

## **THE HOLOCAUST**

Why is the Holocaust a central experience of our civilisation? Is it because what happened once could happen again? Is it because modern technology has helped to uncover hidden and frightening recesses of man's potential for evil? Is it because we have seen how people become enmeshed in a bureaucratic hell which leads them into the negation of first themselves and then of others? Is it because we see in the Holocaust the heights of the human spirit as well as its abysses. Is it because some of us ask where was God, and others ask where was Man?

It is these and similar questions that cause more and more people to devote their attention to the Holocaust, the mass murder of the Jewish people during the Nazi period.

(Yehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective*, Sheldon Press 1978)

### **LEARNING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST**

Fifty years ago the death camps of the Nazi regime were liberated by the Allied forces in their advance across Europe. The horrors which greeted the liberating soldiers, although they have now passed into the collective consciousness of our modern media, yet for the liberating soldiers almost defied belief. That a supposedly civilised nation could perpetrate such horrors seemed unbelievable.



## **INTRODUCTION**

In 1945 when the death camps of the Nazi regime were liberated by the Allied armies, the soldiers who first arrived in the camps had no idea of what they would find. They probably thought that the camps were normal prison camps containing normal prisoners. One finds it difficult to imagine the horror and repulsion that they felt on discovering the atrocities that had been carried out.

The Pianist presents only one incident in the history of the Holocaust. Wladyslaw Szpilman's story is only one of many stories which re-present the experiences of Jews during the Second World War. Thousands of ordinary men, women, children such as those we see in The Pianist were each day brought to the death camps such as Auschwitz Birkenau, usually by railway from many hundreds of miles away, made to undress and lined up to be gassed in specially constructed gas chambers.

It was not only Jews who were killed in this way - gypsies, prisoners of war, homosexuals, people who were mentally ill - all of these did not fit in with Hitler's idea of a master race and so were brutally or clinically put to death.

The key point to remember is that it was only the Jewish race which was selected by Hitler for total extermination. Until Hitler there had been no attempt at the total extermination of Jews in Europe.

Raul Hilberg, an historian, has described the treatment of Jews as follows:

'Since the fourth century after Christ there have been three anti-Jewish policies: conversion, expulsion and annihilation. The second appeared as an alternative to the first, and the third emerged as an alternative to the second.'

But why should this hatred of the Jews have been in existence for so long? Since before the birth of Christ, Jews have been either admired or hated. Why should one religious group have been so selected for hatred and finally, for brutal extermination?

What was it that led the Nazis to attempt to exterminate every Jew in Europe? How did they manage to murder 6 million Jews and millions of others without anyone objecting?

The work that you will be doing in this guide will fill out the details of the movement towards the Holocaust within Germany and what were to become the occupied territories during the Second World War.



## **THE LONGEST HATRED**

In an attempt to answer many questions about the Holocaust we need to look back long before the Nazis ever came to power in Germany. Historically, the Jews have often been seen as outsiders, blamed, like many minority groups, for the ills of society.

### **WEIMAR GERMANY AND THE GROWTH OF NAZISM 1919-1933**

Weimar Germany provided a brief period of relative freedom and prosperity during which many Jews gained prominent positions throughout German society.

However, the seeds of racial antisemitism, sown in German politics and society during the 1870s and 1880s, now began to germinate. Antisemitism was a term coined by the German journalist Wilhelm Marr, who in 1878 created the League of Antisemites. Antisemites saw the Jews as an alien race who could never be part of German society; they believed their loyalties were to collective Jewry. Ironically, the newly emancipated Jews of western Europe saw themselves as loyal citizens of the countries in which they lived. Their difference was religious and not racial.

### **TASK**

#### **THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES**

In order to discover some of the reasons for the rise to power of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, you should try to find out as much as you can about the following:

- a) The Treaty of Versailles - what were the terms of the Treaty at the end of the First World War which so enraged the German people?
- b) The Great inflation of 1919-1923 - in what ways did this set the scene for Hitler and his ideas to start to gain some acceptance?
- c) The Weimar Republic - in what ways did the liberal ideas of the Weimar Republic set up the backlash against the Jews which was to follow in the 1930s?



## **THE RISE TO POWER OF ADOLF HITLER**

Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) was born on the Austrian side of the Hungarian border. He had a poor school record, and then unsuccessfully attempted to become an artist. With the outbreak of the First World War, he joined the army and served as a corporal. He emerged convinced of the virtues of war.

Following the defeat of Germany, Hitler joined the embryonic National Socialist 'Nazi' Party, and he assumed its leadership in 1921. He built up around him a group who later became leaders: Rudolph Hess, Hermann Göring and Julius Streicher. Encouraged by their rapid success the Nazis attempted a putsch, or revolution, in 1923. Supported by Ludendorff, one of Germany's outstanding wartime leaders, Hitler attempted to seize power in Munich and to proclaim a national revolution. The putsch collapsed, but Hitler was given only the minimum sentence for high treason, five years, and Ludendorff was acquitted.

Hitler served a mere nine months of his sentence, during which he wrote the first volume of *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle). In this, he set out quite clearly the political ideas. Most of these ideas can be traced to the ideologies of Pan-Germanism and antisemitism of Schinerer and Lager. They can be summarised as follows:

- ~ The inequality of races is inevitable, and the Aryan race is the chief creative element of mankind.
- ~ Mankind's natural unit is the Volk, or people, of which the German Volk is the greatest.
- ~ The state only exists to serve the Volk, and both morality and truth are to be subservient to this principle.
- ~ The Volk must be headed by a Führer, or leader, who must have absolute authority.

### **TASK**

- What do the ideas in *Mein Kampf* convey - who are they directed against?

