
A Curriculum Guide
accompanying the documentary film

TAK FOR ALT

Survival of a Human Spirit

*The Story of
Holocaust Survivor and Civil Rights Activist
Judith Meisel*



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Revised Edition



WINNER OF THE ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE'S DORE SCHARY AWARD



Written by
Dr. Kathleen McSharry
&
Beth Seldin Dotan

Creative Consultant
Laura Bialis

Historical Consultants
Ronald Frydman
Tina Lunson

Educational Consultants
Dr. John Mark Nielsen
David Nienkamp
Anti-Defamation League

Designed by
Paul B. Morris

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PREFACE

In the words of Judy Meisel “One Person can Do a Lot.”



This teacher's guide accompanying the documentary *Tak for Alt* will assist you and your students in better understanding the complexities of Holocaust survivor Judy Meisel's struggle for life and her fight to defend the human spirit. We want students to walk away from the experience of viewing the film feeling that they have come to know Judy personally. As a Holocaust survivor, Judy experienced one of the darkest chapters of human history. Many who lived through this time are unable to share their past. We are fortunate that, through her hope for and belief in humanity, Judy finds the strength to share her testimony with us.

Many of us will never experience the wide range of human goodness and depravity that Judy's story encompasses; we can, however, listen to Judy's testimony and learn how every action taken in life, no matter how big or small, how full of color or seemingly insignificant, will make a difference in someone else's life. It is our goal to provide an accessible and immediate route for teaching students about the history of the European Holocaust. We want to help students understand that the Holocaust should not simply be relegated to the category of a "history lesson." Our hope is that *Tak for Alt* will change the way you and your students view the world and your place in it. Judy's example of selfless service proves that "one person can do a lot" to make the world a better place. Her story prompts each of us to take actions in our communities that uphold the principles of respect, tolerance, and personal responsibility and that help to ensure the survival of the human spirit.

Beth Seldin Dotan



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Working on the curriculum guide for *Tak for Alt* has truly been a labor of love that has allowed us to stretch and grow with each day of its writing. Beth would like to thank Matthew Kraus of Williams College for recommending her to the film's producer, Laura Bialis. Laura, your dreams were the inspiration for this guide. We would also like to thank the many staff members of the Anti-Defamation League who made this work possible, including Ed Alster, Dina Finz, Chuck Hyman, Jill Kahn Meltzer, and Marjorie Green. We would like to give special thanks to Plains States Region ADL staff members Bob Wolfson, Debbi Zweiback, Linda Pollard, Linda Matter, and Sarita Cooper, whose support and aid were essential to the successful completion of our work.

In addition, we extend our thanks to Harris Finkelstein and Gary Katz of the Kripke Jewish Federation Library in Omaha, Nebraska, for their knowledge of and help with our resources. Our readers, Broderick Fox, Gloria Kaslow, Dawn Nielsen, David Nienkamp, Larry Raful, and Rosie Zweiback, and our friends at Dana College, John Lyden and John Mark Nielsen, donated their valuable time to provide helpful comments that improved our guide. Thanks to all of you for your important input. Thanks also to Linda Schwartz for her invaluable suggestions for the curriculum. We are also very grateful to our historical consultants, Ronald Frydman and Tina Lunson, who helped us develop an historically accurate curriculum. Thanks, also, to Paul Morris for his creative design and John Ealer for his map contribution. We would like to thank Sir Martin Gilbert for giving us permission to include his map. Thanks to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for permission to use their maps and photos and to Dr. Leo Goldberger and Dr. Carol Rittner for allowing us to use their historical work. For permission to use material from their web sites, we'd like to thank the Ghetto Fighters' House in Israel and Bernie Dodge from San Diego State University.

Beth would like to thank her husband, Amnon, and children, Liatte and Yonatan, who have witnessed how a project with so much meaning can enrich their lives together and help them understand the importance of family. Kathleen would like to thank the students in her Spring 2001 Literature for Young Adults class at Dana College—Jessica Gall, Diane Grote, Lauri Kahl, Tiffany Shellberg, and Sarah Thompson—who helped her develop a curriculum that would appeal to young people. She would also like to thank her husband, Joe McDonnell, whose constant love and support made it possible for her to work on this project to its completion.

Our deepest thanks go to Laura Bialis, Broderick Fox, and Sarah Levy for making such a wonderful film, and of course to Judy Meisel, whose story of courage and survival inspires us to try to live our lives according to the principles of love and service she embodies.

DORE SCHARY AWARD

The Dore Schary Award was established to honor the memory of Dore Schary, a film producer and long-serving National Chairman of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). Each year, the ADL bestows the Dore Schary Award on a student-produced film or video that is consistent with the ADL's mission to combat prejudice and intolerance and to promote respect for diversity and equal treatment of all people. The producers of *Tak for Alt*—Laura Bialis, Broderick Fox, and Sarah Levy—were awarded the 2000 Dore Schary Award for their work. For more information on the Dore Schary Award, including a list of past award winners and annual nominees, consult the Anti-Defamation League's Dore Schary web site at http://www.adl.org/main_dore_schary.asp.





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TAK FOR ALT

In daily conversation Danes do not use the phrase “Tak for alt.” As one Dane put it, “Those are pretty big words.” While the literal translation is “Thanks for everything,” the meaning is greater. A more accurate translation is “with deep and profound gratitude for the bounty and fullness of life.” The one place in Denmark where the phrase is commonly found is on gravestones.

In *Tak for Alt*, Judy Meisel returns to Denmark, where she visits the grave of Paula Jensen, the woman who was a foster mother to Judy and her sister after they had escaped to Denmark from Nazi-occupied Poland. On her gravestone are the words “Tak for alt.”

The film’s title, *Tak for Alt*, clearly states Judy Meisel’s profound gratitude and respect for Paula Jensen, for the Danish people, and for those who through selfless action make a difference in the lives of others.

John Mark Nielsen, Ph.D.

Executive Director, The Danish Immigrant Museum, Elk Horn, Iowa

Professor of English, Dana College, Blair, Nebraska

Fulbright Guest Lecturer & George C. Marshall Fellow in Denmark





A LETTER FROM JUDITH MEISEL

Those of us who were in Stutthof Concentration Camp constantly promised that we would never forget one another and that we would be sure to let the world know what had happened to us. Our scariest thought was that we would not survive and that nobody would know what we had gone through. And so we promised one another that, if we did survive, we would be certain to keep the memory alive by telling our story.

On May 5, 1945, when the war was over and my sister Rachel and I were finally freed and wanted to tell what had happened to us, it seemed that no one wanted to hear about it. But one journalist in Denmark did listen and asked many questions. It was difficult because we could only communicate through an interpreter, but it was gratifying that I was finally beginning to keep my promise to those who had not survived.

The people in Denmark were just wonderful! I feel strongly that the kind of person I am today is greatly due to the caring and nurturing that the Danes gave to me during the more than four years that I lived there. I arrived in Denmark at the age of 16 in a broken, malnourished body weighing 47 pounds. By the time I left Denmark for Canada, the Danish people had restored my sister and me to good health and had given us back our trust in humankind.

In 1946 our brother was finally able to find us, which was when Rachel and I first learned that he had survived the Holocaust. He had been imprisoned in Dachau Concentration Camp. After the war he had immigrated to Canada, where I joined him in 1949. On the boat ride to Canada, I met the man who would be my first husband. We married in 1950 in Toronto, and in 1952 we moved to the United States.

When Mina, my first-born, arrived, followed by my other children, Michael and Debra, I still spoke English very haltingly, but in the back of my mind, I was determined to eventually keep the promises that I had made in the Kovno ghetto and in Stutthof Concentration Camp. However, I did not want to traumatize my children, so in their presence I carefully avoided the subject. Besides, I was very busy with my children's Brownie troops and school activities. I was the Girl Scout cookie chairman, and I was captain of the "March of Dimes" fight to rid our neighborhood of polio, so I had little time to devote to my promise. But very often at night I would be unable to sleep, and I would constantly ask myself, "How can I tell the story of what happened?"

In 1963, an African American family named Baker (whom I did not know) moved into an all white neighborhood in Folcroft, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Philadelphia close to where I lived. After watching a televised news report showing a mob of hate-filled people screaming and yelling at the Bakers as they entered their new home, I decided to reach out to the family. I baked a batch of chocolate-chip cookies and went with an African American woman friend to visit them. We parked our car a little distance away, and as we walked through the angry, screaming crowd, I could only think of *Kristallnacht*. All the Bakers wanted was to live with their child in a house that they could afford. But the white residents of the neighborhood did not want the Bakers living there because they were African American.

The Baker incident changed my life; it was then that I knew I had to become involved. That same year, I participated in the 1963 March on Washington in the name of those who had not survived the concentration camps. But I found that that was not enough, so I became involved with the Panel of American Women. We spoke at schools, churches, organizations and conventions all over the country about tolerance and acceptance. Even then, I still longed to go back and stand in the place where my mother had stood when she was taken to the gas chamber, and to the little town of Jasvene where my entire family had been massacred and where my father was buried.

And so, on behalf of all those who did not survive the Kovno ghetto and Stutthof Concentration Camp, the entire Beker and Friedman family, and the millions of others who were murdered in the Holocaust, I want to thank Laura Bialis, Broderick Fox, and Sarah Levy for creating and filming this marvelous documentary, *Tak for Alt*. I sincerely hope that it will be utilized to educate people of all ages how to help stamp out hatred and bigotry, to respect one another's differences, and to encourage everyone to get involved in their community. I am optimistic that the widespread distribution of *Tak for Alt* can become a very useful tool to refute the bigots who continually deny that the Holocaust ever happened.

Tak for Alt! Thank You For Everything!

Judith Meisel

A STATEMENT FROM THE FILMMAKERS



When we first thought of making a film about Judy Meisel, we considered what her story would add to the large number of Holocaust films and videos already available. A clear objective soon became apparent to us. We had never seen a film on the Holocaust that connected a survivor's story to other forms of racism and intolerance, especially in America. Furthermore, the films we had seen on the subject seemed to depict the Holocaust as a purely Jewish issue or to target a specifically Jewish audience. We wanted to create a documentary that conveyed our view that the Holocaust was a catastrophic event on a universal level.

Is the Holocaust the worst example of man's inhumanity to man in history? The answer is probably no. There have been other events just as evil, but on a smaller scale, or events just as catastrophic that happened centuries ago and have been all but forgotten. Why does the Holocaust seem to be the definitive historical event of the 20th Century? The Holocaust happened after a long period of the world moving toward what seemed to be enlightenment, after the abolition of slavery, after the concept of human rights had been expanding for over a century. It started with what seemed to be relatively minor infractions on human freedom—with segregation less strict than the segregation imposed on African Americans during the first half of the twentieth century. The chipping away of Jewish civil rights through a continuing series of small injustices, laws, and rules formed the foundation for the worst event of genocide in recent memory. The Holocaust reminds us of humans' capacity for evil and cautions us against indulging in the illusion that we have somehow evolved beyond the possibility of committing such atrocities again.

As we worked on Judy Meisel's story, we focused on creating a film that would help young people connect with Judy on a very personal level—to relate to her not as a Jew, not as a European, but as a little girl with the same fears, hopes, and dreams as any child in the world. It is our hope that children and adults of all types will relate to Judy on a human level and experience her profound story on an emotional level. The film's references to the Civil Rights movement, which served as Judy's motivation to begin telling her story, will remind our audience that we in America are not immune from the terror of racism and bigotry. Judy's story illustrates that all of us are responsible for speaking out against intolerance, and that each of us can make a positive contribution to the struggle for human freedom.



CURRICULUM RATIONALE

Judy Meisel's story of suffering, courage, and survival is an excellent way to stimulate student interest in learning about the Holocaust in particular and civil rights in general. Her testimony allows students to feel a personal connection to the Holocaust and thus makes the history of the period come alive for them. Judy's story will deepen students' understanding of the human cost of the Holocaust, the range of human goodness and depravity contained in its history, and the capacity each of us has to take actions that make a positive difference in the lives of others. Judy's message of hope and her faith in humans' ability to act on ethical principles inspires others to consider how they, out of the circumstances of their own lives, can make a difference in the lives of those around them and in the communities in which they live.

HOW TO USE THE VIEWING GUIDE

The viewing guide divides *Tak for Alt* into four sections that will enable teachers to guide student learning about the Holocaust, personal ethics, the Rescue of the Danish Jews, and the United States Civil Rights Movement. The four sections are as follows:

Part 1: (17 minutes) "I Knew that I Had to Tell My Story"	(00:00-16:57)
Part 2: (15 minutes) "Everybody was Brave"	(16:57-32:00)
Part 3: (15 minutes) "We Only Wanted to Survive as Jews"	(32:00-47:50)
Part 4: (11 minutes) "One Person Can Do a Lot"	(47:50-59:00)

Each part includes section summaries, viewing objectives, key term definitions, historical background, discussion questions, and post-viewing activities. Teachers may use the entire guide to structure a multi-week unit on the Holocaust, or they may use *Tak for Alt* in shorter teaching units focused on one of the major issues in the film. Judy's story would work especially well as a supplement to an English, history, or Ethnic Studies curriculum. Before using the film in class, teachers will want to view the film and to read the entire curriculum. This will help teachers identify those historical contexts and post-viewing activities that work best with their curriculum and with their students' grade level.

If students are to derive maximum benefit from their viewing of *Tak for Alt*, Judy's story must be contextualized in the history of the Holocaust. For this reason, the curriculum guide includes relevant historical context for Judy's story that is intended to provide teachers with sufficient background to teach the film. Teachers are also encouraged to work with local or regional Holocaust memorial centers and to consult the many fine web sites devoted to issues related to teaching the Holocaust. Especially useful are the web sites of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Anti-Defamation League, Yad Vashem, and the Ghetto Fighters' Museum. The guide's Bibliography and list of Additional Resources provide supplementary information for teachers interested in learning more about teaching the Holocaust.

