



# From Documentation to Social Media: Empowering Students To Analyze (Mis)Information

Barbara Arfa Professional Development Conference on Holocaust Education

March 19, 2023

## PRESENTERS BIOS

**Michael Berenbaum, PhD:** Michael Berenbaum is the Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust and a Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies at the American Jewish University. He is a writer, lecturer, and teacher. He consults internationally on the conceptual development of museums and the development of historical films about the Holocaust. In the past, he has served as a distinguished visiting professor at universities across the nation and beyond.

He was the Executive Editor of the Second Edition of the Encyclopaedia Judaica that reworked, transformed, improved, broadened, and deepened, the now classic 1972 work and consists of 22 volumes, sixteen million words with 25,000 individual contributions to Jewish knowledge. He was also a contributing editor to the Encyclopedia of Genocide.

Dr. Berenbaum's professional distinction and recognition in establishing, sustaining, and developing major Holocaust institutions spans the globe. He also served as historical consultant for numerous documentaries and films about the Holocaust and is the author and editor of twenty-two books, scores of scholarly articles, and hundreds of journal articles. He is also the recipient of numerous awards and is recognized as a pillar and pioneer in multiple areas of Holocaust research, documentation, education, and memory.

**Steven Fisher:** Playwright Steven Fisher grew up Catholic in Delaware County, so writing a play about a boy in a Concentration Camp might not be something you'd expect, writes Jarrad Saffren for The Jewish Exponent. But circumstances led Fisher to "The Last Boy," which opened for two weeks off-Broadway in New York July 10. The play is based on the true story of a secret literary society at the Nazi concentration camp Terezin in the Czech Republic. A group of young boys' hand-produced a weekly magazine, Vedem, of poems and prose. The Vedem archives were buried by the last member of the society, Sidney Taussig, and later retrieved.

Fisher, former youth choir director for the Keystone State Boychoir, learned the story when the choir visited Terezin. Intrigued, he later visited Taussig in Florida to learn more. After the choir honored Taussig in June 2019 with a musical performance written by Fisher, the playwright asked Taussig if he could follow up with a play. Taussig agreed. "I just want to see it on Broadway before time does to me what Hitler failed to do," Taussig said to Fisher.

**Felice Cohen:** "What Papa Told Me" was written by the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor. The book tells the story of Murray, a young Jewish boy from Poland whose courage and sheer will to live helped him survive eight different labor and concentration camps in the Holocaust, start a new life in America, and keep a family intact in the aftermath of his wife's suicide. This unforgettable book offers a unique perspective of the Holocaust, and the story is filled with loss and despair, but hinges on hope and survival. This book is taught in schools across the country, has been translated into Polish, and has sold over 35,000 copies around the world. Felice is also featured in two documentaries focusing on grandchildren of survivors. She splits her time between New York City and Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

**Karen Kruger:** In the summer of 2019, Karen traveled to Brno and Prague, CZ, and to Cornwall, England to research her mother's past. She spent 3 months working in archives, meeting with experts from the Jewish Museum of Prague and traveling to Terezin and Boskovice, Alexovice and other towns, to trace her mother's 1939 journey from her Brno to England. When Karen returned in the Fall of 2019, she knew that she needed to work full-time on the project. She decided to retire from her school administrator's position and dedicate her time, effort and finances to researching the family history.

Jeffery Gary, a documentary filmmaker, learned of Karen's project and offered to interview/film her to record her recent research trip "while it was still fresh in her mind." During the first 2 sessions of filming, Jeffery realized that the story of Karen's mother's family had all the components of a documentary film and he suggested that she consider telling the story on film first instead of writing a book — which she had originally planned to do.

**Carolyn Herbst:** Carolyn Herbst taught Social Studies in New York City Public High Schools for 37 1/2 years and retired in 2001. She has served as President / Chairperson of the Association of Teachers of Social Studies / United Federation of Teachers, and is still active as its Executive Secretary, Newsletter Editor, and Conference Exhibits Chairperson. She was a Fulbright Scholar in India in 1978. She has served as the ATSS/UFT Liaison to the American Society for Yad Vashem Annual Conference for Educators for a number of years.

**Marlene Warshawski Yahalom, Ph.D.,** is the Director of Education for the American Society for Yad Vashem. She is responsible for educational outreach and programs, professional development, teacher training and traveling exhibitions to raise the public's awareness of the lessons of the Holocaust. She also serves on the Education Advisory Board of the Rose and Sigmund Strochlitz Holocaust Resource Center, Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut, and PRISM: an interdisciplinary journal for Holocaust educators. Dr. Yahalom earned her Ph.D. in Sociology from Columbia University. Her thesis is on "The Role of Archives in Remembering the Holocaust: A Study in Collective Memory." She also taught courses on the Holocaust – History and Collective Memory of the Holocaust, and Holocaust, Law and Human Rights. Dr. Yahalom is the child and grandchild of Holocaust Survivors.