THEATRE THREE
Broadway on Main Street

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THEATRE THREE TRAVELING THEATRE
proudly presents

FROM THE FIRES

VOICES OF THE HOLOCAUST

Written and Directed by Jeffrey E. Sanzel

First They Came for the Jews

First they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for me
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.

Pastor Niemoller

FROM THE FIRES: VOICES OF THE HOLOCAUST is a play based on extensive research on the era 1937 to 1945. It traces one individual girl's life during this dark era and focuses on her experiences. The play is fiction- -the times, the place, the experiences chronicled- -unfortunately- -are not.

<u>The Story</u>

FROM THE FIRES opens up in the Mauthausen concentration camp after the American allies have liberated the prisoners. One young soldier writes home to his mother describing the horror that he has seen. In their combing of the camp, the soldiers have found a half-burnt ledger with a roster of prisoners' numbers. He ponders upon whom these faceless numbers could be.

The action then shifts to Berlin. It is spring of 1937 and Rachel Hannah Gold, a Jewish girl, is getting ready for school. Rachel, a high school student, lives with her widowed father, Simon, in a large comfortable second-floor apartment. The apartment is owned by a gentile, Mrs. Hestermann, who lives with her sick mother in the ground floor apartment.

The first part of the play chronicles Rachel and Simon's day-to-day life as the world changes around them. Rachel is singled-out at school for being a Jew; she and her best friend Evy are chased by Hitler Youth. The change in economic law strains Simon's clothing business. Finally, after Kristallnacht, they are reluctantly hidden by Mrs. Hestermann in her basement as Simon desperately tries to get them out of Germany. Unfortunately, he is too late.

The second part of the play deals with their deportation to Auschwitz where Simon is gassed. Rachel learns the way of the camp and becomes instrumental in keeping Evy alive.

In the final part, as the Russians come closer to Auschwitz, the Nazis death-march the prisoners to Mauthausen where the survivors are eventually liberated.

<u>The Characters</u>

The Major Characters:

An unnamed American Soldier: It is through his shocked eyes that the story is told.

Rachel Hannah Gold: A high school-age girl in Berlin of 1937. Strong-willed, intelligent. Has a true sense of impending doom.

Simon Gold: Her widowed father, a non-religious Berliner and World War I veteran. Owns a shop that imports fine men's clothing. He is an optimist to the point of being blind to the changes in his world.

Evelyne "Evy" Rosenberg: Rachel's best friend, a Jew who does not look Jewish. Daughter of a small-time insurance broker. Completely reliant on Rachel to help her make any decision.

Mrs. Hestermann: The landlady. A bitter woman caring for her sick mother. She is not fond of the Golds but at the same time feels that the brutal treatment of the Jews is wrong.

Peter Bolter: The young Aryan shop assistant who works for Simon. In the beginning, he is torn between his loyalty to the Golds and his awareness of the changing tide. Eventually, he makes the choice of becoming a good party member. He is later assigned to guard duty at Auschwitz.

Arthur Weiss: From Krakow. An Auschwitz prisoner who trades in information and anything else that someone might want to buy. He "befriends" Rachel as much as anyone can. He is a realist to the very core.

The Minor Characters:

A street corner speaker: Spouts the party line.
An anti-Semitic schoolmaster.
Sylvia Sandow: Simon's sister-in-law in New York.
Captain Bauer of the Gestapo.
Mr. Rosenberg, Evy's father: A gentle insurance broker.
Goering and *Goebbels:* The infamous Nazi leaders.
A Kapo in Rachel's block: A prisoner in charge of other prisoners. A brutal woman.

Prisoners, Immigration Agents, Newspaper Announcements, etc.

<u>Food</u>
No discussion of the Holocaust experience is complete without a discussion of food and, specifically, bread. Bread was the motivating force in camp as well as the currency. Everything was measured in terms of bread.

In all the accounts that I have read, when the survivors were liberated their thoughts were not of revenge for their families or of their future. Their thoughts were of one thing: Food.

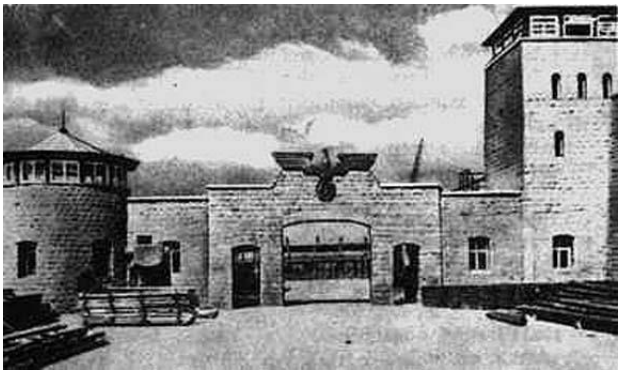
<u>Auschwitz and the Concentration Camps</u>

The Auschwitz concentration camp was actually composed of three camps: Auschwitz, Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II), and Buna-Monowitz (Auschwitz III). Auschwitz I was a concentration camp. Auschwitz-Birkenau was the infamous death camp which housed the gas chambers. Buna-Monowitz was a slave labor camp which housed industrial operations, most notably I.G.Auschwitz, a division of the conglomerate I.G. Farben. The complex of these camps formed a closed zone of some nineteen square miles guarded by up to six thousand men in twelve companies of SS Death's Head units. The camp portrayed in FROM THE FIRES is Auschwitz-Birkenau, where the infamous Dr. Josef Mengele served as chief physician from November 1943 on.

