

Lfd. Nr.	H. Jst. u. Nat.	H. Nr.	Name und Vorname
361.	Ju. Po.	69208	Hann Dawid
362.	"	9	Immerglück Zygmunt
363.	"	69210	Katz Isak Josef
364.	"	1	Wiener Samuel
365.	"	2	Rosner Leopold
366.	"	3	Gewelbe Jakob
367.	"	4	Korn Edmund
368.	"	5	Fenner Jonas
369.	"	6	Wachtel Roman
370.	"	7	Immerglück Mendel
371.	"	8	Wichter Feivel
372.	"	9	Landschaft Aron
373.	"	69220	Wandersmann Markus
374.	"	1	Rosenthal Israel
375.	"	2	Silberschlag Bersch
376.	"	3	Liban Jan
377.	"	4	Kohane Chiel
378.	"	5	Seftmann David
379.	"	6	Kupferberg Israel
380.	"	7	Buchführer Norbert
381.	"	8	Horowitz Schachne
382.	"	9	Begal Richard
383.	"	69230	Jakubowicz Dawid
384.	"	1	Sommer Josef
385.	"	2	Smolers Symon
386.	"	3	Rechen Ryazard
387.	"	4	Szlamowicz Chaim
388.	"	5	Kleinberg Szaia
389.	"	6	Miedeluch Michael
390.	"	7	Hillman Bernard
391.	"	8	Königl Marek
392.	"	9	Jakubowicz Chaim
393.	"	69240	Domb Israel
394.	"	1	Klimbar
395.	"	2	Wisniak
396.	"	3	Schreib
397.	"	4	Silber
398.	"	5	Eidner Pinkus

HOLOCAUST EDUCATION
TEACHER RESOURCE



VANCOUVER
HOLOCAUST
 EDUCATION CENTRE

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WHY TEACH ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST?

Source: Task Force for International Cooperation on the Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

<http://www.holocausttaskforce.org>

The objective of teaching any subject is to engage the intellectual curiosity of students in order to inspire critical thought and personal growth. Therefore it is essential that educators consider questions of rationale whenever they approach any subject.

When educators take the time to consider the reasons for their lessons on the Holocaust, they will be more likely to select content that speaks to their students' interests and that provides a clearer understanding of a complex history.

The following considerations may encourage reflection on the reasons for teaching about the Holocaust:

- » The Holocaust was a watershed event, not only for the 20th century but also in the entire history of humanity. It was an unprecedented attempt to murder a whole people and to extinguish its culture. The Holocaust should be studied because it fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization.
- » A thorough study of the Holocaust helps students think about the use and abuse of power, and the roles and responsibilities of individuals, organizations, and nations when confronted with human rights violations. It can heighten awareness of the potential for genocide in the contemporary world.
- » Study of the Holocaust assists students in developing an understanding of the ramifications of prejudice, racism, anti-Semitism, and stereotyping in any society. It helps students develop an awareness of the value of diversity in a pluralistic society and encourages sensitivity to the positions of minorities.
- » The Holocaust demonstrated how a modern nation could utilize its technological expertise and bureaucratic infrastructure to implement destructive policies ranging from social engineering to genocide.
- » The Holocaust provides a context for exploring the dangers of remaining silent and indifferent in the face of the oppression of others.
- » As students gain insight into the many historical, social, religious, political, and economic factors that cumulatively resulted in the Holocaust, they gain awareness of the complexity of the historical process and a perspective on how a convergence of factors can contribute to the disintegration of democratic values. Students come to understand that it is the responsibility of citizens in a democracy to learn to identify the danger signals and to know when to react.
- » The Holocaust has become a central theme in the culture of many countries. This is reflected in media representation and popular culture. Holocaust education can offer students historical knowledge and skills needed to understand and evaluate these cultural manifestations.

GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

Adapted from *Teaching About the Holocaust: A Resource for Educators*,
United States Memorial Museum, Washington, D.C., 2001.
<http://www.ushmm.org/education/foreducators/>

DEFINE THE TERM “HOLOCAUST”

The Holocaust refers to a specific genocidal event in 20th century history: the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims—6 million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

JUST BECAUSE IT HAPPENED DOES NOT MEAN IT WAS INEVITABLE

Too often students have the simplistic impression that the Holocaust was inevitable. Just because an historical event took place, and it was documented in textbooks and on film, does not mean that it had to happen. The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act. By focusing on those decisions, you gain insight into history and human nature and can better help your students to become critical thinkers.

AVOID COMPARISONS OF PAIN

Avoid generalizations that suggest exclusivity. One cannot presume that the horror of the Holocaust was any greater than that experienced by victims of other genocides.

AVOID SIMPLE ANSWERS TO COMPLEX HISTORY

A study of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about human behaviour, and it often involves complicated answers as to why events occurred. Be wary of oversimplifications. Allow students to contemplate the various factors that contributed to the Holocaust. Racism combined with centuries-old bigotry and anti-Semitism; renewed by a nationalistic fervour that emerged in Europe in the latter half of the nineteenth century; fuelled by Germany’s defeat in World War I and its national humiliation following the Treaty of Versailles; exacerbated by worldwide economic hard times, the ineffectiveness of the Weimar Republic, and international indifference; and catalyzed by the political charisma and manipulative propaganda of Adolf Hitler’s Nazi regime contributed to the occurrence of the Holocaust.

CONTEXTUALIZE THE HISTORY YOU ARE TEACHING

Events of the Holocaust and, particularly, how individuals and organizations behaved at that time, should be placed in historical context. The occurrence of the Holocaust must be studied in the context of European history as a whole to give students a perspective on the precedents and circumstances that may have contributed to it. Similarly, study of the Holocaust should be viewed within a contemporaneous context, so students can begin to comprehend the circumstances that encouraged or discouraged particular actions or events. Students should be reminded that individuals and groups do not always fit neatly into categories of behaviour. The very same people did not always act consistently as “bystanders,” “collaborators,” “perpetrators,” or “rescuers.” Individuals and groups often behaved differently depending upon changing events and circumstances.

STRIVE FOR BALANCE IN ESTABLISHING PERSPECTIVE

Students may assume that the victims may have done something to justify the actions against them, and thus place inappropriate blame on the victims themselves. Rather, the focus should be on the impossible choices faced by the victims. Some students may glorify power, even when it is used to kill innocent people, and are seduced by the symbols of Nazi power. Student should understand how such elements could be abused and manipulated by governments to implement and legitimize acts of terror and even genocide.

MAKE CAREFUL DISTINCTIONS ABOUT SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Students should distinguish between fact, opinion and fiction. All materials should be identified as primary or secondary sources, fiction or montages.

TRANSLATE STATISTICS INTO PEOPLE

The sheer number of victims challenges easy comprehension. First person accounts and memoirs provide students with a way of making meaning out of the collective numbers.

BE SENSITIVE TO APPROPRIATE WRITTEN AND AUDIOVISUAL CONTENT

Graphic material should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the objective of the lesson. Students should not be assaulted with images of horror for which they are unprepared, you violate a basic trust: the obligation of a teacher to provide a “safe” learning environment.

PREPARING STUDENTS FOR SURVIVOR SPEAKERS

As a survivor I am aware of my own mortality. As we warily step through the minefields of our memory, some of us are choosing to recall, some are still trying to forget. When we are gone who will do the telling, bear the unbearable, make the unreal real?”

- Eric S., Holocaust survivor

We often use the term testimony to describe the personal account of a Holocaust survivor. Testimony is given as an act of witness and a form of evidence. Testimony implies a valid or “historic truth.” We do not use the term “story” because it implies a fictionalized or constructed account. The Holocaust is an event that has compelled many of those who experienced it to assume the role of witness to the criminal events for which there were few trials or convictions.

Survivors’ Holocaust testimonies are part of their larger oral history, life stories that extend before and after the dislocation of the Holocaust. These larger oral histories attest to a destroyed way of life and a loss of communities and cultures. In recounting their experiences, survivors remember their past, their community, their family and their identity.

Through the recounting of their experiences, survivors frame and make sense of an experience that is hard, even for them, to grasp or believe. Survivors write and record their experiences to preserve them and gather them into a form that confers meaning. The key here is the word experience. A video camera may record everything that transpires, but it experiences nothing. Experience belongs to the consciousness of a person; it

arises in the encounter between the world of experience and one's thoughts and sense of self. It is the survivor's experience that your students will be privileged to hear.

