

Study Guide to the MTV film

I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust



Based on the book

Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust

by Alexandra Zapruder



**FACING
HISTORY
AND
OURSELVES**

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Interior page of Klaus Langer's diary

Credit: Courtesy of Jacob (Klaus) Langer

Photo of Klaus Langer with his bicycle, Essen, Germany, 1937

Credit: Courtesy of Jacob (Klaus) Langer

Interior page of Elsa Binder's diary

Credit: Courtesy of Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland

Elsa Binder in a group photo with members of the Zionist youth group Hashomer Hazair, Stanislawow, Poland, late 1930s.

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Drawing entitled “People Fleeing Paris” from a sketchbook created by Elizabeth Kaufmann while she was in exile in France.

Date: 1940 - 1941

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Petr Ginz and Eva Ginzova, 1934

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Interior page of Dawid Rubinowicz’s diary showing his first entry on March 21, 1940.

Credit: From *The Diary of David Rubinowicz* (Creative Options Publishing, 1982). Courtesy of Norman Bolotin, Creative Options.

Yitskhok Rudashevski and his father

Undated

Locale: Vilnius, Poland

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Photos of Peter’s parents taped to an interior page of Peter’s diary

Date: August 27, 1942 - January 20, 1943

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Facing History and Ourselves Introduction by Margot Stern Strom

For many, diaries are more than paper on which to collect thoughts. Some people give their diary a name, making it a special confidant. To read somebody's diary is to enter what is often a very private world. Some hide their diaries from their own families; others save them for years to share as a record of their own lives. In recording the events of their lives, diarists explore their own relationship to the world around them. The author Joan Didion explains, "I write entirely to find out what I'm thinking, what I'm looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear."

The diaries in *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People During the Holocaust* come from another place and time. They were written by Jewish children who were caught up in the maelstrom of the Holocaust over 50 years ago. These diary entries testify to the brutal consequences of hatred, antisemitism, racism, and power used to discriminate against and eliminate every child, woman, and man identified as Jewish, as well as other people determined by the Nazis to be unworthy of life. What are readers to do with these painful records of inhumanity?

For 30 years Facing History and Ourselves has helped teachers to recognize how stories from the Holocaust can prompt students to question why this happened and who was responsible. Students are appalled by the way Jews were targeted and robbed of security, possessions, rights, dignity, families, and life itself. Through a study of the Nazi rise to power and the Holocaust, students form critical questions about human behavior.

In a careful study of this history, students explore the connections between scapegoating and peer pressure, and the eventual descent into genocide. They recognize that bigotry and intolerance make democracies vulnerable to manipulation by leaders who gain power by turning neighbor against neighbor. They learn that that civil liberties must be protected, evils resisted, and that the actions of individuals matter.

This study guide provides lesson ideas to help teachers and students access the invaluable historical and literary records of the Holocaust that Alexandra Zapruder collected for her book *Salvaged Pages: Young Writer's Diaries of the Holocaust* and the film *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People During the Holocaust*. We know that teachers will adapt them to work in their own classrooms. Ultimately, though, these diaries are not neutral historical and literary documents; they call for a moral response: empathy, outrage, and action.

In 1987, Facing History and Ourselves sponsored the *Anne Frank in the World* exhibit at the Boston Public Library and organized an international conference called *Children in War: Seed for the Sowing Shall Not be Milled* to reflect on Anne's diary from the Holocaust, to ask how her story connects to the stories of children caught in violence around the world, and what we can do about it. The conference brought together journalists, scholars, and human rights activists. Arn Chorn Pond, a survivor of the Cambodian Genocide and a human rights activist, was the keynote speaker. Pond believes that hearing the stories of children trapped in war has the power to remind all of us what connects us as human beings. He explains:

“[As] I began to listen to the horror of Jewish Holocaust and Armenian Genocide I began to realize a common theme of suffering we all shared and I began to learn about the children of Beirut and the children of present day Israel and the children of El Salvador and the children of Africa who are also victims of violence. I began to realize that there are many victims. Then a queer thing happened to me.

“I began to see that my own suffering and the suffering of all of us had given us a special destiny, a special understanding, a special power perhaps. I began to think that maybe our suffering could help to change, to help to heal, to help to make new life in this world. Finally, more and more recently, I have come to realize that I am alive. I am not alive because the bullets failed to reach my brain and kill me and I am not alive because a stick missed my skull and did not fracture and murder me. I am not alive just because I was not butchered in the awful Cambodian Genocide. I am not just alive because I eat (although I admit, I eat a lot). I am alive because finally and painfully, after all these years, I know that I can love and trust again. I can feel the suffering of others, not just my own, I can feel the pain and loneliness of children and people everywhere who have endured, and are enduring, the violence of humans’ worst qualities.

“I can suffer not just for the Cambodians but for the Jews and for the Armenians and the millions more who suffer today, and I can cry again . . . All of us, the adults and the children, need not be afraid to cry. Our tears, in fact, may even be the power necessary to change violence into love. Change human madness into human kindness. The tears may be the water of new life. So now I offer you the tears of all the Cambodian children who suffered so much to be joined with the tears of those who suffered yesterday and today, and we cry to you, please, never, never again.”

When we bring the stories of the young people whose words are captured in *I'm Still Here* to the young people of today we challenge them to become moral philosophers whose words and actions we will study in the future. We depend on them to help to make Pond's dreams a reality.

Introduction to Study Guide

I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust.

During the Holocaust, a handful of young people chose to write and record in diaries throughout Europe. The documentary film developed by MTV, *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust*, weaves together excerpts of young writers' diaries covering the years 1937 - 1944 and is based on the book *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, by Alexandra Zapruder.

The companion study guide developed by Facing History and Ourselves aims to help educators use the voices of these young writers from the film and the book as a springboard for discussion and for reflection on the value of these diaries as historical sources and literary records. It also provides an avenue for discussing the power of our words to make a difference in the world. As Alexandra Zapruder writes:

“Despite fear and repression, despite hunger, cold, exhaustion, and despair, despite crowded living spaces and a lack of privacy, and despite separation from home and loved ones, young people documented their experiences and their impressions of their lives, and in so doing marked their places in the world.” (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 1)

Over the past thirty years, Facing History and Ourselves has worked with educators around the world to foster cognitive growth and historical understanding through content and methodology that continually complicate students' historical thinking. Facing History and Ourselves poses the idea that there are no simple answers to complex questions and that historical events are not inevitable but are comprised of individual decisions and choices. As students confront the history of the Holocaust and other examples of collective violence, they discover how unexamined prejudices encourage racism and antisemitism, and they make the connections between history and their own lives. By inviting educators and students to use this film and book to examine the diaries through both historical and literary lenses, we are providing a multi-disciplinary approach to examining this history through the voices and choices of these young diarists. Again, Alexandra Zapruder writes:

“These diaries, then, are broken and unfinished fragments from the Holocaust. Not imbued with special gifts, overlaid with precious attributes, or assigned a sacred role, they belong to the vast body of historical fragments that testify to our collective past. And, like a fragment of an ancient pot that we may turn over in our hands to admire for its beauty, to examine for its clues as to the past, and to ponder for its suggestion of the passage of time and an era, these diaries are replete with their own information and potency. Each reflecting specific circumstances and each with its own measure of fact, truth, or insight, these diaries nevertheless make their contribution to an understanding of the history of the Holocaust.” (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 10)

Study Guide

The study guide provides a compelling but flexible structure for exploring the documentary film and relating it to *Salvaged Pages*. It is designed to be used for both middle and high school students in English, language arts, social studies, history, or interdisciplinary studies.

This guide is divided into three sections: **Pre-View**, **View**, and **Post-View**. The **Pre-View** section introduces important themes and historical background in order for students to view the film in an appropriate context. The **View** section fosters critical viewing skills by encouraging reflection and discussion about the film and the experiences of the writers. It also includes historical and biographical information for each of the diarists. The **Post-View** section provides a literary and historical framework to be used in an interdisciplinary unit or in an English or history class. Included in each section are **Classroom Strategies** and **Connections** questions. **Classroom Strategies** suggest pedagogical ideas for using the film in concert with the diaries in your class. **Connections** encourage further class discussions, writing exercises, and reflections. When appropriate, **Extension Activities** are included to further explore a topic or theme and relate it to students' lives.

Letter from Alexandra Zapruder Author of *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*

In 1992, as a researcher at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, I stumbled upon a handful of diaries written by teenagers during the Holocaust. Though I had read Anne Frank's *Diary of a Young Girl* in the eighth grade, nothing prepared me for the surprise of reading these other accounts of life under the Nazi regime. Insightful, detailed, complex, and contradictory, these diaries challenged my assumptions not only about the nature of daily life during the Holocaust, but about young people and their ability to make substantial contributions to the literary and historical record of the time.

Over the course of the next ten years, I gathered and researched more than sixty diaries written by young people in occupied Europe. These writings capture the experience of young people from the inside—not as the Nazis decreed it, not as observers witnessed it, not as historians made sense of it after events occurred. They are records written without knowledge of the outcome, as young people traveled through their daily lives, observing and recording as they did. We, as historians, teachers, and students, mine them for historical information and find it in the details. What did people eat? How did they communicate? What were their concerns? What were their reprieves and joys? What surprises of daily life are contained within that we might not assume or imagine from our perspective 60 years or more into the future?

There are at least two ways to approach this material for its historical value. One way is to know our questions beforehand and to mine the materials for answers. As an example, it is common knowledge that people suffered from extreme hunger, but through the written diaries of those who were there, we can parse out the tremendous physical, emotional, mental, communal, familial, and financial complexity of individuals and a society that is starving to death. But, alternatively, we can read the material and let the information—the common threads and themes contained within it—bubble up and reveal themselves. These are the details that suggest a historical reality we cannot conjure up in the abstract. Normally, even our best questions are bound by what we think we know; primary historical sources challenge us to open our minds to the historical details we didn't think to consider.

As literary records, the diaries may at times stray from the strictly accurate or the historically objective, but they nevertheless touch upon truths of the human experience. The written word is the chosen medium, and as such, reflects the choices of any writer: language, rhythm, cadence, and sequence. Some of the diaries are clearly not meant as literary works—the writer chose the written word because it was the most expedient and efficient way to make a record of his or her experiences. But others were surely drawn to writing as they would have been had they not been living during the Holocaust. They crafted their accounts, chose their words carefully, sketched scenes in words, chronicled events with an eye toward the color and specificity of what they witnessed.

But regardless of craft, like all writers, they sought meaning in the written word. In this, they did more than just describe a moment in time. They sought a way to put words around an element

of the human experience: of suffering and sorrow; of persecution and injustice; of human frailty and failing; of reprieve and hope. We read their words as we read those of the great writers of our time and the past—Shakespeare, Austen, Kundera—not because they necessarily excelled at their craft as older, more experienced, more practiced writers did, but because they shared the impulse of all writers: to find the right words to capture an element of the world in which we live, and to connect it to something larger, something deeper, a truth or an insight that might otherwise elude us.

The diaries of this period are rich and complex sources. They shed light on the historical reality of a moment that is past, and they capture for perennial contemplation the conundrum of life and its meaning in the context of suffering, deprivation, and despair. They do not offer easy answers or tidy summaries. To the contrary, their richness lies in the contradictions and struggles that young writers voiced as they traversed an alien and unfamiliar terrain. Perhaps most important of all, they stand as markers of people in time, those who wrote themselves into existence when the world was trying to erase their presence. As such, they are tools for pedagogy, to be sure, but they are also a reminder of the singular power of the written word. They shed light on the past, but in tandem, they must inspire students—young and old—to be present to the world, and to make a mark on their own time and into the future.

This section aims to prepare students for viewing the film *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust* by introducing two central themes: “Exploring Perspective and Voice” and “Why Write?” Brief historical background follows in order to frame the context of the diaries. To encourage students and teachers to deepen their study of young writers’ diaries, a list of supplementary resources available from Facing History and Ourselves concludes the section.

Essential Questions

- **How do I express myself?**
- **What experiences in my life have shaped my perspective and voice?**
- **What compelled these young people to write in diaries during the Holocaust?**
- **How does this knowledge influence the way I think about my choices today?**

Exploring Perspective and Voice

We express ourselves in writing at many different times in our lives and for many different reasons. Our writing reflects our mood, our geography, and our perspective. Each of us may watch the same play, hear the same song, or experience the same event but understand the plot, lyrics or event very differently. Asking students to share their perspectives with one another enriches and challenges their interpretation and understanding of the material. It also allows them opportunity to reflect on how their values inform and shape their perspective and their voice.

Classroom Strategy: A Shared Experience

To introduce the idea of perspective to students prior to viewing the film, *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust*, it may be helpful to explore these ideas in the following pre-writing exercise.

Prior to viewing the film, invite students to brainstorm a list of experiences the class has recently shared. The experiences can range from a special event or speaker to a particularly memorable class session. Choose one or two of these experiences to use as whole class writing prompt for their journals. Encourage students to recall as many details and feelings as they can from the time of the event. Inform students that they will discuss their reflections in pairs or small groups and then return to a larger group discussion. As they prepare for the larger group discussion, the following questions may help shape their responses: What were the notable similarities and differences between what they recalled about their shared experience? What was similar? What differed? As a class, how do they explain the distinctions?”

Depending upon what the class recognizes as similarities and differences, you may want to bring the exercise to a conclusion by pulling together the various perspectives shared about the event. You may also want to continue to explore the idea of perspective and voice by turning to the

Why Write?

Like any creative endeavor, the writing of a diary reflects a choice, a decision made to observe the world on a daily basis and record the impressions and reflections that occur to the writer. It cannot be done by accident, and as such, its contents reflect *agency*, an act of will or determination—in this case, to put pen to paper, to organize one’s thoughts along a certain set of lines, and to find the words to communicate to oneself, to a loved one, or to the world at large.

The writers in this collection have much in common: they were all young, they were all Jewish, and they were all living as victims of Nazism in one form or another. Some were refugees, having fled their native countries to seek asylum; others were in hiding or passing as non-Jews, concealing their physical presence or their identities from the world. Still others were living in ghettos, daily exposed to the will of their oppressors. They all wrote diaries, but their reasons varied from the most personal to the most public. Among them, there were many who voiced their reasons for beginning a diary at the outset, and there were those who wrote without offering any declaration as to their intent. But the fact of the diary itself suggests a desire to record events, even if we are unable to know the motivating force behind it.

Classroom Strategy: Close Reading

During the years Alexandra Zapruder spent researching, writing and speaking about her book, she was able to develop a series of categories exploring the young writers’ declarations of intent for their diaries, or why they wrote. Before introducing these declarations, ask students to read Alexandra Zapruder’s opening letter at the start of this guide. What moved her to spend ten years researching and writing *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust*? After discussing her reasons, have students refer to **Reproducible 1** and read the declarations of some of the diarists. The sections are organized according to the diarists’ shared intentions for writing. You and your students are invited to read these choices independently, in pairs or in small groups. You may also choose to assign one entry per student and read them aloud in class.

After reading the entries individually or in small groups, students can choose one entry with which they identified and one with which they did not identify. Ask students to explain either in writing or in a paired discussion the following questions. Which entries did they choose? Why did they identify with one entry and not with another. What stood out for them in these entries?

Following their discussion in pairs, ask students to share the highlights of their conversation with the larger group. Are there other ways to categorize these entries? Can you think of other reasons why young people might have written diaries during this time?

Extension Activity: Diary Workshop

Divide the class into small discussion groups and assign each group one of the following sets of questions. The purpose of the small group work is for students to apply their learning of the diary as a literary form to the larger questions concerning their own writing. At the close of their small group work, students should be prepared to present their assigned questions to the larger group.

