

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS • A ROTHMAN FOUNDATION PUBLICATION

PRISM

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PRISM

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FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS

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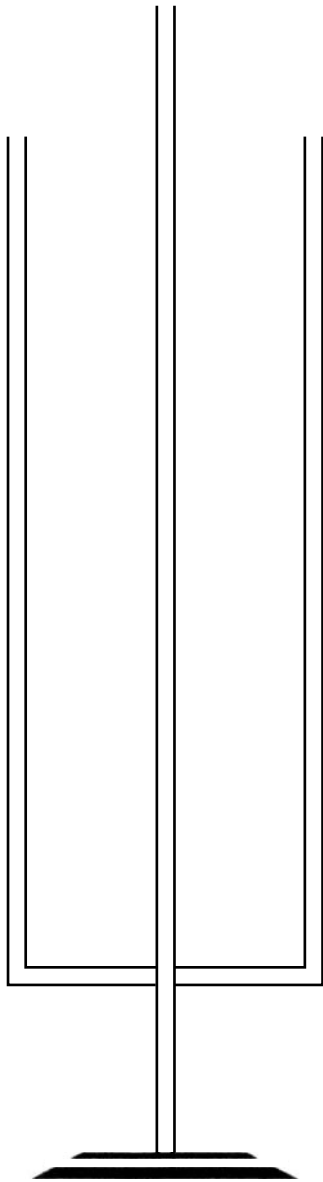
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PRISM

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL
FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS

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PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators is a peer-reviewed journal. 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.

Letters to the editors are welcomed.

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

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Credits & Permissions

FRONT COVER:

A child waiting to be deported from the Lodz Ghetto, circa September 1942 or spring 1943. She is pictured pressing her face to the fence at the place of assembly on Czarniecki Street.

The photograph, taken clandestinely by ghetto resident and photographer Mendel Grossman, serves as testimony to the crime of the Holocaust.

Most of the Grossman photographs that remain and are published in *With a Camera in the Ghetto* (1970, Israel: Ghetto Fighters' House and HaKibbutz HaMeuchad Publishing House), from which this photo was taken, were not copied from negatives, which were, tragically, lost. They are instead copied from prints that had been sent to various people and places after the Holocaust. We are grateful to Zvika Oren and the Ghetto Fighters' House for permission to reprint this photo.

Art collection, Ghetto Fighters' House, Israel.

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A Word from the Editors

"The painful truth is that apprehending the Holocaust requires years of patient study, a long journey through history, literature, art, memoirs, human psychology, and countless other disciplines that illuminate its tangled origins and dreadful results."

—Lawrence L. Langer



As teachers of this subject, we have long recognized the reality Langer describes, and we seek to address it by the founding of this interdisciplinary journal for Holocaust educators. We have chosen the name *PRISM* to reflect the offerings in our journal: multiple academic and pedagogical perspectives of the Holocaust, each shedding a different light and casting a singular hue on the subject. There are myriad aspects of the Holocaust and multiple ways to approach its study, an understanding that echoes the Biblical awareness (Psalms 62:12; Jeremiah 23:29) that in a single Divine utterance, humans may perceive more than one meaning. Although two people undergo the same event, each may experience it differently; for each, it may contain a singular meaning and message. It is this multi-faceted, unique nature of both the Holocaust and its pedagogy that *PRISM* will address.

Our years of learning and teaching about this subject have helped us understand certain other truths: that the Holocaust cannot be taught in its entirety by any one teacher in any single course but can be approached, uncovered, discussed, and examined through one moment, one place, one person at a time; and that the ways of discovering its multiple meanings vary with each teacher and every group of students. We have learned that our goal cannot be to teach the definitive course on the Holocaust but can be instead to send our students on to the next teacher eager to learn more.

We have learned as well that we must differentiate methods and materials, that while we can touch one student with a history of the Lodz ghetto illustrated by facts, figures, and maps, another will learn only from the words of a diary found buried there, while another will be drawn to study only after coming upon a piece of clandestine art or a tattered photograph. For some it will be a survivor's testimony or literary response; for some, a poem written by one who survived or one who perished; for still others, only discussion of the essential religious and philosophical questions raised by the event will provide an entry point to this, a lifetime of study.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This journal is thematic. The story, essays, poetry, art, and documentary photographs in this issue reflect the growing interest in trauma, resilience, vicarious traumatization, and post-traumatic growth. We offer our readers options for examining this theme with the belief that one or more of the aspects discussed will engage them in both immediate and long-term learning.

While this is a journal for educators and students in high school, college, and university classrooms, it is not an instructor's manual. You will find not lesson plans or lists of dos and don'ts; they are available elsewhere. You will find, however, that your own lessons and units of study will grow easily out of the works of art and literature and the personal stories that inform them; out of the historical context for the essays on teaching; and out of the exploration of the pedagogical uses of storytelling, drama, psychology, photography, artifacts, and museum visits. Each contribution, we believe, evokes essential questions that must be raised if one is to present an authentic, useful, and provocative unit of study.

This issue is specific in theme but wide-ranging in content. It includes immediately teachable poetry; an exquisite chapter from *The Soldier with the Golden Buttons*, literature that epitomizes trauma and resilience by Croatian survivor Miriam Steiner-Aviezer; an interview with this survivor; and a treatise on the uses of storytelling, with a focus on testimony, in the classroom. We offer art painted in the camps, in the studio of a child of a survivor, and in the workshop of an Israeli *kibbutznik*. Documentary photographs accompany one scholarly essay that examines the Höcker album and another that examines the role of the museum in teaching about Jewish agency. An introduction to Witness Theater offers educators a new and promising venue for helping students derive meaning from and take ownership of survivor testimony. A detailed description of a unique workshop for Holocaust educators provides a forum for discussion about vicarious traumatization. Two of our graduate students debate the issue of when and what to teach, and an essay detailing the work of survivor Fred Fragner, *z"l*, and its applications for today's classrooms is especially poignant in light of the recent passing of this resilient and gifted survivor and educator.

This journal reflects our philosophy of Holocaust education, we who have taken the classroom journey with our students and have experienced the roots that may trip us, the branches that may knock us off balance. We have accompanied adolescents and young adults to the edge of the abyss and have held them tightly as they looked down. We have let them look away as well, knowing that only the right material brought forward at the right time will help them to discover and integrate what they need to know. We hope this journal serves as a guide for you and your students as you find within it and share that which resonates with you and engages you in this profound and lifelong study. ■

KAREN SHAWN, PH.D., is Visiting Associate Professor of Jewish Education at the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration of Yeshiva University and Senior Fellow of Azrieli's Institute for University-School Partnership. A former public school English teacher, she was Middle School Assistant Principal for Secular Studies of the Moriah School, a Jewish day school in New Jersey. She taught for a decade at the Yad Vashem Summer Institute for Educators from Abroad and served as the educational consultant for the American Friends of the Ghetto Fighters' House. The founder of the Holocaust Educators' Consortium, an international, interreligious Community of Practice, she has spoken and written extensively on Holocaust education. The author of the widely-used text *The End of Innocence: Anne Frank and the Holocaust* (1992, NY; ADL), her most recent edited volumes are an anthology of Holocaust narratives and an accompanying teacher's guide titled *The Call of Memory: Learning about the Holocaust Through Narrative* (Shawn & Goldfrad, 2008, Teaneck, NJ: Ben Yehuda Press).



We are living in troubling times. Economic crises have unsettled our taken-for-granted expectations of security and stability. Political upheavals abound all over the world. Israel is at the forefront of the cataclysmic battle against Islamic fundamentalism. Socially, antisemitic verbal and physical assaults are on the rise. Unethical practices by a few members of the Jewish community have brought to the surface venomous, deep-seated hatred of the Jewish people, now also reflected in increasing antisemitic rhetoric over the Internet. We are confronting educational challenges as we recognize and acknowledge that many of our schools are not adequately responsive to the intellectual, social, and emotional needs of our children.

Troubling as well are concerns regarding the recognition of the Holocaust and its place in world history. Several leaders of state governments have resoundingly reinforced their antisemitic rhetoric by minimizing the significance or denying the very existence of the Holocaust. Influential professors similarly promulgate hate-filled castigations against the facts of the Holocaust and against the State of Israel. Holocaust education continues to remain episodic, fragmentary, and optional despite noble advocacy by organizations such as Yad Vashem, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., and various Holocaust resource centers around the world. Even as 21 US states recommend or mandate Holocaust education for students, there are no requirements in place for teachers to learn either Holocaust history or pedagogy. Compounding the insufficient attention paid to Holocaust education is the recent proliferation of disturbing films and books that distort and/or romanticize the Holocaust experience. As we come to terms with the inevitable passing of Holocaust survivors, who have often been a mainstay of Holocaust education, we struggle to fill the void that their absence will create.

The debut of *PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators* is all the more essential, even a moral imperative, we suggest, given the chaotic and unpredictable global environment that confronts us. We don't expect that this new journal will serve as a panacea for any or all of the grim and worrisome conditions previously enumerated. We do agree, however, with renowned Holocaust educator, scholar, and *PRISM* editorial board member Samuel Totten, who said, and we paraphrase: Education alone will not put an end to hatred, discrimination, or terrorism. But it can be a powerful force to raise the consciousness of people to what it means to be a caring, sensitive individual in a world rife with indifference, injustice, and brutality.

We believe that education is the most important and enduring strategy to combat forces that try to alienate and deny, and we have chosen the medium of a journal to offer educators methods and material that may help them teach essential truths about the Holocaust. We believe that a new forum is needed for educators to address the complex nature of Holocaust study. Much Holocaust education tends to be superficial, inaccurate, and pedagogically unsound; we hope that this new journal will provide opportunities for the exchange of sound ideas and approaches to Holocaust education. We believe, above all else, that

PRISM will serve to inspire and reinforce the good work already being done in many quarters of the educational community worldwide.

PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators was conceived by us, but we realize and acknowledge that our work stands on the great shoulders of our predecessors. In fact, the idea for *PRISM* emerged from a previous publication entitled *Dimensions*, a Holocaust magazine/journal published by the Anti-Defamation League's Braun Center for Holocaust Studies. Although the intent of *PRISM* is very different, we acknowledge the important contribution *Dimensions* and its editor, Dr. Dennis Klein, made to Holocaust education when that journal was in print form. We are proud to have Dr. Klein on our Editorial Board.

PRISM is thematic, and the editors issue a call for papers and other contributions. Opportunities will be provided for the exchange of ideas by readers and authors alike. "A Letter to the Editors" column will debut in the next issue of this publication. Feature articles and research papers will undergo extensive peer review to ensure the highest standard of scholarship. Our goal is to provide useful, practical, and classroom-tested resources, including literature and art, for educators.

We acknowledge and thank the scholars we have assembled to serve on our various boards. Their support, advice, and commitment over the past months have been both necessary and inspiring. We are honored to work with them on this important venture.

We especially acknowledge support from Yeshiva University's Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration. We particularly thank its dean, Dr. David Schnall, who believed in our idea and helped bring it to fruition. We offer our profound gratitude to our benefactor, the Henry Rothman Foundation, and Mr. Henry Rothman, for his patience and unending devotion to this project. He saw its value and immediately chose to support it. May he and his family reap the *zechut*, the spiritual rewards, for their commitment to Holocaust education, especially during these volatile times.

Please feel free to contact us to share your reactions to the journal, to raise questions or suggest topics for upcoming issues, or to discuss any matter relevant to this work. You may contact Jeffrey Glanz at glanz@yu.ed and/or Karen Shawn at shawn@yu.edu. ■

JEFFREY GLANZ, ED.D., holds the Raine and Stanley Silverstein Chair in Professional Ethics and Values in the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration at Yeshiva University, where he is a full professor and Senior Fellow of the Institute for University-School Partnership. Dr. Glanz served as Director of the Holocaust Resource Center at Kean University, NJ, and as Education Editor for the Anti-Defamation League's publication *Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies*. His works on Holocaust education have appeared in journals such as *The History Teacher*, the *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, *Multicultural Education*, and the *Phi Delta Kappan*. His book, *Holocaust Handbook for Teachers: Materials and Strategies for Grades 5–12*, was the principal text in "Teaching the Holocaust," a state-wide in-service course for educators. He and Karen Shawn coordinate "The David and Fela Shappel Family Foundation Institute on the Shoah U'Gevurah" at Yeshiva University.

"It began with the banning of your bicycles," the poet Marjorie Agosín writes to Jewish children we do not know but whose suddenly proscribed life we recognize. We begin our first issue of *PRISM* with this poem because it illustrates a basic and sound principle of Holocaust education: introduce and explore one moment during the time of the Holocaust through narrative, and let the story that unfolds draw the reader to the history it illustrates. Each unique experience, thoughtfully examined, provides a world of learning. For these children, "the banning... banning... restricting" were the first intimations of the Nazi net of death cast wide as Hitler and his henchmen occupied Europe. The children's arms are "open, blossoming," despite "a gold star between" them. The children no longer cross "windswept pastures" and yet "loved life;" surely these are resilient children who survive, if in no place other than this poem.

Marjorie Agosín

Bicycles

It began with the banning of your bicycles,
banning you from going out after eight at night,
restricting you to only buying goods in certain shops
for Jews,
to only walking down certain avenues
with a gold star between your open, blossoming
arms.
Your streets were filled with the thirsty and
fear-stricken.
Your feet quit crossing through windswept
pastures,
and yet
you loved life,
the butterflies,
dawns filled with all those wandering
in no particular direction,
the Star of David illuminating them.

Translated from the Spanish by Richard Schaaf.

MARJORIE AGOSÍN is the daughter and granddaughter of Jewish emigrants from Odessa and Vienna and a professor at Wellesley College. She is the author of *At the Threshold of Memory: Selected & New Poems* (White Pine Press, 2003).

Charles Adés Fishman, our poetry editor, reflects on the poetry included in this issue and offers us glimpses into the poets' memories and motivations.

Charles Adés Fishman

Reflections on Poetry of Trauma and Resilience

The poems featured in this first issue of *PRISM* move us because their authors have been shaped by their relationships to, or their knowledge of, survivors and those who did not survive. The poets, even the youngest of them, are also witnesses, and in reading their poems, we feel, once again, the pain of remembering and knowing. The poems included here have been chosen because they are eminently teachable and because, in most instances, they embrace the primary theme of this issue—trauma and resilience in children during the Holocaust—and also the related theme: the trauma that may be experienced by teachers who work with the Holocaust and by their students to whom they convey that unprecedented knowledge.

As with all serious attempts to comprehend the destruction of the Jews of Europe, in the end, Holocaust poetry is a bridge between that which can be known and expressed and that which cannot. I believe it is also true that poetry can evoke the visceral and emotional reality of genocide through the poets' precise use of words, images, cadence, and silence, so that we feel and understand at the same time. The best poetry will not let us misrepresent the truth of our experiences and will honor the experiences of others—even the most traumatic ones—and it can make otherwise remote, blurred, and even forgotten realities draw more near. At its best, poetry resists abstraction and allows us to feel again, to be wounded again, and—on rare occasions—to heal.

It is my hope that the poems that appear here will help us stand against denial, distortion, and erasure of history and for preservation of memory and context. I believe the 13 poets who are represented here have revealed their own woundedness and have addressed their confusion, anger, and yearning with clarity and power.

In her deceptively simple poem "Bicycles" (p. 6), Marjorie Agosin shares a short sequence of memories and images that evoke the experience of being set apart from others because of one's Jewishness. In that childhood she remembers, or imagines, each restriction imposed on Jews bit into them and left its wound, its scar. The wheels of the banned but still remembered bicycles transport her back to that time of

deprivations, the way the still-blazing Jewish stars do, until each individual being she envisions, each victim who rode those bikes and wore those stars, flares in memory—until each moment in that distant past glows and burns.

Shoshana Dubman's poem "Memories" (p. 37) is noteworthy for its intimate revelation of the emotional wounds the poet all but inherited from her parents—parents she never knew. Dubman reveals that she "grew up in a community of survivors" (Fishman, 2007, p. 532) where talk about the Holocaust was restricted to oblique references to the torments they had lived through. She became a teacher and poet in order to deal with her many unanswered questions, and in the poem, she asks God to "wash" her childhood memories away and to replace them with memories that are rooted in life and joy, not death and suffering.

Julie N. Heifetz's (1985) poem "The Blue Parakeet" (p. 47) is drawn from a book-length series, *Oral History and the Holocaust*. For that collection, Heifetz taped interviews she had conducted with survivors of the Holocaust and then used those testimonies as the rough texts for the luminous and often astonishing poems she created. In "The Blue Parakeet," Anna Lengua, the adult survivor and witness, recalls the trauma she experienced when, as a young girl in Radom, she was sent by her parents to live with a Gentile family on their farm. The "blue parakeet" of the title represents both her enduring hope that she will be reunited with her parents and the pain of her separation from them.

Zahava Z. Sweet's "Dark Whispers" (p. 50) echoes with images and feelings—most importantly, the acute sense of loss and the almost unendurable ache to retain, or recover, a fragment of what was destroyed—and may remind us of Heifetz's oral history poem. Here the speaker is not a survivor who bears witness to a traumatic incident that marked her forever but a child and a granddaughter who, as an adult, vividly recalls her grandmother who survived and her mother who did not. The intimate contacts she shared with these women have left her with an inextinguishable longing. Sweet comments: "My Holocaust poems are about my mother and other members of my family and about the suffering during

World War II. They are a retrospection of my experiences and, essentially, the reticent voice of my war-torn childhood returning" (Fishman, 2007, p. 572).

Elizabeth Rosner's "Homework" (p. 77) and "My Father's Souvenirs" (p. 78) reflect her experience as a child, which was unlike that of many other children of survivors. Instead of living with parents who tried to protect their offspring from the pain they lived with—pain that was like an electric current that bound them to unspeakable experiences and searing yet unexpressed memories—Rosner was given almost too much information by her parents and their friends. It was knowledge that did not soothe or uplift her; to the contrary, what she learned from the lips of those who loved her set her apart from other children and her teachers. Rosner's cry is that she "never had the luxury of not knowing" (p. 77). The "souvenirs" her father brought home with him from the camps tore at her sense of the world she lived in and, perhaps more painful and unsettling, her father's words and actions ripped at her sense of self. This was especially true of his visit to her Hebrew school when she was eight and a later experience that took place in her public school history class; both incidents cut deeply into her and have retained their power. Rosner states: "I am constantly searching for ways to make sense of the impact of the past on the present; I write to explore the secret of what we are given at birth and what we carry beneath our skin" (Fishman, 2007, p. 563).

Tamara Fishman recalls that she wrote "I Did Not Know, but I Remember" (p. 80) when she was "very young" (Fishman, 2007, p. 534). She says that writing the poem was her "immediate reaction to learning the scope and depth of what happened during the Holocaust" and that "although the Holocaust occurred decades before" she was born, she knew that she "was tied to these events and these lost souls" (p. 534). Tamara Fishman is my daughter, and at the time she wrote this poem—she was 12 or 13—I had almost completed editing the first edition of *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust* (1991). It is my belief that the intensity of my work on that edition of the anthology filled our home with painful memories that entered her and took hold. Even now, she maintains she is "still a witness."

Reva Sharon's comments about her moving poem "Shoshana" (p. 98) resonate with Tamara Fishman's poem, although Sharon's poem was written by a mature artist—a poet, photographer, and journalist—whose knowledge of the Holocaust at the time the poem was written was already vast. Similar to Fishman's need to express in a poem her shock at learning about the Holocaust, Sharon's motivation for writing "Shoshana" was to draw nearer to the Shoah itself and, by doing so, to honor the memory of the lost millions. She writes:

I live now because my grandparents left Europe behind to make their lives in America. But I know about the camps

and the ghettos, and I know that not one member of the four families from which I am descended lives in Austria or Poland or Lithuania now. Almost all perished... and I cannot know the extent of it. No, I was not there, but I cannot forget what I have read, seen, heard (Fishman, 2007, p. 568).

We have also included six poems written nearly a decade ago by eighth-grade students of Karen Shawn, co-editor of this journal. Like Tamara Fishman, these poets were 12 or 13 when their poems were written, but unlike "I Did Not Know, but I Remember," which seems to have arisen in the author as a response to living in a house where the Holocaust was a constant presence, these poems were composed to satisfy an ingenious assignment: Each student was asked to interview a survivor and to organize her reactions to that experience within the taut boundaries of a poem. What these poems reveal, I believe, is that the students were changed by the intensity of their experiences and that questioning the survivors and listening closely to their replies had left them shaken. Clearly, they had been transformed by their encounters with Holocaust survivors and had moved from their original stance as uncertain investigators and reporters to that of stunned witnesses, whose wrenching poems were written not merely to satisfy the demands of a productive classroom assignment but also out of their need to break through walls of shock and silence and to record what they had learned. ■

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Literature humanizes the events, statistics, and generalities of the Holocaust; Biba, the child in Miriam Steiner-Aviezer's (2005) semi-autobiographical *The Soldier With the Golden Buttons*, brings to vivid life the abstract terms "trauma" and "resilience" in children during the Holocaust, the central theme of this issue. Suddenly and inexplicably deported from her childhood home, separated from her family, forced to endure dreadful conditions and to witness an unspeakable massacre, Biba is now in an unnamed family camp and reunited with her mother, whom she can no longer recognize. In this excerpt, the last chapter of Steiner-Aviezer's exquisite book-length narrative, Biba's resilience in the face of the emotional torment visited on her by Nazi soldiers leaves us breathless.

Miriam Steiner-Aviezer

The Soldier With the Golden Buttons

All night Biba watched by her mother's bedside. Whenever she nodded off for a moment she would come to with a start, terrified of what might have happened in the meantime, and look at her mother's restlessly tossing figure. Now her mother would shiver with cold, now burn with fever and search blindly about her for the water cup, but her head would fall back heavily before she could moisten her lips, and she would doze off again.

"Let her sleep," thought Biba. "But when she wakes up in the morning she'll be thirsty. I've got to get to the pump ahead of everybody, make sure of a full cup." Softly she rose, moved on tiptoe past the row of beds, slipped out and closed the door behind her.

It was still dark outside, and for a while she stood there uncertainly, a little flustered by the utter silence, the darkness, the empty square, looking so much vaster than by day. She saw the silhouette of the guard, waited for him to move away, then sprinted across the square to the water pump in the middle and sat with her ear against it, listening for the gurgle that would announce the first flow.

She thought of her mother. What was she doing now? Perhaps she had woken up and was looking for Biba, worried by her absence? Or maybe she was all hot again and would feel better if Biba were there to wipe the sweat off her forehead? Maybe she felt sick, wanted to get up and there was no one to help her? Or wanted to drink and the cup was gone? She must be thirsty, terribly thirsty. And what if she wouldn't

be able to get up in the morning, and the Kapo took her number? Maybe she had already been cast on the pile before the hut... No, no, impossible, she had been sleeping when Biba had left just a few minutes ago. But what if she should faint during roll-call, collapse in a heap at the soldier's feet? Or pass it all safely—hut inspection and Kapo and roll-call—and then not come out of the laundry tonight?

What was happening there in the hut? Was she asleep? Were the other women asleep? Was she awake? And what if she were neither asleep nor awake but ... No! she jumped up, ran a few steps and then checked herself, her eyes on the iron pump cold and dead as if no water would ever flow through it.

Dawn broke. From the huts—black squares standing out sharply against the morning mist—the first shadowy figures of women and children emerged. From all sides they converged upon the pump as by an age-old routine, fell mutely into line behind Biba, and waited.

More and more people arrived and the line grew and twisted all across the square to the huts. The pump was coming to life, coughing and spluttering in the morning stillness. A first dribble came out.

Biba held her cup under the spout, filled it to the brim and moved carefully past the queue, back to the hut.

A woman from another hut stopped her.

"How is Mother?" she asked.

"She's asleep."

"Will she be able to get up for roll-call?"

"I don't know," whispered Biba, a sudden tremor in her voice.

The woman sent her a probing look, then with a swift, resolute gesture thrust something into the pocket of Biba's dress.

"There!" she said. "My little Rivkah has no use for it any longer. Hide it, though."

Biba lowered her eyes. She knew that what the woman had given her was a medicine that had been intended for Rivkah, and that last night the women had gathered round Rivkah's bed and pulled the sack- ing over her face.

They had been friends, she and Rivkah. Some days they had waited together in front of the laundry for their mothers to finish work. She had not seen her all morning yesterday, and had gone to look for her in the hut. Rivkah had lain there with her eyes on the ceiling, not speaking, just smiling sweetly at anyone who came to see her, as though in apology, as though to say she was sorry but she didn't quite feel like talking just now. When her mother came with the pills at night—God only knew where she'd got hold of them, maybe stolen them from the pocket of the Soldier with the Golden Buttons—all that was left for her to do was to cover her daughter's face.

Biba would have liked to say something to her, but didn't know what. Their eyes met in a glance of understanding, and the woman whispered through her tears: "Hurry, before it's too late."

"Before it's too late, too late, too late"—the words rang through her head as she strode swiftly to the hut, carefully balancing the cup. Rivkah's mother had come too late. And she? Would she be in time? If only she could run, fly, if a miracle would happen—she'd be touched by a magic wand and find herself by her mother's bedside. If only she didn't have to walk, cross half the square, wondering, asking herself what she would find in the hut. But what could have happened? It was just a fever, and she'd just drink some water and feel better right away. Only hurry and get to her fast and spill nothing.

She arrived. Everyone was already up. The room monitor was checking the beds, pencil and paper in hand. Here and there she would cover up a face, write down the numbers of the sick and the spent—of anyone who wouldn't make it to the roll-call, who would be picked up by the soldier with cart.

The monitor had just reached her mother's bed. She was about to add her to the list when Biba

rushed up to her.

"No!" she shouted. "She's only asleep!" She didn't dare look at the bed for fear of being disproved, but stared boldly into the monitor's eyes.

The monitor felt her mother's pulse, cast a dubious look at her ashen face, and warned Biba: "Just so long as she turns up for roll-call! I shall get it if she doesn't."

"She will, she will, you'll see," Biba declared confidently.

The monitor left. Biba felt her knees go weak and slumped against the bed, shutting her eyes for a moment, still afraid to look. How could she have promised that her mother would show up for roll-call without even knowing how she was? The first women were starting to leave, and she realized she hadn't much time left. She put the cup down, turned to the bed: Her mother was lying quite still, her pale features showing no sign of life. She tried her pulse, thought she could detect a faint flutter but wasn't sure—perhaps it was only that she so much wanted to feel it. No, no, it was there. In that case, she was asleep. Yes, asleep.

How to wake her? Call her. Yes, but how? Call her how? She couldn't just say "Mama" like that. She had never called her "Mama." But then how wake her? She'd have to hurry, it was late, more and more women were leaving.

The monitor appeared in the doorway, threw her a suspicious glance, raised her pencil. Alarmed, Biba seized her mother by the shoulders, shook her. Her mother woke up with a start, a dazed look in her eyes, only half-conscious yet, not clear about her surroundings. She saw Biba, tried to raise her head, say something, then dropped back in exhaustion, closed her eyes. Terrified she would fall asleep again, Biba jumped up, shouted:

"Mama!"

She had said it without thinking, startled by her own voice.

But her mother's eyes opened, went to the ceiling as though she were listening intently to something, not sure whether she had heard it or not. Slowly her face turned to Biba, and her large eyes were radiant with happiness. She made to say something, but burst into tears instead.

She cried softly, without a sound, her hands over her face—cried and cried as if to cleanse herself of all the pain, all the unspoken words.

Biba knelt beside her. There was nothing she

wanted so much now as to throw her arms around Mama, bury her face against her shoulder and tell her how much she loved her. Instead of which she said, irrelevantly:

"Maybe today we'll have a letter from Papa."

Mama took her hands away from her face and looked lovingly at her little Biba. Gently she touched her flushed cheek and whispered:

"Maybe."

Now Biba knew that Mama would get up, and she became all practical.

"I've brought you water and some pills," she announced, as though it were the simplest thing—one just opened the medicine cupboard, took out some pills, turned on a tap and filled a cup.

Mama regarded the pills in astonishment but asked nothing. She put them on her tongue, drank some water, but after a few sips returned the cup to Biba, though clearly still thirsty.

"Have some more," Biba urged, "there's plenty."

Mama lay back, looked at Biba. It was the first time she had looked at her so openly, so frankly. Biba withstood the look and kept her own eyes on Mama's face, waiting, aware that there was something Mama wished to say—something she could say only now.

"You've grown so much."

At that instant the siren went off. The last women were hurrying out.

"Can you get up?" Biba asked anxiously.

"Yes."

Slowly, supporting herself against walls and beds, helped by Biba, she moved to the door. The sight of the Kapo and soldiers outside seemed to give her strength. She was still looking terribly pale, and Biba pinched her cheeks as she had often seen other women do. They had to wait a long time that day, longer than ever, but when the soldiers came Mama stood there upright and smiling before them, her cheeks fresh and rosy as though she had just returned from a holiday in the mountains. Biba pressed her hand triumphantly, and when the soldiers left they grinned happily together at the success of their deception.

Relieved though she was, Biba still wondered whether her mother would be able to stand a full day's work at the laundry. Her heart missed a beat whenever the laundry door opened, and as soon as it closed she would run and peer through the keyhole, watch the soldier in there, sure that if he were

to strike Mama with his birch or kick her, Mama would collapse and her body would be flung on the sand. She winced at the mere thought of her mother, so fearfully weak still, receiving a stroke of the birch.

She heard a dull sound within—a blow? a falling body?—pressed her eye against the keyhole. At that instant Mama turned, looked at the door as though sensing Biba's presence beyond it, and laughed a little to herself. Biba's heart swelled with happiness: Mama was laughing! Good! She was laughing. She had recovered her strength and her spirits. The pills must have worked then. Everything was all right: Mama was laughing.

It was hot, the kind of day when the sun seems to press down on you, to drain you of all energy. Biba left her rock, began to walk up and down along the tall barbed-wire fence behind the laundry hut, looking across at the green fields beyond. She decided to stay there for a bit, found her favorite spot where the large white daisies grew on the other side of the fence, and sat on the ground.

She would come here often to look at the daisies, to see if they had grown, if no one had picked them yet. They were particularly lovely today—large and shiny and in full bloom.

Her eyes went dreamily beyond them to the fields, to the wide valley rising slowly to meet the distant hills.

"Remember?" Mama had said to her one day when they passed this spot. "White daisies. You always used to pick me some for my birthday."

Biba had often thought of her mother's words since. She had tried to remember, but it was all so dim, that other world, so remote and beyond grasp. She sometimes thought it never had existed, that there had always been only the camp, that she had never known any other people except soldiers and camp inmates. And yet Mama had said that about the daisies quite casually, as if it were a simple matter, something that had happened just the other day. She had said it lightly, smilingly, as though it were quite as real as this camp before her eyes: "Don't you remember? White daisies? You always used to pick me some for my birthday."

But Biba did not remember. She stared out over the green fields, breathed the smells of earth and flowers coming from there—and they reminded her of nothing. All she could see was the reality before her: barbed-wire, and beyond it the fields and the daisies. It

evoked nothing—least of all Mama's birthday.

Mama! She jumped up, rushed to look through the keyhole, but Mama wasn't there. The spot where she had been standing before was taken up by a large wooden tub. Biba was just about to panic, to think that the worst had happened, when she caught sight of Mama out of the corner of her eye. They had moved her to another job, and she was now standing by a table and folding linen. Biba drew a long breath. She supposed this work was easier—Mama didn't have to stoop so much, she could probably lean against the wall from time to time, and if she were lucky perhaps even sit down for a bit. She lingered on briefly, making sure Mama was all right, then returned to her post on the rock.

She was tired, felt like sleeping, but dared not leave the laundry and go to the hut. She hadn't slept at all last night, come to think of it, not drunk any water this morning. She felt faint, suddenly, and sick. She would have liked to lie down here, go to sleep on the ground, but it was too hot, and she knew one ought never to go to sleep in the sun. She forced herself to get up, wandered back to the fence, sat.

She stared at the daisies, and all of a sudden it struck her that if she used to bring Mama daisies for her birthday—then her birthday must be now. Daisies only bloomed at a certain time of the year, which meant that Mama's birthday fell when the daisies bloomed, which meant that it was now. She grew confused trying to work it out. Her head ached and she felt dizzy. Everything shimmered before her eyes, the fence and fields and flowers seemed to be shrouded in a yellow haze, like a picture behind colored glass. Then the picture cleared and it was no longer a field but a small colorful garden. A path led from the gate to an ivy-grown pavilion, and masses of flowers grew on both sides of the path—all kinds of flowers, in every shape and color, and each had a name of its own. And over there by the fence were the white daisies on their tall, straight, easy-to-pick stems, and she, Biba, was picking them—an enormous bunch.

Then the garden turned back into fields-behind-barbed-wire again, and she felt sick and wanted to get up but didn't have the strength. She gazed straight ahead of her—not in order to see anything, not in order to call back the picture, but just because she mustn't close her eyes or she'd be dizzy again. Mama's voice came back insistently: "Don't you remember?"

And then she did. She wasn't surprised: it was almost as though she had expected it, as though some screen had suddenly lifted and there, behind it, was everything contained in Mama's "remember."

It all came rushing back:

A large old house. *Their* house. Home. A wide sweep of steps leading to a veranda with tall windows. A swing here. A door to one side, leading to the kitchen where Francka is making a cake. She has covered it in whipped cream and is now sticking candles on top. Piano music is coming from the drawing room. Papa is playing. You can tell there is going to be a party, that visitors are expected. Mama is busy preparing for them, but Biba can't wait—can't wait for Francka to finish the cake, for the visitors to turn up: She wants to give Mama her present now. She runs into the room, her arms full of the white daisies she has picked all by herself. She plants herself in front of Mama—young, beautiful, laughing Mama with her long hair loose on her shoulders, wearing a lovely new dress that makes her look prettier than ever—and recites a poem for her. Then Mama takes her hands and they waltz round the room together, laughing and singing, and Papa plays for them until he stops because he wants to join them too. Afterwards, Mama takes the daisies, arranges them carefully in a bowl, and puts them in the most festive place in the room—on top of the piano.

