

Holocaust Essay

It occurred to me very early on that as people of today, we look back at the Holocaust as a time of horrible deeds and actions. We think of Jews and other minority groups being persecuted, placed into concentration camps, and dying. We pity the past generations, and wish that it never happened. But imagine a girl, about as old as 12, living in the Holocaust. She has first-hand experiences that we never had. Maybe a close relative died. Maybe 10, we never know. While we think the Holocaust may have been one of the most wretched events ever to happen to Jews, a survivor or one who died knew the Holocaust much more. It was worse than a terrible monster, finally roaring up out of its lair.

For my essay I hope to show the real Holocaust, as that terrible, permanent stain on the book of life. It is essential that all people know what really happened. Maybe if the Germans hadn't elected Adolf Hitler, maybe if they all grew together and rebelled against the Nazi party, than the Holocaust wouldn't have happened. But it did, and so it is our duty to educate everyone it what happened, so that it won't happen again.

One of the first dots on the Holocaust timeline was the yellow star labeled "Jude". Imagine how it would have felt to wear that. It was a sign, saying "Look here, I am a Jew!" It served no purpose whatsoever, except to label some harmless Jew. The star brought embarrassment to the Jewish people, and brought joy to the German government and majority of people. They could distinguish between Jew and non-. And that leads to another point. Hitler came to power by saying it was the Jews who destroyed the economy of our country. Was it? It might have been, because there might have been a Jew in the government, and the government joined the war. But most likely it was not. Many people couldn't even tell us apart, we were so wide spread. So the star most likely helped to differentiate us, put us aside, so that we were not to be mistaken.

Later on, Jews were not allowed to be in public places from a certain time each day. Then we were banned completely. What did we do? The answer is no more than what everyone else did. It was unfair, unjust, and not okay. But the part of Germany didn't stand up for us. They didn't say anything. So Jewish people kept on being treated like that. Eventually, we were banned from our jobs. We were not allowed to be hired. There were even signs that read "No pets, no Jews" hanging from shops.

The concentration camps were another big part of the Holocaust. In Auschwitz, they had death showers. They would give the victim a nice bar of soap and then stick them in a shower room with gas coming out of the nozzles. This was a cruel way of killing, but when Germany and Poland and Austria and other countries saw that they might lose, they started mass killing. I sometimes like to think that if we did what the Germans did to us to the Germans, maybe we could let them see the wrong doing of their ways.

This year, I will become a Bat-Mitzvah, a daughter of the commandments. It will then be my job even more to pass the horrors of the holocaust on to and for other people. In my Torah portion, a man is stoned for gathering wood on Shabbat. However, there is no mention of him being part of the Jews' camp. He is stoned for a belief that isn't even his. I can make this connection to the Holocaust, because Jews were stoned for believing in Judaism, while Nazi Germany thought that they should all be Christian.

Nowadays, whenever I see a sign or memorial or website relating to the Holocaust or genocide, I get this tight feeling in my chest, I get mad at the Nazi's, and I

feel very strongly towards what happened in the 40's. A lot of my friends don't ever want to take German, which is a language offered at my school, and when I ask them why, they say because that is where Nazi's live. Other groups at my school think that all Germans are Nazi's, which is not true at all. Just thinking about that makes me feel weird. Just because I don't live in Israel doesn't mean I can't be Jewish. That's not how it works.

The recent Obama campaign has also opened up in me. Many people don't want Obama to be president because his race is a minority. Many ask how that is possible. It doesn't matter. Your religion doesn't matter outside of what you practice and believe. It's okay to be Jewish, Christian, Muslim, or Buddhist. It's okay to be agnostic or atheist. Your race doesn't matter, either. It's okay to be black, Asian, Mexican, Caucasian, etc. No one should care. We are all human. In the holocaust and today, identification is harsh. But we shouldn't come down to that. Always remember, don't judge a book by its cover.

Holocaust Denial

Holocaust denial is when a person, or group of people, says that the Holocaust never happened. The idea of Holocaust denial is completely absurd. To try to say that such a horrific event never happened is a terrible thing to do.

A common reason for denying such an obviously real event is that the Nazis didn't intend to kill all of the Jews; they just wanted them out of Europe. This claim is not supported by evidence. It was quite clear that they were singling out the Jews because they made Jewish people wear the Star of David on their clothes if they left their home. Also, the Nazis did not bring people of other religions out of their homes and to concentration camps. Another common example of denial is that the range of 5 to 7 million Jews killed is an exaggeration, and that the actual number is much less than that. In this case, at least they aren't denying the Holocaust happened, but it is still wrong to say that. If the 5 to 7 million Jews that once existed weren't killed, where did they all go? There is no huge group of Jews (4 million huge) somewhere in the world. That means they must have all been killed somehow. The last most common form of denial was saying that there weren't gas chambers used in the killing of Jews. This is obviously wrong because some of the buildings that the gas chambers were in are still at concentration camps that are open to visitors.

