

WITNESSING POLAND:

A PREPARATION AND REFLECTION GUIDE FOR TEEN TRIPS TO POLAND

DESIGNED BY ARIEL LEV FEINSTEIN

SUBMITTED IN MAY 2015

Table of Contents

RATIONALE	4
LETTER TO THE EDUCATOR	9
ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS	10
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	10
CURRICULAR GOALS	10
AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT	11
<u>UNIT ONE – INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE</u>	<u>12</u>
SESSION 1.1 – WELCOME AND INTRO TO THE COURSE	13
APPENDIX 1.1A – WHAT IS HISTORY? POSTER.....	15
APPENDIX 1.1B – SOURCING POSTER.....	16
APPENDIX 1.1C – CONTEXTUALIZATION POSTER	17
APPENDIX 1.1D – CORROBORATION POSTER	18
APPENDIX 1.1E – CLOSE READING POSTER	19
SESSION 1.2 – INQUIRY PRACTICE WITH THE WHOLE CLASS	20
APPENDIX 1.2A- HISTORICAL THINKING CHART	22
APPENDIX 1.2B – “THE PULL OF HASIDISM”	23
SESSION 1.3 – VISIT TO LOCAL HOLOCAUST MUSEUM	27
<u>UNIT TWO – INQUIRY OF PREWAR JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND</u>	<u>28</u>
SESSION 2.1 – PREWAR JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND, INQUIRY ONE	29
APPENDIX 2.1 – “STRANGERS IN A NEW LAND”	30
SESSION 2.2 – PREWAR JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND, INQUIRY TWO	38
APPENDIX 2.2 – ESTHER.....	39
SESSION 2.3 – PREWAR JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND, INQUIRY THREE	63
APPENDIX 2.3 – JEWISH LIFE IN OŚWIĘCIM.....	64
SESSION 2.4 – INQUIRY REFLECTION: PREWAR JEWISH LIFE IN POLAND	66
<u>UNIT THREE – INQUIRY OF DESTRUCTION OF POLISH JEWISH LIFE</u>	<u>68</u>
SESSION 3.1 – DESTRUCTION OF POLISH JEWISH LIFE, INQUIRY ONE	69
APPENDIX 3.1 – THE NUREMBERG LAWS	70
SESSION 3.2 – DESTRUCTION OF POLISH JEWISH LIFE, INQUIRY TWO	79
APPENDIX 3.2 – LODZ GHETTO LIQUIDATION.....	80
SESSION 3.3 – DESTRUCTION OF POLISH JEWISH LIFE, INQUIRY THREE	85
APPENDIX 3.3 – LIFE IN AUSCHWITZ	86
SESSION 3.4 – INQUIRY REFLECTION: DESTRUCTION OF POLISH JEWISH LIFE	93

UNIT FOUR – INQUIRY OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN POLAND	95
SESSION 4.1 – RIGHTEOUSNESS IN POLAND, INQUIRY ONE	96
APPENDIX 4.1 – SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE IN THE KRAKOW GHETTO	97
SESSION 4.2 – RIGHTEOUSNESS IN POLAND, INQUIRY TWO	101
APPENDIX 4.2 – SMUGGLING IN THE WARSAW GHETTO.....	102
SESSION 4.3 – RIGHTEOUSNESS IN POLAND, INQUIRY THREE	115
APPENDIX 4.3 – RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS	116
SESSION 4.4 – INQUIRY REFLECTION: RIGHTEOUSNESS IN POLAND	120
UNIT FIVE – LOOKING AHEAD (TO THE POLAND TRIP)	122
SESSION 5.1 – ON MEMORY AND REMEMBRANCE	123
SESSION 5.2 – TOUR GUIDE PLANNING (1/2)	124
APPENDIX 5.2A – <i>THE WISE MEN OF CHELM</i>	125
APPENDIX 5.2B – BLOOM’S TAXONOMY PYRAMID	127
SESSION 5.3 – TOUR GUIDE PLANNING (2/2)	128
SESSION 5.4 – FINAL TRIP PREPARATIONS	129
UNIT SIX – BRINGING CLOSURE TO THE COURSE	130
SESSION 6.1 – MAKING MEANING FROM THE TRIP	131
SESSION 6.2 – ANOTHER VISIT TO LOCAL HOLOCAUST MUSEUM	132
SESSION 6.3 – STUDENT WRITING OF THEIR DIVREI MAKOM (1/2)	133
SESSION 6.4 – STUDENT WRITING OF THEIR DIVREI MAKOM (2/2)	134
SESSION 6.5 – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (1/2)	135
APPENDIX 6.5 – SAMPLE FEEDBACK FORM	136
SESSION 6.6 – STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (2/2)	137
CONCLUDING DOCUMENTS	138
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY	138
WORKS CITED	140

Rationale

After eleven rousing games of cards over seemingly endless cups of soda and airplane snack bags, 42 Jewish teens hear the captain announce they are landing in Warsaw. Now it's time to learn about the devastation of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust, the topic for the next seven days, is a difficult and complicated content area not just for teaching but also for learning. When participants of summer programs expect a summer full of fun, the concept of learning about the Holocaust is unsettling and even anathema to their expectations. Especially for annual returnees to their summer camp, where the so-called "Israel trip" is the default summer program for their age group, it is hardly a surprise that teens are often blindsided by the Holocaust educational component of the trip. Touring concentration camps is decidedly not a fun activity. For those participants who arrive for the summer expecting only fun, which many campers on these trips expressed to me, it is understandable when they become distanced and detached when learning about Jewish suffering. Not every teen on these trips is completely unaware of the itinerary in Poland, but lacking a pre-trip orientation that really prepares participants for their "European vacation" would alleviate this issue. Among the summer trips that include a European component, the aim is often to teach participants about European Jewish history in general, and the Holocaust in particular. But here is the catch: the moment these teens get off the plane, excited to be traveling overseas with friends, few, if any, are either emotionally or intellectually prepared to learn about the Holocaust. This curriculum offers a response to this dissonance.

The field of educational tourism continues to grow as current trends in education point towards experience as a valuable means to higher learning. In Jewish education, trips to Europe and/or Israel have since the 1920s¹ been a popular method of experiential education with the hopes of “activating” Jewish identity formation. For the experience to truly be educative, learners must be engaged in the learning process. It is imperative to take into account the developmental level of high school teens in order to engage these learners in the difficult topic of the Holocaust. Erik Erikson’s stages of psychosocial development place this age group in a crisis of identity and in role confusion. Teens are processing questions like “Who am I?” and “Who can I become?” The immense impact a Jewish educational trip can have on teens can help these learners begin to answer these identity formation questions. With preparation and reflection on their trip, learners will interact with these questions in a safe and positive manner. This curriculum is designed to reach these learners at this critical juncture in their Jewish identity in order to make their time in Poland the most meaningful it can be, to redeem it from the point of view of Jewish identity building, and hopefully to inspire participants to bring positive change to the world. Studying the idea of righteousness in the midst of hatred will allow the learners to help them define who they are and who they want to become.

Unlike other Holocaust curricula that attempt to have students memorize dates and facts, this Holocaust curriculum will emotionally and intellectually prepare, and subsequently debrief, high school teens for their Holocaust educational trip to Poland. By providing teens with a series of pre-trip sessions, the experiences during their travels

¹ Cohen, Erik H. “Towards a Social History of Jewish Educational Tourism Research.” *Hagira – Israel Journal of Migration*. Vol. 5. 2015 (not yet published). 3.

can have deeper, more positive, and ultimately more meaningful effects on their growth as Jews and as teens. The opening sessions focus specifically on the Polish Jewish experience before the Holocaust; before learning about Jewish death, students will learn about Jewish life. Then, in order to ascertain the scope of Jewish destruction, students will examine what life was like during the Holocaust. Finally, the curriculum will explore acts of righteousness, including spiritual and physical resistance. Students will do all of this through the method of inquiry.

The Stanford History Education Group is an organization that focuses on the issue of how history is both taught and learned. The organization's four principles of how to read and think like a historian will be integrated throughout the students' inquiries. This focus on righteous behavior is informed by the Enduring Understanding that asserts that the **moral actions taken by a small number of individuals proved disproportionately effective in light of the fact that six million Jews perished in the Holocaust.** The stories of Polish individuals designated as "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem will frame debates about righteousness, as focused on the Enduring Understanding that **righteousness occurs when ordinary people behave with extraordinary courage.** Learning how people acted in the face of evil will hopefully inspire the learners to act righteously in their own lives. This pre-trip part of the curriculum culminates with students preparing to share some of their learning in front of their peers, as they become the tour guide for a single part of the Poland trip.

Carefully designed post-trip sessions focusing on reflection further strive to make the participants' experiences in Poland the most meaningful and growthful as possible. Learners will have opportunities to reflect, not just on the knowledge and information

covered in the inquiry lessons and the tour itself, but also on their emotional experiences of the trip. The curriculum will lead students into a discussion of what it means to “bear witness” to the history of Jews in Poland. The Authentic Assessment for the course is guided by the Enduring Understanding that **Jewish educational tourism teaches more about who you are than where you are**². In what I call a “Dvar Makom,” students will prepare a statement that examines everything they have learned and experienced so far in the course. Students’ inquiry sessions, the trip in Poland, the experience of being the tour guide, the role of bearing witness to events of the Holocaust – the Dvar Makom will allow every student to make personal meaning out of the overall experience of this course.

Part research project, part self-reflection, the Dvar Makom allows for students to reflect not only on the knowledge they learned through their primary source inquiries but also on what it felt like to teach about the Holocaust to others. The personal significance of the location, event, or person and its history, all of which they taught about as tour guides, will become clarified through the Dvar Makom. Students will peer-edit another’s Dvar Makom, and the final sessions will include student presentations. The Dvar Makom will become a document that shows how much a participant can learn when not blindsided by the horror of the Holocaust.

“None of us has the luxury not to do anything with our knowledge of the Holocaust.” These are the words of Yair Rubin, the Educational Project Coordinator at the Ghetto Fighters Museum in Israel. Yair was the local tour guide for my group of high

² Kelner, Shaul. *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism*. New York: New York UP, 2010. Print.

school teens on their summer trip to Europe and Israel. Knowing that my group has spent time in Poland learning about the Holocaust, Yair challenged all of us to do something with those experiences, citing the commandment *v'shinantam l'vaneicha* – and you shall teach your children. What Yair eloquently taught us was a combination of two well-known adages: “Knowledge is power” and “With great power comes great responsibility.” We must teach about the Holocaust, and we must then fulfill our role as witnesses to these events to better the world through acts of righteousness.

Letter to the Educator

Dear Lead Historian,

You are about to embark on an incredible journey. In this curriculum, you will find lessons that enable your students to become expert historians on a certain topic related to Jewish life in Poland, before, during, and after the Holocaust. You will lead your students through a series of 10 inquiry sessions. Although the method of inquiry is usually performed with the entire class reading through the same documents in small groups, this curriculum suggests for these small inquiry groups to research a broad range of topics. This individuation allows for a wider range of knowledge to be created for the class as a whole. Since students will be teaching their peers as tour guides on the trip to Poland, it is important that the inquiry group research topics are diverse.

The resources that I provide are just a small sample of primary sources that are widely available both online and in books. (See my annotated bibliography at the end of this curriculum for multiple suggestions of where to find these resources.) Each inquiry group should go in depth into a certain research topic, which would include at least nine primary sources. I suggest the following research topics:: Krakow, Warsaw, Auschwitz, Oscar Schindler, the Zehnerschaft, Janusz Korzcak, and Irena Sendler.

I provide these seven research topics because of my own experiences in studying them, but I implore you to direct your students to the stories and experiences of those with whom you have personal memories and experiences. As long as the research topics of your students' inquiry groups fit in with your trip itinerary, go for it!

The scope of my project did not allow me to provide 63 different resources for each of these topics. However, I was very intentional with the resources I do provide, so that each source relates in some way to my recommended research topic. For example, Appendix 2.2 is a journal entry of a girl named Esther and her experience in a Beis Yaakov school in Poland, a very similar school in which the women of the Zehnerschaft grew up. Appendix 4.3 studies Yad Vashem's criteria for being designated "Righteous Among the Nations," which would relate to further research of both Oscar Schindler and Irena Sendler.

You will find additional notes at the beginning of each unit, which I hope will clarify exactly how each unit fits into the sequence of the course.

I hope you find as much fulfillment and meaning in teaching this course as I have found in designing it.

Sincerely,

~ Ari Feinstein
arifeinstein@gmail.com

Enduring Understandings

- Moral actions taken by a small number of individuals proved disproportionately effective in light of the fact that six million Jews perished in the Holocaust.
- Righteousness occurs when ordinary people behave with extraordinary courage.
- Jewish educational tourism teaches more about who you are than where you are.

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to read and think like a historian?
- Why is it important for historical claims to be based on evidence?
- Does knowing the victim alter your view of the crime?
- What is the purpose of remembering?
- How much do national governments influence the day-to-day behaviors of its citizens?
- What is righteousness? How can it be achieved?
- Why do some people stand by during times of injustice, while others try to do something to stop or prevent injustice?
- What are the consequences of forgetting?
- Is “Never Forget” enough?
- Why are memory and remembrance important in Judaism?

Curricular Goals

- To intellectually and emotionally prepare students for an educational trip to Poland
- To make personal meaning out of bearing witness to events of the Holocaust
- To read and think historically
- To act out the commandment of *v'shinantam l'vaneicha* - and you shall teach your children

Authentic Assessment

Part One: Research Project

Tour Guiding in Poland

Students will be given an opportunity to become a tour guide during their trip to Poland. To do this, students will form inquiry groups by the second unit of class. They will remain in these inquiry groups throughout the course, and will tour guide together as a group. As inquiry groups, students will research and write about any topic specific to any location on the trip itinerary. In order to achieve excellence, Unit 5 provides students with ample time to prepare exactly what and how they want to teach by utilizing the tools of Bloom's Taxonomy as well as a Set Induction.

In efforts to keep students focused on this tour guiding opportunity, at the end of each inquiry unit, Units 2, 3, and 4, students will be asked to identify at least two main points they want to teach their peers. These building block assessments are to be collected by the educator at the end of Units 2, 3, and 4. In this way, the educator can easily remind each inquiry group of what it is they already decided on teaching as tour guides in Poland.

Part Two: Self-Reflection

Dvar Makom

In what I am calling a Dvar Makom, students will be asked to reflect on the following: what they learned from their inquiries, what they learned on the Poland trip, both intellectually and emotionally, reflections on being a tour guide for their peers, and reflections on what it means for them now as witnesses to these events.

The Dvar Makom is designed to help the learners make sense of their experiences in this course as well as their time in Poland. By grappling with this new knowledge and experience, students will be enabled to find personal meaning out of the course and the trip.

Unit One - Introduction to the Course

Note to the Teacher

Dear Lead Historian,

In this introductory unit, which consists of three lessons, you are tasked with introducing and then practicing the concepts of Reading and Thinking Like a Historian. Please keep in mind that while some students may be familiar with this style of learning history, not all will be. As the inquiry model is the foundation of the pre-trip sessions, it is very important to ensure that all students understand what will be asked of them during those sessions.

Additionally, Session 1.3 involves a trip to a Local Holocaust Museum. It would be best to coordinate a museum tour guide for that day. If there is no museum to visit, I recommend replacing this lesson with a second practice session of inquiry.

B'hatzlacha!

Enduring Understandings

- Jewish educational tourism teaches more about who you are than where you are.

Essential Questions

- What does it mean to read and think like a historian?
- Why is it important for historical claims to be based on evidence?

Unit Objectives

- To introduce the practice of reading and thinking like a historian
- To lay the foundation for the emotional and intellectual preparation of visiting Poland
- To practice the inquiry method together as a whole class

Session 1.1 - Welcome and Intro to the Course

Goals:

- To introduce the practice of Reading Like a Historian
- To lay the foundation for the emotional and intellectual preparation of visiting Poland

Objectives:

- Students will be able to describe the three categories for historical thinking (as set out by Stanford's 'Reading Like a Historian'), and at least one question per category. [see "Historical Thinking Chart" for reference.]
- Students will begin the process of 'Reading Like a Historian' by learning what it means to 'Think Like a Historian'
- Students will share at least one thing they have learned about the Holocaust in the past

Set Induction: (10 minutes)

- **Ask:** What is history? How would you define the word 'history'?
 - a. Give students a minute or two to think about and come up with answers to these questions.
 - b. Call on students to share what they came up with.
 - c. Guide this discussion towards coming up with a working definition of how your class defines 'history.'
 - d. Next, go over the Stanford History Education Group (SHEG) definition:
 - i. History is an account of the past.
 - ii. Accounts differ depending on one's perspective.
 - iii. We rely on evidence to construct accounts of the past.
 - e. Compare and contrast your class definition with the SHEG definition.

Input: (30 minutes)

- On a whiteboard, write out the SHEG's four categories of historical reading skills: Sourcing, Contextualization, and Close Reading.
 - a. As a class, define what these three terms mean.
 - i. Sourcing – to consider a document's origins to help make sense of it
 - ii. Contextualization – making connections between historical eras and circumstances of particular events
 - iii. Corroboration – determining what other documents say and if there is agreement or not
 - iv. Close Reading – finding evidence in a document to make a historical claim
- **Ask:** What kinds of questions need to be asked in order to determine each of these categories?
 - a. Sourcing: *What do we need to ask to determine the origin of the source?*
 - b. Contextualization: *What questions help us find out the historical context of the source?*
 - c. Corroboration: *What do other documents say, and why might one document be more reliable than another?*

- d. Close Reading: *What questions help us discover the underlying meaning or message of a source?*
- After the categories have been discussed, you can hang up the attached SHEG posters onto a wall. **Explain:** *These posters will be hanging during each lesson to help us all remember the types of questions we should be asking about each source that we uncover. In order to think and read like a historian, these are the questions we must keep at the front of our minds in our sessions.*
- **Check for Understanding:** *Does anyone have any comments or questions about these posters?*
 - a. **Discuss:** *I have a few questions for you about this. Why should we learn history in this style? Why should we be learning about this history of Jewish life in Poland and about the Holocaust in this way?*

Closing: (20 minutes)

- Create an open forum for students to express what they already know about the Holocaust and the things they have studied about the Holocaust up until now. Ask the students how they have learned about the Holocaust – from movies, documentaries, textbooks, journals, survivor testimonies (in person or on film), etc. This closing piece is all about creating a safe space for discussion and exploration of what the students already have learned about the Holocaust.
- To close, explain that: *These sessions are designed to build our knowledge of the history of the Polish Jews before, during, and after the Holocaust. Additionally, these sessions are about preparing ourselves for the trip to Poland. We will all be given an opportunity to be the tour guide on our trip. Everyone, in pairs or small groups, will be learning something different about a particular site we will be visiting on our tour, and each one of us will be responsible for teaching the entire group about it.*
- You can field any questions about this subject (re: Dvar Makom) before finishing the session.

WHAT IS HISTORY?

- **History is an account of the past.**
- **Accounts differ depending on one's perspective.**
- **We rely on evidence to construct accounts of the past.**
- **We must question the reliability of each piece of evidence.**
- **Any single piece of evidence is insufficient to build a plausible account.**



SOURCING

**Before reading the document
ask yourself:**

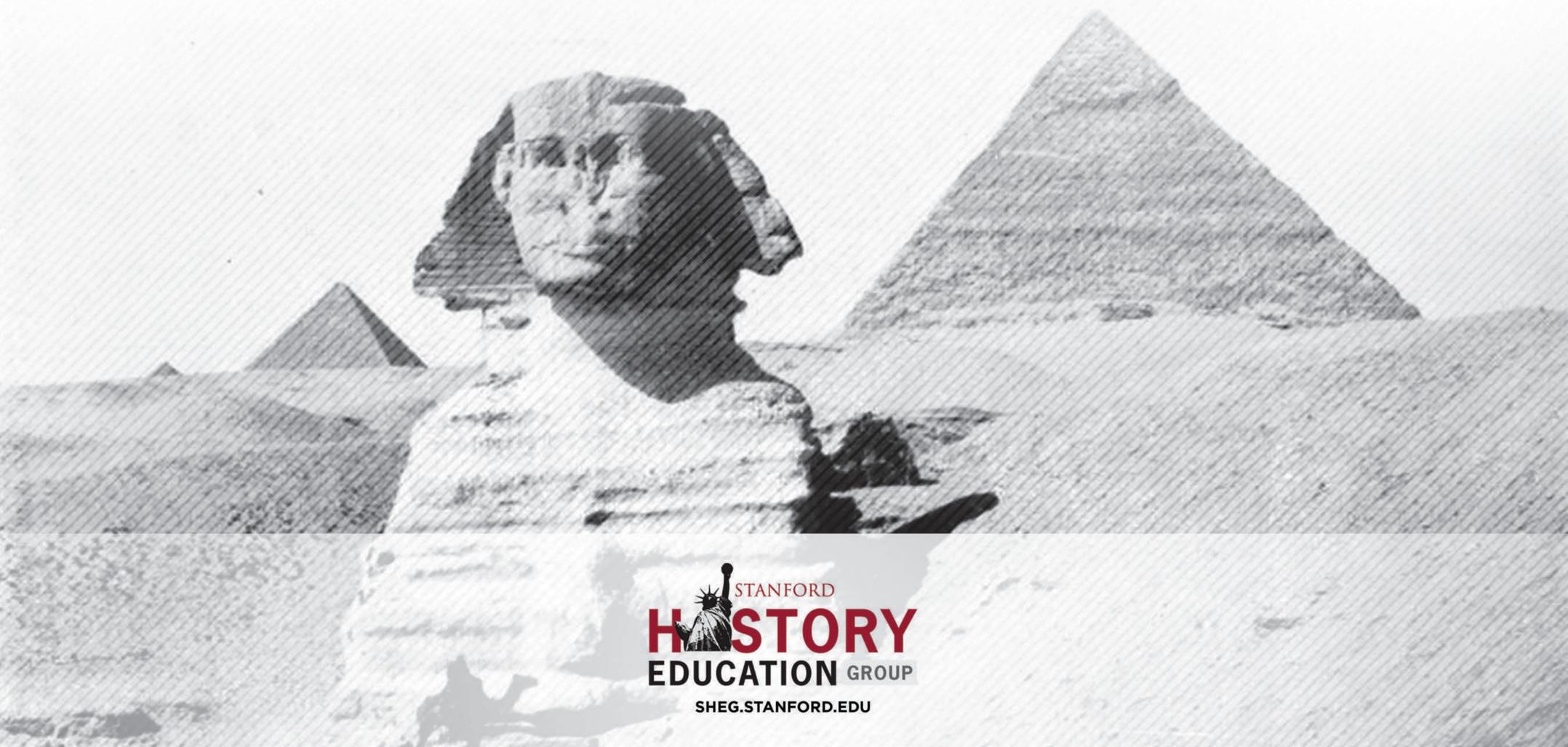
- **Who wrote this?**
- **What is the author's perspective?**
- **Why was it written?**
- **When was it written?**
- **Where was it written?**
- **Is it reliable? Why? Why not?**

CONTEXTUALIZATION

- **When and where was the document created?**
- **What was different then?
What was the same?**
- **How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?**

CORROBORATION

- **What do other documents say?**
- **Do the documents agree?
If not, why?**
- **What are other possible documents?**
- **What documents are most reliable?**



CLOSE READING

- **What claims does the author make?**
- **What evidence does the author use?**
- **What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience?**
- **How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective?**



Session 1.2 - Inquiry Practice with the Whole Class

-scripted-

Goals:

- In preparation of self-guided inquiry sessions, students will begin to think and read historically
- To practice thinking critically about historical documents

Objectives:

- Students will practice active listening
- Students will be able to make a claim about Hasidism and back it up with documentary evidence.

Set Induction: (15 minutes)

- Free-write on any one of the following questions: What is the story of your birth? What is one story of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah? What is one story of a memory from camp? Explain to the students that they will be sharing a two-minute version of their story with a partner.
- Have students pair up and share their stories with each other.
 - a. This is an exercise in **active-listening**. Please refer to the following protocol:
 - b. **Say:** *We are now going to do what is called active listening. While one person shares their story, the partner will sit and listen intently, maintaining eye contact, but not responding verbally. After about two minutes, the listener will have about 1 minute to ask 1-2 questions to delve deeper into the story. Then, we will reverse roles. The new storyteller will have about two minutes to share their story, while the new listener sits and listens, still maintaining eye contact. The new listener will have about 1 minute to ask 1-2 questions to delve deeper into the story. Are there any questions? Lets begin.*

Note: At each interval, announce when 30 seconds and 10 seconds remain.
--

- Return to a whole class discussion and ask: How do you know this story? What kind of evidence or proof do you have that this story occurred the way you describe? How might someone else remember this story?
- **Main Point:** *What you were just describing is history. Beyond the idea that history is simply “things that happened in the past,” history is full of many different accounts, viewpoints, and opinions that sometimes agree and sometimes conflict with one another. Our sessions together are about learning what life was like for Jews in Poland in the time leading up to and during the Holocaust. We will be reading historical documents, like journal entries, and viewing survivor testimonies to better understand the history of Polish Jewry.*

Guided Practice: (35 minutes)

- **Introduce:** *This document is titled “The Pull of Hasidism.” It includes primary source materials from Elie Wiesel’s book Souls on Fire. What are some things you would expect to learn about from this document?*
- **Instruction:** *In groups, please read the document, and answer at least one question for each category in the Historical Thinking Chart I will hand out to you. You have about 20 minutes to do this, and then we will reconvene as a whole class to discuss our observations and things we learned from this reading.*
- Hand out the document and the Historical Thinking Chart (Appendix 1.2), and have students form groups of two or three to discuss.
- After about 20 minutes, ask your class if there are any groups that need more time to finish their discussions and determine when to regroup.
- **Check for Understanding:** Once your class is back together, debrief the experience and ask some of the questions that are included at the bottom of the resource. Ask how different groups came to their conclusions, paying special attention to where groups differed in their answers.

Closing: (10 minutes)

- Ask for one or two volunteers to retell the story they heard from their partner at the beginning of today’s session. You should allow for about four-six minutes of recapping these stories.
- **Explain:** *Even in just one short hour, after intently listening to each other’s stories, it was difficult to retell them. Perhaps if you had been able to use your partner’s notes, you would have been better able to remember their story. You can see why using primary sources is so important for us to learn what happened in the past. The history we will be studying in this class happened, for the most part, within the past 100 years, and that is, historically speaking, very recent history. Next session, we will continue to learn about the history of the Jews in Prewar Poland. We will be splitting into small groups, just like we did today, to continue discussing what life was like for Polish Jews in the late 19th-early 20th centuries. I am looking forward to seeing you next time as we continue becoming expert historians in this field.*

Historical Thinking Chart

(to be used with every inquiry)

Historical Reading Skills	Consider the following...	Prompts (answer at least one per box)
Sourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who wrote this? ○ What is the author's perspective? ○ When and where was it written? ○ Is it reliable? Why or why not? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The author probably believes... ○ I think the audience is... ○ Based on the source information, I think the author might... ○ I do/don't trust this document because...
Contextualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When and where was it created? ○ What was different then? What was the same? ○ How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Based on the background information, I understand this document differently because... ○ The author might have been influenced by... (historical context) ○ This document might not give me the whole picture because...
Corroboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What do other documents say? ○ Do the documents agree? If not, why? ○ What are other possible documents? ○ What documents are most reliable? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The author agrees/disagrees with... ○ These documents all agree/disagree about... ○ Another document to consider might be...
Close Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What claims does the author make? ○ What evidence does the author use? ○ What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience? ○ How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I think the author chose these words in order to... ○ The author is trying to convince me... ○ The author claims... ○ The evidence used to support the author's claims is...

The Pull of Hasidism

In the years after 1648, Poland seemed to be in almost constant turmoil as its neighbors took over more and more of its land. Some Jews responded to the upheavals by turning inward. Others waited anxiously for the coming of the Messiah only to be victimized by false prophets who betrayed their faith and trust. Then at a time when many had lost all hope, a new movement called Hasidism began in the Ukraine. Its leader was Israel Ben Eliezer known as the Baal Shem-Tov, the "master of the good name." He offered hope at a time when many had lost all hope.

As a child in what is now Hungary, Elie Wiesel learned about Israel Ben Eliezer from his grandfather. As an adult, he has continued to study the Baal Shem's life and legacy. To Wiesel, he was "a man of the people in the truest sense of the word."

[The Baal Shem-Tov] had no official titles, no influential friends, no powerful protectors. He had neither material possessions nor wealthy admirers. He could not even lay claim to vast Talmudic learning. . . . This partly explains his immediate success among the less fortunate—they identified with him. . . . His humble origins made it easier for the poor to approach him. . . . He told them what they wanted to hear: that every one of them existed in God's memory, that every one of them played a part in his people's destiny, each in his way and according to his means.

He assured them that a simple but sincere prayer has as much merit as a mystical incantation, that the fervor born in a pure heart is greater than the one born of a complex and unfathomable thought. He said: "The coachman who kisses the holy scrolls of the Torah pleases God more than the angels who praise Him and do nothing else." He wanted them to be suspicious of anyone claiming to have all the answers: "You want to know if a particular Rebbe is genuine? Go and ask his advice. Ask him if he knows a way to chase impure thoughts from your mind; if he says yes, you'll know he is a fake." He told them that pride derived from knowledge is worse than ignorance, that to seek is better than to find. The greatness of man, he taught them, lies in his capacity for humility. Let him start by submitting to God: he will grow and he will be free. . . .

