

# **The Holocaust**

## *Backwards Planning Curriculum Units*

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# How to Use This Unit

Backwards planning offers an innovative yet simple approach to meeting curriculum goals; it also provides a way to keep students engaged and focused throughout the learning process. Many teachers approach history instruction in the following manner: they identify a topic required by state and/or national standards, they find materials on that topic, they use those materials with their students, and then they administer some sort of standard test at the end of the unit. Backwards planning, rather than just starting with a required instructional topic, goes a step further by identifying exactly what students need to know by the end of the unit—the so-called “enduring understandings.” The next step involves assessment: devising ways to determine whether students have learned what they need to know. The final step involves planning the teaching/learning process so that students can acquire the knowledge needed.

This product uses backwards planning to combine a PowerPoint presentation, activities that involve authentic assessment, and traditional tests (multiple-choice and essay) into a complete curriculum unit. Although the materials have enough built-in flexibility that you can use them in a number of ways, we suggest the following procedure:

1. Start with the “essential questions” listed on slide 2 of the PowerPoint presentation (these also appear in the teacher support materials). Briefly go over them with students before getting into the topic material. These questions will help students focus their learning and note taking during the course of the unit. You can also choose to use the essential questions as essay questions at the end of the unit; one way to do this is to let students know at the outset that one of the essential questions will be on the test—they just won’t know which one.

2. Next, discuss the activities students will complete during the unit. This will also help focus their learning and note taking, and it will lead them to view the PowerPoint presentation in a different light, considering it a source of ideas for authentic-assessment projects.

3. Present the PowerPoint to the class. Most slides have an image and bullet points summarizing the slide’s topic. The Notes page for each slide contains a paragraph or two of information that you can use as a presentation script, or just as background information for your own reference. Use the “show set up” function in PowerPoint to present with “two monitors.” Have yours set to include the ‘notes view’ and let the projector show only the slides to the students.

You don’t need to present the entire PowerPoint at once: it’s broken up into several sections, each of which concludes with some discussion questions that echo parts of the essential questions and also help students to get closer to the “enduring understandings.” Spend some time with the class going over and debating these questions—this will not only help students think critically about the material, but it will also allow you to incorporate different modes of instruction during a single class period, offering a better chance to engage students.

4. Have students complete one or more of the authentic-assessment activities. These activities are flexible: most can be completed either individually or in groups, and either as homework or as in-class assignments. Each activity includes a rubric; many also have graphic organizers. You can choose to have students complete the activities after you have shown them the entire PowerPoint

presentation, or you can show them one section of the PowerPoint, go over the discussion questions, and then have students complete an activity.

**5.** End the unit with traditional assessment. The support materials include a 20-question multiple-choice quiz; you can combine this with an essay question (you can use one of the essential questions or come up with one of your own) to create a full-period test.

**6.** If desired, debrief with students by going over the essential questions with them again and remind them what the enduring understandings are.

We are dedicated to continually improving our products and working with teachers to develop exciting and effective tools for the classroom. We can offer advice on how to maximize the use of the product and share others' experiences. We would also be happy to work with you on ideas for customizing the presentation.

We value your feedback, so please let us know more about the ways in which you use this product to supplement your lessons; we're also eager to hear any recommendations you might have for ways in which we can expand the functionality of this product in future editions. You can e-mail us at [access@socialstudies.com](mailto:access@socialstudies.com). We look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Aaron Willis  
Chief Education Officer  
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# The Holocaust: Backwards Planning Activities

## Enduring understandings:

- For centuries, many Christians in Europe had regarded Jews with great suspicion and hostility as people who refused to accept Christian teachings and as guilty of the murder of Jesus Christ.
- This Christian anti-Semitism also came to take the form of a view that Jews were racially distinct and a threat to other races and their cultures. The Nazis played on these fears with their own extreme version of this form of anti-Semitism.
- After World War I, Germany was in a constant state of turmoil. Its weak form of democratic government was often blamed for all of Germany's troubles. The Nazis rose to power during the Great Depression by attacking this democratic government and calling for a new, much more authoritarian government.
- In his book *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler made it clear his Nazis intended to punish the Jews and rid Germany of them.
- During the first years of Nazi power, a series of laws and violent attacks deprived Germany's Jews of all civil rights and much of their ability to make a living, and they made life increasingly unbearable for them.
- During World War II, Germany systematically rounded up as many of Europe's Jews as they could, murdered many, and herded the rest into tightly confined ghettos.
- From the ghettos, millions of Jews were transported to death camps and murdered in a systematic and technologically advanced way.
- The horror of the Holocaust shocked the world deeply and led it to define the concept of "genocide" as a crime against humanity that all nations should work to prevent.

## Essential questions:

- Why did Christians, followers of a religion stressing love and forgiveness, so often turn in hatred against innocent Jews?
- Why did Germany, a powerful industrial society with a well-educated population, accept a form of anti-Semitism so extreme and cruel as to lead to the effort to destroy an entire group of human beings by the millions?
- Why were the democratic nations unable to find a way to stop Hitler and his Nazis from starting World War II and launching the Holocaust?
- Why did the Nazis organize the Holocaust in the form it took—of ghettos, railroad transportation to the death camps, gas chambers, and crematoria?
- In what ways, if any, was the Holocaust different from other genocidal events in history?
- Could or should the Allies have done more to rescue Jews and to stop the Holocaust once they realized it was being carried out?

# Learning Experiences and Instruction

Students will need to know...	Students will need to be able to...
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. that for centuries, many Christians from time to time singled out Jews as enemies of Christ and Christianity</li> <li>2. that in the 1800s racist theories added to this traditional anti-Semitism and made Jews into enemies of supposedly superior races</li> <li>3. that Hitler and the Nazis used these anti-Semitic ideas to depict Jews as enemies of Germany and of all civilization</li> <li>4. that even before World War II, the Nazis implemented many new laws and policies designed to persecute the Jews</li> <li>5. that during the war, they launched a plan to destroy every Jew in all of Europe</li> <li>6. that the Nazis used modern technology in a very efficient, bureaucratic manner to carry out their aim of destroying the Jews.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. read and interpret primary source documents about the history of the Holocaust</li> <li>2. understand some of the reasons that motivated the Nazis in carrying out the Holocaust</li> <li>3. identify some major figures in the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust</li> <li>4. understand and debate certain key controversies having to do with the Holocaust</li> <li>5. identify causal relationships between various events and developments during this period.</li> </ol>

**These lessons incorporate the following learning activities to help students reach the enduring understandings:**

- Overview of essential questions and basic understandings
- Class discussion of subject matter questions in the presentation
- Teacher introduction of common terms and ideas in the essential questions and related projects
- Provide students with primary source materials from which they will complete the related projects in the unit
- Students conduct research in groups to be used later in individual and group projects
- Informal observation and coaching of students as they work in groups
- Evaluation and delivered feedback on projects and research reports
- Students create and present their unit projects
- Posttest made of multiple-choice questions covering the presentation, with one or more essential questions as essay questions

# Project # 1: The *Kristallnacht* Front Page

## Overview:

In this lesson, students will work in groups as reporters and editors covering the events of the night of November 9–10, 1938, in Germany. Known as *Kristallnacht* (“Night of [broken] glass”), it was a Nazi pogrom or series of attacks against Germany’s Jews. The incident dramatically demonstrated the determination of the Nazis to make life nearly impossible for Germany’s Jews. It also revealed a great deal about the nature and ultimate intentions of Hitler and the Nazis. Having collected information about this event and its historical context, students in each group write articles and lay out a newspaper “front page” and an “editorial page” in which they will present their stories and provide commentary by observers of the events of November 9–10, 1938.

## Objectives:

In completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- better understand the events of November 1938 in Germany and their significance
- write news stories and editorial content regarding *Kristallnacht*
- create “front pages” highlighting the details and impact of that violent episode.

## Time required:

Four class periods

## Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, printer, word-processing and publishing software such as Microsoft Word and Microsoft Publisher (should you elect to have students complete the project electronically), poster board, glue (if you want students to assemble pages manually), copies of newspapers of the era (on microfilm or online, if available), the “*Kristallnacht* Newspaper Information Form” (provided)

## Procedures:

Divide the class into several small groups. Each group should first gain greater background knowledge about *Kristallnacht*.

With the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, German Jews were deprived of their rights as citizens. In the years that followed, one act after another further restricted them, harassed them, or limited their economic opportunities. In November 1938, in a rage, a young Jewish man shot a Nazi official

at the German embassy in Paris. That official died on November 9th, and Germany's Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels used the incident as an excuse to incite and support Nazi attacks on Jews throughout Germany. Windows were smashed (hence the name *Kristallnacht*), synagogues and Jewish businesses were destroyed, Jews were attacked and beaten, and thousands were sent to concentration camps.

In the days that followed, the German government held the Jews themselves responsible for the mayhem. New restrictions followed. In many ways, *Kristallnacht* made it clear, or should have made it clear, that the Nazis' intention was not merely the restriction of Jews in German life, but their elimination.

Ask students to speculate as to how a newspaper in the U.S. or England might have covered the events of November 9–10, 1938, in Germany. Next, explain to the students that they'll be working in groups to create newspaper "front pages" covering *Kristallnacht*. In addition to basic news coverage of the uprising and related events on a front page, students should add an "editorial page" that includes the newspaper's own editorial, opinion columns, letters to the editor, and perhaps editorial cartoons and others' illustrations.

Each group should try to include most of the following on its front page or editorial page:

- A front page headline story on the events of *Kristallnacht* itself
- Other articles on recent events in Germany and its dealings with the world in 1938
- A story on Herschel Grynszpan (the man who killed the Nazi official in Paris) and his family
- A story about the Nuremberg Laws and other Nazi acts depriving Jews of their rights
- A report on new restrictions on Jews being considered by the Nazis
- The newspaper's own editorial about the events of November 9–10, 1938
- Several letters to the editor about the situation from the following: an isolationist in the U.S. who did not want America to get involved in Europe's conflicts; a rabbi in the U.S.; an eyewitness account by a Jewish shop owner in a letter to relatives in the U.S.; a German refugee who left Germany in 1937

Once you've introduced the lesson to the class, have students begin research using the related Web sites and by filling out the "*Kristallnacht* Newspaper Information Form" to assist them in completing the project. Allow sufficient time for students to complete their research. Once finished, students should take their information and shape it into news stories to include on the front page and editorial page.

### **Evaluation:**

Once student groups have completed their front pages, evaluate the finished product using a suitable rubric. You may wish to use a school- or district-developed rubric, or the sample rubric included with this lesson.

## Suggested Web resources:

The following is a sampling of possible resources for the small group's work. You should supplement this list by assisting students in finding related information via a reputable search engine.

### Images of *Kristallnacht*

- [http://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+Kristallnacht&hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB\\_en&biw=1032&bih=516&prmd=ivns&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=o4RNTvbwFIqFsALegfX6Bg&sqi=2&ved=0CCEQsAQ](http://www.google.com/search?q=images+of+Kristallnacht&hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB_en&biw=1032&bih=516&prmd=ivns&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ei=o4RNTvbwFIqFsALegfX6Bg&sqi=2&ved=0CCEQsAQ)

### Articles on *Kristallnacht*

- <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/focus/Kristallnacht/>
- <http://frank.mtsu.edu/~baustin/knacht.html>
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Kristallnacht.html>
- <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005201>
- <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/knacht.htm>
- <http://www.aish.com/ho/o/48956531.html>
- <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/Kristallnacht/frame.htm>

### The Nuremberg Laws

- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/nurlaws.html>
- <http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007695>

# The *Kristallnacht* Newspaper Information Form

<b>Stories and/or editorial comments you worked on</b>	
<b>Significance of stories or editorials(why they should be included in the newspaper)</b>	
<b>What the stories show about <i>Kristallnacht</i></b>	
<b>What the stories show more generally about the Nazis in the 1930s</b>	



# The Kristallnacht Newspaper Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
<b>Research</b>	Information form completely filled out; evident that story or stories were well-researched	Information form filled out; adequate information included in the story or stories	Information form incomplete; sketchy information included in the story or stories	Information form incomplete; little or no relevant information included in the story or stories	
<b>Historical accuracy</b>	Highly detailed, accurate or plausible portrayal of events or ideas	Portrayal of events or ideas generally accurate or plausible	Portrayal of events or ideas rarely accurate or plausible	Inaccurate portrayal of events or ideas	
<b>Creativity</b>	Layout of newspaper pages shows exemplary level of creativity and thought	Layout of newspaper pages shows generally high level of creativity and thought	Layout of newspaper pages somewhat difficult to read; flow of page generally acceptable	Layout of newspaper pages very difficult to read; flow of page unacceptable	
<b>Additional criteria as set by teacher</b>					
<b>Cumulative score</b>					

# Project #2: The *Judenrat*—A Debate

## Overview:

This lesson gives students a chance to learn more about the key battles of World War I in an effort to answer the following question: Was any single battle the most important of the war? In small groups of two or three students each, students study several key battles and present descriptions of these battles, their highlights, and their overall impact on the war. Based on the presentations, the class as a whole develops a short set of standards for judging the importance of these WWI battles. Based on these standards, the class then votes to choose one battle as the most important of the war.

## Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- better understand the nature and purpose of the ghettos that the Nazis set up
- better understand the role of the *Judenrat* within those ghettos
- make judgments about whether or not any Jew should have participated in a *Judenrat*.

## Time required:

Four class periods (with one period for the debate in front of the class)

## Materials:

The “*Judenrat* Debate Student Handout” (provided)

## Procedures:

Prior to beginning the lesson, assign students to three groups:

1. A group defending the idea of Jews taking part in a *Judenrat*
2. A group criticizing idea of Jews taking part in a *Judenrat*
3. A small group of moderators to supervise the debate

Students may select the group they wish to join, or you may elect to assign them to groups based on student abilities and personalities. Each group should first learn more about the ghettos the Nazis set up and the *Judenräte* they established for many of them.

During World War II, the Nazis forced Jews all over Europe to give up their jobs, their homes, and most of their belongings, and relocate into tightly controlled and confined ghettos. Life in these ghettos soon became intolerable. Adding to the misery was the cruelty of Nazi soldiers who would beat or shoot Jews in the streets for any reason. However, the Nazis knew the ghetto would be easier to control if Jews were seen as controlling it. Therefore, they frequently put a Jewish Council, or *Judenrat*, in charge of a ghetto. These Jewish Councils had no real power. But they did get to make some minor decisions whenever the Nazis wanted them to do so.

One *Judenrat* member in the Warsaw Ghetto justified joining the *Judenrat* this way: “The Germans will continue to inflict indignities upon us. At least we may be able to soften some of the blows.” But another quickly resigned from Warsaw’s *Judenrat*, saying “Our people have fought hard to get out of the ghetto. I shall not put them back into one.”

In discussing the *Judenrat* in their groups, students should consider and seek to answer the following questions:

- What was the real purpose of herding Jews into the ghettos as the Nazis did?
- How much could Jews know of the ultimate fate the Nazis had in store for them?
- What exactly did the Nazis have each ghetto’s *Judenrat* do?
- In what ways, if any, could the *Judenrat* ease conditions for some or all Jews?
- What rewards or special favors, if any, did the Nazis allow members of the *Judenrat* to have?
- What evidence is there for how various *Judenrat* members felt about their participation in these Jewish councils?
- What difference would it have made for others had any Jew refused to take part in a *Judenrat*?

Here is a suggested format for the debate:

- **Critics of taking part in the *Judenrat*:** This group will prepare a five-minute presentation describing the role of the *Judenrat* and explaining why it was wrong for any Jew to take part in one and why doing so only aided the Nazis in their ultimate goal of destroying all the Jews. The group will then listen closely to the opening statement of the Defenders of the idea of taking part in a *Judenrat*. The Critics will have some time to discuss that statement, and then they must do two things. First they should repeat back as fully and accurately as they can the key points made by the Defenders. They will then have five minutes in which to challenge or criticize those points.
- **Defenders of taking part in the *Judenrat*:** This group will prepare a five-minute opening statement defending the idea of a Jew taking part in a *Judenrat*. They should make reference to the benefits to other Jews that a member of a *Judenrat* might have been able to confer. They will first listen closely to the opening statement of the Critics and will then present their own opening statement. They will have some time to discuss the opening statement by the Critics. They then must do two things: First they should repeat

back as fully and accurately as they can the key points the Critics make. They will then have five minutes in which to challenge or criticize those points.

