

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST



SOPHIE GELSKI

SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

YEARS 9-12

“Teaching the Holocaust” was made possible by a Community Development Grant from the Community Relations Commission and the generous donation of the Stoljar family, in memory of Samuel Stoljar, a distinguished legal scholar and Emeritus Professor of Law at the Australian National University.

Published by the Sydney Jewish Museum, Sydney Australia. All rights reserved.

Design & layout by ignition brands

First Edition August 2003



SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM

**TEACHING
THE
HOLOCAUST**

SOPHIE GELSKI



YEARS 9-12

CONTENTS

SUBJECT CHART KEY

ENGLISH = E
 GEOGRAPHY = G
 HISTORY = H
 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION = RE
 SOCIETY & CULTURE = SC
 STUDIES OF RELIGION = SR
 VISUAL ARTS = VA

		SUBJECT	NUMBER OF LESSONS	ACTIONS	PREPARATION
BACKGROUND NOTES	01				
FOREWARD	08				
UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE HOLOCAUST	09	ALL	1	✓	✗
UNIT 2: COMMUNITY AND CITIZENSHIP	10	G/H	2	✓	✓
UNIT 3: HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS	13	G/H/SC	1	✓	✓
UNIT 4: PROTECTING RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS	17	E/G/H/RE/SC	1	✓	✓
UNIT 5: WHY DIDN'T MORE JEWS LEAVE GERMANY?	22	E/G/H/RE/SC	2	✓	✓
UNIT 6: ANTISEMITISM, PREJUDICE AND STEREOTYPING	27	H/RE/SC/	2	✓	✓
UNIT 7: CHOICES	31	H/RE/SC	2	✓	✓
UNIT 8: THE HOLOCAUST AS REPRESENTATION – WHOSE HISTORY IS IT ANYWAY	41	E/H/VA	2	✓	✓
UNIT 9: THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOLOCAUST	44	E	2	✓	✓
UNIT 10: NAZI 'DOUBLE SPEAK' – EUPHEMISM FOR ANNIHILATION	47	E	2	✓	✓
UNIT 11: POETRY	53	E	1	✓	✓
UNIT 12: PERPETRATORS – “THE BANALITY OF EVIL”	57	H/RE/SC	1	✓	✓
UNIT 13: THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES: BYSTANDERS, RESISTORS, VICTIMS, RESCUERS AND PERPETRATORS	62	H/SC/SR	1	✓	✓





	SUBJECT	NUMBER OF LESSONS	ACTIONS	PREPARATION
UNIT 14: WHERE WAS GOD DURING THE HOLOCAUST?	RE	1	✓	✓
UNIT 15: WHERE WAS MAN?	G/H/RE/SC	1	✓	✓
UNIT 16: RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS	RE	2	✓	✓
UNIT 17: HOW YOU CAN SECURE THE FUTURE – ACTION PLAN	ALL	2	✓	✓
GLOSSARY		77		
VIDEOS – AN ANNOTATED GUIDE		78		
SENIOR FICTION AND NON-FICTION – AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO A CONTEMPORARY SELECTION		80		
RECOMMENDED REFERENCES		82		
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		83		
ABOUT THE AUTHOR		83		
FEEDBACK FORM		84		
APPENDIX: STUDENT WORKSHEETS & HANDOUT MATERIALS		86		



BACKGROUND NOTES

THE NAZIS AND THE PLIGHT OF GERMAN JEWS 1933–1939

In 1933, the Nazis seized power in Germany in the wake of the Great Depression and the collapse of the Weimar Republic, and a dictatorial regime was established. Many Germans supported Adolf Hitler because they saw in him a charismatic *Führer* ('Leader'), who could solve the severe problems affecting the country. These problems included the consequences of the military defeat in the First World War, the harsh terms imposed by the Peace Treaty of Versailles, political instability, social unrest, economic malaise and large-scale unemployment.

In Hitler's vision, Germany, and with time the world, was to be remade along the lines of Nazi ideals – strong, 'Aryan' and 'racially pure'. It was a world in which there was no place for any group or individual defined as a political, social or racial enemy. The Jew was regarded not only as the 'cancer' of the German *Volksgemeinschaft* ('national community') but also the source of all evil – as the *Weltfeind* (the 'world enemy'). The Jew had to be removed and finally eliminated.