Reactions to deniers vary greatly. Most people tend to just completely ignore them, so they don't get undeserved attention. They say that we should not give them what they want, which is to be legitimized. That's how ridiculous other people think it is too. Many scholars say that Holocaust denial is "...at best, a form of academic fraud."

Most people would describe Holocaust denial as a form of anti-Semitism. I agree with this statement. If you are denying that such an important, yet terrible thing happened to the Jewish people, you probably don't like them and don't want them to gain an advantage because of their people's past. That is why I think people deny the

holocaust, because they think that Jews will gain sympathy and an unfair advantage. Even if you think this is legitimate, it still is not an excuse for denying it.

In my opinion, denial of the Holocaust is nearly outrageous. There is so much evidence that it is almost impossible to prove it never happened. The people who portray the event as a myth should feel bad for themselves.

Information found at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust_denial

Holocaust

Why do the words “the Holocaust” trigger something in our brain telling us to think of the WWII genocide in Europe? Is it because that is the only holocaust anyone really talks about? Yes, that’s right. There has been more than one holocaust in history. Okay, so maybe a few other holocausts are talked about and are well known throughout the world. Take Darfur, for instance. But is Darfur referred to as a holocaust? No. Look at the definition of ‘holocaust.’

“A sacrifice consumed by fire; a thorough destruction involving extensive loss of life especially through fire.”

-Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary

The definition says that a holocaust is a “thorough destruction involving extensive loss of life.” Darfur fits under this definition and so do some other not-very-well-known holocausts.

“So, what are these not-very-well-known holocausts you are talking about?” you ask. Well, there’s Darfur, there’s the Armenian Genocide, and, in my opinion, there’s the civil rights movement of the African-Americans in America. Then, of course, there are most wars; the Civil War, WWI, WWII, and all the other wars that have taken place throughout the course of history. As an added extra, there’s a good chance some of these wars involved fire. You may be thinking that the definition almost says that fire must be involved for an event to be classified as a holocaust, but aren’t people always interpreting things in different ways? I would classify anything involving “extensive loss of life” as a holocaust. Take the Bubonic Plague as an example. Many people dead (a thorough destruction of many lives) as well as many other impacts. Already, you can see that I have mentioned at least seven holocausts.

“So what is your point?” you ask. Well, I’m sure that you have heard the saying “never again will we let this [genocide] happen,” but it is just that, a saying. It is most surely not reality. I have done some research and have not found a potential holocaust that was prevented. Nothing is reported about “almost” holocausts. This tells me that either all potential holocausts happened or didn’t exist. So what is the point of remembering? Everyone says it is to prevent future holocausts, but what about present ones?

Going back to war, I would like to elaborate some more on that. I think that because of the destruction war causes, it is a holocaust. War destroys land. Within land,

war destroys homes, people, and lives. The only good thing that might come out of war is the resolution of the cause. To go along with this I would like to say that it is said that multiple lessons were learned from the Holocaust. These were some of the good effects of the Holocaust. There's the lesson that genocide is not good, but that has not been learnt completely. Then there's the lesson that people should stand up for each other which I will mention in the next paragraph.

Now that I am finished ranting about the fact that we have not exactly learned our lesson from the holocaust, I am going to give some solutions to holocausts that could also be used as preventions. One is speaking out against them. If everyone stands up for people being mistreated, things could change. Another helpful act could be donating to causes that help people being affected by a holocaust, either by giving food and such or by using money to organize protests. Finally, we can continue to pass on our knowledge of all holocausts in the hopes that some day there will be peace.

Lastly, I would like to relate this essay to the Holocaust. There are many aspects of the WWII holocaust that many people don't know about. This relates to this essay because there are holocausts not talked about as well as aspects of the Holocaust not spoken of. Let this change!

Zhanna and Frina Arshanskaya

Zhanna Arshanskaya and her sister, Frina, are two Jewish, piano players who survived the Holocaust by playing piano. Their whole family was captured in Moscow and put into a concentration camp in the ravines of Drobitsky Yar. Zhanna's dad bribed the guard to let Zhanna escape. Frina escaped also and eventually found Zhanna. First, before they did anything, they changed their names. The two of them then found sanctuary in an orphanage in a small town. The town had a theater, which needed a piano player. Zhanna and Frina got that job and started playing piano. Even though they were playing for resting Nazis, the two sisters went on playing just to survive. Zhanna and Frina ended up lasting out the war by running around, finding more shelter, and getting to Moscow.

