THE ECHO FOUNDATION

presents

In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel
A Documentary Film Project

Student Dialogue
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East Mecklenburg High School
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Charlotte, North Carolina
In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel

A Documentary Film Project

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Dear Teachers,

In these uncertain economic times we are challenged to face adversity with creativity. Through Echo’s 2009 – 2010 *Voices Against Indifference Initiative*, we shed light on a journey of discovery as we follow two parallel stories – that of Nobel Laureate for Peace, Elie Wiesel and, at the same time, the story of twelve young students as they awaken to their own power to bring about positive change. As history and memory coalesce to inform the future, the audience is carried through time and space toward a new dimension of understanding.

After twelve years of one-on-one educational programming, coupled with a belief in the transformative power of film, Echo steps into a new realm with our first documentary. Created by Indievision Films in association with Emulsion Arts, *IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ELIE WIESEL* gives visual expression to Echo’s work for social justice through education and positions the organization to reach audiences worldwide.

The film is both magical and painful: surreal in its majestic cinematography, and more than real in the ugliness of which man is capable. With Echo’s documentary film, accompanied by this curriculum, you have a teaching tool to support the substantial work you do to weave compassion and social justice into all curricular areas.

We thank you for your partnership again this year, for bringing Echo programming to life with your students, and for your abiding commitment to shaping the leaders of tomorrow.

With gratitude and best wishes for inspired studies,

Stephanie G. Ansaldo, President
The Echo Foundation
# In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel

## Table of Contents

I. 2009-2010 Voices Against Indifference Initiative: In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel ............6
   A. About the Project
   B. Film Locations
   C. Footsteps Student Ambassadors
   D. Study Questions

II. Genesis ..................................................................................................................14
    A. About Elie Wiesel
    B. Elie Wiesel Timeline and World Events: 1928-2009
    C. Judaism
    D. Study Questions

III. Darkness and Light ............................................................................................38
    A. Anti-Semitism
    B. The Holocaust
    C. Remembrance and Reconciliation
    D. Study Questions

IV. Legacy ................................................................................................................66
    A. Academic History
    B. Literature
    C. Night
    D. Study Questions

V. Testimonies of Conscience ................................................................................78
    A. Elie Wiesel’s Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech
    B. Lessons from the Holocaust
    C. Elie Wiesel on Global Conflict
    D. The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity
    E. Study Questions

VI. Indifference .......................................................................................................94
    A. Martin Niemöller Poem
    B. The Bystander Effect
    C. Responsibility to Protect
    D. Study Questions

VII. Hope ................................................................................................................102
    A. A Call to Action
    B. Fundraising and Awareness
    C. Volunteering and Organizations
    D. Writing to Politicians

VIII. Reference Materials ........................................................................................110
    A. Bibliography
    B. Lesson Plans
    C. Academic References
    D. Relevant Organizations and Websites

IX. The Echo Foundation’s Art and Writing Contests ................................................120

X. Appendix: About The Echo Foundation ...............................................................124
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Under the extraordinary commitment and supervision of Boston University alumna, Middle East Scholar and Assistant to the President, Heather Fried, this, and all Echo curricular materials for the past three years, have come to fruition.

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*Educational materials compiled by The Echo Foundation through its Voices Against Indifference Initiative.*
I. In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel
A Documentary Film Project

“…anyone who listens to a witness becomes a witness.”

-- Elie Wiesel

“I think you can understand things from reading history books and memoirs but to actually be there and travel through it is a completely different thing.”

-- Natasha Frosina

A. About the Project.................................. 7
B. Film Locations...................................... 8
C. Footsteps Student Ambassadors................. 11
D. Study Questions ................................... 12
About the Project

Project History

Students asked the question, “How can we have an all-inclusive perspective if we have never left the USA?” In 2006, The Echo Foundation responded by creating the Footsteps Global Initiative, a study, travel and leadership program. In its inaugural year, the program’s focus was In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel, which in turn, sparked the vision for the documentary film.

Student Ambassadors were chosen based on academic merit, a demonstrated commitment to service, and a profound sense of personal responsibility for the human condition. They spent the year prior to their travel studying an Echo-created curriculum about Wiesel’s life and work, serving as ambassadors for Echo educational programming, and participating in a dialogue with Professor Wiesel. In the summer of 2007, they embarked on their remarkable journey.

About the Film

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ELIE WIESEL is an account of opposing forces: evil and redemption, despair and hope, memory and discovery. It is also a testament to the power of personal witness and the possibility of human endurance and change.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ELIE WIESEL chronicles the journey of twelve American high school students as they trace life experiences and formative places of Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Photo and film images of the Nobel Peace Prize winner give context and weight to the student experience. Two parallel stories, woven together through time and history, collide as these young people come face to face with evil and redemption. The film is both magical and painful: surreal in its majestic cinematography, and more than real in the ugliness of which man is capable. “What happens when you take the childhood from the child, the love from the lovers, and peace from the person who strives for harmony above all things?” asks one student in her journal.

Audiences have a unique window into the thought processes of our students as they share their journal entries and profound insights that accompany the coming of age. “Teenagers have more power than adults give us credit for!” Over the course of their journey, the students begin to realize that it is up to them to create a more just and humane world. Their footsteps become our footsteps.
Film Locations

Sighet, Romania

Elie Wiesel's birthplace, the small town of Sighet, Romania, lies deep in the Carpathian Mountains of Transylvania, close to the Ukrainian border. In the 1600s, Jews fleeing persecution in neighboring Ukraine found refuge in Sighet, and until World War II the town had a thriving and vibrant Jewish community.

In his early years, Elie Wiesel spent a quiet childhood immersed in his faith with no inkling of the turmoil building in the outside world. In April 1944, the Jews of Sighet were cordoned into a ghetto in the town's center. One month later, Wiesel and his family were deported to Birkenau.

Today only one synagogue remains in Sighet. The Old Jewish Cemetery, with its tilting stones and abundant wildflowers, is a peaceful reminder of a once vibrant and dynamic community. In 2002, Elie Wiesel's childhood home was declared an historic monument by President Ion Iliescu of Romania and transformed into a museum. In the garden of Elie Wiesel’s home, Student Ambassadors took time to reflect on the theme of identity. “What happens when you take the childhood from the child, the love from the lovers, the peace from the person who strives for harmony above all things?” wrote Gabby Reed in her journal entry.

Krakow, Poland

At the start of World War II, there were 60,000 Jews in Krakow. Following countless evacuations, deportations, and murders during the war years, there are only 1,000 Jews living in Krakow today.

Krakow has always been one of the most important cities in Poland and has a long history of commercial, academic and cultural vitality. Just two hours from Auschwitz-Birkenau, Krakow was the seat of German-occupied Poland. As in many other European cities, the Nazis decimated its Jewish population. It served as a staging ground for sorting Jews being deported to various camps across Eastern Europe.

While the Student Ambassadors were enchanted by Krakow, they were keenly aware of what had taken place only a few miles away at the death camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau. To experience Jewish life in Krakow, Student Ambassadors explored the Jewish section of the city, visited the Remuh Synagogue and heard traditional klezmer music at supper.
Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland

Auschwitz-Birkenau, two death camps in Poland, were the largest of the Nazi concentration camps, claiming the lives of 1.1 million people from 1940 to 1945. They consisted of three main camps and several smaller satellite camps. Upon arrival, victims were sorted into those to be exterminated immediately and those fit for labor. Wiesel’s mother and younger sister were among those killed upon arrival. Auschwitz operated as a Soviet prison camp after the war and was turned into a memorial and museum by the Polish government in 1947.

To honor the victims of the camps, the Student Ambassadors arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau at dawn and in silence. Once the sun had risen, the students dispersed, still in silence, to wander through this most unimaginable place: extraordinary in its natural beauty while at the same time horrific in the ugliness that occurred here. At the agreed-upon time, students gathered again on the train tracks to break the silence with student violinist Maggie Love playing Schein’s *Padoanna* and a recitation of *The Mourner’s Kaddish* by Harold Robins.

Paris, France

One of the largest, oldest and most populated cities in Europe, the French capital of Paris is also known as an epicenter of culture and art. The City of Lights, as it is often called, darkened during World War II under the occupation of Nazi Germany. And yet, it became a locus of Wiesel’s own self-awareness and determination in the years immediately following his liberation.

Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), a Paris-based humanitarian organization, saved hundreds of Jewish children during WWII, and sheltered Wiesel and other orphans after the war. OSE provided these children with medical care, shelter, education and psychological support. The OSE villa in Taverny was named The Elie Wiesel House in 2008, in honor of his 80th birthday.

In France, Elie Wiesel resumed his Jewish studies, eventually attending the Sorbonne to become a journalist, and working for French and Israeli newspapers. Paris represents an important step in his transformation from victim to writer. For our students, it symbolized the endurance of beauty and hope.
Berlin, Germany

Berlin has long been the center of German cultural expression and nationalism, known for its progressive outlook and intellectual heritage. In the 1930s, the German capital became the center of Hitler’s Third Reich. Here, he gathered the leadership of his regime and promulgated his Final Solution.

Today Berlin is at the heart of the reconciliation process between the Jewish and German people. The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and the Jewish Museum in Berlin are two of many permanent expressions that stand as a testament to Germany’s commitment to a more just future.

In 2000, Elie Wiesel was invited to address the reopening of the German Bundestag in Berlin, where he spoke of the Holocaust’s legacy to humanity, our duty to remember, and the imperative to educate.
Footsteps Student Ambassadors

Catherine Auerbach
“The simple feeling of compassion for others can make a difference, and it is this caring that eventually helps to solve problems.”

Casey Horgan
“One person really can make a difference, and standing silently by when one witnesses injustice is perpetuating it.”

Adara Blake
“Young America has the potential to make the world pay attention, and to ignore that potential will only serve to hurt those who can’t raise their voice.”

Margaret Love
“...the best way is to plant seeds of tolerance.”

Evelyn Denham
“We must take responsibility for the problems of our world, and always choose words over silence.”

Gabriela Reed
“Humanity is defined by kindness, generosity and compassion; if we cannot employ these basic qualities, then there is no purpose to our lives.”

Scott Fisher
“I believe that it is important to stand up for what is right.”

Harold Robins
“Nothing is more essential than justice for all people.”

Natasha Frosina
“When a person fails to protest the injustices they witness, they fuel a cycle of injustice.”

Kristine Sowers
“An act of compassion leaves behind hope and knowledge.”

Preston Gray
“Silence allows current issues of indifference to inhabit society.”

Blake Templeton
“If there is something worth fighting for, trying but failing is always better than never trying at all.”
In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel

Film Discussion Questions

1. Describe what you think it would be like to walk in the footsteps of Elie Wiesel. Why would you want to undertake such a journey?

2. Prior to their travel, the twelve students had the opportunity to meet with Elie Wiesel and ask him questions. If you had such an opportunity, what would you want to know? What questions would you ask?

3. Throughout the spring of 2007, the Footsteps Ambassadors conducted research and held discussions in preparation for the trip. Create a list of suggested topics a student traveling in Elie Wiesel’s footsteps might investigate.

4. Why do you think first hand experiences have such a profound impact on our understanding of the Holocaust or history in general?

5. The film presents the question, “Is it possible to have a dialogue with history?” What do you think about this proposition? In what other ways, besides traveling to historical locations, might you be able to “dialogue” with the past?

6. Which part of the film did you find most powerful? Why?

7. Was there a particular student in the film with whom you identified? Why?

8. What did you learn about Professor Wiesel’s life that you had not known before?

9. If you could choose one location in the film to visit, what would it be and why? What would you hope to learn?

10. Elie Wiesel once said, “Because I remember, I despair. Because I remember, I have the duty to reject despair.” What does this mean?

11. Discuss the concept of loss and how it relates to you personally. How can you empathize with the students in the film or with the survivors of the Holocaust?

12. What message(s) will you take away from the documentary?

13. How has your understanding of the Holocaust changed after this film?

14. What are the consequences of indifference?

15. What can you do to make sure the Holocaust is never forgotten? What can leaders do globally?

16. How can lessons from the Holocaust be applied to our modern world?

17. Select another monumental figure or great humanitarian from history. What would it be like to walk in their footsteps? Where would you go? What would you learn?

18. As a result of their journey, many of the students in the film were inspired to action. What cause or issue of social justice are you passionate about? What will you do to address it?
II. Genesis

“…In all my novels, it serves as a background and vantage point. In my fantasy I still see myself in it … I left Sighet but it refuses to leave me.”

-- Elie Wiesel

A. About Elie Wiesel
   1. Biography................................................................. 15
   2. “The People Who Shape Our World”..............................16
   3. Sighet, Romania..........................................................17
B. “Elie Wiesel Timeline and World Events”........................... 18
C. Judaism
   2. “Major Denominations”..............................................28
   3. “Holy Days of Judaism”............................................31
   4. “Jewish Beliefs”.......................................................33
   5. “Music & Prayer”......................................................34
   6. Ani Ma’amín.............................................................36
D. Study Questions.............................................................37

“What is left when they take the childhood from the child, the love from the lovers, the peace from the person who strives for harmony above all things?”

-- Gabby Reed
Elie Wiesel

From The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

Elie Wiesel was born in 1928 in Sighet, Transylvania, which is now part of Romania. He was fifteen years old when he and his family were deported by the Nazis to Auschwitz. His mother and younger sister perished, his two older sisters survived. Elie and his father were later transported to Buchenwald, where his father died shortly before the camp was liberated in April 1945.

After the war, Elie Wiesel studied in Paris and later became a journalist. During an interview with the distinguished French writer, Francois Mauriac, he was persuaded to write about his experiences in the death camps. The result was his internationally acclaimed memoir, *La Nuit* or *Night*, which has since been translated into more than thirty languages.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter appointed Elie Wiesel as Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust. In 1980, he became the Founding Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. He is also the Founding President of the Paris-based Universal Academy of Cultures and the Chairman of The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, an organization he and his wife created to fight indifference, intolerance and injustice. Elie Wiesel has received more than 100 honorary degrees from institutions of higher learning.

A devoted supporter of Israel, Elie Wiesel has also defended the cause of Soviet Jews, Nicaragua's Miskito Indians, Argentina's Desaparecidos, Cambodian refugees, the Kurds, victims of famine and genocide in Africa, of apartheid in South Africa, and victims of war in the former Yugoslavia. For more than ten years, Elie and his wife Marion have been especially devoted to the cause of Ethiopian-born Israeli youth through the Foundation's Beit Tzipora Centers for Study and Enrichment.

Teaching has always been central to Elie Wiesel's work. Since 1976, he has been the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, where he also holds the title of University Professor. He is a member of the Faculty in the Department of Religion as well as the Department of Philosophy. Previously, he served as Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City University of New York (1972-76) and the first Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University (1982-83).

Elie Wiesel is the author of over forty books of fiction and non-fiction, including *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, *The Testament*, *The Fifth Son*, and two volumes of his memoirs.

For his literary and human rights activities, he has received numerous awards including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Liberty Award, and the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor. In 1986, Elie Wiesel won the Nobel Prize for Peace, and soon after, Marion and Elie Wiesel established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

An American citizen since 1963, Elie Wiesel lives with his wife in Connecticut.
Elie Wiesel
From Time 100: The People Who Shape Our World

‘He taught us how to answer evil’

By OPRAH WINFREY
TIME Magazine
May 8, 2006

I remember the icy snow crunching beneath our every step, the subzero wind biting at our bare faces, the quiet utter stillness. As we walked the vast landscape of Auschwitz, I had the honor of being on these once cursed, now sacred, grounds with Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Being in his presence, exposed to his wisdom, has been one of the great blessings of my life. He is my hero not only for what he has endured, but for what he has become—a teacher, a sage, an activist, a humanitarian, a great spirit. Despite the horrors he has survived, he is one of the most loving spirits I have ever known.

Slowly he led me back in time to the moment 62 years ago when he, a terrified 15-year-old boy, stepped off a cattle car into a world where it was, he says, "human to be inhuman." Wiesel lived through a dark, dark night where everyone was there either to kill or to die. Standing in front of Block 17, his former barrack, even this master of words had no words for what he had experienced there. At the remains of what had been Crematorium III, we visited the closest thing there is to his mother's grave. We stood before a case containing mounds of shoes, each pair telling the silent story of a life cut cruelly short. All those lost ... "Who heard their cries then?" he asked. The only answer I could give was that we hear them now.

Evil is never the end of the story; the end of the story is still ours to write. Wiesel, 77, has taught us that we must not forget; that there is no greater sin than that of silence and indifference. In doing so he has not just illumined the past, he has illumined the future. For he himself embodies the only adequate response to evil, a heart that cares so deeply about human suffering—and responds to it so passionately—that evil itself will one day be conquered by a love so great.
Sighet, Romania

From PBS Broadcasting

Sighet, Elie Wiesel’s 1928 birthplace, still survives — a town in northern Romania near the meeting of the Hungarian and Ukrainian borders. But its character was irreversibly changed by the Holocaust. Where once it was a predominantly Jewish community of some 15,000 souls, today only a handful remain.

But photos of the old city have survived, some in family collections, including those preserved by Elie Wiesel and his surviving sisters. Others have been contributed to the photo archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., most of them recovered from the work of an unknown Jewish studio photographer who, from 1920 to 1939, recorded images of the town and the life of its Jewish community. It is the recovery of those photos that makes this visit to pre-war Sighet possible.

“Before me, always, is the photograph of the house in which I was born. The door leads to the yard. The kitchen. I want to go inside, but I am afraid. I want to look at the house, if only from afar. With all that has happened to me, it is essential to remember that place.”

“Why is it that my town still enchants me so? Is it because in my memory it is entangled with my childhood? In all my novels it serves as a background and vantage point. In my fantasy I still see myself in it.

“All that now is gone. The Jews of my city are now forgotten, erased from its memory. Before, there were some thirty synagogues in Sighet; today, only one survives. The Jewish tailors, the Jewish cobblers, the Jewish watchmakers have vanished without a trace, and strangers have taken their place.”
Elie Wiesel Timeline and World Events: 1928-2006

From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Elie Wiesel with his mother and sisters. Courtesy of Elie Wiesel.

1928: On September 30, Elie Wiesel is born in Sighet, Transylvania, then and now part of Romania.

1933: Adolf Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany and the Nazi party takes control of Germany's government. The first permanent concentration camp, Dachau, is established.

1935: Nuremberg Race Laws against Jews are decreed, depriving Jews of German citizenship.

1936: The SS renames its units deployed at concentration camps the "Death's Head Units," later known as "Death's Head Battalions." Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler is appointed chief of the German Police. The summer Olympic games are hosted in Berlin.

1938: Kristallnacht (night of crystal, also known as the night of broken glass): a government-organized pogrom against Jews in Germany, Austria, and the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia results in widespread destruction of synagogues, businesses, and homes and the loss of at least 91 lives in November.

1939: In April, Britain and France guarantee the integrity of Poland's borders after Hitler violates Munich Agreement of 1938 by invading and dismembering Czechoslovakia. In September, Germany invades Poland, starting World War II in Europe. In response, Great Britain, France, and the British Dominions declare war on Germany. In November, the first ghetto is established in Piotrków, Poland. Jews in parts of occupied Poland are forced to wear armbands bearing the Star of David for identification.

1940: In spring, Germans conquer Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands; Winston Churchill becomes British Prime Minister. In May, Auschwitz concentration camp is established near the Polish city Oswiecim. Italy declares war on Britain and France in June. In August,
at German and Italian arbitration, Romania is compelled to cede northern Transylvania, including Sighet, to Hungary. In autumn, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia join the German-Italian alliance, called the Axis. German authorities begin to seal off ghettos in German-occupied Poland.

Elie Wiesel and his family become residents of Hungary.

1941: Nazi Germany attacks the Soviet Union on June 22. The British and the Soviets sign a Mutual Assistance agreement. On July 31 Nazi Security Police chief Reinhard Heydrich is given authorization to plan and coordinate a "total" and "final" solution of the "Jewish Question." Construction of Auschwitz-Birkenau camp (Auschwitz II) begins in autumn. The U.S. enters World War II on December 8, a day after Germany's Axis partner, Japan, attacks the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. On December 8, the first of the killing centers in Nazi-occupied Poland begins operations.

Twelve-year-old Elie Wiesel begins studying the Kabbalah.

1942: The Wannsee Conference held in Berlin in January in Berlin ensures the full cooperation of all state, Nazi Party, and SS agencies in implementing "the Final Solution"--a plan to murder the European Jews-under the coordination of the SS and police.

1943: Jews in the Warsaw ghetto rise up against their oppressors. By the end of the year, the Germans and their Axis partners have killed more than four million European Jews.

1944: Germany occupies Hungary in March. Between late April and early July, around 440,000 Hungarian Jews are deported from Hungary, most of them to Auschwitz. On June 6, D-Day, Anglo-American forces establish the first Allied beachhead in western Europe on the Normandy coast of German-occupied France. On June 22, Soviet forces begin a massive offensive in Belarus and advance to the outskirts of Warsaw in six weeks. Anne Frank's family is arrested by the German occupation authorities in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler orders a halt to the "Final Solution" in November 1944 and orders the destruction of the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Elie Wiesel is fifteen years old when he and his family are deported in May 1944 by the Hungarian gendarmerie and the German SS and police from Sighet to Auschwitz. His mother and younger sister perish; his two older sisters survive.

1945: Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz on January 27. U.S. troops liberate Buchenwald on April 11. Germany surrenders on May 7; World War II in Europe ends on May 8. On September 2, the Pacific War ends with the surrender of Japan after the U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August. World War II is over. The United Nations is founded. Establishment of International Military Tribunal in August. On November 20, the trial of the top Nazi leaders begins in Nuremberg under the auspices of the International Military Tribunal. The Allies (France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union) indict 22 top-ranking Nazi leaders and six German and Nazi Party organizations for crimes against the peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

SS units evacuate Auschwitz in January. Elie and his father are transferred to Buchenwald concentration camp, near Weimar, Germany. Elie's father dies in January; Elie is liberated with the arrival of U.S. troops in April.

1946: Eighteen of 21 defendants are convicted by the International Military Tribunal at the Nuremberg Trial; 12 are sentenced to death.
1945-1949: 177 Nazi offenders are tried under the jurisdiction of the International Military Tribunal in 12 subsequent Nuremberg trials of second rank Nazi leaders. Thousands more Nazi perpetrators and their collaborators are tried in the four zones of occupied Germany and in the countries that Germany and its Axis partners occupied.

1948: The State of Israel is created. On May 14, 1948, the last British forces withdraw from Palestine and the State of Israel is established in accordance with the United Nations Partition Plan that proposed the partition of Palestine into two states, an Arab state and a Jewish state. The U.S. Congress passes the Displaced Persons Act, authorizing 200,000 displaced persons to enter the United States.

On December 9, 1948, in the shadow of the Holocaust, the United Nations approves the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This convention establishes "genocide" as an international crime, which signatory nations "undertake to prevent and punish."

Elie Wiesel studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. He becomes interested in journalism.

1949: Elie Wiesel goes to Jerusalem for the first time.

1952: After studying at the Sorbonne, Elie Wiesel begins travelling around the world as a reporter for the Tel Aviv newspaper Yediot Ahronot.

1954: During an interview with the distinguished French writer, Francois Mauriac, Elie is persuaded to write about his experiences in the death camps.

1955: Elie Wiesel finishes a nearly 900-page manuscript in Yiddish while on assignment in Brazil. And the World Stayed Silent is published in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1956: Shortly after moving to New York City to be a permanent correspondent, Elie Wiesel is struck by a taxicab.

1957: Recovered from his injuries but still a stateless person with expired visas, Elie Wiesel naturalizes to the United States.

1958: La Nuit (appearing in 1960 in English translation as Night) is published, and has since been translated into more than 30 languages.

1961: Dawn is published.
1962: Following his conviction for crimes against the Jewish people, Adolf Eichmann is executed in Jerusalem.

1963: Elie Wiesel becomes an American citizen.

1964: Elie Wiesel returns to Sighet and visits his childhood home. He receives the Ingram Merill award and publishes *The Town Beyond the Wall*.

1966: *The Gates of the Forest* and *The Jews of Silence* are published.

1968: *Legends of our Time*, essays and stories, is published. Elie Wiesel wins the Prix Medicis.

1969: Elie Wiesel marries Marion.

1970: *A Beggar in Jerusalem* and *One Generation After* are published.

1972: His son, Elisha Shlomo, is born. Elie Wiesel also serves as Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City University of New York (1972-76).

1973: In Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana comes to power in a military coup.

*The Oath* is published.

1975: Elie Wiesel receives the Jewish Heritage Award, Haifa University, and the Holocaust Memorial Award, New York Society of Clinical Psychologists.

1976: Teaching has always been central to Elie Wiesel's work. Since 1976, he has been the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, where he also holds the title of University Professor. He is a member of the faculty in the Department of Religion as well as the Department of Philosophy.

1977: Egyptian president Anwar Sadat makes the first visit by an Arab leader to Israel since the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948.

1978: President Jimmy Carter appoints Elie Wiesel as Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust.

1980: Elie Wiesel receives the Prix Liber Inter, France, the S.Y. Agnon Medal, and the Jabotinsky Medal, State of Israel.
1981: *The Testament* is published.

1982: Elie Wiesel is the first Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University (1982-83).

1984: A symbolic ground breaking ceremony is held at the site of the future United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

1985: President Ronald Reagan presents Elie Wiesel with the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal of Achievement.

1986: In December, Elie Wiesel wins the Nobel Prize for Peace. Soon after, he and his wife, Marion, establish The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, an organization to fight indifference, intolerance and injustice.

1987: Elie Wiesel testifies at the trial of Klaus Barbie.

1988: The United States signs the Genocide Convention.

*Twilight*, a novel, is published.

1990: *From the Kingdom of Memory* is published.

1991: *Sages and Dreamers, Portraits and Legends from the Bible, the Talmud, and the Hasidic Tradition* is published.

1993: Elie Wiesel gives address at the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Museum opens to the public.

In response to the atrocities occurring in Bosnia, the United Nations Security Council issues resolution 827, establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. It is the first international criminal tribunal since Nuremberg.

1994: Extremist leaders of Rwanda’s Hutu majority launch a campaign of extermination against the country’s Tutsi minority. In October, the UN Security Council extends the mandate of the ICTY to include a separate but linked tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), located in Arusha, Tanzania.

1995: *All Rivers Run to the Sea* is published.

1997: Elie Wiesel visits Charlotte, North Carolina and helps create The Echo Foundation.
1998: The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda issues the world’s first conviction for genocide when Jean-Paul Akayesu is judged guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity for acts he engaged in and oversaw as mayor of the Rwandan town of Taba.

1999: *And the Sea is Never Full* and *King Solomon and his Magic Ring*, a book for children, are published.

2001: Elie Wiesel addresses the Days of Remembrance ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, Washington, D.C. He is granted the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor, France.

2002: President Iliescu of Romania presents Wiesel with "The Star of Romania."

2003: In November Wiesel addresses the Tribute to Holocaust Survivors, at the USHMM, Washington, D.C.

2004: In July Elie Wiesel delivers remarks “On the Atrocities in Sudan” at the Darfur Emergency Summit, convened at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on July 14, 2004, by the American Jewish World Service and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In September U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "genocide has been committed in Darfur."

Elic Wiesel receives the Commander's Cross from the Republic of Hungary and delivers the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania. Wiesel was chairman of the commission.

