



# MUSIC & THE HOLOCAUST



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Cover image:

Kovno, Lithuania, The ghetto orchestra.

Photo Credit Yad Vashem

# TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST

## TEACHING ETHOS: SAFELY IN, SAFELY OUT

Truly understanding the events of the Holocaust can be a very confronting and emotional experience for people, so we believe it is important for educators to take care of students' emotional wellbeing while working through these topics. This is why our approach to Holocaust education is about leading students safely in and out of learning about the Holocaust. It is not about shock-value or showing students the most horrific imagery you can find. It instead focuses on the ways in which individual lives were impacted. The aim is to give a deep understanding of the grief that was caused to the communities involved while also acknowledging the extent of how many lives were lost.

Our lessons and units focus on safely introducing the events of the Holocaust and safely taking them out of the learning by giving these atrocities some context and allowing reflection.

Although the numbers are important to understand in terms of the sheer magnitude of Nazi Germany's attempt to exterminate the Jewish people, simply focusing on that often takes away from truly understanding how individual lives were impacted. What these units aim to do is focus on the individual stories of Jews, specifically those that survived the Holocaust and migrated to New Zealand.

They will introduce the lives of these survivors prior to Nazi occupation and finish with how they were able to live on after it.



## LESSON STRUCTURE

There are three parts to each unit: life before, life during and life after the war. Each lesson is approximately 60mins, so will equate to about one week of classes.

### Lesson 1 - Life Before

An insight into Jewish life prior to the Holocaust/what European life was like for Jews.

### Lesson 2 & 3 - During the Holocaust

Thematic case studies of individuals' experiences throughout the Holocaust. It explores different aspects of Jewish experiences throughout the Holocaust with antisemitic law changes, ghettos, living in hiding, partisans and an acknowledgement of mass executions.

### Lesson 4 - Life After the Holocaust

What Jews faced immediately after the Holocaust and their return to life and to New Zealand.

# LEARNING ACTIVITIES

## ‘Choiceless choices’

Each unit will include ‘Choiceless Choices’ discussions. Students will be split into groups where they are given a certain time allocation to make the decision on what each person's next action will be. If they do not make a decision in time, their decision will be made for them.

The reality of the Holocaust was that people were constantly having to make difficult choices, often life or death choices where you didn't know whether you were choosing the option that would give you a better chance at life or not. The time limit helps to illustrate that often these decisions had to be made with little information and in small time frames.

## Learning activities

Each unit has a range of activities that include the following material:

- Case studies of Jewish experiences
- Testimony - written and video
- Activities and worksheets
- ‘Choiceless choices’ discussion
- New Zealand survivor stories/testimony
- Literature analysis
- Use of maps

# NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

Each unit aligns with the following New Zealand curriculum Learning Objectives:

	Social Sciences	English
<b>LEVEL 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Understand that events have causes and effects.</li><li>- Understand how formal and informal groups make decisions that impact on communities.</li><li>- Understand how people participate individually and collectively in response to community challenges.</li></ul>	<b>PROCESSES AND STRATEGIES</b> Integrate sources of information, processes, and strategies purposefully and confidently to identify, form, and express increasingly sophisticated ideas. Indicators: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- recognises, understands, and considers the connections between oral, written, and visual language;</li><li>- integrates sources of information and prior knowledge purposefully and confidently to make sense of increasingly</li></ul>

**LEVEL  
5**

- Understand how the ideas and actions of people in the past have had a significant impact on people's lives.

- varied and complex texts;
- thinks critically about texts with understanding and confidence;

**IDEAS**

Show an understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts. Indicators:

- makes meaning by understanding increasingly comprehensive ideas in texts and the links between them
- makes and supports inferences from texts independently.

# MUSIC AND THE HOLOCAUST

## TEACHING RESOURCE

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### PREPARING TO TEACH THIS UNIT

“If there is anything at all above human life, it is the power of music, because that can transport people to something higher. It does so by giving expression to the human life it transcends. It defines the human spirit.”

- Clare Galambos Winter.

**M**usic is an incredibly important expression of Jewish experience prior to, throughout and after the Holocaust. There is power in music for expression and it became significant in helping Jewish people throughout the Holocaust. Therefore, it is important to explore it in conjunction with Jewish experiences. The cultural resistance of music was significant for many Jews to mentally survive the Holocaust, while others struggled to even comprehend the concept of music throughout their suffering.

### ABOUT THIS UNIT

This unit centres around the lives of Jews living in Hungary and the connection that Jews have with music. It explores the dramatic shift that Hungarian Jews experienced from near equals in Hungarian society to dramatic increases in antisemitism within Hungary and the decimation of Jewish society with mass deportations to Auschwitz Extermination Camp. In particular, it explores the experiences of Jews in Budapest and Szombathely. The main story centres around the Galambos family and the survival of Klári (Clare) Galambos and her aunt Rózsi (Rosie) Brill who survived Auschwitz and emigrated to New Zealand.



# 1.

## LESSON 1 LIFE BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST

### Lesson Objectives:

- To be able to explain what life was like for Jewish people living in Hungary prior to German occupation.
- To be able to explain what the music culture was like for Jews in the interwar and early in WWII periods.

### 1. DRAW A JEWISH PERSON

5-10 mins

Begin the lesson by asking students to 'Draw a Jewish person' in their book or printed worksheet.

Before exploring what life was like for Jewish people prior to WWII, it's important to start with what knowledge students have of Jewish culture. Without any guidance or prior discussion, give students a few minutes to draw what they think a Jewish person looks like.

