



INTERNATIONAL
HOLOCAUST
REMEMBRANCE DAY
JANUARY 27, 2026

IRVING ROTH



Irving Roth (1929–2021) was a Holocaust survivor, educator, and moral voice dedicated to preserving the memory of one of history's darkest chapters.

Born in the small town of Kosice, Czechoslovakia (now Slovakia), Roth was raised in a close-knit Jewish family. His childhood, like that of many European Jews, was marked by a deep sense of community and tradition. His life was changed forever in 1939 when his homeland was annexed by Nazi Germany.

Newly implemented antisemitic laws stripped Jewish citizens of their rights, education, and livelihoods. Roth, an exceptional student, was expelled from school because of his Jewish identity. By 1944, as the Nazi regime accelerated its Final Solution, Roth and his family were deported to the Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland.

At Auschwitz, Roth endured unimaginable suffering. He was separated from most of his family and his grandparents, aunts, uncles, and brother were all murdered. As the Soviet army advanced in 1945, Roth was forced on a death march to Buchenwald, another concentration camp in Germany. Resilient, determined, and courageous, Roth survived. When American troops liberated Buchenwald in April 1945, Roth, now 16, was dangerously emaciated but alive.

After the war, Roth immigrated to the United States, where he began rebuilding his life, fully committed to education, faith, and remembrance. He earned an engineering degree, married Edith Roth, and worked as an electrical engineer. Yet his most enduring legacy came later, when he began speaking publicly about his experiences during the Holocaust.

Determined to combat antisemitism and historical denial, Roth co-founded the Holocaust Resource Center at Temple Judea of Manhasset in New York and served as its director for many years.

Through lectures, writings, and educational trips to Auschwitz and other historical sites, Roth reached thousands of students and adults. He believed remembrance was a moral duty. He worked not only to honor the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, but to warn future generations against the dangers of antisemitism. He even published a book, *Bondi's Brother*, to further share his experiences and the enduring trauma of survival.

Roth was also the subject of CUFI's feature length documentary *Never Again?*, which presents Roth's story as it relates to rising antisemitism today.

Until he died in 2021, Irving Roth remained an unwavering advocate for truth. His life stands as both a testament to the human capacity for endurance and a call to remember, reflect, and act against antisemitism.

May his memory forever be a blessing.





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KASIM HAFEEZ



Kasim Hafeez is a British citizen of Pakistani heritage who grew up in Nottingham, England, immersed in anti-Western, antisemitic, and anti-Israel rhetoric. As a teenager, he embraced a radical Islamist ideology and became deeply involved in the anti-Israel movement. However, his worldview began to shift after reading Alan Dershowitz's *The Case for Israel*, which prompted months of research and reflection.

In 2007, Kasim traveled to Israel expecting to confirm his negative beliefs. Instead, he encountered a diverse, democratic, and pluralistic society—an experience that profoundly transformed his understanding of the Jewish state. Moved by what he witnessed, Kasim felt a moral obligation to speak out against the hatred he had once embraced. Formerly identifying as a Muslim, he converted to Christianity and emphasizes honest, fact-based discussion while promoting understanding across communities.

Since then, Kasim has shared his story worldwide, including at the 2013 Global Forum on Combating Antisemitism and the United Nations Human Rights Council, and has been featured extensively in television, radio, and print media.

In 2014, he joined Christians United for Israel (CUFI), where he continues to speak on college campuses, at churches, and through writing and social media, promoting truth, dialogue about Israel and the Middle East, and why Christians should stand with Israel.

In 2020, Kasim appeared alongside Holocaust survivor Irving Roth in CUFI's full-length feature documentary *Never Again?*. Whatever their biographical differences, Roth and Hafeez started bonding and appearing as joint speakers at events across the United States. Together, they educated audiences about the dangers of modern-day antisemitism, urging the constant warning that if men and women of all faiths do not stand against unbridled Jew-hatred, the end result could be another Auschwitz.

