than as a worldwide disaster.

USHMM/Unknown provenance

Hitler's automobile is swamped by supporters as it leaves the Chancellery after Hitler's meeting with President von Hindenburg, November 19, 1932.

USHMM/Michael O'Hara,Bernhardt Colberg

Hitler salutes a crowd lining the streets of Hamburg, August 17, 1934.

HITLER APPOINTED CHANCELLOR The Nazi party surprised observers with its success in the parliamentary elections of 1930, winning 107 seats in the Reichstag, or parliament. By July 1932 the Nazis had gained control of 230 seats to become the strongest single party. In January 1933, an aging President Paul von Hindenburg was persuaded to appoint Hitler Chancellor of the Reich. Hindenburg believed Hitler could lead Germany out of its political and economic crisis. Hindenburg also believed Hitler could be controlled. Once in power, Hitler immediately took steps to end democracy and turn the nation into a dictatorship. He began by calling a new election for March 1933. The Nazi-controlled Reichstag then passed the Emergency Decree. All civil rights—free speech, freedom of the press, the right to assemble, the privacy of the mails—were suspended.

Until the election, Hitler used the power of emergency decrees to rule. All open opposition came to an end. Newspaper offices and radio stations were wrecked. He created special security forces that murdered or arrested leaders of the communist, socialist, and other opposition political parties.

CIVIL RIGHTS SUSPENDED BY ENABLING ACT On the first day the new Reichstag met, the Nazis helped push through the Enabling Act. This act provided legal backing for the Nazi dictatorship. No charges had to be filed to lock people up. Warrants did not have to be issued for arrests. "Enemies of the people and the state" were sent to concentration camps. The first

camps opened soon after Hitler took power. The Reichstag adjourned, never again to have an effective voice in the affairs of Germany during Hitler's rule.

THIRD REICH COMES TO POWER When Hindenburg died in August 1934, Hitler saw his chance to consolidate his power. He united the offices of President and Chancellor to become the Supreme Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The democratic state was dead. Hitler's Third Reich had come to power.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Adolf Hitler (five-part overview) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/adolf-hitler?series=18006
  - Video: Aftermath of World War One and the Rise of Nazism, 1918-1933 www.ushmm.org/learn/introduction-to-the-holocaust/path-to-nazi-genocide/chapter-1/aftermath-of-world-war-i-and-the-rise-of-nazism-1918-1933
- Resources from Facing History and Ourselves
  - The Rise of the Nazi Party (lesson) www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/rise-nazi-party
  - Video: Hitler's Rise to Power, 1918-1933 (9:14) www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/hitlers-rise-power-1918-1933
- Resources from Yad Vashem (World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Israel)
  - Timeline: Germany, 1914-1933 www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/timeline/timeline.asp
  - Rise of the Nazis and Beginning of Persecution www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/nazi-germany-1933-39/beginning-of-persecution.html

SEE the online Holocaust teaching resources recommended by North Carolina Holocaust educators.
www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/holocaust-council/resources/teachingresources.pdf

LESSON ■ HITLER'S RISE

Narrative: Young Jews Become Aware

Those who witness momentous events that change the nation in a day—the 9/11 attacks, the assassination of President Kennedy, the attack on Pearl Harbor—remember exactly how they learned of the event and how it changed their lives. But life-changing *processes* that take a while to emerge—those may be more apparent to some people than to others. When emerging changes occur in childhood, one's coming-to-awareness is more complicated.

Here we read memories from five North Carolina survivors about how they learned of Hitler's rise and threat. In parentheses are each survivor's age and country of residence when Hitler came to power in 1933.

- **Morris Glass** (Poland, 5). Morris's family remained in their town and took in relatives who were forced to leave Germany because they were Polish-born Jews.
- **Barbara Ledermann Rodbell** (Germany, 8). Barbara's family moved to the Netherlands after the Nazis gained control in Germany.
- **Simone Weil Lipman** (France, 13). Simone's family stayed in northeast France near the border with Germany until the Nazis conquered France.
- **Jack Hoffmann** (Austria, 9). Jack's family registered to get visas to leave Austria after the Nazis took control in 1938.
- **Susan Cernyak-Spatz** (Germany, 11). Susan's family moved to Austria when Hitler came to power, then to Czechoslovakia when Austria came under Nazi control. Her father was planning their secret emigration when the war began.

Have students consider these questions as they read the survivors' memories. Remind them to consider the survivor's age at the time.

1. How did each young person become aware of Hitler's rise to power? Who learned from family members? Who witnessed major changes before the war began in 1939?
2. How did their parents respond? Did the parents decide to emigrate? Why or why not?
3. Why did Morris's German relatives have to come live with them in Poland in 1938?
4. What event did Barbara's uncle witness in 1929 that led to his warning that "everybody better pay attention" to Hitler?
5. Why did Barbara's father resist leaving Germany? What convinced him to leave?
6. Why was Simone aware of Hitler's growing threat? Why did her father feel secure despite the threat?
7. What did Simone and Jack witness, in France and Austria, that made the threat visible to them before the war?
8. Why has Susan wondered why her two girlfriends' parents accepted her (after Hitler's takeover) even though she was Jewish?
9. Did Susan understand the threat posed by the Hitler Youth in 1933? Why does she think her parents may have purposely kept her unaware of the Nazi threat?
10. Susan's parents left Germany after Hitler came to power, but stayed in Europe. Why does that puzzle Susan?
11. Which of these survivors would you want to interview about becoming aware of the Nazi threat? What questions would you ask? What guidance would you ask for?

■ HITLER'S RISE ■
YOUNG JEWS BECOME AWARE

When did young Jews in Europe become aware of the rising threat from Hitler and his Nazi Party? From the Nazis' growing presence in the 1920s to Hitler's takeover in 1933, how did young people learn "what was going on"? These five survivors were 5 to 13 years old when Hitler came to power in January 1933. At the time they lived in Germany, Poland, France, and Austria (the latter three would be taken over by Germany). Here they recall the early warnings that they and their families faced deep danger.

MORRIS GLASS (*born 1928, Poland; five years old when Hitler came to power*). My father had an uncle, Bernard, who moved to Germany in the 1920s. At that time, Germany had a democratic government and a tolerant society, and Uncle Bernard settled down, established a medical practice, and raised his family there. Bernard thought highly of Germany; in fact, he considered himself to be German. But his life there began to change in 1933 when Hitler gained power and the Nazis began to exclude the Jews from German life and to persecute them. Finally, in 1938, the Nazis expelled all Polish-born Jews and forced them to return to Poland; among those exiled were Bernard and his son Max. My father met them at the border and brought them to live with us. Neither survived the Holocaust. Despite his suffering at the hands of the Nazis, Uncle Bernard proudly admitted to being a German.


Morris Glass after liberation

___Morris Glass and Carolyn Murray Happer, *Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*, 2011

BARBARA LEDERMANN RODBELL (*born 1925, Germany; eight years old when Hitler came to power*). I remember my childhood in Berlin as being wonderful. My father loved Berlin, and we went all over Berlin as soon as I could walk. He showed me absolutely everything, every little corner. He liked history and music and we went to museums. We always went to Holland on vacation. In 1933 when we went to Holland on vacation, one of my father's cousins, Uncle Biet Pierson, who was a journalist, an editor of a newspaper in The Hague, told my mother that he felt we should not go back home. When Uncle Biet was 19 and just learning to be a journalist, he had been sent to Munich [Germany] to cover a trial. Nobody in Holland had paid any attention to this trial. When he came back and wrote up his report, they said to him, "Why are you making such a fuss?" And he said, "You pay attention to this trial. This is going to end up being something quite awful and everybody better pay attention." It was Hitler's trial in 1924.*


USHMM/Barbara Ledermann Rodbell

Barbara Ledermann in Amsterdam, ca. 1936

"You pay attention to this trial. This is going to end up being something quite awful and everybody better pay attention." It was Hitler's trial in 1924.

* Hitler was tried and convicted of treason in 1924 after the failed Beer Hall Putsch in Munich in November 1923, in which he and his Nazi followers attempted to take over the government of Bavaria, a region of Germany. He was sentenced to five years in prison but was released after nine months. While in prison he wrote his infamous *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle)*.

He was the only one of them who paid any attention to it. It took ten years until things really heated up. So my mother said to my father, "I think we shouldn't go back." And my father said, "What does a lawyer do in a foreign country? What am I going to do?" And she said, "You'll find something to do. I really think we should not go back." And so my father said, "Well, I'm going to go back and see what I can do." He'd already been a lawyer for 25 years. It was practically impossible for him to start over. So he returned to Berlin and went to his office, and there were his secretaries and assistants. There was also a big letter from the government, which said that from then on he could have only Jewish clients. My father had very few Jewish clients. He had big companies that were his clients, and now he could not represent them anymore. He packed up.

So then my father came back to Holland and worked for a Dutch lawyer, but he had to learn Dutch, of course. He handled the clients who were very much like him, who had come to Holland and couldn't practice because they didn't have the Dutch degree. So he went to the university and graduated in three years in a foreign language. It was very hard. He also worked at the same time. We were very proud of him. There was a big party and everybody came. Then a few years later the Germans invaded, and it was all over.

___Barbara Ledermann Rodbell, oral testimony, 1990, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504687

SIMONE WEIL LIPMAN (*born 1920, France; 13 years old when Hitler came to power*). I lived in Strasbourg, on the border with Germany. You just had to cross the Rhine River and you were in Germany. So what was happening in Germany from the late 1920s on, from the rise of Hitler—it was part of my growing-up years. I remember April 1, 1933, when we had a solemn service in our synagogue in Strasbourg because of the restrictions on Jews, and Hitler being installed.* We began to have lot of Jewish refugees come into the city. It was not happening overnight. Although I thought it would never happen in France—French people don't do things like that—my parents probably thought differently, although they took no measures to protect themselves from anything. My father, confident in his status of a loyal French citizen, continued his business to the last day, never put a penny aside, never did anything. But I grew up with the awareness that, indeed, it can happen to the Jews. And I know the history of the Jews. So '33—this is '39 [when the war begins], six years: it came gradually. And then after that, it was just fighting for your survival, you know, and fighting for the survival of others, for those of us who got involved in that [the Resistance].


USHMM/Simone Weil Lipman
Simone Weil (photo on false ID document), 1944

It came gradually. And then after that, it was just fighting for your survival.

___Simone Marguerite (Weil) Lipman, oral testimony, 1998, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506653

JACK HOFFMANN (*born 1924, Poland; family moved to Austria in 1926; nine years old when Hitler came to power*). In 1933 I was nine years old; we were living in Vienna. When Hitler came to power, at first you sort of took note of it. But shortly into the '30s, from 1933 onward, we had a lot of German Jews coming to Vienna, particularly entertainers who could no longer practice their profession. We had all sorts of collections for them; the Jewish community was quite active in Vienna.

* On April 1, 1933, several months after Hitler became chancellor of Germany, he ordered a boycott of all Jewish businesses. In the following weeks and months, harsh restrictions were imposed on the rights and freedoms of Jews in Germany.

In 1934, the Austrian Nazis assassinated the Austrian chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, and this is when we became more aware of what was going on. The Nazis were quite active, more in the country than in Vienna, but there were all sorts of marches and flag-waving and yelling anti-Semitic slogans going on; but where we were, it was not too prevalent.


Jack Hoffmann (top) in a class photo, 1934

That summer when Dollfuss was assassinated, we were in lower Austria where we rented a very small cottage from a farmer, and we heard about the assassination. My father called [from Vienna] and told us not to worry about it and that in our neighborhood everything was quiet. We were asked to put lighted candles in our windows [for mourning], and shortly after that we went back into the city, and we were taught a hymn for Dollfuss. This made us more aware of what was going on next door in Germany, and what was happening to a greater extent in Austria itself.

There were all sorts of marches and flag-waving and yelling anti-Semitic slogans going on . . .

___Jack Hoffmann, oral testimony, 2006, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn126354

SUSAN ECKSTEIN CERNYAK-SPATZ (*born 1922, Austria; seven years old when she joined her parents in Berlin, Germany; 11 years old when Hitler came to power*). I found two good friends in the lyceum [school] very shortly after I entered [1932], Herta Dunsig and Dita Raetz-Waldenburg. If I remember correctly, the fathers of both girls were either in the SA or the SS, but it seems no one was bothered by that. Later on, I have often wondered why I was so completely accepted by Herta's as well as Dita's parents. This might have something to do with Dr. Goebbel's* dictum: "Every German knows some very nice and decent Jews. If we take all of them into consideration, we will never solve the Jewish problem."


Susan Cernyak-Spatz after liberation

In the summer of 1933, I encountered the first Nazi youth groups I'd ever seen. We were in Kolberg on the Baltic Sea, a well-known summer resort. I remember walking with our maid and a marching band of either Hitler Youth or Pimpfe—that was the younger group, something on the order of Cub Scouts—came down the street. I remember being envious that I could not belong to and cheer the group.

I wonder whether or not my parents protected me from any knowledge of what was going on, or whether the district we lived in simply was not populated by rabid fanatics.

Many times, when I hear survivors from Berlin talk about how they were persecuted and discriminated against during the early years of the Hitler regime, I wonder whether or not my parents protected me from any knowledge of what was going on, or whether the district we lived in simply was not populated by rabid fanatics. To this day I cannot understand why my father, such an ardent Zionist,† did not immigrate to Palestine when Hitler came to power. I suspect Mother was not particularly attracted to sand and heat and a pioneering lifestyle, and Father, of course, deferred to her wishes.

* Joseph Goebbels was Hitler's Minister of Propaganda in the Third Reich.
† A Zionist was a person supporting the creation of a Jewish nation in the Middle East. The nation of Israel was created in 1948.

The whole world was holding its collective breath about the madman's next move.

I suppose we knew about political events, but simply refused to be affected by them. I am sure the parents of our group were making arrangements to leave for overseas; at least I hope they had more sense than my parents.

I will never know what prompted my parents to make this decision at that particular time [to move to Austria in 1936] rather than emigrate from Europe entirely. Hitler had made numerous remarks in his speeches about Austria actually belonging to the greater German Reich, if not immediately, then soon. The whole world was holding its collective breath about the madman's next move.

___Susan Cernyak-Spatz, *Protective Custody Prisoner 34042*, 2005

——— ■ ———

- **MORRIS GLASS** survived the Łódź Ghetto and the Auschwitz and Dachau concentration camps. He was 17 when liberated.
- **BARBARA RODBELL** worked with the Dutch Resistance in Amsterdam until liberation. She was 20 when the Allies freed the Netherlands.
- **SIMONE LIPMAN** helped smuggle Jewish children to safe havens in France and Switzerland. She was 24 when the Allies freed France.
- **JACK HOFFMANN** was saved through the Kindertransport program. He was 15 when he arrived in England and 16 when he arrived in the U.S.
- **SUSAN CERNYAK-SPATZ** was deported to Auschwitz without her parents. She was 23 when liberated.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- The Rise of the Nazi Party, 1919-1933 (lesson, Facing History and Ourselves) www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/rise-nazi-party
- "Hitler: New Power in Germany," *The New York Times*, December 24, 1924 (as presented in "1922: Hitler in Bavaria," *NYT*, 2-10-2015) www.nytimes.com/times-insider/2015/02/10/1922-hitler-in-bavaria/
- German Jewish Refugees, 1933-1939 (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/german-jewish-refugees-1933-1939
- Maps: European Jewish Population (USHMM)
  - ca. 1933 encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/map/european-jewish-population-distribution-ca-1933
  - ca. 1950 encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/map/european-jewish-population-distribution-ca-1950
  - To compare maps: Remaining Jewish Population in Europe, 1945 encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/remaining-jewish-population-of-europe-in-1945

USHMM/Stadtarchiv Aachen

Jewish men who have been rounded up for arrest in the days after Kristallnacht file out of the police station in Stadthagen, Germany, November 10, 1938.

III ■ PREWAR NAZI GERMANY ■

_____OVERVIEW_____

■ ***"There was no resistance whatsoever. Hitler was welcomed with open arms."***
___Jack Hoffmann

■ ***"Now it needs to be told. Because there are people who say it never happened, and there are also people today, if you listen to them carefully, who are trying to justify what happened."*** **___Walter Falk**

Seizure of power gave the Nazis enormous control over every aspect of German life. The Nazis could use the machinery of government—the police, courts, schools, newspapers, and radio—to implement their racist beliefs. Jews, who made up less than one percent of the total population in 1933, were the principal target of this attack, but the Roma (Gypsies) and the handicapped were also singled out for persecution because they were seen as a biological threat to the purity of the Aryan race. The Nazis blamed the Jews for Germany's defeat in World War I, its economic problems, and for the spread of communist parties throughout Europe.

GERMANS ACCEPT ANTI-JEWISH PROPAGANDA As Hitler raged against the Jews, he accused them of dominating Germany's economic and political life despite strong evidence to the contrary. In 1925 Jews made up less than five percent of officials in the German government, including the judicial system. Yet Hitler's propaganda machine inflated this number to 50 percent and then 62 percent. By 1930, less than eight percent of the directors of German banking companies were Jewish. In 1932, Germany's 85 major newspapers had fewer than 10 Jewish editors. Yet many Germans believed the Nazi claim that Jews controlled the nation's financial system and its press. The Nazis skillfully used propaganda to create the public perception that Jews were a devious political, economic, and social threat to the nation, justifying Hitler's violent persecution of them.

USHMM/Warren A. Gorrell

Nazi Brownshirts drive a propaganda truck bedecked with anti-Jewish banners that read "He who knows the Jew knows the Devil," and "The Bourgeois: 'the economy is everything.'" The poster depicts a man using a swastika to crush Jews, who have snakes coming out of their heads, Recklingshausen, Germany, August 1935.

In April 1933, soon after gaining power, Hitler began to make discrimination against Jews government policy. All non-Aryans were expelled from the civil service. A non-Aryan was defined as anyone who had Jewish parents or two or more Jewish grandparents. In this same year the government called for a one-day general boycott of all Jewish-owned businesses and passed laws excluding Jews from journalism, radio, farming, teaching, the theater, and films. At the same time, government contracts with Jewish businesses were cancelled.

NUREMBERG LAWS In 1934, Jews were dismissed from the army. They were excluded from the stock exchange, law, medicine, and business. But it was the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 that took away the citizenship of Jews born in Germany, labeling them "subhuman." These laws defined Jews not by their religion, but by the religious affiliation of their grandparents. These laws became the backbone of the Nazi attack on Jews up to 1939. Over time some 14

supplementary decrees were issued which served as the basis for excluding Jews from professions like medicine and law, from serving as patent attorneys or tax advisors, and for limiting their business activities. With these laws Hitler officially made anti-Semitism a part of Germany's basic legal code.

Under these laws, marriage between Jews and Aryans was forbidden. Jews were not to display the German flag and could not employ servants under 45 years of age. These laws created a climate in which Jews were viewed as inferior people. The systematic removal of Jews from contact with their neighbors made it easier for Germans to think of Jews as less human or different.

German Jews lost their political rights. Restrictions were reinforced by identification documents. German passports were stamped with a capital "J" or the word *Jude*. All Jewish people had to have a recognizable Jewish name. Jewish men had to use the middle name "Israel," Jewish women the middle name "Sarah." These names had to be recorded on all birth and marriage certificates.

By 1939 the Nazis had seized Jewish businesses and properties or forced Jews to sell their businesses at rock bottom prices. Jewish children could no longer go to public schools, theaters, or movie houses. Hotels were closed to Jews and in some places Jews were prohibited from living or even walking in certain sections of German towns.

T-4 PROGRAM The Nazis also began the persecution of other groups viewed as racially inferior. Between 1933 and 1935, the Nazis passed laws creating involuntary sterilization programs aimed at reducing the number of genetically "inferior" Germans. Targets of these programs included over 300,000 mentally or physically disabled people. A law passed on July 14, 1933, made sterilization compulsory for people with congenital mental defects, schizophrenia, manic-depressive illness, hereditary epilepsy, and severe alcoholism. This law also included the blind and the deaf, even those who became deaf or blind from such illnesses as scarlet fever or from accidents.

USHMM/Roland Klemig

Propaganda slide produced by the Reich Propaganda Office showing the cost of feeding a person with a hereditary disease, 1936. The illustration shows that a family of healthy Germans can live for one day on the same 5.50 Reichsmarks it costs to support one ill person for the same amount of time.

When Hitler started the war in 1939, he ordered the elimination of the mentally handicapped because they were "useless eaters." The so-called T-4 program, headquartered in Berlin's Tiergartenstrasse 4, took the handicapped to killing centers and gassed them with carbon monoxide. In 1941, public outcry against this program led the Germans to continue it with much greater secrecy. Before August 1941 about 100,000 people were killed by the Nazis through the T-4 program. By the end of the war another 100,000 were murdered in this way. These men and women, along with Jews and Roma (Gypsies), were seen as a biological threat to the purity of the German Aryan race that had to be annihilated.

Many of Germany's 30,000 Roma were also sterilized and prohibited from marrying Germans. They were considered by the Nazis to be racially impure and mentally defective. Later they would be condemned by the Nazis to the same fate as Jews—total annihilation. Over half a million Roma were murdered by the Germans in gas chambers, "medical" experiments, and

random killings. Homosexuals, mostly males, were another target of Nazi persecution. They were often given the choice of sterilization, castration, or imprisonment in a concentration camp where they were forced to wear a pink triangle. Children of mixed African and German racial background were also targeted for sterilization. Some of these children were offspring of German women and African soldiers in the French army stationed by the French in the Rhineland after World War I. These children were taken from schools or streets and sterilized, often without anesthesia. Under a 1933 statute, the "Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Defects," these sterilizations were completely legal.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES Jehovah's Witnesses were singled out for abuse because they were pacifists. They refused to swear an oath to the state or serve in the German army, and they urged others to act as they did. In addition, they would not salute the Nazi flag or say "Heil Hitler." Many Witnesses lost jobs and some went to prisons and concentration camps in Germany or had their children taken from them and sent to orphanages.

SS GAINS POWER Hitler's position was challenged from within the Nazi party by the SA, the abbreviation for the German term for storm troopers. Also called brownshirts, they were Hitler's private army run by Ernst Roehm. In 1934 Hitler ordered a purge of the SA by the SS, the elite group of soldiers who served as his personal bodyguard. The Night of the Long Knives ended any challenge to Hitler's position of power. Once the SS state was created, resistance to the Nazi regime was destroyed. Communists, Catholics, Jews, intellectuals, and others were the targets of the Gestapo (secret police).

FIRST CONCENTRATION CAMP The SS soon took over from the SA the responsibility for setting up concentration camps throughout Germany. Anyone suspected of disloyalty or disobedience could be sent there. The first concentration camp opened in March 1933 at Dachau, close to Munich. It was built to hold political dissenters and "enemies of the state." No charges had to be filed against the detainees; no warrant for their arrest was necessary, no real evidence was required.

PREPARING FOR WAR Hitler also pursued his plans for total war and European domination. He reintroduced the military draft, in violation of the Versailles Treaty. In 1936 his troops reoccupied the Rhineland, and he signed an agreement with Italian dictator Benito Mussolini to establish the Rome-Berlin Axis.

NIGHT OF BROKEN GLASS: KRISTALLNACHT On the night of November 9-10, 1938, the Nazis carried out what the German press called a "spontaneous demonstration" against Jewish property, synagogues, and people. Dr. Josef Goebbels, the propaganda minister, claimed the demonstration was in reaction to the shooting of a lower-level diplomat at the German embassy in Paris (a young Jewish man had attempted to assassinate the official because his father had

USHMM/Robert Schmuhl

Newly arrived prisoners, still in their civilian clothes, and after shaving and disinfection, stand at roll call in Buchenwald concentration camp shortly after Kristallnacht, 1938.

been deported to Poland). Throughout Germany, fires and bombs were used to destroy synagogues and shops. Store windows were shattered, leaving broken glass everywhere. By the time it ended, nearly 100 people had been killed and almost 30,000 had been arrested. That night became known as the Night of Broken Glass, or Kristallnacht. German documents found later showed that Kristallnacht had been carefully planned weeks in advance by the Nazis.

Even before Kristallnacht, many Jews in Germany and Austria had sought to escape. Between 1933 and 1939, about half the German Jewish population succeeded in finding refuge in other countries. More than two thirds of Austrian Jews fled the country as well. Some found safety in Palestine. Others went to China which did not require an entry visa. Latin American nations admitted some Jews as well. Many believed mistakenly that they would be safe in France, Holland, and other western European nations. Particularly because of the worldwide economic depression, public opinion in almost all countries was overwhelmingly opposed to immigration of any kind. The United States, Canada, and Britain maintained their limits on immigrants. Many Jews who remained under Nazi rule in Germany or Austria did so only because they could not get visas or sponsors in host countries or lacked the money needed to emigrate.

In March 1938, German troops marched into Austria and met no resistance. Austria became a part of greater Germany. This Anschluss, or uniting, although a violation of the Treaty of Versailles, would be justified by provisions of the treaty that stated that all people of one nationality had the right to live under one government. Hitler next seized the Sudetenland, an area in western Czechoslovakia where many Germans lived. For a short time he persuaded the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain, and the French Premier Edouard Daladier, that he was right in doing so. But when he invaded and occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia, no justifications could be found.

WORLD WAR II BEGINS Poland would be next. On September 1, 1939, German forces, spearheaded by tanks and bombers, marched into Poland and crushed all organized resistance. Britain and France declared war against Germany on September 3, 1939, and the world was once again at war.

USHMM/Charles & Herma Ellenboghen Barber

AMERIKANISCHES GENERALKONSULAT WIEN, DEUTSCHLAND

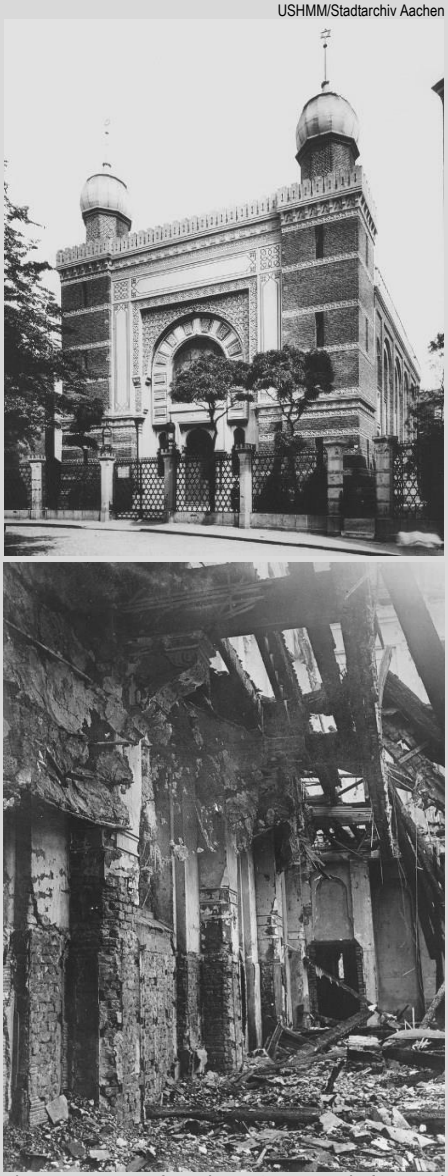
Herrn - Frau - Fräulein Trost Josef, Alice, Dorrit, Erika,

Unter Bezugnahme auf den hier eingereichten, von Ihnen ausgefüllten Fragebogen, enthaltend Ihr Ansuchen um Vormerkung zwecks Einwanderung in die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, wird Ihnen mitgeteilt, daß Sie unter dem Datum des SEP 15 1938 1938 auf der deutschen Warteliste unter Vormerknummer 47291 47294 eingetragen sind.

Sie werden rechtzeitig verständigt werden, wann Ihre Nummer auf der Warteliste an die Reihe gekommen ist. Diesen Schriftstück ist sorgfältig aufzubewahren. Die Vormerknummer ist nicht die Quotennummer.

Notice sent to a Jewish family in Austria by the U.S. consulate in Vienna notifying them of their placement on the waiting list for visas to emigrate to the U.S., issued Sept. 15, 1938. There are over 47,000 applicants on the list ahead of them.

USHMM/Stadtarchiv Aachen



The synagogue of Aachen, Germany, before and after Kristallnacht

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Why Did Germans Vote for the Nazi Party? (lesson) www.ushmm.org/educators/lesson-plans/why-did-germans-vote-for-the-nazi-party
  - Videos in series The Path to Nazi Genocide
    - Building a National Community, 1933-1936 (6:55) www.ushmm.org/learn/introduction-to-the-holocaust/path-to-nazi-genocide/chapter-2/building-a-national-community-1933-1936
    - From Citizens to Outcasts, 1933-1938 (7:29) www.ushmm.org/learn/introduction-to-the-holocaust/path-to-nazi-genocide/chapter-3/from-citizens-to-outcasts-1933-1938
  - State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda www.ushmm.org/propaganda/
  - Anti-Semitic Legislation encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/antisemitic-legislation-1933-1939
  - Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/deadly-medicine-creating-the-master-race
  - Nazi Racial Ideology encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/victims-of-the-nazi-era-nazi-racial-ideology
  - Euthanasia Program encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/euthanasia-program
  - Murder of the Handicapped (T-4 Program) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-murder-of-the-handicapped
  - Nazi Persecution of Homosexuals, 1933-1945 www.ushmm.org/exhibition/persecution-of-homosexuals/
  - Nazi Olympics, Berlin, 1936 www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/nazi-olympics-berlin-1936
  - Nazi anti-Jewish boycott, 1933 (archival footage: 1:27) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/nazi-anti-jewish-boycott
  - U.S. condemnation of Kristallnacht (archival footage: 1:05) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/us-condemnation-of-kristallnacht
- Lessons from Facing History and Ourselves
  - The Rise of the Nazi Party www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust and-human-behavior/rise-nazi-party
  - Dismantling Democracy www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/dismantling-democracy
  - Exploring Nazi Propaganda and the Hitler Youth Movement www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/lessons-and-units/exploring-nazi-propaganda-and-hitler-youth

■ **SEE the online Holocaust teaching resources recommended by North Carolina Holocaust educators.** ■
www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/holocaust-council/resources/teachingresources.pdf

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Access the valuable teaching resources of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at *www.ushmm.org/teach.* The museum's offerings include lesson plans, teaching guidelines, online activities, interactive maps, audio and video collections, the *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, and other exemplary classroom resources.

LESSON ■ PREWAR NAZI GERMANY

- **Narrative: Walter Escapes at Age 12**
- **Narrative: Jack Escapes at Age 14**

As we read in the previous chapter, some Jews in the early 1930s did not imagine that Nazism would present a lethal threat to them in just a few years. This changed with the night of November 9-10, 1938—the explosion of anti-Semitic violence known as Kristallnacht, the "Night of Broken Glass." In Germany and Nazi-occupied territory, thousands of Jewish businesses were attacked and looted. Over 200 synagogues and Jewish cemeteries were destroyed. Jews were beaten in the streets—about 100 were killed. And 30,000 Jewish men were rounded up and sent to detention camps.

The threat was now clear. Jews lined up at nations' embassies to get exit visas, but the process time was long and the entry quotas low. Jews fled through forests and mountains to cross borders into non-Nazi-controlled nations, but they risked arrest, imprisonment, and deportation back to Nazi territory.

For desperate parents, one refuge emerged for their children—Kindertransport (children's transport). Soon after Kristallnacht, a group of British, Jewish, and Quaker leaders convinced the British government to admit refugee children under 17 from Nazi-controlled countries. The first group of children arrived in December 1938, and the last just before the outbreak of war in September 1939. (A last transport organized by another group in the Netherlands arrived in May 1940.) The children lived with families or in camps, hostels, or children's institutions. About 10,000 children, mostly Jewish, were saved from Germany and Nazi-occupied Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland. Most of them never saw their parents again. And their parents, when they sent them off, knew they would likely never see their children again.

The North Carolina survivors whose narratives are presented here both witnessed Kristallnacht and were then sent by their parents to England through Kindertransport.

- **Walter Falk** was 11 in Germany when the apartment he and his mother lived in was ransacked on Kristallnacht, and they left to live with her mother. In 1939, when Walter was 12, his mother sent him to England via Kindertransport. He settled in Greensboro in 1960.
- **Jack Hoffmann** was 14 when he witnessed Kristallnacht in Austria, which the Nazis had taken over earlier that year. Seven months later his parents sent him to England via Kindertransport. He settled in Greensboro in 1997.

Have students consider these questions as they read the narratives.

1. How did Nazi control affect Walter and Jack's treatment as Jewish boys in public schools?
2. Under Nazi control, what happened to the apartments they lived in?
3. What examples does Jack give with his statement about the response of non-Jewish Austrians to Hitler's takeover: *"There was no resistance whatsoever. Hitler was welcomed with open arms."*
4. What did Walter and Jack witness on Kristallnacht? What did they experience personally?
5. How do you think you would have reacted at age 11 or 14?
6. After Kristallnacht, how were they treated by German and Austrian non-Jews?
7. What experience led Walter to write *"So he was a good Nazi, if there is such a thing."*
8. How does Jack describe the ocean voyage from England to the United States, when he was 16? How does it differ from your sense of an ocean voyage?

9. How did Jack and his family respond to being reunited in the United States? What happened to the rest of his family in Europe?
10. How did Walter find out how his mother died during the Holocaust? How did he honor her in Greensboro?
11. Read or view the survivor testimonies about Kristallnacht from Centropa (15 brief excerpts) or the Shoah Foundation (six video clips). Compare the survivors' experiences with those of Walter and Jack. (See Online Resources below.)
12. Read the survivor testimonies about Kindertransport from the *Guardian*. Compare the survivors' experiences with those of Walter and Jack. (See Online Resources below.)
13. Choose one of these statements and use it as the basis for an essay on the importance of Holocaust awareness and education in the U.S. today, especially as the number of Holocaust survivors and eyewitnesses is decreasing. Begin the essay with the statement and refer to it throughout your essay.

    - Jack Hoffmann [who arrived in the U.S. in 1940 at age 16]: *"The whole idea of being in America was something that was difficult for us to imagine. We came from a country that was at war. To be in America, to be in a country that was not threatened, as such, was just unbelievable."*
    - Walter Falk: *"It's just recently [1980s] that I could talk about it. I would never have talked about the Holocaust during the 1940s and 1950s . . . It was too fresh. But now it needs to be told. Because there are people who say it never happened, and there are also people today, if you listen to them carefully, who are trying to justify what happened."*

▪ —— ■ —— ▪

ONLINE RESOURCES

■ **Kristallnacht**

- Kristallnacht (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/kristallnacht
- Remembering the Night of Broken Glass (Centropa) november1938.centropa.org/
- Remembering Kristallnacht: video with survivor testimonies, 25:56 (USC Shoah Foundation) sfi.usc.edu/exhibits/remembering-kristallnacht
- Documents required to obtain a visa to the U.S. (USHMM) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documents-required-to-obtain-a-visa

■ **Kindertransport**

- Kindertransport (USHMM) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/kindertransport-1938-40
- Kindertransport History (Kindertransport Assn.) www.kindertransport.org/history.htm
- Kindertransport (Natl. Archives, UK) www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/kindertransport/
- Kindertransport (BBC News) www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-23032023
- "The Kindertransport children 80 years on," six survivors' experiences, *The Guardian* (UK), Nov. 6, 2018 www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/06/the-kindertransport-children-80-years-on-we-thought-we-were-going-on-an-adventure

"*Translate statistics into people*."

In its guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust (see Supplemental Materials), the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum recommends using first-person accounts of survivors

"*precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims; [they] add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics*."

■ PREWAR NAZI GERMANY ■
WALTER ESCAPES AT AGE 12

Born in 1927 in Germany, Walter Falk and his widowed mother lived in the city of Karlsruhe, which had a strong Jewish community. By the time Walter entered public school, Hitler had taken power and the Nazis were instituting their harsh anti-Jewish policies. After the Nazi-ordered mob violence of Kristallnacht in 1938, Walter escaped to England through the Kindertransport program.

I went to public school like everyone else in Karlsruhe. I was not permitted to say "Heil Hitler" or wear a uniform. This set me apart from the rest of my classmates. I had to attend school parades and listen to propaganda speeches. The attitude towards Jews became worse as time went on. The other students were told not to socialize with Jews. The teachers were not supposed to speak to Jewish parents. In 1937, the Jewish children were separated from other German children, and we were placed into a school for handicapped children, with the Jewish kids on one side of the building and the handicapped children on the other side.

News & Record [Greensboro, NC]

Walter at age 11 (far right) in a transit camp in London after arriving in England through the Kindertransport program, 1941

On the night of November 9-10, 1938, the Nazis unleashed the violence of Kristallnacht, the "Night of Broken Glass." They destroyed 257 synagogues, desecrated Jewish cemeteries, shattered the windows and looted over 7,000 Jewish businesses, and beat up countless Jews on the streets. About 100 Jews were killed and up to 30,000 Jewish men were arrested.

My mother and I lived in an apartment and we didn't know what was going on. The first thing I noticed as I went to school that morning was that the Jewish shoe store downstairs had all its windows smashed. The glass and shoes were all over the street. I went off to school, and the first thing we were told in school was that the teacher would be late because the synagogue was burning and that the teacher, a religious man, had gone over to the synagogue to save the Torah,* which he did. He brought it out of the burning synagogue, I was told, and then came over to school. Then some plainclothesmen, I guess they were from the Gestapo, came and took the teacher and the headmaster away, and I went home.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

Germans walk by the shattered windows of a Jewish-owned business destroyed during Kristallnacht, Berlin, 1938

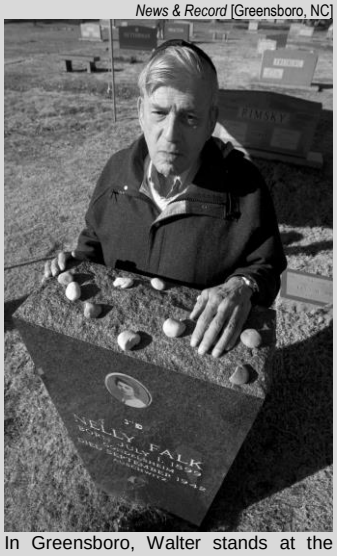
Getting home, I found my mother in tears because two men had been up to our apartment and searched it. They had torn the curtains and a few pictures off the wall. I suppose they were looking for valuables. They were looking to see if there

* The Torah is the sacred scripture of Judaism, known to non-Jews as the first five books of the Old Testament (traditionally ascribed to Moses).

was a safe behind the picture. My mother was very upset. She said, "Let's go to Grandma's," and that's what we did. We went to the railroad station and took the train. My Grandma lived about an hour and a half away in Gondelsheim, a small village. Everything was in order there. There was a Nazi in full uniform standing in front of Grandma's house; he happened to be the next-door neighbor. This man put on his Nazi uniform and stood in front of the house so that no one would do anything to Grandma. He looked out for us. So he was a good Nazi, if there is such a thing.

Walter's mother searched for ways to get Walter out of Germany. Through a friend she learned of the Kindertransport program, through which 10,000 children, mostly Jewish, were allowed to emigrate out of Nazi-occupied territory to England. When Walter left in 1939, he hoped he would see his mother again.

News & Record [Greensboro, NC]



In Greensboro, Walter stands at the memorial headstone of his mother, who perished in Auschwitz in 1942. It is a Jewish tradition to place stones on loved ones' graves as a symbol of the permanence of memory and love for those who have passed away.

After I left Germany, my mother moved in with her mother in the village of Gondelsheim. On October 22, 1940, all the Jews in this part of Germany, which was the province called Baden, were deported to Vichy, France. They were not told where they were going. They were given 15 minutes—at most, two hours—to get a suitcase packed, and they were allowed to take, I think, 50 kilos [about 100 pounds]—or whatever they could carry. There were little children and there were very old people. There were sick people. There were no exceptions made. They were put into cattle cars and sent off. My mother and grandmother were sent to the Gurs internment camp in unoccupied France.

In 1942, my mother was sent to Auschwitz. [He reads from a list of Nazi deportations.] It says here, "Nelly Falk shipped on Convoy #33, September 16, 1942." The Germans were very good at keeping records, and they listed exactly the train she was on. She was identified by her birthdate. There was only one Nelly Falk listed who was born on July 1, 1899. So there is no question about this.

It's just recently that I could talk about it [1980s]. I would never have talked about the Holocaust during the 1940s and 1950s and maybe into the '60s. I wouldn't talk about it. It was too fresh. But now it needs to be told. Because there are people who say it never happened, and there are also people today, if you listen to them carefully, who are trying to justify what happened. I didn't go through what other people with numbers on their arms went through. I'm the luckiest fellow in the world. It could have me down there, too. No, I am very lucky.

Walter came to the U.S. in 1944 to live with an aunt in New York, where he finished high school. He was drafted into the army during the Korean War (1950-1953), serving in Iceland. When he returned he married his wife Ginger, who had left Germany with her family before the war. He began a long career in sales with the Lion Ribbon Co. In 1960 Walter and Ginger moved to Greensboro, NC, when Walter assumed the sales region of North Carolina and Virginia. They have no children.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- "Pebbles from a 'Kindertransport,'" *News & Record* [Greensboro, NC], December 6, 2006
  www.greensboro.com/news/columnists/pebbles-from-a-kindertransport/article_50918661-8fa5-5c72-ba17-261ea7f461dd.html

Selection from Cecile Holmes White, *Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust*, published in cooperation with the N.C. Council on the Holocaust, 1987, archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit. Reproduced by permission of the author.

■ PREWAR NAZI GERMANY ■
JACK ESCAPES AT AGE 14

Born in 1924 in Poland, Jack Hoffmann was two when his family moved to Vienna, Austria. After Hitler took control of Austria in March 1938, the family registered to get visas to emigrate to the United States—a wait of two years or more. After the mass attacks of Kristallnacht eight months later, they decided to send young Jack to England on the Kindertransport.

Jack at age 10 stands behind the right shoulder of his teacher in his public school graduation photograph, 1934.

From the first moment [of the Nazi takeover], things changed radically. Unlike in Germany where it was a gradual approach, with us all the anti-Jewish legislation that had been passed in Germany went into effect almost immediately, including the Nuremberg Laws.* The non-Jewish Viennese, of course, fell in love with this thing from the word go. We were touched by it to the extent that an Aryan could walk into your apartment, into your business, and help himself to whatever he wanted. We had no police protection. You could try and call the police department, but they wouldn't respond to it. The non-Jewish Viennese could also apply to have your apartment, and you were given about a couple of weeks to get out. This happened to us, and we had to move to a smaller apartment.

There was no resistance whatsoever. Hitler was welcomed with open arms. The night before they marched into Austria, we like all others were listening to the radio and listening to the resignation speech.† And while he was making the speech, we could hear and see Nazis all over the place, on streetcars and trucks, with partial uniforms, most of them wearing armbands, but all with these swastika flags and shouting all these slogans—"One People, One Empire, One Leader"—and anti-Jewish songs. The following day, my father was locked out of his office and on his way home somebody pressed a sign in front of a Jewish store, "Don't buy from Jews," and he had to walk back and forth in front of that.

There was no resistance whatsoever. Hitler was welcomed with open arms.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

Non-Jewish Austrians welcome German troops as they arrive in Vienna, March 14, 1938.

We went to school for a couple of days. We were told that we couldn't continue. One of the things that we noticed right off the bat was that my English professor showed up in a SS uniform. All the others wore swastikas. Two professors were pretty much on our side. One was the German professor. He was very very friendly with us and he would frequently run into my mother on the street—and she noticed almost immediately that when he saw her he would cross over to the other side of the street. He wasn't a Nazi by any stretch of the imagination, but he was scared. The music professor with whom we were also very chummy, he did show up, but he also was afraid to talk to us.

* The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 enforced the Nazi ideology of Aryan supremacy and severely restricted Jewish identity and rights.

† Realizing he could not prevent Hitler's takeover of Austria, Chancellor Schuschnigg announced his resignation in a radio speech on March 11, 1938.

As far as our non-Jewish friends are concerned, most of them were afraid to be seen with us. There were some exceptions. One was a young man whom my father had helped get into the business. He would come at least once a week, leave a laundry basket with all sorts of food items, newspapers, everything you can imagine, even some money, ring the bell, and take off. We never saw him, but he made this his regular stop. The other one was a retired Austrian colonel, and he wasn't afraid to be seen with us. He came to our house; he invited us to his house quite regularly. He was severely hurt in the First World War, had a very bad limp, but he really didn't care. I don't imagine that anybody would have done anything to him: he was a national hero—before Hitler came, of course.

KRISTALLNACHT___November 9-10, 1938

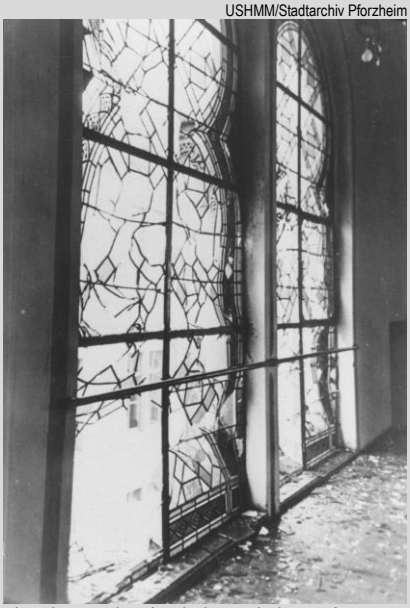
They rounded up at that time about 30,000 Jews, and they were sent to camps.* They went into apartments, they went into stores, and did tremendous damage. They were beating up people in the street. Considering that this thing was done over a period of hours, it's unbelievable. The Austrians didn't need much of an incentive to get involved in these things. Even though this was supposed to be a spontaneous response to the killing of vom Rath in Paris†—this is malarkey. We have today proof that this was an order that came in, how this was organized and that the SS took part in it. They were instructed to be very careful to not damage any Aryan property that may be nearby, but they were told to lob grenades into the temples themselves. The fire department was supposed to stand by in case this got a little bit out of control. The only house of prayer that was allowed to keep standing was the main synagogue, and that was because it was too close to Aryan property!—but all the others were torched. The two temples that we went to, one where I was in the choir, was completely devastated, and that was only a few blocks away from us. The second temple, where we went for the Jewish student classes on Saturday: same thing. I have been in Vienna since then quite a few times, and there's nothing left, either place.

We had some friends who were arrested, and what was so typical of all these "actions"—was that when they took you, they wouldn't tell the family or anybody else where they were taking you. Of course, you then tried to find out from anybody, anywhere. The people who knew about it officially were afraid to tell you anything, even if they'd wanted to. Of those people who were arrested then and taken to the stadium, the vast majority of them, well over a thousand, ended up in concentration camps. At that time, it was still possible for some people, if they could show that they had a visa to go somewhere, to actually be able to take advantage of it. Some did, but the vast majority of them ended up in camps.

USHMM/Leo Goldberger

A synagogue in flames during Kristallnacht

USHMM/Stadtarchiv Pforzheim



The shattered stained glass windows of a synagogue after Kristallnacht

* Twenty-seven Austrian Jews were murdered during Kristallnacht. About 6,000 Austrian Jews were arrested; most were sent to Dachau concentration camp, released only if they agreed to emigrate immediately. Jack's father was arrested later, in September 1939, but was released three weeks later.

† The murder of a German diplomat, Ernst Eduard vom Rath, in Paris by a Polish Jewish young man on November 9 was used as a pretext for Kristallnacht to present it as a spontaneous outburst instead of a Nazi-planned pogrom against Jews.

KINDERTRANSPORT___November 1938 – September 1, 1939

Since we couldn't go to schools, the Zionist organizations* had various schools that were approved by the Nazi government, and I took courses that were to prepare you for Israel—what was then Palestine. I took one course in shoemaking, another in plumbing. I was told then that I was eligible for Kindertransport. I'd never heard about it before. Neither did my family. I was told to talk to my parents about this thing, to be ready within a week, and this is what it was. My mother thought that she wanted to keep the family together. But my father said, "Look, he'll be safer, and he'll come with us to America, ultimately." So we got instructions on what we could take along—it was rather limited—and when we would have to be at the train station. And, really, it happened awfully fast. I said my goodbyes to all the people we were still in touch with. They came to our house. Then we went to the train station, and it was a rather teary scene. It was difficult for a kid my age. It was an adventure, but by the same token, it was something that overwhelmed me almost completely.

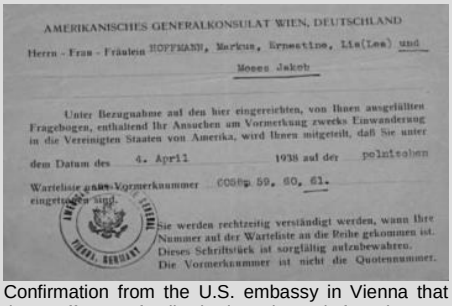
It was difficult for a kid my age. It was an adventure, but by the same token, it was something that overwhelmed me almost completely.

We got on the train. We went through Germany to Holland. In Holland, Jewish organizations had arranged all these things at the train station itself. They gave us juices and things to eat, but the main thing is that people smiled at us. That is something we really weren't used to.

From there we went to Holland, and we took a ferry across to Harwich, England. From there we took a train to Liverpool station. One of the things I didn't realize was that there were Jewish cab drivers in London. They passed a hat around [to collect money], got us all these chocolates, and talked to us mostly in Yiddish, which most of us kids didn't really know, but it was close enough to German that we could understand it. Since I was sponsored by a Zionist organization, I went to a camp, an agricultural camp, and some of the other kids went to private homes, some went to hostels. It all took a couple of hours, and off we went.

My experience at that point was quite different from most kids because I was shifted around from this agricultural camp, then to a nursery [a business growing trees and plants for sale], from there to a youth hostel in London, from there to a camp, and finally to Wellingborough, in Northamptonshire County. At the station I was met by the secretary of Nicholsons Sons & Daniels, who found us lodging, and we started to work at the tannery.†

We had to take a certain medicine, and at that time we were with a childless couple named Higgins. I and another fellow went there—he also came from Vienna, pretty similar background to my own. The medicine



AMERIKANISCHES GENERALKONSULAT WIEN, DEUTSCHLAND

Herrn - Frau - Fräulein HOFFMANN, Markus, Ernestine, Lis(Lea) und Moses Jakob

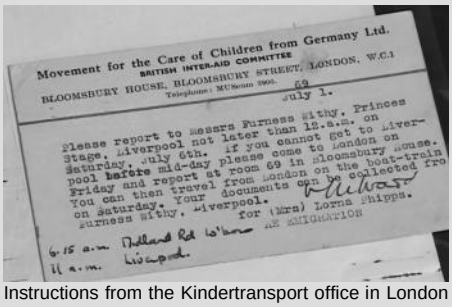
Unter Bezugnahme auf den hier eingereichten, von Ihnen ausgefüllten Fragebogen, enthaltend Ihr Ansuchen um Vormerkung zwecks Einwanderung in die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, wird Ihnen mitgeteilt, daß Sie unter dem Datum des 4. April 1938 auf der polnischen Warteliste unter Vormerknummer 6088 59, 60, 61. eingetragen sind.

Sie werden rechtzeitig verständigt werden, wann Ihre Nummer auf der Warteliste an die Reihe gekommen ist. Dieses Schriftstück ist sorgfältig aufzubewahren. Die Vormerknummer ist nicht die Quotennummer.

Confirmation from the U.S. embassy in Vienna that the Hoffmann family had registered for visas to emigrate to the U.S., April 1938

USHMM/Steven Pressman

Austrian Jewish children view the Statue of Liberty as they arrive in New York harbor, June 1939 (not Jack's group).



Movement for the Care of Children from Germany Ltd.
BRITISH INTER-AID COMMITTEE
BLOOMSBURY HOUSE, BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1
July 1.

Please report to Messrs Furness Withy, Princes Stage, Liverpool not later than 12.a.m. on Saturday, July 6th. if you cannot get to Liverpool before mid-day please come to London on Friday and report at room 69 in Bloomsbury House. You can then travel from London on the boat-train on Saturday. Your documents can be collected fro Furness Withy, Liverpool.

for (Mrs) Lorna Phipps.
HM EMIGRATION

6.15 a.m. Holland Rd to Harw
11 a.m. Liverpool.

Instructions from the Kindertransport office in London for Jack's travel to Liverpool to board a ship for the United States, 1940

* Zionist: a person or organization supporting the creation of a nation for the Jewish people. The nation of Israel was created in 1948 after the war.
† Nicholsons Sons & Daniels was a British tannery and leather importing company. A tannery treats animal hides and skins to produce leather.

tasted terrible, so we poured it into the kitchen sink. They found it and took us to the fellow who had picked us up at the station. He realized right off the bat that we didn't hit it off with this family too well, and he found us lodgings with Mrs. Dugan. And that was quite a difference. She was a retired nurse and she took real good care of us. Very very kind family. And I stayed with her until I took the boat to America.

That was a little bit of an experience. We got onto the ship in Liverpool. It was a former Polish coastal vessel, the MS *Baltrover*. It was a very small boat, less than 3000 tons dead weight, and we joined a convoy. One or two days out of Liverpool, the convoy left us because we were too slow. I don't think we were too much of a challenge for a German U-boat because of the size and lack of any superstructure; it was hardly visible. But it was a very tough voyage; it took about 15 days to Boston. After a few days, everybody got seasick, including the captain and the first mate. The ship was not really rigged for comfort. We had about 20 refugees who were going to America on that ship—the lucky ones.

Jack left Austria for England in June 1939, and he emigrated to America in June 1940. Earlier in 1940, his parents and sister had finally received exit visas, two years after registering with the U.S. embassy after the Nazi takeover of Austria. They left Austria in February 1940, arriving in the United States five months before Jack arrived.

They took a ship from Trieste [Italy] and didn't arrive in New York until February 1940. We had written to each other fairly regularly until the war began [Sept. 1939]. I did hear from them once or twice, but when we lost touch with them completely we really feared the worst. This was when my landlady said she was ready to adopt me.

The whole idea of being in America was something that was difficult for us to imagine. We came from a country that was at war. To be in America, to be in a country that was not threatened, as such, was just unbelievable. I met my family at the bus depot in New York. My father had aged tremendously. My mother and my sister were wearing lipstick and things like that, and it was strange because I wasn't used to it. Of course, it was a joyous event. We couldn't wait to go home and just talk about what had happened.

Jack's favorite uncle disappeared and the family could never determine his fate. Another uncle died in Buchenwald with his family; another died in Łódź. One cousin survived about four years in concentration camps, including Auschwitz.

Jack graduated from high school in 1943 and was drafted into the U.S. army. Upon discharge in 1946, he went to New York University on the GI Bill of Rights, graduating in 1950. He began a long career in foreign trade, managing the U.S. subsidiaries of two European companies. In 1982 he married his wife Nancy, and in 1997 they moved to Greensboro, North Carolina. They have no children. Jack became active with the Kindertransport Association, and he contributed to Holocaust education throughout the state.

