

In 1994, after filming Schindler's List, Steven Spielberg established Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation to collect and archive interviews with survivors and other witnesses of the Holocaust. By the time of this printing, the Shoah Foundation has videotaped more than 50,000 testimonies in 57 countries and 31 languages. The Foundation is currently in the process of making its Archive available worldwide as an educational resource.

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Facing History and Ourselves is a national educational and professional development organization whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and anti-semitism in order to promote the development of a more humane and informed citizenry. By studying the historical development and lessons of the Holocaust and other examples of collective violence, students make the essential connection between history and the moral choices they confront in their own lives. Facing History and Ourselves has offices in areas including Boston, Chicago, Europe, New York, Memphis, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. For more information, contact the national office.

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SURVIVORS

TESTIMONIES OF THE HOLOCAUST TM



A Guide to the Interactive Software



FRONT COVER (left to right):

Silvia, 16, performs in Vienna, Austria in 1935.

Sol poses for a photograph in 1950, several years after moving to the United States.

Paula is in the center of this family portrait, holding a bouquet of flowers. The picture was arranged by the Nazi SS in 1940 and sent to Paula's brother in Lithuania as "proof" that the family was being well treated.

Bert is shown in 1941, at age 14. His sister cut this picture to make it as small as possible, and kept it with her throughout the war. It was given to Bert years later by a friend of his sister.

Silvia had this publicity photograph taken in 1942, while working in Amsterdam as an actress.



BACK COVER (left to right):

Bert, age six, wears the traditional uniform for a German child's first day at school. He holds a candy-filled cardboard cone called a Schultuete.

Silvia, her twin sister, and their older sister sit with their mother in 1919.

This picture of Bert (right) and two friends was taken just after the war, while they recovered in a rehabilitation center in northern Germany.



Steven Spielberg

and

Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation

present

A GUIDE TO

SURVIVORS

TESTIMONIES OF THE HOLOCAUST TM

created by

Facing History and Ourselves

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EMC Corporation



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and
Bert, Paula, Silvia, and Sol for the use of their personal pictures.

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PREFACE

Steven Spielberg founded Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in 1994. The Foundation's mission was urgent: to record the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, bystanders, liberators, and rescuers before it was too late. Nearly fifty years had passed since the end of World War II, and in a short time the last witnesses would be gone.

Since the project's inception, we have collected more than 50,000 videotaped interviews in 31 languages and 57 countries. But the Shoah Foundation's task is not limited to gathering and archiving these firsthand accounts. We wish to share with current and future generations the voices, the faces, and the powerful stories we have collected. The testimonies have the potential to promote a comprehensive understanding of the Holocaust, to effectively combat racism and antisemitism, and to teach the values of tolerance and pluralism.

We are now working to catalogue the Archive of testimonies in order to make it accessible to students and scholars, to teachers and educators, to documentary filmmakers and researchers. They will be able to utilize the indexed materials in order to accomplish individual goals, advance Holocaust scholarship, and create new methods for teaching history.

We are proud to present Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust, a CD-ROM that combines the human perspective of survivor testimonies with the educational potential of interactive technology. This teaching device will introduce Holocaust survivors to an entire generation of students through a more personal approach than is possible with more conventional learning tools.

Listen and watch carefully as these four courageous individuals recount their experiences. Try to understand their anguish and their courage, their struggle and their pain, and let them instruct you on this period in history. Theirs are not just the stories of individuals, but the collective history of one of the most devastating and definitive events of the 20th century.

We are grateful to our colleagues at Facing History and Ourselves for preparing this Study Guide to enable teachers and their students to maximize their experience of the CD-ROM. They have been working for years to help students understand the Holocaust and its lessons of tolerance.

We invite you to begin a journey of significance, of moral and historical importance. This should be a road map to assist you in that journey.

Michael Berenbaum
President and CEO, Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation

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INDEX OF SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES

Disc II

Bert	Paula	Silvia	Sol
<p>"He was a beast."</p>	<p>"I couldn't stop crying."</p>	<p>"...Something for after the war." "I felt the humiliation..." "To breathe some air..." "...The end of the world." "...The worst moment of my life." "The living dead..." "She never spoke again." "We could hear shooting at night."</p>	<p>"A ruling came out..."</p>
<p>"It got colder and colder..."</p>	<p>"...There was no air." "The skies were on fire." "I could read the signs." "If you want to be reunited..." "Here were the electric wires..." "...All the kids attacked me."</p>	<p>"I just wanted to be beautiful."</p>	<p>"We were told to assemble..." "There was difficulty breathing..." "I never saw them again." "He started laughing..." "How can you pray?"</p>
<p>"It was a difficult choice." "People went berserk..." "...They were liberating us." "I was a free man."</p>	<p>"After the Germans left..." "...No human being can explain it." "They didn't kill you?" "These are my memories."</p>	<p>"It's not over..."</p>	<p>"I can still hear that screaming..." "It just didn't go in there." "I want to ask forgiveness."</p>
<p>"All of the rage..."</p>			<p>"Why did I survive?" "I still believe there is a God."</p>

1943

1944

1945

After the War

FOREWORD

For nearly a quarter of a century, Facing History and Ourselves has been teaching about the Holocaust and introducing students across the nation to the stories of survivors. Their accounts reveal that the Holocaust is no more a “Jewish story” or a “German story” than it is a human story. It is a story that prompts reflection about the complexities of good and evil and about one’s responsibilities to the self and to others.

After hearing a survivor speak, many students express outrage at the behavior not only of the perpetrators but also of the bystanders. How, they wonder, could people turn away, as friends and neighbors were stripped of rights, possessions, family, name, and ultimately life itself? Students want to know why no one spoke out before it was too late. An encounter with a Holocaust survivor often illuminates the connections between history and the moral choices students face in their own lives. They come to realize that few events in history are inevitable. The Holocaust was the result of choices made by countless individuals and groups. Even the smallest decisions often had enormous consequences.

Such encounters can change the way students view history and themselves. They begin to recognize the importance of prevention — the idea that our right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” is inextricably bound with their right. They begin to understand that civil liberties are not abstractions. They are real; they matter; and they require constant protection. Yet each year, fewer and fewer students are able to meet a survivor and hear his or her story. Their children and their children’s children will not have this opportunity at all. Steven Spielberg founded Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in 1994 to preserve the testimonies of survivors for future generations. Four of them are featured in *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust*.

These four accounts are not depositions but memoirs. Each contains not only a description of a series of events in the survivor’s life but also the thoughts and feelings that still surround those events. The very words the survivors choose, their hesitations, their changes in affect are a part of their story. Yet even as they struggle to recall the smallest detail, they often brush over a traumatic moment or soften their language at a critical point in the story — perhaps because there are no words to express the horrors they experienced, perhaps to spare us some of that horror. As Elie Wiesel, a noted author and himself a Holocaust survivor, reminds us:

Ask any survivor; he will tell you, he who has not lived the event will never know it. And he who went through it will not reveal it, not really, not entirely. Between his memory and his reflection there is a wall — and it cannot be pierced. The past belongs to the dead, and the survivor does not recognize himself in the words linking him to them. . . . Only the survivor can bear witness, transmit a spark of the flame, tell a fragment of the tale, a reflection of the truth.