Before engaging in intensive study of the issues raised in the film, students will benefit from viewing *Tak for Alt* in one sitting. Judy's story is so compelling that students will want to know her entire story before studying specific aspects of her experience and its larger history. If time permits, students may review sections of the film to deepen their understanding of Judy's story, its connection with United States history, and its implications for themselves as citizens in a free and democratic nation. Teachers are encouraged to photocopy and distribute the Viewing/Discussion questions to their students before they view the relevant sections of *Tak for Alt*. Having the viewing questions and the relevant key term definitions before them as they view the film will enhance student's ability to engage actively with Judy's story.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS



This curriculum guide was designed to comply with National Social Studies and English Language Arts Standards. These standards, which specify what all students should know and be able to do in social studies and the language arts, are adapted by each state education department to create their own set of educational priorities. The viewing objectives and post-viewing activities in each section of the curriculum target specific standards in history, social science, writing, listening, and speaking and are designed to provide teachers with multiple measure of assessment for student learning in these areas.

From the National Council for the Social Studies:

“The primary purpose of social studies is to help young people develop the ability to make informed and reasoned decisions for the public good as citizens of a culturally diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.”

From the National Council of Teachers of English:

“All students must have the opportunities and resources to develop the language skills they need to pursue life’s goals and to participate fully as informed, productive members of society.”

SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY *TAK FOR ALT* VIEWING OBJECTIVES

Listed below are the viewing objectives for the *Tak for Alt* curriculum linked to National Council of Social Studies educational standards. For more information about the ten thematic strands for the NCSS standards, see their website at <www.ncss.org/standards/exec.html>.

VIEWING OBJECTIVE

Section One, page 7

- To understand the universal themes of tolerance, respect, and responsibility
- To connect Judy’s values as an American citizen with her experiences in the Holocaust
- To understand how political and legal systems shape individual choices
- To increase students’ knowledge of the geography of Europe during WWII
- To inform students about the ghetto experience imposed on Jews during WWII
- To expand students’ understanding of Jewish European experience during the Holocaust

SOCIAL STUDIES THEME*

- Theme #9: Global Connections
- Theme #10: Civic Ideals and Practices
- Theme #5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme #3: People, Places, and Environments
- Theme #6: Power, Authority, and Governance
- Theme #2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Section Two, Page 13

- To recognize that everybody has choices, regardless of the circumstances
- To understand how outside influences can shape one’s choices and views
- To see how responsible decisions may require acting beyond cultural/social influences
- To understand ethical decision-making as a form of resistance
- To understand how personal testimony enhances our understanding of history

- Theme #10: Civic Ideals and Practices
- Theme #5: Individuals, Groups, and Institutions
- Theme #4: Individual Development and Identity
- Theme #4: Individual Development and Identity
- Theme #2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Section Three, Page 21

- To understand how cultural and social factors shape individual identities and behaviors
- To evaluate individuals’ choices in terms of tolerance, respect, and responsibility
- To see how government structures enhance or deny citizens’ cultural identities
- To understand how Judy’s Jewish identity was the basis for her survival
- To know and accept one’s cultural identity while interacting with other cultural groups

- Theme #1: Culture
- Theme #4: Individual Development and Identity
- Theme #6: Power, Authority, and Governance
- Theme #1: Culture
- Theme #1: Culture

Section Four, Page 29

- To understand the principles of tolerance, respect, and responsibility
- To understand the relationship between historical events and cultural identity
- To understand different groups’ adaptations and contributions to the United States
- To identify demographic changes resulting from World War II
- To see how memory and personal experiences shape one’s values and sense of self

- Theme #9: Global Connections
- Theme #2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme #2: Time, Continuity, and Change
- Theme #3: People, Places, and Environments
- Theme #4: Individual Development and Identity

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EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS MET BY *TAK FOR ALT* POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Below you will find National Council for Teachers of English educational standards linked with post-viewing activities found in each of the four parts of the *Tak for Alt* curriculum. More information about the NCTE standards may be found on their website at <www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/>.

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITY

ENGLISH STANDARD*

Section One, Page 11

Activity 1: Reflection—Responding to the Film

Standard #3: Applying different strategies to comprehend print and non-print texts

Activity 2a: Jewish Cultural and Religious Life

Standard #7: Conducting research using print and non-print texts

Activity 2b: Jewish Ghetto Life

Standard #1: Reading print and non-print texts

Activity 3: Examining Discrimination Today

Standard #7: Gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing data from various sources

Section Two, Pages 17-19

Activity 1: Reflection—Responding to the Film

Standard #3: Applying different strategies to comprehend print and non-print texts

Activity 2: Decision Making

Standard #3: Applying different strategies to comprehend print and non-print texts

Activity 3: Web Quest

Standard #1: Reading print and non-print texts

Standard #8: Using various resources to gather, create, and communicate knowledge

Activity 4: Testimony as Historical Resource

Standard #2: Reading a wide range of literature to build understanding of human experience

Standard #9: Understanding diversity in language use and patterns across groups

Section Three, Pages 26-27

Activity 1: Mapping Judy's journey from Lithuania to Denmark

Standard #3: Applying a wide range of strategies to comprehend text

Activity 2a: Researching Historical Perspectives

Standard #7: Researching, evaluating, and synthesizing data from a variety of sources

Activity 2b: Researching Acts of Resistance

Standard #8: Using various resources to gather, create, and communicate knowledge

Activity 3: Family Research and Cultural Identity

Standard #7: Researching, evaluating, and synthesizing data from a variety of sources

Standard #5: Employing various writing process elements to communicate

Section Four, Pages 33-35

Activity 1: Mapping Lithuania

Standard #3: Applying a wide range of strategies to comprehend text

Activity 2a: "Who is Responsible?"

Standard #7: Conducting research by generating ideas and asking questions

Standard #8: Using various resources to gather and synthesize information

Activity 2b: The Value of Personal Testimony

Standard #3: Applying a wide range of strategies to comprehend text

Standard #8: Using various resources to gather, create, and communicate knowledge

Activity 2c: One Person Can Make a Difference

Standard #7: Researching, evaluating, and synthesizing data from a variety of sources

Activity 3a: Parallels Between the Danish Resistance and U.S. Civil Rights Movement

Standard #2: Reading a wide range of literature to understand human experience

Standard #8: Using various resources to gather, create, and communicate knowledge

Activity 3b: Understanding Moral Courage

Standard #1: Reading a wide range of print and non-print texts

Activity 3c: Taking the Lesson Beyond the Classroom

Standard #4: Communicating effectively with various audiences

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SECTION 1: (00:00-16:57) **“I knew that I had to tell my story.”**

Words bolded in the main text are defined in the sidebars on the Summary and Viewing/Discussion Questions pages.

SUMMARY

The Film: In the opening section of *Tak for Alt*, Judy Meisel relates her decision to talk about her experiences in the **Holocaust**. The event that precipitates her decision to speak opens the film. While eating dinner one night at home, Judy sees a television report about an African American family, the Bakers, moving into an all-white neighborhood in Folcroft, Pennsylvania. The year is 1963. A mob of whites has turned out in an attempt to intimidate the Baker family into leaving the neighborhood. Judy, who lives in neighboring Philadelphia, welcomes the family into the neighborhood by bringing them some homemade cookies. Judy explains her decision to act by saying, “I felt that if their homes were not safe, my home [was] not safe, and when their rights were trampled on, my Jewish rights were trampled on at the same time.”

EQUAL RIGHTS

The Baker family's story is a concrete example of the importance of equal rights in democratic societies. The Bakers' experience of moving into an all-white neighborhood and Judy's decision to support them demonstrate the courage needed to act on the principles of tolerance, respect, and responsibility.

The Bakers' personal story is part of a larger struggle for African American equal rights in the United States. The U.S. Civil Rights Movement, which was in its strongest period from 1954-1963, used non-violent protest and direct action to strive for equal rights and opportunities for African Americans in housing, voting, and public accommodations. Part IV of the viewing guide provides more information on the U.S. Civil Rights Movement.

JEWISH CULTURAL LIFE

Jews had lived in fully developed Jewish communities throughout Europe for nearly 2,000 years by 1933. (Consult Appendix A, “Two Thousand Years of Jewish Life In Europe by 1933.”) These communities were steeped in Jewish religious values, but they were also influenced by the cultures of the countries in which they lived. Emancipation (freedom of rights) in the nineteenth century gave Jews the opportunity to link traditional values and rituals with modern ideas about intergroup socialization, commerce, and politics.

KOVNO (KAUNAS) GHETTO

The Lithuanian term for Kovno is “Kaunas.” After the Nazis invaded Lithuania in 1941, they established a ghetto in the city of Kovno. The Kovno ghetto was located in Slabodka, a suburb of Kovno that had been a Jewish neighborhood for hundreds of years. Like other ghettos in the occupied countries of Eastern Europe, the Kovno ghetto was enclosed by a fence that prevented Jews from leaving the ghetto without German permission. When the Kovno ghetto was first established, about 35,000 Jews were confined there. Within the first three months of its existence, 12,000 of the Jews in the Kovno ghetto had been massacred by Lithuanian volunteers under German command.

In July of 1944, as Soviet forces approached Kovno, the Germans began transporting the Jews still living in the Kovno ghetto to concentration camps. When Kovno was liberated by Soviet forces on August 1, 1944, only a few hundred Jews remained there.



State Police escort the Bakers to their house in Folcroft, Pennsylvania

Before the Baker incident, Judy had not talked about her **Holocaust** experiences because she did not want to traumatize her children. But witnessing the mob action directed against the Bakers makes “an incredible mark” on Judy. She explains her response by drawing a parallel between the racism in Folcroft to German **anti-Semitism** in the 1930s: “I was devastated, because here I was in Philadelphia, in the City of Brotherly Love, and it was like **Kristallnacht** in 1938 on November 9th, when the world sat and looked at what was happening in Germany, and nobody did anything about it.” Jarred by the lack of support in her own community for the rights of all citizens, she now understands that it is her responsibility to tell her story as a survivor of the Holocaust.

Following the scene with the Bakers, Judy describes her family background, her childhood in Lithuania, the invasions of Lithuania by Russian and German troops, and the effects of the occupations on Jewish cultural and religious life and civil rights. The Russian invasion of Lithuania marks the first time Judy must hide her Jewish identity: her family can no longer attend **synagogue** services, and her mother must light the **Shabes** (Sabbath) candles in secret. Shortly after the Germans invade, Kovno's Jews are forced to move into the **Kovno ghetto**, where Judy and her family live for the next three years. Judy's displacement to the Kovno ghetto was dictated by political circumstances that gradually stripped Lithuanian Jews of their citizenship and civil rights.



“I think that I ’m here today and the kind of person I am is due to my very early upbringing in Jasvene.”

KEY POINT: The connection of Judy’s story to the Bakers’ establishes several key themes in the film: the importance of individual rights in democratic societies; the principles of **tolerance**, respect, and responsibility as essential components of **democracies**; and the responsibility each of us has to object to behavior that violates democratic principles. The Baker incident and Judy’s own story as a Holocaust survivor illustrate how extreme situations bring out character traits in individuals that either uphold or violate democratic values.

VIEWING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the universal themes of **tolerance**, respect, and responsibility that motivated Judy to act on behalf of the Bakers and to tell her story.
- To understand the connection between Judy’s values as an American citizen and her past as a Jew in Europe during the **Holocaust**.
- To understand how political and legal systems shape individual choices.
- To increase students’ knowledge of the geography of Europe during World War II.
- To inform students about the **ghetto** experience imposed on Jews during World War II.
- To expand students’ understanding of Jewish European experience before and during the **Holocaust**.

“My family life was deeply rooted in Judaism.”



Lighting of **Shabbes** candles marks the formal beginning of the Jewish Sabbath on Friday evening, usually prior to a Sabbath meal. They are lit in honor of the Sabbath but also as a symbol of the holiness of the day of rest.

DEMOCRACY

A type of government run directly by the people or by their elected representatives. Democratic societies usually have periodic elections in which all adult citizens are encouraged to vote for representatives from competing political parties. Democratic societies protect the rights of minorities and guarantee equal rights and opportunities for all citizens.

TOLERANCE

An active acceptance of and appreciation for a wide range of personal, social, cultural, and religious practices, particularly when such practices differ from one’s own. Tolerance is an attitude that perceives diversity as a positive social good and is expressed in behaviors that protect the rights of all people.

YIDDISH

A European Jewish language written in Hebrew characters. The language began to develop about 1100 years ago in the area where France and Germany meet and contains vocabulary from those two languages and the Slavic languages that Jews encountered. Yiddish uses many Hebrew words, especially those dealing with Jewish daily life and legal issues. Yiddish was a common language among Jews in all European lands and, once Jews had immigrated to America, in this country, too. The Holocaust destroyed most European speakers of Yiddish, along with their established customs and culture.

EINSATZGRUPPEN

Killing squads comprised primarily of SS officers that flanked the German army as it invaded Eastern Europe. First organized in 1939, the Einsatzgruppen were used in the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. The SS membership of the squad was supplemented by volunteers from Eastern Europe and by Germany’s police and army units. It is estimated that the Einsatzgruppen killed between 1.5 and 2 million Eastern European Jews.

SLABODKA

“Slabode” is a Slavic term for “foreigner.” In medieval towns, people from other places—such as traders from Italy or Germany and Jews—lived in areas called “Slabodka.” In some cases the Jewish section was closed at night and locked by city officials. “Slabodka” is the Yiddish term for the section of Kovno otherwise known as Vilijampole. Slabodka had been home to Jews for hundreds of years and was the seat of several important religious schools.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

LITHUANIA

Lithuania is one of three Baltic States situated on the east coast of the Baltic Sea. (Refer to Appendix D for a map of the region.) Lithuania was founded as a state in the twelfth century, united with Poland in 1385 by royal marriage, and incorporated into Russia in 1795. Lithuania remained under Russian control until the end of World War I, at which time it regained independence. Soviet Russia invaded Lithuania in 1940 and withdrew only when German forces moved against the Soviet Union in 1941, at which time Lithuania came under German occupation.

Prior to the atrocities that occurred during World War II, Jewish life had existed, flourished and wavered in Lithuania for hundreds of years. Although Lithuanian Jews did not have full rights under any of the ruling governments, they were often permitted to govern their own communities by Jewish law and to operate their own schools. Lithuania's Jewish religious schools became famous and supplied rabbis and scholars to much of the world. The Jewish Lithuanian community also produced physicians, writers, and secular scholars.

