

Marc Wilson: A Wounded Landscape Bearing Witness to the Holocaust



Exhibition Guide

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A Wounded Landscape: Bearing Witness to the Holocaust

A Wounded Landscape: Bearing Witness to the Holocaust is a poignant reminder of the atrocities committed by the Nazis and their collaborators. From nearly 40,000 sites across Europe, persecution often began in places people called home.

Between 1939 and 1945, the Third Reich systematically murdered almost six million Jews and countless others they deemed racially inferior or targeted for ideological and political reasons. This included Roma, homosexuals, the mentally and physically impaired, Jehovah's Witnesses, Communists, and over three million Soviet prisoners of war.

Instigated by his own family history experienced during the Holocaust, Marc Wilson embarked on a six year journey, from 2015 to 2021, documenting 130 locations in 20 countries, and gathered the stories of 22 survivors, those who were killed and their descendants.

While some images in the exhibition show Dachau, Belsen, and Auschwitz, and are recognised worldwide, Wilson has also captured numerous other sites of horror within cities, towns, villages, fields, and forests, whose terrible history has faded from public consciousness. These are places where life-or-death decisions were made, and they also hold stories of hope, survival, and memory.

A sound piece runs throughout the gallery, with the voices of some of the survivors and descendants telling their stories. The exhibition is a powerful testament to the indomitable resilience of the human spirit and underscores the importance of bearing witness to history.

** The texts in this exhibition guide are extracts from Marc Wilson's photo book *A Wounded Landscape. Bearing Witness to the Holocaust*. For full testimonies, please refer to the display copy in the gallery. Copies of the book are also available to buy from our shop.

Ronja Beecher



Ronja Beecher (b.1936)
New York, USA, 3 December 2018



"I was born in December 1936, three years after Hitler came to power...

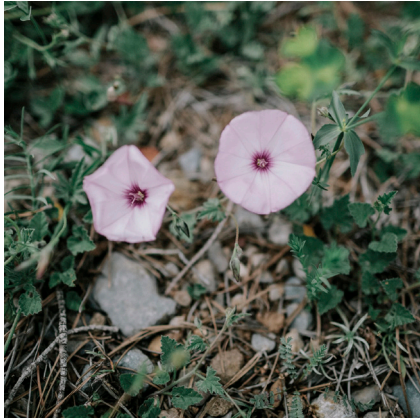
Things were already going downhill in Germany for the Jews and in 1938, two years after I was born, Kristallnacht took place, when all the synagogues were burned, and Jewish shops were attacked. After Kristallnacht, they went to the home of every Jewish person in the entire Baden area. They took all the Jewish men out of their homes and put them into freight cars on the train to Dachau...

After four months they were told there's another camp that's opening at Rivesaltes.

They said people with families should go there, it'll be better for people with families. So, my parents and a lot of others with children left Gurs and went to Rivesaltes... We get to Rivesaltes and it's just as bad... I contracted an infectious disease and had to be separated from my parents...

* * *

One day Ruth called me to her room, and I figured I was going to get scolded. She picked me up and told me they'd found my parents. At that point, I was happier that I didn't get scolded than that they had found my parents."



*K12 children's barracks Rivesaltes internment camp
France, 2015*

Rivesaltes internment camp housed Jews of different nationalities as well as Catalan refugees and French gypsies. Of the 5,000 Jews interned at Rivesaltes internment camp, 2,313 were transported to Drancy to eventually be moved to extermination camps.

Shmuel Atzmon-Wircer



Shmuel Atzmon-Wircer (b.1929)
Tel Aviv, Israel, 7 December 2017



"I had two childhoods. One before 1939 and one after. I was born in Biłgoraj, a town in which you will still find echoes of how life was.

It was burned down completely. It took me 45 years to mentally decide to go back there, which is still, in my mind, due to my children. I wanted to show them my roots...

My roots are deep in the tradition of a 1000-year-old culture. In 1967 I began to study Yiddish culture and language at university because I missed a lot during the war...

I realised that I was cheating myself by not wanting to be this which I am, by trying to pretend to be somebody else. This is very important for me in my life."



*The parents of Shmuel Atzmon-Wircer
Tel Aviv, Israel, December, 2017*

Aaron Ianco



*Eliane Wilson, granddaughter of
Aaron Ianco (1870-1943)
London, UK
25 January 2017*



Written down in 1992 by Annie Ianco, daughter of Aaron Ianco (1910-2000); told in 2017 by Eliane Wilson, granddaughter of Aaron Ianco.

"I remember, one day, coming back from school, I found Papa and Maman crying. I rushed to them, asking why. Papa told me, 'We must leave; our farm and land have been requisitioned by the Romanian government'... I was holding Mirco in my arms. I did not want to cry and upset my parents, but I knew that our troubles had begun...

My parents told me that they were frightened by (fascist movement) the Garde de Fer or Iron Guard. Another day, coming out of school, a gang of boys threw stones at me. Thank goodness Mirco had come to wait for me. He frightened them. They ran away, shouting: 'Jew girl, Jew girl. We will catch you one day – and your dog, we will kill him!'...

Three years passed. One day, I called Mirco. I found him in the garden, dead, poisoned. I cried and cried. I took him in my arms, my faithful companion. I would miss him terribly. I cried...

I left. I was happy. Two years went by. I wrote to my parents that I would come and see them after the birth of my baby (Eliane). Life in France is very bad, and everyone talks about war. Germany is threatening France. With my daughter I went to see my parents.”