Diary and Purpose/Intent

Are the reasons for which young people wrote diaries the same reasons for which a novelist writes? Or for which a person writes a letter? Do the differences in intent shape content, and if so, how?

Diary as Private or Public Expression

Does a “diary” imply something private? How does context determine or change genre? Is it any less of a diary if the writer intends for it to become a public document?

Diary and Personal Voice

If you are writing for yourself, or for comfort, or for other personal reasons, does it matter how well you write? Where does literary talent or skill come into play here? Does the beauty of the language or the literary expressiveness matter in this context?

Diary as a Historical Document

Does the purpose of the diary (as the writer stated it) shape how historically valuable it will be for the study of history? What details would be revealed? What would be missing from a diary that would be found in other historical documents?

CONNECTIONS

- Do you write? If so, what types of writing do you use as a form of personal expression?
- If you don’t write, have you discovered something else in your life that enables you to personally express yourself?
- Imagine a set of circumstances that would alter your reason for keeping a diary, would make you change the purpose of your diary, or would make you start a diary even though you are not so inclined. What might those circumstances be?
- After reading Alexandra Zapruder’s categories and entries, are there different declarations of intent that you were able to identify?

REPRODUCIBLE 1: *Why Write?*

1. To “set things right”; to be accountable to oneself for time, conduct, or character

Undated introduction

“At the urging of my teacher Mr. Roubicek I have decided to keep a diary. Why haven't I kept one before now? I think the main reason was fear of other people: to write a diary and burn it—I didn't want that; and to write a diary and hide it—I could never do that. Besides, I think that a fighter (if I'm not one now, I want to become one) shouldn't look back too much. Despite this, however, when it was absolutely necessary psychologically, I took pencil to paper and set things right—with myself, completely; with the world, as much as my strength allowed. I was, of course, forced to burn those pages.

I write ‘decided’ and not ‘agreed’ because I want to continue with this even when not at the behest of my teacher.” —**Vera Segerova**

(Segerova, Vera. Unpublished diary. [in Czech] Translated by Benjamin Herman. (Beit Theresienstadt, Israel.)

August 13, 1940

“I, Ruthka Liebllich, am a plain girl, a bit wild, a girl of thirteen. Under the influence of Maya Weisberg, one of my older friends, rather, my leader, I came to the conclusion that I must get to know myself. Truthfully, to get to know oneself is a rather dirty business; however, since the decision is mine, I thought that the only way to succeed in such a complicated procedure is to start a diary.” —**Ruthka Liebllich**

(Liebllich, Ruthka. *Ruthka: A Diary of War*. Translated and edited by Jehoshua and Ann Eibeshitz. Originally published in Polish.)

November 24, 1942

“It is because I hate being idle that I have started this diary so that I can write in it every day what I do and think; in this manner I shall be able to account for all I have done each day. Now the introduction is over, and I shall begin my diary tomorrow.” —**Moshe Flinker**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 100.)

2. To confide private thoughts or feelings

June 12, 1942

“I hope I will be able to confide everything in you, as I have never been able to confide in anyone, and I hope you will be a great source of comfort and support.” —**Anne Frank**

(Frank, Anne. *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. Translated by B. M. Mooyart. Originally published in Dutch.)

May 5, 1941

“I have known for a long time that [my younger sister] Sabinka wanted to have a diary like I have. Today when she saw me writing in it she came closer to me and said: ‘Renia, when I'm grown-up like you will you let me read your diary?’ ‘I will let you read it.’ ‘And will you let me publish it?’ Then I started to laugh and declared that in view of her intention I'll never let her read it. Because she made a plaintive face, I told her that I'll give her a notebook and she could write her own diary. She agreed to it and began to write immediately. In the

beginning she had some doubts, asking if it is not stupid to write about oneself. I explained to her that she will be the only one who will read it and certainly she is not ashamed of herself. My speech had such an effect that Sabina sits quietly by my side and writes...

—**Rena Knoll**

(Kroll, Rena. Unpublished diary. [in Polish] Translated by Malgorzata Markoff. (Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw, Poland)

3. For parents or loved ones, to feel closer to those far away

Belonging to FEIGL, PIERRE August 27, 1942

This diary is written for my parents in the hope that it will reach them both in good health. Their son: Pierre FEIGL.
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 69)

February 9, 1945

“Today I’m really in the mood for writing. I’d like to have someone to whom I could tell everything, absolutely everything, someone to open my heart to. My Mummy is the only person to I could tell everything, but unfortunately I’m not with her, so I’ll have to confide in my diary.” —**Eva Ginzova**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 185)

February 8, 1944

“After thinking about it for a long time, I decided to write a diary. I’m doing it for my Mom, Dad, and Eva, to whom I cannot write everything I would like in a letter because, first, it is not allowed and, second, my German is not good enough. I’m also writing it for myself so I won’t forget the great number of incidents and types of people that I have come into contact with.” —**Petr Ginz**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 167)

4. Expressing despair about the purpose of writing, yet the need prevails

Tuesday, July 15, 1942

“I know that all my writing is meaningless. Nobody will read my journal and, as for me, should I escape alive from here, I will throw into the fire everything that will remind me of the damned time spent in Djurin. And still, I write.” —**Miriam Korber**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 266)

June 9, 1942

“Well, this whole scribbling doesn’t make any sense. It is a fact we are not going to survive. The world will know about everything even without my wise notes.” —**Elsa Binder**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 327)

5. For the public, as a testimony to those who were not there

Thursday the 5th [November 1942]

“...I consider that everything should be recorded and noted down, even the most gory, because everything will be taken into account.” —**Yitskhok Rudashevksi**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 212)

June 11, 1944

“I go on dreaming, dreaming, about survival and about getting fame, in order to be able to tell ‘the world’ . . . to tell and ‘rebuke’, to ‘tell and to protest’, both seem at present moment remote and unbelievable—but who knows maybe, perhaps. I dream about telling to humanity but should I be able? Should Shakespeare be able? And what yet I who am only a little proud of understanding Shakespeare?!” —**Anonymous Boy, Lodz Ghetto**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 371)

November 1, 1944

“...I will try to bear written witness as best I can so that it will survive me. That is what occupies my thoughts—not to have the world take notice of me—not to say: there was one who was beautiful and smart and open to the world, and she was seventeen and was snuffed out before her life could even start. No, to say to the world and time what was accomplished here; to read to them a chapter out of the *Golah* [exile] dated 1944...” —**Alice Ehrmann**
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 406)

The following passages introduce historical topics that directly impacted the lives of these young writers.

Antisemitism and Race

Antisemitism had long been part of life in Europe. Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist, coined the word antisemitism in 1879 to describe the hatred of Jews as members of a separate and dangerous “race.” The term combined older stereotypes about Jews and Judaism with the racist thinking of the 19th century. In earlier times, Jews were hated because they refused to accept the religion of the majority. Often times Jews who converted, or so the reasoning went, were no longer outsiders. They belonged. By the late 1800s, racists saw every Jew, regardless of his or her religious beliefs, as an outsider, because conversion does not alter one’s race. Today most scholars regard race as a meaningless scientific concept; human beings, regardless of their so-called race, are more genetically alike than different. Genetic differences within “races” are greater than those between the races.

In the 1800s, the few scientists who tried to show the flaws in racist thinking were ignored. For example, after studying seven million Jewish and Aryan children, the German Anthropological Society concluded in 1886 that the two groups were more alike than different. Historian George Mosse writes:

“This survey should have ended controversies about the existence of pure Aryans and Jews. However, it seems to have had surprisingly little impact. The idea of race had been infused with myths, stereotypes, and subjectivities long ago, and a scientific survey could change little. The idea of pure, superior races and the concept of a racial enemy solved too many pressing problems to be easily discarded.”¹

Hitler’s Rise to Power

In the early 1930s, a worldwide depression intensified feelings against Jews and other minorities. It was a time of stress and uncertainty. In such times, many people are attracted to simple answers to complex problems and blame the “other” in the society for the crisis.

In Germany, the allegation that Jews were responsible for all of the nation’s problems was fostered by groups like Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist, or Nazi Party. In speech after speech, they maintained that the Jews were everywhere, controlled everything, and acted so secretly that few could detect their influence. The charge was without historical validity, but after hearing it again and again, most came to believe it.

In 1933, the Nazis took control of Germany after democratically winning more seats in the *Reichstag*, Germany’s parliament, than any other political party. Once in power, they began to turn Germany into a “racial state” by eliminating the nation’s “racial enemies”—particularly, the Jews. Hitler proclaimed 42 anti-Jewish measures in 1933 and 19 more in 1934. Each was designed to protect “Aryan blood” from contamination with “Jewish blood.” Then in 1935, three new laws were announced in Nuremberg. These laws stripped Jews of citizenship and

¹ *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* by George Mosse. Fertig, 1978, p. 92.

isolated them from other Germans by outlawing marriages between Jews and citizens of Germany.

The Nuremberg laws raised an important question: Who is a Jew? On November 14, 1935, the Nazis defined a Jew as a person with two Jewish parents or three Jewish grandparents. Children of intermarriage were considered Jewish if they followed the Jewish religion or were married to a Jew. They were also Jews if they had one parent who was a practicing Jew. In the years that followed, the Nazis would apply similar racial laws not only to Jews but also to “Gypsies” and Germans of African descent. Increasingly, they defined people solely by their ancestry.

German Expansion

By 1938, Hitler and his Nazi party had been in power for five years. During those years, they carried out their vision of a racial state, step by step. If a measure encountered little or no opposition, they went a little further next time. They advanced their plans for a new German empire in a similar way. On March 11, 1938, German troops entered Austria, the country of Hitler’s birth.

When no country publicly denounced the invasion, the Nazis turned their attention to Czechoslovakia. That fall, they took over parts of the country. In their newly acquired territories, the Nazis quickly applied their racial laws. Hitler’s plan for territorial expansion was called *Lebensraum* or living space. This plan necessitated a greater expansion of territory under German control which Hitler believed was crucial for Germany’s continued existence and its economic self sufficiency. Jews in Greater Germany during this time tried desperately to emigrate only to encounter stumbling blocks. The Nazis did not stand in their way. They were happy to let the Jews go as long as they left behind their money and possessions. Few nations, however, were willing to admit penniless Jewish refugees.

On September 1, 1939, the Nazis invaded Western Poland and much of this territory was annexed to the Third Reich. Two days later, in response to the invasion of Poland, Britain and France entered the war and World War II was officially declared. By 1940, the Nazis occupied the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. In June 1941, the Nazis invaded Eastern Poland and continued their assault into the U.S.S.R.

The Creation of Ghettos

By 1940, the Nazis began deporting German Jews to Poland and forced them to live in ghettos. Following further occupations in Western Europe and with the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the rate of deportations to ghettos rapidly increased. Ghettos were enclosed districts of a city in which the Germans forced the Jewish population to live under miserable conditions. Ghettos isolated Jews by separating Jewish communities both from the population as a whole and from neighboring Jewish communities. Jews were no longer free to go about their daily lives but were forced to live in unsanitary conditions and subsist with extremely limited food rations. The Warsaw Ghetto, established on October 12, 1940, was the largest Jewish ghetto, in both area and population. There, more than 350,000 Jews—about 30 percent of the city’s population—were eventually confined in about 2.4 percent of the city’s total area. Other major urban areas inside and outside of Poland established ghettos. Some of the largest in Poland were in the cities of Kovno and Lodz. Other large ghettos were in Vilnius, Lithuania and Terezín, Czechoslovakia.

The Nazis also created the *Judenrat*, or Jewish Councils, within each ghetto. The *Judenrat* was often comprised of Jewish leaders from their respective communities who were entrusted with implementing Nazi policies within the ghetto. A Jewish Police force was also formed to enforce such policies. Individuals who served in either capacity did so under tremendous duress, often for the sake of obtaining a larger food ration and a chance of surviving one more day.

The “Final Solution”

The Nazis’ decision to systematically murder the Jewish people cannot be linked to a specific date or order. The genocide of the Jews was implemented in incremental stages and was a culmination of Nazi laws over a decade, from 1933 - 1945. Under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, the Nazis instituted state-enforced racism resulting in anti-Jewish legislation, boycotts of Jewish-owned businesses and the *Kristallnacht* (“Night of Broken Glass”) pogroms, all of which aimed to systematically isolate the Jews from German society and drive them out of Germany.

Following the occupation of Poland and the start of World War II, the Nazi policy to encourage emigration, expropriate Jewish property, and eventually consolidate populations into ghettos in the *Generalgouvernement* (a territory in central and eastern Poland in which the Germans established a civilian government) evolved into a comprehensive plan to eventually annihilate European Jewry. After *Operation Barbarossa* (the German invasion of the Soviet Union), *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units) began killing operations aimed at entire Jewish communities. Over 1.5 million Jews were murdered at the hands of the *Einsatzgruppen*. The SS, the elite guard of the Nazi state, soon regarded the mobile killing methods—mainly shooting or gas vans—as inefficient and as a psychological burden on the killers. On July 31, 1941, Hermann Goering authorized Reinhard Heydrich to make preparations for the implementation of a “complete solution of the Jewish question” that became known as *Aktion Reinhard*.

Six extermination camps were established in Poland as part of *Aktion Reinhard*—Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Because the majority of European Jews lived in Poland and Eastern Europe, the geographic location was optimal as it was the essential link to the rail lines. The first, Chelmno, (operating from December 1941 - March 1943) used mobile gas vans to murder Jews en masse. Jews were sent upon arrival directly to the gas chambers at Belzec (operating from March 17, 1942 - December 1942), Sobibor (April 1942 - October 14, 1943, shut down following an inmate revolt), and Treblinka (operating from July 23, 1942 - April 1943). At the largest camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau, established on April 27, 1940, three camps in one existed: Auschwitz I, a concentration and labor camp; Auschwitz II, or Auschwitz-Birkenau, where more than a million Jews perished; and Auschwitz III, known as Buna-Monowitz (taking its name from the Buna synthetic-rubber factory at Monowice, which slave laborers built for I. G. Farben, the German industrial firm.) The sixth, Majdanek was a slave labor and death camp and was in operation from October 1941 until it was the first liberated camp by Soviet troops on July 24, 1944.

The Nazis systematically murdered over three million Jews in the extermination camps. In its totality, the “Final Solution” resulted in the murder of approximately six million Jews, two-thirds of the Jews living in Europe before the start of the war; up to 250,000 Gypsies (or Roma and Sinti people; up to 10,000 homosexuals; and thousands of Communists, labor union leaders, Jehovah Witnesses, and the mentally and physically disabled.

Related Resources from the Facing History and Ourselves Library

Resources with an * can be download from Facing History and Ourselves website at <http://www.facinghistory.org/>. All other resources can be obtained by contacting the Resource Librarian at the Facing History and Ourselves headquarters in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Books

Boas, Jacob. *We are Witnesses: Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust*. New York: Scholastic, 1995. 196 pgs.

David, Kati. *A Child's War: World War II through the Eyes of Children*. New York: Avon, 1989. 210 pgs.

Dwork, Deborah. *Children with a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Germany*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991. 354 pgs.

*Facing History and Ourselves. *Elements of Time: Holocaust Testimonies*. Brookline, Massachusetts: Facing History, 1989. 402 pgs.

*Facing History and Ourselves. *Holocaust and Human Behavior*. Brookline, Massachusetts: Facing History, 1994. 576 pgs.

*Facing History and Ourselves. *Jews of Poland*. Brookline, Mass.: Facing History, 1998. 276 pgs.

Hillesum, Etty. *An Interrupted Life: the Diaries of Etty Hillesum*. New York: Pantheon, 1981. 226 pgs.

Holliday, Laurel. *Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries*. New York: Pocket Books, 1995. 409 pgs.

