

RESCUE

*Preserving Humanity
during the Holocaust*

Witness Biographies



Estelle Abas

Estelle Abas was born to Jacob and Leentje Hartog on July 26, 1911 in Waalwijk, Netherlands. She was the youngest of three children and had a brother, Herman, and a sister, Henriette. Estelle received her elementary and secondary education in Utrecht, where her family moved for her father's job in the shoe business. She belonged to a youth Zionist organization, studied languages, and was fond of sports. After school, Estelle received her certificate for commercial correspondence in foreign languages and worked as a secretary until the beginning of WWII.

When persecution of Jews started in the Netherlands during the German occupation, Estelle's employer, Aart Frylink, helped her flee Utrecht and arranged a hiding place on a farm in Bodegraven, on the south of the country. The farmer family of Gert and Marritje Van Mourik provided shelter to Estelle. On several occasions, she managed to avoid arrests, but eventually had to leave the farm, in late 1944. Estelle lived under false identity with another gentile family until the territory was liberated by Canadian troops in May 1945. Estelle's sister, Henriette, moved to the United States before the war; her brother, Herman, perished in Auschwitz in 1942.

After liberation, Estelle returned to Utrecht and was reunited with her parents. She immigrated to the United States in the late 1940s. Estelle was married twice, both husbands died of illness: Abraham Tobias, her first husband, died in 1956; her second husband, Carl Abas, died in 1962. Estelle worked in a bookkeeping firm and volunteered at the local hospital. She published a book about her experiences, *Promise*, in 1996. Estelle passed away in May 2001.

The interview was conducted on July 15, 1996 in San Diego, CA, United States; interviewer: John Kent; videographer: Allison Hoffman.



Per Anger

Per Anger was born to David and Elsa Anger on December 7, 1913 in Göteborg, Sweden. When Per was three years old, the family moved to Stockholm, where David worked as a civil engineer. Per studied law at Stockholm and Uppsala universities, graduating in 1939.

In 1940, he entered the Foreign Service as an attaché at the Swedish Embassy in Berlin, Germany, where he worked on trade relations. In 1942, he was transferred to the Swedish Embassy in Budapest, Hungary and served there from 1942-1945. While in Budapest, he participated in numerous rescue efforts of people targeted for persecution by the Nazis. Among them was Albert Szent-Györgyi, a Hungarian physiologist, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (1937), active in anti-Nazi resistance. After Germany invaded Hungary in 1944, Anger became involved in efforts to aid Hungarian Jews, issuing protection documents, which helped Hungarian Jews avoid deportation. In late 1944,

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Anger helped Raoul Wallenberg rescue Jews from deportation trains and distribute food and water to deportees. When the Soviet armed forces entered Budapest in January 1945, both Anger and Wallenberg were taken into custody. Anger was released three months later, but Wallenberg never emerged again, becoming one of the 20th century's most famous missing persons.

After the war, Anger served in diplomatic posts in Austria, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, and the United States, and was ambassador to Australia, the Bahamas, and Canada. During his postwar career, Anger led efforts to investigate Wallenberg's fate, meeting personally with Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev in the 1980s. In 2000, the government of Russia finally revealed that Wallenberg died in Soviet custody in 1947.

Anger has received the following awards: Yad Vashem's *Righteous Among the Nations* (1982); the Hungarian Republic's *Order of Merit* (1995); the University of Michigan's *Wallenberg Medal* (1995); honorary Israeli citizenship (2000); the American Swedish Historical Museum's *Spirit of Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award* (2001). The *Per Anger Prize* was instituted by the Swedish Government to honor the memory of ambassador Per Anger and is awarded for humanitarian work and initiatives in the name of Democracy, to individuals or groups who have distinguished themselves either in the past or in more recent times.

Per Anger died on August 26, 2002 in Stockholm. He was survived by his wife, Elena, two sons, Jan and Peter, and a daughter, Birgitta.

