

Resources on the Holocaust

Atkinson, Linda: **In Kindling Flame: The Story of Hannah Senesh, 1921-1944**

This biography for young adults uses the diary, letters, poetry, interviews with her mother and brother, and official documents to tell the story of Hannah Senesh.

Blum, Howard: **The Brigade: An Epic Story of Vengeance, Salvation and World War II**

There is a perception that during the Holocaust, the Jews rarely physically fought back against the Nazis. The most avid readers of World War II books know that resistance did occur (the best known is the Warsaw Ghetto uprising), but it was not enough to change the course of the genocide. The Brigade tells a different story. A 5000-man "Jewish Brigade" was formed from settlers in Palestine, but it was not until the waning days of the war, in November 1944, that the British sent it to fight. This account is told from the perspective of three soldiers and relies heavily on interviews the author conducted with them.

Boas, Jacob: **We Are Witnesses: The Diaries of Five Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust**

Boas presents excerpts from the diaries of five Jewish young people who died in Nazi concentration camps. "A twelve-year-old Polish villager named David, a deeply religious fifteen-year-old named Moshe in Belgium, a thirteen-year-old Lithuanian Communist named Yitzhak, a wealthy thirteen-year-old Hungarian named Eva, and a budding Dutch writer named Anne Frank are... represented here in their efforts to understand and cope with what is happening around them and to them."

Bor, Josef: **Terezin Requiem**

"The story of a performance of Verdi's Requiem in the Theresienstadt concentration camp provides a succinct but devastating image of the power of art even in the sordid horror of the Nazi world. Raphael Schaechter, the conductor, flies elegantly and engagingly by the seat of his pants to assemble and maintain his ensemble, and the many minor characters who move through it are brilliantly and all-too-briefly drawn. The irony of the Catholic Requiem's reinterpretation by doomed Jews is piquantly stated.

Cohen, Rich: **The Avengers: A Jewish War Story**

Cohen describes how three young Jews--Cohen's cousin Ruzka Korczak, her friend Abba Kovner, and Kovner's future wife Vitka Klemperer--created an armed, underground movement behind the German lines in Poland with the goal of sabotaging the Nazis and helping the Russians advance. Cohen reports that Kovner described the group's dilemma this way: "If we act cowardly, we die; if we act courageously, we die. So we might as well act courageously." The group's fighting outlasted the war to exact revenge on the Nazis held in Nuremberg and finally to fight for Israel in the 1948 War for Independence.

Donat, Alexander: **The Holocaust Kingdom: A Memoir**

This book addresses what it was like to endure the horror of living in the Warsaw Ghetto, and reinforces the belief that sometimes it is more honorable to die than to commit certain acts, such as some of the panic-driven people were desperate enough to commit.

Flender, Harold: **Rescue in Denmark**

Derived from a transcribed documentary, Flender tells the story of Danish resistance against a monstrous foe. The interviews that form the basis of this book clearly demonstrate the veracity of the thesis - the whole of Denmark stepped in to help their countrymen escape the Final Solution.

Frankl, Viktor E.: Man's **Search for Meaning**

The book begins with a personal essay about Frankl's imprisonment in Auschwitz and other concentration camps for five years, and his struggle during this time to find reasons to live. The second part of the book describes the psychotherapeutic method that Frankl pioneered as a result of his experiences in the concentration camps. Frankl believes that man's deepest desire is to search for meaning and purpose. "Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is," Frankl writes. "After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips."

Friedman, Ina R.: **Escape or Die: True Stories of Young People Who Survived the Holocaust**

In this extraordinary collection of true stories, 12 Jewish men and women all under the age of 20 at the time, recount their incredible tales of surviving the Holocaust. Covering the years 1933 to 1948 and encompassing ten countries and as many destinations, these stories of escape are more than dramatic adventure tales and are particularly moving for young people.

Gilbert, Martin: **Holocaust**

A compelling book for those who want a general understanding of how the rise of the Nazis in Germany impacted the Jewish people--as well as those who want to learn exactly what was at stake in the Second World War. When *The Holocaust* was first published in 1986, Elie Wiesel gave it a glowing review, writing, "This book must be read and reread."

Gray, Martin: **For Those I Loved**

This story was written by a man who with incredible determination survived the horrors of Warsaw, the ghettos and the gas chambers of Treblinka, saw his family and friends humiliated then murdered by the Nazis, joined with the Polish underground then the Russian army. He then became an officer and as such becoming among the first to enter Berlin at the end of the War.

Hersey, John: **The Wall**

Riveting and compelling, *The Wall* tells the inspiring story of forty men and women who escape the dehumanizing horror of the Warsaw ghetto. John Hersey's novel documents the Warsaw ghetto both as an emblem of Nazi persecution and as a personal confrontation with torture, starvation, humiliation, and cruelty

Huneke, Douglas: **The Moses of Rovno**

Huneke tells the stirring story of Fritz Graebe, a German Christian who risked his life to lead hundreds of Jews to safety during the Holocaust.

Kertzer, David: **The Popes Against the Jews: The Vatican's Role in the Rise of Modern Anti-Semitism**

Kertzer's work explores the church's role in setting the stage for the Holocaust. David Kertzer spells out his thesis in the introduction: Although "the Vatican never approved the extermination of the Jews... the teachings and actions of the Church, including those of the popes themselves, helped make it possible." Kertzer argues that centuries of the church's demonization of the Jews paved the way for genocide.