Yet from that “spark of the flame,” that “fragment of the tale,” we discover, in Steven Spielberg’s words, that “the devastating events of the Holocaust didn’t happen to faceless numbers, they happened to men and women and children with names and faces and families and dreams. People just like us.”

Margot Stern Strom
Executive Director, Facing History and Ourselves

I. OVERVIEW OF THE TESTIMONIES

Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust features four Holocaust survivors who tell their own stories in their own words. Their testimonies are divided into short chronological segments, or chapters, which are linked by the narration of Winona Ryder and Leonardo DiCaprio. The segments are accompanied by a variety of interactive features that help students place each testimony in a historical and geographical context.

Each survivor’s testimony deepens our knowledge of what happened, complicates our thinking about why it happened, and enhances our understanding of how it was experienced and remembered. Together, the four testimonies reveal that there is no “typical” story of the Holocaust. Each is unique.

Born in Germany in 1925, Bert*
as his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather before him.



Bert in 1931, age 6

grew up in the same community as his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather before him. They all regarded Gemunden, a small, predominately Christian town, as their home. Bert describes the changes that took place there after Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. Gradually, Jews in Gemunden were stripped of their rights and isolated from their neighbors. Then, in December 1941, they were pushed onto cattle cars and transported to the Riga Ghetto in Latvia, thousands of miles from home. After the Nazis evacuated the ghetto in 1943, Bert, and later his father, were among those transported to a nearby concentration camp, Kaiserwald, and then to yet another camp, Stutthof in northern Poland. As the Soviet army pushed closer and closer to the camp in 1945, Bert and all of the other prisoners in Stutthof who were able to walk were forcibly marched to the town of Danzig. Those who survived the march were herded onto a barge and towed out to sea with no food or water. After six unspeakable days, British soldiers rescued Bert and a few other survivors.

Paula was born in Ostrowiec, Poland in 1933 — the year Hitler became chancellor of Germany. His armies invaded Poland just
three weeks before Paula’s sixth birthday. In the years that fol-
lowed, her parents, brothers,
and sisters helped keep her alive by hiding her in the Ostrowiec Ghetto and later in a slave



Paula in 1940, age 7

labor camp built within its borders. But there were no safe places for Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Europe. In 1944, Paula and her family, along with the other surviving Jews in the camp, were shipped to Auschwitz. There Paula was separated from her family and held in a special children’s block where she remained until the Soviet army liberated the camp in 1945.

INDEX OF SURVIVOR TESTIMONIES

DISC I

	Bert	Paula	Silvia	Sol
Before the War	"If I hear strange noise at night..." "They beat my father so badly..." "We had a quota number."	"I was the youngest of six children."	"It could never happen here..."	"We came up with a scheme..."
1939	"I am forever grateful..."	"They wouldn't let us on the train..." "An open ghetto was formed..." "They had our picture taken."	"I had become a 'Gypsy'..." "The first German I saw..."	"The whole town participated in it." "We used to talk about many things."
1940	"...No place to hide." "What do you take?" "The unknown..." "...After all, we were German citizens." "We arrived at a gate..." "We hadn't eaten for several days..."	"I was hidden in an attic..." "We came out of our hiding place..."	"What you said on stage was centered."	"They were taken to forced labor."
1941	"There were some good times..."	"I used to 'disappear' myself." "Children were not welcome."	"Where are they going to send us?" "He told me not to go home..."	"We did have a lot of rumors..."
1942				

The following books can also be utilized to explore specific topics and/or concepts highlighted in the CD-ROM or this study guide:

Bar-On, Dan. *Fear & Hope: Three Generations of the Holocaust*. Harvard University Press, 1995.

Berenbaum, Michael, *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Little Brown, 1993.

Block, Gay and Malka Drucker, *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust*. Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1992.

Browning, Christopher, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. HarperCollins, 1992.

Dwork, Deborah, *Child With a Star*. Yale University Press, 1991.

Hilberg, Raul, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*. HarperCollins, 1992.

Langer, Lawrence L., ed., *Art from the Ashes: A Holocaust Anthology*. Oxford University Press, 1995.

Levi, Primo, *Survival in Auschwitz*. Translated by Stuart Woolf. Macmillan, 1993.

Rittner, Carol and Sondra Myers, eds., *The Courage to Care: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*. New York University Press, 1986.

Vishniac, Roman. *A Vanished World*. Schocken Books, 1983.



On the day the Germans took control of Austria in 1938, Silvia*, a 19-year-old actress, left Vienna with a traveling theater troupe. For the next two years, she was just one step ahead of the Nazis. Then in 1940, Germany invaded the Netherlands and Silvia found herself trapped in an occupied country. At first, there were few anti-Jewish laws, and Silvia was able to find theater work. By 1942, however, the Nazis were placing greater and greater limits on Jews. In July, they began mass deportations to concentration camps and other death camps. Silvia responded by joining a resistance group that helped Jewish children to hide until the war was over. When the operation went into hiding, Silvia was one of the children. Eager to find a way out of the country, she turned to a group of people who had agreed to take Jews from the Netherlands to neutral Switzerland. The group had their main headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. Silvia was promptly transported from there, she was sent to Auschwitz and then to Ravensbrueck, a women's concentration camp. In early 1945, Silvia learned that the Red Cross had obtained permission to transport women from Ravensbrueck. She managed to get herself included in the transport. Unfortunately, British planes bombed the transport as it made its way to Sweden. Only 20 women to survive the journey.



Silvia in 1935, age 16

Sol* was born in 1926 in Dovhe, a small town in Czechoslovakia. Shortly before his thirteenth birthday, German troops occupied the country. Adolf Hitler ceded the nation's Carpathian region, including Dovhe, to Hungary in exchange for its support. Sol's family and the other Jews of Dovhe experienced few disruptions at first, but their lives were completely transformed in March 1944 when the German Army invaded Hungary. Within one month, Jews were identified and isolated. Within two months, deportations to Auschwitz began. In less than four months all of Hungary except the capital city of Budapest was without Jews. Sol, his father, and his uncle managed to survive. They were transferred from Auschwitz to [redacted] eastern Germany. As the war drew to a close, the camp was abandoned and the prisoners were forced on a two-week death march to the Bergen-Belsen camp. When Sol's uncle was unable to keep up, he was shot. Just weeks after the men arrived at the dangerously overcrowded camp, the British army liberated it. The British soldiers arrived too late to save Sol's father, who died of typhus a few days later. Sol is the only member of his family who survived the war.



Sol in 1950, age 24

* To protect the privacy of the survivors, they are identified only by their first names.

II. USING THE CD-ROM

The videotaped testimonies of Bert, Paula, Silvia, and Sol — the Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust — are organized chronologically on two CDs. The first encompasses events that occurred before the war in 1942. The second begins in 1943 and continues through 1945 and beyond. Each testimony is illustrated with maps and historical images. The CD-ROM includes interactive maps, historical and geographical overviews, eight timelines of historical information. Together, they provide a unique educational experience for students relate the survivors' stories not only to their own questions but also to the larger history of the Holocaust and World War II.