Novac, Ana. *The Beautiful Days of My Youth: My Six Months in Auschwitz and Plaszow*. Translated from the French by George L. Newman. New York: Henry Holt, 1997. 256 pgs.

Rozenberg, Lena Jedwab. *Girl with Two Landscapes: the Wartime Diary of Lena Jedwab, 1941-1945*. New York: Holmes & Meier, 2002. 190 pgs.

Tec, Nechama. *Dry Tears: The Story of a Lost Childhood*. New York: Oxford, 1982. 242 pgs.

Volavkova, Hana. *I Never Saw Another Butterfly: Children's Drawings and Poems from Terezin Concentration Camp, 1942-1944*. New York: Schocken Books, 1993. 106 pgs.

We Are Children Just the Same: "Vedem," The Secret Magazine by the Boys of *Theresienstadt*. Philadelphia and Prague: Jewish Publication Society, 1994. 199 pgs.

Weitz, Sonia Schreiber. *I Promised I Would Tell*. Brookline, Massachusetts: Facing History, 1993. 105 pgs.

Videos

Just a Diary. New York: Anne Frank Center.

This documentary film depicts the story of Anne Frank as told by a 17-year old Dutch girl. The narrator played Anne Frank in a 1985 stage production of this well-known story. *Just A Diary* includes the personal reflections of the actress and excerpts from the play. The film continues with historical film material, images of the place where the Frank family hid during the war, and photographs taken from their family album. [30 minutes]

Anne Frank Remembered. Culver City, California: Columbia TriStar, 1995.

Features vintage newsreel footage, photographs, and a rare home movie to look beyond the celebrated pages of Anne Frank's diary. Includes interviews with her friends, family, and protector, Miep Gies. [117 minutes]

Dear Kitty. New York: Anne Frank Center.

An educational film for pupils of 10-14 years old about the life and diary of Anne Frank, the Holocaust, fascism, antisemitism, and racism in the past and present.

Camera of My Family: Four Generations in Germany 1845 - 1945. New Jersey: Film Library, 1988.

Catherine Hanf Noren is the photographer and narrator of the original book on which this film is based. Noren came from a middle-class German-Jewish family, and she has created here a photographic essay that describes the members of her family before and during the Holocaust. She was born in Germany in 1938, and she and her parents escaped when Catherine was only a few months old. Other members of her family remained in Germany; 26 were sent to concentration camps where 19 of them died. Her only knowledge of these relatives comes from old family photographs. [18 minutes]

Childhood Memories. New Haven: Yale Fortunoff Archives, 1989.

Through the excerpts of 11 Holocaust survivors and witnesses, this montage examines what conditions were like for Jewish and non-Jewish children living in Nazi occupied Europe before and during World War II. [57 minutes]

I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust

This section provides materials to assist students in their viewing of this literary and historical material from the Holocaust. Along with further historical background and media literacy exercises for viewing the film, biographical information on each diarist profiled in the film is included. The tracking numbers in this guide correspond to the VHS copy and do not follow the DVD tracking numbers.

Map

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/maps/>

Timeline of the Holocaust

1933

- The Nazi party wins power in Germany after gaining the most votes in parliamentary elections. Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor, or prime minister, of Germany.
- The Nazis “temporarily” suspend civil liberties for all citizens. They are never restored.
- The Nazis set up the first concentration camp at Dachau. The first inmates are 200 Communists.
- The Nazis boycott Jewish-owned businesses.
- Jews are prohibited from working as civil servants, doctors in the National Health Service, and teachers in public high schools. All but a few Jewish students are banned from public high schools and the nation’s universities.
- Trade unions are closed.
- Books with ideas considered dangerous to Nazi beliefs are burned in public.

1934

- Hitler combines the positions of chancellor and president to become “Führer,” or leader, of Germany.

1935

- Germany’s Nuremberg Laws deprive Jews of citizenship and other fundamental rights.
- The Nazis intensify the persecution of political dissidents and others considered “racially inferior” including Gypsies, Jehovah Witnesses, and homosexuals. Many are sent to concentration camps.

1936

- The Olympic games are held in Berlin, Germany; signs barring Jews are removed until the event is over. American Jesse Owens wins four gold medals in track and field.

March 1937, Klaus Langer begins his diary in Essen, Germany.

1938

- German troops annex Austria.
- On Kristallnacht, the night of November 9–10, Nazi gangs attack Jews throughout Germany and Austria. 30,000 Jews are arrested, 91 are killed. Thousands of shops and businesses are looted and over 1,000 synagogues are set on fire.
- All Jewish children are expelled from public schools in Germany and Austria.
- The Nazis take control of Jewish-owned businesses.

1939

- In March, Germany takes over Czechoslovakia.
- On September 1, Germany invades Poland.
- World War II begins as Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- Hitler orders the systematic murder of the mentally and physically disabled in Germany and Austria.
- Jews are required to wear armbands or yellow stars.

1940

- The Nazis begin deporting German Jews to Poland. Jews are forced into ghettos.
- Germany conquers the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France.
- The Nazis begin the first mass murders of Jews in Poland.

February 1940, Peter Feigl begins his diary in France.

February 1940, Elisabeth Kaufmann begins her diary in France.

March 21, 1940 David Rubinowicz begins his diary in Krajno, Poland.

1941

- Germany attacks the Soviet Union.
- In October - November, Operation Reinhard begins with the construction of killing centers at Chelmno, Sobibor, Belzec, and Treblinka.
- In two days, mobile killing units (Einsatzgruppen) shoot 33,771 Ukrainian Jews at BabiYar—the largest single massacre of the Holocaust. Einsatzgruppen begin the systematic slaughter of Jews.
- After the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor, Germany—an ally of Japan—declares war on the United States.

December 1941, Miriam Korber begins her diary in Transnistria, Romania.

December 1941, Elsa Binder begins her diary in Stanisławów, Poland.

1942

- At the Wannsee Conference, Nazi officials turn over the “Final Solution”—their plan to kill all European Jews—to the government.
- Five death camps begin operation: Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka, Belzec, and Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- The ghettos of Eastern Europe are being emptied as thousands of Jews are deported to death camps.

- By March, about 20 - 25 percent of the Jews who would die in the Holocaust have already been murdered.
- Allied radio broadcasts acknowledge that the Germans are systematically murdering the Jews of Europe.

February/March 1942, Anonymous Girl begins her diary in the Łódź Ghetto, Poland.

August 1942, Ilya Gerber begins his diary in the Kovno Ghetto, Lithuania.

September 1942, Yitskhok Rudashevski begins his diary in the Vilna Ghetto, Lithuania.

1943

- Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto resist as the Nazis begin new rounds of deportations. These Jews hold out for nearly a month before the Nazis put down the uprising.
- By February, about 80 - 85 percent of the Jews who would die the Holocaust have already been murdered.

October 1943, Peter Ginz begins his diary in the Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia.

1944

- Hitler takes over Hungary and despite the increasing possibility of defeat, begins deporting 12,000 Jews each day to Auschwitz where they are murdered.
- On June 6th, D-Day, the Allied invasion of Western Europe begins.
- In July, Soviet forces liberate Vilna, Lithuania.
- Prisoners blow up one crematorium in revolt at Auschwitz.

June 1944, Eva Ginz begins her diary in the Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia.

1945

- World War II ends in Europe; the Holocaust is over; one third of the world's Jews have been murdered.
- The Holocaust is over and the death camps are emptied.
- Many survivors are placed in displaced persons camps (DP camps) until they find a country willing to accept them.

1946

- An International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg is created by Britain, France, the United States, and the Soviet Union. At Nuremberg, Nazi leaders are tried for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Viewing the Film

The film, *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust* is based upon the book *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*. The diary excerpts read in the film come from the actual pages of the young writers. Like Anne Frank, who wrote her diary while in hiding in Amsterdam, these young writers did not know if they would survive or if their diaries would be discovered and read. While recognizing the very personal, and at times, intimate nature of these writings is essential, it is also important to simply listen to (and read) their words. As Alexandra Zapruder explains in her introduction to this study guide:

...Regardless of craft, like all writers, they sought meaning in the written word. In this, they did more than just describe a moment in time. They sought a way to put words around an element of the human experience: of suffering and sorrow; of persecution and injustice; of human frailty and failing; of reprieve and hope.... Perhaps most important of all, they stand as markers of people in time, those who wrote themselves into existence when the world was trying to erase their presence. As such, they are tools for pedagogy, to be sure, but they are also a reminder of the singular power of the written word.

Today there exist more than sixty diaries written by young people during the Holocaust. This film draws attention to only a few. As you and your students watch the film, pay attention to the voice of each diarist, the details of their lives during this period, how and where they lived, and imagine the role their diaries played in their lives during this period. At the conclusion of the film, invite students to reflect in their journals with any one of the following questions in mind. What are their immediate thoughts and feelings after viewing this film? What do they remember best about the film? What images or diarists stand out? What qualities set those diarists apart? List what they learned from viewing the film. What was new information? What surprised them? What did they find upsetting or disturbing? What questions did the film raise? What do they want to know more about? How did the voices of these young writers inform their understanding of this overall period of time?

After journaling, have students discuss their reflections in class. Were students struck by the same images? By the same stories? If not, have students discuss some possible reasons for the differences between what interested them and what captured the attention of their classmates.

Classroom Strategy: Exploring Film Techniques

Writers use detail to draw attention to a person or event. Filmmakers use color, motion, and sound to accomplish the same thing. *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust* used a variety of film techniques to make the written diaries more multi-dimensional and visual. Film techniques are the various artistic decisions filmmakers use to create their film and tell their story. This can include camera angle, lighting techniques, editing choices, and special effects. For example, in *I'm Still Here*, many historical photographs and pieces of archival film footage were used as the visual foundation for the film's narrative. Was this film technique effective in telling the story of these diarists? What other techniques could have been employed?

Ask students to identify other techniques used in the film. What stood out to them about these particular techniques and were they effective? What were the techniques used to integrate writing

and film? What were the roles of historical photographs and historical footage in the film? How did the information in the film inform students' overall understanding of the experience of each diarist? How was music used in the film? What message did it convey?

As a culminating discussion on film technique, read aloud the final diary entry in the film. It is an excerpt by Elsa Binder dated January 30, 1942. In the film only the last two lines of the larger entry are included. Below is the full passage. As the class reads Elsa's words ask students to think about why the filmmakers choose to end the film with this entry. What line stands out to them? Why? What larger messages does this entry convey? If they were the filmmakers, would they choose this quote?

[...] When fear crawls out in the evenings from all four corners, when the winter storm raging outside tells you it is winter, and that it is difficult to live in the winter, when my soul trembles at the sight of distant fantasies, I shiver and say one word with every heartbeat, every pulse, every piece of my soul—*liberation*. In such moments it hardly matters where it is going to come from and who will bring it, so long as it's faster and comes sooner. Doubts are growing in my soul. Quiet! Blessed be he who brings good news, no matter from where, no matter to...where. Time, go ahead. Time, which carries liberation in its unknown tomorrow; not for Cip, who was happy to live in interesting times, maybe not for me, but for people like me. The result is certain. Down with any doubts. Everything comes to an end. Spring will come.
(*Salvaged Pages*, p. 319)

After viewing the film and being introduced to these young writers through their diaries and photographs, we have a different and deeper understanding of their lives and what they endured. We are reminded in hearing their dreams and aspirations of the magnitude of what was lost. These children, like many others around the world today, continue to be caught in the cycle of violence of war. Reproducibles 2 - 12 allow students to further acquaint themselves with the background and circumstances surrounding each of the diarists included in the film. The pages are excerpted from the introductory sections of each diary in *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust* and trace the overall historical experience of each diarist. However, it is important to remember that the biographical information and the diaries themselves are not the complete story of the events of this time. Rather they are personal snapshots into one life during the Holocaust. To assist in broadening the historical scope of this collection of diaries, each biography page has critical historical information that has been pulled out and assembled together into a listing of **Historical Reference Points** at the end of this section. Please refer to this page as well as encourage students to continue to research the historical developments referenced in the diaries.

Classroom Strategy: Biography and Film

Below are several strategies that may be helpful for your students as they read the biographical pages. You may choose to assign each biography page independently, in pairs, or in small groups with the following exercises in mind.

- Students may choose one diarist from the film whom they are interested in learning more about. What questions do students still have about the diarists' lives? Invite students to develop several research topics from the questions they identified. Students may also want to research any of the people, places, or events to which the diarists refer.
- Students may choose two or more diarists who wrote about a similar experience during the Holocaust. For example, Yitskhok Rudashevski and Ilya Gerber both lived and wrote diaries in the ghetto: Yitskhok in Vilna and Ilya in Kovno. Invite students to research these two ghettos, to explore what was similar or different about these ghettos, and to prepare a brief presentation for small groups or the larger class. Other similar topics to examine could include the experience of emigration, of shame or humiliation, of hiding, or of engaging in intellectual and creative endeavors despite the Nazi policy.
- Students may choose to write a letter to one of the diarists. What experiences would they want to know more specifically about during this period? What would they want to ask the diarists personally?
- Build a [human timeline](#) of the Holocaust using the events experienced by each diarist. A human timeline is a historical chronology created by students and is based upon their research of a specific person or event. Students create the timeline by standing in the chronological order of their event and orally presenting their research to the group. Have students work in pairs or small groups to prepare the appropriate material for their human timeline contribution. For this guide, the human timeline could be based upon the Historical References included in the guide [See pages 45 - 46]. A lesson plan of this activity can be found on the Facing History and Ourselves Online Campus. For more information about obtaining a Campus account, please contact Facing History and Ourselves at <http://www.facinghistory.org/>

REPRODUCIBLE 2



**Klaus Langer, age 12
Began diary in Essen, Germany
March 1937**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 13 - 16.

"Klaus began his diary in his native German shortly after his bar mitzvah in March 1937. According to the author, the first part of the journal consists mostly of descriptions of the family's apartment, his aquarium, books, and notes about friends.... It was not until 1938 that he began reporting consistently on the political situation in Germany and its effect on him and his family....Despite signs of instability—the emigration of many of his Jewish friends and the occasional restrictions against Jews (closing of Jewish-owned businesses and prohibitions against Jews attending the public pool)—the Langers were still living in a relatively recognizable world.

"Klaus's relatively normal life came to a crushing halt with Kristallnacht, the Nazi attack on synagogues, homes, businesses, and private property of Jews in cities throughout Germany and Austria on November 9 -10, 1938. . . .

"...A new onslaught of decrees followed Kristallnacht, almost completely limiting the movement and freedoms of Germany's Jews. Among them were the orders expelling all Jewish children from German schools and banning Jewish youth group activities.

"For the Langer family, Kristallnacht served as a powerful catalyst for emigration. Ultimately, this is the main subject of the diary—emigration itself—and the family's increasingly desperate efforts to get out. . . ."

"Klaus's diary entries, filled as they are with requirements, regulations, and restrictions, seem to mirror the confusion and bureaucratic entanglements of the process itself. His personal story typified that of hundreds of thousands of German Jews who were faced with the fact that throughout the 1930s, few European countries eased quotas, lifted restrictions, or simplified existing procedures to allow for Jewish emigration. . . ."

Klaus escaped Germany for Denmark on September 2, 1939 eventually settling in Palestine in January 1940 where, at age 15, he survived the Holocaust and was never to see his parents or grandmother again. Klaus changed his name to Jacob and lives in Israel today. His original diary is still with him.

REPRODUCIBLE 3



**Peter Feigl, age 14
Began diary in France
27 August 1942**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 63 - 68.

