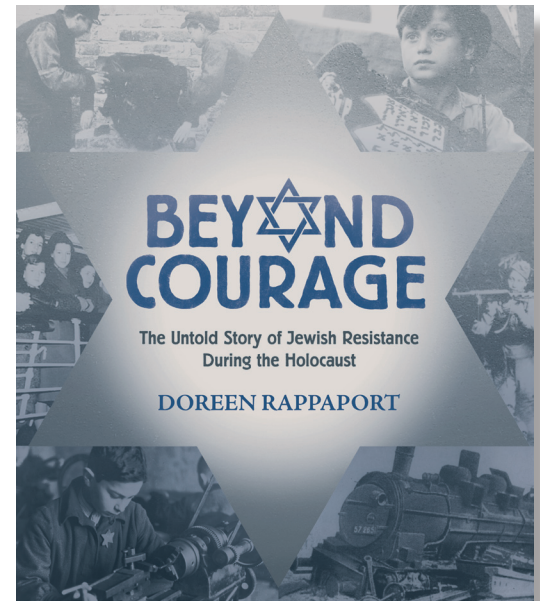


BEYOND COURAGE

The Untold Story of Jewish Resistance
During the Holocaust

BY **DOREEN RAPPAPORT**

In this stirring chronicle, Doreen Rappaport brings to light the courage of countless Jews who organized to sabotage the Nazis and help other Jews during the Holocaust. Under the noses of the military, Georges Loinger smuggles thousands of children out of occupied France into Switzerland. In Belgium, three resisters ambush a train, allowing scores of Jews to flee from the cattle cars. In Poland, four brothers lead more than 1,200 ghetto refugees into the forest to build a guerilla force and self-sufficient village. And twelve-year-old Motele Shlayan entertains German officers with his violin moments before setting off a bomb. Through meticulously researched accounts — some chronicled here in book form for the first time — Rappaport illuminates the defiance of tens of thousands of Jews across Nazi-occupied Europe whose weapons were courage, ingenuity, the will to survive, and the resolve to save others or to die trying.



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Vocabulary

Before students read the book, be sure they are acquainted with the following words. Distribute this list to the class and have students find the definitions, or divide the list and have small groups work together on finding definitions for their portion.

Aryan	<i>Kindertransport</i>
collaborator	<i>Kristallnacht</i>
concentration camp	labor camp
death camp	Nazi
deportation	partisan
forced emigration	pogrom
ghetto	shtetl
Holocaust	transit camp
Jewish Council	Zionist

Responsive Writing

Ask students to write a journal as they read the book, noting their thoughts and feelings about what they are reading. The students should not just be summarizing what they read but articulating their own personal responses. Encourage them to consider the different types of resistance described in the book. Ask them to explore such questions as, Which forms of resistance were new? Do you think you might have participated

in any of them? Students may share from their journals if they would like.

Discussion Questions

Part One: The Realization

1. Why did the author begin the book in Germany? How did Jews in Germany react to the events described in this section? Why were some of the decisions they had to make very difficult? What do you think you would have done in their place?
2. How was *Kristallnacht* a turning point for the Jews? For the Germans?
3. Why do you think the author chose the title “The Realization” for this opening section? Would you have chosen a different title? If so, what would your title be?

Part Two: Saving the Future

1. In what countries do the stories in Part Two take place? What does that tell you about the changing situation in Europe between 1938 and 1942?
2. Compare and contrast the situation of Jews in Eastern Europe with those in France, Belgium, Holland, and Greece.
3. What do the five stories in this section have in common? How do they give meaning to the title of this section, “Saving the Future”?

Part Three: In the Ghettos

1. Ghettos served a number of purposes for the Nazis. What were they?
2. What made it so hard for the Jews to resist what was happening? In spite of the difficulty, what were some of the ways the people in these ghettos resisted?
3. Some Jews in the ghettos became collaborators. What does this term mean? Why do you think they made this decision? What were the pressures they faced?
4. On page 65, there is a map that shows the changing boundaries of the Warsaw ghetto. Examine these boundaries. What do these changing boundaries illustrate about what was happening to Warsaw's Jews?
5. What did Abba Kovner, commander in the Vilna ghetto, mean when he said, "It is better to die as free fighters than to live at the mercy of killers" (page 96)?

Part Four: In the Camps

1. What were the different types of camps? What did they all have in common? How were they different?
2. One of the escapees from the 20th transport, Simon Gronowski, was only eleven years old. How do you think his experience differed from that of other escapees?
3. Throughout the war and during his imprisonment in concentration and labor camps, Israel Cohen practiced his faith, praying to God and even celebrating Hanukkah. How is this a kind of resistance?
4. Uprisings in the camps were unlikely to succeed, but they were attempted nonetheless. Doreen Rappaport writes that Leon Felhendler "preferred dying while attempting escape to letting the Nazis decide when he died" (page 158). Do you agree with his viewpoint?