*Ianco family gravestones uncovered during a visit to the cemetery
Podu Turcului, Romania, April, 2018*



*Former Bobigny deportation station
Paris, France, 2016*

The station was reopened for the transports from Drancy to Auschwitz. Between July 1943 - August 1944 a total of 22,407 men, women and children, were squeezed into 21 convoys of cattle trucks destined for Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp.

Miriam Richter



*Smadar Yehiely, daughter of Miriam Richter (1919-2016)
Kibbutz Nir David, Israel
6 December 2017*



Told by Smadar Yehiely, daughter of Miriam Richter.

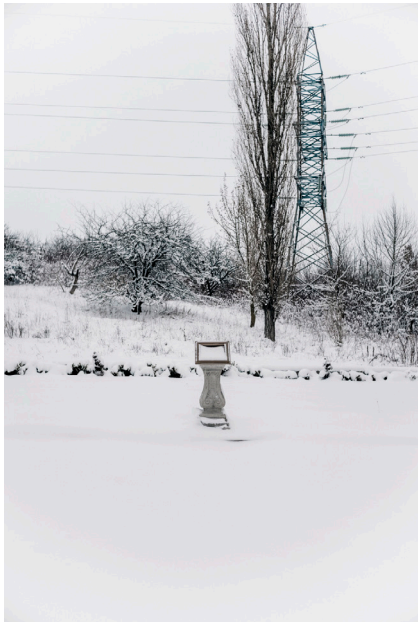
"My mother was born in Rovno, a big town in east Poland and which is now in western Ukraine, and now known as Rivne... We went to visit Rovno... We were lucky because my mother had a good memory and even though she was very old, she was in good shape and could walk. She was not too young when she left and she remembered three houses that her parents moved from, house to house. We went to all those places; the third one was unchanged, and we stood outside and looked... Later she said we'd hurried and didn't spend enough time – and she was right...

The most emotional place we visited was Sosenki forest, not far from Rovno. It's a Russian name: Sosenki. Before the war it was a forest where children went to play. The Germans dug big holes in this place, and this is where they killed all the Jews from Rovno – a common way of killing big groups. My mother's parents and other members of her family were killed here. She knew about it; it wasn't news to her. We had photographs of this place, we knew exactly where to go, we knew that we would find a memorial. We knew exactly what we were going to find, and it took us a few minutes to locate the wall on which her parents' names were written – Liza and Zissia Richter. We stood there and it was very, very emotional...

It was, in some ways, a way for her to say goodbye to her parents. She started to cry. We had not seen her cry often for her parents in her life. Nor my father. They did not cry; they did not show strong feelings. We could feel it in other ways but not directly. But here she cried, it was very emotional for all of us.”



*Members of the Ha-Shomer ha-Tsa'ir youth movement
from Smadar Yehiely's family photo album
Israel, December, 2017*



*Site of a massacre during which 25,000 Jews were
murdered over three days in November 1941
Sosenki forest, Rivne (Rovno), Ukraine
December, 2018*

Ester Hershberg



*Ester Hershberg (b.1920)
Tel Aviv, Israel, 5 December 2017*



Told by Ester Hershberg with contributions from her daughter Ita.

"I am alive because I was at Auschwitz and because I worked for (Oskar) Schindler. I was at Auschwitz and worked with Schindler. I helped many, many men to live. I put the names of their families onto Schindler's list so they could work in the factory, making armaments for the Germans..."



Brännlitz labor camp
Brännlitz, Czech Republic, 2018

The Brännlitz labor camp was a forced labor camp of Nazi Germany which was established in 1944 just outside the town of Brněnec (Brännlitz in German) by German industrialist Oskar Schindler. It was a safe haven for Jews operating under the guise of being an armaments factory. The factory produced no usable armaments of its own, a strategy deliberately chosen by Schindler in the hope of hastening the war's end by contributing nothing to German military efforts.

The family of Gennady Mikityansky



Gennady Mikityansky
Walnut Creek, USA
November, 2017



Told by Gennady Mikityansky.

"My mother-in-law's father worked at the university in our city and was responsible for clearing everything from the building. They had tickets for the train bound for the Central Asian republics, but he was very responsible and wanted to evacuate everything from the university before he left...

While he was trying to finish clearing the university so he could leave, something fell and broke his foot. So, he decided to go back to the city and stay in his brother's house until he was able to join his family. Within two days, the Nazis had occupied Kharkiv. On the third day, every Jew had to go to the central square. He went to the square and was marched 12 km to the KhTZ tractor factory...

In Kiev, Babi Yar is a ravine and the site of several massacres by German forces during World War II. In Kharkiv, it's Drobytsky Yar. And more than 30,000 Jews were killed there. He died there...

My parents did not talk a lot about the Holocaust. In the former Soviet Union, there was nothing in the history books. Nothing. I love history: I read a lot of books during the Soviet time and not even a single word. Because the word Jew, it's like a swear word. They were born in 1930s, so they were kids when the war started.

They remember the evacuation. They told a lot of stories about the evacuation, but we were never told about the Holocaust...

In Kaunas (Kovno) there was the famous Ninth Fort, a military place in Kaunas before the war. It was built before the Great War. During the Nazi occupation of Lithuania and Latvia, it was a concentration camp where members of my wife's family died."



*Vilijampole yeshiva in Kaunas (Kovno) ghetto
Kaunas, Lithuania, 2018*

In a massacre known as the Big Action, on 28 October 1941, 9,200 Jewish men, women and children were taken from here to the Ninth Fort. The following day they were shot in pre-dug pits.



*Site of former ghetto in the tractor plant
Kharkiv, Ukraine, 2019*

The Feldmann family



*Trude Silman (b.1929)
Daughter of Elsa Feldmann
(1899-1945)
Leeds, UK
31 March 2021*



Told by by Trude Silman, daughter of Elsa Feldmann.