"Peter Feigl was born Klaus Peter Feigl on March 1, 1929, in Berlin, Germany. His father, Ernst Feigl, an Austrian national, was a mechanical engineer working in Berlin; his mother Agnes, stayed at home to raise their young son. Ernst and his family were fully integrated members of middle-class Austrian society. He had served in the Austrian navy during World War I, and his family had lived in Austria for many generations. . . . Like many assimilated Central European Jews of the period, the family did not practice Judaism, nor was there any Judaica in the home. . . ."²

"For reasons connected to Ernst Feigl's business, the family moved to Prague in 1936 and to Vienna in 1937. During that year, sensing the rising threat of Nazism in Europe, Ernst Feigl had Peter baptized as a Catholic, hoping to protect him from the Nazis' anti-Jewish policies. Peter, who had never had a Jewish upbringing, recalled that he immediately began taking catechism classes and serving as an altar boy. According to Peter's recollections, from that point forward he considered himself a Catholic. In March 1938, the Anschluss brought Austria under German domination. Ernst Feigl had at a certain point refused to cooperate with the Nazis, who had wanted his help in bringing machinery forbidden by the terms of the Versailles Treaty into Germany. He now suspected that he was on a Nazi blacklist for not aiding them in their illegal schemes. This, in combination with his Jewish identity, did not bode well for him and his family. . . . He consequently wasted no time fleeing Austria for Belgium, taking the family and leaving most of their property behind."

"There they remained until the outbreak of German hostilities in Western Europe in 1940. With the invasions of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, Peter, his mother, and his grandmother fled to France. . . ."

"In mid-July 1942, amid deportations of foreign Jews in France, Agnes Feigl succeeded in having thirteen-year-old Peter enrolled in and sent to a summer camp sponsored by Catholic charitable organizations. . . . A few weeks later, Agnes and Ernst Feigl were arrested and sent to

² Unless otherwise noted, biographical information about Peter Feigl and his family comes from unpublished correspondence between the editor and Mr. Feigl; from Mr. Feigl's unpublished preface and epilogue to the diary; and from Peter Feigl, video-recorded interview, August 23, 1995, conducted by and in the Collection of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

the internment camp at Le Vernet. It was this devastating news that prompted Peter to begin writing a diary, 'intended for his dear parents. . . .'³

"In mid-September, the letters from his parents ceased entirely. . . ."

"It is abundantly clear from the diary that whatever his fears, Peter had no real knowledge at the time of his parents' fate. . . . The Feigl are listed among those on Convoy 28, which departed Drancy the morning of September 4 and arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau two days later. . . . They were most probably murdered on arrival, together with all but about fifty-four of the thousand Jews from the same transport. . . ."⁴

"In January 1943, Peter had the good fortune to be sent to Le Chambon sur Lignon, the Protestant village in the Haute-Loire, where Pastor André and Madga Trocmé among thousands of others, were sheltering and harboring Jews and refugees, especially children. . . .

"Peter remained in Le Chambon for about ten months, during which time he was given false identity papers. . . . His new name was Pierre Fassin. . . . The inhabitants of Le Chambon ran a sort of 'underground railroad' that continually supplied newcomers with false identity papers and then sent them on to new destinations, allowing still more people in need to take their places. . . .

"In May 1944, Peter's escape into neutral Switzerland was organized. . . . The children were given instructions on what to do and how to cross, and on May 22, 1944, Peter made a break for it and ran from France into Switzerland. . . .

"Peter remained in Switzerland until July 1946, when he came to the United States."

He now lives with his wife in Florida. The two volumes of his diary are in the collections of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

³ Feigl, unpublished foreward, 2.

⁴ Serge Klarsfeld, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France 1942-1944* (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1983), 243-45.

REPRODUCIBLE 4



**Elisabeth Kaufmann, age 16
Began diary in Paris, France
February 1940**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 31 - 41.

"Elisabeth Kaufmann (later Elizabeth Koenig) began writing in her diary in her native German in February 1940 in France, just before her sixteenth birthday. She and her family had arrived in France one and a half years earlier as one of the thousands of refugee families fleeing Austria after the Anschluss or its annexation by the Germans in March 1938. Born to a well-established family on March 7, 1924, Elisabeth spent her early childhood years in Vienna with her parents and her older brother, Peter. Her family was cultured, sophisticated, and well-read. Her father held a doctoral degree in international relations and was a prominent journalist. . . .

"In 1933, the family moved to Berlin, where they remained until 1936, when Elisabeth's father was blacklisted by the Nazis and forced to leave the country. . . .

"By the time she began to write in her diary, Elisabeth had already been a refugee for two years. Although much of the diary reflects the struggles, hardships, and complexities of life as a refugee, it also shows the mark of the writer's hand, suggesting the particular educational, social, and cultural milieu in which Elisabeth had been raised. . . .

"With the onset of war in September 1939, the tide of fear and suspicion of foreigners that had been gaining ground in France throughout the 1930s came fully to the fore. Thousands of refugees who fled to France to escape Nazi oppression were now considered 'enemy aliens' because of their German or Austrian nationality. . . .

"In early May 1940, the sudden and swift German attack on the Western countries began. Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg were occupied almost immediately. The invasion of France was imminent. . . .

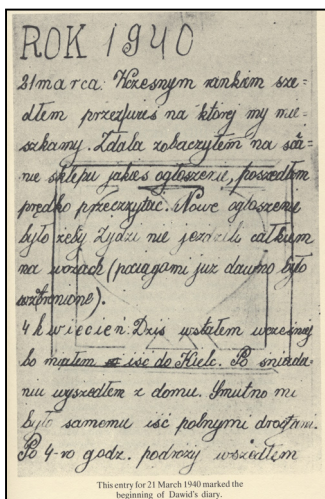
"Elisabeth's diary captures the rising tension in Paris, the accompanying 'Parisian migration', as she referred to the panicked columns of those fleeing the capital, and her own struggles as she joined them, becoming a refugee for the second time in her life. . . .

"After much confusion, Elisabeth. . . found her parents and they settled in Saint Sauveur par Bellac, which was in the southern zone of France, and consequently not under German occupation. In the summer of 1941, Elisabeth was contacted by Hilde Höfert, her former Latin teacher. . . who invited her to come to Le Chambon sur Lignon, to be an au pair for the family of Pastor André Trocmé. In November 1941, after spending the summer and fall with the Trocmé family, Elisabeth received a letter from her father telling her to go directly to Lyons

because the family had obtained visas to travel to America. The family arrived in Virginia Beach in early 1942. . . .

“In 1947, Elisabeth and Ernst Koenig were married and have remained so for more than fifty years. The three volumes of Elisabeth’s diary remained in her own possession until she donated them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. in 1990.”

REPRODUCIBLE 5



Diary of Dawid Rubinowicz, age 12
Began diary in Krajno, Poland
March 21, 1940

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 271-276.

“The first of Dawid Rubinowicz’s five notebooks opens on March 21, 1940, seven months after the German invasion and occupation of Poland. Born in the Polish city of Kielce on July 27, 1927, Dawid and his family, including his parents Josek and Tauba, younger brother Herszel, and younger sister Malka, had moved to the provincial village of Krajno, where they were living at the time of the German attack on Poland in September 1939. . . .

“He began by reporting on the latest restrictions leveled against the Jews, among them a prohibition on traveling by vehicle. He also heard and noted the news of the deportation of Jews from the nearby district capital of Kielce and the establishment of a ghetto there. While Dawid lamented his own life and the state of the world in general, he also savored the small daily pleasures that time and freedom still allowed. . . .

“At twelve-years old, Dawid was one of the youngest diarists whose writings have surfaced thus far. Far from fulfilling the stereotypical image of an innocent little boy, however, Dawid emerges with all the true complexity of a young boy coming of age. . . . Dawid often seemed older than his years, fulfilling an important role at home as the eldest son of a farming family; it was he who drew up a list for the distribution of a flour ration, ground corn and rye at the neighbors’, and carried messages to people in various towns as needed. . . .

“ . . . Dawid reported on all the major threats to the safety and security of the Jews in his town. What emerges most dramatically from his account, however, is the Germans’ systematic exploitation of the Jews, which exhausted their material resources, leaving them beleaguered and impoverished. Dawid reported time and again on the allegedly ‘legal’ fines, taxes, and expropriations levied against his own family and their neighbors and acquaintances. . . .

“ . . . Another form of exploitation was the seizure of Jewish men and boys for forced manual labor. Dawid himself was caught several times and sent to do various tasks, including bricklaying and snow removal. . . .

“Like so many of his counterparts, Dawid reported all the details of his family’s move to the ghetto, as they dismantled their home, packed their belongings, and made arrangements for transport. . . .

“Dawid returned again and again to his worries about the family’s finances. . . . Most of all, however, the diary reflects the escalation in violence afforded by the concentration of many Jews in a small space. . . .

“On May 1, 1942, an argument erupted between Dawid and his father, prompting an outraged tirade that stands in contrast to the rest of the diary. . . .

“The fact of their argument might not have taken on such importance except that a few days later Dawid’s father was arrested and taken to the nearby Skarżysko Kamienna forced labor camp. . . .

“The last part of the diary is almost entirely taken up with the details of communicating with Josek Rubinowicz via the Krajno Jewish Council, trying to send him [his father] mail and provisions. . . . and endeavoring to secure his release through the usual corrupt channels. . . .

“Dawid’s last entry, written on June 1, 1942 begins, ‘A happy day.’ Josek was finally released due to an injured arm and returned to his family. . . .”

“Three and half months after his last entry, from September 15 to 21, 1942, the Jews who had been gathered from various provincial towns and concentrated in the Bodzentyn ghetto. . . were marched on foot to the nearby town of Suchedniow. On September 21, they were loaded into cattle cars and transported to the death camp of Treblinka. Although nothing specific is known about the fate of Dawid and his family, they were almost certainly murdered in the gas chambers in Treblinka.”

REPRODUCIBLE 6



Diary of Yitskhok Rudashevski, age 14
Began diary in Vilna Ghetto, Lithuania
September 1942

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 190 - 197.

"Yitskhok Rudashevski was born in Vilna, Lithuania on December 10, 1927. His father, Elihu, was a typesetter for the *Vilner Tog*, the daily Yiddish newspaper. And his mother, Rose, originally from Kishinev in Bessarabia, was a seamstress. He was an only child living together with his parents and his maternal grandmother. Yitskhok went to school in Vilna, having completed his elementary education and one year of high school at the city's well-respected Realgymnasium before his studies were interrupted by the German invasion. . . .

"...[I]n mid-June 1940, the entire country of Lithuania, including the recently acquired Vilna province, was annexed by the Soviet Union. . . .

"In early September 1941, the Vilna ghetto was established. One year later, as he approached his fifteenth birthday, Yitskhok began writing in his diary in Yiddish. . . .

"Yitskhok, whose literary gift is evident from the very first pages of his diary, chronicled all aspects of the ghetto and its character. . . . He sketched the ghetto inhabitants, highlighting passers-by on the streets, child vendors, and others, capturing their collective pathos, desperation, and humiliation. From time to time, he turned his gaze to the painful presence of the Jewish ghetto police, whom he saw as collaborators, helping 'the Germans in their organized, terrible work of extermination.'

"If there is one predominant subject in Yitskhok's diary, however, it is in the intellectual and cultural life of the ghetto's youth. 'Finally I have lived to see the day,' he wrote on October 5, 1942: 'Today we go to school. . . .' In addition to school, 'the club,' . . . was the center of an extraordinary cultural, intellectual, and artistic life. Yitskhok documented the club's activities proudly in his diary. . . .

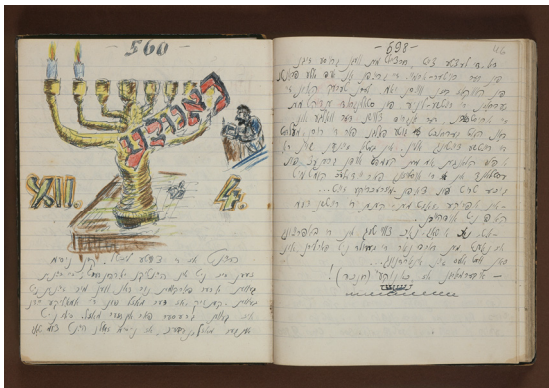
"The young man [also] wrote in his diary, 'I consider that everything must be recorded and noted down, even the most gory, because everything will be taken into account. . . . He not only recounted what happened to him and his family. . . but documented the broad assault on the Vilna Jewish community, recording virtually every major event of the collective experience of invasion, occupation, repression, and mass murder. . . .

“Yitskhok ended his long narrative of the first months of German occupation with a nod toward the advancing Russian army, asserting his faith in its eventual arrival. His buoyant hope in the certainty of liberation is carried throughout the main part of the diary, . . . For Yitskhok, attachment to the Red Army was linked not only to the wait for liberation, but also to his devout commitment to Communism and the Soviet Union. . . . All Soviet organizations were officially disbanded throughout the German occupation, but Yitskhok and his colleagues continued their activities clandestinely. . . .

“Yitskhok and his friends were never able to carry out their plans to resist the Germans. Six months later, on September 23, 1943, the liquidation of the ghetto began. Yitskhok and his family went into hiding, where they remained for two weeks. The only surviving account of Yitskhok during this time is that of his cousin and friend Sore Voloshin, (called Serke in the diary) who recalled him sitting and reading in a corner of their attic, ‘still and silent, speaking only infrequently.’ According to Serke, they were discovered on October 5 or 7. Yitskhok and the rest of the inhabitants of the hiding place were taken to Ponar, where they were shot to death.”⁵

⁵ Yitskhok Rudashevski, *The Diary of the Vilna Ghetto* (Israel: Ghetto Fighters’ House, 1973), 149, 12.

REPRODUCIBLE 7



Diary of Ilya Gerber, age 18
Began Diary in Kovno Ghetto, Lithuania
August 1942

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 329 - 335.

"Ilya, apparently the younger of two children, was born on July 23, 1924, in Kovno, which was at that time the capital of Lithuania. His father, Boris Gerber, was a well-known music teacher and conductor; his mother, by contrast, is not mentioned. . . .

"Ilya would have been fifteen at the time of the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. . . .

"As in Vilna. . . the German onslaught of decrees and restrictions swept like a tidal wave over the Kovno Jewish population. The mass executions that marked the beginning of the 'Final Solution' in Lithuania began with the murder of almost three thousand Jews from July 4 to 6, 1941, at the Seventh Fort. On. . . July 10, 1941, the Germans decreed that the Jews of Kovno were to be moved into a sealed ghetto across the Vilija River in the suburb of Vilijampolė, known to the Jews as Slobodka; by August 15th the ghetto was sealed, with about thirty thousand Kovno Jews inside. . . .

"The last of these [roundups] was the 'Great Aktion' of October 28, 1941, in which ninety-two hundred people (among them forty-two hundred children) were murdered. This brought the mass executions to a temporary halt in Kovno and marked the beginning of the 'quiet period' in the ghetto, dubbed so not because life was without peril or the killings completely ceased, but because during this period (lasting from October 1941 to October 1943) there were no major roundups and executions as there had been up to that time. Ten months later, in August 1942, eighteen-year-old Ilya began writing the third notebook of his diary in Yiddish.

"From the beginning of Ilya's diary, it is clear that he and his family were among the small 'privileged' class of the ghetto, connected to high-ranking members of the Jewish Council. The *protektsiye* (pull) and favoritism that prevailed within the upper levels of the ghetto hierarchy enabled some people to use their connections to make daily existence more comfortable, and sometimes to save their lives altogether. Indeed, the diary is filled with reports that confirm the family's closeness to some of the most important and influential people in the ghetto. . . .

"Unshakenly distant from the 'common man,' Ilya seemed to observe rather than participate in the grim drama taking place around him. This, perhaps more than anything else, was the promise of *protektsiye*; it allowed for a kind of complacency, a sense of security that stemmed

from the belief that connections would prevail, whether it was a matter of having enough food to eat, clothes to wear, money with which to bribe, or friends upon whom to depend. . . .

