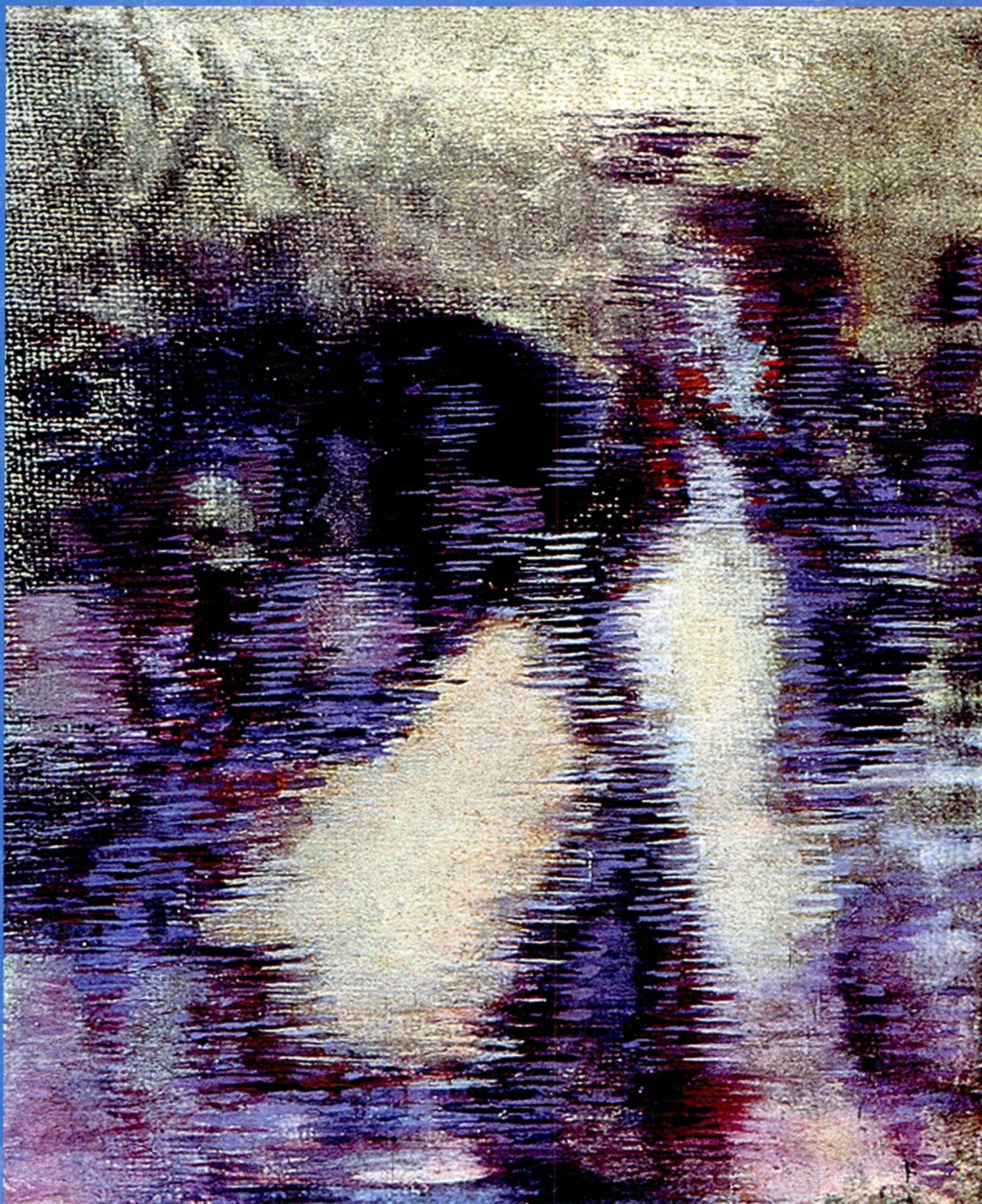




WILL THIS DATE BE NOTED?

A DIALOGUE WITH THE MEMORY OF THE HOLOCAUST



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During the 'Aktion' in the Warsaw ghetto, the Polish-Jewish poet Wladyslaw Szlengel wrote:

"An 'Aktion' in the ghetto. It is January 19th, 1943. **Will this date be noted**, even in the margins of history? Will it be of interest to anyone that on this date once again, and not for the last time, the non-human German tribe mocked all of humanity and put it to a test unlike any other it had ever confronted before?"

Szlengel tried to see how these events would be perceived in the future - in people's memories, and in history - by removing himself from his time and place and transporting himself to a future time and place from which he could look at himself and the events; he would then return to the present and repeat the process again and again.

The impact of his insights stems from his ability to look at the 'Aktion' as it was taking place while, at the same time, seeing it as if it was already something in the past. From the vantage point of the future, and while acknowledging the fragility of memory, he looks at the remembrance of these historic events and worries that their meaning will be lost.

Historic memory is a combination of various time fields. It comprises the events themselves and the way in which they are perceived in the context of a specific time and place. The motive behind memory, its purpose, content and form, are contingent upon this context, and each generation holds its own dialogue with the past.

The memory of the Holocaust is shaped by Jewish society wherever it lives. Yet the meaning of the events and their representations are affected by the political, cultural, and historic circumstances of the various countries where Jews reside. Thus, two paradigms of Holocaust remembrance can be distinguished: the Jewish-Zionist one and the universal one. The Zionist paradigm - "from Holocaust to rebirth" - is based on the Jewish concept "from destruction to redemption." The universal paradigm builds memory around universal values and makes the narrative of the Holocaust a moral one.

The Jewish paradigm has produced patterns of ritual remembrance within the Jewish culture. Yet fifty years after the Holocaust, no myth of redemptive remembrance has evolved; in fact, the opposite is true.

In his poem **New Holiday**, Szlengel touched on the tension between the Jewish injunction "Remember!" and Holocaust remembrance:

"Jews need holidays,
Jews need to remember ...
Because a miracle saved the people from destruction,
Like the holiday of Sukkot,
From these times we will create a new holiday:
Not booths, but bunkers ..."

It seems that something of a decentralization and privatization of memory has occurred, partly because of the previously mentioned fact that memory speaks to different sets of ethos. In the United States, for example, the memory of the Holocaust has undergone changes over the years. This is due to various processes which American society has undergone, as well as to the place of the Jews within that society and how they relate to their identity as Jews, and to the State of Israel.

In a pluralistic society such as the United States, various groups with particularistic memories struggle over a place in the canon of national memory. Thus, Holocaust remembrance has been undergoing a type of "Americanization" process in which the conflict between the two paradigms is apparent: there are those who wish to turn the Holocaust into part of the American experience and those who seek to stress its Jewish aspect and remember it as a Jewish event. The Holocaust museum in Washington has succeeded in uniting these two perspectives.

This is also the background for the question raised by historian James H. Young: Can the American Jewish community preserve the Jewish character of Holocaust remembrance while simultaneously making it part of the collective memory shared by various groups within American society who will shape it on the basis of their dialogue with their own experiences and memories?

At the same time, we are witnessing another process that collective memory is undergoing, one which relates mainly to the victims of the Holocaust: the voices of individuals who experienced the Holocaust are being heard more and more, both those who documented the events as they happened, and those who are now documenting them.

The first stage of this program creates an imaginary dialogue between us and people who lived through the Holocaust and wrote or created works of art about what they were feeling and experiencing just before their deaths. Their fate is sealed and knowing this, they turn outward, beyond the point in time they inhabit, to a different future which they will not be a part of. Their communication, whether made directly or simply by virtue of the fact that it was produced during the Holocaust, gives their words the same power that Barthes ascribed to photography: "This will be, this was." In other words, they know what the future has in store for them, "this will be," but they are capable of looking at it (their own death) and seeing it as something that already happened - "this was." We, too, relate to them in the sense of "This will be, this was." We know what happened to them in the end. Their death, which was a future event for them, is the past for us.

The program starts from this vantage point of "This will be, this was"; here we and they meet and begin a kind of imaginary dialogue - the point from which we begin to examine and create Holocaust remembrance. In this way we, and they, become active architects of memory. This dialogue will enable us to examine these "wills of remembrance" and attempt to fulfill their provisions as well.