Hitler soon discovered the general appeal of a practical political programme which proposed certain specific anti-Jewish measures. The intellectual basis for the political movement was spelt out by Hitler in a letter written in September 1919, his earliest recorded statement:

'Antisemitism as a political movement neither can nor should be based on fleeting emotions, but on the acceptance of fact. And the fact is that Judaism is a matter of race and not religion ... reasonable antisemitism ... must lead to a systematic and lawful campaign for the removal of those privileges which the Jew enjoys, unlike other foreigners in our midst who are subject to the law applying to aliens. The final aim of such antisemitism must be unquestionably the removal of the Jews.'



## **THE COLLAPSE OF WEIMAR DEMOCRACY**

The 'National Socialist German Worker's Party', abbreviated to 'Nazi', was originally targeted at the urban working and lower middle classes - to wean the industrial and working population away from 'international communism' and to instil into it a national form of socialism. Measures designed to appeal appeared in the Nazi Party's twenty-five-point programme of 1920.

However, by 1928 the Nazi Party was virtually extinct as an electoral force, and polled 2.8 per cent of the vote. The prosperity years of 1924-8 almost delivered a fatal blow.

### **TASK**

- Why should a period of prosperity have so damaged support for the Nazi Party?

It was during the 1928 election that the party experienced a dramatic rise in its vote in Schleswig-Holstein, where it polled 18 per cent of the regional vote among the farming population. This change of policy - from working-class urban groups to agricultural ones - produced Hitler's dramatic rise in support in the September 1930 election. The agricultural depression that lasted most of the 1920s coupled with the virtual collapse of the economy of the industrialised world following the Wall Street Crash of 1929 led to the industrial depression of 1929-33.

The Nazi Party's success led also to the collapse of the urban middle-class parties - the German Democratic Party (Germany's only real liberal middle-class party) and the German People's Party. The Nazi Party appealed to white-collar workers, shopkeepers and students - all of whom represented the 'new middle classes in the towns' - a perfect ally for the 'old middle classes of the countryside'. There is no doubt that the rise of the Communist vote played into the hands of the Nazi Party. The depression caused unemployment to rise to 6 million during 1932-3 and helped create a crisis of polarisation in German society between left and right. This was substantially aided by the fragmentation of the Left.

### **TASK**

- Why did the Left wing parties collapse and why do you think that the electoral successes of the Communists was of ultimate benefit to the Nazi Party?

Hitler's appointment as Chancellor in January 1933, in coalition with the Nationalists, was intended to make possible the use of government media, police and electoral supervision. On February 27 1933 the Reichstag (parliament building) burnt down. The Nazis blamed the



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A ROMAN POLANSKI FILM



Communists and it was certainly a factor in the March 1933 election where they polled 43.7 per cent - their highest vote.

By July 1933, emergency presidential decrees, issued under the pretence of national security, enabled the Nazi Party to outlaw other political parties and make Germany a one-party state. Hindenburg, the President and last vestige of the Imperial Reich, died in August 1934, whereupon Hitler became **Führer** and Chancellor of the Third Reich.

## TASK

What was the significance for Hitler of Hindenburg being President and subsequently his death?



## **NAZI POLICY TOWARDS THE JEWS 1933-1945**

1. Exclusion and Emigration (1933-1941)
2. Ghettoisation, Concentration and Extermination (1939-1945)

\* \* It should be noted - and this has been the cause of much confusion and misunderstanding - that these two phases overlap \* \*

### **I. 1933-1941: EXCLUSION AND EMIGRATION**

Attempts to popularise this programme included the involvement of the general population in acts of boycott, violence and intimidation, or in burning and looting of Jewish property and synagogues. The exclusion policy was carried out by force of law, and led to the emigration of over 400,000 German and Austrian Jews by 1941.

#### **ANTI-JEWISH MEASURES**

Between 1933 and 1935, many laws were passed excluding the Jews from society. The comprehensive anti-Jewish Nuremberg Laws were introduced in September 1935.

#### **TASK**

Why were the Nuremberg Laws seen to be such a major turning point?

#### **LEGAL DEFINITIONS**

Aryanisation of the Legal System and Economy 1935-8:

Over the next three years the Nuremberg Laws were augmented, and by 1938 Jews lacked any kind of legal standing and were completely under the power of the Security Police (SS).

In 1937 a policy of Aryanisation of businesses began, whereby Jewish assets were 'transferred' to Aryans. By the beginning of 1938 only about one-third of Germany's 600,000 Jews had left. Most Jews had become attached to Germany and German culture and found it easy to convince themselves that the situation was only temporary. In addition, it was difficult for Jews to find new homes, since the Evian Conference of 1938 failed to persuade countries to open their doors. Thus 1938 saw some 400,000 Jews still in Germany.



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## TASK

Find out as much as you can about the Evian Conference and the responses of the other European nations.

## 1938

The invasion of Austria in March brought a further 190,000 Jews into the German Reich, all of whom were now subjected to the same legal and social discrimination as those already in Germany. Legal measures against the Jews were still further developed, so that from July, Jewish lawyers could no longer practice; while in August all Jewish men were forced to adopt the additional name of Israel, and Jewish women that of Sarah.

This period also saw an increasing number of Jews being taken to concentration camps. At the end of October some 15,000 Polish-born Jews were transferred to the Polish border since they were at first refused entry into Poland. Among them was a couple called Grynzspan. Their young son Herschl was living in Paris, heard what had happened to his parents, and shot the Third Secretary at the German Embassy in Paris. The Nazis used the assassination as a pretext to implement a well-prepared plan to carry out a nationwide programme. On the night of 9 November, hundreds of Jews were murdered and many more severely beaten. Over 7,500 Jewish businesses were destroyed and some 300 synagogues burned down. Broken glass from the synagogue windows gave the programme the name Kristallnacht.

Over 26,000 of the most prominent Jews were taken to concentration camps, and a penal 'contribution' of one billion marks was imposed on the Jewish Community. New regulations were introduced expelling Jews from all business, academic or cultural activities.