Survivors often speak of a sense of obligation to tell the world what happened, which provided a strong incentive for survival during the Holocaust. For many, the responsibility of survival is unfulfilled unless they speak or write. Survivors are motivated to bear witness and to honour the memory of lost family members. They are also motivated by acts of racism and genocide in the world around them and the desire to let young people know that they can make a difference.

Survivors focus on their lived experience. What they experienced does not always resemble an historian's view of history. Students are encouraged to ask survivors questions that are different from those that they would ask of historians. The survivor knows what was in his/her gaze, within his/her realm of experience, what he/she felt and observed.

Survivors of the Holocaust, who speak to school groups, describe a history that was lived. Although many survivors are well informed about various aspects of the Holocaust outside their personal experiences, few are expert historians. Their presentations are personal, eyewitness accounts. Their presentation will be followed by a discussion period in which students will have the opportunity to ask questions.

PROVIDE CONTEXT AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Explain to students that any first-person account is limited by several variables including the survivor's age, gender and country of origin. Some were caught up early or later in the war. Some survived in hiding, others found themselves in labour camps, death camps, partisan or resistance groups. Ask students to be alert to these variables during the presentation and to understand that this is one person's personal account.

In addition to providing a historical overview of the Holocaust, you may want to have students read a survivor's memoir or a book of youth fiction in advance of the survivor's presentation. You may also want to emphasize that survivors are aging and passing away, and that we may be the last generation that will have the opportunity to hear from eyewitnesses of the Holocaust.

ENCOURAGE STUDENT QUESTIONS

Survivors appreciate interacting with students, so please encourage your students to ask their speaker questions. Students may prepare a list of questions for the speaker in advance of the Symposium, and may share their lists with their classmates. Students may wish to ask the speaker about why they have chosen to recount their experiences. Many survivors wish to bear witness, others are motivated to counter racism today, and some see it as an act of remembrance. Alternatively, students may choose to respond not with a question, but by sharing a personal reflection about how the survivor's story has affected them, or what it has made them think about, feel or resolve to do.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION

Ask students to keep journals to help them reflect on what they are hearing from and discussing with a survivor. Journals can be used by teachers to carry on a dialogue with students about a variety of related issues.

After the Symposium, ask students: What did you learn from the survivor that you did not know before? How did this account change your understanding of the Holocaust? Which issues, raised by the speaker, are still with us today? How can this first person account help us address issues of prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, social justice and genocide today? What would you like to know more about?

LETTERS TO SURVIVOR SPEAKERS

Survivors are always delighted to hear from students. Students may share their personal responses to the survivor's presentation, as well as what they learned about the Holocaust. All correspondence can be addressed to the survivor care of the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre, 50-950 West 41st Avenue, Vancouver BC, V5Z 2N7.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

Source: Simon Wiesenthal Museum of Tolerance
<http://www.museumoftolerance.com>

QUESTIONS

1. When speaking about the “Holocaust,” what time period are we referring to?
2. How many Jews were murdered during the Holocaust?
3. How many non-Jewish civilians were murdered during World War II?
4. Which Jewish communities suffered losses during the Holocaust?
5. How many Jews were murdered in each country and what percentage of the pre-war Jewish population did they constitute?
6. What is a death camp? How many were there? Where were they located?
7. What does the term “Final Solution” mean and what is its origin?
8. When did the “Final Solution” actually begin?
9. How did the Germans define who was Jewish?
10. How did the Germans treat those who had some Jewish blood but were not classified as Jews?
11. What were the first measures taken by the Nazis against the Jews?
12. Did the Nazis plan to murder the Jews from the beginning of their regime?
13. When was the first concentration camp established and who were the first inmates?
14. Which groups of people in Germany were considered enemies of the state by the Nazis and were, therefore, persecuted?
15. What was the difference between the persecution of the Jews and the persecution of other groups classified by the Nazis as enemies of the Third Reich?
16. Why were the Jews singled out for extermination?
17. What did people in Germany know about the persecution of Jews and other enemies of Nazism?
18. Did all Germans support Hitler’s plan for the persecution of the Jews?

19. Did the people of occupied Europe know about Nazi plans for the Jews? What was their attitude? Did they cooperate with the Nazis against the Jews?
20. Did the Allies and the people in the Free World know about the events going on in Europe?
21. What was the response of the Allies to the persecution of the Jews? Could they have done anything to help?
22. Who are the “Righteous Among the Nations”?
23. Were Jews in the Free World aware of the persecution and destruction of European Jewry and, if so, what was their response?
24. Did the Jews in Europe realize what was going to happen to them?
25. How many Jews were able to escape from Europe prior to the Holocaust?
26. What efforts were made to save the Jews fleeing from Germany before World War II began?
27. Why were so few refugees able to flee Europe prior to the outbreak of World War II?
28. What was Hitler’s ultimate goal in launching World War II?
29. Was there any opposition to the Nazis within Germany?
30. Did the Jews try to fight against the Nazis? To what extent were such efforts successful?
31. What was the Judenrat?
32. Did international organizations, such as the Red Cross, aid victims of Nazi persecution?
33. How did Germany’s allies, the Japanese and the Italians, treat the Jews in the lands they occupied?
34. What was the attitude of the churches vis-a-vis the persecution of the Jews? Did the Pope ever speak out against the Nazis?
35. How many Nazi criminals were there? How many were brought to justice?
36. What were the Nuremberg Trials?

ANSWERS

1. When speaking about the “Holocaust,” what time period are we referring to?

The “Holocaust” refers to the period from January 30, 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, to May 8, 1945 (V-E Day), the end of the war in Europe.

2. How many Jews were murdered during the Holocaust?

While it is impossible to ascertain the exact number of Jewish victims, statistics indicate that the total was over 5,860,000. Six million is the round figure accepted by most authorities.

3. How many non-Jewish civilians were murdered during World War II?

While it is impossible to ascertain the exact number, the recognized figure is approximately 5,000,000. Among the groups which the Nazis and their collaborators murdered and persecuted were: Gypsies, Serbs, Polish intelligentsia, resistance fighters from all the nations, German opponents of Nazism, homosexuals, Jehovah’s Witnesses, habitual criminals, and the “anti-social,” e.g. beggars, vagrants, and hawkers.

4. Which Jewish communities suffered losses during the Holocaust?

Every Jewish community in occupied Europe suffered losses during the Holocaust. The Jewish communities in North Africa were persecuted, but the Jews in these countries were neither deported to the death camps, nor were they systematically murdered.

5. How many Jews were murdered in each country and what percentage of the pre-war Jewish population did they constitute?

Austria	50,000 – 27.0%
Italy	7,680 – 17.3%
Belgium	28,900 – 44.0%
Latvia	71,500 – 78.1%
Bohemia/Moravia	78,150 – 66.1%
Lithuania	143,000 – 85.1%
Bulgaria	0 – 0.0%
Luxembourg	1,950 – 55.7%
Denmark	60 – 0.7%
Netherlands	100,000 – 71.4%
Estonia	2,000 – 44.4%
Norway	762 – 44.8%
Finland	7 – 0.3%
Poland	3,000,000 – 90.9%
France	77,320 – 22.1%
Romania	287,000 – 47.1%
Germany	141,500 – 25.0%
Slovakia	71,000 – 79.8%
Greece	67,000 – 86.6%
Soviet Union	1,100,000 – 36.4%
Hungary	569,000 – 69.0%
Yugoslavia	63,300 – 81.2%

(Source: Encyclopedia of the Holocaust)

6. What is a death camp? How many were there? Where were they located?

A death (or mass murder) camp is a concentration camp with special apparatus specifically designed for systematic murder. Six such camps existed: Auschwitz–Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka. All were located in Poland.

7. What does the term “Final Solution” mean and what is its origin?

The term “Final Solution” (Endlösung) refers to Germany’s plan to murder all the Jews of Europe. The term was used at the Wannsee Conference (Berlin; January 20, 1942) where German officials discussed its implementation.

