

REPRODUCIBLE 2



Klaus Langer, age 12
Began diary in Essen, Germany
March 1937

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 13 - 16.

“Klaus began his diary in his native German shortly after his bar mitzvah in March 1937. According to the author, the first part of the journal consists mostly of descriptions of the family’s apartment, his aquarium, books, and notes about friends.... It was not until 1938 that he began reporting consistently on the political situation in Germany and its effect on him and his family....Despite signs of instability—the emigration of many of his Jewish friends and the occasional restrictions against Jews (closing of Jewish-owned businesses and prohibitions against Jews attending the public pool)—the Langers were still living in a relatively recognizable world.

“Klaus’s relatively normal life came to a crushing halt with Kristallnacht, the Nazi attack on synagogues, homes, businesses, and private property of Jews in cities throughout Germany and Austria on November 9 -10, 1938. . . .

“. . .A new onslaught of decrees followed Kristallnacht, almost completely limiting the movement and freedoms of Germany’s Jews. Among them were the orders expelling all Jewish children from German schools and banning Jewish youth group activities.

“For the Langer family, Kristallnacht served as a powerful catalyst for emigration. Ultimately, this is the main subject of the diary—emigration itself—and the family’s increasingly desperate efforts to get out. . . .”

“Klaus’s diary entries, filled as they are with requirements, regulations, and restrictions, seem to mirror the confusion and bureaucratic entanglements of the process itself. His personal story typified that of hundreds of thousands of German Jews who were faced with the fact that throughout the 1930s, few European countries eased quotas, lifted restrictions, or simplified existing procedures to allow for Jewish emigration. . . .”

Klaus escaped Germany for Denmark on September 2, 1939 eventually settling in Palestine in January 1940 where, at age 15, he survived the Holocaust and was never to see his parents or grandmother again. Klaus changed his name to Jacob and lives in Israel today. His original diary is still with him.

REPRODUCIBLE 3



**Peter Feigl, age 14
Began diary in France
27 August 1942**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 63 - 68.

“Peter Feigl was born Klaus Peter Feigl on March 1, 1929, in Berlin, Germany. His father, Ernst Feigl, an Austrian national, was a mechanical engineer working in Berlin; his mother Agnes, stayed at home to raise their young son. Ernst and his family were fully integrated members of middle-class Austrian society. He had served in the Austrian navy during World War I, and his family had lived in Austria for many generations. . . . Like many assimilated Central European Jews of the period, the family did not practice Judaism, nor was there any Judaica in the home. . . .”²

“For reasons connected to Ernst Feigl’s business, the family moved to Prague in 1936 and to Vienna in 1937. During that year, sensing the rising threat of Nazism in Europe, Ernst Feigl had Peter baptized as a Catholic, hoping to protect him from the Nazis’ anti-Jewish policies. Peter, who had never had a Jewish upbringing, recalled that he immediately began taking catechism classes and serving as an altar boy. According to Peter’s recollections, from that point forward he considered himself a Catholic. In March 1938, the Anschluss brought Austria under German domination. Ernst Feigl had at a certain point refused to cooperate with the Nazis, who had wanted his help in bringing machinery forbidden by the terms of the Versailles Treaty into Germany. He now suspected that he was on a Nazi blacklist for not aiding them in their illegal schemes. This, in combination with his Jewish identity, did not bode well for him and his family. . . . He consequently wasted no time fleeing Austria for Belgium, taking the family and leaving most of their property behind.”

“There they remained until the outbreak of German hostilities in Western Europe in 1940. With the invasions of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg, Peter, his mother, and his grandmother fled to France. . . .”

“In mid-July 1942, amid deportations of foreign Jews in France, Agnes Feigl succeeded in having thirteen-year-old Peter enrolled in and sent to a summer camp sponsored by Catholic charitable organizations. . . . A few weeks later, Agnes and Ernst Feigl were arrested and sent to

² Unless otherwise noted, biographical information about Peter Feigl and his family comes from unpublished correspondence between the editor and Mr. Feigl; from Mr. Feigl’s unpublished preface and epilogue to the diary; and from Peter Feigl, video-recorded interview, August 23, 1995, conducted by and in the Collection of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C.

the internment camp at Le Vernet. It was this devastating news that prompted Peter to begin writing a diary, 'intended for his dear parents. . . .'³

"In mid-September, the letters from his parents ceased entirely. . . ."