A soldier stood before her.

She did not jump, wasn't even frightened, sat for a moment looking at his good-humored face. She knew him: He was one of the young soldiers who had arrived here together with her. She had encountered him before at this spot—as though he, too, came here in search of his memories. Biba felt certain that he would never have come to chase her away from the fence of his own accord, but that he had been ordered to by the Soldier with the Golden Buttons and was obliged to obey. She got to her feet, sent him a mute greeting as though to convey that she understood and wasn't angry with him, and moved away.

Her pictures of the past stayed with her. She remembered it all now—the large garden surrounding their house, the meadows all about and the woodland, Papa at the pharmacy and Papa at the piano. They all seemed separate, though, single images that refused to blend into one whole pattern. The picture that recurred most often was the one of

Mama: young and lovely and gay, holding the white daisies in her hand and listening to Biba's recital of the birthday poem.

How had the words gone?

"I'm a little mouse... I'm a little mouse... I'm a little mouse..."

The sand was burning under her feet, the sun hot on her neck. Her head swam. Yellow spots appeared on the sand before her, each like a small sun.

"I'm a little mouse... I'm a little mouse... I'm a little mouse..."

One of the suns became a field of daisies, but when she bent to pick them they dissolved under her fingers. The sun burnt and blazed. She found a piece of paper, folded it into a paper hat, put it on her head, moved on.

One of the small suns at her feet began to grow. She paused, watching it expand, then shrink again, laugh at her, then frown, then split up into 1,000 small suns again. She walked—trampling them—the suns, the daisies.

And there was Francka in the sun, wearing a white apron, holding a cake—

And Mama with the dishes—

And Papa at the piano—

A shadow appeared in the sand. She looked at it as at a mirage, a trick of one of the little suns, but it stayed there, did not change, did not vanish. She stepped into it, was aware of a large towering presence beside her.

A tree.

She was standing by a tall tree with thick foliage. She circled it, not daring to touch it for fear it would dissolve. Then she saw moss at its foot, and somehow the sight gave her the courage to stroke the bark and lay her cheek against it. She would have liked to stretch out here, under the tree, shaded by its branches and leaves, and fall asleep like a girl in a story.

She saw a fence—a fence made of brown wooden boards tapering to a point like a row of flat pencils. There was a little gate in the fence, too, like at home, and it seemed to open of itself as in a fairy tale. She passed through, walked along the white gravel path, between beds of flowers.

The ones nearest the fence were small pinkish-violet carnations with flecked petals, emitting a strong sweetish scent. On the other side were high, thick-leafed tulips, each one a different color. Beyond them grew bushes with fragrant white flow-

ers, across from them some plant with red berries, and then, side by side like a row of soldiers—white daisies.

"White daisies," she whispered to herself. She drew near, bent, felt the large petals caress her cheek, put out a hand but let it fall again, not to touch, not to banish this lovely dream.

She wandered back to the path, sat down, closed her eyes and breathed the flower-perfumed air. Then there was someone standing before her. The soldier come to chase her away again? She opened her eyes, saw a pair of boots standing on the white gravel of the path. She studied them, trying to understand why the gravel path was still there too—for if this was a soldier he ought to be standing on sand. She felt puzzled and vaguely perturbed. It was beginning to dawn on her that this was no dream, that she was in a real garden with real flowers, with a white gravel path and a fence of flat pencils and a tree, a real tree, solid and shade-giving. She looked at it all through her eyelashes, afraid to raise her eyes, sensing the looming menace above her.

A calm male voice made her jump:

"Hello, pretty girl!"

She looked up, froze.

It was he—the Soldier with the Golden Buttons.

She scrambled to her feet, fully awake now. It came to her in a flash that something terrible must have happened, though she couldn't quite make out how or what. All she knew for the moment was that she was here alone, face to face with the Soldier with the Golden Buttons. But where? Where was she?

And then she understood. The sign!

She had passed the sign warning off trespassers. Like the boy whose dead body had been exhibited one day during roll-call.

She clung to the fence, stood there as though waiting for the firing squad.

"How nice of you to come and visit me."

A shiver ran down her spine.

"We're old friends, aren't we?"

She cast a swift look about her. The gate was too far—she'd never make it. And anyhow, it was madness to think she could take even one step without his permission or command. She hunched her shoulders, waited.

"Come, my little pretty, come!"

No, no point of even thinking of flight. She was in his hands. She would have to do whatever he told her.

He motioned her toward the house, and she obeyed, dazed with fear, expecting the worst. His hand on her shoulder was like a touch of live coal. She walked along the white gravel path, reached the house.

The Soldier with the Golden Buttons opened the door, told her to enter. She moved, crossed the threshold, recoiled: eight pairs of boots stood before her, eight figures in trim uniforms, eight soldiers with golden buttons. They were all smiling politely.

"Gentlemen," the Soldier with the Golden Buttons announced solemnly, emphasizing each word, "as you see, this young lady has come to honor us with her presence. I hope you will receive her with all the attention due to her."

The officers all bowed correctly.

"She is very welcome!" said the fat officer, the one who had taken the Big Girl away.

Biba wondered whether she ought to say something in reply, but waited to be told.

"And what is the young lady's name?" one officer asked, thrusting his face close to hers.

"Biba," she whispered, hoarse with fright.

"Biba!"—he sounded amused—"Did you hear that? Biba!"

They all laughed as though she had said something terribly funny.

"Biba is a very pretty name," declared one officer, stroking her hair. She bore it bravely without blinking an eyelid. "I've a little girl called Biba myself," he added.

"Right, gentlemen," the Soldier with the Golden Buttons said, "Dinner!"

"I hope," he added, turning to Biba, "that you won't refuse to join us at the table, young lady."

He gave her a little bow, and with his hand on her shoulder led her toward a door at the end of the corridor. Biba walked, her eyes on the door wide with alarm. She could hear the tinkle of glass beyond it. What was happening in the room? What would they do to her in there? She reached the door, stopped in her tracks.

The Soldier with the Golden Buttons made an inviting gesture, but Biba did not move. The officers behind her had stopped, too, as though waiting for their "young lady" to lead the way, but Biba stayed where she was, cold with terror. What awaited her there? The Soldier with the Golden Buttons gave her a slight push and she stumbled forward—a step, another, and she was there.

The first thing that met her eye was a festively

laid table; a white tablecloth, plates, shining silver, tall sparkling glasses, a basket filled with fresh fragrant bread, carafes with iced water, bowls of fruit.

Laughing and chattering, the officers moved to their places, remained standing behind their chairs, waiting for Biba to be seated first. Only the Soldier with the Golden Buttons stayed beside Biba.

"Well," he said, "how do you like it? We prepared it all specially for you."

Biba continued looking at the table, dry-mouthed with fear, and with a sudden overwhelming thirst.

"That is your place, over there," he said, and led her to the head of the table.

The chair was too high for Biba, and so was the table: Only her nose peeped out over it as she sat. They all burst into loud laughter at the sight—and their laughter was so frank, so cheerful, that Biba found herself laughing with them.

And now even her fright was beginning to leave her. Here she was, after all, sitting at a richly laid table, and here were these officers, all pleasant and cheerful as though hers really was nothing but a friendly visit.

Someone brought a big cushion and placed it on Biba's chair, and now she was higher than them.

"All she needs is a crown on her head!"

Her fear was all gone. She sat very straight, trying to live up to the occasion, even appear a little ladylike to them. They seemed so changed—not like officers at all. The napkins they had tucked in under their chins covered part of their uniforms, their boots were invisible under the table, they had removed their belts and caps. She saw them with different eyes because they were different. They were kind and they liked her. They must like her, mustn't they, if they had invited her to their table, and if one of them even had a girl of his own called Biba.

"So how's our little princess?"

Biba smiled, pleased, thanking them with her eyes for being so nice to her. She looked at the carafe in front of her and longed to drink some water. A hand came over the table, lifted the carafe and poured water into a glass. Biba's eyes followed, stared at the clear jet filling the glass, at the ice cubes floating on top, and her thirst grew. She considered holding up her glass to be filled, but thought she had better do nothing without being told. She would wait until they offered her some.

The officers straightened their napkins, played with their spoons, nibbled bread, drank water,

waited. The door on the far side of the room, facing Biba, opened, and a soldier came through. He bore a tray high over his head, and on the tray a large china soup tureen emitting a mouthwatering smell. Biba's hands stirred restlessly on the table. The smell had bowled her over completely. She readied her plate. The soldier began to serve the soup, starting at Biba's left, moving round the table and back to her.

She looked at him expectantly, grateful in advance, but he only lifted the tureen from the tray, put it on the table right before Biba, and went out. She followed him with her eyes, stunned, puzzled. Maybe he had forgotten something and would be back in a minute? She looked at the door that had closed behind him, then at the officers. They were all eating. The door stayed shut, the soup tureen stood on the table, everyone had been served and only Biba's plate remained empty.

Had they forgotten her?

She looked left and right at her table neighbors, but no one took notice of her, no one even glanced her way. What should she do? She watched the golden-yellow dumplings swimming about in the soup, bumping against the little squares of carrot, the greens and spices whose lovely smell filled the room. The tureen stood beside Biba's plate, covering its edge with steam.

Perhaps they meant her to help herself? That was it! Why hadn't she thought of it before? Of course she shouldn't have expected to be served like one of the officers. She was supposed to serve herself. That no doubt was why they had left the tureen so near her—so she would be able to reach it.

She glanced round the table again, trying to make sure she wasn't about to do something she mustn't, then raised herself slightly in her chair and put out a hand. Her hand shook a little at the thought that in a minute she would have some of this delicious soup on her plate, would bring a spoonful of it to her mouth. Tingling with excitement, she looked at the officers once more. They were all busy, bent over their plates. She reached for the soup ladle, and just then an officer's hand came out of nowhere and removed the tureen.

When the tureen returned it was empty. Biba slumped in her seat, trying to make herself small, to hide. But in a moment, conscious of being among officers, of being supposed to do only what was expected of her, she collected herself. No doubt she had acted

wrongly and they had punished her by taking the soup away. She mustn't do anything without being told, without being given express permission.

She was thirsty. She was growing thirstier by the minute, and only now she saw that her glass had disappeared. She watched the carafe. The ice had nearly melted: only two tiny slivers were still floating in there. She stared at them till they, too, were gone, then looked at the officers again. They were finishing their soup. Maybe they hadn't given her any because there hadn't been enough to go round? Ah, but in that case they would surely let her have some of the second course.

But then the second course came and Biba's plate remained empty. Dry-mouthed she watched the soldier refill the carafe, splashing a few drops of water on her sweaty forehead as he dropped the ice cubes in; yearningly, she watched them start to melt again. If she could just wet her lips!

The tureen had been replaced by a bowl of lettuce. She inhaled the sharp vinegar smell until her jaws ached with it, gazed at the crisp green lettuce leaves and felt her mouth shrivel. She heard them pour water into their glasses, saw them cut the meat, saw the vinegar dripping from the lettuce leaves, saw and heard their teeth chewing the food, saw them dip their bread in gravy, stick their forks into the brown-crustured pastry, wipe their chins with their napkins...

And the smells of all the dishes before her mingled and became one great agony—a pain that twisted her stomach and seared her lips. She felt faint, wanted to rest her head on the table and sleep. She was beginning to grow muddled, unable to think, knowing only that she was thirsty, so thirsty that she would collapse if she couldn't at least wet her lips.

Her eyes went to the carafe. She wanted to jump up, seize it in both hands, hide under the table with it and drink and drink, no matter what happened after. But as she looked the carafe seemed to recede, to grow smaller and smaller as it moved away and out of her reach.

The door opened again: the soldier with the tray, and on it a single plate—large and quite empty.

Breathlessly she watched his progress.

He approached the table, put down the tray, and started moving from one officer to the next, emptying the food remnants onto the big plate in his hand—starting down the table from Biba's left, then crossing to the other side.

Biba revived.

"That's for me. That must be for me," she told herself.

"Of course! How could I think they would let me eat with them, eat of the same dishes. They are officers! But it doesn't matter, it doesn't matter at all, just so long as they'll let me have something at last. It isn't unclean or anything—it's what they left on their plates—they didn't touch it—it's clean—sure it is—yes, yes, here he is coming now. Oh, what a lot of food he's got there! Now he'll give me some water, too, no doubt. Maybe the whole carafe ..."

The soldier approached slowly. Biba sat up, fidgeted in her chair, started to push away to make room but relented, not sure she was allowed to do that. And she wouldn't do anything to risk being punished again. Not now!

She kept her eyes on the soldier's plate, already imagining the taste of each scrap of food on it, its feel in her mouth...

The soldier was standing before her. He moved to hand her the plate—but slowly, holding it high in the air above her with his eyes on her face. Biba met his glance. She knew him and smiled. He seemed uneasy, trying to avoid her eyes. She knew him: He belonged to the same group as the soldier by the fence. Only why was he keeping that plate up there over her head when he must know how hungry she was? She grew nervous. The soldier lowered the plate till it was nearly before her, then turned abruptly and went out.

"No!" she shrieked, and her hands flew out after him.

A great burst of laughter roused her. Startled, she put her hand to her mouth to stifle the cry escaping her. Stony with horror, she looked at the fat faces round the table, fat lips roaring with laughter.

"She's caught on at last!"

Biba sat. The cushion had slipped to the floor but she took no notice: Her face hurt, and her lips were so dry that she dared not open them for fear they would bleed. She bowed her head, unwilling to let them see the tears she could no longer hold back.

The officers went on laughing, wiping their lips, dabbing at their eyes with their napkins.

"Congratulations! That really was brilliant!"

"It always works best with children. You've got to catch their imagination, gain their confidence—and then you can do what you like with them," the Soldier with the Golden Buttons was explaining. He

lighted a cigarette, sat back, satisfied.

"Still, it needs quite a bit of patience, what?"

"Did you see how she was hoping she'd at least get the scraps?"

"She didn't give up hope till the very end!"

They poured drinks, peeled fruit, smoked, tittered, looked at Biba, nudged each other, whispered, giggled, drank to each other's health.

The Soldier with the Golden Buttons sat quietly smoking and watching Biba thoughtfully. He looked as pleased as someone after a great victory who expects to be praised and flattered. An idea seemed to cross his mind. He tapped his glass to draw the others' attention, and when they fell silent he said softly, pensively:

"I'm willing to bet that she's still hoping."

"Impossible!"

"After all this?"

"I don't believe it."

"I do!"

"So do I!"

"Come over here, everybody!" the Soldier with the Golden Buttons called. Chairs scraped as they rose, moved, whispering.

Biba remained alone at the head of the table, her eyes lowered, the tears running down her face, dripping onto the empty plate before her. Their whispers reached her through the buzzing in her ears, but she couldn't make out what they were saying. She was thinking of only one thing now, the half cup of water waiting for her in the hut. How long would it be till they let her go? Why couldn't they at least allow her to leave now? What were they waiting for? Why wouldn't they let her go?

The officers came out of their huddle, returned to their places by the table, stood behind their chairs like before, when they had waited for Biba to sit down first. They called the soldier, and he went and came back with his tray. The Soldier with the Golden Buttons took things from it, arranged them on the table, stood back eyeing the effect. then shifted an object or two as though wishing everything to be just right. At last he turned to Biba:

"Come, little one, come here!"

His voice seemed to reach her from a great distance, deep and booming as though from a well, the last word echoing and re-echoing. She looked up and her head swam. Everything seemed to move before eyes—the long table, the fat figures behind it, the big hands that were approaching her now, growing and

growing like the hands of the man-eating giant who took little dwarves from their beds and ate them up. She blinked, trying to get things into focus. The hands were still there. They belonged to the Soldier with the Golden Buttons.

"Come, Biba, come!" he called.

She wanted to move but couldn't. He took a step nearer, and she sensed the threat in his manner. She tried to get up again but her chair was too close to the table.

Someone pulled the chair back for her. She got up.

"Come here!" he said, his voice stricter, but still polite.

Slowly she walked over the soft carpet, halted when he told her. Now she was surrounded by boots again, by officers in uniforms and belts and revolvers. That was how they looked when they turned up for roll-call, with such grins on their faces had they taken away the Big Girl and the girl who wouldn't beat her mother and the dead boy's body. She was ready to obey their commands.

The officer who had a girl like Biba stepped forward, sat on his heels before her.

"Look, Biba," he said, "see these plates on the table here? Well, each plate contains one of the dishes we've had for dinner today." He was speaking slowly, taking his time, making sure she understood. "Now, there's only just one thing on each plate—a piece of meat, a slice of bread, some lettuce, and so on. You can look at it all, and then you can choose one single dish."

Biba waited for him to say what he had to say, her eyes on his face. She was watching him calmly, even a bit pertly, as if he weren't an officer at all.

The Soldier with the Golden Buttons asked: "Did you understand that? From all you see on the table here you can take one—but only one! You are to *choose*."

She raised her head and slowly, slowly lifted her eyes, looked straight into his. Her eyes did not waver. For the first time she stood before him with her back straight and her head erect—unafraid. She looked at him calmly, with dignity, with a smile on her lips—the way he had looked at her the first time. It came to her that she had waited a long time for this moment, and she was glad that it had come and that she had had the courage to meet its challenge.

He threw his head back as though to remove a strand of hair from his forehead, and a nerve by his mouth began to twitch. He glanced round uneasily,

checking to see if the others had noticed the sudden difference that had come over Biba, his own nervousness. Yet he wouldn't give up so soon, spoke again, controlling his voice:

"Whatever you choose will be yours. Look, there's water here too—you may drink a whole glass!"

Biba looked at the glass. Her parched mouth opened slightly but her arms remained stiffly by her sides. Motionless, she gazed at the table, at the plates, the food, the water—and they all seemed unreal, like pictures in the sand that would dissolve at a touch.

She looked beyond the lined-up dishes and saw a vase filled with daisies, the large white petals towering majestically over the range of plates: an island of reality.

She kept her eyes on the flowers, and they shone with all that was absent from this room—light and space and warmth and beauty—and filled her with a marvelous sense of having something that was hers alone.

An idea struck her. She would take a daisy. Yes, she would take a single white daisy. They had said she could take what she wanted from the table—then why not a daisy? It was the only thing she truly wanted. She glanced at the officers, then back at the vase. Yes, she would do it. No doubt they'd be stunned. They, no doubt, thought she had difficulty choosing a dish because she wanted them all. But she would let everything stand and take just one white daisy, and walk past all the boots, through the garden, past the tree, across all the small suns in the sand—walk all aglow with the splendor of her flower, walk through the camp, past all the huts, past all the beds, till she came to the bed where her mother lay and only there she would stop. She would stand before her, hold out the flower and say:

"Happy birthday, Mama!"

And Mama would take the flower, smell it, and its smell would bring back the color to her cheeks, the strength to her limbs, and she would recover like in that story about the boy and the heart ...

"Well, what's up?" the voice of the Soldier with the Golden Buttons woke her from her trance. He turned her roughly toward him. "Do you want something or don't you?"

"Yes, I do," she replied firmly.

She looked at him fearlessly. There was nothing he could do to her any longer. He had lost his power over her, and he knew it. She looked at the others

and they grew uneasy under her gaze and averted their eyes.

Biba moved to the table and the flowers seemed to beckon her on. She could already picture Mama standing there, gay and happy, her long hair loose on her shoulders, her face flushed with pleasure, impatient for Biba to get through her birthday poem so they could dance through the room together.

Her hand reached for the flower—and then another picture formed in her mind, a picture of Mama as she was today, now, there in the laundry hut—bowed, thin, her face old and gray and lifeless, her shaking hands holding a piece of bread and bringing it carefully to her mouth crumb by crumb ... this picture was here, alive and real before her eyes.

She turned her eyes away from the flowers, searched among the plates for a slice of bread, found it—a thick slice, big as three days' ration. She knew she was about to do what the officers expected she would, knew she was giving them one more reason for laughter, for triumph—but she also knew it was bread her mother needed. She put out a hand and took it, turned on her heel and moved to the door. She walked between the two rows of black boots, out of the room, over the white gravel path, past the sign with its warning—and the officers' laughter followed her. But Biba heard nothing. She reached the laundry, peered through the keyhole, and when she saw that Mama was still there she leaned against the blazing wall of the hut and waited, the bread in her hand like a flower, her lips whispering:

“I'm a little mouse ... a little mouse ...”

But try as she would, she could not remember the rest of the poem. ■

MIRIAM STEINER-AVIEZER was born in 1935 in Croatia, where she studied Comparative Literature. She immigrated to Israel where she married; she has a daughter and two grandchildren. A researcher of the Holocaust in the ex-Yugoslavia, she is also an author; her novel *The Soldier With the Golden Buttons* has been published in several languages and illustrates a child's view of the Holocaust. To contact the author e-mail samirayan@zahav.net.il

Captivated as we were by the haunting portrayal of Biba and her experiences, we were eager to learn the story behind the story, so we asked *PRISM* board member Keren Goldfrad to contact survivor Miriam Steiner-Aviezer and request an interview, which was graciously granted. “This interview deepened and transformed the story for me,” Goldfrad remarks. “I hope it will add another dimension to this remarkable narrative.”

Keren Goldfrad

Beyond Testimony: An Interview With Miriam Steiner-Aviezer

Anger, frustration, compassion, rage, sadness, resentment—one cannot stay indifferent to the experiences of a young girl during the Holocaust. Miriam Steiner-Aviezer, in her book *The Soldier With the Golden Buttons* (2005), takes the reader on a journey that begins in a fairy tale kingdom and ends in the inferno of Hell. From a small Slovenian village in Northern Yugoslavia unfolds the story of six-year-old Biba, who suddenly discovers a mysterious part of her identity that singles her out for persecution and humiliation. Without understanding the meaning of her Jewish identity, she bravely confronts her destiny, leaving the reader fascinated by her resilient and mature behavior.

As I was reading the book, I could not help but examine its themes, language, genre, and internal literary structure. Therefore, when the editors of this journal chose to publish the riveting final chapter (pp. 9–18), a remarkable story of trauma and resilience in itself, and asked if I could interview the writer, I was eager to meet her. Not only was I interested in getting her input and perspective on the questions that the story raised for me, but I was also curious to meet “Biba,” the main character in the book.

Miriam had already granted permission to reprint, so she was not surprised by my request to interview her about her story. She agreed but had one request when I called her to set up our meeting: that I not ask her the mundane questions that focus on dry facts. Her calm and gentle voice on the receiver immediately set me at ease, and I looked forward to our face to face meeting.

On a sunny morning, I drove to Miriam’s apartment, located in the center of the Israeli city of Givata’im. I was greeted by her husband, Shmuel, and Miriam quickly joined us. Their smiles and warm welcome instantly made me comfortable, and we started conversing as if we already knew each other. Miriam led me to her study, where we sat facing each other. It was hard not to notice the wonderful collection of books that covered the whole wall adjacent to me. Miriam informed me that her daughter, Nogit, would make an effort

to join us toward the end of our meeting. I was very excited to meet Nogit, who designed the cover of the second edition of her mother’s book and has just completed an M.A. thesis on the psychological effects of the Shoah on the Second Generation, the children of Holocaust survivors.

Since our meeting started in Hebrew, we decided to continue the interview in Hebrew; her words here are my translation. Keeping in mind Miriam’s request on focusing beyond the mere facts of her experience, I started our conversation by relating my impressions and thoughts about the different themes and levels of meaning in the book, and she visibly relaxed and warmed to her subject.

“I am glad that you feel the depth of the book, because many in Israel do not relate to Holocaust literature as a piece of literature but rather as testimony,” she explained in her soft and gentle voice. “If you do not give exact and accurate facts, such as when it happened, where it happened, who took, where did they take, mention names of people and places, then there is a suspicion that it is not so real and therefore should not be read. That is why I had a hard time publishing the book through Yad Vashem. As much as they liked the book, they explained that they are concerned with documentation of the Holocaust, and this type of book would be hard to classify. We were able to get over this difficulty, and Yad Vashem did publish my book, but I understood their dilemma. I work at Yad Vashem, so I know that everything has to be defined and everything has to belong to a certain niche.”

I found her comments fascinating, as I, too, struggle with the dilemmas raised by the use of fiction in teaching the Holocaust, so I began by asking, “Would you classify your book as Holocaust fiction, and if so, do you think this kind of literature has the same validity as autobiographical work or Holocaust testimony?”

“Around the world people are not questioning the validity of Holocaust literature based on its historical accuracy,” she responded. “There is a different approach. There are many prominent writers, like Elie Wiesel, Andre Schwarz-Bart, and

Aharon Appelfeld, to name a few, who wrote fiction about the Holocaust. Many of their books are considered literature and do not fit the category of Holocaust testimony or documentary. These books are about the Holocaust but they are referred to as pieces of literature and are treated as such.

"I did not make up anything in my book. Everything that I wrote about actually did happen. It didn't always happen to me; some of the events in the book happened to other kids. I also mentioned this in the introduction to the book. I unified all these children's experiences into one story."

"Is that why you decided to write the book using the third person narrator?"

"Yes, *The Soldier With the Golden Buttons* is not a testimony, and I do not write only about myself. The story is authentic but not entirely autobiographic. It is a story of many children my age combined into a story of one child, Biba. I speak also in their name. That is why I have chosen the third person narrator."

Biba was Miriam's actual nickname during her childhood, Miriam told me, but the book is not solely about her personal story. Biba is, therefore, not a single entity, but a Jewish girl who represents the perspective of Jewish children who were brutally torn from their cheerful and tranquil childhood during the Holocaust.

Miriam explained that when she heard the stories of those children after the war in 1946, at Crikvenica in a camp that was organized for Jewish child survivors by the American Joint Distribution Committee, she tried to find a common denominator between their stories and the experiences and the feelings that she underwent.

"I wanted to write about the similar aspects that all these stories shared. They all spoke about their separation from their mothers and their attempts to amend that earthquake in their relationship of mother and daughter or mother and son. Even if the separation was relatively short, it was not the same anymore.

"The child is no longer a child. The mother is no longer a mother. The mother loses her security as a mother and cannot provide her child with her basic needs. As much as the mother would like to find the necessary strength, she is sometimes helped by the child and their roles are reversed." She spoke seriously, leaning forward to see if I understood.

I was moved by what she was saying, and I wanted to learn more about her relationship with her mother, so I asked, "In the chapter reprinted in *PRISM*, the complex connection between the mother and the child is portrayed on many levels, including the physical, verbal, and emotional, which I found very powerful. Which aspect of this mother-daughter relationship is most central and significant to you personally?"

Miriam paused for a few seconds before responding.

"Let's begin with the word *Mama*, without translations,"

she said. "The word *Mama* is not just an ordinary word. This word became a prayer. From the moment we were separated from our mothers, it took on a new meaning. When we uttered that word, or thought about it, it gave us hope and anticipation that we would meet again. That prayer formed an image in my mind.

"After a few days, we were reunited with our mothers, but I could not recognize her. My mother and I were separated for only four days, but those few days drastically transformed my mother both physically and emotionally. She was physically beaten and tortured to a point where one could not recognize her, and her separation from me caused her much grief. Her grief intensified when she saw that I did not recognize her as my mother. My greatest accusation against the Nazis is that they stole the ability of a child to love her mother. Suddenly, when you see a monster standing in front of you, instead of your angelic mother, everything collapses. In front of me stands a woman who claims she is my mother, but I don't feel anything for her. My whole life I asked myself why I reacted in that way. Today I know that psychologically it was probably a normal reaction from a normal child."

Miriam paused for a minute, looking past me.

"It wasn't just the physical appearance that startled me," she began, using the first person but switching, seemingly without notice, between the first and the third. "The moment she sees her mother she asks herself: 'Where were you? Mothers are perceived by their children as having super powers, so how come you didn't save me?' I remember when my own daughter was around four or five years old and we took her to the beach. I did not allow her to go into the water, so she said to me, 'Mama, if I can't go into the water, make the water come to me.' I then understood that a child feels that a mother has such power that she can easily bring the ocean to her. As a child, I attributed the same strength to my mother, and that is why I was angry at her for not saving me. It was a very difficult reaction, but I can also say that it was probably my last normal reaction in this situation. *'Mama...'*"

Miriam says the word softly and slowly. Her eyes express the weight of the meaning this word holds for her, and she continues speaking.

"In front of me stands a woman who claims she is my mother. My logic tells me that she is indeed my mother, but I do not feel anything for her. I cannot approach her, open my arms and hug her, and I cannot utter the sacred word 'Mama.' That word belongs to the past. It carries the sanctity of a prayer. Saying the word would have corrupted its meaning. For a while I could not refer to my mother as *Mama*. Looking back retrospectively, this probably hurt my mother dearly. Only many years later was I able to think what this did to her."

I sat quietly, feeling a great sadness from her and for her. She picks up where she left off, wanting me to understand

that normal ways of showing affection between parents and children were no longer applicable under these incomprehensible conditions. The only way you could demonstrate your love, she explains urgently, was by alleviating in some way the existential predicaments that your loved one confronted on a daily basis, whether by obtaining extra rations of food or getting medication when necessary. Choosing the piece of bread instead of a flower, a daisy, in the last scene of the shattering tale she tells, was a realistic decision of facing the reality of the "concentration universe." Under normal circumstances Miriam would bring her mother daisies for her birthday to show her affection, she recalls, but under these conditions, a piece of bread is like a flower.

I ask, "Why did you choose daisies? Did they have some meaning for you beyond the literal?"

"I chose this specific flower," Miriam responded, "because daisy is the flower that I gave my mother for her birthday. It symbolizes the past. Every time I look at daisies, something comes back to me; they arouse memories. These images come back: a piano, a house, a garden, my beautiful mother, and flowers.

"I tried to arouse these memories and think logically. I exercised my mind in order to recall memories. I went through psychological stages of analysis. I am a big girl already. I am six and a half years of age. Where was I up until now? Were my memories for real? Did I actually have these wonderful things? Did these memories actually happen, or did someone recount them to me? Maybe I am still there... Many of the children that I spoke to had these same thoughts. These bits and pieces of memory that lack the wholeness of a unified image bound us together."

After a brief silence, I began to point out certain references to children's stories and fairy tales in the book at large and in this specific chapter: the story of Cinderella (Steiner-Aviezer, 2005, pp. 53-55), the story of the man-eating giant (pp. 56-57), images of a knight in armor fighting a dragon (p. 57), and a fairy-tale prince (p. 81). In the excerpt reprinted here, there is a reference to the story about the boy and the heart (p. 17). In addition, Biba hopes that "she'd be touched by a magic wand" (p. 10), feels that she would like to "fall asleep like a girl in a story" (p. 13), and when she sees a gate in the wooden fence "it seemed to open of itself as in a fairy tale" (p. 13). I asked Miriam what kind of message she wanted to convey through these references.

"Stories and fairy tales help the child enter a world that she does not want to part with," Miriam tells me. "Regardless of what happens, the internal beauty and inner strength of the child is the only thing that gives her the energy to continue living. It is like religion for a religious person who has not lost faith. So, too, the world of stories and fairy tales maintains the strength of the child.

"I wanted to show the difference between how children

reacted as opposed to the reaction of adults. Children are, in a way, noble. This nobility may stem from lack of knowledge. The adults were more aware of what was happening around them and this generated fear, which in turn engendered aggressive behavior. The children were no doubt affected by what was going on around them, but their reaction was different; they became introverted and silent. They tried to stay away from direct contact with others. They tried to avoid any interaction between them and the soldiers, avoid situations which demanded a conversation with their mothers, and even social interactions with other children."

That surprised me; I ask, "Why did children try to avoid contact with other children?"

"Nothing was the same. Not even the games we used to play. We felt like we did not have a right to play. The ways of the past did not apply to this new and awkward situation.

"We also felt that we had to stay away from situations that required decisions. We were programmed in these camps to have decisions made for us. This reminds me of a scene in the play *Ghetto* by Joshua Sobol. In that scene, a soldier drops something on the floor, and a Häftling, a concentration camp prisoner, who stands nearby is not sure what he is supposed to do. Does the soldier expect him to pick it up or not? This can be a fatal decision that will determine whether you live or die. We tried to avoid getting into such seemingly trivial, yet fatal, situations."

Her reference to the soldier led me to ask the question that the title had raised for me. "Many Holocaust writers emphasize the soldiers' black boots," I said. Why did you decide to emphasize the golden buttons?"

Her response was immediate.

"First of all, they glitter. They catch your attention. Secondly, it serves as a symbol, a symbol that differentiates between ordinary soldiers and the officer in charge. One of the elements that I wanted to emphasize is that an ordinary soldier is a victim of war. He is not a Holocaust victim, but he is a victim of war. I did not have the courage to make this point bluntly in the story, but it is there.

"I had eye-contact with one of those soldiers, and the daisies meant something to him as well. Children and soldiers are the real victims. I did not have the courage to say so. Ordinary soldiers do not have any power. They merely obey the orders of the Soldier with the Golden Buttons. He is the most powerful. The ordinary soldier carries out his orders. I see these ordinary soldiers as people. In the dinner scene, they take off their hats and jackets. Seated around the table, their boots were not visible to Biba who was seated on a high chair, so they no longer looked like Nazis, but ordinary men. The dinner reminded me of those family meals that we used to have together long ago. In the beginning, they treated me like a human being."

I felt I had to ask: "Miriam, did this incident actually happen to you?"

"One of the children told me this story. It did not happen specifically to me, but I was able to identify with it." The dinner scene is described so vividly and meticulously that readers of any age can visualize it in detail and empathize with Biba.

Miriam stood up and walked to a folder she had on her desk; she was eager to show me an e-mail correspondence that she had with literary critics who debate the ending of the story. She handed me the papers and smiled.