The program is a type of "memorial" composed of written and visual sources produced mainly by people who were murdered during the war, and the memoirs of those who survived.

The aim of the program is to create a dialogue between these materials and those who are seeking to remember; this dialogue will be the basis for a process through which participants build their own memories. The procedure of choosing a source and creating a personal response (verbal, visual, dramatic) directed toward the creator opens up a discussion in which the student examines the connection between historical and formal institutional memorials to the Holocaust, and his/her personal memory. Thus, the students will attempt to understand the relationship between Holocaust remembrance and the present and future, which they are seeking to shape by means of the past.

In addition, the relationships among various forms of representation and memory will be discussed. Here, personal experience is the springboard for relating to the material, and analyzing and comparing it. The relationship between the memories of survivors and how we perceive the memory of these events will be examined.

Do the memories of the survivors bring us closer to the events, or do they neutralize or distance us from the Holocaust? The analysis of the relationship between our memory and the "wills of remembrance" made by those who lived through the Holocaust is important, because their memories are an all-encompassing experience that obliterates all barriers of time and place; it is as if their Holocaust experiences are not only a keenly felt memory, but also an overwhelming one. Perhaps this total experience gives their words, thoughts, and personal conclusions even greater validity.

The program includes excerpts from Sarah Kofman, Benjamin Wilkomirski, Imre Kertész and Yehudah Elkanah. Naturally, the discussion may be expanded to deal with the work of Paul Celan, Primo Levi, Jean Amery, Jorge Semprun, and others.

In the second stage of the program, the students will design their own memorials. In other words, they will attempt to design a joint memorial experience: a monument, museum exhibit, presentation, or an installation. This assignment poses several questions: what is the connection between an internal, personal memory experience and an externalized, communal one? What are the differences between various forms of memorials, for example, between narrative presentations and artistic representations? Are there limitations to the representation of the Holocaust, and if so, what are they? When we give external expression to memory, are we releasing ourselves from the obligation to remember? And, could the privatization of memory pose a threat to this obligation; could it lead to the blurring of memory?

In his story "Funes, the Memorious," Jorge Luis Borges touches on the connection between remembering and forgetting. After he falling off his horse, the protagonist, Irnau Ponce of Uruguay, can no longer forget anything:

"I in myself alone have more memories than all men have had since the world was a world."

Then, is there such a thing as too much memory? Historian Charles S. Maier points out that memory is no longer a window through which we see the past, but has become instead an important experience in itself. He stresses that today the object of the memory has been cast aside in favor of a representation of the story of past events.

If this is true, then what is the correct way of dealing with remembering and forgetting? Several sources used in the program, such as Wilkomirski's autobiographical book, *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*, and Professor Yehudah Elkanah's article "In Favor of Forgetting," deal with questions of remembering and forgetting. It is interesting to learn what they have to say about "wills of remembrance" and what various people who lived during the Holocaust thought about the relationship between private and collective memory. These questions are all the more important in view of the Nazi aim of destroying memory and its objects. As Hannah Arendt wrote in her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, the Nazis not only sought to destroy the Jews physically, but also to obliterate them from human memory and consciousness.

In this program we attempt to examine personal and collective memory and give names to the anonymous victims of the Holocaust:

"Zioutta... Assiya... Eli... Fania... Siyoma... Do they say anything to you? Nothing. People...indistinguishable from thousands of others. In the thousands they went to the Umschlagplatz. in the thousands they were whipped, torn from their families, loaded onto cattle cars, poisoned by gas. Unimportant people. Statistics will not distinguish them. No medal of honor will distinguish their actions. Names. Empty sounds. For me these are living people, relatives, tangible; they are human life..." (Wladyslaw Szlengel)

Objectives

- To become familiar with the various types of documentation in different European countries.
- To help young people understand the response of Jews during the Holocaust.
- To discuss the significance of preserving memories, the importance of remembering in general, and Holocaust remembrance in particular, with respect to human and Jewish identity.

Target population

The program is intended for 16-year-old youth, teachers, and others interested in the subject.

Method

The program provides a selection of primary sources - poems, letters, diaries, and drawings, as well as secondary sources - memoirs of Holocaust survivors. The texts are divided according to this criterion. The texts we have chosen deal with various ways of remembering, but they cannot all be described in detail here. The teacher is free to utilize other texts as well.

Students should select the source they wish to focus on from those available. Given the time constraints, however, we suggest that the teacher present several sources (approximately ten) instead of all of them. The program is suitable for use as part of a unit on the Holocaust, introducing the subject, or as its own study unit. We have included a partial bibliography; in addition, for each source we have suggested questions to guide students in the general discussion. Naturally, further questions, thoughts and suggestions are welcome, and the program is open to new ideas and concepts.

The program consists of two activities:

The first activity:

- Individual (we recommend that students work individually or with a partner rather than in larger groups)
- Aim: Creating a personal dialogue between the student and Jews who lived during the Holocaust

The second activity:

- Group work (5-7 participants per group)
- Aim: Creating a memorial installation

First Activity

Preparation

Choose texts and drawings and place them in the classroom so that the students can easily browse through them and choose one source to respond to.

Provide teaching aids such as reference books and materials that present additional information about the terms and facts presented in the program.

Provide paper, paints, etc.

Initial activity - personal dialogue (1.5 hours)

General recommendations

We suggest that students sit in a circle during the presentation of individual responses and the general discussion. In addition, it is advisable to supply each student with copies of all the sources chosen by his or her classmates.

Presenting the subject (5 minutes)

The teacher should explain the essence of the activity in very general terms: examining Holocaust remembrance by means of personal responses. Explain also that students will present their source and explain their criteria for choosing it. It is important to stress that the response should be personal; that is, the student should address the writer/artist personally, using any medium to do so. The students' responses may be used as the basis of the installation they create in the next activity.

Selecting a source and creating a personal response (30 minutes)

The entire class

Presenting the sources and the responses (30 minutes)

While the students present their responses, the teacher should raise questions to guide the discussion that will follow the presentation, such as: How would you describe your classmate's response? Is it emotional or intellectual? What in the source was he/she relating to? What type of source did he/she choose and does this have any bearing on the nature of his/her response? Did other students choose the same source? After the students have presented their responses, the teacher should compare the different reactions.

Discussion (25 minutes)

The division between the general discussion and the presentation of the sources and the individual responses to them is to a great extent artificial. The general discussion that deals with Holocaust remembrance may be incorporated into the response presentations.

The starting point of the general discussion should be the clarification of the connection between the sources and memory. A distinction should be made between the two types of sources presented in the program: primary sources and secondary sources. What are the different kinds of remembrance in the various texts?

At this point, questions that relate to the sources the students have encountered, and about memory in general and Holocaust remembrance in particular may be raised. (See page 55 for points for discussion.)

Second activity: Memorial installation (3 hours in the classroom)**First stage: Group planning**

The group should discuss the subject of the installation:

What are the objectives, the purposes? How will it be made?

The group needs to plan the installation and be ready to explain the rationale behind it.

Second stage: Shaping memory

There are many possibilities for this. The previously presented personal responses can be a basis for an exhibit, a placard, a monument, a collage that combines various materials such as texts, photographs, scrap material, drawings, etc.

Third stage: Presenting the installations

The students will first present the installations and then explain the rationale behind them.

Class discussion

What is the connection between the personal experience and the collective one? Does the externalization of personal memory harm or detract from its contents or its essence?

Is it dangerous to multiply the number of memories, since this may lead to a blurring or desensitizing of Holocaust remembrance?