In Hitler's genocidal, racist ideology, *Erlösung* (the 'redemption') of the Germans and of 'Aryan' humanity depended upon *Endlösung* (the 'Final Solution') of the 'Jewish Question'.¹

Systematically, the Jews were excluded from German society. In September 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were proclaimed to "protect German blood and honour" by banning marriages between Jews and Germans, and by depriving Jews of their civil rights and citizenship. Thousands of Jews fled Nazi Germany. This exodus prompted the United States of America to convene an international conference on refugees at Evian in July 1938. Very little however, was done to help the refugees.

The Nazis continued to intensify their campaigns against the Jews. On the night of 9 November 1938, a massive pogrom was organised against Jews in Germany and Austria which became known as *Kristallnacht* – the 'night of broken glass'. More than 1,000 synagogues

were razed and 7,500 Jewish-owned shops vandalised, leaving streets covered with shards of glass. Nazis broke into Jewish homes, terrorising families. Jews were murdered and almost 30,000 Jewish men were incarcerated in concentration camps in order to increase the pressure on emigration.

Following *Kristallnacht*, Nazi policy became even more relentless. Jewish businesses, assets and valuables were confiscated. Jews were herded together in specially segregated 'Jew houses' and deployed in forced labour. They undertook feverish efforts to escape Nazi terror.

In September 1939, Nazi Germany instigated World War Two. The war sealed the fate of German and European Jewry. The Jews found themselves trapped and defenceless against a powerful enemy bent on their total destruction, in a world largely indifferent to their fate.

¹ Wistrich, R. 2001 'Hitler and the Holocaust', Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, p.2

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE TO THE PLIGHT OF EUROPEAN JEWRY (1930–1950)

Xenophobia: a Greek word meaning deep-seated hostility to foreigners – made manifest in Australia in the days of the Gold Rush – characterised Australia's outlook throughout the 1930s (the years of the Great Depression), the Second World War and into the post-war decades.

In spite of increasing Nazi persecution of German Jews and the annexation of Austria in March 1938, Australia's attitude towards the Jewish refugees remained cold and unwelcoming. Just how 'undesirable a race' the Jews were to Australia was made clear at the 1938 Evian Conference by the Australian representative, Lieutenant-Colonel White, when he declared, "as we have no real racial problems, we are not desirous of importing one by encouraging any scheme of large-scale foreign migration."





Some 9,000 Jewish refugees from Central Europe found sanctuary in Australia before the outbreak of World War Two. In 1940, some 2,000 Jewish refugees who had fled Austria and Germany were sent from England to Australia aboard the ship *Dunera*. They were regarded as 'enemy aliens' and interned.

The end of the war marked a radical shift in Australia's immigration policy. For the first time in the nation's history, the Australian Government abandoned its almost exclusive reliance on Anglo-Saxon migration and encouraged non-British migrants. However the 'White Australia Policy' was retained and thus the exclusion of non-European migrants persisted.

For the sake of Australia's future security and prosperity, Arthur Calwell, the architect of Australia's new immigration policy, argued for the 'populate or perish' solution. The Jewish population in Australia, particularly those in Melbourne, considered Calwell the 'friend of Jewish refugees', although Jews continued to face invisible barriers. His sympathy for Jewish refugees and Holocaust survivors was tempered by political expediency.

Calwell supported the Iron Curtain embargo on migrants from communist occupied countries (such as Hungary, Poland and Yugoslavia) and the hostility of the Returned Services League (RSL) against Jewish refugees. New quotas were imposed. Only 25 per cent of any boat or plane was to be filled with people from these two categories.

Before the Second World War, Jews made up 0.5 per cent of the overall Australian population. After the war Australian officials ensured that it would continue to remain so. In spite of such prejudice and discrimination, however, Australia's post-war record regarding Holocaust survivors is far better than that of the United States of America, Canada or Britain. Outside Israel, Australia still continues to have the highest number of survivors on a pro rata basis

THE 'FINAL SOLUTION'

The Nazi policy against the Jews culminated in *Endlösung* (the 'Final Solution') – the murder of six million Jews, known as the Holocaust or the *Shoah*. It was an event unprecedented in history and still eludes understanding. From the outset, Adolf Hitler and other race fanatics had propagated a clear parting of the ways between Jews and Germans. 'Solutions' to the so-called 'Jewish Problem' were implemented in stages.

