



Educators' Guide

PART II

Sidonia's Thread

Crafting a Life From Holocaust to High Fashion

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**A young Hungarian woman finds herself totally alone after the Holocaust,
the only survivor of her family.**

With her toddler in tow, she makes her way to America.

**She survives in a new country through her wits, her imagination,
and above all, her hands.**

Introduction

Purpose

This Educators' Guide walks students and teachers through the life of Sidonia Perlstein, in conjunction with the exhibit entitled "Sidonia's Thread: Crafting a Life from Holocaust to High Fashion." With the aid of her beautiful clothing designs, Sidonia's story is linked together with historical background and essential concepts in an effort to provide a meaningful and unique way to uncover the story of a remarkable Holocaust survivor. This Educators' Guide facilitates an engaging connection between students, teachers, and the exhibit, and is separated into sections based upon the following goals:

1. To promote an understanding of the concept of how an ordinary person, under certain circumstances, can lead an extraordinary life.
2. To promote knowledge regarding the particular plight of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.
3. To bring about a greater knowledge regarding the lives of immigrants in the United States in the last half of the twentieth century.
4. To enhance knowledge about the relationship between creative design, dressmaking, and textiles and the Holocaust and its aftermath.
5. To learn some nontraditional methods of remembering those who have had a meaningful impact on our lives today.

The goals listed above showcase themes central to Sidonia Perlstein's life, incorporating the important history of Hungarian Jews and their experiences during the Holocaust, the topic of immigration, and the struggles and successes of starting a new life in a different country in the aftermath of World War II. The perseverance demonstrated by Holocaust survivors like Sidonia Perlstein is stressed throughout the themes, historical pieces, and activities included in this guide.

This guide provides historical background or context pieces accompanied by visuals and educational activities suitable for high school and college-aged students. While all five sections of the guide provide valuable educational experiences, teachers may not be able to utilize every section, and may have to pick and choose what to use. Each section is designed to provide a comprehensive experience related to the section goal. Educators may choose whether some or all of the sections and activities are suitable for their particular classrooms.

As a prerequisite for utilizing this guide, students and teachers should have background knowledge regarding the causes, events, and impact of the Holocaust. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website, specifically the "Learn About the Holocaust" link contains valuable information to aid with the building of this foundation. In addition, the Echoes and Reflections website offers lessons that are useful for gaining this background information. Both organizations also offer teacher-training programs for Holocaust education.

United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum "Learn
About the Holocaust" Link:
<https://www.ushmm.org/learn>

Echoes and Reflections link:
[https://echoesandreflections.
org/teach/](https://echoesandreflections.org/teach/)

Resources

Resources consulted and used for the narratives included in each section can be found at the end of this guide, in the “Resources” section. Each narrative is followed by suggested activities for high school and college-aged students, including internet resource links that are immediately accessible, without cost. A glossary of important terms is included at the end of this guide as well.

Standards Addressed in this Educators' Guide

The reputable Echoes and Reflections organization, which specializes in Holocaust education, created a Standards Alignment Chart for the lessons included in their program, which incorporates standards from both the Common Core and the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) C3 Framework. Due to the comprehensive nature of this chart, the connected content, and the credibility of the Echoes and Reflections program, the Echoes and Reflections Standards Alignment Chart was used as a guide for addressing applicable standards in this Educators' Guide. Most or all of the Common Core and NCSS C3 Framework standards listed in the Echoes and Reflections chart have the potential of being covered throughout the activities in this guide. The educators' choice regarding which activities they wish to use for their classrooms, along with adaptations, will impact which standards they address.

Echoes and Reflections
Standards Alignment Chart
https://echoesandreflections.org/wp-content/themes/twentyseenechoes/fileview.php?source=1&file_nm=2020/02/11_Acadmic-Standards-1.pdf

Please consult the first link to the left to access the Echoes and Reflections Standards Alignment Chart. Note that the lessons referenced in the Echoes and Reflections Standards Alignment Chart are lessons included in that program, and not this Educators' Guide. However, the standards from the Common Core and the NCSS C3 Framework listed in the Echoes and Reflections chart can be addressed through the activities in this guide.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage
<https://education.mjhnyc.org/aligning-with-the-common-core/>

Furthermore, the second link from the Museum of Jewish Heritage also includes standards from the Common Core that are applicable to this Educators' Guide. While many of them are also included in the Echoes and Reflections chart, it may be worthwhile to view this link from the Museum of Jewish Heritage when considering standards.

