

The Centre for Holocaust Education and Scholarship  
Teachers' Workshop 2017  
**Think – Pair – Share Strategy**  
**“Liberation and Loss”**

## **Background**

Liberation, a time of promise, became a time when children, orphaned by the Holocaust, were confronted with the enormity of what had happened and the extent of their losses.

With the arrival of the Allied armies, these young people emerged from concentration camps and hiding places – forests, convents and isolated farms. Most of those who had been in concentration camps were adolescents, for only those strong enough to work had any chance of survival. Only 1.1 percent of Jewish children alive at the beginning of the war, survived to its conclusion.

Two years after the war, many thousands of young people were still rootless in Europe, while others were temporarily sheltered in refugee camps. Among them were an estimated 4,000 Jewish children, with nowhere to go, waiting for permission to enter any country that would have them.

## **Examine the Paper Trail**

### ***A reflection by Robbie, a 14 year old at liberation...***

“During the war, many of us had promised our elders that should we survive, we would tell the world about what had happened. But when we were liberated, the memories were too terrible to deal with. It was too soon to speak.”

### ***A reflection by Mariette, a 10 year old at liberation...***

“I remember trying to find paper in the orphanage. Everywhere I went I left notes, in the underground train station, the bus station, places I thought Sara, my sister or any of my family might go to look.”

### ***A photograph showing a Jewish boy writing on the side of a train at liberation...***

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### **Discussion Questions**

What are the thoughts and feelings associated with liberation?  
Which obstacles faced by these young survivors did you find surprising?  
What can you learn from the orphans' responses that could be useful in meeting the needs of refugee children to your school or community?

### **For More Information...**

The above information is based on the exhibit *Open Hearts – Closed Doors*, produced by the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre (VHEC). All of the information provided is found in the VHEC Teacher's Guide. The PDF document can be found here [www.vhec.org/images/pdfs/openhearts\\_guide.pdf](http://www.vhec.org/images/pdfs/openhearts_guide.pdf). For more information on this exhibit and other exhibits on the Holocaust at the VHEC please visit [www.vhec.org](http://www.vhec.org).