In the initial years of persecution, the Nazis attempted to make Germany and Austria *Judenfrei* ('free of Jews') by forcing the Jews to emigrate. After the outbreak of the war they envisaged a 'territorial solution', manifested in plans and projects for Jewish 'reservations' ('Lublin Project' and 'Madagascar Plan').

In 1941, against the background of the war of destruction launched against the Soviet Union, decisions were made to bring about a 'Final Solution' through organised mass murder. Emigration and expulsion were replaced by extermination. Mobile *SS-Einsatzgruppen* (SS Operational Task Forces), Police Battalions and other units were entrusted with the task of shooting Jews and other 'enemies' in the newly conquered territories of Eastern Europe. After the first wave of killing, extermination camps were set up equipped with gassing installations that ensured a more advanced and efficient killing technique.

In January 1942, top Nazi officials met at the Wannsee Conference in Berlin to discuss and coordinate the genocide that had been unleashed. Preparations were underway to deport the Jews from Central and Western Europe to the killing fields in the East. At the very end of the war, camp prisoners were 'evacuated' again. They embarked on another long journey, known as 'Death Marches.' Many fell victim to exhaustion, starvation and the atrocities committed by the guards.





Double exposure from the 'Holocaust Project' © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1990. Sprayed and photographed on photolithium silk screen and acrylic, oil and ink on paper. 43" x 22.5". Collection of the artist and Through The Flower Corporation. Photo © Donald Woodman.

GHETTOS

Ghettos are often associated with images of urban slums – or geographically separated minorities. The term 'ghetto' had its origin in the sixteenth century, with the purpose of restricting contact between Jews and Christians. Separate city quarters for both Christians and Jews – on a voluntary or compulsory basis – existed in many Muslim countries until the twentieth century. None of these forms of ghettos, however, can be compared to those established by the Nazis in the countries that they occupied during the Second World War.

The ghettos established by the Nazis were places in which Jews were held under duress, sealed off from the rest of the population by wooden fences, barbed wire and sometimes (as in the case of the Warsaw ghetto) brick walls. They were administered by Nazi imposed *Judenräte* ('Jewish councils'). Members of the Jewish councils were forced to convey the orders of the Nazis. They tried to ameliorate the harsh nature of these orders wherever possible. Ghetto inmates were exposed to terror and slave labour, appalling housing and hygienic conditions, starvation and disease. For the Nazis, the ghettos served as transit stations on the road to extermination. Over 800,000 Jews perished in ghettos.

In the spring of 1942, liquidation of ghettos and the massive deportations to unknown places began. Rumours about the destinations of the deportees – specially built death camps – soon filtered through to the ghettos. To discredit these rumours, the Nazis used the *Judenräte* to disguise the deportation as 'resettlement'. Occasionally they promised extra rations of food as a way of inducing and encouraging Jews to 'volunteer' for 'resettlement'.

CONCENTRATION CAMPS

Nazi concentration camps varied greatly both in type and character. Although all the camps operated according to similar conditions (slave labour, starvation, appalling sanitation, harsh punishments and high death rates), their functions changed during the various stages of the Third Reich.

In the period 1933 to 1936, concentration camps were used to consolidate the political and ideological bases of the Nazi regime by imprisoning, punishing and 're-educating' every real or imaginary opponent of the Nazis – especially members of the Left. They also served as effective deterrents and instruments of terror to remind the population of adaptation and submission. The concentration camp Dachau, established in March 1933, became the model for all subsequent camps.

In the period 1936 to 1941, economic interests became an additional factor during the course of war preparation and expansion. New and larger concentration camps were established, providing the SS industry with a vast army of slave labour. Examples of these were Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen and Mauthausen, as well as the numerous forced labour camps set up in occupied territories.

