



# MCHEnews

MIDWEST CENTER FOR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION MAKING A DIFFERENCE SINCE 1993

FALL/WINTER | 2021/2022

## *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.*

THOUSANDS RESPOND TO PERSONALIZED EVIDENCE OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

How to measure the impact of *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.* and the educational programming surrounding it? The quantitative data is staggering.

We know that:

- More than 200,000 people have tickets to attend, and projections indicate that nearly 250,000 individuals will experience this exhibition.



A child's shoe and sock. Courtesy of @Musealia

- Guests from 49 states and multiple countries have traveled to Kansas City to tour this exhibit.
- Ninety-one percent of guests are spending two or more hours in the exhibit, which is an exceptionally long dwell time for any exhibit.
- Our Auschwitz speaker series has engaged the most prominent speakers across the world on the Holocaust and is projected to reach thousands of learners.
- Teacher professional development and classroom materials have supported hundreds of regional educators, all before the school year began.
- Ninety-seven percent of guests report learning a consequential amount of new and important information about the Holocaust at a time when polling suggests that the public has a low level of knowledge about the Holocaust.
- Ninety-nine percent of guests report that Holocaust education is “important to very important” to their community.

### *Personal Encounter*

These numbers give us a sense of scale. What they do not demonstrate is the power of the personal encounter people are having with this exhibit.

They do not show the teacher standing alone in front of a scale model and map taking time to understand the geography of the space and how that impacted the people destined to live there, however temporarily, as forced laborers.

They do not demonstrate the sensory impact of being in an exhibition with nearly 300 people, all of whom are deeply engaged in listening to the personal stories in the audio tour—in a crowded space where you can hear a pin drop.

They do not demonstrate the impact of looking at the tiny details of a child's shoe and sock—which was carefully tucked into the shoe so he could find it later—and realizing that this one child never came back from what he thought was a shower.

### *Most Important Impact*

*Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.* has brought to Kansas City tangible evidence of the Holocaust—the artifacts that touched the people, victims and perpetrators caught in this historical moment.

The exhibit allows us to personalize the six million murdered and the millions victimized and grapple with the fact that this event is a crime that happened individually to each of those people.

That is an impact that can be measured qualitatively, if not quantitatively, and is the most important impact of Holocaust education.



A teacher studies a scale model and map of Auschwitz-Birkenau

# Generations of Memory

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE | JESSICA ROCKHOLD



## Engaging the Future

The survivors were the first to tour *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away*. In an exhibition that prides itself on connecting the visitor to the personal nature of the history, we wanted to leave space for the survivors to interact with the exhibit as they needed to, contemplating their own experiences and those of their family members who did not survive, among their peers.

For most, they chose to bring their children and, in some cases, their grandchildren. We watched as they pointed to artifacts and pulled a loved one close to share a personal story of deep relevance that was unique and specific to their own family. It is this generational connection to the history that is driving MCHE's upcoming initiatives to engage the children and grandchildren of survivors—the second and third generations.

## Chevra of the Generations

*Chevra* is the Hebrew word for a society or close-knit group. The Chevra of the Second Generation—a group of the children of survivors—used to meet regularly and participate in commemorative and social events. For more than a decade though, that group has been dormant, and it is now our intention to reconstitute it more broadly as the Chevra of the Generations, including the children and the grandchildren of survivors as members.

To that end, we also organized a special private viewing of the Auschwitz exhibit for the Chevra. As with their parents, it was wonderful to see individuals who had not seen each other, in some cases for years, reconnect and have a shared experience around their history. In relaunching this group, we are planning programs that we hope will enhance their sense of community and enable them to become active participants in the collection, preservation and dissemination of their family's story. Workshops on how to digitally archive family history, writing clinics, education sessions and social events will be just a few of the ways that we gather (remotely and in-person) to engage the Chevra.

## The Work Continues

As professionals in this field, we are often asked how our work will change when the survivors are not the primary conveyers of their own stories. One of the many ways that we will work to maintain critical personal connections to this history is by engaging these next generations.

Even as we continue to work with survivors to collect their testimonies and record their vital information—everything from a record of their hometowns and family members to their unique paths through the Holocaust to Kansas City—we are simultaneously working to ensure that the second and third generations are engaged in our work and feel supported in finding their own unique role in this transmission of memory.

The day before the Auschwitz exhibit opened to the public, MCHE organized a remarkable gathering of local survivors. Each occasion where the survivors gather is significant and memorable, but this event was amplified by the fact that for the previous 15 months they had not seen each other.

They missed sharing two *Yom Hasboah* ceremonies, which we conducted virtually for safety in the pandemic. They missed our annual Purim gathering, which is a chance to *gnosh*, chat and share photos. Seeing them arrive was a moment of joy and reconnection. They hugged. They clasped hands. And they again stepped straight into the role of storytellers—about their families, the last many months of the pandemic and life today—but always turning to the Holocaust and their shared past.



Local survivors are the first visitors to tour *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away*, on June 13, 2021.



Chevra of the Generations—children and grandchildren of survivors—meet and tour *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away*.