Part Five: Partisan Warfare

1. Most of the stories of partisan warfare describe very unequal forces. Do you think that the Jews who rose up in the forests, ghettos, and camps believed they could win the military battles? If not, why did they fight?
2. What weapons did the partisans use? Where did they get them? Aside from guerrilla warfare, what were some other acts of partisan resistance? Explain by referring to one of the stories in the book.
3. Ultimately the defeat of the Nazis required the intervention of the Allied armies. Even though no single instance of armed resistance described in the book defeated the Nazis, in what ways might you consider these acts of resistance to have been successful?

After Completing the Book

1. Resistance always requires courage, but there are many different types of courage and resistance. The aspects of resistance covered in this book include preserving individual dignity, saving children, spiritual resistance, documenting the truth, and armed resistance. Give examples of each from the book, referring to the individual stories.
2. The author entitled her book *Beyond Courage*. What do you think that title means? Does the title accurately reflect the themes in her book?
3. What have you learned from this book that you did not know before you read it? Be specific. Which ways of resisting were new to you? Which acts of resistance do you think you might have participated in and why?
4. First-person accounts are invaluable in helping us understand what really happened to people. But what is the danger of re-creating history only from these accounts? What tools can a historian use to assure accuracy? How do you think this author assured accuracy? Students might study the entries in the bibliography for the individual chapters.
5. Some people who resisted the Nazis were not themselves direct targets; they were not Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, or members of other groups the Nazis were attempting to exterminate. Why do you think Joop Westerweel in Holland, Sister Marie-Aurélie in Belgium, Franciszek Bobrowski in Belorussia, or Jean Franklemon and Robert Maistriau in Belgium chose to endanger themselves and their families by helping Jews?

Nonfiction

The following questions can be used as discussion or writing prompts to encourage students to delve deeper into the book and to consider the many different components of nonfiction writing.

Interpreting Photographs

Photographs tell stories, too. Study the photographs on pages 2, 3, 58 (top), 104, 168, 169, 176, and 177.

1. What events do these photographs describe? What would you guess was each photographer's intention in taking the picture? Was that intention achieved?
2. Why do you think the partisans had themselves photographed in the midst of such life-or-death situations?
3. The Germans spent a lot of time photographing the war with the intention of documenting their victories. Look at the photograph on page 77, taken during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Some people believe this is an image of defiance

despite the fact that the uprising failed to save Warsaw's Jews. Why might they think that? What do you think?

Interpreting the Written Word

Every author of nonfiction tries to develop a structure to illuminate his or her theme or themes.

1. What was your first impression of the book based on its title and cover?
2. How did author Doreen Rappaport organize her book? How does this organization illuminate the various aspects of resistance she is presenting? Is her structure effective, dramatic, logical? Explain your thoughts using examples.
3. The author writes, "History and the written word are paramount to the Jewish people" (page 81) and includes many examples in her book. The book opens and closes with the poem "I am a Jew," written by an eleven-year-old boy deported to the Theresienstadt ghetto. Why might the author have chosen this poem for both the opening and closing? How does this poem relate to the concept of resistance?
4. Each section begins with a poem. Why do you think the author included these poems? What does each poem suggest about the section you are about to read? What emotions does the poem reveal about the situation of the writer?
5. Emmanuel Ringelblum was determined to create an archive of diverse documents that would tell the world about what happened in the Warsaw ghetto and Poland even if he and others were dead. What does such a wide-ranging collection of material convey about the era? Why might Rabbi Huberband have wanted to collect jokes (page 84)? What emotions did David Graber express in his will (pages 85–86)? For further study of the Ringelblum Archives, students can explore the websites and books mentioned on pages 215–216.
6. What is the message of the excerpt of "The Partisan Song" on page 167? Listen to the whole song sung in Hebrew on tinyurl.com/cdhk2uw. Even if you don't understand Hebrew, how does the song make you feel? Why do you think this became one of the most famous songs to come out of the resistance during World War II?
7. The stories in *Beyond Courage* are only a few of the many stories of people — Jews and non-Jews — who resisted the Nazis during the Holocaust. Why is it important to tell these stories? How does learning these stories affect your understanding of the Holocaust and the behavior of those involved in it?

Further Investigation

There is extensive bibliographical material, including websites, at the end of the book that can be used to expand the study of the Holocaust and resistance to it. These suggested projects are designed to encourage students to do their own investigative work and research.