Jack during his 2006 interview in Greensboro

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Jack Hoffmann, 2006 (excerpted here), video: 1 hr. 50 min. (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn126354

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

One day after their liberation, former prisoners at the Ebensee concentration camp in Austria gather for U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer Arnold Samuelson. Zev Harel, an Ebensee survivor who now lives in North Carolina, is one of the liberated prisoners (upper right in second row); see p. 152.

IV ■ THE HOLOCAUST ■

_____OVERVIEW_____

■ ***"How did I survive such hell? I learned to accept the nightmarish camp as the real world and coped from one minute to the next. Blind luck also played a part."***

__Susan Cernyak-Spatz

The term Holocaust comes from the ancient Greek word *holokaustos* which means "sacrifice by fire" and has come to refer to the Nazi policy of annihilating all the Jews of Europe.* During World War II, between 1939 and 1945, nearly six million Jews were murdered in mass shootings and in gas chambers, concentration camps, ghettos, forced labor factories, and more. Millions of others were also targeted for Nazi persecution and murder. The victims were grouped by "race"—those deemed genetically and ethnically inferior, and by "behavior"—dissidents and political opponents of the Nazi rule in Germany and German rule in Europe. Estimates of those murdered are below; exact numbers cannot be known.

PERSONS TARGETED by "RACE" (genetic inferiority, ethnic group, nationality, physical disability)

▪ Jews	6 million
▪ Soviet prisoners of war†	2-3 million
▪ Non-Jewish Polish civilians	1.8-1.9 million
▪ Soviet civilians	at least 7 million
▪ People with disabilities in institutions	at least 250,000
▪ Roma (Gypsies)	196,000 – 220,000
▪ Persons of African descent	3,000

PERSONS TARGETED FOR "BEHAVIOR"

▪ Homosexuals	hundreds, possibly thousands
▪ Criminals (recidivist) & asocials	> 70,000
▪ Jehovah's Witnesses	1,900
▪ Political opponents & resistance fighters	Unknown

By categorizing people as "subhuman" and racially and lethally dangerous to the German people, the Nazis justified their brutal persecution of these groups. These were not accidental deaths or casualties of war, but systematically planned murder and mass annihilation.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS As soon as they came into power in 1933, the Nazis created a network of concentration camps to imprison political enemies and persons deemed threats to the regime, including Jews and non-Jews. In 12 years of Nazi rule, from 1933 to 1945, they operated nearly 40 major concentration camps in Germany, occupied Poland, and the occupied Soviet Union, including Dachau, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Ravensbrück, Majdanek, and Auschwitz. Prisoners were starved and worked to death or used in merciless medical experiments conducted by German physicians and university scientists. With the coming of war, the German authorities expanded the camp network throughout occupied Europe.

---

* The Hebrew words *Shoah* (total annihilation) and *Churban* (catastrophe) are also used to describe this historical event.

† The figure for Soviet POWs includes some 50,000 Jewish soldiers. The figure for Soviet civilians includes at least 1.3 million Soviet Jewish civilians (Soviet borders of 1937). *Note*: We do not have the demographic tools to precisely distinguish between Soviet and Polish soldiers and civilians killed specifically for racial reasons or for "behavior" such as resistance to or non-compliance with the German occupation authorities. Nevertheless, we can state that the Germans conducted military and anti-partisan operations as well as responded to violations of occupation policies with a racist disregard for the lives of Polish and Soviet civilians and Soviet POWs. [Peter Black, Ph.D., Senior Historian (ret.), U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.]

POLICY OF FORCED EMIGRATION In the prewar years, the Nazi government tried to entice German Jews to leave Germany by issuing harsh discriminatory laws and both initiating and encouraging waves of street violence against them. The regime officially encouraged Jewish emigration, which greatly increased after the government-initiated attacks of Kristallnacht in November 1938. Of the 523,000 Jews in Germany in 1933 (less than one percent of the population), about 282,000 had left Germany by September 1939 when the war began; of the approximately 200,000 Jews residing in German-annexed Austria, nearly half had left by 1941. After the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, and in the context of reaching a decision on annihilating the European Jews, the Nazi leadership officially banned Jewish emigration in October 1941.

USHMM/Archiwum Panstwowe w Krakowie

Deportation from the Kraków Ghetto 1941-1942

USHMM/Archiwum Dokumentacji Mechanicznej

JEWS FORCED INTO GHETTOS After the Germans invaded and defeated Poland in 1939, they confiscated personal and business property of both non-Jewish Poles and Polish Jews, as well as all Polish government property and facilities. In some areas Polish Jews were formally forced into ghettos or informally restricted to certain areas of cities. These were meant to be temporary holding pens before the Nazi leaders finalized their plans for the fate of Europe's Jews. Jews from Germany and from parts of German-occupied Europe were later sent to ghettos in occupied Poland. The German authorities created hundreds of ghettos, primarily in occupied Poland and the occupied Soviet Union, from where they planned to remove all Jews from Europe.

ANNIHILATION POLICIES BEGIN After occupying Poland in autumn 1939, the Germans implemented a policy of mass murder aimed at the Polish leadership classes—political, military, religious, and community leaders from the national to the village level. They shot, hanged, and killed by other means tens of thousands of non-Jewish Poles, possibly more than 100,000, by the summer of 1940.

Later, after Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, German SS and police and military authorities conducted wholesale murder of civilians whom they deemed to be a threat to their total control, including Soviet political and military leaders, and Jewish and Roma men. Within two months they expanded this practice to target Jewish women, children, and the elderly, that is, entire Jewish communities. In these operations, the victims would usually be rounded up and driven into the forest or countryside, where they had to give up their possessions and were sometimes forced to strip. SS men or German soldiers and locally recruited police auxiliaries then shot the victims at the edge of a large pit where their bodies would be buried. More than a million Jews were massacred in such operations

Commons:Bundesarchiv

Latvian Jewish women huddle together before being executed by Latvian police directed by the local SS commander, 1941.

in the Soviet Union alone, as were thousands of Roma, Soviet officials and civilians, including persons with disabilities. Thousands were also killed in mobile "gas vans" by carbon monoxide gas pumped into sealed panels to asphyxiate those locked inside.

THE "FINAL SOLUTION" It is unknown exactly when Hitler abandoned forced emigration of Jews from Germany as official policy and authorized the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question"—the total annihilation of all the Jews of Europe. The transition had begun in late 1941 when the SS established the killing centers at Chełmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka to murder the Jews living in occupied and annexed Poland. About 1.7 million Jews were killed in these centers, as well as non-Jewish Poles, German and Polish Roma, and Soviet prisoners of war, by carbon monoxide gas piped into gas chambers, or in the case of Chełmno into the backs of sealed paneled trucks. In 1942 the concentration camp Auschwitz-Birkenau was turned into a killing center with the addition of gas chambers and other equipment and structures to facilitate mass murder.

At an important meeting in January 1942 known as the Wannsee Conference, a group of top Nazi leaders and German high-level government officials met outside Berlin to plan the massive bureaucracy needed to implement the Final Solution.* They were told that Hitler had given sanction for the "evacuation of Jews to the East." The officials knew what was intended. Jews from all over western, central, southern and southeastern Europe would be deported to killing centers—facilities designed specifically for mass murder. Jews were to be gathered at "concentration points" in cities on or near railroad lines and taken by train to the killing centers.

The five killing centers were located on the territory of German-occupied Poland due to the density of the Jewish population there, the good quality of transportation facilities in the form of railroad routes and roads, and the relative independence and depth of SS personnel stationed in German-occupied Poland. Each of these killing centers underwent renovation as the SS worked to streamline the mechanized process of killing. Despite frequent rail transport freezes due to German military needs on the Eastern Front, various SS agencies skillfully negotiated with the Reich railroads to devote the necessary resources to the annihilation process.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU The word "Auschwitz" has come to signify the depths of man's inhumanity to man. Few prisoners who entered its gates survived to the end of the war; about two thirds died in the gas chambers or by lethal injection within hours of arrival.

Established by the SS as a concentration camp in 1940, the first inmates of Auschwitz were mostly Polish political prisoners rounded up as the German occupation authorities tightened their grip on Poland; at least half of the 140,000 Poles imprisoned there did not survive. Later

USHMM/Unknown Russian archive

Auschwitz barracks (photograph taken after liberation)

* From Germany and most of the rest of Europe except for occupied Poland and the occupied Soviet Union.

USHMM/Yad Vashem

Hungarian Jews line up for selection after arrival at Auschwitz, May 1944. Most were sent to their deaths in the gas chambers.

thousands of Soviet prisoners of war were sent to Auschwitz; only 92 were alive at the last roll call. These victims died from direct killing, disease, starvation, beatings, brutal forced labor, and exposure. Some were killed in the first experiments with the poison gas Zyklon B, which came to be the primary murder weapon in Auschwitz. Other prisoners were the first victims of the infamous medical experiments, designed to cause unimaginable suffering, conducted by SS physicians, among them Dr. Josef Mengele.

In 1942, the first Jewish prisoners arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau, also known as Auschwitz II, which would become the largest killing center operating under Nazi rule. From across Europe the trainloads arrived with doomed captives—from Poland, Slovakia, the Czech lands, Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary, Greece, Italy, Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway.

Railroad freight cars and passenger trains, packed with terrified prisoners, arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau at a steady pace, sometimes two or three per day. SS guards forced the prisoners off the trains, often separated them by gender (children under 12 stayed with the women), and forced them to wait in line for the "selection" process. A few—the young, healthy, and those with useful skills—were selected for forced labor and allowed to survive. They were sent to the prisoner barracks, forced to give up their valuables, possessions and clothes, have their heads shaved, and be disinfected in showers. Approximately half of these prisoners eventually died of starvation, exhaustion, disease, exposure, direct killing, and horrific mistreatment.

The SS murdered about two thirds of those sent to Auschwitz on the day they arrived. Older people, women with children under 12, pregnant women, and those who appeared weak and sick were "selected" for immediate death in the gas chambers. Up to several thousand people a day could be killed in the four gas chambers, after which their bodies were burned in the crematoriums or open-air "ovens" made out of rail track. By mid-1944, thousands of people were murdered daily. Over 1.1 million people died at Auschwitz, including nearly one million Jews. The term "death factory" aptly describes the efficient and brutal process of mass murder in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

NAZIS TRY TO DESTROY EVIDENCE OF THE "FINAL SOLUTION" As German offensives met defeat in early 1942, special SS units in occupied Poland and the occupied Soviet Union were ordered to locate the mass graves of those previously shot and to dig up the bodies and burn them in order to hide evidence of their crimes. (They often used Jewish forced laborers to exhume and burn the bodies.) In 1943 the SS closed down and dismantled Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec; Chełmno had been closed earlier that spring and, after a short resumption of operations in summer 1944, closed down for good. The gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau were destroyed in early November 1944.

The SS evacuated concentration camps beginning in the summer of 1944, as the Allied armies closed in on Germany from the west (American, British and British Commonwealth troops), and from the east (Soviet troops). As Soviet troops approached Auschwitz in January 1945, surviving prisoners were either shot or forcibly evacuated to camps farther west in Germany, where the SS hoped to maintain control over the prisoners as a labor force and also as a bargaining chip in a plan to negotiate a separate peace with the Western Allies. While two thirds of the surviving prisoners survived the brutal winter evacuations, many died later of disease and malnutrition. As the Allied armies closed in, the SS abandoned many camps before they could destroy all the evidence of what later would be termed "crimes against humanity."

LIBERATION The liberating soldiers were stunned and horrified by what they found in the camps—thousands of starved, emaciated, and desperate prisoners abandoned to their fate by the escaping SS management and guards. Piles of unburied corpses, train cars full of emaciated bodies, crematoriums holding half-burned bodies.

Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, visited the liberated camp of Ohrdruf in Germany in April 1945 and soon conveyed his reaction:

"We continue to uncover German concentration camps for political prisoners in which conditions of indescribable horror prevail. . . . I have visited one of these myself and I assure you that whatever has been printed on them to date has been understatement. . . . the evidence of bestiality and cruelty is so overpowering as to leave no doubt . . . about the normal practices of the Germans in these camps."

"I made the visit deliberately in order to be in a position to give <u>first-hand</u> evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to 'propaganda.'"[*]

Eisenhower Presidential Library/U.S. National Archives

Generals Eisenhower and Patton view evidence of Nazi atrocities at Ohrdruf concentration camp, April 12, 1945.

On April 29, 1945, shortly before he took his own life, Hitler wrote his last political testament. He blamed the war on the Jews, insisting they were solely responsible for causing the war and their own destruction. On May 7-9, 1945, Nazi Germany surrendered unconditionally to Allied and Soviet forces.

What was the Holocaust's grim death toll of the European Jews? It is estimated that up to 2.7 million Jews died in the five killing centers, hundreds of thousands in the ghettos and concentration camps,[†] at least 1.6 million in mass shooting operations (in German-occupied areas of Poland and the Soviet Union, and in Serbia and Croatia), and at least half a million from other causes.[‡] By May 1945, six million Jews—two thirds of the Jews of Europe, who had numbered 9.5 million in 1933—had perished.

[*] Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, statement #1: telegram to Gen. George C. Marshall, 19 April 1945; statement #2: letter to Gen. George C. Marshall, 15 April 1945 [emphasis in original]. Eisenhower Presidential Library, US National Archives.

[†] The total for Auschwitz-Birkenau, originally established as a concentration camp, is included with the five killing centers.

[‡] For estimates of the total deaths of Jews and non-Jews in the Holocaust, see "Victims of the Holocaust and Nazi Persecution" from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, *encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution*.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Major Sources of Online Holocaust Resources (entry pages for curriculum materials)
  - U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) www.ushmm.org/teach
  - Yad Vashem (The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Israel) www.yadvashem.org/education.html
  - Facing History and Ourselves www.facinghistory.org/educator-resources
  - Echoes and Reflections echoesandreflections.org/teach/
  - New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education www.nj.gov/education/holocaust/
  - Holocaust Memorial Resource & Education Center of Florida www.holocaustedu.org/education/
  - Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center hhrecny.org/curriculum/
  - North Carolina Council on the Holocaust www.ncpublicschools.org/holocaust-council/
  - Florida Center for Holocaust Education fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/resource.htm
- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Teaching About the Holocaust www.ushmm.org/teach
  - Introduction to the Holocaust encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/introduction-to-the-holocaust
  - Fundamentals of Teaching about the Holocaust www.ushmm.org/teach/fundamentals
  - What is Genocide? encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/what-is-genocide
  - Holocaust Encyclopedia (5800 entries) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/en
  - The Final Solution encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/final-solution-overview
  - Mobile Killing Squads encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/mobile-killing-squads
  - Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units), archival footage (1:43) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/
    (NOTE: footage of mass execution of Jews in Latvia) film/einsatzgruppen-mobile-killing-units
  - Who Were the Victims? encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/mosaic-of-victims-an-overview
  - The Holocaust in Maps encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/gallery/the-holocaust-maps
  - The Holocaust: Animated Map encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/animated-map/the-holocaust
  - The U.S. and the Holocaust encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-united-states-and-the-holocaust
  - The Aftermath of the Holocaust encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-aftermath-of-the-holocaust
  - The Holocaust and World War II: Key Dates encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/
    the-holocaust-and-world-war-ii-key-dates
  - Video: The Path to Nazi Genocide (38:31) www.ushmm.org/learn/holocaust/path-to-nazi-genocide/
    the-path-to-nazi-genocide/full-film
  - War Crimes Trials encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/war-crimes-trials?series=48246
- Resources from Echoes and Reflections
  - Timeline (interactive) of the Holocaust echoesandreflections.org/timeline-of-the-holocaust/
  - Lesson Plans echoesandreflections.org/teach/
- Holocaust: Essays and Lessons (Facing History and Ourselves) www.facinghistory.org/topics/holocaust
- Journeys through the Holocaust, online exhibition with video excerpts from Shoah Foundation interviews of survivors sfi.usc.edu/exhibits/journeys-through-holocaust

■ **SEE the online Holocaust teaching resources recommended by North Carolina Holocaust educators.** ■
www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/holocaust-council/resources/teachingresources.pdf

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Access the valuable teaching resources of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at *www.ushmm.org/teach*. The museum's offerings include lesson plans, teaching guidelines, online activities, interactive maps, audio and video collections, the *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, and other exemplary classroom resources.

LESSON ■ THE GHETTOS

- **Narrative: Gizella in the Lutsk Ghetto**
- **Narrative: Anatoly in the Zhmerinka Ghetto**
- **Narrative: Morris in the Łódź Ghetto**

The term "ghetto" does not conjure the images of horror that "concentration camp" does, yet their horrors were real and lethal for hundreds of thousands of Jews. The Nazis established over 1,100 ghettos to segregate and isolate the Jewish people of an occupied region before murdering them in mass shootings or deporting them to death camps to be gassed or worked to death. Armed uprisings occurred in several ghettos but were brutally suppressed. Many ghettos lasted for years, and thousands of Jews perished in the deplorable conditions and harsh forced labor—part of the Nazi plan for the ghettos.

Introduce the North Carolina survivors whose narratives are presented here.

- **Gizella Gross Abramson** was 13 when the Jews of Lutsk, in Nazi-occupied Poland, where she was staying with an aunt and uncle, were forced into a ghetto. She later joined the Resistance but was arrested and sent to the Majdanek concentration camp. In the U.S., she settled in Raleigh in 1970.
- **Anatoly Kizhnerman** was 5 when his family was forced into the ghetto of Zhmerinka in Nazi-occupied Soviet Union. They survived for three years, the last few weeks in hiding, until the Soviet army liberated the city. He moved to Greensboro in 1980.
- **Morris Glass** was 12 when he and his family were forced into the ghetto of Łódź, in Nazi-occupied Poland, where they survived for four years until deported to Auschwitz. He moved to Raleigh in 2000.

Have students consider these questions as they read the survivors' narratives.

1. What were the physical living conditions and hardships in the ghettos?
2. How did ghetto residents survive? How did they deal with the scarcity of food?
3. What were the mental and emotional hardships of living in the ghetto?
4. How did ghetto residents cope with these hardships?
5. How did family bonds help them cope? How did memories of the past nurture them?
6. What were the ever-present threats from the Nazi guards and officials?
7. Conduct research on how food, medicine, and other necessities were smuggled into the ghettos. How was this done? How were children smuggled *out* of the ghettos?
8. What questions would you ask Gizella, Anatoly, and Morris about their ghetto experiences and survival?
9. What strengths and resources of your own do you think would have helped you survive in a Nazi ghetto? What would have been your most daunting challenges?
10. Choose one of these statements from the narratives and create a PowerPoint presentation in which the statement appears at the top or bottom of each slide. Choose photographs from the Nazi ghettos to illustrate the statement; access photos from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum at *www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/about/photo-archives* (scroll down to "Search the Catalog").
    - Gizella Abramson: *"There was no food, no sanitation. There was typhoid and starvation everywhere. There were random killings every day. You could hear the sound of screaming and moaning every night."*

- Morris Glass: *"I came to know well the grim reality of ghetto life—it was a life of hunger, disease, filth, fear, and death. It was like something out of a science fiction book. It was horrible beyond my ability to describe it."*
- Anatoly Kizhnerman: *"I remember everything. Because when you're at this age—I was about five years old—and you see terrible things, when parents see how their children are dying because they don't have enough to eat—it's very deep in your memory."*

11. Memorials to ghetto victims have been created throughout eastern Europe. Study these memorials and do research to learn about their creation and reception. How do they honor and grieve the dead? How do they reveal the importance of remembering horrors? How do they say "Never Again"?
    - Kraków Ghetto Memorial (Poland) www.tracesofwar.com/sights/29682/Memorial-Victims-Jewish-Ghetto-Cracow.htm
    - Lviv Ghetto Memorial (Ukraine) wikimapia.org/4945516/Memorial-to-the-victims-of-the-Jewish-Ghetto.htm
    - Minsk Ghetto Memorial (Belarus) wikimapia.org/181686/Memorial-The-Pit-of-Minsk-Ghetto-victims *AND* commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_monument_to_victims_of_Minsk_ghetto_at_Pritytskogo_street,_Minsk,_Belarus.jpg
    - Łódź Ghetto Memorial (Poland) www.lodz-ghetto.com/the_radegast_station.html,38
    - Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorial (Poland) en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monument_to_the_Ghetto_Heroes#/media/File:Monument_to_the_Ghetto_Heroes_in_Warsaw_05.JPG

▪ —— ■ —— ▪

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
    - Ghettos encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ghettos
    - Life in the Ghettos encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/life-in-the-ghettos
    - Hidden History of the Kovno Ghetto www.ushmm.org/exhibition/kovno/
    - "Give Me Your Children": Voices from the Łódź Ghetto www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/voices-from-lodz-ghetto
    - Warsaw Ghetto Uprising encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/warsaw-ghetto-uprising
    - Conditions in the Warsaw ghetto, archival footage (search for more archival footage of the Warsaw ghetto)
        - —0:48 encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/conditions-in-the-warsaw-ghetto
        - —1:16 encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/conditions-in-the-warsaw-ghetto-1
- Resources from Yad Vashem
    - The Ghettos www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/ghettos.html
    - Mutual Assistance within the Ghetto Walls (lesson) www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/lesson_plans/ghettos.asp
    - Warsaw Ghetto www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/ghettos/warsaw.html
    - Voices from the Inferno: Holocaust Survivors Describe the Last Months in the Warsaw Ghetto yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto_testimonies/index.asp
- Resources from Facing History and Ourselves
    - Ghettos www.facinghistory.org/topics/holocaust/ghettos
    - The Jewish Ghettos: Separated from the World www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-8/jewish-ghettos-separated-world

"*Translate statistics into people*."

In its guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust (see Supplemental Materials), the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum recommends using first-person accounts of survivors

"*precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims; [they] add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics*."

GHETTO ■ GIZELLA IN THE LUTSK GHETTO

Gizella Gross was born in Tarnopol, Poland, in 1928. She was 11 when World War II broke out and 13 when the Nazis took over her region of the country, soon beginning their persecution of the Jews.

Gizella, age 9 (left), with her cousin Bella and younger brother Zenon, 1937

My family was very unusual because they owned land, and not many Jews owned land. My memories are of the house and of the soil, and how the house smelled on Shabbat [the Jewish Sabbath]. It was scrubbed clean and I remember the smell of the Sabbath dinner. The candles were on the table. Later when times were bad and I felt lonely, so alone and hungry, I always thought of the candles and of the family. And I always hoped that I would be able to experience this feeling once again.

Gizella's family was forced to move to a small apartment in a nearby city. Her parents sent her to stay with an aunt and uncle in the city of Lutsk, hoping she would be safer—but they were soon forced into a ghetto.

They created a ghetto at the edge of town and moved all the Jews into shacks. All of us had to wear yellow patches on our chests and on our backs. There was only one water pump, and it was padlocked except for one hour a day. There was no food, no sanitation. There was typhoid and starvation everywhere. There were random killings every day. One day I watched a work detail coming back into the ghetto. All at once the Germans started shooting for no reason and cut half of them down. Each day trucks came and took people away, and every day the line at the water pump was smaller and smaller. You could hear the sound of screaming and moaning every night. The Germans said they were relocating people to safety where they could work with honor; a Jewish committee was forced to select who was to go. They forced the deported people to write postcards back to the ghetto so the people would not panic.

Yad Vashem/Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv

In August 1942, the 15,000-17,000 Jews of the Lutsk ghetto were killed in a nearby forest (after Gizella had joined the Resistance).

[Read "Gizella Joins the Resistance" in Ch. 5 (Resistance).]

ONLINE RESOURCES

- *Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust*, by Cecile Holmes White in cooperation with the N.C. Council on the Holocaust, 1987 archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit
- The Lutsk Ghetto (Yad Vashem) www.yadvashem.org/untoldstories/database/index.asp?cid=815

Selection from Cecile Holmes White, *Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust*, published in cooperation with the N.C. Council on the Holocaust, 1987, archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit. Reproduced by permission of the author. Family photograph reproduced by permission of Michael Abramson, son of Gizella Abramson.

GHETTO ■ ANATOLY IN THE ZHMERINKA GHETTO

Anatoly Kizhnerman was born in 1935 in the Soviet Union and moved as a young child with his family to Zhmerinka in the Ukraine, a Soviet territory at the time. When Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, the family found themselves in the midst of war.

As you know, the war between Germany and Russia started on June 22, 1941. In a couple of days the Germans were in the same city where I was living. Of course, most people didn't have time to leave the city.

You know, the Ukraine was invaded many times by Germany before the Bolshevik Revolution [Communist Revolution, 1917], and Jewish people, who often had suffered at the hands of the Russian military, had the opinion that German soldiers were very nice to Jews. You have to remember, the Ukraine was one of the most nationalistic and anti-Semitic republics in the U.S.S.R. [Soviet Union], and Jews suffered a lot from the Ukrainian people, too.

Yad Vashem/RGAKFD

Jewish men arrested in Odessa, near Zhmerinka, Ukraine, after the German occupation, 1941

The Germans divided the city into two parts. Under the agreement between Germany and Romania, which was a satellite of Germany, part of the Ukraine had to belong to Romania. All the Jews living in the Romanian part were put into a ghetto. In the other part of the city, all Jews were killed.

I remember everything. Because when you're at this age—I was about five years old—and you see terrible things, when people can kill each other for a piece of bread because they don't have more to eat, when parents see how their children are dying because they don't have enough to eat. It's very deep in your memory. And you saw everything. And a child's memory keeps very well. Every human being—anyone, animals—when you see something which is dangerous, you will try to protect yourself. You saw how people were killed. You saw how the German soldiers looked, how they killed people. And, of course, you develop an attitude by which you protect yourself. And, as a child, you do the same. When you see a soldier, you would try to escape.

When they put us into the ghetto, they used adults for labor to work on their roads, to fix the bridges which were destroyed during the invasion, and which were destroyed by the Soviet army when they left.

It was not legal, but you would exchange your clothes for a meal, for food. And that was the only way to try and survive. Our house [in the ghetto], a three-bedroom house, was crowded—it was only a place to sleep—but it had a big garden and we had a lot of vegetables, and this gave us

I remember everything. Because when you're at this age—I was about five—and you see terrible things, when people can kill each other for a piece of bread because they don't have more to eat, when parents see how their children are dying . . . It's very deep in your memory.

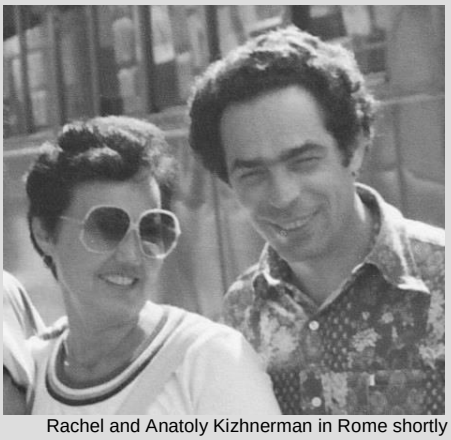
the opportunity to survive. We ate potatoes, I remember. It's all we got. Again, I say, if you put a person in this situation, his only thought is to survive.

I don't know how they found out, but somebody, the non-Jewish people, told the Jews that the Germans were starting to prepare to kill the Jews. This day when somebody gave a message of orders to kill the Jews on that night, everybody left the ghetto. And every family around the ghetto, they started to save the Jews. I remember when we started to run, somebody started to shoot at us. I told my mom, "Don't worry. Run. Faster. Faster."

Anatoly's mother found a family who hid them until the Soviets liberated the region in March 1944. He completed college in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), Russia, and married fellow survivor Rachel Giralnik in 1957. In 1980 they came to the United States with their son and a year later settled in Greensboro, North Carolina.

[See Rachel Kizhnerman's narrative in Ch. 6, Rescuers.]

Anatoly with his son Jerry in the Soviet Union, 1963



Rachel and Anatoly Kizhnerman in Rome shortly before their arrival in the U.S. with their son, 1979

ONLINE RESOURCES

- *Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust*, by Cecile Holmes White in cooperation with the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, 1987
  archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit
- Invasion of the Soviet Union by Germany, June 1941 (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)
  encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/invasion-of-the-soviet-union-june-1941
- The Invasion of the Soviet Union and the Beginnings of Mass Murder (Yad Vashem)
  www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/final-solution-beginning/mass-murder-in-ussr.html

GHETTO ■ MORRIS IN THE ŁÓDŹ GHETTO

Born in Pabianice, Poland, Morris Glass was 11 years old when Germany invaded his country in 1939. He and his family endured four and a half years in the Pabianice and Łódź ghettos. In August 1944 the residents of the Łódź ghetto were sent to Auschwitz, where Morris, his father, and his brother were separated from his mother and two sisters, whom he never saw again.

For four and a half years, from 1940 to 1944, I lived in Jewish ghettos, first in my hometown, Pabianice, and then in neighboring Łódź. I was almost 12 when my confinement began, and I was 16½ when it ended. In the intervening years I came to know well the grim reality of ghetto life—it was a life of hunger, disease, filth, fear, and death. Because the conditions were so deplorable, many people died from starvation, malnutrition, and disease while confined in the ghettos. Along with the other ghetto dwellers, my family suffered greatly. But somehow we survived. Wretched as our situation was, as long as we were together and able to sustain and comfort one another, life had meaning.

Wikimedia Commons

Nazi Reich and occupied territory, 1941 (detail), incl. the General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Region

I could not believe the sights and smells that greeted me when I reached the Łódź ghetto in August 1942. It was like something out of a science fiction book. It was worlds away from the Pabianice ghetto, and it was horrible beyond my ability to describe it. As we approached the ghetto, I could smell it—the stench was horrible. On entering, I saw dilapidated buildings, neglected pavements, flooded gutters, and crowded, narrow streets. I saw a barbed-wire fence topped by electric wires, and it had German guards stationed every hundred meters or so along it. Most startling of all were the people—they looked like walking death. The expressions on their faces were entirely different from any I had ever seen. It was as though they were not even human.

My first impressions were supplemented later by images that are seared in my memory. Foremost among these is the image of people pulling carts full of sewage. The faces and clothing of these people still haunt me. Their clothes were rags, and their faces bore the mask of death. And the smell was overwhelming in its awfulness. It is simply impossible to describe. Men, women, and children desperate for food pulled these carts to receive an extra ration of

USHMM: (left) Ghetto Fighters' House Museum/S. Harcsztark/N. Zonabend; (center) M. O'Hara/B. Colberg; (right) Moshe Zilbar

Children at forced labor in a Łódź ghetto workshop; fence enclosing the Łódź ghetto; destitute child eating soup ration in the Łódź ghetto in winter

bread. I still remember the children moaning, "Mama, Mama." Starvation is indeed a harsh master!

The Nazis had been sending Jews and Roma [Gypsies] from the ghetto to the Chełmno death camp. Soon after Morris and his family arrived, the Nazis deported over 20,000 victims in one week, primarily old and sick people, and children under ten. This became known as the Gehsperre [curfew].

USHMM/Ghetto Fighters' House Museum: Moshe Zilbar/Nachman Zonabend/Photo: M. Grosman

A child selected for deportation during the Gehsperre roundup says farewell to his family through the wire fence of the central prison, September 1942.

The Gehsperre began when Rumkowski* announced that the Germans had demanded that 20,000 Jews be deported. Those designated were children under ten, the elderly, and the sick. The announcement was followed by eight days of agony and terror as the selections were made and the victims deported. No one went to work. Every day we were forced to stand in a line in front of our apartments until the selections had been completed. Anyone found inside a building was shot. Grouped in families, we stood silently, prayed, and waited for the arrival of the SS and the Jewish police. When they approached, we stood very still. I held my breath and looked straight ahead. I was terrified that I would do something to attract attention to myself. The SS would look up and down the rows of Jews and then they would point at a person and persons to come forward.

When a child was selected, the parents would fall on their knees, clutch the child, cry, beg, and plead. . . . It was heartbreaking; it was unbearable.

Many terrible scenes took place during the Gehsperre—it was awful. When a child was selected, the parents would fall on their knees, clutch the child, cry, beg, and plead. The SS would respond by kicking, beating, or even shooting the mothers and fathers. If a child refused to come forward, the child was shot. In an effort to minimize the brutality, the Jewish police tried to hold the parents back and to keep them from running after their children. A similar scenario occurred when an elderly person was selected. The elderly knew that they were going to their deaths—I heard some of them repeating the schema [last prayers] as they were led away. It was heartbreaking; it was unbearable.

Although several people were taken from our building, my family and my aunt's family were spared. My parents did what they could to look younger. My father shaved his beard, and my mother and my aunt rubbed red beets on their cheeks to give color to their faces. What I suspect really saved us was our ages and the fact that we were relatively healthy.

So after the Gehsperre we settled into a daily life of hard work and hoped that by working we could survive. At first we were wary of what might happen next. However, as the deportations became more infrequent and then virtually stopped, we became almost complacent. We developed a feeling that our lives would continue in this mode until somehow we were liberated. But it was not to be. The decision to destroy all the Jews under Nazi control had been made. We had simply been granted a reprieve in order to serve the interests of the Third Reich.

———— ■ ————

* Chaim Rumkowski was the Jewish man appointed by the Nazis as leader of the Jewish administration (Council of Elders) in the Łódź ghetto. Rumkowski and his family were deported on the last transport from the Łódź ghetto to Auschwitz, where they were killed.

Within the Nazi system of exploitation and control, my family and the other Jews of Łódź tried to maintain some semblance of normal life. As promised [by Rumkowski], my family was given an apartment in the building where my aunt Balcia Kantorowicz, her husband, and their seven daughters lived; it was on the third floor. Our happiness at being reunited with our relatives was muted when we learned that two of our cousins had already been deported and that another was dying of tuberculosis. I would watch as she died—she was only 13.

Our apartment consisted of three rooms and compared to our apartment in the Pabianice ghetto, it seemed small, cramped, dirty, and antiquated. However, we soon found out that it was luxurious compared to the lodgings of most people. My brother and I shared a bed in the kitchen, my sisters shared a bed in a small bedroom, and my parents slept in the living room. Sleeping was difficult, not because of the crowding, but because of the bugs. As soon as the lights were turned off, bugs would come out of the plaster walls; when you turned the lights back on, you could see them everywhere. Actually, we did not need to see the bugs to know that they were there; we could feel them as they crawled over our bodies and bit us. We always had bites, tiny red marks everywhere. Bugs were a plague throughout the ghetto.

One good feature of our apartment was a balcony. Father used this little space to grow tomatoes and other vegetables like beets and lettuce to supplement our meager diet. People grew food wherever they could find space.

USHMM/Ghetto Fighters' House Museum: M. Zilbar/N. Zonabend

Wood workshop

USHMM/Robert Abrams

Metal workshop

USHMM/Robert Abrams

Saddle-making workshop

Youth in forced labor in the Łódź ghetto

Cramped, bitten, and lacking heat and sanitation,* we nevertheless had our family intact. Having a family to come home to, share concerns with and embrace, helped me cope with the hunger and fear which might otherwise have overwhelmed me. My family sustained me, and gave me a reason to live.

I especially remember how my parents comforted me whenever the SS appeared in the ghetto. The sight of the SS terrified me. You never knew what they would do—sometimes they snatched people and sometimes they seized property. I was a skinny little kid and the SS were big, or so they seemed to me. Their black uniforms were adorned with a death's head, and they carried guns and whips. Knowing how frightened I was, my parents would move close to me, and after the SS had left, they would comfort me with a hug and a kiss. I remember my mom saying to me, "Child, we will get through this." I was so frightened by the SS that, even after I came to America, I was still afraid whenever I saw someone in uniform.

———— ■ ————

* The apartment had no running water or indoor toilet, so the residents had to use a outhouse which "was almost always overflowing with sewage," Morris remembers.

We were all working. In fact, the reason that the Łódź ghetto lasted as long as it did was that its factories were producing materials that were vital for the German military. We produced everything imaginable. We had metal factories where parts for trucks and cars were manufactured. We made uniforms and boots for the soldiers, and we produced pots, nails, furniture, and many other necessary commodities. Everyone in Łódź worked. It was not an option. If you didn't work, you didn't eat. Furthermore, as far as the Germans were concerned, and as they had made abundantly clear during the Gehsperre, if you could not work you were worthless.

———— ■ ————

In a landscape with little humor, one play on words that circulated in the ghetto went like this:

Who is going to be the loser of the war?

The **JID** or Yid [slang for Jew]—**J**apan, **I**taly, and **D**eutschland [Germany].

Who is going to be the winner?

The **ACHSE** [the Axis: German for an alliance of two or more powers]—the **A**mericans, **CH**inese, **S**oviets, and **E**urope.*

———— ■ ————

Although I did not know about it at the time, the one authentic source of news in the ghetto was a radio that one of the residents, an engineer named Widawski, constructed. Father listened to this radio; however, he did not tell me about it until after we were deported. Not only having a radio but also listening to one was punishable by death. Somehow the Gestapo learned about the radio. When they came to arrest Widawski, he committed suicide so as not to betray anyone.

Once the radio was gone, we were cut off from any verifiable accounts of the war except our own eyes and ears. By the summer of 1944, we occasionally saw Allied planes flying eastward, and we could hear the artillery on the Eastern Front, presumably from the conflict raging in and around Warsaw. This could only be good news.

———— ■ ————

It was difficult to keep up with time. Whereas before the war, life seemed to move from one special day to the next, life in the ghetto seemed to lurch forward in some strange way without reference to the calendar. We lost any concept of time except in relation to how many days there were until we would get rations. We all knew when the food was coming: it was the only unit of time that mattered. Food was the main topic of conversation.

USHMM/Yad Vashem: Arie Ben Menachem

Children waiting in line at a soup kitchen in the Łódź ghetto

We usually received our rations every ten days, and, as anxious as we were for food, the process of obtaining it was grueling. First, we had to stand in a line to receive the ration card. Each family received one card with the rations for the entire family. You then had to stand in another line to receive the food allotment, and after that, you had to stand in a third line to receive the bread allotment. I hated standing

* The Axis nations were Germany, Italy, and Japan. The Allies included the United States, Nationalist China, the Soviet Union (Russia and its satellite territories), and European nations including the United Kingdom (Britain) and France (after the end of Nazi occupation).

in those lines. I would be exhausted from work, and then I would have to stand and wait and wait in some line. Our family took turns, and that made it a little more bearable.

Yes, the hunger was so terrible that there were times when I really didn't care to go on any longer, but fear of dying was greater than the hunger. It didn't help to sit and bemoan the circumstances, so I tried to accept the situation, adjust, and make the best of it.

The rations that we received were small, and the quality of the food was poor. We had barely enough food to survive for a few days, much less ten. The bread was not really bread; I don't know what it was made of, but it was rumored to contain a lot of sawdust. We received enough for each of us to have a small slice of bread each day. The food ration consisted mainly of potatoes, unbleached flour, and kohlrabi, a vegetable similar to a broccoli stem or a cabbage core. Kohlrabi was disgusting; I absolutely hated it. Occasionally we received beets, radishes, cabbage, or turnips, and sometimes we got a can of horse meat, some margarine, or a little brown sugar. On rare occasions, we would receive potato peels—yes, potato peels. They were extra food, and were considered a reason to celebrate.

Yes, the hunger was so terrible that there were times when I really didn't care to go on any longer, but fear of dying was greater than the hunger. It didn't help to sit and bemoan the circumstances, so I tried to accept the situation, adjust, and make the best of it. That was not always easy to do, but I was born with an optimistic and cheerful outlook. These innate qualities helped me to plod on.

USHMM/Leopold Page

A body in the street of the Warsaw ghetto, 1940-41

Added to the hunger and cold was the constant sight of the dead and dying. Everywhere there were beggars—skeletons begging for food. There was nothing to do but to ignore them. We were surrounded by the bodies of dead people. When I went to work there would be corpses on the streets; this was especially true during the winter. After a while, I became almost inured to the sight of dead people. In addition, there were the carts filled with corpses, maybe 20 to 30 bodies in a cart. These carts were pulled by skeletal men, women, and children who were just one step away from death themselves. People were dying in such large numbers that the ghetto was forced to resort to mass unmarked graves where the bodies were just dumped in one after another.

———— ■ ————

About a year and a half without deportations, by the spring of 1944 we were beginning to think that maybe, just maybe, we would survive, that we would outlive the war. We were turning out an enormous amount of items essential to the German military, and we felt assured that this productivity insulated us against death. We simply could not imagine that a people as logical as the Germans would bite the hand that was feeding them. Yes, the Germans were logical, but unfortunately for us, they followed their logic even when it was self-destructive. At the heart of Nazism was the goal of creating a Master Race, primarily by eliminating inferior races and people. In the final year of the war, attaining this goal took precedence over winning the war. The Łódź Jews would perish.

In spring 1944 the Nazis began liquidating the ghetto—rounding up the residents to send them to their deaths in Auschwitz and Chełmno. At first they told the Jews they were being sent to Germany for forced labor and asked for "volunteers." The Glass family went into hiding.

USHMM/Unknown Source

Jews in the Łódź ghetto board trains for the Chełmno death camp

About a week after the evacuation announcement, when it became obvious that few Jews would volunteer for the transports, the Germans began to force us into the trains. They would seal off an area and then march the captured Jews to the station. At this point my family went into hiding.

Our hiding place was in the basement of a former soup kitchen. The manager of the kitchen was a friend of my parents, and my mother had worked there. Hiding there with our family were the manager, his wife, and his two children, and the manager's brother, his wife, and his three children. There were fifteen people in all. Fortunately, our hiding place was fairly large—we could all sit at the same time—and it was not too primitive. While I was totally ignorant about the plan to hide, it was obvious that preparations had been made well in advance. Canned goods, flour, potatoes, and even aspirin and Band-Aids had been stored there. We thought we could manage because we were sure that the Soviet army would liberate us shortly.[*]

I don't remember how long we stayed in the cellar, but it must have been a number of weeks. After the first week or so, we began to leave the cellar at night to get some fresh air, and sometimes we slept on the floor of the kitchen. It was quiet at night because there were no roundups or transports—the Germans were wary of being in the ghetto after dark. During the day, we stayed in the cellar and wrote in journals, played checkers or cards, and read; we did not talk much because there was so little oxygen. After we had been in hiding about two weeks, we started to hear the Germans announcing on loudspeakers that anyone found hiding in basements, attics, or anywhere else would be shot on the spot. It was not long before we heard shots signaling executions.

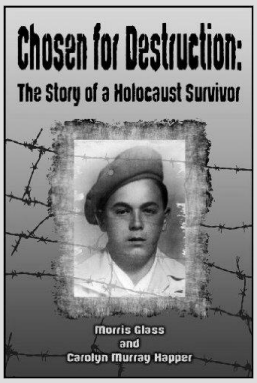
The announcement and the shots caused some of us, especially the younger ones like me, to wonder whether hiding was the best plan. We started saying things such as, "Look, if the Germans find us, they will shoot us immediately, but if we go to Germany to work, we will have a chance to survive." The more shots that we heard, the more afraid we became of being discovered, and the more convinced some of us became, including me, that we should leave our hiding place and join the deportees. Finally my father said, "Let's make a decision, and let's do it democratically by a vote using a secret ballot. Whatever the majority decides is what we will do." Later Father said things to me that suggested that he was fairly sure of the fate that awaited us once we were on the trains. Nevertheless, he was not certain, and so he did not try to persuade us. The majority voted to come forward. Most of the young people felt relief and were happy; most of the adults were not happy.

Once we were in the cattle car and the door was sealed, we knew we had made a mistake. Unfortunately, it was too late. We were now headed for Auschwitz, a place I had never heard of.

[*] The Soviet army entered Łódź on January 19, 1945. Only 877 Jews were still alive, having been ordered to clean out the ghetto.

Once the decision was made, we dressed in our best clothes and started walking toward the train station. We were soon joined by an escort of Jewish police who helped us walk up a plank into a cattle car. Once we were in the cattle car and the door was sealed, we knew we had made a mistake. Unfortunately, it was too late. We were now headed for Auschwitz, a place I had never heard of.

———— ■ ————




Morris with his grandchildren, 2010

Soon after the family arrived in Auschwitz, Morris's brother was sent to a work camp in Germany, and Morris and his father volunteered to work in Germany in order to leave Auschwitz. They arrived in the Dachau concentration camp in October 1944, where his father died from the hard labor and brutal treatment. In April 1945, as U.S. troops approached Dachau, most of the prisoners were marched to a train as the Germans evacuated the camp. Morris escaped the train and survived on the run until American troops secured the area.

Of 42 members of his family, only Morris, his brother, and a cousin survived. While in a Displaced Persons (DP) camp in Italy, Morris learned that his brother had survived and was in a DP camp in Germany. Through an uncle's sponsorship, they came to the U.S., arriving in New York City in June 1949. Morris settled in New Jersey where he bought and expanded a coat manufacturing company. There he met his wife Carol; they have seven children, 18 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. In 2000 they moved to Raleigh, NC, where three sons lived. For years Morris spoke across the state to school, military, and public groups about his Holocaust experience. In 2011 he published his Holocaust memoir, Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*, co-written with historian Dr. Carolyn Murray Happer.*

[Read other selections from Morris's memoir in Ch. 1 (Anti-Semitism) and Ch. 7 (Liberation).]

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Video: Morris Glass's presentation with Carolyn Happer (co-author of Mr. Glass's memoir, *Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*, 2011), Raleigh Weekend C-Span, 16 May 2013, 28:56
  www.c-span.org/video/?313006-1/chosen-destruction
- Video: Morris Glass's presentation to the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, April 2013, video possibly taken by the U.S. Dept. of Defense, uploaded on YouTube by the *Jacksonville Daily News*, NC
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSkq-kYl__o
- The Łódź Ghetto, overview and resources (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)
  www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/lodz-ghetto
- Voices from the Łódź Ghetto, online exhibition (USHMM)
  www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/voices-from-lodz-ghetto
- Łódź Ghetto, archival footage (1:35, USHMM) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/lodz-ghetto

LESSON ■ THE CAMPS

- **Narrative: Esther & Elias Are Sent to Auschwitz**
- **Narrative: Susan Aims for Survival**
- **Narrative: Morris Endures Four Camps**
- **Narrative: Hank Questions a German Officer**
- **Narrative: Julius Survives Close Calls**
- **Narrative: Rena Makes a Promise**

The statistics of the Nazi camp system are staggering. The Nazis created more than 44,000 incarceration sites including concentration camps, forced labor and transit sites, detention sites, ghettos, and the most infamous, the five death camps—killing centers—at Auschwitz, Belzec, Chełmno, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, it is estimated that over 2.8 million died in the killing centers and other camps.* Very few who entered such a camp survived to see liberation, and thousands of the liberated were too ill and malnourished to survive.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum urges us to "translate statistics into people" in order to begin to grasp the vast reality of the Holocaust. Here we read the narratives of seven Jewish Europeans who came to the U.S. after the war and eventually settled in North Carolina. As young people in their teens or early twenties, they survived the brutalities of the Nazi camps.

- **Esther and Elias Mordechai** were young adults in Greece when the Nazis deported all the Jews of their town to Auschwitz. After the war, in 1951, they settled in Greensboro.
- **Susan Eckstein Cernyak-Spatz** was in her early 20s when she endured two grueling years in Auschwitz. She settled in Charlotte in 1972.
- **Morris Stein** endured hard labor as a young teenager in four concentration camps over four years. He moved to Concord in 2005.
- **Hank Brodt** was a teenager when he survived five concentration camps and a three-day death march. He moved to High Point in 2005.
- **Julius Blum** was 19 when he was deported to Auschwitz and then Mauthausen, enduring hard labor until liberation. He settled in Asheville in 1966.
- **Rena Kornreich Gelissen** and her sister were in their early 20s when deported to Auschwitz, where Rena promised her sister they would share the same fate. She moved to Hendersonville in 1988.

Have students offer their impressions of Nazi concentration camps from books and the media. Have they ever imagined if they would survive, and how? What qualities and circumstances do they think influenced one's chances of survival in the camps? It is important to note that survival often depended on chance. Many died of starvation, disease, and brutality, regardless of their strength or will to live. Many were killed in the gas chambers soon after arriving in the death camps. Survivors emphasize the importance of remembering this.

As students read the narratives, have them consider these questions.

1. Overall, what were the shared experiences and emotions of the camp survivors?
2. In what ways did they differ in their responses to the hardships and brutality? What factors might have made the difference?

* See "Documenting Numbers of Victims of the Holocaust & Nazi Persecution," U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documenting-numbers-of-victims-of-the-holocaust-and-nazi-persecution.

3. What do the individual survivors emphasize in their narratives? What do they want you to *learn* from their experiences?
4. How do the survivors explain survival?
5. In what ways did human resilience and character survive in the camps? In what ways were they reduced or lost?
6. How did these survivors experience despair and dehumanization in the camps? How did they respond?
7. How did Hank get the courage to question the Nazi officer? What does he ask? How does the officer respond? How does Hank interpret his response?
8. Susan, Morris, Hank, and Julius were imprisoned alone, without family members. How did they deal with this added hardship? (Julius was arrested and deported with friends, but not family.)
9. Why did the Nazis make the concentration camps as brutal as possible, despite their need for the forced labor of the prisoners?
10. Why were escape and armed resistance nearly impossible?
11. Choose one of these statements from the narratives and write a dialogue between you and the survivor, or between the speaker and another survivor in this publication. Include the statement in the dialogue. What aspects of humanity and the Holocaust experience will you stress in the dialogue? How will you conclude it?
    - Susan Cernyak-Spatz, on survival in Auschwitz: *"You always had to have a support group. The support group might change because any time you changed kommandos [work groups], or changed jobs, or changed blocks, you had to have a new support group. Anybody who tells you that he existed by himself, especially in the lower kommandos, is lying. You had to have a support group."*
    - Rena Kornreich Gelissen, in Auschwitz with her sister: *"My one great feat in life, my fate, is to survive this thing and return triumphant with my sister to our parents' home. . . . There is no debate in my mind about my duty to my sister; the oath is the driving force behind all of my actions."*
    - Morris Stein, on learning that his parents, sister, and brother had all been killed: *"After all that, my personal life became meaningless, and I didn't care if I were to die today or live to the next day. Some days I wished to get it over with, all that suffering, but I didn't know how. . . I had nobody to talk to. The people I came with were all strangers and so were the ones that were in the camp before us. And besides, everybody else's problems were similar to mine."*
    - Julius Blum, on waiting with fellow prisoners in a city train station while the Nazis transferred them to another train: *"We were gathered in a corner in the railroad station, watching the people walking by with Christmas packages. We stood there starved and looking miserable, but not one person out of the hundreds passing by took notice of us or gave us so much as a morsel of bread."*
12. Why do first-person narratives "translate statistics into people"? That may seem obvious at first, but give it some thought.

"*Translate statistics into people*."

In its guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust (see Supplemental Materials), the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum recommends using first-person accounts of survivors

"*precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims; [they] add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics*."

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Nazi Camps — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-camps
  - Concentration Camp System: In Depth — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/concentration-camp-system-in-depth
  - Killing Centers: An Overview (9 parts) — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/killing-centers-an-overview
  - Auschwitz — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/auschwitz
  - Auschwitz through the Lens of the SS (The Auschwitz Album)) — www.ushmm.org/research/research-in-collections/collections-highlights/auschwitz-ssalbum
  - Liberation of Nazi Camps — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/liberation-of-nazi-camps
  - Behind Every Name Is a Story: 25 essays by survivors, including camp survivors, or their families — www.ushmm.org/remember/the-holocaust-survivors-and-victims-resource-center/benjamin-and-vladka-meed-registry-of-holocaust-survivors/behind-every-name-a-story
- Resources from Yad Vashem
  - Labor & Concentration Camps — www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/camps/labor-concentration-camps.html
  - The Death Camps. — www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/final-solution/death-camps.html
  - Daily Life in the Camps — www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/camps/daily-life.html
- Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum — auschwitz.org/en/
- Identity in the Camps (Facing History and Ourselves) — www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-9/identity-camps
- 70 Stories from Auschwitz: brief video clips from testimonies (USC Shoah Foundation) — sfi.usc.edu/exhibits/70-stories-auschwitz
- "Why We Fight," the liberation of Dachau; Episode 9 of *Band of Brothers* (HBO/YouTube) — youtu.be/sHcJtU9dr6I

■ THE CAMPS ■
ESTHER & ELIAS ARE SENT TO AUSCHWITZ

Esther Politis and Elias Mordechai were born in Ioannina, Greece. Esther, age 22, had been married less than a year to her first husband. Elias, in his early thirties, was married with a four-year-old daughter. On March 25, 1944, the Germans came to arrest all the Jews of the city. Nearly 1900 people were deported to Auschwitz that day; only about 160 survived.

ESTHER: Early on a Saturday morning in March 1944, around seven o'clock, somebody knocked on the door so hard. We didn't know what was happening. The Germans were outside. They gave us exactly two hours to get ready. Two of my brothers were begging my mother to let them go hide in the attic. My mother was screaming like anything. She said she was not going to leave anybody behind. Everybody, the whole family, was going. We were very close. The whole family was going to go together. So my two brothers didn't have any choice.

Yad Vashem

A gathering in Ioannina, Greece, before the war, 1930s. The young woman at right was murdered in Auschwitz. A relative, fourth from right, emigrated to Palestine with his new bride in 1937 before the war.

We all got ready. We took a couple of loaves of bread and a quilt or blanket. My grandmother had passed away a month before, and my mother had made a cake for the Sabbath prayer for her. When the Germans came in, my mother had it in her hands, and when they pushed us out of the door, the cake fell in front on the stoop of the house.

They took us to a big place and gathered everybody together. The Germans had a schedule. Everybody's name was written down. They knew how many people were there. And that afternoon they sent trucks, like they carry horses in, and everybody got in. It was March 25 and it was snowing. They called our names out and checked a list before they put us in the truck. I was completely lost. You know, I was 22 years old. I said, "What are they going to do to us? Where are they going to take us?"

ELIAS: There was no food, nothing, in the trucks. They took us to a little town. There we were put in one big building that used to be a warehouse. Two thousand—two thousand people—in one building. No food, not a thing, no water, no food. After eight days, a transport [train] came. Seventy-five people were put in each train car. The train traveled through Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and stopped at Auschwitz, Poland. Eight days and nights. A lot of people died in the train cars by the time the train reached Auschwitz.

ESTHER: Everybody was screaming, "What are they going to do? What are they going to do?" So two German men came in and took us out of the train. You know, if you sit eight days in a train and you don't stretch your feet—a lot of people couldn't walk. So they finally separated us when we came out of the train. They put the young people on the right, the old people on the left. Of all my family, only one of my brothers and I came out of Auschwitz. Everybody else went

that same night to the gas chambers. I told the German officer, "I want to go with my mother," and he said, "You cannot go with your mother because she cannot walk. You're going to walk. And you're going to meet them tonight." And we walked. And we never saw them again.