This is a difficult time to be an advocate for free speech, given the contentiousness of public debate over everything from COVID-19 to

race relations. An unfortunate by-product of this development is the use of Star of David armbands and other images of the Holocaust in a grossly inappropriate attempt to express opposition to policies adopted by the government and by employers.

At a Springfield, Missouri City Council meeting in early August, more than a dozen people who were opposed to a resolution that simply encouraged vaccinations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 wore large yellow Stars of David pinned to their clothes. Although none of them made antisemitic remarks or even referred to the Holocaust, the intentional comparison between measures to fight the pandemic with the deadly objectives of the Nazis' "Final Solution" was shocking and offensive. The Kansas City Star declared that such "Holocaust comparisons mean you forfeit [the] right to be heard."

The challenges that our society faces today are unprecedented. They are not unlike what our survivors and their families were facing in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

# Education as Antidote to Dangerous Free Speech

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE | KARL ZOBRIST

## Leading the Opposition

That cannot be our response, especially in a democratic society that prizes freedom of expression. Regardless of how vile we find such conduct, it should not lead to the suppression of free speech. However, it must be opposed.

MCHE is uniquely qualified to lead that opposition. Our Executive Director Jessica Rockhold and Director of Education Dr. Shelly Cline are experts in the history of the Holocaust and well trained in effective teaching techniques. When they have confronted such conduct in the past, they found that in many cases it was rooted in ignorance and insensitivity. To the extent that more serious issues arise, MCHE and its partners in the community have taken more public steps to expose those with evil motives and potentially unlawful aims.

The challenges that our society faces today are unprecedented. They are not unlike what our survivors and their families were facing in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. Not since those times have we seen such a rise in authoritarian regimes and increase in attacks on religious and ethnic minorities.

## Innovation with Education

Given the additional complications we face from the pandemic, as well as climate change, the path forward will not be easy. I believe that education and innovation will address many of these problems, but they must move together. Because innovation is both threatening and destabilizing, education is essential.

MCHE is a critical part of this process. Our mission is to teach the history of the Holocaust and to use its lessons to counter indifference, intolerance and genocide. While we continue our focus on those objectives, I truly believe that our successes will help lead to a society that is more thoughtful, respectful and safe for everyone.

*Karl Zobrist is a partner in the Kansas City law office of Dentons US LLP, where he specializes in energy law and corporate governance issues. He is also vice chairman of the Kansas City Metropolitan Crime Commission and a member of the board of trustees of Augustana College. He is president of the Truman Good Neighbor Award Foundation, his father, Dr. Benedict Zobrist having served as director of the Harry S. Truman Library from 1971 until 1994.*

## International Holocaust Remembrance Day

**January 24, 6:30 p.m.**  
**Union Station, Regnier Extreme Screen Theatre**  
**30 West Pershing Road | Kansas City, Missouri**

In 2005, the United Nations established January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The UN established this date—the date that Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz in 1945—to honor victims of the Holocaust and to highlight the importance of Holocaust education.

This year's annual Holocaust Remembrance Day commemoration will be offered in partnership with Union Station Kansas City and will feature a talk by Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt, one of the world's leading experts on Auschwitz.

Register at [mchekc.org/auschwitz2021](http://mchekc.org/auschwitz2021)



The Liberation, 1945 by Zinovii Tolkatchev, a Soviet liberator of Auschwitz

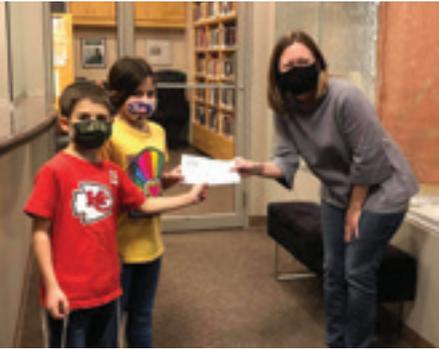
# Why I...

MCHE enjoys the extraordinary support of individuals and groups who further our mission and work in their own unique ways, for which we are so grateful. We asked individuals who represent various types of involvement to explain why they choose to support MCHE with their participation, dollars and energy.

## Why I Am an MCHE Member

Kaley Wajcman and Jon Schwartzbard

Parents of Eliana (age 9) and Noah (age 8) Schwartzbard



This past January, we were brainstorming ways to make our day off for MLK Day meaningful for our kids. As parents, we try to filter how we share relevant news with our kids, but still educate them on how our community is being impacted and, more importantly, how we can bring people together.

As a grandchild of Holocaust survivors, the stories from my grandparents and their families were very much a part of my upbringing. Something you heard around every Shabbat table and something you *felt* at every family gathering.

### Their Story

Unfortunately, all of my surviving great aunts and uncles have since passed. But there is a connection to the Holocaust that is crucial that our children receive because it *is* their story. It's how and why our family lives in Overland Park. It's why we send our children to a Jewish day school.

We choose to make the Holocaust relevant to their lives because we hope that a sense of purpose will continue to grow in their connection to Judaism and our community.