Educators' Guide Acknowledgments

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Hungarian Jews

The Particular Plight of Hungarian Jews During the Holocaust

A Brief History of Jews in Hungary

The existence of a Jewish population in Hungary can be traced back to the Ancient Roman Empire. By the latter part of the 11th century, waves of Jewish immigrants poured into Hungary from Germany, Bohemia and Moravia. During this time, King Koloman provided protection for Jews in return for taxation, giving Hungary a reputation as a safe haven for Jews. For the next few centuries, Hungarian Jews faced both advancements and restrictions. They were allowed to have leadership positions in businesses, were provided legal protection, and were granted continued immigration rights. Yet, they also faced anti-Jewish laws, were unable to lease land, and had to wear badges. They were banished from Hungary during the Black Plague in 1349, but were allowed to return decades later, where they continued to face the ebb and flow of restrictions and improvements.

Ottoman Rule in the sixteenth and seventeenth century allowed for religious tolerance for Hungarian Jews. The eighteenth century brought Hapsburg rule, and with it, a growth of antisemitism and the expulsion of Jews from Hungarian cities, plus an added “toleration” tax. The eighteenth century also began a marked increase in the population of Jews in Hungary. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, Hungarian Jews experienced a lifting of restrictions and emancipation, allowing Jews to partake in many aspects of Hungarian life, ranging from agriculture to business to the arts. From 1735 to 1869, the Jewish population in Hungary grew from 11,600 to 542,000. By the early twentieth century, Hungary had become a diverse national and religious state, with over 800,000 Jews who represented both Central and Eastern European Jewry.

The massive growth in the population of Hungarian Jewry during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was especially due to immigration. Most Jews were peppered throughout the countryside and small villages, as innkeepers, distillers, butchers, tailors and other craft trades. Some were established merchants and tradesmen, ranging from peddlers who sold goods out of a sack to local villages, to those who created trade networks that linked together large estates, warehouses, and even urban centers. Hapsburg centralizing policies afforded more Jews the chance for university education, but also the expectation to assimilate. By the mid-nineteenth century, many Jews still remained in the countryside, while thousands of Jews lived in urban centers, and most remarkably, around 40% lived in market towns, which became thriving communities.

By the late nineteenth century, a rift between Orthodox, reform/conservative and other Jewish groups was evident. Assimilation grew among Hungarian Jews, and Jewish participation in the political, economic and cultural realms of Hungarian life grew. Jews were recognized as a religion and given the same rights as Protestants and Catholics. Jewish merchants made up over 50% of all Hungarian merchants by World War I. While Hungarian Jews faced antisemitic laws prior to World War I, the aftermath of the war brought the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and an escalation of violence against Jews. Despite 10,000 Jewish casualties during

World War I, anti-Jewish legislation throughout the 1920s and 1930s caused hundreds of thousands Hungarian Jews to be reduced to poverty. Hungarian Jews created self-help agencies to provide aid to those in need.



Pre-War boundaries for Austria Hungary.

Kelly Miller's History of the World War for Human Rights, Washington, DC: Austin Jenkins Company, 1919, page 266. Red Square denotes area important to the Perlstein family; arrow is pointing to approximate location of Dámóc, where Sidonia and her family lived.



Post-War boundaries for Austria-Hungary.

The Times History of the War: Volume XXI, London: Printing House Square, 1920, page 416.

The Nazi Occupation of Hungary

Miklos Horthy took over the government in Hungary as regent in 1920. The Numerus Clausus Law was put into effect, which limited Jews in universities, and a harsh crackdown against counterrevolutionaries and Jews also began. In the 1930s and early 1940s the Horthy government began to impose further restrictions on Hungarian Jews, especially related to certain professions and schools. Jewish men were often drafted into forced labor, and Jews in general were subjected to racial laws similar to the Nuremberg Laws in Germany. Hungarian Jews were also required by the government to present their birth certificates, a strategy that was consistent with the Nazi method of “registering” Jews in an effort to determine their numbers and their locations, in preparation for further action. For instance, once Sidonia’s father Simon verified his paperwork, he was no longer permitted to operate his grocery store or tavern; he could only continue to trade.



Map of Hungarian Expansion from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Even though Horthy had entered into an alliance with Germany in 1941, after losing many Hungarians to battles in the Soviet Union, he attempted to withdraw from this alliance. Germany responded by invading Hungary. On March 19, 1944, Operation Margarethe began in Hungary. German Wehrmacht paratroopers followed by occupation forces which included Einsatzgruppen, SS and Gestapo, invaded and took over Hungary without resistance from the Hungarian military, or the civilian population. Once the military operation was deemed successful, the Wehrmacht soldiers were dispersed to the front within a month. The government of Hungary was reorganized to align with both German military goals and the goals of the Final Solution. Adolf Eichmann and his Special Commando, with the help of certain departments within the Hungarian police, led the effort towards the latter.

