

NEWS

THE AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE

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6/21/45

Concise
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RELIEF TEAMS PREPARED TO ENTER CONCENTRATION CAMPS TO AID SURVIVING JEWS

J.D.C.-Organized Staffs Include Medical and Social Workers

Dr. Joseph Schwartz, European Director of J.D.C., Summarizes Observations
Of Eight-Month Tour of Liberated European Countries

Relief teams of medical and social workers organized by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and operating under permission granted by SHAEF, are scheduled to depart momentarily for now-liberated Nazi concentration camps in Germany to aid thousands of Jews once imprisoned in them. This was made known yesterday (Thursday, June 21st) by Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz, European director of the Committee, who has supervised its relief operations in Europe during the past five years, and who has returned to this country after an eight-month tour of the continent.

Dr. Schwartz said that as many as ten teams will soon be engaged in this program. He revealed that permission for J.D.C. representatives to go into the concentration camps was granted by SHAEF just before he left Paris. The teams will be attached to the Army and will work in close coordination with UNRRA. He said that the workers will put the former prisoners in touch with surviving relatives, afford them medical aid and help in the planning for their ultimate resettlement. They will also aid in the evacuation of children to those countries which have agreed to accept them for temporary asylum. Their immediate task is to select 300 children to be evacuated from Buchenwald to Switzerland.

The camps where the J.D.C. representatives will work initially include Buchenwald, Dachau, Belsen and Salzwedel.

Speaking before a press conference held at the New York headquarters of the J.D.C., 270 Madison Avenue, Dr. Schwartz said that 535 children who had "miraculously survived the horrors of Buchenwald," have been admitted to France where they are receiving "excellent care."

"About four-fifths of the children are staying in an OSE home at Ecoy," Dr. Schwartz said, "while the others are in Paris. The OSE is supported chiefly by the J.D.C.

"No one who has seen this group of 515 boys and 20 girls will ever forget the incredulity, joy and thankfulness which shone in their sunken-cheeked faces when they were freed and later fed, clothed and housed," Dr. Schwartz added.

Most of the children were born in Poland and Hungary. American troops freed 92 who were found in a sealed train bound for an extermination camp in Poland. Dr. Schwartz said that this group was the one referred to in recent newspaper articles reporting a dispute between the OSE and the French authorities as to who would assume responsibility for these children. The matter has been cleared up and the children are being aided by the OSE, a J.D.C.-supported Jewish children's health and welfare society.

"All the children over eight have worked in cement ammunition factories for 12 and 14 hours daily," Dr. Schwartz said. "Their daily rations consisted of one small piece of black bread and turnip soup.

"Practically all of the children are over-matured mentally, but their bodies are miserably retarded. One five-year-old boy, carried by the older children, looked like a child of two years."

Dr. Schwartz has returned at this time to work out various urgent problems which confront the Joint Distribution Committee in its task of immediate relief and long-range rehabilitation in behalf of the surviving Jews in Europe. His own survey of conditions in the liberated areas leads him to estimate the number

of surviving Jews in Europe to be close to 1,250,000. Since last October, Dr. Schwartz has visited France, England, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Switzerland, Greece and the Middle East, where he supervised and in some instances organized relief projects for destitute Jewish communities.

The Joint Distribution Committee, which for the past thirty years has been helping impoverished and needy Jews throughout the world, is moving at top speed to revive and rebuild the surviving Jewish communities who escaped the German fury. At present the Committee has a staff of 27 American representatives stationed throughout Europe carrying out its programs.

Dr. Schwartz said that the Jews in Europe have little or nothing. "Their synagogues, schools, even cemeteries, have been destroyed, and it is up to us to restore their spiritual, economic and cultural life," he added.

The Joint Distribution Committee is now affording aid in one form or another in every European country where Jews need help, he stated. This year, more than \$13,500,000, or over \$2,300,000 a month, has been appropriated to meet the urgent pleas for help coming from Europe's Jews. Since V-E Day, it was stated, emergency appeals and requests for funds have been pouring into the J.D.C. headquarters.

