Study Guide for the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach

by Dr. Michael Berenbaum Study Guide for the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach Copyright© 2015

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements
Foreword by Dr. Michael Berenbaum
A Basic Introduction to the Holocaustiz
PART I: How to Use the App1
PART II: FILMS
Introductory Film Survivor and Eight Films
The World Before
The Rise of Nazism
Ghettoization
Einsatzgruppen
Deportation
Death Camps
Liberation
The World After
PART III: Five Audio Programs
"Kristallnacht"
"The MS St. Louis"
"Kindertransport"
"Partisans"
"Hiding"
PART IV: Sculpture Tour of the Memorial4
PART V: Lesson Plans for the Memorial54
LESSON PLAN 1: Reflection
LESSON PLAN 2: Before
LESSON PLAN 3: Retelling the Stories
LESSON PLAN 4: Camps
LESSON PLAN 5: In Hiding
LESSON PLAN 6: After the War
PART VI: How to Use Other Elemenets of This Guide
PARTVII: Historical Perspectives
A History of the Holocaust: An Overview
Timeline
Glossary
PART VIII: Methodological Considerations11

PART IX: General Research and Discussion Topics on the Nazi Holocaust	
PART X: Sources for Further Study Webography	

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FEATURED SURVIVORS AND LIBERATORS (in alphabetical order) Magda Bader Leon Bass Judith Becker **Benjamin Bedzow** Bessie Eichler Bedzow Helen Fagin Henry Flescher Alex Gross Allan Hall Andrew Hall Heny Hersh Herbert Karliner Ezra Katz Dr. Miriam Klein Kassenoff Isaac Klein Tsvi Klein Israel Lapciuc Lilly Malnik David Mermelstein Irene Mermelstein Anne Meyer Paul Parks **Julius Reiter** Abraham Resnick Morris Rosenblat Wendy Reiss Rothfield Israel "Joe" Sachs Herman Schaalman Zalman Schachter-Shalomi Herschel Schacter David Schaecter Norbert Wollheim

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Foreword

A BASIC INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST BY DR. MICHAEL BERENBAUM

The systematic state-sponsored murder of six million Jews, which Americans commonly call the Holocaust (Israelis call it the Shoah" and the Nazis called it "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question") is an enormous event that darkens the landscape of 20th-century humanity and continues to haunt us in the new millennium. Auschwitz redefined the moral landscape of our common humanity.

The history of this event can be written in many ways and in many disciplines and genres: history – Jewish history, German history, American history, European history – and sociology, religion, psychology, political science, art, music, literature, film, and theater, to name but a few.

It can be outlined in stages and processes. The great historian Raul Hilberg spoke of definition, expropriation, concentration, deportation, mobile killing units and death camps.

German law defined the Jews in 1935, declaring that all those of Jewish ancestry, even two generations back, were Jews, no matter what religion they practiced, what traditions they embraced, or the identity they maintained. This held true until 1945, and included the territories the Germans conquered.

Beginning in 1933, German law and society expropriated Jewish property and business, possessions and holdings, reversing a 150-year process of emancipation that saw the Jews gain rights as citizens of the country. The Jews were denied civil liberties and rights, and were segregated in a society implementing apartheid policies.

Parenthetically, since 1945, when the Holocaust ended to the time of this printing, we have learned that neutral powers such as Switzerland and supposedly neutral industries – such as banks and insurance companies; even distinguished museums and trend-setting art collectors – participated in the processes of expropriation and enjoyed its fruits.

All of these Nazi decrees were designed to get the Jews to leave, to make Germany and its conquered lands *Judenrein* – free of Jews. These laws and decrees, business practices, and social norms were designed to give an incentive and to provide a reward for discrimination. Expropriation of Jewish properties since then continues even in our time.

Jews were concentrated first in ghettos and later in concentration and slave labor camps, kept together pending a decision on what to do about the "Jewish question." What does one do about these Jews? They were deported from small communities to larger ghettos in Eastern Europe and from cities in Western Europe to transit camps that sent them eastward. All the while, the German Reich expanded, and more and more Jews came under its control.

Then the decision was made and a policy was implemented.

Though some scholars contend that the policy began locally and only then was implemented regionally and internationally, it was large and bold and euphemistically, called "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question."

In simple terms, "The Final Solution" meant murdering every Jew the Nazis and their collaborators could get their hands on.

At first, mobile troops were sent to stationary victims; Jews were shot one by one in the towns and villages of captured Soviet territory in 1941. Later, this process proved cumbersome both for the killers and the bystanders – no consideration was given to their victims – so a new method was developed. The victims would be made mobile and the killing would be conducted in killing centers, where an economy of scale could be achieved and an assembly-line process introduced. Bullets would no longer be required. Gas would do the job very efficiently.

The killing centers were the next generation of the gas chambers that were first developed by the Germans to kill their own people – people we now respectfully call those with "special needs." The Nazis called them "life unworthy of living" or "useless eaters." They were the mentally and physically challenged, and included infants and toddlers who were an embarrassment to the claim of a Master Race. Gassing was followed by cremation so that the bodies of the murdered would disappear.

The Jews were deported to the killing centers from the ghettos and transit camps where they were gathered and systematically dehumanized and starved.

Although historians may talk about processes, times and dates, history is shaped by – and imposed upon – real people, people like you and me.

Who were these people? Who were the victims and what was their story? Who were the killers and what was their story? Who were the bystanders and what was their story?

If only it were simple to answer those direct questions.

Within each category of participant—yes, bystanders, onlookers, were participants (not doing something is also an act)—there were a wide variety of people whose age, background, and experience differed so widely and so greatly, even within the same community and inside families.

How do we learn their stories?

Ancient people recounted their histories, transmitting them via stories from one generation to the next. The Hebrew Bible's books of Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Kings are a prime example; the Christian Scriptures another; so, too, *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, classic works of Greek literature. Preachers would tell their stories, ballads were sung, plays written, and the plastic and performing arts were also used in telling these stories. This process continues in our time.

The two major ways of telling stories in our time that engage the public are books and movies. In books, words dominate, and in videos, movies, including television, visual images are combined with words to tell a story that engages the eyes, the ears, and the mind.

This study guide enables us to better understand the Holocaust Memorial of Miami Beach and, more importantly, will help teachers tell the story of the Holocaust as remembered by that Memorial.

This Study Guide poses carefully chosen questions to stimulate critical thinking. Anyone who has taught the Holocaust knows that students – and their teachers – are reflective about this material. They speak of it at home and in the classrooms, when they are walking with

their friends and talking with their parents. They inquire of their grandparents, and they sit and listen with rapt and unusually respectful attention to survivors.

Questions are posed. Questions can be pursued together, and after each viewing, our questions become deeper, more intense and we rightfully reject the all-too-facile answers. Premature answers are usually immature answers.

The filmmaker and the app creators have given us powerful topical work, visually compelling, intellectually informative, and emotionally moving. We have listened to the words of Holocaust survivors depicting their experience, telling their story. They are our guides to the inner world that the Miami Memorial represents. We can only approximate that world, approach only its outer perimeter, but even from our safe vantage point, the questions it raises, the challenges it poses, are critical to 21st century humanity.

You are about to begin a journey of learning and teaching, of teaching for the sake of learning. Begin with confidence, but also with humility. At the other end of the journey, something within you will have changed, for one does not approach this material easily, and one does not emerge unscathed. Still, almost all of us who have begun this journey regard it as essential to our moral development and critical thinking, as well as to our common humanity.

Dr. Michael Berenbaum Sigi Ziering Institute Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust, Professor of Jewish Studies American Jewish University Los Angeles, California



2 මේණි

ABOUT THE APP

The Holocaust Memorial of Miami Beach's mobile application for iOS and Android is available for free download from the Apple and Google Play stores. Simply search for "Holocaust Memorial Miami" to find it. There is also free WiFi at the Memorial to make it easy to download and use the app on site. All of the content in the app is also available online on our website, but the mobile app is best suited for use at the Memorial.

Our mobile application is designed to enhance your visit to the Memorial by providing historical context and multiple perspectives through a variety of media. We find that this is the most engaging and compelling way to help visitors relate to the content in a deeply personal way. Video, audio, and still images bring the Memorial to life and deepen our understanding of the history it embodies. Most importantly, the app enables you to hear directly from Holocaust survivors about their experiences.

The app is meant to be used on-site at the Memorial. You can download the application to your device before you visit the Memorial or once you arrive. You can also borrow an iPad on-site that is preloaded with the app.

How to Use the App

As you explore the historical panels that line the first section of the Memorial, audio and visual content is automatically triggered at nine locations. These audio or video programs amplify and expand on the brief information provided in the panels, primarily through the voices of survivors. In addition to this primary media, there is additional related content available at each location. The additional content can be accessed in the "More" section at the bottom of the screen and may include slideshows, interactive maps, timelines, or further audio and video.

After you've explored the historical panels, you'll reach the Tunnel and the Memorial's central feature – the Sculpture of Love and Anguish. No app content is triggered in these areas; we want you to experience these parts of the Memorial without any outside stimuli or potential distractions. You'll then continue on the outer section of the Memorial Wall, where an additional audio program will play as you contemplate the names of those who were murdered.

The app also features a "Sculptor's Tour," led by the creator of the Memorial, Kenneth Treister. When you click on the Sculptor's Tour, audio will be triggered at each of five locations around the Memorial. At each, you will hear directly from Kenneth Treister about his inspiration and intentions in designing the various features of the space.

HOW THE APP IS ORGANIZED

The app's historical content is organized into the following sections:

- 1. The World Before
 - Film: *The World Before*

- Interactive Map: Jews in Europe Before the War
- Slideshow: Jewish Life and Tradition
- 2. The Rise of Nazism
 - Film: The Rise of Nazism, Part 1
 - Timeline: 1933-1939
 - Audio: "The Journey of the MS St. Louis"
 - Audio: "Aboard the *Kindertransport*"
 - Audio: "A Heroic Act on Kristallnacht"
- 3. Ghettos
 - Film: *The Rise of Nazism, Part* 2
 - Slideshow: Survival and Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto
 - Slideshow: Lodz Ghetto and the Jewish Council
 - Slideshow: Murder in the Minsk Ghetto
 - Slideshow: Art and Culture in Theresienstadt
- 4. Deportation
 - Film: Deportation
 - Slideshow: Deportation
- 5. Mobile Killing Units
 - Film: *Einsatzgruppen*
 - Slideshow: Mobile Killing Units
 - Timeline: 1940-1945
- 6. Resistance
 - Audio: "Hiding"
 - Audio: "Resistance"
 - Slideshow: Resistance
- 7. Death Camps
 - Film: *Death Camps*
 - Slideshow: The Camps
- 8. Liberation
 - Film: Liberation
 - Slideshow: Liberation
- 9. Life After
 - Film: *Life After*
 - Audio: "The Hymn of the Partisans"
 - About the "Hymn of the Partisans"





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SURVIVOR



This film is shown as part of the student visit to the Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach. Please use this guide in order to prepare students for their visit or after their visit as a follow up.

STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

The film begins with a quote from a Holocaust survivor and teacher of the Holocaust, Prof. Yaffa Eliach, who was 8 years old when the Germans invaded her Lithuanian town of Eishishok.

The voices of survivors are the authentic voices of the Holocaust. They speak for the victims; living and dead.

Her words were chosen carefully. The dead cannot speak and survivors were also victims, victims of a different sort, victims who lived to tell the story. Her words weave together the complicated history of the rise of Nazism as it was experienced by those who lived through it.

The film begins briefly with the most elementary introduction to Jews and Judaism for those who have no background whatsoever.

Jews trace their roots to the Biblical Israelites, their narrative to the slavery in Egypt and the Exodus. They believe in One God and worship in synagogues where the hand-written Torah scroll on parchment, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, is the centerpiece of their lives.

Through survivor testimony, the film establishes that Jews lived in Europe and in a variety of places, some for millennia or more. Jews were rich and poor, urban and rural, engaged

6 0000

with the countries and communities in which they dwelled or living apart in a Jewish world of one's own. Some were devout, others much less so. As the Nazis rose to power Jews were found throughout Europe and in other regions. Though unified by their identity as Jews; they were diverse in very many ways. Hitler and the Nazis even targeted those who had abandoned their Jewish identity by conversion or indifference.

The film presents a quick timeline:

• January 30, 1933: Hitler is appointed Chancellor [Prime Minister] of Germany legally and democratically by its President. He is the head of a minority party in a coalition government.

Within the first 100 days of his rule:

- o The Reichstag [German Parliament] was set on fire
- o Dachau, the first concentration camp for political prisoners is opened
- o Enabling Legislation, passed by two thirds of the Parliament present and voting but Communists and Trade Unionists were arrested and could not vote – gave Hitler the power to rule by decree.

And then the violence turned against the Jews:

- April 1, 1933: boycott of Jewish stores.
- April 7, 1933: expulsion of Jews from Civil Service.
- May 10, 1933: burning of books by Jews and those deemed "un-Germannic."
- **In September 1935:** the Nuremberg Laws deprive Jews of citizenship, Jews cannot marry non-Jews, cannot fly the German flag.
- In March 1938: Germany invades and incorporates Austria in what is known as the *Anschluss*. Overnight, Germany controls 200,000 more Jews.
- In July 1938: 32 Nations are convened at Evian to discuss the refugee program what to do with the Jews and it becomes clear that no one is interested in receiving Jews in the numbers in which they have to flee Germany and Austria.
- **In September:** the leaders of France and England meet with Hitler and Benito Mussolini in Munich and give up parts of Czechoslovakia, Hitler's "last" territorial demand. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlin returns home declaring "peace in our time." His opponents accuse him of appeasement.

But this film is not just a lesson in history; it is about the people who died and those who survived that history. To understand them, we must understand the historical events they lived through.

- November 9-11 1938: the pogroms known as *Kristallnacht*:
 - o More than 1000 synagogues are burned
 - o 91 Jew are killed
 - o 7,000 Jewish stores are ransacked and looted
 - o 30,000 men age 16-60 are arrested and sent to concentration camps.

Herbert Karliner described his father's arrest and deportation to Dachau: "When he came out I couldn't recognize him. He was there for three weeks but he never told me exactly what happened there at that time."

Perhaps he didn't want to frighten his son. Perhaps he could not put it into words what he experienced. He had changed. So, too, had conditions. Jews knew they had to leave. The question was where could they go and how could they get there?

Wendy Rothfield's father, who had done business in Europe, had a passport and contacts abroad. He had the resources to escape. She recalls: "My father was beside himself; he did not know what to do. He went to England and somehow or other secured passage for my mother and myself to go to England. My mother and I flew from Warsaw to London August 15, and of course September 1st the war broke out and nobody could get out of anywhere."

Hitler was not appeased by the Munich agreement. His appetite for more land and territory, for greater domination, was merely whetted.

- In March 1939: Germany seizes the rest of Czechoslovakia.
- On August 23rd: Hitler and Stalin agree to divide Poland between Germany and the Soviet Union.
- September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland and World War II begins.

Joe "Israel" Sachs describes the ghetto briefly. Some 400 ghettos were established in Germanoccupied Poland alone.

For the Germans, the ghetto was a place to confine and isolate the Jews until the decision was made as to what to do with them. It was to hold them until it was time to deport them to the slave and death camps.

For the Jews, the ghetto was a place to live until it was emptied and they were deported.

Upon the invasion of Soviet-held territories, mobile killing units (*Einsatzgruppen*) went from town to town, village by village, and rounded up Jews, Soviets, Roma and Sinti [Gypsies] and murdered them one by one, bullet by bullet.

After the experience of the *Einsatzgruppen*, the Germans changed the killing process: *instead of sending killers to their victims, they made the victims mobile by putting them in cattle cars and sening them to stationary killing centers*. An assemblyline process, gas chambers and crematoria further depersonalized and industrialized the killing process.

8 2000

The film then moves through the stages of the destruction of the ghetto and the murder by gas in the death camps:

- Deportation
- The train ride to death camps
- Arrival
- Selektion
- Branding and Shearing hair being shaved and tattooing prisoners' forearms
- Learning the fate of one's loved ones
- Work

WHAT DID THEY KNOW AND WHEN DID THEY KNOW IT?

After they settled in the barracks, says a survivor, one *kapo* opens up the door. He says, "You see the chimneys? You see the smoke? There are no parents, no brothers, and no sisters.' And walked out."

Those selected to work had to work. And the survivors describe their work: dirty work, painful work, toil and meaningless work during the cold of winter and the heat of summer, without food and without rest.

As the Germans faced defeat, they wanted to evacuate the camps, to leave no prisoners behind to tell the story of what happened. So they marched them inland, back into Germany, without any provisions. Survivors called these death marches, for if one paused even for a moment, if one rested or stumbled, one was shot to death.

Those who could bear it and those who were lucky—one needed to be both—lived for liberation. They were in desperate condition.

David Mermelstein tells his story: "When we saw that American flag... let me tell you... They came and picked us up. Put us on those cots and they started to feed us every hour on the hour day and night with a little baby teaspoon."

After a time survivors tried to return home, but they were unwelcome.

David Schaecter was driven off his family farm. Israel Klein found the man "who used to work for my father. Now he lives in my house. He owns everything that I used to own. He told me that I better leave because I'm not safe."

Survivors then had to choose where to go. The United States was still only accepting those who could qualify under a quota system. Mandate Palestine – pre-State Israel – was closed by the British to Jewish refugees. So the struggle was hard. And for those who did find a home, there were new languages to learn, jobs to find, a need for places to live – all while reliving haunting, painful memories.

Wendy Rothfield recalls that her mother, who had survived the war years in England, found her past draining.

My mother was home; she was a housewife and took care of me. The letters would come and she'd open the box and open a letter and read it and cry, crying that this one died. One murdered, one shot, it was awful. My mother died at 42, but she died of post-traumatic stress disorder. And I think it was the trauma of the constant reading of those letters of people that died and she felt she was guilty. She was alive in the United States.

Allan Hall, whose mother lost the argument with his father and fled into hiding, never asked his mother the most essential question:

Was my mother happy for having lost the argument? I don't think I would have dared ever to ask her that. The price was too dear. She was always, till the day she died, always mindful of the loss of her parents and her sister. That was a woman that almost healed, but never really did.

THINGS TO NOTICE:

Allan Hall describes the argument between his parents. His father, who read German fluently, intuited that German occupation would be lethal. The family escaped immediately, with no time to say goodbye or to pack up their possessions, and tried to get to Soviet-held territory.

Allan Hall's father and other Jews like him who fled eastward to Soviet held territory, went against the grain of history because for two centuries freedom for Jews was found in moving westward, going to countries where Jews were accepted as citizens, immigrating to the United States. During World War I, the Germans were benign occupiers and the Russians quite cruel. Somehow, Hall's father understood that this time it was different. The Nazi threats were to be taken seriously. Though the family did not make it to the Soviet Union, they lived the wartime years in hiding.

David Mermelstein – who was bar mitzvahed as the Germans invaded – said fear never left him. Everything had changed, seemingly overnight.

Notice the images of the *Eisatzgruppen* that seem fleeting in the film.



This image consists of instructions on how to kill at Zhitomir. The victim is made to stand on the edge of the mass grave and the shooter shoots his gun so that the momentum of the

10 0000

shot forces the victim into the mass grave where he or she can be buried alongside the others.

Look at the second image as well:



This map illustrates the numbers killed in each country. The icon of the coffin is unmistakable. It illustrator is "proud" of his achievement.

David Schaecter describes the deportation:

I remember people trampling each other to death. I remember everyone screamed and yelled and pushed. I remember there was no place to go to the bathroom. I remember there was only one goddamned bucket of water. I remember screaming babies and kids crying, my two little sisters being hovered over by my mother. I remember that very vividly.

Notice that as he describes what he is remembering, he is remembering the events. He is telling us what is seeing in his mind's eye. As he sees them vividly, we hear them equally clearly.

David Mermelstein takes us on the train. He depicts the fear and darkness, the unknown but also the way in which these people took care of each other. Both men describe the bucket as there were no toilets on the train. Jews were made to lie in their own filth.

The doors were locked. It was dark. People wanted to sit down but there was not enough room, so we made sure that the few pregnant women could sit down with the older people. And the bucket of water, with children it was rationed a tablespoon at a time. We didn't know how long it was going to have to last, that bucket. And the train ride took two days and a night. The train stopped. So they picked up a young man to a little window on top to see where we were. So he looked out and he says we are in Oswiecim, in Polish; in German, Auschwitz.

SELEKTION

A historian would say that at the ramp, a German doctor playing God decided who shall live and who shall die. With a flick of a hand or a baton, young and old Jews, as well as women with children, were sent to their deaths; only the able-bodied were chosen to work, the ablebodied and twins chosen for experimentation.

But for the prisoners, these were not abstract concepts or processes; they were mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters. Life or Death!

David Schaecter recalls:

I remember my mother was holding onto my two little sisters and she wouldn't let go. Jakob wanted to go and pull our mother away from the other side, but he got hit, he got pushed.

Some *kapos* – prison foremen – wanted to help their fellow Jews, often at risk to themselves. One quickly told David Mermelstein and David Schaecter to look taller, so they stood on their brother's feet, Mermelstein was told to say he was 17 and not 15, and thus his life was spared. Such information saved lives.

BRANDING AND SHEARING

If you were chosen to live, they cut one's hair, all one's hair, even the private parts, and tattooed the prisoners. From then on "their name was their number." They were digits, not people.

Clothes were also distributed at random. They didn't fit and weren't meant to fit. The individual and his or her needs no longer counted.

The students are about to visit the Miami Memorial. What does this Memorial mean to the survivors?

Andrew Hall, Allan's brother, was born in hiding in the summer of 1944. For him, the Memorial is "really a powerful reminder of that very bleak time of our Jewish history. It reminds us of the need to be vigilant."

For Herbert Karliner, it is a family headstone. "We have no cemetery for my parents. We do have a wall with names on it. At least we have something to remember them by."

It is a place to remember the dead and to challenge the living.

12 **e**

Herbert Karliner said, "I always thought it can happen again. And it does happen again, all over the world. What's going on Sudan, Cambodia – millions of people got killed there, too and I'm trying to educate the people, to tell them what happened to me."

Andrew Hall adds, "These things repeat themselves unless they are in the forefront of your mind."

The last word in the film is a plea from survivors. Joe Sachs speaks for many when he says:

Go out into the world and help make a better world. This is what you're supposed to be doing for yourself and for your kids. Create a better world than what we have lived in.

This is what the authentic voices of the Holocaust want to say to us and to future generations.

These films and audio programs that follow are available as part of the free app at the App Store and Google Play, the Holocaust Memorial website (www. Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach.org), and as part of the student visit to the Holocaust Memorial. You are invited to use this guide before or after the student visit.



Survivors tell the story of the Holocaust in three chapters:

- Before
- During
- After

And so we felt the responsibility to tell their story in those three chapters. There is an added moral responsibility to begin with the World Before. We must teach ourselves and our students that before they were victims, the Jews were people. If we only understand the Jews as victims, skeletal remains, beaten and tortured, then we understand nothing of their lives and nothing of the world from which they came.

STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

We want to establish that Jews came from many European and other countries. They were diverse in economic and social outlook. Some were urban and some rural, some pious and others more secular, many poor and some less so, a few were wealthy and others aspired to a better life.

We touch on religious diversity and on religious education. And catch a glimpse of the Sabbath when one survivor speaks of a joyously Jewish home, and another lights up as he remembers his father on Sabbath — on the Sabbath, he was a king — and a survivor recalls her mother teaching her to bake challah, the special braided bread for the Sabbath.