"It is abundantly clear from the diary that whatever his fears, Peter had no real knowledge at the time of his parents' fate. . . . The Feigl are listed among those on Convoy 28, which departed Drancy the morning of September 4 and arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau two days later. . . . They were most probably murdered on arrival, together with all but about fifty-four of the thousand Jews from the same transport. . . ."⁴

"In January 1943, Peter had the good fortune to be sent to Le Chambon sur Lignon, the Protestant village in the Haute-Loire, where Pastor André and Madga Trocmé among thousands of others, were sheltering and harboring Jews and refugees, especially children. . . ."

"Peter remained in Le Chambon for about ten months, during which time he was given false identity papers. . . . His new name was Pierre Fasson. . . . The inhabitants of Le Chambon ran a sort of 'underground railroad' that continually supplied newcomers with false identity papers and then sent them on to new destinations, allowing still more people in need to take their places. . . ."

"In May 1944, Peter's escape into neutral Switzerland was organized. . . . The children were given instructions on what to do and how to cross, and on May 22, 1944, Peter made a break for it and ran from France into Switzerland. . . ."

"Peter remained in Switzerland until July 1946, when he came to the United States."

He now lives with his wife in Florida. The two volumes of his diary are in the collections of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

³ Feigl, unpublished foreward, 2.

⁴ Serge Klarsfeld, *Memorial to the Jews Deported from France 1942-1944* (New York: Beate Klarsfeld Foundation, 1983), 243-45.

REPRODUCIBLE 4



**Elisabeth Kaufmann, age 16
Began diary in Paris, France
February 1940**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 31 - 41.

“Elisabeth Kaufmann (later Elizabeth Koenig) began writing in her diary in her native German in February 1940 in France, just before her sixteenth birthday. She and her family had arrived in France one and a half years earlier as one of the thousands of refugee families fleeing Austria after the Anschluss or its annexation by the Germans in March 1938. Born to a well-established family on March 7, 1924, Elisabeth spent her early childhood years in Vienna with her parents and her older brother, Peter. Her family was cultured, sophisticated, and well-read. Her father held a doctoral degree in international relations and was a prominent journalist. . . .

“In 1933, the family moved to Berlin, where they remained until 1936, when Elisabeth’s father was blacklisted by the Nazis and forced to leave the country. . . .

“By the time she began to write in her diary, Elisabeth had already been a refugee for two years. Although much of the diary reflects the struggles, hardships, and complexities of life as a refugee, it also shows the mark of the writer’s hand, suggesting the particular educational, social, and cultural milieu in which Elisabeth had been raised. . . .

“With the onset of war in September 1939, the tide of fear and suspicion of foreigners that had been gaining ground in France throughout the 1930s came fully to the fore. Thousands of refugees who fled to France to escape Nazi oppression were now considered ‘enemy aliens’ because of their German or Austrian nationality. . . .

“In early May 1940, the sudden and swift German attack on the Western countries began. Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg were occupied almost immediately. The invasion of France was imminent. . . .

“Elisabeth’s diary captures the rising tension in Paris, the accompanying ‘Parisian migration’, as she referred to the panicked columns of those fleeing the capitol, and her own struggles as she joined them, becoming a refugee for the second time in her life. . . .

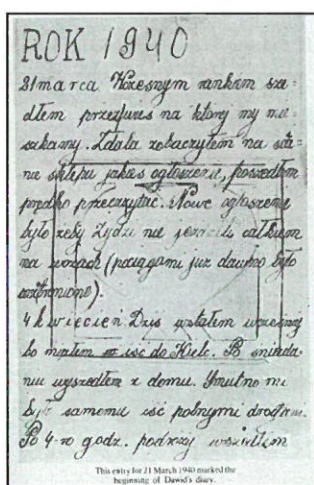
“After much confusion, Elisabeth. . . found her parents and they settled in Saint Sauveur par Bellac, which was in the southern zone of France, and consequently not under German occupation. In the summer of 1941, Elisabeth was contacted by Hilde Höfert, her former Latin teacher. . . who invited her to come to Le Chambon sur Lignon, to be an au pair for the family of Pastor André Trocmé. In November 1941, after spending the summer and fall with the Trocmé family, Elisabeth received a letter from her father telling her to go directly to Lyons

because the family had obtained visas to travel to America. The family arrived in Virginia Beach in early 1942. . . .

