

LIGHT ONE CANDLE

A Child's Diary of the Holocaust



Study Guide

Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre

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Frieda Miller

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Cover Photo: Orphans at Play in The Kovno Ghetto. George Kadish.

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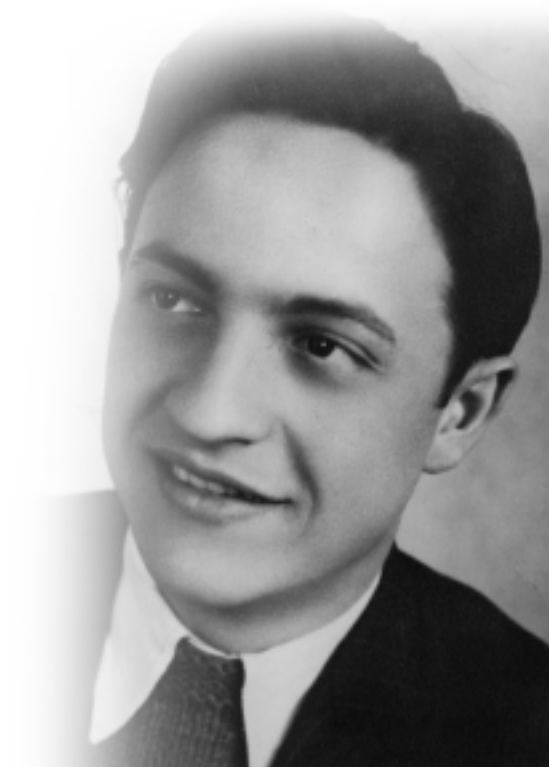
Introduction

The Exhibit

Light One Candle: A Child's Diary of the Holocaust is an exhibit based on the lost secret diary of a young boy, Solly Ganor who survived internment in the Kovno ghetto, the slave labour camp of Landsberg-Kaufering and the Dachau death march. He was witness to Nazi massacres, mobile killing units and the complicity of Lithuanian collaborators. Solly Ganor is a compelling writer whose words capture a world of dislocation, oppression, fear and renewal.

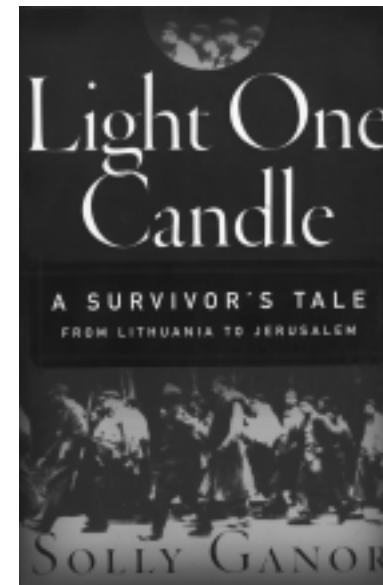
Solly Ganor's story is interwoven with the remarkable rescue efforts of the Japanese Consul to Lithuania, Chiune Sugihara and the liberation of the death march from Dachau concentration camp by Private Clarence Matsumura and other members of the Japanese American 522nd Field Artillery Battalion. These encounters with Sugihara and Matsumura, frame Solly Ganor's Holocaust experiences with heroism and hope.

The exhibit features the photographs of George Kadish, a Jewish photographer who compiled one of the most significant photographic records of ghetto life during the Holocaust. At great personal risk, Kadish fashioned a buttonhole camera, developed film in secret and buried his collection of photographs in the Kovno ghetto. Vowing that the camera would be his revenge, Kadish left a visual legacy, which reflects the harsh conditions of the ghetto and the inherent dignity of its inhabitants.



Solly Ganor After the War. Solly Ganor Collection.

The Study Guide



It took thirty years for Solly Ganor to recreate his lost childhood diary and publish his memoir *Light One Candle*, which has received international recognition and praise especially in the United States, Germany and Japan. Nobel Laureate, Elie Wiesel has compared Solly Ganor's work to that of Primo Levi.

The Study Guide presents excerpts from Solly Ganor's writings as a way for students to learn not only about the events of the Holocaust but to appreciate its human toll and emotional impact. Solly Ganor's account is organized chronologically and thematically from his early childhood through to liberation. For each chapter of Solly Ganor's story, the Study Guide offers discussion questions and suggestions for multi-disciplinary classroom activities, with opportunities for individual study and small group work.

Before a class visit to the exhibit, teachers may wish to assign students selected readings from Solly Ganor's story. Teachers are advised to read Solly Ganor's account in the Study Guide before distributing it to students. They may find that some of the material, in particular the chapter *Massacre at Kazys' Farm* may not be suitable for younger students.

To support Solly Ganor's personal eyewitness account and to extend students' understanding of some of the events and people around him, the Study Guide offers additional student readings on the topics of Kovno & the Ghetto, Chiune Sugihara, and the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion.

A final section of the Study Guide is devoted to the biography of George Kadish, whose remarkable photographs offer a visual counterpoint to Solly Ganor's experiences in the Kovno ghetto. The classroom activities & questions, which accompany this section, may be of special interest to photography students as well as history and social studies students.

Solly Ganor: In His Own Words

Early Childhood in Kovno

Solly Ganor (Zalke Genkind) was born on May 18, 1928 in Heydekrug, a small German-speaking town, near the East Prussian border. His father Chaim Genkind was from Minsk, in White Russia, Belarus and his mother Rebecca Genkind-Shtrom, came from a family that traced its origin in Lithuania to 1756. Solly was the youngest of three children. His sister Fanny was fourteen years older than him and his brother Herman was seven years older.

In 1933, when I was five years old, Hitler came to power in Germany and my parents decided to leave the predominantly ethnic German population of Heydekrug where I was born. We moved to Kovno, Lithuania, which caused a great upheaval in my life. Kovno was a lovely city of nearly 120,000 people. More than thirty thousand Jews lived and prospered in the town, my family among them. My mother's family was huge. My grandparents, two great uncles and their wives, five sets of aunts and uncles, and more cousins than I could count all lived in Kovno.

Kovno was one of the few places in Europe where the Jews were able to live nearly autonomously, and they built a strong community. Its Yeshivas [Jewish religious schools] attracted students from all over Europe. Its professionals and scholars and merchants played an important role in the town's economy. Its cultural life was diverse and sophisticated. There were four Hebrew high schools and one in Yiddish in Kovno. Several Yiddish newspapers and a Yiddish theater, were part of the Jewish culture. Most of the Jews of Kovno were Zionists. I remember my childhood as a very happy one.

Solly's Diary

On Solly's eleventh birthday, his brother Herman gave him a diary as a present. It was a handsome book with the word "diary" embossed in gold on the cover. "You are the writer in this family," he said. "Write down the events to come. Some day it may be an important document." He smiled when he said it, but his eyes were very serious. His words were prophetic.

Meeting Chiune Sugihara

At Hanukah (the Jewish Festival of Lights) in 1939, I met someone that had a profound influence on my life to this day. His name was Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese Consul in Kovno.

I met him quite accidentally at my Aunt Anushka's gourmet shop and he gave me some Hanukah money. He smiled when he gave me the money and told me that he would be my Japanese uncle. There was humor and kindness in those strange eyes, and I immediately warmed to him. "You should come to our Hanukah party on Saturday," I blurted out. "The whole family will be there. Seeing as how you are my



Chiune Sugihara. Sugihara Family Photographs.

uncle," I added.

That Saturday, Chiune Sugihara and his wife Yukiko came to our home to attend our party. It was at the party that Mr. Rosenblat, the Polish refugee who lived at our house, approached Mr. Sugihara out of desperation and asked him to grant him a visa. Mr. Sugihara was puzzled by this request. Why would a Jewish person wish to go Japan, knowing that the Japanese were allied with the Nazis?

At this party, the Sugiharas met many of my uncles and aunts and through them other Jewish families. When Mr. Sugihara heard that I was collecting stamps, he invited me to come to the consulate. I would go to the Japanese consulate quite often, to collect stamps and get some tea and Japanese cookies from his wife, Yukiko. I would play with their older son, Hiroki, even though he was much younger than I.

That was the beginning of a strange friendship between an eleven-year-old boy and his Excellency, the Consul of Japan. It was eight months later, in July 1940 that we found out what a great humanitarian I had befriended, when he began issuing visas to Jewish refugees from Poland against his government's orders. I remember Jewish crowds besieging the consulate, where Chiune Sugihara sat and wrote visas from early morning till late at night, with barely a break for food. In August 1940, he left by train for Berlin, for his new post. A crowd of Jewish refugees came to the station and with tears in their eyes, bid him farewell. "We will never forget you, Chiune Sugihara," they shouted, and I shouted these words with them. Sugihara was like a lighthouse in the sea of darkness that surrounded us during those days in Lithuania.

The Ganors were among the first to receive Sugihara's visas, but as Lithuanian citizens, were unable use them. When the Soviets occupied Lithuania, the Ganors' Lithuanian passports became invalid and they were trapped in Kovno.

German Occupation

The Nazis invaded Lithuania on June 25, 1941. As the Soviet forces withdrew, gangs of Lithuanians began an assault on the Jewish population.

Over breakfast Father held a family conference. We all agreed that it was too dangerous to remain in Kovno. As frightening as the Russian police were, the Nazis were scarier. And no one had much confidence in the Soviet forces. We had heard plenty about the German blitzkrieg, and had seen the Russian army for ourselves. In Kovno, the Soviets' lumbering pre-war tanks had been dubbed 'tanks of fifty.' It took one man to steer, we joked, and forty-nine to push.

It was decided. We would make a run for the Russian border. The Soviets had long since confiscated all private automobiles, so we would have to find transportation, but even if we ended up in Siberia, it would surely be better than life under the Nazis. Father and Herman went down the street to speak to Uncle Itzhak. They returned with grim news. The Russian army was evacuating the town at full speed, and jamming the outgoing

trains. Even if we managed to get on, the Germans were bombing the tracks, and the chances of getting through were slim. There was no other public transport. We would have to reach the border on foot.