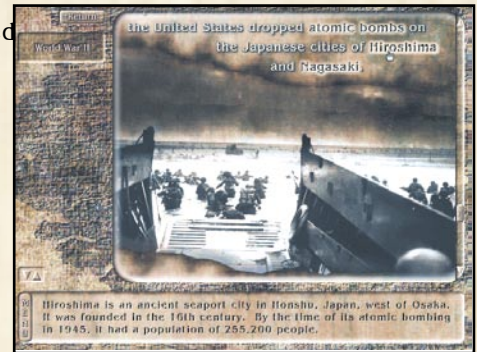
There is no one way to use the CD-ROM nor is there a prescribed order. The four accounts are divided into 69 short chapters in all, each just one to two minutes in length. (The chapters are 1-43 on the first CD and 44-69 on the second CD.)



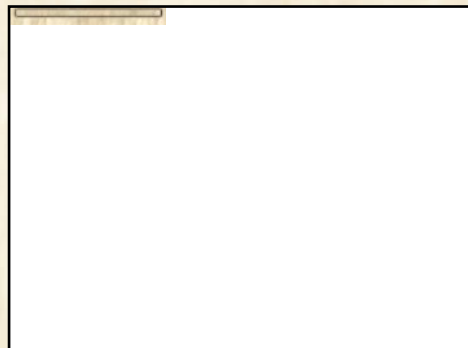
Students may follow a specific testimony from the beginning to the end or use the interactive maps, timelines, and maps to compare and contrast events and

on a computer screen monitor, selected chapters in the testimonies and/or maps to illustrate concepts or prompt class discussions. If there is no computer lab, the CD-ROM can be used for individual activities and individual research and writing projects.

Refer to the User's Manual for installation instructions and detailed information on the features of the CD-ROM.



Detail from Reference Library page on World War II



Detail from the Holocaust timeline for January 1941



Orlev, Uri. *Island on Bird Street*. Houghton, 1989. The author spent two years hiding in the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland. His novel is the story of a 12-year-old boy who hid for five months in an unnamed ghetto. The testimonies of Paula and Bert can be used to supplement the ideas developed in the story.

Richter, Hans Peter. *Friedrich*. Translated by Edite Kroll. Holt, 1970; Puffin Books, 1987. This autobiographical novel is set in Germany and traces the relationship of a Jewish boy and his non-Jewish friend from 1925 to 1942. Bert is exactly the same age as the two boys. His testimony can be used to enhance understanding of the book and complicate its themes.

Siegal, Aranka. *Upon the Head of the Goat: A Childhood in Hungary, 1939-1944*. Penguin, 1984. A memoir that portrays the life of a Jewish girl as, step by step, war and antisemitism creep into her small Hungarian town. Sol's testimony provides a powerful supplement to the events and ideas chronicled in this book.

Tec, Nechama. *Dry Tears: The Story of a Lost Childhood*. Oxford, 1982, 1984. Tec explains how at the age of eleven, she learned to "pass" as a Christian in Nazi-occupied Poland. Paula's testimony parallels Tec's in many ways. Both reveal risks that families took to keep children alive. Both also illuminate what it meant to be a hidden child in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Toll, Nelly S. *Behind the Secret Window: A Memoir of a Hidden Childhood During World War Two*. Dial, 1993. In 1943, a Christian couple in Lvov, Poland, hid Nelly Toll and her mother. Just eight years old when she went into hiding, Nelly kept a diary that inspired her memoir. She also produced 64 watercolor paintings while she was in hiding; 29 of them are included in the book. The book can be used with Paula's testimony to explore more deeply what it meant to be a child, particularly a hidden child, in Nazi-occupied territory.

Weitz, Sonia. *I Promised I Would Tell*. Facing History, 1993. In her memoir, Weitz uses poetry, diary entries, and remembrances to describe her years in the Krakow Ghetto and various concentration camps including Plaszow and Auschwitz. The story she tells is similar to Paula's story. Neither child could have survived without the help of family members. Together, the two accounts reveal the how critical family was to maintaining an individual's identity.

Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Hill and Wang, 1960 (paper, Avon). In *Night*, Wiesel tells two stories — one is a terse, terrifying account of his experiences at Auschwitz and the other describes his relationship with his father and his determination to stay with him until the end. Both stories parallel Sol's testimony.

For a fuller treatment of ideas and concepts developed in this study guide, see *Facing History and Ourselves Resource Book: Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Other books of interest from Facing History include:

Elements of Time is a companion manual to the Facing History videotape collection of Holocaust testimonies — the result of a five-year collaborative project between Facing History and the Fortunoff Video Archive at Yale University, made possible through the vision and support of Eli Evans and the Charles H. Revson Foundation.

Facing History and Ourselves: The Jews of Poland is a consideration of the ways Polish Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors responded to questions of identity, membership, and difference at various times in their shared history.

IV. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust can be used to complement literature about the Holocaust. The books listed below are a few of the many memoirs, novels, and other literary works that can be studied in conjunction with the four testimonies featured on this CD-ROM.

David, Kati. *A Child's War: World War II Through the Eyes of Children*. Avon, 1989. The remembrances of 15 European children during World War II. Included are the memories not only of Jewish children, but also of the children of perpetrators, resisters, rescuers, and bystanders. *Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust* places these accounts in a meaningful context and highlights such themes as family, identity, and universe of obligation.

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Translated by B.M. Mooyaart. Doubleday, 1952, 1967. The unabridged edition, edited by David Barnouw and Gerald Vanderstrom, Doubleday, 1986. The testimony of each of the four survivors can deepen understanding of the diary and its major themes. Like Bert, Anne was born in Germany. Her family was among the thousands who fled the country to escape the Nazis. Bert's story reveals what might have happened to the Franks if they had stayed in Germany. Like Anne, Silvia was also trapped in the Netherlands when the Nazis occupied the country and for a time she, too, was in hiding. Paula's story further illustrates what it was like to be a child, particularly a hidden child, in Nazi-occupied Europe. Sol's story provides insight into conditions at Bergen-Belsen, the camp where Anne and her sister Margot died of typhus just before the war ended.

Holliday, Laurel, ed. *Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries*. Pocket Books, 1995. An anthology of 22 diaries kept by children, many of whom did not survive the war. All four testimonies on the CD-ROM can provide context for these works.

Isaacson, Judith. *Seed of Sarah*. University of Illinois Press, 1991. This memoir is an account of an adolescent girl whose comfortable life in Hungary was thrown into turmoil by the Nazis. The book includes a gripping account of her experiences at Auschwitz. Sol's testimony in many ways complements Isaacson's book. Silvia's testimony adds important insights into what it meant for a young woman to be stripped of her identity.

Koehn, Ilse. *Mischling, Second Degree*. Morrow, 1977. The Nazis defined a person with one Jewish grandparent as a "Mischling, second degree." In her memoir, Koehn describes her life in Nazi Germany as a "Mischling, second degree." Bert's testimony can help readers place her story in a larger context.

Leitner, Isabella. *Fragments of Isabella: A Memoir of Auschwitz*. Crowell, 1978. Leitner's memoir describes what it meant to be a young woman during the Holocaust. Readers will find Silvia's testimony helpful in exploring that perspective more deeply. Leitner also explores many of the themes found in the testimonies of all four survivors – dehumanization, separation from family, and violence.