The limited autonomy that Jewish Lithuanians experienced was part of a more general trend toward Jewish emancipation in Europe. Jews were never granted complete autonomy by any European country until the twentieth century, but, by the end of the 19th century, Jewish civil rights were the topic of numerous conferences, and some European countries considered Jews a religious or ethnic minority, which provided Jewish communities with some protection and, in a few cases, autonomy.

After the First World War, Lithuania provided the most generous minority rights of any of the newly independent Baltic states. Jews were represented in the government by a Ministry of Jewish Affairs. The Ministry's official news report was published in Yiddish, one of the official languages of the land. Jewish schools received government financial support, Jewish cultural life flourished, and Jewish sports groups were formed. Jews opened their own non-exclusive banking network and contributed to the economic recovery of Lithuania. They participated at all levels of society. Unfortunately, the winds of fascism and racism reached Lithuania, and in 1924 a more right-wing group took power. That administration abolished the Ministry of Jewish Affairs, and the rights of Jewish and other minorities began to erode. By the time the Soviets arrived to occupy Lithuania in June 1940, many Jews had been squeezed out of their jobs and livelihoods by anti-Semitic Lithuanian policies. Jews desperate for work accepted jobs in the Soviet administration, which only added to the resentment Lithuanian nationalists felt against Jews.

The restriction of Lithuanian Jewish rights prior to World War II was part of a more general movement toward nationalism across Europe at the time. Dictatorships emerged in many European governments, a development which allowed anti-Semitism to surface within the political, cultural, and economic spheres. The Nuremberg Laws passed by the German Reichstag in 1935 are the most notorious example of the rapid growth of anti-Semitism during this period. These laws, which the Nazis enforced in all European countries they occupied during World War II, revoked Jewish citizenship and forbade certain kinds of interactions between Jews and non-Jews. The Nuremberg Laws were part of a larger pattern of laws designed to deprive European Jews of their civil rights and to separate them from non-Jewish Europeans. The laws eventually made possible the detainment, deportation, and mass slaughter of European Jews.

The rise of Nazism, the increase of anti-Semitism, and anti-Soviet sentiment among non-Jewish Lithuanians account for the pogroms (organized massacres) of Jews carried out by the Lithuanians even before the Germans invaded Lithuania. When the Germans occupied Lithuania in the summer of



Judy's mother, Mina, and father, Osser Beker



“I was devastated, because here I was in Philadelphia, in the City of Brotherly Love, and it was like Kristallnacht in 1938 on November 9th, when the world sat and looked at what was happening in Germany, and nobody did anything about it.”

1941, the Soviets fled in one day, leaving behind the Lithuanian nationalists who shared Germany's anti-Semitic hatred. The Nazis were able to exploit the emotions of the nationalists and used their services to help the Einsatzgruppen systematically slaughter tens of thousands of Lithuanian Jews.

Such collaboration between citizens of an occupied country and the Germans was not unusual. In Part III of *Tak for Alt*, for example, we hear about Mrs. Arenstein, who runs a Wehrmacht Station in Poland for German troops. Collaboration could be economic, as it was in Mrs. Arenstein's case, military, or administrative. By August of 1941, most of the Jews in Lithuania's provinces had been killed by the Einsatzgruppen and their Lithuanian collaborators. Among the dead were 146 members of Judy's family. Monuments commemorating the dead, such as the one Judy visits in Ariogala in Part IV of *Tak for Alt*, can be found in other Eastern European communities and are often paid for and erected by Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.

Kovno was among the first Lithuanian cities to be occupied by the Nazis in their campaign against the Soviet Union. Prior to World War II, more than 30,000 Jews lived in the city. At the time of the Nazi invasion, an additional 5,000 Jews had fled to the city when the war reached Poland. As was their practice in all Eastern European cities in the occupied territories, the German occupying forces first segregated the town's Jews in a ghetto and used them for slave labor. Prior to the establishment of the Kovno ghetto on August 18, 1941, anti-Semitic Lithuanians rounded up and massacred thousands of the city's Jewish inhabitants. The massacres were executed in several forts that ring the city; such forts were built by the Russians in the nineteenth century to defend Kovno from attack. Once the German army controlled Kovno, they also used the forts to kill large numbers of Jews. The 3,000 Jews who remained in camps around Kovno in 1944 were sent to Stutthof and Dachau concentration camps. Fewer than 2,000 of Kovno's Jewish residents survived the war.



A view of the foot-bridge over Paneriu Street, which connected one part of the Kovno ghetto to another



An elderly Jewish man stands among a group of children in a ghetto

SECTION 1: (00:00-16:57)



VIEWING/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

JEWISH COUNCIL (JUDENRAT)

Groups of Jewish representatives, usually selected by the Germans, who carried out Nazi instructions in Jewish communities and ghettos in occupied Europe. Jewish Councils had no autonomy and no power but were obliged under penalty of death to fulfill Nazi demands.

ANTI-SEMITISM

A term first used by Wilhelm Marr in 1879 to indicate hatred of Jews. Such hatred was primarily based on the fact that Jews exist and are perceived to be a threat to world order. Anti-Semitism involves the systematic denial to Jews of rights and powers granted to others.

SYNAGOGUE

The building or place where Jews assemble for worship and religious study.

SCHUL

Yiddish term for a synagogue. A schul can be a small neighborhood prayer house or a large building for community worship.

SLAVE LABOR

The forced labor of Jewish and non-Jewish civilians in occupied Europe. Conscripts worked in factories, in ghetto workshops, in military installations, and in the concentration and death camps. Such labor was usually uncompensated and was supervised by the Wehrmacht, the armed forces of Nazi Germany.

SHTETL

Small, often poor, Jewish town or village in Eastern Europe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

NUREMBERG LAWS

Two racial laws created by the German legislature on September 15, 1935, at the annual Nazi party rally in Nuremberg. The first law deprived German Jews of their German citizenship; the second law, which was established to "protect German Blood and Honor," defined who was a Jew and who was an Aryan. The Nuremberg Laws provided the legal justification for the segregation of Jews and for subsequent anti-Semitic legislation that made possible the deportation and eventual massacre of European Jewry.

HOLOCAUST

The destruction of 6 million or more Jews by the Nazis and their followers in Europe between the years 1933-1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period, but only the Jews were marked for complete annihilation. The term "Holocaust"—literally meaning "a completely burned sacrifice"—suggests a sacrificial connotation to the event. The equivalent Hebrew word "Shoah" originated from the Biblical term meaning "widespread disaster."

SHABES OR SHABBAT (SABBATH)

Shabes (Yiddish term) or Shabbat (Modern Israeli Hebrew term) is the day of rest for the Jewish people specified in the book of Exodus (31:16-17). Shabes begins at sunset on Friday and concludes on Saturday night after the first three stars are visible in the sky. On Shabes one turns away from weekday pressures and activities. It is a day of synagogue worship and a time to be with family.

1. When Judy hears about the mob scene at the Bakers' home, she is "devastated." Why does the Baker incident affect Judy so strongly?
2. What does Judy's decision to take cookies to the Bakers suggest about her values and beliefs?
3. After hearing about the Baker incident, Judy says, "I knew that I had to tell my story." Why does the Baker incident prompt Judy to speak out about her experiences? What are the connections she sees between their lives and her experience as a European Jew during World War II?
4. What do we learn about Judy's family background, including her family members and their geographical location?
5. What are the effects of the Russian and German invasions of Lithuania on Judy's family life?
6. Why do the Lithuanian children taunt and jeer at Judy when she and her family are being moved to the ghetto? What caused the children to change their attitude toward her?
7. What are some of Judy's experiences in the Kovno ghetto? What resistance strategies help her to survive the harsh conditions of ghetto life?
8. What acts of prejudice have you encountered personally or heard about from an acquaintance? Discuss how you or the person you know felt about and responded to being the victim of discrimination.

JEWISH POLICE

The Jewish Police were responsible for the maintenance of public order in the ghettos. Set up by ghetto Jewish Councils operating under German orders, the Jewish police were responsible for gathering Jews for forced labor, collecting payments, and helping the Nazis deport Jews from the ghettos to the concentration camps.

KRISTALLNACHT

A pogrom (organized attack) perpetrated by the Nazis against German, Bohemian, and Austrian Jews on November 9-10, 1938. Synagogues and other Jewish institutions were burned, Jewish businesses were looted, and Jews were assaulted and murdered. In addition, approximately 30,000 German Jewish men were sent to concentration camps. The incident is referred to as Kristallnacht, which means "Night of the Broken Glass," because the streets were littered with broken glass from Jewish storefronts, homes, and synagogues.

German authorities viewed Kristallnacht as just retribution for the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, a secretary in Germany's Paris embassy. Vom Rath had been shot by a Jewish teenager whose parents had been rounded up by the Nazis.

GHETTO

Segregated "Jewish Quarters" in major European cities under Nazi control where all Jews were forced to reside. Enclosed by barbed wire or walls, the ghettos were often sealed so that people were prevented from leaving or entering them. Established mostly in Eastern Europe, the ghettos were characterized by overcrowding, starvation, and forced labor. In a few cases, there were uprisings against the Nazis in the ghettos, most notably in the Warsaw ghetto. All ghettos were eventually destroyed after the Jews within them were deported to death camps.

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES



SECTION 1: (00:00-16:57)

1. Reflection

Ask students to write their responses to the opening section of the film. Students can respond to the Viewing/Discussion questions, or they can write about the sensory imagery in this portion of *Tak for Alt* that most strongly affects them. This writing activity will enhance their awareness of the following motifs that structure Part 1 of the documentary:

- The sounds of breaking glass as an aural link between the civil disturbances in the United States in 1963 and in Europe during WWII
- The use of the Baker incident to frame Judy's story
- The use of gravestones as a visual anchor for Judy's return to Jasvene, Lithuania.

Alvin Curran's *Crystal Psalms* (a concerto written in memory of Kristallnacht and performed by musicians in six different nations simultaneously) would be an excellent accompaniment to this activity. Students could listen to the CD and write about what they feel while listening to it. The Additional Resources section at the end of the curriculum guide includes more information on *Crystal Psalms*.

2. Research

A. Jewish Cultural and Religious Life

- To increase students' understanding of Jewish cultural and religious practice, identify those aspects of Jewish cultural and religious life that Judy mentions in this part of the film, including Jewish life in the shtetl and specific rituals of Sabbath, such as lighting the candles and inviting guests for Sabbath dinner.
- As a group, discuss how the Germans' treatment of Lithuanian Jews in the Kovno ghetto involved the systematic restriction and disruption of Jewish ritual practices. Students may research specific aspects of Jewish life, such as mourning rituals for the dead, in order to understand the extent to which the Nazi occupation of European countries disrupted Jewish cultural and religious life.
- Students can then discuss how attempts to maintain cultural and religious practices constitute a form of resistance to oppression.

B. Jewish Ghetto Life

- To build on the information about ghettos provided in Part I of *Tak for Alt*, students can use the Internet to investigate the number of ghettos created by the Nazis. Consult the Additional Resources section at the end of the curriculum guide for a list of web sites recommended for this and other web-based research activities related to the Holocaust. In small groups or as a whole class, students can create a large wall map locating the ghettos in Europe. This map can then be used as a visual reference during the viewing of the entire film. Teachers may refer to Appendix B for a map of major ghettos in occupied Europe.
- To deepen their understanding of Jewish ghetto life, which could vary greatly from one ghetto to another, students can work in small groups to research one or two ghettos and make class presentations on the particular ghettos they researched. Such research can focus on the following aspects of ghetto life:

social structure • cultural activities • family life • children • resistance
ghetto administration (Jewish Council [*Judenrat*])

- Following small group presentations, the entire class could then discuss how we see these aspects of ghetto life referenced or developed in Judy's recollections of the Kovno ghetto.

“That incident with
the Bakers—
it made an incredible
mark on me.
I knew that I had
to tell my story.
At that point,
I became involved.”

3. Journalistic Approach:

Examining Discrimination Today

- Have students look at recent newspapers and magazines to find reports of intolerance directed against individuals of particular races, ethnicities, beliefs, or lifestyles. See Appendix F in the curriculum guide for a recent newspaper report of such an incident that students can use for this exercise.
- Students can work in small groups to identify similarities between examples of intolerance today and Judy's experiences during World War II.
- Individual students could then write a report on a recent instance of intolerance, exploring the range of possible responses to the situation and explaining which responses would uphold the principles of universal tolerance, respect, and responsibility.

SECTION 2: (16:57-32:00) “Everybody was brave. Everybody wanted to live.”

Words bolded in the main text are defined in the sidebars on the Summary and Viewing/Discussion Questions pages.

SUMMARY

CRITICAL CONTENT NOTE: Part 2 of *Tak for Alt* focuses on Judy Meisel’s experiences in **Stutthof Concentration Camp** and on a **death march**. Judy’s description of life in the concentration camp includes a number of horrific actions directed against the camp’s female inmates. Teachers may want to prepare their students for this part of Judy’s testimony, which includes a wrenching account of Judy’s final moments with her mother, by providing them with some background information on **concentration camps** and the forced marches of concentration camp inmates toward the end of the war.



Deportees from the Kovno ghetto being loaded onto trucks for a work camp in Estonia October 26, 1942

POLAND

When Germany invaded Poland from the west on Sept. 1, 1939, the Soviets invaded Poland from the east. Poland’s eastern area had been ceded to the Soviet Union by Germany in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, an agreement the two countries had signed earlier that year. In 1941, German forces overran the Soviet-occupied area when Hitler declared war on Russia. As German forces swept through Poland, Polish Jews were forced into ghettos. This containment strategy was an interim measure designed to facilitate the deportation of ghetto prisoners to concentration camps.

STUTTHOF CONCENTRATION CAMP

This concentration camp, located 22 miles east of Danzig, Poland, was in existence from January 13, 1941, to May 1, 1945. Stutthof operated as a death camp and had a gas chamber and crematorium. Due to harsh conditions and hard labor in the camp, 65,000 inmates died there. In January 1945, as Russian armed forces approached Stutthof, most prisoners surviving in the camp were evacuated by means of a forced march. During an aerial attack by Allied forces, Judy and her sister, Rachel, escaped and found refuge in a house nearby.

