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ARNOLD LIEBSTER
FOUNDATION

www.alst.org

The Florida Holocaust Museum opened its new 27,000 square foot building on February 28, 1998. The Museum is dedicated to teach the members of all races and cultures the inherent worth and dignity of human life in order to prevent future genocides. The Museum's "History, Heritage and Hope" Permanent Exhibition is located on the first floor and uses original artifacts, historical photographs and documents to tell the story of the Holocaust. The history of other victim groups, ghettos and rescue are also presented, including a censored letter from a Jehovah's Witness concentration camp inmate, Anna Maria Denz, to her sister.

EXHIBITION AT FLORIDA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM "JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: FAITH UNDER FIRE"

Florida Holocaust Museum will exhibit "Jehovah's Witnesses: Faith Under Fire" from November 9, 2012 through April 21, 2013. This 12-panel exhibit created by the Arnold-Liebster Foundation premiered at the Florida Holocaust Museum in 2006 and remains a permanent part of their exhibition. The exhibit chronicles the Nazi persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Witnesses' nonviolent resistance to Nazi terror inside and outside the camps. Oskar, Anna Maria, and Anna Denz are the subjects of one of the panels.

ANNA MARIA DENZ CAMP LETTER

The Denz family lived in Lörrach, Germany, near the Swiss border. Anna Maria and her husband Oskar, along with their daughter Anna, were active in underground resistance efforts to smuggle Bible literature into Germany and reports of Nazi atrocities into Switzerland.

Oskar and Anna Maria were arrested by the Gestapo in 1938. Anna Maria was put in prison where she refused to sign the Declaration renouncing her faith. In 1940 she was sent to Ravensbrück Concentration Camp. Because she refused to do work for the military, Anna Maria was beaten and died in January 1942. Oskar Denz died in 1942 after being used for medical experiments in Mauthausen. Anna escaped to Switzerland and survived the war.

Over 60 years later, 42 letters written by Anna Maria and Oskar Denz were returned to Anna. A stranger found the letters and photographs of a young girl in the bottom of a sewing box in the 1980's. She learned about Anna from a newspaper article in 2000 and matched the details to Anna.

The SS imprint on the camp letter from Anna Maria on display at Florida Holocaust Museum states: "The prisoner remains a stubborn Bible Student (Jehovah's Witness) and refuses to reject the erroneous teachings of the Bible Students. For this reason, the privilege to carry on normal correspondence has been denied." Though the letter revealed little about Anna Maria's physical condition to family members, they knew she was keeping true to her religious beliefs.

RAVENSBRÜCK CONCENTRATION CAMP

Built in 1939, Ravensbrück was the largest women's concentration camp. Jehovah's Witnesses were among the first category of prisoners to arrive in the spring of 1939. In the winter of 1941, Witness prisoners refused to do work for the military. As punishment they were beaten, placed on starvation rations for 40 days, and then flogged. The women's concentration camp was expanded several times during the war and a men's camp was added in 1941. Approximately 1,200 Jehovah's Witnesses were imprisoned in Ravensbrück. The camp was liberated in 1945.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN EUROPE (1933-1945)

Jehovah's Witnesses, a Christian community of 35,000 in Germany and occupied lands, refused to conform to the Nazi ideology of hate. They suffered severely for their belief in nonviolence and their utter rejection of racism. Thrown into Nazi camps, they became eyewitnesses of Nazi genocide and were the only group offered a way out of the camps.

Banned – June 1933

Arrested – 12,500

Killed – 2,000

Executed – 370

Children taken away – 500

THE ARNOLD-LIEBSTER FOUNDATION

The Arnold-Liebster Foundation was established by Holocaust-era survivors Max Liebster and Simone Arnold Liebster in January 2002 to educate future generations in the lessons of history. The foundation supports historical research, teacher training, educational seminars, scholarly publications, museum exhibitions, and similar projects. Through these activities, the foundation especially aims to help young people to repudiate racism, xenophobic nationalism, and violence, and to learn to listen to the voice of conscience.

See www.alst.org for more information and resources.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AT FLORIDA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM LIBRARY

- “Facing the Lion: Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe” by Simone Arnold Liebster Unabridged Edition in English, Spanish
- “Facing the Lion: Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe” Abridged Edition in English - Classroom Set of 20 Copies
- “Crucible of Terror: A Story of Survival Through the Nazi Storm” by Max Liebster in English, Spanish
- “Jehovah's Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault” 28-minute Classroom Edition (DVD-English or VHS-Spanish) and Study Guide (English or Spanish)
- “Jehovah's Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault” 57-minute DVD in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Spanish
- “Purple Triangles: The True Story of a German Family” 25-minute DVD in English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Spanish