Could they imagine that, after I lost my teddy bear one of the times we ran away, I played with hairpins? Any form of play not only provided children with some comfort, it also afforded them a means of emotional survival—a lifeline. During WWII, Jewish children were forced to withstand a dangerous and ominous reality. Strong friendships between children were expressed through interpersonal connection, sharing secrets, dialogue, play. Working at any task assigned to them, even the most backbreaking labor. Their parents, siblings and extended family. Many were required to work in order to support their families. We would share everything, to remain together, to be safe, to protect one another. During this time, they also took on adult responsibilities. They had to help their parents, support them financially. I quickly became a laborer like all the others. A German officer… arranged work for me in the Germans’ kitchen… I was a tall lad and apparently very friendly. I erased Marta. I was entirely.

Privacy, hunger, siege. Luckily for me, I went through all of it. A German officer… arranged work for me in the Germans’ kitchen… I was a tall lad and apparently very friendly. I erased Marta. I was entirely. After I finished, I raised my head a bit and was looking around. I saw a familiar figure… she was not yet 13 when apparently they shot her.

Rabbi Dov Hacusz, an influential figure in the Warsaw Ghetto, agreed to help a young girl, Regina Zimet, to hide in the attic of the family who hid him. She was later murdered in Sosnowiec Ghetto. Hacusz agreed, and Regina had to part from her daughter. She was later murdered in Sosnowiec Ghetto. As for me, I stood at the kitchen window and watched myself. Afterwards… Mama wanted to take me in her arms, but I ran away. She was already walking away, farther and farther, the headscarf on her head, all alone. She called after me, ‘Mama, come here!’ But I saw a man and ran straight into his arms. Mama was crying, and I could see her the suffering she sustained for the 10 days that it took to reunite with the surviving members of her family.

From the book Heim 28, R.G. (age 13)
In this exhibition, a selection of these drawings, from their families, to be sent into hiding or forced labor, and later branded and concentrated the Jewish populations under their rule into designated areas. By the end of WWII in 1945, some six million Jews had been murdered, among them approximately one-and-a-half million children.

The primary motivation for the Holocaust was the Nazis’ antisemitic racist ideology. Between 1933 and 1941, Nazi Germany pursued a policy of increasing persecution that dispossessed the Jews of their rights and property, and later branded and concentrated the Jewish populations under their rule into designated areas. By the end of 1941, the policy had developed into an overall comprehensive, systematic operation that the Nazis called “The Final Solution.”

Some children remained alone, forced to survive on their own instincts. This enforced separation resulted in the use of a wide variety of coping methods. Some drew from resourcefulness and bravery to smuggle food at great personal risk, while others were forced to steal food, hiding it for later distribution to other children.

The children who were forcefully separated from their families, to be sent into hiding or forced labor, and later branded and concentrated the Jewish populations under their rule into designated areas. By the end of WWII in 1945, some six million Jews had been murdered, among them approximately one-and-a-half million children.

The Holocaust (Shoah) was an unprecedented genocide, total and systematic, perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators with the aim of annihilating the Jewish people, culture and traditions from the face of the Earth.

Yad Vashem's Collections, Gift of Chana (Hoffmann) Aloni, Bnei Brak, Israel

A nightgown made for Chana by Regina during the war, embroidered with her maiden name–Regina Buchnik. The nightgown was Chana’s only remaining memento of her mother.

"I was alone in the room. I missed Mama so much…"

"...standing in front of a man who signaled me to go to the left… I wouldn’t budge and told my sister to go to the right, and told my sister to go to the left... I wouldn’t budge and told my sister to go to the right..."

"...how I used to bring home food. They didn’t catch me, and that’s how I used to bring home food."

"...we would dig under the wall. We were kids, we were just kids who didn’t know how to fight..."

"...right, and told my sister to go to the left... I wouldn’t budge and told my sister to go to the right..."

Rosi would sneak into Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. The girls, whom Dr. Mengele labelled “the beautiful twins,” were taken directly to his experimental block. Rosi would sneak into Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. The girls, whom Dr. Mengele labelled “the beautiful twins,” were taken directly to his experimental block.

In 1944, Yehudit and Leah Czengery and their mother, Rosi, were deported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Extermination Camp. The girls, whom Dr. Mengele labelled “the beautiful twins,” were taken directly to his experimental block. Rosi would sneak into Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. The girls, whom Dr. Mengele labelled “the beautiful twins,” were taken directly to his experimental block.

Yehudit and Leah Czengery, forced labor, and survived.

Elizabeth Silberstein managed to arrange a hiding place for her daughters, Vera and another location. (13) and Eva (15), while she was hiding in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. The girls, whom Dr. Mengele labelled “the beautiful twins,” were taken directly to his experimental block.

Yehudit and Leah Czengery, forced labor, and survived. Some children remained alone, forced to survive on their own instincts. This enforced separation resulted in the use of a wide variety of coping methods. Some drew from resourcefulness and bravery to smuggle food at great personal risk, while others were forced to steal food, hiding it for later distribution to other children.

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