Although some Jews were deported to concentration camps, Nazi policy continued to aim to put pressure on Jews to emigrate. Emigration was finally prohibited on 31 October 1941: between the outbreak of war in September 1939 until that date more than 150,000 Jews from Germany, and 30,000 from Austria emigrated. The prohibition came in the wake of German military successes in Eastern Europe in the summer of 1941, that brought millions more Jews under Nazi control. The slaughtering of whole Jewish communities, which began in occupied Russia after the invasion of June 1941, suggested a new approach to the Nazis' Jewish problem, to be called the Final Solution of the Jewish Question.



## **II. GHETTOISATION, CONCENTRATION AND EXTERMINATION (1939-1945)**

### **GHETTOISATION - 1939-1941**

The invasion of Poland in September 1939, which began World War Two, brought some 2 million Jews under Nazi control. In October 1939 all Jews in Poland were obliged to wear a white armband with a blue Star of David, and in November to form ghettos under the control of Jewish Councils (each known as a Judenrat) and led by 'Elders'. Ghettos were established in major cities by mid-1941 and were responsible for carrying out all orders given them by the SS. From October 1941, German Jews were transported to ghettos in Poland. Ghettos had different experiences: in Warsaw there was a policy of reduction through starvation - tens of thousands were killed before deportations started; in Lodz, under Chaim Rumkowski, the Judenrat succeeded in convincing the SS of the economic importance of Jewish textile industries within the ghetto, and it managed to survive until mid-1944.

The Economic and Administration Main Office of the SS had considerable industrial interests in Eastern Europe, and used Jewish labour, skills and equipment. Auschwitz for example, was an extermination camp (at Birkenau) for Jews, a general concentration camp (Auschwitz I), and industrial complex (Buna - Auschwitz III) for the production of synthetic rubber, and a prisoner of war camp.

The total Jewish population killed in Ghettoisation was approximately 800,000.

### **TASK**

What was the purpose of Ghettoisation?



## **THE DECISION TO EXTERMINATE**

Seven key decisions led progressively to the Final Solution:

### **March 1941**

Special Mobile Killing Squads known as Einsatzgruppen from the SS RSMO would operate in the rear of the forward line with the aim of killing all potential partisan fighters (mainly Communist, Jews and commissars).

### **July 1941**

The SS RSMO was empowered to be responsible for overall control, and for co-ordinating railways, finance and foreign office and police departments.

### **Summer 1941**

Himmler (Reichsführer SS) instructs Rudolf Hess to prepare Auschwitz as a death camp.

### **September 1941**

The Euthanasia Programme at five special German institutes is halted after the death of some 90,000 elderly and handicapped people by gas (10 per cent were Jewish).

### **August 1941**

The first experiments were made on Soviet prisoners-of-war with Zyklon B (Hydrogen Cyanide) - an industrial cleansing and fumigation agent usually used to remove infestations.

### **October 1941**

The first deportations of German Jews to Riga and Kovno take place, where they are ghettoised or shot.

### **January 1942**

The Wannsee Conference for the Final Solution of the Jewish Question (see document) held in Berlin, assents to SS supremacy in the implementation of Holocaust policy, and bring other government departments into agreement as their roles as participants. The minutes of the meeting stated:



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## TASK

Look at the minutes below and assess the language and presentation.

'In view of the dangers of emigration in time of war and in view of the possibilities in the East, the Reichsführer SS and Chief of the German Police (Himmler) has forbidden the emigration of Jews. In lieu of emigration, the evacuation of the Jews to the East has emerged, after an appropriate prior authorisation by the Führer, as a further solution possibility.

In the course of the final solution, the Jews should be brought under appropriate direction in a suitable manner to the East for labour utilisation. Separated by sex, the Jews capable of work will be led into these areas in large labour columns to build roads whereby doubtless a large part will fall away through natural reduction. The residual final remainder which doubtless constitutes the toughest element, will have to be dealt with appropriately, since it represents a natural selection which upon liberation was to be regarded as a germ cell of a new Jewish development (see the lessons of history).'

\* \* By March - July 1942 all the major death factories were ready \* \*



## **EXTERMINATION STRATEGY**

The Final Solution therefore took three main forms:

- Ghettoisation and forced labour, which would reduce the majority by starvation, disease and overwork
- Mobile killing operations in Russia
- Deportation and extermination in Polish death camps

### **MOBILE KILLING OPERATIONS IN RUSSIA (JUNE 1941 - DECEMBER 1942)**

Mobile killing took place as part of Operation Barbarossa - Germany's attack on Russia - in the form of two sweeps, from the Baltic down to the Ukraine.

The Action Groups were divided into four - A, B, C and D - and operated just behind the advancing troops. Immediately after entering a town or village, the commander of the Action Group would send for the rabbi and demand that his community should assemble for despatch to a Jewish region. Jews generally obeyed such orders since nothing but good German propaganda had been allowed to reach them since the Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement of 1939. The Germans had also inherited a good reputation from the First World War in their dealings with the Eastern European Jewish population.

### **TASK**

Find out as much as you can about the Molotov-Ribbentrop Agreement and its significance in terms of the perceptions that the Russian people had of Germany.

When the Jewish community had assembled, the Action Group, with the help of local militia, would usually transport the Jews by truck to a nearby ravine or wood where they would be forced to dig a trench. The whole population would then be machine-gunned.

At Babi Yar, outside the Ukrainian city of Kiev, it is estimated that upwards of 50,000 Jews were killed in one or two days.

The figures issued by Action Group A stationed in Lithuania under the heading 'Executions up to 1st February 1942'.

Communists 1064, commissars 56, mentally unsound 653, Poles 44, Russian prisoners-of-war 28, Gypsies 5, Armenians 1, Jews 136,421.