There was even worse news—a new threat from an unexpected quarter. Even with huge numbers of Soviet troops still in Kovno, gangs of Lithuanians armed with rifles and revolvers were roaming the streets. They called themselves ‘Siauliai,’ or ‘Patriots,’ and although they occasionally fought the Russians, for the most part they were robbing and beating up Jews. Our neighbors had turned against us, and the Germans hadn’t even arrived.

With this urgency upon us, we had a last, strange family meal at home. Mother behaved very oddly, insisting upon her best china. She moved stiffly about the room, setting the table and switching on the crystal chandelier. The Rosenthal dishes gleamed under its sparkling lights. Father stopped his protests when he saw my mother’s chin tucked in, a sure sign that nothing he said would move her. What was she thinking? We sat around the big mahogany table in silence, surrounded by the heavy blue drapes, the family pictures and paintings, the knickknacks and embroidered pillows – all the secure, familiar things that were part of our lives. It all felt eerily unreal to me, and sad, like the last meal of the condemned. Mother even served wine.

I remember going to my room to take a last look at all I was leaving, and slipping my beloved copy of *The Mysterious Island* by Jules Vern into my knapsack.

Several thousand Jews tried to flee Lithuania by crossing the border to the Soviet Union. Many were killed in their attempt to escape. The Ganors were among those who tried to get to the Russian border by foot. While trying to escape, the Ganor family witnessed a horrific mass murder. Solly recalls, *I closed my eyes and covered my ears, but the terrified screams of the victims, especially those of the children, still haunt my nightmares.*



German Invasion of Kovno, June 22 – 25, 1941. George Kadish.

Massacre at Kazys' Farm

Recommended for senior high school students. Not suitable for young readers.

While trying to escape Lithuania, the Ganor family witnessed a horrific massacre, which Solly recounts here:

A group of Lithuanian men handed some spades to four Jewish men and told them to dig their graves. One of them, an elderly man with glasses, froze in terror. A German soldier went up and put the gun to the man’s chest. “Pick up that shovel and start digging,” he said coldly. When the man did not respond, the soldier shot him. The force of the bullet at such close range spun him around. His wife let out a terrible wail and threw herself on his body. Their five children stood around them, gaping in disbelief. It happened so fast. My mother was so shocked that she cried out loud. Luckily the condemned Jews cried out at the same time so no one heard her. She struggled to rise, but my brother Herman forced her down.

The remaining three Jewish men hastily began to dig while the Lithuanian men passed around a bottle of vodka and jeered at the Jews. “Well, you lazy Jews, you are finally doing an honest day’s work. Too bad it will be your last!” The two Germans stood aside and smoked, quite aloof. When they were satisfied that the grave was large enough, they told the Jews to undress. Realizing that their last hour had arrived some began to cry, some begged for mercy, some prayed. The taller German shot one of the diggers, and the rest hastily removed their clothes. We were witnessing the ultimate distress of people who are about to die a violent and shameful death.

When they were down to their underwear, the German told them to line up in front of the pit, but the Lithuanians wanted them to strip, especially the women. “No. They will stay in their underwear,” the tall German said “I know what I’m doing. It is psychologically undesirable for the men to see the Jews naked, especially the children. Many good men simply lose their nerve. Better to leave these untermenschen (sub-humans) in their ridiculous underwear.”

I will never forget the German’s little lecture. He had enunciated clearly, as if giving a speech, and I heard every word. It gave me my first insight into the Nazi killing machine. Then the Lithuanian men began shooting. I closed my eyes and covered my ears, but the terrified screams of the victims, especially those of the children, still haunt my nightmares. I was about to bolt, but Herman held me down, hissing in my ear not to make a sound. My mother fainted.

Afterwards, they dragged the trembling farmer Kazys from his house and told him to cover the mass grave with earth. “Next time you try to hide Jews we’ll bury you with them. Understand?” The massacre of these people at such close range, where we could see, hear, and smell every minute of it, went through me like a branding iron. I was a normal thirteen-year-old boy brought up in a sheltered environment, and suddenly I was plunged into a world where anyone could hunt me down and kill me.

Kovno Ghetto

In July 1941, the Nazis established the Kovno ghetto, where the Ganor family was imprisoned for three

years. Solly continued to write diary entries during his this three-year internment in the ghetto.

Our flat in the ghetto had a bedroom and a living room. There was no kitchen, no bathroom or toilet, no running water. In the corner of the living room stood a small wood-burning stove for cooking. The water had to be brought from an artesian well down the block, and the toilet was an outhouse, used by all the neighbors.

Father brought a list of our weekly rations and our hearts sank. How were we to survive? Each person would receive, per week, about 700 grams of bread, 125 grams of horsemeat, 122 grams of flour, 75 grams of coffee substitute, and 50 grams of salt. From time to time we would get a few kilos of potatoes. These were starvation rations, pure and simple, and unless we found other sources of food we could not survive. Hunger was the problem we faced every day. There was only one thing that could temporarily make me forget my hunger, and that was a good book.

I decided to go to work and bring additional rations. It was backbreaking work. The fields were badly overgrown with weeds, and we had to kneel among the rows of carrots and cabbage the whole day, digging out the weeds with our bare hands. There were about thirty of us, mostly around my age, some younger. We were warned not to steal anything. If we were caught with a single carrot in our pockets, we could be shot.

December of 1941 brought one of the worst winters we ever experienced. It became so cold that lying fully clothed under the blankets didn't do any good. I lay shivering the whole night, unable to warm up. We came back from work so frozen that it took hours of massaging our hands and feet to get the blood circulating again. Many suffered terrible frostbite. Some lost whole limbs. One night I dressed as warmly as I could and went out hunting for wood. I decided that I'd rather be shot than freeze to death.



Street in Kovno Ghetto. George Kadish.

The Great Action – At The Ninth Fort

On October 29, 1941 more than 9,200 Jewish men, women and children, Solly's brother, (Zvi) Herman among them, were murdered at the Ninth Fort. This mass murder was known as the 'Great Action.'

My family and I were among the thirty thousand to be selected for 'The Big Selection.' I was thirteen years old at the time and I remember it as if it happened today. It was a cold morning. A few hours passed and nothing happened. We were cold and our feet began to ache. All around us we could hear babies cry, and children begged their parents for food. Here and there old people began to collapse and fell to the ground while their families were trying to lift them up.

Around nine in the morning we suddenly heard a strange sound. It reminded me of the wind moving through tops of trees in a forest. It was the sound that escaped from thousands of mouths when they saw the German and Lithuanian battalions surround the Demokratu place. They were armed with machine guns and they looked grim. Many of them seemed drunk. Then two figures resplendent in new uniforms and shiny black boots approached us. They were the ghetto Commandant Jordan and the Gestapo man, Rauca. These two were to decide our fate.

Rauca placed himself in front of our column. As we were filing past him he began to send the elderly, the ill, women with small children and some of the boys my age, to the right side. Families were torn apart, the young and the healthy to the left while their elderly parents or small children were sent to the right. The heart rending cries of the separated family members filled the air, while those who tried to reunite would be knocked down with rifle butts by the Lithuanian guards. It immediately became obvious who were going to live and who were going to die.

My heart began to beat wildly. Suddenly I felt awfully small. Red face, pale blue eyes, his right arm extended as if he were conducting an orchestra, Rauca stood before us. The executioner! My heart stopped beating. I was drowning in fright. Like in a trance, I moved with my family, with Fanny holding on to me with all her strength. My family and I were among the lucky ones to escape death that day, but many of my relatives, friends and teachers were not so lucky. Among them was my childhood sweetheart, Lena Greenblat. I was barely thirteen when I saw them being led up the road to the Ninth Fort, a gray mass of people walking to their doom. We heard the faint echo of the machine guns firing, as they were shot. My friend Cooky Kopelman was among the few who managed to escape from the fort. It was undoubtedly the worst day in my life and I will never forget it till my dying day. Some times I still have nightmares about that day.

Book Confiscation – Kaddish for my Teacher

On February 18, 1942, the Germans ordered all books in the Kovno ghetto to be turned over to the authorities. Anyone caught with books after the deadline would be executed.

The people of the book, as we Jews had been known throughout the ages, were to be separated from our ancient companions. Nearly everyone complied with the order and began delivering their precious books to the assembly point. My mother had tears in her eyes as she helped me load her beloved books by Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Turgenyev and Pushkin onto my homemade sled. My mother had never quite recovered from my brother Herman's death and reading was her only escape.



I never took the books to the assembly point. My friend Cooky and I found an old abandoned house at the outskirts of the ghetto, which was off limits. We hid the books. I became obsessed.

I wanted more books for our library. We worked as volunteers at the assembly point for three days and managed to steal about five hundred books. It was a risky business, but life wasn't worth living without books. By the time we were finished, we had about a thousand books, in Yiddish, Hebrew, Lithuanian, Russian, French, German and English. We were only fourteen years old, but we were avid readers and read a book a day. Some of the books were hard to understand, but we soon got used to the classics. I think that I got my education from these books. For a while we managed to keep our library a secret, but soon it somehow got out and boys came to us to borrow or exchange books.

One day, our teacher, Mr. Edelstein asked us if we could get him some mathematics textbooks. He secretly taught us mathematics and other subjects, which were strictly forbidden by the Germans. Mr. Edelstein was a kind man whom everyone liked. He was rather shy and always smiled. Like many single men in the ghetto, he had 'adopted' a family that had no working male at its head. He was especially fond of the family's eight-year-old twins and would often trade clothing for food for them, with the Lithuanian guards.

The next day I smuggled in the geometry book and gave it to him. He was so delighted that he gave me a big hug. That afternoon after school, I passed him at the gate, where I heard the Lithuanian guard shout. "What have you got hidden there, Jew boy. A book? I can shoot you for

that!" An SS officer demanded to know where Mr. Edelstein had gotten that book. "Where did you get this book? Tell me or I will kill you!"

I stood frozen in horror as they began beating my teacher. With that I found my feet and started running. I heard a shot and looked back to see Mr. Edelstein fall to his knees. Violent deaths were such a common occurrence in the ghetto that little attention was paid to Mr. Edelstein's.

He was buried in the ghetto cemetery, but funerals and all religious practices were forbidden. Only the twins, who saw in him a father, cried bitterly. Who would provide for them now? I just stood there stunned, unable to utter a sound; I felt that his death was my fault. Cooky suggested that we say Kaddish (the Jewish prayer for the dead) for Mr. Edelstein. "He did get killed because of our book." The next day we said Kaddish for Mr. Edelstein at his unmarked grave. Strangely enough, I felt better for it.