Passover, the holiday that celebrates the Exodus of Biblical Jews from Egypt, is recalled for its special preparations and for the Passover Seder at which the story is retold.



THINGS TO NOTE:

1. Pay special attention to the final image in the film. Note the contrast between a Jew placing the Chanukah Menorah in the window while the Nazi flag flies on a building across the street. Chanukah is the Jewish festival of freedom, celebrating the Maccabee triumph and Jewish religious independence in the year 165 B.C.E. Ironically, the menorah in the window is to make "known the miracle of freedom." Ask your students to imagine what courage it took to proclaim the miracle of freedom as the world around you was descending into dictatorship.



A Chanukah menorah rests on the sill of an apartment window in Kiel, Germany, 1932.

2. Also notice the matzoh – the flat wafers baked fresh for Passover when religious Jews will not eat bread. And that is followed by a gesture of taking a drop out of the wine cup.

What does that mean? By tradition, at the Passover Seder, when Jews recount the story of the Exodus, the wine cup is filled before they recite the 10 plagues inflicted on the Egyptians. With each plague, the cup is diminished by removing a drop of wine, to remind the celebrants that even though victory was essential to freedom, the oppressors paid a price; they, too, were human and their suffering, even while necessary, was suffering – so our own cups cannot be full.

Antisemitism was a constant in Europe before the Holocaust; often it was covert, sometimes social. Occasionally, antisemitism would explode into violence known as pogroms. Under Nazism, as we shall see, it became sustained and systematic. Notice what the survivor says about antisemitism, "It was humiliating." Why does such hatred humiliate the victims, not the oppressors?

Additional Information on the App

You may find the app most useful for the World Before as it presents a concise introduction to Judaism, some major beliefs and symbols, festivals and holy days, as well as life cycle from birth to death. This is designed to answer some basic questions as to who Jews are and what Judaism is for those who know little to nothing.

You may also find additional information on the diverse Jewish communities and some images to make them come alive to your students.



STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

The film begins with an abbreviated timeline, which we will see throughout. For a more detailed and specific timeline, see the timeline at the beginning of this document.

• January 30, 1933: Hitler is appointed Chancellor (Prime Minister) of Germany by President Paul Von Hindenburg. The Nazis had won a plurality of the fall 1932 election, a plurality not a majority and Hitler heads a coalition government.

• During his first 100 days:

- o The Reichstag is set on fire
- o Democratic rule is suspended by the Enabling Legislation implemented as an emergency measure
- o The first concentration camp is established in Dachau for political prisoners
- o Then the assault against the Jews begins
- o The April 1st boycott of Jewish businesses
- o The April 7th expulsion of Jews from the civil service including teachers and doctors, lawyers, and professors
- o The May 10th book burning of Jewish books and those deemed "un-Germanic" by the Nazis.
- September 1935: The Nuremberg Laws are enacted
- **1936:** Germany allies with Italy, the two large fascist countries of Hitler and Mussolini
- March 1938: Germany "invades" and then incorporates Austria
- September 1938: The Munich Conference
 - o At a meeting between the Prime Minister of France and England with Hitler and Mussolini, the West cedes the Sudetenland, part of Czechoslovakia, to Germany. In return, it is promised that

this is Germany's final territorial demand. British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain declares "peace in our time." By March 1939, the agreement is broken when Germany invades the rest of Czechoslovakia.

- September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland and World War II begins.
- September 3, 1939: Britain and France declare War on Germany, but no military action is undertaken.
- **September 17, 1939:** The Soviet Union invades Eastern Poland. Within the month Poland is divided between Germany and the Soviet Union.

The larger historical events are then personalized in survivor testimony

Herbert Karliner speaks of his experience of segregation and apartheid. He can't sit on park benches or on buses.

Anne Meyer describes being an outsider at a Hitler parade and the specific instructions her grandfather gave her, what to do and what not to do.

Alex Gross speaks of the rebuke of his best friend. He admonishes him, "How can you do this? You are my friend." The response: "I love you, but you are a Jew."

• September 1, 1939: War begins when Germany invades Poland. That experience then is personalized in fear, in the radical transition from normal life to wartime.

For the Jews, the result is ghettoization. In Warsaw, an 11-foot-high wall is built around the Jewish quarter and Jews confined within.

As one moves into the ghetto, what do people take from their home? What does one bring with him as he or she heads into danger? What is essential? What is not? This may be a significant question for students to confront.

For Allan Hall, who is living in hiding, getting through the day is a triumph. Survival is dayby-day, each day, many times a day.

- April 1940: Germany invades Norway and Denmark.
- May 1940: German invades France and Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands.
- November 1940: Romania and Hungary ally with Germany.
- April 1941: Germany invades the Balkans Yugoslavia and Greece.
- June 1941: Germany invades the Soviet Union and Soviet-held territories of the Baltic region: Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

Abraham Resnick describes its impact as he is ordered to turn in radios, valuables, and currency.

16 වේවිට

THINGS TO NOTICE:

Look at the sign of the April 1st boycott and notice that the sign is in German and in English. Germany wanted to West to know – explicitly and directly – what is was doing. It served as a warning both to German Jews and to the West of what would follow. It is similar to the way in which ISIS shows its beheadings, calling attention to what it is doing.



Boycott signs in the window of J. Neumann Cigarren, a Jewish-owned tobacco shop, Berlin, 1933 / USHMM.

Anne Meyer speaks of her grandfather holding her hand during a Nazi demonstration as Hitler is parading by. Her grandfather tells her that she may have to salute, but "I don't want you to open your mouth, but just watch with me." This is a form of civic protest, a mild but important mode of spiritual resistance.

Notice, too, the ecstasy of the crowd of all ages.

The newspaper pictured is *Der Stürmer*, a Nazi propaganda tabloid. Its bottom banner, "The Jews are our misfortune."

What did they take with them? As Jews were forced to move into the ghetto and later into the camps, they had to reduce all they had in their homes—all their possessions—into what they could carry on their backs. Sometimes, they wrapped all they had in a sheet.

Why was the pillow so essential to Allan Hall? In hiding, secrecy is imperative and thus Allan and his mother used the pillow to muffle the sound of their sneezes – for to be discovered was to be killed.

Why were Jews marked? Unlike skin of a deeper color, or the eyes of Asian men and women, Jewish identity is not externally manifest and thus the Germans forced the Jews

18 2000

to wear markings to indicate their identity for all to see. Jewish men could be identified by circumcision, as they were the only European population circumcised, but Jewish women were not. In each country the Jewish star had the name *Juif, Jude,* or *Jode,* indicating a Jew. Only in Denmark were Jews not forced to wear a star.



The Star took many forms. In Poland white bands were first used and then later, to conform to what was done elsewhere, a yellow star was used.

Helen Fagin describes the deteriorating condition of Jews in the ghetto. Historians have identified three basic stages:

- The initial stage of moving in.
- When the ghetto became a way of life and death.
- When the end was near and there were rumors of deportation.

When Jews first moved into the ghetto they had some possessions and bought things from non-Jews on a barter system. Notice Fagin's description of trading a diamond ring for a pound of butter. As they settled into the ghetto, the Jews had less and less. Clothes were traded for desperately needed food and, finally, Helen Fagin was reduced to eating out of garbage cans.

Medical conditions were equally difficult. In 1941 one in ten Jews died in the Warsaw Ghetto from starvation, malnutrition, diseases and epidemics. Notice in the film how lice are being picked out of a child's hair. Lice brought with them the typhoid epidemic and lice were everywhere because of lack of sanitation and water.

Julius Reiter tells of the roundup just prior to deportation. He escaped to the forests, but left his brothers behind. He said: "I should have taken them with me." He was the only one of his family to survive.

Abraham Resnick describes the confiscation of radios, currency, and valuables. As a child, that meant his stamp collection was gone. With the confiscation of radios, the only information available to the ghettoized Jews came from German and occupation officials. With no money, there was little chance of escape and confiscation was a form of dispossession; for, in addition to murdering the Jews, or to be more accurate, en route to murdering the Jews, the Germans sought to impoverish them and take hold of all that they had.

As early as 1925, Hitler spoke of two goals: German expansion and racial domination leading to the total elimination of the Jews. Look at the map and see his growing confidence in world domination and listen to the victims and understand the scope of his assault against the Jews.

EINSATZGRUPPEN



Killing of Jews at Ivanhorod, Ukraine, 1942.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Three thousand men, *Einsatzgruppen* [*Einsatzgruppen der Sicherheitspolizei und des SD*], special killing units, entered the Soviet Union in 1941. Their assignment was to round up Jews, Soviet Commissars, and Roma and Sinit [Gypsies], to confiscate their property and systematically murder them in cities and towns, villages and hamlets. They could not operate alone, and they did not operate alone. The Wehrmacht and other Axis armies, local gendarmeries, native antisemitic groups, and even ordinary citizens assisted them in their task.

They entered a city, gathered their intended victims, often by calling for their assembly by using deceptive promises of relocation, marched them to the edge of town and murdered them one-by-one, bullet-by-bullet.

Their victims were men, women, and children—entire families, whole communities, entire regions. One can plot their progress week by week. Reports were written to their superiors, maps were drawn up signifying their accomplishment with coffins and numbers of Jews killed.

Sometimes, the mere presence of German troops in the vicinity was sufficient to spur a massacre. The Polish population of the village of Jedwabne murdered its Jewish neighbors. For years the massacre was blamed on the Germans, while everyone who was alive in 1941 knew that the local population had turned against its Jews. Recent research in the Ukraine, which involved interviews with the local population and archaeological digs of the killing fields, reveal who the killers were. Sometimes, it was the Wehrmacht; sometimes. Romanian troops accompanying the German Army. Other villages were killed by *Eisatzgruppen*, still

20 200

others by the local police or armed villagers. Romanian troops were so harsh in their treatment of Jews that they even aroused the ire of Germans.

There are killing fields and execution sites adjacent to the major cities.

- In Babi Yar, Kiev, now the Ukraine, 33,771 Jews were murdered on September 28-29, the week between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur;
- In the Rumbula Forest, outside the ghetto in Riga, Latvia, 25,000-28,000 Jews were murdered on November 30, and December 8-9;
- In Ponar, the killing fields adjacent to adjacent to Vilna (Vilnius) in Lithuania, more than 60,000 Jews were murdered;
- At the Ninth Fort, adjacent to Kovno (Kaunus), 9,000 Jews, more than half of them children, were killed on October 28, 1941 alone.

Recent research by a French Roman Catholic priest, Father Patrick Desbois, has uncovered hundreds of hitherto unknown mass graves throughout German-occupied Soviet-held territory in the Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania, Byelorussia, and even Russia.

Mass shootings continued unabated, wave after wave. When the killing had ended in the face of a Soviet counter-offensive, special units returned to dig up the dead and burn their bodies to destroy the evidence of the crime. The operation, conducted by Kommando 1005 under the command of Paul Blobel, was called "operation Blot Out." Erasing the evidence would permit the denial of the crime. It is conservatively estimated that approximately 1,400,000 Jews were killed by these shootings.

STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

This film is the only time in the app when we see the crime directly, rather than listening to the survivors.

David Marwell, Director of New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, narrates the very brief historical film, the only direct film that exists of the mass murders. He teaches us how to view historical footage. The filmmaker slows the film so that we can see the participants in specific detail.

The victims in this case were Jewish men, some of whom had been tortured.

The shooters, in this instance, were SS men aided by local auxiliaries.

The bystanders were men, women, and children of the town in Latvia who were witnessing the murder of people they knew, not strangers, but the local pharmacist and physicians, local neighbors, perhaps friends. And even a dog who is startled.

Marwell comments on each and provides us with an excellent opportunity for students to dissect what they see while learning how to interpret a historical document.



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Trains were indispensible to the Nazi killing process. At first, as you may have seen, killing was done by mobile killing units that went from city to city, town to town, village to village, rounded up the Jews, Soviet Commissars, and Roma and Sinti [Gypsies] and killed them. This became psychologically difficult for the killers and it was inefficient. So, another way to kill massive numbers of people had to be found.

The victims were made mobile and the killing centers stationary.

Each of the six Nazi death camps was established on railroad lines. Auschwitz had 44 parallel railway tracks; New York's Pennsylvania Station has only 21. So trains were the means of making the victims mobile, and between 1941 and 1944 some 3 million Jews were sent by train to the killing centers. A close examination of a map of the period will reveal that Auschwitz was centrally located in relation to Jewish communities in Europe, and it was not on German soil. There were no death camps on German soil.

STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

The film begins with Magda Becker describing the rumors that were going through the ghetto, rumors but no real information. They had no definite knowledge of where they would go. Some assumed that they were going to work; they were told that they were being resettled in the East.

Another survivor, David Schaecter, describes the roundup, the general turmoil, and his two little sisters. Notice that his testimony moves from the universal to the most particular, to his own family.

Each survivor matter-of-factly reports on cattle cars; not passenger trains, but the cattle cars used to transport Jews who were herded as cattle, cattle that they did not know were doomed to the slaughter. Cattle cars were loaded until they were packed.

One survivor reports on the lack of a bathroom. When she asks for a bucket she is told that they are going to be killed, surrender your valuables. The guard wanted to keep them for himself. They could see the countryside passing by, but had no sense of where they were going and why.

Norbert Wollheim reports on his wife's determination: "We can take it." They were not aware of what would happen.

One survivor innocently notes, "We thought we were going to a farm."

And finally the moment of arrival: the prisoner catches a glimpse of fences, guards, dogs and soldiers. He is told, "Leave everything here. Everything will follow you!" What did he then know? What could he imagine?

THINGS TO NOTICE Look at the films of what people took; all their possessions were wrapped in a sheet or a backpack.

You may want to ask: What did they take? What would you take?

Irene Zisblat tells of her 2-year-old brother crying. All he wanted was to go home. She promised him he would go home. He never saw home again.

You may ask: Was it right to lie? What would you say?

Alex Gross recalled his conversation with his father: "Yankele, you must live." Somehow, his father intuited what might happen and understood that he would not make it. Yankele [Alex] took in his father's words and his command. They stayed with him throughout the war.



24 වෙලිව



HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During a conference held in Lublin on October 17, 1941, three months before the Wannsee Conference, SS-Brigadefuehrer (Brigadier-General) Obidio Globocnik was assigned by Heinrich Himmler to organize the building of a new type of institution: the Death Camp. It was his task to create a factory of murder using an assembly line process that would culminate in the gas chambers.

The death camps were built on two foundations that were developed earlier in the Nazi regime: concentration camps and gassing installations. Concentration camps had been used as an instrument of Nazi persecution within weeks of Hitler's ascent to power. Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. By the onset of spring, March 22, 1933, Dachau was opened to house the prisoners of the regime.

Later, slave labor camps were established, where inmates were imprisoned and their labor was utilized for the war economy. First, industries were established near slave labor camps to employ the slaves, the SS would profit from their work, and sometime later, slave labor camps were set up near German industries, which willingly and voluntarily employed these workers as it cut their labor costs to the bare minimum.

The second foundation was gassing. Mobile gas vans gave way to stationary gassing installations, including gas chambers, complete with dissecting rooms and crematoria.

The death camp was an innovation, something new in history.

For the Germans, the death camp was an efficient way of conducting industrialized murder, essential for the full implementation of The Final Solution.
මේණි 25

For the Jews, death camps were where they faced death, where they worked in the shadow of death, where they sought to find a way to avoid death, the places where they were murdered.

For the Nazis, the death camps had one purpose: the murder of European Jews with maximum efficiency, minimum use of resources, a depersonalized process that limited contact between the killers and their victims, one that could be operated in relative secrecy and would leave little trace of the crime and enable the confiscation of all remaining Jewish property and the disposition of their bodies.

Six major death camps were established.

- Chelmno
- Belzec
- Sobibor
- Treblinka
- Auschwitz
- Majdanek

Structure of the Film

The film takes us through the nature of camp life. It begins with arrival: Madga tells of the bright lights, all the more startling after days of darkness in the cattle cars, all the more disorienting. Alex Gross describes the noise, the orders, "*Jude Raus!*" Jew Out!

For some there was no arrival; they died on the trains. So Israel Klein reflects on what that moment meant, the last moment when the family was still intact, the last moment with mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, the last moment together.

Selektion follows arrival. A Nazi doctor—it was always a physician—looked at the arriving inmates and sent them to the right or left, which meant life or death, but newly-arrived prisoners did not know which was which. As a rule, when workers were needed, the young and the able-bodied were sent to live, the old and the very young, women with children, were sent to their death.

Because Dr.Josef Mengele was especially interested in twins, twins were sent to medical experimentation facilities. Mengele, who had M.D. and Ph.D. degrees, was a promising young physician who wanted to find a way to increase the German Master Race, so if he could discover how twins were created, he could multiply the Master Race, getting twins out of each pregnancy. So Klein and his brother were sent for experimentation. They lived, but only to be experimented upon.

Notice, we do not hear the stories of those selected to die; they were sent to the gas chamber. We only hear from those who lived, who discovered the fate of their loved ones, who had to live with their loss.

26 වේණි

Before *selektion* some prisoners, at great risk to themselves, gave their newly arriving fellow inmates the key to survival—for the old, look younger and for the young, look older and bigger. "Stretch out, look tall, stay on our shoes."

When arriving prisoners asked what happened to their families, they were told "Look up, see the chimney. That is where they – and you – are going."

Next came processing, what in the Wild West we might call Branding and Shearing. Prisoners who were chosen to live and work were sent to a barracks called the Sauna, where they were told to strip naked, their clothes to be recycled back into Germany. Their hair was shaved — their hair, too, was sent back to Germany to be used as liners for submarines, to be made into cloth, even to be reprocessed for detonators. And then the prisoners had numbers tattooed on their left forearms.

How did it feel?

Lilly Malnik tell us how it felt to be dehumanized, to stand naked as men were walking around, laughing at her. "The ground should open us and I should go in it." She also makes an interesting slip when she says "my name" and then recites her number. Her name became her number. She was to be treated as a digit, not a person.

Alex Gross heard his mother's voice and tried to touch her, yet she had been so transformed he could not recognize her.

Daily life is then described briefly. Life in the barracks: people slept on three-tiered bunks, so crowded that one could not turn without waking up his neighbors. Food was scarce – Alex Gross speaks of the "so-called coffee." Conditions were harsh. After waking, there was roll call.

Magda Becker describes picking off lice from one another. And Norbert Wollheim describes his neighbor Yaakov praying. In astonishment he asks, "How can you pray to God here?" Yaakov answers: "I am thanking God that he did not make me like them—like the murders."

Work was also a form of dehumanization. Morris described digging ditches one way and filling them in the next day; his work was futile, toil without purpose, intended to further demoralize and dehumanize him.

How did prisoners behave toward one another?

The film presents two contrasting recollections, both true. For Henry, "Hunger breaks down iron." It was a battle for survival, every man for himself, fathers against sons, brother against brother and Alex recalls the help that prisoners offered one another. These are two different ways of describing the struggle. Both were prevalent in the camps.

Lilly Malnik describes suicides she witnessed, people walking to the electrified wire, giving up.

THINGS TO NOTE

Look at the opening photo of the Gate of Auschwitz. It says: "*Arbeit Macht Frei*"—work makes you free or work liberates. How is that part of the great Nazi deception?

Notice also the disfigured shape of the B. The sign was produced by prisoners who may have placed the B upside down in order to signal that things are not what they seem to be. Don't quite believe what they are telling you.



The main gate of Auschwitz with the motto "Arbeit Macht Frei," 1945 / USHMM

SHOES

Upon arrival, prisoners were given shoes previously worn by someone else. Shoes and clothes were given randomly without consideration of size. But shoes were essential to survival. Primo Levi, an Italian Jewish inmate of Auschwitz, reports:

Death begins with the shoes; for most of us, they show themselves to be instruments of torture, which after a few hours of marching cause painful sores which become fatally infected. Whoever has them is forced to walk as if he was dragging a convict's chain. He arrives last everywhere, and everywhere he receives blows. He cannot escape if they run after him; his feet swell and the more they swell, the more the friction with the wood and cloth of the shoes becomes insupportable.

Moshe Shulstein, the great Yiddish poet, wrote of the shoes of the Majdanek death camp:

I saw a mountain Higher than Mt. Blanc And more Holy that the Mountain of Sinai

28 වේණි



Piles of shoes in Majdanek, Courtesy USHMM.

On this world this mountain stood. Such a mountain I saw – Jewish shoes in Majdanek....

We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses. We are shoes from grandchildren and grandfathers, From Prague, Paris and Amsterdam, And because we are only made of stuff and leather And not of blood and flesh, each one of us avoided the hellfire.

The death camps were a world in which shoes were recycled and people were considered disposable.

HUNGER

As Primo Levi warned us, had the death camps lasted a little longer, they would have developed a language all their own. We say "hunger" and it means we missed a meal or we say "cold" and it means we need a jacket. They said hunger and it meant that they ate in 1941 and ate again in 1945 and that meal in 1945 killed many because their bodies were no longer capable of digesting food.

We need to bring a sweater and complain of the cold and they got cold in October and were chilled until May, so cold that they could not enjoy a moment of respite even in their hours of sleep. It is for that reason among many that survivors say that "that world is not our world." "You can't imagine it." It was a world apart, a world of extremes without any assistance.

Help and the Battle for Survival

In this film and in many survivors' testimonies we are told conflicting narratives: people assisted one another, they came to each other's aid, they offered each other support and Henry Fleischer pointed out that "hunger can break iron." He meant that in the primitive battle for survival, people turn against each other, not only toward each other. Both are true to the experience of those who were there and both are reflected in this film and throughout the testimonies that we hear.

What are we to make of conflicting descriptions of the same events?

SUICIDE

Holocaust survivor Gerda Weisman Klein once said that "suicide is the final solution to a temporary problem." What did she mean? It is an important opportunity to discuss suicide with your students.

Why did some prisoners choose to commit suicide and go to the electrified barbed wire fences where death was certain and immediate.

ONE MORE PIECE OF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND



Josef Mengele, M.D., Ph.D.

In November 1943, Dr. Josef Mengele became the chief physician of Birkenau. Mengele wanted to "prove" the superiority of the Nordic race. His first experiments were performed on Gypsy children supplied to him from the so called kindergarten. Before long, he expanded his interest to twins, dwarfs, and persons with abnormalities.

Mengele subjected his experimental group to all possible medical experiments that could be performed while his subjects were alive. The tests he performed were painful, exhausting, and traumatic for the frightened and hungry children who made up the bulk his subjects.

The twins and the crippled persons designated as subjects of experiments were photographed, their jaws and teeth cast in plaster molds, fingerprints were taken from hands and legs. Notice that the Klein brothers still do not know what was done to them.

On Mengele's instructions, an inmate painter made comparative drawings of the shapes of heads, auricles, noses, mouths, hands, and legs of the twins. On some days, he would bring candy to his "patients." On other days, or even on the same day, he would inject them with lethal injections or perform surgery without anesthetic.

When the research was completed, some subjects were killed by phenol injections and their organs were autopsied and analyzed. Scientifically interesting anatomical specimens were preserved and shipped out to the Institute in Berlin Dahlem for further research.

On the day he left Auschwitz, January 17, 1945, he took with him the documentation of his experiments. He still imagined that they would bring him scientific honor. He even took this material with him when he escaped to Argentina under a false identity. He brought with him the material that could link him to his crimes.

Mengele died by drowning in Paraguay in 1979.



STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

The film begins with a small timeline.

July 23, 1944	Soviets liberate Majdanek
January 27, 1945	Soviets liberate Auschwitz
April and May	Allied Armies liberate concentration camps in Germany
-	and Austria, then part of Germany.