- **Moderator group:** This group will supervise the debate the two other student groups carry on with each other. The moderators must remain neutral but should try to keep debaters focused on the issue and make sure each debater listens carefully to responses from the other side. At the end of that debate the moderators will field questions from the rest of the class. To perform this role effectively, the moderators should do some of the same background reading and research as the two debating groups.

### Evaluation:

At the end of the debate, evaluate student work using a suitable rubric. Two sample rubrics are included with this lesson, which you may either use or adapt to meet your individual circumstances.

### Suggested Web resources:

- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Judenrat.html>
- <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ghettos/Judenrat.html>
- <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judenrat>
- <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005265>
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Czerniakow.html>
- <http://www.deathcamps.org/occupation/czerniakow.html>
- [http://books.google.com/books/about/The\\_Warsaw\\_diary\\_of\\_Adam\\_Czerniakow.html?id=k7ltAAAAMAAJ](http://books.google.com/books/about/The_Warsaw_diary_of_Adam_Czerniakow.html?id=k7ltAAAAMAAJ)
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/warsawtoc.html>
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/lodz.html>
- <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ghettos/rumkowski.html>

# The Judenrat Debate Student Handout

**Why do you think the Nazis wanted Jews to run these councils in the ghettos they set up?**

**What are your key reasons for being either for or against the idea of any Jew serving on a *Judenrat*?**

**What do you think an opponent of your view would say to challenge each of your reasons as stated above?**

## The *Judenrat* Debate Rubric: Moderator Group

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
<b>Understands the central issues at stake in the debate about Jews joining a <i>Judenrat</i></b>	Understands these issues well and uses them well to guide the debate	Understands these issues adequately and uses them to guide the debate	Only partially understands these issues and makes little use of them to guide the debate	Understand these issues poorly and does not use them to guide the debate	
<b>Keeps debate teams focused on topic</b>	Identifies key points in need of clarification and helps teams address them	Identifies and explains only a few key points in need of clarification	Identifies a few points in need of clarification but cannot help teams address them	Fails to identify points in need of clarification or to help teams address them	
<b>Guides teams to listen and respond to each other</b>	Identifies and explains well central points that the teams need to respond to more carefully	Identifies and explains only a few points the teams need to respond to	Identifies few points the teams need to clarify but fails to help the teams respond to them	Identifies no key points that the teams need to respond to more carefully	
<b>Cumulative score</b>					

# The Judenrat Debate Rubric: Debate Group

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
<b>Handout:</b> the student states reasons for favoring or opposing the idea of Jews joining a <i>Judenrat</i>	Student states his or her reasons well and supports them clearly, with great detail	Student states the reasons adequately and explains them fairly well	Student states the reasons adequately but with little explanation of them	Student states the reasons poorly and does not explain them	
<b>Handout:</b> the student understands the likely arguments against his or her own stand on the idea of Jews joining a <i>Judenrat</i>	The student identifies and explains well several major points against the stand he or she has taken	Student identifies and explains only some key points against his or her stand	Student identifies only a few points against his or her stand	Fails to identify or explain clearly any points against his or her stand	
<b>Debate:</b> defends the group's position in the <i>Judenrat</i> debate	Identifies and explains well several major points in support of the group's position	Identifies and explains only some key points in support of the group's position	Identifies only a few points in support of the group's position	Fails to identify or explain clearly any points in support of the group's position	
<b>Debate:</b> responds to the other group's position in the <i>Judenrat</i> debate	Understands and responds in a relevant way to the other side's comments	Understands and responds in a relevant way to only some of the other side's comments	Only partly understands or responds to some of the other side's comments	Understands few of the other side's comments and fails to respond in any relevant way	
<b>Cumulative score</b>					

# Project #3: The Holocaust in Images— Planning a Lesson for Young Children

## Overview:

In this lesson, a small group of students creates a display of visual images on the Holocaust and then designate those they think could be used in a Holocaust lesson with younger children. The images (photos, poster art, cartoons, paintings, etc.) should be chosen so as to illustrate the power of the visual image to clarify and dramatize gripping historical episodes. Students group the images under several headings to help tell the entire story of the Holocaust. They then designate each image as one they would use with young children or not use with young children in a Holocaust lesson. Students write text to accompany each image and assemble all the images in a well-organized museum-style bulletin-board display or as a PowerPoint presentation. The group discusses its images with the class, explain its selection of images, and explain its reasons for designating some as appropriate for younger children and some as inappropriate.

## Objectives:

As a result of completing the lesson, students will be able to:

- identify several dramatic images that help illustrate the nature of the Holocaust
- understand and discuss the unique emotional power of the visual image
- make informed judgments about how to teach young children about the Holocaust.

## Time required:

Four class periods (with one period for a presentation to the class)

## Materials:

Computer(s) with Internet access, word-processing and PowerPoint software, a printer, the “Visual Images of the Holocaust Checklist” (provided)

## Procedures:

Not all educators agree on how best to teach young children about the Holocaust. Some oppose teaching about it at all to children in the lower elementary grades. Some say it is important to teach about it as long as care is taken to avoid making it too upsetting. Some say a stress should be placed on positive aspects of the story, such as heroic people who rescued Jews during the



Holocaust. Others say it is important to teach about the Holocaust truthfully and thoroughly in all of its aspects.

This lesson requires a small group of students to make some decisions about how they think the Holocaust could be taught to younger children. It does this by asking the group to do two things: First, they must choose a group of visuals to use in a lesson on the Holocaust; second, they must divide their images up into those they deem appropriate in a lesson for young students and those they consider inappropriate. The group should choose its images with the realization that young children may find learning about the Holocaust to be an extremely disturbing, even frightening experience. This does not mean the group should automatically exclude any particular image, but it does mean it should discuss thoughtfully their reasons for including or excluding each particular image.

Assign students to one small group. The group's task is to assemble several kinds of visual images about the Holocaust. Have the group use the suggested Internet resources or other print resources to find approximately 20–30 photos, cartoons, posters, and other visuals telling the story of the Holocaust. Students should try to find images that can be grouped under the following headings:

- Images of Hitler and the Nazi rise to power
- Anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda
- Images of Jewish life in Germany before the Nazis
- Images of Jewish life in Germany during Nazi rule
- Images of life in the Jewish ghettos set up by the Nazis
- Images of the death camps and the Holocaust
- Images of those who resisted the Nazis

Once all the images have been chosen, divide them up among the students in the group. Have each student analyze his or her images using the “Visual Images of the Holocaust Checklist” (use one checklist for each image analyzed). After analyzing the visuals using the checklists, the group should then discuss the visuals and label each one as either “suitable for young children” or “not suitable for young children.” The group should assemble all the images in a well-organized bulletin-board display or as a PowerPoint presentation. It should then conduct a discussion of the images with the entire class. The discussion should focus on the group's decisions to include some images and exclude others from a lesson on the Holocaust for young children.

<b>Evaluation:</b>
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After the group's presentation, you should evaluate students based on their presentation skills as well as on their research skills in completing the “Visual Images of the Holocaust Checklist.” While you may wish to develop your own rubric for this project, a sample rubric is included as a guideline.

## Suggested Web resources:

The following is a sampling of possible resources for the small group's work. You should supplement this list by assisting students in finding related information via a reputable search engine.

### Images of the Holocaust

- [http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB\\_en&biw=1032&bih=516&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=images+for+Nazi+Germany&oq=images+for+Nazi+Germany&aq=f&aql=&gs\\_sm=e&gs\\_upl=102811190311011978112712710113101212651251713.5.611410](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB_en&biw=1032&bih=516&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=images+for+Nazi+Germany&oq=images+for+Nazi+Germany&aq=f&aql=&gs_sm=e&gs_upl=102811190311011978112712710113101212651251713.5.611410)
- [http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB\\_en&biw=1032&bih=516&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=images+for+Jews+in+Germany&oq=images+for+Jews+in+Germany&aq=f&aql=&gs\\_sm=e&gs\\_upl=274841356091013601613313313112111412661312511.10.611710](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB_en&biw=1032&bih=516&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=images+for+Jews+in+Germany&oq=images+for+Jews+in+Germany&aq=f&aql=&gs_sm=e&gs_upl=274841356091013601613313313112111412661312511.10.611710)
- [http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB\\_en&biw=1032&bih=516&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=images+for+Nazi+propaganda&oq=images+for+Nazi+propaganda&aq=f&aql=&gs\\_sm=e&gs\\_upl=17328124734101251251291291012210101141159414.31710](http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&rlz=1R2SKPB_en&biw=1032&bih=516&tbm=isch&sa=1&q=images+for+Nazi+propaganda&oq=images+for+Nazi+propaganda&aq=f&aql=&gs_sm=e&gs_upl=17328124734101251251291291012210101141159414.31710)
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/phototoc.html>
- <http://history1900s.about.com/od/holocaust/tp/holocaustpictures.htm>
- <http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/gallery/gallery.htm>
- <http://www.shamash.org/holocaust/photos/>
- <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/images/>

### Teaching the Holocaust to Young Children

- <http://www.jewishaz.com/jewishnews/980109/holoc.shtml>
- <http://medinger.wordpress.com/2006/11/11/the-holocaust-for-young-children/>
- <http://www.mindspring.com/~cleanccl/holocaustlessonplans.html>
- [http://website.education.wisc.edu/sschweber/pub\\_pdfs/bookchap2.pdf](http://website.education.wisc.edu/sschweber/pub_pdfs/bookchap2.pdf)
- <http://www.aish.com/jw/s/48898037.html>

# Visual Images of the Holocaust Checklist

<b>Image to be analyzed</b>	
<b>What aspect of the Holocaust could this image help to teach?</b>	
<b>What visual features add to this image's emotional power?</b>	
<b>Is this visual useful because of its accuracy and reliability as a source, or as an example of propaganda or bias of some sort?</b>	
<b>Is this visual appropriate for use in a lesson on the Holocaust for young children? Why or why not?</b>	

# Visual Images of the Holocaust Rubric

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Student score
<b>Checklist:</b> analysis of the visual according to the checklist items	Student clearly and accurately describes the visual using all or most of the checklist items	Student adequately describes the visual using most of the checklist items	Student only vaguely describes the visual using some of the checklist items	Student fails to adequately describe the visual using any of the checklist items	
<b>Checklist:</b> explanation of decision classifying the visual as appropriate or not appropriate for young children	Student makes clear and highly relevant comments in deciding which visuals are appropriate and which are not	Student makes helpful comments in deciding which visuals are appropriate and which are not	Student makes only a few vague comments in deciding which visuals are appropriate and which are not	Student makes little or no contribution to the group's efforts to decide which visuals are appropriate and which are not	
<b>Presentation:</b> contribution to the group presentation	Student makes a substantial contribution to the display or PowerPoint	Student makes an adequate contribution to the display or PowerPoint	Student makes a minimal contribution to the display or PowerPoint	Student makes no contribution to the display or PowerPoint	
<b>Cumulative score</b>					

# Extension Activities

1. Using resources available at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Web site ([www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)), research an aspect of the Holocaust that is of interest to you. Collect relevant images and quotes from the Web site. Organize the information into a poster. Add a title and be sure to attach a bibliography indicating the source(s) from which you obtained your information.
2. Identify a form of bias, prejudice, or discrimination that exists in your community today. What people or groups of people are targeted? What forms of prejudice or discrimination do they experience? Take action—choose one option:
  - Make an informational poster that discredits stereotypes.
  - Collaborate with a teacher or counselor to arrange a class or school meeting to educate people about the dangers of bias, prejudice, or discrimination.
  - Write and mail a letter to the editor of a local newspaper in which you oppose a specific form of bias, prejudice, or discrimination.
  - Write and perform a skit about someone who stands up against discrimination.
3. With your teacher's guidance, select and view a high-quality contemporary or historical film that addresses an aspect of Nazi history or the Holocaust. For example, you might view *Schindler's List*, *The Pianist*, *Life is Beautiful*, or *Triumph of the Will*. Create a response to the film. Choose one option:
  - Ask and answer (research) any two questions the film raised for you.
  - Place yourself in the film. Which character would you be? Write a letter about your experiences as that character.
  - Write a review of the film. What were its strengths and weaknesses?

# Discussion Questions

1. What strategies did Hitler and the Nazi party use to seize power?
2. In what ways was the Nazi persecution of the Jews modeled on ancient and medieval anti-Semitism? In what ways did the Nazis take anti-Semitism to a new extreme?
3. What roles did the Nazi government and German technology play in the Holocaust? For example, think of the use of law, police and para-military forces, and the processes used to deport and murder Jews.
4. The Holocaust occurred in stages, beginning with discriminatory laws and progressing through deportation, ghettos, mass execution by *Einsatzgruppen* and, ultimately, the death camps. Could the Holocaust have been stopped? If so, when? What would it have taken to prevent the Holocaust?
5. What social, moral, or political lessons have you learned from your study of the Holocaust? Are there other lessons you have learned as well?

# Related Web Sites

## **H-Holocaust Links**

<http://www.h-net.org/~holoweb/links/>

H-Holocaust is the H-net listserv for research and teaching on the Holocaust. The HHolocaust links page contains historical and pedagogical sites relevant to Holocaust study and education.

## **Holocaust Denial**

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/denial.html>

The Jewish Virtual Library addresses common questions and concerns about efforts to deny the Holocaust.

## **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

<http://www.ushmm.org/>

A valuable resource for teachers and students, this Web site includes a Holocaust encyclopedia, image archives, and many, many pages of survivor testimony.

## **Yad Vashem**

<http://www.yadvashem.org/>

This is the gateway to Israel's leading institution for Holocaust research, education, and remembrance.

# The Holocaust: Multiple-Choice Quiz

1. According to the historian Lucy Dawidowicz, what impact did ancient and medieval anti-Semitism have on the culture of Nazi Germany?
  - A. Ancient and medieval anti-Semitism caused the Holocaust.
  - B. Ancient and medieval anti-Semitism explains why Hitler created the death camps.
  - C. Ancient and medieval anti-Semitism paved the way for Hitler's rise to power, but without Hitler the Holocaust would not have happened.
  - D. Ancient and medieval anti-Semitism motivated the German people to betray Jews and turn them in to the Nazis.
2. What new belief did the Nazis introduce to ancient and medieval anti-Semitism?
  - A. The Nazis considered Jews to be a racial group, not a religion.
  - B. The Nazis believed that the Jews planned to murder all gentiles (non-Jews).
  - C. The Nazis believed that Jews and Muslims were conspiring together to take over Germany.
  - D. The Nazis considered Jews to be descendants of the devil.
3. What was one of Hitler's stated goals?
  - A. To create a Germanic state of the German nation
  - B. To create death camps for the purpose of murdering Jews
  - C. To save Jewish children from death in order to create a population of slaves
  - D. To negotiate a peace treaty with the Jews, if they would only leave Germany
4. What objective was *not* part of the NSDAP's (Nazi party) original political platform from 1920?
  - A. To deny Jews German citizenship
  - B. To deny Jews the right to vote
  - C. To prevent Jews from owning or editing newspapers
  - D. To murder all of the Jews in Europe
5. When German President Hindenburg appointed Hitler chancellor, what was the status of the Nazi party?
  - A. The party had recently gained seats in the German Reichstag.
  - B. The party had recently lost seats in the German Reichstag.
  - C. The party's number of seats in the German Reichstag was constant.
  - D. The party did not hold seats in the Reichstag.