From such figures, often recorded systematically, it can be calculated that over 1,300,000 Jews were murdered within 18 months of the invasion of Russia.



Help was generously forthcoming from the local population, for the four Action Groups never exceeded between 500 and 1000 men each. Again, although the Action Groups were part of the SS, they often had to work in conjunction with the Army. Whatever the individual soldier's reservations about the killings may have been, his duty was clear, from such instructions as the Order of the Day issued by Field Marshall Von Reichenau on 10 October 1941:

'In the Eastern Territories the soldier is not merely a warrior fighting according to the rules of the art of war, but also the merciless bearer of a national ideology. Therefore the soldier must comprehend the necessity of cruel but just revenge against sub-human Jewry.'

### **DEPORTATION AND EXTERMINATION IN DEATH CAMPS**

Over 3 million Jews were killed in death camps near cities: Treblinka to Warsaw, Belzec, Sobibor and Majdanek to Lublin, and Chelmno to Lodz. The camp at Auschwitz in Silesia was chosen to exterminate longer-distance deportees from Western, Central and Southern Europe, and was astride a major railway artery from Vienna to Crakow. The choice of Poland for these camps appears to be attributable to a variety of complex factors. The major reasons were:

#### **TASK**

Why do you think that the Nazis chose to locate the death camps in Poland rather than in Germany?

Deportation from countries not under direct German control often proved difficult:

#### **TASK**

What was the reaction of the leaderships in other European countries to the deportation orders?

#### **TASK**

Szpilman's life is saved by Christian Poles who hid him in empty apartments. Many other people across Europe did so too - see what you can find out about the Resistance Movement and those who helped to save Jews.



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## LIQUIDATION OF THE GHETTOS

Knowledge of the massacres reached the West by December 1942; the existence of Auschwitz and its purpose came to the Allies only in mid-1944. On 17 November 1942, the Allies proclaimed a Declaration denouncing the murder of European Jewry, declaring to bring to account those responsible; which has proved to be very much on-going. However, despite this, as Hitler realised that Germany was losing the War, he ordered the liquidation of the ghettos at Cracow, Lwow, Bialystok and Vilna between March and December 1943, with the deaths of approximately 340,000 Jews. All remaining Jews in the Lodz camp and the newly deported Hungarian Jews were transported to Auschwitz. On November 28th 1944, the last gassings at Auschwitz occurred and on Himmler's orders, the gas chambers were destroyed.

### TASK

Why do you think that Hitler ordered the liquidation and Himmler the destruction of the gas chambers?



## **LIBERATION**

With Hitler having committed suicide and the German army retreating, the Allies advanced into Europe. On 28 January 1945, Russia's Red Army liberated the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex and on 15 April 1945, the British Army liberated Bergen-Belsen. Nazi Germany surrendered on 8 May 1945.

### **AFTER THE WAR**

On 20 November 1945, an International Military Tribunal was instigated at Nuremberg where captured Nazi leaders were put on trial. Hitler, Goebbels and Himmler already having committed suicide, those facing charges of crimes against humanity included Göring, Hess, Von Ribbentrop and Streicher. Lasting almost a year, the trials established certain moral principles and legal precedents. Of those standing trial, twelve defendants were sentenced to death, three to life imprisonment, four were given prison sentences and three were acquitted.

### **TASK**

Known as The Nuremberg Trials, why do you think that the Tribunal was held in Nuremberg and finding out as much as you can about the outcome of the initial hearings, what do you think were the moral and legal precedents that were established?

Holocaust survivor Simon Wiesenthal has devoted his life to seeking out Nazi war criminals and having them tried. However, of over 100,000 known perpetrators, only 10,000 have stood trial.

### **TASK**

Why do you think that so few Nazi war criminals have been prosecuted, especially in the immediate aftermath of World War II and do you think that trials are relevant today?



## **SUGGESTED FURTHER READING**

Included are recommended History texts for teachers, a small Literature section, source materials and helpful 6th Form and GCSE texts.

### **HISTORY TEXTS**

Dawidowicz, Lucy, *The War Against The Jews* (New York, 1975)

Hilberg, Raul, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (New York, 1961)

Arendt, Hanna, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York, 1951)

Bauer, Yehuda, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (New York, 1982)

Gutman, Yisrael, *Fighters Among the Ruins: The Story of Jewish Heroism during World War II* (Washington, 1988)

Shirer, William, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* (New York, 1960)

### **LITERATURE**

Wiesel, Elie, *Night* (London, 1958)

Richter, Hans Peter, *Friedrich*, (New York, 1970)

Levi, Primo *If This is a Man*

### **SOURCES**

Gilbert, Martin, *Atlas of the Holocaust* (London, 1981)

Yad Vashem, *Documents on the Holocaust*, (Jerusalem, 1981)

Jayne Pettitt, *A Place To Hide* (Piccolo, 1994)

Jayne Pettitt, *A Time To Fight Back - True Stories of Wartime Resistance* (Macmillan, 1995)

Anne Frank, *The Diary of Anne Frank* (Pan, 1989)

6th Form and GCSE texts

Landau, Ronnie, *The Nazi Holocaust*, (Taurus, 1992)

Supple Carrie, *From Prejudice to Genocide*

Auschwitz, *Yesterday's Racism* (ILEA, London, 1983)

*Those Were the Days: The Holocaust as seen by Perpetrators and Victims*

Bayfield, Tony Churban (Michael Goulston Educational Foundation, 1981)



## **SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

### **NUREMBURG LAWS ON REICH CITIZENSHIP SEPTEMBER 15,1935**

#### **REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW, SEPTEMBER 15,1935**

The Reichstag has unanimously enacted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

#### **§ 1**

- 1) A subject of the State is a person who enjoys the protection of the German Reich and who in consequence has specific obligations towards it.
- 2) The status of subject of the State is acquired in accordance with the provisions of the Reich and State Citizenship Law.

