

HOLOCAUST
CENTER *for*
HUMANITY



With My Own Eyes: Curriculum for the Holocaust Center for Humanity's Core Exhibit

***Winner of the Association of King County Historical Organizations
Heritage Education Award!***

Holocaust Center for Humanity

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2016

This curriculum supports the Holocaust Center for Humanity exhibit, which opened in October 2015. Through stories and artifacts of local Holocaust survivors, the museum's exhibit engages visitors in the history of the Holocaust and challenges them to consider how each person's actions make a difference. The Holocaust Center is proud to be only the third location in the United States to showcase personal objects from the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau.

This curriculum is aligned with Common Core standards and can be used before, during, or after visiting the exhibit at the Holocaust Center for Humanity. The complete exhibit text and many artifacts and images included in the exhibit can be found in this curriculum.

This curriculum is designed to be adapted for students in grades 7 and up.

Find the curriculum, associated handouts and PowerPoint presentations online at
www.HolocaustCenterSeattle.org.

Questions? Want additional materials or suggestions? Please contact:

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Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust

As determined by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM)

For a complete text of the guidelines with details please visit www.ushmm.org.

Staff at the Holocaust Center for Humanity would be happy to answer questions, provide consultation, and assist in finding appropriate resources and lessons. Email info@HolocaustCenterSeattle.org or call 206-582-3000.

1. 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.

2. Do not teach or imply that the Holocaust was inevitable.

Just because a historical event took place, and it is 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. Focusing on those decisions leads to insights into history and human nature and can better help your students to become critical thinkers.

3. Avoid simple answers to complex questions.

Allow students to think about the many factors and events that contributed to the Holocaust and often made decision-making difficult and uncertain.

4. Strive for precision of language.

Any study of the Holocaust touches upon nuances of human behavior. Because of the complexity of the history, there is a temptation to generalize and, thus, to distort the facts (e.g., "all concentration camps were killing centers" or "all Germans were collaborators"). Rather, you must strive to help your students clarify the information presented and encourage them to distinguish, for example, the differences between prejudice and discrimination, collaborators and bystanders, armed and spiritual resistance, direct orders and assumed orders, concentration camps and killing centers, and guilt and responsibility. Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions.

5. Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust.

a. There exist multiple perspectives including: victims, bystanders, perpetrators, children, adults, etc. Consider examining the actions, motives, and decisions of each group. Portray all individuals, including victims and perpetrators, as human beings who are capable of moral judgment and independent decision making.

b. Students should be encouraged to consider why a particular text was written, who wrote it, who the intended audience was, whether there were any biases inherent in the information, whether any gaps occurred in discussion, whether omissions in certain passages were inadvertent or not, and how the information has been used to interpret various events.

6. Avoid comparisons of pain.

One cannot presume that the horror of an individual, family, or community destroyed by the Nazis was any greater than that experienced by victims of other genocides.

7. Do not romanticize history.

People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide useful, important, and compelling role models for students. However, given that only a small fraction of non-Jews under Nazi occupation (estimated at .005%) helped to rescue Jews, an overemphasis on heroic tales can result in an inaccurate and unbalanced account of history.

8. Contextualize the history.

a. 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. For example, when thinking about resistance, consider when and where an act took place; the immediate consequences to one's actions to self and family; the degree of control the Nazis had on a country or local population; the cultural attitudes of particular native populations historically toward different victim groups; and the availability and risk of potential hiding places.

b. Encourage your students not to categorize groups of people only on the basis of their experiences during the Holocaust: contextualization is critical so that victims are not perceived only as victims.

9. Translate statistics into people.

Show that individual people's families of grandparents, parents, and children are behind the statistics and emphasize that within the larger historical narrative is a diversity of personal experience.

10. Make responsible methodological choices.

a. Be sensitive to appropriate written and audiovisual content. Graphic materials should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the objective of the lesson.

b. Avoid simulation activities and activities that attempt to re-create situations. Such activities oversimplify complex events and can leave students with a skewed view of history. Even worse, they are left with the impression at the conclusion of the activity that they now know what it was like during the Holocaust.

PART 1: Pre-War

Text from Holocaust Center for Humanity exhibit:

Europe had a rich and diverse set of Jewish cultures that had existed for generations, in some areas for over a thousand years.

In 1933, approximately 9.5 million Jews lived in Europe, less than 2% of the total European population. The Jews of Eastern Europe lived predominantly in Jewish villages called shtetls. They wore traditional clothes, spoke Yiddish, and often kept to themselves.

In Germany and Western Europe, Jews tended to assimilate. They lived in the cities, went to the same schools, and dressed and spoke like their non-Jewish neighbors. The roughly 500,000 Jews who lived in Germany made up less than 1% of the German population. More than 100,000 Jews had served in the German army during World War I, and some were decorated war heroes.

Jews in Europe could be found in all walks of life: farmers, tailors, factory hands, accountants, doctors, teachers, artists, and business owners to name a few. Some families were wealthy; many more were poor. More than 60% of the world's Jewish population lived in Europe at the time, and in little more than a decade, two out of every three of them would be dead, killed during the Holocaust.

Below are a few of the artifacts/images in the Holocaust Center for Humanity's exhibit:



Candle Holders and Two Kiddush Cups

Circa 1910-1939

As the Nazis confiscated Jewish property, many families hid their important possessions. These silver candle holders and *Kiddush* cups, used by Jews on *Shabbat*, were discovered after the war by Jewish American Corporal Frederick Ullman in the German village of Cham.

Iron Cross

1914

The Iron Cross was a German military medal given to soldiers who demonstrated heroism and bravery in World War I. Like many Jewish veterans, Walter Schwarz thought this medal would protect him from the Nazi terror. He proudly kept the medal as his family escaped Germany to Shanghai, China and later immigrated to Seattle, Washington.





Tallit Bag

Circa 1920

As the Nazis began their systematic deportation of Jews, individuals hid important items in the hope they could retrieve them after the war. Marian Zelman hid photographs and other possessions in his Tallit (Jewish prayer shawl) bag, which he hid under the floorboards in the place he was hiding in the Lodz Ghetto. After being liberated from Auschwitz he returned to Lodz and recovered this Tallit bag and contents.

Below are images of Jews in everyday life before the war, as seen on the exhibit's Pre-War pillar. (The Pre-War pillar is a large pillar covered in photos. The photos depict pre-war Jewish life in Europe. All of the photos are from local survivors and their families.)





Pre-War—Lesson & Activity

By Branda Anderson, Kamiak High School, Mukilteo

TEACHER NOTES

When studying the Holocaust, it can be easy to get lost in the numbers and statistics, and to lose touch with the people who actually make up the numbers. It is vital that our students engage with and understand the story of the victims, in their own voices, in order for them to truly recognize the enormity of the tragedy. These lessons were designed to help your students identify the main characteristics of the lives of European Jews before and after the rise of the Nazi Party through their stories and artifacts. These activities can be done by your students as they experience the exhibit or reflect on it after their visit.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What factors shape one's identity?

How do governmental policies marginalize minority groups?

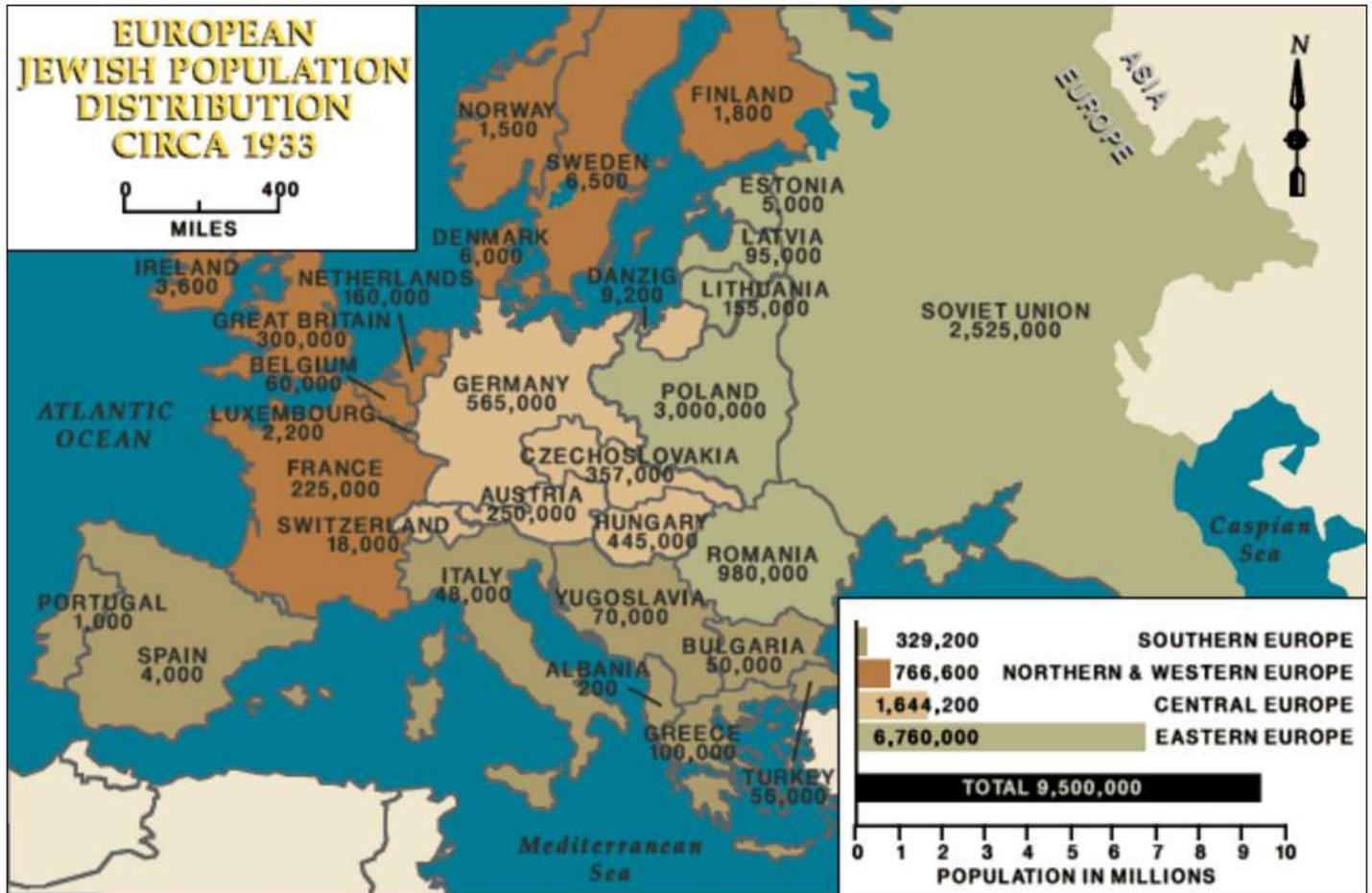
How do people make decisions about who belongs and who is excluded?

Is it acceptable to disobey the law in favor of obeying one's conscience?

What role do minority groups play in societies?

How do racial and religious prejudices impact a nation?

Pre-War Lesson



— US Holocaust Memorial Museum

- On the map above, circle the country with the largest Pre-War Jewish population.
- As you view the exhibit, put a star by the countries you encounter through stories and artifacts.
- As you examine the images on the Pre-War pillar in the exhibit, choose one image and describe what you see (how many people, what are they doing, etc.) If there is a caption, please summarize the text.
- What does this image tell you about Pre-War Jewish life in Europe?

PART 2: Changing World

Text from Holocaust Center for Humanity exhibit:

Defeated in World War I, Germany fell into a deep economic depression. Promising a return to strength and prosperity, the radical National Socialist Party (Nazis) gained popularity. Adolf Hitler and the Nazis implemented a policy of racism, hatred, intimidation, and violence.

Antisemitism is prejudice against or hatred of Jews. This specific hatred had existed for centuries in Europe, but by the late 1800s most Jews enjoyed legal protection. In the early 1900s, antisemitism became a central theme in a number of political parties whose leaders blamed Jews for the social and economic problems following the loss of World War I. Nazis defined Jews as a race. Germans were seen as “superior,” and Jews, at the bottom of the scale, were the most dangerous. The Nazis also targeted homosexuals, people with disabilities, Roma/Sinti (Gypsies), Jehovah’s Witnesses, Afro-Germans, and Poles.

Adolf Hitler founded the Nazi party in Germany in 1919. As the depression following World War I deepened, Hitler’s popularity increased. In 1930, the Nazi party won 107 of 577 seats in the Reichstag, the German legislative body. In 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. His first 100 days in power were marked by mass arrests, suppression of free speech, the opening of the first concentration camps, and the purging of all political opponents.

The Nuremberg Laws, passed in 1935, stripped Jews of German citizenship, removed them from public office, outlawed marriages between Jews and non-Jews, and defined a Jew as “a person with two Jewish parents, or three or four Jewish grandparents.”

Included below are a few artifacts/images in the Holocaust Center for Humanity’s exhibit:



Class Photograph

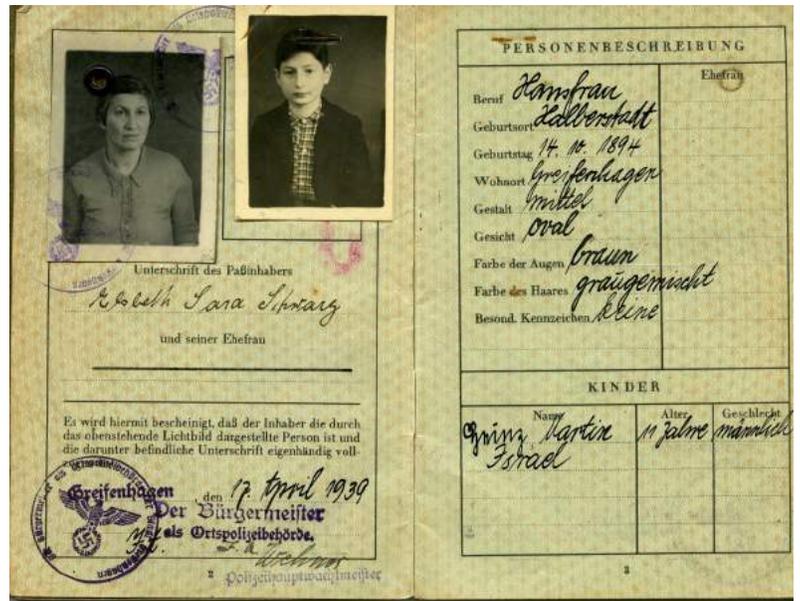
1941

By 1941, Jewish students were not allowed to attend school with other children. Soon after this class photograph from a Jewish school in Ostrava, Czechoslovakia was taken, Frieda Soury, (to the left of the teacher), age 14, was deported to the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. Soury was one of the few survivors. When family members of her classmates returned to her hometown after the war, she cut out the images of their loved ones to give them.

