

Anya Kornhauser **By Gail Weigl**

This is Anya's story, but it is also the story of her rescuers, and these are the people who tend to get lost in the Holocaust narrative. We seldom talk about the rescuers, and why we should study and honor them. So today, I would like to add to the question, "Why study the Holocaust," the question, "Why study the rescuers?" Before we listen to Anya, let's first briefly address both questions (go to note cards).

Finally, I would like to clarify some confusion that might come up during Anya's of necessity shortened testimony:

First: Geography: Fluid borders of Poland, Ukraine, Russia. Ukraine today borders Russia to the East, Belarus to the North, Poland, Slovakia and Hungary to the West, Romania and Moldova to the Southwest, and the Black Sea to the South.

Second: I call your attention to the Glossary(end of overview) where you will find definitions of some of the terms Anya uses such as Banderoses.

Third: Some issues of chronology and gaps in the narrative:

- When Anya refers to the *Judenrat* she was at that time in the Ghetto, which was formed *after* August 4, 1941, when she describes the incident of the first "Action" when the Jews were taken to the town center for a selection. She and her family, with the exception of her brother, Lazar, who had been drafted into the Russian army in 1940, lived in the ghetto in her aunt's house, which held five families. It was there that her mother appealed to the *Judenrat*—the Council of Elders elected to run the Ghetto—for a work permit for Anya.
- There were many partisan groups in the Ukraine, some collaborating with the Nazis, on the promise of independence, some collaborating with the Russians against the Nazis. Anya says that it was difficult, when in hiding, to distinguish one group from the other. The *Banderoses* that she mentions were Nazi collaborators.
- The period when Anya and her sister were on the run, and when they found help and began their life in hiding would have begun sometime in the Fall, 1941. They went into hiding in hiding from the Fall of 1941, when Anya was 16 (because her family fled to the Russian side after the German invasion of Poland in 1939, when Anya was 14, she was able to continue to attend Russian high school) until they were liberated in 1944, when she was 19. Anya describes her own experience, but her sister also was hidden by Protestant Christians. She worked for a farm family as a maid.
- In addition to the SS officer who saved her mother and aunt, Anya was helped by her mathematics teacher and a Ukrainian guard, who looked the other way when she and her sister were on the run, before they were welcomed by the Pentecostal Christians. Anya lived with Polish farmers, then worked in a candy factory in the town of Rovne. Subsequently, she was taken in by Czech farmers, and it was there that she was liberated, February 2, 1944. Her sister had searched for her there, but just missed Anya, who had gone to Rovne to search for her family.
- In Rovne she learned that her mother, father, aunts and cousins did not survive, undoubtedly murdered by the Nazis, but her brother Mendel was alive. She visited her old home, and even met with a Ukrainian neighbor who had stolen much of her family's property. The Russians insisted on the return of the property.
- Her sister tracked her down at a military base on the Russian border, where Anya and a friend were working. After the war officially ended in May, 1945, and after she and her sister reunited with their brother, they legally returned to Poland, with the intention of emigrating to Palestine.
- Rather than emigrating, however, they illegally entered Austria, first going to Vienna, then to the Austrian Alps, where the Americans were settling displaced persons in hotels requisitioned from

Austrian owners. From there, Anya went to a displaced persons camp in the American zone, where she met her husband.

Anya points out there were no concentration camps where she came from in the Ukraine. There were ghettos and work groups, but all Jews were killed. She believed she came from the worst part of the world as far as anti-Semitism is concerned, and was terrified of the Greek Orthodox because of what the church taught them. She mentions that when they found a Jew and turned him or her in, they got a kilogram of salt. She emphasizes the goodness of the true Christians who helped her, despite poverty and danger to themselves.

Glossary

Antisemitism:

Antisemitism is defined as opposition to and hatred of the Jews

Banderosas:

Ukrainian underground fighters who cooperated with Nazi Germany, 1939-1941, and from 1944. The name derives from the Ukrainian politician, Stepan Bandera.

Bandera, Stepan Andriyovych (1909-1959):

A Ukrainian politician and one of the leaders of the Ukrainian national movement in Western Ukraine (Galicia). He headed the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN). During his career, the OUN split into two factions: the OUN-M and the OUN-B. Bandera was responsible for the proclamation of an Independent Ukraine State in Lviv, 30 June, 1941. Soviet authorities authorized his assassination by the KGB in Munich, 15 October, 1959. He is a controversial figure in contemporary Ukraine due to his cooperation with Nazi Germany.