"I am pleased that there are different interpretations on certain issues in my book. This is exactly what I hoped to achieve. Having different viewpoints on certain topics of the book makes it richer and more interesting." As I skimmed what the critics had written, Miriam explained that the more common and more optimistic reading of the story sees Biba as the triumphant winner of this last scene. Other critics argue that the story has a tragic ending where Biba is shot and has a similar fate to the boy who "had passed the sign warning off trespassers...whose dead body had been exhibited one day during roll-call" (p. 13). Based on this reading of the story, Biba seemingly falls into the trap that *The Soldier with the Golden Buttons* has set up for her, and he wins the bet. It would seem unlikely that he would let her leave triumphantly with the piece of bread; otherwise, he would lose his wager. After explaining these two interpretations of the ending of the book, Miriam clarifies her intent:

"Coming out of the house of the Soldier with the Golden Buttons, Biba is no more a child; her childhood dies there in that room. On page 146 [herein, p. 17] I write: 'She looked at him fearlessly. There was nothing he could do to her any longer. He had lost his power over her, and he knew it.' Biba is the winner. But the little Biba, the child, dies there. She is still six years old, but no more a child.

"The bread is a reality, reaching out to her mother by really helping her. She holds the bread in her hand like a flower. An inner beauty (the flower) is still present, even if it is just an image.

"I understand if people come to the conclusion that Biba was shot, like the boy in the story, but there are different ways of dying. The one Biba went through is also death, but not a physical one. 'She could not remember the rest of the poem.' The children's poem belonged to the past, to her childhood that ceased way back. The book does not have a conclusive ending. This is left to the discretion of the reader. Keeping the fate of the girl illusive at the end of the book bestows dramatic strength to the story, much more than granting a 'closed' ending."

At this point, Miriam's daughter, Nogit, arrived at her parents' apartment and joined us in the study room. The strong connection between Miriam and Nogit and the mutual

respect they shared was more than evident. Nogit was not allowed to read her mother's book before the age of 14. When she first read the book, she remembers crying and feeling a great deal of anger. She sat with her mother the whole night to discuss the book.

"I couldn't help imagining my mother experiencing all those dreadful events described in the book. I knew that some of the experiences portrayed are not my mother's, but Biba is my mother. Reading my mother's book," she explains "changed my way of thinking; it made me more mature."

Our conversation came to an end, but I felt a very strong connection to these people who only yesterday were complete strangers to me. Their warm and friendly nature and their honest and open answers made a very strong impact on me. *The Soldier With the Golden Buttons* may not have a conclusively happy ending. Nevertheless, as we sat in her apartment in Givata'im and talked, and as she proudly discussed the accomplishments of her daughter, who is expecting her second child, Miriam projected a powerful sense of resilience, leaving me both relieved and awed by the real woman Biba had become. ■

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Educators often assign students to interview local survivors, a task that may gratify and comfort survivors who appreciate the opportunity to share their stories with an eager listener. Students usually accept this task with alacrity and turn in pages of testimony or videotaped statements, and we take their efforts as proof of our successful teaching. Rarely, though, do we ask our students to reflect on and share the emotions evoked by such an undertaking. When eighth-graders from a Jewish day school were asked to write their feelings and experiences about the interviewing process in an assignment called "Students Confront the Holocaust," they composed heartfelt and expressive essays and poetry that give us insight into the varied responses of adolescents who confront both the teller and the tale. As we listen to, monitor, and discuss such reactions with our students, we may be able to lead them from using testimony as catharsis to using it as a foundation for further learning—our most important teaching goal. Below are three responses; others appear on pages 31, 32, and 63 of this issue.

Students Confront the Holocaust

Erica Kershner

Empty Spaces

It has affected so many people—
They are now scarred for life.
Their unfulfilled hopes, their interrupted dreams
leave empty spaces
that take a lifetime to replenish.

I sit in front of her,
too scared to speak.
I don't know what to say.
I want to feel her pain, to help her
but I can't.
I'm too afraid
afraid of so many things
afraid of her empty spaces.

ERICA KERSHNER is a student at Rutgers University, focusing on Sociology and Gender Studies. She wrote this poem when she was in eighth grade.

Tali Miller

First Time...

I never spoke to a survivor before.
I was a little nervous to interview her.
I didn't know how she would react when I asked her questions.
I didn't want to have to see her cry.
"Mamashainele," she called me.
She gave me cookies and tea.
Livia traded hot water for cigarettes in the ghetto.
She feared for her life every day.
I cried more than she did.

TALI MILLER wrote this poem when she was in the eighth grade.

Rebecca Rapoport

The Survivor

The old woman sits there trembling,
Her hands clenched,
Her eyes closed,
Telling me about the terrible things she suffered in Auschwitz.
I can't imagine how it was for her.
How was she able to resist?
How was she able to survive?
I want to ask her if she would rather have lived or died.
But I can't—
It's too personal,
And I don't have the courage to ask.

REBECCA RAPOPORT is a senior at Barnard College in New York City, majoring in psychology. She wrote this poem when she was in eighth grade.

As an academic and educational journal, *PRISM* may be unique in showcasing literature, but even the most lyrical narrative remains “squiggles on the page,” as Professor Louise Rosenblatt (1976), *z”l*, noted in her seminal work *Literature as Exploration*, without the reader to make the text become the poem it was meant to be. Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women Professor Peninnah Schram's carefully crafted guide provides teachers with the theoretical and practical underpinnings to make any narrative come alive in the classroom. She begins with an overview of the necessity of story and storytelling in general and concludes with specific and detailed suggestions for a memorable and effective presentation of our excerpt from *The Soldier with the Golden Buttons*.

Peninnah Schram

Storytelling and Reading Aloud: Teaching Through the Oral Tradition

Say it! Say it!

The world is made up of stories...

Not of atoms.

—Muriel Rukeyser

From the beginning, Jews have been known as the People of the Book. However, Jews are also the people of the spoken word. Biblically, the world was created with the spoken word (“Blessed is He Who spoke, and the world came into being—blessed is He. Blessed is He Who maintains creation; blessed is He Who speaks and does”). At the time of the giving of the Written Law (Torah *shebikh'tav*), God also gave to Moses (Moshe) the Oral Law (Torah *sheb'al peh*). During the centuries when the Talmud remained as the Unwritten Torah, teachers/scholars, called Tannaim (Aramaic for “repeater”), transmitted these teachings orally. Often referred to as “living books,” these Tannaim, who lived in the first two centuries CE during the Talmudic period, served as an important link between the periods of the oral and the written texts. Written texts of the Oral Law had been interdicted up to that time. The Talmud was finally codified in the 5th–6th century CE. From then to the present, the Jewish people have had a dynamic relationship that entwines text and the oral tradition.

However, these two major Jewish sacred texts, the Torah and the Talmud, are both primarily oral texts; they had never been meant for silent reading. Rather, the words leap off the page, demanding the reader's attention to be sounded. The lack of punctuation, repetition, alliteration, idiomatic language, dialogue, and other rhetorical devices point to the dynamic orality in these texts. Oral texts are known as “hearing literature,” in effect. “Writing is speech put in visible form, in such a way that any reader instructed in its conventions can reconstruct the vocal message” (Coe, 1992, p. 13).

In addition to the orality of the structure of these texts, there are clues throughout the Torah that oral speech, along with hearing/listening, is emphasized and valued. An example from the Torah (Fox, trans., 1995) that highlights orality, with the dual emphasis on speaking and listening, is in *Shmot* 24:7; Moshe “took the account of the covenant and read it in the ears of the people. They said: All that YHWH has spoken, we will do and we will hearken!” While hearken (*v'nishma*) may mean “obey,” it also can mean “listen!” since the root is the same as *Shma* (hear or listen).

In chapter 3 of 1 Kings, Solomon requests an understanding heart, “*lev shomeya*,” literally, a heart that listens carefully. Once again we see an emphasis on listening. Clearly, the narrative was shared orally between teacher and students, parents and children, person to person in *hevruta* (learning with a partner). There is even an admonition in *Erwin* 54a that one should study with a loud (sounded) voice in order to retain the learning.

To further emphasize the orality in Judaism, specified scrolls and books are read aloud, in the synagogue or at home, during certain holy days and celebrations. On Purim, for example, the Scroll of Esther is read aloud; listeners actively participate. On Passover, the Haggadah is read aloud at the seder, with the hosts often incorporating additional poetry and stories, read or told, related to themes of the Exodus.

In addition to the reading aloud of text, usually connected to sacred literature and holy days, storytelling—the art of telling a story without reliance on a written text—is also part of Jewish oral tradition. Storytelling might relate personal and

family stories, biblical and midrashic tales or Hasidic tales, or Jewish or universal folklore of every genre.

Whether text is read aloud or told, the voice is the treasured tool for transmitting words, ideas, emotions, and experiences; the voice is the messenger of the heart. It is the voice, a person's exquisite musical instrument, which carries the message on the wings of a story from one heart to another. Hasidic tradition echoes the idea that the story bypasses the intellect and enters directly into the heart. In this way, shared stories teach the important values and perspectives in a most beautiful and lasting way.

In Judaism, the heart is considered to be the seat of both wisdom and memory, combining the cognitive and affective realms. As is stated in *Kohelet Rabbah* I:7 (4): "A man's whole wisdom is in the heart." When words reach the heart, listeners internalize the meanings and retain images that can lead to action. In Judaism, words are synonymous with actions; the Hebrew word *davar* means "word" as well as "event." Walter Ong (1982) writes, "The spoken word is always an event, a movement in time, completely lacking in the thing-like repose of the written or printed word" (p. 33). He observes: "Sight isolates, sound incorporates" (p. 72).

MEANING FOR TEACHERS

What does all this mean for teachers? Stories, in all cultures, have been a powerfully effective and meaningful teaching tool. Our formative stories plant images that last longer and are more deep-seated in our memories than are lectures or sermons without illustrative narratives. Oral speech is used for reading aloud and for storytelling. What makes the heard words so powerful?

Scholars in the field of communication are discovering that the oral transmission of tales is literally mind-expanding. In his *Scientific American* article titled "Paleoneurology and the Evolution of Mind," Harry Jerison (1976) states, "We need language more to tell stories than to direct actions" (p. 101). He continues:

In the telling we create mental images in our listeners that might normally be produced only by the memory of the events as recorded and integrated by the sensory and perceptual systems of the brain. These mental images should be as real, in a fundamental sense, as the immediately experienced real world. (p. 101)

As Roger Schank (1990) writes, "We need to tell... a story that describes our experiences because the process of creating the story also creates the memory structure that will contain the gist of the story for the rest of our lives. Talking is remembering" (p. 115).

Talking sets the story in the heart. It is interesting to note that the word "ear" is embedded in both words: hear and

heart. Thus, we tell stories with the voice from the heart to reach the ears and hearts of others. Telling stories is sharing. Walter Benjamin (1968), in his essay "The Storyteller," wrote: "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience—his own or that reported by others, and he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale" (p. 87). In effect, storytelling promotes a dialogue among the storyteller, the story, and the listeners.

The oral tradition involves the use of the spoken word that is dynamic and ephemeral. However, we need to differentiate between words that carry information and those that carry story. While words generally cease to exist the moment they are spoken, the words of stories, because they are filtered through the sound of the voice and the physical presence of the storyteller, are absorbed and retained by listeners. Words are only one component in the storytelling experience.

THE VOICE OF THE STORYTELLER

While stories are important tools for learning, the telling or reading aloud of stories makes them even more powerful because the voice creates an immediate relationship between the teller and the listener. It is primarily through the voice that one communicates the humanity of a tale and the believability of the kernel of truth. The voice adds a dimension of sincerity and credibility. It dovetails the person to the content and the feeling for the role of oral interpreter/storyteller/teacher. The direct oral-telling experience has no replacement even in our technological age. There is no substitute for the human voice. In spite of, or perhaps because of, all our electronic media, we need, more than ever, to hear the human voice. The voice draws persons closer together through the shared experience of vocal sound.

There are two oral/spoken arts, as already indicated, namely, the reading aloud from the printed page, known as oral interpretation of literature; and the telling of stories, or storytelling. Reading a text aloud is an art on a continuum with the art of telling a story. Both oral reading and storytelling have the same central concerns: the story, the reader/storyteller, and the listener. However, there are also some differences that help determine which of these arts to utilize in presenting a story to listeners and may inform the classroom teacher who wishes to incorporate reading aloud and storytelling, along with silent reading, into her repertoire.

1. Reading—The words are structured carefully and more formally with complex sentences and sophisticated vocabulary and written with a specific author's style. Literature for reading aloud includes novels, short stories, memoirs/autobiographies, diary entries, and letters.

Telling—A told story demands an oral style with short simple sentences, simple vocabulary, rhetorical devices,

dialogue, repetition, and less description because para-language (voice, body, eyes, gestures, and so on) can be effectively substituted. Literature for storytelling includes folktales of every genre, plot-driven stories, personal/family stories, and stories that have a quality of having been written in the oral style.

2. Reading—The text is “written in stone” and cannot be changed or altered significantly, except for careful cutting/editing for time’s sake and flow of the story.

Telling—The text allows for spontaneity, for adding, changing, and commenting so that the teller can modify the story or create a new variant, even with a traditional tale. Some first-person accounts can be told using the third-person form. The teller can focus on specific concerns of the listeners. A “fluid folklore process” is operative.

3. Reading—The reader can make limited eye contact with the audience, but the text stands between them. Reading aloud, like reading silently, is text-oriented, and unless the text is memorized or expertly prepared, the reader is tied to and focused on the text.

Telling—Storytelling demands eye contact! Telling establishes a direct interactive bond between teller and listener.

4. Reading—The reader has more credibility due to society’s and academia’s higher regard for the medium of the published text, the method of silent, individual reading, and the availability of a wider range of literary material.

Telling—The storyteller has a different kind of credibility depending on how well known the teller is or, in the high school and college classroom, how well the teacher has demonstrated and validated its academic and affective value.

BENEFITS FROM THE ORAL ARTS

Many benefits accrue from exposure to the oral arts. Incorporating storytelling and reading aloud into the more typical silent reading classroom assignment is crucial for cognitive development of language and listening skills and prosocial emotions and behavior, including empathy, hope, and ethical practices. Empathy is an indirect response to hearing a story. A story allows a listener to “feel the experience” of another person; there is a vicarious connection between the word and the event:

“One can receive a message on an intellectual level, just as one can receive a message on an experiential level. A well-told story is a bridge between the two; it is an attempt to give people a sense of the experience” (Weiss, 1995, p. xvi). Communication requires not only the speaker but also a lis-

tener for the cycle of transfer and interaction to continue. The listener responds by becoming a co-creator with the storyteller through the response of empathetic listening. Thus, the speaker/storyteller and the listener become partners in the experience by suspending their own worlds and allowing the creation of a new, shared world.

In essence, listening is an active process of hearing, attending, understanding, and remembering. Listening involves more than hearing—that is, more than just registering sounds. Hearing refers to the physiological sensory process by which the ear receives auditory sensations and transmits them to the brain. Attentive listening involves a process that encompasses the interpretation and understanding of the heard sounds.

The word *listening* derives from two Old English words: *hlystan*, which means “hearing,” and *hlosnian*, which means “to wait in suspense.” Therefore, we can understand listening as a combination of hearing what another person says and a suspenseful waiting, which indicates a psychological bonding, an involvement with that other person. When this happens, the atmosphere becomes conducive to open discussion, to an honest exchange of ideas and questions, and to true education through the medium of story. This shared experience between the teller and the listener creates a bond and an exchange that remains in the heart, the place of wisdom where cognition and affect combine—and where memory resides, too.

READING AND TELLING THE HOLOCAUST STORY

Jews are people who remember and feel the urgency to transmit their history, lessons, and traditions to the next generation. One urgent story to hear, read, and retell is that of the Holocaust as experienced and recorded by survivors. The urgency is ever-present because the remaining witnesses are aging. Overwhelmed with the sheer numbers of books about this tragic time and by the need to teach about what happened to the Jewish people and the world, many teachers have come to understand that the most direct and powerful way to do this is to read and tell stories to students of all ages. However, the educator must make choices regarding both the literature and the method of transmission.

When choosing literature, teachers must decide: What do they want to teach and transmit in the lesson or program? What will be uplifting and not merely shocking or graphic? What literature “speaks” to them? What is age-appropriate? What will fit well into their existing curricula?

When choosing the method of transmission, teachers face a more difficult decision because many consider the memories and words used to capture the Holocaust experiences “sacred.” How does one go beyond silent reading and decide to read aloud the works verbatim or to tell the survivors’ stories without the text? How does one do justice to the

survivors' accounts most effectively in transmitting the full literary experience to the listeners? Which method of transmission will help the listeners remember and be able and eager to share the stories with others?

The answers, I believe, are found in the literature itself. Stories recounted in Yaffa Eliach's (1982) *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*, for example, are inspiring and brief enough so that several can be retold in a class period. However, I read, rather than retell, diary entries from Alexandra Zapruder's (2002) extraordinary book, *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries From the Holocaust*, which capture the experiences, optimism, and will to live in the words of young people who were living through that dark time. Of course, the best-known diary, that of Anne Frank, is another valuable work for reading aloud, along with excerpts from the works of Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi, Gerda Weissmann Klein, and so many others; while still others, such as Bernard Gotfryd's "A Chicken for the Holidays" (2008), can be used for direct storytelling as well as silent reading. Whether one decides to read or tell, above all, the teacher must stay faithful to the intent of the author, even if small liberties are taken in changing or omitting some words.

In the hands, or should we say "voice," of a talented storyteller, even a "book story" comes alive and we are carried along. I recently heard storyteller Carol Birch (2008) retell the story *Luba: The Angel of Bergen-Belsen* (Tryszynska-Fredrick & McCann, 2004). Carol told the story directly to the audience, without holding the book, and it was a riveting presentation. When I asked her whether she had memorized the text, she told me that she had not but had worked instead, as storytellers do, with images rather than with words. She emphasized that it is a process to learn a story, and one needs flexibility when telling it. Thus, she read the story many times to set its sequence and rhythm and internalize its meaning and actions. No doubt some of the wording was also set but not in a "frozen" state. The *telling* of this book allowed the listeners to evoke their own mental pictures and have that interactive, direct relationship between themselves and the storyteller. Would a direct reading of the text be as effective? Yes, but it would be a different experience since the focus would be more on the book and its illustrations.

Even when reading aloud diary entries or excerpts from memoirs, a teacher needs to interpret the passages vocally to heighten the meaning of the words for the listener. One must slow down, pause purposefully, gesture minimally, pay attention to the pacing of the passages, and so on, so the listeners "get it" instantaneously and are able to follow what is happening. Rather than using a dialect or accent for the people or characters in the literature, which is extremely difficult for most of us to do well, use subtle suggestion of the rhythm of speech in the dialogue. Indicate a young person, for example, by using a slightly higher pitch with quicker

pace; an older person, a lower pitch with slower pace. The amount of eye contact is also a consideration while reading, yet readers must be careful not to lose their place on the page, which can break the momentum. Nothing must detract from the focus on the material being read.

The oral reader has other considerations as well, especially the handling of the book and the turning of pages. While a storyteller might use more of the stage space to walk or move toward the audience, the oral interpreter usually holds the text or stands behind a podium on which rests the script. The text might be the book itself or placed in a thin loose-leaf notebook so that the reader can turn the pages seamlessly without losing his or her place. A microphone challenges the reader to prevent the pages from rustling and making intrusive sound effects.

THE SOLDIER WITH THE GOLDEN BUTTONS

Sometimes, one might combine both reading and telling with students' more traditional silent reading of some sections, as I will illustrate with the chapter from Miriam Steiner-Aviezer's (2005) *The Soldier With the Golden Buttons*, reprinted here on pp. 9–18.

To prepare for reading or telling a story, the teacher/reader/teller must first analyze the text for both style and substance. This piece weaves in and out of cinematic dream-like sequences producing tension and suspense in the reader that the teacher's voice must induce in the listener. Which segments best evoke this apprehension? What is the nature of each main character? What are the attitudes of the characters toward each other? What is there in the text to indicate these attitudes? As you practice, create a visual picture of the settings, the people, their clothing, and other objects, such as the white daisies. Use all your senses to recreate the tastes, sounds, colors, and smells that weave through the story. If you were to choose music for the various scenes, what might that music be? What colors would you assign to each of the scenes to help set the mood and tone? How might your reading capture the nature, the situation, the voice, emotions, and physical presence of Biba, her mother, and the soldier? Is there anything specific in the text that will help you decide?

A word of reassurance: There are many different ways to tell and various styles of telling. "Two prophets may receive the same message but no two prophets will relay it in the same way" (Sanhedrin 89). No one person tells a story better or worse than another; each just tells it differently. Teachers need to find the parts of the story that will allow them to convey the message in their most sincere style and with their entire being, meaning voice, physical presence, and imagination.

A great deal of dialogue throughout this story lends itself to storytelling. However, even when reading aloud, certain descriptive or instructive words can sometimes be omitted.

For example, in the sentence “‘I don’t know,’ whispered Biba, a sudden tremor in her voice” (p. 10), one might say simply “I don’t know” with a whisper and a tremor, as one would in Readers’ Theater. Of course, the interpreter, who plays all roles, must be consistent throughout when speaking as these characters. There can be only subtle shifts in posture and vocal characteristics so that the presentation does not become a comedy routine or a juggling act.

After analyzing the internal part of the literary piece, examine the external structure for transitions in action, changes of setting, or changes in the dynamics and moods of the characters. Throughout this story, there are major transitions in the action and scenes. Here is one possibility for dividing the chapter so that the three arts—storytelling, reading aloud, and reading silently—might be interwoven in a classroom.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE CLASSROOM

The opening of the story lends itself to a **telling** of the scene where Biba is watching her mother sleep, feeling anxiety that her mother may be unable to appear for roll call, yet assuring the monitor, “She will, she will, you’ll see” (p. 10). Here, too, leave out the tag line “Biba declared confidently;” the tone of voice should capture that confidence.

However, the section immediately following, which begins, “The monitor left” and ends with “Everything was all right: Mama was laughing” (p. 11), is filled with introspective passages that could be **read aloud** to bridge the storytelling and silent reading. In these pages Biba wakes her mother, who goes to her job in the laundry and is thus safe for another day.

The next line, “It was hot, the kind of day when the sun seems to press down on you, to drain you of all energy” (p. 11) marks a major transition in setting, action, and mood and brings Biba to a realization pivotal to the story. Biba wanders to where “large white daisies grew on the other side of the fence” (p. 11) and “stared at the daisies, and all of a sudden it struck her that if she used to bring Mama daisies for her birthday—then her birthday must be now” (p. 12). It’s a “wow” moment and central to the decision Biba must ultimately make. I would give the class these descriptive passages for **silent reading**, which allows students the opportunity to dwell on the poignant memories expressed in this dreamlike section and to consider the possibilities when suddenly, and ominously, “a soldier stood before her” (p. 12).

Depending on your time constraints, this may be an ideal place to stop. A story must never be rushed, even to meet the time limit of a class. If the teacher is short of time, it is preferable to read or tell the story in sections and end each time before a major transition. After all, that is the approach that kept people buying newspapers when novels were written in serial form. Since the story is long, I would further suggest that the students be given the story from its beginning up

to just this point to take home to read at the end of the first class period. Having the story in hand to reread the opening pages may help students who might not listen with retention in class. Reading just the beginning at home might also heighten the suspense and interest in what happens to Biba and encourage students to listen more attentively to the next day’s oral reading and storytelling.

The next five and a half pages, beginning with “She did not jump” (p. 17), edited judiciously, could be **read aloud** or **told**, since there is a great deal of dialogue between the soldier and Biba, who is invited to dinner. Throughout the dinner, Biba, waiting to be served food or drink, sits and watches the soldiers feast with increasing desperation. The vivid descriptions of each course involve all the senses and our emotions. Is this really happening? Her interior monologues reveal Biba’s state of mind; we sit at the table with Biba, feeling her fright and her desperate hunger and trying to decide with her how to act so that perhaps she will be given some scrap of bread or water. As this torturous scene unfolds, it offers us a glimpse into the nature of pure evil and bears witness to a child’s remarkable resilience in the face of it. As the transition evolves, Biba is finally “ready to obey their commands” (p. 17).

The final pages, beginning with “Look, Biba” (p. 17), would be most effectively **told** as a story, because of the power of the decision Biba is asked to make. This is Biba’s moment to trump the soldiers and triumph—and she does just that! There’s an opening for the teacher and students to enter into a dialogue or for students to comment in their journals when the soldier announces, “Whatever you choose will be yours. Look, there’s water here too—you may drink a whole glass!” (p. 17). You may choose to pause here and ask students to discuss the possibilities, or you may feel that the suspense is too great and the attention of your students too riveted to do anything but continue telling the story to its brilliant end.

When the reading and telling are finished, I would opt for silence. With this approach, the story becomes a gift. However, since it is an educational experience as well, the teacher may prefer discussion and analysis after the silence has lifted. You might ask simply for students to respond freely, and the discussion will flow from there; you might direct the questions, asking, “What caught you up in this story?” “What were you experiencing as you began to understand Biba’s situation?” “Why do you think Biba made the choice she did?” Another possibility would be to ask these and other open-ended questions as homework, allowing students private time to reflect on what they have heard and experienced and to raise their own questions—on the storytelling method as well as the content—the next day.

Reading aloud and then telling through to the end of the story is an option, but there are others; the best way for you to determine what works is to try different ways. I felt initially that the long scene in which Biba is invited to the banquet

must be told directly to the audience to elicit the heightened tension and incredulity. I tried it out by telling it, and I felt that it worked in keeping the vivid images, the sensory recall of the foods on the table, the smells and tastes she had long been deprived of, and even the sound of water poured into crystal glasses. However, when I tried it again by reading the same passages aloud, I found that reading the actual words worked better to increase the suspense and suspend time.

So which is it: reading or telling? That will depend on the presenter, the material, and the presenter's response to the literature. Both ways demand analysis, rehearsal, and careful attention to the text and its meaning; one way is not easier than another. There is no right way or wrong way, only a different way. Either way is the right way to offer people the experience of literature so they may fully appreciate, understand, learn, and, in turn, transmit that experience to others.

In the book *Mothers, Sisters, Resisters: Oral Histories of Women Who Survived the Holocaust* (Gurewitsch, 1998), one account moved me very deeply because of the role of story within the story. Rose Muth tells of her imprisonment in Auschwitz, where she reminded her sister of the parables that their father had told them:

Just before we were separated... my father took us four girls aside. He told us a parable of two men. They were tired of life. They had difficulties and problems. They went to a river, stood on the bridge, and contemplated suicide. One of the men courageously jumped into the water and was gone. The other one shivered and went away. Which was the coward and which was the brave man? Of course, as children, we said it was the one who had the courage to jump into the river. My father said, "No, you're wrong. The one who took up the fight and continued to live and fight for what he wanted, this one was the brave man" (p. 304).

Jews have a tradition to offer a parable to illustrate a point. In Muth's case, the remembered parable served as a blessing, a focus, and a source of resilience that helped her and her sister survive. We never know when we will need the wisdom given to us in the most beautiful way through a story. Therefore, narratives must fill the storehouse of memory from early childhood on to help us live and transmit culture and faith. Stories are indeed a special treasure that must continue to be shared with the voice as the messenger of the heart. ■

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The Minstrel & The Storyteller, with singer/guitarist Gerard Edery. Peninnah is a recipient of the Covenant Award for Outstanding Jewish Educator. To contact the author e-mail peninnahl@aol.com

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These responses by eighth-grade students to hearing survivor testimony reaffirm both the importance of attending to students' emotional reactions during any unit dealing with the Holocaust or other traumatic events and the truth of Peninnah Schram's essay: when stories are told "with the voice from the heart," they touch both "the ears and the hearts" of the listener. "Talking sets the story in the heart," Schram writes, and the young poets here confirm her contention.

Students Confront the Holocaust

Eitan Stavsky

Stories

We sit at your table.
You speak to me.
I concentrate on you,
Your words,
Your stories.
I'm astonished by your stories,
so many of them.
Story
after story
after story
after story.
They keep on coming out of your mouth,
from your soul and into my heart.
Stories of triumph
Stories of resistance
Stories of you.
An optimist, you ignore the despair.
You concentrate on the triumph.
I suddenly realize that these stories aren't just yours.
They are stories of us, of the Jews.
You tell them to me, pass them on to me.
And I listen.

EITAN STAVSKY is a recent graduate of New York University.

Josh Strobel

*My Grandfather
Mendel Buchman*

When the time comes to talk about it

We can't deny it.

Our emotions come out

And we can't hide them.

But as much as it hurts,

You still tell us your story.

You amaze me sitting there so calm and relaxed

While I ask for answers.

As hard as it is for you to remember,

Your response is tender and soft.

In the end,

I am the only one who sheds a tear.

JOSH STROBEL graduated from Yeshiva College in May 2008 with a B.A. in Political Science. He is currently studying in the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary (RIETS) at Yeshiva University. He wrote this poem when he was 12 years old.

Second-Generation artist Mina Cohen's reflective essay on her painting "Pain of Hunger" (p. 35) offers an overview of the lifelong resilience of her mother, Judith Meisel, and is followed by specific suggestions from the editors for engaging students in examining a work of art. In its description of her own daughters' learning about the Holocaust, Cohen's essay implies that a gradual, gentle introduction—with the timing controlled by the learners themselves—to limited amounts of information, illustrated with specific examples from the life of a survivor, is ideal when introducing this subject to children.

Mina Cohen

My Mother, My Art: Reflections From a Child of a Survivor

"Pain of Hunger" (p. 35) is one in a series of paintings entitled *A Survivor's Story* (www.survivorstory.com, p. 7). I created this body of work over several years in the early 1990s based on the stories my mother, Judith Meisel, told me about her experience as a Holocaust survivor.

Food—its preparation, its presentation, and its consumption—plays an important role in the life of families where one or both parents are survivors of the Holocaust. In many survivors' homes, nothing is ever thrown away, stockpiling is the norm, and more food than can be consumed daily is served in one sitting. In our family, my mother is the survivor, and the starvation she was forced to suffer during the Holocaust shaped and scarred her childhood. So for my siblings and me, the issues surrounding food were vivid, personal, and present.

When one hears stories or sees images of emaciated, starving children, one feels compassion. But the emotional response, however sincere, is detached, intellectualized, and viewed through the lens of the contemporary world. When my mother speaks to middle school and high school students, for example, and tells them that she weighed less than 50 pounds at the end of her ordeal, that fact moves them and remains with them. They relate to this truth, however, as adolescents who live in a society that puts much emphasis on body image; they understand emaciation only through the current discussions of eating disorders. They are disconnected from and have no concept of the forced starvation and desperate hunger faced by the millions in ghettos and camps. When I hear or see those images, however, the physical and emotional pain of fierce, unrelenting hunger is personalized and powerful: my image of emaciation is my mother.

I first heard about my mother's Holocaust experiences when I was 10 years old. My entire family attended Camp Ramah, the children as campers and my parents as staff

members. On Tisha B'Av in 1960, my mother told her story in front of the entire camp community. It's difficult, upsetting, and painful for a child to imagine that such events could have happened at all; how much more so when they happened to one's own mother! Afterward, my mother claims I insisted that the story she told us all could not possibly be true. Within a short time, though, I understood that it was.

From then on, what I found particularly hard to understand was my mother's description of the barracks in which she and the other camp inmates were forced to live. I envisioned her barracks looking much like my own camp bunk, which they do resemble a bit when you see them today on a pilgrimage to the concentration camps or when you see the photographs in Holocaust history books. I could not make sense, though, of her description that her barracks had window boxes with flowers growing in them. What a strange dichotomy! Frightened, starving people living in crowded, dirty barracks adorned with flower boxes: The images crowded my mind then, and there they have remained.

As the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, I have felt molded by my mother's experiences in every aspect of my life. I was not able to live a typical teenager's carefree, sheltered life. I developed a consciousness of the precarious and precious nature of life even as my peers did not consider such issues. As a young adult, I understood completely my obligation to make a difference in the world as well as my responsibility to live a Jewish life and raise Jewish children. As an adult child of a survivor, I knew that at some point I would be telling my mother's story.

In 1994, my mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. A little girl during the Holocaust, she is among the youngest survivors still alive, but the illness forced her, and me as well, to contemplate her mortality for the first time. I realized that I needed to begin preparing to take on the mantle of telling her story. I was already a painter by profession, so to

tell the tale through the medium of art seemed like the best way to begin. At that time, my own daughters, Elana and Yael, were seven and 10 years old, respectively, and the challenge of communicating my mother's suffering to them in a way that would not traumatize them but would allow them to understand their grandmother and her experiences more fully was the second impetus for the creation of *A Survivor's Story*.

The paintings that would present her story, I knew, would be different from the body of work that I had created until then. Although I often work in series and the paintings are always abstract mixed media works with multiple layers of paint and collage, both the motivation for and the narrative content of *A Survivor's Story* would be new for me.

The process of my artwork necessitates slow progress, and the paintings evolve over months of work. I work on several pieces at the same time. This method works well for me as an artist, and it worked as well for telling my mother's story to my daughters, as they could watch it unfold, take in what they could, and leave the studio when they had seen, for the moment, enough.

My studio is inside my home, and the girls came there often with me to see what I was doing, and, sometimes, to create their own works of art. My art studio was, and still is, a place where one can get messy and explore. During the creation of *A Survivor's Story*, Elana and Yael would come in to read the stories unfolding on canvas, and we talked endlessly about what each one meant and how it fit into the overall narrative of their grandmother's life. My mother was a child during the Holocaust, and I sometimes think that my children understood and empathized with her experiences in ways adults cannot. By the time my mother's story was captured on canvas, and because, I believe, of the careful and gradual introduction of its various aspects, the girls were fully prepared and eager to hear their grandmother's entire chronicle of survival.

The text on the left of the canvas (p. 35) narrates "Pain of Hunger." The words come from my mother's experience:

She could block out the horrors by putting herself into a trance and smelling the flowers. The commandant of the camp grew prize-winning roses right on the other side of the wall. The only thing a trance couldn't do was cover the pain of hunger.