“In 1947, Elisabeth and Ernst Koenig were married and have remained so for more than fifty years. The three volumes of Elisabeth’s diary remained in her own possession until she donated them to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. in 1990.”

REPRODUCIBLE 5

Diary of Dawid Rubinowicz, age 12
Began diary in Krajno, Poland
March 21, 1940



Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 271-276.

“The first of Dawid Rubinowicz’s five notebooks opens on March 21, 1940, seven months after the German invasion and occupation of Poland. Born in the Polish city of Kielce on July 27, 1927, Dawid and his family, including his parents Josek and Tauba, younger brother Herszel, and younger sister Malka, had moved to the provincial village of Krajno, where they were living at the time of the German attack on Poland in September 1939. . . .

“He began by reporting on the latest restrictions leveled against the Jews, among them a prohibition on traveling by vehicle. He also heard and noted the news of the deportation of Jews from the nearby district capital of Kielce and the establishment of a ghetto there. While Dawid lamented his own life and the state of the world in general, he also savored the small daily pleasures that time and freedom still allowed. . . .

“At twelve-years old, Dawid was one of the youngest diarists whose writings have surfaced thus far. Far from fulfilling the stereotypical image of an innocent little boy, however, Dawid emerges with all the true complexity of a young boy coming of age. . . . Dawid often seemed older than his years, fulfilling an important role at home as the eldest son of a farming family; it was he who drew up a list for the distribution of a flour ration, ground corn and rye at the neighbors’, and carried messages to people in various towns as needed. . . .

“. . . Dawid reported on all the major threats to the safety and security of the Jews in his town. What emerges most dramatically from his account, however, is the Germans’ systematic exploitation of the Jews, which exhausted their material resources, leaving them beleaguered and impoverished. Dawid reported time and again on the allegedly ‘legal’ fines, taxes, and expropriations levied against his own family and their neighbors and acquaintances. . . .

“. . . Another form of exploitation was the seizure of Jewish men and boys for forced manual labor. Dawid himself was caught several times and sent to do various tasks, including bricklaying and snow removal. . . .

“Like so many of his counterparts, Dawid reported all the details of his family’s move to the ghetto, as they dismantled their home, packed their belongings, and made arrangements for transport. . . .

“Dawid returned again and again to his worries about the family’s finances. . . . Most of all, however, the diary reflects the escalation in violence afforded by the concentration of many Jews in a small space. . .

“On May 1, 1942, an argument erupted between Dawid and his father, prompting an outraged tirade that stands in contrast to the rest of the diary. . . .

“The fact of their argument might not have taken on such importance except that a few days later Dawid’s father was arrested and taken to the nearby Skarżysko Kamienna forced labor camp. . . .

“The last part of the diary is almost entirely taken up with the details of communicating with Josek Rubinowicz via the Krajno Jewish Council, trying to send him [his father] mail and provisions. . . . and endeavoring to secure his release through the usual corrupt channels. . . .

“Dawid’s last entry, written on June 1, 1942 begins, ‘A happy day.’ Josek was finally released due to an injured arm and returned to his family. . . .”

“Three and half months after his last entry, from September 15 to 21, 1942, the Jews who had been gathered from various provincial towns and concentrated in the Bodzentyn ghetto. . . were marched on foot to the nearby town of Suchedniow. On September 21, they were loaded into cattle cars and transported to the death camp of Treblinka. Although nothing specific is known about the fate of Dawid and his family, they were almost certainly murdered in the gas chambers in Treblinka.”

REPRODUCIBLE 6



**Diary of Yitskhok Rudashevski, age 14
Began diary in Vilna Ghetto, Lithuania
September 1942**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 190 - 197.

“Yitskhok Rudashevski was born in Vilna, Lithuania on December 10, 1927. His father, Elihu, was a typesetter for the *Vilner Tog*, the daily Yiddish newspaper. And his mother, Rose, originally from Kishinev in Bessarabia, was a seamstress. He was an only child living together with his parents and his maternal grandmother. Yitskhok went to school in Vilna, having completed his elementary education and one year of high school at the city’s well-respected Realgymnasium before his studies were interrupted by the German invasion. . . .