The invasion of Hungary meant the brutal imposition of Nazi genocidal policies at a terrifying pace. Eichmann's actions towards the implantation of the Final Solution meant an immediate seizure of Jewish property, the decree for Jews to wear the yellow star, and the deportation of Jews to ghettos. The duration of Hungarian Jews in ghettos was shortened considerably, usually from two to six weeks, due to the invasion of Hungary happening so late in the war. From May to July of 1944, well over 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported mostly to Auschwitz, many of whom were gassed upon arrival. Within these events, the Jews of Dámóc were some of the first Hungarian Jews to be rounded up during this operation. The Perlstein's were removed from their home in March or early April of 1944, driven away by a neighbor's horse and wagon, and sent to the ghetto in Sátoraljaújhely. In May, the Jews in the ghetto were rounded up for deportation to Auschwitz, including the Perlstein family

Horthy managed to halt the deportation in July, although most of the Jews had already been deported. The only considerable population of Hungarian Jews remaining resided in Budapest. Horthy's government was overthrown by the fascist Arrow Cross Party, and the Hungarian Jews in Budapest were subjected to an intensely brutal purge of the city, where tens of thousands of Jews were shot on the Danube River or forced on death marches; the remaining Jews were forced into a ghetto with horrific conditions. Foreign diplomats like Raoul Wallenberg and Carl Lutz worked to try to save as many Hungarian Jews as they could in Budapest. Hungary was liberated by the Soviets in April of 1945. In the short period of time that the Hungarian Jews faced Nazi persecution around 568,000 perished.



Map of Deportation from Hungarian Ghettos from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Red circle shows the location of Sátoraljaújhely, also labeled on the map, the ghetto from which the Perlstein family was deported to Auschwitz.

Activities

Essential Questions

- How did Hungarian Jews compare or contrast to other European Jews?
- How did Sidonia's life in Hungary affect her life later in the United States?
- How did it affect her creative designs?

Activities

1. Timeline of Hungarian Jews

- A. Using the brief historical summary in this guide where helpful, plus the websites to the left, construct a written or digital timeline with around ten specific dates important to the history of Jews in Hungary. This can be completed individually, in partners, or small groups. More or less events could be included based upon preference and time. The possible dates to include on the timeline are plentiful. Therefore, thoughtfully choose the type of items to include, focusing upon political, economic, religious, social, intellectual and geographical changes related to the history of Jews in Hungary. Each item listed on the timeline should have the date and a brief description of the item.

The timelines should be available to share, either by hanging them around the classroom for a gallery walk, or sharing them in a digital format.

- B. Once the timeline is completed, evaluate the timeline to find several turning point events. The number of events required on the timelines may determine the amount of turning points, but around three turning point events are desired. A discussion about what constitutes a turning point event should occur first, with ideas shared about possible turning points (a change or shift in direction) in a person's life, community, country, or the world. Then, circle or indicate three turning points on the timeline. More or less turning points can be chosen if desired. Include a brief explanation on the timeline as to why each of these items was a turning point.

- C. Next, share timelines and compare events and turning points. This can happen in a gallery walk around the classroom, or by sharing timelines digitally. As timelines are shared, focus on the turning points on each. How do the turning point events on each timeline compare to each other? Which turning point events are the same across and which are different? Through discussion or a written assignment indicate why and how turning points were determined.

These website links should be used to research information for the timeline in question 1A:

The YIVO Encyclopedia for Jews in Eastern Europe:
https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hungary/Hungary_before_1918

The Jewish Virtual Library:
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hungary-virtual-jewish-history-tour>

2. Comparative Study of European Jews

A. To get a better sense on how the history of Hungarian Jews compares to other groups of European Jews, create a four-column chart, either handwritten or digitally, individually, in partners, or in small groups. The first column should contain elements for comparison, such as (but not limited to) the following about Jews and Jewish groups:

- Important countries, cities, or towns mentioned in the research
- Languages spoken
- Professions/jobs mentioned
- Political/social status of Jews (especially in terms of rights given or taken away)
- Traditions, unifying factors, strengths
- Concerns or problems

The second column should contain the title “Western European Jews” which would include German Jews, and the third column should contain the title “Eastern European Jews.” Finally, the fourth column should be titled “Hungarian Jews.”

B. Next, using the websites to the left if desired, fill in the charts finding information pertaining to the items for assessment listed in column one for Western European, Eastern European, and Hungarian Jews. Consult all of the “Overview” websites for the sake of filling in the second and third columns of the chart. For the fourth column specifically on Hungary, several websites should at least be consulted, although time constraints may prohibit all of them from being viewed. The websites on Hungary could also be divided among individuals and groups, if consulting all of them is desired.

C. Using the timeline and the Comparative Study chart, make a list of unique features regarding the history of Hungarian Jews up through 1945 or so. What made their history the same or different? Are there any groups that are similar to Hungarian Jews in terms of what happened to them from 1933-1945? Despite these similarities, overall, what makes Hungarian Jews unique?

For enrichment, watch this video from Centropa regarding Hungarian Jews, and compare its narrative to your research: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DwscZpz-SLI>

3. Connecting to Sidonia: How did Sidonia's life in Hungary prior to her immigration impact the way in which she lived in the United States?

