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Holocaust Remembered

CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST



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The youngest Holocaust victims

By Lilly Filler

Children are voiceless about their environment, about war or violence. And yet the most poignant visual of war and destruction are the children. This issue is devoted to our youngest victims, our children. More than 1.5 million children were murdered in the Holocaust; only 150,000 children survived.



Filler

Children who were 17 years old or younger and who lived in or had lived in Eastern Europe by 1945 are considered child survivors. Fewer

than 3 percent of the entire community of survivors were children. Other than medical experimentation, the Nazis had no use for babies, toddlers or young children. A child survivor stated, "My war started after the war."

Children who had been sent to foster homes, orphanages, or placed with friends "met" their parent(s) after the war, but felt as if their lives of relative safety were now endangered. Children who lived in the forests, sewers, in attics or basements had to acclimate to a totally different norm.

Interestingly, 70-75 percent of all children who survived had at least one



THE STATE FILE PHOTO

parent survive, but how were the parenting skills of that surviving parent? What was the parent's mental status, and how did the parent and child handle the trauma they'd experienced?

One child survivor described her situation as a "family of strangers." Stories of childhood trauma, suicide and drug and alcohol abuse abound amongst the child survivors.

As the world tried to do its best to make the situation better, the children were traumatized again, meeting new families, traveling to all parts of the world, learning new languages and, in many cases, learning what it meant to be Jewish. However, many

children relied on their youthful resilience to put the trauma behind them and live productive lives.

It is fitting that this edition is sponsored by Palmetto Health Children's Hospital. This hospital caters to the children through its state-of-the-art physical facilities, its trained professional staff, its high-tech medical advances and its holistic philosophy. The child and the family are of utmost importance and take top priority in the problem-solving and delivering of services.

Thank you to Palmetto Health Children's Hospital, the administration, staff, and medical personnel for caring for our most prized possessions –

our children – in their physical, mental, emotional and social health.

This is the fourth edition of Holocaust Remembered and the first devoted to the children of the Holocaust. This supplement is but one example of the multiple objectives of the Columbia Holocaust Education Commission. This year, the supplement will be distributed to three additional markets outside of Columbia: Myrtle Beach, Hilton Head and Beaufort, and Rock Hill. We are thrilled to be able to share our stories with these communities and hope that they will be interested in contributing to this publication next year.

The Columbia Holocaust Education Commission is a volunteer organization created from the remaining funds from the Holocaust Memorial, dedicated on June 6, 2001, in downtown Columbia. The Commission funds grants for K-12 educators, provides a speakers bureau of knowledgeable Holocaust speakers and created a museum-quality "Holocaust Remembered" exhibit, shown at McKissick Museum this year from Jan. 9 through April 8. It will be at the Katie and Irwin Kahn Jewish Community Center from April 10 through May 1. An identical portable exhibit is available for loan. If interested in securing a speaker or borrowing the exhibit, please contact Cheryl Nail at cheryln@jewishcolumbia.org or 803-787-2023, ext. 211, or visit the website www.columbiaholocausteducation.org.

Columbia Holocaust Education Commission

www.columbiaholocausteducation.org

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On the cover

Child survivors and victims of the Holocaust.
Photos from AP, USHMM and Yad Vashem.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY REBEKAH LEWIS HALL

Through the eyes of a child

*Only I never saw another butterfly.
That butterfly was the last one.
Butterflies don't live in here,
In the ghetto.*

PAVEL FRIEDMANN

Jan. 7, 1921-Sept. 29, 1944; deported to Terezin Concentration Camp in 1942 and died in Auschwitz in 1944

By Charles D. Beaman Jr.

No one in a Jewish family was safe from the cruelty of the Nazis in Germany during World War II, no matter how young.

As many as 1.5 million children were murdered. Some were herded from ghettos onto trains and delivered to their graves if they looked “unproductive.” The older and able-bodied found themselves worked to death. Others were the victims of horrific medical experiments. We shudder to imagine the terror these children felt being shuffled through



Beaman

the gates of hell into concentration camps under the false promise “Work Sets You Free.”

In the midst of their cold gray toil, children escaped through art. Pictures and poems were found after the war, expressing the reality they experienced. They not only depicted their desperate surroundings, but also illustrated the hope they held inside. Like a butterfly, they saw themselves one day emerging from a dark cocoon and flying away. Some children scratched the shape of butterflies into prison walls with their bare hands. As they faced an uncertain future, these children still saw hope in their mind's eye.

The experience of children of the Holocaust stands in stark contrast to the experience of children we serve today at Palmetto Health Children's Hospital.

“Children's Hospital is a place of hope,” says senior medical director of Children's Hospital, R. Caughman Taylor, M.D. “Step inside and



YAD VASHEM

Hungarian Jews deemed unfit for work wait in a grove near the gas chamber prior to extermination in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

you're immersed in color. It's somewhere we want children to feel like they belong. Every room has kid-friendly features built in to nurture a child's spirit. Family members can stay close by in areas specially designed for them.

“To provide the best medical care, we involve the child's family. This teamwork builds a supportive relationship for the child's entire well-being. We include the family in every aspect of care – totally unlike what children endured during the Holocaust when families were separated. Our holistic approach also extends beyond hospital walls. When a child goes home, the family can rely on community partnerships that help with continued healing.”

In 1983, a group of 35 pediatricians, hospital leaders and community volunteers in Columbia laid the foundation for Children's Hospital. Today, a skilled team of 350 pediatric professionals, all located under one roof, con-

tinues working toward one goal: to provide coordinated, compassionate care to South Carolina's sick and injured children. We also care for children with a suspicion of abuse or neglect and help remove them from dangerous situations.

We do our best to see children's medical care through their eyes. Children are not little adults. Their bodies and spirits need a different type of care, shaped and sized especially for them.

We embrace each unique child. A child's job is to play. By seeing him or her as a child first and a patient second, we encourage play. Coloring and drawing are popular fun activities. The art these children create may show a big needle, often with a big kiss right alongside.

Children of the Holocaust and those at Children's Hospital are separated by time and history. They may not seem to have much in common. Yet their art proves otherwise. It

transcends the distance between them. They all draw their surroundings. They also draw images of courage and hope, like butterflies and kisses.

As a parent, I believe children are a gift from God. We don't own them. They are entrusted to us to raise and to provide for their well-being. The holy writings of King Solomon give us parental guidance: “Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it” (Proverbs 22:6).

On behalf of the 15,000 team members, physicians and volunteers at Palmetto Health, we are honored to join with others to educate the public about the horrors of the Holocaust genocide of children. As a child of God, I believe people of all faiths have a duty to learn from this dark past and work together to teach our children and keep them safe, healthy and loved – today and in the future.

The loss of humanity's innocence

By Federica Clementi

An 8-year-old Jewish boy marches, hands up over his head, while SS man Josef Blösche points a sub-machine gun at him after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943.

Naked children run screaming in pain and terror moments after South Vietnamese planes have dropped napalm bombs on their village of Trang Bang.

A vulture patiently awaits by the bony body of an African toddler about to die of hunger in 1993 famine-ravaged Sudan.

The cadaverous body of 5-year-old Omran Daqneesh is pulled out alive, in utter shock, from under piles of rubble after an air-attack pulverized his apartment building in Aleppo in August 2016.

No image better than the one of a child in the midst of war awakes in us awareness of and indignation at the horrors of which human aggressiveness is capable. Yet the fate of children in war is also the least considered, studied, and understood.

Children are often voiceless presences in history: either because they are too little to talk, or because, even when they are old enough to articulate their thoughts, they are not taken by the adults as legitimate speakers of history. Children are seen as unreliable, their grasp of the historical circumstances is supposedly limited; in fact, moral and political philosophies still struggle with the question of whether or not children are moral subjects.

After the Holocaust, an enormous amount of artifacts by children was found everywhere in Europe: drawings, poems, diaries, journals composed by children in hiding, imprisoned in the ghettos, dying in the concentration camps. These works testify to the unimaginable suffering endured by child victims. These historical traces of the dramas and traumas of the youngest among us reach out through time and space to the adults who, have the power to shape communal, national, global destinies. It might be transformative for our society to heed them.

Women and children during the Holocaust

The fate of young children and their mothers is never so tightly knitted together as in times of war. Historian and filmmaker Daniel Goldhagen correctly writes that "Women's



1944 FILE PHOTO - YAD VASHEM PHOTO ARCHIVE VIA AP

A transport of Jews from Carpatho-Ruthenia, a region annexed in 1939 to Hungary from Czechoslovakia, arrives at Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland in May 1944.

and children's particularity cannot rightly be ignored by subsuming them under the general category of victims, or by treating them as no different than men." And this is especially the case in genocide as scholar Mary Felstiner pointed out, "Genocide is the act of putting women and children first." We must treat women and children as a distinct group of victims: especially since they are seen as such by the perpetrators themselves.

During the Holocaust, women who entered the concentration camps pregnant or with children were automatically selected for the gas chambers, regardless of their ability

to work (a default fate spared to men). Joseph Mengele, known as the "Angel of Death" at Auschwitz-Birkenau, is reported to have said: "[W]hen a Jewish child is born, or when a woman comes to the camp with a child already, I don't know what to do with the child... It would not be humanitarian to send a child to the ovens without permitting the mother to be there to witness the child's death. That is why I send the mother and the child to the gas ovens together."

At his Nuremberg trial, Rudolf Höss, ruthless Kommandant of Auschwitz for almost five years, was interrogated about the Nazi

measures that brought about the death of 1.5 million children: "So a child of three or four years old was dangerous to the German people?" a lawyer asked him; Höss simply replied, "Yes."

The Nazis even built a specific concentration camp, Ravensbrück, about 55 miles north of Berlin, designated exclusively for women (among whom was Gemma LaGuardia Gluck, sister of New York City Mayor Fiorello) and, therefore, children.

The situations in which Jewish children found themselves during World War II in Europe are innumerable: some went into hiding with their parents, some were sent to safe-

ty abroad by their parents whom they never saw again, some survived or perished with their parents in the ghettos, some were used for “medical” experimentation, some had to pretend to be Christian and erase their Jewish identity, sometimes forever, in order to live. Some children saw their parents selected for death in the concentration camps, some were killed in front of their parents, and some still were shoved into the ovens by their own fathers working in the Sonderkommando, a special unit assigned to the task of disposing of the corpses from the gas chambers.

Everything, from lives to possessions to psyches, was destroyed in the genocide. Childhood itself was shattered. As Geoffrey Hartman put it: “Before Auschwitz we were children in our imagination of evil; after Auschwitz we are no longer children.”

Loss of human innocence

Genocide does not only target children for murder as the essential root of a group’s future generation, it also aims at destroying the children’s sense of personal identity and psychological well-being. In socially and psychologically healthy circumstances, children look at the adults around them as sites of safety, reliability and protection. Perhaps what is poetically called “the innocence of childhood” is but the privilege of children to perceive the world as a place not yet mined by betrayal and mortal danger. War and genocide leave no room for innocence.

The child’s world is regulated by a basic principle of justice: good is rewarded, evil punished. G. K. Chesterton idealistically said that “children are innocent and love justice, while most of us are wicked and naturally prefer mercy.” But what if justice is turned on its head? What if the child inhabits a reality in which any logical connection between crime and punishment is lost; in which one is punished for no comprehensible reason; and in which, domestic reality appears to defy the comforting assumptions that the home is a haven and adults know best?

All the ethical principles that parents instill in their children in times of peace were invalidated and reversed by the war and the Holocaust. In order to survive and protect those around them, children had to keep secrets, lie, break the laws, steal, and, in the case of the young Resistance fighters, kill. Children shared every bit of the experience of discrimination, humiliation, terror and ultimately death, with the adults. Understanding the fate of child victims of genocide does not teach us anything about childhood, but it is a lesson



1943 AP FILE PHOTO

A German officer rounds up residents of the Warsaw ghetto before its destruction in 1943.

about adulthood: about our ethical failures and responsibilities.

Of the overall Jewish population of Europe during the Holocaust the highest death rate was that of children. Around 92 percent of Europe’s Jewish children were murdered. In the Łódź Ghetto alone, 95 percent of children died. At war’s end, only 5,000 Jewish children remained alive in all of Poland.

