AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS • A ROTHMAN FOUNDATION PUBLICATION

PRISM

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY • AZRIELI GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JEWISH EDUCATION AND ADMINISTRATION

Chant for All the People on Earth

Not to forget not to ever forget so long as you live so long as you love so long as you breathe eat wash walk think see feel read touch laugh not to forget not to ever forget so long as you know the meaning of freedom of what lonely nights are to torn lovers so long as you retain the soul heart of a man so long as you resemble man in any way in any shape not to forget not to ever forget for many have already forgotten many have always planned to forget fire fear death murder injustice hunger gas graves for they have already forgotten and want you to forget but do not forget our beloved species not to forget not to ever forget for as long as you live carry it with you let us see it recognize it in each other's face and eyes taste it with each bite of bread each time we shake hands or use words for as long as we live not to forget what happened to six million Jews to living beings who looked just as we look men people children girls women young old good bad evil profound foolish vain happy unhappy sane insane mean grand joyous all dead gone buried burned not to forget not to ever forget for as long as you live for the earth will never be the same again for each shred of sand cries with their cries and our lungs are full of their dying sounds for god was killed in each of them for in order to live as men we must not forget for if they are forgotten O if they are forgotten forget me also destroy me also burn my books my memory and may everything I have ever said or done or written may it be destroyed to nothing may I become less than nothing for then I do not want even one memory of me left alive on cold killing earth for life would have no honor for to be called a man would be an insult –

LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY

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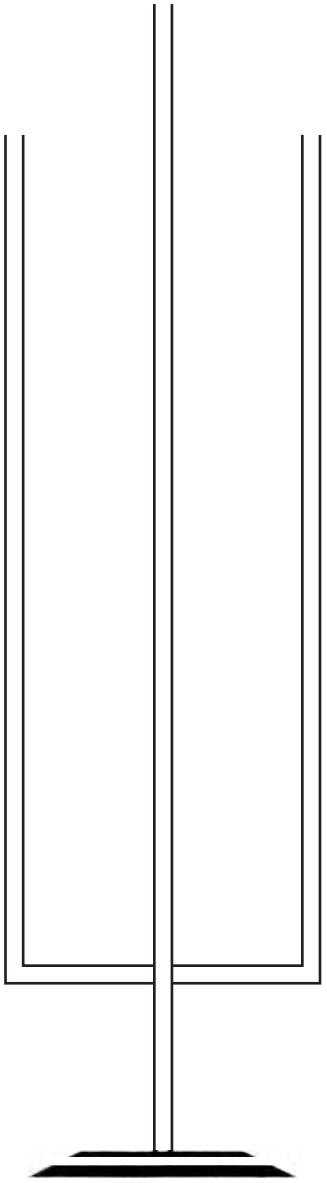
ABOUT THE FRONT COVER

The first line of Leslie Woolf Hedley's "Chant" captures the heart of this issue, commanding and warning us "not to forget not to ever forget so long as you live." What follows is a bewildered, rattling litany of just what we mustn't forget, how we mustn't forget it–and what will happen if we do.

ABOUT THE INSIDE COVERS

These photographs of survivors and their beloved family members who perished in the Holocaust were taken in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Ukraine, Poland, Russia, Lithuania, Austria, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Serbia. They illustrate the diversity of pre-war Central and Eastern European Jewish life: wealthy and poor, city and country folk, traditionally religious and newly modern. Over 22,000 additional old family photographs are available for downloading and classroom use from Centropa's database: *www.centropa.org/search-our-database-jewishmemory.*



In memory of

Henry I. Rothman ז"ל

and

Bertha G. Rothman ע"ה

לחמו מלחמות ה'

"who lived and fought
for Torah-true Judaism"

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PRISM
AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS

PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators is a publication of the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration at Yeshiva University. It is made possible by a generous grant from the Henry, Bertha, and Edward Rothman Foundation. Copies are available upon request. Contact prism@yu.edu to order.

EDUCATORS, HISTORIANS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, THEOLOGIANS, ARTISTS, WRITERS, POETS, AND OTHER INTERESTED AUTHORS ARE INVITED TO SUBMIT MANUSCRIPTS OR ART WORK ON THE FOLLOWING THEMES:

Portraits: Individual Jews and Their Lives Before, During, and After the Holocaust
Submissions due June 1, 2015

KEEP IN MIND:

- Submissions must be emailed to prism@yu.edu in Microsoft Word, using Times New Roman 12 font type, double-spaced, justified, and paginated. The American Psychological Association (APA) *Publication Manual* (6th Ed.) is Yeshiva University's required reference guide for publications.
- Poetry submissions must be sent to **Dr. Charles Adès Fishman,** carolus@optimum.net, our poetry editor. Poetry should be single-spaced. Include your name and email address on each poem.
- Photos and artwork must be attached as separate JPEG or TIF files and accompanied by permissions and captions. Submissions accompanied by documentary photos and artwork are given special consideration.
- Length of manuscript may vary; we seek essays from 4 to 14 double-spaced pages.
- Each issue, including all photos, will be available as a PDF on our web site, yu.edu/azrieli/research/prism-journal/, so permissions must include rights for online as well as print publication.

CONTACT DR. KAREN SHAWN AT SHAWN@YU.EDU WITH QUESTIONS, SUGGESTIONS, AND/OR QUERIES ABOUT SPECIFIC THEMES FOR FUTURE ISSUES.

PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators is a peer-reviewed journal. Acceptance of manuscripts for publication depends on the following factors: sound scholarship; originality; clear, concise, and engaging writing; relevance to theme; value and interest to audience of educators; and adherence to style guidelines. We do not publish previously published essays unless prior approval from the *PRISM* editors has been granted.

The content of *PRISM* reflects the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the Azrieli Graduate School and Yeshiva University.

Contents

Introduction

Funerals are always sad and anxiety-provoking, but those of survivors even more so. In the 30 years I have been learning and teaching about the Holocaust, survivors have been a cherished and crucial part of my education, my classroom and workshop instruction, and my personal life. Now, reading the obituaries that come far too frequently, all of us in the field of Holocaust Studies are wondering: How and what will we teach about this event without its mainstay—the witnesses? Without the personal, electric, unforgettable connection that survivors forge with their listeners, what will keep students learning and remembering?

Our cover poem, "Chant for All the People on Earth," by the late Leslie Woolf Hedley, trumpets this concern; the entire issue explores it. We hope that the message in this collection is clear: The story will not end with us, the last witnesses to the witnesses.

We are proud to welcome Israeli author Etgar Keret to our pages. "Shoes," the title of his short story, may evoke an iconic image of artifacts; his narrative, however, will soon lead you in another direction entirely. This story will prompt lively discussion about the future of Holocaust memory as well as about past and current methods of commemorating the event.

An altogether different feature is the inclusion of six short essays by middle- and high-school teachers: Shmuel Afek (Teaneck, New Jersey); Asmir Hasičić (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina); Melanie Shaul (Hadera, Israel); Wendy Warren and Katiusca Cirino (Sugarland, Texas); Margaret Chasan (Seattle, Washington); and Jeffrey Ellison (Glencoe, Illinois). Their narratives, along with that of Nicole Ripley, director of education at Chicago's Writers Theatre, who worked with Ellison, illustrate the uses they have made of resources offered by the Viennese-based institute Centropa, the Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation, "where Jewish history has a name, a face, a story." We chose to highlight the extensive and fascinating archive at centropa.org, which boasts 1,200 interviews, 22,000 digitized photos, 40 multimedia films, interdisciplinary exhibitions, and podcasts, because of its immeasurable value and its ease of use. Any teacher can join the 500 partner schools in 20 countries whose faculty and students already work with Centropa's materials. Edward Serotta, Centropa's director, offers us in these pages an overview of the center's beginnings and ongoing successes, and Warsaw historian Anka Grupinska describes the complex interview process with which Centropa's staff captured the life stories that comprise its rich database.

None of these essays would have been written or published, nor would we have had access to any of the accompanying photographs, including those that grace our inside covers, without the gracious and highly professional assistance of Dr. Lauren Granite, the US education director for Centropa and my co-editor for this entire section. Her never-flagging patience, attention to detail, thoughtful, nuanced, and careful editing, and daily support allowed our vision for this issue to become a reality.

Olivia Mattis, new to these pages, introduces us to the rescuer Aristides de Sousa Mendes, suggesting that through stories such as his, we can maintain and expand interest in survivors and those who saved them. Mattis shares a segment of José Ruy's new graphic novella about this rescuer and offers a brief overview of pedagogic research that supports classroom use of this medium. Israeli historian and poet Michal Held, another new contributor, writes about the Sephardic Holocaust and the capacity of the arts, in particular poetry, to ensure remembrance, while Myrna Goldenberg, also new to us, provides vividly detailed proof that documentary trial testimony may well prove an antidote to forgetting. Ruth Levitt, in her debut submission, introduces us to London's Wiener Library and its new focus on teaching history through never-before-published testimony about *Kristallnacht*.

Rafael Medoff, a frequent contributor, posits that political cartoons can engage today's students and encourage them to learn and retell the Holocaust narrative, and our art editor, Pnina Rosenberg, shows us the necessity and power of art as documentation. Ros Merkin, in a return appearance, reviews a book on original theater performed in Terezin, introducing a unique medium for engaging our students as they learn this remarkable history. Paula Cowan reviews a variety of websites that help students connect to survivors and their lives, and Carson Phillips and Martin Hagmayr share with us their detailed review of relevant apps to bring the history of the Holocaust to life.

Our poets, Charles Adès Fishman, Leslie Woolf Hedley (cover), Stephen Herz, Marilyn Kallet, Reva Sharon, and Florence Weinberger, ask, worry, warn, lament; they observe, deeply. As Charles Fishman (poetry editor of *PRISM*) wrote in his monumental text *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust* (2007), such poetry enables "us to feel . . . to be wounded . . . and, though never entirely, to heal. . . . [It] is memory given voice, and it is prayer"

(p. 31). The work of these poets will become a mainstay in classrooms around the world.

We welcome Dr. Mordecai Paldiel to our advisory board. He is the former director of the Department of the Righteous at Yad Vashem and currently teaches at Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women. We bid farewell to Rabbi Dr. Bernhard Rosenberg and Dr. Aden Bartura, who have served out their terms. We thank them for their help and support. Drs. Ilana Turetsky and Jeffrey Glanz are welcome additions to our department editors as they work with us from Israel!

Our generous benefactors, Mr. Henry Rothman and the Rothman Foundation, continue to support us, and for this we are grateful. This journal could not continue without Mr. Rothman's sponsorship. To him; to our esteemed board members; and to our superb Yeshiva University support staff, including project manager Steven Schloss and art director Emily Scherer Steinberg, I extend a heartfelt thank-you.

Will the memory of the Holocaust endure in a changed world? Are the elements of Shoah memory that served the second and third generations still appropriate—or might today's youth require that we rethink what it means? Acclaimed Israeli author Etgar Keret dares us to confront these questions with his story of a young boy who is torn between the terrible crimes of yesteryear and the realities of an era far removed.

Etgar Keret

Shoes

Translation by Margaret Weinberger Rotman[1]

On Holocaust Memorial Day our teacher Sara took us on bus number 57 to visit the museum of Volhynia Jewry, and I felt very important. All the kids in the class except me, my cousin, and one other boy, Druckman, had families that came from Iraq. I was the only one with a grandfather who had died in the Holocaust. Volhynia House was very beautiful and posh, all made of black marble, like millionaires' houses. It was full of sad black-and-white pictures and lists of people and countries and dead people. We walked past the pictures in pairs and the teacher said, "Don't touch!"

But I did touch one picture, made of cardboard, showing a thin, pale man who was crying and holding a sandwich in his hand. The tears came streaming down his cheeks like the divider lines you see on a highway, and my partner, Orit Salem, said she would tell the teacher that I touched it. I said I didn't care, she could tell whoever she wanted, even the principal, I didn't give a damn. It's my Grandpa and I'm touching whatever I want.

After the pictures, they took us into a big hall and showed us a movie about little children who were shoved into a truck and then suffocated with gas. Then a skinny old man got up on the stage and told us what bastards and murderers the Nazis were and how he took revenge on them, and he even strangled a soldier with his bare hands until he died. Djerby, who was sitting next to me, said the old man was lying; the way he looks, there's no way he can make any soldier bite the dust. But I looked the old man in the eye and believed him. He had so much anger in his eyes that all the rampages of all the iron-pumping hoods I'd ever seen seemed like small change in comparison.

Finally, when he finished telling us what he had done during the Holocaust, the old man said that what we had just heard was relevant not only to the past but also for what goes on nowadays, because the Germans still exist and still have a country. He said he was never going to forgive them, and that he hoped we would never ever go visit their country, either. Because when he went with his parents to Germany fifty years ago everything looked nice, but it ended in hell. People have short memories, he said, especially where bad things are concerned. People tend to forget, he said, but you won't forget. Every time you see a German, you'll remember what I told you. Every time you see German products, whether it's a television set or anything else, you should always remember that underneath the fancy wrapping there are parts and tubes that they made out of the bones and skin and flesh of dead Jews.

On the way out, Djerby said again that he'd bet anything the old man never strangled anybody in his life, and I thought to myself it was lucky that we had a made-in-Israel refrigerator at home. Why look for trouble?

Two weeks later, my parents came back from a trip abroad and brought me sneakers. My older brother had secretly told my mom that

that's what I wanted, and she got me the best pair in the world. Mom smiled as she handed me the present. She was sure I had no idea what was inside. But I recognized the Adidas logo on the bag right away. I took out the shoebox and said thank you. The box was rectangular, like a coffin, and in it were two white shoes with three blue stripes and the inscription ADIDAS on the side; I didn't have to open the box to know what they looked like.

"Let's put them on," my mother said and took off the wrapping, "to make sure they fit." She was smiling the whole time, and had no idea what was going on.

"They're from Germany, you know," I told her, squeezing her hand tightly.

"Of course, I know," Mom smiled, "Adidas is the best brand in the world."

"Grandpa was from Germany, too," I tried to give her a hint.

"Grandpa was from Poland," Mom corrected me. For a moment she became sad, but she got over it in no time. She put one shoe on my foot and started to tie the laces. I kept quiet. I realized there was nothing doing. Mom didn't have a clue. She had never been to Volhynia House.

Nobody had ever explained it to her. For her, shoes were just shoes and Germany was Poland. I let her put the shoes on me and didn't say a thing. There was no point in telling her and making her even sadder.

I thanked her again and kissed her on the cheek and said I was going out to play ball. "Be careful, eh?" my dad called, laughing, from his armchair in the front room. "Don't wear out the soles right away." I looked again at the pale hide covering my feet. I looked at them and remembered everything the old man who had strangled the soldier said we should remember. I touched the blue Adidas stripes and remembered my cardboard grandfather.

"Are the shoes comfortable?" my mother asked.

"Sure they're comfortable," my brother answered for me. "These aren't cheap Israeli sneakers. These are the same sneakers that the great Cruiff wears."

I tiptoed slowly toward the door, trying to put as little weight as I could on the shoes. And so I made my way gingerly to Monkeys Park. Outside the kids from the Borochov neighborhood had formed three teams: Holland, Argentina, and Brazil. It so happened that Holland needed a player, so they agreed to let me join in, although they never accept anyone who's not from Borochov.

At the beginning of the game I still remembered not to kick with the tip of my shoe, so that it wouldn't hurt Grandpa, but after a while I forgot, just like the old man at Volhynia House said people tend to do, and I even managed to kick a tiebreaker. But when the game was over, I remembered and looked at the shoes. All of a sudden they were so comfortable, much bouncier than when they were in the box.

"Some goals, eh?" I reminded Grandpa on the way home. "The goalie didn't know what hit him."

Grandpa didn't answer, but judging by the tread, I would say that he was pleased, too.

END NOTE

[1] From *The Bus Driver Who Wanted to Be God and Other Stories*, by Etgar Keret, 2004, London: Toby Press. Reprinted with permission.

"Never forget! grows more important with each passing year," Stephen Herz reminds us, not least because "the old Holocaust survivors are dying." His reflection echoes the theme of this volume with his question: "Who will be left / to rescue the dead from oblivion?"

Stephen Herz

Old Survivors Dying

the old Holocaust survivors are dying.
here, in America & around the world
they are dying & dying.
the ones who were marked with the star.
the ones who were marked with a number for a name.
the ones who survived the round-ups
the terror of the ghettos
the death trains.

the ones in hiding who weren't betrayed & survived.
the ones who lived as a hunted animal & survived.
the ones whose children were torn from them & "sent away."
the ones whose parents were shot in front of them.
the ones who fought for life surrounded by death.
the ones in the camps who never would have made it
without someone's help.
the ones whose father, mother, brothers & sisters,
grandmother & grandfather
were all gassed on arrival at Auschwitz.

the ones who cheated the Nazis & rode the *Kindertransport*
to a safe haven in England,
but never saw their parents again.
old survivors now — their ranks thinning out
dying & dying.

the ones who survived the selections.
the ones who lived with the smell of corpses & diarrhea
& saw their comrades dying.
the ones whose bodies were stained with blood
from the dogs' fangs.
the ones who walked back from work
dragging their comrades' corpses.
the ones who were covered with lice,
living in mud
on a starvation diet.

the ones who emptied the trucks
& threw the still warm bodies
into the graves.
the ones who couldn't cry anymore.
the ones who fought hunger, thirst, abuse, fatigue & despair,
but didn't throw themselves on the wire.
the ones who saw men, women & children being led to the gas.
the ones who nearly froze to death
but survived the death marches.
the ones who can't forget the indifference of the onlookers
& the silence of those
they'd believed to be their friends.

the ones who had neither homes nor families
nor countries to return to.
the ones who never discovered
what happened to their loved ones.
the ones who lived with & overcame
the pain & the nightmares.
the ones with traumatic wounds who still have sleepless nights.
the ones who can never forget the stench of burning flesh.
the ones who came back from the dead but are still there.

the ones who keep asking themselves
"why am I alive when six million died?"
the ones without a single person left in the world
who went on to build a new family, a new life.

the old survivors,
in their youth then
in their eighties now —
you've read their memoirs,
seen their Spielberg interviews —
in the schools, the churches, the synagogues,
you've heard their poignant voices —
voices of living history
that thrust us into the midst of things,
that give history a human face —
the voices fading, fading
like their blue tattoos.

as *Never Forget!* grows more important with each passing year,
who will be left to deny the deniers?
who will be left to speak for the burnt bodies,
who will be left
to rescue the dead from oblivion?

"Centropa was founded to commemorate the world destroyed by the Holocaust," writes institute director Edward Serotta, "not to focus on its destruction." Aiming "to preserve Jewish memory in the lands of the Holocaust before it is too late," the Vienna organization has archived 1,200 family stories and 22,000 old photographs and documents to teach students around the world about Jewish life in Europe. Centropa is a bold and creative response to the question that informs this entire issue of *PRISM*: How will we learn about, humanize, and remember the Holocaust's victims when the last of them are no longer with us? The eight short essays (pp. 13–45) that follow Serotta's overview vividly illustrate the work of Centropa and its historians and educators.

Edward Serotta

When the Last Survivor Is Gone: An Introduction to Centropa

> Centropa's approach speaks to the larger truth students must grasp—that the victims were human beings. To learn about the European Jews as victims only, without regard to the richness and complexity of their lives, dehumanizes them and their memory. This, of course, is antithetical to the goals of Holocaust education.
>
> —Mitchell Bloomer, Holocaust Resource Teacher at the Holocaust Memorial Resource and Education Center in Maitland, Florida (2012)

I first started working on Jewish issues in Central Europe in 1985. Over the next 15 years, I published three books that combined photographs and stories, produced four films for ABC's *Nightline*, and worked as a freelancer for several newspapers and magazines. During those years, I spent countless hours visiting elderly Jews in their Soviet-era high-rise blocks in Kiev, cramped apartments in Prague, and crumbling villas on Rose's Hill in Budapest. In almost every case, the people I met regaled me with stories as they took out their old family photo albums, pointed to one picture after another, and let their memories take wing.

I noticed, time and time again, that although most of the people in those photo albums had been murdered during the Holocaust, that grim fact was not what my hosts wanted to talk about. They wanted to tell stories about how their friends and relatives had lived and, as they did so, they took me back to the world in which they had been born and grown up, the world they had watched being destroyed, and the much smaller worlds they had made for themselves in the decades since. Save for the occasional paragraph I used in one of my books or newspaper articles, I didn't record the stories they told me. Over those 15 years, as each one of those elderly Jews died, it saddened me to know that they were taking with them the stories that only they could tell.

In early 2000, I decided to do something about this. I had recently met two young Jewish historians living in Budapest: Dora Sardi and Eszter Andor. The women, each having just given birth to her first child, were both already thinking of ways to pass on the stories their grandparents had been telling them over the years. Although their grandfathers had given video interviews to the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, Dora said, "I want my son to know more about his great-grandfather than his time in a concentration camp." When I asked whether her grandfather had old pictures and would tell her stories about them, she laughed and said, "You don't know the half of it." So Centropa was born. Our goal: to preserve Jewish memory in the lands of the Holocaust before it is too late.

HELPING OLD PICTURES SPEAK: THE STRUGGLE TO CREATE A WORKING METHODOLOGY

The Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, the Fortunoff Archive, and many other organizations were

founded with one very worthy goal in mind: to record video interviews in which survivors describe what their families endured during the years of the Third Reich. While testimony that details the destruction wrought by the crime of the Holocaust is of great import, our goal was entirely different: to commemorate, through oral histories, the world it had destroyed.

If anyone had previously attempted to create an oral history project integrating old family photographs and their stories into a searchable online database, Dora, Eszter, and I were not aware of it. That meant we would have to till our own soil, plant our own wheat, and bake our own bread. Nearly two years passed before we had fine-tuned a methodology and work flow that would bring us the results we wanted.

HOW OUR ORAL HISTORY PROJECT DEVELOPED

Among our colleagues working with survivor interviews was Kim Simon of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. She told us, "You need a good coordinator, someone who will oversee everything: Find the interviewers and interviewees; organize the visits; send the rights contracts; and coordinate with the translator, transcriber, and scanner." That is what we did, and we are still grateful to Kim. Eszter, Dora, and I began interviewing in mid-2000, reviewed the results, made changes as necessary in our procedures, and forged ahead.

Seeking additional advice, I contacted Margalit Bejarano, then Director of Oral Histories at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and asked if she could help. Margalit agreed and attended the interviewer seminars that we organized in Thessaloniki, St. Petersburg, Budapest, Istanbul, and Bucharest. She reviewed our database template and lectured each of our groups on how to get the best personal stories from our respondents.

We codified our methodology in a 150-page interview guidebook that we translated into seven languages. We trained our interviewers to divide every life story into 16 chapters. We taught them how to ask open-ended questions and how to tease out stories as respondents shared their old family pictures. Photo-cataloging software used by museums and archives was far beyond our budget, but Dejan Petrovic, a member of the Belgrade Jewish community, came to work for us in Vienna and introduced us to Filemaker, an inexpensive and user-friendly database program. Dejan quickly adapted it for the use of our interviewers and trained them all in its use. Concurrently, we realized that every picture could be assigned to at least one of five basic categories: portraits, activities, military, Holocaust, and documents. The materials within each category were organized using scores of keywords, all of which were included in the Filemaker database template that every interviewer received on a CD.

In the first visit to each interviewee, we explained our interview procedure and delved into the interviewee's family tree. Subsequently, we asked these survivors to describe in as much detail as possible their prewar lives: their town, grandparents, school, youth clubs, what their parents did for work, the books and newspapers they read. In the wartime stories covering their descent into or escape from hell, which came after the initial interviews, we encouraged participants to tell us as much or as little as they wished about this black chapter in their lives. The postwar stories covered chapters such as interviewees' spouses and in-laws, getting a job, starting a family, their children's leaving home, and their activities since retirement. We interviewed survivors in countries we knew well, specifically Hungary, Poland, Austria, Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria. Most interviews took place in three meetings, each session hours long; many others spanned five, six, or more sessions. It quickly became clear that Centropa's interviewers would need to invest a minimum of 40 hours to complete each interview.

Word spread quickly about the work we were doing and dozens of other Jewish communities contacted us with requests to participate. By 2005 we had a total of 140 freelancers working for us as we added Russia and Ukraine, the three Baltic states, and the successor states of Yugoslavia. In each country, we had a coordinator, several interviewers, a scanner, a transcriber, a translator or two, and a historian who would review each interview and often send the interviewer back to ask more questions or clarify a point.

As our work proceeded and I traveled throughout Europe and the United States to find the funds to keep us going, the query I heard most often from potential donors was why Centropa chose to use old family photographs and audio-taped interviews rather than relying on video, as nearly everyone else was doing. There were several reasons. First, our interviews might last as long as 20 hours, and we could not imagine that anyone would want to watch anyone speak for so long. Second, hiring an excellent sound technician and videographer can be costly, and finding such professionals in 15 countries would prove more than difficult. The most important reason, though, was based on my own experience: When I was writing a newspaper or magazine article and found that I had forgotten to ask a question, I could phone the interviewee a day, a week, or a month later and simply slip the response into the story. This cannot be done in a video shoot.

By 2010, we had interviewed 1,200 elderly Jews in 15 countries in Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Jewish communities of the Balkans, Turkey, and Greece [see Held, pp. 56–62, in this issue—Ed.]. We had digitized some 22,000 photographs and documents. The biographies we had assembled, in original transcriptions and in English

translation, would have run well over 55,000 pages if someone had accidently hit the print button.

Every interview was audiotaped and transcribed, word for word, in the original language. When we translated them into English, however, we eliminated our questions and arranged the responses in chronological order. Though this is anathema for academics, historians are free to use our original-language audio recordings or their transcriptions. (To date, some 44 master's and doctoral students have indeed requested and received them.) For the rest of us—especially for American high school teachers and their students—the English translations are accessible, translated works of autobiography, which is why these stories have proven so popular. Our data show that some 150,000 of our annual 250,000 unique website visitors read through at least one interview online.

As we prepared throughout 2002 for the launch of our website, we realized that if we were going to pay tribute to 20th-century Central European Jewish memory, we ought to enrich the site with additional material relevant to our subject. This is why, when centropa.org went live in September of that year, visitors found blog entries on Jewish foods, written first by Mimi Sheraton and later by Jayne Cohen; travel tips, by Ruth Ellen Gruber; and collections of essays and short stories written by contemporary regional Jewish writers. All this went online, along with parallel websites in German and Hungarian; some material was included in seven additional languages. Appraising our intensive efforts to create as comprehensive a look at 20th-century Central European Jewish history as possible, historian Tom Segev (2002) wrote in *Haaretz* that Centropa "might possibly [be] the largest Jewish museum in the world on the Internet" (n.p.).

As our archive of stories continued to grow, we learned and cultivated still other ways of bringing Jewish memory to life: illustrated books based on interviews; traveling exhibitions comprised of pictures and stories; and, best of all, films drawing on a variety of the materials at our disposal.

FROM STILL PICTURES TO MOVING IMAGES

The concept for producing a multimedia film was simple enough: We would take one of our most compelling interviews, which often stretch to 40 or 50 pages; hone that life story into a 15- or 20-minute script using the original words of our interviewee; and then illustrate that script with family photographs, maps, stock film footage, and other archival photographs. After our respondents or their families approved the stories, we hired well-known actors in Prague, Warsaw, Vienna, Berlin, Bucharest, Sofia, Skopje, and other cities to read the scripts, and musicians to compose and perform musical soundtracks.

Our film program has become our signature offering and has brought us into more schools than we could have imagined. However, we never made films specifically for a student audience, nor will we. Rather, we make the most compelling films we can. As of October 2014, they have been shown at film festivals in the US, Europe, and Israel, and on national television in Austria, Hungary, Bosnia, and Serbia. We have more than 30 biographical films currently online and add two or three each year.

We also produce short documentaries, sometimes narrated by such prominent personalities as American journalist Morley Safer and the Israeli journalist and activist Eliezer Yaari. Topics for these short films include the changes in the map of Europe over the past 200 years; why Jewish soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army were so loyal to Franz Josef I; and how Bulgaria managed to protect its own Jews during the Holocaust even while sending those of occupied Macedonia and Thrace to Treblinka. Laced with maps, archival photographs, and film footage, each film serves as a gateway to a lesson and class discussion.

LISTENING TO TEACHERS, CREATING AN EDUCATION PROGRAM

When Centropa began operating in 2000, we had no educators on our staff and no intention of entering the field of education. When our website went live in 2002, however, the press discovered us, and over the next three years we were profiled in newspapers and on radio in the US, England, and Germany. Enthusiastic emails from teachers followed, asking what educational programs we offered. Our answer: None. I was, however, intrigued by the possibility, and began to visit Jewish schools in the United States, wanting to learn from teachers and students alike what they found compelling about our site. I should have anticipated the answer: the stories.

From 2007 to 2010, we collaborated on developing programs with a growing network of teachers in American Jewish schools and both public and Jewish schools in Europe, finding that our materials worked just as well for Jewish schools in Boston, San Diego, and New York as for public and Jewish schools throughout Poland, Hungary, and Lithuania.

Most of the teachers with whom we work—some 500 in 20 countries—cannot be described as Holocaust educators. They are, rather, teachers of history [see Afek, pp. 16–18, and Hasičić, pp. 19–21]; English as a second language [see Shaul, pp. 24–26]; social studies [see Warren & Cirino, pp. 27–29]; humanities [see Chasan, pp. 30–35]; or literature [see Ellison, pp. 36–39]. They respond enthusiastically to Centropa's short, visually engaging films that show students that the people they are studying were similar to them. These young people played sports; spent time with friends and family; went on vacation; got in trouble once in a while; fought with their siblings; and, if they survived,

FIG 1: Aron Neuman talks to a student from a Viennese high school. Aron, born in Poland in 1917, lost 129 family members in the Holocaust; he managed to escape from a labor camp with fake papers. He remained in Poland until 1969, moved to Israel until 1977, and then came to Vienna, where he lived until his death in 2012.

made their way through hard times. Educators in classrooms and museums appreciate that we show entire life stories, and not just video snippets of elderly Jews describing the horrors they endured. The inclusion of stories about their postwar lives, including the fall of Communism and the wars in Yugoslavia, makes the films valuable in a variety of additional contexts.

Against this backdrop, we created a three-step process for finding and nurturing educators who would become our emissaries. Listening to teachers became the keystone of our educational approach. First, we hold afternoon workshops for prospective participants at schools and invite those who express interest to attend weekend seminars in their country. There, teachers watch our films and use our database, then collaborate on lesson plans that they share with each other. Our experience shows that the most effective learning takes place when teachers are actively involved in using the history they learn to create programs designed specifically for their classes. Seminar participants who produce the most innovative lesson plans and projects are invited to our annual summer academies, where up to 90 educators from 20 countries join us in one or more of the great cities of Central Europe, such as Berlin, Vienna, Prague, Budapest, and Sarajevo. Over the course of eight days, teachers meet with art historians and scholars of Jewish history, form teams, and work together to create interactive learning projects. After returning home and implementing what they have designed, the teachers share the results online so that other Centropa educators can adapt them. There is a constant exchange of pedagogical expertise on centropa.org as plans are fine-tuned and revised.

CENTROPA'S FOUR CORE BELIEFS

As our educational programs have matured, we have developed four core beliefs:

- *Stories are universal and stories connect us all.* The stories of Jews in Central Europe from the last century have meaning for 21st-century students, no matter where they live, because they are human stories, from the small comedies of everyday life to the great tragedies that befell them.
- *No one teaches a teacher better than another teacher.* Educators understand what happens in a classroom and are thus most effective in conveying how Centropa's resources work—and their value.
- *Students need to learn interactively.* Teachers tell us that their students work harder on projects that use the Centropa database, films, and exhibitions than they do on others, because ours are student-driven, active, and highly engaging.
- *We don't believe in borders.* Students conduct their lives today on social media. They are not limited by geographical restrictions; their Facebook friends might

live anywhere in the world. While some schools may still limit their educational opportunities to what happens within their walls or their city, we don't. Our films, databases, and programs create a virtual bridge on which students and teachers from an entire host of countries can meet.

"WE NOW HAVE A WORLD"

> Family stories have a way of bringing history closer to students. After we used Centropa . . . for the very first time, my students weren't thinking that Jewish history was only about the Holocaust. Until we had Centropa, it was all we had to offer them: victims. Now we [have] stories of world-class Hungarian photographers, army officers, business people, and Orthodox families who were living in small towns throughout the country. We now have what we didn't have before in this field. We now have a world. (Komódi Mezőberény, personal correspondence, 2013)

Centropa may well be the only oral history institute with its own social club. Because our interview process was so thorough and intense, we realized early on that we weren't conducting interviews—we were building relationships. Although the idea was not in our mandate, we established Café Centropa clubs for our interviewees in Vienna and Budapest, and these people have been meeting regularly since 2006. Up to 100 elderly friends join us in Vienna, and some 50 in Budapest. We invite singers, authors, journalists, and students [Figs. 1 (p. 11) and 2] to come and speak with them, and we send newsletters and call them once each month, too. Not surprisingly, we lose at least one survivor we interviewed almost every month. The passing of each is like the closing of a library. It is sad but inevitable, and we are grateful that at least we have their stories in films, exhibitions, and books that paint a picture of the Jewish world of Mitteleuropa (Central Europe) that is no more.

The creation of an archive of 1,200 family stories and 22,000 old photographs and documents does not a comprehensive record make, but it is a small light flickering in the vast black hole of forgetting. The importance of this archive will grow in the decades to come, as our stories offer a bridge to let teachers and students enter, explore, and appreciate a world now lost. There can be no more fitting monument to this destroyed world than that.

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FIG 2: Café Centropa was established in 2006 when Centropa invited our elderly interviewees to a meeting at the Jewish community's kosher restaurant. Dr. Martha Kralowa, from Bratislava, talks with a student.

Anka Grupinska describes postwar Jewish life in Poland and her experiences as coordinator of Centropa's oral history project there. By interviewing elderly Jews in Polish cities, towns, and villages, she sought to preserve a tiny slice of a world destroyed.

In the short reflection that follows this essay (pp. 16–18), Shmuel Afek, a high school teacher at a Jewish day school in New York City, explains that Grupinska's work and his summer with Centropa changed the way he teaches.

Anka Grupinska

Searching for Polish Jewish Memory: A Race Against the Clock

The Jewish world of pre-war Poland was colorful and populous, rich in diversity, an inherent feature of the newly reestablished Polish state.[1] Jews were a culturally separate reality and at the same time culturally interwoven, inextricable from the Polish world—and then the Holocaust came. Within six years, this world had been eradicated.

POSTWAR POLISH JEWS: VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

Before the war, there were some 3,500,000 Jews living in Poland. No more than 240,000 survived. The majority of them attempted to resettle in Poland, if only temporarily, with the largest Jewish centers in Lower Silesia, Łódź, Szczecin, Krakow, and Warsaw. Political parties were reactivated, Jewish cooperatives formed, Yiddish books and papers printed, schools teaching Yiddish and Hebrew opened. While the religious Jews who survived did not return in any numbers, it seemed for that brief time that a secular world had survived and would live on here, somehow, and sort itself out, one way or another.

Returning Jews, however, were not welcomed by their neighbors. The Communist authorities did not want pluralism; in addition, they slowly nationalized and centralized everything. Even for those Jews who had been Communists before the war, including state and local administrators, and for the pre-war secular Jewish intelligentsia, antisemitism remained a simmering threat, boiling over in the 1946 Kielce Pogrom and similar episodes. So the Jews either left or blended into the background, divesting themselves doggedly and patiently of their otherness. Only then, invisible, could they live with a sense of relative security.

In the 1980s and 1990s Jews lived among Poles, for the most part, entirely incognito. True, undiluted Jews, who had been born in the pre-war Jewish world in Poland and had witnessed its death, had melted into their surroundings at once in the early post-war years. They had changed their Jewish names to Polish ones, albeit in the favored pattern of retaining some semblance of meaning or sound, as in changing from Blum to Kwiatkowski (*blum* is a flower in German and Yiddish; *kwiatek* is a flower in Polish), or Rozenman to Różański. If they carried within themselves any of their former attachment to their religion or tradition, they soon—and apparently relatively painlessly—dropped it. The few synagogues that had survived the war stood empty, and no Jew was recognizable by dress anymore. They did not return to their hometowns, for they had no reason to do so, and, from the hundreds of interviews I conducted, it is clear that they did not maintain contact with family and friends who had emigrated. The unquestionable purpose of these actions—the acquisition of invisibility—was to create a sense of security in this new world, where there was no space for difference or its repercussions.

In a single apartment block, a tall building in a big city, Mr. Stern, now called Gwiazda, lived on the 11th floor, and Mr. Schumacher, who now went by the name of Szewc, lived on the seventh. They were both old enough to have been brought up in Jewish *shtetlach* (hamlets) in southern Poland. Both of them had photographs, kept well hidden at the bottom of a drawer, of grandfathers with long sidelocks. Both had Polish wives who knew little about the Jews. Both had carved out careers in new government offices, and the two had taken the same elevator for over 30 years. They knew each other but nothing about each other. So completely had they buried their Jewishness that neither recognized the other's identity. Neither had any idea that they had anything in common with each other beyond the elevator and the new reality that they both inhabited.

In 1989, the year when the centrally managed political system was replaced with a democratic one, a variety of conflicting sources indicate that there were between 5,000 and 12,000 Jews living in Poland. Everything began to change: the political, legal, and economic systems; education; and culture in all its incarnations. As these most fundamental elements of life evolved, the Polish people brought down what had so recently been high walls, and broke out of the limits within which they had been restrained for over 40 years.

The greatest, most rapid, and most visible changes, I believe, were in mindset. In the most general terms, the residents of Poland began to examine their identity. They now began to look at themselves more closely and to re-examine portraits of their parents and grandparents, noticing previously undetected traits of their forebears and themselves that they had been stifling for years. Both Christian and Jewish Poles began to explore their shared and separate pasts, their historical relations. Young Poles who could not remember and did not know what had happened began to want to know. Young Jews, in particular, went looking for any and every trace of their history.

In the 1990s, the revival of the religious and cultural life of Poland's Jews commenced. Jewish religious communities and educational institutions that are still active today were created. A new periodical on Jewish issues came out. The old Jewish theater, functioning since 1950, reached new audiences. The Jewish Historical Institute began to conduct its work of focusing on the fate of Polish Jews under the Nazis more openly when the Ministry of Culture assumed its support and provided it with a budget. Universities began to offer courses on Jewish topics. Last but not least, Warsaw saw the opening of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews—a Polish institution founded, in Poland's first public-private institutional partnership, by the City of Warsaw, the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and the Association of the Jewish Historical Institute of Poland—colossal in size, cost, and significance, dedicated to the affairs of Polish Jews.

The words *Jew* and *Jewish* came back into the Polish language and consciousness. People participated in increasing numbers of Polish Jewish ventures, institutions, programs, and projects, rich with the content of a more than 20-year history of public discourse about Polish Jewish relations. In a country where there are currently an estimated 8,000–15,000 Jews or Poles of Jewish descent, several hundred books (remarkably many, relative to the Jewish population!) are published every year on Jewish subjects. The Jewish community in Poland is growing, not because there is a flood of immigrants, but rather from people's discovering or returning to their roots. Those coming back to Judaism, both the tradition and the religion, are very young people, sometimes the second but usually the third generation, who grew up in Polish families with a hidden Jewish identity, inherited more often from a grandfather than a grandmother. In other cases, former émigrés, old Polish Jews, are returning to their language, to their culture, and to a climate that is more moderate than Israel's—returning, in their own words in my interviews, to die here.

