



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Preserving American Jewish History

MS-603: Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum Collection, 1945-1992.

Series E: General Alphabetical Files. 1960-1992

Box 83, Folder 4, Holocaust education, 1977-1982.

experiences of all groups need to be more accurately portrayed.

Recommendations for Programming

National

The American Jewish Committee will distribute the present guidelines to appropriate national organizations, associations and institutions, such as the Education Commission of the States, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association, state departments of education, and textbook publishers and their associations.

The guidelines will also be sent to appropriate professional associations, with the request that the issue be placed on the agenda of their meetings and conferences.

AJC's national office will coordinate chapter activities so that experiences can be shared.

Information and material concerning teacher training efforts and curricula are to be disseminated on request.

Chapters

If Holocaust studies are to be effective, AJC chapters must be intensely involved at the local level. Each chapter should decide what activities are appropriate in view of its interests, resources and expertise. Whatever the nature of the effort, it will be necessary to work on a cooperative basis with school boards, school administrators, curriculum specialists and teachers, as well as with other citizen groups, Jewish and non-Jewish.

Before doing anything else, chapters should survey their communities to see who is already involved in the various aspects of Holocaust studies: curriculum, teacher training, community involvement and so forth. Such a survey will forestall duplication, will identify gaps that need to be filled, and in this way will enable the chapter to stake out a unique role for itself. For example:

1. Survey teacher training programs, and encourage school districts to have teachers take part.

If there are no existing programs, urge that they be developed.

2. Survey textbooks to see how the Holocaust is treated, and report the findings to AJC's national office.
3. Help educators locate and use appropriate supplementary teaching material.
4. Confer with other citizen groups to build support for Holocaust studies.
5. Encourage state departments of education and teacher training institutions to include Holocaust material in curricula.
6. Work with other racial, ethnic and religious groups to encourage more accurate portrayal of their experience in curricula.
7. Meet with textbook publishers in the area to request revision of inadequate texts.

To promote the best possible programming, chapters are urged to report both their successes and their difficulties to the national office, so that their experiences may be shared with other AJCers and interested outside agencies.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION
MARILYN BRAVEMAN
Director of Education

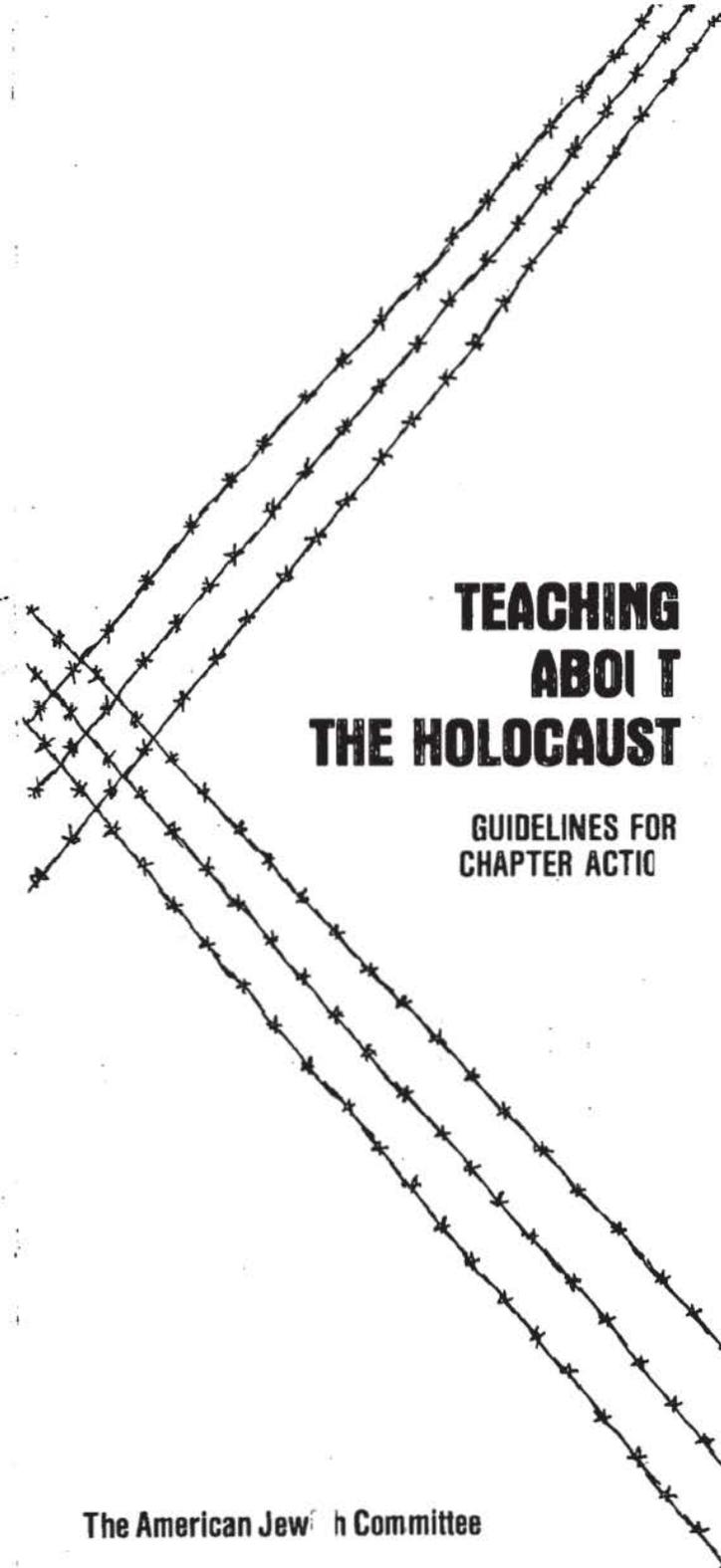
Prepared by

Interdepartmental Task Force on Holocaust Studies
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THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Institute of Human Relations
165 East 56 Street, New York, N.Y. 10022

May 1978

The American Jewish Committee



TEACHING ABOUT THE HOLOCAUST

GUIDELINES FOR
CHAPTER ACTION

Teaching in Context

Some people are concerned that the subject may be too painful for young minds. Indeed, teaching about the Holocaust entails depicting a great deal of violence. But the events are facts of history that cannot be ignored; taught sensitively, and in the context of world events, they may enhance the values of personal freedom and dignity.

Well-informed teachers can draw parallels with other examples of genocide, such as the Turkish government's campaign to exterminate Turkey's Armenian minority in the first quarter of our century. They can explain what racism and prejudice may lead to—for example, racial oppression in South Africa, racial strife in Biafra and Bangladesh, or, here in America, the massacres of the Indians, slavery, and the mistreatment of Japanese Americans during the Second World War.

But care must be taken that the violence of the Holocaust does not become just one more example of the "blood and guts" fare so familiar to television viewers. It should be emphasized that such violence, particularly when encouraged and sanctioned by a totalitarian government, dehumanizes the victimizers as well as the victims.

Where school districts have introduced ethnic studies or ethnic heritage programs, the Holocaust should not be isolated as *the* Jewish experience. Rather, stress should be laid on Jewish contributions to Western civilization in such fundamental areas as law, education, ethics, and the fight for freedom everywhere.

General Guidelines

1. Holocaust studies should be integrated with existing courses, particularly (but not exclusively) world history, American history, social studies, or literature. Alternatively, the subject may be set up as a separate elective course.
2. Since textbooks do not as a rule deal satisfactorily with the topic, appropriate supplementary materials should be sought out or developed.
3. Before a Holocaust curriculum is introduced, teachers must be trained in its use. The training should deal with the emotions and sensitivities

The American Jewish Committee recommends that Holocaust Studies be introduced into intermediate and secondary school curricula. The following pages seek to clarify what constitutes sound teaching about the Holocaust at these levels, and to help AJC chapters—as well as other interested organizations—decide how they will promote such studies.

Rationale

The Holocaust—the systematic persecution and destruction of six million Jews—is little known to, or understood by, persons distant from it in space and time. Until recently it was conspicuously absent from most social-studies texts, and even now it is largely ignored.

Yet to understand the Second World War era, one must be familiar with Hitler's "final solution" and its government-directed genocide against the Jewish people—as well as with the persecution of other "enemies of the Third Reich," such as Freemasons, gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses or homosexuals, and of Catholic and Protestant clergymen who protested these policies. Without an accurate picture of those events in Nazi Germany, there can be no true understanding of the contemporary history of Europe and the United States, or of current events in the Middle East.

In addition, students need to know what prejudice is and how it threatens both victims and oppressors. By encouraging them to clarify their thinking about these issues, we will help them become more responsible citizens and may even help reduce the probability of another Holocaust.

4. Course content and teacher training should be periodically evaluated.
5. When possible, studies to determine what emotional and attitude changes result from teaching about the Holocaust should be incorporated into the program.

Themes for Study

The following themes, currently used in a two-week program in a major city, are an example of how Holocaust studies might be conducted.

Introduction. How can the story of the Holocaust alert people to present and future dangers of racism and genocide?

Theme I. The world that was lost: What was the position of Jews in Europe before the Holocaust?

Theme II. How did the Nazis rise to power in Germany?

Theme III. How did racism and anti-Semitism lead to the debasement of a modern society and to genocidal murder?

Theme IV. How did the Nazis carry out racist policies and genocidal murder in the European countries they conquered in World War II?

Theme V. How did the victims try to maintain human dignity under a system aimed at their dehumanization and physical destruction?

Theme VI. How did the rest of the world respond to the plight of the victims?

Theme VII. How can the study of the Holocaust contribute to a more humane world?

Intergroup Relations Aspects

Curricula must be sensitive to the needs and feelings of other groups. Holocaust studies should not stigmatize Germans, nor encourage hatred of German Americans or any other group or nation. Rather than dwell on collective guilt, they should help students learn the lessons of history.

Blacks and others point out that they, too, have suffered discrimination and worse, and that textbooks do not do justice to their history. These claims should be recognized as valid and should be dealt with, not by discussing who has suffered most, but by emphasizing that the history and

Saint Paul



School of Theology

TRUMAN ROAD at VAN BRUNT BLVD. / KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI 64127

To: Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum
From: Carl Bangs, Professor of Historical Theology
Re: Teaching the Holocaust in the Saint Paul Curriculum
Date: February 3, 1982

We do not at the present offer a separate course on the Holocaust, but it is a distinct unit of work in the required 14-week (full time) course in Historical Studies. Thus all students are introduced to the subject near the end of their first year of seminary studies.

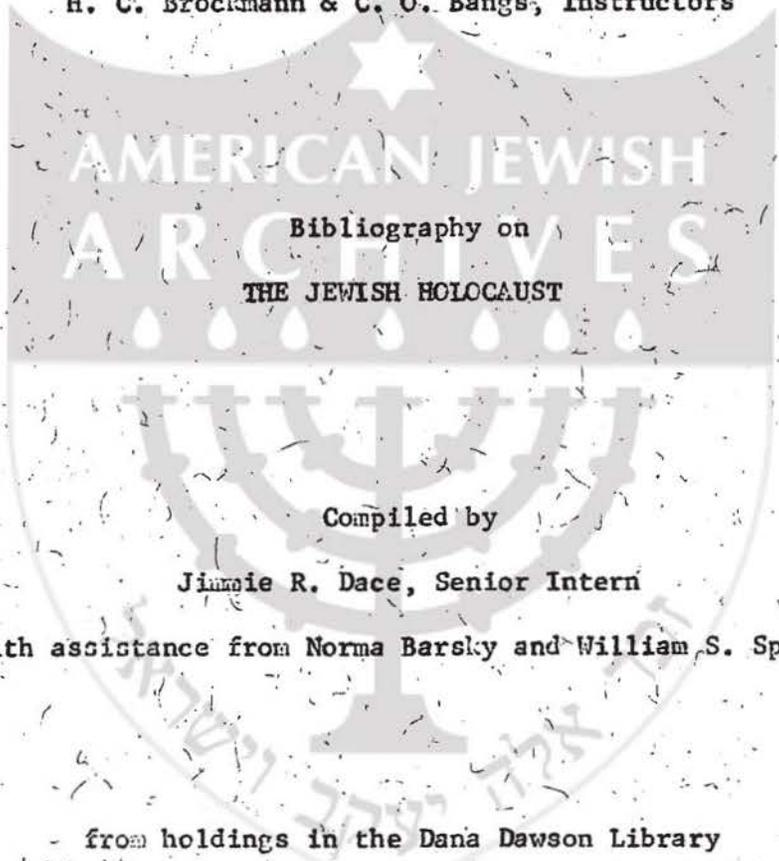
The approaches have varied. In all cases we use movies (e. g., "Night and Fog"). I have developed a "documentary" approach in which the students work with copies of documents in their hands as these are described in their historical setting. An attempt is made to have the students see for themselves the underlying presuppositions of the documents, the use of language, the effect, etc. In the case of the Barmen Declaration I seek a critical appreciation, noting its silence on the specific question of the Jews. Copies of some of the documents are attached. I welcome suggestions for others.

Attached also is a copy of a bibliography of holdings in our library. It is now more than four years old and needs to be updated, because our accessions in the field continue.

I appreciate immeasurably what you are doing for us today. It was my privilege to serve on an interfaith committee that brought you to Kansas City (at U. M. K. C., as I remember) some years ago, and it is good to have you in our city again.

HI. 100-101. HISTORICAL STUDIES

H. C. Brockmann & C. O. Bangs, Instructors



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
Bibliography on
THE JEWISH HOLOCAUST

Compiled by

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with assistance from Norma Barsky and William S. Sparks

from holdings in the Dana Dawson Library

Saint Paul School of Theology

Kansas City, Missouri

May, 1977

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WHY ARE WE NATIONALISTS?

We are Nationalists because we see in the Nation the only possibility for the protection and furtherance of our existence.

The Nation is the organic bond of a people for the protection and defense of their lives. He is nationally minded who understands this in Word and in Deed.

Today, in Germany, Nationalism has degenerated into Bourgeois Patriotism, and its power exhausts itself in tilting at windmills. It says Germany and means Monarchy. It proclaims Freedom and means Black-White-Red.

Young nationalism has its unconditional demands. Belief in the Nation is a matter of all the people, not for individuals of rank a class, or an industrial clique. The eternal must be separated from the contemporary. The maintenance of a rotten industrial system has nothing to do with nationalism. I can love Germany and hate capitalism; not only can I do it, I also must do it. The germ of the rebirth of our people lies only in the destruction of the system of plundering the healthy power of the people.

We are Nationalists because We, as Germans, love Germany. And because we love Germany, we demand the protection of its national spirit and we battle against its destroyers.

WHY ARE WE SOCIALISTS?

We are Socialists because we see in Socialism the only possibility for maintaining our racial existence and through it the reconquest of our political freedom and the rebirth of the German state. Socialism has its peculiar form first of all through its comradeship in arms with the forward-driving energy of a newly awakened nationalism. Without nationalism it is nothing, a phantom, a theory, a vision of air, a book. With it, it is everything, the Future, Freedom, Fatherland!

It was a sin of the liberal bourgeoisie to overlook the State-building Power of Socialism. It was the sin of Marxism to degrade Socialism to a system of Money and Stomach.

We are Socialists because for us the Social Question is a Matter of Necessity and Justice and even beyond that a Matter for the Very Existence of our People.

Socialism is possible only in a State which is Free Inside and Outside.

Down with Political Bourgeois Sentiment: for Real Nationalism!

Down with Marxism: for True Socialism!

Up with the Stamp of the First German National Socialist State!

At the Front the National Socialist German Workers Party!...

WHY DO WE OPPOSE THE JEWS?

We are Enemies of the Jews, because we are fighters for the freedom of the German people. The Jew is the Cause and the Beneficiary of our Misery. He has used the social difficulties of the broad masses of our people to deepen the unholy split between Right and Left among our people. He has made two halves of Germany. He is the real cause for our loss of the Great War.

The Jew has no interest in the solution of Germany's fateful problems; he cannot have any. For He Lives on the Fact That There Has Been No Solution. If we would make the German people a unified community and give them freedom before the world, then the Jew can have no place among us. He has the best trumps in his hands when a people lives in inner and outer slavery. The Jew is Responsible for our Misery and He Lives On It.