“. . . [I]n mid-June 1940, the entire country of Lithuania, including the recently acquired Vilna province, was annexed by the Soviet Union. . . .

“In early September 1941, the Vilna ghetto was established. One year later, as he approached his fifteenth birthday, Yitskhok began writing in his diary in Yiddish. . . .

“Yitskhok, whose literary gift is evident from the very first pages of his diary, chronicled all aspects of the ghetto and its character. . . . He sketched the ghetto inhabitants, highlighting passers-by on the streets, child vendors, and others, capturing their collective pathos, desperation, and humiliation. From time to time, he turned his gaze to the painful presence of the Jewish ghetto police, whom he saw as collaborators, helping ‘the Germans in their organized, terrible work of extermination.’

“If there is one predominant subject in Yitskhok’s diary, however, it is in the intellectual and cultural life of the ghetto’s youth. ‘Finally I have lived to see the day,’ he wrote on October 5, 1942: ‘Today we go to school. . . .’ In addition to school, ‘the club,’ . . . was the center of an extraordinary cultural, intellectual, and artistic life. Yitskhok documented the club’s activities proudly in his diary. . . .

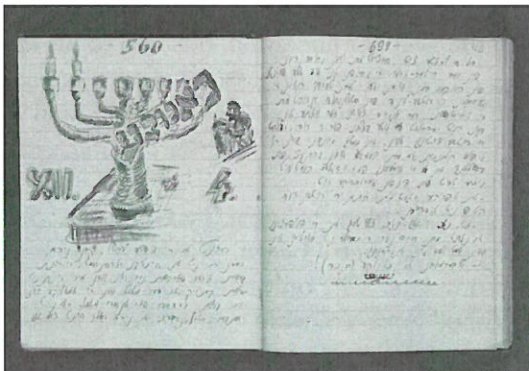
“The young man [also] wrote in his diary, ‘I consider that everything must be recorded and noted down, even the most gory, because everything will be taken into account. . . . He not only recounted what happened to him and his family. . . but documented the broad assault on the Vilna Jewish community, recording virtually every major event of the collective experience of invasion, occupation, repression, and mass murder. . . .

“Yitskhok ended his long narrative of the first months of German occupation with a nod toward the advancing Russian army, asserting his faith in its eventual arrival. His buoyant hope in the certainty of liberation is carried throughout the main part of the diary, . . . For Yitskhok, attachment to the Red Army was linked not only to the wait for liberation, but also to his devout commitment to Communism and the Soviet Union. . . . All Soviet organizations were officially disbanded throughout the German occupation, but Yitskhok and his colleagues continued their activities clandestinely. . . .

“Yitskhok and his friends were never able to carry out their plans to resist the Germans. Six months later, on September 23, 1943, the liquidation of the ghetto began. Yitskhok and his family went into hiding, where they remained for two weeks. The only surviving account of Yitskhok during this time is that of his cousin and friend Sore Voloshin, (called Serke in the diary) who recalled him sitting and reading in a corner of their attic, ‘still and silent, speaking only infrequently.’ According to Serke, they were discovered on October 5 or 7. Yitskhok and the rest of the inhabitants of the hiding place were taken to Ponar, where they were shot to death.”⁵

⁵ Yitskhok Rudashevski, *The Diary of the Vilna Ghetto* (Israel: Ghetto Fighters' House, 1973), 149, 12.

REPRODUCIBLE 7



**Diary of Ilya Gerber, age 18
Began Diary in Kovno Ghetto, Lithuania
August 1942**

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 329 - 335.

“Ilya, apparently the younger of two children, was born on July 23, 1924, in Kovno, which was at that time the capital of Lithuania. His father, Boris Gerber, was a well-known music teacher and conductor; his mother, by contrast, is not mentioned. . . .

“Ilya would have been fifteen at the time of the outbreak of World War II in September 1939. . . .

“As in Vilna. . . the German onslaught of decrees and restrictions swept like a tidal wave over the Kovno Jewish population. The mass executions that marked the beginning of the ‘Final Solution’ in Lithuania began with the murder of almost three thousand Jews from July 4 to 6, 1941, at the Seventh Fort. On. . . July 10, 1941, the Germans decreed that the Jews of Kovno were to be moved into a sealed ghetto across the Viliija River in the suburb of Vilijampolė, known to the Jews as Slobodka; by August 15th the ghetto was sealed, with about thirty thousand Kovno Jews inside. . . .