The interview was conducted on February 21, 1996 in Stockholm, Sweden; interviewer: Lucien Brongniart; videographer: Thomas Wester.



Betty Berz

Betty Berz (née Sagal) was born on June 22, 1926 in Kyiv, USSR (today, Ukraine). The family—Betty, her mother Marie, her father Boris, and her younger sister Rachel—immigrated to Paris in 1929.

When war broke out in France in 1940, Betty was evacuated with other Parisian children, stayed briefly at a boarding school in Gers, then returned to Paris, where she was subjected to anti-Jewish measures, including wearing the yellow star. In June

1942, Betty and her family were warned about roundups and managed to avoid the Velodrome d'Hiver roundup. They took refuge in various places before settling in a room in the 11th arrondissement in Paris, where they stayed for two years with the Bastian family.

After the territory was liberated by U.S. armed forces and French resistance fighters in 1944, Betty's parents engaged in a court battle to take back their apartment, which had been rented out, unbeknownst to them, during the war. In June 1991, the Bastian family was honored by Yad Vashem with the honorific Righteous Among the Nations for saving Jews, including Betty.

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The interview was conducted on July 24, 1996 in La Garenne-Colombes, France; interviewer: Lucie Caries; videographer: Sylvain Rigollot.



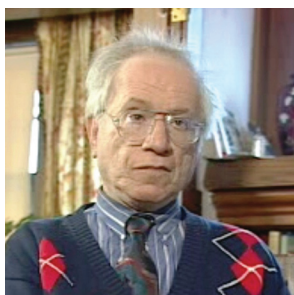
Kruuse Caroe

Kruuse Caroe was born on March 22, 1923 in Asunción, Paraguay. His father, Anfred, was a cattle ranch manager, and his mother, Gudrun, ran the family home. The Caroes' ancestors moved to Paraguay from Germany in the 1600s. Kruuse had two sisters, Anne and Minna, and a brother, Peter. When Kruuse was eight years old, the family moved to Corrientes, Argentina, and since there was no school in the neighborhood, he was sent to Denmark where he lived with his maternal uncle's family in Taarbaek, a small fishing town north of Copenhagen.

Kruuse was in the last year of high school when Denmark was occupied by Germany in April 1940. He joined the local resistance movement and took part in anti-Nazi protests and peace marches. Aware of Nazi persecution of political opponents, Kruuse was able to avoid arrest on September 26, 1943. From that day on, unable to stay under the same roof two nights in a row, he lived in hiding and continued participating in the underground. He distributed leaflets and newspapers, procured weapons, and took part in sabotage and resistance group military operations. When the Danish underground movement learned of impending deportations of Jews in fall 1943, Kruuse, just appointed a group leader of 70-80, was instrumental in organizing Danish Jews' flight by sea to nearby neutral Sweden.

After German forces in Denmark surrendered to the Allies in May 1945, Kruuse served in the Danish army. Following military discharge in 1947, he completed his education, earning an engineering degree and, after a 14-year journey, went back to South America to reunite with his family. In 1952, Kruuse moved to the United States; he married Elisabeth Ärfelt and had two children.

The interview was conducted on August 30, 1998 in Oakland, CA, United States; interviewer: Ruth Durling; videographer: Dick Reizner.



Henri Deutsch

Henri Deutsch was born on July 28, 1930 in Borgerhout, a suburb of Antwerp, Belgium. Henri's father, Bernard, worked in the diamond industry; his mother, Helen, ran the household. Henri had an older brother, Simon, and a younger sister, Josette. He attended school at the Lycée d'Anvers, the Yesodei Hatorah and Tachkemoni elementary schools in Antwerp.

