"Like sheep to the slaughter." To many Jews, the Holocaust represents our shameful, oppressed past. "Why should we teach our children about the disgrace of their ancestors? No heroes, no rulers …?" asks a well-known Israeli author. To him, the Holocaust has no meaning, no lessons we can learn.

How untrue! It's just that the true story—that of the valor, strength and spiritual tenacity of European Jewry—has not been sufficiently told. Holocaust studies focuses, for the most part, on the brave acts of physical resistance: the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, the destruction of a crematorium at Auschwitz, the sabotage work of partisans.

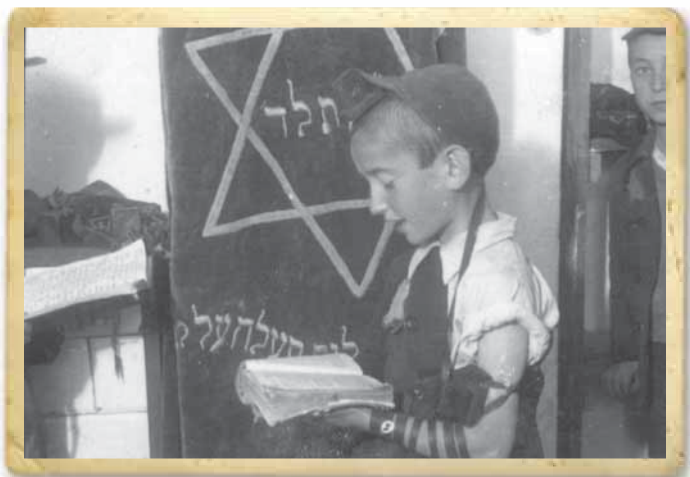
But what about *spiritual* resilience? What about the Jews who, despite living in intolerable, inhuman conditions, baked matzot, laid tefillin and circumcised their sons? In even the most desperate circumstances, we find Jews who ferociously clung to their Jewish identity, who exhibited superhuman strength in defying their captors in order to preserve their religious beliefs. Indeed, Rabbi Ephraim Oshry, the spiritual leader of the Kovno Ghetto during the Holocaust, saw spiritual resistance as the highest form of resistance against the Nazis. "One resists with a gun," remarked the rabbi, "another with his soul." In the pages ahead, we present an extraordinary array of photographs that attest to the rich spiritual and religious lives of European Jews during the devastating years of 1939 to 1945.

All photographs were provided by Shem Olam, an Israel-based organization dedicated to researching and documenting the ethical and religious lives of Jews who lived during the Holocaust. To date, Shem Olam's team of researchers has collected more than 700,000 documents and artifacts related to faith during the Holocaust years, many of which can be seen at the Shem Olam Museum in Kfar HaRoeh. For more information, contact Shem Olam at 972.4.630.1637 or e-mail shemolam@moreshet.co.il.

OF THE DEPTHS

The Agudath Israel Youth Group in Marishin, an area of the Lodz Ghetto, marches in front of Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski, the chairman of the Judenrat in the ghetto.

Some 250,000 Jews in the Lodz Ghetto were deported to their deaths. Located in Central Poland, Lodz had the second largest Jewish community in Europe prior to World War II. Rumkowski was a controversial figure who was torn between helping the Jews survive and giving in to the demands of the Germans. He believed that productivity would spare the Jews from death, and was responsible for establishing 120 factories, which employed thousands of the ghetto's Jews. However, Rumkowski gave in to German demands for deportation; some consider him a traitor for his cooperation.



The Talmud Torah in the Lodz Ghetto, located in the shteibel *of the Kotzker Chassidim, 1941. The Nazis forbade Jews from participating in prayer services or Torah study. Nevertheless, many in the ghetto continued to* daven *and learn clandestinely at the risk of death.*

Boys from the Agudath Israel Youth Group learn Gemara in the Lodz Ghetto.