Charlotte Salomon
Chaim Kaplan
Victor Klemperer
Ella Liebermann-Shiber
Dan Pagis
Moshe Flinker
Mendel Grossman
Anne Frank
Yitzhak Rudeszewski
David Rubinowicz
Y. Charyton
Roman Kramsztyk
Dan Pagis
Yehudah Elkanah
Benjamin Wilkomirski
Felix Nussbaum
Alexander Bogen
Zalman Kalmanovitch
Szmul Zyglebojm
Wladyslaw Szlengel
Rutke Leiblich
Dolek Liebeskind
Sara Kofman
Dr. Elchanan Elkes
"Adam's Father"
Pavel Fantel
David Berger
Heini Velfish
Imre Kertész
Maurycy Bromberg
Wladyslaw Szlengel

Charlotte Salomon

primary
source

information:
Germany
France
pages 48, 51



"A little love, a few laws, a young girl, a big bed. That's life and those its joys,
after so much pain, so many dead.

A little education, a few laws, and inside a vacuum - that's what's left, all that's
left. That's what man has now become."

from *Life or Theater?*



Charlotte Salomon was born in Berlin in 1917. In 1939 she fled to the south of France, where she began to paint "Life or Theater?", an autobiographical work that expresses her perception of the strong connection between life and suffering. She finished her series of paintings shortly before she was sent to Auschwitz in 1943.

Chaim Kaplan

July 26, 1942

primary source

information:

Poland

page 60

...Some of my friends and acquaintances who know the secret of my diary urge me, in their despair, to stop writing. "Why? For what purpose? Will you live to see it published? Will these words of yours reach the ears of future generations? How? If you are deported you won't be able to take it with you because the Nazis will watch your every move, and even if you succeed in hiding it when you leave Warsaw, you will undoubtedly die on the way, for your strength is ebbing. And if you don't die from lack of strength, you will die by the Nazi sword. For not a single deportee will be able to hold out to the end of the war."

And yet in spite of it all I refuse to listen to them. I feel that continuing this diary to the very end of my physical and spiritual strength is a historical mission which must not be abandoned. My mind is still clear, my need to record still strong, though it is now five days since any real food has passed my lips. Therefore, I will not silence my diary!

from *Scroll of Agony*

Chaim Kaplan was born in 1880 in Poland, into a traditional Jewish home, where Hebrew was spoken. After completing his studies in a yeshiva and in the state seminary in Vilna, he moved to Warsaw, where he founded a Hebrew school. In 1935, Kaplan went to Palestine, but for financial and health reasons, decided to return to Poland, where he continued to administer the school. In the summer of 1943, during one of the 'Aktionen' in the Warsaw ghetto, Kaplan was sent to an extermination camp.

Victor Klemperer

September, Wednesday [1944]

My diaries and notes! I tell myself again: if they are discovered, the price will not only be my life, but also Eva's and the many others I mentioned by name, had to name if I want it to reach a documentary level. Am I entitled or even bound to do this, or is it just criminal vanity? And yet again: for twelve years now I have published nothing, could not complete anything, just accumulated and accumulated. Is there any point to this, will something come out of all of this? The English, the Gestapo, the angina, the sixty-three years. And when it is completed, and when it becomes successful, and "if I live on in my works" - what will all this mean "to me and for me"?

I have so little, in fact no talent for faith: of all the possibilities, as far as the personality is concerned - and that's what counts - after all, what is "the Universe" or "the nation" to me - or indeed anything else which I am not? - it is nothingness which appears to me to be the most probable. And it is only from this, not from the "eternal Judge," in whatever form, that I recoil. But all this (that goes through my head daily, many a times daily) I write down only because I don't want to leave the page blank. And then it's back to work, reading and noting things down. Not out of any special energy, but because I don't have anything better to do.

from *Das Tagbuch*, 1933-1945

primary
source

information:
Germany
page 61

Victor Klemperer, a professor of philology, was born in Landsberg, Germany in 1881 to a Jewish family. When he was a child, the family moved to Berlin. In 1940 he was sent by the Nazis to work in various slave-labor factories in Germany. After the war he resumed his university career, and in 1947 joined the Communist Party in Germany. Until his death in 1960, Klemperer lived in East Germany.

Etty Hillesum

Tuesday, July 14, evening [1942]

primary source

information:
Holland
page 61

...My letter of application to the Jewish Council on Jaap's urgent advice has upset my cheerful yet deadly serious equilibrium. As if I had done something underhanded. Like crowding onto a small piece of wood adrift on an endless ocean after a shipwreck and then saving oneself by pushing others into the water and watching them drown. It is all so ugly. And I don't think much of this particular crowd, either. I would much rather join those who prefer to float on their backs for a while, drifting on the ocean with their eyes turned toward heaven and who then go down with a prayer. I cannot help myself. My battles are fought out inside, with my own demons; it is not in my nature to tilt against the savage, cold-blooded fanatics who clamor for our destruction. I am not afraid of them either, I don't know why; I am so calm it is sometimes as if I were standing on the parapets of the palace of history, looking down over far-distant lands. This bit of history we are experiencing right now is something I know I can stand up to. I know what is happening and yet my head is clear. But sometimes I feel as if a layer of ashes was being sprinkled over my heart, as if my face were withering and decaying before my very eyes, and as if everything were falling apart in front of me and my heart were letting everything go. But these are brief moments; then everything falls back into place, my head is clear again and I can once more bear and stand up to this piece of history which is ours. For once you have begun to walk with God, you need only keep on walking with Him and all of life becomes one long stroll - such a marvelous feeling.

We go too far in fearing for our unhappy bodies, while our forgotten spirit shrivels up in some corner. Our lives are going wrong, we conduct ourselves without dignity. We lack a historical sense, forget that even those about to perish are part of history. I am not embittered. And once the love of mankind has germinated in you, it will grow without measure.

from *Etty - A Diary : 1941-1943*



Etty Hillesum was born in 1914 in Middelburg, Holland to an assimilated Jewish family. She studied law and Slavic languages. In August 1942, she was sent to Westerbork camp. In September 1943, she was sent to Auschwitz, together with her parents and brother Misha. She died there on November 30, 1943.

Mendel Grossman

primary source

information:

Poland

Warsaw ghetto

Lodz ghetto

pages 60,62

Everyone should know how to preserve on paper those things he would have people remember. Anyone who cannot do so is illiterate. I have often been reminded of this inviolable truth. Here is an event, a face, a tree, which in the twinkling of an eye will disappear from the world.

What a pity; what a loss.

But the tourists have found an answer:

Photography.

from Janusz Korczak *The Ghetto*.





Mendel Grossman

Mendel Grossman and Henri Ross were employed as photographers by the statistics department of the Lodz ghetto Judenrat. They were permitted to have a camera and were given photographic equipment. Despite the prohibition against unauthorized photography, Grossman and Ross documented life in the ghetto during all the years of its existence. When the ghetto was liquidated, Grossman was deported to a slave-labor camp, and died during the forced march that followed the evacuation of that camp in April 1944.

Janusz Korezak

was an educator and writer and the head of an orphanage in Poland. He was murdered with his children in Treblinka at the end of July, 1942

Anne Frank

Tuesday 11 April 1944

primary source

information:

Holland

page 61

We have been pointedly reminded that we are in hiding, that we are Jews in chains, chained to one spot, without any rights, but with a thousand duties. We Jews mustn't show our feelings, must be brave and strong, must accept all inconveniences and not grumble, must do what is within our power and trust in God. Sometime this terrible war will be over. Surely the time will come when we are people again, and not just Jews.

Who has inflicted this upon us? Who has made us Jews different from all other people? Who has allowed us to suffer so terribly up till now? It is God that has made us as we are, but it will be God, too, who will raise us up again. If we bear all this suffering and if there are still Jews left when it is over, then Jews, instead of being doomed, will be held up as an example. Who knows, it might even be our religion from which the world and all peoples learn good, and for that reason and that reason only do we have to suffer now. We can never become just Netherlands, or just English, or representatives of any country for that matter; we will always remain Jews, but we want to, too.

Be brave! Let us remain aware of our task and not grumble; a solution will come, God has never deserted our people. Right through the ages there have been Jews, through all the ages they have had to suffer, but it has made them strong too; the weak fall, but the strong will remain and never go under!

from *The Diary of a Young Girl*



Anne Frank was born in Frankfurt, Germany. When the Nazis came to power, she and her family moved to Amsterdam, Holland. When the Germans invaded Holland, the Frank family went into hiding in a camouflaged apartment that Anne's father had prepared ahead of time. In August 1944, all those who had been living in the hideout were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Anne and her sister were sent to Bergen-Belsen, where they died in March 1945. Their father, Otto Frank, was the only one who survived.