2005: Elie Wiesel receives the Man of the Year award from the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the Light of Truth award from the International Campaign for Tibet, and publishes *The Time of the Uprooted*, a novel.

2006: Elie Wiesel travels to Auschwitz with Oprah Winfrey.

Additional updates by The Echo Foundation

2007: Elie Wiesel is awarded the Dayton Literary Peace Prize’s Lifetime Achievement Award.

2008: Wiesel receives an Honorary Degree from the City College of New York and an Honorary Doctorate from the Weizmann Institute. The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity condemns the Armenian genocide denial. In December, the Foundation issues a statement declaring that it has lost virtually all assets through Bernard Madoff’s investments.

2009: Elie Wiesel travels with President Barack Obama to Buchenwald.
**The History of Judaism**

From BBC – Religion & Ethics: History of Judaism

“I marvel at the resilience of the Jewish people. Their best characteristic is their desire to remember. No other people has such an obsession with memory.” —Elie Wiesel

The Old Testament

The history of Judaism is inseparable from the history of Jews themselves. The early part of the story is told in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). It describes how God chose the Jews to be an example to the world, and how God and his chosen people worked out their relationship. It was a stormy relationship much of the time, and one of the fascinating things about Jewish history is to watch God changing and developing alongside his people.

The Bronze Age

Jewish history begins during the Bronze age in the Middle East. The birth of the Jewish people and the start of Judaism is told in the first 5 books of the Bible. God chose Abraham to be the father of a people who would be special to God, and who would be an example of good behaviour and holiness to the rest of the world. God guided the Jewish people through many troubles, and at the time of Moses he gave them a set of rules by which they should live, including the Ten Commandments.

The birth of Judaism

This was the beginning of Judaism as a structured religion. The Jews, under God’s guidance became a powerful people with kings such as Saul, David, and Solomon, who built the first great temple. From then on Jewish worship was focussed on the Temple, as it contained the Ark of the Covenant, and was the only place where certain rites could be carried out.

The kingdom declines

Around 920 BCE, the kingdom fell apart, and the Jewish people split into groups. This was the time of the prophets. Around 600 BCE the temple was destroyed, and the Jewish leadership was killed. Many Jews were sent into exile in Babylon. Although the Jews were soon allowed to return home, many stayed in exile, beginning the Jewish tradition of the Diaspora - living away from Israel.

Rebuilding a Jewish kingdom

The Jews grew in strength throughout the next 300 years BCE, despite their lands being ruled by foreign powers. At the same time they became more able to practice their faith freely, led by scribes and teachers who explained and interpreted the Bible. In 175 BCE the King of Syria desecrated the temple and implemented a series of laws aiming to wipe out Judaism in favour of Zeus worship. There was a revolt (164 BCE) and the temple was restored. The revolt is celebrated in the Jewish festival of Hannukah.

Roman Times

For a period the Jewish people governed themselves again and were at peace with the Roman Empire. But internal divisions weakened the Jewish kingdom and allowed the Romans to establish control in 63 BCE. In the years that followed, the Jewish people were taxed and oppressed by a series of "puppet" rulers who neglected the practice of Judaism. The priests or Sadducees were allied to the rulers and lost favour with the people, who turned increasingly to the Pharisees or Scribes. These were also known as Rabbis, meaning teachers.
Year 1: CE
What is nowadays called the 'Current Era' traditionally begins with the birth of a Jewish teacher called Jesus. His followers came to believe he was the promised Messiah and later split away from Judaism to found Christianity, a faith whose roots are firmly in Judaism.

1 CE - 70 CE: Rabbinic Judaism
The Rabbis encouraged the Jewish people to observe ethical laws in all aspects of life, and observe a cycle of prayer and festivals in the home and at synagogues. This involved a major rethink of Jewish life. Although the Temple still stood, its unique place as the focus of Jewish prayer and practice was diminished. Many synagogues had been founded in Palestine and right around the Jewish Diaspora. Great teaching academies were founded in the first century BCE with scholars discussing and debating God's laws. The most well known of the early teachers were Hillel, and his contemporary Shammai.

70 - 200 CE: The destruction of the Temple
This was a period of great change - political, religious, cultural and social turmoil abounded in Palestine. The Jewish academies flourished but many Jews could not bear being ruled over by the Romans. During the first 150 years CE the Jews twice rebelled against their Roman leaders, both rebellions were brutally put down, and were followed by stern restrictions on Jewish freedom. The first revolt, in 70 CE, led to the destruction of the Temple. This brought to an end the temple worship and is still perceived by traditional Jews as the biggest trauma in Jewish history. It is marked by the fast day of Tisha B'Av (meaning the ninth day of the month of Av). A second revolt, in 132 CE, resulted in the death of hundreds of thousands of Jews, the enslaving of thousands of others, and the banning of Jews from Jerusalem.

200 - 700 CE: The Mishna and Talmud
Between 200 and 700 CE Judaism developed rapidly. Following the twin religious and political traumas, the academies moved to new centres both in Palestine and in the Diaspora. A sense of urgency had taken hold and it was considered vital to write down the teachings of the Rabbis so that Judaism could continue. Around 200 CE, scholars compiled the Mishna, the collection of teachings, sayings and interpretations of the early Rabbis. The academies continued their work and several generations of Rabbis followed. Their teachings were compiled in the Talmud which expands on the interpretations of the Mishna and established an all-encompassing guide to life. The Talmud exists in two forms. The first was finalised around the 3rd century CE in Palestine, and the second and superior version was completed during the 5th century CE in Babylon. During this period Jews were allowed to become Roman citizens, but later were forbidden to own Christian slaves or to marry Christians. In 439 CE the Romans banned synagogue building, and barred Jews from official jobs.

The Golden Age — The Jews in Spain
The years either side of 1000 CE were the golden age of the Jews in Spain. Co-existing happily with the country’s Islamic rulers the Jews developed a flourishing study of Science, Hebrew literature and the Talmud. Despite an attempt to forcibly convert all Jews to Islam in 1086 CE, this golden age continued. At around this time the first Jews are recorded in Britain.

The Crusades
The next Millennium began with the Crusades, military operations by Christian countries to capture the Holy Land. The armies of the first Crusade attacked Jewish communities on their way to Palestine, especially in Germany. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem they slaughtered and enslaved thousands of Jews as well as Muslims. Following the example of the Romans earlier, they banned Jews from the city. In Britain, the Jewish population increased, benefiting from the protection of Henry I.
The bad times return
The 1100s were a seriously bad period. Jews were driven from southern Spain by a Berber invasion. Serious anti-Jewish incidents began to occur in Europe:

- in France Jews were accused of ritually murdering a child
- in England Jews were murdered while trying to give gifts to the King at Richard I’s coronation
- 150 Jews were massacred in York
- in 1215 the Catholic Church ordered Jews to live in segregated areas (ghettos) and to wear distinctive clothes.

Expulsions
In England the Jews faced increasing restrictions during the Thirteenth Century, and in 1290 they were all expelled from England. Shortly afterwards the Jews were expelled from France. In 1478 the Jews in Spain suffered under the Spanish Inquisition, and in 1492 Jews were expelled from Spain altogether. The same thing happened in Portugal in 1497. 50 years later in Germany, Martin Luther (founder of Protestant Christianity) preached viciously against the Jews.

Scholarship, literature, and mysticism
But it wasn’t an entirely bad period for Judaism. Scholarship and literature flourished, with figures like Rambam, Luria, Levi ben Gershom, and Eleazar ben Judah. The Jewish form of mysticism, known as Kabbalah reached new heights with the publication in Spain of the Book of Splendour, which influenced Jewish Spirituality for centuries.

Jews return to Britain
This was a period of Jewish expansion. Jews were all allowed to return to England and their rights of citizenship steadily increased. In 1760 the main representative organisation for British Jewry, The Board of Deputies of British Jews, was founded. Jews were first recorded in America in 1648.

Hassidism
Poland and Central Europe saw the creation of a new Jewish movement of immense importance - Hassidism. It followed the example of the Baal Shem Tov (1700-1760) who said that you didn’t have to be an ascetic to be holy; indeed he thought that the appropriate mood for worship was one of joy. The movement included large amounts of Kabbalic mysticism as well, and the way it made holiness in every day life both intelligible and enjoyable, helped it achieve great popularity among ordinary Jews. However it also led to divisions within Judaism, as many in the religious establishment were strongly against it. In Lithuania in 1772 Hassidism was excommunicated, and Hassidic Jews were banned from marrying or doing business with other Jews.

Persecution in Central Europe
Towards the end of the 1700s Jews began to suffer persecution in central Europe, and in Russia they began to be restricted to living in a particular area of the country, called The Pale.

The birth of Reform Judaism
In the 19th Century another new movement appeared in Judaism. This was Reform Judaism, which began in Germany and held that Jewish law and ritual should move with the times, and not be fixed. It introduced many changes to worship, and customs, and grew rapidly into a strong movement. It continues to flourish in Europe and the USA.
Good news and bad news
As the 19th century continued many countries gradually withdrew restrictions on Jews—the UK allowed its Jewish citizens the same rights as others by 1860s. But at the same time Jews came under increasing pressure in central Europe and Russia. There were brutal pogroms against Jews in which they were ejected from their homes and villages, and cruelly treated. Some of this persecution is told in the musical show Fiddler on the Roof. In Israel, Jewish culture was having a significant rebirth as the Hebrew language was recreated from a language of history and religion into a language of everyday life.

UK and USA
In Britain and America this was the century of Jewish immigration, with great numbers of Jewish people arriving to escape the pogroms in Poland and Russia. The Jewish population of Britain increased by 250,000 in 30 years. It was at this time that the East End of London became a centre of Jewish life in Britain. However in 1905 the UK passed a law that slowed immigration to a mere trickle.

The birth of Zionism
The Zionist movement, whose aim was to create a Jewish state, was rooted in centuries of Jewish prayer and yearning to return to the land of Israel. Political Zionism began in the mid-19th Century and towards the end of the century it gained strength as many Jews began to feel that the only way they could live in safety would be to have a country of their own. In 1917, in the Balfour Declaration, the UK agreed that a Jewish state should be established in Israel and, following the First World War, the British governed the region in preparation for a permanent political arrangement. Over the next few years Jewish immigration increased and important institutions were founded such as the Israeli Chief Rabbinate, and the Hebrew University.

The Holocaust
Jewish history of the 1930s and 1940s is dominated by the Holocaust, the implementation on an industrial scale of a plan to wipe the whole Jewish people from the face of Europe. The plan was carried out by the Nazi government of Germany and their allies. During the Holocaust 6 million Jewish people were murdered, 1 million of them children. The events of the Holocaust have shaped Jewish thinking, and the thinking of other people about Jewish issues ever since. War crimes trials of those involved in the Holocaust continue to this day. The tragedy affected much of the religious thinking of Jews, as they try to make sense of a God who could allow such a thing to happen to his chosen people.

The State of Israel
The second defining Jewish event of the century was the achievement of the Zionist movement in the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. There had been strong and paramilitary opposition to British colonial rule for many years, and in 1947 the United Nations agreed a plan to partition the land between Jews and Arabs. In May 1948 the British Government withdrew their forces. Immediately, the surrounding Arab States invaded and the new Jewish State was forced to fight the first of several major wars. Notable among these were the 6-day war in 1967 and the Yom Kippur war in 1973. The first steps towards a permanent peace came when Israel signed a peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, and with Jordan in 1994. For most of its history Israel has had an uneasy relationship with the Arab states that surround it, and has been greatly sustained by the help and support of the USA, where the Jewish community is large and influential. The 21st century began with great political uncertainty over Israel and its relationship with the Palestinian people, and this continues.
Major Denominations

From Religion Facts

Divisions by Practice
Differences between Jewish denominations, which are more commonly known as "movements," reflect varying responses to changing times and cultures. The historical Jewish movements (Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes) were responses to the Roman rule of Israel, while the major modern movements (Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative) are responses to the modern, secular culture of Europe and America.

Thus, while Christian denominations differ chiefly in matters of doctrine, Jewish denominations differ from one another primarily with regard to practice. Hasidism and Kabbalah are mystical approaches to the Jewish faith. Like monasticism in Christianity and Sufism in Islam, Jewish mysticism emphasizes inward, spiritual experiences over intellectual and rational knowledge. This section explores the major modern Jewish movements: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Hasidism, and Kabbalah.

Orthodox Judaism
Orthodox is the most traditional expression of modern Judaism. Orthodox Jews believe the entire Torah (including "Written," the Pentateuch, and "Oral," the Talmud) was given to Moses by God at Sinai and remains authoritative for modern life in its entirety. According to a 1990 nationwide survey, 7 percent of American Jews are Orthodox. American and Canadian Orthodox Jews are organized under the Orthodox Union, which serves 1,000 synagogues in North America. {1}

Orthodox Jews reject the changes of Reform Judaism and hold fast to most traditional Jewish beliefs and practices. Orthodox Judaism has held fast to such practices as daily worship, dietary laws (kashruth), traditional prayers and ceremonies, regular and intensive study of the Torah, and separation of men and women in the synagogue. It also enjoins strict observance of the Sabbath and religious festivals and does not permit instrumental music during communal services. {2}

Orthodox Jews consider Reform and Conservative Jews adherents of the Jewish faith, but do not accept many non-Orthodox Jewish marriages, divorces, or conversions on the grounds that they were not performed in accordance with Jewish law. The Orthodox Union dedicates significant resources to its OU Kosher division, which certifies an estimated 660,000 products in 77 countries around the world. {3}

[References: (1) Orthodox Union official site, (2) "Orthodox Judaism." Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service, 2004, (3) OU Kosher official site]

Reform Judaism
Reform Judaism is the most liberal expression of modern Judaism. In America, Reform Judaism is organized under the Union for Reform Judaism (formerly known as the Union of American Hebrew Congregations), whose mission is "to create and sustain vibrant Jewish congregations wherever Reform Jews live." About 1.5 million Jews in 900 synagogues are members of the Union for Reform Judaism. According to a 1990 survey, 42 percent of American Jews regard themselves as Reform. {1}
Reform Judaism arose in Germany in the early 1800s both as a reaction against the perceived rigidity of Orthodox Judaism and as a response to Germany's increasingly liberal political climate. Among the changes made in 19th-century Reform congregations were a de-emphasis on Jews as a united people, discontinuation of prayers for a return to Palestine, prayers and sermons recited in German instead of Hebrew, the addition of organ music to the synagogue service, and a lack of observance of the dietary laws. Some Reform rabbis advocated the abolition of circumcision and the Reform congregation in Berlin shifted the Sabbath to Sundays to be more like their Christian neighbors. Early Reform Judaism retained traditional Jewish monotheism, but emphasized ethical behavior almost to the exclusion of ritual. The Talmud was mostly rejected, with Reform rabbis preferring the ethical teachings of the Prophets. {2}

Modern Reform Judaism, however, has restored some of the aspects of Judaism that their 19th-century predecessors abandoned, including the sense of Jewish people-hood and the practice of religious rituals. {2} Today, Reform Jews affirm the central tenets of Judaism--God, Torah, and Israel--while acknowledging a great diversity in Reform Jewish beliefs and practices. Reform Jews are more inclusive than other Jewish movements: women may be rabbis, cantors, and synagogue presidents; interfaith families are accepted; and Reform Jews are "committed to the full participation of gays and lesbians in synagogue life as well as society at large." {3}

[References: (1) Uniform for Reform Judaism official site, (2) Jewish Literacy by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, (3) Union for Reform Judaism official site, (4) Essential Judaism by George Robinson, (5) Wikipedia “Reform Judaism”]

Conservative Judaism
Conservative Judaism (known as Masorti Judaism outside the USA) is a moderate sect that seeks to avoid the extremes of Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Conservative Jews wish to conserve the traditional elements of Judaism while also allowing for reasonable modernization and rabbinical development. The teachings of Zacharias Frankel (1801-75) form the foundation of Conservative Judaism. Frankel broke away from the Reform movement in Germany in the 1840s, insisting that Jewish tradition and rituals had not become nonessentials. He accepted both the Torah and Talmud as enduring authorities but taught that historical and textual studies could differentiate cultural expressions from abiding religious truths. In 1902, Solomon Schechter reorganized the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City and made it the flagship institution of Conservative Judaism. Future Conservative rabbis are still trained there. {1}

Conservative Jews observe the Sabbath and dietary laws, although some modifications have been made to the latter. As in Reform Judaism, women may be rabbis. In 1985, the first woman rabbi was ordained in a Conservative synagogue. Conservative Jews uphold the importance of Jewish nationalism, encouraging the study of Hebrew and support for Zionism. Beyond these basic perspectives, beliefs and practices among Conservative Jews can range from Reform to Orthodox in nature. It is more "a theological coalition rather than a homogeneous expression of beliefs and practices." {2} The Conservative movement has been especially successful in the United States, where it is represented by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ). The USCJ was founded in 1913 and today encompasses about 1.5 million Jews in 760 congregations. {3} Future Conservative rabbis are trained at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York, NY, founded in 1883.

A number of studies have shown that there is a large gap between what the Conservative movement teaches and what most of its laypeople have incorporated into their daily lives. Conservative Judaism holds that halakha (Jewish law) is normative, i.e. that it is something that Jewish people must strive to actually live by in their daily lives. This would include the laws of Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath); the laws of kashrut (keeping kosher); the practice of thrice daily prayer; observance of the Jewish holidays and life-cycle events. In practice, the majority of people who have come to join Conservative synagogues only
follow all these laws rarely. Most do follow most of the laws some of the time, but only a minority follow most or all of the laws all of time. There is a substantial committed core, consisting of the lay leadership, rabbis, cantors, educators, and those who have graduated from the movement's religious day schools and summer camps, that do take Jewish law very seriously. Recent studies have shown an increase in the observance of members of the movement. {4}


Hasidic Judaism
Hasidic (or Chasidic) Judaism arose in 12th-century Germany as a movement emphasizing asceticism and mystical experience born out of love and humility before God. The austere religious life of these early Hasids ("pious ones") is documented in the Sefer Hasidim ("Book of the Pious").

The modern Hasidic movement was founded in Poland in the 18th century by Israel ben Eliezer, more commonly known as the Baal Shem Tov ("Master of the Good Name") or "the Besht" (an acronym for Baal Shem Tov). Heavily influenced by the Kabbalah movement, Hasidism emphasized personal experiences of God over religious education and ritual. The primary distinction between modern Hasidism and its earlier incarnation is modern Hasidism's rejection of asceticism and emphasis on the holiness of everyday life. As the Besht himself put it:

I came into this world to point a new way, to prevail upon men to live by the light of these three things: love of God, love of Israel, and love of Torah. And there is no need to perform mortifications of the flesh. {Recorded by his grandson, Rabbi Baruch of Medzhibozh}

The Besht's focus on the needs of the common people and his conviction that everyday activities hold as much religious value as rituals found a welcome audience.

Though it is conservative in many ways, Hasidism clashed heavily with mainstream Judaism when it first emerged. Rabbinical opponents of the Hasidic movement, known as mitnagdim (opponents), accused the Besht and his followers of being licentious and indifferent to tradition.

Hasidic Jews center on a leader called a rebbe or tzaddik, who may or may not be a rabbi. The rebbe is considered especially enlightened and close to God and is looked to for guidance in all aspects of life, from Torah interpretation to choosing a spouse to buying a home. A rebbe's advice is considered absolutely authoritative.

Kabbalah: Jewish Mysticism
The mystical form of Judaism is Kabbalah. Broadly speaking, Kabbalah refers to Jewish mysticism dating back to the time of the second Temple. For many years a carefully guarded oral tradition, it became systematized and dispersed in the Middle Ages. The kabbalistic viewpoint was expressed most importantly in the Yalkut Re'uveni by Reuben Hoeshke in 1660, but also made its way into prayer books, popular customs and ethics. The focus of the Kabbalah is the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God, with the latter described in terms of the sefirot, or attributes of God.
Holy Days of Judaism

From My Jewish Learning: Types of Jewish Holidays

There are essentially three major categories of Jewish holidays, celebrations, and commemorations found in the Jewish calendar. These are biblical holidays, rabbinic holidays, and post-rabbinic celebrations. These categories indicate the historical period during which these holidays came to be established events in the Jewish calendar.

Biblical Holidays

The first major category is biblical holidays. These are festivals that are mentioned in either the Torah (Such as Passover) or other books of the Hebrew Bible. There are two central chapters in the Torah that list the biblical holidays: Leviticus 23 and Deuteronomy 16. These chapters list two kinds of Israelite holidays, the three pilgrimage festivals and the High Holy Days.

Pilgrimage Festivals

The three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach (Passover), Shavuot (Feast of Weeks), and Sukkot (Festival of Booths) mark not only historical events in the development of the Jewish people, but also agricultural celebrations and the seasonal harvests in the land of Israel. These holidays are called pilgrimage festivals because in ancient times all Israelite men were commanded to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem, to take part in the festival celebrations. Even today, Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot continue to mark significant national-spiritual events in the life of the Jewish people, namely the Exodus from Egypt, the receiving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai, and God’s sheltering of the Israelites in the desert for 40 years, respectively.

High Holy Days

The other holidays mentioned in the Torah are the High Holy Days. Although not given these names until much later, Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) are first described in the Torah, though not in the complete form that is observed today. Rosh Hashanah celebrates the beginning of the new Jewish calendar year (a later designation) and is celebrated with the sounding of the shofar, the ram's horn (a biblical description). Yom Kippur is described as a day on which the Israelites are to practice self-denial (later understood to mean fasting and the refraining from several other activities) and to seek expiation for their individual and communal transgressions.

Rabbinic Holidays

The second major category of Jewish holidays is the rabbinic holidays. These are festivals or events which are not expressly mentioned in the Hebrew Bible, but were developed later during the rabbinic period of Jewish history.
One holiday that the rabbis developed—though did not originate—is the holiday of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah. Shemini Atzeret is mentioned in the Torah, and so is an anomaly in the rabbinic holiday category, but it was the rabbis who imbued it with meaning. Originally described in the Torah as an eighth day of the pilgrimage festival of Sukkot, the rabbis declared that Shemini Atzeret was to be celebrated as a holiday in its own right. The second day was later called Simchat Torah, the day of rejoicing in the Torah, on which the ritual reading of the Torah is completed and begun all over again. (In Israel and in many contemporary liberal communities, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are celebrated simultaneously on one day, not two.)

The rabbis also added two public fast days to the Jewish calendar, which are briefly mentioned in the Hebrew Bible: the fast of Esther (Ta’anit Ester), in commemoration of the Jews’ fasting before Esther went in to see the king (Esther 4:16), and the fast of Gedaliah, whose assassination ended Judean sovereignty after the destruction of the First Temple (2 Kings 25:22-26; Jeremiah 40-41).

The other holidays that the rabbis added are primarily commemorations of events in Jewish history that occurred after the period of the Hebrew Bible. For example, Hanukkah, the festival of lights, celebrates the victory of the Maccabees over the Hellenistic Syrians, and the fast of Tisha B’Av commemorates the traditional date on which both the First and Second Temples were destroyed.

Post-Rabbinic Holidays

The third major category of Jewish holidays consists of post-rabbinic holidays. These mark significant events that occurred in the past 2000 years of Jewish history. One holiday that has had a noticeable evolution is Tu BiShevat. Although based on a biblical tradition, and observed after the destruction of the Temple, the character of Tu Bishevat took shape under the guidance of the medieval kabbalists (mystics). Over time it has developed into a popular Jewish “arbor day” with spiritual overtones. Originally associated with planting crops and trees in ancient times, this day has become associated with planting trees and holding symbolic ritual meals characterized by eating fruits and nuts from the land of Israel.

In more recent times, Yom Hashoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, was created by the Israeli Knesset (Parliament) to remember the approximately six million Jewish victims of the Nazi Holocaust in Europe. In addition, Yom Ha’atzmaut, or Israel Independence Day, marks the declaration of the existence of the modern Jewish State of Israel in 1948. It is preceded in Israel by Yom Hazikaron, the Israeli version of Memorial Day, set aside to remember the fallen soldiers who have given their lives defending Israel since its establishment.
A number of formulations of Jewish principles of faith have appeared; most of them have much in common, yet they differ in certain details. A comparison of them demonstrates a wide array of tolerance for varying theological perspectives. Below is a summary of Jewish principles of faith.

1. Monotheism - Judaism is based on strict unitarian monotheism, the belief in one God. God is conceived of as eternal, the creator of the universe, and the source of morality.

2. God is one - The idea of God as a duality or trinity is heretical for Jews to hold; it is considered akin to polytheism. Interestingly, while Jews hold that such conceptions of God are incorrect, they generally are of the opinion that gentiles that hold such beliefs are not held culpable.

3. God is all powerful (omnipotent), as well as all knowing (omniscient). The different names of God are ways to express different aspects of God's presence in the world.

4. God is non-physical, non-corporeal, and eternal. All statements in the Hebrew Bible and in rabbinic literature which use anthropomorphism are held to be linguistic conceits or metaphors, as it would otherwise be impossible to talk about God.

5. To God alone may one offer prayer. Any belief that an intermediary between man and God could be used, whether necessary or even optional, has traditionally been considered heretical.

6. The Hebrew Bible, and much of the beliefs described in the Mishnah and Talmud, are held to be the product of divine Revelation.

7. The words of the prophets are true.

8. Moses was the chief of all prophets.

9. The Torah (five books of Moses) is the primary text of Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism holds that the Torah is the same one that was given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai. Orthodox Jews believe that the Torah that we have today is exactly the same as it was when it was received from God by Moses with only minor scribal errors. Due to advances in biblical scholarship, and archaeological and linguistic research, most non-Orthodox Jews reject this principle. Instead, they may accept that the core of the Oral and Written Torah may have come from Moses, but the written Torah that we have today has been edited together from several documents.

10. God will reward those who observe His commandments, and punish those who violate them.

11. God chose the Jewish people to be in a unique covenant with God; the description of this covenant is the Torah itself. Contrary to popular belief, Jewish people do not simply say that "God chose the Jews." Jews believe that they were chosen for a specific mission; to be a light unto the nations, and to have a covenant with God as described in the Torah.

12. The messianic age. There will be a moshiach (messiah), or perhaps a messianic era.

13. The soul is pure at birth. People are born with a yetzer ha'tov, a tendency to do good, and with a yetzer ha'ra, a tendency to do bad. Thus, human beings have free will and can choose the path in life that they will take.

14. People can atone for sins. The liturgy of the Days of Awe (Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) states that prayer, repentance and tzedakah (dutiful giving of charity) atone for sin. Atonement is deemed only meaningful if accompanied by sincere decision to cease unacceptable actions, and then only if appropriate amends to others are honestly undertaken. It covers wrongdoings by which a person has fallen short of divine wishes in his daily life, and thus there is always a "way back" to God. In Judaism, sin is more considered in terms of a wrongful action, contravening divine commandment to live a holy life, than wrongful thought.
The Hebrew word for prayer is tefilah. It is derived from the root Pe-Lamed-Lamed and the word l’hitpalel, meaning to judge oneself. This surprising word origin provides insight into the purpose of Jewish prayer. The most important part of any Jewish prayer, whether it be a prayer of petition, of thanksgiving, of praise of God, or of confession, is the introspection it provides, the moment that we spend looking inside ourselves, seeing our role in the universe and our relationship to God.