Roumania has become the center for J.D.C. operations in Hungary, Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia, Dr. Schwartz said. He estimated that there are now about 310,000 Jews in Roumania. Recent J.D.C. shipments to this area include over 30,000 pairs of shoes, 79 cases of clothing, about 5,000 sheepskins and 55 cases of medicine.

In Poland, Dr. Schwartz stated, the 40,000 Polish Jews who have returned from hiding in the hills and who were liberated from labor camps, are in dire need of food, bedding and medicines. Tuberculosis, particularly among the children, is creating desperate problems. Supplies are being sent from Teheran to Lublin at the rate of approximately fifty tons a week. The Joint Distribution Committee purchased recently for the Polish Jews 10,000 woolen blankets, 10,000 pairs of army boots, 7,500 men's blouses, 7,500 pairs of trousers, 120,000 lbs. of sugar and 50,000 lbs. of powdered milk.

In Holland, the Joint Distribution Committee has set aside \$70,000 for the purchase of badly needed clothing, the setting up of two children's homes and for the restoration of synagogues. Dr. Schwartz said that special efforts are being made in Holland on behalf of the orphans who had been hidden throughout the occupation in Christian homes and institutions.

The local Dutch committee has been authorized to distribute \$10,000 for immediate assistance to approximately 800 internees who have recently been liberated from the notorious Westerbork concentration camp.

With the aid of the military authorities, the Joint Distribution Committee has established feeding centers in various North Italian cities. \$50,000 per month has been granted for this purpose.

Nearly 2,000 Jews were enabled to enter Palestine this year, Dr. Schwartz said. The Joint Distribution Committee provided the full costs of transportation.

"I do not propose to talk in terms of 'an historic task' or 'challenge to American Jewry,'" Dr. Schwartz said. "There is a desperate job of saving human lives and rekindling human hopes that must be done in Europe and done now."

The J.D.C. receives its income from the campaign collections of the United Jewish Appeal for Refugees, Overseas Needs and Palestine.

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6/21/45

HQ US FORCES EUROPEAN THEATER

STAFF MESSAGE CONTROL

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14 Sept 45

DECLASSIFIED

DOD DIR. 5200.10, June 29, 1960

NE by WGL date 11/2/66

U R G E N T

TO : AGMAN PERSONAL FOR PRESIDENT TRUMAN
 FROM : US FORCES EUROPEAN THEATER MAIN, FROM EISENHOWER
 REF NO : S-23374 T00: 141715B



Dear Mr. PRESIDENT:

I am very much concerned by your letter of August 31st on the HARRISON Report, and I am today starting a personal tour of inspection of Jewish Displaced Persons installations. General officers of my staff have also been so engaged for several days. It is possible, as you say, that some of my subordinates in the field are not carrying out my policies, and any instances found will be promptly corrected.

However, on the brighter side of the picture, I have just received very good reports from our senior Rabbi who acts as liaison officer on Hebrew matters, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee which represents Jewish interests in the UNITED STATES Zone states that it has made no official complaints as it has recognized that all matters mentioned in HARRISON's Report are being remedied with the utmost speed consistent with the difficulties of the situation.

I will give you a detailed report after we complete our current inspections, but in the meantime you can be sure that in the UNITED STATES Zone in GERMANY no possible effort is being spared to give these people every consideration toward better living conditions, better morale and a visible goal.

SMS OUT 3772

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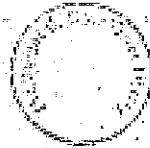
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ORIGINATOR : CHIEF OF STAFF

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AUTHENTICATION: THOMAS N. McGRILL,
LT. COLONEL.

AG RECORDS

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Survival in Hiding

Gain insight into the experiences of Jews in hiding during the Holocaust by reading entries from the diary of teenager Otto Wolf.