The Soviet Union liberated the death camps, the places where Jews were gassed, though many of them had ceased operation before the Soviet troops entered. Both Majdanek and Auschwitz had few survivors. Most inmates had been murdered or forcibly evacuated by death marches.

The film then proceeds to explore how inmates got a sense that liberation was at hand.

For one survivor, it was cannon fire growing closer, for another is was less and less guards. And then came the moment of liberation: The Germans took off, the guard towers were empty, new and strange languages were heard in the camps: Russian and English.

A special part of the film suggests the very unique encounter between surviving Jews and Black liberators.

Survivors repeatedly say that they had never seen a Black man's face, except in pictures and the movies. Europe in the 1930s and early 1940s was entirely white. Black faces for one survivor were the faces of black angels: "They were nothing but angels for us," he said.

The film features Rabbi Herschel Schachter entering Buchenwald as a rabbi, a chaplain, an American liberator of his fellow Jews. He can only allude to what he and they are experiencing.

His words are careful: "They couldn't believe what they were hearing, and I couldn't believe what I was seeing."

The film then focuses on food and medical treatment. After years of hunger, eating too much became as dangerous as starvation and many died because they ate too much, too soon. Other survivors were hospitalized and they recall sleeping in a bed with white sheets, something they had never experienced.

And finally Helen Fagin focuses on what to do next: after being fearful of death, survivors had to learn about life again; they wanted to find out the fate of those they had left behind, to search for loved ones, for anyone.

THINGS TO NOTICE Why were Blacks assigned to the camp?

During World War II, the U.S. Armed Forces were segregated. Whites and Blacks, even Japanese Americans, served in separate units and Black units were assigned "sanitary work." Cleaning up the camp was considered unpleasant work, suitable for these soldiers.

Why did the condition of the Jews remind Paul Parks of U.S. slavery?

Paul Parks, an African-American liberator, first asked, "What did you do to deserve this treatment?" His assumption, naïve as it was, was that the world was just and these people were being punished for what they did. He then learned that they were brutalized because they were Jews and remembered his mother, and most especially his grandmother's, depiction of slavery where you lived and died, awoke and worked at the whim of your master.

Notice the menorah in the background!

Parks was given the menorah many years after the war by one of the survivors he liberated. He made it out of nails and traced Parks down just to say thank you. The menorah is the Jewish symbol of freedom, and the survivor wanted to thank his liberator for his freedom.

Why were survivors told not to eat too much?

Eating too much or eating food their bodies could not absorb killed many survivors. So, starving people had to contain their desire to eat, something not easy to accomplish. David Mermelstein notes that because of their years' long experience of starvation they could not believe that there would be food in the morning or lunch in the afternoon. Thus, they felt the need to get food, hide food, save food, or eat as much as possible because they were uncertain when they would eat again.

What does Helen Fagin mean when she says, "We were liberated from the anxiety and the anguish, but not liberated from life. We didn't know what life had in store for us?"

32 **ී**ම්රි

Let us heed the words of two other survivors, who spoke in similar ways:

Hadasssah Bimko, a survivor of Auschwitz who was liberated in Bergen Belsen said:

For the great part of the liberated Jews of Bergen-Belsen there was no ecstasy, no joy at our liberation. We had lost our families, our homes. We had no place to go, nobody to hug, nobody who was waiting for us, anywhere. We had been liberated from death and from the fear of death, but we were not free from the fear of life.

Viktor Frankl, a survivor of Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, said: "We did not yet belong to this world. Only later—and for some it was much later or never—was liberation actually liberating."

Helen Fagin, Hadassah Bimko, and Viktor Frankl were all suggesting that there is a long distance to go between surviving a trauma and returning to life. And for Holocaust survivors this became ever more difficult as they had suffered and often lost their entire families, their homes and communities – everyone and everything.

This sets the stage for the next film, *The World After*, which speaks of how one rebuilds one's life.

මණි 33



STRUCTURE OF THE FILM

The story of the survivor has three chapters: Before, During and After.

This film addresses the question, what happened after the Holocaust. Exiled from their homes, survivors wanted to return home. Separated from their families and their communities, survivors yearned to be reunited with someone – anyone.

Yet unlike other displaced persons, Jewish survivors of the Holocaust had their entire world destroyed. Their entire families were deported, the total Jewish community was destroyed, no one was left. The other inhabitants of their towns knew that those deported would not return, so they moved into the victims' homes and took over their possessions, their businesses, and their land.

How were the Jews greeted if and when they returned?

"You are supposed to be dead." You were not expected to return. Upon returning home Jews were not safe. Forty-two Jews were murdered in a post-war pogrom in Kielce, Poland. They were buried in the mass grave shown on the screen. There were other massacres and killings, as well.

How did one go about finding those who survived?

In every town, in every DP camp, at every Jewish meeting place, in every newspaper, there were lists of survivors searching for someone. Reunions were random; no one knew where to go and how to find each other.

Where did they go?

34 **ි**ප්රිට

If you can't go home and you do not want to stay in Germany among the perpetrators, you must go elsewhere.

Yet for Jews there were obstacles.

The U.S. had a quota system that did not admit refugees and Mandate Palestine was ruled by the British, who imposed a blockade on new immigrants. Klein said: "My boat was the last boat."

Some did what Joe Sachs did. He stayed in a Displaced Persons camp until a visa arrived. Others were luckier. Herbert Karliner had an uncle in Hartford, Connecticut, who sent an affidavit for him, promising the U.S. government that he would house him and support him. Some children, like Alex Gross, were admitted into the United States under special provisions of the law. He came to the U.S. on the luxury ship *Queen Mary*.

Each of the survivors presented in this film eventually came to Miami. For new immigrants, whether survivors of not, there are many obstacles to overcome: There's a new language to learn; you need to choose a place to live and find a job. For survivors there were additional problems: How do you learn to trust the world, to trust life after undergoing such an experience?

Survivors married, even those who had lost their first spouses and children. They brought new life into the world. The birth of a child is the triumph of hope, the belief in a future. And for survivors the issue was not just survival, but what to do with the fact that they survived. For some it was the recreation of family. Their response to death was to choose life.

For others, it was about values. The film explores the values that these survivors espoused, what they hoped to transmit and to teach.

THINGS TO NOTE

What did survivors mean when they said, "Our children are their lives." Why?

Consider that these survivors were robbed of their past and all they had was their future. Their children represent that future. Their children and now grandchildren and even great-great-grandchildren, are proof that death does not have the final word. They responded to death with life.

But for some, like Abraham Resnick, former Vice Mayor of Miami Beach, it was not just about getting on with his life but "giving back to the community." He got involved in politics.

Anne Meyer presented her response to the Holocaust by advocating rights for all women. She was active in the Civil Rights movement, active in the struggle for Women's Rights, and an advocate of the Equal Rights Amendment, which passed Congress but was never ratified. Jews in the post-Holocaust era were heavily involved in the Civil Rights movement; one in two of the white people who traveled down south in the Freedom rides, one in two who organized voting registration drives during the Mississippi Summer of 1964 were Jews; of the tree men killed that summer, two were Jewish and one was Black. The person who spoke just before Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his classic "I Have a Dream" speech was Rabbi Joachim Prinz, a refugee from Germany, who said:

When I was the rabbi of the Jewish community in Berlin under the Hitler regime, I learned many things. The most important thing that I learned under those tragic circumstances was that bigotry and hatred are not the most urgent problem. The most urgent, the most disgraceful, the most shameful and the most tragic problem is silence.

A great people, which had created a great civilization, had become a nation of silent onlookers. They remained silent in the face of hate, in the face of brutality and in the face of mass murder.

America must not become a nation of onlookers. America must not remain silent. Not merely Black America, but all of America. It must speak up and act, from the President down to the humblest of us, and not for the sake of the Negro, not for the sake of the Black community, but for the sake of the image, the idea, and the aspiration of America itself.

WHAT DID THE UNITED STATES MEAN TO THESE PEOPLE?

Survivors were, in one sense, the classical American story: people who came from hardship and persecution and arrived in the United States yearning for freedom and opportunity. They came to a country where there was comparatively little antisemitism. So Alex Gross said: "America is a bastion of freedom, a place where every person has an opportunity to succeed."

Survivors have become a symbol of resilience. They were not to be defined by their past – or at least not only defined by their past. They have a story to tell, a plea aimed at you and me and most especially at the new generation.

They responsibility to the past is *Zachor*, to remember; not to let the world forget.

Their plea is for values: tolerate one another, accept the diversity of people, their common humanity, what unites us, not what divides us. If that does not happen, they fear it can happen again. The "it" they refer to is not the Holocaust, but genocide and mass murder. And today we live in an age of genocide.

Anne Meyer reminds us of her grandfather's words uttered so many years ago: "It has to be stopped now!"



These audio programs that follow are available as part of the free app at the App Store and Google Play, the Holocaust Memorial website (www. Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach.org), and as part of the student visit to the Holocaust Memorial. You are invited to use this guide before or after the student visit.



THE MS ST. LOUIS

Members of the Heilbrun family on board the MS St. Louis, 1939 / USHMM

BACKGROUND

On May 13, 1939, the *St. Louis*, a luxury liner on the Hamburg-America line, left Germany for Cuba, carrying 936 passengers, all but six of them Jews. Each one had a visa to Cuba. Yet, upon arrival, the Cuban government refused to honor their visas without a million dollar bribe.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was faced with a difficult choice: to pay a ransom would invite other regimes to hold Jewish immigrants captive; not to pay was to condemn these refugees.

Press attention was riveted on the ship—newsreels, radio and newspapers all reported on the fate of the passengers. Unsuccessful appeals were made to the U.S. State Department and to other governments. The sympathetic German captain, Gustav Schroder, sailed the liner off the waters of Florida, where the passengers could see the lights of Miami. The United States refused to open its doors, even to these privileged refugees.

In the end, on the brink of their forcible return to Germany, England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands agreed to receive these refugees. Having sought refuge once, many of the stranded passengers tried to leave Europe again for safety in the New World. Yet, only those who were accepted in England escaped German occupation as France, Belgium, and the

38 **ී**ම්පි

Netherlands were invaded by Germany in 1940. Two hundred and fifty-four of its passengers were killed by the Nazis.

Audio

Herbert Karliner was an 11-year-old passenger on the boat. It was a luxury liner and he and his family were finally free – or so they thought.

In the beginning, he describes the joy. "We had a wonderful time... We looked forward to living in Havana." They ate well. They danced. They watched movies.

Only after some time did conditions change. They waited in the port of Havana unable to get off the ship. In despair, the St. Louis left Havana in search of a haven, in the Caribbean or the United States.

Desperate telegrams were sent; they were unanswered.

"We waited and nothing happened." The Captain lingered off the American coast. In the end, he was forced to sail back to Europe with dwindling supplies. "Hopes started to go way down," Karliner remembered.

Two days away from Germany, four countries agreed to accept the Jews. Herbert Karliner and his family were offloaded in France, where they spent the war years in hiding.

KRISTALLNACHT: THE 1938 POGROMS



Germans pass by the broken window of a Jewish-owned business destroyed during *Kristallnacht*, Berlin, 1938 / USHMM

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On the evening of November 9, 1938, anti-Jewish violence erupted throughout the Reich. The outburst appeared to be a spontaneous eruption of national anger at the assassination of a minor German embassy official in Paris by a 17-year-old Jew, Herschel Grynszpan. However, the violence was choreographed in detail by the German government.

At 11:55 on the evening of November 9th, Gestapo Chief Heinrich Mueller sent a telegram to all police units: "In shortest order, actions against Jews and especially their synagogues, will take place in all Germany. These are not to be interfered with...." Fire companies were instructed to stand by, not to protect the synagogues, but to ensure that the flames did not spread to adjacent Aryan—non-Jewish—property.

Within 48 hours, more than a thousand synagogues were burned along with their Torah scrolls, Judaism's most sacred ritual objects; 30,000 Jewish men—aged 16-60—were arrested and sent to newly expanded concentration camps, which were already overflowing with newly arrested Jewish inmates; 7,000 businesses, from department stores to local groceries, were smashed and looted. Jewish cemeteries, hospitals, schools, and homes were destroyed.

Most Jews saw that Jewish life in the Nazi Reich was no longer possible. Those who had been hesitant to leave now understood they had no choice. Unwanted at home, Jews had only a few havens abroad.

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The pogrom was given a deceptively elegant name: "Kristallnacht," Night of the Broken Glass.

Three days later, on November 12, 1938, Fieldmarshall Hermann Göring, convened a meeting of Nazi officials to deal with the problems that resulted.

Göring was disturbed: "It's insane to burn a Jewish warehouse and then have a German insurance company pay for the loss," he said. "We suffer, not the Jews."

The Jewish problem was to be solved once and for all, but in 1938, its meaning was in economic terms. Only later, by 1941, would the language be genocidal. By a series of policy decisions, the Nazis transformed *Kristallnacht* into a program eliminating Jews from German economic life.

- The perpetrators were not to be prosecuted. Their motives were "pure."
- Rubble of ruined synagogue had to be cleared by the community and property to be repaired by the Jews.
- Jews of German nationality could not file for damages.
- A collective fine of one billion Reichsmarks (\$400,000,000) was imposed on the Jewish community.

In the end, Göring expressed regrets over the whole messy business. "I wish you had killed 200 Jews and not destroyed such value." He concludes on a note of irony. "I would not like to be a Jew in Germany!"

For Jews, *Kristallnacht* was the end of the beginning and the beginning of the end.

Audio

Twelve-year-old Anne Meyer describes how her life and her home were saved on November 10th. Her parents instructed her, her sister, and her grandmother to stay upstairs and no matter what not to move. If someone came up the stairs, they were told to hide under the bed.

The German non-Jewish housekeeper came into the home and reiterated the instructions and said: "I will save you." And when the Gestapo came to the door, she stood in the doorway and said, "I am as Aryan as you are, get out of my house." And they left.

The housekeeper demonstrated courage and compassion; at least for the day, she was both the upstander—literally standing in the way of wrecking a home—and a rescuer, saving the Meyers, at least for a time.

KINDERTRANSPORT



The first Kindertransport arrives in Harwich, England, December, 1938 / USHMM

BACKGROUND

After *Kristallnacht*, Jews recognized that it was time to leave Germany. But where could they go?

One such opportunity for escape came with a steep, almost inconceivable price. Children could leave, but their parents could not. The opportunity developed when British Jews advanced the idea that some 10,000 children should be admitted to Britain. The Cabinet approved and rescue was organized. Children would not work, so they would not take British Jobs.

In Germany, a network of organizers was established, and these volunteers worked around the clock to make priority lists of those most endangered, including orphans and those whose parents were in concentration camps or too poor to sustain them.

Parents were faced with an impossible dilemma: To protect their children, they had to let them go, perhaps never to see them again.

The first *Kindertransport* left Berlin on December 1, 1938, and Vienna ten days later. In March 1939, after the German entry into Czechoslovakia, transports were sent from Prague.

The last transport of children left Germany on September 1, 1939, the day World War II began, with the last of the 10,000 children who were saved by Britain.

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A similar effort by Senator Robert Wagner (D-NY) and Rep. Edith Rogers (R-MA) to save 20,000 German Jewish children was tied up in committee and never undertaken. Nativist anti-immigrant Americans joined forces with unions and with antisemites to kill the bill. The unions were afraid that these children would grow up to take American jobs.

Audio

The audio features one moment in Anne Meyers' journey: her departure from Germany. Her counselor approached the children on the train and ordered them to throw everything valuable out the window — not because she was cruel, but because she understood that the train would be searched, as would the children, and they thus faced a collective danger. One child breaking the rules could endanger them all.

The children and the train were searched at the border and only once they were over the border could be children behave as children. Jewish children escaping Germany intuited the danger. They had to grow up fast. They had to behave.

What happened to Anne afterwards is left unsaid. Did she reunite with her parents or never see them again? Where did she go in England, who took her in, were they kind or cruel, generous or stingy? She did not know what was in store for her as she crossed the border, but she understood – and so must we – that she faced a long journey ahead.

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HIDING



A hiding place in the floor of a bunker prepared for the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, 1943 / USHMM

BACKGROUND

There were two forms of hiding for Jews during the Holocaust: The first was passing as a non-Jew and the second was finding a place to live clandestinely where no one could notice you.

To live in the open as a non-Jew, one could not look too Jewish. One had to speak the native language without an accent and know the "culture and ways" of the majority population. Some secured false identification papers; others lived without papers, knowing that if they were stopped they could be killed.

Women had an easier time than men because Jewish men were circumcised and lowering one's trousers could be a sentence of death, even going to a public bathroom was dangerous.

Jews were subject to betrayal by the local population who were rewarded for turning in a Jew. Even one's eyes could betray you because Jews, unaccustomed to life on the Aryan side – the non-Jewish side – might pay attention to what the local population had learned to ignore. They eyes could be sad, their bodies betray their fear.

Audio

In this audio clip, Allan and Andrew Hall describe their ordeal. Allan describes the birth of his younger brother in a basement and the fragility of his life. Pay heed to the language as the other people in hiding presumed that the child was going to die and wondered why both to save him in the first place.

44 වෙම්ම

They escape during the Warsaw Uprising of the summer of 1944.

The Warsaw Uprising was different than the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in the spring of 1943, when the ghettoized Jews, knowing the deportation was imminent and that deportation meant death, rose in rebellion against their German oppressors, not believing that they could win but that they could make a statement by the way in which they died by striking out at the enemy.

In the late summer of 1944, the Soviet Army stood on the banks of the Vistula River just outside Warsaw. The Polish people believed that they could participate in their own liberation if they rose up against the German occupiers. They were convinced that the Soviets would come to their help, so they rose up in rebellion. But the Soviet forces betrayed them by not coming to their rescue. The Germans decided to destroy Warsaw in its entirety and to expel the entire population.

The Hall brothers, Allan and Andrew, went into the sewers with their parents to escape. Those who escaped with them wanted Andrew, an infant, to be killed or left behind and abandoned to die; for, if he cried, they would all be killed. Andrew's mother refused. "We shall live together or die together," she said.

And Andrew, who was a premature birth, and though he suffered from lack of milk, escaped to the sewers and survived. He learned that for him every day on this earth is a miracle.

PARTISANS



Jewish partisans in Vilna on the day of the ghetto's liberation, 1944 / Yad Vashem

BACKGROUND

Because many students ask why the Jews did not fight back, we offer you more detailed background than usual.

Jews fought the Nazis in the forests of Eastern Europe and the ghettos of Poland. They fought in resistance movements in the West—in France, Belgium and even Germany; with Tito in Yugoslavia, and side-by-side with Soviet partisans. Even in the death camps of Birkenau, Treblinka and Sobibor, Jews resisted with force. Crematoria were blown up and escapes were organized.

At first, armed resistance was not how Jews responded to Nazi oppression. They were more practiced in the art of spiritual resistance. Later it became clear that death could not be evaded by cooperation, negotiation, or forbearance.

JANUSZ KORCZAK



Fighting was not a matter of courage. Courage and valor in the face of death took many forms in the ghettos of Europe. Janusz Korczak was a prominent pediatrician and radio personality, Poland's combination of Dr. Benjamin Spock and Mr. Rogers. He headed an orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto. He was offered a means of escape—but without the children. Knowing full well that he and they would be murdered, he went to his death in Treblinka with his children.

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Jewish resistance fighters had the odds against them. Unlike classical guerrillas, who lose themselves by blending in with the local population, Jews did not easily blend in with the local population—Jews were not mobile or unrecognizable. Confined to ghettos, they were captives who were vulnerable to retaliation. Because of widespread antisemitism in Eastern Europe, Jewish resistance could not rely on popular support. Finally, it was difficult and dangerous to obtain arms.

Unlike contemporary terrorists who attack civilians, partisans attacked military targets, railroad lines and military bases, road and bridges.

Armed resistance was almost always an act of desperation that burst forth when all hope was lost. Jews in the ghettos took up arms in 1942 and 1943 when liquidation was imminent. There was little hope of survival, even less of victory. Resistance was its own reward.

In Lithuania and Byelorussia, ghetto residents had another choice. Where the ghettos were surrounded by dense forests, Jews could attempt to break out during the confusion of battle. In the occupied Soviet Union, where partisan activity was widespread, Jews were welcome participants. In Byelorussia, the local population supported the partisans—even Jewish partisans—and thick forests gave excellent cover for mobile partisan bands.

Some partisan units consisted mainly of Jews. In Lithuania, where Russians comprised 21 percent of all partisans, Jews made up 7.5 percent, a large component considering the massive scale on which the Lithuanian Jews had been slaughtered.

Most of the partisan groups consisted of single men. Because their sole purpose was to fight and inflict as much damage as they could on the enemy, membership was limited to ablebodied men prepared for battle. Those unable to fight were left to fend for themselves. But some Jewish units were unwilling to abandon those untrained or unfit for combat. Thus, another kind of partisan unit was established: the family camp, where women, children, and old people lived with and were protected by the fighters. Perhaps as many as 10,000 Jews – men, women, and children – survived the war in family units.

THE BIELSKI BROTHERS

In December 1941, the Nazis murdered thousands of Jews in the Baranowicz region in western Byelorussia, among them four members of the Bielski family: mother, father, and two sons. Four other sons survived and, along with 13 others, fled to the woods. Tuvia Bielski sent a message to the ghetto: "Organize as many friends and acquaintances as possible. Send them to me in the woods. I'll wait for you."



At first only eight fighters answered Bielski's call. But over the next two years, his group grew to 1,230, as Jews fled to the forests rather than report for deportation. Bielski resisted calls from partisan commanders to forsake those in his group who could not fight.

In the Bielski camp, everyone worked. A school was established for children. The forest camp was half-jokingly called Jerusalem, a sardonic comment on harsh conditions in the forests. The Bielski brigade pillaged food and also attacked the enemy. They exacted revenge on local traitors, and for a while lived as outlaws even among the partisan groups. They created a community where all struggled to survive and all were sustained in their survival. They combined – as only a handful of others did – defensive resistance with armed resistance.

Unlike the roaming bands of male partisans, family camps were large, sprawling and necessarily immobile. They could be sustained only in areas with dense forests. The groups survived by raiding local communities for food and by serving as a civilian support system for other partisan brigades. Killing the enemy was only one of their tasks. Helping the members of the camp survive was of equal importance, especially to the Bielski brothers.

Audio

Charles Bedzow arrived in the camp when he was a boy. Listen closely to how he experienced the camp. He chooses his words carefully: "heaven, freedom, survival." "It was the nicest city in the world, half underground and half above ground."

The camp consisted of fighters and family. Clearly, life in the woods was harsh, cold and difficult, yet it offered an alternative to suffering in the ghetto and death in the camps.

Bedzow could not get over the fact that Jews was welcomed, no matter who they were. And for him, Tuvia Bielski was the biggest hero in the world. "He should be a legend. He had to be tough. He had to be strong, but he carried the camp on his shoulders."

THE PARTISAN HYMN

Inspired by the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Yiddish poet Hirsch Glick (1922-1944) of Vilna, wrote the following poem, which became the anthem of the partisans, sung by many Jewish partisan groups in Eastern Europe. It speaks of their hopes and aspirations. The hymn is sung at commemorations of the Holocaust to honor those who fought back against all odds.

English translation Never say this is the final road for you, Though leaden skies may cover over days of blue. As the hour that we longed for is so near, Our step beats out the message: We are here!