A. In order to answer this question, add to your knowledge regarding Sidonia's life in Hungary and in the United States after her immigration using the resource suggestions to the left. Make a two-column chart to write down some notations regarding the information uncovered in this research. One column should be labeled “Life in Hungary,” the other should be labeled “Life in the United States.”

As you read or look through the following resources, write down important details about Sidonia's life from Hungary and the United States. For the first column, consider

Websites for question 2B:

Overview of European Jews in Western and Eastern Europe from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM):

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-life-in-europe-before-the-holocaust>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-population-of-europe-in-1933-population-data-by-country>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-communities-of-prewar-germany>

Specific resources on Hungarian Jews from the USHMM:

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jewish-community-of-munkacs-from-the-eighteenth-century-to-world-war-i>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/hungary-before-the-german-occupation>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/hungary-after-the-german-occupation>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/raoul-wallenberg-and-the-rescue-of-jews-in-budapest>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/collections-highlight-auschwitz-through-the-lens-of-the-ss?series=12>

Specific resources on Hungarian Jews from Yad Vashem:

<https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/prewar-jewish-life-in-munkacs.html>

<https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/prewar-jewish-life-in-budapest.html>

<https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/jews-of-hungary-during-the-holocaust.html>

Specific resources on Hungarian Jews from the Jewish Virtual Library:

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hungary-virtual-jewish-history-tour>

what her family did for a living in Hungary, how she and her siblings contributed to her family's way of life, and how the Perlstein's and their town of Dámóc fit into the overall history of Jews in Hungary. For the second column, consider how Sidonia and Hanna made their way to America, and how citizenship, language, the community in which they lived in Springfield, and the way in which Sidonia earned a living impacted their lives.

Sources to consult include:

- The brief summary of Sidonia's life in Section I of this guide.
- The information discovered in the timeline activity on Hungarian Jews and the comparative chart on European Jews may be helpful to put Sidonia's early life in Hungary into context.
- Look through the pictures marked as the "Original Exhibit" from the website, "[Sidonia's Thread: Crafting a Life from Holocaust to High Fashion](#)." Focus especially upon the pictures of the display cases, especially the case that shows Sidonia's tools for her trade, such as the pincushion, shears, measuring tape, and pattern. Also note in this same case the picture of Sidonia's studio, and her notebook where she kept track of her customers.

Sidonia's tools



*A resource to consult regarding possible available fabrics in Hungary can be found [here](#), in the *Ashgate Companion to the History of Textile Workers, 1650-2000*.

If desired, consult:

Pages 67–81 of the book *Sidonia's Thread*, written by her daughter Hanna Perlstein Marcus, for more information regarding Sidonia's life in Hungary.

Pages 83–87, 105–112, and 127–134 of *Sidonia's Thread* which contain a few vignettes from Sidonia and Hanna's life in the United States

Using the same part of the exhibit, look through the pictures of the clothing pieces Sidonia designed for her daughter and granddaughter, Brenda. Consider the organic fabrics* that Sidonia, her siblings, and her mother used to sew clothing for the Perlstein family in Hungary, and then consider her choice of fabric and design when she sewed for her daughter, granddaughter and customers in the United States. Note any similarities and differences. Write an essay or reflection beginning with a thesis statement and support it with your research evidence.

Resources

The following resources were either consulted for the narrative introductions to each of the five sections of this guide, or they are resource recommendations for that section. For resources related to the educational activities, please see the suggestions included with the activities for each section.

Resources for Part I

Marcus, Hanna Perlstein. *Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America*. New Charleston: Create, 2012.

Surviving Remnant: Memories of the Jewish Greenhorns in 1950s America. Middletown: Buttonhole Publishing, 2017.

Resources for Part II

Braham, Randolph L. *The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000.

Haraszti, György. "Hungary from 1918-1945." *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hungary/Hungary_from_1918_to_1945

"Historical Background: The Jews of Hungary During the Holocaust." *Yad Vashem*. <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/jews-of-hungary-during-the-holocaust.html>

Marcus, Hanna Perlstein. *Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America*. New Charleston: Create, 2012.

Silber, Michael K. "Hungary before 1918." *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*. https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Hungary/Hungary_before_1918#id0e1pak

Weiner, Rebecca. "Hungary Virtual Jewish History Tour." *Jewish Virtual Library*. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hungary-virtual-jewish-history-tour>

Resources for Part III

Bazarov, Valery. "HIAS and HICEM in the System of Jewish Relief Organizations in Europe, 1933-41." *Eastern European Jewish Affairs* 39:1 (2009): 69-78. doi: 10.1080/13501670902750295.

Cohen, Beth. *Case Closed*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007.

Diner, Hasia R. "American Jewish Identity and the Garment Industry." *In A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry, 1860-1960*, edited by Gabriel M. Goldstein and Elizabeth E. Greenberg, 29-40. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press for Yeshiva University Museum, 2012.

