Dear Educator,

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. Students are fascinated to learn that the Nazis offered the Witnesses the chance for freedom if they would sign a document renouncing their faith. Very few signed. Thrown into Nazi camps, they became eyewitnesses of Nazi genocide. As historian John Toland wrote, this is “a story of human courage that must be heard.”

The Arnold-Liebster Foundation’s website at www.alst.org is an extensive educational resource that includes:

- How to arrange for an interactive Skype conference between Simone Arnold Liebster and your students.
- Jehovah’s Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault 28-minute classroom documentary DVD and study guide.
- Interactive classroom presentations.
- Realizing the importance of Holocaust education, the Arnold-Liebster Foundation is willing to subsidize a major part of the cost of their traveling exhibits.
- Online lesson plans, study guides, primary documents, online exhibition, survivor testimony, classroom questions, educator comments, and more.

The Zev and Shifra Karkomi Permanent Exhibition at the Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center includes an artifacts exhibit about the Nazi persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses, on loan courtesy of Simone Arnold Liebster and the Arnold-Liebster Foundation. The Museum includes the Arnold-Liebster Foundation website in its Resource Links page.

For more information in Illinois, contact Marge Fulton at margfulton6@gmail.com, 309-645-3872 or Gaye Flowers at g.flowers87@gmail.com, 847-224-4900.

Included with this letter is a teacher packet with additional information. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or would like further information.

Sincerely,

Sandra S. Milakovich
sandra@alst.org
twitter: @arnoldliebster

U.S. Contact: 4004 Rodeo Road · Davenport, IA 52806 · 563.391.1819 · www.alst.org
DACHAU
PRINCIPAL DISTINGUISHING BADGES WORN BY PRISONERS

Political
Criminal
Antisocial
Homosexual
Emigrant
Jehovah’s Witness

Jewish Political
Jewish Criminal
Jewish Antisocial
Jewish Homosexual
Jewish Emigrant

Political (French)
Political Second-time Offenders
Penal Company
Wehrmacht Prisoners
Prisoners Under Special Surveillance

Translation of Erklärung

Concentration camp ........................................
Department II

Declaration

I, the ..................................................................................................................
born on ..................................................... in .....................................................
herewith make the following declaration:

1. I have come to know that the International Bible Students Association is proclaiming erroneous teachings and under the cloak of religion follows hostile purposes against the State.
2. I therefore left the organization entirely and made myself absolutely free from the teachings of this sect.
3. I herewith give assurance that I will never again take any part in the activity of the International Bible Students Association. Any persons approaching me with the teaching of the Bible Students, or who in any manner reveal their connections with them, I will denounce immediately. All literature from the Bible Students that should be sent to my address I will at once deliver to the nearest police station.
4. I will in the future esteem the laws of the State, especially in the event of war will I, with weapon in hand, defend the fatherland, and join in every way the community of the people.
5. I have been informed that I will at once be taken again into protective custody if I should act against the declaration given today.

..................................................., Dated .....................................................
Signature ..............................................................

KL/47/4.43 5000
22. Prisoners stand facing a long desk. Behind the desk are the clerks, who are attempting to induct the prisoners into the Nazi army. The repeat of prisoner, desk, clerk, and papers stretches the full length of the long room. Massed like corded wood, more prisoners await their turn. The central figure, Steyer himself, stands before a throng of German military officials and SS who intently observe his refusal to be inducted for military service. Only this clerk points to a purple form, perhaps the infamous “Declaration,” giving Steyer a chance to renounce his faith and leave the camp.
BOOKS

Facing the Lion
Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe by Simone Arnold Liebster
The autobiographical account of a young girl’s faith and courage. Set during the Nazi occupation of Eastern France, it tells the story of one 12-year-old’s struggle to follow her conscience rather than give in to Nazi propaganda and persecution. Simone’s honesty about her joys and fears and her harrowing experiences at school and in a Nazi prison have appealed to thousands of readers, many of whom are young people themselves, struggling with similar peer pressure today.
alst.org facingthelion.com Available for Kindle at Amazon and for iOS at iBooks Store

Online study guides, lesson plans, and information on arranging an interactive video conference with the author and your students.