Kurzman, Dan: **The Bravest Battle: The Twenty-Eight Days of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising**

Kurzman tells the story of the Jewish resisters in Warsaw during the "Grossaktion" - the final rounding up and extermination of Polish Jews. To view the real heroes of this book is to be enlightened about the Jewish history and character that we so rarely have an opportunity to experience through the mainstream media.

Kuznetsov, Anatoli: **Babi Yar: A Document in the Form of a Novel**

Kuznetsov's book describes the occupation of Kiev during World War II from the eyes of a 12-year-old, including the horrible massacre of Jews and Ukrainians at Babi Yar. *Babi Yar* is not only a book of the atrocities that took place in Ukraine during the war, but a glimpse at the survival skills by ordinary Kievites during the occupation. It chronicles the plight of all citizens of Nazi occupation.

Levi, Primo: **Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity**

In 1943, Primo Levi, a twenty-five-year-old chemist and "Italian citizen of Jewish race," was arrested by Italian fascists and deported from his native Turin to Auschwitz. *Survival in Auschwitz* is Levi's classic account of his ten months in the German death camp, a harrowing story of systematic cruelty and miraculous endurance. Remarkable for its simplicity, restraint, compassion, and even wit, *Survival in Auschwitz* remains a lasting testament to the indestructibility of the human spirit.

Morse, Arthur: **While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy**

First published in 1967, this work reveals the untold story behind the deliberate obstruction placed in the way of attempts to save the Jewish people from Hitler's

"final solution", with detailed documentation from worldwide interviews with participants, research in archives around the world, as well as classified and official papers that had never been published before Arthur Morse's exhaustive study .

Pisar, Samuel: *Of Blood and Hope*

From growing up as a young boy in Poland in an upper middle class family, to losing all his loved ones and surviving by his wits in the death camps in Nazi Europe. Samuel Pisas tells the story of surviving the Holocaust and rebuilding his life to become an international lawyer whose influence was greatly felt in the 60's and 70's.

Ringelblum, Emanuel: *Notes from the Warsaw Ghetto*

This book presents a factual chronological statement on the conditions, daily tribulations, and perils of the Warsaw Ghetto. It is written in a documentary style rather than an emotional diary, thus providing a basis to compare and contrast against other "diaries". It is also a moving statement on Warsaw Jewry and their ability to overcome impossible odds, even though the overwhelming majority perished. This is a bold, honest reflection into the eyes of children, adolescents, parents, as they were waiting for their fate.

Senesh, Hannah: *Hannah Senesh, Her Life and Diary*

During her brief life, 1921-1944, Hannah Senesh became a national hero in Israel. Her diary begins in 1933 in her native Budapest. In the midst of entries about school, boys, and travel, her growing awareness of herself as a Zionist emerges; while she is learning Hebrew and making plans to move to Palestine, thoughts on the impending war pepper her writing. She volunteers, the only female, for a parachute troop with a secret mission to land behind enemy lines in Yugoslavia, sneak into occupied Hungary, and warn the Jewish population, including her mother, of their imminent fate. The last section is written by her mother, imprisoned in Budapest when Hannah was captured and brought to the same jail, where Hannah was tortured and died at age twenty-three.

Szpilman, Wladyslaw: *The Pianist*

The Pianist is Szpilman's personal account of the incremental loss of his home, his family and his will to live in German-occupied Warsaw. From 1939 to 1945, the Jewish population in Warsaw fell from 500,000 to less than 50,000. During these years, German soldiers and Ukrainian thugs-for-hire taunted, tortured, mutilated and murdered an innocent and defenseless people. Initially Szpilman's status as a celebrity kept him alive but ultimately it was his raw survival instinct that was the key to his endurance.

Werbell, Frederick E.: *Lost Hero: The Mystery of Raoul Wallenberg*

This book discloses for the first time the truth about how after Wallenberg successfully managed to rescue tens of thousands of Jews from Hitler's Final Solution, he disappears, causing an international scandal and cover-up. The

authors reveal what really happened to Raoul Wallenberg during his Russian imprisonment.

Wiesel, Elie: **Night**

Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel's wrenching attempt to find meaning in the horror of the Holocaust is based on his own experiences in Birkenau, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald. The protagonist of *Night* is a scholarly, pious teenager racked with guilt at having survived the genocidal campaign that consumed his family. His memories of the nightmare world of the death camps present him with an intolerable question: how can the God he once so fervently believed in have allowed these monstrous events to occur? There are no easy answers in this harrowing book, which probes life's essential riddles with the lucid anguish only great literature achieves. It marks the crucial first step in Wiesel's lifelong project to bear witness for those who died.

Wyman, David: **The Abandonment of the Jews; America and the Holocaust 1941-1945**

It has long been alleged that officials in the Roosevelt administration knew, in surprising detail, about Adolf Hitler's plans to exterminate all the Jews in Nazi Europe, and that these officials did little to prevent the massacre, refusing asylum to shiploads of Jewish refugees and failing to order the bombing of railway lines leading to Auschwitz, Treblinka, and other concentration camps. These authors examine the evidence and draw startling conclusions.

Yolen, Jane: **The Devil's Arithmetic**

During a Passover Seder, 12-year-old Hannah finds herself transported from America in 1988 to Poland in 1942, where she assumes the life of young Chaya. Within days the Nazis take Chaya and her neighbors off to a concentration camp, mere components in the death factory. As days pass, Hannah's own memory of her past, and the prisoners' future, fades until she is Chaya completely. Chaya/Hannah's final sacrifice, and the return of memory, is her victory over the horror. The book's simplicity is its strength; no comment is needed because the facts speak for themselves. This brave and powerful book has much it can teach a young audience.