CENTROPA'S DATABASE: "WITNESS TO A JEWISH CENTURY"

Centropa's oral history project was launched in Eastern and Central Europe and the Balkans in 2000. I coordinated the program in Poland from 2003 until 2007. Every month, the number of potential interviewees dwindled, and with every month we were losing unrecorded history. Time was of the essence. I assembled a team of over a dozen people to work with me: historians, ethnologists, sociologists, political scientists, undergraduates, doctoral students. A detailed methodological framework was imposed by Centropa, but the specifics of the Polish situation were such that we had to formulate rules that were binding only here. We talked to old Polish Jews, both those who had remained in Poland during the war, surviving in ghettos, in camps, or on the Aryan side, and those who had made their way to the East—the former Soviet Union—and returned to Poland to live here after the war. On occasion, we talked to people who had returned to Poland years after emigrating.

Given that so many survivors living in Poland had done everything possible to remain invisible, searching for interviewees for Centropa's oral history project was not easy in 2003. To be sure that they could remember the pre-war period, our interviewees had to have been born no later than 1932; we also looked for those who had at least a few pre-war photographs tucked away in a drawer. These elderly Polish Jews were usually mistrustful, uncooperative, and suspicious. The fact that many of them were familiar with the titles of my articles and books on the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto went only a little way toward easing contact. Yet the urgent fact was that their unrecorded histories needed documentation: I had to be patiently persuasive. I told them that individual stories help us understand history better than dry, generalized descriptions of movements and monumental events; that they would be able to authorize every detail of the text composed on the basis of the interviews; and that, if they so wished, all the material could be recorded and filed in an archive for five, ten, or fifteen years, or even longer. Six interviewees took advantage of this option, asking that their interviews not be published before 2010 and even 2015. In total, 68 elderly Jews in six cities agreed to be interviewed; sadly, three passed away before they could sign our rights contracts.

The process itself went something like this: The interviewer (in most cases, a woman) met up with, say, Mrs.

Bornstein—now Bronisławska—in a place where the latter felt comfortable (perhaps in her apartment or in a quiet room in the Jewish Community Center). The questions were open-ended and broad, not necessarily in chronological order (the material was ordered at the text-editing stage). The first few questions were designed to guide the interviewee to enter the world of the story to be told from the angle from which he or she wanted to enter it. The interviewer had to be patient and tactful—an attentive ear rather than a quick tongue. The idea was to hear the interviewee out, to create a safe space in which the interviewer felt comfortable touching on what might prove to be certain uncomfortable, personal subjects, going into them further only when the moment was right and the interviewee ready. The most important aim was to achieve a relationship in which the unwilling or, at best, suspicious narrator dropped his or her defensive stance. The greatest success was to build a relationship in which the talker began to like the interviewer and to want to tell her more. I have to say that these were in the majority.

There was always more than one meeting—at least two, usually three, sometimes even four—each one usually lasting three hours. Then the interviewer produced a verbatim transcript with every comma, every sigh, noted. This transcription, dozens of pages in length, was then pared to a story of between 10 and 20 pages, while also being edited for clarity and correctness. These stories, authorized and translated into English, can be read on the Centropa website and in Centropa publications. All told, we conducted about 65 interviews and scanned over 1,000 photographs. The audio recordings of those hours of interviews, as well as the transcripts, final stories, and scans of photographs, are stored in the master archive in Vienna.

Of all of the different periods and worlds our interviewees had lived through—the prewar period, the Holocaust, postwar Poland—the most important for us to hear about was that which preceded the Holocaust. Such memories had rarely been described with such attention to detail in other oral history projects, and those telling the stories—whether joyfully, nostalgically, or sorrowfully—were always eager to immerse themselves in their reminiscences of that time. That world, though it may have been poor and full of hardships, was the world of their youth, of joy and hope. This was the world that the protagonists of the stories found most pleasant to reconstruct: a world irrevocably lost.

The reactions to telling stories of the Holocaust period varied. Some survivors remembered in great detail; others spoke sparely, tersely. Some expressed deep emotions, others repressed all feeling. All our interviewees knew that they would have to talk about the Holocaust, and almost all of them wanted to have that part of the interview over as quickly as possible.

The way in which they talked about the postwar period was entirely different, and it was some time before I realized how surprising their postwar stories were (and what unique material they would be for scholars). In fact, they were hardly stories at all. There was nothing in particular to talk about beyond a few central facts: They settled in this or that city, got a job, married a Polish husband or wife (rarely a Jewish one), had children—all ordinary, nothing worth talking about. Even after an official anti-Jewish campaign began in March 1968, following the 1967 Six-Day War in the Middle East, and actions were undertaken by the Polish government that caused some 20,000 Jews to leave, those who chose to remain seem to have been unaffected. Yes, it happened. Some lost their jobs, but it was no particular crisis. Others recognized the discrimination, but it didn't particularly affect or even concern them. They had covered their tracks carefully; they had disappeared. They were invisible to others, invisible even to themselves.

The elderly Polish Jews we interviewed speak a tongue of their own, and we recorded that tongue as carefully as possible so as not to lose, alter, or pass over tones, flavors, and meanings now gone. These Polish tongues had often grown out of Yiddish, or at least Yiddish was the context in which they had grown up. Our interviewees use unusual Polish and a variety of forms of Yiddish because "that was how it used to be said," or how they had remembered it. In their language there are no incorrect forms—all are equally correct—for at least two reasons: Pronunciation in Yiddish was never standardized the way spelling was, so that Yiddishisms cannot be identified as part of Lithuanian, Polish, or Ukrainian dialects. Second, the words used come from a variety of cultures and classes. Nevertheless, no matter how contorted, the language used must be faithfully recorded; it is the only post-Holocaust legacy we have from these survivors. Yet, I fear that, in spite of the extraordinary competence of our translators, at least part of this value of our interviews has been lost. Translating this material is a little like translating poetry: The flavor and color of the same phrase is different in two different languages [see Held on the lost Ladino language, pp. 56–62—Ed.]. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that the English translations of interviews conducted in Polish are of inestimable value. This was the last time we would be able to elicit, listen to, and record the history of a time and people who are no more.

SMALL-SCALE AND LARGE-SCALE HISTORY

Oral history projects are small-scale history. The probability of distortion or falsification is limited; if either does occur, it results not from intent but from inability to remember. Large-scale history is built from small-scale histories, creating a simplified image, losing and smooth-

ing out details to create a broad overview. Consequently, it passes over, underplays, or even rewrites important themes.

Personal stories, small histories, bring those differences to light. What we have achieved at Centropa is a record of individual fates. Yet these, too, even if there were thousands of them, could never combine to create a comprehensive record. There are too many gaps, too many unspoken words, unarticulated thoughts, and unremembered details. Just as the community of invisible Polish Jews at the threshold of the 21st century was vastly incomplete, the image of the bygone world it recreated is correspondingly incomplete. No archive, no matter how big, will ever provide us with a full and complete picture of Jewish life in Poland before the war. That Poland is gone, and those who talked about it, scraping the last details from their reprocessed memories, were members of a decimated society.

END NOTE

[1] Poland was reborn as a state in 1918, when it regained independence after over 100 years of partition. During the years 1772–1795, the country was successively carved up among its three neighbors Russia, Austria, and Prussia.

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Shmuel Afek explains how Grupinska's work takes root in his American history classroom. By placing the specific events we call the Holocaust into a larger context that includes post-war European Jewish communities, Afek believes that we honor those who stayed in the very place of the crimes and give our students an additional narrative to remember after the survivors are gone.

Shmuel Afek

The Third Alternative: Building a Life in Post-Shoah Europe

The story will not change but the way we tell the story will change, as it must, as the storytellers themselves change.
—Daniel Mendelsohn, *The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million (2007)*

Teofila "Toska" Silberring grew up in Kazimierz, the Jewish area of Kraków, with loving parents, an adored brother, friends, and in material comfort. This idyll was shattered when the German army invaded Poland in 1939 and, one day soon after, Toska returned from school to learn her mother had been shot by German soldiers. The remaining family members were soon taken to the newly established ghetto, forced to take leave of one another. Toska was imprisoned in Plaszow, then Auschwitz; forced to endure death marches; made to suffer starvation and disease; but when it was all over, Toska remembered her father's instructions and returned home to wait for him and her brother. They never came.

As teachers of the Holocaust, my colleagues and I have taught this story many times, but one thing makes this narrative, and the others found in the Centropa interview database, different: Toska, now bereft of family, did not leave Poland for Israel or for the United States. She stayed in Kraków. There she rebuilt her life, married, and had a child (today a university professor in Kraków) and, towards the end of her life, looked back with satisfaction at the many personal decisions she had made after the Shoah, including her choice to stay in Poland.

Centropa's large database is made up primarily of

stories like this, of Jews from Central and Eastern Europe who, after the Shoah, remained in Europe and rebuilt their lives and communities there. For the Jews who survived, this was what I call the *third alternative:* staying in Europe. By collecting these stories, Anka Grupinska and Centropa have enabled these communities and individuals to regain a place in the spotlight of research and study, a place of dignity and life.

BRINGING THE BABY OF THE LAST JEWS OF EASTERN EUROPE TO THE CLASSROOM

Edward Serotta, the director of Centropa, often tells of how, as a journalist, he went in search of "the last Jew of Eastern Europe" and saw so much evidence of the rekindling of Jewish life that he had to ask, "What do you call the *baby* of the last Jews?" These Jews who had stayed in Europe had no intention of being the last of anything: they had chosen life and they intended to continue it. The second, post-Holocaust generation in these lands was, for decades, unavailable to most of the world because of the Cold War and the narrative that we told ourselves (and many of us still do): that Jewish existence in Europe had been all but extinguished in the Holocaust. For some of us, the only way to make sense of this catastrophe was to see it as a defining moment in the history of the Jewish people, one that had inexorably moved us towards long-awaited statehood in Israel and equality in the United States. In this narrative, the remaining Jews in Eastern Europe were destined to be saved (as indeed Soviet Jewry was) or die out, the insignificant remnant of a long, bloody, and persecution-filled chapter of our history. We didn't account for the fact that, in those countries, the last Jews had had children and grandchildren, many of whom saw themselves as both proud Jews and citizens of their new, post-Communist countries.

A NEW PERSPECTIVE ON HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

Centropa's summer academies bring educators from the US, Israel, and Europe to meet these last Jews and their descendants in the cities where they lead their lives. When I participated, in 2013, I visited elderly interviewees at Café Centropa in Vienna, where Jewish survivors come to socialize; Jewish community leaders in Sarajevo; and the young Polish Jews in Kraków who run the city's active Jewish Community Center. Meeting Jews and observing their lives in these settings compelled my colleagues and me to redesign our history curricula to include an in-depth study of post-Holocaust Jewish life in Europe. Our goal was to make sure our students understood that a remnant of this life continued in Europe even as it planted roots and flourished in America and Israel. We also wanted to encourage students to explore the effects of European post-Holocaust narratives on life there today.

The facts that Jewish life managed to continue in Europe even after the Shoah, that Jewish cultural organizations celebrate this life and contribute to a sense of community and continuity, and that Polish Yiddish theater is vibrant again are all part of a Jewish history rarely taught in a unit on the Holocaust. Yet without this part of the narrative, the full story of survival cannot be understood.

By including in our teaching the stories of Jews who stayed in the lands of the Holocaust, by encouraging students to read the testimonies so painstakingly collected by Grupinska and her interviewers, we give our students a perspective that alters not just how they see the Shoah but how they understand 20th-century history: European Jewry was forever changed by the Shoah, but it has continued. While these Jewish communities may look nothing like they did before the decimation, they exist and are being created anew, within the political and social realities of our century and by young Jews with modern, global sensibilities. These emerging communities, too, are part of the story of the Holocaust, and we need to teach about them not only to honor their existence but also because our students are part of this new world, one in which young European Jews are claiming their past and staking out their future.

The Holocaust is no less cataclysmic for the addition of this context but it is now part of a broader picture, including both that which came before and that which has evolved since. The second and third post-Holocaust generations are now building communities in their own image in their parents' hometowns and cities. For many, the decision to live and build in these countries is not out of respect for the memory of the Shoah; rather, according to such researchers as Katka Reszke (2013, pp. 104–105) and Stanisław Krajewski (2005, pp. 17–18), it grew out of a sense of responsibility for the legacy of hundreds of years of Jewish life that formed the foundation and structure of the Jewish world in which many of us now live. Thus, the stories from Central and Eastern European Jewish communities are unique and essentially different from those from Israel and the United States: For these young and middle-aged Jews, Europe is home because they have lived there for many generations, not because they found refuge there in the late 19th or 20th century, as did the grandparents or parents of the majority of present-day inhabitants of the two largest Jewish communities in the world.

The Jewish historical narrative has always found a place for specific events—the destruction of the First and of the Second Temple, the expulsion from Spain—within the larger sweep of our history, as catastrophic as each was at the time of its occurrence. This is the way of history: Stories shift slightly with each generation's telling. It is thus time to include in our story the Jews who stayed in

Europe after the Shoah, simply because the Shoah did not put an end to European Jewry. It was a catastrophe, of course, after which their communities could never be the same, but they would continue nonetheless. Millions of Jews were murdered in the Holocaust; the Jewish people were not.

It is impossible to know how these small communities will develop, just as we cannot say with any certainty how those in Israel or the United States will evolve. Two things are, I believe, certain: The Jewish people will continue to evolve in ways that we cannot now imagine (although it will remain recognizable as the same ancient people), and the continuing efforts of organizations such as Centropa to preserve and teach the stories of Jewish people will allow their memories not only to remain with us when the survivors are not, but also to help solidify the foundation and build an even broader basis for our Jewish future.

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Asmir Hasičić, a teacher of history, civics, and ethics in Sarajevo, observes that "Centropa's stories of individual Holocaust survivors motivate and inspire our students, none of whom has ever met a survivor in person. For us here in Bosnia, learning about them and drawing conclusions about their actions can help our students create a better postwar society." As Hasičić's Bosniak Muslim, Croatian, Serbian, and Jewish students in Sarajevo discussed and researched the 1990s Bosnian War, they also broadened their understanding of the Holocaust and its significance for our time.

Asmir Hasičić

Teaching the Holocaust in a World Without Survivors

In my Sarajevo classroom, I teach history, civics, and ethics, so I easily find time for Holocaust studies, unlike some of my American counterparts. However, as a teacher of Bosniak Muslims, Serbians, Croats, and Jews, I must take great care in constructing my lessons around any topic related to genocide.

BURDENS OF PAST AND PRESENT IN THE CLASSROOM

Bosnia and Herzegovina carries great burdens of past and present. Despite our long history of ethnic conflict, we are one of the few European countries that have managed to preserve a multicultural, multireligious, multiethnic heritage. At the same time, since the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Bosnian War, our country has faced enormous political, social, and economic problems, all of which contribute to the fragility of our national infrastructure. Today, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a deeply divided country whose workings are based on the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the conflict in 1995. We have made little progress toward stability since, and the resulting depression has severely damaged education. We still do not have any state-level education system, and it seems we never may.

Education, such as there is, is independently administered by two political entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, where the majority consists of Bosniak Muslims and Catholic Croats, and the Republic of Srpska, where Orthodox Serbs comprise the majority. The curricula taught in the two entities are substantially different. What is more, we have three versions of history in our schools: Bosniak, Croatian, and Serbian. The Ministry of Education of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has little influence in the six of the 10 cantons (administrative units of the federation established by the Dayton Accords) with Bosniak majorities, while in the four cantons where Croats are the majority, curricula and texts are imported from Croatia.

How is our internal conflict relevant to Holocaust education? As a result of our political differences, there is no state law against Holocaust denial, because politicians cannot agree on appropriate terminology for such a law. The Bosniaks prefer the wording "a law against Holocaust and genocide denial"; Serbs favor "a law against Holocaust denial." Bosniaks will not agree to the latter because if that diction is used, they can never hope to have another law passed against the denial of the genocide that they suffered.

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION: STUCK IN THE LAST CENTURY

Aside from this political stalemate, Holocaust education in my country has made little progress in the last 50 years. We have been using the same lesson plans, the same approach, with no teacher education or seminars. A few teachers from the Republic of Srpska have attended seminars and trainings at Yad Vashem and brought back what they learned, but most Holocaust teachers' educational materials are taken from history books and lesson plans that discuss the living conditions in Nazi-occupied Europe. Common concepts taught include *concentration camp, Auschwitz, the Final Solution to the Jewish question, 6 million Jews, yellow star, forced labor,* and *gas chamber,* and, of course, horrifying pictures are a staple.

The 2013 Centropa Summer Academy in Berlin showed me how far we are from modern educational approaches. We do not teach life before and after the Holocaust—there is only death. The only individual to whom our students are exposed is Anne Frank. The 6 million are only a number to them: Our students do not see the names,

the faces, the lives of the Jewish victims and survivors—or even of Jews today. Though they have been an integral part of the Bosnian mosaic since the 16th century and are a highly respected part of our society today, Jews number less than 1,000; in my school, we have three Jewish students out of an enrollment of 500. Our students have never met a survivor, so the question of how other societies will teach about the Holocaust when the survivors are gone has had early and ongoing importance for us.

Centropa's film *Survival in Sarajevo,* the story of a small group of Holocaust survivors who opened their synagogue to Muslims, Croats, and Serbs during the 1992–1995 Bosnian War, has put an end to this state of affairs. Now my students have a resource that allows them both to learn about the Holocaust and to talk about our most recent ethnic war, a trauma that shadows every Bosnian classroom.

CENTROPA, THE BOSNIAN WAR, AND THE HOLOCAUST

The decision to start my unit of study with *Survival in Sarajevo* was an unusual one. The film's context is the siege of Sarajevo in the early 1990s, part of a war that teachers have been permitted to discuss only for the last two years, due to the personal memories harbored by every family. The preceding years of silence, 1995–2013, have certainly done their damage. Young people are poorly informed, and widespread misunderstanding of the conflict continues to foster ethnic and religious antagonism. Indeed, the war remains a subject of raw sensitivity in our country.

The same thing holds true in my classroom. I have to present the facts of the last war with great prudence, because my students represent every ethnic group involved in the conflict and parents usually give them facts that support only their own group's perspective. We also lack teaching materials reminding us of our years of living together in peace, so lessons on this topic also must be prepared judiciously. *Survival in Sarajevo* helps because it focuses on Sarajevo's Jewish community, and all parties to the war were cordial towards the Jews at that time. No one has seen more of the awful side of humanity than Jewish Holocaust survivors, who thus become a neutral bridge connecting the quarrelling sides.

So, I wondered, would my students relate to the people in this film? What, if anything, would they take away from its story of moral sense and multiethnic cooperation? I had related to the film well upon first seeing it because one of its protagonists, Denis Karalić, is a Bosniak of my age who was saved by the Jewish community. Would my teenage students also be able to relate to the material and have a productive discussion after viewing it?

ALTERED PERSPECTIVES

I set discussion procedures with the class and we screened the movie. The students absorbed the facts and most reported learning a great deal about the Bosnian War. They realized that, in war, survival is the best ideology. They absorbed a great deal about their Jewish neighbors and the critical role they had played, as well as about the turning points of life—those that determine who one will become.

To my surprise, they related to Denis readily, because they are now the same age that he is in the film. As best friends, Denis and Rasho shared the same fate despite their different nationalities; the students saw people of warring nationalities work together to avoid destroying each other. After witnessing the events portrayed in the film, students reported a change, if only slight, in their perspective of the Bosnian War—and that is a great accomplishment in Bosnia today.

As a result of the film, students also became interested in the local Jewish community, asking to peruse the Centropa website, watch more films, and learn more about Jewish humanitarian and cultural institutions such as La Benevolencija (with which their parents, having lived through the siege of Sarajevo, were familiar), as well as the Jews in their own neighborhoods.

The unexpected thirst for additional information allowed me to switch to a more direct approach to Holocaust education, and I followed up with Centropa's film *Three Promises: The Story of the Kalefs from Belgrade,* which tells the story of two Jewish sisters [Fig. 1] who were saved by a Catholic priest. Students were quickly riveted; some were so moved that they cried at the end.

FIG. 1. Matilda and Breda Kalef, Belgrade, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, 1940s.

FIG. 2. Avram and Dona Kalef, 1928, Belgrade, Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

What is most important is that my students found themselves with altered perspectives on the Holocaust. The gas chambers were no longer a vague historical notion now that they had seen the gas van that had taken Breda Kalef's father away—and they knew that the extended Kalef family [Fig. 2] had been only one small piece of the enormous campaign that was the Final Solution. Forced labor was no longer a nebulous concept, but the specific experience of David Kalef as he was forced to clean the war-torn streets of Belgrade. They read the Kalef biographies from the Centropa website; they saw and studied the photos; and, every now and then, a student wondered aloud, with great humility, "What would I have done?" Last but not least, they finally appreciated the significance of the highly respected and coveted Righteous Among the Nations designation, awarded by Yad Vashem, when they saw what Father Tumpej, the Catholic priest who saved the Kalef sisters, had done to earn it.

In final papers that passionately exceeded the assigned reflective response of 1,000 words, my students wrote cogently of the value of survivor testimony, with many concluding that *every* person from that time had had a story of similar or greater intensity to those we had studied, although many did not survive to share their accounts. They internalized the fact that every one of the 6 million Jews had a name, a life, a love, a dream, a will to live.

Centropa's materials have brought the stories of the Holocaust to life for my students, who have never met a survivor and whose exposure to the Holocaust is severely handicapped by the limitations of Bosnian history and our education system. Centropa's stories of individuals motivate and inspire our students. For us here in Bosnia, drawing conclusions from their experiences can help our students create a better postwar society. Centropa shapes the way teachers and students think about the future as well as the past.

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"Many of my relatives, the Schwarz family, who lived in Horb, Rexingen, and Mühringen in Southwest Germany, were caught up in the Holocaust," says Marilyn Kallet. "My daughter, sister, niece, and I went on a kind of pilgrimage there in 2004 to find out as much as we could about the family, and we discovered a great deal. Only one Jewish person from the area survived deportation: Hedwig Schwarz, my great-aunt. Crippled before the Holocaust, she fell off a transport and was rescued by a nameless angel, then taken to a hospital in Stuttgart, where nuns cared for her. As for the mezuzah in my poem, where the Jews in Horb–Rexingen had lived was obvious from the hollows in the doorposts, just as I describe and the photo illustrates."

Marilyn Kallet

Mezuzah

In Memory, Hedwig Schwarz

In the doorpost of her house, a hollow
where the mezuzah used to hang.
I press my hand against the indentation,
my way of speaking to the past.

Touch the hollow where the mezuzah
used to hang. In Horb, Nazis renamed her street
Hitlerstrasse. My way of speaking to the past
is to listen, press the old men for answers.

1941, Jews were packed into *Hitlerstrasse.*
Now it's a winding picture-postcard road,
Jew free, pleasant as it seemed
before Nazis pressed my family into *Judenhausen.*

I press my hand against the indentation.
Over Horb, a hundred doorposts echo, hollow.

Image from the last privately owned Jewish home in that town. Pictured here, the slanted hollow where the mezuzah hung can be seen clearly on the blue doorpost. The Hebrew inscription over the door remains; it reads, “Blessed shall you be when you come in … blessed shall you be when you go out” (Deuteronomy 28:6). Courtesy Mimi Schwartz.

Centropa encourages teachers to create projects that will expose their students to contemporary cultures in Central and Eastern Europe and update their perceptions of the places where the Holocaust occurred and of those who live there. Melanie Shaul explains how a video project using the poems of Wislawa Szymborska unexpectedly connected her students, many of whom have learning challenges, to the Holocaust, to postwar Poland, and to the rich possibilities of poetry.

Melanie Shaul

Engaging Students in Poetry and Video: Expanding Holocaust Education, Expanding Minds

My first involvement with Centropa was during a 2010 teachers' seminar at the Museum of the Jewish People (Beit Hatfutsot) in Tel Aviv. What attracted me most at the seminar were Centropa's materials, which I felt could facilitate innovative activities to foster both intercultural understanding and an eagerness to learn about the Holocaust even after our survivors are no longer alive. So when Centropa's director, Edward Serotta, asked me whether I was interested in introducing my Israeli students to the poetry of the Polish Nobel laureate Wislawa Szymborska, I was intrigued. Ed suggested that my students create videos interpreting Szymborska's poems, asking, "Is there a better way to get a student to think critically than look at the literature of a country?" I echoed him: Is there a better way to encourage learning and remembrance than through poetry?

My middle- and high-school students in Hadera, Israel, come from different ethnic backgrounds and struggle to learn English. They have learning challenges and behavioral issues and come from challenging economic circumstances. Could I introduce them to the world of poetic voice and expression even as they learned about the Holocaust? Could poetry improve their phonic skills and increase reading comprehension? Could the power of poetry stimulate my students to learn more about Szymborska, Polish culture, the Holocaust, those who had witnessed it, and those who had survived?

CHALLENGES, PEDAGOGY, AND GOALS

In the project that ensued, I decided to include two different classes, both from Beit Eliezer High School, where I teach English as a Foreign Language. The first class consisted of 15 at-risk juniors in an intermediate-level EFL class; the second, 15 seventh graders who had been diagnosed with learning disabilities. In both classes, many students were often truant; when they did attend, they often exhibited behaviors that made teaching quite difficult.

I was eager to combine new technologies and poetry to counter the students' past experiences of reading as tedious and frustrating. As Anne Sullivan (2005) notes, reading poetry can take students beyond the boundaries of written words and imagination by making the abstract concrete through vivid experiences. This transformation can encourage empathy—a necessary quality my students did not often exhibit in my classes. Furthermore, I wanted the poetry to elicit cross-cultural exchanges among my students to support their understanding and appreciation of others—a goal encouraged by Sylvia Vardell, Nancy Hadaway, and Terrell Young (2002). I suspected that by touching my students' emotions, poetry could help improve their behavior and ultimately influence them to want to learn more about the Holocaust, the Polish witnesses, and the Jews who had survived.

After considering several possible approaches to this project, I chose peer collaboration, removing myself as the classroom expert and allowing students to take ownership of their projects and their interpretations of, and responses to, the poems. Without my frontal teaching, my students would, from the beginning, be active learners, a goal I always seek. In any case, I could not follow and present a textbook analysis of Szymborska's poetry, because none was available to me as an EFL teacher.

TEACHING POETRY

I began with the 11th-grade class, handing out four of Szymborska's poems: "Still," "True Love," "Going Home," and "The Three Oddest Words" (1998; all available online). In the first lesson, students divided themselves into groups, each of which chose one poem to read. Without any guiding discussion questions, every group was allotted two lessons to analyze one poem and explain it to the class. The purpose of this assignment was to provide students with an opportunity to analyze the poem as a group without being influenced by my personal interpretation. This activity encouraged students to utilize what they already knew about understanding a text and offered a safe space for each student to interpret the poem—something that would surely give them pause in a large group. Next, each group was asked to collaboratively create a video based on its collective understanding of the poem. No conflicts arose as each group began to adjust its ideas and expectations in response to collaborative interactions.

The class responded in ways I could not have predicted. Where previously students had interacted primarily with their friends, they now began to offer and receive help from others, regardless of their expertise or lack of English. Until this time, over 50% of my students had not attended class regularly; now I saw them daily. Perhaps the greatest impact, however, was the powerful effect of Szymborska's words on their curiosity. I saw my EFL classroom become a research classroom as students sought information about Szymborska's life as a non-Jew in Poland during the Holocaust; wondered what her poetry said about the event; and, most astounding, wanted to learn about Poland and survivors in the aftermath of the Holocaust. For Israeli students, this particular interest in Poland was an important development, because they associate Poland solely with the Nazi death camps and the Holocaust. As students saw similarities between themselves and this Polish poet—surprised that a poet from a place they associated only with death could move them so strongly on subjects of love and life—they wanted to know more about postwar Poland and its non-Jewish witnesses. Students were so intrigued by Szymborska's writings that they voluntarily searched the Internet for more information about her life and work, discovering her brilliant Holocaust reflection "Could Have," a poem I would use with my 11th graders in a future lesson. When sufficient information about postwar Poland was lacking, they eagerly went to their history teachers for answers, beginning to apply what they were learning in their EFL class to their history lessons.

Students brought their personal interests, hobbies, and strengths to their exploration of the poems. One student interpreted "True Love" through dance, saying that he wanted to illustrate his concrete understanding of the poem with abstract dance and show the poem's various themes through movement. A boy who had rarely come to class made a movie (http://youtu.be/Q6aKALN_nBI) combining video, audio, and still images to interpret the same poem and explained that when deciding which media to use, he had had to focus on the analytical elements of the poem, which helped him develop a deeper understanding of its meaning and its relationship to him. A next step would be to consider the poem in light of what the poet saw during the Holocaust.

For the poem "Still" ("In sealed box cars / travel names across the land, / and how far they will travel so, / and will they ever get out, / don't ask, I won't say, I don't know") (translated by Stanislaw Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh), two girls created a movie, putting music to the poem and singing it to a melody by a famous rock band.

SZYMBORSKA IN SEVENTH GRADE

At first, I was a bit apprehensive about teaching this poetry to my seventh graders, who had not only learning disabilities but also very limited knowledge of the history of the Holocaust. They could not make a movie based on their interpretation of poetry in English because they could barely read that language, and their mother tongue, Hebrew, was below level for their age. To enable instant translations, I allowed them to use their cellphones. I began with two poems: "Going Home" ("He came home. Said nothing. / It was clear, though, that something had gone wrong") and the short "The Three Oddest Words," which begins, "When I pronounce the word Future, / the first syllable already belongs to the past" and continues with couplets about "silence" and "nothing."

The students in each of two groups translated their poem into Hebrew, and one representative from each group explained it to the class. When I was sure the students had made meaning from the works (I had begun to consider the possibility that, at least for my older students, connections could be made from these poems to the Holocaust, although they were not about the Holocaust), I assigned the video project.

Students divided themselves into multiple groups and used "True Love" ("Look at the happy couple. / Couldn't they at least try to hide it, / fake a little depression for their friends' sake?") for each individual group video. Despite the poem's sophisticated content and tone, students' achievements were remarkable. Nadav, for example, suffers from pervasive developmental disorders (PDD). Before this project, Nadav had limited interactions with the other students, sitting by himself and refusing to participate. As the lessons progressed, though, he became known as the Dictionary because of his strong English vocabulary, and other students sought his help with both translation and understanding. He was initially unwilling to make a movie, but I did not excuse him; a week later, he had completed it,

using pantomime to act out his interpretation of the poem. The two most academically challenged girls decided to work together in translating the poem into Hebrew and creating a script. They divided the roles: One directed, the other acted. Both enriched their English skills as they worked diligently together for hours to complete their tasks.

Another girl was unhappy with the first movie she had made with classmates, saying that the others were not as serious as she, so she looked outside of our English class for help and co-created a video with students with different levels of English literacy and a variety of religious backgrounds. The result? Jewish, Druze, and Muslim students worked together to make a video based on a Polish Christian woman's poem about the Holocaust.

This student-directed poetry-video project opened cultural doors and broadened students' thinking about themselves and others, especially about how different people respond to the Holocaust.

As with the 11th graders, the effect of this project in my 7th grade class extended well beyond expanding language skills. Some students had previously had difficulty sitting quietly and learning, focusing on and completing a given task. However, during the poetry lessons, disciplinary problems were minimal; those who had been defiant and disrespectful slowly began to shine. Some began to tell others to be quiet and work, becoming their own disciplinarians, developing self-constraint and self-determination, modifying their behavior in ways that would improve their learning, consciously realizing and understanding the need for suitable behavior for an educational environment. Students' improved social interaction, regardless of their abilities, enhanced their capacity to understand the poetry and its appeal and, ultimately, to create their videos.

REFLECTIONS

Centropa's core ideas include the recognition that national borders no longer keep people apart and that the education of digital natives inside the classroom must reflect their attraction to and facility with new media. Through this project, my students developed interest in a variety of subjects: history; poetry; video; the Holocaust; and Poland, a country they once associated only with death and destruction. By immersing themselves in Szymborska's poetry and sharing their interpretations of it through video, dance, and music, both classes of at-risk students with learning disabilities and delinquency issues found ways into the study of the past as they improved their English and their writing. As they expressed themselves through original artistic responses, they became more motivated and confident, growing both emotionally and cognitively as they became more responsible for not only their learning but their peers' learning, as well.

Centropa allowed me to help my students realize their potential to grasp new ideas, interpret, create, and commemorate through independent thinking. A teacher—and her students—could not ask for more.

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Wendy Warren and Katiusca Cirino, teachers in the same school in Houston, Texas, tell how Centropa has enabled them to reach a new audience: Hispanic students. The writers note that many Spanish-speaking students in American schools "come from countries where the Holocaust is neither taught nor connected to their ethnicity or history" and many have a low level of proficiency in the English language. Centropa's film *1492: El Otro Camino (The Other Path),* a history of Sephardic Jews in the Balkans, helps connect these students to Holocaust history through their language and cultural heritage.

Wendy Warren and Katiusca Cirino

Engaging Spanish-Speaking Students With *1492: El Otro Camino*

One of the challenges of teaching in a multicultural environment is engaging culturally diverse students in learning a topic that is not directly relevant to them. Teaching a subject as complex and serious as the Holocaust to students who have no personal connection to its history presents an even greater challenge. While universal themes of the Holocaust, such as the consequences of hatred and the need to establish tolerant and respectful societies, can be explored with all students, those who do not see themselves in its history may be difficult to reach and engage.

Our school, Hastings High School in Houston, Texas, faces this challenge. Our 3,000 students in grades 10–12 speak more than 80 languages. Approximately 80% are considered economically disadvantaged and at risk of not graduating. Hispanic students are the fastest growing segment of our student population: Some 51% are native Spanish speakers. Many of these students come from countries where the Holocaust is neither taught nor connected to their ethnicity or history, so they enter our schools without the familiarity with this history that many other students share. A third have limited English proficiency. As with all learners, Spanish-speaking students have different levels of proficiency in listening, reading comprehension, speaking, and writing, and their learning is also affected by their cultural background, socioeconomic status, and parents' level of education. Thus, when trying to engage these students in a study of the Holocaust, teachers encounter a limited understanding of historical context, an insufficiency of English language skills, and content that is not inherently meaningful to the students.

ENGAGEMENT FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Teachers know: Student engagement is critical to academic success. According to education researcher Philip Schlechty (2002), engagement and learning are so interconnected that they cannot be fully separated. Schlechty identifies five levels of engagement, from *rebellion,* where students refuse to participate in class work and are disruptive, to *engagement,* where students find intrinsic value and meaning in their work. At this level, they will persist in the face of difficulty; they want to get it right because they believe they are accomplishing something of worth [see Shaul, pp. 24–26–Ed.]. In our classes, we often see students at the level below engagement, one that Schlechty calls *strategic compliance,* where they complete tasks because of extrinsic factors, such as grades or parental approval. While we appreciate compliant students, we strive to have authentic engagement as often and with as many students as possible.

THE OTHER PATH

For years, we struggled to engage our Hispanic students at the highest level described by Schlechty. Finally, when we found Centropa's stories of Sephardic Jews in the Balkans, we started to see a potential for success. After several conversations with us, Edward Serotta, Centropa's director, offered to make us a film we could use with our students. That is how *1492: El Otro Camino (The Other Path)* came to be.

This 11-minute film (Spanish with option of English subtitles: www.centropa.org/node/83049) tells the story of Spanish Jews beginning with their expulsion from Spain more than 500 years ago and continuing through centuries in which many cohabited peacefully with their Muslim and Christian neighbors in the Ottoman Empire.

It describes the destruction of the great majority of their European communities during the Holocaust and ends with the story of La Benevolencija, the Jewish humanitarian aid society run by Holocaust survivors and their children that helped Sarajevans of all ethnicities survive the Bosnian war of the early 1990s [see Hasičić, pp. 19–21—Ed.]. This is a story of people of different religions and ethnicities getting along, which is extremely relevant to teenagers in a multiethnic society such as the United States, as well as in our increasingly connected global world. Narrated in Spanish, this film touches Spanish-speaking teens, who may not have known that there were Jews from Spain or seen themselves as connected to the history of the Jewish people. This cultural and linguistic connection with Sephardic Jews authentically bridges the engagement gap for Spanish-speaking students.

We found that *1492: El Otro Camino* engaged our students on several levels. Our Hispanic students immediately connected to the story of Sephardic Jews because the film was narrated in their mother tongue. Particularly for those who struggle with English, this was a powerful way to learn history and connect with the material. Many shared what they learned with their families and returned to class with questions from their family members. By providing a film that tells the story of these Jews in Spanish and includes examples of Ladino (also called Judeo-Spanish), a traditional Sephardic dialect of Spanish and Hebrew comparable to Yiddish among Ashkenazic Jewry, teachers provide Hispanic students with culturally compatible materials. Emotionally, students connect not only to the content but also to the teacher, who addresses the cultural gap by using this film.

On a cognitive level, of course, students understand the content better in their native language—an aspect especially beneficial to English-language learners who feel intimidated by unfamiliar content and by their limited English skills. Creating a safe environment for otherwise under-served students is one of the most valuable assets this film brings to teachers who want to engage these young people in Holocaust studies.

The film's story of Sephardic Jews also captured our students' attention because it ends in 1992, when Jews of Spanish heritage embraced their neighbors of all ethnicities and took a path other than hatred during the Bosnian War of the 1990s. Teens are naturally interested in ethical questions and dilemmas, and events today certainly challenge them to think about current ethnic, religious, and racial conflicts. Thus, this real-life model for living successfully in a multiethnic society and making the right choices in extremely difficult times was of genuine interest to our students.

As with all of its short films, Centropa's *1492: El Otro Camino* visually and technologically engages students. The response to the film by our target audience has been very positive, and students' written reflections demonstrate both their high level of engagement in the story of the Jews and their appreciation of learning through a Spanish-language resource. Alfredo R. wrote:

> I connected with this video very well because I am a Spanish-speaking person . . . so it was interesting seeing this historic past that can trace a small group of people and it relates to a lot of people in the world. It was clear for me to understand the Ladino language since it has Spanish in it.

Kevin N. commented, "I didn't know Jews were kicked out of Spain. I didn't even know some Jews spoke Spanish. I learned a lot from this video and liked it a lot."

Most mainstream American teachers do not share the cultural background of their Spanish-speaking students. We found that when provided with culturally compatible instruction that values their ability to speak two languages, students felt acknowledged, validated, and seen. The goodwill this created on the part of our students was palpable, and, most importantly, contributed to their authentic engagement and academic success. Creating a safe environment for them was one of the most valuable aspects of our experience with this film, and we see potential for it in Spanish and ESL classes, as well. The story of the Sephardic Jews is certainly not included in books or curricula about Hispanic history, culture, or language. Yet because they share the same roots as all Hispanics, their story, too, should be told in that context.

1492: EL OTRO CAMINO: A PLATFORM FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY PROJECTS

Our students' positive reaction to this film compelled us to build on its success and, after attending Centropa's 2014 Summer Academy, which gave us an opportunity to visit Sarajevo, meet members of La Benevolencija, and learn how other educators had used Centropa's exhibition, we returned with a learning project that we expected would engage the entire Houston community. We planned a cross-curricular unit in our school using *1492: El Otro Camino* and Centropa's traveling exhibition *Survival in Sarajevo* as a foundation. This exhibition (www.centro pa.org/upload/centropa-sarajevo/Centropa.org___Sarajevo/Sarajevo_home.html) also traces the history of Spanish Jews from the expulsion from Spain through the Bosnian War of the 1990s, with the primary focus on the story of La Benevolencija. The Jews of La Benevolencija, who had ample experience with persecution, expulsion, and extermination, chose a path other than hatred.