From lands green with palms to lands all white with snow We shall be coming with our anguish and our woe, And where a spurt of our blood fell on the earth, There our courage and our spirit have rebirth! The early morning sun will brighten our day, And yesterday with our foe will fade away, But if the sun delays and in the east remains – This song as motto generations must remain.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead, It's not a little tune that birds sing overhead, This song a people sang amid collapsing walls, With pistols in hand they heeded to the call.

Therefore never say the road now ends for you, Though leaden skies may cover over days of blue. As the hour that we longed for is so near, Our step beats out the message: We are here!

Yiddish, in transliteration

Zog nit keyn mol, az du geyst dem letstn veg, khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg. Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho, s'vet a poyk ton undzer trot: Mir zaynen do!

Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney, mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey, un vu gefaln iz a shpritz fun undzer blut, shprotsn vet dort undzer gvureh, undzer mut!

S'vet di morgn zun bagildn undz dem haynt, un der nekhtn vet farshvindn mit dem faynt, nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in der kayor – vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor.

Dos lied geshribn iz mit blut, un nit mit blay, s'iz nit keyn liedl fun a foygl oyf der fray, Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent dos lied gezungen mit naganes in di hent.

So, zog nit keyn mol az du geyst dem letstn veg, khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg. Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho – es vet a poyk ton undzer trot: Mir zaynen do!





SCULPTURE TOUR OF THE MEMORIAL

RAE

Sculpture Tour

Kenneth Treister, a Miami-based architect and sculptor, created this material. Visitors are privileged to have him as a guide through the different segments of the Memorial.

Below are his comments on what aspects of the Memorial mean, yet because it is a sculpture garden, and because all important artistic works have meanings far beyond their creator's intent, students are invited to offer their own interpretations and not just be guided by Treister's comments. In essence, he, too, is one interpreter of the Memorial, an important, but not the sole – perhaps not even – the definitive voice.

Introductory Sculpture:



This is all Jerusalem stone. It's the same stone that was there when kings David and Solomon lived in Jerusalem. This is the stone the whole memorial is built out of – hand-cut Jerusalem stone.

In Biblical times and in ancient times, the Jews were the artisans in the Holy Land who carved stone. That was a Jewish profession.

One of the problems I had was how do you start? How do you make a sign that says, "Start here?" So I came up with the idea that we would do a sculpture of Europe the year that the Nuremburg Laws were enacted. Jews were made to be inferior people, and yet the Jews stayed. Some left, but most of them stayed. So this sculpture is of a mother, the children are afraid or scared, she is nestling them in her robe, and she doesn't leave. This is the Six Million.

The Tunnel:



The best way to see the memorial is by yourself and without talking. So I made a tunnel. In architecture, you try to juxtapose something small to make something big or something big to make something small. And I made the tunnel very small and made a false perspective.

I made this tunnel converge to make it seem longer than it is. And I made it so that at the end of the tunnel, there's one entrance for one person.

At its end I placed a little girl crying. I put these red stones — it's Jerusalem stone, but it's a deeper stone than the normal Jerusalem stone.

I calculated its placement so that the sun on *Yom HaShoah*—Holocaust Remembrance Day, the 27th of Nissan, usually in mid-April—would come down through the slits and light these stones. If you look at the slits, it will give you a glimpse of the rest of the memorial. So it's a combination of the confinement of the tunnel and the slits of light that come in.

Sculptures Near The Arm:



I wanted to show that the Memorial is not just figures. It is stories, little vignettes. If you study it, you'll see all kinds of stories. One of the stories I wanted to tell was [about] an elderly couple who had been married maybe 60 years and were saying goodbye to one another knowing that they would be killed.

I received a letter from a Catholic priest who taught high school at a Miami Catholic school; he brings his senior class here every semester.

He brought his students here one day when it was chilly, it was in the wintertime. And he said there was one young woman in his senior class who was mesmerized by these two figures. And during the twenty minutes that the class looked at the Memorial, she didn't move from these two figures. And he said at the end, she took her jacket off and put it on the shoulders of this lady.

The Arm:



I have been asked many times, for many years when people see the Memorial: "What is the meaning of the arm?"

The truest answer is that I can't describe the meaning in words because I'm basically a sculptor and not a poet. And if I were Elie Wiesel or William Shakespeare, I could tell you in a short time about the sculpture of "Love and Anguish."

I named it "Love and Anguish" because I thought it was two strong emotions when the Holocaust happened. People had anguish because they were going to die, and then they had the love of their family who were being murdered with them. The Memorial has little vignettes of stories of love and anguish. It's not just figures thrown at the arm. They're not just miscellaneous ladies and children and babies.

Each one is interacting with the other. A brother holds out his hand to help a brother, a baby is lifted to a father, a mother cradles a baby, two older citizens say goodbye after a life of love together. So here you had families being destroyed, so there had to be a lot of love on top of the anguish.

PART V

LESSON PLANS FOR THE MEMORIAL

TEACHER BACKGROUND FILE FOR MIAMI HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL LESSONS 1-6

The systematic state-sponsored murder of six million Jews, which Americans commonly call the Holocaust (Israelis call it the "Shoah" and Nazis called it the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question") is an enormously large event that darkens the landscape of 20th-century humanity and continues to haunt us in the first decade of the new millennium. Auschwitz (the death camp) redefined the moral landscape of our common humanity.

German law defined the Jews in 1935, declaring that all those of Jewish ancestry, even two generations back, were Jews, no matter what religion they practiced, what traditions they embraced, or the identity they maintained. This held true throughout, even in the territories the Germans later conquered.

From 1933 onward, German law and society expropriated (took away) Jewish property and business, possessions and holdings, reversing a 150-year process of emancipation (freedom) that saw the Jews gain rights as citizens of the country, denying them civil liberties and rights, introducing and introducing segregation. All of these decrees were designed to get the Jews to leave, to make Germany and its conquered lands *Judenrein* – free of Jews.

Jews were concentrated first in ghettos and later in concentration and slave labor camps, kept together pending a decision on what to do about the "Jewish question," what to do about these Jews. They were deported from small communities to larger ghettos in the East and from cities to transit camps in Western Europe. All the while, the German Reich expanded, and more and more Jews came under its control.

Then the decision was taken, a policy implemented.

It was called "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question"; in simple terms, the murder of all Jews the Germans could find. At first, mobile troops were sent to stationary victims; Jews were shot one by one in the towns and villages of captured Soviet territory in 1941.

Later, when this process proved cumbersome both for the killers and the bystanders – no consideration was given to their victims – a new method was developed. The victims would be made mobile and the killing would be conducted in killing centers, where an economy of scale could be achieved and an assembly line process introduced. Bullets would no longer be required. Gas chambers – first developed by the Germans, to kill the developmentally disabled, physically handicapped, and emotionally disturbed Germans who were an embarrassment to the claim of a Master Race – were employed. Gassing was followed by cremation so that the bodies of the murdered would disappear. Deportation was again employed, taking the Jews from the ghettos and transit camps of their incarceration to the death camps of their annihilation.

These camps continued functioning until liberation in 1944 and 1945 by Allied troops.

Lesson Plan 1

REFLECTION

LESSON 1: WHAT ARE WE TAKING WITH US?

INTRODUCTION:

This lesson is approximately one hour in length. It can be used in conjunction with the other lessons in this series, or as a stand-alone lesson.

OVERARCHING THEME:

The Holocaust happened to men, women and children, each with his or her own stories.

Essential Questions for the Lesson:

- What lessons can be taken from the experience of survivors?
- What is our imperative to act in the world based on the testimony and experience of survivors?
- What can we do to make the world a better place?
- What is the goal of remembering?
- How were many survivors able to take their past and find hope?

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Examine different ways survivors and others reflect on the lasting experience of the Holocaust
- Reflect on the words of survivors and respond to those words
- Craft a letter to a survivor, appreciating the importance and gravity of their experience
- See survivors as more than victims, as people who are doing something positive in the world as a result of their experiences
- Look outward to the world to see what can be done to improve it in our time

MATERIALS NEEDED:

• A: "Quotes for Reflection Walk" (these should be individually cut and pasted on butcher paper so that students can walk around and reflect on the words of the survivors).

SET INDUCTION:

QUICKWRITE:

Have the students reflect on the following quote in writing for approximately two minutes:

• "There can be no poetry after Auschwitz." -Theodor Adorno

What do you think the author means by this?

Students share their responses with a partner, and then the teacher can choose a few students to discuss with the class.

58 **ී**වීම්ට

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

REFLECTION WALK:

Each quotation from (A) "Reflections from Quotation Walk" should be mounted in the center of a large piece of butcher paper (nine in all) with enough room so that the students can respond in writing around each quote. These nine pieces of butcher paper should be spaced on the walls around the room.

- Teacher will explain that there are nine papers with quotes from Holocaust survivors/about the Holocaust around the room.
- Each student should take a pen and walk silently around the room. S/he will read the quotation in the center of the paper and around the paper respond (students do not need to put their names on their responses.)
- Some students may have ready responses to the quotations, others may need a prompt. Some suggestions: What does this quotation mean? How can this apply to my life? What is this person telling us to do/not do? What surprises me? What do I notice?
- Make sure to reiterate to the students that this should be done silently and respectfully.
- Give students enough time to read and respond to almost all of the quotations — when students are finished, they can return to their seats. (Teacher's note: If individual students finish early, they can write down a quote that spoke to them and explain why they chose it.)
- Teacher asks the group to look at the responses and invite people to share their reflections.

Discussion:

Students share with a partner:

o What did you notice about the quotes? Which one spoke to you? Why?

Class Discussion:

- o How did the Holocaust affect the way people look at the world and the future?
- o What were some significant changes that the survivors experienced as a result of the Holocaust?
- o What can we take away, as human beings, based on the survivors' experiences?
- o How do you think the survivors were able to find hope and make new lives for themselves after their experiences?
- o Going back to the quote we looked at earlier: Theodor Adorno says "There can be no poetry after Auschwitz." Do you agree? Do you think the people whose words are on the wall would agree or disagree? Why?

CLOSURE & ASSESSMENT:

WRITING REFLECTION:

Write a letter to a survivor. It can be a "famous" survivor; it can be someone whose words you heard today, someone you know personally, someone from the films, and tell them what you are taking from their experience. Tell them how you will, as Israel "Joe" Sachs puts it: "Create a better world than what we have lived in."

MATERIALS:

(A) Quotes for Reflection Walk (should be mounted on butcher paper for students to write around. See file for larger, spaced version)

I always thought it can happen again. It does happen again all over the world. What's going on Sudan, Cambodia, millions of people got killed there, too, and I'm trying to educate the people tell them what happened to me. —**Herbert Karliner**

These things repeat themselves unless they are in the forefront of your mind. **—Allan Hall**

One thing I made sure. My children got something that I couldn't get — an education. — **David Memelstein**

I say to the kids, "Go out into the world and help make a better world. This is what you're supposed to be doing for yourself and for your kids." I say to them, "Create a better world than what we have lived in."

-Israel "Joe" Sachs

Only guard yourself and guard your soul carefully, lest you forget the things your eyes saw and lest these things depart your heart all the days of your life. And you shall make them known to your children and your children's children. —**Deuteronomy 4:9**

I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented.

-Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, Holocaust Survivor, author of *Night*.

60 etter

For us, forgetting was never an option. Remembering is a noble and necessary act. —Elie Wiesel

We must be listened to: above and beyond our personal experience, we have collectively witnessed a fundamental unexpected event, fundamental precisely because unexpected, not foreseen by anyone. It happened, therefore it can happen again: this is the core of what we have to say. It can happen, and it can happen everywhere.

-Primo Levi, Survivor of Auschwitz, author of Survival in Auschwitz

Thou shalt not be a victim, thou shalt not be a perpetrator, but, above all, thou shalt not be a bystander.

-Yehuda Bauer, Holocaust historian
Lesson Plan 2

BEFORE

LESSON 2: LIFE BEFORE THE WAR

INTRODUCTION:

This lesson is approximately one hour in length. It can be used in conjunction with the other lessons in this series or as a stand-alone.

OVERARCHING THEME:

The Holocaust happened to men, women and children, each with his or her own stories.

Essential Questions for the Lesson:

What was life like for Jews in Europe before the war? What was the role of Judaism in life before the war? What changed for the Jews?

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Describe the lives of an assortment of Jewish individuals in Europe before the war.
- Explain that before the Jews were victims, they were people.
- Predict what might change, or what might be taken away when Nazis come to power.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

(A) Film, *The World Before*—see link

SET INDUCTION:

Individually, have students make a list of all the rights and privileges that they currently have living in the United States. Circle the three that they feel are most important.

Then, with a partner, have the students share their lists and the three that they circled – they should explain why they chose the rights and privileges that they did.

Teacher chooses a few students to share out to the whole class and the students discuss. Why are these rights so important? What do they allow you to do?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Watch the film, The World Before

o While watching, students should make a list of all the descriptors, adjectives, job titles, etc., that the survivors used to describe their lives before the war. If necessary, the film can be watched twice so that students can gather a full list.

CREATE A "FOUND POEM"

The goal: to create a poem, using the words of survivors, depicting Jewish life in Europe before the war. Students should title their poems.

- o Put students in groups of between two and four students (depending on your class). These groups can be chosen earlier, or counted off, depending on preference.
- o Teacher explains what a "found poem" is: using words that are already created /found (like the words you've just written down while watching the movie) and shaping them, by arranging them, rearranging them, adding or deleting text, in order to create a poem.
- o Teacher tasks the students with creating a found poem in their new groups. They are to use the words that they gathered from watching the film. They don't have to use all of them, and they can add their own words.
- o After students are finished creating their found poems, students present their found poems to each other. Teacher compiles the list of titles on the board.

(Teachers note: Gauge how much time this will take for your students. If they need more time, or if they want to embellish the poem with symbolic illustration, the lesson may take longer.)

DISCUSSION:

- o Based on these titles, what did you notice about life before the war?
- o When did things change for the Jews? How can you tell? If possible, re-watch the end of the movie at minute 3:20, where the survivors talk about the rise of antisemitism (define antisemitism: Prejudice against, hatred toward Jews as a ethnic/religious group).
- o What did Jews have to lose when the war started?
- o What in the lives of Jews before the war reminded you of your family, your life? What was different?

CLOSURE & ASSESSMENT:

Depending on time, this can be done at the end of class, in a truncated format on an exit card, as a homework assignment, or as a class discussion. If the latter is used, make sure that each student is able to share his or her thoughts.

WRITING REFLECTION:

Go back to the list of rights that are important to you made at the beginning of class. Look again at the three you circled that are the most important: What did the Jews lose from their life before the war?

MATERIALS:

(A) Film: The World Before – see link

Lesson Plan 3

RETELLING THE **S**TORIES

LESSON 3: RETELLING THE STORIES

INTRODUCTION:

This lesson is approximately one hour in length. It can also be stretched into two lessons to give students more time to prepare and present. It can be used in conjunction with the other lessons in this series, or as a stand-alone lesson.

OVERARCHING THEME:

The Holocaust happened to men, women and children, each with his or her own stories.

Essential Questions for the Lesson:

- How did the survivors' experience of the Holocaust change their lives?
- What are some of the different and shared experiences in the stories of survivors?
- What is our role in witnessing and passing along these stories?

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Present the story of a survivor
- Explain the importance of telling the survivors' stories
- Examine the differences between survivor narratives
- Discuss the ways in which survivor's lives were altered by the events of the Holocaust

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A: Jigsaw Handout for each group: "Survivors' Stories"
- B: Instruction sheet handout for each group of students
- C: Glossary of terms

SET INDUCTION:

QUICKWRITE:

Have the students reflect on the following questions in writing for approximately 2-3 minutes

• What makes a story important? Memorable? Powerful? Lasting?

Students share their responses with a partner, and then the teacher can choose a few students to discuss with the class.



LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Jigsaw: Each group of students will retell a story of a survivor

(Teacher's note: some of the stories are more difficult, conceptually and emotionally, than others. Stories can be given to groups strategically, based on the needs of the students in each group.)

- Teacher should put students into groups of 3-4 students per group (can be chosen ahead of time, counted off, or use another grouping strategy).
- Each group will receive a different survivor's story, drawn from the testimony in the opening film.
- In their groups, students will read their survivor's story. If there are unknown terms in the account, have the students look at the glossary of terms.
- Then, students will be asked to pull out of the narrative two quotations that speak to them.
- Around these two quotations, student groups craft a short (2-minute (longer if the lesson is in two parts) presentation that will **(respectfully and meaningfully)** convey the **main parts** of the story of their survivor to their classmates. These presentations can be oral, visual, or multimedia whatever the time allows.
- Student groups will take turns presenting their survivor's stories.
- While other groups are presenting, students should take note of differences and similarities between the narratives.

Discussion:

- o What were some differences and similarities between the narratives?
- o What were some significant changes that the survivors experienced as a result of the Holocaust?

o Why is it so important to hear survivor's tell their stories?
(Teacher's note: A point here can be that this generation of young people will be the last to hear survivors speak while they are alive – that they need to carry on these stories themselves, in the words of the survivors, students need to become witnesses to the witnesses.)

CLOSURE & ASSESSMENT:

Depending on time, this can be done at the end of class, in a truncated format on an exit card, as a homework assignment, or as a class discussion. If the latter is used, make sure that each student is able to share his or her thoughts.

WRITING REFLECTION:

What will you take away from these stories? What do you think you will never forget? Why?

MATERIALS:

A: Jigsaw Handout for each group: "Survivors' Stories"

SURVIVOR STORIES

HERBERT KARLINER

My name is Herbert Karliner. When Kristallnacht came, November 9th 1938, everything changed...

I remember my father went out to the store and all of a sudden we heard him screaming somebody broke in the stores so we all went downstairs. The store was completely ransacked; everything was upside down. Another man came and said the synagogue is burning. And somebody came and said the Gestapo is coming to pick up the whole family...they picked up only my father and took him away. My father and all the other people from the village... [were] all taken to Buchenwald.

When he came out I couldn't recognize him. He was there for three weeks but he never told me exactly what happened there at that time. We have got no cemetery for my parents we have a wall we have names on it. At least we have something to remember them.

Bessie Eichler Bedzow

I'm a survivor. I was three years old. My parents, my grandparents and my uncles had a shoe and tailoring manufacturing business. We were from a religious background, very Orthodox. I happened to be born on Yom Kippur.

The Germans came into our house and put a gun to my dad's head and they said something to him, "You did this and this." We all stood by and watched. And one German wanted to kill him in our presence, but there was another officer with him and he said in German, "*Ist was nicht der*"—it wasn't him." And they let him go...

[After the war:] In 1945 the war ended and they said any Polish people can leave Russia and go back to Poland. For days we were on that train. We ended in the city Schechn. And somebody witha Polish uniform and all the medals on him is knocking at the window of the train. And he said, "Is there somebody here from family Eichler? We all jumped. We thought who could that be? And he said his name was Leon Tepper. It was my mother's only living relative. And that moment will always stay with me.

They put me in their house and for the first time ever I went into a bed with white linen, bedding, and a quilt—and I had ample food. They didn't know what to do with me and I thought I died and went to heaven.

68 etter

We got papers and we left for Montreal. And we moved in – nine people in one house with one bathroom with three bedrooms; hardly a kitchen.

I went to a public schoo. Though 12 years old, I couldn't read, I couldn't write...but I had a wonderful Jewish teacher. She said, "I'm putting you in grade six with my brother, but I'm gonna' give all my time to you."

We were all surviving children. We all became like a family; we all stuck together. The perseverance of all these youths was just amazing; they wanted so much more out of life than what they had.

ALLAN HALL

My father, who read German fluently, knew that it was dangerous for Jews to be under German domination and wanted to go east ... Somehow he thought it would be safer there. My mother did not want to leave her parents and her sister. The argument was resolved by my father grabbing me by my hand and saying to my mother and — not saying, yelling — to my mother, "I'm leaving. I've got the bo; I'm going with the boy," and started moving and dragging me literally towards the door.

At that point I heard my mother crying and screaming that she would come. She just wanted a little bit of time. My father said there's no time, we're leaving now.

[After the war] And we were on our way. And by the way, that leaving probably saved our lives because my mother's family was wiped out. Was my mother happy for having lost the argument? I don't think I would have dared ever to ask her that. The price was too dear. 'Cause she was always — 'til the day she died — always mindful of the loss of her parents and her sister. That was a woman that almost healed but never really did.

Going to the memorial is a profoundly emotional experience. It really is just a powerful reminder of that very bleak time of our Jewish history. It reminds us of the need to be vigilant. I have a grandfather, a grandmother an aunt, uncles cousins – and that is their gravestone.

WENDY REESE ROTHFIELD

After the *Anschluss* [the German annexation of Austra] people became very antisemitic. The parks became a place where you would hear ugly words and things changed so radically ...

My father realized this was the beginning of major, major problems and our lives were turned upside down...that was a harbinger of things to come. My father was beside himself. He did not know what to do. He went to England and somehow or other secured passage for my mother and myself to go to England. My mother and I flew from Warsaw to London

on August 15th, and, of course, on September 1st war broke out and nobody could get out of anywhere.

[After the war, in the United States] My mother was home, she was a housewife and took care of me. The letters would come and she'd open the box and open a letter and read it and cry, cry, "This one died." One murdered, one shot, it was awful. My mother died at 42, but she died of post-traumatic stress disorder. And I think it was the trauma of the constant reading of those letters of people that died and she felt guilty. She was alive in the United States.

DAVID MERMELSTEIN

[Before the war]: It was a *shtetl* [where we lived]. We had two synagogues, we had two rabbis, and there were eight stores owned by Jews. We were five brothers, two older, and a sister, and then two younger brothers. And I'm the only one that survived. I was bar mitzvahed but that bar mitzvah I never forgot in my life because as I started to say the beginning, the German policeman started marching and everybody got scared. Everybody was hiding under tables. That fear never left me.

[On the way to the camps]: The doors were locked. It was dark. People wanted to sit down but there was not enough room, so we made sure that the few pregnant women could sit down with the older people. And the bucket of water...with children it was rationed a tablespoon at a time. We didn't know how long that bucket was going to last.

And the train ride took two days and a night. The train stopped. So they picked up a young man to a little window at the top of the car to see where we were. So he looked out and he says we are in Oswiecim. In Polish. In German: Auschwitz. On the right side, behind the fence, old people [were] walking, men, some with canes, and women [with] young children playing with dolls and balls. And [there was] a band in those striped clothes playing Jewish music. Two songs I remember. "*Belz, Mein Shtetleh Belz*" and "*Ale Ale*." That's how we saw Auschwitz.

[In Auschwitz]... And we came before Mengele. And he looked at you [and] didn't say a word—just motioned to the left or right. So my grandfather, my parents, and my two younger brothers and a sister went to the left. My two older brothers went to the right...I just ran by Dr. Mengele; I didn't even see if he showed me to go to right or left.

And I came about 10 or 15 feet from him and there was a *kapo*. And he says, "How old are you?" in Yiddish. And I said 15. And he said, "No, no, you're here, tell them 17." And he says stretch out, look tall, pinch yourself, and go in line." And I had about 15 seconds to figure out what all that meant.

70 etter

So I came where my brothers were. I went between them and I stepped on their shoes and I became tall.

We came into the barrack and the *kapo* closed the door and said, "Now you can ask a couple of questions." So one man hollers out, "Can you tell us when we can see our parents?" Another one says, "What about our sisters? Where are they going to be?" The kapo opened up the door and said, "You see the chimneys? You see the smoke? There are no parents, no brothers and no sisters," and walked out.

