

while their own parents—the grandparents we never knew—and all their relatives and best friends often had perished, some before their very eyes. To many of us, our parents seemed like giants, and we felt inadequate, questioning our own ability to survive what they had. They were the living witnesses and embodiment of what we and the world read in history books and saw in films. How could our own experience, our own pain in growing up, not pale in comparison to theirs?

Struggling not with sheer survival as our parents had, but with issues of personal identity, self-worth, and direction, we began wanting to sort out our confused feelings about our parents' experience and how it affected our own. Some of us did not even know where to begin, what to talk about, whom to talk to—particularly if our parents did not want to talk, and we were afraid to ask. Both generations often tried to protect each other from the truth and the pain by not talking about it. When a few children of survivors started to get together only a decade ago to share common experiences and feelings, they finally discovered a place where they could feel safe to reveal the often dark secret of who they were and what had happened to their parents, thereby decreasing their sense of isolation and gaining support and understanding.

In September 1987, five children of survivors gathered at a television studio in San Francisco to discuss with psychotherapist Marta Fuchs Winik their growing up in survivor families. The videotaped interview was called "Generation to Generation: Part II," and shown on local public television and at the Holocaust Center of Northern California in San Francisco. (Part I was an interview with a survivor family; both programs were directed by David Dror and co-edited with Marta Fuchs Winik.) The following is excerpted from Part II, with pseudonyms used for the participants.

Interviewer. I'd like to ask each of you to introduce yourself and tell us how you're a child of Holocaust survivors.

Reuben. My name is Reuben, and only one of my parents is a Holocaust survivor. My father came from eastern Poland, near the Russian border, and he spent part of the war in a ghetto in his village. He then escaped into the woods and survived as a partisan, and later made his way across Europe to America.

Sarah. My name is Sarah. Both of my parents are from Poland. They left their city the first day of the war, went to various places in Poland and then crossed the border into Russia. They spent the rest of the war in work camps in different parts of Russia.

Nina. My name is Nina, and my father is a Holocaust survivor. He is from Germany and was in "Habonim" Jewish youth group] where

he met with other teenage youths and helped Jews to escape into Scandinavia. My grandfather was in a concentration camp and was able actually to get out of the camp and go to New York. He died the day before my father came to America.

Miriam. My name is Miriam, and both my parents were from Poland and were lucky enough to come over to the United States in 1939. My father left about 100 cousins and aunts and uncles who perished in the Holocaust; and my mother left her mother, who died in Auschwitz, and a brother who went to Siberia and stayed there until 1953.

Joel. My name is Joel, and my mother was from Warsaw and my father was from eastern Czechoslovakia. My mother and her family left Warsaw just before the ghetto was formed, and she and her brothers split up from their parents as they were on their way to the train station to go to Auschwitz. She lived on her own for about a year and then eventually ended up in war camps with her brother, and escaped just as the Russians were coming into town. My father was with his family for the first part of the war for several years; they were walking around just trying to survive. Eventually he ended up in Auschwitz, surviving for a year and then was in Bergen-Belsen, where he was liberated.

Interviewer. When did each of you learn about the Holocaust in your family? Do you remember how old you were and how you felt when you first heard about it?

Miriam. . . . I can't remember a specific time, but I can remember being five and already knowing about the Holocaust. I have actual memories of the children that were killed because I would see photographs in my parents' albums and I would ask, "Who are these children?" My mother would say, "They're Daddy's cousins; they were killed by Hitler." . . . That shocked me, and I would think, children killed—why? Who would want to kill them? And then I would invent, in my own mind, these little playmates that I had that would come visit me at night. I had a sense real early of wanting to make up for this loss, of wanting to be the replacement for these children. They were killed and now I was born in America and I could excel for them. They were smart; they were attractive children. And so I really had an early sense that I had to live out a destiny for millions of children. It was just there; it was fragmented. My parents never sat me down. They still haven't to this day; I'm still finding out things. . . .

Reuben. I think I learned about the Holocaust also at an early age, but maybe later than five. Maybe when I started school, or a little later—maybe by seven or eight. But we used to sit around, my whole family, and talk about war stories. There were a lot of war stories on television at the time, and my dad used to tell his stories. They were mostly the funny things that happened to him. In retrospect they