

30

First Place
Div. 11
PROSE

"Remains of The Holocaust"

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Our bus finally stops at the "Museum of Modern Art". My teacher explains that we are coming to view the work of Alina Szapocznikow.

"Why are we not talking about Anne Frank"? I inquire.

"We are already familiar with Anne Frank and her story" my teacher states.

"I thought we were learning about the holocaust." I rebuke.

"Alina lived through the holocaust and it is her chance to share her story with us today."

My teacher concludes.

We walk around the museum and I am instantly drawn to one of her sculptures called "Souvenir I" which combines a photograph of Alina's summertime memory with her father and a photograph of a deceased women from Bergen-Belson. At first I am not sure how to react to the art piece. Should I recoil from the portrayal of the atrocities that took place, the horrors and undeserving deaths Alina had to witness, and the terrifying fact that humans have the potential to be by far the scariest monsters out there. Or should I rejoice in the fact that through understanding of these past events in history we can make the world a better place and learn from our mistakes. The words of Szapocznikow draw my attention to the placard beneath the art piece, "of all the manifestations of the ephemeral the human body is the most vulnerable, the only source of all joy, all suffering and all truth." My teacher walks over and notices my puzzled gaze.

"She found peace and happiness through sharing the truth about her suffering." My teacher shares.

We all meet back up and our teacher gives us a little background on Alina. In 1926 Alina Szapocznikow lived in Kalisz a Polish town. She was part of a medical family and that is what protected her during the Holocaust because she worked alongside her mother as a nurse at these internment camps. In her younger years Alina alongside her mother and brother were sent to the concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen. Life at Bergen-Belsen was unimaginable, inmates were overworked, starved to the point of emaciation, and disease spread like wildfire.

Alina and her family were also interned at the Lodz and Pabianice ghettos. At the Lodz ghetto around 164,000 Jews were interned here. Like many of the other camps and ghettos disease due to poor conditions served as one of the main killers. Many were deported from Lodz to their death at Chelmno. 320,000 people died at Chelmno this was the first place where Nazis used gas to exterminate the Jews.

“Imagine how horrifying it would have been to witness these events and grow up in such a toxic environment.” My teacher ponders.

After the war Alina forged identity papers to move to Prague thinking she is the only one in her family to survive and not wanting to go back to Poland. Alina pursued art more specifically sculpture. Later on she was reunited with her mother. Like many Holocaust survivors returning to their old homes and ways of life were impossible because after losing their families and being persecuted due to their faith it made it hard for them to feel safe within that old way of life. The psychological effects that the Holocaust had on Alina are apparent through the horrifying art she displayed.

“Thank you class for attentively listening to the story of Alina Szapocznikow! My teacher exclaims.

We all cram onto the bus and it makes me imagine how cramped it felt for the inmates at these camps. As the bus starts I think of the innocent children who were forced onto gas vans thinking they were being driven away from the horrific conditions they had been trapped in for who knows how long and then only to be unknowingly gassed when the engine started. They did not notice the special design of the vehicle how it was an airtight mobile gas chamber.

When I arrive at my house I decide to take a nap with Alina's story still heavily on my mind. In my dream I am met by Alina herself. She grabs my wrist and drags me alongside her. I look around and see rooms filled way over capacity. I hear coughing, screaming and crying. I smell a mix of body odor, vomit, and fecal matter. I watch as walking skeletons fight for scraps of food.

Me and Alina stop beside a table where her mother is examining one of her patients. The site is terrifying a sick, and emaciated man lay before us. Alina grabs her fellow Jews hand and tries to comfort him while her mother messes with several syringes and bandages. I watch as Alina and her mom stuff some food into the patients blue striped pants.

"Eat it slow." Alina advises.

"Try to make it last." her mom adds.

Alina takes me outside and I watch as a guard shoves a man who is holding a shovel to the ground. A younger boy runs up beside the older man and pleads with him to stand up. Go the older man says. The boy races off and so do we. After a while I hear a gunshot go off in the distance. I pray it was not the man we had seen earlier.

