

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE



# PIGEON

## TEACHER'S GUIDE

A COMPANION TO THE VHEC DOCENT-LED CLASSROOM WORKSHOP

*Pigeon* Teacher's Guide. A companion to the VHEC docent-led classroom workshop, *Pigeon*.

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# INTRODUCTION

This teacher's guide is a companion to the classroom-based workshop, *Pigeon*, facilitated by docents of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC). The workshops are offered during the VHEC Renewal Project of Fall 2017 as the Centre undergoes renovations and is closed to the public.

The 60-minute or 45-minute-long workshop (duration depending on the usual class length) consists of a short film that focuses on rescue and decision making during the Holocaust in France, followed by an interactive exploration of those themes led by the docent. The workshops are recommended for students in grades 6 to 12 and classes of 30 students.

The lessons in this guide introduce students to the film's broader historical context, and facilitate their ongoing engagement with the topics and themes raised in the docent-led classroom workshop. The guide includes pre and post-workshop activities, discussion questions, student study documents, links to primary sources, including a survivor testimony, a historical document from the VHEC collection, as well as a glossary and recommended resources.

The pre-workshop activities introduce students to a testimony of a Holocaust survivor from France and her exposure to antisemitism and propaganda. The post-workshop activities offer students the opportunity to engage further with the topic of rescue during the Holocaust and to learn about a specific case of rescue by engaging with a primary source document from the VHEC collection.

Student interaction with primary sources, as provided in this teacher's guide, is an essential component in the development of historical thinking skills and leads to deeper understanding of the past. The guide's lesson plan objectives also correspond to some of the core competencies in the new B.C. curriculum:

- ✓ **Creative & Critical Thinking**  
Fostering historical thinking through active engagement with primary sources.
- ✓ **Communication**  
Allowing students to acquire, apply, interpret, and present information.
- ✓ **Personal and Social Competency**  
Engaging students in reflection on personal and cultural identity and social responsibility through learning from historical accounts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE CONCEPTS SEE B.C.'S NEW CURRICULUM: <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/> AND THE HISTORICAL THINKING PROJECT: [www.historicalthinking.ca](http://www.historicalthinking.ca)

# PRE-WORKSHOP LESSON

## LEARNING FROM TESTIMONY

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### OBJECTIVES

Students learn about Jewish life in France during Nazi occupation and the consequences of the Second World War for Jews. They gain an understanding of what it meant for Jews to experience antisemitism and propaganda.

By listening to testimony excerpts from a French child survivor, students have the opportunity to learn from a first-hand account and to practice analyzing primary sources. Study documents provide a broader background to the history of France prior to and during the war years and support students as they learn to embed an individual experience into its larger historical context.

Through analyzing antisemitic propaganda images created in France during the Second World War, students will develop awareness of the means of propaganda within a specific time period and enhance their skills of critical thinking, observation and interpretation.

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### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

DURATION: 30-60 MINUTES. THE LENGTH OF THIS LESSON CAN BE ADAPTED BY SELECTING ONLY CERTAIN DISCUSSION QUESTIONS OR BY ONLY ENGAGING WITH STEPS 1-3 RATHER THAN INCLUDING STEP 4 (THE EXTENSION ACTIVITY).

#### 1. STUDY DOCUMENTS

Students are asked to read the following study documents:

- *Reading: Jewish Life in France and the Start of the Second World War (page 15)*
- *Reading: Biography Jannushka J. (page 16)*
- *Map: France During The Second World War (page 17)*

## **2. SURVIVOR TESTIMONY ANALYSIS**

### **TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS**

Strong Wi-Fi and at least one computer station, ideally with screen projection, is required. Depending on the equipment in your classroom, you can either watch the testimony excerpts as a class on a screen or, if you have enough computer workstations available, in smaller groups or individually. The excerpts can also be accessed on cell phones, ideally with headphones.

### **INSTRUCTIONS**

Explain to students that they are going to listen to and watch three excerpts from a testimony of Jannushka J., a Holocaust survivor from France. The excerpts are accessible by following the link below that leads you to the VHEC-produced teaching website, *Primary Voices: Teaching Through Holocaust Survivor Testimony*.  
<http://vhec.org/primaryvoices/testimony/next/>

Ask students to watch the following three testimony excerpts. Students may want to take notes while listening to the testimony clips:

JANNUSHKA J. 1995 (LEFT COLUMN):

Clip: Antisemitism [duration 2:45]

Clip: Start of the War [duration 2:17]

Clip: Propaganda [duration 1:22]

### 3. CLASS OR GROUP DISCUSSION

As a class or in small groups, discuss the following questions. If you choose to discuss in small groups, come together as a class after your discussions to share your thoughts and conclusions.

#### **ANTISEMITISM & DISCRIMINATION**

- Summarize the ways in which Jannushka was exposed to antisemitism.
- Why do you think the children at Jannushka's school acted the way they did?
- Reflect on the consequences of Jannushka having experienced antisemitism as a child. What were the consequences for her and her family?
- Can you think of possible short-term and long-term impacts that this form of discrimination had on Jannushka?
- Why do you think Jannushka's parents had a hard time grasping the severity of the situation for Jews in France despite the evidence of acts of discrimination against them?
- Have you come across similar acts of discrimination at your school or in your community, either as a victim of such discrimination or a bystander to it? If so, what did you do? How did it make you feel?
- Can you think of possible ways to respond when you witness an act of injustice as a bystander?

#### **START OF THE WAR**

- Which elements of Jannushka's description of the start of the War in France stood out for you and why?
- How did the start of the Second World War affect Jannushka and her family?
- How does Jannushka describe the Nazis who occupied France at the time?