### Hot Chocolate

So, why hot chocolate? Well, my kids have begged to do a lemonade stand. It was going to be a dreary January day, and we decided that hot chocolate would be more appropriate. It was never about the money for my kids.

As we discussed *why* we had a day off from school and how we could reflect the values of Dr. King, bringing awareness to MCHE became a wonderful opportunity to spread the message of tolerance, the need to educate future generations, and the importance of being advocates in our community.

We were hopeful for a few dollars. However, as soon as we posted an infographic on social media, we received a Venmo donation of \$5. Bingo! Before we opened our stand, we had over \$100! Through drive-by visitors and continued electronic donations from generous friends and family, we raised \$450! We are so proud of our kids for this *chesed*—act of kindness—and we know it will be a fun challenge to try to beat in future years!

## Why I Am Leaving a Legacy

Karen and Mike Herman



As a senior in high school history class many years ago, I remember seeing a film for the first time about the Auschwitz Concentration Camp. The film showed photos of torture and death beyond anything I could even begin to comprehend or fathom; it felt for all the world like a chasm had opened up. To this day, I remember the incomprehension I felt as I approached our teacher Miss Weir and asked, "Did this really happen?" and she replied, "Yes, it did."

Years later, it was one of the great privileges of my life to work alongside MCHE founders Isak Federman, Jack Mandelbaum and other survivors to create MCHE. As Isak and Jack would say, the only way through is to make sure that this kind of thing never happens again.

How? With the help of survivors and their families, through comprehensive education in schools, universities and religious organizations. This is what became—and continues to be—the work of MCHE. My family and I are deeply honored to have contributed to this significant work, alongside so many others who have been so moved.

## Why I Study with MCHE



Erwin Abrams, Lunch and Learner

MCHE provides me with a remarkable mix of lectures, programs and classes to address the enduring questions of *responsibility and accountability* for the Holocaust. MCHE tells us about newly discovered information and emphasizes with words, pictures and films the nature of those who wished to eradicate Jews and other minorities. Especially in these days of people scrambling to rewrite history and deny responsibility, MCHE strives to hold perpetrators to account.

## Why I Speak

Evy Tilzer, Member, Second Generation Speakers Bureau

I give talks about my parents and the Holocaust because I feel a responsibility to be their voice. It was difficult for them to publicly share their life. For so many years, people didn't want to hear their stories. Through my voice, lessons of the Holocaust can be personalized, not just another history lesson. From their story we can learn lessons in life, survival, motivation, perseverance and faith!



Because my parents survived, I am here to tell their story!

# Legacy • Learning • Witness

## Why I Participate in a School Program

Angela Gottesburen, Educator

White Rose Student Research Contest



Every September, I check my email a little more often to see if I have received the announcement from MCHE that introduces the theme for the White Rose Student Research Contest. Once I (excitedly!) discover the topic for that year, my mind immediately wonders how my students will respond and what lessons they will take away.

As an educator, the opportunities that the White Rose contest provides for exploring a variety of primary sources, from poems, songs and diaries to testimonies, legal documents and artifacts challenges and enlightens even the brightest of my students. I am always proud of the knowledge my students gain, and my heart is touched by the connections that they make to their current lives.

After writing the essay, my students are empowered with a deeper understanding that we all share a common humanity, that the spark to not only survive but thrive under insurmountable odds can never be extinguished, and most importantly that we must always speak out and denounce hatred.

## Why I Study with MCHE

Angie Dalbello, Educator

Mill Valley High School, DeSoto School District

As a high school social studies teacher, I find MCHE's teacher programming rich in both content and instructional ideas for the classroom. Jessica Rockhold and Dr. Shelly Cline are incredibly knowledgeable about the Holocaust and able to highlight often overlooked aspects.



MCHE programming has greatly expanded my overall knowledge of the Holocaust. I have been exposed to and worked with primary source resources that I likely would not have discovered on my own. I've met and talked with local Holocaust survivors whose experiences are all unique and made a lasting impression.

MCHE has also enabled me to travel to Washington, D.C. to visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and meet with a D.C.-area Holocaust survivor. I have also appreciated and benefited from MCHE's partnerships in bringing exhibits like *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.* and *State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda* to our community.

The intensive teacher workshops surrounding these exhibits have profoundly influenced me inside and outside of the classroom. Whether it is a film series, in-person speaker, remote speaker or teacher conference, I walk away with greater knowledge and understanding, empathy and ideas for my classroom.

## Why I Volunteer

Dianne O'Bryan, Member

Isak Federman Holocaust Teaching Cadre



In the spring of 1995, I got my first job as a social studies teacher and at the same time was invited to join the MCHE Isak Federman Holocaust Teacher Cadre. Even though I was just beginning my teaching career, I knew that it was critically important for our students to learn about the Holocaust and especially the human side of what happened.

I volunteer with MCHE because I want to help share best practices with other teachers who then share with their students. On a personal level, being part of MCHE has allowed me opportunities to expand my knowledge about the Holocaust, to develop teaching strategies to improve student learning, and to benefit from a professional community of teachers who have greatly enriched my teaching experience.