Reisepass (Passport)

1939

This passport issued to Elsbeth Schwarz and her 11-year-old son Heinz illustrates the identification forced upon Jews by the Nazis. Jewish men were required to take the middle name 'Israel' and women the middle name 'Sarah,' and the large red letter 'J' was stamped on Jewish passports. The Schwarz family was able to escape Germany in 1939, finding refuge in Shanghai, China.



Yellow Star of David

Circa 1940-1943

Jenny Hamber, born in Vienna, Austria in 1875, worked as a nurse while imprisoned in the Theresienstadt Camp in Czechoslovakia in 1943. Jews in Theresienstadt were forced to wear yellow stars, such as this cotton one, sewn onto their clothing. Jenny remained in the camp until her liberation in 1945.

August Landmesser

1936

Hamburg, Germany. August Landmesser was a German worker at the Blohm and Voss shipyard in Hamburg. In this photograph, Landmesser is identified as the man refusing to perform the Nazi salute at the launching of a vessel.





Peter Metzelaar (front center) and his kindergarten class

Circa 1941
Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Propaganda Poster

Circa 1941

The Nazi exhibition "The Jew and France" was held in Paris from September 1941 to January 1942, demonstrating the influence of Jews in France throughout history. This antisemitic propaganda poster accompanied the exhibition, emphasizing the negative effects of the Jewish people and culture upon French society. The text reads, 'Et Derrière: Le Juif' ('And Behind It All: The Jew').



Changing World Lesson & Activity

By Branda Anderson

1. Define Antisemitism:

2. As you view this portion of the exhibit, choose three artifacts and/or pictures that best exemplify the plight of Jews in Nazi Germany and Occupied Europe. *Worksheet on page 15.*

- Describe each picture/artifact and briefly explain how the artifact/picture exemplifies the changes Jews experienced.
- Make sure to place your description near the closest applicable timeline event.

3. In your own words, describe how and why life for European Jews changed from 1933-1942. Be sure to discuss how those changes can be seen the artifacts you encounter in the exhibit.

STUDENT HANDOUT: CHANGING WORLD

Timeline	Artifact/Image	How it exemplifies the changes Jews experienced under the Nazi regime.
<p>January 30, 1933: President Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany.</p> <p>March 20, 1933: SS opens the Dachau concentration camp outside of Munich.</p> <p>April 1, 1933: Boycott of Jewish-owned shops and businesses in Germany.</p> <p>September 15, 1935: Nuremberg Race Laws.</p> <p>March 11-13, 1938: Germany incorporates Austria in the Anschluss (Union).</p> <p>November 9/10, 1938: Kristallnacht (nationwide pogrom in Germany).</p> <p>September 1, 1939: Germany invades Poland; World War II begins.</p> <p>May 20, 1940: Auschwitz Camp Established</p> <p>September 1, 1941: All Jews over the age of 6 in German territory ordered to wear identifying badge – yellow Star of David</p> <p>October 15, 1941: Nazis deport German, Austrian and Czech Jews to ghettos and camps.</p> <p>January 20, 1942: Wannsee Conference held near Berlin, Germany.</p>		

FINAL WRAP UP & REFLECTION

After completing these activities, students can share out their findings in partners or groups. Also a guided class discussion and written reflection on the final question (#3 in Changing World) can help students exhibit their learning. Engage the students in a discussion about the diverse experience of Jews in Europe before 1933 and the common experience after 1933. Discuss how and why the Nazi regime was able to marginalize the Jewish population and the impact that had. Ask students to consider (or reflect in writing) how laws and governmental policies today can marginalize minority groups and why that is dangerous.

LESSON EXTENSIONS OR ADDITIONS

The following links provide more information on the topics considered in this assignment.

Jewish Communities of Prewar Germany

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007052>

Anti-Jewish Legislation in Prewar Germany

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005681>

VIDEO TESTIMONIES

The following are short video clips of survivors in Washington State sharing their personal stories about events related to the topics covered in these sections.

Steven Adler, Video 1 – “Kristallnacht” (1 min)

<http://holocaustcenterseattle.org/survivor-voices/stephen-adler>

Eva Tannenbaum-Cummins, Videos 1 & 2 – “Hitler” (49 sec) and “Park Bench” (1.48 min)

<http://holocaustcenterseattle.org/survivor-voices/eva-tannenbaum-cummins>

Susie Sherman, Video 1 – “Waiting it Out” (1.20 min)

<http://holocaustcenterseattle.org/survivor-voices/susie-sherman>

Klaus Stern, Videos 1 & 2 – “My Best Friend Walter” (43 sec) and “Identity Card” (27 sec)

<http://holocaustcenterseattle.org/survivor-voices/klaus-stern>

PART 3: Flight and Rescue

Text from Holocaust Center for Humanity exhibit:

As Nazi domination of Europe spread, so did Nazi terror and oppression of Jews. Jews desperately searched for ways to leave their home countries, only to find that other countries were closing their borders to Jewish refugees. Once leaving was no longer an option, many Jews went into hiding.

Over half of the German Jewish population fled Germany in the 1930s. Families with young children and elderly or sick relatives had particular challenges. The costs were high, travel could be hazardous, and many anticipated that conditions would eventually improve.

Most countries, including the United States and Britain, put up obstacles to immigration and strictly limited how many Jews could be admitted. Searching for ways to leave became a full-time job. Many Jews escaped to neighboring countries only to have Germany soon invade and occupy their new homes. The Nazi campaign against the Jews spread quickly. When escape was no longer possible, many sought places to hide. A small percentage of non-Jews risked their lives, and the lives of their families, to help Jews to survive.

Below are a few artifacts/images in the Holocaust Center for Humanity's exhibit:

Poesie – Autograph Book

Circa 1930-1940

Poesie, or autograph book, such as this one belonging to survivor Hester Kool (née Waas), were popular among Dutch children. Kool's friends and family wrote notes and poems, and included pictures as tokens of love and friendship. She was able to save the book when she went into hiding after her family was deported from Holland and later murdered in Auschwitz. This prized book is Kool's most tangible connection to her family.





Mr. and Mrs. Symchuck, who hid Henry Friedman and his family, with their granddaughter after the war

1945

Suchowola, Ukraine

In 1942, Julia Symchuck warned Henry Friedman's family of an upcoming Nazi roundup of Jews. Henry Friedman, his mother, younger brother, and a teacher hid with the Symchucks for 18 months.

Owned by Henry Friedman

The barn where Henry's father hid

Suchowola, Ukraine

Henry's father, Jacob Friedman hid nearby with a different family in the loft of their barn.



Hester Kool, age 18 (center), with the children of the family who hid her during the war

1945

The Netherlands, near Amsterdam

Hester Kool was 13 years old when Holland was occupied by the Nazis. When Kool's parents and brother were deported to a work camp, her friend helped her to obtain false identification papers and find a family that would hide her. For two years, Kool cleaned the family's house, took care of their 3 children, slept in the attic, and rarely went outside.

Owned by Hester Kool



Peter Metzelaar on the farm where he hid with his mother

1942

The Netherlands

In 1942, when Peter Metzelaar was 7 years old, the Nazis seized his entire family except for him and his mother Elli. With the help of the Dutch Underground, the Metzelaars found a place to hide on the farm of Klaas and Roefina Post. When Nazi raids in the area became more frequent, making it too risky for the Metzelaars to hide in the house, the Posts constructed a cave in the nearby forest in which they could hide.

Owned by Peter Metzelaar

Passengers on the Deck of the St. Louis

1939

In 1939 a group of German Jews left Hamburg, Germany for Cuba aboard the luxury ocean liner *St. Louis*. Upon arrival only 28 passengers were allowed to disembark. The remaining 909 were forced to return to Europe, where they eventually were accepted by France, England, Belgium, and The Netherlands. As the war progressed, only those who ended up in England found relative safety, as the Nazi army spread through the rest of mainland Europe. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Fred Buff



Refugee girls arriving in England have their ID tags inspected by policeman

Circa 1939

After the violence of Kristallnacht in November 1938, the British government decided to allow endangered children, mostly Jewish, into the country from Germany and its annexed territories. The Kindertransport (Children's Transport), as it came to be known, functioned due to the benevolence of private organizations and individuals who sponsored the children's voyages and subsequent care in Great Britain. Nearly 10,000 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland found safety for the duration of the war, but many never saw their families again.

Flight and Rescue Lessons

By Chris Ellinger, Mountlake Terrace High School

Why didn't the Jewish people leave, even early on when there were clear signs that worse was to come?

Because students frequently ask this question, we approached this lesson from this perspective. The problem lies in the fact that with hindsight we know the endgame. Looking at the issue as it happened shows how difficult it truly was to both leave and to simply help others leave or evade the Nazis. The 5 activities here can be used on their own, together as a package, and in any order. Where appropriate I've tried to include supplemental or extension resources and activities if a teacher wanted to take the lesson further.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S):

How and why do people stay in their communities even in the face of imminent danger?

What does it mean to be part of a community?

How are immigration quotas established? What factors influence immigration policy?

What commonalities do people share when they go to extraordinary means to help other human beings?

OPENING THOUGHTS:

There is an opportunity for discussion and/or reflection before starting any of these activities as it relates to our students' own experiences. This could take place as a group discussion, as a journal write or both.

What would you do if your family was forced to leave your community right now?

- ⇒ With some time to this topic, students should see how incredibly difficult it is to simply leave as many of them expected of the Jews. Even after the obvious loss of other family and friends, students should consider the 'loose ends' it would take to leave. What about the paperwork involved to withdraw from school or leave your home? What if you planned to return? Financial security, etc.
- ⇒ Many of our students have firsthand experience with issues of flight – be they immigration related or from situations resulting from poverty or abuse. Obviously a safe culture and environment would be needed for students to share their stories but the investment in this theme would be significant if that connection was made.

What made these people act when so many others looked away or did nothing?

- ⇒ This second question relates to acts of amazing bravery and courage by humans attempting to help fellow humans.
- ⇒ How can we incorporate these acts and the fortitude to do them into our own daily interactions?

These discussions can all be incorporated into the activities below or as a stand-alone discussion or journal response.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](#)

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.A

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.B

Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1.C

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

ACTIVITY 1: Flight of the SS St Louis

Overview

Many students come to the table with the assumption that anyone could leave whenever they wanted. This activity should make it clear that attempts were made and barriers were massive for those wishing to leave.

- The link below would serve as an excellent introduction video to the topic or supplemental resource.
http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_fi.php?MediaId=232 (introductory video from the U.S. Holocaust Museum)
- The PowerPoint on the SS St. Louis (included on pages 28-33) is informational and can be delivered as a short lecture or students could review it on their own/in groups. The connection to our ongoing immigration issues are very clear and a modern connection could be developed before and/or after the activity if time allowed. A debate or discussion over immigration policy – who sets it, how is it determined, and the uncomfortable questions about discrimination in policy, both now and then, would be relevant and important for students to discuss.

ACTIVITY 2: The Evian Conference

Overview

Students will debate using a Structured Academic Controversy (SAC) to address the following question:

Did the West do all that it could before the beginning of WWII to assist potential and actual refugees of the Holocaust?

The PowerPoint included here (pages 34-39) gives an overview/timeline of events leading up to the Evian Conference as well as directions for how to conduct the SAC.

Students are then directed to the US Holocaust Museum website (www.ushmm.org) to conduct further background research on the Evian Conference before they are ready to begin the SAC.

The documents that students will need to engage in the debate are included in this lesson package (pages 40-49).

These documents are complex and challenging for students but provide a rich background and exploration of the complexities of this time period. After researching the context students are assigned to a respective position and given the readings in order to engage in a debate over this question. (The instructions are included in the PowerPoint.) This activity is longer than the others but could be modified if needed.

Teacher note – if you are unfamiliar or need a refresher, below is a link to teachinghistory.org and their excellent description of the S.A.C. process as well as handouts and explanations of this teaching tool.

<http://teachinghistory.org/teaching-materials/teaching-guides/21731>

ACTIVITY 3: Primary Source review – Klaus Langer

Overview

This is a quick activity that drives home to students the difficulty of flight, even for those who wanted to leave. Students can read, either individually, in small groups, or as a class this excerpt from a 14 year old boy who shares the difficulties his parents have in trying to secure visas (See attached student handout on page 50).

On its own it is an opportunity for analysis of tone – the seriousness and matter of fact response as his family navigates this process.

Students could be asked to identify the tone in his writing.

- Students could also be asked to look up the various countries as a short geography lesson.
- There is also an excellent opportunity to connect this lesson to the exhibit as it will feature a number of photos related to emigration, specifically as they line up for exit visas.
- Students will be able to make strong connections to the exhibit and this diary entry if shown in advance.
- Other questions might include:
 - ⇒ What is the difference between emigration and immigration?
 - ⇒ What is a letter of credit?
 - ⇒ What might be the huge financial responsibility the rich uncle is unwilling to take?
 - ⇒ How does a visa work?
 - ⇒ Where is Palestine? Why would Jews want to go to Palestine?

Diary of Klaus Langer (Essen, Germany)

December 19, 1938

“Regarding the emigration of my parents, I have the following to report. First came two refusals from Argentina for lack of letters of credit. The rich uncle in America is unable to assume such a financial responsibility. We don’t have an affidavit for the U.S. India requires firm employment there or a contract. Father is now trying to make connections in India to obtain a contract. He also wrote to Peru and he was told to go to the Uruguayan consulate. Allegedly the Dominican Republic would take ten thousand Jews and provide them with visas. However, nothing further is known about that. It probably makes no sense to turn to them. However, with a Dominican Republic visa it is possible to get a half-year visa for Palestine....”

Source: Klaus Langer, “December 19. 1938” in *Salvaged Pages*, ed. Alexandra Zapruder (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2002), 24.

ACTIVITY 4: Kindertransport

Overview

This activity is a “choose your own adventure” depending on how much or how little students work with this topic. Although there are artifacts in the exhibit related to this topic, students will benefit from knowing the story behind the Kindertransport process.

