"Could they imagine that, after I lost my teddy bear one of the times we ran away, I played with hairpins? Any pin, a simple bent piece of hairpin, would do. The children's play area had a drawer full of them. My mother would say, 'Benek!' He turned around as if bitten by a snake. 'You don't have to take things. There's enough here.' I would say, 'You do not know! You have no idea! It is not enough! It is not even sufficient to just hold hands.' "

"For over two years, Jakov Goldstein was stowed in a narrow space behind a ceramic tile in an underground school as a prisoner of the Nazis. His mother was incarcerated in a concentration camp. His father and brother died in the Holocaust. ""..."""
Poems, letters, and toys offer a moving account of the hopes, dreams, and fears of children during the Holocaust. Their childhood was lost as they were forcefully separated from their families, transported to concentration camps, and had to adapt very quickly to their new harsh conditions, with many of them effectively rendered with no choice but to become wholly responsible for their own independence and survival.

Throughout this period, family members were often separated; parents and siblings were deported or murdered. Some children remained alone, forced to survive on their own instincts. This enforced separation forced labor, and survived.

The Czengery twins, Yehudit and Leah, age six, Romania, 1943

The Holocaust 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.

In 1944, Yehudit and Leah Czengery and their mother, Rosi, were deported to the Extermination Camp. Wezembeek, Belgium, during the war. Rosa Wurman-Wolf, children’s home in Amsterdam, with her two daughters, boughtIMG_0206.jpg

Vera Silberstein (left) and Eva Silberstein, Bratislava, Czechoslovakia, 1939

The primary motivation for the Holocaust was the Nazis' antisemitic racist ideology. Between 1933 and 1941, the policy had developed into an overall comprehensive, systematic operation that the Nazis called “The Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” These policies gained broad support in Germany and across much of the world. It was only after massive evidence was collected and presented to the international community that the extent of the genocide became clear.

The Czengery twins, Yehudit and Leah, age six, Romania, 1943

Eva (Silberstein) Grinstone

In the war years, many children found themselves responsible for their own fates, as well as the fates of their siblings and parents. They were forced to steal. Some drew from resourcefulness and bravery to smuggle food at great personal risk, while others were forced to steal. In the ghetto, I ran around with the other kids searching for food, stealing food; we would dig under the ground to find food, to eat... with my sister? He responded, 'No, she has to go to work.' She turned around and ran. She ran away happy.

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