

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.

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

Echoes and Reflections link:
<https://echoesandreflections.org/teach/>

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.

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/twentyseventhechoes/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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Design, Dressmaking, the Holocaust and its Aftermath

The relationship between creative design, dressmaking, and textiles and the Holocaust and its aftermath.

Holocaust Survivors and the Garment and Fashion Industries

Sidonia was one of many Jewish Holocaust survivors who pursued a career in the garment or fashion industries after World War II. Within the thousands of written and visual records documenting the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, especially those concerning the Jewish victims of the Nazi regime, a common thread emerges. Despite many experiences spanning various countries, and regardless of socio-economic background or religious practice and beliefs, references to the garment and/or fashion industries are peppered regularly throughout Jewish Holocaust survivor testimonies and other documents. Jewish Holocaust survivors often had family members prior to the Nazi era who were tailors, seamstresses, sold textiles, had department stores, or designed clothing. The same skill set that many Jews acquired out of necessity during centuries of restrictions, persecution, and diaspora, allowed them to become leaders in the garment and fashion revolution of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately, they became targets for destruction in the twentieth.

There does not seem to be one single factor that contributed to Holocaust survivors partaking in the garment and/or fashion industries after World War II. In addition to family background, skills such as sewing and tailoring were often promoted by organizations and Jewish societies for the purpose of immigration. Yet, for those unable to emigrate from Europe during World War II, it was sometimes this same skill set that provided some individuals a chance for survival during the Nazi era.

While there were many variables that contributed to the survival of Holocaust victims, it is worth noting that for some, their skills in the garment industry in the ghettos and camps created by the Nazis, which were ultimately designed to be a part of a system engineered to destroy Jews and Jewish life, may have had a part to play in their physical survival. For instance, Sidonia volunteered to sew in Dachau, when she knew it was a moment of life or death. Her bold action saved her life.

Jewish Holocaust survivors who arrived in America were not ordinary immigrants. They often bore the burden of the memories of their experiences during the Holocaust, the memory of their loved ones who perished, and the physical and emotional traumas they may have endured. Thus, survivors obtaining jobs working with other survivors possibly provided some comfort, especially if their emotional needs were not being met elsewhere. The garment and fashion industries were places where many survivors began their quest for a new life after the war,



Hanna in the “turning point silk dress”

and where they could possibly connect with other survivors in the same situation. Jewish societies in both Europe and America worked tirelessly to aid in this process of rehabilitation.

Whether it was consciously or coincidentally, many survivors of the Holocaust who came to America began to create beauty again after the war, in factories, design studios, and tailor and dressmaking shops. They came to America in the post-war era as the garment and fashion industries were in the midst of an “explosion of casual culture,” contributing to a new generation of American fashion powerhouses. In addition, as “sewing knows no language,” it is evident that skills in sewing and tailoring, whether by hand or by using the sewing machine, were often the means for economic survival, especially when living in a new country.

Sidonia worked during the day sewing pre-designed dresses at the Victoria Dress Company, but in the evening and on her own time she designed unique, modern, and beautiful clothing for her daughter Hanna. A talented designer and seamstress, Sidonia used her exceptional skill as a way to cope with the trauma she experienced, and as a creative outlet for her ideas. Her talent and skill became a way to generate new opportunities for herself, helping her to provide for her daughter Hanna, while making items that people loved.

The Importance of Seeking Beauty

The quest to make something beautiful after the destruction and devastation of World War II also factored into the decision by some Holocaust survivors to partake in the garment and fashion industries after the war. Choosing these industries meant becoming involved in the creation of something new, which helped to counteract what was destroyed. By making something beautiful, such as a well-made suit or brightly colored dress, survivors who were tailors, seamstresses or crafters defied the ugliness they had endured, making beauty rather than sorrow their lasting legacy.

Activities



- How can creative clothing design and fashion express emotion, philosophy, ambition, and redemption?
- What can you tell by viewing Sidonia's designs?

Activities

1. The Importance of Fabric: "It Matters How Fabric Behaves."

A. Sidonia grew up sewing in her small Hungarian village of Dámóc. The fabric available to Sidonia and her family in the decades before World War II would have most likely been natural (versus synthetic, or manmade) fabrics such as wool, cotton, linen, and silk. Hanna recalled her mother, Sidonia, carefully examining fabric with her eyes and hands, feeling the fabric between her fingers, studying the grains, and precisely placing patterns on the fabric in just the right way in order to craft the look that she wanted.

Professor Anya Sokolovskaya from Eastern Connecticut State University, curator of Sidonia's exhibit, describes a designer's choice of fabric as one based upon how the fabric "behaves." In other words, how does the fabric drape when used with certain styles and body shapes? How does the fabric look in certain positions?