It must be understood that the camps served three major purposes: First, they were penal colonies; later, large camps were established to supply labor for projects; and, finally, the

camps were used for "liquidation" or genocide. More than nine thousand camps were scattered throughout German-occupied Europe. They included transit camps, prisoner-of-war camps, private industrial camps, work-education camps, foreign labor camps, police detention camps, even camps for children whose parents had been sent to slave-labor camps. More than three hundred camps were for women only.

By mid-1942, within a few months of the Wannsee Conference, six camps served as killing centers where the victims were gassed: Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, and, of course, Auschwitz-Birkenau.



The camp to which Rachel and Evy are death-marched is Mauthausen. While not an extermination camp, it was, however, considered to be the harshest of the non-extermination camps. To be sent from another camp to Mauthausen was the equivalent of a condemnation to death in its most brutal form.

At liberation, the first accurate count of survivors was 15,211 men and 2,079 women. Jewish survivors numbered fewer than 10%. Included among the survivors was the famous Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal.

<u>Sets, Costumes, Sound, Etc.</u>
FROM THE FIRES is first and foremost a theatrical piece. In no way does it attempt to be a documentary-style presentation.

To that end, the production is a minimalist one with actors changing costumes and characters in full view of the audiences. These changes are done with the switching of a hat or jacket or pair of glasses. The six actors play over two dozen characters throughout the presentation.

The set pieces are abstract structures that become everything from the Gold-Hestermann apartment building to Simon's shop, a school hallway, a cattle car, and the Auschwitz barracks. Sound is introduced to set locales (the train station, the classroom, etc.) or tone (the German's bloodless annexation of Austria indicated by the sounds of tanks moving without firing).

The photos displayed as part of the set are taken from various sources—some are pictures taken by the allies at liberation, others were taken by the Germans themselves.

<u>A Brief Holocaust Chronology (The History Place)</u>

1933

January 30	President Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler as Reich Chancellor.
February 27	Reichstag burns; Decree issued overriding all guarantees of freedom.
March 22	Dachau concentration camp established.
April 1	Nazi proclaim a general boycott of all Jewish owned businesses.

April 7 Laws for Reestablishment of Civil Service barred Jews from holding civil service, university and state positions as well as denied admission to the bar.

April 26 Gestapo established.

May 10 Public burning of books written by Jews, political dissidents, communists and other opponents of Nazism.

July 14 Law stripping East European Jewish immigrants of German citizenship.

September 1 First Nuremburg Nazi Party rally.

October 3 Germany resigns form the League of Nations and the Geneva Disarmament Conference.

December 1 Hitler declares the legal unity of the German state and Nazi party.

1934

January Germany signs a nonaggression pact with Poland.

June27 Night of the Long Knives. Death of Ernst Rohm.

August 2 Death of Hindenburg. Hitler becomes Head of State and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces.

1935

January Saarland returned to Germany.

March Hitler institutes military conscription in defiance of the Versailles Treaty.

June Anglo-German Naval Treaty signed.

Summer *Juden Verbuten* (No Jews) signs increase in numbers outside towns, villages, restaurants and stores.

July 26 Bremen incident; Nazi flag to become the German national flag.

September 15 Reichstag passes anti-Semitic "Nuremburg Laws." Jews no longer considered German citizens; could not marry Aryans or fly the German flag.

November 15 Germany defines a "Jew" as anyone with three Jewish grandparents or someone with two Jewish grandparents who identifies as a Jew.

1936

March 3 Jewish doctors barred from practicing medicine in German institutions.

March 7 Germany remilitarizes and occupies the Rhineland.

June 17 Himmler appointed the Chief of German Police.

October 25 Hitler and Mussolini form Rome-Berlin Axis.

November 25 Germany and Japan sign the Anti-Comentern Pact.

1937

July 16 Buchenwald Concentration Camp opens.

1938

March 13 Anschluss or union with Austria. A priority of Hitler to have Austria join with Germany. Austrian government was bullied in to this union, though some Austrians wanted it.

April 26 Mandatory registration of all property held by Jews inside the Reich.

July 6 International conference at Evian, France fails to provide refuge for German Jews.

August Adolph Eichmann establishes the Office of Jewish Emigration in Vienna to increase the pace of forced emigration.