Out of the Łódź Ghetto, one of several voices of murdered children still reaches us. It comes in the form of a poem written in 1943 by 13-year-old Abramek Koplowicz (translated by Sarah Lawson and Małgorzata Koraszewska):

*When I am twenty years of age,
I will burst forth from this cage
And begin to see our splendid Earth
For the first time since my birth!
In my motorized bird I’ll soar so high
Above the world, up in the sky,
Over rivers and the seas,
With such stupefying ease,
With my brother wind and sister cloud, I’ll
Marvel at the Euphrates and the Nile;
The goddess Isis ruled the land that links
The Pyramids and the massive Sphinx.
I will glide above Niagara Falls,
And sunbathe where the Sahara calls;
If I want to escape the scorching heat,
I will fly up north to an Arctic retreat.
I will top the cloudy peaks of Tibetan fame
And survey the fabled land whence the Magi
came.*

*From the Island of Kangaroos
I’ll take my time and cruise*



1944 FILE PHOTO - YAD VASHEM PHOTO ARCHIVE VIA AP

Jews evicted from their homes march through the streets of Koermend, Hungary, on their way to the ghetto in 1944.

*To the ruins of Pompeii
At the edge of Naples Bay,
I’ll continue to the Holy Land, then seek
The home of Homer, the celebrated Greek.
More and more astonished will I grow
At the beauty of the Earth below.
In all my travelling I’ll be twinned
With my siblings, cloud and wind.*

A year later, Abramek was gassed in Auschwitz.

What is the Holocaust?

As defined in 1979 by the President’s Commission on the Holocaust:

“The Holocaust was the systematic bureaucratic annihilation of 6 million Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators as a central act of state during the Second World War. It was a crime unique in the annals of human history, different not only in the quantity of violence – the sheer numbers killed – but in its manner and purpose as a mass criminal enterprise organized by the state against defenseless civilian populations. The decision to kill every Jew everywhere in Europe: the definition of Jew as target for death transcended all boundaries ...

“The concept of annihilation of an entire people, as distinguished from their subjugation, was unprecedented; never before in human history had genocide been an all-pervasive government policy unaffected by territorial or economic advantage and unchecked by moral or religious constraints ...

“The Holocaust was not simply a throwback to medieval torture or archaic barbarism, but a thoroughly modern expression of bureaucratic organization, industrial management, scientific achievement, and technological sophistication. The entire apparatus of the German bureaucracy was marshalled in the service of the extermination process ...

“The Holocaust stands as a tragedy for Europe, for Western Civilization, and for all the world. We must remember the facts of the Holocaust, and work to understand these facts.”

Anne Frank and her diary

CHILD HOLOCAUST VICTIM

By Doyle Stevick

If there is a single face that has come to represent the victims of the Holocaust, it is Annelies Marie Frank, or as we know her, Anne Frank. Her brief life and powerful voice have echoed around the world. Born in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1929, Anne was 4 when the Nazis took control of Germany. Through her entire life, she knew only a Europe where Hitler's forces threatened the very existence of the Jewish people.

Compelled to leave their homeland for good, the Frank family moved to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, imagining they would be safe from persecution there. But the threat expanded more quickly than their opportunities to escape it. Though the U.S. knew the threat the Nazis posed to German and other European Jews, strict caps on Jewish immigration were maintained and there was little support for admitting Jewish refugees like Anne. Even though her father, Otto, had worked a summer at the Macy's Department Store in New York City, the family was unable to escape Europe to the U.S.

Anne and her family went into hiding in a secret annex at Otto's place of business in 1942, and evaded detection for about two years with the aid of a secretary and others. Here, Anne wrote her famous diary, or at least, its first draft. In March 1944, Anne heard a member of the Dutch government in exile say he wanted to preserve a record of the war. She realized her diary could be published. She then edited and rewrote the original with an eye to publication. When the family was discovered, Anne's writing was scattered and collected by Miep Gies.

The Nazis discovered the hiding place, and it was reasonably assumed that they had received a tip. But a new study from the Anne Frank House suggests that there may be another expla-



German Jewish refugees Otto Frank, third left, and daughter Anne, third right, walk among guests after the wedding of Miep Santrouschitz and Jan Geis on July 17, 1941, in Amsterdam.



Otto Frank with daughters Margot, left, and Anne.



Anne Frank, sitting at the back right table and wearing a white dress, is shown in the sixth-year class at the Montessori School in Amsterdam.

nation. It is important to remember that it was often difficult after years of war to get enough to eat in a time of rationing. Consistently and furtively getting enough food for an additional eight people was much more challenging still. The building containing their hiding place was also a site of

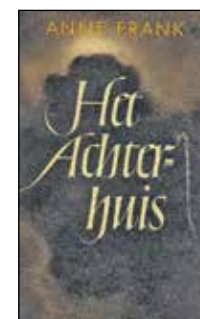
ration-card fraud. The fraud or other illegal work may have led to the raid.

Anne's diary ends abruptly when she was captured, but we know that her family was on the last train from the Dutch transit camp Westerbork sent to Auschwitz, and Anne, now 15, was one of the youngest survivors of that trans-

port. Anne and her sister Margot were relocated to Bergen-Belsen, where they died in 1945, just months before the camp was liberated. Their mother remained at Auschwitz, where she starved to death on January 6th, exactly three weeks before it was liberated. Otto had already been liberated when



One of the final photos taken of Anne Frank.



Anne Frank's diary – originally titled “Het Achterhuis,” or “The Secret” – first appeared in print June 25, 1947.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DOYLE STEVICK

his daughters perished in the camps.

While her life was cut short, Anne's writings have lived on. Otto returned to Amsterdam, and once he learned that his family had all perished, Miep gave him the pages she gathered from the Annex. Otto combined parts of the original diary and the edited version, and omitting the pages that acknowledged the changes she experienced going through puberty in hiding.

The published versions of the diary now generally include these omitted pages, but still blend her original and rewritten versions. For these reasons, we have never read the version that Anne herself intended us to see. Meanwhile, the theater and cinema versions of her story may overshadow her own writing. But to understand Anne and her experience, there is no substitute for reading – or re-reading – her own words, in the extraordinary voice of an ordinary girl.

Elie Wiesel: An ethical compass

CHILD HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

By Lilly Filler

We were very lucky here in Columbia, South Carolina. Elie Wiesel was in our capitol city twice: at Columbia College in 1986 and again at the University of South Carolina in 2006.

I had the opportunity to meet Mr. Wiesel when he was the Solomon-Tenenbaum Guest Lecturer at USC. I was fortunate to have a few moments with him during a dinner preceding the lecture. He was a physically small man, soft-spoken, with sad but understanding eyes. He received my small gifts, mementos of the Columbia Holocaust Memorial, with graciousness, and he thanked me. Imagine, Elie Wiesel thanking me!

He was an icon to me, a man who transcended the evils of the Holocaust, a man who turned his personal sorrows and tragedies into meaningful lessons to the world, a man who wanted the world a better place.

Wiesel, arguably the most famous child survivor of the Holocaust, understood the precious price of life, of the destruction that man can invoke, and of the need to continue to speak out against injustice and inhumanity. He gently spoke of tolerance, of diversity, of man's responsibility to all mankind and of love and understanding. At that visit, in 2006 at the Koger Center for the Arts, the packed auditorium listened and strained to hear his words, his ideas, and his wisdom.

Wiesel was born in Sighet, Romania on Sept. 30, 1928, to Jewish parents. He had three sisters – two older and one younger. When he was 15 years old, he and his father were deported to Buchenwald, and his sisters and mother to Auschwitz. The two older sisters survived; his mother and younger sister were murdered. Wiesel lamented that he felt the strong need to survive so that his father would survive, but only a few weeks before liberation, his father died.



1945 AP FILE PHOTO

Clockwise from top, Elie Wiesel in his bunk at Buchenwald a few days after U.S. troops liberated the camp in 1945; with then-President Barack Obama in 2009 at Buchenwald; and in 2012 at his New York office.



The horrors and unjust behaviors witnessed by the boy Wiesel were memories that the man Wiesel transported into his many writings and books.

After the war, Wiesel studied in France and became a writer and journalist. He wrote in French and in Hebrew, contributing to newspapers. For 10 years after his liberation from Buchenwald in April 1945, he refused to talk or write about his concentration camp experiences, but during an interview with the distinguished French writer Francois Mauriac, he was finally persuaded to write about his experi-

ences in the death camp. He has since written over 40 books, and probably his most acclaimed was "Night" ("La Nuit"), which was translated into 30 languages. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

But to me, his contribution to mankind was his uncanny ability to put into common, simple words the significance of memory, of remembrance, and of empathy. His quotes are profound, his words are a great moral voice, and his vision exact.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter issued Executive Order No. 12093, establishing the President's Commis-

sion on the Holocaust and appointing Wiesel, Auschwitz survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate, the chairman of the Commission. Writing to President Carter, Wiesel stated:

"We will accomplish a mission that the victims have assigned to us: collect memories and tears, fragments of fire and sorrow, tales of despair and defiance and names – above all – names. What we all have in common is an obsession not to betray the dead we left behind or who left us behind. They were killed once. They must not be killed again through forgetfulness."

Wiesel continues to stress in his comments to President Carter: "The most vital lesson to be drawn from the Holocaust era is that Auschwitz was possible because the enemy of the Jewish people and of mankind – and it is always the same enemy – succeeded in dividing, in separating, in splitting human society, nation against nation, Christian against Jew, young against old. And not enough people cared. In Germany and other occupied countries, most spectators chose not to interfere with the killers; in other lands, too, many persons chose to remain neutral. As a result, the killers killed, the victims died, and the world remained neutral."

Wiesel served for six years as the founding chairman of the governing council that would oversee the development of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Wiesel died July 2, 2016, and the world mourned. He was not a political figure, but an ethical compass. Hearing of his death, then-President Barack Obama stated:

"Elie Wiesel was one of the great moral voices of our time, and in many ways, the conscience of the world. ... Elie was not just the world's most prominent Holocaust survivor; he was a living memorial. After we walked together among the barbed wire and guard towers of Buchenwald where he was held as a teenager and where his father perished, Elie spoke words I've never forgotten: 'Memory has become a sacred duty of all people of goodwill.' Upholding that sacred duty was Elie's life. Along with his beloved wife Marion (son Shlomo) and the foundation that bears his name, he raised his voice, not just against anti-Semitism, but against hatred, bigotry and intolerance in all forms. He implored each of us, as nations and as human beings, to do the same, to see ourselves in each other and to make real that pledge of 'never again.'"

Wiesel will be greatly missed by us all – all mankind and the world.

The Kindertransport: A survival story

ANNE FISCHER HEINEMAN'S STORY

By Justin Heineman

Imagine being 13 years old and journeying alone to flee the only country you ever knew with just \$10 to your name. This is the story of my grandmother, Anne Fischer Heineman.

Anne was born Nov. 7, 1925, in Germany to Oskar and Gertrude Fischer. The Fischers were an upper-middle-class family living in the western Berlin suburb of Charlottenburg. Anne and her family lived an ordinary life until

August 1934, when Hitler came to power.

Although it became clear that Germany was no longer a welcoming place for Jews, an already

difficult decision to leave was made more difficult by the many obstacles to emigration. The few countries that admitted Jews attached strict conditions, and by 1938, the Nazis had confiscated Jews' passports. Fortunately, Anne's parents had obtained a study-abroad visa for Anne's older brother, Rolf, shortly after Hitler came to power, and Rolf was safe in England.

On Nov. 9, 1938, the night known as Kristallnacht, Nazis took to the streets torching synagogues, vandalizing Jewish homes, schools and businesses, and killing close to 100 Jews. Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the Fischers applied to the German Jewish Family Agency to send Anne on the next available Kindertransport to England. The Kindertransport was a British-organized effort that rescued nearly 10,000 predominantly Jewish children just before the outbreak of the war by transporting them to England and placing them with British families or organizations. Anne, then, was on the second Kindertransport



Anne Fischer and Warner Heineman on their wedding day, outside the courthouse in Santa Barbara, California.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JUSTIN HEINEMAN

from Germany in late November 1938.

