

## Over 1,000 NJ Public Schools Receive New Holocaust Curriculum

New materials portraying Jews who fought against all odds will assist schools in fulfilling state Holocaust/Genocide Teaching Mandate.

NEWARK, NJ—According to Dr. Paul B. Winkler, Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education, many students ask why the Jews did not do more to resist the Holocaust during World War II. This is not surprising, since the majority of Holocaust education materials focus solely on the devastation that took place in ghettos and concentration camps. In an effort to present another perspective, Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation (JPEF) has created innovative educational materials about the Jewish partisans—armed resistance fighters during the Holocaust. New Jersey is the first state to recommend these new materials to all of its middle and high schools.

“These excellent materials will assist the students of New Jersey in learning a vital concept of Holocaust education—that of resistance,” said Dr. Winkler. “This is an important aspect of our recommended curriculum.”

In 1994 New Jersey became the second state in the country (after Illinois) to require its schools to teach about the Holocaust through a legislative act. JPEF is the only organization that has developed educational materials on the Jewish partisans for this audience. JPEF has created a unique multimedia curriculum of



As many as 30,000 Jewish partisans like the young people who hid in forests and other outlying areas, took up arms against the Nazis. Photo courtesy of Jewish Heritage Museum, New York.

printed study guides, a series of original interviews and short films—all tied together through an interactive Web site. The Commission is recommending these materials to every middle and high school principal in the state at the beginning of September, prior to the beginning of the school year. They are also ordering 100 DVD's from JPEF and posters to distribute to classrooms around the state.

“We are thrilled that New Jersey is leading the way to educate more young people about this aspect of history that has often been overlooked,” said JPEF Executive Director Mitch Braff. “This information has the power to transform people's perception of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust. This is also very relevant to teens who are the same age as many of the partisans they will be studying.”

## National Jewish News (continued)

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JPEF's mission is to develop and distribute effective educational materials about the Jewish partisans, bringing this celebration of heroic resistance against tyranny into educational and cultural organizations.

According to JPEF, 30,000 Jews fought back against the Nazis as partisans. Many of them were teens, and they either formed all Jewish units or joined non-Jews in fighting against the Nazis. They set up bases in the forests of Eastern Europe and in the mountains of Southern Europe. With little access to food and shelter, these brave souls succeeded in saving thousands of Jews and helped the war effort by destroying thousands of Nazi supply trains, power plants and factories.

Following are examples of the Jewish Partisan materials available to New Jersey schools for the first time this year:

- **Study Guides**—Downloadable study guides are available on a variety of topics from how partisans lived and survived to women and antisemitism in the partisans. There are also biographies about various partisans, both men and women. All biographies have video clips associated with them, so students can hear the experiences firsthand, as well as read primary sources through their transcripts.
- **Short Films**—Narrated by Larry King and Ed Asner, JPEF's films are 3–7 minute documentaries reflecting upon aspects of Jewish partisan life, from daily survival

to an introduction to the topic. Each film brings a curriculum to life with interviews and rare footage from Soviet and Italian archives.

- **Live Speakers**—Several partisans are currently living in New Jersey and are available to speak in classrooms to give students a first-hand account of what happened. “I like speaking to the young people because they are the future,” said former partisan Eta Wrobel of Fort Lee, New Jersey. “We will not always be here to tell our story about what really happened. We need to make the young people aware that together we can make a better world.”
- **Website**—The Web site—[www.jewishpartisans.org](http://www.jewishpartisans.org)—features the ability to ask a panel of six former Jewish partisans any question, explore an underground partisan bunker in 3-D, watch short films, download study guides, and much more—all free of charge for teachers and students.

“I am very excited to receive this information from the New Jersey Holocaust Commission,” said Lori Perez, who teaches AP European History at Livingston High School in Livingston, NJ. “The most vital lesson we can teach our students is that even in ostensibly the most hopeless of circumstances, ordinary people have the ability to take charge of their lives to accomplish extraordinary goals and direct the course of history.”

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