The commandant of the Shtuthof concentration camp loved flowers, my mother explained, and carefully tended them when he wasn't "working." In the painting, I split the canvas down the middle with desiccated flowers juxtaposed with emaciated heads and a wall of separation. The wall can be read literally, as the starving inmates were on one side, fenced into a world of ugliness and fear, while their captors on the other side lived a dual life that included the beauty

and luxury of lovingly tending flowers. The colors chosen for this painting are both warm and cool to emphasize this dichotomy, and they have a muted, dulled quality to emphasize the difficulty of understanding the contrast.

My mother will soon be 80 years old, and we have celebrated her 12th year of being cancer-free. My daughters are very close with their grandmother, and her legacy has directly influenced their life paths. Now grown women, both are pursuing careers in social justice. When I recently asked my daughters what they remember from the years when I was creating this series, they both commented on how safe they felt getting the information visually instead of from a "scary movie" or a book, and how important it was to them to have the story personalized and discussed. Viewing art, they agreed, and creating art in response to learning about this subject are gentle and appropriate ways to communicate and process these truths that can otherwise be too disturbing for a young person to bear.

My mother's story now transcends my canvases; she is the subject of the film *Tak for Alt (1998)*, a documentary about her life. She still feels compelled to educate as many people as possible about the Holocaust in an attempt to ensure that the genocide that plagues our world will soon cease. She knows that as the survivors leave us, our primary sources leave us, and the Holocaust becomes merely another chapter in the history books.

It is hard to comprehend the coexistence of flower boxes and barracks in a concentration camp. Beauty and evil do exist, though, side by side, and perhaps my mother's resilient spirit was nourished by those flowers, much as the child Biba's was by the daisies in Steiner-Aviezer's poignant story (pp. 9–18). These moments of hope amid years of anguish can be expressed powerfully in art created by Holocaust survivors, their children, and the victims whose works miraculously survived though they did not. Such art will help to keep the legacy of the Holocaust alive and accessible

EDITORS' NOTE ON TEACHING ART:

Teachers may find the following suggestions useful as they think about how to approach art as part of their Holocaust curriculum. The suggestions have been adapted from New York's Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education and from *PRISM* Art Editor Pnina Rosenberg.

As students look at a painting, ask them to

- notice deeply and describe just what they see, not what they think, feel, imagine, are reminded of, or interpret;
- pose questions—about the subject, the artist, the process, the painting, the colors, the technique, the canvas itself—that come from their observations;
- identify patterns: within the painting itself, between and



"She could block out the horrors by putting herself into a trance and smelling the flowers. The commandant... grew prize-winning roses right on the other side of the wall." When we came across artist Mina Cohen's description of the childhood experience of her mother, survivor Judith Meisel, we were struck by the similarity of the juxtaposition of normalcy and evil shared by Cohen's mother and Biba, the child in our featured narrative. This painting, "Pain of Hunger," evokes both a story and essential questions about the nature of the perpetrators and the remarkable abilities of even the youngest children to find ways to survive their particular torment. The work of art reminds us of the imperative to differentiate instruction, to engage our students through all of their senses and in a variety of disciplines as we teach about crucial facets of the Holocaust. The painting, notes the artist, is "mixed media on canvas including a hologram of a whirlwind and dried flowers."

MINA COHEN
Pain of Hunger • 1994 • 48" x 36"

among this painting and others by the same or different artists, and between this painting and the literature and history they have discussed in class;

- make connections: between and among this and other works of art, history, and literature; class discussions; and people, places, things, and events in their own lives;
- empathize with the artist or her message through the connections they have made;
- create their own personal meaning from the piece and, if they wish, share that meaning with the teacher, the class, and/or the artist;
- take action that arises from their response(s) to the painting by writing to the artist, examining related works of art, and attending museum or other art exhibits on the same

topic; researching the particular subject depicted in the art; and interviewing a survivor;

- reflect on the experience they have had with the art and related works, either through writing, discussion, or their own responsive art; and
- assess the art and the experience of learning through art by drawing their own conclusions about how and what they have learned and/or how they have been changed by this interaction.

FOR EXTENDED LEARNING OR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS IN ADDITION TO CLASS DISCUSSION, RAISE THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- Of what value is an individual/personal testimony in

learning about the Holocaust? In what ways might that value be changed/enhanced/lessened if the testimony is transmitted by someone other than the survivor?

- What do we gain from a visual testimony? In what ways does art as testimony expand our understanding of the events portrayed? In what ways does visual testimony meet students' needs as a learner? How does it compare as a learning tool for students to written and oral testimony?
- What is the function of art/beauty/aesthetics amid the ugliness, cruelty, misery, and hunger of the Holocaust? Can a painting about the Holocaust be beautiful?
- Mina Cohen found a different way—an active one—of transmitting the Holocaust legacy to the Third Generation. Her children witnessed her visual interpretation of her mother's story as it evolved on canvas and in a way participated in the process as they visited the art studio. What other methods might we use to involve the Third Generation in actively learning about its legacy? ■

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- Steiner-Aviezer, M. (2005). From *The soldier with the golden buttons*. In *PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators*, 1 (1), 9–18.

Trauma and *resilience* are terms fraught with multiple meanings and interpretations, particularly in response to survivors' narratives and the legacy they pass on to their children. Shoshana Dubman's poem weaves together these concepts even as it teases them apart, clarifying the complexities that inform each encounter between survivors and their children. "What are the memories for," the Second-Generation poet asks, "if they can't make you feel good?" Use this plaintive query to begin the discussion of one essential question that underlies all Holocaust study: Why should we remember?

Shoshana Dubman

Memories

What are the memories for
If they can't make you feel good?
What are the tears for
If they can't wash away the pain?
What is the pain for
If it only reminds you
Of the missing?

Please take these memories
And wash them with the tears
Of my father who I never knew
With the tears of my mother
Who gave me life
And the life that was taken

Dear god, give me memories
Of joy and forgiveness
And tears that fall from
The laughter of living
And pain that comes
From too much dancing

SHOSHANA DUBMAN was born in 1945 or 1946 in Germany, most likely in a Displaced Persons Camp. She currently lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she works as a special educator in the public school system.

"We are at the forefront of something totally new and different," says Avi Hoffman, the director of the American incarnation of the Israeli "Witness Theater" program designed to bring students and survivors together to tell the survivors' stories. Storyteller Caren Schnur Neile describes the delicate process and offers educators a new way of thinking about connecting students to the past they need to remember.

Caren Schnur Neile

Arts Education After Auschwitz: Students, Survivors, and Storytelling in the U.S. Premiere of "Witness Theater"

There are few experiences any of us will have to endure that approach the enormity and savagery of the Shoah. It seems almost natural to turn away from or "tune out" the details of such an unbearable event, to shut down our emotions when we are faced with the realities of the Holocaust. At the same time, its cultural, social, political, and historical importance, coupled with the imperative to "never forget" and the strong sense of mission that drives so many survivors to tell their stories, propels the Holocaust narrative time and again into the spotlight. As I write this, no fewer than four major and several minor films that detail elements of the annihilation of the Jews of Europe are currently playing in theaters; new memoirs, novels, and anthologies find eager readers; and academic journals, including this one, continue to attract broad interest. How do we keep from becoming Shoah-saturated? How do we learn and retain Holocaust history not only in our minds but also in our hearts? How do we connect with students and adults ignorant of, hardened to, or overwhelmed by the trauma of the event, while at the same time helping survivors work through their experiences and impart them authentically to their listeners? And why would we want to?

This reflective essay responds to these questions through a discussion of the U.S. premiere of Witness Theater, an Israeli arts-based program for Holocaust education. It suggests the heuristic power of arts education to address issues of trauma and promote post-traumatic growth while apparently engendering minimal secondary or vicarious traumatization. The public performance that will be the finale of the project will be presented only after the writing of this piece, but Witness Theater values process over product, and thus the essay briefly outlines the Witness Theater technique and explores some preliminary outcomes from my first experience with it based on student, professional, and survivor journals, transcripts, and interviews.

My dream: I am taking my children to the park in a baby carriage. They are asleep. I am now in the most beautiful spot in the park, and I hear a terrifying sound. The Gestapo boots on the cobblestone road are marching closer and closer in my direction to take my children away from me. The children are still sleeping, so I push the carriage into the bushes. Just as the Gestapo approach the bushes, the children wake up and yell, "We want ice cream!" The Gestapo take my children and hit me with the back of the rifle. I wake up and realize that I was dreaming, but I am afraid to go back to sleep.

— Survivor

I am a professional storyteller and former board member of the National Storytelling Network Healing Story Alliance (www.healingstory.org), an organization devoted to the use of oral narrative to promote emotional and physical well-being. In my work, I have found that when trauma is the question, art, quite often, is the answer. Because art evokes emotion, it helps us learn and remember material. It helps us connect with the artist—in this case, the storytellers. It can lower blood pressure and combat depression. It can also put us in touch with our own emotions and those of others.

What is more, because art invokes metaphor, it minimizes the risk associated with approaching traumatic thoughts or memories. The efficacy of art therapy has perhaps best been described by reference to the Greek myth of Jason and Medusa. The hero, Jason, could not defeat the monster head-on because one look at her would destroy him. His solution was to turn away and, using his shield as a mirror, smite Medusa with his sword. In the same way, art allows us to protect ourselves from our demons, to address them not head-on but indirectly, through metaphor and image.

WITNESS THEATER IN AMERICA

This, then, is the philosophy behind Witness Theater, an eight-year-old project developed by the Israeli agency on aging known as the Joint Distribution Committee-Eshel. Funded by a generous gift from a local philanthropist,¹ Witness Theater was brought to the United States by the Jewish Education Commission (JEC) of the Jewish Federation of South Palm Beach County. Witness Theater is similar in format to the work of Roots & Branches, an intergenerational theater company based in New York, but while the company pairs young actors with senior citizens, Witness Theater pairs high school students with Holocaust survivors.

We knew it was not going to be easy to transfer the Israeli program to the US, even with our Israeli trainers, clinical psychologist Dina Shevitz and Eshel program director Maggie Gad, as sensitive, thoughtful, and patient guides. First, the Israelis designed Witness Theater to take place during school hours. Our version had to occur after school, when students have multiple competing interests and obligations. Next, the original iteration paired students and survivors for 18 months, allowing them to build considerable trust and community; we had a mere 18 weeks. Moreover, the very nature of the program—creating a theater piece on the Shoah co-written by and starring non-actor students and survivors—could well engender retraumatization or vicarious traumatization difficult for us either to fully anticipate or effectively address.

There was one other important difference between our work and that of Eshel that posed a potential challenge. Because our project was conducted under the auspices of the JEC, an organization devoted to Jewish education, our primary emphasis was on the students. Thus our planning discussions covered topics such as the option of offering the students dual enrollment college credit and volunteer hours for their efforts rather than focusing on the emotional needs of the survivors. The Israeli program, the motto of which is “To tell in order to live,” emphasizes a therapeutic process for the survivors. Because survivors in Palm Beach County are, for the most part, donors, rather than recipients, of Jewish aid, this approach was not necessary in our community. Nevertheless, we have hired a social worker to monitor and address the concerns of students and survivors alike.

When we started, our participants² included over a dozen energetic child survivors in their 70s and 80s, well-versed in and comfortable with describing their Holocaust experiences to public audiences, and an approximately equal number of bright, enthusiastic Jewish high school students from day and public schools in Boca Raton, Florida. Under the supervision and direction of a small team of professionals, led by the JEC director, Leon Weissberg, and including a dynamic teen coordinator; a talented freelance social worker; an acclaimed off-Broadway actor and director; and me, a university artist-

in-residence who created and taught an undergraduate class at Florida Atlantic University based on the Roots & Branches model, survivors and students began to meet together, share, create, and perform original plays based on the survivors' stories, using improvisation and other techniques.

I didn't know what to expect, so I just walked in with no expectations.

—Avi Hoffman, Director

As the process begins, students interview the survivors and, to a lesser extent, vice versa. The group comes to trust and feel comfortable in part by sharing personal stories, by participating in intergenerational discussion, and by loosening up and learning performance skills through theater games and improvisation. Finally, the stories, games, and discussions are interwoven into a theater piece by members of the professional team and performed by the students and survivors for a community audience.

Before the first Witness Theater meeting, I was definitely nervous to meet all the survivors. I did not know how I would react to them. I also never knew what to expect. I thought that the survivors would all go in a circle telling their stories, which scared me! But I think that the way that this event was planned out is perfect. I like how we take things slow, step-by-step. Otherwise, I think that not only would the students be blown out of the water, but the survivors, too, would feel overwhelmed.

—Teen participant

Although the process of Witness Theater may sound fairly straightforward, it is anything but. Take the cast itself. The students have all studied the Holocaust in school by state mandate. Some of them have survivors among their family members. Yet at the same time, they are 15 and 16 years old, an age of deep impressions and strong emotions. Meanwhile, our survivors, most of whom are members of the Child Survivors/Hidden Children of the Holocaust group of Palm Beach County, speak quite readily and regularly to groups of all ages about their war experiences. However, while a self-protective mechanism may prevent them from suffering the trauma anew at every presentation, this emotional neutrality does not make for good theater—or effective education. More importantly, it prevents survivors from connecting authentically with their listeners.

On the other hand, as our Israeli trainers warned us, survivors—and child survivors in particular—may have issues and concerns hidden just below the surface that can emerge at any moment. While survivors in Israel often were, historically, treated with contempt and thus may still feel shame

and impotence, our group members did not share that experience. They are confident, articulate, and well-to-do; they present as polished and poised. But what if this persona is their protective armor, and through our work, we pierce it? We have a social worker on our team, but are we equipped to handle a serious situation?

During our training, Dr. Shevitz noted that she personally had experienced secondary trauma during the Witness Theater process, and that we should be aware of this possibility. Having done considerable research on the Shoah years earlier, I did not take the warning to heart. But the next night, I had a frightening dream about the Shoah, followed by a mild anxiety attack. I suddenly remembered that during my research I would lie awake at night imagining which of my neighbors would turn me in to the Nazis.

ART AFTER AUSCHWITZ

We are at the forefront of something totally new and different.

—Avi Hoffman, Director

It is the use of art, it has turned out, rather than any resurgence of trauma, which has been the most difficult aspect of the process for both students and survivors. In our first session together, for example, as part of our exercises designed to loosen participants' inhibitions, I led name games and instructed the group in a simple African nonsense song to encourage harmonizing on a non-musical level. Some of the survivors told me this activity upset them; they perceived an apparent trivialization of the Holocaust and an infantilization of themselves. I explained the importance of such games in reaching our goals, trying to help them see past the perceived silliness of the song to an understanding that art is the highest expression of the human spirit, that our ability to create beauty from tragedy represents the victory of the Jewish people over those who threaten to decimate us. Sadly, however, several survivors did not return because of their discomfort with our methods. Others left for a variety of reasons: one because of concerns about the memory work on his weak heart; one because she did not get along with another member of the group; and four or five were simply uninterested.

Eleven remained and understood our work, and some of their responses helped me to understand those who had not. One man told me, "I was never a child. This is the first time I ever played."

A few students, too, left the group; one mother called to explain that her child did not see the value of spending two months rehearsing a production; she wanted to get to know the survivors. I explained that the final production was not at all the point, that the value of the program was in the pro-

cess of working together and continuing to share stories in a meaningful way, but to no avail.

For the most part, however, the approach has worked beautifully. Several students were shy at first about the theater games, but they grew less so, as did the survivors. In one such exercise, I asked participants to strike poses that represent a particular emotion—fear, joy, misery, curiosity—and stand touching each other, creating a living statue. In another, they mirrored each other's movements; in a third, they parroted each other's words. Most often, they pantomimed or acted out the survivors' stories in small groups. One survivor told of coming to America after the war only to have his mother disappointed that New York City was so dirty. Five students acted out the brief story, one playing the mother, one the survivor, one the father, and the other two, his siblings. In so doing, they not only learned from each other; they also created community.

Watching this project metamorphose into developing relationships between survivors and teens is an amazing experience. As a child of survivors and having been witness to many Holocaust rekindling experiences, I am finding this one exceptionally gratifying. The survivors smile when they speak to their teen partner, and the teens are so attentive and so responsive to their survivors' angst. You don't see this type of interaction in a classroom environment.

—Leon Weissberg, Program Director

We have yet to finalize the loose, mainly improvised performance, which will contain stories of each participant, as well as guitar and trumpet playing—we use whatever skills our participants possess—and dance, song, and a bit of free-form conversation. We do not know how many tickets we will sell for our two performance dates—although we suspect many—or how our audiences will evaluate the shows. But the process, which is, after all, the point of our work, has already drawn rave reviews from those who have experienced it.

I had no school on this day, and I remember having the worst day ever, and I really have no clue why. But when I walked into Witness Theater, it was like all that sadness went away, and the happiness just spilled out on the floor. I just love hearing the survivors' stories. If I were allowed, I'd sit in a room all day and just listen to their stories. They're exciting, sad, intriguing, hopeful, and brave in so many ways.

—Teen participant



Student Chaya Schandelson interviews survivor Leon Ginsburg.

To be part of Witness Theater has given me an opportunity to communicate with young people, to find a sense of comfort in the eyes studying me with kindness and listening to what I have to share about the Shoah. It is almost a feeling of healing, seeing the interest and commitment that each student expressed in this project, absorbing the spirit of the survivors for the future.

—Survivor

Although my own bad dream never returned, I cannot definitely vouch for the survivors and students. They do not report any problems, but I do not know for sure what they have reexperienced or imagined after our sessions together. What I do know is that we all share another dream—that of making the narratives of Holocaust survivors a lasting legacy for the Jewish people and for the world.

I once heard a story about the residents of a small town in the Pacific Northwest who wanted to find a way to preserve their town's history. They could write it, they knew, but books can be destroyed by fire. They could design a time capsule, but where would it be placed to ensure that no harm would come to it, that it would not be stolen or destroyed by nuclear war? Idea after idea was presented and rejected. Finally, the city fathers and mothers found an ingenious solution: They would teach the town history to 10 children. When these children grew up, each would have the mission to teach 10 more children, and that generation of 100 would each teach another 10, and so on. Thus their history would live through the people who knew it, valued it, and understood the importance of passing it on.

Here is where the memory will be maintained; these teens will be able to capture the essence of the survivors and share it with at least the next two to three generations beyond themselves. That's what this is all about: the lasting memory.

—Leon Weissberg, Program Director

This is the philosophy behind Witness Theater: Through art, we can touch hearts by evoking emotion and protect those hearts that threaten to rebreak by invoking metaphor. In so doing, we create a lasting legacy for participants and audiences alike. The student “witnesses to the witnesses,” the last generation to meet Holocaust survivors face-to-face, will be able to transmit these stories to their children and their children's children.

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NOTES

1. Rani Garfinkle, in memory of her husband, Sandy.
2. The participant/contributors quoted or referred to in this paper are survivors Norman Frajman, Zelda and Herschel Fuksman, Leon Ginsburg, Rosette Goldstein, Rosalind Haber, Michel Jeifa, Benno and Selma Lindenberg, Erica and Joe Spindell, and Irene Zisblatt; and teens Josh Domosh, Aly Gerstman, Jeffrey Landau, Katie Mogell, Katie Morris, Zachary Needell, Hila Sachs, Jacob Sarfati, Chaya Schandelson, Brooke Schultz, and Lizzie Shapiro.

"Here mothers can no longer be mothers to their children," writes the poet Charlotte Delbo (1965), translated here by Pnina Rosenberg, art editor of *PRISM*. The theme of the attempted destruction by the Nazis of the bond between mothers and children is a familiar one, part of the vast attempt to dehumanize the Jews. Less familiar is the theme of "rehumanization," the act of resistance by Holocaust artists whose portraiture of children in ghettos and camps "endowed the object of the drawing with a sense of permanent being" as the artists drew the children to "reflect normalcy, strength, and resilience." Rosenberg offers educators a different approach from that of Mina Cohen's to incorporating art into a study of the Holocaust and includes as well specific suggestions for the integration of historical and philosophical implications of art in such study.

Pnina Rosenberg

Reflections of Children in Holocaust Art

My mother

These were the hands and face

They put our mothers naked before us

Here mothers can no longer be mothers to their children.¹

—Charlotte Delbo

In this image of a mother standing naked before her daughter, helpless and no longer able to protect her, Charlotte Delbo (1965, p. 15), poet and Auschwitz survivor, captures the essence of existence in the camps. Her words evoke the hallucinatory world of the Holocaust, in which traditional roles are reversed and distorted and children are left alone with no one to look after them or defend them. They struggle to confront a mad, cruel world where there is little, if any, room for human gestures or acts of humanity.

In this new realm, where human beings were stripped of their individuality and reduced to numbers in the industry of Death, children were the greater victims. This is clearly seen in the famous photograph of the small boy in the Warsaw Ghetto, an icon of the Shoah. Here we see the Jewish child, standing apart from the crowd, hands raised in a gesture of surrender. The brutal torture and murder of children during the Holocaust stands out in its bestiality and inhumanity even in this horrendous world in which all norms were twisted and broken; it was the ultimate symbol of the cruel brutality of the Nazi Final Solution.

The existence of children in ghettos and in transit and death camps did not pass unnoticed by artists, who were themselves inmates and thus condemned to the same fearful, degrading dictates of the conquerors. Many artists depicted the young prisoners who were part of this horrifying world, suffering and trying to survive. Others left delicate portraits of the young inmates, their eyes reflecting deep anguish and pain, so uncharacteristic of normal youngsters. These portraits are, in many cases, the child victim's last record on earth.

PORTRAITURE IN HOLOCAUST VISUAL ART

Holocaust art researcher Sybil Milton (1990), while referring to the prevalence of portraiture done during this period, stated that those images had almost mystical powers: They endowed the object of the drawing with a sense of permanent being, as opposed to the insubstantiality of their physical existence. According to Milton, approximately a quarter of the works of art that survived from the camps and the ghettos were portraits (p. 148).

In many cases, the portraits or drawings were commissioned to be sent home as an act of encouragement and to show that their subjects were alive and well. The subjects, therefore, were made to look good and often reflect normalcy, strength, and resilience rather than the abject human misery and trauma the inmates experienced. The subject of the portrait is seen as an individual amid the mass anonymity of the camp inmates. The portraits were, in many cases, the final commemoration of the subjects before they were led to their deaths. It was characteristic of these portraits that the exact date and place were clearly marked on the pictures; this written information turns them into historical documents.

AIZIK FÉDER—CHILD'S PORTRAIT IN DRANCY CAMP

In Drancy, a transit camp on the outskirts of Paris, which was known as the "antechamber for Auschwitz" because of the many and frequent deportations that left from there for the death camps, the artist Aizik Féder (1887, Odessa–1943, Auschwitz), drew portraits of his co-inmates. Féder, who migrated to Paris,



AIZIK ADOLPHE FÉDER (1887, Odessa – 1943, Auschwitz)

Boy with a Yellow Star Seated by a Laid Table

Drancy Camp, 24 December 1942

Charcoal and colored chalk on paper, 48.8 x 38 cm

Signed and dated, lower right: A. Féder, 24/12-42, Drancy

© Art Collection, Ghetto Fighters' House (Beit Lohamei Haghetat), Israel, donated by Mrs. Sima Féder, the artist's widow, Paris, 1951

the Mecca of the art world at that time, to fulfill himself as a painter, was denounced for his resistance activities, arrested, and sent to Drancy before being deported to Auschwitz, from which he never returned. While in Drancy, Féder, using crayon or charcoal, depicted the rich mosaic of its inmates, people from all walks of life—workers, intellectuals, observant Jews, women, men, teenagers, children, and infants.

The camp, which had been originally built to house soldiers and consisted of five-story, U-shaped buildings, was

transformed in the summer of 1941 into a “Jewish” camp. Run according to the Nazi system of concentration camps, Drancy served as the background for numerous tragic and heart-breaking scenes. Thousands of Jews populated the camp—men, women, children, and the aged. Many were victims of the mass roundups held in various Parisian quarters; others were deportees from other French transit camps in 1942, as well as children aged 2–12 whose parents had already been deported to the east and who were completely confused and disoriented. The inmates witnessed the constant deportations from the camps—40,000 people were sent to the east in 40 convoys—knowing that this was the fate that also awaited them.

Against this background, it is almost unbelievable and unimaginable to find portraits of teenagers and young children who look so innocent and almost untouched by their horrific circumstances, as we find in Féder's portraits. One of his portraits, left, shows a young boy seated at a table with a spoon and an empty tin pot, both placed in orderly fashion on a tablecloth. The boy seems to be absorbed in his thoughts and closed in an inner world. There seem to be no signs that he is interned in this infamous camp; he looks clean and well-nourished; his blue eyes and his blond hair do not qualify him as a Jew, according to the racial stereotype. Yet, the artist incorporated tiny hints that completely invert this almost idyllic scene—particularly, the child is wearing a yellow star on his jacket.

The Nazi occupying regime had decreed that all Jews aged six and over in the French Occupied Zone had to wear a yellow star with the word *Juif* (Jew) on it, on their left lapel. Severe punishments, such as arrest and imprisonment, were meted out to anyone not obeying this law. Ironically, the inmates in Drancy, which was set up to imprison Jews, were also forced to wear the yellow star, as described by one of the camp's inmates: “The absurdity of demanding the Jewish identifying patch in a camp that was exclusively for Jews did not perturb the authorities... The officers and guards took it very

seriously and demanded strict fulfillment of these instructions" (Wellers, 1991, p. 113).

The children in the camp were not spared this decree, as can be seen in Féder's picture as well as in others by the artists in the camp. A small, solemn, tousle-haired child in a blue sweater is depicted, below, sitting on a ruffled bed near a book and a doll, toying with the edges of his yellow star. He is not too young to wear it and thus is eligible to be counted as a deportee to Auschwitz—to "Pitchipoi" (Wellers, 1991, p. 128), the name the children gave to the mysterious, unknown destination of the deportations. This almost serene portrait is signed and dated "A. Féder, 31.12.1942, Drancy."

This exact dating—day, month, year—and the exact place, which is uncommon in artistic practice (usually artists sign their name and add only the year) was a common practice in the art of the Holocaust. It turned the work of art into an historical document. Thus the spectator deciphers the codes and gets the full picture of the depicted event. Once one is aware that Drancy was not only a Parisian suburb but also served during this period as an atrocious camp whose prisoners, even the very young, were destined to be gassed in Auschwitz, the portrait is seen in a completely different

manner. It is no longer a mere portrait, but a requiem.

In a subtle way, the artist portrays the tragic fate that awaits this child whose "Aryan" physiognomy stands in a sharp contrast to his Jewish identity, clearly manifested by the yellow star. This is a world of contradictions—a world that no longer respects logic and is ruled by cruel and inhuman orders and decrees.

ELLA LIEBERMANN-SHIBER: "THE THIEF"

Hunger was the inmates' constant companion, affecting both body and spirit. The inmates' constant search for food is a dominant theme in many paintings. These works illustrate not only the extent of the inmates' hunger but also the dehumanization to which they were subjected.

Ella Liebermann-Shiber (1927, Berlin–1998, Haifa, Israel) moved in 1938 with her family to Bendin (Poland), where, during the war, they lived for several weeks in hiding in a pit that they had dug beneath the garbage container beside their house. Later they were imprisoned in the local ghetto until December 1943, when 16-year-old Liebermann and her family were deported to Auschwitz. When the SS officers in Auschwitz realized that Liebermann was an artist, they asked her to paint portraits in return for a better food allowance. In January 1945, she took part in the death march and was taken to Neustadt, a satellite camp of Ravensbrück. Liebermann and her mother, the sole survivors of the family, were liberated by the Allies on May 2, 1945. In April 1948, Liebermann, accompanied by her husband, Emmanuel Shiber, and her mother, reached the shores of the Israeli port town Haifa, where she resided until her death in 1998.

Urged on by her husband, who thought the artistic expression would help free her from the traumas she had experienced, Liebermann-Shiber produced a series of about 100 drawings from 1945 to 1948 depicting the horrors of everyday life during the Holocaust entitled *On the Edge of the Abyss*. She was posthumously awarded a certificate of "merit and appreciation" by the wife of the president of Israel for her work and contribution to "Holocaust remembrance and promise for the future."

A large number of the drawings in this series related to the topic of food. Liebermann-Shiber depicts the various



AIZIK ADOLPHE FÉDER (1887, Odessa – 1943, Auschwitz)

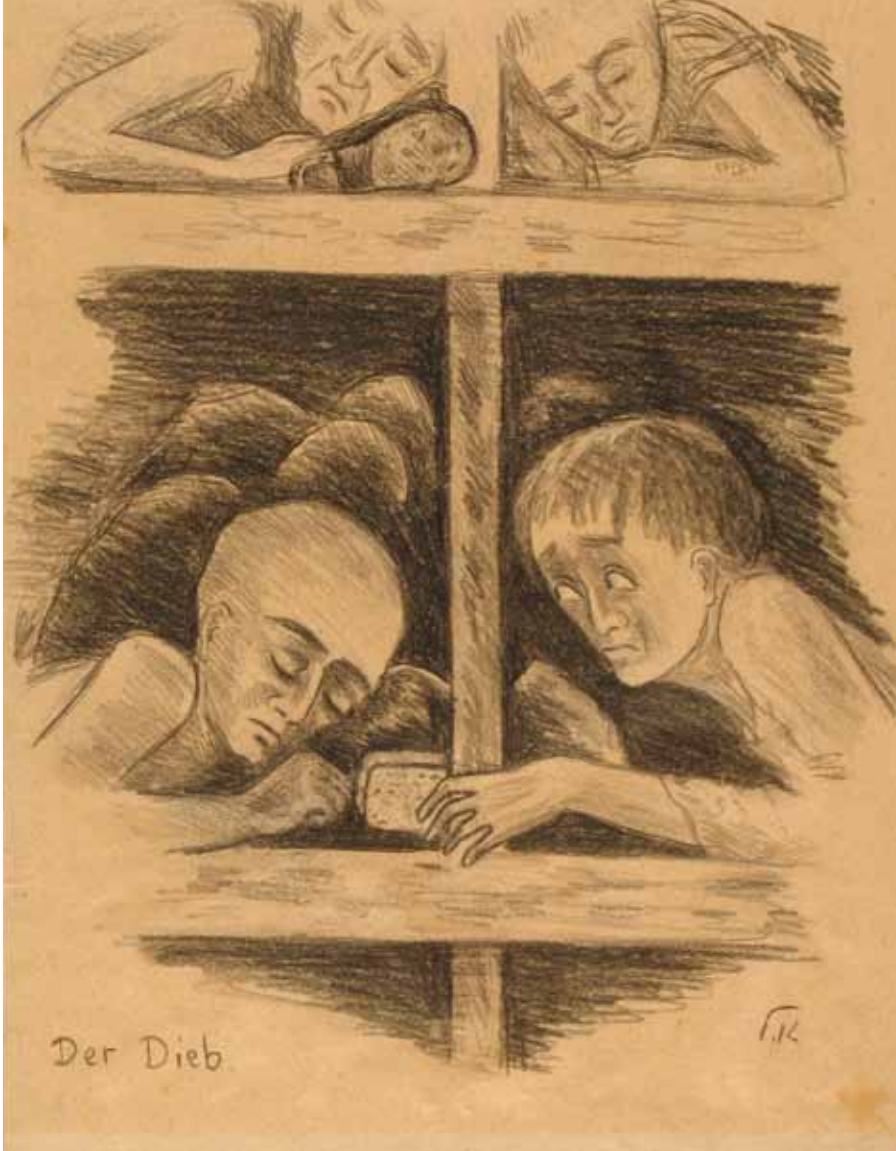
A Young Boy with a Doll in Bed

Drancy Camp, 31 December 1942

Charcoal and colored chalk on gray cardboard, 39 x 49 cm

Signed and dated, lower right: A. Féder, 31/12-42, Drancy.

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ELLA LIEBERMANN-SHIBER (1927, Berlin–1998, Haifa, Israel)

Hunger—Stealing Bread

Bydgoszcz (Bromberg), Poland–Haifa, Israel, 1945–1949

Charcoal and colored chalk on paper, 48.8 x 38 cm

Pencil on paper, 28 x 22cm

Signed (in initials in Hebrew characters) lower right: E. L. Inscription (in German) lower left:

Der Dieb (The Thief)

© Art Collection, Ghetto Fighters' House (Beit Lohamei Haghetatot), Israel, donated by the artist

rituals that accompanied the act of eating and the human misery and deterioration caused by extreme hunger. This fierce hunger makes the battle for survival ruthless, as illustrated in one of the drawings, “The Thief,” above. The drawing depicts a young, emaciated boy stealing a treasured slice of bread at night from a sleeping fellow inmate, a boy like himself.

Four young inmates are portrayed in this work; they are all lying in the crowded barracks, trying to find refuge from the day’s torments. Yet, instead of sticking together, instead of creating a bond that might increase their resilience and help them to overcome the daily misery and suffering, the terrible hunger triumphs and forces them to become suspicious of each other. Hunger breaks the norms of civil society,

forcing children to behave like animals toward each other. Ironically, the “thief,” by stealing, puts his life at risk, as the artist testifies:

Bread is often stolen at night. A piece of bread and some soup have to last us 24 hours. A bite every few hours has to carry us over to morning. But sometimes thieves in the night try to steal the hidden bread, even though they know that if they are caught they will pay with their lives. (Liebermann-Shiber, 1992, p. 64)

The young inmate in Drancy is seated by empty food utensils, which correspond to the atmosphere of emptiness and resignation. The boy depicted by Liebermann-Shiber, in a desperate step, risks his life as he can no longer stand the hunger.

The works show, in different ways, the dehumanization and the degeneration of the humiliated young inmates. Those youngsters, like thousands of others in the ghettos, camps, and hiding places, were exposed to daily atrocities, physical and mental, for the “crime” of being a Jew. Absurd and arbitrary phenomena were part of their daily experience, in a world where the laws of logic no longer applied and where compassion and solidarity were rare commodities.