That is the reason why we, as Nationalists and as Socialists, oppose the Jew. He Has Corrupted our Race, Fouled our Morals, Undermined our Customs, and Broken our Power.

The Jew is the Plastic Demon of the Decline of Mankind. The Jew is Uncreative. He produces nothing. He Only Handles Products. As long as he struggles against the state. He is a Revolutionary; as soon as he has power, he preaches Quiet and Order, so that he can consume his plunder at his convenience.

Anti-Semitism is Unchristian. That means, then, that he is a Christian who looks on while the Jew sets straps around our necks. To be a Christian means: Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself! My Neighbor is One Who is Tied to Me by his Blood. If I love Him, Then I Must Hate His Enemies. He who Thinks German Must Despise the Jews. The one thing makes the other necessary.

We are Enemies of the Jews Because We Belong to the German People. The Jew is our Greatest Misfortune. It is not true that we eat a Jew every morning at breakfast. It is true, however, that he Slowly but Surely Robs Us of Everything We Own.

That Will Stop, as Surely as We are Germans.

The Platform of the German Christians, 1932

The Platform of the German Christians, 1932, accepted Nazi Aryanism and would have made the church a part of the state. Karl Barth and others saw a different role for the church, and at Barmen, 1934, made the famous declaration of the Confessing Church. After the war, at Stuttgart, the surviving leaders of the Confessing Church, despite their resistance to Hitler, made their startling confession of guilt. From The German Phoenix, by Franklin Hamlin Littell. Copyright 1960 by Franklin Hamlin Littell. Reprinted by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc. Originally in Arnold Dannenmann, Die Geschichte der Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen (Dresden: Gunther Verlag, 1933), and in Kirchliches Jahrbuch, 1933-44, 1945-48, ed. Joachim Beckmann. (Gutersloh: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1950).

1. These directives are to point out to all believing Germans the ways and the goals by which they can attain a new order in the church. These directives are not intended to constitute a creed nor to replace one; neither are they intended to disturb the confessional foundations of the Evangelical Church. They state a way of life.

2. We are fighting for the union of the 29 churches embraced by the "German Evangelical Church Federation" in one evangelical National Church, and we march to the call and goal:

Nach aussen eins und geistgewaltig,
Um Christus und sein Wort geschart,
Nach innen reich und vielgestaltig,
Ein jeder Christ nach Ruf und Art!
(from Geibel)

3. The voting list "German Christian" will be no ecclesiastical party in the usual sense. It appeals to all Christians of German type. The age of parliamentarianism is past, also in the church. Ecclesiastical parties have no spiritual claim to represent the church folk, and they obstruct the high purpose to become one church. We want a living People's Church (Volkskirche) which is the expression of all the religious powers of our nation (Volk).

4. We take our stand on the platform of positive Christianity (des positiven Christentums). We affirm an affirmative style of Christian faith, as appropriate to the German spirit of Luther and heroic piety.

5. We want to bring to the fore in our church the reawakened German feeling for life and to make our church life of positive value for life. In the fateful battle for German freedom and future, the church has shown itself too weak in its leadership. The church has not yet marshalled for decisive battle against the God-hating Marxism and the foreign-spirited Center Party (Zentrum), but instead reached an agreement with the political parties which represent these forces. We want our church to fight in the forefront in the decisive struggle for the existence or extinction of our nation. She dare not stand aside or indeed shy away from the fighters for freedom.

6. We demand a change in the legal constitution (political paragraph) and open battle against Marxism, hostile to religion and to the nation, and against its socialist-Christian fellow-travelers of all degrees. We miss in this legal constitution the trusting dependence upon God and the mission of the church. The way into the Kingdom of God leads through battle, cross and sacrifice, not through false peace.

7. We see in race, national character and nation orders of life given and entrusted to us by God, to maintain which is a law of God for us. Therefore racial mixing is to be opposed. On the basis of its experience the German foreign missions have for a long time called to the German nation: "Keep yourself racially pure," and tells us that faith in Christ doesn't disturb race but rather deepens and sanctifies it.

8. We see in home missions (Inner Mission), properly understood, a living Christianity of action (Tat-Christentum) which, according to our understanding, roots not in mere pity but in obedience to God's will and in gratitude for Christ's death on the cross. Mere pity is "charity" and becomes arrogance, coupled with bad conscience, and weakens a nation. We know something of Christian duty and love toward the helpless, but we demand also the protection of the nation from the incapable and inferior. (The Inner Mission)... must moreover keep its distance from economic adventures and must not become a mere shopkeeper.

9. In the mission to the Jews we see a grave danger to our national character. It is the entryway for foreign blood into our national body. It has no traditional justification side by side with foreign missions. We deny the validity of the mission to the Jews in Germany, as long as the Jews have the rights of citizenship and thereby there exists the danger of racial deterioration and bastardization. The Holy Scriptures also say something about the divine wrath and self-betraying love. Marriage between Germans and Jews is especially to be forbidden.

10. We want an Evangelical Church which roots in the national character, and we repudiate the spirit of a Christian cosmopolitanism. We want to overcome the corrupt developments which have sprung from this spirit--such as pacifism, internationalism, Freemasonry, etc.--through faith in the national mission given us by God. Membership of an Evangelical minister in a lodge of Free Masons is not to be allowed.

These ten points of the "German Christians" are a call to rally, and they constitute in great outline the direction of the future Evangelical National Church (Reichskirche), which by the maintaining of confessional peace will develop the powers of our Reformation faith into the finest of the German nation.

(signed) Hossenfelder, clergyman

EXCERPT FROM THE BARMEN DECLARATION
English translation from F. H. Littell, The German Phoenix
Reproduced by permission of Doubleday & Company, Inc.

1. "I am the way and the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6)

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. . . . I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved." (John 10:1, 9.)

Jesus Christ, as he is testified to us in the Holy Scripture, is the one Word of God, whom we are to hear, whom we are to trust and obey in life and in death.

We repudiate the false teaching that the church can and must recognize yet other happenings and powers, images and truths as divine revelation alongside this one Word of God, as a source of her preaching.

2. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (I Cor. 1:30.)

Just as Jesus Christ is the pledge of the forgiveness of all our sins, just so -- and with the same earnestness -- is he also God's mighty claim on our whole life; in him we encounter a joyous liberation from the godless claims of this world to free and thankful service to his creatures.

We repudiate the false teaching that there are areas of our life in which we belong not to Jesus Christ but another lord, areas in which we do not need justification and sanctification through him.

3. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body (is) fitly joined together and compacted. . . ." (Eph. 4:15-16.)

The Christian church is the community of brethren, in which Jesus Christ presently works in the word and sacraments through the Holy Spirit. With her faith as well as her obedience, with her message as well as her ordinances, she has to witness in the midst of the world of sin as the church of forgiven sinners that she is his alone, that she lives and wishes to live only by his comfort and his counsel in expectation of his appearance.

We repudiate the false teaching that the church can turn over the form of her message and ordinances at will or according to some dominant ideological and political convictions.

4. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise domination over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister." (Matt. 20:25-26.)

The various offices in the church establish no rule of one over the other but the exercise of the service entrusted and commanded to the whole congregation.

We repudiate the false teaching that the church can and may, apart from this ministry, set up special leaders (Fuhrer) equipped with powers to rule.

5. "Fear God, honor the king!" (I Peter 2:17.)

The Bible tells us that according to divine arrangement the state has the responsibility to provide for justice and peace in the yet unredeemed world, in which the church also stands, according to the measure of human insight and human possibility, by the threat and use of force.

The church recognizes with thanks and reverence toward God the benevolence of this, his provision. She reminds men of God's Kingdom, God's commandment and righteousness, and thereby the responsibility of rulers and ruled. She trusts and obeys the power of the word, through which God maintains all things.

We repudiate the false teaching that the state can and should expand beyond its special responsibility to become the single and total order of human life, and also thereby fulfill the commission of the church.

We repudiate the false teaching that the church can and should expand beyond its special responsibility to take on the characteristics, functions and dignities of the state, and thereby become itself an organ of the state.

6. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:20.)
"The word of God is not bound." (II Tim. 2:9.)

The commission of the church, in which her freedom is founded, consists in this: in place of Christ and thus in the service of his own word and work, to extend through word and sacrament the message of the free grace of God to all people.

We repudiate the false teaching that the church, in human self-esteem, can put the word and work of the Lord in the service of some wishes, purposes and plans or other, chosen according to desire.



Nürnberg Law for the Protection of German Blood
and German Honor, September 15, 1935

Reichsgesetzblatt, Vol. I, No. 100 (September 15, 1935). Trans. in Documents and Readings in the History of Europe Since 1918, by Walter Consuelo Langsam (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1939).

Imbued with the knowledge that the purity of German blood is the prerequisite for the continuance of the German nation and animated with the unbending will to ensure the German nation for all the future, the Reichstag unanimously resolved upon this law, which is herewith proclaimed:

I. 1. Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are prohibited.

2. Annulment proceedings can be brought only by the Public Prosecutor.

II. Extramarital relations between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are prohibited.

III. Jews may not employ in their households female citizens of German or kindred blood who are under 45 years of age.

IV. 1. Jews are forbidden to hoist the Reich and national flag and to display the Reich colors.

2. They may, on the other hand, display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right is under state protection.

V. 1. Whoever acts contrary to the prohibition of Article 1 is liable to penal servitude.

2. The man who acts contrary to the prohibition of Article 2 is punishable by jail or penitentiary sentence.

3. Whoever acts contrary to the provisions of Articles 3 and 4 is punishable with a jail sentence up to one year and a money fine or with either of these penalties.

STUTTGART DECLARATION OF GUILT, OCTOBER, 1945

Littell, "The German Phoenix"

The Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany, at its session on October 18-19, 1945, in Stuttgart, welcomes the representatives of the World Council of Churches.

We are all the more thankful for this visit in that we are not only conscious of oneness with our nation in a great community of suffering, but also in a solidarity of guilt. With great pain we say: Unending suffering has been brought by us to many peoples and countries. That which we have often witnessed in our congregations we now proclaim in the name of the whole church: We have in fact fought for long years in the name of Jesus Christ against the spirit which found its terrible expression in National Socialist government by force; but we accuse ourselves that we didn't witness more courageously, pray more faithfully, believe more joyously, love more ardently.

Now a new beginning is to be made in our churches. Founded on the Holy Scripture, with all earnestness directed to the sole Lord of the church, they are going about it to purge themselves of influences foreign to the faith and to put themselves in order. Our hope is in the God of grace and mercy, that He will use our church as his tool and give it authority, to proclaim His Word and to create obedience to His Will among ourselves and in our whole nation.

That in this new beginning we may know ourselves to be warmly tied to the other churches of the ecumenical fellowship fills us with deep rejoicing.

We hope in God that through the joint service of the churches the spirit of violence and revenge, that begins again today to become powerful, may be controlled, and the spirit of peace and love come to command, (the spirit) in which alone tortured humanity can find healing.

So we pray in a time when the whole world needs a new beginning: Veni creator spiritus! (signed Bishop Wurm, Bishop Meiser, Bishop Dibelius, Superintendent Hahn, Pastor Asmussen, Pastor Niemöller, Landesoberkirchenrat Lilje, Pastor Niesel, Dr. Heinemann, Superintendent Held. Stuttgart, 19 October 1945.)



Holocaust Survivors Memorial Foundation/350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3508
New York, New York 10118/212 594-8765

December 22, 1981

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Dear Friend:

We would like to tell you how you can contribute in our efforts to increase public awareness of the Holocaust. The Holocaust has finally become a subject of research, study and discussion that has generated great interest, especially among the younger generation. The Holocaust Survivors Memorial Foundation is proud to be instrumental in focusing public attention on one of the most important historical events of mankind. Only through educating the public about the Holocaust can we realize its relevance to our lives today and the significant implications for future generations.

Although some work is being done now, more needs to be done. Despite this attention, the Holocaust is still being ignored and sometimes even erased from the history books. There is indeed an urgency to place a strong emphasis on this area of education. In our first two years, the Holocaust Survivors Memorial Foundation has developed a vast program that has funded numerous projects. The attached enclosure is a listing of the projects supported by the foundation.

We know that you share our feelings...but feelings are not enough. Put your feelings into action. Assist us in our objectives and goals. Help educate and sensitize people about the Holocaust with the hope of working towards a more compassionate world.

Make out a check and put it in the mail today. We are counting on your support. WE NEED YOUR HELP. IT'S UP TO ALL OF US!!

Sincerely,

Shirley Eisner
Shirley Eisner
Director

Anita C. Perkiel
Anita C. Perkiel
Assistant Director

Enc.

AMERICANS CONFRONT THE HOLOCAUST*

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
Institute of Human Relations, New York, NY, U.S.A.

ABSTRACT

On the whole, the "Holocaust" series made a vast audience more aware of, and perhaps more sensitive to, a catastrophe almost beyond comprehension.

Half the people who had seen one or more episodes of "Holocaust" said they had found it possible to "take the program pretty much in stride"; but nearly all of the other half had found it "difficult or disturbing to watch". Furthermore, as noted earlier, majorities of both viewers and nonviewers approved the presentation of the program. Many respondents expressed the hope that if people knew of such things, they would not let them happen again, and a substantial majority wanted the schools to teach about the Holocaust.

It should be noted that the audience for "Holocaust" was even more self-selected than are TV audiences in general. A large number of Americans do not watch such programs, or when they see them tune out the intended message.

Persons who were interested in the subject in the first place, who know something about Nazism or were sympathetic to its victims, were strongly represented among the viewers, while a sizeable proportion of nonviewers (in the neighborhood of 40 percent) were ignorant of recent European history, indifferent to the possibility of future catastrophes similar to the Holocaust, and/or apathetic about events not immediate to them in time or place. (Even among viewers, 29 percent said they did not believe, or were not sure, children should be taught about the Nazi period.)

Survey and Respondents

"Holocaust", a four-part television drama, was presented in the United States by the National Broadcasting Company television network on the evenings of April 16-19, 1978. The audience reaction to the series was explored about three weeks later through a telephone survey conducted by Response Analysis, a polling firm based in Princeton, New Jersey, for the American Jewish Committee (AJC). The questionnaire, designed by Response Analysis and the AJC, sought to measure the impact of "Holocaust" on viewers, gauge the general public's awareness of events during the Nazi period, and assess American attitudes toward the victims of the Nazis, as well as toward present-day Jews and Israel.

From May 5-9, a representative sample of Americans in different localities was interviewed by telephone. The 822 respondents included 411 who had seen "Holocaust" and, for comparison, 411 who had not. The figures

*This study has been abridged by the editor.

and percentages have been weighted according to U.S. Census data for age, sex, education, and region.

Viewers and non-viewers did not differ materially in age, sex or region. The viewers tended to have somewhat higher incomes and more education; the non-viewers described themselves slightly more often as politically conservative. The two groups differed most noticeably in terms of religion and race. Among the viewers, Jews were overrepresented (5.4 percent, or twice their 2.7 percent ratio in the U.S. population), while blacks were underrepresented (3 percent as against a population ratio of 11.5 percent).

Impact of the Program

When asked about the main ideas or impressions which the "Holocaust" program had left with them, a majority of viewers in one way or another expressed horror at the Nazis' cruelty and its senselessness. Almost a fifth said the series had impressed them as a "never again" lesson (Table I).

One of the crucial questions was: "Would you say that watching the "Holocaust" program made you understand any better what Hitler's treatment of the Jews was all about . . . ?" Overall, 60 percent of the viewers said yes; more than a third said no. Among Jews the percentages were reversed, with 55 percent saying no and 39 percent yes. The effect was greatest among the young: 71 percent of viewers between 18 and 29 answered yes (Table II).

Three-quarters of those who had seen the series thought it gave an accurate picture of how the Nazis had treated the Jews, 15 percent were not sure

TABLE I

Asked of viewers (Q. 8): "What are the main ideas or impressions that the 'Holocaust' program left with you?"