In their social studies, English language arts, or foreign language classes, students researched various aspects of

Sephardic Jewish history, and all students were then responsible for teaching others what they had learned. Students who were enrolled in world history or Holocaust and genocide studies became experts in the history of the Sephardim and their experiences during the Holocaust, able to supplement the information offered by the exhibition with their own research and present it to their peers. Foreign-language students learned and taught others about Ladino, and English language-arts students examined literary connections to the various time periods featured in the exhibition.

Our goal was to have every department involved in this project. Our culminating event was a community night in which parents came to visit the *Survival in Sarajevo* exhibition, with their children serving as docents. Eliciting parental support is always a challenge. We believed that inviting parents into the school to learn from their children about history that connects to their lives would make for a powerful event and a positive experience—and it did!

One hundred people attended the opening. Our students displayed their skills as historians, translators, technology innovators, and artists. As they learned a part of Hispanic history that no book presents, they made crucial connections to world history and geography, to writing and speaking, to language and literature, and to peers and proud parents.

As an extension to this community night, we are inviting the other high schools and middle schools in our district to our school for a field trip. Presenting the exhibition and sharing independent research with peers will go a long way towards building our students' confidence, school pride, and academic success.

ENSURING REMEMBRANCE

With *1492: El Otro Camino,* we have been able to connect our students of Hispanic heritage to Holocaust history, thus bringing survivors' stories to another audience. Our students have begun to see how they are connected to events in Europe, even events of the distant past such as the Holocaust. We have seen their pride and interest when their peers from other cultures learned from a resource that acknowledged their language, culture, and history, even if they knew nothing about that history themselves. The final part of the film, the story of La Benevolencija, is not only a model of active citizenship for our students, but the only way many of them will make a personal connection with the Holocaust through individuals who lived through it.

A story that shows people helping rather than hating, showing how we are more alike than different, makes this story relevant to all teens. We can't think of a better way to engage our students and ensure a future of remembrance.

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In her middle-school humanities lesson, Margaret Chasan uses students' natural interest in images to engage them in a study of Jewish life in Vienna before, during, and after the Holocaust. Through a close study of old family photographs and interview excerpts from Centropa's database, students learn about survivors' lives and then reflect on the resilience, hope, and generosity of spirit they discover. The lesson here is an example of what can be done with Centropa's materials; a different version, with instructions and adaptable worksheets, is available at http://www.centropa.org under Education/Teaching Materials.

Margaret Chasan

Vienna Stories: Interviewing a Picture

The act of telling a story is cathartic. The act of listening to a story is cathartic. Ask any parent. Ask any child.
—Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis, former US Ambassador to Hungary

How is it possible for human beings to endure some of the most difficult conditions imaginable and still emerge with generosity of spirit and hopefulness? This essential question frames my students' Holocaust assignment, which integrates language arts, history, and memoir. Students use archival film, photographs, and excerpts of survivor testimony, along with historical background and class discussion, to create a reflective response that expresses their understanding of one aspect of the experiences of those who endured the Holocaust. They are encouraged to identify with people from a different place and time, with the goal of forming the intellectual and emotional connection necessary for remembering them, passing on their stories, and wanting to continue to learn.

This essay serves as an example of what can be done with Centropa's photographs and interviews; those here can be replaced with others, as can the related quotes, questions, and assignments. Each student might find and choose her own photo and interview to examine, groups of students may work on one of the three time periods, or the teacher can easily differentiate the activities to meet the needs of diverse learners. The site is filled with treasures —adapt this lesson or create your own.

Photography is a familiar and engaging medium for students; indeed, they will find many pictures in the Centropa database that mirror their own photos on Facebook. The goal is for students to connect to these lives through images, so they can better understand and empathize with Viennese Jews, learn about Jewish life in Vienna, and discuss the essential question posed above.

In my classroom, students read very brief summaries of Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust in Vienna and study old family photographs, captions, and interview excerpts from each period. Thought-provoking quotes, questions, and short films provide opportunity for discussion, writing, and research, as reflected below.

VIEWING THE PHOTOGRAPHS: STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

Read the overview, look carefully at the pictures and the captions, read the related ideas and questions, and reflect on what you see and learn. Remember that these are survivors' personal photographs. Try to see beyond the surface, to read between the lines. Engage with the photographs. Ask: How do these lives, experiences, ideas, and values compare to mine?

BEFORE 1938—THE WORLD WE LOST

Before the war, the Jews of Vienna had, for the most part, comfortable middle-class lives and total access to all aspects of society. Although antisemitism existed and increased in the 1930s, it was not until the *Anschluss*—Hitler's annexation of Austria in March 1938—that most Jews felt its impact on their lives. Unlike the Jews in Germany, the Jews of Vienna lost everything almost overnight.

Examine these two photos [Figs. 1 and 2] from before the war and read the brief interview excerpts about the people shown:

Interview Excerpt

In this picture, my parents, Zora and Albert Baum,

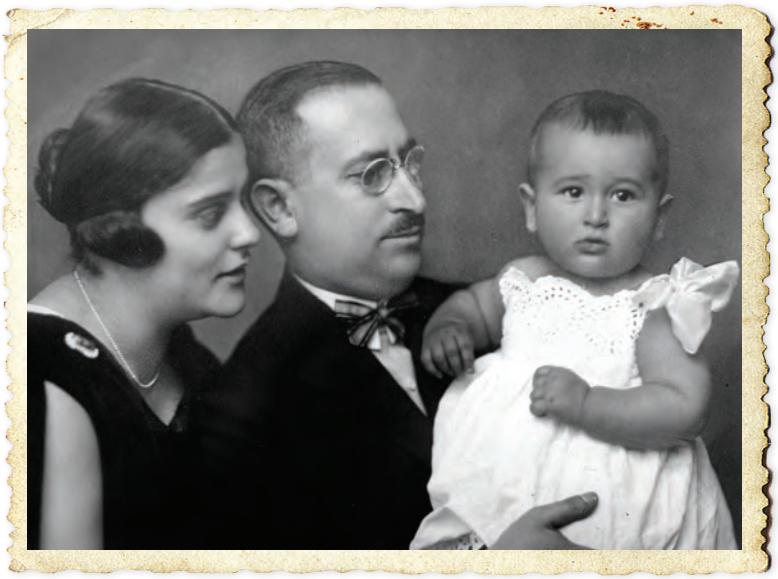

FIG. 1: Zora, Albert, and Vladimir Baum in 1924 in Zagreb, Croatia.

are holding me, their first son, in 1924. I'm about one year old. After my mother graduated from boarding school in 1918, my grandfather decided to marry her off to my father. My father was 16 years older than she was, and she didn't want to marry him. But my grandfather wanted my father to be his son-in-law because he was an up-and-coming businessman. Grandpa had saved a large dowry for his daughter, so he could marry her to whomever he pleased. At the time, my mother was interested in a different young man, who later immigrated to Uruguay. I assume my parents already knew each other before the wedding. My mother was most certainly not in favor of this marriage. But my grandfather always had his way, and so my mother married my father. After a period of internment in a German camp in Italy, Zora and Albert fled over the Alps into Switzerland, where they survived the war. Afterwards, they returned to Zagreb. Albert passed away in 1964, Zora in 1977. (interview by Tanja Eckstein)

Ideas to Consider As You Study the Photo and Excerpt

Our matriarchs had an interesting advantage over today's Western women. Matriarchs didn't begin their marriage with love. Instead, they were taught how to love. They entered marriage with an earnest determination to grow a love that would sustain their marriage for a lifetime. (Michael Ben Zehabe, 2012)

Feelings of love in arranged marriages tend to gradually increase as time goes on in the relationship, whereas in so-called "love marriages," where attraction is based on passionate emotions, a couple's feelings for each other typically diminish by as much as 50% after only 18–24 months of marriage. (Gelbfish, 2012)

Arranged marriage is like a blind date, except that date is supposed to last for a lifetime. ("Arranged Marriage")

Recapture the Moment

1. What is happening in the picture?
2. What specific physical details do you observe? In what ways can you determine something about the economic status of the family? What do the clothes tell you about the era?
3. What motivated the couple to marry? What might this say about how Viennese Jewish women lived in 1924?

FIG. 2: Wilhelm Brück with his sisters, Sabina Halpern and Sara Gizella, in Vienna, Austria, in 1917.

Interview Excerpt

This is my mother, Sara Gizella, at 15, with her older sister, Sabina Halpern, who was already the mother of a three-year-old daughter, and Uncle Wilhelm, playing music together at home. Uncle Wilhelm was a soldier in the Austro-Hungarian Army during the First World War. The family was very musical; all my mother's siblings played an instrument. Sara Gizella survived the war on the run and in hiding; she passed away in 1994. Sabina was murdered in Yugoslavia. Wilhelm escaped internment and was saved by the Americans; he died in Vienna in 1962. (Gisela Eva Kocsiss, interviewed by Tanja Eckstein)

Ideas to Consider

Without music, life would be a mistake. (Friedrich Nietzsche, 2007)

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent. (Victor Hugo, 1905)

If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music. (Albert Einstein in Viereck, 1929)

Recapture the Moment

1. What is happening in the picture [Fig. 2, p. 31]?
2. Note the specific physical details in the picture. What do you observe? What can you deduce about the economic status of the family?
3. What can you infer about their relationship to each other? What can you tell about Wilhelm's family from looking at the picture?
4. Watch the Centropa film *Jewish Soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian Army* (3:45 min.) (www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/jewish-soldiers-austro-hungarian-army). What do you learn about what life was like for Wilhelm?

1938–1945: OUR WORLD DESTROYED

After March 1938, when Hitler invaded, the lives of Viennese Jews took a catastrophic turn. Civil rights disappeared in May 1938, when the Nuremberg Laws were applied in Austria. Jews responded in various ways to the unravelling of their lives. Those who could, emigrated; some sent their children on the *Kindertransport*, while others went into hiding. The Brodmann family, for example, was scattered on three continents: one son was sent to London, another to Palestine, and the parents fled to Shanghai.

As you examine the photos and read the text in this section, you might want to focus on one or more of the following issues and events confronting the Jews during this time: the *Anschluss, Kristallnacht,* possibilities for escape, loss, the *Kindertransport,* Palestine, hiding, and displacement.

FIG. 3: Hans Reiss in Oslo, Norway, in 1939 with the daughter of a local rabbi who was sheltering him.

Interview Excerpt

> My sister, Frieda Reiss, had seven children: Erwin, Leopold, Walter, Hans, Elisabeth, Anna and . . . I never seem to remember the last child's name. Hans [Fig. 3] was born in 1935 and, I believe in 1939, sent to Oslo on a *Kindertransport* organized by the religious community. A rabbi and his family in Norway took him in. We so dearly hoped that he had survived the war, but it was not to be. Hans Reiss, along with his six siblings and his parents, was killed during the Holocaust. The location and date of his death are unknown.
>
> These are my nephews Erwin and Walter [Figs. 4 and 5]. They could have fled, but they chose to stay with their mother, my sister, Frieda. Walter and Erwin Reiss were murdered in Maly Trostinec in 1942. (Hilda Sobota, interviewed by Tanja Eckstein)

FIG. 4: Erwin Reiss in Vienna during the 1930s.

FIG. 5: Walter Reiss in Vienna in 1941.

Ideas to Consider

> Nazi power repeatedly forced defenseless people to make what Holocaust scholar Lawrence L. Langer calls *choiceless choices.* Such choices, he says, do not "reflect options between life and death, but between one form of 'abnormal' response and another, both imposed by a situation that was in no way of the victim's own choosing." (Harran & Roth, 2009, p. 411)

Recapture the Moment

1. Note the dates, and study the faces in the portraits.

What do their expressions tell you?

2. Observe the faces of Hans and the daughter of the rabbi who sheltered him [Fig. 3]. Compare their expressions to those of the boys [Figs. 4 and 5]. What do you see?
3. War frequently presents people with enormous conflicts—choiceless choices. Given what you understand about this time, why do you think the boys chose not to flee?
4. View Centropa's film about Erna Goldmann, *From Frankfurt to Tel Aviv* (15:39 min.; www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/erna-goldmann-frankfurt-tel-aviv) or, if time is short, one about Mieczyslaw Weinryb, *My Town of Zamosc* (7:17 min.; www.centropa.org/node/51703).

FIG. 6: Cousins at the Danube Canal in wartime Vienna.

Interview Excerpt

This picture shows me and my cousins, Kurt and Fred, at the Danube Canal in Vienna. We lived in a two-room apartment, and from the window I could watch the policemen in the police riding school. I was an only child, and many of my parents' friends also had only one child because of the uncertain times and the news from Germany. Kurt was sent to America, where he survived the war; Fred and his mother were deported by the Nazis and murdered. (Trude Scheuer, interviewed by Artur Schnarch)

Ideas to Consider

We were ostracized in a big way. Children who were once friends turned their back on us, spat at us or threw stones at us. Then they took away our home. All I remember is being hugged and kissed and my father put me on the train and locked the door. I did not want to go. I was forced to go. I'm 83 now and I still have sight [sic] of my mother and father getting smaller and smaller in the distance. That's with me every minute of every day. (Ellen Davies, BBC, 2012)

Recapture the Moment

1. What do you observe in the photo [Fig. 6]?
2. Why do you think the photograph is in such poor condition?
3. Why does Trude think there were so many families with only one child?
4. Just before the war, a program called the *Kindertransport* allowed children to leave Nazi-occupied countries and find haven in England and other countries. Examine the impact of this on the children and their families in the Spring 2013 issue of *PRISM*.
5. View the Centropa film about Kurt Brodmann, *The Story of the Brodmann Family* (6 min.), at www.centropa.org/node/52714.

AFTER 1945—A WORLD REBUILT

Before 1938, Vienna's Jewish population numbered more than 185,000; in 1946, just 25,000 Jews remained, many of whom emigrated in the following years. At the end of the 1990s, there were barely more than 7,000 registered members of Vienna's Jewish community. Today, Vienna, with some 8,000 affiliated Jews, has a Sephardic Center; a charitable organization to help Jews, Center Esra; a Jewish school that serves 600 children; six other educational institutions; a sports club; a Jewish museum; 11 synagogues; and kosher shops and restaurants. Many Jews who live in Vienna today came to the city as refugees from Eastern Europe, especially the former Soviet Union, to begin a new life in the Austrian capital.

Here, you might want to focus on the following ideas: diminished population of Jews, rebuilding their lives, looking towards the future, hope, and love.

Interview Excerpt

After the war, my sisters, Ruth and Inge, and I were members of the Hakoah sports club. Every Saturday evening there were dances, and my brother was very

FIG. 7: Alice Silberberg Granierer (fourth row, center) with members of the Hakoah Sports Club in 1950, Semmering, Austria.

active in swimming and water polo. For vacations my sisters and I, as well as everybody else, would always go to the Hakoah cabin at the Semmering. We did not have any money, and that was cheap and always a lot of fun. (Eckstein & Serotta, 2013, p. 235)

Ideas to Consider

Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. (Helen Keller in Herrman, 1998)

It takes two flints to make a fire. (Louisa May Alcott, 1871)

When you hand good people possibility, they do great things. (Biz Stone, 2014)

Recapture the Moment

1. What seems to be the mood in the picture [Fig. 7, p. 33]? Notice the details of the picture, such as clothing and setting. What do you observe?
2. What can you tell by looking at the picture of the Hakoah sports camp? In what ways is it similar to your sports team or youth group?
3. View Centropa's film *The Importance of a Good Vacation* (5 min.), at www.centropa.org/node/45553.

FIG. 8: Bela Max Fischer in his nursery in Petah Tikvah, Israel, 1953.

FIG. 9: Fischer in front of his flower shop in Petah Tikvah, 1953.

Interview Excerpt

My father, Bela Max [Figs. 8 and 9], was born in 1883 in Bratislava. He graduated from a rabbinical program in Bratislava and later worked as a rabbi in Vienna. My parents met in 1923 at the 13th Zionist Congress in Karlsbad [Czech Republic]. My mother was attending as a journalist and my father as a hospital rabbi from the Jewish Community of Vienna. Father tried to flee in 1940 by ship through Tulcea [Romania] to Palestine. After more than three months, he and over 1,000 other refugees arrived in the Haifa harbor. From there he was taken to an internment camp near Haifa. A short time later, the British transported the refugees, who had barely escaped death, by boat to Mauritius. Mauritius was dreadful. The people had lost everything. They did not know anything about the fate of their relatives, and many died of tropical diseases. My father cultivated a small plot of land there and grew local plants. After the war, my father left for Israel and established a nursery and small flower shop. He had brought plants with him from Mauritius and grew them again in Israel. (Hannah Fischer, interviewed by Tanja Eckstein)

Ideas to Consider

It is hard trying to rebuild yourself, piece by piece, with no instruction book, and no clue as to where all the important bits are supposed to go. (Nick Hornby, 2005)

We must be willing to get rid of the life we've planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us. The old skin has to be shed before the new one can come. (Joseph Campbell, 2011)

Recapture the Moment

1. Why do you think someone would pose the individuals in the photographs in this way? What is the photographer trying to convey?
2. Mauritius is a small island in the middle of the southern Indian Ocean that was colonized by the British. What particular challenges did the refugees experience there?
3. What life lessons do you learn from Bela and his experiences?

GENERAL QUESTIONS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING

1. What do you have in common with the people in the photographs? What do you see that is different from your life today?
2. These pictures belonged to the very small numbers of Jews who survived. What combination of special skills, circumstances, people, and luck allowed them to survive?
3. It is difficult for most of us to imagine the degree of upheaval that occurs when safe lives unravel through the disintegration of a society. Where in the world today is this happening? What can you learn from the survivors of Vienna that might help you respond to the people who face genocide today?

FINAL ASSESSMENT

Your final assignment may be expressed in writing, video, art, and/or music. Options include:

- writing a letter to one or more of the people in the photos, asking questions that you still have. You might use as a first line, "Learning about your life from your photos has raised many questions for me." Illustrate your letter as you wish.
- writing a poem about someone in the photo or about what you have learned in this unit. You may use found poetry, employing words from the testimonies; you might use as a first-line starter, "I used to think . . . but now I know . . ."; or you might enhance your poem with music.
- drawing, painting, sculpting, or writing a reflection on the meaning that this unit of study has had for you. As a prompt, you might use this phrase: "As I think of a moment . . ." You might use as a focus any of these topics raised by the photos and text we have studied: loss of prosperity, civil rights, family, shared holidays; or, in the aftermath, joys of youth groups, Israel.

Extended Learning Resources

Vienna Stories: Viennese Jews Remember the 20th Century in Words and Pictures, edited by Tanja Eckstein and Edward Serotta, 2013, Vienna: Centropa.

Online Texts

"Expulsion, Deportation and Murder—History of the Jews in Vienna," www.wien.gv.at/english/culture/jewishvienna/history/nationalsocialism.html.
"Jews in the Land of the Waltz: Jewish Vienna," by Judie Fein, www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1388659/jewish/Jews-in-the-Land-of-the-Waltz.htm.
"Vienna," by Ruth Ellen Gruber, www.centropa.org/travel/ruth-ellen-gruber/vienna.
"Virtual Jewish World: Vienna, Austria," Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Vienna.html.

Centropa Personal Story Films from Vienna

A Suitcase Full of Memories (30:09 min.), Lilli Tauber's story, www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/lilli-tauber-suitcase-full-memories.
Looking for Frieda, Finding Frieda (3:00 min.), Max Uri's story, www.centropa.org/node/47399.
Only a Couple of Streets Away From Each Other (14:51 min.), Kitty and Otto Suschny's story, www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/only-a-couple-of-streets-away-from-each-other.
The Past Is Another Country (20:30 min.), Leo Luster's story, www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/leo-luster-die-vergangenheit-ist-ein-anderes-land.
The Story of the Brodmann Family (6:04 min.), Kurt Brodmann's story, www.centropa.org/node/52714.

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After years in the classroom, Jeffrey Ellison realized he was teaching only how Jews had suffered and died in the Holocaust, but not how they had lived—thus doing a disservice to history, to his students, to those who had been murdered, and to those who had survived. To explore Jewish life before the Holocaust, he used Centropa's open-source database of old family photographs and interviews provided by elderly Jews from Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Sephardic communities of the Balkans, Turkey, and Greece. With the help of Writers Theatre, a local teaching workshop [see pp. 40–45], Ellison's eighth graders shaped their learning into a script and performed it for the entire school community. "Every story is worth telling," one student concluded.

Jeffrey Ellison

Listen to the Echoes: Remembering Prewar Jewish Life Through Performance

Zachor! This Hebrew word for *remember* is at the heart of the Holocaust curriculum at the Jewish day school in Chicago, IL, where I teach. For 20 years I did my best to adhere to this commandment, but in the spring of 2006 I started to question the very meaning and content of memory. At the time, I was leading a group of eighth graders to the newly reopened Yad Vashem and its Valley of the Communities, a four-acre site of 107 walls engraved with the names of over 5,000 Jewish communities that were destroyed in the Holocaust or barely survived it. In the museum, in addition to the grim scenes of starvation, cattle cars, piles of shoes, and mass graves we had expected, we saw a 10-minute introductory video. The film, made by visitors to Polish towns in the 30s, depicted men and women waving and smiling, children studying Torah, and choirs singing *"Hatikvah."*[1] The images surprised us; we had not expected to meet the Jews we had come to mourn. In the Valley, my students stood unmoved: The names on the walls were unknown to them.

The visit challenged my understanding of how and what we need to remember. To my dismay, I realized that my decades of teaching had ignored a critical piece of history: how European Jews had lived and how their communities had functioned before their destruction. To be sure, my students gained exposure to prewar Jewish life by reading a few autobiographies and survivor memoirs: They were touched by Sam Harris's *Sammy: Child Survivor of the Holocaust* (2011) and mesmerized by Gerda Weissmann Klein's remarkable *All but My Life: A Memoir* (1995). However, the intentionality I paid to this important layer of memory was always overshadowed by the darker one.

As I researched prewar Jewish life, I gained an understanding of how critical this topic is for effectively teaching the Holocaust in any educational setting. In American Jewish day schools, where most students can trace their lineage to Central and Eastern Europe, the nature of life before the war is of particular importance; by examining pre-Holocaust Jewish life, students can learn about their roots and enrich their cultural and religious identities. Yet there is no less need for this information in other schools, which also must strive to honor the memory of the victims and to tell a more complete and authentic story of the Holocaust. Learning about Jewish life adds meaning and a layer of understanding about the scope of what was destroyed. It introduces the Jews of that time—their names, their faces, their culture, and their lives—to today's learners, enabling them to see Jewish people in the fullness of their lives quite similar to their own. Such introductions become all the more crucial as we confront the reality of the passing of survivors.

Between 2000 and 2010, Centropa staff interviewed 1,200 survivors [see Serotta, pp. 8–12—Ed.]. Centropa's easy-to-access database of interviews and photographs provides a user-friendly way of researching an individual, family, region, or country, and the organization's website and short multimedia films are state-of-the-art. The family albums—those gorgeous old photographs—move students beyond text to the realm of human connection as they view photos of a child in ballet class, teenagers relaxing together in agricultural fields, a family enjoying a picnic. Today's activities may be different, but the feelings, emotions, and spirit of everyday life have remained constant. In short, this is a treasure trove for students to peruse. How, though, could I most effectively connect young adolescents to the people in the photos and immerse them in the study of pre-Holocaust Jewish life?

Although I have no background in theater, I know its power, and I recognize the need to address my students' various learning styles and preferences. I felt that performance would be a fully engaging way for students to bring to life the stories of the survivors they were studying, so I designed and assigned a theatrical performance project.

Performance requires students to learn history and delve into the inner life of a person through research and reflection. Performing, the act of embodying another persona, requires the use of all senses. Because it "evokes emotion, it helps us learn and remember material" (Neile, 2009, p. 38). It requires that the student be "at the center of the learning experience . . . on stage, guided by the task design created by the faculty member, accessing whatever resources might be needed, and acquiring useful knowledge from the experience" (Boettcher, 2007, p. 2). My goal was for students to learn about the Jewish past by choosing stories of survivors from the Centropa database, then interpreting and embodying those stories in a historically authentic manner as they presented a lost world through someone else's eyes. This was, I hoped, a path towards cultivating compassion: Through performance, my students would learn about the lives of those they had known until now only as obscure victims. In addition, they would recognize the human cost of the Holocaust. One cannot remember or mourn a loss unless one knows what has been destroyed.

In January 2014, I enlisted the aid of Writers Theatre (www.writerstheatre.org), a professional theater company in the Chicago area with an educational outreach program for schools. Writers Theatre director of education Nicole Ripley and her associate Kelsey Chigas guided my students through a five-step process: creating a positive learning community; dramaturgy and research; writing; bringing history to life; and, finally, a performance. In an intense and comprehensive three-month schedule, students met with Nicole as many as four times a week as we moved from learning community to history to performance. My history classes became acting classes, and her acting classes became my history classes.

Soon, other faculty wanted to participate, making this a collaborative effort for teachers and a multidisciplinary learning experience for students. Jewish studies teachers assisted with the pronunciation of Hebrew, Yiddish, and Polish expressions, names, and places. They helped students imagine the past by telling stories about Jewish life in the cities, towns, and *shtetlach* (hamlets) of Central and Eastern Europe—in some cases, those of their own relatives—and recommended music from early- to mid-20th-century Eastern Europe to accompany the performance. The drama teacher taught aspects of performance and theater ensemble; the music teacher helped coordinate the accompaniments; the language arts teachers taught Holocaust literature and encouraged students to analyze survivor writings. Others helped with choreography. The entire eighth-grade team became a part of this project.

CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

The passage from passive learner to researcher to performer presented challenges for students, and they responded in a variety of ways. Some flourished, thoroughly enjoying the acting exercises and seeking feedback. Others could not risk potential ridicule by friends. They claimed to find the acting exercises tedious, sometimes becoming belligerent and disrespectful to the artists and the entire methodology. Still others—the above-it-all group, dismissive and sarcastic—often brought negative energy into the room. Many, having had outside experience with theater, believed they knew better how the process should run. Finally, some were there but not there, doing the minimum, simply going through the motions. Some students may not have been ready for the intense focus and discipline required for the workshops; acting may simply not have been within their area of interest or ability. At times, friction among groups seemed to poison the atmosphere and made it hard to continue—but we persevered.

Even as we dealt with the challenges all new projects entail, I could see my students learning new skills, including how to work together despite obstacles and discomfort. They learned both the power and the limitations of online research when, searching for information on particular towns or *shtetlach,* they found little or none, as many of these places no longer even exist on a map, or when the information was in a foreign language and thus inaccessible to them. They learned how to broaden their search parameters as they became familiar with Centropa's website. They improved their reading, summarizing, and analyzing of texts to uncover essential meaning, and their writing skills improved as they embellished scenes from the Centropa interviews, adding authentic feelings and blending their voices and historical knowledge with those of the survivors. In learning kinesthetically about the importance of gestures, vocalization, intonation, and expression of feelings, they learned the importance of strong public performance. They created a learning community, with its attendant problems and its great satisfactions derived from working for something bigger than themselves.

ON STAGE

We invited faculty, students, parents, and the entire school community to the 90-minute performance. On stage, all challenges evaporated. The students became an ensemble, supporting one another, working together. On a large screen at the back of the stage we projected a photograph montage of survivors, taken from the Centropa website, as the students told their stories. Musical selections from the

prewar years accompanied the monologues and served as interludes between them. The audience laughed, cried, and sat enraptured as the students, individually or in small groups, made vivid the sometimes humorous, sometimes tragic life that was. The performance concluded with a student-narrated voiceover quoting the words of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1975):

> The little Jewish communities in Eastern Europe were like sacred texts opened before the eyes of God. Has there ever been more light in the souls of the Jews in the last thousand years? The present generation still holds the keys to the treasure. If we do not uncover the wealth, the keys will go down to the grave with us, and the storehouse of the generations will remain locked forever. A day will come when the hidden light of the East-European period will be revealed. (p. 17)

The audience gave the students a thunderous standing ovation and, to a person, thanked me; the members of Writers Theatre; and, most of all, their children, for teaching them about our past. For one and a half hours, we had revealed the light and remembered that life—*Zachor!*

REFLECTIONS

While I might focus less on the acting exercises and more on laying historical groundwork through text-based study and the Centropa database, I am convinced that all students can benefit from a performance-based approach—even those who need to be urged out of their comfort zone to work in this unfamiliar medium. Teachers benefit, as well: They can more easily assess learning when students' thinking is made visible, and this performance project required "students to create, talk, write, explain, analyze, judge, report, and inquire," helping us to see "their growth from concept awareness to concept acquisition" (Boettcher, 2007, p. 5).

What is more, the feedback I received was uniformly positive. Students noted, for example, that they had begun to appreciate not only individual lives, but entire communities and ways of life: "I have always thought of the Holocaust as the death of 6,000,000 Jews. . . . I learned that so much more was lost: civilizations, towns, cultures, ways of life. . . . I learned that every story is worth telling."

"I never really knew how Jews lived before the Holocaust . . . what and how much was actually lost. . . . Our world would be different if the Holocaust had never happened."

"The Holocaust destroyed closely knit *shtetl* life that made a Jewish community. . . . That is . . . my biggest takeaway."

Students felt they had honored the memory and legacy of the survivors: "We were sharing stories that wouldn't be heard otherwise."

"It didn't open only our eyes to know truths but also the eyes of the audience."

Above all, students expressed a heightened level of empathy for and connectedness to those they portrayed: "The performance was essential. It took our knowledge to a whole new level. I felt as if I had become Dagmar Lieblova [Fig. 1] only *after* I started performing as her. It wasn't enough just to *write* from her perspective."

"These people . . . all had families and things they cared about before the Holocaust."

"By playing these people, we had to try and understand who they were and, more importantly, what they felt. It was a great way to explore our empathy."

Writers Theatre created an authentic theatrical learning experience for my students, with acting classes and opportunities for students to learn how to embody the emotions of a person and a story through performance. The methodology enabled the students to see the humanity of the interviewees and then bring that humanity to life. As Judith V. Boettcher (2007) observes, "If we design great experiences, students will spend more time interacting with the course content and developing more complex, networked knowledge structures" (p. 7). The combination of Centropa's materials and Writers Theatre proved to be such an experience, and the entire school community was the beneficiary.[2]

THE ECHOES UNDERSTOOD

Last spring, after our Writers Theatre workshop, I traveled with another eighth-grade class to Israel, where we visited Yad Vashem and the Valley of the Communities. This time it was different. As I watched that introductory film of Jews living their lives, I knew my teaching had become whole. For a moment, my class and I had entered into a world that once had been, one in which those who would be murdered knew nothing about the future and were smiling and laughing, playing with friends, competing in sports, getting married, and having children. Now I, and my students, knew why they were waving at us, and we would remember their lives along with their terrible, tragic fates. As one student wrote, "It wasn't until after the performance, when we went to Yad Vashem and watched that movie, that I realized how special our project was. I learned the importance of telling a story of someone who is not able to tell his own."

On our visit to the Valley of the Communities, we were more connected to the site. Each student eagerly found the country, region, or town of the survivor he or she had studied and portrayed onstage and, one by one, they stood beside the massive, cold stone walls representing death, posing for a photograph so as to remember life.

FIG. 1: Dagmar Lieblova, second from left, with her parents and sister, 1934, Czechoslovakia.

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END NOTES

[1] *Hatikva*, "The Hope," a mainstay of Zionist groups in Europe, was ultimately modified to serve as the national anthem of the State of Israel.

[2] For additional reading on the power of performance in keeping survivors' stories alive, see C. S. Neile, *PRISM,* Fall 2009, pp. 38–41—[Ed.].

"The mission of Writers Theatre," says its director of education, Nicole Ripley, "is rooted in the principle that 'the word on the page and the artists who bring that word to life hold primary importance.'" The unit presented here, featured on centropa.org, demonstrates the pedagogical and historical soundness of applying this principle to the testimony of survivors and to the student artists who study them while forging a new path to help us learn, retell, and remember survivors' experiences.

Nicole Ripley

Listen to the Echoes: Creating a Theater-Based, Arts-Integrated Approach to History

"Passover in Salonika, Greece, was special. It has been so many years, the tastes and smells are but crumbs of reminiscence, the essence of a community so strong and vibrant. It always finds its way in my heart," eighth-grader Gabi Wallk passionately declares. She and her scene partner stand in front of their classmates, mirroring one another's gestures to underscore the story of Renée Molho's [Fig. 1] recalling her hometown of Salonika in 1932. Their classmates watch the scene unfurl, taking notes with an eye to applying their observations to their own work. This is the final rehearsal of a three-month intensive curriculum unit created by Writers Theatre to support the history program at Chicago's Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School (BZAEDS).[1]

Renée Molho is a Holocaust survivor and the student performers are paying tribute to her story[2] and the stories of 34 additional survivors, all taken from centropa.org [see Ellison, pp. 36–39, for a teacher's perspective on the unit's unfolding—Ed.].

The mission of Writers Theatre, a professional theater company based in Glencoe, Illinois, is rooted in the principle that "the word on the page and the artists who bring that word to life hold primary importance" (Writers Theatre, n.d.). Our education programs, reflecting this, are focused on using theater and literary arts to build empathy, citizenship, collaboration, and self-expression; encourage imaginative inquiry; and promote civic responsibility. These programs, which extend the company's mission to schools and communities, have grown over the past decade to serve 10,000 students in the Chicago area each year. Drawing from the expertise of our departmental staff and teaching artists, our in-school residency curriculum is tailored to meet the needs and interests of our partners. In this case, responding to a request from BZAEDS teacher Jeffrey Ellison to apply theater practices to his Holocaust curriculum, I designed a rigorous three-

FIG. 1: Renée Molho, Tel Aviv, 1945. Courtesy of Centropa.

and-a-half-month curriculum to complement his work in the classroom. I implemented our arts-integrated approach with support from Writers Theatre Education Outreach Coordinator Kelsey Chigas. Rooted in the Centropa interviews, the intensive curriculum created for BZAEDS aligned with our literary mission and allowed eighth-grade students to learn to become the artists who would lift source texts from the page. The curriculum particularly focused on equipping students with tools needed to embody history and enter the experience of the survivors.

Writers Theatre's approach to integrating theater in the traditional classroom brings history to life and cultivates empathy as students step outside of their immediate experiences. The process of devising an original performance rooted in Centropa's interviews offered students a comprehensive study of past events and the agency to bring them to life. As Alison Oddey (2005) stated, "The process of devising is about the fragmentary experience of understanding ourselves, our culture, and the world we inhabit" (p. 1). Situating this process in the educational arena bridges students' understanding of history with their own lives. Combining excerpts from the interviews with the students' own writing required them not only to comprehend and analyze history, but to make history-to-self connections and to exhibit empathy through embodying another's perspective.

The curriculum was layered in five sequential sections:

1. Ensemble: Establishing a Classroom Culture of Community

Students walk out, state the names and birthplaces of their characters, and take their places onstage. . . . Total stillness. A blank canvas. "We sought to capture the essence of each individual and pay tribute to their legacy. Can you hear their echoes?"

—Listen to the Echoes

In arts-based curricula, particularly when performance is involved, creating a positive learning community is paramount. Establishing a sense of ensemble does this by creating both a culture where diverse ideas and experiences are embraced and a safe space for students to take risks. Because a primary goal of this project was to deepen students' sense of connection to something larger than themselves and enable them to empathize with another's experience, this tenet of the curriculum held particular resonance.

An essential element to building trust and creating a safe space is to establish shared values and ground rules through democratic dialogue. Students were asked to articulate their goals as they began their work, as well as guidelines for the way they would collaborate. Starting on day one, students were on their feet and engaging in theater warm-up activities to encourage them to expand their comfort zone and collaborate, as well as to activate the learning environment. As Viola Spolin (1986) observes, participatory games serve as supplements to the curriculum, "increasing student awareness of problems and ideas fundamental to their intellectual development" (p. 2) and the development of their projects. Over the duration of the program, these games served both to create an ensemble and to introduce performance tools, such as eye contact, stage voice, and using the body for expression. Emphasizing teamwork from the outset facilitated a collective vision for the work; this was reinforced later in the process as students regularly shared writing aloud and collaborated by giving positive feedback.

2. Dramaturgy and Research

The more we researched, the more we connected to these peoples' lives. I want to see the stories people have under them, that you wouldn't know unless you go deep into who they are.

—Listen to the Echoes

The first segment of the students' creative practice was a rigorous dramaturgical process. Dramaturgy, a cornerstone of the theatrical field, involves an in-depth look at the historical, social, and cultural context surrounding a story.

In this project, students combed through the wealth of Centropa interviews and each selected an individual with whom he or she had something in common. Then, I taught students the role of the theatrical dramaturge as a lens to guide them through a historical research process. Following Centropa's mission of celebrating life before the Holocaust, I facilitated a student-driven approach to unearthing the rich cultural details and circumstances surrounding each individual's life, including economics, social structure, education, gender, and customs. Using outside books and resources, students mirrored a professional theater process by compiling dramaturgy packets. These became the foundation upon which the rest of the process was built.

Also during this stage of the process, students compiled photographs of their focus subjects and contextual imagery from the worlds in which they had lived. These were ultimately to serve as a backdrop for our final performance.[3]

3. Writing

Eva— / Artist, risker, dancer, twirliest / Picking the ripe-red currant straight off the briar / The rich Mures Mountains flowing into overcast sky / The sweet smell of gooseberries, / comforting in her hand / Afraid of the times and expected to be stronger / Wondering how long the mountains will last.

—Listen to the Echoes

To help the students effectively pay tribute to the legacy of the survivors, Jeffrey and I engaged the eighth graders in a dialogue around the serious responsibility involved in sharing another person's story. I asked students to identify key passages in the source interviews that highlighted two major pillars: essence—a person's core nature; and legacy—the enduring mark of one's existence.[4] Students began to think of these Jewish men and women as more than victims of an atrocity; they became unique individuals with complex lives before, during, and after the Holocaust. Each student wrote a synthesized interpretation of his or her chosen individual's essence and legacy, pulled key quotes from the source text to support these extrapolations, and articulated a personal connection. By distilling each story through the lens of legacy and essence, a framework was created within which to honor each person.

From here, I ushered students further into the literary realm, as they evolved from researchers into writers. Students were guided through academic writing, unrestricted free writes, poetry writing that centered on identity, and then ethnographic writing, using the source interviews as inspiration to create original monologues and scenes. Students learned to hone in on key details and consider how their pieces related to the larger thematic thread, as well as to take the perspectives of their individual survivors, writing from the first person and thereby further stepping inside their subjects' shoes.

Each of these exercises was rooted in the preceding dramaturgical process: Students' learning was layered to build sequentially from source text to research to the creative arena. The writing process lasted four weeks and included a period of fastidious editing, with feedback from peers and from me. Drawing from the key passages that students identified in their source interviews, I curated and edited their writing into a cohesive working script. This script then underwent a series of edits and enhancements as I met, corresponded, and collaborated with students to reach the most powerful final document possible.