During the German invasion of Belgium in May 1940, the Deutsch family fled to France. They settled in a small village near Bordeaux, called Lacanau Océan. In

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1940, when Paris fell to the Nazis and northern France was occupied by German armed forces, the family fled to Portugal via Spain, having secured papers from Aristides de Sousa Mendes, Consul General of Portugal in Bordeaux. While in Portugal, Henri's parents received a U.S. visa with help of Henri's uncle who lived in New York. The family arrived in the United States on the *Nea Hellas* passenger ship on September 10, 1940.

Henri continued his education at Brooklyn College, Columbia University, and the University of Denver, majoring in theatre. He lived in Israel from 1963-1970 where he taught at Tel Aviv University. Henri also taught Holocaust Studies at Marquette University and is an award-winning playwright with many of his plays focusing on the Holocaust. Married to Suzanna Deutsch (née Sand), at the time of the interview he had three children and was actively involved in Holocaust education.

The interview was conducted on December 22, 1995 in Milwaukee, WI, United States; interviewer: Arlene Becker-Zarmi; videographer: Craig Campana.



Irène Fainman-Krausz

Irène Fainman-Krausz was born on October 1, 1936 in Schiedam, Netherlands. Her parents, Béla, a dealer of Persian carpets, and Rachel Krausz, moved to Rotterdam when Irene was two years old. Irène had an older brother, Donald.

When the war broke out in the Netherlands in May 1940, Irène was four years old. As the family home in Rotterdam was destroyed by bombardments during the German invasion, they moved from one house to another. On September 17, 1942, they were arrested and deported to Westerbork which at that time served as a transit camp for Jewish prisoners in Drenthe on the Dutch-German border. They were subsequently transferred to concentration camps in Germany, in February 1944: Béla was taken to Buchenwald, whereas the rest of the family was transferred to Ravensbrück. In April 1945, due to Rachel's British citizenship, Irène and Rachel were released from the camp and brought to Sweden on a rescue transport organized by Count Folke Bernadotte, a Swedish statesman who negotiated the rescue of Jewish prisoners from German concentration camps. Irène's father, Béla, did not survive, perishing in Buchenwald of malnutrition.

After a brief period of recuperation, Irène and Rachel migrated to England and, having reunited with Donald, came to South Africa, in 1946. Irène married Lester Fainman in 1957. At the time of the interview, she had three sons, a daughter, and three grandchildren. She has worked as a translator and a librarian.

The interview was conducted on September 30, 1995 in Johannesburg, South Africa; interviewer: Anne Lunskey; videographer: Michael Zidel.

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Jean Gemähling

Jean Gemähling was born on November 19, 1912 in Paris, France. His mother taught high school literature and his father was a law professor. After completing studies at the Ecole nationale supérieure de Chimie in Strasbourg, and completing military service in Algeria, Jean worked at a sugar company in Paris (Compagnie sucrière de Paris).

When war was declared in 1939, Jean was mobilized at the German border and then evacuated to Dunkerque, France in May 1940. After a brief stop in Wales, Jean learned of the armistice at Compiègne in June 1940 and rejoined his family in Clermont-Ferrand. Having heard General De Gaulle's speech on 18 June, he decided to join the French Resistance. Jean moved to Marseille in late 1940, and he discovered an organization mounted by American Varian Fry, whose goal was to allow endangered artists and intellectuals to escape Nazi-occupied territory. He worked there until November 1941, when he was arrested for the first time for Resistance-related activities. Provisionally released at the end of March 1942, he took over information services for the resistance group Combat, founded by Henri Frenay. Jean was arrested again in January 1943, but managed to escape and left Marseille under a false identity. In April 1943, he moved to Lyon, where he continued his resistance activities, directing information services for United Resistance Movements (*Mouvements unis de la Résistance* (MUR)) and then the National Liberation Movement (*Mouvement de Libération nationale* (MLN)). When he returned to Paris, he created a second central office of information.

After liberation, Jean worked to regroup resistance informants and helped returning deportees. He held a variety of jobs before landing at the Commissariat of Atomic Energy where he worked for twenty years. For his service to France, Jean was honored with the titles of *Compagnon de la Libération* and *Légion d'Honneur*, France's highest honor. Jean Gemähling passed away in Lagny-sur-Marne (Seine-et-Marne), on May 2, 2003.