- Research the characteristics of the natural fabrics that Sidonia favored, such as wool, cotton, linen and silk, which remained some of her favorite fabrics throughout her life. Make a list of interesting and important details regarding these fabrics. If possible, have swatches of these fabrics available for students to access during this research. The two sites to the left could be a starting place for this research.
- Look through the pictures or actual pieces of Sidonia's clothing creations in the exhibit "Sidonia's Thread: Crafting a Life From Holocaust to High Fashion." Search for evidence of those natural fabrics that Sidonia used in her life in Hungary, and in her life in America. Look for descriptors like wool, cotton, linen and silk. Note the pieces in Sidonia's collection that seemed to use these fabrics the most.

B. Combining the research on natural fabrics (hopefully with the help of fabric swatches), and the observations made after viewing pictures or pieces from Sidonia's collection, write a reflection or engage in discussion addressing the following questions:

- Why did Sidonia possibly favor natural fabrics such as wool, cotton, linen and silk throughout her entire life?

University of California Science
Line: Materials Research
Laboratory
[http://scienceline.ucsb.edu/
index.html](http://scienceline.ucsb.edu/index.html)

Understanding Your Fibers:
University of Georgia:
[https://www.fcs.uga.edu/
extension/textile-basics-
understand-your-fibers](https://www.fcs.uga.edu/extension/textile-basics-understand-your-fibers)

In addition, the following video
resource may be useful:
Fabric 101: How to ID Fabric by
Fiber, Weave, and Fire
[https://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=iMV0K89rbSg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMV0K89rbSg)

Professor Sokolovskaya on Fabric

Consider the texture of a fabric, meaning how it looks and feels. Texture is determined especially by the fabric's material composition, its weight, and how it feels to the touch.

The fabric's structure can determine its texture and behavior. Structure is based upon the fibers of the fabric, and if the fibers are knit, woven, or unwoven.

The color of the fabric can also determine the designer's choice of a fabric for a particular piece of clothing.

—
Red and black crepe wool
three-piece ensemble



- What kind of clothing items in Sidonia's collection utilized these fabrics? What are some possible reasons for Sidonia to use these fabrics in certain pieces of clothing, potentially based on the way that fabric "behaves?"
- Think about the following: What possible emotional connection did Sidonia have to these fabrics? How can emotional connections influence clothing choices? Have you ever purchased clothing items based upon emotional connections, perhaps due to their color, style, purpose, or fabric? Discuss the influence of emotional connections on the choices we make regarding clothing or other textiles that are crafted or purchased.

C. Sidonia was also very frugal when it came to her sewing. She tried not to waste fabric, often using remnants from prior projects to create new pieces. When considering fabric remnants, Sidonia transformed them into skirts, vests, scrunchies, and other items. She also made zipper bags, which she used to organize her materials, and which she often gave away as gifts that many people cherished.

- Look back over the activities in this section so far, and consider her choice of fabrics and style, and determine through discussion or written reflection (or visual representation in the form of a collage or graphic organizer) how her frugality influenced and impacted her fabric and style choices. What factors may have contributed to her desire to utilize every piece of fabric?

D. If desired, consider creating a type of "fabric swatch collage" of various fabrics, either in a tangible display with actual swatches, or digitally with photographs. Students could research fabrics that are often used for particular types of clothing pieces, and include swatches of those fabrics with explanations as to why the fabric's "behavior" is best suited for particular types of clothing. For an added creative twist to this activity, students could also research fabrics that represent their own personal qualities or emotions that could be incorporated into designs. They could then add those swatches with explanations, to their collages.

2. The Human Connection to Design

A. A crucial event happened to Sidonia in 1965, while Hanna was in college. By this point, Sidonia had been crafting one-of-a-kind, notable pieces of clothing for Hanna for years, all while working at the Victoria Dress Company, where she had been promoted to a forewoman. However, her beloved boss, Mr. Podell, decided to retire and to sell the factory. Sidonia decided to take the risk of starting her own business as a seamstress. Having already gained the attention of community members through the beautiful clothing she sewed for Hanna, Sidonia was able to steadily build up her clientele. Furthermore, she also gained the confidence to fully embrace couture fashion and creative design.

Observing the fashion trends around her, and taking advantage of the range of fabrics available to her, Sidonia thrived in her new business venture. Her apartment bustled regularly with clients getting fitted for that perfect outfit, while they engaged in meaningful conversations. Sidonia offered a sympathetic ear and intuitive advice to her customers. Her impact on their lives not only came out in her words, but also in the clothing that she crafted for them. Sidonia worked very fast, sewing for her customers and also continuously sewing clothing for her daughter, Hanna, and eventually her granddaughter, Brenda as well.

