

HOME

ELIE WIESEL

Select Achiever

NOBEL PRIZE FOR PEACE

"ALWAYS question those who are certain of what they are saying."

- Inducted: 1996 -



- The Arts
- Business
- + [Public Service]
- Science & Exploration
- Sports
- Find Your Mentor
- Recommended Books
- Academy Careers

KEYS TO SUCCESS

PROFILE

BIOGRAPHY

INTERVIEW

PHOTO GALLERY

ACHIEVEMENT STORE

Elie Wiesel Biography
Nobel Prize for Peace

Print Biography

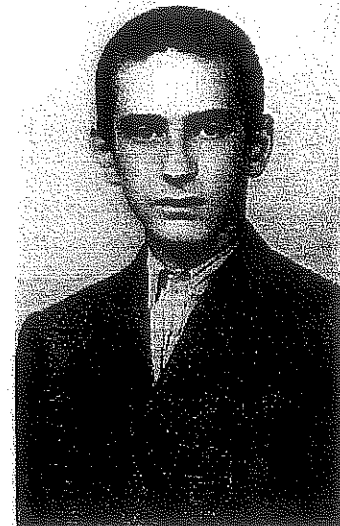
ABOUT THE ACADEMY

Elie Wiesel Date of birth: September 30, 1928

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' STORYTELLER

Elie Wiesel was born in the small town of Sighet in Transylvania, where people of different languages and religions have lived side by side for centuries, sometimes peacefully, sometimes in bitter conflict. The region has long been claimed by both Hungary and Romania and, in the 20th century, has changed hands repeatedly, a hostage to the fortunes of war.

Elie Wiesel grew up in the close-knit Jewish community of Sighet. While the family spoke Yiddish at home, they read newspapers and conducted their grocery business in German, Hungarian or Romanian as the occasion demanded. Ukrainian, Russian and other languages were also widely spoken in the town. Elie began religious studies in classical Hebrew almost as soon as he could speak. The young boy's life centered entirely on his religious studies. He loved the mystical tradition and folk tales of the Hassidic sect of Judaism, to which his mother's family belonged. His father, though religious, encouraged the boy to study the modern Hebrew language and concentrate on his secular studies. The first years of World War II left Sighet relatively untouched. Although the village changed hands from Romania to Hungary, the Wiesel family believed they were safe from the persecutions suffered by Jews in Germany and Poland.



The secure world of Wiesel's childhood ended abruptly with the arrival of the Nazis in Sighet in 1944. The Jewish inhabitants of the village were deported en masse to concentration camps in Poland. The 15 year-old boy was separated from his mother and sister immediately on arrival in Auschwitz. He never saw them again. He managed to remain with his father for the next year as they were worked almost to death, starved, beaten, and shuffled from camp to camp on foot, or in open cattle cars, in driving snow,

FOR TEACHERS

STANDARD-BASED ACTIVITIES

Select Career

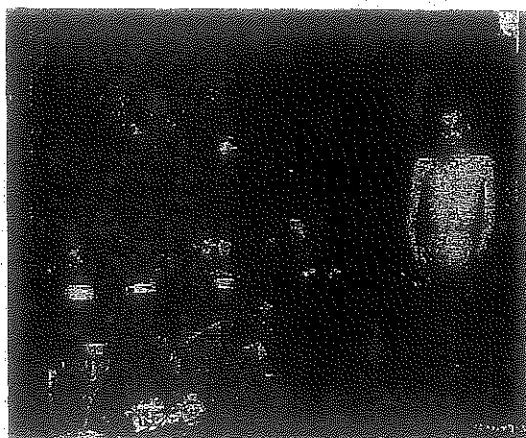
If you like Elie Wiesel's story, you might also like:

- Ehud Barak,
- Mikhail Gorbachev,
- Shimon Peres,
- John Sexton,
- Lech Walesa and
- Desmond Tutu

Elie Wiesel's recommended reading:
The Metamorphosis, In the Penal Colony and Other Stories

Elie Wiesel also appears in the videos:
Making a Better

without food, proper shoes, or clothing. In the last months of the war, Wiesel's father succumbed to dysentery, starvation, exhaustion and exposure.

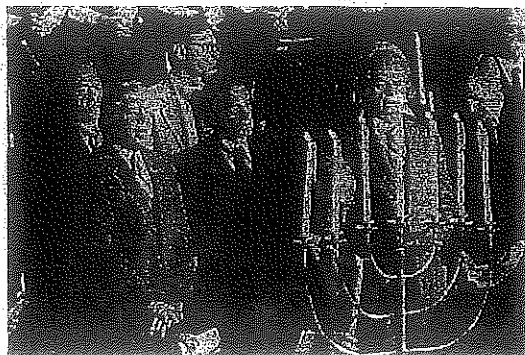


After the war, the teenaged Wiesel found asylum in France, where he learned for the first time that his two older sisters had survived the war. Wiesel mastered the French language and studied philosophy at the Sorbonne, while supporting himself as a choir master and teacher of Hebrew. He became a professional journalist, writing for newspapers in both France and Israel.