At the train station before departing Germany, Anne wore a sign around her neck identifying her foster family, the Arreggers of Bromley. The Nazis permitted Anne to bring just 10 marks, nine of which went to the customs agent who greeted her before boarding the ship to England. After arriving, Anne met her "new" family. Anne knew no English, but Rolf helped interpret. While living with the Arreggers, Anne learned to speak English and attended

a private high school.

Meanwhile, Anne's parents remained in Germany, and the situation was getting increasingly dire. Rolf had a friend who knew a representative in the House of Commons. He reached out to this representative, and by the end of 1939, visas were approved for Oskar and Gertrude. The Fischers arrived with little in their pockets and no knowledge of English. After a short stay with Rolf, they rented a home and began earning a living by operating a



ABOVE: After the war, Anne, fourth from left, served as an Allied Civilian Employee, translating Nazi documents from German to English for the U.S. military. LEFT: Anne more recently.



boarding house. Anne and Rolf moved in with them to help support the family.

The family's unification was short-lived. British tribunals began placing non-citizens in internment camps. Though the tribunal initially ruled that the Fischers would not be interned, this was reversed, and the entire family was transported to the Isle of Man. They lived in gender-separated camps for a year. Upon their release, the Fischers faced new dangers, including pervasive German bombings. Anne herself experienced two close calls.

But Anne persevered. During 1943 and 1944, Anne attended the Girls Training Corps Officer Training School. After the war, Anne became an Allied Civilian Employee interpreter with the U.S. Department of War Civil Censorship Division. Anne's work required travel between Paris and Germany as she translated Nazi documentation into English for the U.S. military. During this time, she met and befriended an American, Richard Halpern, who

offered to help Anne immigrate to the U.S. This offer proved to be invaluable.

In 1947, after her honorable discharge from the ACE program and return home to London, Anne received an affidavit from Richard in the mail, allowing Anne to come to the U.S. After discussing it with her parents, she immigrated in November 1947. She traveled to New York City and lived with Richard and his wife, Barbara. Anne got a job which again made use of her translation skills.

In the spring of 1948, the Halperns moved to their hometown in Los Angeles and invited Anne to join them. Anne moved to California, where she met her future husband, Warner Heineman, on a ski trip organized by a young refugee group. Anne and Warner married and had two children, my father Larry and my aunt Carol.

My grandmother's story is harrowing but inspiring. She not only overcame adversity but persevered and flourished. Whenever I encounter obstacles, I recall her story. Her survival story is both an inspiration and a reminder of what the world can become if people and countries turn a blind eye to hate and intolerance. Let history never repeat itself!



My grandfather's blessing

ESTHER WEINSTOCK KALMS' STORY

By Chavi Kalms Epstein

Growing up in an affluent home in London, England, it was not obvious to me, for those first years of life, that I was missing my set of maternal grandparents. There were no photographs, stories or even a hint of a memory shared and I was none the wiser that anything was amiss.



Epstein

As a student, I learned about the terror of Kristallnacht from a textbook, unaware that my own mother, Esther Weinstock Kalms, had awoken that night, Nov. 9, 1938, to screams and smashing of the glass windows in a synagogue directly beneath her home in Vienna, Austria.

In recent years and with support, my mother started to share fragments of her personal story. Ironically, although that night set the stage of fear for what was yet to come, for my mother, there was also a visual reassurance of the eventual victory.

As her parents and four siblings peered through windows, remaining hidden, terrified that the Germans would come for them next, my mother noticed a Nazi repeatedly kicking at a Torah scroll with the back of his boot. Furious as he was, no amount of violence was able to tear the parchment. At the tender age of 9, from deep within, my mother understood not only that the parchment would never tear, but

that the Jewish nation, too, would never be completely destroyed.

Being aware of the dangers however, my mother begged her parents to send her to safety. This happened thanks to my grandmother's huge efforts, which secured my mother and two of her siblings seats on one of the Kindertransport trains that led 10,000 children to freedom in England. A third sibling was transported later. The fourth sibling escaped to Israel and joined the Haganah but was killed during the Hadassah convoy of nurses and doctors.

It was the second night of Chanukah; my grandfather, Rabbi Dovid Pesachya Weinstock, placed his hands on my mother's head. Probably knowing that he was holding her for the last time, he blessed her. Blessings in general were something that my grandfather highly revered. My mother remembers that my grandfather was scrupulous in making a blessing before and after eating food. He was also extraordinarily careful about not making any extra blessings that would be taking God's name in vain. On this particular night, it was my mother's first conscious experience of actually receiving one. It was something she felt he would not have done in a normal situation.

Even today, my mother is convinced that all the subsequent blessings of marriage, children and sustenance come through the channel of that last night's blessing.

Surprisingly, although my mother feared that she would never see her parents again, there was a huge sense of relief that dominated the train ride, as well as, of all things,

my mother's sense of adventure. In the company of a schoolteacher and two of her siblings and a few of her friends, my mother began her escape with a fair amount of excitement, gratitude and hope.

Although hours away from her siblings, my mother comfortably began her new life with the new "family" in Sunderland – attending school and making new friends. News reached my mother of her father's death in Buchenwald through a schoolteacher. Too far away from any family to digest the shock, the grieving process was never allowed to start, but rather put under lock and key for the next 70 years. The vibrant, loving Chassidic lifestyle that my mother had lived in Vienna was abruptly shelved, leaving behind many questions and an imprisoned heart.

It wasn't until one of my mother's visits to South Carolina years later that I heard her explain to some of my friends who were questioning her about her journey back to her Chassidic lifestyle, that my mother shared how she had felt like a "dropped letter" that the Lubavitcher Rebbe had picked up and returned to its rightful place.

Fortunately, thanks to the local Chabad rabbi in London, who had become a close friend of my father's, my parents' four daughters received a solid Jewish education – something my mother had always hoped for but never had any idea how that could possibly happen. Now, my proud parents – may they live and be well – have over 60 offspring all living meaningful Torah lives – no doubt all part of that continuous blessing from my beloved grandfather!



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHAVI KALMS EPSTEIN

Esther Weinstock Kalms, above, and two of her siblings left their home in Vienna and their parents, top, on a Kindertransport train bound for England in 1938.

An application of intelligence

DAVID TOREN'S STORY

By Rachel Haynie

David Toren's 1939 escape to Sweden from the German city of Breslau (now Wrocław) on the Kindertransport separated him from his older brother. While David took refuge in Sweden, Hans Peter had gone ahead, arriving in England one day before World War II began. The Toren parents had information on David's whereabouts, but did not know where their firstborn was.

At age 14, David cleverly devised a ploy that got information past Nazi censors, tipping his parents off as to



Haynie

Hans Peter's location. For his ploy, he turned to an encyclopedia. "I knew we both had copies of a single-volume encyclopedia published by Knaur. I told my parents in a letter: 'I do not want to forget German, so I am memorizing it, going entry by entry in the encyclopedia. I am now up to Leibzins.' My father realized something was hidden in that message. The next entry was Leister, a university town in England. From my reference my parents knew Leister was the town my brother was in and were able to figure out the rest."

More than seven decades later, Toren still cherishes his father's responding letter of praise, calling him smart for such an application of intelligence.

He also remembers the long and troubling train ride from his native Germany to an unknown Sweden, a trip during which the teenage boy held on his lap someone's baby, entrusted to him. As the train rumbled across Europe, he reflected on the life being left behind.

"In our community, it was my father who organized the Kindertransport. The seat I took had been promised to a friend who had left our community with his family, destined for the Dominican Republic." Toren explained that country's then-president, Rafael Trujillo, believed accepting German Jews who had professional credentials would help improve the intellectual fiber of the country.

The exodus of both brothers took place in 1939, Toren said, "... and my parents were still alive. They were killed March 4, 1943, in the gas chambers at Auschwitz."

Toren managed to hang onto the iconic encyclopedia through tumultuous war times, followed by international moves, service in the Israeli military and, eventually, immigration to the United States. Unfortunately, he cannot show readers what that reference book looked like.

"I kept it with me all those years," explained Toren, who at age 90 still holds sway at the Manhattan law firm on whose letterhead his name is listed. Throughout his professional life, he practiced intellectual property law.

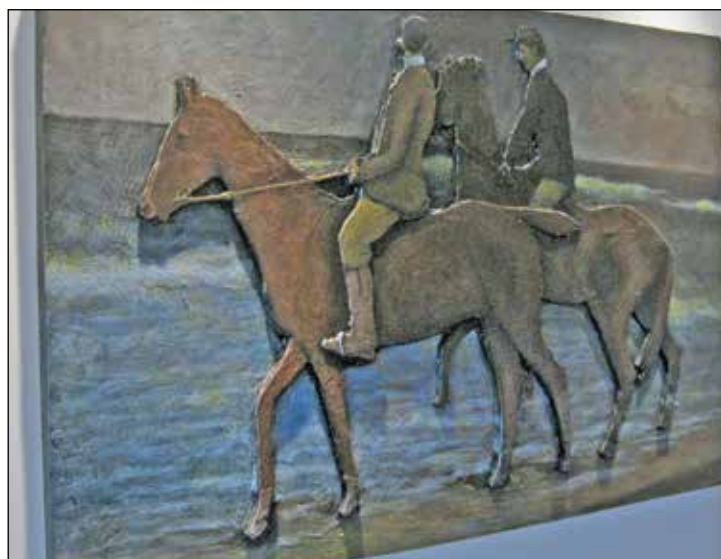
"The Knaur Encyclopedia was in my office on the 54th floor, North Tower, World Trade Center on 9/11, the day Bin Laden struck."

Toren has emerged on the international news scene in recent years because of his successful lawsuit against Germany for the return of Nazi-looted art work for which he produced indisputable proof of heirship. A Max Liebermann painting, "Two Riders on the Beach," was one of 306 art items stolen from Toren's great-uncle, and has been only one of a few works of art returned to rightful heirs.

Toren resides in Manhattan. He has new legal claims in motion against Germany for the return of the other 305 works of art and porcelain stolen from his family.



RACHEL HAYNIE - THE STATE FILE PHOTO



RACHEL HAYNIE - THE STATE FILE PHOTO



COURTESY OF DAVID TOREN

TOP: New Yorker David Toren feels a replica of the Max Liebermann painting the Nazis stole from his family. Columbia artist Christian Thee created the copy, left, in bas relief so Toren, who is blind, can feel it. **ABOVE:** Toren is barely distinguishable in the only childhood photo of him that survived World War II.

Surviving trauma through creativity

By Lyssa Harvey

An estimated 1.5 million Jewish children died in the Holocaust. Most of the children who survived the Holocaust were not among those liberated from concentration camps, but children who had lived during the war hidden with



Harvey

Christian families, placed in monasteries and orphanages, or survived in the woods. Most of the children who survived were orphans and lost family members. An estimated 150,000 Jewish children survived World War II.

How do children survive the trauma of witnessing the unthinkable, becoming displaced, losing their families and their childhoods? How does trauma affect their lifelong experiences and how did these children heal? Child Survivor stories are unfathomable, but yet they survived, thrived, and have inspired. How is this possible?

Children learn about their world through safe exploration and using their five senses. What they see, hear, smell, touch and taste are a child's tools for learning. Children who survived the Holocaust could have suffered from sensory trauma or what today is called Post Trauma Stress Disorder. Early trauma increases the risks of many psychiatric and medical disorders. In addition, the effects of trauma may extend beyond the immediate individual into subsequent generations as a consequence of epigenetic effects. Descendants of Holocaust survivors may experience positive or negative effects from the consequences of their parent's experiences. Today the study and recognition of the biological and trans-generational impact of trauma has led experts to better understand resilience and vulnerability in the healing process.



A 1942 painting by Sophia Kalski depicts children playing in the Lvov ghetto. The game “lacked the joy of childhood,” she wrote. “Already then, the children didn’t know how to laugh.”

Child survivors of the Holocaust rehabilitated their lives, established families and developed successful careers.