From 1941 onwards, the camps were designated a third function – to serve as extermination camps. These 'death factories' were specially designed to implement the 'Final Solution'. Falling into this category were camps such as Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Lublin-Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

Auschwitz was the largest Nazi concentration and extermination camp. Located 60 kilometres west of the Polish city of Kraków, it comprised three camp complexes: Auschwitz I, built in April 1940; Auschwitz II or Auschwitz-Birkenau, built in March 1941; and Auschwitz III or Buna-Monowitz, erected in March 1942. Auschwitz was surrounded by a further forty five 'satellite' or 'sub-camps', all serving as slave labour camps.

The deportation trains ended at the railway platform in Birkenau. The human cargo was brutally driven from the carriages, ordered to leave all personal possessions behind and roughly shoved into two lines – one for men and the other for women and children. Personal belongings abandoned in the carriages were gathered by a slave labour detachment and taken to barracks called *Kanada*, a place associated with 'wealth' by the prisoners.



On arrival, non-Jews were assigned to labour camps while Jews were subjected to *Selektion* (sorting by SS officers and doctors). Jewish prisoners were directed either to the right – life and work – or to the left – death in the gas chambers. About one fifth of the 1.2 million Jews brought to Auschwitz were chosen for work, the rest – the elderly, the sick and women with young children – were gassed.

Those sent to the gas chambers were murdered immediately. Corpses were burnt in the crematoria, but if too many for the crematoria they were burnt in open pits. Members of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* were forced to take part in deluding the victims before they entered the gas chambers and following their murder, in the removal, burning and disposal of the corpses. Four crematoria were constructed containing undressing rooms and gas chambers. Crematory ovens often worked day and night. German companies supplied the installations and poison gas (Zyklon B).

The small number of Jews who, because of their youth or presumed fitness to work, had been ordered to the barracks gained a temporary reprieve. Their murder had only been postponed, however, as long as they were able to work. From the very moment prisoners entered the world of the camp everything was done to debase and dehumanise them, to rob them of their sense of self and their individuality. Prisoners were deprived of all personal possessions, deloused, stripped, given dirty striped prison uniforms or poorly fitting clothes, and had their heads shaved – men and women alike. They were identified by number. In Auschwitz, these numbers were tattooed onto the prisoners left arm. Prisoners were also forced to wear an identifying 'badge' – red for political prisoners, green for criminals, yellow for Jews and pink for homosexuals.

There were a number of *Kapos* or 'privileged prisoners'. Recruited from among the inmates, *Kapos* assisted the SS guards in running the camps. They were also forced to supervise and to brutalise their fellow prisoners. A small group of prisoners were selected for pseudo-medical experiments. SS doctors (the most notorious being Josef Mengele, known as the 'Angel of Death') carried out barbarous experiments on 'patients' in Block 10 of Auschwitz I. They sterilised Jewish women and experimented on groups of twins (including children) and dwarfs – killing many and grotesquely deforming others. Sick or injured prisoners could seek care in the camp hospital. They were cared for by other inmates with medical experience or expertise, however, medicine and medical equipment were in very short supply. Sick prisoners soon learnt that if the orderlies or SS doctors judged them unfit to work they would either be given lethal injections or sent to gas chambers.

Prisoners were kept in crude, overcrowded and dysentery-riddled barracks. They slept on narrow wooden bunks, their sleep often disturbed. It took all of a prisoner's physical and mental strength to survive an ordinary day: the dreaded *Appell* (roll call) involved standing outside for hours at a time and in all kinds of weather, early in the morning, in the late afternoon after many hours of labour, or sometimes in the middle of the night. They endured gruelling hours of work on starvation rations, beaten if they slackened their pace. While a mistake at work or in the barracks often meant a flogging, a weakness or a disease could mean death. Faced with such conditions, some prisoners committed suicide by throwing themselves onto the electrified fence. Others became *Muselmänn* – the term used to describe inmates who had lost their will to live. Physically and mentally broken, weak and exhausted, they were 'walking corpses', who would either expire or to be sent to the gas chambers.





