

Topic Page: [Wiesel, Elie, 1928–2016](#)

Summary Article: **Wiesel, Elie(zer) (1928–2016)**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

Romanian-born US academic and human-rights campaigner. He was held in Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps during World War II, and assiduously documented wartime atrocities against the Jews in an effort to alert the world to the dangers of racism and violence. His novel *La Nuit/Night* (1958, English translation 1960) was based on his experiences in the camps. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1986 for his work as a writer and human-rights activist.

Wiesel was born in Sighet, Romania. In 1944, when he was 15, the town's Jewish population was sent to concentration camps. He and his family were sent first to Auschwitz, and then Buchenwald; Wiesel was the only one to survive. After the war he studied at the Sorbonne in Paris (he has written many of his works in French), and then worked as a journalist for French, Israeli, and US publications. Settling in the USA in 1956, and taking US citizenship in 1963, he taught first at City College, New York, and from 1976 at Boston University, where he was professor of humanities. He was chair of the US President's Commission on the Holocaust (1980–86). In 1987 he established the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

The Holocaust is a constant theme in both Wiesel's fiction and his non-fiction. *La Nuit/Night* was followed by works such as *Dawn* (1961), *The Accident* (1962), *The Town Beyond the Wall* (1964), *A Beggar in Jerusalem* (1970), *The Testament* (1980), *The Forgotten* (1992), and *Twilight* (1988). He has also written plays and lectured widely on Jewish culture and humanitarian issues. Volumes of autobiography include *All Rivers Run to the Sea* (1995) and *And the Sea is Never Full* (1999).

Wiesel sought to remind new generations of the Nazi atrocities so that they might never be repeated. He is considered the most eloquent spokesperson of the death-camp survivors.

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