"Prayer responds to a need--to our need to understand and be understood, to speak and be heard, to sing, to believe, to remember, to share, to dream and to worship."

--Elie Wiesel

The Mourner’s Kaddish
Elie Wiesel speaks of the Mourner’s Kaddish in his writing. Each time, he conveys a strong, spiritual significance. This passage is from his memoir All Rivers Run to the Sea:

“Buchenwald was liberated on April 11, 1945. Actually, the camp liberated itself. Armed members of the Resistance rose up a few hours before the magical appearance of the first American units…Elated prisoners put the SS to flight…Some of us organized a minyan and said Kaddish. That Kaddish, at once a glorification of God’s name and a protest against His creation, still echoes in my ears. It was a thanksgiving for having spared us, but it was also an outcry: ‘Why did You not spare so many others?’”

And again in Night:

“Everyone around us was weeping. Someone began to recite Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. I don’t know whether, during the history of the Jewish people, men have ever before recited Kaddish for themselves.”

Kaddish (קדש Aramaic: “holy”) refers to an important and central blessing in the Jewish prayer service. The term “Kaddish” is often used to refer specifically to “The Mourner’s Kaddish,” said as part of the mourning rituals in Judaism in all prayer services as well as at funerals and memorials. When mention is made of “saying Kaddish,” this unambiguously denotes the rituals of mourning.
The opening words of this prayer are inspired by Ezekiel 38:23, a vision of God becoming great in the eyes of all the nations. The central line of the Kaddish in Jewish tradition is the congregation’s response, “May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity,” a public declaration of God’s greatness and eternality.

בְּעֵדֶת (ַיִּצְקָעֲשׂ שֵׁם כְּנָעַם) May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified (Cong. Amen.)

בָּאָרֶץ לִי נַעֲמָת
in the world that He created as He willed.

מְלַא צְבוּרָה בְּכָלָם בְּרֶמְיזָם
May He give reign to His kingship in your lifetimes and in your days,

כָּלֶמֶךָ בְּנָחָל בְּשַׁךְ
and in the lifetimes of the entire Family of Israel,


(כְּנָעַם)

נַעֲמָה רַבָּתָם בְּכָלָם דְּעֵמֶק
(Cong. Amen. May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.)

נַעֲמָה רַבָּתָם בְּכָלָם דְּעֵמֶק May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.

(כְּנָעַם)

בְּעֵדֶת (ַיִּצְקָעֲשׂ שֵׁם כְּנָעַם) Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, exalted,

יִשְׁפְּלַיֲוִיְכָּם (יִשְׁפְּלַיֲוִיְכָּם)
mighty, upraised, and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, Blessed is He

(כְּנָעַם)

לְעָתִי (יִשְׁפְּלַיֲוִיְכָּם)
He Who makes peace in His heights, may He make peace,

(כְּנָעַם)

לְעָתִי (יִשְׁפְּלַיֲוִיְכָּם)
Lyrics courtesy of Jewish Australia Online Network

**ANI MA’AMIN**

(Hebrew transliteration)

Ani ma'amin,
Be'emu na shelema

Beviat hamashiach ani ma'amin
Beviat hamashiach, ma'amim
Beviat hamashiach ani ma'amin
Beviat hamashiach, ma'amim

Veaf al pi sheyitmahmea
Im kol zeh, achake loh
Veaf al pi sheyitmahmea
Im kol zeh, achake loh

Im kol zeh, im kol zeh, achake loh
Achake bechol yom sheyavoh
Im kol zeh, im kol zeh, achake loh
Achake bechol yom sheyavoh

(sof)
Ani ma'amin

**I BELIEVE**

(English)

I believe with complete faith
In the coming of the Messiah, I believe

Believe in the coming of the Messiah
In the coming of the Messiah, I believe
Believe in the coming of the Messiah

And even though he may tarry
Nonetheless I will wait for him
And even though he may tarry
Nonetheless I will wait for him

Nonetheless, I will wait for him
I will wait every day for him to come
Nonetheless, I will wait for him
I will wait every day for him to come

(Ending)
I believe

**Background**

"I believe" is a prosaic rendition of Maimonides' thirteen-point version of the Jewish principles of faith. Moses Maimonides One of the greatest Torah scholars, was a rabbi, physician, and philosopher in Spain, Morocco and Egypt during the Middle Ages. He was the preeminent medieval Jewish philosopher. The recitation consists of thirteen lines, each beginning with the phrase "Ani ma'amim be-emunah shelema" ("I believe with perfect faith"). It follows the same order as Maimonides' enumeration.

One version of the tune is attributed to the Reb Azriel David, a Modzitser Hasid, who reportedly composed the tune in a cattle car when being taken to Treblinka. The tune was taken up by the other Modziter Hasadim who sang the song as they were being herded into the gas chambers of the Nazi concentration camps. The song was then adopted by other Jewish prisoners and became known as the *Hymn of the Camps*. It is still frequently sung at Holocaust Remembrance Day services. Some also sang it at the Passover seder, in memory of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising which began on the first night of Passover in 1943.

From Wikipedia “Ani Ma’amin”
Genesis
Chapter Study Questions

1. Create a short timeline of Elie Wiesel’s life based on the biography you have just read.
2. Elie Wiesel is a tireless humanitarian, standing up for people around the world who are persecuted and in despair. What specific event(s) in his life do you think gave him this passion for activism? Why?
3. In the “100 People Who Shape Our World” article, Oprah Winfrey writes, “Evil is never the end of the story.” What does this mean? How is it significant when considering Elie Wiesel’s journey?
4. Elie Wiesel describes living in a world where it was “human to be inhuman.” Discuss this phrase and the image it evokes.
5. Research Sighet, Romania. What are the common customs and beliefs? How did the environment shape both Elie Wiesel’s youth and his future?
6. Elie Wiesel says about his home Sighet, “With all that has happened to me, it is essential to remember that place.” Do you relate to this quote in your personal experience? How do our homes and backgrounds shape our identities?
7. Choose 5-10 major world events that you believe had the most direct and profound influences on Elie Wiesel’s life. Justify your choices.
8. Create a timeline of the major events in the history of Judaism. Why did you choose to include those particular events?
9. Define the Zionist movement. What were the objectives of the movement? Was it successful?
10. What early signs of anti-Semitism can you find? When were people most likely to hate the Jews?
11. Make a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting two Jewish denominations of your choice. What beliefs and customs do they have in common? In what ways are they different?
12. Define the term transdenominational. Why do you think many modern Jews see outside of traditional denominations?
14. Choose one Jewish holiday to investigate thoroughly. Why is that day significant? What specific foods, prayers, and customs would be associated with the day?
15. Discuss two of the Jewish principles of faith. Why are these central to Judaism? Why did you select these principles? How are they reflected in other faiths?
16. One of the Jewish principles of faith involves the concept of monotheism. What does that mean? Identify other monotheistic religions. What are their similarities and differences with Judaism?
17. Discuss the message that the Mourner’s Kaddish conveys. How about the message that relates to Ani Ma’amin?
18. Reread Elie Wiesel’s quote on prayer in the “Music and Prayer” section. Why do you think prayer is such an integral part of Judaism and countless other faiths?
19. Write a diary entry from the perspective of a passenger in the cattle car to Treblinka, standing next to Reb Azriel David. What would the experience have been like? How, in all the darkness, might the Ani Ma’amin served as a healing force?
20. Compare and contrast your faith to that of Elie Wiesel with regard to God, humanity, and people’s way of life. What similarities or differences do you notice?
III. Darkness and Light

“Never shall I forget that night, the first night in the camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed ... Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself....”

-- Elie Wiesel

A. Anti-Semitism
   1. Definition .............................................................39
   2. “We Plead on Behalf of an Ancient People..................40

B. The Holocaust ..........................................................42
   2. “Hitler and the Rise of the Nazi Party.........................44
   3. Major Concentration Camps Throughout Europe.........47
   4. Auschwitz.............................................................48
   5. Buchenwald............................................................49
   6. “Nazis and Medical Ethics”.....................................51
   7. “France and the Holocaust”....................................53
   8. Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE).......................54

C. Remembrance and Reconciliation
   1. The Shoah Memorial..............................................55
   2. “Jews in Germany Proof of Reconciliation”..............57
   3. “A Speech by Elie Wiesel before Bundestag”.............58
   4. “Obama and Wiesel Visit Buchenwald”.....................63

D. Chapter Study Questions.............................................64

“Each person who survived, I’m sure they had something they were fighting for, some light that kept them alive....”

-- Scott Fisher
Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is a starting place for trying to understand the tragedy that would befall countless numbers of people during the Holocaust. Throughout history Jews have faced prejudice and discrimination, known as anti-Semitism. Driven nearly two thousand years ago by the Romans from the land now called Israel, they spread throughout the globe and tried to retain their unique beliefs and culture while living as a minority. In some countries Jews were welcomed, and they enjoyed long periods of peace with their neighbors. In European societies where the population was primarily Christian, Jews found themselves increasingly isolated as outsiders. Jews do not share the Christian belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and many Christians considered this refusal to accept Jesus' divinity as arrogant.

For centuries the Church taught that Jews were responsible for Jesus' death, not recognizing, as most historians do today, that Jesus was executed by the Roman government because officials viewed him as a political threat to their rule. Added to religious conflicts were economic ones. Rulers placed restrictions on Jews, barring them from holding certain jobs and from owning land. At the same time, since the early Church did not permit usury (lending money at interest), Jews came to fill the vital (but unpopular) role of moneylenders for the Christian majority. In more desperate times, Jews became scapegoats for many problems people suffered. For example, they were blamed for causing the "Black Death," the plague that killed thousands of people throughout Europe during the Middle Ages. In Spain in the 1400s, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity, leave the country, or be executed. In Russia and Poland in the late 1800s the government organized or did not prevent violent attacks on Jewish neighborhoods, called pogroms, in which mobs murdered Jews and looted their homes and stores.

As ideas of political equality and freedom spread in western Europe during the 1800s, Jews became almost equal citizens under the law. At the same time, however, new forms of anti-Semitism emerged. European leaders who wanted to establish colonies in Africa and Asia argued that whites were superior to other races and therefore had to spread and take over the "weaker" and "less civilized" races. Some writers applied this argument to Jews, too, mistakenly defining Jews as a race of people called Semites who shared common blood and physical features. This kind of racial anti-Semitism meant that Jews remained Jews by race even if they converted to Christianity. Some politicians began using the idea of racial superiority in their campaigns as a way to get votes. Karl Lueger (1844-1910) was one such politician. He became Mayor of Vienna, Austria, at the end of the century through the use of anti-Semitism—he appealed to voters by blaming Jews for bad economic times. Lueger was a hero to a young man named Adolf Hitler, who was born in Austria in 1889. Hitler's ideas, including his views of Jews, were shaped during the years he lived in Vienna, where he studied Lueger's tactics and the anti-Semitic newspapers and pamphlets that multiplied during Lueger's long rule.
We Plead on Behalf of an Ancient People

By Elie Wiesel

From “Confronting Anti-Semitism”
by Kofi A. Annan and Elie Wiesel
(Ruder Finn Press, 2006)

At the end of his magnificent and disturbing novel called The Plague, Albert Camus issues a warning. His hero, the famous humanist, Dr. Rieux, who survived the death of many of his friends and adversaries, is now at the very end of the story, alone, walking in the city, remembering and listening to the cries of joy rising from the town. And all of a sudden, says Camus, Rieux, his hero, remembered:

“That such joy is always imperiled. He knew what those jubilant crowds did not know, but could have learned from books, that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good. That it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and linen chests, that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks and bookshelves and that perhaps the day would come when for the bane and the enlightening of man it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city.” And that is also anti-Semitism.

We plead on behalf of an ancient PEOPLE who, in some quarters, continues to be vilified, threatened, offended and physically marked for humiliation. Call it anti-Semitism or Jew-hatred, it is the oldest collective bigotry in recorded history. In fact, one may say that of all the group-hatreds in antiquity, anti-Semitism alone survived antiquity. It is no longer political, social or religious: it is existential. Anti-Semitism is sui generis. Other people, other traditions, other religious communities and cultures have been persecuted for a variety of reasons; anti-Semitism combines them all. The anti-Semite doesn’t know me—but he hates me. Actually, he hated me even before I was born. He even hates the dead—otherwise why such sacrilege in so many profaned cemeteries?

A young Israeli visiting Berlin was assaulted in the street in broad daylight yesterday. Last week a young Jewish student was stabbed in Paris. A number of European Jews told me that they live in fear. Incitement to hate and violence continues to fill the pages and the TV screens in many, too many, Muslim countries. Under the pretext of blaming Israel’s policies, which they outrageously exaggerate and demonize, their western allies and supporters encourage hatred towards the entire Jewish people. This is the first time in history that the United Nations has decided to explore the roots and consequences of a plague that has brought agony and distress to my people and shame to civilization itself.

Anti-Semitism used to be culturally fashionable and even socially permissible. Goethe detests the Bible, which he called a pugwash of Egypto-Babylonian sodomy. Augustine declared that Jews were still around so that Christians could see in them descendants of Cain and their sins. Hegel said: “the Jewish people are servile, incapable of liberty; they cannot escape slavery except by enslaving others.” On different levels, famous artists, renowned writers, would not hesitate to utter anti-Semitic remarks at cocktails or concerts. The kindest among them thought: just words, words; it doesn’t mean anything.

Both amazing and intellectually disturbing is the realization that even renowned writers, thinkers and artists were infected by the anti-Jewish virus. Richard Wagner and Louis-Ferdinand Céline remain inexplicable examples: how could artistic greatness co-exist with stupid and ferocious racist hatred? And Hegel? Why did he state that: “The great tragedy of the Jewish people cannot but arouse disgust”?

Ezra Pound and Renoir, Kant and Dostoyevsky all had something unpleasant, something ugly, to say about Jews. And Schopenhauer, who violently denounced what he called “Jewish stink” everywhere they are? Why did he accuse the Jews of seeing their homeland only in other Jews? Why did Luther, who
demonstrated extraordinary courage in defying Rome, produce such anti-Jewish diatribes and curses when he grew old?

Listen to Voltaire: “We find in the Jews an ignorant and barbarous people who have long united the most avarice with the most detestable superstition and the most invincible hatred for every people by whom they are tolerated and enriched…” Still, he added with magnanimity, “We ought not to burn them.”

But now we know the consequences. We know that words can kill, just as they can heal. Anti-Semitism has even managed to penetrate the United Nations community. Had it not been for the courageous stance of moral leaders inside the United Nations organization, the infamous resolution comparing Zionism to racism would still be in effect. As for Durban, there efforts were less successful: instead of being a conference against hatred it became a conference of hatred.

The United Nations was created not only to put an end to aggression and war but also to protect innocent victims of fascism and Nazism—and I belong to a people that has been its principal target. Hence we turn to the United Nations and ask its leadership to fulfill its mission and use its political and moral authority to outlaw the plague that anti-Semitism is.

I have devoted most of my adult life to combating many evils of society: intolerance, bigotry, racism, fanaticism and indifference to other people’s suffering and fears. But I never thought I would have to fight anti-Semitism. Naively I was convinced that it died in Auschwitz. Now I realize my mistake; it didn’t. Only the Jews perished there. Anti-Semitism is alive and well in too many lands. Doesn’t the organized world and its moral and intellectual leadership remember the consequences of anti-Semitism? Some of us endured them. We were there—we saw our parents and friends die—because of anti-Semitism.

Thus my plea to the Secretary-General. Help us fight it, help us disarm it. To do so would be in the interest of the United Nations for it would serve the cause of humanity at large. Hatred is contagious. It is a cancer. Who hates Jews, hates all minorities, all those who are different. Who hates Jews will end up hating everybody—and then himself.

In conclusion, I quote from the last page from a recent novel called The Oath. It is about a seventeenth century pogrom in an Eastern European shtetl. Hooligans set the Jewish quarter afire. Jewish homes were burning. But soon the flames invaded the Christian quarter as well. They were out to destroy Jews and ended up destroying themselves too.

“I was stepping back and back, but the distance remained unchanged. The prey of death, the price of life: Kolvillag was burning and I watched it burn. The House of Study, the trees and the walls—whipped by fire and wind. The cobblestones—shattered. The Jewish quarter, the churches and the schools, the store and the warehouses: yellow and red, orange and purple flames escaped from them, only to return at once. The shelter and the orphanage, the tavern and the synagogue joined by a bridge of fire. The cemetery was burning, the police station was burning, the cribs were burning, the library was burning. On that night man’s work yielded to the power and judgment of the fire. And suddenly I understood with every fiber of my being why I was shuddering at this vision of horror: I had just glimpsed the future. The Rebbe and his murderers, the sanctuary and its desecrators, the beggars and their stories, I trembled as I left them—left them, backing away. I saw them from afar, then I saw them no more. Only the fire still lived in what was once a town, mine. Charred dwellings. Charred corpses. Charred dreams and prayers and songs. Every story has an end, just as every end has a story. And yet, and yet. In the case of this city reduced to ashes, the two stories merge into one and remain a secret—such had been the will of my mad friend named Moshe, last prophet and teacher of a mankind that is no more.”
The Holocaust

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. "Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were "life unworthy of life." During the era of the Holocaust, the Nazis also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the handicapped, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that the Third Reich would occupy or influence during World War II. By 1945, close to two out of every three European Jews had been killed as part of the "Final Solution", the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. Although Jews were the primary victims of Nazi racism, other victims included tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsies). At least 200,000 mentally or physically disabled people were murdered in the Euthanasia Program. As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Nazis persecuted and murdered millions of other people. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were murdered or died of starvation, disease, neglect, or maltreatment. The Germans targeted the non-Jewish Polish intelligentsia for killing, and deported millions of Polish and Soviet citizens for forced labor in Germany or in occupied Poland. From the earliest years of the Nazi regime, homosexuals and others deemed to be behaving in a socially unacceptable way were persecuted. Thousands of political dissidents (including Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists) and religious dissidents (such as Jehovah's Witnesses) were also targeted. Many of these individuals died as a result of incarceration and maltreatment.

Before beginning the war in 1939, the Nazis established concentration camps to imprison Jews, Roma, other victims of ethnic and racial hatred, and political opponents of Nazism. During the war years, the Nazis and their collaborators created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) carried out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma, and Soviet state and Communist party officials. More than a million Jewish men, women, and children were murdered by these units. Between 1942 and 1944, Nazi Germany deported millions more Jews from the occupied territories to extermination camps, where they murdered them in specially developed killing facilities.

In the final months of the war, SS guards forced camp inmates on death marches in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners. As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives on Germany, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp prisoners, many of whom had survived the death marches. World War II ended in Europe with the unconditional surrender of German armed forces in the west on May 7 and in the east on May 9, 1945.
The Holocaust: Terminology

What is “genocide?”
From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The term “genocide” did not exist before 1944. It is a very specific term, referring to violent crimes committed against groups with the intent to destroy the existence of the group. Human rights, as laid out in the U.S. Bill of rights or the 1948 United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, concern the rights of individuals.

In 1944, a Polish-Jewish lawyer named Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) sought to describe Nazi policies of systematic murder, including the destruction of the European Jews. He formed the word “genocide” by combining geno-, from the Greek word for race or tribe, with –cide, from the Latin word for killing. In proposing this new term, Lemkin had in mind “a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves.” The next year, the International Military Tribunal held at Nuremberg, Germany charged top Nazis with “crimes against humanity.” The word “genocide” was included in the indictment, but as a descriptive, not legal, term.

On December 9, 1948, in the shadow of the Holocaust and in no small part due to the tireless efforts of Lemkin himself, the United Nations approved the Convention on the Prevent and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. The convention establishes “genocide” as an international crime, which signatory nations “undertake to prevent and punish.” It defines genocide as:

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, as such:

a) Killing members of the group;
b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group

What is meant by the term “Shoah?”
From the Shoah Memorial Museum

Shoah is a Hebrew word which means catastrophe. It is used to describe the genocide of the Jews by the Nazis during the Second World War. The word Shoah covers the genocide stricto sensu, that is a period from the beginning of the massacres in the summer of 1941, until the end of the war in Europe in the spring of 1945, when European Jews ceased to be in danger. However, the persecution of European Jews began long before that, with humiliation and violence day after day, legal and social exclusion, and also spoliation which started in the very few weeks following the Nazis taking power in Germany on January 30, 1933.
Hitler and the Rise of the Nazi Party


Early Life
The son of Alois Hitler (1837–1903), an Austrian customs official, Adolf Hitler dropped out of high school, and after his mother's death in 1907 moved to Vienna. He twice failed the admission examination for the academy of arts. His vicious anti-Semitism (perhaps influenced by that of Karl Lueger) and political harangues drove many acquaintances away. In 1913 he settled in Munich, and on the outbreak of World War I he joined the Bavarian army. During the war he was gassed and wounded; a corporal, he received the Iron Cross for bravery. The war hardened his extreme nationalism, and he blamed the German defeat on betrayal by Jews and Marxists. Upon his return to Munich he joined a handful of other nationalistic veterans in the German Workers' party.

The Nazi Party
In 1920 the German Workers' party was renamed the National Socialist German Workers, or Nazi, party; in 1921 it was reorganized with Hitler as chairman. He made it a paramilitary organization and won the support of such prominent nationalists as Field Marshal Ludendorff. On Nov. 8, 1923, Hitler attempted the “beer-hall putsch,” intended to overthrow the republican government. Leading Bavarian officials (themselves discontented nationalists) were surrounded at a meeting in a Munich beer hall by the Nazi militia, or storm troopers, and made to swear loyalty to this “revolution.” On regaining their freedom they used the Reichswehr [army] to defeat the coup. Hitler fled, but was soon arrested and sentenced to five years in the Landsberg fortress. He served nine months.

The putsch made Hitler known throughout Germany. In prison he dictated to Rudolf Hess the turgid Mein Kampf [my struggle], filled with anti-Semitic outpourings, worship of power, disdain for civil morality, and strategy for world domination. It became the bible of National Socialism. Under the tutelage of Hitler and Gregor Strasser, aided by Josef Goebbels and from 1928 by Hermann Goering, the party grew slowly until the economic depression, beginning in 1929, brought it mass support.

Hitler’s Rise to Power
To Germans burdened by reparations payments to the victors of World War I, and threatened by hyperinflation, political chaos, and a possible Communist takeover, Hitler, frenzied yet magnetic, offered scapegoats and solutions. To the economically depressed he promised to despoil “Jew financiers,” to workers he promised security. He gained the financial support of bankers and industrialists with his virulent anti-Communism and promises to control trade unionism.

Hitler had a keen and sinister insight into mass psychology, and he was a master of intrigue and maneuver. After acquiring German citizenship through the state of Brunswick, he ran in the presidential elections of 1932, losing to the popular war hero Paul von Hindenburg but strengthening his position by falsely promising to support Chancellor Franz von Papen, who lifted the ban on the storm troops (June, 1932).
When the Nazis were elected the largest party in the Reichstag (July, 1932), Hindenburg offered Hitler a subordinate position in the cabinet. Hitler held out for the chief post and for sweeping powers. The chancellorship went instead to Kurt von Schleicher, who resigned on Jan. 28, 1933. Amid collapsing parliamentary government and pitched battles between Nazis and Communists, Hindenburg, on the urging of von Papen, called Hitler to be chancellor of a coalition cabinet, refusing him extraordinary powers. Supported by Alfred Hugenberg, Hitler took office on Jan. 30.

**Hitler in Power**

Germany's new ruler was a master of Machiavellian politics. Hitler feared plots, and firmly believed in his mission to achieve the supremacy of the so-called Aryan race, which he termed the “master race.” Having legally come to power, he used brutality and subversion to carry out a “creeping coup” to transform the state into his dictatorship. He blamed the Communists for a fire in the Reichstag on Feb. 27, and by fanning anti-Communist hysteria the Nazis and Nationalists won a bare majority of Reichstag seats in the elections of Mar. 5. After the Communists had been barred, and amid a display of storm trooper strength, the Reichstag voted to give Hitler dictatorial powers.

From the first days of Hitler's “Third Reich” (for its history, see Germany; National Socialism; World War II) political opponents such as von Schleicher and Gregor Strasser (who had resigned from the Nazis) were murdered or incarcerated, and some Nazis, among them Ernst Rohm, were themselves purged. Jews, Socialists, Communists, and others were hounded, arrested, or assassinated. Government, law, and education became appendages of National Socialism. After Hindenburg's death in 1934 the chancellorship and presidency were united in the person of the Führer [leader]. *Heil Hitler!* became the obligatory form of greeting, and a cult of Führer worship was propagated.

In 1938, amid carefully nurtured scandal, Hitler dismissed top army commanders and divided their power between himself and faithful subordinates such as Wilhelm Keitel. As Hitler prepared for war he replaced professional diplomats with Nazis such as Joachim von Ribbentrop. Many former doubters had been converted by Hitler's bold diplomatic coups, beginning with German rearmament. Hitler bullied smaller nations into making territorial concessions and played on the desire for peace and the fear of Communism among the larger European states to achieve his expansionist goals. To forestall retaliation he claimed to be merely rectifying the onerous Treaty of Versailles.

Benito Mussolini became his ally and Italy gradually became Germany's satellite. Hitler helped Franco to establish a dictatorship in Spain. On Hitler's order the Austrian chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss was assassinated, and the Anschluss amalgamated Austria with the Reich. Hitler used the issue of “persecuted” Germans in Czechoslovakia to push through the Munich Pact, in which England, France, and Italy agreed to German annexation of the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia (1938).
**World War II**

Hitler's nonaggression pact (Aug., 1939) with Stalin allowed him to invade Poland (Sept. 1), beginning World War II, while Stalin annexed Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to the USSR and attacked eastern Poland; but Hitler honored the pact only until he found it convenient to attack the USSR (June, 1941). In Dec., 1941, he assumed personal command of war strategy, leading to disaster. In early 1943 he refused to admit defeat at the battle of Stalingrad (now Volgograd), bringing death to vast numbers of German troops. As the tide of war turned against Hitler, his mass extermination of the Jews, overseen by Adolf Eichmann, was accelerated, and he gave increasing power to Heinrich Himmler and the dreaded secret police, the Gestapo and SS (*Schutzstaffel*).

**Fall of Hitler and the Third Reich**

By July, 1944, the German military situation was desperate, and a group of high military and civil officials (including Field Marshal Erwin von Witzleben and Karl Goerdeler) attempted an assassination. Hitler escaped a bomb explosion with slight injuries; most of the plotters were executed. Although the war was hopelessly lost by early 1945, Hitler insisted that Germans fight on to the death. During the final German collapse in Apr., 1945, Hitler denounced Nazi leaders who wished to negotiate, and remained in Berlin when it was stormed by the Russians.

On Apr. 29 Hitler married his long-time mistress, Eva Braun, and on Apr. 30 they committed suicide together in an underground bunker of the chancellery building, having ordered that their bodies be burned. Hitler left Germany devastated; his legacy is the memory of one of the most dreadful tyrannies of modern times.
Major Concentration Camps Throughout Europe
Image courtesy of Wikipedia
All over the world, Auschwitz has become a symbol of terror, genocide, and the Holocaust. It was established by Germans in 1940, in the suburbs of Oswiecim, a Polish city that was annexed to the Third Reich by the Nazis. Its name was changed to Auschwitz, which also became the name of Konzentrationslager Auschwitz. The direct reason for the establishment of the camp was the fact that mass arrests of Poles were increasing beyond the capacity of existing "local" prisons. Initially, Auschwitz was to be one more concentration camp of the type that the Nazis had been setting up since the early 1930s. It functioned in this role throughout its existence, even when, beginning in 1942, it also became the largest of the death camps.