September 29 Munich Conference: Great Britain and France agree to German occupation of the Sudetenland section of Czechoslovakia.

October 15 Germans mark all Jewish passports with a large letter "J."

November 7 Herschel Grynszpan, whose parents were deported from Germany to Poland, assassinates Ernest von Roth, Third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris.

November 9 Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass), anti-Semitic riots in Germany, Austria, and Sudetenland; 200 synagogues destroyed and 7,500 Jewish shops looted.

November 12 26,000 Jews are arrested and sent to concentration camps November 15 Jewish students are expelled from German schools.

December 12 One billion mark fine levied against German Jews for the destruction of property during Kristallnacht.

December 13 Decree on "Aryanization" is enacted. Compulsory expropriation of Jewish industries, businesses, and shops.

1939

January 30 Hitler in Reichstag speech, "If war erupts it will mean the *Vernichtung* (extermination) of European Jews."

March 15 Germany occupies the remainder of Czechoslovakia.

July 26 Adolph Eichmann is placed in charge of the Prague branch of the Jewish Emigration Office.

August 23 Molotov - Ribbentrop Pact signed: nonaggression treaty between Germany and Soviet Union.

September 1 Germany invades Poland.

September 3 Great Britain and France declare war on Germany.

September 17 Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland.

September 21 Heydrich issues directives to establish ghettos in German-occupied Poland.

October 12 First deportation of Jews from Austria and Moravia to Poland.

October 28 First Polish ghetto established.

November 23 Wearing of *Judenstern* (yellow six pointed Star of David) is made compulsory throughout occupied Poland.

1940

April 9 Germany invades Denmark and Norway.

April 30 Lodz Ghetto sealed: 165,000 people in 1.6 square miles.

May 10 Germany invades Holland, Belgium, and France.

May 22 Auschwitz concentration camp established.

June 4 British army evacuates its forces from Dunkirk, France.

June 22 France surrenders to Germany.

September 27 Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis is established.

November 15 Warsaw Ghetto sealed: contains 500,000 people.

1941

January 21-26 Anti-Jewish riots in Romania.

March 17 Adolph Eichmann appointed head of the department for Jewish affairs of the Reich Main Security Office, Section II B4.

April 6 Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece.

June 22 Germany invades the Soviet Union.

July 8 Wearing the Jewish star in the German occupied Baltic States is required.

July 31 Heydrich is appointed by Goring to carry out the "Final Solution" (extermination of all Jews in Europe).

September 15 Wearing of the Jewish star is decreed throughout the Greater Reich.

September 23 First experiments with gassing are made at Auschwitz.

September 28/29 35,000 Jews are massacred at Babi Yar outside Kiev.

October 8 Establishment of Auschwitz II (Berkenau) for extermination of Jews, Gypsies, and Slavic people.

October 10 Thereseinstadt Ghetto in Czechoslovakia is established.

October 14 Deportation of German Jews begins.

October 23 Massacre in Odessa: 34,000 killed.

October 24 Massacre in Kiev: 34,000 killed.

November 6 Massacre in Rovno: 15,000 killed.

December 7 Japanese attack Pearl Harbor.

December 8 U.S. declares war on Japan. Chelmo extermination camp on the Ner River in Poland is opened. Massacre in Riga: 27,000 killed.

December 11 Germany declares war on U.S.

December 22 Massacre in Vilna: 32,000 killed.

1942

January 20 Wannsee Conference on Nazi "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." Heydrich outlines plan to murder Europe's Jews.

January 21 Unified resistance organization established in Vilna.

March 17 Extermination program begins in Belzec; by the end of 1942, 600,000 Jews will have been murdered.

June 1 Treblinka Extermination camp opens. Wearing of Jewish star is decreed in Nazi occupied France and Holland.

July 22 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto are deported to Treblinka.

July 28 Jewish resistance organization is established in the Warsaw Ghetto.

October 17 Allied nations pledge to punish Germany for the policy of genocide.

1943

January 18 Jews in Warsaw Ghetto launch uprising against Nazi deportations. Fighting lasts four days.

February 2 German Sixth Army surrenders at Stalingrad. This marks the war's turning point.
April 19 Warsaw Ghetto revolt begins as Germans attempt to liquidate 70,000 inhabitants.
May 16 Warsaw Ghetto liquidated.
June 11 Himmler orders liquidation of all Polish ghettos.
August 2 Revolt at Treblinka death camp.
August 16 Revolt in Bialystok Ghetto.
September 23 Vilna Ghetto liquidated.
October 14 Armed revolt in Sobibor Extermination camp.
October 20 United Nations War Crimes Committee is established.