The Jews of the United States. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.

Helmreich, William B. *Against All Odds: Holocaust Survivors and the Successful Lives They Made in America*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1996.

Marcus, Hanna Perlstein. *Sidonia's Thread: The Secrets of a Mother and Daughter Sewing a New Life in America*. New Charleston: Create, 2012.

Surviving Remnant: Memories of the Jewish Greenhorns in 1950s America. Middletown: Buttonhole Publishing, 2017.

"Post War Years." *US Citizenship and Immigration Services*. <https://www.uscis.gov/about-us/our-history/overview-of-ins-history/post-war-years>

Segev, Zohar. "Remembering and Rebuilding: The World Jewish Congress, In the Shadow of the Holocaust." *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 14, no. 2 (July 2105): 315-352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2014.957917>.

Stone, Dan. *The Liberation of the Camps: The End of the Holocaust and its Aftermath*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015.

Wilson, Jennifer. "Creating Beauty in the Wake of the Holocaust: Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Post-War Careers in the Clothing Industry." MHGS Thesis. Gratz College, 2019.

Resources for Part IV

Gabriel M. Goldstein and Elizabeth E. Greenberg, ed. *A Perfect Fit: The Garment Industry and American Jewry, 1860-1960*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press for Yeshiva University Museum, 2012.

Kaplan, Marion. *Between Dignity and Despair*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. (Quotation "Sewing Knows No Language" page 114)

Kremer, Roberta S. ed. *Broken Threads: The Destruction of the Jewish Fashion Industry in Germany and Austria*. Oxford, Berg: Vancouver Holocaust Education Association, 2007

Martin, Sean. *A Stitch in Time*. Cleveland: The Western Reserve Historical Society, 2015.

Newman, Johanna. "Modern Jewish History: From Ghetto to Glamour-How Jews Redesigned the Fashion Business." *The Jewish Virtual Library*. Accessed March 15, 2019. <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/from-ghetto-to-glamour-how-jews-redesigned-the-fashion-business>.

Postrel, Virginia. *The Fabric of Civilization: How Textiles Made the World*. New York: Basic Books, 2020.

Wilson, Jennifer. "Creating Beauty in the Wake of the Holocaust: Jewish Holocaust Survivors and their Post-War Careers in the Clothing Industry." MHGS Thesis. Gratz College, 2019

Resources for Part V

Lambros Fatsis. "The Importance of Studying People." *The Sociological Review*.

<https://www.thesociologicalreview.com/the-importance-of-studying-people/>

Stearns, Peter N. "Why Study History (1998)." *American Historical Association*.

[https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-\(1998\)](https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/historical-archives/why-study-history-(1998))

Glossary

The majority of the following terms were defined using the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website (ushmm.org), unless noted otherwise. Glossary terms are listed in alphabetical order.

Adolf Eichmann

Eichmann was a crucial figure in the implementation of the Nazi's Final Solution, which eventually became the mass murder of the Jewish population of Europe. Eichmann had experience with organizing emigration and forced deportation of Jews in the early years of World War II, and continued to do so until the end of the war. He was the main figure involved with organizing and managing the deportation of Hungarian Jews starting in 1944. He escaped US custody at the end of the war in 1946, but was discovered in Argentina in 1960 and brought to Israel, where his trial was widely publicized, bringing attention to the events of the Holocaust. He was hanged for his crimes in 1962.

See the following link for the documents required by Nazi Germany in order for Jews to leave:
<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/documents-required-to-obtain-a-visa>

Affidavit

A sworn statement in writing. In order to emigrate during the Nazi era, German Jews had to obtain many documents, including affidavits. Affidavits were also necessary for Holocaust survivors who wanted to emigrate after the war.

American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee

Also known as "The Joint" or the JDC, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was created in 1914 in New York from forty Jewish organizations, which met to provide relief efforts for Jews in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. The JDC continued its efforts throughout World Wars I and II, providing money and food to European Jews in peril, even while their European offices were ransacked or closed. They helped to facilitate the escape and emigration of Jewish refugees during the Nazi era, as well as supplied aid to rescuers like Raoul Wallenberg and Carl Lutz. After the war, the JDC continued to operate, often working in conjunction with other agencies to provide aid to Jewish Holocaust survivors.

National Park Service, US Department of the Interior:
<https://www.nps.gov/places/u-s-immigration-station-angel-island.htm>

Angel Island

Sometimes called the "Ellis Island of the West," Angel Island is located in California's San Francisco Bay, and was the point of entry for Asian immigrants. It processed approximately one million Asian and other immigrants between 1919 and 1940.

Anti-Defamation League:
<https://www.adl.org/anti-semitism>

Antisemitism

The belief or behavior hostile toward Jews just because they are Jewish.