For ten years, he observed a self-imposed vow of silence and wrote nothing about his wartime experience. In 1955, at the urging of the Catholic writer Francois Mauriac, he set down his memories in Yiddish, in a 900-page work entitled *Un die welt hot geshvign* (And the world kept silent). The book was first published in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Wiesel compressed the work into a 127-page French adaptation, *La Nuit* (Night), but several years passed before he was able to find a publisher for the French or English versions of the work. Even after Wiesel found publishers for the French and English translations, the book sold few copies.

In 1956, while he was in New York covering the United Nations, Elie Wiesel was struck by a taxi cab. His injuries confined him to a wheelchair for almost a year. Unable to renew the French document which had allowed him to travel as a "stateless" person, Wiesel applied successfully for American citizenship. Once he recovered, he remained in New York and became a feature writer for the Yiddish-language newspaper, the *Jewish Daily Forward* (*Der forverts*).

Wiesel continued to write books in French, including the semi-autobiographical novels *L'Aube* (Dawn), and *Le Jour* (translated as *The Accident*). In his novel *La Ville de la Chance* (translated as *The Town Beyond the Wall*), Wiesel imagined a return to his home town, a journey he did not undertake in life until after the book was published.



As these and other books began to win him an international reputation, Wiesel took an increasing interest in the plight of persecuted Jews in the Soviet Union. He first traveled to the USSR in 1965 and reported on his travels in *The Jews of Silence*. His 1968 account of the Six Day War between Israel and its Arab neighbors appeared in English as *A Beggar in Jerusalem*. In time, Wiesel was able to use his fame to plead for justice for oppressed peoples in the Soviet Union, South Africa, Vietnam, Biafra and Bangladesh.

He has written plays including *Zalmen, or the Madness of God* and *The Trial of God* (*Le Procès de Shamgorod*). His other novels include *The Gates of the Forest*, *The Oath*, *The Testament*, and *The Fifth Son*. His essays and short stories are collected in the volumes *Legends of Our Time*, *One Generation After*, and *A Jew Today*. Although Wiesel still writes his books in French, his wife Marion now collaborates with him on their English translation.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter appointed Elie Wiesel Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. In 1985 he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Freedom and, in 1986, the Nobel Prize for Peace. The English translation of his memoirs appeared in 1995 as *All Rivers Run to the Sea*. Since 1976, he has been Andrew Mellon Professor of Humanities at Boston University. He makes his home in New York City with his wife and their son, Elisha.

“How can a citizen of a free country **not pay attention?** How can anyone, anywhere **not feel outraged?** How can a person, whether religious or secular, **not be moved by compassion?** And above all, how can anyone who remembers **remain silent?**”