The Children's Action

Thirteen hundred Jewish children, most under the age of 12, were taken to the Ninth Fort and murdered on March 27-28, 1944, in what was referred to as the "Children's Action."

That day, the Germans decided to 'eliminate,' as they called it, all Jewish children and the elderly people. Mothers who wouldn't let go of their children were attacked by snarling Dobermans until they fell. Some were shot; others were thrown into the truck with their babies. The old and sick who couldn't move fast enough ended up crawling under a hail of kicks and blows, and were attacked by the dogs when they collapsed. The din was horrible – barking, curses, shrieks. I thought I would lose my mind. The dark opening at the back of the truck was like the maw of some prehistoric monster swallowing human sacrifices.

The scenes I witnessed that day overshadowed all other atrocities I had witnessed. It was the epitome of sheer brutality and meanness to babies, little children, and the elderly. Of all the atrocities I witnessed during the years of the Holocaust, none affected me as the 'Children's Action.'



Children with Jewish Stars. George Kadish.

Kovno Ghetto Liquidation

On July 8, 1944, the Nazis began the six-day liquidation of the Kovno ghetto. About 4,000 Kovno Jews were taken as slave laborers to concentration camps in Germany. Solly's mother Rebecca and his sister Fanny were sent to the Stutthof concentration camp near Danzig, where Solly's mother died of typhoid fever. Later, Fanny was amongst a group of women, who were put on a ship to be drowned in the Baltic Sea. Fortunately, she managed to survive. Solly and his father were deported to Lager X (Camp 10), a satellite camp of Dachau concentration camp. Before his deportation, Solly was forced to dispose of his long-held diary in a latrine. The risk of being caught with it was too great.

Dachau: Landsberg-Kaufering Concentration Camps

In July 1944, the Nazis transported us halfway across Europe to Bavaria. There, near the medieval town of Landsberg and its surroundings, Hitler decided in the last phases of the war to build gigantic underground factories where the jet fighter Messerschmidt ME262 was to be built. This was Hitler's promised secret weapon that would sweep the American and British planes out of the German skies.

There were, in all, eleven outer camps of Dachau, where in nine months more than fifteen thousand Jewish slaves, out of a total of thirty thousand, died of starvation, hard labor and beatings by the German supervisors and the SS guards. I was in an outer camp of Dachau, known as Lager X (Camp 10), near Utting, a picturesque little town. We, the half-starved Jews of Lithuania, Poland, and Hungary, were to build these gigantic factories, and perish while building it.

The Nazis coined a phrase for us: 'Vernichtung durch Arbeit'—'Annihilation through Work.' In fact, they starved us and made us work twelve hours a day at hard labor, condemning us to a slow agonizing death.

Jews from Lithuania, Poland, and Hungary were put to work building gigantic underground factories designed to produce the jet fighter Messerschmidt ME26 for the German war effort. The construction site was called 'Moll,' named after the owner of the construction company, Leonard 'Moll.' I will never forget the day when I first laid eyes on it at the end of 1944. We knew that the Germans were building some kind of underground factory. We had heard terrible stories about it. We traveled for what seemed like an hour along a tree-lined dirt road. Darkness had fallen, and in the distance we could hear the low grinding roar of heavy machinery. The din increased just before we emerged into a huge clearing, lit by the glare of floodlights. The road dropped into a vast excavation, and from it rose an enormous concrete vault, bristling with vertical reinforcing rods so that it looked like some monstrous hedgehog. Narrow railroad tracks curved towards the opening.

The installation was a half-cylinder of concrete, 1,300 feet long and spanning more than 275 feet at the base. It rose some 95 feet into the air at the top of the arch. Under the glaring lights, cranes and bulldozers moved into and around its mouth. Scores of tractors, trucks, and other heavy equipment created an ear-shattering roar. Along the sides, scores of prisoners stood on platforms handling huge flexible hoses that spewed wet

cement into the spiked grid work, while others moved about with shovels and buckets. Everywhere we looked we saw what looked like thousands of men in striped uniforms moving about the compound, carrying lumber, iron rods and sacks of cement.

It was like an enormous, evil hive. Even as we watched, we heard inhuman screams coming from above. The men who were maneuvering the huge hose had lost their grip, and the pipe began writhing about, spewing concrete in all directions. The men desperately tried to seize it, but it whipped and flailed and knocked several men off their feet. One after another they fell screaming onto the spikes, while the hose poured hundreds of pounds of concrete on top of them.

The men I saw fall into the concrete are still entombed in its massive construction to this day. I personally knew one of the men entombed. His name was Zelig and he was from a small town in Lithuania. He was one of the 'human horses' whose job it was to pull a food cart from the village of Utting to a German worker's kitchen. I too was a horse, one of four teenage boys who were given that job.

At that stage of the war, gasoline was a very precious commodity so Jewish slaves were used as 'horses'. Make no mistake, being a 'horse' was a coveted job in the camp, the alternative was to carry hundred pounds of cement or iron rails on your back. The other advantage to being a 'horse' was that the cart we were pulling was filled with food for the kitchen, and we always managed to scrounge a crust of bread or a bowl of soup.

Zelig was an ardent Zionist and hoped to go to Israel if he survived the war, but his wish never came true. He fell into the roof of 'Moll' and became entombed with the others. I will never forget his screams as he fell to his horrible death.

Fifty-eight years later, I returned to the 'Moll' with some of the other men who had slaved there, to say Kaddish (the Jewish prayer for the dead) for Zelig and the others who perished at the site. I thought of Zelig who, like Moses, never got to see the land of Israel that he loved so much.



Underground Barracks at Landsberg-Kaufering. US Army Photograph.

Premonition

On December 25, 1944, Solly's father awoke weeping. His face was ashen and he kept repeating his wife's name, "Rebecca." Solly tried to calm him and tell him it was just a nightmare. His father shook his head.

"You don't understand. I was there, standing by your mother's bunk. I saw your sister Fanny applying a cold compress to her head. Then I heard Fanny cry out and I knew that she was dead. My life's companion, my sweet Rebecca is no more." He began chanting Kaddish (the Jewish prayer for the dead). By the expression on his face I saw that he actually believed this. My heart filled with sorrow for him. "Don't worry about me, son. No one in the world can take away the wonderful years I spent with your mother, nor, the beauty of her person. I know she is gone, but she will live within me forever."

After the war, I learned that my mother had died of typhoid fever in Stutthof on December 25, 1944. My sister Fanny, who survived the war, was applying cold compresses to her brow when she died. This event remains one of the unexplained mysteries of my life.

Purim in Dachau

One day, Jews from the Lodz ghetto in Poland, who had been deported to Auschwitz, began to arrive in Dachau. They didn't look like people. They looked more like walking skeletons.

In concentration camp slang they were known as 'Muselmann' – people at the last stage before death. They thought that after Auschwitz, our camp looked like paradise, but that was deceptive. Most of them died soon after their arrival, from hard labor, beatings and starvation. Still they preferred to die here than in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. They told us incredible stories of gas chambers and crematoriums, where thousands of people were murdered every day.

By March 1945, there were only a few of them still alive. One of them was known as 'Chaim the Rabbi'. We never found out whether he was actually a rabbi, but he always washed his hands and made a bracha (blessing) before eating. He knew the dates of the Jewish calendar, and also knew all the prayers by heart. From time to time when the Germans were not looking, he would invite us to participate in the evening prayers. Our Jewish camp leader, Burgin, heard about him and tried to get him easier jobs. Most people died when they had to carry a hundred pounds of cement sacks on their backs, or other chores of heavy labor. He wouldn't have lasted a day on a job like this. He once told me that if he would survive he would get married and have at least a dozen children.

Around the middle of March, we were given a day off. It was a Sunday. The camp was covered with snow, but here and there the first signs of spring were in the air. We heard vague rumors of the American breakthrough into Germany and a glimmer of hope was kindled in our hearts. After breakfast, consisting of a slice of moldy bread, a tiny piece of margarine, and brown water, known as 'Ersatz Coffee', we returned to our barrack to get some extra sleep. Suddenly we noticed 'Chaim the Rabbi' standing in the snow and shouting.

On his head he had a paper crown made of a cement sack, and he was draped in a blanket which had cut-out stars from the same paper attached to it.

We stood petrified before this strange apparition, barely able to trust our eyes, while he performed a dance in the snow, singing: "I am Achashwerosch, the king of the Persians." Then he stood still straightened himself out, chin pointed to the sky, his right arm extended in an imperial gesture and shouted: "Haman to the gallows! Haman to the gallows! And when I say Haman to the gallows, we all know which Haman we are talking about!"

We were sure that he had lost his wits, as so many did in these impossible times. By now there were about fifty of us standing gaping at him, when he said: "Fellow Jews, what is the matter with you?! Today is Purim, let us play a Purim Shpil (game)!" Then it dawned on us that this was the time of the year when children dressed up for Purim.

It took the 'Rabbi' to remember the exact date by the Jewish calendar when Purim was. We hardly knew what day it was. He then divided the roles of Queen Ester, Mordechai, Vashti and Haman among the onlookers. I was honored to receive the role of Mordechai, and we all ended up dancing in the snow. And so we had our Purim Shpil in Dachau.

But that was not the end of the story. The 'Rabbi' promised us that we will get today our 'Shalach Manot,' (gifts). And miracle of miracles, the same afternoon, a delegation of the International Red Cross, came to the camp. It was the first time that they had bothered about us. Still, we welcomed them with open arms, because they brought us the gifts the 'Rabbi' promised. Each one of us received a parcel, containing, a tin of sweet condensed milk, a small bar of chocolate, a box of sugar cubes, and a pack of cigarettes. It is impossible to describe our joy! Here we were starving to death and suddenly on Purim, we received these heavenly gifts. Since then, we never doubted the 'Rabbi' anymore.

His prediction also came true. Two months later 'Haman-Hitler' went to the gallows, and shot himself in Berlin, while we, those of us who were still alive, were rescued by the American army, on May 2, 1945. I lost track of the 'Rabbi' on our Death March, from Dachau to Tyrol, but I hope that he survived and had many children as he always wanted. I always remember him when Purim comes around, for the unforgettable 'Purim Shpil' in Dachau.

