In January 1942, in Wannsee, Germany, the Nazi leaders held a conference. In many places the Nazis moved Jews into ghettos—a section of the city where all Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to live. Jews could be found in all areas of life—as farmers, factory workers, tailors, doctors, teachers, accountants and small business owners. Although some families were wealthy, many more were poor. Some children had to give up their schooling to work, while others went to universities.

The Nuremberg Laws, which we read about in the last article, took away the rights of the German-Jewish people and separated them from non-Jewish Germans. More and more laws were passed, and the Jewish people saw their rights and choices being taken away. In some areas, Jews were forced to wear a star or an armband to identify them as Jewish. The laws made it legal to treat the Jews as subhuman.

In January 1942, in Wannsee, Germany, the Nazi leaders held a conference and made plans to destroy the entire Jewish population. They called their plan The Final Solution.

Eleven million people were murdered during the Holocaust, six million were Jewish.

The Nazis regularly went through the ghettos in an action where they rounded up the Jews. Some were able to hide; others were lucky enough to be taken in by rescuers, but most were taken with their families to concentration camps, labor camps or death camps.

In many places the Nazis moved Jews into ghettos—a section of the city where all Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to live. Ghettos were surrounded by barbed wire and walls, and Jewish people made no attempt to flee. The ghettos often did not have enough living space, and could not provide enough food for all the people forced to live there.

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In many areas, Jews were forced to wear stars on their clothing. On this star is the word "Jude," German for "Jew." On display at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center.

"One time my mother and my cousin got caught not wearing the armband. The reason you didn’t want to wear them was because anybody can throw rocks at you or hit you, because who was going to protect you? Nobody was out to protect the Jew. So if people went to an area where they were afraid to walk with the armband, they might take it off. Well, the police did catch my mother and my cousin not wearing it. My mother they beat with a ball, a rubber ball, but inside was a piece of stone and her arms were beaten up, were all swollen. My cousin was about seventeen years old, they made her clean an armband and made plans to destroy the entire Jewish population. They called their plan The Final Solution.

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activities

1. As a class, discuss the ways Jewish people in Nazi Germany were oppressed. Why do you think non-Jewish citizens went along with these new laws and treatment of Jewish citizens? Do you think this could happen today? Why or why not?

2. As a class, brainstorm a list of words to describe what you’re feeling. Make a list and then identify the opposite feeling of that — what is a word (antonym) that describes this opposite feeling? Next, chose two sets of words/feelings and locate an image/article in today’s Seattle Times that represents both.