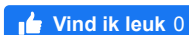


Remembering Auschwitz after 70 years: preserving stories



By [Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015](#) Jan 27, 2015



Click on photo to enlarge or download: Susan Hilsenrath Warsinger stands in the U.S. Holocaust Museum's Hall of Remembrance after Tuesday's International Holocaust Remembrance Day event. Warsinger began discussing her experiences during the Holocaust in 1992 when she became a museum volunteer. SHFWire photo by Jordan Gass-Pooré

WASHINGTON – It was 70 years ago on Tuesday when the Soviet Army's 322nd Rifle Division entered [Auschwitz-Birkenau](#), the largest of Poland's concentration and extermination camps.

This was where, from 1941 to 1945, the Nazis executed more than a million people. It served as a labor camp and the center for quick Jewish extermination, administered by Zyklon B gas pumped into chambers.

[The U.S. Holocaust Museum](#) on Tuesday honored the memories of the millions of Jews, Roma, gay men and women and others who died during the Holocaust and paid tribute to the resilience of those who survived.

[Susan Hilsenrath Warsinger](#), 85, a retired Maryland schoolteacher, of Chevy Chase, Md., is a Holocaust survivor and volunteer at the museum. She escaped Germany before her family could be taken to a camp. She and a few dozen survivors attended the event.

She didn't speak at the ceremony but said she was there because she takes any opportunity she can to bring attention to the Holocaust.

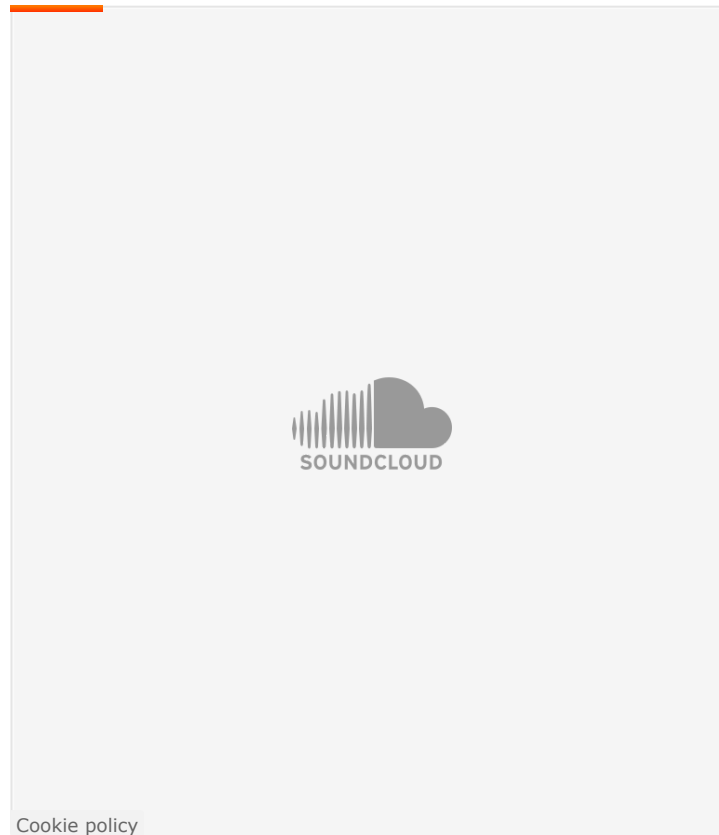
"We have a special obligation to care for them, to preserve their stories and to make sure a generation never arises in our midst that does not know what happened at Auschwitz," Vice President Joe Biden said in a statement.

President Barack Obama was in Saudi Arabia, but said in a statement that this anniversary is a time to reflect on the efforts the world has made since the Holocaust to end genocide.

[International Holocaust Remembrance Day](#) was designated in 2005 by the U.N.

Arthur Berger, senior adviser of the U.S. Holocaust Museum, asked people to make a pledge to stand together to prevent mass atrocities. He said Auschwitz has become a symbol of human barbarity.

That's why Warsinger decided to talk about her experiences as a Holocaust survivor through the museum's education department. She visits Maryland schools, where she tells children everyone has a responsibility to stop injustice.



Warsinger was 9 years old on Nov. 9, 1938, when violence against the Jews broke out across the country.

Through her bedroom window she and her brother watched as neighbors uprooted a telephone pole and smashed it through their glass front door. Their main objective was to harm the rabbi living above the Hilsenraths.

“He said he saw the civil policeman standing with his arms crossed and he didn’t do anything to stop the crowd from throwing the rocks and bricks,” she said.

This would be known as the “[Night of Broken Glass](#),” or Kristalnacht.

Although the action appeared to be unplanned, Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, among others, had orchestrated the pogroms.

Immediately following the “Night of Broken Glass,” Warsinger said people wanted to leave Germany.

Before this happened, she said Jews, including her father, thought life in Germany would return to normal. Fearing for his children's lives, Warsinger's father sent her and brother to France. Their parents stayed behind.

The siblings lost contact with their parents when the Nazis took over northern France in May 1940. "So, my brother and I got on one of the last ships, the S.S. Serpa Pinto, a Portuguese ship, and we came to the United States," she said.

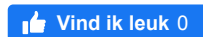
In 1941, Warsinger was reunited with her parents in the U.S., and the family later moved to D.C. And so did the rabbi who had lived above them.

Reach reporter Jordan Gass-Pooré at jordan.gass-pooré@scripps.com or 202-408-1490. SHFWire stories are free to any news organization that gives the reporter a byline and credits the SHFWire. Like the Scripps Howard Foundation Wire interns on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).



About Jordan Gass-Pooré - Spring 2015

Jordan Gass-Pooré is a Spring 2015 reporter for the SHFWire from Texas State University.



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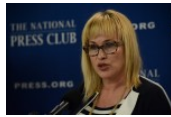
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