#### **PROPAGANDA**

- In what ways was Jannushka exposed to propaganda against Jews?
- What prejudices about Jews were featured in the propaganda?
- Jannushka says: "I am still the victim [of the propaganda] though I am a survivor." What do you think she means by that statement?
- How can propaganda influence individuals' attitudes and actions?
- Can you think of examples of propaganda in today's society?
- Anti-Jewish propaganda was a key element of Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany and in occupied Europe. Do you think that there is a difference between the impact of propaganda in a dictatorship, with fewer non-governmental sources of information, and the impact of propaganda in a democracy, which has a free press and an open platform of ideas?

## 4. EXTENSION: ANALYZING PROPAGANDA

### MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

Make copies of *Analyzing Propaganda 1 Worksheet (pages 7 to 10)* and *Analyzing Propaganda 2 Worksheet (pages 11 to 14)* and distribute to students. Students may work in groups or individually. Answers can be recorded on the analysis sheet.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Explain to students that they will analyze two pieces of visual propaganda that were published in Vichy, France. Both pieces are similar to the ones that Holocaust child survivor Jannushka J. mentioned in her testimony.

In the excerpts from her testimony, Jannushka J. describes how propaganda materials were distributed at her school. Like the first image on *Analyzing Propaganda 1: Il Était une Fois un Maréchal de France (page 7)*, many of the images that Jannushka encountered were of Marshal Pétain surrounded by children. Pétain was the Chief of State of Vichy France (1940-1944), under whose government antisemitic laws were enforced in the unoccupied southern portion of France.

Other propaganda materials that Jannushka mentions include graphic materials depicting Jews in an antisemitic way. The second piece of propaganda is an example of an antisemitic image that circulated in the form of a learn-to-read book targeted at young readers.

Ask students to look carefully at the images and to answer the analysis questions.

Before you convene for a class discussion:

- With younger students, grades 6-7: Read the contextual information and share with students in order to guide the discussion.
- With older students, grades 8-12: Ask students to read the contextual information to inform the discussion.

Convene as a class and discuss the students' answers.



## ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 1: IL ÉTAIT UNE FOIS UN MARÉCHAL DE FRANCE



Children's book cover *Il Était une Fois un Maréchal de France* [Once upon a time, there was a Marshal of France]. The book is about Marshal Pétain, the leader of Vichy France, and was published in 1941.

Paluel-Marmont, Albert. *Il Était une Fois un Maréchal de France*. Illustrated by Pierre Rousseau. Paris: Curial-Archereau, 1941. Courtesy Concours National de la Résistance et de la Déportation. <https://www.reseau-canope.fr/cnrd/selection/nojs/6885>

ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 1: *IL ÉTAIT UNE FOIS UN MARÉCHAL DE FRANCE***CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

The main figure depicted in the image is Marshal Pétain, the leader of Vichy France (1940-1944). Under Pétain's leadership, the regime collaborated closely with Nazi Germany.

The aging Marshal was well known in France as the hero of a significant battle of the First World War, the Battle of Verdun. Symbols of his military rank (his French military hat, called a *kepi*, and his medal) refer to his past as a French military hero. In this children's book, Pétain is illustrated as noble hero and savior of France who cares for the wellbeing of his fatherland, especially its families and children and its rural population. The authors of the book underline his authentic rural origins, thus encouraging young rural readers to identify with this man who grew up in a small village very much like their own.

Even though Pétain never had children, he is depicted as a family man. The book emphasizes his belief in a strong work ethic and in the family as pillars of a safe and strong France. This reflects the Vichy regime's motto "Work, Family, Homeland", that replaced for four years the French republican motto "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity."

As with many other propaganda texts created during the Vichy regime, the creators of this book adapted themes common in Vichy French propaganda to the narrative structures and stylistic elements of children's fairy tales, as the book's title, *Il Était une Fois un Maréchal de France – Once upon a time, there was a Marshal of France*, demonstrates. The book also starts with those very words. The once-upon-a-time beginning of Pétain's biography elevates him instantly into the realm of timeless legend, where the marvelous feats so common in fairy-tales are not only possible but, moreover, to be expected.

Children were both the target audience for much Vichy French propaganda, as well as common figures in many of the propaganda images. Like the boy and girl in the image shown above, children often served as symbols of the new regime. The regime's Ministry of Education decreed in 1942 that propaganda and pedagogy could be combined. School-age children became a significant target of propaganda literature. While propaganda texts published during the Vichy Regime were not officially part of the obligatory primary school curriculum, many of them were incorporated into compulsory classes such as *Education morale, civique et patriotique*. The regime created new offices such as the *Bureau de Documentation du Chef d'Etat* and *Imagerie du Maréchal* in order to promote the new government's motto "*Travail, Famille and Patrie*" and, in particular, to maintain the popularity of its leader, Marshal Pétain.

As the new regime lost some of its momentum, and as Pétain's political influence declined, the number of propaganda texts being produced increased.

Sources: Concours National de la Résistance et de la Déportation. "Il Était une Fois un Maréchal de France." <https://www.reseau-canope.fr/cnrd/selection/nois/6865>; Facing History and Ourselves. "The Nazis in Power: Propaganda and Conformity." <https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/decision-making-times-injustice/nazis-in-power-propaganda-conformity>; Paluel-Marmont, Albert. *Il Était une Fois un Maréchal de France*. Illustrated by Pierre Rousseau. Paris: Curial-Archereau, 1941; Proud, Judith K. *Children and Propaganda: Il Était une Fois...: Fiction and Fairy Tale in Vichy France*. Oxford: Intellect Books, 1995; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "France." <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005429>.