Death March

At the end of April 1945, the remaining prisoners of Dachau were sent on a death march away from the advancing Allied Forces. Most died from starvation, exhaustion and freezing weather on the picturesque roads of Bavaria. Their bodies lay strewn where they fell and were shot.

Solly Ganor and several hundred survivors of the Dachau death march were liberated on May 2, 1945 by the all-Japanese American 522nd Field Artillery Battalion. The unit consisted of Japanese American soldiers, ironically, many of whom had volunteered for military service from Japanese Internment Camps in the United States.

I was with a group of Jewish prisoners on a death march from Dachau. Finally the order came to stop at a small clump of woods. I found a spot under a tall pine and wrapped myself in my wet blanket. I was alone now, the last of my group. Those who were better, braver and smarter than I had died. The snow continued to fall, covering everything, including me. I fell asleep. During the night I could hear shots. The guards must have been firing at the sleeping prisoners. No one had the strength to try to escape now. I was too exhausted to care.

I awoke with a start. There wasn't a sound anywhere, no shouted orders or barking dogs. A tank appeared, then a jeep. I closed my eyes, waiting for a bullet to put me out of my misery. Then I heard someone speaking English. When I opened my eyes, four men in khaki uniforms were approaching. Their oriental features astonished me. They looked like Sugihara and his family. I stared at them, unable to grasp the situation. Japanese? One of the men came up and knelt in front of me. He gently touched me on the shoulder and said, "You are free, boy. You're free now," he said, and then smiled. Private Clarence Matsumura saved my life simply by getting me hot broth.



Death March from Dachau. USHMM.

Clarence Matsumura & Liberation

Private Clarence Matsumura recalls the liberation of Solly Ganor and other prisoners on the death march by the Japanese American 522nd Field Artillery Battalion.

Toward the end of the war, when we'd finally broken through the Siegfried Line and the Germans were in retreat, three of my buddies and I were driving around in a weapons transport. We were acting as forward observers. The Germans were retreating so fast then that our infantry could hardly keep up. We came to a really peaceful-looking town, called Dachau. I had never heard of it before. Right in the middle of town was what looked like a big factory, with a high fence all around and a big brick smokestack in the middle. Before we ever reached it we noticed the odd smell. You just can't describe it, but you never forget it. The smell of decaying human flesh. There were corpses all piled up everywhere in there. I was very shook up. We didn't know anything about slave labor camps then. We didn't know what the hell was going on.

Then someone told us that the Nazis had marched many of the prisoners out of town. We took off after them. We started finding prisoners wearing black and white striped uniforms, along the roadside. I don't know how any of them could stand on their feet. They were nothing but skin and bones. They couldn't speak. Most of them were lying on the ground, many of them unconscious. We were supposed to be chasing down the SS, but these people were starving. We knew that we had to get them into someplace warm and get them some food. We put them into inns and into barns. We went into the villages and got the Germans out of their houses and brought these prisoners in instead.

The first thing we got them was water. They were starving, but only the strong ones could eat or drink, and many of them had lost their teeth from scurvy. All we could do was clean them up, give them blankets, try to get some broth down them, spoon by spoon. The strange thing was, there were only men there. I don't think I saw any women. But unless you undressed and bathed them you couldn't really tell. They were so emaciated you couldn't tell whether they were men or women.



Private Clarence Matsumura. 522nd Field Artillery Battalion Photographs.

I didn't talk about it with my family or with the other Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans). How could anyone who had not seen it? It's not that easy to talk about. It affected all of us. It took us a long time to get over it. We couldn't understand why people had to do things like that to other human beings.

After The War

After his liberation Solly worked as an interpreter for a US Army intelligence unit that was identifying and prosecuting Nazi collaborators hiding among the Displaced Persons. Solly's father survived the Death March and married a Canadian woman, Ethel Ostry, who was in charge of United Nations Relief Agency (UNNRA) in the Munich area. Solly was supposed to have joined them in Canada. Instead, he joined the Israeli Defense Forces and fought in the War of Independence after the State of Israel was declared on May 15, 1948. Afterwards, he joined the fledgling Israeli Merchant Marine, where he eventually became a captain.



Solly Ganor in Israel's Merchant Marine. Solly Ganor Photographs.

For me as a Holocaust survivor, Israel is not only my country that I love, have fought for, and helped to establish from the very beginning, but the country where six million Jews could have found sanctuary from the Nazi persecutions.

In 1960, he studied English Literature and languages in London. In 1963, he returned to Israel where he married his present wife, Pola. They have two children, Daniel and Leora, and three grandchildren. In 1977, they moved to La Jolla, California. Today, the Ganors divide their time between Israel and the United States .

Reunions

On May 2, 1992 the 47th anniversary of his liberation, Solly was reunited with Clarence Matsumura, the young soldier who had saved his life almost fifty years earlier.

*Our reunion in Jerusalem had almost a miraculous effect on me. When we met face to face, I broke down. I cried for a very long time. I hadn't cried since the day of my liberation in 1945. The catharsis of meeting my liberator was like a second liberation. It changed my life in more than one way. I began to lecture on the subject of the Holocaust, in many countries but, most importantly, in 1995, I finally published *Light One Candle*, a recreation of my lost wartime diary and it has since been translated into many languages.*

In the concentration camps we prisoners often talked about the remote chances of our survival. We made a pact among ourselves that those who survived would tell the truth about what happened. We knew that the world had to be informed. When I survived the war, I knew I was obligated to speak on behalf of the millions of people murdered, and especially the million and a half Jewish children whose voices were silenced. I feel I have finally fulfilled my promise to my perished friends and family to tell their stories. I have finally lit 'One Candle' for them.

In September, 1994, Solly was reunited with Yukiko Sugihara, the widow of Chiune Sugihara in Nagoya, Japan. She clearly recalled the family Hanukah party at the Genkind home in Kovno, 1939. She continues to speak out about the Holocaust and the rescue efforts of her husband, Chiune Sugihara.



Yukiko Sugihara and Hiroki Sugihara Greet Solly Ganor. Sugihara Family Photograph.

Classroom Suggestions: Solly Ganor

Keep a Reflective Journal

Read Solly Ganor's account of his life from early childhood to after the war. Keep a journal of personal reflections while reading his biography and respond to those aspects of his story that you find to be the most compelling or interesting. Reflect on the impact that his story has for you. Alternatively, express your reflections in the form of a letter to Solly. Explain what significance his story has for you. What questions do you have for him?

Dramatic Reading

Read one of Solly Ganor's writings and write a reflective response. Organize a class presentation which interweaves dramatic readings of Solly's writings with students' responses. Project slides of selected Kadish photographs or other relevant photographs to enhance your performance.

Discussion Questions

Historians sometimes use the oral histories as an important source for learning about past events. In your opinion, what is the historical value of a Holocaust survivor's personal account? How does it differ from other historical source materials such as a newspaper article or written report about the events? Whose oral histories do you think should be recorded today and for what reasons?

Classroom Suggestions: Jewish Life in Kovno

Reconstruct a Culture

Before the Holocaust, Kovno was home to one of the most vibrant Jewish communities in the world. The Holocaust resulted in not only a tragic loss of life but also in a terrible cultural loss that saw a community and a unique way of life vanish forever.

Read Solly Ganor's account of his early life in Kovno. Look at the Student Reading, *Kovno & the Ghetto*. Make a list of what was lost by the Jews of Kovno during the Holocaust and sort your list into categories. Consider language, literature, arts, culture, religion, education, science, business, etc. Compare your list with others in the class.



Jewish Orchestra in the Kovno Ghetto. George Kadish.

Classroom Suggestions: Holocaust Diaries

Solly's Diary

The Nazis severely punished people who were found keeping records or writing diaries. Despite this risk, Solly kept his diary in the ghetto but had to dispose of it in a latrine, before being deported to Dachau.

Discussion Questions

- Why do you think Solly kept a diary despite the personal risk?
- Do you think he was writing for himself or for a future audience? Explain.
- What other diaries or memoirs are you familiar with?
- What is the difference between a diary and a memoir? The author of a memoir recalls and writes about past events, while a diarist observes current events and writes without knowing the outcome of the history.
- Solly Ganor's book is an attempt to recapture a lost diary. In your opinion is it more of a diary or a memoir?
- Solly says "I feel I have finally fulfilled my promise to my perished friends and family to tell their stories. I have finally lit 'One Candle' for them." Explain the metaphor that Solly uses and what promise the candle represents. What candle would you choose to light in the world today?

Keep A Diary

Keep your own journal or diary for a week or more, writing daily entries. Is it difficult to discipline yourself to write every day? Why are some days easier to write about than others? How difficult is it to be completely truthful or accurate?

Read Another Diary

Read a diary written by another young person during the Holocaust, such as Anne Frank or Moshe Flinker.

Discussion Questions

- What do you think motivated the author to keep the diary, despite the personal risk? Consider the need to respond to the world around them, to tell the truth, to reflect on one's experiences of the events and to leave a legacy for the future.
- Describe the author's writing style.
- What does their writing style reveal about their character?
- In what ways did the author find refuge or comfort in the act of writing?
- What value do personal observations and spiritual questioning have for readers?
- What do the diaries reveal about the human condition, courage, despair, optimism, spirituality and the will to live?

Classroom Suggestions: Chiune Sugihara

Nominate a Rescuer

The act of rescue was a rare occurrence during the Holocaust. Few non-Jews were in positions to help or willing to accept the risk of helping or hiding Jews during the Holocaust. It is estimated that less than one-half of one percent of those under Nazi occupation helped to rescue Jews. The title Righteous Among the Nations is awarded by Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority in Israel to non-Jews who saved Jews from Nazi persecution at the risk of their own lives.

Read Solly Ganor's account of his relationship with Sugihara and read the Student Reading about Chiune Sugihara. Write a letter from Solly Ganor's point of view to Yad Vashem nominating Sugihara for the award. The letter should provide evidence from Solly's story, be persuasive, historically accurate, and describe the risks to Sugihara, his family and his career.