We go to a wooded area and the ground is covered densely by the dead bodies of children and mothers. I wake up from my dream shortly and then fall right back to sleep. I look around and see Alina but she is no longer 16, she is much older. She is crouched over sculpting her dark

hair covering her face. She finishes the sculpture and it looks exactly like what I viewed earlier at the museum. A tear falls from her eye as she takes a look at her finished product. I look at her and understand fully how much of herself she puts into her art. Her art is an outlet for all the trauma she faced during the holocaust.

She never talked about what she endured growing up as a Jew. For many victims of the holocaust they found it difficult to talk about the past without reliving the horrors they faced. Even after Bergen Belson was liberated due to how emaciated and sick they were many died shortly after. Those who survived carry their stories with them every day.

I turn in my bed and wake up briefly again but I am slowly dragged back into the dream once more. I look at Alina and she is Lying in bed looking at a photo of her father. She reaches for her sheet and coughs straight into it. She pulls the sheet away and blood droplets stain her white sheets. Her cheeks are rosy and throat is sore from coughing. The setting changes drastically and Alina is older maybe in her 40's.

She looks to me and whispers "thank you."

"For what" I question.

"For letting me be heard and hopefully you have learned some valuable lessons." She ends with.

I wake up from my dream and I decide to do some more research on Alina and the holocaust. Bergen Belson was liberated by the British on the 15th of April in 1945. Szapocznikow's father died of Tuberculosis in 1937 and Alina survived tuberculosis through a treatment but died of cancer in 1973.

Later in the day I reflect on the research I did on Alina and what I have learned. She is so inspiring she had to face anti-Semitism, the cruelties of man, and the loss of her family and former way of life.

Anti-Semitism was the fuel for the rise of Hitler and the Jews have been a scapegoat for centuries. When the bubonic plague broke out they were blamed for spreading it. They were even blamed for angering god because they were not Christian. Yet again this shows how through prejudices we wrongly put others down and violence is stirred up that can lead to devastating events like the Holocaust.

Like Alina many families were separated and torn apart during the holocaust. Our family and the history tied to it affects not only survivors but their children and their children's children. The trauma of the holocaust flows through each generation. It shapes how survivor's children cope, interact, and identify.

During the holocaust people were stripped of names, practices, jobs, and were treated like objects. They were devalued and without knowing who you are life is difficult to live. Being denied to do the things you feel passionate about and being reduced to a number you lose your direction in life. Religious identity has related content that shapes your values, beliefs, and behavior. It is inspiring that Alina still found direction in life even though she had to struggle with her own image and identity.

Despite how dehumanizing and horrific the events of the holocaust were the survivors like Alina still persevered. The most inspiring thing is Alina went on to do something she felt passionate about even though she faced so many obstacles. She pursued art and shares the traumas of her past through art. Her artwork will preserve a moment in time when people were

bystanders and did not stand up for what was right. Every time her art work is viewed we will be reminded of the effects of the holocaust and through understanding we will be free.

People will also be reminded that no faith is inferior and it should be encouraged that people explore different ways of being and thinking. As a young child it is hard to understand why it is important to learn about the holocaust. Most children want to ignore it because the horrors are unlike anything they have ever been exposed to before. From a young age we are taught to see the good in the world and to continue making the world a better place but it is important to take the bad into consideration. Ignoring the Holocaust is like wanting it to happen again. That is exactly what people did during the extermination of Jews they were all bystanders until people took action to liberate and free them.

Through Szapkinow's resilience I learned that facing your past is hard but it is key to your own development and understanding of the world. Alina does not even realize how impactful her artwork truly is. Her work is displayed in countless museums and has the ability to impact many people. She connects people and families who also lived during this horrific moment in time not only survivors but also liberators. She brings together people who practice Judaism. By viewing the art work of Alina people start to remember their own stories and the importance of sharing them. Although it is difficult and scary to think about through her art they can find the courage to share their stories. They realize they can share their stories in whatever form they desire be it art, song, or poem.