## **ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 1: WORKSHEET**

1 OF 2

When you first look at the book cover, to what is your eye attracted first? Why do you think that is?

Summarize the scene that is depicted.

Describe the people in regards to their appearance, gestures and clothes.  
What can you conclude about the people from the way in which they are depicted?

Describe the accessories worn by Marshal Pétain and the objects carried by the children. What could they symbolize/stand for?

## ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 1: WORKSHEET

2 OF 2

What colours are used in the background and what do they symbolize?

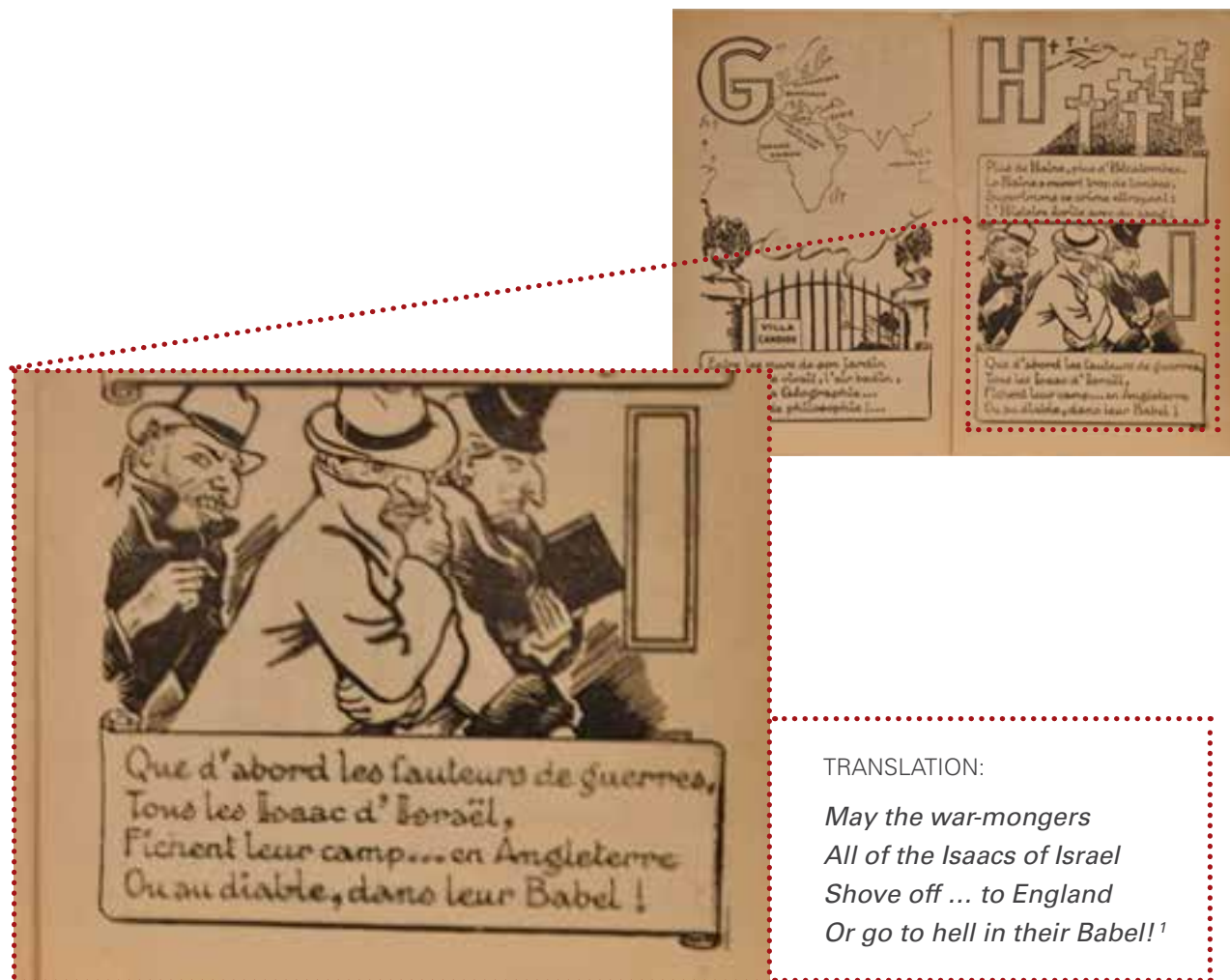
On the bottom of the drawing, there are three words in French: *Travail, Famille, Patrie*, which translates into Work, Family, Fatherland. What thoughts come to your mind when you hear these words?

What mood/atmosphere is established by this image and how does it make you feel?

What mood/atmosphere is established by the book's title: *Once upon a time, there was a Marshal of France?*

What overall message do you think this drawing was intended to convey?

## ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 2: A B C LEARN-TO-READ BOOKLET



Excerpt of an A B C learn-to-read booklet “for use by small children who learn to read and large people who do not yet understand French,” published in Vichy France, 1940-44.

G. Mazeurie Imprimerie, ed. *A-bé-cé-daire*. Paris: G. Mazeurie Imprimerie, 1940 – 1944. Courtesy United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection, Gift of the Katz Family.

<sup>1</sup>The word “Babel” has its origins in the Hebrew verb, *bll*, which means, “to confuse.” In the bible, “Babel” features prominently in the account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1–9). The story describes how Jewish people, descended from one common ancestor, Noah, migrated to an area called Babylonia (present-day Iraq). Once there, they decided to build a tower that was to be so tall that it would put them on the same level as God. As punishment for their arrogance, God destroyed their ability to understand one another and confused them by dividing them into seventy different tribes, each with its own language. Those tribes came to be widely dispersed.