**Discussion:** Once they have all drawn something, discuss what they have drawn.

- What religious symbols did they include? Or stereotypes? Talk about how we may think of the racial, antisemitic stereotypes such as big noses. Or religious clothing such as a head scarf, a kippah, payot (side curls worn by orthodox Jewish men) or the clothing worn by ultra orthodox Jewish men.
- Did any just draw a stick person with no identifying features?
- Explain the difference between Judaism as a religion and Jews as an ethnic group.

### Jews vs Judaism explanatory notes:

- Jews are members of one of the oldest monotheistic (single god) religions, the religion of Moses. The line between being a member of the religion and being of the Jewish "race" seems to be difficult even for Jews to define; however most Jews consider Judaism a religion, rather than a race.
- The Torah is a partial history of the Jewish people. Today, Judaism is effectively divided into three sub-sects but some claim that the number is higher. Mostly, the three groups differ on how strictly they follow ancient Jewish tradition.
- Jews as an ethnic group are considered to be descendents from the Israelites, a group of Semitic-speaking tribes who in the Iron Age inhabited what is now Israel/Palestine.
- Many Jews, particularly since the Holocaust, still practise many of the traditions of Jewish religion without actually being religious. As survivor Clare Galambos Winter expresses: "[She] follows these rituals for a God she doesn't believe in, but her observance is an act of solidarity with world Jewry. She declares, 'I was born Jewish and will never be anything but Jewish.'"

## 2. LIFE FOR JEWS PRIOR TO 1939

20 mins

### A. Photo task: Are these photos from the 1930s or modern day?

- Students will be given a selection of black & white photos. In groups, they need to decide which photos are from the 1930s and which are from the present day.
- In order to categorise each photo, students can consider the following questions:
  - What do you see in this photo? Look closely to see if there are any details that might tell us when this photo was taken.
  - Are there people in the photo? What are they doing?
  - What objects are in the photo?
  - What does the photo tell us about life during that time period?

#### Use these images to unpack the following:

- The comparison of modern and older photos highlights some of the similarities in how people lived in the 1930s compared with now.
- Prior to the Holocaust, Jewish people had varied lives. Some were very religious, others had assimilated to the countries where they lived and barely thought of themselves as Jewish. Others lived tough lives in poverty where they struggled to survive. Most Jews in Hungary had assimilated to Hungarian society and considered themselves more Hungarian than Jewish. They had lives where they went to the beach, played sports, went to school etc.
- Also highlight how this is still relatively modern history.

#### Photos and brief notes about each image:



Budapest, Hungary, photo of the parents of Olga Lukacz before the war, 25/12/1940  
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 11351697



Budapest, Hungary, photo of Olga Lukacz (mother of submitter) at school.  
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID11222455





Budapest, Hungary, Peter Klein (the submitter) with his parents, Arpad Yitzhak and Irene on a vacation, before the war  
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 4690279



DEBRECEN, Hungary - Hungarian National Anthem conducted by MAJ Istan Pal of the Hungarian Military Orchestra of Debrecen  
May 2018. Credit SSG Joshua Dahl



Budapest, Hungary, Nelly Gal and Jenő Hercz, the parents of the submitter, on their wedding day, 27/11/1927  
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 91192



Bitolja, Yugoslavia, A mandolin orchestra, Prewar  
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 101840



Hungary - Dance and be happy.  
May 2012 - Credit Dennis Jarvis



Summer sun vacation time on the Baltic Sea in Germany, August 2015  
Credit dicau58

## B.Video Testimony: A glimpse of music life in Hungary

Watch Clare Winter speak of the culture of music in her city in the 1920-30s.

### Discussion:

1. How does this compare to your experiences of music growing up?
2. What impression does this give you of the importance of music in European culture?

## 3. THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM IN EUROPE

10 mins

### A. Put the word 'antisemitism' up on the board.

#### Task: Think-Pair-Share

Students write their initial thoughts on what they think 'antisemitism' means.

In pairs, they share what they each came up with and then the pairs share with the class what they think it means.

#### Share the definition:

**/anti'sɛmətɪzəm/**

noun

hostility to or prejudice against Jews.

### B. Briefly explain the rise of antisemitism in Germany and Hungary

Briefly talk through the rise of Hitler and antisemitism in Germany. These attitudes were largely mirrored in Hungary with the rise of far-right, nationalist and antisemitic political groups such as the Arrow Cross Party.

## 4. ANTISEMITIC RESTRICTIONS IN HUNGARY

20 mins

In order to help students understand the severe impact of the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws in Germany, you want to get them to consider what decisions and freedoms they currently value.

## A. Task: What rights are most important to me?

Rank the following in order of importance to you, with #1 being most important and #9 being least important.

- Date/Marry whomever you choose?
- Go to a public school close to home?
- Live in a neighborhood of your choice?
- Swim and play in a public swimming pool or park?
- Eat what you want, according to taste, culture, and religious custom?
- Be able to own a pet?
- Leave your house whenever you choose?
- Shop at stores and businesses of your choosing?
- Vote?

## B. Read about the introduction of Jewish restrictions and antisemitic laws in Hungary.

## C. Students to highlight which anti-Jewish laws would impact the human right(s) they consider to be most important.

# HUNGARY AND ANTI-JEWISH POLICY

Germany wasn't the only country to create **anti-Jewish laws** prior to and during World War Two. In **1938**, Hungary introduce the first of **several anti-Jewish laws** that were **modelled on Nazi Germany's Nuremberg Laws**.