Most adult survivors of trauma report that the memories don't leave their body, brain or heart. They have learned to safely compartmentalize the memories away in order to adequately function in their lives. Some survivors of the Holocaust learned to isolate the trauma of the past. They didn't allow the past to interfere with their present lives. There is speculation that since Holocaust related traumas were not caused by significant attachment figures, but rather by an external force against an entire ethnic group that greater post traumatic growth was possible. Many survivors have healed by safely de-attaching from their memories and traumas.

The power of creativity and play also provides a balm for healing, renewal and growth. Creativity and play helps

children cope with stressful or hostile environments. Repairing sensory trauma through imagination and creativity allows children to heal from trauma, loss and grief. The creative process helps build new coping skills and brings new insights to present circumstances. Being able to voice personal stories is a profound, cathartic, and powerful way to help children survivors of trauma.

During the Holocaust there were desperate attempts of adults and children to recreate a sense of normalcy. Children were encouraged to play or found a way to play even in hostile settings. Some children were able to share what they saw and to express their feelings through art, stories, poems and diaries. An example of documented children's activities took place at the Theresienstadt concentration camp in what is now the Czech Republic. Although forbidden, there

“Standing behind the curtained window, I watched the children playing and wished that I too could go outside. Instead I visited the children on paper. I took a walk with them on paper.”

NELLY TOLL

Without Surrender: Art of the Holocaust



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE U.S. HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Shortly after his liberation, Michael J. Kraus, a Czech Jew born in 1930, wrote about and illustrated the crematorium at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

were attempts at organized play, art lessons and storytelling. Out of the 15,000 children who passed through this camp approximately 90% of these children perished in death camps.

After World War II, there are documented examples of art and play activities for children in the many displacement camps throughout Europe. This may have helped to absorb some of the shock and trauma while becoming reacquainted with the reality of post Holocaust life. It is known that many individuals including children suffered long term psychological and physical damage from the traumas of the Holocaust.

Many child survivors of the Holocaust eventually shared memories with family members and others. Descendants of survivors have also told the stories to others when a survivor couldn't or passed away. Memories are

being preserved through the growing genre of Holocaust books, film, photography, theatre, dance, and art.

Being able to express a traumatic experience can be a powerful healing tool at any stage in life. The creative process allows for emotional healing and can bring personal reconciliation. This positive narrative can be considered part of the epigenetics of resilience in Holocaust survivors and their families. Children survivors of the Holocaust and their descendants who share their stories are finding remarkable ways to remember and teach the lessons of the Holocaust.

Many children who were traumatized by the Holocaust not only survived, but thrived and through their lives and their shared stories have inspired others to remember the past and create change for the future.

‘Wrap them up and get out’

CHILD RESCUE IN NAZI-OCCUPIED AMSTERDAM

By Saskia Coenen Snyder

Baby Benjamin Flesschedrager was 10 days old when his parents, Philip Flesschedrager (1920-1943) and Elisabeth Appelboom (1921-1945), carried him into the Dutch Theater on Plantage Middenlaan in the heart of the Jewish neighborhood in Nazi-occupied Amsterdam. Born in hiding, Benjamin, who cried often, had posed a danger to the people caring for the young Flesschedrager family, and they had consequently been asked to leave. On June 20, 1943, however, before they could find an alternative hiding place, disaster struck when the Nazis arrested Philip, Elisabeth, and their newborn son and sent them to the Dutch Theater, which served as the central holding place for Jews slated for deportation first to Westerbork, then to Auschwitz or Sobibor.

The Dutch Theater, or *Hollandsche Schouwburg*, was a small and utterly unsuitable building to hold large numbers of people and luggage. The air was stifling, conditions were chaotic, and sanitary provisions proved woefully insufficient, all of which intensified the already high levels of anxiety and fear among Jewish families.

To relieve overcrowding and noise, Nazi officials had, already in 1942, designated the Jewish child care center (*crèche*) directly across the street as a *dépendance* (annex) for Jewish children. The *crèche*, which was well-known for its progressive teaching philosophy and excellent early childhood education training program in the 1930s and 1940s, abruptly metamorphosed from a small, daytime nursery to a round-the-clock emergency holding facility where some 5,000 Jewish children found temporary shelter between July 1942 and August 1943. Lovingly cared for by Jewish staff, the children slept, ate and played at the *crèche*, sometimes only for a few days, sometimes for weeks, before they were reunited with their parents and deported.

While aware of their ultimate fate but

determined to maintain calm among the deportees, the Nazi authorities allowed nursing mothers to visit their little ones every few hours. Accompanied by Nazi guards, Jewish mothers left the Dutch Theater, crossed the busy street while Tram No. 9 passed on its way to the central train station, and nursed their babies at the *crèche* before they were escorted back to their husbands. Sienny Kattenburg, who worked at the nursery as a nanny, related after the war that children would be returned to their parents on the evening of their scheduled deportation.

“We woke them up at 9 p.m. and gave them a bottle or something to eat. Then they had to go across the street. I’ll never forget those pale, frightened faces of the children while we walked down the stairs. Across the street, at the Theater, fear prevailed among those selected for transport. We had to return the kids to their terrified parents. It was horrible. Nobody knew what was going to happen.”

Most of the children never returned.

The lucky few

A different fate, however, awaited Baby Benjamin. He was one of the approximately 500 children who were smuggled out of the *crèche* and taken to non-Jewish families across the country by members of the Dutch resistance.

This risky undertaking involved an elaborate network of people, whose primary organizers included Henriëtte Henriquez Pimentel (the director of the day care center), Walter Süskind (a member of the Jewish Council in charge of the Dutch Theater), and Johan van Hulst (the head of the Dutch Reformed *Kweekschool*, a training college for school teachers located next door to the *crèche*). They stood in close contact with members of the Dutch underground resistance (many of whom were university students), who in turn arranged for non-Jewish families willing to take in a Jewish child at a time of war. Through careful planning and cooperation, this network of people saved the lives of hundreds of

children who would have otherwise faced Nazi brutality and murder in their most horrifying manifestations.

To save a Jewish child from deportation, a number of procedures needed to be set in motion. First, Pimentel and Süskind required the permission of parents to take their child to an unknown location for an indeterminate time. One staff member of the *crèche* recounted that “(v)ery quietly, so nobody would hear, I would ask parents ‘Would you like to leave your child with us? We will arrange for a safe place until you return.’ I would walk across the street (to the Theater) a few hours later to hear their decision. Most parents refused. Who gives away their own child, without knowing who will care for it?”

Especially in 1942 and early 1943, when most Dutch Jews didn’t know about gas chambers and crematoria, most parents showed reluctance to separate from their children, their dearest possession in a cruel world. While rumors circulated, few Dutch Jews realized the scope and magnitude of Hitler’s Final Solution – “annihilation was simply unthinkable,” as one child survivor explained.

When, however, parents granted permission, the second course of action required the administrative disappearance of the child’s name from registration and deportation lists. Süskind, who was in charge of recording new arrivals at the Dutch Theater, secretly erased names from these lists. It helped that Süskind, who was born in Lüdenscheid, spoke fluent German and had attended the same school as the *SS-Hauptsturmführer* Ferdinand aus der Fünten, the head of the Central Office for Jewish Emigration in Amsterdam, who orchestrated the deportation of Dutch Jews. Adept at feigning cordial relations, Süskind, with the help of alcoholic bribes, was able to divert the attention of Nazi officials and expunge the names of Jewish children from administrative records.

The dangerous journey

Once parents had granted permission, Pimentel contacted the Dutch un-



JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

derground resistance, who arranged for new temporary homes and coordinated the journey. Accompanying a Jewish child from Amsterdam to a new destination by means of public transportation was a dangerous task: Those taking the train included not merely Dutch commuters but also Nazi soldiers and officials who could easily overhear conversations. While traveling with a stranger, children often talked about their families, asked questions, or cried, and they did so in public spaces occupied by Dutchmen and Germans, friends and foes. To avoid inquiries, the resistance typically assigned women to chaperon Jewish children to the Dutch countryside as a mother-child duo raised fewer suspicions and lowered chances of arrest.

Before they boarded trains or trams, Jewish children first had to be smuggled out of the *crèche*. They were hidden in

suitcases, boxes, laundry bins, and duffle bags. The majority were taken out at nighttime into the back garden – shared with the adjacent *Kweekschool* – and handed over to Jan van Hulst, who took the children through the Dutch Reformed school building to the next caretaker. Sometimes children were carried out the front door in broad daylight, timed precisely at the moment Tram No. 9 stopped in front of the Theater and blocked the view of Nazi guards. As many people walked in and out of the nursery – nannies, parents, Jewish Council members, Nazi guards – it raised few suspicions when, every now and then, someone left the building carrying a bag. Betty Oudkerk, who partook in the rescue operations, related after the war that she regularly “flirted with German guards while (she) carried a large bag with a baby inside. Just a duffle bag. (She) walked out of

the front door of the *crèche* with it. Wrap them up and get out – that’s what it all came down to, really.”

The actions of all these rescuers, Jewish and non-Jewish, illustrate that Dutch Jews and Christians were not all passive in the hands of Nazi totalitarian power and genocide. Resistance and rescue efforts occurred and saved lives, although it is equally true that they didn’t occur on the scale that we may have hoped. Rescue efforts existed alongside paralysis, fear, conformity – sometimes even unequivocal collaboration on the part of the non-Jewish Dutch population. The story of the Jewish *crèche* is remarkable precisely because it wasn’t typical.

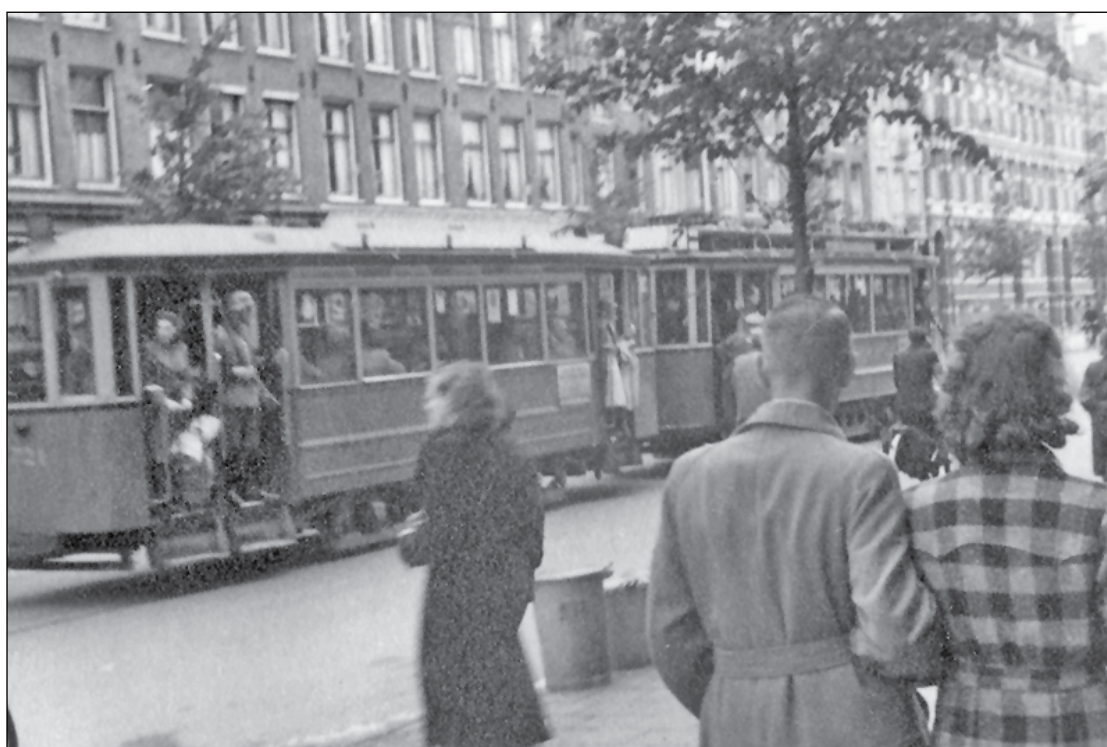
Benjamin’s fate

Baby Benjamin was smuggled out of the nursery in a trash can. A courier of the Dutch resistance took the now

1-month-old infant to the Bongers family in Overtoom, who were strictly Dutch Reformed. A new baby didn’t remain unnoticed in such circles. When a neighbor, who supported the Dutch Nazi movement (the *Nationaal-Socialistische Bond* or NSB) inquired after the new addition to the family, the Bongers’ replied that their daughter, Rie, had given birth to a baby boy out of wedlock – a confession that brought great shame to a deeply pious family in 1940s Holland.