Discussion Questions

- Chiune Sugihara's wife Yukiko supported her husband's actions, assisted him in processing the visas and bore some of the same risks. Do you think Yukiko Sugihara should have also received the award?
- The motivations of rescuers varied. Some acted on moral, religious or political convictions, and others because they were paid to do so. What do you think motivated Chiune Sugihara to act as he did?
- Consider some of the following characteristics of rescuers identified by Professor Nechama Tec: a high level of individuality, independence, and self-reliance (not a follower, but an independent thinker), a commitment to and involvement in helping others that had preceded the war (compassion), a belief that their help or rescue of Jews was not heroic or extraordinary but merely their duty, often an unplanned act, sometimes impulsive and a universalist world view.

Research Diplomat Rescuers

As a diplomat, Chiune Sugihara was in a unique position to help. Research and compare the actions of another diplomat rescuer. Consider Jan Zwartendijk from the Netherlands, Dr. Feng Shan Ho, of China or Raoul Wallenberg of Sweden. Why do you think it is important to tell the stories of those who chose moral action during the Holocaust?

From Inaction to Action Today

People involved in the Holocaust are often categorized as victims, perpetrators, bystanders or helpers/rescuers. These terms help us to understand moral decision making during the Holocaust or at other times. For instance, some forms of bullying can have terrible, even fatal consequences. In many such cases there are bystanders present who say or do nothing. Research one such incident in your school or community. What could the bystanders have done to prevent the incident? What can students do to move from being a bystander to one who helps in a realistic and safe manner?

Classroom Suggestions: Nazi Occupation

Nazi Collaborators

Read Solly Ganor's account of the German Occupation of Kovno and the Massacre at Kazys' Farm (older students only). Read the Student Reading *Kovno & the Ghetto*.

Nazi Germany conceived and implemented a plan known as the 'Final Solution' to eliminate European Jewry. However, they could not have succeeded to the extent that they did, without the support of sympathizers and collaborators in countries under their occupation. Research the role of Lithuanian collaborators and explain their motivations.

Discussion Questions

- What is a collaborator?
- What did you know about the role of the Lithuanian collaborators before this reading?
- What other national groups collaborated with the Nazis?
- Why do you think so little is known about the role of Nazi collaborators?
- Read the account of Solly's mother's last supper before leaving for the ghetto. Why do you think Solly was so affected by her actions and remembers the occasion so well?
- What do you think her actions communicated to her family?



Jewish Family Moving into the Kovno Ghetto, August 1941. George Kadish.

Classroom Suggestions: Nazi ‘Actions’

Language of Deception

A specialized language developed during the Holocaust, particularly in the ghettos and concentration camps. The Nazis often used language to deceive their victims and to conceal or minimize the scale and nature of their activities. For example, deportations to concentration camps were referred to as a ‘resettlement to the east’. Solly refers to several ‘actions.’

Compare how the word ‘actions’ is commonly used with the Nazi use of the word? Suggest other words to replace the word ‘action’ in the Children’s Action or the Great Action, to more accurately describe the events. Find other examples of specialized words found in Solly Ganor’s account. Consider the following words: liquidation, muselmann and selection. Compile a glossary, which includes the common usage of the words and their Holocaust meanings.



Family Forced to Move into Smaller Quarters After the ‘Big Action’ of October 28, 1941. George Kadish.

Children’s Rights

- Children are often amongst the first victims of wars and natural disasters. They are naturally more vulnerable because of their size and age. However, during the Great Action and the Children’s Action, children were not just accidental victims but intentionally targeted by the Nazis for extermination. Why do you think this was the case?
- What violation of rights did Jewish children experience during the Holocaust?
- Why do you think human rights violations during the Holocaust became a catalyst for the creation of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the 1959 Children’s Human Rights Declaration?
- Compare the fate of children in the Holocaust to that of another twentieth-century genocide.

Classroom Suggestions: Kovno Ghetto

Resistance

- For the Jews of Kovno, the ghetto represented a removal from home and a time of deprivation and fear. What does Solly’s account tell you about the process of ghettoization?
- Why were children particularly vulnerable in the Kovno Ghetto?
- In what ways did they contribute to life in the ghetto and to the resistance?
- What did Solly do to resist his Nazi captors in the ghetto?
- Resistance takes many forms; some are personal acts, others collective. The Kovno ghetto was known for its spiritual, not armed resistance. Consider Solly’s diary and hiding of books and the Jewish Council’s Secret Archives. Why are these referred to as spiritual resistance?
- What factors do you think Jews had to consider before becoming involved in any form of resistance?
- In what way do you think Solly’s acts of resistance helped him to cope with life in the ghetto?

Research Secret Archives

Read the Student Reading, *Kovno & the Ghetto*. The Jewish Council of Elders defied the Nazis by supporting the ghetto’s underground resistance and by creating secret archives to document German crimes. Research their activities. Find one of their documents and explain its significance.



Child laborer in the Kovno Ghetto. George Kadish.

Classroom Suggestions: Dachau Concentration Camp

Slave Labour

There were 30 satellite camps of Dachau, eleven of these sub-camps were known as the Landsberg-Kaufering. Solly was a witness to the workings of Landsberg-Kaufering's Lager X (camp 10).

What does his account tell you about how the camp was organized and for what purpose?

Solly Ganor was one of four teenage boys in Lager X of Dachau, forced to work as a 'human horse,' pulling a food cart from the village of Utting to a kitchen. Why did Solly believe that being a 'horse' was a coveted job in the camp? Only those children who appeared older, stronger and capable of slave labour had any chance of survival. What slave labour did these young people perform?

Solly explains that the primary goal of Dachau, like that of other concentration camps, was 'Annihilation through Work.' Slave laborers had a life expectancy of about four months at Dachau. Research the Dachau Concentration Camp. List and describe the range of slave labour performed by prisoners at Dachau. Create a chart illustrating how Dachau was organized to make efficient and productive use of slave labour.

Resistance

- Read Solly's account of Purim in Dachau and the Student Reading *Kovno & the Ghetto*. Why can this be thought of as an example of spiritual resistance? Compare the actions of the rabbi to other forms of resistance in the Kovno ghetto.
- The Rabbi draws an analogy between the events of Purim in ancient Persia and the Holocaust. He calls for the death of the ancient evil-doer Haman, when he is clearly referring to Hitler. Are the rabbi's actions the antics of a madman or an act of defiance? Explain.
- Given the risk, why do you think Solly and others participated in this re-enactment?
- In what way does the re-enactment of the Purim play reflect a commitment to their faith?

Debate the Value of Spiritual Resistance

Form two groups to debate the question of whether acts of resistance during the Holocaust were futile. Each group supports one of the following positions by developing an opening statement, the body of the argument and a rebuttal of the opposite position.

Position A

Given that resistance in Dachau, Lager X was futile, it would have been better for the rabbi and the other actors in the Purim play to have focused their efforts on conserving their strength on a rare day of rest rather than engage in this act of rebellion. Resting would help save as many lives as possible. The Purim play and the antics puts everyone at risk by drawing the attention of the Nazis and their punishment. Spiritual resistance, is not a true act of resistance in that it does not actively undermine or harm the Nazi regime.

Position B

The goal of Dachau and its satellite camps was 'Annihilation through Work' for its slave laborers. Given that death was a near certainty in Lager X, it was far better to die defiantly. Resistance, even spiritual resistance might inspire resistance in others. Raising prisoners' spirits even briefly is more important than any physical respite. A boost to the prisoners' morale, their sense of dignity and as a commitment to their faith, was worth the risk of punishment or even death.

Genocide

Genocidal policies and practices have not ceased since the end of World War II. Using the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, chart the human rights abuses committed during the genocides of Cambodia (1976-1979), Rwanda (1994) or Bosnia-Herzegovina (1992-1995). By forming small study groups and assigning one of these cases to each group, information can be shared and compared.

Classroom Suggestions: Liberation

Liberation or Discovery

Members of the Allied forces liberated the concentration camps; the Americans at Dachau, the British and Canadians at Bergen-Belsen and the Soviets at Auschwitz-Birkenau, amongst others. However, many suggest that the word 'liberated' should be replaced with the word 'discovered.' Research the military objectives of the Allies. In your opinion, was the liberation of concentration camp victims a primary goal or an accidental discovery? In small groups, develop both sides of the argument, to support or oppose the use of the words 'liberate' and 'discover.' Share these arguments in a classroom debate. Read Clarence Matsumura's account of liberation and use quotes from his narrative as evidence in the debate.

Matsumura & Sugihara

Read Solly's account of meeting Sugihara and of being liberated by Private Clarence Matsumura and other members of the Japanese American 522nd Battalion. Solly's twin encounters with Sugihara and Matsumura seem to bookend his Holocaust experiences. Discuss the parallels between the two men, their characters, their actions and their lasting impact on Solly.

Student Reading: George Kadish

Photographer with a Hidden Camera in the Kovno Ghetto

Photographing daily life in the Kovno Ghetto was an extremely risky venture. The Germans strictly prohibited it, yet George Kadish took every opportunity possible to document life in the ghetto. The result constitutes one of the most significant photographic records of ghetto life during the Holocaust.

George Kadish was born Zvi (Hirsh) Kadushin in Raseiniai, Lithuania, in 1910. After attending the local Hebrew school, he moved with his family to Kovno. At the Aleksotas University, located in one of Kovno's suburbs he studied engineering and joined the rightist Zionist movement, Betar. Before the war, he taught mathematics, science, and electronics at a local Hebrew high school. His hobby, however, would have the most significant impact on his and others' lives. He developed an interest in photography and even began building his own cameras. He designed a hidden camera for use on his trouser belt.



George Kadish. Kadish Collection.

Acquiring and developing film secretly outside the ghetto was as dangerous as using his hidden cameras inside. Kadish worked as an engineer repairing x-ray machines for the German occupation forces outside the ghetto, in the city of Kovno. There, he bartered for film and other photographic supplies. He developed his precious negatives at the German military hospital, using the same chemicals he used to develop x-ray film. He smuggled them out in hollowed-out sets of crutches.

