

20-60 MINUTE FREE COURSES

Free online video courses prepare you to teach a class on Jewish resistance during the Holocaust.

FREE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNITS

Awarded through Touro College, aligned with Common Core Standards

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COURSE EXAMPLES

RESISTANCE BASICS

Engage and inspire your students by teaching about the 20-30,000 Jews who fought back against the Nazis and their collaborators as Jewish partisans. After completing the course you'll be ready to teach a class on Jewish armed and unarmed resistance.

TACTICS OF RESISTANCE

Expand your students' thinking about the spectrum of possible responses to genocide and other forms of aggression—from non-violent to armed resistance. Tactics of resistance is more than a lesson plan: it's a framework for analyzing conflict throughout the school year.

OTHER COURSES INCLUDE

Women in the Partisans, Ethics of War, and Teaching with the Motion Picture *Defiance*.

INTRODUCING JPEF's EDUCATOR TOOLKIT

Bring the Jewish partisans into your classroom with *Fighting Back: Armed Jewish Resistance During the Holocaust*. This self-contained Educator Toolkit, includes JPEF's 12 films, lesson plans and study guides, and guidelines for teaching about the Jewish partisans in as few as 30 minutes. Learn how to introduce the Jewish partisans to your students through JPEF's Resistance Basics 30-Minute Training Video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bAOTcyHPYuo>.

Order your toolkit at outreach@jewishpartisans.org



JEWISH PARTISAN
EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

Who Are the Jewish Partisans?

par-ti-san *noun*: a member of an organized body of fighters who attack or harass an enemy, especially within occupied territory; a guerrilla

During World War II, the majority of European Jews were deceived by a monstrous and meticulous disinformation campaign. The Germans and their collaborators detained millions of Jews and forced them into camps, primarily by convincing them that they were going there to work. In reality, many of these so-called “work camps” were actually death camps where men, women, and children were systematically murdered. Yet approximately 20,000 to 30,000 Jews, many of whom were teenagers, escaped the Nazis to form or join organized resistance groups. These Jews are known as the Jewish partisans, and they joined hundreds of thousands of non-Jewish partisans who fought against the enemy throughout much of Europe.

What Did They Do?

Jewish partisans blew up thousands of German supply trains, convoys, and bridges, making it harder for the Germans to fight the war. Partisans also destroyed power plants and factories, focusing their attention on military and strategic targets, not on civilians. Jewish partisans forced the Germans to spend massive amounts of resources on combating them, disrupting their focus from multiple fronts against the Allies. One German commander called the Jews a “dangerous element” for their participation in partisan units in Russia.¹ In Lithuania, where Jewish partisans made up approximately 10% of all partisan fighters, they were responsible for 79% of derailed German trains and injuring nearly 50% of all enemy soldiers.² Jewish partisans saved thousands of Jewish lives, in some cases literally breaking Jews out of the ghettos, and in at least one situation, digging a tunnel to free 250 people from a ghetto. It is important to note that many partisans credit three things for their survival—luck, knowledge, and opportunity—and with courage and bravery.

How Did Other Jews Resist?

Resistance against the Germans took many different forms. In addition to the physical resistance of the partisans and ghetto fighters, spiritual resistance included holding services, and teaching children to read Hebrew. Artistic resistance produced art and poetry in ghettos and camps. Without taking up arms, these Jews stood in defiance to the Nazis, who sought to strip Jews not only of their lives, but also of their dignity and self-respect in order to facilitate the killing process. Jews countered the Germans and their collaborators in still other ways. There were smugglers who sent children to safety and couriers who carried messages between the ghettos. There were forgers who created documents to ensure Jews safe passage to non-occupied countries or to create fake identity cards that allowed Jews to “pass” as non-Jews. Jews in the work camps also sabotaged guns and other products they were forced to make for the Germans.

Why Should We Learn About the Jewish Partisans?

Most students believe that Jews went “like sheep to the slaughter”. They perceive the Holocaust as a piece of Jewish history only about victimization and the loss of hope. The experience of thousands of Jewish partisans who stood up to tyranny and oppression, fought successfully against the Germans, and saved countless lives is an important part of Jewish history that few students are aware of. This information has the power to transform people’s perception of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust, providing a clearer picture of Jewish heroism and character. After learning about the partisans, non-Jewish teens acquire a greater understanding about the Jewish people, leading to interfaith dialog and tolerance, while many Jewish teenagers often feel empowered, developing a stronger sense of Jewish identity and pride. The story of the Jewish partisans is empowering, and demonstrates how young people can make a positive difference in the world.



A group of Jewish members of the Lenin battalion of the Lipczany forest. 1944. Location: Belorussia. Source: Museum of Jewish Heritage

Life Lessons of the Jewish Partisans

Most of the Jewish partisans that JPEF interviewed agreed that three important life lessons must be passed on to future generations:

- Young people can make a difference
- Stand up to tyranny, oppression, and discrimination...early
- Question authority

JPEF encourages educators to discuss these concepts with their students throughout the lessons.

What is JPEF?

The Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation develops and distributes effective educational materials about the Jewish partisans, brining the celebration of heroic resistance against tyranny into educational and cultural organizations. JPEF’s curricula is designed for use in 6th–12th grade classes on World History, Ethics, Leadership and Jewish Identity, and promotes critical thinking and decision making. Holocaust organizations worldwide rely on JPEF’s expertise and incorporate its materials into their collections and educational programs.

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1. Documents of the Holocaust, edited by Yitzhak Arad, Israel Gutman, and Abraham Margalioit (Lincoln, The University of Nebraska Press, Jerusalem, Yad Vashem 1999), 441–444.
2. Fight Back, Dov Levin, (New York, Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1985), 196.