In its final iteration, the script featured scenes and monologues from the perspective of all of the individuals studied. In some cases, where two or more students studied the same person, multiple performers gave voice to different moments in an individual's life. Each featured story stood as an individual tribute, and these were connected thematically through students' poetry and personal narratives; the structure mirrored the curricular foci of legacy, essence, and students' personal connections to the past.

4. Embodying and Bringing Text to Life Through Theater

Rachel Averbukh from Pskov, Russia, reminds me of my great-grandmother, Mildred: strong women, Russian, and around the same age. Like my great-grandmother, Rachel has taught me not to follow the crowd if I don't think it's the right way to go. I should be strong, do what I believe.

—Listen to the Echoes

With the script and their research as a springboard, students began to breathe life into the words on the page. Harnessing the themes of legacy and essence, students created gestures (behavioral and abstract) to epitomize their characters. This established a physical vocabulary that would come together with their monologues and scenes. As Lincoln Center Institute's pedagogy in aesthetic education teaches, the act of embodying is invaluable; it allows students to experience their learning through "the senses as well as emotionally" (p. 6) and to physically express their understanding (Lincoln Center Institute, 2008) [Fig. 2].

FIG. 2: Students engage in an exercise in an embodying workshop and rehearsal. Photo: Writers Theatre.

This embodiment occurred as students participated in a series of ethnographic performance workshops. With additional support from Chigas, students learned how to deliver text on stage by emphasizing operative words and reading with expression. Chigas and I brought in contextual images to stimulate experiential imaginative inquiry into what it might have been like to live in the past. We led students in character study through performance training that included moving in their characters' spines, honing in on their internal energy, and creating physical relationships onstage. Students worked with me individually and in small groups to practice their monologues and scenes with more focused attention to crafting the final performance [Fig. 3].

FIG. 3: Eighth-grade students rehearse for the final performance. Photo: Writers Theatre.

The devised physical vocabulary was woven into the staging of the scenes to activate the world of each character, but it was also used as a metaphorical brushstroke to bookend the performance. At the start of the performance, each actor entered in neutral (without expression) and wearing black, suggesting uniformity between characters. As the play unfolded, each actor physically introduced details and complexities to the story until, at the culmination of the piece, all the actors returned to the stage, this time repeating shared and individual gestures to represent the diversity and richness of Jewish life.

Embodying the stories deepened students' personal investment in and comprehension of the real people behind the source interviews. Further, this rigorous process allowed students to connect these stories to their own lives. As awareness of these individual stories was piqued, so was an awareness of self. Students witnessed and supported one another's risk-taking and growth. In this way, rehearsing in the educational setting doubled as rehearsing for real-life scenarios. As Augusto Boal (2006) stated, "The actor works with human beings, and therefore works with herself, on the infinite process of discovering the human" (p. 37). The staging process deepened students' understanding of the material and simultaneously of the human condition and their contribution or impact on a greater world.

5. Performance

The sun was just starting to cast a palette of colors onto the sky. This view of the sun sinking behind the mountains was always a symbol of our whole town united under one sky.

—Listen to the Echoes

The last step in this process was the final presentation, the culmination of the students' extensive work. Though the curriculum was, by design, process-based, the opportunity to share in front of an audience created a sense of accountability—both to the survivors' stories and to the learning community. Further, sharing with a public audience afforded students the chance to "take action . . . based on the synthesis of their work" (Lincoln Center Institute, 2008); this deepened their sense of pride, ownership, and accomplishment. On April 10, 2014, the eighth graders performed for an audience of over 100 community members, who joined the students in bearing witness to and honoring history.

EFFICACY OF ARTS INTEGRATION

Within the field of arts education, there is rich evidence of the positive impact of thoughtfully designed arts-integrated curricula. It is widely asserted that work pursued in this context must balance the arts and non-arts subject areas equally. Arnold Aprill (2010), founder of Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), defines this work as "teaching and learning in which arts learning and academic learning are connected in ways in which [both are] deepened" (p. 7). There are innumerable examples of such curricular symbiosis from the field. As James S. Catteral and Lynn Waldorf (1999) describe, in all cases, a successful curriculum "exhibits explicit ties to both art and academic standards" (p. 57). Alice C. Pennisi (2012) points to Urban Arts Partnership's work throughout New York City to emphasize that arts integration should "enable non-arts teachers to work with practicing artists who not only understand how to create meaningful art curricula but also know how to negotiate those disciplinary boundaries while still respecting the teacher's discipline" (p. 108).

In our case, establishing clear key curricular objectives at the outset of the project certainly did facilitate our success. These objectives included building empathy and understanding outside of students' selves; cultivating a sense of citizenship; studying and celebrating a lost culture by establishing personal connections to those who had endured the Holocaust; and providing a rigorous, student-centered artistic experience. These goals encompassed opportunities for growth within the academic and artistic subject areas. Engagement with the subject matter fed the artistic process, and the artistic process deepened students' understanding of the subject matter. Jeffrey Ellison's background in teaching the Holocaust and my theatrical expertise provided "opportunities for students to critically analyze and challenge their world" (p. 108) that might not have occurred in a traditional classroom environment.

Mark A. Graham (2009) asserts that the "teacher who is also an artist" can transform "the educational dynamics of school learning" by facilitating "complex learning environments that invite collaboration and intense interaction with the disciplines and art-making" (p. 86). Effective

teaching in this context requires teachers to serve as facilitators: The approach "is about mediating and mentoring" (p. 90).

Laura Tan Paradis's 2011 report for CAPE speaks to the "social and developmental impact" of arts-integrated work on students (p. 12). This was evidenced specifically by one of our students, described by members of the eighth-grade team as typically quiet and reluctant to share. In fact, at the outset of this project, the student articulated reluctance to participate and almost withdrew from the experience. However, with careful mentorship, as he engaged in collaborative and complex learning experiences, this student demonstrated marked growth. The process ignited something in him: He was the first to memorize his monologue and performed in front of his peers in rehearsal with such vigor and enthusiasm that it raised the bar for the rest of the class.

Our curriculum was designed with attention to key criteria for successful arts integration. The CAPE study *How Arts Integration Supports Student Learning,* helmed by Karen DeMoss (2002), articulates three "universal themes" present in positive student outcomes that comprise a useful framework for comparison to our program. Included are "improved learning environments" that provided students with "methodologies and class climates that liberated their learning from traditional boundaries and inhibitions," engaging students in content through "constructive challenge," and "broadened learning communities" that extend learning "beyond the traditional classroom" (p. 13). In the unit created for BZAEDS, these themes are paralleled by the use of theater as a new medium for historical exploration, with layered artistic participation and reflection throughout.

APPLYING THIS PROJECT IN OTHER SETTINGS

This curriculum, designed specifically for the students at BZAEDS, drew on Writers Theatre's expertise to take students through a layered, professionally developed, arts-integrated curriculum. However, given limited time or resources, the fundamental principles of this methodology could be reimagined in myriad settings. Possible adjustments include assigning specific source interviews, providing curated contextual materials to support the background research, and using only excerpts of the source interviews as the content for performance. The experience of embodying or sharing with an audience would deepen a student's relationship to this history in any circumstances—the breadth and depth of the process can be determined or shaped to reflect educators' goals and aptitudes. Also worthy of consideration is that the success of arts-integrated curriculum relies on age-appropriate approaches to this work. Certainly, this curriculum, particularly in the writing phases and in the creation of physical vocabulary, could be intensified for high-school students, who would bring a different angle, maturity, and connection to the work.

As Oddey (2005) articulated, the participatory process gives "young people time and space to express, exchange, and change their views or opinions. . . . It is yet another way of understanding the world we live in, and ourselves" (p. 124). Embodying historical experiences broadens perspectives and teaches engaged citizenship. As one student said, "I was thinking about my monologue and I realized that it's really important for me to make it as successful and powerful as it can potentially be. I want each word to be important and beautiful. . . . I have loved this opportunity and project!" The Centropa interviews are inherently narrative-driven and dialogue-based and so provide rich material to inhabit. Live theater is entirely active, in the moment, and as ephemeral as history or people's lives. Using theater as the educational vehicle to honor these interviews and encourage further learning and remembrance offers an unparalleled opportunity to merge form and content; encourage intra- and interpersonal growth; and make history, and the people who lived it, come alive.

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END NOTES

[1] The script was researched, devised, and written by Nicole Ripley of Writers Theatre with the eighth-grade students at BZAEDS, January–April 2014.

[2] To learn more about Renée Molho, see the 24-minute Centropa film *Renée Molho—A Bookstore in Six Chapters,* available at www.centropa.org/centropa-cinema/renee-molho-bookstore-six-chapters.

[3] This approach mirrored the projections design in Writers Theatre's *The MLK Project: The Fight for Civil Rights,* written by Yolanda Androzzo, which served as inspiration for the students in their process.

[4] Students saw a performance of Writers Theatre's production *The MLK Project,* which brings to life heroes of the Civil Rights Movement, as an example of highlighting legacy in monologue-based performance and ethnography.

"The availability of live survivor testimony diminishes each month and, with it, living evidence of the Shoah," writes Myrna Goldenberg. She suggests turning to "hundreds of hours and miles of shelves of written court records and original documents detailing the process and prosecution of mass murder" as one way of uncovering its grimmest truths, a difficult journey of discovery appropriate only for older high school, college, and graduate students immersed in this study.

Myrna Goldenberg

Charles Reznikoff's *Holocaust*: The Trials as Poetic Narrative

View of judges' panel during testimony at the Nuremberg Trials, 1945.

The availability of live survivor testimony diminishes each month and, with it, living evidence of the Shoah. This inevitable disappearance of survivors leads to an "anxiety of historical transmission"—that is, the fear that without survivors, the Shoah will be forgotten (Trezise, 2013, p. 1). It has been stated that "their nightmare will never be over as long as they [survivors] live" (Confini, 2009, pp. 532–533). Dare we say that the nightmare that was the Shoah will also disappear?

To be sure, the presence of survivors animates the words they use and transforms mass murder in the abstract into murder of the individual—approximately six million Jewish individuals. Without survivors to tell their stories, what remains are thousands of hours of their audio and video testimony and hundreds of hours of testimony of those who witnessed the survivors. Though not the same as live survivor testimony, these first-person accounts are useful to researchers of any discipline and to the classroom teacher, more so as survivors and witnesses no longer speak in person. Video testimony, especially when well edited, is particularly compelling.

What also remains are the written narratives that tell individual stories—of survival, murder, hope, cruelty, terror—stories of another planet so unimaginable that ordinary language fails us. Language, though, is our major tool for relating the unspeakable and describing the unthinkable.[1] Inadequate as they may be, the words in these narratives are perhaps our most accessible means of retrieving and

teaching about experiences almost universally described as unknowable. As educators, we access that vocabulary to transmit the horror of the genocide by which mass murders and subsequent genocides are measured. Put simply, we try to find ways to transform the words we know into the experiences that, thankfully, we can never know but must recognize. The challenge we face is to use everyday language to convey the unimaginable.

Less compelling than oral or written testimony, but equally important, are hundreds of hours and miles of shelves of written court records and original documents detailing the process and prosecution of mass murder. These are the documents that Charles Reznikoff mines for his book-length poem *Holocaust* (2007). Reznikoff (1894–1976)[2] uses passages from *Trials of War Criminals Before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals* and *Verbatim Record of the Trial and Appeal of Adolf Eichmann: In the District Court of Jerusalem, Criminal Case No. 40/61* to construct an 88-page narrative of the Shoah. He focuses exclusively on Jewish victims, selecting the testimony of witnesses as his primary sources. Where appropriate, he draws from "affidavits and certain official war documents presented by trial lawyers" (Sutherland, 2007, p. 91). Divided into 12 nearly chronological chapters, the poem tracks the Shoah from the deportation of Jews from Germany to Poland in its first chapter ("Deportations") to a horrific and rather non-chronological last chapter ("Escapes") detailing the deaths of thousands of Jews in Chelmno, Gleiwitz, and Auschwitz, and on the death marches, and then the destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Reznikoff's opening lines form a disarming narrative, simple in its telling but horrific in its impact:

> One evening, a policeman came and told him— / he had come from Poland and had been in Germany almost / thirty years— / told him and his family / "To the police station at once. / But you are going to come back right away," the policeman added. . . . / When they reached the police station, / they saw Jewish men, women, and children . . . /
> All were taken to the town's concert hall . . . . / and kept there twenty-four hours, / and then taken in police trucks to the railway station. . . . / And the Jews were all put on a train / taking them towards the Polish border. (p. 3)

Reznikoff encapsulates in two lines the gradual process of the Jews' deportation to Polish ghettos from their homes in "all sorts of places in Germany / until the Jews numbered thousands," setting the stage for their next deportation, to the work and death camps (p. 3). He introduces the process of humiliation in the next few lines:

> The Jew was given a bucket of hot water / and told to clean steps of the entrance [to the former offices of Jewish community]; / the water had an acid in it burning his hands. / The chief rabbi of the community, wearing his robe and prayer shawl, / was pushed out beside him / and also told to clean the steps; / the other S.S. men, standing around, and passers-by / smiling or laughing. (pp. 4, 5)

Reznikoff insisted that the names of perpetrators were far less important than their actions. Here, he introduces the type of SS he labels the *entertainment squad*—those who entertained themselves by taunting the Jews. In Chapter IX, "Entertainment," Reznikoff writes:

> The dog belonged to the S.S. man in charge of "the showers," that is, the gas chambers; / the S.S. man would call the dog "Mensch," that is, "man": / and whenever he set the dog on a Jew would say, "Man, get that dog." (p. 53)

Thus, Reznikoff demonstrates the perversity of language, another tactic the Nazis used to deceive the public and dehumanize Jews. In the same chapter, he shows us Nazi misuse of the verb *play:*

> And in still another camp the officers played "the spinning top": / they would place a stick in the ground—stand it up quite low— / and the man to be tortured would have to keep touching it with his right hand, / his left hand behind his back, / and keep turning around the stick, / and as he ran around he was beaten / and those beating him would shout, "Quicker! Quicker!" / He would have to go around at least ten times, / but after three or four times some would faint. / And once five had the bottoms of their trousers bound with rope / and mice put into the trousers; / the men had to stand at attention / and those who could not because of the mice / were beaten. (pp. 53–55)

In the last chapter, Reznikoff describes another type of amusement that was anything but that for the prisoner:

> They spent a half an hour doing frog-jumps, / even in the rain and mud. / And now and then a man would be taken out of line and sent to the gas chambers. / If, for example, he had diarrhea—as many had— / and had to leave the drilling, / this would be recorded / and he would end up in the crematorium. (p. 80)

The games are labeled entertainment, not torture, but the label fools no one, least of all Reznikoff's readers, who may need to be reminded that the source of this informa-

tion is documented trial testimony, not gruesome fantasy. In contrast to its contents, which are precisely the unknowable and the unthinkable, the poem "yields a style that is pristine, fastidious, almost stiff in its effort to say exactly what it means to say" (Auster, 1984).

Readers of Shoah literature are often shielded from the horror of such scenes (and, of course, adolescents should be), but this poet spares no one. His irony is quite obvious in the chapter called "Research" (italics added):

> We are the civilized— / Aryans; / and do not always kill those condemned to death / merely because they are Jews / as the less civilized might: / we use them to benefit science / like rats or mice; / to find out the limits of human endurance at the highest altitudes / for the *good* of the German air force; / force them to stay in tanks of ice water / or naked outdoors for hours and hours / at temperatures below freezing; / Yes, study the effects of going without food / and drinking only sea water / for days and days /
> For the *good* of the German navy! / or wound them and force wooden shavings or ground glass / into the wounds. . . . / All for the *good* of the German army! / *Heil Hitler!* (p. 9)

The following excerpts come some pages after the ones above; wherever one reads in this poem, verse after verse of adapted court testimony is jarring, leaving indelible imprints on the mind:

> They gathered some twenty Hasidic Jews from their homes . . . / They were led up a hill. / Here they were told to chant their prayers / and raise their hands for help to God / and, as they did so / the officers poured kerosene under them / and set it on fire. (pp. 24–25)

Other scenes of brutality taken from testimony too graphic to be quoted directly constitute the sixth chapter, "Gas Chambers and Gas Trucks":

> The bodies were thrown out quickly / for other transports were coming: / bodies blue, wet with sweat and urine, legs covered with excrement, / and everywhere the bodies of babies and children. / Two dozen workers were busy / opening the mouths of the dead with iron hooks / and with chisels taking out teeth with golden caps. (p. 31)

In death, as in life, the victims were violated.

While the poem itself accuses no one Nazi by name, it does locate the sites of the horrors of the ghettos and camps:

> One Saturday, when he was thirteen, / he was taking a walk with his father in the ghetto of Lodz; / they heard shots / and saw people falling. / And then his father fell down, too: / shot and killed. / He himself was caught and put on a truck / but begged the men who held him prisoner to let him go home / to tell his mother what had happened / and that he was to go away with them: / but all they answered was, "Shut up!" / (Afterwards, when he was taking out the gold teeth of the dead / at Chelmno / and had to go through all sorts of files, / he saw a photograph of his mother in one of them.) (p. 71)

Reznikoff's restraint and detachment are chilling; the catalog of horrors is unrelenting:

> If the gas chambers were crowded / and no room for the youngest children—or even adults— / they were thrown on piles of wood / that had been sprinkled with gasoline / and just burned alive. / But that their screams might not be too disturbing / to those who worked / an orchestra of Jews from the camp / was set to playing loudly / well-known German songs. (p. 46)

Those who were not immediately murdered on arrival would be worked to death; in this excerpt, we gain insight into their day:

> In one camp after they were awakened at four in the morning / and got a cup of coffee / they worked in the quarries all day / and returned to the camp at nine or ten at night. / They then got a bowl of watery soup / and two or three bad potatoes. / By the time they got to the bundles of straw on which they slept / it was midnight. / In two months, thirty-five hundred in that camp died of hunger. (p. 47)

Unlike many other works about the Shoah, *Holocaust* includes large sections on women and children. In Chapter VIII, "Children," Reznikoff describes various transports of children from Vichy France:

> A visitor once stopped one of the children: / a boy of seven or eight, handsome, alert, and gay. / He had only one shoe and the other foot was bare, / and his coat of good quality had no buttons. / The visitor asked him for his name / and then what his parents were doing; / and he said, "Father is working in the office / and mother is playing the piano." / Then he asked the visitor if he would be joining his parents soon— / they always told the children they would be leaving soon to rejoin their parents— / and the visitor answered, "Certainly. In a day or two." (p. 51).

In the chapter "Ghettos," Reznikoff presents a scene in which a woman was caught with a baby in her arms:

> She began asking for mercy: if she were shot / the baby should live. / She was near a fence between the ghetto and where Poles lived / and behind the fence were Poles ready to catch the baby / and she was about to hand it over when caught. / The S.S. man took the baby from her arms / and shot her twice, / and then held the baby in his hands. . . . / The S.S. man laughed. (pp. 14–15)[3]

Such detail does two things: Its matter-of-fact sensationalism risks the gravitas of the rest of the poem, and it defines the speaker as a reliable witness. Its inclusion reflects that

> what matters to Reznikoff is not the one who does the telling. Rather, he presents the telling itself: the personal testimony, the concrete details of what happened. . . . As Reznikoff remarked, "What is important is what is said." (Sutherland, 2007, pp. 91–92)

Reznikoff's skill of integrating victim and perpetrator testimony reinforces the sense of immediacy: We cringe at the pain of the victim and we are witness to the cruelty of the perpetrators as if there were no intermediary. This raw material does not allow for respite in the narrative: There is no commentary, no elaboration. Nor is there a satisfying resolution, nor can there be, with six million dead. Indeed, the absence of commentary is part of Reznikoff's strength and uniqueness.

The last chapter, "Escapes," is in itself a provocative narrative. Reznikoff ends the 22 pages of this section with eight lines about the rescue of Jews at the shores of Denmark and the boats on which Jews were "ferried to safety in Sweden":

> About six thousand Danish Jews were rescued / and only a few hundred captured by the Germans. (p. 88)

In pointing to rescue, he brings his narrative full circle. At the end of the first chapter, he told us:

> A priest in Germany would find Jews shelter / and Jews came to him to hide. / He sent them to workingmen in the suburbs of Berlin / and to farmers out of town, / and they sheltered hundreds— / not a door was closed. (p. 5)

We feel a sliver of redemption for humanity at both the beginning and the end of the poem. The narrative of catastrophe is thus framed with examples of courage, a critical alternative to the acts of cruelty in this unrelentingly grim narrative.

The overwhelming amount of documentation about the Shoah might discourage students who are unsophisticated or novice researchers. Reznikoff's editing of the original court records limits and narrows the narrative yet refuses to obscure the evil of the catastrophe. As he did for *Testimony* (1934) and some sections of *By the Waters of Manhattan* (1930), he pored over court documents:[4] in this case, over 26 volumes of Nuremberg testimony and a sizable transcript from the Eichmann trial. This technique opens the door for us, as teachers, to demonstrate the strategy of objectivity and methods for evaluating seemingly objective work.

Having graduated from New York University Law School, Reznikoff was educated to view testimony as a type of truth, giving the reader the "point of view of the law court" (Burke, 1934, p. xiii). However, the selectivity of details provided betrays the claim of objectivity. In the world of the Internet, a world without filters that informs both the wise and the naïve, we have the obligation to expose our students to bias and its appropriate evaluation. Nevertheless, in the absence of survivors, these details provide a body of evidence that is convincing and that condemns the perpetrators: No interpretation beyond the presentation of the evidence is necessary, "nor would [Reznikoff] allow himself any subjective outcry" (Syrkin, 1984). Still, we must remember that in his distillation of the primary material, Reznikoff is not without bias, despite his masterful appearance of objectivity. *Holocaust* seems to be artless or, as Hindus (1984) states, "chaste"—and that is part of what makes it so accessible, as if there were "no style" (Hindus, n.p.). As Louis Untermeyer (1930) asserts in his introduction to *By the Waters of Manhattan,* "The style is the story—quiet, always serious, and cumulatively impressive" (p. 7).

American poets writing about the Shoah were spared direct experience of Hitler's destruction, "removed from direct experience of the devastating destruction of European Jewry and therefore denied a survivor's truth—his pain and suffering, a personal mandate to tell the story" (Parmet, 2001, p. 20). This poem, though, puts the reader/student into a courtroom, intensely facing the offenders; it creates confrontation with the perpetrators and causes consequent discomfort to its readers. Clearly, it needs careful and responsible contextualization if it is not to overwhelm even adult readers. Just as clearly, it would be irresponsible to present this poem to any but the most mature high-school students. Yet it is through these overwhelming scenes that we, whether students or professional historians, understand that the Shoah was a "central moral event in human history" (Confini, 2009, p. 531).

The passing of survivors challenges us to use the

legacy they have gifted us: "When I'm gone, my stories will remain," Morris Cohen reminds us (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2014, cover). Along with narratives and interviews housed in *Holocaust* museums and archives, Reznikoff's *Holocaust* gives us, as teachers, the opportunity to raise questions of institutional morality within a specific historical context. It thus is a valuable teaching tool that demands our attention and engages the minds and moral cores of our students.

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END NOTES

[1] "They expect the worst—not the unthinkable." p. 4. See *Auschwitz and After,* by C. Delbo (trans. Rosette C. Lamont), 1995, New Haven: Yale University Press.

[2] For an excellent short biographical essay, see Charles Reznikoff: Man and Poet, ed. Milton Hindus, 1984, Orono, ME: National Poetry Foundation, retrieved from www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/reznikoff/bio.htm.

[3] Court testimony indicates that the baby was about 18 months old when he was murdered (Sutherland, 2007, p. 93).

[4] It is this technique that he used in his earlier volumes titled *Testimony,* in which he drew from court records of colonial and post-Civil War America to tell its history. Kenneth Burke (1934) explains that these vignettes were "not concocted: they were 'actual' experiences trimmed for the purpose at hand" (p. xii), i.e., to transmit a particular history.

"We often ask ourselves what makes the art created during the Holocaust and, in the aftermath by its survivors, unique," writes *PRISM* art editor Pnina Rosenberg. "After all, acts of murder and violence have been part of human history since the earliest times and are depicted in numerous works of art. The answer to this question is complex, in the same way that the Holocaust itself bears no simple explanation." This essay suggests that these works will serve as historical traces, documenting the Holocaust even in the absence of those who were there.

Pnina Rosenberg

Art and Holocaust: Learning and Transmission

Holocaust art created by those who experienced it is distinguished by the fact that, for the first time in history, the artists themselves were witnesses to the events and documented them from first-hand experience. In previous works of protest, such as Goya's *The Execution of the Hostages* and Picasso's *Guernica,* the artist learned of the horror second-hand and subsequently reacted to it. Holocaust artists, however, experienced the daily barbarity and horror themselves and recorded it while it was occurring, not as an aesthetic experience but in fulfillment of their basic needs—to express themselves; to find refuge, even momentarily, in their creations; and to leave a record for posterity, as noted by the Israeli author and survivor Aharon Appelfeld (1997): "To record for posterity was at times the main source of motivation for survivors. The vow to tell everything, to leave nothing untold, to report every aspect of the horrors" (p. 6, original translation). Hence, once the survivors are no longer able to narrate their history, their visual testimony will transmit their legacy and, intertwined in it, the history of the Holocaust.

THE ROLE OF ART DURING THE HOLOCAUST

> I asked myself why I was drawing, when I was fighting day and night. This is something similar to biological continuation. Every man, every people, is interested in continuing his people, his family, in bringing children into the world for the future—in leaving this one thing. Another motivation was to get information to the so-called free world about the cruel, cruel actions of the Germans—so that there would be some documentation. To tell this to a world that was completely ignorant. . . . To be creative in the situation of the Holocaust, this is also a protest. Each man, when he comes face to face with real danger, with death, reacts in his own way. The artist reacts through his medium. This is his protest! This is my medium! He reacts artistically. This is his weapon. He must leave his mark as a "mensch" on mankind. This is what shows that the Germans could not break his spirit. (Costanza, 1982, p. xviii)

These words, written by the artist-partisan Alexander Bogen (Vilnius, 1916 — Tel Aviv, 2010) about the works he produced during the Holocaust, contain the essence of the art that was created in those unbearable conditions [Fig. 1].

FIG. 1: Alexander Bogen, *Youth in Vilnius Ghetto, 1943.* Courtesy of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum.

Bogen suggests three main roles that it fulfilled:

- Art as biological continuation: Humans have a basic need to leave their stamp on the world, especially when they are in danger of annihilation. Thus, works of art served as a means of transmitting inmates' and fighters' experiences. (These chronicles become even more crucial as survivors are no longer able to present their testimony in person.)
- Art as documentation: Artists used universal visual language to provide evidence of the forces of evil and the depths of inhumanity to which the human race could sink—so that the world would know.
- Art as protest: In a world where undesirables were turned into subhumans—anonymous numbers with no individual identity—the creation of works of art was a kind of spiritual protest. Despite physical torture, starvation, and the constant threat of death, artists resisted and, with pencils and scraps of paper, fought back, pursuing a banned occupation that gave them a sense of a fleeting mastery over their lives—an element of supreme importance in a world where such a thing was almost completely denied.

Thus today, when learning from these visual testimonies, we can reflect not only on the subjects they depict, but also on their crucial role during those dark days as witnesses to the spark of humanity that was not extinguished.

VISUALIZING INMATES' LIFE

Despite the diversity of the Jewish artists and their locations —ghettos, hiding places, and camps throughout Nazi-occupied Europe—the artwork that survived depicts common themes reflecting their life and their daily struggle to maintain human norms.[1]

Those who were imprisoned frequently depicted the camps, particularly the barbed-wire fences and watchtowers of their everyday surroundings—constant reminders that they were confined, cut off from the society of which they had been an integral part up to a brief time previously. Although these scenes of the camps might be presumed to be objective representations of the reality in which the artists were living, the painters frequently projected their personal feelings onto the scene, so that these paintings actually reflect the artist's mood rather than reality as such.

Some artists showed the camps as places crowded with people, as they really were, while others depicted them without a living soul, projecting their loneliness onto a scene of abandonment, detachment, and isolation from humankind.

The constant, intolerable hunger, which weakened prisoners both physically and mentally, can hardly be depicted. Yet numerous scenes illustrate the intense degradation forced on the camp inmates, showing them lining up for daily rations [Fig. 2], guarding a scrap of bread as though it were a treasure, or rummaging through the garbage to find a bite to eat. Their daily life was totally divorced from everything they had known in their previous lives; even their most basic human needs were not met. They had to attend to their physical needs, such as going to the toilet and washing, in the public space, exposed to the eyes of their fellow inmates as well as the guards. This reality is described in testimony by Auschwitz survivor Raya Kagan (1947):

FIG. 2: Leo Haas (Opava, Czechoslovakia, 1901 — Berlin, 1963), *Food Distribution in Terezin, 1944.* Courtesy of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum.

> Three in the morning. Dark and cold outside. Dark and cold in the women's barracks. We huddle next to the trough and try to reach the trickle of water from the taps. The first in line splash water on the others behind them. It is impossible to wash satisfactorily. . . . A short distance away there is a second queue . . . for the toilets . . . with no divisions or walls between them. At the beginning we could not bring ourselves to go near them. But we were bursting. Even here we were on display. (pp. 56–57, original translation)

This world was both bewildering and embarrassing. It is no wonder that so many pictures depict these very uncommon subjects, in which the inmates try to gain some privacy and to overcome, usually with little success, those daily obstacles.

The abundance of portraitures is not surprising: Portraying a face or a figure was an act of commemoration, confirming the existence of the individual in a world where existence was so uncertain and arbitrary. In some

cases, artist inmates, after drawing portraits and other paintings for the camp administration, were allowed, as fringe benefits, to send small pictures to others, which allowed them to assure relatives that they were alive and well. Resistance members similarly smuggled art to comrades still on the outside, and in transit camps, inmates sometimes could send and receive mail—censored, of course, by the administration. These opportunities to send art to the outside explain why we frequently find the name of the subject of the picture next to the artist's signature, along with the date and place, and why the figures in the portraits have a slightly better appearance than in reality: The artists wanted to send a positive message, not to show the misery of their situation. Notwithstanding, many such portraits are the last record of both their model and their artist [Fig. 3].

FIG. 3: Aizik Feder (Odessa, 1887 – Auschwitz, 1943), *Jewish Inmate in Drancy, 1942–1943*. Courtesy of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum.

Beautification of the model also helped to raise the artist's morale, according to testimony by Auschwitz inmate Zofia Stepien-Bator: "I tried to make everything more pleasant. I did it because everything was so ugly, gray and dirty, and I wanted to depict something beautiful in my drawings" (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 89). [See Rosenberg, *PRISM*, Spring 2012, pp. 66–69—Ed.]. Thus portraiture served as an act of protest against the dehumanization and loss of identity forced upon model and artist, as reported by another Auschwitz inmate:

> In the camps, a person becomes a number. We are not called by our name, but by our number. According to our number, we receive rations and are divided into work groups. Your number goes with you to the infirmary and the crematorium. Your number is your eternal soul. . . . The camp authorities have made a point of taking away any object that might remind a prisoner of his previous life, the life of freedom. You lose your identity, become gray, one of the many who passed through the camp and disappeared without trace or memorial. (Kagan, 1947, p. 53, original translation)

At first glance, it might be surprising that the artist-inmates' repertoires include many landscape scenes depicting beautiful panoramas, such as distant snow-covered mountains, picturesque villages seen beyond the camps' barbed-wire fences, and their memories of their own cities and towns [Fig. 4]. Those views, which contrasted sharply with the misery of life within their fenced space, provided the camp artists with a fleeting connection with the outside world or bonded them with their recent past. In both cases, painting such scenes served as a momentary refuge and escape from the physical and moral ugliness that surrounded them, as depicted by psychiatrist and Auschwitz survivor Viktor Frankl (1984):

> The more intense the inmate's inner life became, the more he or she experienced the beauty of nature anew. It even helped to forget the horrors of life for a while. If anyone had seen our faces as we were taken

FIG. 4: Karl Schwesig (Gelsenkirchen, Germany, 1898 – Dusseldorf, 1955), *Snowy Mount Canigou Seen From St. Cyprein Camp (France), 1940*. Courtesy of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum.

from Auschwitz to a camp in Bavaria, staring at the Salzberg mountains with their summits sparkling in the setting sun or clinging to the bars of the tiny openings of the rail car, he would never have believed that these were the faces of despairing human beings who had lost all hope of life and freedom. Despite this, or maybe because of this, we were entranced by the beauty of nature, which we had missed for so long. (p. 59, original translation)

Unlike so many other aspects of camp life, the deportations to death are relatively rarely portrayed. This might be explained by the fact that the inmate-artists who were not deported were shocked and overwhelmed while witnessing their fellow inmates' fate, which may have caused artistic paralysis. It should also be considered that artistic activity was banned, for fear that it would reveal the truth about the Nazi concentration-camp world; hence, the artists may have censored themselves because it was too dangerous to be caught with such testimonies. Even in Terezin, where the Nazis initially turned a blind eye to much artwork—even those drawings that portrayed quite realistically the horror of camp life—artists hid their later work because they were aware of the growing danger of depicting such graphic truths. Indeed, when the administration suspected artists of doing work they knew was incriminating, even though they never found the paintings they sought, they tortured the artists as well as other members of their families, including wives and children. Some of these artists consequently perished in Terezin; most of the others were deported because of their alleged criminal acts. Of this group, only Leo Hass survived; after the war, he returned to Terezin and rescued those incriminating visual testimonies.

Thus despite the penalties, there are several representations of deportations, which manifest the contrast between the deportees—men and women, aged and young, sick and helpless people—and the guards, smartly dressed soldiers with guns pointed at helpless inmates.

A feature of the Fleischmann drawing [Fig. 5] that strikes the eye is that it is almost impossible to distinguish between the reduced human beings and their meagre bundles. Yet in the background of the faceless mass of deportees, the artist focused on a child, one of whose hands holds his mother's hand and the other a toy. The artist-inmates, who constantly witnessed scenes of abuse, torture, and death, were moved by the tragic fate of the innocent children. By fixing his gaze on a helpless child, the artist gave a last tribute to the infant and exercised his only means of protest against the brutish fate of the young and innocent victims.

By analyzing the various themes depicted by artist-inmates during their internment, the contemporary viewer can reconstruct minute details of prisoners' daily life (and death), hopes, and dreams. In this way we can familiarize ourselves with the inmates' daily struggle to maintain their dignity as human beings, despite the Nazi attempt to reduce them to sheer numbers in the machinery of their mass-murder plan.

POST-HOLOCAUST TESTIMONIES: ARTISTS RETRACING THEIR PAST

I reconstructed each picture shortly after I was liberated. With trembling hands, I began to reconstruct the hell from which, by a miracle, my mother and I had emerged. I felt that every drawing that disclosed the horrors I had endured in some way eased my mind. . . . I have tried to express through my drawings all I felt and saw in my youth, all which made my world dark, so that my work will bear witness to those terrible things. It is a meager attempt, for I do not believe it is possible to convey the horrors we suffered either through drawings or any other form of expression. (Lieberman-Shiber, 1997, n.p.).

These words appear in Ella Lieberman-Shiber's graphic novel *On the Edge of the Abyss,* with whose images and text she succeeded in creating a sensitive artistic documentation of the events she had experienced during the Holocaust, hoping it would alleviate, just a little, the harsh burden she carried.

The 93 small pencil drawings that she made soon after liberation reflect a phenomenon common to several artist-survivors who felt the need to document their Holocaust memoirs and share them with the world. Alfred Kantor's (1971) autographic novel consists of 127 colored drawings

FIG. 5: Karl Fleischmann (Klatovy, Czechoslovakia, 1897 – Auschwitz, 1944), *Deportation From Terezin to Auschwitz, 1942–1944.* Courtesy of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum.

made while he was interned in the Degendorf displaced persons' camp in Bavaria. In the space of two months after arriving there in July 1945, he produced these drawings based on his memories of the various camps in which he had been imprisoned: Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Schwarzheide. The immediate expression of his experiences through art seems to have been a kind of exorcism, as if he sought to purify himself from the physical and mental horrors he had undergone and free himself, as far as possible, from these appalling ordeals.

David Olère, who was a Sonderkommando in the gas chambers at Auschwitz, emerged from this hell determined to bear visual witness to the horrors to which he had been exposed there. Straight after his return to his home in France, he began to recreate the hell of the camps in works of art that, without exception, are painful to look at and seem "to repel, rather than attract, his audience. . . . He drew only from memory and looked only for truth. . . . For him [it] was a moral obligation" (Klarsfeld, 1989, p. 9).

These artists visualize the dehumanization endured by those who were imprisoned during the Holocaust, attested by Appelfeld (1997):

> People learned to live like animals, to eat like them, to grab whatever they could. Thirst weakens you, fear crushes you, and finally even the most noble of human beings crawls on all fours to steal a piece of bread from a friend who has fallen asleep for a moment. (p. 4, original translation)

This deliberately imposed dehumanization, depicted in Olère's black-and-white drawings and colored oil paintings, gave legitimacy to the brutal soldier to commit any dreadful act he chose on these seemingly non-human beings, who were converted into faceless numbers, and thus no longer inviolate.

In post-Holocaust works in which the artist-survivors confront their past, they basically repeat the same theme and subjects depicted by imprisoned inmates: They portray the camps and their barbed-wire fences, the unimaginable hunger and its consequences, and the wide spectrum of inhumane living conditions. The main difference is that they have freed themselves from the self-censoring inflicted on the incarcerated artists; thus, while their works do depict similar themes, they are bolder and more blatant. With no fear of being caught, they want to cry aloud to the world and display openly what they endured and from what they want to be liberated, because the memory of it is too heavy to carry and continue living. Their painting becomes not only a means of documentation but also a kind of therapy: "I felt that every artistic revelation of the horrors of my past brought me some relief and, to some extent, calmed my thoughts," Liebermann-Shiber wrote (1997, n.p.).

Despite the difference between works of art created during the Holocaust and after, they all reflect the inmates' desire to leave traces of their experiences for future generations. These are traces that educators can use as they continue to transmit the histories of the Jews who endured the Holocaust once these eyewitnesses can no longer tell their stories themselves.

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END NOTE

[1] Images of the discussed works can be seen at the author's website *Learning About the Holocaust Through Art,* http://art.holocaust-education.net/.

"The effacement of the Sephardic catastrophe from the collective memory," Michal Held explains, "is directly related to the growing concern about teaching the Shoah in a world where there will be no living survivors. I suggest that the combination of *listening* to the survivors who are still with us, *being creative* in response to their legacy, and encouraging *educational enterprises* based on communication and artistic expression will provide us with effective tools for, eventually, replacing living testimonies as best we can."

Michal Held

Listen, Create, Educate: The Sephardic Holocaust From Scholarly and Personal Perspectives[1]

After the death of the last witnesses, the remembrance of the Holocaust must not be entrusted to the historians alone. Now comes the hour of artistic creation.
—Aharon Appelfeld, *Haaretz,* 2005

The facts of the complete destruction during the Holocaust of the Sephardic communities of Greece and Yugoslavia, and the murder of Sephardic Jews originating in France, Belgium, Italy, and other European countries, have long been met, for the most part, with undeserved silence. As noted by Esther Benbassa and Aron Rodrigue (2000), while "most people are aware of the destruction of the Ashkenazi heartland in the middle of the twentieth century, [they are unaware of the fact that] its Judeo-Spanish counterpart also disappeared at approximately the same time" (p. xxiii). The distance between the Balkan countries, most of whose Sephardic Jews were deported, and the death camps to which they were sent was not only physical but social and cultural as well. Unlike the German Jews, who as early as the 1930s were living amidst and suffering from the conditions that accompanied the gradual rise of Nazism, the members of the Sephardic communities could have never anticipated or imagined them.