Moshe Flinker

December 8, 1942, night

primary source

information:

Holland

page 61

Shortly after we came to Brussels and found an apartment, my mother began to question my father about my future. I was spending my days idly. At times I read Hebrew, but mother considered that this would lead nowhere. The first time she expressed her views, I laughed and even father paid little attention to them. I wondered how she could worry about a happy future at a time when we were faced with the problem of life or death. My father gave her a similar answer whenever she broached the subject to him.

During the last few days when my mother raised the question of my future, my reaction was again one of laughter, but when I was alone, I too began to ponder this matter. What indeed is to become of me? It is obvious that the present situation will not last forever - perhaps another year or two - but what will happen then? One day I will have to earn my own living. At first I wanted to drive such thoughts away, but they kept coming back. So I start thinking seriously about the problem. After much deliberation, I've decided to become...a statesman. Not any sort of statesman, but a Jewish statesman in the Land of Israel.

Even though it would take a miracle to free us now, the rest of my idea - living in our Land - isn't so far-fetched. Then perhaps, the rest of the world might slightly change its attitude toward us. The relations between other nations may also alter a bit. But our people are so exile-minded that many generations have to pass before we become a free people physically and mentally (the latter is the main thing). That is why we will need leaders to guide us on the road to true spiritual freedom.

from *Young Moshe's Diary: The Spiritual Torment of a Jewish Boy in Nazi Europe*



Moshe Flinker was born in 1926 in The Hague, where his family had settled after immigrating from Poland. He immersed himself in Jewish studies, and languages, including as Yiddish, Hebrew, German and Latin. When the Germans occupied Holland and Moshe learned about the atrocities they were committing against the Jews, he began a regimen of self-deprivation in sympathy with his oppressed fellow-Jews. In 1942, Moshe and his family managed to escape to Belgium. In April 1944, someone informed on them and the Gestapo raided their home. They were sent to Auschwitz and never returned.

Y. Charyton

primary source

information:

Poland

page 60



"Rabbi"
painted in the Bialystok ghetto, 1942
from *Art of the Holocaust*

Charyton's works are found in the Institute of Jewish History in Warsaw. Charyton sometimes reproduced paintings he had originally done during the war.

Yitzhak Rudeshewski

22.10.1942

Our history study group is operating. We hear lectures about the great French Revolution and that era. We are also actively involved in studying our group's second theme, the history of the ghetto. We are studying the history of the Shavli rabbinic dynasty. For this purpose questionnaires were passed out to all the participants; they include questions that have to be addressed to the people living in the dynasty's courtyard. We have already started on our assignment. I am going with a friend. The questions are divided into four areas: questions about the period of Polish rule, Soviet rule, German rule (up to the time when the ghetto was set up) and the ghetto. The people answer differently, but they repeat the same sad ghetto refrain: property, documents, hiding places, lost things, lost relatives. I have felt what it is like to do the work of a historian. I sit by the table and ask questions. I write down dry and factual answers to questions about the greatest suffering. I write, ferreting out details, without paying attention to wounds that I am prying into.

from *The Diary of a Youth in Vilna*

primary source

information:
Vilna ghetto
page 63

Yitzhak Rudeshewski was born in 1927, the only son of a family that had settled in Vilna in 1923. His father was a typesetter in a printing house and his mother was a seamstress. When Vilna was captured, his family went to live in the ghetto, and in September 1943 the family moved into a hideout that a relative had prepared for them. At the beginning of October, the Germans discovered their hiding place, and they were all sent to Ponar.

David Rubinowicz

December 18, 1942

primary source

information:

Poland

page 60

I already wrote that I have begun to learn Arabic. Naturally, I do not study it simply because I think it is a nice language or something like that. I have started - and I very much want to finish, too - studying this language because so many of the people who live in Palestine and the neighboring countries speak this language. And foremost among the goals I have set for myself, as I already wrote, I need very much to know at least how to speak this tongue. I have much more need of it than I do of all the languages they taught me in school. It is, after all, only natural that first and foremost we will need to live in peace with our brothers Ishmael, who are also the descendants of Abraham. Things that happened before the war, such as the terrible riots, that so frightened the olim, must be prevented from happening again. I am sure that all these things that happened before the war, that is, all the riots, were sparked by Germany or Italy, and they will also be punished for the deaths of all those who perished in Palestine by the hands of the Arabs. But I think that if the leaders of Israel had at least learned Arabic so they could speak with the Arab leaders, then it seems to me that these things would not have come to pass. And that is why I am making such an effort to learn this language.

from *The Diary of David Rubinowicz*

David Rubinowicz was born in the city of Kielce, Poland, in 1927. His family lived in the village of Kriano, where they were in the dairy business. When the German occupation began, the family was forced to leave their home. In September 1942, they were sent to Treblinka extermination camp.

Roman Kramsztyk



primary source

information:
Poland
Warsaw ghetto
pages 60, 62

"Old Jew with Children"

from *Art of the Holocaust*

"Tell my fellow artists to paint. Tell them my parting words." I was forced to swear to him that I would fulfill his dying wish. that I would convince his fellow artists to produce drawings and paintings about the ghetto after the war. "[Tell them to] put aside the nudes, the portraits, the still lifes. The world must know about the crimes the Germans committed. Tell them that they should draw what they saw and witnessed here, that they should sacrifice everything in order to tell the world about the bestiality of the Germans." He told me this with his dying breath.

from Rachel Auerbach, *In the Streets of Warsaw*

Born in 1885 in Warsaw, Kramsztyk became one of Poland's outstanding artists. In the Warsaw ghetto, he painted scenes of ghetto life and the horrors of Nazi occupation.

Roman Kramsztyk was murdered during an 'Aktion' in the summer of 1942.

Ella Liebermann-Shiber

secondary source

information:

Bedzin

page 61

Bedzin, 1942

Captain Franz Pofter of Breslau gathered the Jewish children around him and shouted, "You wanted this war!" We looked at him, not understanding what he wanted of us. A six-year-old kid got out of line and said: "No uncle S.S.-man, we don't want the war, we want a piece of bread."

from *On the Edge of the Abyss*



Ella Liebermann-Shiber was born in Berlin. Her ordeals began in 1938, when her family was expelled from Germany to Poland. When the Germans occupied Poland, the family found itself in the ghetto of Bedzin. The family was later deported to Auschwitz, where her father and brothers perished in the gas chambers. She and her mother were saved, thanks to her ability to draw.

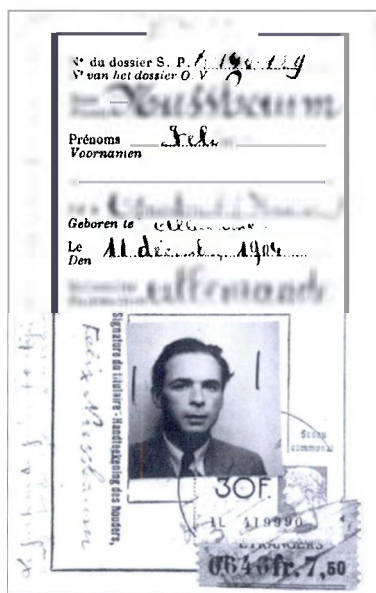
Felix Nussbaum

primary
source

information:
Germany
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Self Portrait with Jewish Identity Card
Late 1943



Felix Nussbaum was born in Osnabruck, Germany. When the Nazis came to power, he fled. He went to Brussels in 1935, going into hiding during the Nazi occupation of Belgium. In 1944, he was caught and sent to Auschwitz.

Dan Pagis

Instructions for Crossing the Border

secondary source

Imaginary man, go. Here is your passport.
You are not allowed to remember.
You have to match the description:
your eyes are already blue.
Don't escape with the sparks
inside the smokestack:
you are a man, you sit in the train.
Sit comfortably.
You've got a decent coat now,
a repaired body, a new name
ready in your throat.
Go. You are not allowed to forget.

from *Points of Departure*

Dan Pagis, a poet and literary scholar, was born in 1930 in Radotz, Bukovina, Romania. When he was four, he and his family moved to Vienna, where he grew up and attended school. In 1941 he was sent to a concentration camp. In 1946, he went to Palestine with Youth Aliyah. He died in 1986.