JEWISH RESISTANCE

GHETTO RESISTANCE

Early commentaries characterised Jewish resistance as meagre and insignificant, and it always bore a masculine face – armed ghetto or partisan fighters. Too often there has been a complete neglect not only of women's activities but also of any 'spiritual' or 'moral' forms of resistance. The might of the German military apparatus presented formidable obstacles to Jewish resistance, but resistance could not be stifled, even in the face of obstacles such as:

- the isolation of the ghettos
- a lack of trained fighters – ordinary men, women and children, not soldiers, were imprisoned in the ghettos
- a lack of arms, exacerbated by the disinterest and hostility of outside groups (the local underground movement and partisan groups)
- the traditional significance of family ties making it impossible for many to abandon parents, siblings, spouses and children in order to join fighting groups or escaping to forests
- Nazi deception encouraging resettlement to seem like a viable option – the existence of 'death camps', though beyond comprehension, was a very carefully guarded secret
- the deepening of anti-Semitic feeling – the local population was treated ruthlessly by the Germans and assisting Jews was punishable by death
- overcrowding, starvation and disease in ghettos

COURIERS

Female couriers were usually members of the various youth movements embodying specific features – generally fair skinned and blue eyed, with good Polish skills. They could, therefore, covertly travel from one sealed ghetto to another. As 'human transmitters', they saw, assessed and absorbed the plight of each ghetto. They transferred information, secret documents, letters and money between ghettos and the outside world.

It was due to their efforts that news percolated through to the ghettos. They were essential to the Jewish underground as they procured and smuggled weapons. After ill-fated uprisings, couriers became the lifeline for the Jewish partisan units and the men, women and children hiding on the 'Aryan' side. The couriers brought sorely needed supplies of food and medicines, money, news of the latest developments and, most importantly, hope – the essential ingredient for survival. To date, the resistance of these brave young women has been largely unacknowledged.

THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

Jewish men and women used whatever means available to oppose the Nazi regime. Armed uprisings took place in approximately 100 ghettos situated in Poland, Lithuania, Belorussia, and the Ukraine. The largest and longest revolt was the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It was organised and led by young, political activists – they included 23 year-old Mordechai Anielewicz, the leader of the uprising, Yitzhak Zukerman and his wife Zivia Lubetkin, Marek Edelman, Israel Kanal and Pawel Frankel.

In April 1943, equipped with a small number of pistols, homemade grenades and a few rifles, the Jewish fighters engaged the Nazis in direct combat. They fought without hope of victory but were fortified by the very act of their defiance. For an entire month, a few hundred young fighters held out against the vastly superior German armed forces recruited from the SS, police and military. Eventually the Ghetto was razed – the Nazis burning it, building by building. On 16 May, Jürgen Stroop, a German SS commander, reported that the *Grossaktion* ('large-scale operation') had been accomplished, the ghetto vanquished and the remaining Jews deported to death camps.

Anielewicz and many other ghetto fighters were killed. A few others such as Yitzhak Zuckerman, Zivia Lubetkin and Marek Edelman escaped through the sewers to the 'Aryan' side. They later fought as a separate unit in the Polish Uprising in August 1944. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising became the central symbol for remembrance of the Holocaust and at the same time, a symbol for Jewish heroism.



CAMP RESISTANCE

In Auschwitz and other camps Jewish prisoners did resist. Some joined underground organisations; others showed solidarity for fellow inmates and attempted to protect them. Weak prisoners were assigned less arduous work details. Inmates ill-treated by *Kapos* or SS guards were transferred to other blocks. Those involved in the distribution of food and other essential items offered direct help. The provision of even one slice of bread or one tablet of medicine – as acts of resistance – could determine life or death.

A few like Marla Zimetbaum, succeeded in escaping and disseminating news of the heinous crimes being perpetrated. Jews rebelled in eighteen slave labour camps and in five extermination camps. In 1943 inmates in Treblinka and Sobibor stood up against annihilation. In October 1944 the rebellion of the Jewish *Sonderkommando* in Auschwitz-Birkenau took place. The resisters destroyed Crematoria One with explosives. In early January 1944, shortly before the ‘evacuation’ of Auschwitz, Roza Robota and three young women members of the camp underground were publicly hanged. They had smuggled the explosives from an armament factory to the *Sonderkommando* so that the resisters were able to blow up the crematoria. Heroism like Rosa's was not unique. The courage and determination of camp inmates are just some of the stories that have been lost in the murder of the prisoners or in the ‘silence’ of Holocaust survivors.