DAVID SCHAECTER

I am a Holocaust survivor. We were rounded up and taken to the nearest railway crossing. The train came and we were forced to go into these cattle cars. The brutality, that's when it began. We were being pushed and beaten and whatever they wanted to take away from us they did. I remember people trampling each other to death. I remember everyone screamed and yelled and pushed. I remember there was no place to go to the bathroom. I remember there was only one goddamn bucket of water. I remember screaming babies and kids crying, my two little sisters being hovered over by my mother. I remember that very vividly.

[In the camp] I remember my mother was holding onto my two little sisters and she wouldn't let go. Jakob wanted to go and pull our mother away from the other side, but he got hit, he got pushed. We were dehumanized. People at that point were still anxious to live and we still wanted to go and comply and work.

We cleaned the cars. We cleaned the railway cars that we came in. Oh, my God. Human waste, knee high. All kinds of items soaked and smelled. [The job] was taking it, throwing it out, and scrubbing the goddamned cars.

Jakob was much more aware of things than I was. Jakob was a protector in the true sense... and I remember Jakob was showing me how to boil the water, and we'd boil the water. And then all of a sudden Jakob just turned weak and then one day he wasn't heating the water and I'm looking for him. And he was lying down and his stomach swelled up and he had such dysentery. The next day we're going to work and he can't walk and he's throwing up. And he says I don't want to live anymore; he let go of me and I let go of him and that was the last time I was with Jakob...and I kept walking.

[After the camp was liberated] I walked to the farm and they went berserk. They screamed, they yelled, "You're supposed to be dead. What are you doing here?"

ISRAEL "JOE" SACHS

My name is Israel "Joe" Sachs. And I'm a survivor. September 1st, 1939 will never be out of my mind...The synagogues in town were burned down. Jewish stores were pillaged. Not

only Jewish stores. They took everything from everywhere they could. This is where my Holocaust begins.

In early '42 they had all the Jews from the area move into the center of town, with two and three families in an apartment.

At that point in time I was already working in the factory, because my father was a tailor; he was given a job when the factory was established. For the first two or three months valuables were turned in. People had to preserve some of the valuables if they could. We would barter in the street with non-Jewish people. Farmers brought something in and they did that at the risk of their own lives, coming into a Jewish section. But they did; they took their chances. And that's how we lived.

[In the camp].... we marched through the gate and we started to hear the curses: "The Jew this and Jew that," and all of a sudden a bunch of *kapos* come running with clubs and beat us to run to the washroom. When we got to the washroom we had to take our clothes off and we moved on in line to a bunch of people who shaved our heads.

Then they started to club us to take showers. Shower water doesn't run, it drips. So then we walk out in line and they start throwing uniforms at you. They put the disinfectant spray on you before you put on your clothes, then you put on your clothes. Put on a pair of shoes, they fit or not – doesn't matter, you're happy you get a pair of shoes.

I was assigned to work at the building of the Krupp warehouses. We just did the heavy work.

(B) Instruction sheet Handout for each group of students

SURVIVOR STORY PRESENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. As a group, read your survivor's story (use the glossary to define any unknown words/terms).

2. After you read, as a group, decide on two quotations from the story that stand out to you.

3. Using these two quotations in some way, come up with a short presentation (teacher will give exact amount of time) that will (respectfully and meaningfully) share the main parts of the story of your survivor with your classmates. These presentations can be oral, visual, technology-based, etc.

(C) Glossary of Terms

Anschluss: in March 1938 Germany invades and incorporates Austria in what is known as the Anschluss. Overnight, Germany controls 200,000 more Jews. **Antisemitism**: prejudice against the Jewish people

72 **E**

Auschwitz-Birkenau: located in Poland, largest death camp built by the Nazis; between 1.2 and 1.5 million people were murdered there by means of starvation, disease, and gassing; Birkenau is often referred to as Auschwitz II.

Bar Mitzvah: Ritual coming of age ceremony for Jewish boys 13 years of age.

Buchenwald: one of the first concentration camps; located in central Germany

Concentration Camps: work and death camps located in Germany and Poland to incarcerate and exterminate Jews, Gypsies, political dissidents, and others deemed "undesirable" by the Nazis.

Crematorium: a furnace used in the death camps to incinerate the bodies of victims.

Death Marches: forced marches of concentration camp prisoners as the Nazis tried to keep ahead of the Allied forces; approximately one-third of those in the death marches were killed as a result of either disease, starvation, overexposure to the elements, or being shot by their guards.

Deportation: forced removal of Jews from their homes in Nazi-occupied lands; under the pretense of resettlement, victims were sent to death and labor camps.

Holocaust: term used to describe the systematic annihilation of the Jewish people of Eastern Europe by the Nazi regime; by the end of World War II, approximately 6,000,000 Jewish men, women, and children had been killed.

Gestapo: the Nazi Secret State Police.

Ghetto: an area of a city to which the Jews were restricted and from which they were forbidden to leave.

Kapo: a prisoner appointed by the Nazis to oversee labor details in the concentration camps *Kristallnacht*: "Night of Broken Glass," the organized pogrom against Jews in Germany and Austria on November 9–10, 1938.

Mengele: Nazi Doctor in charge of the selection (deciding which prisoners will live and which will die), also performed medical experiments on prisoners.

Shtetl: a small Jewish village in the Pale of Settlement (modern-day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, and parts of western Russia).

Yom Kippur: The Jewish Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, observed by fasting from sunset to darkness the next night.

Lesson Plan 4

CAMPS

LESSON 4: CAMPS

NOTE: Disturbing images of the Nazi death camps are used in this lesson; additionally, the content of the lesson itself, as well as the images and stories, might be upsetting to some. Use your discretion, especially with students in grades younger than high school. Additionally, make sure to check in emotionally with your students, before, during, and after the lesson.

INTRODUCTION:

This lesson is approximately one hour in length. It can be used in conjunction with the other lessons in this series, or as a stand-alone lesson.

OVERARCHING THEME:

The Holocaust happened to men, women and children, each with his or her own story.

Essential Questions for the Lesson:

- How did the Nazis use systematic measures in order to dehumanize their prisoners?
- How did the prisoners fight dehumanization and resist it spiritually?
- What impact did the tortures in the camp affect the humanity of the prisoners?
- What ways can people change under immeasurable duress?

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the ways in which the Nazis depersonalized human beings in order to be able to commit the atrocities of death and torture.
- Describe the ways in which the prisoners in the camps had their humanity stripped away.
- Understand some ways in which some struggled against this dehumanization.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A: PowerPoint: (A) "Depersonalizing Killing in the Death Camps."
- B: Video: (B) "Death Camps" from the app.
- C: Class set Handout: (C) "I Saw a Mountain."

SET INDUCTION:

[Teachers' note: this following a quotation from a survivor in the Death Camps video – but have the students think about what it might mean without giving context]

QUICKWRITE:

• Students should do a quickwrite of approximately 2-3 minutes on the following quote:

"My name is A-5143"

What could this quotation mean? How does this person see her/himself? How might others see her/him?

- Have students briefly share their responses with a partner and then the teacher can ask for a few students to share their thoughts with the class.
- With the context of the above quote, the teacher can introduce the term "depersonalization" (Taking away someone's human characteristics and individuality).
- Ask: How does the above quote show depersonalization?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

OPTIONAL Context Mini-Lesson (Some of the information may be difficult for younger students. Suggested for students 8th grade and above.)

- Explain to students (use (A) "Depersonalizing Killing in the Death Camps" Power Point (Optional) with images):
 - o The Death Camps evolved from and were built on concentration camps that were established earlier in the Nazi regime. The Nazis then included slave labor in the camps.
 - o The Death Camps included gas chambers in all but one death camp, complete with crematoria [a place to burn the bodies of those gassed].
 - o For the Nazis, the death camps had one purpose: the murder of European Jews with maximum efficiency, minimum use of resources, a depersonalized process that limited contact between the killer and their victims.
 - o Six major death camps were established.
 - Chelmno It alone used mobile gas vans and burned bodies openly in fields
 - Belzec
 - Sobibor
 - Treblinka bodies were first buried and then, when it appeared that Germany was losing the war, they were dug up and burned in pits.
 - Auschwitz four gas chambers were used and bodies were burned in crematoria.
 - Majdanek

Watch the film (B) *Death Camps*

o Before students watch the film, ask them to look for instances in which survivors were depersonalized by the Nazis and the camp experience

- 76 P
 - o Watch the film
 - o Have the students in new pairs discuss what they noticed. Did they notice the same instances as their partner?
 - o As a class, compile a list of the ways that the Nazis depersonalized the human beings in the camps.
 - o Why would depersonalization have been necessary for the Nazis to carry out their plans?
 - o How might you imagine the experience of depersonalization affects human beings?
 - o Consider how the film also describes ways in which inmates fought against their dehumanization.

Discussion of Poem: (C) "I Saw a Mountain"

o Introduce: this poem was written by Yiddish poet Moshe Shulstein.

- o Read the poem as a class.
- o Have the students, in new pairs, go through and highlight, circle, or underline times in which shoes are given human characteristics
- o Discuss: the author uses personification (giving human characteristics to some thing non-human) to show the humanity behind the shoes that have been saved by the Nazis, unlike the human beings who once wore them.
- o How does the author show the shoes had more value to the Nazis than the people?
- o How is personification similar to depersonalization? How is it different?
- o How does the personification of the shoes fight against the depersonalization of those who wore them?

CLOSURE & ASSESSMENT:

Depending on time, this can be done at the end of class, in a truncated format on an exit card, as a homework assignment, or as a class discussion. If the latter is used, make sure that each student is able to share his or her thoughts.

WRITING REFLECTION:

Depersonalization can allow for people to commit atrocities to other human beings. What can we learn from this? How does the process of depersonalization affect people's image of themselves? How does it affect their humanity?

MATERIALS:

(A) OPTIONAL "Depersonalizing Killing in the Death Camps" – see attached PowerPoint

- (B) Video "The Rise of Nazism" see App
- (C) Poem: "I Saw a Mountain"

I saw a Mountain Higher than Mt. Blanc And more holy than the Mountain of Sinai. Not in a dream. It was real. On this world this mountain stood. Such a mountain I saw – of Jewish shoes in Majdanek. ...

Hear! Hear the march. Hear the shuffle of shoes left behind – that which remained. From small, from large, from each and every one. Make way for the rows – for the pairs, For the generations – for the years. The shoe army – it moves and moves.

"We are the shoes, we are the last witnesses. We are shoes from grandchildren and grandfathers. From Prague, Paris and Amsterdam. And because we are only made of stuff and leather And not of blood and flesh, each one of us avoided the hellfire.

We shoes – that used to go strolling in the market Or with the bride and groom to the chuppah [Jewish wedding canopy], We shoes from simple Jews, from butchers and carpenters, From crocheted booties of babies just beginning to walk and go On happy occasions, weddings, and even until the time Of giving birth, to a dance, to exciting places to life... Or quietly – to a funeral. Unceasingly we go. We tramp. The hangman never had the chance to snatch us into his Sack of loot – now we go to him. Let everyone hear the steps, which flow as tears, The steps that measure out the judgment." I saw a mountain Higher than Mt. Blanc And more holy than the Mountain of Sinai. - Moses Schulstein

Lesson Plan 5 IN HIDING

LESSON 5: IN HIDING

INTRODUCTION:

This lesson is approximately one hour in length. It can be used in conjunction with the other lessons in this series, or as a stand-alone lesson.

OVERARCHING THEME:

The Holocaust happened to men, women and children, each with his or her own story.

Essential Questions for the Lesson:

- What were some of the experiences of Jews who went into hiding?
- What were some of the struggles they faced?
- How was escape and hiding connected?
- What were the difficulties in escape and hiding?
- How do survivors who spent the war hiding reflect on their experiences?

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Examine different ways Jews hid during the Holocaust
- Discuss some of the unique challenges for Jews in hiding
- Reflect on the experiences of individual survivors who went into hiding

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- A: Pictures "Gallery Walk Hiding Places"
- B: PowerPoint: "Background on Jews in Hiding"
- C: "Hiding Hall" audio file

SET INDUCTION:

Silent Gallery Walk with Pictures from (A) "Gallery Walk Hiding Places": (see attached files)

Pictures should be evenly spaced around the room. Captions on the photos can be left on or off, depending whether you want the students to construct meaning from the images alone, or whether you feel the captions will add necessary information for your students to experience the walk.

Students should **silently** walk around the room examining the pictures, taking notes on what words come to mind when they see the images.

Short Discussion: Students should first share with a partner, a picture that made an impression on them. Why?



Then with the class: What words did you write down? What do you imagine these pictures depict?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Background on Jewish Life in Hiding:

Before listening to the audio, use **(B)** PowerPoint "Background on Jewish Life in Hiding" to let the students know:

- While some Jews were able to hide in plain sight (pretending to be Aryan (non-Jewish), many went into hiding: in the woods with the Partisans (freedom fighters) or with Gentile families willing to hide them.
- To live in the open as a non-Jew one could not look too Jewish. One had to speak the native language without an accent and know the "culture and ways" of the majority population.
- Some secured false identification papers, others lived without papers knowing that if they were stopped they could be killed.
- Jews were subject to betrayal by the local population who were rewarded for turning in a Jew.

Listen to the Audio clip: "(C) Hiding Hall"

- Explain to the students that the Hall family had been hiding with non-Jews in Poland. In 1944, Poles decided to revolt against the Germans, hoping the Soviets would come to their aid. The Soviets didn't and the whole city was destroyed. The Hall family had to escape. This is that story.
- While listening, students should note challenges that Hall family faced while in hiding and preparing to escape through the sewers.

Discussion:

Students share with a partner:

• What did you notice about the audio?

Class Discussion:

- Why would those who were escaping with Hall family advocate for letting the baby die? What were your reactions to this dilemma?
- How does that dilemma show a greater truth about the experience of those who went through the Holocaust?
- "We either all of us live or all of us die." What were your reactions to the mother's statement that saved her son?

CLOSURE & ASSESSMENT:

Depending on time, this can be done at the end of class, in a truncated format on an exit card, as a homework assignment, or as a class discussion. If the latter is used, make sure that each student is able to share his or her thoughts.

WRITING REFLECTION:

In the audio clip, Andy Hall states: "Every day I have had on this Earth has been a miracle for me, and I try to recognize that." What do you think he means? How do you imagine his experiences have shaped his life after the Holocaust?

MATERIALS:

(A) Pictures "Gallery Walk Hiding Places"



1. "RG-46.06.14, Jewish Boy Hiding in Fear of Deportation | Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust." RG-46.06.14, Jewish Boy Hiding in Fear of Deportation | Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust. N.p., n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.



2. "Bunker in Eibergen Region." Photo Archives. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d. Web. 06 July 2015



3. "Heinz Geiringer in Imaginary Room." Photo Archives. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.



4. "Suse Grunbaum Attic Storeroom." Photo Archives. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.

5. "Visiting while hiding in Poland." Photo Archives. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.



6. "Sewer Manhole Cover from Warsaw." Photo Archives. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d. Web. 06 July 2015.

- (B) PowerPoint: "Background on Jews in Hiding" -see attached file
- (C) "Hiding Hall" audio file -see attached

Lesson Plan 6

AFTER THE WAR

LESSON 6: AFTER THE WAR

INTRODUCTION:

This lesson is approximately one hour in length. It can be used in conjunction with the other lessons in this series, or as a stand-alone lesson.

OVERARCHING THEME:

The Holocaust happened to men, women and children, each with his or her own story.

Essential Questions for the Lesson:

- What was the experience after the war like for survivors?
- What were some of the challenges survivors faced after the war?
- How does not knowing a language affect the experience of people moving from one place to another?

OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Examine an individual's experiences after the war
- Explain the challenges survivors faced after the war

MATERIALS NEEDED:

(A): Text of "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn"

- (B): Strips of text for "Teaparty" read of: "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn"
- (C): Youtube clip of "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn"
- (D): Clip from Opening Film

SET INDUCTION:

QUICKWRITE:

In pairs, have students brainstorm and write down everything they can think of: what might have been the survivors' experience after liberation from the Concentration Camps, or after coming out of hiding? What might have been some challenges survivors faced? Where do you think they might have gone next?

Teacher will then hear from some of the pairs and compile a list on the board of the students' expectations of what the survivors faced after the war.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:

Part 1: "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn"

• Teaparty activity: Students will be given (B) strips of paper with discrete portions of the text from "*Vu ahin zol ikh geyn*." Each student will read his or her strip of paper.

(Teachers' Note: strips should be read out of order. Students should read in a loud, clear voice. Teacher can call on students, students can popcorn read, or just speak when moved – this is up to the teacher. If some students in the class are not comfortable reading aloud, stagger the strips so that not each student receives a piece of paper, instead only a certain number.)

After all strips have been read, ask the students to make predictions about what the text may be about and how it relates to the experience of survivors.
Then, pass out (A) lyrics to the whole song "*Vu ahin zol ikh geyn*."

(*Teachers'* Note: *Explain, briefly, that the song is in Yiddish, a language with properties of both German and Hebrew, spoken by most Jews in Europe at that time.*)

Students will listen to (C) Youtube clip of "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn." While they listen, students should read along with the lyrics and circle or underline times where any of the predictions they previously made about the challenges the survivors might have faced — or how the song reflects the experience of survivors and is supported by the full text.

• Teacher has students reflect, first with a partner, and then as a whole class about the meaning of the lyrics of this song. Which words in the song tell the most about the post-war experience? Students should pull out these particular words.

• **Discussion:** What is the experience of listening to the song in Yiddish vs. in English? Is there a difference? What challenges that the survivors faced did you predict initially? What challenges might you not have predicted?

Part 2: "Resettlement"

- Watch (D) Opening Video from minute 26:06-27:14
- "Resettlement: Bessie Eichler Bedzow." Students should listen to the words of Bessie Eichler Bedzow – what do they notice about her language? What challenges might she have faced in coming to a new country? What does she name as challenges? What doesn't she name as challenges?
- Teacher mentions background: Bessie Eichler Bedzow was from Poland, moved to Russia during the war, then to Montreal and finally the United States.
- Discuss: How many and which languages might she have spoken based on where she was from (Polish, Russian, Yiddish)? What language(s) might she have needed to speak in her new home (English, French)? How could that have shaped things for her after the war? She speaks of a teacher who guides her. What might have been her experiences without that teacher?
 - Individual reflection: What is the experience in school now for students who don't speak English as a first language?
 - Using the individual reflection, in pairs, discuss: what in Bessie Eichler Bedzow's experience can help us with the tension of arriving to a new school in a new country not speaking the language? What should we learn from her experience and apply to today?

86 මෙම්ම

- In the same pairs as above, students should come up with a list of three things, based on and extrapolated from Bessie Eichler Bedzow's story, of what could help students who come to school not speaking the language.
- Pairs share out with the whole class.

CLOSURE & ASSESSMENT:

Depending on time, this can be done at the end of class, in a truncated format on an exit card, as a homework assignment, or as a class discussion. If the latter is used, make sure that each student is able to share his or her thoughts.

WRITING REFLECTION:

Helen Fagin (a survivor) says: "We were liberated from the anxiety and the anguish, but not liberated from life. We didn't know what life had in store for us."

What does she mean? What new challenges did Jews who had come through the war have facing them? How did they persevere?

MATERIALS:

(A): Text of "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn"

Igor S. Korntayer, aka S. Korn-Teuer, born in the 1890s, killed by the Nazis c. 1941. Polish Jewish lyricist, poet, actor. He was hired in 1926 by the Scala Theater to write song lyrics, and is best known for the song Vu ahin zol ikh geyn? (Where Shall I Go?) written with "tango-king" Oskar Strock.

YIDDISH

Der Yid vert geyogt un geflogt Nisht zikher iz far im yeder tog Zayn lebn iz a finstere nakht Zayn shtrebn alts far im iz farmakht Farlozn, bloyz mit sonim – kayn fraynt Kayn hofnung on a zikhern haynt Chorus Vi ahin zol ikh geyn? Ver ken entferin mir? Vi ahin zol ikh geyn Az farshlosn'z yeden tir? Di velt iz groys genug Nor far mir iz is enk und kleyn Vi a blik kh'muz tsurik S'iz tsushtert yede brik Vi ahin zol ikh geyn?

මේණි 87

English

Chorus

The Jew becomes hurried and flees;	Where can I go?
Each day is uncertain for him.	Who can answer me?
His life is a sinister night;	Where can I go
Everything he aspires to is closed to him.	When every door is locked?
He is abandoned – enemies everywhere,	The world is big enough,
no friends.	Only for me, it's narrow and small.
He has no hope for a "secure today."	Like a backward glance, I must return.
-	But every bridge is blocked.
	Where can I go?

(B) Strips of text for Teaparty Read of "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn"

Should be printed and cut, then given to students out of order

The Jew becomes hurried and flees;

Each day is uncertain for him.

His life is a sinister night;

Everything he aspires to is closed to him.

He is abandoned – enemies everywhere, no friends.

He has no hope for a "secure today."

Where can I go?

Who can answer me?

Where can I go

When every door is locked?

The world is big enough,

Only for me it's narrow and small.

Like a backward glance, I must return.

But every bridge is blocked.

Where can I go?

88 මෙම

(C): Youtube clip of "Vu ahin zol ikh geyn" sung by Steve Lawrence

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T7AjIAFqG6o

(D): Clip from Opening Film 26:06-27:14

PART VI

HOW TO USE OTHER ELEMENTS OF THIS STUDY GUIDE

AN OVERVIEW

This study guide contains a wide variety of suggested research questions that invites students to explore all aspects of the Holocaust. Each part of the study guide is developed to encourage students to think critically, explore choices, and make decisions based on a code of conduct that reflects a commitment to humanity.

The film, memoirs, and questions in this study guide were selected based on the following specific criteria for each:

A. It provides a framework for exploring various aspects of the Holocaust.

B. It is thought-provoking, enabling the reader or viewer to reach deeper levels of understanding.

C. It helps students to consider the ramifications of the Holocaust in terms of who they are and how they will conduct their lives.

D. It encourages discussion on human rights and social responsibility for today's world.

E. It is easily accessible.

F. It has the ability to motivate, enrich, and illuminate.

This study guide is divided into specific topics, each based on the Holocaust and society's attempt today to learn from the past.

Definitions on "What was the Holocaust of 1933-1945"

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM

LONDON, UK

Under the cover of the Second World War, for the sake of their "new order," the Nazis sought to destroy all the Jews of Europe. For the first time in history, industrial methods were used for the mass extermination of a whole people. Six million were murdered, including 1,500,000 children. This event is called the Holocaust.

The Nazis enslaved and murdered millions of others as well. Gypsies, people with physical and mental disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war, trade unionists, political opponents, prisoners of conscience, homosexuals, and others were killed in vast numbers.

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

WASHINGTON, DC, USA

The Holocaust refers to a specific genocidal event in twentieth-century history: the statesponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims—six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

YAD VASHEM

JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

The Holocaust was the murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators. Between the German invasion of the Soviet Union in the summer of 1941 and the end of the war in Europe in May 1945, Nazi Germany and its accomplices strove to murder every Jew under their domination. Because Nazi discrimination against the Jews began with Hitler's accession to power in January 1933, many historians consider this the start of the Holocaust era. The Jews were not the only victims of Hitler's regime, but they were the only group that the Nazis sought to destroy entirely.

COMMON STUDENT QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

Source: USHMM.org

Reprinted with Permission and adapted by Dr. Michael Berenbaum

How could Hitler make the Holocaust happen by himself?