**Division of the Camp**

The first and oldest was the so-called "main camp," later also known as "Auschwitz I" (the number of prisoners fluctuated around 15,000, sometimes rising above 20,000), which was established on the grounds and in the buildings of prewar Polish barracks. **The second part was the Birkenau camp (which held over 90,000 prisoners in 1944), also known as "Auschwitz II."** This was the largest part of the Auschwitz complex. The Nazis began building it in 1941 on the site of the village of Brzezinka, three kilometers from Oswiecim. The Polish civilian population was evicted and their houses confiscated and demolished. The greater part of the apparatus of mass extermination was built in Birkenau and the majority of the victims were murdered here.

More than 40 sub-camps, exploiting the prisoners as slave laborers, were founded, mainly at various sorts of German industrial plants and farms, between 1942 and 1944. The largest of them was called Buna (Monowitz, with ten thousand prisoners) and was opened by the camp administration in 1942 on the grounds of the Buna-Werke synthetic rubber and fuel plant six kilometers from the Auschwitz camp. On November 1943, the Buna sub-camp became the seat of the commandant of the third part of the camp, Auschwitz III, to which some other Auschwitz sub-camps were subordinated.

**Interessengebiet**

The Germans isolated all the camps and sub-camps from the outside world and surrounded them with barbed wire fencing. All contact with the outside world was forbidden. However, the area administered by the commandant and patrolled by the SS camp garrison went beyond the grounds enclosed by barbed wire. It included an additional area of approximately 40 square kilometers (the so-called "Interessengebiet" - the interest zone), which lay around the Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II-Birkenau camps.

The local population, the Poles and Jews living near the newly-founded camp, were evicted in 1940-1941. Approximately one thousand of their homes were demolished. Other buildings were assigned to officers and non-commissioned officers from the camp SS garrison, who sometimes came here with their whole families. The pre-war industrial facilities in the zone, taken over by Germans, were expanded in some cases and, in others, demolished to make way for new plants associated with the military requirements of the Third Reich. The camp administration used the zone around the camp for auxiliary camp technical support, workshops, storage, offices, and barracks for the SS.
Buchenwald

From My Jewish Virtual Library: Buchenwald

Buchenwald

Buchenwald was one of the largest concentration camps established by the Nazis. The camp was constructed in 1937 in a wooded area on the northern slopes of the Ettersberg, about five miles northwest of Weimar in east-central Germany. Before the Nazi takeover of power, Weimar was best known as the home of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who embodied the German enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and as the birthplace of German constitutional democracy in 1919, the Weimar Republic. During the Nazi regime, “Weimar” became associated with the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Buchenwald first opened for male prisoners in July 1937. Women were not part of the Buchenwald camp system until 1944. Prisoners were confined in the northern part of the camp in an area known as the main camp, while SS guard barracks and the camp administration compound were located in the southern part. The main camp was surrounded by an electrified barbed-wire fence, watchtowers, and a chain of sentries outfitted with automatically activated machine guns. The jail, also known as the Bunker, was located at the entrance to the main camp. The SS carried out shootings in the stables and hangings in the crematorium area.

Most of the early inmates at Buchenwald were political prisoners. However, in 1938, in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, German SS and police sent almost 10,000 Jews to Buchenwald where they were subjected to extraordinarily cruel treatment. 600 prisoners died between November 1938 and February 1939.

Beginning in 1941, a varied program of involuntary medical experiments on prisoners took place at Buchenwald in special barracks in the northern part of the main camp. Medical experiments involving viruses and contagious diseases such as typhus resulted in hundreds of deaths. In 1944, SS Dr. Carl Vaerner began a series of experiments that he claimed would “cure” homosexual inmates.

Also in 1944, a “special compound” for prominent German political prisoners was established near the camp administration building in Buchenwald. Ernst Thaelmann, chairman of the Communist Party of Germany before Hitler's rise to power in 1933, was murdered there in August 1944.
Forced Labor and Subcamps

During World War II, the Buchenwald camp system became an important source of forced labor. The prisoner population expanded rapidly, reaching 110,000 by the end of 1945. Buchenwald prisoners were used in the German Equipment Works (DAW), an enterprise owned and operated by the SS; in camp workshops; and in the camp's stone quarry. In March 1943 the Gustloff firm opened a large munitions plant in the eastern part of the camp. A rail siding completed in 1943 connected the camp with the freight yards in Weimar, facilitating the shipment of war supplies.

Buchenwald administered at least 87 subcamps located across Germany, from Duesseldorf in the Rhineland to the border with the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in the east. Prisoners in the satellite camps were put to work mostly in armaments factories, in stone quarries, and on construction projects. Periodically, prisoners throughout the Buchenwald camp system underwent selection. The SS staff sent those too weak or disabled to continue working to the Bernburg or Sonnenstein euthanasia killing centers, where they were killed by gas. Other weakened prisoners were killed by phenol injections administered by the camp doctor.

The Liberation of Buchenwald

As Soviet forces swept through Poland, the Germans evacuated thousands of concentration camp prisoners from western Poland. After long, brutal marches, more than 10,000 weak and exhausted prisoners from Auschwitz and Gross-Rosen, most of them Jews, arrived in Buchenwald in January 1945. In early April 1945, as American forces approached the camp, the Germans began to evacuate some 28,000 prisoners from the main camp and an additional 10,000 prisoners from the subcamps of Buchenwald. About a third of these prisoners died from exhaustion en route or shortly after arrival, or were shot by the SS. Many lives were saved by the Buchenwald resistance, whose members held key administrative posts in the camp. They obstructed Nazi orders and delayed the evacuation. On April 11, 1945, starved and emaciated prisoners stormed the watchtowers, seizing control of the camp. Later that afternoon, American forces entered Buchenwald. Soldiers from the Third U.S. Army division found more than 20,000 people in the camp, 4,000 of them Jews. Approximately 56,000 people were murdered in the Buchenwald camp system, the majority of them after 1942.
Nazis and Medical Ethics

Nazis and Medical Ethics: Context and Lessons
ScienceDaily
October 18, 2004

WASHINGTON -- The practice of medicine in Nazi Germany still profoundly affects modern-day medical ethics codes, according to Alan Wells, Ph.D., an expert in medical ethics with the American Medical Association (AMA) and Patricia Heberer, Ph.D., historian at the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM). To teach those lessons to the next generation of physicians, the AMA and the USHMM announced plans today to deliver a lecture series on the subject to medical schools around the country.

The collaboration between the AMA and the Holocaust Museum coincides with the Museum's special exhibition, "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race," which runs through Oct. 16, 2005.

"During the 1930s, the German medical establishment was admired as a world leader in innovative public health and medical research," Dr. Wells said. "The question we want to examine is: 'How could science be co-opted in such a way that doctors as healers evolved into killers and medical research became torture?" Dr. Wells and Dr. Heberer spoke today at the American Medical Association's 23rd Annual Science Reporters Conference in Washington D.C.

"The story of medicine under Nazism is instructive and an important theme in understanding the evolution of the Holocaust," said Dr. Heberer. "The collaboration of the USHMM and the AMA Institute for Ethics presents a unique opportunity to explore this topic, both in terms of history and contemporary issues, and to bring the lessons drawn to students, physicians, and faculty in universities around the country."

The presentation will focus on the role Nazi medical practices played in the development of medical ethics and the lessons that today's physicians have learned from the period leading up to the Holocaust. The series is being jointly funded by the AMA Institute for Ethics, the AMA Foundation, the Museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies and host institutions. The series will visit 12 to 15 medical schools as well as selected universities over the next year.

"Many of the most important issues in medical ethics today – from genetic testing and stem cell research to caring for prisoners of war are directly affected by the experiences of medicine leading up to and during the Holocaust," Dr. Wells said. "Physicians need to explore these issues without getting caught up in political agendas or the results can be something we never intended and cause great harm."

According to Dr. Wells, World War II era Germans were extremely advanced in medicine, technology and public health research but these successes have largely been overlooked by history because of the medical extremes of the Holocaust. For example, Germany was the first to have a high-powered electron microscope, the first to document the link between asbestos and lung cancer, and an innovator in developing high profile public health campaigns for a variety of health issues – such as anti-smoking campaigns and promoting breast self-examination to help detect tumors at an early stage. These advances and campaigns, however, were eventually aimed exclusively at the "Aryans" – the Nazi ideal of the "master race."
"Adolf Hitler spoke of Germany as a body with himself as the doctor," Dr. Wells said. "He wanted to make Germany 'healthy' by eliminating diseased, unhealthy parts of the body. At first this meant killing the disabled. But because the Nazis also believed that Jews possessed 'bad' genes, they, too, came to be portrayed by public health 'experts' and 'scientists' as a threat to racial purity and a healthy nation."

These actions grew from a theory called "eugenics" (using selective breeding to improve the genetic quality of a species), which came from a distortion of Charles Darwin's theories of "survival of the fittest," according to Dr. Heberer. Some eugenics programs, such as laws sanctioning the sterilization of the "feeble minded," initially met with resistance throughout the world, including in Germany. But when the Nazis came to power, and particularly during World War II, these constraints disappeared as the Nazi regime was able to implement its radical version of medicine.

"We want to understand why healers became killers and use our understanding as a guide for medicine today," Dr. Wells concluded. "Even though the horrors of the Holocaust seem to be so long ago, we can never forget this history because it continues to affect medical ethics today. For example, one reason doctors today are so concerned about racial and ethnic health disparities is because our codes of ethics demand that we treat every person equally, without regard to race or ethnic background. This ethical obligation is a direct outgrowth of the horrors of Nazi medicine."

Nuremberg Trials. Defendants in their dock. The main target of the prosecution was Hermann Göring (at the left edge on the first row of benches), considered to be the most important surviving official in the Third Reich after Hitler's death.
During the interwar period, France was one of the more liberal nations in opening its doors to Jewish refugees from Poland, Romania, and Germany. In 1939, however, the French government imposed restrictions on Jewish immigration and set up internment camps for refugees. When Germany defeated France in June 1940, there were approximately 350,000 Jews in the country. More than half of them were refugees from Germany who had arrived during the 1930s. France signed an armistice with Germany in June 1940. Under the terms of the armistice, northern France came under direct German occupation; the eastern provinces of Alsace and Lorraine were annexed to Germany. Southern France remained unoccupied and was governed by a French administration under the leadership of Marshal Henri Philippe Petain. The Petain regime had its capital in the town of Vichy. Officially neutral, Vichy France collaborated closely with Germany.

After the defeat of France, the Vichy government promulgated antisemitic legislation, including the "Statut des Juifs" (Law of the Jews) passed in two parts in October 1940 and June 1941. This comprehensive statute excluded Jews from public life; required their dismissal from positions in the civil service, the army, commerce, and industry; and barred them from participation in the professions (including medicine, law, and teaching). In July 1941, Vichy inaugurated an extensive program of "Aryanization," confiscating Jewish-owned property for the French state. Many Jews were left destitute. Foreign Jews were particularly vulnerable. Thousands of Jews were sent to internment camps, such as Gurs near the Spanish border, where many died. The German authorities also deported 4,000 Jews from Gurs to Auschwitz. Elsewhere in France, other major camps in which (mostly foreign) Jews were interned included Saint-Cyprien, Rivesaltes, Le Vernet, and Les Milles. There were many smaller camps as well.

Preparations for the inclusion of Jews in western Europe in the "Final Solution" began in early 1942. Deportations from France began that summer. French police rounded up Jews, mainly those without French citizenship, in both the occupied and unoccupied (Vichy) zones. In mid-July, 13,000 Jews were seized in Paris and interned for several days in the Velodrome d'Hiver sports arena. Without food or water, they were held until their deportation to Auschwitz. Throughout France, Jews were assembled in camps, loaded onto cattle cars, and sent to the Drancy transit camp northeast of Paris. More than 60 separate transports left Drancy during 1942. Most of these transports went to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Drancy served as the last stop before Auschwitz for at least 62,000 Jews deported from France.

Thousands of Jews fled to the southeast corner of France after the Italian army occupied territory east of the Rhone River in late 1942. The Italian authorities refused to hand over Jews to the Germans, despite repeated demands. While many Jews in the Italian zone were rounded up by the Germans after September 1943, thousands managed to hide or to escape to Switzerland. The last deportation from France to Auschwitz took place in August 1944. During the war, over 77,000 Jews deported from France were murdered in Nazi camps. Of these, one-third were French citizens and over 8,000 were children under the age of 13.

More than three-quarters of the Jews who resided or had found refuge in France in 1939 managed to survive. This high survival rate was due to many factors, including dispersal of Jews in many localities, a minimal German police presence, and assistance from some non-Jews. By the end of 1944, Allied forces had liberated France. To avoid capture, many Vichy officials fled to Germany.
After the German invasion of France and the establishment of camps and deportations via Drancy, efforts were made by various groups to hide Jewish children. Wherever possible, efforts were made to send them on to safety in other countries such as Switzerland and the United States. One of the most active organizations in this effort was Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), a French Jewish humanitarian organization that saved hundreds of refugee children during WW II. OSE is a worldwide Jewish organization for health care and children's welfare. They were founded in Russia in 1912 and transferred to France in 1933.

OSE gave assistance to children and adults in as many as fifteen towns and the internment camps in southern France. Care was given to about 1,300 children, some orphans and some whose families had placed them in these facilities. About 350 of these children were sent by ship to the United States from May 1941 to May 1942. After the German movement into southern France, OSE went underground but continued to hide children and transfer them to Switzerland when that was possible. Overall, it was possible for OSE to rescue more than 5,000 children.

OSE ran dozens of orphanages, for children from infants to teens, whose parents had been murdered, or were imprisoned in camps. Beginning in March 1939, several transports brought children from Vienna, Berlin, Frankfurt and other places in Germany to France. Some were brought by family trying to insure their safety. They were housed temporarily in Rothschild facilities, before being sent to the first OSE home in Montmorency, north of Paris.

By June of 1939 the number of children had grown greatly, and a second home was opened about 2 miles away from Montmorency, in Baubonne. A number of orthodox children were moved there from Montmorency. All stayed there until June 1940 when the Germans moved in on Paris. About 35 children who had been on the ship St. Louis were also housed nearby, when the OSE agreed to take them in.

The children were schooled and trained according to their ages, and were given special training in physical education and survivor skills. With the German approach in 1940 all three homes near Paris were closed, and the children were taken to OSE homes in the south of France.

From June through September 1941, three transports managed to bring about 200 children from the OSE homes to the U.S. They were sponsored by the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, The Jewish Children's Aid, and assisted by the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) in Marseilles. In 1942, the police began roundups and deportations from the orphanages to Nazi concentration and extermination camps, and the OSE organized an underground network in order to smuggle the children to neutral countries. Some children were saved by French rescuers, and some joined the French Resistance movement.
The Shoah Memorial

The Shoah Memorial was opened to the public in January 2005. Situated at this turning point of the "century of genocides," open to the new century, the new institution is intended as a bridge between the men and women who were contemporaries of the Shoah and those who did not experience this period of history, either directly or through the mediation of their parents. The Memorial is a resource center, the first and foremost collection of archives on the Shoah in Europe, but it is also a "museum of vigilance," designed to learn, understand and experience, because now and forever it will always be necessary to construct "a rampart against oblivion, against a rekindling of hatred and contempt for man," to quote Eric de Rothschild, President of the Memorial.

Commemoration Sites within the Memorial

The Shoah Memorial contains the tomb of the unknown Jewish Martyr. The founder of the CDJC, Isaac Schneersohn, began plans for this monument in 1950. It was inaugurated on October 30, 1956. It is composed of several elements and spaces: the parvis and the crypt where ceremonies connected to the Shoah generally take place, the monumental pediment of the building and the bronze cylinder in line with the parvis as an echo to the chimneys of the death camps. The Wall of Names, erected in 2004, has added a new dimension to the site of commemoration of the genocide.

Wall of names
The names of the 76,000 Jews, including 11,000 children all deported from France as part of the Nazi plan to annihilate the Jews of Europe with the collaboration of the Vichy government have been engraved on this wall. Most of them were assassinated in Auschwitz-Birkenau; others were killed in the camps of Sobibor, Lublin, Majdanek and Kaunas / Reval, between 1942 and 1944. Only about 2,500 people survived deportation. This wall restores identity to the children, women and men the Nazis tried to eradicate from the surface of the earth. Their names are engraved in stone that their memory be perpetuated.

The Parvis
This gathering point is bordered on one side by a wall bearing seven bas-reliefs representing the persecution of the Jews, the work of the sculptor Arbit Blatas in 1982. On its other side is the Wall of Names. In line with the parvis, the bronze cylinder bears the names of the Warsaw Ghetto and of the camps, such as Auschwitz, Belzec, Bergen-Belsen, Birkenau, Buchenwald, Chelmno, Dachau, Majdanek, Mauthausen, Sobibor, Struthof, Treblinka.
The Pediment
The building's stone facade is a 14 meters high blank wall on which two inscriptions are engraved.

*In Hebrew:* "Remember what Amalek did unto our Generation exterminating 600 myriad bodies and souls, in the absence of war."

(Text in Hebrew by Zalman Schneour, distinguished Jewish poet, adapted from Deuteronomy 25:17).

*In French:* "Before the Unknown Jewish Martyr, incline your head in piety and respect for all the martyrs; incline your thoughts to accompany them along their path of sorrow. They will lead you to the highest pinnacle of justice and truth."

(Text in French from Justin Godard, former Minister, Honorary President of the Committee for the Unknown Jewish Martyr).

The crypt
In the crypt, under the parvis, stands a Star of David fashioned out of black marble. It symbolizes the tomb of the six million Jews, dead without a grave. It contains the ashes of martyrs taken from the death camps and from the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto. The ashes were buried on February 24, 1957 in earth from Israel, in keeping with tradition, by Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan.

Police files on Jews (The "fichier juif")
On the same level as the crypt, the "fichier juif" was entrusted to the CDJC in 1996 and is in an enclave belonging to the Archives Nationales (National Archives). It is in fact a collection of several index files put together between 1941 and 1944 as ordered by the Vichy government and instigated mainly by the Préfecture de Police (French police authority).

The Prefecture's files include the individual and family identification of Jews arrested in Paris and the Seine department. The "fichier juif" also includes the identification cards for Drancy, Pithiviers and the Beaune-la-Rolande camps in the Loiret. All of these files contain a special section for detained children.
Jews in Germany Proof of Reconciliation

Deutsche Presse Agentur (DPA)
Published: January 27, 2004

BERLIN (DPA) - Germany's fast-growing Jewish community is the best illustration of post-war reconciliation, the president of Berlin's parliament said Tuesday in an annual speech of atonement for the Holocaust.

"A special proof is that Jews are again living in Germany," said Bundestag President Wolfgang Thierse in a speech to parliament's lower chamber on the anniversary of the 27 January 1945 liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp by the Soviet Red Army. The number of Jews living in Germany has increased to over 100,000 from about 30,000 in 1990, the year of German reunification. The Jewish influx has been fuelled by Berlin's decision to allow Jews from the former East Bloc to settle in Germany - a move criticized by some Israelis. Thierse noted that Germany now had the third biggest Jewish population in Europe. But his sombre speech mainly underlined the monstrosity of the Holocaust in which six million Jews were murdered.

"The Holocaust was a European catastrophe, conceived and carried out by the Germans," said Thierse, adding that in a certain sense it was the most defining event of the 20th century in Europe. Thierse said a big lesson of the Holocaust was that Europe's values and traditions could not be taken for granted. This was why the real task of the European Union was to forge European peace and a community of values, he said.

In a keynote address to the German parliament, Holocaust survivor Simone Veil also underlined the role of the EU in securing peace in post-war Europe.

"For the first time in history Europe has been unified without the use of force," said Veil, a French politician who served as president of the European Parliament. Veil, who survived both Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen concentration camps where she lost her mother and a sister, noted the sharp change in public attitudes to the Holocaust over the past 59 years.

She described her liberation by British troops from Bergen-Belsen but noted "we could not be happy ... we had the feeling as if we had lost our humanity."

"We had no parents ... and nobody wanted to hear our story," she said, adding: "We were not supposed to survive and survivors were supposed to keep silent." Veil said this view had been radically revised in past decades with Auschwitz becoming a universal symbol of evil.

But she warned the mood surrounding the Holocaust may have swung too far in the opposite direction. "Not every massacre is genocide," said Veil. "The Shoah is in danger of banalised." Veil expressed deep concern over rising anti-Semitism in France linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"This is a cancer," she said. "The situation in the Middle East or material insecurity must never be an excuse." Any flaring up of anti-Semitism showed a crisis of democracy, said Veil who called on European political leaders to fight the trend.

Veil, who was 17 when she was deported to Auschwitz, had a simple message for young people in Europe: "Don't forget the past."
Elie Wiesel: Speech Before Bundestag

A Speech by Elie Wiesel before Bundestag
The Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holocaust
January 27, 2000

Allow me to tell you a story. But, first, I hope you understand that I speak to you as a witness. When a witness speaks, he or she must take a vow to tell the truth. The Jew that I am feels that he ought to make a prayer. Fifty five years ago the Russians came a bit too late for me and those who are close to me. Do not look at me and see the man that I am now. Please try and see in me the person I was 55 years ago. Today, I am here with my wife, Marion, and two very close friends, Inga and Ira, and so I will say a prayer. The prayer is from the Book of Baruch: "Blessed be the Lord for enabling me to be here at this day."

And now a story.

Once upon a time in a faraway land, there lived a benevolent king. One day, he was told by his astrologers that the next harvest would be cursed and that whosoever would eat from it would go mad. And so he ordered an enormous granary built and stored there all that remained from the previous year's crop. He then entrusted the granary's key to his closest friend and this is what he told him: "When my subjects and their king will have been struck with madness, you and you alone will have the right to enter the storehouse and eat uncontaminated food. Thus you will escape the malediction. But in exchange, my poor friend, you will be duty-bound to fulfill a vital and impossible task. Your mission will be to crisscross the earth, going from country to country, from town to town, from marketplace to marketplace, from person to person, shouting with all your might: 'Good people, do not forget that you are mad! Men and women, do not forget, do not forget that you are mad!'"

This tale, told by the very great Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav, who was a forerunner of Franz Kafka, surely applies to this century which has just ended, a century, in which madness erupted in history and turned it often into a nightmare. And so the witnesses that we are, some of us, we, too, go around the world simply to say: "Don't forget that you were mad, don't forget that history has carried madness in it." And so the man you so kindly invited to take part in this solemn and moving session devoted to the memory of the victims of what we so inadequately call Shoa or Holocaust - there are no words for it - is a son of an ancient people whose mission over the centuries has been to teach the oneness of God and the sacredness of human life. Some sixty years ago, in this very metropolis, in this city, this man that I am and his community, were condemned to isolation, distress, despair and death. And yet, I hope you believe me, I am a witness and I speak to you today with neither bitterness nor hate. All my adult life I have tried to use language to fight hate, to denounce it, to disarm it, not to spread it.

Will my words hurt you? That is not my intention. But please understand, when I entered this Chamber, I did not leave my memories behind. In fact, here, because of you, they are more vivid than ever. All I wish
to do in this short time is to evoke in a few words an unprecedented event which will, for generations to come, continue to weigh on the destiny of my people and yours.

And this event, I still don't understand it. I go on trying and trying. Since my liberation, on April 11, 1945, I have read everything I could lay my hands on that deals with its implications. Historical essays, psychological analyses, testimonies and testimonies, poems and prayers, assassins' diaries and victims' meditations, even children's letters to God. But though I managed to assimilate the facts, the numbers and the technical aspects of the "Aktionen," the implacable significance which transcends them continues to elude me. The Nuremberg Laws, the anti-Jewish decrees, the Kristallnacht, the public humiliation of proud Jewish citizens, including brave World War I veterans, the first concentration camps, the euthanasia of German citizens, the Wannsee conference, where the highest officials of the land simply met to discuss the validity, the legality and the ways of killing an entire people. And then of course Dachau, Auschwitz, Majdanek, Sobibor - the capitals of this century. Yes, these names ... flags, black flags, reminding a world that will come, of a world that has been. What made them possible? How is one to comprehend the cult of hatred and death that flourished in this country? How could bright young men, many superbly educated, from fine families, with diplomas from Germany's best universities, which then were the best in the world, how could they allow themselves to be seduced by Evil to the point of devoting their genius, the genius of Evil, to the torture and the killing of Jewish men, women and children whom they had never seen? They didn't do it because these Jews were rich or poor, believers or non-believers, political adversaries, patriots or universalists, but simply because they had been born Jewish. Their birth certificate had become a de facto death sentence. But did it really make these killers feel strong and heroic to murder defenseless children? Could they really have been so afraid of old and sick people, of small children as to make them their priority targets? What was it about them that was frightening? Their weakness, their innocence perhaps? Were the killers still human? That is the question which is my obsession. At what point does humanity end? Is there a limit beyond which humanity doesn't deserve its name anymore?

While preparing myself for today's encounter with you - an encounter of course which is symbolic on more than one level, as you put it very well, President of the Bundestag - I reread certain chronicles by survivors and witnesses, both living and dead. And I was struck again by how similar the scenes of cruelty were. It is as though one German, always the same, tortured and killed one Jew, for ever the same, six million times. Yet each episode is unique, for every human being, created in God's image, is unique.

Since I am not a historian, rather than discuss history I tell stories. And here is one, just one: it takes place in September 1941 in Babi-Yar, in Kiev, as reported by an eyewitness, a certain B.A. Liebmann.

He tells of a Jewish family which has spent several days hiding in a cave. The mother decides to seek help in a nearby village with her two small children. They are intercepted by a group of drunken Germans who, in front of the mother, behead one child, then the second. As the distraught mother clutches the bodies of her dead children, the Germans, obviously delighted with the spectacle, kill the mother as well. And when the father appears on the scene, they murder him too. I don't understand.

One could tell you more stories, six million more. Of all the crimes committed against my people, the Jewish people, the murder of its children is the worst. They were always the first to be taken and sent off to death. A million and a half Jewish children perished, Ladies and Gentlemen. If I were to begin reciting their names, the Moischeles, the Jankeles, the Sodeles, here and now, I would have to stand here for months and years.

Haven't the peoples of the world lost so much, too, not only my own, through what was done? How many benefactors of humanity perished when they were a month old, or a year? There could have been among them scientists who would have discovered a remedy for AIDS, a cure for cancer. They could have
written great poems to inspire everybody, to renounce violence and war, a few words perhaps or a song to bring people together at last.

There is a picture that shows laughing soldiers surrounding a Jewish boy in a ghetto, I think probably in the Warsaw ghetto. I look at it often. What was it about that sad and frightened Jewish child with his hands up in the air, that amused the German soldiers so? Why was tormenting him so funny? Were these soldiers, who likely were good husbands and fathers, not conscious of what they were doing? Weren't they thinking of their own children and grandchildren, who one day would have to carry the burden of their crimes although, as I shall say later, they are innocent? Ivan Karamazov believed that "cruel people are sometimes very fond of children." Yes, but not of Jewish children.