"My parents had managed to get all three of their children to the UK, but we were all in different places... When my brother got a letter, he'd send it to me, and I'd send it on to my sister. So, in this way we'd pass letters between us. Father wrote the most beautiful letters to us right until he was transported to Auschwitz in April 1942. He wrote mainly in German, but after his children left for the UK, he learned English so that he could correspond with us in our new language...

After the war ended, my brother received news from Czechoslovakia. A cousin who had survived the concentration camps wrote to Paul in 1945. She had found out that my father had been taken to Auschwitz in 1942 on one of the first transports that had gone from Czechoslovakia. He was killed in the gas chambers within three weeks of arriving there. I haven't been able to find out my mother's fate...

There was a tiny fragment of paper discovered at Ravensbrück (concentration camp). It had no name on it, but it exactly described my mother – it had her birth

date, it described her working as a nurse, which was true. All the things fitted but the name. I can't be sure, but I strongly suspect it was her. I think it is most likely that she was on one of the final death marches from the concentration camps."



*A birthday letter to Trude from her father
Leeds, UK, March, 2021*



Volary, Czech Republic, 2018

On 20 January 1945, nearly 1,000 female Jewish prisoners were forced on a death march from the Schiersee (Sława) camp in western Poland. On route, around 300 more women were added to the march from other camps. After walking over 800 km, the march ended in Volary in Czechoslovakia on 5 May 1945. Nearly 1,000 women died or were murdered along the way.

Eugene Black



*Lilian Black OBE (1951-2020)
daughter of Eugene Black
(1928-2016)
Leeds, UK, 21 May 2018*



Told by Lilian Black, daughter of Eugene Black.

"He was born in Munkács (Mukachevo)... He was transported as a Hungarian Jew with his parents, his two sisters and members of the wider family... He was 16, mad about football and not really interested in family things.

On 19 March, the German occupiers created the ghettos. (The family) wore the yellow star and in May they were taken from the ghetto on one of the first transports from Mukachevo. After three days and three nights of travel they arrived in Birkenau. Of course, they didn't know that they were in Birkenau...

He stayed there for a few weeks, until one morning (the group) was marched back up to the ramp where there were lorries. They were all loaded into them – 1,000 Hungarian Jewish men basically loaded onto lorries. They set off again and were driven about 120 kilometres to what was the underground V2 rocket factory, which was the Dora-Mittelbau concentration camp. That was where he did his slave labour...

I knew from about the age of eight that there was something untoward. I knew that my father had been in the concentration camps, but nobody really knew the whole story. He'd reveal little bits but then I had this dichotomy because I wanted

to ask him about it, but I didn't feel I could. I couldn't ask him about it because I didn't want to hurt him anymore than he'd been hurt. It was my mother who eventually told me. I would have been about nine or ten. I kept asking because we'd go to family parties and there would be nobody there from his side of the family. Why didn't we have grandparents and why did my father have this accent?"



*Dora-Mittelbau tunnel system
Nordhausen, Thuringia, Germany
March, 2018*



*Former ghetto
Mukachevo, Ukraine
December, 2018*



*Gelsenberg, a sub camp of Buchenwald, Gelsenkirchen
February, 2018*

Henri Borlant



Henri Borlant (b.1927)
Paris, France, 20 June 2017



"My mother came (to France) in 1912, before the First World War, with her parents. She was 12 years old, born in 1900, She had two younger sisters, she was the eldest. They left Kishinev (now Chişinău, Moldova) because of the pogroms*, I suppose, and life was very difficult with three young girls. They needed to leave for their security, for their lives, for the lives of their children.

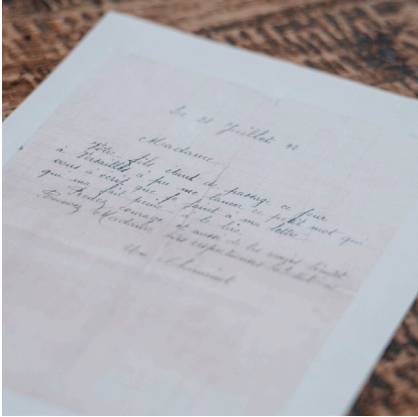
So, they came to France... We lived like Parisians. We did not eat kosher, we did not go to the synagogue, but the boys were circumcised when they were born and made their barmitzvah...

On 15 July 1942, a lorry of German soldiers arrived. They came to the first floor where our family's apartment was located. They had a list. They came to arrest those aged between 15 and 50. I was 15 and one month; I was on the list...

I knew my personal history, but the numbers, the names, I did not know. When you are told that there were 6,000 and that you are the only survivor. It is something that keeps you awake...

I stayed there until the arrival of the Americans... they came with General Eisenhower, General Bradley and General Patton, as well as war correspondents, photographers and newspaper reporters. They saw it all. Eisenhower said. 'Now our boys will know why they are fighting. It was justified.'

* Pogrom is a Russian word meaning "to wreak havoc, to demolish violently." Historically, the term refers to violent attacks by local non-Jewish populations on Jews in the Russian Empire and in other countries.



A copy of a letter written to Henri's mother containing the note thrown by Henri from the convoy during his transportation to Auschwitz
Paris, France, 2017



Known as 'House 13', this location was one of the sites in a city-wide pogrom in 1903 during which 49 Jews were murdered
Chişinău, Moldova, 2015

The family of Noga Breier



*Noga Breier, Kibbutz Nir David, Israel
6 December 2017*



"I am second generation but not typical because my father was very young. He was born in 1939 in Vienna and taken to Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1943. He was in the camp from the ages of four to six.