THE FILM: This section of *Tak for Alt* begins with Judy’s description of the evacuation of Jews from the Kovno ghetto and their transportation to **Stutthof Concentration Camp**. When the prisoners arrive at the gates of the camp, the men are separated from the women. Judy describes her mother’s panic at being separated from Judy’s brother, Abe, whom Judy does not see again until after the war. Judy recalls what she first noticed when she entered the camp—large piles of shoes, mounds of combs, and the striped dresses and wooden clogs worn by the camp’s female inmates. Judy then describes a number of violent incidents perpetrated by the camp’s male and female guards, including the ripping out of Judy’s mother’s gold teeth, the tearing out of Judy’s long blond hair, the murder of an infant and the baby’s mother, and the death of Judy’s mother in the Stutthof **gas chamber**. The section concludes with Judy’s description of the evacuation of Stutthof and the forced march of its inmates.

Interspersed with Judy’s testimony are the comments of Stanislaw Swigon, a historian of **Stutthof Concentration Camp**. Swigon’s commentary provides important historical context for Judy’s story that makes her courageous choice to retrace her steps in Europe even more powerful. As a spokesperson for all of those who did not survive the Kovno ghetto and **Stutthof Concentration Camp**, Judy teaches us that we each must act on the principles of tolerance, respect, and responsibility if we are to do our part to ensure the survival of the human spirit.



KEY POINT: Judy's survival in **Stutthof Concentration Camp** is made possible by her mother's and other female inmates' **acts of resistance** in the camp. The women's willingness to act on Judy's behalf, despite great risk to themselves, exemplifies the film's main theme: whatever our circumstances, we all have the ability to choose attitudes and behaviors that make a positive difference in the lives of others. Judy's willingness to become involved with the Bakers in 1963 and her subsequent decision to tell her story as a Holocaust survivor are additional examples of the ethical choices available to us in even the most difficult circumstances.

Viewing objectives

- To recognize that everybody has choices, regardless of the circumstances.
- To understand how outside influences can shape one's choices and the way one views the world.
- To understand how responsible decision-making requires the individual to reflect and act beyond the influence of cultural and social forces.
- To understand how ethical decision-making can be a form of **resistance**.
- To understand how personal testimony about the Holocaust enhances our understanding of the historical record.



On her return to Jasvene, Judy looks at a photo of her cousin with a local villager.

AN ACT OF RESISTANCE

Prisoners of concentration camps engaged in various acts of resistance against the dehumanizing conditions of the camps, even though such resistance might have led to their deaths. Judy's description of camp life includes many such incidents. For example, when Judy's mother pushes her away from the threshold of the gas chamber, Judy runs naked to some nearby bushes to hide. Five female inmates whose job it is to remove clothing from corpses surround Judy, dress her, and exclaim, "Run to your barracks!" Their refusal to comply with Nazi orders is an example of the heroic resistance that camp inmates engaged in and that allowed them to retain their dignity even in the face of death.

MEMORY AFFIRMING ONE'S IDENTITY

Judy says that memories of her happy childhood in Jasvene helped her survive the concentration camp. "Amongst the death, I would close my eyes, and I would think about nasturtium[s], which we had in Jasvene... It would put me in a total trance. I could feel like I was taking an extra breath of life. I would also smell my mother's Friday morning baking challah. All those things, those wonderful, wonderful aroma[s], I would smell. And the most important thing is . . . I would hear my mother's voice singing a lullaby to me."



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

GEOGRAPHY

In order to understand Part 2 of *Tak for Alt*, students will need to locate Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, and Germany on a map of pre-World-War-II Europe. (Consult Appendix A for the map, “Two Thousand Years of Jewish Life in Europe by 1933.”) Students will also need background information on concentration camps in general and on Stutthof Concentration Camp in particular. A map of concentration camps can be found in Appendix C of the curriculum guide. After viewing Part 2 of *Tak for Alt*, students can study the map to see the number of camps and their geographical locations. Finally, students will need some background on death marches, an aspect of the Holocaust with which they may be unfamiliar.



Deportation from the Kovno ghetto on October 26, 1943.

THE RISE OF NAZISM

In 1919, the United States and European countries involved in World War I signed the Treaty of Versailles, which established national boundaries for central European countries and which stipulated the economic reparations that Germany would be required to make for its role in the war. The Treaty included a “war guilt” clause, which placed the entire responsibility for the war on Germany. German resentment over the terms of the treaty, along with severe economic instability caused in part by the reparations payments, undermined the ability of Germany’s post-war government to guide the country to full economic, political, and social recovery. The Versailles Treaty and its impact on German life were important factors in the emergence of the Nazi party as a viable political force.

The German government of the 1920s was known as the Weimar Republic. The Republic was a democracy run by the Reichstag, a democratically-elected legislature; a president; and an executive branch composed of the Chancellor, who was appointed by the president, and the Chancellor’s cabinet. The Weimar Constitution was founded on democratic principles of popular election, education for all citizens, and protection of religious minorities. Initially, the Weimar government was able to form effective political coalitions with other moderates. But as Germany’s economic woes deepened, political factions from the extreme left and right became more attractive to many Germans, who felt that a democratic government could not protect and further the interests of the German people.

The fear of a Communist takeover, in combination with the economic instability of the period, weakened the Weimar Government and laid the groundwork for Hitler’s rise to power. By the mid-1920s, Hitler’s National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) began to gain support from those most severely affected by Germany’s economic crisis, including the lower middle class and young people. Germany’s economy stabilized in the latter half of the 1920s, only to be thrown into a tailspin again by the Great Depression. Germany’s dire economic situation caused even more Germans to believe Hitler’s claims that he could stabilize Germany’s economy and restore Germany’s honor.

According to Leni Yahil, author of the definitive text, *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry*, Hitler’s rise to power was made possible by three additional factors. First, the NSDAP fostered fear of civil chaos by provoking confrontations with supporters of the Communist Party and by encouraging Germans to perceive German Jews as enemies of the state. Second, Hitler dismantled the democratic parliamentary procedures of the Reichstag. Finally, Hitler succeeded in influencing the masses of Germans with his propaganda. On January 30, 1933, Hitler became Germany’s new chancellor. When Hitler’s National Socialist Party was elected to a plurality in the German legislature later that year, the Nazi takeover of the German political structure was complete.



Burning of the Kovno ghetto during liquidation, 1944



THE FINAL SOLUTION

In his book, *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*, which he wrote while imprisoned for treason in 1923, Hitler stated his belief that thousands of Jews should have been gassed in World War I. This belief was based on Hitler's racist theory that Jewish people were genetically flawed and were a threat to German racial purity. Hitler's anti-Semitism was the foundation of the National Socialist Party's ideology and governmental structure. The notion of a Jewish threat to a supposedly "pure" Aryan race was one of the means by which the Nazis gained support from a variety of organizations and associations in Germany.

During the 1930s, the Nazis discussed various methods of ridding Europe of its Jewish inhabitants, including making daily life so difficult that Jews would choose to emigrate out of Germany. One bizarre proposal involved deporting Jews to the island of Madagascar. This plan did not come to fruition, but a plan to contain groups of Jews in ghettos was carried out once Poland was occupied in 1939. The establishment of the ghetto system facilitated the transport of Jews to concentration and death camps and thus made possible the implementation of the Nazis' genocidal agenda.

In addition to European Jews, a number of other groups were persecuted by the Nazis, including communists and other political prisoners, German criminals, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, the physically disabled, and gypsies. With the exception of the gypsies, who, like Jews, were considered racially inferior, these groups were not targeted for extinction. Death rates for all of the groups were high, however, because of the harsh conditions of camp life. Many died because of inadequate food, clothing, and shelter; extreme weather conditions and rampant disease; and overwork and direct physical mistreatment from the Nazis, such as beatings, medical experiments, torture, and murder.

No documentation has been found that proves Hitler ordered the "final solution," but historians agree that Hitler's main aides operated on his instructions when they established the camp system and oversaw the genocide of the Jewish population of Eastern Europe. The three aides who were centrally involved in the genocide were Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS; Hermann Goring, the head of the German Air Forces; and Reinhard Heydrich, Hitler's Head of Reich Security Services and administrator of concentration camps.

The genocide of the Jews first began with the Einsatzgruppen, four mobile killing squads comprised mainly of SS officers and overseen by Himmler. The Einsatzgruppen used automatic weapons to kill Jewish prisoners turned over to them by the Wehrmacht (the regular German army) as they swept through Eastern Europe. When it became clear that the mass shootings of Jewish prisoners had negative psychological consequences on the killing squads, the Nazis instituted the use of mobile gas chambers, which were vans or trucks equipped to suffocate forty to sixty people at a time. But such vans were unreliable, and the SS were still required to face their victims after they were gassed, so the Nazis searched for alternative extermination methods.

In 1941, Goring ordered Heydrich to develop plans for a final solution to the Jewish question. Heydrich presented his plans at the Wannsee Conference, a meeting of fourteen high-ranking Nazi officials that occurred on January 20, 1942. Heydrich's plans included continued use of the Einsatzgruppen along with the establishment of death camps across Eastern Europe. In areas where Jews had already been concentrated in ghettos, especially in Poland and the newly occupied Eastern territories, deportations by well-planned train systems were carried out to specially designed death camps. Six million Jews were the victims of the final solution, along with an additional five million non-Jewish victims who did not fit the Nazis' definition of racial purity.



Jews arriving at a concentration camp



Women on their way to slave labor in Auschwitz-Birkenau

**APPELL**

German for “roll call.” Appells were conducted every morning and evening in all the concentration and slave-labor camps within occupied Europe. Appells could last for as long as half a day and could be called at any time of the day or night.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Large prison complexes housing all designated “enemies” of the Nazi regime. The Nazis established concentration camps shortly after their assumption of power on January 30, 1933. Early concentration camps contained actual and potential political opponents, such as communists and socialists, and other “undesirables,” such as Jehovah’s Witnesses, gypsies, and homosexuals. Beginning in 1938, Jews were targeted for internment in camps solely because they were Jews. Before then, only Jews who fit one of the earlier categories were interned in camps. The first three concentration camps established were Dachau (near Munich), Buchenwald (near Weimar) and Sachsenhausen (near Berlin).

RESISTANCE

Overt or covert opposition to the Nazis and their collaborators by individual Jews or groups of Jews. The foundation for Jewish resistance was the struggle for physical survival. Jews smuggled food, clothing, and medicine into ghettos and camps and traded goods whenever possible. Resistance also took the form of organized rescue activity by some Jewish partisans. Spiritual resistance included Jewish religious observance in the face of laws that forbade this activity. There were also cases of armed resistance in ghettos and concentration camps.

GAS CHAMBER

Method of murder first used by the Nazis in the Euthanasia program started in 1939. This program was directed against those people whom Nazis called “useless mouths”: the handicapped, the frail, the mentally retarded, and others. Initially, the Nazis used mobile gas chambers that killed forty to sixty prisoners at a time. Fixed location gas chambers in concentration camps were in use by 1942. Disguised as shower rooms, these chambers were used to kill prisoners with carbon monoxide or Zyklon B, a form of cyanide. The gas chamber in Stutthof from which Judy escapes began operation in June of 1944.

DEATH MARCH

Forced marches of concentration camp prisoners over long distances, under unbearable conditions, during which the prisoners were abused or killed by their guards. Most death marches occurred near the war’s end as the Eastern front collapsed. The purpose of the marches, some of which lasted several months, was to destroy all evidence of the camps.

1. What was the sequence of events that took Judy and her family to Stutthof?
2. How do the selfless actions of others help Judy survive her camp experience?
3. How do family ties and memories of her childhood in Jasvene help Judy survive the horrors of Stutthof and the extreme circumstances of the death march?
4. In what specific ways do the female prisoners in Stutthof resist the Nazis in the camp and on the death march?
5. Judy says that, in the ghettos, in the concentration camps, and on death marches, everyone was brave, and that those who survived did so because of “mazel” (luck). Discuss those aspects of Judy’s camp experience that she survived because of choices that others made or that she survived because of luck.
6. In your opinion, how does Judy’s story of surviving the Kovno ghetto, Stutthof Concentration Camp, and the death march expand our understanding of facts about the Holocaust that we can find in history books?
7. Describe a time that you or someone you know had to make a difficult decision that you knew was right. What considerations made it possible for you or for the person you know to choose the right course of action, despite the possibility of negative consequences for yourself or for others?



“Amongst the death, I would close my eyes and think about nasturtium[s], which we had in Jasvene. I would smell that nasturtium. It put me in a total trance. I could feel like I was taking an extra breath of life.”

1. Reflection

Throughout the film, we see how Judy’s memory of events from her childhood shapes her testimony and her perspective on current events. Students can create a scrapbook that depicts the following:

- Key memories from Judy’s childhood
- Memories that have formed Judy’s view of the world
- Beliefs and values that influenced decisions she made while in Stutthof Concentration Camp

2. Decision-making

To develop their understanding of the concept that everybody has choices regardless of their circumstances, students can identify key decisions made by various people in Stutthof Concentration Camp and on the death march. Students can then discuss each decision-making moment in one or more of the following ways:

- *Ethical decision-making*: choices made that reflect an individual’s commitment to principles of tolerance, respect, and responsibility.
- *Resistance*: internal strategies or external behaviors that opposed the Nazi system of dehumanization.
- *Selfless acts*: risking one’s own safety by acting on behalf of others.

3. Web Quest

Judy’s personal experience in Stutthof Concentration Camp is an excellent introduction to a focused research activity on concentration camps in general. The following information will help teachers create web quests designed to teach students more about specific aspects of camp life. The recommended web sites provide specific, reliable information about concentration camps, including maps and testimonies. If the decision is made to consult web sites not included in the list, please check the credibility of the sites’ sponsors to ensure the reliability of information provided by the sites.

"I would also smell my mother’s Friday morning baking challah. All those things, those wonderful aromas, I would smell. The most important thing is that I would hear my mother’s voice singing a lullaby to me.”



POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Unfortunately, web sites sponsored by Holocaust revisionists (those who claim the Holocaust did not occur) are numerous and will appear in a general think-engine search for topics related to the Holocaust. ***For this reason, we strongly suggest that you thoroughly review all web-based materials before presenting them to your students.*** A well-constructed web quest will develop students' abilities to recognize legitimate sources of information and will cultivate productive and informed research habits for future projects.

