

Questions raised by Quora readers, related to the Holocaust, each followed by my response:

Does anyone have a family member who died in the Holocaust?

I can probably list about 50 close relatives who were killed, but it would be better if I showed you a picture of three of my first cousins, and a poem I wrote about them a few years ago on Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day:

Lawn Chairs

Holding the photograph in my hand
I imagine what it would be like
for the four of us
to be sitting together on lawn chairs,
me and my cousins,
reflecting together on our lives,
on sixty or more years of living,
reflecting together on life and its lessons.

What stories we share,
Shmuli, Aliza, Zama, and me,
reclining in our lawn chairs,
smiling at our memories.
The different paths we chose,
our successes, our failures,
our children and grandchildren,
our loves, and our losses.

I look at the picture again.
The lawnchairs are there,
but only three and quite small.
They are occupied by smiling children,
Shmuli, Aliza, and Zama
leaning forward in their lawn chairs
and smiling toward the futures
that they never had.

So I sit alone on my lawnchair
on this spring day of remembrance
with feet dangling as in the picture
and wonder if I lived their lives as well as my own.



During the Holocaust, were there any sympathetic Germans towards Jews?

There were some Germans who opposed the Nazis and who helped Jews, but there were too few of them, in part because the risks were very high; if you were caught you would be executed.

However, it is important for people of conscience to be prepared to take risks to resist unjust and immoral governments.

Two inspiring Germans I particularly want to mention are Sophie and Hans Scholl. They were a brother and sister who were students at the University of Munich and members of a non-violent resistance group called White Rose. They were executed in February 1943, a few days after they were caught passing out anti-Nazi leaflets at their University. Sophie was 21 and her brother was 24.

As we commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day (April 12 this year), it is important that we also remember these heroes.

Several films have been made about them, and you can find information about them and White Rose on the internet.