



Life After The Holocaust: Trauma, Guilt, and Remembrance



The End of World War II

- With the defeat of the Nazi regime in 1945, the Holocaust ended.
- The Holocaust had killed 6 million Jewish men, women, and children.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ of Europe's Jewish population was gone.



Aftermath

Many of the survivors of the Holocaust feared staying in Europe and moved to the United States.

“Between 1945 and 1952, more than 80,000 Holocaust survivors immigrated to the United States,” (United States Holocaust Museum, pg. 1)



Aftermath

- Many Jewish survivors had no home to return to. Jewish homes were either destroyed or stolen.
- Jewish communities and institutions were wiped out.
- Having to live among residents that helped in the Holocaust and among the reminders of what had happened in their communities added to their trauma.



Trauma

For survivors of all ages, the emotional trauma of the Holocaust, quite obviously, did not end at liberation. In the quest for a new life survivors often suppressed the trauma they sustained during the Holocaust. Despite their best efforts to “move on;” however, they could not escape a host of emotional and psychological difficulties. Survivors carried their ghosts with them. In fact, the trauma of the Holocaust affected the genetic make-up of survivors and some researchers have shown that through "epigenetic inheritance" this trauma (and the psychological disorders that come with it) can be passed on to their children and grandchildren.

(The Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program)



Guilt

- Many of the survivors lost loved ones and family members in the Holocaust
- Survivor's guilt was something a lot of survivors had to face.
- The guilt of having survived while others didn't was just a part of the trauma.



Remembrance

- A lot of survivors share their stories through books, memoirs, interviews.
- Generations later their stories are not forgotten.
- We remember the Holocaust because it happened and we remember the victims.
- Part of the Jewish identity



Remembrance

- To honor the victims of the Holocaust, January 27th is International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- “Memory is what shapes us. Memory is what teaches us. We must understand that’s where our redemption is” -Estelle Laughlin, Holocaust Survivor

References

“About Life after the Holocaust” *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*,
encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/about-life-after-the-holocaust.

“Surviving the Aftermath of the Holocaust.” *The Holocaust Survivor Memoirs Program*,
memoirs.azrielifoundation.org/articles-and-excerpts/in-the-aftermath-of-the-holocaust.