POSSIBILITIES FOR TEACHERS

These images are reproduced on the educational site “Learning about the Holocaust through Art” at art.holocaust-education.net. Here students may find additional information about the artists and their environments and become acquainted with other works by these artists as well as works on similar subjects by different artists, enabling students to view those discussed here from a wider perspective. Discussion options on the site attempt to connect the paintings with knowledge that students have or wish to pursue and offer historical and philosophical questions such as:

1. What was the official Nazi policy on art, and how was this implemented during the Holocaust? Find examples of “establishment” versus “underground” art.
2. What was unique about the works of art created during

the Holocaust when compared with works created up until that time?

3. What are the various functions of Holocaust art? (These might include testimony, documentation, commemoration, spiritual protest, artistic expression, or a means of barter.)
4. How do the works of art in this collection relate to your previous knowledge of the Holocaust? Have they confirmed your understanding or changed the way you think about it? Give specific examples.
5. In which ways might works of art created during the Holocaust be used as evidence to counter the claims of Holocaust deniers?
6. Works of art reveal aspects not expressed in historical documentation. Using the art reproduced in this journal, discuss this idea.
7. What additional artistic expressions (visual or dramatic) exist that depict aspects of difficult historical events? How well did these works represent the events? How do they affect you and your attitude toward these events?
8. Beauty versus ugliness: Discuss the inherent contradiction between the aesthetic values of art and the intensity of the tragedy portrayed.
9. Objectivity versus subjectivity: As a student of the Holocaust, how do you integrate the differences between factual, documentary testimony and personal, artistic expression?
10. Choose a medium and create your own artistic response to the subject of the Holocaust. ■

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NOTES

1. Ma mère
c'était des mains un visage
Ils ont mis nos mères nues devant nous [...]
Ici les mères ne sont plus mères à leurs enfants.
Delbo (1965)
2. On Aizik (Adolphe) Féder (1887–1943) and his works in Drancy, see Rosenberg, P. (2000). *Salon de Refusés: Art in French internment camps*. Ghetto Fighters' House, pp. 43, 57–58; Silver, K. E. & Golan, R. (Eds.). (1985). *The circle of Montparnasse: Jewish artists in Paris 1905–1945*. New York: Universe Books, pp. 99–100.
3. For the exact wording of the decree, see *Les Juifs sous l'Occupation: Recueil des textes officiels français et allemands 1940–1944*. (2nd ed.). (1982). L'Association "Les Fils et Filles des Déportés Juifs de France," Paris, pp. 155–156. (First ed. published by Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine, Paris, 1946.)
4. On Ella Liebermann-Shiber (1927–1998), see Liebermann-Shiber, E. (1992). *On the edge of the abyss*. Ghetto Fighters' House; Rosenberg, P. (2007). *Art remembrance—Artists in the Holocaust*. Ghetto Fighters' House, p. 103.

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The bond between mothers and daughters could not be sundered by the Holocaust; this affirmation is a theme explored in story, essay, artwork, and poetry by child survivors and children of survivors in this issue of *PRISM*. Below, we read of a mother who returned "so much smaller than I remembered"; we read of another who did not come back at all, despite the desperate hope that "she'll come through a window in the sky, fly in on wings, a raven or an angel." Such intimate reflections on the critical relationship between mother and child, may, as Sweet (Fishman, 2007, p. 572) observes, "free a silent suffering" as these artists allow the next generation to enter, albeit vicariously, into their experiences of and with their mothers.

Julie N. Heifetz

The Blue Parakeet

Based on the tape of Ann Lenga, sent as a child
by her parents to hide in the Polish countryside.

They knew what was coming to Radom, to all the Jews.
My parents paid to send me to a farm in the country
with a Gentile family. They treated me like
I was one of them. I learned to milk a cow
and churn my own butter. In the woods there were
mulberries and sweet clover. In the evening
I went to the edge of the property where Gypsies
played their violins and danced. I never saw
so much jewelry.

Because I talked to trees and said I heard
my father singing, they called me Dreamer.
I like to play games by myself, the games
I used to play with Papa. Especially the game
we called the Color Game. "I'm thinking of
something blue," I'd say. Papa had to guess
what I was thinking. "Your dress? Your eyes?
The book on the library table?" Until finally
I'd tell him "I'm thinking of the color blue.
Blue as the moonstone on your finger."
All the colors of home came back to me
playing the Color Game. The pale yellow grass
tall enough to hide in, Papa's cotton shirt,
embroidered like a silk bouquet
with every color of the rainbow.

Winter came. I heard Papa tell me, "Look
how the icicles are candles in the starlight.
Think of them as friends. Also,
slap yourself, move around, keep active.
You'll be warmer." With the first snowfall
I thought about my cousin Helga. We visited
winters in Cologne, flirted with boys
at the skating rink in our sophisticated dresses.
Helga was prettier than I was. I hoped
she was still pretty that winter.

Many nights the same dream came back to me.
I was in the forest, alone. On every tree
a sign with candy-striped colored letters.
LOST. A BLUE PARAKEET!!
I tried to see the treetops, a little spot
of blue in green leaves, but the limbs were
twisted fingers reaching out to grab me.
I ran faster and faster, until I woke up
whimpering, sad for the bird alone
in the world she hadn't been born to,
sad for the child who'd lost her.
Of all the nights I had the dream,
I never saw the bird.

One day some neighbors came. While I was
gathering eggs they saw me. "She has
a Jewish nose. You have Jews hiding here."
After that I hid in the hayloft,
but eventually the Germans found me.
I was sent to Auschwitz, the youngest
in my lager. Some would take bread
from the dead. I could never do this.
There was even cannibalism there. One old woman
tried to protect me. She put her arms around me.
"Cover your eyes. Nothing important is happening."
What I saw I did not see. What I felt

somedays I could not feel. I became like a robot,
empty, except for dreaming of hundreds of faces
streaked with color, melting in the rain.

To keep my spirits up, I started rumors.

“The war is over, someone with a radio told me
the liberators are coming.” After a while,
whatever I said, nobody believed.

The Lagerführerin, our camp commander,
had the prettiest hair, hair like cotton candy.
You couldn't paint a doll that beautiful.

She loved to torture. The minute our hair
would grow a quarter of an inch, she'd cut it.
When she walked by, I imagined her bald and naked,
me holding the razor.

In 1945 after the war, I went back to Radom.
Our house was there, the Gentiles gave it back
for me to live in. Someone told me
while I was in the country they saw my father
on a transport. He was strong.
He was young enough to make it. I knew
where my strength had come from.
Three months I waited. One day I went
to an open window. Down below my mother was walking.
I must have screamed. She turned around.
I ran to the street where she was waiting.
Her hands were all over me. She was crying,
so much smaller than I remembered.
I thought she was a lie I wanted to believe in.
I held her very gently, the way a child would hold
a tiny bird in her hands.

Lagerführerin (Ger.). Female camp commandant.

JULIE N. HEIFETZ is a psychotherapist, playwright, author, and actor who, for 30 years, has written poems, songs, books, and articles, as well as one-woman shows and speeches, that bear witness to voices that have been lost or silenced.

Zahava Z. Sweet

Dark Whispers

In memory of my mother
—Łódź Ghetto, 1941

Grandmother
sorts potato peels in the sink
for our supper.
“My children gone,” she sighs.
“The oldest and the youngest gone.”
I hide in the black folds of her dress—
will my mother come back?

The light of day faded
in Grandmother’s house,
the room dark as her dress.
I sleep in the empty bed,
my mother’s hair
in the blankets.
Her fragrance of konwalia. If I wait
the door might open.
She will appear in her seal coat,
her voice,
pearls of the sea.
Perhaps she’ll come
through a window in the sky,
fly in on wings,
a raven or an angel.
Maybe I could take
a strand of her hair
to wear
on my finger.

Konwalia (Pol.). Lily of the Valley

ZAHAVA Z. SWEET was born in Poland and survived the Holocaust. Her book of poems, *The Return of Sound* (Bombshelter Press, 2005), is a reflection on her life. She writes, “Poems fly in like butterflies from the dream world.”

The medium of film offers students yet another avenue of exploration of individual stories of Jewish agency during the Holocaust. “Can movies do the subject justice?” Yeshiva University professor of film Eric A. Goldman asks. We think one particular film exemplifies just how well they can. Survivor Uri Orlev’s semi-autobiographical *The Island on Bird Street*, a book that was adapted into a film, is a uniquely appropriate tool to help middle-school students in particular understand the trauma of the hunted life of a child in a ghetto and the remarkable resilience of an 11-year-old boy who survived.

Eric A. Goldman

The Island on Bird Street: A Film Review

In 1978, when NBC broadcast the miniseries *Holocaust*, Elie Wiesel, in a *New York Times* article, charged that the program “trivialized” the Shoah. Yet after it was broadcast in the United States and around the world, a new understanding grew about the Shoah, especially in Germany. Survivors began to speak more openly about their experiences, and hundreds of studies, novels, documentaries, and feature narrative films followed. Fifteen years later, Steven Spielberg’s *Schindler’s List* reignited the debate on what Saul Friedlander called “the limits of representation,” the problems in representing the “unrepresentable.” Can movies do the subject justice? Just how far can cinema go in trying to capture the horror that is the Holocaust? What is the place and value of film in a unit of study on the Holocaust? These are just a few of the issues confronting the educator who must struggle to clarify what information is appropriate for students in each grade, which films will help to meet specific learning goals, and when film is the most appropriate medium for providing an understanding of particular events, people, and themes.

The use of film as a tool for recounting aspects of the Holocaust, especially to children and teenagers, has changed dramatically over the years. Forty years ago, educators were drawn to the power of film, particularly the documentary film, to recreate and reinforce the shocking realities of the period. They believed that one needed to display the horror, to show the atrocity. If a student did not cry, scream, or tremble, the lesson was deemed ineffective, so the use of graphic films was common. Teachers often used Alain Resnais’s (1955) brilliant *Night and Fog*, for example, to ensure that their students would never forget learning about the Holocaust. The film was short enough—31 minutes; it was grim enough; and its moral—“*Qui est responsable?* Who is responsible?”—was clear and powerful.

For many students in the 1950s and 1960s, this artistic juxtaposition of barbed wire and piled bodies was their intro-

duction to the Shoah, and they never forgot it—for better or worse [Ed. Note: see Witty, p. 73]. To the child of that era, such visions were frightening and appalling, but the horrors of Vietnam and all of the tragedies since then have changed viewers’ responses to such film. The instant replay of death on the news and the graphic violence available on television, on the Internet, and in video games have taken away the shock that, earlier, made a lasting impression on the young.

Yet the debate continues about what might be termed the “nightmare effect.” If there is a chance that even one of your students leaves the viewing experience frightened and facing sleepless nights, have you chosen the wrong film for your audience? Certainly, this is a question that I have often raised as I discuss the issue with colleagues and choose films for my own students. How does one present and utilize cinema as the incredible educational tool that it is? How does one determine when the time is right for a particular film or whether a film goes too far in its presentation of reality? Today, psychologists and educators who specialize in teaching about the Holocaust have helped teachers understand that vividly violent and disturbing images can suffocate rather than teach, and that while there is room for differences of opinion, care must be taken in choosing films on this topic.

Still, cinema, if thoughtfully selected, is a wonderful *hag-gadah* for the Holocaust. It allows each aspect of the event to be told through an individual’s singular experience and voice, on varied levels and through different methods, until the truths of the Holocaust take on a reality that will not be diminished by time or by other more current terrible truths.

The particular experience and distinct voice of a child survivor are given to us in John Goldsmith and Tony Grisoni’s screen adaptation of survivor Uri Orlev’s (1984) semi-autobiographical book *The Island on Bird Street*, a remarkable tool for teaching the Shoah to students as young as 12. The film has all the elements that should be part of a narrative about the period.

The young hero must flee and hide from the Nazis. Jews are rounded up and yes, *kapos* are part of the story. There are both good and bad Jews, good and bad Poles, and we even encounter a German soldier who spares our hero. There will be loss of life, particularly of a close relative, but we do not witness it. There are also role models that serve the film well; the most remarkable is the father of the protagonist, who keeps his promise despite all odds and returns at the conclusion of the film to take his son to safety. What is most noteworthy is that the hero of the film is a young boy to whom middle school students can easily relate, and yet older students and adults will be equally captivated by the sensitive portrayal of this lonely, endangered soul desperately trying to survive in the midst of incessant and violent actions against the Jews.

The film, a somewhat fictionalized account of Orlev's Holocaust experiences, focuses on 11-year-old Alex, who, having lost his mother, witnesses his father and uncle being taken away in a sudden roundup by the Nazis. He runs for safety, as instructed, to Bird Street within the ruins of an unnamed ghetto that vividly evokes the Warsaw Ghetto. There he must create his own haven and care for himself as he waits for his father to return. His "island," like that of Robinson Crusoe, whom he often cites, is at first the rubble in the courtyard, but when that soon becomes precarious, he creates, through sheer ingenuity and strength of will, a sheltered loft in the midst of a half-destroyed ghetto apartment building. From his perch there, he observes and waits out the dreadful events taking place around him.

Director Søren Kragh-Jacobsen begins the 1997 film by creating distinct boundaries, closely resembling what children might find in a simple playing of hide-and-seek. Clearly, though, here the stakes are far higher; this is no game. Walls, fences, barbed wire, and other boundaries that separated the Jew from the Pole are evident from the opening scenes and throughout the film as Kragh-Jacobsen sets up and continues the dynamic of being in or out, imprisoned or free, safe or in danger. Somehow, as dangerous as this destroyed ghetto is, being inside it represents some element of safety, as Alex soon learns when, desperate for companionship, he ventures out from his island onto the perilous streets beyond the ghetto walls and tries to blend in with the Poles who live there. There is grave danger for Alex here, yet this treacherous outside world represents an element of normalcy and even intimacy to which Alex is occasionally compelled, by searing loneliness and need, to return.

As the film moves forward, the lines of security blur, and one wonders which space is safer and whether Alex might more easily survive within or outside his island. Kragh-Jacobsen has Alex looking often through a peephole in his hiding place beyond his tiny foothold of security to see the streets and people outside the ghetto walls; he contemplates the prospects for both his capture and his escape on the Polish side of the ghetto. Along with Alex, we agonize: Which side holds the better chance for survival? How will Alex's

father find him if Alex does not remain on Bird Street? What if his father does not return?

The film narrative never fails to keep our attention, as a variety of visitors enter Alex's improvised world for brief, and sometimes not so brief, encounters. Through them we are offered glimpses of other characters' war experiences as Alex crosses paths with desperate Jews in hiding, partisans, a kind and brave Polish doctor, and Nazi soldiers who will not give up their search for Jews in the ghetto, down to the last remaining child. To be sure, the film is gripping, with the occasional frightening and sudden threats to Alex merely providing the necessary tension without doing any emotional damage to a young viewer.

The film is about surviving the horror of the incessant and brutal ghetto roundups and deportations, yet at the same time it illustrates the strength and resilience that Jews were able to summon during these dark times. That viewers can easily connect with Alex as he forages for food, constructs his shelter, plays in the rubble, hides from his pursuers, and yearns for his family makes the film all the more potent and useful in the classroom.

The Island on Bird Street is a film certainly worth considering in planning an introductory unit on the Shoah. It is a historically accurate story set in a vividly realized ghetto, a tale of hope and courage, of tragedy and resilience. Its hero is an intelligent and appealing young boy with whom students can identify and bond. The trauma of the period is limited and presented without graphic detail while still evoking many of the profoundly grim realities of ghetto life during the Shoah. Bringing us both inside and outside the ghetto walls, the movie also provides some understanding of how Jews and Poles co-existed and related in those terrible times. It is a narrative of both hiding and bravery, aspects of the Holocaust not often explored simultaneously. Søren Kragh-Jacobsen's rendering of Orlev's story is tasteful, warm, and beautifully executed. ■

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The discovery of the Höcker album, which contains photographs of Nazi officers “at play,” provides educators with a remarkable, document-based opportunity to explore with their students the persistent question of how the Holocaust was humanly possible. We assume our students will be troubled by the study of atrocity, but how might they respond to the study of people who, as historians Cohen, Erbelding, and White observe below, “in a different time and place, may have been pillars of society rather than criminals”? This essay and the remarkable photographs it examines and contextualizes offer educators three approaches to studying this “parallel universe” in Auschwitz during the camp’s final six months. As your students react to these documents and the history that informs them, introduce them to “All There Is to Know About Adolf Eichmann,” a poem by Leonard Cohen (1964). “What did you expect?” the poet asks. “Talons? Oversize incisors? Green saliva? Madness?”

Judith Cohen, Rebecca Erbelding, and Joseph Robert White

Three Approaches to Exploring the Höcker Album in High School and University Classes

Educators, historians, and even survivors frequently write about the Holocaust in the passive voice. Books typically mention how “Jews were deported,” “children and elderly were sent to the left,” and even “six million Jews were murdered.” There are many reasons for this lack of identified agent. Frequently, it is impossible to know who directed the activity. Was it the SS, auxiliary troops, or local gendarmes? Rather than misstate a historical fact, it is easier to sidestep the issue. Other factors are at play as well. For example, the exhibits at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) rarely portray Nazis; this is a deliberate decision not to “give a face to the perpetrators” and risk glamorizing them in the eyes of neo-Nazis (Linenthal, 1995, p. 199). As a memorial, the museum’s mission focuses instead on displaying the faces of the victims. However, Europe’s Jews did not simply disappear or “perish” as the standard term implies. Human beings, making deliberate decisions for a variety of reasons, planned and perpetrated the murder of the Jews.

The actions of the Holocaust were undertaken by people who, in a different time and place, may have been pillars of society rather than criminals; that idea may be simply too hard to face. It is perhaps for this reason that the recently discovered photo album that had belonged to Karl Höcker (adjutant to the commandant of Auschwitz), which depicts SS officers in their off-hours during the camp’s final six months, has received and continues to receive such wide attention. Though everyone knows that the SS officers at Auschwitz were men who pursued normal activities in their spare time, seeing the photographic evidence shocks afresh each time

the album is opened.

However, beyond the simple shock value of seeing Nazis at play, what can be gleaned from the album? How can educators and historians make use of the images that at first glance challenge our previously held imaginations of Auschwitz to enhance our knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust?

For the past year and a half, we, as members of the staff of the USHMM, have poured over the photos, examining them with magnifying glasses in order to discover any missing clues that can help to unravel the mysteries of the Holocaust. Though working collaboratively, we each approach the album from a different perspective and therefore present three alternative ways to use the album in the classroom. Each option raises different questions for study: How does the album illustrate the disparity between the lives of perpetrators and victims and what do we learn from that? Were the individuals depicted in the album able to choose whether to take part in the mass murder at Auschwitz, and if they opted not to participate, what would have happened to them? How does the album intersect with the larger events of World War II and the Holocaust? What do the images suggest about the perpetrators’ mind-set on the eve of evacuation?

THE HÖCKER ALBUM—A CASE STUDY IN PARALLEL UNIVERSES

Few documents match the emotional power of photographs. But photographs also have the power to mislead. They freeze a moment in time without the before or after and crop people and places out of the scene at the photographer’s discretion. With-

out prior knowledge of the Holocaust, one might think, from a cursory examination of the Höcker album, that Auschwitz was merely an SS resort. It could be easy, therefore, simply to dismiss the album as a document that so distorts historic reality that it has no role to play in a Holocaust curriculum. However, without the perpetrators there would not have been a Holocaust. How, then, can a teacher reinsert the terror of the Holocaust into a seemingly benign photo album?

In some ways, it is the very humanness of the Holocaust that is so terrifying—the fact that it was planned and enacted by educated people who maintained the trappings of civilized society even as they murdered millions. The SS murderers refused to believe that they were anything less than ideal citizens. Rudolf Höss (1996) wrote in his postwar memoir:

May the general public simply go on seeing me as a bloodthirsty beast, the cruel sadist, the murderer of millions, because the broad masses cannot conceive the *Kommandant* of Auschwitz in any other way. They would never be able to understand that he also had a heart and that he was not evil (p. 186).

Höss and others rationalized this seeming contradiction by differentiating between true human beings such as them-

selves and those deemed unworthy of life: the Jews. The Höcker album is filled with photographs of seemingly mundane activities and symbols of civilized society that assume a sinister cast when juxtaposed with survivor testimony and



FIG. 2: An accordionist leads a sing-along for SS officers, including Karl Höcker, commandants Rudolf Höss, Richard Baer, and Josef Kramer, and Dr. Josef Mengele at the Solahuütte retreat outside Auschwitz, July 1944.

other Holocaust images taken at the same time. How can one look at Höcker playing with his pet dog Favorit, for instance, and not be reminded of how the SS used German shepherds to maul Jewish prisoners (Müller, 1979)?¹ [Fig. 1]

When seen in the context of other Holocaust iconography, the album challenges students to contrast the lives of the perpetrators to those of the victims by capturing images of similar yet contradictory activities. This juxtaposition enables students to better understand the nexus between the coexisting worlds of perpetrators and victims and ask the difficult and essential question of how human beings can justify this dichotomy.

Several photographs display SS men entertained by an accordionist. [Fig. 2] However, music played a much more sinister role in the concentration camps. In her memoir, *Playing for Time*, Fania Fénelon (1977) describes how musicians were forced to perform for the SS to provide relaxation from the exertions of murder and to accompany work battalions to slave labor. Filip Müller (1979), who survived three years in Auschwitz working in the crematoria, describes how the Nazis used music to camouflage their murderous intentions:

At any moment I expected a bullet through the base of my skull. Instead, from not far off, I heard music. It was



FIG. 1: SS-Obersturmführer Karl Höcker pets his dog Favorit. All photos courtesy United States Holocaust Memorial Museum unless otherwise noted.



FIG. 3: Hungarian Jews share their last bits of food under the trees of Birkenau shortly before being led to the gas chambers, May 1944. Courtesy of Yad Vashem.



FIG. 4: SS officers and a physician gather for drinks, September 1944.

one of Schubert's songs, and it was, without doubt, being performed by a real live orchestra. I briefly put aside my somber thoughts of dying, for I argued, that in a place where Schubert's *Serenade* was sung to the accompaniment of an orchestra, there must be surely room for a little humanity. (p. 11)

Perhaps nothing defines our existence as social animals more than our ability to enjoy the fellowship of friends and relatives, frequently over meals. The contrast between the two photographs above, taken less than four months apart, speaks for itself. The first shows Hungarian Jewish mothers sharing a last morsel of food with their children minutes before being sent to the gas chambers [Fig. 3]. The second shows Dr. Carl Clauberg, who directed sadistic medical experimentation on young women, enjoying a bottle of wine together with Auschwitz Commandant Richard Baer and his adjutant Karl Höcker [Fig. 4].

Almost nowhere can you see the contrast between the two worlds as vividly as in the photos documenting the treat-



FIG. 5: "Funeral of SS comrades after a terror [bombing] attack"



FIG. 6: Members of the *Sonderkommando* at Birkenau burn the bodies of gassed prisoners outside in the open air as the crematoria were insufficient to dispose of the huge volume of corpses, August 1944. Courtesy of Auschwitz State Museum.

ment of the dead. How a society cares for its dead reflects its compassion (or lack thereof) toward the living. Scholar R. P. Harrison (2003) writes: "To be human means above all to bury" (p. xi).² Thus we see in the Höcker album a page entitled "*Beisetzung von SS-Kameraden nach einem Terrorangriff*" ("Funeral of SS comrades after a terror [bombing] attack"), which portrays a military funeral for SS officers killed in an Allied bombing, probably in September 1944 [Fig. 5]. Veiled widows weep, officers salute, and wreaths of flowers bedeck the site to reflect the solemnity of the occasion. A clandestine photograph [Fig. 6] taken by members of the *Sonderkommando* only weeks earlier provides the counterpoint. It shows them tossing corpses onto a pyre after the Nazi killing machine had exceeded the capacity of the crematoriums. For the Nazis, only true humans were worthy of burial and the accompanying rituals.

What can we learn by comparing similar iconography? Looking at the photographs of the Höcker album side by side with other Holocaust documents dramatically illustrates how the Holocaust turned the world upside down. For the Nazi

hierarchy at Auschwitz, everyday leisure activities reflected the joys of civilization. However, for the victims, the benign became the malignant. Dogs, music, and even social gatherings assumed sinister connotations. Perhaps nothing more dramatically illustrates how the Nazis concocted a worldview that divided human beings into *Über-* and *Untermenschen*, those worthy of life and those condemned to slavery and murder.

THE HÖCKER ALBUM—A STUDY OF CHOICES

Just as it is tempting to look at an album of photographs of Nazi perpetrators as a novelty, separate from the reality of their Holocaust crimes, it is also tempting to paint the perpetrators as monolithic, as gray uniforms with boots, riding crops, and harsh German voices. But the Auschwitz staff photographed in the Höcker album, which, in addition to the administrative personnel, includes young female *SS-Helferinnen* (literally, “helpers”) and SS doctors, were not monoliths but flesh-and-blood individuals with personalities, families, and the knowledge of right and wrong. This is difficult to comprehend, as it restores agency to the perpetrators—they cannot merely be labeled as “evil” but must be discussed as individuals with the ability to make decisions. If they had made the decision to reject their role as perpetrator, what would have happened to them? The album provides an interesting way to open a discussion on morality and choices through an examination of the *SS-Helferinnen* and of the SS doctors.

The *SS-Helferinnen* [Fig. 7] were young women between 17 and 24 years old who worked as telecommunications operators and secretaries at Auschwitz, maintaining the telephone

and telegraph systems within the camp, reporting the daily news, and relaying messages between the various sections of the camp and between Auschwitz and Berlin or Auschwitz and other camps. We do not know whether these young women knew what Auschwitz was before they arrived there to begin work, but they had been reared within the Nazi educational and social systems. It is important to emphasize the power of indoctrination in general and Nazi indoctrination in particular. Certainly it does not excuse antisemitic or murderous behavior, but stressing the power of education and propaganda can elicit an interesting classroom discussion about peer pressure and the bravery of making alternate choices.

In her biographical essay, written as part of the application process to become a *Helferin*, Hildegard Ritzmann (NARA, Berlin Document Center [BDC] series 6300), who had just reached her 18th birthday, wrote:

Now I could see my dream come true and applied to the Armed Section of the SS [*Waffen-SS*] as a news reporter. I am very much looking forward to my new profession and will put all my energy into making it a success.

Luzia Arndt (NARA, [BDC] series 6300) wrote:

Since I am very interested to join the SS News Report Office, I want to introduce myself. It is my greatest ambition to volunteer to occupy the position where I can fulfill my duty... [I]n April, I will be 17 years old.



FIG. 7: SS-Obersturmführer Karl Höcker frolics with the *SS-Helferinnen*, young women who worked in the communications department at Auschwitz, 22 July 1944.

What news did they report, and how much did they know about the reality of Auschwitz?

They knew quite a bit, in fact. Included in their duties was the reporting of incoming transports, including the number of prisoners selected to work and the number of prisoners who were sent to the gas chambers. They had made the choice to assist with the paperwork and communications necessary for Auschwitz to function. Yet in the Höcker album, these young women appear carefree and joyous, like college co-eds off campus for the day.

Rosemarie Katzmann, another *Helferin*, does not appear in these happy photographs. She arrived at the camp in August 1944, a month after the photos were taken, and though the other *Helferinnen* stayed at Auschwitz for an extended period of time (some were sta-

tioned there for years), she remained for only two months. A year after she left the camp, in October 1945, Katzmann was interviewed by US intelligence about her memories of the people at Auschwitz.³ When asked to explain her short employment, Katzmann stated:

I was transferred (as punishment) from Auschwitz for the following reasons: I forwarded a letter for one of the inmates. ...I also gave some bread and cigarettes to a Polish girl, [f]urthermore, I openly discussed together with another girl...the life and activities of... Beer [sic.; final commandant of Auschwitz Richard Baer]...with the consequence that my immediate superior...asked for an immediate transfer.

She does not explain why she disobeyed the rules in such a way, nor does she mention the secrecy declaration she must have signed upon arriving at the camp. The declaration stated (NARA, BDC series 6300), among other things, that she was obliged not to divulge:

either by mouth or in writing, whatever I have been informed. ...I have been made aware of this duty in my service for the SS. I realize that by disobeying this duty I act against the strict order of secrecy keeping.

By discussing Baer's activities, Katzmann violated her secrecy agreement. She was not imprisoned for this offense or for helping a few of the inmates who were forced to work in the offices. She was transferred out of the camp system to the SS recruiting office in Breslau (now Wrocław) and then to an air base. According to her testimony, her punishment consisted merely of transfer.

The SS doctors were in much closer proximity to the prisoners than were the *SS-Helferinnen* and were also directly involved with the killing process. The doctors took turns staffing the "ramp," meaning overseeing the "selections" of prisoners on newly arrived train transports to Birkenau and, in some cases, conducting medical experiments on the prisoners. Some of the Auschwitz doctors appear in photographs throughout the Höcker album, both at the SS retreat at Solahütte and at the camp itself. Notable among them are Dr. Josef Mengele [Fig. 8], who conducted horrific experiments on a wide range of human subjects including twins;

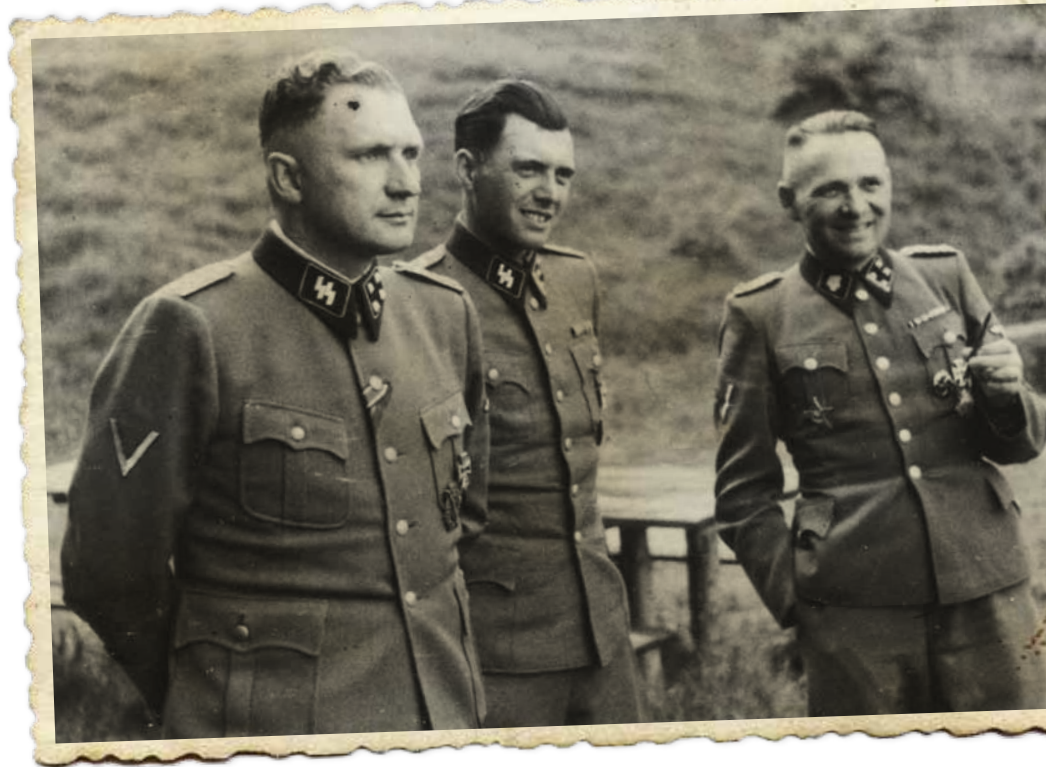


FIG. 8: SS physician Dr. Josef Mengele (center), notorious for his brutal medical experimentation, socializes with Auschwitz-Birkenau commandant Richard Baer and ex-commandant Rudolf Höss, most likely at a farewell party for Höss, who was leaving his post of garrison senior at Auschwitz, end of July 1944.

Dr. Eduard Wirths, the chief physician of the SS garrison at Auschwitz; and Dr. Carl Clauberg, a renowned gynecologist in prewar Germany who took the opportunity to travel to Auschwitz to experiment on forced sterilization methods for women. All appear in this album laughing and joking with higher ranking officers, but one doctor, who also appears once in the album, made a different choice



FIG. 9: Auschwitz commandant Richard Baer (center) walks with ex-commandant Rudolf Höss (right) during the dedication ceremonies for the new SS hospital, 1 September 1944; SS physician Dr. Hans Münch, the only officer to be acquitted during the postwar Cracow Auschwitz trials, is believed to be pictured in the background (with moustache, in back, far right).