So, he remembers very little, and I didn't grow up with the story because from him there was nothing to tell. But his sister typed up the story of the story of his grandfather and that was the story of everything that happened. They were a family: a father and mother and three children. My father was the youngest. His father was a carpenter who had a workshop in Vienna. They were taken to Theresienstadt, and his father made a lot of things for the commander. His father was meant to be on the train to Auschwitz, but they took him off because he had not finished the work for the commander. He said, 'If you want me to finish the work, then take my whole family off.'

My father had an older sister and an older brother, and they took care of him because his parents were kept in another part of the camp...

Before my grandfather was taken to Theresienstadt, he was in work camps for almost a year. When my father was young, his father was not at home because the Germans had taken him. He said that my father was very sick in the camp, he had polio and for six months he couldn't move his legs."



*Theresienstadt, concentration camp and ghetto
Terezín, Czech Republic, 2018*

More than 33,000 people died at Theresienstadt,
mostly from malnutrition and disease.

Rita Weiss



Rita Weiss (1926-2018)
Tel Aviv, Israel, 4 December 2017



Told by Rita Weiss with contributions by from her daughter Ronit.

"We could not understand how, just a few weeks ago, we had been in our beds in our clean pyjamas and now we were prisoners in another country. We did not know what had happened to our families. We were in the work camp for just two months because the Russian army invaded and so we were put on the train to Stutthof concentration camp...

We had no warm clothes, no shoes, no underwear, and we worked very hard in the camp and other workplaces. One time, it was very cold, and I fell over but all around the camp was an electric fence. We saw many people run to the fences and be electrocuted. I fell onto the fence and was electrocuted and was burned on my breasts. I saw myself in the air and I saw myself lying in the snow. I thought I had died and maybe I had gone to God. The snow. The cold. I blacked out but, in the morning, I crawled back to my block and people said, '...but we saw you die.' After that I don't remember...

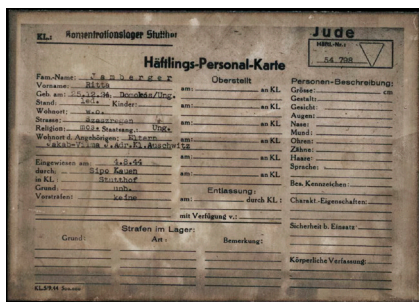
We waited to die in the sea. A barge with prisoners from Norway, Poland, Greece. It was April or May, and the sea was not so salty, so we began to drink the water. After one day and one night we did not know what to do. One man said we must begin to swim. We did not know where we were, which country, which sea. We just

wanted to swim so we did. We could die in the sea, or we could die on the boat. I had to survive, to stay alive, to tell of what had happened.”



*Jewish women's blocks
Stutthof concentration camp, Sztutowo, Poland, 2019*

Dej was the largest outdoor ghetto in Europe, a forest fenced off with wire mesh. As many as 7,800 Jews were forced to live in makeshift barracks, homemade tents or outdoors here. It was liquidated between May and June of 1944.



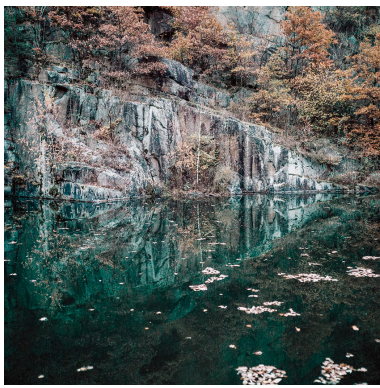
*Rita Weiss' prisoner 'personnel' card Tel Aviv, Israel
4 December 2017*



Babi Yar, Kyiv, Ukraine, December 2018

In September 1941, over two days, 33,771 Jews were massacred at Babi Yar ravine.

Between 100,000 and 150,000 Jews, Roma, Ukrainian resistance and Soviet prisoners of war were murdered in the ravine from 1941 to 1943.



Mauthausen, Austria, November 2016

Prisoners from Mauthausen were forced to jump from this cliff to their death, It was known by camp guards as the 'parachute jump'.



*Disinfection room at Mauthausen concentration camp
Mauthausen, Austria, November 2016*

Initially, political opponents and groups of people labelled as 'criminal' or 'antisocial' would be imprisoned here and forced to work in the granite quarries. Towards the end of the war, overcrowding, lack of food and rampant disease led to mass death among the prisoners in the final months before liberation. Of the nearly 200,000 prisoners at Mauthausen, close to half died.



*Area to the right of the crematoria in the forest camp at
Kulmhof extermination camp
Rzuchowski forest, Poland, 2015*

The church and the castle are closely situated in the village of Chelmo (Kulmhof in German). People were loaded in the vans in front of the church and in the other period at the castle. The crematorium site was situated a few kilometers away in the woods and could be reached over a narrow road. The speed of the trucks was such that all victims in the back of the vans were dead on arrival.



Bone fragments from burned and crushed corpses seep through the sandy soil at Kulmhof extermination camp Rzuchowski Forest, Poland, 2015

At least 172,000 prisoners were killed in the camp between 1941 and 1944. From summer 1942, bodies were burned in open-air ovens after the smell of decomposition from mass graves became apparent in nearby villages.



Location of former Litzmannstadt ghetto Łódź, Poland, 2015

The Gypsy camp at Litzmannstadt ghetto held more than 5,000 people. On 16 January 1942, the ghetto's population was transported to Kulmhof extermination camp.