The subjects of Kadish's photographs were varied, but he seemed especially interested in capturing the reality of the ghetto's daily life. In June 1941, witnessing the brutality of the first Nazi 'actions', he photographed the Yiddish word *Nekoma* ("Revenge") found scrawled in blood on the door of a murdered Jew's apartment. Camera in hand, or whenever necessary, placed just so to record subjects through a buttonhole of his overcoat, he photographed Jews in search for smuggled food, humiliated and tormented by Lithuanian and German guards Jews dragging their belongings from one place to another on sleds or carts and Jews concentrated in forced work brigades. Kadish also recorded activities at the ghetto's food gardens and in schools, orphanages, and workshops.

In addition to depicting the severe conditions of ghetto life, he had an artistic eye for portraiture, the desolation of deserted streets, and the intimacy of informal, improvised gatherings. Kadish's last photographs taken inside the ghetto are those recording the deportation of ghetto prisoners to slave labor camps in Estonia. In July 1944, after escaping from the ghetto across the river, he photographed the ghetto's liquidation and burning. Once the Germans fled, he returned to photograph the ghetto in ruins and the small groups who had survived the final days in hiding.

Kadish recognized early on the danger of losing his precious collection. He enlisted the assistance of Yehuda Zupowitz, a high-ranking officer in the ghetto's Jewish police, to help hide his negatives and prints. Zupowitz never revealed his knowledge of Kadish's work or the location of his collection, even during the "Police Action" of March 27, 1944, when Zupowitz was interrogated and tortured at Fort IX prison along with 130 other men in the Jewish Ghetto Police to find out their connections to the ghetto's underground. Kadish retrieved his collection of photographic negatives upon his return to the destroyed ghetto.

After Germany's surrender on May 8, 1945, Kadish left Lithuania for Germany with his extraordinary photographs. As early as August 1945, in Landsberg, Germany (which had by then become part of the American Occupation Zone), Kadish mounted exhibitions of his photographs for survivors residing in the displaced persons camps. Kadish later said that his photographs were his revenge.

Reprinted from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Hidden History of the Kovno Ghetto, page 55.



Kovno Ghetto Deportation to Estonia. George Kadish.

Classroom Suggestions: Kadish Photographs

Photographs Tell Stories

Examine one of Kadish's photographs. Imagine that you did not know who took it and when. What clues can you find in the photograph that might help you determine the date, time of day, time of year and location? Make your predictions based on such clues such as clothing, hairstyles, vegetation, buildings, tools and other objects. Consider the characteristics of the photograph itself such as color. Who are the subjects of the photograph, what are they doing and what is their relationship to the photographer?

Write a caption for the photograph or write a newspaper article about it.

The Camera as a Weapon

- Do you have a camera? How common an activity is taking pictures today?
- How common was it for people to own a camera or to be a photographer in Kovno at the time?
- Kadish took great risks at every stage in the photographic process. Describe each point in the process at which he was at risk. List all the obstacles that he had to overcome. Consider; carrying a camera, taking photographs, finding film, developing film, smuggling film into the ghetto, smuggling negatives & photographs back into the ghetto, hiding them and the camera.
- Kadish buried his negatives and photographs, vowing that his "camera would be his revenge." Do you think he succeeded? Explain.

Subject Matter & Style

- Kadish focused his lens on three major subject areas: individual portraiture, Jewish daily life in the ghetto and the activities of the Lithuanian and German guards. Select three photographs that represent these three subject areas.
- Describe the subject matter of each photograph.
- What makes it commonplace or unusual?
- What is the relationship between the subject(s) and the photographer?
- Describe the style of each photograph. Consider; composition, camera angle, distance from the subject, clarity of focus and contrast of dark and light.
- Compare the three photographs.
- Do you think that Kadish's style was affected by his subject matter? Explain.
- How risky you think it was for Kadish to have taken each picture and why?
- How might the risk have influenced both the subject matter and style of each photograph?
- Make a comparative chart summarizing your findings.

Nazi Photographers

- When historians examine historical photographs for evidence they question who produced them, in what context and for what purpose. Most of the images that we have of the Holocaust were taken by the perpetrators, themselves. Select a Kadish photograph and find a Nazi photograph with similar subject matter. Consider individual or small group portraiture, Jewish daily life or the activities of perpetrators. Compare Kadish's motivations in taking pictures to that of the Nazis.
- What do you think motivated the Nazis to keep a photographic record of the Holocaust? Consider documenting the success of their plan to eliminate European Jewry. Consider the following factors: humiliation, propaganda, and portraying their victims as a defeated people or as less than human.
- Who was the intended audience?
- What do the photographs tell you about the subject(s)?
- What do the photographs reveal about the person who took it? Why do you think that it is important to know who the photographer was? How might that affect your response to a photograph?
- What impact do these photographs have on you?

Iconographic Photographs

- Kadish's photographs are so powerful and compelling that many have become emblematic of or synonymous with the Kovno ghetto. Imagine that you had to design a poster or write an article about the Kovno ghetto. Which of his images would you choose to represent the ghetto or the experience of its inhabitants? Explain your choice.
- What key theme, idea or event does the image represent?
- Find another photograph that has become emblematic of or closely associated with another historic or current event. Compare the subject matter and styles of both photographs.
- What historical evidence do they offer about each of their respective events?
- What is the emotional impact conveyed by each photograph?
- In what ways can each image be said to be emblematic of the event portrayed?

Jewish Photographers

The photographs of George Kadish are rare in that they are among the few to have survived that were taken by a victim, as opposed to a perpetrator. Roman Vishniac was another Jewish photographer, who spent three years capturing the traditions, customs, and everyday Jewish life in the small Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. He shot more than 16,000 photographs, under dangerous conditions and managed to smuggle thousands of negatives out of Eastern Europe. Imagine that you are a curator of an exhibition, comparing these two photographers. Select five photographs from each man's body of work. Write an introduction to the exhibit and captions for the photographs you have chosen.

Student Reading: Kovno & the Ghetto

Kovno

Between 1920 and 1939, Kovno (Kaunas), located in central Lithuania, was the country's capital and largest city. It had a Jewish population of 35,000–40,000, about one-fourth of the city's total population. Jews were concentrated in the city's commercial, artisan, and professional sectors.

Kovno was also a center of Jewish learning. The yeshiva in Slobodka, an impoverished district of the city, was one of Europe's most prestigious institutions of higher Jewish learning. Kovno had a rich and varied Jewish culture. The city had almost 100 Jewish organizations, 40 synagogues, many Yiddish schools, 4 Hebrew high schools, a Jewish hospital, and scores of Jewish-owned businesses. It was also an important Zionist center.

Kovno's Jewish life was disrupted when the Soviet Union occupied Lithuania in June 1940. The occupation was accompanied by arrests, confiscations, and the elimination of all free institutions. Jewish communal organizations disappeared almost overnight. Soviet authorities confiscated the property of many Jews. Meanwhile, the Lithuanian Activist Front, founded by Lithuanian nationalist emigres in Berlin, clandestinely disseminated anti-Semitic literature in Lithuania. Among other themes, the literature blamed Jews for the Soviet occupation. Hundreds of Jews were exiled to Siberia.

Following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Soviet forces fled Kovno. Immediately before and following the German occupation of the city on June 24, anti-Communist, pro-German Lithuanian mobs began to attack Jews (whom they unfairly blamed for Soviet repression), especially along Jurbarko and Krisciukaicio streets. These right-wing vigilantes murdered hundreds of Jews and took dozens more Jews to the Lietukis Garage, in the city center, and killed them there.

In early July 1941, German Einsatzgruppe (mobile killing unit) detachments and their Lithuanian auxiliaries began systematic massacres of Jews in several of the forts around Kovno. These forts had been constructed by the Russian tsars in the nineteenth century for the defense of the city. Einsatzgruppe detachments and Lithuanian auxiliaries shot thousands of Jewish men, women, and children, primarily in the Ninth Fort, but also in the Fourth and Seventh forts. Within six months of the German occupation of the city, the Germans and their Lithuanian collaborators had murdered half of all Jews in Kovno.

Kovno Ghetto

The Nazis established a civilian administration under SA Major General Hans Kramer. Between July and August 15, 1941, the Germans concentrated the remaining Jews, some 29,000 people, in a ghetto established in Slobodka. It was an area of small primitive houses and no running water. The ghetto had two parts, called the "small" and "large" ghetto, separated by Paneriu Street. Each ghetto was enclosed by barbed wire and closely guarded. Both were overcrowded, with each person allocated less than ten square feet of living space. The Germans continually reduced the ghetto's size, forcing Jews to relocate several times. The Germans destroyed the small ghetto on October 4, 1941, and killed almost all of its inhabitants at the

Ninth Fort. Later that same month, on October 29, 1941, the Germans staged what became known as the "Great Action." In a single day, they shot 9,200 Jews at the Ninth Fort.

The ghetto in Kovno provided forced labor for the German military. Jews were employed primarily as forced laborers at various sites outside the ghetto, especially in the construction of a military airbase in Aleksotas. The Jewish council (Aeltestenrat; Council of Elders), headed by Dr. Elchanan Elkes, also created workshops inside the ghetto for those women, children, and elderly who could not participate in the labor brigades. Eventually, these workshops employed almost 6,500 people. The council hoped the Germans would not kill Jews who were producing for the army.

In the autumn of 1943, the SS assumed control of the ghetto and converted it into the Kauen concentration camp. The Jewish council's role was drastically curtailed. The Nazis dispersed more than 3,500 Jews to sub-camps where strict discipline governed all aspects of daily life. On October 26, 1943, the SS deported more than 2,700 people from the main camp. The SS sent those deemed fit to work to labor camps in Estonia, and deported children and the elderly to Auschwitz. Few survived.

On July 8, 1944, the Germans evacuated the camp, deporting most of the remaining Jews to the Dachau concentration camp in Germany or to the Stutthof camp, near Danzig, on the Baltic coast. Three weeks before the Soviet army arrived in Kovno, the Germans razed the ghetto to the ground with grenades and dynamite. As many as 2,000 people burned to death or were shot while trying to escape.

Throughout the years of hardship and horror, the Jewish community in Kovno documented its story in secret archives, diaries, drawings, and photographs. Many of these artifacts lay buried in the ground when the ghetto was destroyed. Discovered after the war, these few written remnants of a once thriving community provide evidence of the Jewish community's defiance, oppression, resistance, and death. George Kadish (Hirsh Kadushin), for example, secretly photographed the trials of daily life within the ghetto with a hidden camera through the buttonhole of his overcoat.