It may take the form of religious teachings that proclaim the inferiority of Jews, for instance, or political efforts to isolate, oppress, or otherwise injure them. It may also include prejudiced or stereotyped views about Jews. Hostility toward Jews dates back to ancient times, perhaps to the beginning of Jewish history.

In the late 19th century, Jews were associated with modernity and liberalism, ideologies that were at odds with the growing trends of conservatism and nationalism. Hatred and discrimination of Jews, however, predates the 19th century and can be traced back hundreds of years. Antisemitism during the Nazi era was especially associated with Nazi racial ideology, where Jews were considered an enemy race.

Smithsonian Institution:
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/idealabs/ap/essays/looking.htm>

Artifact

An object created by and used by people, allowing researchers to make connections between history and people. Artifacts have a way of bringing the past back to life.

Merriam-Webster:
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/assimilation>

Assimilated/Acculturate

Assimilation occurs when groups from different cultures absorb the dominant culture by acquiring its habits, language, and modes of life.

Acculturation is a process of social, psychological, and cultural change that stems from the balancing of two cultures while adapting to the prevailing culture of the society (Google Dictionary).

The Jewish Virtual Library:
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/bar-bat-mitzvah-and-confirmation>

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

A ceremony for Jewish children where they formally are obligated to observe the commandments, usually around age 13 for males, and age 12 or 13 for females.

National Geographic:
<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/health-and-human-body/human-diseases/the-plague/>

Black Plague

After starting possibly in China and spreading along trade routes in the early 14th Century, the Black Plague killed about twenty-five million people in Europe, and continued to appear for centuries. The cause was later discovered to be fleas infecting rats with the *Y.pestis* bacteria. However, during the 14th century, when the cause was unknown, Jews were often blamed for the Black Plague.

Wikipedia:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casual_wear

Casual Culture

Also called casual wear, or leisure wear, casual culture clothing includes comfortable, relaxed everyday wear that is not formal. Casual culture became especially popular in Western society starting in the 1960's.

Code of Ethics

A set of guidelines for moral or ethical conduct for personal and/or professional use.

Nazi Concentration Camps

Camps where people targeted by the Nazis were imprisoned and confined in harsh conditions without legal processes. Concentration camps served to incarcerate people considered a security threat, often involving forced labor. Concentration camps also resulted in the killing of groups targeted by the Nazis. There were tens of thousands of Nazi concentration camps. Sidonia

Perlstein was in Auschwitz, which was both a concentration camp used for slave labor and a Killing Center. She was also in Dachau and Bergen Belsen.

Dámóc

A small, agrarian town where the Perlstein's lived, near the border of northeastern Hungary and Czechoslovakia, at the foothills of the Carpathian Mountains. (Information taken from *Sidonia's Thread*, by Hanna Perlstein Marcus)

Killing Center

The Nazi camps designed specifically for large-scale murder. While some victims sent to these camps were kept alive for various reasons, the main task of these camps was to use a systematic and industrial program to put to death, often upon arrival, the victims who were sent there. There were a handful of Killing Centers, including Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmo, and Auschwitz Birkenau.

Deportation

The removal of Jews from their existing home and their subsequent relocation to ghettos, camps, or killing fields. Once Jews were removed from their homes, their property was often confiscated by the Nazis and/or looted by non-Jewish community members. Deportation involved a mass coordination especially of railways, involving Nazis, military personnel, and civilians (like train engineers) from various countries.

DP Camp/Displaced Persons Act

The end of World War II revealed around ten million “Displaced Persons,” or “DPs,” who were often forced laborers, prisoners, or concentration camp survivors left on German soil. During the process of sending them back to their home countries, called repatriation, camps called “DP camps” were set up to house the DPs until they acquired the necessary paperwork to leave. Among the millions of DPs were Jewish Holocaust survivors, who often had no home to return to. Thus, their situation often resulted in emigration. In 1948, the United States passed the Displaced Persons Act, allowing 400,000 DPs (68,000 of which were Jews) to immigrate into the United States between 1949-1952.

Einsatzgruppen

These were Nazi mobile killing groups that followed the German army in its march eastward and murdered over one million civilians to “secure” the occupied territory. The invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 intensified the number of killing squads as well as the amount killed, the vast majority of which were Jews. The mobile killing squads by then consisted of a variety of collaborating groups including the Nazi SS, army and police, along with local officials.

Ellis Island

Located in New York Harbor, Ellis Island served as an immigration station for 62 years, starting in 1892. During this time, 12 million immigrants especially from Europe were processed at

Ellis Island in a series of inspections that lasted around three to five hours. All but around two percent made it through to start a new life in America.

Wikipedia:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Textile_sample_)
 Textile_sample_

Fabric Swatch

A small piece of fabric left over from an existing project, or ordered as a sample from a textile company or other retail establishment.