The final words of Zhanna's Dad were "I don't care what you do, just live!" Zhanna had those words echoing in her head for a few days when she was escaping. Those words made get enough courage to perform in front of the Nazis. Zhanna kept the words in the back of her mind to help her get through the Holocaust. Zhanna still remembers those words. Every time she hears it in her head, she is happy because she followed the final words of her dad and could use it to her advantage and performed.

If I had a choice to perform in front of the Nazis, like Zhanna, I would do it. There is little risk for being caught if the Nazis do not know who I am. I would Change my name, like Zhanna, to a different name so there would not be any risk. If I do not perform then I would be bored and I might do something that will give away that I am Jewish.

After the war, Zhanna met Larry and David Dawson. Larry helped Zhanna and Frina move to America. Zhanna and Frina went on with their musical career studied

under Muriel Kerr. On a mountaintop, David proposed, but Zhanna declined. Later, David proposed again and Zhanna accepted in 1948. In 1955, Frina was studying under the legendary Sidney Foster and met Kenwyn Boldt. They were soon married. In 1975, David died, but Zhanna, on the other hand, is still alive today.

The reasons people study the holocaust even today

The Holocaust was a great tragedy to befall humanity and started through racism and nonacceptance of a people. Pretty much all over the world people know about the Holocaust and what happened and things like memorials and statues are there to remind us this day that nothing like that should ever happen again even though it did sixty years ago. Today we study the Holocaust to remember the past to be better prepared for the future, make sure that it is something that is always remembered and will never leave the world no matter how bad it was, and so that people such as Holocaust deniers never grow too strong and make the Holocaust seem as if it had never happened.

The Holocaust is a learning experience for many people today and prepares people to be ready for genocides big or small in any country anywhere. Because of the Holocaust, even because of all the innocent people who lost their lives during the Holocaust they have shaped the world today to make sure that nothing like that should ever happen again. No matter how much we call ourselves modern and more humane there will always be the people that take their power to an excessive level and could start another genocide such as one like the Holocaust. We need to learn more about the Holocaust and the horrible things it did to people so that nothing like it can ever happen again. People should be given complete educations about the Holocaust so that they know about the horrible things that happened during the Holocaust so that a genocide that was planned out by an evil person could be stopped early before people start to die. If we were prepared before the Holocaust had happened and we were aware of genocides it would have been completely avoided. Big things like the Holocaust have started with petty stereotypes and eventually very important people started to believe in these stereotypes and then started to hate that minority and that would be how a genocide would start, from simple racism. Today after the Holocaust we have learned from it and the simple racism that could kill millions is now not as believed in as it used to be and so acts of hate crime can be stopped before they can occur.

The Holocaust has been imprinted into the minds of many people but still people don't know and are ignorant of what has happened and then even some people refuse what has happened and are unwilling to accept the truth. Because of this we must keep teaching about what has happened and what humans like us have done to others even as they were calling themselves sophisticated and knowledgeable. What has happened has been attacked many times by Holocaust deniers and neo-Nazis who have called the Holocaust a fake and staged for many reasons including anti-Semitism. Many of the people who believe in this have been taught by Holocaust deniers and they have not been taught about the Holocaust and so their opinions are distorted because they have not learned what really happened. While studying to write this I read a novel about Holocaust denial and it turns out that many Holocaust deniers have their work published by publishers who also have published books that teach Holocaust denial and are pointed to young children.

That shows that educating people is the best way to prevent this from happening again and making the numbers of Holocaust deniers grow so that it would seem as the Holocaust as just another piece of history. But the Holocaust is a learning thing to make sure that insane things like it should never happen again, and if people are educated enough about the Holocaust, won't ever happen again in the future. But Holocaust denial books should be prevented even if it breaks the freedom of press books that advertises denial should not be allowed to be published. For example, in Germany Holocaust denial is illegal and things like Holocaust denial don't happen and everyone knows about the Holocaust and how it was a horrible thing and how it should never happen again. Every country in the world can go through a genocide until it learns about never having one happen again like in Germany's case. But one genocide is enough and more genocides are happening today and so Holocaust denial should be illegal in all places so that people will always know about the Holocaust and how today we still learn from it to make sure that it never happens again. This will allow education for the Holocaust and so that no one will forget the horrors that happened during the Holocaust.