Multiple responses	Percent of viewers
Horror, senselessness	27
Learned lesson - don't let it happen again	19
Sympathy with victims	11
Hard to understand how something like this could happen	10
Upset by violence, brutality	7
Believe it to be history of what took place	7
Negative feelings about Nazis	6
Wonder why Jews didn't fight back	4
Technical or historical criticism ("watered down," "inaccurate")	3
Shocked by indifference of other nations	2
More appreciative of our freedoms, democracy, way of life	2
No answer	11

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date 9/3/81

to Marc Tanenbaum

from Gerry Rosenfield

subject

Our "Holocaust" study
was the lead article in
an issue devoted
entirely to reactions
to the TV program.

memorandum

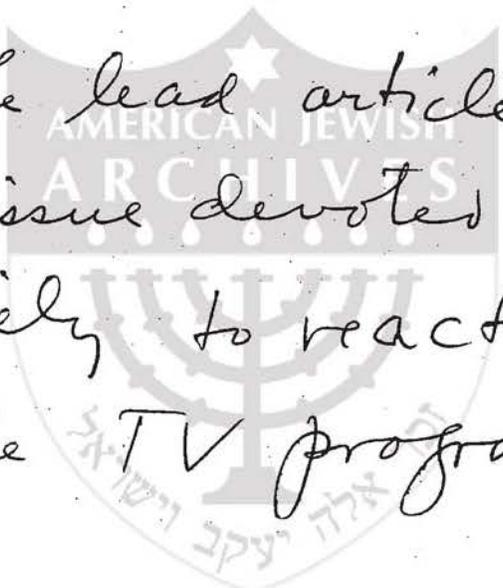


TABLE II

Asked of viewers (Q. 16): "Would you say that watching the 'Holocaust' program made you understand any better what Hitler's treatment of Jews was all about, or didn't the program add anything to what you already understood about this?"

	Percent of viewers		
	"Understood better"	"Didn't add anything"	Not sure or don't know
All viewers	60	36	4
By age:			
18-29	71	28	1
30-49	58	36	6
50 or more	49	47	4
By education:			
High school or less	63	33	4
Some college or technical school	67	30	3
College graduates	44	55	1
By religious preference:			
Protestant	65	32	3
Catholic	63	33	5 ¹
Jewish	39	55	6

¹Apparent total 101 percent. In this and subsequent tables, apparent one-percent deviations from 100 percent totals are due to rounding.

TABLE III

Asked of viewers (Q. 17): "Do you think the 'Holocaust' program gave an accurate picture of the Nazis' treatment of the Jews or do you think it gave an inaccurate picture of this?"

	Percent of viewers		
	"Accurate"	"Inaccurate"	Not sure or no opinion
All viewers	75	10	15
By age:			
18-29	77	9	14
30-49	76	9	15
50 or more	71	11	18
By education:			
High school or less	75	9	16
Some college or technical school	81	6	13
College graduates	76	12	12

or had no opinion, and only 10 percent thought it inaccurate (Table III).

The answers thus far suggest, as would be expected, that many of those who chose to watch "Holocaust" already had strong feelings about the Nazis

and about their victims. This is confirmed by the finding that only 29 percent of the viewers said their feelings about the Nazis had been affected in one way or another by the program (Table IV). Of this group, 91 percent said it had strengthened or revealed anti-Nazi feelings (or pro-Jewish ones, though the question did not ask about these), and 5 percent reported pro-Nazi (or anti-Jewish) feelings. Of 62 percent who said their feelings about the Nazis had *not* been affected, 7 percent (4 percent of all viewers) said they had been pro-Nazi (or anti-Jewish) to begin with (Table V).

Was presenting a program such as "Holocaust" on television considered a good idea? More than two-thirds of all those interviewed (83 percent of viewers and 56 percent of non-viewers) thought it was; among those under 29, as many as 78 percent did (Table VI). When asked why, 83 percent of

TABLE IV

Asked of viewers (Q. 21): "Were your feelings about the Nazis affected in any way as a result of watching 'Holocaust'?"

	Percent of viewers		
	"Yes"	"No"	Not sure or no opinion
All viewers	29	62	9
By age:			
18-29	37	53	10
30-49	30	65	5
50 or more	21	66	13

TABLE V

Asked of viewers (Q. 22A) who say (Table IV) their feelings about Nazis were affected by watching "Holocaust": "In what ways were your feelings affected?"

Asked of viewers (Q. 22B) who say (Table IV) their feelings about Nazis were not affected: "Why do you say that?"

	Percent of viewers reporting	
	Feelings affected (strengthened or revealed)	Feelings not affected
Anti-Nazi (or pro-Jewish ¹) feelings	91	47
Pro-Nazi (or anti-Jewish ¹) feelings	5	7
Indeterminate (no "pro" or "anti" specified)	2	32
Other	1	7
Don't know or no answer	1	7

¹Feelings about Jews volunteered, though question was about Nazis.

TABLE VI

Asked of viewers (Q. 10): "(Just to remind you / As you said), "Holocaust" was about how the Nazis in Germany persecuted and killed the Jews of Europe. Some people say it's a good idea to have programs like "Holocaust" which remind Americans of what happened under Hitler, other people say programs like this are not a good idea.

"How do you personally feel – do you think a program like "Holocaust" is a good idea or not a good idea to show on TV?"

Asked of non-viewers (Q. 7): "(Let me tell you that / As you mentioned earlier,) the program, "Holocaust", was . . . [etc. as above]."

	Percent		
	"Good idea"	"Not a good idea"	Not sure or no opinion
All respondents	68	18	14
Viewers	83	9	8
Non-viewers	56	24	20
By age:			
18–29	78	11	11
30–44	68	20	12
45–59	67	16	17
60 or more	55	26	19
By religious preference:			
Protestant	64	20	16
Catholic	73	16	11
Jewish	100	0	0
By family composition:			
Children under 18 in family	74	14	12
None under 18	64	20	16
By sex:			
Female	63	21	16
Male	73	14	13

those who favored the idea said it could make people aware of what might happen. Of those who did not think the broadcast a good idea, one-half simply said the past could not be changed; most of the rest objected to violence on TV or thought the film might put dangerous ideas in people's heads.

Should children be taught about the Holocaust era? Of those who had seen the series, 71 percent said it was a good idea, as did 65 percent of all respondents. College-educated persons, political liberals and parents of

TABLE VII

Asked of viewers (Q. 12) and non-viewers (Q. 9): "Do you think it is a good idea to teach children about things like what the Nazis did, or do you think this not a good idea?"

	Percent		
	"Good idea"	"Not a good idea"	Not sure or no opinion
All respondents	65	20	15
Viewers	71	14	15
Non-viewers	60	25	15
By education:			
High school or less	62	23	15
Some college or technical school	72	14	14
College graduates	77	11	12
By family composition:			
Children under 18 in family	71	17	12
None under 18	60	22	18
By sex:			
Female	62	21	17
Male	68	19	13
Politics:			
Liberal	80	12	8
Conservative	70	18	12

TABLE VIII

Asked of viewers (Q. 14) and non-viewers (Q. 11) who say (Table VII) it is a good idea to teach about "things like what the Nazis did": "Where do you believe children should be taught about things like this?"

Multiple responses	Percent		
	All respondents	Viewers	Non-viewers
School	76	76	76
Home	46	52	40
Television	10	12	7
Church or synagogue	8	8	8
Other	3	4	3
Not sure or no opinion	4	3	4

children under 18 most often approved (Table VII). When those who favored teaching about the Holocaust were asked who should do it, with multiple choices permitted, over three-fourths chose the schools; almost one-half chose the home. Viewers and non-viewers essentially agreed in their responses to this question (Table VIII).

Awareness

Even in the years right after the Second World War, many Americans were only vaguely aware of the actual events in Europe and the vast destruction wrought by Nazism (Stember et al., 1966; 136-155). What could be expected in 1978?

Viewers were asked: "How well informed would you say you were about Hitler's treatment of the Jews before you watched the "Holocaust" program . . . ?", and non-viewers were asked the same without reference to the program. People under 30 were found to know less about the period than those in their 40s and 50s. Among viewers aged 29 or younger, 30 percent described themselves as poorly informed; among non-viewers in the same age group, 46 percent did. Analogous differences were found in other age groups (Table IX). The non-viewer category contained more people who simply

TABLE IX

Asked of viewers (Q. 15): "How well informed would you say you were about Hitler's treatment of the Jews before you watched the 'Holocaust' program - very well informed, fairly well informed, not very well informed, or poorly informed?"

Asked of non-viewers (Q. 12): "How well informed would you say you are about Hitler's treatment of the Jews - very well informed. . . [etc., as above]."

	Percent			
	"Well informed"	"Fairly well"	"Not very" or "poorly"	No opinion
Viewers	35	44	20	1
By age:				
18-29	20	49	30	1
30-49	41	44	15	0
50 or more	46	39	13	2
Non-viewers	19	43	37	1
By age:				
18-29	12	42	46	0
30-49	19	46	34	1
50 or more	24	44	31	1

TABLE X

Asked of viewers (Q. 19) and non-viewers (Q. 13): "As far as you know, did the Nazis treat other people the same way they treated the Jews?"

	Percent		
	"Yes"	"No"	Not sure or no opinion
All respondents	42	33	25
Viewers	46	34	20
Non-viewers	40	32	28
By age:			
18-29	37	35	28
30-44	48	34	18
45-59	50	30	20
60 or more	37	32	31
By education:			
High school or less	38	33	29
Some college or technical school	48	32	20
College graduates	59	33	8

TABLE XI

Asked of viewers (Q. 27) and non-viewers (Q. 17): "To what extent do you think most Germans knew what the Nazis were doing to Jews and other people they were persecuting? Would you say most Germans knew a lot about this, they knew something about this, or they knew little or nothing about it?"

	Percent							
	All respondents		Viewers		Non-viewers		Jewish respondents	
Germans knew a lot	14	44	14	48	14	42	31	58
Germans knew something	30		34		28		27	
Germans knew little or nothing	42		44		40		31	
Not sure or no opinion	14		8		18		11	

were not interested in the subject and felt no desire to know more about it.

One-quarter of all respondents said they did not know whether people other than Jews had been treated by the Nazis in the same way, and as many as a third thought none had been (Table X). Thus, it seems evident that whatever history young Americans have learned, it includes little about Nazism.

Do Americans think most Germans knew what the Nazis were doing?

Respondents were divided almost equally: 44 percent said most Germans knew a lot or at least something, 42 percent said they knew little or nothing (Table XI). Of the Jewish respondents, 58 percent thought the Germans knew.

"Do you think there are any countries or governments in the world today

TABLE XII

Asked of viewers (Q. 31) and non-viewers (Q. 21): "Do you think there are any countries or governments in the world today that are similar to Nazi Germany?"

	Percent		
	"Yes"	"No"	Not sure or no opinion
All respondents	46	27	27
Viewers	53	25	22
Non-viewers	41	28	31
By age:			
18-29	46	33	21
30-44	53	25	22
45-49	48	22	30
50 or more	35	26	39
By education:			
High school or less	39	30	31
Some college or technical school	60	20	20
College graduates	66	21	13

TABLE XIII

Asked of viewers (Q. 32) and non-viewers (Q. 22) who say (Table XII) there are countries similar to Nazi Germany: "Which countries or governments are similar to Nazi Germany?"

Multiple responses	Percent		
	All respondents	Viewers	Non-viewers
Communist countries	56	60	52
Uganda	17	19	15
Other (Africa, Philippines)	15	18	12
Latin America	6	6	5
South Africa	5	6	4
Western democracies	4	3	4
Arab countries	3	4	2
U.S.A.	1	1	1
Israel	1	0	2
Don't know	16	9	23

that are similar to Nazi Germany?" Almost half (46 percent) of all respondents said yes, while 27 percent said no and another 27 percent were not sure (Table XII). When those who had said yes were asked to identify the countries or governments they had in mind, 56 percent mentioned Communist countries, 17 percent Uganda, and 15 percent other Third World nations. Some respondents named several countries; 16 percent did not specify any (Table XIII).

Attitudes toward Jews

Questions were asked both to determine how the Jewish victims of the Holocaust were perceived, and to discover whether significant anti-Semitic bias still existed in America. On the whole, the viewers were sympathetic to the Jews; if a majority of them (55 percent) said their feelings had not been affected by the program, the reason in all but a few cases seemed to be that they were sympathetic in the first place (Tables XIV and XV).

"Holocaust" stressed the failure of some German Jews, as exemplified by the physician and his wife, to act in the face of the ominous German reality. The survey asked: "... Do you think the persecution of the Jews was ... their own fault?" (Table XVI). The response was inconclusive, possibly because the question itself proved ambiguous.

Some respondents took "fault" to mean failure of perception or nerve. In the words of one respondent: "At first [Jews] didn't understand what was going on; they should have fought back but didn't." But others interpreted "fault" as moral guilt. Thus, one respondent led off with an old anti-Semitic stereotype: "They [Jews] had the businesses and controlled everything, so Hitler took from the haves and gave to the have-nots." The same respondent continued: "Because they have gone through centuries of per-

TABLE XIV

Asked of viewers (Q. 23): "Were your feelings about Jews affected in any way as a result of watching 'Holocaust?'"

	Percent of viewers		
	"Yes"	"No"	Not sure or no opinion
All viewers	39	55	6
By age:			
18-29	42	51	7
30-49	41	55	4
50 or more	32	60	8

TABLE XV

Asked of viewers (Q. 24A) who say (Table XIV) their feelings about Jews were affected by watching 'Holocaust': "In what ways were your feelings affected?"

Asked of viewers (Q. 24B) who say (Table XIV) their feelings about Jews were not affected: "Why do you say that?"

	Percent of viewers reporting	
	Feelings affected (strengthened or revealed)	Feelings not affected
Pro-Jewish (or anti-Nazi ¹) feelings	92	59
Anti-Jewish (or pro-Nazi ¹) feelings	4	9
Indeterminate (no "pro" or "anti" specified)	1	24
Other	1	3
Don't know or no answer	2	5

¹Feelings about Nazis volunteered, though question was about Jews.

TABLE XVI

Asked of viewers (Q. 25) and non-viewers (Q. 15): "Thinking back to the treatment of the Jews by Nazi Germany before and during World War II, do you think the persecution of the Jews was mostly their own fault, partly their own fault, or not at all their own fault?"

	Percent		
	"Mostly" or "partly their fault"	"Not at all their fault"	No opinion or no answer
All respondents	20	57	23
Viewers	25	61	15
Non-viewers	17	55	28
By education:			
High school or less			
Viewers	24	60	16
Non-viewers	17	51	32
Some college or technical school			
Viewers	29	57	14
Non-viewers	18	66	17
College graduates			
Viewers	23	67	10
Non-viewers	18	68	14

secution, they [Jews] feel that they are martyrs — that's why they just sat back and let Hitler do this."

Contrary to what might have been expected, viewers were somewhat more inclined than non-viewers (25 percent as against 17 percent) to put the blame for what happened primarily on the Jews (Table XVI). Moreover, of those viewers who faulted the Jews, 47 percent said they did not fight hard enough, whereas only 22 percent of the non-viewers took this position. At every educational level, many more viewers than non-viewers reacted negatively to what was seen as Jewish passivity.

Reasons For Watching or Not Watching

How many of the non-viewers deliberately chose not to watch "Holocaust", and why? Almost a third of the respondents indicated they had intentionally passed up the program — some because they were not interested, some because they did not like to see violence, others because they thought it would be too sad or depressing, and still others because they did not want to be reminded of the Holocaust era. But 45 percent said they had been unable to watch, meaning simply they were not near a television set at the time (Table XVII). In this connection, it should be noted that over half of those who did not watch thought it a good idea to have such a program (see Table VI).

Of those who did watch "Holocaust", one-half had been attracted by the advance publicity for a TV spectacular, were curious how TV would

TABLE XVII

Asked of non-viewers (Q. 5): "Can you recall why you didn't watch the 'Holocaust' program or only watched a little of it?"

Asked of viewers who watched irregularly (Q. 2): "Why didn't you watch 'Holocaust' on all of the nights the program was shown?"

Multiple responses	Percent	
	Non-viewers	Irregular viewers
Unable to	45	63
Don't watch much TV	14	3
Not interested	10	7
Too sad or depressing	9	5
Don't like violence	9	3
Watched another program	8	7
Didn't know it was on	6	7
Don't like serial programs	6	0
Didn't want to be reminded of Holocaust	4	1
No answer	1	9

TABLE XVIII

Asked of viewers (Q. 4): "What made you decide to watch the 'Holocaust' program in the first place?"

