

"Forgive but do not Forget"
by Mae McKenna
Hudson Middle School, Grade 6
Mrs. Cathy Kantin, Instructor



They have eyes that are shielded from sorrow

Ears that are deaf to screams

A mouth that tastes no blood

And feet that can walk through the streets

The victims have eyes that cannot unsee pain

The victims have ears that ring with shrieks

The victims have mouths that have forgotten what true food tastes like

And the victims have broken and battered feet

Those trapped within the ghetto walls have their identities snatched and stolen

A number is tattooed onto their arm

A star or triangle shows their cause for being locked away

Things the victims cannot help, such as being a Jew, being a Gypsie, having romantic attractions to someone of your same gender, having a mental or physical disability

They are no longer called by a friendly voice, waving their hand in the air, a smile plastered on their face

They are no longer called by name

They are called by number

In a sharp, staccato voice, eyes that glint with malice, a sneer twisted on the face

They are called by the people that will be their demise

The people walk past the iron bars without thoughts

Their eyes are focused in front

The Jews are forbidden from exit

The citizens are forbidden from entry

A child skitters to the barbed wire

Their withered hands reach out for even the smallest morsel of bread

They are shot by the Nazis,

Yet another one killed from the blood-thirsty monsters

The victims are husks of once lively people

Doctors, bakers, lawyers, teachers

Their once bright eyes sag with tiredness and depression

Their voices no longer sound like a melody

Their legs drag along the rough concrete

Their backs are bent in a permanent shape

The citizens show what life could be

They speak with smooth voices

They walk easily

Their backs show no struggle

Their eyes show no tiredness

They possess well-paying jobs

The jobs the Nazis had stolen from the victims

The lines of the ghetto walls separate the living from the dead

The victims and the citizens are both harmed,

Whether they know it or not

The victims sleep on wooden planks, crammed together like sticks in a woodpile

They do not receive good sleep

They are woken in the early hours, driven from their planks

They stand in a perfect, horizontal line

The Nazis shout at random

One flinches or falters; shot

One does not smack their cap on their leg with enough enthusiasm; shot

One does not greet their persecutors by saying, "*Heil Hitler*," with enough energy; shot

Outsiders daring to help them get out or to give them more food; shot

But yet, liberation falls in every camp, even the notorious death camp of Auschwitz

Some are too weak to even celebrate

The war ends in Europe

Anti-Semitism does not end with the war and the fall of the Third Reich

It lasts

The victims find that their homes have been taken over by others

They find that people will no longer allow them in

Their former homes feel like foreign places

There are people put on trial

Collaborators, is what others call them

Those who did not try to help feel bad

Those who collaborated with the Nazis or turned others in are tried and often found guilty

Those who helped do not feel remorse or sadness for what they have done

They understand it was the correct path in a time of darkness

They guided themselves in search of the light

Some citizens risked their lives to save the victims

Maria Andzelm: Polish; dared to hide two Jewish men

Hilde Jacobsthal: Dutch; dared to save Jewish children by giving them to Christian families

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Ferenc Schwartz: Czech Jew; dared to work with the Underground to save others

Liliane Belinne: Belgian; dared to put Jews under her family's name

Preben Munch-Nielsen: Danish; dared to ferry Jews from Denmark to Sweden

These names are among the thousands that dared to help

But these names were not adults

They were mere teenagers, willing to risk their life to save others

They are among the Righteous Among the Nations

They are saviors

Even still, there were millions who fell to the claws of the Reich

Their names shall not be lost to history

They shall not be forgotten

The numbers of the survivors are dwindling

They have forgiven the country of Germany for the Holocaust

They understand that there were people afraid of the consequences to come

But even as they forgive, they shall not forget

By forgetting the hallowing years of the Holocaust,

It will be paving way for it to happen once more

Today, in the year of 2022, many people are educated on this horrid event

Forgive but do not Forget

However, this is only in the United States

It does not speak for other nations

Even still, people are remembering the victims and the heroes

And they are forgiving the nation of Germany

But not forgetting the Holocaust

For they shall never forget

As they preserve the record of the victims

And the heroes

They are forming a road to keep this genocide well-known to prevent another

A poppy is placed on the gravestone of one of the heroes

There are many others with flowers resting upon the cold stone

Heroes and victims

The poppy shows remembrance

It shows gratitude

Some will think it seems like blood

And they are right

The poppy is red

Red like the blood of the victims

Red like the swastika flag of the Third Reich

But it shows remembrance over all

For there are those who did not help, it is something they deeply regret

A hand is held in unison

Lest we Forget

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