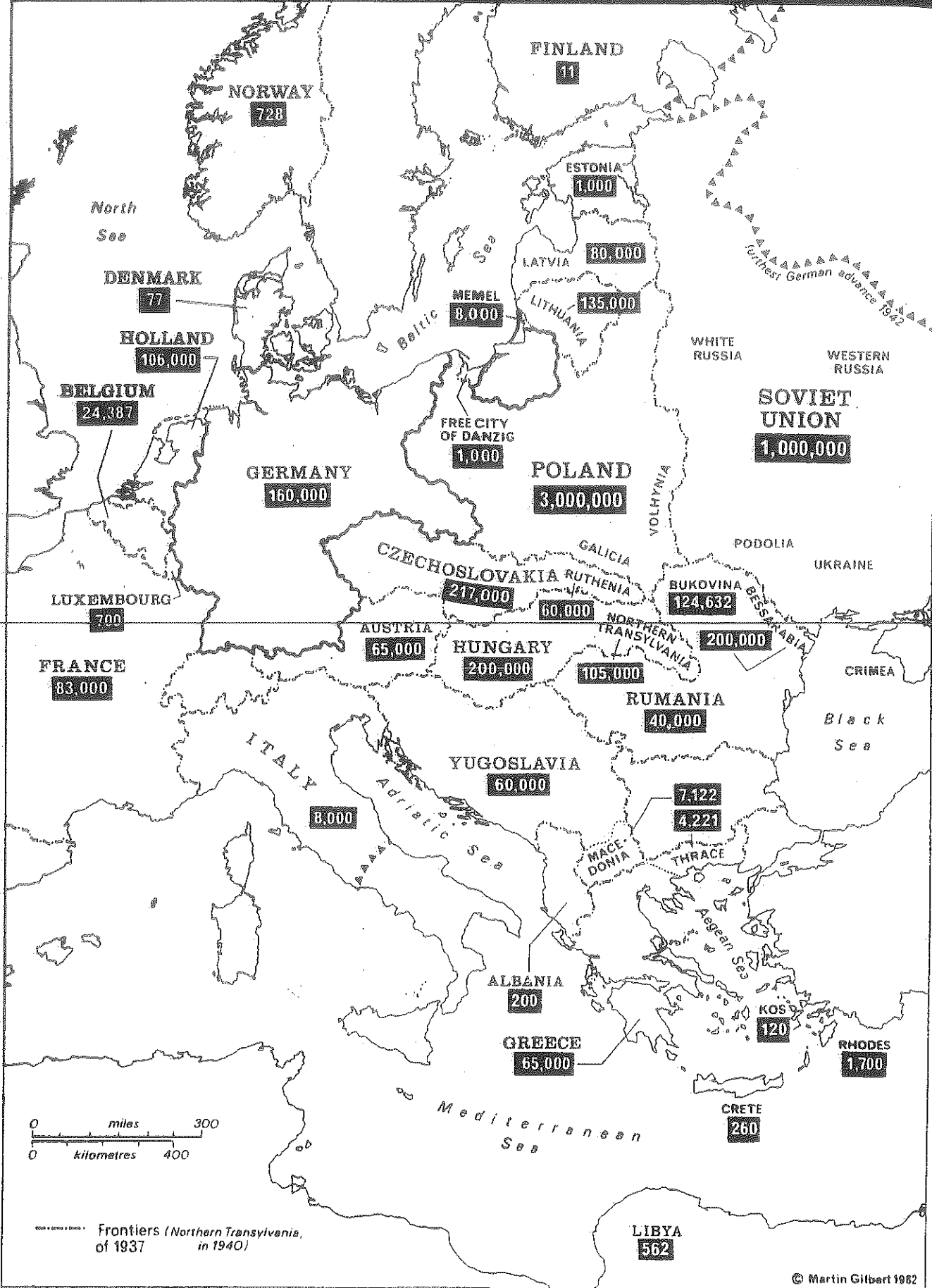
-Elie Wiesel

Sophomore English
H. St. Jean

WWII Time-Line:

- 1) 1937 – Japan invades China.
- 2) 1938 – (November) “Kristallnacht” – The night of broken glass – German’s destroy Jewish businesses and synagogues.
- 3) 1939 – Britain and France declare WAR on Germany.
- 4) 1940 – Italy declares WAR on Britain and France.
- 5) 1941 – Germany invades Russia.
- 6) December 7th, 1941 – Japan bombs Pearl Harbor! U.S. declares WAR on Japan and Germany.
- ~~7) 1943 – Italian people revolt against Benito Mussolini. He is forced to resign and is imprisoned. (Later, he is assassinated)~~
- 8) 1943 – “The Big Three Summit” – meeting of Winston Churchill – Britain, Joseph Stalin – Russia, and Franklin D. Roosevelt – United States.
- 9) Hitler commits suicide! Germany surrenders.
- 10) 1945 – President Harry S. Truman – drops atomic bombs on Japanese islands. Aug. 6th = Hiroshima, and August 9th = Nagasaki.
- 11) War ENDS when the Japanese surrender. Officially, August 14, 1945.

JEWS MURDERED BETWEEN 1 SEPTEMBER 1939 AND 8 MAY 1945: AN ESTIMATE



Frontiers (Northern Transylvania, of 1937 in 1940)

Night - memoir - the collection of Elie Wiesel's memories from 1941 to 1945.

*Originally, the title was – And the World kept Silent - 900 pages written in French in 1955.

*Finally, published in 1960 (127 pages) written in English. Dedicated to his parents and Tzipora.

*At first, readers refused to believe his words! An investigation into the validity of the work ensued. It was PROVEN TRUE.

*Wiesel wrote this book after a 10 YEAR SELF-IMPOSED SILENCE. (He refused to speak or write a word about the war and the atrocities he experienced during the war.) Then, when he finally started writing, he couldn't stop! Professor Wiesel teaches at Boston University. He has written over 47 books and plays.

Characters:

Moshe the Beadle – 1) awkward, clown-like, “waiflike timidity”, a strange man accepted by the community. 2) teaches Cabbala to Elizer. 3) Foreign Jew expelled from Sighet to Hungary. * Months later he returns to warn the people of Sighet; no one believes him.

Elie Wiesel – 1941 – Elie is 12 years old.

Chlomo Wiesel – father. Community leader; well respected man.

Elie's mother.

Hilda – sister = 16 - 18 years old. ? (marrying age)

Bea – sister = 15 ?

Tzipora – sister = 6 or 7 ?

Martha – former Wiesel servant who tries to convince Elie's father to have the family hide in her village, at her home.