Levoy, Myron. *Alan and Naomi*. Harper, 1977. The central character in this novel set in New York City in 1944 is Alan Silverman, a bright junior high school student whose favorite pastime is stickball. His life changes when his parents ask him to spend time with Naomi Kirshenbaum, a young French refugee whose experiences during the war have left her deeply disturbed. Any or all of the testimonies can be used to help readers understand Naomi's reactions to liberation.

III. INTRODUCING THE TESTIMONIES

This section contains activities that present major themes and help students place the testimonies in a meaningful context.



Bert's chapter from *Before the War*: "If I hear a strange noise at night..."

Each of the accounts featured on this CD-ROM was drawn from a much longer oral testimony. Professor Lawrence Langer, who has spent many years interviewing survivors and listening to their stories, reminds us that an oral account is very different from a written memoir. It demands the role not only "of passive listener but also of active hearer. This requires us to suspend our sense of the normal and to accept the complex immediacy of a voice reaching us simultaneously from the secure present and the devastating past."

This section of the study guide contains three sets of activities: *The Individual and Society*, *We and They*, and *Describing the Indescribable*. Each activity encourages students to be "active hearers," and helps to place the testimony in a meaningful context. All three require that students listen to a least one testimony from beginning to end before accessing the interactive features of the CD-ROM so that they can come to know the survivor, not as an abstraction but as a real person with a name, a face, a family, and dreams. A person just like them.

Each set of activities begins with a short lesson and is followed by a series of questions and other activities that prompt discussion. There are no right or wrong answers. Many reflect Langer's warning that the testimonies of Holocaust survivors provide "no closure, because the victims who have not survived — in many ways, the most important 'characters' in these narratives — have left no personal voice behind. They can only be evoked, spoken about." There are other voices that can only be evoked as well. Although the words of the perpetrators have survived, they are not heard on this CD-ROM. They are only "spoken about." The same is true of the bystanders. This is why oral testimonies must be integrated with other sources of information. The interactive features of this CD-ROM help students to do so by placing each testimony in a larger context, prompting further reading and inquiry, and promoting discussion.

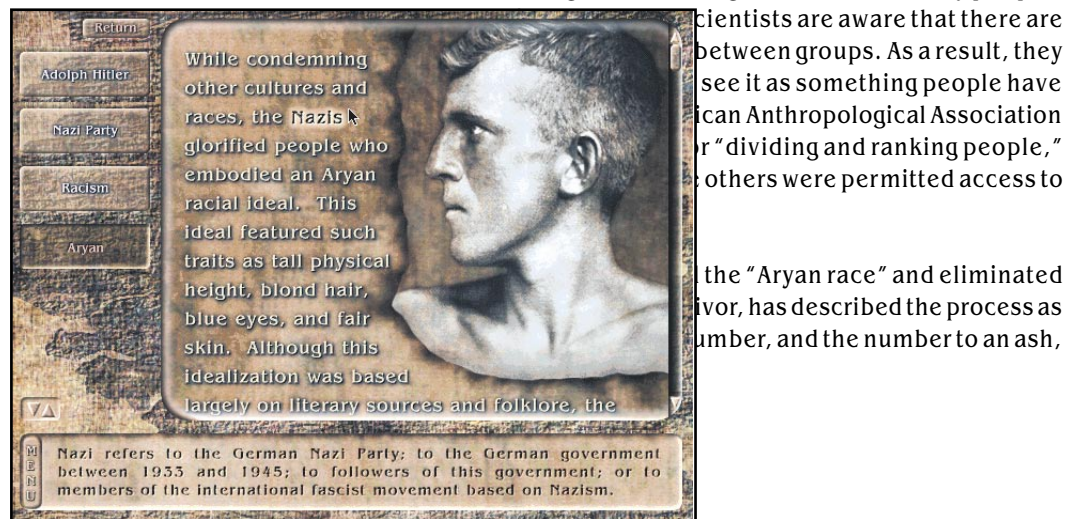
THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

"Who are you?" is a question we have all been asked at one time or another. Survivors: Testimonies of the Holocaust chronicles a time in history when the answer to that seemingly simple question often meant life or death. It was a time when to define oneself or be defined as a Jew or a Gypsy, for example, had enormous consequences as the Nazis set out to identify, isolate, dehumanize, and ultimately annihilate millions of children, women, and men because of their "race."

Then as now, most people viewed their identity as a combination of many factors. They regarded gender, ethnicity, religion, occupation, even physical characteristics as part of their identity. They also included their ties to a particular community, school, or nation. Their values and beliefs were a part of their identity, too, as were the decisions and experiences that shaped their lives. To the Nazis, these factors were unimportant. They cared only about one factor — "race."

Like many people in the early 1900s, the Nazis believed that humankind was divided into distinct and unchangeable "races." They firmly believed that these "races" were not equal. Some were superior to others. Adolf Hitler wrote a book called *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) in which he ranked the "races." At the top he placed the Aryans, the mythical ancestors of the German people. At the bottom were Jews, Gypsies, and Blacks, whom he regarded as less than human.

Hitler believed that members of a "race" share a genetic heritage. At the time, many people,



scientists are aware that there are differences between groups. As a result, they do not see it as something people have in common. The American Anthropological Association has criticized the practice of "dividing and ranking people," and others were permitted access to

the "Aryan race" and eliminated anyone who did not fit the mold. Hitler, however, has described the process as "eliminating the weak, the number, and the number to an ash,"

Image from Reference Library page on "Aryan"

Monuments and Memorials

People often remember the past by building monuments that honor their heroes or commemorate their tragedies. In creating the memorial, the individuals involved must answer a variety of questions. Some questions relate to the purpose of the memorial, others concern its audience, and still others regard who will be remembered and why. To what extent is each of the testimonies you followed a memorial? Who do the survivors want to be remembered, and for what reasons? What do they want us to know and remember? What do they want us to learn from their experiences? What is the moral or lesson of each testimony? Of all four testimonies?

Redefining a Universe of Obligation

After the war, a Christian woman in Poland recalled two occasions when she turned away rather than helped a Jew. Wondering if the outcome would have been different if she and others had followed their conscience, she concluded, "Possibly, even if more of us had turned out to be more Christian, it would have made no difference in the statistics of extermination, but maybe it would not have been such a lonely death." How did she define her universe of obligation during the war? Why is she now uncomfortable with that definition? Every major religion teaches that we are indeed "our brothers' keepers" and yet much of history describes the way neighbors have turned against neighbors. What do the testimonies teach us about the value of our neighbors? About the way people everywhere are linked?



Silvia's chapter from *After the War*:
"It's not over..."



Karl Brandt listens to his sentencing at the Nuremberg trials. Dr. Brandt was a leader of the Nazi Euthanasia Program in which hundreds of thousands of disabled people were killed.

International Military Tribunal created by Great Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union tried 22 Nazi leaders for crimes against humanity. The prosecution used the Nazis' own records as evidence. Not only the quantity of records available but also the quality of the records was evidence. The defendants did not deny they had committed the acts for which they were being tried but only that they were not responsible for these acts because they were obeying the law.