Many Jews went into hiding to avoid capture by the Nazis and their collaborators. Some concealed only their Jewish identity and continued to live in the open, using false identification papers. Others physically hid in attics, cellars, or other shelters. For most, hiding was a difficult decision that involved extraordinary risks. Many families, like Anne Frank's, attempted to hide together. But often children were sent into hiding first because more people were willing to take in a child than an adult.

Nearly all Jews who went into hiding relied on others to help them, and they often felt that they were totally dependent on their helpers—for food and water, for news from the outside world, and especially for a willingness to continue to keep their secret. Usually, those in hiding gave their helpers money to pay for food and other supplies and to reward the helpers for making such a dangerous commitment. Sometimes Jews were hidden by neighbors or former employees whom they knew, and sometimes they were helped by strangers, but the risks of hiding changed the nature of even the closest and most trusted relationships.

Otto Wolf was 15 years old when his family went into hiding in the forest of a small Moravian town called Tršice, in occupied Czechoslovakia. In the summer of 1942, the Wolf family was ordered to report to a nearby city for deportation, but they chose not to do so. With the help of a family friend named Slávek, who was in love with Otto's older sister Felicitas (known as Lici), they lived in shelters built in the woods near the town. Over the next three years, the family moved from various shelters in the forest to the homes of acquaintances, as each location became dangerous. Otto kept a diary throughout this period. ¹

September 19, 1942, Saturday, 13th week. We sleep until ten, and then pray. We have bread with jam for lunch. I and Lici go for water. We are depressed, wondering how things will go. Who will give us sanctuary? [. . .] We have cheese and bread for dinner. They go to the bushes at 8 P.M. and wait for Slávek until half past ten, but in vain. Slávek does not come. We don't know why, and hope that he will come tomorrow.

July 6, 1943, Tuesday, 55th week. We return to the forest at half past three. [. . .] Around five-thirty in the afternoon, we hear rustling. I climb a little higher up and see a person. He straightens up and sees me. When he recognizes me, he comes straight to us. It is Pluhař. He promises not to tell anyone, not even his wife. Then he leaves. We theorize extensively, and are really concerned that he went to turn us in. We wait to see what will happen next. The women are down below, and Dad and I go into the clearing. We hear more rustling around 8 P.M. and conclude that he is returning with a policeman. What a surprise! He comes with a loaf of bread and a little schmaltz [chicken fat]. He is assuming that we are hungry. What an outstanding deed! Dad gives him his black pants, and he is very happy. He says that he will return in the morning and bring milk and cigarettes. We are overjoyed and thank God that that's the way things turned out. At ten, we go cooking. There is bread as well as laundry soap there. We make caraway soup with bread. The sky is glowering.

In early 1945, the Wolfs moved to a hiding place in the home of Mařenka Zbořilová, who had been their maid before the war. Her husband was uncomfortable that they were there.

March 4, 1945, Sunday, 141st week. Mařenka brings us breakfast upstairs, and we eat. Mr. Zbořil is carrying on like a madman: he does not want us here, and so forth. He goes to church, and we venture downstairs. For lunch, we have noodle soup. Mr. Zbořil comes home at noon, raging. He looks like a

beast. We therefore think it wiser to retreat upstairs. Mařenka goes out to borrow a newspaper. When she returns, he rips the paper out of her hand and bellows that we had better be gone by morning. He even comes up to the attic to tell us that we must go, everyone in all the huts allegedly knows about us. [. . .] We can't even eat dinner. Tonight, I sleep with my parents. During the night, Mr. Zbořil was out in the yard three times, cursing like a sailor.

On April 18, 1945, Soviet prisoners of war who were helping the German army conducted a raid on the village where the Wolfs were hiding. Searching for resistance fighters, they captured Otto Wolf and 22 other men. Otto's family left the village to hide in the forest. His sister Felicitas immediately took over writing in the diary, believing that Otto would one day return.