#### **§ 2**

- 1) A Reich citizen is a subject of the State who is of German or related blood, who proves by his conduct that he is willing and fit faithfully to serve the German people and Reich.
- 2) Reich citizenship is acquired through the granting of a Reich Citizenship Certificate.
- 3) The Reich citizen is the sole bearer of full political rights in accordance with the Law.

#### **§ 3**

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in co-ordination with the Deputy of the Führer, will issue the Legal and Administrative orders required to implement and complete this Law.

Nuremberg, 15 September 1935  
at the Reich Party Congress of Freedom

The Führer and Reich Chancellor  
Adolf Hitler

The Reich Minister of the Interior  
Frick



**NUREMBERG LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND GERMAN HONOR,  
SEPTEMBER 15, 1935**

Moved by the understanding that purity of the German Blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people, and inspired by the inflexible determination to ensure the existence of the German Nation for all times, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following Law, which is promulgated herewith:

**§ 1**

1) Marriages between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if conducted abroad to circumvent this Law.  
2) Annulment proceedings can be initiated only by the State Prosecutor.

**§ 2**

Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood is forbidden.

**§ 3**

Jews may not employ in their households female subjects of the state of German or related blood who are under 45 years old.

**§ 4**

1) Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich or National flag or to display the Reich colors.  
2) They are, on the other hand, permitted to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.

**§ 5**

1) Any person who violates the prohibition under § 1 will be punished by a prison sentence with hard labor.  
2) A male who violates the prohibition under § 2 will be punished with a prison sentence with or without hard labor.  
3) Any person violating the provisions under § 3 or § 4 will be punished with a prison sentence of up to one year and a fine, or with one or the other of these penalties.

**§ 6**

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in co-ordination with the Deputy of the Führer and the Reich Minister of Justice, will issue the Legal and Administrative regulations required to implement and complete this Law.

**§ 7**

The Law takes effect on the day following promulgations except for § 3, which goes into force on January 1, 1936.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935  
at the Reich Party Congress of Freedom



**EXTRACTS FROM THE REGULATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE JEWS FROM THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF GERMANY, NOVEMBER 12 1938**

On the basis of the regulation for the implementation of the Four Year Plan of October 18 1936, (Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p 887), the following is decreed :

I

- From January 1, 1939, Jews are forbidden to operate retail stores, mail-order houses, or sales agencies, or to carry on a trade [craft] independently.
- They are further forbidden, from the same day on, to offer for sale goods or services, to advertise these, or to accept orders of all sorts, fairs or exhibitions.
- Jewish trade enterprises (Third Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law of June 14, 1938 (Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p 627) which violate this decree will be closed by police.

II

1. From January 1, 1939, a Jew can no longer be the head of an enterprise within the meaning of the Law of January 20, 1934, for the Regulation of National Work (Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p45)
2. Where a Jew is employed in an executive position in a commercial enterprise he may be given notice to leave in six weeks. At the expiration of the term of the notice all claims of the employee based on his contract, especially those concerning pension and compensation rights, become invalid.

Berlin, November 12, 1938  
Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan

Göring  
Field Marshal General

**EXTRACT OF THE REGULATION FOR THE PAYMENT OF AN EXPIATION FINE BY JEWS WHO ARE GERMAN SUBJECTS, NOVEMBER 12, 1938**

The hostile attitude of Jewry toward the German People and Reich, which does not even shrink from cowardly murder, calls for determined resistance and severe expiation. Based on the Decree of October 18, 1936, for the Implementation of the Four Year Plan (Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p887) I therefore order the following:

I

The totality of Jews who are German subjects will pay a Kontribution (fine) of 1,000,000,000 (one billion) Reichmarks to the German Reich.

Berlin, November 12 1938



**EXTRACT FROM A REPORT BY KARL JAGER, COMMANDER OF EINSATZKOMMANDO 3,  
ON THE EXTERMINATION OF LITHUANIAN JEWS, 1941**

**Commander of the Security Police and the SD  
Einsatzkommando 3**

**Kovno, December 1 1941**

**Reich Secret Document**

Final Summary of Executions carried out in the operating area of ED (Einsatzkommando) 3 up to December 1, 1941.

... I can confirm today that Einsatzkommando 3 has achieved the goal of solving the Jewish problem in Lithuania. There are no more Jews in Lithuania, apart from working Jews and their families.

These number:

- in Shavli, about 4,500
- in Kovno, about 15,000
- in Vilna, about 15,000

I wanted to eliminate the working Jews and their families as well, but the Civil Administration (Reichskommissar) and the Wehrmacht attacked me most sharply and issued a prohibition against having these Jews and their families shot.

The goal of clearing Lithuania of Jews could only be achieved through the establishment of a specially selected Mobile Commando under the command of SS Obersturmführer Hamann, who adopted my aims fully and who was able to ensure the co-operation of the Lithuanian Partisans and the Civil Authorities concerned.

The carrying-out of such Aktionen is first of all an organisational problem. The decision to clear each sub-district systematically of Jews called for a thorough preparation for each Aktion and the study of local conditions. The Jews had to be concentrated in one or more localities and, in accordance with their numbers, a site had to be selected and pits dug. The marching distance from the concentration points to the pits averaged 4 to 5 kms. The Jews were brought to the place of execution in groups of 500, with at least 2 kms distance between groups... All the officers and men of my command in Kovno took active part in the Grossaktionen in Kovno. Only one official of the intelligence corps was released from participation on account of illness.

I consider the Aktionen against the Jews of EK 3 to be virtually completed. The remaining working Jews and Jewesses are urgently needed, and I can imagine that this manpower will continue to be needed urgently after the winter has ended. I am of the opinion that the male working Jews should be sterilised immediately to prevent reproduction. Should any Jewess nevertheless become pregnant, she is to be liquidated...