A woman davens *in an Orthodox nursing home in the Lodz Ghetto.*

What does a person take on the way to a death camp? These religious items—two Kiddush *cups and a dreidel—were found in Chelmno, a death camp in Poland. Currently in the Shem Olam Museum.*

A knife, engraved with the words Shabbat Kodesh. The knife was found in Chelmno, in the area where the Jews were taken before being led to the forest to be murdered and dumped into a mass grave. The remains of an infant, less than five days old, were found buried in the earth next to the knife. It is believed that the knife was used to perform a Brit Milah *on the baby. It is unclear whether the* Brit Milah *was performed before or after the baby's death, but most likely the parent, before being sent to death, wanted to ensure that the baby would be buried as a Jew. Upon discovering the remains, Shem Olam organized a service, with permission from the Polish authorities, where* Kaddish *was recited. Currently in the Shem Olam Museum.*

Photo of a Nazi cutting off the peyot *of a young boy, taken in Zamushtz, Poland, in 1940. Many Polish Jews insisted on keeping their* peyot *and beards at a time when doing so was at risk of death. Nazis who chose not to kill for this act of defiance would pull* peyot *out with a pair of pliers.*

The dining room in an orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto. The photo demonstrates that even in the ghetto the community tried to take care of its children.

This photo appeared in an album created by the orphanage and sent to Yitzhak Gitterman, director of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Poland, in 1942. The album was created to help raise funds for community endeavors in the ghetto. An active member of the Warsaw Underground, Gitterman helped as many Jews as he could, including Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the Piaseczner Rebbe, who was murdered in a death camp near Lublin. Gitterman was murdered in 1943 during an aktion *by the Nazis in the Warsaw Ghetto.*

A matzah bakery in Sandomyicz (Chuzmir in Yiddish), in Central Poland, south of Lublin, in 1941. Not much is known about the bakery, but it is incredible that it even existed. Food was so scarce that it's unfathomable how ingredients were obtained. Though the Jewish people were under threat of death, their love of the mitzvot, *even during this time of terrible despair, was far greater than their fear of the Nazis.*

Men in the Lodz Ghetto daven *on* Hoshanah Rabbah *1941. Note the* lulav *and* etrog *held by one of the men. It's extraordinary that these Jews were able to obtain the* Arba Minim, *Four Species. In the early 1940s, the Klausenberger Rebbe wrote that there were only four* etrogim *in all of Hungary—and the Nazis hadn't even entered the country yet. When the Rebbe was released from Auschwitz, General Dwight D. Eisenhower asked him if he needed anything, and the Rebbe replied that he needed the* Arba Minim. *General Eisenhower sent a plane to Italy to obtain sets of* Arba Minim *and presented them to the Klausenberger Rebbe and his followers.*

The Agudath Israel Youth Group davens *Shacharit in the Lodz Ghetto.*

Elderly men in the kollel *eat in the old* shteibel *in the Lodz Ghetto. The elderly were not able to work in the ghetto; the* kollel *was established because these men wanted to continue to learn Torah even amidst such intolerable conditions.*

Siddur *recovered in 2001 from a Polish man selling books outside of the Treblinka death camp. Scientific analysis revealed that the message in Yiddish on the front and back covers of the* siddur *was written in blood. The message reads, "My name is Caminka from Treblinka. Hashem will avenge the deaths of my little daughter, Sara Leah; my dear wife Shaindel."*

At Treblinka, most Jews were put to death immediately. The few left alive were put to work sorting the belongings of those sent to their death or doing other jobs. The small groups of people that remained alive were killed when a new group would arrive a week later. It is believed that the owner of this siddur *acquired it while sorting the belongings of other Jews. He then used it to write his last message.*
In August 1943, about 300 people escaped from Treblinka; two-thirds of the escapees were found a week later and shot to death. Siddur currently in the Shem Olam Museum.

Album presented as a gift to the local Polish mayor who had helped the Jews in the Chenstichoba Ghetto obtain flour for the baking of matzot. *The mayor was responsible for obtaining supplies and food for the ghetto. The album was created in 1941; the cover depicts a Seder plate with an onion, carrot and radish—not the typical Seder foods but probably whatever was available in the ghetto.*

IN THE INFAMOUS TEREZÍN CONCENTRATION CAMP,
WHERE THE NAZIS CRUELLY EXPLOITED ARTISTS AND WRITERS FOR PROPAGANDA,
COMPOSERS CREATED HOPE AND SUSTAINED THE SPIRITS OF THEIR FELLOW INMATES WITH

MUSIC OF HEARTBREAKING BEAUTY.

"This project reflects my sincere wish to commemorate those who created music under conditions of unthinkable misery and who so tragically lost their lives."

– ANNE SOFIE VON OTTER

"One of the most historically important releases in recent memory."

– BOSTON GLOBE

ANNE SOFIE VON OTTER

TEREZÍN | THERESIENSTADT

with BENGT FORSBERG • CHRISTIAN GERHAHER • DANIEL HOPE and others

BORDERS.

www.universalmusicclassical.com

© 2008 Deutsche Grammophon, GmbH/Universal Music Classical