Due to the complexity of this chapter in Jewish history and the modest length of this essay, I present here only a brief analysis of segments of testimony by three Sephardic survivors, accompanied with my poetic responses, work based on my belief that scholarly study can be enriched by personal experiences that led to it.

The Shoah, understood through Israeli education, media, and literature, is a meaningful part of my identity, even though my immediate family was not murdered. My father and his Ashkenazic family lived in Romania. My grandfather was sent to forced labor but, fortunately, the family was not deported. My mother was born to a Sephardic family in Jerusalem and always reminds us of how fortunate she was.

My relationship with the Holocaust became more personal as my contacts with the Sephardic community deepened. A few years ago, when I started to teach a course on the Sephardic Holocaust at the Hebrew University, I discovered that young, educated students were not always aware of the fact that the German plan to destroy the Jewish people included Ladino-speaking Jews. I soon realized that it was my duty to listen to the Sephardic survivors remaining and to implore other people to do the same. I found myself on a scholarly and poetic journey founded on three principles: *listen, create,* and *educate.*

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

In 1492, the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella decreed the expulsion of Spanish Jewry, most of whom resettled in the Ottoman Empire, retaining for nearly 500 years the Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) language and a culture with Hispanic roots. A flourishing Sephardic community was established in Greece, where the city of Salonika [Fig. 1] developed as an important Sephardic social, cultural, and economic center over the following centuries. The

prosperous life of the Greek Jews ended abruptly in the summer of 1943, when only very few of German-occupied Salonika's Jews escaped deportation to Poland.

The study of the Holocaust tends to center on the destruction of the Ashkenazic Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe, omitting altogether or rarely referring to the experience of Sephardic Jews. Statistically and demographically, this focus may be logical; after all, 90% of the 400,000 Jews who lived in Warsaw alone before the war were murdered. On the other hand, while a much smaller population, only 50,000 Jews, lived in Salonika, it is important to note that approximately 97% of them were murdered as well. The Sephardic Holocaust is equal in its importance to the Ashkenazic Holocaust in that it illustrates the totality of the German plan to destroy the Jewish people in its entirety, hunting every Jew in every community, no matter how small, for no reason but that they were Jews.

The number of Sephardic Jews murdered is not the only reason their narrative must be told, of course: We also seek to capture the stories of their rich and notable lives told expressly in their mother tongue, together with those of the tragic destruction of their community. The importance of the Jewish community of Salonika, the largest one in Greece and one of the largest in the world in the 1930s by percentage of Jews in the city's general population, is, unfortunately, unknown to many. Yet the city was home to Jewish theaters, orchestras, hospitals, schools, and numerous social organizations. Its port was closed on Shabbat, the Jewish day of rest, and Jews played central roles in the city's commercial scene.[2] A vibrant center of Jewish printing, the city published, among other materials, highly popular Ladino newspapers daily until April 6, 1941, three days before the Germans closed all Jewish print shops.

FIG. 1: *La Torre Blanka* (the White Tower), a landmark of Jewish Salonika (August 2009). Photo credit: Michal Held.

Led by the Nazis to believe that they were to start a new life in Poland, the Jews of Salonika and the surrounding small towns and islands who did not escape were forced to leave. Squeezed into cattle wagons, they embarked on a horrifying journey across Europe. After 10 days or more on the sealed trains, during which many died of starvation and others suffered dreadfully, they finally disembarked at the gates of an inferno.

Nothing in their imagination and experience could have prepared them for, or helped them to survive, the new reality. Even if they were not murdered upon arrival, their chances for survival were limited. They were completely unaccustomed to the harsh Polish climate and of course had no clothing to protect them against it. Their language was Ladino, which is mainly a Romance language with embedded Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Turkish, and Balkan components. They had no command of Yiddish, a language close enough to German that it enabled Ashkenazic Jews to communicate with German-speaking inmates and, most important, to obey German commands. They had no natural affinity with Ashkenazic prisoners; as many Sephardic survivors recall, the Askenazic Jews who first met them in Auschwitz assumed that gentiles were now arriving there, as well. The Ashkenazic Jews' inability to recognize the presence of Jews whose looks, language, and customs did not resemble their own was probably natural under those dreadful circumstances. Yet it emphasizes the Sephardic belief that, metaphorically, they were murdered twice: the first time as outcasts from their own people, and again by the Germans, who made no distinctions between Jews of different origins.

LADINO: THE LINGUISTIC PANORAMA

Originating in medieval Spain, Ladino became a widespread Jewish language when the descendants of Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula in 1492 used it in oral and written form in their newly established communities in the Ottoman Empire and northern Morocco. Although it is uncertain whether the Jews who lived in the Iberian Peninsula until the Spanish Expulsion used a Judeo-Spanish dialect, there is no doubt that they left Spain with a rich cultural heritage. Judeo-Spanish language thus flourished over the next 500 years in contact with the Hebrew and Aramaic traditions and the Jewish values of its users, as well as with the non-Jewish linguistic and cultural features of their new surroundings.

Preserved for five centuries as a nomadic diasporic language, Ladino shaped and represented the unique identity of Sephardic Jews. From the start of the 20th century, however, its status deteriorated, first because of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and finally because of the Nazi destruction of the Sephardic communities of the Balkans, which effectively—and tragically—brought their

culture to an end. Concurrently, even the otherwise fortunate events of the rise of Zionism and the revival of the Hebrew language contributed, ironically, to the serious decline of Ladino language and culture.

Despite losing its function as a tool of daily communication, Ladino today is experiencing a cultural revival in many parts of the world as a language of creative activity. It is the language used by the survivors interviewed here, serving as a metaphor on which an identity can be rebuilt. Testimonies narrated in the Jewish language that represents the fragmented Sephardic collective identity become a replacement for the Sephardic homeland destroyed during the Holocaust. Displacement and diaspora are integral parts of Sephardic identity, which, in our time, may well be regarded as merely a memory. The vivid and living personal identity of the few survivors who still can testify in their mother tongue thus challenges us to attempt to reconstruct a Judeo-Spanish memory in our times.

TALKING WITH THE SEPHARDIC SURVIVORS

Israeli author Aharon Appelfeld (2001) notes that "without Yiddish, we are crippled, walking on crutches. I love Hebrew, but it cannot replace a mother tongue. Hebrew is not a language to hug" (p. 120). Like Yiddish, the Ladino of the Balkans was a language to hug; like Yiddish, it was murdered during the Holocaust. Unlike Yiddish, however, the Ladino of the demolished communities cannot be the preferred language of Sephardic testimony or the language to which a new generation listens: Almost 100% of the Ladino-speaking Sephardic Jews of Greece and Yugoslavia were murdered, so there are almost no speakers left alive. Those few remaining survivors in Israel to whom I spoke in Ladino indicated that speaking about and conceptualizing the Shoah in their mother tongue differs from doing so in any other language. Although fluent Hebrew speakers, they feel, both practically and symbolically, that when they create their personal narrative in the lost Ladino that represents their world that no longer exists, this world is far better reconstructed than it could be in a language that was never an integral part of it [see Grupinska, pp. 13–15—Ed.]. The interview excerpts and my poetry that follow illustrate the way in which listening closely, for me, leads to creating, ensuring a lasting memorial for each survivor.

THE VIOLINIST FROM AUSCHWITZ

Jacques Strumza (Salonika 1913—Jerusalem 2010) [Fig. 2] studied engineering and music in France. He refused to join the Greek army, and thus ultimately accompanied his family on the train from Salonika to Poland. Selected to perform in the Auschwitz prisoner orchestra, he has been referred to by many in the aftermath as the Violinist From Auschwitz. Strumza had told his story numerous times

FIG. 2: Jacques Strumza, June 2004. Photo credit: Michal Held.

around the world and published it in many languages but, to the best of my knowledge, his testimony had never been documented in his mother tongue. I interviewed him in Ladino at his Jerusalem home.[3]

A moving example of an experience culled from Strumza's subterranean reservoir of memories is a description, told in Ladino, of the musical compositions that the Germans gave to the orchestra members after confiscating them from Jews who had brought them to Auschwitz but never had a chance to play them before they were sent to their death. Showing me such a sheet of musical notes, Strumza implores: "Take this. And tell me what it is."

> **Michal:** It's a piece of paper . . . a very old one.
> **Jacques:** Yes, very old. Do you know what it is? You don't know. Can you see? There is a *Stempel* [stamp] here. Would you like me to help you? K-L. *Kapelle. Kapelle* is an orchestra, K-L is concentration *Lager* [camp], and underneath it says, "Auschwitz." This is the original music we had in the orchestra, the original. This is how I got out of Auschwitz . . .
> **M:** It makes me shiver, this document that was saved. It's like a soul.
> **J:** Exactly. You have said the word.
> **M:** Many souls, not just a single one.
> **J:** And the *Stempel,* the *Stempel* is like this [pointing at the number on his arm].
> **M:** Yes. On the skin or on the music, it is the same thing.
> **J:** The same thing.

Holding the sheet of music in his trembling hand and pointing at the Nazi stamp on it, Jacques says that this stamp is burned into the flesh and blood of the music,

depriving it of its humanity, just like the number tattooed on his arm.

Everything he says is uttered in Ladino, the language that hardly exists to be hugged anymore, to use Appelfeld's figurative term, and yet its last echoes enable us to have this conversation. These survivors have almost no one with whom they can use this language, their mother tongue and major tool of communication in their lives before the Holocaust. That it disappeared in a violent, cruel, and unnatural way symbolizes, to an extent, the whole tragedy of the end of life as they knew it.

Strumza was a short man, yet his music and his personality are so vibrant that, in our interview, he evoked a great presence, which inspired me to write the following poem.

BIG MAN[4]

Perhaps he is from Salonika perhaps / he is from Paris perhaps / he is from Jerusalem he certainly is / from Auschwitz /

A yellowed sheet of music for violin quivers in his hands—

Una stampa blu kuvre las notas / i el demanda si la puedo meldar / i si kero ke m'ayude

A blue stamp covers the notes / and he asks if i can read it / and if i would like him to help me

Kapelle es orkestra / K–L es konsentrasion lager / es orijinal de la muzika / ke teniamos en la orkestra / Yo sali de Auachwitz ansina / la stempel es komo—

Kapelle is orchestra / K–L is concentration camp / it is the original music / we had in the orchestra / this is how I got out of Auschwitz / the stamp is like—

He caresses the number on his arm / and I am thinking how was this big man able to play / *Moderato* in Auschwitz /

And he says for sixty years I thought that there had been no / God in Auschwitz

And now I think that this was not His fault

I was able to process the deep impressions left in me by the Sephardic survivors by turning these feelings into poetry, writing in Hebrew (which I translated into English for this journal) and in Ladino—a fusion that I see as a crippled language. When the world lacks the living presence of the survivors, I believe that art created in response to them, both by those who have met and talked with them and by those who have learned about them only through their written or video-recorded testimony, shall become a most important tool for understanding the Holocaust and passing on its many ramifications.

Struggling with the intractable dilemmas that the Holocaust forces us to confront through the writing of poetry, I have become aware that whatever is created in this context is paradoxical, as it evolves around signifiers (the concept of the *signifier* and *signified* comes from Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistic theory) that negate their own ability to signify. However, since artistic expression can never be silenced, these signifiers exist within a crippled language that talks about its inability to talk, a stuttering language, a language on crutches.

It is through this prism that I understand my own fragmentary poem about Strumza. Writing it grew out of the feeling that no matter how many times he unfolded his story, even in his mother tongue, Ladino, and his other languages, it could never be fully understood, because, when attempting to describe the Shoah, all languages are, to some extent, crippled. Thus the poem, too, is somewhat incomplete.

Art struggles to carve meaning out of the inferno and helps us realize that we cannot reach beyond the fragmentary. When the historical facts overwhelm and cloud our ability to understand, the creative way of coming to terms with the undecipherable, even when fragmentary, forms a meaningful tool for internalizing the painful truths of the Shoah.

THE JOYFUL/QUEEN

Malka Simcha (Seres 1914—Jerusalem 2010) [Fig. 3] shared her life experiences and views with me when I researched the personal narratives of Sephardic women storytellers.

FIG. 3: Malka Simcha, September 1999. Photo credit: Michal Held.

As a young woman, she left her hometown of Seres, in the north of Greece, to visit her aunt in Istanbul, where she eventually married and settled down; the German occupation prevented her from keeping contact with her family. This is how Malka (whose first name means queen and whose last name means joy in Hebrew) presented herself in the personal narrative she shared with me in Ladino:

> *Me engrandesi en Seres, eramos sesh ermanos, kuarto ermanas i dos ermanos: donde kedi yo la sola i todos se fueron a la Shoah. . . . I ansi kedo el echo. No los vidi mas. Eyos se fueron. Vino la gerra, se serraron los kaminos. Yo kedi en Estambol, eyos kedaron en la Gresia. . . . Sien personas de mi famiya se fueron.*
> [I grew up in Seres; we were six, four brothers and two sisters. I remained alone; all perished in the Shoah. . . . That was the end of it. I remained in Istanbul, they remained in Greece. . . . A hundred people from my family were gone.]

As our conversation progressed, she spoke of her father's letters that stopped coming to Turkey, and of her letters to him returned, stamped *Unknown.* That trauma reappears in this excerpt as a symbol for the uprooted Sephardic life:

> **Malka:** I will tell you one thing: that God gives man the power to continue to live. What I went through during the Holocaust, knowing nothing about anybody . . . I would stand at the window [in Istanbul], watch some old man, poor thing, maybe it is my brother, maybe it is my father, maybe it is . . . having no one. . . . In the end, I got a letter: "Left; destination unknown." The postcard I had sent returned to me, saying that they had left and never come back. . . . It is unknown where they went. Do you understand?
> **Michal:** I understand that it is impossible to understand.
> **Malka:** No. It is impossible. Impossible to believe. Impossible to talk.

Explaining that her past was effaced and all she had was a future, Malka told me that all Jews in her hometown had been drowned by the Germans, who had not even bothered sending them to Poland. Shadowing the conversation was her wondering about the destiny of humanity and the failure to understand what had happened. In response to this interview, I wrote a poem (Held, 2009, p. 10):

> a green airplane takes off / as i turn a saucer ornamented with fading gold flowers / upside down / at her home in Jerusalem—
>
> it once was a tea set / in Istanbul / tells the joyful queen / adding that before drinking Turkish tea, she purchased for / five matches / a ticket to a shadow theater / performed behind a great white sheet / in a small Greek town / whose Jews were all drowned— / the tea set is from Czechoslovakia, she says / when its golden flowers sparkle momentarily with their old glow / and the airplane still trying / to take off.[5]

TRAVELING BETWEEN HOMELANDS AND DEATH CAMPS

Before leaving on my first journey to Poland, I contacted Jackie Handeli, a Sephardic survivor who had been sent to Auschwitz from Salonika, and asked him what he would like me to pay particular attention to on my tour of the camp.

"On a glass-covered table in block no. 4," he answered, "they keep the list of women who arrived at Auschwitz on one of the transports from Salonika, including my family members. The table is located in a remote corner and the guides tend to ignore it," he explained, and begged me to read the names.

Arriving in block no. 4, I separated myself from the group and our guide and, scribbling the names in my diary, I followed Handeli's modest request. He had also asked for one other thing:

> When you stand before the pile of suitcases with Jewish names written on them, remember that we, the Jews from Greece, had no suitcases. Deported in haste, we were allowed to pack only a 20-kilogram bundle of belongings. Please think about us there, in front of the suitcases.

When I rejoined the group, the guide tried to personalize the names on the suitcases by attaching them to Central and Eastern European Jews. My thoughts wandered to the missing suitcases—the nameless bundles of the Sephardic Greek Jews. All I could do was write a poem (Held, 2009, p. 34).

> Sol / Diamante / Vida / Buena / (vida buena?) / Oro / Sol / Alegra / Sol /
>
> three suns a diamond happiness goodness gold life /
>
> all these I found in the names of the women of Selanik / who arrived in the transport to Auschwitz / clinging to a bag of objects collected in haste / even a suitcase on which a name and an address may be jotted / they could not pack
>
> staring at the names suffocated in a vitrine / in block number four I stood before them / and for but a moment their soul was bound in the bond of life / and their gas-grayed hair was colored again
>
> Oro was red-headed / For a moment

A map of Europe hung on the wall in another block in Auschwitz; the camp was located in the center of this map, and arrows went to it from every destination from which Jews had been deported to this death camp. When we gathered in front of the map, the guide pointed at the Greek island of Rhodes, indicating that it was the remotest point from which Jews had been uprooted to be sent here. She illustrated the incomprehensibly broad nature of the Shoah by asking what the connection was between the Mediterranean, Ladino-speaking, Sephardic Jews and the German plan to murder the Jewish people. The group was silent.

WHEN THE WORLD BECOMES ORPHANED

Meeting with some most inspiring Sephardic survivors reinforced my realization that the personal perspectives of all survivors are essential tools for deciphering the incomprehensible catastrophe of the Shoah. Before it is too late, we must make the effort to listen to as many as possible, so that when the world becomes orphaned of them, we will be able to create memorials and education based on or inspired by their authentic narratives and add them to the repository of testimony we will bequeath to the next generations.

The piles of shoes, glasses, spoons, suitcases, and violins mutely testifying to the horrors in the murder sites may live longer than the human survivors, but there will come a day when they, too, will disappear. The poems in this essay grew out of my impressions of the encounters with the survivors and of the piles of objects that I encountered in the death camps. Processing them into a work of art—a poem or any other form of artistic expression—is an essential additional tool that may help facilitate our study of the Holocaust when there are no survivors, no artifacts.

A remarkable example of such a tool is Marjorie Agosin's (in press) collection of poems *Las Islas Blancas / The White Islands.* The voyage taken by the poet in this book invites us to experience and internalize a reviving lost universe: the space stretched out along the coasts and among the islands of the Mediterranean, once occupied with Sephardic Jews, Sephardic women. When Agosin visited their deserted islands in the early 21st century, the Sephardic life and culture of the Jews who had been murdered during the Holocaust were already fading. To defy their mortality, as Benedict Anderson (1983) suggested, Agosin has incorporated them into her own imagined community. The fragments of Sephardic Jewry that come into being in her poems can be understood in light of Pierre Nora's (1989) description of the stage in which *lieux de mémoire* (sites of memory) no longer exist. At this point in the history of the Sephardim, Agosin recreates their *milieux de mémoire* (environments of memory) and invites us to rediscover them, traveling through *The White Islands.*

I conclude with a poem written in reaction to my recent visit to Rhodes. At first, I was unaware that it related to the Holocaust. Only when I saw the photos I had taken on the Greek island side by side with those I had taken in Auschwitz during the same summer did I realize that the journey taken by the Sephardic Jews from Medieval Spain to Greece had ended some 450 years later in Poland.

The poem is inspired by a traditional Sephardic wedding song performed by the women who accompanied the bride to her ritual bath[6] (Held, 2009, pp. 15-17).

ISLE OF ROSES (ISLE OF POMEGRANATES)[7]

The wild streets of Rhodes / are all vacant to my eyes / waves of blue joy run to shore / i see a mikveh[8] / of tears

Son yenas de djente las kayes de Rodes / ke a mi me se ven todas abandonadas / las olas de alegria mavi ke koren al bodre de la mar / me paresen un mikve / de lagrimas

Evreon Martyron Square dons color / and my eyes see only shadows / of infants old people men women / expelled / Ladino on their tongues

Past midnight the old town fills / with Greek music / strains of longing / i only hear the chanting of the maidens / who once sang here

Throw yourself to the sea / they sang to the bride on her immersion / and on her emergence / an almond tree bloomed / between the river and sea / the groom already waited / when a quince tree sprouted / before them

Enwrapped in my soul i stride / along the lanes of the isle of Pomegranates / when before me i come upon a Turkish bath all sealed and shut / with no immersion / and no / bride

i solo yo planto / arvoles de almendras i de bimbrios / entre la mar i las arenas / de mi alma

and only i plant / almond and quince trees / between the sea and the shore / that are within me

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END NOTES

[1] I wish to thank Marjorie Agosin for encouraging me to write about the Sephardic Holocaust, and even more so for the ongoing interaction that led us both to explore the creative and the reflective paths into this almost inconceivable chapter of Jewish history.

[2] See, for example, *Voices From Jewish Salonika: Selections From the Satirical Series Tio Ezra* I *Su Mujer Benuta* and *Tio Bohor* I *Su Mujer Djamila* by Moshe Cazes and by David M. Bunis, 1999, Jerusalem and Thessaloniki: Misgav Yerushalayim.

[3] The interview has been translated from Ladino by the author.

[4] Author's translation from the Hebrew; first published in English here.

[5] The geographical shift in the poem echoes the fact that Malka had the tea set in Istanbul, but it was originally made in Czechoslovakia and she told me about it when we drank from it in Jerusalem. This may be regarded as both a concrete and a symbolic representation of wandering Jewish life in general and this individual's life in particular.

[6] For a multidisciplinary analysis of the wedding song, see *"Bein ha-Nahar la-Yam: Nittu'ah Tarbuti Sifruti Rav-Rovdi Shel Shir Hatunnah Yehudi-Sefaradi me-ha-I Rodos"* [Between the Sea and the River: A Multilayered Cultural and Literary Analysis of a Sephardic Wedding Song From the Island of Rhodes], by Michal Held, 2007, *El Prezente,* 1, pp. 91–122 (in Hebrew).

[7] Originally a bilingual Hebrew–Ladino poem. In this translation, I embedded a part of the Ladino version alongside the English one. According to tradition, the name Rhodes derives from an ancient Greek word meaning *rose* or *pomegranate,* and thus Rhodes is often referred to as the Island of Roses or Island of Pomegranates.

[8] Hebrew word for a body of water, such as the sea, in which a Jewish bride ritually immerses before her wedding.

One way we can reach the next generation is by teaching through artifacts—the items the survivors, and those who did not survive, were somehow able to use and to keep. This poem by Stephen Herz with its list of homely artifacts becomes a lens through which we suddenly see a fact, a person, a moment of the Holocaust differently, and in much sharper focus.

Stephen Herz

Whatever You Can Carry

Twenty-nine storerooms were burned before the liberation of Auschwitz. In the six that remained they discovered 348,820 men's suits, 836,255 women's coats, more than seven tons of human hair, and even 13,964 carpets.

—Michael Berenbaum: *The World Must Know*

"You will work in the factory, work in
the fields, you will be resettled in the East,
bring whatever you can carry."

So our dresses, shirts, suits, underwear,
bedsheets, featherbeds, pillows, tablecloths,
towels, we carried.

We carried our hairbrushes, handbrushes,
toothbrushes, shoe daubers, scissors, mirrors,
safety razors. Forks, spoons, knives,

pots, saucepans, tea strainers, potato
peelers, can openers we carried. We carried
umbrellas, sunglasses, soap, toothpaste,

shoe polish. We carried our photographs.
We carried milk powder, talc,
baby food.

We carried our sewing machines. We carried
rugs, medical instruments,
the baby's pram.

Jewelry we carried,
sewn in our shoes, sewn in our corsets,
hidden in our bodies.

We carried loaves of bread, bottles of wine,
schnapps, cocoa, chocolate, jars of marmalade,
cans of fish. Wigs, prayer shawls, tiny

Torahs, skullcaps, phylacteries we carried.
Warm winter coats in the heat of summer
we carried. On our coats, our suits,

our dresses, we carried our yellow stars.
On our baggage in bold letters, our addresses,
our names we carried.

We carried our lives.

"Confronted by the reality of an ever-dwindling number of eyewitnesses to the Holocaust," writes Rafael Medoff, "educators are looking for new and compelling ways to help students grasp this difficult topic." He suggests that political cartoons from the 30s and 40s "will serve as yet another bulwark against forgetting."

Rafael Medoff

Cartoonists Who Exposed the Holocaust—and How Students Can Learn From Them

At a time when most of the world looked away, a handful of American political cartoonists tried to alert the public to the horrors of the Holocaust and the need for action to rescue Jewish refugees from the Nazis. This little-known chapter in the history of American responses to the Holocaust not only sheds light on unheralded efforts to publicize the plight of Europe's Jews, but also offers a unique and engaging way to teach this subject to middle-school and high-school students.

The word *cartoonist* usually conjures up images of artists who draw superheroes, create gags for the daily newspaper's comic-strips page, or animate Saturday morning cartoons. Yet the political, or editorial, cartoonist plays an entirely different role in society. As he pokes, prods, and provokes politicians and encourages the public to do likewise, this class of artist uses pen-and-ink sermons to make a serious point about real-life social or political issues. As Hess and Kaplan noted in their 1968 history of American cartoons, political cartoons are one of the most powerful means of communication the world has known. Pundits may write page after page of insightful commentary, but commentary proffered in the form of an illustration can pack an emotional punch far more intense than the impact of the written word.

Examples abound. A cartoon mocking 1884 Republican presidential candidate James Blaine, printed on the front page of Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World* and plastered on billboards around the state on the eve of the election, is believed to have led to Democrat Grover Cleveland's narrow victory in New York, which was the key to his election as president (Hess & Kaplan, pp. 120–121). In the late 1800s and early 1900s, politicians in Pennsylvania, New York, California, Indiana, and Alabama stung by cartoonists' barbs attempted to legislate restrictions on what cartoonists were permitted to draw. Pennsylvania Governor Samuel Pennypacker, for instance, furious over a series of cartoons in the *Philadelphia North American* portraying him as a parrot, initiated a bill in 1902 to ban "the depicting of men . . . as birds or animals" (Hess & Kaplan, p. 48). During World War I, the U.S. government had such regard for the influence of cartoonists that it created a Bureau of Cartoons to enlist them in support of the war effort.

Thomas Nast,[1] America's first great cartoonist, frequently aimed his pen at "Boss" Tweed, the corrupt late-19th-century New York City politician. Dispatching his henchmen to lean on Nast, Tweed reportedly told them, "My constituents can't read. But they can't help seeing them damned pictures!" Ultimately, Nast's cartoons proved instrumental in Tweed's downfall. Tweed fled to Spain, only to be arrested by border guards who recognized him from Nast's drawings (Hess & Kaplan, pp. 13, 95). Political satirist Walt Kelly, who in 1948 created the famous comic strip *Pogo*, memorably compared the function of a political cartoonist to that of a watchdog: "It is the duty of a watchdog to growl warnings, to bark, to surmise that every strange footfall is that of a cat, to worry about birds, and to suspect unknown insects" (Medoff & Yoe, 2015, p. 7).

During the 1930s and 1940s, American political cartoonists were working in an industry that, to put it charitably, did not distinguish itself in responding to the Nazi genocide. Most major dailies ignored the Holocaust or, at best, relegated it to the back pages, as demonstrated in *Buried by* The Times (2005), Laurel Leff's definitive study of how *The New York Times* covered the Holocaust. Most political cartoonists, like most editors and reporters, paid scant attention to the plight of the Jews, presumably for the

same variety of reasons. Undoubtedly, some were simply not sufficiently interested in the subject to pay close attention to what was happening to the Jews, while others may have assumed their readers would not be interested. Perhaps there even were some who harbored prejudice against Jews. In any event, once World War II had erupted, there were many other pressing issues competing for the small space on the editorial pages where cartoonists made their case.

Yet there were exceptions. A handful of cartoonists rose to the occasion, barking furiously to alert the public and the government to the plight of the Jews. Several were Pulitzer Prize-winning muckrakers; others were Jewish refugees whose family members were trapped in Hitler's Europe. What they shared was a willingness to put their art to the service of humanity.

Cartoonists' responses to Hitler's rise in early 1933 varied. Some, such as the *New Orleans Times–Picayune* cartoonist Keith Temple, shared the widespread assumption in the West that conservative German political and industrial leaders would restrain Hitler's radicalism [Fig. 1],

FIG. 1: "Just in Case He Goosesteps Too Much!" Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

illustrating the naïveté that was prevalent among Roosevelt administration officials and news media regarding the Nazi leader. Others, such as three-time Pulitzer winner Rollin Kirby, recognized the menace of Nazi antisemitism [Fig. 2].

FIG. 2: "The Pyromaniac." (By Kirby. Reproduced by permission of the *New York World-Telegram.* 1933.) Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

In the months preceding the 1936 Olympic games in Nazi Germany, a vigorous public debate erupted in America over whether to participate. The Roosevelt administration and the Amateur Athletic Union supported US participation, while Jewish organizations, the NAACP, and others, including a handful of athletes, called for a boycott to protest Nazi persecution of German Jewry. Cartoonists such as William Gropper [Fig. 3] and Jerry Doyle [Fig. 4] endorsed the boycott.

FIG. 3: "The Olympics Must Not Be Held in Berlin!" Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

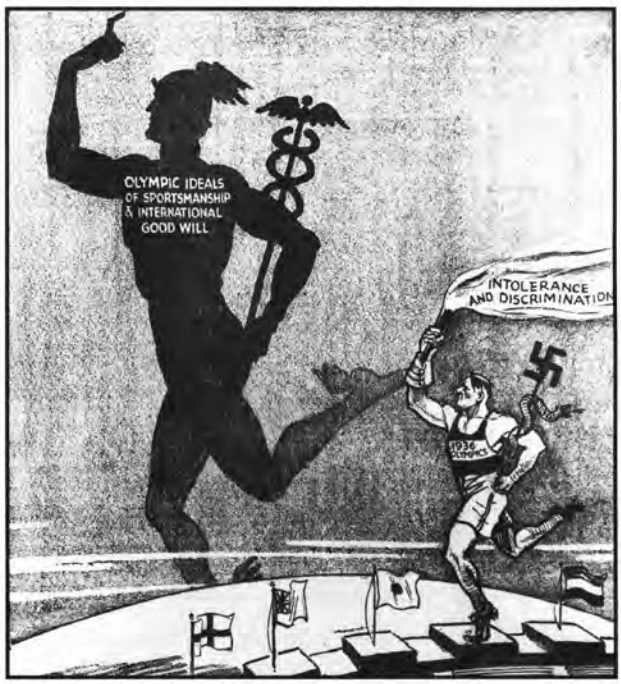

FIG. 4. "The Modern Mercury." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

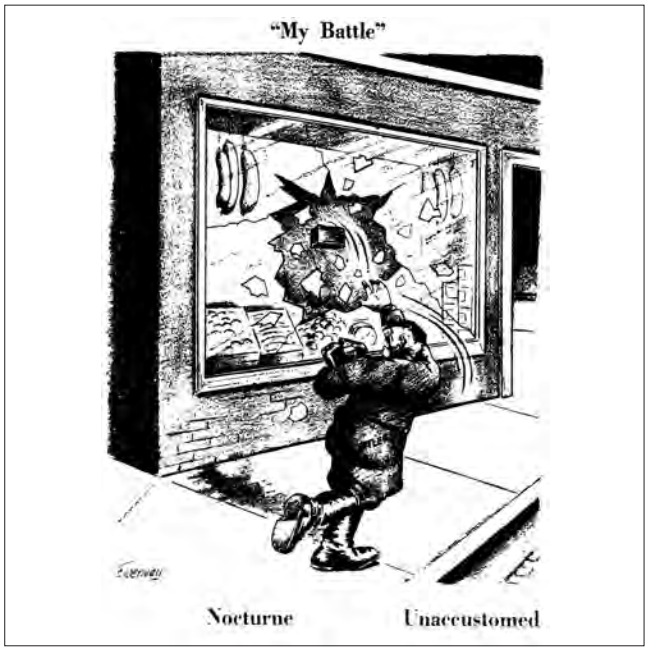

FIG. 6: "My Battle." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

FIG. 5: "Over Germany Its Shield." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

FIG. 7: "Maybe a Few Colonies Would Quiet Him!" Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

The November 1938 *Kristallnacht* pogrom made headlines around the world and naturally attracted the attention of numerous political cartoonists. Most, such as Grover Page [Fig. 5] and Henry Elderman [Fig. 6] (using a title that alluded to Hitler's autobiography), focused simply on the barbarism of the Nazis. A few, however, chose to turn the spotlight on the responsibility of the international community. Hugh Hutton suggested that European leaders' attempts to appease Hitler encouraged the violence [Fig. 7].

Herbert Block (the Pulitzer Prize winner known by his signature, "Herblock") urged the free world to do more than just point a finger at the Germans [Fig. 8, p. 68].

The intensifying refugee crisis and the 1939 voyage of the refugee ship *St. Louis* [see Medoff, pp. 63–69, in the spring 2014 issue of *PRISM*—Ed.] inspired commentaries by cartoonists. The German-born Jewish cartoonist Eric Godal [Fig. 9, p. 68] took the ancient image of the "wandering Jew" and infused it with new meaning.

Wanted by the Gestapo because of his subversive art, Godal narrowly escaped arrest and in 1935 made his way to the United States, where he began working for a number of publications, notably the New York City daily newspaper *PM*.

In 1939, Godal's mother, Anna Marien-Goldbaum, decided to join her son in New York. In a tragic twist, just one year after the appearance of his cartoon on the wandering Jew, she had the misfortune of booking passage on the

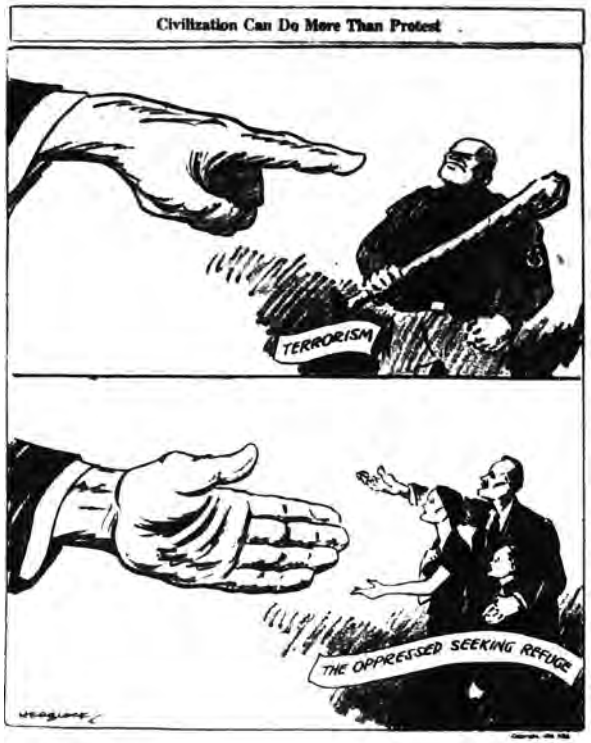

FIG. 8: "Civilization Can Do More Than Protest." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

FIG. 9: "The Wandering Jew." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

The Wandering Jew

FIG. 10: "The Wandering Jew." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

FIG. 11: "Ashamed." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

St. Louis. As the ship hovered off America's coast, hoping for permission to land, the *New York Daily Mirror* published excerpts from heartbreaking letters "from an aged mother on the wandering steamship to her son, an artist, in New York" (Medoff & Yoe, 2015, p. 9). Rebuffed by the Roosevelt administration, the *St. Louis* was forced to return to Europe. Many passengers, including Godal's mother, were subsequently murdered in Nazi death camps.

FIG. 12: Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

An especially arresting cartoon about the *St. Louis* saga, again invoking the theme of the "wandering Jew," was created by three-time Pulitzer winner Edmund Duffy [Fig. 10] for the *Baltimore Sun.*

His editor, H. L. Mencken, once said of Duffy, "Give me a good cartoonist and I can throw out half the editorial staff." Fred L. Packer, in the *New York Daily Mirror,* utilized America's most famous symbol of welcoming the oppressed in a cartoon titled "Ashamed" [Fig. 11].

Accompanying the cartoon was an editorial that described the Statue of Liberty as averting her eyes in shame at the Roosevelt administration's refusal to give haven to the 930 passengers of the *St. Louis.*

FIG. 13: "Only God Can Make a Tree to Furnish Sport for You and Me!" Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

As the persecution of Europe's Jews advanced from discrimination to expulsion to mass murder, political cartoonists further raised the alarm. Prior to his illustrious career creating children's books, Theodor Seuss Geisel, better known by his pen name, Dr. Seuss, served as an editorial cartoonist for the newspaper *PM*. Seuss created numerous anti-Nazi cartoons, although only a few touched on the plight of the Jews. In one [Fig. 12], he lampooned Americans who were indifferent to the suffering of children abroad.

He also created one of the most graphic cartoon depictions of Nazi mass murder: a drawing of Hitler and Vichy leader Pierre Laval singing together in a forest of hanging Jewish corpses [Fig. 13].

The renowned Polish-Jewish artist and illustrator Arthur Szyk also drew a number of Holocaust-related political cartoons. Arriving in the United States in 1940, he began contributing anti-Nazi cartoons and illustrations to leading U.S. magazines. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, who was among the artist's admirers, was heard to react to his work with the remark, "This is a personal war of Szyk against Hitler, and I do not think that Mr. Szyk will lose this war!" (Medoff & Yoe, 2015, p. 204).

FIG. 14: "Who Cares?" Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

As news of the Nazi genocide began reaching the West, Szyk joined the Bergson Group, a coalition of Jewish activists who lobbied the Roosevelt administration to rescue European Jewry from Hitler [see Medoff, pp. 112–119, in the Spring 2012 issue of *PRISM*—Ed.]. Szyk's dramatic illustrations were featured in many full-page advertisements placed by the Bergson Group in US newspapers. A June 1943 cartoon by Szyk on the editorial page of the *New York Post* [Fig. 14], pointedly titled "Who Cares?" challenged the Allies' indifference to the plight of European Jewry.

FIG. 15: Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

It was likely drawn in response to the Bermuda Conference of that year, at which the US and British governments had again refused to take meaningful steps to aid the refugees. Szyk had a strong personal connection to the fate of Europe's Jews: Most of his family members were trapped in German-occupied Poland. His widowed mother, at the age of 70, was murdered in the Nazi death camp Chelmno in 1942, as he learned by the following summer. Szyk's brother and many of his wife's relatives also were killed by the Nazis.

Eric Godal's cartoons were the most explicitly critical of the American government's response to the annihilation of the Jews. In Fig. 15, three soldiers, representing (according to their uniforms) the United States, Great Britain, and France, each tell the refugees to go elsewhere, while pointing in the direction of a tombstone that bears a Jewish star.

In Fig. 16, two State Department officials are depicted as callously shoving aside news of the mass murder of Jews in Europe. Unfortunately, such cartoons were the exception, not the rule.