Please note that there is an opportunity for a local connection for students as well. Steve Adler, a local survivor and speaker, has a series of videos that would serve as excellent resources either as individual short lessons or as part of a larger exploration with the U.K. National Archives. A link is provided below to see Steve’s biography and a series of videos that document his experiences.

There are 3 links below and students can either explore on their own or with some designed activity. The third link is from the national archives in the United Kingdom and has an excellent collection of documents. Students could review these on their own or with guidance. The lesson plan attached to the national archives link is an excellent activity for students – create and curate their own exhibition using the documents and pictures from the website. If time permits, this would be an enriching activity for students in preparation of their visit to the Holocaust Center for Humanity’s exhibit.

Encyclopedia article on the Kindertransport from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005260>

Kindertransport Association – provides background, history, and testimony

<http://www.kindertransport.org/history.htm>

United Kingdom National archives with lesson plans and documents related to this topic

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education/resources/kindertransport/>

Steve Adler, Holocaust survivor in Seattle who was on the Kindertransport from Germany to England – Video clips, biographical information on Steve.

<http://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/survivor-voices/stephen-adler>

Activity 5: Rescuers

Overview: This activity is designed simply to expose students to the vast number of individuals who made a difference and how their choices saved lives. Using the resources below, teachers may choose from a variety of short or longer activities.

The web resources will provide biographical resources for teachers to assign or use for their own planning.

The attached PowerPoint, “Those who refused to turn away” (pages 51-52) is a starting place for exploration or a stand-alone introduction to those who risked their lives to help others.

In addition to the links below is a document with characteristics of the Righteous (page 53).

Resources:

- US Holocaust Museum collection of rescuers:
<http://www.ushmm.org/research/research-in-collections/search-the-collections/bibliography/rescuers>
- University of South Florida compilation of rescuers (also great teacher resources):
<https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/people/rescuer.htm>
- The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous features a set of posters and handouts (accessible here) that highlight rescuers around the theme of character traits that exemplify those who made a difference.
<https://jfr.org/resources/>

Possible activities:

1. Assign each student one or more rescuers to research and possibly share their findings. For stories of rescuers:
 - A. www.jfr.org
 - B. <http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/index.asp>
 - C. www.ushmm.org
2. Create a gallery of rescuers for students to walk the room and observe/take notes/discuss
 - A. Enhance with focus on various geographical locations, gender, religion, etc. to show students that rescuers came from all walks of life
3. Depending on length of unit, present one rescuer as the intro to each lesson with a takeaway idea for each rescuer (example – a rescuer from the German army might show the complicated nature of how not all Germans supported the pogroms against Jews, even those wearing a uniform – this also dispels the common claim among German soldiers that they were simply “following orders.”)
4. Writing activity – this could follow any of the previous activities. What is the common link? What made these extraordinary people make decisions that had grave consequences for their own lives? What can we learn from these individuals that could apply to our own lives when we are faced with moral and ethical choices?

Final wrap up and reflection – modern immigration/refugee crisis

As mentioned previously, this theme presents an excellent opportunity for students to examine the modern issue of immigration through the historical lens of the Holocaust. Students might be asked at the end of this unit of study, after a visit to the exhibit, or at the end of any of the lessons above if this changes their thoughts or stance on immigration.

Now that they have seen the real impact of restrictive policies or the horrible consequences of simply not acting, is there a place in the immigration conversation for this lesson?

Students could either write in a reflective journal or engage in a class discussion or a series of questions relating the challenges of flight and rescue to a modern context.

Sadly, the refugee crisis in Syria presents a stark example happening right now that could be used as a lesson as well. What role does the United States have in securing safe passage for refugees in the Syrian Civil War?



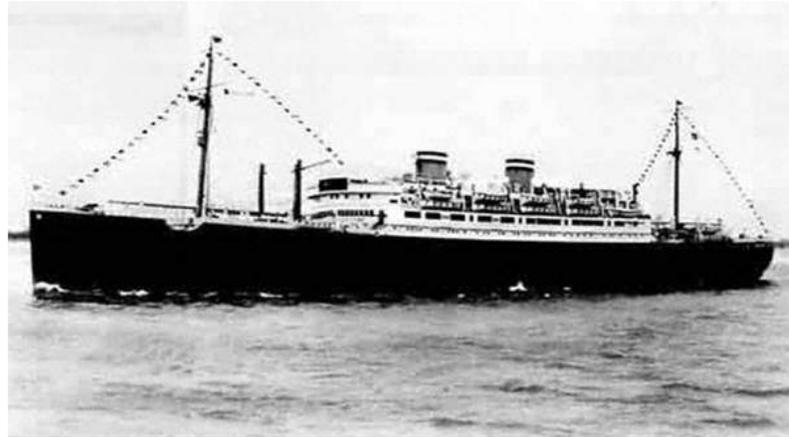

The Holocaust, Immigration, and the SS St. Louis




Essential Question

- Should the U.S. pursue a strict immigration policy?
 - Congress is continuing to debate today a new immigration policy that will have radically change how we look at immigration in this country
 - Consider the SS St. Louis

SS St. Louis



Kristallnacht

- On May 13 1939 the SS St. Louis set sail from Hamburg, Germany for Havana, Cuba. On board were 937 Jewish refugees fleeing persecution from Nazi Germany after the horror of Kristallnacht, the pogrom of shop-burning and mass arrests the previous November. Each passenger carried a valid visa for temporary entry into Cuba. It was one of the last ships to leave Nazi Germany before Europe was engulfed in war.

Denial in Cuba

- As the boat approached Havana, the Cuban government declared the visas invalid and refused entry to the passengers.
- Subsequent negotiations with the Cuban government to permit the landing ended in failure.
- Similar attempts to seek entry to the United States also brought no respite.
- The United States, as the St. Louis steamed along its southern coast, refused to let the ship dock, in keeping with its straitjacket of a refugee policy, which would only tighten as the war progressed.
- After waiting 12 days in the port of Havana and off the Miami coast, the boat was forced to return to Europe.

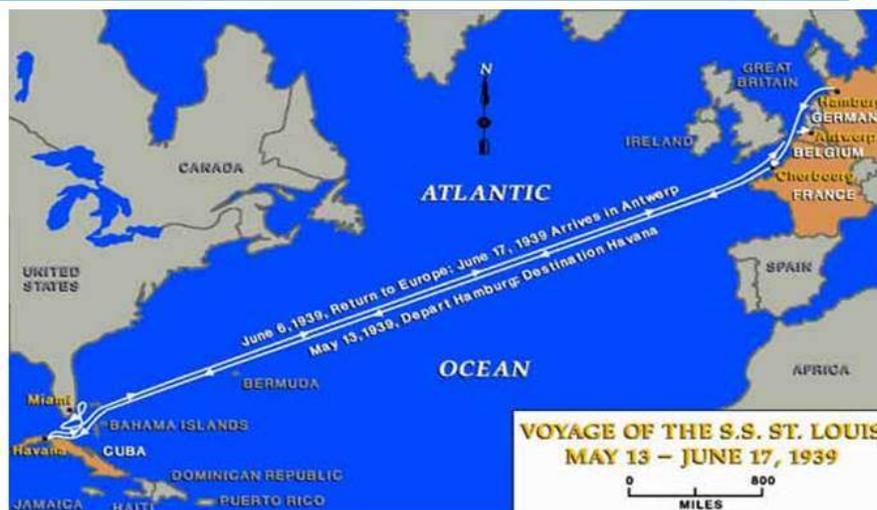
Amnesty

- Four weeks to the day after the St. Louis had set sail from Hamburg, the Belgian King and Prime Minister agreed that 200 passengers could land in Belgium.
- Within a further three days on June 13 the British, French and Dutch governments each agreed to grant temporary asylum for the refugees until homes in other countries could be found.
- The ship docked in Antwerp and the passengers were dispersed to their various destinations.

Fate of the passengers

- Following the German invasion of Europe, many of the former St. Louis passengers found themselves again under Nazi rule and did not survive the Holocaust.
- Most of the survivors were those who were granted refuge in Great Britain.

The journey



Discussion/Response

- Why did the United States not intervene?

Follow up

- Choose one activity to complete on your own
 - Research one of the survivors of the SS Saint Louis and prepare a report to the group/class
 - Research the immigration policies of the following countries from 1930-1939 and prepare a report to the group/class
 - England
 - France
 - The United States
 - Canada

Sources

- <http://www.blechner.com/ssstlouis/>
- <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/stlouis.html>
- <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005267>

THE EVIAN CONFERENCE

Structured Academic Controversy

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- **Did the West Do All That It Could Before the Beginning of WWII to Assist Potential and Actual Refugees of the Holocaust?**

WHAT DO WE KNOW?

- Before we begin, do a brainstorm in your comp book
 - What do you know about the Holocaust?
 - Important to remove misconceptions before we begin
 - Can you translate the slogan *Arbeit Macht Frei*?



KEY TERMINOLOGY AND TIMELINE

- 1932 – Nazi party wins seats in parliament
- 1933 – Hitler appointed chancellor
- Term: Antisemitism - Hatred toward Jews in thought or action



- 1933 – Reichstag Fire
- 1933 – Enabling Acts
 - Allows emergency powers for Hitler for 4 years

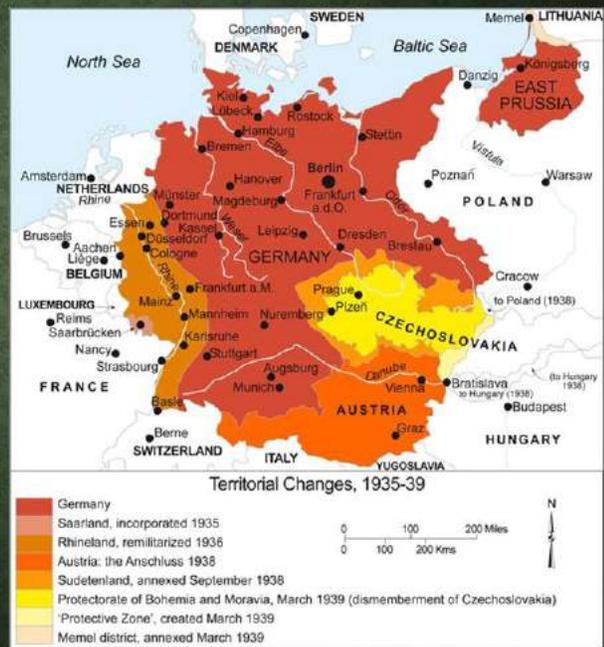


- 1935 – Nuremberg Race Laws
 - Law for the Protection of Blood and Honor
 - Who you can marry
 - Reich Citizenship Law
 - Who is a citizen
- Once it becomes a law, it no longer is considered discrimination



Hitler gobbles up territory

- 1936 – Rhineland
- 1938 – Austria
- 1938 – Czechoslovakia



Kristallnacht "Night of Broken Glass"

- November 1938
- Over 1000 synagogues burned
- Over 7500 businesses destroyed
- 30,000 arrested and sent to concentration camps
- The signal to leave for most of the Jews left
- Term: pogrom

Violent riot aimed at a group



PREPARATION FOR S.A.C.

- Go to the US Holocaust Museum website (www.ushmm.org)
- Click on US Visa Requirements
- Read what it takes to emigrate to the United States from Germany at this time
- Review the Evian Conference information to prepare for the S.A.C.



EVIAN CONFERENCE

- The Évian Conference was convened at the initiative of US President Franklin D. Roosevelt in July 1938 to respond to the plight of the increasing numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing murderous persecution in Europe by the Nazis
- Hitler essentially said that other nations would agree to take the Jews, he would help them leave:
“I can only hope and expect that the other world, which has such deep sympathy for these criminals [Jews], will at least be generous enough to convert this sympathy into practical aid. We, on our part, are ready to put all these criminals at the disposal of these countries, for all I care, even on luxury ships.”
- No countries agreed to change their immigration policy

STRUCTURED ACADEMIC CONTROVERSY

- You and your partner will become familiar with one side of this argument of our essential question
- Today your job is to prepare the argument by taking 20 minutes to read the PRO or CON argument related to your side
- Take 20 minutes to read it carefully, using all of the reading strategies we practice
 - Using context
 - Looking up words we don't know
- Write down the 3 best arguments for your side in your comp book along with the evidence you would use to support each of your arguments.

PROCESS

- Yes side presents their 4 arguments
- No side restates their argument (support team)
- No side presents their 4 arguments
- Yes side restates their argument (support team)
- Reach consensus – abandon your 'side' and identify the differences

Structured Academic Controversy (SAC): Evian Conference Viewpoints

The following pages (40-49) accompany Activity 2, page 23

STUDENT HANDOUT

Viewpoint: Yes.

Though the Evian Conference failed to provide substantial relief to Jews fleeing Nazi oppression, the failure was systemic rather than intentional.

Modern, sovereign states have limited means to influence each other's behaviors. They can offer incentives, ranging from improved diplomatic relations to outright bribes, to encourage a neighboring state to continue doing something, to stop doing something, or not to begin doing something. They can also threaten or impose sanctions, ranging from a diplomatic snub to a full-scale military assault. When diplomats have neither carrot nor stick, they are left with the far weaker tools of moral suasion, saying, in effect, "you should do this because it is the right thing and will benefit you in the long run even if it seems ill advised right now." Such efforts are rarely effective unless the cost involved—political or otherwise—is small and the perceived moral good is strong.

It was this last, weak diplomatic tool that the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) had available to it as it tried to find an international solution to the growing refugee crisis sparked by official anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany (which in 1938 included Austria and parts of Czechoslovakia). What came to be called the Evian Conference (6–15 July 1938) failed to provide substantial relief to Jewish refugees, not because it was intended to fail but because the problem—half a million Jews stripped of their financial resources and desperate to flee— could only be resolved by governments not allied with Nazi Germany acting in ways that were, at the time, clearly against their perceived national interest. Only when the full meaning of Nazi tyranny and anti-Semitism became clear near the end of World War II (1939–1945) would some of the barriers to Jewish immigration be rescinded by the same nations that had failed to act at Evian. By then, of course, when the moral necessity could not be evaded, the clock had run out on diplomacy and millions of European Jews were already dead.