“Ilya wrote his final diary entry on January 23, 1943. . . . Ten months later, in October 1943, there was another massive roundup in Kovno. . . an event that marked the end of the ‘quiet period.’ The ruthless destruction of the remainder of the Kovno Jews followed, and in July 1944 Kovno was liquidated; by war’s end the vast majority of the former Kovno Jewish community had perished. . . .

“Ilya and his family are presumed to have perished, although nothing specific is known about their fate.”

REPRODUCIBLE 8



Diary of Petr Ginz, age 15
Began Diary in Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia
October 1943

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 160 - 167.

"Petr Ginz was born on February 1, 1928, in Prague, the first child of Otto Ginz and Maria Ginzová. . . . Although Maria had been raised in a Catholic family. . . she and her husband maintained a liberal but traditional Jewish home, keeping kosher, attending synagogue on major holidays, celebrating Petr's bar mitzvah, and sending their children to a progressive Jewish school. . . .

"On March 15, 1939, the Germans annexed Czechoslovakia and four months later, in June, legislation modeled after the Nuremberg Race Laws (defining who was and was not a Jew) was put into practice.⁶ Petr . . . [was] classified as *mischlinge* of the first degree—children of a mixed marriage in which two grandparents were Jewish. . . .

"In December 1941, shortly after the establishment of the Terezín (Theresienstadt) ghetto, deportations from Prague to Terezín began. The Ginz family was gradually broken up according to the Nazi rules for dealing with Jews in mixed marriages and their offspring. . . .

"Petr kept a journal of his own in Terezín beginning in October 1943. . . . Petr did not make daily, dated entries in his journal, nor did he write it in the form of a narrative. Rather, it is a terse list composed of two parts: 'plans,' noting what he intended to accomplish for the month, and 'reports' listing his actual achievements for that month. . . . The journal [for Petr] does not provide an account of daily happenings in Terezín, the character of the persecution to which Petr was subjected, or the events of the Holocaust per se. Instead it is a record of the fifteen year-old writer's efforts to expand his intellectual and artistic capabilities. . . .

"Although Petr decided that his diary was not the best vehicle for recording aspects of life in Terezín, it was in the pages of a more public form of communication, the magazine *Vedem*, that this commitment was most fully realized. *Vedem* was a secret publication undertaken by the boys of Home 1, produced every week between December 1942 and September 1944, and read aloud on Friday evenings. . . . Petr occupied a central role in the production of the magazine, serving as its editor. . . .

⁶ František Ehrmann, Otto Heitlinger, and Rudolf Itlis, eds., *Terezín* (Prague: Council of Jewish Communities, 1965), 15.

“Petr’s last journal entries were written in September 1944, the month he was deported. . . . Petr’s life came to an end in Auschwitz, where, at the age of sixteen, he was murdered in the gas chambers.”

REPRODUCIBLE 9



Diary of Eva Ginz 14
Began Diary Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia
June 24, 1944

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 160 - 167.

“On February 21, 1930... Eva [Ginzová.] came into the world. . . . Although [her mother] had been raised in a Catholic family. . . she and her husband maintained a liberal but traditional Jewish home, keeping kosher, attending synagogue on major holidays, celebrating Petr’s [her brother’s] bar mitzvah, and sending their children to a progressive Jewish school. . . .

“On March 15, 1939, the Germans annexed Czechoslovakia and four months later, in June, legislation modeled after the Nuremberg Race Laws (defining who was and was not a Jew) was put into practice. . . . Eva [was] classified as *mischlinge* of the first degree—children of a mixed marriage in which two grandparents were Jewish. . . .

“In December 1941, shortly after the establishment of the Terezín (Theresienstadt) ghetto, deportations from Prague to Terezín began. The Ginz family was gradually broken up according to the Nazi rules for dealing with Jews in mixed marriages and their offspring. . . .

“Eva’s diary opens on June 24, 1944, when she was fourteen, with a description of her arrival in Terezín six weeks before. She wrote until the liberation of the ghetto in May 1945, recording all aspects of her daily life there. In particular, her diary reflects the living circumstances of the young in Terezín, who lived not with their parents but in collective ‘children’s homes. . . .”

“In her diary, Eva described the barracks in which she and her bunkmates dwelled; they were overcrowded, cold, filthy, dark, and infested with bedbugs and fleas. . . . Time and again Eva and her friends were uprooted and moved, only to find themselves ordered to move again just as they got settled. The lack of decent shelter in combination with frequent exposures to new rooms led inevitably to illness. Eva herself suffered from a bout of scarlet fever and diphtheria that kept her in the hospital for six weeks. . . .

“Eva’s diary offers glimpses of daily life in Terezín, but there is something still deeper to be found within it. Across entry after entry, week after week, and month after month, Eva returned to the subject of the separation of her family. . . . The image that thus emerges from Eva’s diary is that of a family decimated by war and oppression, its members scattered, left only to mourn their losses and worry for the fates of their loved ones. . . .

“In late September 1944, Eva noted in her diary that a transport of men between the ages of sixteen and fifty were being assembled. . . . Five days later, Eva wrote in her diary, ‘So Petr and Pavel are on the transport’. . . . Eva described her last moments with her brother. ‘I pressed through the crowd. . . and passed Petr the bread through the window. I had enough time to hold his hand through the bars before a guard drove me away.’

“. . . Eva’s diary begins to suggest the high price of survival. The shock of separation from Petr, the loss of his comforting presence, and her fear and desperation for his well-being dominate the rest of the diary. . . .

“As the months continued to roll by and Eva continued to hear nothing from her brother, her worry for his fate developed into a deeper, more suspicious kind of fear. . . . In April 1945, as liberation was imminent, surviving prisoners evacuated from concentration camps in the East were brought westward by the Nazis. In ten short days, more than twelve thousand of these death camp survivors flooded into Terezín, shocking the ghetto inhabitants with their terrible physical and emotional state. . . .⁷

“Terezín was liberated by the Soviet army on May 8, 1945. A few days later, Eva and her father returned home to Prague and were reunited with Eva’s mother. Though Eva was disappointed that Petr was not waiting for her at home, she closed her diary on a hopeful note: ‘when Petr comes back I’ll write it here.’ Almost two years later, on April 14, 1947, Eva, then seventeen, made one additional and final entry in her diary, ‘Petr hasn’t come back.’”

⁷ George E. Berkley, *Hitler’s Gift: The Story of Theresienstadt* (Boston: Branden, 1993), 240-43. See also the diary of Alice Ehrmann, entries beginning on April 20, 1945.

Diary of an Anonymous Girl, age unknown
Began diary in Łódź Ghetto, Poland
February and March, 1942

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 226 - 230.

'There is no justice in the world, not to mention in the ghetto.' So begins the diary of a young girl writing in the Łódź Ghetto in late February and March of 1942. Her identity is unknown. . . . The language of the diary is Polish; the diarist and her family were most likely native Poles, but whether they were originally from the city of Łódź or settled from a smaller village nearby is likewise unclear. . . .

"The diary is fragmentary, beginning in the midst of an undated entry and ending abruptly in the middle of a sentence. The rest of the entries are dated, covering a three-week period beginning on February 27 and ending on March 18, 1942. . . . Far from reflecting a diverse and varied existence in the ghetto. . . these activities and conversations revolved almost exclusively around two primary subjects: food and deportations. . . .

"As the only major ghetto to exist on 'German' soil, it [the Łódź Ghetto] was completely segregated from the ethnic German population and the Poles still residing there. Consequently, there was virtually no smuggling or trading of food, medicine, or provisions between the ghetto residents and the outside world. . . . For this reason, hunger, starvation, and death due to malnutrition were rampant in Łódź, dramatically more so than in any of the other major ghettos. . . .⁸

"She recorded, too, her own physical suffering, complaining bitterly of her aching stomach, teeth, and head, her weakness, and worst of all, the indescribable and by all accounts excruciating sensation of unrelieved hunger. . . .

"If food is the primary subject of the diary, the deportations of Jews from the ghetto is only minimally secondary. . . Beginning in January 1942, the Nazi authorities had undertaken the first so-called resettlements from the ghetto toward the eventual goal of emptying the ghetto and ridding the region entirely of Jews. . . .

"The diary ends in the middle of a sentence on March 18, 1942."

⁸ Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941 - 1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), xxiii-xxv, xxxiv-xxxvi; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 vols. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 205-14.

REPRODUCIBLE 11



**Miriam Korber, age 18
Began diary in Transnistria, Romania
December 1941**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 243-249.

“Miriam Korber was born to Leon and Klara Korber in 1923 in the small town of Câmpulung-Moldovenesc, in the southern part of the Romanian province of Bukovina. . . Miriam’s diary is unique for although its content echoes other diaries written in ghettos and camps throughout Eastern Europe, it was written in Romania, where the Fascist regime of General Ion Antonescu carried out the genocide of its own Jewish population, creating a circumstance unparalleled in the history of World War II. . . .

“In the late 1930s, as Germany was aggressively implementing anti-Jewish legislation, a succession of Romanian leaders and viciously antisemitic political parties put in place their own legal, economic, and social restrictions on Jews, including the institution of *numerus clausus*, or Jewish quota, in Romanian universities, civil service, and the professions, and the revocation of citizenship for 150,000 to 200,000 Jews. In August 1940, antisemitic legislation based on the Nazi Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935, which defined Jewishness according ‘racial’ criteria, was enacted in Romania. The following month, a coup d’état backed by Nazi Germany brought the Fascist leader Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard party to power in Romania. . . .

“It was as a consequence of these laws that Miriam Korber was forced out of high school in Botoșani, Moldova, where she had been sent as a teenager to study and live with her maternal grandparents. She returned to her hometown Câmpulung, finding herself faced with an ever increasing battery of restrictions. She recalled that 1940 - 41 was a ‘year of humiliation,’ with the imposition of special identity cards for Jews, restrictions on travel by train, the seizing of hostages, and the expulsion of Jews from the villages. . . .

Miriam and her family left Câmpulung on October 12, 1941, and arrived in Djurin, Transnistria, on November 4. Her diary, begun in her eighteenth year, and written entirely in Romanian, opens one month later. The first entries provide a long account of the family’s journey from Câmpulung to Transnistria, capturing the chaos of moving and the long and painful journey from home to a strange new place. . . .

“By December 13, 1941. . . Miriam’s description of the family’s deportation had been completed. . . . Her daily diary entries begin at this time. While it is an account of her own life. . . the diary also reflects the broader experience of exile shared by the Romanian Jews in Transnistria. Her diary is filled with reports of the physical hardships that plagued the exiles. . . .

“Miriam reflected on the inexplicable desire to live, despite the misery and hopelessness of their circumstances. Similarly, she was among many writers who suffered from the paralysis of her life in the ghetto, describing the apathy brought on by imprisonment. . . .

“Miriam’s diary breaks off in October 1943. She remembers that her father was caught in a roundup and sent away to a destination unknown by the family at the time; in fact, he was sent to a forced labor camp. According to the author, she didn’t have the strength to continue writing after this devastating event. A year and a half later, the Russian army liberated Djurin. Miriam returned to Romania with nine other young people, all of whom walked behind the Red Army troops as they marched through the Ukraine and into Romania. After two weeks of walking, she arrived home in Botoșani, Romania, on May 2, 1944. . . .

“Miriam’s diary was hidden from her for a long time, first by her mother and then by her husband, who feared the emotional repercussions of her reading the diary and remembering the horrors of life in Transnistria. After the war, she went on to become a doctor, and in the 1990s she published the diary in Germany and Romania. The original remains with her to this day.”

REPRODUCIBLE 12



Elsa Binder, age 21
Began diary in Stanisławów, Poland
December 1941

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 301-306.

"On October 12, 1941, a massacre of ten thousand Jews took place [in Stanisławów]. Two months after this pogrom, in late December 1941, the ghetto was established, and at about the same time, Eliszewa [Elsa] began writing her journal. . . .

"When the war broke out. . . in September 1939, and in the eastern region of Poland was annexed to the Soviet Union (as a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 1939), Stanisławów, too, came under Soviet rule. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the town of Stanisławów was occupied briefly by Hungarian troops (allied with the Germans) and then, in late July, by the German themselves. Repressions, terror, and executions followed swiftly.

"Eliszewa clearly saw her diary as a place to express her deepest thoughts and feelings about herself, her family, love, friendship, and the impact of oppression and suffering on her own life. . . . To that end, she wrote about herself, her character and physical appearance, and the bitter circumstances of her life, looking back at her 'twenty-one years of life, so much at odds with the gods,' as she described it. Likewise, she reflected at length on her immediate family, describing her parents' and her sister's personalities, attributes, and failings, and mulling over their relationships. . . .

"In particular, Eliszewa wrote with contempt, fury, and bitter sarcasm about the corruption she witnessed on the part of the Jewish Community Council. . . . She painted a scathing portrait of the members of the Jewish Council, alluding not only to the system of favoritism and family privileges that sustained them, but touching on the great divide between the privileged youths of the ghetto and her own circle. . . .

"If there is one subject, however, that reverberates most clearly throughout the diary, it is death and its proximity. Throughout the diary, Eliszewa recited litanies of the dead, not only marking the fact of their lives and deaths in her diary, but painting an image of a community slowly shrinking, each new act of violence further reducing the already decimated population. . . .

"On March 31, 1942, there was another major roundup in Stanisławów. Five thousand people without work certificates were seized and taken to the killing center in Belżec, where they were murdered. Shortly thereafter, all the remaining ghetto inhabitants were classified according to their ability to work: 'A' category referred to 'experts' working for the German economy, 'B' signified people employed in 'less essential' functions, and 'C' was applied to those 'unfit' for

labor or 'the handicapped and the old,' as the diarist described it. Eliszewa's sister, Dora, was categorized a 'C,' then upgraded to a 'B, and was then, according to the diary, taken to Rudolfsmühle, (the improvised prison for the inhabitants of Stanisławów), where she was held with other captives for four days. At the end of this time, she was taken away to a destination unknown to the writer."

"Eliszewa did not write again for almost a month after the roundup. When she resumed her diary, she wrote about the devastating loss of Dora. . . .

"She wrote her last entry on June 18, 1942; her text ended abruptly as she was recounting a close call with the Gestapo and the Ukrainian police as she smuggled money and supplies into the ghetto. Over the course of the summer, there were shooting operations in the ghetto and another roundup that claimed the lives of another thousand people. This was followed by yet another transport of five thousand people to Belzec in September. The liquidation of the ghetto took place in late February 1943. It is certain that Eliszewa and her family perished, although the exact circumstances of their deaths are not known. Her diary was found in a ditch on the side of the road leading to the cemetery, which was the execution site for the Stanisławów Jews.⁹

⁹ Raul Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews*, vol. 2, 496.

Historical Reference Points

The historical references included below were selected from each of the diarists' biographies and pertain to specific events, locations or policies that impacted their experience of the Holocaust. Encourage students to deepen their understanding of this period by choosing any of the reference points to research using the websites included below.

Anschluss
Auschwitz-Birkenau
Bełżec
Drancy
Emigration
Final Solution
German Jews
Gestapo`
Ghetto Police
Iron Guard
Jewish Council (*Judenrat*)
Kristallnacht

Le Chambon sur Lignon
Liberation
Łódź Ghetto
Mischlinge
Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact
Nuremberg Race Laws
Ponar
Quotas
Terezín
Treblinka
Vedem
Vilna Ghetto

Websites

Jewish Virtual Library

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/bibliof.html>

Comprehensive listing of Holocaust-related websites organized by category.

<http://www.pbs.org/auschwitz/>

Created as an educational companion to the 2004 BBC six part mini-series on the history of Auschwitz.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org>

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country's memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust.