Crucible of Terror
A Story of Survival Through the Nazi Storm by Max Liebster
In searing detail, Max Liebster recounts his torturous journey through five Nazi concentration camps, including the notorious Auschwitz. Through the storm of Nazi terror, Liebster, a young German Jew, finds a haven in an unexpected source—a unique group of prisoners who wear the purple triangle. It is a drama of survival, but even more, it is a story of hope and moral courage.
crucibleofterror.com Available for Kindle at Amazon and for iOS at iBooks Store

Order books at: www.alst.org/pages-us/paypal/Order-Books-DVDs.html

EXHIBITIONS

Who Am I? Young Minds Forced to Choose
Premiered at Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust November 2006. Created by the Arnold-Liebster Foundation, this compelling exhibit of thirteen panels examines the lives and experiences of young Jehovah’s Witnesses who suffered due to their refusal to accept Nazi ideology. Includes educational activities for students and audio recordings by survivors.
Hosted by Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust; School District of Palm Beach County, Florida; Virginia Holocaust Museum; and The Center for Holocaust and Genocide Education at University of Northern Iowa.

Jehovah’s Witnesses: Faith Under Fire
Premiered at Florida Holocaust Museum January 2006. Twelve panels created by the Arnold-Liebster Foundation chronicle the Nazi persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses and the Witnesses’ nonviolent resistance to Nazi terror inside and outside the camps. As historian John Toland wrote, this is “a story of human courage that must be heard.”
Hosted by Florida Holocaust Museum; Virginia Holocaust Museum; and Mount Mercy College, Iowa.

Exhibition subsidies available from Foundation.
For more information:
http://www.alst.org/pages-us/traveling-exhibitions.html
Simone Arnold was born in August 1930 in Alsace, France. Even as a young child, Simone had a strongly developed sense of justice. As Jehovah’s Witnesses, Simone’s parents raised her to listen to her conscience, even if it meant being different from or unpopular with others.

As Hitler’s armies invaded France, Simone and her parents faced increasing threats and pressure because of their refusal to conform. Simone, age 11, was determined to listen to the voice of her conscience. She refused to give the Hitler salute or sing Nazi songs. She was confronted by teachers, ridiculed, expelled, and knocked unconscious, arrested by juvenile authorities, and put in a Nazi penitentiary home in Germany. For nearly two years, Simone was forbidden to talk and forced to do hard labor.

Both her parents were imprisoned in Nazi camps, and none expected to live to see the family reunited. At the end of the war, however, the Arnolds all returned home and rebuilt their lives. Like her father, Simone attended art school. After learning English, she went to the United States to the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Simone married Max Liebster in 1956, and together they devoted their lives to their ministry and to peace education, which she has continued since his death in 2008.

The Arnold-Liebster Foundation was established by Max Liebster and Simone Arnold Liebster in January 2002 to educate future generations in the lessons of history. A non-political, non-profit organization, it strives to keep alive the memory of victims of dictatorships and religious persecution. The foundation supports historical research, educational programs and seminars, teacher training, museum exhibitions, film showings, and similar projects for the purpose of promoting peace, tolerance, human rights, and religious freedom. 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. The Arnold-Liebster Foundation is based on the founders’ lifelong commitment to peace education.

Simone has spoken about human rights issues before the European Parliament in Strasbourg and the Council of Europe in Brussels. Her invited and sponsored lectures include Appalachian State University, Rice University, University of Texas at Austin, Stanford University, San Diego State University, Tulane University, Florida Holocaust Museum, Bremen Jewish Heritage and Holocaust Museum, Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust, Imperial War Museum (UK), University of Toronto, Staffordshire University (UK), Ravensbrück Concentration Camp Memorial, and Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial.

She has related her experiences to educators, students, and the public in over 80 cities in Belgium, Britain, Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland, Russia, and the United States.

Arnold-Liebster Foundation – www.alst.org
INTERACTIVE VIDEO CONFERENCE

Through special arrangement with the Arnold-Liebster Foundation, Simone Arnold Liebster is available to visit your classroom through a free interactive audio or video conference.

Students read Facing the Lion: Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe or online excerpts and prepare questions for Simone in advance of the live session. A free study guide is available online.

Internet-based video conferences have been held with students in Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington. (Please see letters of recommendation on Education/Interactive Video Conference With Survivors at www.alst.org)

Simone lives in France. She and her husband, Max, also a survivor, founded the Arnold-Liebster Foundation in 2002 to promote education about the Holocaust and human rights. 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.

The Liebsters have visited over 50 cities in Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, Canada, and the United States, relating their experiences to educators, students, and the public.