The Kovno ghetto had several Jewish resistance groups. The resistance acquired arms, developed secret training areas in the ghetto, and established contact with Soviet partisans in the forests around Kovno. In 1943, the General Jewish Fighting Organization (Yidishe Algemeyne Kamfs Organizatsye) was established, uniting the major resistance groups in the ghetto. Under this organization's direction, some 300 ghetto fighters escaped from the Kovno ghetto to join partisan groups. About 70 died in action. The Jewish council in Kovno actively supported the ghetto underground. Moreover, a number of the ghetto's Jewish police participated in resistance activities. The Germans executed 34 members of the Jewish police for such activities.

The Soviet army liberated Kovno on August 1, 1944. Of Kovno's few Jewish survivors, 500 had survived in forests or in bunkers; the Germans evacuated an additional 2,500 to concentration camps in Germany.

Courtesy © United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., www.ushmm.org search for Kovno/Holocaust Learning Center

Student Reading: Chiune Sugihara

Chiune Sugihara and the Rescue of Thousands of Jews in Kovno, Lithuania

Chiune “Sempo” Sugihara was the Japanese Consul in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania, at the beginning of World War II.

Chiune Sugihara was born on January 1, 1900, in the town of Yaotsu, near Nagoya, Japan. He attended Tokyo’s prestigious Waseda University. He paid for his own education with part-time work as a longshoreman and tutor.

Sugihara decided to enter the diplomatic service, and received a scholarship to study at Harbin University to become a diplomat. He attended the Japanese national language institute in Harbin, China, where he studied Russian and graduated with high honors.

He served with the Japanese government in Manchuria and was promoted to Vice Minister of the Foreign Affairs Department. In Manchuria, Sugihara was disturbed by Japanese military policy and the cruel treatment of the Chinese. He resigned his post in protest in 1934.

In 1937, Sugihara was posted to the Japanese embassy in Helsinki, Finland.

In October 1939, Chiune Sugihara was sent to Kovno to open a consulate. Kovno was the temporary capital of Lithuania at the time and was strategically situated between Germany and the Soviet Union. Chiune Sugihara had just settled down in his new post when the Nazi armies invaded Poland and a wave of Jewish refugees streamed into Lithuania. They brought with them chilling tales of Nazi atrocities against the Jewish population. They escaped from Poland into Lithuania without possessions or money.

On June 15, 1940, the Soviets invaded Lithuania. In July, the Soviet authorities instructed all foreign embassies to leave Kovno. Chiune Sugihara requested a 20-day extension and the Soviets granted it. Except for Dutch trade representative, Jan Zwartendijk, who acted as an ‘honorary’ consul, Sugihara was the only foreign consul left in Kovno.

Against this terrible backdrop, the Japanese Consul became the focus and hope of the Polish refugees. The fate of thousands depended on his help. Thousands of Polish Jews converged on the Japanese consulate begging him for exit visas, and at first he was powerless to issue them. Sugihara wired the government in Tokyo on several occasions for permission to issue these visas. They told him that he could not issue the visas unless the recipients had adequate funds and would only be passing through Japan. The refugees were virtually penniless and had no documentation.



Chiune and Yukiko Sugihara. Sugihara Family Photograph.

Visas For Life

To help the Jews escape, Sugihara and the Dutch honorary consul Jan Zwartendijk, who was stationed in Kovno, entered into a ‘conspiracy of goodness.’ They determined that two Dutch islands in the Caribbean, Curacao and Surinam, did not require entrance visas. Zwartendijk was willing to stamp the refugees’ passports with a Dutch visa to that destination, and received permission from his superior to do so.

The Soviet minister in Kovno, who was also sympathetic to the refugees, agreed to let them pass through Soviet borders. This was largely due to Sugihara’s persuasive appeals.

Without permission to issue these visas, Sugihara had a difficult decision to make. He was a career diplomat, who suddenly had to defy government orders in order to follow his conscience. Sugihara knew that if he disobeyed the orders of his superiors, he could be fired and disgraced. He consulted his wife and family regarding the decision. Chiune and his wife, Yukiko, feared for their safety in making this decision. They agreed that life was more important than policy. Consul Sugihara said, “I may have to disobey my government, but if I don’t, I would be disobeying God.” Sugihara was a humble man and, when asked later why he did it, he replied: “Those people told me the kind of horror they would have to face if they didn’t get away from the Nazis and I believed them. There was no place else for them to go. They trusted me. They recognized me as a legitimate functionary of the Japanese Ministry. If I had waited any longer, even if permission came, it might have been too late.” Yukiko Sugihara remembered that “the refugees’ eyes were so intense and desperate, especially the women and children.”

For one month, from July 27 to August 28, 1940, Chiune Sugihara sat for endless hours signing visas. Hour after hour, day after day, for three weeks, he issued the precious, life-saving visas. He often wrote hundreds of visas in a day. When refugees began climbing the fence to get into the compound, Sugihara came out and calmed them down. He promised them that as long as there was a single person left, he would not abandon them.

Sugihara issued visas to over 300 students and teachers of the Mir Yeshiva rabbinical school. This was the only case in which an entire Jewish university was saved during the Holocaust. Sugihara even managed to issue visas from the window of his train as it was leaving Kovno for Berlin.

Several hundred additional refugees were able to escape Lithuania using Sugihara-style visas they forged.

After obtaining visas, the refugees lost no time in getting on the train that took them to Moscow, and by the trans-Siberian railroad to Vladivostok. From there, most refugees continued on to Kobe, Japan. They were allowed to stay in Kobe for several months. From there, many of the Sugihara survivors were able to obtain visas for the United States, Canada, Australia, South America and Palestine. In addition, more than 1,000 Polish refugees went to Shanghai, China. Thanks to the humanity and courage of Chiune Sugihara and Jan Zwartendijk, thousands of Jews survived.

Student Reading: 522nd Field Artillery Battalion

522nd Field Artillery Battalion: Unlikely Liberators

One of the units of the American army that helped liberate the Jews of Europe had its own unique history. The unit was called the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and was comprised of Japanese American men who volunteered for service from Hawaii and from internment camps throughout the United States. More than 120,000 Japanese Americans were interned for the duration of the war. Forced from their homes, they were sent to ten remote and desolate camps located in America's West.

The 442nd was an all-segregated regiment whose members were born in America but whose parents were from Japan. They called themselves Nisei, which means second generation. This is the story of a unit whose men were barely 5'3" and weighed barely 100 pounds. The unit suffered the highest combat casualties of any American fighting unit and became one of the most decorated military units in American history.

The 522nd Field Artillery Battalion provided supporting fire for the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. By the end of the war, the 522nd achieved such a reputation that the 7th Army asked that it remain attached to it for the campaign in southern Germany. The Nisei soldiers of the 522nd witnessed the final defeat of Hitler's army. The campaign was fought at high speed. By April 1945, the German Army was in full retreat. The advancing 3rd and 7th Armies could not even keep up with the retreating German army. At that time, thousands of German soldiers were surrendering, many of them to the 522nd.

What these young Nisei soldiers would soon discover was something for which they and the other Allied soldiers were completely unprepared. Few soldiers in the US army had heard of the existence of Nazi concentration camps. The 522nd Field Artillery Battalion of the 442nd was among the early witnesses to the Holocaust.

Sub-camps of Dachau were located around the German cities of Landsberg and Kaufering, near Munich. The purpose of these slave-labor camps was to build giant underground airplane assembly factories for the newly developed ME262, the first jet fighter aircraft in the world, for the German air force. Conditions at these camps were extremely deadly. In the one-year that they were open, tens of thousands of Jews were worked to death. Most prisoners lasted less than four months.

In the last week of April 1944, Hitler and Himmler issued an order to march the pitifully few survivors of these camps away from the advancing Allied armies. On April 24, this infamous death march started out from Dachau with over 10,000 Jews. The Jews were marched through many of the towns of Bavaria in Southern Germany. Germans who claimed they knew nothing of the Holocaust were now confronted with the irrefutable evidence of Nazi brutality and murder.

The death march was unimaginably brutal. The prisoners were not fed for days and were near exhaustion and death. They were forced to march 10-15 hours per day, wearing just tattered striped uniforms and

After his assignment in Kovno, Sugihara was posted briefly in Berlin, then in Prague, Czechoslovakia, Königsberg, Germany, and Bucharest, Romania.

At the end of the war, the Sugihara family was captured by the Russians and interned in a Siberian prisoner of war camp for 18 months. In 1947, they were allowed to return to Japan after being away from home for more than ten years.

After serving the Japanese foreign ministry for nearly a quarter of a century, Sugihara was asked to resign from the diplomatic service. When he inquired why he was being asked to resign, he was told that it was because of "that incident in Lithuania." His career as a diplomat was shattered. He had to start his life over. For the last two decades of his life, he was separated from his family as he worked as a manager for a Japanese export company in Moscow.

After the war, Mr. Sugihara never spoke of his extraordinary deeds. It was not until 1969 that Sugihara was found by a man whom he had helped to save in Kovno. In 1985, Sugihara received Israel's highest honor, the "Righteous Among the Nations" award by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. He said that he was very happy with the honor. In 1986, Consul Sugihara passed away peacefully in Kamakura, Japan, at the age of 86.

More than sixty years after the rescue, there are thousands of Jewish descendants who owe their lives to Chiune Sugihara. Yukiko Sugihara recalled that every time she and her husband met people they had helped, they felt great satisfaction and happiness. They had no regrets, "I think that our decision was humanely correct."

In 2001, the Japanese Foreign Ministry, in a ceremony in Tokyo, finally recognized Sugihara for his actions in saving Jews in Lithuania.

Courtesy of Eric Saul, Visas For Life: The Righteous and Honorable Diplomats Project.



*Sugihara's Japanese Transit Visa in Nathan Bluman's Passport.
Susan Bluman Collection.*

Glossary

worn out wooden clog shoes. Jewish survivors, who had suffered under the Nazi yoke for five years, were barely alive. If a Jewish prisoner fell on this death march, they would be immediately shot by the German, Ukrainian or Hungarian guards or torn to pieces by the fierce guard dogs. In five days, over half the Jews who started off on the death march were murdered.