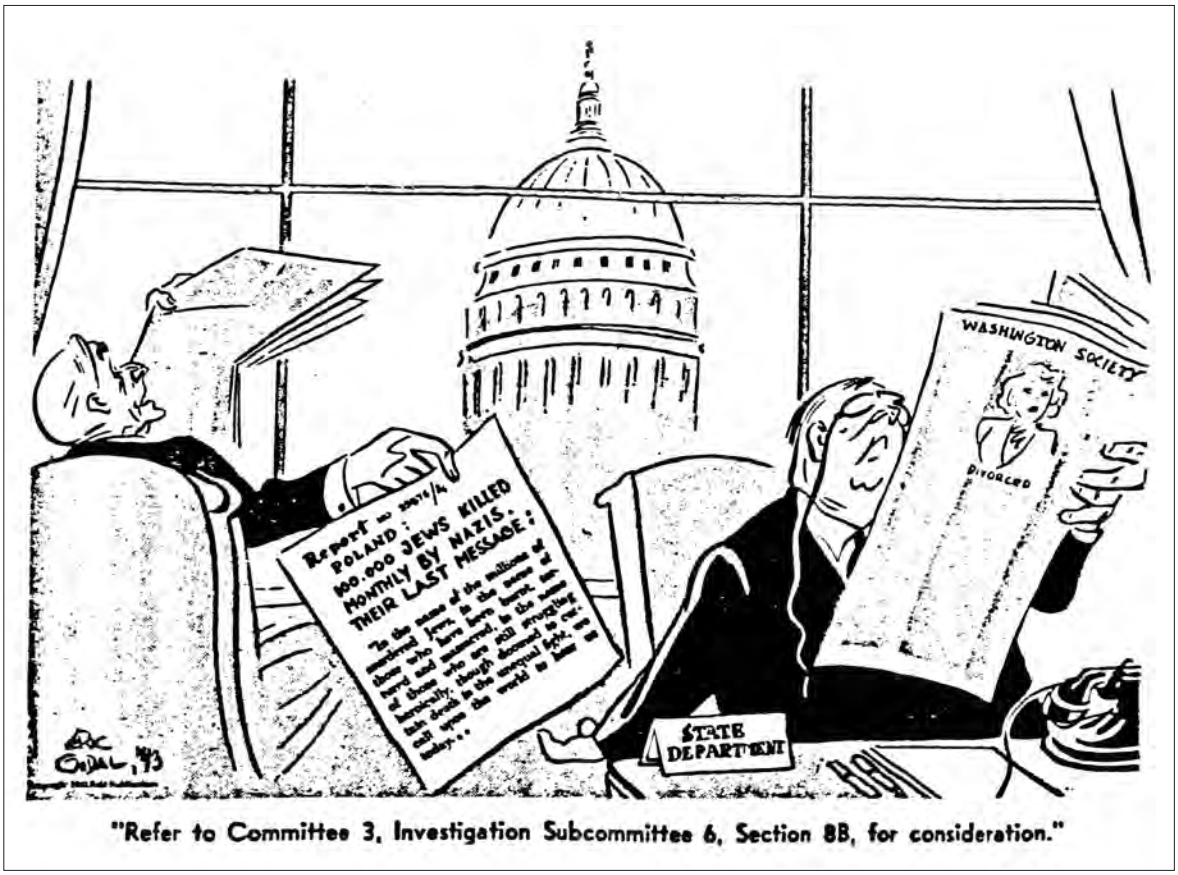

FIG. 16: "Refer to Committee 3, Investigation Subcommittee 6, Section 8B, for Consideration." Courtesy of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies.

USING POLITICAL CARTOONS IN THE CLASSROOM

Cartoons drawn to protest the Holocaust and condemn its perpetrators will serve as yet another bulwark against forgetting. In recent years, pilot programs featuring a small number of these cartoons have been held in a number of high schools in southern New York State under the auspices of the Westchester Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center. The programs have included workshops for students and seminars to train teachers in the use of Holocaust cartoons in their classrooms.

Teachers' evaluations of the sessions have been overwhelmingly positive. Kate Charleston, chair of the Social Studies Division of Ossining High School, reported that the medium of cartoons "focused and sustained our students' interest." Brett Bowden, a history teacher at Croton-Harmon High School, found that employing political cartoons "provided students with an easy-to-grasp mechanism [with] which to view, understand, and ultimately share history with others." Lois A. Gordon, coordinator of Social Studies for the White Plains, New York, public schools, who has hosted several workshops, wrote, "It is amazing to realize the power that visuals have in conveying to students the tangible as well as intangible events, moods, and trends of a given period in world history."

The use of political cartoons for teaching the Holocaust in New York State serves a dual purpose, as the statewide Regents exam in history requires students to analyze one or more cartoons. Curriculum standards in many other states, such as those teaching the Common Core, include similar requirements.

Cartoonists Against the Holocaust (Medoff & Yoe, 2015), which features the cartoons accompanying this essay and more than 100 others, including background information on the issues and events that they address, will be introduced into select middle- and high-school classrooms in 2015–2016. Educators anticipate that their students will be more receptive to such visual presentations than they are to written materials. "My students connect very well with visuals," says Robert Hadley, who teaches Holocaust and Genocide at Clackamas High School, near Portland, Maine. "Thoughtful visuals inspire critical thinking and analysis."

Confronted by the reality of an ever-dwindling number of survivors of the Holocaust, educators seek new and compelling ways to help students grasp this difficult and sensitive topic and feel personally connected to it. The political cartoonists described here were contemporaries of those who endured the Holocaust; in their own right they served as witnesses, learning about and promptly responding to events as they unfolded. By bringing their incisive commentaries into the classroom to let students view the events of those years through their eyes, we can draw on a powerful approach from the past to address a concern of the present and future.

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END NOTE

[1] Historians view Nast in the context of the post-Civil War clash of idealistic, social-justice-minded journalists revolting against the growing power of political machines and corrupt political bosses such as Tweed. See "The World of Thomas Nast," by Morton Keller, archived at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum, Ohio State University, http://cartoons.osu.edu/digital_albums/thomasnast/keller.pdf.

Just as our classrooms will one day be bereft of survivors, so, too, will we soon lose the last of the rescuers. The Sousa Mendes Foundation, founded in 2010, seeks to document the actions of the rescuer Aristides de Sousa Mendes, a Portuguese diplomat during the Holocaust. Olivia Mattis, president and co-founder of the Foundation, writes that it "has as its ambitious goal to identify all Sousa Mendes visa recipients worldwide and trace each family's story of survival." In this way, the Foundation seeks both to honor him for his efforts and to ensure long-term knowledge and remembrance of him and the Jews he rescued.

Olivia Mattis

Sousa Mendes's List: From Names to Families

For educators looking for ways to engage young people in the heavy history of the Holocaust, there is no better entry point than the inspiring story of a rescuer. The notion that one person can make a difference is one that each student can apply to his or her own life. Moral courage will never go out of style.

One such rescuer was Aristides de Sousa Mendes (1885–1954) [Fig. 1]. As the Portuguese consul general stationed in Bordeaux, France, at the onset of World War II, he was confronted with the reality of thousands of desperate Jewish refugees seeking to escape the advancing German army. As one refugee remembers,

> We began to live visas day and night. When we were awake, we were obsessed by visas. We talked about them all the time. Exit visas. Transit visas. Entrance visas. Where could we go? During the day, we tried to get the proper documents, approvals, stamps. At night we tossed about and dreamed about long lines, officials, visas. Visas![1] (in Gilbert, 2007, p. 126)

With visas to neutral Portugal, these refugees would be eligible to receive exit visas to depart from France and transit visas to cross through Spain. They would then be able to take a ship from the port city of Lisbon to safety in the United States, Brazil, Australia, or another country.

However, Portugal was under the dictatorial rule of António de Oliveira Salazar. Determined to keep refugees out, for fear of attracting Hitler's ire, Salazar issued a decree to all of his diplomats in November 1939 in a confidential memo called Circular 14 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000, pp. 81–82). This document forbade the issuing of Portuguese visas to Jews expelled from their countries of origin, Russian citizens, holders of Nansen passports

FIG. 1: Aristides de Sousa Mendes in 1940.

(those issued to stateless refugees), and other categories of Holocaust refugees, without prior approval from the Portuguese foreign ministry. This order created a situation of moral crisis for Sousa Mendes, which intensified in June 1940 as Nazi troops were overrunning France. Should he fulfill his sworn duty to uphold the policy of his government, and leave the refugees to their fate? Or should he defy this direct order, issue the visas, rescue thousands of complete strangers at his own peril, and, in the process, throw away his 30-year career?

On a day now known as the Day of Conscience,[2] Sousa Mendes decided to issue the visas. He saved thousands of lives—some estimates place the figure as high as 30,000—not only in Bordeaux, but also in the cities of Bayonne and Toulouse, where he gave orders to his vice-consuls to follow his example, and in Hendaye, where he handed out visas himself.[3] Yad Vashem historian Yehuda Bauer (2001) has described this unique operation as "perhaps the largest rescue action by a single individual during the Holocaust" (p. 249).

Sousa Mendes's rescue operation resulted in a sudden and tremendous influx of refugees into Portugal in the spring and summer of 1940. "Lisbon was the bottleneck of Europe, the last open gate of a concentration camp extending over the greater part of the Continent's surface,"

wrote Holocaust refugee Arthur Koestler in his 1941 memoir, *Scum of the Earth*.

> By watching that interminable procession, one realized that the catalogue of possible reasons for persecution under the New Order was much longer than even a specialist could imagine; in fact, it covered the entire alphabet, from A, for Austrian Monarchist, to Z, for Zionist Jew. (p. 242)

Ironically, despite the Portuguese government's official policy against accepting refugees, their presence in the country allowed the regime to take credit for their rescue, and the history books were written accordingly. As Manuela Franco (2000), Director of the Diplomatic Institute at the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, explained,

> When Aristides de Sousa Mendes took it upon himself to save as many of the thousands fleeing the German advance in France as he could . . . he was challenging a political concept and confronting Lisbon with the creation of that most difficult of precedents, the humanitarian one.

In her view, "the image of 'Portugal, a safe haven' was born then in Bordeaux, and it lasts to this day" (p. 19).

The rescue of these refugees had a significant effect on US and world culture in literature, science, fashion, politics, and the arts. Notable Sousa Mendes visa recipients included Salvador Dalí, Hans and Margret Rey (authors of *Curious George*), the Imperial Habsburg family of Austria, members of the Rothschild family, and others. Most, however, were ordinary men, women, and children escaping the horrors of Nazi persecution. These families came from all over Europe, including Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, and Switzerland.

Sousa Mendes paid a heavy price for his civil disobedience. He was put on trial and faced 15 charges, including the issuing of unauthorized visas, and the stamping of visas on documents that were not passports. He was found guilty, suspended from the diplomatic corps, and blacklisted. He was driven into poverty with no way to support his large family, which was socially shunned, and his children, treated as enemies of the state, were forced into exile because they were not allowed to finish their schooling or to work in Portugal. One daughter remained; she was married and her husband was able to work. Sousa Mendes also stayed, always hoping to be vindicated, but he died in 1954 in poverty and disgrace, almost erased from history. Only posthumously, beginning in 1966, was his act of moral courage recognized, not by his own country but by Israel, when he was awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem. [See "The Righteous Diplomat Who Defied Orders," by Mordecai Paldiel, in *The Jerusalem Post*, December 6, 1986, p. 6—Ed.] Meanwhile, Salazar took credit in the postwar years for having let the refugees into his country. It was only following his death in 1970 and the Carnation Revolution of 1974 that Portugal began taking a sober look at the fascist elements of its wartime behavior, such as Circular 14. The whole Sousa Mendes story was unknown in Portugal until the 1980s, and only in 1988 did the Portuguese government finally redress its past mistreatment of its diplomat by posthumously restoring his name to the diplomatic rolls through an act of Parliament.

DOCUMENTING EACH FAMILY: THE WORK OF THE SOUSA MENDES FOUNDATION

The Sousa Mendes Foundation, founded in 2010, seeks to document Sousa Mendes's heroism.[4] Our research has as its ambitious goal to identify all Sousa Mendes visa recipients worldwide and trace each family's story of survival. Beginning with scans from a handwritten visa registry book and cross-referencing them with ship manifests and other records, we have been able to reconstruct entire family groups, including names, faces, ages, artifacts, and testimonials, thus bringing each family's story to life. A grant from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany has greatly aided in this effort. This essay describes the process we have used and highlights three individual cases. We are continually seeking to expand our knowledge of this important story, so if you know of a family that escaped the Holocaust through Portugal between 1940 and 1942, please contact us at: info@sousamendesfoundation.org.

Among the models for our project is Serge Klarsfeld's (1994) magisterial book *French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial*, a richly documented account of the more than 11,000 French children murdered in the Holocaust. While our project shares that undertaking's goal "to fill in as many blanks as possible" (p. 104), the action we are documenting—rescue, not murder—is its mirror image. Accordingly, just as Klarsfeld uses deportation lists and camp arrival records to document the fate of the murdered Jews of France, so do we use ship manifests and immigration records to document the fate of those who were saved on French soil in the largest solo rescue operation of the war. We have devoted a page of our website to these names (www.sousamendesfoundation.org/visa-recipients/); each name is clickable to reveal the story behind the visa.

SOUSA MENDES'S LIST

The issuing of visas at the Portuguese Consulate in Bordeaux took place in assembly-line fashion and involved the participation of Sousa Mendes; his secretary, José Seabra; two of Sousa Mendes's sons; and two or three

refugees. One person would collect the passport from the refugee, a second person would stamp it, Sousa Mendes would sign it, Seabra would assign the visa a number, and someone would record the date, visa number, and name in a ledger book. Like Schindler's list, this is Sousa Mendes's list. The book, dated 1939–1940, was found when the Portuguese Consulate in Bordeaux was renovated years after the war, and it is now housed in the archives of the Portuguese foreign ministry in Lisbon. It contains only about 2,000 names, as it lists only passport holders (i.e., adults) and does not include visas issued in the other cities under Sousa Mendes's authority.

The research process involves several layers of work. First, we needed to decipher the names in the visa registry book, which were written in great haste, in a variety of hands, and with frequent misspellings and abbreviations. We then grouped these names into families and cross-referenced and verified them using ship manifests and online genealogical databases. This process allowed our team to ascertain each family group's complete traveling party and add any missing names to our list. Thus we learned, for example, that in a family of two adults and four children, with only two visas granted, six lives were saved. We then cull further information from the manifests, including city of last residence. For any refugee families that had resided in Belgium, we obtain further information and documentation from the Foreigner Files in the Felix Archives in Antwerp, including photographs, dates and places of birth, alternate spellings of names, and maiden names. The last stage in the process entails identifying, locating, and contacting visa recipients or their descendants. This stage involves research into immigration records, obituaries, telephone directories, and social media. By the time we reach out to the families to ask for testimonials, photographs, passports, and other artifacts, we usually have a great deal of information to share with them.

Figures 2–12 illustrate this process in action for three different families. Shown in Fig. 2 is a page from Sousa Mendes's list that shows visa nos. 1951–1986, issued on June 17, 1940. The first step of process consisted of ascertaining how many handwritings are present and deciphering their peculiarities. This page was clearly assembled in great haste; for example, for the first few lines in the middle column we see the abbreviation for *ditto* under the words *visto em passaporte* (visa in passport [of]), but soon this *ditto* indication is dropped. On this particular page, we see one handwriting (most likely that of José Seabra, Sousa Mendes's secretary) on lines 1951–1956 and one or possibly more handwritings (possibly of one of Sousa Mendes's sons and/or a refugee volunteer) on 1957–1986. Some visa recipients are clearly identified (e.g., visa no. 1958, Jacob Brachfeld, and no. 1962, Abraham Horowitz), whereas others are presented in abbreviated form (e.g., no. 1957, Soldinger

FIG. 2: Excerpt from Sousa Mendes's list for June 17, 1940.

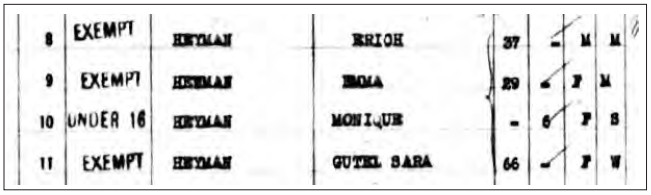
Mr et Mme, and nos. 1963–1965, Thoreau/Thoreau/Thoreau). In some cases, the names are listed with the last name preceding the first (e.g., no. 1981, Wijnberg, Moses); in others, the last name is last (e.g., no. 1982, Isaac Wijnberg). In each case, the challenge is to establish the correct spelling of the name and then the identity of the individual (e.g., which of the many European Jews named Abraham Horowitz).

The haste with which the page was written is understandable when one realizes that it was assembled a mere three days after the fall of Paris, as the German army was approaching Bordeaux.

SPOTLIGHT: HEYMAN/HEYMANN FAMILY

Fig. 3 is a detail from Sousa Mendes's list showing members of the Heyman family. Here we see visa nos. 1983–1985, assigned to Sara Heyman, Erich Heyman, and Emma Heyman. The same family appears in Fig. 4, showing an excerpt of a ship passenger manifest for the September 1940 voyage of the Greek vessel *Nea Hellas* from Lisbon to New York. The latter document provides us with new

FIG. 3: Detail of Sousa Mendes's list featuring visa issued to the Heyman family on June 17, 1940.



8	EXEMPT	HEYMAN	ERICH	37	-	M	M
9	EXEMPT	HEYMAN	EMMA	29	-	F	M
10	UNDER 16	HEYMAN	MONIQUE	-	6	F	S
11	EXEMPT	HEYMAN	GUTEL SARA	66	-	F	W

FIG. 4: Detail of passenger list of the ship *Nea Hellas* departing Lisbon for New York on September 12, 1940.

information, including the full name of Sara Heyman (Gutel Sara Heyman) and the ages and relationships of the members of the family; she is the mother of Erich, who is married to Emma. We also learn that Gutel Sara is a widow ("W"). Most important, we learn of the existence of another family member: Monique Heyman, age six months, who was certainly on the passport of one of her parents. Thus we learn that with three visas from Sousa Mendes, four lives were spared, and we can add baby Monique to the list. Further passenger records on Ancestry.com reveal an alternate spelling of the family name—Heymann—as well as Americanized first names Eric, Emily, and Monica.

Searching for the name Monica Heymann in online marriage records, our research team member Marie J. Gomes was able to establish Monica's married name, which led her to an entry Monica had contributed to her alumnae magazine in which she mentioned her children. This information led Marie to Monica's daughter, Elisa, whom she contacted through social media. Elisa forwarded the inquiry to her mother, who sent us this reply:

> I am totally surprised to find out that my family's escape story is part of a bigger story. I am Monica David, daughter of Eric and Emily Heymann. I was born in February 1940 in France. I actually was born with the name of Monique Marguerite Heymann, which I understood to have been changed to Monica in the US. My father also brought his mother, Augusta Heymann, on that ship. Unfortunately, he was unable to convince my maternal grandparents to join us; they later perished in a concentration camp. We were not allowed immediate entry to the US, so we ended up in Brazil for some time (am not sure how long) and then were able to re-enter the US. (personal correspondence to Marie J. Gomes, May 14, 2012)

This testimony led us to Brazil immigration cards [Fig. 5] available at www.familysearch.org, and to photos of the family members in 1940. Note that Emma's name is given with the Czech feminine ending, as Heymannová. Baby Monique is listed, as well.


REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL

FICHA CONSULAR DE QUALIFICAÇÃO

Nome por extenso: Emma HEYMANNOVA -

Admitido em território nacional em caráter: -PERMANENTE-

Nos termos do art. 24 letra -- do dec. n. 3.010 de 1938

Lugar e data de nascimento: Olomouc 10 4 1911.

Nacionalidade: TCHECA Estado civil: casada-

Filiação (nome do Pai e da Mãe): Bedrich e Briess Blanka-

Profissão: -XXX-

Residência no país de origem: New York-

NOME	IDADE	SEXO
Monique Marguerite	7 meses	feminino-

FILHOS MENORES DE 18 ANOS

Passaporte n. -25918- expedido pelas autoridades de Prefeitura Policia - Praça - em data 6 de Outubro de 1937.

Visado sob n. -2258-

ASSINATURA DO PORTADOR:

Consulado Geral do Brasil em Nova York 15 de Outubro de 1940

O CONSUL

FIG. 5: Brazil immigration card for Emma Heymannová.

The Brazilian cards also list parents' names, so they are a great source of maiden names of married female refugees. Here we see Emma's parents listed as Bedrich e Briess Blanka, indicating that the maiden name would be Blanka—but is this record wrong? In fact, Blanka is a feminine first name in Czech, and Briess is more likely to be the surname. From Monica David's testimony, we learned that Emma's parents were Holocaust victims. A quick search of Yad Vashem's Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names yields a Page of Testimony for Blanka Briess, confirming that Briess is the correct surname. Gutel Heymann's card provides her maiden name: Wolff. It further lists her nationality as German and indicates that her passport was issued in Berlin in 1939. On the basis of this information, we conclude that the middle name Sara was not her real name, but rather was the false middle name imposed by the Nazi regime on all Jewish women. We therefore strike it from her listing.

4	H.T.P.	HEYMANN	Erich	37		M	M
5	H.T.P.	HEYMANOVA	Emma	29		F	M
6	UNDER 16	HEYMANN	Monique Marguerite	10		F	S
7	H.T.P.	HEYMANN	Gutel Sara	67		F	W

FIG. 6: Detail of passenger list of the ship *Argentina* departing Rio de Janeiro for New York on January 6, 1941.

Finally, a search of passenger records for journeys from Rio de Janeiro to New York answers Monica David's uncertainty as to how long the family was in Brazil [Fig. 6]: Note new spelling of Emma's last name. Naturalization records complete the story. Here is the resulting entry for the Heymann family presented on our website:

HEYMANN, Emma née BRIESS
(Visa # 1985 – age 29)
HEYMANN, Erich (Visa # 1984 – age 37)
HEYMANN, Gutel née WOLFF
(Visa # 1983 – age 66)
HEYMANN, Monique Marguerite (age 3 months)

The above visas were issued by Aristides de Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux on June 17, 1940. Gutel Heymann was a German citizen; the other family members were Czech. The family crossed into Portugal and subsequently sailed on the ship *Nea Hellas* from Lisbon to New York in September 1940. From there, they went to Brazil on the vessel *Argentina* in November 1940, returning to New York on the same vessel in January 1941. The family members were naturalized as US citizens in 1946.

SPOTLIGHT: ROZENFELD FAMILY

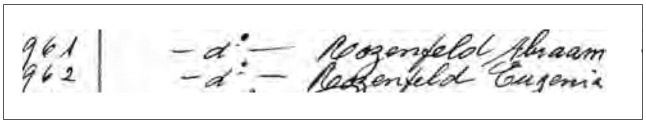
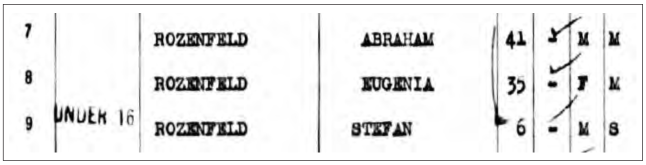

961 —d:— Rozenfeld Abraam
962 —d:— Rozenfeld Eugenia

FIG. 7: Detail of Sousa Mendes's List featuring visa issued to the Rozenfeld family on May 24, 1940.



7		ROZENFELD	ABRAHAM	41		M	M
8		ROZENFELD	EUGENIA	35	-	F	M
9	UNDER 16	ROZENFELD	STEFAN	6	-	M	S

FIG. 8: Detail of passenger list of the ship *Nea Hellas* departing Lisbon for New York on July 12, 1940.

Next, we turn to the Rozenfeld family, whose visas were issued by Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux on May 24, 1940. Fig. 7 shows the names of Abraham (misspelled Abraam) and Eugenia Rozenfeld as they appear in Sousa Mendes's list as visa nos. 961 and 962. Passenger records find them traveling on the Greek vessel *Nea Hellas* in July 1940 and reveal that they belong to a family of three: Abraham, 41; Eugenia, 35; and Stefan, 6 [Fig. 8]. A search on www.whitepages.com identified a Stephen Rozenfeld of the right age and provided his address and telephone number. One of our team members, Sylvain Bromberger, called and confirmed that he had reached the right man. Rozenfeld, who had never heard of Aristides de Sousa Mendes, promptly located his father's World War II passport and kindly provided our team with scans and photographs [Fig. 9].[5]

FIG. 9: Visa no. 961, issued by Aristides de Sousa Mendes to Abraham Rozenfeld in Bordeaux, France, on May 24, 1940.

An exodus story emerged. Eugenia and Stefan Rozenfeld left Poland in January 1940, shortly after the German invasion and just before the establishment of the Lodz Ghetto. They escaped to Belgium, where they were reunited with Abraham. On May 10, 1940, the Nazis invaded Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg. On that day, the family left Belgium, headed towards France, and reached Bordeaux, where they received the Sousa Mendes visas enabling them to enter neutral Portugal. From a 1940 letter written by Abraham Rozenfeld, we learn that they resided in Lisbon at that time.

ROZENFELD, Abraham (Visa # 961 – age 41)
ROZENFELD, Eugenia (Visa # 962 – age 35)
ROZENFELD, Stefan (age 6)

The above visas were issued by Aristides de Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux on May 24, 1940. The Rozenfelds, Polish citizens coming from Belgium, crossed into Portugal, where they resided in Lisbon. They sailed to New York on the ship *Nea Hellas* in July 1940 and were naturalized as US citizens in 1945.

SPOTLIGHT: SEGALL/WEINSTEIN FAMILY

Finally, we turn to the Segall/Weinstein family, consisting of three generations: maternal grandparents Oskar and Julie Weinstein; parents Erwin and Paula Segall; and a child, Frederic Segall. The adults are enumerated in the visa registry book [Fig. 10].

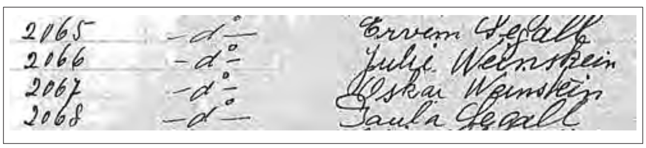

2065 —d:— Erwin Segall
2066 —d:— Julie Weinstein
2067 —d:— Oskar Weinstein
2068 —d— Paula Segall

FIG. 10: Detail of Sousa Mendes's List featuring visa issued to the Segall/Weinstein family on June 18, 1940.

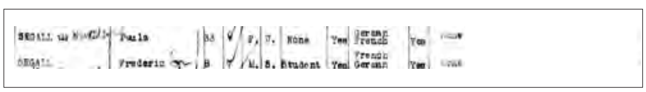


FIG. 11: Detail of passenger list of the ship *Nyassa* departing Lisbon for New York on November 23, 1940, listing the nationalities of Paula Segall and her son as "None" (last column).

The child's name has been gleaned from ship manifests, as have the family members' nationalities, places of birth, and places of last residence. Oskar and Julie are listed as Czech citizens residing in Nice. The passenger listings [Fig. 11] also include their daughter, Paula, and grandson, Frederic. Erwin, age 38, is missing from the manifest, and Paula's marital status is given as "W" (wid-


Segall

Familienname: ..... Segall

Vornamen: ..... Erwin Israel

Geboren am: 23. 12. 1902

in: ..... Wien

Beruf: ..... Privatbeamter

Letzter inländ. Wohnsitz: Linz/Donau, Niederreithstr. 6

Der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit für verlustig erklärt durch Bekanntmachung vom 11. 12. 1940, veröffentlicht in der Nr. 293 des Deutschen Reichsanzeigers und Preußischen Staatsanzeigers vom 13. 12. 1940.

FIG. 12: Nazi document listing Erwin Segall, born in Vienna, as having been stripped of his German nationality by the Nuremberg laws. Note the middle name "Israel" imposed on all Jewish males by the Nazi regime.

owed). His fate illustrates that being a refugee could itself become a death sentence for many.

Why is Paula listed as stateless (nationality: "None"), along with her son, Frederic? A search for Erwin on Ancestry.com yields the answer in a document issued by the Nazi regime [Fig. 12] attesting that Erwin, though born in Vienna, had been stripped of his nationality by the Nuremburg Laws, as had been his Czech-born wife (who had become Austrian by marriage) and their child (also born in Vienna). Sousa Mendes, forbidden by Circular 14 from issuing Portuguese visas to stateless persons, nonetheless did so for the Segall family.

SEGALL, Erwin (Visa # 2065 – age 38)
SEGALL, Frederic (age 8)
SEGALL, Paula née WEINSTEIN (Visa # 2068 – age 33)
WEINSTEIN, Julie (Visa # 2066 – age 56)
WEINSTEIN, Oskar (Visa # 2067 – age 60)

The above visas were issued by Aristides de Sousa Mendes in Bordeaux on June 18, 1940. The Weinsteins, Czech citizens, were the parents of Paula Segall, stateless. Paula and her son, also stateless, crossed into Portugal and sailed from Lisbon to New York on the vessel *Nyassa* in November 1940. Erwin Segall, stateless, died during the exodus. The Weinstein couple sailed from Barcelona to New York on the *Villa de Madrid* in July 1941 and were naturalized as US citizens in 1946, along with their daughter and grandson.

The three studies presented above are typical of the thousands of families that Sousa Mendes rescued from the clutches of the Nazi regime. The Heymann family story demonstrates the quirkiness of US immigration policy, which required many families to leave and then be readmitted. The Rozenfeld family is an example of double refugees: first from Poland, then from Belgium. The story of Erwin Segall, first stripped of his nationality and then dying during the exodus, illustrates the humiliation and danger of being a refugee. These stories serve as reminders that a life-saving visa by itself was not enough to ensure a successful exodus.

ADDING FACES TO NAMES

An important goal of our project is to put faces to as many names as possible. This is especially important in those cases where the refugee was unable to leave Nazi-occupied France despite the visa from Sousa Mendes and was subsequently deported and murdered. We are aware of other cases where the refugees managed to embark on a ship, only to drown when the ship was torpedoed. We are able to obtain photos of the visa recipients from the Foreigner Files in the Felix Archives; Brazil immigration cards; and the families themselves, if we are in contact with them. The work done by our research team goes beyond a scholarly or educational function; it serves a memorial role as well.

The project has yielded a number of surprises. For example, we have identified a group of 152 Polish refugees who, by agreement between the Polish government-in-exile in London and the British government, transited through Portugal to Camp Gibraltar, a refugee camp barely mentioned in the scholarly literature, located on the British-owned island of Jamaica. We also have identified several hundred refugees who were aboard an American vessel, the *SS Washington,* that was nearly torpedoed by a German U-boat in June of 1940 upon leaving the port of Lisbon. We have been able to trace the migration via Portugal of German refugees to Brazil; Czech refugees to Mexico; Austrian refugees to Cuba; Dutch refugees to the East Indies; and Polish refugees to the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia. In one case, we were able to reunite families in Brazil and the United States who had escaped Europe together and kept photos of one another, but had not known of each other's whereabouts since 1940. As the Holocaust was a shattering of the entirety of the Jewish people, we are gratified to be able to put a few of the shards back together.

In Portugal, under the leadership of architect Luisa Pacheco Marques and historian Margarida de Magalhães Ramalho, we are working with city officials in the town of Vilar Formoso to create a permanent display on Aristides de Sousa Mendes and the visa recipients on the site of the very train station where most of the refugees entered Portuguese soil in 1940. We further plan to work with the governments of France and Portugal to establish museum displays both in Bordeaux, where the events of 1940 transpired, and in Cabanas de Viriato, the site of the Sousa Mendes family's ancestral home. In North America we conduct educational events for all ages, such as exhibitions and film screenings, and have produced a graphic novel aimed at a middle-school readership [see Mattis, pp. 79–82—Ed.].

As survivor and author Roman Kent remarked in a speech at the Center for Jewish History (2011), the Allies won the war militarily, but it was the Righteous Among the Nations—those individuals in Nazi-occupied countries who at great personal risk refused to be bystanders in the face of evil—who won the war of morality, by safeguarding timeless humanistic values.[6] Similarly, in a July 2012 speech marking the anniversary of the *Vel d'Hiv* round-ups in Paris of 1942, French President François Hollande declared that in the dark days of World War II, when the collaborationist French government betrayed the trust of its citizens by failing to uphold their rights, it was the Righteous Among the Nations who saved France's honor. Chief among these was Aristides de Sousa Mendes, whose rescue action on French soil was unparalleled.

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END NOTES

[1] Although not spoken by a Sousa Mendes visa recipient, these sentiments were widely shared by Holocaust refugees across Europe.

[2] This expression was coined by the humanitarian activist João Crisóstomo. The actual date of Sousa Mendes's decision has been anecdotally placed on either June 16 or 17, 1940, following a three-day period of crisis during which he was in bed wrestling with his conscience. A recently discovered letter from Sousa Mendes to his son-in-law Silvério places him "in bed with a nervous breakdown" on June 13; see www.sousamendesfoundation.org/de-winter. However, Sousa Mendes was already delivering visas in defiance of Circular 14 well before that period, as, for example, to the Wiznitzer and Ertag families. See: www.sousamendesfoundation.org/wiznitzer and www.sousamendesfoundation.org/albuquerque-ertag-flaksbaum-landesman-untermans.

[3] The oft-cited figure of 30,000 refugees (one third Jews, two thirds not) is impossible to confirm, but it can be traced to the 1940s. See Miguel Valle Ávila, "Was Lisbon Journalist 'Onix' Portugal's Deep Throat? Aristides de Sousa Mendes Defended in the U.S. Press in 1946," p. 28. *The Portuguese Tribune,* October 1, 2013. The figure is clearly in the correct order of magnitude: From a search on Ancestry.com, we can determine that 74,138 passengers traveled from Portugal to New York during the period from 1940 to 1942. To this number can be added an untold number of passengers assisted by Sousa Mendes who traveled to non-US destinations, such as Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and the United Kingdom. In addition, we need to count an estimated 10,000 stranded refugees who were never able to enter Portugal because of the action by the Salazar government to seal the French–Spanish border at Hendaye and Irun on June 24, 1940. See "Spain Halts Flow of War Refugees; Border Guards Hold Up Most of Those Seeking Entrance," p. 3, *The New York Times,* June 25, 1940; and "American Writers Escape Into Spain," p. 15. *The New York Times,* June 26, 1940. Some of these refugees, such as the Subotnik family (www.sousamendesfoundation.org/subotnik) were able to escape France through another exit route. Others, such as the Rajcyn family (www.sousamendesfoundation.org/guill-rajcyn), were forced to go into hiding in Nazi-occupied France and were ultimately deported and murdered.

[4] I coordinate the research team, whose past and present members include Sylvain Bromberger, Angela Ferreira Campos, Paul Freudman, Jane Friedman, Catherine Gaulmier, Marie J. Gomes, Joan Halperin, Paula Kashtan, Linda Mendes, Harry Oesterreicher, Della Peretti, Jackie Schwarz, João Schwarz da Silva, and Daniel Subotnik. The website was established by Harry Oestereicher and is now managed by the team at A Thing Design.

[5] About half of the visa recipient families we have contacted had never heard the name of Aristides de Sousa Mendes and had erroneously believed that they owed their safety and freedom to the Salazar regime.

[6] Kent's comments introduced the event "Reflections on a Righteous Man" (May 12, 2011, Center for Jewish History, New York), which featured a conversation between Dr. Mordecai Paldiel, former Director of the Department for the Righteous at Yad Vashem, and Sebastian Mendes, Professor of Art at Western Washington University and grandson of Aristides de Sousa Mendes.

The Sousa Mendes Foundation, notes Olivia Mattis, joins other remembrance organizations in using the cartoon format to present a subject more typically taught through history books and survivor testimonies. Here Mattis presents a brief rationale for use of this medium, along with a small sample of the Foundation's newly published *Aristides de Sousa Mendes, Hero of the Holocaust*, by José Ruy, Portugal's leading cartoonist. Read with Rafael Medoff's essay on cartoonists who exposed the Holocaust, pp. 65–71.

Olivia Mattis

The Holocaust Cartoon—No Longer Taboo

How to reach young people? That is everyone's concern in the Holocaust remembrance community, as the population of survivors dwindles from year to year. With its cartoon portrayal of this heavy subject matter—a genre introduced with the publication of Art Spiegelman's *Maus* (1986)—the Sousa Mendes Foundation joins other remembrance organizations such as the Anne Frank House, the David Wyman Institute, and the Jan Karski Educational Foundation.

Della Peretti's English translation of José Ruy's *Aristides de Sousa Mendes, Hero of the Holocaust,* originally published in Portuguese and based primarily on the Portuguese-language writings of historian Rui Afonso, brings together details of the life of Sousa Mendes previously unavailable in English. It is just what Spiegelman (2011) defines as a cartoon: "a drawing that gets to essences" (p. 168).

The use of a visual format is especially appropriate to the Sousa Mendes story because there were numerous artists among the recipients of his Portuguese visas, including, most notably, Salvador Dali and the author-illustrators Hans A. and Margret Rey, creators of Curious George. Yet is it appropriate—and effective—for the classroom, as well?

Jonathan Hennessey, who has authored a graphic adaptation of the United States Constitution, points out that

> the human eye processes images something like 60,000 times faster than it processes text. This isn't to say that text has no place, but . . . images are very powerful, and . . . could be powerful teaching tools. (in Cutler, 2014, p. 1)

Other educators offer varied rationales for the potential power of comic images. Comic-book author Josh Elder (2014), recognizing that often "the biggest challenge is getting students to pay attention in the first place," believes that "comics are a way to do that" (p. 2). Elder, the founder of Reading With Pictures, says that "comics make reading


FINALLY HE WAS ABLE TO REACH THE CONSULATE.
WHY AREN'T YOU HELPING THESE POOR REFUGEES?
YOU KNOW VERY WELL ABOUT CIRCULAR 14!
THAT CIRCULAR VIOLATES THE PORTUGUESE CONSTITUTION, VIEIRA BRAGA!
BUT OUR GOVERNMENT CATEGORICALLY REFUSES TO ISSUE VISAS TO ANY OF THESE PEOPLE!
VIEIRA BRAGA, I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU AND YOUR BOSS, FARIA MACHADO, ARE CONFLICTED, BUT TELL ME HOW WOULD YOU FEEL IF YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN BECAME REFUGEES?
WE ARE HERE TO FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS OF OUR SUPERIORS!
VERY WELL. YOU ARE HERE TO OBEY THE ORDERS OF YOUR SUPERIORS?
?!
WELL, AS THE CONSUL GENERAL OF BORDEAUX, I AM STILL YOUR SUPERIOR AND I ORDER YOU TO ISSUE ALL THE VISAS NECESSARY TO SAVE THESE POOR PEOPLE FROM PERSECUTION AND DEATH. AND WE ARE WAIVING ALL FEES!
WITH EVERYONE HELPING, ARISTIDES STARTED A NEW SIGNATURE ASSEMBLY LINE.
WORD GOT OUT, AND A CROWD RUSHED INTO THE STAIRWELL OF THE CONSULATE IN BAYONNE.
THEY ARE GIVING VISAS? EVEN TO JEWS?
YES, TO EVERYONE AND THEY AREN'T EVEN CHARGING A FEE. I AM GOING STRAIGHT TO THE SPANISH BORDER SO I CAN GET TO PORTUGAL!
DON'T PUSH!
CAREFUL!
THE CONSULATE IS ON THE 3RD FLOOR.
20

easy and fun" but, recognizing that educators need a pedagogic rationale to use them, he has aligned his latest work, an anthology titled *Reading With Pictures: Comics That Make Kids Smarter,* with the Common Core Standards to illustrate the potential of comics in the classroom. According to educator David Cutler (2014), "Comic books not only awaken an early love of reading but also help children grasp abstract concepts" (p. 2). Tracy Edmunds (2014), a curriculum writer, believes that teachers need "new tools, and comics bring a one-two punch with images and text working together" (p. 1). Educator Lisa S. Cohen (2014) writes, "The visual world has had increasing impact on our students' lives," and using graphic novels in the classroom "is a way to connect to untapped portions of their minds." Cohen, who uses graphic novels even in her Advanced Placement classes, contends that they "allow for a new approach to diction, imagery, syntax, structure, and language." She advocates asking students to "find 'hidden' connections between the text and visuals and discover the ways in which the visuals interact with each other" (n.p.).