The United States and its allies held their own trials. Great Britain tried over 5,000 Nazis. The Soviets held similar trials. The Germans under German rule also tried Nazi leaders, including those who had run the death camps.

Dr. Brandt worked with the British Army as a witness (during the war.) Bert helped the U.S. army find war criminals (during the war.) What purpose did these trials serve for the victims, or warn those who might commit similar crimes? How do these trials create a history that is not judged or acknowledged?

Dr. Brandt's trial. As the SS "expert" on the "Jewish Question," he arranged for the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Jews to the death camps. His trial was one of the first to make extensive use of the testimony of survivors. What might testimonies like those on this CD-ROM add to a trial that official reports, memos, letters, and other evidence could not provide?

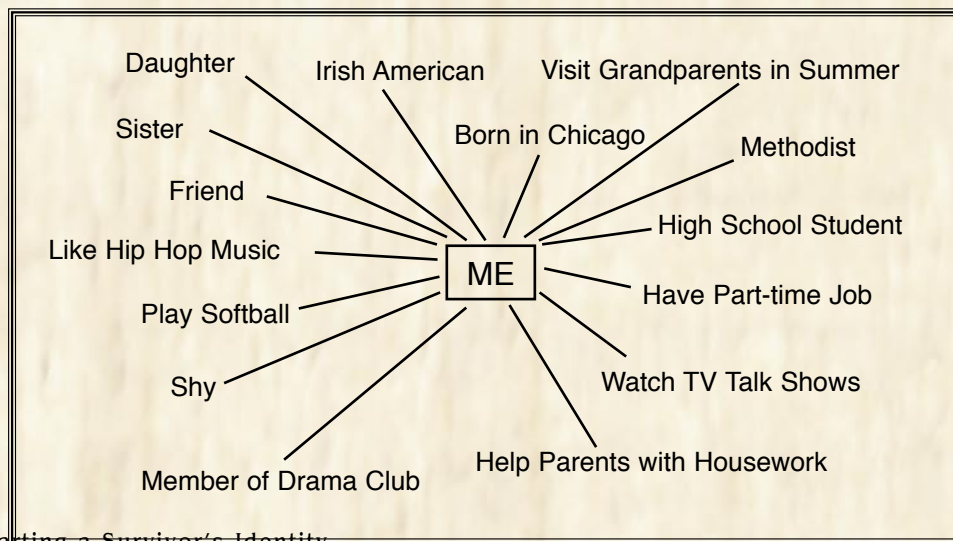
official reports, memos, letters, and other evidence could not provide?

It has been said that the last battles fought in every war are over memory — over the way that war will be remembered. How important are the testimonies of the survivors to that struggle over memory? How necessary is it that their voices be heard?

Defining Your Identity

Introduce yourself by creating an identity chart like the one below. It should contain the words that you use to describe yourself as well as those that others might use to characterize you. What experiences have shaped your identity? Who are the individuals who have been important to your sense of who you are and what you might become? Add them to your chart. When you finish, share your chart with a partner or the whole class. What labels, roles, or experiences appear on every chart? Which appear on only a few? To what extent is each chart unique?

IDENTITY CHART



Charting a Survivor's Identity

Working alone or in a small group, choose one of the four survivors featured on the CD-ROM and listen to his or her testimony from beginning to end. Then replay the testimony, year by year. This time, explore the photographs, maps, and other visuals that accompany the testimony. After listening to the chapters from Before the War, begin an identity chart for the survivor similar to the one you constructed for yourself. Add to the chart as you listen to more chapters. What individuals, ideas, decisions, or experiences have shaped his or her identity? What words or phrases does the survivor use to explain who he or she is? What words or phrases might others use to describe him or her?

Comparing Experiences

One way to compare and contrast the experiences of the four survivors is by sharing the identity charts you and your classmates created. In what respects are the four charts alike? How is each unique? Another way is to focus on a particular year or years and find out what that year was like for each of the four survivors. To do so, go to the Home Page, highlight a year, and then click on Map Detail. Find each survivor on the map and listen to his or her account of that year. What similarities do you notice? How do you explain the differences?

The Power of Identity

Throughout occupied Europe, the Nazis tried to dehumanize Jews and other groups they considered “less than human.” How has the testimony you explored deepened your understanding of what it means to dehumanize an individual — to strip a person of citizenship, an occupation, possessions, family, a name, and ultimately even life itself? How did that attempt shape the survivor’s identity?



Sol’s 1943 chapter: “A ruling came out...”

A Matter of Belongings

Paula takes pride in a photograph that survived the war. (See Paula, 1940, “They had our picture taken.”) Bert recalls his family home. In describing the order that forced his family from that home, he sadly asks, “What do you take?” What is he suggesting about the importance of objects and the memories they evoke? (See Bert’s chapters from 1941.) Why does Silvia place such importance on a compact? What does it symbolize to her? (See Silvia, 1943, “I felt the humiliation.”) What is the connection between one’s possessions and one’s identity?

Memory and Identity

In many respects, each of the four testimonies is a memoir. The term comes from a Latin word meaning “to remember.” Why do the survivors need to remember what happened to them? Why do they want us to hear what happened? How have the stories they tell shaped their identity?

The Power of Labels

Each of the four survivors is a Jew. What meaning did each survivor attach to that part of his or her identity before the war? Did the survivor see himself or herself as belonging to a “race,” as a follower of a religion, or as a member of an ethnic group? How central was the label to the way each saw himself or herself? To the way others saw the individual? How did experiences during and after the Holocaust shape the way each seems to regard that label today?

What Silenced the Bystanders?

Holocaust survivor Primo Levi was often asked, "Did people know what was happening?" He replied with a question of his own, "How is it possible that the extermination could have been carried out in the heart of Europe without anyone's knowledge?" Each of the four survivors on the CD-ROM was deported from his or her home and transported to a concentration camp or ghetto. Several describe death marches at the end of the war from one camp to another. Use Map Detail to trace their routes. What towns did they pass through? Who was likely to see the trains and hear the cries from within? Who was likely to have seen the prisoners forcibly marched from one camp to yet another? How do you account for their silence? Levi concluded:

In spite of the varied possibilities for information, most Germans didn't know because they didn't want to know ... In Hitler's Germany a particular code was widespread: those who knew did not talk; those who did not know did not ask questions; those who did ask questions received no answers.

Thus, in Levi's view, the Germans built for themselves "the illusion of not knowing." Why does Levi regard not knowing as an "illusion"? What evidence can you find of that illusion in Bert's testimony? (See Bert, Before the War-1941.) In the testimonies of the other survivors? What did people in other countries know? What did they do as a consequence? Use the Timeline and the Index to research your answers.

Could Bystanders Make a Difference?

Many people believe that there was nothing anyone could do once the Holocaust began. Others disagree. Use the Index and the Timeline to find out how the following individuals and nations responded to the murder of Europe's Jews: the people of Denmark, the people of Bulgaria, Raoul Wallenberg, the U.S. War Refugee Board. Albert Camus, a writer who took part in French resistance to the Nazis, believed that "strength of heart, intelligence, and courage are enough to stop fate and sometimes reverse it." To what extent do the responses of the individuals and groups you researched support that belief?