Multiple responses	Percent of viewers			
	All ages	Aged		
		18-29	30-49	50 or over
To become better informed about the history of the era	33	37	39	23
Publicity in media	22	13	28	25
It sounded interesting (nonspecific)	18	19	15	20
Directly related to respondent's life, religion or era	14	10	9	24
Just tuned in	9	10	8	9
To see how they would do it on TV	8	8	8	9
Informal communications	8	12	10	2
Because someone else wanted to watch	5	7	5	2

TABLE XIX

Asked of viewers (Q. 9): "Did you find any parts of the 'Holocaust' program difficult or disturbing to watch or did you find yourself taking the program pretty much in stride?"

	Percent of viewers		
	"Difficult or disturbing"	"Took in stride"	No opinion or no answer
All viewers	46	51	3
By sex:			
Female	57	41	2
Male	35	62	3

handle it, or simply thought it sounded interesting. One-third, however, said they had wanted to know more about the history of the era, and 14 percent said it was in some way related to their lives (Table XVIII).

In general, the findings provide reason for both satisfaction and concern. For while they confirm that most Americans condemn racism and Nazism, they also indicate that a hard core of racists and anti-Semites remains in the United States, and that a good many Americans, without being anti-Semitic, feel themselves quite remote from Jews and their concerns.

A Summary of Direct Audience Response to "Holocaust"

"Holocaust" was seen by an estimated 120 million persons in the U.S. between April 16 and 19, 1978 — about half of all television viewers during

its time slot (*Advertising Age*, 1978). The audience was second only to that of "Roots", which in 1977 had drawn an estimated 130 million.

By the end of May, the National Broadcasting Company had received some 22,000 letters and telephone calls about the programs — a response exceeded only by reactions to "Jesus of Nazareth" in 1977. In contrast, the American Broadcasting Company, which produced "Roots", received only about 3,400 letters and phone calls within six weeks of its airing. While it is true that some Jewish, church and education groups organized mail campaigns endorsing "Holocaust", and that there also was a small organized response denouncing the program, this does not adequately explain why a program seen by 10 million more people evoked so much fewer messages. Thus, the vast difference remains a mystery.

According to NBC tallies, the mail response to "Holocaust" was 87 percent favorable and 13 percent unfavorable. Telephone calls (most of them received during or right after the series) were 75 percent favorable and 25 percent unfavorable. One network official reported that NBC had never before received so many calls about program content. (Most often viewers call to complain because a favorite show is preempted.)

APPROVING RESPONSES

Of the thousands of favorable letters, many commended NBC for its "courage" in telling, as one writer put it, "the incredible truth in credible terms," or for a "successful presentation" that was "emotionally involving, moving and sufficiently realistic under the circumstances." Some who wrote in this vein were themselves Holocaust survivors.

Many letters from teachers and parents characterized the series in such terms as "educational television in its finest hour." Others pointed out that it "showed what textbooks have failed to cover in the schools." The tenor of many responses is exemplified in the words of an English teacher from Wisconsin: "I was born in the early 50s to a Protestant family in the South, and while I knew certain 'facts' about the Holocaust, I never really understood it as something that happened to real people. This is a shocking admission for an educated woman, I realize, but we were all so isolated in the present, the Nazis have become just stock 'entertainment' figures."

A good many writers declared that "the world needs reminding" of such aberrations in human history and urged NBC to undertake other, similar projects. On the other hand, a sizable number of letter writers tempered their praise of the program with criticism of the interruptions by commercials which, in their view, trivialized the serious theme.

DISAPPROVING RESPONSES

Of those who reacted unfavorably to "Holocaust", some condemned, on intellectual and moral grounds, the entire concept of the production — the idea of presenting a catastrophic human tragedy as a "soap opera serial." One such critic accused NBC of "reducing a searing moral issue to a media event." The commercials were regarded as an added *sacrilege*.

Others, while willing to accept the dramatization on its own terms, objected to certain "distortions." Some felt that Jews were being stereotyped, or that German Jews were stigmatized as stupid. Others criticized the "sanitized" look of the concentration camps and inmates.

Some writers, claiming knowledge of the events depicted, said the scenario turned episodes such as the Warsaw Ghetto uprising into "simplistic inanities." Some Lithuanian Americans asserted that there had never been Lithuanian SS troops such as were depicted in the program; Polish Americans complained that the series failed to stress the suffering of Poles at the hands of the Nazis; Ukrainian Americans scorned the suggestion that Ukrainians took pleasure in the murder of Jews or benefitted from it.

About 2 percent of the unfavorable mail (about one-quarter of 1 percent of the total mail) was openly anti-Semitic. Some examples:

"The Holocaust is a fraud. Read Butz." (Reference is to Butz, 1977.)

"I am sick and tired of the Jews and their obsessions."

"NBC is part of an international and clandestine plot (stemming from Israel, no doubt) to have all Americans sympathize with and love the Jews."

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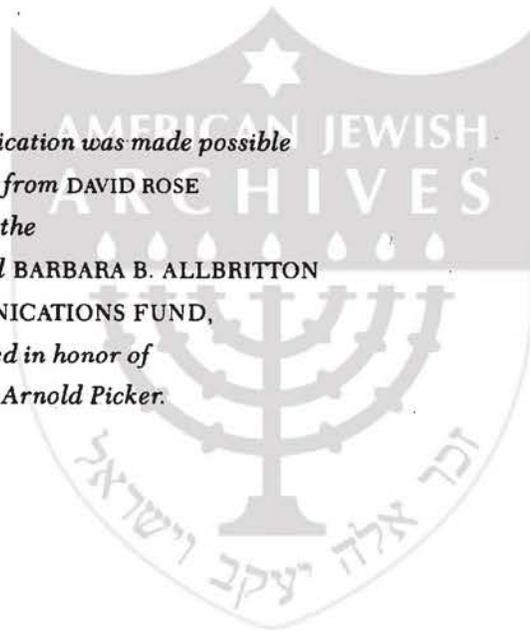


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Foreword



AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

Most of the victims of what has become known as “the Holocaust” were Jews, but the story of the Holocaust is not a Jewish story. Nor is it a German story, though most of the killers were German. The import of the Holocaust transcends all lines of race or religion; its human significance is universal.

It is fitting, therefore, that this pamphlet should appear at a time when a Presidential commission has been charged with the task of conceiving the form and substance of a national memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. That is not a simple undertaking. A memorial is a symbol, and to devise a fitting symbol is impossible without a clear understanding of what is being symbolized. Is the theme nothing more than a threnody — a monument to the sadness of untimely death? If these millions had perished in a natural disaster—a flood or earthquake—would the same memorial serve equally well for them and for the victims of the Holocaust?

Plainly not; much more is at stake here than the expression of grief for the dead. They were killed by human hands, and the sole reason for their selection was that they were Jews. It is not so much the fact of their deaths as it is the means and motive for their killing that gives the Holocaust its terrible moral significance, which the word “genocide” is intended to encapsulate.

Although the history of mankind is marked and marred by many mass atrocities, the Holocaust is unique in its scale, the deliberation with which it was executed, and the terrible modernity of the gas chambers and crematoria which were its principal means. It is fitting, therefore, that it should be memorialized separately.

But the years of the Holocaust were not the first in which humans have been killed in large numbers because of race or religion, and in modern times the American Indians and Armenians come readily to mind. Awareness of these exterminations darkens the horror of the Holocaust, because they show that the Nazi terror was not an unprecedented and solitary aberration, but a human phenomenon which had appeared before and, therefore, might occur again.

That is why, as Ms. Rabinowitz rightly reminds us, study of the Holocaust is more than the pursuit of history for its own sake. We may never fully understand why the Holocaust took place, but we cannot afford not to seek its comprehension. A first and long step is to know what happened, and that is what this pamphlet tells us.

June, 1979.

TELFORD TAYLOR



DOROTHY RABINOWITZ is the author of *New Lives*, a widely acclaimed book based on the personal stories of more than 100 survivors of the Nazi death camps. She has also contributed many articles and reviews to *Commentary*, *New York* magazine and *Saturday Review*, and is co-author, with Yedida Nielson, of *Home Life*, a book dealing with old people in nursing homes and other institutions.

TELFORD TAYLOR represented the U.S. at the Nuremberg war crimes trials (1946–49) as chief counsel for the prosecution, with the rank of Brigadier General. He has since followed a dual career as a writer and lawyer. Besides practicing law, he has taught at Yale and Harvard, and currently teaches at Columbia and Benjamin N. Cardozo Law Schools.

I visited every nook and cranny of the camp because I felt it my duty to be in a position from then on to testify at first hand about these things in case there ever grew up at home the belief or assumption that "the stories of Nazi brutality were just propaganda."

General Dwight D. Eisenhower
recalling the camp at Ohrdruf, 1945

A philosopher has written that language breaks down when one tries to speak about the Holocaust. Our words pale before the frightening spectacle of human evil unleashed upon the world, and before the awesomeness of the suffering involved, the sheer weight of its numbers—eleven million innocent victims exterminated—six million of them Jews.

But, we must strive to understand, we must teach the lessons of the Holocaust, and most of all we ourselves must remember.

President Jimmy Carter
International Holocaust Day
Washington, April 24, 1979

Why do we cast back our minds to all this today?

*Not in order to dissociate ourselves
from our own history and not in order to point
our finger at others who had become guilty
... We commemorate in order to learn
how people ought to behave towards each other
and how they ought not to behave.*

*—West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt,
Kristallnacht Anniversary
Cologne, November 9, 1978*



About the Holocaust

On April 12, 1945, as the European phase of the Second World War drew to a close, the Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, visited one of the Nazi camps that were being liberated by the armies of the United States and its allies. The camp—Ohrdruf Nord, just outside Gotha in east central Germany—was not a large-scale death factory; it was an ordinary Nazi concentration camp holding, at the time, some 3,000 buried and unburied dead. But the General saw enough to realize that future generations might not believe such things could have happened.

“I have never been able to describe my emotional reactions when I first came face to face with indisputable evidence of Nazi brutality and ruthless disregard of every shred of decency,” Eisenhower later wrote. “I am certain, however, that I have never at any other time experienced an equal sense of shock.” Some of the officers with him could not go through the whole camp, he noted, but he forced himself to look at everything; so that he could personally refute anyone who might some day dismiss the reports of Nazi atrocities as fabrications. And to make doubly sure the evidence was reliably recorded and publicized, Eisenhower asked the U.S. and British governments to send journalists and legislators to view the camps.¹

A generation later, the mind still recoils from the full horror of the Nazi crimes. And hardest to believe, even today, is the fact that *some six million men, women and children were systematically put to death simply because they were Jews.*

Yet there is no doubt that these things happened. The death tolls have been documented to within a few hundred thousand: approximately 815,000 Jews from Central Europe, 236,000 from the West European countries, 229,000 from Scandinavia and the Baltic countries, 402,000 from Southern and Southeastern Europe, and 4,252,000 from Poland and the Soviet Union—all together something over 5.9 million. (Figures for individual countries appear on page 38.)

The evidence was systematically set down by both the perpetrators and the victims, and there is no disagreement among them, either as to the intent or as to the result. The six-million total was first mentioned, not by an Allied or a Jewish source, but by Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi leader whose assignment it was to round up the Jews and deliver them for annihilation.² The testimony of the two sides agrees right down to names, places, dates and numbers. On the basis of this first-hand evidence, thousands of books and articles have been written, forming a vastly detailed record of what is known about the Holocaust.

Even to those well acquainted with what happened, the fact that an entire people's right to exist could be nullified by the official decree of one of the world's most advanced countries is still unassimilable. It is unassimilable, too, that this nullification could be endorsed and acted upon by citizens in the name of that country, and that the killing could be pursued with all the intelligence and the managerial and technological skills that a modern state could bring to the task. It remains beyond comprehension that, in accordance with the schedule, Jewish men, women and children from every corner of Europe were packed into cattle trains and transported to specially constructed camps in various regions of Poland, where they were herded into stalls and gassed to death. And it is still impossible to imagine that trainloads of such cargo arrived at the death camps daily, or every few days, for a period of years.

Jews were not the only group that suffered mass murder under the Nazis. During the early Hitler years, in a rehearsal for later extermination programs, there were mass killings of mental patients in Germany. In the same period, a great many political opponents of the Nazi regime were murdered in prisons and

concentration camps. During the war, large numbers of non-Jewish Poles, Russians and other Slavs, considered by the Nazis to be "of inferior race," died in prisoner-of-war camps, and countless civilians from the Nazi-occupied countries were literally worked to death in German war industries.

Only the Jews, however—and, according to some accounts, the gypsies—were slated for genocide, that is, deliberate and total extinction; and only they were killed, for the most part, not by overwork, unchecked disease, avoidable starvation or casual murder, but by the planned factory methods of the death camps.

If we are still unable to assimilate the full horror of those events, it is not because there is any question that they really happened, but for reasons within ourselves. In the span of recorded time the Holocaust is recent history; and our ability to absorb and understand such a catastrophe remains in question to this day. When the truth about what was taking place began to seep through during the war, and when it was laid bare for all to see after the fighting ended, there was a brief period when the magnitude of the Nazi crimes penetrated the consciousness of people everywhere. But after the Nuremberg trials of major and second-echelon war criminals ended, in 1949, the subject was widely avoided.

In the early 1960s, the Eichmann trial in Israel once more seared the conscience of a reluctant world for a brief period. But not until recent years have large numbers of concerned men and women the world over—civic and religious leaders, educators, and the public at large—finally come to view the Holocaust as history whose dimensions we cannot afford *not* to know.

They take this view because more than half of all who are now alive were born after the end of World War II, and because many of the new generation have little or no information about that entire era. Even fewer have the close personal knowledge of the Holocaust that is the inheritance of Jewish families, almost all of whom lost relatives in the catastrophe. Today, there is a new readiness to look into that dark period in human history and to try to understand what happened. The two questions people now ask themselves and the historians are: What do we really know? And how do we know it?

The sight we saw when we opened the cell doors was about like that of an overfilled suitcase being opened. The corpses fell out toward us. I estimate that up to 60 bodies were crammed into one small cell, so tightly that even in death they could not fall down but remained standing. We could see that they had crowded toward the air vent; actually the poison gas had been pumped in through this vent.

*—Report on the first gassings at Auschwitz,
by a Polish camp inmate.³*

AMERICAN JEWISH
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What We Know

The Holocaust had its beginning in the rise of the National Socialists (Nazis) in Germany during the 1920s and early 1930s. It was an era of inflation and depression, a time of bitter recrimination over the country's defeat in the First World War, and of social and economic upheaval. Immediately upon coming to power in 1933, the Hitler Government began, quite openly, to frame a national policy based on the Nazis' racial doctrines, in which the "subhuman" Jew was represented as the enemy incarnate of the German people and the "Aryan master race." By means of draconian anti-Semitic legislation, Jews were successively deprived of civil-service careers, public education, citizenship rights, property, opportunities to earn their livelihood and, eventually, freedom of movement. Toward the end of the 1930s, a vise of terror and violence closed ever tighter around the Jews of Germany, and of Austria after Hitler's annexation of that country.

With the outbreak of war in 1939 and the gradual Nazi conquest of most of the continent, the reign of terror was extended to country after country; nearly 9 million of Europe's Jews eventually came under German rule. In all of Europe, from Poland to France and from Norway to Greece, impoverishment, brutaliza-

tion and the daily peril of arrest and deportation became their lot. Expelled from economic life, forced to wear a yellow star, driven into ghettos, they were, as the Germans intended, practically and symbolically isolated from the non-Jewish population—an isolation foreshadowing the fate reserved for them. For Hitler and his henchmen had come to a decision: The Jews would all be killed; and to avoid arousing opposition within the Nazi empire or strengthening the Allies' determination to defeat Germany, that genocidal intent would be kept secret.

When Germany attacked the U.S.S.R. in June 1941, mobile killing units known as *Einsatzgruppen* ("commandos" or "action groups") closely followed the invading armies into the Soviet Union itself, as well as into Soviet-annexed Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, and immediately killed a large part of the Jewish population, either by shooting or by packing them into vans and gassing them. At the same time, construction of large-scale extermination camps was begun, with chambers for mass gassings and ovens for burning the bodies. The first of these camps, at Chelmno, began functioning in December 1941; and within a few more months, six major camps were completed in Poland, five of which had no other function than the annihilation of Jews shipped from every corner of Europe.

