

# Souls Echo

## Without Ben

By Sharon Hannah Berry

He is a tough act to follow. While we are without Ben on this earth, his voice and spirit echoes, "We have a lot of work to do". It was my father Ben's wish that we continue his mission of Holocaust education and set up a foundation in his mother's name.

Hannah Ida Urman (born Chaja Ajdla Urman) was Ben's mom. Growing up, we did not hear stories of the horrors Ben suffered. Countless times, we only heard the story of a young boy walking to fetch water in the freezing cold weather. When he would arrive home, his mom would place his freezing hands between her legs to warm them. My father was a young boy when the Nazi's invaded his home town, and he was taken from his mom and siblings and placed in forced labor and then concentration camps. Despite the suffering of the Nazi's cruelty, torture and starvation, Ben hung on to the touch and warmth of his mother and never let it go throughout his life. It was both his life vest, and a torment that fractured his soul.

As the first girl born in our family, I was given the middle name of Hannah. My dad would often tell me that I looked like his mom. While it is an honor to resemble and carry the name of my grandmother, it is bittersweet. When I think of my grandmother, I cannot help but feel her heartbreak beneath the suffering, the indignation, the worries and the horrible sense of loss she had to have felt. And when I think of her murder and the murder of most of her family, I'm struck with a terrible pain and sadness I cannot truly describe. These should not be the memories anyone has to bear, but the reality is, like far too many others, they are mine and they are what I'm left with. No tender moments. Not even a photograph. Nothing, except her incredible spirit lifting mine as we move forward to help make the world a place that will resist evil at every turn.



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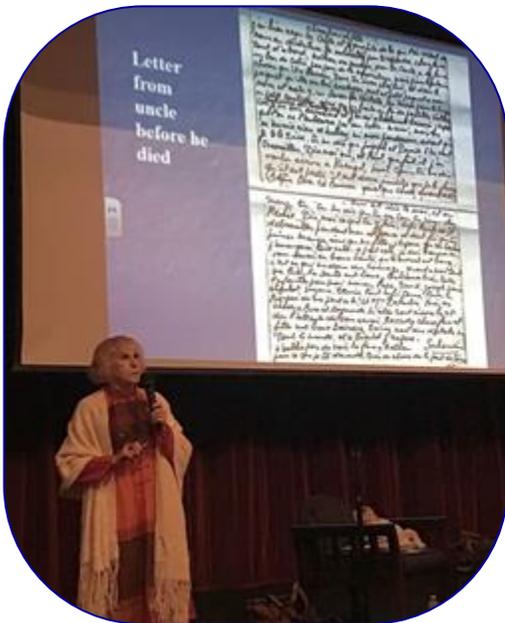
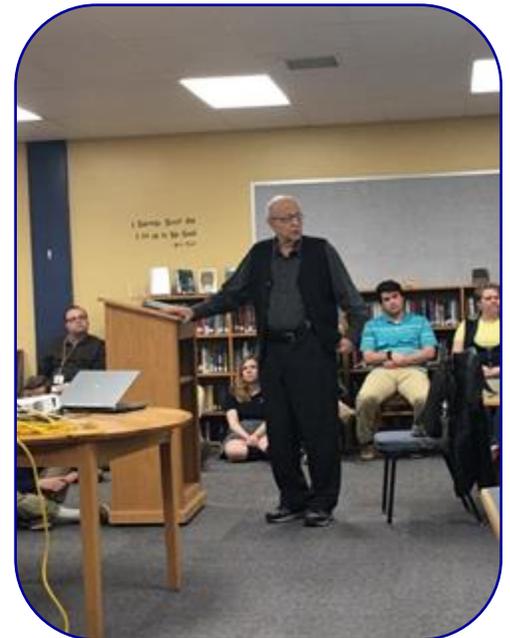
Of Blessed Memory  
Holocaust Survivor Ben Fainer  
May 1, 1930 to May 17, 2016



Holocaust Memorial Wall at Helias Catholic High School in Jefferson City, Missouri, where three different survivors have spoken to students the past five years -- thanks to the school and teacher Sarah Kempker.