For more information please contact:
Sandra S. Milakovich
U.S. Contact for Arnold-Liebster Foundation
sandra@alst.org     •     www.alst.org

Universities
Appalachian State University
Rice University
University of Texas at Austin
Stanford University
San Diego State University
Tulane University

Museums
USHMM (book signing)
Florida Holocaust Museum (twice)
Bremen Jewish Heritage and Holocaust Museum, Atlanta, GA
Imperial War Museum (UK)
Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust (live video conference)

Non-US
University of Toronto
Staffordshire University (UK)
Council of Europe
European Parliament
Ravensbrueck Concentration Camp Memorial
Neuengamme Concentration Camp Memorial

Invited and Sponsored Lectures
Stand Firm: Choice and Consequences
Germany (1933-1945)

overview
What could people have done to resist Nazi terror? What if more people had chosen not to cooperate with Nazi genocide? Using primary documents and first-person survivor testimony, this outline focuses on the difficult choices made by Jehovah’s Witnesses, a group of people who adhered to their beliefs despite brutal efforts to make them conform to Nazi ways. Readings are drawn from Holocaust and Human Behavior and Facing the Lion: Memoirs of a Young Girl in Nazi Europe; additional material drawn from DVD and study guide (listed as Jehovah’s Witnesses Stand Firm Against Nazi Assault in Facing History Resource Library).

learning outcomes
Students will:

- Identify Nazi propaganda and pressure tactics
- Analyze why certain individuals refused to cooperate with the Nazis
- Evaluate decision-making that helped individuals resist negative peer pressure
- Compare and contrast real-life choices and consequences of conforming to or rejecting destructive behavior

historical context
“Choice and Consequences” explores the issues of conformity and obedience through the eyes of two young Jehovah’s Witnesses who, like most in their religious community, made the choice to stand firm for their beliefs. The totalitarian Nazi State sought to create a uniform society in which all looked to Hitler and his Nazi State as the supreme authority. The enormous pressure to conform presented a challenge to Jehovah’s Witnesses, a group of Christians who do not believe in fighting in war. They speak or “witness” about their faith that only God (Jehovah), through his Kingdom, will bring peace and justice to the earth. Thus, they refused to accept Hitler as Germany’s “savior.” Thousands of Witnesses were terrorized, expelled from jobs and school, arrested, tortured, and sent to prisons and concentration camps. Hundreds of young Witnesses were taken from their parents and sent to juvenile camps, reformatories, and Nazi foster homes.

Online Campus Lessons & Units
Online lesson plan Stand Firm: Choice and Consequences is available to teachers who are members of the Facing History Educator Network.
STANDING OUT–STANDING UP
A JEHOVAH’S WITNESS EXPERIENCE

An Online Exhibit for the Classroom
Presented by The Shoah Foundation and Arnold-Liebster Foundation

- Free downloadable Testimony clips from the Shoah Foundation archive
- Free downloadable Lesson Plan with classroom activities
- Testimony Clips and Activities timed perfectly for classroom use
- Lesson Objectives Include:
  - Using primary source materials to learn about the Jehovah's Witness experience during the Holocaust
  - Defining the term “core values”
  - Learn to recognize and counter the peer pressures that might undermine those values
  - Understanding the importance of adhering to one’s own voice of conscience

Documents and books convey facts, but only eyewitnesses express the connections between past and present through the life stories of real people—illustrating the importance of individual experience and responsibility in making history and in building the future. By reflecting on her beliefs and background, Simone’s story guides students in a discussion of a familiar adolescent dilemma—being different and being pressured to fit in.


Contact Arnold-Liebster Foundation: sandra@alst.org or visit www.alst.org
November 7, 2016

Dear Greg and Sandra:

On behalf of Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center, we would like to commend the Arnold-Liebster Foundation in the continued pursuit to educate students and teachers throughout the Midwest on the persecution of Jehovah’s Witnesses during the Holocaust. The Illinois Holocaust Museum has found the resources your organization has been able to provide us and our patrons most valuable, in particularly our ability to promote the exemplary study guide and documentary video “Stand Firm.”

The power of your resources lies in their ability to allow the educator to present the history of the Holocaust in a way that causes the student to relate the experience of the Jehovah’s Witnesses to his or her own life today - the values we hold dear, the moral choices we each confront, and the recognizing the each of us has the power to stand up and speak out for what is right. By finding the courage, by standing firm for what they knew to be right, these ordinary people overcame extraordinary odds. The collective values that our educators are able to teach through these lessons affirm our human dignity, promote the good of the individual and the common good, and protect our human rights.

In history classes students should not only learn what happened, they should be given an opportunity to make ethical judgments about it. After all, history is not just a timeline of events; it is about people making choices that affected other people. Those choices had ethical and moral dimensions, and often produced profound consequences. At times, we know what we should do, feel strongly that we should do it, yet still fail to translate moral judgment and feeling into effective moral behavior. By bringing to the forefront the character dimension of the this aspect of Holocaust history, you enhance the relevance of the subject matter to the student’s natural interests and questions, and in the process, increase student engagement.