Yad Vashem

<http://www.yadvashem.org.il/>

Since its inception in 1953, Yad Vashem has been entrusted with documenting the history of the Jewish people during the Holocaust period, preserving the memory and story of each of the six million victims, and imparting the legacy of the Holocaust for generations to come through its archives, library, school, museums and recognition of the Righteous Among the Nations.

POST-VIEW

This section offers a literary and historical framework for analysis following a viewing of the film and introductory exploration of the diaries. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this material, the **‘Literary Lens’** and **‘Historical Lens’** can be stand-alone units of study or integrated across the curriculum.

LITERARY LENS

Perspective and Scope: Reading What Survived

Like most people who write diaries, the young writers in the book and film shift between varying perspectives, voices, and scopes of interest. Alexandra Zapruder saw patterns related to perspective and voice as she wrote and researched her book. She developed one organizing principle for untangling the shifting nature of the diarists’ writing by considering the different perspective or “worlds” that engaged their attention, and the corresponding voice or tone that they adopted. She identified these ‘worlds’ as the internal world with: 1) The voice of reflecting; 2) The immediate world with the voice of reporting; and 3) The external world with the voice of chronicling. This organizing principle is only one way to analyze the richness of this material. It can serve as a model structure for students to engage in the process of literary analysis. As students move forward in their exploration of this material, they will continue to learn that the diarists wrote for many different reasons, in many different styles and under very different circumstances.

Ask students to engage in a close reading of these ‘worlds’ found on Reproducible 13, 14, and 15. How does each “world” inform them about the Holocaust? What factors impact how they express themselves, whether it be in writing or other forms of creative expression? If they were to develop an organizing principle for understanding the diaries as a body of literature, what words and structure could they develop? How does examining the ‘worlds’ that Alexandra Zapruder organized shape how they live in their world today? As they read this material independently, in pairs, or in small groups, have students keep in mind the factors that shape their own ‘world’ and voice.

Internal Perspective/Reflecting

The most personal of these perspectives is the **internal world**. Writers tend to use a **reflecting** voice for this type of writing; they are examining themselves, their inner lives, their deepest thoughts and feelings. They reflect over matters of character and their dreams and hopes for the future. Many young writers describe their relationships and conflicts with family, friends, and first loves. Some writers use their diaries as a place to consider matters of faith, religion, and belief (or lack of belief) in God.

Anonymous Girl-Lodz Ghetto

Wednesday, March 11, 1942

“Today I had a fight with my father. I swore at him, even cursed him. It happened because yesterday I weighed twenty decagrams of *zacierki*[noodles] and then sneaked a spoonful. When my father came back, he immediately noticed that some *zacierki* were missing. My father started yelling at me and he was right. . . . I became very upset and cursed my father. What have I done? I regret it so much, but it can’t be undone. My father is not going to forgive me. How will I ever look him in the eyes? He stood by the window and cried like a baby. Not even a stranger has ever insulted him before. . . . We would be a happy family, if I didn’t fight with everybody. All the fights are started by me. I must be manipulated by some evil force. I would like to be different, but I don’t have a strong enough will. There is nobody I can talk to. Why isn’t there anybody who would guide me, why can’t anybody teach me? I hate my sister. She is a stranger to me. God, show me what is right” (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 238)

Moshe Flinker-Brussels, Belgium

July 4, 1943

“It has again been two weeks since I last wrote in my diary, despite all the promises I made to myself last time. What can I do? Several times during the past two weeks I took my diary in hand but I did not open it because I had nothing to write. I still am hopeful from day to day and from week to week; despite the repeated disappointments I have suffered I shall never stop hoping, because the moment I stop hoping I shall cease to exist. All I have is hope; my entire being depends on it. And at the same time I have nothing. What will these useless hopes bring me? I don’t know what to do. Everything is becoming hollow. Formerly, when I took up my Bible and read it, it was as if I had returned to life, as if the Lord had taken pity on me; even in my darkest moments I found consolation in Him. Now even this is denied me, all seems lifeless, it does not enthuse me.” (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 120)

Immediate World/Reporting

The **immediate world** is one step removed from the internal one, concerning itself with the daily lives or important events that occur within the writer's personal circle (family, friends, and acquaintances). This lends itself to a **reporting** tone, virtually devoid of emotion or personal reflection, and focused on documenting an event for posterity. These entries are usually described in great detail, with an emphasis on accuracy and specificity.

Klaus Langer-Essen, Germany

December 19, 1938

"Regarding the emigration of my parents I have the following to report. First came two refusals from Argentina for lack of letters of credit. The rich uncle in America is unable to assume such a financial responsibility. We don't have an affidavit for the U.S. India requires firm employment there, or a contract. Father is now trying to make connections in India to obtain a contract. He also wrote to Peru and he was told to go to the Uruguayan consulate. Allegedly the Dominican Republic would take ten thousand Jews and provide them with visas. However, nothing further is known about that. It probably makes no sense to turn to them. However, with a Dominican Republic visa it is possible to get a half-year visa for Palestine. Shanghai also accepts Jews, even without a visa, but it is questionable how one can live there. The mail also brought no news from Palestine. We have submitted a request for a "commercial certification." (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 24)

Peter Feigl-France

Monday, May 22, 1944 [Geneva]

"Leave at 6:30 A.M. from Lyons Brotteaux to Viry via Culoz. Arrival at 12 P.M. There, half of them don't get off [the train]. I jump off the running train. The two passeurs [guides who help people cross national borders clandestinely] tell us to hide in a grass field. Cops go by. At 1 P.M., the others who got off at St. Julien rejoin us[.] The column starts walking behind the passeurs. We are marching along a road. While no one could be seen on the road, at a sign from the passeur we cross in double time a grassy field and then a plowed field. We see the railroad track. The barbed wires have already been cut. No one on the tracks. We go through at a gallop. Then we enter high grasses and a small forest. . . . We see the border. No Krauts, no French. He makes us lie flat on the ground. It rained and it's not pleasant. My feet are soaking wet. The signal for us. On the run we get nearer to the barbed wires. We throw our backpacks over the fence and we cross wherever feasible. A Swiss guard is watching us. We cross at Sorral II. We are well received. An interrogation (the first one) already started. I pull out my real [identity] papers, which had been sewn into my jacket [lining]." (*Salvaged Pages*, pp. 88)

External World/Chronicling

The **external world** is still more removed from the personal life of the writer and his or her immediate circle. Writers who take on this perspective are **chronicling** a series of events as it happened to their community, or capturing a scene as it occurred to people they may not know but who nevertheless share their existential plight. These tend to be the most literary forms of expression; chroniclers capture in writing scenes and incidents that embody something larger than the single experience at hand. They see and sketch these moments for their generality, as snapshots of something related to a larger and more common experience.

Yitskhok Rudashevski-Vilna Ghetto, Lithuania

Friday the 2nd of October [1942]

“Since new districts that border on our Disner Alley have been added to our ghetto and since our little street is full of ruins that run through the whole of Yatkever Street, these ruins are being torn down [. . .] Now demolished walls stand. In the daytime you can see blue sky and at night the stars through the black holes that served as windows. Strange feelings come over me as I look at black ruins shattered by the bloody storm that used to sweep over our ghetto. I look at the black holes, at the fragments of stoves. How much tragedy and anguish is mirrored in every shattered brick, in every dark crack, in every bit of plaster with a piece of wallpaper.”

“Here the murderers, the Lithuanians, broke in like animals with axes and with crowbars and sought their prey: women, children, men. . . . Through here hungry people used to crawl outside the ghetto and bring in some food. . . . [Here] Germans stood and laughed at the horror. . . . And Jews walked around near the ruins and bit their lips until they bled in misery and shame. . . . As I look at the ruins an uncanny feeling comes over me to see how Jews putter around there. I too crawl between the bricks, pieces of wallpaper, tiles, and it seems to me a lamentation ascends from the black crevices, from the stale holes. It seems to me that the ruins are weeping and importuning as though lives were hidden here . . .” (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 208)

Alice Erhmann-Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia

November 19, 1944

“All the people have disappeared somewhere; here and there an unclear message from somewhere-like far calls from a ship wandering the ocean. The city lives on. It lives with bated breath, a lull between two catastrophes; but it lives on. People carry their heroism masked behind an everyday face; they no longer even talk about it. Every loved one is alone with their—waiting? cares? fears? What should one call it? They say that many people are coming. Who knows? The city is so exhausted; we will bear all this, I and the city and you and you . . .”

“Forty people just arrived from Prague. Widows from mixed marriages, prisoners. No one talked to or saw them as they were being transported. They come from the world outside and are quarantined. They have parents and siblings here; they bring news but are inaccessible. Because of that they are unearthly, and how unearthly must this city seem to

them! This is how it is done: this is how psychosis is created, fear of ghosts.” (*Salvaged Pages*, pp. 407 - 408)

Classroom Strategy

Exploring Perspective: Reflecting, Reporting or Chronicling Diaries

After reading the diary entries from Reproducibles 13 - 15, ask students to gather in pairs or small groups to discuss their understanding of the diarists’ varying voices, stylistic choices, and intentions for their writing.

- Internal World/Reflecting: What *thoughts or feelings* are being expressed in the entry by the Anonymous Girl? By Moshe Flinker? What words, phrases, or sentences illustrate this perspective? What stands out for the reader in these personal entries and why?
- Immediate World/Reporting: What *events* are being documented by Klaus Langer? By Peter Feigl? What words, phrases, or sentences illustrate this perspective? What does the reader learn from the details that each writer chose to include?
- External World/Chronicling: What *larger experiences* of the community are being expressed by Yitskhok Rudashevski? By Alice Erhmann? What words, phrases, or sentences illustrate this perspective? What impression or message does the reader take away from these sketches?

Extension Activities

The following exercises connect the literary and historical nature of this material to the individual lives of students.

Journal Focus: Exploring Your Voice

The very difficult ‘worlds’ and experiences that each of the diarists lived through can be a leap in our imagination. In their daily struggle to survive, they wrote and gave voice to their hopes and fears, they explored their personal and inner voice, and documented their everyday experiences. Perhaps they wrote with the hope of maintaining their humanity in the face of cruelty, or perhaps they wrote in the hope of allowing others to learn from their words. In the spirit of exploring voice, invite students to think about an everyday experience in their lives today. Some examples of experiences could be a visit to the circus; a visit to a graveyard; a train trip; the running of an errand; or attendance at a party. Once the experience is identified, ask students to describe it in a paragraph or two in each of the following voices.

- Internal/Reflecting: How did it make them feel personally? What were the thoughts and ideas that are unique to them and their experience? What did it remind them of in their own past? What was it about being in that place that was specific to them and only them?
- Immediate/Reporting: What exactly happened? Who were they with and how did they get there? What did they do while they were there? What exactly did they see? What did it look like, what was the weather, what was the timing, what was the sequence of events?
- External/Chronicling: What did the scene look like from above-as if you were outside of it looking in? What were people doing? What was the general mood? What common things did they observe? What impressions did the overall scene give them? Did the mood, the scene correspond to what they would expect given where

they were and what they were witnessing? If so, what did the scene tell them about the moment in time? What details contributed to their overall impression?

After exploring their different voices in writing, they can discuss the following questions with a classmate. They may choose to focus on one of the voices explored or use all three. What voice was most challenging to write? Why? What voice was most comfortable? Why? What did they discover about their own voice and perspective by engaging in this exercise?

Exploring Third Party Perspective

To further explore the idea of perspective, ask students to choose one entry from the diary entries in this section and write a response to it from a third party perspective. For example, examine Peter Feigl's entry dated Monday, May 22, 1944 in the **'Immediate World/Reporting'** section. Ask students to respond to this entry as a reporter writing about the experience of fleeing from Switzerland that Peter recounts. Or they can examine Yitzhok Rudashevski's entry dated October 2, 1942 in the **'External World/Chronicling'** section. Ask them to respond to this entry as a reporter writing about the deportation of families into the ghetto. Allow students to spend the necessary time to research a particular historical experience or event referenced by the diarist in order to be historically sound.

Historical Photographs

Historical photographs capture a moment of time from the perspective of the photographer while a diary entry captures a moment in time from the inner life of an individual. Examining historical photographs of the diaries themselves is another window into the role the diaries played in the diarists' lives during the Holocaust and can be another strategy to explore third party perspective. Reproducible 16 includes photographs of pages from two of the diaries: one from Peter Feigl and the other from Ilya Gerber. Ask students to choose one of the photographs and write an article or editorial from a third party perspective. They may want to include in their article answers to these framing questions. What important information about the diarist do they need to include in their article? What do the photographs of these pages reveal beyond the entries themselves that would be important to include? Are there questions left unanswered about the diarists to pose in their article?

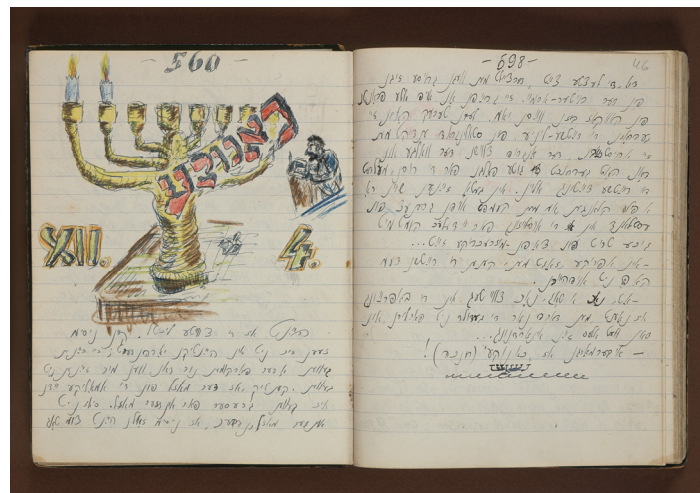
CONNECTIONS

- Did your experience of writing from the three different perspectives change or inform your own understanding of the diarists in *I'm Still Here*?
- What insights did you gain about your own perspective by completing these writing exercises?
- How does the vantage point or perspective shift the choices you make when you write?
- How do these choices, in turn, yield different results in your writing and consequently different historical or literary value to the reader?
- How did viewing a photograph of a diary influence your perspective on the diarist?

REPRODUCIBLE 16



Photos of Peter Feigl's parents taped to an interior page of Peter's diary.



Interior page of Ilya Gerber's diary showing a menorah (candelabra) with two candles marking the second night of Chanukah.

"Today is the second candle lighting of Hanukkah. Miracles are not evident in the present century. They took place or happened when we did not [yet] exist. Evidently the luck of the Jews of old was greater than our luck." (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 355)

HISTORICAL LENS

Examining Separation: Emigration, Hiding, and Ghetto Life

Aside from being pieces of literature, the diaries are invaluable historical documents. Below are two themes that draw out from the historical material a shared experience; that of **Separation/Emigration, Hiding, and Life in the Ghetto** and **Moral Complexity in a Time of Crisis.**

Essential Questions

These questions can serve to frame a unit of study on the experience of separation as expressed in the film or in the diarists' entries.

- **What circumstances force families to separate during a time of war?**
- **What do we learn about the experience of separation during the Holocaust from these diaries?**
- **How does this knowledge influence the way I think about my choices today?**

Separation—from one's family and friends, home, and way of life—is a casualty of war and genocide. Communities are torn apart, and individuals must often survive on their own deprived of familiar language, customs, and social norms. During the Holocaust, separation from one's community could mean the difference between life and death.

Up until World War II began on September 1, 1939, emigration was possible from Central Europe, but never easy. With emigration quotas fully enforced, Jews and other targeted groups had to navigate through an enormous bureaucracy, turn over assets to leave, and were highly restricted in what they could take. Once the Nazi assault in the East accelerated, families continued to flee when possible; westward for France, the Netherlands, and Belgium, and eastward into Russia. There they lived as refugees, often viewed with suspicion and caution, yet able to survive.