I have always enjoyed art and for the longest time I thought it was about making something pretty that is nice on the eyes but after hearing Alina's story I realized that art can be used to do far greater things. Through art we can capture past memories, events, and traumas and in turn transform them. Art does not have to look pretty it just needs to embody something of

importance. If you can spread a message and convey emotions that impact others through your art, then you have truly learned what art is about.

Alina inspires me to continue to find things I am passionate about, stand up for what is right, and to bring awareness to the tragic mistakes of the past. Alina's art not only brings awareness but it also embodies the dehumanizing aspect of the holocaust. Her art work serves as a memorial in a way that it reminds us of those who were affected by the holocaust. Alina inspires other artists to bring awareness to events and causes they have been impacted by.

Tomorrow may very well be my last. We are outnumbered, famished, and broken. However, to not fight is more of risk than resistance ever will be. It is up to use to choose our own fate. We band across this ghetto, across Warsaw, for more than just freedom. We fight for more than justice. At least I do, anyway.

When I parted with my little sister, I remember the sour trudge through the backdrop of our lives. Warsaw's late November was just as unforgiving as it always has always been, icy wind grabbing at the loose end of our clothes and slush soaking our soles relentlessly. My luggage tripped along stones and snowdrops as I pulled it along beside me. Even with the clock breathing down our necks, the four of us- my parents, sister and I- were all too concerned with taking our time. After all, it was all we had.

When I parted with my little sister, I saw our old bakery on the corner of the main road. Once our neighbors had rushed in the early mornings to the buy best of the new batches; Mr. Bartol, an elderly Christian neighbor of ours, used to wait early for his usual loaf of rye. My school friends would drop in for a "Hello!" and one of Mama's krówki. The smell of bread would loom in the streets and trial my sister and I after a long afternoon of help around the shop. Even though schooldays were ever busy, my schedule weaving between a fine mesh of homework, cleaning, and cooking, the time spent under our warm roof made it all rewarding. The best part of it wall was my little shadow: Elanora. Ela followed me ever since Mama brought her home from the hospital. She had always been as sweet as the sun, and proved nothing but helpful wherever she trailed. I was hard against being an older sister at first, but it was hard not to grow close to someone so sweet. All that remained of those sweet times was a building in shambles, a roof caved in, and, in sight of the impending deadline, our closest friends then only

rushed for their lives. They hugged luggage like family and tugged family like luggage towards the new ghetto.

When I parted with my little sister, I felt the pain of loss like no other. I clutched Mama's arm tightly as our destination rounded the bend. Each step felt sluggish and surreal, almost like my coat was water boarded. I tried to ignore Ela's faint weeping, not because I didn't care, but because I knew it would make me weep too. I've never been sure, but I think Papa did the same.

We reached the steps of a tall brick building almost flush with those alongside it. Only two hurried knocks made the thick spruce door swing inside to reveal a head of thinning blonde hair. A familiar Christian elder flashed a weak smile as Papa shook his hand. Mama left my grasp to envelop the stumpy man in a hug, mumbling something about wishing she had been able to bring some rye as a parting favor to which he chuckled wistfully. Mr. Bartol's wrinkles suggested he smiled often, and even on a day like that day it proved true, even if his grins were grim.

"We must hurry now," he remarked. "I must find a place for her here. I'm already keeping a few others her age with me."

All eyes turned to Elanora, her cheeks strewn with tears. She shook her head madly as she cowered behind my father.

"Please don't leave me here alone. Isn't there another way?" She hiccupped. My mother took her hands, and my father knelt down. They told her this was the only option for her safety. They told her about how the Germans had taken our bakery and then our home. They told her that, considering everything against us over the last few years, there was only a matter of time before they were to take her as well (which I chose not to believe). She was small enough to hide. Limber enough to get away. She could be safe in a world against her. With the will of

thousands, she somehow seemed to understand, and gave a somber nod towards the split concrete.

Then she looked to me. Seeing a thirteen year old like her endure some of the hardest circumstances any child could face was soul shattering. I stared at her for what felt like a long time.

“Joasia...” Ela hushed, looking up at me. “Joa please, can’t you at least stay?” I shook my head, biting back my tears before finally kneeling and reaching inside my luggage. I handed her the only picture of all of us I had managed to salvage from our home. Though I meant to save it for myself, I insisted that she have it to remember what we look like when we came back to her some day. She flashed a small, hopeful grin before pulling me close.