The most common criticism of American involvement at Evian holds that the conference was proposed by President Roosevelt as a means of providing political cover for the administration's unwillingness to ruffle isolationist and nativist feathers by increasing the small numbers of refugees admitted to the United States. In 1938, after all, the president was running for an unprecedented third term in office and could ill afford to antagonize voters who already suspected him of being too willing to get the United States involved in another European conflict. Because the economy had yet to recover from nearly a decade of depression, admitting more than a token number of Jewish refugees, most of whom would need to look for work, would only add to the lingering unemployment crisis. Even Jewish organizations hesitated to support increasing immigration to the United States since the only thing preventing the Nazis from expelling the entirety of Germany's Jewish population was the lack of any place to send them. Certainly what neither Roosevelt nor any other head of state could afford to do was to offer to receive a large number of impoverished refugees. The only possible solution to the refugee crisis that the Nazis were causing, short of a policy change in Germany, was for a substantial number of nations to accept a larger number of Jewish refugees. Any country that tried to solve the problem alone would court political disaster. But a broad-based agreement to share the refugee burden could, Roosevelt had reason to believe, succeed. The challenge became, then, getting governments to the table and persuading them to pay a modest political cost for a substantial moral good. Success was never very likely, but neither was it impossible. The political obstacles simply overwhelmed good intentions.

The political obstacles were substantial. Roosevelt wanted a solution to the refugee crisis but was limited by existing immigration laws. The laws, revised in 1921 and 1924 under Presidents Warren G. Harding and Calvin Coolidge, set specific quotas for foreign countries based on the population origins of Americans residing in the United States in 1890. These laws were directed at eastern Europeans (especially from Russia and Poland), Italians, and Asians. The total number of immigrants allowable per year was set at 153,774 (65,721 from Great Britain and 25,957 from Germany). President Herbert Hoover mandated that no immigrant would be admitted who could become a public charge. This provision, coupled with the Nazis' seizure of Jewish assets and funds, made it difficult for German Jews to enter the country.

FDR had stated that he would not ask Congress to liberalize immigration laws or to increase the size of the quota. He knew that his administration faced political risk in promoting Jewish immigration into the United States. Gallup polls from June 1936 to January 1938, published in *Time* magazine, revealed that approximately 65 percent of Americans were against Roosevelt seeking a third term. A *Fortune Magazine* poll, conducted during June 1938, demonstrated that 67.4 percent of Americans agreed that "with conditions as they are we should try to keep (refugees) out." In addition, 18.2 percent of respondents said, "We should allow them to come but not ruin our immigration quotas," and 4.9 percent favored increasing the quota. The rest were undecided.

Many American Jews were not in favor of admitting refugees. In April 1938 the *Jewish Examiner*, a Brooklyn newspaper, conducted a survey of Jewish opinion. Among the replies only two out of six Jewish congressmen were in favor of easing quotas. Three rabbis feared that any quota increase might arouse a public backlash.

The Great Depression (1929–1941), with its widespread unemployment, fostered anti-immigrant attitudes, prejudice, fear of foreign competition and alien ideologies such as communism, and worries that refugees would become public charges dependent on taxpayer money. An opinion poll for March 1938, at the time of the *Anschluss* (annexation of Austria), revealed that 41 percent of Americans believed that "Jews have too much power in the US"; for example, that they controlled finance, commerce, and entertainment. One-fourth of respondents were in favor of banning Jews from "government and politics," and one-fifth favored expelling Jews from the United States. Nineteen percent were in support of an antisemitic campaign in the United States. A Gallup poll conducted the same year revealed that 72 percent of Americans believed "We should not allow a larger number of Jewish exiles from Germany into the US" and 52 percent were opposed to contributing "money to help Jewish and Catholic exiles from Germany settle in other lands."

Nativistic (100 percent Americanism) nationalists within Congress, such as Representative John Rankin (D-Mississippi), Representative Martin Dies Jr. (D-Texas), Senator Robert Reynolds (D-North Carolina), and Senator Rufus Holman (R-Oregon), frequently promoted anti-immigrant and restrictionist legislation. They were concerned that aliens would steal American jobs, consume resources that belonged to American citizens, and endanger American culture. Senator Reynolds, before an immigration subcommittee, asked, "Why should we give up those blessings to those not so fortunate? ... Let Europe take care of its own people. We cannot take care of our own, to say nothing of importing more to care for." Representative Thomas Jenkins (R-Ohio) complained that Roosevelt had embarked "on a visionary excursion into the warm fields of altruism. He forgets the cold winds of poverty and penury that are sweeping over the one third of our people who are ill-clothed, ill-housed, ill-fed." He said the president was proposing to "violate the immigration policies under which the nation is supposed to have been operating for the past seven or eight years. For years the policy has been to stay within ten percent of quotas."

The natural refuge for many Zionist Jews was Palestine, which in 1938 was administered by the British government as a mandated territory. But because the British government had no wish to alienate the Arab states on whose behalf they were theoretically administering Palestine, they insisted that the subject of Palestine not be raised at Evian. Since no solution to the refugee problem could be achieved without the British present, Myron C. Taylor, the head of the American delegation, agreed not to permit the issue to be raised since, as the American Consul General in Jerusalem, Wallace Murray, wrote, "These questions would stir up bitter passions and might even lead to a disruption of the Committee's labors." Zionist organizations, therefore, lost interest in any proposed solution to dealing with Jewish immigration that would of necessity leave out any discussion of Palestine. While Palestine could not have absorbed more than a small percentage of German Jews, its exclusion from the agenda at Evian set the tone for what was to come.

Furthermore, the countries being asked to accept refugees were, no matter how well intentioned, ill equipped to absorb large numbers of refugees into their economies and cultures. This reality was exacerbated by the racism and anti-Semitism endemic in some of the states, including the United States, most able to absorb refugees. It was this outlook that dominated the conference and continues to give the Evian Conference a reputation for cultivated indifference. Thomas W. White, the Australian delegate, is most often quoted in this context when he defended Australia's policy of not admitting more than a few hundred Jewish immigrants a year. Though Australia was actively seeking immigrants from Britain, Canada, and the United States at the time, the number of Jews admitted could not be increased, "since we have no actual race problem, we are not desirous of introducing one among us by encouraging any sort of plan of foreign migration in considerable proportions." White was clearly not considering Australia's treatment of its Aborigine population as constituting a "race problem," but as distasteful as his words might be, he was diplomatically asserting that the political and social cost of opening up his country to Jewish refugees would be greater than the Australian government was then willing to pay. As obsessed as many Australians were with keeping Australia "white" and "British," White's language could be seen more charitably as a statement of fact rather than of indifference. In fact, Australia agreed several months later to receive fifteen thousand immigrants over three years, though only nine thousand were taken in from 1933 to 1943. Most of the thirty-one other governments represented at Evian made similar claims: the economic, social, and political risks involved in becoming a place of refuge for German Jews, no matter how desperate their circumstances, was greater than they could bear. Countries such as Australia and Argentina needed farmers, not businessmen. And no one wanted to admit refugees who would require public assistance.

Nazi policy, however, ensured that most Jews would find it impossible to leave Germany with more than the clothes they wore. German economic policy aimed to impoverish German and Austrian Jews by seizing their assets. In 1933 emigrants from Germany were allowed to retain 75 percent of the value of their assets. This percentage was later decreased to 15 percent, and by 1938 it was reduced to 5 percent. It was this policy of economic spoliation that did the most to prevent the Evian Conference from succeeding.

During the opening of the Evian Conference, the British ambassador in Berlin asked German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop whether the Reich government would allow refugees to retain enough capital to allow resettlement. Von Ribbentrop replied that "This was an internal German problem that was not subject to discussion. The question whether Germany could facilitate the transfer of capital in Jewish hands had to be answered in the negative, since a transfer of the capital accumulated by the Jews—especially after the war—could not be expected of Germany. Cooperation with the powers at present in session at Evian was therefore out of the question for Germany." Germany intended to expel its Jewish population in such a way that the refugees would be seen as an intolerable burden on the rest of the world.

Most of the countries represented at Evian would have increased their refugee quotas—and several ultimately did—but no one was willing to go first and risk solving everyone else’s moral problem at the expense of his own political career. This frame of reference was aided, of course, by the assembly’s decision not to give the victims a voice in the discussion. In this way, the governments represented at Evian continued to look at Jewish suffering as simply another aspect of the Jewish Question that had become a staple of European diplomacy. Assuming that the Jewish Question had no solution, and not imagining that Adolf Hitler was on the verge of proposing a “final” solution, the Evian Conference met with a “business as usual” attitude, desiring to do something but hoping that someone else would take the first step. When no one did, the conference disbanded. German and Austrian Jews, hemmed in and abandoned, saw their last hope of relief drowned. But the fault was neither with Roosevelt nor with an indifferent international community. The Nazi government, not yet decided on extermination but not wanting the Jews to leave Germany with any resources making resettlement possible, created insurmountable obstacles at Evian. A stronger commitment to justice on the part of the Americans or the British might have made a difference, but such altruism was no more common at Evian than at any other international conference before or since.

–TANDY MCCONNELL, COLUMBIA COLLEGE

Structured Academic Controversy (SAC): Evian Conference Viewpoints

STUDENT HANDOUT

Viewpoint: No. The Evian Conference was intended only as a politically expedient means of avoiding action to assist the Jews

The Evian Conference (6–15 July 1938) was planned and implemented to provide political cover to the participating governments and to justify their unwillingness to assist Jewish refugees from Nazi oppression. It was never intended to do anything else.

On 12 March 1938 German troops marched over the Austrian border and received the flowers and cheers of thousands of Austrians. This act, marking the beginning of the *Anschluss* (annexation of Austria) into the Third Reich, drastically altered the situation of the Austrian Jews. Whereas in Germany, beginning in April 1933, anti-Jewish laws and regulations were gradually introduced, within Austria these policies, including the Nuremberg Laws, were enacted rapidly over a two-to-three-month period.

The perilous position of Jews within Austria was widely recognized. *The New York Times* reported on 13 March from Vienna: “Beating of Jews and plundering of Jewish owned stores increased today.”

Jews were disappearing from Vienna life. Few, if any, were to be seen on the streets or in the coffee houses. Some were asked to leave streetcars. Others were not molested if they gave the Hitler salute. One man was beaten and left wounded in the street. Another, leaving a café, was beaten while his wife looked on.

Israel Cohen, sent by the World Zionist Organization in London to Vienna, saw “Thousands of Jews ... besieging the Embassies and Consulates of different Governments in frantic efforts to obtain visas. Their state of despair was evidenced by the fact that they began queuing up at midnight, members of a family relieving one another, so as to make sure of being admitted into the coveted presence the following day.”

Austrian Jews, like those whose experience of Nazi rule in Germany had preceded theirs by five years, wanted desperately to flee and looked to British-controlled Palestine, the United States, Great Britain, and elsewhere for refuge. The Jewish population of Germany numbered approximately 500,000 in 1933 and represented less than 1 percent of the total population. By 1938 about 150,000 German Jews had managed to emigrate. After Germany annexed Austria, 185,000 more Jews were brought under Nazi rule. Following the occupation of the Sudetenland, Bohemia, and Moravia in 1938–1939, an additional 115,000 Jews were added to Greater Germany.

The goal of the first phase of Nazi anti-Jewish policy was to make Greater Germany *judenrein* (Jew-free) by means of forced emigration. This goal was to be accomplished by seizing Jewish assets and property, by eliminating Jews from the workforce, and by using terror. The plight of these Jews, and fears of mass migrations, led to calls for an international solution to this refugee crisis.

The U.S. State Department was concerned that these Nazi anti-Jewish policies would force large numbers of Jews to flee the Reich and to seek refuge in the United States. The State Department viewed an international conference as a means of placing President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the forefront of efforts to find places of safety for refugees while avoiding domestic demands for an increase in the immigration quota and a change in American immigration policies. An internal State Department memorandum acknowledged that the purpose of the American proposal was “to get out in front” of liberal opinion, especially commentary from such influential columnists as Dorothy Thompson and “certain Congressmen with metropolitan constituencies,” and attempt to guide the pressure to increase Jewish immigration “primarily with a view to forestalling attempts to have the immigration laws liberalized; to seize initiative before pressure built and to spread responsibility among the 32 nations [which attended the conference] instead of us.”

On 25 March 1938 the State Department called for an international conference to discuss the refugee situation. The language proposing the conference was decidedly noncommittal: “Our idea is that whereas such representatives would be designated by the governments concerned, any financing of the emergency emigration referred to would be undertaken by private organizations with the respective countries. Furthermore, it should be understood that no country would be expected or asked to receive a greater number of immigrants than is permitted by its existing legislation.”

President Roosevelt indicated that the German and Austrian quotas would be combined, providing approximately twenty-six thousand slots for refugees, but no new slots would be created. In other words, the president was expressly unwilling to take the one action the crisis demanded.

Undersecretary of State Sumner Wells recommended to the president that the American delegation be led by Secretary of State Cordell Hull, accompanied by Francis Perkins, Secretary of Labor, and George Messersmith, head of the Foreign Service Personnel Board. Wells also suggested himself as the other delegate. However, Roosevelt selected a lower profile delegation. Myron C. Taylor—a strong advocate of refugee causes, a Quaker, former head of U.S. Steel, and Roosevelt friend—was named as head of the delegation with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinaire and Plenipotentiary. The other members of the U.S. delegation included James G. McDonald, presidential adviser on refugee affairs; George L. Warren, executive secretary of the Committee on Political Refugees; and several technical assistants. None of these delegates carried much political weight.

There was also concern at the State Department that eastern European countries such as Poland, Rumania, and Hungary were planning to expel their own Jews. Such an action, it was felt, could dissuade other nations from liberalizing their respective immigration policies and lead to more “refugee dumping.” The Roosevelt administration therefore planned to limit discussion at the refugee conference strictly to German and Austrian refugees. It also avoided any reference to Jews, choosing instead the more neutral term “political refugees.”

The State Department had hoped to hold the conference in Geneva, Switzerland, but the Swiss, wary of offending Germany and conscious of their own restrictive immigration policies, declined. The French government offered the Hotel Royal, located in the spa town of Evian-les-Bains, lying on the French shore of Lake Geneva, as the conference site.

The U.S. government sent a proposed agenda to participating governments and to refugee organizations that wished to be present as observers:

“To consider what steps can be taken to facilitate the settlement in other countries of political refugees from Germany (including Austria). The term ‘political refugees,’ for the purposes of the present meeting, is intended to include persons who desire to leave Germany as well as those who have already done so.