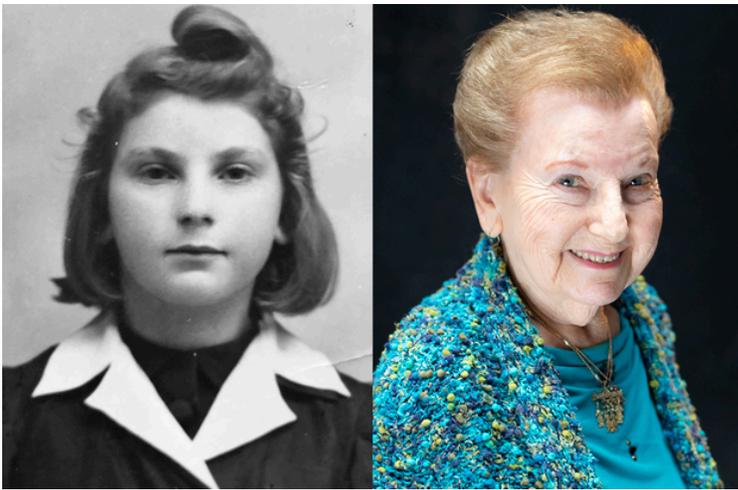
In 2021 Kasim began hosting a weekly video update on YouTube entitled, *CUFI Weekly*, where he continues to discuss all issues related to antisemitism in America and around the world, and the latest updates on Israel and the broader Middle East. He remains a vocal advocate against antisemitism, extremist ideology, and the delegitimization of Israel.





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RUTH ELENBERG EISENBERG



Ruth Elenberg Eisenberg was born Rachel Sygal Epstein on April 15, 1935, in Skalat, Poland (today Skalat, Ukraine). Her father, Hersch, owned a tannery, and her mother, Fayga, was a homemaker. Ruth had five older siblings: Yitzhak, Malka, Szamo, Miriam, and Bronia. Skalat was home to a large, mostly orthodox Jewish population. Ruth eagerly anticipated Shabbat each week, a day she celebrated with family.

In September 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland, splitting the country between themselves in accordance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Skalat, which was located in eastern Galicia, fell under Soviet occupation.

Then, in June 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union and invaded Soviet-occupied Poland. The next month, the Germans occupied Skalat and instituted anti-Jewish restrictions. They required Jews to wear white armbands with the Star of David on them and to perform forced labor. Ruth, then six, could not begin school due to the occupation. Nazi authorities confiscated her father, Hersch's, business in 1942. The family was permitted to stay in their house, but feared violence. As a result, they converted their basement into a hiding place.

In October 1942, SS officers carried out an "Aktion" (or operation) in Skalat, attacking and rounding up Jews. When the Aktion began, Ruth's family hid with their friends, the Sass family, in their basement. As the SS encircled the home, Ruth's older sister Malka was unable to prevent her baby from crying.

Two of the Sass brothers and Ruth's brother, Yitzhak, knocked down a brick wall to the outside of the basement, and members of both families escaped. Ruth and her mother ran into a barn and hid in a barrel. However, Malka and her baby, and Ruth's sister Miriam, as well as her father Hersch, were caught. Hersch was sent to the Janowska labor camp in Lwów, where he died. The rest were taken to the Belzec killing center, where they were likely killed upon arrival. Afterwards, the Germans established a closed ghetto in Skala.

The SS and their collaborators liquidated the Skala ghetto on June 9, 1943, killing hundreds of Jews who remained in the ghetto. Ruth and the remaining members of the Sygal Epstein and Sass families hid in the basement below the Sygal Epstein's house. Although the officers stuck bayonets through the floor, injuring one of the Sass boys, they did not discover the two families below.