The use of the phrase “go to hell in their Babel” in the antisemitic learn-to-read book has a number of possible meanings. The phrase may, for instance, relate directly to the biblical story of the Tower of Babel and therefore accuse Jews of being responsible for the confusion and inability of humanity to understand and get along with each other, which would underscore the accusation made at the start of the piece that Jews were “war-mongers.” If one understands Babel as standing for “confusion” and “chaos” more generally, the phrase seems intended to advise Jews to go back to their “self-made” chaos. Since Babel refers to a region in the Middle East, “go to hell in their Babel” also evokes the slur “go back to where you came from,” in this case, to the Middle East.

## **ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 2: A B C LEARN-TO-READ BOOKLET**

### **CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

This learn-to-read booklet was produced by sympathizers of the Vichy regime. It encourages readers – children and adults who do not yet know how to read – to collaborate with the Germans and to spread hatred towards Jews and other people deemed “enemies of the state.”

While antisemitic propaganda did not appear in France for the first time in 1940, it increased after the armistice between Germany and France and with the establishment of Nazi-occupied northern France and the Nazi-influenced Vichy regime in southern France. The Vichy regime argued that Jews, in particular, were responsible for Germany’s defeat of France and that both new Jewish immigrants and French Jewish citizens posed threats to the country. The regime employed national and ethnic stereotypes and prejudices in their decrees and their propaganda. In 1940, antisemitic policies were passed that excluded Jews from public life, forced their dismissal from government jobs and positions in the military, and prohibited them from having occupations in industry, commerce, and in professions including medicine, law, and teaching. Eventually, thousands of Jews were interned by French authorities in detention camps where they were held in harsh conditions. By 1942, deportations of Jews to Nazi death camps in the east began.

Nazi Germany’s influence in France also dictated the official attitude in the country towards the principal military opponents of Hitler’s Reich, most notably the English, Russians and Americans. Many French citizens left their country after the defeat of the French forces and sought safety in England. Vichy propaganda, including the piece depicted above, encouraged viewers to consider such people traitors.

Sources: Isaacs, Jacob. “The Tower of Babel. Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center. [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/246611/jewish/The-Tower-Of-Babel.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/246611/jewish/The-Tower-Of-Babel.htm); Siff, Myra J., Harold Louis Ginsberg, and Israel Moses Ta-Shma. “Babel, Tower of.” In *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 2nd ed., edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 19-21. Vol. 3. Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Antisemitic Learn to Read Booklet.” Last modified July 20, 2017. <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn539573>; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Propaganda.” <https://www.ushmm.org/propaganda/resources/>.

## **ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 2: WORKSHEET**

1 OF 2

Focus on the section about the letter "I." Describe who is portrayed and how they are depicted in regards of their appearances, clothing, and expressions.

What mood/atmosphere is established by this image and how does it make you feel?

Describe the tone of the translated text. How does it make you feel?

With reference to both the text and the image, explain what you take to be the meaning of the piece.

## **ANALYZING PROPAGANDA 2: WORKSHEET**

2 OF 2

In her testimony, Jannusha J. states that the antisemitic propaganda distributed in her classroom had a long-lasting negative impact on her. Looking at this image, can you explain how both Jewish children and non-Jewish children may have felt having been exposed to such images?

Works of propaganda frequently employ some or all of the following strategies:

- Promote biased information
- Intentionally ignore facts or perspectives that do not correspond with the propagandist's own ends
- Play to human emotions, and to fear in particular
- Address their message to a mass audience
- Draw sharp distinctions between "us" and "them"
- Employ symbols to establish and emphasize their message

Reflect on how this particular example of antisemitic propaganda exhibits the characteristics of propaganda listed above.

Have you come across similar present-day examples of propaganda? What are some ways you have or could respond to propaganda?



**READING: JEWISH LIFE IN FRANCE AND THE START OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR**

Historically, France had been a safe place for its immigrants, including for the many Jews who fled to France from persecution in Eastern Europe in the 1800s. In the first decades of the 20th century, French metropolitan centres such as Paris held a great many opportunities for their Jewish communities.

By the 1930s, however, the situation for Jewish immigrants and residents in France had begun to change. As the situation for Jews in Germany worsened, many fled to France. Certain segments of the French population began to resent the new immigrants to France. Some expected that the influx of newcomers would worsen France's already poor economic situation. In the late 1930s, French authorities responded by imposing stringent restrictions on immigration.

One year after the beginning of the Second World War, the Nazis had occupied Paris and defeated the French armed forces. Following France's military defeat, some French citizens chose to leave France and to continue to fight against the Nazis. However, the majority of French people chose to side with the segment of the French government that negotiated with the Nazis. They hoped that, by choosing to negotiate, they could secure a lenient peace. The peace treaty divided France into two different zones: the Nazi-occupied zone in the north and the Free Zone in the south, led from the city of Vichy by French Marshal Philippe Pétain. The Vichy government embraced the antisemitism of the Nazi occupiers of Northern France, arguing that Jews, in particular, were responsible for France's defeat. Initially, Jews not of a French background were expelled from the Free Zone. As the war progressed, thousands more Jews who had made their home in France were rounded up and interned in transit camps, prior to being deported to Nazi death camps in the east.

Sources: AVODA Institute, Ed. *Pigeon: Educator's Resource Guide*. Northampton: AVODA Institute, 2007; The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. "France." <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005429>.

## **READING: BIOGRAPHY JANNUSHKA J.**

Jannushka was born in Paris, France, in 1933. At the time of the invasion of France in 1940, she was six years old. Forced to wear the yellow star, Jannushka faced beatings and insults from her classmates and was eventually removed from school by her parents.