“The last of these [roundups] was the ‘Great Aktion’ of October 28, 1941, in which ninety-two hundred people (among them forty-two hundred children) were murdered. This brought the mass executions to a temporary halt in Kovno and marked the beginning of the ‘quiet period’ in the ghetto, dubbed so not because life was without peril or the killings completely ceased, but because during this period (lasting from October 1941 to October 1943) there were no major roundups and executions as there had been up to that time. Ten months later, in August 1942, eighteen-year-old Ilya began writing the third notebook of his diary in Yiddish.

“From the beginning of Ilya’s diary, it is clear that he and his family were among the small ‘privileged’ class of the ghetto, connected to high-ranking members of the Jewish Council. The *protektsiye* (pull) and favoritism that prevailed within the upper levels of the ghetto hierarchy enabled some people to use their connections to make daily existence more comfortable, and sometimes to save their lives altogether. Indeed, the diary is filled with reports that confirm the family’s closeness to some of the most important and influential people in the ghetto. . . .

“Unshakably distant from the ‘common man,’ Ilya seemed to observe rather than participate in the grim drama taking place around him. This, perhaps more than anything else, was the promise of *protektsiye*; it allowed for a kind of complacency, a sense of security that stemmed

from the belief that connections would prevail, whether it was a matter of having enough food to eat, clothes to wear, money with which to bribe, or friends upon whom to depend. . . .

“Ilya wrote his final diary entry on January 23, 1943. . . . Ten months later, in October 1943, there was another massive roundup in Kovno. . . an event that marked the end of the ‘quiet period.’ The ruthless destruction of the remainder of the Kovno Jews followed, and in July 1944 Kovno was liquidated; by war’s end the vast majority of the former Kovno Jewish community had perished. . . .

“Ilya and his family are presumed to have perished, although nothing specific is known about their fate.”

REPRODUCIBLE 8



Diary of Petr Ginz, age 15
Began Diary in Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia
October 1943

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 160 - 167.

“Petr Ginz was born on February 1, 1928, in Prague, the first child of Otto Ginz and Maria Ginzová. . . . Although Maria had been raised in a Catholic family. . . . she and her husband maintained a liberal but traditional Jewish home, keeping kosher, attending synagogue on major holidays, celebrating Petr’s bar mitzvah, and sending their children to a progressive Jewish school. . . .

“On March 15, 1939, the Germans annexed Czechoslovakia and four months later, in June, legislation modeled after the Nuremberg Race Laws (defining who was and was not a Jew) was put into practice.⁶ Petr . . . [was] classified as *mischlinge* of the first degree—children of a mixed marriage in which two grandparents were Jewish. . . .

“In December 1941, shortly after the establishment of the Terezín (Theresienstadt) ghetto, deportations from Prague to Terezín began. The Ginz family was gradually broken up according to the Nazi rules for dealing with Jews in mixed marriages and their offspring. . . .

“Petr kept a journal of his own in Terezín beginning in October 1943. . . . Petr did not make daily, dated entries in his journal, nor did he write it in the form of a narrative. Rather, it is a terse list composed of two parts: ‘plans,’ noting what he intended to accomplish for the month, and ‘reports’ listing his actual achievements for that month. . . . The journal [for Petr] does not provide an account of daily happenings in Terezín, the character of the persecution to which Petr was subjected, or the events of the Holocaust per se. Instead it is a record of the fifteen year-old writer’s efforts to expand his intellectual and artistic capabilities. . . .

“Although Petr decided that his diary was not the best vehicle for recording aspects of life in Terezín, it was in the pages of a more public form of communication, the magazine *Vedem*, that this commitment was most fully realized. *Vedem* was a secret publication undertaken by the boys of Home 1, produced every week between December 1942 and September 1944, and read aloud on Friday evenings. . . . Petr occupied a central role in the production of the magazine, serving as its editor. . . .

⁶ František Ehrmann, Otto Heitlinger, and Rudolf Itlis, eds., *Terezín* (Prague: Council of Jewish Communities, 1965), 15.