. . . And since it is even to every man to acquire all the powers, why despair? Why give up the fight? One tear, one prayer can change the course of events; one fragment of melody can contain all the joy in the world, and by letting it go free, influence fate. And no elite has a monopoly on song or tears; God listens to the shepherd playing his flute as readily as He listens to the saint renouncing his earthly attachments. The prisoner's craving equals the wise man's: the one, like the other, has a bearing on the essence of man.

He taught them to fight sadness with joy. "The man who looks only at himself cannot but sink into despair, yet as soon as he opens his eyes to the creation around him, he will know joy." And this joy leads to the absolute, to redemption, to God; that was the new truth as defined by the Baal Shem. And Jews by the thousands let themselves be carried by this call, they needed to live and to survive. Thanks to it, there was joy—following pain—and it brought together the dispersed and exiled. . . . When he died in 1760, twenty-four years after his revelation, there remained in Central and Eastern Europe not a single Jewish town that was left unaffected. He had

been the spark without which thousands of families would have succumbed to gloom and hopelessness—and the spark had fanned itself into a huge flame that tore into the darkness.¹¹

After the Baal Shem's death, a number of his disciples became the leaders of groups of believers. Many of these groups saw their rebbe as a *zaddik*. A *zaddik* is a righteous man—one who carries "God's light" in the world. To the *hasidim*, he was also a saint, an activist, and a wonder-worker. They believed that through his devotion and righteousness, their prayers would reach the heavens. They told and retold stories that celebrated the wisdom and power of both the Baal Shem and their own rebbe.

In one story, a group of *hasidim* gather at the Baal Shem's House of Prayer on Yom Kippur, the most solemn of the Jewish holidays. Among them is a villager whose 13-year-old son is unable to recognize the shapes of the letters let alone understand their meaning. Hour after hour, the boy sits silently as the men pray. Early in the afternoon, he asks his father if he can blow the whistle in his pocket. His father warns him not to disturb the service. But as the closing prayer begins, the boy takes out his whistle and blows it loudly. Although the congregation is startled, even frightened by the noise, the Baal Shem continues to pray but more quickly and easily than usual. Later he explains, "The boy made things easy for me."

In another story, a skeptical visitor is puzzled by the behavior of a *zaddik* who disappears for hours at a time during Elul, the month that comes just before the High Holy Days. It is a time for making peace with enemies, for resolutions, and for heroic efforts to correct personal flaws. Where does the *zaddik* go? What does he do? The visitor decides to find out. After secretly following the *zaddik*, he discovers that the rebbe disguises himself as a peasant so that he can help a poor woman without being recognized. When the visitor later hears the *hasidim* speak of how their *zaddik* ascends to heaven whenever he prays, he nods and quietly adds, "If not higher."

Such tales amused, delighted, and offered hope to hundreds of thousands of Jews throughout Eastern Europe. But not everyone accepted the teachings of the new movement. Opponents were known as *mitnagdim*. They were led by the most respected and learned rabbi of the day, Elijah ben Salomon Zalman—the Gaon of Vilna. To him, "the visions and miracles" of the rebbes were "so many illusions, dangerous lies, and idolatries." He and others were troubled by the fact that the title of *rebbe* was often inherited rather than earned. They were also concerned by the disdain many *hasidim* had for learning. The Gaon and others believed that an ignorant man cannot be truly pious.

The battles between *hasidim* and *mitnagdim* were so bitter that in some places *hasidim* were excommunicated, or excluded from membership in the Jewish community. In explaining why the movement flourished in spite of such antagonism, Wiesel writes:

It is only natural that the Baal Shem was much talked about. People praised his powers and quoted his maxims. The Jewish world was in an uproar; it followed his astounding ascent with fear or hope, or both. To remain indifferent was impossible; one took a stand for or against this extraordinary personality who seemed to be everywhere at once, come and gone in a flash, leaving behind him a trail of wonder or anger. . . . The legend of the Baal Shem had fired the Jewish imagination with such violence and in so many places, nobody could stop or even brake his momentum. He answered a need.

For the eighteenth century was not very kind toward these Jews who lived in the most ravaged parts of Central and Eastern Europe. . . . Their freedom, their life hinged on the good will of local squires who exploited their commercial talents. Let

the [Jewish] innkeeper or the superintendent present himself at week's end with a purse that was too light, and he would end up in jail savagely beaten. With no one to bail him out. The situation prevailed particularly in the small villages and isolated towns; none was to be pitied more than the Jew who lived in an out-of-the-way hamlet; he felt forgotten, forsaken by his brethren.

The larger communities had other kinds of problems; they were too divided. There were barriers between those with learning and those without, between the rich and the poor, the leaders and the craftsmen, the notables and the average citizens; the different classes watched each other with distrust, bitterness and rancor. At the top of the social ladder: the secular leaders (usually well-off if not rich), the rabbis named by them, the Talmudists, the devout, the teachers. Whoever possessed neither title nor fortune was ignored. Whoever showed neither knowledge nor piety belonged to the oppressed class. . . .

On a spiritual plane, Judaism went through a crisis that was no less serious. . . . Traumatized by the nightmare of false Messiahs of the seventeenth century, the rabbis looked askance at anything that seemed new, anything that was obscure. . . . And so, to protect tradition, they surrounded it with fences and obstacles; who tried to overturn them left himself open to fanatic, merciless repression. . . .

But man cannot live indefinitely without a dream and without a legend. Therefore, if someone appears who brings them both—it is enough. He will impose himself and reign.¹²

CONNECTIONS

Some scholars view *Hasidism* as revolutionary. In what sense was it a break with the past? In what respects was it in keeping with Jewish tradition?

What values do the stories retold in this reading teach? What is the moral, or lesson, of each? Y. L. Peretz, a Yiddish writer, retold many *hasidic* tales, including the one about the rebbe who went to heaven “if not higher.” What was the appeal of such stories?

In the 1700s most women and many poor men knew only Yiddish. In 1622, a rabbi published a book for them called the *Tsena-Urena*. It contained prayers, summaries of the Torah readings, and stories from the Talmud. It also offered advice on how to be a good Jew. It quickly became a best-seller. Almost every family owned a copy even though scholars looked down on those who used it. The *hasidim* were the first to praise those who prayed in Yiddish. A descendent of the Baal Shem, Rabbi Nachman of Bratislav, told these women and men, “In Yiddish, it is possible to pour out your words, speaking everything that is in your heart before the Lord.” How do such statements explain the appeal of *Hasidism*?



The *Tsena-Urena* enabled Jews who knew no Hebrew to pray and study the Bible.

Elie Wiesel writes that "man cannot live indefinitely without a dream and without a legend. Therefore, if someone appears who brings them both—it is enough. He will impose himself and reign." What does he mean? Are his words true for the world today or do they just apply to eighteenth-century Europe?

Session 1.3 - Visit to Local Holocaust Museum

Goal:

- To create a shared baseline knowledge of the Holocaust

Objectives:

- Students will experience a visit to the Local Holocaust Museum
- Students will have the opportunity to reflect on their visit and express their reflections through writing a thank-you note to the museum/tour guide

Framing Before the Visit:

- Before you enter the museum, explain to your students that they will all be writing a thank-you note to the museum for hosting them today.
 - a. If you happen to get a tour guide for your museum trip, your students should address their letters to the tour guide.

Note: If you do have a tour guide, it is a good idea to remind your students that when they go to Poland, they will all have the opportunity to be the group's tour guide, so they should give the proper respect to their tour guide.

- Explain that the students' thank-you letters should consist of at least one new thing they learned during their time at the museum.

Reflection:

- Before you leave the museum, give your students at least 15 minutes to think about their experience at the museum and to write a thank-you note to the museum/tour guide.

Unit Two - Inquiry of Prewar Jewish Life in Poland

Note to the Teacher

Dear Lead Historian,

This is the first of three units of inquiry, guided by Stanford University's Reading Like a Historian philosophy.

You will need to create small inquiry groups of about three or four students per group. These groups will (hopefully) remain constant throughout the course. Understandably, circumstances may arise in which you would need to switch the groups around, and that is okay, but the ideal is to have the same group studying together throughout the sessions.

Many of the primary sources for this unit are similar across the groups, but remember that this style of learning may be new for many of the students. Be sure to offer help or clarification as needed.

B'hatzlacha!

Enduring Understanding

- Jewish educational tourism teaches more about who you are than where you are.

Essential Questions

- Does knowing about the victim alter your view of the crime?
- What is the purpose of remembering?

Unit Objectives

- To build on the intellectual preparation of visiting Poland
- To familiarize students with several primary sources concerning Prewar Jewish Life in Poland
- To reflect on students' learning and allow them to make meaning of their inquiries

Session 2.1 - Prewar Jewish Life in Poland, Inquiry One

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Prewar Jewish Life in Poland
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Prewar Jewish Life in Poland
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Strangers in a New Land

In 1492, Jews were expelled from Spain. According to one legend, as they journeyed eastward in search of a new home, a note miraculously dropped from the sky. It read, "Poh lin." In Hebrew, the words mean "Here, stay overnight." The exiles took those words as a sign and settled in the land they called "Polin" or "Poland." The legend suggests how important Poland was to the Jews of long ago. But it is just a story. Very few of the Jews who settled in Poland came from Spain.

Historians believe that Poland took its name from its founders—a group known as the Polanie or “people of the open fields.” In the tenth century they built a kingdom between the Vistula and the Oder, two of the many rivers that wind their way across the plains of northern Europe. The first Jewish settlers probably arrived toward the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth. By the end of the 1200s, the country was home to several thousand Jews, mainly from neighboring lands like Germany, Bohemia, and Austria. Later they would be joined by Jews from places as far away as Spain, Greece, Italy, and Turkey. By the early 1400s, about 10,000 Jews made their home in Poland. Arnold Zable, an Australian Jew whose family came from Poland, says of these men and women:

They lived on the edge of time and space, my ancestors, always on the verge of moving on, continually faced with the decision: do we stay, persist, take root within this kingdom, or do we take to the road again? Perhaps it is safer, greener, beyond the next river, over the next mountain-range, across yet another border. Often enough the choice was made for them, and they fled for their lives in the wake of expulsions, inquisitions, and massacres to seek a new place of refuge. At other times they were welcomed, initially, for the skills they had accumulated as wanderers; centuries on the move had made them masters of the ephemeral. They knew how to serve as middlemen, entrepreneurs, navigators and astronomers, court advisers and healers; even though their hearts longed for some soil to till.²

In those days, travelers did not need visas to enter a country. Permission was needed only if they wished to settle there. From the 1200s on, Polish rulers welcomed newcomers—especially artisans and merchants. At the time Poland was recovering from attacks by Mongol warriors. It needed settlers to rebuild the country and secure its borders.

As in neighboring kingdoms, an individual's place in Polish society was decided at birth. Who your parents were determined to a large extent not only who you were but also what you could become. At the top of Polish society were those who fought—the nobles and knights. Then came those who prayed—the priests and monks. At the bottom were those who toiled—the peasants or serfs who worked on the large estates of the upper classes. How did newcomers fit into such a society? Polish kings and princes, like rulers in other parts of Europe, created a place for new arrivals by issuing a charter. A charter was a contract that outlined the rights and responsibilities of both the ruler and the newcomers.

In 1264, Prince Boleslaw of Kalisz granted the first known charter to Jews in Poland. Like similar documents in Germany, Bohemia, and Hungary, it placed the new-

comers under the prince's rule and specified the taxes they would have to pay. Like charters elsewhere, it was a source of revenue for the ruler. And like charters elsewhere, it dealt with Jews not as individuals but as members of a group. Many of the rights outlined in the charter were similar to those Jews had in other places. These included the following:

- Nobody may disturb or attack the Jews or take property they have inherited.
- Jews have the right to trade with anyone they choose to as long as the trade is legal.
- Jews have freedom of movement within the borders of the country to carry on their businesses and trade without paying duties.
- No one may demand hospitality in a Jewish home without the family's consent.
- Jewish children may not be forcibly baptized. Jews who ask to be baptized must wait three days so that authorities may determine that they are doing so of their own free will. Those converts must give up any family property they have inherited.
- If a dispute between a Jew and Christian is taken to a court, each party may argue its case according to its own laws.
- Anyone who attacks or murders a Jew will not only receive the usual punishment for such crimes but also pay a fine to the royal treasury.

The charter issued by Boleslaw in 1264 also contained four privileges not found in charters issued by rulers of other countries.

1. In keeping with papal decrees, Jews are not to be accused of using Christian blood "because their law prohibits the use of any blood." A Christian who makes such a charge is to suffer the same punishment a Jew would receive if the accusation were true.
2. Jews can receive a horse as security for a loan only during the daylight hours. (This was to protect Jews against accusations that they had accepted stolen horses as pledges. Stolen horses were more likely to be transferred at night than during the day.)
3. A Jew may be accused of forfeiting money only if the accusation is authorized by the prince or his local representative.
4. A Christian who fails to help a Jew attacked at night is required to pay a fine.

Charters granted in Poland in the years that followed also safeguarded the right of Jews to practice their religion. They could not be forced to accept money on the Sabbath even in payment of a debt. They were also allowed to have their own slaughter houses so they could prepare kosher meat and protection for their funeral processions.

During the Middle Ages, kings and princes were not the only lawmakers in Poland. Nobles often proclaimed their own laws. So did the Church. Each tried to define the place of Jews and other minorities within its territory. Although these laws varied from place to place and time to time, Jews almost everywhere in Poland had more freedom than they did elsewhere. Jews in other parts of Europe were increasingly seen as the property of a ruler who could pawn, rob, or expel them whenever he or she chose. In Poland, however, Jews were treated as "freemen"—a rank similar to that of a knight.³ Like knights, freemen were obligated to defend their king or lord in battle. So Jews formed their own battalions and even turned their synagogues into fortresses in times of war.

Polish Jews went to great lengths to guard their status as "freemen" against every challenge. In the 1500s, one group confronted a former Russian general who had been given control of a town in Volhynia, a Polish province. When a few Jews in the town

refused to obey one of his orders, he confined them to a dungeon filled with water. He then demanded that other Jews in the town pay a ransom for their release. Outraged by such behavior, the Jews took their grievances to the king of Poland and the Sejm, a parliament of nobles. The Jews argued that the general had violated the terms of their charter. After hearing their story, the king and the nobles agreed. At their insistence, the general released his Jewish prisoners.

Not surprisingly, such stories attracted more and more Jews to Poland. Most towns and cities in the kingdom now had a “Jewish street.” At first glance, it looked much like any other thoroughfare in the town. What set it apart were a handful of buildings important to Jewish life. Almost every town of any size had at least one synagogue, a ritual bath or mikvah, and a hospital. (In those days hospitals sheltered travelers as well as sick people.) The Jewish cemetery lay at the end of the street or just beyond the city gates. These institutions were organized and managed by a *kehilla*—an association that collected the taxes the Jewish community paid to its Polish ruler and provided a broad range of services.

At first, Polish kings or princes named the leaders of a town’s *kehilla*. By the 1500s, however, Jews were choosing their own leaders and enforcing their own laws. They also decided who qualified for membership in their community. Those decisions were made by a small group of men chosen on the basis of their age, how long their family had lived in the community, their contribution to the community, and above all, their economic status and scholarship.

By the 1500s, many *kehillot* in Poland were confronting issues that involved Jews in more than one community. To address those concerns, they organized regional associations and later a national one. In those days, the Kingdom of Poland was divided into four provinces: Greater Poland with Poznan as its capital, Little Poland (Krakow), Red Russia (Lvov), and Volhynia (Ludmir). In 1569, a fifth province was added when the Principality of Lithuania with Vilna as its capital became part of Poland. All five regions had their own associations. And from time to time, the leaders of these groups would gather at the great trading fairs held in Lublin and Yaroslav to settle major disputes and discuss issues of common concern. The Vaad Arba Aratzot or Council of the Four Lands grew out of those meetings. Lithuania was initially part of the Council, but it separated from the group in 1623.

The leaders of the Vaad included noted rabbis and scholars. In deciding cases, they used a code of Jewish law known as Shulhan Arukh. It was compiled by Joseph Karo, an exile from Spain who settled in Palestine in the 1500s. In creating the code, he drew mainly on Sephardic (Spanish) and Middle Eastern traditions. Later Moses Isserles, a great Polish rabbi, added Ashkenazic (German-Polish) customs and practices to the code.

By the 1600s, there were Jewish settlements in every part of Poland “Yet,” Zable warns, “at no time were these communities entirely secure. Arbitrarily, a charter or privileges they had been granted could be repealed, and their function, place of residence, and status redefined.”⁴

CONNECTIONS

Arnold Zable describes his ancestors as continually faced with the decision: “Do we stay, persist, take root within this kingdom, or do we take to the road again?” These decisions were not made lightly. What were the possible consequences of each choice? What factors

do you think influenced the way individuals and families answered the question?

The charter issued in 1264 states that "a Christian who fails to help a Jew attacked at night is required to pay a fine." What values are reflected in the statement? Why do you think this provision was included in a document that defined the rights of Jews in Poland? What does it suggest about the way many Christians defined their "universe of obligation"?

A contract is a written agreement between two or more parties that is enforceable by law. What are the advantages in having a piece of paper that spells out your rights and responsibilities? What are the disadvantages? What do the rights included in the charters suggest about relationships between Christians and Jews in other places and in other times? How do the charters hope to avoid the problems of the past? How do they try to anticipate the future? To what extent do your answers explain the four new rights included in the charter of 1264?

What is true in law is not always true in fact. What evidence can you find in the reading that suggest Jewish rights and privileges may not have been as secure as the charters would suggest?

Zable writes that his ancestors were "masters of the ephemeral." The word *ephemeral* refers to something that lasts for only a brief time. What are "masters of the ephemeral"? How secure are such people?

On the Edge of Time and Space

In a society where membership is determined by birth, outsiders are always on the edge of time and space. As Arnold Zable reminds us, "Arbitrarily a charter or privileges they had been granted could be repealed, and their function, place of residence, and status redefined. There was always the threat of a sudden whirlwind, a madman on the rampage full of drink and misdirected rage, inciting the mob to join in and take out its frenzy on these peculiar people who had settled among them with their private God and the countless prayer-houses in which they worshipped Him."

In 1569, Poland and Lithuania were united into a single country, the second largest in Europe and one of the most diverse. Poles made up only about 40 percent of the total population. The country was also home to Ukrainians, White Russians, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Tartars, and Jews. Some were conquered peoples. Others came to Poland as refugees from other parts of Europe or Asia. Although Poland was officially a Catholic country, it granted religious minorities more freedom than most countries did.

With Poland's growth came rivalries among the various groups who lived in the country. In the past, Jews were often the only artisans or merchants in a city or town. Now they had competition from German and Polish artisans and merchants who argued that Christians ought to be favored over Jews. They therefore demanded restrictions on their Jewish counterparts. In some cities, these Christian merchants and artisans won the right "not to tolerate Jews" and other outsiders.

By the 1600s, many Jews in Poland were seeking new opportunities in the recently conquered Ukraine where Polish nobles were building huge estates. The nobles needed help in managing those estates and supervising the work of the peasants, most of whom were Ukrainian or Russian. In 1569, there were about 4000 Jews in the Ukraine. By the 1640s, historians estimate that there were over 50,000 Jews in 115 separate communities. During those years, a new system developed in Poland known as the *Arenda* system. It was a complicated leasing arrangement in which Jews rented the right to manage an estate or group of estates at a fixed rate.

Those who held such a lease could in turn sub-lease parts of the estate or economic activities associated with it to friends and relatives. In theory, anyone could be a leaseholder. But in reality, almost all of the leaseholders were Jews. They paid for the right to work as tax collectors, artisans, administrators, and scribes. They also leased the right to run flour mills, breweries, and inns. Their rent had to be paid year in and year out, in good times and bad. And whenever the leases were renewed, nobles often increased the rent. Whenever a fee went up, that increase was usually passed on to the peasants in the form of higher taxes, fees, tolls, and prices.

The peasants deeply resented both the noble who ruled their land and the Jews who collected his taxes and carried out his orders. Differences in language and religion only increased tensions in the region. Not long after the massacres, Nathan Hanover, a Jewish scholar who lived in the Ukraine, explained why:

[King Sigismund III] was a kind and upright man. He loved justice and loved Israel [the Jewish people]. In his days the religion of the Pope gained strength in the Kingdom of Poland. Formerly most of the dukes and the ruling nobility [in the Ukraine] adhered to the Greek Orthodox faith, thus the followers of both faiths were

treated with equal regard. King Sigismund, however, raised the status of the Catholic dukes and princes above those of the Ukrainians, so that most of the latter abandoned their Greek Orthodox faith and embraced Catholicism. And the masses that followed the Greek Orthodox Church became gradually impoverished. They were looked upon as lowly and inferior beings and became the slaves and handmaids of the Polish people and of the Jews. . . . The nobles levied upon them heavy taxes, and some even resorted to cruelty and torture with the intent of persuading them to accept Catholicism. So wretched and lowly had they become that all classes of people, even the lowliest among them, became their overlords.¹⁰

In the spring of 1648, Bogdan Chmielnicki united the Ukrainian peasants against their Catholic Polish rulers and the “unbelieving” Jews with words such as these: “You know the wrongs done us by the Poles and Yids, their leaseholders and beloved factors, the oppressions, the evil deeds, and the impoverishment, you know and you remember.”

From the start, much of the peasants’ anger was directed at the Jews. Few ever saw the noble who owned their land. Most knew only the Jews who enforced the noble’s laws in the Ukraine and collected his rents, taxes, and tolls. According to some sources, over one-fourth of all of the Jews in Poland were killed in the fighting and countless others left homeless. And the fighting did not end with the defeat of Chmielnicki and his men. Their attacks marked just the beginning of a series of bloody encounters in the Ukraine. They also marked the start of years of turmoil in Poland as one country after another took advantage of the nation’s growing weakness. Little by little, Poland’s land was divided among its neighbors.

Even those Jews who lived far from the battlefields were affected by the fighting. They were now required to pay more and more taxes. Some of the money was used for soldiers and weapons. The *Vaad* or Council of Four Lands used the rest to help Jewish victims of the fighting. So did *kehillot* throughout the country. Many of these groups went deeply into debt to meet their obligations. They borrowed not only from other Jews but also from Polish nobles and officials of the Catholic church.

CONNECTIONS

Arnold Zable (Reading 1) describes Jews as living “on the edge of time and space, . . . always on the verge of moving on, continually faced with the decision: do we stay, persist, take root within this kingdom, or do we take to the road again? How did Jews in the late 1500s and early 1600s answer the question? What were the consequences of their choices?

Why do you think Ukrainians directed much of their anger against the Jews rather than the Polish nobles? What does your answer suggest about the risks of being an outsider?

Write working definitions of the words *outsider*, *outlaw*, and *outcast*. How does an *outsider* become an *outcast*? How does an *outcast* become an *outlaw*? In the mid-1600s who were the *outsiders* in Poland? The *outlaws*? The *outcasts*?

growing up under alien influences, would follow the ways of their mother? They understood, in their way, what was happening and often took their father's side. I felt alone and abandoned by my husband and society. I submitted. But no one suspected the tragedy I experienced that day. Only a few yellowed pages to which thirty-eight years ago in an hour of despair I confided my unhappiness are the silent witness of my suffering. These words, which I first wrote, April 15, 1871, I have set down again for they seem to express the woe and despair which so many wives and mothers suffered in that transitional era in Jewish life.

NOTE

1. Born into a pious and wealthy Russian Jewish family, Pauline Epstein Wengeroff (1833–1916) witnessed with consternation the transformation of traditional

Jewish life under the impact of secular modernity. In her memoirs, which appeared when she was in her seventies, she gives eloquent expression to what she regards as the tragic disintegration of Jewish tradition and familial bonds; indeed, the tragedy is exemplified by the conversion of several of her own children to Christianity. Significantly, she wrote her memoirs not in Yiddish or Russian, but in German, the language of the European cultural elite. For a translation of her memoirs, see P. Wengeroff, *Remberings of the World of a Russian-Jewish Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. from the German by Henny Wenkart, ed. with an afterword by Bernard D. Cooperman (Potomac: University Press of Maryland, 2000). Also see Shulamit Magnus, "Pauline Wengeroff and the Voice of Jewish Modernity," in *Gender and Judaism: The Transformation of Jewish Tradition*, ed. T. M. Rudavsky (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp. 181–90.

23. THE JEWISH QUESTION IN EASTERN EUROPE (1877)

AARON LIEBERMANN¹

In all countries about to acknowledge the dignity of every child of man, the question of Jewish civil rights has, in the context of normal social life, become increasingly important. As of now, however, this question is still out of place in the countries of the East where it has not yet occurred to anyone to consider someone not of his tribe or allegiance as human. [This question has not yet occurred to the] barbaric peoples nor to their yet more barbaric rulers. In America and Western Europe, on the other hand, the question has already been forgotten, for there the concept "man" has dispelled the concepts of nation and faith—at least among the enlightened. Only in

those countries bordering the East and the West—the settlements of the Slavic tribes—will some still parley over the Jewish question without resolving the "unsolvable riddle."...

[In Eastern Europe] the Jews and their supporters have been compelled to fight for their lives in a defensive war against enemies waging a war of offense, and their strategems greatly vary depending on the features of the battlefield. In Rumania the Jews seek refuge from persecution and oppression in the protection of the powerful kings. And sometimes they gain satisfaction by hurling insult and abuse back at those who vilify them. It is understandable

Source: Aaron Liebermann, "Sheelat hayehudim," *Haemet* 1 (Summer 1877), pp. 1–5. trans. A. Schwartz.

that they then completely overstep bounds, and seizing upon the doings of their opponents heap scorn and contempt on the entire Rumanian people. For the misdeeds of some, they defame an entire nation with curses of the marketplace. . . . These strategems may help, but woe to the member of the household who seeks the protection of strangers to defend him from the blows of his father or brother! On most occasions they will manage to break all his bones before his protectors rush to his aid. In the land of Galicia, the Jews are strong enough to defend themselves without outside help. Those Jews with sidelocks as twisted and as long as our exile, who wear cloth pants, stockings, and all the other old Polish garb—now called “Jewish clothing”—those men are politicians and diplomats! Positioned between the Germans and the Poles, they always lean toward that faction whose way seems right to their sight. There, in Galicia, the Jews truly stand on one footing with the other national tribes as far as politics are concerned, and in a time of need they will come here to Vienna with their shoes and stockings, their sidecurls and *zjupitse*² to stand before the Kaiser. The Jews of Russia are not like that. Only rarely may their voices be heard speaking of their enemies in the Russian journals. It is not a voice of jubilation but—whoever hears may laugh—a voice of supplication spoken halfheartedly, gravely and in a spirit of utter defeat. We know that our brethren in Russia apologize that they have not been permitted to respond to their enemies as they would like, and we can believe them. . . . But in fact it is all the same to us if they respond in a tone of jubilation, like the Jews of Rumania, or in a tone of entreaty as they now do. For as we have said from the outset, this is a war of might and guile, lie and deceit—and it is indeed a war! At one end are those who will bring all Jews to trial for every offense committed by individual Jews. The Jews, for their part, will make every effort to drag out their rights and show them off in the bright light of day declaring: Here is the Jewish people! Both will place

individuals in the stead of the collective as a whole. However much the Jew-haters increase their search among us for evil doings, the Jews will strive wherever they can to conceal the blemishes of their brothers from the “desecration of God’s name,” or they will produce their righteous brothers as having been maligned as sinners. This will sometimes be successful, but most of the time it will fail. For how is it possible to show that all of Israel is a righteous nation or that in all of Jacob’s flock there is not even one leprous lamb?

This war over the Jewish question could continue forever, for while both sides are correct concerning details, they have both relied in their arguments on sophistry, both have emphasized *quid pro quo* and both have missed the larger truth. How will it come to an end? When will the fate of the Jews and of the Slavs be joined together in peace? When will each side acknowledge the other’s humanity and join hands for the ascent to human perfection? . . .

NOTES

1. Aaron Liebermann (1845–1880), pioneer of Jewish socialism and Hebrew writer. In 1875 he fled his native Russia in order to avoid arrest for his socialist activities. In London he began to develop a program for a revolutionary socialist organization among the Jews of Russia. He was inspired by the *Narodnik* principle of “going to the masses,” which he interpreted as going to the Jewish masses. In 1877 he settled in Vienna and began to publish *Haemet* [The Truth]—the first Hebrew socialist periodical. Only three issues of the periodical appeared; its quick demise was caused by financial difficulties and the need to smuggle the periodical into Russia. Liebermann wrote most of the articles, and in them he criticized organized Jewish life, the exploitation of the poor by the rich Jews, and the unthoughtful hostility of Jewish socialists to Jewish tradition. This selection is taken from the inaugural article of *Haemet*. It describes the plight of various East European Jewish communities.
2. A black overcoat, similar to a caftan.

Session 2.2 - Prewar Jewish Life in Poland, Inquiry Two

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Prewar Jewish Life in Poland
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Prewar Jewish Life in Poland
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Appendix 2.2 - Esther

Background Information:

YIVO (Yiddish Scientific Institute, now known as the Institute for Jewish Research) is currently a part of the Center for Jewish History. It was established in 1925 in Vilna in order to preserve, study, and teach the cultural history of Jewish life throughout Eastern Europe from an interdisciplinary (and specifically not religious) perspective.