The Sousa Mendes cartoon, then, can meet a variety of needs in today's differentiated classrooms. Intended for readers aged 10–15, it follows the life of the consul, beginning with his childhood, and tours the world, showing his diplomatic postings in San Francisco, Brazil, Zanzibar, and Belgium. Interwoven with the biographical narrative is the historical context, including the rise of Hitler, the construction of concentration camps, and the persecution of the Jews. The climax of the story—Sousa Mendes's crisis of conscience—is depicted as a two-and-a-half-page dream sequence with a parade of concentration camps drawn in greyscale, ending with his sudden realization that the fate of the Jewish refugees rests with him. His decision made, he declares, "I am going to issue visas to everyone, regardless of nationality, race or creed!"

As they read, students can explore Ruy's use of time sequencing—crucial in understanding a story arc—such as flashback versus forward narrative; his use of color, such as monochrome, polychrome, and greyscale, necessary to recognize mood and tone; and other aspects of visual rhetoric that help to tell a story, including concepts with specific relevance to this genre: *panel*, *balloon*, *shading*, *perspective*, *storyboard*, *sequencing*, and *typography.* More broadly, this comic can serve as an addition to a unit on rescue during the Holocaust, specifically the plight of the Jewish refugees and the limited and few attempts to provide haven; or as an entry into Holocaust history or into the Portuguese history that surrounds the Sousa Mendes story. Ruy's cartoon illustrates the advice of historian Rafael Medoff, who, in his extensive study of cartoons and their effectiveness in teaching [see Medoff, pp. 65–71—Ed.], has found that "a straightforward approach works best for massive subjects like the Holocaust." He suggests

> that the most compelling technique is to . . . stick carefully to the historical record, but find the real-life stories that people will find most interesting, and use artwork—especially cartoon or comic book art—to liven it up so the reader will want to keep reading until the end. (in Kaminer, 2013)

Medoff observes that "the public is starting to get used to the idea that serious, accurate history can be depicted in a comic book style" (in Kaminer, 2013), but using cartoons and graphics to teach about both past and current events is not new: The comic strip *Doonesbury* has never shied away from commenting on world affairs, and editorial newspaper cartoons, used in history textbooks to illustrate facts and concepts, have a long and distinguished history. Marjane Satrapi's *Persepolis* (2004) is an autobiographical cartoon widely used to teach about Iran. Spiegelman's *Maus* is a classic text in units on the Holocaust, and his *In the Shadow of No Towers* (2004) teaches about 9/11. Now it is vitally current—particularly in the wake of the *Charlie Hebdo* massacre in Paris. "The comic book, if taught well and responsibly, can be a refreshing and interesting supplement to existing history lessons," states Verena Radkau-Garcia (2014) of the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, based in Germany.

Given the paucity of books available on Sousa Mendes in English (there is only one: José-Alain Fralon's 2001 *A Good Man in Evil Times)*, this cartoon is a significant addition to the literature. Obviously, it will not replace a history text but will be used in conjunction with related websites, films, news stories, and scholarly articles, providing students with multiple entry points into the subject of the minority of good people who rescued Jews during the Holocaust. It provides an engaging example of the universal concept—no matter the format in which it is presented—that one person can make a difference.

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Reva Sharon has written, "I was not there, but I cannot forget what I have read, seen, heard." She remembers "no day when I have not remembered some fragment of the Holocaust." Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel, with its two-minute siren that halts the entire country and brings its inhabitants to mournful attention, reminds us that, although we "cannot bring life back into ashes," we can, as Reva does, carry those lives in our hearts.

Reva Sharon

Holocaust Remembrance Day —Jerusalem

Everything
even the wind
through the trees
through the dry clouds scudding
over the face of the waters
even the birds' songs
stopped

Stopped like the drivers
who stepped from their cars
like the workers
who stopped at their desks
like the farmers
who stood erect in their fields
We stopped

in our tracks
like their whisks in the batter
like their pens on their pages
in mid-stream
like the laughter of the children
like the embraces of the lovers
were stopped

Like their dreams
like their hopes
like their memories
like their footsteps
like their voices
. . . we stopped

And the sirens wailed *remember*
And again they wailed *remember*

Ruth Levitt describes a new educational and research resource about the violent terror attacks against Jews that erupted in November 1938 in Germany and Austria. Created for teachers, students, historians, researchers, and others by Levitt and other researchers at the London-based Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide, the contemporaneous eyewitness testimony provided by this project offers yet another method of ensuring remembrance when the eyewitnesses can no longer give evidence.

Ruth Levitt

The Pogrom—November 1938 Project: Learning History Through Contemporaneous Testimony

Wrecked and pillaged windows of Jewish shops in Friedrichstrasse, Berlin, after the November Pogrom 1938. Courtesy Wiener Library.

The relationship between the events of November 9–10, 1938, and the further unfolding of the Holocaust is complex and critical. Yet, particularly for young people in Europe and North America, this night of terror may be no more than an obscure incident occupying a few sentences in a history book. It is this unfamiliarity that the Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide seeks to correct with its soon-to-be-launched Pogrom—November 1938 Project, which presents pertinent information in rare contemporaneous testimony and

images that facilitate much deeper understanding of what happened on that night and why. The documents are particularly significant because most were collected in the days and weeks immediately following the November 9–10 pogrom. These testimonies, therefore, are different in nature from those based on memories recalled years later, which are inevitably modified and influenced by other, intervening personal experiences as well as by versions and interpretations of the events by historians, politicians, journalists, and others. The direct, unmediated nature of the testimonies in the project makes them all the more important and valuable.

Even the names given to that night bear study. It is now nearly 77 years since *Kristallnacht,* also called *Novemberpogrom, Reichskristallnacht,* and *Novemberaktion.* These labels translate as *Night of Broken Glass,* Pogrom—November*, Reich's Night of Broken Glass,* and *November Operation.* Because each name carries significant associations, implications, and interpretations, and because meanings can influence perceptions, commentaries, and analyses about the events and their consequences, each term must be understood. Some historians dispute that this was a pogrom, which they define as "exterminatory violence against a social group," rather than "state-directed terror against Jews."[1] Some wish to avoid the term *Kristallnacht* because they regard it as misrepresenting what happened by implying only windows were broken, thus downplaying the extent and severity of the murders and other harms caused to the Jews at the time. Some wish to avoid Nazi vocabulary, such as the word *Aktion.* As Pogrom—November and *Kristallnacht* have become the most recognized terms for the episode, we at the Library have retained them for users' convenience even though they are not wholly accurate and we do not endorse them.

THE TESTIMONIES AND THEIR HISTORY

The Pogrom—November 1938 Project is due to be launched in spring 2015 in three formats: an online exhibition (www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/novemberpogrom), followed by an e-book and a physical book. At the center of these resources is the Library's unique collection of 356 eyewitness reports of the events of November 1938, which will be available in English for the first time. These vivid and compelling testimonies are accompanied by related reports and images from the Library's collections and elsewhere, detailed below; a glossary to provide information about the historical and international context; and a comprehensive index of people, places, and subjects.

The testimonies and these other texts and images demonstrate how, on and after November 9–10, 1938, simultaneously in hundreds of towns and villages in Germany and Austria, thousands of Jews were terrorized, persecuted, and victimized. Countless individuals were attacked, abused, and beaten; over 90 people were killed; and over 25,000 men were arrested and detained, many for several months, in the concentration camps at Buchenwald, Dachau, and Sachsenhausen, where they were brutally mistreated. Over 1,200 synagogues and thousands of Jewish shops, businesses, and homes were desecrated and burned [Fig. 1].

FIG. 1: Bamberg Synagogue on fire, November 1938. Courtesy Wiener Library.

The sequence of events that preceded the November terror included increasing restrictions and disenfranchisement of Jews in Germany and Austria, a wave of arrests in May and June of that year, the expulsion of Polish-born Jews from Germany to the border with Poland in October, and Herschel Grynszpan's mortal attack on German diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris on November 7. Nazi Minister of Propaganda Goebbels used this death as the pretext for launching the *Novemberaktion.*

Immediately afterwards, on November 12, Nazi leaders met to assess the outcomes of the *Novemberaktion* and to discuss further expropriation of Jewish property and expulsion of Jews. For those Jews who were able to emigrate, a swift departure was urgent but not easy, because of the intricate bureaucratic procedures imposed on them along with punitive taxes and seizure of virtually all of their property. For those who could not get out, poverty and desperation intensified. With the onset of World War II, all borders were closed, and German Jews were effectively trapped.

The Pogrom—November 1938 Project's testimonies, fascinating in themselves because of their immediacy, are also of great interest because they are closely connected to the Library's own history. The Wiener Library today is the heir of the work that Dr. Alfred Wiener (1885–1964), a German Jew, initiated in Berlin starting in the late 1920s to combat antisemitism, working under the auspices of the Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith

(*Central-Verein deutscher Staatsbürger jüdischen Glaubens*). He perceived the rising threat from the Nazi Party and was the driving force behind the establishment of the *Büro Wilhelmstrasse,* a bureau that collected intelligence about the Nazis to inform campaigns undermining their activities. The *Büro* consisted of a small team of activists who collected information about the rise of the Nazi regime, monitoring their antisemitic activities and policies before that information was widely acknowledged. The *Büro* communicated this information internationally by writing and disseminating regular bulletins and reports and by participating in international meetings and networks of Jewish and other aid organizations, and Wiener wrote, lobbied, and spoke, serving as the public face of the *Büro* as he promulgated wider understanding of the Nazi threat.

The *Büro*, Wiener, and his family were at even greater risk once the Nazi Party had come to power in Germany in 1933. In order to continue the work of collecting and disseminating information about the worsening situation for Jews, Wiener moved with his family to Amsterdam. There, he and Dr. David Cohen, a prominent figure in the Dutch Jewish community, secured the interest and support of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and the Anglo-Jewish Association to establish a new organization to continue the efforts of the *Büro Wilhelmstrasse.* Wiener again established a small team for this new Jewish Central Information Office (JCIO) and found premises for it and an apartment for his family at Jan van Eyckstraat 14, Amsterdam-Zuid. Between 1934 and 1939, the JCIO team gathered large amounts of documents and other evidence and issued numerous reports and bulletins recording events mainly in Germany and Austria, which it mailed to governments, journalists, politicians, and Jewish organizations abroad.

Following the November terror, and with evidence mounting of the Nazi regime's territorial ambitions, Amsterdam ceased to be a safe place for the JCIO. Accordingly, the staff packed up much of the accumulated archive and shipped it to London in August 1939. Throughout the war, the JCIO served the British government by providing reports and intelligence from abroad. The collection increasingly was referred to as Dr. Wiener's Library and eventually became the basis of today's Wiener Library.

THE TESTIMONIES

The 356 documents comprising the JCIO collection about the Pogrom—November were created on 636 single-sided sheets of fairly thin, white, foolscap-size paper using a typewriter with a black ink ribbon. The verbatim testimonies were typed single-spaced, sometimes with a few handwritten annotations such as a question mark or brief comment; the name and sometimes the address of the person who gave each report are also included in several cases. Each report has a unique serial number, from B.1 to B.353 (*B.* presumably is an abbreviation of *Bericht,* or *report*), with five additions (B.62a, B.175a, B.333a, as well as B.1001 and B.1002 at the end), and two unused numbers (B.342 and B.343). There is no obvious logic to the numbering sequence; it is not arranged chronologically, geographically, or by source. Several reports do carry a date, and the approximate dates of some others can be worked out by context. Most of the dated reports were created in November and December 1938, while others were prepared in January and February 1939 and the remainder originated sporadically in the following weeks. The last few were typed in the early summer of 1939, just before the JCIO was packed up and moved to London. Some time after this move, probably in the 1960s, the bundle of these 356 documents was bound into a single volume between red leather boards. Today, the Library speculates that the testimonies were sourced using the JCIO's several usual modes of information gathering, including face-to-face interviews, telephone conversations, letters, written reports, newspaper research, and informal conversations and correspondence with other organizations.

The testimonies vary in length. The shortest is a mere 13 words, the longest is about 12,400 words, and the average is about 800 words. The total word count of all the testimonies is approximately 200,000. Almost all (333, or 93%) were written in German, but 18 are in Dutch, five in English, and one in French. Until now, most were available only in German and thus restricted to a small proportion of those worldwide who sought to understand *Kristallnacht* and the events surrounding it.

In addition to the reports, another bundle of pieces of white paper, contained in a small, plain envelope, came to light at the Library. These are of much smaller dimensions (under A6 size), typed in black ink on one side; they contain names and sometimes addresses or other information about the sources of reports B.130 to B.200, with perforations at the top suggesting that each page was detached from the same notepad to be typed.

In 1998, the reports were microfilmed for inclusion in *Testaments to the Holocaust,* a microfilm document collection published in that year to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1938 events. Around that time, the frail and damaged red leather binding holding the reports together was removed, and the 636 sheets were rebound in two large-format folio volumes fitted with a slipcase. A decade later, to commemorate the 70th anniversary in 2008, the microfilm reels were digitized and re-published by Cengage, together with other content, as an online database for its subscribers. Also in 2008, the Library published the 356 reports in German as a small (20 cm × 13 cm) but thick (over 930 pages) hardback book entitled *Novemberpogrom* 1938 (Suhrkamp Verlag; ISBN 978-3-633-54233-8), which included introductory essays by Ben Barkow (Wiener

Library Director), Raphael Gross, and Michael Lenarz (Frankfurt am Main Jüdisches Museum, Director and Head of Archives respectively).

CONTENT AND VOICES IN THE TESTIMONIES

Within the collection, several different styles of description, narrative, and voice are apparent. Some are raw and personal, using language that conveys unconcealed distress or despair, expressing great misery, fear, or desperation. Some beg for help. Others are angry, defiant, or scornful towards the perpetrators. Those that are written in a matter-of-fact, impersonal way, with little or no overt emotion or commentary, are equally chilling. Some are minutely detailed, others much less so. A few manage an ironic tone of gallows humor; one or two present hair-raising escapes or describe attempts to hide as exciting adventures.

A few, remarkably, try to present a scrupulous balance of positives and negatives. One would think that the terror could elicit only negative responses; but testimonies illustrate rare instances of relative kindness—or, at least, less viciousness. For example, one report describes the head of an SA troop ransacking a private apartment stopping his men from hurting the frightened owners, smashing their furniture, and destroying their goods because, he said, they had caused enough injury and damage. In another, a man incarcerated in a concentration camp comments that the food quality and portion size are reasonable, despite the generally dreadful living conditions there. A third tells of an off-duty official who, passing an acquaintance in the street, tells him that the synagogue would be set on fire, enabling the man to forewarn the rabbi and others to protect or remove valuable religious objects.

Some testimonies indicate that the pogrom was preplanned by the regime:

> The lists of those to be arrested must have been compiled at least nine months earlier because they included people who were already dead or who had emigrated. Even I was arrested under a profession that I have not practiced for almost nine months. (B.184)

> I was able to see clearly a typewritten list of all the names of the regular inhabitants of the house in the hands of the leader of the group, the lettering being the large type used for official purposes. (B.118)

Some record names, places, dates, and times:

> Herr Dr. X. reports on four cases of suicide, which happened within a rather short space of time in his circle of relatives or friends: 1) Frau Selma Goldschmidt, Berlin, aunt of the reporter, poisoned herself with Veronal in the middle of January 1939; 2) Frau Goldschmidt, friend of 1, also took her own life; 3) Frau Hedwig Michaelis, Berlin, native of Potsdam, ditto; 4) Frau Clara Arnold, c. 75 years old, cousin of the mother of the reporter, ditto. (B.222)

Such details are omitted or anonymized in many other reports:

> The undersigned are asking us for help to save the children of our brother A. from B. Our brother has been confined in prison in C. since 10th November. Today the wife writes that she was informed that he would only be released if he leaves Germany within three weeks. (B.112)

Many present the plight and firsthand confrontations that individuals endured:

> I was arrested on 13th June 1938 at 6 o'clock in the morning in order, it was said, to be taken to a face-to-face meeting. In reality, I was to be transported to a camp because I had been fined RM. 1,000 during the inflationary period. When we arrived at the Charlottenburg prison, I discovered some 100 Jews who were sharing my fate and with me had to sign a statement at the outset that began with the words, "I, a criminal Jew." (B.174)

> In the night from 9th to 10th, we awoke to the noise of furniture being thrown about and were able to establish that uniformed SA in small private cars, always seven to eight men in each, were breaking into Jewish homes and destroying everything like vandals. (B.155)

A number of others give a broader overview or list details obtained from relatives or others:

> In families where the mother is no longer alive and the father is now incarcerated in a concentration camp, the children are left behind without adult help. Acquaintances and family members, with whom they could perhaps have found shelter, are themselves helpless in destroyed homes. No one knows what should happen to the children. They have no chance of emigrating abroad in the normal manner unless foreign charitable institutions take up their case. (B.21)

Taken together, the collection provides a highly specific set of word pictures from different personal perspectives, which corroborate many features of the perpetration of the terror. There is fulsome description of the way the arrests were planned and carried out in people's homes; who the intruders were; how they broke in; their disrespect in

speaking to the occupants; physical violence; verbal attacks; the damage they did to furniture, fittings, windows, and doors; the clothing they stole or tore; the money and other possessions they looted; how they forced the occupants out into the street; and what transport they used to take away those who would be incarcerated. The testimonies include the details of arrival at assembly places, police stations, and prisons; how the Jews were spoken to and treated there; how long they were kept standing; whether they were put in cells; the deprivation of information; whether they had any food, water, sleeping accommodation, or access to lavatories; what they could find out from other prisoners about what would happen to them; the personal information they had to give to their captors and guards; who was released, at what point, and on what grounds; who was detained, and when and where detainees were moved. From those who were taken to concentration camps there are several very full accounts of the journey; lack of food, water, and lavatory facilities; treatment by their guards; impressions on arrival; their reception; the beatings, violence, humiliation, and terror they experienced; the incessant routine of lengthy roll calls and prolonged standing at attention; the work; and punitive exercise drills they were forced to perform under threat of punishments or death [Fig. 2].

FIG. 2: New arrivals at Buchenwald. Courtesy Wiener Library.

> Nobody was beaten to death directly, but rather the weakest bodies were the first victims of this camp regime, then the next weakest, etc. It is clear that the majority of deaths occurred among the eldest people. We counted c. 50–55 deaths in the first two and a half weeks. On one day, roughly two weeks after arrival, according to the doctor, the highest death rate on a single day was 11. Several prisoners had nervous breakdowns and left the barracks during the night. We had been informed early on that this fell under martial law, and in fact these people were *"auf der Flucht erschoßen"* [shot while escaping], i.e., killed by the SS night patrol. (B.184)

There are full accounts of the food they were given; the washing and sanitation arrangements; the illnesses, wounds, and medical treatment or lack thereof; sleep or lack thereof; the cold; the heat; and the uniforms or other clothing they were issued. The psychological and emotional toll emerge clearly from these testimonies, even where the experiences are described in uncomplaining terms. Those who had completed the bureaucratic procedures for emigration as well as the financial and travel arrangements before they were arrested were usually released quite quickly. Yet the physical and mental suffering inflicted on all the imprisoned men is graphically conveyed, communicating the acute shock and bewilderment that many felt. This initial shock was soon followed for many by learning how to try to survive and what to do or avoid doing when coping with the brutality, acute deprivation, and distress they were suffering.

Testimonies about the November terror came to the JCIO from all over Germany and Austria, including several provided by those in transit from their homes or who had already travelled abroad. Some recount the shocking information they gleaned from relatives and friends about attacks, beatings, lootings, and deaths in other towns and villages or about those they saw for themselves when visiting the homes or offices of family, colleagues, or acquaintances. Several of the reports describe in detail how synagogues were broken into, their contents desecrated, and the buildings set on fire or blown up and allowed to burn as the fire brigade looked on [Fig. 3].

FIG. 3: Synagogue interior, Munich, November 1938. Courtesy Wiener Library.

> Fire-fighting operations were so delayed everywhere that only the neighboring buildings were safe. In response to direct questions to the heads of individual *Feuerwehren* [fire brigades], it was explained that the *Feuerwehren* were only in a position to prevent the spread of the fires to neighboring buildings. (B.333)

In addition, there was deliberate humiliation of rabbis, synagogue staff, and committee members:

> In Graz, the formerly esteemed and generally popular senior rabbi, university professor, and historian was taken from his bed at an early hour, dragged by his beard to the cemetery, and ordered to dig his own grave; he was left there in the most appalling state. (B.296)

A number of reports shed light on the predicament of parents desperately seeking help to get their children to safe places away from Germany and Austria, including some by impoverished families and lone parents who were on the brink of breakdown or suicide. Among these is a compilation of short postcards written by children on a *Kindertransport* train to their families at home as they travelled through Holland to safety in England:

> Dear Mutti, We are already on the way to Rotterdam. In Holland we have been very well received. At the border we were given a hot midday meal. Otherwise we are very merry and quite jolly. H. sends warm greeting and a kiss. Much love, Werner

> At this moment, the train is stopping in Rotterdam. It is going on to the Hook of Holland now, then by ship to London! I am happy. Hopefully, you too will soon be happy. Love, Edmund. (both B.135)

TRANSLATION AND EDITING

At the outset, the editors of the project guided the translating and editorial work with the objective of enabling readers to understand what the survivors had tried to convey and how they had conveyed it. Keeping in mind that most of the accounts were in German and written over 75 years ago and many of the individuals were in a state of bewilderment, shock, or distress, the translators sought to keep the intention, style, and voice of each source by maintaining the register and feel of the language and preserving idiomatic color and tone as much as possible. The English texts deliberately retain certain German words, followed by their translation, where, for example, the survivor has specified particular concentration camp language, or the names of the many permits, regulations, taxes, and processes, or the names of organizations and rank of officials. The German vocabulary, unfamiliar to many readers, is an important part of the history, but it must not be a barrier to understanding that history and has been translated conscientiously. The work on the text was guided by a commitment to achieving clarity while not modernizing, over-anglicizing, or sanitizing the words, even though that might have made reading it easier for today's students. Using anachronisms or turns of phrase that might fit when translating a modern source would have violated the historical origins of these testimonies.

To further assist readers who encounter unfamiliar words or facts, there is also a bespoke glossary, which defines and explains all the specialized terminology and the main contextual factors associated with the November 1938 events. Further, there are indices of people, places, and subjects to complement full-text search, and the full German texts also are available. Several other historically important resources that form parts of the project include the original German versions of the testimonies and some contemporaneous reports of the pogroms. Also included are a selection of 1938–1939 articles from the Library's archive of press material and a number of photographs, including images of burning synagogues and damaged shops.[2]

NEXT STEPS: NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEARNING

The project plan includes a seminar, a travelling exhibition, and initiatives to introduce the resources to school, college, and adult groups. The Wiener Library is a partner in EHRI (European Holocaust Research Infrastructure), an EU-funded collaboration to create online access to dispersed sources relating to the Holocaust. This collaboration provides routes for working with other archives and experts to strengthen links to related content; until now, the many significant collections of Holocaust material located around the world have not usually been coordinated in ways that could assist scholars and researchers, and the EHRI is seeking to address this and to create new opportunities for research and learning in the field of Holocaust studies.

At the heart of Holocaust education projects such as this is the obligation to find ways to best describe and understand the past for the benefit of today's teachers and learners and for the next generation, who will be without the benefit of living witnesses. It is not a simple matter to present the complex actions, perceptions, and attitudes of people in unfamiliar places and at moments in time that can now seem very distant and different. How we accommodate and comprehend the passage of time shapes our ideas and the very narratives that we choose to consider.

This project is helping to increase the Library's digital presence by removing barriers to accessing collections, furthering the Library's aim of attracting new audiences and reaching existing audiences more effectively. By digitizing and translating the testimonies, the project is

making this unique material available to a worldwide audience, thus serving the Library's mission: "to engage people of all ages and backgrounds in understanding the Holocaust and its historical context through an active educational programme" (Wiener Library, n.d., n.p.).

REFERENCE

Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide. (n.d.). About us. Retrieved from http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk/About-Us.

END NOTES

[1] In discussion with historian Dr. François Guesnet, University College London, a speaker at a workshop held at the Wiener Library in May 2014 on Pogroms: Contemporary Reactions to Antisemitic Violence in Europe, 1815–1950.

[2] The Library is very grateful to the *Mémorial de la Shoah* for permission to include a selection of contemporaneous photographs as well as information about the political developments that preceded and followed the Pogrom—November, taken from a set of short texts that the *Mémorial* prepared for its exhibition *La nuit de crystal* and published in Paris in 2008. The *Stiftung Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas* kindly gave permission to include two maps showing the pogrom locations.

Jewish men arrested on November 9, 1938 in Oldenburg. Courtesy Wiener Library.

"The use of digital technology, including mobile apps, has become increasingly popular in educational settings," note Carson Phillips and Martin Hagmayr, "yet little focus has been paid to incorporating mobile apps into the study of the Holocaust, despite the number available and the need to find engaging ways to encourage the next generation to study this subject." This review identifies six apps that illustrate best practices for using digital technology in or outside of the Holocaust classroom.

Carson Phillips and Martin Hagmayr

Incorporating Apps Into Holocaust Education

In the end we retain from our studies only that which we practically apply.
—Goethe, *Conversations* I (trans. Oxenford), 1850

The six apps reviewed here exemplify best practices in the nascent field of Holocaust education apps—particularly those that illustrate a constructivist approach, one that places students at the center of the educational experience and encourages active learning. Interacting with survivors in the classroom and online has provided students with this opportunity until now, but as the witnesses pass away, teachers can turn to digital technology to offer another form of interactive engagement.

Designed for today's generation, these apps reflect our awareness that knowledge is constructed from and shaped by experience. As Alice Christie notes, they "emphasize problem solving and understanding" (2005). We rejected those that were merely repositories of vast amounts of knowledge to be disseminated through a frontal learning approach in favor of those that structured learning around a variety of essential concepts, providing learners with multiple entry points into the study of the Holocaust and the option to acquire knowledge through different modes of communication and learning styles.

Finally, these apps include primary source material, such as documents, photographs, and artifacts—essential and invaluable tools for developing critical-thinking skills while contextualizing the history of the Holocaust. Created in Europe, North America, and Australia, the apps are innovative and pedagogically sound. They will never replace relationships with survivors, of course, but they are welcome additions to the study of the Holocaust.

Montreal Holocaust Museum
Compatible with iOS (iPhone/iPad) and Android
Developed by Tristan Interactive; last updated January 2014; available in English and French
www.mhmc.ca/en/events/view/67

This app is deceptively simple in function and content. One quickly discovers that it exemplifies visionary implementation of digital technology, offering users a variety of functions, subtly scaffolded information, and seemingly endless educational possibilities. Learners can choose from three distinct programs anchored on the museum's

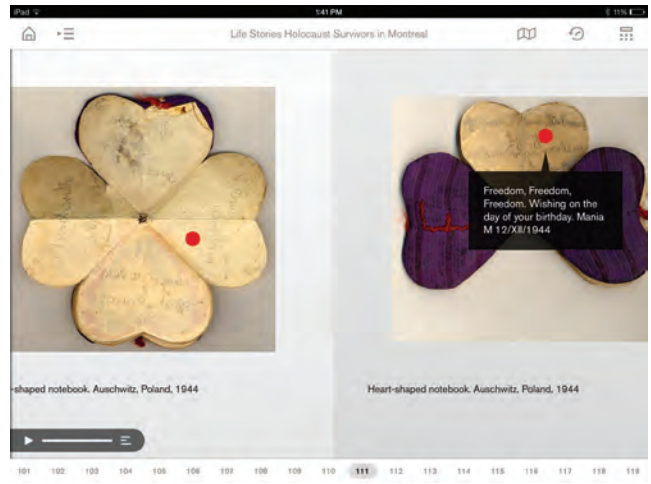

FIG. 1: *Heart of Auschwitz* as seen in app. Image courtesy of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

permanent exhibition: Life Stories of Holocaust Survivors; Children and Teenagers During the Holocaust; and Deconstructing Genocide. Thanks to a magnifying function, each offers an almost unprecedentedly close view of extraordinary artifacts, archival photographs, and historical documents from the museum's holdings. Concise audio descriptions enhance the experience of viewing specific artifacts. All images are provided in high resolution, allowing viewers to see them in stunning detail.

Of particular interest is the *Heart of Auschwitz* [Fig. 1, p. 91], created by Jewish women in Auschwitz-Birkenau as a greeting card for the 20th birthday (December 12, 1944) of fellow inmate Fania Landau. English and French translations allow the viewer to read the individual messages written on the card and to view the artifact from numerous angles and positions with remarkable clarity.

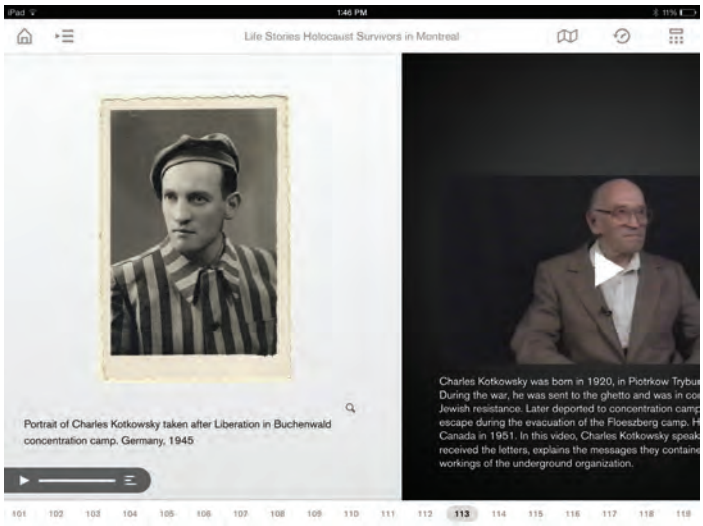

FIG. 2: Screenshot of app: Archival photograph of Charles Kotowsky (left) and an excerpt from this recorded testimony (right). Image courtesy of the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre.

The app makes extensive use of the recorded testimonies of survivors who made Montreal, Canada, their home [Fig. 2]. Users see and hear survivors address aspects of their experiences in poignant thematic excerpts. These testimonies are intricately interwoven throughout each of the app's tours, providing learners of history with an optimal combination of documents, artifacts, and testimony.

Pragmatically designed, this app is easy to use and thoroughly engaging. Once downloaded, it requires only a short initial network connection for content to be transferred. After this initialization process, the app functions completely offline. Users are encouraged by the program to offer reflections and to share their experiences with the app though social media such as Facebook and Twitter, and email.

Oshpitzin: A Guide to the Jewish History of Oświecim
Compatible with iOS and Android
Developed by Me & My Friends; last updated August 2014; available in English, German, Hebrew, and Polish
http://app.oshpitzin.pl/

The Oshpitzin app makes it possible to explore the rich Jewish history of Oświecim, a town commonly known for its proximity to the Auchwitz-Birkenau death camp. Once installed, all of its resources can be used either off- or online. The app includes both a useful museum guide *(In the Museum)* for the Auschwitz Jewish Center in Oświecim as well as a resource for learning the Jewish history of Oświecim *(In the City)*.

The home screen provides a plan of the museum with a menu that allows users to browse through objects or search for them by number. A magnifying function allows users to see documents and artifacts in close detail but, unfortunately, not from all angles. A descriptive text accompanies each object, and the app also offers a comprehensive audio guide. The app's archival documents are ideal for the document-based questioning required in high-school history classes.

In the City [Fig. 3] incorporates a well-designed city map and utilizes GPS technology. Users can see where various historic sites are situated in relation to their exact location in Oświecim, which viewers will discover was called Oshpitzin by its Jewish residents during the interwar period. As with *In the Museum,* additional information, including archival photographs, short texts, and video

FIG. 3: Screen shot of app showing the House of Rabbi Eliyahu Bombach. Image courtesy of Auschwitz Jewish Center: Museum, Synagogue, Education Center.

testimony excerpts, is provided for each venue. A major feature, titled *Augmented Reality,* offers the option to view historical photographs of certain buildings superimposed over contemporary photographs. Some buildings, such as the Great Synagogue, were completely destroyed during the Holocaust, leaving no traces of the original architecture, but 3D-model technology allows learners, by either using a QR code remotely or scanning the QR code available on a site panel at each actual site along the walking tour, to see the original buildings in 3D. A code for all of the models can be downloaded at http://oshpitzin.pl/marker.pdf.

This app is well designed, user-friendly, and intuitive to use, particularly during a visit to Oświecim but also for learners worldwide to learn about the town, its Jewish heritage, and the fate of its Jews during the Holocaust. Because of its concise texts and the good quality of photographs and archival documents, the app is a natural for use in school projects. Unfortunately, some videos, such as the testimony excerpt about the Sola River, are of poor quality and are neither translated nor subtitled, and the German version of the app does not include documents in the museum related to the Holocaust. Despite these shortcomings, however, the app combines the best advantages of digital technology with clear historical information and an engaging format.

JewishVienna—Between the Museums
Compatible with iOS and Android
Developed by Wiener Digital Manufaktur; last updated November 2013; available in English and German
www.jmw.at/en/app/jewishvienna

This app guides visitors through 21 points of significance to Jewish Viennese history located along a route that connects two distinct buildings: the Jewish Museum of Vienna on *Dorotheergasse* and the *Judenplatz,* located in the inner city. The points of interest can be viewed on a map and, utilizing GPS technology, can be located and reached. Each point of interest is accompanied by several images and texts.

The app can be used to learn about the city's rich Jewish history and the fate of its Jewish citizens during the Holocaust. It also highlights particular places in Vienna that have a generally unknown connection to the Jews who lived there. For example, using the catchy title Where You Can Now Buy Cheap T-Shirts, the app directs users to an address, *Graben no. 8.* There learners uncover the history of the family Braun, who owned a bridal store at that address. (Those in the family who survived, the site notes, escaped to New York City, where they opened a linen shop.) Their bridal shop was aryanized (confiscated by the Nazis) in 1938; today, Graben no. 8 is home to the popular fashion retailer H&M.

Unfortunately, no video or audio files are utilized in this app, which makes it less useful for those who do not want to read text. Further, although the app is titled *Between the Museums,* some places described are not on that path. The app concentrates on the first district of Vienna but provides no information about the others, such as the very important second district and former Jewish quarter, *Leopoldstadt,* where many Viennese Jews were assembled for deportation to concentration camps "in the east." Finally, this app would benefit from a more complete map and annual updates to provide information about new memorial plaques, additional personal narratives, and city projects recognizing Vienna's Jewish past. While it is easy to use during a walk through town or in a classroom, the app does not maximize the technological possibilities of video excerpts, audio files, 3D models, and augmented reality.

heim.at.home
Compatible with iOS and Android
Developed by NOUS Knowledge Management; last updated November 2012; available in English and German
www.facebook.com/pages/heimathome/240929809354981

Heim.at.home connects the histories of Vienna and New York through the personal narratives of individuals [Fig. 4].

FIG. 4: Map featuring domiciles of Edith Harnik. Image courtesy of heim.at.home. Photographer: David Plakke.

It provides 10 interviews, conducted by a Viennese granddaughter of a survivor, of former Jewish inhabitants of Vienna, survivors who now live in New York. Each is profiled with photographs and a short audio or video file. The narrator states that, for all the survivors she interviewed, Austria, and Vienna in particular, has remained, in some sense, *Heimat* (home). The speakers express this sentiment despite the losses and tragedies they endured in the Holocaust.

An impressive component of the app, which can be used off- or online, is its city maps of New York and Vienna, which indicate the survivors' former and current places of residence. By clicking on a specific point, users can see where each person lived and lives, exploring graphically the connection between two large cities and the fate of these individuals. When the user clicks on the icon for a survivor, a lengthy text provides information about the person and his or her thoughts regarding Austria and home. One can also click on an icon to learn more about the speaker's life in Vienna, escape, and life in New York now.

The greatest strength of this app is its use of personal photographs of the survivors and short video and audio files that allow learners to discover more about the interviewees' experiences. However, the excerpts are short and not translated or subtitled. Many are in German; English subtitles would have increased their reach and use. The app also does not utilize all of the technology and advantages specific to mobile devices, but it engages nonetheless.

StoryPod JHC

Compatible with iOS
Developed by Jewish Holocaust Centre, Australia; last updated March 2013; available in English
www.jhc.org.au/museum/our-museum/storypods.html

This app explores the individual stories of 10 survivors who made their way to Australia after World War II. On its home screen, one swipes a photograph of one of the survivors into a golden frame and then finds an animated desk, each unique to its survivor, on which there are testimonies, artifacts, and photographs. Clicking on a camera reveals archival photographs, each with a short description; clicking on a radio causes the survivor's voice to be heard. There is no prescribed order: Searching is at the discretion of the learner, allowing students to explore history in their own way, guided by attractive and complex visual imagery. With its vivid images, ease of use, and hand-on approach, the app lends itself to utilization in school projects and will interest a diverse range of students.

Visit USHMM

Compatible with iOS and Android
Developed by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum; released September 2014; available in English
www.ushmm.org/information/apps/ushmm-mobile

The Visit USHMM mobile app is designed to enhance all aspects of visiting the Washington, DC, museum. The app offers four features: My Visit, Personal Stories, Reflect & Share, and Stay Connected.

The *My Visit* feature encourages patrons to choose, before they arrive, which exhibitions they plan to visit and indicates the amount of time necessary to explore each area. Inclusion of floor plans facilitates movement throughout the museum. The extensive use of recorded survivor testimonies in the *Personal Stories* feature is a strength of this app. By viewing these personal accounts, learners engage with the effects of historical events on individuals. The oral history recordings provide an important entry point for visitors and allow them to discover more information through linked archival photographs and personal artifacts. This layered learning offers users multiple entry points into a complex area of study.

Of particular educational value is the *Reflect & Share* feature, which enables users to return to any part of the permanent exhibition, where they can explore artifacts and oral history excerpts at their leisure. The *Stay Connected* feature encourages its users to leave comments by means of social media.

Although this app does not offer as many functions as do the Montreal Holocaust Museum and Oshpitzin apps, it does provide users with a stimulating encounter with the museum's vast archival and artifact holdings while encouraging visitors to remain in touch with the institution.

ENGAGING WITH HISTORY

Each app reviewed here offers learners an interactive, engaging experience with learning history. As George E. Hein (1991) notes, "It takes time to learn: Learning is not instantaneous. For significant learning, we need to revisit ideas, ponder them, try them out, play with them, and use them" (n.p.). Mobile apps provide this opportunity for students today.

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What better way is there to ensure remembrance than to urge every survivor to "tell it," to "speak to the children"? Cartoons and comics, apps and websites: all can help to teach, but nothing can replace Florence Weinberger's exhortation as she sees "the survivors dwindle": "Speak to the children / without faltering."

Florence Weinberger

Speak to the Children

You meet them wherever you go.
On a cruise ship of a thousand people,
the one other survivor
sits down at your table.
You start comparing notes, camps,
liberation dates. Nearby,
a survivor's granddaughter eavesdrops,
then joins your conversation — soon
everyone around you is in tears.

Survivors' children find you.
You look like their uncle; they want to hear
your story. You seldom tell. Meanwhile,
the survivors dwindle. They're down to a handful.
Tell, I urge you, tell it
on paper, on tape, but you'd rather
speak to the children, speak to the children
without faltering, if you can bear to;
you'd rather look into their eyes,
where they carry, carelessly revealed,
everything they own.