The Germans had two reasons for selecting the East as the site of their mass murder installations. One was that the largest number of Jews lived in Eastern Europe; the other was that the non-Jews of the region had deep-rooted traditions of religious and political anti-Semitism and were unlikely to protest. The ranks of the Nazi killers were in fact swollen with accomplices from the non-Jewish native population.

Of the total 6 million Jewish dead, Nazi mobile killing units accounted for more than 2 million. Most of the others were gassed in the death camps. Of the nearly 9 million Jews who had come under Hitler's power, fewer than 3 million were alive at war's end.

*I cannot recollect a single occasion
when it was alleged by the Defence
that any of the documents was forged or false.*

*—Lord Elwyn-Jones,
United Kingdom Prosecutor at Nuremberg⁴*

How We Know

The Nazis' early persecution of the German and Austrian Jews, between 1933 and 1939, was conducted openly and was fully reported in German and foreign newspapers and other writings of that period. In addition to those accounts, there are published texts of Nazi laws and decrees; legal, business and government records; books, leaflets, and films disseminated by the Nazis themselves; and contemporary testimony or later recollections of individuals.

About the subsequent era of mass murder, which originally was intended to remain a secret, the largest body of evidence comes from the Germans themselves. A huge quantity of captured German documents provides incontrovertible proof that the "Final Solution"—the destruction of the Jews—was a primary goal of the Nazi war machine. Seized before the Nazis were able to destroy them, these records, detailing every step toward that goal, including the planning and execution of numerous mass murder operations, all came under the scrutiny of Allied intelligence teams whose task it was to assemble evidence of German war crimes; and so overwhelming was this evidence that in the trial of the major war criminals which followed, no defense lawyer ever claimed that even a single document was false or invalid.

The victims, too, provided evidence in the form of documents: personal papers, records buried underground and eyewitness reports. The Jewish testimony is small in volume compared to the official German records compiled over Hitler's 12-year reign; but it is indisputable.

One major source of the victims' evidence is the "Oneg Shabbat" ("Pleasures of the Sabbath") archives, a secret project directed during the years of the German occupation of Poland by a

Warsaw historian, Emanuel Ringelblum, whose aim was to record every aspect of Jewish life and its destruction at Nazi hands. Participants in the project risked their lives to collect data about ghetto life, institutions and culture, jokes, songs and curses, and to bury them underground. Included in the records were detailed accounts of German atrocities and of concentration camp experiences, secret correspondence reporting the fate of Jewish communities throughout Poland, copies of the underground press in the Warsaw ghetto, and diaries of their day-to-day existence which Ringelblum and his colleagues urged all Jews to keep.⁵

It was a deliberate effort by the victims to preserve for history the details of their final days and their destruction. The passion of their enterprise is given voice by one Oneg Shabbat participant whose testimony was among the records recovered from their underground hiding place after the war. David Grober, a young man whose assignment it was to pack and hide the documents, knew he was risking his life in the task; but he never doubted it was worth doing. "I don't want any thanks," he wrote. "It will be enough for me if the coming generations will recall our times . . . We reckoned that we were creating a chapter of history and that was more important than several lives . . . What we could not cry out to the world, we buried in the ground. May this treasure be delivered into good hands, may it live to see better times, so that it can alert the world to what happened in the twentieth century."⁶

Similar records were recovered after the war from the grounds of the Auschwitz extermination camp. The recorders there were a special detail of inmates whose task it was to remove bodies from the gas chambers and burn them. Doomed, as they knew, to the same fate as their fellow Jews, some of the members of this *Sonderkommando* (Special Squad) undertook to conceal eyewitness accounts and other evidence *beneath the soil* of the crematoria. Reflecting the passion of these chroniclers to record what was taking place, one such document, by a man named Salmen Gradowski, pleads: "Dear finder, search everywhere in every inch of ground. Dozens of documents are buried beneath it, mine and those of other persons, which will throw light on everything that happened here. Great quantities of teeth also are buried here. It was we, the commando workers, who deliberately strewed them all over the ground, as many as we could, so that the world should find material traces of the millions of murdered people . . ."⁷

Mutually confirming, the evidence set down by victims and perpetrators is validated by yet a third, small but significant body of information: the testimony of a handful of non-Jews who took the risk of recording, in protest, acts of genocide they had witnessed or had been forced to take part in. Best known among these is Kurt Gerstein, an SS officer who, in 1942, was ordered to find ways to improve the killing techniques in the death camps. Gerstein went to one of the camps, Belzec, to see at first hand what his assignment meant. Deeply shaken, he found ways to inform the Allies of what he had seen; eventually his report was published.⁸

The evidence concerning the Nazi crimes—most of it from official German records captured by the U.S. Army and the other liberating armies—was first revealed in its full scope at the Nuremberg trials, which were conducted between 1945 and 1949 by the United States in conjunction with her wartime allies. German government and army records, correspondence, photographs—a mountain of documents, composed in the spirit and the language of bureaucracy—were transformed by the Allied legal staff into eloquent briefs for the prosecution.

The trial of the Major German War Criminals before an International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg opened November 20, 1945, and ended October 1, 1946, before a panel of judges representing each of the Allied powers. The president of the court was Lord Justice Geoffrey Lawrence of Great Britain. U.S. Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson was chief counsel for the United States prosecution; Sir Hartley Shawcross, His Majesty's Attorney General, appeared as chief prosecutor for Great Britain; Lieutenant General Roman A. Rudenko was the chief prosecutor for the Soviet Union, and France was represented by two chief prosecutors, François de Menthon and Auguste Champetier de Ribes.

The defendants—all in the top echelons of Nazi military or political leadership—stood accused of having committed Crimes Against Peace by planning, initiating or waging a war of aggression; of having committed War Crimes, including murder and deportation of civilian populations; and of having committed Crimes Against Humanity, specifically, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhuman acts against civilian populations, as well as persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds.

The prisoners in the dock included former Reich Marshal Hermann Göring, Hitler's chief deputy since the 1930s; Joachim

von Ribbentrop, Foreign Minister of the Reich; Hans Frank, Governor-General of Poland, which is to say the chief administrator of occupied Poland; Julius Streicher, since 1923 editor of *Der Stürmer*, Germany's chief organ of anti-Semitic propaganda; Albert Speer, architect and head of German war production, for which enterprise millions of slave laborers were brought to Germany; and Fritz Sauckel, the administrator who provided Speer with his slave laborers. Also in the defendants' dock was Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the highest surviving chieftain of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS), the Nazis' elite organization, which formed a second army and a second government within the power structure,⁹ as well as Nazi party officials, propagandists, and the high commanders of the German army and navy. The central figures in the Nazi hierarchy did not live to stand trial at Nuremberg; Adolf Hitler, his Propaganda Minister Josef Goebbels, and the Chief of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, had committed suicide as the Allied armies closed in.

After the first and most important trial of major German war criminals, twelve more trials were held before American military tribunals in Nuremberg. Charges were brought against the German physicians who had conducted "experiments" on Jewish concentration camp inmates; against the *Einsatzgruppen* leaders; against Nazi judges, industrialists, military commanders, cabinet ministers, foreign-office officials. The testimony of the first trial and that of the other twelve was promptly collected and published; the former alone yielded 42 volumes of evidence, the latter, 15.¹⁰ Of the documents submitted by the prosecutors in all these cases, some 3,000 dealt with crimes against the Jews.¹¹

The Nuremberg trials were only a beginning. Each year for decades, in East and West Germany and in every country occupied by the Nazis, more war criminals and Nazi collaborators, both native and foreign, were brought to book, and the process continues to this day.¹² The most spectacular of these proceedings since Nuremberg took place in 1961, when Israel located, captured, tried—and ultimately convicted and executed—Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi official who had organized and carried out the deportations to the death camps.¹³ The Eichmann trial, held in Jerusalem, rounded out the known history of the "Final Solution"; but the cases involving lesser Nazi criminals also add to the mass of evidence documenting, beyond a shadow of possible doubt, the evolution of a policy that began with persecution and ended in genocide.

A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He does not have the right to vote and cannot hold public office . . .

Marriages between Jews and German nationals of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages contracted in contravention of this law are void . . . Violations will be punished by imprisonment at hard labor.

Jews are forbidden to display the national flag or national colors.

—From the Nuremberg Laws, 1935

How It Began

AMERICAN JEWISH
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Hitler's anti-Jewish policy advanced by stages, the first of them extending from his accession to power in 1933 to the beginning of World War II in 1939. Jews had been increasingly assimilated into the German society since the first half of the 19th century and had become prominent in the nation's industry, culture and arts; but a strong tradition of anti-Semitism endemic in Germany since the Middle Ages remained very much alive at the same time.¹⁴ With anti-Semitism established as official government policy in 1933, the expulsion of Jews from the cultural and economic life of Germany began.

April 1, 1933 marked the first major act of official persecution. On this day, the Government called for a boycott of all Jewish shops and businesses, and the event received tremendous attention throughout the world. Official anti-Jewish measures accelerated in the following two years, as Jews were expelled from civil service and the professions, and finally, with the passage of the Nuremberg Laws in 1935, deprived of citizenship rights. The Nuremberg Laws, passed by acclamation in the Reichstag, the German parliament, also outlawed marriages and extra-marital sex relationships with Jews, making them crimes punishable by imprisonment. After 1939, the punishment was death.¹⁵

The racist doctrines of National Socialism, the ideological cornerstone of the Nazi state, held that the Germanic or Nordic race was destined by reason of "natural superiority" to rule humankind, whereas Jews were "parasites," a world plague to be eradicated. From the earliest days of the Nazi reign, this theory was expounded in every way possible—through films, newspapers, "educational" institutions like the "Institute for Exploration of the Jewish Question" (headed by Nazi theoretician Alfred Rosenberg), speeches by Hitler to the German people, and other propaganda devices.¹⁶

At first, the Nazis' aim was merely to "purge" Germany of Jews by forcing them to leave the country. But because other countries rigidly limited the number of refugees to whom they were willing to grant entrance visas, emigration was extremely difficult. Even so, as early as 1935 some 75,000 Jews had fled Germany. There was a huge exodus of artists, intellectuals and ordinary citizens from a country that was now hurling into public bonfires the works of Heine, Einstein, Freud and a host of other German-Jewish writers, artists and scientists, together with those of non-Jews declared "decadent" by the Nazis. Before the outbreak of the Second World War closed the gates to all emigration, more than half the Jews in Germany and Austria had managed to escape.

Those who were not fortunate enough to get away lived in ever-increasing peril. Jews were barred from schools, forbidden to enter parks and theaters, harassed and beaten on the streets. On November 9, 1938, a government-inspired wave of anti-Jewish violence spread throughout Germany and Austria. Using as a pretext the assassination of a German diplomat in Paris by a 17-year-old Polish Jew distraught over the deportation of his parents, the propaganda machinery mobilized the populace for "spontaneous" demonstrations. An impassioned anti-Semitic broadcast by Josef Goebbels, Hitler's propaganda minister, launched an orgy of plunder and sadism that would become known in history as the *Kristallnacht* ("Crystal Night," the night of broken glass). The onslaught actually lasted several days, and before it was over, nearly 100 Jews had been killed and over 30,000 arrested.¹⁷

The *Kristallnacht* made news throughout the world. Journalists and consular officials transmitted eyewitness reports of the beatings, of the wanton destruction in which every synagogue in Germany was put to the torch and Jewish institutions and businesses were vandalized. Among those who recorded the events

was Sir Michael Bruce, a retired British diplomat, who described screaming, bloodthirsty people lusting for Jewish victims, and told of the efforts of a reporter for the *London News Chronicle* to protect an aged Jewish woman who had been dragged from her home by the mob.

Then, Bruce wrote, the mob's hate turned to a hospital for Jewish children, mainly cripples or consumptives. "In minutes the windows had been smashed and the doors forced. When we arrived the swine were driving the wee mites out over the broken glass, barefooted and wearing nothing but their nightshirts. The nurses, doctors and attendants were being kicked and beaten by the mob leaders, most of whom were women."¹⁸

In a special twist of sadism, the Nazis fined the Jewish community a billion marks in "damages" for the destruction that had taken place. A vicious assault with the twofold purpose of enriching the German treasury and intensifying anti-Jewish sentiment, the *Kristallnacht* was a turning point, signaling doom for German Jewry. The warfare waged against Jews was now total. They were forbidden to sell goods and services of any kind, or to own retail stores.¹⁹ In increasing numbers, they were arrested and deported, their property and assets confiscated. On January 30, 1939, in a speech to the Reichstag, Adolf Hitler offered a bold prophecy: In the event "international Jewish financiers" succeeded "in plunging the nations once more into a world war," he said, the consequence would be "the obliteration of the Jewish race in Europe."²⁰ What the world audience which heard this speech did not know was that Hitler was not just making a prediction—he was announcing his intention to make that prediction come true.

The mission of the SS and police in Poland was by no means confined to customary security tasks in occupied territory. It was, on the contrary a far-reaching program for the total extermination of Polish Jews and the destruction of Polish culture.

The program was secret in the sense that Himmler did not publish it broadcast, but in the nature of things it could not remain a secret where there were eyes to see and ears to hear...

—Telford Taylor²¹

The Murder Plan

Brigadier General Telford Taylor, U.S. Chief Counsel for War Crimes in the Office of the U.S. Military Government, and an authority on the relationship between the German Wehrmacht and the Nazis, documents “the virtual autonomy of Himmler’s police forces and special SS units” in Poland, and the special task assigned them by Hitler.

From the Nazis’ invasion of Poland in September 1939 through their subsequent conquest of virtually the entire European continent, special directives concerning the Jews were issued by the SS, to which Hitler had assigned the handling of the “Final Solution.” The documents, which eventually fell into Allied hands, indicate clearly that as early as 1939 the SS was making murder plans. For example, an order issued by Reinhard Heydrich, the SS officer in charge, to the heads of his *Einsatzgruppen* three weeks after the invasion of Poland outlined the ghettoization that was to be the first phase of the Holocaust. Jews were to be gathered into “concentration points,” the order stated—“as few concentration points as possible,” so as to “facilitate subsequent measures.” Concentration points were to be “only cities which are rail junctions, or at least located along railroad lines.”²²

The ominous meaning of these and later directives became clear at a conference of high state and SS officials held in Wannsee, a Berlin suburb, on January 20, 1942—when the death camps were already under construction or completed. The purpose of the meeting was to coordinate the role of various government agencies in the “Final Solution.” The minutes—also among the documents captured after the war—show that Heydrich, at Hitler’s directive, outlined to the assembled officials the details of the policy toward Jews which the SS had been putting into effect, leaving somewhat vague how much of the “new” policy was for the future and how much was already being carried out.²³

Emigration, Heydrich announced, was to be replaced by evacuation of Jews to the East, in accordance with previous authorization by the Führer. The new procedures, Heydrich continued, were to be “regarded only as provisional options; even now practical experience is being gathered that is of major significance in view of the coming final solution of the Jewish question.” As U.S. Supreme Court Justice Jackson later noted at Nuremberg, the Nazis consistently employed abstract or euphemistic language when discussing mass murder plans; the Wannsee conference was a prime example. To Heydrich’s audience, accustomed to the language of indirection employed in such circumstances, the meaning of “evacuation to the East” was clear: The Jews were to be annihilated.

The “practical experience” to which Heydrich referred was the mass killing of Jews in occupied territories that had begun immediately upon the German invasion of the Soviet Union in mid-1941. Detailed procedures were set forth at Wannsee for the deportation of Jews from all of the occupied or annexed countries to the newly established death camps, a sweeping operation in which Europe was to be “combed through [for Jews] from West to East.” The purpose for which Polish Jews had earlier been gathered into “concentration points,” all of them near railway lines, was now clear: All of Europe’s Jews were to be transported by rail to the death camps.

The death figure in the ghetto still hovers around 5000 per month. A few days ago, the first case of hunger-cannibalism was recorded...