In the summer of 1941, a French policeman warned her father that the family faced arrest and deportation. This motivated them to seek hiding places. At that time, Jannushka and her brother were sent to a small village in northern France. They lived in hiding until they were liberated by the American armed forces.

After the war, Jannushka was reunited with her parents. At the age of 19, she left France to travel and worked for the United Nations, before settling in Vancouver.

## MAP: FRANCE DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR



# POST-WORKSHOP LESSON

## RESCUERS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

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### OBJECTIVES

Students gain a critical understanding about rescuers and acts of rescue during the Holocaust. They learn about the difficult circumstances in which rescuers made their decisions to help and why not everyone became a rescuer.

Discussion questions assist students in understanding that rescue during the Holocaust is a complex matter and that rescuers were not born as such, but were ordinary people from diverse backgrounds.

By engaging with a case study of rescue that is illustrated by a primary source document from the VHEC collection, students will develop their historical thinking skills. This includes using primary source evidence, analyzing cause and consequence of actions made in the past, and gaining awareness of the ethical dimensions of history.

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### INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

DURATION: 30-60 MINUTES. THE LENGTH OF THIS LESSON CAN BE ADAPTED BY SELECTING ONLY CERTAIN DISCUSSION AND FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS OR BY ONLY ENGAGING WITH STEPS 1-3 RATHER THAN INCLUDING STEP 4 (THE EXTENSION ACTIVITY).

#### 1. CLASS OR GROUP DISCUSSION

Ask students the following questions and instruct them to discuss the list of attributes/characteristics below. They may discuss as a class or in groups. Duration of discussion: 5 minutes.

Which attributes/characteristics do you think apply to a person who rescued Jews during the Holocaust?

- Old
- Young
- Middle-Aged
- Poor
- Rich
- Political
- Apolitical
- Educated
- Illiterate
- Public figure
- Loner
- Member of an organized group
- Urban
- Rural
- Neighbour
- Stranger
- Jewish
- Christian
- Muslim
- Atheist
- Man
- Woman

## 2. STUDY DOCUMENT

Students are asked to read: *Reading: Rescue During the Holocaust (page 21)*

## 3. CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

Let students assess what they learned and share conclusions as a class. You may want to encourage students to share their thoughts by posing the following questions for open discussion or as prompts for journal reflections:

- Did the assumptions that you had about the characteristics of a rescuer fit with what you learned from the reading? What surprised you?
- Having learned more about the characteristics of rescuers, do you think you could have been a rescuer?
- What might have been reasons for people not to get involved in rescue?
- What are reasons you might stand up like the rescuers? What are reasons why you might not stand up?
- Were the acts of rescuers “heroic”? What makes someone a “hero”?
- Raul Hilberg, a prominent Holocaust scholar, once said: “At crucial junctures, every individual makes decisions, and...every decision is individual.” How do you understand his statement?
- Have there been situations in your own life where you had to choose between helping and not helping? What were your considerations in determining your course of action? How did you feel?
- Can you think of examples of acts of rescue being carried out today in your own communities and at the international level?
- Although there were cases of rescue during the Holocaust, there were also cases of collaborating (being complicit) with the Nazis. Why do you think people decided to collaborate?  
[Possible answers could be: fear, social pressure, punishment, antisemitism, prejudice, belonging to a minority, belonging to the majority, propaganda, beliefs, ideology, power, greed, jealousy, revenge, monetary or social advantages, etc.]

## 4. EXTENSION: AN ACT OF RESCUE: THE CASE OF DR. J.T. ZWAAN

### MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS

Make copies of the study document *Reading: A Doctor's Note (page 22)* and distribute to students.

### INSTRUCTIONS

Ask students to examine the historical document from the VHEC collection displayed in the *A Doctor's Note* study document and to read the associated contextual information. Ask students to look carefully at the images and to answer the analysis questions.

- How did Dr. J.T. Zwaan rescue Albert Jacob van Haren?
- Can you think of possible consequences for van Haren and his family if his physician had not falsified the diagnosis?
- What other acts of rescue is Dr. J.T. Zwaan believed to have undertaken?
- The van Haren family survived the Holocaust by going into hiding. What do you think life in hiding looked like? How would it make your family feel to live in hiding for three years?
- Why do you think the van Haren family kept the doctor's note and gave it to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre?
- Dr. J.T. Zwaan was a rescuer who acted on his own by making the decision to write a fraudulent diagnosis for van Haren. However, he also is believed to have acted together with other rescuers as part of the Dutch resistance. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of working together in a group?

### **DID YOU KNOW?**

#### ALBERT EINSTEIN AND THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

Albert Einstein, known as a genius, physicist and Nobel Laureate, was also a refugee and humanitarian. The German-born physicist fled persecution in Nazi Germany together with thousands of other Jews. He arrived in America in 1933. At Einstein's request, a rescue organization was founded that would later grow into the International Rescue Committee. Today, the organization helps people whose lives have been shattered by conflict and disaster. To find out more please visit:  
<https://www.rescue.org/article/albert-einsteins-legacy-refugee>.

Adapted excerpts from: International Rescue Committee. "Albert Einstein's Legacy as a Refugee." Last modified July 24, 2017. <https://www.rescue.org/article/albert-einsteins-legacy-refugee>.

## READING: RESCUE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

There are examples of rescue from every country that was occupied by the Nazis; however, rescue was risky and relatively rare. An estimated 0.5% of the total population in Nazi occupied countries chose to help and rescue Jews. In numbers, this translates to approximately 26,000 non-Jewish rescuers. Many rescuers are known as “Righteous Among the Nations,” a title awarded to rescuers for their courage and good deeds by Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre.