This excerpt comes from a book called *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland Before the Holocaust*. These autobiographies were created as entries to competitions in the years 1932, 1934, and 1939. The entries were to inform the YIVO researchers about the life of Jewish youth. “These are singular documents of Jewish life in Eastern Europe during the years between the two World Wars... [They] offer us insights into Jewish life... unlike any other source” (xi).

In efforts to study the life of Polish Jews before the Holocaust without judging that life knowing what was to be its fate, this excerpt allows Esther to describe her life on its own merit. “By presenting the rich complexity of ordinary young Jews’ lives as they understood themselves” is one step towards understanding the diversity of Polish Jewry at this time” (xii).

“The YIVO Institute, which solicited these autobiographies in an effort to understand this generation of young Jews and assist them in their struggles, was itself an exemplary innovation of Jewish society in interwar Poland” (xiii).

“YIVO’s decision to study Jewish adolescents during the 1930s...was unusual on several counts. After all, the authors of these accounts were neither professional writers nor famous figures... Rather, they were ordinary individuals who spoke in their own voices about their everyday lives at a critical historical moment... Adolescents were of special interest to YIVO because they held the future of Jewish life in their hands” (xviii).

Citation:

Shandler, Jeffrey. “Introduction.” *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland Before the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2002. xi-xlii. Print.

12

Esther

Contest year: 1939 • Language: Yiddish
Year of birth: 1920 • Age: 19 • Sex: Female

J was born in 1920 into a strict hasidic family. My father was a Gerer hasid. As far back as I can remember, I was steeped in hasidic traditions. At the age of five I remember feeling lucky that I was a Jew. I felt sorry for people who weren't Jewish and didn't have such good fortune. According to my childish reasoning, they were unhappy because they lived the wrong way.

When I was five, my father hired a *melamed* for me. I don't remember much of what he taught me, for at this time my field of vision was widened, revealing new horizons that made me forget everything else. A woman named Sara Schenirer came to L. Her arrival caused an upheaval in our house. I had heard amazing stories about this extraordinary woman. People said that she was establishing schools for Jewish girls.

The word "school" was magic to me. I was full of questions. How would it look? I imagined countless benches. For some reason, I pictured the teacher as a tall, large woman with a ruler in her hand. With extraordinary impatience, I awaited the founding of a school in our town—and, what was more, a Jewish school. I envisioned a paradise. Imagine! To be able to learn. Knowledge! I kept asking whether they would teach us writing and arithmetic. Father answered: "First you will learn to pray, to write Yiddish, and to translate the prayers." And when he told me that we would also study the Bible, it took my breath away. I asked him if we would be able to study Rashi commentaries, too. His answer was: "Girls don't study Rashi and Gemara." Well, that meant "no"—but it still left the Bible. As if I were intoxicated, I ran out to the shed in the courtyard where we children played. I told anyone who would listen that there would soon be a school for girls in L., where we would learn Yiddish and how to pray and, I concluded triumphantly, study the Bible.

Then I went to hear Mrs. Schenirer lecture. I can remember how she spoke. Everyone applauded—and I clapped the loudest. To make a long story short, a Beys Yaakov school was founded. My father worked actively on behalf of the school, often giving public lectures. It didn't take long for the school to be opened. I was an excellent student. In the school I experienced my happiest moments as a child. Finally, I was able to study. Of course, we didn't study the Bible, but we did learn the *alef-beys* and singing as well.

After two years in Beys Yaakov, I started to think about public school. My older friends were already going there. The topic was barely mentioned at home. Father didn't like the idea of my going to a school where Yiddish wasn't spoken and where boys and girls studied together. Knowing this, I didn't insist but meekly requested that I be sent to public school. Father answered that there was no rush. He tried to comfort me by saying that I already had a school. I burst out crying and pleaded with him, but again I didn't dare to demand. Finally, Father promised me that I could go to public school, but on one condition only: the Beys Yaakov school was to come first. Perish the thought that I would neglect the Beys Yaakov school for the Polish school! Meanwhile the registration period was over, and I missed a year. I regretted this but made use of the time to study on my own.

To this day I can't recall who taught me the Polish alphabet. But I do remember reading the signs on our haberdashery and a placard carried by someone on the street. It seems that I was able to do this because I had already learned how to combine letters to make words. I longed for my first day in public school, and finally it came. No child was happier than I was; yet at home my first day of school passed almost unnoticed.

When I arrived at the school, they wanted to put me in a preparatory class. I tried to figure out what to do; I knew that my parents wouldn't come to school to intercede on my behalf. In my broken Polish I insisted that I was ready to enter the first grade. After being tested, I was placed there at once. From then on I never parted with my primer. I finished it and in a short time knew it by heart.

Naturally, I cherished the Beys Yaakov school more than ever. I didn't consider the public school to be "ours," even though we were taught by Jewish men and women. Since they didn't observe the Sabbath and always spoke Polish, as far as I was concerned they were "unfortunate people." I also felt that the way that they taught religion was wrong. More than once I found myself in tears outside the classroom door as a consequence of challenging my teacher. I had no intention of making myself important; I only wanted to point out where the teacher had erred. I would explain that this

or that in the school's teaching of history didn't conform with what we were taught in Beys Yaakov and therefore was wrong. For this I got paddled liberally. While I continued to protest at every opportunity, this didn't prevent me from getting straight 5's on my report card. Father was very pleased and stopped talking about my becoming a "*shikse*." He was glad that I opposed the lessons in religion.

Still, my freedom during those school days was limited. Father didn't let me go to the movies. This was forbidden because indecent and sacrilegious things were being shown there. But I had a strong desire to go, so I saved up my money and went. My heart throbbed with joy and excitement. What I actually saw was marvelous! I cried and laughed with heroes and heroines on the screen. When I came home I was terrified that Father might find out. Quietly, I sneaked off to bed. After a few days passed without my being scolded, I was overjoyed. When the whole school was being photographed, I wasn't allowed to take part. I didn't understand why, but I had to comply.

I was an outstanding student, promoted to the next grade every year. There was a library at school. What treasures I imagined behind the glass panels of the bookcases! When I came home and said that the teacher had given me permission to sign up for the library, Father stopped eating his dinner and declared that under no circumstances was I to read any Polish books. Once again I swallowed tears of sincere regret. I simply couldn't understand why Father would not allow me to read them. I looked for someone to help me. This time, Mother came to my aid. Together we decided that I would sign up for the library without Father's knowledge. And that is what I did.

I devoted myself to reading with a passion. Within the red and blue covers of the library's books I found an enchanted world, filled with regal characters involved in wondrous tales that completely captivated my young mind. I read in secret, so as to escape my father's notice. It hurt me that he wouldn't allow me to read. I was tormented by the thought that I was deceiving him, but I lacked the courage to tell him, because I feared that he would categorically forbid me to read. Then—one time I fell asleep while reading. I woke up distraught from a dream and forgot to hide my book. By the time I remembered, it was too late. Father happened to walk into the kitchen where I had been reading and saw the book; an interrogation followed, and if Mother hadn't intervened I would have suffered considerably.

When he realized that I had been reading despite his prohibition, Father settled on a compromise. He would allow me to continue reading on the condition that my Beys Yaakov teacher monitored my selections. The teacher I had at the time turned out to be very lenient. She let me read

whatever I wanted and even praised my enthusiasm for reading. This continued through the third grade of public school, and in this way I was able to achieve my great aspiration.

Although I read a great deal, this didn't keep me from becoming active in a youth organization. In addition to the classes at Beys Yaakov the school had a youth organization, called Basya. I was one of its first and most active members. I was ready to make any sacrifice to help develop this organization. I recruited members and also served as secretary. I often did my school work late at night because I had so little time. As important as school was to me, the organization rated a hundred times higher. I remember that I began neglecting the public school. My teacher there was angry when I missed school once because of a performance at Basya. I bore this anger bravely and was happy that I was being punished for a principle. I was proud of my convictions. I read books that gave me issues to debate with the Zionist girls, among whom we recruited.

I participated in every spiritual aspect of Jewish life, both at home and in the Beys Yaakov school. I found spiritual pleasure in the poetry of the Sabbath and holiday table, the melody of my father studying Gemara; these inspired me with reverence for all that is beautiful and uplifting in the Jewish tradition. In addition, the lessons of the youth organization had an influence on me. The noble call to "love your neighbor as yourself," proclaimed on the wall of the Beys Yaakov school, lived within me. I understood what it meant to live in a community. And at the age of thirteen, I was elected leader of our group. Those were years of faith—faith in the success of all that we were doing with enthusiasm and in a spirit of humaneness and mutual love.

I was so busy with community life that I forgot my private life at home. The latter wasn't as successful as the former. At home we were beginning to feel the impact of the unfolding economic crisis. The haberdashery we owned became smaller and smaller. My father had to find other means of supporting us. He became a *melamed*. He taught older boys, but it was still a big blow to him, as he was used to wealth. His parents had owned an iron foundry on their own estate. That is why he suffered so much from this humiliation. The hasidic aristocrat in him also suffered. Father often mentioned his great lineage. He was a grandson of the Alexander Rebbe.

All this had very little impact on me. I had my youth organization, public school, books. However, it isn't true that these changes made no impression on me. While I was affected by Father's situation and felt sympathy for him, I consoled myself with the thought that his dignity wasn't diminished. So I continued to live an active and happy life. I was always cheerful in the company of my friends. My sense of humor helped me forget unpleasant

things. I laughed, joked, sang, and danced until I was exhausted. I did everything to the point of exhaustion.

My reading was no longer monitored. Father believed me when I told him that I wasn't reading any harmful books. I was reading the historical novels of Sienkiewicz, Prus, Orzeszkowa, and others. At the same time I read Yiddish books from the Beys Yaakov library, especially those by Lehmann and Schachnowitz. The Polish books gave me much to think about. I saw life from a different perspective. For the first time I saw another kind of existence. I learned about the extraordinary heroism of historical figures, and I also saw their private lives.

I discovered the existence of a new feeling—the feeling of love. This raised another problem for me: whether or not to read books on this topic. My Orthodox upbringing dictated that I shouldn't. I sensed that love was something people didn't discuss. Hadn't my father told me not to talk to the boys in school? They were boys, and I was a pious girl. In fact, I felt that way myself. What should I do now—read about love? From within, another, bolder voice sounded: "It's no sin! Read!" So I read. And the more I read, the more I kept my thoughts a secret. During this time I worked less enthusiastically for Basya. I became a world unto myself. Thoughts tortured me and didn't let me rest. I wanted to find out everything, understand everything, and I sought this only in books. This didn't please my parents. Although they were preoccupied with making a living, they noticed how distraught I had become. They advised me to stop reading.

My father reproached me for no longer being so devout. I myself didn't know the reason for this. I read about the early Christian martyrs and was alarmed at my reaction. The thought that they impressed me was upsetting, and I pushed it away. I was afraid of myself. Often I didn't want to be alone. I was afraid of my thoughts. In addition, my friends grew distant from me. Actually it was I who withdrew from them. Still, I felt the need to confide in someone, to pour out my heart. My public school friends were childish and empty and couldn't understand me. I had no intimate girlfriends. Then the thought of writing a diary occurred to me.

At the time a friend of mine from Basya died. Her death made a deep impression on me. I don't know where this came from, but I was obsessed by dark thoughts. No spark remained of my former cheerfulness. I began keeping a diary. At first I wrote in Yiddish, but I had no place to hide the diary. My older brother found it and read it aloud to everybody. I was deeply embarrassed and stopped writing. But I didn't feel better. I constantly felt stifled and troubled. Finally, I realized what was wrong with me: I was in love. Well, what of it? Such things are not unheard of among sixth graders in public school. But I had felt so remote from love. Could this be

happening to me? It was forbidden. I wasn't even allowed to talk to "him." And the boy who was the object of my feelings didn't even have the slightest suspicion. After all, I was a Beys Yaakov girl. I suffered, but it was easier for me because I suffered in silence. Now that I knew why I was suffering, the inner conflict vanished. I was no longer as unsure of myself or as gloomy as before. I considered it an affliction that had to be overcome, if I wanted to remain true to my ideals. My sense of humor returned.

I studied diligently. Public school now occupied all my thoughts. I still attended the Beys Yaakov school, but without my former devotion. A public school teacher played a decisive role in this. Unlike the other teachers, she would speak with me outside of school. She loved me for being a gifted student, above all in Polish and in history. As I've said, this teacher had a great influence on me. She organized a student council for our class. I was chosen as an officer and a judge in our school court. I arranged independent study programs, and the teacher and I constantly planned social evenings and amateur performances. Amateur theater was my life. I was never too tired to act in plays, and I especially liked to direct them. In Beys Yaakov I had performed since I was six or seven years old, and I continued to do so in public school. I passionately loved all the preparations, the rehearsals that led up to performances. My imagination carried me to a far-away place, a dream world. I immersed myself in the roles I played with complete devotion. This made me forget the suffering at home, where things had taken a turn for the worse.

We had to sell the store. This was a painful period to endure. As far back as I could remember, we'd had our own store. It was hard to get used to the idea that we wouldn't have one anymore. We had become one with the store, and parting with it seemed like saying goodbye to a piece of my life. But I had to be strong. I was mature enough to understand that this was an unavoidable step. I understood that keeping the store was impossible; there wasn't enough money to stay in business. We had to move to another apartment. Mother started selling goods from our home, and Father continued teaching boys.

I was then in the seventh grade of public school. I kept a diary in Polish. I was becoming more and more immersed in the Polish language. I especially loved Polish literature. I idolized the Polish Romantic poets Mickiewicz and Słowacki. Polish history was also a subject I loved and learned easily. I was enthralled by everything connected with Polish history. I was consumed with the great martyrdom of Polish heroes in their struggle for Poland's independence. I venerated Marshal Józef Piłsudski. I experienced a great deal on account of this.

On 11 November our school, together with all Poles, celebrated Poland's Independence Day. I wrote a speech about Marshal Piłsudski. I read the speech in the municipal auditorium before a large crowd, including the mayor. Whether it was my speaking ability (which I had developed in the youth organization) or the impassioned sincerity pulsing in the words of my speech, it was sufficient to have pleased the mayor greatly. He, too, is a devotee of Piłsudski. He applauded me loudly and personally thanked me. Afterwards, the school director told me that the mayor had expressed interest in me and wanted to be helpful to me. However, as this happened in the middle of the school year, it wasn't possible to talk about reduced tuition for *gymnasium*. Apparently, the mayor wanted to do something to help me to continue to study.

Soon thereafter, the school celebrated Hanukkah with another performance. It was about the Maccabees, and I played a leading role. I also gave a speech on Hanukkah and the Maccabees. On 19 March, the Marshal's name-day, I gave another speech on his life and work at a celebration, and again the mayor was present. He thanked me sincerely and asked me to give him a copy of my speech. Then he asked me what book I would like to choose as a token of his thanks and as a remembrance of him. I chose the complete works of Mickiewicz. He promised it to me but didn't keep his word. But this wasn't his fault; the school director failed to take care of it. That was in 1935. Just then, Marshal Piłsudski died. Because of this, the school year ended on a completely different note, and my book was forgotten.

I completed public school and was faced with the question: What next? The teachers at school advised me to go to the mayor. They said he would surely help me, given the interest he had already shown in me. I made every effort to continue studying. I had an enormous thirst for knowledge. I was convinced that I had no talent for learning a trade. But I was all alone; no one helped me.

I knew that I would have to take care of myself. I had planned to go to the mayor and ask for his help, so that I could study in the *gymnasium*. But my father intervened. He said categorically "No! Enough of the 'others!'" He said that if I spoke about it again he would disown me. It pained me to see how miserable my desire to study made him. Still, I wouldn't have given up on my plan if Father hadn't told me that he was sending me to study at the Beys Yaakov teachers' seminary in Cracow. With this prospect ahead of me, I no longer thought about the *gymnasium*.

From the time I was a very young girl, everyone at home had always said that I would become a Beys Yaakov teacher. I didn't know how this would

come to pass. I was fifteen years old and couldn't go to the seminary until I was sixteen. The idea of being a teacher excited me. I was happy that I would be studying again and pleased at the prospect of earning some money. I began to imagine what it would be like to be on my own. I saw myself somewhere in a distant city, a dedicated pioneer of Jewish education. I dreamed of trips to far-away places, of glorious impressions. But dreams alone accomplish little. I had to begin earning money. The public school teachers referred several children to me for tutoring. I didn't want to do this, but I had no choice. I came to school with tears in my eyes. Everything there was so caring and friendly. I wanted to stay in school so much.

And so I became a tutor. I enjoyed every new thing I taught them. However, while it is a pleasure to teach bright children, the ones I taught were very limited. Learning new things didn't give them any pleasure at all, and I had to use all kinds of methods to motivate them. It is impossible to describe fully what I endured at the time. It was a tragedy. I was such a good student, learning came so easily to me, and now I had to wear myself out to teach the simplest thing. It was a struggle. I was very conscientious and devoted. I wanted to teach them. Even though I was often barely paid anything, I worked hard. I regarded the lessons as my responsibility, and if I wasn't conscientious about them, then as far as I was concerned I had failed to fulfill my obligation.

I began to write again. I had no one to tell my thoughts and feelings, so I kept a diary. This time I wrote in Polish. Actually, it wasn't a diary in the true sense of the word; it consisted of scattered images of my life, a reflection of my feelings and ideas.

At this time we were promoted from the youth organization Basya into Bnos Agudas Yisroel. We participated in a solemn induction ceremony, at which the speakers repeatedly stressed the exalted nature and significance of our duties. Although their speeches impressed me and made me think, my enthusiasm had waned. I had done a lot of reading, and sparks of protest had ignited my youthful soul. I couldn't abide the organization's extreme restrictions. Bnos had rules that forbade a great deal, preferring restrictions to fresh experiences. For example, I loved going to the theater and longed to see real actors, but I wasn't even supposed to think about this. Doing so would have resulted in unpleasant consequences for me in Bnos. I found such narrowness oppressive.

I had begun to see people differently. Until then I hadn't believed in human malevolence. I thought everyone was good, that everyone had a heart. My ordeals became difficult to endure once I was convinced of the error of my thinking. I realized this when I became involved in situations where I had to suffer other people's capriciousness. I often had to grit my

teeth as I catered to the whims of some of my students' mothers. These women were very limited. They didn't appreciate my efforts. All they saw was that their children were making very little progress. I was held responsible if a child didn't remember something. This made teaching loathsome. My only consolation was the hope that this was temporary.

My father said I would soon be going to the seminary. He went to Ger to see the *rebbe*, hoping to arrange a reduction in my tuition, but accomplished very little. Nevertheless, I began to study and prepare. Every group that had some influence wrote a letter on my behalf. I studied with a friend, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. She had barely attended Beys Yaakov and had already earned the *mata matura*, so we were both supposed to go. We studied nine hours a day to prepare for the examination. She was generous to the extent that she wanted to benefit from my knowledge. There was little I needed to learn from her, but I wrote out the required exercises for her. Yet when the time came to go to the seminary, I was the one who remained at home. The reason for this was simple, but so tragic! "Why? Why?" a voice within me cried. "Why do I have to suffer like this, when I have such a drive to learn? Why must I suffer within the narrow confines of my limited duties, when everything in me longs for broad horizons? Why must I content myself with conforming, when I know that, given the opportunity, I can accomplish great things?" These thoughts tormented me. I began to understand the enormous power of money, but this didn't make me worship it. A curse erupted from my heart. It wasn't only that I regretted losing the opportunity of entering the teachers' seminary in Cracow. My thoughts were full of hate for money, which dulled every feeling of human kindness and made people deaf to the cries of unfortunate souls.

In addition, I was swept by a wave of regret at the thought that I had lost my chance to go to the *gymnasium* because of the prospect of attending the teachers' seminary. I could no longer think about obtaining a reduction in tuition for the *gymnasium*. Relations between Jews and Poles had deteriorated significantly. This, too, had a powerful impact on me. The loyal Polish patriot in me suffered. Now I, whose soul was so bound to Poland, had to give up my cherished dream of Poles and Jews living together in harmony. I had drawn such a pretty picture of it. The impassioned patriotic thoughts expressed in my youthful speeches were genuine. And now all of this had vanished. Every day the newspapers brought fresh, grim news of the persecution of Jews. My faith in Poland's "heart" was tarnished. I no longer saw a nation with brotherly feelings for all of its citizens, as Poland had been in her prewar dreams.

The situation for Jews in general upset me, especially as I had experienced it personally when I lost the opportunity to study in a *gymnasium*.

Now I began to look for a home in a Jewish milieu. I realized that in the present situation Jews must fortify themselves. To do this, I felt it was necessary to learn the history of the Jews, acquaint myself with the Jewish poetry of the prophets, and study ancient Jewish law. This gave me the strength to endure my painful memories. I countered the disparaging attitude of others with our own spiritual values. The magnificent voices of the prophets made me aware of our feeling for righteousness, and the vision of the "end of days" (in Isaiah, Chapter 2) hovered before my eyes.

The sparks of excitement, dimmed by disappointment over the way my schooling ended, were ignited once again. Only one thing remained unclear: I couldn't understand why Jews had so many political parties, which were constantly at war with each other. I didn't realize that people have different ideas and passions and therefore have to organize different parties. And where would you find a wider range of viewpoints and concepts of good and evil than among Jews? I didn't understand any of this. To me, people were first of all people, and if others belittled us and despised us, then we ought to stick together in order to prevail. However, I saw something different. I saw how one organization opposed another. I heard the leaders of Bnos declare that we had to protect ourselves from "strangers" on the street. They talked about "nets spread to entrap our souls." Evidently, it wasn't enough that we hadn't become like "those Jews," but we also had to continue to protect ourselves from them. I had my doubts. It seemed crazy to me to be afraid of the same Jewish girls who had gone to public school with me. Why should I be afraid? Was this the way to carry out what I was taught, or did I not understand the meaning of "to study and to teach"? Wouldn't I accomplish a great deal more if I brought our ideas to these allegedly alien circles? It certainly wouldn't do me any harm, and perhaps it would even prove useful to the Jewish people.

What are we, then, as a separate group? What courage does it take to be good and pious when this is all one knows, and everyone breathes the same air? Questions flickered through my mind as quickly as shapes in a kaleidoscope, but I didn't dare speak openly. When I did speak out once, people let me know that they were displeased, and they misinterpreted my motives. They accused me of yearning for the "free world" and for gentile pleasures. Perhaps there was some truth in what they said. But one thing is certain: what they understood as my craving for the freedom of a cheerful life I regarded as a compulsion to move toward broader horizons, a desire not to become frozen in the narrow confines of their ideas. I still wished to live my life among others and to spread our spiritual values among the many young Jews who were unacquainted with them. But my voice was

stifled by their shallow precepts of "keeping the treasures at home," of adhering to the chosen nature of our calling to continue the traditions of the Jewish woman of the past.

And, as always, I had to comply. My protest against all of this remained unspoken. I thought that they would cast me out as a "destructive element," out of fear for all the principles that they had instilled in us. I realized what the consequences were and felt that I would lose more than I would gain. First of all, my situation at home would become intolerable. But that wasn't important. I loved Bnos despite its faults. I didn't want to lose the opportunity to study, so I was silent. I was silent only with other people; on my own—I wrote. No one knew what lay hidden in the pages of my notebook. Perhaps only the trees could have revealed this, but they were silent witnesses, and for this I loved them. Under their gentle, maternal shade I poured out my heart, my feelings, and the thoughts that tormented me. I loved nature, and she inspired warm and trusting feelings in me. She wouldn't reveal my secrets. How magnificent she is! When I walked out to the open fields, or the forest, I was so happy. I felt far from human evil. Here everything was so gentle, clear, open, full of vital joy, with unquenchable lust for everlasting life, always moving, pulsing with blood—Life.

At the time I was reading Lindsey's *The Revolt of Modern Youth*, and I admired the author for his understanding of all that tormented young people. What he presented was the opposite of what we had been taught. It would have caused an uproar at Bnos. On the whole they looked askance at my excessive reading and predicted that no good would come of it. Outwardly I laughed at this, but inwardly I was hurt that they had so little understanding of the pain that young people experience. I couldn't bear the pretense, the false faces they put on when they dealt with important issues. I wanted all to say what they thought, and then perhaps something substantial might be accomplished. I wasn't a renegade but I had a passionate love of the truth. I strove to see the truth about our lives lead us to a sound understanding of all eternal truths. At the time I had no doubt that these truths existed.

I was still an observant, pious young woman, full of trust in the Almighty and reverence for tradition. But living a spiritual life alone was not enough. Only those who were financially secure could afford to do so. I had to be practical. Even though I was quite young, I understood that without some means of earning a living I would be lost. Although I made some money tutoring, I knew that wasn't providing me with a living. The only possibility for me in our town was teaching in a public school, and I hoped to leave this place. I wanted to see other worlds and other people and to experience

a different kind of life. I wanted to test my strengths and to see how successful I could be in becoming economically and intellectually independent. I wanted to prove to myself that I could live by my own convictions. I wanted to see how they would hold up under new experiences. My convictions, it seemed to me, were influenced by my orthodox upbringing, and I didn't question it. I just wanted to take a chance and see to what extent the powerful dreams of my youth could be realized. I realized that to accomplish this I had to know how to do something. I wasn't good at working with my hands, nor did this interest me. Whenever I sewed or knitted something I became very impatient. This wasn't a solution. There was very little I could do with my seven years of public school and six years at Beys Yaakov.

I went to my father and asked, "What next?" His only answer was, "You won't have to sew for a living, and you won't have to join a trade union." I think he was more afraid of the latter than the former. And since I didn't want to learn a trade, I agreed. "But what next?" I asked. "You'll be a teacher, a Beys Yaakov teacher," he answered. When I replied that this seemed impossible, he said that he would definitely make it happen. "Just continue to be pious, and with God's help," he concluded, "everything will work out." But the uncompromising nature of life extinguished every spark of optimism in me. Despite the fact that Father had promised me so much, things continued to get worse. Unable to bear this situation calmly, I looked for another way out.

I don't know how it happened, but my thoughts began to take shape in rhyme. While I was jotting down thoughts in my diary at the end of the day, without any effort I would write in verse. These were poems of hope for a better life. They expressed my own pain and the suffering of the Jewish people in general. I wrote everything in Polish. Because I read Polish books and thought in Polish, I wrote in Polish. Once, while visiting a girlfriend's house, I wrote "The Jew, the Eternal Wanderer," "The Jewish Merchant," and some other poems. This was a revelation for me. I didn't know whether to be happy or worried—happy at the fact that I had succeeded in writing poetry or worried that I wouldn't have the opportunity to develop this further.

In public school I had written programs for various events and, according to my teachers, some of them were very good. Since these were for school productions, I didn't think too much of them. But this was a different matter. Naturally, I didn't tell anyone about my poems. I read several to my Beys Yaakov teacher and she liked them very much, but I didn't tell her who the author was. I didn't consider myself a poet, but I enjoyed writing. I rarely knew when I would feel like writing. I might be walking down the street, or I might notice a shining star deep within the dark blue

sky or a human sigh echoing in the stillness. Then I would feel such a rush of warmth in my heart that I'd drop everything and rush off to write.

Father was surprised that I spoke so little about going to the Beys Yaakov teachers' seminary. Not knowing the real reason for my silence, he interpreted it in his own way. He thought I was no longer a pious Jew, no longer committed to Beys Yaakov, and no longer eager to go to Cracow. As a result, he redoubled his efforts to send me there. He had finally succeeded in getting a considerable reduction in my tuition, and I was preparing to go to the teachers' seminary, when grim fate intervened. Apparently fate shows no consideration for the intensity of people's plans. A calamity befell us! My father died suddenly. He passed away in the prime of life, at the age of forty-nine. What a blow! I felt as if I had been struck in the head. Never again to—how horrible! I ran through the house aimlessly, collapsed, bewildered, before his body, and screamed. I screamed until I choked, until I had no more strength, until I forced my screams back down my throat and into the depths of my heart. Two years have passed, but it is still impossible for me to forget and for my burning wounds to heal. Although this is no place for clichés, I can't suppress my sighs as I write these words.

Yes, it is true that he was a strict father, but he never meant to harm me, nor was it his fault that he didn't understand me. He didn't see the contradiction between his desire for me to be happy and his desire for me to be like him. I was left an orphan. My sadness was great. I experienced it with my entire being. But there was no time to contemplate this—life was making its own demands. Father had been the family provider. In losing him we also lost our means of support. Mother, my sister, and I faced a difficult task. How would we make a living? I had an older brother, but he got married just after Father died. Meanwhile, I continued tutoring, but this brought in very little money. My mother started a business, but she did poorly because of the boycott. Once again came the grim question: "What next?"

Now I had an abundance of "sponsors" among my family and friends. (How did Sholem Aleichem put it? "I'm doing fine, I'm an orphan," says Motl, the cantor's son.") During all the time that we had been struggling, unable to manage on my father's meager earnings, they were unconcerned. Now, suddenly, it dawned on them that I didn't have a trade or a job so as to help support my mother and sister.

It pained me to realize that there was no longer any question of realizing my dreams. As I said, I had "providers." They, too, sent letters to Cracow to convince the school to reduce my tuition fees, but to no avail. Even a personal intervention with the seminary director by the chairman of Beys Yaakov in L. didn't help. Without money, nothing could be done. I

could always continue tutoring, but now this work offered no hope that my situation would ever be different.