To consider what immediate steps can be taken, within the existing immigration laws and regulations of the receiving countries, to assist the most urgent cases. It is anticipated that this would involve each participating government furnishing, in so far as may be practicable, for the strictly confidential information of the Committee, a statement of its immigration laws and practices and its present policy regarding the reception of immigrants. It would be helpful for the committee to have a general statement from each participating government of the number and type of immigrants it is now prepared to receive or that it might consider receiving.

To consider a system of documentation, acceptable to the participating states, for those refugees who are unable to obtain requisite documents from other sources.

To consider the establishment of a continuing body of governmental representatives, to be set up in some European capital, to formulate and to carry out, in cooperation with existing agencies, a long range program looking toward the solution or alleviation of the problem in the larger sense.”

Taylor held preliminary discussions in Europe with other diplomats, which established further ground rules for the conference:

“Stress should be laid on the fact that Evian will be a confidential meeting of representatives of governments and not a public conference where all sorts of ideas will be aired to the press and to the general public. In consequence there should be only one public session at the outset where general statements may be made. Thereafter the meeting should go into executive session and a formal declaration should be given out for publication.

In view of the fact that most of the delegates to the Evian meeting must be in Paris by July 19 when the King of England will make his state visit it will be advisable to adjourn the conference at Evian on July 17 with the understanding that it will resume in Paris if necessary after the King’s visit.”

The British accepted the invitation with the stipulations that Palestine would not be discussed at the conference and that the United States would guarantee that the United Kingdom would not be pressured to accept more Jewish refugees into Palestine. Taylor, during a preliminary meeting with the British delegation, indicated that American Jewish leaders had approached him to allow Chaim Weizmann, the head of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, to meet him in private session to present the argument that Palestine offered the best haven for Jewish refugees. However, Sir Michael Palairret, deputy head of the British delegation, declared that the British government “would naturally prefer that this meeting should not take place” Taylor agreed and promised not to talk to Weizmann prior to the conference.

The U.S. State Department also agreed to avoid the issue of Palestine. In a cable from the Chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs (Wallace Murray) to the Consul General at Jerusalem (Wadsworth), Murray wrote:

“It is highly probable that various groups will endeavor to induce the representatives of the governments participating in the meeting to take up the question of immigration into Palestine. It is felt that the Committee should reject any attempts to interject into its considerations such political issues as are involved in the Palestine, the Zionist and anti-Zionist questions. These questions would stir up bitter passions and might even lead to a disruption of the Committee’s labors.”

The Evian Conference was planned around six public sessions and one private session of all the delegations. Two subcommittees would perform the actual work of the conference. The first subcommittee, chaired by Judge Michel Hansson of Norway, would examine the legal aspects of emigration. It would evaluate the laws of the participating countries regarding the treatment of refugees, the numbers of immigrants each nation would accept, and details concerning the documentation of aliens. This subcommittee consisted of the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Holland, and Switzerland. Unfortunately, many of the delegates, indulging in the recreational activities of the Evian region, did not attend the meetings. Hansson was forced to publicly ask representatives from twenty countries to attend meetings.

The other subcommittee, chaired by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas W. White, the Australian Minister of Commerce, would hear statements from the thirty-nine refugee organizations attending the conference, of which twenty were Jewish. The subcommittee decided to limit its hearings to only “those organizations concerned with the relief of political refugees from Germany (including Austria)” It also determined that each organization would be allowed only one speaker, who could speak for a maximum of ten minutes. Eventually, this time limit was decreased to five minutes. Clearly, hearing, even indirectly, from the refugees on whose behalf the conference had been called was not a priority. The subcommittee refused to allow representatives of Austrian refugee organizations to attend the meetings. An Austrian, Artur Rosenberg, representing the Austrian Refugee Foundation, said this refusal was “scandalous, since the committee was called to discuss our own people”

Nearly twenty-five delegates spoke at the Evian Conference explaining why, although greatly sympathetic, their respective countries were unable to accept refugees. White said that Jewish immigration into Australia numbered annually in the hundreds, but that his country could not take more, for it is understandable, that in a young country, the human influx that one prefers would be that which comes from the source where the majority of its citizens originated, and it would not be possible to grant unjustifiable privileges to a non-British category of subjects without injustice for the others. It is also no doubt understandable that, since we have no actual race problem, we are not desirous of introducing one among us by encouraging any sort of plan of foreign migration in considerable proportions.

This almost universal reluctance to receive Jewish refugees was not lost on the Nazis. German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, in a memo to Adolf Hitler, described a conversation he had with French foreign minister George Bonnet:

“Bonnet said that in the first place they did not want to receive any more Jews from Germany and (asked) whether we could not take some sort of measures to keep them from coming to France, and in the second place France had to ship 10, 000 Jews somewhere else. They were actually thinking of Madagascar for this. ... I replied to M. Bonnet that we all wanted to get rid of our Jews but that the difficulties lay in the fact that no country wished to receive them.”

Ironically, von Ribbentrop's cynicism was almost matched by some Zionist groups. When Arthur Ruppin, a prominent economist and sociologist, met with Zionist immigration experts to discuss the implications of the Evian Conference, he noted that Palestine had limited potential to absorb immigrants and that the British would not allow increased Jewish immigration there. He recommended that Jews should settle in other areas first in order to expedite their exodus from Germany and Austria. He urged Zionists who would be attending the conference to work toward such a goal.

Yitzhak Gruenbaum, at a session of the Jewish Agency Executive, took a contrary view and stated:

"Palestine might cease totally to be regarded as a country suitable for immigration.... There is a danger that in the course of the search for a country of refuge some other, new territory will be found to which, so it will be desired, Jewish migration will be directed. We for our part must defend the principle that it is only in Palestine that Jewish settlement can succeed and there can be no question at all of an alternative to it."

David Ben-Gurion, future prime minister of Israel, agreed with Gruenbaum and felt that acceptance of Ruppin's idea would diminish pressure on the British to open up Palestine for immigration and that it could potentially interfere with Zionism's assertion of an historic right to the land of Palestine. Although Ben-Gurion knew Palestine was not ready to accept large numbers of refugees, he continued to demand a linkage of refugee resettlement to Palestine. Ben-Gurion also believed that the "more we say about the terrible distress of the Jewish masses in Germany, Poland, and Rumania the more damage we shall inflict [on our own position] in the current negotiations [on the future of Palestine]". Thus, German Jews came to be regarded as unwanted pawns in a life-and-death game of meaningless diplomacy. Given Nazi Germany's determination to resolve its "Jewish Question" one way or another, the seeds of the "Final Solution" might reasonably be seen as having been sown at Evian.

The accomplishments of the Evian Conference were virtually null. The final resolution called for the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees, based in London and chaired by Lord Winterton, with an American director, George Rublee. The aim of this committee was twofold: to negotiate with the German government to re-establish a system of orderly emigration and to confidentially obtain information regarding the immigration policies of potential countries of resettlement. Neither proved meaningful in actually rescuing Jews from Nazism.

Delegates to the Evian Conference and their respective governments expressed great sympathy for the plight of Jews and non-Jewish "Aryans" who sought to flee Germany. However, this sympathy was not translated into effective action. The democracies lacked sufficient political and moral will to confront the anti-Jewish policies of the German government, which were the ultimate cause of the refugee dilemma. The message sent to the Nazis by the failure of the conference was clear: while the West might criticize the actions of the Reich, these countries did not want the Jews either. It took no great leap for Hitler and Heinrich Himmler to persuade themselves that no one in the West would seriously object to extermination either.

On 12 September 1938 Hitler spoke to a Nazi Party congress in Nuremberg and commented on the hypocrisy of the democracies toward Jewish refugees:

“They complain ... of the boundless cruelty with which Germany—and now Italy also— seek to rid themselves of their Jewish elements. All these great democratic empires taken together have only a handful of people to the square kilometer. Both in Italy and Germany there are over 140. Yet, formerly Germany, without blinking an eyelid, for whole decades admitted these Jews by the hundred thousand. But now ... when the nation is no longer willing to be sucked dry by these parasites, on every side one hears nothing but laments. But lamentations have not led these democracies to substitute helpful activity at last for their hypocritical questions; on the contrary these countries with icy coldness assured us that obviously there was no place for Jews in their territory.... So no help is given, but morality is saved.”

Although the democracies cannot be blamed for the Holocaust, it is clear that their failure to accept Jewish refugees led to catastrophe for German and Austrian Jews. Since the vast majority of Jews murdered by the Nazis was Polish, Lithuanian, and Russian, the Evian Conference could not have affected their fate one way or the other. But Western indifference to the Jews was not without effect. The 24 November 1938 issue of *Das Schwarze Korps*, the official publication of the SS, described how the progressive impoverishment of Jews would force Jews into a life of crime: “If things were to develop in this way we would be faced with the harsh necessity of having to exterminate the Jewish underground in the same manner as we are used to exterminating criminals in our Order State: with fire and sword. The result would be the actual and definite end of Jewry in Germany—its complete destruction”

The Evian Conference was doomed to fail for a variety of reasons. The American invitation to attend the conference specified that participating nations would not have to change their respective immigration laws and quotas and that any cost would have to be borne by private organizations. Roosevelt selected a nondiplomat with little public standing to head the American delegation. The Roosevelt administration did not attempt to garner public or political support for accepting a larger number of refugees. The Great Depression, unemployment, anti-Semitism, fear of aliens, and isolationism were additional factors fostering anti-immigrant attitudes. The subject of Palestine as a potential haven was not discussed. Jewish groups could not agree on a unified policy toward immigration and failed to send high-level representation to the conference. Finally, the sole accomplishment of the conference, the creation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Political Refugees, failed in its mission to persuade nations to offer realistic opportunities for resettlement or to convince the German government to allow refugees to retain enough financial assets to reestablish themselves in a new life.

Perhaps the essence of the Evian Conference is best expressed by the comments of the Chief Concierge of the Hotel Royal in Evian:

“Very important people were here and all the delegates had a nice time. They took pleasure cruises on the lake. They gambled at night at the casino. They took mineral baths and massages at the *Etblissement Thermal*. Some of them took the excursion to Chamonix to go summer skiing. Some went riding: we have, you know, one of the finest stables in France. But, of course, it is difficult to sit indoors hearing speeches when all the pleasures that Evian offers are outside.”

—DENNIS LAFFER, TAMPA, FLORIDA

STUDENT HANDOUT

Accompanies Activity 3, page 24

Diary Entry of Klaus Langer (Essen, Germany)

December 19, 1938

“Regarding the emigration of my parents, I have the following to report. First came two refusals from Argentina for lack of letters of credit. The rich uncle in America is unable to assume such a financial responsibility. We don’t have an affidavit for the U.S. India requires firm employment there or a contract. Father is now trying to make connections in India to obtain a contract.” He also wrote to Peru and he was told to go to the Uruguayan consulate. Allegedly the Dominican Republic would take ten thousand Jews and provide them with visas. However, nothing further is known about that. It probably makes no sense to turn to them. However, with a Dominican Republic visa it is possible to get a half-year visa for Palestine...”

Source: Klaus Langer, “December 19. 1938” in *Salvaged Pages*, ed. Alexandra Zapruder (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2002), 24.

Those who refused to turn away

Yad Vashem - the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Authority

Yad Vashem, in Israel, commemorates the heroism and fortitude of the Jewish partisans, fighters in the Ghetto revolts, as well as the actions of the "Righteous Among the Nations" (non-Jews who saved the lives of Jews).

More about the "Righteous Among the Nations" can be found here:
<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/index.asp>.

Martin Niemöller – outspoken foe of Hitler – spent 7 years in a concentration camp

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out--Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out-- Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out-- Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me--and there was no one left to speak for me.





Courage – the state of mind that enables one to face danger, hardship, or uncertainty with composure and resolve

- What makes one courageous? Can we all exhibit this important human trait? What happens when one or all fail to exhibit courage?
- Let's read about two examples of amazing courage
 - **Marion van Binsbergen Pritchard** - <http://digitalassets.ushmm.org/photoarchives/detail.aspx?id=19883>
 - **Irena Sendler** - <https://jfr.org/rescuer-stories/sendler-irena/>

Characteristics of Rescuers

Accompanies Activity 5, pages 26

According to Nechama Tec, professor of Sociology at the University of Connecticut and expert on the rescue of Jews during World War II, there is *“a set of interdependent characteristics and conditions that Holocaust rescuers share:”*

1. They don't blend into their communities.

This makes them less controlled by their environments and more inclined to act on their own principles.

2. They are independent people and know it.

They do what they feel they must do, what is right, and the right thing is to help others.

3. They have a long history of doing good deeds.

4. Because they have done the right thing for a long time, it doesn't seem extraordinary to them.

If you consider something your duty, you do it automatically.

5. They choose to help without rational consideration.

6. They have universalistic perceptions that transcend race and ethnicity.

They can respond to the needy and helpless because they identify with victims and injustice.

** Taken from *Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust* by Gay Block and Malka Drucker, Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1992.

PART 4: Camps and Ghettos

Text from Holocaust Center for Humanity exhibit:

The Nazis isolated Jews by forcing them into ghettos. The Nazi “Final Solution” in 1942 called for the destruction of the entire Jewish population. Jews were rounded up, killed, deported to killing centers, or sent to forced labor camps. Even in the harshest conditions, Jews resisted physically and spiritually.

On September 1, 1939, the German army invaded Poland, which marked the beginning of World War II. Hitler’s goal was to secure more land for the German people and to carry out Nazi racial policies. The Nazis swiftly conquered country after country in Europe.

The Nazis and their collaborators forced Jews to move into crowded, often enclosed, areas called ghettos. Ghettos isolated Jews by separating them from the general population. Over 1,000 ghettos were set up throughout Nazi-occupied territories. In the Warsaw ghetto in Poland, more than 400,000 Jews were packed into an area of 1.3 square miles, with an average of over 7 people per room. With insufficient food and medicine, tens of thousands starved to death or died of disease in the ghettos.

A special group of Nazi SS and police made up the Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units). They were notorious for their brutality and mass murder. The Einsatzgruppen, with support from local civilians and police, went from town to town in the Soviet Union massacring Jews. By the spring of 1943, the Einsatzgruppen had killed over a million Soviet Jews, as well as tens of thousands of political dissidents, partisans, Roma, and disabled persons.

In January 1942, at the Wannsee Conference, high-ranking Nazi Party and German officials met to discuss “The Final Solution to the Jewish Question” – the Nazi plan to get rid of Jews through systematic mass murder. Ghetto occupants were shot in mass graves or deported, usually by train, to killing centers.