April 20, 1945, Friday. We wake up at quarter after five and go to a clearing to move our feet a little since it has been dreadfully cold during the night. We have no blankets. We then pray: it is Yom Kippur Qatan. We fast until 1 p.m. At noon, I take the basket and go back to the Oheras' for the most indispensable of indispensable items. When I get there, I find Mrs. Oherová running around as if she had lost her mind. She says that I must leave right away, that the criminal police have already been here twice and that they had left just before I arrived. [. . .] Each one of us has a tiny piece of bread with a little shmaltz for dinner. Before noon, an old woman roaming around the place scared us. We go to sleep at seven.²

After liberation, the remaining members of the Wolf family learned that Otto had been killed after a local man revealed that he was Jewish. Otto was tortured by the Gestapo but never revealed where his family was hiding or the names of the people who had helped them. Felicitas eventually emigrated to the United States and donated the diary to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Connection Questions

- 1 How do these diary entries help you understand the challenges of surviving in hiding? What needs did the Wolf family have? How did they find ways to meet their needs?
- 2 How do Otto and Felicitas describe the intense stress that hiding created for their family? How did they cope?
- 3 Who were some of the people the Wolfs encountered while in hiding? How do you account for the range of responses to the Wolfs?

1 Alexandra Zapruder, ed., *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 122–29. Reproduced by permission of Alexandra Zapruder.

2 Alexandra Zapruder, ed., *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 132, 136, 152, 156. Reproduced by permission of Alexandra Zapruder.

How to Cite This Reading

Facing History & Ourselves, "Survival in Hiding," last updated May 12, 2020.

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Contact us

~~SECRET - EMERGENCY~~

*Concentration
Camp*

INCOMING CABLE

PARIS

Rec. & Sten. 9/20/45

JB2 LF205 PARIS 105/104 1/50 SEP 19 1945
NLT JOINTDISCO NY
AMERICAN JEWISH JOINT DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE INC
270 MADISON AVENUE

242 RE YOUR 132 FOR YOUR INFORMATION THERE WAS A LETTER TO IKE AS A RESULT OF WHICH HE ACCOMPANIED BY PATTON VISITED ON SEPTEMBER 17TH CAMP FELDAFING WHICH IN ANTICIPATION THIS VISIT HAD BEEN HURRIEDLY BUT THOROUGHLY CLEANEDUP STOP IKE MADE IMPROMPTU SPEECH AT YOMKIPPUR SERVICES FELDAFING WHICH ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED BY INTERNEES STOP AS DIRECT RESULT THIS VISIT SEVERAL HOMES AND A HOSPITAL WILL BE REQUISITIONED FOR DPS EVERY EFFORT WILL BE MADE TO KEEP THEM GAINFULLY OCCUPIED STOP MILITARY GUARDS WILL BE REMOVED AND SUBSTITUTED BY DP GUARDS STOP WE HOPEFUL THESE DEVELOPMENTS WILL SET PATTERN OTHER CAMPS

JOINTFUND

RJ



Proclamation by Jewish Pioneer Youth Group In Vilna, Calling For Resistance, January 1, 1942

They Shall Not Take Us Like Sheep to the Slaughter!

Jewish youth, do not be led astray. Of the 80,000 Jewish in the "Jerusalem of Lithuania" [Vilna] only 20,000 have remained. Before our eyes they tore from us our parents, our brothers and sisters. Where are the hundreds of men who were taken away for work by the Lithuanian "snatchers"? Where are the naked women and children who were taken from us in the night of terror of the *provokatzia*?

Where are the Jews [who were taken away on] the Day of Atonement?

Where are our brothers from the second ghetto?

All those who were taken away from the ghetto never came back.

All the roads of the Gestapo lead to Ponary.

And Ponary is death!

Doubters! Cast off all illusions. Your children, your husbands and your wives are no longer alive.

Ponary is not a camp -- all are shot there.

Hitler aims to destroy all the Jews of Europe. The Jews of Lithuania are fated to be the first in line.

Let us not go as sheep to slaughter!

It is true that we are weak and defenseless, but resistance is the only reply to the enemy!

Brothers! It is better to fall as free fighters than to live by the grace of the murderers.

Resist! To the last breath.