Saying “I love you” for what felt like the last time made me feel gutted. As she was guided behind that thick spruce door, and as Mama guided me back through the street, the bumping around of luggage was all I could really feel.

That has been the only day in the three years we’ve been trapped to this place that I remember vividly. After we left my little sister, we began the walk towards our last home. The ghetto was small and the air felt thicker there. Heavier. Our rooms were crowded, the streets wailed at night as diseases grazed upon us. In our alley side apartment alone were three families not including us. Our rations shrank slowly at first until the sum of my family’s daily bread amounted to about the size of a small dinner for two. Every apartment on my block went without heat in the dead of winter. So many would wake up to their loved ones frozen. The Germans took and they took and took from us people to the point that I didn’t think they had anything left to take. I was angry. Furious. I wanted to riot, and I stood with those around me in the beginning. I saw no reason not to stand up.

But then they started to take the people.

Thousands by thousands they sent nearly all of us away. Neighbors and friends, members of my temple, and strangers with faded faces each vanished. My parents were just the same. I remember my father's condition edged fatality over the course of the winter, and yet he miraculously recovered. I had never seen Mama so happy; she only smiled the way she did as Papa stood up again when the shop was still on our little corner. Her eyes only looked so lovingly as Ela learned to read to her and as I learned to bake with her. Soon after though, a cruel hand dealt them into the next shipment. Not a soul saw anyone on that train again, and confusion waltzed around through whispers and windows. I looked for them in everything: the rations, the cots, the thawing dirt around the confine. I tried to stay positive for them, deluding myself into thinking that maybe Jews like us had finally found a place in the world and that they were just there waiting for me. Waiting with Elanora on the other side... That was when the man came back with the news.

I never met the man myself, but his news erupted across the ghetto. Everyone taken, friends, strangers, family, had met a heartless fate. The cards were dealt, and every man, woman and child feared the hand. Some rioted and perished. More sobbed together. Others crafted ways to get away. I, surprisingly, became quiet. Losing my parents instilled an unfamiliar fear in me. I didn't necessarily fear for my life before then, or at least not consciously. Every day I followed every order and submitted, hoping that I would be spared. I kept to myself even after they finally left the rest of us alone to fumble in our enclosure.

The only ones I seemed to cling to from then until now were the children of the ghetto. Their youth and innocence sent a familiar love through my heart for the time before we were captured. Maybe it was selfish in that they reminded me of my own youth and my lost family,

but I knew I wanted to try to preserve and prepare them for what would happen. I scavenged what I could, taught them, and we supported one another in our own ways as more and more of us fell to unbearable disease and famine. When tensions exploded after word of liquidation, I gripped them and did my best to instill a hope I myself did not have.

Being familiar with most of the youth in my area, it caught me by surprise to hear a few of their soft murmurings well after curfew. I peered out into the alley besides the window, careful not to wake the few others in the room with me. Two of the kids from around the bend followed a slim young woman in dark clothing. She told them to wait back and stepped ahead, and then together they weaved between lurking guards' view. I dared not follow, but the same happened night after night, pitchy murmur after murmur vanishing into thin air from the street. As the ghetto's strain excelled, plans of revolution flourished, and the new doomsday loomed, I couldn't help but to hide along one of their usual paths one week ago from today. The wind bit at the end of my tattered clothes.

Slowly they approached, and as she told the new group (this time a small cluster of kids from the next street over) to wait, I approached and asked them what was going on. Obviously she overheard, as her head whipped around quicker than I could react. I flinched, expecting the worst, but she relaxed, studying me closely. I could sense her cold eyes rolling over my features, feeling as if she could see through me. Through the dark, I saw her eyes go wide.

"Elanora?" She whispered, the word nearly making my bite my own tongue. I stared at the woman, confused. I shook my head, quickly spitting out an introduction and that I had a sister named Elanora. I asked how she knew her only for her to give a warm smile.