6. How did the “Enabling Act” expand the power of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party?
  - A. It made Chancellor Adolf Hitler equal to President Hindenburg.
  - B. It enabled Germans who were not Jewish to vote twice in all elections, while Jews had only one vote.
  - C. It enabled the Nazi army to take over the police force in Germany.
  - D. It gave Hitler the power to supersede (go around) the constitution.
7. Which of the following was a goal of the boycott of Jewish businesses called for April 1, 1933?
  - A. To motivate Jewish business owners to sell their property to Germans
  - B. To create work for Nazi guards
  - C. To create a day of rest for German shoppers
  - D. To identify Aryan Germans who supported Jews so the Nazis could arrest them
8. What was the main purpose of the Nuremberg Laws?
  - A. To help school children learn how to identify Jews in their classes
  - B. To create a legal basis for mass murder
  - C. To create a system of racial classification
  - D. To expand Nazi power beyond Germany into Austria and other European countries
9. To which concentration camps were many Jews sent after the *Kristallnacht*?
  - A. Dachau and Buchenwald
  - B. Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau
  - C. Chelmno and Sobibor
  - D. Treblinka and Majdanek
10. What was the main effect of anti-Semitic laws in Nazi Germany?
  - A. Due to the protest of world nations, the Nazis repealed (took back) many of the laws.
  - B. Jews recognized that they were being deprived of their rights, and they fought back with armed resistance.
  - C. Jews were gradually deprived of jobs, transportation, and even food.
  - D. Thousands of Jews converted to Christianity in order to avoid persecution.
11. The *Kindertransport* had a positive and a negative impact on the children who participated. What were they?
  - A. Children were rescued from the Nazis, but many never saw their parents again.
  - B. Children were able to tell the world about Nazi crimes, but no one believed them.
  - C. Children were saved from the death camps, but many were sent to work camps instead.
  - D. Many children traveled to the United States, but they lost touch with their German language and culture.

12. What impact did the Euthanasia program (T4) have on the Holocaust?
- A. It was the first attempt at committing mass murder of Jews.
  - B. Participants in T4 later traveled to Eastern Europe to manage the mass murder of Jews.
  - C. Germans were horrified by T4, and this delayed the Holocaust.
  - D. The world learned about T4 in time to stop it, before the Nazis began murdering Jews in the Euthanasia program.
13. Which were some of the official functions of the *Judenrat* (Jewish council) in a ghetto?
- A. To provide entertainment and education
  - B. To maintain a police force and distribute food
  - C. To organize Jewish resistance against the Nazis
  - D. To maintain communication with Jewish councils in other ghettos, in order to stay informed of Nazi plans and strategies
14. What role was the primarily played by *Einsatzgruppen* in the Holocaust?
- A. They rounded Jews up for transport to camps.
  - B. They fought against Jews in the Warsaw uprising.
  - C. They massacred large numbers of Jews.
  - D. They served as guard in the death camps.
15. Raul Hilberg wrote about the Jews, “The German Nazis at last decreed: you have no right to live.” To what was he referring?
- A. T4
  - B. Ghettos
  - C. The Final Solution
  - D. The Nuremberg Laws
16. At the conclusion of the Düsseldorf trial for Nazi leaders from Treblinka, the judges issued the following statement: “It is obvious that the camp administration ... had to make it their business ... that the systematic processing, i.e. the mass killings, should go on smoothly, and strictly on schedule.” What does this statement imply?
- A. The Nazis were careless and sloppy murderers.
  - B. The Nazis planned and carried out the murder of Jews with technical precision.
  - C. The Nazis did not care what the world thought of their actions.
  - D. The Nazis were not well organized.

17. One concentration camp survivor recalled, “The women were frantically pulling themselves together, helping each other appear as alert and robust as possible.” Why did this occur?
- A. They wanted to avoid being sent to the gas chambers.
  - B. They wanted to appear healthy so they would receive extra rations.
  - C. They had heard that men would be visiting their barracks.
  - D. They were hoping to be sent home.
18. Approximately how many Jews were murdered at the death camp Auschwitz-Birkenau?
- A. 1,600
  - B. 16,000
  - C. 160,000
  - D. 1,600,000
19. Which of the following examples of resistance occurred in the history of the Holocaust?
- A. Armed uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto
  - B. Armed uprising at the death camp Treblinka
  - C. Jews engaged in non-violent or spiritual resistance by maintaining human dignity under Nazi oppression.
  - D. All of the above
20. Which statement about world knowledge of the mass murder of Jews in death camps is true?
- A. The world did not know about the mass murder until after 1945
  - B. The world knew about the death camps as early as 1939.
  - C. The world learned about mass murder in the death camps while it occurred, but did nothing to intervene.
  - D. The world learned about mass murder in the death camps while it occurred and took action to stop it.

# The Holocaust:

## Multiple-Choice Quiz Answer Key

1. C
2. A
3. A
4. D
5. B
6. D
7. A
8. C
9. A
10. C
11. A
12. B
13. B
14. C
15. C
16. B
17. A
18. D
19. D
20. C







## The Holocaust

### The Genocide of Europe's Jewry

The term “genocide” was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944. According to the United Nations Genocide Convention, the term denotes acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such.” More specifically, genocide includes “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.”

“Genocide” and “Holocaust” are not the same thing. “Holocaust” is a word of Greek origin meaning “sacrifice by fire.” Genocide was an element of the Holocaust, but the Holocaust involved much more than genocide. According to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, “The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators... The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were ‘racially superior’ and that the Jews, deemed ‘inferior,’ were ‘life unworthy of life.’”

## Essential Questions

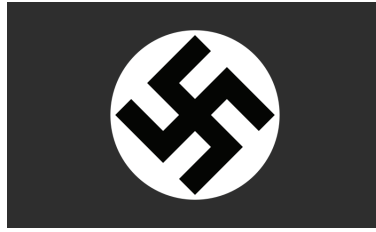
- Why did Christians, followers of a religion stressing love and forgiveness, so often turn in hatred against innocent Jews?
- Why did Germany, a powerful, industrial society with a well-educated population, accept a form of anti-Semitism so extreme and cruel as to lead to the effort to destroy an entire group of human beings by the millions?
- Why were the democratic nations unable to find a way to stop Hitler and his Nazis from starting World War II and launching the Holocaust?



## Essential Questions (continued)

- Why did the Nazis organize the Holocaust in the form it took, of ghettos, railroad transportation to the death camps, gas chambers, and crematoria?
- In what ways, if any, was the Holocaust different from other genocidal events in history?
- Could or should the Allies have done more to rescue Jews and to stop the Holocaust once they realized it was being carried out?

## Reflections



- What do you know about the Holocaust?
- What do you want to know about the Holocaust?

Note to teacher: Take a few moments to have the class reflect on these questions. You may choose to have students write down their responses first, then share their thoughts with everyone else. Use this opportunity to assess students' prior knowledge, correct misinformation, and gain a sense of student interest in the topic. Classroom discussion of this slide will enable all students to begin study of the unit having shared a common set of information and questions.

# Studying the Holocaust



History of Jewish Persecution



Nazis' Anti-Jewish Ideology  
and Rise to Power



Nazi Persecution of the Jews and  
the "Final Solution"



Aftermath

The first section of this presentation includes a brief history of the Jews, how the Jews were persecuted throughout the centuries, and the origin of the term “anti-Semitism.” Nazi policies and actions can be understood only in this historical context. The second part of the presentation focuses on the Nazis’ rise to power. The third part of the presentation looks at specific ways in which the Nazis persecuted the Jews, including economic and social discrimination, mass arrests, deportations, the creation of ghettos, and massacres. It also discusses the “Final Solution”: the development of systematic mass murder at killing centers such as Treblinka and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Finally, the section titled “Aftermath” addresses the liberation of the camps, survivors’ journeys home, war crimes trials, and the culture of Holocaust memory and memorialization.

## Who Are the Jews?

- Descendants of Abraham and Sarah
- The Jewish tribes conquered Caanan (Israel) in ~1000 BCE after leaving Egypt (the Exodus)
- Set up independent kingdom under King David
- Conquered by Romans in 70 CE, which began the dispersion of Jews throughout Europe and Middle East (the Diaspora)



Sculpture of Moses

The Jews are descendants of an ancient tribal people. Eventually, the Hebrew tribes united under the kings Saul, David, and Solomon (about 1000 BCE) and lived in an area similar to what now forms the contemporary state of Israel. In 70 CE, the Romans destroyed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and captured the Jews, making them slaves in the Roman Empire. This was the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora (dispersal) which over the subsequent 1500 years led many Jews into parts of Western and Eastern Europe and throughout the globe.

## Anti-Semitism



*The Eternal Jew*, an anti-Semitic book

- Term coined in 1879
- Anti-Jewish sentiment had existed for hundreds of years before that

Coined by Wilhelm Marr in 1879, the term “anti-Semitism” was first used only about 50 years before Hitler came to power. For hundreds of years before that, however, European rulers—both Christian and secular—implemented discriminatory policies and incited deadly attacks against the Jews. The image here is from “The Eternal Jew,” the title of a movie and a book produced by the Nazi Party in 1937. The book’s cover shows a caricature of a Jew holding part of Russia under his arm, a whip in one hand, and bloody coins in the other.

What message does this drawing attempting to convey about Jews? (Note to teacher: discuss briefly with the class.)

## Christian Anti-Semitism

- Denied civil rights
- Permitted synagogue burnings
- Occupational exclusion
- Yellow badges
- Massacres
- Ghettos
- Expulsions



Fresco depicting the crucifixion of Jesus

Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. The power of the Christian Church grew from this period. The Church disliked the Jews because they would not accept Jesus as the Messiah. Over the next thousand years, the Church issued several anti-Jewish decrees. In addition to denying civil rights to Jews, the Church passed laws which excluded Jews from public office, permitted the burning of books and synagogues, and forced Jews to wear a badge on their clothes (1215).

In the 11th century, the Crusaders, who sought to rid the Holy Land of Muslim infidels, also murdered Jews and pillaged Jewish property on their way to the Middle East.

In Switzerland and Germany during the 14th century, Jews were accused of starting the plague by poisoning the drinking water in Europe. This false accusation sprang in part from general prejudice against the Jews. However, many people and city governments that owed substantial amounts of money to Jewish lenders saw an opportunity and joined in the accusations. With many calling for blood, town councils carried out mass executions of Jewish residents.

In 1516, the Governor of Venice forced Jews to live in a particular area of the city which would be called “Ghetto Novo,” thus establishing the first ghetto in Europe.

The Spanish Inquisition was revived in the 15th century in order to ensure the Catholic faith and punish heretics. Jews, Muslims, and Protestants were all targeted. The Spanish monarchs Isabella and Ferdinand passed an edict expelling all Jews from Spain. In the years that followed, other European countries (including England, France, Germany, and Portugal) also expelled Jewish populations.



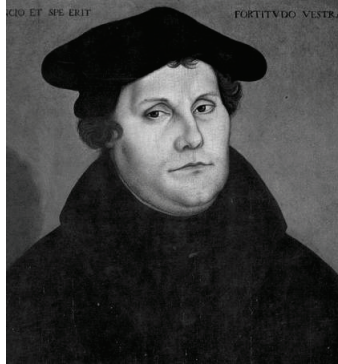
Dead bodies  
stacked beneath  
Christmas wreaths  
at Buchenwald

“The missionaries of Christianity had said in effect, you have no right to live among us as Jews. The secular rulers who followed had proclaimed: you have no right to live among us. The German Nazis at last decreed: you have no right to live.”—Raul Hilberg

In the past, Christian missionaries had forced Jews to convert to Christianity and get baptized. Secular rulers had isolated Jews into ghettos and away from the rest of the population. The Nazis isolated Jews also, and ultimately planned for the widespread mass murder of the Jews. The quote in this slide comes from Raul Hilberg’s book *The Destruction of the European Jews*, (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1961).

## Martin Luther

- 1483–1546
- Started the Protestant Reformation
- Published “On the Jews and their Lies”
- Called for the burning of synagogues
- His work was honored by the Nazis



Martin Luther

Luther originally was sympathetic to Jews; however, when they did not convert to his form of Christianity, he turned against them. In 1543, Luther wrote of the Jews: “They are nothing but thieves and robbers...First set fire to their synagogues or schools...I advise that their houses also be razed and destroyed...I advise that all their prayer books and Talmudic writings be taken from them...I advise that their rabbis be forbidden to teach...I command putting a flail, an ax, a hoe, a spade, a distaff, or a spindle into the hands of young, strong Jews and Jewesses and letting them earn their bread.” (From “On the Jews and their Lies.”)

Some historians believe that the influence of Lutheranism in German religion and culture may have contributed to the acceptance of anti-Semitism in the twentieth century.



## Discussion Questions

1. On slide 6 of the PowerPoint, a Nazi illustration depicts a Jew. The facial features of the Jew are distorted in ways that reinforce a stereotype of the Jews common in Europe in the 1800s. What is a stereotype and in what ways do the facial features here stereotype the Jews?
2. On the same slide, the Jew is shown with a whip. He is also holding some coins in one hand and, under his arm, part of a map with a hammer and sickle on it. Both the coins and the hammer and sickle are meant as symbols. What do you think they symbolize here? Why might many people find it odd that Jews could be depicted as embracing both of these symbolic objects at once?

1. A stereotype is an overly simple and generalized image or concept of a group, often one that conveys a negative view of that entire group. Here the facial features help to convey a sinister, greedy, almost less than human look to the figure in the illustration.
2. The coins symbolize the idea that Jews are uniquely obsessed with making money; the hammer and sickle is a symbol of communism, suggesting the Jews are trying to promote communism throughout the world. This might seem odd since communism is normally seen as promoting equality and sharing as opposed to a capitalist drive for private profit and wealth.

## Foundations of Nazi Anti-Semitism

## Weimar Republic



“List 1 SPD [socialists]:  
Against the Centrists and the Swastika”

- Political conflicts brought out tensions between leftist, rightist, and centrist parties
- This 1930 poster supports the socialist “List 1” party against the Nazis and the centrists

The Weimar Republic was founded on November 9, 1918. It suffered from extreme political crises—thousands of soldiers returning from war, rebellions, extremist political parties on both the right and left ends of the spectrum, economic uncertainty and upheaval, a new constitution with unfamiliar democratic institutions, and national humiliation as a result of losing the war and signing the Versailles Treaty. There were 20 different elected governments in 14 years. Significant economic crises occurred as well, including the Great Depression, which began in 1929. The Weimar Republic was also a time of intense cultural activity in literature, theater, and cinema.

## The NSDAP

- Platform for the National-sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, announced February 24, 1920
- Anti-Semitic objectives:
  - Jews should not be citizens
  - Jews in Germany should be subject to laws for aliens
  - No right to vote for Jews
  - No Jewish immigration
  - Jews should not own or edit newspapers



Hitler at a 1923 NSDAP rally

The NSDAP had its origins in the German Workers Party. Viewing the party as a potential socialist threat, the German army launched an investigation. Adolf Hitler, a soldier at the time, was sent to infiltrate the party and report on it. He soon became enthusiastic about the party's philosophy and joined. Later, the name of the party was changed to the "National Socialist German Workers Party," known commonly in English as the "Nazi party."

## Adolf Hitler and *Mein Kampf*



Hitler in 1924

- 1924: Hitler publishes book titled *Mein Kampf*, or “My Struggle”
- Outlines theories on race, living space, and war

In his book, Hitler outlined the following themes:

- **Anti-Semitism:** Hitler divides humans into categories based on physical appearance, establishing higher and lower orders of humans. He claims the Germanic type, or Aryan, with fair skin, blond hair and blue eyes is the superior form of human and constitutes a master race. Jews and the Slavic peoples are considered racially inferior.
- **Lebensraum** (“living space”) for Germans: Hitler wrote that since the Aryans were the master race, they were entitled to acquire more land for themselves. This Lebensraum can be acquired by force if necessary. In particular, Hitler includes the lands to the east of Germany, namely Russia. That land would be used to cultivate food and to provide room for the expanding Aryan population at the expense of the Slavic peoples, who were to be removed, eliminated, or enslaved.
- **War:** War could be used not only for acquiring living space, but also to avenge the losses to France after World War I.

It is thought that Hitler was influenced by earlier writings known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The author alleged that a Jewish conspiracy planned to take over the world. The “protocols” were supposedly transcripts from a meeting held by rabbis in which they laid out a plan for achieving Jewish domination over the next century. Hitler used the text to help justify anti-Semitism as a form of self-defense for Germany and the German people. *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* have been proven to be a forgery.