"As opportunities to meet a Holocaust survivor dwindle, online testimonies become vital resources," Paula Cowan observes. "This guide provides information on a short selection of sites that offer online Holocaust survivor testimony in English, or with English subtitles, and can be accessed for free and with quick or no registration." Pair this with essays by Levitt (pp. 84–90) and Phillips and Hagmayr (pp. 91–94) for a helpful review of the power of technology to enhance Holocaust education.

Paula Cowan

A Selective, Annotated Guide to Holocaust Websites

As opportunities to meet a Holocaust survivor dwindle, online testimonies become vital resources. The wide range of platforms available to access such testimony means that while teachers can still bring survivors' voices into the classroom, they can also assign students to listen to or view testimony on their own time at home, while travelling, or while studying with friends. Online testimonies, of course, cannot compare to seeing and hearing a survivor face-to-face, where students can ask questions and respond directly to the survivor: An in-person meeting with someone who endured the Holocaust is often a highly charged, emotional, and unforgettable experience. Yet, although it may be difficult for even video testimony to arouse one's emotions in the same way as inperson testimony, online interviews offer the benefit of allowing students to view and listen to material repeatedly and, on some sites, read testimony transcripts, facilitating deeper understanding and critical engagement. Further, online testimony sites provide educators and students with links to relevant sources and useful contextual information.

Online survivor testimony may not always be engaging: Today's digital natives can be blasé and, at worst, disrespectful of this material, which boasts no glitz or graphics to enliven the speakers' presentations. Sometimes survivors' accents are unfamiliar to young listeners, who may not have the patience to stay with the viewing. Thus educators must choose material carefully, while considering how they will address issues arising from the distance between learners and the speaker to ensure that their students' engagement is a deeply personal, meaningful experience.

University of Southern California Shoah Foundation (United States)
http://iwitness.usc.edu

The USC Shoah Foundation is a leader in providing educators and students online access to eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust and other genocides. These accounts are published through the distinct *IWitness* and *Visual Histories* online programs.

IWitness contains new and dynamic ways for students from middle school through university to interact with survivor testimonies. These include such multimedia activities as incorporating music and testimony into class video projects and designing word clouds.[1] These exercises help students develop critical-thinking and self-reflection skills and allow teachers to assess the main ideas that students take from their encounters with survivor narratives. The *IWitness* platform provides educators with estimated completion time, curricular links, and appropriate grade-level information for each activity. *IWitness* lets students search its database using a vast index of keywords; because testimonies are indexed at 60-second intervals, students can target the specific areas of testimony in which they are interested, making this very much student-centered learning. The site also includes a glossary of terms and other research functions.

A series of introductory films, available on the *IWitness* platform, focuses on how to use the collection in a responsible and educational manner. One of these, the film *Ethical Editing: A Workshop for Teachers Using Video Testimony in Classrooms,* which clearly evidences a commitment to honor and respect each testimony, includes the unambiguous statement that using testimony as a classroom resource requires responsibility. *IWitness* also sends teacher educators to American classrooms to present various ways of using the site and to help teachers design lessons using testimony. The testimonies available online—so far approximately 1,300 of the Shoah Foundation's collection of more than 50,000—are organized by subject matter,

name, and time period, with edited short clips available on myriad subjects and themes. In addition, and most helpful to the teacher, every survivor interview that has been uploaded to the website is viewable in its entirety, with welcome ramifications for background learning.

Yet despite the tremendous trove of information that *IWitness* offers, it does not, even in a note to the teachers, mention that some speakers have already passed away—information that could convey an added sense of urgency to viewing the testimonies and learning the history that prompted them.

In addition to the complete *IWitness* and *Visual History Archive* (VHA) collections—valuable material well worth the few moments required for registration—the VHA offers access to a selection of testimonies from its archives via YouTube. Each of these testimonies, between one and two-and-a-half hours in length, begins with the interviewer's reading to the viewing public a placard that states the date of the interview, the names of the interviewer and survivor, the city and country where the interview is conducted, and the language spoken. This verifies the testimony's authenticity and conveys a sense of the seriousness of the occasion of taking testimony.

Selected Clips

Testimony by Ernest Levy: http://youtu.be/Yr6xAjtkbLA
Testimony by Esther Stern: http://youtu.be/bHH2MlSU5po
Testimony by Leon Leyson: http://youtu.be/LMyZ4LTpqWo
Testimony by Kathy Levy: http://youtu.be/WSdH6AcDDL8

The British Library (United Kingdom)

Learning Voices of the Holocaust

www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/voices/testimonies/life/lifelanding.html

The British Library provides powerful audio accounts of the Holocaust from survivors living in the United Kingdom. There are two avenues to access these materials. One is *Learning Voices of the Holocaust: Survivor Testimonies,* where students can listen to survivors speak on five topics: "Life Before the Holocaust," "Ghettos and Deportation," "The Camps," "Resistance," and "Liberation." (There is also a more comprehensive account, called "Testimony of Edith Berkin.")

Each topic explores several different survivors' experiences. Most survivors are named, but some are anonymous. While this anomaly respects the survivor's right to remain unidentified, it does make cross-referencing information from additional sources difficult for students. Such anonymity also raises concerns regarding verification of the authenticity of those testimonies, which is problematic given the growing number of revisionists and deniers who challenge basic facts of the Holocaust.

Most recordings are short. Although listeners are not given recording length before listening, it is easily estimated from the accompanying transcript, which is also useful for students unfamiliar with the various accents of the speakers.

The section "Life Before the Holocaust" contains testimonies from nine survivors, who explain the antisemitic prejudice and discrimination they experienced and their loss of rights after anti-Jewish decrees were issued. In the "Camps" section, survivors tell of the fear with which they lived daily, and they effectively describe their environments, with their distinctive sounds and smells. While this section is suitable only for students 15 and older, the others contain testimonies suitable for younger pupils. Some testimonies, for instance, would enhance a study of the *Kindertransport*; others can help students understand why Jews had to go into hiding. Each recording is accompanied by a brief biography of the speaker.

Sounds: Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust

http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history/Jewish-Holocaust-survivors

The second portal provided by the British Library is *Sounds: Jewish Survivors of the Holocaust.* This collection comprises interviews taken from a larger oral history project, *The Living Memory of the Jewish Community,* which recorded testimony between 1988 and 2000. The interviews are arranged in alphabetical order of survivors' surnames, and the approximately 30-minute interviews are segmented for easy listening. Some of the clips are extensively curated, with narration and archival photographs interspersed in the testimony, giving the interview a documentary feel. Other interviews are segments of these longer testimonies.

As with *IWitness*, each testimony begins with the interviewer stating the date of the interview. In addition to a full transcript, each audio testimony is accompanied by a detailed overview of the survivor's life. This is particularly useful for educators in assessing the materials' suitability for teaching programs and goals.

Included in the collection is testimony by Sir Nicholas Winton, MBE, the organizer of a rescue operation that brought approximately 669 children, mostly Jewish, from Czechoslovakia to safety in the United Kingdom. This *Kindertransport* was active until the very day of the outbreak of the Second World War. [See the entire spring 2013 issue of *PRISM* for detailed accounts of the *Kindertransports* and Sir Winton's role in saving children—Ed.].

The Holocaust Explained (United Kingdom)
www.theholocaustexplained.org/our-stories

Managed by the London Jewish Cultural Centre, this website is designed for students aged 11–16. Its home page clearly distinguishes texts for children of 11–14 years from those suitable for those aged 14–16. Each of six video testimonies is 39–53 minutes in length, with subtitles, where necessary, to assist any listeners who have difficulty understanding an unfamiliar accent. As prior to the war survivors lived in different countries, each experience is very different from the others. These testimonies have a fresh, modern look, as the website was launched in 2011, and the survivors, now quite elderly, are shown speaking eloquently in formal venues. Although the website refers to these as interviews, those asking the questions are not visible and their voices are seldom heard. These testimonies, therefore, come across more as talks than as interviews.

Each video clip is divided into sections by headings, some of which are common, such as "Life Before the War" and "Life Under Nazi Occupation," and others that are specific to the individual's testimony. Transcripts and minute-by-minute breakdowns of the videos are not provided to the listener. Although it is time-consuming, educators should (as always!) listen to these testimonies before assigning them to students, so that they can more effectively plan lessons, ensure age-appropriateness, and pre-teach some aspect of a testimony to provide historical context and ensure that students get as much as possible out of meeting the survivors.

One interesting feature of this website is its efforts to ensure that its audience will understand the importance and seriousness of the material and treat the narrative with dignity. The testimony page contains the request, "Please be respectful when listening to the Holocaust survivor testimonies," although it does not explain the meaning of respect in this context or provide guidelines for using the testimonies or tips for active listening.

Yale University Library (United States): Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies
www.library.yale.edu/testimonies

This archival collection contains video recordings of Holocaust testimonies that were recorded in 1979 and deposited at Yale University in 1981. The complete archive comprises thousands of testimonies, each recorded in the preferred language of the speaker, which range from one-and-a-half to 40 hours in length. The site provides access to edited English-language material from the collection. Suitable for students aged 14 years and older, these edited testimonies are between 25 minutes and one-and-a-half hours in length and categorized by helpful headings: *Thematically organized programs, Single-witness programs,* and *Short testimony excerpts.* The videos are also available on YouTube, with optional accompanying captions in English.

Each section of the website contains testimonies of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust told by survivors including Edith P. from Czechoslovakia, Rachel G. from Belgium, and Rabbi Baruch G. from Poland, as well as non-Jewish witnesses, such as Gypsy survivor Anna W. and Colonel Edmund M., a first lieutenant in the 65th Infantry Division of Patton's Third Army who saw Mauthausen Concentration Camp shortly after its liberation. Unfamiliar accents are uncommon here, as the testimonies from Jews tend to be from child survivors, who, in the main, have lost the cadences of their original languages. The absence of survivors' surnames is problematic for the reasons discussed earlier. However, each testimony is accompanied by a well-written summary, a helpful resource that provides teachers with insight into speakers' experiences prior to viewing and will assist them in determining materials' suitability for students and planning lessons.

Selected Clips
Testimony by Rabbi Baruch G.: http://youtu.be/ut5rE4dEwBY
Testimony by Menachem S.: http://youtu.be/UbBqOibdIfU
Testimony by Renée H.: http://youtu.be/KLN9Io6qQZs
Testimony by Rachel G.: http://youtu.be/RrlWU0I9QmE
Testimony by a bystander and two survivors: http://you tu.be/WByrxGE64Y0
Witness: Voices From the Holocaust: http://youtu.be/leqk GOqyWMI
Yugoslav Voices From the Holocaust: http://youtu.be/hK3N 2KCA2F8

Facing History and Ourselves (United States)
www.facinghistory.org/for-educators/educator-resources/resource-collections/survivor-testimony/survivor-profiles

Survivor Profiles, part of the website of Facing History and Ourselves, contains eight testimonies suitable for students 11 years old and up, recorded by Holocaust survivors born in Poland, Yugoslavia, Belgium, and Holland who came to live in the US. Each profile contains a biography, additional resources, related videos, and a photo gallery section.

The biographies are, in the main, brief, written in a chatty yet respectful tone. They clearly inform the reader of the survivor's year and place of birth, experiences during the Holocaust, and contributions to the US. The "Additional Resources" section contains fuller biographies for some of the survivors. Photographs in the gallery are beautifully presented; most can be enlarged with a mouse click, and all are clearly explained by captions. Most profiles, though not all, provide access to video testimony.

Of the videos available, those by the late Sonia Weitz are particularly effective, as they were recorded on different occasions over the years and thus allow the viewer a greater range of opportunities to get to know the speaker. One clip (25 min.) focuses on the speaker's life before and during the Holocaust, another (5 min.) on her experiences at Bergen-Belsen, and a third (25 min.) on her perspectives of victims of the Holocaust, while an additional video (2 min.) features her recitation of a poem that she composed about the tragedy of 9/11. This footage, together with the accompanying photographs and additional links, including a transcript of her contribution to the film *Present Memories* (1999), provides a richer and fuller understanding of the speaker and her testimony.

The three clips of Rita Lurie are also of special interest for two reasons. First, they show students asking the speaker questions, rather than the speaker delivering a prepared talk. While most questions appear to have been prepared beforehand, others are posed to the speaker, apparently by the teacher, in response to what the speaker says. This enables a dialogue, rather than a formal talk, to take place. Second, these clips explore the legacy of the Holocaust for the second generation, through a discussion by Rita's daughter Leslie about its impact on her mother and her family.

The "Additional Resources" section contains primary source documents and relevant links to other sources within and outside of the Facing History and Ourselves site. Learners will find external links, such as one that leads users to find out more about Amsterdam by linking to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Amsterdam page, quite useful, as they provide further context for the specific areas under study in the classroom.

The testimonies also include contrasting experiences of going into hiding: One Dutch survivor was sheltered in various houses in the Hague; another was taken in under false pretenses by an orphanage in Poland; and two survivors found refuge in attics and on farms, respectively, in Poland and outside Belgrade, Yugoslavia (now Serbia). Still other testimonies on this site can be easily integrated into well-known Holocaust narratives that are the subject of both books and films: One survivor, Janet Applefield, was one of the hundred children saved by Lena Kuchler (Kuchler-Silverman, 1963), while another, Rena Finder, who worked in the Emalia factory, had her name on Schindler's List. The site, with its rich content and contemporary feel, encourages learners to find out more about the Holocaust and its impact on the next generations.

Yad Vashem
www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/multimedia.asp

Yad Vashem's statement that "recording survivor testimony is one of the most important components in safeguarding the memory of the Holocaust and entrusting it to future generations" explains its commitment to making survivor testimony instantly accessible to the world community and its dedication to ongoing development of this crucial resource for student learning. Its Testimony Department started with collecting written testimonies; progressed to recording audio testimonies; and, since 1989, has been recording video documentation. Sixty percent of testimony collection is now in video format, with old footage currently being digitized.

The Voice of the Survivors categorizes testimonies by topic and place. Currently 10 topics and over 70 places are identified, and clicking on one of these takes the viewer to a long list of testimonies that are available. Similar to the Holocaust Survivor Testimonies, these are short clips, and Hebrew-speaking testimony is accompanied by either subtitles or voiceovers in English. This approach facilitates depth of study as, for example, the 36 entries under *Ghettos* provide insight into ghettos in Plonsk, Radom, Kovno, Vilna, Krakow, and Warsaw.

One of the charming features of the curated, online selection of testimonies is that many of the speakers were recorded while sitting comfortably in their homes. They speak in an unrehearsed manner, eagerly answering questions posed to them—a format that conveys a sense of intimacy. The excerpts have been chosen to highlight specific themes and topics; students do not have the ability to drive the investigation by choosing from the testimonies with a search engine as they can with *IWitness*. While some of these testimonies are suitable for students younger than 14, teachers are strongly advised to check the content of a testimony before using it, due to the strong focus on details of the camps, the Final Solution, and the death marches.

Holocaust Survivor Testimonies are under-five-minute film clips that, like USC's *Visual History Archive*, are available on YouTube. Testimony is spoken in Hebrew, with subtitles in English. Some of these clips contain music and archival footage and pictures; each is accompanied by a synopsis that identifies the survivor-speaker or speakers, its source, and where students can find further information. Key words included in clip titles assist students studying a specific topic in discovering relevant material.

Gathering the Voices (United Kingdom)
www.gatheringthevoices.com

This recently constructed site (still undergoing development) provides oral testimony from 22 people who sought sanctuary in Scotland, some through the *Kindertransports* (Cowan, 2013) and some as camp survivors. While there is no video material, a range of scanned newspaper articles, photos, and oral testimonies—quite useful for student

comprehension, comparison, and review—is clearly presented. One common principle in Holocaust pedagogy is that students should learn of life before, during, and post-Holocaust [see Serotta, pp. 8–12—Ed.], and testimonies on this site are consistently structured accordingly.

The site contains links to relevant websites and an application that maps the routes that four of the survivor-speakers followed on their road to Scotland, an imaginative way of providing visual reference. One unique principle of this website, note Shapiro, McDonald, and Johnston (2014), is that it was produced collaboratively by interdisciplinary teams of university staff and college students from the disciplines of digital media, graphic design, and history. The volunteer students of history transcribed data, graphic-design students contributed to the website design, and audio-technology students cleaned the interviews of unnecessary noises such as coughing. Holocaust education thus occurred in the process of making this website as well as resulting from the final product.

THE NEXT BEST THING

This guide is by no means a definitive list of online Holocaust survivor testimony; rather, it provides brief overviews of a number of easily accessible and classroom-useful sites and touches on issues regarding their classroom use. Online testimony can be flexible in that it brings the survivor voice into the classroom at a time of the educator's choosing. Yet it is no different from in-person testimony in that while it shares the aim of bringing history to life through the survivor voice, each testimony is unique and not representative of other survivors' experiences.

The need to maintain these websites cannot be overemphasized, as today's students expect instant information presented in a visually and auditorily appealing way and will quickly lose interest in sites that do not meet their requirements. Well-presented, well-organized testimony becomes important as survivors themselves can no longer come into our classrooms. Designing and maintaining the sites that host this testimony present a challenge for educational technology, as we need to respond promptly and effectively to the new world of tomorrow's learners by devising innovative tools to hold and maintain their interest and by ensuring that, when we do, our students are working with these tools in ways that promote authentic historical memory.

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END NOTE

[1] A word cloud is a visual representation of the key terms or words found in a body of material. A term's size commonly indicates how often it appears, while other formatting and a range of cloud shapes also often play a role.

"Counting the Holocaust," by *PRISM* poetry editor Charles Adès Fishman, urges us to consider: Can attempting to count the murdered Jews help us in any way "to get a handle on the Holocaust"? Will "grains of uncooked rice" or "six million periods" be the legacy those we lost bequeathed to us? Yet the numbers confound. Perhaps we try to count to underscore the truth that every person who died counted, *as if s/he were the world entire.*

Charles Adès Fishman

Counting the Holocaust

He tried to get a handle on the Holocaust:
let others immerse themselves in questions
of time and intention

He would leave the Nazis to history
the endless litany of camps to architects
and statisticians

Let the professors tussle over Hitler's evil
genius the altruism of Schindler the German
muse of Goldhagen

He wanted to know one thing only —
what six million of anything added up to . . .
and so he counted:

grains of uncooked rice until the gallon jugs
he dropped them into filled his kitchen un-
matched contact lenses

newly-minted pennies then soda pop bottle caps
battered shoe boxes abandoned valises and six
million periods in 12-point Gothic type:

thirty-seven hundred and four unconsumed
pages He was counting the Holocaust and he
kept counting.

Performing Captivity, Performing Escape: Cabarets and Plays From the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto, edited and translated by Lisa Peschel (2014), is an anthology of works from the cultural life of Theresienstadt that helped the ghetto's inmates to preserve their sense of civilization despite Nazi persecution. As we seek "to preserve the memory and testimony of survivors and to find new methods to teach this history to the next generation," writes Ros Merkin, this volume offers "a welcome example of one way we might approach this."

Ros Merkin

Cabarets and Plays From the Terezín/ Theresienstadt Ghetto: A Review

At a time when we are increasingly anxious to preserve the memory and testimony of survivors and to find new methods to teach this history to the next generation, Lisa Peschel's meticulously researched and annotated anthology of plays and cabarets performed in the Terezín Ghetto is a welcome example of one way we might approach this. Beautifully produced and richly illustrated, the book offers 11 scripts, some accompanied by sheet music. Some are cabaret sketches; others are short plays of up to 45 minutes. These fascinating historical documents were either previously available only in Czech or German or never available before. Many were believed lost until they were re-discovered through Peschel's detective work in private collections and in small archives, and through discussions with survivors.

The primary Terezín theater text, and sometimes the only one, known to most students familiar with that ghetto is the children's opera *Brundibár,* performed for the Red Cross visit in 1944, so these scripts are a welcome addition. Remarkable in their diversity of tone and theme, they cover a wide variety of approaches that Jewish prisoners used to make performances in the ghetto. Some, especially the cabaret sketches, are topical, ridiculing daily life including everything from Jewish guards to well-fed cooks. Some are brutally satirical, including the puppet play *Looking for a Specter,* in which the king's minister suggests making a skeleton from the bones of all those over 60 to frighten and subdue the people who might be contemplating a rebellion. Others are allegorical: *The Smoke of Home* refracts contemporary life through the prism of the Thirty Years' War. Some are surprising in their articulation of a vision of a life after Terezín. In one conversation from *Laugh With Us,* two men sit on a park bench. It is sometime in the future. One man wants to know why the other is wearing a yellow star; he has never seen it before. The whole cabaret ends with a song (a photograph of the melody is included in the volume) in which the ghetto is just a memory:

> Those old days in Terezín / Now we see them differently / Just a memory / Though we feared catastrophe / It passed without calamity / Now it's history. / They won't believe you when you try to describe / Just what an absurd thing was Terezín life. / In a hundred years we'll bet / When the whole world reads of it / All they'll do is laugh. (p. 215)

Some of the texts are haunting. The final script in the book was part of a cabaret performed, at the request of the prisoners, not in the ghetto but for New Year's Eve entertainment at the Oederan, a sub-camp of the Flossenbürg concentration camp. The guards agreed to the performance provided it would be in German and that they would be in the audience. The script was written by 19-year-old Lisa Zeckendorf, who had been transferred there from Terezín in 1944; in Peschel's book, it is reconstructed in conversations she had with Zeckendorf during a visit to Prague in 2009. The script features an acidic and disturbing catwalk show as the "guests of the holiday camp Oederan" listen to a commentary outlining the latest fashions, where the new body shape is "*über*-slim" and "one wear one's bones in view." The secret to achieving this is a new diet developed by European scientists:

> In the morning, black chicory coffee, refusing milk and sugar, of course, and with it one piece of dry bread—by no means more. At midday, a thin soup, made with turnips that are actually intended for cattle. . . . In the evening, black coffee again, this time

> with two pieces of dry bread. Weight loss is guaranteed, and with long-term maintenance of this diet, success is dead certain. The highest acceptable weight is eighty pounds, but she who can bring her weight down to seventy pounds is a queen. (p. 402)

As Lisa strides across the stage in a dress full of holes, stroking her bare skull, a walking skeleton, she does, the stage directions tell us, believe herself to be queen; Zeckendorf notes that the SS women who were in attendance "laughed themselves silly during the whole performance" (p. 402). While we can't really perform this today with all the resonances of the physicality of those actors, a reading would serve in university classrooms to illustrate the purposes that such bitterly ironic drama served for the inmates.

Peschel's microscopic attention to detail is impressive; she spent a lot of time unearthing biographical details of writers and performers, and the scripts have abundant annotation, much derived from conversations with survivors. These attempt to make sense of the myriad veiled references and resonances in the texts (as well as problems that arise from translation) that spoke volumes to the audiences in Terezín but that we find hard to comprehend. These range from references to specific places in the ghetto to jokes based on linguistic misunderstandings. Such details are invaluable for anyone looking to use these plays for teaching and performance, particularly as the volume was in part "prepared with performance in mind" (p. 4).

It is a shame, therefore, that Peschel did not spend more time exploring and discovering how these texts worked in and as performance. Some have stage directions, which help to envisage them; there are some references to the time and place of performances, including Hans Hofer's poem about the difficulties of obtaining theater tickets; and some chapters include illustrations of performance spaces. Much, though, is glossed over. For dramatists and educators who seek to bring these works to modern audiences, it would have been helpful to provide more information on where and how performance happened in these most difficult of circumstances. What did the sets and costumes look like? Where were these texts performed? In theaters? In any room that could be found? However, this does not detract from the value of the volume to historians and educators alike, and the contextualizing introduction does help readers to understand why so much theatrical activity took place. As well, the glossary and numerous footnotes detailing places and references unknown to the contemporary reader help us make sense of the texts.

Peschel is at particular pains to argue that we should not see these works simply as acts of defiance; we must understand that they also offered the prisoners ways to indulge in nostalgia for home and to enjoy moments of aesthetic pleasure and escape. The performances, established and organized by the prisoners themselves, "could not change the conditions," but they could help people "counteract the intense feelings of fear and helplessness" in ways that kept them "from becoming paralyzed by despair and enabled them to get on with the daily fight for life" (p. 6).

As a testimony to the extraordinary range of theatrical work produced in Terezín, this volume is invaluable. It is also an example of how careful and patient research can ensure that work we thought lost can be rediscovered and presented with the help of those who created or witnessed it in performance. As a compendium of scripts for performance or reading, it also offers us an imaginative way to engage school classes and university students, or indeed a wider audience, with the history of Terezín.

Peschel, the translator of these texts and a lecturer in the department of theater, film, and television at the University of York (UK), notes that permission does need to be obtained, even for schools and colleges, to use these scripts in their own settings. Contact Peschel at www.york.ac.uk/tftv/staff/lisa-peschel/ for further information on how to obtain rights from the heirs of the authors. "I'm happy to say," she wrote, "that there are living descendants of most of the authors and, in one case, the author himself is still alive" (2014, personal correspondence).

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This plea by Stephen Herz serves as a fitting conclusion to his poem "Old Survivors Dying" (pp. 5–7), in which he asked who will remember. Here, he addresses all of us, urging that remembrance be "in our souls in our hearts" so deeply that even "the years" themselves will "never forget."

Stephen Herz

Let There Be Remembrance

For Zelig Preis

let there be remembrance
in our souls in our hearts
let our hearts bleed
for those who perished
let the perished
be more than a statistic
let the statistics have faces
let the faces have voices
let the voices cry out to us
through time
let that time
be remembered
through the years
let the years
never
forget.

About the Contributors

Editor

KAREN SHAWN

Karen Shawn, Ph.D., is visiting associate professor of Jewish education at the Azrieli Graduate School and editor of this journal. The founder of the Holocaust Educators' Consortium, an international, interreligious community of practice, Shawn has spoken and written extensively on Holocaust education. A recipient of the Covenant Award for Excellence in Jewish Education (2000), her most recent publication is *Rethinking and Restructuring Holocaust Education* (2015), a monograph in the *Azrieli Papers* series.

Associate Editor

MOSHE SOKOLOW

Moshe Sokolow, Ph.D., is Fanya Gottesfeld-Heller professor and associate dean of the Azrieli Graduate School of Education and Administration, specializing in the history and philosophy of Jewish education and curriculum development in Judaic studies. He is the author of *Studies in the Weekly Parasha, Based on the Lessons of Nechama Leibowitz* (2008, Urim) and, most recently, of *Tanakh, an Owner's Manual: Authorship, Canonization, Masoretic Text, Exegesis, Modern Scholarship, and Pedagogy* (2015, Urim).

Contributors

SHMUEL AFEK

Shmuel Afek has lived and taught in Israel and in the US. A graduate of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and of Yeshivat Har Etzion, Shmuel teaches social studies at the Abraham Joshua Heschel High School in New York City and adult education at New York's Park Avenue Synagogue, using Centropa materials in both venues. He is especially interested in integrating the Shoah in new, more effective ways into the teaching of 20th-century Jewish history. To contact the author, email him at shmuelaf@heschel.org.

MARGARET CHASAN

Margaret Chasan taught English at Cape Town High School before immigrating with her family to Seattle, Washington, where she taught at Seattle's Eastside Catholic High School, directing a program for special needs students and teaching senior English. Later, and for more than a decade, she taught humanities and modern Jewish history at Seattle's Jewish Day School. She has won excellence-in-teaching awards, including the Dick Ellis Award and the Maria Erlitz Award, and has presented at Centropa and national Catholic conferences. To contact the author, email her at margaret@chasan.net.

KATIUSCA CIRINO

Katiusca Cirino is the chair of the International Language Department at Alief Hastings High School, in Houston, Texas. She teaches AP courses in Spanish language, literature, translation, and interpretation. She received her MA in Spanish language and culture from Universidad de Salamanca, and her BA in translation and interpretation in English, French, and Spanish from Universidad Central de Venezuela. She is a member of the Hastings Site Decision Committee and sponsors the Multicultural Literary Society. To contact the author, email her at maestracirino@gmail.com.

PAULA COWAN

Paula Cowan, Ph.D., is a senior lecturer in education at the University of the West of Scotland. She has presented papers at national and international conferences and has published essays on Holocaust education and remembrance. An author of Holocaust curricular materials for primary and secondary teachers and co-editor of *Teaching Controversial Issues in the Classroom: Key Issues and Debates* (Continuum, 2012), she is also a UK delegate on the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. To contact the author, email her at paula.cowan@uws.ac.uk.

JEFFREY ELLISON

Jeffrey Ellison, Ed.D., teaches history at the Bernard Zell Anshe Emet Day School in Chicago. He received his doctorate, with a focus on Holocaust education, from Florida Atlantic University in 2001. He has published articles in professional journals, lectured on high school and university campuses, and initiated and facilitated Holocaust conferences. Most recently, he participated in the Centropa Summer Academy and the Facing History and Ourselves study trip to Poland, the latter sponsored by the Forum for Dialogue Among the Nations. To contact the author, email him at jellison@bzaeds.org.

CHARLES ADÈS FISHMAN

Charles Adès Fishman is poetry editor of *PRISM*. His books include *Mortal Companions* (1977); *The Death Mazurka* (1989), an American Library Association Outstanding Book of the Year; *Chopin's Piano* (2006); *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust* (2007), his world-renowned anthology; *In the Language of Women* (2011); and *In the Path of Lightning: Selected Poems* (2012). He is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of English & Humanities in the State University of New York. To contact the poet, email him at carolus@optimum.net.

MYRNA GOLDENBERG

Myrna Goldenberg, Ph.D., professor emerita, Montgomery College, Maryland, has published seminal articles on women and the Holocaust and co-edited, with Amy Shapiro, *Different Horrors, Same Hell: Gender and the Holocaust*; with Elizabeth Baer; *Experience and Expression: Women, the Nazis, and the Holocaust*; and, with Rochelle L. Millen, *Testimony, Tensions,* and Tikkun: *Teaching the Holocaust in Colleges and Universities*, as well as numerous articles on American Jewish women's literature and history. Her current research focuses on sexual violence during the Holocaust and on American women's poetry about the Holocaust. To contact the author, email her at myrnagoldenberg2@gmail.com.

ANKA GRUPINSKA

Anka Grupinska is a writer, co-curator of exhibitions, and coordinator of oral history projects, and was publisher and a journalist of the *Czas Kultury* underground in Poznań. Her 1991 book *Po kole. Rozmowy z żydowskimi żołnierzami* is now in a third edition (2013) titled *Ciagle po kole. Rozmowy z żołnierzami getta warszawskiego.* Among her other publications are *Najtrudniej jest spotkać Lilit*; *Opowieści chasydzkich kobiet*; and 12 *opowieści żydowskich.* To contact the author, email her at a.grupinska@karta.org.pl.

MARTIN HAGMAYR

Martin Hagmayr holds an MA degree in history from the University of Vienna and is a graduate of the University College of Education Upper Austria. The recipient of several scholarships, he has studied at the University of Basel (Switzerland), Humboldt University of Berlin (Germany), Yad Vashem, and Beit Lohamei Hagetaot (Israel). A member of the Pedagogical Department of Hartheim Castle, he has published numerous articles on the Nazi euthanasia program and its victims. To contact the author, email him at m.hagmayr@gmail.com.

ASMIR HASIČIČ

Asmir Hasičič was born in Doboj, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and his elementary education in Bosnia, Germany, and Croatia was shaped by the Bosnian War. A graduate of the Islamic Gymnasium and the University of Sarajevo, he is an imam; religious minister *(khatib)*; religious teacher *(mualim)*; teacher of history, religion, ethics, and civic rights in an elementary school in Sarajevo; and president of the Canton Sarajevo History Teachers Association, working to improve history education and fostering textbook reforms. To contact the author, email him at hasicic.asmir@hotmail.com.

LESLIE WOOLF HEDLEY

Leslie Woolf Hedley (1921–2013) is the author of *Watchman, What of the Night?* (1988) and several short story collections. His "Chant for All the People on Earth" was set to music by Marta Ptaszynska and, with the title "The Holocaust Cantata," was recorded for Polygram and conducted by Lord Yehudi Menuhin. Another version of the cantata was composed by Depraz and performed on Television France.

MICHAL HELD

Michal Held, Ph.D., teaches Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) literature and culture, with special emphasis on the Sephardic Holocaust, at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is a member of the Israeli Parliamentary Association for Holocaust Remembrance and Aid to Survivors. Her doctoral dissertation, *Let Me Tell You a Story/* Ven te kontare: *The Personal Narratives of Judeo-Spanish Speaking Storytelling Women, An Interdisciplinary Study* (Hebrew), was published in Hebrew by the Ben-Zvi Institute (2009). Her latest book of poetry is *Over the Face of the Waters* (2009). Her website is www.michalheld.com; to contact the author, email her at mheld@mail.huji.ac.il.

STEPHEN HERZ

Stephen Herz is the author of *Marked: Poems of the Holocaust* (NYQ Books, 2014) and *Whatever You Can Carry: Poems of the Holocaust* (Barnwood Press, 2003), about which Thomas Lux said, "Not since Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz* have I read a book so precise, so powerful, so terrifying." His poems have been widely published and used in Holocaust studies classrooms. To contact the poet, email him at herzpoet@yahoo.com.

MARILYN KALLET

Marilyn Kallet is the author of 16 books, including *The Love That Moves Me* (2013) and *Packing Light: New and Selected Poems* (2009), both from Black Widow Press, and translations of French Surrealist poetry. She directs the creative writing program at the University of Tennessee, where she is Nancy Moore Goslee Professor of English, and she leads poetry workshops in Auvillar, France, for the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. To contact the poet, email her at mkallet@utk.edu.

ETGAR KERET

Etgar Keret was born in Ramat Gan in 1967. His writing has been published in *The New Yorker*, *Zoetrope*, and the *Paris Review* and his books have been translated into 35 languages. In 2007, Keret and Shira Geffen won the Cannes Film Festival's *Camera d'Or* award for their movie *Jellyfish.* In 2010, Keret received the Chevalier Medallion of France's *Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.* His most recent book, *The Seven Good Years*, will be published by Riverhead Books in spring 2015.

RUTH LEVITT

Ruth Levitt, Ph.D., is a Research Fellow at London's Wiener Library for the Study of the Holocaust and Genocide. She has researched and translated key documents in the Library's archive of Dutch and German materials. A Visiting Senior Research Fellow at King's College London, she has published several books and papers; her most recent is Kensett: Artisans in Britain and America in the 18th and 19th Centuries (http://bit.ly/1x19XOV). To contact the author, email her at ruth.levitt@gmail.com.

OLIVIA MATTIS

Olivia Mattis, Ph.D., an award-winning musicologist, is president and co-founder of the Sousa Mendes Foundation. Mattis lectures widely and co-organized the 2013 conference Portugal and the Jewish Refugee Crisis of World War II at the Center for Jewish History in New York. In 2016, she will co-lead a Journey on the Road to Freedom trip to France and Portugal, in the footsteps of Sousa Mendes and the refugees he saved; it will be open to Holocaust educators and students. To contact the author, email her at oliviamattis@sousamendesfoundation.org.

RAFAEL MEDOFF

Rafael Medoff, Ph.D., is founding director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, in Washington, DC, which focuses on issues related to America's response to the Holocaust. He is the author of 15 books about the Holocaust, Zionism, and American Jewish history, the latest of which is *Cartoonists Against the Holocaust* (co-authored with Craig Yoe). To contact the author, email him at rafaelmedoff@aol.com.

ROS MERKIN

Ros Merkin, Ph.D., is a Reader in Drama at Liverpool John Moores University. Her research focuses on local and regional theater, and her publications include a chapter on Liverpool's theater in the *Cambridge Companion to Theatre History.* She also creates and directs theater and has recently created a performance about the Oneg Shabbat Archives. To contact the author, email her at r.merkin@ljmu.ac.uk.

CARSON PHILLIPS

Carson Phillips, Ph.D., is the assistant director of the Sarah and Chaim Neuberger Holocaust Education Centre in Toronto, Canada. He served as a Canadian delegate to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance from 2009 to 2013 and is the recipient of numerous scholarly awards, including the 2013 BMW Canada Award for Excellence from the Canadian Centre for German and European Studies. He has presented and published his research in Austria, Canada, Germany, and the United States. To contact the author, email him at drcarsonphillips@gmail.com.

NICOLE RIPLEY

Nicole Ripley, director of education at Writers Theatre in Glencoe, Il, has worked extensively with youth in the US and in Asia. She focuses her practice and curriculum development on using theater to address issues of social justice. She is co-creator of *Teens at the Table,* a participatory program using arts as civic practice to address youth violence. An alumna of Northwestern University, she was a 2006 Luce Scholars Fellow in Thailand, a Fulbright recipient, the 2013 Communities in Schools of Chicago Al Ward Spirit of Giving awardee, and a 2013 nominee for a 3Arts award in teaching arts. To contact the author, email her at nripley@writerstheatre.org.

PNINA ROSENBERG

Pnina Rosenberg, Ph.D., art editor of *PRISM*, is an art historian specializing in the art and legacy of the Holocaust. She lectures on these subjects in the Technion—Israel Institute of Technology and The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel. She has presented numerous papers at international conferences; has published books, articles, and exhibition catalogs on various aspects of Holocaust art and memory; and is a contributor to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica* and the *Jewish Women Historical Encyclopedia.* To contact the author, email her at pninarose@gmail.com.

EDWARD SEROTTA

Edward Serotta is an American-born, Vienna-based photographer, filmmaker, and writer who has been specializing in Jewish life in Central and Eastern Europe for the past 30 years. He has three books and four films to his credit. He has written for *The Washington Post*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *Time*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *The Independent*, and *Die Zeit.* He has photographed on assignment for *Time*, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Die Zeit*, and *Süddeutsche Zeitung.* To contact the author, email him at serotta@centropa.org.

REVA SHARON

Reva Sharon is a poet, photographer, and artist who has lived in Jerusalem for 27 years. Her photography and art have appeared on book covers and in international exhibitions. Her prose and poems have been published in journals and anthologies, including *PRISM* and *Blood to Remember* (Time Being Books, 2007), and collected in *Pool of the Morning Wind* (Jerusalem: Shemesh). To contact the poet, email her at rsharon@actcom.net.il.

MELANIE SHAUL

Melanie Shaul teaches English as a Foreign Language at Beit Eliezer Junior and Senior High School in Hadera, Israel, where she is the English coordinator. To contact the author, email her at ymontn@hotmail.com.

WENDY WARREN

Wendy Warren earned her BA in Political Science from the State University of New York at Oneonta and her M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Houston (Texas). She teaches AP World History and Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Hastings High School in Houston. A member of the Holocaust Museum Houston's Education Committee since 2007, she received the 2013 Texas Exes Outstanding Teaching Award from the University of Texas and the 2012 Humanities Texas Outstanding Teaching of the Humanities Award. To contact the author, email her at wendydwarren@gmail.com.

FLORENCE WEINBERGER

Florence Weinberger was educated at Hunter College and California State University, Northridge and UCLA; and has worked as a teacher, legal investigator, and consumer advocate. Her poems have appeared in a variety of magazines and anthologies, including *The Deronda Review, The New Vilna Review, Blood to Remember,* and *Ghosts of the Holocaust,* and she is the author of four collections of poetry: *The Invisible Telling Its Shape, Breathing Like a Jew, Carnal Fragrance,* and *Sacred Graffiti.* To contact the poet, email her at flopetw@verizon.net.

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