1944

March 19 Germany occupies Hungary.
May 15 Nazis begin deporting Hungarian Jews. By June 27, 380,000 sent to Auschwitz.
June 4 Allies liberate Rome.
June 6 D-Day Normandy Invasion: Allies begin liberation of Western Europe.
July 20 Group of German officers attempt to assassinate Hitler.
July 24 Soviet troops liberate Maidanek extermination camp.
October 23 Paris liberated.
November 7 Revolt at Auschwitz; one crematorium is destroyed.
November 8 40,000 Jews forced to participate in the Budapest to Austria death march.
November 24 Himmler orders destruction of Auschwitz crematorium to hide evidence of Nazi death camps.

1945

January 17 Soviet troops liberate Warsaw. Auschwitz evacuated; inmate death march begins.
January 25 Stutthof concentration camp evacuated; death march of inmates begins.
February 4 Yalta Conference.
March 5 American troops cross Rhine River.
April 15 British troops liberate Bergen-Belsen death camp.
April 25 American and Soviet troops meet at the Elbe River.
April 30 Hitler commits suicide.
May 7 V-E Day Germany surrenders unconditionally.
August 6 Bombing of Hiroshima.
August 9 Bombing of Nagasaki.
August 15 Japan surrenders unconditionally
September 2 V-J Day.
November 22 Nuremburg War Crimes Tribunal commences.

1946

October 1 Nuremburg Trials conclude with a judgement in which twelve defendants were sentenced to death, three to life imprisonment, four to various prison terms, and three acquitted.

Some Final Figures: Death tolls of the European Jew 1939-45

(Taken from THE HOLOCAUST by Martin Gilbert)

Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Western USSR	4,565,000
Hungary	300,000
Czechoslovakia	277,000
Rumania	264,000
Germany	125,000
Holland	106,000
France	83,000
Austria	70,000
Greece	65,000
Yugoslavia	60,000
Belgium	24,000
Italy	7,500
Estonia	1,000
Norway	868
Luxembourg	700
Denmark	120
Total	5,949,188

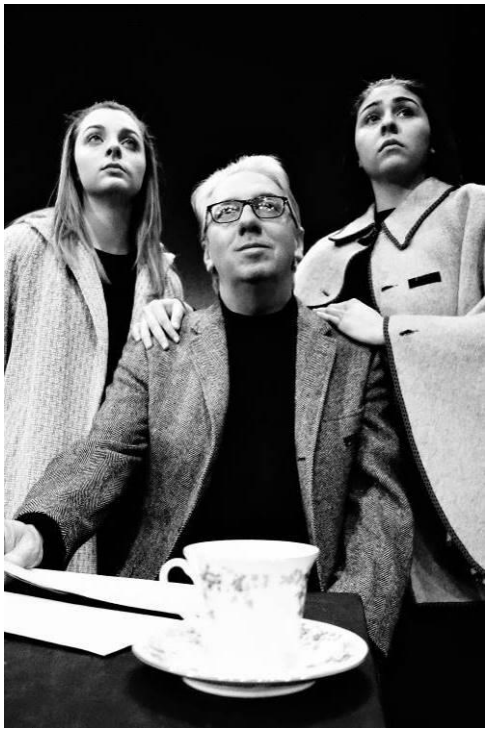


Chart of Camps

Camp	Function	Location	Established	Evacuated	Liberated	Est. No. Murdered
Auschwitz	Concentration/ Extermination	Oswiecim, Poland (near Krakow)	May 26, 1940	January 18, 1945	January 27, 1945 by Soviets	1,100,000
Belzec	Extermination	Belzec, Poland	March 17, 1942		Liquidated by Nazis December 1942	600,000
Bergen-Belsen	Detention; Concentration (After 3/44)	near Hanover, Germany	April 1943		April 15, 1945 by British	35,000
Buchenwald	Concentration	Buchenwald, Germany (near Weimar)	July 16, 1937	April 6, 1945	April 11, 1945 Self-Liberated; April 11, 1945 by Americans	
Chelmno	Extermination	Chelmno, Poland	December 7, 1941; June 23, 1944		Closed March 1943 (but reopened); Liquidated by Nazis July 1944	320,000
Dachau	Concentration	Dachau, Germany (near Munich)	March 22, 1933	April 26, 1945	April 29, 1945 by Americans	32,000
Dora/Mittelbau	Sub-camp of Buchenwald; Concentration (After 10/44)	near Nordhausen, Germany	August 27, 1943	April 1, 1945	April 9, 1945 by Americans	
Drancy	Assembly/ Detention	Drancy, France (suburb of Paris)	August 1941		August 17, 1944 by Allied Forces	
Flossenbürg	Concentration	Flossenbürg, Germany (near Nuremberg)	May 3, 1938	April 20, 1945	April 23, 1945 by Americans	
Gross-Rosen	Sub-camp of Sachsenhausen; Concentration (After 5/41)	near Wroclaw, Poland	August 1940	February 13, 1945	May 8, 1945 by Soviets	40,000