## The Nazis Defined Jews as a Race

- 19th-century theory of race
- Nazis saw Jews as a race of people, not a religion
- “Racial hygiene”
- Non-observant Jews, Jews who had converted to Christianity



A German elementary school class in race hygiene, 1934

By the 19th century, scientists had developed a biological theory of race. They used simple tools and primitive methods to classify people by race: for example, they would measure the dimensions of people’s heads, examine individual’s facial profiles, and record eye color. The Nazis built on these 19th-century theories to define the Jews as a race. The Nazis also developed a philosophy of “racial hygiene,” which held that the Aryan race should be protected from “contamination” by non-Aryan blood. Consequently, even non-observant Jews and Jews who had converted to Christianity were considered *racially* Jewish by the Nazis.

*USHMM Photo Archives. Photograph #13394*

## Nationalism and Fascism



Fascist leaders Benito Mussolini  
and Adolf Hitler

- **Nationalism:** a strong sense of pride and loyalty to a nation and its culture
- **Fascism:** a political philosophy that glorifies the nation at the expense of basic civil and human rights; advocates a dictatorial, one-party government

Nationalism and fascism are complex political ideas; the Nazis used both to aid them in their rise to power. Nationalism was used as a unifying force appealing to a sense of common German identity. The Nazis also used fascist techniques such as propaganda, intimidation, and terror. Once they had control of the government, they established a dictatorial, one-party government and aimed to achieve a racially and culturally pure state.

## Hitler's Goal



"A Germanic State of the German Nation"

This painting illustrates an idealized, Germanic peasant world. The women are strong and fertile, as symbolized by the baby. They live a simple life, close to the earth, as symbolized by the act of peeling potatoes for dinner just inside the door from a rural farmyard. Hitler extended the concept of "nation" beyond the idea of shared language, customs, and traditions. He added the idea that the German nation should be *racially pure*. Thus, the phrase quoted on this slide refers to the idea of creating a modern, political, Aryan state that would be culturally and racially homogeneous. Clearly, there would be no room for Jews in the nation Hitler envisioned. (The quote is from page 329 of the Manheim translation of *Mein Kampf*).





“The Wandering Jew”

“The widespread acceptance by the German people of anti-Semitism as a common political dogma paved the way for Hitler’s rise to power...”

“Without Adolf Hitler, however, the Final Solution would not have been planned and would not have been carried to its irrevocable end.”

—Historian  
Lucy Dawidowicz



Dawidowicz is regarded as an “intentionalist” historian—one who believes the Holocaust can be traced back to Hitler’s *intention* to murder all of Europe’s Jews. Other historians have emphasized the workings of German bureaucracy in creating the Holocaust, and still others have claimed that the German people as a whole were vicious anti-Semites. More recently, historians have accepted that both Hitler’s goals and the organization of the Nazi police state were important causal factors in creating the Holocaust; the fact that anti-Semitism had flourished in Europe for hundreds of years before the Holocaust also is seen as a major factor.

Note to teacher: The cartoon in this slide is from a 1901 edition of *Puck* magazine. It shows a lone Jew pushing through the snow past buildings with flags from different countries—the implication being that he has been rejected by all of them. You may wish to enlarge this cartoon and briefly discuss it with the class.

## The Nazis Win Political Power

- NSDAP representation in the Reichstag increased from 1924 to July 1932
- Party lost seats between July and November 1932
- January 30, 1933: President Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor
- Hitler then moved rapidly to seize total power



Hitler sworn in as Chancellor

By the end of 1932, Germany was entering a period of economic recovery and the Nazi party had declined in national elections. In November of that year, the Nazis won only 196 of 572 Reichstag seats, or 33%, down from 230 seats in the previous elections. President Hindenburg agreed to appoint Hitler chancellor in order to build an anti-communist coalition.

## The Reichstag Fire

- February 27, 1933
- Started by Dutch anarchist Marinus van der Lubbe
- Did van der Lubbe act alone?
- The Nazis used the fire as an excuse to expand their power



The Reichstag after the fire

Although there has been controversy over whether van der Lubbe acted alone, historians at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum have concluded that he did. The Nazis swiftly capitalized on the Reichstag fire, declaring a national emergency and suspending constitutional guarantees protecting freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, the right to be free from search and seizure without probable cause, and due process under the law. These measures paved the way for the Enabling Act, which suspended normal constitutional processes in Germany.

## The Enabling Act

March 23, 1933

**Article 1** “Other than through the procedure prescribed by the constitution, laws of the *Reich* may be decided by the government of the *Reich* as well.”

**Article 2** “Laws decided upon by the government of the *Reich* may deviate from the provisions of the constitution as long as they do not affect the institutions of the *Reichstag* and the *Reichsrat* as such.”

**Article 3** “Laws decided upon by the government of the *Reich* shall be issued by the Chancellor [i.e., Hitler] and announced in the *Reich Law Gazette*. They shall take effect on the day following the announcement, unless they prescribe a different date.”

The Enabling Act followed many important developments early in 1933. A presidential decree dated February 28, 1933, gave Hitler emergency powers. On the same day, all communist party members of the Reichstag were arrested, and some were beaten. In early March, the Nazis won 288 of 647 seats in the Reichstag. On March 5th, Germany’s states were stripped of their power.

## Discussion Questions

1. In his book *Mein Kampf*, Hitler called for *Lebensraum* (“living space”) for Germans. In what way might the Versailles Treaty after World War I have made it easier for many Germans to agree with Hitler about this?
2. Today, we tend to see Nazi anti-Semitism as singling out a fairly weak people and victimizing them. In *Mein Kampf*, however, Hitler depicted Jews in such a way as to make the Germans appear as the victims. What ideas about the Jews did he use to make this case?

1. The Versailles Treaty took away several lands on various sides of Germany’s borders. To Germans it seemed as if the victors in World War I were hemming them in unfairly.
2. Hitler viewed the Jews as engaged in a vast worldwide conspiracy to subvert civilization. In his mind, the Jews were a powerful, single-minded people bent on subjugating all others.

## Discussion Questions (continued)

3. Hitler's form of anti-Semitism stressed the notion that Jews were a racially distinct group and Germans had to protect their racial purity against the Jews. In what ways does this form of anti-Semitism differ from the form it took among some Christians at various times over the centuries?
  4. Hitler's Nazis lost some seats in the November 1932 elections. But by and large they had grown enormously in popularity and power from 1929 on. What social conditions in those years might have aided them in their rise, and why?
- 
3. Christians saw Jews as a group sharing religious beliefs that rejected Christ. They tended to accept Jews who converted to Christianity. Hitler's view was that Jews remained Jews as a race no matter what they did, said or believed. On the other hand, some students may point out that at times some Christians, too, held that Jews were as a whole people responsible for killing Christ.
  4. The onset of the Depression of the 1930s threw millions out of work in Germany. Rising discontent led many to look to the Nazis for answers and for a strong leader.

## Nazi Persecution of the Jews

- Widespread violence against Jews
- Boycott of Jewish businesses
- Occupational exclusion
- The Nuremberg Laws
- *Kristallnacht*
- Mass arrests and imprisonment



Hitler arrives at the Nuremberg Rally, 1935

The photo in this slide shows Hitler arriving in Nuremberg for the Nazi Party Rally of 1935. The rally was accompanied by mass demonstrations intended to celebrate Hitler, the Nazi party, and Nazi “values,” including the purity of Aryan blood. Mass demonstrations had the effect of creating intense emotional experiences for the participants, which often created deepened support for Hitler and commitment to his party and goals. The next slides will describe increased persecution of the Jews that took place before 1935, then discuss the Nuremberg laws, which were enacted after the rally.

## National Boycott



The sign reads, "Germans! Defend yourselves! Don't buy from Jews!"

- April 1, 1933
- Goals:
  - Intensify anti-Semitic sentiment
  - Motivate Jewish businessmen to sell out to non-Jews
  - Appease radical Nazis who wanted more action against Jews
- Uniformed Nazis blocked Jewish-owned stores
- Jewish doctors, lawyers, judges also targeted for boycott or exclusion

Many Germans disregarded the boycott. They stayed home that day, then after the boycott they continued to shop at stores owned by Jews. For many Jewish shopkeepers, however, the boycott was devastating. Many did end up selling their businesses to non-Jews, then emigrated from the country.

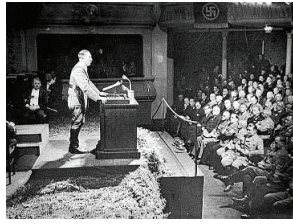


## Occupational Exclusion

- The “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service” passed on April 7, 1933
- Jews were required to resign from civil service (government) jobs
- German Jews who fought on the front in World War I or whose father or son were killed in action were exempted
- On September 22, 1933, Jews were removed from cultural and media organizations

The Nazis moved swiftly to deny Jews their livelihoods and their dignity. A larger objective was to motivate German Jews to emigrate. About half of Germany’s Jewish population did emigrate during the Nazi years, but the German government required them to leave their homes, property, and their savings behind.

## The Nuremberg Laws



Hitler speaks at the party rally  
in Nuremberg

- September 1935
- **Article 5, 1** A Jew is an individual who is descended from at least three grandparents who were, racially, full Jews.
- **Article 5, 2** A Jew is also an individual who is descended from two full-Jewish grandparents if: he/she participates in the Jewish religious community or is married to a Jewish person on or after September 15, 1935.

The Nuremberg Laws were designed to “protect” the “Aryan race.” In order to implement anti-Semitic policies, the Nazis had to clarify who the Jews were. As already stated, the Nazis considered Jews a race, not a religion. Many Germans, however, had a mixture of Jewish and gentile ancestors. In the Nuremberg Laws, the Nazis clarified how they would categorize different individuals. The Nuremberg laws also stripped Jews of German citizenship, including the right to vote or hold public office. In addition, these laws criminalized interracial relationships and marriages.

**Also Considered Jewish  
by the Nazis**

- Children born of marriages in which at least one parent was Jewish and the marriage occurred after September 15, 1935
- Children born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936, who had at least one Jewish parent

**Not Jewish  
but “Mixed”**

- Individuals descended from two Jewish grandparents:
  - who do not adhere to the Jewish religion
  - who are not married to a Jew and do not marry a Jew (Mischling of the first degree) **OR**
- Individuals descended from one Jewish grandparent (Mischling of the second degree)

The Nuremberg laws also addressed the identity of children who would be born after the laws were enacted. Status as a “Mischling” (meaning “mixed race”) could protect individuals from persecution. Clearly, in the Nazi world it was “better” to be a Mischling of the second degree, and therefore less “Jewish.”

## 1936 Olympics



Jesse Owens of the United States wins four gold medals

Germany had been awarded the 1936 Olympics prior to Hitler coming to power and the passage of the Nuremberg Laws. Some nations, including the United States, debated whether to boycott these games because of the situation. The games did go on and Hitler hoped the games would be a showcase for the achievements of the Third Reich. However, Jesse Owens, an African American, won four gold medals and set two records thereby challenging the Aryan racial superiority theory.

*Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass):  
November 9, 1938

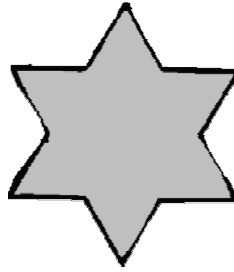


Jewish-owned store damaged by bombing

In Paris, a Jewish teenager named Herschel Grynszpan assassinated a German embassy officer. In Germany, Nazis used this incident as a pretext for nationwide violence against the Jewish population. Homes, businesses, and synagogues were attacked or destroyed. Tens of thousands of Jews were arrested and put into concentration camps. The Jewish community was also charged a fine of one billion marks to pay for the damage. *Kristallnacht* was the first coordinated, organized instance of violent action against the Jewish community in Germany. It was immediately followed by the complete “Aryanization” of Jewish property and businesses.

## Daily Life for Jews in Nazi Germany

- Banned from public library reading rooms, public transportation, cinemas, theaters, parks, and recreation centers
- Daily curfews, then limited to shopping only between 3:00 and 4:00 PM
- Prohibited from owning cars and typewriters, and from smoking
- Required to wear the yellow Star of David
- Prohibited from buying flowers, purchasing eggs, vegetables, meat, and white bread
- Jewish pet owners were required to deliver pets for euthanasia



Some of the laws listed in this slide were national, while others were merely local. For a Jew in Nazi Germany, it seemed as if every day brought new prohibitions or violence. Some German gentiles were eager to inform on their Jewish neighbors for violating a law. Jews accused of having failed to comply with a ban or prohibition could be subjected to a house search, arrest, beating, or internment in a concentration camp.

## *Kindertransport* (1938–1939)



Jewish girl fleeing Vienna

The British government eased immigration restrictions after *Kristallnacht* to allow the rescue of refugee children (mostly Jews, but some others as well). In 1938 and 1939, some 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia were sent to England by their families. Many would never see their parents again, but unlike many Jews who did not get away from the Nazis, they would *survive*.

## German Expansion and War



The invasion of Poland

- March 1938: Germany annexes Austria
- September 1938: Germany annexes the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia
- September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland

Hitler justified the annexation of Austria and the Sudetenland (western Czechoslovakia, which had a large German-speaking population) by claiming that most of the residents of these areas were Germanic and should thus be incorporated into Germany. The invasion of Poland marks the start of World War II.



## Ghettos

### **Heydrich's orders, September 21, 1939:**

“For the time being, the first prerequisite for the final aim is the concentration of the Jews from the countryside into the larger cities.”

“In each Jewish community, a Council of Jewish Elders is to be set up...to be *fully responsible*...for the exact and punctual execution of all directives issued or yet to be issued.

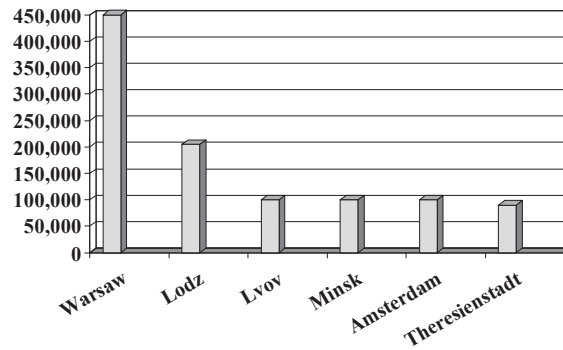
Heydrich anticipated that Jews would be subject to curfews and later barred from other areas of the city.



Reinhard Heydrich,  
chief of Nazi security

The Jewish Council (*Judenrate*) in each city was required to take a census of Jews in their local area, then ensure that Jews were properly deported to the urban “concentration” points. This resettlement of Jews into cities was the first step in creating ghettos—impoverished urban areas that were sealed off from the rest of the city by fences, walls, and armed guards. Nazi orders required that these “concentration points” be created near rail junctions. Later, this would facilitate the transport of Jews to death camps.

## Populations of Significant Ghettos



Theresienstadt, established in the old fortress city of Terezin (just over the German border in what is today the Czech Republic), was not like the other ghettos. Instead, it was a “show ghetto” created largely for the confinement of more prominent Jews. The Nazis used Theresienstadt for propaganda purposes, trying to create the impression that Jews were being treated humanely under their rule; however, thousands of Jews were shipped from Theresienstadt to meet their death at Auschwitz.

## Jewish Leadership in the Ghettos

- *Judenräte* (Jewish Councils) were the primary ghetto administrations
- Organized a ghetto police force
- Postal service
- Food distribution service
- Work, housing, and health care services
- Eventually, the *Judenräte* also had to provide lists of names for deportation to forced labor camps, concentration camps, and death camps



Members of the *Judenrat* for the Łódź Ghetto

The men on the *Judenräte* often were faced with “choiceless choices.” For example, when the Nazis demanded victims for deportation, the councils had to decide who would go and who would stay. In the ghettos, Jewish police forces helped round up victims selected for deportation. Sometimes the *Judenräte* were accused of corruption or violence; however, sometimes they struggled to support their population as equitably as possible.

## Daily Life in the Warsaw Ghetto



Children eat on the street in the Warsaw ghetto

- Diarists and ghetto “historians” kept detailed records (recovered after 1945)
- 6–7 people were crowded into each room
- Starvation: food rations of about 200 calories a day
- Some had jobs; others survived through smuggling and other illegal activities
- In 1941, thousands died every month
- Illegal prayer services and clandestine schools held in private homes

The Warsaw ghetto was sealed by a high wall on November 15–16, 1940. The wall was 11 miles long, 11.5 feet high, and 10.6 inches thick; barbed wire stretched across the top of the wall. Eventually, the ghetto housed close to 450,000 Jews. Fortunate members of the Jewish population were able to secure jobs working in German factories located in or near the ghetto. Others collected scrap material for the Germans. Smuggling operations—often facilitated by bribery—took place in connected buildings that lay on both sides of the ghetto wall, underground canals, and through camouflaged openings in the ghetto wall.