The Time for Heroes

In reflecting on individuals who went to great lengths to save Jews during the Holocaust, writer Cynthia Ozick warns, "When a whole population takes on the status of bystander, the victims are without allies; the criminals, unchecked, are strengthened; and only then do we need to speak of heroes. When a field is filled from end to end with sheep, a stag stands out. When a continent is filled from end to end with the compliant, we learn what heroism is." How does she define the word heroism? What does her definition suggest about the importance of taking action before heroism is necessary?

PERPETRATORS AND BYSTANDERS

Many scholars have reflected on the behavior of the perpetrators by focusing on what motivated their actions. Others have focused on the role of bystanders. Were they truly as powerless as they claimed to be? The testimonies of the four survivors provide glimpses of both the perpetrators and the bystanders.



German guards humiliate a Jew in Ostrowiec, Poland.

The Perpetrators

The German guard who humiliated Silvia in Malines was following orders. (See Silvia, 1943.) A number of historians, psychologists, and sociologists have tried to explain why he and so many other Germans not only willingly obeyed such orders, but did so with enthusiasm. They often treated the Jews far worse than their superiors demanded. Daniel Goldhagen and a number of other scholars trace such behavior to antisemitism. They argue that for generations, Germans have regarded Jews as “different,” even “less than human.” Other scholars have attributed the behavior to opportunism, terror, peer pressure, a strong desire to please authority figures, or the need to conform. Based on the testimony or testimonies you studied and what you know about human behavior, what factor or combination of factors encourages such obedience? How do you account for exceptions? For example, how do you explain the officer at Kaiserwald who left food for Bert? (See Bert, 1943.) What may have prompted his actions?

The Bystanders

Most bystanders in the 1930s and 1940s saw themselves as powerless. After all, they ask, what could one person do to stop the killings once they began? A number of sociologists believe that bystanders play a critical role in every society. “They can,” writes Professor Ervin Staub, “define the meaning of events and move others toward empathy or indifference. They can promote values and norms of caring, or by their passivity or participation in the system, they can affirm the perpetrators.”

A few of Bert’s Christian neighbors in Gemunden secretly left food for the family. Yet none of them spoke out when Jewish families in the community were deported. (See Bert, 1940-1941.) How do you account for those who would secretly feed hungry families and yet allow their homes and jobs to be taken away from them? A number of non-Jews in the Netherlands took enormous risks to protect Jewish children. They also helped Silvia, her mother, and sister hide from the Nazis. (See Silvia, 1940-1942.) What do you think prompted them to take a stand at a time when so many others looked the other way?

WE AND THEY

"We know that we are unique individuals," writes psychologist Deborah Tannen, "but we tend to see others as representatives of groups. It is a natural tendency, since we must see the world in patterns in order to make sense of it." However, she warns, "this natural and useful ability to see patterns of similarity has unfortunate consequences. It is offensive to reduce an individual to a category, and it is also misleading." Others have noted that our "natural tendency" to rely on labels has both social and moral consequences.

We tend to consider those who are most "like us" as part of "our universe of obligation" — the circle of individuals and groups for whom we feel responsible, whose rights we seek to protect, and whose injuries call for amends. When those within that circle are threatened, we feel compelled to take action. When those who are beyond it are in danger, we are likely to suggest that they are not our responsibility. We avoid action because their troubles are "none of our business."

For centuries, Jews were seen as outsiders in Europe — a vulnerable minority that lay outside the universe of obligation of the majority. As a religious minority, Jews were seen as a people who stubbornly refused to accept Christianity. Indeed, by the fourth century, the word Jew had become an expression of contempt among many Christians. By the sixth century, laws in much of Europe protected Christians from "contamination" by not allowing them to eat with Jews. Jews could not hold office or employ Christian servants. Many occupations were closed to them. By the thirteenth century, church officials in Germany and elsewhere required that Jews wear specially marked clothing. By the 1500s, except for a few business encounters, Jews were completely isolated from their Christian neighbors. In some places, Jews were confined to a ghetto, a section of a city or town enclosed by high walls and guarded by Christian gatekeepers. With this more rigid separation came new myths and disinformation. Their effects lingered long after the ghetto walls began to fall in the late 1700s and Jews were allowed to become citizens of the countries in which they had lived for so many centuries.

Then in the late 1800s, myths about Jews and other minorities took on new life as ideas about "race" captured the imagination of many Europeans and Americans. In the past, Jews could at least, in theory, end discrimination and achieve acceptance by converting to Christianity. Now their status as outsiders was permanent. Conversion could not change a person's "race." In 1879, a new word was coined to define this hatred of Jews. That word was antisemitism.

Individuals and Their Universe of Obligation

Working alone or in a small group, choose one of the four survivors featured on the CD-ROM and listen to his or her testimony from beginning to end. Then replay the testimony, year by year. This time, explore the photographs, maps, and other visuals that accompany each chapter. How does the survivor seem to define his or her universe of obligation? Who is a part of that universe? Who lies beyond it? What does the survivor's testimony reveal about the way non-Jews seemed to define their universe of obligation before the war? During the war? After the war? At what times did they define that universe most broadly? At what times was it most narrowly defined? What were the consequences of those definitions? Compare and contrast your findings with someone who followed the story of another survivor. What similarities do you notice? What differences seem most striking?

Nations and Their Universe of Obligation

Access the Timeline tool on the CD-ROM to understand how each of the following nations defined its universe of obligation before the war: Great Britain, Denmark, France, Hungary, the Soviet Union, the United States. How did each country define it during the war? After the war was over? How do you explain the changes in the definitions from one time period to another?

Consequences

How individuals and groups define their universe of obligation has important consequences. Martin Niemoeller, a Protestant minister in Germany, reflected on some of those consequences. In 1932, when the Germans went to the polls to choose their country's leaders, he was among those who supported the Nazis in that election. By 1938, he regretted the choice he had made. That year, the Nazis sent him to a concentration camp, where he remained until the war ended. After the war, he is believed to have said:

In Germany, the Nazis came for the Communists and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak for me.

How did Niemoeller define his universe of obligation in 1932? What were the consequences of that definition? What is the moral of Niemoeller's words? That is, what lesson do they teach? How does that lesson relate to the story that each of the four survivors tells? To the way individuals and nations define their universe of obligation in the world today?

Defining Your Universe of Obligation

Study your identity chart. What does it suggest about the way you define your universe of obligation? How has your definition changed over the years? What prompted those changes?

Rescue and Resistance

Jews in every part of Europe fought the Nazis. There were uprisings in Krakow, Warsaw, Vilna, Kovno, Bialystok, and other cities. Jews even managed to revolt in such death camps as Auschwitz, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

Acts of Heroism

Write a working definition of the word heroic. (A working definition is one that grows to encompass more and more information.) Begin by writing what the word means to you. Then add the meanings you discovered as you listened to the survivors and reflected on their experiences. For example, how would you characterize Silvia's efforts to hide Jewish children in the Netherlands? (See Silvia, 1942.) Her role in passing information on the progress of the war to other inmates at Ravensbrueck? (See Silvia, 1943.) Were you alive heroic? (See Paula, 1941-1944.) How did you help your family or Sol's desperate attempt to escape? What do you think of these acts of heroism? Does an action have to be heroic?