The Bongers realized, however, that it was the only plausible lie that would save this Jewish child’s life. Reassured by the explanation, the NSB neighbor subsequently delivered bottles of milk twice a week “for the baby who cries so much.” Benjamin survived the war, although his parents did not. Reunited with family members after the Nazi regime collapsed, Benjamin learned only at age 10 what had happened to his parents and what “grandpa and grandma Bongers” had done for him.

Benjamin’s parents were among 75 percent of Dutch Jews murdered during the Holocaust, a comparatively high number for a Western European country. Henriëtte Pimentel died in Auschwitz at the age of 67. Walter Süskind arrived in Auschwitz, together with his family, in the fall of 1944. Upon arrival, his wife and daughter were gassed immediately; Süskind succumbed on a death march in late February 1945. Johan van Hulst survived the war and became a professor of pedagogy at the University of Amsterdam, a prominent leader of the CDA political party (Christian Democratic Appeal), a member of the European Parliament, and a prolific writer. As for the many members of the underground Dutch Resistance and the families who hid Jewish children, most of their identities are unknown. Without their help, courage, and conviction that rescue “was the right thing to do,” the number of victims would have been even higher.



RESISTANCE MUSEUM IN AMSTERDAM



NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE FOR WAR DOCUMENTATION



JEWISH HISTORICAL MUSEUM, AMSTERDAM

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The No. 9 Tramline, which ran across from the Dutch Theater; sleeping quarters at the *crèche*; and the Dutch Theater building. RIGHT: Children at the *crèche* photographed circa 1942.

‘Though the storm howls around us’

JANUZ KORCZAK AND THE CHILDREN OF WARSAW

“Children are not the people of tomorrow, but are people of today. They deserve to be taken seriously.”

JANUSZ KORCZAK
1878-1942

By Theodore Rosengarten

Polish history and Jewish history often seem like ships passing in the night. Warsaw’s most visited museum, devoted to telling the story of the Polish Resistance Home Army’s fight to liberate the city from German occupation in 1944, makes almost no mention of the 1943 Jewish ghetto uprising, Europe’s first armed revolt against the Nazis. Similarly, but for different reasons, the failed Polish rebellion occupies no place in Jewish commemoration.

Can these gaps of memory be bridged? If there is a unifying figure revered by Poles and Jews alike whose life story does justice to the entwined history of the two peoples, it is Janusz Korczak. Doctor and teacher, orphanage director, popular writer, and radio personality, Korczak is celebrated in Poland for turning down a Swiss passport to freedom and accompanying his ghetto orphans on the train to Treblinka death camp. “You do not leave a sick child in the middle of the night,” he told friends who tried to save him, “and you do not leave children at a time like this.”

Even before this defining moment, Korczak was acclaimed as a fierce advocate for children. Born Henryk Goldszmit to an assimilated Jewish family who believed the Polish nation held a place for Jews, Korczak adopted his pen name in 1898, when he was 20 years old, while keeping his given name in two stints as a soldier and throughout his medical practice. In the trenches of



COURTESY OF THEODORE ROSENGARTEN



COURTESY OF THE KORCZAKIANUM CENTRE FOR DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH IN WARSAW

World War I, he wrote “How to Love a Child,” based on his observations as director of the orphanage he had led since 1912 and would lead until 1942. In 1928, he published “How to Respect a Child,” built around the core idea of children as thinking people who have a right to participate in the decisions that affect their lives. His most famous book was a novel called “King Matt the First,” about a child prince who becomes king when his father suddenly dies and must learn from his own mistakes. King Matt tries to mobilize the children of the world to demand their rights, for which he is hated by other kings who overthrow him

and force him into exile. The book took flight like “Peter Pan” and is still widely read today. King Matt’s kingdom ran on the principles of a children’s republic as practiced in Korczak’s orphanages – one for Jewish children, and a second for Catholics – with their own parliaments and courts, whose leading value was forgiveness.

Two films have brought Korczak’s life to the screen. The first, a 15-minute short titled “Ambulans,” came out in 1961, and the second, Andrzej Wajda’s full-length feature, “Korczak,” appeared 29 years later in 1990. Each is an artifact of its era as



COURTESY OF THE KORCZAKIANUM CENTRE FOR DOCUMENTATION AND RESEARCH IN WARSAW

TOP LEFT: Janusz Korczak, fourth from left, at Polish children’s center of the Summer Camp Society, 1908. RIGHT: Korczak with his students in Warsaw in 1938. BOTTOM LEFT: Korczak leads children to the Umschlagplatz, a holding area used as a stopping point on the way to the Treblinka death camp, on Aug. 7, 1942, as portrayed in the 1990 film “Korczak.”

well as a dramatic reconstruction. In the first, a group of children and their teacher are loaded into an ambulance by the Nazis. Normally representing safety and healing, the vehicle becomes the group’s death chamber. But in 1961, under a repressive communist regime, the teacher could not have physical characteristics associated with Jews, and the link with Korczak’s story can only be inferred. Poland had barely begun to recover from the war that had killed at least a fifth of its population, and it was forbidden to say that Jews were the Nazis’ principal victims.

All this had changed by 1990. The communists had just been driven from power, and free Poland was reclaiming its history, including its Jewish history. The actor playing Korczak looks like his twin, the setting has moved to Warsaw, and when the children march in neat rows with their teacher to the Umschlag-

platz to meet the train that would take them into the unknown, they march under a banner with the star of David – unthinkable in 1961, or even in 1981.

Korczak died because he was Henryk Goldszmit, a Jew. If a film of his life were to be made today, 25 years after Wajda’s production, it would show that no degree of assimilation could make right-wing Poles forget that fact. It would delve into the doctor’s own doubts about his strategy to save Jewish children by teaching them to read, write, and speak Polish like the natives they were. Korczak’s sense of his Jewish identity intensified as he faced crushing anti-Semitism in the 1930s, and in 1934 and 1936, he traveled to Palestine to visit some of his former students who had immigrated to Eretz Yisrael and settled on kibbutzim, collective farms based on the ideals of communal ownership of property, social justice, and equality their teacher had championed at the orphanage in Warsaw. He listened to their criticisms of his theories which, they had concluded, could not be applied in greater Poland. He planned to return to Palestine and build an orphanage in the Galilee, but the start of the war in September 1939 killed his dream.

The Germans counted Korczak’s brood carefully; 192 children and 10 adult assistants were crammed into freight cars bound for Treblinka – the same distance from Warsaw as Florence, South Carolina, is from Columbia. Every child once had a family, and still had a name, memories and dreams, and each cherished the gift of life. At the “head of this little army, the tattered remnants of the generations of moral soldiers (Korczak) had raised in his children’s republic,” marched the doctor, a witness reported. Someone raised a song, all joined in, and even the executioners’ helpers paused to listen: “Though the storm howls around us, let us keep our heads high.”

This is not a mythical remembrance; this happened.

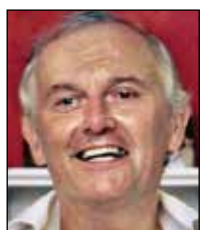
‘For the sake of humanity’

JOSEF B. FISERA’S STORY

By Francois Fisera
as relayed to Lilly Filler

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a theologian and anti-Nazi dissident wrote, “Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”

Josef B. Fisera lived by these words all of his life. Born June 4, 1912, he was



Francois Fisera

the son of a Protestant schoolmaster and the younger of two children. His family lived in a small village in Kluky within the Austrian Hungary Empire, later known as Czechoslovakia. His family was committed to social action and the defense of minority rights. Josef attended a French high school, studied law at the University of Prague, and received a degree from the Sorbonne in France in Education. He was interested in teaching mentally disturbed and abused children, but this changed with the turn of events in the late 1930s.

From 1936 to 1938, Josef volunteered with the Czech Red Cross, fighting nationalist conservatives led by Gen. Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War. In 1939, he became a director of a children's summer camp in Brittany. When the war began, he sequestered the children there for three additional months since it seemed too dangerous to send them back to Paris. He finally returned to Paris and began to do radio broadcasts asking Czech immigrants to enlist in the French army to help defeat the enemy. By 1941, Josef was searching the hills of Marseilles for a place to hide children who were



PHOTOS COURTESY OF FRANCOIS FISERA

ABOVE: Josef Fisera plants an olive tree in Israel in 1988, when Yad Vashem honored him as one of the Righteous Among the Nations. **RIGHT:** Fisera in later years.

targeted for death. An abandoned school and adjoining farm were discovered and, with a group of volunteers, Josef worked to provide safety for these children. Teachers and local farm hands set out to create this safe environment. Josef went on to create an army of resistance fighters as well as the Protestant relief organization MACE (Maison d'Accueil Cretienne pour Enfants, or Christian Welcoming House of All Children).

When Fisera was informed about the “camps” that children were being sent to, he used his law degree and met with local police and government

officials to convince them of the need to release these children. It has been speculated that entire Jewish families were freed through these efforts.

By 1943, Germans were making their move into the “free zone” in southern France. Fisera and his teachers, with some cooperation from local officials, quickly moved entire groups of children from harm's way. He has been credited with saving at least 527 children, 82 of whom were Jewish. The mayor of Vence, railroad employees, and loyal French military personnel were all instru-



mental in cooperating with him, despite the fact that more than 50 percent of French citizens were cooperating with the Nazis.

Within a month, Fisera was arrested at the farmhouse by the SS, denounced, interrogated, and pistol-whipped. He was released due to local political pressure and went into hiding, but he continued his fight. He joined the Resistance group Rossi and worked tirelessly against the enemy. He continued his clandestine efforts to save children and families until the liberation of Paris in August 1944. From September 1944 to late 1945, he was second in command at the Czech Consulate of the government in exile in Paris. While serving in this capacity, Josef met and married Zina Minor Mazieres, a wealthy Russian Jewish woman with whom he had a daughter, Francine. They divorced by 1945.

Josef continued to care for children and refugees at summer camps with funds from the Czechs and the Protestant organization CIMADE. He worked for the Czech branch of the Red Cross, helping set up orphanages for war orphans. One of his tasks was to find some of the Jewish children placed with non-Jewish families. Many were later sent to Israel or the United States. He helped care for the Buchenwald children in Ecouis, a convalescence camp for child victims.

He resigned from his functions at the Czech consulate when the

communists seized power in February 1948. At that time, he started teaching at the Sorbonne in Paris, but the rise of the Communist Party concerned him greatly. He continued to help with dissident movements in Czechoslovakia.

In 1947, Josef met Amy Belsky, through the Czech delegation and married her. They had three children: Vladimir, Francois and Helen. Amy died at age 55 after 21 years of marriage. Through intensive research, Josef was able to find that his wife's grandfather was mayor of Prague from 1863 to 1867. Josef remarried another Czech, Eugenia, in 1969.

In 1988, Yad Vashem honored Josef Fisera as one of the Righteous Among the Nations. Josef, with his son Francois at his side, planted an olive tree in Israel. Many relatives of the children he saved attended the moving ceremony. The Israeli ambassador in Paris presented a special diploma, “Just of the Just,” to Fisera, and he was invited and welcomed to retire in the state of Israel as a guest. He gracefully declined.

In 2002, he published his memoirs, concentrating on his lifelong fight for human rights and freedoms. He received French state distinctions, including the Chavalier de l'Ordre National de la Legion d'Honneur and the Order of T. G. Masaryk.

The children he saved never left his heart. He kept each and every one of “his” children's names in special boxes in his study, high on a shelf, still protected. Whenever he was asked why he risked his life, he would simply shrug his shoulders and say in an unassuming way, “For the sake of humanity.”

Josef B. Fisera died at his home in Paris on Jan. 9, 2005, at age 93. At the ceremony of his death, he was awarded full military honors at the Invalides. He was interred at the family grave site in the Czech Republic. Francois' son Joseph proudly carries the name of his grandfather.