Chelmo Church Chelmo, Poland, 2015

A church in which prisoners of Kulmhof extermination camp were kept overnight. It is next to 'the palace', a manor house where prisoners were stripped and forced to hand over their valuables on arrival.

Among Nazi death camps, Chelmo was the first to deploy gas. Inside custom-rigged 'mobile killing vans', vehicle exhaust was funneled into a sealed compartment where up to 50 victims were packed.



*Gas chamber, Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp,
(opposite the Struthof Hotel)
Struthof, Alsace, France, 2016*

The bodies of more than 80 Jewish prisoners gassed here were sent to the Strasbourg University Institute of Anatomy in order to establish Jewish “racial inferiority” by means of anthropological study. The gas chamber was also used to perform medical experiments on people (primarily Roma Gypsies) who had been transferred from Auschwitz.



*Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp
Struthof, Alsace, France, 2016*

Guards’ vegetable garden at Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp, fertilised by the ashes of incinerated prisoners.



*A crossing point into Transnistria and site of mass murder
River Dniester, Rezina, Moldova, 2018*

By the end of July 1941, Romanian soldiers and gendarmes concentrated tens of thousands of Jews in northern Bessarabia and began forcing them to leave by crossing the Dniester River, shooting hundreds of them and throwing their bodies into the river. Up to 32,000 Jews were forced to cross the Dniester by late July early August 1941.



*A former concentration camp
Harzungen village, near Nordhausen, Thuringia, Germany
March 2018*

Harzungen was a sub camp of Dora-Mittelbau. Huge numbers from the Roma and Sinti communities were transferred to Dora Mittelbau from Auschwitz.



*Jewish cemetery
Vălcineț, Moldova, 2015*

Natalie Filipciuc lives in a house close by. It was given to her grandmother when its Jewish owners were forced to leave.

Natalie uses a list given to her grandmother by the Jewish owners to help visitors find the graves of their families.



*Disembarkation station in the valley below
Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp
Rothau, Alsace, France, 2016*

Until the construction of Natzweiler-Struthof concentration camp was completed, prisoners slept in the nearby former Hotel Struthof, hence the name Natzweiler-Struthof. Prisoners worked in nearby granite quarries, on construction projects, and in the maintenance of the camp. Many prisoners in the camp were members of the French resistance.



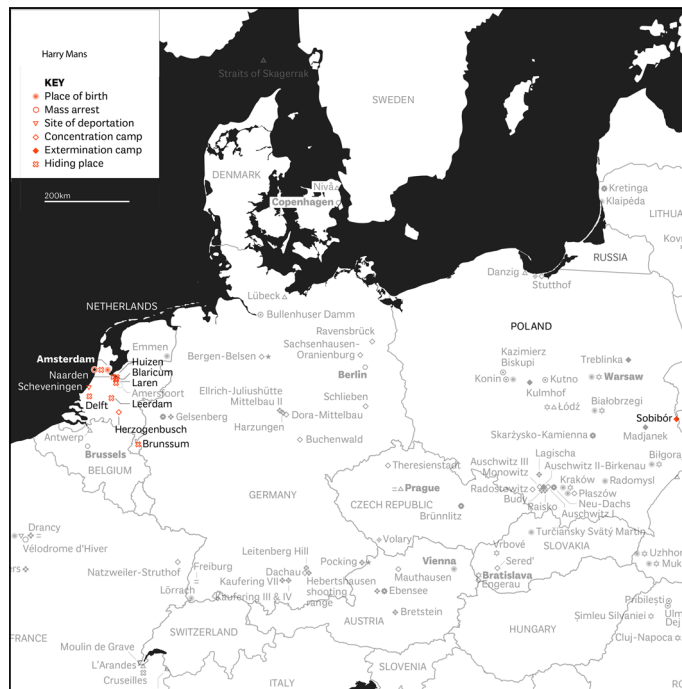
*Autopsy table
Buchenwald, Germany, 2018*

Although there were no gas chambers, hundreds perished each month from disease, malnutrition, exhaustion, beatings, and executions. The bulk of the prisoners were starved and worked to the point of death in nearby stone quarries. Camp records indicate that throughout its existence some 240,000 prisoners from at least 30 countries were confined at Buchenwald. The Nazis also tested the effects of viral infections and vaccines on inmates here.

Harry Mans



Harry Mans (1933-2020)
London, UK
26 July 2018



"I was born in Amsterdam on 1 October 1933. (my parents) They had fled from Poland in the 1920s to escape the many pogroms* at that time. They got married in Holland but, when I was still very young, they divorced... Life was very hard for them and ours was very much a hand-to-mouth existence...

Holland had a Jewish population of about 140,000. Quite a few of these were people who had escaped from Germany, and later from Austria, in the hope of finding safe refuge in Holland.

Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way... Three quarters of the Dutch-Jewish population perished. This is a much higher percentage than in any other West European country. There were many Dutch people who risked their lives to help the Jews by hiding them. This was difficult as Holland is a small country with no large forests and no mountainous terrain.

There were a lot of collaborators and informers, some of whom acted as bounty hunters. They were paid a sum for each Jew they turned in...

The next thing I remember is that all Jews who were old enough to have to carry an identity card had to register and have a large letter J stamped on the front of it, near their photograph. This didn't apply to me as I was not yet old enough to have an identity card. Then, in May 1942, all Jews over the age of six had to wear

a yellow Star of David made of cloth and which had the word JOOD (Jew) printed in large black letters in the middle of it. This had to be worn on the left-hand side of all outer garments... We had to buy these stars at a cost of four cents each and they had to be sewn on with the stitches so close together that you could not push a pencil between them...