After the war Esther and Elias returned to Ioannina hoping to find their families, but most of their relatives had died in Auschwitz. They became friends and married in 1946. In 1951 they emigrated to the United States with their two daughters and settled in Greensboro, North Carolina, where other Jews from their town had emigrated before the war.

USHMM/Yad Vashem

Jews arrive in Auschwitz before being lined up for selection, May 1944. One crematorium is visible in the upper right.

USHMM/Yad Vashem

An SS physician examines an elderly Jewish man during selection, May 1944. The woman has probably been selected for slave labor.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- The Holocaust in Ionannina (Yad Vashem) www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/valley/ioannina/german_occupation.asp
- The Holocaust in Ionannina (Kehila Kedosha Janina Synagogue and Museum, New York, NY) www.kkjsm.org/the-holocaust-in-ioannina
- A Greek Girl in Auschwitz: Rebecca Hauser's Story (North Carolina survivor), video, 28 min. (Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education in North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC) youtu.be/UbPudYTSWgs
- The Auschwitz Album: photographs taken by SS photographers as Hungarian Jews arrived and were selected for death or slave labor, May-June 1944 (Yad Vashem) www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/selection.asp
  - Arrival www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/arrival.asp
  - Selection www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/selection.asp

Selection from Cecile Holmes White, *Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust*, published in cooperation with the N.C. Council on the Holocaust, 1987, archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit. Reproduced by permission of the author. Images credited USHMM/Yad Vashem in the public domain; access courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

THE CAMPS ■ SUSAN AIMS FOR SURVIVAL

Susan Eckstein was born in 1922 in Vienna, Austria, and moved to Berlin, Germany, with her family in 1929. They witnessed Hitler's rise to power and so returned to Austria and then, after the Nazis occupied Austria in 1938, they fled to Prague, Czechoslovakia. Hoping to smuggle his family out of Nazi-occupied Europe, her father was able to enter Poland—on August 31, 1939, one day before the Nazis invaded Poland and World War II began. He eventually arrived in Belgium, but Susan and her mother were unable to follow him. They were arrested in 1942.

Susan's ID photo which she carried as a refugee in Brussels, Belgium, in late 1945 after the war ended

We were deported to Theresienstadt [concentration camp] from Prague. My mother, due to some personal decisions, chose to go on a further transport [train]. So mother chose at that time to be deported east from Theresienstadt, and nobody knew where to. Well, we found out later—I saw her name on the transport list when I worked in the political department in Auschwitz—that she arrived on the transport but never came into the camp. So probably, I would say, that at that age—mother was 45—she was one of the fortunate ones. Because, at her age, she would have come into the camp and she would have suffered terribly and then gone into the gas. This way, she went into the gas, not knowing what was happening, not knowing what was going on.

I came into the Auschwitz death factory from one of the many collection camps for Jews in German-occupied countries. My transport consisted of 500 men and 500 women. Sixty women between the ages of 14 and 34, myself included, were selected for labor in the women's camp; the same number of men went into the men's camp. The rest were gassed at once. Men and women, separated in camps enclosed with electrified barbed wire, were guarded day and night by soldiers with machine guns.

I was "processed" into the camp on January 28, 1943. According to Hitler's master plan I was to live for two and a half months doing hard labor before being murdered. I was shaved all over, given the summer uniform of a dead Russian prisoner, a kerchief to cover my bald head, and a tin bowl for food, drink, and other purposes. I had no spoon, coat, handkerchief or rag, nothing for care and maintenance of my appearance. This was a means to dehumanize prisoners so that guards would feel no pity when they treated us like vermin.

People ask how I survived such hell. I have only one explanation that makes sense to me. I learned to accept the nightmarish camp as the real world and coped from one minute to the next. Blind luck also played a part.

People ask how I survived such hell. I have only one explanation that makes sense to me. I learned to accept the nightmarish camp as the real world and coped from one minute to the next. Blind luck also played a part. Twice a day the SS guards made random selections from the prisoners' ranks. Those chosen went to the gas chambers. I have no explanation for why some lived and others died. Survival depended on getting through selection alive or finding a kommando that worked inside the camp and was not subject to selections.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

The barracks of Auschwitz-Birkenau, photo taken after liberation

Kommandos were work units that performed tasks inside and outside the camp. An inside unit might have five prisoners while an outside unit contained 200 to 300 laborers. Outside jobs included road building, demolishing bombed houses, digging stumps, cultivating fields, carrying ties and rails for railroad construction, all without the help of machinery. For eight months in 1943, between bouts of typhoid fever, jaundice, scabies, and other diseases, I served on an outside kommando and lived in a barracks built to house 200 people, but actually crammed with 400 to 500 women. There was one toilet and one water faucet for 25 overcrowded barracks.

On the first day of walking out with the kommando, not knowing the rules and regulations of the camp, I just acted on instinct. We were standing in line by the gate waiting to march out, and there was the work commander leader, an SS man, and I just blithely stepped up and said to him, “Reporting name so-and-so, number so-and-so, and I’m a secretary.” And that man’s mouth fell open because nobody had dared to do that, and somehow I suppose I must have made an impression. He wrote my number down and everybody in line said, “My God, he wrote your number down, you’re going to go to the gas.”

But three days later, I and some other people who had given their profession as secretary were called to work in the political department* to serve as temporaries. I guess they had a lot of investigations down there and they needed people to take transcripts of the investigations. And through that, after about two or three weeks, I got a job in the political department, which was the elite department, clean and relatively well fed. But after about a month or so, somebody in the secretarial kommando was caught smuggling information out of a file, probably out of a personal file. Like in all jobs, last hired, first fired. The example was made with me and two others who were on the bottom rung. And we were kicked out of Auschwitz and back to Birkenau to the extermination camp.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

Women in the barrack bunks soon after the liberation of Auschwitz, 1945

* Among other roles, the political department managed the crematoria and prisoner arrival/selection, maintained prisoner files, and conducted investigations and interrogations (which usually involved physical torture).

And then I made my way through typhoid fever, scurvy, hepatitis, and the whole bit. Well, I survived.

A lot of people, when they came into Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was a surrealistic nightmare situation, couldn't accept the fact that they were there. Why were they there? They couldn't live like that. No normal being could live like that. They totally refused to adapt or even attempt to cope within the frame of that nightmare. And I think, if I remember, from the first day on, whether it was walking around in Russian prisoners' uniforms and with a shaved head, and with one bowl for eating and elimination and everything, I accepted it. I accepted it and I manipulated to cope with anything, and I think that that was one of the most important things, that you accepted the frame of the situation and lived from one minute to the next, or from one day to the next, with no other aim but survival.

Survival was the utmost thing and survival needed to be within the frame of that given world. That was the world I lived in.

Because I have seen people who simply would lie down and die because life like that's not worth living. And, just like today where the physician will tell you your own mental condition was part of your cure, it was the same thing there. Your mental condition was part of your survival. Survival was the utmost thing and survival needed to be within the frame of that given world. That was the world I lived in.

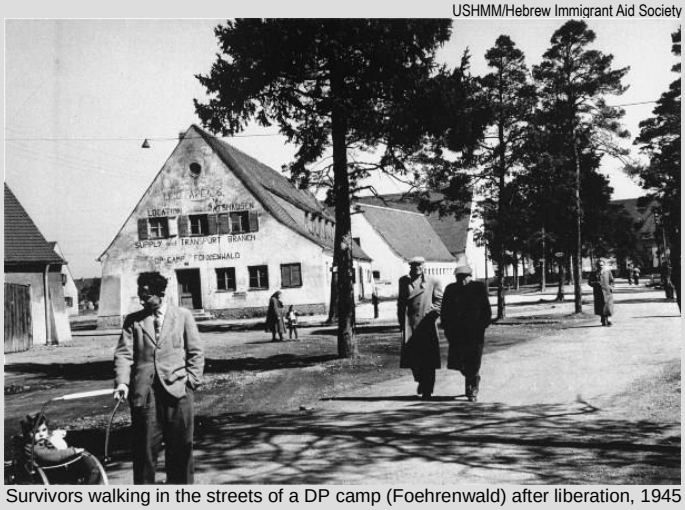
You always had to have a support group. The support group might change because any time you changed kommandos, or changed jobs, or changed blocks, you had to have a new support group. Anybody who tells you that he existed by himself, especially in the lower kommandos, is lying. You had to have a support group.

In January 1945, the Germans evacuated the camp because the Russians were too close. They did not release us. Instead we endured an infamous death march in the subfreezing Polish winter. Women who had survived for two or three years in Birkenau died on that march. Those who could not walk anymore got a bullet in the head. Survivors were stuffed into the overcrowded concentration camps in Germany proper. I spent three months after that death march in the Ravensbrück women's camp near Berlin.

When the Russians entered Berlin [late April 1945], the Germans marched us deeper into Germany. They hoped to exchange their prisoners for German prisoners held by the Allies. But when we arrived at the first American checkpoint near a small German village, German hopes were dashed. The SS guards went straight into prisoner-of-war camps. The Americans put me in a displaced persons camp.

It felt strange to walk down streets without guards or barbed wire. It took a long while to get used to freedom. I was alive but six million Jews had died as a result of governmental hatred and prejudice. These deaths, called the Holocaust, must be remembered to prevent mankind from being diminished again. The Holocaust must never be repeated.

USHMM/Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society



Survivors walking in the streets of a DP camp (Foehrenwald) after liberation, 1945

Susan was reunited with her father in Belgium soon after the war. She married Hardy Spatz, an American GI, and they came to the U.S. on July 4, 1946. They have three children and two grandchildren. After completing a Ph.D. in Germanic Literature & Language at the University of Kansas in 1972, she moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where she taught German and French at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for 33 years. In 2005 she published her Holocaust memoir, Protective Custody: *Prisoner 34042. For many years she spoke to students and other groups across the state.*

Susan Cernyak-Spatz, ca. 2013

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Susan Cernyak-Spatz, audio, 1979 (3¼ hrs., U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn47955
- Oral testimony of Susan Cernyak-Spatz, video, 1994 (6 hrs., USHMM) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn509009
- Susan Cernyak-Spatz, video introducing audiobook of *Protective Custody: Prisoner 34042* (2013) www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLS0y2Bh68Mvideo
- "Holocaust survivor discusses experiences, lessons, for the current generation," *The Appalachian*, Sept. 22, 2015 theappalachianonline.com/2015/09/22/holocaust-survivor-discusses-experiences-lessons-current-generation/
- The Auschwitz Album: photographs taken by SS photographers as Hungarian Jews arrived and were selected for death or slave labor, May-June 1944 (Yad Vashem) www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/album_auschwitz/selection.asp

Adapted from: (1) Susan Cernyak-Spatz, "Inside Auschwitz-Birkenau," *Tar Heel Junior Historian*, 25:3 (Spring 1986), published by the North Carolina Museum of History, archive.org/details/tarheeljuniorhis2527tarh; (2) Cecile Holmes White, "Inside a Concentration Camp," interview with Susan Cernyak-Spatz, ch. 2 of *Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust*, published in cooperation with the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, 1987, archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit. Reproduced by permission of the author. Images credited USHMM reproduced by permission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photos of Dr. Cernyak-Spatz reproduced by permission of Dr. Cernyak-Spatz and her daughter Jackie Fishman.

THE CAMPS ■ MORRIS ENDURES FOUR CAMPS

Morris Stein was born in 1928 in a small town in Poland. His father was a businessman who traded in cattle. When Morris was 11, the Nazis invaded and occupied Poland, leaving his town alone for a while. But after a year the Germans started coming to the town and demanding young Jewish men for labor—nobody ever knew where they were sent. In 1941, Morris's ordeal began: he endured hard labor in four concentration camps before liberation in 1945.

Morris (third from left) and his family in Poland around 1938

In the beginning of 1941, the Nazis ordered that every Jew must wear a white band with a yellow star on the left arm so that we would be recognizable. And they started to stop over more often, sometimes in the middle of the night. In the morning we found a few Jewish people shot to death in the streets for no reason at all, just because they were Jewish.

In the middle of 1941, the German military ordered all the Jewish community in our town to concentrate in another town about ten miles from ours, in a specific place and on a certain hour and date. Everybody was scared, because we had heard rumors of what happened in other places. But we still didn't want to believe that human beings, even Germans, were capable of such atrocities against other humans. Besides, children had no say and grownups followed the orders.

Nobody dreamed that this was the beginning of the end.

People started leaving on foot and followed the orders of the Germans. We had to leave everything behind. As soon as a house was vacant, the Polish people and neighbors waited outside like scavengers to take our possessions. My parents, two sisters, and one brother (I was the youngest; we were all two years apart from each other) decided not to follow the orders of the Germans.

My father and brother joined the underground organization. They were called "partisans" (today they would be called "guerrillas"). Their aim was to fight the Germans any way they could and disrupt the German military machine wherever possible, like undermining a military train or attacking a German military convoy and taking their weapons and ammunition. My father became a leader of a group, and their main aim was to kill as many German soldiers as possible and take their weapons, since there were a lot of people, including Poles, who wanted to join them but couldn't afford to buy a rifle on the black market. The more people they had, the stronger the group became, and they could attack bigger German outfits. My oldest sister had a boyfriend. She and her boyfriend joined a different group of partisans.

My mother, my other sister, and I were hiding in another village in the attic of a farmer's house. My parents paid them a monthly fee for taking that risk. The German authorities had warned the Polish people not to aid in any way, especially not to hide anybody who was Jewish. Aiding a

Nobody dreamed that this was the beginning of the end.

USHMM/Michael Temchin

Jewish partisan fighters in the Parczew Forest near Morris's town (Zakrzówek), 1944

Jewish person would be punishable by death, and everyone was required to report to the authorities if they knew that someone was helping or hiding Jews. Some Poles took the risk for the money, and others risked their lives because they were good hearted or for religious reasons. But there were more people helping the Germans than the Jews.

My father used to come at least once a week at night with my brother and a few of his soldiers to bring us food and money. He used to tell us of the operations they were involved in. After an hour or two, he would disappear in the darkness of the night, back into the woods to his headquarters. They had to change their hiding places very often so that the Germans couldn't trace them to a certain place. They were not a national organization. Each group operated independently like a unit. Sometimes they united with other units for a bigger undertaking. Of course, a lot of times there were armed clashes with German soldiers, and some got killed or injured, but there was no other way to survive.

The Germans passed a law that each farmer had to give to the German army a certain amount of what he grew, according to the size of his farm. Small farmers couldn't afford to give anything, so the Germans went from farm to farm and confiscated whatever they found. Through informers, my father found out the date they were coming to the village where we were hiding. In the middle of one night, we (my mother, sister, and I) left that village to go to another village where our father made arrangements for us to hide until it was safe to return.

After a few days I went back to the first farmer to find out if it was safe to return. I had to go through woods and fields and was approaching a railway crossing when I heard the order in Polish, "Stop! If not we will shoot." I was handcuffed by two Polish guards, who were guarding the railway against the underground, and brought to a prison in another village.

After a few days, the Polish police took me to another town and handed me over to the German Gestapo. They told the Gestapo that I threatened them, that if they didn't let me go free, my father in the underground would kill them for arresting me—which was a complete lie. Those Poles knew my family personally, and they knew about my father, because to survive in the underground my father had to raid some farms for food supply, some of which my father used to bring us on his visits.

I didn't tell them anything, because I knew that they were going to kill me anyway, so I made up my mind not to disclose anything about the rest of my family.

The Gestapo locked me up in a room by myself. A few hours later they took me to another room. After a while, two officers and a dog, a German shepherd, came to the room. They interrogated me with all kinds of questions about my parents and my family, where my father was hiding, and so on. To all their questions I answered that I didn't know and that I was all by myself. They got mad and started beating me with a leather strap and, while they were beating me, the dog was biting me all over. When they stopped, the dog stopped. I don't know how long it went on like this, but I didn't tell them anything, because I knew that they were going to kill me anyway, so I made up my mind not to disclose anything about the rest of my family. When the interrogation stopped they locked me in a dark room.

After a while they brought me to a prison. There were about 50 Jewish men, women, and children in one big room. I sat in a corner on the floor crying and bleeding from the dog bites. There was nothing anybody could do for me. There was no toilet or any water in the room. All we had was the dirty clothes on our bodies.

After a few days in prison I remember, on a Friday, they took us outside the prison. A German officer looked us over and he picked out seven men and seven women including me. They put us on a truck and we thought this was the end for us. After a while, we found ourselves in a camp with barbed wire and guards on the towers. A few days later we found out that they had shot all the others from that prison.

BUDZYN_____1½ years: 1941-1942.

The first camp I was in was Budzyn. It was about 15 kilometers [about 9.3 miles] from my home-town. There were about 5,000 people, all Jewish, some from my town including some of my relatives and neighbors. I was assigned to a barrack [living quarters]. The next day we were awakened at five o'clock in the morning. At six we were lined up in the barrack and received a portion of bread and tea and sometimes coffee. At seven they lined us up in groups. Each group had a different task of work. I was assigned to a group whose job was to dig out the stumps from big trees in a wooded area where they cut the trees down.

The conditions in that camp were terrible. After we got a piece of bread and tea in the morning, we went out to work all day without water or food, all day. We received a bowl of soup when we returned to camp. We were just as hungry after we ate as before. After a while a lot of people got swelling in their feet, especially their ankles, from malnutrition. In time, they just couldn't walk anymore. Either they died or were selected to be killed.

They marched us every morning and evening to work and back with guards on both sides of the road. I was warned by the people in camp not to go to the doctor and not to complain about my wounds from the dog bites, because whoever couldn't work was eliminated. My wounds got infected and it took quite a while until they healed.

Then I thought to escape. It was almost impossible to escape from the camp with the high barbed-wire fence and the guards, but where we worked was an open wooded field and some guards with rifles. Every once in a while, one or two people attempted to escape. Some were shot trying. Others succeeded, later to be caught by the Poles and handed over to the Germans. In that case, they brought the individual to the camp, lined up the whole camp and brought the prisoner to the middle of the camp with a few guards. They told us what his crime was (escaping), and we all had to watch him being hanged. They left the body hanging for two days. Whenever we had to go to the field bathroom we had to pass the body. It was like a warning to the others not to try to escape.

USHMM/Lee T. Stinchfield

After liberation, a camp survivor reenacts how the hangings took place at Ohrdruf concentration camp in Germany. The caption for the photo reads, "The scaffold for public execution. The prisoner was hung from a chain noose. The plank was then pushed from under his feet."

After a while they designed a new punishment. Whenever somebody escaped, they lined us up five deep and they took every tenth person starting from the front until they had ten people and ordered them to kneel and shot them in front

Every week, after we went to work, the Germans took the sick people outside the camp and killed them. Somehow, I don't know how, I survived all that.

of the whole camp. Since I was caught by the Poles already once, I hesitated to escape, but it was on my mind for quite a while.

Then an epidemic of typhus spread in the camp, and I got infected too. We tried to be productive and go to work as long as we could, until it was impossible to get up from bed. Every week, after we went to work, the Germans took the sick people outside the camp and killed them. Somehow, I don't know how, I survived all that.

In 1942, they moved the camp closer to where most of us worked, about four kilometers from the old camp. It was a smaller camp but it was cleaner. A short time afterward they randomly selected a few hundred of us. They put us on trucks to the train station. They locked us in box cars without windows. I don't know how many days we traveled. We ended up in another camp near Kraków, a place called Mielec.

MIELEC_____one year: 1943-1944.

There was already a camp there with Jewish men only. (In the first two camps there had been both men and women. In those camps, the women were kept in separate barracks with high barbed-wire fences around them.) In Mielec we worked in very big one-story buildings. We were building air-plane bodies without the engines. In other buildings, they made the engines. The conditions in that camp were a little better because we had Poles and German civilians supervising and coming every day from outside, and they brought us some food scraps.

Nazi Reich and occupied territory, 1941 (detail), incl. the General Governorate for the Occupied Polish Region

In the first two camps, there were some of my relatives and some of my hometown people. Some of them were brought to the camp after I was, and I found out that my brother had been caught in the woods with a rifle and the Germans had executed him. Then my father got injured in a partisan operation against the Germans, and he went to stay with my mother and sister on a farm. One day the Polish police, together with the Gestapo, attacked the place and killed them all. My other sister was also killed while in the underground organization. That is all I know and what I was told by people from our hometown and relatives that came to the camp after me.

After all that, my personal life became meaningless, and I didn't care if I were to die today or live to the next day. Some days I wished to get it over with, all that suffering, but I didn't know how. My mind and my thoughts were occupied with how to fill my stomach because I was hungry most of the time. I had nobody to talk to. The people I came with were all strangers and so were the ones that were in the camp before us. And besides, everybody else's problems were similar to mine.

WIELICZKA_____several weeks in 1944.

I was in Mielec about a year when they liquidated the whole camp to another place called Wieliczka. The camp wasn't far from the train station. Before we started marching they took a group of us and gave each of us five loaves of bread to carry to the camp. We were separated from the others. On the way, some of us ate some of the bread. When we arrived in camp, they checked everybody and whoever was missing even a piece of bread they locked up. The next

day they lined up the whole camp, brought us out, and each one of us got spanked 25 times on the bare butt, including me, with a special leather strap. The pain and suffering for a few days were indescribable.

In Wieliczka, we met some of the people from the first two camps. We found out that the reason they kept us moving was because the Russian army was closing in on us. We were in that camp about two or three weeks when they put us on trains again.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

A French survivor shows the Flossenbürg crematorium to a photographer after the camp was liberated, May 1945.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

The airplane factory near Flossenbürg where Morris and other inmates worked, May 1945

FLOSSENBÜRG_____late 1944 until liberation in April 1945.

After a few days, in the winter of 1944, we arrived in Germany to a concentration camp called Flossenbürg. In this camp there were tens of thousands of people from all nationalities, including Germans, Russians, Poles, Gypsies—mostly non-Jewish. There also was a crematorium where they burned the bodies of people who either died on the way from Poland to Germany or in the camp itself. Some of our people died so we had to carry them to the crematorium.

On arrival, they put us in a big hall underground and ordered us to undress, completely naked. They gave us soap and we took a cold shower. They took all our clothing away and gave us uniforms like pajamas, with blue and white stripes, and shoes with wooden soles. Instead of a haircut, they cut a strip from the forehead to the neck in the back. They registered us and each one got a number with a colored triangle on it. We had to sew it on the jacket, on the left side of the chest. My number was 16335.

We got assigned to different jobs. I worked on body parts for Messerschmitt airplanes. Others worked on engines or in stone mines. My job wasn't too hard. I worked with an electric drill all day and every day, but the marching to work and back with the wooden shoes took its toll. In the winter the snow got stuck to the soles and in the summer we got blisters.

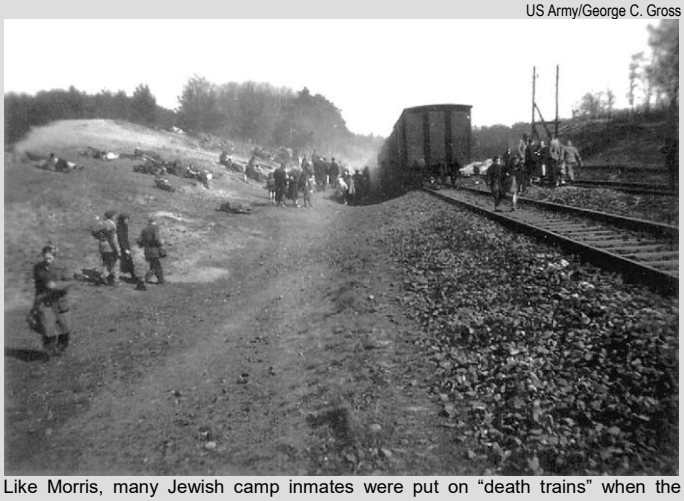
The food was terrible. In the morning they gave us a loaf of bread, two pounds for ten people. In the evening, we got soup, which was like hot water. Sometimes we found a piece of potato in it. After a while, we looked like skeletons: skin and bones. Each morning there were dead people in the bunks who died from starvation. We had to report it to the authorities and bring the bodies to the crematorium to be burned.

After a while, we looked like skeletons: skin and bones. Each morning there were dead people in the bunks who died from starvation. We had to report it to the authorities and bring the bodies to the crematorium to be burned.

This last camp was the worst of all. The food was the worst, no doctors, no medicine. If somebody got sick they continued working until they dropped dead.

LIBERATION_____April 1945.

In the beginning of 1945, we started seeing American and English planes overhead. Then they flew over us almost daily. Then, in March, they ordered only Jewish people to line up in the middle of camp. They marched us to the train station where the box cars were waiting for us.


US Army/George C. Gross

Like Morris, many Jewish camp inmates were put on "death trains" when the Nazis evacuated camps that were near the advancing Allied armies. They were freed when guards abandoned the trains as the liberating forces arrived. (This train had left the Bergen-Belsen camp in Germany.)

Their purpose was to transfer us to Dachau where there was a large concentration camp with a gas chamber and crematorium. They loaded us on the train with two engines, one in the front and one in the back. As soon as the train started moving we were attacked from the airplanes. The planes made a few circles from the front train engine to the back engine, shooting at us and bombarding the railway.

The German guards, who had been watching us standing on the train, started to run for cover in between the train cars. We broke loose to try to escape. But after the air raid was over, the guards started collecting us back to the train. People all over were dead or injured from the raid. We were ordered to bring all the injured to one spot, and they all were killed. They marched the rest of us to the woods and kept us there for the rest of the day. In the evening, they marched us all night.

That was how a new ordeal started for us. To avoid all the air raids we marched at night and rested in wooded areas at day. Anybody who fell behind from exhaustion was killed. We passed some villages on our way. The German people just stood on the side roads looking at us. Some days they brought us some food scraps or some water and some days nothing. We ate grass, roots, even leaves: anything that was chewable.

This suffering went on for about two weeks. All that time we saw planes and heard bombardments, especially at night when it was quiet. Then, one day after we marched all night and we lay down to rest on the ground, they lined us up again and left us standing in a wooded area. All the guards left. We waited for a while and they didn't come back. So we started to disperse in all directions.

We heard intense shooting and bombardment very close to us. Some of us started going in the direction where the shooting was going on. Others went the opposite way. On the way, we saw German soldiers running away in the fields everywhere. When we came to the first houses in the village, women and children greeted us with food and water and told us the Americans were here.

After a few minutes we reached the main streets of the town where we found hundreds of tanks and other vehicles full of U.S. soldiers still fighting some German resistance in the streets. When they saw us with the camp uniforms, they bombarded us with food, cigarettes, chocolate, everything, they threw at us! Food we never saw in our lives! People

When they [U.S. soldiers] saw us with the camp uniforms, they bombarded us with food, cigarettes, chocolate, everything, they threw at us! Food we never saw in our lives!

There was such confusion! Unbelievable! We didn't know what to do and where to go.

started eating and getting sick from all that food that our bodies weren't used to. In the first few days, some died from overeating. And we found out, after we were liberated, that some German soldiers were searching in the woods and shot whomever they found. That march before the liberation lasted from the middle of March until April 23, the day of liberation.

There was such confusion! Unbelievable! We didn't know what to do and where to go. We formed groups of three or four and slept in barns, thinking all the time this can't be true, that it must be a dream—and afraid that soon Germans would come and get us back to camp or kill us. In the meantime, the U.S. Army moved forward and we were left to ourselves. There was no law or order anywhere. Some individual German soldiers who were hiding in some homes or in the woods came out at night and shot some of our people whom they found.

After a few days, the U.S. Army and an organization called UNRRA* started to get us organized and help us with daily needs and problems. They gave us identification cards stating that we were D.P. (Displaced Persons) and ordered us to leave that town and go to the next bigger town—Schwandorf, in the region of Bavaria. When we got there, they concentrated us in a camp that had been a military base. UNRRA didn't force us to obey their orders, but they explained that having us in one place would make it easier for them to take care of us.

On the way to Schwandorf, we saw some empty houses that some German families deserted. We went inside to look for clothes to get rid of our camp uniforms so the Germans wouldn't stare at us. We occupied one of the houses. It is hard to believe that some of the houses we went in looked like palaces with the most valuable things imaginable. Our group of boys, 14 to 16 years old, weren't interested in material things. We looked like skeletons—skin and bones—and it took a while to realize that all this was real and the German army would not come back after us.

USHMM/Robert Marx, Museum of Jewish Heritage, NY

Morris holds a placard with his name (Moszek Sztajnkeler) issued by UNRRA after liberation. Many such photographs were taken to help reunite survivors with their families.

All those years in camp I never thought about freedom or ever getting out. It seemed that my destiny and that of the others would end in one of the camps, either getting killed or dying from starvation.

UNRRA, in addition to giving us identification cards, took pictures with our names on the picture, to be sent all over Europe to look for relatives. They formed a kitchen in the camp and whoever wanted could come three times a day to get food. But we had no transportation, so most of the time we skipped the free meal. The four of us (we lived in one house) realized we had to find a way to survive. Sometimes one of us went to the camp and brought a meal for all four of us.

Except for a place to live in and the clothes on our bodies, we had almost nothing. What we did have was a couple of pistols and a gun that we found in the unoccupied houses. We went to the end of town and we would hide on both sides of the main road waiting for German ex-soldiers walking or riding bicycles on their way somewhere. We would stop them, search them, take their

* UNRRA: The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (1943-1947) was founded by 44 nations, and primarily funded by the U.S., to aid the millions of war refugees in Europe. It established nearly 800 resettlement camps, providing shelter to about seven million people.

bicycles away and if we found watches we also took them. We occasionally saw some of them walking on dirt roads in the fields. Those were mostly ex-SS men. We tried to stop them too, but a couple of times they shot at us and we shot at them. They were more experienced with weapons than we were, so we abandoned the whole adventure.

Morris (in back) and other children survivors at the Kloster Indersdorf orphanage in Germany, where Morris spent several months before being sent to England by UNRRA in October 1945

By then, we had bicycles and watches. The bicycles we used for our transportation, and we sold the watches to other Displaced Persons in the camp. This way we had some money to buy food. In times when we had no money, we rode out of town to farmers and we told them that we were in concentration camps and we asked them for food. Most of the time they gave us some. If one refused or didn't have any, we went to another farmer. Usually we brought back food for a few days. We also rode to the camp to get a hot meal in the kitchen almost daily. That is how we survived from day to day. Another way to survive was to live in the DP camp which we and lots of others didn't like. It gave us the feeling of the concentration camp again. The only thing missing in the camps was the guards.

After a while, in 1945, UNRRA registered young boys to emigrate to England. In the meantime, one of my friends and I decided to go to Poland and smuggle some watches and sell them for a big profit. We crossed the border from Germany to Czechoslovakia, then to Poland, illegally. We sold the watches within two days for Polish money, but when we tried to exchange the money on the black market to German money we got caught by the Polish police and put in prison. After a few days we were brought to court to be sentenced by a military court marshal. We were ready to get a harsh sentence because it was right after the war and mainly because it was now a Communist country. Luckily, when the judge started questioning us and I told him which camp I was in, he asked me if I remembered a certain name and I said yes. It turned out he was in the same camp I was in. Not only did he let us free, but he went around in the court house and tried to change some of our money into German marks!

After other close calls, Morris and his friend arrived back in Germany. In October 1945, UNRRA sent him, his friend, and other displaced young men to England. Morris was 17 when he arrived.

I described in brief the suffering in the camps. It would be too gross and too graphic to describe in details the killings, the beatings, people starving, others eating human flesh, and so on.

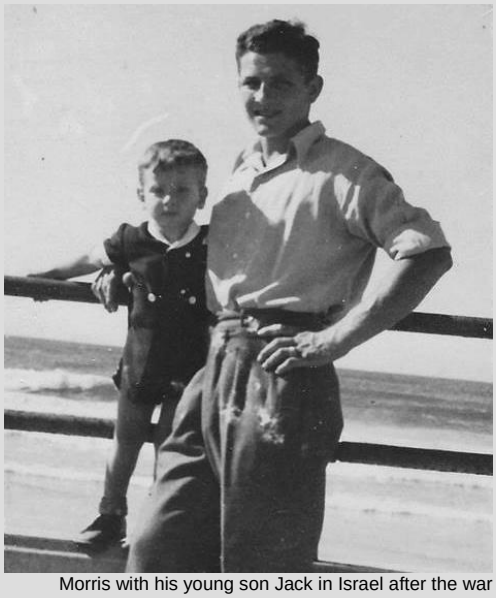
Every one of us survivors has suffered in those few years in camp more than anyone can imagine. Lots of times, even now, I sometimes wonder how different my whole life would have been if I had my parents and brother and sisters, and I had grown up in a family. But I guess I will never know.

Every one of us survivors has suffered in those few years in camp more than anyone can imagine. Lots of times, even now, I sometimes wonder how different my whole life would have been if I had my parents and brothers and sisters, and I had grown up in a family. But I guess I will never know.

Morris worked in England before moving to Israel, where he married Rivka Pichota in 1949. They moved to the U.S. in 1961 with their three children. When Morris became an American citizen, he changed his name from Moszek Sztajnkeler to Morris Stein (and Rivka changed her name to Michelle). With an uncle's help, Morris learned the butcher business. They lived in New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Florida before moving to North Carolina around 2005. They have eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Morris Stein, "Reflections on Hell," Holocaust autobiography, 1995 bit.ly/2mHx03r
- "Moszek Sztajnkeler [Morris Stein] Identified," U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2016 rememberme.ushmm.org/updates/moszek-sztajnkeler-identified
- Forced Labor (USHMM) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/forced-labor-in-depth
- Displaced Persons (USHMM) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/displaced-persons
- United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration: UNRRA (USHMM) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/united-nations-relief-and-rehabilitation-administration



Morris with his young son Jack in Israel after the war

Morris and his family in Israel about 1960

Morris (right) with his wife Michelle and son Jack, ca. 2010

Excerpted and adapted from "Reflections on Hell," by Morris Stein, 1995, bit.ly/2mHx03r. Reproduced by permission of Jack Stein, Mr. Stein's son. Images credited USHMM reproduced by permission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Family photographs reproduced by permission of Jack Stein.

THE CAMPS ■ HANK QUESTIONS A GERMAN OFFICER

Born in a Polish village in 1925, Hank Brodt was 16 when the Nazis occupied his region in 1941. He endured forced labor and the brutality of several concentration camps before liberation in May 1945. He recounts this interchange with a Nazi officer while in the Melk labor camp.

One day, a German officer stopped me to ask a question. I immediately took off my hat, my eyes cast down.

"Who are you?" he asked me.

"I am a Polish Jew," I replied.

"Where were you born?"

"I was born in Poland."

"So, you are Polish?" he said.

"No, sir, I am a Polish Jew."

We went back and forth like this for a while, and I could feel my ire building, though I was, of course, careful to maintain my composure. Finally, I asked him if I could ask him a question of my own.

USHMM/Arnold E. Samuelson

Survivors of the Ebensee concentration camp, including Hank Brodt, gather the bodies of camp inmates after the camp was liberated, May 7, 1945. Hank is in the center, sixth from left, partially obscured, wearing a black cap and an arm band.

To this he responded angrily, "How dare you ask a question of a German officer of the Third Reich!" Nevertheless, he granted me a question.

I tried to choose my words carefully, but there was something I had been longing to understand from the beginning of this ordeal, and I saw this as a chance to articulate the essential question. "I am Polish," I said. "I have committed no crime other than being Jewish. Why am I here?"

There it was, at last. Out of my heart, out of my mouth, and into the open. Why was I here? Why were any of us here? Why was this happening to us?

There was an awkward silence, and then a moment passed between us. The officer turned and walked away without uttering a single word.

I considered this a triumph, and I knew that this brief conversation was enough to get me killed. Maybe it was my imagination, but I like to think that he had some internal struggle with what Germany was doing, and his part in that cause.

I came to realize that not all Germans were Nazis. People were afraid. A German soldier never knew who was around him. Who was a true follower? Who swore allegiance to Hitler? Perhaps that German officer believed the propaganda, perhaps not. However, for the length of a conversation, this German officer was perhaps trying to make sense of the insanity in his own way.

—— ■ ■ ——

In 1953, Hank testified in the war crimes trial of Fritz Hildebrand, the SS commander of one forced labor camp that Hank had endured. Hildebrand was sentenced to eight years and released after two years. With new evidence, Hildebrand was tried again in 1967 and, with the testimony of Hank and others, was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment.

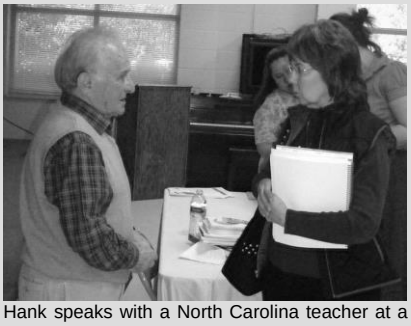
Hank's mother and sister were murdered by the Nazis (his father had died when Hank was an infant). His brother had been drafted into the Soviet army, survived the war, and lived in the Soviet Union and Israel until his death in 1986. Hank was unable to locate him until 2007, when his daughter made contact with his brother's family in Israel through JewishGen Family Finder. Hank immediately visited his brother's family and honored his brother at his grave.

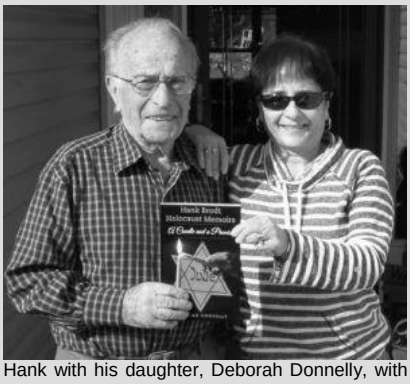
Hank emigrated to the United States in 1949 with the help of an American soldier he met after being liberated. Drafted into the army during the Korean War, he served in Germany for two years (1950-1952), where he married his wife Kathe (whom he had met soon after liberation). They settled in New Jersey and raised their two daughters. In 2005 Hank moved with his second wife Aida (Kathe had died in 1978) to High Point, North Carolina. He has two grandchildren. With his daughter, Hank wrote his memoir, A Candle and a Promise*, in 2016. He continues to speak to audiences about his Holocaust experience.*

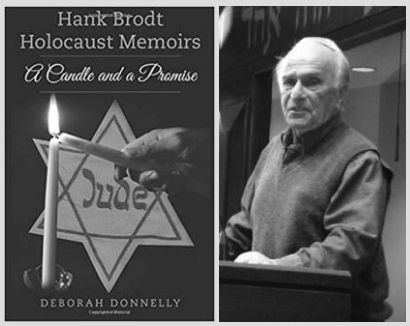
ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Hank Brodt, 2006 (1⅓ hrs., U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn126323
- Presentation of Hank Brodt, High Point University, NC, 2015 (1 hr. 13 min., HPU: YouTube) youtu.be/k73HYDPWtbY

Hank and Kathe Brodt on their marriage in Germany, August 1952


Hank speaks with a North Carolina teacher at a Holocaust workshop, 2010.


Hank with his daughter, Deborah Donnelly, with whom he wrote his memoir



The yellow star with "Jude" (Jew) on the cover of Hank's memoir is the one worn by his wife's mother in then Czechoslovakia.

"Conversation with a German Officer," ch. 23 in Deborah Donnelly, *Hank Brodt Holocaust Memoirs: A Candle and a Promise*, The Netherlands: Amsterdam Publishers, 2016, amsterdampublishers.com/books/candle-and-a-promise/. Reproduced by permission of Amsterdam Publishers. 1945 photograph from the U.S. Natl. Archives in the public domain; access courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Family photographs reproduced by permission of Deborah Donnelly.

THE CAMPS ■ JULIUS SURVIVES CLOSE CALLS

Julius Blum was born in 1925 in Munkács, Czechoslovakia, a mountain town with a strong Jewish community. In 1938 the area was annexed by Hungary as part of the Munich agreement that gave most of Czechoslovakia to Hitler. The Jews of Hungary were relatively safe until Nazi Germany invaded the country in March 1944. By late May, all the Jews of Munkács had been sent to Auschwitz to be killed.

In March 1944 the German army occupied Hungary. Shortly afterwards, laws were put in place requiring Jews to wear yellow stars and observe a curfew after sunset. All other rights Jews had previously had as citizens—owning their own businesses, attending universities, practicing a profession, and even owning a radio, the only source of news that they had—were taken away from them.

Ramsey Library/UNC-Asheville

Julius (second from left) with his parents and brother before the war. Julius discovered this photo in a trash pile behind his family home when he returned after liberation.

I was 19 years old. I lived with my family in a small town about 100 miles south of the Polish border. A small group of young friends and I, 20 of us total, decided never to wear a yellow star. Using false papers identifying us as non-Jews, we at first avoided capture. At night we secretly listened to the BBC [radio] broadcasts from London. We never learned about what was happening to Jews in other parts of Europe. Had we known it, we would have organized and fought behind the lines, gladly giving our lives or perhaps helping to end the war sooner.

Not long after the Germans ordered Jews to wear the yellow star, we were forced to leave our homes and move into the ghetto. My grandmother, grandfather, aunt, her husband, their two children, and his parents, and my uncle and his family all shared two small rooms. Instead of moving into the ghetto, we 20 fellows decided to go into the woods where we hoped to survive until the war was over. We pretended to be migrant workers accepting odd jobs from the farmers. We worked on one farm taking care of pigs and carting wheat to the flour mill. Close to the end of April, the farmer we worked for informed on us to the Germans. We were captured by German soldiers and taken to the brick factory, which was the transport area for Jews being deported to Auschwitz. At the brick factory, we were severely beaten and then interrogated to find out if we knew anyone else hiding in the woods. Unfortunately, I had a note written in Hebrew in my pocket which a German officer found. Thinking it was a secret code, he took me to the group leader. I was questioned and beaten until I passed out. Luckily, I was taken to a first-aid station and the doctor looking after me happened to be a close family friend. He made sure I was put in a cattle car with the rest of my friends.

No one in the train knew where we were heading. A day later the train stopped. The Germans opened the cattle car doors and allowed Hungarian Jews from the nearby labor camp to bring water into our car. The big bucket that served as a bathroom for the whole train car was emptied. Immediately they locked the doors again and the train headed east.

USHMM/Yad Vashem

Selection on arrival at Auschwitz, spring 1944

USHMM/Yad Vashem

Selection for slave labor at Auschwitz, spring 1944

About three or four days later, the train stopped, and the doors opened to a bedlam of noise. Voices in German, Yiddish, French, and Polish shouted for us to get out of the car, leave everything behind. Men and women were told to line up separately. Immediately they marched us forward and we passed the first selection in front of [Dr. Josef] Mengele. I shall never forget Mengele. He was dressed immaculately from his uniform to his very highly polished boots. I could see my reflection in them. He looked at me. I was still showing bruises on my face, and despite the fact that I was young and otherwise in excellent condition, he wasn't sure if I should go right or left. Finally he asked me, "Can you run?" I loudly answered "Yes." Then he pointed to his left and I started running. This was the difference between life and death.

We were taken to an empty barrack where we sat wondering where we were and what was going to happen to us. Late that evening a fellow in a prison uniform came to our barrack, hoping to find somebody he knew. He had heard that a transport from Hungary had arrived. He told us that we were in a camp called Birkenau, an adjoining camp to Auschwitz, and that we had been selected to work, but he doubted that many of us would survive the harsh conditions and the lack of food. We asked him about the others who were directed to Mengele's right, mostly the elderly, frail, or women with children. He told us we would never see them again. He pointed to the chimneys spewing smoke and sparks, letting us know that was where they were. We realized the odor we were smelling was burning flesh. The rest of the night not one of us slept a wink. We just stood by the windows and looked at the chimneys.

Early in the morning several prisoners took us to the showers, ordering us to strip naked and leave everything behind except for our shoes. First the barber shaved our bodies. After the shower, we were disinfected and given a towel, a piece of soap, and a bowl with a rusty spoon. They also gave us a uniform of lightweight striped fabric and marched us to Auschwitz, about a mile and a half away. There we were assigned to a place in a barrack and a number was tattooed on our left arm. Then the guards asked everybody about their profession. Other prisoners had advised me to claim a profession; I told them I was a plumber.

One day they came and called out certain numbers. The men with these numbers were assigned to be taken to a labor camp. I was one of the 200 men taken in a transport to a new camp built to

He told us that we were in a camp called Birkenau and we had been selected to work, but he doubted that many of us would survive the harsh conditions and the lack of food. We asked him about the others who were directed to Mengele's right . . . He told us we would never see them again.

house workers for a nearby factory. I was assigned to a drill machine used in producing cannons for the German army. We worked seven days a week, 12 hours a day on the day shift, and another group worked 12 hours on the night shift. We were considered luckier than most other people who worked outdoors and in the mines which was much more difficult.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

Auschwitz prisoners unloading rail cars containing cement at the I.G. Farben oil and rubber production factory built near Auschwitz in order to use Jewish forced labor. (Julius probably worked in the steel mill in the Sosnowitz labor camp near Auschwitz.)

Our life followed a certain routine. We got up at six o'clock in the morning and lined up for appel, which was the roll call or counting. We got a dark hot liquid that they called coffee and marched to work. Seven o'clock at night the night shift arrived, and the day shift marched back to camp. We were given a soup which sometimes contained one or two pieces of potatoes or turnips. It was a daily struggle figuring out where to stand in line to reach the kettle just before it was empty. People at that point in the line were the lucky ones. They were in the right place to receive the piece of potato and turnip in the bottom of the soup kettle. We were also given a slice of bread, one sixth of a loaf.

Little communication took place among prisoners. We were not allowed to talk while working or marching, or during roll call. The only time we talked to each other was during mealtime when the subject was invariably food—what our mothers used to cook and our favorite dishes, and what we were going to do when we were liberated. I was going to spend all my money eating in a pastry shop until I was sick to my stomach. My dream was to have enough bread to satisfy my hunger along with one slice of bread for tomorrow.

Luckily, for me, the patient underneath had died during the night and the doctor, risking his life, changed the tag from my bed to the dead man's bed, and I survived a close call.

Late in the fall I dropped a piece of metal on my foot, and my toes got so swollen I had to take my shoe off. The next morning I was told to report to the infirmary. The doctor of this infirmary was the brother of an inmate that I had befriended on a previous occasion. We discovered we had both belonged to the same Zionist organization [that supported the creation of Israel]. The doctor was very attentive to me especially after I developed a high fever. My fever started just as the inspector from Auschwitz came to take away the dead and half-dead. At night he passed through the hospital and if he saw somebody too weak to return to work, he tagged the bed, assigning the person to be taken back to Auschwitz. In the morning I woke up and saw the tag on my bed. My fever had broken and I felt much better. I asked the doctor to help me since I felt good enough to go back to work. Luckily for me, the patient underneath had died during the night and the doctor, risking his life, changed the tag from my bed to the dead man's bed, and I survived a close call. Two days later I was back at work.

In December [1945], just before Christmas, we heard heavy machine gun fire and knew Russian soldiers were coming closer. The Nazis gathered us together, gave each of us half a loaf of bread, and marched us to the railway station. The factory where we worked produced one gun a day, the

best gun of World War II, but for the previous few weeks not a single gun was taken to the battlefield because the Germans lacked the fuel or trains to carry them. Yet they had no problem getting a train to take us to Austria. We ate the bread on the first day of the trip. For the rest of the trip, we had no bread or water. We picked up some snow from the top of the car through a small window. In Munich, Germany, the train was taken away from us and we waited for a day outdoors for another. We were gathered in a corner in the railroad station, watching the people walking by with Christmas packages. We stood there starved and looking miserable, but not one person out of the hundreds passing by took notice of us or gave us so much as a morsel of bread. A day later we arrived at Mauthausen, a concentration camp in Austria. We had to get off the train and walk about a mile to the station in knee-deep snow. Weakened by starvation and brutal treatment, many could not make it. Those who fell in the snow were killed. At least one third of the group died.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

Survivors of (probably) Gusen concentration camp, Austria, May 1945

Mauthausen was at the foot of the Alps mountains. It was mid-January and extremely cold. We kept ourselves from freezing by huddling together to get the warmth of our body temperatures. After three weeks, we were taken to Gusen, a labor camp working for the military. I was assigned to assemble machine guns. The camp was in a valley, and the factory was on top of a hill. From the camp to the factory we had to climb 21 rough uneven steps, and these steps became the test to determine if we were still fit to work. If anyone fell while walking those steps, his number was reported and the next day he was told to stay in his barracks. Staying in the barracks usually meant you would be taken to the crematorium to die.

Again I was in luck. My barrack was the very last one on the road before the cart headed for the crematorium. . . . The cart came, but it was so overloaded with corpses that the fellows pulling the cart said to me, "We will come for you tomorrow." The next day . . . the same thing happened again. The cart was too full.

On the second day of May, as I was going to work, I fell on the steps. My number was recorded and I was told not to go to work. After everyone left for work, I sat on the steps waiting for the cart to come for me to take me to the crematorium. Again I was in luck. My barrack was the very last one on the road before the cart headed for the crematorium. In mid-afternoon, the cart came, but it was so overloaded with corpses that the fellows pulling the cart said to me, "We will come for you tomorrow." The next day, two of us sat on the steps, waiting for the cart. Our minds were so numb that it really didn't matter that this would be our last day on earth. The same thing happened again. The cart was too full. Again they told us that they would be back for us tomorrow. I didn't know whether I was happy or sad to be given another day to live.

That afternoon, at five o'clock, we again lined up for an appel [roll call]. Always exactly at five o'clock the gates opened and the German soldiers appeared. But on this day it was five minutes after five and the gates were closed. Suddenly I saw two soldiers in green uniforms peeking through the gates. Then the gates opened and suddenly some prisoners shouted, "We are free."

Everyone ran towards the gates to surround the [American] soldiers. They looked at us as if we were creatures from outer space, while we looked at them as if they were angels from heaven.

The German soldiers had fled as American GIs approached the camp. We started singing our national anthems. Every European country was represented. Then everyone ran towards the gates to surround the soldiers. They looked at us as if we were creatures from outer space, while we looked at them as if they were angels from heaven. We stared at each other without saying a word. Then I remembered my English lesson from school and I shouted "God Save the King." A soldier looked at me and said, "We are Americans, not British." The silence was broken and we started communicating. Thus my captivity ended and my second life began.

Julius was reunited with his mother and father in the United States. His brother and the rest of his family died in the Holocaust. Julius came to the United States in 1947 on a scholarship to study in Georgia; he earned his degree in textile engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta. After working in textile mills in South Carolina, he opened his own textile plant, Blue Jay Knitting, in 1966 in Asheville, North Carolina. Julius retired in 1988 after establishing several other textile plants in the region. He and his wife Phyllis have three sons and five grandchildren.

USC Shoah Foundation

Julius and Phyllis Blum, 1995

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Julius Blum, video, 1 hr. 50 min., no date: first seconds of video, likely including the interview date, omitted (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)
  collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn520398
- Julius Blum, profile in *Choosing to Remember: From the Shoah to the Mountains*, 2000, p. 15 (Center for Diversity Education, UNC-Asheville)
  diversityed.unca.edu/sites/default/files/choosing%20to%20remember%20small.pdf
  - Study Guide for *Choosing to Remember*
    diversityed.unca.edu/sites/default/files/Choosing_Student_Guide.pdf.pdf
- Julius Blum, profile in *Coming to the Mountains: Immigration and Western North Carolina*, p. 9 (Center for Diversity Education, UNC-Asheville)
  diversityed.unca.edu/sites/default/files/ComingtotheMoutnains.pdf [sic]
  - Study Guide for *Coming to the Mountains*
    diversityed.unca.edu/sites/default/files/ComingtoMountains_Studyguide.pdf
- Julius Blum, brief biography in research for the project SHOAH: Survivors and Witnesses in Western North Carolina (Center for Diversity Education, UNC-Asheville)
  toto.lib.unca.edu/findingaids/oralhistory/SHOAH/blum_julius.pdf

THE CAMPS ■ RENA MAKES A PROMISE

Rena Kornreich was born in 1920 in Tylicz, Poland, and her younger sister Danka was born two years later. Rena looked after her sister throughout their childhood, never expecting that her devotion would be crucial through the horrors of Nazi concentration camps. In March 1942, when the sisters were 20 and 22, they were on the first transports of Jews to Auschwitz. Five months later they were moved to the newly created women's camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau.

How will we survive this place? What do we have to do in order to live? What does this life mean? What is there to know? We did not receive a ticket when we entered Auschwitz-Birkenau saying, You will leave on such and such a day; you will leave alive. There are no guarantees. Birkenau is a cruel awakening. In Auschwitz there was a lot of death, but it was not such a daily fact of life.* Now we see death every day. It is a constant, like our meals. And there are not just one or two girls dying, like before, but tens and twenties and losing count.

Rena (far right) with her parents, her older sister Zosia, and her younger sister Danka, mid-1920s

Sisters Rena (left), Danka, and Zosia with their mother and Zosia's children, ca, 1940

I know that I must be with my sister. I know that I must make sure she lives; without her I cannot survive. I do not admit that to myself, but I know she is a part of my truth, my being. We cannot be separated; there is danger in separation.

There is only one thing that exists beyond the gates of Auschwitz-Birkenau. It lies in wait for me like a beacon of light shining through the fog. I hold it before me constantly, every second of every day. It is the only thing that keeps me going—Mama and Papa. They beckon to Danka and me from the fringes of my mind. Their hands wave against a backdrop of snow and winter sky. *We're here!* they cry. *We're waiting for you to come home.*

We're coming, Mama, I remind them. *Don't leave us here alone*. And they don't. I hear Mama's voice comforting my troubled mind, soothing the worries of our existence. The only thing she cannot help is the hunger, but even that dulls in comparison to the knowledge that Mama and Papa are waiting for Danka and me to return to Tylicz. I frame this picture in my mind and hang it on a mental wall where I can gaze at it constantly. I know they are there. I work because they need me. I live because they are alive.

Mama, I brought you the baby back, I repeat over and over in my head. It is the refrain in the song that keeps me strong and healthy and spirited. *Mama, I brought you the baby back*. My one great feat in life, my fate, is to survive this thing and return triumphant with my sister to our parents' home.

———— ■ ————

* These were the earliest months of Auschwitz before the camp fully transitioned from a concentration camp to a death camp.

You have to have a brain to figure out all that is going on, the tricks to being camp smart. . . . The new arrivals barely have time to figure out how to survive before they die.

These first few weeks we are barely surviving. The food is less than it was, which means it has gone from a crust to half a crust. The soup is so thin there is no use to wait at the end of the line for a piece of turnip or meat, and the tea is practically clear. Every morning that we wake up, at least one of the girls has died on our block. There are no exceptions. We are dropping like flies.

You have to have a brain to figure out all that is going on, the tricks to being camp smart: where it's the warmest, who's the most dangerous, who doles out a bit more soup. The new arrivals barely have time to figure out how to survive before they die.

After roll call you don't know anything else that's happening. You can't keep brooding about what is befalling you and everyone else because then you won't have the energy to go on, and you have to keep going. The work you do may kill you, but if you don't do it you will be killed. No matter what the detail, we work, we dig, we carry, we sift, we push, we die.