No One to Help

To those who wonder why Jews faced with no one to help, Primo Levi wrote a reply in his book *The Truce*. Why did they flee? To whom could they turn for help? The world was made of air. They no longer had a country to turn to for an answer? What happened when she tried to help? Silvia's tried to hide. Who helped them to do so? To what extent did where a Jew lived make a difference? How did the policies affected a Jew's ability to hide or flee? How did Jews could find safe hiding places?

So Much Resistance

Elie Wiesel has written, "The question is not why the Jews did not fight, but why they did. Tormented, beaten, starved, where did they find the strength — spiritual and physical — to resist?" How do you think the survivor or survivors you studied would answer Wiesel's question? How do you answer it? Some have called resistance a choice Jews made about how to die rather than about how to live. Others argue that resistance is more about the will to live and the power of hope than it is about death. Which view is closest to each of the four survivors' thinking? Which is closest to your own?

Resistance fighters from Vilna, Lithuania pose with their weapons. Abba Kovner led the Jews in the fight against the Nazis in the city.

ferently that it was the parents who took the first step and the most terrifying step in the protection of their children, as it was they who had to determine whether it was best to send them into hiding, to try to smuggle them out of the country, or to keep them at their side.

Find evidence in the testimonies of the kind of response Dwork describes. Was Silvia resisting when she exchanged information with other inmates at Ravensbrueck? (See Silvia, 1943.) Was Bert's smuggling food to his family an act of resistance or of defiance? (See Bert, 1943.) Were Paula and her brother defying the Nazis when they smuggled food to their mother in Auschwitz? (See Paula, 1944.) How would you characterize the Yom Kippur service Sol and his father participated in at Erlenbusch? (See Sol, 1944.) Is there a difference between resistance and defiance?



Keeping Faith

What is the relationship between one's heritage and one's identity? Throughout history, people who have been enslaved have gone to extraordinary lengths to keep their heritage alive. Why do you think it has been so important to them? How does your answer help explain why Sol's father tried to observe Jewish holidays in a concentration camp? Why do you think Sol recited the traditional prayer for the dead after his father died? (See Sol, 1944-After the War.) To what extent were such actions a form of resistance or defiance?

DESCRIBING THE INDESCRIBABLE

Many survivors speak of the need for “another voice, other words” to convey what they experienced during the Holocaust. Primo Levi, a Holocaust survivor from Italy, explained:

Just as our hunger is not the feeling of missing a meal, so our way of being cold has need of a new word. We say “hunger,” we say “tiredness,” “fear,” “pain,” we say “winter” and they are different things. They are free words, created and used by free men who lived in comfort and suffering in their homes. If the (camps) had lasted longer, a new, harsh language would have been born; and only this language could express what it means to toil the whole day in the wind with the temperature below freezing, and wearing only one pair of shoes and in one’s body nothing but wearing a pair of shoes and a pair of pants being near.

A New Language

Write a working definition of the following words. The definition is one that grows to encompass more and more meanings as you learn more about the word. Then choose one of the testimonies to read. Write a paragraph explaining how the testimony has altered your understanding of such words. What does the “new language” Levi describes? (See Bert, 1945, “There were no trees, there was no sky, there was only a sky which burnt, which burnt you. Cold and a desert climate and something which does not exist.”)

How is she using familiar words like burnt, cold, and desert to convey an experience that is outside our experience? How does Bert convey the five or six days he spent on a barge in the Baltic Sea? Why do you think words fail him? (See Bert, 1945, “They went berserk.”) When Sol recalls the horrific conditions at Bergen-Belsen in the final days of the war, he speaks of hunger. (See Sol, 1945.) How is that hunger different from our understanding of the word? When Paula describes wetting the bed while she was in hiding, what is she trying to convey to us about her fear and anxiety as she lay in that attic room? (See Paula, 1941.) How do these examples help us understand why Levi and others believe that “our language lacks words to express this offense, the demolition of a man”? What do the testimonies suggest about how this new language was learned?



Without the Horror

After the war, Abba Kovner, a poet and Holocaust survivor, was shown a model of Treblinka and was told that it was an “accurate and authentic” depiction of the death camp. He vehemently disagreed. “It was the buildings without the anguish and the horror. Treblinka was not the buildings and the fence. Without the horror, it was just another youth camp. What is the ghetto in socio-historical accounts without the horror?” Look carefully at the historical photographs that accompany the chapters in Paula and Bert’s testimonies describing ghetto life. To what extent do the pictures help us glimpse the anguish and the horror? How do the testimonies of Paula (1940-1943) and Bert (1941-1942) deepen our understanding of what lay within the ghetto walls? How do all four testimonies help us imagine the anguish and the horror of the camps? (See Bert, 1943-1945; Paula, 1944-1945; Silvia, 1943-1945; Sol, 1944-1945.)



Paula’s 1940 chapter:
“An open ghetto was formed...”



Bert’s 1941 chapter:
“We arrived at a gate...”

SLAVE LABOR

Theologian Richard Rubenstein maintains that the Holocaust is linked, although not exclusively, to a cultural tradition of slavery "which stretches back to the Middle Passage from the coast of Africa, and beyond, to the enforced servitude in Ancient Greece and Rome." He argues that if we ignore the links between slavery and the Holocaust, "we ignore the existence of the sleeping virus in the bloodstream of civilization, at the risk of waking the virus in the bloodstream of civilization."

We and They

Why do you think Rubenstein sees racial hatred as the virus that threatens civilization? How is it linked to slavery?

Orlando Patterson is an African-American scholar who has written extensively about slavery in history. He defines slavery as a relationship between a dominant group over another. Although he sees similarities between slavery and other forms of oppression, he regards slavery as unique in that slaves are always disrespected, and they are always outside the dominant group's "universalization of the term match the experiences of the slaves whose stories you have heard or read."



Maintaining Identity

Individuals and groups find ways to maintain their identity despite policies of humiliation and discrimination. Historian Deborah Dwork points out that these acts of resistance can take many different forms:

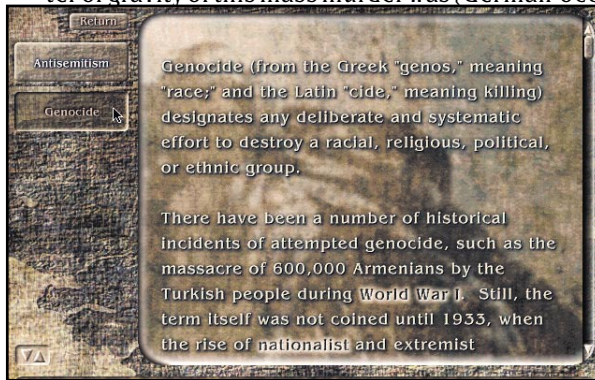
The policy (in the ghettos of Warsaw and Vilna), for example, ... to educate, feed, and protect children out of proportion to their ghettos' resources was another way in which Jews opposed the press of Nazism and held fast to their principles and responsibilities. The activities of Jewish networks throughout Nazi-occupied Europe to save the children are also too frequently forgotten. And, most poignant, the decisions taken by the children's parents on behalf of their daughters and sons are an overwhelmingly painful form of courage and resistance. It cannot be stressed too

Civilian prisoners labor at the Ravensbrueck concentration camp in Poland.