On the morning of May 2, 1945, advanced patrols of the 522nd Field Artillery found hundreds of survivors of the march, who they mistook for 'lumps in the snow' just off the main road. After a closer investigation, the Nisei determined that these lumps were people, and many were alive. George Goto remembered, "People can't imagine what it was like to see people who were actually nothing but skin and bones. You can't imagine a human being starving other human beings so badly they would get in that condition."

The Jewish survivors were astonished to discover that their liberators were American soldiers of Japanese descent. The survivors remember the kindness of their faces. The Japanese American soldiers offered them small amounts of food. This was the first act of compassion the survivors had seen in over four years. Clarence Matsumura remembered, "They were obviously starving to death. We tried to feed them, and they couldn't take the food. Some of them died in my arms, unable to swallow the food that we had given them. I cried. I still feel guilty to this day." Matsumura hardly took time out to feed himself during those days. After a while, he had fainted from exhaustion, and remembers being awakened by the survivors, now feeding him. Survivors of the Dachau death march credit the Japanese Americans not only with their liberation, but also with saving their lives from the German guards.

The 522nd Field Artillery left the area around Waakirchen, Germany, on May 4, 1945. Along with the 101st Airborne Division, they participated in the capture of Hitler's headquarters at Berchtesgaden in Obersalzberg, Austria.

Many reported that after having seen the Jewish survivors of the death march, they would "never be the same again." For the last fifty years, PFC Neil Nagareda has always wondered, "How people could be that cruel to human beings?" Many of the Nisei were changed for life and would not talk, even to their families, about what they had seen in the last weeks of the war. They felt that this was a terrible burden and it continued to cause them great anguish.

Courtesy of Eric Saul, Visas For Life: The Righteous and Honorable Diplomats Project.

Action / Aktion

German word meaning operation. An action was a murderous campaign carried out by the SS, often with the help of local auxiliary police forces, and undertaken for political or racial reasons.

Aeltestenrat

The Council of (Jewish) Elders, mandated by the Germans to run the internal affairs of the Kovno ghetto.

Auschwitz

The largest, most notorious, and murderous Nazi camp established in 1940 near Oswiecim, Poland. It contained the slave labor camp Buna-Monowitz and in 1942, it included the extermination camp Birkenau. 1.3 million Jewish men, women, and children and 300,000 victims from other ethnic and cultural groups were killed in Auschwitz.

Blitzkrieg

A German term meaning 'Lightning War.' Blitzkrieg was a German military strategy which involved coordinated and concentrated air and land strikes in order to surprise the enemy and to rapidly advance through enemy lines.

Concentration Camp

The Nazis established prison camps shortly after assuming power in 1933 to hold and isolate political opponents and those considered to be 'racially' undesirable such as Jews and Gypsies. Most of the approximately 1800 camps were transit or labour camps. The first were Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. After the occupation of Poland, extermination camps were established for mass murder at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, Chelmno and Majdanek.

Dachau Concentration Camp

One of the first concentration camps created, it opened in Germany in March 1933 as a prison for political opponents of the Nazi regime. Although Dachau did not have a mass extermination program, there were 31,591 registered deaths out of 206,206 registered prisoners. The total number of unregistered deaths is not known. The camp was liberated on April 29, 1945.

Death March

In retreating from Allied soldiers at the end of the war, Nazis forced large numbers of prisoners to march long distances under heavy guard and under intolerable conditions. Approximately a quarter of a million prisoners were murdered or otherwise died on these marches between the summer of 1944 and the end of the war.

Deportation

Part of the Nazi program to remove Jews from Germany, and increase living space for ethnic Germans. Deportation eventually became a means to transport Jews throughout Europe to concentration camps and implement the Final Solution.

Einsatzgruppen

Nazi mobile killing units made up of men from the SS Security Police and other volunteers, operating in German-occupied territories during World War II. The Einsatzgruppen were used in the invasions of Eastern Europe. Their victims, primarily Jews, were executed by shooting and were buried in mass graves from which they were later exhumed and burned.

Final Solution

The Nazi euphemism for the genocide of the Jews of Europe. The plan to destroy European Jewry was formalized at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942.

Hannukah

A Jewish festival in winter celebrating the biblical story in which the small army of Judah and the Macabees triumphed over their more powerful enemy

Hitler, Adolf (1889–1945)

Founder of the German Nazi party and its leader from 1919 until 1945. Hitler became Chancellor of the Third Reich from 1933–45. He outlined his plans for territorial conquest and expressed his hatred for Jews in his autobiography *Mein Kampf* written in 1923. On January 30, 1942 Hitler set in motion the destruction and murder of six million Jews. He committed suicide in an underground bunker in Berlin on April 30, 1945.

Holocaust

The mass murder of nearly 6 million European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. Many individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered during the Holocaust, but only the Jews were targeted for total extermination. The term literally means a burnt sacrifice, or sacred burning. The biblical word 'Shoah,' meaning catastrophe, is the Hebrew equivalent.

Kaddish

Jewish prayer for the dead.

Kadish, George

Lithuanian Jew, born Zvi (Hirsh) Kadushin, who took secret photographs of daily life in the Kovno Ghetto. Kadish's collection of nearly 1000 photographs survived the war and he began exhibiting them as early as May 1945 in Displaced Persons' Camps.

Kovno Ghetto

On June 25, 1941 German forces marched into Kovno, Lithuania, and forced its 29,000 Jews to resettle in Slobodka, the city's poorest district. In August 1941 the ghetto was permanently sealed and over the next three years Nazi atrocities escalated. The ghetto underground succeeded in creating a significant collection of secret archives to document their experiences. In July 1944 most of the 6,100 remaining Jews of Kovno were deported and the ghetto was liquidated and raised.

Liberation

Term used when concentration camps were overrun by Allied forces. Most camps were liberated between January–April 1945.

Liquidation

Term used by Nazis referring to the removal and/or elimination of prisoners in concentration camps and ghettos.

Muselmann

Term used by concentration camp inmates to refer to the most physically and emotionally run-down prisoners who were thought to look like a kneeling Muslim. These inmates were so weak and emaciated they could hardly walk, work, or stand erect.

Nazi

Name for the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP)

Ninth Fort

Killing site in Kovno where 10,000 Jews were murdered by Germans and Lithuanians in October 1941.

Purim

A Jewish festival in spring, celebrating the biblical story in which Jews stood up to the anti-Semite, Haman, who tried to destroy them.

Red Cross

International organization, founded in 1863 according to the terms of the Geneva Convention to care for the wounded, sick and homeless during wartime. Its mandate later expanded to include the monitoring of humanitarian international law. The Red Cross attempted to assess conditions in prison and concentration camps during the war but was refused entry by the Nazis. After the war the Red Cross assisted in tracing survivors, in family unification and resettlement.

Refugee

One who is fleeing the danger of racial, religious, ethnic, or political persecution.

Siauliai (Patriots)

Lithuanian gangs who began robbing, beating, and murdering Jews once the Germans began advancing toward Lithuania. After Lithuania was occupied, the Siauliai continued to carry out pogroms while the Germans looked on.

Shtetl

Yiddish term referring to Jewish towns in Eastern Europe, mainly from the Baltic to the Black Sea. The rich Jewish cultural and religious towns were wiped out by the Nazis.

Landsberg-Kaufering Concentration Camps

A series of 11 sub-camps of Dachau. Many of the Landsberg-Kaufering camps used slave labour to build military armaments for Germany. The camps were liberated on April 27, 1945.

Matsumura, Clarence

A Japanese-American Private in the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion, involved in liberating Dachau and several of its sub-camps in late April 1945.

SS

Abbreviation for Schutzstaffel (Defense Protective Units), usually written with two lightning symbols. Initially established as Hitler's personal bodyguard, the SS was transformed into a terrorist organization by Heinrich Himmler. The organization is best known for its role in the destruction of European Jewry.

Stutthof Concentration Camp

A labour and extermination camp in German-occupied Poland, with 115,000 inmates from sixteen nations interned there. Over 65,000 victims were murdered at Stutthof before it was liberated by the Soviets on May 10, 1945.

Sugihara, Chiune

(1900-1986) Japanese Consul to Lithuania, stationed in Kovno. He defied diplomatic orders from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and issued 1,600-3,500 transit visas from late July 1940 to September 1, 1940 to Polish Jewish refugees. Sugihara returned to Japan in 1947 and was dismissed from the diplomatic corps. He was recognized as a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem in 1985.

Sugihara, Yukiko

(1913-) Wife of Chiune Sugihara, Japanese Consul to Lithuania. Yukiko encouraged her husband to issue visas to Jewish refugees and helped feed and house many of the refugees. In 1995 she wrote *Visas For Life*, describing the rescue efforts that she and her husband undertook. She has spoken widely about the Holocaust and her husband's rescue efforts.

Synagogue

The central place of worship for a Jewish congregation.

Typhoid Fever

Infectious disease very common in the concentration camps and a common cause of death. It is characterized by exhaustion, nervous symptoms, high fever, and the eruption of reddish spots on the body. The disease is transmitted by lice and fleas and thrives under unsanitary, crowded conditions.

Untermenschen

A German term used in Nazi racial theory meaning sub-human. This racial category was reserved largely

for Slavs and was ruthlessly employed against Polish civilians and Soviet POWs. Although Jews also fell into this category, the Nazis believed the Jews to be a pestilence with no redeeming value.

Visa

An endorsement on a passport or separate document which, permits the holder to enter, pass through or leave a country.

Yiddish

One thousand-year-old vernacular of Ashkenazi Jews developed in northern France and Germany. Based in large part on German and Hebrew, the language traveled east when many Jews were forced out of Western European countries. It became the common language of Central and Eastern European Jewry.

Zionist/Zionism

The political and cultural movement among Jews to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Zionists were on the cutting edge of political activism in Europe and America.

522nd Field Artillery Battalion

An all Japanese-American military unit. The most decorated unit of the American army for its size and length of service in Europe. It specialized in missile engines and weapons. The battalion liberated Dachau on April 28, 1945.

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