Janowska	Concentration/ Extermination	L'viv, Ukraine	September 1941		Liquidated by Nazis November 1943	
Kaiserwald/Riga	Concentration (After 3/43)	Meza-Park, Latvia (near Riga)	1942	July 1944		
Koldichevo	Concentration	Baranovichi, Belarus	Summer 1942			22,000
Majdanek	Concentration/ Extermination	Lublin, Poland	February 16, 1943	July 1944	July 22, 1944 by Soviets	360,000
Mauthausen	Concentration	Mauthausen, Austria (near Linz)	August 8, 1938		May 5, 1945 by Americans	120,000
Natzweiler/Struthof	Concentration	Natzweiler, France (near Strasbourg)	May 1, 1941	September 1944		12,000
Neuengamme	Sub-camp of Sachsenhausen; Concentration (After 6/40)	Hamburg, Germany	December 13, 1938	April 29, 1945	May 1945 by British	56,000
Plaszow	Concentration (After 1/44)	Krakow, Poland	October 1942	Summer 1944	January 15, 1945 by Soviets	8,000
Ravensbrück	Concentration	near Berlin, Germany	May 15, 1939	April 23, 1945	April 30, 1945 by Soviets	
Sachsenhausen	Concentration	Berlin, Germany	July 1936	March 1945	April 27, 1945 by Soviets	
Sered	Concentration	Sered, Slovakia (near Bratislava)	1941/42		April 1, 1945 by Soviets	
Sobibor	Extermination	Sobibor, Poland (near Lublin)	March 1942	Revolt on October 14, 1943; Liquidated by Nazis October 1943	Summer 1944 by Soviets	250,000
Stutthof	Concentration (After 1/42)	near Danzig, Poland	September 2, 1939	January 25, 1945	May 9, 1945 by Soviets	65,000
Theresienstadt	Concentration	Terezin, Czech Republic (near Prague)	November 24, 1941	Handed over to Red Cross May 3, 1945	May 8, 1945 by Soviets	33,000
Treblinka	Extermination	Treblinka, Poland (near Warsaw)	July 23, 1942	Revolt on April 2, 1943; Liquidated by Nazis April 1943		
Vaivara	Concentration/ Transit	Estonia	September 1943		Closed June 28, 1944	
Westerbork	Transit	Westerbork, Netherlands	October 1939		April 12, 1945 camp handed over to Kurt Schlesinger	

Some Teaching Guidelines for the Holocaust
As suggested by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

1. *Define what you mean by "Holocaust."*
2. *Avoid comparisons of pain.*
3. *Avoid simple answers to complex history.*
4. *Just because it happened does not mean it was inevitable.*
5. *Strive for precision of language.*
6. *Make careful distinctions about sources of information.*
7. *Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions.*
8. *Contextualize the history you are teaching.*
9. *Translate statistics into people.*

(A resource book for educators is published by the museum entitled TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST which contains excellent materials as well as extensive bibliography and videography.)

Liberation and the First Refeeding Syndrome
by Michelle LaBozzetta, B.S. in Nutrition, Long Island University

Refeeding Syndrome is a condition caused by extreme overeating after a period of starvation or malnutrition. It was first diagnosed in survivors of the Holocaust. There had never been such an enormous number of starving, malnourished people being liberated and brought back to health in history before.

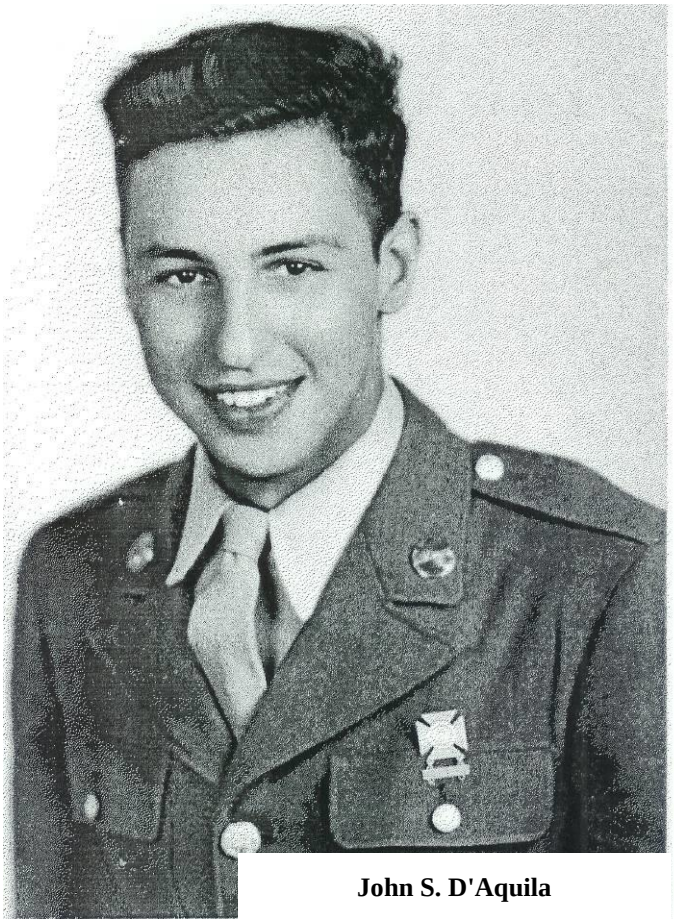
Prior to liberation, prisoners were fed small amounts of low quality food which resulted in their starvation. When a body goes into starvation mode, the cells attempt everything they can to sustain life. Without consuming enough carbohydrates, insulin secretion slows down and cells can no longer create energy from their usual source. Meanwhile, fat and protein stores (muscles) are used as a secondary and less effective source of energy.