When opportunities arose some Jews chose to hide, either literally concealing themselves from the outside world, as in the case of Anne Frank, or by passing as non-Jews, concealing their identity with false papers. Even when successful, hiding entailed grave risks to themselves and their rescuers. As the diarist Yitskhok Rudashevski wrote, "Whoever can do so hides. The word 'maline' [hiding place] has become relevant. To hide, to bury oneself: in a basement, in an attic, to save one's life." (*Salvaged Pages*, p. 208)

If emigration and hiding were not possible, Jews living in cities and towns in Nazi occupied Europe were forced into ghettos throughout Eastern Europe. Under the guise of "relocation to the East" or "forced labor," Jews were deported to designated areas living in unsanitary conditions, with rampant disease and forced starvation. Once confined in the ghetto the strain of hunger, loss of livelihood, and displacement of entire communities continued to take its toll.

Film Focus: On Separation

The diarists included in this section serve to illustrate the dire choices that forced families to separate from one another. This experience was not exclusive to only these diarists, but they

serve to illuminate the extreme circumstances surrounding the choice of separation that was precipitated by the war. Invite students to review the film with the lens of separation (emigration, hiding, or ghetto life) in mind using the film excerpts and tracking numbers listed below.

Film Excerpts: On Examining Separation

Klaus Langer—Essen, Germany and Denmark (1:02 - 1:05)

Peter Feigl—France (1:05 - 1:09)

Elisabeth Kaufmann—Paris, France (1:09 - 1:12)

Peter Ginz—Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia (26:52 - 32:43)

Miriam Korber—Transnistria, Romania (38:09 - 42:19)

Directly following their viewing and before moving on to the diary entries, allow students time to reflect in their journals and express thoughts, feelings, or further questions regarding the experience of separation during the Holocaust. What individual story stood out to them? What did they learn about the experience of separation from this film viewing?

Diary Entries: On Examining Separation

The diarists included in this section serve to illustrate the experience of separation. Each individual who lived during this period experienced the strain and pain of separation, be it from friends, family, or village. You and your students may choose to read these entries individually, in pairs, small groups, or aloud in class. Take time to discuss each entry in relation to the historical theme. Ask students to identify key language that speaks to the idea of separation. The entries included in this section were excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*. The page numbers and film tracking numbers are included if students choose to look up the entries or revisit the film.

Connection questions at the end of the entries provide an opportunity for reflective writing or further class discussion on the excerpted entries.

Klaus Langer—Essen, Germany and Denmark (book p. 32; film: 1:02 - 1:05)

The entry from Klaus Langer is dated seven days after the beginning of World War II. What aspect of separation does Klaus's entry exemplify?

September 8, 1939 [Denmark]

"On August 29 I received a letter from the Aid to Jewish Youth in Berlin. Efforts were under way to get us into Denmark. We were to prepare to leave. My hopes were not very high since we were disappointed so many times before. However, on September 2, the second day of the war, a telegram arrived that instructed me to be in Berlin the next morning because we would be going to Denmark. That meant I had to leave that day and spend the night in Berlin. . . . That afternoon at four o'clock I left Essen. . . . The departure from my parents was very short and difficult. I had no idea when I would see them again, especially because the war is on now. To be in a war in Germany as a Jew means to be ready for the worst. When I sit here all alone, I often think of my parents and grandmother and then only sad thoughts come to mind."

Peter Feigl —France (book pp. 69 - 70; film 1:05 - 1:09)

Peter Feigl used his diary as the primary vehicle for communicating with his parents so far away. What aspect of separation does Peter's entries to his parents exemplify?

Friday, August 28, 1942

"I went to communion and I prayed for you, my loved ones."

[The reference to communion is fully explained in Peter Feigl's biography pp. 27 - 28]

Saturday, August 29, 1942

"The mailman was here. I run to ask if there is something for me. Praise the Lord. A postcard from you telling me that you are together at the Camp du Vernet. . . ."

Tuesday, September 1, 1942

"The start of a new month. I wait to hear from you. Nothing for me. . . ."

Wednesday, September 2, 1942

"I am in bed. Nothing from you."

Saturday, September 12, 1942

"I have written you a card every other day just as you asked. But the directress tells me that she got a letter from a J. aid group [probably a Jewish Aid organization] saying that you were in the occupied zone and that you wanted to hear from me. I am afraid for [you]. I don't mail the card. It's useless. Tonight I cried. Who knows where you were taken to?..."

Elisabeth Kaufmann—Paris, France (book pp. 56 - 57; film: 1:09 -1:12)

Elisabeth's entries speak to the experiences of refugees during the war. What aspect of separation does Elisabeth's experience exemplify?

June 11, 1940

"Tomorrow [Mother and I will] leave Paris. . . ."

"I asked myself for how long? Forever. . . or will it be for only a short time?"

June 13, 1940

"Yesterday, after we had already become quite tired from walking, we found another means of getting away. . . ."

"I found a car whose driver was also willing to take Mother . . . I showed Mother, pushed her a little to make her go faster, then climbed on my bike and rode away. At the last moment I remembered that I had no idea where the car was going. I turned around, but at that moment the line moved ahead and when I yelled and asked where the car was going, the driver has only time to yell back 'St. Remy. . . .'"

"As I approached St. Remy . . . I had no idea how in this chaos of cars and people I could find her again. . . ."

"After one hour Mother still had not come and I started to worry. . . ."

“A third hour passed during which [. . .] I became increasingly afraid and anxious. . . . It was already seven then eight, then nine o’clock. It got later and later and wetter and wetter. Suddenly I saw Mother getting out of a car. . . . I ran to her.”

Miriam Korber , Transnistria, Romania (book pp. 249 - 250, 257; film: 38:09 - 42:19)
Miriam Korber’s entries follow her deportation and experience of exile. What is revealed about the consequences of separation in Miriam’s entries?

Tuesday, November 4, 1941

“On Sunday at six in the morning, we found out that we were leaving. . . . But we could not even begin to imagine what we would live through; who could have such a dark imagination? . . . The long road was muddy, strewn with wagons filled with bags, bundles, children, and old people. . . . We are loaded into cars that are actually used to transport horses. . . . so we get in, 38 people in a car. . . . We were afraid that they would seal the cars. . . .

“Along the road we saw. . . . the homes of the Jews who had been killed; we saw on each wall written with charcoal, the names of those who had been murdered.”

Wednesday, January 21, 1942

“. . . Today I realize that it would have been better if they had killed us all. . . then, in our home, rather than sending us away to this wasteland to die of cold and hunger, since this is the goal of the people who sent us here. It would have been more humane. But it looks like we are doomed to writhe in pain, and not just for a minute as by a firing squad but for months and years. . . .”

Classroom Strategies

Video Focus: The Departure

Klaus Langer speaks directly to the moment of departure from his parents in Germany.

“The departure from my parents was very short and difficult. I had no idea when I would see them again, especially because the war is on now. To be in a war in Germany as a Jew means to be ready for the worst. When I sit here all alone, I often think of my parents and grandmother and then only sad thoughts come to mind.”

In the film, there are historical photographs and film footage of anguished parents saying good-bye to their children from train and bus stations. As Klaus notes in his entry, it was a very difficult moment as both parents and children did not know when they would ever see one another again. In student journals or in small groups, discuss this difficult moment. How would they describe it? What considerations do they think these parents weighed before sending their children into the unknown? Under what circumstances would such a decision be made? What are the risks involved in this decision? What are the consequences? How did it feel to watch these images?

Journal Focus: Emigration

Elisabeth Kaufmann was a talented artist as well as a writer. Reproducible 17 is a drawing that comes from Elisabeth’s sketchbook during this period. The title of the drawing is “People Fleeing Paris” and it is dated somewhere between 1940 - 1941. Make copies of this Reproducible for each student. Below the drawing, invite students to look closely at the

details of Elisabeth's sketch and reflect upon what they have learned thus far from the film and diaries about the experience of separation these young writers endured during the Holocaust. What details do students see in this drawing that speak to the idea of separation? What part of the drawing stands out to them? Why? What images from the film or passages from the diaries echo these ideas? If they were to give this drawing a second title, what title would they choose?

Extension Readings

Facing History and Ourselves has many classroom resources examining the experience of separation during the Holocaust. Its primary resource book, *Holocaust and Human Behavior* has many readings that touch on this theme. Use the following readings to complicate students' understanding of the historical circumstances of the writers from *Holocaust and Human Behavior: Facing History and Ourselves*

- On *Emigration*, Chapter 6, Reading 5, "The Night of the Pogrom"
- On *Hiding*, Chapter 7, Reading 12, "In Hiding"
- On *Ghetto Life*, Chapter 6, Reading 17, "Return to the Ghettos"

Another relevant resource that speaks to the experience of separation is *The Children of Willesden Lane*. This memoir details the experience of one young girl who survived the Holocaust due to the organization of the *Kindertransport*, the rescue effort that shepherded upwards of 10,000 children from Germany and Austria to Great Britain from 1939 - 1940.

CONNECTIONS

- How has your understanding of the impact and consequences of separation during a time of war changed as a result of viewing the film or reading the diaries? Which diarist's experience impacted your understanding of this theme the most?
- Compare the diary of Klaus Langer with Peter Feigl. Both young men were separated from their parents because of the Holocaust, but under different circumstances. What were the different reasons which forced this separation and did these differences impact their overall experience?
- What current events or crisis area illustrates another experience of separation from family and community due to war? What role do nations play in supporting or exacerbating these situations?

REPRODUCIBLE 17



Drawing entitled "People Fleeing Paris" from a sketchbook created by Elisabeth Kaufmann while she was in exile in France. 1940 - 1941

Historical Lens: Moral Complexity in a Time of Crisis

Every day during the Holocaust these young writers struggled to survive. Whether circumstances led them to flee their native countries as refugees, to hide or pass as non-Jews, or to live sequestered in a ghetto, each one was forced to adapt to circumstances where a moral norm of behavior was absent and everyday choices were no longer available. Time and time again, these young writers describe the struggle between the impulse to survive and the moral compromises that such survival often required.

Essential Questions

These questions can serve to frame a unit of study on this theme and assist students as they explore the diary entries.

- **How did the Holocaust change the norm of making choices?**
- **What do we learn from these diaries about the moral dilemmas people faced during the Holocaust?**
- **How does this knowledge influence the way we think about our choices today?**

The diaries reveal the range and scope of these internal moral struggles and allow us, as readers, to enter into the very private lives of these writers. As you review the personal struggles of the diarists with students, it is important to be explicit about their perspective as victims who had endured years of Nazi policy and persecution. Their writing comes out of a time of atrocity and extreme deprivation. They no longer had the choice to freely attend school, go to work daily or decide what to eat. Rather, if living in a ghetto, the “choices” became attending an underground and illegal school, obtaining a work permit (often illegally and at great expense) to gain employment, or succumbing to extreme hunger and stealing food at grave risk to yourself and your family just to survive one more day. These daily dehumanizing conditions and choices engendered the voice and perspective of these writers and reveal insights not commonly found except under such conditions.

It may be helpful to introduce new language to understand the complex landscape of moral choices during this period. Holocaust scholar Lawrence Langer coined the phrase “choiceless choices” to refer to the behavior of camp inmates during the Holocaust. Langer explains that because of extreme deprivation and dehumanizing conditions, the normal landscape of choices and decisions, must be examined differently. He argues the behavior in the camps “cannot be viewed through the same lens we used to view normal human behavior since the rules of law and morality and the choices available for human decisions were not permitted in these camps for extermination. As important as it is to point out situations of dignity and morality which reinforce our notions of normal behavior, it is all the more important here to try to convey the ‘unimaginable,’ where surviving in extremity meant an existence that had no relation to our system of time and space and where physical survival under these conditions resulted in ‘choice-less choices!’”¹⁰ While Langer is directly speaking to the experience of death camp inmates, it is possible to think through and discuss with

¹⁰ Lawrence Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit* (State University of New York Press, 1982), 74.

students the idea of degrees of “choice-less choices” as you move through this section. What does it mean to survive in extremity? What decisions would one encounter under such conditions? How does surviving in a ghetto force individuals to confront “choice-less choices”? Understanding and applying terms like ‘choice-less choices’ can further enable students to frame and examine more critically the idea of moral decision making in the context of the Holocaust.

Film Focus: On Moral Complexity

The diarists included in this section serve to illustrate the internal moral choices and decisions that were faced during the Holocaust. The struggle with morals and decision making was not exclusive to these diarists. Each individual who lived during this period confronted degrees of a “choice-less” choices on a regular basis. Invite students to review the film with the lens of confronting the moral complexity of daily life during the Holocaust. Directly following their viewing, allow students time to reflect in their journals and express thoughts, feelings, or further questions regarding the theme. What individual story stood out to them? What did they learn about their ethical and moral struggles from this film viewing?

Dawid Rubinowicz —Krajno, Poland	(12:43 - 16:48)
Yitskhok Rudashevski —Vilna Ghetto, Lithuania	(16:50 - 23:54)
Ilya Gerber —Kovno Ghetto, Poland	(23:55 - 26:51)
Eva Ginzová —Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia	(29:13 - 32:43)
Anonymous Girl —Łódź Ghetto, Poland	(33:53 - 38:07)
Elsa Binder —Stanisławów, Poland	(42:20 - 44:57)

Diary Entries: On Moral Complexity

The diary entries included in this section serve to further illustrate the daily struggle with moral decision-making. After viewing the film, invite students to explore the selected passages from the diaries. You and your students may choose to read these entries individually, in pairs, in small groups, or aloud in class. Take time with students to discuss each entry in relation to the historical theme. Ask students to identify key language that speaks to the idea of moral complexity. The entries included in this section were excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust*. The page numbers and film tracking numbers are included if you or your students choose to revisit them.

Connection questions at the end of the entries provide an opportunity for reflective writing or further class discussion on the excerpted entries.

Dawid Rubinowicz—Krajno, Poland (book pp. 297 - 298; film: 12:43 - 16:48)

Dawid Rubinowicz’s diary speaks to the daily life and experience of German brutality in his small rural hometown in Poland. His entries capture the choices and dilemmas he faced as the escalation of violence increased against the Jewish community.

February 9, 1942

“[...]While I was eating my dinner, the village constable came and said I’d have to go and shovel snow at the back of the school, so I went right away. On the way I called in at another Jew’s to see if they were going to shovel snow too. Just as I was going there the

German came out with the committee. When I entered the house it couldn't be recognized—they turned the place upside down. Everyone had been beaten up. . . . Father came from Kielce just as the German and the committee entered our house.[. . .] As they were leaving they demanded two chickens and a bottle of vodka for supper. We had to hand them over a chicken and a bottle of vodka. So one day follows another - always expense and fear."

May 6, 1942

"A terrible day! About three o'clock I was awoken by knocking. It was the police already making a raid. I wasn't afraid. After all Father and my cousin were in Krajno and knew what was going on. The other cousins had hidden. . . . Anciel came, saying Father and my cousin had been caught as well. Only then did I start crying. . . .

May 14, 1942

"As Mother was crossing the street, a member of the [Jewish] Council stopped her and gave her a parcel. They said they'd forgotten to hand it to her yesterday. Father is sending his dirty washing, our cousins are as well. The parcel also contained three letters. Father writes that it's very upsetting for him that we don't write any letters and tell him when we send anything, or otherwise keep him informed. Obviously they haven't delivered the letter to him. He writes that I should hide, there'll be more raids; he wants me to put on girl's clothes. . . . He stresses we should sell something and save him, if at all possible. I cried my eyes out after such a sad letter. When I'd calmed down I went across to read my cousins' letter. They write the same as Father, asking to be saved. While reading the letters, I thought to myself, we're here in freedom (such a freedom as I wouldn't wish on a dog; all the same we're better off here than Father there), and perhaps Father is going short of even a piece of bread? Ah, how terrible it is! . . ."