This was the beginning of a difficult existence, a struggle to stay afloat on the crest of life's waves. It was a two-fold struggle: first, a struggle to find a means of financial support; second, a struggle within myself not to sink into apathy or be overwhelmed by pessimism. This was how far things had come. I had suffered too much to still have the strength to be an optimist. However, I realized that if I wanted to survive, I would have to become stronger—perhaps not so much for my own needs and satisfaction as to be able to help my mother. As the oldest daughter in the house (barely seventeen years old), I felt that I had responsibilities, and this made it possible for me to keep up my energy. I listened to my mother's reassuring words, unable to reveal to her that my faith in a better tomorrow had grown rather weak. Still, I knew that she was trying to assuage her own sad resignation with faith. I wrote little at the time; my diary lay forgotten somewhere. Whenever I tried to write I started to cry, because I had to write about Father. Otherwise, my mind felt empty.

And then I made a friend. She was the morning star after a dark night. I had many friends whom I had known earlier, who sympathized with me and even tried to help me. But she was entirely different. Even though they were intelligent, the other girls didn't understand me and couldn't tolerate the satisfaction I found in books. They criticized me for not conforming to fashion. But this young woman whom I had just met was different; she possessed an endless source of enthusiasm.

We began by reading a book together, and before long she knew my innermost thoughts. It was a marvelous summer. Every hour I spent with her my spirit exulted. I read my verses and a portion of my diary to her. She liked my poems very much. Although she never actually asked me anything, she said she discovered who I was in my poetry.

My friend wasn't a member of Bnos and had left the Beys Yaakov school while still a student. This caused the leaders of Bnos to denounce our friendship. My older brother, who was secretary of the Beys Yaakov committee, demanded categorically that I break up with my friend. I tried to persuade them, to explain what she meant to me, but they didn't want to accept the idea that she was a source of vitality, that she was a breath of air from another, freer world. To say this would have meant confessing my desire for freedom, for something different, which was "forbidden." So I had to give in, outwardly. I promised not to meet with her anymore. But we still met in secret, taking long walks on the outskirts of town. We met either early in the morning or late in the evening. She knew about everything that had happened, and our attachment to each other grew even stronger. I had

to endure a great deal because of our friendship, but it was worth the price. My own mother criticized me severely, although she had nothing against my friend. Nevertheless, she said that I had to conform.

This friendship might have resulted in my being expelled from Bnos had I not left L. and gone to G. to see my brother. While I was there, I received a letter offering me a position as a Beys Yaakov teacher in a small town. Although I hadn't graduated from the seminary, I had so many skills that they considered me capable of starting a school. I knew this to be true. When I was in L. I could have held such a position. Still, I wasn't pleased at this prospect for a number of reasons: To begin with, I didn't want to teach without certification. Moreover, and this was the most important reason, the idea of being a Beys Yaakov teacher was now far from my thoughts. I had suffered too much to feel that I could preach what I myself thought cramped people's lives. I was too conscientious. But when I received a letter saying there was no work to be had at home, I reconsidered. Given the general situation, I began to look for the positive—"Seek, and ye shall find." First of all, I tried to convince myself that I wouldn't start a Bnos group there; therefore, things wouldn't be so difficult. Teaching young children to write, pray, and study the Bible is not that terrible, after all. It wouldn't go against my convictions. I won't start a Bnos group, I thought, and in that way I could avoid any conflict with my conscience. And so I went.

At seventeen years of age, I set out on my journey all alone. I didn't even know where this little town was located. Getting there was an ordeal. It was somewhere on the Vistula River. Transportation was possible only along the river. It seems I chose the wrong road. I was traveling all alone somewhere along the river and I didn't know where I was, but I braced myself. There on the banks of the Vistula I felt a surge of independence within me. I had only one thought: to keep going! I could never give up. I had to accomplish what I had set out to do. This made it possible for me to spend a whole night waiting for a boat. I had my strong will to thank for being able to wait until the boat finally appeared.

I arrived in a very small town: a sleepy country community, a few squat houses, a marketplace strewn with sand, where all sorts of animals lazed about, and a church tower. This was the town at first glance. As if that weren't enough, I had to put up with a long line of children, who had come out to look over the new arrival in town. Apparently strangers were a rarity for them. This scene didn't inspire courage or arouse very cheerful thoughts in me. However, I was so used to extraordinary twists of fate that I smiled.

When I arrived at the rabbi's house, I learned that the Beys Yaakov school had yet to be established. What they had written to me was purely

imaginary. It turned out that nothing was ready. It was too late to quit. I felt that there was no turning back, and I made peace with my fate. After all, here I would be able to work and help my mother.

I got down to work. I formed a men's committee from among the children's parents. On Saturday I delivered a lecture. It was quite a draw. The small synagogue was packed with men and women. I didn't have time to reflect. I was swept up in a whirl of work and responsibilities.

Registration began and I had to be everywhere. When I had a chance to be alone, I was amazed at what I was doing. I had no idea where this ability to get things done came from. All by myself, I assigned sixty children to classes, scheduled lessons, and even went along to rent space for the school. I had to write appeals, post announcements, give lectures. I had to accomplish all this and quietly, too, because the school was still unofficial. The men's committee did very little. Finally, regular work began. It was a very difficult assignment. I was dealing with children who had never learned to read or write Yiddish. I had to start at the very beginning. It is impossible to imagine how limited these children were.

By late fall, after Sukkoth, the school was running smoothly, and I was busy ten hours a day. When I found myself alone, the energy of the day evaporated, and I was overcome with longing and regret. I ached to be home. More than anything else, I missed my books and my friend. But these were only momentary yearnings, and I considered them a weakness. I knew that I had to be strong and must struggle against anything that would distract me from my work. I worked very diligently, and this gave me a certain pleasure that nourished me.

What I taught my young students filled me with joy, and I had the satisfaction of knowing that there were talented children among them who could be educated. Indeed, they had to be disciplined before they could be taught. They were exceptionally wild. They didn't have the slightest idea of how to get along with each other. They were provincial egotists. They tattled on one another. It wasn't easy to have a conversation with them. They were very suspicious and always looked for an opportunity to make mischief and to laugh. I had never encountered anything like this. It took me several weeks to convince them of the need for community.

All of this would have been bearable were it not for the interference of the parents. They expected their children to learn everything in one month. When the first mother came to me after I had been teaching for a month, wanting to know why her daughter still hadn't learned how to pray, I laughed in astonishment. My laughter turned sour when I realized that she wasn't the only one, that almost all the parents had the same complaint: why didn't their child know what others knew? I tried to argue, explain, but I realized it was no use. It was simply the custom to complain. Apparently

this was a way of passing the time. Whatever the reason, it bothered me. I took it to heart that these people were so limited. Their lack of appreciation for someone else's efforts upset me. Didn't they see that I had made a revolution in their children's small world? The children themselves were truly pleased and came to school eagerly. The parents were at fault for measuring everything according to its usefulness to them. Here, too, as with everything else in their little world, they wanted to "get the most for their money." It irked me, but I couldn't talk to anyone about it. I controlled my temper and continued teaching the children.

The only light in this darkness was the mail that I received from home, especially the letters I received from my friend. These letters came from the bottom of her heart; they were written with the intent of bolstering my courage and were imbued with the power of faith. They managed to curb my rebelliousness. No one understood me as she did; she knew how to divert my thoughts from all that was unpleasant. I hardly read any books at the time, so she also wrote to me about books she had read. But what was most important was the way her letters revealed the complexities of life. These weren't superficial thoughts from a girl's narrow little world, but a reflection of human struggle, joy, and suffering.

Suddenly, something happened that altered the course of our future correspondence. The chairman of the school board, in whose home I lived, found part of a letter that I had misplaced. After going through it, he asked me why I was corresponding with a socialist. (He actually called her something stronger.) He said he was afraid of the police. It just so happened that on the page he saw she had quoted a passage from a book by Karl Kautsky. He simply didn't want to understand it, calling it "pure agitation," "compromising," and so on. I had to find a solution. As always, I promised not to write to her anymore. But I did write to her at another friend's address. It was risky. She wrote to me without signing her letters, interspersing them between pages of my mother's letters. In this way, defying restrictions, we once again continued our correspondence.

Meanwhile, I put on a play. I was the director, and, because of the lack of material, I wrote the play myself. The children had never before appeared in any type of performance. My work was crowned with success. The day after the performance everyone in town slept late.

Then the cold weather began. The poorer children stopped coming to school. This was a disastrous blow; there were days when only half the children attended. The school board's ineptitude was responsible for this crisis. Nevertheless, they decided to wait it out and not close the school, since when the warm weather returned there would surely be more students. Their optimism didn't reassure me. I saw the situation in all its starkness. Now, with meager earnings, I thought of home with even greater longing.

My letters to my friend were filled with outbursts of doubt and rebellion against the cruelty of life. Life, which I had once imagined to be so fine, so grand, now forced me to stagnate among heartless people, to wander along thorny paths, through gray and lonely days. As long as I earned money and was able to help my mother, I felt that at least I was fulfilling my obligation to her. But now I no longer felt this satisfaction, I felt that I was suffocating.

At the time I wrote a great deal. In addition to writing letters, which were from ten to twelve pages long, I kept a diary, in which I expressed all my moments of boundless despair, passionate protest, and longing to escape from this morass. I felt I would never escape, that all roads were closed, and so I became lonelier. While I was there I also wrote several poems and two novels in Polish. The first novel was called "Why?" All the voices of my suffering—the cruelty of fate toward the weak and innocent—were expressed through the mouth of my heroine. Her only weapon was the single word "Why?" The other novel depicted a young hasid struggling between two forces: a waning hasidic force and a powerful social force. He flees from the first and finds refuge in the second. But when a fire breaks out in the *beys-medresh*, he sacrifices himself against his will on the altar of his past convictions, the call of his hasidic origins. This novel was called "A Blood Sacrifice."

But all this didn't comfort me. I had to struggle within not to lose my balance. I was suffocating and yearning, but my yearning was mixed with something else. While I wanted to go home, I also knew I would be unable to accomplish anything there. I might not even be able to give any private lessons. Then what was next? Again, there was no way out. Perhaps I was better off here. But that, too, seemed impossible.

The anti-Semitism in this little town increased. It could be seen in the shrinking non-Jewish clientele in Jewish-owned shops. It could be heard in the smashing of a windowpane on a dark night. It could be seen in the black eye of a Jewish peddler. Naturally, I felt it at the school as well.

The police began to show interest in the school, which still wasn't licensed because it hadn't met the state's financial requirements. Several times they asked me who I was, what I was doing here, and so on. Evidently, whatever they had been told didn't satisfy them. The police followed me, observing my every move. I was aware of this. Every time I saw a policeman I thought he would stop me and ask about the school. During class I was uneasy and nervous.

Every Sunday, peasants from the surrounding villages would gather outside the school window, look in and make fun of the "Jewish school." I got used to this; I was only afraid they'd tell a policeman. Work turned into

a vigil. I had to struggle to be strong. I suffered inwardly, but I continued to teach. Then once, during class, a policeman walked in. The children were petrified. For a moment I looked into an abyss, and shining from its depths was a face with two green eyes, over which hovered a mother's tears. But I quickly took hold of myself. With my last ounce of strength I firmly and matter-of-factly explained that I was a relative of a merchant, whose children I was teaching Yiddish. Because there were other children who wanted to learn, I was teaching them as well. Apparently he believed me, but his face glowed with malice. On behalf of the village mayor, he declared that schools weren't allowed unless they were licensed in distant Kielce by the provincial school superintendent. The chairman of our school board was afraid of being fined and recommended closing the school immediately. I didn't see any other way out, especially as it was winter, before Passover. And so I had to close the school—another disappointment. It's true I felt stifled here. But how characteristic! Eternal wandering. No rest anywhere.

I no longer thought that a dire fate hung over me. I stopped thinking I was being punished. For what reason? Was it a sin to try to sustain myself and my family? No, I had people to thank for all this! I sensed their cruelty. By then, even if I had been very naive, I would no longer have been able to believe in justice after what I had experienced. Was it only the Beys Yaakov seminary director's extreme caution that kept me from achieving anything? Was it because he was deaf to all my pleas? At the time I hadn't considered whether my soul could survive as a Beys Yaakov teacher. I simply felt the ground falling away beneath my feet.

Again I had nothing, again I was searching. I returned home. As depressed as I was, I had to put on a cheerful face. My mother's beseeching eyes compelled me to do so. She didn't yet know what I had been through. Why tell her? She was heartened by my being a teacher. But when I talked to my friend, I removed my mask. I told her everything. I confessed my suffering, recounted endless inner misery. I told her stories of the boundless struggles of my pure heart with immeasurable human indecency, and I expressed my total disgust with how cruel the world was.

Had it not been for my friend, I would surely have collapsed emotionally. She was a socialist, and she gave me some political pamphlets. I seized them with a passion. I devoured them, and at the same time I became calm—but not quiet. I merely subdued my most extreme feelings. I took myself more firmly in hand, and a new world opened up before me. That is, it seemed to be a new world, but in reality it was an old story living within me. What was new was the fact that now I was aware of it. I recognized the naked truth. I raised the backdrop and looked behind the scenes at charity and the philanthropist. I saw people differently. I didn't regard them as bad

or guilty. They weren't born either evil or good. Their motives depended on the material and social conditions under which they had developed. Then was the policeman who had made me lose my job simply fulfilling his duties as dictated from above? Was the director of the seminary completely innocent? It wasn't that he wanted to harm me. The successful development of the movement demanded that he do it. Well, yes. But the question remains: Is this good? Is it right that one person suffer and another live happily without even appreciating it? An eternal question. It's a difficult problem: "Why do the wicked prosper and the righteous suffer?" Can I justify suffering in this world with a reward in the "next world"? I had suffered too much from people—who were, after all, made "in the image of God"—for my beliefs not to have weakened. I was too young to think of my share in the "next world." Nor was I interested in going there.

This world was calling to me. What was I to do? Now that I perceived the truth, I stopped idealizing everything. I understood life without my former fantasy. I merely looked for a way to maintain myself, so as to avoid being crushed by the brutal wheels of daily life. Moreover, I didn't feel alone. The whole world felt closer. The millions of brothers and sisters, proletarians like myself, felt closer. I saw myself among their ranks, among all those who have suffered. I observed them. Even though they may have been hardened by work and weren't used to thinking about themselves, I understood them. The threads of our common fate bound us together. The one thing that pained me was that the young people of our town, especially those among the proletariat, were very shallow. With few exceptions, they did little more than amuse themselves. But I wasn't angry at them. They did this in order to survive. And youth demands what it is due.

I became a silent admirer of socialism. Its truths eased my life. I stopped searching for a position. With a feeling of indifference, I began to tutor again. I knew I wouldn't accomplish anything with my modest strength. My mother had no idea what was happening with me. She was only surprised that I was so unconcerned about the position I had lost. She didn't realize how far I was from the idea of being a teacher.

Only one thing was amiss: The people at Beys Yaakov began to harass me again about my relationship with my friend. I didn't leave Bnos; I couldn't. The town was small, and my leaving the organization would have caused all kinds of comments. First and foremost, I would have been accused of longing for "a life" (a way of putting it that was peculiar to L.). My mother and our whole family would have suffered terribly. All that was left for Mother was the belief that she and I would be happy together. What would have been the use of disappointing her so soon? So it was impossible for me to quit. Perhaps I would have, but there was no other organization to join.

I returned to Bnos, but they weren't happy with me. First of all, I opposed what was being said there too frequently. We had a certain "freedom" to speak out, but this wasn't what they had in mind. Rather, they envisioned the Talmudic argumentation of the good old days in the yeshivas, when even a certain number of questions regarding the "outside world" were discussed. But all of this was used as a means of showing that "our way" was everlasting, that "our way" was correct, that we were God's chosen people. So it was no wonder that they found my outspokenness a hindrance.

I was often summoned for questioning. They had problems with me, but they weren't entirely sure what they were. They were displeased that I had signed up at the public library. Apparently, they considered it terrible to read books. They didn't mind Polish books as much as Yiddish books. The latter, to their way of thinking, were dangerous. Polish books, they argued, didn't have the direct power to make a Jew less pious, but Yiddish books, written by godless heretics, were filled with made-up stories that cast aspersions on innocent, pious Jews.

Despite all this, I read. A new world opened up for me. Until this time, I hadn't shown any interest in Yiddish books; I didn't know they existed. Now I was delighted with every page of Yiddish. I discovered a new basis for my thinking. I hadn't understood Jews from the perspective I now encountered in the works of Mendele Mokher Seforim, Sholem Asch, Sholem Aleichem, and others. I realized my hypocrisy in previously showing so little interest in Yiddish literature.

Bnos had already begun to think seriously about expelling me. Their only deterrent had been the memory of my father. They had considered it a good deed to be my spiritual mentors. But now they were ready to expel me. Their main accusation against me was that I associated with outsiders. I knew very well whom they meant by this. Still, I wouldn't, couldn't give in to them.

Then something happened that overshadowed all the efforts of Bnos: I became ill. I was giving lessons on the outskirts of town. Every day I walked the two kilometers, regardless of the weather. During the summer, this wasn't a problem. But when the rainy autumn began, I caught a cold and became very ill. There was talk of my needing an operation. My illness lasted two months. During this I endured so much! I thought I wouldn't recover. I had moments of extreme anguish, but never resignation. I wanted to be well, to live! No matter how, as long as I could live. I suffered for weeks. During sleepless nights, my conscience gave a terrible account of my life, amounting to a collection of unfulfilled desires, a constant quest for something uplifting, a little forbidden joy. That's all there was. I was riven with spasms. Bizarre images raced through my feverish brain. And above

everything hovered a tragic "Why?" My desire for life cried out. The vision of paradise vanished.

My young body conquered the illness without any need for surgery. I got well. With youthful vigor, I rejoiced in my recovery, especially since the board of Bnos no longer held anything against my girlfriend. They were moved by how much devotion she had shown during my illness and how much she had sacrificed for me. There was little time for me to convalesce. I went back to work. It was difficult, but I had no choice. Throughout the winter I divided my time between working and lying in bed. As a result of failing to get enough rest after my illness, I had a continuous cold.

I took up writing again, but this time only in my diary. After all, I have no ambition to become a poet or a writer. My friend tried to persuade me to send one of my manuscripts to a publisher. I didn't do it for fear of being ridiculed. All my writing was precious to me, and I had invested too much of myself in it to be able to endure that. Nor was there any place to send my manuscripts. I had written everything in Polish. Although there were Jewish periodicals in Polish, I wouldn't have sent my writings to any of them. I doubted they would accept my work because of the subject matter.

Lately, however, one question began to trouble me: Why didn't I write in Yiddish? Since I was a Jew, why did I have to write in a foreign language? The answer was quite simple: Until recently I hadn't read any Yiddish books, other than those that had been translated from Hebrew. They were just Beys Yaakov textbooks; they weren't literary in character. I promised my diary that I would write in Yiddish, although this would entail certain difficulties. But despite my promise, I continued to write in Polish, until I read an announcement from YIVO in the public library. My heart skipped a beat. I knew that I would write my autobiography. It would be my first work in Yiddish.

This wasn't my only cause for rejoicing. At last! I would write candidly. It would be an interesting experiment, solely for myself. Until now, if I had occasion to write something of this sort, it was usually in a specific context. But now I'd be able to speak freely, without any obligation to comply with specific requirements. It would be an account of my own life, in the light of my own feelings and thoughts. Still, I had certain qualms because of my home and Beys Yaakov.

Yes, I still belonged to Bnos. I've stressed the reason for this previously. I have nowhere else to go; it's my milieu. My mother would suffer a great deal if I quit. Even so, I might quit, but there's no other organization that offers anything other than frivolous pleasures. I'm not an active member of Bnos. I seldom go there. My excuse is a lack of time, which is actually the

case. I am busy twelve hours a day. Yet I'm unable to live in more than a single room that I sublet along with my mother and sister. After a whole day of running around giving lessons, it's hard to read a book. Fortunately, at least, summer is coming, and when my students are on vacation I can read outdoors.

Even now, as I write these lines, I'm exhausted. But the fatigue doesn't bother me much. As I see it, since I am writing for someone far away, what's close by becomes easier to describe. I know very little about the YIVO Institute. But the bulletins from YIVO reflect such an implicit understanding of young people, such rapport, that I am writing this despite the considerable risk. The slightest suspicion that I am writing an autobiography would provoke an extremely strong response in Bnos. They would certainly not tolerate it. Only the assurance that those to whom I write will abide by my wishes that nothing be revealed publicly has given me the courage to write. No one at home knows what I'm writing. My notebook is well hidden. Only my friend knows about this.

Who knows? Perhaps this autobiography will change the course of my life. This is something new for me. I have never before examined my life seriously. In any case, it's been a difficult life to this very day. There seems no possibility of improving it. My financial conditions are oppressive. The ambiguity of my situation is agonizing; the need for duplicity, the way that I am misunderstood is unnerving. I can't speak out because I'm not understood, while those who do understand me can scarcely help. My soul aspires to distant horizons, yet I remain in this little world of narrow duties. It's impossible for me to break away because this would mean losing the basis of my life. Therefore my protest is silenced by the voice of reason. Reading books substitutes for reality, and life goes on. And when a sigh escapes from the depths of my heart, when sparks of rebellion and protest ignite in my tired but youthful eyes, they vanish in the turbulence of life, which casts off the weak and battles the rebellious. Still, from my lips comes an eternal "Why?" Then my shoulders straighten and brace themselves, ready to endure anything, never to surrender, but with faith—onward!

Through my neighbor's thin, wooden walls I hear the whirring of a sewing machine. The sound clatters in my head and interferes with my work. At the same time I think: How limited my aspirations are! I desire nothing more than to have a room of my own. For me this is typical: a great, beautiful, idealistic thought runs into a material obstacle. But this, in turn, provokes fresh ideas.

"Esther"

7 May 1939

Session 2.3 - Prewar Jewish Life in Poland, Inquiry Three

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Prewar Jewish Life in Poland
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Prewar Jewish Life in Poland
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Note: This inquiry requires the use of a computer, iPhone or iPad, as the inquiry documents are online (or on the App Store). Due to the unique nature of these sources, extra guiding questions appear in the appendix to this lesson.

Appendix 2.3 - Jewish Life in Oświęcim

Website link for the inquiry: <http://oshpitzin.pl/map/>

(note: “Oshpitzin” is the Yiddish pronunciation of the Polish “Oświęcim”)

Recommended locations to research:

- “Rabbi Lazar Rosenfeld Beit Midrash”
- “Bobover Yeshiva”
- “Great Synagogue”
- “Great Beit Midrash”
- “Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue”

Guiding Questions:

- Who were the Bobover Jews?
- Who was the leader of the Bobover Jews?
- What kinds of uses did the Bobover Yeshiva provide for the community?
- Describe the location of the Great Synagogue.
- What were some of the influences for the Great Synagogue, both in design and in ritual practice?
- Mordechaj Grubner describes the visit of the President of Poland to Oświęcim. Describe it in your own words.
- How did the community utilize the Great Beit Midrash?
- Looking at the various pictures, describe Jewish life in Oświęcim.

Background Information:

Shelomoh Halberstam (1847–1905), grandson of Ḥayim Halberstam by the latter’s fifth son, Me’ir Natan (1835–1855), became famous as the founder of his own Hasidic dynasty in the town of Bobowa (Bobov). Born in Tarnobrzeg-Dzików, he was orphaned at the age of eight and grew up in his grandfather’s Sandz court. He served as rabbi in various towns in Galicia, including Bukowsk and Oświęcim (Auschwitz). In 1880 he moved to Vishnitsa (Wiśnicz Nowy, Galicia), where he took on the lifestyle of a Hasidic rebbe and in 1888 founded the first Hasidic [yeshiva](#)—contrary to Sandz tradition, which frowned on yeshiva study. He was also involved in public activities, mainly in the [Makhzikey ha-Das](#) organization and in the struggle against modernism and [Zionism](#). He was soon recognized as the most important *tsadik* in western Galicia. In 1892, he settled in the small town of Bobov, which gave his dynasty the name it still bears.

Shelomoh’s only son, Ben-Tsiyon Halberstam (1874–1941), who succeeded him as *tsadik* and as principal of the yeshiva, was known for his affectionate treatment of young people, in the hope that he would persuade them to remain within a Hasidic framework. Between the two world wars he founded an extensive network of about 50 yeshivas in Poland, known as ‘Ets Ḥayim, which

together enrolled hundreds of students. The yeshiva at Trzebinia (Tshebin), where he lived from 1932, was particularly famous.

A large part of Ben-Tsiyon Halberstam's time was devoted to the material needs of the yeshiva students, and to that end he established in each yeshiva an association called Tomkhe Orayta (Supporters of Torah). When World War II broke out, he escaped to [Lwów](#), where he died in an anti-Jewish pogrom in July 1941. Ben-Tsiyon's son Shelomoh Halberstam (1907–2000), who directed the yeshiva network in his father's lifetime, managed to escape from the Nazis. In 1946, he reached the United States, and in 1967 he settled in the Borough Park section of Brooklyn, New York. Thanks to his charismatic personality, he successfully reestablished the Bobov dynasty, making it one of the largest and most influential Hasidic sects of his time.

Other descendants of the Halberstam family founded dynasties in many towns and villages of Galicia, Poland, [Slovakia](#), and Hungary, including Rudnik, Chrzanów, Cieszanów, Czchów, Oświęcim, Żmigród Nowy, Bardiów, Nisko, Stropków, Dolina, and Grybów.

Citation:

Assaf, David. "Sandz Hasidic Dynasty." *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. Published 27 October 2010. 22 April 2015
<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Sandz_Hasidic_Dynasty>

Session 2.4 - Inquiry Reflection: Prewar Jewish Life in Poland

-scripted-

Goals:

- To provide time for reflection
- To preemptively respond to the potential tedium of doing too much inquiry

Objectives:

- Students will have an opportunity to reflect on the past three inquiry sessions and determine – “What does this mean for me?”
- Students will identify at least two pieces of information they want to teach as part of their tour guiding in Poland

Opening: (3 minutes)

- **Explain:** *We have reached the end of our first unit of study – the life of Jews in Prewar Poland. Today, instead of honing our skills of Reading Like a Historian, we will all take a step back from our ongoing inquiry to think for a little bit about what we have all learned. In order to do this, we will be using a protocol³ for reflecting on the things we have learned. I will pass out this protocol to each group – you will need one person to be a time-keeper/facilitator to make sure everyone in your group gets a turn to share their reflections. Please separate into groups of three – your group does not need to be with the same people in your inquiry groups.*
- **Note:** During this reflection process, walk around the room and listen in on your students’ conversations. Add your input as you feel it is needed. This will allow you to better understand what your students feel they have learned, as well as to ensure that your students remain on task.
 - a. Periodically, remind your class how much time remains, or when they should be switching presenters in the group round. This is especially important during the final round of the protocol.

Reflection Protocol: (45 minutes)

- Individual Round (10 minutes)
 - a. As a whole class, students will sit silently and free-write about at least two new understandings they have gained from the last three inquiry sessions. Students are encouraged to review their notes and primary sources during this time.

Note: collect these free-writes as a building-block assessment.

³ Protocol adapted from NSRF: “The Process of Developing Understanding: A Protocol for Reflection and Analysis.” http://www.nsrffharmony.org/system/files/protocols/understanding_analysis_o.pdf

- Group Round (10 minutes x3; 30 minutes total)
 - a. 3 minutes of presenter sharing
 - b. 2 minutes of group questions (about how the presenter came to learn that info)
 - c. 2 minutes of group reflections on the presenter's new understanding
 - d. 3 minutes of presenter responding about his/her learning experience

- Final Round (5 minutes)
 - a. Appreciate – Take a moment to celebrate all of the new things you have learned over the course of these sessions so far!
 - b. How does what you have learned over the last few sessions compare with what you knew before?
 - c. How might we apply these new understandings to our *Divrei Makom*?

Closing: (12 minutes)

- When there are 10 minutes left in class, end the small group conversations and return to a whole class conversation. Debrief the reflection process and check in with your students how it went. Ask students to share their thoughts on today's process using questions like these:
 - a. What worked well in this reflection session?
 - b. Was there an 'aha moment' for anyone?
 - c. Was it easy or hard to reflect back on the last three sessions?
 - d. How well have the inquiry process and the Reading Like a Historian method worked for me?
 - e. What might we do differently to make our future sessions more productive/useful/thoughtful?

- To close, explain that we will be returning to our inquiry practice next session, on the topic of Jewish Destruction during the Holocaust.

Unit Three - Inquiry of Destruction of Polish Jewish Life

Note to the Teacher

Dear Lead Historian,

This is the second of three inquiry units, focusing on the Destruction of Polish Jewish Life.

Carry on with the inquiry sessions! By this time, the inquiry groups should remain constant from session to session, building towards the final sessions of the pre-trip part of the course when the inquiry groups will plan their teaching moment in Poland. It would be helpful to remind the students to begin thinking about that upcoming time in Poland when they will become tour guides.

If you feel as though a quick refresher of what it is to read and think like a historian, do so at the beginning of the first session of this unit.

B'hatzlacha!

Enduring Understandings

- The effect individuals had during the Holocaust is magnified in light of the fact that six million Jews and five million others perished during the Holocaust.
- Jewish educational tourism teaches more about who you are than where you are.