Rabbis in the Warsaw Ghetto

Jews were prohibited from observing the laws of their faith and engaging in worship; however, they continued to clandestinely practice their religion.

## Lodz Ghetto: Conditions

“Filth was also tremendous. Filth. It was filthy. It was filthy even in the building where we lived. I mean, in the winter time. I mean, the toilet was...it was...it was ice. It was all ice. And then the feces and the urine all over, was overflowing... overflowing there.”

—Beno Helmer, b. 1923,  
Czechoslovakia



Disposing of raw sewage in the  
Lodz ghetto

The Łódź ghetto was created on February 8, 1940, and sealed off from the rest of the city on April 30, 1940. In December of 1941, the first Jews were transported from the ghetto to death camps. They were sent first to Chelmno, later to Auschwitz. The quote in this slide is from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Web site (<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/phistories/>).

## Lodz Ghetto: Nazi Cruelty

“The German [sic] came and they, they lined everybody up... And there was...you know this was like in a semi-circle. And there was a lady there with a child. And, uh...[sighs] And he ask [sic], ‘Whose is this child?’



German soldiers and Polish civilians look on as one Jewish man is forced to cut off the beard of another

And the woman who was the mother says, she did not admit the child. So he took the child by the legs, and he swung it against the wall. And he killed the child.”

—Beno Helmer, b. 1923, Czechoslovakia

The author of the quote in this slide describes what people would do to survive—some would go so far as to deny their own child in order to avoid being killed themselves. Quote is from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Web site (<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/phistories/>).

## The Nazis Advance East and West



Hitler shows his elation after the defeat of France

- May 1940: Belgium surrenders
- June 1940: France surrenders
- Summer and fall, 1940: “London Blitz”
- April 1941: Yugoslavia and Greece defeated
- June 1941: Germany invades the USSR

The Nazis advanced rapidly across Europe, but the decision to invade the Soviet Union ultimately turned out to be a key factor in their downfall. The Soviets weathered the invasion and eventually turned back the Nazis; however, millions of Soviet soldiers and citizens died. German troops also sustained heavy casualties. By the end of the war, the Soviet army managed to drive the Nazi forces back into the heart of Germany.



## Massacre at Babi Yar (Kiev)

- 1941: During the High Holy days, Nazis from *Einsatzgruppe C* ordered Jews out of the city
- Jews were marched to a ravine and machine-gunned to death
- Nazi gunners relieved after one-hour shifts
- Over 33,000 Jews murdered in two days



An *einsatzgruppe* soldier speaks to two unidentified women at the ravine at Babi Yar

*Einsatzgruppen* were SS and police personnel trained specifically to commit mass murder. Their leaders reported to Reinhard Heydrich, Nazi Chief of Police and Intelligence. The *Einsatzgruppen* operated primarily between 1941 and 1942 in the Baltics and the Soviet Union, where they murdered over 1,000,000 Jews.

# 1942



Red, purple, and brown areas were occupied by Germany or its allies

## Occupied by Germany or German Allies

- France
- Netherlands
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Poland
- Portions of the Soviet Union
- Norway
- Italy
- Czechoslovakia
- Greece
- The Balkans
- North Africa

By 1942, Germany had conquered or occupied vast portions of both western and eastern Europe. The Nazis planned to murder each and every Jew in these territories.



Samuel Schryver poses at the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam

As the Nazis conquered or occupied neighboring countries, Jews were crowded into ghettos or deported to concentration camps or death camps. Many people know the story of Anne Frank, whose family went into hiding in Amsterdam in an attempt to avoid capture. In the image in this slide, Samuel Schryver poses by a sign at the entrance to the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam. Schryver was active in the Dutch underground, making ID cards for Jews from cards he pickpocketed from gentile Hollanders. Ultimately, it is estimated that the Nazis murdered some 106,000 Dutch Jews.

## The Wannsee Conference

- January 2, 1942, called by Reinhard Heydrich
- Attended by high-ranking administrators including Adolf Eichmann (Hitler did not attend)
- Planning for the *Endlösung* (Final Solution) to the “Jewish question”
- Included discussion of the “problem” of people of mixed Jewish descent and in mixed marriages
- Compulsory sterilization suggested
- Dissolution of mixed marriages discussed



SS General Reinhard Heydrich

SS General Reinhard Heydrich headed several important departments in Nazi Germany—the Security Police (SIPO), the Security Service (SD), and the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA); he also directed the work of the *Einsatzgruppen*. In January of 1942, Heydrich organized the Wannsee conference. For the conference, Heydrich wanted to gather together the leaders of all relevant German government and Nazi party agencies. He wanted to coordinate the genocide process and assert the authority of the SS over these agencies. Most historians believe that genocide had already been planned and its implementation had already begun before the Wannsee conference even took place. Whatever the timeline, the minutes from the conference clearly demonstrate the commitment of Nazis to systematically annihilate the Jews.

## Official Notes from the Wannsee Conference

- “Under proper guidance, in the course of the final solution the Jews are to be allocated for appropriate labor in the East...in the course of which action doubtless a large portion will be eliminated by natural causes.”
- “The possible final remnant will, since it will undoubtedly consist of the most resistant portion, have to be treated accordingly, because it is the product of natural selection and would, if released, act as the seed of a new Jewish revival.”
- “State Secretary Dr. Bühler stated that the *Generalgouvernement* would welcome it if the final solution of this problem could be begun in the *Generalgouvernement*... [Dr. Bühler] had only one request, to solve the Jewish question in this area as quickly as possible.”

(Note: “Generalgouvernement” refers specifically to Belzek, Sobibor, and Treblinka.) Notice that at no point do the quotes in this slide refer directly to murdering Jews. The Nazis almost always spoke in bureaucratic jargon and euphemisms, such as in the last line when instead of saying “to murder each and every Jew that could be caught,” they say “to solve the Jewish question in this area as quickly as possible.”

## The “Final Solution”



Bodies of victims

The Nazis called their plan to kill all of the Jews the “Final Solution.” (It was also code-named “Operation Reinhard,” after Heydrich.) Under cover of war, they isolated, concentrated, and then deported Jews from all over Europe to six camps equipped with gas chambers located in German-occupied and annexed Poland. While historians and researchers have uncovered many memoranda and reports relating to the “Final Solution,” no specific order can be traced back to Hitler. However, plenty of secondhand testimony exists showing that Hitler had made it known to Heinrich Himmler and others that he wanted to implement the Final Solution.

## July 19, 1942: Himmler's Orders

"I order that the resettlement of the entire Jewish population of the *Generalgouvernement* [part of Nazi-occupied Poland] be carried out and completed by December 31, 1942."

"By December 31, 1942, no persons of Jewish extraction are to be found in the *Generalgouvernement*...a total cleanup is necessary."



Himmler (left foreground) inspects a prisoner-of-war camp in Russia

Himmler explained that this measure was necessary for the "ethnic separation of races and peoples." The measure was also intended to protect the "security and purity" of Germany and to prevent the development of a resistance movement.

## Deportations From the Ghettos



Jews being deported from the Łódź ghetto

Major deportations from ghettos across Europe to killing centers began in early 1942, when camps first began gassing Jews. The image in this slide shows Jews being deported from the Łódź ghetto. Many of these people would die at Chelmno; later on, the Nazis would ship Jews from the Łódź ghetto to Auschwitz.

Photo source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.



## Testimony: Deportations



Women being deported from the  
Warsaw ghetto, 1943

“They told us the day before that we can pack one small suitcase and we should be ready to leave the ghetto. When we came to the...factory...there they started to search us again. The SS was there also, and every woman had to, and every girl had to undress, naked, and we were searched internally for valuables. My mother was a very religious person, and all I could think of was how terrible this is for my mother to go through something such, such a terrible ordeal.”

—Cecilie Klein-Pollack  
b. 1925, Czechoslovakia

Deportations were frightening experiences for the victims. Not sure of what was happening, many chose to believe they were in fact being “resettled,” perhaps in a work camp. As the quote in this slide shows, some victims were subjected to searches. The Nazis loaded deportees into crowded “cattle cars” of trains; people in the cars would have to travel for days with no food, water, or toilet facilities. This quote is from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Web site (<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/phistories/>).

## Testimony: Arriving at Treblinka

“At 4 p.m. the train started to move again and within a few minutes, we pulled into the Treblinka camp. Only when we arrived there did the full truth dawn on us in all its horror. Ukrainians armed with rifles and machine guns were stationed on the roofs of the barracks. The camp yard was littered with corpses, some still in their clothes and others stark naked, their faces distorted with terror, black and swollen, with eyes wide open, with tongues protruding, skulls crushed, bodies mangled. And blood everywhere—the blood of innocent people, the blood of our children, of our brothers and sisters, our fathers and mothers.”

—Jankiel Wiernik



Franz Stangl, commandant  
of the Treblinka  
extermination camp

Jankiel Wiernik escaped from Treblinka in the uprising of August of 1943. Miraculously, he was able to hide from the Nazis and eventually (with the help of sympathetic gentiles) he wrote and published this testimony in May of 1944. Wiernik later settled in Israel and died in 1972. Quoted from “One Year in Treblinka,” in *The Death Camp Treblinka*, (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979).

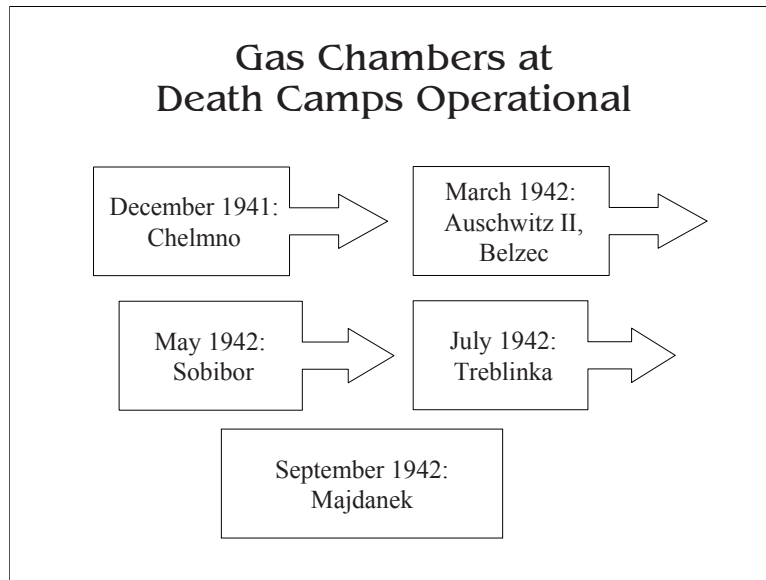
## Looting the Victims



Shoes from victims of Majdanek



The Nazis stole everything they could from their victims, including clothing, shoes, linens, jewelry, watches, and even women's hair. These items were shipped by train from the concentration camps and death camps back to Germany. Some camp prisoners worked collecting the personal property of victims. They had to sort, count, and pack the items, then prepare them for shipment back to Germany. In addition to shoes, these prisoners also took clothing, coats, wristwatches, and other personal possessions. Camp prisoners known as *Goldjuden* or "Gold Jews" were required to check the teeth of all victims and extract any gold fillings; the Germans would then melt down the gold.



The victims arrived on trains. They were instructed to strip for showers, and women and girls had their hair shorn (the hair was packed and shipped to Germany for use in mattresses and other items). At Chelmno, victims were gassed in mobile vans; at the remaining camps, victims were gassed in “showers.” Each camp used different methods to dispose of the bodies: some buried the victims in mass graves then later exhumed the bodies for cremation. Other camps burned the corpses directly in crematoria.

## Testimony: Death in the Gas Chambers

“Between 450 and 500 persons were crowded into a chamber measuring 25 square meters ... On the way to their doom, they were pushed and beaten with rifle butts ... Dogs were set upon them, barking, biting and tearing at them. To escape the blows and the dogs, the crowd rushed to its death, pushing into the chamber, the stronger ones shoving the weaker ones ahead of them. The bedlam lasted only a short while, for soon the doors were slammed shut. The chamber was filled, the motor turned on and connected with the inflow pipes and, within 25 minutes at the most, all lay stretched out dead or, to be more accurate, were standing up dead. Since there was not an inch of free space, they just leaned against each other.”



Inside of a gas chamber at Majdanek

—Jankiel Wiernik (at Treblinka)

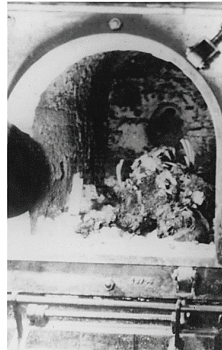
At most of the camps, the Nazis used carbon dioxide gas to murder the prisoners. Auschwitz II (Auschwitz-Birkenau) and Majdanek used cyanide (Zyklon B).



Crematoria at Majdanek (near Lublin, Poland)

At several of the camps, the Nazis buried bodies of victims in mass graves. Later, the Nazis exhumed the corpses and burned them in the open on funeral pyres. Many camps also had crematoria (such as those pictured in this slide), which had been manufactured specifically to accommodate the large numbers of dead produced in the camps every day.

## Killing Jews “Strictly on Schedule”



An oven at Buchenwald

“As a rule the interval between the arrival of a transport at the unloading platform and the completion of the killings of the new arrivals was not longer than about an hour and a half...during the period of peak activity three and sometimes as many as four or five transport trains would arrive with their horrible cargo and have to be processed... Since each transport brought an average of 6000 new arrivals, it is obvious that the camp administration...had to make it their business...that the systematic processing, i.e., the mass killings, should go on smoothly, and strictly on schedule.”

This selection is from judgment rendered against Nazi officers Kurt Franz and Franz Stangl of the Treblinka death camp. This decision was issued on September 3, 1965.

How did the Nazis use technology to make the mass murder of the Jews more efficient? (Note to teacher: If you wish, take a few moments and discuss this question with the class.)

## Work Camps

- Auschwitz and Majdanek functioned as both death camps and work camps
- After disembarking from the trains, victims underwent a “selection”
- Those selected for death were promptly executed
- Those selected for work suffered months or years of torture in the camps
- Additional “selections” culled weak or sick prisoners from the work population and sent them to the gas chambers



Laborers at Sachsenhausen camp

At Auschwitz and Majdanek, the Nazis operated industrial plants. Jews lucky enough to escape “selection” when they first arrived at the camps would work in the plants. In fact, if Jews could survive the first few weeks in the camp, their chances for subsequent survival increased.



## Testimony: Work in the Camps



Inmates emaciated from work  
and starvation

“Then he [the guard] leads us to a pile of stones, which we are ordered to carry to another place, about a kilometer away. Loading the bricks and the stones... must be done with the greatest of speeds, and then you carry them, and return with the empty hod [carrier] running... Over you, there is an S.S. [guard] standing with a horsewhip at the ready, and whoever wants to stretch his back gets a heavy blow.”

A considerable amount of the work prisoners had to do was meaningless, exhausting, physical labor intended only to wear the inmates out. This quote in this slide is from *The Death Camps* by William W. Lace (San Diego: Lucent Books, 1998).

## Testimony: A “Selection” for Death

“All at once the [work group] stopped short ... ‘What is it? What’s happening? An inspection? No, selection!’ ... The women were frantically pulling themselves together, helping each other appear as alert and robust as possible ... We were getting closer ... Now I could see the German doctor standing beside the officers ... It was our turn. We marched up to the gate in time to the music’s sprightly beat. Mengele’s face, as he looked us over, was bland and impassive ... ‘This one,’ [the supervisor said] ‘Always *kaputt*. She can’t do the work.’ ‘Out,’ the doctor said simply, waving the pencil at her. And Lili stepped from the line. She held out her arm. [The assistant] read off the number, and he wrote it down in his notebook.”