Yitskhok Rudashevski—Vilna Ghetto, Lithuania (book pp. 209, 216 - 217, 219, 223; film: 16:50 - 23:54) Yitskhok Rudashevski's entries focus on his personal struggles within the confines of the ghetto and the choices he faced to maintain his dignity and humanity.

Saturday the 17th [October 1942]

"...I go out into the street - there is a disturbance near a bakery. A woman has snatched a pot from the bakery and has run away. She was pursued and beaten. It aroused a feeling of disgust in me. How terribly sad! People are grabbing morsels from each other's mouths. I am overcome with pity for the hungry woman, how she is being insulted with the dirtiest words, how they beat her. I think: what peculiarly ugly things occur in the ghetto! On one hand, the ugliness of stealing a pot of food, and on the other to strike a woman crudely in the face because she is probably hungry."

Sunday the 18th [October 1942]

"...Toward evening a new sensation. Suddenly one bright day Jewish policemen donned official hats. I walk across the street and here go some of them wearing leather jackets, boots, and green round hats with glossy peaks and Stars of David. [...] I hate them from the bottom of my heart, ghetto Jews in uniforms, and how arrogantly they stride in the boots they have plundered! The entire ghetto is stunned. Everyone feels the same about them and

they have somehow become such strangers to the ghetto. In me they arouse a feeling compounded of ridicule, disgust, and fear.[...]"

Wednesday the 10th of December [1942]

"It dawned on me that today is my birthday. Today I became fifteen years old. You hardly realize how time flies. It, the time, runs ahead unnoticed and presently we realize, as I did today, for example, and discover that days and months go by, that the ghetto is not a painful, squirming moment of a dream that constantly disappears, but is a large swamp in which we lose our days and weeks. Today I became deeply absorbed in the thought. I decided not to trifle my time away in the ghetto on nothing and I feel somehow happy that I can study, read, develop myself, and see that time does not stand still as long as I progress normally with it. In my daily ghetto life it seems to me that I live normally but often I have deep qualms. Surely I could have lived better. Must I day in and day out see the walled-up ghetto gate, must I in my best years see only the one little street, the few stuffy courtyards?

"Still other thoughts buzzed around in my head but I felt two things most strongly: a regret, a sort of gnawing. I wish to shout to time to linger, not to run. I wish to recapture my past year and keep it for later, for the new life. My second feeling today is that of strength and hope. I do not feel the slightest despair. Today I became fifteen years of age and I live confident in the future. I am not conflicted about it, and see before me sun and sun and sun. . . ."

Thursday the 7th [January 1943]

"Today they give the five decagrams of pork on ration cards. I waited in line a short time and at last found myself inside the store. There is so much injustice evident among us Jews in the ghetto, so much that is not right, so much that is disgusting. For instance, in the distribution of meat on the ration cards. People freeze and stand in line. Policemen, privileged persons, walk in freely. During the distribution the butcher throws the piece of meat to the person in line as if he were doing him a favor, exploiting a child, a person who is less vituperative, by giving him the worst. . . ."

"The crowd of frozen women stands in 'line,' hushed, wrathful, devouring the meat table with their eyes. . . ."

Thursday the 18th [March 1943]

"I am busy for hours at a time. It is so hard to accomplish something at school and in the club, and at the same time to be involved with cooking and cleaning. First of all reports sneaked up on us. At school we are now covering the theme of Vilna in geography. I am preparing a report 'On Jew[ish] Printing in Vilna.' For several months now there is no light in the evenings. In the evening we lie around in the workroom, the reading room. I often reflect, this is supposedly the ghetto yet I have such a rich life of intellectual work: I study, I read, I visit club circles. Time runs by so quickly and there is so much to be done, lectures, social gatherings. I often forget that I am in the ghetto."

Ilya Gerber—Kovno Ghetto, Poland (book pp. 336 - 337, 352 - 353, 358 - 359; film 23:55 - 26:51)

Ilya Gerber's diary reveals the privileged position his father held in the ghetto and the favoritism and corruption that accompanied this role. These entries reflect the range of experiences Ilya faced and witnessed given this position.

August 26, 1942

"...it became known that bringing food [into the ghetto] is permitted only until the twenty-sixth of this month. After the twenty-sixth you will not be able to carry into the ghetto even one gram of food. . . .

"What has been taking place in the ghetto in the past few days is hard to describe. People struggled and fought at the ghetto gate; everyone wanted to slip into a better [labor] brigade in order to make a [food] parcel, in order not to starve, to be able to provide for later, for hard times. People struggle at the gate, they shove and curse (nothing unusual in the ghetto); in short things are lively. . . . The gate sentries, the NSKK [the Nazi Motorized Transport Corps], beat people with their whips, slapped them in their faces, socked them in their noses, but the crowd paid them no attention. If one person falls out of the line, bloodied by the German whips, his place is immediately taken. People quarrel and shove, so long as the pulse still beats, so long as the 'I' wants to live. The crowd has only one thing in mind: bread, flour, a few vegetables!! I want to live...!

"And yesterday was the same, only worse. The shoving was horrendous. The square, the gathering place of the workers, was jammed and everyone pushed and shoved. The last day! The twenty-fifth! After that no food will be allowed into the ghetto! And that day, the last day of being able to bring anything home for the family; turned everyone into an animal. Nothing but 'I' existed - 'my children, my wife, they are hungry, they ask for food, I must bring something for them today! That was the motto of the day.'"

November 10, 1942

"Father has obtained a new position in the ghetto. One no one had ever heard of before, and one he never sought -he has become the conductor of the (Jewish) Policeman's Chorus, now being formed. Papa has been appointed director and he must put together a four-voice chorus of about a hundred ghetto policemen. It sounds like a bad dream—the Jews in the ghetto, people condemned to death, no, not so much people as shadows of people, living corpses, future 'daisy pushers'—these are the ones who are to create a chorus in the ghetto? Why? To amuse the embittered public? For whom? For the Germans? Hebrew songs, cantorial laments, Yom Kippur melodies, all for the Germans? Whom are they creating the chorus for -the labor office? . . . For the people whose friends, brothers, sisters, and nearest and dearest have gone to the [Ninth] Fort!?" For whom?"

December 21, 1942

"Among the family names that were called out was mine. . . ."

* The Ninth Fort refers to the site of mass execution in Kaunas, Lithuania where upwards of 50,000 people were murdered including 30,000 Jews and 10,000 foreigners.

"The crowd repeats like an echo, each one individually: 'G-e-e-e-r-b-e-r.'"

“The door closed behind us. The lock made a grating sound. I am in jail! I was surrounded by darkness. Voices echoed through the emptiness. . . . There were quite a few of my friends there. . . .

“The door of the ‘prison’ keeps on opening and closing -new ‘captives’ come in. . . .

“Suddenly a voice is heard: ‘Gerber!’

“Iserlis called me and I went out from the jail to the corridor. I look up and Papa and Khaye [Ilya’s sister]. Salke had informed them at my house that I was confined. So Papa came running right over with my sister. . . . Since he is more or less known to all the functionaries and policemen, getting me out of jail was not too difficult. . . . Papa took his ‘darling boy’ out of jail and transported me home. That was the first time that I was confined behind bars.”

Anonymous Girl—Łódź Ghetto, Poland (book pp. 236 - 238; film: 33:53 - 38:07)
The Anonymous Girl diary speaks to how extreme deprivation impacted any semblance of moral decision-making in the ghetto.

Tuesday, March 10, 1942

“In the morning I want my father to leave as soon as possible. Then I jump from the bed and consume all the bread my mom has left for me the entire day. My God, what has happened to me? I [don’t] know how to restrain myself. Then I starve all day.”

Wednesday, March 11

“Today I had a fight with my father. . . . It happened because yesterday I weighed 20 decagrams of zacierki [noodles] and then sneaked a spoonful. When my father came back he immediately noticed that some zacierki were missing. My father started yelling at me and he was right. . . . I became very upset and cursed my father. What have I done? I regret it so much, but it can’t be undone. My father is not going to forgive me. . . . We would be a happy family, if I didn’t fight with everybody. All the fights are started by me, I would like to be different but I don’t have a strong enough will. There is nobody I can talk to. . . . God, show me what is right.”

Elsa Binder—Stanisławów, Poland (book pp. 325 - 326; film 42:20 - 44:57)
Elsa Binder’s diary reveals the struggles of a young woman exploring her identity while all around her she witnessed death and the destruction of her community.

Stanisławów, May 14, 1942

“They say it is the way it is before the Nile floods. We are tired after the fast, which is coming to an end. Corpses and corpses. Dead and alive. It started in March. All the handicapped on the Aryan side were killed. It was a signal that something ominous was coming. And it was a disaster. . . .

“On April 4 the labor department informed us that commencing next day all people over sixteen had to be registered. According to their job, health, and age they will be placed in the following categories: ‘A,’ ‘B,’ and ‘C.’ ‘C’ was for the handicapped and the old. . . .

“On Sunday morning we all went. Although we knew that youngsters and children are being detained, we didn’t pay any attention to Dora [Elsa’s sister] and entered the office. I saw her trembling feverishly. . . .

“She went first. She was given a ‘C’ category, which was changed into a ‘B,’ so ‘C’ was returned. We saw it with our own eyes. My father said something and they almost took him. And the time came that I can’t even write about. Black despair! What are they going to do with them? Hope. They are taking them to Rudolfsmühle. Hopelessness. Will they select them or not? Four days and four nights passed between despair and hope. We got their letters, which swung from calling for liberation and asking for help to comforting us. ‘Be strong,’ my sister wrote, ‘they won’t shoot us, they will send us to the labor camps.’ And in the margin she added, ‘I am suffering so much. . . .’

“During that period they were selecting others as well. We couldn’t do anything. Forgive us, my sister. Forgive me that I didn’t cheer your short life, that I was nasty and intolerant. I have realized it too late but it is so empty here without you. . . . Forgive us that we couldn’t help you. We did our best. Lucifer didn’t want to buy my soul in return for your freedom. We had to watch you going away. What did you feel when you passed by our house? I was in pain. I deliberately walked away from the window in order not to watch. They say you were surrounded by a pack of dogs and the Gestapo. Who is worse? They say you were sent to work. You have to come back one day. I don’t want our lives to be broken forever. . . .”

Classroom Strategies

Video Focus: Moral Complexity

To reinforce the theme of moral complexity in a time of crisis, return with your students to the section in the film focusing on the Anonymous Girl (33:53 - 38:07) and Elsa Binder (42:20 - 44:57). In journals or in small groups, have students identify the moral issues these two young women faced. How did the visual imagery in the film impact their understanding of this theme in relation to these writers? How did the visual imagery deepen their overall understanding of the theme of moral complexity in a time of crisis? Did these two diarists face “choice-less” choices? Why or why not?

Journal Focus: The Dilemma

Within each diary excerpt included in this section, one perspective of a moral struggle is revealed. Invite students to return to the diary excerpts and engage in a close reading of the material independently or in pairs, taking note of the moral struggles being expressed by the writers. In their journals, ask students to present both sides of the moral issue. What was the issue(s) discussed by the diarist? What were the factors that influenced the diarist’s decision and what were the factors to consider for the other option? Do any of the moral issues from the entries relate to the idea of Langer’s “choice-less” choices discussed earlier in this section?

Extension Reading

Facing History and Ourselves has many classroom resources dedicated to the theme of moral decision-making. Two of its resource books, *Holocaust and Human Behavior* and *The Jews of Poland*, have many readings that touch on the theme of moral decision-making. Use the

following two readings to complicate students' understanding of the historical circumstances of the writers:

- From *The Jews of Poland*, Chapter 5, Reading 2, "Hunger."
- From *Holocaust and Human Behavior*, Chapter 6, Reading 6, "Taking a Stand."

CONNECTIONS

- Compare the different moral issues that are expressed in the Dawid Rubinowicz, Ilya Gerber, Yitskhok Rudashevski, and Anonymous Girl diary entries. Are similar dilemmas shared between the four diarists? Are there different moral issues being recorded?
- Which diarist(s) experience impacted your understanding of the theme of moral complexity in time of crisis?
- What are the factors that influence or impact your moral decision-making today? How are they different from the factors that shaped the decisions of the diarists?
- Actor Zach Braff appears in the middle of the film with the following provocative passage relating to the theme of moral decision-making today.

"Why didn't more people speak out about the terrible things that were happening in Europe? Well, most Americans didn't know much about what was going on. There was no internet, no TV, and little information in the news and on the radio.

Also, America had its own problems. The Great Depression was over and people were finally beginning to lead normal lives again.

Many of us today might be just as reluctant to risk our comfort-let alone our lives—to help people whose problems seem to have nothing to do with us.

But there are always consequences for silence and indifference. These diaries show us what those consequences were.

What would you have done? What do you do today?"

What are the moral choices that Zach Braff presents in this passage? How would you answer his questions? How are the choices he poses different than the choices examined in this guide? In the film we hear the moral dilemmas of people who are victimized, but in the passage above the position of power is quite different. Who has the power in the above passage and how does power impact the capacity to make moral choices?

FINAL PROJECTS

The projects listed below are examples of concluding assignments that can be used to assess learning of the content of the book and film and to evaluate critical thinking skills.

1. Perspective and Scope: Reading Our Lives Today

Through examining the film *I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust* and the book *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, students have explored the power of the written word. As Alexandra Zapruder expressed at the close of

her letter in this guide, these diarists “wrote themselves into existence when the world was trying to erase their presence.”

For students to recognize the power of their written work, ask them to choose an event in our recent history. Instead of detailing the event itself, ask students to frame their reflection as a diary entry. They may choose which “world” to mirror—the internal/reflective, immediate/reporting, or external/chronicling model—or create an entry from another perspective and identify it with an appropriate organizing principle or categorization. Inform students that they will be sharing their entry with a partner as well as assembling them together in a literary anthology or creative writing magazine.

2. Salvaged Pages: Four Voices

There are four diarists in the book *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust* that were not included in the film. They are Moshe Flinker from Brussels, Belgium; Otto Wolf from Olomouc, Czechoslovakia; Anonymous Boy from Łódź Ghetto; and Alice Ehrmann from the Terezín Ghetto. These four voices should not be overlooked, as they continue to enrich our understanding of the Holocaust through the evidence of their diaries.

Ask students to choose one of the diarists not included in the film and spend some time engaged in a close reading of the entirety of his or her diary. Instruct students write an essay, identifying entries that could fit into either of the historical themes explored in the guide and be able to explain how and why these entries were chosen. Please contact Facing History and Ourselves to borrow a class set of *Salvaged Pages* to complete this exercise.

3. Challenging Injustice Tribute

In the film *Anne Frank Remembered*^{*}, Nelson Mandela stated, “During the many years my comrades and I spent in prison we derived inspiration, courage and tenacity from those who challenged injustice even under the most difficult circumstances. Some of us read Anne Frank’s diary on Robben Island and derived much encouragement from it.”

First, brainstorm as a class what it might look like to challenge injustice. What are the personal qualities they find inspiring and courageous in those who challenge injustice? Do any of the diarists from the film or book exhibit any of these qualities? Which diarists? From the list of qualities, ask students to identify and research individuals who they believe exemplify these qualities.

Once the research is complete, students can work individually or in pairs to create a tribute to the diarists chosen. A tribute is a declaration of gratitude, respect, and admiration. The Challenging Injustice Tribute can be a creative writing piece or a two or three-dimensional piece of art. Explain to students that their tribute will be displayed in a gallery within the class so each submission should be accompanied by a title and explanation of the piece created.

^{*} *Anne Frank Remembered*— See page 17 in the guide for annotated reference.