Binjamin Wilkomirski

...I puzzled furiously over what I could recall, but there was nothing there. No joyous liberation. I never heard the word "liberation" back then, I didn't even know there was such a word.

Nobody ever told me the war was over.

Nobody ever told me that the camp was over, finally definitely over.

Nobody ever told me that the old times and their evil games and rules were over and that I could go forward without fear or threat into a new time and a new world, with new peaceful games and new rules. Not even later. My foster parents just kept repeating..."You must forget it all. Forget it, the way you forget a bad dream; you're not to think about it any more. It was all a dream..."

...So I told myself: All right, you're still stronger than I am. I'll pay you constant attention, I'll learn the rules of your games, I'll play your games, but that's all I'll do - play them; I'll never become like you. You people, you profess to take these rules seriously. You preach honesty, and you're liars. You preach openness, and you won't tell me the truth.

Making me play along, making me adopt your rules, is just one of your tricks to soften me up and lull me into a false sense of security. There are the real rules, about living and surviving, that I learned in the camp, and that Jankl taught me, and you'll never get me to forget those. The good life is nothing but a trap. The camp's still there - just hidden and well disguised. They've taken off their uniforms and dressed themselves up in nice clothes so as not be recognized...

from *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*

secondary source

information:

Latvia

page 61

Binjamin Wilkomirski was born in Latvia in 1941. When the war ended, he was found in Auschwitz; he was five years old. He was sent to Switzerland, where he grew up and lives today.

Zalman Kalmanovitch

primary source

information:
Vilna ghetto
page 63

This is the nature of man - the way of the world. What becomes covered by dust becomes forgotten. Even in the ghetto you can see how they have already forgotten.

It cannot be otherwise. Yet this is not injustice. After all, the real reason for mourning is the fear of one's own demise, the fear of death. This is the fate that has befallen thousands; are we any better than them? What has happened to them will happen to us...

To mourn for the dead and the victims is only natural, all the more so when they are our loved ones and our relatives.

Yet this is irrelevant to the nation...In the final analysis, the Jewish people themselves will forget this branch, which was severed from it, which sank into oblivion. They will have to learn to get along without it, to allow new branches, leaves and blossoms to grow from the healthy trunk... Do not dwell on your sadness. This will not harm the nation. We can only hope that the nation will be strengthened by this trial. This thought shall fill our hearts with gratitude to history...

from *A Diary from the Ghetto in Nazi Vilna*

Zalman Kalmanovitch's diary and other writings from the Vilna ghetto constitute a very special document by a Jewish intellectual. He was a scholar of Yiddish literature and Jewish culture, and one of the heads of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. He died in a camp in Estonia, where he was taken along with the remnant of Vilna Jewry.

Rutke Lieblich

16.4.1941

I am still a teenager, and to laugh is healthy. Sometimes I am sorry that desires have awakened in me so early in life. I am already fifteen years old (almost) and I yearn for love, but on the other hand I don't yet want to be an adult. But why are we growing old so quickly? Does life have anything at all in store for me? After all, in life everything passes by and nothing can be repeated. Only memories remain. Memories of happiness and sadness. In the end you forget and are forgotten. Nothing is repeated.

Yes, that is just how people will forget us too. When I am small and gray, no one will remember Rutke Lieblich who was once alive, full of turbulence and chaos, a girl of fifteen. Now I am full of life. But someday all that will be left of me will be dust and ashes. So, what is there to live for? But we are living nonetheless - to remain alive.

from the diary of Rutke Lieblich, in: *A Woman in the Holocaust*

**primary
source**

information:

Poland

page 60

Rutke Lieblich was born in 1926 in Anzrichov, Silesia, Poland. She began writing a diary on August 13, 1940. Rutke and her family were sent to Auschwitz. The last entry in her diary is dated December 28, 1942.

Alexander Bogen

primary
source

information:
Vilna ghetto
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from *Art of the Holocaust*

An artist, himself sentenced to death, I memorialized others who were also destined for destruction. Was this merely an aesthetic experience? Did I have a guilty conscience when I used a bereaved mother, an abandoned child and a dying old man as my models?

I ask myself why I continued to draw at the same time that I was fighting day and night... Everyone who faces cruelty, danger, death, reacts in their own way. One cries out, another takes up arms. An artist uses the tools of his trade. This is his protest! These are his mediums! These are his weapons. As a human being who describes humanity, he feels compelled to leave behind his drawings. This is how he proved that the Germans did not succeed in breaking his spirit.

Alexander Bogen escaped from the Vilna ghetto and fought with the partisans in the forests. He lives in Israel today.

Wladyslaw Szlengel

Stop a Moment

primary source

information:

Poland

Warsaw ghetto

pages 60, 62

Forced by necessity
To yearn and to believe...
To suffer - to survive
To fight tooth and nail,
To hang on by the skin of our teeth,
To accept everything...
What is happening here?
Listen, please, this is about us
A living testimony...
About white ravens, impossible yet...
Let them look upon us,
Let them speak about us,
From dusk to dawn,
Important people,
Einstein and the wealthy!!!
But let me be!!!
Who are we talking about here?

In what way will they enrich the world
When they write and speak profusely...
About their longings,
About how they share in the sorrow,
of our sacrifice.
Let me be!!!
I don't believe them!!!

Chaplin will build
A wall in Hollywood,
A cardboard ghetto,
His well-fed hired hands
Making dollars,

How they will cry passionately,
How they will wail,
How great will be their shame,
How much our fate touches their hearts,
They apologize profusely.
But what about me?
They will make profuse

Noise and fanfare
About what happened in the city of Warsaw,
They will mark me,
They will celebrate me,
And what will I say then,
Blessed be the memory of... me?
This is a bluff, gentlemen,
A joke, gentlemen
I will survive,
I will tell about it --
I will cry out myself, all of it
In a hundred voices,
In rhyme and rhythm,
In a hundred poems.
They don't have to share in our sorrow,
To grieve on our behalf.
We have no intention of fading into the shadows.
We will survive,
We are a strong tribe.

We will hide somewhere, anywhere
Even under the ground
Read the newspaper, listen to gossip
It doesn't hurt
It even offers encouragement.
Grit your teeth,
Clench your fists,
A stiff-necked people
With perverse luck.
Disney is not the only smart one
For us Jews, too, our time has come.
We want grapefruits,
We want stadiums,
Wonderful trips,
Comfortable carriages,
There are strong Jews in the USA,
Sorry,
But what about me???...

from *What I Read to the Dead: Poems of the Warsaw Ghetto*

Born in Warsaw in 1914, Szlengel wrote poetry for Polish and Jewish newspapers. In the ghetto he continued to write poetry that documented the events in the ghettos, as well as his own feelings. He died during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943, in one of the ghetto bunkers.



Samuel Artur Zygelbojm

"...The responsibility for this crime of murdering the Jewish population of Poland falls in the first instance on the perpetrators, but indirectly it is also a burden on the whole of humanity, the people and the governments of the Allied States, which thus far have made no effort toward concrete action for the purpose of curtailing this crime.

By the passive observation of the murder of defenseless millions and of the maltreatment of children, women , and old men, these countries have become the criminal's accomplices...

As I was unable to do anything during my life, perhaps by my death I shall contribute to breaking down that indifference."

from David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945*

primary
source

information:

Poland

page 60

Samuel Artur Zygelbojm, a Jewish Socialist member of the Polish National Council, committed suicide in London two weeks after the Bermuda Conference in April 1943. In June 1942, Zygelbojm had attempted to focus worldwide attention on the Jewish Labor Bund report from Poland, the first alarm to signal the annihilation of Europe's Jews.