8. When did the “Final Solution” actually begin?

While thousands of Jews were murdered by the Nazis or died as a direct result of discriminatory measures instituted against Jews during the initial years of the Third Reich, the systematic murder of Jews did not begin until the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941.

9. How did the Germans define who was Jewish?

On November 14, 1935, the Nazis issued the following definition of a Jew: Anyone with three Jewish grandparents; someone with two Jewish grandparents who belonged to the Jewish community on September 15, 1935, or joined thereafter; was married to a Jew or Jewess on September 15, 1935, or married one thereafter; was the offspring of a marriage or extramarital liaison with a Jew on or after September 15, 1935.

10. How did the Germans treat those who had some Jewish blood but were not classified as Jews?

Those who were not classified as Jews but who had some Jewish blood were categorized as Mischlinge (hybrids) and were divided into two groups:

Mischlinge of the first degree—those with two Jewish grandparents;
Mischlinge of the second degree—those with one Jewish grandparent.

The Mischlinge were officially excluded from membership in the Nazi Party and all Party organizations (e.g. SA, SS, etc.). Although they were drafted into the Germany Army, they could not attain the rank of officers. They were also barred from the civil service and from certain professions. (Individual Mischlinge were, however, granted exemptions under certain circumstances.) Nazi officials considered plans to sterilize Mischlinge, but this was never done. During World War II, first-degree Mischlinge, incarcerated in concentration camps, were deported to death camps.

11. What were the first measures taken by the Nazis against the Jews?

The first measures against the Jews included:

April 1, 1933: A boycott of Jewish shops and businesses by the Nazis.

April 7, 1933: The law for the Re-establishment of the Civil Service expelled all non-Aryans (defined on April 11, 1933 as anyone with a Jewish parent or grandparent) from the civil

service. Initially, exceptions were made for those working since August 1914; German veterans of World War I; and, those who had lost a father or son fighting for Germany or her allies in World War I.

April 7, 1933: The law regarding admission to the legal profession prohibited the admission of lawyers of non-Aryan descent to the Bar. It also denied non-Aryan members of the Bar the right to practice law. (Exceptions were made in the cases noted above in the law regarding the civil service.) Similar laws were passed regarding Jewish law assessors, jurors, and commercial judges.

April 22, 1933: The decree regarding physicians' services with the national health plan denied reimbursement of expenses to those patients who consulted non-Aryan doctors. Jewish doctors who were war veterans or had suffered from the war were excluded.

April 25, 1933: The law against the overcrowding of German schools restricted Jewish enrolment in German high schools to 1.5% of the student body. In communities where they constituted more than 5% of the population, Jews were allowed to constitute up to 5% of the student body. Initially, exceptions were made in the case of children of Jewish war veterans, who were not considered part of the quota. In the framework of this law, a Jewish student was a child with two non-Aryan parents.

12. Did the Nazis plan to murder the Jews from the beginning of their regime?

This question is one of the most difficult to answer. While Hitler made several references to killing Jews, both in his early writings (*Mein Kampf*) and in various speeches during the 1930s, it is fairly certain that the Nazis had no operative plan for the systematic annihilation of the Jews before 1941. The decision on the systematic murder of the Jews was apparently made in the late winter or the early spring of 1941 in conjunction with the decision to invade the Soviet Union.

13. When was the first concentration camp established and who were the first inmates?

The first concentration camp, Dachau, opened on March 22, 1933. The camp's first inmates were primarily political prisoners (e.g. Communists or Social Democrats); habitual criminals; homosexuals; Jehovah's Witnesses; and "anti-socials" (beggars, vagrants, hawkers). Others considered problematic by the Nazis (e.g. Jewish writers and journalists, lawyers, unpopular industrialists, and political officials) were also included.

14. Which groups of people in Germany were considered enemies of the state by the Nazis and were, therefore, persecuted?

The following groups of individuals were considered enemies of the Third Reich and were, therefore, persecuted by the Nazi authorities: Jews, Gypsies, Social Democrats, other opposing politicians, opponents of Nazism, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, habitual criminals, and "anti-socials" (e.g. beggars, vagrants, hawkers), and the mentally ill. Any individual who was considered a threat to the Nazis was in danger of being persecuted.

15. What was the difference between the persecution of the Jews and the persecution of other groups classified by the Nazis as enemies of the Third Reich?

The Jews were the only group singled out for total systematic annihilation by the Nazis. To escape the death sentence imposed by the Nazis, the Jews could only leave Nazi-controlled Europe. Every single Jew was to be killed according to the Nazis' plan. In the case of other

criminals or enemies of the Third Reich, their families were usually not held accountable. Thus, if a person were executed or sent to a concentration camp, it did not mean that each member of his family would meet the same fate. Moreover, in most situations the Nazis' enemies were classified as such because of their actions or political affiliation (actions and/or opinions which could be revised). In the case of the Jews, it was because of their racial origin, which could never be changed.

16. Why were the Jews singled out for extermination?

The explanation of the Nazis' implacable hatred of the Jew rests on their distorted worldview which saw history as a racial struggle. They considered the Jews a race whose goal was world domination and who, therefore, were an obstruction to Aryan dominance. They believed that all of history was a fight between races which should culminate in the triumph of the superior Aryan race. Therefore, they considered it their duty to eliminate the Jews, whom they regarded as a threat. Moreover, in their eyes, the Jews' racial origin made them habitual criminals who could never be rehabilitated and were, therefore, hopelessly corrupt and inferior.

There is no doubt that other factors contributed toward Nazi hatred of the Jews and their distorted image of the Jewish people. These included the centuries-old tradition of Christian anti-Semitism which propagated a negative stereotype of the Jew as a Christ-killer, agent of the devil, and practitioner of witchcraft. Also significant was the political anti-Semitism of the latter half of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth centuries, which singled out the Jew as a threat to the established order of society. These combined to point to the Jew as a target for persecution and ultimate destruction by the Nazis.

17. What did people in Germany know about the persecution of Jews and other enemies of Nazism?

Certain initial aspects of Nazi persecution of Jews and other opponents were common knowledge in Germany. Thus, for example, everyone knew about the Boycott of April 1, 1933, the Laws of April, and the Nuremberg Laws, because they were fully publicized. Moreover, offenders were often publicly punished and shamed. The same holds true for subsequent anti-Jewish measures. Kristallnacht (The Night of the Broken Glass) was a public pogrom, carried out in full view of the entire population. While information on the concentration camps was not publicized, a great deal of information was available to the German public, and the treatment of the inmates was generally known, although exact details were not easily obtained.

As for the implementation of the "Final Solution" and the murder of other undesirable elements, the situation was different. The Nazis attempted to keep the murders a secret and, therefore, took precautionary measures to ensure that they would not be publicized. Their efforts, however, were only partially successful. Thus, for example, public protests by various clergymen led to the halt of their euthanasia program in August of 1941. These protests were obviously the result of the fact that many persons were aware that the Nazis were killing the mentally ill in special institutions.

As far as the Jews were concerned, it was common knowledge in Germany that they had disappeared after having been sent to the East. It was not exactly clear to large segments of the German population what had happened to them. On the other hand, there were thousands upon thousands of Germans who participated in and/or witnessed the implementation of the "Final Solution" either as members of the SS, the Einsatzgruppen, death camp or concentration camp guards, police in occupied Europe, or with the Wehrmacht.

18. Did all Germans support Hitler's plan for the persecution of the Jews?

Although the entire German population was not in agreement with Hitler's persecution of the Jews, there is no evidence of any large scale protest regarding their treatment. There were Germans who defied the April 1, 1933 boycott and purposely bought in Jewish stores, and there were those who aided Jews to escape and to hide, but their number was very small. Even some of those who opposed Hitler were in agreement with his anti-Jewish policies. Among the clergy, Dompropst Bernhard Lichtenberg of Berlin publicly prayed for the Jews daily and was, therefore, sent to a concentration camp by the Nazis. Other priests were deported for their failure to cooperate with Nazi anti-Semitic policies, but the majority of the clergy complied with the directives against German Jewry and did not openly protest.

19. Did the people of occupied Europe know about Nazi plans for the Jews? What was their attitude? Did they cooperate with the Nazis against the Jews?