January 1, 1942, Vilna Ghetto.

Moreshet Archives, D. 1.4630.

Source: Y. Arad, Y. Gutman, A. Margalio (Eds.), *Documents on the Holocaust, Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, 1981, Document no. 196.

Entries from a Ghetto Diary

16 October 1942

The word in the street is that the "Liar" [code name for the radio] announced that only 300,000 of the 3,000,000 Polish Jews remain, and that the rest were killed in his deportations. I do not believe it, although one could believe it after watching the deportation procedure. They went out and searched only for people who were unable to work: children under the age of ten, old people over sixty years of age, the ill. . . . They sent away children up to age ten without parents, sent sick people from the hospitals with the one nightshirt that they'd slept in. For what? It's been said that they took them to Chelmno . . . where there's a gas house where they are poisoned. . . .

Guards at the Gate

In this photograph, German and Jewish police guard one of the entrances to the Lodz ghetto. A crowd of Jewish residents has gathered in the background.

3 August 1944 [the end of the Lodz ghetto]

I write these lines in a terrible state of mind—we have all of us to leave this ghetto within a few days. . . . Biebow, the German Ghetto-Chief, held a speech for the Jews. . . . He asked the crowd if they are ready to work faithfully for the Reich, and all answered "Yes." What sort of people are these Germans, that they managed to transform us into such low, crawling creatures; is life really so worthy?

When I look on my little sister, my heart is melting. Hasn't the child suffered her share? . . . What will they do with our sick? with our old? with our young? . . . I don't even know if I shall be allowed to be together with my sister. I cannot write more. I am more resigned terribly and black spirited.

From the diary of Menachem Oppenheim, who was in the Lodz ghetto.



The Jewish Partisans' Anthem
by Hirsh Glik

*Never say that you have reached the final road
Though lead-gray clouds conceal blue
skies above,
The hour that we've longed for now
draws near,
Our steps proclaim like drumbeats:
We Are Here!*

*From green, palmy lands and countries
white with snow,
We come with all our suffering and woe;
And wherever any of our blood is shed,
Our courage and our valor rise again!*

*Tomorrow's sun will turn this day to gold,
And this dark night will vanish with the foe,
But should tomorrow's sun await the dawn
too long,
Let this song ring out for ages yet to come!*

*Not with lead was this song written, but
with blood;
*It wasn't warbled in the forest by a bird!
But a people, trapped between collapsing walls,
With weapons held in hand—they sang
this song!*

*So, never say that you have reached the
final road,
Though lead-gray clouds conceal blue
skies above,
The hour that we've longed for now
draws near,
Our steps proclaim like drumbeats:
We Are Here!*

*From Art, Music, and
Writings from the
Holocaust
by Susan Willoughby*

DACHAU SONG

DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP, 1938

Lyrics by: Jura Soyfer

Music by: Herbert Zipper

Language: German

Translation by the USHMM

Playwright Jura Soyfer and composer Herbert Zipper, active in the Viennese antifascist cabaret, were arrested by the Gestapo after the German-Austrian Anschluss of 1938.

They met again at Dachau, where both toiled as "horses," hauling cartloads of heavy stone throughout the camp. Soyfer and Zipper wrote Dachau Song in September 1938 as an ironic response to the motto "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work Makes Freedom) inscribed on the gate at the entrance to the camp.

Initially performed in secret, Dachau Song was eventually learned by many camp inmates. Both Soyfer and Zipper believed that exercising the intellect helped preserve a prisoner's self-respect in the face of constant humiliation. According to Zipper, he and his coauthor made Dachau Song deliberately difficult to learn, hoping the challenge would help their comrades rise above their surroundings.

Weeks after composing the song, the two men were transferred to Buchenwald, where Soyfer died from typhoid fever at age 26. Zipper, ransomed by his family, fled to Paris and then to the Philippines, where he served as conductor of the Manila Symphony. After World War II, Zipper immigrated to the United States, working as a conductor, composer, and music educator until his death at age 92 in 1997.

