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'Defiance' schooling classes on Holocaust

BY MEREDITH KOLODNER
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

Some city teachers are using the film "Defiance," about Jewish resistance in World War II, in their curriculum to teach an unusual focus on the Holocaust.

The film, which stars **Daniel Craig** - who also is the latest **James Bond** - tells of two Jewish brothers who helped save more than 1,200 Jews by organizing a hidden, mobile village in the Polish forest.

"Very often students, when studying this history, think of Jews as being very passive," veteran teacher **Alice Braziller** said.

"I don't think you should teach the Holocaust unless you're also talking about resistance," added Braziller, who teaches at **Manhattan's Satellite Academy High School/HS570**.

The history of these resistance fighters is not usually taught in high school.

"This has been an unknown story in classrooms," said **Mich Braff**, founder of the **Jewish Partisan Educational Foundation**.

"Many of the partisans were teenagers. The story is that young people can stand up against tyranny and make a difference."

The group developed an online curriculum to go with the film (www.jewishpartisans.org).

In the film, the brothers not only hide fellow Jews, they attack from the forest and kill German soldiers and their collaborators.

"It really struck me that they were very fierce and very strong," said Satellite senior **Arriann Henry**. "They didn't only protect themselves, they saved other people."

Bronx High School of Science has long taught a course on the Holocaust.

"Last year, we watched "Schindler's List," and we talked a lot about non-Jewish rescuers," said **Sophia Sapozhnikov**, who plans to use the "Defiance" curriculum in her Holocaust course.

"It's good to have examples of Jews who rescued themselves."

Sapozhnikov's grandfather survived the Holocaust by fleeing **Romania** during the war. Five of his siblings died in **Auschwitz**.

Her maternal grandmother, who was Ukrainian, saved a family of Jews by hiding them in her church.

She said the curriculum was a way of raising ethical questions about if and when killing and revenge is justified.

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"At one point a character says, 'Even though hunted like animals, we will not become like animals.'" said Sapozhnikov, 30.

"Their goals change. These are people who can serve as a role model to students." mkolodner@nydailynews.com

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