## Survivors' Testimony

Dr. Ram Levy shared his story with Helias Catholic High School Students. Dr. Levy and his family lived in Samokov, Bulgaria – with a population of 700 people of the Jewish religion. His parents were Sephardic Jews, whose ancestors settled in the Ottoman Empire following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Once again, his family suffered occupation, ghettoization and life-threatening events; they escaped deportation in Hitler's Final Solution by the intervention of King Boris III.



Hidden child survivor, Rachel Miller, shared her story with Parkway North High School Students. Her father and uncle were imprisoned in Drancy Camp outside Paris; both died as Hitler's guinea pigs, as he tested poisons to annihilate as many people of the Jewish religion and other "undesirables" as possible. Rachel's mom sent her away from the city to summer camp and changed her name and identity to a non-Jew. Shortly after she was sent away, her mother and her sister were captured by the Nazis.

Board members Sandy and Barb (one of Ben's daughters and dear friend respectively) facilitated these programs and had the honor of spending time with each survivor. More photos and information on Mrs. Miller's and Dr. Levy's stories can be found at <https://www.hannahfound.org/photo-gallery>.



Rund envisioned a day that would recognize the millions of people the Nazis systematically persecuted. After many years of effort, On January 3, 1996, he “*laughs and cries Hallelujah*” as he read the letter stating that German President Roman Herzog was declaring January 27 as Holocaust Remembrance Day – commemorating the same day in 1945 when the Red Army liberated the Auschwitz concentration camp.

## A Pioneer in Holocaust

An Interview with Emanuel Rund

Over 40 years and across three continents, Emanuel Rund has produced, directed and shot close to 200 films on a wide array of topics, including 30 documentary and feature films about the Holocaust and the creation of Israel. As a historian, journalist or filmmaker, he has spoken at countless lectures or events and authored several books. In 1980, he was among the pioneers, who started making films about the Holocaust, which turned out to be his major life's work. He has created dozens of films for the Israeli and U.S. governments, has acted as publicist on Israeli-Jewish advocacy and public diplomacy, and is keynote speaker on *Defender of Jerusalem & Jewish People* and *The Rise of Anti Semitism and Anti Israel on Campuses*.

*Mr. Rund, it a honor to talk with you about your life's work and Holocaust education.*

**Was there an event or catalyst that drew you to Holocaust documentary film making?**

My father was a Holocaust survivor, who escaped death by fleeing Berlin Germany and moving to Israel, where I was born in 1946. When I was seven years old, my father took me to visit "Martef Ha'Shoah," the "Holocaust Basement" on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, which was the first Holocaust Museum. I saw the lampshades made by Ilse Koch -- the sadistic wife of the commandant of Buchenwald, who had prisoners killed to use their skin for those barbaric lampshades; I saw a bar of soap made from the fat of human corpses. I could not fathom how these events could have happened. Those images stayed with me. As I grew up I wanted to learn more; however, I learned there were virtually no educational resoures. This prompted me to create films to share with the world.

**1961** – Skipped school to go to the trial of the notorious Nazi, Adolph Eichmann, in Jerusalem, where he knew the prosecutors and met a number of survivor witnesses

**1967** – In Jerusalem, he worked for the Israel radio and TV and transmitted and recorded the original "Jerusalem of Gold" song in May 1967. During the Six Day War defending Jerusalem, he was amongst the first targets shot at by the Jordanian Army