Hungarian Jews line up for selection at Auschwitz

In the quote on this slide, “the supervisor” was a prisoner placed in charge of the work group, or *Kommando*. Her lover in the camp had made an advance at Lili earlier in the day. In order to get back at Lili, the supervisor called Mengele’s attention to her. She was selected to be sent to her death in the gas chamber. The quote is from Liana Millu’s memoir, *Smoke over Birkenau* (New York: Jewish publication society, 1991).

## Testimony: Roll Call



Roll call at Sachsenhausen

“To an S.S. the roll call is the most important and most ceremonial time at the camp. We are all standing outside in front of the Block. The chief of the Block then gives the command ‘*Mützen ab!*’ (‘Caps off!’)... The *Blockführer* [leader] passes before each Block and counts the prisoners... If one or several prisoners are missing, the roll call begins again and the escape alarm is sounded.”

—Marco Nahon

Roll call, or “*Appell*” often lasted for hours, particularly if there was a discrepancy in the count of prisoners. During lengthy roll calls, inmates might physically support one another because those who fell to the ground could be murdered on the spot or “selected” for death at another time. Nazis would also use roll call as an occasion to torture or murder inmates who had violated camp rules. Sometimes a camp orchestra or band would be required to perform while prisoners were beaten, hung, or shot in front of the entire population of inmates. The quote in this slide is from Marco Nahon, M.D., *Birkenau: The Camp of Death* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1989).

## Discussion Questions

1. In the early years, the Nazis organized boycotts of Jewish-owned businesses and excluded Jews from certain professional occupations. Do you think these policies were mainly ways to better control the Jews, ways to force Jews to leave Germany entirely, or simply ways to humiliate and intimidate the Jews? Explain your answer.
2. In what ways did the Nuremberg Laws reflect Hitler's racist version of anti-Semitism?
3. We still use the term "ghetto" today. In what ways were the ghettos the Nazis set up different from ghettos as we use the term now?

1. Answers will vary and should be discussed.
2. They carefully sought to define Jews and the restrictions on them so as to prevent any possible racial mixing between Jews and non-Jews.
3. The ghettos the Nazis set up for Jews were guarded; all Jews were forced into them; food supplies, medicine, and other resources were severely and intentionally limited; etc.

## Discussion Questions (continued)

4. The *Judenräte* were Jewish councils whom the Nazis chose and put in charge of administering the ghettos. Do you think it was possible for a Jew to be a member of a *Judenrat* and make any ethical decisions at all? Why or why not?
5. Why do you suppose the Nazis did not continue the Holocaust in the form of killing squads with machine guns and pistols such as the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Baltics and the Soviet Union?
6. Why do you think that in official notes, even the top Nazi officials at the Wannsee Conference spoke in bureaucratic jargon only about a “final solution” rather than describe it openly as the extermination of the Jews?
7. How did the Nazis use technology to make the mass murder of the Jews more efficient?

4. Answers will vary and should be discussed. No true free choices were possible for Jews on these councils, yet they might have been able to provide some temporary relief to some Jews. Since the councils did not know their fate for certain, they could have hoped to be in a position to seek changes for the better, etc.
5. Answers will vary and should be discussed. The strain on the killers did concern some Nazi officials.
6. Answers will vary and should be discussed.
7. The use of trains to transport victims at precise intervals, use of gas chambers to kill many at one time, use of special poison gases, etc.

## Resistance at Treblinka

- Revolt planned by a small group of inmates
- Stole and copied a key to the arsenal
- Seized weapons
- Planned to murder guards, cut telephone lines, set the camp on fire
- The successful revolt occurred on Monday, August 2, 1943
- Treblinka was shut down; however, very few inmates survived



Distant view of smoke from the fire set by inmates at Treblinka

As the camp burned, Nazis hunted down inmates who had escaped into the woods. They murdered all they could find. Local farmers helped a small number of escapees: some gave them food and water, others recommended hiding places, and still others provided directions to help the escapees find their ways to safety. In the end, of the hundreds of thousands of Jews who were shipped to Treblinka (estimates range up to 1,000,000) only about 60 survived.

## Testimony: Escape and Survival



A Jewish man lies dead, shot in the woods by German soldiers

“Suddenly we heard the signal—a shot fired into the air... I grabbed some guns and let fly right and left, but when I saw that the road to escape stood open, I picked up an ax and a saw, and ran... Every second counted... Then I heard a shot... I turned and saw a guard... I noticed [his weapon] had jammed. I slowed down, I pulled the ax from my belt... I came up close to him and struck him with my ax... I was free and ran into the woods.”

—Jankiel Wiernik

Of the 1000 inmates alive in Treblinka when the revolt occurred, only about 200 survived to flee; of those, only about 60 survived after the Nazis scoured the surrounding areas looking for prisoners on the run. Still, this is far more than survived other death camps such as Belzec, where only *two* inmates are known to have survived the camp at all. In all, 700,000 people died at Treblinka while it was operational; 600,000 died at Belzec. The passage in this slide is from *The Death Camp Treblinka*, (New York: Holocaust Library, 1979).

## Other Examples of Resistance

- *Sobibor*: On October 14, 1943, prisoners revolted. Eleven SS men died. Three hundred prisoners escaped, but most were captured and killed. Approximately 50 survived.
- *Auschwitz*: On October 7, 1944, *Sonderkommando* (Jewish prisoners who handled corpses for the crematoria) revolted. They blew up one gas chamber with gunpowder stolen from a munitions factory. Eventually, all escapees were captured and killed.
- *Nonviolent resistance*: “The enemy’s intention was for us to be devoured by filth. Very well then, it was necessary to keep oneself clean.”



Participants in the Sobibor uprising who survived

Violent uprisings in the ghettos and in the camps occurred several times. Some incidents involved just one person: for example, a woman who had been stripped naked and forced to march to the gas chamber at Treblinka turned on the Nazis, grabbed a gun from one of the soldiers, and managed to fire off shots before being killed herself. Other acts of resistance took the form of organized uprisings like those described in this slide. Prisoners also used smaller, nonviolent acts of resistance to affirm their dignity and humanity. For example, prisoners would maintain a commitment to cleanliness, care for sick or injured inmates, secretly keep journals or sketch pictures, or say prayers. The quote included in the last bullet on the slide is from Pelagia Lewinska’s “Twenty Months in Auschwitz,” reprinted in Carol Rittner and John K. Roth’s *Different Voices* (New York: Paragon House, 1993).



## Citizen Resistance



- The White Rose Movement
- Righteous Gentiles

Not all Germans supported Hitler. One such group was the “White Rose” movement. It was comprised of several young men and one woman. They secretly distributed pamphlets challenging the German population to resist the policies of the Nazis. In early 1943, all of the members were caught, tried for crimes against the state, and executed.

The Yad Vashem Museum in Israel recognizes over 11,000 people who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. They are called “the Righteous Gentiles.” Many hid Jews in their homes for years.

Question for students: Would you risk your life to save others in this manner? What are the variables that would influence your decision?

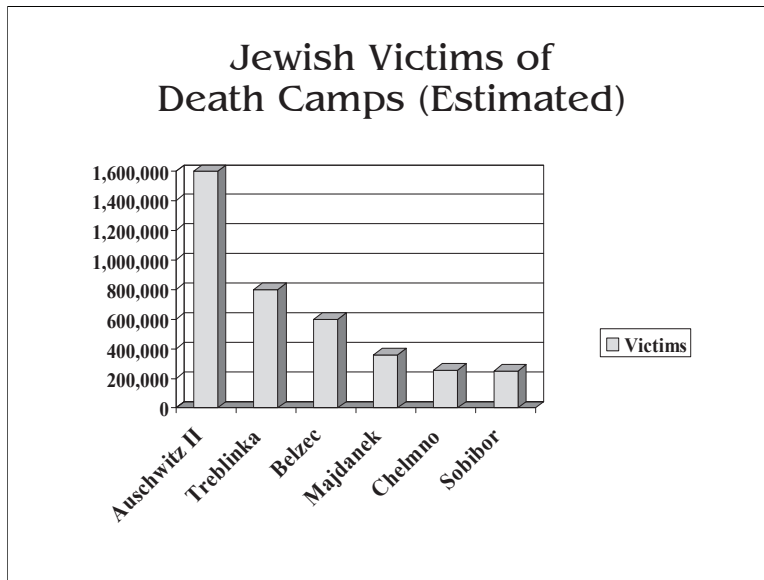
## The Case of Denmark

- Denmark rescued almost its entire Jewish population
- April 9, 1940: The Nazis occupy Denmark
- August 29, 1943: Military rule instituted; Nazis demand deportation of Jews
- Danes transported 7229 Jews and 686 non-Jews across the sea to Sweden rather than hand them over to the Nazis
- Only 477 Danish Jews ended up in concentration camps



Danish fishermen ferry Jews to safety in neutral Sweden

Historian Yehuda Bauer has written, “The Danish rescue action was largely spontaneous, a reaction to the Nazi disregard of Danish national pride and Danish traditions and religious and political convictions” (*A History of the Holocaust*, New York: Franklin Watts, 1982). The case of Denmark illustrates the fact that there were instances in which people acted humanely toward and helped not only their Jewish friends and neighbors, but even total strangers.



Estimates of the actual number of dead vary widely. In many cases, inmates were sent directly from the trains to the gas chambers, and no accurate count of victims was made. It is generally agreed that the total is 6,000,000.

## Other Victims of Nazi Persecution

- Socialists
- Communists
- Handicapped
- Gays and lesbians
- Christians
- Gypsies



Gypsy girl

Though the Nazis specifically targeted the Jews, they also engaged in a less systematic and less extensive persecution of other groups of people. They did not hesitate to arrest, imprison, torture, or even kill individuals they viewed as a threat to their power, their authority, or their conception of what German society should be.

Some estimates from historians:

- Romani and Sinti (Gypsies)
- 250,000–1,000,000 according to sources cited by Hancock
- Disabled
- Over 200,000 were killed in the official euthanasia campaign, 1939–41. There is no way to know how many were killed outside the campaign. “No reliable figures exist for the spontaneous killings.”
- Homosexuals
- 3,000–9,000 German homosexuals according to Whitman.
- 5,000–15,000 according to Lautmann

(<http://www.holocaust-history.org/~rjg/deaths.shtml>)

## What Happened to the Camps?



A survivor weeps at liberation

- December 1942: Belzec shut down; the camp had only two survivors
- March 1943: Chelmno shut down; reopened June–July, 1944 to gas Jews from the Łódź ghetto.
- August 1943: Prisoners' revolt at Treblinka; camp destroyed; approximately 60 survivors
- October 1943: Prisoners' revolt at Sobibor; camp destroyed
- July 1944: Majdanek liquidated as Soviet army advanced; prisoners shipped to Auschwitz
- January 1945: Auschwitz abandoned by Nazis; prisoners forced on death march west

Some of the camps, including Belzec and Sobibor, were completely destroyed by the Nazis: German troops razed the buildings, tore down the fences, and plowed over the grounds. The Nazis essentially tried to destroy evidence that would reveal the extent of their crimes.

In the image in this slide, a survivor weeps when he learns he will not be among the first shipped to a hospital.

## Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto

- July–September 1942: More than 300,000 Jews deported from the Ghetto
- Ghetto residents received reports of mass murders at Treblinka
- JFO (“Jewish Fighting Organization”) led armed revolts in January and April 1943
- Resisters held out until May 16, 1943



Buildings on fire during the uprising

While Nazi General Jürgen Stroop cannot be considered an objective reporter, he claimed to have captured 56,065 Jews, killed 7000, deported another 7000 to Treblinka, and destroyed 631 bunkers in the Warsaw Ghetto. The fact that a few hundred ghetto fighters were able to hold out against the Germans for a month provides a testament to their extraordinary courage and heroism.

## What Did the Allies Know?

August 1942: Gerhart Riegner of World Jewish Congress cabled Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in New York and Sidney Silverman (Member of Parliament) in London:

“Received alarming report...according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3.5–4 million should after deportation and concentration in east be exterminated at one blow to resolve once and for all the Jewish question in Europe... Methods under discussion include prussic acid.”

The State Department requested that Rabbi Wise temporarily suppress this document until it could be confirmed. When they received confirmation several months later, the information was released.

In the 1970s, extensive aerial photos of the camps (including Auschwitz) were discovered in Allied military archives. Despite the fact that the Allies had knowledge of the camps and bombed targets in the area, they never took any direct action against the camps or the rail lines leading to camps.

Note to teacher: Discuss the following questions with your students.

- Should a government believe any memo or report it receives from third-party sources in other countries without substantial supporting evidence?
- Once the Allies had confirmed the action in the document, what actions could they have taken?
- Why didn't the Allies bomb the camps? Was it even possible? What would it have achieved?

## Nazi Retreat and Hiding the Evidence



One of 150 prisoners burned to death by SS troops

- The Nazis attempted to cover their tracks
- As the Soviets advanced, the Nazis shut down camps and forced tens of thousands of inmates to march west
- The Nazis blew up crematoria, razed buildings, unearthed mass graves, burned bodies, and buried the dead in order to conceal evidence of their atrocities
- Some prisoners were also burned to death

After a long siege that took a horrendous toll on both sides, the Soviets finally defeated the Nazis at Stalingrad in October of 1942. After this point, the tide of the war began to turn against Germany. The German army retreated and the Soviet army began marching west, finally reaching the Auschwitz concentration camp in January of 1945.

Why did the Nazis attempt to cover up evidence of the death camps? Prominent historians have suggested that the Nazis did have a valid fear of both legal and extralegal reprisals not just from Jews, but from the international community as well.



## Liberation

- January 26, 1945: Soviets liberate Auschwitz
- April 11, 1945: Americans liberate Buchenwald
- April 15, 1945: British liberate Bergen-Belsen
- April 29, 1945: Americans liberate Dachau
- May 9, 1945: Soviets liberate Theresienstadt

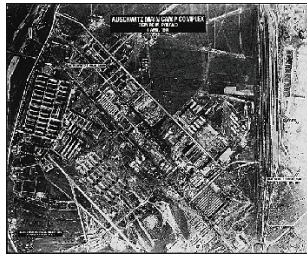


Allied soldiers provided survivors with food, water, and medical care

As allied soldiers liberated the camps, they were horrified by what they found. Piles of corpses lay strewn about, charred remains lay in crematoria, and starving, skeletal human beings cried for food and water. The American, British, and Soviet armies were unprepared to deal with the tens of thousands of desperately ill concentration camp inmates they discovered.

Photo source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

## Testimony: Liberation at Auschwitz



Aerial photo of the main camp complex at Auschwitz

“Then the bombardment began... It seemed far away... After a few minutes it was obvious that the camp had been struck. Two huts were burning fiercely... The Germans were no longer there. The towers were empty... It was impossible to sleep; a window was broken and it was very cold. I was thinking that we would have to find a stove to set up and get some coal, wood and food.”

—Primo Levi,  
*Survival in Auschwitz*

Because he was ill in the infirmary, Primo Levi was not evacuated on the death march from Auschwitz. In this and the next slide, he describes conditions in the camps after the Nazis had fled but before the Soviets had arrived.

## Testimony: Liberation at Auschwitz

“The work of the bombs had been completed by the work of man: ragged, decrepit, skeleton-like patients at all able to move dragged themselves everywhere on the frozen soil, like an invasion of worms. They had ransacked all the empty huts in search of food and wood... Around the smoking ruins of the burnt huts... [some] had found potatoes and were roasting them in the embers of the fire.”

—Primo Levi,  
*Survival in Auschwitz*



Burning barracks at Auschwitz  
immediately after liberation

Like Primo Levi, only the sickest and weakest patients remained at the camp after other inmates were evacuated on the death march.



Victims at Auschwitz, January 1945

When the Soviets arrived at Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, they found 7600 survivors and many corpses like the ones shown in the photo on this slide. Even after rescue, thousands of survivors died from cold, starvation, and illness.

Photo source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

## World War II Ends in Europe



The Germans formally surrender

The Germans signed an unconditional surrender on May 7, 1945. The previous week, Hitler had committed suicide in his bunker.



After liberation: removing the yellow Star of David

As the war ended, Jews liberated themselves from the discrimination and persecution they had experienced under Nazi rule. In this image, Simon Trampetter removes the Star of David from the coat of his friend Joseph Keller in the Netherlands.