Holocaust denial is a humongous problem for people everywhere because Holocaust deniers try to grow and make more Holocaust deniers by teaching others and advertising about Jews and others being liars about the Holocaust so that their numbers grow. Holocaust deniers should never grow too strong to blot out the truth in what has happened in the 1930s and 40s and so there is a strong point on the education of children about what happened and how anything like it should be prevented in the future because of knowledge about the Holocaust and its horrors. If the number of Holocaust deniers could grow too strong then many people would bandwagon with the Holocaust deniers and then the Holocaust would just evaporate from people's minds and no one would see any wrong with starting a genocide against a people. If we forget about the Holocaust more things like it will happen because no one will look back into the past and see that it was a bad thing and the consequences that would come from it. Holocaust denial should be illegalized in all countries not to prevent or oppress people's rights as some could see, but instead to stop the oppressors from allowing their ideologies to become true. Without the Holocaust deniers than the Holocaust will never become a thing questioned and debated about but a thing known to all and kept in mind to better make this world that we live in through our decisions.

DENMARK and the HOLOCAUST

The story of Denmark during the Holocaust is unique in itself. Denmark was a country in which the Holocaust failed. Why? Two factors that probably accounted for the lower degree of anti-semitism are as follows:

1. The level of anti-semitism directed towards Danish Jews before the war.
2. The pattern of relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish communities in those countries.

Before the war, Jews in Denmark were seen as common citizens. They were accepted as they were, and were granted full access to just about everything.

When Nazi Germany first invaded Denmark in 1940, the Royal Navy surrendered without firing a single shot. For the next three years, German demands continued to escalate until the Danes were unable to turn the "cold shoulder" any more. By 1943, Danish resistance movements were in full swing. There was a good deal of unhappiness directed toward the Germans.

On the eve of Rosh Hashana, Rabbi Marcus Melchior informed his congregation that the Germans planned a mass round up of Jews the next day. Almost instantaneously, like a call to arms, the entire country sprang into action. Non-Jewish families helped to hide the Jews anywhere they could, including their own homes. Even the Lutheran Church helped in the anti-German movement.

When the Nazis came, the Church was ready. The Bishop of Copenhagen prepared a written statement which was read aloud in all Lutheran churches throughout Denmark. The churches helped to hide Torah scrolls and to gather money, food and other resources.

Almost 800 Jews were successfully saved, thanks to the spontaneous help received from the Danes. Unlike so many in Nazi-occupied Europe, most Danes saw themselves as human beings linked to others through a shared humanity, not as individuals inhabiting a world divided into "us" and "them." In the words of Thomas Merton about Denmark and the Holocaust: "they helped the Jews not because they were Christians, but because they were human."

Simon Wiesenthal

Simon Wiesenthal was born on December 31, 1908. When he was a child he was captured by the Nazis and put in concentration camps. He spent a total amount of four years in concentration camps. First it was Janowska but he managed to escape. Then it was Plaszow, but he was transferred. Finally he was put in Mauthausen, but the American army captured it and freed all the captives. When he was released he was five foot eleven and weighed less than forty-five kilograms. He then became an architectural engineer. After that he opened a small company dedicated to tracking down ex-Nazi fugitives. They would take tips and transfer them to the FBI, Mossad, and other authorities. One day he got a tip from a friend saying that a Nazi leader, named Adolf Eichmann, who was responsible for the death of four million Jews, was living in Latin America under a false alias. He then tipped off the FBI and Mossad. But little was done because they did not know where he was. But soon after that the same friend told Simon he was in Buenos Aires. Simon told Mossad, who then sent undercover agents into Buenos Aires and captured him, Simon became an overnight celebrity. He published books, and biographies. When he was interviewed about the capture he failed to mention that the whole operation went through the Israeli embassy, or most of Israel's part in the operation. This enraged Isser Harel, head of Mossad at the time. So when he wrote his official memoirs of the event he made no mention of Simon. Harel's account of the event has been disputed at book length, while Wiesenthal's contributions to the capture of Eichmann have not even been confirmed. After Eichmann was executed Wiesenthal opened a new and larger organization. He hired ex-FBI, Mossad, CIA, Navy Seals, CTU, and other law enforcement, and military officers. They took tips and tracked down ex-Nazi fugitives. His organization is still continuing to this day, and has caught men like Karl Silberbauer, the Gestapo officer responsible for the arrest of Anne Frank. Silberbauer's confession helped discredit claims that The Diary of Anne Frank was a forgery. During this period Wiesenthal also located nine of the 16 Nazis later put on trial in West Germany for the murder of the Jewish population of Lwów and also captured Franz Stangl, the commandant of the Treblinka and Sobibor death camps, and Hermine Braunsteiner-Ryan, a former Aufseherin living in Queens who had ordered and participated in the torture and murder of thousands of women and children at Majdanek. Braunsteiner's capture led to the establishment of the Office of Special Investigations in the United States, to investigate Nazi activity within the US. Simon passed away on September twenty-fifth, two thousand five in his sleep, but lives on in the hearts of the many people he touched.