Upon liberation, soldiers passed out concentrated food rations (C-Rations and K-rations) to do what they believed would help the starving survivors. Unfortunately, this hurt more than it helped. When nutrient rich foods are reintroduced into the diet, there is a switch in metabolism from fat-based and protein-based to carbohydrate-based. Over the next few days, refeeding syndrome takes effect and the switch causes a drop in phosphorus levels. Maintaining an appropriate level of phosphorus is important because one of its many important functions in our cells is energy production and storage. Without enough, there is an increased risk of respiratory and cardiac failure, seizure and/or sudden death.

To prevent deaths from refeeding syndrome, survivors were put on a diet based on fat and protein rich foods, and slowly moved to foods richer in carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals. This helped their bodies adjust to the change in energy source.

John S. D'Aquila: The Inspiration for the American Soldier

John D'Aquila was born on April 6, 1923, in Middletown, Connecticut, the tenth of eleven children. He attended Central Grammar School and Middletown High School, graduating in 1941. He expected to go to college but to pay his own way; he decided he would work for a year and then be able to finance his education.



John S. D'Aquila

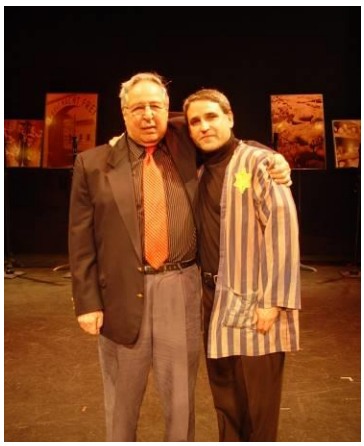
He went to work at the New Britain Tool and Die Co. and worked the six-in-the evening to six-in-the-morning shift. After the attack on December 7, 1941, he kept working. In September 1942, he began attending Middlebury College, in Middlebury, Vermont, where he spent his freshman year. His three brothers had been called up and in May of 1943, he joined the army. Brother Joe was in the Navy; brother Bill was in the Air Force; and brother Tom was in the Army. Their sister Mary joined the WACS.

John attended basic training at Camp Roberts, CA. From there a group of them were sent to the College of Puget Sound, in the Army Specialized Training Program. After six months, the program was disbanded and they were sent to Camp Cook where John became a Member of the 11th Armored Division. The training was in the Armored Infantry. It was then that they realized the possibility that they would be sent into the fighting war.

John realized that he could not kill a person and asked to be transferred to the Medical Corps. As an Aid Man, he was wounded once and received the Purple Heart. He was the only original Aid Man of his battalion at the end of hostilities.

When he returned, he finished his degree at Middlebury, went to Catholic University Law School, and received his LLB and JD.

"Like most servicemen, we were told to forget what we saw and what we went through, and having lost two and half years of our lives, I played hard and often. Joe and Bill saw action: Joe in Iwo Jima and Bill in Guadalcanal. We never spoke of our days in the service."



John S. D'Aquila with author Jeffrey Sanzel

John went to work for insurance companies, worked in Messina, New York, at the Eisenhower Lock. He lived most of his working years in New York City and lived in Brooklyn. Retired, he moved to Belle Terre, and was asked to join the Board of Directors of Theatre Three. His travels included Romania, Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, China, Egypt, Russia, and Thailand.

A chance meeting with Artistic Director Jeffrey Sanzel in the spring of 1996 brought about his first flood of memories of his combat experience—the most important memory being the freeing of the Concentration Camp at Mauthausen, Austria. It is these memories that inspired the creation of FROM THE FIRES' framing character, the American Soldier.

John attended dozens of performances of FROM THE FIRES during its first two decades of performances. He joined the company for its week at the Richmond Center for the Performing Arts (outside of Toronto) where he answered questions following each performance.

John passed away on August 14, 2014, at the age of ninety-one.

Sources

There are thousands upon thousands of books written on the Holocaust. They chronicle every step of this dark era in world history. There are books that trace the entire history of anti-Semitism and Jewish oppression to the specifics of one individual's experience in a concentration camp.