Dr. Hans Münch [Fig. 9] was stationed at Auschwitz from the spring of 1943. He was sent there to prevent disease outbreaks among the Auschwitz staff. When, in the spring of 1944, the Hungarian Jewish transports began to arrive at the camp, all the doctors were required to staff the ramp. Münch refused on moral grounds and traveled to Berlin where he successfully pleaded his case. He never participated in a selection. The medical experiments that he did perform were not fatal—in fact, after completing his experiments, he pretended that they were still ongoing and asked his subjects to feign being in tremendous pain. This decision saved them from the gas chamber, the usual destination for the subjects of completed medical experiments.⁴ Münch remained at Auschwitz until the evacuation in January 1945 and spent the last few months of the war at Dachau. There he sought to protect the prisoners he had befriended, going so far as to give Dr. Louis Micheels, a prisoner who had worked under him at both concentration camps, a revolver and ammunition. Micheels (1989) testified that Münch “shook hands ... and wished [me] early freedom” (p. 145). After the war, Münch was briefly imprisoned in Poland and put on trial with 41 other Auschwitz officers. Thanks to the testimony of Micheels and other survivors, Münch was the only defendant acquitted. He participated in documentaries and interviews and met with survivors, describing his experiences at Auschwitz, documenting the facts as he remembered them (so as to provide a strong deterrent to Holocaust deniers), and serving as an example of the right of refusal that other officers chose not to take.⁵

With the examples of Rosemarie Katzmann and Hans Münch, it becomes obvious that the perpetrators of mass murder at Auschwitz were not trapped into committing their crimes. They made the decision to do so, just as Katzmann made the decision to help a few inmates she knew, and Münch made the decision to do all he could in his role as a doctor to help the Auschwitz prisoners. What of Karl Höcker, the owner and creator of the photograph album? In his final plea to the court at the Frankfurt Auschwitz trial in 1965, he stated:

About the happenings in Birkenau, I only learned in the course of time and had nothing to do with them. There was no possibility for me to influence these happenings in any

way. I neither wanted them nor was part of them. I did nobody any harm nor has anyone perished in Auschwitz because of me. (Fritz-Bauer-Institut, 2005)

It is clear that Höcker's statement was patently false, as is the theory that Auschwitz staff members just did their duties and that their refusal to do so would have had serious repercussions for themselves and their families. Neither Katzmann nor Münch was blameless; both could have done more. Their cases, however, force us to look at the perpetrators in Höcker's photograph album and come to the unsettling realization that the happy men and women pictured in it had legitimate choices about their actions and consciously made the decision to perpetrate mass murder.

FITTING THE HÖCKER ALBUM INTO THE LAST SIX MONTHS AT AUSCHWITZ

The Höcker album enables students to engage with a fresh, visual, and candid primary source on Holocaust perpetrators. The use of detailed secondary and primary accounts by such authors as Danuta Czech (1990) and Primo Levi (1961) can enhance students' understanding of where these photos fit into the Holocaust and World War II. Most of the album's

FIG. 10: A CHRONOLOGY OF THE HÖCKER ALBUM

31 May 1944: Luftwaffe General Erich Quade delivers a lecture to Auschwitz SS and IG Farben personnel on aerial warfare.

16 June: SS-Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl and SS-Obergruppenführer Ernst-Heinrich Schmauser visit Auschwitz for a construction conference.

21 June: Auschwitz I (main) camp commandant Richard Baer and his adjutant, Karl Höcker, receive promotions respectively to SS-Sturmbannführer and SS-Obersturmführer.

22 July: Höcker accompanies SS-Helferinnen for an outing at the Solahütte resort.

Circa 29 July: Auschwitz officers hold a party at Solahütte, probably in honor of departing Garrison Senior, SS-Obersturmbannführer Rudolf Höss.

1 September: SS construction authorities “hand over” the newly built Birkenau troop hospital to the concentration camp.

Mid-September: Höcker salutes SS personnel killed in a “terror attack,” with mourning women and children seated behind him.

24 December: Höcker lights Yule trees.

Late December: SS and civilians conduct another mass funeral with military honors for comrades killed in one or more “terror attack(s).”

Early January 1945: Höcker, Baer, SS-Sturmbannführer Eduard Wirths, and other SS personnel hunt rabbits.

annotations are undated and its pages out of chronological order; this brief review [Fig. 10] is intended to facilitate such analysis by addressing questions of where the album intersects with larger historical events and the perpetrators' mindset shortly before the camp's evacuation.⁶ One point students should consider is that the "past" captured in these photos was the perpetrators' "present."

In May 1944, Richard Baer assumed command of the Auschwitz I main camp with Karl Höcker as adjutant and, on July 29, became senior commandant (technically called the "garrison senior") for Auschwitz's three main camps and about 40 subcamps. Auschwitz II-Birkenau reached peak killing capacity in spring/summer 1944. Expanded in the spring, the killing machinery operated at full speed through August, with the destruction of Hungarian Jews from May 15 to July 7, the Czech family camp on July 10–11, and the "Gypsy" camp and Łódź ghetto in August. On October 7, 1944, the Jewish Sonderkommando revolted and destroyed Crematory IV. The dismantlement of the killing complexes began in November and continued until evacuation.⁷

Although the album does not show any genocidal activities, it features many perpetrators, including Rudolf Höss, Josef Mengele, and Otto Moll. Apart from documenting their callousness to the trauma inflicted upon their victims, the photographs of excursions, festivities, and hunting parties illustrate the centrality of comradeship within the SS, in particular for those tasked with mass murder. The few German civilians pictured remind us of Auschwitz's purpose as an "exemplary Eastern [German] settlement" in the Polish town of Oświęcim and of the cozy ties between the SS and German industrialists exploiting slave labor.⁸

The Auschwitz camp complex was still a work-in-progress in late 1944. The album corroborates this point. The well-photographed opening of the Birkenau troop hospital on September 1 shows SS officers marking the project's completion, less than four months before Auschwitz's evacuation [Fig. 11]. They also celebrate Wirths' promotion to *Sturmbannführer* and decoration with the War Service Cross First Class, both awarded, as recalled by his prisoner clerk Hermann Langbein, for his role as the prime mover behind the hospital. Proposed in December 1942 to augment medical facilities for SS personnel afflicted with typhus (caused by SS-created camp conditions), the hospi-



FIG. 11: The Inspector of SS Construction for Upper Silesia, *Sturmbannführer* Karl Bischoff, shakes hands with Auschwitz commandant Richard Baer during the "handover" of the SS troop hospital at Birkenau to the concentration camp, 1 September 1944.

tal's design was subsequently expanded to care for Wehrmacht troops and for accommodating German civilians left homeless by Allied bombings.⁹

Until spring 1944, the war minimally affected Auschwitz. This situation changed with the first Allied photo-reconnaissance mission on the nearby IG Farben chemical factory (IG Auschwitz) on April 4.¹⁰ Soon Allied planes dropped leaflets in the area, pointedly naming Auschwitz staff and warning of future war-crimes trials. The camp erected numerous air-raid shelters for "Aryans," including single-person shelters for guards. The Allies attacked IG Auschwitz five times between August and December. On at least two occasions, bombs accidentally struck Auschwitz I and Birkenau, killing SS personnel.¹¹

The Höcker album shows the war coming home to Auschwitz. Paradoxically, it also reveals how SS officers pushed the fact of the proximity of the war out of mind. Photographs depict Luftwaffe General Erich Quade during a lecture tour on aerial warfare (to which IG Farben personnel were also invited) [Fig. 12, p. 60]; SS generals Oswald Pohl and Ernst-Heinrich Schmauser attending a construction meeting on air protection and the Birkenau troop hospital; and two mass funerals (in September and December) for SS victims of "terror [bombing] attack." Given their late dates, December 24, 1944, and early January 1945, the Yuletide and rabbit hunt images [Fig. 13, p. 60] beg questions about what



FIG 12: Luftwaffe General Erich Quade stands in front of the Aushchwitz Leader Building (*Führerbau*), with Baer, Höcker, and then Auschwitz Garrison Senior Rudolf Höss, 31 May 1944.

the SS thought as Soviet guns rumbled within earshot, only 40 kilometers away at Cracow.¹²

Up to one second before midnight, the photographed SS officers evince few concerns, even while evacuation preparations took place behind the scenes, and with the prospect, however remote, of the hangman's noose. Behind the facade, however, at least one officer, Wirths, confided worries about evacuation in letters to his wife.¹³ The open question of what other SS officers may have thought about the war's progress should be grounded partly in the contexts of dictatorship and war. On the one hand, the regime arrested those publicly manifesting dissent, a practice amplified in wartime as the Propaganda Ministry banged the "Final Victory" drumbeat. On the other, many Nazis cherished hopes of a last-minute miracle. In his-

torian Ian Kershaw's (1999) phrase, the SS "worked toward the Führer," acting upon Hitler's perceived and anticipated wishes, especially in the realm of "racial policy," and trusting his ability to pull Germany's chestnuts out of the fire (p. 93).¹⁴ Although the vicissitudes of war were beyond their control, the death marches commencing on January 17, 1945, only days following the rabbit hunt [Fig. 13], were the Auschwitz officers' responsibility. Even as the Third Reich crumbled, the SS continued to work toward the Führer.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

When set in proper historical context, the Höcker album provides teachers and students of the Holocaust the opportunity to discuss uncomfortable but essential questions: What were the perpetrators thinking? How did they perceive what they were doing and the times in which they lived? How did their comfortable lives contrast with the prisoners' experiences? To what extent did the perpetrators exercise agency? These questions enable students and teachers to go beyond the passive voice and, for that matter, beyond the stereotypes of "the Germans," "the Nazis," or "the SS," to see those who carried out the Final Solution as human beings. ■



FIG 13: SS-Obersturmbannführer Karl Möckel with SS officers, including SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich Jostern (far right) during a rabbit hunt, January 1945.

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NOTES

1. In several places, Müller (1979) describes the uses the Auschwitz SS personnel made of dogs in terrifying detail. Hössler, who is shown celebrating in the Höcker album, coerced the victims into the gas chambers by unleashing the dogs:

Then the door was opened. There, flanked by a pack of intimidating dogs, stood SS guards, their pistols in their hands, ready to fire. The dogs were straining at their leashes; they were only a few meters away from the crowd and waiting to pounce on them as soon as they were unleashed. They bared their fangs viciously and barked loudly... The show of force on the part of the SS had succeeded: the frightened crowd was willing to do whatever was demanded of them. (p. 78)
2. In her book *This Republic of Suffering* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), Drew Gilpin Faust quotes the trustees of the Antietam National Cemetery as writing that "one of the striking indications of civilization and refinement among a people is the tenderness and care manifested by them towards the dead" (p. 61).
3. It is problematic to take Katzmann's testimony at face value, as there are no documents yet found to corroborate her story. But her time at Auschwitz was inexplicably short and her testimony furnishes a plausible explanation.
4. These and other stories can be found in Frankfurter, 2000.
5. Dr. Münch was reinvestigated in the late 1990s after giving an interview to *Der Spiegel* (Schirra, 1996), in which he seems to have stated that he conducted deadly medical experiments and participated in selections. There was insufficient evidence for retrial, and the prosecution did not investigate further as Münch was suffering from severe dementia. These claims, however, are inconsistent with the immediate postwar testimony of survivors and of the testimony Münch gave throughout his life about his role at Auschwitz. Eva Mozes Kor, a survivor who as a child was the victim of Josef Mengele's experiments, met with Münch in 1995 and wrote a defense of him after the 1996 *Der Spiegel* article. See Kor, 2008.
6. In the photo album, only a handful of annotations give specific dates, so the chronological inset was extrapolated from external and internal evidence. The date of Quade's visit to Auschwitz is found in Frei, 2000, p. 447. The date and purpose of the Pohl/Schmauser visit are found in Czech, 1990, pp. 646–647. Baer's and Höcker's promotion dates are found in the album and verified from their SS Officers' files (SSOs) at the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA). The date of the visit by the *SS-Helferinnen* to the Solahütte retreat is found in the album annotations. The date and likely reason for the Solahütte visit by Höss and other high-ranking SS officers are an educated guess based upon the date of Baer's promotion to Auschwitz garrison senior (*Standortälteste*), 29 July 1944, which took place with Höss's departure; the focus on Höss in the photographs; the presence of Höss's "genocidal factotum," SS-Hauptscharführer Otto Moll; and the presence of SS-Obersturmführer Anton Thumann, formerly the protective custody camp leader at Lublin-Majdanek, who may have been working with the Lublin concentration camp "liquidation office" at Auschwitz after Lublin's evacuation on 22 July 1944. Baer's takeover as garrison senior is found in Frei, 2000, p. 475. The date for the "handover" (*Übergabe*) of the SS troop hospital is found in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Zentralbauleitung der Waffen-SS und Polizei Auschwitz collection, Russian State Military Archives (*Osobyi*), RG 11.001 M.03, reel 44, files 502-1-317 and 502-1-356; and Beischl, 2005, p. 88. The approximate date for the first funeral image is deduced from the warm weather summer uniforms; the presence of Birkenau commandant Josef Kramer, who assumed command at Bergen-Belsen in late November 1944; and Czech, 1990, p. 708. The Yule tree's lighting traditionally took place on 24 December; the approximate dating of the remaining three funeral photographs is inferred from winter conditions, and from Czech, 1990, p. 768. The dating of the rabbit hunt comes from Lifton, 1986, p. 403, based upon the correspondence of SS-Sturmbannführer Dr. Eduard Wirths.
7. A student-accessible overview of Auschwitz is Rees, 2005. For specific killing operations in 1944, see Gutman and Berenbaum, 1994. For the estimated 40 subcamps, see Megargee, 2009.
8. On perpetrator comradeship, see Klee, Dressen, and Riess, 1991. Quotation from Nuremberg Industrialist (NI-) 11117, in *Trials of War Criminals before the Nürnberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10, Nürnberg, October 1946–April 1949*, 15 vols. (Nürnberg, 1950–1953), VIII: 386. One album photo shows a German industrialist (most likely from IG Farben) chatting with SS-Obergruppenführer Oswald Pohl, who directed SS business enterprises and slave labor.
9. RG 11.001 M.03, reel 44, files 502-1-317 and 502-1-356; Beischl, 2005, p. 88; and Langbein, 1982, p. 247.
10. The Allied photo-reconnaissance missions inadvertently photographed Jewish deportations at Birkenau, a fact not realized until 1978, when Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) photo interpreters Dino Brugioni and Robert Poirier reexamined World War II-era aerial photography from the Auschwitz area. See *The Holocaust Revisited: A Retrospective Analysis*

of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Extermination Complex (Washington: Central Intelligence Agency, 1979). For criticisms of this book, see Wolfe, 1995, pp. 10–18.

11. On the counterfactual question of whether the Allies should have bombed the Auschwitz killing center or its attendant railway lines, the most comprehensive overview is Neufeld and Berenbaum, 2003. On the likely German response and the air campaign at IG Auschwitz, see White, 2002, pp. 54–76. The attacks in 1944 took place on 20 August (US), 13 September (US), 18 December (US), 23 December (Soviet), and 26 December (US). The Soviets also struck IG Auschwitz twice in January 1945, shortly before its evacuation. The 13 September raid caused 15 SS deaths in the main camp and the 26 December attack killed five SS, the latter when a stray bomb hit the new Birkenau troop hospital. One photograph dated “Summer 1944” (*Sommer 1944*) shows Höcker standing in front of an air-raid shelter designed for a single guard.
12. IG Farben’s invitation appears in RG 11.001 M.03, reel 70, file 502-5-2, Dürrfeld, Rundschreiben, nd, Betr.: “Modernen Luftkrieg,” p. 189. On hearing Soviet guns, see Levi, 1961, p. 151.
13. On Wirths, see Lifton, 1986, p. 398. On evacuation preparations, which began tentatively on 21 December 1944, three days before Höcker lit the Yule trees, see Strzelecki, 2001, pp. 275–279, which reproduces an order for evacuation routes by Nazi Gauleiter Fritz Bracht in case of Soviet advance.
14. Lifton, 1986, pp. 403–404, however, notes that to the end, Wirths did not believe the Führer knew about the Final Solution.

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When we monitor students' reactions to their learning and encourage honest expression of the despair, anger, sadness, impotence, rage, worry, or withdrawal they may be experiencing during an extended unit on the Holocaust, we may learn, much to our dismay, that we have not succeeded in our goal of inspiring students to want to learn more, as this poignant response from an eighth-grade student illustrates. An important discussion for Holocaust educators centers around this disconcerting discovery and raises questions regarding what we have done and what we can do now when our students "can't read . . . think . . . feel anymore."

Students Confront the Holocaust

Michael Goldsmith

A Time of Horror

Hearing the story
Of this tragic time
Of this time of sadness
Of this time of sorrow

I try to imagine
What it was really like
But nothing I can imagine
Could be as horrifying as living it

There are so many questions to ask
But I dare not say more
My eyes fill
I am overwhelmed

I can't read anymore
I can't think anymore
I can't feel anymore
I can't imagine
What the Holocaust was really like.

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pp. 64–69 intentionally omitted

Due to a copyright issue, the essay “The Holocaust Museum as an Extension of the Classroom (essay),” by Brana Gurewitsch, cannot be viewed on line.

A hard copy of this journal, including the Gurewitsch essay, is available on request. E-mail prism@yu.edu and include your full mailing address.

How much knowledge about the Holocaust is too much for students? How early is too early to begin to teach about the event? How do we find the correct balance between teaching about the atrocities and teaching about Jewish agency? Two graduate students from the Azrieli Graduate School of Jewish Education and Administration debate these and other pedagogical questions in the following pages. We welcome your responses to the points of view they put forward.

Point/Counterpoint

Joshua Levy

The Necessity of Darkness: The Pedagogic Imperative to Teach About the Death Camps

The Holocaust, as a historical event, is most extreme. The opposing phenomena of cruelty and kindness have never before been so clearly documented in such shocking ways. Good and evil assume their purest meanings when we examine the story of the European Jews living and dying in the years leading up to, and including, the era of World War II. Indeed, the Holocaust embodies extremes, and often, for teachers, it is difficult to find the balance in presenting the nuances of every aspect of life during this time. It is a struggle, teachers find, to insert uplifting moments, because such minimal goodness is vastly overshadowed by the horror. Yet struggle they do, for the sake of their students' sensibilities and perhaps also for the sake of their own emotional well-being.

"The vexing challenge that confronts us," Lawrence L. Langer (1978) noted, is "to be in touch with the intolerable, and to remain psychologically whole" (p. xiii). "I suppose," he writes 20 years later, "given the history of our indecent century, the impulse to defend the human species must surface periodically as ballast against the darker view" (Langer, 1998, p. 5).

Today's teachers confirm this need to push back against the darkness. "In the years that I have been teaching about the Holocaust," Daniel Meyer (2008) writes in his teacher's guide to Bernard Gotfryd's "A Chicken for the Holidays":

I have come to believe that students must come away from such study with a sense that the Holocaust was not merely a horrible display of man's inhumanity, a litany of atrocities to be examined with morbid fascination and used to inform future generations of the need to be vigilant against evil's insidious and relentless search for will-

ing recruits. It was also the canvas upon which ordinary people painted the story of their tenacious wish to live, love, and celebrate their family and their faith, to preserve all that they held dear. (p. 168)

Surely, this is true. There is much positive behavior to note throughout lessons on the Holocaust: the small kindnesses Jews showed one another despite their own desperate privations; friendships forged among the condemned; acts of resistance and sacrifice documented in ghettos and camps throughout Eastern Europe, including strenuous attempts to adhere to Jewish law; and, of course, the remarkable and notable, if limited, actions of the Righteous Gentiles, who risked their and their families' lives to save Jews.

However, at its core, the Holocaust was a wholly negative and dark period in history. One cannot gloss over the essence of the evil perpetrated in our need to establish the fact that good also existed. This perspective, if too heavily emphasized, risks falsely skewing students' understanding of the Holocaust and its essential bleakness. Allowing a student to think that the Holocaust contained good and bad in equal measure is both ahistorical and a gross injustice to those who were its victims. Responsibility is the key here: responsibility to memory, to the survivors, to the students, and to ourselves. As difficult as it may be to teach about the violent and anguished extremes of the Jewish experience in the ghettos, the forests, and in hiding; and in the transit, concentration, and death camps, a treatment of the Holocaust without their discussion is disingenuous. "To ignore the intolerable, as if death by atrocity were an aberration and not a crucial fact of our mental life, is to pretend an innocence that history discredits and statistics defame" (Langer, 1978, p. xiii).

Of course, of importance to this discussion are the qualifications of age-appropriateness: what, when, and how much; and if certain things should be taught at all to anyone but the Holocaust scholar. However, such considerations play themselves out in all aspects of Holocaust pedagogy and should not be taken as insurmountable obstacles here, where we are addressing teachers of students in grades 11, 12, and beyond. It is obvious that young adults of such ages are already exposed to vicarious violence, atrocity, and gore through the media and other cultural phenomena and, tragically, through our very real life experiences. To quote Langer (1978) again, “The facts of recent history have destroyed much of the sustenance that once fed our conceptions of human dignity” (p. xii). To teach high school juniors and seniors and university students about the realities of the conditions and actions in concentration and death camps may not desensitize them, as some may purport, or force them away from further study, but may rather, in fact, attune them to what they may have hitherto mistaken as mere exaggeration.

CLASSROOM OBJECTIVES

In an effort to narrow the scope of the lessons possible in a unit on this subject, I suggest four specific areas of focus for four separate lessons, taught perhaps over the course of a four-period unit but further condensed or expanded as necessary. Certainly, no two classroom conditions are identical, and some basic assumptions, such as the grade level, must always be made in teaching guides such as this. The areas are:

1. Historical context
2. Literary analysis
3. Comparisons
4. Thought-provoking questioning; Conclusions

Historical Context

In placing this section first, I recognize that I am taking a side in the debate over which to teach first: the narrative or historical context. I believe that I am acknowledging the sensitivity of the subject with the assertion that the history *should* be taught first. Concerns that the “excitement” or “suspense” of the story may be sacrificed when the students “know too much” beforehand fall by the wayside when dealing with the concentration and death camps. A proper framework *must* be established when discussing and teaching this darkest of times. It is incumbent upon the teacher to be knowledgeable about the history of the camps, with time spent on research and much thought on pedagogy before ever broaching this topic. The teacher must *always* know considerably more than the students: *always*.

That said, what must be conveyed to the students is decidedly not everything, and no one high school teacher would have the time or the knowledge base to do so. You

might start in the early 1930s with Hitler's rise and the establishment and maintenance of the camps as prisons for political dissidents such as outspoken journalists or Communists. Increasingly, then, the camps became places to hold certain social “undesirables,” such as homosexuals, trade unionists, Gypsies, mentally handicapped, and others who did not follow or support the Nazi party platform. The genocidal extermination of the Jews as the central purpose of the camps did not arise until later. With the beginning of the Second World War, as more and more “undesirables” came under the rule of Hitler's Germany (namely, Jews in Poland after its takeover), more and more camps were established to hold them.

By mid-1941, though, the SS had begun a small, soon-to-be-expanded program of selected mass killings in the camps themselves by means of gassing. By November of that year, camps specifically designed for that purpose began to be set up (the first was Chelmno; others were Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Auschwitz-Birkenau). Using different methods of execution, the Einsatzgruppen A, B, C, and D had already murdered 300,000 Jews by December 12, 1941; in January of 1942, at the Wannsee Conference, the planned genocide of the Jews as the Final Solution was established as official Nazi policy, and the mass murder of the Jews began in earnest. The horrors of the Einsatzgruppen, gas vans, gas chambers, and crematoria need not be overemphasized, but they should be addressed, as should the inhumane conditions in the camps, including starvation diets, forced labor, humiliations, tortures, random beatings and murders, and the various forms of occasionally extreme Jewish compliance.

Good teachers are aware of the sensitivities of their students; certainly, one should not push students to face this history in *all* its horrific detail. A general discussion, though, is essential. Clearly, more or less detail depends on several factors, not the least of which is the time allotted for this unit of study as well as the context—that is, if this is a history class or a literature, humanities, religion, or psychology class. For those who choose the more detailed approach, there are hundreds of reputable resources, easily found and explored online. A few are:

<http://remember.org/camps>—A poignant database of pictures of some of the camps.

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/cc.html>—A wealth of organized and outlined information about the camps.

<http://fcit.usf.edu/HOLOCAUST/resource/resource.html>—A site dedicated to pedagogic materials including maps, video clips, primary source materials, and relevant links.

<http://www.pbs.org/auschwitz/40-45/index.html>—A unique site and resource analyzing the specifics of the Auschwitz death camp.

Literary Analysis

From my experience, the straightforward history of the time must be illustrated by literary narrative, which, with its intimate and personal portrayals of specific occurrences and encounters, gives students the ability to relate in more profound ways to the grim circumstances and realities of the Holocaust. Elie Wiesel's (1968) "Yom Kippur: The Day Without Forgiveness" for example, is the quintessence of the kind of narrative most appropriate to be taught. It conveys the atmosphere and conflicts intrinsic in the dire situation of its protagonists in very real ways, yet the situation it depicts, while dreadful, does not contain the potentially objectionable, vividly graphic content of other such accounts. Wiesel has mastered the difficult form that is Holocaust literature, offering us truth with a sensitivity that makes its inherent trauma bearable.

As the class begins analysis of the assigned story, the teacher would have decided on appropriate goals, rationale, assessment opportunities, including writing assignments; and methodology, including vocabulary guides, reading prompts, and discussion questions that elicit both affective and cognitive responses, such as:

1. Based on what we have learned in history texts, in what ways do you think this story accurately portrayed the lives of those in the camps?
2. What emotions does this story evoke from you, the reader?
3. What do you think were the intentions of the author in writing this story?

You might also ask students to choose and explain the two or three passages that represent to them the heart of the story.

Comparisons

Students will compare several stories on the same subject to analyze what and how they learned most effectively from each. (A wealth of such stories is available; additional choices might include Cynthia Ozick's [1980, 1993] "The Shawl" as well as "The Verdict" and "Friendly Meetings," both by Sara Nomberg-Przytyk [1985].) They may also reflect on the different understandings they gained from literary narrative and history texts.

Thought-Provoking Questioning; Conclusions

Increasingly, classroom methodology has been focusing more and more on the benefits of involving the students in classroom decisions (Marzano, Marzano, & Pickering, 2003; Hardin, 2007). As such, this final section, though *ipso facto*, revolves around student debate over the validity of teaching this material. Just as teachers may debate if and how to teach about the death camps, so, too, can involving the students in such discussions be healthy and productive. Such conversa-

tion allows each learner to share and elicit validation for his or her feelings and also offers possibilities for expression of individual coping and learning styles.

Some follow-up questions:

1. Do you think the workings of the concentration and death camps should be taught in high schools? Is there anyone to whom this should *not* be taught?
2. What value is to be gained by learning the details of the death camps? Is there such a thing as too much when it comes to teaching such material?
3. Is memory enough of a motive to learn something? Are there also lessons to take away?
4. What responsibilities do we, as teachers and students, have to the victims/survivors?
5. What are alternative ways to learn this material?

CONCLUSION

There are few subjects as sensitive as the Holocaust, and no portion of that time in history is more delicate and difficult to teach than that of the concentration and death camps. As educators who endeavor to teach this material, we need not deny the difficulty of our task. Indeed, we should share our apprehension with the students and involve them in the discussion and debate over the value and the depth of the teaching of this aspect of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust is vivid on our historical map. To not teach it would be a grave injustice. To teach its full horror would be a nightmarish experience not appropriate or possible to be shared in the average classroom. Yet as we strive to honor and memorialize those who suffered at the bloodied hands of the perpetrators, we must find a way—a sensitive way—to confront and to teach at least some of its grimmest truths, savage as they might be.

"Auschwitz must and will forever remain a question mark only," Wiesel (1997) wrote. The death camps are unending question marks, but questions about them should be rightfully asked nonetheless. What happened in them? Why did it happen? How could it have happened? What does it all mean? These are questions that the teacher of a class on the Holocaust will undoubtedly face. If, through the foregoing teaching, the student has walked away with nothing but an appreciation for those questions—a sense of the heartbreaking impossibility that was the Holocaust—then we will have done our duty. ■

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Point:

Emily Amie Witty

The Obligation to Teach the Light:

A Response to Joshua Levy's "The Necessity of Darkness: The Pedagogic Imperative to Teach About the Death Camps"

I recall vividly my 11th-grade Holocaust education experience when I was a student in an all-girls yeshiva high school. As my classmates and I entered the ballroom where all large gatherings and assemblies were held, each of us— young, unsuspecting, and unprepared—found a seat facing a giant movie screen. The lights dimmed, and then before my eyes came images that seared and burned my soul and numbed my thoughts. The story of the Holocaust unfolded shockingly through images of haunted and wandering skeletal figures staring with empty eyes into the narrating camera. I felt no sympathy for them or anyone in the film; I could make no sense of what I was seeing or why I had to see it. Corpses were stacked in rigid piles; bodies, naked and unburied, lay sprawled in the pits where they had been tossed. As the photographs filled the screen, I felt no connection to the ghastly scenes; I instinctively shut my eyes to block them, and I kept my eyes closed tightly and hid my face for the remainder of the film. I countered the grim factual narration by whispering to myself, "What is this evil that has been thrust upon me? Why are my teachers subjecting me to this?"

Today, an educator myself, I reflect on the motivation of my teachers then, and I confess that there is a part of me that understands. I, too, have the urge to show all the evils that were done to us, the Jews. There is a part of me that feels so victimized and yes, angry, that I also want to scream the suffering of my people to the entire universe. I want to thrust before the eyes of the world the images that I was forced to view as a teenager and have my story, the story of the Holocaust, seen, heard, felt, and understood. I want others to not only witness but also somehow to experience viscerally the horror and trauma of those ghastly and tragic figures whose eyes met mine on that screen. I understand the Holocaust educator who says about his complacent 10th-graders, "I simply want the words to burn their comfortable souls and leave them scarred for life" (Thorton, 1990).

I understand the feeling, but I reject it. Precisely because I *am* a teacher, and one who teaches the story of the Holo-

caust, I am committed to ensuring that no students of mine will ever be turned away from learning about this history the way I was. Thus I have spent the last number of years in Jerusalem and in New York learning both the history and the pedagogy of the Holocaust and have been privileged to learn from giants in both fields. I have come to understand that trying to teach about the Holocaust by using media and methods that serve to transfer to our unsuspecting students our own adult outrage and anger about what happened cannot and does not help new learners embrace this study and seek to learn more. It did not work for me when I was a teenager because I was shocked and appalled and repelled; it does not work today. Psychologically, it cannot work, because learners do not seek out pain; they turn away. If they are burned and scarred by the fire, they will not return to touch it again. Teaching the darkness from beginning to end is a model doomed to fail.

I feel compelled, therefore, to respond to several points in Joshua Levy's (2009) pedagogic editorial in this issue, in which he makes the case for "the necessity" to teach the darkness. Levy begins with his concern that teachers, unable or unwilling to confront the realities of the concentration and death camps, will instead distort the history and focus too heavily on a few moments of goodness. He warns, correctly:

One cannot gloss over the essence of the evil perpetrated in our need to establish the fact that good also existed. This perspective, if too heavily emphasized, risks falsely skewing students' understanding of the Holocaust and its essential bleakness. Allowing a student to think that the Holocaust contained good and bad in equal measure is both ahistorical and a gross injustice to those who were its victims. (p. 70)

He continues, "The horrors of the... gas chambers and crematoria need not be overemphasized, but they should be addressed, as should the inhumane conditions in the camps, including a starvation diet, forced labor, humiliations, tortures, random beatings and murders" (p. 71). He suggests that the lessons commence with a historical overview, beginning with Hitler's rise to power. "You might start in the early 1930s with Hitler's rise and the establishment and maintenance of the camps as prisons," he writes (p. 71).

I agree that one must teach the historical events of the Holocaust; in the absence of this information, there can be no meaningful conversation with students. However, I disagree with Levy's suggested starting point and propose instead the centrality of teaching about Jewish life before Hitler: the vibrant Jewish communities of Eastern and Western Europe, the yeshivot and centers of Torah learning, the contribution of Jews to the arts, music, and science of the time. Levy suggests that the focus of teaching should be on

Hitler and his collaborators, and by so doing, he brings the darkness quickly and decisively into the classroom. I believe that we should teach first about the Jews—an element of "light"—and only then about their oppressors. I submit that it is only the elements of light in the blinding darkness of the Holocaust that enables one to be able to see and confront the suffering, despair, and anguish of this historical event. As Holocaust historian and museum curator Yitzchak Mais teaches, we must tell the story through the Jewish narrative and not the Nazi narrative.

Levy seems to suggest as well that if we do not talk about the horrors of the gas chambers, then our students won't be able to grasp fully or appreciate the suffering of the Jews. Yet there can be little doubt about the suffering endured by the Jews long before Auschwitz and Treblinka. There is the suffering of the German Jew whose business was boycotted by those who were his neighbors and friends, who had his long-standing German citizenship revoked, who watched as his children were first humiliated in, and then expelled from, their schools. There is the anguish of the German and Austrian Jews who endured Kristallnacht, who were interned in camps, who had to make the "choiceless choice" of the Kindertransport. There is the mortification of the Polish Jews whose beards were torn from their flesh on public streets by laughing, taunting Poles and the fear and despair of the Jews forced into ghettos. There is the terror of the Jews throughout Europe who were rounded up and deported or forced to seek hiding places. Levy seems to say that our students will comprehend the evil of Nazism only if we expose them to the Nazi terror of the years 1941–1945. Is the terror against the Jews during the years of 1933–1941 somehow insufficiently evil for students to get the point?

When I reflect on my educational philosophy, I remember that I teach children first and foremost; only secondarily do I teach the subject of the Holocaust. In the same vein, the Holocaust, first and foremost, is a story of individual men, women, and children; only secondarily is it history, a collection of facts and figures. It is with this principle in mind that I approach my classroom, and this principle informs my choice to tell the history through the voices and stories of the Jews rather than the perpetrators.

This widespread depiction of Jews as innocent but passive victims presents a fundamentally skewed picture of what was a far more complex and nuanced situation, and prevents people from viewing the behavior of Jews during the Holocaust in a positive light. (Mais, 2007, p. 18)

If we do not present Jews as active participants in their own history, and if we do not allow our students the time, space, and security to explore the extent of the evil according to their cognitive and emotional capacity and tolerance

at their own pace and in their own way, *then* we risk skewing the history. We owe it to our students to teach the “more complete perspective [that] will reveal that Jews were not passive victims, but active agents who responded with a surprisingly wide range of resourceful actions” (Mais, p. 18). This teaching does not in any way negate the Nazi net that ensnared European Jewry—quite the opposite. Through learning about the responses and actions of the Jews, students begin to understand for themselves the challenges and hardships that confronted the Jews under Nazi occupation.