## 1938

### THE FIRST "JEWISH LAW" IS PASSED

Hungary adopts comprehensive anti-Jewish laws and measures, excluding Jews from many professions.

#### MAY

Jews were now only allowed to represent **20 per cent of the workers** in various professional bodies, but in the **press chamber**, the proportion of Jews was **limited to 6 per cent**.

#### November

In a number of places, **soldiers withdrew the right to measure alcohol and sell tobacco from Jews**, and **redistributed the rights to non-Jewish traders**.

The **Hungarian Social Democratic Party** recommended that **Jews be excluded from its leadership**.

## 1939-40

### THE SECOND "JEWISH LAW" IS PASSED

It defined Jewishness on a racial basis, and its definition of who was Jewish **was stricter than** that contained in the **Nazis' 1935 Nuremberg Laws**.

The Law also **ordered investigations into the citizenship** of all those naturalized after June 1, 1914, **excluded foreign Jews from applying for Hungarian citizenship**, and ordered the **introduction** of unarmed **forced labor**.

**In the general elections**, the first secret ballot in Hungary, the **antisemitic, far-right Arrow Cross Party won 25 per cent of the vote**.

The implementation of the "Economic Balance" law by the Government Commission for the Intellectual Unemployed, **received more than 14,000 denunciations of Jews in under six months**.

Around **40,000 vacancies** were **freed up for non-Jews**.

## 1941

### THE THIRD "JEWISH LAW" PASSED

This law **banned marriages between Jews and Non-Jews**, and punished sexual relations between Jewish men and Christian women.

This was also the **first inscription of forcible relocation into law in Europe**.

## 1942

### THE FORTH "JEWISH LAW" PASSED

Jews were **banned from acquiring real estate / land**.

## 1944

### REMOVAL FROM HUNGARIAN SOCIETY

Several decrees terminated **Jews' membership of press, theatrical, film and legal chambers, banned Jews from holding public office, and from employing non-Jews in Jewish households.**

#### APRIL

The most important decree was that which **forced the wearing of the yellow star from April 5**

An Interior Ministry decree detailed the preparations for the **Jews' forcible ghettoization and relocation to internment camps, followed by their deportation.** This process began on April 16.

"The Preservation of Hungarian Intellectual Life from Works by Jewish Authors" decree resulted in the **destruction of books by Jewish authors.**

Historian Paul Lendvai writes of the Holocaust in Hungary that  
**"NOWHERE ELSE IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE WERE THE JEWS SENT TO THEIR DEATHS SO QUICKLY AND SO BRUTALLY."**

And these first anti-Jewish laws foreshadowed and enabled the aggressive destruction of Hungarian Jewry.

\*Note: denunciation is the act of informing against someone. So this meant that Non-Jews had informed officials of the location and/or the Jewishness of Jewish neighbours/locals in Hungary.



# 2.

## LESSON 2 LIFE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

### Lesson Objectives:

- To understand how antisemitic attitudes from Germans and Hungarians impacted Jewish lives.
- To understand how Jews reacted in different ways to restrictions and attempted extermination of the Jewish people imposed by Nazi Germany.

### 1. CHOICELESS CHOICES

5 min

#### A. Put the phrase 'Choiceless choices' up on the board.

Ask students to write down what they think the phrase means and discuss their answers.

**Answer:** Choiceless choices, in the context of this unit, is about when families and individuals were forced into situations where they had to make life altering decisions. Often they would have to make these decisions with very little information and wouldn't know whether their decision could result in someone living or dying. Sometimes these choices had to be made very quickly too.

### CASE STUDY: THE GALAMBOS FAMILY

10 min



#### Andor Galambos

Born in 1896 in Budapest

He was a decorated WWI veteran. He took great pride in his war record, which increased his sense of betrayal years later when the Hungarian government

legislated against Jews. His brother, Aladar was so distinguished a war hero that he was exempt from those laws. He was a businessman and was the West Hungarian

representative for a group of oil companies. His daughter Klári said, "He took me ice skating... and he told me all about the stars." He was very much the head of the family. "In the threatening political climate, both brothers Magyarised<sup>1</sup> their family name from Gans to Galambos, Hungarian for their mother's maiden name, Tauber, which means 'pigeoner'."<sup>2</sup>

#### Pronunciation:

Galambos - Gaa-laam-bosh  
Szombathely - Som-bayth-hi



#### Zsuzsanna Galambos (nee Brill)

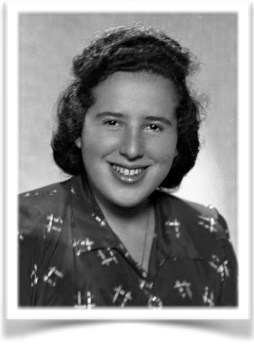
Born in 1899 in Nemeskolta

She was studying to become a doctor until she met Andor. A highly cultured and educated person. According to her daughter, she was "an extraordinary person, warm, knowledgeable, understanding. She was mentor and confidante for many. People poured their hearts out to her." She had two siblings: her brother Miklós born 1901 &

<sup>1</sup> Magyarization, after "Magyar"—the autonym of Hungarians—was an assimilation or acculturation process by which non-Hungarian nationals came to adopt the Hungarian culture and language, either voluntarily or due to social pressure, often in the form of a coercive policy.

<sup>2</sup> The Violinist: Clare Galambos Winter Holocaust Survivor

her sister Rózsi (Rosie) born in 1908 with whom she was very close. Her family was "Liberal, well-educated and non-religious."