The attitude of the local population vis-a-vis the persecution and destruction of the Jews varied from zealous collaboration with the Nazis to active assistance to Jews. Thus, it is difficult to make generalizations. The situation also varied from country to country. In Eastern Europe and especially in Poland, Russia, and the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania), there was much more knowledge of the "Final Solution" because it was implemented in those areas. Elsewhere, the local population had less information on the details of the "Final Solution."

In every country they occupied, with the exception of Denmark and Bulgaria, the Nazis found many locals who were willing to cooperate fully in the murder of the Jews. This was particularly true in Eastern Europe, where there was a long standing tradition of virulent anti-Semitism, and where various national groups, which had been under Soviet domination (Latvians, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians), fostered hopes that the Germans would restore their independence. In several countries in Europe, there were local fascist movements which allied themselves with the Nazis and participated in anti-Jewish actions; for example, the Iron Guard in Romania and the Arrow Guard in Slovakia. On the other hand, in every country in Europe, there were courageous individuals who risked their lives to save Jews. In several countries, there were groups which aided Jews, e.g. Joop Westerweel's group in the Netherlands, Zegota in Poland, and the Assisi underground in Italy.

20. Did the Allies and the people in the Free World know about the events going on in Europe?

The various steps taken by the Nazis prior to the "Final Solution" were all taken publicly and were, therefore, reported in the press. Foreign correspondents commented on all the major anti-Jewish actions taken by the Nazis in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia prior to World War II. Once the war began, obtaining information became more difficult, but reports, nonetheless, were published regarding the fate of the Jews. Thus, although the Nazis did not publicize the "Final Solution," less than one year after the systematic murder of the Jews was initiated, details began to filter out to the West. The first report which spoke of a plan for the mass murder of Jews was smuggled out of Poland by the Bund (a Jewish socialist political organization) and reached England in the spring of 1942. The details of this report reached the Allies from Vatican sources as well as from informants in Switzerland and the Polish underground. (Jan Karski, an emissary of the Polish underground, personally met with Franklin Roosevelt and British Foreign Minister Anthony Eden). Eventually, the American Government confirmed the reports to Jewish leaders in late November 1942. They were publicized immediately thereafter. While the details were neither complete nor wholly accurate, the Allies were aware of most of what the Germans had done to the Jews at a relatively early date.

21. What was the response of the Allies to the persecution of the Jews? Could they have done anything to help?

The response of the Allies to the persecution and destruction of European Jewry was inadequate. Only in January 1944 was an agency, the War Refugee Board, established for the express purpose of saving the victims of Nazi persecution. Prior to that date, little action was taken. On December 17, 1942, the Allies issued a condemnation of Nazi atrocities against the Jews, but this was the only such declaration made prior to 1944.

Moreover, no attempt was made to call upon the local population in Europe to refrain from assisting the Nazis in their systematic murder of the Jews. Even following the establishment of the War Refugee Board and the initiation of various rescue efforts, the Allies refused to bomb the death camp of Auschwitz and/or the railway lines leading to that camp, despite the fact that Allied bombers were at that time engaged in bombing factories very close to the camp and were well aware of its existence and function.

Other practical measures which were not taken concerned the refugee problem. Tens of thousands of Jews sought to enter the United States and Canada, but they were barred from doing so by the restrictive immigration policies

In 1938, thirty-two nations, including Canada, attended the Evian Conference to discuss the problem of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany, but refused further Jewish immigration. In 1939, a shipload of German Jewish refugees aboard the S.S. St. Louis, were refused sanctuary in Canada and forced to return to Europe. During the Holocaust, Canada admitted only about 5,000 Jews — one of the worst records of any of the refugee receiving countries.

22. Who are the “Righteous Among the Nations”?

“Righteous Among the Nations,” or “Righteous Gentiles,” refers to those non-Jews who aided Jews during the Holocaust. There were “Righteous Among the Nations” in every country overrun or allied with the Nazis, and their deeds often led to the rescue of Jewish lives. Yad Vashem, the Israeli national remembrance authority for the Holocaust, bestows special honors upon these individuals. To date, after carefully evaluating each case, Yad Vashem has recognized approximately 10,000 “Righteous Gentiles” in three different categories of recognition. The country with the most “Righteous Gentiles” is Poland. The country with the highest proportion (per capita) is the Netherlands. The figure of 10,000 is far from complete as many cases were never reported, frequently because those who were helped have died. Moreover, this figure only includes those who actually risked their lives to save Jews, and not those who merely extended aid.

23. Were Jews in the Free World aware of the persecution and destruction of European Jewry and, if so, what was their response?

The news of the persecution and destruction of European Jewry must be divided into two periods. The measures taken by the Nazis prior to the “Final Solution” were all taken publicly and were, therefore, in all the newspapers. Foreign correspondents reported on all major anti-Jewish actions taken by the Nazis in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia prior to World War II. Once the war began, obtaining information became more difficult, but, nonetheless, reports were published regarding the fate of the Jews.

The “Final Solution” was not openly publicized by the Nazis, and thus it took longer for information to reach the “Free World.” Nevertheless, by December 1942, news of the mass murders and the plan to annihilate European Jewry was publicized in the Jewish press.

The response of the Jews in the “Free World” must also be divided into two periods, before and after the publication of information on the “Final Solution.” Efforts during the early years of the Nazi regime concentrated on facilitating emigration from Germany (although there were those who initially opposed emigration as a solution) and combating German anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, the views on how to best achieve these goals differed and effective action was often hampered by the lack of internal unity. Moreover, very few Jewish leaders actually realized the scope of the danger. Following the publication of the news of the “Final Solution,” attempts were made to launch rescue attempts via neutral states and to send aid to Jews under Nazi rule. These attempts, which were far from adequate, were further hampered by the lack of assistance and obstruction from government channels. Additional attempts to achieve internal unity during this period failed.

24. Did the Jews in Europe realize what was going to happen to them?

Regarding the knowledge of the “Final Solution” by its potential victims, several key points must be kept in mind. First of all, the Nazis did not publicize the “Final Solution,” nor did they ever openly speak about it. Every attempt was made to fool the victims and, thereby, prevent or minimize resistance. Thus, deportees were always told that they were going to be “resettled.” They were led to believe that conditions “in the East” (where they were being sent) would be better than those in ghettos. Following arrival in certain concentration camps, the inmates were forced to write home about the wonderful conditions in their new place of residence. The Germans made every effort to ensure secrecy. In addition, the notion that human beings—let alone the civilized Germans—could build camps with special apparatus for mass murder seemed unbelievable in those days. Since German troops liberated the Jews from the Czar in World War I, Germans were regarded by many Jews as a liberal, civilized people. Escapees who did return to the ghetto frequently encountered disbelief when they related their experiences. Even Jews who had heard of the camps had difficulty believing reports of what the Germans were doing there. Inasmuch as each of the Jewish communities in Europe was almost completely isolated, there was a limited number of places with available information. Thus, there is no doubt that many European Jews were not aware of the “Final Solution,” a fact that has been corroborated by German documents and the testimonies of survivors.

25. How many Jews were able to escape from Europe prior to the Holocaust?

It is difficult to arrive at an exact figure for the number of Jews who were able to escape from Europe prior to World War II, since the available statistics are incomplete. From 1933–1939, 355,278 German and Austrian Jews left their homes. (Some immigrated to countries later overrun by the Nazis.) In the same period, 80,860 Polish Jews immigrated to Palestine and 51,747 European Jews arrived in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. During the years 1938–1939, approximately 35,000 emigrated from Bohemia and Moravia (Czechoslovakia). Shanghai, the only place in the world for which one did not need an entry visa, received approximately 20,000 European Jews (mostly of German origin) who fled their homelands. Immigration figures for countries of refuge during this period are not available. In addition, many countries did not provide a breakdown of immigration statistics according to ethnic groups. It is impossible, therefore, to ascertain.