“Petr’s last journal entries were written in September 1944, the month he was deported. . . .
Petr’s life came to an end in Auschwitz, where, at the age of sixteen, he was murdered in the gas
chambers.”

REPRODUCIBLE 9



Diary of Eva Ginz 14
Began Diary Terezín Ghetto, Czechoslovakia
June 24, 1944

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 160 - 167.

“On February 21, 1930... Eva [Ginzová.] came into the world. . . . Although [her mother] had been raised in a Catholic family. . . she and her husband maintained a liberal but traditional Jewish home, keeping kosher, attending synagogue on major holidays, celebrating Petr’s [her brother’s] bar mitzvah, and sending their children to a progressive Jewish school. . . .

“On March 15, 1939, the Germans annexed Czechoslovakia and four months later, in June, legislation modeled after the Nuremberg Race Laws (defining who was and was not a Jew) was put into practice. . . . Eva [was] classified as *mischlinge* of the first degree—children of a mixed marriage in which two grandparents were Jewish. . . .

“In December 1941, shortly after the establishment of the Terezín (Theresienstadt) ghetto, deportations from Prague to Terezín began. The Ginz family was gradually broken up according to the Nazi rules for dealing with Jews in mixed marriages and their offspring. . . .

“Eva’s diary opens on June 24, 1944, when she was fourteen, with a description of her arrival in Terezín six weeks before. She wrote until the liberation of the ghetto in May 1945, recording all aspects of her daily life there. In particular, her diary reflects the living circumstances of the young in Terezín, who lived not with their parents but in collective ‘children’s homes. . . .”

“In her diary, Eva described the barracks in which she and her bunkmates dwelled; they were overcrowded, cold, filthy, dark, and infested with bedbugs and fleas. . . . Time and again Eva and her friends were uprooted and moved, only to find themselves ordered to move again just as they got settled. The lack of decent shelter in combination with frequent exposures to new rooms led inevitably to illness. Eva herself suffered from a bout of scarlet fever and diphtheria that kept her in the hospital for six weeks. . . .

“Eva’s diary offers glimpses of daily life in Terezín, but there is something still deeper to be found within it. Across entry after entry, week after week, and month after month, Eva returned to the subject of the separation of her family. . . . The image that thus emerges from Eva’s diary is that of a family decimated by war and oppression, its members scattered, left only to mourn their losses and worry for the fates of their loved ones. . . .

“In late September 1944, Eva noted in her diary that a transport of men between the ages of sixteen and fifty were being assembled. . . . Five days later, Eva wrote in her diary, ‘So Petr and Pavel are on the transport’. . . . Eva described her last moments with her brother. ‘I pressed through the crowd. . . and passed Petr the bread through the window. I had enough time to hold his hand through the bars before a guard drove me away.’

“. . . Eva’s diary begins to suggest the high price of survival. The shock of separation from Petr, the loss of his comforting presence, and her fear and desperation for his well-being dominate the rest of the diary. . . .

“As the months continued to roll by and Eva continued to hear nothing from her brother, her worry for his fate developed into a deeper, more suspicious kind of fear. . . . In April 1945, as liberation was imminent, surviving prisoners evacuated from concentration camps in the East were brought westward by the Nazis. In ten short days, more than twelve thousand of these death camp survivors flooded into Terezín, shocking the ghetto inhabitants with their terrible physical and emotional state. . . .⁷

“Terezín was liberated by the Soviet army on May 8, 1945. A few days later, Eva and her father returned home to Prague and were reunited with Eva’s mother. Though Eva was disappointed that Petr was not waiting for her at home, she closed her diary on a hopeful note: ‘when Petr comes back I’ll write it here.’ Almost two years later, on April 14, 1947, Eva, then seventeen, made one additional and final entry in her diary, ‘Petr hasn’t come back.’”

⁷ George E. Berkley, *Hitler's Gift: The Story of Theresienstadt* (Boston: Branden, 1993), 240-43. See also the diary of Alice Ehrmann, entries beginning on April 20, 1945.

REPRODUCIBLE 10

Diary of an Anonymous Girl, age unknown
Began diary in Łódź Ghetto, Poland
February and March, 1942

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 226 - 230.

