

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Lesson 1	The Rise of Hitler	4
Lesson 2	The Anti-Semitic Mentality	8
Lesson 3	From Segregation to “the Final Solution”	12
Lesson 4	The Aftermath.....	16

Introduction

Teaching the Holocaust

In recent years, educators have seen a flood of new teaching materials on the Holocaust. These materials are helping to pass on to the next generation an awareness of this terrible moment in human history. Yet because there are so many approaches to teaching about the Holocaust, educators are often faced with the problem of how to choose among them.

Therefore, it may help you to understand our approach clearly. The goal of some curriculum units and materials is to treat the Holocaust as a way to raise awareness about the evils of genocide and prejudice in general. Others stress the unique nature of the Holocaust, teaching it mainly in order to keep the memory of it alive and vivid. Our approach leans toward this latter view. We think it crucial for students to grasp the unique aspects of the Holocaust in order to fully understand it. However, we do also feel that students must be challenged to relate the Holocaust to their concerns about their own life and times. Hence, while the images and discussion questions in this booklet focus on the nature of the Holocaust itself, many follow-up activities ask students to relate what they learn to their own lives and their own society.

MindSparks materials use still images to bring history to life. In the case of the Holocaust, this presents some problems. In a way, the historical record of Nazism and the Holocaust is *too* visual. The overpowering horror of this visual record makes it difficult to avoid sensationalism, or to know exactly what youngsters can handle emotionally. Many of the illustrations in this booklet are quite grim. Yet we have tried to avoid using the most gruesome images, while not sanitizing the truth that students need to grasp. We hope this helps to promote the kind of thoughtful and reflective response the Holocaust demands of all of us. The twelve illustrations in the booklet are presented in four lessons. Each lesson uses three of these illustrations to explore one broad topic in the overall story. Briefly, the four lessons are as follows:

The Rise of Hitler

The illustrations focus attention on the militaristic and totalitarian nature of the Nazi regime. That regime was not simply authoritarian. It was a tyranny of the mass spectacle and the total elimination of the individual.

The Anti-Semitic Mentality

The three images in this lesson together reveal most of the key elements in the anti-Semitic ideology that was used to justify the “Final Solution.”

From Segregation to the “Final Solution”

The pre-war forms of discrimination and oppression were only a prelude to the events that make the Holocaust unique, the systematic and planned elimination of an entire people for no real reason at all.

The Aftermath

The focus here is on the relative burdens of guilt born by Germany’s leaders, its citizens, and the rest of the world. A final image asks students to find reasons for hope in Jewish resilience and renewal.

Using Photos, Cartoons, and Other Visuals to Teach History

Most textbooks today are full of colorful visuals. But all too often these visuals function primarily as window dressing. They make the text more entertaining, or at least more palatable. But only occasionally do the visuals in textbooks do more than offer simple pictorial reinforcement of ideas already presented in the text. In many cases, they pander to the visual orientation of the young while doing little to help young people master the challenges of the visual media that dominate their lives.

By way of contrast, our approach to using visual materials emphasizes their unique strengths as historical documents. The lessons in this booklet focus students on the visual symbols and metaphors in editorial cartoons, the dramatic qualities of certain photographs, the potential of many images to make abstract ideas more specific and concrete, the implicit biases and stereotypes in certain images, their emotional power, and their ability to invoke the spirit of a time and place. In the process, we make every effort to strengthen students' visual literacy skills in general, as well as their ability to think critically and engage in spirited but disciplined discussions.

How to Use This Booklet

The booklet is divided into four lessons, with three illustrations per lesson. Each lesson consists of the following:

A BACKGROUND INFORMATION SHEET This page provides brief summaries explaining the three illustrations on which the lesson is based and their relevance to the lesson's objectives.

CD-ROM WITH IMAGES The ImageXaminer allows you to project the images for use in your class discussions. The CD-ROM also includes a folder containing all of the discussion questions and follow-up questions in pdf format. All of the images are also in pdf format, should you wish to create overhead transparencies.

DISCUSSION-ACTIVITY SHEETS FOR EACH ILLUSTRATION

Each sheet displays one illustration. It includes a sequence of questions to help you plan an all-class discussion while viewing the images in the ImageXaminer. The questions take students step by step through an analysis of the illustration. If you wish, you may reproduce these pages and hand them out. In addition to the discussion questions on the illustration itself, one or two follow-up activities are suggested. Some of these can be made into individual assignments, while others will work best as small-group or all-class activities.