## Why I Support a Program

Sam Devinki, Benefactor

Together We Remember

The question is why do I support MCHE? The answer spans

75 years. I was born in 1947 in a displaced persons camp in Regensburg, Germany. My parents and my mother's mother were the only survivors of my immediate family. The Dzierwiencki/Braun family lost almost 100 members of their extended families in the Shoah.

It became clear to me that the only way to fight the antisemitism, bigotry and hatred was through education. MCHE turned out to be the perfect vehicle to combat that hatred and ignorance, which continues in our country today. I also realized that the best time to educate people about the Holocaust is when they are still young.

I helped to start a program called Together We Remember, which tries to give 16- and 17-year-olds a deeper understanding of the history of the Holocaust. Studies conclude with a two-day trip to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. Over the last 14 years, Together We Remember has taken over 150 teenagers through this program. In my opinion, MCHE has done more to educate people in the metropolitan area about the Holocaust than any other organization.

## Why I Serve on the Board of Directors

Lynn Hoover, Member



More than 25 years ago I was at a party at the home of a client, who introduced me to her father, Jack Mandelbaum. We began to talk and I noticed numbers tattooed on his arm. I suddenly knew that he had survived the Holocaust. At a later time, Jack told me of his and other survivors' desire to create an educational organization to teach how to avoid other Holocaust-like events from occurring.

Jack asked if I wanted to be a part of that program and I said, "heck yea." MCHE was formed and I have been on the board except during off years, trying to work toward making certain that we do what we can to not let events lead to anything like the Holocaust. That is why I give MCHE my time, talent and resources.

## DONATIONS RECEIVED JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

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\*of blessed memory

We regret any errors or omissions and would appreciate your contacting the MCHC office at [danas@mchekc.org](mailto:danas@mchekc.org) with any needed corrections.

# Teaching and Learning Continues in the Pandemic

Despite the challenges of teaching in a pandemic, our educators remain committed to learning new content and engaging their students. Here are a few examples of our work together.

**White Rose Student Research Contest** – Educators from across the country participated in our annual research contest. The theme was “Propaganda,” and we added a new documentary category and expanded our geographic reach. Congratulations to winners Anna Kruger and her teacher Andi Husted and to Jenna Jordan and her teachers Bailey Appleton and Angela Gottesburen. Congratulations also to Catherine Crayon and her teacher Penny Selle for being the first filmmaker in our research contest and being awarded the Sophie Scholl Pioneer Prize.

**Americans and the Holocaust Partner Workshop** – Educators joined MCHE and educators from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial

Museum for a workshop focused on difficult questions about what and when Americans learned about the Holocaust and stressed the importance of teaching students to read history forward rather than with the knowledge of hindsight.

**Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.** – In July, nearly 30 educators from seven states joined MCHE for a comprehensive four-day institute. Through lecture, discussion, classroom activities and daily in-depth experiences in the exhibit, educators explored the path and process of the Holocaust. MCHE partnered with Union Station in August for a special educator preview, allowing teachers the opportunity to experience the exhibit among their peers before planning field trips for students.

**Graduate Student Workshop** – MCHE was proud to partner with the University of Missouri Kansas City and Professor Andrew S. Bergerson to present a virtual workshop on comparative genocide. Graduate students in his course presented their research on a variety of genocides to a community audience. The students then facilitated a discussion about the genocide they studied and its intersections with the Holocaust.



Educators attend MCHE's Summer Institute at Union Station Kansas City.

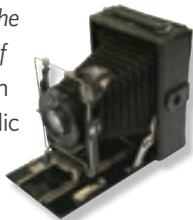
## FALL/WINTER PROGRAM CALENDAR

Please visit [mchekc.org](http://mchekc.org) for complete details and to register for programs.

### SEPTEMBER

**September 4 - October 31**

*Pictures of Resistance: The Wartime Photography of Faye Shulman* Exhibition at the Kansas City Public Library Central Branch



### OCTOBER



**October 20**

Auschwitz In-Depth: A Workshop for Educators at Union Station Kansas City

**October 26**

Auschwitz Speakers Series: *Time Capsules Under the Rubble: The Ringelblum Archive in the Warsaw Ghetto*

### NOVEMBER

**November 9**

Auschwitz Speakers Series: *From Nuremberg to Demjanjuk: Justice and the Trials of the Holocaust* and *Kristallnacht* Commemoration

**November 16**

Exploring the Essay – a program for educators

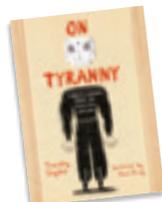
**November 18**

Auschwitz Speakers Series: *Archaeology of the Holocaust: Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen*

### DECEMBER

**December 1**

Auschwitz Speakers Series: *Our Mothers Were in Auschwitz: Three Daughters Remember*



**December 8**

New Graphic Edition Presentation: *On Tyranny*

### JANUARY 2022

**January 24**

Auschwitz Speakers Series: *Auschwitz* International Holocaust Remembrance Day Commemoration

**January 27**

Literary Lunch Break: A Reader's Guide to *Survival in Auschwitz*



### FEBRUARY 2022

**February 10**

Community-wide Common Book Discussion: *Survival in Auschwitz*

### MAY 2022

**May 1**

Yom Hashoah



**To Be Determined**

Auschwitz Speakers Series: *Mengele: Unmasking the "Angel of Death"*



# Auschwitz Speakers Series

MCHE and Union Station Kansas City are pleased to announce the participation of the following historians and scholars in a public speakers series associated with the exhibition *Auschwitz: Not long ago. Not far away.* These events are free and open to the public but require pre-registration. Dates, times and format are subject to change based on Covid restrictions. Information and registration are available at [mchekc.org/auschwitz2021](http://mchekc.org/auschwitz2021).