Essential Question

- How much do national governments influence the day-to-day behaviors of its citizens?

Unit Objectives

- To build on the intellectual preparation of visiting Poland
- To familiarize students with several primary sources concerning Destruction of Jewish Life in Poland
- To reflect on students' learning and allow them to make meaning of their inquiries

Session 3.1 - Destruction of Polish Jewish Life, Inquiry One

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Destruction of Polish Jewish Life
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Destruction of Polish Jewish Life
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

2 THE FIRST STAGE:
ANTI-JEWISH LEGISLATION



INTRODUCTION

TO RESTORE GERMANY to its former greatness, Hitler believed that the Jews had to be purged from the political and public life of the German nation and removed from all positions of political, social, or cultural influence. The first systematic anti-Jewish acts of the National Socialist government, therefore, deprived the Jews of the equal rights which they had won in the course of the past century.

On March 23, 1933, Hitler had, by a policy of deceit and false assurances, obtained a majority in the Reichstag to pass the Enabling Act, a law authorizing the government to issue legislation on its own responsibility, even if that legislation deviated from the Reich Constitution. Thenceforth, the decrees which were promulgated by the German government adhered to the principles of National Socialist ideology rather than to the rules of law.

The first anti-Jewish decree was issued on April 7, 1933, just two weeks after the passage of the Enabling Act. The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, whose very title indicated its nationalist character, provided for the dismissal of "non-

"Aryan" civil servants, including clerical employees and workers as well as professionals. War veterans were excepted, an appeal having been made on their behalf by Reich president Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg. That same day another decree was issued which denied admission to the bar to lawyers of "non-Aryan descent."

On April 11, 1933, an implementing decree appeared, defining "non-Aryan" status: "It is enough for one parent or grandparent to be non-Aryan. This is to be assumed especially if one parent or one grandparent was of the Jewish faith." Thenceforth, proof of "Aryan" origins had to be supplied by all persons in the civil service and eventually for most other positions.

On April 25, 1933, the Law Against the Overcrowding of German Schools and Institutions of Higher Learning established a numerus clausus for students of "non-Aryan descent." An implementing decree issued the same day set the admissible quota of "non-Aryans" at 1.5 percent. By the end of 1933, a spate of pseudo-legal legislation had eliminated Jews from public and government positions, bringing about a reversion of status to the pre-Emancipation era.

On September 15, 1935, at the ceremonial session of the Reichstag convened at the annual Nazi party congress in Nuremberg, two new laws were enacted—the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor. The Reich Citizenship Law declared that German citizenship was awarded only to subjects of "German or kindred blood." An implementing decree, issued on November 14, 1935, addressed itself to the unsettled status of offspring of marriages between Jews and "Aryans," designated as Mischlinge ("hybrids"). The law established the racial pedigree of various types of Mischlinge and also removed the exemptions allowed in the 1933 legislation for Jewish civil servants who were war veterans.

The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor forbade marriage and sexual relations between Jews and those of "German or kindred blood," providing severe penalties for violations. Its first implementing decree further regulated the status of Mischlinge. The enactment of these laws, isolating the Jews from the general population of Germany, marked the end of the first stage of the process disemancipating the Jews in Germany. Hitler hinted, in presenting the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, at an imminent and ominous change in his

anti-Jewish policy. This law, he said, was "an attempt to regulate by law a problem which, in the event of repeated failure, would have to be transferred by law to the National Socialist party for final solution."

The next cycle of anti-Jewish legislation came in 1938 and was synchronized with Hitler's plans for war. The Law Regarding the Legal Status of the Jewish Religious Communities, promulgated on March 28, 1938, withdrew public status from the *Gemeinden*, the legally recognized local Jewish communal bodies, putting them under the administrative control of the regime, foreshadowing eventual Gestapo control.

On April 26, 1938, after the annexation of Austria, the Decree Regarding the Reporting of Jewish Property was issued. Promulgated by Göring, as Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan, and by Wilhelm Frick, the Minister of the Interior, this decree ordered every Jew to assess and report the value of his entire domestic and foreign property by June 30, 1938. The first in a series, this law set in motion a process that would lead to the total expropriation of all Jewish property.

On August 17, 1938, the Second Decree for the Implementation of the Law Regarding Changes of Family Names and Given Names was issued. (The original law, issued on January 5, 1938, laconic and mysterious, had merely established the government's authority in the matter of change of name.) Not only were Jews forbidden to take "Aryan" names, in accordance with lists provided, but all Jewish men were now obliged to add the name of Israel to their own names; all Jewish women were to add the name of Sarah. This law presaged the identification of Jews in passports and personal documents, and also by means of Star-of-David armbands and badges, the wearing of which later became obligatory throughout German-ruled Europe.

On November 7, 1938, a Polish Jewish boy by the name of Hershel Grynszpan (Germanized as Grünspan) shot Ernst vom Rath, a member of the German legation in Paris. Two days later, vom Rath died of his wounds. His death, on the anniversary of the Munich Putsch, served as the pretext for a massive pogrom against Jews all over Germany, resulting in enormous destruction of Jewish property. This pogrom became known as *Kristallnacht*, "night of glass," on account of the large-scale smashing of display windows of Jewish-owned stores. The German government exploited the oc-

casation to accelerate the expropriation of the Jews and the liquidation of their community. On November 12, 1938, Göring, acting as Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan, imposed a one-billion-mark penalty payment upon the Jews. Thereafter, in rapid succession, flowed decrees and orders totally expropriating Jewish property, businesses, and industry, and putting Jews under police surveillance.



LAW FOR THE RESTORATION OF
THE PROFESSIONAL CIVIL SERVICE, APRIL 7, 1933

The Reich Government has enacted the following law, promulgated herewith:

§ 1 (1) To restore a national professional civil service and to simplify administration, civil servants may be dismissed from office in accordance with the regulations that follow, even in the absence of the conditions required therefor under present law.

(2) For the purposes of this law, the following are regarded as civil servants: direct and indirect officials¹ of the Reich, direct and indirect officials of the states and officials of municipalities and confederated municipalities, officials of public corporations as well as of institutions and enterprises of equivalent status (Third Decree of the Reich President for Securing the Economy and Finances, dated October 6, 1931; *Reichsgesetzblatt* I, p. 537—Part 3, Chapter V, Article I, § 15, Paragraph 1). The provisions also apply to functionaries of social-insurance carriers who have the rights and duties of civil servants.

(3) Officials temporarily retired from active service also are civil servants for the purposes of this law.

(4) The Reichsbank and the German Reich Railroad Company are authorized to adopt corresponding regulations.

§ 2 (1) Civil servants who have entered civil-service status

1. "Direct and indirect officials" is a technical term dating back to the bureaucracy of Frederick the Great. "Direct" civil servants were employed by government agencies; "indirect" civil servants were employed by public corporations and institutions engaged in public functions.

determine to what particular schools and institutions of higher learning the law applies.

(2) The Reich Minister of the Interior may fix general numerical guidelines for limiting the number of pupils and students.

To § 4

(8) The population ratio (§ 4, Paragraph 1) for use in new admissions is set at 1.5 per cent; the quota (§ 4, Paragraph 2) for use in reducing the number of pupils and students is set at a maximum of 5 per cent.

(9) Within university faculties the population ratio is to be maintained among new enrollments.

In each school the population ratio is to be maintained among new admissions for as long as the school is still attended by pupils of non-Aryan descent who remain there within the limits of the quota provided for in § 4, Paragraph 2.

Where the number of new admissions to a particular school is so small that under the population ratio no pupil of non-Aryan descent would be admitted, one pupil of non-Aryan descent may be admitted. However, in this case further admission of pupils of non-Aryan descent will be permissible only when the population ratio will not have been reached among the total of new admissions since the effective date of the law.

(10) When a pupil of non-Aryan descent who was newly admitted subsequent to the effective date of the law changes schools, he is to be counted in the population ratio at the school to which he transfers.

(11) Pupils of non-Aryan descent who have newly entered or will newly enter school at the beginning of the 1933 school year will in all cases count as not yet admitted. § 4, Paragraph 1, applies to them.

The same applies analogously to students who have been or will be enrolled for the first time in the 1933 summer semester.



REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW, SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

The Reichstag has unanimously enacted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

§ 1 (1) A subject⁵ is anyone who enjoys the protection of the German Reich and for this reason is specifically obligated to it.

(2) Nationality is acquired according to the provisions of the Reich and state nationality law.

§ 2 (1) A Reich citizen is only that subject of German or kindred blood who proves by his conduct that he is willing and suited loyally to serve the German people and the Reich.

(2) Reich citizenship is acquired through the conferment of a certificate of Reich citizenship.

(3) The Reich citizen is the sole bearer of full political rights as provided by the laws.

§ 3 The Reich Minister of the Interior, in agreement with the Deputy of the Führer, will issue the legal and administrative orders required to implement and supplement this law.

*Nuremberg: September 15, 1935
at the Reich Party Congress of Freedom*

The Führer and Reich Chancellor

The Reich Minister of the Interior



FIRST DECREE TO

THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW, NOVEMBER 14, 1935

Pursuant to § 3 of the Reich Citizenship Law of September 15, 1935 (*Reichsgesetzblatt I*, p. 1146), the following is decreed:

§ 1 (1) Until further regulations concerning the certificate of Reich citizenship are issued, subjects of German or kindred blood who on the effective date of the Reich Citizenship Law possessed the right to vote in Reichstag elections, or to whom the Reich Minister of the Interior, in agreement with the Deputy of the Führer, granted provisional Reich citizenship, will be provisionally deemed Reich citizens.

(2) The Reich Minister of the Interior, in agreement

5. The German term *Staatsangehöriger*, translated as "subject," refers to someone who is under the rule of a government that affords him protection and to which he owes loyalty.

with the Deputy of the Führer, may revoke provisional Reich citizenship.

§ 2 (1) The provisions of § 1 also apply to subjects who are Jewish *Mischlinge*.

(2) A Jewish *Mischling* is anyone who is descended from one or two grandparents who are fully Jewish as regards race, unless he is deemed a Jew under § 5, Paragraph 2. A grandparent is deemed fully Jewish without further ado, if he has belonged to the Jewish religious community.

§ 3 Only a Reich citizen, as bearer of full political rights, can exercise the right to vote on political matters, or hold public office. The Reich Minister of the Interior or an agency designated by him may, in the transition period, permit exceptions with regard to admission to public office. The affairs of religious associations are not affected.⁶

§ 4 (1) A Jew cannot be a Reich citizen. He is not entitled to the right to vote on political matters; he cannot hold public office.

(2) Jewish civil servants will retire by December 31, 1935. If these civil servants fought at the front during the World War for the German Reich or its allies, they will receive the full pension according to the salary scale for the last position held, until they reach retirement age; they will not, however, be promoted according to seniority. After they reach retirement age, their pension will be newly calculated according to the prevailing salary scales.

(3) The affairs of religious associations are not affected.

(4) The conditions of service of teachers in Jewish public schools remain unchanged until the issuance of new regulations for the Jewish school system.

§ 5 (1) A Jew is anyone descended from at least three grandparents who are fully Jewish as regards race. § 2, Paragraph 2, Sentence 2 applies.

(2) Also deemed a Jew is a Jewish *Mischling* subject who is descended from two fully Jewish grandparents and
a. who belonged to the Jewish religious

⁶ The Jewish religious communities (*Gemeinden*) were permitted to retain their legal status as official corporations, that is, having the power and authority of state or municipality, until March 31, 1938. See below, Law Regarding the Legal Status of the Jewish Religious Communities, March 28, 1938.

community when the law was issued or has subsequently been admitted to it;

b. who was married to a Jew when the law was issued or has subsequently married one;

c. who is the offspring of a marriage concluded by a Jew, within the meaning of Paragraph 1, after the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor of September 15, 1935 (*RGBl.* I, p. 1146) took effect;

d. who is the offspring of extramarital intercourse with a Jew, within the meaning of Paragraph 1, and will have been born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936.

§ 6 (1) Requirements regarding purity of blood exceeding those in § 5 that are set in Reich laws or in directives of the National Socialist German Workers Party and its units remain unaffected.

(2) Other requirements regarding purity of blood that exceed those in § 5 may be set only with the consent of the Reich Minister of the Interior and the Deputy of the Führer. Insofar as requirements of this kind already exist, they will become void as of January 1, 1936, unless approved by the Reich Minister of the Interior in agreement with the Deputy of the Führer. Application for approval is to be made to the Reich Minister of the Interior.

§ 7 The Führer and Reich Chancellor may grant exemptions from provisions of the implementation decree.

The Führer and Reich Chancellor

The Reich Minister of the Interior

The Deputy of the Führer



LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF

GERMAN BLOOD AND GERMAN HONOR, SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

Imbued with the insight that the purity of German blood is prerequisite for the continued existence of the German people and inspired by the inflexible will to ensure the existence of the German nation for all times, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law, which is hereby promulgated:

§ 1 (1) Marriages between Jews and subjects of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.

(2) Only the State Attorney may initiate the annulment suit.

§ 2 Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of German or kindred blood is forbidden.

§ 3 Jews must not employ in their households female subjects of German or kindred blood who are under 45 years old.

§ 4 (1) Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich and national flag and to display the Reich colors.

(2) They are, on the other hand, allowed to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right enjoys the protection of the state.

§ 5 (1) Whoever violates the prohibition in § 1 will be punished by penal servitude.

(2) A male who violates the prohibition in § 2 will be punished either by imprisonment or penal servitude.

(3) Whoever violates the provisions of §§ 3 or 4 will be punished by imprisonment up to one year and by a fine, or by either of these penalties.

§ 6 The Reich Minister of the Interior, in agreement with the Deputy of the Führer and the Reich Minister of Justice, will issue the legal and administrative orders required to implement and supplement this law.

§ 7 The law takes effect on the day following promulgation, except for § 3, which goes into force January 1, 1936.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935

at the Reich Party Congress of Freedom

The Führer and Reich Chancellor

The Reich Minister of Justice

The Reich Minister of the Interior

The Deputy of the Führer



FIRST DECREE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

NOVEMBER 14, 1935

§ 3 (1) Subjects who are Jewish *Mischlinge* with two fully Jewish grandparents may conclude marriages with subjects of

Session 3.2 - Destruction of Polish Jewish Life, Inquiry Two

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Destruction of Polish Jewish Life
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Destruction of Polish Jewish Life
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Appendix 3.2 - Lodz Ghetto Liquidation

Background Information:

Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski (1877--1944) was Chairman of the *Judenrat* in the Lodz ghetto in Poland. Formerly an unsuccessful businessman and an orphanage director, Rumkowski was appointed *Judenrat* chairman on October 13, 1939, after the German invasion of Poland. Like all *Judenrat* heads, Rumkowski was torn between helping the Jewish population in the ghetto survive, and giving in to the demands of the German authorities. Rumkowski, however, is considered to be one of the most controversial of all *Judenrat* leaders, in that he often cooperated with the Germans and treated the Jews of his ghetto dictatorially.

Rumkowski reported directly to the German ghetto administration, which was headed by Hans Biebow. He was completely responsible for everyday life in the ghetto: providing food, housing, heat, work, and health and welfare services for the suffering ghetto population. Rumkowski controlled all aspects of the ghetto, even its cultural life. When rabbis were forced to stop working, he himself began performing marriages. His picture even appeared on the ghetto's money. Rumkowski was also responsible for setting up 120 factories, which employed thousands of the ghetto's Jews, all employed in producing goods for the Germans. Rumkowski believed that if he could create a productive and vital work force for the Nazis, then they would not destroy the ghetto.

Rumkowski also believed that in order to save the ghetto as a whole, he would have to cooperate with the Nazis and give in to their deportation demands. By the end of 1941, the extermination camp at Chelmno had been established and the Germans forced Rumkowski to organize the deportation of a portion of the ghetto population. Initially, Rumkowski tried to convince the Germans to reduce the number of Jews to be deported. However, the Germans refused and made Rumkowski responsible for deciding who was to be deported. During the first 5 months of 1942, 55,000 Jews from Lodz were sent to their deaths at Chelmno.

During the second week of September 1942, another deportation was carried out. The Nazis demanded that Rumkowski turn over all children and old people. He cooperated with their demand and calmly asked families to surrender their children. Twenty thousand Jews were brutally rounded up and sent to Chelmno. Subsequently, there was a respite from the deportations, strengthening Rumkowski in his belief that keeping the peace and working for the Germans, would help prevent further deportations. During that period of time, the Lodz Ghetto was left alone while other ghettos all over Poland were being destroyed.

However, by the late spring of 1944, the Soviet army was advancing toward Lodz. The Nazis decided to liquidate the Lodz Ghetto. Rumkowski was forced to arrange the deportation. From June 23 to July 14, 1944, approximately 7,000 Jews were sent to

Chelmno. The Jews of Lodz resisted the deportations passively, leading the Nazis to decide to liquidate the ghetto immediately, with SS and German police units carrying out the evacuation. The Germans closed the ghetto's factories and dissolved all *Judenrat*-run institutions. The Jews were now taken to Auschwitz. Rumkowski encouraged the Jews to calmly report for deportation, but they ignored his request. The Germans completed the liquidation of the ghetto in late July and August, sending the Jews to their deaths. Only a few hundred Jews managed to hide successfully. Rumkowski and his family were not spared---they were deported to Auschwitz on August 30, 1944, and were murdered there. Lodz was liberated by the Soviet army on January 19, 1945.

Some historians view Rumkowski as a collaborator and traitor. Others believe he made a serious, yet flawed, attempt to rescue as many Jews as possible.

Citation: "Rumkowski, Mordechai Chaim." *Yad Vashem*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<[http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft Word - 5839.pdf](http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205839.pdf)>.

Rumkowski's "Give me your children" speech:

A grievous blow has struck the ghetto. They are asking us to give up the best we possess – the children and the elderly. I was unworthy of having a child of my own, so I gave the best years of my life to children. I've lived and breathed with children, I never imagined I would be forced to deliver this sacrifice to the altar with my own hands. In my old age, I must stretch out my hands and beg: Brothers and sisters! Hand them over to me! Fathers and mothers: Give me your children!

I had a suspicion something was going to befall us. I anticipated "something" and was always like a watchman: on guard to prevent it. But I was unsuccessful because I did not know what was threatening us. The taking of the sick from the hospitals caught me completely by surprise. And I give you the best proof there is of this: I had my own nearest and dearest among them and I could do nothing for them!

I thought that would be the end of it, that after that, they'd leave us in peace, the peace for which I long so much, for which I've always worked, which has been my goal. But something else, it turned out, was destined for us. Such is the fate of the Jews: always more suffering and always worse suffering, especially in times of war.

Yesterday afternoon, they gave me the order to send more than 20,000 Jews out of the ghetto, and if not - "We will do it!" So the question became, 'Should we take it upon ourselves, do it ourselves, or leave it to others to do?'. Well, we - that is, I and my closest associates - thought first not about "How many will perish?" but "How many is it possible to save?" And we reached the conclusion that, however hard it would be for us, we should take the implementation of this order into our own hands.

I must perform this difficult and bloody operation - I must cut off limbs in order to save the body itself. I must take children because, if not, others may be taken as well - God forbid.

I have no thought of consoling you today. Nor do I wish to calm you. I must lay bare your full anguish and pain. I come to you like a bandit, to take from you what you treasure most in your hearts! I have tried, using every possible means, to get the order revoked. I tried - when that proved to be impossible - to soften the order. Just yesterday, I ordered a list of children aged 9 - I wanted at least to save this one aged-group: the nine to 10 year olds. But I was not granted this concession. On only one point did I succeed: in saving the 10 year olds and up. Let this be a consolation to our profound grief.

There are, in the ghetto, many patients who can expect to live only a few days more, maybe a few weeks. I don't know if the idea is diabolical or not, but I must say it: "Give me the sick. In their place we can save the healthy."

I know how dear the sick are to any family, and particularly to Jews. However, when cruel demands are made, one has to weigh and measure: who shall, can and may be saved? And common sense dictates that the saved must be those who can be saved and those who have a chance of being rescued, not those who cannot be saved in any case...

We live in the ghetto, mind you. We live with so much restriction that we do not have enough even for the healthy, let alone for the sick. Each of us feeds the sick at the expense of our own health: we give our bread to the sick. We give them our meager ration of sugar, our little piece of meat. And what's the result? Not enough to cure the sick, and we ourselves become ill. Of course, such sacrifices are the most beautiful and noble. But there are times when one has to choose: sacrifice the sick, who haven't the slightest chance of recovery and who also may make others ill, or rescue the healthy.

I could not deliberate over this problem for long; I had to resolve it in favor of the healthy. In this spirit, I gave the appropriate instructions to the doctors, and they will be expected to deliver all incurable patients, so that the healthy, who want and are able to live, will be saved in their place.

I understand you, mothers; I see your tears, alright. I also feel what you feel in your hearts, you fathers who will have to go to work in the morning after your children have been taken from you, when just yesterday you were playing with your dear little ones. All this I know and feel. Since 4 o'clock yesterday, when I first found out about the order, I have been utterly broken. I share your pain. I suffer because of your anguish, and I don't know how I'll survive this - where I'll find the strength to do so.

I must tell you a secret: they requested 24,000 victims, 3000 a day for eight days. I succeeded in reducing the number to 20,000, but only on the condition that these be children under the age of 10. Children 10 and older are safe! Since the children and the aged together equal only some 13,000 souls, the gap will have to be filled with the sick.

I can barely speak. I am exhausted; I only want to tell you what I am asking of you: Help me carry out this action! I am trembling. I am afraid that others, God forbid, will do it themselves.

A broken Jew stands before you. Do not envy me. This is the most difficult of all orders I have ever had to carry out at any time. I reach out to you with my broken, trembling hands and beg: Give into my hands the victims! So that we can avoid having further victims, and a population of 100,000 Jews can be preserved! So, they promised me: If we deliver our victims by ourselves, there will be peace!!!

At this point in the speech the crowd begins shouting. Many cry out: "We will not let the children go alone! We will all go!"

These are empty phrases!!! I don't have the strength to argue with you! If the authorities were to arrive, none of you would be shouting!

I understand what it means to tear off a part of the body. Yesterday, I begged on my knees, but it did not work. From small villages with Jewish populations of 7000 to 8000, barely 1000 arrived here. So which is better? What do you want? That 80,000 to 90,000 Jews remain, or God forbid, that the whole population be annihilated?

You may judge as you please; my duty is to preserve the Jews who remain. I do not speak to hot-heads! I speak to your reason and conscience. I have done and will continue doing everything possible to keep arms from appearing in the streets and blood from being shed. The order could not be undone; it could only be reduced.

One needs the heart of a bandit to ask from you what I am asking. But put yourself in my place, think logically, and you'll reach the conclusion that I cannot proceed any other way. The part that can be saved is much larger than the part that must be given away!"

Citation:

"Chaim Rumkowski." *HolocaustResearchProject.org*. Web. 24 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ghettos/rumkowski.html>>.



Rumkowski delivers one of his many ghetto speeches



Jewish children being deported from Lodz Ghetto.

Session 3.3 - Destruction of Polish Jewish Life, Inquiry Three

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Destruction of Polish Jewish Life
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Destruction of Polish Jewish Life
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Appendix 3.3 - Life in Auschwitz

Background Information:

Rudolf Hoess (1900–1947) was Camp Commandant of Auschwitz. Hoess was born in Baden-Baden, Germany. He volunteered for the army during World War I even though he was underage. In November 1922 Hoess joined the Nazi Party. In 1928 he got involved with the Artamanen Society, a nationalist group which encouraged work on the land and resettlement on Polish territory. He joined the SS in June 1934, on the advice of SS commander Heinrich Himmler, one of the leaders of the Artamanen society.

From 1934--1938 Hoess learned how to run a concentration camp at Dachau, where he trained under camp commandant Theodor Eicke. In May 1940 Hoess was transferred to the site of Auschwitz, and made commandant of the new concentration camp there. Hoess played a large role in organizing and setting up the camp to his liking. In May 1941 Himmler ordered Hoess to establish a new camp right near Auschwitz; this became Birkenau, or Auschwitz II. By the summer, Hoess began preparing the camp as a mass extermination site. At that point, Himmler advised Hoess that Hitler had ordered the "Final Solution" to the "Jewish question," and that the SS was responsible to carry out that assignment. Auschwitz was chosen as the major site of the Final Solution—the mass extermination of all of European Jewry— because it was conveniently located, with respect to transportation and concealment from the outside world.

From summer 1941 to November 1943 Hoess presided over the murder of Jews from Germany, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Poland, France, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Belgium, Austria, Yugoslavia, Italy, Norway, and Greece. He was the one who had made the decision to use Zyklon B gas for that purpose. He left Auschwitz at the end of 1943, but returned to head the extermination of Hungarian Jewry in "Aktion Hoess." In all, he was responsible for the deaths of more than one million people.

After the war, Hoess escaped and assumed a false identity. In March 1946 he was found and arrested. The Supreme Court in Warsaw sentenced him to death; he was hanged in Auschwitz on April 16, 1947.

Citation:

"Hoess, Rudolf (Hoss)." *Yad Vashem*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206418.pdf>.

36. COMMANDANT OF AUSCHWITZ (c. 1945)

RUDOLF HOESS¹

By the will of the Reichsfuehrer SS (Himmler), Auschwitz became the greatest human extermination centre of all time.

When in the summer of 1941 Himmler himself gave me the order to prepare installations at Auschwitz where mass extermination could take place, and personally to carry out these exterminations, I did not have the slightest idea of their scale or consequences. It was certainly an extraordinary and monstrous order. Nevertheless the reasons behind the extermination program seemed to me right. I did not reflect on it at the time: I had been given an order, and I had to carry it out. Whether this mass extermination of the Jews was necessary or not was something on which I could not allow myself to form an opinion, for I lacked the necessary breadth of view.

If the Fuehrer had himself given the order for the "final solution of the Jewish question," then for a veteran National-Socialist and even more so for an SS officer, there could be no question of considering its merits. "The Fuehrer commands, we follow" was never a mere phrase or slogan. It was meant in bitter earnestness....

But outsiders simply cannot understand that there was not a single SS officer who would disobey an order from the Reichsfuehrer SS, far less consider getting rid of him because of the gruesomely hard nature of one such order.

What the Fuehrer, or in our case his second-in-command, the Reichsfuehrer SS, ordered was always right....

Before the mass extermination of the Jews began, the Russian *politruks* and political commissars were liquidated in almost all the concentration camps during 1941 and 1942....

While I was away on duty, my deputy, [Karl] Fritzsch, the commander of the protective custody camp, first tried gas for these killings. It was a preparation of prussic acid, called Cyclon B, which was used in the camp as an insecticide and of which there was always a stock on hand. On my return Fritzsch reported this to me, and the gas was used again for the next transport.

The gassing was carried out in the detention cells of Block 11. Protected by a gasmask, I watched the killing myself. In the crowded cells death came instantaneously the moment the Cyclon B was thrown in. A short, almost smothered cry, and it was all over. During this first experience of gassing people, I did not fully realise what was happening, perhaps because I was too impressed by the whole procedure. I have a clearer recollection of the gassing of nine hundred Russians which took place shortly afterwards in the old crematorium, since the use of Block 11 for this purpose caused too much trouble. While the transport was detraining, holes were pierced in the earth and in the concrete ceiling of the mortuary. The Russians were ordered to undress in an anteroom; they then quietly entered the mortuary, for they had been told they were to be deloused. The whole transport exactly filled the mortuary to capacity. The doors were then sealed and the gas shaken down through the holes in the roof. I do not know how long this killing took. For a little while a humming sound could be heard. When the powder was thrown in, there were cries of "Gas!" then a great bellowing, and the trapped prisoners hurled themselves against both the doors. But the doors held. They were opened several hours later, so that the place might be aired. It was then that I saw, for the first time, gassed bodies in mass. It made me feel uncomfortable and I shuddered, although I had imagined that death by gassing would be worse

Source: Rudolf Hoess, *Commandant of Auschwitz*, trans. C. Fitzgibbon (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1953), pp. 144-50, 153-55.
Copyright 1953 by George Weidenfeld and Nicolson, Ltd. Reprinted by permission.

than it was. I had always thought that the victims would experience a terrible choking sensation. But the bodies, without exception, showed no signs of convulsion. The doctors explained to me that the prussic acid had a paralyzing effect on the lungs, but its action was so quick and strong that death came before the convulsions could set in, and in this its effects differed from those produced by carbon monoxide or by a general oxygen deficiency.

The killing of these Russian prisoners-of-war did not cause me much concern at the time. The order had been given, and I had to carry it out. I must even admit that this gassing set my mind at rest, for the mass extermination of the Jews was to start soon and at that time neither Eichmann² nor I was certain how these mass killings were to be carried out. It would be by gas, but we did not know which gas or how it was to be used. Now we had the gas, and we had established a procedure. I always shuddered at the prospect of carrying out exterminations by shooting, when I thought of the vast numbers concerned, and of the women and children. The shooting of hostages, and the group executions ordered by the Reichsfuehrer SS or by the Reich Security Head Office had been enough for me. I was therefore relieved to think that we were to be spared all these blood-baths, and that the victims too would be spared suffering until their last moment came. It was precisely this which had caused me the greatest concern when I had heard Eichmann's description of Jews being mown down by the Special Squads [*Einsatzkommandos*] armed with machine-guns and machine-pistols. Many gruesome scenes are said to have taken place, people running away after being shot, the finishing off of the wounded and particularly of the women and children. Many members of the *Einsatzkommandos*, unable to endure wading through blood any longer, had committed suicide. Some had even gone mad. Most of the members of the *Kommandos* had to rely on alcohol when carrying out their horrible work....