Of course, for us Jews in occupied Europe, it soon became clear that the free world was aware of and therefore responsible, though to a much different degree, for what was happening to us. The Allies seemed not to care very much; they did not open their borders to us when there was still time. And so Berlin became convinced that our fate was of no real concern to anyone. Not even God, the God of Israel, seemed to care. More than anyone else's, his silence was a mystery that continues to puzzle and distress many of us to this day. But that is another matter, one we debate mostly when we are among ourselves. Today, we shall speak only of Jews and Germans, then and now. My people has had innumerable enemies since it appeared on the world stage. We remember them all. But none had wounded us as deeply as Hitler's Germany. Over time, we endured discrimination, persecution, many forms of isolation, we survived the Crusades, the Inquisition, the pogroms, the various results of ingrained anti-Semitism. But the Holocaust went much farther indeed. I say it with pain: no nation, no ideology, no system has ever inflicted brutality, suffering and humiliation on such a scale on any people as yours has on mine in such a short period.

The sentence the Third Reich imposed upon us was deadly and irrevocable. The Final Solution, precisely outlined, was eschatological in nature; its goal was to annihilate every Jew, down to the last one on the surface of the earth. That was actually a kind of principal objective; the deportation of Hungarian Jews, and I am one of them as you know, had priority over the military convoys taking much-needed soldiers to the front.

I know, there were Germans who did not comply. And we must remember them, you and I. Those who had the courage to oppose the official racist ideology. Those who resisted the Nazi totalitarian regime. Those who tried to topple it and paid with their lives. And you are right in honoring their bravery. Only, sadly, they were few. And those who rescued Jewish friends and neighbors even fewer.

Now, many in Germany and elsewhere choose to put all the blame on the Nazis. "The Nazis did this or that," is the accepted formula. The Nazis, not the Germans.

Does it mean that there were two parallel histories of Germany, a Nazi history and a German history? Of course, all Germans were not Nazis. But I can tell you again as a witness, I remember in those times that the word German inspired fears; we were afraid when we heard that the Germans were coming.

Here, in this very place, the new leaders of the German people are so valiantly and honorably trying to build a new destiny, a more human philosophy of living. And we are here to tell you that we appreciate this. In those times, the decision to kill the Jews was taken at the highest level of government but was implemented down below. And for the victims, everything was German: the Zyklon gas was German, those who built the crematoriums were German, those who built the gas chambers were German, the orders given were German. As Paul Celan put it: "Der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland." And Celan committed suicide because he felt probably that his words could not communicate this essential truth of
his or our experience. Until the end of times, Ladies and Gentleman, Auschwitz will remain a part of your history, just as it will continue to be a part of mine.

I know, it is difficult and painful for you to think in these terms. Yours is a new generation, none of you have had to swear allegiance to Hitler. Of course, none of you have committed any crime or any sin. But I am sure that, in moments of anguish, you wonder where your parents were then, were did they stand then?

I feel compelled to tell you what I repeat everywhere I go, not only here: I do not believe in collective guilt; only the guilty and their accomplices are guilty, but surely not those who were not yet born, surely not their children. The children of killers are not killers, but children. And your children, many of them are so good. I know some of them; a few have been my students. They are so marvelous, so highly motivated, and at the same time tormented, understandably so. They somehow feel guilty, although they should not feel guilty at all. And what they are doing to somehow redeem your country, your people, is extraordinary. Whatever touches the spirit is of concern to them. They go to Israel to build, and they help any cause that deals with violation of human rights because they feel, your children feel that it is important not to forget this dark period.

So what is what we call the Holocaust? Was it the consequence of history, an aberration of history? This is not the time, nor the place to speak about that. There are other times, in school, when education is important. The Chancellor and I yesterday participated in a meeting in Stockholm about education on the Holocaust. And your words were very highly appreciated there. I am not sure that I have the answer to the Holocaust, but surely education is a major component of that answer. So emphasize education, increase the budget, do whatever you can so that the children, your children, who want to know, are able to know.

I am here, and I remember 55 years ago. I remember, and if I were to tell you what I remember, you would, like me, tremble. So, let us speak rather of what has to be done. I as a Jew, of course, speak of the Jewish victims, my people. Their tragedy was unique, but I do not forget other victims. When, as a Jew, I evoke the Jewish victims, I honor the others as well. As I like to put it: not all victims were Jewish but all Jews were victims.

And it is to remember them, Mr. President, Mr. Chancellor, President of the Bundestag, that this Parliament is marking the 27th of January as a day for commemorating the victims of the Nazi regime or, as I would call it, National Holocaust Remembrance Day. And this decision does you honor. And my presence here is meant, of course, to highlight your willingness to open the gates of memory and to declare together our conviction and resolution that it is high time for Cain to stop murdering his brother Abel.

Surely, there will be those who will say that it is too easy for you to devote one day a year just to pay a kind of homage and then go back to your normal business. Some will say it is a mockery. I don't agree. I take your move very seriously. I don't believe that it is to forget Auschwitz that you wish to remember its liberation. On the contrary, I believe that you wish to recall its liberation so as to condemn what preceded it, and to know more about it. I also believe that you will not listen to the indecent voices here in this land urging you to "turn the page" because you allegedly are "fed up with those stories." Those who want to turn the page have done so already. Not only have they turned the page, they have ripped it out of their consciousness. But by conspiring to obliterate the victims' memory, those who want to turn the page are killing them a second time, and that will be their burden.

After the war, some of us expected a defeated and humiliated Germany to deliver a more powerful message of remorse and contrition, one that would be linked to morality; instead, in those years it was related more to politics. But, since Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's time, you have become a democracy,
worthy of taking its place in the family of nations. You have consistently supported Israel, and your record of financial reparations to the victims, mainly to the Jewish victims, but also to all slave laborers, as the law you are introducing in Parliament stipulates, is positive. But I believe that perhaps the time has come for you to make a gesture that would have world-wide repercussions.

President Rau, you met a group of Auschwitz survivors few weeks ago. And one of them told me that you expressed something very moving. You asked for forgiveness for what the German people had done to them. Why shouldn't you do it here? In the spirit of this solemn occasion. Why shouldn't the Bundestag simply let this be known to Germany and its allies and its friends, and especially to young people? Have you asked the Jewish people to forgive Germany for what the Third Reich did in Germany's name to so many of us? Do it, and it will have extraordinary repercussions in the world. Do it, and the significance of this they will acquire a higher dimension. Do it, and the world will know that its faith in this Germany is justified. For, beyond national, ethnic or religious considerations, it was mankind itself that was threatened then, in those darkest of days. And in some ways, it still is. Whatever this new century holds in store, and we desperately want to have hope for the new century and its new generation, Auschwitz will continue to force men to explore the deepest recesses of his and her being so as to confront their fragile truth.

I told you before that I prefer stories. I would like to conclude with the story of a little Jewish girl who died with her mother the night they arrived in Birkenau in May 1944. She was eight years old, and believe me, she had done nothing to hurt or harm your people - why did she have to die such an atrocious death? If her brother lives to be as old as the world itself, he will never understand. And so, he will simply quote another great Hasidic Master: Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov. He was known for his great compassion and he said: "My friends, do you wish to find the spark? Look for it in the ashes."
By ED HENRY
CNN News
Published: June 9, 2009

BUCHENWALD, Germany (CNN) -- President Barack Obama made an emotional visit to the former Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald, Germany, Friday, saying that the camp should serve as a reminder of humanity's duty to fight the spread of evil. The visit had personal significance for the president, whose great-uncle helped liberate prisoners from the camp during World War II.

"I will not forget what I've seen here today," Obama said after touring the camp with German Chancellor Angela Merkel; Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, and survivor Bertrand Herz.

"These sites have not lose their horror with the passage of time," Obama said. "This place teaches us that we must be ever vigilant about the spread of evil in our times. ... We have to guard against cruelty in ourselves ...."

Wiesel, whose father died at Buchenwald, was imprisoned at the camp during the final months of the war in 1945. "Every war is absurd and meaningless," Wiesel said. "The world hasn't learned. ... Had the world learned, there would have been no Cambodia and no Rwanda and no Darfur and no Bosnia."

Like Obama, Wiesel stressed that the lessons of Buchenwald are that humanity must unite to keep such atrocities from happening again and work toward making the 21st century "filled with promise and infinite hope."

"Memory must bring people together, rather than set them apart. Memories here not to sow anger in our hearts, but on the contrary, a sense of solidarity with all those who need us," Wiesel said.

Obama told reporters earlier in the day that his great-uncle, Charles Payne, had a "very difficult time re-adjusting to civilian life" after helping his Army division liberate the Ohrdruf forced labor camp, a subdivision of Buchenwald. "And it is now up to us, the living, in our work, wherever we are, to resist injustice and intolerance and indifference in whatever forms they may take and ensure that those who were lost here did not go in vain."

Later Friday, the president traveled in Germany to Ramstein Air Base and visited with wounded American troops at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center. He then moved on to Paris, France, ahead of D-Day commemoration services on Saturday.

Obama began his tour of the Middle East and Europe in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday, before moving on to Egypt, where on Thursday he delivered a key speech on American and Muslim relations.

In the 55-minute address -- billed as a fence-mending effort between the United States and Islam -- the president urged those in the Cairo audience and the people across the globe viewing the speech on television to enter a new, productive and peaceful chapter of relations.
**Darkness & Light**  
*Chapter Study Questions*

1. When would you say Hitler’s rise to power first began? What about Hitler gained him so many followers and such popularity?
2. What was so monumental about *Mein Kampf*? What dangers did it pose to peace and human rights?
3. What 3-5 events were most beneficial to the rise of the Nazi party?
4. How was Hitler able to implement such a heinous act as mass genocide and see it happen? Why didn’t anybody protest?
5. What were some of the major stages of segregation and persecution that lead up to the Holocaust? Make a flow chart that shows the growing intensity at each one.
6. Reread the definition of genocide. Conduct additional research to identify examples of genocide throughout history. Why is this definition so important in the modern era?
7. Where did anti-Semitism begin? Why? Can it ever be justified? Throughout history, what were some of the major crises for which the Jews were accused, often falsely?
8. Compare and contrast anti-Semitism with other forms of hatred, such as racism in America or the genocide in Darfur. What aspects are the same? What are different?
9. Some of the most intellectual figureheads of the 20th century were anti-Semitic. Who were they? What reasoning did they use for this bigotry?
10. Elie Wiesel ends his essay on anti-Semitism with a quote from his book, *The Oath*. Discuss the symbolism that he uses in this passage. What does he compare anti-Semitism to? What is the end result?
11. What were the names of some of the main death camps? Can you locate them on a map of Europe? Compare and contrast Auschwitz and Buchenwald.
12. In your opinion, how has Elie Wiesel managed to retain his sense of gratitude, even after everything he has been through?
13. How would you differentiate between hatred, anger, and refusal to forgive?
14. As a survivor of the concentration camps, how has Elie Wiesel found meaning for his life? What is his reasoning for coming out of the nightmare alive?
15. Describe the role of Vichy France in the Holocaust. Why do you think this is often overlooked or forgotten?
16. Describe the OSE. What impact did this organization have? What struggles did both its members and its founders encounter?
17. Write a journal entry from the perspective of a student walking through the Shoah Memorial. What is its significance? What particular elements of the memorial do you feel would be the most poignant?
18. Taking into consideration the “Nazis and Medical Ethics: Context and Lesson” article, what role does ethics play in science?
19. What steps does Germany continue to make towards reconciling the Holocaust? How has public attitude toward the Holocaust shifted over the past few decades? How does the perception of the Holocaust differ around the world?
20. Discuss the significance of world leaders congregating at Buchenwald. What does this symbolize?
IV. Legacy

“Not to transmit an experience is to betray it.”

-- Elie Wiesel

In class at Boston University, 1982  
From *And the Sea Is Never Full: Memoirs, 1969*—  
by Elie Wiesel

A. Elie Wiesel: Academic History……………………………67  
B. Literature  
  1. Literary Works by Elie Wiesel…………………………68  
  2. “Interview: Elie Wiesel” .................................69  
C. “Night: An Overview”...........................................75  
D. Study Questions.................................................76

“I respect Elie Wiesel so much for what he’s been doing: donating his life to keep the stories alive.”

-- Casey Horgan
Elie Wiesel: Academic History

Elie Wiesel lecturing to students in Boston, 1990 / Boston University Collection

1972 – 1976          Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at City University of New York
1976 – present       Andrew Mellon Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Boston University
1982                 Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University
1993 – present       Co-instructor of Winter term (January) courses at Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida
1997 – 1999           Ingeborg Rennert Visiting Professor of Judaic Studies at Barnard College, Columbia
Literary Works by Elie Wiesel

From The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity

“My work is not to pass judgment but to bear witness.”
—Elie Wiesel at the Student Dialogue, hosted by Charlotte Latin School, 1997

Night, a memoir (1960)
Dawn, a novel (1961)
The Accident, a novel (1962) (later published in The Night Trilogy as Day - see below)
The Town Beyond the Wall, a novel (1964)
The Gates of the Forest, a novel (1966)
The Jews of Silence, a personal testimony (1966)
Legends of Our Time, essays and stories (1968)
A Beggar in Jerusalem, a novel (1970)
One Generation After, essays & stories (1971)
Souls on Fire: Portraits & Legends of Hasidic Masters (1972)
The Oath, a novel (1973)
Ani Maamin, a cantata (1973)
Zalmen, or The Madness of God, a play (1975)
Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits & Legends (1976)
Four Hasidic Masters, more portraits & legends (1978)
The Trial of God, a play (1979)
The Testament, a novel (1980)
Images from the Bible (1980)
Five Biblical Portraits (1981)
Somewhere a Master, more Hasidic tales (1982)
Paroles d'étranger, essays, stories, & dialogues (1982)
The Golem, the retelling of a legend (1983)
The Fifth Son, a novel (1985)
Signes d'exode, essays, stories, & dialogues (1985)
Against Silence: The Voice & Vision of Elie Wiesel, collected shorter writings edited by Irving Abrahamson, 3 volumes (1985)
Night/Dawn/Day, his first memoir & first two novels (1985) (known as The Night Trilogy)
Job ou Dieu dans la tempête, dialogue & commentary with Josy Eisenberg (1986)
A Song for Hope, a cantata (1986)
The Nobel Speech (1987)
Twilight, a novel (1988)
The Six Days of Destruction, Meditations toward Hope, with Albert Friedlander (1988)
Silences et mémoire d'homme, essays & dialogues (1989)
From the Kingdom of Memory, Reminiscences (1990)
A Journey of Faith, with John Cardinal O'Connor (1990)
Sages and Dreamers: Biblical, Talmudic, & Hasidic Portraits & Legends (1991)
Célébration talmudique, portraits of Talmudic Masters (1991)
The Forgotten, a novel (1992)
A Passover Haggadah, as told by Elie Wiesel (1993)
All Rivers Run to the Sea, Memoirs (1995)
Célébration prophétique, portraits and legends of the Prophets (1998)
Les Juges, a novel (1999)
King Solomon and His Magic Ring, a children's book, illustrated by Mark Podwal (1999)
And The Sea Is Never Full, Memoirs II (1999)
D'où viens-tu?, essays (2001)
Conversations with Elie Wiesel, with Richard Heffner (2001)
The Judges, a novel (2002)
After the Darkness, essays (2002)
Le temps des déracinés, a novel (2003)
Wise Men and Their Tales, portraits of Biblical, Talmudic, and Hasidic Masters (2003)
Interview: Elie Wiesel

By the Academy of Achievement
June 29, 1996
Sun Valley, Idaho
From the Academy of Achievement

Childhood is one of the recurring themes in your writing. Could you tell us something about your childhood?
My childhood, really, was a childhood blessed with love and hope and faith and prayer. I come from a very religious home and in my little town I was not the only one who prayed and was loved. There were people who were poorer than us and yet, in my town, we were considered to be, not a wealthy family, but well-to-do, which means we weren't hungry. There were people who were.

I spent most of my time talking to God more than to people. He was my partner, my friend, my teacher, my king, my sovereign, and I was so crazily religious that nothing else mattered. Oh, from time-to-time we had anti-Semitic outbursts. Twice a year, Christmas and Easter, we were afraid to go out because those nights we used to be beaten up by hoodlums. It didn't matter that much. In a way, I was almost used to that. I saw it as part of nature. It's cold in the winter, it's hot in the summer and at Christmas you are being beaten up by a few anti-Semitic hoodlums.

Now, it is still the child in me that asks the questions. It is still the child in me that I am trying to entertain or to reach with my stories, which are his stories.

What people were important to you? Who influenced you? Who inspired you?
Well, naturally, my grandfather. He was a Hasid, meaning a member of the Hasidic community, and I loved him, I adored him. So, thanks to him, I became a Hasid too. And my mother—who actually continued his tradition—she’s the one who brought me to Hasidic Masters. And all the stories I tell
now—I've written so many books with Hasidic tales—these are not mine, these are theirs, my mother's and my grandfather's.

My father taught me how to reason, how to reach my mind. My soul belonged to my grandfather and my mother. They influenced me profoundly, to this day. When I write, I have the feeling, literally, physically, that one of them is behind my back, looking over my shoulder and reading what I'm writing. I'm terribly afraid of their judgment.

After the war, I had a teacher in France who was totally crazy. He spoke 30 languages, literally 30 languages. One day he learned that I knew Hungarian, and he didn't. He felt so bad that he learned Hungarian in two weeks. In two weeks he knew more about Hungarian literature than I did. Then, I had, in New York, a very great teacher, a very great Master. His name was Saul Lieberman, a Talmudic Scholar. I've studied Talmud all my life. I still do, even now, every day. For 17 years we were friends, as only a real teacher and a good student can be.

As a boy, what books most influenced you, were most important to you?
Religious books, of course. At home we didn't study the prophets that much. We studied the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch) and then, again, Talmud and Hasidic stories. They, of course, had a lasting influence on me. Secular literature? We had to go to school, so we went to school too, but I received the main impact from my religious schools as a child.

After the war, I began reading, of course. I went to the Sorbonne and I began reading literature. Dostoyevsky and Thomas Mann, the usual. And Kafka. I remember the awakening that occurred in me when I read, for the first time, Franz Kafka. It was in the evening when I began reading. I spent the entire night reading and, in the morning, I heard the garbage collector around five o'clock. Usually, I was annoyed at the garbage collector. It's a very ugly noise that they make, ugly sounds. That morning I was happy. I wanted to run out and embrace them, all these garbage collectors, because they taught me that there was another world than the world of Kafka, which is absurd and desperate, and despairing.

I read a lot. I teach my students, not creative writing, but creative reading and it is still from my childhood. You take a text, you explore it, you enter it with all your heart and all your mind. And then you find clues that were left for you, really foredestined to be received by you from centuries ago. Generation after generation there were people who left clues, and you are there to collect them and, at one point, you understand something that you hadn't understood before. That is a reward, and as a teacher I do the same thing. When I realize there is a student there, in the corner, who understands, there is a flicker in the eye. That is the greatest reward that a teacher can receive.

When did you know that you wanted to be a writer?
I'm not sure I am, actually. I have written 40 books, it must mean I'm a writer. When you have to write "profession," I'm not going to write "writer." After all, "Profession?" "Writer?" A profession is to be a human being, maybe. That's a very noble profession. Or teacher, the noblest of all professions. I write. As a child, really, at age ten, eleven, or twelve, I was already writing. I wanted to become a writer, and I even wrote a book of commentaries on the Bible. It's so bad. I found it after the war. It's so horrible, I'm embarrassed even to admit that I had written it.
My ambition really was, even as a child, to be a writer, a commentator, and a teacher, but a teacher of Talmud. And here I am. I'm a writer, for want of a better word, and I'm a teacher. I don't teach the same things. I don't write about the same things -- although I do write commentaries on the Bible, and on the Prophets, and the Talmud, and Hasidic Masters. But still, I am a writer and a teacher.

It's hard for any of us to imagine what you experienced, as an adolescent, in the concentration camps. How did that affect and change what you did with your life?

It affected me a lot. I cannot talk about myself. I like to talk about other people, not about myself, but I'll try to answer you.

Of course it had an overwhelming affect. After the war—I was 15 when I entered the camp—I was 16 when I left it and all of a sudden you become an orphan and you have no one. I had a little sister and I knew, with my mother the first night, that they were swept away by fire. My older sister I discovered by accident after the war, in Paris, where I was in an orphanage. But to be an orphan -- you can become an orphan at 50 and you are still an orphan. Very often I think of my father and my mother. At any important moment in my life, they are there thinking, "What an injustice."

To date, I haven't written much about that period. Of my 40 books, maybe four or five deal with that period. I know that there are no words for it, so all I can try to do is to communicate the incommunicability of the event. Furthermore, I know that even if I found the words you wouldn't understand. It is not because I cannot explain that you won't understand, it is because you won't understand that I can't explain.

The idea of the writer's mission, to be a witness, to be a messenger, was that part of your intention as a writer?

I wasn't that ambitious really. I wanted to write. I wrote my first book in Yiddish. In 1956, it came out in Buenos Aires, and then in French in 1958, and in New York in 1960. I wrote it, not for myself really. I wrote it for the other survivors who found it difficult to speak. And I wanted really to tell them, "Look, you must speak. As poorly as we can express our feelings, our memories, but we must try. We are not guaranteeing success, but we must guarantee effort." I wrote it for them, because the survivors are a kind of most endangered species. Every day, every day there are funerals. And I felt that there for a while they were so neglected, so abandoned, almost humiliated by society after the war.

When I became Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust in 1978, I wanted really to glorify the survivors. There wasn't a committee to which I didn't appoint a survivor, because I felt they deserve it. The same reason I wrote is really for that mission. It's always afterwards that, in a way, your friends or your readers convince you that you went beyond that, that you are a messenger, and so forth.

I didn't use those words, I used the words simply, "Look, we have to tell the story as best as we can. And we know that we won't succeed." I know I won't succeed. I know I haven't succeeded. Take the word "Holocaust." I am among the first, if not the first to use it in that context. By accident. I was working on an essay, a biblical commentary, and I wrote about the sacrifice, the binding of Isaac, by his father Abraham. In the Bible, there is a Hebrew word ola, which means burned offering. I thought the word "holocaust" was good: fire and so on. In the Bible, it was the son who almost died, but in our case it was the father who died, not the son. The word had so many implications that I felt it was good. Then it became accepted, and everybody used it and then I stopped using it because it was abused. Everything was a holocaust all of a sudden. I once heard a sportscaster on television speaking of the defeat of a sports team and he said, "Was that a holocaust!" My God! Everything became a holocaust.
In Bosnia, I remember, they spoke about a holocaust. I went to Bosnia to see. I felt, if it is, I must move heaven and earth. Even if it isn't, I must move heaven and earth to prevent it, but at least not to use the word. Well, all of this is really not very easy, but why should it be?

After the war, you did not speak, you were not a witness, for ten years.
I was. You know... You can be a silent witness, which means silence itself can become a way of communication. There is so much in silence. There is an archeology of silence. There is a geography of silence. There is a theology of silence. There is a history of silence. Silence is universal and you can work within it, and its own context, and make that silence into a testimony. Job, after he lost his children and everything, his fortune and his health, Job, for seven days and seven nights he was silent, and his three friends who came to visit him were also silent. That must have been a powerful silence, a brilliant silence. You see, silence itself can be testimony and I was waiting for ten years, really, but my intention simply was to be sure that the words I would use are the proper words. I was afraid of language.

What persuaded you to break that silence?
Oh, I knew ten years later I would do something. I had to tell the story. I was a young journalist in Paris. I wanted to meet the Prime Minister of France for my paper. He was, then, a Jew called Mendès-France. But he didn't offer to see me. I had heard that the French author François Mauriac—a very great Catholic writer and Nobel Prize winner, a member of the Academy—was his guru. Mauriac was his teacher. So I would go to Mauriac, the writer, and I would ask him to introduce me to Mendès-France.

Mauriac was an old man then, but when I came to Mauriac, he agreed to see me. We met and we had a painful discussion. The problem was that he was in love with Jesus. He was the most decent person I ever met in that field—as a writer, as a Catholic writer. Honest, sense of integrity, and he was in love with Jesus. He spoke only of Jesus. Whatever I would ask—Jesus. Finally, I said, "What about Mendès-France?" He said that Mendès-France, like Jesus, was suffering. That's not what I wanted to hear. I wanted, at one point, to speak about Mendès-France and I would say to Mauriac, can you introduce me? When he said Jesus again I couldn't take it, and for the only time in my life I was discourteous, which I regret to this day. I said, "Mr. Mauriac," we called him Maître, "ten years or so ago, I have seen children, hundreds of Jewish children, who suffered more than Jesus did on his cross and we do not speak about it." I felt all of a sudden so embarrassed. I closed my notebook and went to the elevator. He ran after me. He pulled me back; he sat down in his chair, and I in mine, and he began weeping. I have rarely seen an old man weep like that, and I felt like such an idiot. I felt like a criminal. This man didn't deserve that. He was really a pure man, a member of the Resistance. I didn't know what to do. We stayed there like that, he weeping and I closed in my own remorse. And then, at the end, without saying anything, he simply said, "You know, maybe you should talk about it."

He took me to the elevator and embraced me. And that year, the tenth year, I began writing my narrative. After it was translated from Yiddish into French, I sent it to him. We were very, very close friends until his death. That made me not publish, but write.
The book *Night*, was not easily published, was it?
Neither in France nor here, in spite of Mauriac. He was the most famous author in Europe, and he brought it personally from publisher to publisher. They didn't want it. It was too morbid, they said. "Nobody wants to hear these stories." Finally, a small publisher (who, by the way, was also Beckett's publisher, which means he had courage) published it. So we brought it to an American publisher. It went from publisher to publisher to publisher. All of them refused it. They gave the same reasons, until a small publisher picked it up. From 1960 to 1963, three years, it didn't sell 1500 copies. Nobody wanted to read it. It doesn't matter. I am not here to sell, I'm here to write.

What lessons can we draw for young people for all of this? How do you maintain faith in the face of the circumstances that you've endured in your lifetime? How do you keep hope and optimism alive? How do you keep going?
Well, I could answer you by saying, "What is the alternative?" But it's not enough. In truth, I have learned something. The enemy wanted to be the one who speaks, and I felt, I still feel, we must see to it that the victim should be the one who speaks and is heard. Therefore, all my adult life, since I began my life as an author, or as a teacher, I always try to listen to the victim. In other words, if I remain silent, I may help my own soul but, because I do not help other people, I poison my soul. Silence never helps the victim. It only helps the victimizer. I think of the killer and I lose all faith. But then I think of the victim and I am inundated with compassion.

Is it possible for you to say what advice you might offer to young people today who are starting out on whatever course they may follow?
Sensitivity. Be sensitive in every way possible about everything in life. Be sensitive. Insensitivity brings indifference and nothing is worse than indifference. Indifference makes that person dead before the person dies. Indifference means there is a kind of apathy that sets in and you no longer appreciate beauty, friendship, goodness, or anything. So, therefore, do not be insensitive. Be sensitive, only sensitive. Of course it hurts. Sensitivity is painful. So what. Think of those that you have to be sensitive to. Their pain is greater than yours.