The largest of these “death camps” was Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland, which by spring 1943 had four poison gas chambers disguised as showers. Up to 6,000 Jews were gassed there each day. An estimated 1.1 million people were murdered at Auschwitz between 1940 and 1945, including more than a million Jews and tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsies), Poles, and Soviet prisoners of war.

In addition to six killing centers (Auschwitz-Birkenau, Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmno, and Belzec), there were thousands of concentration camps, forced labor camps, and transit camps where treatment was brutal. Over 6 million Jews and millions of others were murdered in the Holocaust.

Included below are a few artifacts/images in the Holocaust Center for Humanity's exhibit. The following artifacts came from the Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum:



child's mug



child's shoe



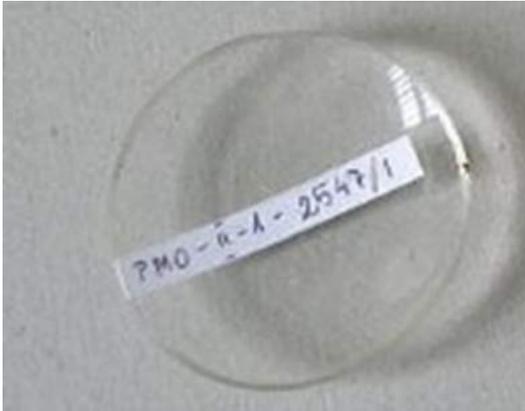
man's shoe



glasses frame



woman's shoe



Glasses lens



powder compact



wooden toothbrush



pocket watch



shoe polish



comb



Nivea cream tin



small suitcase



empty Zyklon B canister

The following artifacts are from the Holocaust Center's collection:



Bowl

Circa 1940-1945

Under the lip of this bowl are the engraved letters 'BMW.' The bowl was owned by a woman in Allach, a sub-camp of Dachau. Known today for manufacturing cars, the Bayerische Motoren-Werke AG used slave laborers drawn from Allach and other camps to produce airplane parts for the Nazis. The bowl was given to Magda Schaloum soon after the war in a displaced persons (DP) camp.



Bowl, Rope, Spoon (Circa 1944)

This bowl and wooden spoon were issued to Mrs. Ilse Wolf (née Huppert) in Lenzing, a sub-camp of Mauthausen operated by the Nazis to provide slave labor for the German company Lenzinger Zellwolle AG. Ilse Wolf was in Lenzing from November 1944 to May 1945. On the bottom of the enamel bowl are the words "Kol Waffen SS, Lublin." A prisoner had to have a bowl in order to receive one's daily ration of food. On the wooden spoon is the number 630, her inmate number. She secretly made the length of rope at a factory in Lenzing, where her forced labor included making synthetic fibers like it. Ilse Wolf used the rope as a belt, tying her food bowl around her waist to keep it with her, ensuring that she could eat.

Donated by Mel Wolf





Ed Kaye (left) and two Polish Partisans

1944
Poland

After escaping the ghetto formed by the Nazis in his hometown of Pruzhany, Poland, Ed Kaye joined partisan resistance groups. Hiding in the forests, Kaye worked to sabotage and fight the Nazis until the end of the war.



Photograph of Thomas Blatt

Circa 1945
Poland

In October 1943, a group of prisoners at the Sobibor death camp carried out a daring revolt, killing SS officers and setting the camp on fire. Thomas Blatt, a teenage boy whose family had been murdered at Sobibor, assisted in the revolt. Over 300 prisoners escaped during the revolt, but only 54 lived until the end of the war, including Blatt. After the uprising, the Germans destroyed all traces of Sobibor. Owned by Thomas Blatt

Jews go through the selection process on the Auschwitz-Birkenau arrival platform known as the 'ramp'

1944, Auschwitz, Poland

The people in the background are on their way to Crematorium II.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Yad Vashem (Public Domain)



**Jews captured during the suppression of the
Warsaw ghetto uprising**

1943

Warsaw, Poland

On April 19, 1943, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising began after German troops entered the ghetto to deport the remaining inhabitants. 750 Jewish fighters fought the German soldiers. The resistance fighters held out for almost a month, but on May 16, 1943, the Germans blew up the Great Synagogue in Warsaw, and the resistance ended. 56,000 Jews were captured. 7,000 of them were shot and the remainder deported to camps.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum,
courtesy of Louis Gonda



The bridge used to travel between the two portions of the Warsaw ghetto

1942 Warsaw, Poland

This wooded bridge connected the small and large portions of the Warsaw ghetto. The street below was not part of the ghetto.

Bild 101I-270-0298-14 Bundesarchiv



Bundesarchiv, Bild 101I-270-0298-14
Foto: Reithel, Juni 1942

**Destitute children sit barefoot on the
pavement in the Warsaw ghetto**

1940-1943

Warsaw, Poland

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum





Women and children being taken to Crematoria IV and V

1944

Auschwitz, Poland

The elderly and the young children were almost always sent immediately to the gas chambers as they were deemed 'unfit for work.'

United States Holocaust Memorial

Museum, courtesy of Yad Vashem (Public Domain)



A man playing accordion leads a group of SS officers in song at the retreat at Solahuette

1944 Near Auschwitz, Poland

This photograph comes from the album of Karl Höcker, an SS officer working in the Neuengamme Concentration Camp, and later in Auschwitz. The album contains 116 photographs and documents recording the lives of officers at Auschwitz during the last six months of the war.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Anonymous Donor

GHETTOS and CAMPS LESSONS

By Branda Anderson, Kamiak High School, Mukilteo

As you learn about and study the Holocaust it is important to understand who was involved. The following terms: victim, perpetrator, collaborator, and bystander are often used to categorize individuals and groups related to their experience and/or involvement in the Holocaust. These terms are generalizations and in reality individuals and groups often move between categories.

<p>Victim - Approximately 11 million people were killed because of Nazi genocidal policy. It was the explicit aim of Hitler's regime to create a European world both dominated and populated by the "Aryan" race. The Nazis were dedicated to killing millions of people it deemed undesirable. Some people were undesirable by Nazi standards because of <i>who they were</i>, their genetic or cultural origins, or health conditions. These included Jews, Gypsies, Poles and other Slavs, and people with physical or mental disabilities. Others were Nazi victims because of <i>what they did</i>. These victims of the Nazi regime included Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, the dissenting clergy, Communists, Socialists, asocials, and other political enemies.</p>	<p>Perpetrator - Although Adolf Hitler is often perceived as the chief perpetrator, there were others. Perpetrators were Nazi party leaders, bankers, professors, military officials, doctors, journalists, engineers, judges, authors, lawyers, salesmen, police, civil servants, and others. Perpetrators committed crimes against Jews and others considered undesirable for many reasons. They wanted power. They believed in an ideology of racial cleansing. They profited financially, displaced their anger from their own failures, or were perhaps "following orders."</p>
<p>Collaborator- Those who helped the Nazis. Collaboration took many forms. There were those who actually assisted the Nazis in the military takeover of their countries, those who fought in various military formations on the side of Germany, those who revealed the names and locations of Jewish partisans or Jews in hiding, those who cooperated with the German government, and those who helped directly or indirectly in the murder of the Jews.</p>	<p>Bystander-The vast majority of people in Germany and occupied Europe were aware, at least to some extent, of how the Nazi regime was treating the Jews. Nevertheless, they took no active position on the matter. They did not openly persecute the Jews but they did not actively help them either.</p>
<p>Upstander - Upstanders embrace the challenge to speak out, do the right thing, and make decisions that help create positive change in our world. They speak up and act in the face of injustice. Upstanders make a conscious choice to step in instead of stand-by. Some of their acts are big and some are little, but none are too small to deserve attention.</p>	

STUDENT HANDOUT

As you address the following questions please keep those above terms in mind.

Define the following terms/ideas in your own words based on what you learn through the exhibit:

- *“final solution”*

- *Ghetto*

- *Einsatzgruppen*



Dorian RYSER, octobre 2008

- Circle any camps/ghettos mentioned in the exhibit on this map.
- As you examine the artifacts in the exhibit, consider the following question and write a brief reflection:

Who benefited from the camps? How would you categorize those who benefited (perpetrator, bystander, collaborator) and why? Explain and give specific examples of artifacts you saw that support your answer.

Siegfried Fedrid

- **Choose one of Mr. Fedrid's artifacts, describe the artifact and explain what the artifact tells the viewer about the victims of the Holocaust.**

Questions to consider: What is the item? Why would Siegfried keep such an item during and after the Holocaust? Why would he want this item displayed in a museum?

Auschwitz Artifacts

- **As you examine the artifacts from Auschwitz, consider the following questions and write a brief reflection:**

What do we learn about the victims by examining the artifacts? Why do you think they had these things when they arrived at Auschwitz? What do we learn about the perpetrators by examining the artifacts. Cite specific items from the display in your | response.

RESISTANCE

Jewish resistance during the Holocaust took many forms, from armed uprisings to efforts to keep Jewish cultural and spiritual identity alive in the ghettos and camps.

After you have completed your tour, reflect on what you have seen as it relates to Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust.

- **Discuss three photos/artifacts that portray the idea of Jewish resistance. (These can be photos of individuals who resisted or artifacts with stories related to resistance.)**

Name the artifact/photo

Describe the artifact/photo

Explain how the artifact/picture portrays an element of Jewish resistance

Choose one of the stories on the Resistance Pillar. Briefly summarize the person who is discussed (who are they, where are they from, what did they do.) Explain how their actions were a form of resistance during the Holocaust.

Based on what you have learned during your visit, what would have created barriers to resistance during the Holocaust? Be specific and explain your thinking. With those barriers in mind, why do you think individuals (and groups) chose to resist the Nazis? Explain your thinking.

CCS Addressed:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3

Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused

Extra information to accompany previous lesson:

Ghettos and Camps

By Ilana Cone Kennedy
Holocaust Center for Humanity

4 things you need to know about ghettos

1. Purpose of ghettos
2. Warsaw ghetto was the largest
3. There were different kinds of ghettos
4. Conditions were terrible in all of the ghettos. Thousands died of disease and starvation.

1. Purpose

- Before 1942 - move Jews out of the way so ethnic Germans could possess the land
- Slave labor
- Short term holding (as in Hungary) then deported to camps



Germany invades Poland, Sept. 1, 1939

2. Warsaw Ghetto Established Oct-Nov 1940



The bridge used to travel between the two portions of the Warsaw ghetto. 1942.
This wooded bridge connected the small and large portions of the Warsaw ghetto.
The street below was not part of the ghetto.



Lodz Ghetto Currency



Lodz ID Card



Theresienstadt Currency



Armband from Theresienstadt

5 things you need to know about camps during the Holocaust

1. There existed different types of camps – language is important
2. Einsatzgruppen
3. Wannsee Conference was a turning point
4. Establishment of death camps
5. Auschwitz-Birkenau was the largest camp complex. How did it work?

True or False?

- Prisoners were tattooed in all camps.
- All camps had gas chambers.
- Gas came out of the showerheads.



Under the lip of this bowl, originally owned by a woman in Allach, a sub-camp of Dachau, are the engraved letters 'BMW.' Known today for manufacturing cars, the *Bayerische Motoren-Werke AG* used slave laborers drawn from Allach and other camps to produce airplane parts for the Nazis. The bowl was given to Magda Schaloum soon after the war in a displaced persons (DP) camp. Magda, a survivor of Auschwitz and other camps, initially kept the bowl since it was useful for cooking and receiving meals while in the DP camp.



Survivor Ilse Wolf received this bowl and spoon while at the Lenzing sub-camp of Mauthausen. The prisoners of Lenzing worked in a factory making synthetic fibers for use in Nazi military supplies. In secret, Ilse created the rope seen here to tie her bowl and spoon to her waist so as not to lose them, since they were the only way she could receive food.



2. Einsatzgruppen



3. Wannsee Conference Jan 1942

- On January 20, 1942, 15 high-ranking Nazi Party and German government officials gathered at a villa in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee to discuss and coordinate the implementation of what they called the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question."

- The "[Final Solution](#)" was the code name for the systematic, deliberate, physical annihilation of the European Jews.

- Not one person objected to the plan.



3. Death Camps Established in Poland 1941 - 1942

- Chelmno
- Belzec
- Sobibor
- Treblinka
- Majdanek
- Auschwitz-Birkenau



Women and Children being taken to Crematoria IV and V, 1944, Auschwitz.
From the Auschwitz Album.

4. Auschwitz-Birkenau



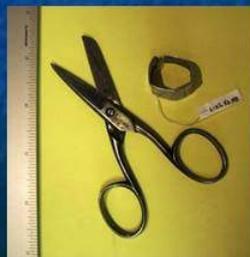
Jews go through selection process on the Auschwitz-Birkenau arrival platform known as the "ramp"



A man playing accordion leads a group of SS officers in song at the retreat at Solahuette. 1944
Near Auschwitz, Poland



Siegfried (Fred) Fedrid



Shirt

Survivor Marian Zelman was given this shirt in Gleiwitz Concentration Camp, a sub-camp of Auschwitz. The tear on the shoulder, which Zelman repaired himself, occurred when an SS soldier threw him into a truck.

Artifacts from Auschwitz Museum



Resistance 3 Stories

- Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
- Thomas Blatt (Sobibor)
- Ed Kaye (Partisans)

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising April – May 1943



Other Stories of Resistance (on the pillar)

- Sugihara
- Leon Matalon
- Martin Metzton
- Irene Opdyke
- Paula Stern

Part 5: Liberation and Post-War

Text from Holocaust Center for Humanity exhibit:

Allied forces witnessed horrific crimes as they moved across Europe from mid-1944 and into 1945. Jewish survivors emerged from hiding, camps, or secret identities. The survivors of the Holocaust, with determination and resilience, spread throughout the globe to rebuild their lives.

By mid-1944, Nazi Germany's stronghold over Europe began to erode. As Allied troops (led by the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union) advanced, the Nazis made attempts to cover up their crimes. The pace of executions increased. Remaining prisoners, starving and diseased, were marched out on foot through snow and freezing conditions in what became known as "death marches." Those who could not keep up were shot on the spot.

When Soviet troops liberated Auschwitz in January 1945, they found abundant evidence of mass murder. Thousands of survivors were left behind, barely alive. There were tens of thousands of dead bodies, supplies of Zyklon B poison gas, and warehouses filled with personal belongings, including hundreds of thousands of men's suits and more than 14,000 pounds of human hair. Jews who had been in hiding throughout Europe cautiously came out.