26. What efforts were made to save the Jews fleeing from Germany before World War II began?

Various organizations attempted to facilitate the emigration of the Jews (and non-Jews persecuted as Jews) from Germany. Among the most active were the Jewish Agency for Palestine, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, HICEM, the Central British Fund for German Jewry, the Reichsvertretung der Deutschen Juden (Reich Representation of German Jews), which represented German Jewry, and other non-Jewish groups such as the League of Nations High Commission for Refugees (Jewish and other) coming from Germany, and the American Friends Service Committee. Among the programs launched were the “Transfer Agreement” between the Jewish Agency and the German government whereby immigrants to Palestine were allowed to transfer their funds to that country in conjunction with the import of German goods to Palestine. Other efforts focused on retraining prospective emigrants in order to increase the number of those eligible for visas, since some countries barred the entry of members of certain professions. Other groups attempted to help in various phases of refugee work: selection of candidates for emigration, transportation of refugees, aid in immigrant absorption, etc. Some groups attempted to facilitate increased emigration by enlisting the aid of governments and international organizations in seeking refugee havens. The League of Nations established an agency to aid refugees but its success was extremely limited due to a lack of political power and adequate funding.

The United States, Canada and Great Britain convened a conference in 1938 at Evian, France, seeking a solution to the refugee problem. With the exception of the Dominican Republic, the nations assembled refused to change their stringent immigration regulations, which were instrumental in preventing large-scale immigration.

In 1939, the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, which had been established at the Evian Conference, initiated negotiations with leading German officials in an attempt to arrange for the relocation of a significant portion of German Jewry. However, these talks failed. Efforts were made for the illegal entry of Jewish immigrants to Palestine as early as July 1934, but were later halted until July 1938. Large-scale efforts were resumed under the Mosad le-Aliya Bet, Revisionist Zionists, and private parties. Attempts were also made, with some success, to facilitate the illegal entry of refugees to various countries in Latin America.

27. Why were so few refugees able to flee Europe prior to the outbreak of World War II?

The key reason for the relatively low number of refugees leaving Europe prior to World War II was the stringent immigration policies adopted by the prospective host countries.

Canada’s immigration policies ranked immigrants according to their desirable characteristics and placed them in one of four classes. In the first class were British or Americans who were guaranteed entry into Canada. In the Preferred Class were immigrants from western and northern Europe, who were exempt from most restrictions. The Non-Preferred Class were those from eastern Europe and the Baltic States, who were admitted as farmers if they had sufficient money. The Special Permit Class was comprised of southern Europeans and Jews, who had to get special cabinet permission to immigrate. In 1923, immigration policies were tightened up to severely limit the admission of these non-preferred immigrants, especially Jews. Canada’s doors remained effectively closed to Jews until after the war.

Great Britain, while somewhat more liberal than Canada or the US on the entry of immigrants, took measures to severely limit Jewish immigration to Palestine. In May 1939, the British issued a “White Paper” stipulating that only 75,000 Jewish immigrants would be allowed to enter Palestine over the course of the next five years (10,000 a year, plus an additional 25,000). This decision prevented hundreds of thousands of Jews from escaping Europe.

The countries most able to accept large numbers of refugees consistently refused to open their gates. Although a solution to the refugee problem was the agenda of the Evian Conference, only the Dominican Republic was willing to approve large-scale immigration. The United States and Great Britain proposed resettlement havens in under-developed areas (e.g. Guyana, formerly British Guiana, and the Philippines), but these were not suitable alternatives.

Two important factors should be noted. During the period prior to the outbreak of World War II, the Germans were in favour of Jewish emigration. At that time, there were no operative plans to kill the Jews. The goal was to induce them to leave, if necessary, by the use of force. It is also important to recognize the attitude of German Jewry. While many German Jews were initially reluctant to emigrate, the majority sought to do so following Kristallnacht (The Night of Broken Glass), November 9-10, 1938. Had havens been available, more people would certainly have emigrated.

28. What was Hitler's ultimate goal in launching World War II?

Hitler's ultimate goal in launching World War II was the establishment of an Aryan empire from Germany to the Urals. He considered this area the natural territory of the German people, an area to which they were entitled by right, the Lebensraum (living space) that Germany needed so badly for its farmers to have enough soil. Hitler maintained that these areas were needed for the Aryan race to preserve itself and assure its dominance.

There is no question that Hitler knew that, by launching the war in the East, the Nazis would be forced to deal with serious racial problems in view of the composition of the population in the Eastern areas. Thus, the Nazis had detailed plans for the subjugation of the Slavs, who would be reduced to serfdom status and whose primary function would be to serve as a source of cheap labour for Aryan farmers. Those elements of the local population, who were of higher racial stock, would be taken to Germany where they would be raised as Aryans.

In Hitler's mind, the solution of the Jewish problem was also linked to the conquest of the eastern territories. These areas had large Jewish populations and they would have to be dealt with accordingly. While at this point there was still no operative plan for mass annihilation, it was clear to Hitler that some sort of comprehensive solution would have to be found. There was also talk of establishing a Jewish reservation either in Madagascar or near Lublin, Poland. When he made the decisive decision to invade the Soviet Union, Hitler also gave instructions to embark upon the "Final Solution," the systematic murder of European Jewry.

29. Was there any opposition to the Nazis within Germany?

Throughout the course of the Third Reich, there were different groups who opposed the Nazi regime and certain Nazi policies. They engaged in resistance at different times and with various methods, aims, and scope.

From the beginning, leftist political groups and a number of disappointed conservatives were in opposition; at a later date, church groups, government officials, students and businessmen also joined. After the tide of the war was reversed, elements within the military played an active role in opposing Hitler. At no point, however, was there a unified resistance movement within Germany.

30. Did the Jews try to fight against the Nazis? To what extent were such efforts successful?

Despite the difficult conditions to which Jews were subjected in Nazi-occupied Europe, many engaged in armed resistance against the Nazis. This resistance can be divided into three basic types of armed activities: ghetto revolts, resistance in concentration and death camps, and partisan warfare.

The Warsaw Ghetto revolt, which lasted for about five weeks beginning on April 19, 1943, is probably the best-known example of armed Jewish resistance, but there were many ghetto revolts in which Jews fought against the Nazis.

Despite the terrible conditions in the death, concentration, and labor camps, Jewish inmates fought against the Nazis at the following sites: Treblinka (August 2, 1943); Babi Yar (September 29, 1943); Sobibór (October 14, 1943); Janowska (November 19, 1943); and Auschwitz (October 7, 1944).

Jewish partisan units were active in many areas, including Baranovichi, Minsk, Naliboki forest, and Vilna. While the sum total of armed resistance efforts by Jews was not militarily overwhelming and did not play a significant role in the defeat of Nazi Germany, these acts of resistance did lead to the rescue of an undetermined number of Jews, Nazi casualties, and untold damage to German property and self-esteem.

31. What was the Judenrat?

The Judenrat was the council of Jews, appointed by the Nazis in each Jewish community or ghetto. According to the directive from Reinhard Heydrich of the SS on September 21, 1939, a Judenrat was to be established in every concentration of Jews in the occupied areas of Poland. They were led by noted community leaders. Enforcement of Nazi decrees affecting Jews and administration of the affairs of the Jewish community were the responsibilities of the Judenrat. These functions placed the Judenrat in a highly responsible, but controversial position, and many of their actions continue to be the subject of debate among historians. While the intentions of the heads of councils were rarely challenged, their tactics and methods have been questioned. Among the most controversial were Mordechai Rumkowski in Lodz and Jacob Gens in Vilna, both of whom justified the sacrifice of some Jews in order to save others. Leaders and members of the Judenrat were guided, for the most part, by a sense of communal responsibility, but lacked the power and the means to successfully thwart Nazi plans for annihilation of all Jews.

32. Did international organizations, such as the Red Cross, aid victims of Nazi persecution?

During the course of World War II, the International Red Cross (IRC) did very little to aid the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. Its activities can basically be divided into three periods:

1. September, 1939 - June 22, 1941:

The IRC confined its activities to sending food packages to those in distress in Nazi-occupied Europe. Packages were distributed in accordance with the directives of the German Red Cross. Throughout this time, the IRC complied with the German contention that those in ghettos and camps constituted a threat to the security of the Reich and, therefore, were not allowed to receive aid from the IRC.

2. June 22, 1941 – Summer 1944:

Despite numerous requests by Jewish organizations, the IRC refused to publicly protest the mass annihilation of Jews and non-Jews in the camps, or to intervene on their behalf. It maintained that any public action on behalf of those under Nazi rule would ultimately prove detrimental to their welfare. At the same time, the IRC attempted to send food parcels to those individuals whose addresses it possessed.