When you talk about victims and injustice, you are speaking about something that is universal. It is with us as much today as it was during the war years.
Absolutely. Sensitivity is inclusive, not exclusive. If you are sensitive, you are sensitive to everything. You cannot say I am only sensitive to this person but not to others. That is not only counterproductive, it's self-defeating. It's not only because of religion, or because of social problems, or of medical problems, that you must be sensitive. There is nothing more exciting than to be a sensitive person. Because then you listen, and you go out and you hear the birds chirping and it's great. You see a person in the street, you do not know his face and you think, "Who knows what secret that person carries?" Which means you learn and you learn and you learn and you become enriched to a point that afterwards it overflows.

What personal characteristics are most important for young people to have in mind as they look toward their futures and their careers?
What I say, of course, applies to all since I don't know the individual component of that group you are trying to refer to. I would say, favor the question, always question. Do not accept answers as definitive. Answers change. Questions don't. Always question those who are certain of what they are saying. Always favor the person who is tolerant enough to understand that there are no absolute answers, but there are absolute questions.
If you were going to recommend books...
Don't ask. I wouldn't recommend mine because it would be vanity. Were I to recommend others, those I'm not recommending would be angry. I would certainly say to read the classics. I like to re-read the classics. The Bible, naturally, then the religious texts, the Hindu texts. The Upanishads and the Vedas are great, great books. Then go to the Greeks. And The Song of Gilgamesh. These are extraordinary books, even to this day. Read and read and read, but mainly read those who have survived the centuries.

What would you say the American Dream means to you?
Equality in diversity. That no group should be superior in the American society than another. Second, generosity. The person who is fortunate --thanks to his or her talent or heritage, to have more than others - - that person should know that he or she owes something to others who are less fortunate. Third, that every minute can be the beginning or the end of an adventure.

As we approach the 21st Century, what do you see as the greatest challenges in front of us?
Fanaticism. If there is one word that comprises all of these threats, it is fanaticism. For some reason, it is growing everywhere, in every religion: in Islam, in Christianity, in Judaism. Why now? Haven't we seen fanaticism is dangerous as an idea, because it carries poison? Furthermore, in politics, imagine a fanatic with power. May I go one step further? Imagine a fanatic with nuclear power. Do you have any doubt that if Idi Amin, in Uganda 20 years ago, before he was thrown out, would have used a weapon if he had one? Or a Khadafi now, in Libya? It's dangerous. A fanatic therefore, must be unmasked first, and then disarmed.

Is there anything that you have thought about doing that you haven't been able to do yet?
I may seem silly or childish to you, but if I could bring back one child, I would give up anything I have. Just one child. If I could now -- which is more possible -- free one prisoner, I would give a lot. If I could give a feeling of solidarity to a person who is abandoned, I would still give a lot. So you see, I would like to do things that I cannot do. All I have is a few words, and I will give these words. That's what I am trying to do.

What is your hope for this generation that follows us?
I would not want my past to become their future.

Is there anything else you would like to say?
In spite of what I have seen in my life, and observed, I agree with Albert Camus, whose work I always love to read and teach. At the end of his novel, The Plague, which is a desperate and despairing novel, he says, more or less, "There is more to celebrate than to denigrate in man."

Thank you. Thank you so much.
Night: An Overview

From Teacher Resources at http://www.bellmore-merrick.k12.ny.us/night.html

Setting: Concentration camps during World War II. Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Buna.

Background Information:
During World War II, Hitler formed many concentration camps throughout Germany and Poland. In these camps the people imprisoned, mainly of Jewish or Gypsy descent, were tortured, starved, put through horrific conditions, killed, and worked to death.

Major Characters:
- Elie Wiesel- He tells his heart wrenching story of his imprisonment in Nazi Germany. He overcame the odds with his strength and will to live.
- Elie's Father- He gave Elie the strength to go on without him and to save himself. He died in the 40 mile march between concentration camps in the dead of winter.

Plot Summary:
The autobiography began in 1941 with Elie and his family living in Sighet, an area in Germany. In 1944 German and Hungarian police set up ghettos where all the Jews and other religious and ethnic people were kept, and Elie and his family were basically kept captive in this area by the Gestapo. This was just until they were to be taken away to the concentration camps. When Elie and his family arrived at the concentration camp in Birkenau, he was separated from his mother and sister, whom he later found out had been killed. It was hard for him to deal with the fact that he would never see them again, and he wanted to give up. Elie almost killed himself while he was on the line waiting to get into the camp, facing the fire pits. A line straying to the left and one to the right decided his fate. If he was pointed on the right line, he would be immediately sent to the fire pit. He lied saying that he was 18, but was actually 14. When he was almost at the front of the line, he decided to throw himself at the barbed wire fence, rather than dying by fire. He changed his mind when the line suddenly shifted and he didn't have to go in the fire after all. He was relieved, but also dispirited, knowing he would never see his mother and sister again.

Elie's father kept him going, constantly saying that they would make it, and that he should never lose his faith. Upon arriving, men had to give away their clothes and personal articles and get checked physically by the SS troops, who assessed their physical condition and depleted them of confidence and privacy.

They were sent off to Auschwitz where they were put to work. They couldn't say they were skilled workers, because as a result they would be separated. Elie worked in a factory, where he met a lot of people, including a girl from France. He was separated from his father at that time. He liked Auschwitz better because it was cleaner and set up nicer than Birkenau. He had become numb to beatings by now, and had witnessed numerous hangings of his friends at the camp.

He was then sent from Auschwitz to Buna with his father. He had become accustomed to the stench of burning bodies. He injured his foot, which caused him to have an operation. After the operation, the camp was sent out to march because the Russians were coming to bomb the camps. Elie was told not to stay in the hospital because he would be killed. So, he went out with his weak father and barely healed foot to march. It was the middle of the winter, and none of the prisoners were dressed well enough. They were headed for Buchenwald, which was a forty-two mile march. They had to run for most of the time. Once they reached Buchenwald, they rested for awhile. Elie's father passed away at the camp from dysentery. Elie had to continue going on without his father. They were later liberated at Buchenwald, and Elie was one of the very few to survive.
1. How do you think Elie Wiesel’s childhood has influenced his writing style?
2. Who has inspired his work throughout the years? In what ways?
3. Does the author show a passion for his work? What about writing do you think appeals to him?
4. What other literary works does Elie Wiesel list as having had a profound effect on his work?
5. How does he explain his being both a writer and a teacher?
6. Although the author hasn’t written that much about the period in which he was in the concentration camps, what kind of “overwhelming affect” do you think it has had on his writing?
7. What seems to be Elie Wiesel’s main purpose for writing?
8. How can silence be as powerful as the spoken or written word? When does silence become unacceptable?
9. What does Elie Wiesel say is the most important quality for young people to have?
10. Do you agree with Elie Wiesel when he says fanaticism is the greatest challenge to our century? Why or why not? In what modern-day examples can you see fanaticism posing a threat to the world?
V. Testimonies of Conscience

"I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation.”

-- Elie Wiesel

A. Elie Wiesel’s 1986 Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech..............................................79
B. “Wiesel at UN Special Session: Will World Ever Learn Lessons from Holocaust?”81
C. Elie Wiesel on Global Conflict
   1. Elie Wiesel & The Middle East.................................................................82
   2. “Nobel Laureates Offer Support for Iranian Dissidents”............................84
   3. “On the Atrocities in Sudan”.......................................................................85
   4. “Outcry over Darfur a reaction to Rwanda, Nobel laureate says”.............87
   5. Elie Wiesel on Myanmar & Sri Lanka.......................................................88
D. The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity...........................................................89
   1. “Elie Wiesel on Loss, Starting Over”.........................................................90
   2. “Nobel Laureates Discuss Global Threats”..............................................91
   3. Beit Tzipora Centers...............................................................................92
E. Chapter Study Questions..................................................................................93

“There need to be more people like him, more people who are willing to speak up about anything and about what they believe in.”

-- Evelyn Denham
The Nobel Peace Prize 1986

From The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity

“The Norwegian Nobel Committee has resolved that the Nobel Peace Prize for 1986 should be awarded to the author, Elie Wiesel. It is the Committee's opinion that Elie Wiesel has emerged as one of the most important spiritual leaders and guides in an age when violence, repression and racism continue to characterise the world ... The Norwegian Nobel Committee believes that Elie Wiesel, with his message and through his practical work in the cause of peace, is a convincing spokesman for the view of mankind and for the unlimited humanitarianism which are at all times necessary for a lasting and just peace.”

-- The Norwegian Nobel Committee
Oslo, October 14, 1986

The Nobel Acceptance Speech delivered by Elie Wiesel in Oslo on December 10, 1986

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Chairman Aarvik, members of the Nobel Committee, ladies and gentlemen:

Words of gratitude. First to our common Creator. This is what the Jewish tradition commands us to do. At special occasions, one is duty-bound to recite the following prayer: "Barukh shehekhyanu vekiymanu vehigianu lazman haze"—"Blessed be Thou for having sustained us until this day."

Then—thank you, Chairman Aarvik, for the depth of your eloquence. And for the generosity of your gesture. Thank you for building bridges between people and generations. Thank you, above all, for helping humankind make peace its most urgent and noble aspiration.

I am moved, deeply moved by your words, Chairman Aarvik. And it is with a profound sense of humility that I accept the honor - the highest there is—that you have chosen to bestow upon me. I know your choice transcends my person.

Do I have the right to represent the multitudes who have perished? Do I have the right to accept this great honor on their behalf? I do not. No one may speak for the dead, no one may interpret their mutilated dreams and visions. And yet, I sense their presence. I always do—and at this moment more than ever. The presence of my parents, that of my little sister. The presence of my teachers, my friends, my companions... This honor belongs to all the survivors and their children and, through us to the Jewish people with whose destiny I have always identified.

I remember: it happened yesterday, or eternities ago. A young Jewish boy discovered the Kingdom of Night. I remember his bewilderment, I remember his anguish. It all happened so fast. The ghetto. The deportation. The sealed cattle car. The fiery altar upon which the history of our people and the future of mankind were meant to be sacrificed.

I remember he asked his father: "Can this be true? This is the twentieth century, not the Middle Ages. Who would allow such crimes to be committed? How could the world remain silent?"

And now the boy is turning to me. "Tell me," he asks, "what have you done with my future, what have you done with your life?" And I tell him that I have tried. That I have tried to keep memory alive, that I have tried to fight those who would forget. Because if we forget, we are guilty, we are accomplices.

And then I explain to him how naïve we were, that the world did know and remained silent. And that is why I swore never to be silent whenever wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never
the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.

Of course, since I am a Jew profoundly rooted in my people's memory and tradition, my first response is to Jewish fears, Jewish needs, Jewish crises. For I belong to a traumatized generation, one that experienced the abandonment and solitude of our people. It would be unnatural for me not to make Jewish priorities my own: Israel, Soviet Jewry, Jews in Arab land... But others are important to me. Apartheid is, in my view, as abhorrent as anti-Semitism. To me, Andrei Sakharov's isolation is as much a disgrace as Joseph Begun's imprisonment and Ida Nudel's exile. As is the denial of solidarity and its leader Lech Walesa's right to dissent. And Nelson Mandela's interminable imprisonment.

There is so much injustice and suffering crying out for our attention: victims of hunger, of racism and political persecution—in Chile, for instance, or in Ethiopia - writers and poets, prisoners in so many lands governed by the Left and by the Right.

Human rights are being violated on every continent. More people are oppressed than free. How can one not be sensitive to their plight? Human suffering anywhere concerns men and women everywhere. That applies also to Palestinians to whose plight I am sensitive but whose methods I deplore when they lead to violence. Violence is not the answer. Terrorism is the most dangerous of answers. They are frustrated, that is understandable, something must be done. The refugees and their misery. The children and their fear. The uprooted and their hopelessness. Something must be done about their situation. Both the Jewish people and the Palestinian people have lost too many sons and daughters and have shed too much blood. This must stop, and all attempts to stop it must be encouraged. Israel will cooperate, I am sure of that. I trust Israel for I have faith in the Jewish people. Let Israel be given a chance, let hatred and danger be removed from their horizons, and there will be peace in and around the Holy Land. Please understand my deep and total commitment to Israel: if you could remember what I remember, you would understand. Israel is the only nation in the world whose existence is threatened. Should Israel lose but one war, it would mean her end and ours as well. But I have faith. Faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even in His creation. Without it no action would be possible. And action is the only remedy to indifference, the most insidious danger of all. Isn't that the meaning of Alfred Nobel's legacy? Wasn't his fear of war a shield against war?

There is so much to be done, there is so much that can be done. One person—a Raoul Wallenberg, an Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, Jr.—one person of integrity, can make a difference, a difference of life and death.

As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our life will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs.

This is what I say to the young Jewish boy wondering what I have done with his years. It is in his name that I speak to you and that I express to you my deepest gratitude as one who has emerged from the Kingdom of Night. We know that every moment is a moment of grace, every hour an offering; not to share them would mean to betray them.

Our lives no longer belong to us alone; they belong to all those who need us desperately. Thank you, Chairman Aarvik. Thank you, members of the Nobel Committee. Thank you, people of Norway, for declaring on this singular occasion that our survival has meaning for mankind.
Wiesel at UN Special Session:
Will the World Ever Learn Lessons from Holocaust?

From the Consulate General of Israel in San Francisco
January 24, 2005

Sixty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, an historic special session commemorating the victims of the Holocaust took place at the UN General Assembly in New York Monday, HA'ARETZ reported. Holocaust survivor Eli Wiesel, a Nobel Peace Laureate, was the keynote speaker at the event—a rare appearance by a non-statesman or diplomat at the podium of the body that was created on the ashes of World War II.

"If the world had listened, we may have prevented Darfur, Cambodia, Bosnia and naturally Rwanda," Wiesel said. "We know that for the dead it is too late. For them, abandoned by God and betrayed by humanity, victory did come much too late. But it is not too late for today's children, ours and yours. It is for their sake alone that we bear witness."

He ended his poignant speech with a dramatic moment, a silent stare out at the diplomats and TV cameras watching, and then asked, "But will the world ever learn?"

Wiesel's speech was one of the highlights of the special session that was initiated by Israel, promoted by the United States and energetically undertaken by Secretary General Kofi Annan as an important event meant to remember "the Jews and others" who were murdered at Auschwitz and throughout Europe during the Nazi reign of terror.

While UN protocol prohibits any prayer from being recited in the plenum, Annan decided that the unique nature of the event and its special character made it possible to break the rules and allow the chanting of El Maleh Rahamim, a traditional Jewish memorial prayer.
Elie Wiesel: Israel at 60
TIME Magazine
June 18, 2009

Israel in sixty years? When it comes to Jewish history, it is dangerous to indulge in prophecy. Who would have predicted Abraham leaving the grandiose home of his father and his idols to discover that God alone ruled the world? And Moses, the man with a speech defect, an inspired spokesman for his people? And David the young shepherd, a warrior and king?

Had anyone predicted Hitler's crimes? Only three years after the saddest and cruelest chapter in Jewish history, a sovereign Jewish State was proclaimed: Was it predictable? Was its military victory over five well armed Arab armies predictable? And the Six-Day war? And the Yom Kippur war? And the influx of a million Jews from the Soviet Union? And the assassination, by a Jewish fanatic, of the legendary Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin?

To try to predict is ill-advised and dangerous. Having said all that, can I avoid the urgent question of tomorrow? There I consider myself an optimist. I believe that, at one time or another, Israelis and Palestinians will live together. Yes, there will be two states — a Jewish one for Jews, and a Palestinian one for Palestinians. Historically unavoidable, this is bound to happen. But how, and at what price? That I cannot figure out. All I know is that suicide terrorism must be eliminated. I am looking forward to tomorrow with hope.

Nobel Laureate Wiesel Condemns Ahmadinejad At Geneva Meeting
ASSOCIATED PRESS
April 21, 2009

(RFE/RL) -- Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel has accused Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad of fanning hatred by attacking Israel at a UN conference on racism. Wiesel called the presence of Ahmadinejad and his opening speech at the UN racism conference on April 20 "an insult to our intelligence."

"Here we are now in the United Nations, an organization created as a response to the atrocities of the Second World War and we have to protest against anti-Semitic speech," Wiesel said.

Wiesel, a Jewish writer, professor, political activist, Nobel Laureate, and Holocaust survivor, addressed the UN conference in Geneva as it tried to get back on track after most Western states walked out in protest against Ahmadinejad.

Ahmadinejad sparked the furor when he criticized the creation of a "totally racist government in occupied Palestine" in 1948, calling it "the most cruel and repressive racist regime."

"After World War II, using the excuse that Jews were victimized and abused during the Holocaust, they made a nation homeless, and they transferred [people] from Europe, the United States, and other countries to their land, and they created a racist government in the occupied Palestinian territories," he said, amid applause and shouts.
Meeting Boycotted
Ahmadinejad's remarks prompted all 23 European Union delegates present to walk out of the conference room. The meeting had been already boycotted by the United States, Israel, Australia, Italy, and Germany, which decided not to attend the conference in protest against Ahmadinejad's presence.

The boycotting states had feared the current meeting would be marred by charges of racism against Israel much as happened at the first UN conference on racism in Durban, South Africa, in 2001. In Durban, the U.S. and Israel walked out midway into that event over an attempt by Muslim countries to liken Zionism - the movement to establish a Jewish state in the Holy Land -- to racism.

Ahmadinejad's remarks aroused still greater antipathy from EU states because they coincided with the annual Holocaust commemoration day, whose observance began on April 20.

Six survivors of the Holocaust lit six beacons at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem to honor of the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis and their collaborators. April 20 was also the anniversary of the birth of Adolf Hitler. On April 21, sirens wailed for two-minutes in Israel to remember the victims of the Nazi genocide.

And an annual March of the Living at the former Nazi death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau in Oswiecim, Poland, paid respect to those killed there.

Ahmadinejad, who has previously called for Israel to be wiped off the map and described the Holocaust as a "myth," came under strong fire from conference organizers as well as Western states for his latest remarks.

'Accuse, Divide, Incite'
UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the Iranian president has misused the antiracism conference. The UN chief said he had asked Ahmadinejad before his speech to avoid dividing the conference in Geneva. But he said the Iranian president had instead used the podium "to accuse, divide and even incite," in direct opposition to the aim of the meeting. And the U.S. State Department called Ahmadinejad's remarks "unacceptable."

"The comments that [Ahmadinejad] made, frankly, were unacceptable and, frankly, feed racial hatred," spokesman Robert Wood said. "Iran needs to end this type of inflammatory rhetoric. It's not helpful. And I think you saw today a number of delegates walked out during his speech, which I think sent a very powerful message to Iran that this type of rhetoric is unhelpful, it's counterproductive."

The Czech Presidency of the European Union said that the bloc "rejects in strongest terms views expressed by President Mahmud Ahmadinejad labeling Israel as [a] racist regime." The UN summit is expected to approve a final document on April 24 that avoids any offense to the Jewish state. The Czech Presidency's statement said those EU nations participating in the forum "have no outstanding difficulty of substance with the draft Outcome Document and are ready to give...consent to it during the adoption on [April 24]."

The goal of the UN forum is to take stock of progress in fighting racial discrimination, xenophobia, and intolerance since the Durban gathering. Final documents issued by the UN racism summits have no enforcement power.
Nobel Laureates Offer Support for Iranian Dissidents

Washington — Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel and 44 other Nobel prize winners offered their support Monday for Iranian dissidents, including fellow Nobel laureate Shirin Ebadi, telling them: “Do not lose hope.”

The open letter, published as a full-page advertisement in The New York Times, was signed by Nobel laureates from several countries, including Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa.

“We, the undersigned Nobel laureates, strongly condemn the flagrant human rights violations in the wake of the recent presidential election in Iran,” it said.

The letter, paid for by the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, was published in the Times and the International Herald Tribune as Iran’s Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei endorsed President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad’s election.

The controversial Iranian president’s victory in June elections had been strongly contested, and triggered a series of opposition protests by Iranians who said the vote was rigged.

Wiesel told AFP the letter, which said the election had been “shamelessly tampered with,” was intended to ensure that protestors in Iran “did not feel abandoned.”

“For me, the worst torture is to feel you have been abandoned,” the Holocaust survivor said.

Wiesel said he had not been in touch with Ebadi, fearing communication with the human rights lawyer might result in “retaliation” against her. Ebadi won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her human rights efforts in Iran.
On the Atrocities in Sudan
by Elie Wiesel

Remarks delivered at the Darfur Emergency Summit, convened at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on July 14, 2004, by the American Jewish World Service and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Sudan has become today’s world capital of human pain, suffering and agony. There, one part of the population has been—and still is—subjected by another part, the dominating part, to humiliation, hunger and death. For a while, the so-called civilized world knew about it and preferred to look away. Now people know. And so they have no excuse for their passivity bordering on indifference. Those who, like you my friends, try to break the walls of their apathy deserve everyone’s support and everyone’s solidarity.

This gathering was organized by several important bodies. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Committee on Conscience (Jerry Fowler), the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, the American Jewish World Service (Ruth Messinger) and several other humanitarian organizations.

As for myself, I have been involved in the efforts to help Sudanese victims for some years. It was a direct or indirect consequence of a millennium lecture I had given in the White House on the subject, “The Perils of Indifference”. After I concluded, a woman in the audience rose and said: “I am from Rwanda.” She asked me how I could explain the international community’s indifference to the Rwandan massacres. I turned to the President who sat at my right and said: “Mr. President, you better answer this question. You know as well as we do that the Rwanda tragedy, which cost from 600,000 to 800,000 victims, innocent men, women and children, could have been averted. Why wasn’t it?” His answer was honest and sincere: “It is true, that tragedy could have been averted. That’s why I went there to apologize in my personal name and in the name of the American people. But I promise you: it will not happen again.”

The next day I received a delegation from Sudan and friends of Sudan, headed by a Sudanese refugee bishop. They informed me that two million Sudanese had already died. They said, “You are now the custodian of the President’s pledge. Let him keep it by helping stop the genocide in Sudan.”

That brutal tragedy is still continuing, now in Sudan’s Darfur region. Now its horrors are shown on television screens and on front pages of influential publications. Congressional delegations, special envoys and humanitarian agencies send back or bring back horror-filled reports from the scene. A million human beings, young and old, have been uprooted, deported. Scores of women are being raped every day, children are dying of disease hunger and violence.

How can a citizen of a free country not pay attention? How can anyone, anywhere not feel outraged? How can a person, whether religious or secular, not be moved by compassion? And above all, how can anyone who remembers remain silent?

As a Jew who does not compare any event to the Holocaust, I feel concerned and challenged by the
Sudanese tragedy. We must be involved. How can we reproach the indifference of non-Jews to Jewish suffering if we remain indifferent to another people’s plight?

It happened in Cambodia, then in former Yugoslavia, and in Rwanda, now in Sudan. Asia, Europe, Africa: Three continents have become prisons, killing fields and cemeteries for countless innocent, defenseless populations. Will the plague be allowed to spread?

“Lo taamod al dam réakha” is a Biblical commandment. “Thou shall not stand idly by the shedding of the blood of thy fellow man.” The word is not “akhikha,” thy Jewish brother, but “réakha,” thy fellow human being, be he or she Jewish or not. All are entitled to live with dignity and hope. All are entitled to live without fear and pain.

Not to assist Sudan’s victims today would for me be unworthy of what I have learned from my teachers, my ancestors and my friends, namely that God alone is alone: His creatures must not be.

What pains and hurts me most now is the simultaneity of events. While we sit here and discuss how to behave morally, both individually and collectively, over there, in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, human beings kill and die.

Should the Sudanese victims feel abandoned and neglected, it would be our fault—and perhaps our guilt.

That’s why we must intervene.

If we do, they and their children will be grateful for us. As will be, through them, our own.

Refugees in Menawashi, Darfur. Approximately 7,000 came to Menawashi in just a few days.

From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
Outcry over Darfur a reaction to Rwanda, Nobel laureate says

MICHAEL VALPY
From Bell Globemedia Publishing Inc.

TORONTO -- The Western world's mounting public demand for action to halt the murder and rape in Darfur is a response to the indifference in the West to the genocide in Rwanda a dozen years ago, says Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel.

Mr. Wiesel, the world's best-known survivor of the Nazi genocide against Jews, said in an interview the great difference between Rwanda and the slaughter of people in Sudan's western Darfur region is that "Darfur came after Rwanda." People know, said Mr. Wiesel, that the one million killed in Rwanda could have been saved if there had been outside intervention. And they know that the hundreds of thousands killed -- and still being killed -- in Darfur could likewise be saved.

Mr. Wiesel publicly asked then U.S. president Bill Clinton why his country had intervened in the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo but not in Rwanda, and Mr. Clinton replied that the United States would never again allow another genocide in Africa to occur. His successor, President George W. Bush, has called the Darfur killings a genocide and yet, years after they began, they're continuing.

Asked why the Rwandan genocide could have happened, with so little attention paid to it by the media, Mr. Wiesel replied, "It is a puzzle to me, but I suppose it didn't make the front pages because the people were black and far away."

Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian commander of the small contingent of United Nations peacekeeping troops in Rwanda at the time, has given the same answer to why the UN and the world's governments didn't respond to his urgent appeals for help: "Because the people being killed were black."

Mr. Wiesel has been a leading participant in the public campaign by Jewish and other faith groups in the U.S. and Canada to propel Darfur to the top of government agendas. The 77-year-old novelist, teacher and journalist recently took part in the huge Darfur demonstration in Washington.

He is lecturing tomorrow night at the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall on his lifelong campaign against the evils of fanaticism and indifference. The lecture is sponsored by Hillel, the Jewish student organization. Mr. Wiesel said fanaticism is growing everywhere, in many cultures, in all religions. He calls it the 21st century's greatest danger. Fanatics, he said, have been behind the rivers of blood shed in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan.

In 1944, at age 15, Mr. Wiesel was interned with his family by the Nazi occupiers of his village in Hungarian-ruled Transylvania. They were transported to Birkenau, the reception centre for Auschwitz, where his mother and sister were killed. His father subsequently died of dysentery.
NEWS: Elie Wiesel on Myanmar & Sri Lanka

Nobel laureates speak out on Myanmar
Source: JTA – The Jewish Telegraphic Agency
October 9, 2007

Some 69 Nobel laureates signed a statement expressing outrage at human rights abuses in Myanmar. In a statement released Tuesday by The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, the laureates “denounce the oppressive rule of the junta government” and “urge the international community, particularly China, Russia and India who have influence on Myanmar, to use it on the Burmese government to secure basic democratic freedoms and to ensure the protection of human rights.”

The signers also call for the release of pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been held under house arrest for much of the past eight years. In August, tens of thousands of protesters marched to demand democratic reforms in Myanmar. The junta crushed the demonstrations, detaining thousands and killing at least 10. China opposes sanctions against Myanmar, saying they won’t help resolve the country’s problems. The United States announced sanctions on Burma last month.

Professor Elie Wiesel Releases Statement on the Tamil People
Source: Tamil Sydney
July 10, 2009

Prof. Elie Wiesel's Foundation for Humanity released a statement on the persecution of the Tamil people of Sri Lanka on June 30, 2009 that was posted on the Foundation's website. The statement comes in response to the continued discrimination and violence against the Tamils since the massacre of more than 25,000 Tamil civilians by the Government of Sri Lanka in May 2009. Over 60 years of persecution of the Tamils by the Sinhalese-dominated state and military, have included ethnic cleansing, long term displacement and colonization of Tamil areas, along with extrajudicial executions, disappearances and other serious human rights abuses.