-Top secret report of Warsaw District Propaganda Division of the German Government in Poland, March 21, 1942²⁴

The Ghettos

The Nazi occupation of Poland was marked virtually from the outset by rampaging violence and sadism against Jews, with the most extreme forms of cruelty reserved for the Orthodox. In a year-long reenactment of the *Kristallnacht*, Jews were wantonly murdered, synagogues desecrated and Jewish places of business plundered, either directly by the Germans or in pogroms in which the non-Jewish population was encouraged to take part. Simultaneously, with some delays, the ghettoization of the Jewish community was instituted. Jews were sealed into segregated areas, to be run by *Judenräte* or Jewish Councils directly responsible to the Germans.²⁵

Jewish families uprooted from nearly 2,000 towns and cities in Poland were crowded into slum sections apportioned to them in a few cities; half a million, including deportees from Germany and Austria, were packed into the Warsaw ghetto, into an area that earlier had barely accommodated 35,000. A report on one apartment house in the Warsaw ghetto in January 1942 states: "Number of residents—1,613; rooms—153. Only the orphans' rooms and children's club room are heated. No running water, and toilets are not working...persons stricken with dysentery remain here and even persons with broken limbs are not sent to the hospital...The refugees are in rags and tatters. Some are completely naked. The number of deceased during the month was 183. The mortality rate is 11.5 percent..."²⁶

With allotted rations of not quite 1,000 calories a day, an amount clearly intended to reduce their number by starvation, the Jews struggled hopelessly against hunger, disease, and exhaustion by slave labor. It was possible neither to leave the ghetto—Jews were forbidden on pain of death to go outside its confines—nor to sustain life inside it. Famine and disease took a daily toll and left the ghetto streets so covered with the dying and the dead that quick burial was impossible.

It was the most remarkable fact of ghetto life that, amid death and destruction, a vigorous culture flourished. Abandoned to a world ruled by starvation and terror, ghetto inhabitants drew on their religious, psychological, spiritual and communal resources. Secret schools, theatres and self-help organizations were established and maintained. Hospitals and clinics were operated, with makeshift medical instruments and secretly manufactured medicines; doctors made clandestine house calls.²⁷ Though one of the earliest steps the Nazis took in their determination to break the Jewish spirit was to burn down the synagogues, ghetto residents continued to gather for worship and for studying Torah.²⁸ And in nearly every ghetto, underground newspapers reported what was really happening in the outside world.²⁹



It was to be expected from the first that the Jewish problem in the East could not be solved by pogroms alone. On the other hand, in accordance with the basic orders, the mopping-up work of the Security Police had as its goal the annihilation, as comprehensive as possible, of the Jews. Sonderkommandos reinforced by selected units... therefore carried out extensive executions both in the towns and in the countryside.

*—Roundup Report of Einsatzgruppe A
to October 15, 1941³⁰*

AMERICAN JEWISH The Killing Squads ARCHIVES

After the German invasion in 1941, the mass annihilation of Jews in the occupied Soviet territories began. The killings were facilitated by detailed advance plans. Secret orders from the German military command permitted the SS *Einsatzgruppen* to move freely behind the front lines and to operate autonomously. These instructions, issued by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel and later introduced into evidence at Nuremberg, referred to the “special tasks” which the Führer had entrusted to the SS.³¹ The special tasks were to kill Jews.

The procedure was described at Nuremberg by one of the SS commanders. The Jews were first rounded up and told they were going to be relocated. They were then led to the place of execution, where they were shot, standing or kneeling. In mid-1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* were operating all over the Eastern front in line with this procedure. Later, more advanced technology for mass murder was developed. Gas vans, whose occupants could be killed in 10 or 15 minutes, were introduced, the commander testified, and orders were issued to use such vans for killing women and children, so the commandos would be spared the unnecessary spiritual strain of shooting them. The commandos, however, preferred the spiritual strain to the task of unloading gas

vans of corpses soiled with excrement, and so shooting continued to be their primary killing method.³²

The men who performed these deeds, and the men who commanded them, were not, as might be supposed, drawn from the lower ranks of society, or from the criminal class. On the contrary: The *Einsatzgruppen* had been selected especially for their qualities of leadership and ideological commitment. By and large professional men, they included attorneys, teachers and physicians. One of those to stand trial at Nuremberg was a Protestant pastor, Ernst Biberstein. Another, Otto Ohlendorf, commander of a battalion which moved through the Ukraine, town by town and city by city, systematically slaughtering the Jews, was a Doctor of Law who had attended three different universities before joining the Nazi party and the SS.

The prosecutors at Nuremberg exacted testimony from Ohlendorf regarding the liquidation of Jewish children. Ohlendorf had told the tribunal that the purpose of killing Jews and Communists had been to achieve a permanent solution to the dangers they posed to Germany. But what kind of danger were the children thought to pose? For what reason, the prosecutor asked, had the children been massacred? Ohlendorf's reply was a reasoned statement of the Nazi position, reasonably presented and buttressed by Nazi logic. Killing the children was very simple to explain, he told the court, if one started from the fact that the order tried to achieve not merely security, but permanent security. The children would grow up; and as children of parents who had been killed, they would constitute a danger no smaller than their parents. Twice, in separate testimony, Ohlendorf explained the German "position" regarding the Jews, and the actions of the *Einsatzgruppen*: "The order was the Jewish population should be totally exterminated." Did this order include the children? "Yes."³³

The *Einsatzgruppen* moved with lightning speed from one Jewish population center to another, but they sometimes left handfuls of survivors who had succeeded in hiding, or had been wounded and left for dead. One such survivor, Rivka Yoselewska, lived to testify to the fate typical of every Jewish community the commandos swept through. The witness told how the killers had first led the Jews of Pinsk to a large pit. Even with the sight of the naked Jews before her, she had clung to the hope that the Germans meant only to torture them. Ordered like the rest to take off her clothes, she did so and held on to her six-year-old daughter. The shooting began, the SS firing into the back of each Jew's head.

First her mother and father were shot and kicked into the ditch. Then her grandmother, who had been comforting two grandchildren in her arms. The witness's sister was next. Pointing the gun at her, as she stood naked, praying for her life, the SS man looked into her eyes and shot straight at her. When Yoselewska's own turn came, he asked, "Whom do I shoot first, your daughter or you?" But the bullet, meant to kill, only grazed her. Kicked into a ditch full of dead and dying Jews, she lay there until, regaining consciousness, she pulled herself out from under the bodies suffocating her. For three days she sat dazed among the corpses, until a farmer rescued her and brought her to the Partisans in the forest.³⁴

Innumerable reports filed by the *Einsatzgruppen* commanders themselves bear out the witness's testimony. It was their duty to declare the number of Jews killed, and the location and date of each "action"—the only facts of importance to their superiors. Impersonal as they are, the reports nevertheless point up how hard it is to put the facts of mass murder baldly, without adornments and rationalizations:

"Operational Situation Report, U.S.S.R. No. 106, October 7, 1941...An adequate number of apartments has been evacuated through the liquidation of approximately 35,000 Jews on 29 and 30 September 1941, so that now shelter for the homeless is secured..."

"Operational Report, U.S.S.R. No. 94, September 25, 1941. Since...Jewish propaganda activity was especially heavy in Lithuania, the number of persons liquidated in this area by *Einsatzkommando 3* has risen to 75,000."³⁵

The testimony about the mobile killing units that history is most likely to remember, however, comes neither from a Nazi source nor a Jewish one, but from a German civilian. Hermann Friedrich Graebe, an engineer who was in charge of a construction firm in Dubnow in the occupied Ukraine during 1942, told the Nuremberg tribunal how, when he heard from his foreman that 1,500 Jews were being killed daily, he undertook to find out for himself if it was true. Unflinchingly reportorial and objective, Graebe's recording of that truth evokes the horror of the Holocaust with a power matched by few other witnesses. Accompanied by his foreman, he had driven to the site where the killings were said to take place. There indeed he saw trucks, and great mounds of earth, 30 meters long and two meters high, and people being driven off the trucks by armed Ukrainian militia under the

supervision of an SS man. Who the people were was unmistakable; on the back and front of their clothes they wore the regulation yellow patches marking them as Jews.

The people who had got off the trucks—men, women, and children of all ages—had to undress upon the orders of an SS-man, who carried a riding or dog whip... Without screaming or weeping these people undressed, stood around in family groups, kissed each other, said farewells and waited for a sign from another SS-man, who stood near the pit, also with a whip in his hand.

During the 15 minutes that I stood near the pit I heard no complaint or plea for mercy. I watched a family of about 8 persons, a man and woman, both about 50 with their children of about 1, 8, and 10, and two grown-up daughters of about 20 to 24. An old woman with snow-white hair was holding the one-year-old child in her arms and singing to it, and tickling it. The child was cooing with delight. The couple were looking on with tears in their eyes. The father was holding the hand of a boy about 10 years old and speaking to him softly; the boy was fighting his tears. The father pointed toward the sky, stroked his head, and seemed to explain something to him. At that moment the SS man at the pit shouted something to his comrade. The latter counted off about 20 persons and instructed them to go behind the earth mound. Among them was the family which I have mentioned. I well remember a girl, slim, and with black hair, who, as she passed close to me, pointed to herself and said "23."

People in the pit were wedged together and lying on top of each other, so that only their heads were visible. Some of those shot prior to Graebe's arrival were still moving, lifting their arms and turning their heads. The SS man who had done the shooting sat at the edge of the pit, already two-thirds full with 1,000 people, his feet dangling. He had a Tommy gun on his knees and was smoking a cigarette.

The people, completely naked, went down some steps which were cut in the clay wall of the pit and clambered over the heads of the people lying there... They lay down in front of the dead or injured people; some caressed those who were still alive and spoke to them in a low voice. Then I heard a series of shots. I looked into the pit and saw that the bodies were twitching... When I walked back, round the mound, I noticed another truckload of people which had just arrived. This time it included sick and infirm persons. An old, very thin woman with terribly thin legs was undressed by others who were already naked, while two people held her up. The woman appeared to be paralyzed... I left with Moennikes [the foreman] and drove in my car back to Dubno.³⁶

*By making use of all available labour, work on Crematorium II has been completed, save for a few constructional details.... The ovens were fired by the chief engineer of the firm that did the work
-Topf & Sons of Erfurt-during his tour of inspection, and they functioned perfectly.*

*-Report by the Director,
SS Construction Department at Auschwitz, 1943³⁷*



The Death Factories

It was clear from the beginning that the executors of the "Final Solution" would have to develop more efficient means than shooting if they were going to annihilate all the Jews. Despite the efforts of the *Einsatzgruppen*, and the efforts of their SS superiors and the German High Command to facilitate the killing, the number of Jews remained large. A report from the commander of a squad that had massacred 33,000 Jews at Kiev put the matter succinctly: A total of 75,000 Jews in the area had been liquidated thus far, he said, but "today it is already clear that even with such tactics a final solution of the Jewish problem will not be possible."³⁸ In much of occupied Europe, roundups and immediate massacres of Jews were impossible for logistic or political reasons; what had been done with comparative secrecy in Poland and the Soviet Union could not be done the same way in Northern and Western Europe.

Because of all this, Adolf Eichmann, head of the Jewish Affairs Division of the Reich Security Office, and Rudolf Hoess, commandant of Auschwitz, began investigating the possibility of building huge gas installations to duplicate on a vast scale the efficiency of the killing vans. By early 1942, the Germans had added to their extensive network of forced-labor and concentration camps six extermination centers equipped with gas cham-

bers, all in Poland. Their names are by now well known: Auschwitz, Majdanek, Treblinka, Chelmino, Belzec and Sobibor. Except for Auschwitz, which also had a large slave-labor division, these camps had no other function than annihilation.³⁹

As the work of killing proceeded, the technology improved; German industrial firms vied with one another to provide the death machinery. Captured documents attest that mass murder became, indeed, a cornerstone of German industry. Quite unself-consciously, a manufacturing firm called C. H. Kori, in a bid for business, reminded the SS Central Construction Office that the company had already handled satisfactory installations at Dachau and Lublin. The letter went on:

Following our verbal discussion regarding the delivery of equipment of simple construction for the burning of bodies, we are submitting plans for our perfected cremation ovens which operate with coal and which have hitherto given full satisfaction.

We suggest two crematorial furnaces for the building planned... We guarantee the effectiveness of the cremation ovens as well as their durability, the use of the best material and our faultless workmanship....

Heil Hitler.⁴⁰

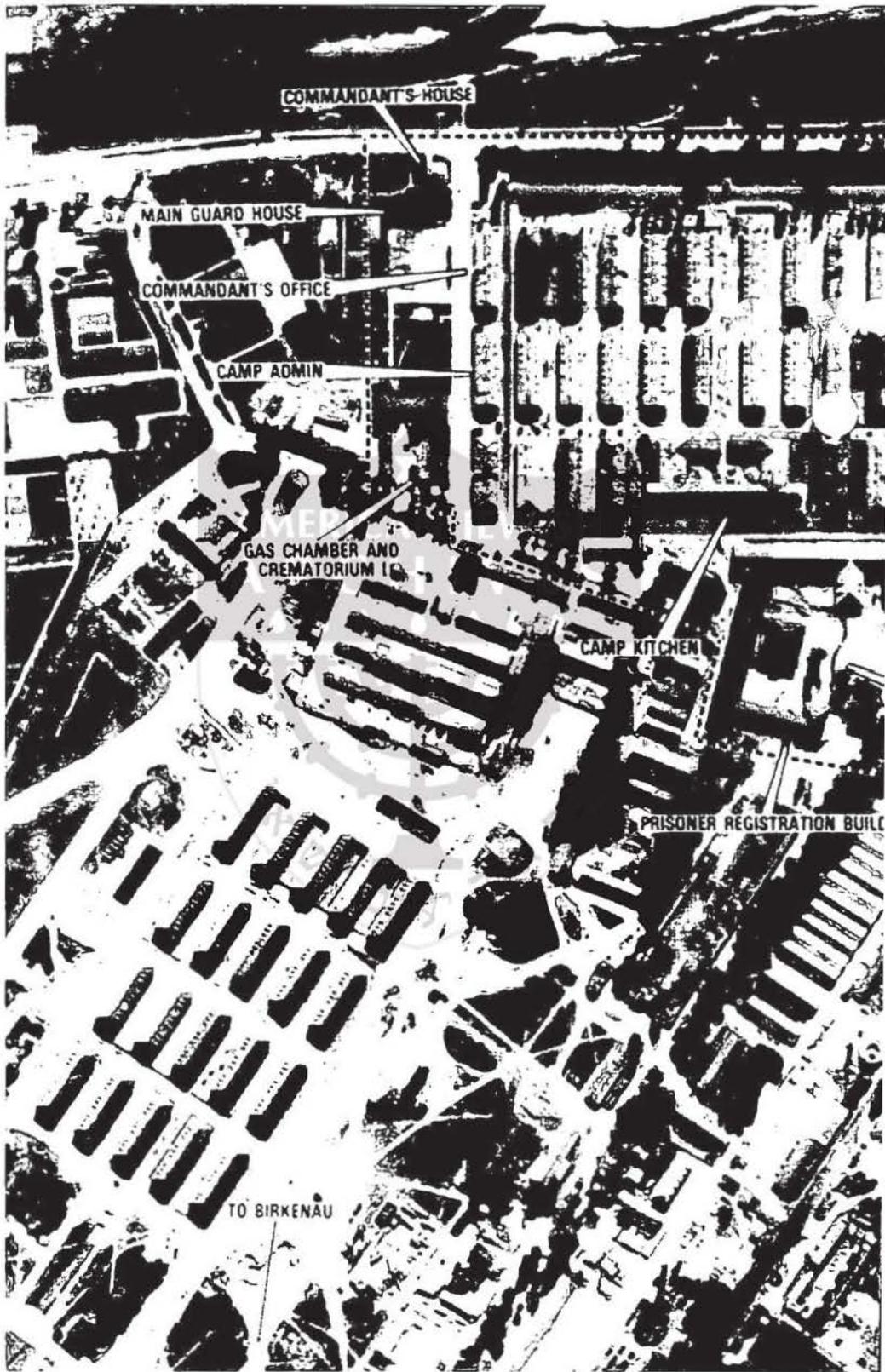
In the winter and spring of 1941-42, the first Jews were dispatched to the death camps at Chelmino, Belzec and Auschwitz. They were told, as were those who came after them, that they were being "resettled" at "work camps." SS officer Kurt Gerstein, assigned to develop improved killing techniques, was one witness to the gassings. Totally overcome by the horror he had witnessed, Gerstein left Belzec determined to tell what he had seen. A Catholic, he tried first to reach the Vatican but was turned away. He finally found a Swedish official willing to relay the news to the Allies, and in 1945 he himself also delivered a written statement to Allied military officials.