3. Summer 1944 – May 1945:

Following intervention by such prominent figures as President Franklin Roosevelt and the King of Sweden, the IRC appealed to Miklós Horthy, Regent of Hungary, to stop the deportation of Hungarian Jews.

The IRC did insist that it be allowed to visit concentration camps, and a delegation did visit the “model ghetto” of Terezin (Theresienstadt). The IRC request came following the receipt of information about the harsh living conditions in the camp.

The IRC requested permission to investigate the situation, but the Germans only agreed to allow the visit nine months after submission of the request. This delay provided time for the Nazis to complete a “beautification” program, designed to fool the delegation into thinking that conditions at Terezin were quite good and that inmates were allowed to live out their lives in relative tranquility.

The visit, which took place on July 23, 1944, was followed by a favorable report on Terezin to the members of the IRC which Jewish organizations protested vigorously, demanding that another delegation visit the camp. Such a visit was not permitted until shortly before the end of the war. In reality, the majority were subsequently deported to Auschwitz where they were murdered.

33. How did Germany’s allies, the Japanese and the Italians, treat the Jews in the lands they occupied?

Neither the Italians nor the Japanese, both of whom were Germany’s allies during World War II, cooperated regarding the “Final Solution.” Although the Italians did, upon German urging, institute discriminatory legislation against Italian Jews, Mussolini’s government refused to participate in the “Final Solution” and consistently refused to deport its Jewish residents. Moreover, in their occupied areas of France, Greece, and Yugoslavia, the Italians protected the Jews and did not allow them to be deported. However, when the Germans overthrew the Badoglio government in 1943, the Jews of Italy, as well as those under Italian protection in occupied areas, were subject to the “Final Solution.”

The Japanese were also relatively tolerant toward the Jews in their country as well as in the areas which they occupied. Despite pressure by their German allies urging them to take stringent measures against Jews, the Japanese refused to do so. Refugees were allowed to enter Japan until the spring of 1941, and Jews in Japanese-occupied China were treated well. In the summer and fall of 1941, refugees in Japan were transferred to Shanghai but no measures were taken against them until early 1943, when they were forced to move into the Hongkew Ghetto. While conditions were hardly satisfactory, they were far superior to those in the ghettos under German control.

34. What was the attitude of the churches vis-à-vis the persecution of the Jews? Did the Pope ever speak out against the Nazis?

The head of the Catholic Church at the time of the Nazi rise to power was Pope Pius XI. Although he stated that the myths of “race” and “blood” were contrary to Christian teaching (in a papal encyclical, March 1937), he neither mentioned nor criticized anti-Semitism. His successor, Pius XII (Cardinal Pacelli) was a Germanophile who maintained his neutrality throughout the course of World War II. Although as early as 1942 the Vatican received detailed information on the murder of Jews in concentration camps, the Pope confined his public statements to expressions of sympathy for the victims of injustice and to calls for a more humane conduct of the war.

Despite the lack of response by Pope Pius XII, several papal nuncios played an important role in rescue efforts, particularly the nuncios in Hungary, Romania, Slovakia, and Turkey. It is not clear to what, if any, extent they operated upon instructions from the Vatican. In Germany, the Catholic Church did not oppose the Nazis’ anti-Semitic campaign. Church records were supplied to state authorities which assisted in the detection of people of Jewish origin, and efforts to aid the persecuted were confined to Catholic non-Aryans. While Catholic clergymen protested the Nazi euthanasia program, few, with the exception of Bernhard Lichtenberg, spoke out against the murder of the Jews.

In Western Europe, Catholic clergy spoke out publicly against the persecution of the Jews and actively helped in the rescue of Jews. In Eastern Europe, however, the Catholic clergy was generally more reluctant to help. Dr. Jozef Tiso, the head of state of Slovakia and a Catholic priest, actively cooperated with the Germans as did many other Catholic priests.

The response of Protestant and Eastern Orthodox churches varied. In Germany, for example, Nazi supporters within Protestant churches complied with the anti-Jewish legislation and even excluded Christians of Jewish origin from membership. Pastor Martin Niemöller’s Confessing Church defended the rights of Christians of Jewish origin within the church, but did not publicly protest their persecution, nor did it condemn the measures taken against the Jews, with the exception of a memorandum sent to Hitler in May 1936.

In occupied Europe, the position of the Protestant churches varied. In several countries (Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and Norway) local churches and/or leading clergymen issued public protests when the Nazis began deporting Jews. In other countries (Bulgaria, Greece, and Yugoslavia), some Orthodox Church leaders intervened on behalf of the Jews and took steps which, in certain cases, led to the rescue of many Jews.

35. How many Nazi criminals were there? How many were brought to justice?

We do not know the exact number of Nazi criminals since the available documentation is incomplete. The Nazis themselves destroyed many incriminating documents and there are still many criminals who are unidentified and/or unindicted.

Those who committed war crimes include those individuals who initiated, planned and directed the killing operations, as well as those with whose knowledge, agreement, and passive participation the murder of European Jewry was carried out.

Those who actually implemented the “Final Solution” include the leaders of Nazi Germany, the heads of the Nazi Party, and the Reich Security Main Office. Also included are hundreds

of thousands of members of the Gestapo, the SS, the Einsatzgruppen, the police and the armed forces, as well as those bureaucrats who were involved in the persecution and destruction of European Jewry. In addition, there were thousands of individuals throughout occupied Europe who cooperated with the Nazis in killing Jews and other innocent civilians.

We do not have complete statistics on the number of criminals brought to justice, but the number is certainly far less than the total of those who were involved in the “Final Solution.” The leaders of the Third Reich, who were caught by the Allies, were tried by the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg from November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1946. Afterwards, the Allied occupation authorities continued to try Nazis, with the most significant trials held in the American zone (the Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings). In total, 5,025 Nazi criminals were convicted between 1945–1949 in the American, British and French zones, in addition to an unspecified number of people who were tried in the Soviet zone. In addition, the United Nations War Crimes Commission prepared lists of war criminals who were later tried by the judicial authorities of Allied countries and those countries under Nazi rule during the war. The latter countries have conducted a large number of trials regarding crimes committed in their lands. The Polish tribunals, for example, tried approximately 40,000 persons, and large numbers of criminals were tried in other countries. In all, about 80,000 Germans have been convicted for committing crimes against humanity, while the number of local collaborators is in the tens of thousands. Special mention should be made of Simon Wiesenthal, whose activities led to the capture of over one thousand Nazi criminals.

Courts in Germany began, in some cases, to function as early as 1945. By 1969, almost 80,000 Germans had been investigated and over 6,000 had been convicted. In 1958, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG; West Germany) established a special agency in Ludwigsburg to aid in the investigation of crimes committed by Germans outside Germany, an agency which, since its establishment, has been involved in hundreds of major investigations. One of the major problems regarding the trial of war criminals in the FRG (as well as in Austria) has been the fact that the sentences have been disproportionately lenient for the crimes committed. Some trials were also conducted in the former German Democratic Republic (GDR; East Germany), yet no statistics exist as to the number of those convicted or the extent of their sentences.

36. What were the Nuremberg trials?

The term “Nuremberg Trials” refers to two sets of trials of Nazi war criminals conducted after the war. The first trials were held November 20, 1945 to October 1, 1946, before the International Military Tribunal (IMT), which was made up of representatives of France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States. It consisted of the trials of the political, military and economic leaders of the Third Reich captured by the Allies. Among the defendants were: G”ring, Rosenberg, Streicher, Kaltenbrunner, Seyss-Inquart, Speer, Ribbentrop and Hess (many of the most prominent Nazis – Hitler, Himmler, and Goebbels – committed suicide and were not brought to trial). The second set of trials, known as the Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings, was conducted before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals (NMT), established by the Office of the United States Government for Germany (OMGUS). While the judges on the NMT were American citizens, the tribunal considered itself international. Twelve high-ranking officials were tried, among whom were cabinet ministers, diplomats, doctors involved in medical experiments, and SS officers involved in crimes in concentration camps or in genocide in Nazi-occupied areas.

TIMELINE OF THE HOLOCAUST & WWII

1933

JANUARY 30

Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany by President von Hindenburg.