Sam Kassow

## ***Time Capsules Under the Rubble: The Ringelblum Archive in the Warsaw Ghetto***

Dr. Samuel Kassow, Charles Northam Professor of History, Trinity College

October 26 | 6:30 p.m. | Union Station Kansas City

During World War II, Jews resisted not only with guns but also with pen and paper. Even in the face of death they left “time capsules” full of documents

that they buried under the rubble of ghettos and death camps.

They were determined that posterity would remember them on the basis of Jewish and not German sources. The Ringelblum archive in the Warsaw Ghetto buried thousands of documents. But of the 60 people who worked on this national mission, only three survived.

This will be their story.



Lawrence Douglas

## ***From Nuremberg to Demjanjuk: Justice and the Trials of the Holocaust***

Lawrence Douglas, James J. Grosfeld Professor of Law, Jurisprudence and Social Thought, Amherst College

November 9 | 6:30 p.m.

Annual *Kristallnacht* Commemoration

Presented in partnership with the Truman Presidential Library and Museum at Union Station Kansas City

This talk explores the era of the great trials of

the Holocaust, beginning 76 years ago at Nuremberg and ending a decade ago with the conviction of John (Ivan) Demjanjuk in Munich. Professor Douglas will consider the aims and limitations of criminal justice when dealing with crimes of genocidal sweep. See page 9 for more details.



Caroline Sturdy-Colls

## ***Archaeology of the Holocaust: Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen***

Dr. Caroline Sturdy-Colls, Professor of Conflict Archaeology and Genocide Investigation, Staffordshire University

November 18 | 2:00 p.m. | Zoom

Archaeologist Caroline Sturdy-Colls pioneered methods and technology that produced groundbreaking results and offer new insights into the

nature of Nazi genocide. In this talk she will share the methods and results of her work at Treblinka and Bergen-Belsen. Dr. Colls specializes in Holocaust studies, identification of human remains, forensic archaeology and crime scene investigation. She is the author of *Finding Treblinka. Archaeological Investigations at Treblinka Extermination and Labour Camps.*



Alice Jacks Achtenberg



Regina Kort



Matilda Rosenberg

## ***Our Mothers Were In Auschwitz – Three Daughters Remember***

Featuring: Alice Jacks Achtenberg, Regina Kort and Matilda Rosenberg  
December 1 | 6:30 p.m. | Union Station Kansas City

Members of MCHE’s Second Generation Speakers Bureau

Alice Jacks Achtenberg, Regina Kort and Matilda Rosenberg share the experiences of their mothers Bronia Roslawowski, Sonia Warshawski and Alegre Tevet as Auschwitz survivors.



Robert Jan van Pelt

## ***Auschwitz***

Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt, Author, Architectural Historian and Professor, University of Waterloo  
January 24 | 6:30 p.m. | Union Station Kansas City

Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt is one of the world’s leading experts on Auschwitz. He co-authored the award-winning book, *Auschwitz 1270 to the Present*, with Dr. Debórah Dwork, and initiated and chaired the workgroup that created the master plan for the future of the Auschwitz Museum. Dr. van Pelt was one of the four internationally renowned historians who served as expert witnesses for the defense in the Irving-Lipstadt trial.

This presentation commemorates International Holocaust Remembrance Day. See page 3 for more details.



David Marwell

## ***Mengele: Unmasking the “Angel of Death”***

Dr. David G. Marwell, Former Chief of Investigative Research, Department of Justice, and CEO of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York City  
Pending Reschedule due to Covid at Union Station Kansas City. | Date to be announced.

Historian David G. Marwell will talk about his recent book on Josef Mengele, in which he strips away the myths that have attached themselves to the Auschwitz doctor and replaces what is a frightening caricature with a perhaps even more unsettling picture of the human being that he was.

# Attention Graduate Students!

## THE RUTHIE RESEARCH GRANT NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Ruthie Abend Krigel Tivol was born in Dubienka, Poland in 1929. In December 1938, Ruthie, her sister and mother joined her father, who had traveled to the United States earlier to work, in Kansas City.

Ruthie always understood how fortunate her family was to escape World War II and the Holocaust. She never forgot those left behind.

An ardent benefactor, Ruthie provided sustaining support for MCHE in the form of a legacy gift, part of which has been designated as the Ruthie Tivol Graduate Research Fund. This fund will support an annual grant for young scholars. Upon completion, grantees will make a public presentation based on their research in the Kansas City community.