Like my Aunt Bronia and her family, my father also received a summons at the beginning of August telling him to report to the railway station in The Hague at a specified time and to bring a change of clothes and other necessities...

* * *

When I went to bed, we said goodnight and that was the last time I saw him. He was first sent to Vught transit camp, from where we received two postcards from him during the first week. After that we heard nothing more and it was not until sometime after the end of the war and several enquiries, that the Red Cross informed us that he had been murdered in Auschwitz on 21 September 1942. He was 36 years old..."

* Pogrom is a Russian word meaning "to wreak havoc, to demolish violently." Historically, the term refers to violent attacks by local non-Jewish populations on Jews in the Russian Empire and in other countries.



*PT*Travel pass of Paulina Kuppermann
(Mother to Harry Mans)
London, UK, 2017



Sobibór extermination camp
Poland, 2018

Fruma Segalyte and Avram Samson



*Hettie Posner
Daughter of Fruma Segalyte
(1913-2007) and Avram Samson
(1919-1987)
London, UK
1 June 2018*



Told by Hettie Posner and Elvin Samson, daughter and son of Fruma and Avram.

"The old ones, they didn't get any help, they had to get on with it themselves... Some of them did not talk. Some of them never spoke (about it) throughout their lives and a lot of second-generation survivors are quite screwed up. I remember going to a group once for the second generation and somebody said their father was, I think, a priest or a vicar, something like that. They only realised after his death that he was Jewish, and he had been hidden as a child.

(My mother) She was living with her sister in Kovno (Kaunas), and they looked out of their window one morning and could see the airport was on fire. I suppose that was the start of it, the German bombings. They could see the smoke and the fire. There was pandemonium and the girls thought they had better run. They packed up their stuff and, mum always told us, some people said, 'Come with us. We'll give you a lift.' The girls got their things into the car, but then the family drove away with the girls' belongings... The girls continued to walk and were stopped by a German lorry... The soldiers said, 'We'll take you into Kovno, because without us you won't get there alive.' The local Lithuanians were murdering them (the Jews)...

On one occasion, she was marched into a camp, it may have been at the end of one of these marches. She still had a rucksack on her back which contained one or two family photos.

They were marched into the camp and told to have a shower. Now, by this time my mum and her fellow people knew what was going on. (They thought) we're not going to have a shower; that's it – we're going to the gas chambers. Thinking she was going to die, she dug a hole in the ground and buried the rucksack in the hope that somebody would find it..."



*Family photographs. Fruma and Avram were married at Pocking displaced persons camp in Germany
London, UK, 2017*



*Site of the Lietūkis garage massacre
Miško street, Kaunas, Lithuania, 2019*

Simon Malkes



*Simon Malkes (b.1927)
Paris, France, 27 June 2018*



"A lot of Lithuanians worked for the German Gestapo and the SS. In the streets they would chase down Jews and take them to jail. When the jails were full, the Lithuanians and Germans took the Jews to a forest located 10 km from Vilna known as Ponary...

As we were working for the Germans we received a pass, and they did not touch anyone with this identity card. My mother stayed at home and every morning we went to workshops which were managed by Karl Plagge, a German officer. He was the engineer managing all this. In other places Jews were abused but in (HKP 562 forced labour camp), the Jews were treated correctly...

Plagge was told to take the Jews and their families, about 1,200 people, and put them in two huge houses. We moved from the ghetto to the HKP buildings: one room for the three of us.

Two weeks later, the ghetto was closed and surrounded by the Germans with the help of Lithuanians and Ukrainians. The young men were sent to Estonia to work while the older people and the children were killed. Some people escaped and went into hiding. During the night some of them came to HKP and from them we learned what had taken place in the ghetto. We realised that Plagge, the engineer, was a good person even though he was a member of the Nazi party."



*Site of the Ponary massacres
Ponary, Vilnius, Lithuania, 2018*

Between 1941 and 1944; 70,000 Jews, 20,000 Poles and 8,000 Russian prisoners of war, were murdered by German SS and Lithuanian collaborators.



*Road leading to the site of the Ponary massacres
Ponary, Vilnius, Lithuania 2018*

Kopel Kendall



*Vivienne Kendall, widow of Kopel Kendall (born Kopel Kandelzucker, 1928-2009)
London, UK
15 March 2017*



Told by Vivienne Kendall, widow of Kopel Kendall.

"My husband Kopel was born on 7 March 1928 in a little town called Białobrzegi in Poland... In the summer of 1942, the deportation started. The people in the ghetto were given five minutes to get to the town square. Kopel, his mother and his sisters arrived there safely despite the fact that the SS were firing constantly. Kopel was hit on the head and pulled away by his friendly policeman and was put into a working column.

He later found out that his mother and sisters were sent to Treblinka, which was where Jewish people were killed on arrival...

They were finally liberated on 8 May 1945. Kopel arrived in Windermere in Cumbria on 13 August 1945. He came as one of 732 child survivors. They had all lost their families. They all became a new family and, even today, they are still one big family. They really needed each other to talk to as they understood each other, having lived through similar experiences.

You know, he was quite nervous. They sent him to this clinic to be assessed by a psychiatrist. And he walked into the room and started screaming. There was this table, and all the doctors were in white coats. He said it was as if he was back with the Nazis."



Lake District, England, 2017

Windermere became home to 300 of the 732 child survivors, including Kopel, after they arrived in 1945.

Jan de Jonge



*Daphne de Jonge, granddaughter of
Jan de Jonge, (1895-1945)
Bath, UK
3 January 2020*

Told by Daphne de Jonge, granddaughter of Jan de Jonge.