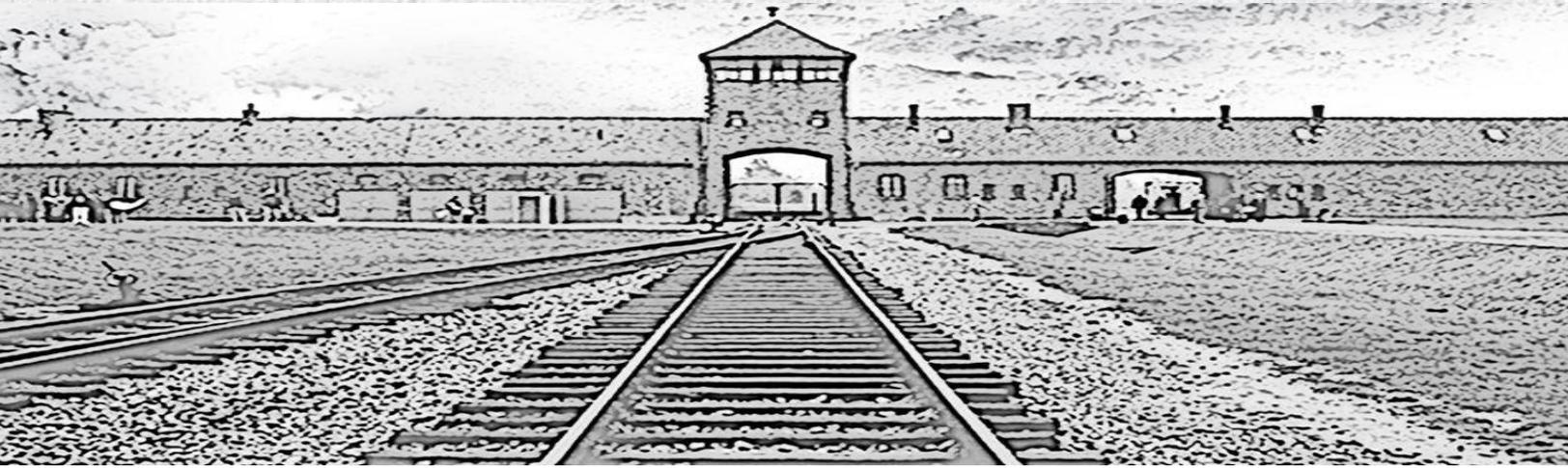
**1985** – Hunted Nazis in Germany and worked with the department in Tel Aviv that hunted and kidnapped Eichmann from Argentina to Israel

**1992** – *Alle Juden Raus* (All Jews Out), a film written and directed by Rund, receives Oscar nomination for foreign long documentary film

**1996** – Initiator of January 27 Holocaust Remembrance Day

**2005** – UN embraces January 27 as International Holocaust Remembrance Day worldwide

*Continued on page 7*



*Without Ben - Continued from page 1*

Each time I see newly found resources in the Holocaust groups, I dive in to look for family information and photos. I found a photo of Ben as a young boy, and included it on the web site. Setting up a non-profit, is a process – follow the steps, pay the fees . . . Creating a web site is another story. Researching our family history, the Nazis and how humanity crumbled and failed was gut-wrenching. In this process, however, we found a cousin in Israel, Ben’s childhood friend Hirsch, learned about his Great Aunt Molly, and made many new friends whose families are from Bedzin and the Zaglembe region. And after many months, tears, and discoveries, we went live – [www.hannahfound.org](http://www.hannahfound.org) (These stories are on our web site, along with more information).

There are many foundations that use “found”, short for foundation, as part of a web site domain name. For us, “found” is a soul’s echo. In each utterance of Hannah Found, whether in print or voice, Hannah’s memory echoes --her young life of approx. 30 years, her three young children, parents, friends, six millions Jews, and millions of others, who suffered and were murdered by Hitler are found and remembered. As Ben’s memory candles, we have a responsibility that the lessons of the Holocaust are not forgotten.

Yet memory is not a constant. It is permanently reinterpreted and differs in its time and place. The research of the United States Holocaust Museum has found that “one-half of the world’s population has never heard of the Holocaust, and one-third of the other half, denies it occurred.”

A comprehensive study by the Claims Conference found a significant lack of Holocaust knowledge in the U.S. Specifically, 41% of Americans and 2/3s of Millennials have never heard of the Holocaust. Of the 40,000 camps and ghettos during the Holocaust, 49% of Millennials cannot name one.

(<http://www.claimscon.org/study>).

Two years ago, Ben died on May 17th. In the Jewish religion, May is the month of Sivan. Spiritually speaking, it represents the Torah being given to Israel, and for Messianic believers, the giving of the Holy Spirit; it is a month when we acknowledge that time itself is rooted in the Biblical Calendar with its divinely inspired cycle of festivals – celebrating life and death. And while we are without Ben, his memory and legacy endures, and “we have a lot of work to do”.

