



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
Office of Institutional Advancement
Press Release
November 10, 2021

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Virtual Event: ‘Franci’s War’—A True Story of Survival in Theresienstadt and Beyond

MAHWAH, N.J. – On November 16 at 7 p.m., renowned author and journalist Helen Epstein will discuss her mother’s Holocaust memoir, *Franci’s War* that she edited and annotated for publication.

Originally written in 1974, Franci Rabinek Epstein begins the story of her Holocaust ordeal in Prague with the German occupation of March 15, 1939 and continues with her deportation in the summer of 1942 to Terezin (Theresienstadt in German), the former fortress town forty miles north of Prague that the Nazis transformed into a transit camp/ghetto. It would be the start of a three-year nightmare that would take her to Auschwitz-Birkenau, to slave labor camps in Hamburg, and, finally, to Bergen Belsen, where in April 1945, she was liberated by the British. Her return to Prague finally came in August 1945.

Franci was known in her group as the Prague dress designer who lied to Dr. Mengele in Auschwitz, saying she was an electrician, an occupation that both endangered and saved her life. In this memoir, she offers her intense and candid account of those years. *Franci’s War* is the powerful testimony of one incredibly strong young woman who survived.

The Gross Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies is sponsoring the program. Registration to attend via Zoom is at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/x/helen-epstein-francis-war-a-true-story-of-survival-in-theresienstadt-tickets-160860172105>

Helen Epstein is an arts journalist and author/translator of ten books, including the non-fiction trilogy *Children of the Holocaust*, *Where She Came From* and *The Long Half-Lives of Love and Trauma*. *Franci's War* has been published in nine countries. Her pioneering work on the inter-generational transmission of trauma paved the way for hundreds of works by second-generation writers, artists and researchers and has been widely translated.

Born in Prague in 1947, Epstein grew up in New York City, and while an undergrad at Hebrew University, was caught in the 1968 Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia. *The Jerusalem Post* printed her first-person account and launched her journalism career. Her reviews and articles have appeared in the *Sunday New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *New York*, *Esquire*, and *NewYorker.com*

She is, with her husband Patrick Mehr, founder of Plunkett Lake Press, curating classics of non-fiction and lectures at universities, libraries, religious and civic institutions.

For information or to request disability-related accommodations for this event, please contact holgen@ramapo.edu or call 201-684-7409.

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Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college and is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding. The College is ranked #1 among New Jersey public institutions by College Choice; is recognized as the state's top college on the list of Best Disability Schools by *Great Value Colleges*; was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful College Campuses in America by *CondéNast Traveler*; and is recognized as a top college by *U.S. News & World Report*, *Kiplinger's*, Princeton Review and *Money* magazine, among others. Ramapo College is also distinguished as a Career Development College of Distinction by *CollegesofDistinction.com*, boasts the best campus housing in New Jersey on *Niche.com*, and is designated a "Military Friendly College" in Victoria Media's *Guide to Military Friendly Schools*.

Established in 1969, Ramapo College offers bachelor's degrees in the arts, business, data science, humanities, social sciences and the sciences, as well as in professional studies, which include business, education, nursing and social work. In addition, the College offers courses leading to teacher certification at the elementary and secondary levels, and offers graduate programs leading to master's degrees in Accounting, Business Administration, Creative Music Technology, Data Science, Educational Technology, Educational Leadership, Nursing, Social Work and Special Education, as well as a post-master's Doctor of Nursing Practice.