### **Klári Galambos**

Born in 1923 in Budapest

As a child, Klári decided she wanted to play the violin and took her musical studies very seriously. At 16 years old she moved to Budapest to finish her schooling and study at the Fodor private music academy. She was a twenty-year-old violin student living in Budapest in March 1944. She had a very close relationship with her mother, Zsuzsanna, and her aunt, Rózsi.

### **Mihály Galambos**

Born in 1929 in Budapest

Little is known about Mihály. Klára was very protective of him. Photographs show a happy boy who seemed close to his older sister.



## **B. Give students the following scenario:**

They have 5 minutes to decide what option Klári will choose and why. If they haven't made a decision after the allotted time, their decision will be made for them.

Klári had moved to Budapest to study at the Fodor private music academy in 1940, when she was 16 years old. She was still studying music in March 1944 when the following happened:

"On the morning of Sunday 19 March 1944, Klári was at an orchestra rehearsal in the Heavy Metalworkers' Trades Hall when a man burst in with an urgent message for the conductor. Obviously shaken, the conductor informed the players that Germany had occupied Hungary, the army had entered Budapest and its tanks were rolling down the main boulevard. As the extreme left wing Trades Hall would be an early target, they must pack up their instruments and leave immediately, taking different routes. 'Go, go, go!' he urged the stunned, mostly Jewish musicians.

On her way to her lodgings, Klári saw the German army on the József körút progressing through the city, a chilling sight of thousands of soldiers on trucks and tanks. People watched quietly from the pavement. She remembers feeling terrified. 'I had a feeling then -- an eerie, eerie thing -- that my country had just been taken over without a shot being fired. They just walked in as if it was theirs.'

### **What should Klári do in response to the German invasion?**

- Stay in Budapest and continue with her studies for as long as possible.
- Return home to her parents in Szombathely.
- Try and find somewhere to go into hiding.

**If you haven't made a decision:** You stay in Budapest where, most likely, you initially live a restricted life and then are deported to Auschwitz sometime between mid-May and July. Otherwise you will be forced into the Budapest ghetto in October 1944 or potentially brutally murdered by a member of the Arrow Cross Party.

**What actually happened:** 'I went home to my lodgings and prepared to go home to my parents.' Klári was then arrested at the train station with around 30 other Jewish men and women when trying to return to her family home in Szombathely. The Hungarian government had passed an unannounced law that required Jews to have written permission to travel. They were herded into a jail next to the train station for 3 nights, being forced to stand in a sewage flooded cell with no room to sit. The women heard gunshots from the courtyard below and discovered that the guards were "...shooting the Jews. There are so many of them and we have nowhere to put them so they are shooting them.' We were sure that once they had finished with the men it would be our turn. We became very quiet, waiting to be called. Some women were praying, some crying. For me, it was beyond tears. I was just twenty. Was this how I was going to finish my life?"

## 2. DEPORTATION TO AUSCHWITZ

20min

**Students to read through the extract from *The Violinist: Clare Galambos Winter Holocaust Survivor* by Sarah Gitanos and highlight key passages or phrases that they find interesting in the reading.**

This information will be used in the next activity of creating a 'found poem'.

### Extract:

#### Liquidating the ghetto

"As Clare recalls, their lives in the ghetto had become so terrifying that it was a relief when the time came to leave. 'They marched us out of that hellhole through the main streets where people stood around -- most of them silent, but some taunted us and jeered -- with nothing except what we stood up in, and me with my violin. I had official permission to keep it!... They marched to an abandoned factory, the ruins of the Hungarian Motor and Machine Works near the railway track... The overcrowded conditions of the ghetto were nothing to the concentration they experienced on this site. They had no facilities whatsoever. The only water pump was not functioning. A big trench was dug to serve as a latrine. In the terrific heat the stink was overwhelming and it attracted thousands of flies... The searches for valuables continued. Jews selected randomly were transported back to the ghetto to be tortured... Twice a day cartloads of tortured victims were returned to the motor factory, most having lost their minds. A list of the next victims was read out -- no one was safe -- and they were taken away for similar treatment.

At the factory, dead bodies added to the stench..."

#### Loading the Cattle Cars

"Suddenly, on 3 July, two high-ranking Gestapo leaders arrived and listened politely to complaints about the impossible conditions. The Obersturmbannführer showed sympathy that

astounded the hundreds who gathered to hear what was going to happen to them. He said he was appalled at what he had seen, but it would soon be altered, everything would be much better. They were going to be taken to Germany to work under the same conditions as Germans... At last, here was someone in authority who spoke to them like human beings. They wanted to believe him. Everyone was suddenly smiling, not knowing they had just been given a scripted, orchestrated speech that was part of the preparation for shipping them to Auschwitz... The next morning, 4 July, the cattle cars arrived with their doors open and the Jews went in 'like mindless sheep'. Klári was cradling her violin in her arms when, just before she got to the gate, a guard quietly took it from her. 'My beloved violin, my right hand, it was taken away. The man said, "You won't need this where you're going." It hurt more than anything else during that period.

We were jammed in, not fifty to a wagon but well over a hundred. 'At the last minute they brought all the sick from the mental hospital, the terminally-ill, and they were evenly distributed among the cattlecars.' Arriving in horse-drawn carts were those who had just been beaten and tortured... All went with military precision: orders were shouted, the whistle blew, the heavy doors were pulled to, they heard the locks snapping closed and there was darkness..."