"We work together on the outside," the stranger explained. "Ela is one of the best rescuers we have on our team. We work to save our own"

With the clapping of nearby footsteps, the woman quickly rounded up the children and took to the edge of the alley, the air now stagnant. She looked back to me, dumbfounded on the ground.

“She’s still looking, you know. She never gave up. She’s waiting for you, Joasia.”

Tomorrow is the day that the rest of the ghetto revolts. The Germans offer jam and bread to all who go willingly. To those who refuse, they offer an end. Hearing such a sweet girl stay and wait for me broke me. To hear her put herself at risk ripped me into pieces. However, it also saved me. To hear the one I love most, a follower who seemed broken and alone, resists a system that she felt helpless to put things into perspective. In the days following that meeting, I branched out. I talked to the rebels. I bear a weapon and an agenda. For too long I have wallowed under the foot of those who took everything. Tomorrow, I take back the life and family that is mine. I am not alone in this fight. I will endure. I am a survivor.

48

THIRD PLACE
DIV. II
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Loneliness comes over me daily, especially as I reach my older years. I feel a piece of myself missing, and there is, my sister. My other half gone. She would still be here, I know she would, if we never went through the gruesome childhood years the way we did. I dearly wish that no one ever goes through what we went through. We were all just poor children caught up in an insane man's path. No significant reason why, none at all.

Pain, awful pain, that is what I felt when I saw it, the camp. It hit me in the gut and made my heart quench. My body shivered and my lungs begged me to breath. Nothing hurt more than being shoved off of the cold ragged train and landing on the ground, not realizing the ground was covered in bodies. Soulless, innocent bodies and I was in shock, thinking my family and I were next. I screamed a silent scream and ran for my family. I hugged my mother tight, gripping her dress with a fist. She looked at me and hushed me telling me that all would be alright. But I could see the fear in her eyes. I could see she was more scared than me; she did not want to lose her children or her husband. I looked ahead to see lines and lines of people. To my right was the train tracks and to my left there were piles of things. Daily objects one would take on a trip thrown into a pile. Pictures were scorched and clothes torn away. Chaos everywhere. I heard the soldiers screaming words in German but it sounded foreign to me. I did not understand anything happening around me.

A quick 10 minutes went by and my family was soon to be split up. My father was the first to be ripped away from us. He mouthed I love you and that was the last I saw of him. My brother was taken next. He stood strong and tried to show confidence for my mother but they both knew that would be the last time they would look at each other. And then there I was holding on to my mother for dear life; I was crying as I had already lost two family members and could not bear losing another. As the Nazi soldier approached my mother he stood in shock.

He shouted, “Zwilling! Zwilling! Zwei!”

“Is that good? Do they live?” my mother replied with confusion.

To the Nazi soldier this was great news. To me it would be the worst news. It would be the news that would destroy my life and forever change my future. Next thing I knew my mother kissed and hugged me one last time and prayed for me to be my strongest.

Her very last words were, “Stick together. I love you my beautiful twins”.

Twins that is what we were. Two people who were born minutes apart and who looked identical to each other. Twins with a kind of intellectual, subconscious connection. It ponders those who do not understand it but to me it was like icing on a cake. When we arrived at the camp I was in such shock I almost forgot the other half of me holding onto my mother’s other side of her dress. I went blank on the girl next to me but now she was all I have and I cannot lose her too.

There we stood; two innocent little girls shaking in the cold all alone. What would be next for us? Are we going to be separated too? I was not safe and my sister knew it too. But out of the blue this man walks up to us and nods his head as if to say these will be perfect. Doctor Josef Mengele. The man who would forever alter my life in less than a year’s time. He was no doctor for all he did was cause pain and death. Mengele, the “angel of death,” ordered us to be sent with the other twins to begin the next step as soon as possible.

Twins, there were so many. I did not know there could be so many other twins. Each one of us frightened as our worlds were being flipped upside down. My sister and I sat in the cold church looking building feeling safer knowing we were not alone. But deep down I felt alone. I felt abandoned and terrified.