The Holocaust

**OBJECTIVES
FOR THIS LESSON:**

1. Students will better understand the unique power of Adolf Hitler as a dictator and the Nazi form of totalitarianism he imposed on Germany.
-

The Rise of Hitler

Use the background information on this page to help your students better understand the three illustrations making up this lesson. The questions and activities presented in the rest of the lesson can be used to help students clarify meanings and debate important issues.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS:

Illustration 1

In the early 1930s, democratic Germany was thrown into chaos and destroyed by an Austrian World War I veteran named Adolf Hitler. In the 1920s, bitterness over the unfair settlement of World War I moved some to join Hitler's National Socialist German Workers Party, the "Nazis." Then, the hard times of the Great Depression swelled that support to a near-majority in elections in 1932. In 1933, Hitler became Germany's top leader, its Chancellor. What his Nazis proceeded to create was not an ordinary dictatorship, but a truly "totalitarian" society. These photos convey its unique character. Hitler appears as one of his men, yet also raised high above them. His rigid stance, salute, uniform and bearing convey the idea of unbending authority and total power. This cult of power was celebrated in huge spectacles, such as the rally on the right. The individual disappeared into a disciplined mass, a militarized nation in which all independent thought and feeling was to be eliminated.

Illustration 2

Book burnings were organized by the Nazis as another kind of mass spectacle. Books were seized and burned by the thousands in huge nighttime bonfires such as this one. The Nazis taught that Germany had been poisoned by un-German ideas. Huge torchlight parades and book burnings like the one shown here could not destroy every banned book in Germany. The book burnings were really a kind of ritual, in which people acted to purify the nation. Among the books burned were those by communist revolutionaries such as Karl Marx or V. I. Lenin. But they also included many far less radical authors — Ernest Hemingway, for example, Thomas Mann, Sinclair Lewis, and Hellen Keller.

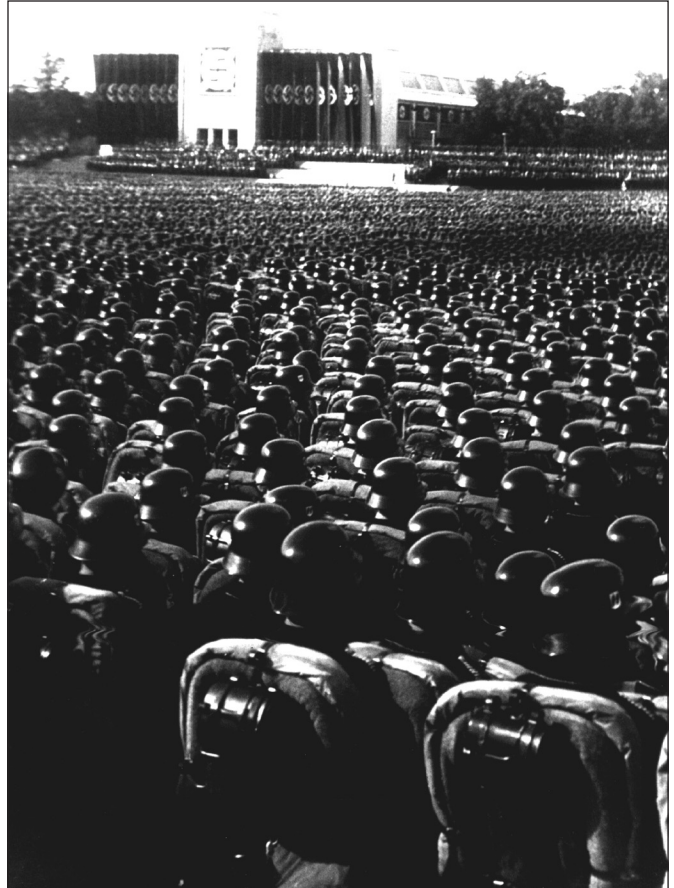
Illustration 3

All aspects of life in Germany were organized to glorify the Nazis and support their goals. This drive for totalitarian control led the Nazis to stress education and youth. So, too, did their worship of physical strength. The young children in this photo are members of Hitler Youth. In addition to Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls, the schools, universities, army, media, even the churches fell under Nazi control. Together, they made it impossible for individuals to escape the control of the all-powerful state, even inside their own families and homes.

Illustration 1



The National Archives



The National Archives

Discussing the Illustration

1. The photo on the left is of one of the most terrifying leaders ever to come to power in all of history. He is the man standing with his arm extended out rigidly. Can you name him and the nation he once led?
2. The photo shows Hitler in 1928 at a big rally for the political party he then led. That party was called the National Socialist German Workers Party. By what shorter name did the world come to know Hitler's party and his followers in Germany?
3. In 1928, Hitler had not yet taken complete control of Germany's government. When did he get that control?
4. After taking power in Germany, the Nazis continued to hold big rallies, such as the one on the right. From these two photos, what can you tell about Hitler and the kind of leader he was? That is, what do the photos alone show you about him, about his leadership, and about the kind of nation the Nazis wanted Germany to become?

Follow-up Activities

1. Small Group Activity: Together the two photographs shown above reveal a good deal about the nature of the Third Reich, the government Hitler set up. Your group's task is to carefully select five to ten more photos, drawings, posters, or other visuals for a bulletin board display designed to explain to young children what they most need to know about Hitler, the Nazi movement, and the Third Reich. Ask your librarian to help you locate books with photos and other visuals on the Hitler era. Do some reading on your own about Nazi Germany. Discuss the visuals you find, and choose ten images carefully with their educational value for young children in mind. Write simple explanations of each image and link them together to tell a single, easily understood story. If you can make good copies of the images, use them along with your explanations to create a well-organized display.