Studies of rescuers show that the decision to rescue Jews had little to do with the rescuer’s religion, nationality, education, class, profession, gender, age, or ethnic heritage. There are Christians from all denominations, as well as Muslims and atheists. They come from all walks of life: highly educated people as well as illiterate peasants; public figures as well as people from society’s margins; city dwellers and farmers from the remotest corners of Europe. As diverse as their social, religious, economical and educational backgrounds were, studies also show that many rescuers had certain characteristics, ideologies and beliefs in common.

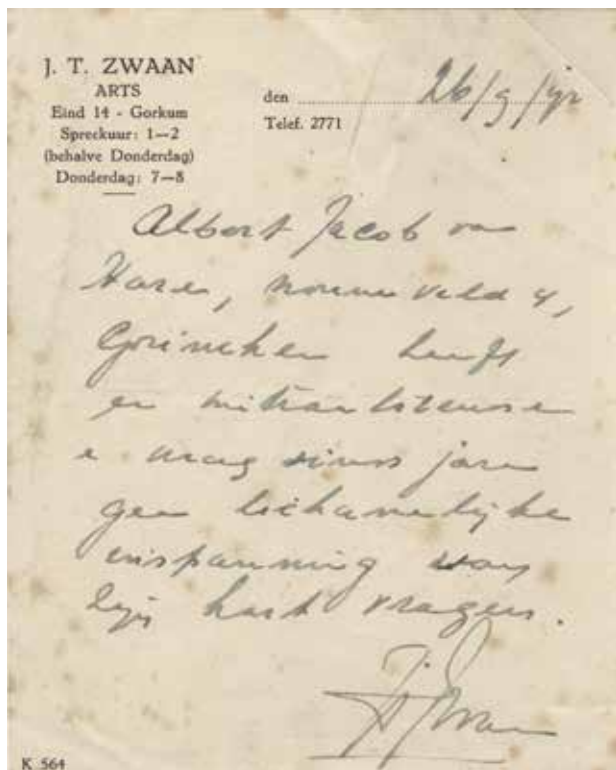
Often, rescuers were independent individuals or non-conformists who refused to follow the crowd. In many cases, rescuers acted on their own, for example hiding neighbours in their attics or barns. However, there are also cases when rescuers were part of an organized effort, for example as members of resistance groups or the underground. In a few places — including Denmark and Bulgaria — rescue occurred on a national scale. Rescuers did not see Jews as Jews but as human beings in need and acted out of true altruism, the belief in selfless concern for the well being of others. They did not weigh the risks and rewards of the act of rescuing Jews. They typically had a history of performing good deeds and did not perceive rescue work as anything remarkable. Faced with another person’s need, they believed that they had no choice but to act.

Many times, rescuers were bystanders or witnesses first. Many had already seen or heard about injustice and violence carried out against their Jewish neighbours before, at some instant, making the decision to help. In other words: No one was born a rescuer. Rather, many people became rescuers through a gradual process. Ervin Staub, who studied rescuers, described this process in the following words: “Goodness, like evil, often begins in small steps. Heroes evolve; they aren’t born. Very often the rescuers make only a small commitment at the start — to hide someone for a day or two. But once they had taken that step, they began to see themselves differently, as someone who helps. What starts as mere willingness becomes intense involvement.”

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<sup>2</sup> Ervin Staub quoted in “Choosing to Rescue,” Facing History and Ourselves, <https://www.facinghistory.org/holocaust-human-behavior/choosing-rescue>.

## READING: A DOCTOR'S NOTE



Courtesy of Duifje Van Haren – VHEC Collection

Illustrated here is a doctor's note from a non-Jewish doctor, J.T. Zwaan, regarding his Jewish patient, Albert Jacob van Haren. It was issued on 26 September 1942. In the note, the doctor attests that van Haren has a heart condition that makes him unable to do heavy work. Dr. Zwaan fabricated this diagnosis and, in doing so, prevented van Haren from being deported from the Netherlands to a forced labour camp.

Forced labour camps — sometimes called slave labour camps — were a form of concentration camp established by the Nazis first in Germany and, subsequently, in other Nazi-occupied countries, including the Netherlands. In these camps, incarcerated laborers were forced to work for the Hitler regime in frequently deadly conditions. Labourers were deliberately undernourished, they did not have enough clothes to keep them warm, they received inadequate medical attention and were severely punished if they did not obey the

camps' Nazi authorities. As a result, mortality rates among forced labourers were high.

Having been rescued from forced labour, Albert Jacob van Haren, together with his wife, fled their home in Gorinchem, Netherland, after the Nazis tried to arrest them. The couple went into hiding on October 15th, 1942 and spent the remainder of the war in hiding very near to their home. Both Albert and his wife, Duifje (Delia), survived the Holocaust. In 1953, the couple immigrated to Canada, along with their four children, settling first in Edmonton and, later, in Calgary, Victoria and Vancouver.

Van Haren's rescuer, Dr. Zwaan, was a family physician in Gorinchem. He became involved in the Dutch resistance soon after the Nazis occupied the Netherlands. In addition to his work as a physician, he is believed to have helped Jews in hiding, distributed ration cards, and helped Allied pilots who were shot down over the Netherlands. Dr. Zwaan was arrested twice and imprisoned in Amersfoort concentration camp for a few months. At the end of the war, he was arrested by the Gestapo, the official secret police of Nazi Germany, but was released a few days later. He continued to practice medicine in the years after the war.



## APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

**Antisemitism:** Opposition or hatred of Jews. As a term, it came into widespread use in the 1870's. Subsequently, it has come to denote hatred of Jews, in all of its forms throughout history.