## Ruthie Research Grant Guidelines

### Eligibility

1. Be a graduate student in excellent standing at a Kansas or Missouri university.
2. Be working on a Holocaust-related research topic.
3. Funding is for research-related expenses excluding conferences.

### Requirements

1. Complete all travel within 12 months of the date of the award.
2. Present a public talk to the MCHE community based on the funded research within 12 months of completing travel.

Submit your application at [mchekc.org/graduate-research](http://mchekc.org/graduate-research).

## Kristallnacht Commemoration

### FROM NUREMBERG TO DEMJANJUK: JUSTICE AND THE TRIALS OF THE HOLOCAUST

November 9, 6:30 p.m. | Union Station, Regnier Extreme Screen Theatre | 30 West Pershing Road | Kansas City, Missouri

Within months of Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany, anti-Jewish laws and legal restrictions went into effect. In the first six years of Nazi rule over 400 decrees and regulations restricted the lives of Jews, including the 1935 Nuremberg Laws that stripped Jews of their citizenship.

In 1938, legal oppression escalated to physical violence on the night of November 9. Jewish businesses, homes and synagogues were vandalized, burned and destroyed. Jewish residents were beaten, assaulted and arrested. *Kristallnacht* marked a turning point in Germany's actions against the Jews. German territory continued to expand, and German policy toward the Jews became increasingly radicalized until it culminated in continent-wide genocide.

Years later after the war ended, the Western Allies conducted war crimes trials of those responsible for the Nazi system. Eventually, this process was turned over to the new German government. Both eras of postwar justice had their shortcomings and failures.

This year's community commemoration will feature a lecture by Lawrence Douglas, in which he will explore these eras of great trials of the Holocaust, beginning 76 years ago at Nuremberg and ending a decade ago with the conviction of John (Ivan) Demjanjuk in Munich. Professor Douglas will consider the aims and limitations of criminal justice when dealing with crimes of genocidal sweep.

This program is offered in partnership with Union Station and the Truman Presidential Library and Museum.



1963 Auschwitz Trial in Frankfurt. In the first row is defendant Victor Capesius (with dark glasses), behind him stands defendant Oswald Kaduk.

Register at [mchekc.org/auschwitz2021](http://mchekc.org/auschwitz2021)

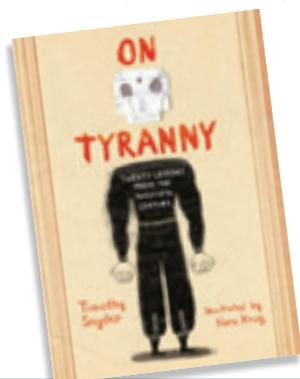
## On Tyranny – New Graphic Edition Presentation

December 8, 6:30 p.m. | Zoom

In 2017, historian Timothy Snyder compiled a pocket-sized guide to resisting tyranny. A notable departure from his longer monograph studies, *On Tyranny*, took the lessons of the 20th century and instructed the reader on specific actions they could take to protect democracy.

Now, Nora Krug, a German-American author and illustrator, has partnered with Snyder to produce an exciting new edition of *On Tyranny*. This work is a mixture of graphic memoir, collage-style scrapbook and historical narrative. Its creative format will reach new audiences, again reminding us of how important our personal roles are in defending our institutions of democracy.

On December 8, Timothy Snyder and Nora Krug will speak to the Kansas City community via Zoom about this project. This program is a partnership of the Goethe Pop Up Kansas City, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Midwest Center for Holocaust Education, and Union Station Kansas City. The conversation will be moderated by Dr. Andrew S. Bergerson, Professor of History and Public Humanities at UMKC.



Register at [mchekc.org/ontyranny](http://mchekc.org/ontyranny)

# Victims of the Nazi Era: Memory and Remembrance

DR. SHELLY CLINE

In the heart of Berlin, within sight of the Reichstag, lies *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*. This massive memorial is made up of a series of concrete slabs and covers more than four acres. Reflecting the enormity of the crime, this memorial dominates the landscape, but if you walk a bit farther and look more closely, you'll notice a variety of smaller monuments dedicated to additional victims of the Nazi regime.

"The Final Solution to the Jewish Question" was at the center of the Holocaust, and yet, much like the landscape of today's Berlin, there is much more to this history than first appears.

## Persecuted Groups

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis sought to create a racial state comprised of what they deemed to be a racially pure population, while at the same time attempting to bring the thoughts and values of their citizens in line with Nazi ideology. To that end, individuals of multiple groups were persecuted by the Nazis because of their political convictions, sexual orientations, religious practices, or their perceived biological identities.

The persecution, suffering and murder of these groups deemed unworthy of inclusion in the Nazi state often pre-dated the persecution of the Jews and laid the groundwork for the mechanisms that would be used against the Jews. By understanding the Nazi treatment of these persecuted groups we may better appreciate the uniqueness of the Jewish experience.