### **The Journey to Auschwitz**

"Nothing Klári had experienced equalled the horror of the next three days. The shame of having to defecate in buckets in front of everyone soon became secondary to the stench and airlessness, the heat, hunger and, worst of all, the thirst. People suffering from dehydration were hallucinating, thrashing around and screaming as they gasped for air before losing consciousness... Many died, including Klári's aunt Piroska Káldor who had been so badly beaten. The dead bodies were stacked against the door to make more room. It was a relief to have space to sit and stretch out painfully swollen legs."

### **Arrival**

"On 7 July 1944 the transport from Szombathely arrived at Auschwitz II, also known as Auschwitz-Birkenau or simply, Birkenau... 'The heavy doors of the wagons were torn open... As we had stacked the dead against the door the cadavers all tumbled out onto what looked like a concrete platform. There was a tremendous lot of shouting and yelling and orders were screamed at us. And there was so much light. The men on the platform wore striped pyjamas and spoke some Slavonic language. They jumped up into the bowels of the car and pushed us, a dazed and mindless mass of humanity, off the car. I remember feeling utterly alone as I couldn't find my mother in mêlée. I thought that she had died in the wagon and I hadn't noticed it...' As she was pushed forward, Klári saw a baby between the legs of a dead woman. She instinctively bent down and picked it up, but when one of the men in pyjamas yelled at her to put it down, she obeyed. Later she realised he had saved her life as anyone carrying a child was sent straight to the gas chamber.

Despite the chaos, she found her family... her mother and Rózsi had discussed what they would do, who would stay with whom, if they were split up. Now her mother held Mihály's hand and Rózsi held Klári's as they were separated from the men, ordered into rows of five and moved ahead in two parallel columns.



'At the head of these columns stood a German officer. He was impeccably dressed in his uniform and his boots shone like mirrors. He was bathed, he was shaved, he was just a beautiful shiny German in his uniform and his high boots... The enormous difference between our bedraggled, dirty and smelly appearance and this man's self-assured bearing was indescribable. He seemed to move his fingers only as he pointed in the direction he wished the person who stood in front of him to proceed. Mother and Mihály moved off to the left and joined the column that was moving away from us. Rózsi and I were directed to the right...' Klári was later told that the officer was Josef Mengele, the SS physician known as the 'Angel of Death.'

By July 1944, when Klári arrived in Birkenau, the SS could no longer keep up with the tempo and volume of arriving transports, and the selection process with its bureaucratic registration had broken down. But without doubt a selection took place. Klári never saw her mother or brother again. Mihály at fourteen was too young to live; and Zsuzsanna, who had just turned forty-five, was too old.

### **Processing**

She and Rózsi held hands more tightly as they were hurried on, yelled at obscenely by SS women in grey uniforms whom they had to address as 'Frau Aufseherin'. She recalls their 'very long walk' past rows of camps surrounded by electric fences. She felt nothing about the grey emaciated inmates, little knowing that she would soon be among their numbers...

On arrival at the 'sauna' bathhouse, they had to strip naked in the open air and hand over all their clothing, keeping only their footwear which was to be soaked in a tub of disinfectant. They were then 'herded into a long line of showers'. After washing, they were made to stand with their legs apart while they were 'shorn all over our bodies, not only on our head but wherever a woman grows hair' as the guards and others stood around watching. Apart from residual feelings of shame, Klári endured it all with disinterest. 'I was just hungry. It was all there was to it. I didn't know where I was, I didn't know why all my hair on my whole body was cut. I don't think I ever spoke to anybody.'

They were not registered or tattooed with identification numbers like earlier arrivals. Nor were they given uniforms or footwear -- instead they were handed assorted rags, remnants that had belonged to murdered Jews... Klári's garment was a long black rough rag with a cut over one breast and another over the buttock. That was all: they had no underwear, nor any other outer garment...

The transit Jews were then marched to Section BIII, the camp known by other prisoners as 'Mexico', 'the poorest of the poor'. Klári never knew either name of her camp. 'You don't tell the animals where they are,' she explains dryly. She later came to believe she had been in C-Lager.

Section BIII was still under construction, without running water or plumbing. The windowless wooden barracks, originally designed as stables, had no light, no bunks, no mattress or any covering whatsoever, and no heating. High summer in Poland meant extreme swings of temperature from blistering hot days to bitterly cold night." P69-81

### 3. FOUND POEM

15min

#### **A. Students write a 'found poem' using the extract about Klári's experiences at Auschwitz.**

A "found poem" is one that is created using only words, phrases, or quotations that have been selected and rearranged from another text.

To create a found poem, you must choose language that is particularly meaningful or interesting to you and organise the language around a theme or message.

For example, the following poem was created from the opening paragraph of the deportation extract:

They marched us out  
where people stood  
silent;  
some taunted  
and jeered.  
Marched  
to an abandoned factory.  
No one was safe.

#### **B. In small groups, students share their found poems and why they chose that theme.**

### 4. HUNGARIAN TREATMENT OF JEWS - ARROW CROSS PARTY

10 mins

By late 1944, almost all of the Jews in Hungary had been deported to Auschwitz or other camps. The only Jewish community that existed still was in Budapest when the Arrow Cross Party had come to power. The Arrow Cross Party was a far-right Hungarian party that tormented and tortured the Jews of Budapest. Without the support of groups like the Arrow Cross Party, Germany's deportation of Jews from Hungary wouldn't have been nearly as successful. It is important to acknowledge the culpability of the bystanders and non-German perpetrators in the Holocaust.