DACHAU SONG

Charged with death, high tension wire
Rings around our world a chain.
Pitiless, a sky sends fire,
Biting frost and drenching rain.
Far from us is lust for living,
Far our women, far our town.
When we mutely march to toiling
Thousands into morning's dawn.

CHORUS

But we all learned the motto of Dachau to heed
And became as hardened as stone.
Stay humane, Dachau man, be a man, Dachau mate
And work as hard as you can, Dachau mate
For work leads to freedom alone!

Faced by ever-threatening rifles
We exist by night and day.
Life itself, this hell hole stifles
Worse than any words can say.
Days and weeks we leave unnumbered
Some forget the count of years.
And their spirits encumbered
With their faces scarred by tears.

CHORUS

Lift the stone and drag the wagon
Shun no burden and no chore.
Who you were in days long gone by
Here you are not anymore.
Stab the earth and bury depthless
All the pity you can feel.
And with your own sweat hapless
You convert to stone and steel.

CHORUS

Once will sound the siren's wailing
Summons to the last roll-call.
Outside, then, we will be hailing
Dachau mates uniting all.
Freedom brightly will be shining,
For the hard-forged brotherhood.
And the work we are designing
Our work it will be good.

CHORUS

THE CONSUMPTIVE, BELSEN 1945

By: Mervyn Peake



If seeing her an hour before her last
Weak cough into all blackness I could yet
Be held by chalk-white walls, and by the great
Ash colored bed,
And the pillows hardly creased
By the tapping of her little cough-jerked head—
If such can be a painter's ecstasy,
(Her limbs like pipes, her head a china skull)
Then where is mercy?

from <https://www.mervynpeake.org/poet.html>



HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
DAY TRUST

NEVER SHALL I FORGET ELIE WIESEL

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, that turned my life into one long night seven times sealed.

Never shall I forget that smoke.

Never shall I forget the small faces of the children whose bodies I saw transformed into smoke under a silent sky.

Never shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith for ever.

Never shall I forget the nocturnal silence that deprived me for all eternity of the desire to live.

Never shall I forget those moments that murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to ashes.

Never shall I forget those things, even were I condemned to live as long as God Himself.

Never.

Never Shall I Forget from *Night* by Elie Wiesel.

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To learn more about Holocaust Memorial Day and discover more poetry featuring a variety of experiences of the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides please visit us online:



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Teacher Mira

With patches on our bodies, striped and parching,
They chase us in the ghetto, streets are marching,
Our buildings say farewell eternally,
Stone faces walk with us at each decree.

Old people wearing tfillin like black crowns,
A calf walks with a village Jew in tow,
A woman drags a person by the nails,
Another pulls a bunch of wood on rails.

Among them walks a woman, Teacher Mira.
A child is in her arms — a golden lyre.
She clasps another child by his frail hand,
The students walk around her — trusting band.

And as they get to Jew Street, there's a gate,
The wood still warm and raw, they huddle, wait.
And like a sluice for torrents of a flood,
It opens up and swallows in its blood.

They chase us over ruins, no bread, no light,
Bread is a book, a pencil shines so bright.
She gathers all her children on the floor,
Teacher Mira goes on teaching as before.

She reads Sholem Aleichem's tale aloud,
A sparkle in their eyes, they laugh so proud.
She ties blue ribbons in the girls' braids
And counts her treasures: hundred thirty heads.

And Teacher Mira, like the sun, at dawn
Awakes, waits for her children to go on.
They come. She counts. Oh, better not to count!
For overnight, some twenty were cut down.

Her skin, a windowpane in stains of dusk,
Mira must not reveal the darkness thus.
She bites her lip, of courage she will tell:
About Hirsh Lekert, how he fought and fell.

And overnight, gray covered all the town,
And Teacher Mira's hair, her silver crown.
She seeks in cellars for her mother blind,
And seventeen more children she can't find.

When sun dried up the blood, with branches green
She trimmed the orphaned room, so neat and clean:
— Gershteyn the teacher came and we shall sing,
Over the walls, our children's choir will ring.