Auschwitz a choiceless choice? (Paula, 1944, "If you want to be reunited...")
What distinguishes such choices from other decisions? Why do those choices still haunt many of the survivors?

When Did Murder Become Genocide?

Scholars are still debating exactly when the Holocaust began. "At the core of the Holocaust was an intense eleven-month wave of mass murder," writes historian Christopher Browning. "The center of gravity of this mass murder was (German-occupied) Poland, where in March 1942, despite



Detail of the Reference Library page on Genocide.

that idea? When do you think the Holocaust began? When do you think it began for the survivor or survivors you studied?

and persecution, every major Jewish community of Polish Jewry survived." Use the new timeline that begins in March 1942 and Browning's conclusion. How were each of the events during that time? Which were most deeply

Use the Holocaust timeline to identify the event that most impacted you. At what extent do the experiences of the four survivors support your conclusion?

Still other scholars argue that the Holocaust began almost immediately after Hitler came to power in 1933. What event or events in the timelines support your conclusion?



A detail from the 1942 Overview shows the house in Wannsee, Germany where German leaders planned the extermination of Europe's Jews.

IV. CONNECTIONS

This section of the study guide identifies specific concepts and themes developed in the four testimonies.

GERMAN DECEPTION

The Nazis carried out their plans for the Jews secretly. Often they masked their intentions with false claims, false promises, and words that camouflaged their real purpose.

False Promises

In many places, the Nazis told the Jews that they were being transported to the "east" for "resettlement." Some were urged to volunteer for the move. Paula's sisters were among those who volunteered for resettlement. Neither survived. (See Paula, 1942.) The Nazis based their policies on the idea that if you tell a lie big enough and often enough, people will come to believe it is true. How did the claim that Jews were being "resettled in the east" reflect that idea? Find other examples of German deception in the CD-ROM by using the Index to access the text of such Reference Library pages as Deportation, Disinformation, Euthanasia Program, and Propaganda. What was the purpose of the Nazis' lies? Whom were they designed to deceive — the victims or the bystanders? What were the consequences of these acts of deception?

Is a Picture Worth a Thousand Words?

One of Paula's brothers fled the country immediately after Germany invaded Poland. When he heard that Jews were being mistreated in occupied Poland, he went to the International Red Cross and demanded information about his family. The Red Cross forwarded his plea to the Germans. They responded by taking a photograph of his family. That picture survived the war. (See Paula, 1940, "They had our picture taken.") Look carefully at the photograph. Why do you think the Germans insisted that it be taken? What do you think the Germans wanted to cover what the photograph conceals. Look at the photograph and how it illustrates her testimony and those of other victims. What do you think the photograph means without the testimony? How do you think the photograph illustrates images in a historical context?



SS officers dressed and posed Paula's family for this picture in the winter of 1940. Paula, sitting in center, was seven years old.

CHOICES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman and other scholars have noted that the Nazis' plans for the Jews, Gypsies, and other victims emerged "inch by inch, pointing at each stage to a different destination, shifting in response to ever-new crises, and pressed forward with a 'we will cross that bridge once we come to it' philosophy."

Charting a Course

In the beginning, Jews were able to make choices. Each survivor describes the ones he or she made as well as those of parents, friends, and neighbors. Early on, those decisions were based at least in part on information. For example, what prompted some Jews in Bert's hometown to leave Germany in the 1930s? Decisions are also based on assumptions about "human nature." People sometimes call these assumptions "common sense." What assumptions about human nature affected the choices Bert's father made in the early 1930s? What did common sense suggest was the "right thing" for a Jew to do in Germany in 1938? In Poland in 1939? In the Netherlands in 1940? Or in Hungary in 1944? Values and beliefs play a part in the choices we make. On what values were these decisions based? To what extent did loyalties to a nation, a family, or a way of life affect the choices Jews made?



One of Paula's brothers chose to flee to Soviet territory soon after the Nazis occupied Poland. In retrospect, it was the right decision. Despite deportations to labor camps and great suffering, most of the Polish Jews who survived the war were those who fled to the Soviet Union. At the time, however, it was virtually impossible to know that it was the right choice. Alexander Donat, who also lived in Poland, left briefly and then returned to Poland because of family responsibilities. He later wrote of his choice: "We knew we faced dreadful anguish, but never in our wildest dreams did we anticipate the ultimate holocaust." What do his remarks suggest about why it was so difficult for Jews to make the "right decision"?

When did each of the survivors realize how great the danger really was? Why do you think so many refused to believe the rumors they had heard? For example, do you think the people in Sol's hometown really believed that the stories of mass murder were false? (See Sol, 1942.) Many individuals and groups tend to doubt information that lies beyond their religious or moral beliefs. What would the people in Dovhe have had to believe about the world and humanity in order to

accept the rumors they heard? What is the difference between saying that someone is lying and saying that you cannot believe what he or she is saying? What kinds of stories do you find hardest to accept as true? What are the main differences between the stories you believe and those you doubt?

Little by Little

Throughout occupied Europe, the Nazis determined who was and was not a Jew and then issued orders that set Jews apart from their neighbors. For example, in some areas under German rule, all Jews over the age of ten had to wear a white armband with the Star of David on it. In other places, they were required to attach a yellow star to their clothing. Most Jews obeyed such orders. After the war, Yitzhak Zuckerman, a young Jew who helped organize an uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland, reflected on the significance of that decision:

Who could have understood in that first moment that from the white and blue armband with the Shield of David ... that from the Band of Shame was a straight line that would extend direct to Treblinka (death camp)? The incidents began and we grew accustomed to them. We were humiliated when we were forced to remove our caps in the presence of the German commanders ... and we grew accustomed to that. We wrestled with ourselves when the Germans seized us for the slave labor battalions ... and we grew accustomed to that. We became used to not eating, to dying of the typhus, to starving. We grew accustomed to all of this. There was a certain force that prevented us from seeing reality as it actually was.

What danger did Zuckerman see in becoming "accustomed" to each new order? Why do you think he believed that one humiliating incident prepares for the next? To what extent do the testimonies of Bert and Sol support his views? (See Bert, *Before the War*-1943; and Sol, 1941-1944.)

How do Zuckerman's remarks relate to the perpetrators? To what were they becoming accustomed? How do his remarks relate to bystanders? To what were they becoming accustomed?

Choiceless Choices

Historian Deborah Dwork writes that the choices Jews made during the Holocaust were "so alien, so different from anything Jews experienced personally, or had learned through education, that they could not apply their knowledge to it." Professor Lawrence Langer calls those decisions "choiceless choices." They are decisions made in the "absence of humanly significant alternatives — that is, alternatives enabling an individual to make a decision, act on it, and accept the consequences, all within a framework that supports personal integrity and self-esteem." To what extent were the choices the survivors describe in their testimonies choiceless choices? For example, are Sol's decision to leave his uncle (Sol, 1945, "I can still hear that screaming...") and Bert's to leave his father (Bert, 1945, "It was a difficult choice.") examples of choiceless choices? Was Paula's almost instinctive decision to step out of a circle of "volunteers" at