Hitler did not make the Holocaust happen himself. Many, many Germans and non-Germans were involved in the so-called Final Solution. Besides the SS, German government, Nazi party officials who helped to plan and carry out the deportation, concentration, and murder of European Jews, many other "ordinary" people—such as civil servants, doctors, lawyers, judges, soldiers, and railroad workers and industrialists—played a role in the Holocaust. The Germans were assisted in their task by the Axis armies, collaborators, local gendemarie, ethnic Germans living in occupied countries, as well as local antisemites. They were also assisted by those who remained silent, as silence helps the perpetrators and not their victims.

Why didn't they all leave?

Frequently, this question refers to German Jews before the start of 1939. Consider what is involved in leaving one's homeland, as well as what sacrifices must be made. German Jews were, in most cases, patriotic citizens. Over 12,000 died fighting for Germany in World War I, and countless others were wounded and received medals for their valor and service. Jews, whether in the lower, middle, or upper classes, had lived in Germany for centuries and were well assimilated in the early twentieth century.

It is important to consider how the oppressive measures targeting Jews in the pre-war period were passed and enforced gradually. These types of pre-war measures and laws had been experienced throughout the history of the Jewish people in earlier periods and in other countries, as well. No one at the time could foresee or predict killing squads and killing centers.

Once the difficult decision was made to try to leave the country, prospective emigrants had to find a country willing to admit them and their family. This was very difficult, considering world immigration policies, as demonstrated by the results of the Evian Conference of 1938. If a haven could be found, consider other things that would be needed to get there. The United States had a quota system. Britain imposed restrictions on immigration to Mandate Palestine, the very difference between life and death, was a stamp in a passport.

Why wasn't there more resistance?

The impression that Jews did not fight back against the Nazis is a myth. Jews carried out acts of resistance in every country of Europe that the Germans occupied, as well as in satellite states. They even resisted in ghettos, concentration camps and killing centers, under the most harrowing of circumstances.

Why is it then that the myth endures? Period photographs and contemporary feature films may serve to perpetuate it, because they often depict large numbers of Jews boarding trains under the watchful eyes of a few lightly armed guards. Not seen in these images, yet key to understanding Jewish response to Nazi terror, are the obstacles to resistance. There were natural hesitations to resist, as the Germans practiced disproportionate punishment. The random execution of many was imposed as a penalty for the escape of one. Fathers would not leave their children or abandon their wives; youth were hesitant to leave their parents behind in danger.

The Swiss historian Werner Rings taught that there were four forms of resistance in all countries under German-occupation: Symbolic and Personal Resistance – such as maintaining dignity, identity, and continuity; Polemical Resistance – such as disseminating information regarding the German crimes among Jews, other occupied people, and to neutral and Allied nations; Defensive Resistance – protecting and aiding fellow Jews, and Offensive and Armed Resistance – whether offered by the individual or the collective. Such behavior was found throughout German-occupied European populations, including the Jews.

How did they know who was Jewish?

Eventually Jews in Germany were locatable through census records. In other countries, Jews might be found via synagogue membership lists, municipal lists, or, more likely, through mandatory registration and information from neighbors or local civilians and officials.

What happened if you disobeyed an order to participate?

Contrary to popular assumption, those who decided to stop or not participate in atrocities were usually given other responsibilities, such as guard duty or crowd control. Quiet noncompliance was widely tolerated, but public denunciation of Nazi anti-Jewish policy was not.

Wasn't one of Hitler's relatives Jewish?

There is no historical evidence to suggest that Hitler or any of his relatives were Jewish. Recent scholarship suggests that the rumors about Hitler's ancestry were circulated by political opponents as a way of discrediting the leader of an antisemitic party. These rumors persist primarily because the identity of Hitler's paternal grandfather is unknown; rumors that this grandfather was Jewish have never been proven. There were no Jews living in the town where Hitler's grandmother lived.

Why were the Jews singled out for extermination?

The explanation of the Nazis' hatred of Jews rests on their distorted worldview, which saw history as a racial struggle. They considered the Jews a race whose goal was world domination and who, therefore, were an obstruction to "Aryan" dominance. They believed that all of history was a fight between races, which should culminate in the triumph of the superior "Aryan" race. Therefore, they considered it their duty to eliminate the Jews, whom they regarded as a threat. In their eyes, the Jews' racial origin made them habitual criminals who could never be rehabilitated and were hopelessly corrupt and inferior. Hitler defined the Jews as a "cancer" on German society; their elimination was therefore essential and also therapeutic.

94 වෙරිට

There is no doubt that other factors contributed toward Nazi hatred of Jews and their distorted image of the Jewish people. These included the centuries-old tradition of Christian antisemitism, which propagated a negative stereotype of Jews as murderers of Christ, agents of the devil, and practitioners of witchcraft. Also significant was the political antisemitism of the latter half of the 19th and early part of the 20th centuries, which singled out Jews as a threat to the established order of society. These combined to point to Jews as a target for persecution and ultimate destruction by the Nazis.

What did the United States know and do?

Despite a history of providing sanctuary to persecuted peoples, the United States grappled with many issues during the 1930s that made staying true to this legacy difficult, among them wide-spread antisemitism, xenophobia, isolationism, and a sustained economic Depression. Unfortunate for those fleeing from Nazi persecution, these issues greatly impacted this nation's refugee policy, resulting in tighter restrictions and limited quotas at a time when open doors might have saved lives.

Over the years, scholarly investigation into the American reaction to the Holocaust has raised a number of questions, such as: What did America know? What did government officials and civilians do with this knowledge? Could more have been done? Scholars have gauged America's culpability through the government's restrictive immigration measures, its indifference to reported atrocities, and its sluggish efforts to save European Jews. Scholars have also distinguished between "information" and "knowledge." Much information was available regarding what the Nazis were doing to the Jews and for various people, including government officials such information became "knowledge' at different points in time, knowledge upon which they were prepared to act and to respond. Many dismissed the "information" they had as unconfirmed rumors. And even some who "knew" felt that little could be done. As one scholar said, "The pessimist said little could be done and little was done. The optimists believed that something must be done – almost anything."

Debates have sparked over key events, including the MS *St. Louis* tragedy, the establishment of the War Refugee Board, the role of the American Jewish community, the media's coverage of Nazi violence, and the proposed, but abandoned, bombing of the Auschwitz death camp – an adjacent slave labor complex was bombed in late summer 1944. The topic continues to evolve with the introduction of new documentation and revised hypotheses.

More information can be found in several Holocaust Encyclopedia articles. Start with the overview of antisemitism, and then read the related articles on antisemitism through the centuries.

PART VII

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

A HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST: AN OVERVIEW TIMELINE GLOSSARY

Only guard yourself and guard your soul carefully, lest you forget the things your eyes saw and lest these things depart your heart all the days of your life, and you shall make them known to your children and your children's children — Deuteronomy 4:9

A HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST: AN OVERVIEW By Dr. Michael Berenbaum

The Holocaust has come to mean the systematic, state-sponsored murder of six million Jews and millions of non-Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. The word is Greek in origin, a translation of the Hebrew word *olah* meaning, a burnt offering offered whole unto the Lord. The Nazis called the murder of the Jews, "The Final Solution to the Jewish Problem." It was their way of speaking euphemistically. Defining Jews as a problem or a question demands a solution. The word final was only all too accurate. Their intention was totally to end Jewish history, to eliminate all Jewish blood once and for all.

Yiddish-speaking Jews used the word *churban*, destruction, to signify the Holocaust. More recently, the word Shoah has been used alone, to signify a whirlwind of destruction. Historian Lucy Dawidowicz called the Holocaust "The War Against the Jews," and perhaps she is right. The planned destruction of an entire people was a war the Nazis came close to winning.

The destruction of the Jews was at the center of Nazi ideology, at the center of Hitler's vision, but Jews were not the Nazi's only victims. Nazi racism was directed against a mosaic of victims.

Some were targeted for what they did. Trade unionists and political dissidents were sent to concentration camps. Some were victimized for what they refused to do. Jehovah's Witnesses would not swear allegiance to the State; they would not register for the draft. German male homosexuals and after the 1938 annexation of Austria, Austrian gays, were arrested because they would not breed the master race; they were an insult to the Nazi macho image.

In addition to Jews, the Germans systematically killed three groups. The first the people we describe today as people with "special needs." They were the mentally retarded, physically handicapped or emotionally disturbed Germans murdered in a so-called "euthanasia" program. They were considered "life unworthy of living." Gas chambers and crematoria were developed to kill them. As many as 200,000 Germans were killed in the euthanasia program.

Roma and Sinti [Gypsies] were also killed. Their fate most closely paralleled the Jews. They were murdered in the gas chambers as families—men, women, and children. Perhaps as many as 250,000 Gypsies were murdered by the Germans.

During the early days of the war against the Soviet Union in 1941, Soviet prisoners of war were put to death mostly by starvation and exposure without shelter. Later, they were allowed to live, to be used in forced labor. But some 3.3 million Soviet POWs died under German rule. Slavic nations, most especially, Poles, were decimated.

WHY JEWS?

Antisemitism, the hatred of Jews, has existed throughout history. Jews play a special role
in Christianity. Jesus was born a Jew and preached to the Jews, but his followers broke with Judaism and created Christianity, which was developed over time into a different religion. His followers believed that Christianity had come to fulfill and replace Judaism and did not understand why the Jews remained faithful to their traditions and refused to convert. Religious antisemitism persisted throughout the centuries – and with it, the bloody persecution of the Jewish people in sporadic fits.

This continued into the 16th century when religious reformer Martin Luther founded Protestantism and admonished the Jews for not embracing his new religion. Typically, he called for violence against them. He referred to Jews as venomous.

In addition, some interpretations of the Gospel—which the Vatican, the Catholic Church, changed only in the 1960s—blamed the Jews for the death of Jesus. Not only were the Jews of ancient days guilty of deicide, but all Jews, from generation to generation, were considered guilty of the murder of Christ. Thus, the early origin of antisemitism was religious.

Until the French Revolution of 1789, the status of Jews in Europe was tenuous. Treated as outsiders, they had few civil rights. They were taxed as a community, not as individuals. Exclusion from the larger society reinforced their religious identity and strengthened their communal institutions, which served judicial and quasi-governmental functions. In the French Revolution, with its promise of liberty, equality and fraternity, the rights of citizenship were extended to Jews. Still, Jewish freedoms were conditioned on the willingness of Jews to abandon their age-old customs and their communal identity.

In the 19th Century a new form of antisemitism developed – political antisemitism. The term "antisemitism" was coined by a German journalist to refer to this type of prejudice. Hatred of the Jews was used for political purposes to elect candidates to office, to oppose policies that would grant minorities, including Jews, equal rights and greater freedom. One such antisemitic incident divided France. A Jewish captain on the French General Staff, Alfred Dreyfuss, was falsely accused of spying for the enemy. In the streets people chanted "death to the Jews." Even when the fraudulent charges were discovered, there were many who still refused to believe that Dreyfuss was innocent. They refused to accept the Jew as a member of society. But the lesson was clear: Jews were not secure even in the most advanced nation in Europe.

A document was forged in 1917 by the Russian Secret Police entitled the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, which described a Jewish conspiracy to dominate the world. Despite undeniable proof of its falsehood, it was widely believed and circulated throughout Europe. Today it has been published in many languages and accepted as factual by people who hate Jews.

As the 19th Century ended, Jewish life was in ferment throughout the East. In Eastern Europe, many Jews lived in *shtetls*, villages that were predominantly Jewish. They spoke Yiddish, read Yiddish books, both sacred and secular, and attended Yiddish theaters and movies. Many Jewish men wore traditional black caftans and continued to observe the practices of their grandparents. Jewish religious life in all its forms was fervent. Yet many a young

98 etter

Jew left the yeshiva – a religious seminary where only Sacred Texts were taught – to enter a German university, casting aside traditional garb and practice and ardently embracing the teachings of the West. Despite antisemitism and cultural constraints, Germany was the place where Jews were best able to participate in intellectual and cultural life. They assimilated rapidly. Intermarriage was widespread; so was conversion.

Jewish life was caught up in radical change. In 1881, Czar Alexander II was assassinated by revolutionaries. Jews were blamed and an era of promise came to an end in Russia. Pogroms and persecutions erupted and set off a massive migration to the West as millions of Jews migrated to the New World. The Jewish population of the United States increased from 250,000 in 1881 to some four million in 1919 as waves of immigrants came to escape antisemitism, poverty and despair. The shores of the United States were open to receive those needing a haven, those yearning to be free.

At times of economic insecurity or rapid cultural change, at times of defeat or dislocation, Jews were blamed for all that was happening. They were used as scapegoats. People could be united by turning against a common enemy. The Germans had lost World War I, the Great Depression was a global one, and the Jews were conveniently located to become targets.

In Germany, in the century preceding the Nazi rise of power, antisemitism was linked to German nationalism and culture. Intellectuals, artists, and composers, such as Richard Wagner, believed that Jews were innately incapable of being part of the true German nation. This idea had a direct impact on Hitler.

Adolph Hitler and his followers built on this long tradition of antisemitism, but transformed it into racial antisemitism. The enemy was Jewish blood, conversion was impossible. Only the complete elimination of Jews would do. A Jew was guilty not because of the religious beliefs he practiced, or the identity he affirmed, but because of blood. And they joined racial antisemitism with an even more lethal brew – redemptive antisemitism, the elimination of the Jews; not initially but eventually by murder, which they termed "extermination" – was essential to the national wellbeing of the German people. Jews were regarded as a cancer, a tumor. Invasive surgery was required for the health of the nation.

THE NAZI PERSECUTION

The Nazis came to power in Germany legally; they were elected to the Reichstag. Adolph Hitler assumed office in 1933 as head of a coalition government with his opponents gambling that once in power he would be forced to the center, to moderate or mute the antisemitic, racist and dictatorial aspects of his platform. He spent the first two years of his regime consolidating power, eliminating political opposition, and solidifying his dictatorship.

German law defined the Jews in the Nuremberg legislation of 1935; Jews were identified not by the religion they professed, the values they avowed, the beliefs they practiced, or the identity they affirmed, but biologically, based on the religion of their grandparents. The enemy was all Jews, religious and secular, ardent or assimilated, Zionists or German nationalists. Since Jewish blood was the target, even those who had converted to Christianity, even those whose

parents had been converts, including priests and nuns, ministers and pastors, were defined as Jews. Once established, this definition of Jews was applied in country after country as the Reich expanded its borders and occupied other lands from 1938 onward.

Over the next three years, property was confiscated, civil liberties were abridged, then violated, and ultimately cancelled; homes, businesses, possessions, synagogues, public institutions and private property were all taken from the Jews. Jewish students were not allowed to attend schools or universities. They could not sit on park benches or swim in public pools. At first, this discrimination was an effort to force them to emigrate, to make Germany *Judenrein* [free of Jews]; and later confiscation and expropriation of personal property, homes and businesses became an essential part of the "Final Solution."

In Germany this policy evolved slowly from 1933-39; the first stage, eliminating Jews from German society and forcing them to leave Germany in acts of "self-deportation" reached its crescendo in the November 9-11 pogroms of 1938 known as *Kristallnacht*, the night the synagogues of Germany and Austria were burned, Jewish businesses were looted, Jewish homes were invaded and 30,000 Jewish men–almost all between the ages of 16 and 60- were arrested and sent to concentration camps.

The process of eliminating the Jews from society, which had taken years in Germany, took only months in Austria after its incorporation into the Reich in March 1938, and oftentimes only weeks in territories later occupied by German expansionism.

David Marwell, the director of New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage, has said that just because Jews were simply overpowered, that did not mean that they were passive. Jews responded to the Nazi onslaught by trying to emigrate. There were hurdles to overcome, but they were persistent. More than one in two left Germany and Austria before the onset of war. They trained themselves in mobile professions. They became electricians and plumbers, agricultural workers and nurses rather than lawyers and writers. Musicians and architects "spoke" a universal language. Jews turned inward, turning toward Jewish history and Jewish spirituality to face the onslaught.

Within a month of the beginning of World War II, in September 1939, more than two million Jews came under German domination as the Germans conquered Poland. Forced emigration of a population so vast became an ever-more distant fantasy.

Shortly afterwards, the first systematic killings began, not of Jews, but of the mentally retarded and physically disabled Germans. Hitler personally ordered "that patients considered incurable according to the best available human judgment of their state of health, can be granted a mercy killing." Within two years, six killing centers were established with gas chambers and crematoria. The physicians who began their service at these centers would later be moved to the death camps.

WAR AND GHETTOIZATION

Jews in German-occupied Poland were forced to live together in confined areas, ghettos in the

100 වේණිට

East; and with the German invasion of Western Europe in 1940, transit camps were established in the West. To the killers, these were temporary measures, pending a determination of some final policy. The victims thought that the ghettos would endure. They were wrong.

Just as German policy toward Jews did not remain static, so, too, German control of Europe evolved. In his 1925 book, *Mein Kampf* [*My Struggle*] Hitler articulated a vision of German expansionism, German "living space." Once in power, his vision became state policy. The German Reich increased in size by incorporating former territories; in 1938, Austria and the Sudetenland, and then from the fall of 1939 onward, expansion by war. Poland fell in September; Western Europe, Holland, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark and other countries in the spring and summer of 1940 and the Balkans and the Soviet Union in 1941. With each expansion the number of Jews under German control increased and anti-Jewish policies were immediately imposed.

Emigration was not possible. There were too many Jews and they were unwanted everywhere. Allied countries refused to receive large numbers of Jews even in peacetime. This position was confirmed at the 1938 conference in Evian; reaffirmed at the Bermuda Conference of 1943. The Germans believed Allied reluctance to receive immigrants as tacit consent. They were confident that the Allies were equally reticent to implement rescue.

IMPLEMENTING "THE FINAL SOLUTION": EINSATZGRUPPEN

Sometime in the winter of 1940-41, a policy decision was made and crowned with a proper name: "The Final Solution to the Jewish Problem." The "solution" envisioned was all too final: the murder of all Jews under German domination – men, women and children. Those who acted on this policy were certain that they were implementing the Fuhrer's [Adolph Hitler's] will.

With the invasion of the Soviet Union in June of 1941, the slaughter began by using mobile killing units, *Einsatzgruppen*, that accompanied advancing German forces. They entered town after town, village after village, hamlets and even large cities, rounded up the Jews, Gypsies and Soviet Commissars and shot them one by one, bullet by bullet, person after person. This process continued as the army advanced to the East.

When the military situation stabilized, the killing units returned to finish off what had been left undone. Once again, they were to return in 1943, this time to dig up the bodies and burn them to wipe out all evidence of their crime.

Killing was difficult, even for the killers. The killers drank heavily. Alcohol somehow made the work more bearable. They spoke in euphemisms — of special actions, special treatment, executive measures, cleansing, resettlements, liquidation, finishing off, appropriate treatment.

The killers themselves were marked. If post-war testimony is to be believed, one of the key SS officers told Heinrich Himmler, the leader of the SS, "Look at the eyes of the men in this kommando, how deeply shaken they are...These men are finished for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we training here? Either neurotics or savages."

The German killers did not operate alone. The Wehrmacht, the German Army, also participated. Local gendarmerie, native antisemites, and even neighbors who had previously worked with their local Jews, participated in the killing. One of the most painful documents of the Holocaust is a German complaint against the venomous cruelty of the Romanian army, who tortured the Jews before killing them. And in recent years, a Roman Catholic priest, Father Patrick Desbois, has been interviewing older inhabitants, eyewitnesses to the killing, and unearthing the mass graves.

He has made some important forensic discoveries. The SS and the Wehrmacht used different bullets than the local police or the native citizens, so he is able to identify who performed the killing. He has also discovered bodies without bullets and thus the stories of fathers and mothers who took a bullet for their child and threw them into the mass graves in the hopes that they would survive. He has also found keys, which indicates that when the victims left home that morning, they full expected to return to their homes again. We all carry keys; they represent security and safety.

To deal with the impact of this type of killing on the Germans, a more impersonal method of killing was sought. If the killers could no longer be brought to the victims in order to slaughter them face to face, the victims must be brought to the killers and disposed of in a way that kept the victims at a distance. Thus a second form of killing was developed: the death camp, where the victims were gassed, and the bodies were then burned.

FROM EINSATZGRUPPEN TO DEATH CAMPS

Railroads were essential to the killing process. And deportation transformed ghettos into transit camps, way stations to contain the captive population until the killing centers were developed and opened for business. Deportation meant the loss of home, the collapse of families, the beginning of a journey to death. Deportation also meant that there was no tomorrow, no hope. It was then—and only then—that ghettos in Warsaw, Vilna, Bialystok and many other places rose in revolt.

The timetable was swift. The policy was announced in January 1942 at the Wannsee Conference, where 15 men-seven of whom held doctorates from German universities – gathered to learn of the "Final Solution." They spoke of killing eleven million Jews in Europe, assuming that they would conquer Great Britain and all of the Soviet Union. After this meeting, three death camps that were under development since November 1941 – months prior to the conference – came on-line in the winter and the spring. By the summer of 1942, deportations to death camps had begun; by 1943 most of the Jews to be killed in the Holocaust were already dead.

At the time of the Wannsee Conference, between 75-80% of the Jews who were to be murdered in the Holocaust were still alive. By the spring of 1943, four of five of those Jews were dead.

Three camps were reserved exclusively for killing Jews: Sobibor, Treblinka, and Belzec. Auschwitz and Majdanek served three functions: as killing centers, slave labor camps and concentration camps. At Auschwitz, the largest and most lethal of the camps, some

102 වේණිට

1.25 million people were murdered there, mostly Jews. Twenty thousand Roma and Sinti [Gypsies] were killed as well as tens of thousands of Poles and Soviet prisoners of war. A German map of 1945 lists 3,000 camps, but there may have been more. Recent United States Holocaust Memorial Museum research indicates that there may have been some 42,000 camps of varying types. These other camps were not solely dedicated to killing, though conditions were so harsh, slave labor so intense, food so scarce, that hundreds of thousands of inmates died or were killed.

Nazi doctors, such as Josef Mengele, M.D., Ph.D., who was both a physician and a researcher stationed at Auschwitz, performed medical experiments on the inmates. They were forcibly sterilized or frozen. Tests were painful, exhausting, and traumatic for the frightened and hungry children who made up the bulk of Mengele's subjects. When the research was completed, some subjects were killed by phenol injections and their organs were autopsied and analyzed. Scientifically interesting anatomical specimens were preserved and shipped out to the Institute in Berlin Dahlem for further research.

Upon arrival, Jews were separated in a process known as "*selektion*," when an SS physician would divide the young and the able-bodied from other prisoners. Those chosen to die would be sent directly to the gas chambers. Their personal possessions were confiscated, and hair shorn; as many as 2,000 would be sent into the sealed gas chambers at one time. SS personal would pour two canisters of Zyklon B down an opening and within 20-30 minutes the new arrivals would be dead. Their bodies would then be sent to the crematoria where gold teeth were removed, and private parts examined before cremation. Sometimes when the crematoria could not handle the volume of killings, bodies would be burned in open fields.

The able-bodied who passed the first *selektion* would then be processed. They too would be shaven, their personal possessions confiscated, a number were tattooed on their forearms and they would be referred to by number, not by name. They were forced to work for long hours under harsh conditions. Prisoners were neither adequately fed nor kept warm. They, too, faced periodic *selektions*. Only the few able to withstand these horrible conditions could survive. Weakened or sick prisoners were sent back to Birkenau and gassed.

The fate of Jews differed country by country, region by region. What evolved slowly in Germany over twelve years or in Poland over three, took less than three months in Hungary. The Germans invaded Hungary in March 1944. Jews were defined immediately and their property was confiscated, by April they were ghettoized. On May 15, the deportation began and by July 8th, 437,402 Jews had been deported, primarily to Birkenau, the death camp at the Auschwitz complex, on 147 trains. Eight in ten were gassed upon arrival.