'There is no justice in the world, not to mention in the ghetto.' So begins the diary of a young girl writing in the Łódź Ghetto in late February and March of 1942. Her identity is unknown. . . . The language of the diary is Polish; the diarist and her family were most likely native Poles, but whether they were originally from the city of Łódź or settled from a smaller village nearby is likewise unclear. . . .

"The diary is fragmentary, beginning in the midst of an undated entry and ending abruptly in the middle of a sentence. The rest of the entries are dated, covering a three-week period beginning on February 27 and ending on March 18, 1942. . . . Far from reflecting a diverse and varied existence in the ghetto. . . these activities and conversations revolved almost exclusively around two primary subjects: food and deportations. . . .

"As the only major ghetto to exist on 'German' soil, it [the Łódź Ghetto] was completely segregated from the ethnic German population and the Poles still residing there. Consequently, there was virtually no smuggling or trading of food, medicine, or provisions between the ghetto residents and the outside world. . . . For this reason, hunger, starvation, and death due to malnutrition were rampant in Łódź, dramatically more so than in any of the other major ghettos. . . .⁸

"She recorded, too, her own physical suffering, complaining bitterly of her aching stomach, teeth, and head, her weakness, and worst of all, the indescribable and by all accounts excruciating sensation of unrelieved hunger. . . .

"If food is the primary subject of the diary, the deportations of Jews from the ghetto is only minimally secondary. . . . Beginning in January 1942, the Nazi authorities had undertaken the first so-called resettlements from the ghetto toward the eventual goal of emptying the ghetto and ridding the region entirely of Jews. . . .

"The diary ends in the middle of a sentence on March 18, 1942."

⁸ Lucjan Dobroszycki, ed., *Chronicle of the Łódź Ghetto, 1941 - 1944* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), xxiii-xxv, xxxiv-xxxvi; Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, 3 vols. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985), 205-14.

REPRODUCIBLE 11



Miriam Korber, age 18
Began diary in Transnistria, Romania
December 1941

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 243-249.

“Miriam Korber was born to Leon and Klara Korber in 1923 in the small town of Câmpulung-Moldovenesc, in the southern part of the Romanian province of Bukovina. . . Miriam’s diary is unique for although its content echoes other diaries written in ghettos and camps throughout Eastern Europe, it was written in Romania, where the Fascist regime of General Ion Antonescu carried out the genocide of its own Jewish population, creating a circumstance unparalleled in the history of World War II. . . .

“In the late 1930s, as Germany was aggressively implementing anti-Jewish legislation, a succession of Romanian leaders and viciously antisemitic political parties put in place their own legal, economic, and social restrictions on Jews, including the institution of *numerus clausus*, or Jewish quota, in Romanian universities, civil service, and the professions, and the revocation of citizenship for 150,000 to 200,000 Jews. In August 1940, antisemitic legislation based on the Nazi Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935, which defined Jewishness according ‘racial’ criteria, was enacted in Romania. The following month, a coup d’état backed by Nazi Germany brought the Fascist leader Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard party to power in Romania. . . .

“It was as a consequence of these laws that Miriam Korber was forced out of high school in Botoșani, Moldova, where she had been sent as a teenager to study and live with her maternal grandparents. She returned to her hometown Câmpulung, finding herself faced with an ever increasing battery of restrictions. She recalled that 1940 - 41 was a ‘year of humiliation,’ with the imposition of special identity cards for Jews, restrictions on travel by train, the seizing of hostages, and the expulsion of Jews from the villages. . . .

Miriam and her family left Câmpulung on October 12, 1941, and arrived in Djurin, Transnistria, on November 4. Her diary, begun in her eighteenth year, and written entirely in Romanian, opens one month later. The first entries provide a long account of the family’s journey from Câmpulung to Transnistria, capturing the chaos of moving and the long and painful journey from home to a strange new place. . . .

“By December 13, 1941. . . Miriam’s description of the family’s deportation had been completed. . . . Her daily diary entries begin at this time. While it is an account of her own life. . . the diary also reflects the broader experience of exile shared by the Romanian Jews in Transnistria. Her diary is filled with reports of the physical hardships that plagued the exiles. . . .

“Miriam reflected on the inexplicable desire to live, despite the misery and hopelessness of their circumstances. Similarly, she was among many writers who suffered from the paralysis of her life in the ghetto, describing the apathy brought on by imprisonment. . . .