Dr. Mengele waltzed in standing tall and confident. He began ordering us to load up to head to our next location. He glanced over all of us, sometimes smiling and sometimes frowning. I hold on to my sister, grasping her hand tight enough to break it. We arrived at the our “new home.” It looks nice but it feels unsafe. There is barb wire fencing surrounding the building and it all looks grey. As I walk I almost feel better but only for a split second. The halls have pictures and the rooms have nice beds and toys. I think for a second that all is going to be alright. And it was for a while.

Dr. Mengele is not that bad after all. He brings us candy and takes great care of us. I even call him my uncle. The older twins watch over us and make sure we have everything we need and Uncle Mengele harms anyone who tries to do any bad to us. I feel more safe and welcomed as time goes by. I am happy with my sister by me.

I, I, I feel... scared. Today, in my gut, I knew that disaster was on its way. A sense of coldness filled the halls. The smell of fear surrounds me. It is Monday. This is the second week all of the twins and I have been here. The scientists abruptly walk into our room and guide me and my sister to an all-white, cold, blank room.

“Take off your dress and anything under it!” the scientist demanded.

I am in shock. I do not wish to take of my clothes. I do not wish to stand here naked and cold. But I do it. The scientists begin walking around us and examine our bodies. I wish to hide away and not let anyone stand there and look at me like I am some sort of animal. I stand here in the room for eight hours. I am so tired. I think that maybe today was just like an extensive checkup and it will not occur again. But I am wrong and I will know this very soon.

Tuesday, I am shaken awake. The guard drags me out of the room and away from my sister. I am told to get in line and wait for my turn. Wait for what? What am I next in line for? I am strapped to a chair. My right arm is tied off and the nurses tell me they just need a little blood. But they begin taking more than just a little. They take a lot. I feel faint. I am weak. I think it is over now. Finally, I can go and rest and hug my dear sister. Wait, there is more. The nurses begin sticking needles in my arm and start injecting an unknown solution in my body. What is this. I panic. I want to scream. I pass out.

Today is Wednesday. I have just woken and I do not feel very well, but I will not say anything. I could get in trouble. It is the second day of the examination. I begin to realize that these tests will not be over for a very long time. My sister and I stand for another eight hours naked and cold in front of strangers who examine us like we are guinea pigs. My sister does not know what happened to me yesterday. I do not wish to tell her. She must not know how I feel. I am strong. I know I will be alright.

Thursday, I am taken into the mysterious room with the nurses again. I sit down in the dentist like chair and just accept the fact there is no fighting the procedures anymore. I feel worse today. My body burns and my head is pounding. The nurses go to take my blood but stop. They immediately call the doctor over. He tells them to rush me to the hospital. I felt sick but I did not know how bad. I have a fever of 105 and sores forming on my body. Once I am at the emergency room Dr. Mengele comes to visit me. I hear him whispering with the doctor about my condition. Hospital doctor explains, "She is very sick. Her fever is unbelievable high and her sores are unknown."

"What a shame," Mengele says, "She is so young. I hate to have to take such a young life away."

“I give her two weeks, and if she is not better she will die,” Mengele says with a slight grin over his face.

I act like I did not just hear my own death sentence. I try to ignore what was just discussed between the two doctors. I must get better, if not for me but for my sister. I know what happens to the twin sibling that does not make it. If one poor soul dies the other of the pair does too. Many times twins disappear in the building. I hear stories of one twin who became ill dies and Mengele takes care of the other twin in a gruesome way. I hear he takes them on a nice care ride around the country and tricks the twin into feeling safe. Then he shoots them in the back of the head. The poor innocent life is taken. Mengele kills the other twin only to tear the body apart and compare it to the other twin who died of sickness. Knowing all of this I definitely cannot die. My sister will not die because of my health failing. I must keep fighting.

Today marks two weeks. I am not better. My fever has stricken me so ill that my body has gone numb. I fear for what is to come next. I strive to survive. I pull myself out of bed with the little strength I have and drag myself across the cold cement floor to the water spout. One drink is all I need. As the cold crisp water touches my lips I go limp and completely hit the floor. My fever broke immediately after. I began to gain my strength back and feel much better for my near death condition.