Sarah Kofman

secondary source

information:

France

page 60

Of him, all is left to me is the pen. I took it
one day, from my mother's bag where
she kept it with other souvenirs from my father.
A pen like this, of the kind we have to fill with ink,
we don't make anymore.
I used it during all my school years. It broke down on me
before I could decide to give it up.
I still have it, all the pieces taped together, in front
of my eyes, on my desk, and it makes me write and write.
My many books may have been some necessary, diverse ways
to tell "THAT."

from *Rue Ordener, Rue Labat*

Sarah Kofman, a philosopher, was born in 1934 and lived
in France, where her family had immigrated from Poland.
Her father, a rabbi, died in Auschwitz. She committed
suicide in 1994.

Dolek Liebeskind

"The Last Supper"

...The narrator continued in her attempt to convince him that rescue was necessary by reminding him about that which had been dear and sacred to him all his life and toward which he had educated a generation of children and youth aliyah to Eretz Yisrael (Palestine)...He went on to say that, if only for their brothers in Palestine, they have to die an honorable death, a death worthy of pioneers. Dolek Liebeskind expressed this idea succinctly in "Oneg Shabbat" ("The Last Supper"), which was published in the Cracow ghetto in November 1942: **"We are fighting for three lines in history."**

from Gusta Davidsohn, *The Diary of Justina*

primary
source

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Dolek Liebeskind one of the leaders of the Jewish Combat Organization (ZOB) in the Cracow ghetto, and a member of the Akiva Zionist youth movement. He was captured in the bunker of the ZOB headquarters and killed after an operation against German installations in Cracow.

Dr. Elchanan Elkes

Dr. Elchanan Elkes, Last Testament

October 19, 1943

primary source

information:
Kovno ghetto
page 63

My beloved son and daughter!

...We know full well how heavily the doubt of our survival weighs upon you, and what strength and confidence you would draw from the news that we are alive. This would certainly give you courage, and belief in work and life with a firm and clear goal. I deeply fear despair and the kind of apathy which tends to drive a person out of this world. I pray that this may not happen to you. I doubt, my beloved children, whether I will ever be able to see you again, to hug you and press you to my heart.

Try to settle in the land of Israel. Tie your destiny to the land of our future. Remember, both of you, what Amalek has done to us. Remember and never forget it all your days, and pass this memory as a sacred testament to future generations. The Germans killed, slaughtered, and murdered us with complete equanimity. I was there with them. I saw them when they sent thousands of people - men, women, children, infants - to their death, while enjoying their breakfast and while mocking our martyrs. I saw them coming back from their murderous missions dirty, stained from head to foot with the blood of our dear ones. There they sat at their table - eating and drinking, listening to light music. They are professional executioners.

The soil of Lithuania is soaked with our blood, spilled at the hands of the Lithuanians themselves.

And now, for a moment, I close my eyes and see you both standing before me. I embrace and kiss you both, and I say again that, until my last breath, I remain your loving father.

from *Surviving the Holocaust: The Kovno Ghetto Diary*



Elchanan Elkes was born in 1879 in Kalvarija, Lithuania on the German border to a traditional Jewish family. He completed his medical studies in Koenigsberg, which was part of Germany at the time. In August 1941 he was appointed to the Alttestenrat in the Kovno ghetto. When the ghetto was liquidated in July 1944, Elkes was sent to the Landsberg camp in Germany. Shortly thereafter he became ill, and died on October 17, 1944.

Dr. Elkes wrote "Last Testament" to his children, who in 1938 had gone to England to study medicine, his son Joel in London, his daughter Sarah in Birmingham. Joel Elkes subsequently emigrated to the United States, where he became head of the Department of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University. Sarah Elkes, who lives in England and Israel, is a specialist in the problems of homeless children.

Ari Klonicki-Klonymus

primary source

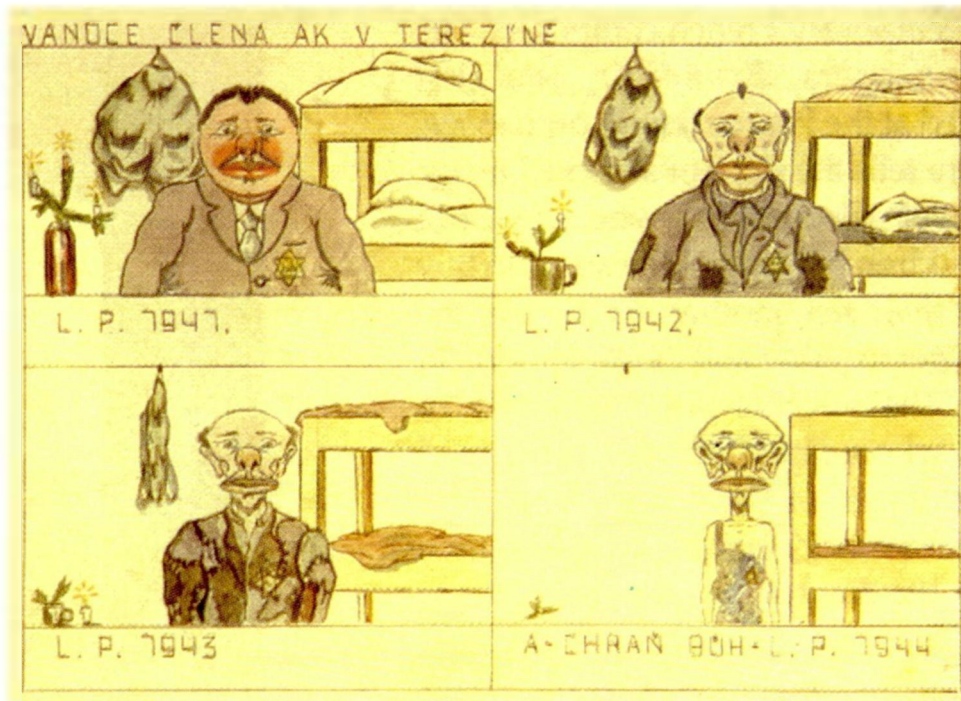
...[I am telling you] about life under Hitler. We can never be certain of what each new day will bring. The blows of fate beat down upon us like unceasing, torrential rain. We bow our heads and wait in desperation for new blows. Our feelings have become dulled and hardened. We have become like wild animals, ruled by instinct, our nerves always taut...

Finally, I want to make a comment about the language. There are sure to be various mistakes in style, grammar, etc. I haven't used Hebrew for four years. I did not write in Yiddish because I wanted to make it harder for strangers to read this. I wish you a long and happy life. But do not forget, you Jews who are living outside the countries of blood, to avenge our blood which has been spilled, our honor which has been defiled.

from *The Diary of Adam's Father*

Arie Klonicki-Klonymus (with his wife, Malvina) wrote a diary during two weeks of hiding in farmers' fields in the summer of 1943 when the final liquidation of the Jews of Galicia was taking place. It is addressed to their infant son, Adam, who they attempted to hide with Christian farmers during that time. The writer directs his thoughts to the future, as shown by the use of the name "Adam's father." He contrasts the future with their present circumstances of being hunted like animals, and contrasts himself to the Germans, who brought this about. Arie and Malvina Klonicki-Klonymus was murdered in 1943. It is not known if the son survived.

Pavel Fantel



primary
source

information:
Terezin ghetto
page 63

"The Metamorphosis of Man"
Watercolor, 1944



Dr. Pavel Fantel (1903-1944) studied medicine and served as a physician in the Czech army. He was deported 1942 to Terezin, where he secretly drew satirical drawings of everyday life in the ghetto. Fantel was deported to Auschwitz in October 1944.

Heini Velfish

primary source

information:

France

Gurs

pages 60, 62

In Gurs we put on plays on a stage,
Will you know, really know what this means?
Behind the barbed wire the world ended.
Eight thousand men and women,
Miserable, uprooted, deserted.