The WebQuest approach used here is based on the work of Bernie Dodge at San Diego State University. On his web site at <http://webquest.sdsu.edu>, Dodge provides the following definition of a WebQuest:

"A WebQuest is an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet. It includes:

- an introduction to set the stage and provide background information
- a task that is doable and interesting
- a set of information sources needed to complete the task
- a description of the process the learners should go through in accomplishing the task
- some guidance on how to organize the information acquired (e.g. guide questions, timelines, concept maps)
- a conclusion that brings closure to the quest."

"I went back to my
good happy childhood
in Jasvene"

Create a web quest that will allow students to discover some of the defining characteristics of camp life, including:

- Living conditions (housing, clothing, and food)
- Types of forced labor
- Administration
- Survival strategies of prisoners

Create your web quest by using the following web sites:

The Ghetto Fighters' Museum: www.gfh.org.il

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: www.ushmm.org

Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation: www.vhf.org

Map out your quest efficiently so your students do not have to search the entire web site. There is much more information than they need in each site. Below are two examples of how to map web quests on these topics.

Information from a testimony:

www.gfh.org.il:

Click on American Flag.

Go to the "History" tab.

In the History Workshop, go to "Testimony of Survivors."

Read "Deborah Ben Yehuda-Polalk."

Describe Deborah's experiences in the camp.

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES



SECTION 2: (16:57-32:00)

Information about the camps:

www.ushmm.org:

Go to “History.”

Go to “Holocaust Learning Center.”

Look up Concentration Camps.

If you have the technology (RealPlayer 8), go to “Personal Histories” and listen to a few of the included testimonies.

After completing their web quests, students can work individually or in small groups to identify the common elements of concentration camps. The entire class can share their ideas and discuss the ways in which Stutthof Concentration Camp was unique.

4. Testimony as Historical Resource

Many Holocaust survivors have recorded their testimony in writing. Such records are invaluable resources for developing a better understanding of daily life in concentration camps. Below is a list of testimonies that are recommended for classroom use at the high school or college level. *Please note that all the sources listed include difficult material and should be reviewed by the teacher prior to student use.* It is also suggested that teachers encourage their students to write about their reactions to what they read. Teachers may also want to give students opportunities to discuss their feelings with their instructor and/or with other students.

Recommended written testimonies of the Holocaust (see the Additional Resources section at the end of the curriculum guide for full bibliographic citations):

Night by Elie Wiesel

Children in the Holocaust and World War II: Their Secret Diaries by Laurel Holliday

Star Children by Clara Asscher-Pinkhof

Man's Search for Meaning by Viktor Frankl

The Sunflower by Simon Wiesenthal

Four Stories of Hiding and Rescue: Testimonies of Survivors Who Were Children

During the Holocaust (Videocassette) by Yad Layeled Children's Memorial,

The Ghetto Fighters' House



Judy returns to Stutthof Concentration Camp

Stutthof historian Stanislaw Swigon explains to Judy:

“Today when we look around the forest that grows around us, we can hardly imagine what really happened here. . . . This is the place where human bodies were burned on a pyre. Sometimes we are surprised when we look around and we see that everything grows so wonderfully. This soil here is full of blood and ashes—human ashes from. . . . human bodies. That’s why everything grows so quickly here.”

SECTION 3: (32:00-47:50) **“We only wanted to survive as Jews.”**

Words bolded in the main text are defined in the sidebars on the Summary and Viewing/Discussion Questions pages.

SUMMARY

The Film: Part III of *Tak for Alt* describes Judy and her sister's escape from Poland to Denmark and the Danish people's rescue of Denmark's Jews. While still in Poland, Judy and her sister take refuge in a Catholic convent, which they leave when they are pressured to convert to Catholicism. They then work in a **Wehrmacht** Station run by Mrs. Arenstein, whose husband is an **SS** officer. After **Allied forces** bomb the **Wehrmacht** Station, the girls escape to Denmark, where they find a safe haven from the Nazis, despite the fact that Denmark had been occupied by the German army since 1940.

Once in Denmark, Judy begins to recover from the physical and psychic traumas she suffered during World War II. Judy's healing is made possible by the compassionate treatment she and her sister receive from individual Danes, most especially Paula and Sven Jensen, Lutherans who created “an incredible family” for Judy and her sister. Judy is also strongly affected by the entire Danish people's ethical resistance to the Nazis. Denmark's courageous decision to protect their Jewish citizens during the German occupation and their welcoming back of Denmark's Jews after liberation renew Judy's faith in humanity; as Judy says, the Danes' principled behavior convinced her that “not all people are [like] beasts.”

MAZEL

Yiddish term for “luck.” As she stands on the banks of the Vistula River, Judy attributes her survival to a series of lucky circumstances.

HIDDEN IDENTITY

The hiding of one's true identity from the Nazis. Many individuals fleeing from or resisting the Nazis assumed false identities. Those working in resistance undergrounds created fake identity cards and papers. Children were placed with non-Jewish families and told to tell an “under-cover” story about themselves and their association with their new families. Judy and her sister took on false identities when they worked for Mrs. Arenstein, stating that they were Lithuanian Catholics. They did not reveal their Jewish identity to this wife of an SS officer.

SWEDEN

A northern European country that remained neutral during WWII and that offered safe harbor to thousands of Danish Jewish refugees during the war. Although Sweden's refugee laws were stringent in the beginning of the war, the country ultimately accepted nearly 8,000 Danish Jews in 1943 and more than 9,000 other Danish refugees during the war.

The Danish Ambassador to the U.S., Henrick Kauffmann, was instrumental in securing Swedish aid for the Danish Jews. In addition to obtaining support from Sweden's fund for refugees, Ambassador Kauffmann solicited donations from Jewish and Danish Americans to assist Danish Jews in Sweden. Refugees were provided with shelter, clothing, food, and education. Many refugees in Sweden supported themselves by working in refugee relief. The Swedish Jewish community, along with Jewish refugees in Sweden, also attempted to send parcels of food and supplies, via the Red Cross, to fellow Jews in internment camps.



Judy and Rachel in Denmark after Liberation



Paula and Sven Jensen

RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

An umbrella term for the various underground groups in German-occupied Europe. These groups planned sabotage and covert activities in an attempt to defeat Nazi Germany during WWII. In addition to accumulating weapons, underground groups hid and rescued Jews and others targeted by the Nazis.

ZIONISM

Political movement and term coined in the publication of Theodore Herzl's "Judenstaat" and at the first Zionist congress in the 1880's. The idea of Zionism stems from a longing for an ancient homeland from which Jews were exiled nearly 2000 years ago. Modern Zionism emerged from the rise of European anti-Semitism and the dream of returning to a Jewish homeland.

VISTULA RIVER

The river begins in the Carpathian Mountains and flows through Poland, passing Cracow in the southwest and Warsaw near the center of Poland. It empties into the Baltic Sea near Danzig/Gdansk. The river is 678 miles long and is an important trade route. It served as the demarcation line that divided Poland into Soviet and German annexations after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact of August 1939. The Vistula was an obstacle on the way to freedom for Judy and her sister.

KING CHRISTIAN X

The Danish King during the German occupation of Denmark. King Christian (1870-1947) publicly opposed the Nazis' attempt to deport Danish Jews and thus helped motivate his subjects to engage in principled resistance to the Nazis. King Christian's ethical leadership demonstrates Judy's belief that each of us can make a positive difference in the lives of others, no matter how difficult the circumstances.

KEY POINT: In this section of the film, Judy and her sister hide their Jewish identity in order to survive. Once in Denmark, they must reclaim their Jewish identity in order to fully recover from the war. Part III of *Tak for Alt* shows how an entire country working together can make a difference in the lives of individuals. The Danes' willingness to act on the principles of tolerance and respect enabled them to save the vast majority of Denmark's Jews from the Nazis.

VIEWING OBJECTIVES

- To understand how cultural and social factors help shape individual identities and affect individuals' behavioral choices within a community.
- To examine and evaluate individuals' behavioral choices in terms of the universal principles of tolerance, respect, and responsibility.
- To explore the ways in which government structures enhance or deny the cultural identities of citizens.
- To understand how Judy's Jewish identity was the basis for her survival.
- To know and accept one's cultural identity while interacting positively with members of other cultural groups.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT

THE DANISH RESPONSE TO THE NAZI INVASION

The following is excerpted from The Rescue of the Danish Jews: A Primer. Eds. Carol Rittner and Leo Goldberger. Series Editor: Dennis B. Klein. New York: Anti-Defamation League Braun Center for Holocaust Studies, 1993.



After Liberation Day, Danish Jews return to Copenhagen harbor from Sweden

On April 9, 1940, Nazi Germany invaded neutral Denmark. In the official note presented to Danish Foreign Minister Peter Munch, the German government declared that it had no intention “now or in the future of encroaching on Denmark’s territorial integrity or political independence.” Having only a small army—about twenty thousand men, mostly inexperienced recruits scattered around the country—and with no alternative other than to fight what most certainly would have been a brutal losing battle against superior German forces, Denmark surrendered and accepted German occupation.

In his response to Nazi Germany’s demands, Danish Foreign Minister Munch drew attention to what was considered by the Danes to be a key sentence in the German note: the government of the Third Reich had no intention “now or in the future of encroaching on Denmark’s territorial integrity or political independence.” That sentence became the basis for the “policy of negotiation” regulating cooperation between Nazi Germany and Denmark during the years of occupation.

Denmark was allowed a degree of autonomy unheard of in any other country occupied by Nazi Germany. The Danes retained their own government. The King, Christian X, was permitted to remain on the throne. The Danish foreign office, parliament (*Rigsdag*), and courts continued to exercise their functions. Even the press was allowed a surprising amount of freedom. The Royal Danish armed forces and the police remained undisturbed. The constitutional protection of the Danish Bill of Rights, including the lives and rights of Denmark’s Jews, was upheld.

Yet, despite their promises the Germans did infringe upon Denmark’s “territorial integrity” and “political independence.” In June 1941, for example, immediately after the German invasion of Russia, the Danish police implemented German orders to arrest Communist leaders and active members of the party, including members of the *Rigsdag*.

Working within the “policy of negotiation” had its advantages, however. The Danes remained in control of their own domestic affairs, and no amount of German pressure could alter the status quo of the Jews in Denmark (including 1,500 refugees who had come to Denmark between 1933 and 1940). Some 7,800 Jews lived in Denmark in 1940. About 5,000 were native Danes whose families had lived in Denmark for generations and had achieved a proud place in the history of Danish society.

Throughout the German occupation, the Danish government rejected the notion of a “Jewish question” whenever the Germans raised it. The Jews, they asserted, were like all the citizens of Denmark and would be treated no differently. As long as the Danes were in charge of their own domestic affairs, the government was prepared to shield its Jewish inhabitants against the imposition of special legislation against them—such as the Nuremberg racial laws, which were never implemented in Denmark.

In addition to not being forced to wear the Yellow Star, Jews were never barred from restaurants, public places, schools, cinemas, or theaters. Unlike their counterparts in other Nazi-occupied countries, their property was not confiscated and they were not dismissed from their employment nor was movement restricted.

“In 1943, while my sister and I went through the Kovno ghetto [and] Stutthof Concentration Camp, the Danes saved their Jews by taking them across to Sweden.”



After Liberation Day, Danish Jews return to Copenhagen harbor from Sweden

The Great Synagogue in Copenhagen remained open, and relationships among members of the Jewish community remained unhindered despite the presence of German troops. The Jews of Denmark were never made to feel like “outsiders” among the Danish people whose fate they shared during the German occupation.

On August 28, 1943, Nazi Germany, through its plenipotentiary in Denmark, SS-Obergruppenfuehrer Werner Best, issued an ultimatum to the Danish government. Public gatherings of more than five persons were prohibited, as were strikes and financial support of strikers. An 8:30 p.m. curfew was imposed. Firearms and explosives were confiscated, press censorship was imposed, and Danish special tribunals for dealing with infringements of these prohibitions and regulations were to be established. Sabotage was to be immediately punished by death.

On September 8, 1943, Dr. Best sent a telegram to his superiors in Berlin saying that the time was ripe for action against Danish Jews. It is not clear why Best sent the telegram. Until then, he had vacillated on the “Jewish question” in Denmark. Perhaps he wanted to secure control from his nemesis, General Hermann von Hanneken, commander of the Wehrmacht in Denmark, or perhaps he wanted to impress Hitler and Himmler. Whatever his motives, by the end of September, 1943 it became clear that the Jews of Denmark would not escape the fate of Jews in other parts of Nazi-occupied Europe.

Curiously, Best informed Georg F. Duckwitz, a German shipping official in Copenhagen and his confidant, about the German roundup of Jews in Denmark. Duckwitz was so outraged that he forewarned several Danish politicians who were his friends about the planned action. They, in turn, immediately alerted the Jewish leadership.

On Wednesday, September 29, 1943, just before the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah), Rabbi Marcus Melchior sounded the alarm. He told his congregants, assembled for morning services, what the Germans were planning to do during the night between October 1 and 2, when the Nazis knew that Jewish families would be gathered in their homes for the holiday. They were to warn anyone they knew who was Jewish to go into hiding immediately. People quickly set about contacting relatives, friends and neighbors.

As word spread, non-Jewish Danes began to do what they could to help Jews. Friends, acquaintances, and even total strangers hid Jews in homes, hospitals, and churches. All sorts of people helped: rich and poor, men and women, young and old—doctors, nurses, teachers, scholars, students, housewives, secretaries, politicians, policemen, clergy, taxi-cab drivers, fishermen, dock workers, merchants, high society matrons, and, of course, members of the resistance.

"I feel I owe my life to the Danes. Not only my life to live, but they also gave me back my self esteem as a human being. I saw that not all human beings were as beasts, like the Nazis were, or the collaborators that collaborated with the Nazis."



Boats in Gilleleje harbor in Northern Denmark



“The Danes helped us escape to Sweden, but much more important was the welcome we had when we returned immediately after the liberation in May 1945. Because history shows many cases where the non-Jewish population would help Jews to leave the country, but very few examples of the Gentile population welcoming Jews back.”

