

Teacher Material

Life in Europe 1945-1949

Life Stories

Here you will find a list of all the life stories in the student materials file. A brief summary is given about each one. Here we also acknowledge the people who put the story together. All of these stories are written up from the lives of real people. They are, of course, not representative of all the millions of people who lived in Europe in the years 1945-49. Each individual life is different. The stories are presented to help your students to engage with the human side of the years 1945-49. It is possible to compare and contrast the stories in order to see similarities and differences. There are also evidence files in the student material that will help your students decide how typical their person's life story was. You can, of course, decide how many of the stories to use. Some of the stories are longer than others. You can therefore differentiate for your students' reading ability. Some of the stories start well before 1945. Of course, these experiences are also relevant to how a person felt and experienced the 1945-49 period. This grid will help you to select stories appropriate for your class.

Name of person	Passport in 1945-49	Summary of the story	Acknowledgement
Leticia Benini	Italy	A young girl in northern Italy living in a village with a family struggling to survive in the post-war world and very cut off from events.	Written up by Hanae Taquchi.
Mireille Berengar	France	Daughter of a butcher from the South of France who lived through Liberation and the setting up of the French 4 th Republic.	Written up by Hanae Taquchi.
Emilia and Augusts Berzins	USSR (Latvia)	Emilija and Augusts, rich peasants, were collaborators during the Second World War. Both together built and developed a large farm and survived the First Soviet Occupation named the 'terrible year' (1940-1941), Nazi Germany's occupation from 1941-1944 and the Second Soviet occupation because they collaborated with both Communists and Nazis. After the war they lost 90% of their land but kept all of the buildings.	Written up by Edgars Berzins.
Mara Burka	USSR (Latvia)	As a very little girl she survived famine and avoided deportation in early years after war. She experienced collectivisation and communist propaganda.	Written up by Edgars Berzins.
John Chillag	Hungary	A Hungarian Jewish Holocaust survivor who returned to Hungary and then had his property seized by the communists so he became a displaced person and left for Australia.	Written up by Helen Snelson from John Chillag's talks to schools.

Cecília Csölle	Hungary	A young woman who lost her fiancé in the war and who was a Red Cross nurse in Germany. She found herself alone in Soviet occupied Hungary after the war. Meanwhile, her family were living as part of the Hungarian minority in Czechoslovakia.	Written up by Attila Hromada.
Heinrich Grüber	Germany	A Lutheran priest who helped Jews to emigrate in WW2. He survived concentration camps, and negotiated with both sides for humane treatment to individuals during and after the war.	Written up by Ineke Veldhuis-Meester Using Heinrich Grüber 'Memories from seven decades' and talks with Ilse van der Rhee.
Finn Hjort	Denmark	A teenage boy who was part of the Danish resistance and was tortured. After the war he worked in various parts of Europe and then went back to education and won a scholarship to the University of Cambridge, UK.	Written up by Helen Snelson, with the help of Benny Christensen, from notes by Sarah Hjort made after speaking with her grandmother Elizabeth Hiley.
Jo Jansen	Netherlands (ex-pat Indonesia)	Interned as a young girl in a camp in the Far East. The family's reunification was delayed and they then moved back to The Netherlands.	Written up by Ineke Veldhuis-Meester.
Hermine Kersten	Germany (Upper Silesia)	Fled as a refugee with her family, at first to East, and then to West Germany. Relatives helped them to set up a new life in the west.	Written up by Ineke Veldhuis-Meester following interviews with Hermine Kersten.
Janis Kurelis	USSR (Latvia)	A resistance leader and organiser of the Latvian forest brothers who had to flee the advancing Soviets and escape to the British zone of defeated Germany.	Written up by Edgars Berzins.
Inés Lapeña Fernández	Spain	A young girl more touched by the impact of the Spanish Civil War than that of World War Two. She endured hardship and migration within Spain.	Written up by Sara Casamayor.
Tomas Marzagon	Spain	A young man who worked with the inmates in a labour camp in Spain (because of the Civil War). He moved to Germany and then Belgium.	Written up by Mateo Martínez.
Mary Marples	UK (England)	The mother of young children in a blitzed city, whose husband came back from a German prisoner of war camp in 1945.	Written up by Helen Snelson.
Ingeborg Motz-Witzel	Czechoslovakia (German)	Ingeborg was born in the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. She was forcibly deported to Germany in 1945 and the family settled in Eisleben, Soviet zone of occupied Germany. She then fled to West Germany as a young adult.	Written up by Sophia Heggemann.
Margarita Nelken	Spain	A socialist intellectual and campaigner for women's rights, who became a communist in the Spanish civil war. Exiled in Mexico, she lost a son in WW2 and failed to find a home in post-war Europe.	Written up by Luis Horrillo.
Lev Netto	USSR (Estonia)	A Soviet POW in Germany drafted into the Red Army after 1945 and then convicted of espionage early in the Cold War and sent to Siberia.	Written up by Edgars Berzins using material from the Orlando Figes archive of oral material.
Rachel Price	UK (England)	A young woman who worked in an office in London during and after war.	Written up by Helen Snelson.
Olga de Ruiter	Netherlands	A collaborator with the Nazis and leader of women's branch of the Dutch fascist party (NSB). She served time in prison after the war.	Written up by Ineke Velhuis-Meester.

Alexander Skillen	UK (Northern-Ireland)	A man who was a printer who went to war and returned to civilian life in 1946. His family survived the bombing of Belfast, but lost their home. The family were reunited in a new house and began life together again.	Written up by Ben Kealey, with help from William and Marie Kealey.
Igor Slavec	Yugoslavia (Slovenia)	A young man conscript into the German army who survived and had to rebuild his life.	Written up by Marjeta Šifrer after interviewing Igor Slavec.
Irena Slipets	USSR (Ukraine, former Poland)	A woman whose family experienced hardship after the war and Stalinistic collectivisation. Her Polish town became part of Ukraine in 1945.	Written up by Olha Pedan-Sliepukhina after an interview with Irena Slipets.
Solidad Solano	Spain	Woman who lived in rural Spain in the Civil War and survived the post-war period partly by smuggling. She also moved to Barcelona and then Valencia.	Written up by Mateo Martínez from recordings of interviews./;
Corrie Tendeloo	Netherlands	A woman who fought for legal rights for women as a lawyer in private practice and in the Dutch parliament. She attended the 1948 Hague Europe conference.	Written up by Ineke Veldhuis-Meester.