The interview was conducted on April 9, 1998 in Ozoir-la-Ferrière, France; interviewer: Peggy Frankston; videographer: Bernard Kleindienst.



Edward Harvitt

Edward Harvitt was born Adolf Horowitz on June 29, 1929 in Stanisławów, Poland (now Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine), in a traditional Jewish family. Edward's father, Joachim, owned a grocery store; his mother, Amalia, was a homemaker. Edward received his elementary education in a secular Hebrew school, and after the Soviet occupation of Stanisławów in 1939, continued in a public school.

Following the Soviet occupation and German invasion in 1939, Edward and his parents were forced to leave their family home and, along with other Jewish inhabitants of the town, moved into the crowded Stanisławów ghetto. In October 1942, Joachim was killed during a roundup; Edward and his

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mother escaped from the ghetto and lived under false identity, on Greek Catholic papers, assisted by Metropolitan Archbishop **Andrei Sheptytskyi**, until the territory was liberated by the Soviet armed forces in summer 1944.

After liberation, Edward's mother married Emil Gottlieb; together with Edward they moved to Legnica, Poland, and later to a displaced persons camp in Hasenecke bei Kassel, Germany, run by the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. In 1951, the family arrived in New York on invitation of Edward's uncle. In the United States, Edward worked in the fields of engineering and construction. He married Elisa Con and had three children and three grandchildren.

The interview was conducted on August 3, 1998 in Mountainside, NJ, United States; interviewer: Marilyn Simon; videographer: Neculai Burghilea.



Andrée Herscovici

Née Geulen, Andrée Herscovici was born on September 6, 1921 in Brussels, Belgium into a middle-class Catholic family. In 1938, working with the Red Cross, she assisted refugees from the Reich. Head of a summer camp in 1942, and aware of the danger of death that threatened the children, Andrée joined the Committee to Defend Jews (*Comité de Défense des juifs* (CDJ)), which worked to save Jewish children from deportation. In 1943-44, working with other resistance members and the CDJ, Andrée took children from families in danger in Brussels and Anvers and

placed them in convents and youth camps. She worked under a false identity and with very strict clandestine rules. The combined efforts of these women allowed for the safety of thousands of Jewish children. In September 1944, after the territory was liberated by Allied armed forces, she is one of the first people to enter the Mechelen concentration camp to aid the internees.

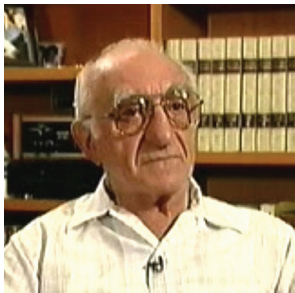
After the war, Andrée continued to work with the CDJ whose name became Aid to Jewish Victims of War (*l'Aide aux Israélites victimes de la guerre*). The organization created homes for orphans and paid for their studies. In September 1948, she married Charles Herscovici, whose parents perished in Auschwitz. In 1951, she served as a witness in the trial of Alexander von Falkenhausen, military governor of Belgium and the north of France during the war. In 1989, Yad Vashem honored her with the title of Righteous Among the Nations for her work to save Jewish lives during the Holocaust. In 2007, the state of Israel honored her with honorary citizenship.

The interview was conducted on November 19, 1997 in Brussels, Belgium; interviewer: Kerenn Elkaim; videographer: Erik Black.

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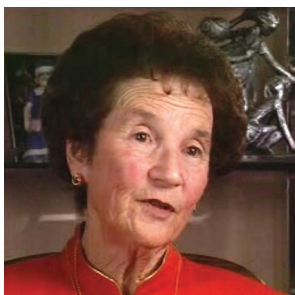
Israel Kipen

Israel Kipen was born on March 21, 1919 in Bialystok, Poland. His parents, Judel and Sheina Kipen, owned a knitwear manufacturing business. Israel was the eldest of five children: he had three brothers, Hershl, Lazar, and Simcha, and a sister, Shifra. He attended a Hebrew Gymnasium in Bialystok and studied humanities at the University of Warsaw. He returned to Bialystok after graduation in 1937.