Again, we appreciate your commitment to this important aspect of Holocaust history. Today’s events tell us that the lessons of the Holocaust remain all too relevant in our day. We often wonder about the human capacity to resist evil. And, by using the resources of the Arnold-Liebster Foundation we are able to promote to our educators a way to bring a more positive example into their classrooms of one group of people who followed their conscience in the face of tyranny.

All the best in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Kelley H. Szany
Director of Education
To Whom It May Concern:                                                                                    July 7, 2015

I am an ESL teacher at Lake Forest Academy in Lake Forest, Illinois, and my classes and I have had the honor of bringing Simone Arnold Liebster via Skype interview into our classroom for many years. Prior to working at Lake Forest Academy, I worked as a history teacher at Rivermont Collegiate where my students also had the privilege of interviewing Ms. Liebster.

Many people are unaware that it was not only Jews who were victims of the Holocaust, but thousands of Jehovah Witnesses suffered under Nazi aggression as well. We were first introduced to the story of Jehovah Witness survivors and victims of the Holocaust by Sandra and Greg Milakovich. They provided many excellent resources both video and online to help my students understand this unique story. My students and I were moved by the fact that Jehovah Witnesses were the only group who were given the opportunity to gain freedom from the death camps by signing a declaration renouncing their faith and most significantly, thousands refused to sign. The DVD Sandra and Greg provide entitled, Stand Firm, gave us the necessary background to prepare for the interview with Simone Liebster. Sandra and Greg also provided copies of Ms. Liebster's inspirational book, Facing the Lion, which I had my students read and discuss prior to the interview as well. This book is a true testament to the faith and courage Ms. Liebster and her family possessed during this horrific time when their faith was tested. Facing the Lion has become my favorite book in teaching the Holocaust and is now required reading for my students each year. After reading the book and listening to Simone Liebster speak, my students have learned so much and are greatly humbled by her story.

I continue to teach this unit now with the help of Gaye Flowers who lives in the Chicago area and is a friend of Sandra Milakovich. Mrs. Flowers, like Sandra and Greg, bring a captivating power point presentation into the classroom with a focus on the story of Jehovah Witnesses in the Holocaust. Mrs. Flowers has also led my students on fascinating tours of the Holocaust Museum in Skokie, Il. It is very interesting to see a section of the museum devoted to Simone Liebster and other Jehovah Witnesses who suffered in the Holocaust. I have been blessed to have worked with such outstanding people over the years to help enhance the Holocaust study in my classroom. I have had many students return to tell me this unit and the interview with Simone Liebster was the highlight of their academic year. I know it has been and will continue to be for me as well. It is imperative that Simone Liebster's story continues to be passed down to this generation and future generations in order for us to understand each other and bring peace in this world. As Simone Liebster said in her interview, "When making choices in life, choose only those things that bring about love." This message as well as many others made by Ms. Liebster are very important for young people to hear. I hope more teachers will learn and teach Simone's Liebster's story.

Sincerely,

Michele Vaca
ESL Teacher
Lake Forest Academy
1500 West Kennedy Drive
Lake Forest, IL 60045
My name is Emily Anderson and I teach at Springfield Learning Academy, an alternative high school in Springfield, Illinois.

I first heard Simone Liebster tell her story while I was at an Illinois Council for Social Studies Spring 2015 Conference at Eastern Illinois University. Her words moved me and the chance to have my students also hear her first hand was a rare opportunity I am certainly glad I did not pass up.

I was soon in touch with Marge Fulton who was to lead the Holocaust presentation in my classroom. Marge is a wealth of knowledge about the Holocaust. Through her emails and materials, I was able to gain a great deal of background information and understanding about Simone’s unique experience during World War 2 as a Jehovah's Witness. Never before had I heard about the Jehovah's Witnesses experience during the Holocaust. This was a new avenue for my students and myself to explore. Rather than zoning in on the religious aspect of the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses, we merely remained focused on the essential question and idea of standing firm in one’s beliefs, whatever those beliefs may be.

Simone’s message mirrored our approach. When relaying her story, Simone was honest about her life and her experiences which is necessary in allowing her audience to get a true glimpse into her life. A main message that I came away with from skyping with Simone was that people need to see where ideas come from and who is behind them rather than just blindly following along. Her ability to stand up for what she believed was right was because she had an educated conscience. Having an educated conscience is an essential component when truly standing firm in one’s beliefs.

Sincerely,
Emily Anderson
9/16/15

Springfield Learning Academy
101 E. Laurel
Springfield, IL 62704