We are children of God

By Joseph J. Lipton

The green field that bordered the small shtetl (village) of Baisogola, Lithuania where parents brought their children to play was fresh cut. Trees sparkling under the sun's rays stood as sentinels. Wildflowers gave color and scent. The shouts and laughter of children lent a sense of innocence to the scene. Every morning except Sabbath, Chyia Silberstein brought her 4-year-old son and her 5-month-old baby girl to this oasis to be with other children. This ritual rarely varied.



Lipton

However, on this particular Friday morning, Erev Shabbas (day before Sabbath), when Chyia approached the field with her children she noticed something different. A trench 10 yards long and 5 feet deep scarred the ground. The dirt from the gaping hole was piled along one side of the trench. Suddenly, she heard a rumbling noise accompanied by harsh, guttural voices. "Shnell! Shnell! Mach shnell!" ("Fast! Fast! Move fast!")

When Chyia turned, she saw her neighbors, friends and relatives herded to the scar in the earth. The German SS had invaded Lithuania with orders to round-up all Juden (Jews) from the village – men, women and children and put them to the Final Solution.

In the fog of confusion Chyia saw her husband. As she ran toward him, an SS trooper snatched the infant from her arms, slammed it to the ground and then with the heel of his boot crushed the infant's head.

The Holocaust was an event con-



1942 AP FILE PHOTO

This photo taken from a the body of a German officer killed in Russia shows a German firing squad shooting Soviet civilians in the back as they sit beside their own mass grave in Babi Yar, Kiev, in 1942.

temporaneous in large part with World War II – but separate from it. In fact, the Final Solution often took precedence over the war effort – as trains, personnel and material needed at the front were not allowed to be diverted from death camp assignments. On a very basic level, therefore, the Holocaust must be confronted in terms of the specific evil of anti-Semitism – virulent hatred of the Jewish people and the Jewish faith. An immediate response to the Holocaust must be a commitment to combat prejudice wherever it might exist.

***"The Grizzly Bear is huge and wild
He has devoured the infant child.***

***The infant child is not aware
He has been eaten by the bear."***

— "Infant Innocence" by Alfred Edward Housman (1859-1936), English poet and classical scholar

The entire mass of humanity, confused and frightened, were ordered to line up at the edge of the trench and remove all clothing. It was bedlam. Babies crying, youngsters clutching to parents, mothers trying to calm the terror in the eyes of the young as the assassins nonchalantly yet eager-

ly moved to their machine guns in obedience to years of indoctrination.

***"I am liberating the German
from the degrading chimera
known as conscience.***

***Christianity is a religion for
slaves and fools, for the last shall
be first and the first shall be last."***

— Adolf Hitler as quoted in *The Nation* magazine by American journalist John Gunther (1901-1970)

Before the word "Holocaust" was adopted, assaults upon Jews in Europe were called "pogrom." It is de-

fined as an organized massacre of helpless people. Pogroms against Jews have a long, continuous and unrelenting history. The first pogrom took place in Alexandria, Egypt, in the year 414 AD wiping out the city's Jewish population. In the Holocaust the Germans elevated the pogrom, thanks to advanced technology and ardor, to new levels of insanity and inhumanity.

***"They make haste to shed
innocent blood."***

— Isaiah 59:7,
8th-century B.C. Hebrew prophet

The inevitable question – Why? Why would a man or woman immersed in a high standard of education, learning and culture snatch a 5-month-old baby from its mother's arms, throw it to the ground and crush it to death with the heel of his boot? Indeed!

There is a process that is referred to by psychologists and psychiatrists that is used to shape and encourage desired human behavior called indoctrination. All branches of human activity utilize this process to their own purpose – religions, the military, nations, educational institutions and others.

“(Indoctrination) is the power of reiterated suggestions and consecrated platitude. The individual is as helpless against it as the child is helpless against the formulas with which he is indoctrinated. Not only is it possible by these means to shape his tastes, his feelings, his desires, and his hopes; but it is possible to convert him into a fanatical zealot ready to torture and destroy and to suffer mutilation and death for an obscene faith, baseless in fact, and morally monstrous.”

— Learned Hand (1872-1961),
American jurist in a May 1951 address
at Elizabethan Club

And again that ubiquitous word – Why? Why did the Jews become the designated scapegoat? – ostracized, harassed, ridiculed, maligned, pillaged, tortured, raped, burned alive, murdered?

At the Nuremberg trial, a German general was asked how such heartless, obscene cruelty could happen. He answered: “I am of the opinion that when for years, decades, it is preached that Jews are not even human, such an outcome is inevitable.”
Post hoc, ergo, propter hoc.

“Jews are doomed to wander about the earth as fugitives and vagabonds, and their faces must be covered with shame. They are condemned to serfdom.”

— Pope Innocent III (1161-1216, pope 1198-1216)



HISTORICAL ARCHIVES, WARSAW, POLAND

This 1942 photo of the killing of Jews at Ivanhorod, Ukraine, was mailed from the Eastern Front to Germany and intercepted by members of the Polish resistance. The inscription on the photo read, “Ukraine 1942, Jewish Action, Ivangorod.”

“We order that each and every Jew in our temporal domain shall depart completely out of the country within three months.”

— Pope Pius IV (1499-1565, pope 1559-1565)

Edgardo Mortara (1851-1940) was born to a Jewish family and kidnapped at age 6 from his parents' home in Bolonga by order of Pope Pius IX (1792-1878, pope 1846-1878).

— The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara by David L. Kertzer (born 1948), a professor at Brown University

“The Jews are the most miserable people on earth.”

— Martin Luther (1483-1546), German religious reformer in Table Talk, chapter DCCCLII

“Jews are a race rejected by God.”

— Luther in Table Talk, chapter DCCCLXI

“I believe today that I am acting in the sense of the Almighty Creator. By warding

off the Jews I am fighting for the Lord's work.”

— Adolf Hitler addressing the Reichstag, Germany's governing body, in 1936

Religion, we are told, is the rule of conduct for mankind, but to what avail when it has lost its voice? After such pronouncements and recommendations, Jews have wandered throughout the earth from country to country. When Constantine, Emperor of the Roman Empire, made Christianity the state religion in the year 325 A.D., that sealed the fate of the Jew for as long as man shall populate the earth.

When I am asked, are these deeds a stain upon Christianity? I respond, “Who am I to say?” “When the denouement arrives, Jesus will examine his ecclesiastical stewards before granting salvation.” “In the Holocaust 1.5 million children were murdered. Thousands of infants butchered. Youngsters taken from their parents crowded into death trains and shipped to the crematoria of Auschwitz and Treblinka.”

Facing the Holy Men – pontiffs,



1945 AP FILE PHOTO

A survivor of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in Germany delouses his clothes at the camp in April 1945, soon after it was liberated by Allied troops.

priests, ministers – Jesus asks, “Did you protest?”
Silence.
Jesus wept.

*“To the manger
Came the Romans,
From the mother's breast
The babe was swept.*

*Begging and pleading,
The child is innocent
He knows not right from wrong.*

*No matter says the Guard
The King has ordered
The Holy Father has sanctioned
Babes born to Jewish mothers
Are to be removed.*

*Oh, my innocent child
To be marked by race or name
To be singled out for blame
To put life upon the cross
Without shame.”*

— “Shame” by Joseph J. Lipton (born 1923), a spectator amidst human folly

We are not all Christians, all Muslims or Jews, but we are all children of God!

An addendum by Lilly Filler

During the fourth period of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-1965), a controversial document, “Nostra Aetate,” was “clarified.”

The document stated that the Jews of the time of Christ, taken indiscriminately, and all Jews today are no more responsible for the death of Christ than Christians.

The conclusion further stated that “... the Church, mindful of the patrimony she shares with the Jews and moved not by political reasons but by the Gospel's spiritual love, decries hatred, persecutions, displays of anti-Semitism, directed against Jews at any time and by anyone.”



'Don't worry; we are German'

JUDITH DIM EVANS' STORY

By Judith Dim Evans
as relayed to Lilly Filler

The story of Judith Dim Evans is a remarkable one of survival from the Holocaust as a child and fighting for survival and independence of Israel as an adolescent. The older of two children, Judith was born Aug. 25, 1932, in Byton, Germany, to Jewish parents. Her father left when she was very young, and she was reared by her mom and grandmother. Her grandmother lived a Jewish life with observance of Shabbat, reciting prayers and cooking Jewish foods, although they never went to a synagogue. Her mom was more of a creative spirit, enjoying sophisticated culture and philosophical discussions with her German friends.

As a child, Judith remembers her mother's mantra: "Don't worry, we are German. Nothing will happen to you." But on Kristallnacht, on Nov. 11, 1938, she remembers her mother squeezing her hand as they ran through the streets smelling the burning buildings and books, and hearing the sounds of windows crashing and breaking. She remembers seeing writing on storefronts and hearing taunts by German youth – "dirty Jew" and "Jews smell from garlic" – an association that still haunts her. But as a child, she knew that this could not be true; her Jewish home was not dirty, and she did not smell of garlic!

In early 1941, Judith and her younger brother returned from school to find her mom and grandmother sewing yellow stars on all of their clothing. When she returned to school the next day, the atmosphere felt different. She was shunned and ignored by her previously friendly classmates. Her brother got into fights and was beaten daily. Again, her mom reassured them: "Don't worry; we are German, and nothing will happen to you." But Judith felt isolated and alone.

Some time later, her mom was



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JUDITH DIM EVANS

Clockwise from left: Judith, second left, with girls who attended her boarding school in Jerusalem; Judith and her first husband, Chiam Dim, and their two children, Arron and Michelle, in 1953; Judith, 16, a Haganah volunteer.

picked up by local police, sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp and never seen again. Soon, her grandmother was removed from the home and placed in a ghetto, where she ultimately died. Having no adults left in the house, neighbors took the two children in, but by year's end, they were placed in a "cloister convent," an orphanage, supervised by nuns. The two children were instructed to say that their father was in the military and that their mother had died.

Although well treated by the nuns, Judith felt alone and began to withdraw. She could not identify as Jewish, so she did as the other children did and went through holy communion and confession. She became a member of the German youth groups and marched with the class, saluting "Heil Hitler." She remembers using "green

soap" and ironically loved the smell of it, only to be told later that it was manufactured from the marrow of Jews.

The orphanage embraced the German propaganda. "Oberman" – the expression of the superior blond, blue-eyed strong men over the beautiful, blond, blue-eyed, subservient women – was espoused, and the stereotypic caricature of Jews, with big noses, long fingers and nails and dripping in blood – was perpetuated. But Judith observed that like all the other orphans around her, none were blond and blue-eyed, but rather dark hair and dark eyes prevailed.

In May 1945, Judith began to hear about the concentration camps and the rumors of masses of Jewish deaths. The convent was secured by the Poles, and since Judith could not speak Polish, it became difficult to understand what was happening.



After Allied forces liberated the orphanage, she tried to find Jewish organizations that could help her, but as a 13-year-old, looking well fed, clothed and educated in Catholicism, no one believed that she was Jewish.

Finally, her path crossed with a leader of the Zionist movement in Poland, Sarah Stern, who would later become a member of the Knesset, Israel's governing body. Believing Judith's incredible story, Stern secured one of the few British Certificates that would allow emigration to Palestine. After a grueling trip, Judith arrived in Palestine in April 1946. She eventually attended an upscale boarding school in Jerusalem and had a complete education.

When Israel was declared an independent state by the United Nations in November 1947, Judith joined the Haganah, the underground group

fighting for Israeli independence, and served as a communicator, runner and volunteer, often finding herself in dangerous combat zones. What sustained her was her mom's mantra: "Don't worry; nothing will happen to you." Independence for Israel was won in May 1948. A year later, in May 1949, Judith finished high school in Tel Aviv.

Judith became the sole manager of a refugee camp with over 250 Yemenis, and she personally pleaded with Prime Minister Ben Gurion for more help. Gurion sent a military company to the camp, and Judith met Chiam Dim, the military officer who became her husband. She married in 1951 and had two children. She became an educator and school principal, the youngest in Israel, and developed a progressive curriculum for children. Chiam Dim was killed in the Six-Day War in 1967.