I must thank two people in particular: John D'Aquila, whose personal account of the liberation of Mauthausen was the basis for the American soldier. His sharing of his experience helped shape the play and its point of view. (see above)

The second is Gerhart Friedlander who allowed me to read the translations of his parents' correspondence to him. Gerhart was in America during the 1930's and his parents wrote hundreds of letters. These letters (from November 12, 1937 to October 9, 1938) helped me truly get a sense of day-to-day Jewish-German life.

I am deeply grateful for the generosity of these two men.

What follows are some of the many books, films, and other sources that have been used to create FROM THE FIRES. It is in no way a comprehensive list of Holocaust writing. Instead, it cites many of the texts that have been helpful in creating the piece.

If I had to select one book above all others to teach the experience of the Holocaust it would be Elie Wiesel's NIGHT. His honest, vivid, unflinching account of his experience is as powerful for me in its tenth reading as it was in its first.

Also, Ruth Minsky Sender's trilogy THE CAGE, TO LIFE, and THE HOLOCAUST LADY are outstanding, personal, and passionate works.

Of course, mention must be made of ANNE FRANK: DIARY OF A YOUNG GIRL (now in a definitive edition combining the three diaries with Anne's own commentaries) as well as Willy Lindwer's THE LAST SEVEN MONTHS OF ANNE FRANK (which includes material he was not able to use for his television documentary of the same title). I also must mention a more recent release called CHILDREN IN THE HOLOCAUST AND WORLD WAR II: THEIR SECRET DIARIES. Laurel Holliday has collected many powerful pieces written from different perspectives. THE UPSTAIRS ROOM is Dutch Johanna Reiss's touching account of her years spent hiding in a farmhouse during the occupation.

Primo Levi's brilliant SURVIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ chronicles his experience as an Italian Jew in the infamous camp. Vivid personal accounts can also be found in Eugen Kogon's THE THEORY AND PRATICE OF HELL (chronicling Buchenwald); Arne Brun Lie's NIGHT AND FOG (a non-Jew who survived Strutthof, Natzwiler, and Dachau); AUSCHWITZ: A DOCTOR'S EYEWITNESS ACCOUNT by Dr. Miklos Nyiszli (with a disturbing and powerful foreword by Bruno Bettelheim); Gerda Weissman Klein's beautiful and moving ALL BUT MY LIFE (basis for the Academy Award-winning short documentary "One Survivor Remembers."); I SHALL LIVE: SURVIVING AGAINST ALL ODDS 1939-1945, Henry Orenstein's amazing account of his survival of five concentration camps; and Inge Deutschkron's OUTCAST: A JEWISH GIRL IN WARTIME BERLIN tells of her experiences in hiding during the Holocaust.

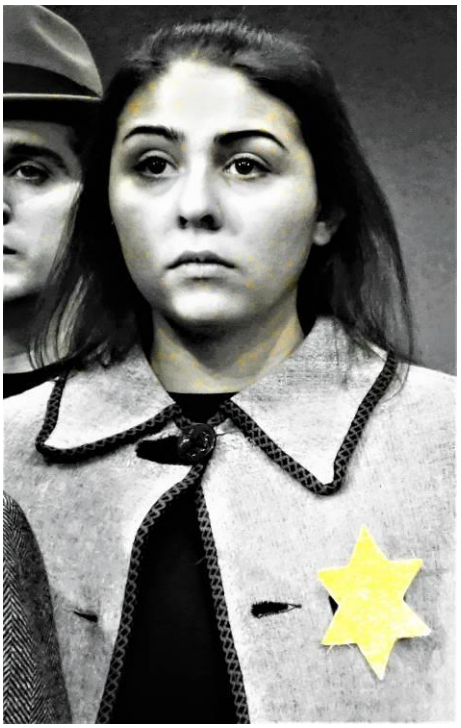
HAVEN, by Ruth Gruber, gives a striking account of 1,000 World War II refugees who were settled in an internment camp in Oswego, New York. The book tells the stories and experiences of many of the individuals in this group.

CHILDREN OF THE FLAMES by Lucette Matalon Lagnad and Sheila Cohn Dekel parallels the lives of the twins deported to Auschwitz with their camp doctor, Josef Mengele.

There is a plethora of excellent works dealing with the overall subject of the Holocaust. Michael Brenbaum's THE WORLD MUST KNOW: THE HISTORY OF THE HOLOCAUST AS TOLD IN THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MUSEUM is a powerful, focused and superb study. Other references include Lucy S. Daviwodwicz's definitive THE WAR AGAINST THE JEWS (1933-45), THE HOLOCAUST: THE FATE OF EUROPEAN JEWRY by Leni Yahil, Charles Lawliss's...AND

GOD CRIED: THE HOLOCAUST REMEMBERED, THE HOLOCAUST: THE WORLD AND THE JEWS 1933-1945 by Hugh Trevo-Roper. For younger readers A NIGHTMARE IN HISTORY: THE HOLOCAUST 1933-1945 by Miriam Chaikin is excellent.