When the Germans surrendered in May 1945, the war did not end for the survivors. Many required long hospital stays. Displaced persons (DP) camps were established by the Allies to give refuge to the survivors who stayed for weeks, and sometimes years. They searched for family members and friends, or attempted to return home — often finding nothing waiting for them. Their houses and possessions had been stolen from them, and most of their neighbors had turned a blind eye or, worse, played a role in their persecution. The survivors who found their way to the Pacific Northwest came with hopes of freedom and a chance to start a new life.

Below are a few artifacts/images in the Holocaust Center for Humanity's exhibit:

Displaced Persons Camp Photo Album

1945

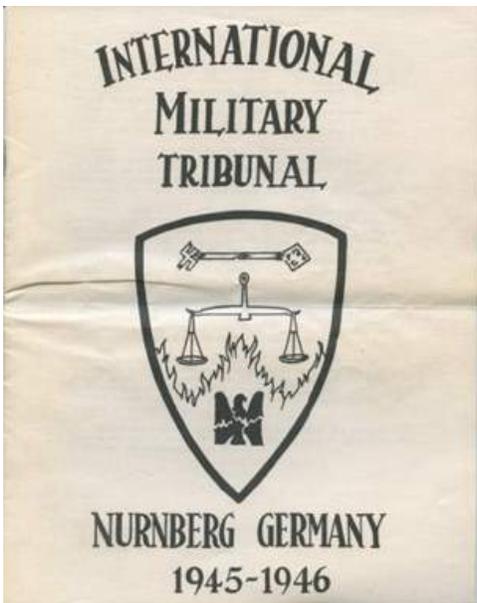
In 1939, at the age of 17, John Rock escaped Nazi-occupied Vienna on the Kindertransport to England. He joined the British army in 1940. After the war Rock worked with the United Nations running displaced persons (DP) camps in Germany for Holocaust survivors. He compiled photo albums depicting important camp events, daily life in the DP camps, and schools for children.



United States Army Dog Tags

1945

The US Army required all officers to wear dog tags for identification in case of casualty. Engraved on these dog tags are Sergeant Douglas Fargo's name and serial number, 36966356. On May 4, 1945, Fargo helped liberate Gunskirchen Lager, a sub-camp at Mauthausen concentration camp in Germany, with the 71st division of the 3rd Army, serving under General George Patton.



International Military Tribunal Program – Nuremberg Trials

1945-1946

After the war, Nazi officials were put on trial by the Allied Powers in Nuremberg, Germany, the former site of the largest Nazi rallies. Wesley O'Donnell, an American who attended the trials, took notes about the defendants in his copy of the tribunal program. He noted that Hermann Goering wore darkened glasses and dozed off during the proceedings.



Secret photograph taken by a German civilian of concentration camp prisoners on a death march from Dachau to Wolfrathausen
1945
Germany

As the Allied military advanced further into Germany, the Germans sought to eliminate evidence of the camps. Thousands of prisoners were forced to walk for days, weeks, or even months. Many people died on these “death marches” from starvation and exposure or were shot by their guards because they could not keep up.



Dachau survivors cheer the arrival of American liberators
1945
Dachau, Germany



German civilians living in a nearby town are forced to view a wagon piled with corpses by U.S. military personnel in the recently liberated Buchenwald Concentration Camp
1945
Buchenwald, Germany



A survivor of Buchenwald Concentration Camp drinks from a metal bowl

1945

Buchenwald, Germany

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park



The defendants at the International Military Tribunal

1945-1946

Nuremberg, Germany

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Albert Rose



Leo Hymas (standing on the far right) and other liberators of Buchenwald and its subcamps

1945

Buchenwald, Germany

Born in 1926 in Idaho, Leo Hymas was drafted into the US Army at age 18 in 1944. Hymas served as a machine gunner under General Patton's Third Army and took part in the liberation of Buchenwald and its subcamps in 1945. Following the end of the war in Europe, Hymas was sent to Japan, where he served under General MacArthur until May of 1946.

Owned by Leo Hymas



Magda Schaloum and her husband, Izak, on their wedding day in a displaced persons camp

1945

Germany

In 1944, at the age of 22, Magda Schaloum was deported from her hometown of Gyor, Hungary to Auschwitz. After working in several slave labor camps, Schaloum was finally liberated by the US Army in 1945. While in a displaced persons camp in Feldafing, Germany, Schaloum met her husband, Izak, a Sephardic native of Salonika, Greece. He had also survived Auschwitz. Izak and Magda Schaloum were married six weeks later while still in the camp. They settled in Seattle in 1951.

Liberation and Post-War—Lessons & Activities

By Chris Ellinger, Mountlake Terrace High School

TEACHER NOTES

This is often a neglected aspect of the Holocaust – what happened when the war ended? What happened to the survivors? The activities connected to this theme will attempt to provide students with the context for what happened to the survivors after the war as well as the punishment delivered to the Nazi's who perpetrated the Holocaust. They will also provide some small answer to the question of how the world attempted to ensure these atrocities would never occur again.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

How can peace settlements shape the future both positively and negatively?

How does society hold each other accountable when acts of ultimate horror are committed?

How does one rebuild a life after surviving the atrocities of the Holocaust?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.9

Analyze seminal U.S. documents of historical and literary significance (e.g., Washington's Farewell Address, the Gettysburg Address, Roosevelt's Four Freedoms speech, King's "Letter from Birmingham Jail"), including how they address related themes and concepts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A

Introduce precise claim(s), distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and create an organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9](#)

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.2

Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

Activity 1: Liberation of the camps

1. Interactive map showing the liberation of the camps.

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_nm.php?ModuleId=10005131&MediaId=7826

2. Testimonies from liberators. Teachers should preview and assign specific stories rather than sending students to the site without guidance.

<http://remember.org/witness/liberators>

3. Excellent lesson plan on liberation from Yad Vashem. There are many options for this activity, from the very brief (short video) to the more comprehensive.

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/lesson_plans/liberation_and_survival.asp

4. Testimony of Leo Hymas, a liberator who lives in Washington State.

<http://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/survivor-stories/leo-h>

Recommendation – show the short video from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum (first link above) which gives a summation of the liberation with a narrated map tutorial.

Follow this introduction with a jigsaw activity where students read first-hand accounts of various liberator stories (second link from remember.org), including those who were liberated and those who witnessed and participated in the liberation.

By assigning each student in a small group one story, they can then share out their findings to the other group members so that they can collectively learn about the complexities of the liberation process.

A great focus question for this activity would be to compare the experiences of former prisoners after the war ends – without a home or place to go, many simply moved to a new camp for displaced persons.

A handout for students is featured in the supplemental materials. For extended opportunities, the third link from Yad Vashem has an excellent lesson plan that deeply explores issues of liberation.

Finally, there is another rich opportunity for a local connection in the story of Leo Hymas, a survivor whose written history is featured in the Holocaust Center’s database and whose photo will be featured in the exhibit.

Activity 2: The Nuremberg Trials

Overview:

This activity will ask students to read information text (non-fiction) to help answer the question, “What are the challenges to an international system of law?”

The article “**The Last Man at Nuremberg**” (article is available [online](#) or as a handout in this packet, pages 92-95) explores the last surviving prosecutor of the Nuremberg trials and explores the challenges of the newly created international criminal court.

A Student Handout for the article is also located in this packet.

Possible discussion questions related to article:

- ⇒ How does one determine the price of a life?
- ⇒ How do you return property when many of the original owners are dead?
- ⇒ How do you convict mass murderers when there is no evidence?
- ⇒ Whose job is it to put these murderers on trial?

This connects to the exhibit by reinforcing the importance of documentation and preserving artifacts not just for remembrance but to prosecute those who perpetuate the crimes.

Students should have a basic understanding of the Trials themselves. [This article from the History channel](#) has a concise summary of the trials as well as a number of short videos from the trials themselves.

Guiding Questions to consider and pose to students:

- ⇒ What were the Nuremberg Trials?
- ⇒ How does a military tribunal differ from a civilian court?
- ⇒ What was new and unique about the attempts to prosecute Nazi war criminals?
- ⇒ How was evidence handled in the trials? (example - were survivors used as witnesses?)

Resources:

“The Last Man At Nuremberg” Article

<http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/05/the-last-man-at-nuremberg/361968/>

History Channel article on the Nuremberg Trials – provides summary, and short videos

<http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/nuremberg-trials>

Activity 3: Creation of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Overview

While both are important events, the emphasis might best be placed on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as one of the greatest positive legacies of World War II.

Students can begin this exploration in a short discussion or journal response to the question – “What is necessary to prosecute those who commit genocide?”

Most will answer evidence, victim accounts, documents, etc., but the reality is that without a legal definition of human rights, it is difficult to prosecute those who attempt to take away human rights.

Students can then read the preamble to the Declaration (full text in the first link) and discuss how it might be used today to defend modern acts of genocide as well as why it is so important to have this concept of human rights written down and disseminated to all.

Links 2-4 below are all supplemental opportunities to explore the United Nations, its history, structure and role in modern world affairs. Also included is a link to a series of YouTube videos of Eleanor Roosevelt, providing original accounts of her efforts to create this pivotal document. It is highly encouraged to have students view at least one video of her speeches to the United Nations.

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

2. PBS lesson plan on the structure and current challenges of the United Nations

http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/lessons_plans/the-united-nations-and-reform/

3. A YouTube link to Eleanor Roosevelt speaking to the United Nations after the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2rDoS7XErcw&index=2&list=PLvaidTBFchHsx9dS_HYkiLqt8UQP70dY

4. A link to the United Nations and a series of student friendly guides that cover many topics related to the United Nations.

<http://unusa.org/global-classrooms-model-un/for-educators/resources/activity-guides>

Activity 4: Where are they now? Local survivors

Overview

This activity is very straightforward but very important in connecting our own community to the Holocaust. Students can explore the biographies and video stories of local survivors from the Holocaust Center for Humanity's website. As in previous activities, there are a number of avenues for students to engage in these histories – on their own, in groups, as a daily introduction before a lesson, etc.

1. This link will take you to the Holocaust Center's database of local survivors and their stories.

<http://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/museum/stories-of-local-survivors>

2. This link will also take you to the Holocaust Center for video narratives of local survivors.

<http://www.holocaustcenterseattle.org/museum/survivor-voices>

Final wrap up and reflection – the legacy

After all of the activities and experiencing the moving and important exhibit, there is one final question to consider that was posed in the Atlantic article for the Nuremberg trials:

What will we do when all of the survivors are gone? How do we make sure to preserve history, especially in the face of those who deny this ever happened?

These are pivotal questions and a strong take away for students as they wrap up this unit of learning. A short discussion, a reflective journal, a brainstorm of how history is preserved or a list of things that every student can do to preserve these stories and the lessons they represent. Perhaps even a teacher guided review of Holocaust denial to show the absolute importance of not only learning the material for yourself, but to preserve it and ensure that the message is accurate for those who follow as well.

JIGSAW ACTIVITY – LIBERATION

Directions to students – in your group of 4, each person reads a different narrative or account of liberation. Complete one of the boxes below based on the account you read. Prepare to hear the findings of your groupmates and take notes on their research in the other 3 boxes.

Worksheet on page 91.

<p>Your research topic: _____</p> <p>Was your story from the perspective of a liberator or someone who was liberated? _____</p> <p>Where were they from? _____</p> <p>Summarize their story, including a list of 3 details of their experience at liberation. (How they survived, how they liberated, feelings/emotions, friends or family that did/didn't make it, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>Describe their experiences after the war if mentioned in the narrative</p>	<p>Your group member's research topic: _____</p> <p>Was your story from the perspective of a liberator or someone who was liberated? _____</p> <p>Where were they from? _____</p> <p>Summarize their story, including a list of 3 details of their experience at liberation. (How they survived, how they liberated, feelings/emotions, friends or family that did/didn't make it, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>Describe their experiences after the war if mentioned in the narrative</p>
<p>Your group member's research topic: _____</p> <p>Was your story from the perspective of a liberator or someone who was liberated? _____</p> <p>Where were they from? _____</p> <p>Summarize their story, including a list of 3 details of their experience at liberation. (How they survived, how they liberated, feelings/emotions, friends or family that did/didn't make it, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>Describe their experiences after the war if mentioned in the narrative</p>	<p>Your group member's research topic: _____</p> <p>Was your story from the perspective of a liberator or someone who was liberated? _____</p> <p>Where were they from? _____</p> <p>Summarize their story, including a list of 3 details of their experience at liberation. (How they survived, how they liberated, feelings/emotions, friends or family that did/didn't make it, etc.)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>Describe their experiences after the war if mentioned in the narrative</p>

ARTICLE: The Last Man at Nuremberg

Accompanies Activity 2, page 87

The life of 95-year-old Benjamin Ferencz, the only living prosecutor from the war-crime trials that followed the Holocaust



Benjamin Ferencz was 27 when the *Einsatzgruppen* trial began in 1947. There were 22 defendants, all men, all members of the German SS. “One of the counsel has characterized this trial as the biggest murder trial in history,” the military tribunal wrote. “In this case, the defendants are not ... charged with sitting in an office hundreds and thousands of miles away from the slaughter.... These men were in the field actively superintending, controlling, directing, and taking an active part in the bloody harvest.” Put simply, the *Einsatzgruppen* were exterminators: Their squads traveled to towns throughout Eastern Europe, rounding up Jews and shooting them with mechanized efficiency. Some mass graves were filled with hundreds of bodies; others, thousands.

Otto Ohlendorf, Paul Blobel, and almost two dozen others led these divisions of Hitler’s army; after the war, they were indicted for crimes against humanity. Benjamin Ferencz was 27, and he was the chief prosecutor responsible for convicting 22 men on trial for murdering 1 million men, women, and children.

In the nearly 70 years since he took part in the trials at Nuremberg, Ferencz has lived a remarkable life. He led efforts to return property to Holocaust survivors after the war and participated in reparations negotiations between Israel and West Germany. He wrote multiple books, including a hefty, two-volume tome outlining his ideas for the body that would later become the International Criminal Court. He fathered four children.



Benjamin Ferencz at the *Einsatzgruppen* trial at Nuremberg.

Now he's 95, and tired. "I'm getting old," he said. "I'm running out of steam. I need help from young people."

To be clear, nothing about Ferencz's demeanor indicates a deficiency of steam. I met him outside of a convention center in Washington, D.C. on a sunny spring day, and as we went through a metal detector inside, he happily showed off his suspenders for the security guard to check. "How old are you? You get around pretty well," the guard said. "For an old guy," Ferencz replied. He pointed a thumb at me. "This is my girlfriend," he added.