Jäger, SS Standartenführer



**FROM A SPEECH BY FRANK ON THE EXTERMINATION OF THE JEWS  
DECEMBER 16, 1941**

...One way or another ---I will tell you that quite openly ---we must finish off the Jews. The Führer put it into words once: should united Jewry again succeed in setting off a world war, then the blood sacrifice shall not be made only by the peoples driven into war, but then the Jew of Europe will have met his end.

**PROTOCOL OF THE WANNSEE CONFERENCE  
JANUARY 20, 1942**

...Under appropriate direction the Jews are to be utilized for work in the East in an expedient manner in the course of the final solution. In large (labour) columns, with the sexes separated, Jews capable of work will be moved into these areas as they build roads, during which a large proportion will no doubt drop out through natural reduction. The remnant that eventually remains will require suitable treatment; because it will without doubt represent the most (physically) resistant part, it consists of a natural selection that could, on its release, become the germcell of a new Jewish revival. (Witness the experience of history.)

Europe is to be combed through from West to East in the course of the practical implementation of the final solution. The area of the Reich, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, will have to be handled in advance, if only because of the housing problem and the socio-political needs...

The Nazis calculated that there were **11 million** Jews in Europe that they wanted to exterminate.



**HITLER BANS PUBLIC REFERENCE TO THE "FINAL SOLUTION OF THE JEWISH QUESTION", JULY 11 1943**

National-Socialist German Workers' Party  
Party Secretariat

Head of the Party Secretariat

Führer Headquarters, July 11 1943

Circular No. 33/43 g.

Re: Treatment of the Jewish Question

On instructions from the Führer I make known the following:

Where the Jewish Question is brought up in public, there may be no discussion of a future overall solution (Gesamtlösung).

It may, however, be mentioned that the Jews are taken into groups for appropriate labor purposes.

Signed M Bormann

Distribution:           Reichsleiter  
                              Gauleiter  
                              Group leaders

File Reference:        Treatment/Jews

**FROM A SPEECH BY HIMMLER BEFORE SENIOR SS OFFICERS IN POZNAN  
OCTOBER 4, 1943**

**Evacuation of the Jews**

...I also want to speak to you here, in complete frankness, of a really grave chapter.

I am referring here to the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people... Most of you men know what it is like to see 100 corpses side by side, or 500 or 1,000. To have stood fast through this and - except for cases of human weakness - to have stayed decent that has made us hard. This is an unwritten and never-to-be-written page of glory in our history...

...All in all, however, we can say that we have carried out this most difficult of tasks in a spirit of love for our people. And we have suffered no harm to our inner being, our soul, our character...



**FROM HITLER'S TESTAMENT**

Adolf Hitler

It is untrue that I or anybody else in Germany wanted war in 1939...

But before everything else I call upon the leadership of the nation and those who follow it to observe the racial laws most carefully, to fight mercilessly against the poisoners of all the peoples of the world, international Jewry.

Set down in Berlin, April 29, 1945, 4.00 o'clock

**EXTRACT FROM WRITTEN EVIDENCE OF RUDOLPH HESS  
COMMANDER OF THE AUSCHWITZ EXTERMINATION CAMP**

In the summer of 1941, I cannot remember the exact date, I was suddenly summoned to the Reichsführer SS,\* directly by his adjutant's office. Contrary to his usual custom, Himmler received me without his adjutant being present and said in effect:

'The Führer has ordered that the Jewish question be solved once and for all and that we, the SS, are to implement that order.

The existing extermination centers in the East are not in a position to carry out the large Aktionen which are anticipated. I have therefore earmarked Auschwitz for this purpose, both because of its good position as regards communications and because the area can easily be isolated and camouflaged.

The Jews are the sworn enemies of the German people and must be eradicated. Every Jew that we can lay our hands on is to be destroyed now during the war, without exception. If we cannot now obliterate the biological basis of Jewry, the Jews will one day destroy the German people.'

We discussed the ways and means of effecting the extermination. This could only be done by gassing, since it would have been absolutely impossible to dispose by shooting of the large numbers of people that were expected, and it would have placed too heavy a burden on the SS man who had to carry it out, especially because of the women and children among the victims.

We calculated that after gas-proofing the premises then available, it would be possible to kill about 800 people simultaneously with a suitable gas. These figures were borne out later in practice...



## **RESCUERS**

‘Whoever saves a single life is as one who has saved an entire world.’

### **QUOTATION FROM THE TALMUD**

At some stage during the study of the Holocaust students will ask themselves whether they would have been a perpetrator, victim or bystander. But it is important to suggest that the option of becoming a rescuer was possible. Furthermore that the rescuers were not saints, or people who felt that they were destined to be heroes. Rather, they were ordinary people who happened to be in the right place at the right time, and although the exact number of Rescuers is unknown, it is estimated as being, at most, only one half of one per cent of the total population under Nazi rule.

### **CASE STUDY**

The following case study outlines the ways in which Jews were helped to escape deportation:

#### **Bert Bochove**

Although Bert grew up in a small town in the Netherlands he did not have a conservative or narrow-minded upbringing. His parents were religious, but in a different way from other people, and he says that he ‘didn’t grow up with the idea that you need Christ to make it’.

When he was young he saved a boy from drowning, whilst others just stood around watching; so he always had a brave streak in him. He married in 1941, and moved with his wife to Huizen, to live above the pharmacy which they owned.

‘...[T]he first months were pretty quiet. But in 1942 things started getting bad for the Jews. The way it started was, my wife’s girlfriend, her name is Henny, came to us. She was Jewish and she needed help. We didn’t ever talk about it. It was something you had to do, and it was easy to do because it was your duty. And that was the beginning because when her husband came, that was all right too. And when the sister came, well, why not?’. It was in this way that the Bochoves ended up hiding 37 Jews.