In 1939, Israel decided to flee Soviet-occupied Bialystok. He crossed the border and lived for a year in Vilna, under Lithuanian administration then traveled across Russia and Japan, and landed in Shanghai, China, in October 1941. During the war, he ran a Jewish community kitchen and a Jewish hospital in the Shanghai French Concession. Israel managed to stay out of the Hongkew ghetto during the Japanese occupation of China.

Israel moved to Melbourne, Australia in May 1946, and he established himself as a knitwear manufacturer. In Australia, Israel reunited with family members who had been deported to Soviet Kazakhstan in the early 1940s. He married Laura Baitz in 1950; at the time of the interview the couple had two children and three grandchildren. On retirement from his manufacturing business in 1977, he resumed his education and completed his Master's degree in the Department of Middle Eastern Studies of Melbourne University in 1982. Israel was active in the local Jewish community and was a cofounder of Mount Scopus College. In 1995, the Judaica collection at Monash University Library was named *The Laura and Israel Kipen Judaica Collection*. In 1997, he published a scholarly work, *Abad Ha-am: the Zionism of the Future*, and in 1998 his autobiography, *A Life to Live*.

The interview was conducted on February 17, 1997 in Melbourne, Australia; interviewer: Pauline Wrobel; videographer: Ann Aucote.



Eva Lewin

Eva Lewin (née Lifschitz) was born on November 25, 1925 in Swinemünde, Germany, a small resort on the Baltic Sea coast where Eva's family owned a convenience store. Children of a WWI veteran, Eva and her older brother, Hans, grew up with a strong sense of German national identity and when the Nazis came to power in the 1930s, had a difficult time coping with the sudden rise of anti-Semitism. In 1937, Eva's family lost their store and home to anti-Jewish expropriations and left Swinemünde for Berlin. As Nazi laws continued to spread in Germany, the

Lifschitzs decided to send Eva and her brother out of the country. Hans immigrated to Palestine on Youth Aliyah in 1938; Eva, aided by British Quakers, left for England on a *Kindertransport* in 1939.

In England, Eva lived in a foster family in Petworth, a small town in West Sussex. She kept in touch with her parents but the correspondence stopped soon after WWII began in September 1939. Eva attended St. Mary's

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School in Sussex, a boarding school designated primarily for handicapped children. She took domestic science classes, cared for the children who needed assistance, and did house work. When the bombings of Sussex began, the school moved to Wales, where Eva became an assistant matron.

In 1945, after the war ended, Eva moved to London and worked as a nurse in a maternity home. She immigrated to the United States in 1947, joining extended family in Detroit. Eva later moved to New York and became a registered nurse. She married Jack Lewin; the couple had three daughters and seven grandchildren. After the war, Eva found out that her parents had perished in Auschwitz. Eva's brother, Hans, who after immigrating to Palestine had joined the army and fought on the WWII front in Italy and Germany, committed suicide in Berlin after the war.

The interview was conducted on December 18, 1995 in Woodmere, NY, United States; interviewer: Marian Weisberg; videographer: Yitzhak Gol.



Kurt Lewin

Kurt Lewin was born on February 28, 1925 in Katowice, Poland. He was the eldest son of the Chief Rabbi of Lwów, Ezekiel Lewin, and had two brothers, Nathan and Leon. When Kurt was three years old, the family moved to Lwów. Kurt's father was friends with Metropolitan Archbishop **Andrei Sheptytskyi**, the head of the Greek Catholic church in southeast Poland.