———— ■ ————

It is Sunday. It is fall. We get off our shelves. Get our tea. Eat our half piece of bread. There is a rumor that there is going to be a selection.

"What's a selection?" we ask among ourselves.

We groom all day, pulling lice from our armpits and clothes. There is no frightening these creatures; they are everywhere. I spit on my shoes and wet the crease on my pants. It is important to look good if there is going to be a selection—whatever that means. I want to look right. Sunday fades with the light of a pale sun.

USHMM/Yad Vashem

Jewish women who have been selected for forced labor at Auschwitz-Birkenau march toward their barracks after disinfection and headshaving, May 1944.

Four A.M. *"Raus! Raus!" ["Out! Out!"]*

We grab our tea as we step outside. I notice that something is different immediately. The guards do not count us at once. Instead they stand at one end of camp, ignoring our neat lines and perfect rows. We wait and wait. Well after the sun is up, we wait. The row at one end begins to move forward slowly. We strain our eyes to see what is happening but they are too far away. "They are selecting us." The whisper scurries down the rows, informing those of us who are not yet moving toward the SS.

"What's it mean?" Danka asks.

"I don't know," I lie. I have an idea, but it is not something I will share with anyone I care about. We stand in our lines, forced to contemplate what new Nazi trick this is.

"They're deciding who will live and who will die," the whispers confirm. Our ranks grow silent and still. How can this be true? How can they do that? We have seen how they step on us like cockroaches—why does this next thing come as such a surprise? We move forward. I take Danka's hand, squeezing it reassuringly. "I will go in front of you," I whisper.

There are two sisters at the head of the line. I recognize them from the first transport. Like me, they've been here since the beginning. They step up to the table of SS officers. An SS points for one to go left and the other right. "No! Please!" the one who has been chosen for life cries, falling on her knees. "Let me go with my sister," she begs the officer, careful not to touch him. She huddles at his glossy obsidian boots, weeping for mercy. He points. She follows her sister. Hand in hand they step toward the flatbed trucks.

I squeeze Danka's hand one last time before stepping in front of those who will judge me fit or unfit. Tomorrow may have no meaning for us if we do not pass this selection—and if we do pass? Tomorrow may have no meaning for us. I hold my breath. The thumb points for me to live. Stepping forward cautiously, I wait for my sister. The thumb points for Danka to follow me. I breathe.

———— ■ ————

I am concerned about Danka's depression. She doesn't seem to care about ever getting her own bowl of soup again.* This is something beyond her fear of the kapos† serving the food. She seems so downtrodden, as if she's giving up on any hope of survival, and this depression is eating away at her soul. She is absent; her eyes are glazed over most of our waking hours. I don't think that she's too far away, but I know I must try to do something before she goes beyond my grasp. Struggling with what to do about my sister's failing faith, I finally decide that there is no other course but to confront her.

USHMM/Yad Vashem

Women prisoners of Auschwitz on a work detail to sort through a huge pile of shoes from a transport of Hungarian Jews, 1944

It is late. The rest of the block is sleeping fitfully. "Danka," I whisper into the dark, "are you asleep yet?"

"No."

"What's bothering you? Something's wrong, I know it. Why're you so sad?"

"I don't know."

"Please talk to me. How can I help you if I don't know what's going on in your head? I feel you shrinking away from me. You have to tell me what's wrong."

"What sense is there to this?"

"To Auschwitz?" I'm puzzled.

"To everything." She pauses. "What if there's a selection and I'm selected to die?"

"What makes you say that?"

"You look better than me. You aren't losing so much weight, and you're still strong. What if I can't make it?"

Slowly it dawns on me. "Remember those two sisters?" I take her hand. "And how the one begged to go with the other one?"

* After being hit by a guard who accused her of returning to the soup line for seconds, Danka refused to go through the soup line again.
† Kapo: a camp prisoner forced to act as a guard of prisoners in labor groups.

I cannot lie to my sister, but I can promise one thing.

She nods in the shadows.

"I will do the same, if it comes to that."

"They don't allow it all the time, though. That was the first selection; they were soft. Now if someone begs to go with their mama or sister or daughter, they laugh and push them away."

"I will do whatever it takes, even if I must strike the SS."

"Then they will kill you immediately—that's no good."

There is something else lurking behind her eyes. It isn't dying alone she's afraid of, but I'm not sure which fear is possessing her.

"What is it you're really afraid of?"

"Being thrown in the truck," she confesses. "They treat us like rotten meat. I don't want to be discarded like that, thrown onto the flatbeds. I'm afraid of what Erna said. Maybe there won't be enough gas, and I'll go into the crematorium still alive. What if they're trying to conserve the gas?"

I cannot answer that question. How can I assure her that there will be enough gas to kill us when we arrive at the ultimate destination of all prisoners in Auschwitz-Birkenau? I cannot lie to my sister, but I can promise one thing.

"Sit up, Danka. Come on, sit up." I hold out my hand. "You see my hand here." I put her hand on mine and look into her eyes. "Our parents are standing here in front of us and my hand is our Talmud, and on this holy book and before our parents I make the oath to you—that from this day on, if you are selected I will join you no matter what. I swear that you will not go onto the trucks alone."

It is pitch-black in the blocks, but I can almost see the light flicker back on in my sister's eyes as I make this promise. Exhausted, I release her hand, and we fall back against the cold wood, pulling our blankets close around our bodies. Sleep comes swiftly, carrying us to a land where there are no shadows.

At lunch the next day, Danka stands in line and receives her first full helping of soup in months.

———— ■ ————

The SS walk up and down our rows counting the evening crew, making note of those who collapsed and died during the day. A hush descends through the columns of women. Dr. Mengele has come into camp. We know who he is; there are rumors about him. He stands before us, the glorious angel of doom.*

An SS motions for a portion of our ranks to move away from the main group. Danka and I are in the group separated from the rest of roll call. Dr. Mengele walks slowly among us looking for the healthiest, most able-bodied specimens. It is a moment I have been hoping for; sometimes he chooses prisoners for inside work details. This may be our lucky day, the day we find a way to leave Birkenau. He walks by us like a butcher inspecting his meat.

He points at me but passes over Danka. I step out, walking to the front of the line, moving away from my sister. Danka is discarded with the rest of the unfit specimens. Roll call is dismissed. Thousands of women hurry to their respective blocks to grab their bread and a place on the shelves to sleep.

We march away from the regular blocks toward the quarantine block. Turning my head, I catch a glimpse of my sister as the pit in my stomach grows wider and wider. The anxiety of not having her next to me is unbearable. I do not know if this detail is for life or if it is for death. I do know that

* Dr. Josef Mengele is the most infamous of the Nazi physicians who conducted brutal medical experiments on prisoners in the concentration camps.

the only way I can keep my promise to my sister, though, is to keep her with me at all times—too much can happen in a moment. There is no debate in my mind about my duty to my sister; the oath is the driving force behind all of my actions.

There is no debate in my mind about my duty to my sister; the oath is the driving force behind all of my actions.

That night, Rena offers her bread portion to a kapo guard to let her leave the quarantine block and get Danka. Reunited, the sisters wait several days in quarantine with the other selected women, wondering what work they will be doing.

Danka drifts off into a world of her own. I watch her become oblivious to her surroundings, knowing that this is how she survives. Meanwhile, I listen to every bit of information I can gather; this is how I survive—always being aware.

"Raus!" "Line up!" It's the fourth morning. An attendant from the hospital enters the block. "March out!" We follow her lead, stepping out of quarantine, marching across the length of camp toward another building. The sign over the door reads SAUNA. Inside, the kapo informs us, "Leave your old clothes in a pile here. You no longer need them. There are new uniforms on that table. "*Schnell!" ["Quick!"]*

Stepping naked over to the table, we snatch up the new one-size-fits-all uniforms, pulling them over our bodies. They're exactly like our other blue-and-gray striped dresses, rough as unworn sandpaper.

"Put these aprons on!" We tie clean, white, pressed aprons around our waists as we line up again, filing out of the building in twos. We march back across the length of the compound in front of the rest of the women in camp already lined up for morning roll call. The next building we enter is in the middle of the camp; it's a small, one-room building across from our blocks. It's Mengele's office. Inside, the nurse orders us to hold out our arms so that the secretary can write down each of our numbers on a list. Outside, we line up facing the camp roll call, in neat rows of five, ten to each line, forming our new exclusive work detail.

Out of the corner of my eye I see a woman with a list in her hand and make a note that her presence is odd. She comes from behind the building, nervously looking this way and that as if she's afraid. She stands for a moment, scratching something out on the list, then cautiously she takes one of the girls by the hand and leads her out the back of the line and behind Mengele's office. They disappear.

My heart races as the realization sinks in. "Danka, this is not a good detail to be in."

USHMM: Natl. Museum of Auschwitz-Birkenau/Instytut Pamieci Narodowej/United Nations/US Natl. Archives

Josef Mengele; Nazi physician Carl Clauberg (left) in the Auschwitz experiment unit; an 11-year-old survivor of Auschwitz experiments being vaccinated after the war; an experiment survivor showing her scarred leg during the Nuremberg war crimes trials

It takes less than a second for me to decide the course of action we must try to take if we are to survive. "Come with me."

Danka's eyes bulge with fright. "Why do you say that?"

"One of the elite just took a friend or relative out of the lineup."

"Who?"

"I don't know who she is, but she's important enough to walk around while the rest of us are standing roll call. She would know if this was a bad kommando [work detail]. We're not going to work under any roof. This is for death."

"You can't be sure."

"Yes, I can." I look around. My mind runs through every scenario possible. It takes less than a second for me to decide the course of action we must try to take if we are to survive. "Come with me."

Her eyes pop out of her head. "Where?"

"Back to the sauna." I look at the dreaded dresses we're wearing. How could I have missed the signs? No numbers on the breast, new dresses, clean white aprons exactly like the experiment victims were wearing.* "Our only chance is to get our old uniforms back before they remove them and we're lost for good."

"We can't do that!"

"We have to." I am fierce.

"How?"

My mind has catapulted beyond the situation we are in, to the particulars that could save our lives. "We're going to pretend that we're just as important as any block elder or kapo. I'm going to take your hand and we're going to march across the compound and I'm not letting go until we're in the sauna."

"In front of everybody?"

"It's a gamble."

"We can't. They'll shoot us for sure."

"Danka? This is something for experiments. Remember the women with the faces?"

"Gathering herbs?"

"You want to be a zombie?" I glare into her face.

"No."

We fall silent as an officer passes.

"You're going to be if you don't come with me now. We have one chance to live and once chance to die. If we cross the compound we might live or die. If we stay here we're dead for sure."

She wants to follow me, I can tell, but fear has her feet rooted into the ground. "I can't," she whispers.

I lean very close to her ear. "I'm going to break my oath to you. I swore I'd die with you, but that was only if you were selected, not if you chose to die. I don't owe that to you anymore!" Our

* One day the sisters witnessed the march of skeletal women with "bottomless eyes" to the gas chamber. Another inmate tells them the women are experiment victims: "They torture them until they are dead or vegetables. After they are done experimenting with them, they go to the gas."

voices are sparse and speculative. The SS are busy counting the prisoners on the other side of the Lagerstrasse [camp main street].

“If you don’t want to listen to what I’m saying, then you’re deciding to give up your life—but I’m not. I’m going back to the sauna whether you come with me or not.” I pray I’ve scared her enough to come with me.

“What do I do?” Her voice wavers.

“Just walk with me. That’s all you have to do. Keep your chin high and believe you’re important.” Her eyes glaze over. She will do as she’s told. “Now give me your hand.” Like a cold clammy fist, her fingers wind around mine.

Passing Stiewitz and Taube [SS officers], we walk with the air that we are doing exactly what we’ve been told to do. My fingernails dig into her flesh. I’m not letting go of my sister’s hand. We walk, convinced that no one will stop us. We are important. We have been ordered to return to the sauna. I repeat this to myself over and over. Chins up, eyes forward, never look back.

The distance seems to remain the same. The sauna gets closer. The lines and rows of prisoners seem to continue on forever. Through the desert of Birkenau we walk invisible. Seconds slow to hours as our feet trudge through the mud. Our heads held high, our gaze never veers from our path. Danka’s hand turns blue from the tightness of my squeeze. Chins up, eyes forward, never look back.

I open the sauna door without looking behind me. There are no voices behind us ordering us to halt, no gunshots firing at our backs. There’s only roll call, the lifeline that we must grab as quickly as we can change our clothes. We step inside, shutting the door behind us.

“Quick, Danka. We have to hurry!” I whisper urgently. “Undress and give me your clothes. I will do the rest.” Tearing the uniform of an experiment victim off my body, I search the pile of discarded uniforms in my underwear. Danka cannot move. She stares at me like a small animal frozen by fear, incapable of helping me as I fumble through the clothes looking for her number, repeating “2779, 2779” over and over, out loud. My hands tremble uncontrollably as my nerves unravel.

There is no time. Our lives depend on getting back to roll call. We must be counted. We must disappear before anyone notices we’re missing from the special detail. Finally, her uniform is on the floor in front of me. I toss it to Danka.

Rena finds her uniform in the pile and, when they both have changed, she opens the sauna door and views her goal—the lines of women standing for roll call.

USHMM/Instytut Pamieci Narodowej

A section of the Birkenau camp from the main watch tower (Death Gate), with the Lagerstrasse [camp main street] in the foreground (photo taken after liberation in January 1945)

“Ready?” I don’t wait for an answer, pushing Danka out ahead of me and into the neat ranks of five. “Please move up,” I whisper to the girl-women around us. “Please move over. Make some room, please.” No one pushes back, no one argues. The rows of fated women we depend on move as silently as water, swallowing us into their bosom until we are one with the ranks.

The SS move up our row. We hold our breath. They pass us. We have been counted. Roll call ends.

We are outside digging, building, rather than in Mengele’s and Clauberg’s hands. It feels good to work. It feels good to be alive.

As the Soviet army approached Auschwitz in early 1945, most prisoners were forced on a death march to the Ravensbrück camp in Germany. There Rena and Danka were liberated on May 2, 1945. Rena believes her parents perished in Auschwitz. The fate of their sister Zosia is unknown. (Their older sister Gertrude had immigrated to the U.S. in 1921.) After the war, Rena and Danka worked for the Red Cross in Holland. Rena married one of the Red Cross commanders, John Gelissen, and in 1954 they emigrated to the United States (two years after Danka had arrived with her husband). In 1988 Rena and John retired to Hendersonville in the North Carolina mountains. The couple have four children and three grandchildren. In 1995 Rena published her Holocaust memoir, Rena’s Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz*.*

Rena and Danka in Holland after the war

Rena and Danka, 1995

Rena’s Promise, 2015 ed.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Rena’s Promise, website accompanying the 2015 edition of Rena’s memoir; follow the Education tab for teacher and student resources and the Promise Project — www.renaspromise.com/
- Video: Shoah Foundation oral testimony of Rena Gelissen, 1996 — Access via sfi.usc.edu/vha.
- Video: Presentation by Rena Gelissen on her Holocaust experience, Salem College, Winston-Salem, NC, 1994 (YouTube) — www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGx3i_GiT6w (first of several parts on YouTube)
- Jeremy Berlin, “How two sisters’ love helped them survive Auschwitz,” interview with author Heather Dune Macadam, *National Geographic*, April 15, 2015
  news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/04/150415-ngbooktalk-nazis-auschwitz-holocaust-survivors/

USHMM/Simone Weil Lipman

Simone's false ID card as "Simone Werlin"

Gizella Abramson

Gizella's false ID issued in 1942, when she was 14. Vera is the Polish short form of Veronika.

USHMM/Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War

Jewish partisan brigade in Nazi-occupied Belarus, Soviet Union, 1943

Barbara Rodbell

Barbara and Manfred in the rooming house where Barbara first stayed, using her false ID papers

V ■ RESISTANCE ■

_____OVERVIEW_____

- ***"[The Resistance] wasn't a great big organization where people all knew each other. It was one person knew another knew another knew another. The less you knew the better, because if you got caught you could give away maybe one person. Maybe!—if you were not tough as nails."*** **__Barbara Ledermann Rodbell**
- ***"You would be surprised how easy it was when you thought of it. You were able to figure out how to do these things. You do not always have to be taught. Maybe they [Resistance] knew that I had this ability, and that I could, intuitively, find ways."*** **__Gizella Gross Abramson**
- ***"I was rarely frightened. I was young and felt sort of invulnerable, not thinking beyond what I had to do. There was a job to be done and I did it. None of us felt we were doing anything extraordinary or particularly brave. So many of my peers were doing the same kind of work. We did it because it was the thing to do."*** **__Simone Weil Lipman**

USHMM/Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War

Jewish partisan brigade in Nazi-occupied Belarus, Soviet Union, 1943

When the horrors of the Holocaust were revealed, many people wondered how it was possible for the Nazis to kill so many people without meeting overwhelming resistance. But for all the conquered peoples of Europe, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, resistance was extremely difficult and dangerous. Especially due to the Nazis' carefully devised plans for the Final Solution, Jews had few opportunities for massive resistance. Under the Nazi policy of collective responsibility, anyone working against the Germans faced brutal punishment. Entire communities and families were held responsible for individual acts of resistance or sabotage. Despite this, resistance to Nazi persecution was varied and widespread. Many Jews worked with underground units and partisan fighters. Armed resistance took place both within and outside ghettos and camps, some leading to major uprisings. Many Jews exercised spiritual resistance by continuing to practice their religion despite the dangers.

UNDERGROUND RESISTANCE Many Jews who were able to evade deportation or escape ghettos joined underground resistance units in their countries. Such units would gain enemy information, sabotage facilities and railroads, create false documents, help those in hiding, and accomplish other high-risk endeavors. Some could get false papers identifying them as non-Jewish, and those who looked "Aryan" (for example, with blond hair and/or blue eyes) could take on risky assignments that brought them into close contact with Nazi officials.

ARMED RESISTANCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE Armed resistance came from those who managed to escape capture and deportation to the camps. Organizing themselves into small resistance groups, they fought against the Nazis with few weapons, inadequate food, and little help from non-Jewish residents. Known as partisans, they attacked German supply depots and military units, captured weapons, and served as links between the ghettos and the outside world. Most partisan units fought in the forests and countryside of eastern Europe and western

Soviet Union, such as the Bielksi partisans featured in the 2008 film *Defiance*. Partisan efforts did extend throughout occupied Europe. On April 19, 1943, members of the National Committee for the Defense of Jews, in cooperation with Christian railroad workers and members of the Belgian underground, attacked a train heading to Auschwitz from the Belgian transit camp of Malines and helped several hundred Jewish deportees escape.

ARMED RESISTANCE IN GHETTOS Resistance groups existed in about 100 Jewish ghettos in eastern Europe, and some led armed uprisings when the ghettos were being evacuated and destroyed. The largest and most well known is the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of April-May 1943. With few weapons and little outside help, young ghetto residents held out for several weeks against overwhelming German superiority; few of the ghetto fighters survived. In September 1942, in the Tuchin ghetto in the Ukraine, 700 Jewish families escaped, but almost all were captured and few survived the war. Similar uprisings took place at the Białystok and Vilna ghettos in Nazi-occupied Poland; in both cases most participants were killed.

ARMED RESISTANCE IN CAMPS While the strongest armed resistance took place in the ghettos, many concentration camps had resistance groups that helped prisoners get food from the outside, bribed camp guards, sabotaged installations, etc., and some staged uprisings when it was apparent they would soon all be killed.

- In the **Treblinka** uprising of August 1943, prisoners took weapons from a storeroom and set fire to some buildings. Over 300 prisoners were able to escape through the barbed-wire enclosures. About 200 were caught and killed, including most of the revolt leaders.
- In the **Sobibor** uprising of October 1943, prisoners killed about 12 guards, cut telephone and electricity wires, and set fire to the camp. About 300 escaped; about 100 were recaptured and killed.
- In the **Auschwitz** uprising of October 1944, armed Jewish prisoners, using gunpowder smuggled out of factories by women prisoners, killed three guards and blew up a crematorium. 250 prisoners died during the fighting, and about 200 were executed later, including five of the women prisoners.

Such uprisings and escapes occurred in several dozen camps despite the unlikely chance of survival.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

SS troops capture two Jewish resistance fighters during the Warsaw ghetto uprising, 1943

USHMM/Sylvia Kramarski Kolski

Three survivors of the Treblinka uprising in Warsaw after the war. After escaping the camp, they hid in the forest and later with a Christian family until liberation.

USHMM/Misha Lev

A group of the approximately 50 survivors of the Sobibor uprising, in Kholm, Russia, August 1944

USHMM/Jona Rosen

Jewish parachutists living in Palestine in training in Egypt, ca. 1943. Of the 32 who parachuted into eastern Europe, 12 were captured and 20 successfully joined armed resistance groups.

SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE In the ghettos, forced labor camps, concentration camps, and death camps, Jews rebelled through daily acts of spiritual resistance. They participated in worship services at great risk, and in the ghettos secretly continued the education of their children by organizing schools. Others resisted by creating art or music, keeping diaries, or by stealing out of the ghetto to obtain food. In the camps, many continued to hold Sabbath and holiday services, and pray silently or aloud in the barracks so that others could be comforted. They shared food, helped the weak stand through roll call, or intentionally produced defective war materials in forced labor factories. All were extraordinary acts of courage and resistance.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Jewish Resistance — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-resistance
  - Jewish Partisans — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-partisans?series=21826
  - Jewish Uprisings in Ghettos and Camps, 1941-1944 — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-uprisings-in-ghettos-and-camps-1941-44
  - Warsaw Ghetto Uprising — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/warsaw-ghetto-uprising
  - Killing Center Revolts — encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/killing-center-revolts
  - Individual Responsibility & Resistance during the Holocaust (lesson) — www.ushmm.org/educators/lesson-plans/individual
- Resources from Yad Vashem
  - Combat and Resistance — www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/combat-resistance.html
  - Spiritual Resistance during the Holocaust: Maintaining a "Normal" Way of Life in an Abnormal World — www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/spiritual-resistance.html
  - Solidarity in the Forest: The Bielski Brothers (partisan fighters) — www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/solidarity-bielski-brothers.html
- Lessons from the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida
  - Jewish Resistance Group Project — www.holocaustedu.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Daily-Lesson-Plan-4-4-Jewish-Resistance-Group-Project.pdf
  - Response to the Holocaust: Resistance and Rescue — hhrecny.z2systems.com/np/clients/hhrecny/product.jsp?product=28&

SEE the online Holocaust teaching resources recommended by North Carolina Holocaust educators.
www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/holocaust-council/resources/teachingresources.pdf

LESSON ■ RESISTANCE

- **Narrative: Gizella Joins the Resistance**
- **Narrative: Barbara Gets False ID Papers**
- **Narrative: Simone Saves Refugee Children**

Jewish resistance to Nazi persecution took many forms: partisan and underground fighting, camp and ghetto uprisings, sabotage by forced laborers, smuggling food and supplies, secretly communicating information, etc. Here we focus on the dangerous work of three young Jewish women who were able to get false ID papers and pass as non-Jews. They performed secret assignments that, if discovered, would likely lead to immediate death.

Introduce the North Carolina survivors whose narratives are presented here.

- **Gizella Gross Abramson** was 14 when she was brought into the Resistance in Nazi-occupied Poland, due to her language skills and Aryan appearance. She was eventually arrested and sent to the Majdanek concentration camp. She settled in Raleigh in 1970.
- **Barbara Ledermann Rodbell** was 18 when she joined the Resistance in Nazi-occupied Holland. When her family was arrested, she was able to escape due to her false ID papers and Aryan appearance. She worked with the underground in Amsterdam until liberation. She settled in Chapel Hill in 1985.
- **Simone Weil Lipman** was in her early twenties in France when she volunteered to work in an internment camp in unoccupied southern France for Jews deported from other countries. When Germany occupied all of France, she joined a secret network to hide Jewish children and smuggle many to Switzerland. She settled in Chapel Hill in 1986.

Have students consider these questions as they read the narratives. Remind them that all three women were teenagers when they worked in the Resistance.

1. How did these young women enter the Resistance in Nazi-occupied Poland, the Netherlands, and France? How were they trained or prepared for their Resistance work?
2. All three used false ID papers created with their own photos but different, non-Jewish, names. How did they acquire the false IDs?
3. What dangers did they face? How did they deal with the dangers?
4. What did these women actually do in the Resistance? List 5-10 specific things they did, e.g., checking a Nazi officer's wastebasket daily, and moving Jews and downed Allied pilots to new hiding places. Why did their youth fit these assignments?
5. Why could Barbara be out past curfew? Why was Gizella assigned to work in a Nazi officer's residence? What experience did Simone bring to her work hiding and smuggling children? How did the individual characteristics of each woman influence her work?
6. One of these Resistance workers was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. One was nearly arrested but threw away incriminating evidence just in time. One escaped arrest despite going through police checkpoints regularly. How might they explain the difference in their fates?
7. We who learn of these brave acts wonder if we could do them in similar situations. What do you think these women would say to us?
8. After the war, how did Gizella and Barbara help *themselves* adjust to their wartime experiences and their postwar lives without family? (Their parents and siblings were killed in death camps.)
9. How did Barbara search for her family immediately after the war?

10. What does Gizella mean when she says “I realized I must not let Hitler win”?
11. What does Barbara mean in her poem, referring to her own children: “Children: beautiful / will they suffer? / of course! Later, sometime——”?
12. Choose one of these statements from the narratives and write a response to the speaker as though you were a teenager during the war and about to join the Resistance. How would you want the speaker to elaborate on her statement? What would you want to know to prepare yourself?

    - Barbara Rodbell: *“The Resistance wasn’t a great big organization where people all knew each other. It was one person knew another knew another knew another. The less you knew the better, because if you got caught you could give away maybe one person. Maybe!—if you were not tough as nails.”*
    - Gizella Abramson: *“You would be surprised how easy it was when you thought of it. You were able to figure out how to do these things. You do not always have to be taught. Maybe they [Resistance leaders] knew that I had this ability and that I could, intuitively, find ways.”*
    - Simone Lipman: *“During those years I was rarely frightened. I was young and felt sort of invulnerable, not thinking beyond what I had to do. There was a job to be done and I did it. None of us felt we were doing anything extraordinary or particularly brave. So many of my peers were doing the same kind of work. We did it because it was the thing to do.”*

13. Read Barbara’s poem “Autobiography” and study the collage which she created several years after the war, using photographs of herself, her children, and the dead of a concentration camp. Create a collage and write a poem entitled “Resistance,” based on the narratives of Barbara, Gizella, and Simone. Barbara ends her poem with the word “Hope.” End your poem with one word, too.
14. When Holocaust survivors speak to audiences today, most are in their 80s and 90s, and this can influence how we respond to them. It’s hard to imagine a woman of 94 bicycling in short skirts and ballet makeup as she moves people from one hiding place to another, as Barbara did. Think of questions you would ask Barbara if you heard her speak. Write them down while imagining you’re talking to the teenaged Barbara. How does this affect your questions, and how you ask them?

Barbara Ledermann Rodbell in about 1942, in 1990 during her interview excerpted here, and in 2018

“*Translate statistics into people*.”

In its guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust (see Supplemental Materials), the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum recommends using first-person accounts of survivors

“*precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims; [they] add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics*.”

RESISTANCE ■ GIZELLA JOINS THE RESISTANCE

Gizella Gross was born in Tarnopol, Poland, in 1928. She was 11 when World War II broke out, as the Nazis invaded from the west and the Soviets from the east. Her parents decided to send her to live with an aunt and uncle in the nearby city of Lutsk, but soon the Jews of Lutsk were forced into a ghetto. Her uncle was a doctor, so he was allowed to leave the ghetto more often to treat Christian patients. Gizella would accompany him, carrying his medical bag. One day her uncle called for her to bring a medical instrument to a patient's home. There she realized that, with her blond hair, she was mistaken for a non-Jew.

I walked out without my yellow patches.* Suddenly I hear, "Eh, Kleines? Wohin gehst Du? Wohin gehst Du, Kleines?" "Where are you going, little one?" I was walking with my head bowed. They were German soldiers calling me. "Now look at her," they said. "How pretty. She looks like my —— look at the blonde hair. Look at those eyes. Do you want a piece of chocolate?"

Gizella in May 1941, at age 13½

I remember walking on. I didn't turn around then. I came to the farm and I must have looked a bit strange. Uncle says to me, "What's the matter with you? You look positively yellow. And where are your patches?" He turned to the wife of the farmer he was treating and said, "Do me a favor, put the patches on her." But the farmer's wife shook her head. She looked at me and said, "No, I won't. She doesn't need any patches. She doesn't look Jewish."

As life became more perilous in the ghetto, her uncle found hiding places with Christian families. He and his family hid in one farmer's barn, and Gizella was to hide on another patient's farm. She slipped out of the ghetto and went to meet people who would take her to her hiding place.

We were to meet at a meadow on the edge of town. I heard trucks coming and hid. When they arrived, they were full of people. The Germans yelled at them to get down, and I saw a shower of yellow stars as they got off. They made the people dig trenches as they argued about how deep the trenches should be. Then they lined everyone up by the trench and made them disrobe. There was a command to fire, and they started shooting. I saw one lady holding her baby. She was smiling and kissing her baby with tears streaming down as the bullets hit her. There was screaming for a while, and then it got quiet. Those voices have haunted me every day of my life.

The Germans left and I crept out. Blood was rising to the top of that pit. I was standing and looking at it when two men grabbed me. "What do you want?" I said. Then somebody put his hands on me, and I was placed under straw in a wagon. They said, "You be quiet. Look, we know who your aunt is. We know who you are."

Her "captors" were members of the Polish Resistance who would train her to join the Resistance.

And that was the beginning. I was taken to a peasant home. They listened to me speak German, Russian, and Polish. I spoke those languages without any difficulties. I was given the birth certificate of a young woman whom I knew—her name was Veronika. The birth certificate

* Jews were required to wear yellow patches with the Star of David (✡), a symbol of Judaism.

was authentic, but the only problem was Veronika was much older than I. So the next picture you might see of me, I had put my hair up so that I looked a little bit older. I remember thinking that I looked much more mature.

[One Resistance member] spoke Polish to me. He spoke fluent Russian. He would correct my Russian. He would correct my Ukrainian, never my Polish. My German was better than his. He said, "I want you to tell them that you live in a village [the village on Veronika's birth certificate]. Say you have a sore throat and that you have come to be cured in Lutsk. You have a sore throat."

Gizella's false ID issued in 1942, when she was 14. Vera is the Polish short form of Veronika.

At night he would shine a light in my face to wake me up. He would say,

"What's your name?"
"Gizella Gross."
"What's your name?" SLAP.
"Veronika?"
"WHAT'S YOUR NAME?"
"VERONIKA!"

That way I became conditioned. When I went for that certificate [ID], I was Veronika.

After getting her false identification papers, Gizella began working with the Resistance. She was told she would know only one person among its members.

The person that I was to know was named Makar. Throughout my stay, I only knew that one man. I was so naive that I didn't even ask why until I was sent on my second job and was given a different identity. I never was permitted to ask any questions. Nothing. If I did, their standard answer was "None of your business. None of your business."

At that job, I was supposed to be the granddaughter and a niece [of people pretending to be her grandmother and uncle] in this house, which was a nicer home than most in that neighborhood. The commandant, the German commandant in that city, lived in that house. My job was to polish his boots, bring his meals, empty the wastebasket. Anything I found in the wastepaper basket, I was told to bring to Makar. My job was to live in this house. Never ask any questions. And tell Makar about the comings and goings of the German officers and the types of insignias they were wearing. And I was to listen to what was said. "Pretend you do not understand German so that you can listen to their conversation. Be like a kitten. Ingratiate yourself."

I was always, always, on guard. It was ridiculous. I had no choice of where to go, what to do. They [the Resistance] knew my real name. They knew where my parents were. They knew where my aunt and cousins were. They had me right in their hands. They said they would help with my family.

You were able to figure out how to do these things. You do not always have to be taught. Maybe they knew that I had this ability, and that I could, intuitively, find ways. Maybe that was my skill—that and those languages that I knew.

You would be surprised how easy it was when you thought of it. You were able to figure out how to do these things. You do not always have to be taught. Maybe they knew that I had this ability, and that I could, intuitively, find ways. Maybe that was my skill—that and those languages that I knew.

Gizella's ID in place of a passport before emigrating to the U.S., 1946

Gizella's photo on her naturalization certificate when she received U.S. citizenship, March 1952

With little notice, Gizella left the commandant's house with the woman posing as her grandmother. Soon she was assigned to steal copies of identification and ration forms.

In my next job, I had a completely different identity. I was provided with a job as a cleaning person in a house where all the identification forms necessary for Christians to exist were processed and stored. This was the hub of the German regional occupation. People could survive with those papers. I never knew whom they gave them to. That's what I wonder about today. I would like to know that I saved someone's life. Maybe they saved some Jews.

In late 1943, Gizella was arrested at a checkpoint, jailed, and tortured for information. In January 1944 she was sent to the Majdanek concentration camp and endured brutal treatment and slave labor in a stone quarry, as well as being forced to translate for the Nazis. As the Soviet army approached in summer 1944, the Nazis evacuated Majdanek, sending most prisoners to other camps and executing those who were near death. Gizella was selected for the second group, but no bullets hit her and she was able to hide in the execution trench until the Germans left and the Soviet liberators arrived.

Now liberated, Gizella served as a translator for the Soviets—especially when they interrogated captured German soldiers—until the Allies achieved victory in May 1945. She entered a hospital in a U.S.-run Displaced Persons camp. After months of recuperation, Gizella came to the U.S. in 1946 to live with an aunt in New York. She was the only member of her family to survive. Later she recounted her troubled first years after liberation.

Nothing made me happy. I remember I was like a machine. I ate. I answered questions. But I was dead inside. Why? Why? Why? A person's profile would remind me of someone I knew who was killed. When my aunt made a rare roast beef, the sight of blood made me ill to my stomach; I ran to the bathroom. One day she made hamburgers. The smell of the charred meat brought back the smell of the oven. And I hated. I hated so. One day I was taking a walk. I heard two women speaking German. I turned around. There must have been such hatred on my face. These women looked and ran away.

And I realized that I was given a chance, and that it was up to me to do something with my life. I could not hold onto this hate. I felt that the hate would eat me up, and whatever God-given ability I had, I would not be able to use. I realized I must not let Hitler win: "He will not kill me." If I did not change, I knew—sooner or later—I would break down. That's how I started. I would take one step forward, and two steps backwards. But I knew that if God in his mercy and wisdom let me live, I had to do something productive with my life. I am his partner. This was the beginning.

I realized that I was given a chance, and that it was up to me to do something with my life. I could not hold onto this hate.

I want to prevent atrocities like that from ever happening again. People have to believe that it happened to the Jews and it can happen again. I love America and I love democracy with all my heart, but how can people defend it if they don't realize it can be threatened? I have an obligation to talk about it.

Gizella graduated from high school in 1947 and from college in 1951. In 1952 she married Paul Abramson and in 1970 they relocated with IBM to Raleigh, NC. They had two children, four grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. For over 38 years Gizella dedicated herself to teaching about tolerance and the Holocaust throughout the state of North Carolina.

[Read about Gizella's life in the Lutsk Ghetto in Ch. 4 (The Holocaust: Ghetto).]

Paul and Gizella Abramson, ca. 1993

Gizella (second from right) with her family, ca. 1993

Gizella with one of the many groups of students she spoke to about her Holocaust experience, ca. 1995

ONLINE RESOURCES

- "Holocaust survivor says 'learn to love,'" *Carteret County News-Times* (NC), May 18, 2008
  www.carolinacoastonline.com/news_times/news/article_8f7a692c-b1c3-55a0-b4d6-95d18b2623d5.html
- "'May you always walk on the sidewalk,'" *The News of Orange County* [NC], March 25, 2009
  www.newsoforange.com/news/article_0cc1c458-c768-582e-b9a8-8fdcb288c39e.html
- *Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust*, by Cecile Holmes White in cooperation with the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, 1987
  archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit
- Life after the Holocaust: experiences of six Holocaust survivors who rebuilt their lives in the United States (online exhibition, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)
  www.ushmm.org/exhibition/life-after-holocaust/

RESISTANCE ■ BARBARA GETS FALSE ID PAPERS

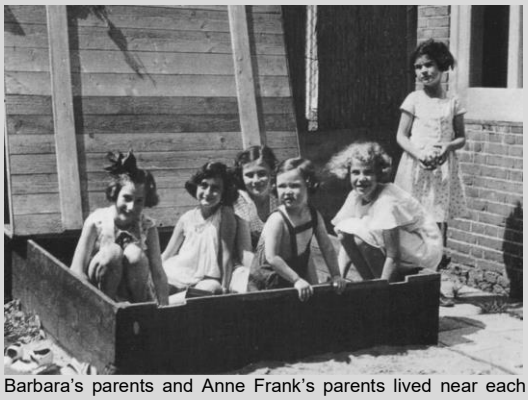
Barbara Ledermann was born in 1925 in Berlin, Germany. In 1933, when she was eight, her family left Germany to escape the Nazi regime and moved to Amsterdam, Holland (the Netherlands), where her grandparents lived. In the same year, Otto Frank and his family also left Germany to find safety in Amsterdam.

When we got to Holland and I went to my first school, there was a girl in my class named Margot Frank. Our parents met, having come from Germany the same year and having a lot in common. They and the Franks socialized a lot and, of course, the kids played. As a matter of fact, Margot dragged me through school. Without her, I would have never done anything because I was full of play. I wanted to become a dancer and I worked very very hard at that, but not at much else. So without her saying, "Today we study," I wouldn't have been able to get through! We all played together. Anne came to the house a lot and we went to her house a lot. My sister was a lot more serious than Anne was. Anne liked games the way I did. Margot also was very serious, very deliberate, very beautiful. She would have made a real mark in the world, I know that, just like my sister!

Until the Germans marched into Holland [in 1940], I didn't know very much about anything. I knew that there was Hitler and that Germany was ruined for us. Things were bad. But I was just playing and going to school and dancing and having a good time.

USHMM/Barbara Ledermann Rodbell

Franz and Ilse Ledermann with their daughters Barbara (right) and Susannah, on the terrace of their Amsterdam apartment, ca. 1936



Barbara's parents and Anne Frank's parents lived near each other and were friends. In this 1937 photo in Amsterdam, Anne is second from left, and Barbara is second from right.

Then one day we heard the bombardment of Rotterdam. We heard it all the way in Amsterdam—the planes, the low hum of the planes. I remember standing at the window and the Germans were marching in right through our street, and my father was standing at the window and saying to me, "Take care of your mother. You know, they'll come for me tomorrow." It took a year and a half, but it did happen in the end. Many terrible things happened then. Jews started jumping out of windows and out of balconies, killing themselves with gas. I remember a man being saved from trying to gas himself and him yelling and screaming, "I don't want to. Don't do this. Don't save me. I want to die." I was 15. This made a huge impression on me. I asked my mother, "Why does he want to die?" My parents told me it's because they're Jews and Hitler doesn't like Jews. It was the first time I was really aware of this.

After the Nazis occupied Holland in 1940, they began rounding up Jewish residents and sending them to concentration camps. While many assumed they were being sent to labor camps,

Barbara's friends in the underground, especially her boyfriend Manfred, convinced her that their likely fate was death. They urged her to get false identification papers and pass as a non-Jew, which, as a blonde and blue-eyed German, she was easily able to do. In 1943, as her family was about to be arrested, they said their final farewells. "Bless you. Go," her father said. "This is the end. This is the last time."

Manfred told me that I would be murdered if I were called up [in a Nazi roundup]. He said to me, "you do not go." And I said, "That is impossible. I mean, what would happen to my parents if I don't go?" And Manfred said, "Nothing that wouldn't happen otherwise." I said, "What do you mean?" He replied, "Everyone who goes and gets into their hands will be killed. They are all going to die." And I wouldn't believe it. It took him about three hours to explain to me how anybody could not go, and what you do if you don't go, and how you survive and where you get food and where you get money. This was my first acquaintance with the possibility of not going.

USHMM/Rita Serphos

False identity card issued to Benjamina Serphos in Amsterdam under the name Theodora Tijdgaat

And then I met a fellow and he had a friend who could get me false papers. He said, "You need papers. It'll be 300 gilden [Dutch money]." I remember that—300 gilden. That was a lot of money, you know! I came home and said to my mother that I needed the money, and she said, "What for?" I said, "For the papers." And she said, "Tomorrow, when you go back to school, you'll have it." And those were my first false papers.

And they were very bad, <u>but</u> they saved my life! In the early days, the false papers were of people who died or lost them or other ways that you could get people's real papers. What they would do is take out the picture of the person—the original person—and insert your picture and your fingerprint and whatever else they had to change. And, of course, these were not papers that had a J [for Jew] on it. They looked very authentic! Mine was of a 27-year-old girl. I was 17, maybe, and I looked like 13. Pigtails, little! So they were unlikely papers. And then one night I told Manfred I had the papers, and he looked at them and said, "They're not bad. They're not bad. They're very good. Keep them where you can get to them."

I told my father I had the false papers and said to him, "I'm not going. Whenever they call me, I'm not going." And my father said, "You have to go. What will happen to us?" And there came this guilt that was put on me like a hood, you know, all over. If you try to save yourself—that's what he meant, you know—we will all die.*

So for months I tried to live with that and say, "Okay. I can't kill my family!" And my father, he felt he had calmed me down. Then one night we were sitting at our big window in the living room and we were looking out—already it was curfew; there were curfews at night. And all of a sudden, we see trucks come—long rows of trucks. I couldn't believe what was happening. The Nazis came with lists

USHMM/NIOD Inst. for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies, the Netherlands

Jews expelled from their homes walk to an assembly center in Amsterdam where they will be deported, most to their death.

* The officials had lists of Jewish residents and would know that a family member was missing from the apartment.

and they picked up people by name. They picked up old Mrs. Treuman. Mr. Treuman was married to a Gentile [non-Jewish] lady, and he and their children were okay. But they picked up his mother, and she could hardly walk. She was a very old lady, and they were good friends of ours. My stomach just turned. They picked up all the Jewish people I knew. And they stopped about two stoops [front steps of the apartment buildings] before ours.

However, Manfred always knew what was going on, and he knew they were picking up people on our street. He sent this Leo Weil, a friend of his—he wore a long leather coat and was on a motor bike and had a hood on. I mean, you can imagine what he looked like! And right in the middle of all this going on, the doorbell rang and—I mean, I thought I was going to die. Manfred had sent him to get me. So I put my false papers in my pocket, and the J [for Jew] was not on my clothes! I had taken it off. And I said to my father, "Goodbye." He grabbed me and he kicked Leo down the stairs, and Leo drove off and told Manfred, "I can't get her. They won't let her go! I can't make a fuss. If I make a fuss, I get arrested." So he left and I was left there and, as I said, the Nazis stopped two platforms [stoops] before us, so nothing happened to us that night.

Manfred hid Barbara in a factory owned by his father and then arranged for her to stay in a rooming house where the manager didn't question her ID papers. Barbara missed her family very much and decided to take the risk and visit them.

Barbara and Manfred in the rooming house where Barbara first stayed, using her false ID papers

I hadn't seen my parents for a long time. We talked over the phone. I was very homesick, very homesick, and they wanted to see me. It was terribly dangerous, it was stupid, and I did it anyway! I sewed on the J, and I went to see my parents and my sister, trying to get through without being seen by the neighbors. Of course, there was a lot of crying and a lot of happiness that we were still there and we were still together.

It's now 1943, June 1943. Everything goes fine that first evening, and then the next morning at six o'clock, a woman we used to call Cassandra comes up and says, "I just heard. This whole area is closed off and we're all—this is the big deal for this area. All the Jews are going to be picked up. This is not a little razzia [raid]. This is everything! Everybody!" AND I WAS THERE. I was there! I was caught! It was terrible! At the same time, I was with my family, and if anything happened to them, it would happen to me, too, and this was it. My mother—who had never before spoken up to my father—said to him, "Franz, sie geht," which means "Franz, she goes." "She has to leave, you know!" And I had my papers—I had my papers. Couldn't take a thing. My father says to me, "Bless you. Go. This is the end. I think this is it. This really is it. This is the last time. This is it." He said, "You go. You go. Try it. Doesn't matter anymore, you know. Just try it."

My father says to me, "Bless you. Go. This is the end. I think this is it. This really is it. This is the last time. This is it." He said, "You go. You go. Try it. Doesn't matter anymore, you know. Just try it."

I didn't even think how fantastic that was, you know, that, at least at the last moment, he said I agree with you, go. Not that it lessens

my guilt. Really, it doesn't lessen the guilt of not having been with them, not participating in that thing that happened to them. Anyway, I kissed them and went downstairs, and it was a beautiful day. A sunny, warm, June day in Holland. Beautiful Sunday—people were going to church! Quiet. Nothing going on. Two streets up, nobody knows what's happening so nearby.

The day was June 20, 1943. Barbara's family was taken away to Westerbork transit camp in Holland, and for several months she was able to exchange mail with them. But in November she stopped hearing from them.

The Germans would let you send packages to people in Westerbork, and I managed to send a lot of packages during the months that my parents were there, and we had regular mail from my parents. They received everything I sent. Nothing disappeared. I want to say that when they were taken away later, I never knew that they were in Auschwitz. I didn't know where they had been sent. I heard they had been sent on, and that was it. And it now appears that they were killed the day they arrived in Auschwitz. Learning this was a terrible shock, really an incredible shock!

USHMM/Hans Aussen

A group of Dutch Resistance members and hidden Jews crowded into a room [possibly to listen to a clandestine radio]

For the rest of the war, Barbara stayed in Amsterdam and worked with the Resistance.

[The Resistance] wasn't a great big organization where people all knew each other. It was one person knew another knew another knew another. The less you knew the better, because if you got caught you could give away maybe one person. Maybe!—if you were not tough as nails [to withstand torture].

They put me to work. I was a dancer.* There was a ballet company in Amsterdam run by Yvonne Georgi, a great dancer from Germany. She was put by the Germans into the Dutch national theater to run the ballet company. I went into her ballet school and took classes, and I was then asked to join the company. I asked the underground, "Was it all right?" Oh, yes!—because you'd get fantastic ID papers when you went there, into this company. Because the company traveled, you got papers to be out after curfew. And that way I could help shift people from one hiding place to another, like American soldiers—pilots who were shot down—and other people who were underground.

Let me tell you how this was done. There were no more trucks or taxis, and there were very few cars, because there was no gasoline. So what they had was people on bicycles pulling little wagons behind them. And the people that I moved were moved in the middle of the night, after curfew, with them being the bench and me sitting bent over—sitting on their backs, with a rather short skirt and my very good papers, with makeup still on from the ballet. When German soldiers or the Dutch police would stop me and ask, "What is this?" I would have a smile and [my false ID] papers. I shifted a lot of people that way, from one hiding place that had gotten dangerous to another one which was new and hopefully better.

At 19, they felt I was getting old enough to do some other things, also. I had to be good for something. Besides, standing in line for food was hard in the winter, in the rain and the cold, I can tell you. We took care of a lot of other people who were underground who could not come

* When Jewish children were excluded from the Dutch public schools, Barbara received permission from her parents to attend a fine arts school.

out. I didn't particularly see these people, but I had to get food for them. Somebody helped me rent an apartment; it was rented under my false name, of course.

I was always cold. This is still one of my greatest fears. I can stand hunger better than cold.

Then a very difficult time started. Very difficult! First of all, we went into the Hunger Winter.* Not only us, but also the Germans! This was the first time they also had less food. They started to be hungry, and they started to be scared of the underground who had so many weapons! The Germans had weapons, but they were mostly old men and kids. It was just a very scary situation!

During that time I had the apartment which had big windows. I met the neighbors from across the street, and they told me that the people downstairs would go upstairs to our apartment when we were out and steal the food out of the closet. But we were hiding people there. Imagine the Germans running into these people. We had hiding places, closets—which used to be closets, now papered over—and there was an entrance via the floor and a rug that went up to it. The people we hid knew how to get into these closets. Of course, the Germans weren't stupid either, and if they did have a razzia [raid], if they did have a check into various apartments, they would stick their bayonets into the walls and into the floors looking for people.

There were no lights, no electricity. We had to go downstairs to get water from the fire hydrant and bring it to the third floor in buckets between three and five in the afternoon—you were assigned periods where you were allowed to get water. We were pretty starved. During that time we ate from the soup kitchen. We ate flower bulbs, soup made out of flower bulbs. We ate whatever the soup kitchen came up with. You had three little pots, and one of you had to go to the soup kitchen and get it. We hadn't had any butter or fat for so long that we were freezing to death. I was always cold. This is still one of my greatest fears. I can stand hunger better than cold. It was terribly cold! There were six or seven of us in the apartment. We would all go in one bed and put everybody's blankets and mattresses on top of us and we still were cold.

Library & Archives Canada

Dutch civilians and Canadian soldiers celebrating in Amsterdam, May 10, 1945, two days after the Germans surrendered to the Allies, ending World War II in Europe. The sign reads: "Amsterdam/Prov[ince]: N[orth] Holland. This is May 10th. And it ain't 1940." The photo was taken five years to the day after Holland was invaded by the Germans on May 10, 1940.

We were hungry, cold, and full of fleas by the end of the war. The hunger got so terrible toward the end. The Germans knew [that the Allies were near], and they let the Red Cross drop food in and around Amsterdam. They dropped cases of food on the roofs or in the parks or in open space, and the Germans were so scared by that time they didn't dare to pick them up. The food was distributed evenly, you know. If you found a case on your roof, you better take it, but we rarely ate the food because much of it was spoiled.

Then we heard that the Canadians were coming to liberate us. During that period we were getting sort of ready. You knew you could already go in the streets. We knew you didn't have to be as afraid.

* More than 20,000 people died during the Hunger Winter of 1944-1945 in the Netherlands, caused by the severe winter and the Nazis' stopping food shipments to northern Holland after the Allies and Dutch Resistance liberated southern Holland. People had to survive on 400-800 calories a day.

In the early 1950s, Barbara Rodbell wrote this poem and created the collage with photos of her, her four children, and the dead of a concentration camp. © Barbara Rodbell.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Many women am I.
Reach far into history.
Walked through the desert with Moses,
daughter of sages and wise men.
Walked through Rome, Spain, Poland,
Russia—
walking, walking to Germany, Holland,
daughter of poets, musicians, painters.

All Europe,
its thought, religion—
its suffering are mine.
Holocaust, death all around;
young and old—again, again—
well known this.
Prepare to fight, live: and do.

Alone now, as often before.
Start over.
Walk to America for husband and
children:
so nice, so nice (where next?)
Children: beautiful;
will they suffer?
of course! Later, sometime——

Rest awhile, find myself;
contribute, reach out and grow.
Walk with my daughter
hand in hand.
Hope again, always hope—
walk on and on.
Hope——

And they were coming. And they did come. I remember looking at the trucks coming, full of these healthy, pink, blond, blue- and black-eyed guys. I'd never seen so much flesh! I mean, it was incredible. And, of course, we went out there and screamed. We just screamed.

The war's ending and people are showing up. My cousin Ava comes back. She says, "Here I am." She told me they—my cousins—all were dead. I started learning who was alive and who was dead. We started hearing that there were lists of people who were coming back, and that my mother was on one of the lists. Well, Manfred said to me, "Don't believe it." And I said, "I'm going to believe it." We then knew—we had learned about the concentration camps. In '45.

So I started going to the train stations when I had the time. I stood there and I stood there and I stood there. People coming out of trains, and they have their heads shaved and they looked awful, coming back from camps; and you asked, did you know so-and-so? Did you know so-and-so? No. No. No. Now I think that one of those people was somebody who took my mother's name to get back to Holland. And somebody showed up with my sister's name and, of course, when I started looking, she was gone. I mean there was nobody to find.

After the war I worked for two years in the ballet. I danced; that's how I made money. I went to the apartment where I had lived with my family and told the woman there where I was living and asked her to forward any mail that she would get and to let me look in the hiding places that we had around the house. And, of course, she'd found the hiding places. There was nothing there. And then the woman below us, who was a fascist during the war, said to me, "I saw you got on [stayed in Amsterdam with false papers]. I didn't give you away when you ran away. You helped me." And I said, "You were helped enough"—because she had a lot of our family's possessions and I didn't get anything back. So I said, "I won't give you away, just like you didn't give me away."

After the war, Barbara learned that her family had been killed on their arrival at Auschwitz in late 1943. She remained in Amsterdam and worked with the ballet company until she came to the United States in November 1947, when she was 22. For a time she worked with the Ringling Brothers Circus. Settling in Baltimore, she met and married Martin Rodbell. In 1985 they moved to Chapel Hill, North Carolina, when Martin became Scientific Director of NIH's National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences in Research Triangle Park. They have three sons and one daughter, six grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Barbara has spoken across the state about her Holocaust experiences.

Barbara and Martin Rodbell on their wedding day, September 10, 1950, in Baltimore

Barbara Ledermann Rodbell, 2018

ONLINE RESOURCES

- 1990: Oral testimony of Barbara Ledermann Rodbell, excerpted here, video: 2 hrs. 53 min. (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)
  collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504687
  - Segment on using false papers and living in hiding (1:21)
    encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/barbara- ledermann-rodbell-describes-false-papers-and-moving-people-to-hiding-places
  - Segment on Anne and Margot Frank's parents (1:08)
    encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/barbara-ledermann-rodbell-describes-anne-franks-parents
  - Segment on Nazi orders to go to Jewish schools (1:57)
    encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/barbara- ledermann-rodbell-describes-her-reaction-to-nazi-mandated-schools-for-jewish-children-in-amsterdam
- 1984: Oral testimony of Barbara Ledermann Rodbell, video: 2 hrs. (USHMM)
  collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn520379
- 1998: Oral testimony of Barbara Ledermann Rodbell, audio only: 4 hrs. (USHMM)
  collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506651
- "Barbara Rodbell: Growing Up with Anne Frank," *The Story*, February 21, 2013, audio: 45 min. (American Public Radio) www.thestory.org/stories/2013-02/barbara-rodbell-growing-anne-franketurn
- *Daring To Resist: Three Women Face the Holocaust* (Martha Lubell Productions, 1999)
  - Video, 57 min. (about; video not online) www.wmm.com/filmcatalog/pages/c483.shtml
  - Synopsis, teacher's guide, resources (WHYY/PBS, 2000) www.pbs.org/daringtoresist/ www.pbs.org/daringtoresist/barbara.html

Excerpted from the oral testimony of Barbara Ledermann Rodbell, interview by Linda G. Kuzmack, June 12, 1990; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504687. Reproduced by permission of Barbara Ledermann Rodbell and courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Excerpts presented without ellipses for ease of reading. Images credited USHMM reproduced by permission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Other family photographs reproduced by permission of Barbara Ledermann Rodbell. 2018 photograph of Ms. Rodbell courtesy of Marianne Wason.