They sing: 'Not far is spring.' But in the street,
Axes and bayonets smash, crush, and beat.
They drag from cellars, hidings, but the choir
Sings on 'Not far is spring,' sings higher, higher.

They are but sixty, with no sister, mother,
Now Teacher Mira is one and the other.
A holiday approaches, little doves,
We shall prepare a play, a play she loves.

The fête — and only forty children left.
But each in a white shirt, each child bereft.
The stage is fresh, a garden in the sun,
A river you can swim in, you can run.

When Peretz's third gift took all the bows,
The peril has cut down the rickety house.
People were caught by snatchers! Save us, Heaven!
Of a hundred thirty, Mira remains with seven.

Till axes split her mind, she on her knees,
A flower, and her children — buzzing bees.
Gray is the flower, and the time is awesome.
Tomorrow in the dew, again she'll blossom.

Vilna Ghetto, May 10, 1943
Abraham Sutzkever

Refugee Blues

Read W.H. Auden's poem "Refugee Blues" about the plight of Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.

In 1939, W. H. Auden wrote a poem called "Refugee Blues" that expressed his opinion of the plight of Jewish refugees from Greater Germany. It was reprinted in a number of newspapers.

Say this city has ten million souls,
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,
Every spring it blossoms anew;
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said:
"If you've got no passport, you're officially dead";
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;
Asked me politely to return next year:
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we go
today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:
"If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread";
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and
me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;
It was Hitler over Europe, saying: "They must die";
O we were in his mind, my dear, O we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:
But they weren't German Jews, my dear, but they weren't German
Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,
A thousand windows and a thousand doors;
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me. ¹

Connection Questions

- 1 Who is the speaker of the poem? To whom is the poem addressed?
- 2 What do you think Auden wants his readers to think about? What imagery does he use to communicate his message?
- 3 How does the poem add to your thinking about the refugee crisis in the 1930s? Is the poem's impact different from that of the other types of sources you've encountered in this chapter (such as in the reading, **The Voyage of the St. Louis**)?
- 4 Is the message of Auden's poem relevant to any events in the world today? If so, which ones, and why?
- 5 Can you think of a song, poem, or other work of art that has influenced your thinking about history or current events?

¹ W. H. Auden, "Ten Songs," in *Collected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson (New York: Modern Library, 2007), 263–64. Reproduced by permission from Random House.

How to Cite This Reading

Facing History & Ourselves, "Refugee Blues," last updated August 2, 2016.

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Life of Jewish Partisans and Jewish Family Camps in the Forest, From a Diary by a Jewish Partisan, 1942-1943

August 12, 1942

...The idea of the forest returned and came to life. After the second mass-murder all of us were certain that the Germans made no difference between one Jew and another... They deceived the Judenrat and the Jewish Police when they promised them that they would stay alive if they helped to carry out the slaughter, and in the end they killed them too. Once more we began to search for ways of escape outside the ghetto....

The first to escape were Jews from the neighborhood to Naliboki Forest. They disappeared and nothing more was heard of them. The people from Zhetl also went, to Lipiczanka Forest, and they were joined by some from Nowogrodek, who returned after a while to take with them their relatives and friends. From them we heard details of life in the forest. They have arms, they carry out attacks on Germans traveling on the roads; the peasants are afraid of them and supply them with food. There are Russian partisans in the forest who live on good terms with the Jews and carry out joint attacks on the Germans with them.

Young boys of 15 to 17 snatch arms from the Germans and fix stocks to pistols and rifles. A small group got together and moved out to the Belskis. Two of them came back to the ghetto. They would have nothing to do with anyone there, and refused to speak to their former friends weren't they partisans? They went back to the forest and took with them their relatives, wives and acquaintances.

[1943]

As a result of our many attacks on the Germans in the area of our camp, a German assault was to be expected any day. Information reached us that the Germans knew where we were. The Staff decided to dissolve the separate groups and to reestablish the Brigade.