Weeks pass by and I feel much better. The testing began again once they saw my health rise. It goes on for weeks on end. I will never find out what substances were injected in my body. All the research about this is will be hidden away and much of it is destroyed. When I had fallen sick my poor sister was taken in my place for the injections. Little did we know that the serum shoved into her body would cause her, her life.

I have grown tired of this work done on me. I am in agony. Twins keep disappearing around me left and right. I have lost track of time that I have spent in this dark dungeon like place. Today is different though. Today we are set free. Out of the blue Russian soldiers come marching into the building. They rescue us. Only 200 out of the 3,000 set of twins survive. We march out in striped jackets to notify that we are free. I will not see my family again but I have my sister here with me now and that is all I need. Our names are Eva and Miriam Mozes and this is our survival story of the Holocaust.

26
HONORABLE
MENTION
DIV. 11
PROSE



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Holocaust Contest

Slavery refers to a condition in which individuals are owned by others, who control where they live and at what they work. Slavery was any system in which principles of property law are applied to people, allowing individuals to own, buy and sell other individuals, as a de jure form of property. A slave is “unable to withdraw unilaterally from such an arrangement and works without remuneration.” (Brace). According to Kevin Bales, “Slavery is theft- theft of a life, theft of work, theft of property or produce, theft even of the children a slave might have borne.” Slavery has always existed throughout history, in many times and most places. As time progressed, slavery evolved into another form, not racism, but religionism and it is called the Shoah (Holocaust).

Although the Shoah was religious slavery, there was one German-Jew that helped African-Americans throughout slavery. Albert Einstein traveled to Lincoln University and gave a speech in which called “Racism... a disease of white people... I do not intend to be quiet about it” (Gewertz). Einstein has sensitized to racism by the years of Nazi-inspired threats and harassments he suffered during his tenure at the University of Berlin. Holocaust was a period in history at the time of World War Two (1939-1945) when millions of Jews were murdered because of who they were. (What). Just like slavery, the Holocaust had abolitionists also. During slavery, the most famous African American abolitionist was Harriet Tubman. But during the Holocaust, this American couple did not receive all of the glory that they really deserved from America like Harriet Tubman.

Martha and Waitstill Sharp, American Unitarian aide workers, helped thousands of Jews, intellectuals, and children in Prague, Lisbon, and southern France in 1939–1940. (“Martha”) The

Sharps are inspirational to me because they showed that putting others first no matter what can free one of all limitations. Before the Holocaust, Waitstill Sharp was born in 1902 and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1926. Martha Ingham Dickie was born in 1905, and studied social work at Northwestern University, training at Jane Addams' famous Hull House settlement. They met each other in 1927 and married in 1928. Waitstill returned to Harvard and graduated from the Divinity School in 1933, which was appointed as a Unitarian minister. While Waitstill graduated from the Divinity School in 1933, Einstein was in the United States when the Nazis came into power in 1933, and, fearful that a return to Germany would place him in mortal danger, he decided to stay, accepting a position at the recently founded Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, N.J. Meanwhile, after Waitstill and Martha gave birth to their two children in Meadville, Pennsylvania, they moved to a new congregation in Wellesley Hill, Massachusetts.

After the Nazis took power in 1933, Germany began to demand the "return" of the ethnic German population of Czechoslovakia—and the land on which it lived—to the German Reich. ("Martha"). In late July, early August 1938, Hitler demanded appropriation of the Sudetenland, a border area of Czechoslovakia containing a majority ethnic German population. On September 29-30 at the Munich Conference, "the leaders of Britain and France agreed that Nazi Germany could annex this territory in exchange for Hitler's pledge not to wage war. Czechoslovakia was not permitted to attend the conference. Unitarians in the United States, who had close ties to Unitarian churches in Czechoslovakia, were stunned by the news. Unitarian leaders in Prague soon became inundated with political dissidents, Jews, and other refugees fleeing Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland, who sought refuge in free and democratic Czechoslovakia." ("Martha") The American Unitarian Association (AUA) opted to organize a reassurance effort to

refugees in Czechoslovakia. Robert Dexter, the director of the AUA Department of Social Relations, traveled to Europe to evaluate the situation. After Dexter realized the current state of affairs, he recommended that the Unitarians strive to help the Jews and other anti-Nazi Germans from the Sudetenland, Austria, and Germany.