RESISTANCE ■ SIMONE SAVES REFUGEE CHILDREN

Simone Weil was born in 1920 in a small village in northeast France. At age three, she and her family moved to the larger city of Strasbourg, near the German border. After graduating from high school in 1938, Simone studied early childhood education and taught in a Montessori school in Paris. When France surrendered to Germany in June 1940, the country was divided into two parts, the north occupied by Germany, and the unoccupied south, "Free France," governed by cooperating French officials. When all Jews were forced to leave Strasbourg, Simone's family fled to the south of France. Simone was soon called to help children again.

One day late in 1941, I got a letter from someone I had known in Strasbourg, Andrée Salomon. She was a member of OSE, a French Jewish children's relief organization.* OSE had set up children's homes around Paris in the late 1930s to care for Jewish children from Germany and Austria whose parents had sent them to safety in France. After the German invasion of France in 1940, the homes were moved to the south of France. By 1941 OSE was taking care of several hundred Jewish children in 16 homes. OSE workers were trying to help families detained in French internment camps get their children out of these camps and into homes for children. Andrée asked me to come at once to an internment camp in Rivesaltes where many foreign-born Jewish families deported from the Rhineland [German region on the border with France], Belgium, and Holland were being held.

So I packed my bags and came. I was 21 years old. I had no idea what to expect at Rivesaltes.† I hadn't even known these camps existed. I was shocked at the conditions there. People were malnourished, inadequately clothed, and living in filthy rat-infested quarters. We set up infirmaries, clinics, and nurseries, and created programs for children and teenagers.

At this time OSE workers could take children under age 15 out of the camps and place them in homes for children. To be released from an internment camp, a child had to have a residence permit authorized by a local government official. Some officials found ways to help us, despite the orders of the Vichy government [the French authority in the unoccupied southern half of France]. First, however, we had to persuade the

USHMM/Simone Weil Lipman

Children cared for by OSE in the Rivesaltes transit camp, southwest France, 1942

USHMM/Simone Weil Lipman

A girl scout troop that Simone formed in Rivesaltes, 1942

USHMM/Simone Weil Lipman

A boy scout troop that Simone formed in Rivesaltes, 1942

* OSE (o-ZAY): Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (Children's Aid Society).
† Rivesaltes is near the Pyrenees mountains (the border between France and Spain).

USHMM/Simone Weil Lipman

Rivesaltes transit camp, 1942

parents in the Rivesaltes camp to let their children go. The deportations had not yet started to the death camps in eastern Europe. Understandably, the parents, not realizing the grave dangers they faced, were reluctant to be separated from their children.

By August 1942, buses and trucks unloaded their human cargo daily at the internment camps. Rivesaltes became a central collection point for deportations. People were told they would be sent to work camps, but that wasn't true. The trains went to the death camps in Nazi-occupied Poland. At this time, some Jews could still escape deportation, depending on their nationality, date of arrival in France, service in the French army, and a few similar factors. For example, Jews with one non-Jewish parent might be allowed to remain. We scrambled to provide people in the camps with documents that would help them.

In our work we were aided by other relief agencies, the French Resistance, and the Jewish scouting movement. The Jewish scouting movement became a laboratory for falsifying documents and escorting people to safe places and across borders. Taking children out of the camps was now strictly forbidden. The Nazis and their French collaborators had ordered that Jewish families be kept together for their "resettlement to the East." The French police even took children from the children's homes after the parents had been tricked by the police into giving them their children's addresses.

USHMM/Micheline Weinstein & Jacqueline Levy-Geneste

Simone (right) with Dora Weissberg outside a building in Rivesaltes, 1942

By November 1942, all of France was occupied by the Germans after the Allied invasion of north Africa. Rivesaltes was emptied out, and I took a job in one of the children's homes taking care of the children whom we had gotten out of the camp. We cared for about 50 children. In spite of the risks, the police alerts, and the lack of food, we tried to make life in the home as normal as possible.

By early 1943, the French police were taking children over age 16 from the children's homes. The homes were easy targets for police roundups, because they were known to house Jewish children. The Germans conducted house searches and made mass arrests. OSE offices were raided and had to be moved

many times. Now French Jews like myself were as much at risk as foreign-born Jews. How foolish we had been to think we would escape persecution.

In the summer of 1943 we learned that the children's homes would soon be closed. We had to act quickly. OSE formed a secret network to place the Jewish children under assumed names in non-Jewish surroundings. The homes began to forge false identity papers and organize secret border crossings into Switzerland and Spain for the older teenagers. Everywhere frightened Jewish parents clamored for false papers and entrusted their children to OSE.

USHMM/Simone Weil Lipman

Simone's false ID card as "Simone Werlin"

The new OSE operation needed workers, and I was eager to join. What were the qualifications? None, really. You had to do it and be able to blend in physically with the non-Jews around you. I began by changing my identity. I took a different name and obtained a false birth certificate, an identification card, and, most importantly, ration cards for food and clothing. By then a network of people forging false papers existed, so we had access to blank identification cards. I made my place of birth the town of Toul because I knew that Toul's city hall had been bombed and all the documents had disappeared.

Changing my prewar student card and library cards was easy, but to make my new identity more believable, I needed the help of my former professors at the School of Social Work in Strasbourg. I went to see them. Without asking me any questions, they agreed at once to help me. They got me a diploma under my false name and a certificate stating that I was their student in 1938. These documents later helped to save my life when I got into a tight spot. I also needed a cover. The local Department of Public Health listed me as a member of its staff and gave me the documents to prove it. I went there only once to see what the place looked like in case I needed to describe it.

With my new identity established, I moved to Chateauroux, a safe city some 75 miles north of Limoges [in central France] and began my real job, helping to find safe places and new identities for children escaping from the Nazis. One of the first people to assist us was the Archbishop of Toulouse, who had spoken out from the pulpit against the discriminatory measures against Jews. He immediately gave his support to our project, helping to find homes for 24 children in Catholic convents, orphanages, and private schools. Soon we were combing the entire southern zone for Christian children's homes and even summer overnight camps willing to take Jewish children under false names.

The bewildered children came day and night, carrying whatever possessions they had. They traveled in small groups supervised by a social worker. We found temporary shelter for them until permanent housing could be arranged, and coached them in their new identities before taking them to new families. When, as sometimes happened, a false identity broke down, the children had to be moved at once and placed elsewhere for everyone's safety.

USHMM/Felice Zimmern Stokes

At age one, Felice Zimmern was deported with her family from Germany to an internment camp in south France. Rescued by OSE workers in 1942, she and her sister lived with French farmers, Juliette (here with Felice) and Gaston Patoux near Chateauroux until the end of the war. The Patoux were honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem.

Sometimes children came to us who were being smuggled into neutral countries, particularly Switzerland. We got them false papers, took the labels out of their clothes, and went through their luggage removing any traces of their true identities. I took them from Chateauroux to Lyons. Then someone else helped them cross into Switzerland. More than a thousand children were smuggled from France to Switzerland this way. Coded lists of the children's real and false names compiled by OSE workers were kept in Geneva [Switzerland], ensuring that the children could be traced even if all the OSE workers were killed.

USHMM/Charles Martin Roman

OSE members smuggled Jewish children over the Pyrenees mountains to Spain and over the Alps mountains to Switzerland in arduous multi-day journeys. In this photo from an Austrian Jew who had been protected by OSE, Jewish refugees escape over the Alps to Italy after Italy surrendered to the Allies in 1943.

In February 1944, the Gestapo raided OSE headquarters. All the OSE offices and medical centers were closed. Workers were captured and shot as hostages or died in battles between the French Resistance and the Gestapo. Despite this, OSE's work continued.

There was a job to be done and I did it. None of us felt we were doing anything extraordinary or particularly brave. So many of my peers were doing the same kind of work. We did it because it was the thing to do.

During those years, I was rarely frightened. I was young and felt sort of invulnerable, not thinking beyond what I had to do. There was a job to be done and I did it. None of us felt we were doing anything extraordinary or particularly brave. So many of my peers were doing the same kind of work. We did it because it was the thing to do.

Around this time I was arrested in Limoges by the French militia, a special police unit dedicated to finding Jews and members of the French Resistance. Limoges was the headquarters for OSE work in my area and I had to go there from time to time. I was walking down the street with a co-worker when a young Frenchman came up to us and said, "Follow me." Under his arm, he carried a gun. He belonged to the French militia which suspected my friend of being in the Resistance. He marched us to my friend's apartment and began ransacking her rooms. Neither of us knew exactly what he was looking for, but sewn into the lining of my suit pocket were the seals of town halls used in making false papers. I also had a coded list of my hidden children.

As I watched the French militia man tear apart my friend's apartment, I thought about how to get rid of the incriminating documents. I asked permission to go to the bathroom and they let me go. That simple little slip on their part saved me. In the bathroom, I removed everything from the lining of my pocket and flushed most of it down the toilet. The rest I threw out the window. When I came back into the room, they went through my papers but I was okay. I had my diplomas, my university student card, and my library card with the false names. Luckily no one asked me about the address in Limoges on my identification card. I didn't even know where the street was. If they had asked me to take them there, I couldn't have done it, but they didn't and I was saved. The militia let me go, but not my friend.*

In September 1944, the war was over for us in southern France. OSE reopened its doors and we took the children out of the convents and homes that had hidden them and brought them to a large chateau in central France. We celebrated as the search for the children's surviving

* Simone learned years later that her friend had survived the war.

relatives began. Months passed before the Allies reached the death camps in Poland. Only then did we learn that many of the children we had sheltered were now orphans.

USHMM

Simone Weil Lipman during her interview with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2006

Simone helped to rescue several hundred children during the war. When France was liberated in 1944, Simone opened a preschool near Paris for Jewish children who had lost their parents during the war. Offered a scholarship by the National Conference of Jewish Women, she came to the U.S. in 1945 and earned a master's degree in social work, pursuing her career as a social worker in Cleveland, Ohio, and Syracuse, New York. She married Martin Lipman, also a Holocaust survivor; they have two sons and five grandchildren. In 1986 they retired to Chapel Hill, North Carolina. In the 1980s Simone reconnected with OSE and attended OSE reunions, meeting with some of the refugees she had helped to save. Simone spoke to many students and other groups across the state about her war experiences.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Video, 1990: Oral testimony of Simone Marguerite (Weil) Lipman, excerpted here, 1¾ hrs., with transcript (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504630
  - Short selections from the testimony
    - Conditions in the Rivesaltes camp (2:11) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/simone-weil-lipman-describes-camp-conditions-and-her-work-for-the-childrens-aid-society-ose-in-rivesaltes
    - Moving children to safety (1:44) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/oral-history/simone-weil-lipman-describes-helping-the-childrens-aid-society-ose-move-children-to-safety-in-southern-france
- Audio, 1998: Oral testimony of Simone Weil Lipman, 4¼ hours, with transcript (USHMM) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506653
- Video, 2006: Oral testimony of Simone Weil Lipman, 1¾ hours, with summary (USHMM) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn607951
- Video, 2008: Defying Genocide, conversation with Simone Weil Lipman and Damas Gisimba, director of an orphanage in Rwanda that was besieged by militias during the 1994 genocide, 18½ min., (USHMM) youtu.be/TbM4ux8SKII
- OSE (Oeuvre de secours aux enfants), Wikipedia entry en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C5%92uvre_de_secours_aux_enfants

Rescuers of North Carolina Survivors
_____Featured in This Guide_____

- **Johannes & Maria van den Brink**, rescuers of Renée Fink
- **Natalia & Nikinor Palaschuk**, rescuers of Shelly Weiner and Rachel Kizhnerman
- **Simone Weil Lipman** (right) with a colleague, rescuers of Jewish children in France
- **Bogdan Zal** and fellow rescuers of Esther & Ezjel Lederman in Nazi-occupied Poland

VI ■ RESCUERS ■

_____OVERVIEW_____

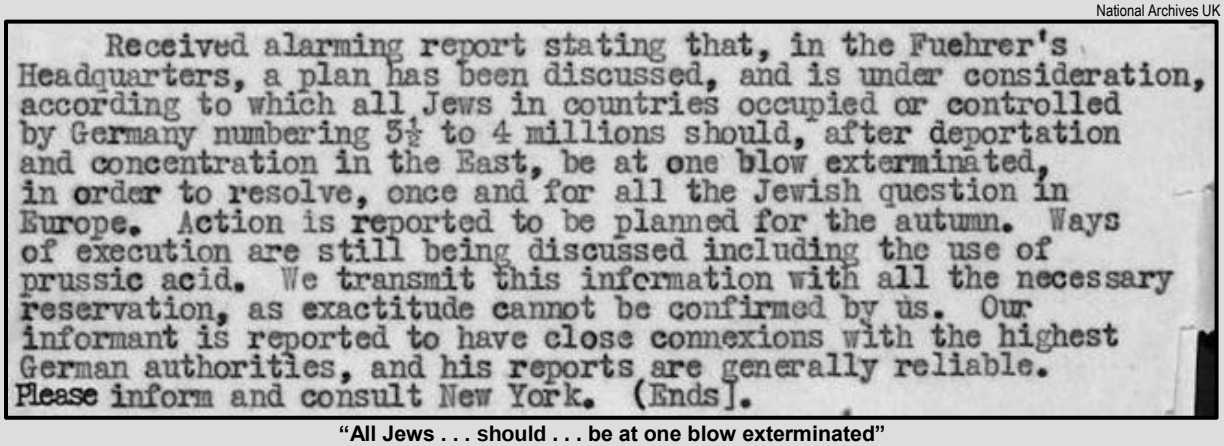
- ***"Our decision to save the Lederman family was entirely spontaneous. We couldn't stand by and not offer help."*** **__Bogdan Zal**
- ***"I have often wondered how the Palaschuk family had such strength and bravery to do what they did. To hide us—four people—when they knew that the punishment would be death for them and their children, and all their property would be confiscated. I am not sure how I would react in the same situation. I don't think that many of us would know how we would react."*** **___Shelly Weiner**

For the most part, the nations of the world offered little assistance to the victims of the Holocaust before and during the war. German plans for the annihilation of the Jews could not have succeeded without the active cooperation of non-Germans in occupied Europe. A long tradition of anti-Semitism aided the Nazis in their efforts. Many of the death camps were staffed by eastern Europeans, recruited and trained by the Nazis. Yet amidst this environment many individuals took great risks to aid and rescue Jews and other Nazi victims.

NATIONS OFFER LITTLE HELP AS NAZI PERSECUTION BEGINS During the early years of the Nazi regime, few countries offered refuge to its victims, even after it became clear that discrimination against Jews and other groups was a deliberate policy of the German government. Although its charter forbade such actions, the League of Nations remained helpless to stop Hitler's plans for the forced expulsion of the Jews. The League did set up a commission to help German Jewish refugees, but member nations offered so little assistance that the head of the commission, James McDonald, resigned in protest in 1935. No nation offered to revise its immigration policy to meet this crisis. None except England offered to accept Jews in large numbers while they could still get out in the 1930s; many were Jewish children from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia who were saved through the Kindertransport program.

NATIONS KEEP IMMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS The countries of the world continued to restrict immigration from Europe. In the 1930s government officials in the United States and Great Britain as well as others outside Nazi Europe received numerous press reports about the persecution of Jews, and by August 1942 they had confirmed reports of Hitler's intent to annihilate European Jewry. However, various factors including anti-Semitism, the Great

National Archives UK



Received alarming report stating that, in the Fuehrer's Headquarters, a plan has been discussed, and is under consideration, according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3½ to 4 millions should, after deportation and concentration in the East, be at one blow exterminated, in order to resolve, once and for all the Jewish question in Europe. Action is reported to be planned for the autumn. Ways of execution are still being discussed including the use of prussic acid. We transmit this information with all the necessary reservation, as exactitude cannot be confirmed by us. Our informant is reported to have close connexions with the highest German authorities, and his reports are generally reliable. Please inform and consult New York. (Ends).

"All Jews . . . should . . . be at one blow exterminated"

Portion of the telegram sent by Gerhard Riegner, secretary of the World Jewish Congress in Switzerland, to its New York and London offices on August 8, 1942, confirming reports that the Nazis intended to exterminate the Jews in Germany and the occupied nations.

Depression, and fear of a massive influx of refugees stopped both countries from changing their immigration and refugee policies. During the Nazi regime (1933-45), the United States admitted about 200,000 refugees from Nazi-controlled Europe, yet nearly 200,000 openings went unfilled. Once the war began for the U.S. in 1941, immigration from war-torn Europe to the U.S. basically stopped. Great Britain, Canada, and a number of Latin American countries had policies similar to those of the United States. During the war, the Allies' stated goal of defeating Germany's military took precedence over rescue efforts. U.S. leaders did not take specific steps to stop or slow the murder of Jews until 1944 when mounting pressure from the public, particularly from Jewish-American groups, led the U.S. to undertake limited rescue efforts.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

A Jewish girl wearing an ID tag sits after arriving in England with the second Kindertransport, December 1938.

KINDERTRANSPORT After the Nazi attacks on Jews in November 1938 (Kristallnacht), Great Britain offered refuge to thousands of children in Germany and Nazi-occupied regions. Through the Kindertransport program from 1938-1940, 9,000-10,000 children under 17 (7500 of them Jewish) left their homes, most never to see their parents again, and traveled to Britain where they lived with families or in children's facilities.

***ST. LOUIS* REFUSED ENTRY** While the doors to official emigration were closing to German Jews, many still tried to leave for a safe haven abroad. In May 1939, 937 German Jews boarded the MS *St. Louis* bound from Germany to the United States. The passengers already had American quota permits but did not yet have visas. After the *St. Louis* reached Cuba, the passengers waited for over a month for their papers to be processed by American authorities. When permission was eventually denied by the U.S., several Jewish organizations arranged for the refugees to settle in Great Britain, France, Belgium, or the Netherlands. While many died in Nazi camps, most of the *St. Louis* refugees survived the war.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

Jewish refugees on board the *St. Louis* in Havana harbor, Cuba, before being turned back to Europe, June 1939

LITTLE SUPPORT FROM CHURCH LEADERS BEFORE THE WAR The world's religious communities did little to protest the mistreatment of Germany's Jews. Before the war, few Catholic and Protestant clergymen officially condemned the Nazi treatment of Jews. Church leaders in Germany looked aside when in 1935 the Nazis implemented the Nuremberg Laws. After war broke out, however, a number of Catholic and Protestant leaders did offer assistance to Jews, including false baptismal certificates and refuge in monasteries and convents. In Germany, Pastor Martin Niemöller, a World War I hero, spoke out against some Nazi policies, as did a few other high-ranking German religious leaders. But such protest was limited and came too late to make a difference.

Many church organizations gave critical assistance to Jewish and non-Jewish refugees in Europe; for example, the Society of Friends (Quakers) gave aid to thousands of Jewish refugees in internment camps in southern France and arranged for many of their children to emigrate to the United States. After the war, the American Friends Service Committee and the British Friends Service Council were awarded the 1947 Nobel Peace Prize, particularly for their relief work in Europe during and after the war.

DENMARK Even after it was occupied by the Germans in 1940, the Danish government refused to accept Nazi racial policies. The Danish king told German officials that he would not permit the resettlement of Denmark's small Jewish population. In fall 1943, when the Nazis ordered the deportation of the Danish Jews, the Danish Resistance, with the strong support of the local population, organized a boatlift to neutral Sweden. Danish fishermen and police risked their lives, ferrying Jews across the Baltic Sea to Sweden. The two-week rescue saved 7,200 Jews (and 680 of their non-Jewish relatives), almost the entire Danish Jewish community.

ITALY AND BULGARIA Although Italy and Bulgaria were allied with Germany in the war, both nations resisted German orders to deport Jewish citizens and slowed efforts to deport Jews. Despite severe German pressure and local anti-Semitic political parties, Bulgaria did not deport its Jewish citizens (but did allow deportations from areas newly annexed to Bulgaria).

POLAND In Nazi-occupied Poland the Nazis made helping Jews an offense punishable by death. The names of those executed were widely publicized, and punishments often applied to the rescuers' families as well as the rescuers themselves. Despite this, many Polish citizens aided Jews during the war. Hundreds of Polish Catholics hid Jews in their homes and farms. A few resistance groups supplied arms to Jewish fighters in Polish ghettos. Zegota, a small underground organization of Polish Catholics, hid Jews from deportation. Older Jews in hiding were given money and medicine. An estimated 4,000 Jewish children were taken from the ghettos and put into Catholic orphanages, convents, or cloisters where they assumed new identities and survived the war.

USHMM/Leopold Page Photographic Collection

Oskar Schindler (second from right) in Munich one year after the war with a group of Jews he rescued, spring 1946

USHMM/Jack Lewin

Juliet Usach (arms folded), director of La Guespy children's home in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, with Jewish children living in the home, ca. 1941

OSKAR SCHINDLER The efforts of businessman and Nazi Party member Oskar Schindler to save Jewish lives became world known with the 1993 film *Schindler's List* by Steven Spielberg. Even though Nazi authorities suspected him of protecting Jews, Schindler continued to insist that he needed the forced laborers in his factories, thereby saving over 1,000 Jews from death in Auschwitz.

FRENCH AND DUTCH TOWNS HIDE JEWS The small town of Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, a community of Protestant Huguenots in southern France, saved between 3,000 and 5,000 Jews. Urged to act by the local pastor of the Reformed Church, André Trocmé, townspeople hid thousands of Jews in their homes and farmhouses. From there many were smuggled across the border into Switzerland. The Dutch village of Nieuwlande performed a similar act of heroism. Beginning in 1942, each resident agreed to hide one

Jewish family or at least one Jew. By sharing the danger equally, no one villager risked being denounced by the others.

ANNE FRANK Perhaps the most famous hidden person during the Holocaust is Anne Frank, who with her family and others hid for almost two years in a secret section of the building which housed her father's business in Amsterdam. Only four employees knew of their hiding and helped the families survive until their arrest.

HIDDEN CHILDREN It is estimated that only 6-11% of the prewar population of Jewish children in Europe survived the war, and many of these were sent into hiding with Christian families or organizations by their parents. Despite vast efforts by the United Nations and other organizations to reunite families after the war, the obstacles in chaotic war-torn Europe were immense, and, tragically, few parents of hidden children were still alive. (See the Lesson "Hidden Children" in this guide.)

DIPLOMATS IN NAZI-HELD NATIONS HELP JEWS ESCAPE Many know the name of Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat in Nazi-occupied Budapest, Hungary, who gave Swedish "certificates of protection" to thousands of Hungarian Jews, often handing out these documents to people loaded on German trains bound for the death camps. Wallenberg and other diplomats in Budapest from neutral nations, including Carl Lutz (Switzerland) and Sampaio Garrido (Portugal), saved tens of thousands of lives through their bravery. Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat in occupied Lithuania, gave hundreds of Jews visas to travel through Japan to the island of Curaçao, a Dutch island in the Caribbean where they had permission to travel. George Mantello, a Jewish diplomat working for the consulate of El Salvador in Switzerland, gave fake Salvadoran citizenship papers to thousands of Jews.

WHO WERE THE RESCUERS? There are many other instances of individuals acting with exemplary selflessness to rescue Jews and other victims from the fate of death to which Nazism had condemned them. Their acts range from smuggling food through a ghetto wall to hiding a family in an attic or barn to providing thousands of desperate Jews with exit visas. Who were they? Why did they act when many did not? For many, the explanation is a commitment to doing what is right, regardless of the consequences. Many rescuers insist that they were not particularly courageous, that anyone in the same situation would have done the same. We who learn of their acts hope this is the truth.

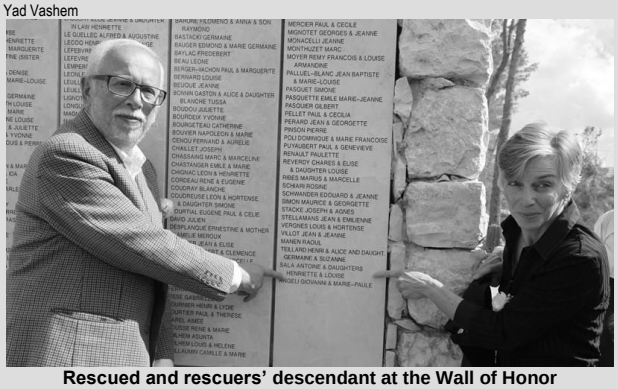
Rescuers featured in this guide (from top):

- **Johannes & Maria van den Brink**, rescuers of Renée Fink
- **Natalia & Nikinor Palaschuk**, rescuers of Shelly Weiner and Rachel Kizhnerman
- **Simone Weil Lipman** (right) and a col league, rescuers of Jewish children in France
- **Bogdan Zal** and fellow rescuers of Esther & Ezjel Lederman in Nazi-occupied Poland

In addition to personal integrity and courage, several factors of place and circumstance influenced the opportunity for rescue:

- The degree of control that the Nazis exercised over an occupied country often reflected their attitude toward the country's inhabitants—were they fellow "Aryans" or not? In Denmark, non-Jewish citizens were treated leniently by Nazi authorities at first because the Germans viewed the Danes as racially superior Aryans like themselves. In contrast, the Nazis exercised almost total control in occupied Poland, whose non-Jewish people were primarily Slavic and thus deemed subhuman by the Nazis (and might have been annihilation victims if the Nazis had won the war). This total control made citizen rescue efforts extremely risky: rescuers would be killed or sent to concentration camps themselves.
- The degree of anti-Semitism within an occupied country was a critical factor. Historically many eastern European countries had a strong tradition of anti-Semitism. Denunciations of Jews and those who tried to protect them were common. In such areas, before they could act, prospective rescuers had to overcome deeply ingrained anti-Jewish attitudes as well as the knowledge that their actions on behalf of Jews would be condemned by non-Jewish friends and relatives.
- In many parts of eastern Europe, Jews and Christians lived in separate social and cultural worlds. This lack of assimilation made it very difficult for Jews to blend into the Christian world. In Poland, for example, over three fourths of all Polish Jews spoke Yiddish or Hebrew as their first language.
- In some places, it was easier for Jews to physically blend with the rest of the population. Hiding Jews in countries like Italy was made somewhat easier by the fact that many Jews looked similar to their Italian rescuers. Italians saved more than 30,000 Jews following Hitler's occupation of northern Italy in 1943. Nuns, priests, and others hid families in convents or forged new identity papers for those they rescued. In Nazi-occupied Poland this was not the case.
- The sheer number of Jews within a particular country and the degree to which these Jews were assimilated also affected their chances of rescue. It was easier to get Denmark's 7,200 Jews to safety than Poland's three million.

Yad Vashem



Rescued and rescuers' descendant at the Wall of Honor

As a young Jewish boy in Paris, Henri Dzik was taken in and protected by the Sala family in southern France during the war. In 2013, the family was honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem. Henri and Veronique Dorothy, a granddaughter of the Salas, point to the Salas' names on the Wall of Honor in Yad Vashem.

YAD VASHEM HONORS THE "RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS" At Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Israel, non-Jews who aided Jews during the Holocaust are honored as Righteous Among the Nations. 27,000 individuals from 51 countries have received this honor as of January 2018. Hundreds of trees have been planted along the Avenue of the Righteous, each bearing a plaque with the rescuer's name and a description of his or her actions. The Avenue of the Righteous reminds visitors of the courage of non-Jews who, despite risk to their own lives and families, refused to stand by while others were persecuted.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from Yad Vashem
  - Rescue www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/rescue.html
  - The Righteous Among the Nations www.yadvashem.org/righteous.html
  - Rescuers' Stories (39): Righteous Among the Nations www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories.html
  - The World's Reaction www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/rescue/worlds-reaction.html
  - *Schindler's List* as an Educational Tool (classroom activities) www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/schindlers-activities.html

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Rescue encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/rescue
  - Rethinking Perpetrators, Bystanders, and Rescuers (lesson) www.ushmm.org/educators/lesson-plans/rethinking-perpetrators-bystanders-and-rescuers-overview-and-background
  - Some Were Neighbors: Collaboration and Complicity in the Holocaust somewereneighbors.ushmm.org/
  - The United States & the Holocaust encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-united-states-and-the-holocaust
  - Americans and the Holocaust www.ushmm.org/americans
  - U.S. Immigration and Refugee Law, 1921-1980 encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/united-states-immigration-and-refugee-law-1921-1980

- Resources from Facing History and Ourselves
  - Holocaust and Human Behavior: 12 chapters of readings/videos/activities www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior
  - Select Readings from Holocaust and Human Behavior
    - — Choices That Define Us www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-10/choices-define-us
    - — Choiceless Choices www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-9/choiceless-choices
    - — The Holocaust: The Range of Responses www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-holocaust-and-human-behavior/holocaust-range-responses
  - America and the Holocaust www.facinghistory.org/defying-nazis/america-and-holocaust

- Assessing Responsibility and Conscience (Lesson: PBS) www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/the-holocaust-assessing-responsibility-and-conscience/

■ **SEE the online Holocaust teaching resources recommended by North Carolina Holocaust educators.** ■
www.ncpublicschools.org/docs/holocaust-council/resources/teachingresources.pdf

LESSON ■ HIDDEN CHILDREN

- **Narrative: Shelly and Rachel Hide on a Farm**
- **Narrative: Renée Hides with a Catholic Family**
- **Narrative: Esther's Rescuers Are Honored**

Of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis, over one million were children. Of those who survived, many did so by going into hiding. Some hid with their families, like Anne Frank, and were helped by friends and underground workers who provided food and provisions. Some were sent by their parents to Christian families or facilities that protected them in "open hiding," i.e., by presenting them as Christian children. Many in hiding were captured through betrayal or Nazi raids and died in concentration camps, as did Anne Frank.

If your students have read Anne Frank's diary, ask what they most remember about Anne and her adjustment to life in hiding as a teenager. Anne would have been 92 years old today (2021) if she had survived. What questions would students ask Anne if they could meet her? They could ask the same questions of the survivors in this chapter, as all four are alive in 2021 (the year of this revised edition).

Introduce the North Carolina survivors whose narratives are included here. All remained in hiding until their countries were liberated.

- **Shelly Weiner and Rachel Giralnik Kizhnerman** were five- and six-year-old cousins in Nazi-occupied Poland when they went into hiding with their mothers on the farm of a Christian family. They settled in Greensboro in 1972 and 1980.
- **Renée Laser Fink** was four when her parents sent her into "open hiding" with a Christian family in Nazi-occupied Holland. Her parents did not survive. She settled in Chapel Hill in 1988.
- **Esther Gutman Lederman** was 18 when she went into hiding in Nazi-occupied Poland with a boyfriend and his family in the home of a Christian family, the Zals. Her memoir includes a piece written by **Bogdan Zal**, who explains his family's decision to be rescuers. She moved to Chapel Hill in 2004.

Have students consider these questions as they read the narratives.

THE RESCUED

1. What circumstances led each person into hiding?
2. Renée, Shelly, and Rachel were very young when they went into hiding (4, 5, 6). How much did they understand of what was happening to them so abruptly?
3. Esther went into hiding when she was 18. How did her experience differ from the young girls' experiences?
4. How did Renée's "open hiding" differ from the secret hiding of Shelly, Rachel, and Esther?
5. What did the hidden children do to spend their time? to protect themselves?

"*Translate statistics into people*."

In its guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust (see Supplemental Materials), the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum recommends using first-person accounts of survivors

"*precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims; [they] add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics*."

6. Did the parents of each hidden child survive the war? How would this affect the child's life after liberation?
7. How did the survivors adjust to coming out of hiding?
8. How did they adjust to life after arriving in the United States? What challenges did they face? How did they meet them?
9. What does Renée Fink mean that for many child survivors the "toughest part was surviving survival"?
10. What does Shelly Weiner mean that, after liberation, she "really wanted to become part of something"?
11. Why has it been important to these four survivors to keep in contact with their rescuers?

THE RESCUERS

12. What motivated the rescuers to hide the Jewish young people? How did they, or the people they rescued, explain their actions?
13. What risks did they face?
14. What did the rescuers do to protect the Jews while in hiding?
15. What did they do to protect themselves?
16. Choose one of these statements from the narratives and write an essay, journal entry, etc., asking yourself how you would hope to act if someone you cared about needed to be hidden to survive.

    - Bogdan Zal: *"Our decision to save the Lederman family was entirely spontaneous. We couldn't stand by and not offer help. We realized the peril our action would bring in case of discovery."*
    - Renée Fink: *"This family had a very strong idea of humility and doing the right thing. And for them it wasn't very complicated. That is the only way that the two people I came to call Mama and Papa looked at the world. It was the only right thing for them to do. And they were in total disregard of any danger that was posed to them and eight of their children."*
    - Shelly Weiner: *"I have often wondered how the Palaschuk family had such strength and bravery to do what they did. To hide us—four people—when they knew that the punishment would be death for them and their children, and all their property would be confiscated. I am not sure how I would react in the same situation. I don't think that many of us would know how we would react."*

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Hidden Children
    - — Overview encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/life-in-shadows-hidden-children-and-the-holocaust
    - — Online exhibition: Life in Shadows: Hidden Children of the Holocaust, with script, study guide, and annotated bibliography www.ushmm.org/exhibition/hidden-children/index/
    - — Hiding: Personal Histories (brief videos with transcripts) www.ushmm.org/exhibition/personal-history/theme.php?th=hiding&t=4
    - — Anne Frank: Biography encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/anne-frank-biography
  - Children during the Holocaust encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/children-during-the-holocaust
  - Children's Diaries encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/childrens-diaries-during-the-holocaust
- Survival in Hiding (Facing History and Ourselves) www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-and-human-behavior/chapter-9/survival-hiding

■ HIDDEN CHILDREN ■
SHELLY & RACHEL HIDE ON A FARM

First cousins Shelly Weiner and Rachel Giralnik were four and five when the Germans invaded Soviet-controlled Poland in June 1941, occupying Shelly's hometown of Rovno. Six months later, the Nazis massacred 17,500 of the town's Jewish residents, forcing the remaining Jews into a ghetto. In July 1942 these survivors were systematically murdered. Shelly and her mother were able to escape to the nearby village where Rachel and her mother lived. They went into hiding on the farm of Christian neighbors until the Soviet army liberated their region in February 1944. In 2006, Shelly and Rachel were interviewed about their experience, and in 2013 they returned to visit Rovno (now Rivne, Ukraine) and the farm where they had hidden.

SHELLY: The Nazis formed the ghetto, and there were about 5,000 Jews left, and they took all the Jews from the ghetto and they marched them to the center of town, and they walked them to the edge, and they had dug trenches, and they shot them. And that's when our whole family—our aunts and uncles and cousins and my grandfather—they were all killed that day. But my mother had been told by one of her Polish neighbors that they were going to do that, and she snuck us out of the ghetto. And we walked to Rachel's mother's house that night.

Edward Serotta/Centropa

In 2013 Shelly and Rachel returned to Ukraine and visited the farm where they had hidden. They were welcomed by the family's son and daughter-in-law (right). Shelly holds the photograph of the Palaschuks, who hid them for 20 months.

Natalia and Nikinor Palaschuk

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe the hiding place?

RACHEL: The first hiding place was in a barn attic.

SHELLY: It wasn't that big. It was just big enough for us to sit down or lie down. We couldn't stand up. We stayed there 18 months.

INTERVIEWER: What was life like in hiding, in terms of meals and conditions? How did you make it?

RACHEL: Meals? We depended on the people who hid us. If they had some food, they would bring us something. It was very scarce. Conditions? We didn't have a toilet. It was hot in the summer, It was very, very cold in the winter.

SHELLY: We couldn't bathe. We couldn't change our clothes. We couldn't get up and walk. We couldn't make any noise. We were children. We had nothing to play with. The only thing we had was straw. We didn't have anybody else to talk to. Just us.

INTERVIEWER: Did anyone ever question you or suspect you?

SHELLY & RACHEL: Yes, yes. They were always suspecting.

RACHEL: There were some neighbors who were always suspecting that these people were hiding us. And the Ukrainian nationalists were after Jews, too. And the people who hid us, they were very scared, maybe more of the Ukrainian nationalists than of the Germans, because if they would find us, they would kill them, too. And they had a son who was in charge of all Ukrainian nationalists, and he knew that his parents were hiding us, and that's why they never came to look for us, because he wouldn't let them do it.

Edward Serotta/Centropa

Shelly and Rachel at the Palaschuks' barn where they hid with their mothers 70 years earlier

INTERVIEWER: Were you ever threatened during this time?

SHELLY & RACHEL: Yes—oh, yes.

SHELLY: They came once to look for us. The farmer came and told us that they were outside waiting for us. It was amazing, because we were probably five and six at the time. We were very young.

RACHEL: The farmer said they are coming to look for us. They were tipped off.

SHELLY: We had no choice but to come down. And so, the two of us, for some reason, we begged our mothers not to just come down passively. We would take our chances and run into the woods, because the barn was right at the edge of the woods. We just made this plea to them, because they said to the farmer that we needed a few minutes to say goodbye to each other, because they knew what was coming. And that is what we did. We ran into the woods that night, the four of us. And we could hear them that night, looking for us.

Antoshka, age 16, the farmers' daughter who hid with Shelly and Rachel at times when Germans came to the farm for food or to conduct searches

RACHEL: We spent the night in the woods. It was summertime. And then we went from the woods into the cornfields, and we were hiding there, for three days, with no food, no water, nothing.

INTERVIEWER: And then what happened?

SHELLY: Then we came back to the farm, because we were very dehydrated and very sick. It was August. And then the farmer made a place for us in the barn, where the horses drink out of the trough. Just for a week in this horrible trough; it was so hot and horrible. At that time, he was tired of the Germans coming to get his wheat and everything, so he had dug a hole in the woods to put his grain and all his produce and everything. So he said he would dig another hole and put us in it.

RACHEL: And his daughter, too, because he was afraid that the Germans would take his daughter to Germany.

INTERVIEWER: How did you pass the time, all those hours?

SHELLY: We don't know. Our mothers talked to us a lot, told us stories. What else?

RACHEL: We were crushing straw. That was our pastime, playing. And before we went into hiding, there were a lot of things happening. They killed our cousins and our aunt and uncle in a close-by village. Actually the Ukrainian nationalists killed them—and another cousin, Luba—who were coming looking for us; they thought they could hide together with us. They couldn't because they found them, and they were killed.

SHELLY: As children, we knew about all these things, and we heard a lot of those things. Even when we were in the barn, we could hear people being shot and killed, and screaming and crying. So even at that very young age we knew about fear and death.

———— ■ ————

SHELLY: There were a lot of side stories we're not telling you.

INTERVIEWER: Would you tell one or two, if you have time?

There are very few people our age who survived the war, who were hidden. It had to be not because of what we did or who we are, but it was our mothers. They were very strong women.

SHELLY: My Aunt Sonja, Rachel's mother, would tell me that she would sneak out. She had a lot of things that she had stored in different places. She would sneak out in the middle of the night, and she would go to different farms and she would take these things and sell them to the farmers, and bring some of the money to our farmer, so he would have something. And [the farmers] would say "Where are you coming from?" And she would say, "Oh, I'm so far away from here." You know, she would never tell them. Our mothers were very brave women. There are very few people our age who survived the war, who were hidden. It had to be not because of what we did or who we are, but it was our mothers. They were very strong women. And my aunt had stories to tell all the time. She was the one who was brave and would get up in the middle of the night. And she knew all the dogs in the village and they would always follow her, because otherwise she would wake up the whole village and she would be caught.

RACHEL: And something else. We had a cat before the war and, of course, when we went into hiding, the cat was left alone. I don't remember that, but my mother told me that the cat came into that barn where we were hiding, looking for us. Evidently he knew, or he smelled or felt that we were there. The people who were hiding us were afraid that the cat might reveal our existence there.

INTERVIEWER: What happened to the cat?

RACHEL: I don't know. I don't know what happened to the cat.

———— ■ ————

INTERVIEWER: How were you able to leave hiding?

SHELLY: We were liberated by the Russian army—the Russian army came in 1944. So the farmer took our mothers into town, or they walked into town—I don't know how they got into town—I think they walked into town, to make sure that it was true; they weren't sure. Then he took us in a wagon and brought us into town.

RACHEL: We were left for a while.

SHELLY: Right. They didn't want to take us yet. I don't know how long we were kept before he took us into town. But the war wasn't over yet, because they were still fighting in 1944. A lot of bombs and things falling, a lot of air raids.

RACHEL: There are a lot of details that we left out. It sounds like it was easy, but it wasn't. It was hell.

SHELLY & RACHEL: There was a lot of hunger, a lot of frostbite. We were frozen, both of us. There were a lot of rats and mice and lice. Hunger and malnutrition.

———— ■ ————

INTERVIEWER: As you look back [is there] any memory that particularly stands out?

RACHEL: Darkness, hunger, fear, cold—

SHELLY: Cold, a lot of cold, and darkness—

RACHEL: Not being able to move around, not being able to talk loud—

SHELLY: I think, yes, darkness. If you go into my house today, there are no curtains on any windows. A lot of light.

RACHEL: I like light, too. I hate dark homes.

SHELLY: Every light goes on as soon as I walk into the house.

———— ■ ————

INTERVIEWER: How long was it before you came to the United States?

SHELLY: Well, that's another long story—

RACHEL: A long story! [laughter]

SHELLY: A long story and a half! In 1945 when the war was over, Stalin [leader of the Soviet Union] made a decree that anybody who was a Polish citizen could go to Poland, so we went to Poland. Rachel and her mother stayed in Russia [in the Ukraine, then a Soviet territory]. And we went to Poland and we were there for about nine months, and then the Poles started having pogroms* again because some of the Jews returned from the concentration camps and wanted their property back, and the Poles did not want to give it up. In one town 60 Jews were slaughtered. We made our way to the American Zone in Germany, so we were in a Displaced Persons camp for three years.† And then we wanted to go to Israel, but Israel was not a

Shelly and her mother in Poland, 1945

Shelly as a flower girl in her uncle's wedding, 1945

Shelly and her parents, Eva and Myer, in a Displaced Persons camp, 1948

* Pogroms are organized massacres of an ethnic group, usually approved or organized by governing authorities, referring primarily to the planned massacres of Jews in eastern Europe and Russia/Soviet Union beginning in the late 19th century and continuing into the 20th century.

† Rachel's father had been forced into the Soviet army. He survived the war and returned to Rivne after the war. Rachel and both of her parents were able to get to the American Zone in Germany.

state [nation] as yet. So we were supposed to go—I'm making this very short—on one of these illegal boats to Israel. We were all packed and ready to go. I got up in the morning and I had the mumps, so we had to give up our places. That boat was captured by the British and there was some fighting, and the people were sent to Cyprus [island in the Mediterranean Sea]. So, again, my mom didn't think it was such a good idea, so we ended up in the United States in 1949. And that's how I got here. That's my story.

Rachel as a student in Leningrad, Soviet Union (now St. Petersburg, Russia), 1950s

INTERVIEWER: Sounds like the short version.

SHELLY: Very short version—there's a lot in between.

INTERVIEWER: Rachel, you stayed in Russia?

RACHEL: We stayed there. I went to school, got my education, got married, and had one child. We had not been in touch with Shelly and her mother for a long long time until Stalin died [1953]. And when he died, Shelly's mother, my aunt, found us, and we started corresponding, and they helped us to come to the United States.

INTERVIEWER: And what year did you come to the United States?

RACHEL: In 1980. My mother, I, my husband, and my son.

SHELLY: We had no idea where they were, absolutely none. My mother was walking down the street in Tel Aviv [Israel]. And this man recognized her and said, "I just saw your sister in Russia." We called them. This was in the late 1960s, and he gave her the address, and my mother went to Russia, and then I went with her in 1974. It was still very communist then. Quite interesting.

RACHEL: We moved to Leningrad [now St. Petersburg], and this was where we lived and worked, and I went to school. From Leningrad we came to the United States.

The family in Rome, Italy, in the 1980s. Left to right: Sonya (Rachel's mother), Jerry (Rachel's son), Shelly, Rachel, and Anatoly (Rachel's husband).

INTERVIEWER: Could you describe your life when you reached the U.S.?

SHELLY: I went to school in Philadelphia. For me as a 12-year-old, it was very interesting. I had never ridden in a car. The most fascinating thing as a 12-year-old was I never believed such a thing as television existed—because, well, that's crazy. How can you see things in the air, pictures being transmitted in the air? And I walked into a cousin's house and there was a television set, and I sat right down and watched it. And things like wallpaper—the most amazing things I thought about—full-length mirrors. These are things that

Shelly and Rachel with their mothers, Eva and Sonya, in Greensboro, NC, ca. 1996

I had never experienced. Telephones were kind of strange. We didn't have that at all. But it didn't take me long to adjust. I very much wanted to be part of something, because I hadn't been part of anything. I didn't have a childhood, did not have any friends, never played with toys. Didn't have a place—even in the Displaced Persons camps, we moved around a lot. We didn't have a home or apartment; we lived in one room. I really wanted to become part of something.

INTERVIEWER: Rachel, you came much later to the United States. How was it for you when you arrived here?

RACHEL: It wasn't easy. It was very difficult. The most difficult part of it was not knowing the language. This was a big obstacle in getting a job, getting around, everyday life. Was very, very difficult. Of course, I came as an adult, and it was different from Shelly. We did have TV and radio and whatnot [laughs]. I was an accountant back in Russia, and when I came here, of course, I couldn't be an accountant, and it was very difficult to get my first job. It was a big problem. It was difficult because back in Russia you were somebody. Here you are nobody [as a new immigrant]. You have to get whatever job comes. That was difficult—difficult emotionally to accept that. You can't work. You're treated differently than you were treated there. You're kind of second-class people. People look at you differently. But then after I learned English, everything fell into place.

———— ■ ————

INTERVIEWER: Many years later, did you ever keep in touch with the descendants of the people who hid you?

SHELLY & RACHEL: Yes, yes.

RACHEL: After the war, the people who hid us, they were still alive, but I don't remember when they passed away; they were older people. Their daughter was still alive, and their son was killed at the very end of the war. And we were in touch with their daughter until we left the Soviet Union, I and my mother.

SHELLY: We also stayed in touch with her. My mother and I ended up coming to the United States in 1949. We stayed in touch with her; we wrote her. We could send packages; there was a way to send packages to Russia, and we wrote to her and sent pictures and everything until 1984. And she died. We were planning actually to go see her in 1984. Her name was Antoshka. She lived on the farm.

———— ■ ————

Edward Serotta/Centropa

Shelly and Rachel at the barn where they hid with their mothers before moving to an underground bunker after the Germans searched for them on the farm

Rachel: *"Going back to the hiding place in 2013 was very, very emotional. . . . The hiding place was still there, and it was the same way exactly as we left it in 1945. The only person who lived there is a daughter-in-law of the people who hid us . . . her son, her grandchildren, and she, they were very, very happy to see us."*

Shelly: *"I have often wondered how the Palaschuk family had such strength and bravery to do what they did. To hide us—four people—when they knew that the punishment would be death for them and their children, and all their property would be confiscated. I am not sure how I would react in the same situation. I don't think that many of us would know how we would react."*

Return to Rivne (video, Centropa)

In 2013 Shelly and Rachel returned to their hometown and visited the farm where they had hidden. A video on their experience—Return to Rivne—*was produced by Centropa. In 2015 Shelly returned again to contribute to Centropa's teacher seminar program.*

Shelly met Frank Weiner in high school in Philadelphia and they married in 1958, moving to Greensboro in 1972. They have three daughters and five grandchildren. In 1957 Rachel married Anatoly Kizhnerman in the Soviet Union, and they came to Greensboro in 1980. They have one son and two grandchildren. Shelly and Rachel continue to speak about their Holocaust experiences across the state.

[See Anatoly Kizhnerman's narrative in Ch. 4, The Holocaust.]

Edward Serotta/Centropa

Shelly and Rachel view the entrance to their underground hiding place.

View *Return to Rivne* at www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/return-rivne-holocaust-story?language=en.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Shelly Weiner & Rachel Kizhnerman, 2006, 3 hrs. (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn607952
- *Return to Rivne: A Holocaust Story* (video, 23:33, Centropa, 2015, with script & study guide)
  - Video www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/return-rivne-holocaust-story?language=en
  - Script www.centropa.org/sites/default/files/film_script/return-to-rivne-final_script.pdf
- "Holocaust survivors to speak about revisiting hiding places," [Greensboro] *News & Record*, October 11, 2013 www.greensboro.com/news/local_news/holocaust-survivors-to-speak-about-revisiting-hiding-places/ article_1f5a24cb-8f8e-516c-99ad-7fb15c76adc8.html
- Videos on other hidden-children survivors in North Carolina, with lesson plans (Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education in North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC)
  - Renée Fink: On the Back of a Stranger's Bicycle (see narrative excerpts in this chapter, p. 122) youtu.be/eJAiC7fJXSo
  - Esther Lederman: Hiding for Our Lives (see narrative excerpts in this chapter, p. 128) youtu.be/J1mvWa2ky5M

Excerpted and adapted from the oral testimony of Shelly Weiner and Rachel Kizhnerman, November 14, 2006; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of Marcia Horn, collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn607952. Reproduced by permission of Shelly Weiner and Rachel Kizhnerman and courtesy of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Excerpts presented in chronological order; breaks in narrative order designated by horizontal dividers. Family photographs reproduced by permission of Shelly Weiner and Rachel Kizhnerman.

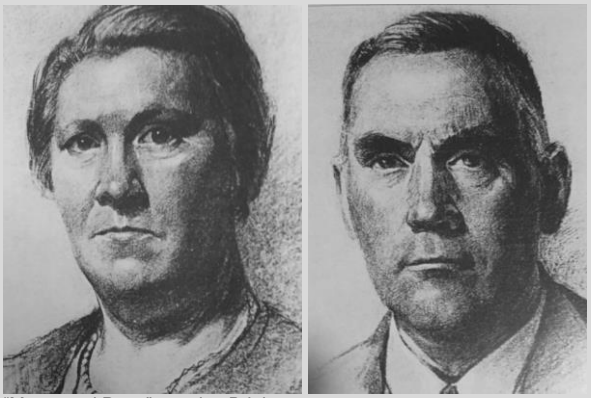
■ HIDDEN CHILDREN ■
RENÉE HIDES WITH A CATHOLIC FAMILY

Renate Laser was born in Holland (the Netherlands) in 1937, the only child of her German parents who left Germany in 1933 when Hitler gained power. After the Nazis conquered Holland in 1940, life for Jewish residents became increasingly dangerous. Many went into hiding like the family of Anne Frank. In 1942, before Renate's parents went into hiding, they arranged through the underground to place their daughter with a Christian family. Renate became Rita van den Brink, "hidden in plain sight" until the end of the war. She never saw her parents again.

Renate with her parents, Fritz and Edit Laser, in the late 1930s. (She was given the name Renée by an uncle when she arrived in the U.S. after the war.)

We were lower than dogs or cockroaches. Little by little [after the Nazi invasion], all our freedoms were taken away. Jews could not practice professions. Lawyers couldn't be lawyers. Doctors couldn't be doctors. Children could not go to public school. We were not allowed to be in public places or parks. We couldn't shop for groceries or necessary things except for very prescribed hours during the day, but by that time all the goods would virtually be gone. And at that time things became extremely bad and dangerous for Jews. We either had to go into hiding or be picked up in what were called razzias—the raids.

But the Dutch underground was extremely active, and proportionately there were—if you keep in mind that Holland was such a small country—there were more what is called "righteous among the nations" or "righteous Christians" than in a lot of other countries. And at the same time, there was a tremendous number of collaborators known as NSBers* who were very sympathetic to all things German and were more than eager to work with the Germans. There was a lot going on, and with the help of the underground, which may be more commonly known as the Resistance, two hiding places were found. I went into one hiding place for a short time, which I know nothing about. And then the van den Brink family was found, and we stayed together for the duration of the war.



"Mama and Papa" van den Brink

There are books written about what motivated the righteous Christians in Holland. This family was Catholic and they had a very strong idea of humility and doing the right thing. And for them it wasn't very complicated. That is the only way that the two people I came to call Mama and Papa looked at the world. It was the only right thing for them to do. And they were in total disregard of any danger that was posed to them and eight of

* NSB: Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging—the National Socialist (Nazi) Party of the Netherlands.

The van den Brinks and their eight children, aged approximately 10 to 24, lived in the left side of this duplex house in Laren, Holland. Renée joined them as a four-year-old Jewish girl whose parents feared it was the only way to save her life. (The painting was commissioned by Wilhelmina van den Brink, the oldest child, as a gift for Renée.)

their children. And it posed—I mean, to say "great danger" is such an understatement—they were all risking their lives to place even one little person like me for whatever length of time I ended up being there. So imagine, if they did the right thing, they had no idea if it would be a week or a month, or six months, and it ended up being from 1942 until well into 1945—May 4th.

I came to the house one day on the back of a stranger's bicycle. I didn't know who the stranger was. I did not have the first inkling of why I was on her bicycle. Neither would I ever have realized until I was older what it meant to my parents to see me off on this bicycle with a very nice woman who obviously was one of the underground workers. So I came—I don't know if it took many hours for the trip; I don't remember those details, at age four.

Knowledge was dangerous, and that's why going back to the woman who took me on her bicycle, knowing now the way the underground worked—everybody was a cog, a tiny cog in a very large machine. For them not to know anything beyond what they were doing was the only safe way, whether it was delivering a child from one address to another, or printing a flyer, or doing any number of hundreds of jobs. They were tiny jobs and that person only knew what he was doing. Everybody had false names; therefore you couldn't give anyone away.

After I got to this house, there were no more explanations, and I was just, kind of, in some kind of a survival mode. I lost my tongue and my appetite, and I was very homesick. I grew to love every one of these siblings. Five brothers and three sisters. There was a lot of love, but in a very stoic non-demonstrative way.*

The Germans kept such incredible records that they knew who was Jewish and who wasn't. Holland was such a topsy-turvy place, you know, after the bombing of Rotterdam, between the 10th and the 14th of May in 1940. There were a lot of non-Jewish people also displaced, because they had been bombed out of their houses. So you had people looking for shelter, and Jewish people on the run looking for hiding places. And Germans coming and making house searches. Where I lived they were constantly searching. I was Jewish, and I was putting everyone at terrible risk, and their sons were conscript material [eligible for the military draft]—they were the age when the Germans would have taken them.

NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies, the Netherlands

Over 400 Jewish men were rounded up and deported in a Nazi "razzia" (raid) in Amsterdam, February 1941.