At the beginning of April all the groups were ordered to leave their valleys and move within 24 hours to Brozova Forest in Stara-Huta.

We packed our belongings, filled our knapsacks, and fastened our blankets on top of them. The cooking gear and other things were loaded on carts and we moved out. The night was cloudy and the sky full of rain. The damp penetrated into the very marrow of our bones. The dry, bare branches of the young trees waved and bent hither

and thither. Our thoughts were black too. Many of us had been lost in our wanderings from forest to forest, from base camp to base camp. They had fallen, and who knew what awaited us at the next base?

by day the snow began to melt. Long pools of water stretched along the sandy paths. We had many kilometers to go. Our feet sink in the mud as though it were soft dough. You want to rest and there is no place to sit. Everything is wet and damp. Now we have found a kind of hillock from which the water has run off. The people sit down, rest, eat their fill and then continue on their way. In this way we crossed forests, fields, and roads until we reached Brozova Forest, in Stara-Huta.

There we found groups that had arrived before us -- the group of Yudel Belski, who had lost 10 of his best men; he had few fighting men and their arms were poor: the group could no longer survive on its own. Also the Dworecki group, which had arrived early at the new base. The cold was not yet over and they had built huts for themselves.

After a brief consultation we decided not to build huts. We found a dry hill, stretched out on our knapsacks, rested and set about putting up a shelter of branches.

In the course of a few days all the groups gathered in one place. We began to live according to the plan that had applied before the winter. Every evening the whole unit assembled. One platoon was selected for guard duty for the next 24 hours; several groups were sent out to get food; the people were divided up according to kitchens, each group doing its own cooking. The groups received their supplies from a central store, in accordance with the number of its members.

At the beginning of April a group of Jews and their families were sent to us from the *Iskra* (spark) group. Their arms were taken from them and they were told to join the Jewish company. These were the first Jewish refugees from Lida Ghetto. The young and single people stayed with the Russians....

J. Jaffe, *Partizanim* ("Partisans"), Tel Aviv, 1951, pp. 24-25, 70-72.

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Related

Rescue by Jews

Handout

Diary from the Łódź Ghetto

In early 1942, a young girl living in the ghetto in Łódź (a Polish city) kept a diary of her experiences. Her name remains unknown, but her diary entries evoke the fear and suffering of life in the ghetto.

[No Date]

There is no justice in the world, not to mention in the ghetto... People are in a state of panic. And this hunger. A struggle against death from starvation. Life is terrible, living conditions are abominable, and there is no food . . .

Wednesday March 11, 1942

. . . Today I had a fight with my father. I swore at him, even cursed him. It happened because yesterday I weighed twenty decagrams of zacierki [egg noodles] and then sneaked a spoonful. When my father came back, he immediately noticed that some zacierki were missing. My father started yelling at me and he was right. But since the chairman [Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, the head of the Jewish Council of Łódź] gave out these zacierki to be cooked, why can't I have some? I became very upset and cursed my father. What have I done? I regret it so much, but it can't be undone. My father is not going to forgive me. How will I ever look him in the eyes? He stood by the window and cried like a baby. Not even a stranger insulted him before. The whole family witnessed this incident. I went to bed as soon as possible, without dinner. . . . We would be a happy family, if I didn't fight with everybody. All the fights are started by me. I must be manipulated by some evil force. I would like to be different, but I don't have a strong enough will. . . .

Saturday March 14, 1942

. . . O freedom! Will I have to stay behind this barbed wire forever? Will that sign be on the big board forever, [Entering Jewish residential area forbidden]? Will there always be a booth with a German guard who has a rifle on his shoulder? Has it always been like this? Will it stay like this? Oh, no! But who is going to live through it? I miss freedom. Especially on a warm sunny day. O sun! It's you who make me yearn for freedom. My heart is bleeding and my eyes are full of tears. Someone reading this in the future may sneer at me, say I'm an idiot . . .¹

¹ Alexandra Zapruder, *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 230–40.