Final Solution

The Final Solution was the name of the Nazi plan to solve what they deemed the “Jewish problem.” The “solution” changed over time, from forced emigration of Jews out of Germany, to the mass murder of the Jewish population. The specific point when the Nazis decided to switch from forced emigration to mass murder is unclear. However, somewhere between 1941 and 1942, the steps towards the annihilation of the Jewish population (and other Nazi targets, especially the Roma population) began, which included deportations, gassing, shooting, acts of terror, disease, and starvation.

Case Western Reserve:
[https://case.edu/ech/articles/g](https://case.edu/ech/articles/garment-industry)
 garment-industry

Garment Industry

Usually a reference to the creation and growth of ready to wear clothing that emerged in the mid-nineteenth century, especially due to the mechanization of clothing production by the sewing machine. Trends in urbanization and immigration often contributed to the growth of the garment industry.

Genocide

Coined by Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin in 1944, the term genocide comes from the Greek word “genos,” for tribe, and the Latin word “cide,” for killing. Legally the term genocide means the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group as such, by killing, causing serious bodily or mental harm, inflicting conditions of life to bring about the group’s destruction, preventing births, or forcibly transferring children from one group to another group.

Ghetto

The name “ghetto” comes from the Jewish quarter created by authorities in the sixteenth century in Venice, Italy. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Jewish quarters called ghettos were created in various cities around Europe. During World War II, the Nazis created ghettos, starting in Poland, to concentrate and isolate Jews from non-Jewish populations. The conditions of life were designed to cause great suffering.

Jewish Virtual Library:
[https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.](https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hapsburg-monarchy)
 org/hapsburg-monarchy

Hapsburg Empire

The Hapsburg Dynasty ruled a multi-national empire centered in Austria for centuries, from the late thirteenth century until the end of WWI. Within the Hapsburg Empire were areas with considerable Jewish populations. Jews experienced an ebb and flow of restrictions during the

centuries of Hapsburg rule; towards the end of the nineteenth century, they began to gain civil equality within the empire, until it fell after WWI.

Holocaust

The Holocaust was the state sponsored, systematic persecution and killing by the Nazis of six million Jews, two-thirds of them **European Jews**, as well as other targets considered inferior or a threat by the Nazi party. The Nazi regime led Germany starting in 1933 until 1945. Legal restrictions and discrimination marked the beginning of the Nazi regime, until the violent events of Kristallnacht in 1938, the beginning of World War II in 1939, and the invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 which resulted in the mass murder of Nazi targets by bullets and in killing centers. Holocaust survivors often found themselves in DP camps awaiting immigration into the United States and other countries.

Horthy, Miklos

Miklos Horthy, who had been an officer in the Austro-Hungarian navy, came to power at the head of a conservative-nationalist coalition, which unraveled most of the democratic reforms created in Hungary immediately after World War I. Horthy presided for the next 24 years over an authoritarian, almost feudal system of aristocratic rule.

Hungary

A country located in Europe surrounded by Austria, Czechoslovakia (at the time of World War II), Romania, and Yugoslavia (at the time of World War II). The Jews of Hungary were a diverse set of communities including modern and traditional Jews, which were by and large still alive in the middle of 1944. Despite the impending loss of Germany and the Axis Powers, and despite world leaders acknowledging the mass murder of Jews prior to 1944, the Jews of Hungary were still deported and put to death in large numbers in the last year of the war. (DO Arrow Cross Party)

Immigration/Emigration

Immigration is the process of moving to a new country while emigration is the process of moving from another country. Immigrants trying to move to the United States after World War I faced quota limitations and had to obtain many documents including an American immigration visa. Jews trying to emigrate from Germany in the 1930s as the Nazis increased their restrictions often found it incredibly difficult to do so, due to emigration requirements.

Isolationism

The policy of reducing involvement with foreign affairs. The United States practiced isolationist policies after World War I by not joining the League of Nations, creating new laws with immigration restrictions, and passing Neutrality Acts.

Jewish Virtual Library:
<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/kapos>

Kapo

Supervisors in Nazi concentration camps, some of which were Jews. They were sometimes as harsh as their German non-Jewish counterparts, creating an ethical dilemma in the aftermath of the war among Jewish Holocaust survivors.

Liberation

In the context of World War II, liberation meant the freeing of survivors in Nazi concentration and killing centers by Allied troops starting in July of 1944.

Nazi

The name for the National Socialist German Workers Party, a far right, nationalist, racist, and anti-democratic political party in Germany led by Adolf Hitler. Created right after World War I, it especially gained followers due to the Great Depression. The meaning of the word “socialist” for Nazis was not the same as the socialistic movements elsewhere; socialism for the Nazis meant a unified country based upon Nazi racial ideology, with a German community of people (the Volk) that were devoted to the state.

Numerus Clausus Law in Hungary

This law was enacted in Hungary in 1920 and severely restricted the number of Jews in institutions of higher learning. It is considered the first antisemitic piece of legislation put forth by a European country after World War I. (Peter Tibor Nagy, The Numerus Clausus in Interwar Hungary, *Eastern European Jewish Affairs*, Volume 35, No.1, June 2005).