Continuing to work in education, often educating children of diplomats, Judith met an American, Tom Evans, in 1982. They married and moved to Aiken, where she still resides. Judith continues to speak at schools and churches about her experiences during the Holocaust and in Israel.

"I had a choice to grow up with hatred or to do something out of my experiences," she said. "Life is a journey and you choose the road you want to walk."

I have many names

GAD MATZNER'S STORY

By Gad Matzner

My parents, Isaac and Gitla Matzner, lived in Rudnick, in Galicia Poland. My father, several of his male cousins, as well as my mother's brothers left Poland in August 1939 in anticipation of the German invasion. They crossed into Russian territory to find places for their families. They ended up in Lvov. My mother with my older brother, her sisters and their children, followed in the fall. They reunited in

Lodz, Russia, where they remained through 1940.

In late 1940, when Hitler invaded Russia, they were compelled to move farther East. They



Matzner

ended up on the Asian side of the Ural Mountains, in a small town called Michalofsky Zavod, where rice was collected and stored. The family lived in unheated huts, four families per hut. The men in the family worked for the military to supply them with rice. Our family was cold, starving and barely surviving. The men fed their families with rice, smuggled home in pockets sewn inside their pants.

In January 1942, my malnourished, underweight mother took ill. The temperature was 52 degrees below zero Centigrade. A cousin took Gitla to a local "hospital" where she gave birth to me. She had no idea she had been pregnant; I weighed about a kilo (2.2 pounds). The doctor advised my mother to abandon this baby; it would never survive. I was given a Bris, or circumcision, and named Godel (Gad) after my fraternal great-grandfather.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF GAD MATZNER

In 1948, Gad Matzner, second left, and his family – from left, older brother Oskar, mother Gitla, father Isaac and grandmother Malka – lived in Krakow, Poland, where Gad was called Godek.

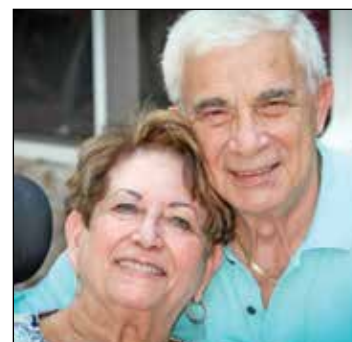
Because I was so sickly, we remained in the Ural. Some of the family moved to Samarkand in Uzbekistan, where there were other refugees from our family. When Stalin realized the Germans were no longer a threat, he decreed that Polish refugees go back to Poland. In 1945, at the end of the war, we returned to Poland in cattle cars, supplied by the Russians.

I was 3 years old. There, I was called Godek.

When we returned to our homes, they were occupied by the Poles of the town. We left and ended up in Dzierzoniow (previously Reichenbach, Germany). My brother Nachum David (named after the grandparents who perished in Russia and German concentration camps) was born



Gad, center left, and his brothers, Oskar, left, and Nahum David, right, with their maternal grandmother, Malka, in 1947.



Gad with his wife, Bobbi.



Gad's parents, Gitla and Isaac, as shown on their Israeli passports in 1953, when they moved to the U.S.



Four-year-old Gad in 1946.

there. In 1947, we traveled to Krakow, where we remained until 1950, when we were allowed to go to Israel. In Is-

rael, I became known as Gadie.

In 1953, my immediate family, came to the USA, where I became George because they would not call me God, which is how the Israeli passport spelled Gad.

As a sad afterword: My father's three brothers and one sister, as well as his parents, perished in the Holocaust. One sister emigrated to Eretz in the 1920s. She and my father were the only survivors. My mother's two sisters, who stayed in Poland, perished. My maternal grandparents died of natural causes after the war. My mother, her two sisters and three brothers survived. One of the three came to the U.S. in the 1920s and sponsored the surviving family members to come here in 1953.

A child survivor of Theresienstadt

ELLEN KLEIN'S STORY

By Irene Jablon

Recently I had the honor of interviewing my cousin, Ellen Klein, who I have known as long as I can remember. When I was a child, Ellen and her husband Larry would come from New York to visit us in Miami. Ellen's father, Emil Grunebaum, and my father were first cousins, born and raised together in Bergel, Germany.

Ellen was an only child, born in 1931, and four years later, her family moved to Frankfurt, where they owned and lived in an eight-unit



Jablon

apartment building. Emil was a successful and affluent cigar salesman. While serving in the German army during World War I, he sustained a leg injury. The family belonged to a conservative shul and were observant Jews.

Ellen attended a Jewish school, but by age 9, she was no longer allowed to go because of growing anti-Semitism. She recalls having water thrown on her from apartment windows when she was playing outside. She remembers seeing the store signs, "No Jews Allowed," and wearing the yellow star marked "Jude." By 1939, the Nazis took away all of the pets of the Jews, including the four canaries from her home.

By 1940, all the Jews in Frankfurt were sent to a ghetto, where Ellen's family lived in one room. Ellen remembers the night when the Nazis came. They lined up all of the men in the lobby and deported them to Buchenwald concentration camp. Emil was spared because of his leg injury. The family remained in the ghetto until 1942. Then, they were transported by cattle car to Theresienstadt. Upon arrival in Terezin, possessions were taken, Ellen was separated from her father, and she and her mother were taken to the barracks. The barracks were full of lice and bugs. She was fed one meal a day, consisting of hot water mixed with dirt and grass, and was allotted a quarter loaf of bread every three days. Learning to speak Czech, Ellen begged the female Nazi server for more food. This request was met with a hit across Ellen's face with the metal pot, causing her to fall to the floor.



LEFT: Before the war, Ellen's family owned an apartment building in Frankfurt, Germany. TOP RIGHT: Ellen married her husband, Larry Klein, in 1954. BOTTOM CENTER: Ellen and Larry Klein today. BOTTOM RIGHT: Ellen as a young woman.

To this day, Ellen has scars from the blow.

After some time, Ellen and her parents were moved to a small house with bunk beds. Her mother was sent outside the camp each day to work in an airplane factory. Emil did not work, and Ellen was sent to dig ditches. On Nov. 11, 1944, the entire camp was scheduled to be executed, with men and women lined on opposite sides of a deep ditch. But for unknown reasons, the execution was aborted.

Theresienstadt was constructed and touted to be the model camp for the outside world to see. When the Red Cross came to inspect, the Nazis would set up artificial classrooms. Ellen remembers an SS officer named Heinrich who pretend-



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ELLEN KLEIN

ed to be a teacher. "Uncle Heinrich, chocolates again!" the children would squeal, but when the visitors left, the chocolates were confiscated.

Ellen's work changed after time. She was made to shovel human ashes into boxes and load the boxes onto trucks to be taken to the nearby river for disposal. She was an adolescent now but only weighed 65 pounds. She recalls many unpleasant experiences in the camp, such as male prisoners exposing themselves in front of girls. This was a stark introduction to young adulthood.

Theresienstadt was liberated May 8, 1945. Ellen and her parents were sent to a convalescence home in Germany to recuperate. She had contracted tuberculosis. After four weeks,

they returned to their hometown of Frankfurt, only to find that all of their furnishings had been confiscated by the Nazis. They remained in their apartment from 1945 to 1947, but they no longer owned the building. In 1947, the family left Germany and immigrated to New York with the help of a humanitarian organization. They moved to Brooklyn, and Emil became the superintendent of an apartment building that housed many Jewish refugees.

In 1952, Ellen met her future husband, Larry Klein, also a survivor, in Brighton Beach. They married in 1954 and had one son, Ronnie. Ellen is well at 85 years old and enjoys her three granddaughters and two great-grandchildren.

Lost childhood

HENRY SILBERSTERN'S STORY

By Henry Silberstern
and Sarah Spoto

Of the estimated 1.5 million children murdered during the Holocaust, Henry Silberstern is one who defied the odds. Henry was born April 15, 1930, the second child of Jan and Edita in Teplice, Czechoslovakia. His family lived a comfortable, happy life. His father was a lawyer, and his mother was a homemaker caring for the two boys, Henry and Rolf.

After the 1938 annexation of the Sudetenland, including Teplice, life began to change for Henry's family. Due to increased hostility toward Jews in Germany, his family moved to Prague. Yet, in 1941, restrictions limited the family's

ability to survive. Henry's father was no longer permitted to practice law, and Jews were forced to wear the yellow "Jude" star. In 1941, Jews were forced

to relocate into designated housing in Prague. His family shared an apartment with two other families. His father began to teach to earn money. Jewish children were not allowed to attend school.

In November 1942, Henry and his mother were forced to report to the Terezin ghetto. His father and brother were not selected at that time. That was that last time Henry saw his father alive. Prior to the continued ghettoization process, his father suffered from poor health. Henry learned later while living in Terezin that his father had died.

Terezin (Theresienstadt) was divided into living quarters for women, men, boys, and girls. Thus, Henry was separated from his mother with only occasional contact. Henry lived in a dormitory for boys and found friendships with his bunkmates.

The Nazis tried to limit the news that



PHOTOS COURTESY OF HENRY SILBERSTERN

Holocaust survivor Henry Silberstern, from left, with his father in 1931; with his wife, Beneta, in 1952; and visiting Birkenau in 2007.

had spread to the outside world that the Jews lived in deplorable conditions. Terezin was selected as the "model" ghetto to show the world that life was continuing for the Jews. A film, "Hitler Gives the Jews a City," showed the ghetto inhabitants living well and without hardship. The International Red Cross was invited to the "model city." This propaganda showed Jews participating in theater, soccer and other social events.

The prisoners of Terezin were allowed to participate in cultural events. Henry was selected to perform in the children's opera Brundibar, which became a trademark show for the ghetto. As children were transported east to concentration camps, more children entered Terezin, which kept the opera running. Eventually, his brother Rolf was selected in July 1943 and sent to the Terezin ghetto. Henry, his brother and mother were able to meet at times, but visiting was limited.

As the ghetto became overpopulated, transports to camps increased. Henry, Rolf and their mother were selected in spring 1944 to report to Auschwitz. The family was forced into cattle cars with about 100 people. On May 19, 1944, they entered the Birkenau complex.

This group from Terezin was actually allowed to remain in the Family Camp BIIId. Henry and Rolf's heads were shaved, and they were sent to showers, forcibly tattooed and given used clothing to wear. Henry recalls the strange smell after their arrival, with inmates telling them that the Nazis were burning bodies.

Everything was overwhelming to Henry, and he was not sure what to believe. Dr. Mengele, the infamous Auschwitz camp doctor, held a strange selection in July. He made 500 boys strip and evaluated them. Henry, then 14, was one of the 89 boys selected for slave labor, and he was moved to the men's barracks in Auschwitz-Birkenau. All other boys were sent to the gas chambers.

The Terezin family camp went through a similar process; those who were able-bodied, were sent to work, and all others were sent to their deaths. Henry, Rolf and their mother passed selection, but they were separated after the inspections. While in the men's camp, Henry and the other boys carried out jobs for the Nazis. For example, the boys picked up the dead from the barracks and carried them in carts to the crematoria.

Henry remembers standing for morning count on a daily basis, – multiple times, regardless of the weather. If the inmate count was off, it was repeated. Prisoners would pass out due to malnutrition or relieve themselves at their spot due to long waits. This process only continued to dehumanize the inmates.

Henry was sent in fall 1944 to a sub-camp called Furstenrube to work as a bricklayer. After spending a few months in the sub-camp, he and the inmates were marched and eventually transported by train to the Dora-Nordhausen camp in January 1945. This slave labor camp in the Harz Mountains built ballistic missiles. Jews were forced to make the very missiles to be used against Allied forces. Henry recalls while working inside the cave, it at least provided a warmer environment during the harsh winter. The mountains also protected them from aerial bombings, and prisoners were able to converse with one another.

In February, the camp had to be evacuated as Allied forces approached. Henry and the same Terezin boys were transported by cattle car to Bergen-Belsen. It was the worst camp the inmates had seen. Typhus was rampant throughout

the camp, and the lack of food created deplorable conditions.

By April, Allied shots could be heard, and on Henry's birthday, April 15, Bergen-Belsen was liberated. While the camp was under Allied care, inmates were nursed back to health. During this process, Henry questioned Czech women through barbed wire if they had knowledge of his mother. To his joy and surprise, his mother sent him a handwritten note; she was alive in the women's barracks!