Bert constructed a hiding place in a hollow wall between his and his neighbour’s house. It was impossible to find. Bert, however, was betrayed to the Gestapo through one of his shop workers. Fortunately Bert had found out about the Nazis’ visit and managed to get the Jews out of the house in time.

Bert was also involved in placing Jews in other Dutch towns; it was always a very dangerous operation as there were many Dutch Nazis willing to curry favour with the occupying power. He says: ‘...I knew everyday that something could happen. But I was never really afraid. My worry was more for the family, for Eric [Bert’s son] and his mother.’



**SOME ADDITIONAL QUOTATIONS FROM PEOPLE WHO RESCUED JEWS**

'I was only a vessel through which the Lord's purpose was fulfilled. I know that when I stand before God on Judgement Day, I shall not be asked the question posed to Cain - where were you when your brother's blood was crying out to God?'

**Imre Bathory, Hungary**

'What I did came naturally. It would have been unnatural not to do it.'

**Herta Muler-Kuhlenthal, Netherlands**

'No law in the world says that I should live and you die. The Nazis have decided that, but I am fighting against them and am not bound by their rules.'

**Stanislawa Ogrodzinska, Poland**

'I did nothing special and I don't consider myself a hero. I simply acted on my human obligation to the persecuted and suffering. I want to emphasise that it was not I who saved them. They alone saved themselves. I simply gave them a helping hand...I sought no compensation for what I did...and in a way I am proud that while I was once rich, I am now destitute. To sum up, I should like to reiterate that I did no more than help forty-nine Jews to survive the Holocaust. That's all!'

**Wladyslaw Kowalski, Poland**

Extract from the testimony of an Auschwitz survivor

Hugo Gryn was born in Czechoslovakia in 1930. Not long after his bar mitzvah he was sent with his family to Auschwitz. This is how he describes what happened:

'Although we did not yet know the name of our destination we were, in fact, at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When the SS guards, with rifles at the ready pointing at us, led us to the train, the ghetto-commandant announced that this transport was heading 'East' where Jews would be resettled and given agricultural work. The war had made a shortage of food and Jewish colonies would have to help the Axis war effort. In the process, the commandant added 'You will be well housed, well fed and when the war ends maybe we shall let you go to your homes again!'

'...my father returned,...he sat down beside me and said, 'We are in the most terrible place in the world, and we are abandoned people. I don't know what is to become of us.' And for the first time since we got on the train my father cried and his sobs were the saddest sounds I had ever heard.



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## F I L M E D U C A T I O N

In the next two or three days I discovered how Auschwitz-Birkenau worked. How the young and old, to the sound of music were marched to the low buildings that looked like our shower block, how they had to strip and make neat piles and how instead of hot water they were engulfed by the vapours of Zyklon B gas and how they were then taken to ovens and cremated... And about the way in which human fat and ashes were turned into soap. Perhaps the small grey bars of soap we were given.

### TASKS

- Find media reports about Fascist or neo-Nazi activities in Britain, Europe and America.
- You are a Jew living in Germany in 1933. Do you believe that your neighbours will let the government destroy German Jewry in the 21st century?
- Do you think that the same thing could happen to any minority group in Europe in the 21st century?

**Remember** - you know that these events happened in Nazi Germany.

- Can you think of any similar examples during the last 50 years?

### THINK

If the same thing did happen to you, a British citizen, in England in the 21st century:

Would you flee?

- Where would you go?
- Could your family simply pack up and leave England?
- How would you survive financially?
- What language would you speak?

There is a knock at the door. It is the Secret Police. You are being taken to a 'work camp'. You have 15 minutes to pack 1 suitcase.

- What would you take?
- If the above was not happening to you, but to your neighbour, how would you react?



Look at the prejudice chart. Look up the word prejudice. What does it mean? Discuss its meaning with your group.

Looking at the prejudice chart, can you isolate any areas that would lead to pre-judgment?

Where, in your school or community, are there areas of difference? Think of modern examples where these areas of difference have not been compatible with the host society, but have led to exclusion and alienation. For example, events in Bosnia.

Imagine that a law was passed where all immigrants who came to this country, post 1990, were deprived of citizenship and threatened with deportation.

- How would you react?
- Would you welcome it?
- Would you inform on your classmates?
- Would it upset you?
- Would you suggest that your family hide an immigrant friend?

**Remember** - this is the law of the land. Would you break it?

### DISCUSSION POINT

Should there be an equation between law and justice? Think of examples where the two are not compatible.

### QUESTIONS

1. Can you tell the blood of a Jew from the blood of a non-Jew?  
Can you distinguish between the blood of any different cultural groups?
2. What percentage of the German population were Jewish in 1933?  
The Nazis saw the Jews as a threat to German culture. Were they?  
What percentage of the British population are Jewish today?  
Do Jews today threaten the culture of Britain?  
Does anyone?  
Think of examples in the Press where certain people argue that some groups do.
3. How could human beings participate, often voluntarily, in the running of death camps?  
What do you think their feelings towards the Jews, Gypsies and political prisoners might have been?  
What effect had Hitler and Goebbels made with their portrayal of Jews as rats, financial conspirators, sub-humans, non-Aryans, filth, contamination, the enemy, Communists?



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# F I L M

## EDUCATION

Some suggestions for classroom discussion or written work .