FEBRUARY 27-28

The Reichstag Building is burnt down. Hitler persuades von Hindenburg to issue emergency decrees reducing freedom of speech and other rights.

MARCH 22

Dachau, the first concentration camp opens. Political opponents of the Nazi's detained.

APRIL 1

The first state-directed boycott of Jewish shops and businesses.

APRIL 7

First Nazi Laws excluding Jews from Civil Service, medical professions, and the Arts. Schools and universities are Aryanized. Jewish children are denied access to public education.

APRIL 26

Gestapo established.

MAY 10

Public burning of books written by Jews, political opponents of the Nazis and others.

JULY 14

Law permitting the forced sterilization of Gypsies, the mentally and physically disabled, African-Germans and others considered "unfit." East European Jewish immigrants stripped of German citizenship.

1934

AUGUST 2

Hitler proclaims himself Führer und Reichskanzler (Leader and Reich Chancellor). Armed Forces must now swear allegiance to him.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

First major wave of arrests of homosexual men in Nazi Germany.

1935

MARCH 17

Hitler's army invades the Rhine land.

APRIL

Jehovah's Witnesses banned from all civil service jobs and are arrested.

SEPTEMBER 15

"Nuremberg Laws," anti-Jewish racial laws enacted; Jews lose the right to German citizenship and to marry Aryans. Sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews forbidden. Aryan women under age 45 cannot work in Jewish homes.

1936

JULY 12

First German Gypsies are arrested and deported to Dachau Concentration Camp.

AUGUST 1-16

Olympic Games take place in Berlin. Anti-Jewish signs are temporarily removed.

1938

MARCH 12-13

Austria is peacefully annexed (Anschluss) by Germany. All anti-Semitic decrees immediately applied in Austria.

JULY 6-15

Representatives from thirty-two countries meet at the Evian Conference in France. Most countries refuse to let in more Jewish refugees.

NOVEMBER 9-10

Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass):

First state organized riot in Germany and Austria directed against Jews and Jewish businesses. Hundreds of synagogues destroyed; Jewish homes and shops looted; nearly 30,000 Jewish men sent to concentration camps. Jews were later forced to pay for the damages.

NOVEMBER 12

Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses into Aryan hands.

NOVEMBER 15

All Jewish pupils expelled from German schools.

DECEMBER 2-3

All Gypsies are required to register with the police.

1939**MARCH 15**

Germans invade Czechoslovakia.

JUNE

Cuba, the United States and Canada refuse to admit Jewish refugees aboard the S.S. St. Louis, which is forced to return to Europe.

AUGUST 23

Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed: non-aggression pact between Soviet Union and Germany.

SEPTEMBER 1

Germany invades Poland; World War II begins.

SEPTEMBER 10

Canada declares war on Germany.

OCTOBER

Hitler extends power of doctors to kill institutionalized mentally and physically disabled people in the "euthanasia" program.

OCTOBER 12

Germany begins deportation of Austrian and Czech Jews to Poland.

NOVEMBER 23

Jews in German-occupied Poland forced to wear an armband or yellow star.

1940**APRIL - JUNE**

Germany invades Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and France.

MAY 20

Auschwitz concentration camp established at Oswiecim, Poland.

JUNE 30

Lodz Ghetto sealed.

SEPTEMBER 27

Italy, Germany and Japan form an alliance called the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis.

OCTOBER

Warsaw Ghetto established: ultimately contains 500,000 people.

1941**MARCH 22**

Gypsy and African-German children are expelled from schools in the Reich.

MARCH 24

Germany invades North Africa.

APRIL 6

Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece.

JUNE 22

Germany invades the Soviet Union. The Einsatzgruppen, mobile killing squads, begin mass murders of Jews, Gypsies and Communist leaders.

JULY 31

Hermann Göring appoints Reinhard Heydrich to implement the "Final Solution."

SEPTEMBER 3

Soviet prisoners of war and Polish prisoners are killed in Nazi test of gas chambers in Auschwitz.

SEPTEMBER 29-30

Mobile killing squads, at Babi Yar near Kiev, Ukraine, murder approximately 34,000 Jews.

NOVEMBER 26

Establishment of Auschwitz II (Birkenau) for the extermination of Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Russians and others.

DECEMBER 7

Japan attacks Pearl Harbour.

DECEMBER 8

Gassing begins at Chelmno extermination camp in Poland.

DECEMBER 11

Germany and Italy declare war on the United States.

1942

JANUARY 20

Wannsee conference in Berlin; Nazi leaders meet to discuss “the Final Solution,” the plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

SPRING

Nazi extermination camps at Auschwitz–Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec and Majdanek–Lublin begin the mass murder of Jews in gas chambers.

JUNE

Jewish partisan units established in the forests of Belorussia and the Baltic States.

Jews in France and Holland are required to wear identifying stars.

1943

APRIL 19 - MAY 16

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising ranging from Jewish armed resistance to deportation.

JUNE 21

Heinrich Himmler orders the liquidation of all ghettos in Poland and the Soviet Union.

SUMMER

Armed resistance by Jews in Treblinka concentration camp, Bedzin, Bialystok, Czestochowa, Lvov and Tarnów ghettos.

OCTOBER 14

Armed revolt in Sobibor extermination camp.

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER

Rescue of Danish Jewry to Sweden.

1944

MARCH 19

Germany occupies Hungary; Adolf Eichmann put in charge of plan to eliminate Hungarian Jewry.

MAY 15 - JULY 9

Over 430,000 Hungarian Jews are deported to Auschwitz–Birkenau, where most of them are gassed.

JUNE 6

D-Day: Allied invasion at Normandy, France.

JULY 23

Russians liberate Majdanek concentration camp.

JULY 31

The Gypsy camp at Auschwitz–Birkenau was liquidated; approximately 3,000 men, women and children are gassed.

OCTOBER 6

Prisoners revolt at Auschwitz–Birkenau and blow up one crematorium.

1945

JANUARY 17

Nazis evacuate Auschwitz and force prisoners on “death marches” toward Germany.

JANUARY 27

Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz–Birkenau.

APRIL

U.S. troops liberate Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps.

APRIL 30

Hitler commits suicide in his bunker in Berlin.

MAY 5

U.S. troops liberate Mauthausen concentration camp.

MAY 8

Germany surrenders, the war ends in Europe.

AUGUST 6 AND 9

The U.S. bombs Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

SEPTEMBER 2

Japan surrenders, end of World War II.

NOVEMBER 1945 - OCTOBER 1946

International Military War Crimes Tribunal held at Nuremberg, Germany.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ANTI-SEMITISM

A form of racism, related to the discrimination or persecution of Jews. The term came into widespread use in the 1870's.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

First established as a Nazi concentration camp in 1940 at Oswiecim, Poland primarily for Polish prisoners. In 1942 it was expanded to include the extermination camp—Birkenau (Auschwitz II) and the labour camp—Buna-Monowitz (Auschwitz III). Surrounded by numerous sub camps, it grew to become the largest of all the Nazi concentration camps. Approximately 1.1 to 1.6 million Jews and 100,000 other victims were murdered or died at Auschwitz. At liberation, only 7600 prisoners—those not forced on death marches—were found alive.

BUCHENWALD

One of the first concentration camps established by the Nazis in July 1937 near Weimar in central Germany. The first inmates were Communists and Jews. Following Kristallnacht in 1938, 10,000 Jewish men were imprisoned there. Dora-Nordhausen and Ohrdruf were two sub-camps of Buchenwald. Approximately 43,000 people perished there before American forces liberated it in April 1945.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The Nazis established prison camps shortly after assuming power in 1933 to hold and isolate political opponents and those considered to be “racially” undesirable such as Jews and Gypsies. Most of the approximately 1800 camps were transit or labour camps. The first were Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen. After the occupation of Poland, extermination camps were established for mass murder at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, Chelmno and Majdanek.

CREMATORIUM / CREMATORIA

Building at concentration camps that housed the ovens that burned murdered inmates.

DEATH MARCH

In retreating from Allied soldiers at the end of the war, Nazis forced large numbers of prisoners to march long distances under heavy guard and under intolerable conditions. Approximately a quarter of a million prisoners were murdered or otherwise died on these marches between the summer of 1944 and the end of the war.