*“The Survey found there are critical gaps both in awareness of basic facts as well as detailed knowledge of the Holocaust, and there is a broad-based consensus that schools must be responsible for providing comprehensive Holocaust education.”*

*-- Claims Conference Study*

Built in 1881, the Great Synagogue of Bedzin was set on fire September 8, 1939, five days after the Nazi invasion; many people were locked inside the synagogue and died. The town population was approx. 60,000, and 50% was Jewish, who practiced their religion in two synagogues and 80 Shtetls.



View from side/ back of Synagogue before the fire completely destroyed

## Upcoming Programs

### *“Summers of Death”*



### *“Through the Eyes of Youth: Life and Death in the Bedzin Ghetto”*

This exhibit tells the story of several young children and how they fought to survive in Bedzin, Poland during and after the Holocaust.

Forced into a cramped ghetto, the entire Jewish population was eventually deported into extermination camps. The youth of Będzin struggled with growing up amid violence, hatred, and loss, while still trying to find small joys in life.



### Events Dates and Further Details to Follow on our Web Site and Facebook Page:

In this presentation, Holocaust survivors and an educator will share the activities of the Nazis during the summer months of selected years of the Holocaust.

Karl Hoecker and women from the auxiliary services of the SS and SS men from the KL Auschwitz camp at Międzybrodzie Białskie (a SS holiday resort) located in the immediate vicinity of the Auschwitz II-Birkenau concentration camp.

After their revelry, these smiling faces would return to Auschwitz and killing people – some days 10,000 people per day.

Bedzin Holocaust survivor Doris (nee Szpringer) and her husband Ralph Martin are the founders of the Martin-Springer Institute at Northern Arizona University. The Exhibit, which includes Doris’ story, was created and curated by a faculty-student team under the mentorship of Dr. Bjorn Krondorfer, Director of the Martin-Springer Institute. More information is available on their web site <http://bedzinexhibit.org/>.



## *“We Sponsor Education, so the Holocaust is Never Forgotten”*

In the U.S., 12 states have laws on mandatory Holocaust education -- CA, CT, FL, IL, IN, MI, NJ, NY, OH, PA and RI. Outside the U.S., eight countries have mandatory Holocaust education -- Austria, France, Germany, Israel, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, and the U.K.

## Teach to Remember

By Liane Holliday-Willey, Ed.D.

There was a time when people told stories to their children and their children’s children about moments in history that held people hostage to grotesque ideology that became reality. Among the worst marks on history was, of course, the Holocaust. Survivors and their families, liberating soldiers, the media and educational institutions shared the nightmares brought to life by the Third Reich in candid and strong words and images. They also shared their hopes for a promising tomorrow built on kindness and grace. Those days of remembering and building worlds to keep history from repeating itself are dwindling at alarming rates. Holocaust education is falling to the wayside through every channel we used to use to keep it pertinent, to keep its return safely guarded against. It’s astonishing, but the sad truth is we are yet to live in a world that fails to realize marginalization, intolerance, and exclusion can lead to profoundly horrific events that quite literally spill blood in the streets and cause death to the soul. The political aisles across the globe and chants of hate groups through easy-to-access social media are growing in numbers. In fact, sociologists and other experts tell us organized bigotry is likely to continue to fracture and maim our humanity for many generations to come.

We must exercise our moral and ethical consciousness to close the gates around the lack of education that leads to ignorance that too often translates into horrific actions. We need to rely on the research findings that strongly suggest a solid educational program that brings history to life through field trips to Holocaust memorials and museums, does play an important role in beating back anti-Semitism. We need to support the research that confirms storytelling from our soon to be lost survivors and their torch bearing families and friends, does create a social conscious change within those who listen and learn. We need to empower our young people to believe they have a responsibility to build a future that will never again see murderous strife brought against any group who shares different beliefs.