What Gerstein saw at Belzec was the process of destruction that was standard practice at the death camps. There were barracks marked "Barber," "Cloak Room" and "Valuables"; farther on, there was a passageway enclosed by barbed wire, with signs reading "To Baths and Inhalators"; a set of stairs; and then, by the rear wall, an edifice with large wooden doors. On its roof was a copper Star of David. This was the gas chamber.

The first trains Gerstein saw arrived from Lvov—45 cars holding a total of 6,700 people, of whom 1,450 had died on the way. Behind the barbed-wire windows of the train stood terrified men,



*Women prisoners at a Nazi camp,
guarded by kapos (inmate trusties) with sticks
and camp guards with watchdogs. (FPG photo.)*





The Auschwitz death camp, accidentally included in a U.S. Army reconnaissance photograph of a nearby chemical plant in August 1944. The gas chamber, crematorium and other structures, including the storage warehouse for loot taken from the victims, are all clearly identified. (Wide World photo.)



*Sentencing at Nuremberg;
October 1946:
The top surviving Nazi
leaders, seated in the two
rows directly in front
of the helmeted soldiers,
listen silently as the
International Military
Tribunal pronounces judgment
on them. (Acme photo.)*

women and children. Two hundred Ukrainian workers detailed for the task tore open the doors of the train and, with leather whips, drove the Jews out of the cars. Loudspeakers directed them to take off all their clothing, artificial limbs and eyeglasses, and to turn in money and valuables. Then, flanked by the Ukrainians, the Jews—men, women, young girls and babies—were marched, completely nude, from the trains, directly past Gerstein and the camp captain, who stood on the ramp in front of the death chambers. An SS man assured them that they were going to be put through a harmless disinfection procedure; but most of them were not deceived, Gerstein observed.

They walked up the small wooden flight of stairs and entered the death chambers, most without a word, pushed forward by those behind them. One Jewish woman of about forty, her eyes flaming torches, cursed the murderers; after several whiplashes by Captain Wirth in person, she disappeared into the gas chamber. Many people pray, while others ask: "Who will give us water for washing the dead?..."

Inside the chambers, SS men crowd the people. "Fill them up well," Wirth had ordered, "700-800 of them to every 25 square meters." The doors are shut.

But the diesel engine that is to pump in the poison gas fails to start. There is a long delay before it begins. The rest of the people from the train stand naked, in the cold. Those locked in the gas chambers wait. Gerstein records it all.

Yes, I see it all and I wait. My stop watch showed it all, 50 minutes, 70 minutes, and the diesel did not start! The people wait inside the gas chambers. In vain. They can be heard weeping....After two hours and 49 minutes...the diesel started. Up to that moment, the people shut up in those four crowded chambers were still alive, four times 750 persons in four times 45 cubic meters! Another 25 minutes elapsed. Many were already dead, that could be seen through the small window....Finally, after 32 minutes, all were dead.

Afterwards, Gerstein records, a great banquet is held in honor of the visitors. In a speech paying tribute to the employees of the camp, one of the visitors, a hygiene professor from the University of Marburg, refers to the "great work" done at the camp, and tells all those assembled: "When one sees the bodies of the Jews, one understands the greatness of your work!"⁴¹

Even after the defeat of nazism, the technicians were proud of how efficiently their murders had been accomplished. At

Nuremberg, Hoess referred to the many improvements made at his installation, as opposed to Treblinka: At Auschwitz, he told the tribunal, the gas chamber was built to process 2,000 people at one time, whereas those at Treblinka accommodated only 200. Another "improvement" was that "at Treblinka the victims almost always knew that they were to be exterminated," while at Auschwitz "we endeavored to fool the victims into thinking that they were to go through a delousing process." He added: "Very frequently, women would hide their children under their clothes, but of course when we found them we would send the children to be exterminated . . ."42

Hoess commemorated these advances in the killing procedure with a passage in the autobiography he wrote while awaiting trial and execution in Poland: "During the spring of 1942 hundreds of vigorous men and women walked all unsuspecting to their death in the gas chambers, under the blossom-laden fruit trees of the 'cottage' orchard."⁴³ The fruit trees Hoess referred to were located adjacent to the gas chambers.



*The persecution of the Jews has hit the Danes in the
sorest point in their conception of justice....
We couldn't yield to the German threats when the
Jews' well-being was at stake....If we desert
the Jews in the hour of their misery, we desert
our native country.*

*—Christmas Møller,
Danish Minister of Trade, 1943⁴⁴*

As the Horror Spread

In 1943, Julius Streicher triumphantly told readers of *Der Stürmer* that the Jews had disappeared from Europe, and that the “Jewish reservoir of the East” had ceased to exist.⁴⁵ The first half of his claim never came true; but the second half had been very nearly borne out. As the destruction of Jews in Poland and the occupied parts of the Soviet Union neared completion, “Final Solution” measures were undertaken in every other occupied European country and every German satellite.⁴⁶

How successful the Germans were in achieving their objectives in a given country depended in large part upon the amount of cooperation given them by the particular government, as well as on the attitude of the non-Jewish inhabitants toward their non-Jewish countrymen. In all or nearly all Nazi-controlled countries, including Germany itself, some non-Jews secretly helped or sheltered Jews,⁴⁷ but the number who did so varied greatly. In some countries, such as France, Italy and especially Denmark, Jews received significant, sometimes decisive help from their non-Jewish compatriots. In most of Eastern Europe, on the other hand, where there was a long history of entrenched anti-Semitism, the German murder machine not only proceeded unfettered; it was aided by the complicity of the native population, and secret helpers of the Jews were few. This is one important

reason why, by and large, Jewish losses were proportionately heaviest in the Eastern countries.

Seizing men, women and children in an occupied country and deporting them to the death camps was no easy matter without help from local authorities. Wherever there was marked local opposition to the deportation of the Jews, a considerable portion survived. The one exception was Holland, where a brutal occupation and ironclad internal control by the Germans overcame all popular support for the Jews.⁴⁸

Of the occupied European countries, Denmark alone undertook an active struggle to save its Jewish population. While it is true that the Germans were eager to preserve good relations with Denmark, and proceeded more cautiously in imposing their authority there than in other occupied European countries, the protective stand the Danes took toward Danish Jewry—a stand made clear to the Germans from the beginning—was decisive.

Because the Danes struggled actively to counter the dissemination of anti-Semitic propaganda, the Germans hesitated to introduce anti-Jewish measures. Workers, students, doctors, lawyers and teachers took upon themselves the duty of protecting the rights of their Jewish fellow citizens. While Jews elsewhere were being isolated, forced to wear the yellow star, hounded out of economic life and finally deported to the death camps, the Danish courts were busily prosecuting anti-Semites. When the authors of a slanderous anti-Semitic article appealed a stiff jail sentence and a fine, the courts responded by increasing the jail sentence.

Thus, Danish democracy was prepared for the test which came in October 1943, when the Germans moved to effect the "Final Solution" for Danish Jewry. Alerted by a sympathetic German shipping official to the impending deportations, the Resistance moved quickly into action, and all Denmark became one large underground network dedicated to saving the Jews. With the cooperation of the Swedish Government, Danes planned, financed and executed one of the most extraordinary rescue operations in history, managing to ferry almost all of the Danish Jews to safety to Sweden—a heroic undertaking even more remarkable when compared with the behavior of other countries under Nazi domination.

In France, where a quarter of the Jewish population was deported to the death camps, the collaborationist Vichy Government, the French military and the police extended every cooperation to Eichmann's deportation experts. Not only did the Prime Minister, Pierre Laval, agree to deport all foreign born or "state-

less" Jews; to their numbers he added, on his own, several thousand Jewish children left behind by parents already arrested. The Germans had neither required nor anticipated this bonus of deportees. When Pastor Marc Boegner, a leading French Protestant, pleaded that the children be saved, assuring Laval that French families would adopt them, Laval retorted that this was precisely what he did not want. "Not one of them must remain in France," he declared adamantly.⁴⁹

At the Eichmann trial, a witness would tell of the fate of those children, arbitrarily dispatched to a transit camp at Drancy, en route to Auschwitz. They arrived in buses, the witness recalled, frightened, alone, under the guard of French police. Some were barely two or three years old and did not know their names. The adult Jewish prisoners, also waiting at Drancy for shipment to the gas chambers, put little disks on the children, with new names which they had given them, and took turns caring for them.

Part of the tragedy of those victimized by the Holocaust was that they had not only to experience undreamed-of suffering, but to observe it as well. A vignette recounted at the Eichmann trial testifies to the pain of such observation. René Blum, a brother of Léon Blum, a former Premier of France, was among the deportees being held at the transit camp at Drancy, the witness reported. Together one day, they saw among the captured children a boy of seven or eight, whose clothes, once of good quality, were in tatters. "My name is Jacques Stern," he told René Blum, who had bent down and asked his name, adding that his father worked in an office and his mother played the piano. "She plays well," the boy said.

Though they knew otherwise, the adults always told the children, when they asked, that they would soon be reunited with their parents. Thus, when the boy asked whether he would soon leave the camp and rejoin his parents, they told him that in two or three days he would join his mother. Then the boy took from his pocket a piece of army biscuit he had saved and said, "I'll give it to mother." When Blum reached down to caress him, the boy, who a moment before had seemed carefree and gay, broke into terrible sobbing. A few days later, all 4,000 children were en route to Auschwitz.⁵⁰

A non-Jewish observer, a French social worker named Annette Monod, described the children's departure. The morning the children were shipped to Auschwitz, she reports, the weather was cold; the children, half asleep, sat on the ground, each with a little bundle of clothes, sometimes with a doll's head or a wheel of a

truck or other toys treasured because they were symbols of their lost homes. The gendarmes tried to take roll call, but found it was impossible; the children did not respond to their names. One tiny boy strode up to a gendarme and began to play with the whistle hanging from his belt. The children were assembled only 200 yards from the train, Miss Monod recalled, but it was a long way for small children.

I noticed one gendarme take the bundle of a boy of about four or five to help him walk. But he was immediately reprimanded by an adjutant, who told him rudely that a French soldier did not carry the bags of a Jew....

Once we were in the station, the children were loaded onto the trains in a sudden burst of speed....

It was at this point that the children felt frightened. They didn't want to go and started to cry.... Jacquot, a little five-year-old of whom I was particularly fond, started shouting for me: "I want to get down, I want to stay with Mademoiselle...." The door of the car was shut and bolted, but Jacquot pushed his hand through a gap between two planks and continued to call for me, moving his fingers. The adjutant mentioned above hit him on the hand.⁵¹

Not a single one of the deported Jewish children survived. The bulk of the French Jews, however, did survive, thanks in good part to anti-deportation pressures brought to bear on the Vichy Government by church leaders, and to the considerable help made available to them by sympathetic friends and neighbors.

No less crucial to their survival was the help Jews received from the Italian Army in the zones of France it occupied; for Axis partner though it was, Italy was determined not to yield up Jews to be murdered. On this subject a ceaseless flow of correspondence issued from SS officials and the German Ambassador, complaining of Italy's intransigence. "The attitude of the Italians is and was incomprehensible," declared Eichmann's deputy, SS First Lieutenant Heinz Röthke, in a memo to Berlin. Italian military authorities and the Italian police, he complained, "protect the Jews by every means in their power," and despite some 20 earlier reports sent to the Reich Security Head Office, the Germans had been unable to effect any change in the Italians' attitude. Another SS official complained that the Italians not only permitted "no restrictions in respect of the Jews" but, on the contrary, took Jews of all nationalities in their zone under their protection and forbade the Vichy Government to enforce measures even against Jews of French nationality.⁵²

Not only did Hitler's principal ally, Italy, refuse to hand over a single Jew; in sharp contrast to Vichy France, whose soldiers and police zealously hunted Jews down and deported them, it interfered actively in deportation efforts. The contrast was particularly sharp in the area around Grenoble, a major French city under Italian occupation. There, Vichy police rounded Jews up for deportation to Auschwitz, only to be forced to release them at the order of the Italian military commander.⁵³ In Annecy, also in the Italian zone, the barracks where French gendarmes had imprisoned Jews in preparation for sending them to Auschwitz were surrounded by Italian troops, who forced the release of the prisoners.⁵⁴

In Italian-occupied Greece, Hungary and Croatia, the story was the same: a head-on confrontation between Italian humanism and German determination to wipe out Europe's entire Jewish population. In the 1930s, Italy had enacted anti-Jewish legislation of its own, in keeping with its role as a Fascist ally; now, aware that the Jews were being murdered, Italian foreign-office officials wrote warning reports about crimes "which no alliance can make Italy a partner to." As a result, Jews remained safe from deportation not only in Italy but wherever there was an Italian military presence. This immunity lasted until 1943, when the Germans overran Italy. Despite the efforts of the Italian people, some 8,000 Italian Jews, 20 percent of the Jewish population, ultimately perished in camps or in Italy itself.⁵⁵

The Italians were not alone among Germany's allies in refusing to cooperate in mass murder. In Bulgaria (an unenthusiastic Axis partner with an earlier record of active opposition to anti-Semitism, which had entered the war on Germany's side in order to regain territory previously lost), the deportation of most Jews was averted when the Parliament and the Bulgarian Orthodox Church raised strong protests, though not before the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia had been sent to their death.⁵⁶ Finland had an alliance with Germany; yet Finland's leaders unequivocally rejected all requests to deport Jews for "resettlement in the East." "Finland is an honest nation," the Finnish Foreign Minister, Rolf Witting, told the Germans. "We prefer to die with the Jews; we shall never betray them." As a result of this courageous stance, the Jews of Finland escaped the fate of the vast majority of their coreligionists elsewhere.⁵⁷

*Brothers! It is better to die in battle in the ghetto
than to be carried away...like sheep...*

*Jewish people, go out into the squares. Anyone who
has no weapon should take an ax, and he who has no ax
should take a crowbar or a bludgeon.*

For our ancestors!

For our murdered children!

*—Manifesto of the Jewish Resistance in Vilna,
September 1, 1943⁵⁸*



AMERICAN JEWISH
ARCHIVES
Jewish Resistance

From the earliest years of the postwar era, the question of Jewish resistance to the Nazis has been debated. At the end of the war, as well as for a time thereafter, it was assumed that the Jews had mounted no resistance at all except in the battle of the Warsaw ghetto. This assumption resulted from lack of information concerning the Jewish response to the Nazis—from the fact that what was known about the Holocaust at that time was derived mostly from German sources.

The German records and accounts were devastatingly reliable in documenting the destruction of European Jewry. But they were incomplete and unreliable where the response of the Jews was concerned; for German propaganda goals required that the Jews be seen as cowards who failed to fight back. Jewish sources, hardly available until much later, and far fewer in number, were the first to throw light on the extent of Jewish resistance.⁵⁹

What the Germans concealed or did not know was gradually revealed as the Jewish records emerged, documenting the resistance which had taken place not only in the ghetto of Warsaw, but also in those of Bialystok, Vilna and Czestochowa, in the Polish forests, in the death camps of Treblinka and Sobibor, and in Auschwitz itself.⁶⁰ Little was known of these and innumerable

more obscure episodes of resistance because, in most cases, none of those who took part lived to tell of them.

The Warsaw ghetto uprising of 1943, unlike all others, is well documented in the Nuremberg proceedings. The Nazis had recorded this event with what the American prosecutor described as "Teutonic thoroughness as to detail, illustrated with photographs to authenticate its almost incredible text." The report—entitled "The Jewish Ghetto in Warsaw Is No More"—was written by SS Major General Jürgen Stroop, the commander of the troops who fought the Jewish combatants.