In the spring of 1942 the first transports of Jews, all earmarked for extermination, arrived from Upper Silesia.

They were taken from the detraining platform to the "Cottage"—to Bunker I—across the meadows where later Building Site II was located. The transport was conducted by [Hans] Aumeier and [Gerhard] Palitzsch and some of the block leaders. They talked with the Jews about general topics, enquiring

concerning their qualifications and trades, with a view to misleading them. On arrival at the "Cottage," they were told to undress. At first they went calmly into the rooms where they were supposed to be disinfected. But some of them showed signs of alarm, and spoke of death by suffocation and of annihilation. A sort of panic set in at once. Immediately all the Jews still outside were pushed into the chambers, and the doors were screwed shut. With subsequent transports the difficult individuals were picked out early on and most carefully supervised. At the first signs of unrest, those responsible were unobtrusively led behind the building and killed with a small-calibre gun that was inaudible to the others. The presence and calm behaviour of the Special Detachment³ served to reassure those who were worried or who suspected what was about to happen. A further calming effect was obtained by members of the Special Detachment accompanying them into the rooms and remaining with them until the end.

It was most important that the whole business of arriving and undressing should take place in an atmosphere of the greatest possible calm. People reluctant to take off their clothes had to be helped by those of their companions who had already undressed, or by men of the Special Detachment.

The refractory ones were calmed down and encouraged to undress. The prisoners of the Special Detachment also saw to it that the process of undressing was carried out quickly, so that the victims would have little time to wonder what was happening.

The eager help given by the Special Detachment in encouraging them to undress and in conducting them into the gas chambers was most remarkable. I have never known, nor heard, of any of its members giving these people who were about to be gassed the slightest hint of what lay ahead of them. On the contrary, they did everything in their power to deceive them and particularly to pacify the suspicious ones. Though they might refuse to believe the SS men, they had complete faith in these members of their own race, and to reassure them and keep them calm the Special Detachments therefore always consisted of Jews who themselves came from the same districts as did the people on whom a particular action was to be carried out.

They would talk about life in the camp, and most of them asked for news of friends or relations who had arrived in earlier transports. It was interesting to

hear the lies that the Special Detachment told them with such conviction, and to see the emphatic gestures with which they underlined them.

Many of the women hid their babies among the piles of clothing. The men of the Special Detachment were particularly on the lookout for this, and would speak words of encouragement to the woman until they had persuaded her to take the child with her. The women believed that the disinfectant might be bad for their smaller children, hence their efforts to conceal them.

The smaller children usually cried because of the strangeness of being undressed in this fashion, but when their mothers or members of the Special Detachment comforted them, they became calm and entered the gas chambers, playing or joking with one another and carrying their toys.

I noticed that women who either guessed or knew what awaited them nevertheless found the courage to joke with the children to encourage them, despite the mortal terror visible in their own eyes.

One woman approached me as she walked past and, pointing to her four children who were manfully helping the smallest ones over the rough ground, whispered:

"How can you bring yourself to kill such beautiful, darling children? Have you no heart at all?"

One old man as he passed by me, hissed:

"Germany will pay a heavy penance for this mass murder of the Jews."

His eyes glowed with hatred as he said this. Nevertheless he walked calmly into the gas-chamber, without worrying about the others.

I remember, too, a woman who tried to throw her children out of the gas-chamber, just as the door was closing. Weeping she called out:

"At least let my precious children live."

There were many such shattering scenes, which affected all who witnessed them.

During the spring of 1942 hundreds of vigorous men and women walked all unsuspecting to their death in the gas chambers, under the blossom-laden fruit trees of the "Cottage" orchard. This picture of death in the midst of life remains with me to this day.

This mass extermination, with all its attendant circumstances, did not, as far I know fail to affect those who took a part in it. With very few exceptions, nearly all of those detailed to do this monstrous "work," this

"service," and who, like myself, have given sufficient thought to the matter, have been deeply marked by these events.

Many of the men involved approached me as I went my rounds through the extermination buildings, and poured out their anxieties and impressions to me, in the hope that I could allay them.

Again and again during these confidential conversations I was asked: is it necessary that we do all this? Is it necessary that hundreds of thousands of women and children be destroyed? And I, who in my innermost being only fought them off, attempted to console them by repeating that it was done on Hitler's order. I had to tell them that this extermination of Jewry had to be, so that Germany and our posterity might be freed for ever from their relentless adversaries.

There was no doubt in the mind of any of us that Hitler's order had to be obeyed regardless, and that it was the duty of the SS to carry it out. Nevertheless we were all tormented by secret doubts.

I myself dared not admit to such doubts. In order to make my subordinates carry on with their task, it was psychologically essential that I myself appear convinced of the necessity for this gruesomely harsh order.

Everyone watched me. They observed the impression produced upon me by the kind of scenes that I have described above, and my reactions. Every word I said on the subject was discussed. I had to exercise intense self-control in order to prevent my innermost doubts and feelings of oppression from becoming apparent.

I had to appear cold and indifferent to events that must have wrung the heart of anyone possessed of human feelings. I might not even look away when afraid lest my natural emotions get the upper hand. I had to watch coldly, while the mothers with laughing or crying children went into the gas-chambers.

On one occasion two small children were so absorbed in some game that they quite refused to let their mother tear them away from it. Even the Jews of the Special Detachment were reluctant to pick the children up. The imploring look in the eyes of the mother, who certainly knew what was happening, is something I shall never forget. The people were already in the gas-chamber and becoming restive, and I had to act. Everyone was looking at me. I nodded to the junior noncommissioned officer on duty

and he picked up the screaming, struggling children in his arms and carried them into the gas-chamber, accompanied by their mother who was weeping in the most heart-rending fashion. My pity was so great that I longed to vanish from the scene; yet I might not show the slightest trace of emotions.

I had to see everything, I had to watch hour after hour, by day and by night, the removal and burning of the bodies, the extraction of the teeth, the cutting of hair, the whole grisly, interminable business. I had to stand for hours on end in the ghastly stench, while the mass graves were being opened and the bodies dragged out and burned.

I had to look through the peep-hole of the gas-chambers and watch the process of death itself, because the doctors wanted me to see it.

I had to do all this because I was the one to whom everyone looked, because I had to show them all that I did not merely issue the orders and make the regulations but was also prepared myself to be present at whatever task I had assigned to my subordinates.

The Reichsfuehrer SS sent various high-ranking party leaders and SS officers to Auschwitz so that they might see for themselves the process of extermination of the Jews. They were all deeply impressed by what they saw. Some who had previously spoken most loudly about the necessity for this extermination fell silent once they had actually seen the "final solution of the Jewish problem." I was repeatedly asked how I and my men could go on watching these operations, and how we were able to stand it.

My invariable answer was that the iron determination with which we must carry out Hitler's orders could only be obtained by a stifling of all human emotions. Each of these gentlemen declared that he was glad the job had not been given to him.

I had many detailed discussions with Eichmann concerning all matters connected with the "final solution of the Jewish problem," but without ever disclosing my inner anxieties, I tried in every way to discover Eichmann's innermost and real convictions about the "solution."

Yes, every way. Yet even when we were quite alone together and the drink had been flowing freely so that he was in his most expansive mood, he showed that he was completely obsessed with the idea of

destroying every single Jew that he could lay his hands on. Without pity and in cold blood we must complete this extermination as rapidly as possible. Any compromise, even the slightest, would have to be paid for bitterly at a later date.

In the face of such grim determination I was forced to bury all my human considerations as deeply as possible.

Indeed, I must freely confess that after these conversations with Eichmann I almost came to regard such emotions as betrayal of the Fuehrer.

There was no escape for me from this dilemma.

I had to go on with this process of extermination. I had to continue this mass murder and coldly to watch it, without regard for the doubts that were seething deep inside me.

I had to observe every happening with a cold indifference. Even those petty incidents that others might not notice I found hard to forget. In Auschwitz I truly had no reason to complain that I was bored.

NOTES

1. Rudolf Hoess (1900-1947). A member of the SS, in May 1940 he was appointed first commandant of Auschwitz. At the end of 1941 Himmler ordered him to adapt the camp for the Final Solution. In November 1943 he was transferred to the inspection authority of the concentration camps. In 1944, however, he returned to Auschwitz for a two-month period to supervise the extermination of 400,000 Hungarian Jews. After the war the Polish government tried him, condemning him to death. While in prison Hoess wrote his autobiography, from which this except is taken. He was hanged at Auschwitz in 1947. Auschwitz, the Nazis' largest concentration and extermination camp, was located near the small Polish town Oswiecim (in German, Auschwitz) in Galicia. Estimates of the victims of Auschwitz's gas chambers vary from 1,000,000 to 2,500,000. In addition to Jews, tens of thousands of Gypsies and other prisoners were killed at Auschwitz.
2. Adolf Eichmann (1906-1962), head of the Gestapo Section IV B 4, which dealt with Jewish affairs and the deportation of the Jews to the death camps. See this chapter, document 41, note 1.
3. These *Sonderkommandos*—popularly known as *kapos*—were recruited from among the camp inmates. See this chapter, document 38, note 4.

MAN'S SEARCH FOR MEANING

Viktor Frankl

The story of daily life in the concentration camps has been recorded in many books of testimony. Camp inmates were subjected to long days of arduous work while surviving on a diet of thin soup and moldy bread. Always subjected to continual humiliation from the SS guards, inmates had to learn to withstand an environment created to dehumanize them before they were killed.

This selection by Dr. Viktor Frankl, a survivor of Auschwitz, begins to answer the question of how the inmate adjusted to life in the concentration camp. Frankl argues that the inmates had to find meaning in their suffering as a reason to go on living. Those who lost faith in the future were those most likely to die. Yet Frankl's testimony goes far beyond the issue of survival in camps to the larger question of how humans deal with life itself.

The prisoner who had lost faith in the future — his future—was doomed. With his loss of belief in the future, he also lost his spiritual hold; he let himself decline and became subject to mental and physical decay. Usually this happened quite suddenly, in the form of a crisis, the symptoms of which were familiar to the experienced camp inmate. We all feared this moment — not for ourselves, which would have been pointless, but for our friends. Usually it began with the prisoner refusing one morning to get dressed and wash or to go out on the parade grounds...No blows. no threats had any effect. He just lay there, hardly moving. If this crisis was brought about by an illness, he refused to be taken to the sick-bay or to do anything to help himself. He simply gave up. There he remained, lying in his own excreta. and nothing bothered him any more.

I once had a dramatic demonstration of the close link between the loss of faith in the future and this dangerous giving up. My senior block warden, a fairly well-known composer and librettist, confided in me one day: "I would like to tell you something. Doctor. I have had a strange dream. A voice told me that I could wish for something, that I should only say what I wanted to know, and all my questions would be answered. What do you think I asked? That I would like to know when the war would be over for me...I wanted to know when we, when our camp, would be liberated and our sufferings come to an end."

"And when did you have this dream?" I asked.

"In February, 1945," he answered. It was then the beginning of March.

"What did your dream voice answer?"

Furtively he whispered to me. "March thirtieth.

When F— told me about his dream, he was still full of hope and convinced that the voice of his dream would be right. But as the promised day drew

nearer, the war news which reached our camp made it appear very unlikely that we would be free on the promised date. On March twenty ninth, F— suddenly became ill and ran a high temperature. On March thirtieth, the day his prophecy had told him that the war and suffering would be over for him, he became delirious and lost consciousness. On March thirty-first, he was dead. To all outward appearances, he had died of typhus.

The ultimate cause of my friend's death was that the expected liberation did not come and he was severely disappointed. This suddenly lowered his body's resistance against the latent typhus infection. His faith in the future and his will to live had become paralyzed and his body fell victim to illness—and thus the voice of his dream was right after all.

Any attempt to restore a man's inner strength in the camp had first to succeed in showing him some future goal. Nietzsche's words, "He who has a why to live for can bear with almost any how," could be the guiding motto for all...efforts regarding prisoners. Woe to him who saw no more sense in his life. no aim, no purpose, and therefore no point in carrying on. He was soon lost...

What was really needed was a fundamental change in our attitude toward life. We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us...Sometimes the situation in which a man finds himself may require him to shape his own fate by action. At other times it is more advantageous for him to make use of an opportunity for contemplation and to realize assets in this way. Sometimes man may be required simply to accept fate, to bear his cross...

When a man finds that it is his destiny to suffer, he will have to accept his suffering as his task; his

Unit I: READING #2

single and unique task. He will have to acknowledge the fact that even in suffering he is unique and alone in the universe. No one can relieve him of his suffering or suffer in his place.

His unique opportunity lies in the way in which he bears his burden.

For us, as prisoners, these thoughts were not speculations far removed from reality. They were the only thoughts that could be of help to us. They kept us from despair, even when there seemed to be no chance of coming out of it alive. There was plenty of suffering for us to get through. Therefore, it was necessary to face up to the full amount of suffering, trying to keep moments of weakness and furtive tears to a minimum. But there was no need to be ashamed of tears, for tears bore witness that a man had the greatest of courage, the courage to suffer. Only very few realized that...

A very strict camp ruling forbade any efforts to save a man who attempted suicide. It was forbidden, for example, to cut down a man who was trying to hang himself. Therefore, it was all important to prevent these attempts from occurring.

I remember two cases of would-be suicide. which bore a striking similarity to each other. Both men had talked of their intentions to commit suicide. Both used the typical argument—they had nothing more to expect from life. In both cases it was a question of getting them to realize that life was still expecting something from them; something in the future was expected of them. We found, in fact, that for the one it was his child whom he adored and who was waiting for him in a foreign country. For the other it was a thing, not a person. This man was a scientist and had written a series of books which still needed

to be finished. His work could not be done by anyone else, any more than another person could ever take the place of the father in his child's affections.

This uniqueness and singleness which distinguishes each individual and gives a meaning to his existence has a bearing on creative work as much as it does on human love. When the impossibility of replacing a person is realized, it allows the responsibility which a man has for his existence and its continuance to appear in all its magnitude. A man who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the "why" for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any "how."

50

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why did the senior block warden die on March 31st?
2. What is meant by Nietzsche's statement. "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."
3. What does Frankl say about crying?
4. How can Frankl's comments about suicide in the camps relate to the issue of increasing suicide today?

DEFINITIONS

furtively: slyly

psychohygiene: the relationship between individual health and state of mind

Session 3.4 - Inquiry Reflection: Destruction of Polish Jewish Life

-scripted-

Goals:

- To provide time for reflection
- To preemptively respond to the potential tedium of doing too much inquiry

Objectives:

- Students will have an opportunity to reflect on the past three inquiry sessions and determine – “What does this mean for me?”
- Students will identify at least two pieces of information they want to teach as part of their tour guiding in Poland

Four Corners Reflection Activity: (25 minutes)

- **Explain:** *Now that we have finished our second section of inquiry sessions, primary sources which have all focused on the Destruction of the Holocaust. Just as we did at the end of the first section, we will pause from doing more inquiry and circle back to a reflective discussion of what we have all learned during this unit. Last time, if you recall, we split into small groups and followed a protocol to help us reflect.*
Today, before we split again into small groups, we will do what I like to call “The Four Corners Activity.” I will read a series of statements that refer specifically to this unit, and silently, you will all move to the corner that corresponds with your opinion on each statement. If you notice, on each corner of this room, there is a sign that says Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. After everyone has moved, I will ask for a volunteer or two from each corner to share why they chose that corner. Lets begin with a practice round...
- **Statements:**
 - a. I like pineapple.
 - i. (**Note:** This might be a good time to remind your students that when moving corners, please do so silently...)
 - b. I did not learn anything new about the Holocaust.
 - c. The strategies and techniques I used in the last three inquiry sessions were helpful to my growth as a historian.
 - d. I learned something I never thought I would have learned about the Nazis.
 - e. My understanding of the experience of Destruction of the Holocaust has grown.
 - f. I found evidence in my sources to make a historical claim.
 - g. I feel that I am an expert on the source materials I studied in this unit.
 - h. I was effective in communicating my opinions to my peers.
 - i. I am progressing as a historian, both in thinking and in reading.

- j. I made a connection between one of this unit's sources to one of last unit's sources.

Group Work: (35 minutes)

- **Note:** Students will now be tasked with meeting in their inquiry groups to delve into the material as a whole. They should continue developing whatever it is they want to teach when they have their opportunity in Poland. Additionally, they should be identifying some lesson or understanding they have gained from the primary sources that will be used in their Divrei Makom.
- During this time, your role is to ensure that students are focused and on task. Before sending off the class into their inquiry groups, **announce** that you will not be reconvening as a whole class today, and that instead, you will be coming around each group to check in with them personally.
 - a. You should have about 5-7 minutes to sit down with each group. **Ask** the following questions:
 - i. How comfortable does this group feel with Reading and Thinking Like a Historian?
 - ii. What changes, if any, has this group made between the first and second inquiry units?
 - iii. What two pieces of information has this group identified as worthwhile to share with the whole class?

Note: Collect the students' responses so you can assess their learning. Please take notes from each group's responses, as this will help you begin to plan out when and where each group will be teach on the trip.

Unit Four - Inquiry of Righteousness in Poland

Note to the Teacher

Dear Lead Historian,

This is the third and final unit of inquiry, and its focus is on stories of Righteousness in Poland.

At this point, students should fully understand what is expected of them, but make sure you are helping push their inquiries forward. In the back of their minds, students should be thinking about their tour guiding moment on the trip. Note that a whole unit is designed to actually plan out the student teachings, but it will be helpful for students to already be considering what they want to teach.

B'hatzlacha!

Enduring Understandings

- Moral actions taken by a small number of individuals proved disproportionately effective in light of the fact that six million Jews perished in the Holocaust.
- Righteousness occurs when ordinary people behave with extraordinary courage.

Essential Questions

- What is righteousness? How can it be achieved?
- Why do some people stand by during times of injustice, while others try to do something to stop or prevent injustice?

Unit Objectives

- To build on the intellectual preparation of visiting Poland
- To familiarize students with several primary sources concerning Righteousness in Poland
- To reflect on students' learning and allow them to make meaning of their inquiries

Session 4.1 - Righteousness in Poland, Inquiry One

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Righteousness in Poland
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Righteousness in Poland
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Appendix 4.1 - Spiritual Resistance in the Krakow Ghetto

Background Information:

Testimony in English (translated)

Taken from Rabbi Menashe Levertov, Chief Rabbi of Krakow, between 1:30-4:30 on 7/15/1957 and 10:50-2:30 on July 27th 1957.

Recorded by Yanus Turkov, New York

“I am the descendant of a Rabbinic family of many generations. My father Rav Issakel, a Rabbi in Krakow was among the greatest of the great Jewish scholars. From my mother’s side - also Rabbis. My maternal grandfather was the Rabbi of Sanok, head of the Jewish court, Rabbi Leibel Frankel. I was born in Krakow, November 10th 1904 (should be 1906) studied in yeshivas in Krakow and was rabbinically ordained in the year 1928.

In 1927, I married the daughter of my uncle (great-uncle) Rav Shem Klingberg, the Rabbi of Zalashitz, one of the greatest masters of the Kabbalah. We had two sons (8 and 4 years old) (this would be the ages when the war broke out).

When the Germans took over Krakow they started seizing Jews for work. They drove across the city during the day and at night and one could see how they capture Jews with beards and earlocks and they pull and cut and rip out. It was dangerous to go out with a beard and earlocks and thousands of these Jews did not go out on the streets and did not see daylight, in order to protect their beards and earlocks and the Chassidic dress, because the Germans also cut the long Chassidic coats (kapotas). ...

The ghetto was established in March 1941. Till the liquidation, we still prayed in synagogues with minyanim (at least 10 men) three times a day. After mincha and maariv (evening prayers) we sat and studied; even those who were not religious, who never practiced, also came and listened to the studying. We hoped that soon, soon the war would be over. And immediately, the next day new troubles would begin, new ordinances and deportations and immediately after that we once again sat and studied.

In the ghetto we had “cheders.” The teacher, understandably, was at risk for his life, as we were officially not allowed to have them. He, however, did it with dedication and sacrifice in order to enable the children to keep up with their learning, boys as well as girls. There were no yeshivas but people “sat” with (continued) learning Torah and serving God.

A group of Gerar Chassidic young men, about 60 or 70, sat in the ghetto the entire time, in a hidden cellar, and learned with an extraordinary stubbornness. The rest of the world did not interest them. They could have been “kosher” and had the proper “einsatz” (assignment) cards and even not have to work, just be secure with the right documents. But, they refused to do it. Even the people who disapproved of their behavior and considered the young men to be suicidal, also had respect for them and

saw to it that they were not lacking in food, because their (the students') dedication was immeasurable.

I used to go to them and provide them with things, as much as I could. Their ending occurred when we went into the concentration camp; they stayed behind hidden in the ghetto in a bunker. They were called the “young men from the cave.”

Weddings in the ghetto went on quietly. Chupa and kiddushin were given. Divorces were few, though from time to time there was a divorce. Officially, ritual slaughter was forbidden, but secretly ritual slaughter was done. On Shabbat and holidays, Chassidic Jews tried to get out of working as much as possible, and made an effort to send substitutes whom they hired. ...

The young Gerer men, who hid the entire time in a bunker from the ghetto; they were brought to the Plazow concentration camp, where they were all shot, to the last one. You cannot imagine the holiness of these young men. Everyone of them ran into the ditch and with great passion shouted “Shma Yisrael” (Hear oh Israel) You could hear the outcry Shma Yisrael, and right after that a shot. That is how it repeated until they were all shot, to the last one. We all in the camp heard the outcries and were left numbed - every one of us, in that moment, wanted to be together with those young men, who went to their death with such passion, that the human mind could not conceive of it. At that time, when every moment we waited for Death, we wished ourselves to at least die like them, with that kind of heroism.”

Citation: Levertov, Menashe. “Testimony in English.” *Levertov 4ever*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.levertov4ever.com/testimonyinenglish.htm>>.

“The Life of the Religious Jews in Krakow During the Occupation”

by Rabbi Menashe Levertov

(Translated from the Polish by Rabbi Levertov's wife, Rachel Kanner Levertov)

“The religious life in the ghetto did not change. Orthodox Jews in their deep faith did not deviate one step from the centuries old Tradition. There were a few small synagogues in which prayers were held three times daily. Ritual was observed as in normal times and in the hardest moments the religious Jews did not neglect the religious practices. In almost every home *Kaddish* was said. In the hardest days, during anniversaries of the tragic events, fast days were proclaimed. But, because fasts were officially forbidden as the Germans considered them to be a symbol of rebellion and protest, the days of fasts were announced in the small synagogues. Afterwards, the news was transmitted by word of mouth and so the remaining (alive) honored the memory of the murdered until they themselves fell victim to further murders.

Among the circles of Orthodox Jews of Krakow, there were a number of special figures, among them Lazar Panzer, aged about 50. Before the war he was the head of an Orthodox school, Yesodei Hatorah, in Krakow. In the ghetto, he conducted the secret teaching of Judaic subjects, organized work, taught and led the teaching which took place in groups in a conspiratorial way. A few hundred students aged 5-15 availed themselves of that teaching.

Alter Kurzman, an old social activist about 70 years old, who before the war belonged to the administration of the House of Orphans, who when the children of that orphanage went to their death during the "relocation" did not hide and declared that he was not going to abandon the children and he then went together with them.

Rabbi Sheim Klingberg, an outstanding expert in mysticism and Jewish writings, well-known in Orthodox circles, led for his execution in Plaszow to the place of execution near the camp, begged to be left with his Tzitzit. He recited "Veiduy"(confessions) aloud, and then Shma Yisrael, first in Hebrew, then in Yiddish, and he called, "I should be the last sacrifice for the Jewish nation." Following this, he went a few steps straight, with his head proudly raised and with a peremptory tone, he said to the Hangman Strajewsky "Nu".

Also worthy of mention is the posture of Krakow Rabbis. Seeing the hopelessness of the struggle of a civilian population, deprived of arms, against an enemy whose weapons were the expression of the newest military technique, they comforted the people doomed to a martyr's death while they themselves set an example of dignity with their own stance. Even though the Germans forbade interventions under the threat of a death penalty, a delegation of Rabbis went to the Archduke Sapiena with a request for intervention in reference to the threatened "relocation" of the Jews. The Germans did not wait long for their answer. All the participants of the delegation were afterwards immediately sent to Aushwitz.

With a special passion of religious feeling in the ghetto, in the vanguard, were the Jewish Orthodox youth, in the group of the so-called " Gerer Hasidim". In cellars, in attics, and in corners of overcrowded homes, this youth was found studying Talmud in a moving disregard for the tragic reality. In the search for Divine truth, disregarding the persecution and the danger to life, they juxtaposed their deep faith to the bestial German mob to whom they were given as prey. They had a collective life helping each other, ready for the greatest sacrifices in the conviction that the blood sacrifice was for a purpose. They looked proudly into the eyes of death. They walked proudly in their long "bekeshas", in their different Hassidic clothes, defenseless against the armed German brigands, fanatical, unyielding in their observance of the most minute religious rules. Their youthful activism was completely consumed by their religiosity which kept growing commensurately with the tragedies befalling the Jewish community. They took up passive resistance, ignoring the German orders. In longing for God, who abandoned his people in their greatest pain, ready every minute for death, they treated it as an act of "Kiddush Hashem"(sanctifying God's name), a sacrifice for the Jewish nation and the Faith. They were convinced that they were living a historical moment which demanded a sacrifice of life. They were 100 and when after the liquidation of the ghetto the Germans were leading them to death in Plaszow they walked courageously, in ecstasy, like real martyrs of faith. The Hangmen put them in rows and shot them one after another. People working in the camp at a certain distance heard a scream of "Shma Yisrael," one after another, and then a bang of a fallen body."

Citation: Levertov, Menashe. "Krakow Ghetto Religious Life." *Levertov 4ever*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.levertov4ever.com/ghettoreligiouslife.htm>>.

Session 4.2 - Righteousness in Poland, Inquiry Two

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Righteousness in Poland
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Righteousness in Poland
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Note: This inquiry requires the use of and device that can watch a Youtube video. There are paper resources as well.

Appendix 4.2 - Smuggling in the Warsaw Ghetto

Background Information:

Henry Greenblatt (testimony, 2min 50sec)

Henry, a Jewish survivor, talks about living in the Warsaw ghetto. He tells of his efforts to acquire food for his family and describes how he snuck in and out of the ghetto through rain gutters.

Gender: Male

DOB: Nov 1, 1930

City of birth: Warsaw

Country of birth: Poland

Ghettos: Warsaw (Poland), Siedlce (Poland)

Visit:

<http://sfi.usc.edu/videoclips?field_tags_tid_1=henrygreenblatt&field_language_tid=All&sort_by=created&sort_order=DESC>

Citation: USC Shoah Foundation Survivor Testimony

to the Rabbinate (at the Office of the Rabbinate, 4 Miodowa Street, between noon and 3 p.m.) or to an individual rabbi.

At the same time we request the Honorable Chairman to call to the doctors' attention the gravity of their decision in these matters, which should be issued only in cases involving the eventual endangering of life and with all due professional seriousness!

With great respect,
[Fifteen undersigned rabbis]



PERETZ OPOCZYNSKI:

SMUGGLING IN THE WARSAW GHETTO, 1941

Kozla Alley

The ghetto wall cuts across Franciszkańska Street right at Kozla Alley. From the distance you don't see it; only when you stand at the corner of the alley does it become visible, and then in its entirety, as it is. It is an alley, narrow and small, with odd old-fashioned[?] ¹⁷ and antiquated buildings, courtyards[?], twisting entryways, and tumbledown stairways. Here and there, a narrow many-windowed five-story house shoots up between two antiquated buildings, a sign that small flats had been here, working people, artisans, and street-vendors.

These forlorn, uprearing buildings, squeezed in between the antiquated little houses, destroy the symmetry of the alley and give an impression of something chaotic, untrammelled[?] neglected and disregarded even before the war. . . .

In front of every house is a dense mass of fruit and vegetable carts and food stands. The food stands are small. On a chair or a small table a woman sets out a few small sacks of two or three kilograms of rye, coarse, and "ration" flour; or groats, millet, and barley. Other types of food, like beans and white flour, are not usually seen[?] on these stands, but can be had in the stores. The prices here are of course a little cheaper than in other streets; after all, it is

¹⁷. Illegible portions of the original are indicated by a bracketed question mark, reconstructions in brackets.

Koźla Alley. Still, they are dear enough for a great part of Warsaw Jews, whom the ghetto has robbed of their livelihood and left with idle, useless hands and whose only possibility for sustaining a bare existence is by selling, little by little, their clothes and household effects at the poor man's flea market.

The booths, stands, and carts block the street. Every booth is besieged not so much by customers as by those who want to buy, but don't have the wherewithal. The volume of business is large, but negligible in weight. Rare the housewife who buys a whole kilo of potatoes, beets, or carrots. People buy ten decagrams or less. People buy a single apple, and anyone who buys a quarter kilogram is a super housekeeper.[?] People come to find out how high the market stands today, if prices have fallen. They swallow their mortification and leave with a searing pain of shame that they are penniless. . . .