**Bystander:** A witness to an event or an act. In the context of the Holocaust, often one who witnessed acts of injustice without becoming directly involved as a direct perpetrator of those actions or as a rescuer.

**Concentration Camps:** Immediately after assuming power on January 30, 1933, the Nazis established camps where they "concentrated" and imprisoned perceived enemies of the state. Enemies of Nazism included: actual and potential political opponents (Communists, Socialists, Monarchists), Jehovah's Witnesses, Sinti and Roma, homosexuals and others deemed "anti-social." The general round-up of Jews did not begin until 1938. Before then, only Jews who fit the other categories were interned in the camps. The first three camps were: Dachau, Buchenwald, and Sachsenhausen.

**Hitler, Adolf:** Born in 1889, became leader of the Nazi Party in 1921 and later Chancellor of Germany from 1933 – 1945. Led Germany into the Second World War and was the prime initiator of the Holocaust. Hitler killed himself in a Berlin bunker at the end of the war.

**Holocaust:** The systematic and state-sponsored persecution and annihilation of six million Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators in Europe between the years 1933-1945. Other individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered grievously during this period,

but only the Jews were marked for annihilation. The term "Holocaust" — literally meaning "a completely burned sacrifice" — suggests a sacrificial connotation to what occurred. The word Shoah, originally a Biblical term meaning widespread disaster, is the modern Hebrew equivalent.

**Immigrant:** Someone who comes to a new place or country of which he or she is not a native, in order to settle there.

**Labour Camp:** Camps in which Nazi authorities in Germany and, later, in Nazi-occupied Europe held forced labourers, also called slave labourers. Before and during the War, the Nazis arrested people deemed "enemies" of the Nazi regime (both Jews and members of other targeted groups) whom they exploited for labour. Conditions in the labour camps were often deadly. Labourers were deliberately undernourished, they did not have enough clothes to keep them warm, they received inadequate medical attention and were severely punished if they did not obey the camps' Nazi authorities.

**Marshal Pétain:** French military leader in the First World War. Subsequently, leader of the unoccupied southern portion of France (called "Vichy France" or the "Free Zone") from 1940 - 1942. Pétain led Vichy France in collaborating with the Nazi occupiers, thus enabling and enforcing antisemitic measures in the "Free Zone."

**Nazi:** A member of the National Socialist German Workers Party, the radical right-wing party that was formed in Germany in 1919. The Party was initially founded under the name

"German Workers Party" but, by 1920, added "National Socialist" to its name.

**Nazism:** The ideology of the National Socialist German Workers Party and the party's system of rule from 1933 to 1945. Also a form of fascism. The ideology included: 1) anti-liberalism and anti-parliamentarianism, 2) anti-communism and anti-socialism; 3) the Fuhrer principle which replaced parliament with a hierarchical dictatorship based on the concepts of leader and follower, command and obedience; 4) nationalism, 5) racism and antisemitism, 6) imperialism and 8) militarism.

**Propaganda:** A form of communication designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes or behaviour of its audience. Promotes biased information, ideas or practices and is transmitted through various forms of media, including speeches, slogans, posters, newspapers, films etc.

**Refugee:** Someone who flees their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a social group, or political opinion.

**Rescuers:** People who, rather than remain in the position of a bystander to, or perpetrator of, an act of injustice, help the victim(s) of such acts. In the context of the Holocaust, rescuers were people who put themselves at risk in order to assist and save people targeted by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. There are examples of rescue from every country that was occupied by the Nazis; however, rescue was risky and relatively rare.

# APPENDIX: GLOSSARY

**Righteous Among the Nations:**

Non-Jewish individuals recognized by the world's official memorial to victims of the Holocaust (called Yad Vashem) as having risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. The actions of the Righteous Among the Nations are recognized by a medal, a certificate of honour, and by the inscription of their name on the Mount of Remembrance near Yad Vashem. Recipients of "Righteous Among the Nations" medals come from diverse backgrounds, and 44 different countries.

**Second World War:** The war fought between Allied and Axis forces between the years 1939 and 1945. Waged in Europe, the Middle East, North and West Africa, North America

and throughout South-East Asia and the Pacific, the war, by its end, claimed the lives of tens of millions of military personnel and civilians.

**Testimony:** The first-hand account of a witness to an event. Many Holocaust survivors have provided written or oral testimonies of their experiences, some as part of trials against war criminals. More recently, many survivors have recorded their testimonies with Holocaust museums and education centres as a way in which to confront the phenomenon of Holocaust denial and to preserve their accounts for future generations.

**Transit Camp:** Camps established by the Nazis throughout occupied

Europe to facilitate the deportation of Jews from countries including Belgium, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, and Slovakia to Nazi camps and killing centres in occupied Poland. Jews were held in transit camps for varying durations prior to being deported to the east.

**Vichy Regime:** The government of the "Free Zone" – the area of France not occupied by the Germans. The regime was named for the city of Vichy, where it made its headquarters from 1940 – 1942. Although nominally independent, the Vichy Regime collaborated with the Nazi German occupiers.

