

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Americans and the Holocaust* traveling exhibition coming to the Milwaukee Public Library with programming co-sponsored by the Holocaust Education Resource Center.**

Milwaukee, Wis. — The Milwaukee Public Library is one of 50 U.S. libraries selected to host *Americans and the Holocaust*, a traveling exhibition from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum that examines the motives, pressures and fears that shaped Americans' responses to Nazism, war and genocide in Europe during the 1930s and 1940s.

The touring library exhibition — based on the special exhibition of the same name at the Museum in Washington, D.C. — has traveled to U.S. libraries from 2021 to 2024. Milwaukee will be the last stop on the tour.

Based on extensive new research of that period, *Americans and the Holocaust* addresses important themes in American history, exploring the many factors — including the Great Depression, isolationism, xenophobia, racism and antisemitism — that influenced decisions made by the U.S. government, the news media, organizations and individuals as they responded to Nazism. This exhibition will challenge the commonly held assumptions that Americans knew little and did nothing about the Nazi persecution and murder of Jews as the Holocaust unfolded.

"MPL has a strong track record of winning grants from national arts and library organizations for their prestigious educational traveling exhibits highlighting many cultures, peoples and places," said Joan Johnson, Library Director. *"We invite our patrons to explore this latest example and expand their understanding of historical events through the joint programming that is supplemental to the exhibit. We're grateful to work with the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC) on this critically important content for the programs."*

Americans and the Holocaust will be on display at Milwaukee Central Library along with a series of related special events, from October 30, 2023 to January 5, 2024.

In addition, HERC is generously co-sponsoring and co-curating several learning opportunities for students and adults, from class field trips to panel discussions. In-person and virtual events are scheduled throughout November and December, with a special exhibit opening event on the evening of November 9th, featuring a guided tour, reception and keynote speaker, Dr. Daniel Greene. November 9 is also the 85th anniversary of Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass), and the program will commemorate this solemn event.

"Having toured this exhibition firsthand, I can honestly say experiencing it was one of the defining moments of my own understanding of the Holocaust. At its core, this exhibition is about wrestling with the unsettling questions 'What did Americans know as the Holocaust unfolded, and what more could have been done?' Such questions are essential for us to continue asking today." said Samantha Abramson, Executive Director, HERC.

For more information about *Americans and the Holocaust* and related programming at the Milwaukee Public Library, visit mpl.org/aath/. To learn more about the exhibition, visit ushmm.org/americans-ala.

Americans and the Holocaust: A Traveling Exhibition for Libraries is an educational initiative of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the American Library Association.

Americans and the Holocaust was made possible by the generous support of lead sponsor Jeannie & Jonathan Lavine. Additional major funding was provided by the Bildners — Joan & Allen z”l, Elisa Spungen & Rob, Nancy & Jim; and Jane and Daniel Och. The Museum's exhibitions are also supported by the Lester Robbins and Sheila Johnson Robbins Traveling and Special Exhibitions Fund, established in 1990. Additional programming support was made possible by the Holocaust Education Resource Center.

About the Milwaukee Public Library

Milwaukee Public Library is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee. Since 1878, Milwaukee Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for residents of Milwaukee and beyond. With 13 locations, and more than three million items in circulation, MPL offers free access to a rich collection of materials both physical and digital, access to technology, classes, exhibitions, programming and more. Learn more at mpl.org.

About the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center

As the only organization in Wisconsin dedicated solely to Holocaust education, the Nathan and Esther Pelz Holocaust Education Resource Center (HERC) supports educators across the state and provides public programming and educational experiences for learners of all ages. Since the enactment of Wisconsin Act 30, HERC has trained 775 educators, impacting 137,000 students throughout Wisconsin. Learn more about our program offerings at hercwi.org.

About the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

A living memorial to the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum inspires leaders and citizens worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity. The Museum’s far-reaching educational programs and global impact are made possible by generous donors. For more information, visit ushmm.org.

About the American Library Association

The American Library Association (ALA) is the foremost national organization providing resources to inspire library and information professionals to transform their communities through essential programs and services. For more than 140 years, the ALA has been the trusted voice for academic, public, school, government and special libraries, advocating for the profession and the library’s role in enhancing learning and ensuring access to information for all. For more information, visit ala.org.

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