WORLD WAR II AND THE WAR AGAINST THE JEWS

The progress of World War II impacted on the Holocaust. With each German advance, more Jews came under German domination; impending German losses often intensified the pace of destruction; each area liberated from German control brought relief to its endangered population—none more endangered than the Jews. And in the final months of the war, as

camps in the East were being overrun, the Nazis instituted a series of forced evacuations by foot and by rail – hasty retreats of incarcerated concentration camps populations. Few, if any, provisions were provided; the marches took place in the dead of winter. They were known as death marches, the last ditch effort to keep the living witnesses from being captured by the Allies. For the victims, the struggle was no longer against the Nazis, but against death itself, as they were forced to draw upon reservoirs of strength, pushed beyond the limits of endurance.

RESISTANCE

Jews fought the Nazis in the forests of Eastern Europe and in the ghettos of German-occupied Poland; they fought as part of the Maquis in France and with Tito in Yugoslavia; they took up arms alone in occupied Poland, and resisted alongside Soviet partisans. Even in the death camps of Birkenau, Treblinka, and Sobibor, Jews resisted with arms; crematoria were blown up, escapes were organized.

Jews fought against impossible odds. Unlike classical guerilla fighters, Jews were often immobile. Confined to ghettos, they were captive and vulnerable for retaliation. Antisemitism was widespread, therefore Jewish resistance did not enjoy popular support. The Jewish fighters could not easily disappear among the native population, as they were subject to betrayal. The ghettos in which they fought were subject to collective reprisals, collective responsibility. All could be killed for the decisions of a few.

Therefore, armed resistance was not the first response. Jews were more practiced in the art of spiritual resistance, thwarting Nazi intentions by non-violent means, by less than all-out confrontation. Courage in the face of death—and valor—took many forms.

Arms were difficult and dangerous to obtain; they had to be purchased and smuggled, pistol by pistol, rifle by rifle. Material assistance was not available from the Allies, and the underground armies in German-occupied Poland were reluctant to supply weapons against a common enemy; they did not believe that Jews would fight.

Armed resistance was an act of desperation. It erupted when Jews understood Nazi intentions, when hope of survival had been abandoned. The motivation of the fighters was to protect Jewish honor, to avenge Jewish death.

LIBERATION AND ITS AFTERMATH

As the Allied armies swept through Europe in 1944 and 1945, they found seven to nine million displaced people living in countries that were not their own. More than six million returned to their native lands. But more than one million refused repatriation. Victims became displaced persons, stateless, in search of new homes and new lands.

For Jews, there was nowhere to go. Their homes had been destroyed, their families murdered and they were unwanted everywhere. The presence of so many Jews on German soil, living among their former killers, pressured world leaders to find a place where the Jews could go.

Most of the Jews wanted to rebuild their lives in an independent Jewish state in Palestine. They demonstrated their determination by trying two types of illegal migration: *Bricha*, the escape from Soviet-held territories to American or British-held territories, and *Aliyah Bet*, efforts to bring displaced person to Palestine in violation of British policy.

Only in 1948, when the State of Israel was proclaimed and opened its shores to receive the Jews, did most find a home, a place to rebuild their lives. Soon, thereafter, under the leadership of President Harry S. Truman, the U.S. government relaxed its rigid quota laws to permit people then called refugees—who we now call Holocaust survivors—to immigrate to the United States.

In the winter of 1943, Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and Josef Stalin, leaders of the United States, Great Britain and the USSR respectively, had declared their determination to bring the Nazi leaders to justice. Allied outrage at Nazi wartime behavior only intensified after the discovery of killing centers.

Just after the war ended, agreement was reached to conduct joint trials. President Truman, who replaced FDR on April 12, 1945, took the unusual step of asking Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson to lead the American effort. Nuremberg, the site of annual Nazi party pageants, was chosen for the trials.

Three forms of crimes were specified in the indictment:

Crimes against the Peace: Planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression;

War Crimes: Violations of laws and customs of war such as the murder, ill-treatment, or deportation of slave labor or for any other purpose of civilian populations...killing of hostages, prisoners of war, plunder of private property, destruction of towns and cities;

Crimes Against Humanity: Murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation... against any civilian population...persecution on political, racial, or religious grounds... whether or not in violation of domestic laws of the country where perpetrated.

There were two series of trials at Nuremberg and over the past 70 years, the trials of Nazi war criminals have continued because of the uniqueness of this crime. In 1948, the United Nations passed the Genocide Convention, which was designed to overcome the claims of Nuremberg defendants that they had violated no law. The Convention specifically defines the various aspects of Nazi genocide as criminal. It prohibits the killing of persons belonging to a group (the Final Solution); causing grievous bodily or spiritual harm to members of a group; deliberately enforcing upon the group living conditions which could lead to complete or partial extermination (ghettoization and starvation); enforcing measures to prevent births among the group (sterilization); forcibly removing children from the group and transferring them to another group (the "Aryanization" of Polish non-Jewish children). The adoption

of the Convention was followed the next day by the adoption of a Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

And in the years since, as you will see in these films, survivors have borne witness to the events they experienced.

The world tried to rebuild the scaffolding of justice by trying a few perpetrators; it tried to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and to outlaw genocide, hoping against hope that naming the crime and outlawing it would somehow end.

As to the Holocaust survivors, who were a small minority of the victims, many more were murdered than survived. The question they faced was what to do with the accident of their survival. They, too, had to rebuild their lives in its aftermath. Over time they came to answer the question: "Why did I survive?" not with statements about the past, but by what they did with their lives in the aftermath.

Because they have faced death, many will have learned what is most important in life. Life itself, love, family and community, and what Holocaust survivor and Academy Award Winner Gerda Klein called, "A boring evening at home." The small things, the simple things we have all taken for granted, cannot be taken for granted but must be treasured and appreciated anew.

For Jewish survivors, the survival of the Jewish people became paramount. The final statement of Jewish history and Jewish memory must be about life and not death, no matter how pervasive that death.

For many survivors, bearing witness conferred a sense of meaning in the aftermath of atrocity. They have told the story of the past, to keep a promise they made to those they left behind. More importantly, in the hope – however slim – that it can transform the future.

WHAT OF THE ROLE OF HOLOCAUST MEMORY IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD?

In a world of relativism, the Holocaust has taken its place as an Absolute. We don't know what is good. We don't know what is bad. But we do know that the Holocaust is evil, absolute evil. It is for that reason why people use the word in the plural as they attempt to call attention to their suffering – the Black Holocaust, the Holocaust of the American Indians, the Holocaust in Kosovo, Rwanda, Bosnia. The Holocaust is the nuclear bomb of moral epithets. It is an event of such magnitude that the more we sense the relativism of values, the more we require the Holocaust as the foundation for a negative absolute, absolute evil. This may well be the reason why the leaders of European nations have rediscovered the importance of the Holocaust for contemporary moral education. This may also be the reason why it becomes the focal point for Papal visits to Israel, for German society and for American society.

It may also be why Holocaust deniers deny an event that for all reason, all standards of rationality, and all evidence cannot be denied. It is in this function, as negative absolute, that the Holocaust may loom largest in the coming years.

Consciousness of the Holocaust has moved way beyond the Jewish community. In the past half century, the bereaved memories of a parochial community have been transformed into an act of conscience. Survivors have responded in the most deeply Jewish way of all: remembering suffering and transmitting that memory in order to fortify conscience, to plead for decency, to strengthen values and thus to intensify a commitment to human dignity. That is how the Biblical Jews taught us to remember that we were slaves in Egypt and that is why the Biblical experience has framed the struggle for freedom ever since.

One cannot undo what has happened. Historians can answer the question, "How?" only in the most technical sense – detailing event after event. But, as you shall read, theologians, writers, poets and philosophers, psychologists and artists have not answered the question "Why?"

Yet we can answer the question of what to do with this history. Embrace it, study it, wrestle with it and ultimately transform it to inspire the human spirit to enlarge our sense of responsibility, to alleviate human suffering, and strengthen our moral resolve.

TIMELINE

1933

January 30 March 23 March 23 April 1 April 7	Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany First concentration camp established at Dachau German parliament empowers Hitler to enact all laws on its behalf Hitler proclaims one-day boycott of all Jewish shops/businesses Jews are expelled from the civil service including judges and professors, teachers, lawyers, and physicians
April 26	Establishment of the Gestapo
May 10	Public burning of books deemed un-Germanic written by Jews and opponents of Nazism throughout Germany
Spring/Summer	Jewish professors are expelled from universities; Jewish writers and artists are prohibited from pursuing their work
July 14	Nazi Party proclaimed by law to be only legal political party in Germany
October 19	Germany withdraws from the League of Nations
1934	
August 2	Hitler named <i>Führer</i> and Reich Chancellor [President and Prime Minister] after the death of German President von Hindenburg
1935	
March 16	Compulsory military service reinstated in Germany in violation of Treaty of Versailles
May 31	Jews barred from military service
September 14	Nuremberg Laws passed depriving Jews of German citizenship
1936	
March 7	German Army occupies the Rhineland in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
June 17	Heinrich Himmler appointed Chief of German Police
October 25	Hitler and Benito Mussolini of Italy form Rome-Berlin Axis
November 25	Germany and Japan sign military pact
1937	
July 16	Buchenwald Concentration Camp, near Weimar, is opened
1938	
March 13	Germany annexes Austria
July 6-16	Evian Conference produces no result in helping provide refuge for Jews
September 29-30	Munich Conference – England and France yield part of Czechoslovakia to Germany and are promised that this was Hitler's final territorial

108 TIGO	
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	demand. English Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain pro-
0 + 1 =	claims that he has brought "peace in our time."
October 5	At the request of the Swiss government, Jewish passports are marked with a "J"
October 28	Approximately 15,000 Polish citizens living in Germany, many
	for decades, are resettled in Poland. Poland refuses to admit
	them and they are stranded on the border
November 9–10	<i>Kristallnacht</i> (Night of Broken Glass) pogroms against Jews throughout Germany and Austria; Jewish shops and busi- nesses are burned, looted, and synagogues are destroyed. 30,000 Jewish men aged 16-60 are arrested and sent to concentration camps
November 12	Jews are forced to turn over all retail businesses to Aryans
November 15	Jewish students are expelled from schools in Germany
December 3	Jews must hand in their drivers' licenses and car registrations
December 8	Jews can no longer attend universities
1939	
January 1	Jewish men must have a middle name of Israel and Jewish women the name Sara added to their identity cards
Jan. 30	At sixth anniversary address to German Reichstag, Hitler threatens that if war erupts the Jews will be annihilated
March 15	German troops occupy remainder of Czechoslovakia
May 13	The MS St. Louis sets sail from Hamburg, Germany for Cuba
August 23	Soviets and Germans sign nonaggression pact secretly agreeing to divide Poland
September 1	Germany invades Poland. World War II begins as France and Britain declare war two days later but do not attack
September 17	Soviets invade and occupy Eastern Poland
September 23	Jews must turn in all radios
November 28	First ghetto established in Poland
1940	
February 12	German Jews begin to be deported to concentration camps
April 9	Germany invades Denmark and Norway
May 7	Lodz Ghetto established in German-occupied Poland
May 10	Germany invades Holland, Belgium, and France
May 20	Auschwitz Concentration Camp is established
June 22	France surrenders to Germany
November 15	Warsaw Ghetto is established
1941	
Feb. 22	Deportation of Dutch Jews begins; Holland's workers strike in sympathy for Jews

March	Adolf Eichmann made head of Gestapo section for Jewish Affairs
April 6	Germany occupies Greece and Yugoslavia
June 22	Germany invades Soviet Union
June-Dec.	Nazi <i>Einsatzgruppen</i> (special mobile killing units) carry out mass murder of Jews in areas of Soviet Union occupied by Ger-
July 31	man Army Reinhard Heydrich is appointed by Hermann Göring to carry out "The Final Solution"
September 1	Every Jew in areas occupied by Germans must wear yellow Star of David
September 28	Massacre of Jews at Babi Yar – 33,771 Jews are murdered
October 14	Large-scale deportations of Jews to concentration camps begin
October	Establishment of Birkenau
December 7	Japan attacks U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor, triggering American en- try into World War II
December 8	Chelmno concentration camp begins operation
December 11	Germany and Italy declare war on the United States
	Seminity and fully declare war on the Sinted States
1942	
	Wanness Conference: plans for "Final Solution" are coordinated
January 20	Wannsee Conference; plans for "Final Solution" are coordinated
March 17	Murder by gas "extermination" begins in Belzec
March	Deportations to Auschwitz begin
April	Murder by gas "extermination" begins in Sobibor
Summer	Deportation of Jews to extermination camps from Holland, Po-
	land, France, Belgium, Croatia; armed resistance by Jews in sev-
	eral ghettos
Luly 22	
July 22	Treblinka is opened
July 23	Large-scale deportation of Jews from Warsaw Ghetto; at least
	265,000 Jews are sent to Treblinka by September 21st.
July 28	Jewish Fighting Organization (Z.O.B.) organized in Warsaw
	Ghetto
October 4	Jews still in concentration camps in Germany transferred to
	Auschwitz to die
	Auschwitz to the
1943	
January 18–21	Armed Jewish resistance to Nazi attempt to "liquidate" the
Junuary 10 21	
	Jews – the German term for sending Jews to the death camps –
	Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto attempt their first uprising
February 2	Germany's Sixth Army surrenders at Stalingrad
March	"Liquidation" of Krakow Ghetto
April 19	Warsaw Ghetto Uprising begins on Passover Eve. Jews attack
*	German troops attempting to deport them to Treblinka; resis-
	tance continues for weeks.
May 16	
May 16	German General Jurgen Stroop reports to his superiors, "The

110 වීමීම	
	Jewish Quarter in Warsaw [the Warsaw Ghetto] is no longer."
June 11	Himmler orders" liquidation" of all ghettos in German-occu- pied Poland and Soviet Union
August 2	Armed uprising in Treblinka; 300 Jews escape and in its after- math the death camp ceases to operate
October 14	Revolt in Sobibor
1944	
January 22	War Refugee Board is formed by Executive order of U.S. President Roosevelt
March 19	Germany invades Hungary
April	Jews in Hungary are ghettoized prior to deportation
May 15	Germans begin deporting Hungarian Jews; 437,402 Jews are deported to Auschwitz on 147 trains in 54 days, overwhelming the system
June 6	Allied invasion of Normandy/D-Day
June 30	Kasztner Train with 1,684 passengers departs Budapest and ca.18,000 additional Jews were detained in Austria instead of being sent to Auschwitz in deal for goods and money with the Germans; train heads to Bergen-Belsen. All held in Belsen are released to Switzerland by December, 1944. It is the largest rescue of Jews in the war
July 7	Deportations from Hungary end, only the Jews in Budapest, Hungary's capital, are still alive
July 8	Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat, arrives in Budapest to help rescue Jews
July 20	German attempt to assassinate Hitler fails
July 24	Soviet troops liberate Majdanek death camp
August 6	SS begins to drive concentration camp prisoners into Germany in advance of Soviet troops
August 25	Paris is liberated
November	Last deportation from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz
November 8	Beginning of death march of Jews from Budapest to Austria
November 24	Himmler orders destruction of Auschwitz crematoriums to con- ceal evidence of death camps
1945	
January 17	Evacuation of Auschwitz; beginning of death march from there
January 27	Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz/Birkenau
February 4–11	Yalta Conference to plan post-war world
April 11	American troops liberate Buchenwald
April 12	U.S. President Roosevelt dies in Warm Springs, Georgia; Harry
S.	Truman becomes President
April 15	British troops liberate Bergen-Belsen

April 29	American troops liberate Dachau
April 30	Hitler is believed to have committed suicide
May 7	Germany surrenders; reign of the Third Reich is over; World
-	War II ends in Europe
August 6	U.S. drops first atomic bomb over Hiroshima
August 9	U.S. drops second atomic bomb over Nagasaki
August 15	Japan surrenders; World War II is over
November 22	Nuremberg Trials begin

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GLOSSARY

Antisemitism: prejudice against the Jewish people, spelled correctly without a hyphen. **Aryan**: term used by the Nazis to describe a "race" of people they viewed as being racially superior; originally, the term used to classify an Indo-European language group **Auschwitz-Birkenau**: located in Poland, largest death camp built by the Nazis; over 2,000,000 people died there by means of starvation, disease, and gassing; Birkenau is often referred to as Auschwitz II

Babi Yar: the site of a mass grave inside the Soviet border, near Kiev, where more than 100,000 Jews were shot and buried by the Nazis with the support of the Ukrainian militia **Buchenwald**: one of the first concentration camps; located in central Germany

Concentration Camps: work and death camps located in Germany and Poland to incarcerate and exterminate Jews, Gypsies, political dissidents, and others deemed "undesirable" by the Nazis

Crematorium: a furnace used in the death camps to cremate the bodies of victims

Dachau: one of the first concentration camps built by the Nazis, located in southwestern Germany

Death Camps: camps built to exterminate Jews and other "enemies" of the Nazi regime

Death Marches: forced marches of concentration camp prisoners as the Nazis tried to keep ahead of the Allied forces; approximately one third of those in the death marches died as a result of either disease, starvation, overexposure to the elements, or being shot by their guards

Deportation: forced removal of Jews from their homes in Nazi-occupied lands; under the pretense of resettlement, victims were sent to death and labor camps

Displaced Person (DP) Camps: camps set up after World War II as temporary living quarters for survivors of the Holocaust who now had no home or country to return to.

Einsatzgruppen: special German mobile death squads estimated to have killed millions of Jews. Victims were executed in mass shootings and buried in unmarked graves—usually in ditches they were forced to dig

Evian Conference: conference organized by President Franklin Roosevelt and held at Evianles-Ban in France, in 1938, to discuss the plight of Jews trying to escape Nazi persecution; 32 nations were represented but the conference did little to solve the problem

"Final Solution": Nazi code word for the physical extermination of Jews under their control, including Jews from North Africa, Asia, and the Middle East

Gas Chamber: a sealed and airtight room where death was induced through the use of poisonous gases

Genocide: the systematic killing of a nation or race of people

Gestapo: the Nazi Secret State Police

Ghetto: an area of a city to which the Jews were restricted and from which they were forbidden to leave

Gypsies: a group of people also singled out for extermination by the Nazi regime; by the end of World War II, approximately one quarter of a million Gypsies had been killed; also known as Roma and Sinti peoples.

Holocaust: term used to describe the systematic annihilation of the Jewish people of Eastern Europe and other countries by the Nazi regime; by the end of World War II, approximately 6,000,000 Jewish men, women, and children had been killed

Kapo: a prisoner appointed by the Nazis to oversee labor details in the concentration camps *Kristallnacht*: Night of Broken Glass, the organized pogrom against Jews in Germany and Austria on November 9–10, 1938

Labor Camp: a Nazi concentration camp predominately designed for slave labor **Liberators**: soldiers who freed the prisoners of the concentration camps

Majdanek: death camp located outside Lublin, one of the largest cities of Poland; most of the camp still remains intact today since the Nazis did not have time to dismantle it before the Russian troops arrived

MS *St. Louis*: a ship carrying Jewish refugees to Cuba and the United States in June 1939; denied safe harbor, it eventually was forced back to Europe where many of its passengers met their deaths; immortalized in the book and movie *Voyage of the Damned*

Nazi: acronym for the National Socialist German Workers Party

Nuremberg Laws: issued in 1935, laws which were designed to exclude the Jews from Germany socially and politically

Nuremberg Trials: the trial of 22 major Nazi figures held in Nuremberg, Germany, before an international military tribunal

Partisans: patriotic civilians who banded together to fight Nazi rule, usually operating in the forests in Russia, Poland, and Lithuania

Pogroms: organized acts of discrimination and violence aimed at a specific group of people **Prejudice**: an attitude toward a person, group of people, or ideas about them formed without adequate information

Racism: practice of discrimination, segregation, persecution, and domination on the basis of race

Reichstag: the central legislative body of Germany, its Parliament

Resistance: physical and spiritual opposition to the Nazi regime

"Righteous Among the Nations": the term used for non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews from Nazi persecution

Righteous Gentiles: non-Jews who helped save Jewish lives

SA: storm troopers or Brown Shirts; organized to protect Nazi rallies **Scapegoat**: an innocent person or persons blamed for the problems or troubles of another

114 වෙලිව

S.D. (*Sicherheitsdienst*): the Security Service of the Nazi regime; headed by Reinhard Heydrich and responsible for security of the high-ranking members of the Nazi party

Shtetl: a small Jewish village in the Pale of Settlement, which included modern-day Lithuania, Belarus, Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, and parts of western Russia.

SS (*Schutzstaffel*): elite guard, under the command of Heinrich Himmler, responsible for the administration of the concentration camps and for carrying out the "Final Solution"

Sobibor: death camp in Poland where a quarter of a million people were gassed; setting for a famous uprising by prisoners in October 1943

Sonderkommandos: prisoners in the death camps whose jobs were to clear away the bodies of gas chamber victims

Swastika: symbol of the Nazi party; it was originally an ancient religious symbol in India

Theresienstadt: Nazi ghetto located in German-occupied Czechoslovakia; frequently called a "Model Ghetto" to show the outside world, including the Red Cross, how well the Jews were being treated; prisoners were kept here briefly before being transported to the death camps

Third Reich: official name of the Nazi regime; ruled from 1933 to 1945 under rule of Adolf Hitler

Torah: the handwritten scroll of the Five Books of Moses, the Pentateuch, one portion of which is read weekly in synagogue

Totalitarianism: a government or doctrine in which one political party or group maintains complete control and makes all others illegal

Treaty of Versailles: peace treaty that was signed at the end of World War I in Versailles, France; its conditions imposed economic hardships on Germany, weakened and humiliated the nation, and led to the popularity of the Nazi movement

Treblinka: one of the Nazi death camps established in Poland; between 1940 and 1943, approximately 750,000-900,000 people, many from Warsaw, were gassed there; site of a 1943 revolt in which about one-fourth of the prisoners there at the time escaped but ultimately most were recaptured

Wannsee Conference: held in Wannsee, a lakeside neighborhood in Berlin, on January 20, 1942, to coordinate the Nazi plans for a "Final Solution"

War Refugee Board: U.S. agency established in January 1944 by order of President Roosevelt to rescue people from German-occupied territories

Warsaw Ghetto (and Warsaw Ghetto Uprising): the largest ghetto in Europe, established in November 1940; at one time it held over 350,000 people in an area of approximately 3.5 square miles; between January and April 1943, a small group, the Jewish Fighting Organization, with few weapons, were able to hold off German soldiers;

Warsaw Uprising: The revolt of Polish non-Jews against their German occupiers, which began in the summer of 1944 when Soviet troops were at the Vistula River in the hopes that Poles could aid their own liberation. Soviet forces did not aid the Poles, so they faced the Germans alone and German troops razed the city and deported its inhabitants.

White Paper: British mandate of 1939 which limited Jewish immigration to Palestine

Yellow Star: the six-pointed Star of David made of yellow cloth and sewn to the clothing of European Jews so Nazis could easily identify them. In other countries, Jews wore blue and white armbands with the Star of David printed on them.