The AUA asked Waitstill and Martha Sharp to travel to Prague to assist refugees with \$40,000 to support them on their journey. After the Sharps accepted to go to Czechoslovakia, they left their two children with a close friend in the congregation. They set sail to Europe on February 4, 1939. In between the travel, Martha and Waitstill Sharp would stop and set up a network of volunteers and agencies over the next six months as they traveled in and out of Prague. A little after the Sharps got to Czechoslovakia, the Nazi conquered and occupied the state. After Czech's president surrendered without chaos, the Sharps' need escort to get to their job. In Czechoslovakia, Martha's job was to focus on individual immigration cases, while Waitstill focuses on the relief projects they been sent to lubricate.

For the next six months, "...the couple assisted refugees with immigration paperwork, distributed relief money, and goods, and helped refugee intellectuals find employment in the United States... Much of their activity involved individual cases, though, on one occasion, Martha escorted 35 refugees—journalists, political leaders, and orphaned children—to England, concealing their identities from Nazi authorities along the way. She also cooperated with British organizations to gather children for Kindertransports"("Martha"). Because there was a conference in Switzerland, Waitstill had to leave Prague six months later. When he wanted to return to Prague, the Germans would not let him, Martha joined him a week later. When the Sharps decided to sail back to the United States, World War II began in Europe. "After the

Sharps left Europe, the AUA's Robert Dexter and his wife, Elisabeth, embarked on a 10-country fact-finding mission. This mission led to the establishment of the USC (Unitarian Service Committee). The Sharps, the Dexters, and Unitarian minister Charles Joy are considered the five founding staff members of the Unitarian Service Committee." ("Martha"). In May 1940, they went back to Europe but sent to France as Unitarian Service Committee's Ambassadors Extraordinary. Also, Einstein became an American citizen in 1940, while realizing that African Americans in Princeton were treated like Jews in Germany and how the town was strictly segregated. There was no high school that blacks could go to until the 1940s. But before they could get to France, the German Nazi had already taken over the country. In addition to, the Sharps opened an office in Lisbon since thousands of refugees were escaping to neutral Portugal, hoping to find safety and a ship to take them to the United States or other places outside of Europe.

Because the Unitarians office stayed open during the war, The Sharps, Charles Joy, and the Dexters each staffed the office at various times, and, in collaboration with many other individuals and organizations, helped several thousand people escape. They directly helped a German Jewish novelist Lion Feuchtwanger. Although Martha gave up her ticket to Feuchtwanger to go to New York, she went to Marseilles which was the primary port in unoccupied Vichy France from which refugees could escape. In Marseilles, Martha focused on milk distribution to French children and organized a children's transport to the United States. Martha diligently fought "numerous bureaucracies to secure exit visas, transit permits, and identity papers for 29 children and 10 adults. She sailed from Lisbon with two of the children and four adults in early December 1940. The others followed on a second voyage. Martha's

organization of the children's transport became a model for the United States Committee for the Care of European Children, which brought several hundred children from France, Spain, and Portugal to the United States during World War II". In the aftermath of WWII, Einstein and Paul Robeson, a famous actor and singer, worked together on the American Crusade to End Lynching, in response to an upsurge in racial murders as black soldiers returned home. ("Martha"). During the Holocaust in 1963, Yad Vashem had orthodox the title of Righteous Among the Nations to honor non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

The story of Martha and Waitstill Sharp was an inspiration to me because they were selfless people that knew that their lives were going to be in danger by rescuing Jewish people out of the Holocaust, but they did not care. They said "[i]f we had a chance to go back in time to do things differently, we wouldn't. We would do everything the exact same". That inspired me because I know that no matter how bad things are, being selfless and deciding to put others lives ahead of your own is not always a bad thing. This empowers me with an act of courage that reassures me that I should always pass the ability to perform the same actions with no limitations.

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