"My Opa, my grandfather, was born on 9 September 1895 in Emmen in Holland.

On 25 June 1941, he was taken from his home and family by two police officers from Hengelo, ... My Opa was part of the resistance in his hometown of Hengelo...

Like many others, Opa had to work in the BMW factory. This factory was attached to a Dachau outdoor labour sub camp known as Dachau-Allach. Due to the camp's terrible living conditions, many prisoners became very ill with typhus fever. My Opa was one of them...

Opa died on 7 March 1945. On 29 April 1945, Dachau was liberated by American soldiers...

29 April... so close, yet too far for my Opa. He was buried on the Leitenberg, Dachau's mass grave. He is buried there with about 7,400 other human beings. I am happy and relieved that Opa's body left that horrible camp. Eventually Opa was free."



*Execution site at a pistol range
Dachau, Germany, 2016*



*Hebertshausen sub camp firing range
Dachau, Germany, 2016*

Dachau was the first concentration camp built by Nazi Germany, opening on 22 March 1933. The camp was initially intended to intern Hitler's political opponents. However, its purpose soon expanded to include forced labor and the imprisonment of Jews, Romani, German and Austrian criminals, as well as foreign nationals from countries that Germany occupied or invaded. More than 4,000 Soviet prisoners were executed here.



*Crematorium at Dachau concentration camp
Dachau, Germany, 2016*

Upon liberation by US soldiers found countless piles of emaciated corpses, dozens of train cars filled with badly decomposed human remains and thousands of 'walking skeletons' who had managed to survive the horrors of Dachau.

Vladimir Genoler



*Sergey Genoler, grandson of Vladimir Genoler (birth date unknown-1941)
Doibani I, Transnistria, 13 April 2018*



Told by Sergey Genoler, grandson of Vladimir Genoler.

"I do not know exactly when my grandfather Vladimir Genoler was born, but he already had five children when he was tortured and executed. My father was just a baby, three months old. He was born in March, and it happened on 2 August 1941.

The old people said that when the German fascist invaders came to the village, there were German sympathisers. These so-called henchmen handed over villagers, including my grandfather. He was not a Communist but, as a sympathiser for Lenin's party, he was close enough to the Communist Party for the Germans. They handed over a list of people who were sympathisers and active under Soviet rule, and also lists of Jewish residents.

People on these lists did not know where they were going; they thought they were just going along to have a conversation, so they went voluntarily when they were called.

The night before the execution, when people arrived in the village council building, they were brutally beaten. They were locked in the basement and beaten all night and when they were taken out by these Nazi henchmen, they were beaten along the road. They took them to the edge of the village and forced them to dig their

own graves. After that, they began to shoot the Communists and sympathisers one by one, as also the Jewish residents.

They gathered all the villagers and staged a public execution. They forced them to dig graves and, after they were shot, they were buried and covered with earth. The wounded were buried too. People said that for the next two days the earth was still breathing...

In Doibani II, they also gathered the villagers and demanded that Communists, sympathisers, and Jewish residents be given up. But they did not find them because the local people steadfastly insisted there were no Communists or Jewish residents in Doibani II. And so, they hid the wounded soldiers and the Jews."



Memorial at the execution site of Communist party members and Jews from the village Doibani I, Transnistria, April, 2018



Doibani I, Transnistria, April, 2018

Frieda Gelber



Frieda Gelber (1925-2019)
New York, USA
30 October 2017



"My first experience was terrible. We travelled for three days and three nights on the train until we arrived at Birkenau. Then everybody got off and Mengele was standing there. I got off and he said, 'Du Swartze, comme hir' because I was dark skinned. After that my sister came with her little boy and there was a big truck with kids. They grabbed her little boy, and they threw him in the truck with all the others. It was unbelievable: a truck full of kids. They just threw them in, like wood.

My mother and father were already in the forest. (The Germans) said they were going to take a shower and we younger ones went to the right, also to take a shower. From there they went straight to the crematorium: my father, my mother, and my whole family.

They took us to a real shower. We showered and they shaved our heads. They gave you one piece of clothing. And we stayed outside the whole night until they had arranged which block, we were going to go into...

* * *

The Romanians, you know, they were suffering too. And one guy, a Romanian guy, came to where we lived and he said to us, 'You want peace, you want food? Come to the city and I'll show you.' There was a shop with a big sign – kosher meat. He said it's carne kosher. Carne is meat so we thought he had kosher meat.

But they had people hanging up there. That was those, you know, those terrible people. That happened after the war.”



*Frieda's family album
New York, USA, 2017*



*Hot air chambers in the central sauna
Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Oświęcim, Poland, 2016*

The family of Yair Ebelson



*Yair Ebelson
Tel Aviv, Israel, 7 December 2017*



"In my house, there was no talking about the Holocaust. I mean, I knew most of my family was murdered by the Nazis. I knew we were descendants of those few who survived the inferno. I knew bits here and there about my murdered family. Every detail I did have was not directly from the source but from my parents...

My grandfather, who fought in the Red Army, and reached the rank of major, never told me how he got injured three times during the war. My grandmother never told me that they fled to Uzbekistan, trying to outrun the war, or that she had lost her 18-month-old son due to malnutrition. He would have been my only uncle. On the other side of my family the loss was even greater; neither the death of my grandmother's first husband in the Red Army nor the murder of my grandfather's first wife and two daughters were mentioned. They never told me about the brothers and sisters they lost, about their parents, about their friends. They never discussed the Holocaust. They preferred to leave the past in the past and look at the present and the future.

I'm mostly sorry I didn't insist more on sitting down and discussing the past with them. Learn more. Understand them better. I'm sorry I didn't ask them to tell me about themselves, their families, their homes."