The traffic of the rickshaws, the distinctive means of locomotion of the Warsaw ghetto, which . . . [?] was taken from as far away as the Japanese and Chinese. The rickshaw is a big help in Koźla Alley, not so much because now there are no droshkies and wagons, since the Germans confiscated the Jewish drivers' horses—that would still not be intolerable. The Warsaw Jewish porter, you may be sure, can carry a fine load of flour on his back. But what's the use if you don't dare do it in the open? For the Gestapo agent's eye is on the lookout. With the rickshaw, it's another story. The Jews have perfected the rickshaw in ways the Chinese never dreamed of. Under the seat is a space where you can stow a few bundles of flour, and sit up there on the plush seat as innocent as you please: I'm just taking a little ride.

But not everyone who carries food from Koźla Alley uses a rickshaw. Most go on foot, and indeed these are the mainstay of Koźla, the receivers and their helpers, the "strollers." They can't afford rickshaws; their rickshaws are their own backs onto which they often load three or four bags of flour, groats, and other sorts of food at one time. A bag may weigh fifteen kilograms, yet off they go.

The market at the corner of Koźla Alley, the congestion among the vegetable buyers, and the rickshaws block the way for the "stroller" and other buyers at Koźla. Each stride brings curses from the crowd. [The "stroller" who hears these curses] hurries. He sweats and pants

and tries [to get rid] of his bundles as soon as possible, because a Gestapo agent [is around] and has terrified him.

The movement and the danger [are] not so great all through the day, for the smuggler doesn't want to and can't keep the goods in storage; he must get the goods off his hands as quickly as possible. Just as feverishly and hurriedly as it is smuggled into his house, so quickly must he get it out. Only then can he relax, with no evidence to incriminate him.

Nighttime Smuggling

Nighttime smuggling supplies the smugglers' shops with plenty of everything: vegetables and fruit, groceries, meat and poultry[?], honey, and whatever one's heart desires. Even good drink, too. The city needs to eat in the morning, the "strollers" need a whole day for their work. At five o'clock summer mornings you can see them hauling bags of food, sacks of potatoes, cans of milk. Their faces fresh, washed by the morning, these people have the spirit of working people who eat their fill, and the feeling of assurance and of strength—amid the swarm of swollen feet.

Nighttime smuggling is only a part of all the [smuggling], and cannot supply the ghetto with everything it requires in the few night hours, especially in summer, when the smuggler never gets the goods he ordered at the specified time. When you ask the smuggler if he will have such and such provision later, he will always answer: I don't know, if they get it over to me, I'll have it. Everything depends on when they can pass it over from there.

Nighttime the smuggling goes by way of the rooftops, through tight openings, through cellars, and even over the ghetto wall itself. In short: wherever possible. Daytime, in contrast, it goes much more simply, although not without dodges and very often with inventiveness, a Jewish head. As the Mishna has it: "He who sees a place where miracles happened to Israel. . . ."

Kozla Alley has several even-numbered houses in which non-Jews live, but whose entrances and gates have been walled up. Their entrances are on the other side, on Freta Street, that is, outside the ghetto. Only the windows of some apartments look out on Kozla. This is indeed a blessing not only for the few non-Jews who occupy these apartments, but also for the Jews. And, let's be honest, not only for the Jews of Kozla Alley, for the smugglers, but for all the

Jews in Warsaw. Smuggling, to be sure, is basically a dirty business, a noose on the neck of the hunger-swollen consumer, but, nevertheless, under the terrible conditions of the great prison into which Warsaw Jews have been corralled, the ghetto walls, it is the only salvation for the surviving remnants. Who knows, some day perhaps we ought to erect a monument to the smuggler for his risks, because consequently he thereby saved a good part of Jewish Warsaw from starving to death.

Grated Windows

The windows of the non-Jewish apartments were secured from top to bottom with wire grating, supposedly to fence the building off from the Jewish street. Actually the gratings are a good way to bring off the smuggling. Inside, right at the grates, the Gentile inserts a wooden trough, the kind you see in the mills. The trough reaches [?] through the grating, and when the Gentile pours a sack of rye into it, the rye drains through the grating right into the sack in the hands of the Jewish smuggler of Koźla Alley. In a wink the sack is full, and Meyer Bomke, the tall porter, with shoulders like a Russian peasant, whisks it on his back like a feather and vanishes, as he must.

Cereal, millet, granulated sugar, [?] and other foods are smuggled the same way. Only flour is smuggled in paper bags . . . through upstairs windows. From above, the Polish smuggler lowers a rope to the sidewalk. There the Jewish smuggler ties the paper bags to the rope. The Pole hoists the rope with the paper bags, fills them with flour, then lowers the rope with single bags of flour, which are [promptly] seized by the smugglers who spirit them away. In order not to cut his hands, the Pole wears heavy cotton gloves, through which the rope slides smoothly.

When the time comes to lower the merchandise, the ground-floor windows are besieged. Around the smugglers are their wives, their sons and daughters, porters [?] talking to the Poles. But only those can buy who are entitled, according to the smugglers.

Often you can hear one smuggler arguing with another at the "non-Jewish" window: "Jakie, rat! You stinker! The devil take you! You won't get near that window again! I swear, I'll fix you good!"

"Meyer, shove off! Hurry up. Look how he works."

"Mendel, blazes take you, why are you standing there! Here, take this to the market."

. . . . People scramble for merchandise and the smuggled goods are quickly removed. A heave, a shove, a yank, and the merchandise is stowed away in the half-closed dark stores. . . . Broad-shouldered women, red-cheeked, with calloused hands wink nervously, keeping a lookout to the end of the alley, where it meets Franciszkańska, to see if someone is coming, driving, riding. And suddenly the air is pierced by a hoarse warning scream: "Passover!"¹⁸

The warning is picked up on all sides and [all] doors are slammed shut and bolted. Padlocks are hung up outside. Some of the smugglers remain inside, others go out to keep watch. They lean against the store, as if to say they have nothing better to do. The Poles above speedily hoist up the ropes, and Koźła becomes quiet. The atmosphere grows more in tense anticipation. The smuggling routine has ground to a halt.

For it is "Passover." Some non-Jew with a briefcase has turned up. No one knows who he is, but probably he is a police agent. So they wait. When the Pole upstairs, too impatient to wait, has the nerve to lower the rope again, shouting to the Jews below: "There is no more Passover," they send up a warning with the contemptuous manner of the more experienced: "Hold on, Passover is still around."

The Poles deliver milk to Koźła Alley at about seven in the morning, elsewhere still earlier. Large tin cans of standard liter capacity are set outside the windows of the ground-floor apartments. A thick hose equipped with a measuring device is passed through the wire mesh of the grates. One turn of the faucet and out pours a white stream of rich milk, diffusing the aroma of cow sheds, and quickly fills the cans. Even more quickly it is dispatched from the window into the stores, where milkmen and women are already waiting with containers to deliver the milk home to their customers.

Berl the Souse

The Jewish smugglers, receivers of the milk, are provided with tasters to see if the milk is pure, unadulterated, but that is only for themselves. They don't care if the customers are fooled, in fact they

18. One of dozens of code words of warning, usually Hebrew, used by the Jews in the ghettos and labor camps.

manage to somehow, because, after all, it's not a matter of justice, but a matter of profit[?], a plump drumstick or gizzard, and a drink, which a man like Mr. Berl must have. Indeed, this Mr. Berl has prepared the cans in his place in such a way that they contain a goodly quantity of water mixed with a sort of white froth, and that's the way he does business. When a woman comes to the window and insists on buying the milk as it flows directly from the Pole's hose, to be sure of its purity, he argues that it will cost her six zlotys. But just let her hesitate a moment, and the hose will fill Berl's can. Then he says, "Now, you can have it for five zlotys."

The accounting is quite simple.

Actually we've run ahead of ourselves. The work plan or, more accurately, the daily smuggling plan begins not with milk, but with vegetables. Not everybody can buy bread, but a beet, on the other hand, a potato, or carrot, are precious foods in wartime, much in demand.

Solly the Skirt, a squat man with round red cheeks like Simhat Torah apples, and doughy hands stuck in his pants pockets, starts selling at dawn: smuggled potatoes, greens, and also eggs, creamery butter, honey, and sometimes also non-kosher fats. His wife, Rosie, with a big backside, fleshy lips, and puffy beringed fingers, stands at the scales; time and again she lifts a bag of flour and asks this one and that one what he's buying, how much he pays, and giddap—we're off again. If she doesn't like the price, she shouts in her manish voice: "Beat it, phonies, we'll send [a delivery boy] to your house[?]. Too bad you can't do with less than pure white flour."

Solly stands nearby on his stumpy legs, frowns, his squinty eyes with his whitish brows dusted with flour summon up the sleepiness of a baker. He keeps his hands in his pants pockets; the watch chain over his well-filled vest gleams sumptuously, as if to say: Damn your hides, you paupers! The hell I'll give you such flour for that price. Solly the Skirt knows what flour is. After all, he was a baker before the war.

One of his six or eight partners, Izzy the Face, who is two heads taller but has the same oaken shoulders, also stands around with his hands in the pockets of his lumber jacket and does nothing. He just watches to see if the "capital" is growing. His people sit at the counter, adding, figuring, and taking in money. The young man at the till keeps track, and, at each transaction, he opens the drawer crammed with paper money and closes it. The Polish money which

the Germans issued, with reproductions of the Chopin monument and Piast's portrait,¹⁹ lies piled up in heaps like greasy trash piles. Hundreds, five hundreds, and fifties, fifties, fifties—mountains. The young fellow, with the shiny boots and the expensive cigarette in his mouth after a good breakfast, shows contempt both for the money and those who provide it. So much money is piled before him, so much inflated paper, that he imagines he's not short of money. Indeed he too has forgotten what people without money look like, and he waits impatiently for the paupers to pay up, so he can grab it fast.

Izzy the Face has nothing to do. He hangs around the shop, his floury visored cap down over his eyes, looking like a ferocious dog. Also the third, fourth, and fifth partners are in the store. Once they were well-to-do truckers, soft-drink producers, tanners. Now they are smugglers. One of them sits with one leg propped up on the counter, munching a drumstick, a pickle for dessert, loftily eyeing the customers. . . .

Only the women, the partners' wives, are nimble. They are experts on eggs, butter, and all the other foods, and they are dying for that big take. One complains to the other that for thirty zlotys she cannot get anything for her children to eat, but of course she's lying. She wants to make herself out to be a poor slob. Both women know very well that this is said only for the customers, so they won't envy her. Look, upon my word, even the top smugglers of the Koźła can't afford to spend more than thirty zlotys for breakfast. But of course it's not true, because nowadays a kilo loaf of bread costs twenty zlotys, and what about butter and milk and cheese and indeed a fresh egg, which a smuggler's child simply must have for breakfast—things that hundreds of thousands of Jewish children in town see only in their delirious dreams. The twenty-zloty loaf is a sure guarantee that the smuggler's children will have all those good things. It also ensures Solly's peace of mind and that of his partners, as well as the nervous helter-skelter of their wives.

Meanwhile, we're still at the start of the day, at the sale of potatoes. Right away the sale of other foods will begin and then comes the real hullabaloo. You can never know, two hours later a miracle can happen—someone will start a rumor that the Germans are invading Russia. At dawn troops were seen marching over the

19. The legendary peasant ancestor of the first dynasty of Polish dukes and kings.

bridge to Praga.²⁰ That's enough. The Gentile smugglers understand such sensational news as well as their Jewish counterparts, and prices suddenly soar. That's all they need. When prices soar, things get brisk in Koźla. There is a scramble for the merchandise. Every bag of food lowered from the Polish windows is instantly seized in the pincer-like grip of the strong iron paws of the tough Jewish porters, who grab the goods for the rich traders in the markets. No one can compete with them.

Hundreds of Jews then throng the street, as on festivals in front of the synagogue, portly, well-fed. They make deals and talk politics. The sidewalk is thickly littered with cigarette butts and stubs, at a time when a cigarette costs 60 groszy, about ten to twelve times the prewar price.

Peddlers circulate in the crowd with little boxes of cakes, shouting, "Come on, let's go, who'll take a chance?" Numbers are drawn from a small sack; some lose and some even win a pastry. A couple of smuggler lads besiege the cake peddlers and devour the cakes with such insolent gusto, it is sickening to look at their greasy faces. Street singers and players drop in here in the hope of earning something in this land of plenty, but who appreciates them? The fiddle screeches, the singer sings: "I don't wanna give away my ration card, I wanna live a little more." But it has no effect. This street comes alive, starts to move and surge only when the whisper spreads: "Another quarter, half a zloty . . . two . . . rye flour 24½. . . ." That's the prettiest music in the alley.

Who cares about the corpse, or rather the dying man who has chosen to lie down right in front of Solly's place and plans to die right under the smugglers' feet? On Ostrowska, Wołyńska, even on Franciszkańska, and the Nalewki, the dead lie in the streets as though they were at home. Jews arise in the morning, go out and know they will find dead bodies there—one, two, five, ten; corpses of famine, the bloated dead who hungered through the war and, hungering, attained death, desired yet hated. But here in Koźla Alley? A squashed fly or a louse—who pays it heed?

The smugglers are in shiny boots and fine jackets. The cool September sun gilds their pampered faces. They nibble on the caramels and pastries which the sweets-peddlers bring them, and they never even hear the whir of the death-bullet as it whizzes by.

20. Suburb of Warsaw, on the east bank of the Vistula.

"Hey, boy, lookit! Auntie's coming!"

He means Basha, a red-head, one of the "strollers." It is nine, ten o'clock in the morning. The food smuggling is in full swing. The strollers stuff their knapsacks with the plenty of Kozła Alley and carry it to the bakers. The strollers earn twenty, at most thirty, groszy on each kilo of food, and they have to lug many loads. Some make dozens of trips daily to the alley for fresh food supplies. They have wives and children, they work hard, walk a lot, carry many loads, want to eat, indeed, must eat. For bread and potatoes alone they need fifty zlotys a day, if not a whole hundred. Without them [the smuggler would be] helpless. The smuggler knows it, but he likes to make a living too, no less than anyone else who has hired hands.

Basha, a tall girl with big feet, strides like a boy, and zips across the street with the sacks of flour like a demon. One-two and she's there and back with an empty knapsack and a handful of paper money. Before you look around, she's out and back inside again and so on continuously. Not slower than Basha is old Zelig, a man in his seventies, from childhood accustomed to lugging loads. . . . He also comes to the alley sometimes twenty times a day.

Not all strollers have the same luck. There are some women strollers who can barely manage to drag their swollen legs. They have to plead for eight or ten kilos of flour at one time, and the smugglers regard them as nuisances they can't get rid of. They do them a favor and throw them a few kilos of flour, as though it were a despised handout to these pesky recipients, but this is just for appearances' sake. At bottom they know how to appreciate the value of every stroller[?] because he helps them quickly to unload the forbidden fruit, to avoid tangling with a stray gendarme, a Polish policeman or a Junak.²¹

Yesterday there was a pretty piece of business. Right after a good deal on all sides, the Germans appeared unexpectedly at night—different Germans who had not been "fixed," and they did a real piece of mischief. They confiscated food worth tens of thousands of zlotys and, besides, it cost a fortune to get off with only the losses. During the tumult three boundary guards fell from the roof and were killed on the spot. Well, after all, they do live from boundary money.

21. Auxiliary police.

The system of boundary money is a complicated one, reminiscent of the wide range of instrumentalities through which circulating and profit-seeking capital has at all times tried to benefit and under all circumstances to insure its income. There are Polish and Jewish boundary men. The Poles smuggle the merchandise, brought by Christian suppliers to the Jews. The Jewish boundary men deliver to the Jewish smugglers on the Jewish side. The boundary men keep accounts thereby, how many tons of provisions are smuggled in, and for every kilo they get a percentage. The boundary men have their own people who watch the buying and selling and make sure they won't be cheated.

The boundary men have a hard lot. Standing on the roof means they are always in mortal danger. But what won't a Jew do to earn his bread?

Koźla Alley gives thousands of Jews their livelihood. The barrowmen who cart away vegetables and fruit and the porters live off it. Outside every smuggler shop are always a couple of porters who grab the lowered bags of flour, sacks of grain and other provisions and deliver them to their designated places. Besides their regular earnings, the porters have staked out a new claim—a package fee on every sack of food that leaves Koźla Alley.

At the corner of Franciszkańska stands Zelig the Paw, a stolid personage in a Polish-peasant hat with a lacquered visor that he wears at rakish angle, ready to spring on anyone carrying a package:

"Stop!" he hisses. "Don't be bashful, uncle, hand over fifty for a package fee."

"Me—fifty?" replies the passerby, trying to look innocent.

"Yeah, fifty and make it quick."

The other gives in. Otherwise Zelig the Paw lets him have the feel of a real paw so that he sees stars. Against such an argument all pleas are useless, so he cries and pays.

Noon Rest in Koźla Alley

At noon everything quiets down in Koźla. All the supplies of smuggled provisions have already been sold. The porters sit on the shop steps, the smugglers take a nap on the counters in the empty stores, and Koźla Alley rests, preparing itself for the afternoon smuggling, which starts at about four or five.

You never know if the afternoon prices will be the same as the morning prices. This you can tell only when they lower the supplies through the windows. In the courage of the first smuggler who carries off his bags of flour, of the porter and the boundary men, the entire alley [senses] the change on the bourse and, like a sudden wind across a wheat field on a hot summer day, a murmur gusts through the street: "Higher."

Not only the barrowmen, porters, strollers, milkmen, and boundary men live off the alley. Thousands of grocery stores live partly off it, naturally raising their prices. Last but not least, Kozla Alley supports tens of thousands of Jews who even with money in their pocket would die of hunger if the alley did not serve as their granary.

Time will tell.

Whoever will endure, whoever will survive the diseases that range in the ghetto because of the dreadful congestion, the filth and uncleanness, because of having to sell your last shirt for half a loaf of bread, whoever will be that hero, will tell the terrible story of a generation and an age when human life was reduced to the subsistence of abandoned dogs in a desolate city.



HENRYKA LAZAWERT: THE LITTLE SMUGGLER

Over the wall, through holes, and past the guard,
Through the wires, ruins, and fences,
Plucky, hungry, and determined
I sneak through, dart like a cat.

At noon, at night, at dawn,
In snowstorm, cold or heat,
A hundred times I risk my life
And put my head on the line.

Under my arm a gunny sack,
Tatters on my back,
On nimble young feet,
With endless fear in my heart.

But one must endure it all,
 One must bear it all,
 So that tomorrow morning
 The fine folk can eat their fill.

Over the wall, through holes and bricks,
 At night, at dawn, at noon,
 Plucky, hungry, artful,
 I move silently like a shadow.

And if the hand of destiny
 Should seize me in the game,
 That's a common trick of life.
 You, mother, do not wait up for me.

I will return no more to you,
 My voice will not be heard from afar.
 The dust of the street will bury
 The lost fate of a child.

And only one request
 Will stiffen on my lips:
 Who, mother mine, who
 Will bring your bread tomorrow?



CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN
 THE VILNA GHETTO, MARCH 1942

The number of cultural events in March [1942] was exceptionally high, because all existing suitable premises in the ghetto, like the theater, gymnasium, youth club, and school quarters, were used. Every Sunday 6-7 events took place with over 2,000 participants. At the end of the month the Culture Department had to give up to the incoming out-of-town Jews a number of premises like the gymnasium, School No. 2, Kindergarten No. 2, and a part of School

Session 4.3 - Righteousness in Poland, Inquiry Three

Goals:

- To familiarize students with these primary sources
- To build on students knowledge and awareness of Righteousness in Poland
- To assess students' critical thinking skills

Objectives:

- Students will be able to tell the story of their primary source, especially as it relates to other aspects of Righteousness in Poland
- Students will be able to connect their primary source to a part of the Poland trip itinerary
- Students will be able to make a claim on the document and back it up with documentary evidence.

Inquiry Group Activity: (whole class period)

- Introduce today's inquiry selection.
- Hand out copies of the primary sources as well as the Historical Thinking Chart to each student.
- Ensure that every student inquiry group answers at least one question from each category on the Historical Thinking Chart.
- If students need help determining how this primary source relates to the Poland trip itinerary, provide guidance to them.

Note: This inquiry requires the use of and device that can watch a Youtube video. There are paper resources as well.

Appendix 4.3 - Righteous Among the Nations

Background Information:

What is the meaning of the term “Righteous Among the Nations”?

The term “Righteous Among the Nations” (*Chasidei Umot HaOlam*) was taken from the Jewish tradition – from the literature of the Sages. A number of explanations of the term exist, such as: non-Jews who came to the aid of the Jewish people in times of danger; in other cases it is used to describe non-Jews who observe seven basic tenets set down in the Bible – including the prohibition of bloodshed. The lawmakers took the existing term and added new meaning to it. The Yad Vashem Law went on to characterize the Righteous Among the Nations as those who not only saved Jews but risked their lives in doing so. This was to become the basic criterion for awarding the title.

What are the basic criteria for awarding the title of Righteous?

The basic conditions for granting the title are:

- 1) Active involvement of the rescuer in saving one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps
- 2) Risk to the rescuer’s life, liberty or position
- 3) The initial motivation being the intention to help persecuted Jews: i.e. not for payment or any other reward such as religious conversion of the saved person, adoption of a child, etc.
- 4) The existence of testimony of those who were helped or at least unequivocal documentation establishing the nature of the rescue and its circumstances.

Citation:

Yad Vashem. “The Righteous Among The Nations.” *FAQs*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/faq.asp>>.

“Hiding in Zoo Cages”

Jan and Antonina Zabinski; Poland

By the 1930's the Warsaw Zoo had become one of Europe's largest zoos. Its expanded area housed many animals. This prosperity was, however, short lived. When World War II broke out extensive parts of the zoo were destroyed in the bombings, many animals were killed, and others, including the zoo's special attraction – the elephant Tuzinka – were taken to Germany.

Dr. Jan Zabinski was the director of the zoo. He was the author of many popular-knowledge books about biology and the psychology of animals, as well as the producer of a number of very popular radio-shows. Despite the enormous problems he faced as the director of a zoo during wartime, he was not blind to the suffering of the Jews. When the Warsaw ghetto was established Jan and his wife, Antonina, began helping their Jewish friends. As an employee of the Warsaw municipality he was allowed to enter the ghetto. Under the pretext of supervising the trees and small public garden within the ghetto area, he visited his Jewish acquaintances and helped them as best as he could. As the situation in the ghetto deteriorated, he offered them shelter.

“Dr. Zabinski, with exceptional modesty and without any self-interest, occupied himself with the fates of his prewar Jewish suppliers... different acquaintances as well as strangers,” wrote Irena Meizel. She added: “He helped them get over to Aryan side, provided them with indispensable personal documents, looked for accommodations, and when necessary hid them at his villa or on the zoo’s grounds.” Regina Koenigstein described Zabinski's home as a modern "Noah's ark". According to the testimonies, many Jews found temporary shelter in the zoo’s abandoned animal cells, until they were able to relocate to permanent places of refuge elsewhere. In addition, close to a dozen Jews were sheltered in Zabinski's two-story private home on the zoo's grounds. In this dangerous undertaking he was helped by his wife, Antonina, a recognized author, and their young son, Ryszard, who supplied food and looked after the needs of the many distraught Jews in their care.

Rachel Auerbach, who took part in the attempts to create a clandestine ghetto archive and who played an important role in documenting the story of the Warsaw ghetto, was in contact with Zabinski all through that period. After the ghetto was liquidated, she went into hiding and continued to work on her diary, recording events for posterity. As the front came closer to Warsaw, she gave one of her notebooks to Zabinski. He put it in a glass jar and buried it in the zoo grounds. In April 1945 Rachel Auerbach was able to retrieve her manuscript and publish it.

An active member of the Polish underground Armia Krajowa (Home Army), Zabinski participated in the Polish uprising in Warsaw of August and September 1944. Upon its suppression, he was taken as a prisoner to Germany. His wife continued his work, looking after the needs of some of the Jews left behind in the ruins of the city. Jan wrote in his own testimony explaining his motives: “I do not belong to any party, and no party program was my guide during the occupation... I am a Pole – a democrat. My deeds were and are a consequence of a certain psychological composition, a result of progressive-humanistic upbringing, which I received at home as well as in Kreczmar

High School. Many times I wished to analyze the causes for dislike for Jews and I could not find any, besides artificially formed ones.”

On September 21, 1965, Yad Vashem recognized Jan Zabinski and his wife, Antonina Zabinska, as Righteous Among the Nations. On October 30, 1968 Dr. Jan Zabinski planted a tree on the Mount of Remembrance.

Citation:

Yad Vashem. “Hiding in Zoo Cages.” Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/zabinski.asp>>.

From the letter of Irena Meizel to Yad Vashem, November 1962

“From the moment the uprising began in the Jewish quarter, Dr. Zabinski and his wife began to help a few of the besieged people. When the situation "on the other side of the wall" became more dangerous, Dr. Zabinski, with exceptional modesty and without any self-interest, occupied himself with the fates of his prewar Jewish suppliers of milk and vegetables, and whatever was necessary for the zoo. He occupied himself with the fates of different acquaintances as well as strangers who needed his help. He helped them go over to the Aryan side, provided them with indispensable personal documents, looked for accommodations, and when necessary hid them at his villa or on the zoo's grounds. These people did not always have what was considered "the right looks", but this did not influence his decision to protect them. His home became a transit station for a whole procession of people – rich and beggars.

“When the uprising in the ghetto broke out, a whole family of a well-known Warsaw lawyer moved into the first floor of Dr. Zabiniski's villa. One of the family's daughters was mentally ill, and more than once did Dr. Zabinski have trouble with her. One Sunday morning, as I was visiting them, the girl had an attack, and while the person who took care of her wasn't watching, jumped out of the window. It was a summer afternoon, and the zoo was filled with people. Needless to say what terrible consequences this could have had for the other three people who were hiding in the apartment, as well as the doctor's family, had one of the visitors to the zoo noticed the bedlam.

“All of Zabinski's rescue efforts were implemented with extreme modesty and quiet, but the results were significant. It has to be mentioned that Dr. Zabinski was earning money for the upkeep of his family (a wife who was far from being healthy and a young son) by giving clandestine private lessons....He didn't take a penny from those he took care of, and did not allow them to give him any gifts, such as meat, sugar or flour – most expensive items in those days.”

Citation:

Yad Vashem. "From the letter of Irena Meizel." Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/related/meizel_testimony.asp>.

**Moshe Tirosh's testimony: Rescued by Righteous Among the Nations
in the Warsaw Zoo**

Moshe Tirosh and his parents were saved by Zabinski, the director of the Warsaw Zoo, who hid Jews in his home and in the animal cages.

Citation:

Yad Vashem. "Video Testimony." Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/video/video_zabinski.asp?height=520&width=730>.

Session 4.4 - Inquiry Reflection: Righteousness in Poland

-scripted-

Goals:

- To provide time for reflection
- To preemptively respond to the potential tedium of doing too much inquiry

Objectives:

- Students will have an opportunity to reflect on the past three inquiry sessions and determine – “What does this mean for me?”
- Students will identify at least two pieces of information they want to teach as part of their tour guiding in Poland

Sponge Activity: (15 minutes)

- Have the following instructions written down on a whiteboard, and direct students to the instructions when they walk in for class. Note that these prompts are deliberately vague, intended to provide students the opportunity to write freely about what they feel they have learned.
- **Note:** You will collect students’ responses as a form of assessment.

Welcome, Historians! Please take a few minutes to write down the following items:

- a. 3 new things you learned from the past three inquiry sessions*
- b. 2 new insights you have gained from the past three inquiry sessions*
- c. 1 question you still have about the past three inquiry sessions*

This is known as the “What—So What—Now What” reflection protocol. If your students need help determining answers to this prompt, you can use these questions to help:

- What (descriptive)
 - a. What surprised you about your primary sources?
 - b. Describe the people, the location, the incidents, etc.
 - c. Describe an event/person that stands out in your mind from your sources.
- So What (interpretive)
 - a. What did you learn from your primary sources? What about you has changed with this new understanding?
 - b. How did your inquiry challenge any assumptions of the topic?
- Now What? (applicative)
 - a. Do any current events relate to what you learned from your inquiry?
 - b. How do your new understandings apply to other parts of life?
 - c. Where do we go from here? What’s the next step?

Whole Class Reflection: (15 minutes)

- Now that your students have had sufficient time thinking over this unit’s inquiry sessions, it is time to facilitate a whole class discussion about the inquiry process as a whole.
- *Well, Historians, you have now completed all of the inquiry sessions we will be doing as preparation for our trip to Poland. Congratulations and mazal tov on*

a job well done! I know it has not always been easy, but I hope you have come away feeling like something close to an expert in the field of history, and specifically of Jewish history in Poland. Thinking back on the time you have spent reading and thinking like a historian, can you please tell me what skills you think you have gained after having gone through this process?

Small Group Reflection: (25 minutes)

- Break up the class into their inquiry groups, and have them share their 3-2-1 Reflections with each other, about 3-5 minutes per student. (This step should take about 15 minutes.)
- When there are about 15 minutes left, get the attention of your class, and **say:** *Historians, you have about 10-15 minutes remaining to talk in your group. You should now start determining what the two or three understandings are that you would like to teach to the whole group when we are in Poland. As a reminder, you do not need to be preparing how to teach it; rather you should just be deciding what content or new insights you want to teach. In just a couple of sessions, we will start to really dig in and begin planning how you will teach us all. For the remaining time today, try to figure out what content you hope to teach.*

Closing: (5 minutes)

- To close this lesson, come back together as a whole class.
- **Say:** *Before we leave today, I would like us all to hear from at least one person from each inquiry group about their 3-2-1 Reflections. It can be any of the things you wrote down, or maybe something new that you just learned when you were discussing with your fellow historians in your inquiry group. Please, let's be mindful of the time, so keep your responses short, just a couple of sentences.*

Unit Five - Looking Ahead (to the Poland Trip)

Note to the Teacher

Dear Lead Historian,

This final unit in preparation to the Poland Trip serves as the bridge for the students – from all of the previous inquiry sessions to putting their new knowledge into practice.