The Hannah Ida Urman Foundation is dedicated to creating and promoting the healing power that comes when we remember... when we really remember Hitler’s horrors. We welcome individuals and groups to send us their stories, letters, journals, photos, references and any other source of information they may have, so that we can help bring all memories to a place of honor and wide sharing.

*Interview with Emanuel Rund - Continued from page three*

**In the short space of this interview, we cannot touch upon the hundreds of films and other work you have created in the past 40 years. What would you select as your most important and impactful educational projects or films?**

Making the film *All Jews Out* was groundbreaking as a Holocaust film. In 1985, I started filming a couple that were Holocaust survivors and their daughter in New York. A few years later, I escorted that family to their German hometown, Göppingen (near Stuttgart), to attend the 50 year memorial of the Pogrom Night Kristalnacht, when the synagogue was set on fire. I accompanied the then 50 year-old daughter of the Survivors to Terezin-Theresiensatdt Concentration Camp, where her family was imprisoned from 1942 to 1945. This trip formed the basis of the film that follows through Stuttgart a German woman, who was part of the Nazi headquarters, as she tells her point of view of the Terezin-Theresiensatdt Camp. Her statements are juxtaposed with those of the survivors. Also interwoven are interviews of townspeople who had taken part in the events, including the head of the Nazi Party, a fireman, and Jewish survivors; their stories were captured by local students. The film was viewed widely, became an international success, and was nominated for an Oscar for Best Foreign Long Documentary Film. Today, it is still used as an educational resource.

Then, making the sequel to the film *Until When* was a project of reconciliation, friendship, and healing. I organized a tour for the young Germans from Leer to visit the Holocaust-era deported Jewish emigrants from their hometown. They heard nostalgic uplifting stories from the first generation of survivors; they discussed German-Jewish relations with children of survivors, and they play basketball with the third generation – grandchildren of survivors. They took part in the "Yom Ha'Shoah ceremony at Yad VaShem in Jerusalem. They returned to Germany well-informed, with a higher sense of responsibility for social and just causes and fewer guilt complexes that plagued them before their visit. There were several who also converted to Judaism.

**Why do you believe Holocaust education is relevant and needed?**

First and foremost, Holocaust education pays tribute to the memory of the millions of victims of the Holocaust.

Through Holocaust education, a vow is reaffirmed to counter antisemitism, bigotry, racism, and other forms of intolerance. These problems did not cease when WWII ended. In fact, all are on the rise today across college campus and society at large. Recent studies show that Holocaust knowledge is lacking in the U.S. and around the world. It is through looking at human behavior and the collapse of basic morals during the Holocaust, we can peer into the roots and results of prejudice, racism, and stereotyping in any society. If mankind does not learn the lessons from the Holocaust, the same mistakes are doomed to be repeated.

*Rund is available as a keynote speaker and consults on a myriad of film production capabilities. Many of his films are available as educational resources. You can view his interviews on YouTube and follow his events on Facebook. To arrange events or film screenings, he can be reached via email at [filmmmy@aol.com](mailto:filmmmy@aol.com).*

In response to a question on the Claims Conference Study findings, Spielberg said that Holocaust education “should be part of the social science, social studies curriculum in every public high school in this country.”



In April, at a panel discussion marking 25 years since the release of *Schindler's List*,

## Looking Forward

Watch for details on upcoming events to be posted on our web site [www.hannahfound.org](http://www.hannahfound.org) and social media. 

You Can Play a  
Role in  
Continuing  
Ben's Mission

Interested in a field trip to a local Holocaust Learning Center, a remote visit by a Holocaust Survivor or another educational program, please contact us.

We believe that facilitating Holocaust educational programs that share the human stories of those who suffered and died enables communities to bond together and strengthen their commitment to preventing future genocides. We believe it is imperative to honor the blessed memories of those who were killed.

If we overlook the facts that Hitler changed the laws of Germany to persecute and then systemically kill more than 7M humans based on his religious, racial and other discriminations, we defy morality.

If we forget the atrocities of WWII when 70M other people who died or were physically or emotionally injured as a result of military activity, crimes against humanity, and war-related famine, we lose our humanity.