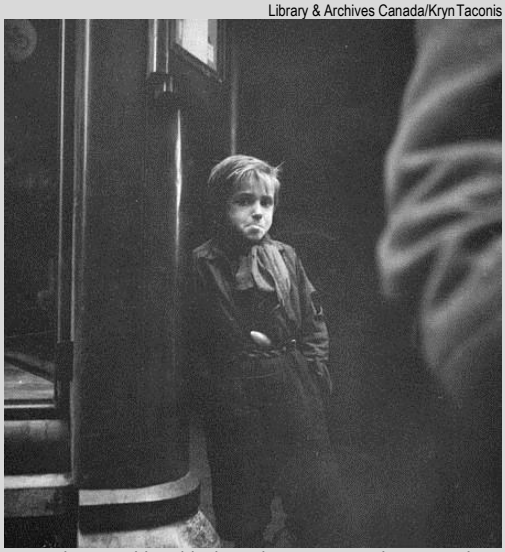
* Bert van den Brink was ten years old when Renate arrived. In a letter to Renée in 2014, he related how he learned that someone was joining their family: "One day my Dad took me aside to speak to me. I thought, what have I done wrong now? But he said, 'Tomorrow we are going to have a little girl come here and she is going to be your little sister and her name is Rita, and if anyone ever asks you about her you must always say she is your sister.'" [*Prism*, June 2017]

And then in addition to those major fears, the Germans took whatever they wanted. And if you were caught with a radio or anything that was contraband [forbidden], you were in grave danger, too. There was a little bit of panic each time. I think they really had to get rid of me into some little corner of the house. With enough warning I was tossed into a bed upstairs in one of the bedrooms; they'd cover me up with blankets. And my hair got covered that way, so it wouldn't raise questions about my appearance. They would point to me and start coughing and say "TB" [tuberculosis], and the Germans ran. It never failed. My hair was covered up, because in some cases Jewish children had their darker hair dyed so that they looked a little bit more Christian if they were not looking like the family.

My aunt and my grandmother were hiding, and they were on the run. They spent some time on the run together, and then they separated. My aunt and my uncle were working in the underground. My uncle said to my aunt at one time, "We're dead, either way, so we might as well make our lives count for something," and they joined the underground. So they did that. My parents went into hiding together and they were betrayed.*

I'm telling you about my grandmother's visit. One year while I was in hiding and she was on the run—she must have been in the east of Holland at that particular time. She spent two nights walking in the dark and hiding in the day so that she wouldn't be picked up. We were not free and had to have ID papers. [Jews had to wear the yellow star, and their ID papers were stamped with the letter J.] Certainly you couldn't be Jewish without being picked up and sent to the camps. So she appeared on my birthday. She didn't stay long, but it was unforgettable.

Library & Archives Canada/Kryn Taconis



Young boy outside a black market restaurant in Amsterdam, hoping for a food handout. Children often carried spoons "just in case." It is estimated that 20,000 people starved to death in Holland during the Hunger Winter of 1944-45.

I remember going to bed hungry every night.† And along with missing my parents, I was just wishing for food and thinking a lot about being hungry. We had some fake foods like bread. Now I call it "ersatz bread," but it may be better known as "wartime" or fake bread, just like "ersatz coffee." But every day we must have had a loaf of something that was called bread. And every night I went to bed thinking—and keep in mind, it was always exactly cut into the number of family members—11 of us, 11 equal slices. Somehow the heel seemed a little thicker. And so we each got our turn at the heel of the bread. And I would go to bed at night thinking "tomorrow is my turn to get the heel."

There were people starving, and they came—endless knocks on the door of people begging for food, just to survive.

There were people starving and they came—endless knocks on the door of people begging for food, just to survive. And every time there was a knock, my oldest Catholic sister answered and gave something to whoever was begging. This went on for a long time, and they always shared. Now, modesty and humility were a big part, so I know we shared proudly, but it

* Renée's mother and father were murdered in Auschwitz. Her uncle was shot and killed on a street in Utrecht. Her aunt and grandmother survived the war and reunited with Renée.

† More than 20,000 people died during the Hunger Winter of 1944-1945 in the Netherlands, caused by the severe winter and the Nazis' stopping food shipments to northern Holland after the Allies and Dutch resistance liberated southern Holland. People had to survive on 400-800 calories a day.

The fact that I appeared suddenly in this town, in this household, must have been the source of constant fear. Your neighbors could turn you in. Those were days we lived with fear on a level that is not easily explained.

The fact that I appeared suddenly in this town, in this household, must have been the source of constant fear. Your neighbors could turn you in. Those were days we lived with fear on a level that is not easily explained. So when I say they risked their lives every day—anyone could've turned them in at any time. And that's one reason they took their chances: they did it, they took me in. But they couldn't send me to public school; that would have raised a lot of questions. Church, I guess, wasn't an option: we went. But I never got to go to school. I never learned to read or write [during the war].

I'm going to tell you a little about different ways of hiding. My hiding experience was true for me. Other children were also hidden. Some went from house to house. Many were abused physically, sexually. Some were made into little slaves. I mean, there are horror stories about hiding, and they didn't all get families like [mine]. I was so incredibly fortunate. In some cases tiny hidden spaces were created behind walls.

My hiding was what I personally call a kind of open hiding, because Anne Frank comes to the minds of many people. She was what I call in a closed hiding, never to be seen or heard by anyone outside those walls. I could go outside at certain times, yet one of my brothers used to think back and feel sorry for me that I didn't get to come and go in the house as freely as the others. But I personally don't remember that.

Some little babies were pushed into bureau drawers, which were closed if there was a danger of being discovered. Others hid in barns, in haystacks, in chicken houses. One of my friends was thrown into a coal bin, underneath all the coal, at the age of two, his parents hoping he would be discovered in time, because Germans would come and poke with bayonets. Other children were thrown out of moving trains when possible, [their parents] thinking that was no worse than certain death. And some frantic Jewish was never mentioned. Yet I knew what was going on because it was always visible.

Then came the day there were knocks at the door, and Zus didn't answer, because we didn't have food to share. That would have had to be, I realize now, what was called in Holland the Hunger Winter, the winter of 1944-45. It was one of the coldest winters, and the food supplies had really run out. We were reduced to eating flour mixed with water, and sometimes we had smushed or mashed-up tulip bulbs, and we ate that.

USHMM/Lennie Jade

Aaron Jedwab was born in hiding and taken immediately to live with a Dutch Resistance leader who told neighbors he was an abandoned child. When he was reunited with his parents after the war, a "sister" lived with them for a time to help with his transition.

USHMM/Susie Grunbaum Schwarz

Susie Grunbaum lies in the barn attic storeroom where she and her mother hid for two years, protected by a Dutch Christian family.

USHMM/Marion I. Cassirer

Marion Kaufmann, a hidden child (right), with Rie Beelen, daughter of the Dutch Christian family who hid Marion until liberation, when she was reunited with her mother.

parents carrying infants desperately offered them to strangers on the street or in train stations. Hidden children were very good and very quiet and very well behaved.

Some parents paid money to families to take their children. That's another special quality about the van den Brinks—they did not do this for money. But in too many cases there was money involved, not only in Holland, but especially in the east [of Europe]. And when money ran out, children got kicked out into the street. And there are some pretty awful stories about little children on the run, and feral children running in the woods.

Renée, ca. 1949

Renée on her wedding day, 1957

After the war, I want to make it clear that, in the case of too many child survivors, our lives fell apart then and in the years that followed. I think for us, the toughest part was surviving survival. My grandmother knew where I was, so we were united, eventually. I desperately wanted to stay with the van den Brinks, but I went and lived with my beloved grandmother. And then before I knew it, I was told that we were going to America.

We survivors are speaking for many reasons. We must make sure the world never forgets and repeats. We must respond to Holocaust deniers and revisionists. We must speak for standing up for one's beliefs and having the courage to do that. I can easily respond to any questions about deniers and revisionists. We have the Germans to thank for that. They kept impeccable records. They were crazy for recording all the details, all the numbers, all the timetables of the trains. And if that's not good enough for people, then we can thank General Eisenhower for having his soldiers document through film and still photography what they found in the camps. There are all sorts of records. And I can say to students, if you come across such people, tell them you've met me.

———— ■ ————

Renate and her grandmother arrived in the U.S. in 1948 due to the efforts of Renate's father's cousin, Walter, who had emigrated from Germany in the mid-1930s, and who had married Renate's aunt after she arrived in the U.S. in 1947. Walter gave Renate another new name—Renée—because he thought people would mispronounce her name. Renée graduated from high school and attended the University of Vermont, where in 1957 she met her husband, Edward Fink. They were married for 45 years and had two children and five grandchildren. They moved from New Jersey to North Carolina in 1988.

In the 1960s, Renée reconnected with "Papa" van den Brink and the children ("Mama" had died during the war). In 1972 she and her family made their first trip to visit them. In 2014 she joined over 50 members of the van den Brink family to celebrate a reunion in Holland. In 1987, Johannes Gijsbertus and Maria van den Brink-Zoon were formally recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Israel, and by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC.


Renée joined her Dutch family at a reunion which gathered over 50 relatives from Holland, Australia, Mexico, and the United States, 2014. (The medal is a chocolate medallion given to Renée to wear to the reunion.)

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Renée Fink (source of excerpts presented here): "On the Back of a Stranger's Bicycle," 2014 (Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education of N.C./Holocaust Speakers Bureau, Chapel Hill, NC)
  - Video: 24 min. www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJAiC7fJXSo
  - Lesson and Power Point www.holocaustspeakersbureau.org/videos.html
- Oral testimony of Renée Fink, 2006, video: 110 min. (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn607950
- Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Israel
  - Righteous Among the Nations www.yadvashem.org/righteous
  - Entry on the van den Brinks db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4043113
- Nancy Lefenfeld, "Memory, Knowledge, and Family Love," on Renée Fink's experience as a hidden child and her life after the war, *Prism: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Education*, Spring 2017, 25-34. www.scribd.com/document/343887648/PRISM-2017

■ HIDDEN CHILDREN ■
ESTHER'S RESCUERS ARE HONORED

Esther Gutman *was born in 1924 in Łódź, Poland. After the Nazis invaded in 1939, her family took refuge in a nearby town. In 1942 the Germans began rounding up the town's Jews, including Esther's father. Esther had a friend, Ezjel Lederman, who had gone into hiding with his family in the home of Christian friends, the Zals. Esther asked them to take her in too, with her mother and sister, but her mother and sister were arrested before she could return for them; she never saw them again. The Zals hid Esther and the Ledermans for 22 months.*

Bogdan Zal *is one of two surviving members of the Catholic family who saved Esther and the Lederman family from arrest and murder by the Nazis. Years later Esther asked Bogdan to write a chapter for her memoir,* Hiding for Our Lives *(2007). His narrative is excerpted here.*

Esther Gutman

Bogdan Zal (left), with his cousin Wieslawa, and Ms. Zalewska

___In Bogdan Zal's Own Words___

At the outbreak of World War II in the fall of 1939, I visited the Lederman family in Chmielnik, about 20 km [12 miles] from my home in Grzymala. At that time I met his parents and his younger brother Ezjel. We formed a close friendship. We agreed with the Ledermans that in case the situation for Jews in Chmielnik becomes unbearable and dangerous, due to the new acts of persecution by the Germans, they should feel free to come to our home through back roads and wait out the crisis. They did that on a number of occasions in the years 1940-1942. They would always return to Chmielnik after the situation became calmer.

I remember exactly that on October 2, 1942, the whole Lederman family came to our home upset that the Germans were preparing some drastic action against the Jews. It turned out to be the total liquidation of the ghetto. The Germans collected the Jews in the market place and led them to the railroad. They took them to Jedrzejow and from there to Treblinka [concentration camp]. After the total evacuation the Germans checked the vacant dwellings in Chmielnik and killed any Jews they found hiding. The Germans issued an edict that the punishment for hiding Jews is the execution of the offending family and burning of the property. One was obliged to report any Jews hiding in the forest or other places.

Our family together with the Ledermans finally decided to make the hiding places in the village, in the old [family] house. We had to organize in secrecy so that strangers saw and heard nothing. In the beginning the Ledermans found themselves in the attic, then in the pantry, under which there was a potato cellar. An entrance to the cellar was created, where a box was built and covered with potatoes.

Our decision to save the Lederman family was entirely spontaneous. We couldn't stand by and not offer help.

A few days later an 18-year-old girl with false papers as a Catholic showed up unexpectedly asking for help—Esther Gutman. She claimed to be a friend of Ezjel who told her our address and told her she could count on our help. She asked for help for herself as well as for her mother and sister who remained in Chmielnik.

Esther did not know that the Ledermans were already hiding with the Zal family. She left our home and found shelter in a nearby village. The citizens of that village suspected her of being Jewish and she was afraid to remain there. Under cover of darkness Esther found her way to our home again and told us that her [false ID] papers were in the hands of the mayor of the village. Jozef, our brother, went to that village immediately and retrieved the false ID, which could not be allowed to fall into the hands of the Germans. Esther was sent to the forest for the night. The next day, after a meeting with the Ledermans, it was decided that Esther would go into hiding together with the Ledermans.

In the evening we took Esther to the attic. She got frightened that there was someone there, but after recognizing the Ledermans she calmed down and was delighted. Now the family in hiding consisted of five people.

Now, our immediate goal was to keep the fact that we were hiding a Jewish family in strictest secrecy from our neighbors and numerous other people coming to the house. We had activists from various resistance groups! Peasant Battalions, Land Army, National Armies Forces, reporters from the underground press, all meeting at our house and discussing policies. Nobody knew or got any inkling about the hidden Jewish family. Ezjel showed the greatest initiative in the planning of secret hiding places. A hiding place was dug out under the floor in the empty chamber. The entrance was covered by a box of dirt. Air was being brought through a duct from the outside. His hiding place was used frequently as a result of rumors circulating of German raids.

Germans used to come to demand farm products like grain, livestock, and dairy products. They also organized raids to hunt down healthy young individuals for forced labor in the Reich. During the raids the Ledermans were urged to stay in the special hiding places.

In our village there were many underground activists. Germans tried to get them arrested. There were raids and searches in homes of people whose names were on the Gestapo lists.

There was a lot of optimism and hope in the underground press, and a large number of these secret publications passed through our home. Ezjel was the main commentator of the progress of the war in Europe. He marked the progress of the Allied armies in the east, west, and south, as well as in Africa and Italy.

Esther kept writing postcards to her father, who was doing forced labor in an armament factory in northern Poland. We would mail these cards from neighboring

Esther Lederman: *We would stand at the window, our only fragile link to the outside world, for long spans of time and watch chickens pecking at the ground, dogs chasing the chickens, cows ambling by, horses being driven to and from fields, birds in search of worms, worms wiggling away from the birds. They were all free; they could do as they pleased, they could search for their own food, defend their own lives. They could fight for their own existence, enjoy the sunshine, and even look for shelter in cold and rain.*

We could not do any of these things. We were not allowed to actively participate in the act of living. We were passively dependent on other people's charity, mood, goodwill, and circumstances. We could only eat food given to us, drink the wisdom of centuries encapsulated in books given to us, and wait for fate to be kind to us.

towns so the Germans could not trace the place they came from, or who was sending them. It turned out that Esther's father did indeed keep receiving them, and after his liberation told us they gave him hope and courage to survive.

Days and weeks were passing in expectation of liberation from the German occupation. We lived constantly in fear of the Germans storming into the house and finding the hidden Jewish family. Finally in July 1944 the Soviet army approached the River Vistula and created a beachhead at the town of Baranów. The area around Grzymala was freed from the Germans. I clearly remember the moment in August at dawn when the Ledermans alighted from the bunker telling us that they heard the Russian language most certainly coming from the Soviet soldiers. There was great joy that finally the nightmare was over.

Esther Lederman: *It was August 3, 1944, when the Russians, our liberators, arrived. But now what? How to get out of the Zals' house? How to leave the house without tipping off the neighbors to the fact that five Jews had been hidden there throughout a 22-month period? How to sneak out without exposing the Zals to the response of their neighbors, who considered it a crime to harbor Jews? This was no imaginary danger. We understood full well that if the neighbors found out about us the Zals would come to harm.*

At that time I had a crystal-powered radio which I put together and tried to get some detailed information about the situation in our area. This radio aroused suspicion in the Soviet military. This was a war zone and it could indicate a secret spy station.

Captain Schneidklotz came to arrest me but I was in the old house. He took my father hostage and left for Grzymala to arrest me. I managed to hide since my brother Jozef came to warn me. Mme. Zalewska took Captain Schneidklotz to the Lederman family and explained to him that I could not be a spy for the Germans. I saved a whole family. Captain Schneidklotz saw that the saved family was Jewish.

Yad Vashem

The medal awarded to the Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem. The inscription reads in Hebrew, "Whoever saves one life, it is as if he saved an entire universe."

Bogdan Zal and his daughter at Yad Vashem, pointing to the inscription of his family on the Wall of Honor, 1992

It turned out that he was also Jewish. There was tremendous surprise, greetings, laughter, and crying for joy. The captain sent his adjutant for food, vodka, and we had a feast. He wanted to meet me and thank me personally for saving a Jewish family. This was the beginning of a great friendship between our family and the captain.

———— ■ ————

Our decision to save the Lederman family was entirely spontaneous. We couldn't stand by and not offer help. We realized the peril our action would bring in case of discovery. The Germans killed everyone caught hiding Jews.

At this time [2005] I and my sister Janina on our side, and Esther on the Lederman side, are the only survivors. We developed the kind of relationship which is much deeper than any in families. I derive great pride and joy in Esther's children's accomplishments. Esther always tells me that these are my children and my grandchildren, since thanks to me their parents and grandparents were saved from annihilation and were able to create this kind of a generation.

Radio Kielce

Bogdan and Esther in Poland

I can proudly state that my family was awarded the medal of "The Righteous Among Nations," and a tablet was installed on the Wall of Honor in the Garden of the Righteous in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. I also received honorary citizenship from the State of Israel.

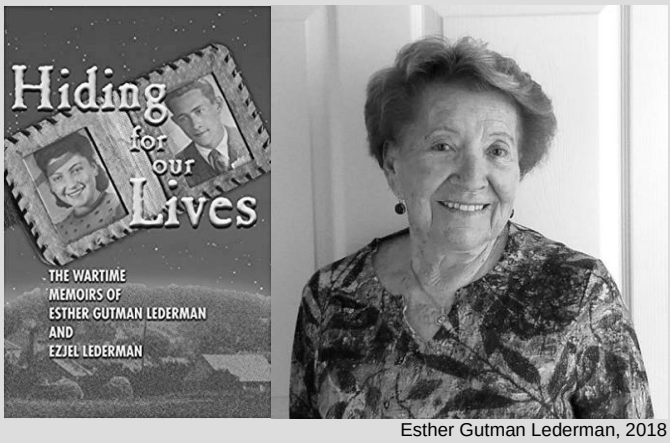
In 1984 the Zal family—Jan and Maria Zal, their sons Jan, Antoni [Bogdan], and Jozef, and their granddaughter Wiesława Wąsowicz, were given the honored designation of "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Israel.

Esther was reunited with her father after the war, and they left Poland with the Ledermans to stay in a Displaced Persons camp in Germany. She and Ezjel married in 1946 and arrived in the U.S. in 1949, living in New York where Ezjel practiced medicine. They have four children, seven grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. In 2004 Esther moved to Chapel Hill, NC, to be near one of her daughters. She continues to speak to students and other groups about her Holocaust experience.

Ezjel & Esther Lederman, ca. 1946

ONLINE RESOURCES

- "Hiding for Our Lives: Esther Lederman's Story," 2015 (Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education of NC/Holocaust Speakers Bureau, Chapel Hill, NC)
  - Video: 29 min. (three parts)
    (1) youtu.be/J1mvWa2ky5M (2) youtu.be/ZuXXjKPg-4c (3) youtu.be/F3mbBLXRSAM
  - Lesson and Power Point www.holocaustspeakersbureau.org/videos.html
- The Righteous Among the Nations (Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Israel)
  www.yadvashem.org/righteous.html
  - The Zal family, honored as Righteous Among the Nations
    db.yadvashem.org/righteous/family.html?language=en&itemId=4039840
  - Online exhibition: I AM My Brother's Keeper: A Tribute to the Righteous Among the Nations
    www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/index.asp
  - Photo gallery: The Bond between Rescuers and Rescued
    www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/righteous/gallery.asp



Esther Gutman Lederman, 2018

Excerpted and adapted from Esther Lederman, *Hiding for Our Lives: The Wartime Memoirs of Esther Gutman Lederman and Ezjel Lederman*, Booksurge Publishing, 2007. Reproduced by permission of Esther Lederman. Ellipses omitted for ease of reading. Names Esther and Ezjel used here in place of original Polish names Ezdia and Salek. Family photographs reproduced by permission of Esther Lederman. 2018 photograph of Ms. Lederman courtesy of Marianne Wason.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

An American soldier walks through the gates of Kaufering I, a Dachau subcamp, on the day of liberation, April 27, 1945.

VII ■ LIBERATION ■

_____OVERVIEW_____

- ***"One of the [prisoners] comes back and says 'I can't believe it, the gate is open, and there isn't anyone around.'"*** **___Zev Harel**
- ***"How can I describe the jubilation I felt when I first glimpsed the tank flying an American flag?"*** **___Morris Glass**
- ***"I didn't realize I was going to be liberated. I was liberated instantly. We had no idea."*** **___Abe Piasek**

Young Allied soldiers entering Nazi-occupied territory as the war neared its end had no idea what horrors awaited them. Although Allied leaders knew about the Nazi concentration camps, there was little awareness or acknowledgment that they represented a brutal highly organized policy of mass murder. As the young soldiers reached these camps—often abandoned by the Germans—they found thousands of skeletal victims and thousands of piled corpses. "We went inside and saw all the bodies," recalls George Rose, a liberator of Dachau who now lives in Wilmington, NC. "We went through the main gate, and there was a wall all around it with bodies like rag dolls, like little dolls thrown on top of one another. Then [survivors] started screaming '*Amerikaner, Amerikaner*.' They came out and they were hugging us and kissing us. I didn't realize I'd done something so important."

LIBERATION OF THE CAMPS AND GERMANY'S SURRENDER As Allied forces marched through Europe from the east (Soviet army) and from the west (American, British, Canadian, French, and other forces), they liberated hundreds of Nazi concentration camps. They gave food and medical care to the survivors and they buried the dead by the thousands. They compelled local residents to view the horrific camps and help transport bodies to burial. They photographed and filmed the horrors to document the genocide they saw firsthand.

__LIBERATION OF MAJOR CAMPS__

			Liberated by
Majdanek	Poland	July 23, 1944	Soviet Army
Auschwitz	Poland	Jan. 27, 1945	Soviet Army
Ohrdruf	Germany	April 4, 1945	U.S. Army
Buchenwald	Germany	April 11, 1945	U.S. Army
Westerbork	Holland	April 12, 1945	Canadian Army
Bergen-Belsen	Germany	April 15, 1945	British Army
Dachau	Germany	April 29, 1945	U.S. Army
Ravensbrück	Germany	April 30, 1945	Soviet Army
Mauthausen	Austria	May 5, 1945	U.S. Army
Ebensee	Austria	May 6, 1945	U.S. Army
Theresienstadt	Czechoslovakia	May 8, 1945	Soviet Army
Surrender of Germany (V-E Day)		May 8, 1945	

As spring arrived, the defeat of Nazi Germany became complete. On April 25, 1945, the Soviet and American armies met at the Elbe River in central Germany. On April 30, Hitler committed suicide in his underground bunker in Berlin. On May 2, Berlin surrendered to the Soviet army. The German forces surrendered unconditionally on May 7 in the west and May 9 in the east.

DISPLACED PERSONS The Allied forces faced the daunting challenge of providing relief for war refugees labeled "displaced persons"—the millions of liberated slave laborers and concentration camp survivors. Much of this work was accomplished through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), which set up hundreds of displaced persons camps in Germany, Austria, and Italy. They set up housing in former army barracks, schools buildings, and even concentration camps; provided medical care, schools and training centers,

and cultural programs; helped DPs find surviving relatives; and helped them get home—or wherever they felt would provide security and a future. Many Jewish DPs went to Palestine on the eastern Mediterranean coast, where the state of Israel was created in May 1948. About 80,000 emigrated to the United States. The experiences of Holocaust survivors who came to the U.S. and eventually settled in North Carolina are featured in this guide

SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES Many survivors did not talk about their experiences for many years, even to their children and other relatives. With time, and the growth of Holocaust commemorations, museums, memoirs, and programs like Steven Spielberg's Shoah Foundation to record survivor interviews, we have a permanent record of individuals' experiences. Many survivors continue to speak to students, the military, and other public groups.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Resources from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum
  - Liberation www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/liberation
  - The Aftermath of the Holocaust encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-aftermath-of-the-holocaust
  - Displaced Persons encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/displaced-persons?series=48246
  - Archival footage: liberation of camps (not a complete list)
    - — Auschwitz (child survivors) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-auschwitz-child-survivors
    - — Auschwitz (victims' belongings) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-auschwitz-belongings-of-victims
    - — Bergen-Belsen encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-bergen-belsen-1
    - — Buchenwald (color) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/german-civilians-forced-to-view-atrocities-committed-in-buchenwald
    - — Dachau encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-dachau
    - — Dachau encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/us-soldiers-care-for-dachau-survivors
    - — Ebensee (color) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-ebensee-camp
    - — Majdanek encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-majdanek
    - — Mauthausen and Gusen encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-mauthausen-and-gusen
- "Memory of the Camps," unfinished 1945 documentary with footage taken by British and American film crews with troops liberating the camps, presented by PBS Frontline in 1985 (57:32). Graphic footage. www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/memory-of-the-camps/
- Resources from the USC Shoah Foundation
  - Online exhibition: Stories of Liberation sfi.usc.edu/liberation
  - Witnesses for Change: Stories of Liberation (video clips from seven testimonies) sfi.usc.edu/exhibits/witnesses-change-stories-liberation
- Liberation and Survival (lesson, Yad Vashem) www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/lesson-plans/liberation-and-survival.html
- "Why We Fight," depiction of the liberation of Dachau; Episode 9 of *Band of Brothers* (HBO)/YouTube youtu.be/sHcJtU9dr6I
- Media coverage of the 2015 North Carolina General Assembly remembrance honoring survivors and liberators on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Dachau concentration camp
  - WRAL-TV, Raleigh, NC, April 29, 2015 www.wral.com/legislators-honor-holocaust-survivors-solider/14613083/ [sic]
  - WWAY-TV, Wilmington, NC, April 29, 2015 www.wwaytv3.com/2015/04/29/veteran-concentration-camp-survivor-reunite-70-years-later/
  - "Holocaust survivors emotionally reunite with soldier who helped free them," *People*, April 30, 2015 people.com/human-interest/holocaust-survivors-meet-george-rose-soldier-who-freed-them-from-dachau/

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Access the valuable teaching resources of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at *www.ushmm.org/teach.* The museum's offerings include lesson plans, teaching guidelines, online activities, interactive maps, audio and video collections, the *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, and other exemplary classroom resources.

LESSON ■ LIBERATION

- **Narrative: Morris Sees an American Tank**
- **Narrative: Abe Survives a Death Train**
- **Narrative: Edith Is Freed from Auschwitz**
- **Narrative: Zev Meets His Liberators**

All four of these camp survivors were teenagers during the Holocaust. To lead students into the liberation narratives, ask these questions: (1) How might it have influenced their experiences that they were teenagers in the camps? (2) How would it feel to realize you might never see your family again? (3) When life changes abruptly, as in being liberated after years of brutal treatment, how does one adjust to a radically different world—freedom?

Introduce the North Carolina survivors whose liberation narratives are presented here.

- **Morris Glass** was 11 when the Nazis invaded Poland. He survived over four years in the Łódź ghetto and was liberated from the Dachau concentration camp. He moved to Raleigh in 2000.
- **Edith Neuberger Ross** was 15 when the Nazis invaded the Netherlands. She went into hiding but was captured and sent to Auschwitz where she was liberated. In 1947 she married David Ross, a Kindertransport survivor, and they settled in Apex in 1988.
- **Abram (Abe) Piasek** was 11 when the Nazis invaded Poland. He endured forced labor in three forced labor camps and was on a death train to Dachau when liberated by Allied troops. He moved to Raleigh in 2009.
- **Zev Harel** was 14 when he was sent from Hungary to Auschwitz and later Ebensee, where he endured hard labor until liberation. He moved to Greensboro in 2013.

Also note the liberation experiences of camp survivors Julius Blum and Morris Stein in Ch. 4 and of Gizella Abramson in Ch. 5.

Have students consider these questions as they read the narratives.

1. How did Morris, Edith, Abe, and Zev sustain their will to survive?
2. What does Zev mean by “the finish line”? How did the other survivors express this idea?
3. In what ways did they feel that luck helped them survive? How did their own quick thinking and personality help them survive? (Remember that many victims died regardless of their strengths and character.)
4. How did Morris, Abe, and Zev respond to seeing African American soldiers?
5. How have the survivors expressed gratitude to each other, to those who helped them during the war, and to their liberators?
6. What aspects of the liberation experience do you find in all the narratives? What unique aspects do you find?

“*Translate statistics into people*.”

In its guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust (see Supplemental Materials), the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum recommends using first-person accounts of survivors

“*precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims; [they] add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics*.”

7. All four survivors were teenagers in the concentration camps. How does that affect your understanding of their experiences, and of the narratives they created many years later?
8. What questions would you want to ask Morris, Edith, Abe, and Zev if you met them?
9. Let's say these four narratives are to be published in a small book and you are asked to write the introduction for students. Write an introduction of three to five paragraphs that includes (a) an overview of the liberation experience, (b) guidance on reading the narratives as a careful and compassionate observer, and (c) a statement of your personal response to the narratives.
10. Write a dialogue of 50-100 lines between two of these survivors. In your introduction, explain why you chose the two people and what characteristics of their experiences you would emphasize to the reader. In the final lines of the dialogue, have them pose a question to the reader, share a wish for the future, offer a lesson from their experiences—or you can create a similar concluding element.
11. Create a chart with five columns. Title the four right columns with the names of the four survivors. Title the rows of the first column with these entries, and, if you wish, add two to three entries of your own. What patterns do you find upon completing the chart? What questions do you have?
    - Age when liberated
    - Last camp before liberation
    - Location (country) of camp
    - Liberated how? by what army?
    - When did the person realize he/she was free?
    - What was his/her physical condition on liberation?
    - To what factors does the person attribute his/her survival?
    - What did the person do immediately, and shortly after, being liberated?
    - Did the person return to his/her home country?
    - Was the person able to find surviving members of his/her family?
    - Did the survivor go to Palestine or, later, Israel?
    - When did the survivor come to the U.S.? How?
    - Where in North Carolina did the person settle?
    - Write one statement in the narrative that most affected you.
    - Why did this affect you?
12. View and read the media reports below about the 2015 North Carolina General Assembly remembrance honoring survivors and liberators on the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Dachau concentration camp. One of the survivors at the remembrance was Abe Piasek, whose narrative is included in this chapter. What do you learn about the experience of being liberated, and of being a liberator, from these reports?
    - "Legislators honor concentration camp survivors, soldier," WRAL-TV, Raleigh, NC, April 29, 2015 www.wral.com/legislators-honor-holocaust-survivors-solider/14613083/ [sic]
    - "Veteran, concentration camp survivor, reunite 70 years later," WWAY-TV, Wilmington, NC, April 29, 2015 www.wwaytv3.com/2015/04/29/veteran-concentration-camp-survivor-reunite-70-years-later/
    - "Holocaust survivors emotionally reunite with soldier who helped free them," *People*, April 30, 2015 people.com/human-interest/holocaust-survivors-meet-george-rose-soldier-who-freed-them-from-dachau/

LIBERATION ■ MORRIS SEES AN AMERICAN TANK

Morris Glass was born in 1928 in Pabianice, Poland. He was 11 years old when Germany invaded his country in 1939. He and his family suffered through four and a half years in the ghettos of Pabianice and Łódź. In August 1944 the Łódź ghetto was liquidated and its residents sent to Auschwitz, where Morris, his father, and his brother were separated from his mother and two sisters, whom he never saw again. Soon after, Morris's brother was sent to a forced labor camp in Germany, Morris and his father volunteered to work in Germany in order to leave Auschwitz. They arrived in the Dachau concentration camp in October 1944, where his father died from the hard labor and brutal treatment. In April 1945, as U.S. troops approached Dachau, most of the prisoners were marched to a train as the Germans evacuated the camp.

Walking the half kilometer from Kaufering IV [Dachau subcamp] to the railroad tracks was no easy task for most of us. We walked as slowly as possible and as close to each other as possible in order to help those who were struggling—otherwise, they would have been shot. After we had waited several hours, a huge train appeared. It stretched as far as the eye could see and held thousands of people. Because the cattle cars were full, my group was put in a coal car where we were stacked like sardines, one on top of the other. Most were sick and burning with fever. People were dying all around me. Once again I thought, "This is the end." But now more than ever, I desperately wanted to live. I was certain that the war would end soon. Liberation seemed very near.

Once again I thought, "This is the end." But now more than ever, I desperately wanted to live.

There were a number of signs that indicated that the days of the mighty Third Reich were numbered. The Allied guns sounded very close. I saw very young boys, maybe 14, 15, or 16 years old, manning huge anti-aircraft guns—a sure sign that the Germans were on their last leg. Furthermore, it was whispered that some of the SS guards had been heard to say that the surrender would be soon. I had listened to rumors for years, but I knew this one must be true. Unfortunately, we also heard troubling reports that we were being sent to the Tyrol Forest on the border between Germany and Austria to be fed poisoned soup. This was a rumor that I hoped was not true, but knowing the Nazis, I feared the worst. Thank God for Generals Patton, Eisenhower, and Taylor, and all the others! It was because of their rapid advance that I never found out if there was truth to the poisoning rumor.

Morris Glass shortly after the war, wearing a borrowed beret of the Jewish Brigade

I'm not sure how many days I was on the train. At some point, we came under fire from American and British planes that were attacking German anti-aircraft guns. In order to discourage the attack, the Germans deliberately parked our train next to the guns. The Allied planes were flying very low—so low the pilots could see us. I know that they tried not to hit us, but sometimes they did. Those of us in open cars lay there totally helpless, like dead ducks. There were a lot of casualties. I saw people

with missing arms and legs and other terrible wounds. There was no one to care for them. All of a sudden, I felt wet and warm. I thought, "Oh, no, after all these years, I'm to be killed by my friends." When I recovered from my fright and I checked myself, I was okay. What I had felt was hot water gushing from a locomotive that had been punctured.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

American soldiers with a medical detachment view the bodies of prisoners killed by the SS just before the evacuation of the Kaufering IV subcamp of Dachau.

As a result of the Allied attack, our train was damaged and stalled, and there were piles of dying people in my car and along the tracks. There was confusion and panic everywhere. When I saw some SS fleeing into the woods, I thought that I must be hallucinating, but then I realized that the war just might be over. I decided that if the SS were leaving, then I too would leave, and so I and four others rolled off the train. I said to them, "It's a matter of hours. Our liberators must be very close. Let's walk toward the village," and off we went. One of my friends, Libel, had pneumonia and was burning with fever. He was very sick, so we walked slowly.

We walked to a farm, where the family gave us food. Thinking that the war must be over and that we were safe, we rested for several hours. But our dream of freedom was soon ended when some German militia arrested us. First, we were taken to a Wehrmacht [German armed forces] officer who spoke kindly to us and assured us that the war would be over shortly. We begged him to let us go, but he said that he was under orders to detain all prisoners. Then the SS came and accused us of being spies who were running toward the Americans. They wrote down our numbers and told us that we would be executed in the morning. I don't know why they did not shoot us then, but luckily for us they didn't. The SS took us to a wooded area where there were hundreds of wounded and dying prisoners. We could hear them crying "Hear O Israel" and pleading for help. Amidst all the suffering, it was hard to think about myself.

Nevertheless, knowing that the war was almost over, my friends and I were determined to escape execution. Since the SS knew us only by the numbers on our jackets, we exchanged our jackets for the jackets of dead prisoners. Feeling protected by our new numbers, we slept through the night. In the morning, after some SS gave us permission to get water for the sick and dying, the five of us started to walk away from the camp. Just as we started walking, the sky became very dark and rain started to come down in sheets. With our movements shielded by the dark and the rain, we walked away from the SS as fast as we could. Finally, we met a farmer who took us in, gave us food, and hid us in his hayloft. While we were lying in the hay, we heard the SS come. They searched and searched, but they did not find us. When we went to sleep that night, we were aware that we had much to be grateful for.

When we awoke in the morning, we were greeted by the great news that there had been a radio announcement (which it turned out was incorrect) that Germany had surrendered. Our joy at this news was tempered by the worsening condition of Libel. We knew something had to be done immediately or he would die. Seeing how sick Libel was, the farmer told us that there was a hospital only a kilometer away. It seemed once again that luck was with us.

Jauntily, we set out for the hospital. Believing that the war was over, that we were out of danger, and that there was a place nearby where Libel would be cared for, we were a happy group. Unfortunately, we had not walked far when we learned that all was not well. The messenger of


Waffen SS soldier, 1945

bad news was a hulking SS officer who was sitting on a motorcycle in the middle of the road, holding a machine gun. As we rounded the curve and saw him, I thought, “Oh, my God, what will we do?” Somehow, I quickly came to my senses, calmly walked up to him, and told him that we were lost and wanted to go back to the train. He must have believed me because he gave us directions and let us go. We started walking as instructed, but as soon as the road curved, we raced into the forest.

We would have been happy to have stayed in the forest until we knew for certain that the SS had departed and that the war was really over, but Libel was very very sick and we had to get him to the hospital. We waited until dark and then set out once again. Covering the short distance to the hospital took a long time because every time we heard a car or any strange noise, we would jump back into the woods. Finally, we saw the lights of a large building. We went around the back, and I knocked on the door. It was opened by a nun. I didn’t have to say anything; she just motioned us to come in. We had arrived at St. Ottilien, a Benedictine* monastery that had been converted into an SS hospital. We were now under the care of kindly nuns and monks, but we were not yet out of danger.

The nuns were so good to us. They gave us food and took our filthy prison clothes, which they burned. When I said, “I have one wish. I would like to take a bath,” they took all of us to be bathed. And wonder of wonders, there I was, I who had not had a real bath in years, in a bathtub with soap, hot water, and a nun who came and scrubbed me. This was heaven!!! I must have been in that tub for hours. After the bath, the monks gave us new clothes, and then they whisked us away and hid us in a hayloft—it was still an SS hospital. The monks told us that it was a matter of days until the war would be over and we would be free. In the meantime, we could stay where we were and they would bring us food.

A day or two later, the monks told us that the Americans were very near, and since there might be some shooting, we should move to the basement where it would be safer. We went to the basement. I found a box to stand on so that I could see out of the window—I was not going to miss a thing. Before long, I was rewarded with a view of an American tank coming up the hill.

How can I describe the jubilation I felt when I first glimpsed that tank flying an American flag? There is no way to describe the joy in my heart—the joy of being free! I ran outside and embraced the first soldier I saw and then another and another and another. I was happy beyond my ability to describe it. I was free! I was free! I was free! A

U.S. Army


An American tank of the 1st Infantry Div. rolls through Gladbach, Germany, March 1, 1945, as the Allied troops neared victory over the Nazis.

* A Roman Catholic monastic order.

minute ago, I had been a prisoner and hiding, and now I was free and hugging every American soldier I could find. I just could not believe it.

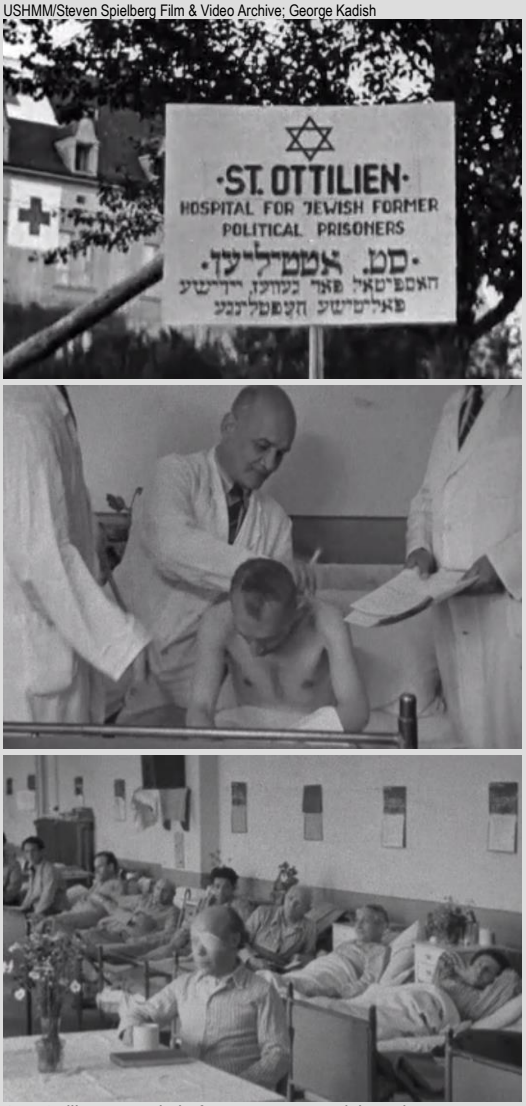
I was then and I remain now very grateful to the American army for giving me back my life and my freedom. My gratitude has no bounds. Every time I see the Stars and Stripes, I am reminded of my debt to those soldiers and to the American army.

How can I describe the jubilation I felt when I first glimpsed that tank flying an American flag? I was free! I was free! I was free!

My gratitude has no bounds. Every time I see the Stars and Stripes, I am reminded of my debt to those soldiers and to the American army.

On spotting us, one of the soldiers yelled out, "We need five beds immediately." On his orders, we were taken into the hospital and everything possible was done to help us. The Americans put us on a strict diet and checked us every few hours. Because so many survivors had died from overeating, they carefully supervised what and how much we ate. The German SS doctors treated us politely and tried to help us—they said they wanted to redeem themselves. Of course, the nuns and the monks were wonderful. Much care was devoted to Libel. The Americans and the Germans tried to save him, but he died shortly after we were liberated. To lose him, especially after we were free, put a damper on our spirits, but even his death could not destroy our joy.

USHMM/Steven Spielberg Film & Video Archive; George Kadish



St. Ottilien Hospital for Former Jewish Prisoners, near Landsburg, Germany, 1945 or 1946. Morris is at the far left (screenshots from video; see Online Resources).

Shortly after I was put in the hospital, the soldier who had ordered the beds came to check on us. When he was giving the order, I thought that I heard him using some Jewish words, but I said, "No, no, Morris, you are fantasizing." Well, I wasn't. It turned out that he was a Jewish guy from Brooklyn. That made me so proud—one of my saviors was an American Jew! Also among the American liberators was a black man; this was the first time that I had ever seen a black person except in the circus.* My life was indeed full of new and wondrous things.

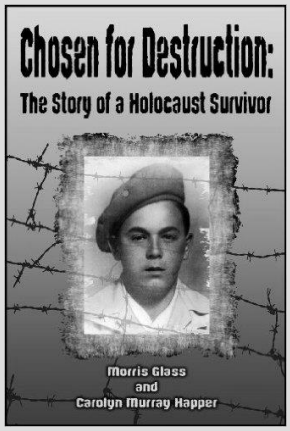
St. Ottilien was a perfect place for me to be. In addition to the hospital, it included a farm with cows and other animals, and wheat and potato fields. The bounty of nature and the serenity of the countryside buoyed my spirits, and with the good care that I was receiving, I improved rapidly.

Recognizing that this was an ideal place to recover, General Eisenhower decreed that St. Ottilien was to be a hospital for Jewish survivors. Within two or three weeks, there must have been a

* Most major European circuses featured black African performers.

thousand of us there, all needing medical attention. The SS doctors were removed from the hospital and replaced by American doctors and by Jewish doctors who were themselves survivors. The Jews there, like survivors everywhere, were desperately seeking their loved ones. As soon as I met another survivor, I would immediately ask if they knew my family and they would ask me the same question. It was a search that was to go on all over Europe and the world for a very long time.

U.S. Dept. of Defense



Morris Glass speaking at the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune's Days of Remembrance in April 2013

Of 42 members of his family, only Morris, his brother, and a cousin survived. While in a DP camp in Italy, Morris learned that his brother had survived and was in a DP camp in Germany. Sponsored by an uncle (the brother of their father), they came to the U.S., arriving in New York City on June 2, 1949. Morris settled in New Jersey where he bought and expanded a coat manufacturing company. There he met his wife Carol; they have seven children, 18 grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren. In 2000 they moved to Raleigh, North Carolina, where three sons live. For years Morris spoke across the state to school, military, and public groups about his Holocaust experience. In 2011 he published his Holocaust memoir, Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*, co-written with historian Dr. Carolyn Murray Happer.*

[Read other selections from Morris's memoir in Ch. 1 (Anti-Semitism) and Ch. 4 (The Holocaust: Ghetto).]

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Video: Morris Glass's presentation with Carolyn Happer (co-author of Mr. Glass's memoir, *Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor*, 2011), Raleigh Weekend C-Span, 16 May 2013, 28:56
  www.c-span.org/video/?313006-1/chosen-destruction
- Video: Morris Glass's presentation to the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, April 2013, video possibly taken by the U.S. Dept. of Defense, uploaded on YouTube by the *Jacksonville Daily News*, NC
  www.youtube.com/watch?v=XSkq-kYl__o
- Video: Morris Glass reviews the experiences in his memoir, *Chosen for Destructio*n, 2013 (C-Span/ YouTube, 28:32) www.youtube.com/watch?v=e_-1sYifN5U
- Video: St. Ottilien Hospital for Jewish Former Political Prisoners, 1945 or 1946, 6:23 (Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum)
  collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/fv1260

LIBERATION ■ EDITH IS FREED IN AUSCHWITZ

Edith on the rooftop of her house in The Hague, Holland, before the war

Edith Neuberger was born in 1925 in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. After the Nazis invaded her country in 1940, her parents sent her and her older sister Bobbie into hiding with a family near The Hague. Her parents and little brother were arrested, and soon after, in December 1942 when Edith was 17, she and her sister were discovered and arrested, and sent to the Westerbork camp in Holland, from which Jews were sent to death camps in Nazi-occupied Poland. Separated from her family, Edith was sent to Auschwitz alone and endured brutal treatment. In January 1945 as the Soviet army approached Auschwitz, she was sent to the camp hospital with suspected tuberculosis. The Germans abandoned the camp, leaving Edith and thousands of other survivors on their own.

I had such a tremendous fever that I was petrified to fall asleep in case I wouldn't wake up in the morning. It was really very very bad. Finally they decided to examine me, and they decided that I had TB. How they decided it, I don't know, but it was highly likely, and it turned out they were correct. So they put me in the TB block, and it was well known that when it comes to selection [for death], the whole TB block goes. I and another girl—I remember her name, it was Enid—she was a German Jewish girl, and we were both so-called diagnosed having TB and had to go to the TB block. So we go through the doors and I remember saying to Enid, "We'll never get out of here. This is really it. This is it." And it was it for her: she never made it.

I stayed in there for about a week or ten days, when an announcement came through from Berlin, an order that all the crematoria had to be broken down because they wouldn't want to leave behind any evidence for the Russians, which was my luck. So I remember a German SS man walking through the barrack and talking about this in a loud voice and saying in German he had never seen those Jews work so hard, trying to break down the crematoria.

We knew the Russian front was coming near. During all the time I was there, whenever a transport [train] came into the camp, I tried to find after appel [roll call] some Dutch people and learn where the transport had come from. One day I came across a transport from Grenoble, France, and one of the people told me that landings had begun in June [D-Day invasion], so we were aware of that. I also found out through the grapevine that Bobbie was in Auschwitz I—Birkenau

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

Women survivors on the day of liberation, January 27, 1945

USHMM/Mark Chrzanowski

One of the destroyed crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau after the liberation, late January 1945

was called Auschwitz II—and that Bobbie was used as a guinea pig in experiments. She survived it all; she lives in Holland. So I knew Bobbie was alive, and that gave me some hope. I thought, if she's alive, then I'm going to make sure that I stay alive.

So I knew Bobbie was alive, and that gave me some hope. I thought, if she's alive, then I'm going to make sure that I stay alive.

The Russians were coming near. By now it was near the end. It was December '44 and we could hear shooting or whatever. We heard something. The day came that the Germans decided they were going to leave the camp, so they went into every barrack and gave the order to the kapos [inmates assigned to be guards] "*alle Juden raus!*"—all the Jews out! The others could stay. So I made myself as flat as possible and tried to hide. But I had no such luck. The Ukrainians were only too glad to get rid of the Jews. They hated us. They found me and they dragged me down, and they told me I had to get out. They gave me a thin blanket, a safety pin to get the blanket around my body, and a pair of shoes.

And I went out in the cold, and December in Poland is very cold. I went out and we were supposed to line up five abreast. I was number two in one of the five somewhere. And I was standing there, and the SS man in charge of this particular group somehow caught my eye and told me to come to him. And I was scared stiff, of course, and I came to him, and then he pulled his pistol and put it on my ear, and he said, in German, of course, "You can't even walk half a mile. What do you think you can walk, five miles?" Well it wasn't any five miles; it was hundreds of miles, or hundreds of kilometers, that these people walked. "You can't even walk half a kilometer." And he was right. I couldn't. I was really in sad shape. So after he cocked his pistol, he told me I wasn't worth his bullet. "So go back into the block, and eventually we'll shoot all you Jews in the block that can't walk."

So I walked back to the block, and I was petrified that he was going to shoot me in the back anyway. But he didn't. I got into the block, and the Ukrainians that had thrown me out wanted to throw me out again. And so I told them in German, hoping they at least would understand some German, because I don't speak Ukrainian or Russian, that the SS man had told me to go back. He was going to shoot me here; he wanted to shoot me here, I said. So they said, "All right, go!" So I was allowed in, and I stayed. I went back to my bed—of three, up high —and I stayed there.

Eventually I learned that they had gone away, the Germans, with all these people that were supposed to walk [on a "death march" to Germany]. And what happened, I heard later, that as soon as you sat down on this walk, they shot you in the neck. They didn't leave you sitting—they shot you. They killed each and every one who couldn't walk anymore. So I almost certainly would not have made it. I wouldn't have made it even one mile.

So now the Germans had gone, and there was no food at all. There wasn't even that turnip soup. I just lived on snow. I went outside and tried to find some snow that was clean, because the so-called potties were overflowing, so everybody went out in the snow and did whatever they had to do. So I tried to find some snow that was clean. And I lived on that for about five days, I think.

So now the Germans had gone, and there was no food at all. There wasn't even that turnip soup. I lived on snow.

Then the Russians came, and there was a Yugoslav partisan girl that had a bed close to me. But the only way I could talk to her—she didn't speak any German—she could speak a little bit of school French, and I could speak school French, so we made do with that, and the rest talking with our hands. So one day she handed me a pocket knife, and I didn't know what was going on. I thought she'd gone mad and was going to attack me. But she put it in my hand and

she pointed it at the door of the barracks. And I went there and I saw a whole group of women hovering over a dead horse. And they were all cutting a piece of horse to eat. So I worked my way through them and I cut myself a piece of horse and just ate it. It just about killed me because my dysentery was worse than ever. I couldn't digest anything anymore. So I made my way back to my bed and I passed out. Then when I came to, I just stayed there. I was having dysentery all the time. It was just terrible. There was blood all over the place.

USHMM/Mark Chrzanowski

Liberated women in Auschwitz, January 27, 1945

USHMM/US Natl. Archives

An Auschwitz warehouse overflowing with clothes taken from prisoners, January 1945

The Russians began transporting the survivors to their home countries. Because the German railroads were destroyed, the Dutch survivors were to go by train to the Black Sea and then by ship through the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean to Holland. While still in poor health, Edith began the journey, which stopped for a time in Chernivtsi, Romania [now Ukraine], on the way to the Black Sea.

I had with me about seven or eight dresses which I had received from the Yugoslav girl, who was in much better shape than I, because after all she wasn't Jewish so she wasn't beaten, she wasn't treated as badly. And she had gone after the Germans left and raided the barracks where they kept all the clothes that they took away from the Jews when they arrived. Everybody that could, did, but I couldn't. She had grabbed armfuls of clothes. Now when she got back to her bed, seeing that it was January and it was cold, she kept all the winter clothes, and the summer clothes that she had grabbed were no good to her, so she gave them to me. So I was thrilled with it. Although they were cotton dresses, I put one over the other. I was nothing but a skeleton, anyway. I weighed in at 59 pounds after liberation. So I put just one over the other, and I thought, well, six summer dresses will keep me just as warm as one winter dress.

When we got to Romania and it got warmer, I didn't need them all, and so I sold them on the marketplace. People came up to me and didn't speak my language and I didn't speak their language, so they came and they touched my clothes, and you talk with your hands, and I stripped off the dress—I had plenty underneath. And I got money for it, for which I bought—they sold a lot of yogurt and blueberries there. And I ate yogurt and blueberries, which I'm sure was very good for me. By that time I could digest food again. So this is how I got some money, by selling my clothes off my body.

One day we went to the marketplace in order to sell a dress of mine again so we could have some food. And I passed out. I completely collapsed and I was out. I was totally out. When I came to, I was covered with paper money. All the farmers in the market knew where we came from, because we had no hair, you know, we were shaven. And your hair doesn't grow back if you don't get anything to eat. Your hair just doesn't grow. So they knew where we came from, and I was covered with all this money. And my friend and another Dutch girl—there were three

of us together—thought this was fantastic, and right away told me “We’re going back tomorrow and you’re going to faint again!”

But it didn’t work out that way, because a woman came up to me, very well dressed, and spoke to me in German, and she said, “Do you understand German?” And I said, “Yes, I do.” She said, “I am Jewish and I am Austrian, and I’m married to a Russian Jewish doctor here. And I think it would be better for you if you would be in a hospital bed.” Everybody knew in Chernivtsi where we were and who we were. She said, “Why don’t you come tonight for dinner?” And I couldn’t believe my ears. So the three of us went there, and I hadn’t sat at a table with a tablecloth and with a knife and a fork and regular food—I just couldn’t believe it. So they treated us very well, and it turned out that the Russian Jewish doctor was the head of the TB hospital there.

The doctor confirmed the diagnosis of TB and Edith was treated in the hospital and regained strength. She left Romania on a train bound for Holland, this time traveling through Poland and Germany. In Berlin, Edith and her traveling companions were able to get from the Russian occupation zone to the American zone, and from there Edith finally arrived at the Dutch border.

When I got to Holland, they gave me a hard time at the border, because this stupid man said to me, “Where are your papers showing that you are Dutch?” And I said, “Well, what do you expect? I don’t have any papers.” And so he started with “Well, then we can’t let you in.” I got so mad that I started swearing in Dutch till there was no end to it. And he said, “If you can swear in Dutch like that, you’ve gotta be Dutch.” And so that’s how I got back into Holland.