During the Soviet occupation of Lwów in 1939-1941, Kurt was subjected to school anti-Semitism because of his father's rabbinical post and, in order to adapt to the new regime and avoid political persecution, became a Red Cross instructor. Soon after the German invasion in summer 1941, pogroms started in Lwów and Kurt's father went to Metropolitan Sheptytskyi to ask for intervention. On the same day, Kurt was forced to bury bodies of prisoners who had been executed by the People's Commissariat Internal Affairs (NKVD) in the city prison, Brygidki, during the Soviet occupation. While working there, Kurt saw his father marched into the prison and executed. He, too, was soon arrested and brought to Lackiego Street Prison in Lwów, but he managed to escape and fled to Rawa Ruska. Kurt stayed in the Rawa Ruska ghetto until October 1942. Aware of impending deportation to the Belzec death camp, he escaped from the ghetto and sought help from Metropolitan Sheptytskyi. With his assistance, Kurt and his brother Nathan were hidden by monks in various monasteries. As the front approached, Kurt returned to Lwów. The city was liberated by the Soviet armed forces in June 1944.

After liberation, as a result of his Holocaust experiences, Kurt assumed a Polish name of Roman Matkowski and served in the Polish armed forces until the end of the war. In May 1946, Kurt arrived in Palestine via Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Italy. He attended Hebrew University and was a member of Haganah, during 1946-1954. He finished his graduate studies at Columbia University and settled in the United States, where he worked as an economist. After the war Kurt became involved in the process of beatification of Metropolitan Archbishop Andrei Sheptytskyi and testified as a witness in Rome. He also testified in a war crimes trial against Osidach, a

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wartime Ukrainian police commanding officer in Rawa Ruska, in Philadelphia, PA in 1981 (UNITED STATES v. OSIDACH 513 F.Supp. 51).

At the time of the interview, Kurt was married to Donatella Lewin and had three children and three grandchildren. Kurt's brother Nathan survived the Holocaust; his mother, Rachel, and brother Leon perished. Lewin wrote about his experience in *A Journey through Illusions*, published in 1994.

The interview was conducted on January 30, 1997 in New York, NY, United States; interviewer: Naomi Rappaport; videographer: Ramin Fathie.



Isaac Sephiha

Isaac Sephiha was born on February 20, 1925 in Brussels, Belgium, into a Jewish family of Turkish origin. His father, David, restored rugs. His mother, Esther, had health problems which prevented her from working. Isaac also had three sisters and two brothers.

After the German invasion of Belgium in May 1940 and the initial anti-Jewish measures, Isaac worked with the Belgian National Movement to Save Children (*Mouvement national belge au sauvetage d'enfants*). Caught by the Gestapo on October 23, 1943, he and his father were sent to the Mechelen concentration camp, then transferred on Transport Z (a Sinti/Roma transport), to Buchenwald on January 15, 1944. At Buchenwald, he worked in a quarry before being assigned, along with his father, to construction/masonry. When the camp was evacuated in April 1945, Isaac and his father participated in the death march towards Dachau, where they arrived on April 28. The following day, sick with typhus, they were liberated by U.S. Armed forces and taken in by American and French medical staff. Isaac's father succumbed to the illness.

Isaac was repatriated to Belgium via Switzerland, where he found his sisters and mother, who had been interned at Ravensbrück. With his brother Vidal, who had returned from Auschwitz, Isaac decided to move to Palestine in 1946. Departing from La Ciotat, France, Isaac and the other passengers were forced by the British to debark at Haifa, Palestine, and sent to Cyprus, to an internment camp 70 near Famagusta. In 1947, Isaac was released from this camp and joined a kibbutz in Palestine. He went to Belgium in 1950 to attend to his dying mother, and returned to Israel the following year to marry. Isaac worked as an optician. He married a second time in 1971 and had a son, Michaël.

The interview was conducted on May 30, 1997 in Brussels, Belgium; interviewer: Kerenn Elkaïm; videographer: Horst Mockel.