Berihah (Hebrew: “Escape”):

An organized effort that helped Jews escape from post-Holocaust Europe to Palestine.

Concentration Camps:

Prison camps maintained by Nazi Germany throughout the territories they controlled, intended to hold political prisoners and opponents of the regime.

Displaced Persons (DP) Camps:

After the war, displaced persons camps were set up to house the survivors of the Holocaust who had become stateless.

Extermination Camps:

Holocaust scholars distinguish between concentration camps and extermination (death) camps, established for the sole purpose of carrying out the extermination of the Jews of Europe—“The Final Solution”—as well as Poles, and members of other nations. These camps included Belzec, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Forgotten Genocide:

The Armenian Genocide was the first genocide of the 20th Century. When asked how he expected to successfully mass murder millions of Jews, Hitler was thought to have responded, “Who today remembers the Armenian Genocide?” implying that if the world did not care about the Turkish slaughter of the Armenians, why would the world care about the Jews?

Genocide:

From the Greek, “*genos*” (race) and the Latin, “*caedes*” (killing), the word genocide (“race murder”) was first introduced by Raphael Lemkin in 1933. Today it is generally applied to the murder of human beings by reason of their belonging to a specific racial, ethnic, or religious group, unrelated to any individual crime. In 1948, The UN General Assembly adopted a convention for the prevention of genocide and calling for the punishment of perpetrators.

Ghetto:

Originally used in Venice to describe the area where Jews were compelled to live, the word came into widespread use in occupied Europe between 1939-1944, to define the areas where Jews were required to live prior to transport to concentration and extermination camps.

Holocaust: With a lower case “h” holocaust means complete destruction by fire. It is the term used in the Hebrew Bible to describe the ashes of the burnt offering in ancient sacrificial Judaism. With a capital “H” the term refers to the planned annihilation of the Jewish people by Germany and the Nazis between 1933-1945. Gypsies, Jehova’s Witnesses, political dissidents, homosexuals, and the mentally and physically disabled were also persecuted during these years, but the term Holocaust applies specifically to the systematic killing of the Jews. Despite vast documented historical evidence, there are still those who claim the Holocaust was fabricated by “Zionists.”

Israelites:

Term derived from Israel (Hebrew: “to persevere with God”) in the Hebrew Bible, which is mainly concerned with the Israelites.

No Place to Go:

Between 1933-1945, Germany and its allies imprisoned and murdered the Jewish people in Nazi-occupied Europe, in ghettos, in slave labor camps, and in death camps in what was called the “final solution to the Jewish problem.” The free world had strict immigration quotas and would not allow the Jews in. As survivor Sonia Schreiber Weitz has said, “The world was made up of two kinds of countries...those that would not let the Jews out and those that would not let the Jews in.”

Race:

The term refers to the concept of dividing people into populations or groups on the basis of various sets of characteristics. The most widely used—and inaccurate—human “racial” categories are based on visible traits (especially skin color, cranial or facial features, and hair texture) and self-identification. The Third Reich stated that Jews were racially inferior and would destroy civilization if allowed to live. Beyond the obvious lies, Jews are not a race because they have representation in every “racial” and ethnic group. The Jews are a people, not a race.

Swastika:

The German *hakenkruez* or *swastika* was the emblem of anti-Semitism since 1918, and was established as the national symbol of Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler. The arms of the Nazi swastika bend clockwise, unlike those of the Fylfot, the arms of which bend backward, or counterclockwise. The Fylfot is a religious symbol of all sun gods, and survives today in Asia among Buddhists, Jains and Hindus, and among the Indian tribes of North America.

Introduce myself and Holocaust Legacy Partners: A program of the Holocaust Center, Boston North, Inc. dedicated to preserving Personal Memories of the Holocaust, by pairing a younger person with a Holocaust survivor. Due to the inevitability of human mortality, there will be a time when there are no more survivors. Each Holocaust Legacy Partner represents a survivor’s memory by providing first hand eyewitness testimony to current and future generations. I have been entrusted by my survivor, Anya Kornhauser, to represent her memory and legacy.