Photo source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

## A Route Home



Survivors begin their journey to Palestine (which later became Israel)

- Survivors spent months or even years in camps for “displaced persons” (“DPs”)
- Thousands walked or rode trains home
- In Kielce, Poland, 150 Jewish survivors were attacked upon returning home: 42 were killed, 50 wounded
- Those who returned home found their communities destroyed and their families decimated

At the war’s end, allies had to cope with hundreds of thousands of Jewish concentration camp survivors and millions of war refugees. The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency (UNRRA) ran camps for “displaced persons,” often organizing them by nationality. “DPs” often suffered from severe mental and physical illnesses stemming from their experiences in the camps. The destruction of roads and railroads throughout Europe made travel home difficult at best. Many nations did not welcome Jewish refugees after World War II. Nevertheless, approximately 136,000 immigrated to Palestine, which would later become Israel. Approximately 80,000 traveled to the United States; President Harry Truman, going against the will of Congress, had supported the immigration of Jewish refugees to America.

## The Nuremberg Trials



The victorious Allies, France, Great Britain, The Soviet Union, and the United States, agreed to establish an international tribunal to try Germany's leaders for complicity in the deaths of twelve million people.

In October 1945, the International Military Tribunal met in Nuremberg where its prosecutors indicted 22 principal Nazi leaders on crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Other lesser cases would be handled in national courts.

Twelve defendants received death sentences. Three defendants received life in prison. Four received sentences of up to 20 years, and three were acquitted.



## Holocaust Memorial at Dachau



The memorial stone reads, “To the dead, honor, to the living, a warning.” Throughout Europe, communities have created monuments and memorials to mark sites where the Holocaust occurred.

Photo source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photo Archives.

## Elie Wiesel on the World



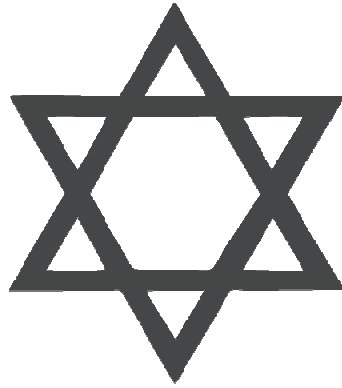
“There was always a respite between the different stages, between the Nuremberg laws and the *Kristallnacht*, between expropriation and deportation, between the ghettos and liquidation... I maintain that by forceful action, only once, by taking a stand without ambiguities, the free world would have been able to force the Germans to draw back, or at least to plan on a smaller scale...”

Do you agree that the world could have stopped the Holocaust if nations had come together and taken decisive action against Germany? Why or why not? The passage in this slide comes from Lawrence Langer’s book, *Art from the Ashes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

### First They Came for the Jews

First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Jew.  
Then they came for the Communists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Communist.  
Then they came for the trade unionists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a trade unionist.  
Then they came for me  
and there was no one left  
to speak out for me.

*Pastor Martin Niemöller*



In your opinion, how  
can we best honor  
the dead?

What warning should  
we take from our study  
of the Holocaust?

Encourage students to reflect on these questions, perhaps privately at first then in full-class discussion. You may wish to talk about other examples of genocide that could have been averted—or should be averted in the future—through the engagement of individual citizens, nations, and human rights organizations.

## Discussion Questions

1. What obstacles must have made it very hard for inmates in the death camps to rebel against the Nazis?
2. Are you more surprised that so few did rebel or that any were able to rebel at all? Explain your answer.
3. Over 11,000 people risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. They are called “the Righteous Gentiles.” Would you risk your life to save others in this manner? What are the variables that would influence your decision?
4. Once the Allies confirmed reports about the death camps, should they have bombed the camps? Had they done so, what would it have achieved?

1. Very strict control and surveillance by armed guards; lack of knowledge of what was happening inside and outside the camps; the use of some camp inmates to control other inmates; etc.
2. Answers will vary and should be discussed.
3. Answers will vary and should be discussed.
4. Answers will vary and should be discussed. Some may feel any knowledge at all about the Holocaust would require actions to stop it. Others may feel the bombing of the camps might only have enraged the Nazis and led them to step up the killings or would detract from the war effort itself and delay the day of victory, etc.







## The Holocaust

The Genocide of Europe's Jewry

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### Essential Questions

- Why did Christians, followers of a religion stressing love and forgiveness, so often turn in hatred against innocent Jews?
- Why did Germany, a powerful, industrial society with a well-educated population, accept a form of anti-Semitism so extreme and cruel as to lead to the effort to destroy an entire group of human beings by the millions?
- Why were the democratic nations unable to find a way to stop Hitler and his Nazis from starting World War II and launching the Holocaust?

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### Essential Questions (continued)

- Why did the Nazis organize the Holocaust in the form it took, of ghettos, railroad transportation to the death camps, gas chambers, and crematoria?
- In what ways, if any, was the Holocaust different from other genocidal events in history?
- Could or should the Allies have done more to rescue Jews and to stop the Holocaust once they realized it was being carried out?

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## Reflections



- What do you know about the Holocaust?
- What do you want to know about the Holocaust?

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## Studying the Holocaust



History of Jewish Persecution



Nazis' Anti-Jewish Ideology and Rise to Power



Nazi Persecution of the Jews and the "Final Solution"



Aftermath

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## Who Are the Jews?

- Descendants of Abraham and Sarah
- The Jewish tribes conquered Caanan (Israel) in ~1000 BCE after leaving Egypt (the Exodus)
- Set up independent kingdom under King David
- Conquered by Romans in 70 CE, which began the dispersion of Jews throughout Europe and Middle East (the Diaspora)



Sculpture of Moses

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## Anti-Semitism



*The Eternal Jew*, an anti-Semitic book

- Term coined in 1879
- Anti-Jewish sentiment had existed for hundreds of years before that

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## Christian Anti-Semitism

- Denied civil rights
- Permitted synagogue burnings
- Occupational exclusion
- Yellow badges
- Massacres
- Ghettos
- Expulsions



Fresco depicting the crucifixion of Jesus

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Dead bodies stacked beneath Christmas wreaths at Buchenwald

“The missionaries of Christianity had said in effect, you have no right to live among us as Jews. The secular rulers who followed had proclaimed: you have no right to live among us. The German Nazis at last decreed: you have no right to live.”—Raul Hilberg

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## Martin Luther

- 1483–1546
- Started the Protestant Reformation
- Published “On the Jews and their Lies”
- Called for the burning of synagogues
- His work was honored by the Nazis



Martin Luther

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## Discussion Questions

1. On slide 6 of the PowerPoint, a Nazi illustration depicts a Jew. The facial features of the Jew are distorted in ways that reinforce a stereotype of the Jews common in Europe in the 1800s. What is a stereotype and in what ways do the facial features here stereotype the Jews?
2. On the same slide, the Jew is shown with a whip. He is also holding some coins in one hand and, under his arm, part of a map with a hammer and sickle on it. Both the coins and the hammer and sickle are meant as symbols. What do you think they symbolize here? Why might many people find it odd that Jews could be depicted as embracing both of these symbolic objects at once?

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## Foundations of Nazi Anti-Semitism

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## Weimar Republic



"List 1 SPD [socialists]:  
Against the Centrists and the Swastika"

- Political conflicts brought out tensions between leftist, rightist, and centrist parties
- This 1930 poster supports the socialist "List 1" party against the Nazis and the centrists

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## The NSDAP

- Platform for the National-sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, announced February 24, 1920
- Anti-Semitic objectives:
  - Jews should not be citizens
  - Jews in Germany should be subject to laws for aliens
  - No right to vote for Jews
  - No Jewish immigration
  - Jews should not own or edit newspapers



Hitler at a 1923 NSDAP rally

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## Adolf Hitler and *Mein Kampf*



Hitler in 1924

- 1924: Hitler publishes book titled *Mein Kampf*, or "My Struggle"
- Outlines theories on race, living space, and war

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## The Nazis Defined Jews as a Race

- 19th-century theory of race
- Nazis saw Jews as a race of people, not a religion
- “Racial hygiene”
- Non-observant Jews, Jews who had converted to Christianity



A German elementary school class in race hygiene, 1934

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## Nationalism and Fascism



Fascist leaders Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler

- **Nationalism:** a strong sense of pride and loyalty to a nation and its culture
- **Fascism:** a political philosophy that glorifies the nation at the expense of basic civil and human rights; advocates a dictatorial, one-party government

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## Hitler's Goal



© 2002 historypictures.com  
“A Germanic State of the German Nation”

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"The Wandering Jew"

"The widespread acceptance by the German people of anti-Semitism as a common political dogma paved the way for Hitler's rise to power..."

"Without Adolf Hitler, however, the Final Solution would not have been planned and would not have been carried to its irrevocable end."

—Historian  
Lucy Dawidowicz




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## The Nazis Win Political Power

- NSDAP representation in the Reichstag increased from 1924 to July 1932
- Party lost seats between July and November 1932
- January 30, 1933: President Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor
- Hitler then moved rapidly to seize total power



Hitler sworn in as Chancellor

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## The Reichstag Fire

- February 27, 1933
- Started by Dutch anarchist Marinus van der Lubbe
- Did van der Lubbe act alone?
- The Nazis used the fire as an excuse to expand their power



The Reichstag after the fire

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## The Enabling Act

March 23, 1933

**Article 1** "Other than through the procedure prescribed by the constitution, laws of the *Reich* may be decided by the government of the *Reich* as well."

**Article 2** "Laws decided upon by the government of the *Reich* may deviate from the provisions of the constitution as long as they do not affect the institutions of the *Reichstag* and the *Reichsrat* as such."

**Article 3** "Laws decided upon by the government of the *Reich* shall be issued by the Chancellor [i.e., Hitler] and announced in the *Reich Law Gazette*. They shall take effect on the day following the announcement, unless they prescribe a different date."

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## Discussion Questions

1. In his book *Mein Kampf*, Hitler called for *Lebensraum* ("living space") for Germans. In what way might the Versailles Treaty after World War I have made it easier for many Germans to agree with Hitler about this?
2. Today, we tend to see Nazi anti-Semitism as singling out a fairly weak people and victimizing them. In *Mein Kampf*, however, Hitler depicted Jews in such a way as to make the Germans appear as the victims. What ideas about the Jews did he use to make this case?

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## Discussion Questions (continued)

3. Hitler's form of anti-Semitism stressed the notion that Jews were a racially distinct group and Germans had to protect their racial purity against the Jews. In what ways does this form of anti-Semitism differ from the form it took among some Christians at various times over the centuries?
4. Hitler's Nazis lost some seats in the November 1932 elections. But by and large they had grown enormously in popularity and power from 1929 on. What social conditions in those years might have aided them in their rise, and why?

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## Nazi Persecution of the Jews

- Widespread violence against Jews
- Boycott of Jewish businesses
- Occupational exclusion
- The Nuremberg Laws
- *Kristallnacht*
- Mass arrests and imprisonment



Hitler arrives at the Nuremberg Rally, 1935

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## National Boycott



The sign reads, "Germans! Defend yourselves! Don't buy from Jews!"

- April 1, 1933
- Goals:
  - Intensify anti-Semitic sentiment
  - Motivate Jewish businessmen to sell out to non-Jews
  - Appease radical Nazis who wanted more action against Jews
- Uniformed Nazis blocked Jewish-owned stores
- Jewish doctors, lawyers, judges also targeted for boycott or exclusion

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## Occupational Exclusion

- The "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service" passed on April 7, 1933
- Jews were required to resign from civil service (government) jobs
- German Jews who fought on the front in World War I or whose father or son were killed in action were exempted
- On September 22, 1933, Jews were removed from cultural and media organizations

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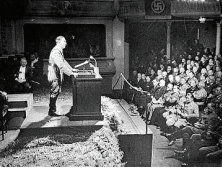
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## The Nuremberg Laws



Hitler speaks at the party rally in Nuremberg

- September 1935
- **Article 5, 1** A Jew is an individual who is descended from at least three grandparents who were, racially, full Jews.
- **Article 5, 2** A Jew is also an individual who is descended from two full-Jewish grandparents if: he/she participates in the Jewish religious community or is married to a Jewish person on or after September 15, 1935.

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### Also Considered Jewish by the Nazis

- Children born of marriages in which at least one parent was Jewish and the marriage occurred after September 15, 1935
- Children born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936, who had at least one Jewish parent

### Not Jewish but “Mixed”

- Individuals descended from two Jewish grandparents:
  - who do not adhere to the Jewish religion
  - who are not married to a Jew and do not marry a Jew (Mischling of the first degree) **OR**
- Individuals descended from one Jewish grandparent (Mischling of the second degree)

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## 1936 Olympics



Jesse Owens of the United States wins four gold medals

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### *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass): November 9, 1938



Jewish-owned store damaged by bombing

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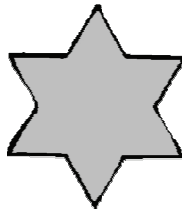
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### Daily Life for Jews in Nazi Germany

- Banned from public library reading rooms, public transportation, cinemas, theaters, parks, and recreation centers
- Daily curfews, then limited to shopping only between 3:00 and 4:00 PM
- Prohibited from owning cars and typewriters, and from smoking
- Required to wear the yellow Star of David
- Prohibited from buying flowers, purchasing eggs, vegetables, meat, and white bread
- Jewish pet owners were required to deliver pets for euthanasia



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### *Kindertransport* (1938–1939)



Jewish girl fleeing Vienna

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## German Expansion and War



The invasion of Poland

- March 1938: Germany annexes Austria
- September 1938: Germany annexes the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia
- September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland

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## Ghettos

### Heydrich's orders, September 21, 1939:

"For the time being, the first prerequisite for the final aim is the concentration of the Jews from the countryside into the larger cities."

"In each Jewish community, a Council of Jewish Elders is to be set up...to be *fully responsible*...for the exact and punctual execution of all directives issued or yet to be issued.

Heydrich anticipated that Jews would be subject to curfews and later barred from other areas of the city.



Reinhard Heydrich, chief of Nazi security

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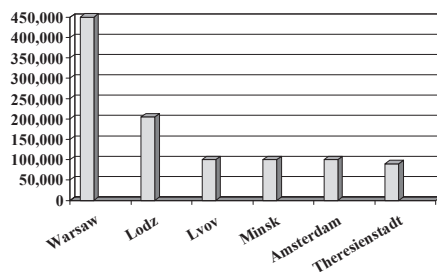
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## Populations of Significant Ghettos




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## Jewish Leadership in the Ghettos

- *Judenräte* (Jewish Councils) were the primary ghetto administrations
- Organized a ghetto police force
- Postal service
- Food distribution service
- Work, housing, and health care services
- Eventually, the *Judenräte* also had to provide lists of names for deportation to forced labor camps, concentration camps, and death camps



Members of the *Judenrat* for the Łódź Ghetto

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## Daily Life in the Warsaw Ghetto



Children eat on the street in the Warsaw ghetto

- Diarists and ghetto “historians” kept detailed records (recovered after 1945)
- 6–7 people were crowded into each room
- Starvation: food rations of about 200 calories a day
- Some had jobs; others survived through smuggling and other illegal activities
- In 1941, thousands died every month
- Illegal prayer services and clandestine schools held in private homes

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Rabbis in the Warsaw Ghetto

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## Lodz Ghetto: Conditions

"Filth was also tremendous. Filth. It was filthy. It was filthy even in the building where we lived. I mean, in the winter time. I mean, the toilet was...it was...it was ice. It was all ice. And then the feces and the urine all over, was overflowing... overflowing there."

—Beno Helmer, b. 1923, Czechoslovakia



Disposing of raw sewage in the Lodz ghetto

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## Lodz Ghetto: Nazi Cruelty

"The German [sic] came and they, they lined everybody up... And there was...you know this was like in a semi-circle. And there was a lady there with a child. And, uh...[sighs] And he ask [sic], 'Whose is this child?'

And the woman who was the mother says, she did not admit the child. So he took the child by the legs, and he swung it against the wall. And he killed the child."