Henry told an officer that his mother was alive and was allowed to visit her a few times. Unfortunately, over the next couple of months she contracted typhus and passed away. Henry returned to Prague after regaining his strength and made contact with an uncle. He returned to school and eventually immigrated to Canada. While living in Canada, he was adopted by a host family and began earning a living and learning English.

Over time, he met the love of his life, Beneta Bregger. They wed and moved to New York State. Henry Silberstern began speaking later in his life about his experiences and the importance of helping out our fellow man. He spoke to thousands of students and adults on the Holocaust. He even was documented in film "Lost Childhood: The Story of the Birkenau Boys" by Rich Newberg. His memoir, "The Lost Childhood, a Memoir by Henry Silberstern," was published in 2013. He also accompanied trips to Poland for students and adults. Even though he lost almost his entire family during the Holocaust, he created a beautiful family in the United States.

Henry passed away Oct. 25, 2016, leaving his wife, two daughters, four grandsons, and great-grandchildren. All they ask is that his story is not forgotten. He would want us to become more tolerant of others. Henry always hoped that his experience be a testament to what unchecked hate and power can do.

Never forget!

Editor's note: The Teacher's Advisory Committee, an ad hoc committee of the S.C. Council on the Holocaust, established a scholarship essay program for high school seniors, awarding \$1,000 toward the South Carolina college of their choice. The prompt given students for the scholarship essay contest in spring 2016 was:

"In 2011, the S.C. Superintendent of Education proposed cutting the funding for the S.C. Council on the Holocaust. Write a convincing argument about the importance and relevance of Holocaust education to S.C. today."

This is the winning essay.

By Hayes Hoover

The genocide of 6 million people that took place during the Holocaust is considered to be one of the most tragic events in human history. It exposed and laid bare the darkest and most evil side of humanity and for generations has served as a warning of what can happen when democracy is not appreciated and protected. Indeed, the horrors of the Holocaust can never be forgotten. Failing to remember would be dishonoring and disrespecting the victims. The South Carolina Superintendent of Education proposal to deny students the opportunity to learn about the Holocaust makes this horrendous event in history seem trivial. Holocaust education is important because it relays the message that racism, hatred, and oppression should not be tolerated. It teaches and urges the students of South Carolina to not be indifferent and apathetic as they watch injustice happen, but to instead protest, speak up and stop atrocities.

Indeed, the Holocaust learning experience is of vital importance to the young people of South Carolina, who at times have seen infringement of civil rights, abuse of power and prejudice in their state. Learning about what occurred in the Holocaust helps students realize that sitting in silence, watching any race or human being be discriminated and subject to intense hatred is never acceptable. Being educated about the Holocaust inspires students to

be a voice for those that don't have one. Being indifferent and failing to take action is dangerous to both society and the soul. Each of us has the responsibility to fight intolerance and hatred. When we don't embrace that responsibility we become accomplices! Martin Niemöller (1892–1984), a German anti-Nazi theologian and pastor, describes these sentiments so vividly in his famous poem, "First They Came":

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out –

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out –

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out –

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me – and there was no one left to speak for me.

On May 8, 1945 boys from the Hitler Youth and residents of Dachau, were forced by Americans, to come face to face with the terrors of the concentration camps. The German people, were forced to tour the camps, look at the naked corpses and take personally responsibility for the horrors that occurred in those camps (German Civilians). They had done nothing to help the innocent prisoners. They went on with their lives denying the horrors and brutality that was happening in the concentration camps. Their goal was to forget and put it behind



COURTESY OF EILEEN CHEPENIK

Hayes Hoover, second left, with his parents and Holocaust survivor Joe Engel. Hoover, a Ladson resident attending Clemson University, graduated from Connections Academy in 2016.

South Carolina Council on the Holocaust

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them. Surely the goal of the Superintendent of Education is not to shield the students from the unimaginable atrocities? Surely it's not an attempt to bury and forget such a vital part of American history?

Furthermore, Holocaust education provides the students of South Carolina the opportunity to learn about hatred and forgiveness, fear and hope, courage and survival in the face of immense suffering and challenges. It enables students to face similar daunting challenges with an open mind and with greater awareness to morality, as well as, consider and reflect on their own hearts and the adults they want to become. It encourages students to carefully consider the culture they live in and never repeat the same

mistakes. It opens their eyes to the dangers of peer pressure and conforming and helps them recognize their own prejudices. We cannot allow the Holocaust to be just another event that happened in the past. It needs to become personal and touch our hearts. I will never forget the day I had the privilege of walking into Anne Frank's house while visiting Amsterdam. As I walked into the secret annex, Anne Frank and the Holocaust became painfully real. It struck a profound chord in the depths of my heart that will stay with me forever. This is the kind of connection South Carolina students need to feel with the Holocaust. It's the emotion and inspiration that will help the students become better people.

Eastern European Travel/ Study Tour of the Holocaust

The S.C. Council on the Holocaust will sponsor a Travel/ Study Tour on the Holocaust to Poland from June 17-25. The first 10 South Carolina-certified teachers to apply will be eligible for \$1,000 subsidies and for three graduate credit hours from Columbia College. The tour is open to the public, but teachers have first priority. For information on the tour, contact Leah F. Chase of Chase Inc. at (843) 556-0525 or leahlfc@gmail.com.

Holocaust Education Institute for Teachers: 'Understanding and Teaching the Holocaust'

An intensive summer institute for South Carolina teachers, sponsored by the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust, July 16-21, 2017, at Columbia College (course number: EDU 724; three hours of graduate credit). There is a registration fee. Room and board are provided by the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust. For more information, contact Barbara Parker at (803) 786-3763, or visit the Council's website to download an application.

In conclusion, Holocaust education teaches South Carolina students how to embrace people from all walks of life and accept diversity. Tragically, the Holocaust is not an isolated event in history. It has happened in countries like Rwanda, Liberia, Yugoslavia and Sudan. Disapproving or even feeling heartsick about such atrocities is not enough. It is vital for the students of South Carolina to keep the terrible events of the Holocaust alive. Students must learn how to take a stand, nourish democracy and make a difference.



HOLOCAUST EDUCATION RESOURCES

By Lyssa Harvey

COLUMBIA HOLOCAUST EDUCATION COMMISSION

www.columbiaholocausteducation.org

Promotes awareness of the Holocaust and fosters education in grades K-12 throughout South Carolina. The Commission, an outgrowth of the campaign to erect the Columbia Holocaust Memorial, sponsors the "Holocaust Remembered" exhibit, including teacher education guides, and provides grants to educators and institutions to provide innovative, quality Holocaust education.

THE SELDEN K. SMITH FOUNDATION FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

www.holocausteducationfoundation.org

Named in honor of the longtime chair of the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust and a retired history professor from Columbia College, the foundation provides funds to schools, colleges, churches, synagogues, civic groups and individuals for research, student field trips, teacher training and workshops, classroom supplies, Holocaust speakers, exhibitions, and related educational programs. The foundation will participate May 2, 2017, in Midlands Gives, and donations can be made via the website or mailed to The Selden K. Smith Foundation for Holocaust Education, c/o Minda Miller, Chair, P.O. Box 25740, Columbia, SC 29224.

S.C. COUNCIL ON THE HOLOCAUST

www.scholocaustcouncil.org

■ **Video and curriculum guide for teachers:** Public and private middle and high schools in the tri-county area have a copy of "Seared Souls: Voices from the Past," a video produced by the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust and SC-ETV, and "South Carolina Voices, a Teaching and Curriculum Guide." Please check with your school's social studies curriculum chair. This information is also on the website of the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust.

ONLINE RESOURCES

- **Columbia Holocaust Education Commission:** www.columbiaholocausteducation.org
- **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** www.ushmm.org
- **Yad Vashem: The Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority:** www.yad-vashem.org.il
- **Facing History and Ourselves:** www.facinghistory.org
- **Centropa:** www.centropa.org
- **Echoes and Reflections: Multimedia Holocaust Education Kit Anti-Defamation League:** www.echoesandreflections.org
- **Teaching Tolerance and "One Survivor Remembers," Southern Poverty Law Center:** www.teachingtolerance.com
- **Simon Wiesenthal Center:** www.simonwiesenthalcenter.org
- **University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute:** www.usc.edu/college/vhi
- **The REMEMBER Program of the Charleston Jewish Federation:** www.jewishcharleston.org/remember
- **A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust: Liberators, Florida Center for Instructional Technology, University of South Florida:** <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/people/liberato.htm>
- **Anne Frank Museum:** www.annefrank.nl
- **UNESCO Clearinghouse on Global Citizenship Education:** <http://gcedclearinghouse.org>

■ **Mini-Grant Program for Holocaust Education:** Funding is available for Holocaust education projects. Teachers are encouraged to apply. Subsidies may also be granted for teachers to participate in the above-mentioned educational opportunities. Project goals must coincide with the objectives of the Holocaust Council. For requirements or to download an application, visit the Council's website.

■ **Teachers' Advisory Committee:** This group of teachers from around the state has developed a PowerPoint

presentation and script available to teachers and holds educational conferences to assist with teaching the Holocaust. Daylong educational workshops are held in the fall. For more information, contact Emily Taylor, etaylor@lexington4.net, or visit the website, www.scholocaustcouncil.org.

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN AND THE HOLOCAUST

■ **Yad Vashem:** Growing collection of primary sources for the study of children as witnesses and observers, as

well as targets and victims of Nazism. Nazi policies toward children were central to Hitler's plan to remake the population of Europe into masters and slaves, with no place for Jews.

■ **U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum: Children During the Holocaust** An emerging focus of research and presentation, the experiences and observations of children are chronicled here through personal histories and historical footage.

■ **Anne Frank Museum, Amsterdam** Anne Frank's diary is many young people's introduction to World War II and the Holocaust. The answer to "Why is Anne so famous?" may really stem from the theme of Anne's coming of age and from the beauty and intimacy of her writing. This site reflects the Museum's multiple missions, as a research center, a creator of important exhibitions in the field of public history, a provider of curricula for every level of education, and a defender of human dignity everywhere. The site is a work of art itself continually in the making.

■ **A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust: Children** Pioneering online directory created at the University of South Florida with links to scholarship on the fate of all children in Nazi-occupied Europe.

■ **University of Southern California: Shoah Foundation** Links to sites that focus on ways children were included in Nazi persecution. "French Children of the Holocaust" and "Mengele's Children: The Twins of Auschwitz," are two titles.

Our sincere thanks and gratitude

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Contributing authors: A special thank you to all the contributing writers who spent hours researching and writing this historical narrative on the Holocaust.

Survivors, liberators, eyewitnesses: Thank you for telling us your stories. We have the deepest respect and gratitude to all of you who trusted us with your story and allowed us to tell the world. Only by hearing your testimonies and narratives can we continue to tell the truth about the Holocaust. And to the families of the survivors, liberators and eyewitnesses, you have honored your loved ones by keeping their memories alive.

The State newspaper: We are so grateful for your willingness to partner with us in this endeavor. You have the vehicle to reach the public, and we can provide you with the stories, both personal and historical. Thank you to Sara Johnson Borton, president and publisher of The State; Mark Lett, vice president and executive editor; Bernie Heller, vice president of advertising; Kathy Allen, director of marketing; and Rebekah Lewis Hall, special projects coordinator, who has spent countless hours developing these beautiful pages.

Send us your story

We invite those with experiences from the Holocaust to send their stories (500 words or fewer), along with three to four original photographs, to Barry Abels, barrya@jewishcolumbia.org.

Community Yom HaShoah Commemoration
Sunday, April 23rd | 5:00 PM
Tree of Life Congregation
6719 N Trenholm Road (29206)

featuring Hugo Schiller, Holocaust Survivor



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The caption the Associated Press distributed with this photo in 1945 read: “Probably for the first time in their lives, children in Belsen camps (in Germany) are able to laugh and play normally. Sweets toys and clothing have been sent in from outside the camp, some commandeered some given by soldiers and relief organizations. These four babies wearing new boots and warm clothes look all the brighter on May 2, 1945, since the British took over their welfare.”

1945 AP FILE PHOTO