## Practice for Genocide

Across the street from the Jewish memorial you'll find Berlin's most famous

park, the Tiergarten. The same Tiergarten as the infamous address Tiergartenstrasse 4, for which the Nazi "euthanasia" program was named. On the edge of the park stands a 78-foot blue glass wall set in concrete that serves as the memorial to the nearly 300,000 people killed in Aktion T4. In 1939, secret killing operations began targeting infants and toddlers with disabilities, but eventually expanded to include those up to age 17.

These children were killed by lethal overdose or starvation. In 1940, the program expanded to include adults whose mental or physical conditions were deemed "undesirable" by the Nazi state. Gassing installations were established at six killing centers within Germany.

The utilization of gas chambers and their disguise as showers first used during T4 would later be reused against the Jews, and many of the men involved in operating the T4 centers would later join the leadership of killing centers in the East. In many ways this killing program provided the Nazis with valuable practice for later genocidal initiatives. Recent research has revealed the program continued much longer and more extensively than previously believed.

## Roma and Sinti

On the opposite side of the park lies a small, circular reflecting pool with a stone triangle at its center. This easily missed memorial commemorates the persecution and murder of the Roma and Sinti peoples. Like the Jews, the Roma and Sinti endured centuries of persecution throughout Europe before the Nazi period. Similarly, they were targeted by the Nazis for racial reasons.

Through forced labor and mass murder

between 250,000 and 500,000 Roma and Sinti were killed. Unlike many of the other groups of victims, the Roma were sent to killing centers such as Chelmno, Belzec and Auschwitz-Birkenau. After the war, Roma and Sinti remained marginalized peoples in many parts of Europe, which has increased the difficulty of researching and memorializing their experience under the Nazis.

## Pink Triangle

A short distance from the reflecting pool of the Roma, stands a stark concrete structure that appears to be listing to one side. Inside, it holds a single screen on which a film continuously loops. It is the memorial dedicated to the queer victims of the Nazis. Nazi persecution of men who had sexual relations with other men began as early as 1933 and increased in 1935 when the Nazis expanded the pre-existing law known as Paragraph 175. This change was inclusive of a wider range of behaviors and made arrest easier.

These men were targeted because their sexual activity detracted from the reproductive goals of the Nazi state. Those arrested under Paragraph 175 were tried and, if convicted, were most often sent to prison. Between 5,000 and 15,000 repeat offenders were sent to concentration camps such as Dachau, Sachsenhausen or Buchenwald where they were identified with a pink triangle. Arrests declined during the war years as Germany faced increasing shortages of military aged men.

Although gay men were the most visibly targeted, recent research has shown how other members of the LGBTQ+ community were also persecuted. Those not conforming to the gender norms of the



The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin



T4 Memorial, Berlin



Roma and Sinti Memorial, Berlin

time could be arrested under the category “asocial” and subsequently sent to the camp system. Although Paragraph 175 did not include women, the lives of lesbians were also disrupted. Many lived in fear or entered heterosexual marriages for safety.

The majority of “pink triangle” survivors did not come forward after the war to tell their stories because they feared reimprisonment. Paragraph 175 remained law in Germany until 1994. It was not until 2002 that Germany granted survivors of this group eligibility for reparation funds.

### *First to Auschwitz*

The second largest monument in the area is found on the northeast corner of the park. Built in 1945, it commemorates the Soviet war dead, and it looks like many Soviet memorials of its time. While this memorial is dedicated to those who died during the Battle of Berlin, it reminds us of the 3.3 million Soviet prisoners of war killed by the Nazis. Second only to the Jews, the Soviet POWs were the largest group of victims of Nazi racial policy. Nazis viewed Soviets as subhuman enemies who also posed a political threat as “Bolsheviks.”

Soviet POWs were subjected to brutal conditions within the camps in which they were held, sometimes without food or shelter. They were among the first prisoners sent to Auschwitz and labored to construct large portions of the camp. Of the Soviets sent to Auschwitz, 99% were killed. Although most died from exposure and exhaustion, it was Soviet POWs that the Nazis subjected to their first experiments with Zyklon B. Research into this group has been complicated by subsequent European history.

### *Missing from Memory*

We can also think about who is missing from this memory landscape. One major

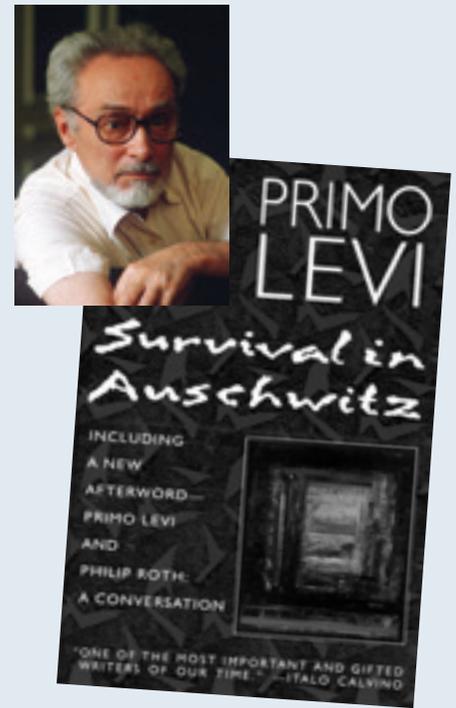
group of victims that is not currently represented here are the Jehovah’s Witnesses. The Nazis persecuted this group for their beliefs and convictions. Actions against Jehovah’s Witnesses began soon after the Nazi rise to power; however, it was in 1935 with the introduction of compulsory service that conflict escalated.