—Beno Helmer, b. 1923, Czechoslovakia



German soldiers and Polish civilians look on as one Jewish man is forced to cut off the beard of another

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## The Nazis Advance East and West



Hitler shows his elation after the defeat of France

- May 1940: Belgium surrenders
- June 1940: France surrenders
- Summer and fall, 1940: "London Blitz"
- April 1941: Yugoslavia and Greece defeated
- June 1941: Germany invades the USSR

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## Massacre at Babi Yar (Kiev)

- 1941: During the High Holy days, Nazis from *Einsatzgruppe C* ordered Jews out of the city
- Jews were marched to a ravine and machine-gunned to death
- Nazi gunners relieved after one-hour shifts
- Over 33,000 Jews murdered in two days



An *einsatzgruppe* soldier speaks to two unidentified women at the ravine at Babi Yar

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1942



Red, purple, and brown areas were occupied by Germany or its allies

### Occupied by Germany or German Allies

- France
- Netherlands
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Poland
- Portions of the Soviet Union
- Norway
- Italy
- Czechoslovakia
- Greece
- The Balkans
- North Africa

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Samuel Schryver poses at the Jewish quarter in Amsterdam

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## The Wannsee Conference

- January 2, 1942, called by Reinhard Heydrich
- Attended by high-ranking administrators including Adolf Eichmann (Hitler did not attend)
- Planning for the *Endlösung* (Final Solution) to the “Jewish question”



SS General Reinhard Heydrich

- Included discussion of the “problem” of people of mixed Jewish descent and in mixed marriages
- Compulsory sterilization suggested
- Dissolution of mixed marriages discussed

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## Official Notes from the Wannsee Conference

- “Under proper guidance, in the course of the final solution the Jews are to be allocated for appropriate labor in the East...in the course of which action doubtless a large portion will be eliminated by natural causes.”
- “The possible final remnant will, since it will undoubtedly consist of the most resistant portion, have to be treated accordingly, because it is the product of natural selection and would, if released, act as the seed of a new Jewish revival.”
- “State Secretary Dr. Bühler stated that the *Generalgouvernement* would welcome it if the final solution of this problem could be begun in the *Generalgouvernement*... [Dr. Bühler] had only one request, to solve the Jewish question in this area as quickly as possible.”

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## The “Final Solution”



Bodies of victims

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## July 19, 1942: Himmler's Orders

"I order that the resettlement of the entire Jewish population of the *Generalgouvernement* [part of Nazi-occupied Poland] be carried out and completed by December 31, 1942."

"By December 31, 1942, no persons of Jewish extraction are to be found in the *Generalgouvernement*...a total cleanup is necessary."



Himmler (left foreground) inspects a prisoner-of-war camp in Russia

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## Deportations From the Ghettos



Jews being deported from the Łódź ghetto

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## Testimony: Deportations



Women being deported from the Warsaw ghetto, 1943

"They told us the day before that we can pack one small suitcase and we should be ready to leave the ghetto. When we came to the...factory...there they started to search us again. The SS was there also, and every woman had to, and every girl had to undress, naked, and we were searched internally for valuables. My mother was a very religious person, and all I could think of was how terrible this is for my mother to go through something such, such a terrible ordeal."

—Cecilie Klein-Pollack  
b. 1925, Czechoslovakia

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## Testimony: Arriving at Treblinka

“At 4 p.m. the train started to move again and within a few minutes, we pulled into the Treblinka camp. Only when we arrived there did the full truth dawn on us in all its horror. Ukrainians armed with rifles and machine guns were stationed on the roofs of the barracks. The camp yard was littered with corpses, some still in their clothes and others stark naked, their faces distorted with terror, black and swollen, with eyes wide open, with tongues protruding, skulls crushed, bodies mangled. And blood everywhere—the blood of innocent people, the blood of our children, of our brothers and sisters, our fathers and mothers.”



Franz Stangl, commandant  
of the Treblinka  
extermination camp

—Jankiel Wiernik

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## Looting the Victims



Shoes from victims of Majdanek



Gold rings stolen by the Nazis

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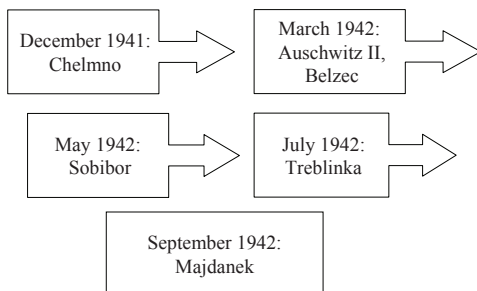
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## Gas Chambers at Death Camps Operational




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## Testimony: Death in the Gas Chambers

"Between 450 and 500 persons were crowded into a chamber measuring 25 square meters ... On the way to their doom, they were pushed and beaten with rifle butts ... Dogs were set upon them, barking, biting and tearing at them. To escape the blows and the dogs, the crowd rushed to its death, pushing into the chamber, the stronger ones shoving the weaker ones ahead of them. The bedlam lasted only a short while, for soon the doors were slammed shut. The chamber was filled, the motor turned on and connected with the inflow pipes and, within 25 minutes at the most, all lay stretched out dead or, to be more accurate, were standing up dead. Since there was not an inch of free space, they just leaned against each other."



Inside of a gas chamber at Majdanek

—Jankiel Wiernik (at Treblinka)

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Crematoria at Majdanek (near Lublin, Poland)

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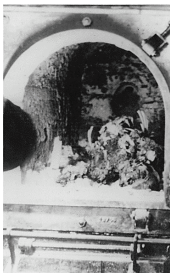
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## Killing Jews "Strictly on Schedule"



An oven at Buchenwald

"As a rule the interval between the arrival of a transport at the unloading platform and the completion of the killings of the new arrivals was not longer than about an hour and a half...during the period of peak activity three and sometimes as many as four or five transport trains would arrive with their horrible cargo and have to be processed... Since each transport brought an average of 6000 new arrivals, it is obvious that the camp administration...had to make it their business...that the systematic processing, i.e., the mass killings, should go on smoothly, and strictly on schedule."

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## Work Camps

- Auschwitz and Majdanek functioned as both death camps and work camps
- After disembarking from the trains, victims underwent a “selection”
- Those selected for death were promptly executed
- Those selected for work suffered months or years of torture in the camps
- Additional “selections” culled weak or sick prisoners from the work population and sent them to the gas chambers



Laborers at Sachsenhausen camp

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## Testimony: Work in the Camps



Inmates emaciated from work and starvation

“Then he [the guard] leads us to a pile of stones, which we are ordered to carry to another place, about a kilometer away. Loading the bricks and the stones...must be done with the greatest of speeds, and then you carry them, and return with the empty hod [carrier] running... Over you, there is an S.S. [guard] standing with a horsewhip at the ready, and whoever wants to stretch his back gets a heavy blow.”

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## Testimony: A “Selection” for Death

“All at once the [work group] stopped short ... ‘What is it? What’s happening? An inspection? No, selection!’... The women were frantically pulling themselves together, helping each other appear as alert and robust as possible ... We were getting closer ... Now I could see the German doctor standing beside the officers ... It was our turn. We marched up to the gate in time to the music’s sprightly beat. Mengele’s face, as he looked us over, was bland and impassive ... ‘This one,’ [the supervisor said] ‘Always *kaputt*. She can’t do the work.’ ‘Out,’ the doctor said simply, waving the pencil at her. And Lili stepped from the line. She held out her arm. [The assistant] read off the number, and he wrote it down in his notebook.”



Hungarian Jews line up for selection at Auschwitz

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## Testimony: Roll Call



Roll call at Sachsenhausen

“To an S.S. the roll call is the most important and most ceremonial time at the camp. We are all standing outside in front of the Block. The chief of the Block then gives the command ‘*Mützen ab!*’ (‘Caps off!’)... The *Blockführer* [leader] passes before each Block and counts the prisoners... If one or several prisoners are missing, the roll call begins again and the escape alarm is sounded.”

—Marco Nahon

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## Discussion Questions

1. In the early years, the Nazis organized boycotts of Jewish-owned businesses and excluded Jews from certain professional occupations. Do you think these policies were mainly ways to better control the Jews, ways to force Jews to leave Germany entirely, or simply ways to humiliate and intimidate the Jews? Explain your answer.
2. In what ways did the Nuremberg Laws reflect Hitler’s racist version of anti-Semitism?
3. We still use the term “ghetto” today. In what ways were the ghettos the Nazis set up different from ghettos as we use the term now?

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## Discussion Questions (continued)

4. The *Judenräte* were Jewish councils whom the Nazis chose and put in charge of administering the ghettos. Do you think it was possible for a Jew to be a member of a *Judenrat* and make any ethical decisions at all? Why or why not?
5. Why do you suppose the Nazis did not continue the Holocaust in the form of killing squads with machine guns and pistols such as the *Einsatzgruppen* in the Baltics and the Soviet Union?
6. Why do you think that in official notes, even the top Nazi officials at the Wannsee Conference spoke in bureaucratic jargon only about a “final solution” rather than describe it openly as the extermination of the Jews?
7. How did the Nazis use technology to make the mass murder of the Jews more efficient?

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## Resistance at Treblinka

- Revolt planned by a small group of inmates
- Stole and copied a key to the arsenal
- Seized weapons
- Planned to murder guards, cut telephone lines, set the camp on fire
- The successful revolt occurred on Monday, August 2, 1943
- Treblinka was shut down; however, very few inmates survived



Distant view of smoke from the fire set by inmates at Treblinka

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## Testimony: Escape and Survival



A Jewish man lies dead, shot in the woods by German soldiers

“Suddenly we heard the signal—a shot fired into the air... I grabbed some guns and let fly right and left, but when I saw that the road to escape stood open, I picked up an ax and a saw, and ran... Every second counted... Then I heard a shot... I turned and saw a guard... I noticed [his weapon] had jammed. I slowed down, I pulled the ax from my belt... I came up close to him and struck him with my ax... I was free and ran into the woods.”

—Jankiel Wiernik

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## Other Examples of Resistance

- *Sobibor*: On October 14, 1943, prisoners revolted. Eleven SS men died. Three hundred prisoners escaped, but most were captured and killed. Approximately 50 survived.
- *Auschwitz*: On October 7, 1944, *Sonderkommando* (Jewish prisoners who handled corpses for the crematoria) revolted. They blew up one gas chamber with gunpowder stolen from a munitions factory. Eventually, all escapees were captured and killed.
- *Nonviolent resistance*: “The enemy’s intention was for us to be devoured by filth. Very well then, it was necessary to keep oneself clean.”



Participants in the Sobibor uprising who survived

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## Citizen Resistance



- The White Rose Movement
- Righteous Gentiles

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## The Case of Denmark

- Denmark rescued almost its entire Jewish population
- April 9, 1940: The Nazis occupy Denmark
- August 29, 1943: Military rule instituted; Nazis demand deportation of Jews
- Danes transported 7229 Jews and 686 non-Jews across the sea to Sweden rather than hand them over to the Nazis
- Only 477 Danish Jews ended up in concentration camps



Danish fishermen ferry Jews to safety in neutral Sweden

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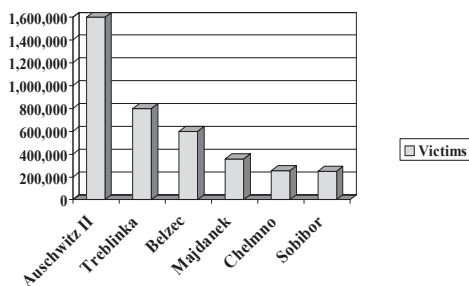
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## Jewish Victims of Death Camps (Estimated)




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## Other Victims of Nazi Persecution

- Socialists
- Communists
- Handicapped
- Gays and lesbians
- Christians
- Gypsies



Gypsy girl

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## What Happened to the Camps?



A survivor weeps at liberation

- December 1942: Belzec shut down; the camp had only two survivors
- March 1943: Chelmno shut down; reopened June–July, 1944 to gas Jews from the Łódź ghetto.
- August 1943: Prisoners' revolt at Treblinka; camp destroyed; approximately 60 survivors
- October 1943: Prisoners' revolt at Sobibor; camp destroyed
- July 1944: Majdanek liquidated as Soviet army advanced; prisoners shipped to Auschwitz
- January 1945: Auschwitz abandoned by Nazis; prisoners forced on death march west

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## Uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto

- July–September 1942: More than 300,000 Jews deported from the Ghetto
- Ghetto residents received reports of mass murders at Treblinka
- JFO (“Jewish Fighting Organization”) led armed revolts in January and April 1943
- Resisters held out until May 16, 1943



Buildings on fire during the uprising

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## What Did the Allies Know?

August 1942: Gerhart Riegner of World Jewish Congress cabled Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in New York and Sidney Silverman (Member of Parliament) in London:

“Received alarming report...according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3.5–4 million should after deportation and concentration in east be exterminated at one blow to resolve once and for all the Jewish question in Europe... Methods under discussion include prussic acid.”

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## Nazi Retreat and Hiding the Evidence



One of 150 prisoners burned to death by SS troops

- The Nazis attempted to cover their tracks
- As the Soviets advanced, the Nazis shut down camps and forced tens of thousands of inmates to march west
- The Nazis blew up crematoria, razed buildings, unearthed mass graves, burned bodies, and buried the dead in order to conceal evidence of their atrocities
- Some prisoners were also burned to death

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## Liberation

- January 26, 1945: Soviets liberate Auschwitz
- April 11, 1945: Americans liberate Buchenwald
- April 15, 1945: British liberate Bergen-Belsen
- April 29, 1945: Americans liberate Dachau
- May 9, 1945: Soviets liberate Theresienstadt



Allied soldiers provided survivors with food, water, and medical care

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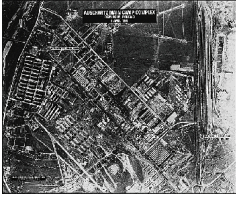
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## Testimony: Liberation at Auschwitz



Aerial photo of the main camp complex at Auschwitz

“Then the bombardment began... It seemed far away... After a few minutes it was obvious that the camp had been struck. Two huts were burning fiercely... The Germans were no longer there. The towers were empty... It was impossible to sleep; a window was broken and it was very cold. I was thinking that we would have to find a stove to set up and get some coal, wood and food.”

—Primo Levi,  
*Survival in Auschwitz*

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## Testimony: Liberation at Auschwitz

“The work of the bombs had been completed by the work of man: ragged, decrepit, skeleton-like patients at all able to move dragged themselves everywhere on the frozen soil, like an invasion of worms. They had ransacked all the empty huts in search of food and wood... Around the smoking ruins of the burnt huts... [some] had found potatoes and were roasting them in the embers of the fire.”

—Primo Levi,  
*Survival in Auschwitz*



Burning barracks at Auschwitz immediately after liberation

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Victims at Auschwitz, January 1945

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## World War II Ends in Europe



© 2002 historypictures.com  
The Germans formally surrender

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After liberation: removing the yellow Star of David

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## A Route Home



Survivors begin their journey to Palestine (which later became Israel)

- Survivors spent months or even years in camps for “displaced persons” (“DPs”)
- Thousands walked or rode trains home
- In Kielce, Poland, 150 Jewish survivors were attacked upon returning home: 42 were killed, 50 wounded
- Those who returned home found their communities destroyed and their families decimated

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## The Nuremberg Trials



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## Holocaust Memorial at Dachau



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## Elie Wiesel on the World



“There was always a respite between the different stages, between the Nuremberg laws and the *Kristallnacht*, between expropriation and deportation, between the ghettos and liquidation... I maintain that by forceful action, only once, by taking a stand without ambiguities, the free world would have been able to force the Germans to draw back, or at least to plan on a smaller scale...”

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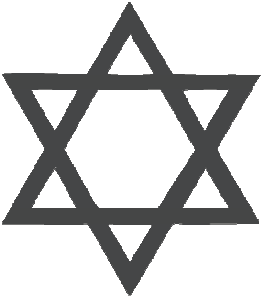
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In your opinion, how  
can we best honor  
the dead?

What warning should  
we take from our study  
of the Holocaust?

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### Discussion Questions

1. What obstacles must have made it very hard for inmates in the death camps to rebel against the Nazis?
2. Are you more surprised that so few did rebel or that any were able to rebel at all? Explain your answer.
3. Over 11,000 people risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. They are called "the Righteous Gentiles." Would you risk your life to save others in this manner? What are the variables that would influence your decision?
4. Once the Allies confirmed reports about the death camps, should they have bombed the camps? Had they done so, what would it have achieved?

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