

Mira Kimmelman is a Holocaust Survivor who wrote the book “Echoes from the Holocaust”. She went through the most horrific events during the Holocaust; from being separated from her family, to being physically weak and getting many diseases, and the fear of not meeting her family members again. The book was her personal perspective on a terrible genocide in human history. Even after all she went through, Mira never lost hope and endured till the end to tell the history of what she and many other Jews went through to keep the memory alive.

During her childhood, Mira lived in a town called Danzig. It was hard for her to leave because she made many memories and the town was valuable to her. When Mira and her family were moved into the ghettos, she tried to help her parents by working and doing simple chores to get food for the family. Schools for Jews became illegal at that time and death was the punishment for anyone who was caught disobeying. Mira’s parents insisted that she continues her schooling in secrecy. During her time in the ghettos, she joined the Zionist Youth movement. She received pamphlets that people would sneak into the ghettos, and she hid them. When German soldiers came to check the ghetto, fear paralyzed her and she would never bring anything home again that would put the lives of her family in danger. This experience made her petrified and it shows how much danger the lives of Jews were in. Many killings happened at the ghettos which horrified the Jews and as Mira states in chapter 5 (page 36) it says, “ The ghetto never recovered from the shock of the murders. We lost our leaders, Our role models, some of our best people.” The impact of this line on how their lives were controlled by the horrifying events, and what they went through while in the ghettos.

Jews were forced to march in columns when the liquidation of the ghetto occurred. They were being taken to Treblinka, the death camp, which they had no idea was their destination. Families were separated and never got to say goodbye. Mira was separated from her mother and never saw her again. She was treated as a slave and the only thought she had was about her family. She received several blows and whippings. The impact this left on many Jews, of being separated from families and how they were forced into labor, made them want to kill themselves before the cruel acts of wickedness would. One day at Purim, she was very ill and barely could see and was taken to the hospital. She was ordered by Dr. Morkowicz to stay at the hospital for three days. She had left a day early because she was feeling better and if she hadn't left earlier it would have been the end of her life. The news about what happened to the other patients shocked her that if she stayed one more day, she would have been among the unlucky victims. On page 43, in the beginning of chapter 8, Mira states, "More than 3000 Jewish prisoners worked either a 12 hour day shift or a 12 hour night shift and all were overseen by cruel SS men... Here Jewish slave laborers were used and abused." This reveals the dehumanizing way Jews were treated and that Mira wanted the world and new generations to see the corrupt way they were treated and that if we remain indifferent to human suffering it can happen again. Mira and her family went through very cruel conditions in the death camps. It was very easy to get many diseases in the very unclean conditions of the camp. Many people got typhoid and almost 30 percent of the ill died. Mira states that the only thing that gave them strength to survive was hope - hoping for the war to end soon, that the Soviets would liberate them. Life in the Blizyn Camp was full of harsh conditions from being bitten by rats at night to living in constant fear of their lives.

The prisoners at the concentration camps were commanded to give up their children to be taken to a "better place" and the mothers had no choice but to put their children in the hands of

death. The fate of the children was that they were taken to a forest and were killed with machine guns. These horrible events had a very big impact on Mira, how they still haunt her and traumatized all the other prisoners with her. She went through many hard times and she got sick multiple times. On page 58, Mira states “How did I survive? With the help of God, the support of my friends, kind deeds by those who shared food with me. We were determined to go on, to retain our humanity, to live despite the danger and obstacles. But most of all the will to outlive our enemies gave me and my friends the inner strength to survive.” This reflects on Mira’s message because it shows the reason why she endured all of the dehumanizing events that happened during the Holocaust. Mira’s message is to keep the memory of those who died and to fight against those who deny the Holocaust and to fulfill the duty to remember. Living through the Holocaust is something so hard for a person to imagine: all the petrifying events people lived through, the way they were treated as if they animals and not human beings.

Mira’s wrote this book as a memoir and a memorial to those who were killed. She is a witness to the dead who cannot speak of the unspeakable horrors. Mira’s message is to not remain silent about what happened so that we don’t allow it to happen again. Mira closes the book by stating, “Only by remembering the better lesson of Hitler’s legacy can we hope it will never be repeated. Teach it, tell it, read it.” This concludes to prove her final message to the readers of her book, to never forget the dehumanizing ways that the Jews were treated so that it never again happens in human history. Overall, it may be stated that Mira’s message and purpose of the book is to bear witness of her family and friends that died and to share her journey through the horrifying event and the killing of 6 million Jews and to keep the memory of this genocide, for it to never happen again.