Following the liquidation, it was not safe for the family to remain in Skala, which the Germans had declared "free of Jews." Ruth's older sister, Bronia, was sent to the local labor camp, and she covertly brought Ruth inside. Ruth hid in a bed under the mattress to avoid detection. That night, Marko Baranofski, a non-Jewish friend of the Sass', smuggled Ruth out of the camp. Bronia joined her later. Ruth, her family, and friends hid in the Baranofskis' attic for a short time. But when the neighbors grew suspicious, they had to leave. Yitzhak and two of the Sass brothers left to locate a hiding place in the forest. Ruth and the others laid in trenches in the Baranofskis' potato field for a day, awaiting the men's return. Her mother, Fayga, was too weak to make it to the forest and remained in the field where she ultimately died.

In December 1943, after three months in the forest, one of the Sass boys arranged for Ruth, Bronia, and the Sass women to hide with the Szewchuks, a Ukrainian family from a nearby village. They agreed to hide them even though Mr. Szewchuk was a member of the Bandera faction of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) a Ukrainian nationalist force known to commit violence against Jews and Poles. Yitzhak was killed during a bombing towards the end of the war.

In March 1944, Soviet troops occupied the region and liberated the remaining members of the Sygal Epstein and Sass families. Ruth and Bronia returned to Skala and reunited with their brother Szamo. The siblings left Skala, eventually arriving at a displaced persons camp in Cremona, Italy, in the fall of 1945. From the displaced persons camp, they contacted their uncle Charlie Siegel, who had immigrated to the United States, and he helped them leave Europe.

Ruth arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey on September 24, 1947. She lived with relatives and attended school until her brother and sister arrived from Cremona. In 1953, Ruth married Sidney Sass, and they had two children. All three surviving Sygal Epstein siblings married a member of the Sass family. After Sidney's death, Ruth remarried another survivor, Henry Eisenberg. In 2019, Yad Vashem recognized the Baranofskis as Righteous Among the Nations. May her memory forever be a blessing.

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MOTI ALON (BORN ANDRÁS BRICHTA)



Moti Alon was born András Brichta in 1935 in Újpest, then a suburb of Budapest, Hungary, to Margit and László Brichta. He and his twin brother Károly grew up in a Jewish family.

In 1943, Moti's father, László, was taken into a Hungarian Jewish labor battalion, as happened to many Jewish men under Hungary's alliance with Nazi Germany. After the German occupation of Hungary in March 1944, Margit and the twins were deported with thousands of other Hungarian Jews to the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp.

Upon arrival at Birkenau on 10 July 1944, the twins were separated from their mother and selected for Dr. Josef Mengele's twin experiments, being placed in a special twins' barrack (often referred to as Block 15). Because they were twins, they were spared immediate murder in the gas chambers and instead were used for medical experiments.

Their mother, Margit, remained in Birkenau, forced into labor. The boys occasionally saw her marching to work, but after some months, she became seriously ill and was sent to the women's barracks. In January 1945, as the Soviet army approached, the SS began to flee Auschwitz. Power and water were cut; the crematoria stopped operating; and the camp descended into chaos.

During this period, the twins were sent to work in the “Kanada” area—the warehouses where belongings of murdered prisoners were sorted. In his testimony, András (Moti) recalled seeing a sweater, seizing it when a guard looked away, and miraculously not being shot. That sweater stayed with him after the war and is now preserved as an artifact at Yad Vashem.

Shortly before or at liberation, the twins found their mother in the women’s barracks, gravely ill and skeletal. They were with her when Red Army soldiers entered the camp, an event Moti later described as a wave of emaciated women surging toward the liberating soldiers, realizing at last that they were free.

In early May 1945, Margit and her twin sons returned to Budapest, where they were reunited with László, who had escaped the labor battalions and gone into hiding. The family began to rebuild their lives. Later, they immigrated to Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel), where photographs show Margit with her twin sons under their new Hebrew surname Alon. András Brichta became Motti (Moti) Alon, and his Auschwitz tattoo number 17456 remains a permanent mark of what he survived (his brother’s number is 17457).

In later interviews, including one quoted in connection with the “twins of Auschwitz” story, Moti Alon recalled being a nine-year-old child in Auschwitz in 1944 and even being forced to witness degrading abuse inflicted on other prisoners. Yet he insisted that he chose not to live his entire life defined by trauma.