We put on plays to remain alive,
What does that mean - you cannot know.
For Ibsen - a miserable piece of bread,
For A Midsummer Night's Dream - an egg you wouldn't touch,
And maybe a handful of vile-looking cereal.
...We brought thousands of despairing people back to life,
We inspired courage, hope, and faith.
We experienced all human pain and suffering,
We experienced everything, ourselves, in our own bodies,
Nevertheless, we put on plays, on a stage,
Will you know, really know what this means?

written in the Gurs camp, from *Paths of Memory*, 18, December, 1996

David Berger

Vilna, 2.3.41

To Elsa Gross
Petah Tikvah

primary
source

information:
Vilna ghetto
page 63

Dear Elsa,

The day before yesterday I sent you a letter and today I am sending a postcard. I want to be sure that you receive at least one "last" piece of mail from me. When I wrote the letter, I was very angry and upset. Today I am calmer, although I do not know what tomorrow will bring.

Regardless, I am ready for anything. I was meant to see you soon. And now? The worst is that I do not know how long it will be before I will see you again. So, this postcard will be my leave-taking from you. Be well, Elsa, and be strong and steadfast. I remember you. If something "happens," I would like there to be one human being who remembers that once there was a person named David Berger. During difficult moments, this will make it easier for me. I don't care so much about my family, because I gave them up a long time ago. I sent pictures for you with Leiblitz and Tova Mantok. Take them and remember! Again, I thank you Elsa, for everything. Please don't worry, and be strong. I'll be fine. Please send regards to everyone who comes from Vilna and special regards to Gisa.

Good-bye,
David Berger

from the Massua archives

Maurycy Bromberg

primary source

information:

Poland

page 60



"Watching the Transport"
by Maurycy Bromberg, from *Art of the Holocaust*

Maurycy Bromberg was a Polish-Jewish artist who painted in Warsaw and Auschwitz. No biographical information exists about him.

Imre Kertész

Even the exaggerations of the gendarmes. I admit, all seemed to me now nothing more than noisy bravado in comparison with this orchestrated professionalism, precise in every detail. And, even though I clearly saw, for example their faces and the color of their eyes and hair, and every tiny facial feature, even some defects - acne, here and there - nonetheless, somehow, I could not find comfort in all of this, somehow I almost hesitated: Putting all else aside, are these people who are walking by really like us; in truth, are they too really made of the same human substance, more or less? But then I thought, I am apparently mistaken in my reasoning, because, of course, I am obviously not a person like they are.

from *Fateless*

secondary
source

information:

Hungary

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Born in Budapest in 1929, Imre Kertész was a writer. In 1944 he was sent to Auschwitz and Buchenwald. After the war he worked as a journalist, and then as a writer and translator of German literature and philosophy. His book *Fateless* was published in 1975, but did not receive recognition in Communist Hungary. Today, Kertész is considered one of the most important authors in Hungary.

Dan Pagis

Testimony

secondary source

No no, they definitely were
human beings: uniforms.
How to explain? they were created
in the image.

I was a shade.
A different creator made me.

And he in his mercy left nothing of me that would die.
And I fled to him, floated up weightless, blue,
forgiving - I would even say, apologizing -
smoke to omnipotent smoke
that has no face or image.

from *Points of Departure*

Dan Pagis, a poet and literary scholar, was born in 1930 in Radotz, Bukovina, Romania. When he was four, he and his family moved to Vienna, where he grew up and attended school. In 1941 he was sent to a concentration camp. In 1946, he went to Palestine with Youth Aliyah. He died in 1986.

Felix Nussbaum



primary
source

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The Skeletons Play for a Dance (detail)
18 April, 1944

Felix Nussbaum was born in Osnabruck, Germany. When the Nazis came to power, he fled. He went to Brussels in 1935, going into hiding during the Nazi occupation of Belgium. In 1944, he was caught and sent to Auschwitz.

Wladyslaw Szlengel

The Monument

primary source

information:

Poland

Warsaw ghetto

pages 60, 62

To the heroes - poems, rhapsodies!!!
The heroes who the coming generations will honor,
On their tombstones they will engrave names,
And a monument of marble they will erect.

After the noble ones are gone, legends will remain,
That they were giants,
The myth will become frozen in time - and turn into
A monument.

And who will tell you, the coming generations,
She was not steel and not mythological -
She was taken away - they killed her.
And she is no more ...

Do you understand: She was, and she is no more,
In every corner here - the evil eye,
Makes it abundantly clear, she is no more.

And what? A person? No - that is not important -
No statistic will distinguish her,
For the world, for Europe, she is less than a small bread crumb,
What is important here - her efforts!
But when you were about to mount the stairs,
Before you pushed open the door, before you even touched the doorknob,
You felt the scent in the air,
Of hot soup, of a white hand towel,
An undefined warmth, enveloping,
You sigh...
She was,
But they took her away.

from *What I Read to the Dead: Poems of the Warsaw Ghetto*

Robert Musil

There is nothing in this world as invisible as monuments. They are no doubt erected to be seen - indeed, to attract attention. But at the same time they are impregnated with something that repels attention ... Anything that endures over time sacrifices its ability to make an impression. Anything that constitutes the walls of our life, the backdrop of our consciousness, so to speak, forfeits its capacity to play a role in the consciousness.



Born in Warsaw in 1914, Szeleń wrote poetry for Polish and Jewish newspapers. In the ghetto he continued to write poetry that documented the events in the ghettos, as well as his own feelings. He died during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in April 1943, in one of the ghetto bunkers.

Yehudah Elkanah

In Favor of Forgetting

secondary source

I see no greater danger facing the future of the State of Israel than the fact that the Holocaust has been systematically and intensively inculcated into the consciousness of the Israeli public, even that of the majority that did not experience it and the second generation, which was born and grew up here. For the first time I understand the dangerous nature of our efforts. For decades we have been sending every Israeli child to visit Yad VaShem, over and over again. What did we want these innocent children to do with this experience?

We declared "remember," with closed minds and with closed hearts, without providing any interpretation. Why? What is the child to do with these memories? For many, the pictures of the atrocities are likely to give rise to hatred.

"Remember" can be interpreted as a call to hate, continuously and blindly. It may be important for the world at large to remember. This is not necessarily a certainty, but in any case this is not our problem.

Every nation, including the German nation, has to decide how and based on what considerations they may want to remember. We, on the other hand, should forget. An atmosphere in which an entire people determines the way it relates to the present and defines its future by focusing on the lessons of the past is disastrous for the future of a society that wishes to live in relative peace, tranquillity, and security like other nations.

The very existence of our democracy is in danger when the memory of the victims of the past is an active participant in the political process. The ideologies of fascist regimes understood this. Using past suffering as a political claim is like asking the dead to participate in the democratic process of the living.

I believe that the most important political or educational role for the leaders of this nation is to stand firmly behind the living, to devote themselves to building our future, and not to dwell on the symbols, ceremonies, and lessons of the Holocaust at every opportunity. They must uproot the control that the historic "remember" has over our lives.

from an article in *Ha'aretz*, March 2, 1988

Yehudah Elkanah was sent to Auschwitz at the age of ten. He is Professor of philosophy of science at Tel Aviv University.

Charlotte Salomon
Chaim Kaplan
Victor Klemperer
Ella Liebermann-Shiber
Moshe Flinker
Anne Frank
Y. Charyton
Dan Pagis
Roman Kramsztyk
Benjamin Wilkomirski
Alexander Bogen
Sara Kofman
Dr. Elchanan Elkes
Imre Kertész
Etty Hillesum
Felix Nussbaum
Mendel Grossman
Yitzhak Rudeszewski
David Rubinowicz
Yehudah Elkanah
Felix Nussbaum
Zalman Kalmanovitch
Szmul Zyglebojm
Wladyslaw Szlengel
Rutke Leiblich
Dolek Liebeskind
Pavel Fantel
Heini Velfish
Maurycy Bromberg
Wladyslaw Szlengel

Specific questions for the various texts:

- Does human and personal suffering have meaning? Compare "Stop a Moment" (Szlengel), Etty Hillesum, and Anne Frank.
- Who do we remember? For whom do we erect memorials and museums? Is the anonymous victim given any recognition in formal public memorials? Compare Szlengel's "The Memorial," Robert Musil, and Maier on the Holocaust museum in Washington.

