

# Visual History Archive Relevance by Topic – Political Beliefs, Age, and Social Class

**Overview:** The Visual History Archive (VHA) contains over 55,000 oral history testimonies of interviewees of diverse age and social class background. More than 250 of these testimonies are by interviewees who were incarcerated by the Nazi regime as political opponents during the Second World War, including members of different political parties in occupied territories and members of resistance movements.

## Potential Research Topics Include:

- Political discrimination
- Political diversity
- Political identity
- Resistance
- Age discrimination
- Age and survival
- Age and memory
- Social class and survival

**Indexed Search Term Examples:** political activities; political demonstrations; political discrimination; political identity; political prisoners; political rehabilitation; political ideologies; political organizations; political parties; political police; political activities (stills); political opponent arrests; political prisoner functionaries; political prisoner kapos; political and legal organizations; political opponent legal prosecutions; dissident activities; lobbying activities; age deceptions; elderly prisoners; elderly refugees; elderly ghetto inhabitants; Kindertransport; socioeconomic status



## The VHA in Use – Teaching

**Courses:** Several courses, including Children and Youth Literature in Exile ([taught by Wiebke von Bernstorff at the Universität Hildesheim](#)), Childhood and Youth in Poland During the Holocaust ([taught by Agnieszka Wieters-Wierzcholska at the Freie Universität Berlin](#)), and The Nazi Era and the Holocaust in Children and Youth Literature ([taught by Fabian Wendler at the Freie Universität Berlin](#)), utilized VHA testimonies to explore age-related topics in the context of the Holocaust.

**Student Work:** [Be Watchful That the Night Never Again Falls in Germany](#) – Under the guidance of Professor Siegfried Mielke of the Freie Universität Berlin and Professor Günter Morsch of the Brandenburg Memorials Foundation, students at FU Berlin used VHA testimonies to research and write biographies of trade unionists who were political prisoners at Sachsenhausen in a project seminar. These biographies later became part of a travelling exhibition of the Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum, which describes the experiences of 16 trade union members in the concentration camp.

**ITestimony Activity:** [Growing up 'Behind the Barbed Wire' of Auschwitz](#) – This activity examines what life was like for children in Auschwitz by studying their images and VHA testimonies.





## The VHA in Use – Research and Publications

**Research Case Study:** [Coming of Age During the Holocaust](#) – Barnabas Balint (University of Oxford)

Balint consulted over sixty VHA testimonies by interviewees who were eleven to eighteen years old at the time, to examine how young Hungarian Jews reacted to persecution in Auschwitz-Birkenau, viewing their survival through the lens of their youth.

**Research Case Study:** [Missing Links: Social Bonds and Barriers amongst Italian Jewish Deportees](#) – Bieke Van Camp (Université Paul-Valéry Montpellier)

Van Camp examined 28 VHA testimonies by Italian Jewish deportees of all social classes, who had different work assignments in camps, to analyze how these factors influenced the social bonds they created and the significance of those bonds for survival.



## Testimony Highlight

**Age Deception and Political Discrimination:** Holocaust survivor David Bergman [discusses age deception at Auschwitz](#) (Segment 13), and scholar Israel Charny [discusses the relationship between genocide and political discrimination](#). (Segment 9)



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