Today, 300,000 Tamils are held hostage in detention camps, while the Tamil homeland is occupied by the Sinhalese military, and Tamils throughout the island face discrimination, insecurity and lack of political representation.

The conditions in these camps are reported as horrific, as food is scarce, medicine is being denied and hepatitis and other preventable communicable diseases are spreading in the population. There are few toilet facilities and human waste is left untreated, so concern for epidemics is growing. Aid agencies and journalists continue to be denied adequate access. Kidnapping and rape by the military forces who control the camps is reported routinely, and the abductions of youth accused of being rebel members continues unabated.

Prof. Wiesel’s 'Tamil People Statement' reads:

Wherever minorities are being persecuted we must raise our voices to protest. According to reliable sources, the Tamil people are being disenfranchised and victimized by the Sri Lanka authorities. This injustice must stop. The Tamil people must be allowed to live in peace and flourish in their homeland.
Elie Wiesel and his wife, Marion, established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity soon after he was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize for Peace. The Foundation's mission, rooted in the memory of the Holocaust, is to combat indifference, intolerance, and injustice through international dialogue and youth-focused programs that promote acceptance, understanding and equality.

The Foundation runs multiple programs both domestically and internationally.

In the U.S., the Foundation organizes The Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics Essay Contest for college juniors and seniors and bestows The Elie Wiesel Humanitarian Award to a deserving individual.

Outside the U.S., the Foundation organizes a regular calendar of international conferences for youth in conflict-ridden countries and gatherings of Nobel Laureates.

The Foundation also runs Beit Tzipora Centers for Study & Enrichment in Israel that give Ethiopian Jewish children the opportunity to overcome early educational inequality and participate fully in Israeli society. Named in memory of Elie Wiesel's younger sister, who died in Auschwitz, the Foundation currently runs two centers, one in Ashkelon and one in Kiryat Malachi, which enroll more than 1,000 youth. The goal of these programs is to provide Ethiopian immigrants with desperately needed academic tutoring, pre-vocational training, and social and emotional support.
Elie Wiesel On Loss, Starting Over

By JEFF GREENFIELD
May 16, 2009
CBS News

(CBS) High on the list of people taken by Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme was Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace Prize winner and holocaust survivor. On Saturday, Wiesel talked about his loss, and about starting over, in an exclusive interview with CBS News correspondent Jeff Greenfield.

"For the first moment I felt a kind of not physical but spiritual, mental nakedness, that everything was taken," Elie Wiesel said.

It was late last year when Wiesel learned that he and his foundation had lost all their money at the hands of Bernard Madoff.

"For the first moment of course was almost paralyzing," he said. "Then we shook ourselves up."

And that is what Wiesel wanted to talk about in his only television interview - how someone finds the resilience to "shake themselves up" in the face of such a blow.

"When my life seems to be partly or wholly in ruins, I build on them. I may even use the ruins for the buildings. Second, I will never allow anyone to change my life or destroy what I have done with it," he said. "Somehow what I must keep in mind is what I think of myself."

There is nothing sentimental about Wiesel's view of the world; he believes that evil is a palpable presence; he does not explain what happened as a mark of God's mysterious will.

"Too easy," he said. "Human beings should be held accountable. Leave god alone. He has enough problems."

"I would imagine that one of the assets you could draw on was literally a worldwide community of friends and colleagues," Greenfield said. "Were they there for you?"

"No, not really," Wiesel said. "Very few, very very few. But this happens. It doesn't affect me, I gain a lucidity. The masks have been dropped."

Others - people he had never met - did come through. "Five dollars, ten dollars, children. One of them sent us Chanukah money. And he said, "I prevailed upon my parents to match the fund."

And in a sense, the horrors of what Wiesel lived through six decades ago - watching his parents and little sister die in the concentration camps - provides him a sense of perspective. "When I was young I lost everything. And almost everyone else. And so all the other fortunes mean much less. Look, if I were alone in the world, I would have the right to choose despair, solitude and self-fulfillment. But I am not alone," he said. "And if someone is, I have to be present to someone who is alone. And of course that is the sense of my life. Look at my age. I have to be self-conscious of what I'm trying to do with my life."

Nobel Laureates Discuss Global Threats
Petra Conference 2008

By Tamsin Carlisle
June 16, 2008
“The National”

Economic threats to world prosperity will be the major discussion topics for Nobel laureates and prominent world figures convening today in Jordan’s ancient city of Petra for a three-day conference.

The conference agenda will highlight business-related issues such as soaring oil prices, the global finance crisis and food security, making it fundamentally different from those addressed in previous years at the annual brainstorming session – and indicating a change of geopolitical tide.

For the first time in the Petra conference’s four-year history, politically driven threats to world security – including religious extremism, terrorism and armed conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere – will take a back seat to economic issues, reflecting deepening concern among leading international thinkers and policy makers over the increasing likelihood of a major global economic slowdown that would bring misery to many, if not most of, the world’s seven billion inhabitants.

Entitled “Reaching for New Economic, Scientific and Educational Horizons”, this year’s Nobel Laureates’ conference will feature plenary sessions on transforming the global economy to bridge the gap between developing and developed countries, and averting a world hunger crisis precipitated by soaring food prices. The world’s energy supply and its relation to climate change will also be discussed.

By contrast, last year’s conference had a youth focus. The proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, the HIV/Aids pandemic and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process were issues extensively aired at the two previous meetings in Petra.

Thirty Nobel Laureates from the six fields in which the Nobel Prize is awarded each year – peace, economics, literature, physics, chemistry and medicine – will be among the roughly 250 participants expected to attend this year’s conference.

Established in 2005 as a forum for articulating practical solutions to pressing global problems, the annual conference is co-hosted by Jordan’s King Abdullah II and Elie Wiesel, the recipient of the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize.

It has consistently attracted the attention of prominent peace activists, including the Dalai Lama, Elie Wiesel, and the former US president, Jimmy Carter, who attended the inaugural event.
Beit Tzipora Centers

From The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity

In the mid-1990's, soon after thousands of Ethiopian Jews were rescued from violence and persecution in Africa, The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity created two educational centers in the State of Israel. These Beit Tzipora Centers, in Ashkelon and Kiryat Malachi, focus on educating the Ethiopian-Jewish community and giving Ethiopian-Israeli young people the opportunity to grow and participate fully in Israeli society. The centers currently enroll more than 1,000 boys and girls in after-school programs and serve as a model for other schools.

Named in memory of Elie Wiesel's younger sister, who died in Auschwitz, these centers have become a major part of the Foundation's work and remain a passion of the Wiesels. Elie and Marion Wiesel have been actively involved in the Beit Tzipora Centers since the beginning and continue to remain active in the management of the Centers, regularly visiting and encouraging the students to succeed.

School and public officials have recognized that the Beit Tzipora study and enrichment programs significantly improve the quality of life for these young people. The Foundation's dream is to give all Ethiopian children in Israel the chance to excel. This work is constantly expanding and growing and will remain at the heart of the mission of The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.
Testimonies of Conscience
Chapter Study Questions

1. Why do we need to remember the truth?
2. What about Elie Wiesel made him deserving of the Nobel Prize?
3. After reading the speech, what do you think is Elie Wiesel’s most important life mission? What is his main philosophy for what he does?
4. While not telling the world of the atrocities of the Holocaust would have been a horror in itself, how could the telling of his experiences be a “betrayal of the dead?” Explain this duality with at least two examples from the text.
5. Why does Elie Wiesel feel as ardently about anti-Semitism, a crime against his own people, as he does about apartheid and poverty in Chile?
6. Answer the question posed by the second article in this section: Will the world ever learn lessons from the Holocaust?
7. What is so unique about the problem of anti-Semitism? How has it managed to continue for so long?
8. Analyze Elie Wiesel’s view of “Israel at 60.” Do you agree or disagree with his perspective? What might you add about Israel’s place in the world today?
9. Many conflict areas in the world arise as a result of extremist minorities managing to wield an extraordinary amount of influence. Why do you think this happens? In what other instances throughout history has this pattern occurred?
10. Investigate and discuss one of the current situations that Elie Wiesel has tried to shed light on (i.e. the conflict in Israel and Palestine, the human rights violations in Iran, the situation in Darfur). What can be done to address this situation? Examine the role of geographical, political, social, and religious issues. How does the current situation reflect prior political and social movements?
11. What other issues of social justice and human rights are present today on a global scale? How do these issues affect the global community? What happens when conflict areas or large social issues go unaddressed?
12. Define social responsibility and humanitarism. How are the two linked?
13. According to Elie Wiesel, how do we become killers and villains by doing nothing?
14. How have the words “never again” lost their meaning in light of Darfur?
15. Elie Wiesel calls Sudan “today’s world capital of human pain.” Create a timeline of various capitals of human suffering throughout history. Why did you choose these events? Can you identify any patterns of significance?
16. What is the mission of The Elie Wiesel Foundation?
17. How is Elie Wiesel’s personal journey a “call to action?”
18. Research other Petra Conferences. How did the 2008 Conference differ? How has the conference expanded since its inaugural year?
19. If you were a delegate at the Petra Conference, which “global threat” would you be most concerned about and why? What solutions might you propose?
20. What is the focus of the Beit Tzipora Centers and why are they of importance to Elie Wiesel?
VI. Indifference

“To remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all.”

-- Elie Wiesel

A. “Martin Niemöller: ‘First they came for the Socialists…’” ...................... 95
B. “Gang rape raises question about bystanders’ role” ................................. 96
C. “The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)” .................................................. 99
D. Study Questions ..................................................................................... 101

“You have to look at the atrocities that are happening today. It’s our responsibility to make sure we don’t let events like this go on unnoticed.

-- Harold Robins
Martin Niemöller: "First they came for the Socialists"

From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Martin Niemöller (1892-1984) was an ardent nationalist and prominent Protestant pastor who emerged as an outspoken public foe of Adolf Hitler and spent the last 7 years of Nazi rule in concentration camps.

Niemöller is perhaps best remembered for the quotation:

First they came for the Socialists  
and I didn’t speak out  
because I wasn’t a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists  
and I didn’t speak out  
because I wasn’t a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews  
and I didn’t speak out  
because I wasn’t a Jew.

Then they came for me,  
and there was no one left to speak for me.

The quotation stems from Niemöller's lectures during the early postwar period. Different versions of the quotation exist. These can be attributed to the fact that Niemöller spoke extemporaneously and in a number of settings. Much controversy surrounds the content of the poem as it has been printed in varying forms, referring to alternating groups such as Catholics, Jehovah's Witnesses, Jews, Trade Unionists or Communists depending upon the version. Nonetheless his point was that Germans -- in particular, he believed, the leaders of the Protestant churches -- had been complicit through their silence in the Nazi imprisonment, persecution, and murder of millions of people.

At the same time, however, Niemöller, like most of his compatriots, was largely silent about the persecution and mass murder of the European Jews. Only in 1963, in a West German television interview, did Niemöller acknowledge and make a statement of regret about his own antisemitism (see Gerlach, 2000, p. 47).
Gang rape raises questions about bystanders' role

From CNN.com
By Stephanie Chen
October 30, 2009

(CNN) -- For more than two hours on a dark Saturday night, as many as 20 people watched or took part as a 15-year-old California girl was allegedly gang raped and beaten outside a high school homecoming dance, authorities said.

As hundreds of students gathered in the school gym, outside in a dimly lit alley where the victim was allegedly raped, police say witnesses took photos. Others laughed.

"As people announced over time that this was going on, more people came to see, and some actually participated," Lt. Mark Gagan of the Richmond Police Department told CNN.

The witnesses failed to report the crime to law enforcement, Gagan said. The victim remained hospitalized in stable condition. Police arrested five suspects and more arrests were expected.

So why didn't anyone come forward?

Criminology and psychology experts say there could be a variety of reasons why the crime wasn't reported. Several pointed to a problematic social phenomenon known as the bystander effect. It's a theory that has played out in lynchings, college riots and white-collar crimes.

Under the bystander effect, experts say that the larger the number of people involved in a situation, the less will get done.

"If you are in a crowd and you look and see that everyone is doing nothing, then doing nothing becomes the norm." explains Drew Carberry, a director at the National Council on Crime Prevention.

Carberry said witnesses can be less likely to report a crime because they reinforce each other with the notion that reporting the crime isn't necessary. Or, he says, witnesses may think another person in the crowd already reported the incident. The responsibility among the group becomes diffused.

"Kids learn at a young age when they observe bullying that they would rather not get involved because there is a power structure," Carberry adds.

The phrase bystander effect was coined in the 1960s after people watched or heard a serial killer stalk and stab a woman in two separate attacks in the Queens neighborhood of New York.
Kitty Genovese struggled with the attacker on the street and in her building. She shrieked for help and was raped, robbed and murdered. When witnesses in the building were questioned by police about why they remained silent and failed to act, one man, according to the 1964 New York Times article that broke the story, answered, "I didn't want to be involved."

Though the number of people who saw or heard Genovese struggle was eventually disputed, her case still became symbolic of a kind of crowd apathy that psychologists and social scientists call the "Genovese syndrome."

"I don't propose people get involved by running over and trying to stop it," the 73-year-old brother of Kitty Genovese told CNN, referring to the California gang rape case. Instead, Vincent Genovese advocates a call to 911. "Everyone has a cell phone," he said. "There is no excuse for people not to react to a situation like that."

A similar incident took place at a New Bedford, Massachusetts, bar in 1983. Witnesses said several men threw a woman on a pool table where they raped and performed oral sex on her. Several witnesses failed to call police.

"The people in the bar didn't do anything. They just let it happen," said Richard Felson, a professor of crime, law and justice at Penn State University in University Park, Pennsylvania.

This detached mentality can be especially pervasive among youth, who are too young to comprehend what victimization means, said Salvatore Didato, an organizational psychologist in New York. When a teenager -- or anyone -- doesn't have a personal bond to the victim, they are less likely to help out.

Experts say sometimes bystanders see the victim as less important than the person committing the crime, who appears to wield power. "The victim to them is a non-person," Didato said.

But in California, it's illegal for a witnessed crime involving children to go unreported. The Sherrice Iverson Child Victim Protection Act passed in 1999 makes it a misdemeanor to fail to report a crime against a child. However, the bill only applies to victims 14 or younger. The victim in the California gang-rape case was 15.

Phil Harris, a criminal justice professor at Temple University, who has studied juveniles and group situations for nearly three decades, offered another hypothesis on why as many as 20 witnesses failed to notify police. He said the witnesses could have been angry themselves -- or had a problem with the victim.

Richmond Police Department officials said some of the witnesses in the California gang rape ended up participating in the sexual assaults.

"A lot of kids don't know how to express anger and they are curious when anger is expressed," Harris said.
Scientific studies over the last decade have shown that adolescent brain development occurs into the 20s, which makes it hard for teens to make decisions, criminologists say. In 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court took this research into consideration when it ruled that children could not be given the death penalty.

It is still unclear the ages of the male witnesses who gathered around the victim in California and watched.

In Boston, Massachusetts, Northeastern University criminologist Jack McDevitt says he believes the California gang rape was too violent -- and lasted too long -- to be the result of the bystander effect alone.

McDevitt, who specializes in hate crime research, says the male witnesses may have kept quiet out of fear of retaliation. In his research, witnesses who live in violent communities often fear stepping forward because snitching isn't tolerated.

Snitching could also bring dangerous consequences to their friends and family. "They don't believe the system will protect them from the offender," he said. "They think the offender will find out their name."

That may have been the case in Chicago, Illinois, in September when an honor student was beaten to death by four teenage boys outside a school. Video captured by a bystander showed several students watching the attack, but police have found many of the witnesses tight-lipped in the South side community where violence has been prevalent. Police have charged three suspects with murder.

While information from the Richmond Police Department in the coming weeks may reveal more about the bystanders and attackers, crime experts say one thing is clear: Third parties can affect the outcome of a crime. Witnesses have the power to deter violence -- or stop a crime from going on, experts say.

Bystanders could have prevented the gang rape from lasting more than two hours, if they had reported the crime to authorities sooner.

The victim was found under a bench, semi-conscious.

"This just gets worse and worse the more you dig into it," Lt. Mark Gagan of the Richmond Police Department. "It was like a horror movie. I can't believe not one person felt compelled to help her."
The Responsibility to Protect (R2P)

Why was the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) Developed?

From Genocide Intervention Network

During the 1990s, millions of lives were lost due to genocidal violence in Rwanda [1] and Bosnia [1]. The international community could not agree on the appropriate response to these mass atrocities. When it did respond, its efforts were often too little and/or too late.

The main source of controversy is the apparent contradiction between sovereignty and humanitarian intervention. Sovereignty is one of the guiding principles of international relations: externally, states are equal despite of size and wealth; internally, they have the authority to make decisions with regard to the people and resources within their territory.

In this sense, humanitarian interventions - occasions in which the international community forcefully intervenes in a state to protect their population - seem to contradict the principle of sovereignty. However, UN Secretary-General Koffi Annan posed the all-important question:

"if humanitarian intervention is, indeed, an unacceptable assault on sovereignty, how should we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica - to gross and systematic violations of human rights that affect every precept of our common humanity?"

The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, sponsored by the Canadian government, decided to take on Annan's plea. The result was the R2P doctrine, which aims to bridge the gap between the principle of state sovereignty and the need for humanitarian intervention to protect people at risk.

How the United States has incorporated R2P

The United States has begun to incorporate the Responsibility to Protect doctrine within their resolutions. Paragraphs 138 and 139 of the United Nation's 2005 World Summit Outcome [2] narrowed the Responsibility to Protect doctrine to mean the following:

Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. This responsibility entails the prevention of such
crimes, including their incitement, through appropriate and necessary means. We accept this responsibility and will act in accordance with it... (¶ 138).

Regarding the current genocide in Darfur, the United Nations passed Resolution 1769 on July 31, 2007, authorizing the deployment of an UN-African Union hybrid force, which said:

While Resolution 1769 maintains the sovereignty of the Government of Sudan, it also endorses Resolution 1674 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which reaffirms the provisions of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document regarding the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

**The basic principles of the "Responsibility to Protect"

The R2P doctrine is based on 2 basic principles:

1. State sovereignty implies responsibility, and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself.

Where a population is suffering serious harm, as a result of internal war, insurgency, repression or state failure, and the state in question is unwilling or unable to halt or avert it, the principle of non-intervention yields to the international responsibility to protect.

Sovereignty, thus, implies the responsibility to not only to respect other states' sovereignty, but also a responsibility to protect a country's population. Conversely, the international community does not only have the right to intervene when a country is unable or unwilling to protect its people, but also a responsibility to do so.

Prevention is the single most important dimension of the responsibility to protect. If prevention fails, however, the international community has the responsibility to employ whatever measures may be necessary to protect lives. If military intervention is needed, individual states and the international community have the responsibility to assist with the reconstruction efforts in order to ensure that violence does not erupt again.

**For more information about the Responsibility to Protect, visit the following sites.**

- The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty [3]
- Responsibility to Protect: Engaging Civil Society [5]
- View a PowerPoint presentation on R2P [6]
- Core Documents on R2P [7]
- More Reading on R2P [8]
- R2P Coalition [9]
- Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect [10]
**Indifference**

*Chapter Study Questions*

1. What does Elie Wiesel mean by “indifference”?
2. What is the bystander effect?
3. Why do you think no one responded to the sexual assault of the 15 year old California girl?
4. If you had been there, would you have gotten involved? Why? If yes, what would have been the risks?
5. Was this incident different from the one involving Kitty Genovese?
6. Should being a bystander be a crime itself? Why or why not?
7. Give an example in your own life when you had to make a decision to get involved or not. What did you decide? Why? How would you handle it the next time?
8. What are the arguments for the Responsibility to Protect Doctrine?
9. What are the arguments against this doctrine?
10. What are the obstacles to its effective implementation?
11. Having identified the situation in Darfur as genocide, what is the responsibility of the US to the people of Darfur? Is this an example of a situation where nations have a responsibility to protect?
12. What responsibility do we each have to one another?
VII. Hope

“Unless we are ready to be swallowed by despair and death, and I refuse that option...then I believe hope exists...only another...human face can turn despair into hope. That face is yours.”

-- Elie Wiesel

Image Courtesy of Public Radio International

A. Call to Action..............................................103
B. Fundraising & Awareness..............................106
C. Volunteering & Organizations.........................107
D. Writing to Politicians...................................108

“You know we all have things we need to do and I think it’s easy to say ‘I’d like to get involved, but I don’t have time right now and I'll do it later’ and I really would like to get the word out to other people that you do have time to save human lives.”

-- Maggie Love
A Call to Action

The following is a perspective from Gabby Reed, a 2007 Echo Footsteps Ambassador, following her journey in the footsteps of Elie Wiesel. It serves as both as a call to action for community members on behalf of the Footsteps Ambassadors.

In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel
By: Gabby Reed
Published by Charlotte Viewpoint
January 2008

Growing up, my Jewish father and Catholic mother never lost the chance to impress upon me and my siblings the importance of tolerance, and of speaking up in situations where we witnessed discrimination or injustice. When I first heard about the Holocaust, I was horrified, and that feeling only increased every time I heard the emotion in my parents’ voices as they spoke of the six million Jewish deaths. But even for a self described compassionate and sensitive teenager, it took traveling over the Atlantic Ocean to Europe for me to finally understand what it means to leave six million stories untold.

Over Thanksgiving break of 2006, I rushed to complete my application and essay for the program “In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel,” sponsored by The Echo Foundation of Charlotte. Two months and one interview later, I received a letter saying that I had been chosen as one of twelve student ambassadors to participate in this extraordinary program.

I was overwhelmed. The prospect of meeting Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, author of Night and countless other works, and a survivor of the concentration camps, was daunting. Then there was my excitement at the fact that I would be embarking on a twelve-day journey through Europe to see places that were crucial in Wiesel’s life and in the story of the Holocaust.

In March, I met Elie Wiesel in Charlotte. I shook hands with him, and with the eleven other ambassadors, I asked him questions and listened to his answers. His voice resonated as he responded, each time saying something so poignant and profound that it was impossible not to pay attention with every fiber. But we had only begun our journey.

Less than three months later, in mid-July, we took off from Charlotte-Douglas International Airport. Sitting on the plane that day, I tried to imagine what I would feel on this journey. I knew what I, in all my naïveté, wanted: to see the world through the eyes of Wiesel, to feel his pain and to cry his tears. Perhaps I thought that if I were to suffer as he had, I could take away all of that grief from him and from all of the victims. At the same time, I was grounded by reality: How could I even hope to comprehend the enormity of such a tragedy?

We arrived in Europe with a carefully devised itinerary. We would visit Sighet, Romania, where Wiesel was born; Krakow, our gateway for a bus ride to Auschwitz-Birkenau; Paris, where Wiesel spent time after World War II; and finally Berlin, to see the synagogues and memorials that represent the survival and the revival of the Jewish faith. I was prepared to cry at Auschwitz, and I had my journal and pen ready to record my emotions. But when those feelings actually hit me, they were like merciless waves, crashing down when I least expected it.
The first time it happened – the first time I was hit by the power that is emotion, pure and unanticipated – I was sitting on a bench in the garden of Wiesel’s childhood home. We had finished touring his house, and we paused to reflect and write in our journals. Sitting amidst the serenity of this garden, separated from the car engines and city voices by a wall enclosing the area, I realized what Wiesel had lost.

In one room, near the window, there was a large radio set atop a smaller table. Our tour guide told us that, unlike some other pieces of furniture in the house, both of these items were the exact same ones that had been in Elie Wiesel's home so many years ago. Standing in this room, I could see Wiesel and his family gathered around the radio. I could see all six of them -- Wiesel, his parents, and his three sisters -- with remarkable clarity. They were huddled close together, anxiously awaiting news about events abroad and even within Sighet. And with every piece of information that they could hear through the static, I saw them alternately rejoicing and sighing with equal passion.

I define myself in large part by my family, by my friends, by my community – their beliefs and their guidance, their encouragement and their reproaches. But for Wiesel, none of this was allowed to exist after Sighet. Life itself did not exist beyond the subjection enforced by uniformed men, and the number that was a feeble attempt at replacing a name.

Only a few days later, we visited Auschwitz-Birkenau, which triggered emotions I had not known before. Even now, the camps seem to mock us, for there is no way to express the emotion of such a place through words. Standing on the railroad tracks which led so many to their deaths, staring at the rows of barracks, I could not comprehend my own feelings. My only choice was to walk, to put one foot in front of the other, until I was far enough away from everyone that I could finally cry uncontrollably, for the lives that were lost and the lives that were ruined, for those who died as well as those who had to face the fact that they lived.

But after I had experienced so much sadness, I was able to rejoice also. There was an attempt to extinguish the Jews, and so many others as well. It was a massive failure. The Jewish faith, as much now as ever, possesses richness and intrigue and strength. The Jewish people today embody spirit and life. And while nothing will ever bear sufficient witness to this tragedy, countless memorials and memoirs recall what has happened.

On my journey, I learned one lesson that surpasses all else. It was a simple lesson, one Wiesel has preached over and over again, yet one I had to experience to truly learn: “We must remember.” Memory is, after all, the first step in avoiding the cyclical nature of history. Only our collective memory of the past has the potential to ensure that no such crime against humanity can ever be committed again.

Memory, however, is only the beginning of the process. Memory combined with apathy or a sense of complacency is nothing, or worse. But memory with action is powerful. As people, we are condemned if we know the horrors brought about by our collective indifference and yet continue in our passivity. After learning about the events caused by our failure to act, it is only right that we should seize the opportunity to spread this awareness to others.

Even as a high school student, I can teach. I can write, I can speak, I can listen, and I can offer to help even when it is inconvenient for me. I can show my own commitment to preventing and combating injustice through both what I do and what I avoid doing, what I say and the words that I leave unspoken. And yet, even with so many ways to bring about the change that I envision, it is a difficult and daunting task.
My rational side tells me that it is impossible for me to do anything of note. In my mind, an older, worldlier version of myself stands next to me, beating in the fact that I am only one person. I don’t have the ability to make a difference. Perhaps I don’t even have the right.

But then, the five-year-old me, a radiant and optimistic girl, fantasies of rainbows and bluebirds in her mind, rises up on my other side. Untainted by the evil of injustice and suffering, she spins around in circles, reminding me of a different vision of the world.

And while change might start with one person, it never ends with one. Rather, change, and the desire and will to cause it, can become inevitable. I know, because through my experiences with The Echo Foundation, I have been imbued with an undying and almost compulsive aspiration to fight injustice. For now, I do not expect to see the results of my actions, catalogued and concrete. Instead, all I want is to share what I have seen and cause a few others to feel what I feel.

I want to keep alive that little girl in me – who believes in a better world and the power of one person to make a difference.
Fundraising & Awareness

Passionate about a good cause but can't get started? There are a plethora of online resources to guide you through the fundraising process and help you accomplish your objectives, including the following:

1. Fundraising Ideas & Products Center
Looking for some unconventional ideas? Visit the website below for tips and suggestions about how to secure donations:
   
   http://www.fundraising-ideas.org/DIY/index.html

2. Fundraiser Insight
This website includes articles to help launch your fundraiser as well as a list of fun, innovative ideas:
   
   http://www.fundraiserinsight.org/ideas

3. USA Fundraising
For insightful articles on fundraising and applying for grants, check out this site:
   
   http://www.usafundraising.com

4. Non-Profit Fundraising Ideas
Working with a larger organization? This website details successful strategies employed by nonprofits to raise funds quickly:
   

5. Top Ten Fundraising Ideas
This website lists 10 simple fundraising ideas for kids, teenagers, and families, guaranteed to help out your cause:
   
   http://school.familyeducation.com/school-fundraising/38482.html

Education & Awareness

The most important part of fundraising is becoming educated about the issues you pursue. For more information about topics in this curriculum guide, please read the “Reference Materials” section for additional listings of organizations, websites, books, and films aimed to generate awareness and understanding.