Operation Margarethe

In March of 1944, Operation Margarethe began in Hungary; German Wehrmacht paratroopers followed by occupation forces, which included Einsatzgruppen, SS and Gestapo, invaded and took over Hungary without resistance from the Hungarian military, or the civilian population. Once the military operation was deemed successful, the Wehrmacht soldiers were dispersed to the front within a month, and the government of Hungary was reorganized to align with both German military goals and the goals of the Final Solution. Adolf Eichmann and his Special Commando led the effort towards the latter with the help of certain departments within the Hungarian police. (Jennifer Wilson—see citation in Resources, Part III)

ORT Impact Through Education:
<https://www.ort.org/en/>

Organization for Rehabilitation and Training

Created in Russia in 1880, the ORT provided skills training for impoverished Jews. It grew throughout Europe and provided loans, training, and equipment to Jews, especially refugees, and continued to grow worldwide, helping Jewish DPs after World War II. The ORT continues its work today providing vocational training around the world.

Ottoman Empire

Founded in 1299, The Ottoman Empire grew to dominate the area around the Mediterranean Sea with a multilingual, multiethnic empire. The Ottoman Empire ruled southern and central

medieval Hungary during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Hungarian portions of the Empire were taken over by the Hapsburgs in the eighteenth century. Already faltering on the eve of World War I, the Ottoman Empire collapsed after the war, resulting in the creation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and other states in the Middle East.

Peddlers

Individuals who traveled the countryside, selling goods to customers often from a sack that was carried on their back. It was common for young Jewish men to do this in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially due to restrictions that prohibited other occupations for European Jews.

Refugee

A person outside of their native country who cannot return due to fearing for their life because of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, or affiliation with a certain group.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>

Resilience

Defined by the American Psychological Association as the means to adapt and even achieve personal growth in the face of adverse circumstances and traumatic events.

Sátoraljaújhely

Located at the base of the Sator Hills at the foot of the Carpathian Mountains, Sátoraljaújhely was at one time the capital city of the region that included Dámóc. Prior to the war, the Perlstein family visited this town frequently. During the war, it became a ghetto, where the Perlstein family was sent before their deportation to Auschwitz. (Information taken from *Sidonia's Thread*, by Hanna Perlstein Marcus)

Seamstress/Tailor

A seamstress typically sews items; a tailor alters items to fit. It is generally accepted that both seamstresses and tailors can alter and create clothing, so their occupational titles are often grouped together.

SS (Schutzstaffel)

Originally Hitler's personal bodyguard unit, the SS was made up of elite, "pure" German party members and became the leading enforcement organization that oversaw internal security and the execution of Nazi racial policies. The SS ran the Nazi concentration and killing camp system, and the intelligence branch of the SS (the SD) participated in the Einsatzgruppen.

Diane von Furstenberg,
Master Class:
<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/natural-vs-synthetic-fibers>

Synthetic versus natural fabrics

Synthetic fabrics are man made; natural fabrics are made from animal or plant-based fibers.

UNRRA

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, created in the United States in 1943. It was designed to help European nations after World War II with their massive refugee and displaced persons population. It helped millions of refugees and displaced persons with a variety of services and administered displaced persons camps.

YIVO Archives:

<http://www.yivoarchives.org/index.php?p=collections/controlcard&id=32628>

USNA

The United Service for New Americans, created in New York in 1946 that assisted immigrants, especially Holocaust survivors, with integrating into American society.

See the USHMM link here to learn the steps for this process:

<https://exhibitions.ushmm.org/americans-and-the-holocaust/what-did-refugees-need-to-obtain-a-us-visa-in-the-1930s>

Visa

The necessary documentation to enter into a foreign country, issued by the foreign country. For Jewish refugees trying to leave Europe, obtaining a visa to enter into a new country was particularly difficult.

Wallenberg, Raoul and Lutz, Carl

Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg and Swiss diplomat Carl Lutz worked in Budapest, Hungary, to provide tens of thousands of Jews their certification papers claiming they were under the protection of neutral powers. Lutz and Wallenberg worked with local Jewish agencies as well to gain protective papers and shelter for the Jews in Budapest.

Wehrmacht

The official German military, which often assisted the SS in perpetrating Nazi crimes.

World War I/World War II

World War I was the first significant international conflict of the twentieth century, occurring from 1914-1918. The devastation and destruction from World War I, coupled with the unease and economic crises of the interwar period, gave rise to dictatorships and eventually World War II, which occurred from 1939 to 1945.

Yellow star of David

The yellow Star of David was the “Jewish badge” that the Nazis forced the Jews of Germany and occupied territories to wear, in order to label, humiliate, segregate, and control their movements. While the yellow Star of David was common, other areas had variations, such as the white armband with a blue Star of David in areas of Poland.