Charles S. Maier

The ostensible purpose of the Holocaust is to teach the lessons of the Holocaust. But what are the 'lessons' of the Holocaust that allegedly justify these museums? The lesson cannot be only that genocide is evil. This conclusion hardly requires the museum effort. Is the lesson that if we somehow forget the past we are doomed to repeat it? We are hardly to forget this past, although we may downgrade its psychological urgency, and in any case history does not really repeat itself. On the other hand, some conclusions that we might think of as legitimate 'lessons' are rejected. The huge structure on the Mall hardly keeps us from attempting to return the Haitians who make it to our shores in fragile boats. Chancellor Kohl's government has hardly forgotten the Holocaust, although it pays Romania to take back its gypsies. The skinheads who like to draw graffiti and take out their penchant for gang warfare on 'Pakis' in Britain or on Vietnamese and Africans in Germany are unlikely to be making tours of Holocaust exhibits. Is not the real lesson of the Holocaust museum - or of Yad Vashem in Israel, the national shrine to which every official visitor is immediately taken - that the group sponsoring the museum has suffered incredibly and wants recognition of the fact? The subtext of the memory museum is that by virtue of prior suffering collective existence should be recognized and honored by the wider society, whether by American culture in the United States or by international public opinion in the case of Israel.

from *A Surfeit of Memory - Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial*

- Szymon Artur Żygielbojm committed suicide in London to protest the world's indifference to the plight of the Jews. Do you know of any similar cases? Did you know about this story before? Why didn't Żygielbojm's action take on the heroic dimensions that are associated with the memory of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, for example? What is the significance of his action for us today? Who do we remember and who is not part of our memory, and why?
- David Berger asks his friend to "remember!" What is the meaning of this request? What is the difference between Berger's appeal and, for instance, Elkes' injunction "to remember" in his will? What is the difference between personal memory and collective memory?
- Do you think it is important to know the life histories of the writers, and why?
- Can the diaries of young people, such as Anne Frank, David Rubinowicz, and Moshe Flinker be compared on the basis of the way they grasp and deal with reality? What is the basis for their concept of reality?
- What is the task of history and the historian? Compare Etty Hillesum and Yitzhak Rudenshewski. What kind of historical discussion do we want to have about the Holocaust, for example, one that deals with individuals and their daily lives, or with diplomatic and military history?
- What reasons do people have for writing a diary? Compare the diaries of Kaplan and Klemperer. What importance do they have for our memory?
- Is the Holocaust an event that we shall never be able to understand fully? The poem by Heini Velfish.
- How do we perceive the victims in our memory? In the drawing of the S.S. man and the children in which the children are accused of having "wanted the war," how are the victims presented? How are the victims perceived in other texts?
- What is the importance of visual sources for Holocaust memory compared to the diaries?

- What is the connection between memory and forgetting? Compare Wilkomirski, Dan Pagis, and Elkanah.
- What is the difference between Elkanah's "In Favor of Forgetting," what Kalmanovitch says about forgetting, and what Rutke Lieblich wrote?

General questions:

- Have you encountered any "wills of remembrance"?
- What is the connection between these wills and Holocaust remembrance, and its purpose as we understand it?
- What are the various ways in which we remember events?
- In your opinion, what are the problems related to Holocaust remembrance?
- **Why should we remember?**

LATVIA

HOLLAND

Terezin Ghetto

GURS

POLAND

Warsaw Ghetto

Kovno Ghetto

FRANCE

Vilna Ghetto

HUNGARY

GERMANY

Lodz Ghetto

BEDZIN

POLAND

On September 1, 1939, the German army invaded Poland. Extensive areas of Poland were annexed to the German Reich and in the area that remained, the Germans set up a civil government, the General gouvernement. Hundreds of thousands of Jews from the annexed territories were deported to ghettos in the General gouvernement. In 1942, as part of "Operation Reinhard," three extermination camps were set up in Poland: Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor. By the time the war was over, most of the Jews of Poland had been exterminated in these camps, in Auschwitz and in other camps.

FRANCE

In May 1940, the Germans invaded France. According to the agreement between Marshal Henri Petin and the Germans, France was divided into two regions. The north, including Paris, was to be ruled by the Germans, while the south was designated as a free zone, to be administered by the Vichy government headed by Petin.

The Vichy government passed and implemented laws in the spirit of Nazi ideology. The deportation of the Jews of France to the extermination camps in Poland began in March 1942, and by the end of the war, approximately 75,000 French Jews had been murdered.

HUNGARY

Hungary was a German ally until March 1944. At that time, with the advance of the Red Army to the Carpathian Mountains, the Germans occupied Hungary. Most of the Jews of Hungary were sent to Auschwitz and were murdered there.

LATVIA

Latvia was occupied by the Soviet army in June 1940 and declared a Soviet republic. Shortly after Latvia's capture by the German army in June 1941, Einsatzgruppe "A" began the task of murdering the Jews of Latvia, which continued in stages up to the end of the war.

HOLLAND

On the night between May 9 and 10, 1940, the Germans invaded Holland. They ousted the Dutch government and replaced it with a German one that operated alongside a Dutch administration. As early as September 1940, the Germans took steps to Aryanize the society. The deportation of the Jews of Holland to concentration camps began at the end of 1941, and during 1942 and 1943 they were sent to extermination camps. About 107,000 Dutch Jews were murdered by the Nazis.

GERMANY

In 1940, about 250,000 German Jews still remained in Germany. Between the time the Nazis took power and the beginning of World War II, about 220,000 German Jews had emigrated to European countries, Palestine, the United States, and South America. In October 1941, the deportation of masses of German Jews to the East began, as did the killing of these Jews as part of the "Final Solution."

BEDZIN

This city, located in Upper Silesia, Poland, was captured by the Germans on September 4, 1939. In May 1942, the deportation of the city's Jews to Auschwitz began, and on August 1, 1943, the Germans began the liquidation of the ghetto.

GURS

A penal camp for political dissidents in France. When the agreement between Marshal Petin and the Germans was signed in June 1940, all opponents of the Nazi regime, among them refugees who did not hold French citizenship, were turned over to the Germans.

Warsaw Ghetto

When the war broke out, the Jewish community of Warsaw numbered 375,000, about one third of the city's population. In November 1940, the area of the ghetto was enclosed and another 90,000 Jews from surrounding towns were sent there. After the large deportations that took place between July 22, 1942 and September 12, 1942, about 60,000 Jews remained in the ghetto. Most of the deportees were murdered in Treblinka extermination camp. On July 28, 1942 the Jewish Combat Organization (ZOB) was established. On September 19, 1942, when the third and last stage of the ghetto's liquidation began, the assaults on the Germans began. On May 16, 1943, the Warsaw ghetto was destroyed.

Lodz Ghetto

On September 8, 1939, Lodz was captured and annexed to the German Reich. On April 30, 1940, the area of the ghetto was enclosed and about 200,000 Jews were forced to move there from other parts of the city and its environs. In December of that year, the deportations to labor camps began, and in January 1941, the deportations to the death camps began. The ghetto was liquidated on June 23, 1944.

Terezin Ghetto

The ghetto of Theresienstadt, a fortress town located in northwestern Czechoslovakia, was established in November 1942 and populated by Jews deported from Central and Western Europe. The Germans' purpose in setting up this ghetto was to present it to the world as an exemplary Jewish settlement. The Jews of Terezin were sent mainly to Treblinka and Auschwitz extermination camps.

Kovno Ghetto

In June 1941, Kovno was captured by the Germans. During riots by Lithuanians against the Jews of the city, about 10,000 perished. In August 1941, the ghetto was closed. During 'Aktions' which took place intermittently from September 28, 1941 through March 1944, the Jews of Kovno were sent to the Ninth Fort, where they were murdered.

Vilna Ghetto

On June 24, 1941, Vilna was captured by the Germans. Various restriction orders were immediately issued against the Jews. From August 31 to September 3, the "great provocation" took place, during which about 8,000 Jews were taken to the Ponar forest and murdered. Two ghettos were erected in the areas where the Jews had lived. The first one was liquidated in October 1941, and by the end of September 1943, the other ghetto was also completely liquidated.

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Massuah Institute for the study of the Holocaust conducts seminars and other educational activities for youth from Israel and abroad.

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