“Miriam’s diary breaks off in October 1943. She remembers that her father was caught in a roundup and sent away to a destination unknown by the family at the time; in fact, he was sent to a forced labor camp. According to the author, she didn’t have the strength to continue writing after this devastating event. A year and a half later, the Russian army liberated Djurin. Miriam returned to Romania with nine other young people, all of whom walked behind the Red Army troops as they marched through the Ukraine and into Romania. After two weeks of walking, she arrived home in Botoșani, Romania, on May 2, 1944. . . .

“Miriam’s diary was hidden from her for a long time, first by her mother and then by her husband, who feared the emotional repercussions of her reading the diary and remembering the horrors of life in Transnistria. After the war, she went on to become a doctor, and in the 1990s she published the diary in Germany and Romania. The original remains with her to this day.”

REPRODUCIBLE 12



Elsa Binder, age 21
Began diary in Stanisławów, Poland
December 1941

Excerpted from *Salvaged Pages: Young Writers' Diaries of the Holocaust*, pages 301-306.

“On October 12, 1941, a massacre of ten thousand Jews took place [in Stanisławów]. Two months after this pogrom, in late December 1941, the ghetto was established, and at about the same time, Eliszewa [Elsa] began writing her journal. . . .

“When the war broke out. . . in September 1939, and in the eastern region of Poland was annexed to the Soviet Union (as a consequence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact of August 1939), Stanisławów, too, came under Soviet rule. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the town of Stanisławów was occupied briefly by Hungarian troops (allied with the Germans) and then, in late July, by the German themselves. Repressions, terror, and executions followed swiftly.

“Eliszewa clearly saw her diary as a place to express her deepest thoughts and feelings about herself, her family, love, friendship, and the impact of oppression and suffering on her own life. . . . To that end, she wrote about herself, her character and physical appearance, and the bitter circumstances of her life, looking back at her ‘twenty-one years of life, so much at odds with the gods,’ as she described it. Likewise, she reflected at length on her immediate family, describing her parents’ and her sister’s personalities, attributes, and failings, and mulling over their relationships. . . .

“In particular, Eliszewa wrote with contempt, fury, and bitter sarcasm about the corruption she witnessed on the part of the Jewish Community Council. . . . She painted a scathing portrait of the members of the Jewish Council, alluding not only to the system of favoritism and family privileges that sustained them, but touching on the great divide between the privileged youths of the ghetto and her own circle. . . .

“If there is one subject, however, that reverberates most clearly throughout the diary, it is death and its proximity. Throughout the diary, Eliszewa recited litanies of the dead, not only marking the fact of their lives and deaths in her diary, but painting an image of a community slowly shrinking, each new act of violence further reducing the already decimated population. . . .

“On March 31, 1942, there was another major roundup in Stanisławów. Five thousand people without work certificates were seized and taken to the killing center in Bełżec, where they were murdered. Shortly thereafter, all the remaining ghetto inhabitants were classified according to their ability to work: ‘A’ category referred to ‘experts’ working for the German economy, ‘B’ signified people employed in ‘less essential’ functions, and ‘C’ was applied to those ‘unfit’ for

labor or 'the handicapped and the old,' as the diarist described it. Eliszewa's sister, Dora, was categorized a 'C,' then upgraded to a 'B, and was then, according to the diary, taken to Rudolfsmühle, (the improvised prison for the inhabitants of Stanisławów), where she was held with other captives for four days. At the end of this time, she was taken away to a destination unknown to the writer."

"Eliszewa did not write again for almost a month after the roundup. When she resumed her diary, she wrote about the devastating loss of Dora. . . .

"She wrote her last entry on June 18, 1942; her text ended abruptly as she was recounting a close call with the Gestapo and the Ukrainian police as she smuggled money and supplies into the ghetto. Over the course of the summer, there were shooting operations in the ghetto and another roundup that claimed the lives of another thousand people. This was followed by yet another transport of five thousand people to Bełżec in September. The liquidation of the ghetto took place in late February 1943. It is certain that Eliszewa and her family perished, although the exact circumstances of their deaths are not known. Her diary was found in a ditch on the side of the road leading to the cemetery, which was the execution site for the Stanisławów Jews.⁹

⁹ Raul Hilberg, *Destruction of the European Jews*, vol. 2, 496.