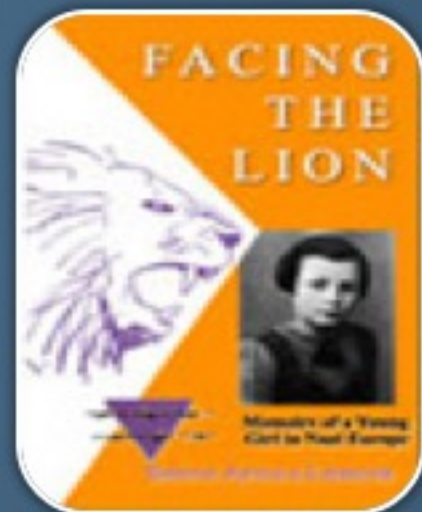


Standing Firm



Overview



- “ Unlike Jews and Sinti and Roma (“ Gypsies”), persecuted and killed by virtue of their birth, Jehovah’s Witnesses had the opportunity to escape persecution and personal harm by renouncing their religious beliefs.”⁽⁴⁾



- Between 1933-1945 about 10,000 witnesses were imprisoned. An estimated 2,500-5,000 Witnesses died in these camps and more than 200 were executed.⁽⁴⁾
- Simone Arnold was a 12-year-old Jehovah's Witness who lived in the Alsace- Lorraine region of France during the Nazi regime. Because she refused to acknowledge Hitler above her God, she faced persecution.



The Issue

- Why was Simone persecuted? The Nazis taught that salvation came from Hitler and that National Socialism was the faith of Germany. ⁽¹⁾ Jehovah's Witnesses believe that salvation is only possible through Jesus as king of God's kingdom. Therefore, Simone was unwilling to give her allegiance to Hitler.

Tests of Her Faith

- Simone's school principal did not like her refusal to say "Heil Hitler". He tried to use peer pressure to get her to compromise. For example, on one occasion he began beating a classroom full of children; telling the children that Simone was responsible for the beatings. But instead of the students being mad at Simone, they encouraged her to not compromise. ⁽¹⁾

Tests of Her Faith

- On another occasion Simone's principal had all the kids stand around the flag pole, with Simone front and center trying to make her salute the Nazi flag. Once again Simone refused to give in to this pressure. ⁽¹⁾

Arrest



- Simone was arrested at age 12 and spent the next two years at a Nazi penitentiary home for girls. She did hard labor and got sick many times. She dreaded the possibility of being sent to prison. ⁽¹⁾.

The Bible



- One of Simone's assignments was to clean the bedsprings of the schoolteacher's bed. She discovered she was able to hide a Bible in the bedsprings. She said "Regular Bible reading eased my inner feelings. I regained confidence in my hopes for the future." (1)

Release

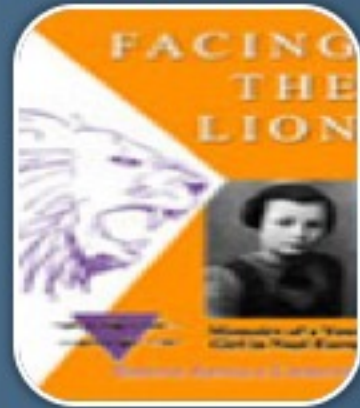
- In April 1945 Simone was liberated and reunited with her parents.



Impact

- Simone Arnold's story is important because it shows that you don't have to be a grownup to take a stand for your beliefs. As Sybil Milton, former Senior Historian of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum said, "Her story is one of hope, strength, and courage."

Resources



- (1) Facing the Lion: Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe by Simone Arnold Liebster
- (2) Arnold-Liebster Foundation
- <http://www.alst.org/index.html>
- (3) [Simone Arnold Interview](#)
- (4) Jehovah's Witnesses Victims of the Nazi Era 1933-1945