*Kaiserwald concentration camp
Mežaparks (forest park), Riga, Latvia, 2018*

Before Kaiserwald's prisoners were evacuated to other camps, including Stutthof, all prisoners under 18, those over 30, the infirm, anyone deemed unfit for work and convicted criminals were murdered in the Biķernieki forest.

Sylvia Kerner and her family



Sylvia Kerner (b.1941)
London, UK
7 April 2021



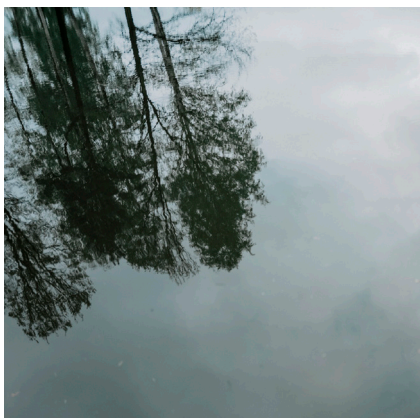
Told by Sylvia Kerner to her children and grandchildren.

"I'm doing this for my three children, Jamie, Stefan and Vanessa, and their families and my grandchildren because they may wonder, one day, where do I come from? Where are my ancestors? English people and others can trace their families so far back; unfortunately, in my case I have only have two generations.

Those who died in the camps, there's no sign anywhere of their existence. They lived, they died. They went up in smoke. There is no grave, no nothing. And, yet they did exist. They created a family and you, my children, and grandchildren, are part of this family; you are the link to the future.

I imagine, the most terrible, terrible journey. In a cattle truck with no hygiene, no food, no air. Half dead before they had to walk the last steps to the gas chamber and leave this earth in smoke. I'm doing this because these people existed...

My youth was really enveloped in the Holocaust because my parents' friends suffered. When they gathered together, you could be sure that within half an hour the subject would be what happened to them in the Holocaust."



*Ash pond
Auschwitz II-Birkenau, Oświęcim, Poland, 2019*

Eugene Lebovitz



*Eugene Lebovitz (b.1928)
Miami, USA, 7 November 2017*



"I'm out there because I'm trying to prove something that my mother and father never got to finish, that's what I'm here for. It's very, very special if I can convey my message and encourage and inspire kids. I have three very, very important things that I start with: ama – which is love, emunna – to believe, and the third, most important, part is omeh – courage to do what you do: without that you're nothing...

I was from a large family of ten brothers and sisters, in Uzhhorod (now in the Ukraine). After the Nazis seized the town, it became the first Hungarian ghetto. I wound up in Auschwitz-Birkenau...

As they emptied out the work camps, they forced us on a death march in the middle of winter, January 1945. The next day, in the freezing cold and snowstorms, we were loaded into another cattle car and taken to the forest to be shot. I survived under a pile of bodies.

So, I survived, and I was put in a block with Russians. Even today I tell people, 'You know what the big entertainment at night was? Killing lice.' Full of lice, every one of us was full of lice. No matter how many you killed, they'd come back. So that was the big entertainment at night and during the day we had to dig ditches and do work. I did this for 29 days.

29 April. I am liberated. I look around. I see people come out of the ground like

potatoes. This was the first unit, the soldiers. Russian soldiers came out, so I realised I had been liberated by the Russians. So, what do I do? I'm the only one that goes to the Russian headquarters. I go there and in front of me they are taking somebody, a Hungarian, and as soon as I see him, I start screaming at him in Hungarian. The guy asks me if I speak Hungarian. I say, 'da.' He takes me in, gives me boots, the most beautiful pair of boots, pants, shirt, gun, and an ID. NKVD. I did not know what it meant. I am the interpreter for the KGB, that's what the man was."



*A photo of Eugene Lebovitz at home with his brothers, sisters, mother, father and grandparents
Uzhhorod, 1934
Jerusalem, Israel, 2017*

Anna Rabkin and Arthur Rose



Anna Rabkin (b.1935)
San Francisco, USA
2 November 2017



"I had never seen a slum in my life. I thought it was so ugly and disgusting. It was dirty and overcrowded and there were rodents and all sorts of vermin. We rented a room and the kitchen in that apartment had another family living in it. The building had several floors, one of those outside balconies, and a courtyard in the middle. There was one toilet which I was not allowed to go into because it was so filthy and one tap, so the water came from one place. Hygiene was a real problem: I got lice and had to have my head shaved. Everybody was terrified of typhoid. There was a lot of disease and no medication to speak of...

I think it was in 1942 when, all of a sudden, walks in a German soldier with a big sack. I was just astounded; I thought, 'Oh, this is the end; they're going to take me away.' And my mother said, 'Don't worry, just get into the sack, it's okay.' And then she said, 'Goodbye. Keep quiet, don't say a word.'

* * *

But the woman was an alcoholic and I was told by our landlady that she went to a bar and must have said something that made somebody suspicious. The Germans paid bounties, and this person went to the Gestapo and told them that they thought the woman might be hiding somebody. I was told that they were all shot. Recently, after Arthur read my memoir, he said, 'You know, I was told a

different story. I was told that they were sealed the apartment and that they died there.' That was so nightmarish that I just couldn't deal with it."



*Cloth sacks in the ghetto building where Anna and Arthur lived
Lviv, Ukraine, December 2018*



Lviv, Ukraine, December 2018

The street on which Anna and Arthur's parents went into hiding; there is a hiding place in the walls outside the ghetto.



Gas chamber
Auschwitz I, Oświęcim, Poland, 2016

A Side Gallery touring exhibition.