—Rabbi Bent Melchior, former Rabbi of Copenhagen
and son of Rabbi Marcus Melchior, who warned his congregation
of the German plan to deport Denmark's Jews



Danes celebrate in the street on Liberation Day, May 5, 1945

Jews went into hiding, aided by their Danish neighbors. The next step however, was to get them to Sweden which had agreed to accept all Danish Jewish refugees. Boats were needed. Immediately people began contacting fishermen, wharf workers, yacht owners—everyone and anyone who could help the Jews to make the illegal and dangerous crossing by water to Sweden. Up and down the coast fishing boats—large and small—were pressed into action. Danes everywhere helped: some because they were paid to do a job, others because they hated the Nazis and finally had a way to outwit their German occupiers, and still others because they were determined to stop the Final Solution in Denmark.

Almost all attempts to evade the Germans were successful, but some failed. Not every Dane was high-minded. On the night of October 6, 1943 about 80 Jews, hiding in a church attic until a transport could spirit them away from the small fishing hamlet of Gilleleje, were betrayed. They were arrested and deported by the Germans.

Of the nearly 8,000 Jews in Denmark in 1943, the Gestapo succeeded in arresting only 474. These unfortunate men and women were sent to Theresienstadt, the so-called “model” concentration camp where they were forced to endure dreadful conditions until the end of the war. But their fellow Danes never forgot them. A Red Cross delegation from Denmark was even given permission in 1944 to visit the camp's Danish Jewish inmates. On April 15, 1945, Swedish Red Cross buses suddenly appeared in Theresienstadt and carried 423 Danish Jews to safety in Sweden. By the time they left Theresienstadt, 57 Danes had died from old age or illness. Five babies also had been born there in 1944.

There were many factors that contributed to the success of the rescue of the Danish Jews in 1943. Leni Yahil, in her authoritative study, *The Rescue of Danish Jewry*, listed five: (1) The small number of Jews in Denmark; (2) The special political conditions prevailing in the model protectorate of the Germans; (3) The geographic proximity of Sweden; (4) The date of the assault on Danish Jews (Autumn, 1943)—a turning point in the war marked by German defeats at El Alemein and Stalingrad; and (5) The democratic traditions of the Danish people.

VIEWING/DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



SECTION 3: (32:00-47:50)

1. Why did Judy and her sister refuse to convert to Catholicism, even though doing so might have helped them survive?
2. How did luck (*mazel*) continue to shape Judy and her sister's experience during the war?
3. How did the Danes respond to the German invasion of their country? What specific acts of resistance to the German occupation can you identify that the Danes engaged in? How did such actions give Judy and her sister hope?
4. How does Bella's story of her family's rescue by the Danes relate to Judy's story?
5. Once in Denmark, what prevents Judy and her sister from identifying themselves as Jews?
6. How does the Danish people's behavior encourage Judy and her sister to identify themselves as Jews?
7. What key moments illustrate the fact that Judy's Jewish identity serves as a foundation for her survival?
8. How do Paula and Sven Jensen contribute to Judy and her sister's survival? How do their actions show that one person can make a difference?

WEHRMACHT

The regular German army. The army policy was to turn all Jews over to the SS *Einsatzgruppen*, which then frequently executed them immediately. The Wehrmacht tacitly endorsed the genocide or actively assisted the SS by rounding up and helping to shoot Jewish prisoners.

TYPHUS

Any of several forms of infectious disease transmitted by fleas and lice. The primary symptoms of Typhus are fever, skin rash, and delirium.

SS

Abbreviation for "Schutzstaffel" (protection squad), a guard force originally formed in 1923 to provide personal protection for Nazi party officials. Later overseen by Heinrich Himmler, the commander of Germany's police forces, the SS eventually included the Gestapo, which was charged with investigating and rooting out opposition to the Nazi party; the *Einsatzgruppen*, the mobile killing squads that followed Wehrmacht units in the invasion of the Soviet Union; the *Waffen SS*, special fighting units of men who had passed the Nazi loyalty test; and the *Death's Head* regiments, which were in charge of concentration camps and wore a skull-and-bones insignia on their uniforms.

ELSINORE

Northern port in Denmark from which Danish Jewish refugees departed to Sweden. Elsinore was also the location of one of Denmark's most effective underground units, which was code-named "The Elsinore Sewing Group." The "Sewing Group" was responsible for locating hiding places, arranging ground transportation, and hiring fishing boats to take Jews across to Hålsingborg, Sweden. Part of the larger resistance that saved most of Denmark's Jews, the Elsinore Sewing Group continued to run operations for other refugees through the spring of 1944.

ALLIED POWERS

Those nations allied in opposition to the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy, Japan) in WWII. The Allied powers included Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States, China, and all other wartime members of the United Nations.

RED CROSS

International society for the relief of suffering in time of war or disaster. The Danish Red Cross, in conjunction with the Swedish and International Red Cross, attempted to send parcels and letters to Danish Jews in internment camps. A Red Cross delegation also received permission to inspect the Theresienstadt ghetto/camp, where there were approximately 470 Danish Jews. In addition to their work on behalf of Jews and others confined in the camps, the Red Cross also played an important role in Denmark itself, caring for and nursing back to health refugees, including Judy and her sister.

"TAK FOR ALT"

A Danish expression commonly found on Danish gravestones. Literally translated, "Tak for Alt" means "thanks for everything," but the meaning is greater. A more accurate translation is "with deep and profound gratitude for the bounty and fullness of life." The title of Judy's story, "Tak for Alt," clearly states Judy's profound gratitude and respect for Paula Jensen, for the Danish people, and for others who, through selfless action, make a difference in the lives of others.



POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

1. Map Activity

As a class, chart Judy and her sister's movements from Lithuania to Denmark and review the means by which they made their escape. Have students locate Sweden on the map and reflect on how the Danish people were able to aid their fellow citizens' escape to Sweden. Teachers may consult Appendix D for a map that tracks Judy's journey from Lithuania to Denmark.

2. Research

A. Historical Perspectives

- Provide students with a copy of the map of Denmark in Appendix E.
- Have students recall the Danish rescue of Bella Kaznelson documented in this section of *Tak for Alt*.
- Students can then research Danish history in order to understand the Danish people's response to the German invasion of Denmark and to the Nazis' attempt to deport Danish Jews. Such research can focus on the cultural pluralism and political equality that characterize Danish history and on the Danish government's great openness to and respect for its Jewish citizens.
- Students can compare Danish resistance to the German occupying forces with the collaborationist response of the Lithuanians described in Part II of *Tak for Alt*.
- Students can then discuss how each country's response to the Germans either upheld or undermined democratic principles.

B. Acts of Resistance

In small groups, the class can research documented acts of resistance during the Holocaust. Examples of such resistance include the following:

Individual resistance

Carl Lutz
Yukiko Sugihara
Rudolf Vrbra
Raoul Wallenberg

Group resistance

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon
The Rebellion at Sobibor
The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
The White Rose

The Anti-Defamation League's "The Tribute to the Rescuers" web site at http://www.adl.org/tribute_to_rescuers/edu_overview.asp is an especially good research tool for this activity. The site includes a variety of stories about heroic resistance activities during the Holocaust.

In class presentations, students can identify the following for each act of resistance they research:

- Relevant historical context for the specific act of resistance
- The range of behavioral choices available in the situation
- How the acts of resistance reflect ethical decision-making and the fact that one person, one community, or one country can make a difference.

After discussing these issues, students can then draw parallels between the acts of resistance they researched and acts of resistance documented in Part III of *Tak for Alt*, such as Judy and her sister's decision to leave the Catholic orphanage and the Danish rescue of the Jews.

“There has never been animosity between the Danes and the Jews. They just fit in. They were citizens of Denmark. So . . . when they were in trouble, we started, and—bang!—did it go fast.”

—Axel Christensen, *Danish Resistance Saboteur and Archivist of the Danish Resistance Museum*



“We thought we were the only two Jews alive. And we only wanted to survive as Jews. Nothing else mattered to us.”

3. Family Research and Cultural Identity

A. A Unique Family Tree

Ask students to explore important aspects of their personal identities, including cultural and social factors, value systems, and outside influences. After brainstorming a list of important components of their identities, students can create a family tree that indicates how individuals from previous generations and from their immediate extended families have influenced students' individual identities. Ask students to indicate the following for each family member:

- Person's birth place
- Religion
- Race and/or ethnicity
- Any known migration or move to new places
- Three personal values this person claimed (students can ask living members of their families to help them identify key elements of deceased family members' personal identities)
- Three ways this person might have influenced the student's life and value system (through religious belief, cultural connection, or some other factor)

B. Building Bridges

Once students complete their family trees, ask them to make a list of the different cultural groups present within their families. In small groups, students can discuss how these different groups interact with one another in their families (for example, during holiday gatherings or on special occasions such as birthdays and graduations). Students may also discuss where cross-cultural tensions might exist in their families. Students can then write a focused paper on how these cultural differences have helped them to build bridges within family or among friends. They should discuss the importance of learning about different cultures and express how building bridges has shaped their experiences as individuals and within their families.

After creating their family trees, students can work in small groups or as a whole class to reflect on what they have learned about themselves. Students can explain the make-up of their family trees to one another and explore how important aspects of their families' histories have shaped them as individuals either positively or negatively.



Judy and Rachel in Denmark after Liberation

SECTION 4: (47:48-59:00) "One person can do a lot."

Words bolded in the main text are defined in the sidebars on the Summary and Viewing/Discussion Questions pages.

SUMMARY

The Film: The final section of *Tak for Alt* describes important stages of Judy's recovery in terms of her family and her cultural identity. The section begins with Judy's description of her journey to North America, her reunion with her brother in Toronto, and her family life and professional development in Philadelphia. Judy goes back to school and earns a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. Working with children allows her to witness and to be a part of normal childhood experiences that Judy longed for when she was a girl in Lithuania but which World War II made impossible.

After describing Judy's life in Philadelphia, *Tak for Alt* returns to the Baker incident, with which the film opens. The discriminatory action directed against the Bakers jolts Judy into realizing that racism and bigotry still occur and that what happened to the Jews in Europe during World War II can happen to other people. This realization motivates her to begin telling her story and to speak out against incidents of intolerance and **discrimination**. She participates in the 1963 **March on Washington** for Jobs and Freedom; meets **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**; and joins the **Panel of American Women** to advocate for the principles of **tolerance**, **respect**, and **responsibility**.

The film's conclusion begins with Judy's return to **Ariogala**, Lithuania, where 650 Jewish people, including 146 members of her own family, were killed by the Einsatzgruppen in 1941. Judy mourns their deaths by visiting their gravesite and by reciting the *Kaddish*, the Jewish prayer for the dead. The film concludes with a portrait of Judy's living family members and Judy's explanation that, when she holds her grandson, she is holding him for all of the people who did not survive the Holocaust, especially those who were with her in Stutthof.

JEWISH BURIAL RITUALS

As is the case with all religious traditions, Judaism includes a number of rituals that place death within a larger cultural context and that help the living to grieve and to remember the dead. The ancient custom of placing a tombstone at the head of a grave is one such ritual that helps keep the memory of the deceased alive.

The tombstone for a person of the Jewish faith will usually include the Hebrew name of the deceased, his or her father's name, and the date of death according to the Hebrew calendar. When Judy visits her father's grave at the beginning of "Tak for Alt," her husband places a piece of paper over the writing on the gravestone and rubs on it so that Judy can have a written record of the words on her father's headstone.

Toward the end of "Tak for Alt," Judy visits a monument in Ariogala memorializing the slaughter of 650 Jews by the Nazis in 1941. While at the gravesite, Judy recites the "Kaddish," the Jewish prayer for the dead. This prayer does not mention death; rather, it is an exaltation of life and God. Judy also places a stone on the top of the monument. This custom may represent reburial, or it may be a reminder of the biblical phrase "from dust to dust."

PANEL OF AMERICAN WOMEN

This national civil rights organization advocated integration and spoke out against intolerance and discrimination. Founded in 1948 by Esther Brown, a Jewish woman who lived in Kansas City, Missouri, the Panel gave American women a public voice in the struggle against prejudice. Brown founded the organization after successfully suing the Kansas City school system for its failure to accommodate black and white students equally in the public schools. Judy Meisel joined the interracial organization after witnessing the white mob action against the Bakers.



Some of Judy's family members who perished in Ariogala



KEY POINT:

In one of her presentations to a group of students, Judy asks who is responsible for what happened to the Jewish population in Europe during World War II. Her answer is that we are all responsible. Accepting one's responsibility to speak out against intolerance and **discrimination** and to protect individual and group rights is the most important message in *Tak for Alt*. Judy's experience in the United States illustrates this point: her decision to talk about her experiences during World War II changes the world in a positive way and models for all of us how one person can make a positive difference in the lives of others.

VIEWING OBJECTIVES

- To understand the universal principles of **tolerance**, respect, and responsibility that motivated Judy to act on behalf of the Bakers and to tell her story.
- To understand the dynamic relationship between historical events and cultural identity.
- To understand different groups' adaptation to the United States and their contributions to our nation's cultural identity.
- To identify demographic changes resulting from World War II in the countries where Judy lived.
- To recognize the power of memory and the influence of personal experiences on an individual's values and sense of self.



Judy in 1949, just before leaving Denmark for Toronto

ARIOGALA

A town in central Lithuania in the same area as Jasvene. Ariogala had a population of less than 2,000 in 1940. During the Holocaust, Jews from Ariogala and several smaller towns were marched by the Einsatzgruppen to a remote field near Ariogala and executed there.

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

A Baptist minister who helped organize the U.S. Civil Rights movement during the 1950s and 1960s. King's philosophy of nonviolent civil disobedience against unjust laws and his own principled behavior in the face of discrimination galvanized support for African Americans' civil rights. In "Letter from Birmingham Jail," which he wrote while imprisoned for leading protests against racial discrimination in Alabama, King states that "one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." The letter, which King addressed to Jewish and Christian religious leaders in Birmingham, asserts that one of the greatest obstacles to freedom is the failure of law-abiding citizens to speak out against discrimination and prejudice. King's profound impact on American social relations demonstrates Judy's claim that "one person can do a lot" when working for justice and tolerance.

MARCH ON WASHINGTON

A civil rights demonstration in which 250,000 Americans gathered on the Washington, D.C., mall to dramatize their support for a Civil Rights bill before Congress. At the time it took place on August 28, 1963, the March on Washington was the largest civil rights demonstration in American history. Now considered the high point of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, the demonstration was led by an integrated group of civil rights activists, including Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who delivered his famous speech, "I Have a Dream," there. Judy Meisel participated in the March on Washington in memory of all of those who had not survived the concentration camps.