In this unit, students will be asked to think deeply about what memory and remembrance mean, and why those ideas are so important to the Jewish people. This topic will help frame students' thinking as they make their final preparations for tour guiding in Poland.

It is important to note that although the expectation is that students will be able to finalize their tour guiding before the trip, it is also possible that students will not finish by the final session. For those groups who are a little behind, you can remind them that, although they should try to finish during these sessions, it is possible that they might have some time to continue planning during the flight to Poland, and potentially even during the trip itself.

B'hatzlacha!

Enduring Understanding

- Moral actions taken by a small number of individuals proved disproportionately effective in light of the fact that six million Jews perished in the Holocaust.
- Jewish educational tourism teaches more about who you are than where you are.

Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of remembering?
- What are the consequences of forgetting?
- Is “Never Forget” enough?
- Why is memory and remembrance in Judaism?

Unit Objectives

- To recognize the importance of memory and remembrance in Jewish life
- To bridge what students have done so far with what is about to happen
- To synthesize their inquiries into personal meaning
- To formulate their main ideas for what they will teach on the trip
- To build a safe space that will endure on the Poland trip

Session 5.1 - On Memory and Remembrance

Goals:

- To teach Jewish values of memory and remembrance.
- To frame students' thinking about their tour guiding in Poland.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define memory and remembrance in a Jewish context.
- Students will be able to justify the importance of memory and remembrance, using at least one Jewish reason for each.

Background Information:

- In this context, I choose to define “**Memory**” as something personal that an individual has learned, whether through study, experience, or otherwise.
- “**Remembrance**” I choose to define as communal or global ties to history.
- The following five texts relate to Jewish memory and remembrance that you should familiarize yourself with in advance of this lesson.
 - a. V'higad'ta l'vincha – Exodus 13:8 (Passover Seder)
 - b. Zakhor et yom ha Shabbat – Exodus 20:8 (#4 Commandment)
 - c. Vshinantam lvanecha – Deuteronomy 6:7 (Sh'ma prayers)
 - d. L'kayem et iggeret ha'purim – Esther 9:29 (reading of the Book of Esther)
 - e. Tisha b'Av (Mishnah Ta'anit 4:6, more info here: <http://www.jewfaq.org/holidayd.htm>)

Note: Before the Gallery Walk Activity, have some kind of discussion or activity with your students to create a working definition of both Memory and Remembrance.

Gallery Walk Activity (x2): (40 minutes)

- Post large printouts of the above five texts around the room.
- Instruct students to spend time reading each of the texts. Frame their “gallery walk” by asking students to determine which text best represents why Memory is important to Judaism.
- Invite students to take informal notes on each of the texts as they walk around the room.
- Once everyone has read all of the texts, instruct students to gather near their chosen text.
- In these small groups, students should discuss reasons why they chose this specific text.
- **Round two:** Repeat this process, but now students should determine which text best represents why Remembrance is important to Judaism.

Session 5.2 - Tour Guide Planning (1/2)

Goals:

- To provide time and space for students to prepare their tour guiding in Poland
- To give students a beginner's understanding of Bloom's Taxonomy

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain the different levels of Bloom's Taxonomy
- Students will be able to apply Bloom's Taxonomy as they plan their tour guiding in Poland.

Set Induction: (10-15 minutes)

- Introduce *The Wise Men of Chelm*. (See Appendix 5.2a)
- Pass out copies of the story (See also Appendix 5.2a) and have a volunteer read it.
- After reading the story out loud, write the following instructions on the board for students to complete by themselves.
- List the characters in the story
- Compare and contrast one character from another character
- Write three new titles for the story
- As a whole class, ask for volunteers to share their answers to the questions.

Bloom's Taxonomy Activity: (10 minutes)

- Pass out Bloom's Taxonomy Pyramid (included below), and go over each level.
- Explain to your students that Bloom's Taxonomy is one way to help them plan out what they want to teach when they are tour guiding in Poland.
 - a. Students should use Bloom's Taxonomy to help envision what they would want people to have learned from their tour guiding.
- Break the class into their small inquiry groups, and explain that for the rest of this session and the next one, they have time to plan out their tour guiding. Explain that one way to begin this is to consider what the main idea(s) they want to teach is.
- Remind students to revisit their own reflections of what they learned from their inquiries as a possibly helpful place to start.

Appendix 5.2a - *The Wise Men of Chelm*

Background Information:

“Wise Men of Chelm”

In East European Jewish [folklore](#), the city of Chelm (Pol., [Chelm](#); Yid., Khelem) functions as an imaginary city of fools... The legendary “town of fools,” often presented ironically as “The Wise Men of . . . ,” is a feature common to most European folklores. Chelm, as was the case with its counterparts in other cultures, spawned hundreds of tales describing outlandish naiveté and stupidity that have been printed in dozens of editions in a variety of languages. Many of these are titled *The Wise Men of Chelm*. Chelm, located approximately 65 kilometers southeast of [Lublin](#), had a Jewish population from at least the fourteenth century, and was a real town whose residents bore no connection to the stories. If anything, the town was known for Torah scholarship...

The stories became part of an oral folklore and, once placed within the cultural framework of East European Jewry, were Judaized. The first publication of Chelm-like stories appeared in Yiddish in 1597...It is unclear when they became connected to the town of Chelm. During the nineteenth century, a number of other Jewish towns figured as fools’ towns, including Poyzn. Over time, however, Chelm became the central hub of such stories, the first specific publication of which occurred in an 1867 book of humorous anecdotes, allegedly written by [Ayzik Meyer Dik](#). Later, particularly in the early twentieth century, dozens of collections of *Khelemer mayses* (Chelm stories) were published in Yiddish as well as in English and Hebrew translations.

It is thought that the use of Chelm as a locale for such folk stories began during the eighteenth or nineteenth century, became stabilized, and then remained a constant feature in Jewish folklore. It is unclear why Chelm was the locus for these stories. Some have speculated that it was a result of a rivalry with another town. Others claim that Chelm earned its reputation purely by chance. With no documentary evidence denoting the history of the use of Chelm as a center for Jewish morons, the city’s folkloric status is based solely on conjecture.

Repeated orally and printed frequently in book form, stories of Chelm became a significant popular phenomenon in East European Jewish folklore. A number of Yiddish writers, among them [Y. L. Peretz](#), [Leyb Kvitko](#), and [Isaac Bashevis Singer](#), either used the folkloric themes of the wise men of Chelm as a source for humorous or satiric stories or published their own versions of them.”

Citation: Portnoy, Edward. "Wise Men of Chelm." YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe 4 November 2010. 24 April 2015
<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Wise_Men_of_Chelm>.Greenblatt (testimony, 2min 50sec)

Chelm Story:

“A Chelm Scholar’s New Baby”

A young scholar of Chelm, innocent in the ways of earthly matters, was stunned one morning when his wife gave birth. Pellmell he ran to the rabbi.

“Rabbi,” he blurted out, “an extraordinary thing has hap-pened! Please explain it to me. My wife has just given birth although we have been married only three months! How can this be? Everyone knows it takes nine months for a baby to be born!”

The rabbi, a world-renowned sage, put on his silver-rimmed spectacles and furrowed his brow reflectively.

“My son,” he said, “I can see you haven’t the slightest idea about such matters, nor can make the simplest calculation. Let me ask you: Have you lived with your wife three months?”

“Yes.”

“She has lived with you three months?”

“Yes.”

“Together—have you lived three months?”

“Yes.”

“What’s the total then—three months plus three plus three?”

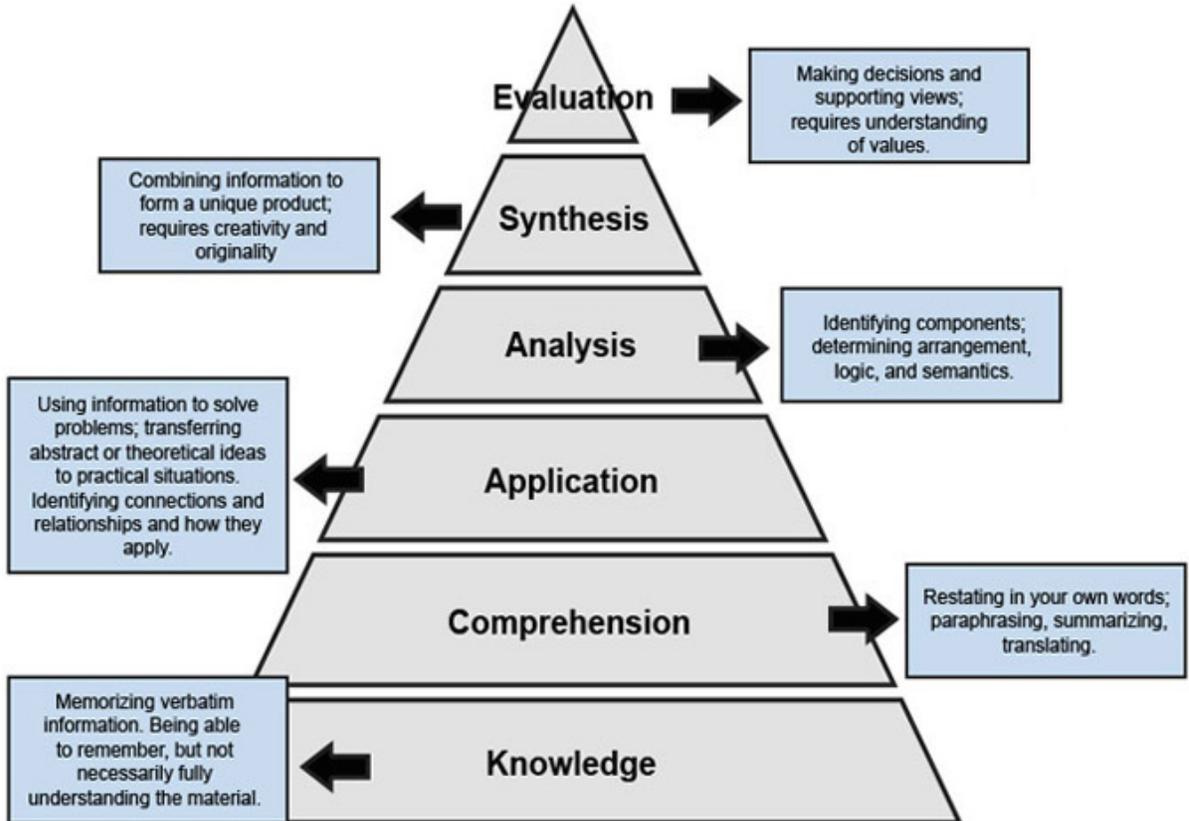
“Nine months, Rabbi!”

“So... what is the problem?”

Citation: Pinsker, Sanford. “Chelm Stories & Motke Habad.” *My Jewish Learning*. 14 Feb. 2005. Web. 23 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/chelm-stories-motke-habad/single-page/>>.

Appendix 5.2b - Bloom's Taxonomy Pyramid

Bloom's Taxonomy



Session 5.3 - Tour Guide Planning (2/2)

Goals:

- To provide time and space for students to finish planning their tour guiding in Poland
- To give students a primer on Set Inductions

Objectives:

- Students will be able to apply Bloom's Taxonomy as they finalize their tour guiding in Poland
- Students will be able to create a Set Induction for their tour guiding

Activity to teach about Set Inductions: (10 minutes)

Note: This activity should occur at the beginning of the lesson, and should leave plenty of time for students to finalize their plans for tour guiding as well as to create their own set inductions.

- Provide a definition of Set Induction
 - a. "The opening activity of a lesson that gets learners thinking and ready for the lesson."
- Explain that there are a wide variety of activities to get learners engaged. Ask students to brainstorm ideas for how to start their tour guiding. Write their responses on the board.

Possible Ideas:

 - a. Pose interesting questions
 - b. Share pictures or objects
 - c. Tell a short story or anecdote that relates to the topic
 - d. Journal or free-write on a certain topic or question
 - e. Provide a quick summary of what you are about to teach
 - f. Give clear instructions
 - g. Role play a provided scenario
 - h. Read a poem
- Validate all of their ideas, and pick any two-four ideas that you find particularly helpful or interesting to further unpack as a class.

Session 5.4 - Final Trip Preparations

Goals:

- To acknowledge any fears and hopes of students about the upcoming trip to Poland
- To build a sense of shared expectations amongst the students

Objectives:

- Students will be able to express their fears and hopes about going to Poland
- Students will build a safe space that will endure on the Poland trip.

Fears and Hopes Activity: (20 minutes)

- **Introduction.** *Students should take about 3-4 minutes to briefly write out at least one fear and one hope for their trip to Poland.*
- **Pair-and-share.** *Students should turn to the person next to them and take about 1-2 minutes each sharing what they wrote with each other.*
- **Listing.** *As a whole class, ask for as many students (for about 4 minutes) to share either their fear or their hope about visiting Poland. Make a list of these fears and hopes on the board.*
 - a. Having listed these fears and hopes, give students a chance to talk openly about what is on the board.
- **Debriefing.** *Ask the students if they were surprised at their own and others' fears and hopes about the Poland trip. Check in with your students about how they felt expressing their negative feelings with each other.*

Unit Six - Bringing Closure to the Course

Note to the Teacher

Dear Lead Historian,

It is my sincere hope that you found the Poland trip meaningful, and that you helped your students grow in profound ways. Your task for this final unit of the course is to help guide your students into making meaning of their trip, as well as all of the sessions prior to the trip.

You will take the students back to your Local Holocaust Museum, this time with a focus on learning from the museum itself, with the framing question of “How does this museum institutionalize the memory of the Holocaust?” It is your option whether or not you would like a museum tour guide for this visit.

However, the focus of this final unit is assessment, in which you will help your students create their Divrei Makom. Discussing what exactly is meant by “bearing witness” helps set the tone for this unit, and carefully designed protocols will help your students make sense of their trip to Poland.

It is my deepest hope that you enjoy this reflective unit of the course.

B’hatzlacha!

Enduring Understandings

- Moral actions taken by a small number of individuals proved disproportionately effective in light of the fact that six million Jews perished in the Holocaust.
- Righteousness occurs when ordinary people behave with extraordinary courage.
- Jewish educational tourism teaches more about who you are than where you are.

Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of remembering?
- What are the consequences of forgetting?
- Is “Never Forget” enough?

Unit Objectives

- To share memories from the trip in Poland
- To create Divrei Makom
- To gain a deeper understanding of what it means to remember, as well as what it means to bear witness

Session 6.1 - Making Meaning from the Trip

Goals:

- For students to feel comfortable sharing their feelings, reactions, and memories of the trip.
- For students to begin writing their Divrei Makom

Objectives:

- Students will be able to freely share their feelings and memories of their time in Poland

Sharing Protocol: (40-45 minutes)

This protocol has four steps: whole class – small groups – pairs – solo

Whole class – about five minutes

- Ask students to think of one to three words that best describes their experience in Poland.
- When most or all students are ready to share, go around the circle and hear everyone's word or short phrase.

Small groups – about 15 minutes

- Divide the class into four small groups, and have them sit in a circle.
- Ask students to think of and share one moment from the trip that they will always remember. For example, it could be the moment or the story that made them think of the word/phrase from the initial circle.

Pairs – 10 minutes

- Students pair up with the person across from them in the circle.
- In these pairs, students share the longer version of their story/moment that they shared in small groups.
- Students should try to think deeply about why they thought of this moment as opposed to others.

Solo – 10 minutes

- Individually, students are given this time to write freely about this moment in particular, but also about their overall feelings and memories of their time in Poland.

Session 6.2 - Another Visit to Local Holocaust Museum

Goals:

- For students to become aware of how a museum institutionalizes its memory of the Holocaust

Objectives:

- Students will create a guide for visiting the Local Holocaust Museum
- Students will use this guide in an attempt to determine the museum's motivation or goals in its exhibits

Set Induction: (10-15 minutes)

- On the board, have the following questions written so all students can read them.
 - a. What is the purpose of remembering?
 - b. What are the consequences of forgetting?
 - c. Is "Never Forget" enough?
- Students should take about five minutes to free-write a response to one of these questions.
- Once everyone has something written, ask for volunteers to share what they wrote.
 - a. **Note:** try to take at least two responses to each prompt

Main Activity: (20-25 minutes)

- Students will create a guide (i.e. a checklist, graphic organizer, or something of that sort) in preparation of their visit to the Local Holocaust Museum.
- This guide should help them to identify how the museum answers the questions from the above set induction.

Session 6.3 - Student Writing of their Divrei Makom (1/2) What it means to “Bear Witness”

Goals:

- To begin a deeper exploration of the meaning of “bearing witness”
- To allow structured time for students to write their Divrei Makom

Objectives:

- Students will be able to examine different meanings of “bearing witness”
- Students will be able to use these meanings of “bearing witness” as a launching point for writing their Divrei Makom
- Students will be able to begin composing their Divrei Makom

Synectics Activity: (20-30 minutes)

- This activity explores assumptions about the meaning of the phrase “bearing witness.” To do this, use the metaphor: Bearing witness is like receiving an award.
- Ask for students to contribute descriptions of what it means or looks like to “receive an award.” These answers will be referred to as “Column 1.” Once a sufficient number of descriptions have been collected (at least ten), ask students for pairs of words from Column 1 that are opposites, to be placed in Column 2. Not everything will have an opposite, but students should be invited to explain a pairing that is not immediately clear. Example answers are as follows:
 - a. It is an honor
 - b. You want to tell people about it
 - c. You are proud of it
 - d. Not everyone gets the award
- Once all pairings have been collected and written down in Column 2, have students vote on which single pair of opposites they would like to continue with in Column 3. Students will now develop a list of other things that embody the opposite pairing they have selected. Once more examples have been listed (at least six) in Column 3, students finally choose one of the things listed in Column 3 to explore what “bearing witness” means.
- Students should be given about five minutes to answer the prompt “Bearing witness is like ____ when...” or “Bearing witness is like ____ because...”
- (The _____ above is the Column 3 selection that students voted on.)
- To close, students should respond to the question, “What did you learn about bearing witness from doing this exercise?” It may be helpful for the teacher to give the first answer to this question.

For the remainder of the class period, students should find a space in the room where they can begin to write freely about their own witnessing of Poland in general, and specifically of the Holocaust sites they visited.

Session 6.4 - Student Writing of their Divrei Makom (2/2)

Goals:

- To allow structured time for students to write their Divrei Makom

Objectives:

- Students will be able to work with their peers in improving their Divrei Makom
- Students will continue editing their Divrei Makom

Peer Reviewing Activity: (15-20 minutes)

- Having someone edit another's work is sensitive stuff, and the students must realize this. Ensure that every student follows the same protocol for feedback to avoid having a lot of hurt students at the end of class.
- Divide students into pairs. Hand out the following protocol for how to review and offer constructive feedback on each other's D'var Makom.

Use the following symbols for the various issues that may come up:

- For anything that you have a question about, circle and use a question mark. ?
- For something that is unclear, underline with a squiggly line. ~~~~~
- For something you enjoyed to read, put a checkmark in the left-side margin ✓
- For an idea you want to see developed further, underline and write a dollar sign \$
- Write down any questions you have at the bottom of the document.

- Students should take the first five-eight minutes to read each other's D'var Makom.
 - a. Once they have finished reviewing, students should then spend about five minutes each talking about the other's work, and respond to any questions the other student may have about his/her review.
- The remaining 40-45 minutes of class should be spent with students working on their Divrei Makom.

Note: When there are about five minutes left in class, announce to the students that the following two sessions are for student presentations so be sure that by the end of this class students know on which day they will be presenting.

Session 6.5 - Student Presentations (1/2)

Goals:

- To give students an opportunity to share their learning in a safe space
- To teach a constructive method to give and receive feedback

Objectives:

- Students will be able to use the provided protocol to offer constructive feedback to their peers
- Students will be able to share their learning with each other

Sharing Protocol:

- For each student presenter, all other students should write on a new sheet of paper the following prompts:
 - a. I appreciate...
 - b. I notice...
 - c. I wonder...
- These prompts should each have one third of the page (sample provided on the next page)
- Before the first presentation, ask students if they remember the three sentence prompts for their feedback forms. If they do not, make sure to remind them.
- Students should all receive an equal amount of time to present, somewhere around five-six minutes, and there should be about two minutes between each presentation so that the audience has enough time to write their feedback.

Appendix 6.5 - Sample Feedback Form

[Student Presenter's Name]

I appreciate...

I notice...

I wonder...

[Name of Student Providing Feedback]

Session 6.6 - Student Presentations (2/2)

Goals:

- To give students an opportunity to share their learning in a safe space
- To teach a constructive method to give and receive feedback

Objectives:

- To use the provided protocol (from the previous session, Appendix 6.5) to offer constructive feedback to their peers
- To share their learning with each other

Sharing Protocol:

- For each student presenter, all other students should write on a new sheet of paper the following prompts:
 - a. I appreciate...
 - b. I notice...
 - c. I wonder...
- These prompts should each have one third of the page (sample provided on the next page)
- Before the first presentation, ask students if they remember the three sentence prompts for their feedback forms. If they do not, make sure to remind them.
- Students should all receive an equal amount of time to present, somewhere around five-six minutes, and there should be about two minutes between each presentation so that the audience has enough time to write their feedback.

Note: Since this is the very last session of the course, leave some time at the end (about five-ten minutes) for any closing remarks that you have for your students.

Concluding Documents

Annotated Bibliography

- Brown, Jean E., Elaine C. Stephens, and Janet E. Rubin. *Images from the Holocaust: A Literature Anthology*. Lincolnwood: NTC Pub. Group, 1997. Print.
- Dawidowicz, Lucy S. *A Holocaust Reader*. New York: Behrman House, 1976. Print.
- Flohr, Paul R. and Jehuda Reinharz. *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1980. Print.
- Kaplan, Chaim Aron, and Abraham Isaac Katsh. *The Warsaw Diary of Chaim A. Kaplan*. 2nd ed. New York: Collier, 1973. Print.

The above four books all are full of primary source materials which have helped me in designing this guide. Though I did not provide resources from each of these books in this curriculum, there are vast amounts of primary source materials from which to choose.

-
- YIVO Institute for Jewish Research: <<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org>>
 - Shandler, Jeffrey. *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland Before the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2002. Print.

YIVO is an online encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, and it “provides the most complete picture of the history and culture of the Jews in Eastern Europe from the beginnings of their settlement in the region to the present.” The website is fully interactive, with maps, images, documents, audio and video. One feature I would highlight is the tab “For Educators,” where sample lesson plans are offered, as well as a link to YIVO’s “Educational Program on Yiddish Culture,” which includes all sorts of Prewar Jewish life content aimed at high school students.

Awakening Lives was published in cooperation with YIVO, as the journal entries including in this book were originally written for YIVO writing contests for teens. What makes this book such an incredible resource is that the journal entries are written at such a time when there was no thought of the Holocaust. As it says in the introduction to this book, too often scholars write about Jewish life in Poland and Europe before the Holocaust “through lenses tinted by nostalgia and horror” (xii). These autobiographical journal entries shine a new light on Jewish life after World War One.

- Darsa, Jan. *The Jews of Poland*. Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, 1998.
- Strom, Margot Stern. *Holocaust and Human Behavior: Resource Book*. Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, 1994.

Facing History and Ourselves is an educational organization aimed at adolescents who are beginning to create their own personal identity as individuals. *Holocaust and Human Behavior* and *The Jews of Poland* are two great resource books for Holocaust education for high school students.

Margot Stern Strom, editor of *Holocaust and Human Behavior*, is the Executive Director of Facing History and Ourselves.

Like other Facing History books, the goal is to provide meaningful and flexible structures with which to explore ideas and events of the history of the Holocaust. One of the overarching goals is to “[help] students make connections between historical events and their own lives” (pg xxvi).

The first unit explores the idea of identity formation and the idea of individuality within a group, and continues with how nations have created their own identities. Most of the book addresses the timeline of decisions made that eventually led up to the Holocaust, focusing on issues of antisemitism, violence and conformity, and how the Nazis transformed Germany into what it became. The final unit explores the roles of thought, judgment and action when creating their own identity and also the concepts of prevention and memorialization.

Jan Darsa, editor of *The Jews of Poland*, was a Jerusalem Fellow who did two years of extensive research in Israel on the Jews of Poland prior to the Holocaust. This book covers “the complexities of Jewish history...with which to examine the vibrancy of Jewish life before, during, and after the Holocaust” (pg vi).

The approach of this resource book is to provide a background of what Jewish life was like in Europe before the Holocaust. The fear this book responds to is that only the tragedy of the Holocaust is what students learn when they learn about the Holocaust. This book’s goal is to teach about the rich and vibrant Jewish life that was soon to be demolished by the Nazi regime. This book “is a history that is not covered in [their] Resource Book nor is it addressed in the many other books in [their] library” (pg vi). Identity, membership, and belonging are key issues in this book.

Major themes in this book include identity, membership, discrimination, violence, citizenship, nationalism, war, choice, terror, choice and choiceless choice, resistance, courage, rescue, memory, memorial and many others. All seven chapters are tagged with key concepts that provide a focus for the content.

- Yad Vashem: <<http://www.yadvashem.org>>
- USC Shoah Foundation: <<http://sfi.usc.edu/>>

These two websites have seemingly unending amounts of resources, and specifically to these sites are survivor testimonies. Yad Vashem has lots of textual and audio/visual testimonies, and the Shoah Foundation has primarily audio/visual testimonies.

- Bergen, Doris L. *War & Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. Print.

If you were to simply pick up this book and look through pages 245-258, you would find multiple dozens of primary sources that would provide ample amounts of inquiry resources. However, I recommend reading this book, as Bergen is able to concisely explain the details of the Holocaust in a readable way. Bergen also poses many questions that provoke lots of thoughts that translate into Essential Questions for your students.

- Rosensaft, Menachem Z. *God, Faith & Identity from the Ashes: Reflections of Children and Grandchildren of Holocaust Survivors*. Woodstock: Jewish Lights, 2015. Print.

This new book offers many anecdotes written by first- and second- generation survivors of the Holocaust. The writings in this book would provide helpful examples to students of what their Dvar Makom should strive to be.

Works Cited

- Assaf, David. "Sandz Hasidic Dynasty." *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. Published 27 October 2010. 22 April 2015.
<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Sandz_Hasidic_Dynasty>
- "Chaim Rumkowski." HolocaustResearchProject.org. Web. 24 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ghettos/rumkowski.html>>.
- Cohen, Erik H. "Towards a Social History of Jewish Educational Tourism Research." *Hagira – Israel Journal of Migration*. Vol. 5. 2015 (not yet published). 3.
- Dawidowicz, Lucy S. *A Holocaust Reader*. New York: Behrman House, 1976. 35-48 and 197-208. Print.
- "Hoess, Rudolf (Hoss)." Yad Vashem. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206418.pdf>.
- Kelner, Shaul. *Tours That Bind: Diaspora, Pilgrimage, and Israeli Birthright Tourism*. New York: New York UP, 2010. Print.

- Levertov, Menashe. "Krakow Ghetto Religious Life." *Levertov 4ever*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.levertov4ever.com/ghettoreligiouslife.htm>>.
- Levertov, Menashe. "Testimony in English." *Levertov 4ever*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.levertov4ever.com/testimonyinenglish.htm>>.
- New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education. *The Holocaust and Genocide: The Betrayal of Humanity* (A Curriculum Guide for Grades 9-12). New Jersey, 2003.
- Pinsker, Sanford. "Chelm Stories & Motke Habad." *My Jewish Learning*. 14 Feb. 2005.
Web. 23 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/chelm-stories-motke-habad/single-page/>>.
- Portnoy, Edward. "Wise Men of Chelm." *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*.
4 November 2010. 24 April 2015
<http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Wise_Men_of_Chelm>.
- "Rumkowski, Mordechai Chaim." Yad Vashem. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<[http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft Word - 5839.pdf](http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205839.pdf)>.
- Shandler, Jeffrey. "Introduction." *Awakening Lives: Autobiographies of Jewish Youth in Poland Before the Holocaust*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2002. xi-xlii. Print.
- "Stanford History Education Group." *Stanford History Education Group*. Web.
<<http://sheg.stanford.edu/>>.
- "The Process of Developing Understanding: A Protocol for Reflection and Analysis."
National School Reform Faculty. Web. 24 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.nsrffharmony.org/system/files/protocols/understanding_analysis_o.pdf>.
- USC Shoah Foundation Survivor Testimony
- Yad Vashem. "From the Letter of Irena Meizel." Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/related/meizel_testimony.asp>.
- Yad Vashem. "Hiding in Zoo Cages." Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/zabinski.asp>>.
- Yad Vashem. "The Righteous Among The Nations." *FAQs*. Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/faq.asp>>.
- Yad Vashem. "Video Testimony." Web. 23 Apr. 2015.
<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/video/video_zabinski.asp?height=520&width=730>.