

## 14. Liberation

### Discussion:

What is liberation?

The year 2004 – 2005 marks the 60-year anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi occupied territories and the camps within them.

There were many liberation experiences. Liberation means different things to different people. Below are several photos and stories to illustrate some of these experiences.

*(The following photos and quotations were the theme of this year's Jacob Friedman Holocaust Creative Writing Contest, sponsored by the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center.)*



### Safe Conduct Pass

*"The German soldier who carries this safe conduct is using it as a sign of his genuine wish to give himself up. He is to be disarmed, to be well looked after, to receive food and medical attention as required, and to be removed from the danger zone as soon as possible."*

Leaflets like this one were dropped on the German army from September 1944 to March 1945. The Allies dropped 65,750,000 leaflets. This leaflet bears the name and signature of General Eisenhower. It was printed in both red and green. This safe conduct pass was found in the collection of the late Herman Zimmerman of Seattle, Wash. who served in the U.S. Army during WWII. On

display at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center.



### A New Life

Henry Friedman, a local Holocaust survivor, at age 17, in the town of Gliwice, Silesia. 1945. Courtesy of Henry Friedman.

*When we arrived in Brody, I was shocked to find none of our relatives. When I was in hiding, I had feared that I would be the only Jew who*

*survived. A terrible empty feeling came over me at the loss of so many cousins, and I felt as though I were standing all alone in a huge stadium.*

— Henry Friedman in his memoir  
*"I'm No Hero"*

Henry Friedman was born in Brody Poland in 1928. In 1941, when Mr. Friedman was 13, Nazi Germany occupied the area and the situation became intolerable for the Jewish people. In order to avoid being forced to move into the ghetto, where Jews were periodically rounded up and taken to concentration camps, Mr. Friedman, his younger brother, mother and their female teacher hid in a barn owned by the Symchucks, a Christian family. The space in which they hid was tiny, about the size of a queen-size bed. For 18 months, the Symchucks hid the Friedmans until finally, in March 1944, the Russians liberated the area. 15,000 Jews lived in Brody before the war. Fewer than 100 survived. The Symchucks risked their own lives and their children's lives to save the Friedman family. They have been recognized here and abroad as Righteous Gentiles.

# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL



### Liberation at Auschwitz

Soon after liberation, surviving children of the Auschwitz camp walk out of the children's barracks. Poland. After January 27, 1945. Photo courtesy USHMM.



### The Unaccompanied Children

Orphaned children who survived the Holocaust. Pictured with John Rock (with the cap on the right). In 1939, at age 17, Mr. Rock escaped Austria and managed to get to England. When he turned 18 he joined the British navy. After the war he became the director of several displaced persons (DP) camps in Germany. Mr. Rock passed away in Nov. 2004 at his residence in Seattle. From the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's collection.



### Confronting Atrocities

Citizens of Linz, Austria, look at photographs of Nazi atrocities. Such displays were mounted across American-occupied Germany and Austria. 1945. Photo courtesy USHMM.

# Studying the Holocaust

## RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

### Suggested Resources

- "Liberation 1945." Published and produced by United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- "Inside the Vicious Heart," by Robert H. Abzug. Oxford University Press, 1987.
- "The End of the Holocaust: the Liberation of the Camps," by Jon Bridgeman. Areopagitica, 1990.
- "GIs Remember: Liberating the Concentration Camps." National Museum of American Jewish Military History. Washington DC, 1994.
- **Liberation Bibliography:** [ushmm.org/research/library/bibliography/liberators/right.htm](http://ushmm.org/research/library/bibliography/liberators/right.htm)

*\*\*All of the above books are available to check out at the Holocaust Center*

### Films

- "Liberation." 2004. Moriah Films. (High School and up)
- "The Long Way Home." 1997. Vanguard Films. (High School and up)
- "Liberation 1945: Testimony." U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

### Web sites

- **Liberation: A Learning Site for Students:** [ushmm.org/outreach/liberati.htm](http://ushmm.org/outreach/liberati.htm)
- **Liberation of Nazi Camps — USHMM**  
[ushmm.org](http://ushmm.org).  
 Click "History" and then "Holocaust Encyclopedia."
- **The Holocaust Chronicle**  
[holocaustchronicle.org/StaticPages/579.html](http://holocaustchronicle.org/StaticPages/579.html)

### ■ Excerpts, Scenes, etc.

- "Ten Days" in "Survival in Auschwitz." Primo Levi.
- Chapter 13 in Part II, and Part III in "All But My Life." Gerda Weissmann Klein.
- Liberation scene at the end of the film "Schindler's List"
- Liberation scene at the end of the film "The Pianist"