We sat on a bench in the sun, and there, he told me about the bodies at Buchenwald. "I saw crematoria still going, the bodies starved, lying dying, on the ground. I've seen the horrors of war more than can be adequately described." He spoke clearly and without much emotion. I heard familiar phrases that stuck out from previous interviews I had read in preparation for our conversation. This was how he had learned to tell his story: straightforward, detached, honest but without too much detail. This, I think, is how he has survived 70 years of recalling exactly what it looks like when thousands of murdered Jews are laid out side-by-side, stacked in piles.

After fighting with an anti-aircraft artillery battalion in the U.S. army during World War II, Ferencz was assigned to General George Patton's office and tasked with helping to establish a war-crimes division. This was not a typical mission, for one good reason: The army had never had a war-crimes division before.

As part of this effort, Ferencz joined the forces that liberated a number of concentration camps in what was then Germany, including Buchenwald and Mauthausen. He collected documentation: the number of bodies, and where they were located; the sanitary conditions of the camps; the files left behind by army officials, including ledgers recording who had died, and when. It was this evidence that eventually led to the speedy conviction of the *Einsatzgruppen* commanders. "I was able to rest my case after two days without calling a single witness—the top-secret documents were indisputable," Ferencz said.

But without his intervention, these men may have never been taken to trial. "The case had not been planned," he said. "When we discovered this evidence, I brought it to General [Telford] Taylor, and I said we have to put on a new trial, and he said we can't." The Pentagon had already planned its schedule of trials, Taylor said, and the war-crimes division faced staffing shortages and budget limitations.

“I said, ‘We can’t let these mass murderers go free—I have the evidence here in my hands’. And he said, ‘Can you do it in addition to your other work? OK, you be the prosecutor.’”

Looking back, this anecdote seems outrageous, suggesting that the trials following the most extensive genocide in human history were haphazardly assigned to young, newly minted prosecutors. But this is what’s so remarkable about Ferencz’s career: Again and again, he has been asked to establish law and order in situations that had never been dealt with before on such a large scale. If it sounds like the army was making up trial procedures as it went along, that’s because, well, it was.

The *Einsatzgruppen* case was fairly straightforward, but since then, Ferencz has dealt almost exclusively in ethical ambiguity. Sorting out stolen property and reparations for the victims of the Holocaust after the war proved particularly difficult. “We first had to establish the principals: Who is entitled for the restitution of property? If parents were dead and they owned a house, what happened to the heirs? What happened to the repairs if the house had been bombed? What happened to the mortgage?” he explained. “We had to prove the injuries to each individual victim and evaluate how much they were worth. If a person had lost his arm, it was easy. If a person had lost his mind, it was not so easy.”



Ferencz, in 2005 (benferencz.org)

This is the challenge of litigating mass atrocities. Terror cannot be quantified. Years of life cannot be paid back in dollars, and sanity cannot be restored through prison sentences. Ferencz used secret records to secure a conviction against 22 mass murderers, but what if there are no cleanly written ledgers to capture the fuzzy outer boundaries of evil?

The law is a blunt tool for this task, but after a lifetime of confronting war crimes, it’s Ferencz’s tool of choice. He is incredibly optimistic about the potency of courts and prosecutors and statutes. Seven decades after liberating concentration camps, he still believes international law can eliminate war.

“The capacity to destroy life on earth has grown incredibly in the course of my lifetime, which increases the need to set up a mechanism to try to prevent that from happening,” he said. “There are perpetrators of crimes, and there are victims of crimes. They are ready to fight and die for their ideals; they cannot have a fair judgment. You need a third party—a court—in order to determine the facts.”

This goes far beyond the scope of the International Criminal Court, which Ferencz was instrumental in establishing in 2002. To date, that body has indicted only 36 people and opened investigations in eight countries, all of them African. Several countries, including the United States, refuse to recognize its authority. It exists to prosecute war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity in cases where national governments are unable or unwilling to do so themselves. In its 12 years of existence, the court has convicted only two people.

Despite the current limitations of international law, Ferencz believes that a court with a more extensive mandate could help prevent future conflicts by adjudicating transnational disputes and deterring aggression. He has also proposed that national governments and regional alliances criminalize the illegal use of force in accordance with the way it is defined by the United Nations. This, he believes, would change the very nature of war.

“Of course it will change! The present system is too stupid,” he said. “If two heads of state are unable to agree, they send young people from one country to kill other young people who they don’t even know, for reasons they don’t understand, in places they’ve never heard of.

“I’ve written books on all this,” he added. “Nobody reads them.”

Ferencz has spent his entire life documenting, litigating, and trying to prevent mass atrocities, but he’s still hopeful that war—all war, everywhere—can end. He is also one of the last witnesses of the world’s most extensive genocide—the only living prosecutor left from Nuremberg. Among those who know him, there’s a palpable sense of urgency about capturing his memories—the Holocaust museum has done extensive interviews with him, and even his son got involved in helping me set up a conversation with his father. Eventually—in a matter of years, not decades—the world will only have secondhand knowledge of the Holocaust.

“I can tell you why I’m optimistic: I have no choice,” he told me. “I’m 95. I don’t have much time before I die.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



EMMA GREEN is the managing editor of TheAtlantic.com, where she also writes about religion and culture.

STUDENT HANDOUT

Directions to students: As you read the article “The Last Man Standing at Nuremberg” please respond to the guided questions below.

Two important terms are introduced early in the article. If they are unfamiliar, please spend a few minutes to find out who or what these groups are.

1. Who are the Einsatzgruppen?

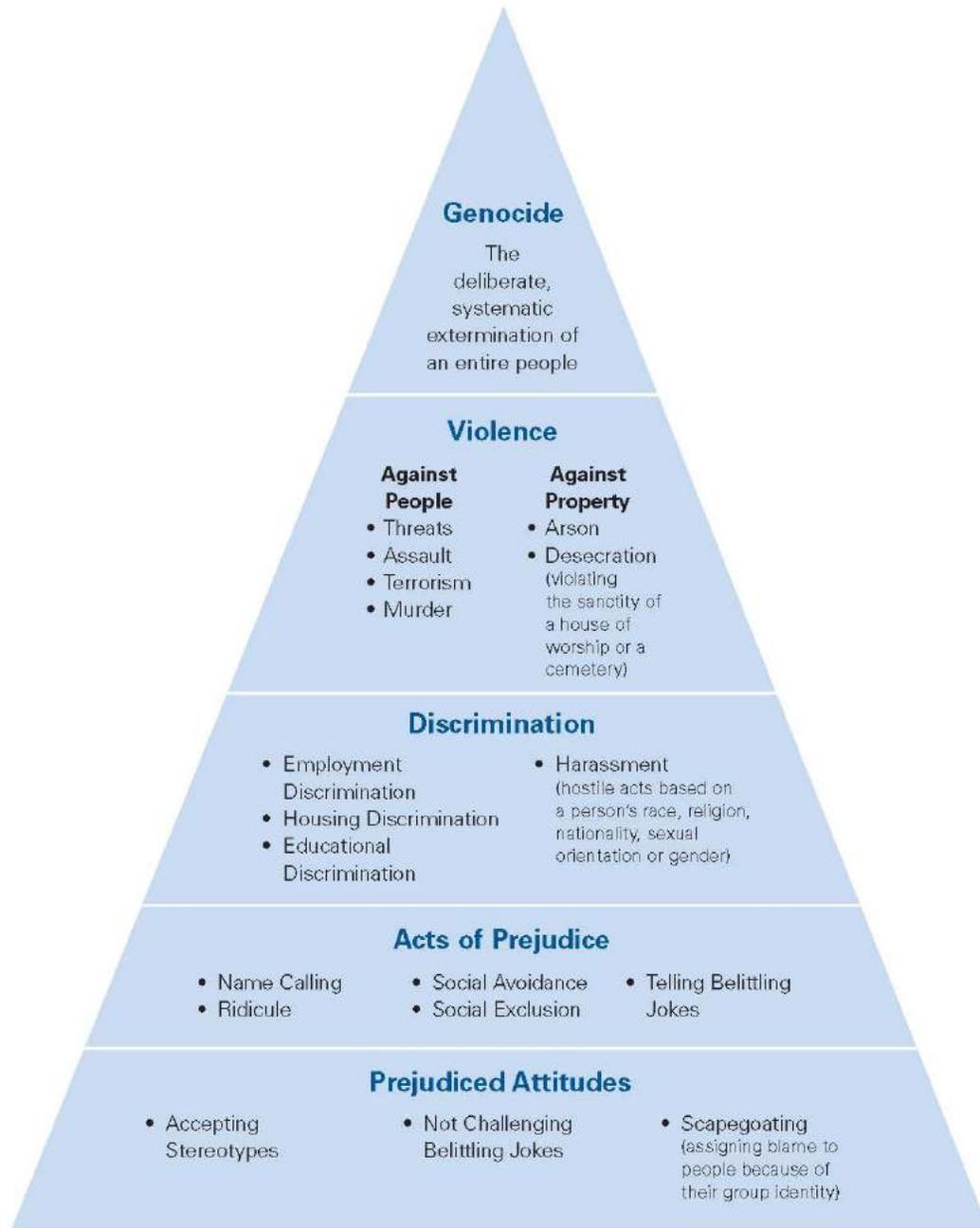
2. Given the nature of war, why do you think the army never had to have a war-crimes division prior to World War II?

3. “But without his intervention, these men may have never been taken to trial.” Why do you think the Army and the Pentagon would not attempt to prosecute all criminals?

4. Do you agree that a court like the International Criminal Court can prevent future atrocities through legal action, just as Mr. Ferencz asserts? Why or why not? In your answer, cite at least one passage directly from the article to defend your claim.

5. The article points out a startling reality: “Eventually—in a matter of years, not decades—the world will only have secondhand knowledge of the Holocaust.” How important is it to preserve these stories and others like it as this generation of survivors dies out? What are the long term consequences of losing these voices? Identify 2 possible outcomes of this reality? (For example – As men like Mr. Ferencz pass away, their firsthand knowledge and passion to prevent it from happening fade away and, as he points out in the article, unless a young generation steps up and continues to demand an end to war and these atrocities, they will continue and get worse.)

PYRAMID OF HATE



HOLOCAUST
CENTER *for*
HUMANITY

Educate. Inspire. Take Action.

Suggested Websites

- ◇ **Holocaust Center for Humanity – www.HolocaustCenterSeattle.org**
Information on local programs & upcoming events • testimonies, bios, photos, and videos of local Holocaust survivors • lesson plans and activities • suggested resources by grade level • teaching trunks • Speakers Bureau • Writing, Art, and Film Contest • library • and more
- ◇ **Anne Frank Museum Amsterdam - www.annefrank.org**
Interactive monument – “Anne Frank Tree” • Activities, teacher guides, timelines • Exhibits online
- ◇ **Facing History and Ourselves - www.facing.org**
Lesson plans & activities on a variety of issues that touch upon human rights, genocide, stereotyping, and culture • Online teacher seminars • Professional development opportunities
- ◇ **Jewish Foundation for the Righteous (JFR) - www.jfr.org**
Profiles of non-Jewish people who helped to rescue Jewish people during the Holocaust • Rescuers searchable by visual map • Professional development opportunities • Teaching materials
- ◇ **Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation (JPEF) - www.jewishpartisans.org**
Online videos and interviews with partisans • Teacher guides and activities on partisans and resistance • Virtual bunker to explore • Professional development for educators
- ◇ **Simon Wiesenthal Center – Museum of Tolerance - <http://motlc.wiesenthal.com>**
Online exhibits • Teaching Materials – timelines, glossary, 36 questions
- ◇ **Teaching Tolerance – Southern Poverty Law Center - www.teaching.org**
Free teaching kits • guides for parents and teachers • Free magazine subscription • Grants available for teachers
- ◇ **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) - www.ushmm.org**
Holocaust encyclopedia • Exhibits online • Teaching materials • videos and podcasts • Professional development opportunities • animated maps
- ◇ **iWitness - USC Shoah Foundation Institute – <http://iwitness.usc.edu/SFI>**
Database of testimonies searchable by keyword • testimonies of Rwandan survivors • educator resources • multimedia activities for students
- ◇ **Yad Vashem – Jerusalem - www.yadvashem.org**
Online exhibits • Teaching materials • Righteous Among the Nations - Information and biographies • Lists of names and information on victims, including tracing services • International programs

Contributor Bios:

Ilana Cone Kennedy

Ilana Cone Kennedy is the Director of Education at the Holocaust Center for Humanity. For the past 12 years Ilana has worked with teachers throughout the region to provide and develop teacher trainings, community programs, study trips to Europe, and classroom resources on the Holocaust and genocide. Ilana is an Alfred Lerner Fellow from the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, a recipient of the Pamela Waechter award for Jewish Communal Service, a Jackson Foundation Leadership Fellow, and has participated in numerous Holocaust education programs nationally and internationally, including those through the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and Yad Vashem. Ilana is the proud mom of two kids, ages 7 & 9, and an energetic Boston Terrier.

Branda Anderson

Branda Anderson is a World History/Social Studies teacher at Kamiak High School in Mukilteo, WA. Branda is a graduate of the University of Washington with a Masters in Teaching, and serves on the Holocaust Center's Education Advisory Committee. In 2011, she participated in the Holocaust and Jewish Resistance Teachers Program traveling to Washington DC, Israel, Germany and Poland, and in 2012 Branda attended the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous Summer Institute in New York. This past summer, Branda participated in the Holocaust Center's study trip to Poland, and completed a Masters in Holocaust and Genocide Studies from Gratz College. Branda is married with a 2 year old son.

Chris Ellinger

Chris Ellinger has taught for 15 years at Mountlake Terrace High School. Chris currently teaches a 10th grade Humanities block class that blends English and History curriculum together within an extended time frame. Chris is the Social Studies Department chair at MTHS, as well as a National Board Certified teacher in History. He is actively involved within his District to help develop the transition into a Common Core world. "My association with the Holocaust Center for Humanity began a few years ago at a teacher conference. As a result of their professional and thorough approach to educator support, I have attended as many workshops as they offer and received the honor of an Alfred Lerner Fellowship in the summer of 2013. Personally, I live in Seattle with my wife Andrea, a 7th grade Science teacher in the Kent School District, our 5 year old son Evan, and our 3 year old daughter Avery."