Levy appropriately suggests the inclusion of narratives, and he recommends Elie Wiesel’s “Yom Kippur: The Day Without Forgiveness,” for example, as “the quintessence of the kind of narrative most appropriate to be taught” (p. 77). While one might argue that the story does show Jews “responding”—in this case, refusing to fast for Yom Kippur—the overriding depiction here is of suffering, martyred, despairing Jews, victims of the Nazis rather than active agents. Here and all too often, our default position is to choose narratives that depict Jews as passive recipients of Nazi cruelty.

In addition, as educators we must always consider our audience and the background knowledge and experience they bring into our classroom. Any child familiar with the holidays on the Jewish calendar knows that the Jewish people have been the target of persecution and repeated attempts at annihilation. Students are keenly aware of the strength and voice of the perpetrator in history. What the student has yet to be exposed to is *the strength and the voice of the Jew* in history. Thus it is critical to teach Jewish agency, particularly for Jewish students. As Holocaust historian Yehuda Bauer (1973) suggested:

A Jew seeking to understand what his Jewishness means must take into account his people’s greatest catastrophe. He must ask himself, for example: How did the values and attitudes to which I am heir stand up under the most terrible test in history? (pp. 55–56)

With the rise of the Nazi Party, “Jews *responded* [emphasis mine] to what they perceived to be a brutal—but temporary—situation” (Mais, 2007, p. 19). As the anti-Jewish legislation isolated the Jews from their German neighbors and Jews were no longer permitted to go to German schools or play on German sports teams, Jews created their own schools and teams. They did not simply accept the status quo; they made choices and were active agents in their history. A glimpse into Jewish life during the period of their imprisonment in ghettos reveals a vibrant and flourishing network of communal activities. Lucy S. Dawidowicz (1976) writes:

Despite the attempts of the Germans to impose a state of barbarism upon them, the Jews persisted in maintain-

ing or in re-creating their organized society and their culture. ...In nearly all the ghettos, the Jews conspired against the Germans to provide themselves with arts, letters, and society—above all, with the protection of the community against man’s solitariness and brutishness. Never was human life suspended. (p. 327)

Too often the only voice brought into the history classroom in general and the Holocaust classroom in particular, is that of the perpetrator. We hear the voices of Adolf Hitler and Adolf Eichmann but not the voices of Yocheved Farber, a four-year-old from Vilna; or Moshe Flinker, a teenager from the Netherlands. Neither Yocheved nor Moshe survived the Holocaust; we owe it to them and the millions of others who did not survive to bring the Jewish voice to our students. We owe it to the mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, husbands, and wives that the Nazis murdered to let *their* voices be heard and remembered. To do anything less is to condemn them to a second death.

As Holocaust educators—as educators of children—we must practice responsibly. We must resist the urge to show violent images in an attempt to take a shortcut to elicit a quick visceral response from our students and to provoke them to feel our pain and rage. Instead, we need to develop the resources, skills, and emotional resilience to present this history in an age-appropriate way with the goal of cultivating within our students the desire to learn more about this chapter in human history. ■

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Counterpoint:

Joshua Levy

Finding the Right Proportion:

A Response to Emily Amie Witty's Response

I appreciate the opportunity to respond to Emily Amie Witty's comments about my editorial. I'll begin with her personal anecdote—an admittedly powerful and important example of the potential dangers of teaching the darkness. The progression of her article implies that were the Holocaust to be taught in the way I suggest, it would mirror the experience she had in her adolescence.

Witty, however, has interpreted my statements as an either/or scenario. I insist that the horror be taught, ergo I insist that *only* the horror be taught. She takes issue with my examples in a potential lesson of the historical context of the death camps, implying that my entire Holocaust curriculum is contained therein. Yet I mention explicitly that the good must be taught as well: "There is much positive behavior to note throughout lessons on the Holocaust" (p. 70).

My suggesting the death camps as crucial components of a unit of study was certainly not to say that they should be taught to the exclusion of everything else; rather, I maintain that everything else should not and cannot be taught to the exclusion of the camps. My article is titled "The Necessity of Darkness," not "The Necessity of *Only* the Darkness." I urge readers to rebalance the classrooms that have skewed the Holocaust too far toward the redeemable. I would surely not do so only to have the scales unevenly tip in the other direction. Yet Witty asserts that not only would I have a teacher present the bad to the exclusion of the good, but I would also insist on teaching the camps to the exclusion of the rest of the bad. "Yet there can be little doubt about the suffering endured by the Jews long before Auschwitz and Treblinka" (p. 74), she writes, as if I would deny it.

Witty agrees that the Holocaust should be taught through the lenses of individual people and acknowledges my emphasis on narrative and the personal stories contained therein, but she rejects the specific narrative I chose in spite of my stated reason: Wiesel "offer[s] us truth with a sensitivity that makes its inherent trauma bearable" (p. 72). When she implies that my methods would "not allow our students the time, space, and security to explore" the Holocaust "at their own pace and in their own way" (pp. 74–75), she does not

recognize that I do qualify lessons based on age-appropriateness and other such markers of emotional maturity, directly addressing such concerns through my suggestion that Holocaust educators involve their students in discussions of Holocaust pedagogy in the classroom itself.

Witty suggests that I speak in absolutes, and in doing so, engage in a disservice to the very goals I wish to accomplish. I wonder if Witty does the very same when she writes that it is her "choice to tell the history through the voices and stories of the Jews rather than the perpetrators" (p. 74). Her outlook on Holocaust education is an either/or statement—Jews or Nazis—and she has chosen. I wonder if Witty would respond to this by asserting that she, too, did not mean to say the above to the exclusion of everything else; that, of course, we must endeavor to explore every aspect of the Holocaust without improperly skewing the nature of the era; and that, as educators, we seek to avoid absolutes. In that case, perhaps, there is little fundamental difference between us after all. ■

"I write to examine inherited grief and trauma," Second-Generation poet Elizabeth Rosner (Fishman, 2007, p. 563) explains. When Rosner's father comes to her Hebrew school class and writes the number 6,000,000 on the board, Rosner remembers that she didn't "know what else he talked about that Sunday morning, what stories he told; I just remember all those zeroes lined up against each other."

Today, though, our students are not children of survivors, and most American educators teach students who have no family connection at all to the victims and survivors. How is the "grief and trauma" of the Holocaust different when it is not directly inherited? If, when today's young people watch documentaries, they no longer wonder "which emaciated face" is the face of their father, is their viewing experience any less painful?

On the other hand, how do we understand and accommodate the students for whom every face *might* have been the face of their father? Poet Tamara Fishman wrote, when she was just 13 and steeped in learning, "A part of me died with those people whose faces I have never seen." She will "hear the clatter of the cattle cars . . . forever"; she "did not know, but . . . remember[s]"; she thinks, "It could have been my grandparents . . . It could have been me, too." Such revelations underscore the necessity of vital research for educators: how do students today cope with learning about the Holocaust?

Elizabeth Rosner

Homework

What do I say to them, the ones who say they didn't know about the ovens and the gas chambers, the ones who say *I didn't know they were actually killing people, I mean I just didn't know*. What do I say? It happens all the time: casual announcements at various gatherings, pieces of conversation floating lightly into the air as if I am someone they can confess to and be reassured *It's all right, it's all right*. Is it? I never had the luxury of not knowing. I knew even before I knew, had this feeling in my bones that something was terribly wrong and there was nothing anyone could do about it, especially me. Nothing. I mean fifth grade, studying about World War Two on a worksheet, filling in the blanks, and there is one sentence about Hitler invading Poland, one sentence. I'm thinking about my mother, about how that one sentence is supposed to summarize being herded into the ghetto and the cousins killed and the hiding in the basement of the peasants' house and

the aunts killed and the dogs barking and the terror of every moment—one sentence on a worksheet is all. I'm ten years old but I know this blank can't be so easily filled in, and I'm noticing another sentence about America entering the war, and I'm thinking *What took so long?* And where is the part about all the dead people? Where is the part about yellow stars and Zyklon B and the soap made from burning bodies? Where is the story that people keep telling me they didn't hear until they were older, until just recently in fact, when they saw *Schindler's List* on TV?

Elizabeth Rosner

My Father's Souvenirs

One.

A mustard-yellow tattered star, and
JUDE mimicking the Hebrew alphabet.
A rectangular patch for
a faded blue prison number.
A pale yellow file card with a
small, passport-size “mug shot”
of a fifteen-year-old boy with a newly shaved head
and protruding ears, a mouth held tightly closed
and wide, wide dark eyes.

Two.

When I was eight years old,
my father came to my Hebrew school class.
He asked how many people
lived in our city; a few of us mumbled

uncertain guesses, no one knew.
He took a piece of chalk and wrote 80,000
on the board, said this was how many.
I thought about shopping malls and schools
and neighborhoods, about the vastness of my world.
Then he wrote another number on the board: 6,000,000.
I don't know what else he talked about that
Sunday morning, what stories he told; I just remember
all those zeroes lined up against each other.

Three.

In my eleventh grade history class,
a room full of bored adolescents,
we are about to see a film and the teacher refuses,
for once, to tell us anything about it.
The projector hums and flutters, the room is dark
and full of whispers, giggles, chairs scraping the floor.
When I realize the film is *Night and Fog*,
my body stiffens. I have seen it before;
I know about the mass graves, piles of eyeglasses and
suitcases and shoes, the living skeletons
huddled behind barbed wire.
The film gets caught in the mechanism and begins
to flap and sputter; someone gets up
to fix it but I'm already out of my chair and
heading for the hall where I can lean against
the cold metal lockers and close my eyes.
It's the only way to stop myself
from wondering which emaciated face is his.

ELIZABETH ROSNER is the author of two novels, *The Speed of Light* (Ballantine, 2001) and *Blue Nude* (Ballantine 2006), as well as the poetry collection *Gravity* (Small Poetry Press, 1998). She lives in Berkeley, California.

Tamara Fishman

I Did Not Know, but I Remember

I can hear the clatter of the cattle cars.
It echoes forever in my mind.
My ears have never heard the sound,
and yet it is ingrained in my soul.
I did not know those who were tossed into the flaming inferno
and taken out,
black ashes.
I did not know those whose burning flesh smelled
for miles around,
still in the air.
I did not know those who were made to walk the death march,
slowly dying,
and were then gunned down not because of what they had done
but because of what they had been born.
I did not know those who were live guinea pigs for “doctors”
such as Josef Mengele
and later died or were permanently scarred
from the effects of the torture.
I did not know those who bravely fought
against a monstrous tyrant
and did not live to see it dwarfed.
I did not know those marked for death,
and yet they are a part of me.
I am bound to them with a special bond,
as still I think, “It could have been my grandparents,
parents, friends.
It could have been me, too.”
A part of me died with those people whose faces I have never seen.
A part of me is dead and buried
in the grave of millions.

TAMARA FISHMAN, who was 13 when she wrote this poem, is a singer-songwriter and former news editor who is currently attending law school at the University of Virginia. Her debut CD, *The Hunger and the Silence*, is available at CDBaby.com and iTunes.

This essay by psychologist Naomi L. Baum addresses the summative concerns of vicarious traumatization, resilience, and post-traumatic growth and explores “how to present material [about the Holocaust] in ways that promote growth and minimize traumatization.” Working with Batya Rotter and Estie Reidler, Baum presents the rationale, structure, activities, and results of her original “resilience seminar for Holocaust educators,” a model for all of us who teach this subject to students of any age.

Naomi L. Baum
Batya Rotter
Estie Reidler

Building Resilience for Holocaust Educators

Holocaust studies have burgeoned in the past 30 years, becoming part of the mainstream curriculum in many schools. As fewer survivors live to tell their stories directly to students, teachers are now responsible for transmitting both the cognitive and the affective components of the event. It is important to look not only at the educational gains but also at the risks that this may engender. Psychologist and educators agree that exposure to traumatic events, even vicarious exposure, affects both children and adults and is related to post-traumatic symptoms and distress (Salston & Figley, 2003; Collins, 2003; Baranoswky, Young, Johnson-Douglas, Williams-Keeler, & McCarrey, 1998; Yehuda, Wainberg, Binder-Brynes, & Duvdevani, 1998).

In 2008, when French President Nicolas Sarkozy suggested that every 10-year-old French child be required to “adopt a 10-year-old Holocaust victim” and to learn about this child’s life and death, many psychologists, educators, and politicians were concerned about the psychological ramifications of this activity (“Sarkozy Defends,” 2008), and his suggestion was subsequently rejected. Indeed, concern over the emotional burden that learning about the Holocaust can present is not without warrant, yet there is little literature that focuses on the emotional and developmental impact of Holocaust studies on either adults or children.

This paper will first review the literature on vicarious traumatization and resilience and then describe a course developed for Holocaust educators at the Efrata College for Education in Jerusalem titled “Coping: A Resilience Seminar for Holocaust Educators,” taught in the fall of 2007. The course was initiated to help teachers develop sensitivity to their students’ needs and learn how Holocaust studies may affect both them and their students. In this course, emphasis was placed on understanding the nature of resilience in the face of trauma in general, and in particular as it relates to Holocaust studies.

VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION

The term *vicarious* or *secondary* traumatization describes a phenomenon in which a person who has not been directly exposed to trauma displays post-traumatic symptoms as a result of dealing closely with someone who has experienced severe trauma (Salston & Figley, 2003; Collins, 2003). Studies of helpers, including nurses, therapists, and providers of humanitarian aid, have found increased levels of post-traumatic symptoms as a result of exposure to victims’ stories (Pulido, 2007; Hyman, 2005). Researchers have found that helpers may become anxious, depressed, and fearful, exhibiting symptoms similar to those of the people they are trying to help (Salston & Figley, 2003).

In the case of the Holocaust, secondary traumatization often refers to the maladaptive symptoms displayed by children of survivors or those who grew up in close proximity to Holocaust survivors (Mor, 1990). For example, in a study of 100 participants drawn from clinical as well as community settings, Yehuda et al. (1998) found that current and lifetime post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was significantly more prevalent in children of Holocaust survivors than in normal controls. In another study, Baider et al. (2000) found that women who were children of Holocaust survivors displayed higher levels of distress when confronted with stressful situations such as diagnosis with breast cancer (Baider, Hadani, Perry, Avramov, & De-Nour, 2000). These studies indicate that secondary traumatization may have relatively far-reaching effects on individuals’ coping mechanisms in many spheres of life.

Studies have also documented symptoms of vicarious traumatization that occurred through indirect exposure to disturbing testimonials and depictions, such as media, photography, and literature (Halasz, 2002; Lindquist, 2006). Felman (1992) described her students as being “in crisis,”

experiencing both “panic” and “despair” after watching videos of survivor testimony. One anecdotal study by Berman (2001) explored the effect of reading distressing novels, which, while not related to the Holocaust, addressed death and suicide in a way that encouraged readers to empathize with the novels’ fictional characters. Berman found that over the course of the year, a number of his students complained to him that reading these novels was causing them to feel depressed and even suicidal.

Along similar lines, the relatively new phenomenon of educational trips for high school and college students to visit the sites of concentration camps and ghettos in Poland is exposing students even more directly to the traumatic horrors of the Holocaust. One of the major goals of these visits is to help students empathize with the pain of Holocaust victims and to convey the horror of the Holocaust (Blum, 2004). By taking students to visit places where such atrocities occurred, the risk of vicarious traumatization becomes an even greater concern. Silverman et al. (1999) documented students’ reactions both immediately following and six months after one such student trip to Poland. The study found that immediately following the trip, students reported increased post-traumatic stress and heightened risk for PTSD symptoms. At the six-month follow-up, students exhibited similar and sometimes even more severe reactions. Not surprisingly, while these symptoms were exhibited by only a small minority of students, they were most likely to appear in students who previously displayed some type of psychological disturbance.

RESILIENCE AND POST-TRAUMATIC GROWTH IN THE SHADOW OF TRAUMA

Resilience is often the term used in the post-traumatic context to understand how most people who have been exposed to traumatic experiences continue to lead their lives in a constructive fashion and return quickly to everyday functioning (Bonanno, 2004). The term refers both to the processes through which an individual recovers from a traumatic event (Luthar, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000) and to the personal and interpersonal characteristics that aid a person in overcoming adversity (Masten, 2001; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Garmezy, 1991). Factors such as adequate social support, healthy family history, and high intelligence may distinguish a resilient individual and help him or her to succeed in the face of difficult circumstances (Brewin, Andrews, & Valentine, 2000; Bonanno, 2004).

Post-traumatic growth (PTG) is another term that refers to an individual’s ability to grow through traumatic experiences (Park & Helgeson, 2006; Linley & Joseph, 2005). Where resilience connotes a return to, or maintenance of, normal levels of functioning after trauma, post-traumatic growth refers to exceeding prior functioning, learning from adversity, and

finding meaningful ways to cope and grow after trauma. Hobfoll and colleagues (2007) have found that subjects who reported higher levels of stress also reported higher levels of post-traumatic growth. Cadell and Hemsworth (2003) studied post-traumatic growth in caretakers of AIDS patients and found that those who had access to spiritual and social supports evidenced more post-traumatic growth than their counterparts. However, it is important to point out that Pat-Horenczyk and Brom (2007) note that there have been significant methodological issues in measuring PTG and question the meaning of these results.

The studies of resilience and post-traumatic growth are relevant to the discussion of the Holocaust because they point to the potential benefits of teaching the difficult topics in the Holocaust curriculum. While concerns regarding increased risk of vicarious traumatization caused by exposure to Holocaust studies were elucidated above, such exposure also presents a unique opportunity that can lead to growth, both emotional and spiritual, when presented appropriately and sensitively. The question that will be explored below is how to present material in ways that promote growth and minimize traumatization.

COPING: A RESILIENCE SEMINAR FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS

Overview

Building personal and professional resilience was the stated goal of this course, taught in the fall of 2007 at the Efrata Teachers College, Jerusalem. The impetus for this course was expressed by the director of the Holocaust Studies program at Efrata: “Many people, both students in our College and seasoned teachers, have told me that they are interested in Holocaust studies but afraid of them. They feel they will not be able to cope with the difficult material.” This spurred her to consider the importance of a course on coping with trauma and stress. As a result, she turned to the primary author, a senior psychologist who directs the Resilience Unit at the Israel Center for the Treatment of Psychotrauma (ICTP).

This course grew out of a workshop protocol entitled “Building Personal and Professional Resilience” (BPPR), which we developed at the ICTP over the last six years as we worked with educational teams that had been exposed to trauma during the difficult years of the Second Intifada in Israel and in the wake of the Second Lebanese War (Baum, 2005; Baum et al. in press). We chose to work with teachers, as they are natural partners in developing resilience within the student body. Rather than relying on sporadic visits of outside experts in the wake of traumatic exposure, the BPPR workshops focus on developing teachers’ self-awareness, sensitivity, and skills so as to embed mental-health objectives in each classroom. We have collected evaluation data from several hundred teacher participants to examine the

effectiveness of this model and have found that teachers show significant change in four factors—knowledge, skills, behavior, and awareness—and do not show significant change in attitudes (Baum, 2005; Baum et al. in press). Using this model in the Holocaust Studies curriculum, we focused on teachers' ability to cope with secondary stress reactions and vicarious trauma as they (and oftentimes their students, as many of them were actively teaching in a variety of settings) encountered readings, stories, and visits to museums and other Holocaust-related sites. Our goal was to increase educators' resilience by expanding their understanding of trauma, their self-awareness, and their skill base for dealing with emotions, both their own and those of their students.

The four underlying objectives of the workshop, known as the four Ss, are presented throughout the sessions:

- Self-awareness and regulation
- Support for feelings
- Strengths and personal resources for coping
- Significance, meaning, and hope

These Ss, which were culled from the resilience literature, form the cornerstone of the teacher training and inform the ideas and hands-on activities that the teachers subsequently implement in their classrooms. We have found in our work with thousands of teachers in Israel and internationally that by becoming aware of how they are coping on a personal level, teachers can more effectively communicate with their students about traumatic events. In addition, teachers develop the confidence to acknowledge difficult emotions and allow them into the normative classroom discussion. They learn to identify overt and subtle symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder and learn what referral services are available for them and their students, thus enhancing their ability to identify students who need these services. Teachers develop a repertoire of classroom activities involving emotions and resilience-building. The ultimate goal of the BPPR intervention is to encourage teachers to apply their new skills and tools in their classrooms, where children can then learn through example and through exercises how to identify difficult emotions, talk about them, and utilize their own internal resources to cope with possible distress. Thus, teachers can change the environment of the classroom into one that encourages social and emotional communication and offers a supportive and caring space for growth.

In applying the BPPR model to the framework of a course within a college environment, we expanded the original four sessions to seven, but we insisted on three-hour class meetings so that there would be sufficient time for a psychoeducational component along with an experiential exercise in each class meeting. Class participants came from a variety of backgrounds. They included students enrolled in a full-

time study program at the College, veteran teachers taking the course for in-service credits, and teachers participating in a two-year certificate course of study to become Holocaust educators. It should be noted that a large number of participants had personal contact with the Holocaust, especially as Second or Third Generation descendants. While this topic has not been researched, it would not be surprising to find a high percentage of Holocaust educators who have a personal connection to the Holocaust.

The course was run as a group workshop, a structure that proved to be challenging within a college environment where frontal lecture courses with tests are standard. Each session opened with a "check-in circle" in which participants were asked to report to the group how they were doing, share any thoughts or questions that had come up over the week that pertained to course material from the week before, or discuss any other matter they felt relevant. This opening structure helped create a workshop setting, where an emphasis on sharing and growth replaced a focus on tests and final marks. In addition, during the first session, the ground rules for the group, which included confidentiality, no cross-talk or interrupting others, and punctuality, were covered and agreed upon by all. Table 1 details the themes that were expanded on over the course of the seminar

All topics in the workshop were presented with particular emphasis on how they related both to the Holocaust and to students of the Holocaust. For example, when explaining the difference between stress and trauma, we compared actually living through the Holocaust to, for instance, visiting a death camp or watching a movie about the concentration camps, to examine what would define one situation as traumatic while another as merely stressful. During the meetings dealing with emotions and empathic communication, we spent considerable discussion time on how to talk with young children about Holocaust-related subjects.

In meetings that explored meaning and hope, the work of Viktor Frankl took on particular significance in light of his personal history in Auschwitz.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The initial phase of the course focused on the teachers themselves, allowing time and space for the teachers to develop greater self-awareness and understanding regarding both their own motivations to engage in Holocaust studies and the effects of their studies on their personal lives. The importance of this stemmed from our understanding that before teachers can approach their students and begin to apply the resilience-building classroom activities within their own classrooms, they must spend some time developing self-awareness, identifying their own strengths and weaknesses, and building personal resilience resources. Workshop activities geared to these goals were planned and implemented in the first two sessions. It is

TABLE 1: BUILDING PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESILIENCE—FOUR THEMES

THEMES	PSYCHO-EDUCATION THEMES	ACTIVITIES	SKILLS	COMMENTS
One: Self-awareness and self-regulation	a. Developing a common language b. Defining resilience, stress, and trauma c. Understanding trauma in children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breathing Minute meditation Where am I? Where do I want to be? Drawings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma vocabulary Understanding the normal trajectory of healing from trauma Self-expression Self-regulation Mindfulness 	Trauma creates deregulation in both physiological and psychological responses. Understanding this and understanding ourselves is the first step to resilience-building.
Two: Support for feelings	a. Empathic communication b. Accessing feelings c. Expressing feelings d. Eliciting feelings in others e. Childhood fears	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clay-molding activity involving feelings Breathing exercises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-regulation Self-awareness 	Developing empathy, initially to oneself, paves the way to listening to others, especially students. Creating a listening environment aids healthy emotional development.
Three: Strengths and coping strategies	a. Models of coping b. BASIC-Ph model for coping resources (Lahad and Ayalon, 2000).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coping: What works? What doesn't? (Worksheets) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying successful coping Initiating new coping activities 	BASIC-Ph model allows participants to analyze their coping styles, discussing whether they are predominantly based on belief, affect, social, imagination, cognitive, or physical.
Four: Significance: Creating meaning and hope	Understanding post-traumatic growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meaningful moments: exercise Writing a prayer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities for bringing meaning into the classroom 	Creating meaning can take many forms, ranging from creating narrative to developing action plans to help others.

important to note that our expectation in working with participants who were currently teaching was that they would choose some of the workshop activities and use them in the classroom. They were encouraged to adapt these activities to suit both their students' needs and classroom constraints.

In addition to the self-awareness exercises, relaxation exercises were introduced and practiced. Relaxation and guided imagery are central to this work because trauma and trauma-related distress often disturb one's ability to self-regulate. Practicing breathing and relaxation and learning

various mindfulness-based exercises are the key tools for building self-regulation in traumatic and stressful situations. We have had much success in supporting teachers as they dare to bring these exercises into the classroom with children at all age levels. It often takes a bit of practice on the part of the teacher, and we encourage all teachers to practice first at home and become entirely comfortable with these exercises before attempting them in the classroom. Teachers have often been surprised to see how willing children of all ages are to participate in relaxation exercises in school.

The third and fourth class meetings focused on supporting emotional exploration and understanding emotions and empathic communication. Working with nonverbal media, such as modeling clay and therapeutic cards, participants first explored their own world of emotions and began to discuss the place that emotions had in their classrooms, particularly when confronting the Holocaust. It was surprising to most participants how they had overlooked this seemingly essential piece in their Holocaust pedagogy to date.

Vignette: A student teacher participating in the seminar reported on an activity that she had done in her first-grade classroom using drawing as a medium. After she read aloud a story that had Holocaust themes deemed appropriate for first grade, she asked students to draw using only black crayons. She was surprised by some of the students' reactions. One student burst into tears and was too frightened to draw. Other students expressed their distress in similar but less extreme fashions. She noted that had she not been attending this course, she would have glossed over the reactions of her students and assumed that she was a beginning teacher making mistakes, without delving into what actually happened and what she might have done differently. The class then used this teacher's experience as a springboard for discussions about the wide range of normal student reactions to this difficult material and the need to both allow and be prepared for these reactions. This discussion helped this beginning teacher and other participants to build confidence in dealing with strong emotions in the classroom.

As mentioned in an endnote, the introduction of Holocaust material into the elementary classroom is general practice in Israel necessitated by the pervasive exposure to Holocaust material, particularly around the date of Yom Hashoah. There are curricula that have been especially prepared for children at even the youngest ages, and the story that the teacher chose was from the suggested materials for use with first graders. The discussion focused on whether the use of the black crayon was especially difficult for some children and whether there might have been an alternative way to present the lesson that may have been less distressing for some of the children.

The third phase of the course involved developing an understanding of the strengths we have, how we cope, and what resources we use when faced with difficult situations. We have used the BASIC-Ph model (Ayalon & Lahad, 2001), which analyzes the various modes people choose when coping. Each letter stands for a different mode of coping: B=belief systems, A=affect, S=social, I=imagination, C=cognitive, and Ph=physical. According to Ayalon and Lahad, most people have a preferred mode of coping that can be identified. We have used the model with great success with in-service teachers. Applying this model, students

were able to categorize the host of coping behaviors at their disposal and were able to begin to apply them in a more considered and directed manner. Class participants were then given an assignment to design a classroom exercise utilizing some of the knowledge, skills, and activities they had learned in the course. They were encouraged to choose activities with which they felt comfortable and that they felt suited their students' needs and abilities. They were given worksheets to report on the classroom activities they chose; these served as the basis for additional classroom discussion. Participants chose from the entire gamut of activities that they had experienced, and some even created new activities using one of the themes.

Vignette: As noted, each classroom session began with a check-in. During the check-in at the fourth session, a class member reported that she had had a flashback during the previous class session of an extremely traumatic event that she had experienced on a trip to Poland over 10 years ago. She related to the class that her mother was a survivor of a concentration camp and had undergone medical experimentation during her time there. On her trip to Poland, when her group visited the camp where her mother had been interned, she and a friend became separated from the group and decided to enter, through an open window, the prisoner block where the medical experimentation had taken place. Once in the block she totally froze and kept thinking, "I will never get out of here." Several long minutes later, her friend succeeded in calming her down and helped her out of the window. She had never before discussed that event with anyone. Something in the previous classroom session had triggered this memory and created a flashback for her. She reported having the same sensations of panic and a feeling of extreme stress. When the flashback receded, she felt detached from the class and did not participate until the end of the session. Through hearing this student's experience, the teachers were able to consider the fact that they may be totally unaware of and miss their own students' significant emotional reactions unless they make a concerted effort to allow such sharing in the classroom. When the student who shared this was asked by the instructor what would be helpful to her right now, she said that simply sharing this story with the class had been extremely helpful and empowering. This further emphasized that often there is nothing to "do" but allow space and time for emotions to be shared in the group setting.

The final themes explored were significance, meaning, and hope. A classroom activity titled "Silver Lining" asked students to choose a difficult situation from their past and to try to find and explore a significant moment in that situation from which they drew a new understanding or meaning for their lives. Students shared their stories, which led to a discussion of the importance of bringing meaning into the main stage of Holocaust studies. The search for meaning in the

aftermath of the Holocaust has been the subject of countless books, articles, films, and other art forms. Yet because that search doesn't lead to a single answer—and because it often raises more questions than answers—adults often shy away from introducing this topic to children.

Guiding this discussion and acknowledging that we, as adults, don't have to have all the answers before raising these issues reduce some of the anxiety related to discussions about meaning. In addition, alternative ways of understanding meaning, including action-based activities, were discussed.

FEEDBACK AND EVALUATION

Feedback, both verbal and written, was solicited at several points during the course and at the conclusion. During the course, there was palpable resistance by a sizable minority of participants who found the course unsettling. They preferred frontal lectures, tests, and papers and found the workshop format too personal for the academic setting. It is the senior author's opinion that much of the unacknowledged resistance had to do with introducing emotional material in an environment that was highly cognitive in nature. After airing concerns, the seminar proceeded as planned. Final evaluation measures focused on knowledge and skills of participants in dealing with the effects of trauma and long-term stress in the classroom, as well as on teachers' in-classroom behavior related to these concepts. Feedback focused on the content of the workshop as well as the manner of presentation and the perceived impact on participants. Participants reported experiencing the greatest changes in their self-awareness and willingness to talk about difficult emotions in a work setting, as well as their knowledge about trauma and stress and the way they affect children and adults.

Vignette: A senior Holocaust educator with advanced degrees in Holocaust Studies shared with the class that in all of her research and years of work, she tried to maintain a detached attitude in order to continue her academic pursuits without emotional deterrents. She acknowledged that this was the first time she had been asked to consider how Holocaust studies were affecting her on a personal and emotional level. She found this both intriguing and somewhat unsettling at first, but as the course proceeded, she reported a sense of growing awareness about her emotions relating to Holocaust material.

CONCLUSIONS

Holocaust education presents teachers with a unique opportunity to inspire students to think more deeply about the value of human life, morality, and social responsibility (Brown & Davies, 1998; Schultz, Barr, & Selman, 2001; Blum, 2004). While the Holocaust is generally taught as history, it has also been used to teach about racism, antisemitism, and

ways in which society can combat oppression, and teachers can play an important role (Short, 1999; Berman, 2001). In investing teachers with the difficult work of ensuring that Holocaust topics are taught in both an educationally rich and psychologically sound manner, we must consider the potential challenges and stress teachers may face on a personal level. This is especially true as schools include Holocaust studies in their core curricula and teachers are called upon to teach—and students to learn—this difficult subject without any emotional preparation or mental health training.

The “Coping: Resilience Seminar for Holocaust Educators” encouraged personal growth and resilience for educators and provided the skills to help them think about teaching this subject in a developmentally appropriate manner. The goals of the seminar were to improve teachers' understanding of how they personally coped with the Holocaust, to teach them to be sensitive to the meanings that various students' responses may have, and to teach them how they, as educators, can create a supportive educational environment for students who study such difficult material. Future empirical studies will examine in depth the effect of classroom participation on participants' resilience, coping, and optimism, as well as the effects of intensive Holocaust study on the development of post-traumatic symptoms. In addition, examining the effects of participation in this seminar on teaching styles may be a fruitful line to pursue.

Creating and teaching this Resilience Seminar was both challenging and thought-provoking for the senior author. The dearth of attention paid to the emotional costs and effects of Holocaust studies on its participants is surprising. The need to address these issues grows as the numbers of students visiting Poland continue to increase and Holocaust Studies as an academic field of endeavor burgeons. Introducing this seminar into the Holocaust educator's course of study in colleges and universities will encourage personal growth and resilience in Holocaust educators and will increase their sensitivity to students' emotional needs. Acknowledging that learning about the Holocaust is often painful and difficult and making a place for these emotions in the course of regular study will not only increase students' mental health but will also provide them with tools to meet many of the challenges that life brings. ■

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NOTES

1. A special thanks to Michal Ben Yaakov, PhD, Director of Holocaust Studies at Efrata Teachers College, and to class participants who provided insights and inspiration.
2. In Israel in particular, very young children are exposed to the Holocaust through the media and the sirens on Yom Hashoah, so there is a necessity to address the Holocaust starting with the child's first years in an educational setting. Helping teachers find a balance between mediating the child's exposure to Holocaust material and overwhelming the child with inappropriate detail and content is most important.

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We thought it fitting that the final essay of our journal is itself interdisciplinary. Its reflective research on trauma and resilience is illustrated by stories of survivors, first-person testimony, documentary photographs, and pedagogical insights culminating in specific suggestions for today's educators. Professor Ray Wolpow's examination of the importance of "required helpfulness" as "a path through the dead of night" can help teachers foster resilience as they remind their students that "it is our strengths that we must focus upon."

Ray Wolpow

Through the Dead of Night: Lessons in Trauma and Resiliency From Child Survivors of the Shoah

Before the advent of clocks, nighttime was often described within a cyclic framework: "dusk," "night-fall," "night," "dead of night," "cock crows," and "dawn." The "dead of night" was night at its darkest with sound and motion at their lowest points, when most sleep in peace. For those wrestling with trauma, though, the "dead of night" is too often a time haunted by dissociated fragments of painful memory.