- Sidonia loved the fashion of First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, wife of President John F. Kennedy. She was known for her elegant, fashionable style. Research the fashion trends in America for the 1960's, possibly using the website to the left. Then, look at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum website for the link entitled "First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Clothing."
- Next, look again through the pictures or actual pieces of Sidonia's clothing creations in the exhibit "Sidonia's Thread: Crafting a Life From Holocaust to High Fashion." Is there a piece that especially resembles the fashion of First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy? Furthermore, are there design features among multiple pieces that seem to resemble the type of designs that Jacqueline Kennedy wore? Why do you think Sidonia appreciated Jacqueline Kennedy's style? How important was Jacqueline Kennedy's clothing at the time?
 - For a more thought-provoking discussion, consider that Sidonia was born in a small Hungarian village where peasant clothing

Website with fashion trends by decade:
<https://fashionhistory.fitnyc.edu/category/20th-century/>

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Link:
<https://www.jfklibrary.org/visit-museum/exhibits/museum-artifacts/first-lady-jacqueline-kennedy-clothing>

Helpful Youtube Videos explaining and showing Jackie Kennedy's style:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gBO5l3jTfVc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlmL7WlJq50>

Wool challis ensemble for Brenda

Check wool tweed ensemble for Brenda



was most likely what she was surrounded by, prior to World War II. However, once she immigrated to America after the war, she was able to design and create high fashion clothing. How was Sidonia able to do this? Why did she want to? What factors contributed to her success with modern fashion?

- B.** Sidonia continuously sewed for her daughter Hanna, who became a social worker. Sidonia wanted Hanna to be successful, which influenced the clothing she made for her. Look through the website above again (or a similar source) that shows fashion trends throughout the decades, paying particular attention to the trends for the 1980s, as Sidonia started sewing professional pieces for Hanna in that decade. What trends for clothing for professional women were popular then?
- Next, look through the collection of Sidonia's pieces from her exhibit, especially those from the 1980s and 1990s. Consider selections that would have most likely been appropriate for Hanna to wear as a social worker. Do these pieces seem to match the trends in your research? How does this garment collection, which features many of her creations from the 1980s and 90s, coincide with the women's movement of that time? How does this show Sidonia's dedication as a seamstress, designer, and mother? Have a class discussion or complete a written reflection addressing these questions. Consider the website on the left in your discussion.

Power Dressing:
<https://www.encyclopedia.com/fashion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/power-dressing>

- C.** When deciding which pieces to group together for Sidonia's exhibit, Anya Sokolovskaya used concepts, topics and themes that she believed were evident in Sidonia's pieces. For example, for the section of the exhibit highlighting Sidonia and Hanna's immigration to the United States, Anya used "spring" themed clothing to symbolize a sense of renewal. She grouped Hanna's suits from work together, as well as the Bar Mitzvah collection that Sidonia made for Hanna and her granddaughter, Brenda. The visual impact of these groupings in Sidonia's exhibit was highly effective, encouraging the visitor to think about Sidonia's life, work, and creations in a multifaceted and meaningful way.

To demonstrate how garment styles can manifest different themes and qualities, create a collection of clothing items that showcases a theme of your choice. Professor Sokolovskaya suggests the following guidelines when considering fashion choices for your theme:

- Consider the "strength" in the garment's performance, especially in its shape and form. For instance, structured garments such as jackets with lapels and padded shoulders project strength and independence and might provoke thoughts about similar traits of the creator/wearer. Similarly, garments with soft shapes made of draped fabrics might symbolize feminine qualities.
- Consider accessories or elements of the garment that enhance the design, such as pleats, frills, and lapels. Or, consider the absence of these details as a design statement.



—
Group of four ensembles

Fashion Shows and Themes:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kwJZK1R3T0>

Why Clothes Matter:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8da1nXckEy4>

- ◉ Consider elements of the design such as color, shape, and texture. What elements seem most important to you and what does this say about your personality?
- To help create the collection, research the ways that designers craft their collections and shows. Then, either draw your own designs, or find fashion pictures online to include in your collection. Have several pieces that showcase your theme. Include fabric swatches or pictures of fabric, if desired. Consider the videos to the left for your research.
- Place your illustrations or pictures into a brochure that can be created digitally, or on paper. Have a “fashion week” or day to showcase these collections. Have a class discussion where students share their visions regarding the themes and qualities of their fashion collections.
- ◉ Connecting to the exhibit, write a reflection, essay, or have a class discussion regarding the power of creative design to be both therapeutic and a form of personal expression. In what ways did they manifest the theme, ideas, and qualities they hoped to include in their fashion collection? What challenges did they have? What were their successes and failures with putting their vision into a collection? Why do you think Sidonia went above and beyond working at a garment factory, to become a designer herself? What does her collection in the exhibit reveal about her?

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/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.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.