1. Just because a historical event took place and is documented in textbooks and on film does not mean that it was inevitable, that it *had* to happen. This concept is sometimes overlooked. The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act. Why didn't world leaders help sooner? What could they have done? How could that have changed the course of history?
Have students explore these questions by researching the similarities and differences in the way world leaders responded to the wars in Bosnia, Darfur, and Rwanda and the 2011 uprisings in Egypt and Libya. Invite students to present their findings to the class.
2. Have students make their own videos illustrating what they would like people to remember about what they learned about resistance during the Holocaust.
3. *Beyond Courage* focuses primarily on Jews who organized themselves to resist, but as mentioned in some of the stories told in the book, some Christians also participated in resistance activities. Go to the "Righteous" section of the Yad Vashem website and research Christians who helped Jews.
4. In some ways the Holocaust was a unique event. In other ways it resembles situations at other times in other places during which huge numbers of people have died and/or been killed. Many people believe that the lesson we must learn from studying the Nazi Holocaust is that we each have the responsibility to resist injustice and make the world a better place for all people. For example, according to its charter as quoted on its website, Doctors Without Borders "provides assistance to populations in distress, to victims of natural or man-made disasters and to victims of armed conflict. They do so irrespective of race, religion, creed or political convictions."
What are some other organizations with goals focused on bettering the world? Have students research different organizations and create a visual display that shows what each organization does, its goals, how it raises money, how funds are used, and what sort of results it has produced.
5. In her introduction, Doreen Rappaport writes, "I will continue my journey by adding other resistance stories to my website. I hope you will consider this book a first step in your own journey of exploration and discovery, and I invite you to continue traveling with me at www.doreenrappaport.com." People she suggests further for research include Gisi

Fleischmann, Hanka Folman, David Gur, George Kadish, David Knout, Shulamit Gara Lack, Anny Latour, Faye Schulman, and Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandel.

6. Visit a Holocaust memorial or center in your city or see if there is an educational arm that will visit your school and share its programs. Inquire about interviewing survivors. If you don't have a center, you can contact the U.S. Holocaust Museum and ask if they know of someone you could interview by Skype or e-mail.

Resistance Calendar

As you move through the year, you can refer to this Resistance Calendar and feature one of the stories in the book that takes place during that month. You will notice that certain dates are exact; others list only the month, because historians have been unable so far to pinpoint their exact dates. Some additional details not found in the book are included here per the author's research.

JANUARY

- January 30, 1943: Ernst Fonthelm goes underground in Berlin.
- January 1944: Sarika Yehoshua organizes her all-girl partisan unit.

FEBRUARY

- February 11, 1941: Jewish youths in Amsterdam attack pro-Nazi sympathizers.

MARCH

- March 17, 1944: One hundred Jews escape from the Koldichevo labor camp.

APRIL

- April 19, 1943: Three resisters stop the 20th transport from Brussels to Auschwitz.
- April 19, 1943: Warsaw's Jews begin their twenty-seven-day uprising.

MAY

- May 18, 1942: Resisters attack the Soviet Paradise exhibit.
- May 20, 1943: Jewish partisans rescue fifteen girls from the Convent of the Nursing Sisters of the Blessed Sacred Heart in Brussels.

JUNE

- June 1944: Marianne Cohn writes her poem of defiance, "I Will Betray Tomorrow, Not Today."

JULY

- July 1942: The CDJ (Jewish Defense Committee) is organized. It begins activities in September 1942.

- July 1943: Vitka Kempner and two compatriots blow up a German troop train.

AUGUST

- August 1943: Seven hundred members of the Bielski encampment evade German forces.

SEPTEMBER

- September 26, 1943: Two hundred fifty Jews escape from the Novogrudok labor camp.

OCTOBER

- October 14, 1943: More than three hundred sixty-five Jews rose up and attempted escape from the Sobibor death camp.
- October 7, 1944: *Sonderkommandos* blow up Crematorium 4 in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

NOVEMBER

- November 10, 1938: David Zwingermann and Horst Löwenstein rescue twelve undamaged Torah scrolls.

DECEMBER

- December 18, 1942: The boys in Theresienstadt's Home One inaugurate their secret magazine, *Vedem*.
- December 1944: Israel Cohen observes Hanukkah in Kaufering IV labor camp.

About Doreen Rappaport

Doreen Rappaport is an award-winning author known to educators, parents, children, and young adult readers for thirty-eight fiction and nonfiction books that celebrate multiculturalism, the retelling of folktales and myths, history, the lives of world leaders, and the stories of those she calls "not yet celebrated." She received a lifetime achievement award for the writing of nonfiction from the *Washington Post* and the Children's Book Guild.

Beyond Courage, her most ambitious project to date, took more than six years to research and write. Of this work, she says, "How Jews organized themselves in order to survive and defy their enemy is an important but still neglected piece of history. I present a sampling of actions, efforts, and heroism with the hope that I can play a role in helping to correct the damaging and persistent belief that Jews 'went like sheep to the slaughter.'"

Doreen Rappaport and her husband, Bob Rosegarten, live in upstate New York.

This teachers' guide was written by Betty Ann Ross, former coordinator at the Educational Resources Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York, in consultation with Doreen Rappaport.



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