

The HOLOCAUST in The SOVIET UNION



ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
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Activity: Rescue

GRADE LEVEL: 7th-12th Grade

SUBJECT: Multidisciplinary

SUGGESTED TIME: 45 minutes

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

Why would someone risk helping a Jewish person survive?

RESOURCES: [Holocaust in the Soviet Union Educator Resources](#)

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Ask students how they think people were able to survive the Holocaust in the Soviet Union. Point out that many people who survived did so with the help of someone else
2. Ask students what risks someone took to be a rescuer, and what their possible motivations could be.
3. Read the testimonies of 2 survivors:
 - a. Zoya Nikiforovitch
 - b. Anastasia Kapustinskaya
 - c. David Chernyahovskiy
 - d. Riva Valitskaya
 - e. Matus Stolov
4. Focusing on how others helped them. Ask the students:
 - a. Who helped them survive?
 - b. How did they do so?
 - c. Why do you think the Rescuer made the decision to help the Survivor?

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5. Share and discuss as a class.
6. Ask students to write a letter to one of the Rescuers telling why their story was particularly meaningful to the student and why that story should be told.

Extension Activity:

Just outside Illinois Holocaust Museum, the Michael and Jacqueline Ferro Fountain of the Righteous pays special tribute to those named by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations – non-Jewish individuals and families who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. A peaceful place for quiet reflection, the fountain is encircled by plaques that honor the Righteous. To date, the Museum has honored 71 people, including 8 from the former Soviet territories, for their heroic and courageous efforts to rescue Jewish refugees during the war and continues to celebrate the Righteous Among the Nations. Yad Vashem (<https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?searchType=all&language=en>) currently honors over 27,000 people, including over 250 from the former Soviet territories.

1. Ask students to read the biographies of those from the former Soviet territories who have been honored as Righteous at Illinois Holocaust Museum's Ferro Fountain. [Click here for bios.](#)
2. Have students identify who they were, what they did, and what might their motivations had been for their actions.
3. Why do you think the numbers of Righteous Among the Nations are so low compared to other countries?