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Surviving Through the Lessons of Sports

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Surviving Through the Lessons of Sports

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During the Nazi era, European Jews experienced tremendous persecution in the form of racial laws, ghettoizations, and death camps. In the 1930s both antisemitism and the enthusiasm for sports were a part of German society and culture. As an act of defiance and neutralization of prejudice misbeliefs, Zionist Organizations created sport associations. This was a means to promote their ideology of establishing a new homeland.

Playing sports increased the willingness of survival upon being sent to the camps during World War II. The participation and competition allowed for the Jewish communities to create a identity and disprove the Nazis ideology of being subhuman.

These sports associations were well liked by their members. It allowed for people to forget about their misfortune, and it added a sense of belonging and inclusion to Jewish citizens within their society.



Photograph Number: 18055 (USHMM)
The donor, Ilse Dahl (left), competes against two other runners in the 100 meter race at a sporting event in Berlin.

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Photograph Number: 20509(USHMM)
Group portrait of Jewish youth in a soccer team in Berlin. Tosca Kempler (born Taube Sussman) is the daughter of Jacob Sussman (b. Lublin, Poland) and Sima (nee Fluss) Sussman (b. Pysznica, Poland).