Child survivors of the Shoah know traumatic days and nights beyond our imagination. They also know of resilience and hope. Somehow, despite being bereft of family, home, security, nourishment, identity, and self-worth, most learned to affirm the value of life in the face of atrocity and death and then to transform mistrust and suspicion of authority to integrity and faith in community. They did so against the greatest of odds.

Take, for example, Hemmendinger and Krell's (2000) recounting of the fate of nearly 1,000 orphan boys, survivors of the death march from Auschwitz, discovered upon liberation in Buchenwald's Barrack 66 and sent on transports to orphanages in England, France, and Switzerland. Several well-meaning mental-health professionals considered these children, ravaged in their developmental years, as "psychopaths... damaged beyond hope of repair, of recovery, of normalcy" (p. 8). Yes, some survivors failed to overcome their struggles. However, the group of 426 nurtured by Hemmendinger and others at Écouis, Ambloy, and Taverny "produced rabbis and scholars, physicists and physicians, businessman and artists, as well as a Nobel Prize winner. The majority... [became] devoted husbands and fathers" (p. 8). Most found, and continue to find, their way through the dead of night.

The account that follows is of another sanctuary, the Western District Children's Center for War Orphans at Aglasterhausen, as told by Ferdinand (Fred) Fragner, who,

shortly after liberation, served as school principal, teacher, and houseparent for children between October 1945 and April 1946. This story is gathered from extensive interviews, review of documentation from the ITS archive at Bad Arolsen, a 21-page unpublished essay composed by Fragner in 1948, letters of reference from United Nations officials, and numerous personal notes, photos, and keepsakes carried by Fragner to the United States and later compiled and translated by Fragner's daughter, Anita. At its conclusion, using insights from the literature of trauma and resiliency, I will discuss what survivors such as Fragner have taught us about getting through the "dead of night."

FROM NOVÝ JIČÍN TO AGLASTERHAUSEN

Ferdinand (Fred) Fragner was born in Nový Jičín, Czechoslovakia, in 1915. He was introduced early to traumatic loss: His father died of pneumonia when he was 13; a year later, his mother died of a stroke. Nonetheless, he completed his formal education and moved to Prague, where he attended Charles University, seeking a PhD in psychology. When Czechoslovakia was occupied by Germany in 1938, Fred left the university to join the partisan underground. His decision to do so was based on his "strong belief that every man and woman must stand up for what they believe." The partisans attacked by day and retreated to the woods by night. (Today, with a smile, Fragner will tell listeners, "Sleeping on the ground in all kinds of weather was enough to convince me that I never wanted to go camping again" [Fragner, 2005].)

Fragner eventually learned that what remained of his family, along with his entire Jewish community, was gone, deported by the Nazis to the death camps. Nearly three years later, during a raid of a prison in which his comrades were confined, Fragner was shot, captured, interrogated, and tor-

tured by the Gestapo. The Nazis deported him as a Jewish political prisoner to the concentration camp at Buchenwald, where he “endured conditions and treatment beyond comprehension, beyond descriptive words known to humanity” (Fragner, personal communication, 2007).

On May 5, 1945, Fragner was liberated and reunited with his wife, Kazimiera Wilner, who had been imprisoned at Bergen-Belsen; together they went to work for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) at the Children’s Center for War Orphans at Aglasterhausen, Germany [Fig. 1]. Fragner repeatedly states: “Working with



FIG. 1: Western District children’s center, UNRRA, Team 507. Aglasterhausen, Spring 1945. Photo by Wlad Groman, UNRRA, U.S. Zone

these children saved my life” (Fragner, personal communications, 2005–2008). Let us explore his work at the Center as well as the reasoning behind his statement.

A HEARTY WELCOME AND A PROMISE TO ASSIST IN MEETING THE CHILDREN’S NEEDS

In need of meaningful work and pleased to utilize his extensive formal education, Fragner welcomed his new duties as school principal, teacher, and—with his wife—houseparent, at the 175-plus bed institution for children. Most residents were adolescents, but there were also babies and preschoolers. Fragner explains: “They arrived in groups large and small and individually. They were undernourished and usually in great need of good medical care.” They had no property, and what they wore was “a mixture of all types of old military clothing.” Some “had lice; others were clean” (Fragner, 1948, p. 4). Most came from Displaced Person (DP) Camps; others were found with German families, and some of them were new refugees from territories occupied by Russians. This Center for children “of allied nationality” included children from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Romania, and the Ukraine. Catholics,

Protestants, and Jews were represented in the many groups that arrived.

After a complete medical examination, children would meet with Fragner, who did not need training as a psychologist to recognize that these children had “suffered the most traumatic experiences... including years of neglect and deprivation which had greatly disturbed their normal development of personality.” During these sessions Fragner would:

in a very firm manner explain the group of which they would become a member, emphasizing the fact that we are an international center. Children here are of different nationalities and religions and do their best to live happily together... We offer every newcomer a hearty welcome and promise him assistance in his needs. But what is even more important is the interest [and support] shown by the group. (pp. 3–4)

Fragner would also explain that the Polish guard at the front gate was there only for their protection; children were always free to leave. Houseparents helped them to understand that here they would “find a place where somebody will care about them and where they and their feelings will be respected.” With time, children were given a choice in selecting roommates, “within certain limits” (Fragner, 1948, p. 3). Those inclined were encouraged to paint murals on the walls to lessen the institutional feel of Aglasterhausen.

Fragner was instrumental in ensuring that those hired to assist the one American-trained nurse with the 15–25 infants and preschoolers were carefully chosen. “Our experience convinced us that we should choose kind women with an interest in children and train them for our Center, rather than assistants who were overly efficient and not human enough.” Moreover, Fragner and his staff recognized that “quiet, well-organized, and scientifically sterile” children’s areas were not necessarily signs of good health, preferring sounds like a “noisy playground, full of laughter, crying, screaming, full of life and activity” (Fragner, 1948, p. 5).

TRANSFERRING LOVE AND UNDERSTANDING THROUGH PATIENCE AND KINDNESS

Fragner instructed the staff “not to interrupt [the children] in play” and that all “quarrels, fights, and misunderstandings between students were to be handled with much patience, understanding, and kindness.” He realized that “the most sensitive ones were confused” and required and deserved a great deal of understanding and good will. Confusion was an indicator that this was a “new kind of world.” Fragner identified “outbursts of hostility” against him and other caretakers as “repressed feelings about the loss of their own parents” (1948, pp. 4–6). He saw himself as teacher, mentor, and guide, intellectually and socially. “A teacher should provide a sense

of belonging. He should be someone you know will be there if you really need him" (2008, personal communication). As one who shared the children's sense of loss, Fragner believed that if he and his colleagues gave of their time with patience, kindness, and energy, "this feeling of love and understanding would transfer to them" (p. 9).

Those who cared for the children of Aglasterhausen included eight UNRRA staff (director, welfare officer, doctor, nurse, and part-time clergy); 30 displaced persons (e.g., school principal, teachers, shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, auto mechanics, cooks); and about two dozen German staff that included custodians, dressmakers, laundry women, and kitchen helpers. The combination of differing nationalities, languages, and religions led to one of the greatest challenges the staff faced: "To create an atmosphere in which persons of different nationalities can live and work together harmoniously" (R. Greene, Director, UNRRA Team 507, letter of reference, June 22, 1946). Fragner played a leadership role in tipping the scale toward cooperation and harmony:

As a teacher and a houseparent, Mr. Fragner showed unusual understanding and tolerance. He was so imbued with the hope of an international world, a peace-loving world, that he tried to teach this assorted group of children the importance of living together amiably and he succeeded. (G. L. Sperry, UNRRA Team 507 Principal Welfare Officer, letter of reference, June 27, 1946)

"EVERYTHING IS NOT ALWAYS SO BEAUTIFUL, BUT OF COURSE IF IT WERE, IT WOULD NOT BE NORMAL"

As school principal, Fragner involved the entire staff in the children's education, vocational training, and recreation. He set up an academic curriculum that included teaching in Polish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, English, Hebrew, German, and occasional tutoring in other languages. After



FIG. 2: Members of the Aglasterhausen Band, Spring 1945. Photo by Wald Groman, UNRRA, U.S. Zone

school, he involved others in providing vocational training in carpentry, shoemaking, baking, tailoring, auto mechanics, and electricity. With simple musical instruments donated from the YMCA in America, he started a small band [Fig. 2] and chorus that learned to perform simple songs such as "Jingle Bells." He organized soccer and volleyball teams and arranged contests with teams outside Aglasterhausen so the children and staff could support each through healthy competition.

Fragner modeled what he taught. Rather than focus on his troubles, he threw himself into helping others, day and night. UNRRA Director Greene writes that Fragner "had very deep convictions about democracy and was very effective in putting these into operation amongst the group of adults and children, many of whom had been subjected to many years of propaganda against other members of the group" (letter of reference, June 22, 1946). Democracy was instituted through weekly meetings where teachers, houseparents, and students discussed problems, events, and happenings in the center. Realizing that cooperative relationships were necessary to bring healing, they endeavored to settle each misunderstanding with "respect and affection." "Everything was not always so beautiful, but of course if it were, it would not be normal" (Fragner, 1948, p. 17). Staff and most children took an active part in meetings, but no one was ever forced to do so:

[Children] have a chance to participate... to express their thinking and feelings... It gives them a feeling of self-respect, and opportunity to learn democracy, and an assurance of their rights within certain unwritten social laws and socially accepted limitations. They learn to trust people with whom they live and work, and understand better some of their own problems and needs. ... [However,]... some just sit and sleep and it takes a great deal of understanding and patience to make them talk and express their feelings. (p. 15)

"IT IS OUR STRENGTHS THAT WE MUST FOCUS UPON IN ORDER TO IMPROVE OURSELVES"

Fragner encouraged his children to speak of their strengths, not of their weaknesses. "After all," he would tell them, "it is our strengths that we must focus upon in order to improve ourselves" (Fragner, personal communication, 2007). He walked his talk. Despite his own history of devastating trauma, he found his own strength by helping others. In his words:

Working with these children saved my life. Together we created an atmosphere of kindness and understanding, of love, freedom, democracy and brotherhood, of cooperation, trust, and most important, of unforgettable healing relationships. Was it a big loving family? No. It was an institution where everybody respected and tried to

understand everyone else. ...We were a happy community and although it was a slow and not always encouraging process, in the long range it worked. It had to work. (1948, pp. 17-18)

Yes, he believed that this path through the dead of night had to work. Doing so required extra focus on strengths. After the loss of his parents, Fagner had spent a great deal of time reading and writing to get through his losses. Believing his children would benefit from an outlet for their own writing, he organized a school newspaper.

“WE ARE STILL CHILDREN. BUT WE ARE ALSO OLD BY OUR EXPERIENCES”

That newspaper, named *We the Children* by its contributors, included this excerpt, written originally in Polish and Yiddish by one of Fagner's students, 13-year-old Bronia K., a concentration camp survivor whose entire family had been killed:

Although everyone calls us still children, how far we are from childhood. Yes, we are children, but we are also ex-prisoners of concentration camps. ...Where are our mother's affections and love for which we are so longing? We know only hate and selfishness. Instead of laughter and enjoyment... we were forced to hard labor eighteen hours daily. Instead of enjoying the beauty of nature, we had to hide in the dark barracks in constant fear for our lives. ...Death was the constant companion of our childhood. ...We lost everything and everybody. And sometimes we felt that our lives are senseless and hopeless, and that we are lonesome as the star in the skies. (p. 19)

Bronia writes that they were welcomed and cared for by loving and understanding adults, including survivors who had every reason to be bitter and selfish. And yet:

Instead of thinking of themselves, of their own future, they offered us their work, their help and their love. They want to give us that which our dead parents would [have wanted for us]. ...to return to life, to adjust to our new... situations. (p. 20)

Bronia concludes that “we the children” of Aglasterhausen should reciprocate, giving their caretakers as much love as they were being given. With wisdom beyond her years, she suggests that if the children help their caretakers do “the work” they are doing, they will be helping themselves.

With all our energy, with all our strength, with all our willpower we must go on and work, and work, and find again a place in the community of the world. We must

resist all temptations which may lead us away from our goal. It is true—we are still children. But we are also old by our experiences. We are a new kind of children, over-mature children. Aged children. We should be able to use our logic and good sense. (p. 20)

In May 1946, with the assistance of the U.S. Committee for the Care of European Children, Fagner and his wife left for America with 60 of “their” children and helped each of them find new homes. Fagner never completed his doctorate in psychology, but he did enroll at an American university where he earned a master's degree in social work before assuming the roles of psychologist/social worker, teacher, and director of residential treatment at centers for the mentally ill at major hospitals and community mental health centers in his new home, the United States of America.

DISCUSSION: LESSONS FOR EDUCATORS IN TRAUMA AND RESILIENCY

Finding ways to teach children wounded by acts of violence and hatred to, in Bronia's words, “find again a place in the community of the world” was Fagner's greatest pedagogical challenge at Aglasterhausen. The research literature on trauma and resilience can help us to understand how and why his efforts were a success and how we can apply them in our own classrooms. In her classic book *Trauma and Recovery*, trauma expert Judith Herman (1992) explains:

Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love and community... They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim's faith in natural and divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis. (p. 51)

The etymology of the word *trauma* is the Greek word for wound. However, in contemporary thought, trauma is neither the wound nor the event that caused it. Rather, trauma is used as an umbrella term to describe the inability of an individual or community to respond in a healthy way (physically and/or mentally) to acute or chronic stress. In other words, trauma and traumatic effect denote that a stressful event or events have overwhelmed and thereby compromised the health and welfare of a victim and his or her community (Pynoos, Steinberg, & Goenjian, 1996; Wallace, 1996).

Fagner was no stranger to trauma and resilience. He understood that the children who arrived at Aglasterhausen had experienced deprivation of basic needs, torture, and death of family, friends, and community for extensive periods of time with little or no support. Along with medical care, food, and shelter, they needed unconditional positive regard and acceptance and the nurturing comfort and trust that

come from loving relationships. To enter into and succeed in those relationships, the children needed to be reempowered as autonomous individuals and be provided the security of reasonable, clearly communicated and reasonably enforced expectations.

The counterbalance of traumatic affect, “resiliency,” is the ability to withstand and rebound from stress. One of the miraculously healing attributes that fosters resiliency is what Rachman (1978) labeled “required helpfulness,” that is, helping oneself by helping others. By helping others deal with common challenges, the staff and children of Aglasterhausen were able to support each other in ways that nonsurvivors could not. Why? It’s difficult to say. Perhaps helping another provides the counterpoint, dissonance, and harmony needed to supply insight. Perhaps the helper steps away from the isolating effects of trauma and toward membership in a community that seeks understanding of the incomprehensible. Perhaps each authentic demonstration of recovery provides some meaning to an otherwise dissociated tragedy. Whatever the reason, placing himself in a position where he was required to help others with similar challenges, in Fagner’s words, “saved my life.” He created opportunities for each member of Aglasterhausen to do the same. This was a dual-purpose poultice; in so doing, Fagner provided his children with the attribute that the literature most frequently cites as essential for providing safe passage through tumultuous times: a significant adult or alternative caregivers who provide love, caring, and support (Masten, 2001; Werner, 1990). The empowerment and stability required to overcome traumatic affect are fostered when members of a community are treated with unconditional positive regard and encouragement (Bernard, 2004; Henderson & Milstein, 2003). “Kind women with an interest in children” were valued, and quarrels, fights, and recalcitrant children were handled with “patience, understanding, and kindness.”

Fagner encouraged staff to recognize that “outbursts of hostility” directed toward them might be “repressed feelings” triggered by threatening memories evoked by the children’s current situation, thereby assuming a plausible link between some stimulus in the Aglasterhausen environment and the child’s behavior. The staff did not need to know the details; after all, they couldn’t undo the traumatic event. They could, however, provide unconditional positive regard and thus help the child to respond differently. Fagner believed that with sufficient time and energy, “love and understanding would be transferred” from staff to the “most sensitive children,” those so deeply traumatized that greater doses of love were required.

Nobel laureate and survivor Elie Wiesel (1977) asserts: “If the Greeks invented tragedy, the Romans the epistle, and the Renaissance the sonnet, our generation invented a new literature, that of testimony” (p. 19). Fagner encour-

aged students to write their thoughts and feelings. Composition of such narrative is now recognized for its therapeutic value to those struggling to contextualize, reflect, and work through traumatic memories (Berman, 2001; Cloitre, Cohen, & Koenen, 2006). Moreover, a growing body of research encourages the use of such narrative writing, along with testimonial literature, to foster resiliency among students struggling to recover from traumatic experiences (Das-Brailsford, 2007; Wolpow, 2006–2007).

LESSONS FOR EDUCATORS APPLIED: FOSTERING RESILIENCE IN TODAY’S CLASSROOMS

There is nothing new about the presence of traumatized children in schools. Abuse, gang violence, murder, betrayal, the pain of irreplaceable loss, and the suffering and isolation known by Fagner and his children afflict many children today. What is new is our knowledge of the pervasiveness of the problem and its effect on school performance. Studies funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the United States Justice Department indicate the significant percentages of American students and their families who live in a culture of isolating familial and societal violence including, but not limited to, domestic abuse; rape; homicide; gang violence; drug- and alcohol-related violence; physical, emotional, and sexual abuse; mental health issues; and/or loss due to suicide (Fellitti et al., 1998; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). Research shows that trauma can limit cognitive performance, disrupt abilities to self-regulate emotions and behavior, and corrupt attempts to form the relationships necessary to succeed in the classroom (Cole et al., 2005).

Fagner’s work and related research support today’s educators who seek to incorporate positive regard, loving relationships, autonomy, and guided choices into their classroom environment. What follows are four pragmatic suggestions for today’s classroom teacher, drawn from the literature of trauma and resiliency and shaded with lessons from Aglasterhausen.

1. Reduce arousal and fear by providing physical and emotional safety: Students struggling with trauma are justifiably concerned for their safety. Consequently, they often operate at a high level of arousal and fear. If they discern, correctly or incorrectly, that they are to be exposed to increased danger, their fright, fight, and flight symptoms (e.g., anxiety, hostility, aggressiveness, withdrawal) will likely resurface and increase. Teachers can reduce fearful arousals in several ways:

- Identify and reduce emotional and environmental triggers of traumatic response in our classrooms (e.g., loud noises, bullying, power struggles, or unexpected changes in schedules, seating, or lighting).

- Keep in mind that routine provides comfort to the child frequented by the unpredictable. Transitions can be a sign of danger. The trauma-sensitive teacher should help students envision a safe transition from one activity to the next. (For example, in one first-grade classroom, the teacher plays a recording of a five-minute piano sonata and announces that once it is over, they shall move from math land to reading land.)
- Keep in mind that we will not be able to identify some complex triggers; some regression to old behaviors is inevitable. When students withdraw or have outbursts, they may fear that we will respond violently, putting them at greater risk. We can respond as Fagner did “with patience, understanding, and kindness,” recognizing that these behaviors may be the result of “repressed feelings about other losses.”

2. Set and enforce expectations by providing choices, not ultimatums:

Some teachers think a student's unpredictable outbursts or withdrawals either can't or must be controlled and may try to control behavior with ultimatums: “You will behave, or you will be severely punished.” Others may ignore a student, sending the inadvertent negative message of “You are too damaged to behave, so I'm giving up on you.” If a stable student is acting in oppositional defiance, these strategies might work. However, if a student is dealing with traumatic response, these strategies contribute to a cycle of worsening symptoms: feelings of disempowerment trigger traumatic behavior, leading to messages of disempowerment that trigger more traumatic behavior. Contrast that with teachers who tell a student, “I see you are struggling, but you can't continue to behave in this manner. Let's come up with at least two choices. You'll tell me which you prefer. Whatever you decide, I will continue to care about you.” Fagner, his staff, and their children attempted to settle misunderstandings with “respect and affection.” Perpetrators of trauma rob their victims of power and control. In order for students to perceive themselves as having the power to take back control of their lives, expectations must be presented with choices, not ultimatums.

3. Offer students the choice of reading the testimonial literature of the Holocaust and responding in a personal or shared journal:

“The ordinary response to atrocities is to banish them from consciousness. Certain violations of social compact are too terrible to utter aloud: This is the meaning of the word unspeakable” (Herman, 1992, p. ix). Fortunately, many child survivors learned to voice the void, to speak of the unspeakable, to use words against words to foster resilience and hope for themselves and others. Their messages can be of comfort and significance to

students struggling to recover from traumas of their own. Obviously, this option should be a choice, offered with the awareness that reading Holocaust literature can trigger memories that worsen behaviors. Nonetheless, those of us who teach the Shoah know that most adolescents find this reading completely engaging, and many are willing to share their personal responses to it in writing. What is more, students who are otherwise easily distracted may find such reading compelling. It is difficult to say why; perhaps the reader, wrestling with indescribable events of his or her own, struggles alongside the writer. Perhaps the reader's real-life difficulties, instead of isolating him or her, supply insights. Perhaps reading the pain of another who emerges from trauma offers the reader membership into a community that seeks understanding of the incomprehensible. Whatever the reasons, many adolescents struggling to recover from trauma in their own lives find this literature and their written response to it restorative.

4. Offer students guided opportunities to help others:

Fagner “saved” himself by helping others. He created supervised opportunities for students and staff to do the same. A trauma-sensitive learning environment may offer guided opportunities for older students to help younger or less-able students also dealing with trauma; such supervised pairing can provide solace, create mutual trust, and affirm the self-worth of those involved. Community organizations as well as schools welcome weekly volunteers, after-school mentors, or big brothers/sisters. However, pairing with survivors of trauma is not merely “peer tutoring”; partners will still be vulnerable to traumatic triggers. Teachers and community workers, with help from school social workers and psychologists, will need to plan carefully, model, and observe ongoing interactions with loving care and nurture new-found healthy relationships.

CONCLUSION

At a speaking engagement commemorating the 60th anniversary of his liberation from Buchenwald, Fagner (2005) was asked why he preferred not to be called a “survivor” of the Holocaust. Narrowing his eyes, he replied:

The damage still pervades. Screaming memories of death and dismemberment still haunt me. I don't call myself a survivor of the Holocaust because physically, emotionally, and spiritually, I have not yet fully escaped the anger, anxiety, and depression of my imprisonment.

Let us not assume that lessons learned about trauma and resiliency from study of child survivors of the Holocaust will reverse the damage done by violent perpetrators. Bruises fade, but memories last forever. Despite this sorrowful actu-

ality, Fragner's work at Aglasterhausen provided him with much of what he needed to rebound from the traumatic effect of the devastating events in his life and to help nearly 200 children to do the same. His story, both horrifying and inspiring, is a path through the dead of night. In his words:

There was something in Aglasterhausen, in its children and staff, in the work and hardship, its happiness and sorrow, its hope... that makes it unforgettable to everyone who has been in our Center. It was as the first glimmer of the rising sun. (1948, p. 18) ■

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IN MEMORIAM

In the comfort and company of loving family and friends, Fred Fragner passed away the afternoon of Shabbat Zachor, 5769 (March 7, 2009). May his memory be for a blessing, and may his story continue to inspire and inform teachers for generations to come.



Prina Rosenberg

“Everything Is Part of the Holocaust”: An Introduction to Josh Freedman’s “Endurance”

Two opposite poles—an old man vs. a young woman, resignation vs. resilience—are presented in Josh Freedman’s (2008) monoprint on arche paper entitled “Endurance.” The work, done at the artist’s studio at Kibbutz Mahanayim, depicts “a young woman who can stand up for herself, a woman with a strong character, with optimism, who will survive, who is protective as well,” attests the artist. “She gets her strength in part from those she protects. The left side of the painting evokes a man, an older man, who cannot survive without her; she will endure, therefore, for his sake as well as her own,” he writes (personal correspondence).

Symbiotic relationships such as this are relevant in any difficult situation, but even more so during the Holocaust, when camaraderie and sharing were vital to the inmates, as testified by Raya Kagan (1947), an inmate of Auschwitz-Birkenau, when she recorded her memories soon after her liberation:

Slowly the prisoners organized themselves into pairs or small groups (“families”). The “family” was a source of bonding. It relieved the weight of our burden, let light into our lives and became a beacon in that wasteland of



“Endurance” is an original work of art by Josh Freedman, a painter and printmaker from Kibbutz Mahanayim in the Galilee. This painting is a gift from the artist to acknowledge and celebrate our first issue of *PRISM*. To contact the artist e-mail jf@mahanayim.org

scarcity and grief. It nurtured the brain and the soul and absorbed all our energy, saving us from the black depths of bitterness and despair. (pp. 115–116)

The work of Freedman, a contemporary Israeli artist who identifies himself as a painter and printmaker, forms an interesting dialogue with the visual art created during the Holocaust. Its relatively small dimensions (25 x 35 cm) evoke works of art produced in camps and ghettos, where the small size was necessitated by the scarcity of materials; in “Endurance” this smallness encourages the viewer to get closer in order to grasp the details, thereby creating an intimate relationship with the picture. Thus the viewer can sympathize with the depicted phenomena and understand more personally its meaning.

Freedman does not create “Holocaust art” per se, and he does not limit the protagonist in this work to the Holocaust. “It is the pain, the endurance of the woman, the human element in the piece that matters most.” He was adamant, though, that for a Jew living in Israel, “everything is part of the Holocaust. It’s still prevalent throughout Israeli society, always there, too close not to be used or considered in everything I do.” ■

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We urge those who teach the difficult and painful narrative of the Holocaust to bring their students back, at the end of the unit of study, to the reassuring present, where the losses they may have made their own can be mourned from a distance safe enough to ensure that students will not be emotionally engulfed by the tragedy. We chose Reva Sharon's "Shoshana," therefore, as our final poem. We know that the voices of lost mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and children, along with "the clatter of wheels on tracks," will echo in the hearts and minds of the generations of students we teach, but we know as well that our hope, our power, and our promise lie in Sharon's simple refrain: "You will survive."

Reva Sharon

Shoshana

for Shoshana Schreiber, who bears number A-25415 on her arm

Leaning on her cane and into
the wind of two continents
that lifts the leaves of Jerusalem
and sweeps by her in
the streets of New York,
wisps of blond hair
straying from under
an elegant hat,
she listens
as the wind carries
the refrain

Shoshi Shoshi
you will survive

At end of day she removes
hairpins and as she brushes
remembers a scarf
long lost white and crimson
rescued from a heap
of abandoned clothes
and stuffed (verboten)
in the toe of her shoe
as she passed (otherwise
innocent naked and shorn)
the armed guards of Auschwitz

Shoshi Shoshi
you will survive

On her high hard bunk
she tied the scarf
securely around her head
crimson and white in a sea of sick gray
caught the eye of the kapo
who selected her for
work in the kitchen
where she ate what she could scrape
and wondered why with a scarcity of bread
the stacks always smoked at the bakery ovens

Shoshi Shoshi
you will survive

She remembers the hands of her mother
and the eyes of her father
and recalls the clatter
of wheels on tracks
and the voice of her brother
in the cavedark of the boxcar

"Shoshi Shoshi
you will survive"

The faces their faces she remembers
the last time she glimpsed them
when she gazes into
her grandchildren's faces
(eight in New York thirteen in Jerusalem)

And she leans
into the wind of two continents
which rises
bypasses Europe
lifts the leaves
under a stone-heavy sky
and shifts

REVA SHARON is a poet, photographer, and artist who has lived in Jerusalem for 21 years and whose work has appeared in many exhibitions, journals, and anthologies, including the Holocaust anthology *Blood to Remember* (Time Being Books, 2007).

David Silberklang

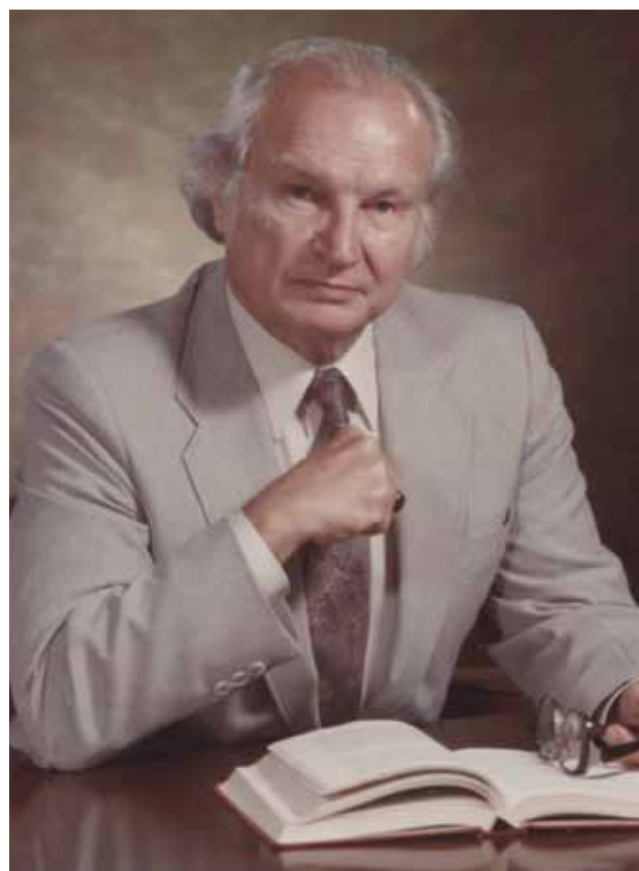
Reflections on Franklin Littell: In Memoriam

Nearly thirty years ago I met a remarkable man who was visiting at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where I was a beginning graduate student. His name was Franklin Littell, and I had never encountered anyone like him. I had grown up in an Orthodox Jewish home and was doing graduate work on the history of the Shoah in Israel. Here was a believing Christian, an ordained Methodist minister, a professor of theology with a penetrating analytical mind, who had turned his incisive critique inward on his worlds—Christianity and academia—with a challenge to confront the recent past. The theological crisis exposed by the Shoah, he argued, was greatest for the Christian world, they who had demonized the Jews and from among whom had emerged the murderers. His passion for his subject was infectious, his knowledge of theology and history encyclopedic, and his speaking style engaging. For those who entered his classes or lectures with firm beliefs on a subject, his approach was challenging—his students needed to think critically and openly. Listening to him and discussing a subject with him were invigorating experiences. Whoever spent just a bit of time in his company came away a changed person. And with all that, Franklin Littell was also a remarkable *mensh* of a truly rare caliber.

There have been many obituaries and articles about Franklin Littell since he passed away on May 23 of this year, and a well-deserved outpouring of praise for this special man's seminal contributions to the study of the Shoah in North America and to promoting fruitful and positive Christian-Jewish relations. I would like to add a few personal reflections.

Franklin and his wife, Marcia, a significant intellect and professor in her own right, visited Israel often, and I had the pleasure of their company at various events and occasions. Franklin was always engaging, always open to other people, but also always listening to what others had to say. He opened my mind and academic pursuits to a literature and to subjects that I had not considered seriously before. We worked together in the 1980s and the first part of the '90s on the then new journal, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, of which Yehuda Bauer was editor-in-chief and I was assistant editor. Franklin served on the editorial board, and his input deep insights were critical to the early (and ongoing) success of that journal.

One of the most rewarding moments in my long learn-



ing experience inspired by Franklin came when one of my undergraduate students at the Rothberg International School at Hebrew University, a devout Christian, wrote a paper around a decade ago on the Christian Churches and the Holocaust. I referred her to some of Franklin's writings, as well as to others, and she proceeded from there. During our meetings to discuss her progress, I discerned her enthusiasm as well as her distress at her discoveries. Her paper was one of the best I had ever received from an undergraduate, but her closing comments in a cover note were the most important. She said that she had previously had no idea about the churches and the Holocaust; she had not even imagined that this was a subject for serious academic research. Her work on this paper, which began with Franklin, had shaken and moved her deeply. Not only would she think seriously about what she had been taught and not taught growing up as a Christian, but she would also continue pursuing the subject

and teach others to look at Christianity and the Shoah openly and critically. In her church, at least, things would change, she believed. In a sense, this student was an intellectual grandchild of Franklin. Without him, I could never have considered having an undergraduate student write such a paper, and without him, she and her church might never have addressed the difficult subjects seriously.

Franklin had many other attributes that came to the fore outside the classroom and the church. He could regale us with a good story, or entertain us with his beautiful voice. He was a wonderful tenor, and he and Yehuda Bauer (a fine baritone) would sometimes get together and sing with the students. And he had a wonderful way with children—my children enjoyed his and Marcia's company immensely when the Littells came over for dinner a few times when our children were still small.

There is a Jewish mystical tradition that posits the continued existence of the world as we know it to the *lamed-vavniks*, thirty-six righteous people whose righteousness and good deeds maintain us. The implicit assumption in this belief is that these unknown 36 are Jewish, but Franklin Litell's exemplary life makes me wonder if we must endorse this assumption. As we know, a non-Jew who does good deeds in fulfillment of the seven Noahide Laws is considered a *hasid umot ha-olam*, one of the righteous among the nations, and thereby assures herself or himself of that place. Perhaps some of these *hasidai umot ha-olam* could be also be among the *lamed vavniks*. Franklin Littell certainly assured his place in Heaven, and I would guess that if there are 36 righteous people on whom our continued existence rests, he was one of them. Who, if not him?

I will miss him both personally and intellectually. May his memory be a blessing for us all. ■

Dr. David Silberklang is the editor of *Yad Vashem Studies*. He serves as Israel's representative on the Academic Committee of The Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research, and has served as the Editor-in-Chief of Yad Vashem Publications, where he was responsible for overseeing the publication of dozens of books published each year by Yad Vashem. Dr. Silberklang, a graduate of Columbia University and the Institute for Contemporary Jewry at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, teaches at The Rothberg International School of The Hebrew University. Dr. Silberklang has presented and published numerous scholarly papers about the Holocaust in Poland; the response of the Allies to the Holocaust; and the response of German Jews to the Nazis during the 1930s. He is a member of the advisory board of *PRISM*. To contact the author, e-mail david.silberklang@yadvashem.org.il



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