MAJDANEK: CONCENTRATION CAMP by Czeslaw Rajca and Anna Wisniewska (translated by Anna Zagorska) gives a succinct yet detailed account of life in the camp. THE NAZI DOCTORS by Robert Jay Lifton details the work of these men in the various camps as well as medical killing and the psychology of genocide. THE SURVIVOR by Terrence Des Pres, is aptly sub-titled "An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps." It traces the necessary personal components of survival in a camp. Jean-Francois Steiner's TREBLINKA (translated by Helen Weaver) is the definitive account of this notorious death camp.



For an understanding of the events and the policies of the Nazis towards German Jews from 1933 through 1945, Karl A. Schleuenes' THE TWISTED ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ proved to be a very helpful and detailed book as was Anthony Read and David Fisher's KRISTALLNACHT. IN HITLER'S GERMANY, Brent Engelmann describes every day life in the third Reich from the stand point of an Aryan trying to help Jews survive.

Hitler's MEIN KAMPF provided a first-hand look at the rhetoric and propaganda used by the Nazi regime.

THE END OF THE HOLOCAUST: THE LIBERATION OF THE CAMPS by Jon Bridgman was helpful both in giving an overall view of camp life as well as detailed accounts of the liberation of some of the major concentration camps.

Martin Gilbert's ATLAS OF THE HOLOCAUST provides dozens of maps and charts explaining deportations, concentration camp placements, death march routes, etc. His THE HOLOCAUST contains additional maps as well as photographs.

Many powerful pieces of fiction exist which can sometimes be more accessible for young readers: DANIEL'S STORY (published in conjunction with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibition) by Carol Matas; THE DEVIL'S ARITHMETIC by Jane Yolen; and, particularly, Hans Peter Richter's companion books I WAS THERE and FREIDRICH which tells the same story from two different perspectives: a young Aryan boy in the former and a young Jewish German boy in the later. Roberto Innocenti's haunting picture book ROSE BLANCHE shows the horror of the time through the eyes of a child. A more sophisticated work but highly recommended is THIS WAY FOR THE GAS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, by Tadeusz Borowski (translated by Jan Kott).

Miscellaneous works include HOLOCAUST POETRY (compiled by Hilda Schiff) which includes pieces by Elie Wiesel, Stephen Spender, Primo Levi, Karen Gershon, and others. I NEVER SAW ANOTHER BUTTERFLY contains children's drawings and poems from Terezin Concentration Camp (now in its second expanded edition).

A special mention must go to Art Spiegelman's MAUS books. They are a riveting account of his father's experience but told in a comic fashion.

Finally, WRITING AND THE HOLOCAUST, edited by Berel Lang, became both an indispensable companion and a reminder of the importance of treading with care in this field. The book is composed of essays by leading writers and addresses many issues. Notable in this fine work is the editor's superb introduction, Raul Hilberg's "I Was Not There", Irving Howe's "Writing and the Holocaust" and Leslie Epstein's "Writing about the Holocaust".

And, of course, my trip to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C.—its exhibitions, its library, and its staff—was of infinite help and value.

<u>A final note from the Author</u>
FROM THE FIRES has been a passionate labor and a personal odyssey. I was brought up in a community with a large Jewish population and my exposure to the subject was very important in my upbringing. In our community were many survivors, most of whom were reluctant to speak about their experiences. As one said to me, "It is not for me to remember--it is for you to remember."

I have remembered and will continue to carry that statement with me for as long as I live.

In taking on this project, I had many fears ... "Who am I to write about the Holocaust?" "Does someone who was not there have the right to take on this task?" "Can someone who has not suffered write these things?"

These questions plagued me and many times threatened to stop the project. The final force which drove me to continue and finally finish the work was the horrifying alternative: Silence.

With that, I realized that we must all do our part. In many ways, Primo Levi's poem *Shema* speaks to this:

You who live secure
In your warm houses,
Who return at evening to find
Hot food and friendly faces:

Consider whether this is a man,
Who labours in mud
Who knows no peace
Who fights for a crust of bread
Who dies at a yes or a no.
Consider whether this is a woman,
Without hair or name
With no more strength to remember
Eyes empty and womb cold
As a frog in winter.
Consider that this has been:
I commend these words to you.
Engrave them on your hearts
When you are in your house, when you walk on your way,
When you go to bed, when you rise.
Repeat them to your children.
Or may your house crumble,
Disease render you powerless,
Your offspring avert their faces from you.

(In translation by Ruth Feldman and Brian Swann)

I hope FROM THE FIRES will be a small contribution to keep alive the memory of this tragic moment in history.

Dedicated to the millions upon millions of victims--both living and dead.

Never again.

So long as you can feel
the cold- -
the wet- -
the hunger- -
and the lice- -
which itch,
and drink your blood
You are alive- -
Rejoice
You will survive
Be strong,
it can't be long.

from "Be Strong" by Michael Etkind

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