A prime piece of evidence for the prosecution because it exemplified the program of deliberate and total annihilation, the Stroop report was also memorable for its inadvertent rendering of Jewish heroism and German savagery. Torn between the need to demean the Jewish combatants and the need to explain to his Berlin superiors why his forces could not break their resistance for almost a month, Stroop's report moves tortuously between citations of SS heroics and examples of the tenacity of the Jews. Stroop describes Jews who fell into German hands shouting imprecations and curses at Germany, the Führer and the German soldiers, and recounts what happened when he decided to break the resistance by setting the ghetto on fire:

...Not infrequently, the Jews stayed in the burning buildings until, because of the heat and the fear of being burned alive, they preferred to jump down from the upper stories after having thrown mattresses and other upholstered articles into the street from the burning buildings. With their bones broken, they still tried to crawl across the street into blocks of buildings which had not yet been set on fire or were only partially in flames.⁶¹

Though the Germans were expert propagandists, particularly in the use of photographs, the propaganda effect of both the written report and the pictures that accompanied it was undone by the truths which they revealed. One photograph shows women and children marching, their hands raised in surrender; the caption beneath states that Jewish "bandits"—the Nazis' word for Jewish resistance fighters—were driven from their hiding places.

More than 15 years after the Nuremberg Tribunal heard details of the Jewish uprising as described in the Stroop report, another tribunal heard about the same event, unfolded this time by a Jewish resistance fighter. The Israeli judges presiding over the trial of Adolf Eichmann heard the testimony of Zivia Lubetkin Zuckerman. As ever, the victims and the perpetrators agree on

the basic facts; but whereas Stroop renders the Jews as dehumanized, animalistic creatures who crawl across streets with broken bones, Zuckerman describes living, breathing people.

We were happy and laughing. We knew, we felt, then that the end of the Germans was near. We knew they would defeat us, of course, but we knew they would pay dearly for it....When we threw our grenades and saw German blood on the streets of Warsaw, after they had been flooded with so much Jewish blood and tears, a great joy possessed us....They, the great fighters, were fleeing from our primitive homemade grenades....Of course they came back....They had ammunition, water and bread...all the things we lacked....In the ghetto people were embracing and kissing each other, although everyone knew it was almost certain he would fall. Rabbi Meyzel put his hand on my head and said...“Bless you, it will be good to die now....”⁶²



It would no doubt be difficult to calculate within a hundred thousand or so one way or another, exactly how many people were victims of the Nazi policy of extermination. That fact in itself demonstrates the enormity of the policy.

*—Sir Hartley Shawcross,
British Chief Prosecutor at Nuremberg⁶³*

The Statistics of Death

JEWISH
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As a witness at Nuremberg, Rudolf Hoess provided a detailed accounting of the destruction process at Auschwitz, the largest of the death centers. Like so much of the record-keeping of the perpetrators, his report is rich in the statistics of murder. At Auschwitz alone, Hoess testified, 2½ million victims had been gassed and burned during his tenure, and at least another half million had been killed by deliberate starvation and disease. Those three million dead, estimated Hoess, represented 70 to 80 percent of all persons sent to Auschwitz as prisoners. Many of them had first been subjected to medical “experiments,” others exploited for slave labor.

We executed about 400,000 Hungarian Jews alone at Auschwitz in the summer of 1944....

The “final solution” of the Jewish question meant the complete extermination of all Jews in Europe. I was ordered to establish extermination facilities at Auschwitz in June 1941. At that time there were already three other extermination camps in the Government General....I visited Treblinka to find out how they carried out their extermination. The Camp Commandant at Treblinka told me that he had liquidated 80,000 in the course of one-half year. He was principally concerned with liquidating all the Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. He used monoxide gas and I did not think that his methods were very efficient. So when I set

up the extermination building at Auschwitz, I used Cyclon B, which was a crystallized Prussic Acid which we dropped into the death chamber from a small opening....⁶⁴

By such means the death camps finished what the *Einsatzgruppen* had begun. In all, the "Final Solution" wiped out approximately 3 million Jews in Poland (90 percent of the country's Jewish population), and approximately 228,000 in the Baltic countries: Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia (also 90 percent). In Soviet White Russia, 245,000 Jews (65 percent) were massacred by the *Einsatzgruppen* and their non-German collaborators, in the Soviet Ukraine 900,000 (60 percent), and in Russia proper 107,000 (11 percent). Jewish losses in Hungary totaled 450,000 (70 percent); in Rumania 300,000 (50 percent); in Germany and Austria 210,000 (90 percent); in the Netherlands 105,000 (75 percent). France lost 90,000 (26 percent) of its Jews, the Bohemian and Moravian regions of Czechoslovakia 80,000 (89 percent), the rest of Czechoslovakia 75,000 (83 percent). As for Jews from Greece, 54,000 (77 percent) were killed; from Belgium, 40,000 (60 percent); from Yugoslavia, 26,000 (60 percent); from Bulgaria, 14,000 (22 percent); from Italy, 8,000 (20 percent); from Luxembourg, 1,000 (also 20 percent). Norway's small Jewish population was reduced by 900—one-half of the total.⁶⁵

By 1945, the effort to exterminate the Jews of Europe had very nearly succeeded. Approximately six million had been murdered, the religious and cultural life of East European Jewry extinguished forever. The figures tell what happened and to whom; but the human agony they represent cannot be communicated in numbers.

As the American prosecutor, Justice Jackson, continually reminded the court, for proof that the Germans had engaged in a war of extermination against the Jews, one had only to take the word of the Germans themselves. The cold, stark facts and figures, drawn from the defendants' own records, defied rebuttal. Reviewing all the evidence, the judges at the trial of the Major War Criminals pointed out that "Adolf Eichmann, who had been put in charge of this program by Hitler, has estimated that the policy pursued resulted in the killing of 6 million Jews....The persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Nazi Government has been proved in the greatest detail before the Tribunal," the judges declared.⁶⁶

In the mass of evidence which led so inexorably to this judg-

ment, two pieces of testimony stand out. One is from a speech by SS Chief Heinrich Himmler before SS leaders in Poznan in 1943:

I want to tell you about a very grave matter in all frankness. We can talk about it quite openly here, but we must never talk about it publicly....I mean the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish people....Most of you will know what it means to see 100 corpses piled up, or 500 or 1,000. To have gone through this and—except for instances of human weakness—to have remained decent, that has made us tough. This is an unwritten, never to be written, glorious page of our history.⁶⁷

The other piece of evidence, from Hans Frank, Governor-General of occupied Poland, is worth noting because it is a judgment rendered not by the accusers, but by the accused. Referring to the annihilation of the Jews, he told the court: "A thousand years will pass and still this guilt of Germany shall not have been erased."⁶⁸ He was in a position to know: As the chief occupation officer of Poland, he had presided over the murder of 3 million men, women and children—the largest Jewish population in any country in Europe.



*That which has happened is a warning. To forget it
is guilt. It must be continually remembered.
It was possible for this to happen, and it remains
possible for it to happen again at any minute.
Only in knowledge can it be prevented.*

—Karl Jaspers⁶⁹

Why We Must Know

If, as Hans Frank acknowledged, the guilt for inventing, organizing and carrying out the Holocaust lies with Germany, it must also be acknowledged that the world permitted the Holocaust to happen. For the Nazis succeeded in murdering the Jews of Europe not only because of their fanatic commitment to the "Final Solution," or because their advanced killing technology enabled them to do so; they succeeded because no nation in the civilized world intervened, heeded the threats that Jews were about to be slaughtered, or provided refuge from the slaughterers when the threats became reality. They succeeded, in short, because they were allowed to succeed. "The bystanders to cruelty," concluded Arthur D. Morse, the chronicler of American apathy, "became bystanders to genocide."⁷⁰

The Holocaust stands both as history and as a warning. As history, it shows us how easily attitudes and ideas are translated into moral action or lack of it, and how that translation determines whether human beings live or die. As the record shows, where the non-Jewish population opposed the Nazis' racist ideology and offered help to the Jews, Jewish losses were relatively low; where anti-Semitism met a widespread sympathetic response, the destruction of the Jews was virtually total.

For years, the majority of people preferred not to know the details of the Holocaust; and in recent years, as interest in the subject has grown, there have even been—precisely as General

Eisenhower predicted—some clumsy efforts by old and new Nazis and self-styled historical theorists to deny that the crimes really happened.⁷¹

While mostly ignored, as they deserve to be, such efforts to rewrite history have, on some occasions, produced eloquent rejoinders—among them one, printed in *The New York Times* in December 1977, by the late Walter J. Fellenz, Colonel, U.S.A., who led the combat infantry troops that overran the Dachau concentration camp in Germany on April 29, 1945:

I was the first American camp commander of this death mill....Now, 32½ years later, I am still shocked by what I saw during my 16 hours at the liberation of this shameful place. To me, the Holocaust was one of the most shameful crimes since man walked this earth. More shameful, however, is the fact that the forces of evil are trying to deny that this Holocaust ever took place....What are the real motives of these people? Are they possessed by evil? Sadly, I truly think so....No, I am not a Jew; I am but an old soldier....⁷²

That this witness to the Nazi crimes expected some people not to believe him if they thought he was Jewish suggests how prevalent still is the idea that the Holocaust is solely a Jewish matter. It is well, in the face of such belief, to recall the warning of the anti-Nazi German philosopher, Karl Jaspers, that what happened must be remembered because it can happen again at any minute. Implicit in this reminder is another: What happened to one person can happen to any.

The Holocaust was and remains a tragedy of universal implication, and one whose warnings we ignore at our peril.

Readings and Footnotes

The literature documenting and interpreting the Holocaust is so immense that it would take a large book just to list it. In 1973, one bibliography, limited to English-language materials (Jacob Robinson, *The Holocaust and After: Sources and Literature in English*, New York: YIVO Institute), listed over 6,000 items, and the flood of publications has not abated since then.

Listed immediately below is a limited selection of the best-known and most authoritative basic works readily available to American readers. The footnotes that follow these general references name many additional important works, in English and other languages.

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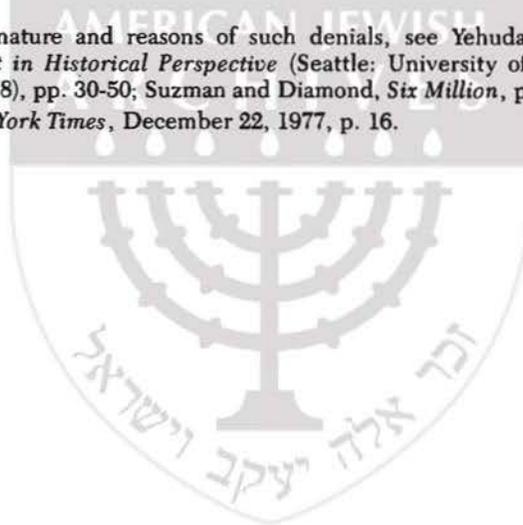
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 41. Gerstein's report is preserved in two somewhat different versions: in *Le Monde juif* (Paris), XIX (January-March 1964), pp. 4-12, and in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (Munich), vol. I (April 1953), pp. 185-193. The present extract is from a definitive version in English, in Dawidowicz, *Holocaust Reader*, pp. 104-109.
 42. "Blue Series," vols. XXXIII, pp. 277f., and XXII, pp. 495f., in English; quoted in Suzman and Diamond, *Six Million*, pp. 95 and 39f.
 43. *Commandant of Auschwitz: The Autobiography of Rudolf Hoess* (Cleveland: World, 1961), pp. 166f.
 44. Signed editorial in *Free Denmark*, an underground newspaper, October 2, 1943. Quoted in Harold Flender, *Rescue in Denmark* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1963), p. 68.
 45. *Der Stürmer*, November 4, 1943; quoted in English in "Blue Series," vol. V, p. 109. The full *Stürmer* article reprinted in German, *ibid.*, vol. XXIX, pp. 180-185.
 46. See for example, Randolph L. Braham, *The Destruction of Hungarian Jewry: A Documentary Account*, 2 vols. (New York: Pro Arte, 1963), a collection of original evidence, mostly in German; Alexander Dallin, *German Rule in Russia, 1941-1945: A Study of Occupation Policies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1957), which contains much on Nazi "racial" policy concerning both Slavs and Jews.
 47. See Eric H. Boehm, *We Survived: Fourteen Histories of the Hidden and Hunted of Nazi Germany* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Clio Press, 1966). Also Michael Horbach, *Out of the Night* (London: Vallentine, Mitchell, 1967), from the German.
 48. See Jacob Presser, *The Destruction of the Dutch Jews* (New York: Dutton,

- 1969), from the Dutch. What is probably the best-known first-hand document of the entire Holocaust was written in the Netherlands during the Nazi occupation: Anne Frank, *The Diary of a Young Girl* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), also from the Dutch.
49. Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem*, p. 107. The roundup and deportation of French Jews, including children, is the subject of Claude Lévy and Paul Tillard, *Betrayal at the Vel' d'Hiv'* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967), from the French.
 50. Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem*, p. 107.
 51. Lévy and Tillard, *Betrayal*, *op. cit.*, pp. 158f.
 52. Both complaints are cited in Léon Poliakov and Jacques Sabille, *Jews Under the Italian Occupation [of France]* (Paris: Editions du Centre, 1955), in English, pp. 106 and 61; also see p. 102.
 53. *Ibid.*, pp. 64f.
 54. Hilberg, *The Destruction*, p. 415.
 55. See Robert Katz, *Black Sabbath: A Journey Through a Crime Against Humanity* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), a history of the roundup of the Jews of Rome by the Nazis.
 56. See Frederick B. Chary, *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution, 1940-1944* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972).
 57. Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem*, p. 254; Lévy and Tillard, *Betrayal*, p. 207.
 58. Translation in Glatstein, *Anthology*, *op. cit.*, p. 333.
 59. Reuben Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975) is a comprehensive history. A brief pamphlet on the subject is Yehuda Bauer, *They Chose Life: Jewish Resistance in the Holocaust* (New York: The American Jewish Committee, 1973). For one among several analyses of the psychological, biological and moral factors that enabled some camp inmates to survive and resist, see Terrence des Pres, *The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).
 60. Rebellions in death camps are recorded, for example, in Jean-François Steiner, *Treblinka* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), from the French; Józef Garliński, *Fighting Auschwitz: The Resistance Movement in the Concentration Camp* (London: Julian Friedman, 1975), from the Polish.
 61. Full text of the Strop report in German, with many photographs, in "Blue Series," vol. XXVI, pp. 628-693. Translation of quoted passage in "Red Series," vol. I, pp. 995f. A day-to-day history of the event is: Dan Kurzman, *The Bravest Battle: The Twenty-eight Days of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* (New York: Putnam, 1976).
 62. Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem*, p. 223.
 63. Letter from Lord Shawcross, dated May 3, 1977. Quoted in Suzman and Diamond, *Six Million*, p. 31.
 64. "Blue Series," vol. XXXIII, pp. 276f., in English, cited in Suzman and Diamond, *Six Million*, pp. 93, 95.
 65. Dawidowicz, *War Against the Jews*, *op. cit.*, p. 403.
 66. In English in "Blue Series," vols. I, pp. 252f.; XXII, pp. 491, 496. In 1961,

Hilberg named a lower figure, 5.1 million (*The Destruction*, p. 767); but more recently, Dawidowicz arrived at a total of 5,933,900 (*War Against the Jews*, p. 404), virtually the same as Eichmann's six-million estimate.

67. Full German text in "Blue Series," vol. XXIX, pp. 110-173; the quoted passage is on p. 145. Extract in English, *ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 500f. The present translation is from Bracher, *German Dictatorship*, *op. cit.*, p. 423. A biography of Himmler: Roger Manvell and Heinrich Fraenkel, *Heinrich Himmler* (New York: Putnam, 1965).
68. Frank's statement about Germany's guilt is part of his admission of personal culpability, printed in English in "Blue Series," vol. XII, p. 13.
69. Karl Jaspers, *The Origin and Goal of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 149.
70. Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 383. Also see Henry L. Feingold, *The Politics of Rescue: The Roosevelt Administration and the Holocaust, 1939-1945* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1970).
71. For the nature and reasons of such denials, see Yehuda Bauer, *The Holocaust in Historical Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978), pp. 30-50; Suzman and Diamond, *Six Million*, pp. 1-23.
72. *The New York Times*, December 22, 1977, p. 16.





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