As a class, analyse photos of members of the Arrow Cross Party by considering the following questions:

- What do you notice? What do you see that makes you say that?
- What are the people doing?
- Describe the environment. What would it be like to live here? What sounds would you hear? What would you smell?

- What may have happened before this scene? What might happen after?
- What does the photograph tell you about the life of these people?



Budapest, Hungary, Jews being humiliated by members of the Arrow Cross Party - Credit Bundesarchiv - Item ID 32422



Budapest, Hungary, Jews being humiliated by members of the Arrow Cross Party  
Credit Bundesarchiv - Item ID 32506



Budapest, Hungary, Members of the Arrow Cross Party escorting Jews during deportation. The Arrow Cross Party and Hungarian Gendarmerie were integral in mass deportations of Hungarian Jews  
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 101355



Budapest, Hungary, Members of the Arrow Cross Party on their way to an 'Aktion' against Jews, which is where they humiliated, brutalized and tortured the Jewish people of Budapest  
Credit Yad Vashem - Item ID 101864



# 3.

## LESSON 3 LIFE DURING THE HOLOCAUST

### Lesson Objectives:

- To understand how the culture of music existed in the ghettos and camps despite all of the hardship that Jews experienced.
- To understand how Jews managed to survive the attempted extermination of the Jewish people by Nazi Germany.

### 1. CHOICELESS CHOICES

10min

**In pairs, students are given 5 minutes to decide what Klári and Rózsi should do in response to the opportunity for Klári to join the musicians at Auschwitz.**

A surprising situation arose that offered Klári a choice, but it was a choice that would have separated her from Rózsi. One day when they were sitting on the ground, talking about food, a party of women turned up unexpectedly.

They were properly dressed, they were courteous and had musical instruments, and they sat themselves down... and they started to play. I thought, now I think I've gone mad, now I have lost my mind, because this is an orchestra! We were dying like dogs. We were so hungry we had no mind, we were in rags, we had no furniture, we were sitting on the ground full of sores, and they played Strauss waltzes!

Someone sitting with her mentioned that Klári played the violin, and between waltzes a member of the orchestra approached her and asked if she wanted to join them. Klári considered it briefly. It was clear the musicians enjoyed privileges, but it would have separated her from Rózsi. At 35, Rózsi would have been more vulnerable alone -- women much younger were dying every day."

*The Violinist: Clare Galambos Winter Holocaust Survivor by Sarah Gaitanos*

#### What should Klári do?

- Join the musicians and gain privileges in the hope that it would increase her chances of survival?
- Not join the musicians in order to stay with Rózsi so that they could support one another through this ordeal?

**If you haven't made a decision/What actually happened:** Klári decided not to join the musicians despite the opportunity for gaining more privileges. She and Rózsi stayed together and were later selected for forced labour at Allendorf camp, a subcamp of Buchenwald, in Germany where they worked in a munitions factory building bombs such as TNT. Klári was given a few opportunities to play a violin

while at this new camp. It was a relief to escape Auschwitz, but they were forced to work with very toxic chemicals without any protective gear and were still given very little food etc. The starvation, hard labour and toxic chemicals resulted in Klári losing the ability to have children later in life, along with other shorter term health side effects.

## 2. MUSIC OF THE HOLOCAUST

20mins

Although Clare had very little engagement in music throughout her experience, many others were able to perform and create music and it provided a form of spiritual resistance for many.

**Students are given/can select a ghetto or camp to research. What was the music culture like at one of the following camps/ghettos:**

- Warsaw ghetto
- Auschwitz
- Vilna ghetto
- Kovno ghetto
- Partisan resistance

Suggested websites:

- <https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/music/index.asp>
- <http://holocaustmusic.ort.org/>

## 3. POEM: *MUSICA PROHIBITA*

15 mins

**Read the poem *Musica Prohibita* by Ilse Weber.**

Ilse was in Theresienstadt Concentration Camp and although there was a culture of music and performance, it was generally forbidden to have music. Ilse speaks of music as a form of spiritual resistance, the sense of hope for survival beyond the present day horrors.

### ***Musica Prohibita*** **by Ilse Weber**

I wander through Theresienstadt.  
A policemen's glance makes my flesh crawl,  
the lute I found is concealed, held tight,  
wrapped like an infant in a shawl.

My heart beats fast, my cheeks are hot,  
I dread his probing eyes.  
If he discovered what I've got  
they'll take the lute I prize.

In this place we are all condemned,  
a shamed, despairing crowd.  
All instruments are contraband,  
no music is allowed.

Want and cruelty we endure,  
every torment they devise.  
Let them try our spirits more,  
from the dust we shall arise.

We must be strong within ourselves,  
lest in despair and dread we drown.  
Must sing until the song dissolves  
these walls, and our joy tears them down.

Music lights up a poet's words,  
from our plight brings release,  
even the sparest songs of birds  
bear moments of blessed peace.

And when again we lose our nerve  
drowning, drowning in despair,  
the boundless beauty of the world  
wafts resuscitating air.

Music is beatitude,  
it is there salvation lies.  
Fearlessly, I tote my lute  
beneath the policemen's eyes.

### **Discuss as a class:**

- **Although music existed within many camps and ghettos, how do you think many other Jews experienced music throughout the Holocaust?**

Many Jews lost all sense of the cultural and social norms that they had become accustomed to, including losing their connection to music. Hungarian Jews, in particular, had largely assimilated to Hungarian society and participated in all aspects of cultural society. For Jews all over Europe, the forced labour and deportations to concentration and extermination camps removed every sense of culture they had, including music, through both the Nazi's rules and the sheer exhaustion of their experiences.