Most of the approximately 10,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses who were imprisoned during this period were held in prison, but nearly 3,000 were sent to concentration camps. Unlike other groups mentioned above, Jehovah’s Witnesses were given the option to renounce their beliefs to gain their freedom. Despite this, most did not avail themselves of this choice.

### *Unique and Universal*

Through this simple journey around the Tiergarten we can consider the range and scope of death and suffering under the Nazi state. The Nazis targeted some such as the Jews, Roma, Sinti and Soviets for racial reasons, the disabled for perceived biological defects, and some such as the LGBTQ+ community and Jehovah’s Witnesses for behaviors or beliefs that ran counter to the Nazi worldview.

While it is always inappropriate to compare the suffering of victims, it is necessary to analyze the policies toward different victim groups and how those policies were implemented. By examining the experiences of these victims of Nazi crimes, we are able to properly understand the context in which the Holocaust happened, to explore what is unique to each victim group, and to recognize what is universal across the experience. It has taken many decades for these memorials to be constructed, and for the histories of these groups to be researched, reminding us of the ever-evolving process of memory and remembrance.



## Common Book Recommendation

**January 27, 12:00 p.m.**

Literary Lunch Break: A Reader’s Guide to *Survival in Auschwitz* with Dr. Shelly Cline and Kaite Mediatore Stover  
Hosted by the Kansas City Public Library via Zoom

**February 10, 12:00 p.m.**

Community-wide discussion led by Dr. Shelly Cline  
Hosted by MCHE via Zoom

Consider if this is a man  
Who works in mud,  
Who knows no peace,  
Who fights for a crust of bread,  
Who dies by a yes or no.

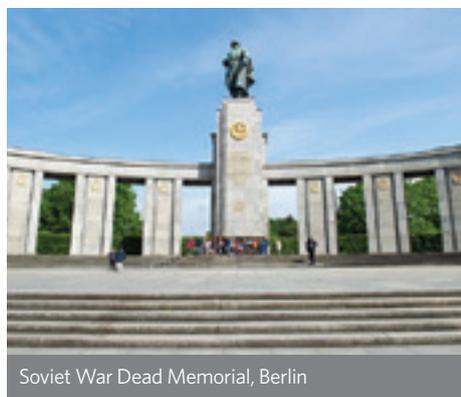
This fall, the community is encouraged to read *Survival in Auschwitz*. This memoir was among the very first to be published after the Holocaust. In it, Primo Levi recounts life in Auschwitz with a calm, somber prose, often seemingly at odds with the nature of the events he describes.

Join us to discuss the difficult questions about the human condition Levi presses us to consider. Contact Kaite Stover [kaitestover@kclibrary.org](mailto:kaitestover@kclibrary.org) to get a copy of the book.

Register at [mchekc.org/common-book](http://mchekc.org/common-book)



Memorial dedicated to gay victims, Berlin



Soviet War Dead Memorial, Berlin

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## MCHEKC.ORG: Refreshed and Revitalized



MCHE has refreshed and revitalized its website. We continue to add rich content which, with improved navigation and search functionality, allows learners to access Holocaust educational materials as their time and interest permits.

### Visit mcheck.org for:

- **Witnesses to the Holocaust Archive** featuring the profiles, testimonies, and supplemental educational material on 93 regional Holocaust survivors.
- Full presentations from the **Auschwitz Speaker Series**, as well as past lectures by historians and content experts.
- Full catalogue of **MCHE documentaries**, including *The Holocaust: Through Our Own Eyes*, and the topical documentaries *Kristallnacht*, *Ghettos*, *In Hiding*, *Auschwitz*, *Jewish Responses*, and *Liberation*.
- **Find a program** in our complete listing of offerings for professional educators, adult learners, and our commemorative programming.

- **Support our work** by becoming a member, remembering or honoring a loved one with a tribute, or making a general donation.

### Coming in 2022:

- **New American Archive** featuring MCHE holdings of the papers and photographs of the New American Club.
- **Core Concepts Lecture Series** including content lectures delivered by MCHE educators and supplemented with additional educational materials. This series is supported by an innovation grant from the Jewish Community Foundation of Greater Kansas City and Ed and Sandi Fried.

Our thanks to the team at Propaganda3 who have made this project come to life and continue to believe in our work and support our mission.

## MCHE'S SPRING 2022 NEWSLETTER IS GOING DIGITAL

Update your email at [info@mcheck.org](mailto:info@mcheck.org) to receive a copy or visit [mcheck.org/about/newsletter/](http://mcheck.org/about/newsletter/) to find all of our newsletters.