

# Life in Hiding

Once the roundups of Jews in the Third Reich began, the only way Jews could avoid deportation to ghettos and camps was to go into hiding. Hidden Jews were at constant risk of discovery. Many had to remain physically concealed in cramped hiding spaces. Others assumed false identities to pass as Christians. In rural regions, particularly the forests of eastern Europe, some Jews fled to remote areas and survived with other escapees as part of resistance groups.

Families were often forced to split up and hide separately. Jewish children who survived the Holocaust most often did so by hiding in Christian homes, convents and schools, assuming Christian identities as cover. These false identities created complex questions for children who had been assigned multiple names, families and religions in their young lives.

For many hidden children, the end of the war did not bring an end to their trauma. Reunions with parents were joyous but also difficult. Child survivors were often too young to remember their families and struggled to recover a sense of comfort with their pre-war Jewish identities. For children whose families did not survive, there was little to help them regain their connection with Jewish culture and faith.



Number 98 / Fall 2024

# Help and Rescue

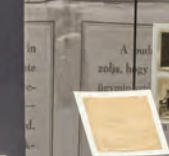
While most Europeans turned a blind eye to the treatment of Jews, some stepped in to help. Without these rescuers and helpers, few Jews could have escaped Nazi-occupied Europe or survived in hiding. Jews fleeing Europe had to present real or forged documentation to enter countries accepting refugees after the war broke out. Jews trying to survive in Europe were in desperate need of hiding places. They relied on helpers willing to risk their lives to save them.

Diplomats and religious institutions were able to maintain some independence from Nazi occupiers. Some sheltered Jews in their embassies, safe houses, convents and orphanages. Others took Jews to leave Nazi-occupied areas that allowed individuals provided hiding networks, food, medicine and identity cards. They acted or in organized groups.

Helpers came from diverse religious, social, educational and economic backgrounds. They were driven by moral, religious or political beliefs to help neighbours and strangers in peril. Helpers were active in every European country, despite the personal danger. In Nazi-occupied Eastern Europe, the punishment for assisting Jews was death for the helper and often their families as well.

Number 98 / Fall 2024

# Imprisoned in Ghettos



When the Nazis entered Poland in 1939, they forced Jews into ghettos. The Warsaw Ghetto was the largest in Europe. Ghettos were often overcrowded and unsanitary. In response, Jews organized resistance movements like the ŻOB and ŻZW. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising of 1943 was a major act of resistance. Despite the odds, many Jews managed to escape the ghettos and survive.

Imprisoned in ghettos, Jews lived in extreme conditions. They were often separated from their families and communities. The ghettos were a place of suffering and despair. However, some Jews managed to find ways to survive, including hiding in attics and basements. The struggle for survival was a daily reality for many.



Archivaria

# Archivaria

The Journal of the Association of Canadian Archivists



If undeliverable please return to  
Association of Canadian Archivists  
130 Albert St., Suite 1912  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5G4