Edith was reunited with her sister and successfully treated for TB. She learned that she could not emigrate to the U.S. until she had been free of TB for five years, so she decided to go to Israel. On the way, she met David Ross, who as a child had been sent from Germany to England through the Kindertransport program. They were married in 1949 in Israel and, after living in London for several years, they moved to the U.S. in 1953, settling in Delaware. They moved to Apex, North Carolina, in 1988. They have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Edith and David Ross on their wedding day, Haifa, Israel, 1949

Edith Ross during her interview with the Shoah Foundation, Apex, NC, 1997

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Edith Ross, 1997, video, 2½ hrs. (USC Shoah Foundation) youtu.be/dXifQsbQ-ZA
- Women in Auschwitz (classroom activity with readings, Yad Vashem) www.yadvashem.org/education/educational-materials/ceremonies/women-auschwitz.html

LIBERATION ■ ABE SURVIVES A DEATH TRAIN

Abram Piasek was 12 years old in 1940 when the SS entered his town of Bialobrzegi in Poland and killed or deported most Jewish residents. He was separated from his parents and sister, whom he never saw again. For two years he endured forced labor in a weapons factory in the Radom camp in Nazi-occupied Poland and then was sent via Auschwitz to the Vaihingen camp in Germany, where he repaired airfields cratered from Allied bombing raids. After several months he was transferred to the nearby Hessental camp to work on railroad maintenance. In spring 1945 as Allied troops approached, the prisoners who could walk were put on trains to be transported deeper into Germany.

Abe Piasek in 1946

Before the liberation, we were put on cattle cars. This has to be about two weeks before the liberation. And we had no idea where we were going. They put us on a train from the Hessental camp—a labor camp, which was about a few miles [from Vaihingen]—that was a real slaughterhouse. And they took us away. They loaded up the cattle cars, and we were going back and forth for a couple days, and we had no idea why we were going back and forth.

All of a sudden the train stopped. The train stopped because the American Air Force bombarded the locomotive. We couldn't get out from the cattle car because it was locked from the outside. Some people got out because their cattle cars were locked from the inside. So one guy was yelling "what's going on?" and he opened the cattle car, and as we opened up we saw the SS running away. They dropped their weapons, they were running away. And the people [camp inmates] from the Polish army, they picked up the weapons and started shooting the guards. I didn't see it, but I heard the shots. They were killing them.

I didn't realize I was going to be liberated. I was liberated instantly: we had no idea. Actually, we were supposed to end up in Dachau. That was the train to Dachau—that was the last stop. We stopped a few miles from Dachau. And at that time, we were liberated. They bombed the locomotive, and the army was coming fast. I was 17. When the Germans took me away from my home, I was 12. When I was liberated, I was 17.

Hessental airfield with craters from Allied bombing, 1945

We had no idea what we were going to do, so we sat on the crater where they had been bombing. And then I saw a guy coming out from a jeep, or a tank or a big truck, who was black. That's the first time I'd seen a black person, and I had no idea who they were. And of course at that time they were segregated, and so that's the first thing I saw.

Then we were running around wild, me and my friends. And we were actually starting to rob places in the town. We went into banks,

into jewelry stores. And I was looking for bread, but my friends were looking for jewelry. They sure enough got the jewelry, but I was not interested in the jewelry; I was interested in bread.

They stopped us—the MP [Military Police]—and they brought us to a camp, Feldafing, near Munich. It was run by UNRRA [United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Admn.]. We threw away our [prisoner] uniforms and got regular clothes. After that we were robbing the trains, really robbing the trains, because we were wild. We robbed the trains; we threw out the suitcases. Maybe about 10, 15 of us. You know, there was everything you can think of in the suitcases, but I still wasn't interested. I was interested in eating food.

Then Patton and Eisenhower stopped us. Patton told the people from camp that if you don't stop robbing the train, he was going to put barbed wire around the camp. But the people didn't like that. So Eisenhower came, and they promised him that nobody would rob the trains again. And he told Patton not to put wire around it.

In a couple weeks, when we got used to the camp, they had all the teenagers line up outside the barracks. And they told us we were going to go to another camp, Foehrenwald. All the young people, I would say from 15 to 25, we were put in that camp.

USHMM/Marc Block

Generals Eisenhower and Patton inspected the Feldafing displaced persons camp, Sept. 17, 1945, after President Truman ordered Eisenhower to improve the living conditions of Jews in DP camps in the U.S. occupation zone.

USHMM/Marion Pritchard

Survivors learning carpentry in Foehrenwald, ca. 1945-1947

I was there from 1945 till 1947. And meanwhile we were learning a trade. We were learning how to dance. And they brought in all the girls, you know, and romance was going on.

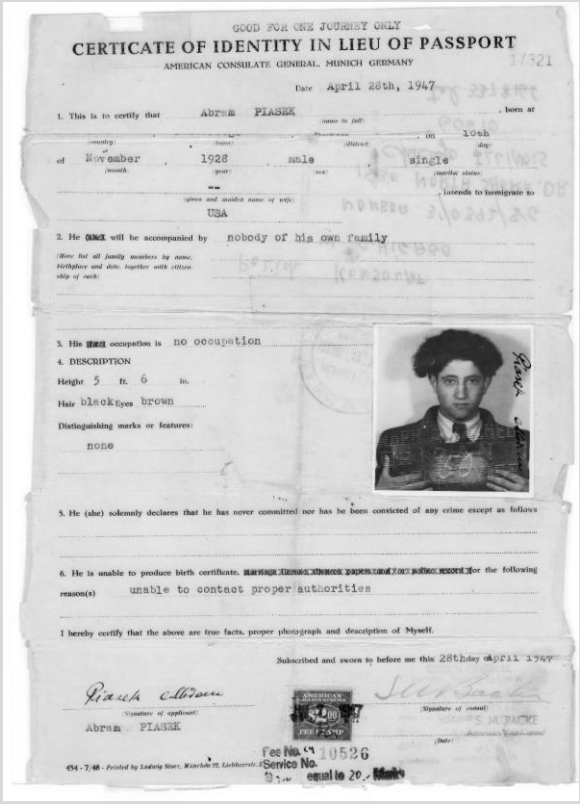
We forgot that we had been in a [concentration] camp because they didn't let us remember, and I think that was good. . . . We were busy constantly, from morning till night, till we went to sleep. So we couldn't even think about what had actually happened to us.

I was learning to be a carpenter. But I really wasn't—I didn't care for it. But anyway, we went to school. We were learning Hebrew. The teachers were Israels, the Israeli soldiers, from the Palmach.* And we were learning, and the food was good, and we were gaining weight, and a lot of the people, the elderly people, got married. And two years, from 1945 to 1947, the camp almost doubled in population, with babies being born.

We forgot that we had been in a [concentration] camp because they didn't let us remember, and I think that was good. They were really trying to get the kids away from what they went through. We were busy constantly, from morning till night, till we went to sleep. So we couldn't even think about what had actually happened to us. Our minds were in left field, because nobody talked about it. Nobody. For so many years to be locked up—didn't think about it.

* The Palmach was the elite brigade of Jewish soldiers fighting for the establishment of the state of Israel, which was created in May 1948.

They asked us who wants to go to Israel. That was in ’46. A lot of people went to Israel. And I decided, well, I wanted to come to the United States. I remember as a kid, my grandmother received packages from New York, in the thirties when I must have been five, six, seven years old. And I remembered her name. So I went to the consulate and I told him that I have some relative, but the relative I picked—must have been about a thousand of them in the book—so I have no idea who they were. So I closed my eyes. I said this is the one, I just put my finger on it. And two months later it came back. And he said, “Mr. Piasek, you picked the wrong people.” And I said, “Why?” “They’re not even Jewish!” So they decided I wasn’t going. And, well, I didn’t give up. And a few months later they decided—the Americans probably decided, I assume so—that the teenagers who wanted to go to the United States should register, and I was picked to register to come to the United States.



GOOD FOR ONE JOURNEY ONLY

CERTICATE OF IDENTITY IN LIEU OF PASSPORT

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL, MUNICH GERMANY

Date April 28th, 1947

1. This is to certify that Abram PIASEK (name in full), born at (country), (town), (district), on 10th (day) of November (month) 1928 (year) male (sex) single (mother tongue), (given and maiden name of wife), intends to immigrate to USA

2. He will be accompanied by nobody of his own family (Here list all family members by name, birthplace and date, together with citizenship of each)

3. His occupation is no occupation

4. DESCRIPTION

Height 5 ft. 6 in.

Hair black Eyes brown

Distinguishing marks or features:

none

5. He (she) solemnly declares that he has never committed nor has he been convicted of any crime except as follows

6. He is unable to produce birth certificate, ~~marriage license, divorce papers and/or police record~~ for the following reason(s) unable to contact proper authorities

I hereby certify that the above are true facts, proper photograph and description of Myself.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 28th day of April 1947

(Signature of applicant)

Abram PIASEK

(Signature of consul)

S. M. PACKE

(Date)

Fee No. 10526

Service No.

equal to 20 Marks

454 - 7/48 - Printed by Ludwig Storz, München 19, Lichtenrade...

Abe’s ID issued by the U.S. consulate to substitute for his birth certificate. Most Holocaust survivors had none of their official documents, such as birth certificates, identification cards, etc., and had no way to get copies.

2. *He will be accompanied by*: nobody of his own family.

6. *He is unable to produce birth certificate for the following reasons(s)*: unable to contact proper authorities.

With about 50 other survivors from Foehrenwald, Abe boarded a ship in Bremerhaven, Germany, and on August 3, 1947, arrived in New York City.

They put me in a hotel with all the people who came with me, the young kids. And we were there for about two weeks—must have been about 300 or 400 of us from all the camps around the Munich district, from Bavaria. They gave us five dollars. At that time five dollars was a lot of money.

Then after a few weeks some other kids were coming, so they told us we had to decide where we want to go. And we knew very little. They asked me, “Where do you want to go? You have two choices, Connecticut or California.” I said, “How far is California?” They said, “2000 miles.” “How far is Connecticut?” “100 miles.” So I said Connecticut.

But I had nobody there. When I came there, they put me into a lady’s [home] who was taking in the displaced persons. She was Jewish, and she got paid for it. So five of us were staying in her home. So we stayed over there for, I would say, for about a year. And it was nice. I learned a trade, I went to school. And over here, I had to find a job. So I found a job, and I was working in a coat factory, in Manchester, Connecticut.

I was a presser. I was making, I think, twenty cents or thirty cents a coat. And then they put me in another home. Their name was Waxman, in Hartford, Connecticut. And they had two boys my age. I was there for about eight, nine, months, and I worked there at the laundry. And I still went to school, night school, and daytime I was working, so I saved up a few dollars.

And then I met Shirley through a friend of mine. He went out with another girl, and she went along with them. So he was talking to her, and I said, “Whom are you talking to?” He said, “Her

Shirley and Abe with their children at the Statue of Liberty, 1956

name is Shirley." I said, "Can I talk to her?" And he said, "Sure." So I talked to her and made a date. And we went out to a hamburger place—I didn't have any money, very little. And I didn't like her at the beginning. When I came home, another guy said, "How is she?" I said, "She's ok." "Do you like her?" I said, "No." "Can I have her telephone number?" I said, "No, I'm going to take her out once more." So I did, and from then on, it's history. I came in '47 and in '49 I was married.

When I got married, I worked in a few jobs. Shirley's father was a carpenter, so I helped put in the carpets, put in linoleum. Then I joined the National Guard, and then I joined the army. In '49 there was a depression here—very hard to find a job, so I joined the army. Then Shirley got pregnant and we had a baby, and that's how I get out from the army. From 1950 to 1955 I was in the reserves.

After that, I went to get a bakery job, because my wife's sister's friend's friend knew the owner from the bakery. So I got a job right away. And since then, I'm still baking.

I never talked about it until, I would say—of course, my wife knew, a lot of people knew that I was a displaced person. But we never got in a discussion about what happened until the '80s. That's the first time I opened up. I was interviewed by Spielberg.* And then they said, you have to speak in schools, to tell your story. So I did. So I started to talk about it. Very difficult.

Abe and Shirley have two children, eight grandchildren, and one great-grandson. They moved to California in 1975 and later to Florida, as Abe continued his profession as a baker. In 2009 they moved to Raleigh to be near a daughter. For many years Abe spoke to students and other groups in North Carolina about his Holocaust experience.


Abe Piasek (right) with camp liberator George Rose and Mr. Rose's wife, April 29, 2015, at the North Carolina General Assembly remembrance of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Dachau concentration camp

ONLINE RESOURCES

- "Holocaust survivor Abe Piasek discusses the time he spent as a prisoner," *The Daily Reflector*, Greenville, NC, April 29, 2016
  www.reflector.com/News/2016/04/29/Holocaust-survivor-details-harrowing-experiences.html
- "Holocaust survivors emotionally reunite with soldier who helped free them," *People*, April 30, 2015
  people.com/human-interest/holocaust-survivors-meet-george-rose-soldier-who-freed-them-from-dachau/
- Displaced Persons camps (USHMM)
  - Feldafing encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/feldafing-displaced-persons-camp
  - Foehrenwald encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/foehrenwald-displaced-persons-camp

Adapted from the interview of Abe Piasek by Linda Scher and Larry Katzin, Raleigh, NC, July 20, 2015; reproduced by permission of Abe Piasek. Images credited USHMM reproduced by permission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photographs of Mr. Piasek courtesy of Mr. Piasek. 2015 photograph of Mr. Piasek courtesy of Marianne Wason.

* Steven Spielberg, the Hollywood film producer, founded the Shoah Foundation in 1994 (now at the University of Southern California) after working with Holocaust survivors while filming *Schindler's List*. The Foundation has recorded interviews with over 55,000 Holocaust survivors, including Abe Piasek, who was interviewed in 1995.

LIBERATION ■ ZEV MEETS HIS LIBERATORS

Zev Harel was born in 1930 in Kis-Sikarlo, Hungary (now Borgou, Romania). In March 1944, when he was 14, he and his family were sent to Auschwitz, where he avoided death in the gas chamber by saying he was older. Soon he was sent with his older brother to the Ebensee labor camp in Austria. Separated from his brother, Zev endured hard labor until liberation on May 6, 1945, by the U.S. Third Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, whose reunions Zev has attended.

Trying to think back on those days and recalling the thoughts and feelings of then, two memories that I have—the finish line, the expectation that I'll get there, and not so much the reasons why. Other than the sense of "keep on going" because the finish line is there and you'll get there, you'll get through, and what it is that will be there. And wanting to get back and to see what happened to my father and mother and to see them again.

On his last weeks before liberation. Our work detail [in a quarry near Ebensee] was across the street from a place called the Marian Guest House. While we were working there—when the SS guards were not nearby—we had all kinds of ways of supporting one another. And we had what I call rescue fantasies: "When this is over, I'll do this and this." Some of the other people would say "the first meal that I will have my wife cook for me will be this and this." Or "the first food that I eat will be this and this." And my fantasy was "when I'm done with this, I will go into that restaurant and order a meal, and not only eat it, but I'll pay for it." That was one of my rescue fantasies.

The person who owned the quarry that I worked at, he also had horses and cows and the like. And so once every week one of the SS guards would take me there to do work that needed to be done in the barn. The owner had a daughter who was older than me—she was probably about 17 or 18 years old—and she would bring a nice plate and give it to the SS officer so that he could have his meal. But, bless her heart, she would sneak whatever she could, a piece of bread or something that she could bring in and just set there in the barn for me to have to eat. So I appreciated it to this day, and when I had a chance to go back, I personally thanked her for that. [See p. 155.]

U.S. National Archives/Arnold Samuelson

Zev Harel (circled) stands with other Ebensee survivors in this famous photograph taken by a U.S. army photographer.

In the last days before liberation, Zev was assigned to the crematorium detail. On May 5, 1945, as the U.S. Army approached, the SS guards fled and the Americans entered the camp the next day.

Already there were the beginning rumors that the American soldiers are not far away, that the Russians are closing in, that the finish line is getting closer and closer. But what we feared is that the Germans will not want anyone who has been part of knowing how they were

USHMM/Arnold Samuelson; Felix Uhrinek

Survivors gather in the main square of Ebensee after liberation.

Survivors leave Ebensee by cart and on foot.

burning the bodies to be around to tell about it. So I remember the last day in camp that a Russian guy and I who were on the same work detail, that we decided that we'll just hide, and so we hid under an old barrack. We were expecting the Germans to come—it was a dumb thing to do, in retrospect—we were expecting the Germans to come with the dogs to sniff us out—but it was too late already. We had done this dumb thing, just on the spur of the moment.

And then we hear noise and this guy, who was one of the [imprisoned] Russian soldiers, crawls out and looks in and comes back and says, "I can't believe it, the gate is open, and there isn't anyone around." So I came out, and we are going toward the gate, and the gate is open, and so with the flow of people out of the gate—and that's my liberation.

The American soldiers arrived and liberated us. I learned in retrospect that that morning, when the German soldiers were aware that the Americans are nearby, they handed over the guarding to some civil militia. A minute or two after the Germans departed, they just left their posts, and so people just started streaming out of camp. What I recall of that day is just a mass of people walking out and being part of the people that walked. I wanted to get away from Ebensee as far as I could. That's the sensation that I remember carrying with me. I can't really recall any triumphant joy, expressions of joy or any of that thing. It took about two or three days to sink in that we are liberated, for me.

U.S. National Archives

African American soldiers of the 666th Quartermaster Truck Company, 82nd Airborne Division, in Europe, 1945

As we were walking out of the camp, the last thing that I remember is that I fell into a roadside ditch. I had typhoid. So I was in the ditch—not knowing much about what was happening—and there are two or three African American young men in this group. And African American soldiers were not allowed to fight because they were discriminated against. They were in the support units. So a young African American member of that support unit picked me up from the ditch—now try to imagine that—something in the roadside ditch, he picked me up, drove me to the nearby town where he knew that there was a hospital—Linz—which was about ten miles from our camp—took me to the hospital and asked the nurses to nurse me back to life. So you can have a sense that I am very proud to be an American. I owe my life to the brave American soldiers. And had it not been for those that fought against the Nazis and brought about the defeat of the Nazis—had it not been for that concerned

discriminated-against young African American man that took me from the roadside ditch and took me to the hospital for me to be brought back to life, I would not be standing here and sharing with you.

I asked him [Sen. John Glenn] to help me find that young man that I owe my life to. But I have not been successful.

I tried to find that young man because I wanted personally to have an opportunity to thank him. Over the years I got to know Senator John Glenn who chaired the Senate Special Committee on Aging, and he's also a retired colonel. So I asked him to help me find that young man that I owe my life to. But I have not been successful.


Zev's Israeli passport photo, 1952

After the liberation, my brother, then 19, went to a youth village that had been set up for young survivors. When I recovered and left the hospital, I spent a short time—about three weeks—working with the Russian military in Austria. I was comfortable using Russian and all the Slavic languages, but I wanted to go "home," so I walked away and went back to the village where I'd grown up. I got home [in January 1946] and fortunately my brother also survived, and the two of us figured out that we didn't want to stay in the place where we grew up, so we left everything and went back to Germany and I spent time in a displaced persons camp [Bergen-Belsen]. And there I applied for coming to the United States. In order to come to the U.S., someone who wanted to come from another country had to get permission. I had an uncle who agreed to sponsor me and send me papers, but I was waiting and waiting there for the State Dept. to agree and process the papers. Since I picked up languages very easily, during the year I was in camp I learned to speak Russian, to speak Polish, to speak the various languages. So after spending time and helping the members of the Palestine Jewish Brigade smuggle persons who wanted to go to Palestine, they rewarded me by having me replace one of the Brigade soldiers, and I got to then-Palestine that way. When I got to then-Palestine [July 1946], I was 16 years old. Again I decided to pretend that I was older. I pretended to be 18 years old. I volunteered to serve in the then-Israeli military and I take pride in the fact that I succeeded in contributing to the establishment of the state of Israel.

Zev completed high school and college in Israel and came to the U.S. in 1965 for graduate studies at the University of Michigan, where he met his wife Bernice. After completing his Ph.D. in social work at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, he began a long career as a professor of social work at Cleveland State University.

In May 1995, at the 50th anniversary of liberation, World War II veterans were invited to attend the annual Holocaust commemoration in Cleveland, Ohio, sponsored by the Kol Israel Foundation. Among the attendees was Captain Carl Delau. He was the commanding officer of the 3rd Cavalry squadron that liberated Ebensee camp. We enjoyed meeting each other after the commemoration.


Zev with members of the 3rd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron at its 2005 reunion

Following the event, we were invited to attend the 3rd Cavalry reunions and did so for several years. They were held in Detroit, Michigan, or Chicago, Illinois. These reunions provided opportunities for the World War II veterans to recall and share their experiences and observations about the war years. It was very special for me to be able to thank in person the veterans who saved my life. In addition, I could highlight the historical significance of their service and the defeat of Nazi Germany. It was also heartwarming to see that it meant something to them to meet the people they had saved and to see that they had a good life. I continued to meet in person with Capt. Carl Delau, who resided in Amherst, Ohio, until he passed away in 2005.

Zev retired in 2009, and in 2013 he and Bernice moved to Greensboro, North Carolina. Dr. Harel makes presentations on his Holocaust experience to schools and public groups across the state.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Oral testimony of Zev Harel, 1984, video, 2⅔ hrs. (U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn505019
- Oral testimony of Zev Harel, 1996, video (USC Shoah Foundation) Access video via sfi.usc.edu/vha.
- Oral testimony of Zev Harel, 2005, video, 45 min., (USHMM) collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn78755
- "70 years after liberation, a North Carolina Holocaust survivor tells his story," audio, 19:12, *The State of Things*, March 27, 2015 (WUNC-FM) www.wunc.org/post/70-years-after-liberation-north-carolina-holocaust-survivor-tells-his-story
- Video: Liberation of Ebensee, May 1945, 2:21 (USHMM) encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/film/liberation-of-ebensee-camp
- The Liberation of the Ebensee Concentration Camp (U.S. Army Center of Military History) history.army.mil/news/2015/150500a_ebensee.html

Narrative adapted from: (1) Zev Harel, interview by the Natl. Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section, 23 July 1984; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of the Natl. Council of Jewish Women, Cleveland Section; (2) Zev Harel, presentation at Congregation Shaarey Tikvah, Beachwood, Ohio, 12 April 2005; U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of Congregation Shaarey Tikvah; (3) "Mythbuster: Zev Harel, Educator and Gerontologist," Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging, Cleveland, Ohio, 13 July 2010, www.benrose.org/mythbusters/MB_Harel.cfm; (4) Email communication with Dr. Harel, 18 Sept. 2016. Reproduced by permission of Dr. Harel. Images credited USHMM reproduced by permission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photographs of Dr. Harel courtesy of Dr. Harel. Photograph of Dr. and Mrs. Harel courtesy of Marianne Wason.

Bernice and Zev Harel, 2016. Zev wears the cap of the 3rd Cavalry squadron that liberated Ebensee, and he holds a plaque displaying an article on his reunion in 1981 with the woman who slipped him food while he was in Ebensee. In the plaque photo is Carl Delau of Cleveland who helped feed liberated prisoners in the camp.

Diane Suchetka, "Forty years later, a reunion," *The Plain Dealer*, Cleveland, Ohio, May 4, 2005 [excerpts].

[Dr. Harel] drove to Ebensee to see the memorial there. But first, he walked to the guest house across the street. "Table for one," Zev told the hostess, his concentration camp fantasy finally coming true.

He sat down and read the menu, decided on the wiener schnitzel, looked up to find the waitress. Instead his eyes met a familiar face. "Will you join me?" Zev asked. The woman sat down in the chair across from Zev.

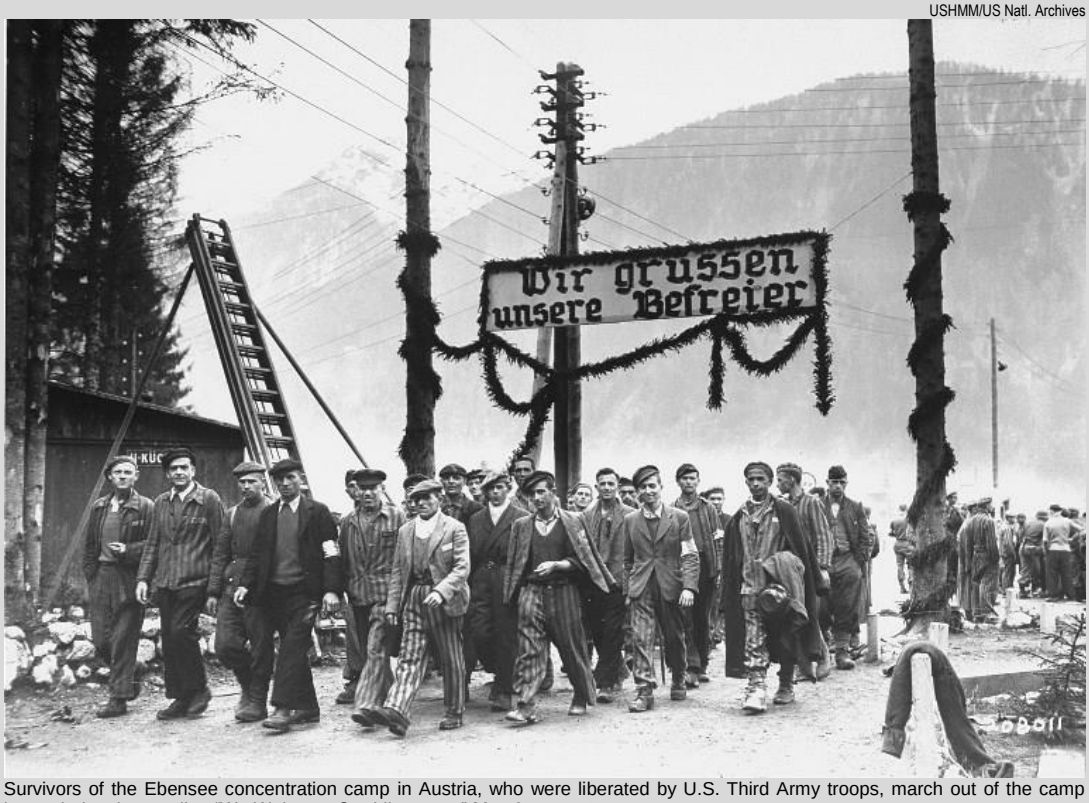
"Do you remember me?" She looked more closely. "I was the boy who cleaned the stalls during the war."

The dark-haired girl who smuggled food to him, who helped keep him alive, was grown now and running her father's guesthouse. She insisted on treating Zev to dinner, but he refused.

When the check came, he paid, just the way he'd dreamed as a prisoner 40 years before. . . .

Zev won't stop looking, though, for the man who saved him—a pile of skin and bones in a dirty cloth sack—from that ditch at Ebensee. He wants to thank him before it's too late. He wants to thank him, too.

USHMM/US Natl. Archives



Survivors of the Ebensee concentration camp in Austria, who were liberated by U.S. Third Army troops, march out of the camp beneath the sign reading “We Welcome Our Liberators,” May 6-June 1945.

____PHOTOGRAPH PERMISSIONS____

- **Photographs credited to survivors and their families are reproduced by permission.** See individual narratives for specifics. Recent photographs of survivors courtesy of Marianne Wason: Barbara Rodbell, p. 103; Esther Lederman, p. 133; Abe Piasek, p. 151; Zev & Bernice Harel, p. 155.

- **Photo Archives, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC.**

  Photographs reproduced by permission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. Those listed in this section are (1) images for which the museum holds copyright, and (2) those in the public domain (held by the museum or other repositories) which were accessed through the museum's photo archives. Images accessed through the museum for which copyright is owned by other institutions are listed below in Other Repositories and Sources.

  The views or opinions expressed in this guide, and the context in which the images are used, do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of, nor imply approval or endorsement by, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Page #	USHMM ID #	Provenance	Description
5	94182	Hans Pauli	Eugenics poster entitled "The German Face," ca. 1935.
5	49816	Library of Congress	Nazi propaganda slide entitled "Nordic Heads of All Ages and Nations," ca. 1936. In the public domain.
11	24532	Provenance: see published source.	Adolf Hitler poses with a group of SS members soon after his appointment as chancellor, February 1933. Published source: Vom 30. Januar zum 21. Maerz: Die Tage der national Erhebung - Jochberg, Erich C. – Leipzig: Verlag das neue Deutschland- p. 2.
12	09668	William O. McWorkman	Followed by an SS bodyguard, Adolf Hitler greets supporters at the fourth Nazi Party Congress, Nuremberg, Aug. 1-4, 1929.
12	02286	James Sanders	Adolf Hitler leads an SA unit in a Nazi party parade in Weimar, 1931.
13	24527	Provenance: unknown; see published source.	An automobile in which Adolf Hitler is riding moves through a crowd of supporters as it leaves the Chancellery after Hitler's meeting with President Paul von Hindenburg, November 19, 1932. Published Source: Vom 30. Januar zum 21. Maerz: Die Tage der national Erhebung - Jochberg, Erich C. - Leipzig: Verlag das neue Deutschland.
13	47463	Michael O'Hara/Bernhardt Colberg	Standing in an open car, Adolf Hitler salutes a crowd lining the streets of Hamburg, August 17, 1934.
16	68163	Barbara Ledermann Rodbell	Members of the Ledermann family, Jewish refugees from Berlin, pose outside on the terrace of their apartment in Amsterdam, ca. 1936 [crop of Barbara Ledermann].
17	N04718	Simone Weil Lipman	False ID card issued to Simone Werlin, the pseudonym of Simone Weil, stamped with the seal of Chateauroux, France, 1944.
20	26872	Stadtarchiv Aachen, Aachen, Germany	A small group of Jewish men, who have been rounded up for arrest in the days after Kristallnacht, file out of the police station in Stadthagen, Germany, November 10, 1938. In the public domain.
21	80821	Warren A. Gorrell	Members of the SA drive through the streets of Recklingshausen, Germany, on propaganda trucks bedecked with anti-Jewish banners, August 1935.
22	07671	Roland Klemig	Propaganda slide produced by the Reich Propaganda Office showing the opportunity cost of feeding a person with a hereditary disease, 1936.
23	13138	Robert A. Schmuhl	Newly arrived prisoners, still in their civilian clothes, and after shaving and disinfection, stand at roll call in Buchenwald concentration camp shortly after Kristallnacht, 1938.
24	10005	Charles & Herma Ellenboghen Barber	Document from the American Consul-General in Vienna, Austria, certifying that the Trost family (Josef, Alice, Dorrit, and Erika) applied for U.S. visas on Sept. 15, 1938, and have been placed on the waiting list with the numbers 47291-47294.
24	29814	Stadtarchiv Aachen, Germany	The old synagogue of Aachen, Germany, before Kristallnacht (taken sometime before 1938). In the public domain.
24	29816	Stadtarchiv Aachen, Germany	The old synagogue of Aachen, Germany, after its destruction during Kristallnacht, November 1938. In the public domain.
28	86838	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Germans pass by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht, Berlin, 1938. In the public domain.
30	00407	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Viennese civilians welcome the arriving German troops into the city, March 14, 1938. In the public domain.
31	89998	Leo Goldberger	Residents watch as flames consume the synagogue in Opava, Czechoslovakia, set on fire during Kristallnacht, Nov. 1938.
31	97572	Stadtarchiv Pforzheim	The shattered stained glass windows of the Zerrennerstrasse synagogue in Pforzheim, Germany, after its destruction on Kristallnacht, November 1938.
32	76118	Steven Pressman	Children aboard the *President Harding* look at the Statue of Liberty as they pull into New York harbor, June 1939.
33			Jack Hoffmann, screenshot from his USHMM oral testimony, Greensboro, NC, 2006.
34	66297	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	One day after their liberation, a group of former prisoners at the Ebensee concentration camp pose outside for U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer Arnold Samuelson, May 7, 1945. In the public domain. Zev Harel, who now lives in North Carolina, is one of the liberated prisoners.
36	50347	Archiwum Panstwowe w Krakowie; Provenance: Stadthauptamt der Stadt Krakau, Propaganda und Kultur.	A German official supervises a deportation action in the Kraków ghetto. Jews, assembled in a courtyard with their bundles, await further instructions, ca. 1941-1942. In the public domain.
36	02159	Archiwum Dokumentacji Mechanicznej. Provenance: Stadthauptamt der Stadt Krakau, Propaganda und Kultur.	A member of the German SS supervises the boarding of Jews onto trains during a deportation action in the Kraków ghetto, 1941-1942. In the public domain.
37	04857	Unknown Russian Archive	A view of the Auschwitz concentration camp after liberation (after January 1945).
38	77319	Yad Vashem	Jews from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] await selection on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, May 1944. In the public domain. From the "Auschwitz Album," an album of photographs documenting the arrival, selection, and processing of one or more transports of Jews from Subcarpathian Rus (Carpatho-Ukraine), then part of Hungary, that came to Auschwitz-Birkenau in the latter half of May 1944. The album, which includes 193 photographs mounted on 56 pages, was produced as a presentation volume for the camp commandant. The album was found after the liberation by Lili Jacob, herself an Auschwitz survivor who appears in one of the photographs.
46	89757	Sidney Harcsztark	Jewish children at forced labor in a workshop in the Łódź ghetto.
46	47448	Michael O'Hara/Bernhardt Colberg	View of the fence and road enclosing the Łódź ghetto.
46	24635	Moshe Zilbar	A destitute young boy in tattered clothes eating his soup seated in the snow in the Łódź ghetto.
47	89772	Ghetto Fighters' House Museum: Moshe Zilbar/Nachman Zonabend	A child who has been selected for deportation, bids farewell to his family through the wire fence of the central prison, during the "Gehsperre" action in the Łódź ghetto, September 1942.
48	89491	Ghetto Fighters' House Museum: Moshe Zilbar/Nachman Zonabend	Children working in a wood workshop in the Łódź ghetto.
48	95200A	Robert Abrams	Teenagers work in the Łódź ghetto metal workshop.
48	95186A	Robert Abrams	Workers fashion metal fasteners in the saddle making workshop of the Łódź ghetto.
49	72091	Yad Vashem/Arie Ben Menachem	Łódź ghetto children waiting in line in front of a soup kitchen.

50	05552	Leopold Page Photo Collection	A body on the street in the Warsaw ghetto, 1940-1941.
51	02625	Unknown source: copyright unknown	Jews from the Łódź ghetto board deportation trains for the Chelmno death camp, 1942-1944.
57	77293	Yad Vashem	Jews from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] sit in a large group on one side of the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau before undergoing the selection process, May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
57	77236	Yad Vashem	Jews from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] undergo a selection on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau; woman looking toward camera probably chosen for forced labor, May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
59	04412	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	A view of the Auschwitz II camp showing the barracks of the camp; after January 29, 1945. In the public domain.
59	31450B	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Former women prisoners on the wooden bunks that served as beds, in Auschwitz concentration camp, January 1945, soon after liberation. In the public domain.
60	71675	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society	Street scene in the Foehrenwald displaced persons' camp, 1945. In the public domain.
63	01281	Michael Temchin	General Michael (Rola) Zymierski, commander of the Polish communist Armia Ludowa, poses with a partisan unit in the Parczew Forest, 1944.
64	62784	Lee Stinchfield	After liberation, a survivor reenacts how the hangings took place at Ohrdruf concentration camp.
66	85861	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	A French survivor shows the crematorium in Flossenbürg to a photographer, May 1945. In the public domain.
66	37481	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Interior view of an abandoned airplane factory near Flossenbürg, where inmates of the nearby concentration camp were forced to work. In the public domain.
67	--	George C. Gross Collection	"Death train" carrying Jewish prisoners from Bergen-Belsen, abandoned as Allied forces advanced, April 1945.
71	62754	Arnold E. Samuelson	Using stretchers and carts, survivors of the Ebensee concentration camp remove the bodies of former inmates to the crematorium for burning, May 7, 1945. Hank Brodt, a survivor now living in North Carolina, is in the photograph.
74	77319	Yad Vashem	Jews from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] await selection on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau after arrival, May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
74	77358	Yad Vashem	Jewish men from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] who have been selected for forced labor at Auschwitz-Birkenau, await further processing after having been disinfected and issued underclothing, May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
75	78597	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Auschwitz prisoners unload railcars containing cement at the I.G. Farben factory in Auschwitz-Monowitz. In the public domain.
76	04490	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Survivors in (probably) Gusen gather outside of a barrack, May 1945. In the public domain.
79	77368	Yad Vashem	Jewish women from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] who have been selected for forced labor at Auschwitz-Birkenau, march toward their barracks after disinfection and headshaving, May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
80	77394	Yad Vashem	Auschwitz women inmates sort through a huge pile of shoes from the transport of Hungarian Jews, May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
82	78744	United Nations Archives & Records Management Section	United Nations personnel vaccinate an 11-year-old concentration camp survivor who was a victim of medical experiments at the Auschwitz camp; photograph taken in Bergen-Belsen displaced persons camp, Germany, May 1946.
82	79809	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Polish survivor Jadwiga Dzido shows her scarred leg to the court, while expert witness Dr. Alexander explains the nature of the medical experiment performed on her in the Ravensbrueck concentration camp. Dzido and Alexander were appearing as witnesses at the Doctors Trial, December 20, 1946. In the public domain.
83	50790	Instytut Pamieci Narodowej (Institute of National Remembrance, Warsaw, Poland	View of the Birkenau B-IA section of Auschwitz concentration camp, from the main watch tower (Death Gate) with the Lagerstrasse on the foreground, etc.; photo taken after liberation.
86	N04718	Simone Weil Lipman	False ID card issued to Simone Werlin, the pseudonym of Simone Weil, stamped with the seal of Chateauroux, France.
86& 87	56442	Belarusian State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War	Group portrait of members of the intelligence unit of the Molotov partisan brigade, Belarus, Soviet Union, 1943. In the public domain.
88	26546	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	SS assault troops capture two Jewish resistance fighters pulled from a bunker during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising, 1943. In the public domain.
88	66111	Sylvia Kramarski Kolski	Three survivors of the Treblinka uprising walk along a street in Warsaw, Poland, after the war.
88	10625	Misha Lev	Group portrait of participants in the uprising in the Sobibor death camp, August 1944.
88	97193	Jona Rosen	Palestinian Jewish parachutists Haviva Reik, Baruch Kamin, Uriel Kanner, Dov Berger (Harari), Tsadok Doron, and Sara Braverman go sightseeing while in Egypt for their training, ca. 1943.
91			Barbara Ledermann Rodbell, screenshot from her USHMM oral testimony, 1990.
96	68163	Barbara Ledermann Rodbell	Members of the Ledermann family, Jewish refugees from Berlin, pose outside on the terrace of their apartment in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, ca. 1936.
97	22861	Rita Serphos	False identity card issued to Benjamina Serphos under the alias Theodora Tijdgaat.
99	42674	Hans Aussen	A group of Dutch resistance members and hidden Jews are crowded into a room, possibly to listen to a clandestine radio.
103	80186	Simone Weil Lipman	Children cared for by the OSE in a classroom in the Rivesaltes transit camp, France, 1942.
103	80193	Simone Weil Lipman	Members of a girl scout troop organized by Simone Weil in the Rivesaltes transit camp, France, 1942.
103	80198	Simone Weil Lipman	Members of a boy scout troop organized by Simone Weil in the Rivesaltes transit camp, France, 1942.
104	80156	Simone Weil Lipman	A section of the Rivesaltes transit camp, France, 1942.
104	78724	Simone Weil Lipman	Children walking in line in the Rivesaltes transit camp under the care of the OSE, France, 1942.
104	54719	Micheline Weinstein/Jacqueline Levy-Geneste	Two volunteer OSE workers, Dora Weissberg & Simone Lipman, pose for a photograph outside a building in Rivesaltes, France.
104	N04718	Simone Weil Lipman	False ID card issued to Simone Werlin, the pseudonym of Simone Weil, stamped with the seal of Chateauroux, France.
105	29120	Felice Zimmern Stokes	Juliette Patoux poses with Felice Zimmern, the Jewish child she sheltered on her farm in La Caillaudiere, near Vendoeuvres, France.
106	37970	Charles Martin Roman	Jewish refugees escape over the Alps to Italy from the Italian-occupied zone in France following the signing of the Italian armistice, September 1943.
107			Simone Weil Lipman, screenshot from the video of her USHMM oral testimony, 2006.
108	54719	Micheline Weinstein/Jacqueline Levy-Geneste	Two volunteer OSE workers, Dora Weissberg and Simone Lipman pose for a photograph outside a building in Rivesaltes, France, 1942.
110	69285	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	A Jewish youth, wearing a numbered tag, sits on a staircase with her head in her hands after her arrival in England with the second Kindertransport, December 1938. In the public domain.
110	11291	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Jewish refugees aboard the MS *St. Louis* attempt to communicate with friends and relatives in Cuba, who were permitted to approach the docked vessel in small boats, June 1939. In the public domain.
111	03411	Leopold Page Photo Collection	Oskar Schindler in Munich one year after the war with a group of Jews he rescued, spring 1946.
111	03685	Jack Lewin	Jewish children living at the La Guespy children's home in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, pose with their director, Juliette Usach (in glasses), ca. 1941.
112	54719	Micheline Weinstein/Jacqueline	Two volunteer OSE workers, Dora Weissberg and Simone Lipman pose for a photograph outside a building in Rivesaltes,

		Levy-Geneste	France, 1942.
127	81892	Lennie Jade	Members of the Wikkerink family stand outside their home shortly after Aaron Jedwab, a Jewish infant, was left on their doorstep.
127	89646	Susie Grunbaum Schwarz	Suse Grunbaum lies in an attic storeroom at the home of Bernard and Mina Hartemink in Sinderen, the Netherlands, where she was hidden during the war.
127	05723	Marion I. Cassirer	Marion Kaufmann with Rie Beelen, the daughter of her rescuers.
134	04437	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	An American soldier walks through the gates of Kaufering I (Landsberg), a subcamp of Dachau, on the day of liberation, April 27, 1945. In the public domain.
140	74578	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Troops with the medical detachment of Combat Command A, 12th Armored Division, XXI Corps, U.S. 7th Army, examine the bodies of prisoners killed by the SS just prior to the evacuation of the Kaufering IV subcamp of Dachau, 1945. In the public domain.
142	Film ID: 143	Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive/George Kadish	Three screenshots from film "Hospital for former Jewish prisoners. medical care," St. Ottilien Hospital for Jewish Former Politi-cal Prisoners near Landsberg, Germany, 1945-1947, 06:23, RG-60.0093.
144	31450A	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Former women prisoners on the wooden bunks that served as beds, in Auschwitz concentration camp, soon after liberation, January 1945. In the public domain.
144	58410	Mark Chrzanowski	View of one of the destroyed crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau immediately after the liberation.
146	58415	Mark Chrzanowski	A group of female survivors trudge through the snow immediately after the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau.
146	85750	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	View of one of the warehouses in Auschwitz, which is overflowing with clothes confiscated from prisoners, shortly after liberation. In the public domain.
149	09806	Marc Block	Generals Eisenhower and Patton tour the DP camp at Feldafing, September 17, 1945.
149	34842	Marion Pritchard	Jewish men and youth practice carpentry in a vocational workshop (probably in the Foehrenwald DP camp), 1945-1947.
152	66297	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	One day after their liberation, a group of former prisoners at the Ebensee concentration camp pose outside for U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer Arnold Samuelson, May 7, 1945. In the public domain. Zev Harel, who now lives in North Carolina, is one of the liberated prisoners.
153	62752	Arnold E. Samuelson	A crowd of survivors gathers in the main square of the newly liberated Ebensee concentration camp, May 1945.
153	65535	Felix Uhrinek	Survivors of the Ebensee subcamp depart the camp by wagon and on foot, May 1945.
156	66299	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Survivors of the Ebensee concentration camp, who were liberated by U.S. Third Army troops, march out of the camp beneath the sign, "We Welcome Our Liberators." May 6-June 1945. In the public domain.
164	08297	Frank Brooks	Survivors gather around an American military vehicle in the Mauthausen concentration camp, Austria, May 1945. ("Tar Heel" is written on the windshield, probably in dust.)
174	74599	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Inmates waving a home-made American flag greet U.S. Seventh Army troops upon their arrival at the Allach concentration camp, April 30, 1945. In the public domain.
175	26536	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn. /Myron Friedmann	Jews captured during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising are led away from the burning ghetto by SS guards (uprising: April 19-May 16, 1943). In the public domain.
177	77241	Yad Vashem	Jews from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] undergo a selection on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz gate visible at upper left), May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
180	77295	Yad Vashem	Jewish women and children from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary], in line by the train after arrival, await selection on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, May 1944. From the "Auschwitz Album"; in the public domain.
181	66297	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	One day after their liberation, a group of former prisoners at the Ebensee concentration camp pose outside for U.S. Army Signal Corps photographer Arnold Samuelson, May 7, 1945. In the public domain. Zev Harel, who now lives in North Carolina, is one of the liberated prisoners.
183	14463	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	The Nazi defendants and their lawyers at the International Military Tribunal trial of war criminals at Nuremberg. Defendant Albert Speer (standing at right) delivers a statement in the doc (IMT trial: Nov. 20, 1945-Oct. 1, 1946). In the public domain.
185	64407	Sharon Paquette	German soldiers of the Waffen-SS and the Reich Labor Service look on as a member of an Einsatzgruppe prepares to shoot a Ukrainian Jew kneeling on the edge of a mass grave filled with corpses, 1941-1943.
185	62118	Leonard Lauder	Bystanders watch Jews as they are rounded up and attacked on a street in Lvov, Nazi-occupied Poland, 1941.
185	86055	Peter Feigl	Group portrait of Jewish and non-Jewish refugee children sheltered in various public and private homes in Le Chambon-sur-Lignon during World War II with some of the French men and women who cared for them, 1943.
185	29901	Sophie Zajd Berkowitz	Polish rescuer Genowefa Starczewska-Korczak holds Celina Berkowitz, the Jewish child she protected during World War II, 1943.
189	26543	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	Jews captured by SS and SD troops during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising are forced to leave their shelter and march to the Umschlagplatz for deportation (uprising: April 19-May 16, 1943). In the public domain.

■ Other Repositories & Sources

Page #	Repository / Source	Photo Description / Permission
4	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY	Jewish ghetto of Rome, detail of Antonio Tempesta, *Plan of the City of Rome*, etching with some engraving, 1645. Edward Pearce Casey Fund, 1983; accession number: 1983.1027(1–12). In the public domain.
9	Sports and Tourism Museum, Warsaw, Poland	Ilja Szrajbman, Polish Jewish Olympic swimmer, 1930s. USHMM # 21712/S. Permission request submitted.
9	Sports and Tourism Museum, Warsaw, Poland	Roman Kantor, Polish Jewish Olympic fencer, 1930s . USHMM # 21723. Permission request submitted.
10	*The Daily Reflector*, Greenville, NC	Morris Glass speaking to a student audience at East Carolina University, 2013. Photo by Aileen Devlin. Reproduced by permission of the *Daily Reflector*.
28	*News & Record*, Greensboro, NC	Walter Falk at age 11 in a transit camp in London after arriving in England through the Kindertransport program, 1941. Permission requests submitted.
29	*News & Record*, Greensboro, NC	Walter Falk at his mother's memorial headstone in the Greensboro Jewish cemetery, 2006. Permission requests submitted.
36	Commons: Bundesarchiv	Latvian Jewish women huddle together before being executed by a killing squad composed of Latvian police directed by the local SS commander, 1941. In the public domain.
39	Eisenhower Presidential Library, U.S. National Archives & Records Admn.	April 12, 1945—Dwight D. Eisenhower views the charred bodies of prisoners at Ohrdruf concentration camp. #71-321-2.
43	Hessisches Hauptstaatsarchiv (Hessian State Archives), Wiesbaden, Germany	Children in a street in the Lutsk ghetto, Nazi-occupied Poland (now Ukraine). Yad Vashem #87215. Reproduced by permission of the Hessian State Archives.
44	The Russian State Documentary Film & Photo Archive at Krasnogorsk (RGAKFD)	Jewish men arrested in Odessa, near Zhmerinka, Ukraine, after the German occupation, 1941. Yad Vashem # 63483; credited by Yad Vashem to RGAKFD. Permission request submitted; correspondence continuing with RGAKFD.

46	Wikimedia Commons	Nazi Reich and occupied territory, 1941, detail *of A Map of the German Front of the Second World War, circa 1941-1942.*
57	Yad Vashem	In the courtyard of a house in Ioannina, Greece, 1930s. Among those photographed is Elisabet Batis, who was murdered in Auschwitz in April 1944. #4318025. Reproduced by permission of Yad Vashem.
48	Wikimedia Commons	Nazi Reich and occupied territory, 1941, detail *of A Map of the German Front of the Second World War, circa 1941-1942.*
68	Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York; Gift of Robert Marx, Yaffa Eliach Collection, Center for Holocaust Studies	Moszek Sztajnkeler (Morris Stein) holding placard with name for postwar identification, ca. 1945, 1946. USHMM #10596. Reproduced by permission of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York. (Digital image from USHMM)
73	Choosing to Remember Collection (OH-SHOAH), Special Collections and University Archives, D. H. Ramsey Library, University of North Carolina at Asheville	Julius Blum with his parents and brother before the war. Photograph published in *Coming to the Mountains: Immigration and Western North Carolina*, created by the Center for Diversity Education, UNC-Asheville, at diversityed.unca.edu/sites/default/files/ComingtotheMoutnains.pdf [sic]. No restrictions on use.
77	USC Shoah Foundation	Julius and Phyllis Blum, screenshot from video of Mr. Blum's Shoah Foundation oral testimony, 1995.
82	Panstwowe Muzeum Auschwitz-Birkenau w Oswiecimiu (Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum)	Photo portrait of Josef Mengele in civilian clothes. USHMM #71555. Permission request submitted.
83	Instytut Pamieci Narodowej [Institute of National Remembrance], Warsaw, Poland	Carl Clauberg in the Auschwitz medical experiment unit, between 1941 and 1944. Permission request submitted.
97	NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam, the Netherlands	Jews proceed to an assembly point before deportation from Amsterdam. USHMM # 45142. Reproduced by permission of the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies.
100	Library & Archives Canada	Canadian forces and Amsterdam residents soon after liberation, May 1945. Canada Dept. of National Defence Collection, PA-114069. Copyright expired; in the public domain.
109	National Archives UK	Telegram from Gerhart Riegner to S.S. Silverman, both of the World Jewish Congress, sent Aug. 8, 1942, regarding rumors of the annihilation of Jews in concentration camps. Catalogue reference FO 371/30917. Open Government License v3.0.
113	Yad Vashem	Henri Dzik and Veronique Dorothy point to the Salas family names on the Wall of the Righteous after the family was honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem, 2013. Reproduced by permission of Yad Vashem.
117	Centropa (Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation), Vienna, Austria / Edward Serotta	Shelly Weiner & Rachel Kizhnerman standing with the daughter-in-law of the Palaschuks who had hidden them with their mothers during the war, Rivne, Ukraine, 2013. Permission requests submitted.
118	Centropa/Edward Serotta	Shelly Weiner & Rachel Kizhnerman standing in front of the barn in which they had hidden, 2013. Permission requests submitted.
122	Centropa/Edward Serotta	Shelly Weiner & Rachel Kizhnerman at the door of the barn in which they had hidden, 2013. Permission requests submitted.
123	Centropa/Edward Serotta	Shelly Weiner & Rachel Kizhnerman looking at a bunker in which they had hidden, 2013. Permission requests submitted.
123	Centropa	Screen shot from Centropa video, *Return to Rivne*, 2015. Permission request submitted..
125	NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam, the Netherlands	Round-up (razzia) of Jewish men, Amsterdam, February 1941. Permission request submitted.
126	Library & Archives Canada	Young boy during the Hunger Winter, 1944-45, waiting outside a black market restaurant in Amsterdam. Photograph by Kryn Taconis. Copyright expired; in the public domain.
132	Yad Vashem	Medal awarded by Yad Vashem to the Righteous Among the Nations. Reproduced by permission of Yad Vashem.
140	U.S. Army	An American tank of the 1st Infantry Division rolls through Gladbach, Germany, March 1, 1945. In the public domain.
141	U.S. Dept. of Defense	Screenshot from video of presentation by Morris Glass at the Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune's Days of Remembrance, April 2013; video possibly taken by the U.S. Dept. of Defense; uploaded to YouTube by the *Jacksonville* [NC] *Daily News*. In the public domain.
147	USC Shoah Foundation	Edith Neuberger Ross, screenshot from video of Shoah Foundation oral testimony, 1997.
153	U.S. Natl. Archives & Records Admn.	African American soldiers of the 666th Quartermaster Truck Company, 82nd Airborne Division, Europe, 1945. #535533. In the public domain.
181	Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Phnom Penh, Cambodia	Victims of the Cambodian genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge regime under Pol Pot, 1975-1979; intake photographs of prisoners in the S-21 prison and torture center. Permission request submitted.
181	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)/Roger Arnold	Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar flee to Bangladesh after facing brutal persecution that UN officials have said may amount to crimes against humanity, ca. 2018. Permission request submitted.
181	Kate Mereand-Sinha	Sign from Save Darfur rally, Washington, DC, April 30, 2006. Photograph by Kate Mereand-Sinha, www.flickr.com/people/katmere/. Reproduced courtesy of Kate Mereand-Sinha.

■ Unknown Source or Copyright___

Page #	Description
2	Pogrom in the Jewish ghetto of Frankfurt, woodcut, 1614.
3	Medieval illustration depicting Jews being burned at the stake (Schilling, *Bildchronik*), 1515.
3	Cover of Martin Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lives*, 1543.
8	Photographs (2) of Pabianice, Poland, 1926.
133	Bogdan Zal and Esther Lederman in Israel, n.d. (ca. 1990s). Search for copyright owner in process.
141	Waffen SS soldier on a motorcycle, 1945.
148	Aerial view of Hessental airfield, Germany, with craters from Allied bombing, 1945.

■ SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS ■

Holocaust survivors Zev Harel (top), Abe Piasek (middle), and Peter Stein (bottom) speaking to teachers at workshops sponsored by the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust in Winston-Salem, Raleigh, and Greenville, NC.

■ North Carolina Holocaust Survivors: Online Testimonies ■

ABBREVIATIONS

CHGHRE	Center for Holocaust, Genocide, and Human Rights Education of North Carolina
USHMM	U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC
SHOAH	USC (Univ. of Southern California) Shoah Foundation, Visual History Archive

USHMM and Shoah Foundation testimonies not available online are not listed here. See p. 162, bottom.

■ **AGNES ARANYI**
- Oral Testimony, 1990 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504526

■ **JULIUS BLUM**
- Oral Testimony, no date (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn520398

■ **HANK [HENEK] BRODT**
- Oral Testimony, 2006 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn126323

■ **SUSAN CERNYAK-SPATZ**
- Oral Testimony, 1979 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn47955
- Oral Testimony, 1994 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn509009

■ **RENÉE FINK**
- On the Back of a Stranger's Bicycle (CHGHRE) — youtu.be/eJAiC7fJXSo
- Oral Testimony, 2006 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn607950

■ **RENA KORNREICH GELISSEN**
- Oral Testimony, 1996 (SHOAH) — Access video via sfi.usc.edu/vha.