# APPENDIX: RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

## BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Bornstein, Max. ***If Home is Not Here***. Toronto: Azrieli Foundation, 2012.  
Rich in details of pre-war life in Poland, France and Canada and life for Jewish refugees in war-time Britain, *If Home Is Not Here* gives rare insights into the experiences of a Jewish boy caught up in political forces beyond his control. – Publisher

Delbo, Charlotte. ***Convoy to Auschwitz: Women of the French Resistance***. Lebanon: Northeastern University Press, 1997.  
On January 24, 1943, 230 women political prisoners who worked for the French Resistance were deported to Auschwitz. [...] The prisoners came from all regions of France and represented a wide range of social backgrounds and political views. With a gripping simplicity and poignancy, Delbo recounts the unique life history of each woman. – Publisher

Fittko, Lisa. ***Escape Through the Pyrenees***. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2000.  
This memoir is Lisa Fittko's extraordinary story of life as an "enemy alien" in France before and after the German invasion of 1940. – Publisher

Fry, Varian. ***Assignment: Rescue – An Autobiography***. New York: Scholastic, 1993.  
An undercover agent during World War II describes how he sneaked into Vichy France and rescued thousands of men and women slated to be sent to concentration camps. – Publisher

Gilbert, Martin. ***The Righteous: The Unsung Heroes of the Holocaust***. Toronto: Key Porter, 2003.  
Drawing from twenty-five years of original research, Gilbert re-creates the remarkable stories of the non-Jews who have received formal recognition by the State of Israel as Righteous Among the Nations. – Book jacket

Grose, Peter. ***A Good Place to Hide: How One French Community Saved Thousands of Lives in World War II***. New York: Pegasus, 2015.  
The untold story of an isolated French community that banded together to offer sanctuary and shelter to over 3,500 Jews in the throes of World War II. – Publisher

Gutman, Israel, editor. ***The Encyclopedia of the Righteous Among the Nations: Rescuers of Jews during the Holocaust***. Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2003-2007.  
Each volume includes a general preface, a specific introduction about the Righteous Among the Nations in the particular countries in that volume, entries for each individual designated as Righteous Among the Nations, photographs, maps, and an explanation of terms. – Publisher

Marrus, Michael R., and Robert O. Paxton. ***Vichy France and the Jews***. New York: Basic Books, 1981.  
A detailed and comprehensive account of Vichy's own antisemitic policies and practices. [...] Comparing German documents with newly available French sources, Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton conclusively demonstrate that, contrary to postwar testimony, Vichy unleashed a wave of antisemitic laws independent of German pressure. – Book jacket

Proud, Judith K. ***Children and Propaganda: Il Était Une Fois – Fiction and Fairy Tale in Vichy France***. Oxford: Intellect, 1995.  
This volume demonstrates how the everyday literature of youth was subverted [by 'the propagandists of Vichy France'] to incorporate and extol the dominant ideologies of Petain and his supporters, and indeed to promote the more overtly anti-semitic and aggressive doctrines of Nazi sympathisers in Paris. – Book jacket

Scott-Weaver, Meredith L. ***"Republicanism on the Borders: Jewish Activism and the Refugee Crisis in Strasbourg and Nice."*** *Urban History* 43.4 (2016): 599 – 617. doi: 10.1017/S0963926815000838.

This case-study of Jewish activism in Strasbourg and Nice, interwar urban locales situated along the frontiers with National Socialist Germany and fascist Italy, respectively, examines critical facets of Jewish advocacy during the refugee crisis of the 1930s. – Abstract

## YOUNG READERS

Borden, Louise. ***The Journey that Saved Curious George: The True Wartime Escape*** of Margret and H.A. Rey. Illustrated by Allan Drummond. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

A biography of famed authors Margret and H.A. Rey, authors of Curious George, and their remarkable escape from France to the United States during World War II. Includes illustrations and photographs of the Reys and a partial bibliography of books by Margret and H.A. Rey. – USHMM

Hoestlandt, Jo. ***Star of Fear, Star of Hope***. Translated by Mark Polizzotti. Illustrated by Johanna Kang. New York: Walker and Co., 1995.

As a young girl living in France during the Nazi occupation, Helen can't begin to understand why her best friend, Lydia, must wear a star [...] Set against the larger horror and betrayal of the Holocaust, *Star of Fear, Star of Hope* honestly yet gently reminds us of people's capacity for love and hate, courage and betrayal. – Book jacket

Kacer, Kathy. ***Hiding Edith: A True Story***. Toronto: Second Story Press, 2006.

The true story of Edith Schwalb, a young Jewish girl who was saved from the Nazis by the courage of the entire French village of Moissac. – Publisher

Kris, Joseph Joffo (adaptation). ***A Bag of Marbles: The Graphic Novel***. Illustrated by Vincent Bailley. Translated by Edward Gauvin. New York: Graphic Universe, 2013.

In 1941 in occupied Paris, brothers Maurice and Joseph play a last game of marbles before running home to their father's barbershop. This is the day that will change their lives forever. [...] Based on an autobiographical novel by Joseph Joffo and adapted with the author's input, this true story offers a harrowing but inspiring glimpse of a childhood cut short. – Publisher

LittleSugar, Amy. ***Lisette's Angel***. Illustrated by Max Ginsburg. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 2002.

A girl recalls her childhood in Nazi-occupied France, where her family struggled for food and prayed for help and rescue. When a paratrooper lands in their yard, the children must help save his life. Inspired by a true story. – USHMM

Meyer, Susan Lynn. ***Black Radishes***. New York: Penguin Random House, 2010.  
Sydney Taylor Honor Award Winner *Black Radishes* is a suspenseful WWII/Holocaust story, in which one boy learns what it means to be Jewish and French at a time when everything is changing. – Publisher

Roth-Hano, Renée. ***Touch Wood: A Girlhood in Occupied France***. London: Puffin Books, 1989.

In this autobiographical novel set in Nazi-occupied France, Renée, a young Jewish girl, and her family flee their home in Alsace and live a precarious existence in Paris until Renée and her sisters escape to the shelter of a Catholic women's residence in Normandy. – Book jacket