Getting Started

Not sure where to begin? Read on for listings of local and global volunteer opportunities.
Volunteering & Organizations

Every person has the potential to have a positive impact on the world today; all it takes is a little passion to spark inspiration, a little initiative to rise above potential, and a little determination to achieve action. Get involved with your school, your community, your government, and your world.

Health Clinics and Hospitals
Charlotte Community Health Clinic
www.mycchc.org
Community Free Health Clinic
www.mycchc.com
Carolina Medical Center Hospitals
www.carolinasmcomedicalcenter.org
Presbyterian Hospital
www.presbyterian.org

Awards
Coca-Cola Scholars Foundation
www.coca-colascholars.org
President’s Volunteer Service Awards
www.presidentialvolunteerserviceawards.gov
Prudential Spirit of the Community Service Award
www.prudential.com/spirit
Young Heroes of Hope Award
www.echofoundation.org

Worldwide Volunteer Action
Amnesty International
www.amnesty.org
AmeriCorps
www.americorps.gov
Habitat for Humanity International
www.habitat.org
Peace Corps
www.peacecorps.gov

Internships
Bank of America Student Leader
www.bankofamerica.com/neistudentleaders
The Echo Foundation
www.echofoundation.org
PIH Institute for Health and Social Justice Summer Internship Program
www.pih.org/youcando/internships.html
United States Senate Youth Program
www.hearstfdn.org/ussyp

Local Action
The Echo Foundation
www.echofoundation.org
Amnesty International what can you do
www.amnestyusa.org
Metrolina AIDS Project
www.metrolinaaidsproject.org
Habitat for Humanity
www.habitatcharlotte.org
Red Cross
www.redcrosshelps.org
Salvation Army
www.salvationarmyusa.org

Volunteer Networks
Do Something
www.dosomething.org
Global Volunteer Network
www.volunteer.org.nz
Network for Good
www.networkforgood.org
Idealist
www.idealista.org
VolunteerMatch
www.volunteermatch.org
Youth Service America
www.ysa.org

Legislative Action in Progress
Open Congress
www.opencongress.org
Politicians on the Issues
www.ontheissues.org
(See next page, “Writing to Politicians”)
Writing to Politicians

Five Tips on Constructing a Letter/Email to Your Politician
1. Introduce who you are.
2. Keep your letter focused on one specific topic.
3. Keep your letter factual (not emotional) and concise (approximately one page).
4. Request the action you would like the politician to take.
5. Maintain a professional and respectful tone in your letter.

Sample Letter

[Date]

[Recipient’s title and name]
Senator and Representative Title is “The Honorable”
[Recipient’s Address]

Dear [Recipient’s title and last name]*,
*i.e. Senator (last name), Representative (last name), Governor (last name), or Mr. President (no last name).

... ...

Sincerely,
[Sender’s Name]
[Sender’s address/contact Information]

7/12/08

The Honorable Sue Myrick
United States House of Representatives
6525 Morrison Boulevard, Suite 402
Charlotte, North Carolina 28211

Dear Representative Myrick,

...
...

Sincerely,
Joe Smith
0123 Tolley Drive
Charlotte, NC 28204

Find a Politician
Congressional Directory
www.congress.org

The President
President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

North Carolina Senators
The Honorable Richard Burr
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

North Carolina Governor
Governor Bev Perdue
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

The Honorable Kay Hagan
United States Senate
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510
VIII. Reference Materials

“Education without compassion is a dangerous tool.”

-- Elie Wiesel

“I kind of hope just to learn more about Elie Wiesel, about how he really made a difference, and apply it to my own life so I can make a difference as well.”

-- Kristine Sowers

A. Bibliography............................................. 111
B. Online Lesson Plans.................................... 116
C. Academic References................................. 117
D. Relevant Organizations and Websites............. 118
Bibliography

Related Resources

Historical References

- Abstract: This work examines the origins of anti-Semitism and Nazism as well as the history of Jewish-German relationships. One of the most readable general histories for high school students.

- Abstract: This work includes translated extracts from Hitler's major speeches.

- Abstract: This comprehensive work, written by the project director of USHMM, tells the story of the Holocaust with words and photographs. It can be used in conjunction with a museum visit or on its own.

- Abstract: Details and preparation for the Nuremberg Trials are discussed.

- Abstract: The stories of survivors of the death camps are analyzed in an attempt to understand what these people endured and how they survived.

- Abstract: This Holocaust survivor uncovers the details of "normal" life under Hitler.

- Abstract: This classic volume contains the first documented evidence of Christian aid to the Jews during the Holocaust. Friedman has collected eyewitness accounts, personal letters, and diaries as source material. He also conducted interviews across Europe to discover and record stories of rescue.

- Abstract: Gilbert combines historical narrative with personal testimonies. An invaluable tool for providing supplementary material on any aspect of the Holocaust.

- Abstract: Hilberg includes rescuers and Jewish resisters, but his main focus is on the destruction of European Jewry and those who are responsible for it.


- Abstract: This work takes a critical look at the American response to the events that were unfolding in Europe before and during the Holocaust.


- Abstract: This work is a collection of Jewish survivor accounts discussing life before, during, and after the Holocaust.


- Abstract: Between 1935 and 1938 the celebrated photographer Roman Vishniac explored the cities and villages of Eastern Europe, capturing life in the Jewish *shtetlekh* of Poland, Romania, Russia, and Hungary.


- Abstract: Roman Vishniac's poignant and beautiful images of Jewish life before the war form an unforgettable document of a lost civilization, depicting eight different communities, each of which is described in a short text enhanced by passages from Vishniac's diaries.


- Abstract: David Welch explores Nazi propaganda and the various public reactions to it, and arrives at certain conclusions about the effectiveness, and limitations, of Hitler's manipulation of the masses.


- Abstract: Material is grouped into three broad time periods. Major emphasis is placed on Hitler’s “Final Solution.” Suitable for advanced readers.

**Memoirs**


- Abstract: Alicia was thirteen when she escaped alone from a firing squad and, while hiding from Nazis and collaborators, began saving the lives of strangers. She states, "I believe that the book will teach young people what enormous reserves of strength they possess within themselves."


- Abstract: A touching diary of five teenage victims of the Holocaust.


- Abstract: Miep Gies, along with her husband, were among those who helped the Frank family while they were in hiding. Her story is an important supplement to Anne Frank's diary as it adds historical background as well as an outside perspective to Anne's story. Gies enables the reader to understand what was happening both inside and outside the Annex.


- Abstract: This rabbi's memoir sheds light on the relatively unknown ghetto Lvov. Kahane also investigates a still disputed Holocaust theme: the attitudes of Ukrainians towards European Jews.

Abstract: A true story that tells about Gerda's experience as one of only 120 women who survived a three-hundred-mile march from a labor camp in western Germany to Czechoslovakia.


Abstract: A survivor of Auschwitz recounts the ordeal of holding her family together after her mother is killed in the camp.


Abstract: This memoir of a young Italian chemist describes life inside Auschwitz in a direct yet sophisticated manner.


Abstract: A young smuggler from the Warsaw ghetto maintains contact between the ghetto and the Aryan side of the city.


Abstract: This book begins just before the Nazi invasion of Poland and continues through life in the Lodz ghetto and finally, at Auschwitz.


Abstract: In this award-winning book, Aranka Siegal tells the story of her family and her life in Hungary as a child. In 1944 she and her family were taken to Auschwitz.


Abstract: A powerful history about the Treblinka extermination camp and a revolt by the prisoners there.


Abstract: Wiesel, one of the most eloquent writers of the Holocaust, is known best for this novel. A compelling narrative, *Night* describes Wiesel's own experiences in Auschwitz.


Abstract: A young girl in Poland during the Holocaust secures a job working in the household of an SS officer and his wife, using her false papers.

**Videos**

*Anne Frank in Maine*

A junior high school class in Maine performs *The Diary of Anne Frank* and studies the Holocaust. 28 minutes. Anti-Defamation League of B’nai Brith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

*The Camera of My Family*

The story of one upper-middle-class German Jewish family before and during Nazi years. 20 minutes. Anti-Defamation League.

*The Holocaust: A Teenager’s Experience*

The story of a 12-year-old boy’s harrowing experience in Nazi death camps, some graphic footage. 30 minutes. United Learning, 6633 West Howard Street, Niles, IL 60648.

*Islam: Empire of Faith*
- The epic PBS documentary that charts the history of Islam from its beginnings in Mecca and Medina in the seventh century to the glory of the Ottoman Empire 1,000 years later. 180 minutes. PBS, 2100 Crystal Drive Arlington, VA 22202.

The Klan: A Legacy of Hate in America
- Documentary narrated by actor James Whitmore, devoted mostly to KKK activities over last 30 years, racist content. 30 minutes. Films, Inc., 5547 North Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640.

More Than Broken Glass: Memories of Kristallnacht
- News footage, photographs, and interviews with witnesses tell story of Kristallnacht. 31 minutes. Ergo Media, P.O. Box 2037, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

Paper Clips
- Struggling to grasp the concept of six-million Holocaust victims, students at Whitwell Middle School in rural Tennessee decide to collect six-million paper clips to better understand the extent of this crime against humanity. 82 minutes.

Partisans of Vilna
- An enormously riveting and inspirational tale of WWII and the Holocaust, Partisans of Vilna chronicles the amazing endeavors of the Jewish resistance fighters. 130 minutes.

Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness
- A historical documentary that tells the remarkable story of Chiune Sugihara and the Jewish refugees that he helped to save. 90 minutes. WGBH and PBS.

Through Our Eyes
- True stories of children caught up in Holocaust. 27 minutes. IBT Publishing, Inc., 3747 West Granville, Chicago, IL 60659.

To Know Where They Are
- A father and daughter travel to Poland to search for traces of lost ancestors. 28 minutes. Anti-Defamation League.

Tomorrow Came Much Later
- High school students travel with Holocaust survivor to Nazi death camps. 58 minutes. Coronet Film and Video, 420 Academy Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062.

Weapons of the Spirit, classroom version

Parts of video references from Elie Wiesel: Voice From the Holocaust
Copyright © 1994 by Michael A. Schuman

Fiction

- Abstract: Stories of daily life in Auschwitz describe the relations among the inmates, their various duties within the camp, and the hardships they endured.

- Abstract: This collection of short stories describes people that are placed in a variety of normal human situations that have been distorted by war.

The Echo Foundation 114 In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel
- Abstract: This fiction describes the creation of the Warsaw Ghetto, the building of the "Wall" around it, and the uprising and eventual destruction of the ghetto.

- Abstract: Thomas Keneally's famous novel tells the story of a remarkable man, Oskar Schindler, who saved the lives of thousands of Jews by harborimg them in his factory during the Holocaust.

- Abstract: A young boy abandoned by his parents in Eastern Europe during World War II encounters terror and brutality. For mature readers only.

- Abstract: This is the dramatic version of Fania Fenelon's story of her days as a musician at Auschwitz.


- Abstract: A young Hungarian Jew escapes to the forest during the Nazi occupation, and assumes various roles in order to stay alive. He later joins a partisan group to fight against the Nazis.

**Art and Poetry**

- Abstract: More than 350 works of art created by people who lived in ghettos, concentration camps and in hiding are presented, along with essays and biographical information. This artwork is an affirmation of the durability and insistence of the creative human spirit.

- Abstract: Presented in the original Polish as well as in English, this volume also includes nearly 60 black-and-white drawings by the author, who is still an artist today.

- Abstract: This volume contains the music and words to 25 songs. Introductions include information about each composer as well as the setting where each song was written.

- Abstract: The author, a winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1966, was a German Jew who escaped to Sweden in 1940.

- Abstract: These poems describe the Jewish flight from Nazi terror and include memorials to the six million Jewish people who perished in the Holocaust.

From the Florida Center for Instructional Technology
Online Lesson Plans

I. Holocaust Graffiti: Writing for Understanding
   An Educator’s Reference Desk Lesson Plan

   DESCRIPTION:
   Students examine a Holocaust related poem/graffiti and then write their own Holocaust graffiti.

   LESSON PLAN:
   http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/World_History/Holocaust/HOL0202.html

II. Human Needs Analysis: An Introductory Activity to the Holocaust
   An Educator’s Reference Desk Lesson Plan

   DESCRIPTION:
   This lesson leads to a greater understanding of the dehumanization that took place during the Holocaust and can be used as introductory lesson in an English classroom or Social Studies classroom. Students generally understand the physical effects that the Holocaust had on people, but this lesson helps them understand the emotional and psychological effects that occurred through the dehumanization of individuals.

   Students discuss what an individual needs in order to exist and in order to exist happily, and they analyze the different types of human needs - physical, emotional, intellectual, etc.. Students discuss the possible impact of having these basic needs unfulfilled.

   LESSON PLAN:
   http://www.eduref.org/cgi-bin/printlessons.cgi/Virtual/Lessons/Social_Studies/World_History/Holocaust/HOL0200.html

III. Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular – Teaching Guide
   From PBS, Public Broadcasting Corporation

   DESCRIPTION:
   A teacher’s guide to be used after students read Night by Elie Wiesel and view the film “Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular.” Includes three activities and many additional resources:
   1) Listening
   2) Bearing Witness and Faith
   3) Making a Difference

   LESSON PLAN:
   http://www.pbs.org/eliewiesel/teaching/activity1.html

IV. List of Free Teaching Guides for Night:

   A list of free teaching guides for Night available from Holtzbrinck Publishers:

   http://media.us.macmillan.com/teacherguides/9780374500016TG.pdf

The Echo Foundation 116 In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel
Academic References

Boston University
Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies
The Boston University Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies coordinates and supports all academic programs relating to Jewish Studies at the University. The services and programs of the Center are available to Judaic Studies concentrators in the Department of Religion and all others interested in the subject area.

The Center hosts special events of high quality and interest in order to further the integration of Judaic Studies into the life of the University and the community. These include programs in films, theater, and music, all of which contribute to the cultural life of the University.

The Universal Academy of Cultures (Académie Universelle des Cultures)
Set up in Paris in 1992 by Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, The Universal Academy of Cultures is placed under the patronage of the President of the French Republic and carries out its activities with the support of the Prime Minister, and the Ministries of Culture, Education and Foreign Affairs. It is composed of worldwide personalities from the fields of literature, science and the arts.

University of Arizona
Center for Middle Eastern Studies
The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at the University of Arizona (UA) is a Title VI National Resource Center supported by the U.S. Department of Education. CMES was created in 1975 with federal and University support and has grown to include 117 members, 89 of whom are faculty. The Center supports and promotes Middle East language and Middle East studies-related teaching and research throughout the University, and fosters understanding of the Middle East through an extensive program of outreach to schools and the wider community.

University of Michigan
Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies
The Middle East and North Africa together constitute a highly diverse cultural area within a world now undergoing rapid and large-scale change, particularly in the aftermath of September 11. In this context, the mission of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS) is to enhance awareness of the peoples, cultures, and languages in this vitally important region of the world.

This mission is accomplished by explaining and interpreting the region in all of its historical and contemporary aspects to students at the University of Michigan, Michigan's schoolchildren and community members, and scholars seeking specialized knowledge of a region stretching from the western coast of Morocco to the eastern border of Afghanistan, with cultural influences extending into the northern Caucasus and Islamic Central Asia. In a globally interconnected world, it is equally important to explore the transregional and transnational forces at work in the Middle East, given the region's increasing central role in international affairs.

The University of Paris Sorbonne—Paris IV (Université Paris Sorbonne—Paris IV)
University Institute of Jewish Studies Elie Wiesel (Institut Universitaire d’Études Juives)
(Please see corresponding article in curriculum guide.)
The Echo Foundation

In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel

Relevant Organizations and Websites

Academy of Achievement
For more than 40 years, this unique non-profit entity has sparked the imagination of students across America and around the globe by bringing them into direct personal contact with the greatest thinkers and achievers of the age.
www.achievement.org

Amnesty International
Amnesty International undertakes research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.
www.AmnestyUSA.org

Council on Foreign Relations
The Council on Foreign Relations is an independent, national membership organization and a nonpartisan center for scholars dedicated to producing and disseminating ideas so that individual and corporate members, as well as policymakers, journalists, students, and interested citizens in the United States and other countries, can better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments.
www.CFR.org

The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity
Elie Wiesel and his wife, Marion, established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity soon after he was awarded the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize. The Foundation's mission, rooted in the memory of the Holocaust, is to combat indifference, intolerance and injustice through international dialogue and youth-focused programs that promote acceptance, understanding and equality.
www.ElieWieselFoundation.org

The Holocaust Chronicle
The Holocaust Chronicle website transcribes the companion book of the same title, a massive, not-for-profit volume conceived and published by Chicago-based Publications International, Ltd. *The Holocaust Chronicle* is a remembrance designed to be held in one’s hands. It is a portable archive that demands to be looked at and read.
www.holocaustchronicle.org

Human Rights Watch
Human Rights Watch is an independent, nongovernmental organization, supported by contributions from private individuals and foundations worldwide. We stand with victims and activists to prevent discrimination, to uphold political freedom, to protect people from inhumane conduct in wartime, and to bring offenders to justice.
www.HRW.org

International Crisis Group
The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization, with nearly 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.
www.CrisisGroup.org
Jewish Virtual Library
The Jewish Virtual Library is the most comprehensive online Jewish encyclopedia in the world, covering everything from anti-Semitism to Zionism. So far, more than 10,000 articles and 5,000 photographs and maps have been integrated into the site.
www.JewishVirtualLibrary.org

Night
The publisher’s (Hill and Wang) book website for Night by Elie Wiesel offers various resources such as a Teacher’s Guide (included in this curriculum guide), Reader’s Guide, Essay Writing Tips, background information about the novel and its author, and related links to other websites.
http://us.macmillan.com/night-1#guides

The Nobel Foundation
A private institution established in 1900 based on the will of Alfred Nobel. The Foundation manages the assets made available through the will for the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Peace.
www.NobelPrize.org

Oeuvre Secours aux Enfants
OSE is a worldwide Jewish organization for children’s welfare and healthcare. During World War II, the OSE established a rescue network for children in Nazi-occupied France.
www.ose-france.org/

The Petra Conference of Nobel Laureates
The Petra Conference is yearly conference of Nobel Laureates established in 2005 designed to address pressing world issues. The theme of the Fourth Petra Conference, held June 17-19, 2008, was “Reaching for New Economic, Scientific and Educational Horizons.”
http://www.petranobel.org/

The Save Darfur Coalition
The Save Darfur Coalition is an alliance of over 100 faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations. Our mission is to raise public awareness and to mobilize an effective unified response to the atrocities that threaten the lives of two million people in the Darfur region.
www.SaveDarfur.org

The Shoah Memorial
The Memorial is a resource center, the first and foremost collection of archives on the Shoah in Europe, but it is also a "museum of vigilance," designed to learn, understand and experience, because now and forever it will always be necessary to construct "a rampart against oblivion, against a rekindling of hatred and contempt for man," to quote Eric de Rothschild, President of the Memorial.
www.memorialdelashoah.org

United Nations
The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that aims at facilitating cooperation in international law, international security, economic development, and social equity.
www.UN.org

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

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

What has the world learned from tragedies of the past? How can we use the lessons of history to create a better world today? Create a compelling editorial cartoon for The Charlotte Observer sharing your views and convincing others that lessons from the past are a tool for creating a more just world today.

WHAT: Presented by The Echo Foundation, In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel offers art contests in two categories: ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY. Keeping in mind the film, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ELIE WIESEL, students are invited to respond to the above challenge in either medium.

WHO: The contest is open to all Charlotte area high school students, grades 9 – 12.

WHEN: Entry forms and submissions must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation at 1125 East Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday, March 1, 2010.

HOW: Entry forms may be downloaded at http://www.echofoundation.org, The Echo Foundation website, or obtained at The Echo Foundation office. No student name should appear on the front of a submission and an entry form must accompany each entry.

PURCHASE AWARDS AND CATEGORIES: First ($100), second ($75) and third ($50) prizes will be given in each of the two categories: art and photography. All other art and photography entries can be reclaimed following the contest’s judging.

JUDGING AND RULES: Educators and professionals in the corresponding fields will serve on the judging panel. The panels reserve the right to not award a cash prize in a category if the submissions do not meet the qualifications for entry. 2-D original artwork and photography may not exceed 36” in height or width.

For more information contact: The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844, or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.
In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel

ART & PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST:
OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

******

This completed and signed form must accompany each entry. Copies of this form are permissible. Two-dimensional Original Works of Art no larger than 36” x 36” will be accepted.

Please Print or Type:

Full Name: ______________________________________________     Male   Female

Address: __________________________________________________

City: __________________________ State: __________ Zip: ________________

Phone: ________________ Email: ___________________ School: ______________________

Current Class Status:     □ Freshman     □ Sophomore     □ Junior     □ Senior

Title of entry and brief description:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

I give permission for my student’s art entry to be used in future publications and/or exhibits.

_________________________________                       _____________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature    Date

Entry Form and submission must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation, 1125 E. Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday, March 1, 2010.

For more information contact:  The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844 or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.

The Echo Foundation

In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel
In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel

presented by

The Echo Foundation

GUIDELINES

ESSAY & POETRY CONTEST

What has the world learned from tragedies of the past? How can we use the lessons of history to create a better world today? Write a compelling editorial column for The Charlotte Observer sharing your views and convincing others that lessons from the past are a tool for creating a more just world today. Be specific and give examples.

WHAT: Presented by The Echo Foundation, In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel offers writing contests in two categories: ESSAY AND POETRY. Keeping in mind the film, IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ELIE WIESEL, students are invited to respond to the above challenge in either medium.

WHO: The contest is open to all Charlotte area high school students, grades 9 – 12.

WHEN: Entry forms and submissions must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation at 1125 East Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday March 1, 2010.

HOW: Entry forms may be downloaded at http://www.echofoundation.org, The Echo Foundation website, or obtained at The Echo Foundation office. No student name should appear on the front of a submission and an entry form must accompany each entry.

PURCHASE AWARDS AND CATEGORIES: First ($100), second ($75) and third ($50) prizes will be given in both categories.

JUDGING AND RULES: Educators and professionals in the corresponding fields will serve on the judging panel. The panels reserve the right to not award a cash prize in a category if the submissions do not meet the qualifications for entry. All written entries must be typed (double-spaced). Word limit for essays is 1,500; poetry has no limit on length.

For more information contact: The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844, or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.
In the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel

presented by

The Echo Foundation

ESSAY & POETRY CONTEST:
OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

*******

This completed and signed form must accompany each entry. Copies of this form are permissible. Essays may be no more than 1,500 words, must be printed in size 12 font and double-spaced.

Please Print or Type:

Full Name: ______________________________________________ □ Male □ Female

Address: ________________________________________________________

City: __________________ State: _______ Zip: _______________________

Phone: ______________ Email: __________________ School: _____________

Current Class Status: □ Freshman □ Sophomore □ Junior □ Senior

Title of entry and brief description:

_______________________________________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

I give permission for my student’s essay / poetry entry to be used in future publications and/or exhibits.

__________________________________                        _____________________________

Parent/Guardian Signature                  Date

Entry Form and submission must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation, 1125 E. Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday, March 1, 2010.

For more information contact:
The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844 or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

AN INTRODUCTION

The Echo Foundation promotes justice and inspires hope through education, creative acts of service, and the development of leadership for a more humane world.

Through comprehensive educational programs, The Echo Foundation equips individuals with moral and intellectual tools necessary to create positive change in their local and global communities. Echo initiatives use the power of example to educate about critical issues of human rights and social justice. Experiential learning opportunities, programs using the arts in service to humankind, and facilitated dialogue in the pursuit of solutions are hallmarks of the organization.

The foundation was created in 1997 by Stephanie Ansaldo, with Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel serving as Honorary Chair, following Wiesel’s visit to Charlotte that year. As the community-wide project Against Indifference concluded, Wiesel challenged the community to act on its convictions of human dignity, justice, and moral courage. He also offered his assistance in developing programs to address critical issues facing humanity.

Today Echo delivers programming through five core initiatives. The foundation has hosted 19 humanitarians, Nobel Laureates and world leaders, served over 600,000 students, and forged partnerships worldwide. For more information about The Echo Foundation, visit www.echofoundation.org.
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

FIVE INITIATIVES

The Echo Foundation Mission: “To sponsor and facilitate those voices that speak of human dignity, justice and moral courage in a way that leads to positive action for humankind.” Echo promotes its mission through the implementation of Five Initiatives.

• **Voices Against Indifference:** Through bringing renowned humanitarians to Charlotte as a catalyst for education, and with diversity of race, class and culture as our primary focus, The Echo Foundation creates educational programs centered on the message of our annual guest. *Voices Against Indifference* builds bridges across racial divides by bringing students from all corners of Charlotte-Mecklenburg together to learn about the messages of our guests. In other words, thinking globally and acting locally – taking lessons learned around the world and seeking to apply the solutions locally. An extension to this initiative is Echo’s Annual Award Dinner at which the International Humanitarian is the keynote speaker and a local hero is chosen to receive the Echo Award Against Indifference.

• **Forum for Hope:** Believing that the tone and culture of an organization begins at the top, Echo invites 20 leaders from the Charlotte community to travel together for the purpose of exposure to individuals who have, from a humanitarian perspective, shaped the world in a positive way. Our inaugural journey was to Boston for a round table discussion with Echo Foundation Honorary Chair, Elie Wiesel. Participants met twice prior to traveling to build unity around the mission of the initiative and to establish goals and measures for success. A steering committee was formed to identify participants, ensuring representation from professional, educational, religious, medical and arts communities with an emphasis on race, ethnicity and gender diversity.

• **Living Together in the 21st Century:** *Living Together in the 21st Century* is an education outreach project for 2nd grade students originated by Nobel Peace Laureate Elie Wiesel with involvement by child activist Jonathan Kozol, and created by Charlotte-Mecklenburg teachers. LT is a broad based curriculum that focuses on living together in harmony and teaches problem solving strategies, conflict resolution and respect for others. The underlying mission of the project is to simultaneously begin to build compassion for people of all races, cultures and backgrounds, and to teach life skills in young children that will prepare them to live in our society non-violently. The curriculum is mandatory in all Charlotte-Mecklenburg elementary schools.

• **Footsteps Global Initiative:** Our belief is that travel and hands-on experiences have the capacity to transform students in a way that transcends classroom learning; only by “doing” can young people fully appreciate the challenges that face them as future leaders. This leadership initiative for regional high school students promotes awareness and global citizenship through international travel and service. Competitively selected Ambassadors of the initiative participate in yearlong programming that combines intensive study, volunteerism and travel to locations of great humanitarian interest.

• **Books Beyond Borders:** Encourages international understanding and action on behalf of others by helping Charlotte students furnish libraries for children around the world.
THE ECHO FOUNDATION

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