DEPORTATION

Part of the Nazi program to remove Jews from Germany, increasing the living space for ethnic Germans. Initially an effort to rid German-held land of Jews, deportation eventually became a means to deliver Jews to concentration camps and implement the Final Solution.

DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPS

Facilities established in Germany, France, Italy and Belgium, some located in former concentration camps, where stateless Jews were housed. Some refugees remained in these camps for several years while they waited for permission to immigrate.

FINAL SOLUTION

The Nazi code name for the plan to exterminate the Jews of Europe. Intended as a resolution to what the Nazis called the “Jewish Question.” The plan was formalized at the Wannsee Conference, held in a suburb of Berlin in January 1942.

GAS CHAMBER

Sealed rooms in extermination camps and some concentration camps, often masked to look like shower or delousing facilities. Prisoners were crowded into the chambers where poison gas or carbon monoxide was released. Zyklon B was used at Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek. Most of the other killing centres used carbon monoxide. After gassing victims' bodies were cremated or buried in mass graves.

GESTAPO

From the German Geheime Staatspolizei or secret state police during the Nazi period. A branch of the SS, a quasi-military unit of the Nazi party, which dealt with political opponents by using terror and arbitrary arrest. Adolf Eichmann was in charge of the section of the Gestapo charged with implementing the “Final Solution” the deportation and mass murder of European Jews.

GHETTO

The Nazis used the medieval term ghetto to describe the compulsory “Jewish Quarters” often in the poorest section of the city, where Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to live. Surrounded by barbed wire or walls, the ghettos were sealed before the deportation of Jews to the concentration camps. Established mostly in Eastern Europe, the ghettos were characterized by overcrowding, starvation and forced labour.

HITLER, ADOLF (1889-1945)

Founder of the German Nazi party and its leader from 1919 until 1945. Hitler became Chancellor of the Third Reich from 1933–45. He outlined his plans for territorial conquest and expressed his hatred for Jews in his autobiography *MEIN KAMPF* written in 1923. On January 30, 1942 Hitler set in motion the destruction and murder of six million Jews. He committed suicide in an underground bunker in Berlin on April 30, 1945.

HOLOCAUST

The mass murder of nearly six million European Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. Many individuals and groups were persecuted and suffered during the Holocaust, but only the Jews were targeted for total “extermination.” The term literally means a burnt sacrifice, or sacred burning. The biblical word “Shoah,” meaning catastrophe, is the Hebrew equivalent.

KRISTALLNACHT

The “Night of Broken Glass,” the Nazis orchestrated attack against Jewish people, their businesses and synagogues in Germany and Austria, which took place of November 9, 1938 in Germany, and Austria. Hundreds of synagogues were burned, thousands of Jewish businesses were destroyed and 30,000 Jews were rounded-up and taken to concentration camps. The event marked an escalation in the Nazi persecution of Jews.

LIBERATORS

American, British, Canadian and Soviet troops who entered the concentration camps at the end of the war.

NAZI

A member of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) founded in 1919 and brought to power in 1933 under Adolf Hitler.

NAZISM

The ideology of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party and the party’s system of rule from 1933 to 1945. Also a form of fascism. The ideology opposed liberalism, parliamentary democracy, communism and socialism.

NUREMBERG LAWS

Anti-Jewish legislation announced during a Nazi party rally in Nuremberg, Germany on September 15, 1935. The first of a long series of decrees stripped Jews of their German citizenship, defined a Jew based on the number of Jewish grandparents he/she had, prohibited marriages and sexual relations between Jews and Germans, prohibited the hiring of German maids under the age of forty-five by Jews, and forbid Jews to raise the German flag.

REFUGEE

Someone who flees their country of origin because of a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a social or political group.

RESISTANCE

Opposition to Nazi occupation. Jewish resistance took many forms. Armed resistance occurred in ghettos—the most famous was the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising—but there were also concentration camp uprisings. Resistance also took place in forests and rural areas where Jews formed partisan units. Jews joined underground movements in the countries where they lived and practiced spiritual resistance. They prayed, observed holidays, organized cultural events and children’s classes in the ghettos and to a lesser degree, in the concentration camps.

SELECTION

The process of choosing those victims to be killed in the concentration camps. These “selections” targeted women, children, the elderly and those physically unfit for slave labour. Medical personnel often carried out the selections.

SS

Abbreviation for Schutzstaffel (Defence Protective Units), usually written with two lightning symbols. Initially established as Hitler’s personal bodyguard, the SS was transformed into a terrorist organization by Heinrich Himmler. The organization is best known for its role in the destruction of European Jewry.

SWASTIKA

Symbol of the Nazi party. A cross with equal arms each of which is bent at a right angle. It appeared on Nazi uniforms and flags.

WORLD WAR II

A war fought from 1939 to 1945, in which Great Britain, France, the Soviet Union, the United States, China, and other allies defeated Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Japan. After Germany invaded Poland in September 1939 Britain declared war against Germany. Canada entered the war shortly after. The United States entered the war after the bombing of Pearl Harbour in December 1941. The war ended with the surrender of Germany in May 1945 and the surrender of Japan in August 1945.

YELLOW STAR OF DAVID

Symbol adopted by the Nazis as a way to identify Jews. Polish Jews were the first required to wear the yellow star on the outside of their clothing in 1939, later the Jews of Russia, Germany and other Nazi-occupied countries in Europe were also identified through this cloth badge.

RESPONDING TO GENOCIDE TODAY

The VHEC's Holocaust based anti-racism educational programming is dedicated to teach and motivate successive generations to recognize and respond to prejudice and hatred. Learning about the history of the Holocaust will inspire many students to respond to injustices that they encounter in the present day.

There are a number of excellent websites that provide information and guidance for student activism in response to human rights abuses and genocide, a selection of which is included below. Students should be encouraged to consult a variety of news sources.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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

ANTI-DEFAMATION LEAGUE

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

GENOCIDE WATCH

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

GENOCIDE IN DARFUR

<http://www.genocideindarfur.net/>

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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

STAND CANADA - STUDENTS TAKING ACTION NOW: DARFUR

<http://www.standcanada.org>

SAVE DARFUR CANADA

<http://www.savedarfurcanada.org>

THE UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM'S COMMITTEE ON CONSCIENCE

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

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

SELECTED WEBSITES

THE CYBRARY OF THE HOLOCAUST

<http://remember.org/>

Includes online exhibits, teaching resources and comprehensive bibliographies.

HOLOCAUST TEACHER RESOURCE CENTER

<http://www.Holocaust-trc.org>

A good source of Holocaust-related lesson plans, essays and bibliographies.

THE NIZKOR PROJECT

www.nizkor.org

Major archive for documents related to the Holocaust and Holocaust denial.

OPEN HEARTS - CLOSED DOORS: THE WAR ORPHANS PROJECT

<http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/Exhibitions/orphans/english/>

This multimedia teaching exhibit chronicles the lives of war orphans as they emerged from the events of the Holocaust into displaced person camps and eventually to new lives in Canada.

SIMON WIESENTHAL MUSEUM OF TOLERANCE

<http://www.museumoftolerance.com>

The online Teachers' Guide provides a useful glossary, lesson plans and resources.

UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

<http://www.ushmm.org>

The USHMM is America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history.

USHMM HOLOCAUST ENCYCLOPAEDIA

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

A useful thematic and multimedia overview of the Holocaust.

USHMM: A LEARNING SITE FOR STUDENTS

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

Organized by theme, this site uses text, historical photographs, maps, images of artefacts, and audio clips to provide an overview of the Holocaust.

VANCOUVER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION CENTRE

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

This website offers up-to-date information about the VHEC's mandate, exhibits, school programs, teaching resources, outreach speakers, professional development activities for teachers, public programs and more.

YAD VASHEM: THE HOLOCAUST MARTYRS' & HEROES' REMEMBRANCE AUTHORITY, ISRAEL

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

This website offers teaching resources, survivor testimonies, online exhibits and museum information.

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MEMOIRS AVAILABLE AT THE VHEC BOOKSTORE

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CYBRARY OF THE HOLOCAUST

<http://www.remember.org/educate/>

NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

<http://www.atsweb.neu.edu/holocaust/bib.htm>

YAD VASHEM

http://www1.yadvashem.org/about_holocaust/bibliography/home_bibliography.html