HISTORICAL CONTEXT



The Bakers in front of their home in Folcroft, Pennsylvania

THE UNITED STATES CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT: A HISTORY OF INTERRACIAL COOPERATION

Judy Meisel's participation in the March on Washington and her work with the Panel of American Women are part of a long history of Americans from different racial and ethnic backgrounds working together to achieve equality for all citizens. Organized interracial civil rights work in the United States began with the emergence of the movement to abolish slavery. William Lloyd Garrison's American Anti-Slavery Society set a precedent for interracial efforts when it hired fugitive slave Frederick Douglass as a full-time lecturer. Garrison advocated not only the abolition of slavery but also full civil and political rights for African Americans. After the Civil War, Douglass continued to work in interracial organizations that advocated full civil rights for African Americans and women. He pointed to the successes Jews had in overcoming discrimination in the United States to predict that blacks would someday enjoy the same social success.

A number of historic parallels between the experiences of European Jews and American blacks—enslavement, discrimination, segregations, and diasporas—encouraged Douglass and other African American leaders to identify with Jewish Americans. The rise of anti-Semitism in the United States in the first decade of the twentieth century, along with post-Reconstruction populism in the South, prompted black, white, and Jewish leaders to form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 1910 (Lewis 85, Berson 28). The lynching of a Jewish man in 1915 in Georgia escalated Jewish involvement in the civil rights movement (Berson 31), and, by the 1920s, the NAACP was winning a series of legal victories due in part to the financial backing and legal counsel of Jewish agencies and individuals (Lewis 94). In the 1930s, the rise of Nazism led most Americans to urge various groups to unite behind the common goal of defeating fascism abroad. L.D. Reddick, for example, urged blacks and Jews to reject “the particularism of each group yelling for its rights” and to recognize that “in the face of common foes abroad and at home the most elemental self-interest would dictate that Jews and Negroes ‘close ranks’ immediately” (122, 119).

The Jewish-black alliance intensified in 1945 when the NAACP and American Jewish Congress lawyers began working together on anti-discrimination statutes and Fair Employment Practices legislation (Berson 96-97). The 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, which was argued before the U.S. Supreme Court by NAACP lawyers, was the culminating point of the legislative approach. This U.S. Supreme Court decision, which ruled that Kansas' segregated schools were unconstitutional, reversed an earlier Supreme Court ruling, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), in which the court had ruled that segregation did not constitute discrimination. The legislative approach of the NAACP must be seen within a larger context of U.S. civil rights activity during the post-war period. Esther Brown's Panel of American Women, an organization Judy Meisel joined in the 1960s, was one of many organizations advocating civil rights in the 1950s and 1960s. Other civil rights groups operating at this time included the Urban League, which was founded in 1911 to address blacks' economic and social needs, and the Congress of Racial Equality, founded in the 1940s and motivated by a nonviolent religious philosophy focused on building an interracial, inter-religious “beloved community.”

“I’ll never forget when
I went in the March on Washington.
I was very lucky; I met
Martin Luther King twice.
It was just exhilarating
to hear “I Have a Dream.”
I think those were the most
exciting, exciting times.”



The NAACP laid the groundwork for and supplied material support to these and other civil rights organizations of the late '50s and early '60s. NAACP activists worked in local communities to register voters and to train civil rights activists; the organization also provided money for projects and supplied legal counsel to other civil rights groups. The most important of these civil rights organizations in relation to *Tak for Alt* is the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). Founded in 1958 and led by Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., SCLC was an outgrowth of the Montgomery Improvement Association, which organized a long-term boycott of Montgomery's segregated bus system. The issue was ultimately decided by the United States Supreme Court, which in 1956 let stand a lower court ruling that Montgomery's segregated public transportation system was unconstitutional.

SCLC's goals were the desegregation of public accommodations, equal employment opportunity for African Americans, and voter registration. The fully integrated organization engaged in direct service in local communities to achieve integration and equal rights for African Americans. It also worked with other civil rights organizations to mount protests against segregation and discrimination and to demonstrate in favor of civil rights legislation. The combined efforts of these civil rights groups culminated in the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibited discrimination in most places of public accommodation, banned discrimination by employers and unions, and provided necessary financial and organizational aid to communities desegregating their schools. The traditional brand of civil rights activism exemplified by SCLC in the early '60s, combined with a moral claim that we are all obligated to speak out against intolerance and prejudice, is the fundamental American context for Judy Meisel's message of hope.



A mob of demonstrators in front of the Baker home in Folcroft, Pennsylvania



State police restrain the mob outside the Baker home in Folcroft, Pennsylvania

**DEMOCRACY**

A type of government run directly by the people or by their elected representatives. Democratic societies usually have periodic elections in which all adult citizens are encouraged to vote for representatives from competing political parties. Democratic societies protect the rights of minorities and guarantee equal rights and opportunities for all citizens.

TOLERANCE

An active acceptance of and appreciation for a wide range of personal, social, cultural, and religious practices, particularly when such practices differ from one's own. Tolerance is an attitude that perceives diversity as a positive social good and is expressed in behaviors that protect the rights of all people.

STEREOTYPE

A reductive, simplistic belief about a person based on his or her membership in a particular racial, ethnic, gender, or social group. Stereotypes link one aspect of a person's identity with assumptions about that person's behavior, values, or character. Such stereotypes may be perceived as "positive," such as the belief that Asians are good at math, or negative, such as the belief that girls don't excel in sports. In either case, the stereotype has negative effects because it denies the diversity of experience and ability of people within a particular group.

PREJUDICE

A negative attitude toward or a belief about a person or group of people based on stereotypes that imply the superiority of one group over another. Prejudicial attitudes are usually the justification for discriminating against the person or group who is the object of prejudice.

DISCRIMINATION

The unfair treatment of others based on the belief that people of particular racial, ethnic, national, or cultural groups are fundamentally different from and inferior to members of other groups. Discrimination includes overt acts of aggression, such as the white mob's attempts to intimidate the Bakers. It can also occur on the institutional level, as was the case with segregation laws in the United States and with the Nuremberg Laws in Germany.

SEGREGATION

The policy of separating people according to racial, ethnic, or other criteria. Although certain groups have chosen to separate themselves from others in order to maintain their cultural identity or autonomy, segregation carries a negative connotation. In United States history, segregation refers to the legal separation of the races in public accommodations, transportation, schools, employment, and housing. The segregation imposed on African Americans is in some ways similar to the segregation of European Jews during the middle ages and into modernity. Segregation was one of the first legal limitations imposed on German Jews during the years immediately preceding World War II.

1. Why does Judy decide to leave Denmark? Why do you think Judy feels compelled to join her brother in Toronto?
2. Why do you think that Judy finds it so important to visit the graves of her father, of Paula Jensen, and of her extended family in Ariogala? How might visiting their graves contribute to Judy's healing from the traumas of World War II?
3. How does Judy's work with children help her recapture her lost childhood?
4. Why did the Baker incident prompt Judy to speak about her own experiences as a Holocaust survivor?
5. How does the Baker incident deepen our understanding of the effects of racism and bigotry and of our own responsibility to protect the rights of others?
6. How does Judy's speaking about her experiences as a Holocaust survivor help others?
7. How is Judy making a difference in the United States today?

POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES



SECTION 4: (47:48-59:00)

1. Mapping Activity

As a final map activity, have students locate Lithuania on a map of Eastern Europe. Once they have located the country, students can reflect on the reasons for Judy's return to Jasvene and Ariogala. In group discussion and in writing, students can discuss how Judy's return to her birthplace helps her resolve some of the grief she experiences as a survivor of World War II.

2. Research

A. "Who is Responsible?"

Have students complete the following activities as a way of exploring answers to Judy's question about who is responsible for the genocide of the Jews in World War II.

- Research political developments in Germany between the two world wars and the ways various other countries, including the United States, responded to Hitler's rise to power.
- Explore why more countries did not resist the Nazis' genocidal policies. What political, economic, social, and historical factors conditioned various countries' failure to resist the Nazis' program?
- Conclude with a personal opinion about the events that led up to WWII and about who is responsible for the Jewish Holocaust.

B. The Value of Personal Testimony as a Form of Historical Evidence

Judy's dialogue with Stanislaw Swigon, the Stutthof camp historian, establishes the idea that history is a story constructed by many different voices. As Judy states at the end of the film, personal stories about the Holocaust differ from the information provided in traditional history books. Testimonies such as Judy's constitute an essential supplement to more traditionally recognized forms of historical evidence (e.g. a Nazi ledger, the physical foundation of a destroyed crematorium, or an archival photograph).

Have students explore, in writing or in the plastic arts, answers to the following questions:

- What do we learn from an eyewitness point of view that the historical perspective cannot provide?
- Why is personal testimony an essential component of the historical record?

To develop their ideas about these questions, have students analyze several historical records of a single event. Working as individuals or in groups, students can perform the following steps:

- Go to the website of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum at www.ushmm.org.
- Read two different survivor testimonies.
- Research in historical sources some of the information provided in the testimonies.
- Explain how the personal testimony you have read enhances or changes the historical information found in textbooks.

Through class presentations, students could then articulate and debate the merits and limitations of different forms of historical evidence.



Judy with her brother Abe after moving to Toronto, Canada



Judy and her husband, Fred, today



Judy in 1996 with her children and their families at her granddaughter Ilana's Bat Mitzvah (Jewish coming-of-age ceremony)

C. One Person Can Make a Difference

Judy states that individuals who survived the Holocaust were no more courageous or resourceful than those who did not survive. As she says, "Everybody was brave; everybody wanted to live." Judy attributes her own survival to *mazel* (luck) and to the courageous individuals who took risks to help save her life.

To deepen students' understanding of the idea that individuals can make a decisive difference in the lives of others, have them complete the following activity:

- Identify someone who has made a difference in your community by using a negative or problematic situation as a basis to perform specific, constructive actions that have benefited the community.
- Write a paper in which you discuss how this person's contributions demonstrate that "one person can do a lot."
- Explore the question of how significant people or events in that person's life helped him or her take effective action to improve the community.

3. Connections



SECTION 4: (47:48-59:00)

A. *Parallels Between the Danish Resistance and the U.S. Civil Rights Movement*

Judy's understanding of the need to speak out against intolerance and prejudice was sparked by her experience with the Bakers and demonstrated by her subsequent activities in the U.S. Civil Rights movement. To enhance students' understanding of the connections between Judy's experience as a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust and the history of racism and civil rights in the United States, devote class time to the following activities:

- View a videotape of Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., delivering his speech, "I Have a Dream," at the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.
- Discuss how the values King articulates in his speech and the actions he took during the United States Civil Rights Movement illustrate Judy's claim that "one person can do a lot" to further the cause of civil rights for all.
- Find a common theme between King's message in his speech and the actions taken by King Christian X and the Danish people during the German occupation of their country during World War II.

B. *Understanding Moral Courage: Research Essay*

This lesson provides students with the opportunity to explore a historical event that demonstrates how an individual or group can take a stand against injustice and work to effect positive social change. It then asks the student to apply what they learn to their own lives.

The Anti-Defamation League's web site, "The Tribute to the Rescuers," defines moral courage as "the ability to take a strong stance on a specific issue and to defend it based on one's personal beliefs or convictions regardless of danger or threats to personal safety" <www.adl.org/tribute_to_rescuers/edu_overview.asp>.

Have students research an historical event other than the Holocaust that will help them develop their understanding of the concept of moral courage. Examples include the Underground Railroad during the United States Civil War, resistance activity in Tibet, and principled behavior during the Bosnian War. Have students focus their essays on individuals or groups that demonstrated ethical behavior during particular times of social or national crisis. Essays should include a section in which students explore how the individual or group positively affected a community, a nation, or the world, and how their actions provide positive models for choices students make in their own lives today.

C. *Taking the Lesson Beyond the Classroom*

As a concluding activity for your study of *Tak for Alt*, consider what communities beyond your classroom would benefit from students' sharing their work. Students can engage in one or more of the following activities:

- make presentations to other classes in their school
- visit with students at others schools studying the Holocaust
- identify community centers near their schools that would welcome student groups and present their work at one or more of the centers. Taking their work beyond the classroom and sharing it with others is one concrete step students can take to make a positive difference in their own communities.



Judith Meisel

"If you tell students this happened, without having a survivor tell them 'I was there,' it's going to be from a historian's point of view. It's not going to be from an eyewitness point of view, and they're two very different things, and I'm thinking about it a lot."