- **Why was it important for Jews to fight to keep music in their lives?**

As Ilse Weber refers to in her poem, the power of music for lifting spirits and for expressing emotions had a huge impact for Jews in maintaining some connection to their humanity.

## 4. DEATH MARCH TO FREEDOM

"... On 27 March, the camp was evacuated. In their weakened state, the women started their march along the highway, knowing nothing of their destination... The Nazis' obsession with the 'Final Solution' saw them trying to complete the job, even in the face of defeat, and in death marches all over Europe starving Jews were driven at gunpoint towards extermination camps away from the approaching Allies. Those who lagged behind or tried to escape were usually shot. This might well have been the intended fate of the women prisoners from Allendorf... Over the next three days they passed through Neustadt, Wiera, Treysa and Ziegenhain, and continued to follow the *Reichsstraße* 254, passing by Leinsfeld, Gebersdorf, Frielendorf and Lützelwig. Accompanied by SS in vehicles, they shared the highway with the German army, which was retreating in the other direction. 'Long convoys of army vehicles packed with soldiers passed us...' The soldiers appeared horrified by the state of the women. On learning the prisoners were Hungarian, they called up a couple of Hungarian soldiers who told the women to walk slowly, the Allies were only two days away. The women had no strength to walk other than slowly, but with their SS guards threatening to shoot them, they had to keep moving. Between hope and terror and sometimes not caring whether they lived or died, starving and exhausted, they put one foot in front of another...

Gradually, buoyed with the knowledge that the Allies were close and thinking they had nothing to lose, groups of prisoners made their escape under the cover of darkness, slipping away and hiding in barns and stables. There they waited, fearful of being found and shot, or of the barns being set alight.

But the SS guards were also running away... Klári and a group that included Marta [an SS officer] peeled away from what had been the main column... Klári's group had probably got beyond Friedlendorf, a distance of 31 kilometers from [Stadtallendorf], when they decided to run for it.

Our lives were not worth much anyway, so we took the risk. There was no moon and the march had just started. We sneaked away and when we found a thicket we caught our breath. We counted our ranks and we were thirty-one of us. We huddled together and trembled with fear. There was suddenly a lot of shooting from all directions. To our horror we discovered we were in no-man's land, between two armies.

Somehow they escaped the bullets and found their way to a village. Like other groups, they found a barn where they slept for the night in scratchy hay, close to one another as animals do for warmth and comfort.

In the morning two of their members walked outside and saw tanks. American tanks. Hearing their joyous cries, the others came to see for themselves. Klári's first thought was, 'My god! We are not going to die!' They made their way down to the village and stood in a row like a line of scarecrows... They were free, liberated in the village of Dillich, near Borken, on 31 March

1945. At the time, Klári had no concept of liberation beyond the realisation that she would not now be killed and that the Americans would feed them..."

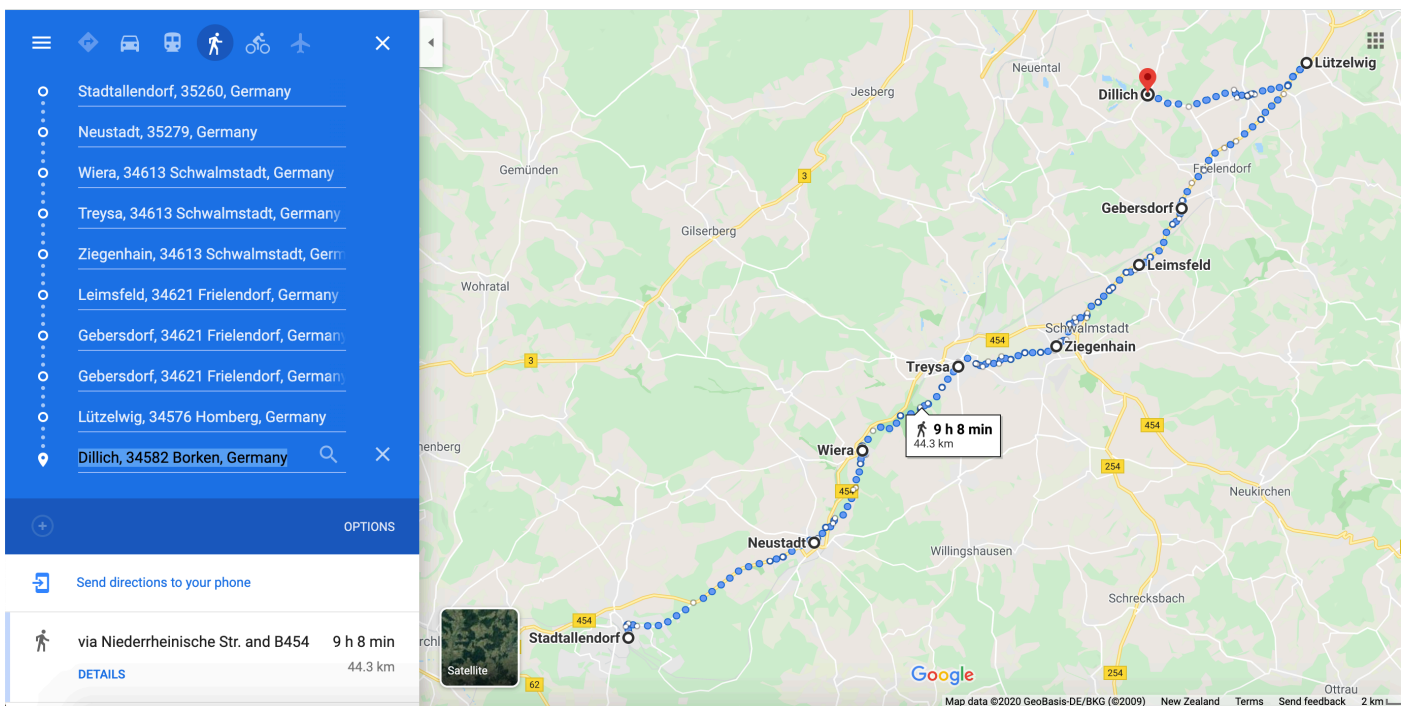
*The Violinist: Clare Galambos Winter Holocaust Survivor* by Sarah Gaitanos

