

VOICES IN THE VOID

Recommendations for further reading/ viewing

Books and Essays- Nonfiction

- ***Beyond the Shadows: The Holocaust and the Danish Exception*** Judy Glickman Lauder, 2018
- ***Reflections on the Holocaust*** Humanity in Action (ed. Julia Zarankin), 2011

Films- Documentary

- ***Lampedusa in Winter*** Jakob Brossmann, 2015
- ***Fire at Sea*** Gianfranco Rosi, 2016
- ***Flee*** Jonas Poher Rasmussen, 2021
- ***The Albanian Code*** Yael Katzir, 2021
- ***Two Trees in Jerusalem*** Humanity in Action, 2022
- ***My Father's War*** Humanity in Action, 2022

Humanity in Action Projects

- ***Theresienstadt - Danish Children in Nazi Captivity*** Solvej Berlau, 2004
- ***The Refugees*** Sara Ridder, 2016
- ***Radio Transit*** Nefeli Myrodia, 2016
- ***To Those Who Die at Our Borders*** Armin Wühle, 2016
- ***Trampoline House visits Roskilde University - Why do we need an asylum system in Denmark?*** Julian Lo Curlo & Federico Jensen, 2017
- ***Welcome Everyone*** Verena Riedmiller, 2018
- ***Humanizing the Refugee Experience*** Anna Linh Müller & Daniel Buchman, 2017
- ***Statefree.World*** Christiana Bukalo, 2021
- ***Leaving no one behind*** Iason Apostolopoulos, 2021

Additional Resources

- ***Oral history interview with Bent Melchior***
Interview by Dr. Judith Goldstein, June 1996
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Speech by Danish Ambassador and Consul General in New York, Anne Dorte Riggelsen, on the occasion of the 75th Commemoration of the Rescue of the Danish Jews, 2018

This very month, we are marking the 75th anniversary of the Rescue of the Danish Jews – a commemoration that inevitably begs the questions of what exactly it means to keep the memory of this particular historic event alive today.

WWII, as we know, changed Europe for the worse. The unfathomable and horrific fact of the Holocaust itself, which saw the systematic genocide of European Jews across so many countries and cultures, continues to cast its long, dark shadow on a continent which had – up until then – prided itself as the birth place of enlightenment ideals and of modern liberal democracies.

As such, we are able to appreciate today the full extent to which the mass atrocities of war-torn Europe, committed against Jews and other minorities in particular and humanity at large, constituted nothing less than the murder of the European soul itself. With this irretrievable loss of innocence, Europe forever lost its right to serve as moral leader of the free world, of incarnating the aspirations of mankind towards ever higher standards of humanity.

And yet, both this unbearable history of war crimes and the more isolated stories of individual acts of humanity and hope of those who found the bravery to stand up against them, still lives on today. And nowhere else do they live on more vividly, more fervently, than here in the City of New York. Within the at once local and global communities of all of you sitting here at our table tonight, as well as within the American Jewish community at large. For this heavy-hearted, yet absolutely invaluable, burden of witnessing, of carrying forth the memories of lives lost, of entire peoples, nation states and continents failing their moral responsibility – I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

This simple act of bearing witness, of keeping individual memories as well as unique family histories alive, remain more important today than ever. This weekend's act of hate-driven violence and mass shootings so close to here in Pittsburgh, makes the necessity of this responsibility univocally clear. The Jewish community of New York, and of the US more widely, has always demonstrated the ability to persevere and thrive within the context of a diverse culture.

Within this grander picture of things, the story of the rescue of the Danish Jews in October 1943 can seem to hold only diminutive weight. And yet, we need to light the torch of hope – however small, or distant – whenever we can find meaningful reason to do so.

Among other things, the unparalleled story of the Danish Rescue operation and the extraordinary civic resistance that went into its success, reminds us exactly that the moral choices of individual human beings does matter; that seemingly irreversible paths of history can be reversed – or, if nothing else, momentarily halted or barred from unfolding in their full-blown ugliness.

Individual acts of humanity, as we learned at the symposium earlier today, takes courage, compassion and trust. It takes a naked willingness to risk the things we value most – our safety, our livelihoods, sometimes even our lives – by standing up for our beliefs, our value systems, our institutions, our fellow human beings.

This may sound like a job description that only invincible super heroes can hope to fulfill. Yet, the story of the Danish Rescue reminds us that even ordinary men and women are capable of stepping up to the challenge when it really matters, to fight for what they hold dear or what they see as a safeguard of basic decency and societal solidarity. We all need to keep this legacy in mind, in a time when our world is becoming – once again – an ever more unstable and unpredictable place to be. It reminds us of our responsibility to be true to ourselves. And to be true to the values of the communities, societies and institutions we have so painstakingly built over the course of the last seven decades since the end of WWII.

Here, artists along with historians carry a particular responsibility, or rather, I believe, they have a particular role to play: in keeping the memory alive; in continuing to challenge interpretations and re-interpretations of past events; in carrying forth eyewitness accounts (the few we still have left); or producing their own fresh eyewitness accounts, renditions and narratives to bring the past to life – the darkest as well as the most hopeful moments – to serve as the historical consciousness of humanity for the purpose of warning, encouraging and inspiring similar acts of unselfish humanity and basic decency in our present times.

This is exactly what our impressive panel of distinguished scholars, writers and commentators have done at this afternoon's symposium. A big thank you for bringing history to life in all its nuances and complicated repercussions. And an equally big thank you to you, Michael (Glickman), for generously hosting this important event at your Museum, and to Humanity in Action and Thanks to Scandinavia for their continued support. And, last but not least, this is exactly what tonight's guest of honor – Mrs. Judith Glickman Lauder – has done in her impressive body of photography work, which chronicles the sites of genocide and rescue alike."