Zionism: the movement to establish a Jewish homeland in Israel **Z.O.B.**: the Jewish Fighting Organization which led the uprising of the Warsaw Ghetto **Zyklon-B**: the gas used in the gas chambers of the death camps

PART VIII

METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

From: Teaching About the Holocaust: A Resource Book for Educators. Reprinted with permission from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, DC., and adapted by Dr. Michael Berenbaum The teaching of Holocaust history demands of educators a high level of sensitivity and a keen awareness of the complexity of the subject matter. The recommendations that follow, while reflecting methodological approaches that would be appropriate to effective teaching in general, are particularly relevant in the context of Holocaust education.

1. Define the term "Holocaust."

The Holocaust refers to a specific genocidal event in twentieth-century history: The statesponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims — 6 million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

2. 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 suffering between those groups. Similarly, 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 exclusivity, such as "the victims of the Holocaust suffered the most cruelty ever faced by a people in the history of humanity." Suffering is deeply personal as one survivor said: "The pain of my toothache is not helped by you describing your broken arm. An aspirin might help; so, too, a hug."

3. Avoid simple answers to complex history.

A study of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about human behavior, and it often involves complicated answers as to why events occurred. Be wary of oversimplifications. Allow students to contemplate the various factors that contributed to the Holocaust; do not attempt to reduce Holocaust history to one or two catalysts in isolation from the other factors that came into play. For example, the Holocaust was not simply the logical and inevitable consequence of unbridled racism.

Rather, racism combined with centuries-old bigotry and antisemitism; renewed by a nationalistic fervor that emerged in Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century; fueled by Germany's defeat in World War I and its national humiliation following the Treaty of Versailles; exacerbated by worldwide economic hard times, the ineffectiveness of the Weimar Republic, and international indifference; and catalyzed by the political charisma and manipulative propaganda of Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime contributed to the occurrence of the Holocaust.

4. JUST BECAUSE IT HAPPENED DOES NOT MEAN IT WAS INEVITABLE.

Too often students have the simplistic impression that the Holocaust was inevitable. Just because a historical event took place, and it was documented in textbooks and on film, does not mean that it had to happen. This seemingly obvious concept is often overlooked by students and teachers alike. The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act. By focusing on those decisions, you gain insight into history and human nature and can better help your students to become critical thinkers.

5. STRIVE FOR PRECISION OF LANGUAGE.

Any study of the Holocaust touches upon nuances of human behavior. Because of the complexity of the history, there is a temptation to overgeneralize and thus to distort the facts (e.g., "all concentration camps were killing centers" or "all Germans were collaborators"). Rather, you must strive to help your students clarify the information presented and encourage them to distinguish the differences between prejudice and discrimination, collaborators and bystanders, armed and spiritual resistance, direct orders 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; and actual military engagement. But resistance also embraced willful disobedience, such as continuing to practice religious and cultural traditions in defiance of the rules or creating fine art, music, and poetry inside ghettos and concentration camps. For many, simply maintaining the will to remain alive in the face of abject brutality was an act of spiritual resistance.

6. Make careful distinctions about sources of information.

Students need practice in distinguishing among fact, opinion, and fiction; between primary and secondary sources; and among types of evidence such as court testimonies, oral histories, and other written documents. Hermeneutics—the science of interpretation—should be called into play to help guide your students in their analysis of sources. Students should be encouraged to consider why a particular text was written, who wrote it, who the intended audience was, whether there were any biases inherent in the information, whether any gaps occurred in discussion, whether omissions in certain passages were inadvertent or not, and how the information has been used to interpret various events.

Because scholars often base their research on different bodies of information, varying interpretations of history can emerge. Consequently, all interpretations are subject to analytical evaluation. Only by refining their own "hermeneutic of suspicion" can students mature into readers who discern the difference between legitimate scholars who present competing historical interpretations and those who distort or deny historical fact for personal or political gain.

7. Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions.

Though all Jews were targeted for destruction by the Nazis, the experiences of all Jews were not the same. Simplistic views and stereotyping take place when groups of people are viewed as monolithic in attitudes and actions. How ethnic groups or social clusters are labeled and portrayed in school curricula has a direct impact on how students perceive groups in their daily lives. 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.

Remember the experiences of people varied by geography, by time, by place and by circumstances. The perpetrators behaved one way in 1940-41 before the killing had started, another way in 1941-42 when it was assumed that Germany would win the war and the master race would rule the earth, and still another way in 1944-45 when the German armies were retreating and facing defeat. So, too, did the local populations. The situation of Jews differed in the countries that Germany occupied: different in Denmark than in France, in Holland than in Poland.

8. DO NOT ROMANTICIZE HISTORY TO ENGAGE STUDENTS' INTEREST.

People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide useful, important, and compelling role models for students. However, given that only a small fraction of non-Jews under German occupation helped to rescue Jews, an overemphasis on heroic tales in a unit on the Holocaust 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, along with a balanced perspective on the history, must be priorities for any teacher. Still, students need positive role models.

9. CONTEXTUALIZE THE HISTORY YOU ARE TEACHING.

Events of the Holocaust and, particularly, how individuals and organizations behaved at that time, should be placed in historical context. The occurrence of 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, study of the Holocaust should be viewed within a contemporaneous context, so students can begin to comprehend the circumstances that encouraged or discouraged particular actions or events. Frame your approach to specific events and acts of complicity or defiance by considering when and where an act took place; the immediate consequences to oneself and one's family of one's actions; the impact of contemporaneous events; the degree of control the Nazis had on a country or local population; the cultural attitudes of particular native populations historically towards different victim groups; and the availability, effectiveness, and risk of potential hiding places.

Students should be reminded that individuals and groups do not always fit neatly into categories of behavior. The very same people did not always act consistently as "bystanders," "collaborators," "perpetrators," or "rescuers." Individuals and groups often behaved differently depending upon changing events and circumstances. The same person who in 1933 might have stood by and remained uninvolved while witnessing social discrimination of Jews might later have joined up with the SA and become a collaborator or have been moved to dissent vocally or act in defense of Jewish friends and neighbors.

10. BEFORE THEY WERE VICTIMS, THEY WERE PEOPLE.

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. The fact that Jews were the central victims of the Nazi regime should not obscure the vibrant culture and long history of Jews in Europe prior to the Nazi era. By exposing students to some of the cultural contributions and achievements of 2,000 years of European Jewish life, you help them to balance their perception of Jews as victims and to better appreciate the traumatic disruption in Jewish history caused by the Holocaust. Similarly, students may know very little about Gypsies (Roma and Sinti) except for the negative images and derogatory descriptions promulgated by the Nazis. Students would benefit from a broader viewpoint, learning something about Gypsy history and culture as well as understanding the diverse ways of life among different Gypsy groups.

11. Translate statistics into people.

In any study of the Holocaust, the sheer number of victims challenges easy comprehension. You need to show that individual people – families of grandparents, parents, and children – are behind the statistics and to emphasize that within the larger historical narrative is a diversity of personal experience. Precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims, first-person accounts and memoir literature provide students with a way of making meaning out of collective numbers and give individual voices to a collective experience. Although students should be careful about overgeneralizing from first-person accounts, such as those from survivors, journalists, relief workers, bystanders, and liberators, personal accounts help students get beyond statistics and make historical events of the Holocaust more immediate and more personal.

12. BE SENSITIVE TO APPROPRIATE WRITTEN AND AUDIOVISUAL CONTENT.

One of the primary concerns of educators teaching the history of the Holocaust is how to present horrific images in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Graphic material should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the objective of the lesson. You should remind yourself that each student and each class is different and that what seems appropriate for one may not be appropriate for all. Students are essentially a "captive audience." There was enough horror in the Holocaust so there is no need to use horror for horror's sake. When you assault them with images of horror for which they are unprepared, you violate a basic trust: the obligation of a teacher to provide a "safe" learning environment.

The assumption that all students will seek to understand human behavior after being exposed to horrible images is fallacious. Some students may be so appalled by images of brutality and mass murder that they are discouraged from studying the subject further. Others may become fascinated in a more voyeuristic fashion, subordinating further critical analysis of the history to the superficial titillation of looking at images of starvation, disfigurement, and death.

Though they can be powerful tools, shocking images of mass killings and barbarisms should not overwhelm a student's awareness of the broader scope of events within Holocaust history. Try to select images and texts that do not exploit the students' emotional vulnerability or that might be construed as disrespectful of the victims themselves.

13. Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust.

Often, too great an emphasis is placed on the victims of Nazi aggression rather than on the victimizers who forced people to make impossible choices or simply left them with no choice to make. Most students express empathy for victims of mass murder. But it is not uncommon for students to assume that the victims may have done something to justify the actions against them and, thus, to place inappropriate blame on the victims themselves.

There is also a tendency among students to glorify power, even when it is used to kill innocent people. Many teachers indicate that their students are intrigued and, in some cases, intellectually seduced by the symbols of power that pervaded Nazi propaganda (e.g., the swastika and/or Nazi flags, regalia, slogans, rituals, and music). Rather than highlight the trappings of Nazi power, you should ask your students to evaluate how such elements are used by governments (including our own) to build, protect, and mobilize a society. Students should also be encouraged to contemplate how such elements can be abused and manipulated by governments to implement and legitimize acts of terror and even genocide.

In any review of the propaganda used to promote Nazi ideology – Nazi stereotypes of targeted victim groups and the Hitler regime's justifications for persecution and murder – you need to remind your students that just because such policies and beliefs are under discussion in class does not mean they are acceptable. Furthermore, any study of the Holocaust should attempt to portray all individuals, especially the victims and the perpetrators of violence, as human beings who are capable of moral judgment and independent decision-making.

14. Select appropriate learning activities.

Word scrambles, crossword puzzles, and other gimmicky exercises tend not to encourage critical analysis but lead instead to low-level types of thinking and, in the case of Holocaust curricula, trivialize the history. When the effects of a particular activity, even when it is popular with you and your students, runs counter to the rationale for studying the history, then that activity should not be used.

Similarly, activities that encourage students to construct models of killing centers should also be reconsidered because any assignment along this line will almost inevitably end up being simplistic, time-consuming, and tangential to the educational objectives for studying the history of the Holocaust.

Avoid simulation activities: Thankfully, we cannot replicate the living situation and the "choicelss choices" faced by people in ghettos, trains, concentration camps and death camps — and we shouldn't try. Also, don't ask students, "What would you have done?" Choosing heroic acts of self-sacrifice, or moral acts of rescue, are simple in a classroom, but far more difficult to make in real life.

Thought-provoking learning activities are preferred, but, even here, there are pitfalls to avoid. In studying complex human behavior, many 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 at the conclusion of the activity that they now know what it was like during the Holocaust. Holocaust survivors and eyewitnesses are among the first to indicate the grave difficulty of finding words to describe their experiences. It is virtually impossible to simulate accurately what it was like to live on a daily basis with fear, hunger, disease, unfathomable loss, and the unrelenting threat of abject brutality and death.

An additional problem with trying to simulate situations from the Holocaust is that complex events and actions are oversimplified, and students are left with a skewed view of history. Because there are numerous primary source accounts, both written and visual, as well as survivors and eyewitnesses who can describe actual choices faced and made by individuals, groups, and nations during this period, you should draw upon these resources and refrain from simulation games that lead to a trivialization of the subject matter.

Rather than use simulation activities that attempt to re-create situations from the Holocaust, teachers can, through the use of reflective writing assignments or in-class discussion, ask students to empathize with the experiences of those who lived through the Holocaust era. Students can be encouraged to explore varying aspects of human behavior, such as fear, scapegoating, conflict resolution, and difficult decision-making or to consider various perspectives on a particular event or historical experience.

15. Reinforce the objectives of your lesson plan.

As in all teaching situations, the opening and closing lessons are critically important. A strong opening should serve to dispel misinformation students may have prior to studying the Holocaust. It should set a reflective tone, move students from passive to active learning, indicate to students that their ideas and opinions matter, and establish that this history has multiple ramifications for them as individuals and as members of society as a whole.

Your closing lesson should encourage further examination of Holocaust history, literature, and art. A strong closing should emphasize synthesis by encouraging students to connect this history to other world events and to the world they live in today. Students should be encouraged to reflect on what they have learned and to consider what this study means to them personally and as citizens of a democracy.



GENERAL RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION TOPICS ON THE NAZI HOLOCAUST 1933-1945

Research

Using the Internet and other resources, research and respond to the following either in writing or discussion groups:

1. Look up the definition of the Holocaust on the United States Holocaust Museum's website (www.ushmm.org). What do you notice about this definition that explains why the Jewish culture was the focus of the Nazi Holocaust from 1933-1945? What information does the definition give about other victims of the Holocaust?

2. Research the history of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe during the years 1928-1933, right before the Nazi party came into power and the Holocaust began. Which countries had the largest Jewish population and were later affected by the Nazi regime?

3. What was life like for Jewish populations before the Holocaust? Describe specifically how people led their daily lives i.e. school, work, play, and religious activities.

4. Beginning in 1933, the Nazis began burning prayer books, books by Jewish writers, along with any other books that they felt contradicted or would corrupt the Nazi racial ideology. What was the significance of book burning, and how did it foreshadow the events to come?

5. Research the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. How did these laws possibly strengthen and incite antisemitic attitudes? Remember the distinction between the Nuremberg Laws and the Nuremberg trials.

6. Research the term antisemitism. What are its origins? How did antisemitism encourage Nazi propaganda?

7. What other groups besides Jews were targeted by the Nazis? Do any of these groups still suffer from prejudice? If so, who are they, and in what ways do they continue to be subjected to prejudice?

8. What is the origin of the term ghetto? What is meant by the term ghetto in reference to the Holocaust? Describe the various purposes behind forcing the Jewish people into these ghettos.

126 වේණි

9. It has been said that "although not all the victims were Jews, all Jews were victims." After reading about the events of the Holocaust, the ghettos, as well as the concentration camps and death camps, discuss this statement.

10. Researching the Holocaust of 1933-1945, what does it say about other victims of the Holocaust?

11. Research the Olympic Games of 1936. Should America have taken part in the games? How did Jesse Owens' victory in the 1936 Olympics symbolize victory over Nazi racism?

12. What was *Kristallnacht*? What is the historical background on how the events occurred? How did the Nazi police react during the two days of *Kristallnacht*? What did *Kristallnacht* make clear for German Jews? Why do the Germans now call it the November pogroms?

13. Why were the Jewish people required to wear a yellow badge or star? Research the use of badges and labels by the Nazis. Why would the Jewish people see this as a dehumanizing experience? And why did one Jewish journalist tell his people, "Wear it with pride." How can your attitude toward such dehumanization become a means of spiritual resistance?

14. During the Holocaust, other groups such as political dissidents and Gypsies, were also identified with assigned badges. Research this identification process and write a brief paper to explain what groups were singled out and why. Describe the badges each group had to wear.

15. Research the MS *St. Louis*. How does the fate of the ship mirror the way most of the world reacted to saving the Jewish people? How does the world's reaction to the *St. Louis* show the importance of the often phrased theme of Never Again: What You Do Matters?

16. Why didn't most of the German Jews flee in the early years when they could? How was immigration to the United States possible yet impossible for Jewish families in Germany between the years 1936-1941?

17. What was the largest ghetto and where was it located? List five significant facts about this ghetto that reflect your knowledge of ghetto life during the Holocaust.

18. The Wannsee Conference meeting was held on January 20, 1942. Research who attended that conference. Who were these German State and Nazi officials? How many officials were there and what where their educational and professional backgrounds? Why is it important to know this background information? Why were they chosen to attend? Explain how the term "Final Solution" came into being at this conference.

19. Research the Evian Conference of 1938 and the Bermuda Conference of 1943. What generalizations can you make based on the results of these conferences?

20. Define the term genocide. Who coined the term? What are its roots? In 1948, the Genocide Convention was adopted by the United Nations and defined specific aspects of Nazi persecutions to be crimes. List five aspects of Nazi persecutions that were defined as crimes, and give specific instances of each.

21. Where is Yad Vashem? Why was this institution established? Why is it so important to the study, and the history, of the Holocaust? Research the Hebrew term *Yad Vashem*. What does it mean?

22. Elie Wiesel received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1986. Research this famous author/ survivor of the Holocaust. For what major literary work is he best known?

23. Research the various levels of prisoner-type camps the Nazis devised. Specifically, research the differences between a ghetto, a work/labor camp, a transit camp, a concentration camp, and, finally, a death camp. There were six major death camps. Locate them and name each camp.

PART X

SOURCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

WEBOGRAPHY

www.annefrank.com

Anne Frank On-line. This site is dedicated to everything about Anne Frank; her biography, photos, memoirs, virtual tour of the Anne Frank house and lesson ideas for educators and students

www.adl.org

Anti-Defamation League, an organization founded in 1913 to fight antisemitism through programs and services that counteract hatred, prejudice and bigotry. The mission of the ADL is "to stop the defamation of Jewish people, to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike." Many educational resources can be found on this site by reviewing and visiting the various links noted; particularly The Hidden Child Foundation

www.ahoinfo.org/

The Association of Holocaust Organizations was established in 1985 to serve as a network of organizations and individuals for the advancement of Holocaust programming, awareness, education and research.

www.chgs.umn.edu/

The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies was established by the University of Minnesota in the College of Liberal Arts in 1997. This extensive Web site serves as a resource for teaching and informing the public about the Holocaust and contemporary genocide.

www.coe.fau.edu/CentersAndPrograms/CHHRE

The Center for Holocaust and Human Rights Education (CHHRE) at Florida Atlantic University offers training and resources to teachers involved in Holocaust and genocide education. Many programs including: scholar lectures, teacher seminars and institutes, film programs and educational curricula on the history of the Holocaust

www.centropa.org/

Centropa. An Interactive Database of Jewish Memory "Where Jewish History Has A Name, A Face, A Story". This program has a site with many links to follow which offer historical information, video testimonies and information on applying to go to their various summer seminars held each year for teachers.

www.echoesandreflections.org/

Echoes and Reflections: A HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAM that includes everything educators need to teach the complex issues of the Holocaust to 21st century students. A comprehensive curriculum and extensive teacher training program available in Israel and all over the United States.

www.elholocausto.org/

El Holocausto is a comprehensive Spanish-language site covering the history of the Holocaust and educational resources as well.

www.facinghistory.org

Facing History and Ourselves Homepage. Facing History and Ourselves is a national educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. Educational resources and books and films are available.

www.flholocausteducationtaskforce.org/

Florida Department of Education Task Force on Holocaust Education. Lesson Plan Resources, Film Resources, and Florida statute for Mandate to Teach The Holocaust plus key listing of Florida Teaching institutes. All the information a Florida teacher needs for his/her school district needs.

www.flholocaustmuseum.org

Florida Holocaust Museum. Features a vast collection of works of art, photographs and historical artifacts as well as excellent educational materials and hosts a summer Institute for teachers. The programs at the Museum include: educational exhibits, teacher seminars throughout the year, teaching trunks and survivor testimonies.

http://www.gfh.org.il/eng/

The Ghetto Fighter's House Museum in Israel focuses on lessons and projects of Jewish Resistance during the Holocaust. Many ideas, projects and lessons can be found on this website on Physical and Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust.

www.jewishpartisans.org/

Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation. A major resource exploring those who stood up to Nazi Tyranny and saved lives of thousands of Jews. The most comprehensive on line lesson plans on the subject of the Jewish partisans and especially on Women Partisans are available as well as teacher trainings.

www.historychannel.com

History Channel - Good resources for Holocaust film documentaries that can be used in 60 -minute segments for classroom use and a basis for further research.

www.hdec.org

The Holocaust Documentation & Education Center. Largest collection Center in Florida for information on survivor documentation. The Holocaust Documentation Center has many outreach programs including: monthly library lectures and readings by Holocaust survivors, year round programs for community and teachers and staff, essay writing contests, film presentations and an annual summer teaching institute

www.holocaustresources.org/

Holocaust Education Resource Council (HERC) provides the following resources for educators, students, and the community: educational programs and curricula Teacher training for educators, Holocaust Teaching Trunks, Speakers Bureau of survivors, witnesses, liberators, second generation online resources and tools, public programs, local writing and art contest, newsletter support and consultation for educators

www.holocaustmemorialmiamibeach.org

Holocaust Memorial Miami Beach. A unique outdoor memorial and educational site for resource for History of the Holocaust, many on site programs, outreach for cultural and educational programs, and guided student/teacher on site visitations as well as a Wall of Remembrance. The Memorial hosts a unique Holocaust Education Week program annually and hosts Kristallnacht and Yom Hashoah Programs every year on site.

www.holocaustedu.org/

The Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center of Florida. This Center was built by people who believed in the power of knowledge. It focuses on guided tours, lesson plans, year round cultural programs, scholar visits and a summer teaching institute.

www.holocaustmuseumswfl.org/

The Holocaust Museum & Education Center of Southwest Florida. To promote respect and understanding by teaching the history and lessons of the Holocaust. Lesson plans for teachers, Institutes and guided tours of the exhibits in the Museum as well as a summer teaching institute are offered on a daily basis.

www.hrusa.org

Human Rights USA suggests ideas and tools for advocating and protecting human rights. Encourages community- based actions and student guided projects.

socialsciences.dadeschools.net/

Miami-Dade County Public Schools Department of Social Sciences is a major Resource for Holocaust Education Study Guides and for Florida Standards on Teaching the Holocaust.

www.jewishmuseum.org.pl/en

Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Newest major museum on the history of Polish Jews. The Research and Publications Department documents, researches and disseminates knowledge about the history of Polish Jews. The Education Department offers guided tours and lesson plans.

www.mjhnyc.org

Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. The Museum honors those who died by celebrating their lives — cherishing the traditions that they embraced, examining their achievements and faith, and affirming the vibrant worldwide Jewish community that is their legacy today. New generations are taught how to recognize and fight contemporary instances of injustice and oppression.

www.remember.org

Remember.org . Homepage of the Cybrary of the Holocaust. The Cybrary is a web site on the Holocaust. It contains a collection of Encyclopedic information, answers to frequently asked questions, survivor testimony, transcripts of Nazi speeches and official documents, artifact photos, historical photos, artwork, poetry, books written by survivors.

www.wiesenthal.com

The Simon Wiesenthal Center Homepage. Headquartered in Los Angeles, the Simon Wiesenthal Center is an international center for Holocaust remembrance, and the defense of human rights and the Jewish people. Contains answers to thirty-six frequently asked questions about the Holocaust, biographies of children who were hidden in the Holocaust and many other valuable educational resources

www.socialstudies.com

Social Studies School Service. An on-line catalog of Holocaust videos and resources. Teachers and students will find this site user friendly from which to order materials including films and memoirs

www.ushmm.org

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Includes information about: background history of the Holocaust and of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum; how to plan a visit to the museum; community programs, films, lectures, conferences for educators, as well as guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust a videography for teachers, and answers to frequently asked questions about the Holocaust.

www.education.miami.edu/holocaust

University of Miami School of Education and Human Development Holocaust Institute. Largest Teacher Holocaust Training Institute in South Florida. Film Programs, Curriculum Resources and year round cultural programs hosting major scholars of the Holocaust are held in the Miami area with a following of hundreds of community guests to all programs. sfi.usc.edu

USC Shoah Foundation. Survivors of the Shoah: The Visual History Foundation created by Steven Spielberg has recorded more than 50,000 videotaped interviews with Holocaust survivors. These are being recorded electronically for computer d CD-ROMs to be distributed for museums and other Holocaust education sites. This site also has lesson plans and access to the unique iWITNESS program

www.yadvashem.org.il

Yad Vashem is the World Center for Holocaust Research, Education, Documentation and research. It includes: Educational Materials, Database of Shoah Victims' Names, Visiting the Holocaust History Museum, testimonies about the Righteous Among the Nations, extensive teacher training seminars every month for teachers from all over the world and a summer international Holocaust conference.

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