15mins

**A. Students read through the passage describing Klári's experience of being marched from Allendorf Camp.**

**B. Students map out Klári's march from Allendorf (in Stadtallendorf, Germany) to eventually being liberated in Dillich, Germany.**

Students could either draw the map using the student resource or map it on a web based map such as Google Maps. Their final maps should look like this:





# 4.

## LESSON 4 RETURN TO LIFE

### Lesson Objectives:

- To understand how shocking and life altering it was for Jews to discover the real extent of mass murder that occurred during the Holocaust.
- To understand how Jews managed to return to life after such traumatic events.

## 1. LEARNING ABOUT THE EXTENT OF THE HOLOCAUST

15 min

The Galambos family are just one of millions of Jewish families that were torn apart by the Holocaust. As Europe was liberated by the Allies and as survivors returned home, the full extent of the Holocaust started to become clear.

**Students will rank the following statements about the Holocaust from most shocking to least shocking:**

- It is estimated that 6 million Jews perished in the Holocaust.
- Hitler and Germany were responsible for the attempted extermination of all Jews in Europe.
- Although millions of others died because of the war and Nazi persecution, Jews were the only group that Germany attempted to completely get rid of.
- Of the approximately 144,000 Jews sent to Theresienstadt, some 33,000—almost 1 in 4—died there, and about 88,000 were deported to Auschwitz and other death camps. By the war's end, only 19,000 were alive.
- Of the 4228 Szombathely Jews deported to Auschwitz July 3-4 1944, only 400 would survive.
- In just eight weeks, 424,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- By the end of the war, 565,000 Hungarian Jews were murdered

All those who survived the Holocaust faced the daunting task of returning back to a new version of normal. But how could they do that when their lives had just been torn apart?

## 2. RETURNING TO LIFE IN NEW ZEALAND

10 min

Klári and Rózsi had a chance to emigrate to New Zealand thanks to a family connection. With the move, they changed their first names to Clare and Rosie.

**Watch the video of Clare talking about her move to New Zealand and her involvement in New Zealand music.**

**Students answer the following questions:**

- What was life like for Klári/Clare when she first arrived in Wellington, New Zealand?
- What is so significant about Klári/Clare calling her violins her babies?
- How has Klári/Clare influenced others in New Zealand?
- What significance does Klári/Clare's story of survival have for us as New Zealanders?

### **3. WHY DOES IT MATTER THAT WE REMEMBER?**

25 min

**A. Watch Clare talk about her reluctance to share about her experiences in the Holocaust and her message for future generations.**

**B. Read through quotes about why we must remember the events of the Holocaust:**

"The spirits of evil are emerging in a new guise, presenting their anti-Semitic, racist, authoritarian thinking as an answer for the future, a new solution to the problems of our age. And I wish I could say that we Germans have learnt from history once and for all. But I cannot say that when hatred is spreading."

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (2020)



"First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out. And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me."

Martin Niemöller (1946)



"Where they have burned books, they will end in burning human beings."

Heinrich Heine -- *Almansor: A Tragedy* (1823), p. 142



"I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

Elie Wiesel Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech, December 10, 1986



"Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions."

Primo Levi

**Discuss these final words and maybe any other idea around why it matters for us to remember this modern piece of history.**

**C. Group activity - Students create a video or poster explaining why is it important that we remember what happened in the Holocaust.**

Students could get some inspiration from the 'Keeping the Memory Alive' posters on the Yad Vashem website: <https://www.yadvashem.org/education/international-projects/posters/2014.html>



## FURTHER READING

### ***The Violinist: Clare Galambos Winter Holocaust Survivor* by Sarah Gaitanos**

The biography of Clare Galambos Winter that provides in-depth exploration of her story of survival alongside the contextual information of what was happening throughout European society.

### ***Night* by Elie Wiesel**

This short book tells the haunting story of Elie Wiesel's personal experience of Auschwitz and Buchenwald from 1944-45.

### ***The Pianist: The Extraordinary Story of One Man's Survival in Warsaw, 1939-45* by Wladyslaw Szpilman**

On September 23, 1939, Wladyslaw Szpilman played Chopin's Nocturne in C-sharp minor live on the radio as shells exploded outside - so loudly that he couldn't hear his piano. It was the last live music broadcast from Warsaw: That day, a German bomb hit the station, and Polish Radio went off the air.

Though he lost his entire family, Szpilman survived in hiding. In the end, his life was saved by a German officer who heard him play the same Chopin Nocturne on a piano found among the rubble. Written immediately after the war and suppressed for decades, THE PIANIST is a stunning testament to human endurance and the redemptive power of fellow feeling.