### TASKS

Working in small groups:

1. Look up the words oppression, discrimination, minorities in the dictionary. Discuss what they mean.
2. When a group experiences prejudice or discrimination, should they do anything? What? Why? Should other people do anything? What? Why? Write down three suggestions in each case.
3. Find examples of actual or reported prejudice or discrimination in newspapers or on television?
4. Write down some groups in your area who are experiencing prejudice or discrimination. What forms does this prejudice/discrimination take? List at least three.
5. Find and list three or more examples from the media of people opposing prejudice/discrimination.
6. Have you ever been persecuted yourself? What did you think/feel about it? What did you WANT to do? Describe these in at least three sentences.
7. If you have not had this experience, what do you THINK you would do, and why? Discuss this in your group, and if there are differences of opinion write down what they are..
8. Have you ever persecuted (or bullied) others? Write down a brief description of what happened - for yourself in the first instance. Ask your teacher, in confidence, whether other groups have done this and whether the class could share and discuss the points without identifying who made them.
9. Look up the word scapegoat. Have you ever had a scapegoat in your class in school? Describe that person and explain why you think s/he was made a scapegoat.
10. Discuss in your group the differences between being a scapegoat and being discriminated against or persecuted. Write down the differences you all agree on for later discussion with the whole class.
11. Using your definitions, list as many groups of people as you can who have been made scapegoats in history.
12. Discuss in your group the definition 'Racism is discrimination against, and persecution of, people on grounds of their origins'. Write down three points on which you agree.



13. Write down at least three examples - from history or now - of the particular racism that is antisemitism.

14. Using your knowledge of the Holocaust, discuss some or all of the following questions:

- What were the reasons for it happening in Germany when it did?
- What were the conditions in Germany? Have any of those conditions existed anywhere since, and if so with what results? Do some of the conditions exist now? How many/what combinations of those conditions do we or should we regard as tolerable before becoming concerned?
- Do we have the right, or a responsibility, to express concern? Individually or in groups? What groups? How and to whom do we express it? What do we do if we feel our concern is being ignored/repressed? Do we have a right to consider breaking the law in those circumstances, even in a democracy? How far should we go along that road?
- What is democracy? Is there only one version of it? Who decides? (You might wish to consider examples of the UK democratic legislature producing un- or anti-democratic legislation, historically or since 1945.) Can legislation be racist, and if so can it be democratic? Are extra-parliamentary activities undemocratic? What activities have contributed to improvements in democratic processes (for example, the ending of the property qualifications for suffrage; the introduction of women's suffrage; the end of rotten boroughs)? What has contributed to the failure or amendment of certain proposed legislation?
- Britain has a reputation for having always been tolerant - even welcoming - of immigrant communities, especially if they are seen as needing to escape persecution or suffering. Does examination of the legislation (not forgetting the 1905 Aliens Act), and events, now or historically, bear this out?
- To what extent are we, individually or collectively, aware of injustice, prejudice, discrimination, persecution - in the world, in Europe, in Britain, in our locality, in the playground/classroom?
- If we know that there are injustices, are we, are there organisations, do we belong to those organisations, doing anything about them?
- Do we know of occasions when people ignore violence against other people, and even stand by watching it - not only not assisting the attacked person, but not even calling the police? What is involved in these attitudes and actions/inactions? Are they something we should be concerned about? Is there a difference between individuals' and groups' responses to someone being attacked? What is the connection between such attitudes and actions/inactions and the Holocaust?



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## F I L M EDUCATION

- Is there, or should there be, conflicting loyalties/feelings when, for example, police and soldiers are ordered to use what some (even they) might consider to be 'unnecessary violence' against people?
- At what point is the line crossed from separate 'incidents' and generalised attitudes, to what could be seen as 'State repression'?
- Does it sometimes seem that many of us are more inclined to feel strongly, or take individual action, on the question of animal comforts and rights than on human rights? Why is this? Are there influences, around us or in ourselves, which encourage such feelings?



## **THE STORY OF JANUSZ KORCZAK**

Janusz was born in Warsaw in 1878. He studied medicine, became a children's specialist and founded an orphanage in Krochmalna Street, Warsaw. He became a world-famous educationalist and his most famous book *How to Love Children* expresses in its title the essence of his life. He died as he lived:

Wednesday, August 12, 1942. Today Korczak's orphanage is to be 'evacuated'... Korczak himself may remain, physicians are needed. They are not marked for deportation.

But Korczak refuses to stay behind. He will not abandon 'his' children, he will go with them.

And so a long line is formed in the front of the orphanage on Sliska Street. A long procession, children, small, tiny, rather precocious, emaciated, weak, shrivelled and shrunk. They carry shabby packages, some have schoolbooks, notebooks under their arms. No one is crying.

Slowly they go down the steps, line up in rows, in perfect order and discipline, as usual. Their little eyes are turned towards the 'doctor', they are strangely calm. The 'doctor' is going with them. They are not alone, they are abandoned.

Dr Korczak busies himself with the children with a sober earnestness. He buttons the coat of one child, ties up a package of another, or straightens the cap of a third. Then he wipes off a tear which is rolling down the thin little face of a child ...

Then the procession starts out. The children are marching quietly in orderly rows, calm and earnest, and at the head of them is Janusz Korczak...

Soon after, Janusz Korczak and his children arrived at Umschlagplatz (a collection point, in the ghettos, for deportation, usually near a railway siding)...

The secretary of the Judenrat, Nahum Remba, was witness to the scene. 'On the Umschlagplatz I suggested to Korczak that he came with me to the Judenrat and have them intercede with the Germans. He refused; he did not want to leave the children alone even for one minute.'

The loading of the boxcars to Treblinka began. Korczak led the procession. This was not an ordinary boarding of a train for a journey; it was a march of mute protest against barbarism, a scene never to be forgotten. The children, in groups, with Korczak in the lead holding two little ones by their hands.

Even the ghetto police stood at attention and saluted as they passed.

They were never seen alive again.



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## QUESTIONS ON JANUSZ KORCZAK

1. What makes Korczak's ordinary actions (buttoning a coat, tying up a package) so special?
2. Was Korczak's decision to remain with the children a good one, or should he have tried to intercede with the Germans, as Nahum Remba advised?
3. Explain the position of the ghetto police in this scene. Who were they and what were their powers?
4. How can a society make sure that such a scene could never happen again?
5. What do you learn about human nature, and about such things as strength, courage and power from this?