■ **ZEV HAREL**
- Oral Testimony, 1984 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn505019
- Oral Testimony, 1996 (SHOAH) — Access video via sfi.usc.edu/vha.
- Oral Testimony, 2005 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn78755

■ **REBECCA HAUSER**
- A Greek Girl in Auschwitz (CHGHRE) — youtu.be/UbPudYTSWgs

■ **JACK HOFFMAN**
- Oral Testimony, 2006 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn126354

■ **RACHEL KIZHNERMAN**
- Oral Testimony, 1998 (SHOAH) — Access video via sfi.usc.edu/vha.

■ **RACHEL KIZHNERMAN & SHELLY WEINER**
- Oral Testimony, 2006 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn607952

■ **ESTHER GUTMAN LEDERMAN**
- Hiding for Our Lives (CHGHRE) — youtu.be/J1mvWa2ky5M

■ **SIMONE WEIL LIPMAN**
- Oral Testimony, 1990 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504630
- Oral Testimony, 1998 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn506653
- Oral Testimony, 2006 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn607951

■ **HAL MYERS**
- Over the Mountains to Safety (CHGHRE) — youtu.be/7_RxmKIaMfA
- Oral Testimony, 2007 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn78763

■ **BARBARA LEDERMANN RODBELL**
- Oral Testimony, 1984 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn520379
- Oral Testimony, 1990 (USHMM) — collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504687

■ **EDITH NEUBERGER ROSS**
- Oral Testimony, 1997 (SHOAH) — youtu.be/dXifQsbQ-ZA

■ **PETER STEIN**
- Growing Up under Nazi Rule in Prague (CHGHRE) — youtu.be/sEfwMWZiFlY

■ Published Memoirs ■

Also see Online Resources at the end of the survivor narratives in this publication.

HANK BRODT	***Hank Brodt Holocaust Memoirs: A Candle and a Promise***, by Deborah Donnelly (Hank Brodt's daughter), Amsterdam Publ., 2016.
SUSAN ECKSTEIN CERNYAK-SPATZ	***Protective Custody: Prisoner 34042***, by Susan Cernyak-Spatz (Joel Shatsky, editor), N&S Publishers, 2005.
RENA KORNREICH GELISSEN	***Rena's Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz***, by Rena K. Gelissen with Heather Dune Macadam, Beacon Press, 1995; exp. ed., 2015.
MORRIS GLASS	***Chosen for Destruction: The Story of a Holocaust Survivor***, by Morris Glass and Carolyn Murray Happer, Media Consultants, Inc., 2011.
REBECCA YOMTOV HAUSER	***My Simple Life in Greece, Destroyed by the Holocaust***, by Rebecca Yomtov Hauser, Lulu Publishing, 2016.
ESTHER GUTMAN LEDERMAN	***Hiding for Our Lives: The Wartime Memoirs of Esther Gutman Lederman and Ezjel Lederman***, by Esther Lederman, Booksurge Publishing, 2007.
PETER STEIN	***A Boy's Journey: From Nazi-Occupied Prague to Freedom in America***, by Peter J. Stein, Lystra Books & Literary Services, 2019.
HAROLD WERNER	***Fighting Back: A Memoir of Jewish Resistance in World War II*****,** by Harold Werner, ed. Mark Werner, Columbia University Press, 1992.
WALTER ZIFFER	***Confronting the Silence: A Holocaust Survivor's Search for God***, by Walter Ziffer, Dykeman Legacy Press, 2017.
COLLECTION	***Witnesses to the Horror: North Carolinians Remember the Holocaust***, by Cecile Holmes White, in cooperation with the North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, 1987; archive.org/details/witnessestohorro00whit. Gizella Abramson, Susan Cernyak-Spatz, Walter Falk, Florence Goematt, Donald Hekler, Erica Hekler, Anatoly Kizhnerman, Klari Kletter, Elias Mordechai, Esther Mordechai, Bramy Resnik, Burt Romer, Eva Weiner, Rochelle (Shelly) Weiner.

■ Online Memoirs ■

MORRIS STEIN	***Reflections on Hell***, 1995. ◆ drive.google.com/file/d/0Bz_C56Le4rV8bFJOUHJ4UFJsQW8/view

NOTE: **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum testimonies** of North Carolina survivors that are not available for viewing on the museum's website are not listed here.

Shoah Foundation testimonies of North Carolina survivors that are not available for viewing in the Visual History Archive database from the USC Shoah Foundation are not listed here. These survivors include Agnes Aranyi, Julius Blum, Hank [Henek] Brodt, Susan Cernyak-Spatz, Renée Fink, Morris Glass, Manfred Katz, Anatoly Kizhnerman, Esther Gutman Lederman, Martin Lipman, Hal Myers, Abe Piasek, Frieda Ross Van-Hessen, Henry Vogelhut, Runia Vogelhut, Eva Weiner, and others.

Shoah Foundation testimonies that are not available online can be seen at libraries and organizations with access to the full archive of over 55,000 testimonies. For those sites, see sfi.usc.edu/locator/full_access_sites. The North Carolina access sites are Appalachian State University, Duke University, Forsyth Technical Community College, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Wake Forest University.

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON THE HOLOCAUST
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
www.ncpublicschools.org/holocaust-council/

___HOLOCAUST FACT AND FICTION___

Mark each statement true or false.

_____ 1. Approximately six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

_____ 2. Other victims of Nazi persecution included Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Slavic peoples (primarily Poles and Russians), and political opponents such as Communists and socialists.

_____ 3. Before World War II, most European Jews lived and worked on farms, and few lived in urban areas (towns and cities).

_____ 4. Jews made up 15 percent of the population in pre-World War II Germany.

_____ 5. Jews are a race as well as a religious group.

_____ 6. The Nazis believed that racial purity was required to build the new German empire.

_____ 7. Hitler was partly Jewish.

_____ 8. The Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933 but did not begin anti-Jewish measures until 1938, a year before the war.

_____ 9. Through the Kindertransport program, thousands of children (mostly Jewish) in Nazi-controlled countries were allowed to emigrate to England before the war.

_____10. Before 1939, the U.S., Canada, and western European countries would accept Jewish refugees, but Hitler refused them permission to emigrate.

_____11. After 1939, word spread of the mass murder of Jews in eastern Europe, and later of the creation of death camps, but many people, including Jews, found the reports too hard to believe.

_____12. The Nazis established ghettos to gather and isolate the Jews of Poland and eastern Europe before sending them to concentration camps to be murdered (or to die of forced labor, disease, malnutrition, and brutal treatment).

_____13. If Jews converted to Christianity, they were not sent to ghettos or concentration camps.

_____14. While the Jews of Germany and eastern Europe were targeted for total destruction, the Jews of Nazi-controlled western Europe were not murdered unless they actively opposed the Nazis.

_____15. Most of the concentration camps were located in Germany.

_____16. Most of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust died in the ghettos and camps. About one third were killed in mass shootings.

_____17. The Nazis' genocidal goal was aided by the cooperation of many non-Jews in the Nazi-controlled countries throughout Europe.

_____18. There was no Jewish resistance during the Holocaust.

_____19. The governments of the United States and Britain were aware of the mass executions of Jews during the war.

_____20. Most of the people who rescued Jews during the Holocaust were other Jews.

_____21. The "Righteous Among the Nations" refers to countries that fought alongside the U.S., Britain, and the Soviet Union against the Nazis and their collaborators.

_____22. Many Jewish men and women who survived the Holocaust say that chance was a major factor in their survival.

_____23. The Nazis were able to destroy most of the physical evidence of the Holocaust in the last months of the war.

_____24. Top Nazi officials were tried and most convicted in the Nuremberg war crimes trials. Many other Nazi officials escaped capture and trial.

_____25. All Holocaust survivors have now passed away.

USHMM/Frank Brooks

Survivors speak to an American liberator (perhaps from North Carolina), Mauthausen concentration camp, Austria, May 1945.

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON THE HOLOCAUST
NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
www.ncpublicschools.org/holocaust-council/

___HOLOCAUST FACT AND FICTION___

__with answers and explanations__

True 1. Approximately six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust by the Nazi regime and its collaborators.

True 2. Other victims of Nazi persecution included Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Slavic peoples (primarily Poles and Russians), and political opponents such as Communists and socialists.

False 3. Before World War II, most European Jews lived and worked on farms, and few lived in urban areas (towns and cities).

Most European Jews lived in eastern Europe, primarily in Jewish towns or villages known as "shtetls." Most Jews of western Europe lived in urban areas and were more integrated with the non-Jewish populations.

False 4. Jews made up 15 percent of the population in pre-World War II Germany.

Jews made up less than 1% of the total German population. In 1933, Germany had a population of 70 million people, about 565,000 of whom were Jewish.

False 5. Jews are a race as well as a religious group.

Jews are not a race. Jews are a religious group as are Christians and Muslims.

True 6. The Nazis believed that racial purity was required to build the new German empire.

False 7. Hitler was partly Jewish.

There is no reliable evidence to support this rumor, which was partly based on the fact that the identity of Hitler's paternal grandfather (his father's father) is unknown.

False 8. The Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933 but did not begin anti-Jewish measures until 1938, a year before the war.

The Nazis took action immediately to restrict the civil and economic rights of Jews. The first anti-Jewish measures were enacted in the spring of 1933, soon after Hitler assumed dictatorial powers through the Enabling Act.

True 9. Through the Kindertransport program, thousands of children (mostly Jewish) in Nazi-occupied countries were allowed to emigrate to England before the war.

False 10. Before 1939, the U.S., Canada, and western European countries would accept Jewish refugees, but Hitler refused them permission to emigrate.

Before World War II, Jews were allowed, even encouraged, to leave Germany, but most European countries limited or forbade their entrance. For a variety of reasons, including American anti-Semitism and the Great Depression, the U.S. government would not raise the quota to admit more Jewish refugees.

True 11. After 1939, word spread of the mass murder of Jews in eastern Europe, and later of the creation of death camps, but many people, including Jews, found the reports too hard to believe.

True 12. The Nazis established ghettos to gather and isolate the Jews of Nazi-occupied Poland and eastern Europe before sending them to concentration camps to be murdered (or to die of forced labor, disease, malnutrition, and brutal treatment).

False 13. If Jews converted to Christianity, they were not sent to ghettos or concentration camps.

Jews were not permitted by the Nazis to convert to Christianity. Children born to a Jewish mother or father were considered "racially Jewish" by the Nazis.

False 14. While the Jews of Germany and eastern European were targeted for total destruction, the Jews of Nazi-controlled western Europe were not murdered unless they actively opposed the Nazis.

The Nazis began murdering the Jews of Nazi-occupied Poland and eastern Europe in the early years of the war. Soon after they adopted the "Final Solution" in 1942 to annihilate all the Jews of Europe, they began to round up the Jews of western Europe to send them to the death camps.

False 15. Most of the concentration camps were located in Germany.

Most of the camps were located in Nazi-occupied Poland, including the five death camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chełmno, Sobibor, and Treblinka).

True 16. Most of the Jewish victims of the Holocaust died in the ghettos and camps. About one third were killed in mass shootings.

True 17. The Nazis' genocidal goal was aided by the cooperation of many non-Jews in the Nazi-controlled countries throughout Europe.

False 18. There was no Jewish resistance during the Holocaust.

Jews carried out many acts of resistance against enormous odds—in ghettos, concentration camps, and killing centers—including sabotage in forced labor factories, gathering intelligence (spying), smuggling food and supplies, serving in Resistance and partisan groups, and staging armed revolts in camps and ghettos.

True 19. The governments of the United States and Britain were aware of the mass executions of Jews during the war.

False 20. Most of the people who rescued Jews during the Holocaust were other Jews.

People in every European country and from all religious backgrounds risked their lives to help Jews. Efforts ranged from isolated acts of individuals to small or large organized networks.

False 21. The "Righteous Among the Nations" refers to countries that fought alongside the U.S., Britain, and the Soviet Union against the Nazis and their collaborators.

The honor of "Righteous Among the Nations" is granted by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center in Israel, to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. About 27,000 individuals from 51 countries have been so honored.

True 22. Many Jewish men and women who survived the Holocaust say that chance was a major factor in their survival.

False 23. The Nazis were able to destroy most of the physical evidence of the Holocaust in the last months of the war.

Despite destroying many documents and trying to raze concentration camps before their evacuation, the Nazis were unable to erase the record of the Holocaust. Millions of documents and other evidence were collected by the Allies in Germany and Nazi-held countries.

True 24. Top Nazi officials were tried and most convicted in the Nuremberg war crimes trials. Many other Nazi officials escaped capture and trial.

False 25. All Holocaust survivors have now passed away.

It is estimated that about 400,000 survivors of the Holocaust are alive today around the world (2020), about one fourth of them in the United States. Most are in their 80s and 90s; the youngest are in their 70s.

HOLOCAUST TIME LINE

North Carolina Council on the Holocaust, N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction

1932

March 13 In the presidential election in Germany, Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazi (National Socialist) Party, receives 30% of the vote, and President Hindenburg receives 49.6%. In an April run-off election, Hitler receives 37% and Hindenburg 53%.

July 31 In elections for the Reichstag (parliament), the Nazi Party receives 38%, the Social Democrats 22%, the Communists 14%, the Catholic Center Party 12%, and other parties 14%.

1933

Jan. 30 Hitler is appointed chancellor of Germany by President Hindenburg.

Feb. 28 The Nazis use the burning of the Reichstag (parliament) building in Berlin as an excuse to suspend civil rights of all Germans in the name of national security.

March 4 Franklin D. Roosevelt is inaugurated president of the United States. He remains president until his death less than one month before the end of the war in Europe.

March 5 In the last free election in Germany until after World War II, the Nazi Party receives 44% of the popular vote in parliamentary elections. Hitler arrests the Communist parliamentary leaders in order to achieve a majority in the Reichstag.

March 22 **DACHAU,** the first Nazi concentration camp, is opened in Nazi Germany to imprison political prisoners, many of them dissidents of the regime.

March 24 **HITLER BECOMES DICTATOR**. The Reichstag gives Hitler power to enact laws without a parliamentary vote, in effect creating a dictatorship (Enabling Act).

April 1 The Nazi government orders a one-day boycott of all Jewish businesses. In the next six years over 400 Nazi decrees remove Jewish citizenship and civil rights, and put severe limitations on their participation in German public and economic life.

April 7 Nazis begin banning Jews, Communists, and other “undesirables” from the German civil service, including doctors, lawyers, and teachers. All Jewish judges are forced to resign.

April 26 The Gestapo (secret police) is established, taking over all local police.

May 2 The Nazi government bans German labor unions and arrest their leaders.

May 10 Thousands of books considered “un-German,” including many written by Jews and political dissidents, are destroyed in public burnings across Germany.

July 14 The Nazi government institutes the forced sterilization of those with physical and mental disabilities, mental illness, and other conditions considered detrimental to the creation of a supreme “Aryan race.”

July 14 The Nazi Party declares itself the only legal political party in Germany. All other parties are banned.

Sept.-Oct. The Nazi government bans all Jewish performers from participating in theater, opera, and other cultural activities. Jews are barred from being news reporters and editors.

Oct. 14 Hitler announces Germany’s withdrawal from the League of Nations.

1934

May 17 Jews are banned from receiving national health insurance.

May 17 Mass pro-Nazi rally is held in New York City by the Friends of New Germany.

June 30 **NIGHT OF THE LONG KNIVES.** Hitler orders the execution of hundreds of suspected opponents of his regime, including many top officers of the Nazi Storm Troopers (SA).

Aug. 2 **HITLER DECLARES HIMSELF FUEHRER** (leader) after President Hindenburg dies.

Aug. 19 With 90% approval, the German people vote to support Hitler's dictatorial powers.

Oct. 1 Hitler orders the expansion of the army and the navy, and the creation of an air force, in violation of the Versailles Treaty that concluded World War I.

1935

March 16 Hitler renews the draft in violation of the Versailles Treaty, with no response from Britain, France, and the U.S.

Sept.-Nov. **NUREMBERG RACE LAWS** deprive Jews of citizenship; they are banned from voting, holding public office, marrying non-Jews, and exercising other civil rights. The legal definition of a "Jew" is someone with three or four Jewish grandparents.

1936

March 7 **NAZI INVASION OF THE RHINELAND** between Germany and France. Nazi military aggression for territory begins.

July 12 Sachsenhausen concentration camp is opened in Germany.

Aug. 1 The Olympic Games open in Berlin. Signs reading "Jews Not Welcome" are temporarily removed from most public places by Hitler's orders.

Oct. 25 **ROME-BERLIN AXIS.** Germany and Italy form alliance.

Nov. 25 **ANTI-COMINTERN PACT.** Germany and Japan create alliance against the Soviet Union.

1937

July 15 Buchenwald concentration camp is opened in Germany.

Nov. 5 German army is ordered to prepare for war.

1938

March 13 **NAZI OCCUPATION OF AUSTRIA**, which is annexed to Germany (the Anschluss).

June-Dec. **RESTRICTIONS ON JEWS ESCALATE,** e.g., Jews are barred from public schools and universities, and from public cultural and sports events. They are excluded from economic professions such as bookkeeping, selling real estate. loaning money, peddling (and any work outside their area of residence). Jewish doctors are forbidden from treating non-Jewish patients. Jews are ordered to have the letter "J" stamped on their passports.

July 6-14 **EVIAN CONFERENCE.** Delegates from 32 countries meet in France to consider ways to help European Jews, but no nation agrees to accept any refugees.

Aug. 8 Mauthausen, the first concentration camp in Austria, is opened.

Sept. 29 **MUNICH AGREEMENT.** Great Britain and France agree to the German takeover of the Sudetenland in western Czechoslovakia in return for Hitler's promise to demand no more territory.

Oct. 6 **NAZIS OCCUPY SUDETENLAND** in western Czechoslovakia as permitted by the Munich Agreement.

Oct. 28 17,000 Polish-born Jews are rounded up and expelled at the German border with Poland.

Nov. 9-10 **KRISTALLNACHT: THE NIGHT OF BROKEN GLASS.** Nazis initiate anti-Jewish riots in Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland. 257 synagogues are destroyed, 7,500 Jewish stores are looted, 91 Jews are killed, and 30,000 Jewish men are sent to concentration camps.

November Nazis escalate policies to force Jews to decide to emigrate. Jewish-owned businesses are ordered closed. German Jews are ordered to pay 1,000,000,000 (one billion) Reichsmarks in reparations for the damages of Kristallnacht.

Dec. 2 **FIRST KINDERTRANSPORT** arrives in England with Jewish and other endangered children escaping Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia.

1939

Jan. 30 **REICHSTAG SPEECH.** Hitler threatens that a world war initiated by "international Jewish financiers" would bring on the "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."

Feb. 9 A bill to permit the entry of 20,000 Jewish refugee children into the U.S. is introduced in Congress. The bill lacks support and dies in committee.

Feb. 20 22,000 members of the German-American Bund attend a pro-Nazi rally in Madison Square Garden in New York City.

Feb. 21 Nazis order Jews to turn over all of their gold, silver, platinum, and precious stone items to the government, as well as fur coats, radios, bicycles, and typewriters.

March 4 Nazis initiate policy to use German Jews for forced labor.

March 15 **NAZIS OCCUPY CZECHOSLOVAKIA** in violation of the Munich Agreement.

March 25 Half a million people attend a massive "Stop Hitler" parade in New York City.

April 30 German landlords are given the right to evict Jewish tenants.

May-June The ship *St. Louis*, carrying almost 1,000 Jewish refugees from Germany, is turned away from Cuba, the U.S., and other countries before returning to Europe.

Aug. 23 Germany and the Soviet Union sign a nonaggression pact, which Germany will break by invading the Soviet Union in June 1941.

Sept. 1 **WORLD WAR II BEGINS. GERMANY INVADES POLAND.** Britain and France declare war on Germany on Sept. 3. The U.S. declares its neutrality.

Sept. 17 Soviet army invades western Poland as agreed with Germany a month earlier.

October **EUTHANASIA PROJECT.** Nazis begin forced euthanasia of patients with mental illness, hereditary diseases, and physical disabilities.

Oct-Dec. **GHETTOS ARE CREATED IN NAZI-OCCUPIED POLAND** to isolate the Jewish populations into small enclosed sections of the cities.

Dec. 18 Nazis severely restrict food rations for Jews in Germany.

1940

April-May **NAZIS INVADE WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.** Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and France are defeated and occupied.

May 14 Last transport of children escaping Nazi-occupied Europe leaves the Netherlands.

May 20 **AUSCHWITZ** concentration camp is opened in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Aug. 8 **NAZIS BEGIN AIR ATTACKS ON BRITAIN.** The Germans fail to defeat Britain by aerial bombing and never invade the island.

Aug. 15 The Nazis announce plan to deport all European Jews to the island of Madagascar, off southeastern Africa, over four years. The plan is postponed and then abandoned in 1942 with the adoption of the Final Solution.

Sept. 27 **THE AXIS IS FORMED** as Germany, Italy, and Japan sign the Tripartite Pact.

Nov. 16 The Jewish ghetto in Warsaw is sealed, enclosing 450,000 Jews inside its walls. Other ghettos in Nazi-occupied Poland are sealed by the Nazis in the following months.

1941

April 6 Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece.

June 22 **GERMANY INVADES THE SOVIET UNION** in violation of the nonaggression pact.

June 23 **EINSATZGRUPPEN** (mobile killing squads) begin murdering hundreds of thousands of Jews in the western Soviet Union.

Sept. 1 German and Austrian Jews are ordered to wear armbands with the Star of David.

Sept. 3 The Nazis initiate use of Zyklon-B gas to kill prisoners in Auschwitz.

Sept. 29 **BABI YAR MASSACRE**. 34,000 Jews of Kiev, Ukraine (Soviet Union), mostly women, children, the ill, and the elderly, are massacred by German troops in the ravine of Babi Yar. Many brutal massacres of Jews occur throughout the Soviet war zone.

Oct. 12 German army reaches outskirts of Moscow but fails to take the city.

Oct. 15 Nazis begin mass deportations of German Jews to ghettos in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Oct. 22 Over 30,000 Jews are killed by the Romanian government over two days, and many more are left to die or are deported to killing camps.

Nov. 24 Theresienstadt is created as a "model camp" in Nazi-controlled Czechoslovakia.

Nov. 30 Germans begin mass shootings of 30,000 Jews of Riga, Latvia (Soviet Union).

Dec. 7 **THE U.S. ENTERS WORLD WAR II.** The U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, is bombed by the Japanese air force. The U.S. declares war on Japan the next day.

Dec. 8 **CHELMNO** death camp is opened in Nazi-occupied Poland.

Dec. 11 Germany and Italy declare war on the U.S. The U.S. declares war on Germany and Italy.

1942

Jan. 5 German Jews are ordered to turn in their winter clothing to be sent to German troops fighting in the Soviet Union.

Jan. 16 First deportation of Jews in the Lodz ghetto to Chelmno death camp, where the Nazis had first used gas to kill prisoners.

Jan. 20 **"THE FINAL SOLUTION"** to exterminate European Jews is planned at the Wannsee Conference near Berlin. More death camps are opened in the following months.

March 17 **BELZEC** death camp begins operation in Nazi-occupied Poland.

March 25 First deportation of Slovakian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

March 27 First deportation of French Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau..

May 16 **SOBIBOR** death camp begins operation in Nazi-occupied Poland.

May 18 The *New York Times* reports mass killings of Jews by the Nazis in Nazi-occupied Poland and Nazi-occupied Soviet Union.

June 2 BBC radio (London) reports the killing of 700,000 Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland since the war began, as documented by a Polish underground leader.

June 2 First deportation of German Jews to Theresienstadt.

July 15 First deportation of Dutch Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

July 21 20,000 American Jews hold a mass rally in New York City to urge the U.S. and its allies to rescue the Jews of Europe.

July 22 **TREBLINKA** death camp begins operation in Nazi-occupied Poland. First transport of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto arrives in Treblinka.

Aug. 14 Switzerland bars all Jewish refugees from crossing its border with France.

Oct. 4 All Jews in German concentration camps are sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Oct. 9 German Jews are forbidden to buy books.

Oct. 25 First deportation of Norwegian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Nov. 8 **ALLIED INVASION OF NORTH AFRICA BEGINS**. Allied forces land on the coast of Morocco.

Nov. 24 An American Jewish leader publicizes a telegram sent by a Jewish diplomat in Switzerland conveying evidence of the Nazi plan to completely annihilate the Jews of Europe (Reigner Telegram).

Dec. 17 Allied nations issue statement confirming that Germany is conducting the mass murder of Jews and "will not escape retribution."

1943

Feb. 2 **NAZI RETREAT FROM THE EASTERN FRONT BEGINS.** German army surrenders at Stalingrad, Soviet Union.

Feb. 26 First deportation of Roma (Gypsies) to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

April 19 U.S. and British officials meeting in Bermuda fail to devise an effective plan for rescuing the victims of the Nazis in Europe.

April 19 **WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING** begins. Armed Jewish resistance continues for 28 days after the Nazis began to liquidate the ghetto. 50,000 Jews are killed; the survivors are sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

May 13 **ALLIES ARE VICTORIOUS IN NORTH AFRICA** with the Axis surrender in Tunisia.

June 21 Liquidation of all ghettos in Nazi-occupied Soviet Union is ordered by Himmler.

June 28 Four crematoria are completed at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Nazis estimate that 2,000 persons can be killed at one time in each crematorium.

June-July Nazis order all ghettos in Nazi-occupied Poland and Nazi-occupied Soviet Union to be liquidated. Armed resistance by Jewish fighters occurs in five ghettos.

July 10 **ALLIES INVADE SICILY**, beginning the military campaign to free continental Europe.

July 25 As the Allies invade Sicily, Italians revolt and depose Mussolini. German army soon occupies Italy from the north.

Aug. 2 **TREBLINKA UPRISING**. Camp inmates revolt and escape; only 70 survive.

Aug.-Sept. The Jewish ghettos in Vilna, Minsk, and Bialystok are liquidated. All Jews are deported to death camps.

Sept. 3 **ALLIES INVADE THE MAINLAND OF ITALY**, landing at Salerno.

Sept. 3 First deportation of Belgian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Sept. 15 First deportation of Italian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Sept. 20 Danish underground begins to evacuate over 7,000 Jews by sea to Sweden.

Oct. 14 **SOBIBOR UPRISING**. 300 camp inmates escape; 100 are recaptured and killed.

November U.S. Congress holds hearings on the State Department's willful inaction in response to the mounting evidence of the Nazi annihilation of the Jews.

1944

Jan. 2 **WAR REFUGEE BOARD**. Pres. Roosevelt creates the War Refugee Board to remove responsibility for Jewish relief from the State Dept. The Board escalates efforts to secure refuge for Jews in the U.S. and to provide aid and food for Jews in occupied Europe.

Jan. 27 Nazi siege of Leningrad, Soviet Union, ends after 900 days (2½ years).

March 18 Germany invades Hungary.

May 2 First deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

June 4 American forces capture Rome, Italy.

June 6 **D-DAY. THE ALLIES INVADE NORTHERN EUROPE** at Normandy, France.

June-Nov. **EUROPEAN CITIES ARE LIBERATED FROM NAZI CONTROL.** U.S., British, and Canadian armies progress from the west and south, liberating Rome, Florence, Paris, Lyon, Brussels, Antwerp, and Strasbourg. The Soviet army progresses from the east, liberating Minsk, Brest-Litovsk, Vilnius, Bucharest, and Sofia.

July-Jan. Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg saves nearly 33,000 Jews in Hungary by giving them visas and setting up "safe houses." Other diplomats save Hungarian Jews with similar efforts.

July 20 Attempt by German officers to assassinate Hitler fails.

July 25 **SOVIETS LIBERATE MAJDANEK**—the first major camp to be liberated.

Aug. 4 **ANNE FRANK** and her family are arrested in their hiding place in Amsterdam, Holland, and sent to Auschwitz. In October, Anne and her sister Margot are sent to Bergen-Belsen in Germany where they die of typhus (most likely in February 1945).

Aug. 6 The last major ghetto in Poland, the Lodz Ghetto, is liquidated, its 60,000 Jewish residents deported to Auschwitz.

Oct. 7 **AUSCHWITZ UPRISING**. Inmates revolt and destroy Crematorium IV and kill several guards. They are all executed.

Oct. 21 Aachen is taken by U.S. troops—the first major German city to be captured.

Nov. 26 The *New York Times* publishes the "Auschwitz Protocols," three eyewitness reports detailing Nazi atrocities in Auschwitz.

Dec. 16 **BATTLE OF THE BULGE** begins. The last German offensive campaign in western Europe (in the Ardennes Forest in Belgium and Luxembourg) is halted on January 27, 1945, after successful Allied counteroffensive action.

1945

Jan.-April The Soviet army liberates the cities of Warsaw, Danzig, Budapest, and Vienna.

Jan.-April **DEATH MARCHES.** Thousands of prisoners die on forced marches from concentration camps to central Germany as the Nazis retreat from advancing Allied armies.

Jan. 18 Nazis evacuate Auschwitz as the Soviet army approaches from the east.

Jan. 27 **AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU IS LIBERATED** by Soviet troops.

Jan.-May **CONCENTRATION CAMPS ARE LIBERATED** across Europe by Allied troops.

April 11 Buchenwald concentration camp is liberated by U.S. forces.

April 12 U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt dies. Vice President Harry Truman becomes president.

April 15 Bergen-Belsen is liberated by British forces. Of the 58,000 survivors, nearly 30,000 die in the following weeks from disease and the effects of chronic malnutrition.

April 16 The Battle of Berlin begins as Soviet forces encircle the city. The city surrenders May 2.

April 25 American and Soviet troops meet at the Elbe River in Germany.

April 28 Italian dictator Benito Mussolini is captured and killed by Italian partisans.

April 30 **HITLER COMMITS SUICIDE** as Allied armies continue assault on Berlin. Other top Nazi officials commit suicide in the following days.

May 5 Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria is liberated by U.S. troops.

May 8 **WAR IN EUROPE ENDS.** Germany surrenders: V-E Day (Victory in Europe).

Aug. 15 **WORLD WAR II IS OVER.** Japan surrenders: V-J Day (Victory in Japan).

Oct. 18 **NUREMBERG WAR CRIMES TRIALS BEGIN** in Germany. In the first trials of top Nazi officials, each of the four Allied nations provides two judges. Twelve further trials of Nazi officials are conducted between 1946 and 1949.

1946

Oct. 1 **VERDICTS DELIVERED** in first Nuremberg Trials. Of the 22 major Nazi officials who are tried, twelve are sentenced to death by hanging, three are sentenced to life in prison, four receive sentences of 10 to 20 years, and three are acquitted. Many other Nazi war criminals are tried in later years. Many escape capture.

1948

Dec. 9 **CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION AND PUNISHMENT OF GENOCIDE** is adopted by the United Nations and, by December 2017, ratified by 149 nations. Genocide and mass atrocities continue in the postwar era and are met with differing levels of resistance by the world community of nations.

1960s

1960 **ADOLF EICHMANN**, the Nazi officer most responsible for implementing the Final Solution, is captured in Argentina where he and many fellow Nazis had escaped after the war. In 1961, in Israel, he is tried and convicted of war crimes and hanged June 1, 1962.

1963-65 **FRANKFURT AUSCHWITZ TRIALS.** 18 of 22 SS officers in Auschwitz are found guilty in war crimes trials in Germany. Most Nazi officials at Auschwitz are never brought to trial.

1970s

1975-79 **GENOCIDE IN CAMBODIA**. More than two million people are killed by the Khmer Rouge regime in a campaign to purge the country of Western influence and create an authoritarian agrarian state.

1979 The U.S. Attorney General creates the Office of Special Investigations to investigate possible Nazi war criminals living in the U.S. Over 100 former Nazis are deported or deprived of citizenship in subsequent years.

1990s

1992-95 **GENOCIDE IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA**. With the dissolution of Communist Yugoslavia in 1991, Bosnian Serb extremists launch a program of “ethnic cleansing” to eliminate the Muslim Bosnians (Bosniaks) and the Bosnian Croats, murdering up to 100,000 people.

1994 **GENOCIDE IN RWANDA**. 500,000 to one million minority Tutsis are killed in a 100-day period by the majority Hutus in a government-initiated program of annihilation.

1995 In the largest massacre in Europe since the Holocaust, Bosnian Serbs murder 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys near the city of Srebrenica. [July]

2000s

2002 The International Criminal Court begins operation in The Hague, Netherlands, to prosecute genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. [July 1]

2003-present **GENOCIDE IN THE DARFUR REGION OF SUDAN.** Nearly 500,000 of the non-Arab people of Darfur in western Sudan have been killed in a genocidal campaign by the Arab government of Sudan.

2010s

2011 John Demjanjuk is convicted in Germany of war crimes as a guard at the Sobibor death camp and is sentenced to five years in prison. He dies in a nursing home the next year. The search for living Nazi war criminals who have escaped justice continues.

2016/2017 Bosnian Serb commanders Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić are convicted in separate trials of genocide and crimes against humanity by the U.N. Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, for atrocities committed during the Bosnian War of 1992-95. Karadžić is sentenced to 40 years in prison, Mladić to life.

2016 **GENOCIDE IN SYRIA AND IRAQ.** The U.S. State Dept. announces that the mass killing by the Islamic State (ISIS) of Yezidi, Christian, and Shia Muslim peoples in Syria and Iraq qualifies as genocide. [March 17]

2018 **GENOCIDE IN MYANMAR.** The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum concludes that the persecution and murder of the Muslim Rohingya minority in Burma (Myanmar) qualifies as genocide. [December]

___Holocaust Time Lines___

- **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC**
  www.ushmm.org/learn/timeline-of-events/before-1933
- **Yad Vashem, World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Israel**
  www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/timeline/timeline.asp
- **Jewish Virtual Library**
  www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/timeline-of-jewish-persecution-in-the-holocaust

___Genocide___

- **Definition and Discussion**
  - **United Nations Office on Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect**
    www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.html
  - **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC**
    www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/defining-genocide
- **Cases of Genocide since World War II**
  - **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC**
    www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases
  - **Interparliamentary Alliance for Human Rights and Global Peace**
    www.ipahp.org/index.php?en_acts-of-genocide.

Inmates greet U.S. Seventh Army troops upon their arrival at the Allach concentration camp, Germany, April 30, 1945.

__Original caption__

"After American troops arrived, homemade American flag was raised by the prisoners of Dachau prison camp. As it waved in the breeze, it seemed to reflect the joy of inmates who realize freedom for the first time in many years."

WHY TEACH ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST?

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20020219-questions-of-rationale.pdf

Because the objective of teaching any subject is to engage the intellectual curiosity of students in order to inspire critical thought and personal growth, it is helpful to structure your lesson plan on the Holocaust by keeping questions of rationale, or purpose, in mind. Teachers rarely have enough time to teach these complicated topics, though they may be required to do so by state standards. Lessons must be developed and difficult content choices must be made.

A well-thought-out rationale helps with these difficult curricular decisions. In addition, people within and outside the school community may question the use of valuable classroom time to study the Holocaust. Again, a well-formed rationale will help address these questions and concerns. Before deciding what and how to teach, we recommend that you think about why you are teaching this history.

HERE ARE THREE KEY QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Why should students learn this history?
- What are the most significant lessons students should learn from studying the Holocaust?
- Why is a particular reading, image, document, or film an appropriate medium for conveying the topics that you wish to teach?

The Holocaust provides one of the most effective subjects for examining basic moral issues. A structured inquiry into this history yields critical lessons for an investigation into human behavior. It also addresses one of the central mandates of education in the United States, which is to examine what it means to be a responsible citizen.

BY STUDYING THESE TOPICS, STUDENTS COME TO REALIZE THAT:

- Democratic institutions and values are not automatically sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected.
- Silence and indifference to the suffering of others, or to the infringement of civil rights in any society, can—however unintentionally—perpetuate these problems.

- The Holocaust was not an accident in history; it occurred because individuals, organizations, and governments made choices that not only legalized discrimination but also allowed prejudice, hatred, and ultimately mass murder to occur.
- The Holocaust was a watershed event, not only in the 20th century but also in the entire course of human history.

STUDYING THE HOLOCAUST ALSO HELPS STUDENTS TO:

- Understand the roots and ramifications of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society.
- Develop an awareness of the value of pluralism and an acceptance of diversity.
- Explore the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, and indifferent to the oppression of others.
- Think about the use and abuse of power as well as the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with civil rights violations and/or policies of genocide.
- Understand how a modern nation can utilize its technological expertise and bureaucratic infrastructure to implement destructive policies ranging from social engineering to genocide.

As students gain insight into the many historical, social, religious, political, and economic factors that cumulatively resulted in the Holocaust, they gain awareness of the complexity of the subject and a perspective on how a convergence of factors can contribute to the disintegration of democratic values. Students come to understand that it is the responsibility of citizens in any society to learn to identify danger signals and to know when to react.

When you as an educator take the time to consider the rationale for your lessons on the Holocaust, you will be more likely to select content that speaks to your students' interests and provides them with a clearer understanding of a complex history. Most students demonstrate a high level of interest in studying this history precisely because the subject raises questions of fairness, justice, individual identity, peer pressure, conformity, indifference, and obedience—issues that adolescents confront in their daily lives. Students are also affected by and challenged to comprehend the magnitude of the Holocaust; they are often particularly struck by the fact that so many people allowed this genocide to occur by failing either to resist or to protest.

Photo, p. 177: Jews captured during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising are led away from the burning ghetto by SS guards (uprising: April 19-May 16, 1943). U.S. National Archives and Records Administration.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

www.ushmm.org/teach/fundamentals/guidelines-for-teaching-the-holocaust

Teaching Holocaust history demands a high level of sensitivity and keen awareness of the complexity of the subject matter. The following guidelines, while reflecting approaches appropriate for effective teaching in general, are particularly relevant to Holocaust education.

- **Define the term "Holocaust."**

  The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators. The Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933. They believed that the Germans belonged to a race that was "superior" to all others. They claimed that the Jews belonged to a race that was "inferior" and a threat to the so-called German racial community. By 1945 the Germans and their allies and collaborators had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the "Final Solution"—the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. German authorities also persecuted other groups because of their perceived racial and biological inferiority. These groups include Roma (Gypsies), people with disabilities, some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Soviet prisoners of war, and Black people. Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

- **The Holocaust was not inevitable.**

  The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act. Focusing on those decisions leads to insights into history and human nature and fosters critical thinking. Just because a historical event took place, and it is documented in textbooks and on film, does not mean that it had to happen.

- **Avoid simple answers to complex questions.**

  The history of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about human behavior and the context within which individual decisions are made. Be wary of simplification. Seek instead to convey the nuances of this history. Allow students to think about the many factors and events that contributed to the Holocaust and that often made decision making difficult and uncertain.

- **Strive for precision of language.**

  Because of the complexity of the history, there is a temptation to generalize and, thus, to distort the facts (e.g., "all concentration camps were killing centers" or "all Germans

were collaborators"). Avoid this by helping your students clarify the information presented and encourage them to distinguish, for example, the differences between prejudice and discrimination, armed and spiritual resistance, direct and assumed orders, concentration camps and killing centers, and guilt and responsibility.

Words that describe human behavior often have multiple meanings. Resistance, for example, usually refers to a physical act of armed revolt. During the Holocaust, it also encompassed partisan activity; the smuggling of messages, food, and weapons; sabotage; and actual military engagement. Resistance may also be thought of as willful disobedience, such as continuing to practice religious and cultural traditions in defiance of the rules or creating art, music, and poetry inside ghettos and concentration camps. For many, simply maintaining the will to live in the face of abject brutality was an act of spiritual resistance.

Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions. Though all Jews were targeted for destruction by the Nazis, the experiences of all Jews were not the same. Remind your students that, although members of a group may share common experiences and beliefs, generalizations about them without benefit of modifying or qualifying terms (e.g., "sometimes," "usually," "in many cases but not all") tend to stereotype group behavior and distort historical reality. Thus, all Germans cannot be characterized as Nazis, nor should any nationality be reduced to a singular or one-dimensional description.

- **Strive to balance the perspectives that inform your study of the Holocaust.**

  Make careful distinctions about sources of information. Encourage students to consider why a source was created, who created it, who the intended audience was, whether any biases were inherent in the information, whether any gaps occurred in discussion, whether omissions were inadvertent or not, and how the information has been used to interpret various events.

  Most documentation about the Holocaust comes from the perspective of the perpetrators. In contrast, survivor testimonies and collections humanize individuals in the richness and fullness of their lives.

  Strongly encourage your students to investigate carefully the origin and authorship of all material, particularly anything found on the Internet.

- **Avoid comparisons of pain.**

  A study of the Holocaust should always highlight the different policies carried out by the Nazi regime toward various groups of people; however, these distinctions should not be presented as a basis for comparison of the level of suffering between those groups during the Holocaust. One cannot presume that the horror of an individual, family, or community destroyed by the Nazis was any greater than that experienced by victims of other genocides. Avoid generalizations that suggest otherwise.

  Similarly, students may gravitate toward comparisons between aspects of the Holocaust and other historical or contemporary events. Historical events, policies, and human behaviors can and should be carefully analyzed for areas where there may be similarities and differences, but this should be done always with careful consideration of evidence and contextual factors, differentiating between fact, opinion, and belief.

- **Avoid romanticizing history.**

  Portray all individuals, including victims and perpetrators, as human beings who are capable of moral judgment and independent decision making. People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide compelling role models for students. But given that only a small fraction of non-Jews under Nazi occupation helped rescue Jews, an overemphasis on heroic actions can result in an inaccurate and unbalanced account of the history. Similarly, in exposing students to the worst aspects of human nature as revealed in the history of the Holocaust, you run the risk of fostering cynicism in your students. Accuracy of fact,

together with a balanced perspective on the history, is necessary.

- **Contextualize the history.**

  Events of the Holocaust, and particularly how individuals and organizations behaved at that time, should be placed in historical context. The Holocaust must be studied in the context of European history as a whole to give students a perspective on the precedents and circumstances that may have contributed to it.

  Similarly, the Holocaust should be studied within its contemporaneous context so students can begin to comprehend the circumstances that encouraged or discouraged particular actions or events. For example, when thinking about resistance, consider when and where an act took place; the immediate consequences of one's actions to self and family; the degree of control the Nazis had on a country or local population; the cultural attitudes of particular native populations toward different victim groups historically; and the availability and risk of potential hiding places.

  Encourage your students not to categorize groups of people only on the basis of their experiences during the Holocaust; contextualization is critical so that victims are not perceived only as victims. By exposing students to some of the cultural contributions and achievements of 2,000 years of European Jewish life, for example, you help them to balance their perception of Jews as victims and to appreciate more fully the traumatic disruption in Jewish history caused by the Holocaust.

- **Translate statistics into people.**

  In any study of the Holocaust, the sheer number of victims challenges comprehension. Show that individual people—grandparents, parents, and children—are behind the statistics and emphasize the diversity of personal experiences within the larger historical narrative. Precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims, first-person accounts and memoir literature add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics.

- **Make responsible methodological choices.**

  Educators who teach about the Holocaust seek to honestly and accurately investigate a history in which millions of people were dehumanized, brutalized, and killed while ensuring a safe classroom environment in which their students can engage in learning and critical thinking. Graphic material should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the lesson objective. Try to select images and texts that do not exploit the students' emotional vulnerability or that might be construed as disrespectful to the victims themselves. Instead of avoiding important topics because the visual images are graphic, use other approaches to address the material.

  In studying complex human behavior, some teachers rely upon simulation exercises meant to help students "experience" unfamiliar situations. Even when great care is taken to prepare a class for such an activity, simulating experiences from the Holocaust remains pedagogically unsound. The activity may engage students, but they often forget the purpose of the lesson and, even worse, they are left with the impression that they now know what it was like to suffer or even to participate during the Holocaust. It is best to draw upon numerous primary sources, provide survivor testimony, and refrain from simulation games that lead to a trivialization of the subject matter.

  Art projects featuring Nazi imagery, word scrambles, crossword puzzles, counting objects, model building, and gimmicky exercises tend not to encourage critical analysis but lead instead to low-level types of thinking and, in the case of Holocaust curricula, trivialization of the history. If the effects of a particular activity, run counter to the rationale for studying the history, then that activity should not be used.

Photo, p. 179: Jews from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] undergo a selection on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau after arrival (detail), May 1944. Yad Vashem.

Why Simulation Activities Should Not Be Used in Holocaust Education

Anti-Defamation League *www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/why-simulation-activities-should-not-be-used*

Educators sometimes aim to use simulations or role plays when teaching about historical atrocities in order to engage students more deeply, build empathy, and teach the topic in an interactive way.

We frequently hear news stories about a classroom lesson that set out to try to help build empathy for the victims of the Holocaust by having students role play situations of either being "persecuted" or "privileged." We also hear about teachers who have their students participate in a role play to help them "see how it feels to be a slave." Some of these simulations have gone so far as to have selected students wear a yellow star for a day and be subjected to enforced rules like forcing them to stand at the back of the class, the end of long lunch lines or barring them from using some bathrooms. There are other stories in which teachers ask students to write essays to defend and advocate for slavery or the Holocaust in order to reflect on the perspective of the perpetrator. In many cases, these well-intentioned efforts go awry, leading to upset, complaint and distress for students, families and the school community.

WHY SIMULATION ACTIVITIES ARE PROBLEMATIC While simulation-type activities may appear to be a compel-ing way to engage students on topics and events involving genocide and oppression such as the Holocaust, slavery, racial segregation, internment of Japanese-Americans, etc., we strongly caution against using such activities for these reasons:

- They are pedagogically unsound because they trivialize the experience of the victims and can leave students with the impression at the conclusion of the activity that they actually know what it was like to experience these injustices.
- They stereotype group behavior and distort historical reality by reducing groups of people and their experiences and actions to one-dimensional representations.
- They can reinforce negative views of the victims.
- They can put students in the position of defending and/or identifying with the oppressors.
- They impede critical analysis by oversimplifying complex historical events and human behavior, leaving students with a skewed view of history.
- They disconnect these events from the context of global history.
- They can be emotionally upsetting or damaging for students who are sensitive and/or who may identify with the victims.

While we want students to think about their own choices and decisions, asking students to consider what they would have done under the same circumstances is an artificial question, as there is no way to know what decisions we will make until we are actually faced with them. Such an exercise also inherently judges the decisions that were made by individuals, decisions that were often "choiceless choices" where no decision was a good decision but a choice had to be made. Often these decisions—which had to be made very quickly—could mean the difference between life and death. There is no way to adequately or authentically replicate such situations, nor should we try.

ALTERNATIVES TO SIMULATION ACTIVITIES Below are examples of effective and pedagogically sound methods that can be used to help foster a sense of empathy and help students begin to understand the motivations, thoughts, feelings and actions of those who lived through atrocities like these.

- Provide ample opportunities for students to examine primary source materials, including photographs, artwork, diary entries, letters, government documents, and visual history testimony. Such an exploration allows for a deeper level of interest and inquiry on a range of topics from many perspectives and in proper historical context.
- Assign reflective writing exercises or lead class discussions that explore various aspects of human behavior such as scapegoating or making difficult moral choices. These activities allow students to develop compassion and empathy, share how they feel about what they're learning and consider how it has meaning in their own lives.
- Invite the voices (through a variety of strategies) of survivors and other eyewitnesses to share their stories with students.

One of the goals for teaching about these horrific historical events is for students to determine their own roles and responsibilities in the world around them. To advance this thinking and learning, we encourage teachers to give students opportunities to consider meaningful actions they can take in their schools and communities when they see injustice or are faced with difficult moral and ethical decisions.

Photo: Jewish women and children from Subcarpathian Rus [then part of Hungary] await selection on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau after arrival, May 1944 (detail). Yad Vashem.

THE HOLOCAUST was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators. The Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933. They believed that the Germans belonged to a race that was "superior" to all others. They claimed that the Jews belonged to a race that was "inferior" and a threat to the so-called German racial community. By 1945 the Germans and their allies and collaborators had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the "Final Solution"—the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. German authorities also persecuted other groups because of their perceived racial and biological inferiority. These groups include Roma (Gypsies), people with disabilities, some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others), Soviet prisoners of war, and Black people. Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

GENOCIDE is defined as any of the following acts committed with the intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, as such:

- Killing members of the group;
- Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The term "genocide," which did not exist prior to 1944, is a very specific term, referring to violent crimes committed against a group with the intent to destroy the existence of the group. On December 9, 1948, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which establishes genocide as an international crime, which signatory nations "undertake to prevent and punish."

Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum


Holocaust survivors, 1945


Cambodian victims, 1979

Save Darfur rally sign, 2006


Rohingya refugees, 2018

Photographs: U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, Kate Mereand-Sinha, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (Roger Arnold).

■ ROLES PEOPLE PLAY ■
in Human Rights

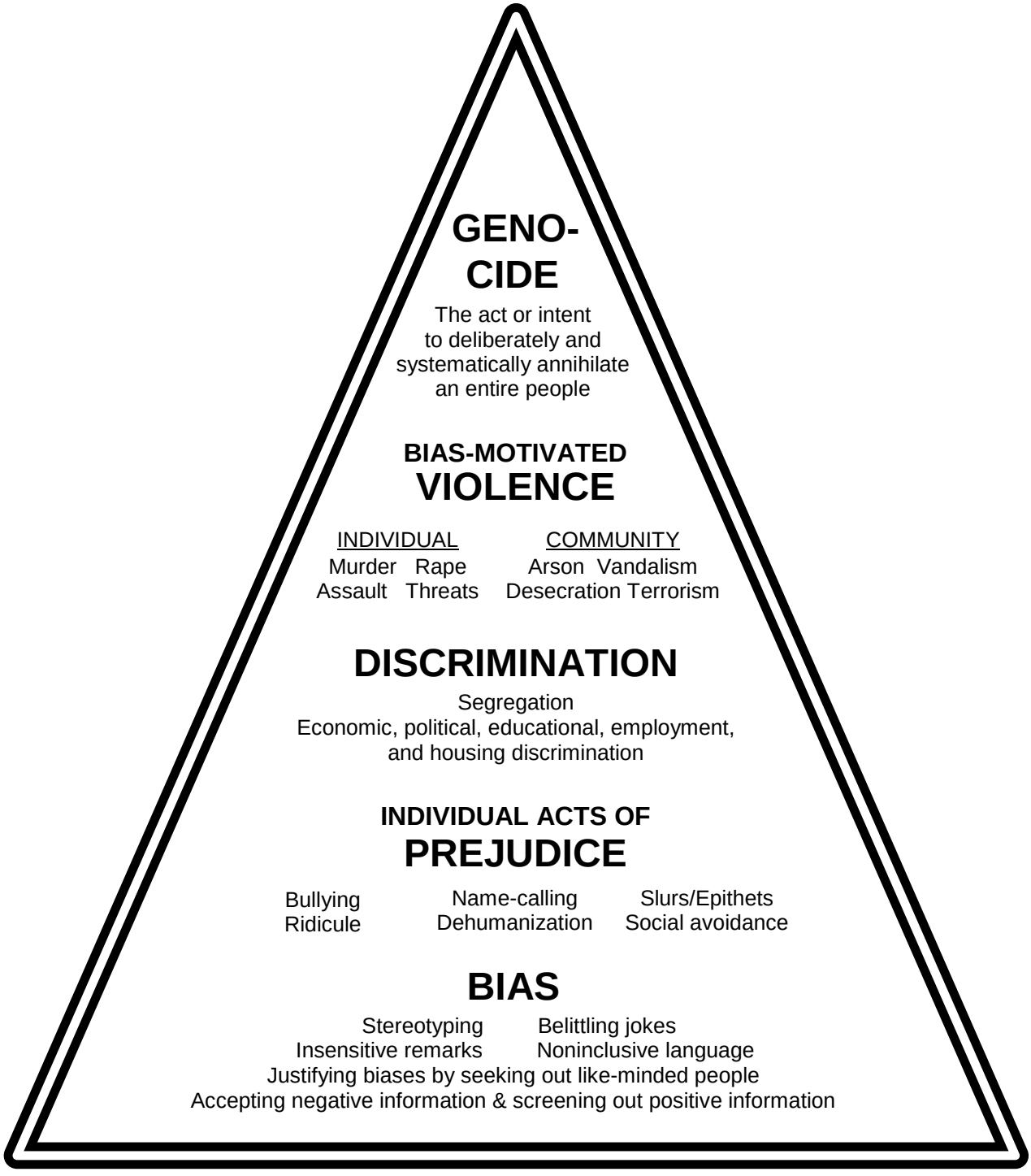
- **PERPETRATORS —** people who plan and carry out acts of violence along with an inner circle of forces they control, such as the military, police, and militias.
- **ENABLERS —** arms dealers, mafias, or other criminals who look to profit from mass killings.
- **UPSTANDERS —** people who help those targeted for violence or death, often at great peril and personal risk; they speak out, offer assistance, and intervene to prevent abuse.
- **BYSTANDERS —** people who stand by and do nothing; by looking away, they can even appear to support the perpetrators.
- **VICTIMS —** people targeted for violence.

■ WHY PEOPLE STAND BY ■

- **FEAR —** Some people feel they have to go along with the perpetrators or they will suffer abuse themselves.
- **PERSONAL GAIN —** Some people see personal or economic gain in allowing others to be victimized.
- **BLIND OBEDIENCE —** Some individuals just do what they are told by authority figures.
- **PREJUDICE —** All too often, people are ready to believe propaganda because it reaffirms their own prejudices.
- **THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO —** Some people do nothing because they do not believe they can make a difference.
- **NO ONE ELSE IS HELPING —** If no one stands up, it's easier for others to justify doing nothing.

Adapted from a display at the National Center for Civil & Human Rights, Atlanta, Georgia. Photos reproduced by permission of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum: (1) Massacre of Jews by an Einsatzgruppe unit, Ukraine, 1941-1943; (2) Bystanders watch as Jews are rounded up and marched through the streets of Lvov, Poland, 1941; (3) Jewish and non-Jewish children sheltered in Le-Chambon-sur-Lignon, France, with their protectors, 1943; (4) Polish rescuer holds the Jewish child she protected during the war, 1943.

PYRAMID OF HATE



Adapted from Pyramid of Hate, ADL (Anti-Defamation League).

FIRST **they came for the socialists—**
and I did not speak out
because I was not a socialist.

THEN **they came for the trade unionists—**
and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist.

THEN **they came for the Jews—**
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.

THEN **they came for me—**
and there was no one left
to speak for me.

Rev. Martin Niemöller (1892-1984), a German Protestant minister imprisoned from 1938 to 1945 for his ardent opposition to the Nazi regime. In April 1945, as Allied troops approached Dachau concentration camp, he was transported by the Nazis with other political prisoners to Austria, where he was liberated by the U.S. Army.

Photo: Jews captured during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising are led away from the burning ghetto by SS guards, May 1943 (detail), U.S. National Archives.


SZTAJNKELER Mosze