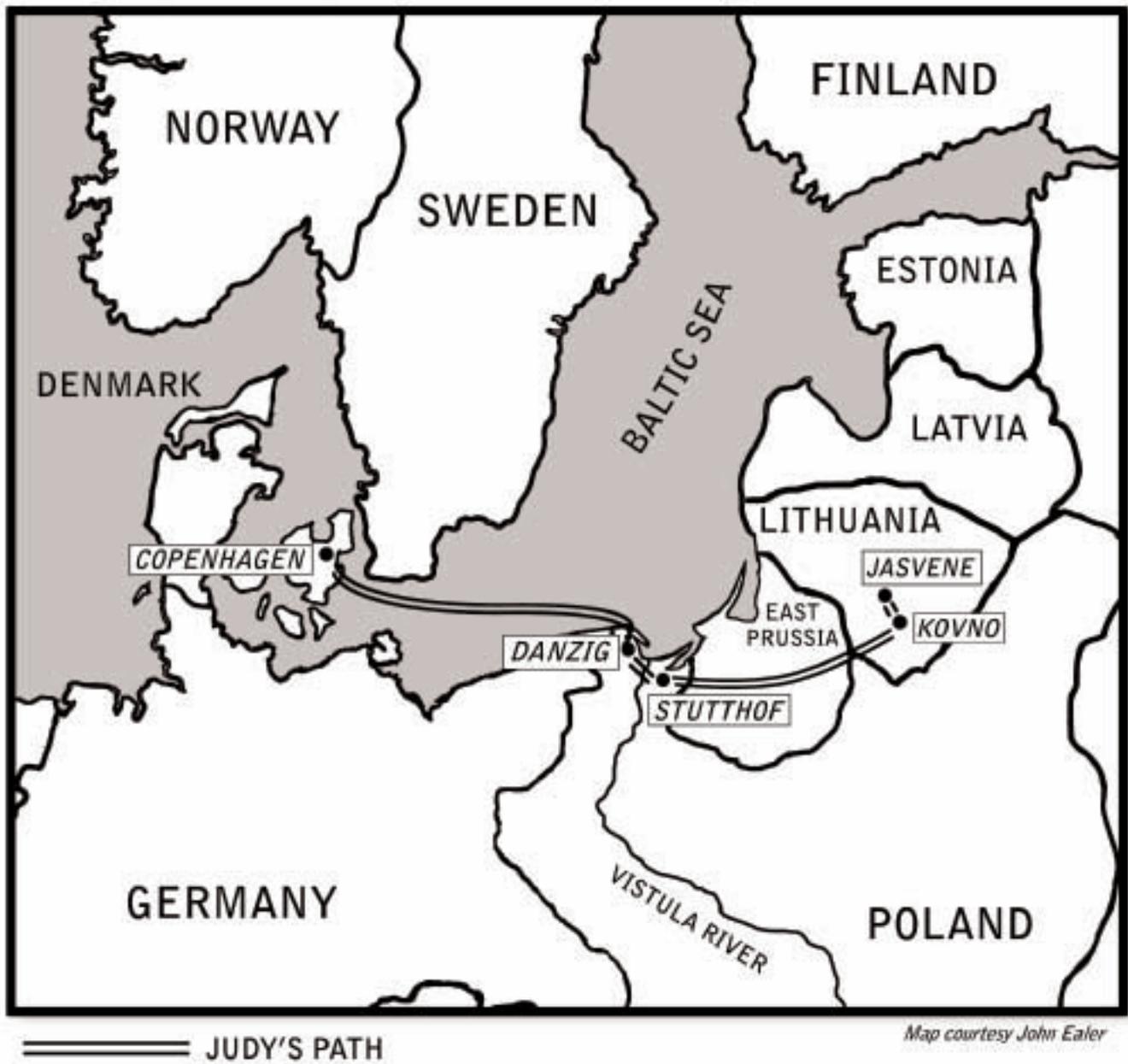
APPENDIX A

Map: Two Thousand Years of Jewish Life in Europe by 1933



APPENDIX D

Map: Judy's Journey from Lithuania to Denmark



APPENDIX E

Map: Denmark



Team Leaves White League In Silence Instead of Cheers

By JOHN W. FOUNTAIN

CHICAGO, March 10

The Saints whizzed up and down the parquet court under the glow of the gym lights, the game of basketball reduced to black and white.

The St. Sabina Saints are black. Their opponents, the St. Gerald Giants, are white.

"Let's go, Saints," yelled a St. Sabina parent, Lamar Johnson, on a recent Saturday.

"Where's the foul? Where's the foul?" he barked at the referee as Raumel Thompson, a beefy youth, put back a rebound for a basket, giving the Saints an 8-6 lead.

Amid the noises of the game, there was a silent rift. Blacks sat with blacks. Whites sat with whites. There were no friendly exchanges, only the sudden explosion of parents' cheers when one of their boys scored a basket.

The boys of St. Sabina and St. Gerald, still somewhat impervious to the hangups of the adult world, played on, focused for now on the battle for baskets.

But a more complicated struggle ended last week, when parents and coaches at St. Sabina (pronounced suh-BINE-uh), fed up with what they said was a season's worth of racially tinged resentment and hostility, overwhelmingly agreed to quit the nearly all-white Southside Catholic Conference, the athletic league they had fought so hard to join.

The fight began last May, when St. Sabina, a mostly black Catholic elementary school on the city's South Side, tried to join the Southside conference, and league officials voted 11 to 9 to reject the school.

The Rev. Michael Pflieger, a white activist Chicago priest who is the pastor at St. Sabina, has long said that the decision was rooted in racism. National publicity and a plea from Cardinal Francis George, the Chicago archbishop, led to a change of heart, and St. Sabina was admitted one month later.

While there have been some bright spots, St. Sabina parents, coaches and even the children say their season has been filled with slights and insults.

They have included cold stares, the silent treatment and having to play at so-called neutral sites rather than at home because many people in the conference deem their South Side neighborhood unsafe. There was also the time a player from an opposing team shouted a racial slur.

In this historically segregated heartland city, the boys from St. Sabina, and their parents and coaches, found themselves locked in a test of wills, in some ways, perhaps, even a test of their faith.

Through it all, since the season began in December, the boys had one mission: to play basketball. They kept their eyes on the conference championship trophy.

More than halfway through the season, on the day of the game against St. Gerald, their eighth-grade team was still breezing and undefeated at 13-0.

The boys included Clifton Jones, a respectful muscular shot blocker; Charles Bell, the short guard with the toothy smile, who likes to launch three-point shots; and Kevin Hicks and Jeremiah Kelly, the stars of St. Sabina's seventh-grade team, who also start on the eighth-grade team.

Among them, too, was Richard Charles, a 6-foot-1 teenager who at 200-plus pounds starts at small forward and also plays on the football team. Soft-spoken, with a spray of peach fuzz underneath his chin, Richard likes rap and video games and hopes to become a teacher and coach.

Even when his mother was against his playing in the league because of the opposition to St. Sabina, Richard says, "I always wanted to play." He reasoned that the reluctance to admit St. Sabina had more to do with the teams in the league being "scared of getting beat."

"It surprised me when they said we didn't want to play them," Richard recalled. "When they said that, I was like, we're just going to blow y'all out."

Turf Clearly Defined

Auburn-Gresham is home to St. Sabina. It is a neighborhood of proud brick bungalows and apartment buildings with its share of dilapidation and a collection of fast-food joints and corner liquor stores, with the usual mix of crime, poverty and drugs that often plague inner-city neighborhoods. It is not without signs of hope.

St. Sabina is a safe haven, a white stone building that rises on south Racine Avenue and occupies an entire city block. The Ark Center at St. Sabina bustles with the sounds of basketballs and volleyballs, with the voices of children. A blue and white banner that hangs above the glistening parquet floor reads, "How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity." Psalm 133:1

Most of the "brothers" around here are black.

"The Catholic parishes reflect the intense residential segregation of metro Chicago," said Gary Orfield, co-director of the Civil Rights Project at Harvard University and co-editor of a book titled, "Religion, Race and Justice in a Changing America," published in 1999.

"With that kind of segregation of education and housing," Mr. Orfield said, "there's not much chance for the kids to get to know each other. And they tend to develop these intense stereotypes. You can't maintain the same stereotypes about people that you actually have human contact with."

The New York Times

Tension and Animosity

The tension ran thick in the gym of St. Bede the Venerable. Like other St. Sabina parents, watching from courtside, Linda Charles, Richard's mother, was already a bit nerve-racked.

"From the moment that we walked in, there was animosity," Mrs. Charles recalled. "You could feel it."

No one was surprised. After all, months earlier St. Bede voted against St. Sabina's joining the league, citing safety concerns.

Weeks earlier, parents and coaches said they had seen several parents accost Father Pflieger at the St. Germaine game on Dec. 16, calling him a racist and jawing at him. They followed him all the way to his car, stopping only after some St. Sabina parents, one of them a sheriff's officer, suggested that the good Christian folks had had their say and should now leave the priest alone.

Then there was the St. Linus game for the sixth-grade team on Dec. 18, when Christopher Mallette, the athletic director at St. Sabina, walked up to a coach with whom he had had a public dispute over St. Sabina's initial denial of a place in the league. Mr. Mallette stuck out his hand as a peace offering.

"He turned his back and refused to shake my hand," Mr. Mallette recalled. "My kids are sitting there with their mouths open. The other two coaches came running up to me. But the damage was done."

The action on the court for the eighth-grade team in the St. Bede game was worse. The St. Sabina coaches had to do something. They huddled with the team. They would go with a different strategy, one that called for motion and spreading the floor, forcing the opponent into a chase, leaving the basket wide open to a cutting player. They call it North Carolina.

"The idea was like, Muhammad Ali: They can't hit you if they can't catch you," Mr. Mallette said.

St. Sabina won by 40 points.

After the game, Clifton Jones was walking out of the gym when he spotted one of the players from the St. Bede team.

"He looked at me, and I was like, 'Good game, man,'" recalled Clifton, 14. "He said, 'Nah, you need to go on home, nigger.'"

"It kind of hurt, real hurt." Clifton wants to keep playing.

A Meeting About a Slur

At an emergency meeting at the Ark in February, Mr. Mallette told parents that there was not-so-good news about the grievance filed against St. Bede for the racial slur. He told parents that the league's executive board acknowledged in a letter that "an incident did occur" at St. Bede's gym on Jan. 20. Mr. Mallette explained that the board had decided that the two teams should talk at a "neutral site." There was no apology from the team or the player, nor any mention of sanctioning.

If St. Sabina rejected the offer, the letter stated, the matter would be "concluded." If St. Bede rejected it, the eighth-grade team would

be "prohibited from participating in the basketball playoffs." While they did not like the offer, St. Sabina parents and coaches accepted it.

"Our children have to be prepared for this in life," said Consuela Smith, Clifton's mother. "I really don't think we should quit, not right now. We want to do the playoffs. We've got to do the playoffs."

Toward Victory and Defeat

The St. Sabina Saints lost their next game, a hard-fought one on March 2 against Most Holy Redeemer, last season's champions. But the next day, they beat St. Mary Star of the Sea.

After a slow start, the Saints started to pull away. They ran up and down the court, their game faces turned to smiles as regular season champions. Final score: 61-37.

Standing next to a teammate, Charles Bell said he felt good about the season.

"We had our ups and downs, but we pulled together at the end," he said, smiling and looking forward to the playoffs.

In the end, there would be no playoffs. A few days later, St. Sabina pulled out of the league after learning that league officials intended to enforce an unwritten rule prohibiting seventh graders from playing with their eighth-grade teams in the playoffs and that the Southside conference was going to allow St. Bede into the playoffs.

Also, despite being the top seed in the seventh- and eighth-grade divisions, St. Sabina had no scheduled home games in the playoffs, while teams with fewer victories did. St. Sabina parents and school officials voted on Thursday night to withdraw, 54-0.

"I see their point of view," St. Mary's coach, Richard Gabel, 44, said after the game days earlier. "I'm sure they did feel a lot of tension. If I was at St. Sabina, I would too. I think you give it a couple of years everything will turn out better. I really do."

"It's probably racism, probably," Mr. Gabel said. "I think that's what it comes down to."

The conference's chairman, Michael Phelan, said the executive board had "changed its mind" about allowing St. Bede to be in the playoffs, explaining that barring the team would be "too steep a penalty."

Giving his assessment of how St. Sabina was received, Mr. Phelan said: "It's like life. A portion of the members are colorblind. They'll play anybody. Another, more sizable portion has their reservations, but they're members so they're going to do what's best for all and grin and bear it. Then there's a small number of people who there's nothing you can do. They see race as an issue."

Outside St. Sabina on a gray afternoon last Friday, several boys from the eighth-grade team bounced a basketball on the sidewalk, waiting for their parents to pick them up, reflecting on their season. "I just wanted to play ball," said Kevin Hicks.

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RECOMMENDED MUSIC

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Curran wrote this concerto to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. The music on the CD was performed simultaneously by musicians in six different nations and broadcast live around the world. *Crystal Psalms* is a deeply moving musical interpretation of *Kristallnacht* that expresses on an artistic level how people of different backgrounds working together can make positive contributions to humanity.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

RECOMMENDED WEB SITES

- www.adl.org. The web site of the Anti-Defamation League, an international civil rights organization, provides education programs and resources for teaching tolerance and combating prejudice and bigotry.
- www.csss.org/holocaust. David Nienkamp's study, "Holocaust Education and the States' Secondary Social Studies Standards," is available at this site. Nienkamp's work, which is housed at the Simon Wiesenthal Center Library and Archives for the Mandel Advanced Funding Project, models how to integrate study of the Holocaust into high school social studies' standards.
- www.gfh.org.il. The Ghetto Fighters' Museum and Jewish Resistance Heritage Museum, located in Israel, focuses on the history of Jewish resistance to the Holocaust and is dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust and to Holocaust education in Israel and worldwide. Yad Layeled Children's Memorial, located at the Ghetto Fighters' House, is devoted to telling the story of more than 1.5 million Jewish children who perished during the war.
- www.ushmm.org. The web site of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides the most extensive on-line collection of resource materials for teaching the Holocaust.
- www.vhf.org. This is the web site of Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation. Founded by Steven Spielberg, the Foundation's initial mission was to videotape and preserve the testimonies of Holocaust survivors and witnesses. The Foundation is now working to make its archive material available to a worldwide audience. The web site lists locations in the United States where archived video testimonies may be viewed.
- <http://webquest.sdsu.edu>. This site was created by Bernie Dodge, Professor of Educational Technology at San Diego State University. It provides instruction on WebQuest, an inquiry-oriented activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the internet.
- www.yad-vashem.org.il. Yad Vashem is a museum, archive, and resource center for Holocaust studies located in Jerusalem. It houses the most extensive collection of artifacts related to the Holocaust in the world.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Beth Seldin Dotan earned her Masters in Jewish Education from the Hebrew Union College-Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, California. She has worked as an interviewer in Israel for Steven Spielberg's Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation and at Yad Layeled Children's Memorial at the Ghetto Fighters' House Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Heritage Museum in the Western Galilee, Israel. She returned to the United States to work as the American Coordinator for the Ghetto Fighters' Museum International Book-Sharing Project for middle school children in the United States and Israel. Presently, Dotan directs the Institute for Holocaust Education at the Plains States Regional office of the Anti-Defamation League in Omaha, Nebraska.

Kathleen McSharry earned her B.A. in English from the University of California at Berkeley and her M.A. and Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her dissertation, *Interracial Relations in Post-World War II American Literature*, includes a chapter on American-Jewish attitudes toward black-Jewish relations in the United States. She has taught interdisciplinary courses on the Holocaust to first-year college students and course units to student teachers on standards-based approaches to Holocaust education. Formerly an Associate Professor of English and the Chair of the English Department at Dana College in Blair, Nebraska, McSharry is currently Associate Dean of General Education and Associate Professor of English at Saint Francis University in Loretto, Pennsylvania.