PARTISAN WARFARE

Jews fought in partisan units, either in their own partisan groups or as part of larger, non-Jewish groups that took up the armed struggle against the Nazis and their local collaborators behind front lines. Two specific goals dominated: revenge and survival. The number of Jewish partisan fighters was as high as 50,000.



There was yet another form of Jewish resistance manifest in Jewish family camps. Set up in remote forest areas in Lithuania, Belarus, Poland and the Ukraine, family camps absorbed the last remaining members of the destroyed Jewish communities, and in many instances, women played a vital role in leading these communities. The size of the camps varied from a handful to several hundred Jews. They were constantly searching for food and hiding places, living in bunkers dug out of the ground, or in huts, tents or sheds. Many fell victim to denunciations or the attacks of a hostile population or were hunted down by the Germans and their local collaborators. Some 10,000 Jews might have survived the ‘Final Solution’ in forest camps.

SPIRITUAL AND MORAL FORMS OF RESISTANCE

Examples of spiritual or moral forms of resistance also deserve recognition. Ghettos were designed to demoralise and dehumanise. Ghetto inmates sustained life by illegal importation of food and the establishment of hospitals, kindergartens and orphanages. They also set up schools and organised musical and cultural activities to maintain dignity. Religious observance continued. Prisoners clung to the belief that slave labour for the German war industry carried out in ghetto workshops and factories would offer them a chance of survival.

Many tried to escape from the ghettos and find hiding places on the ‘Aryan’ side. Others built secret ‘bunkers’ to hide in during round-ups. Secret archives were kept. Illicit newspapers and pamphlets were produced and distributed. Young political activists, the vanguard of the Jewish youth movement, provided decisive impulses for the preparation and implementation of ghetto uprisings. In many cases, however, the conditions of ghettos and camps prevented armed resistance, due especially to the physical and mental exhaustion as well as the total isolation and lack of weapons. The very struggle for survival became an act of resistance. According to Primo Levi, survivor and author of *‘Survival in Auschwitz’*, keeping oneself clean in a place such as Auschwitz was an assertion of human dignity and the human spirit.



RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

Many Jews fled Nazi-dominated Europe, finding refuge in Switzerland, Sweden, Spain, Turkey and other countries. Attempts were made to escape deportation and death by offering bribes. The Nazis offered to sell small groups of Jews for goods or money.

Some Jews were saved because they lived in countries which, though sympathetic to or even allies of Germany, refused to comply with the demand to hand their Jews over (such as Italy, Bulgaria and Finland). Danish behaviour was outstanding – exemplifying the highest moral and political responsibility. The Danish King, government, public and churches refused to surrender 8,000 Jews – most of them refugees – to the Germans. In August 1943 some 7,000 Jews were rescued and spirited to safe haven in Sweden through a unique operation carried out by the underground and an armada of Danish boats.

Jewish lives were protected and saved by some prominent individuals or businessmen such as Oskar Schindler. Some diplomats actively engaged in the rescue of Jews. For example Sempo Sugihara, Japanese Consul in pre-War Lithuania, issued Jews with life saving transit visas to overseas destinations. In 1944 the Swede Raoul Wallenberg, who was posted to Budapest, saved many Jews by giving them 'protective passports'.

It is estimated that about 200,000 Jews survived in hiding or by pretending to live as Christians, relying on forged birth certificates and/or false identity cards. Both Jews and those who sheltered them feared betrayal from neighbours and blackmailers. People caught helping Jews risked the death penalty or being sent to concentration camps. One third of those in hiding were killed either because they were discovered or betrayed.



LIBERATION

Liberated by the victorious allied forces in 1945, many survivors were assembled in Displaced Persons Camps (DP-Camps). Some returned to homes that had been claimed by neighbours or strangers. Haunted by memories and disheartened by the loss of loved ones they often found it impossible to stay. Often sole survivors, confused and grief-stricken, sought either fresh or foreign landscapes in which to begin new lives.

More than 20,000 survivors found sanctuary in Australia, one of the furthest places on earth from war-torn, anti-Semitic, blood-soaked Europe. Many went to Palestine to help in the struggle for a national homeland – Israel. Others went to the United States, Canada or other countries. Scattered throughout the world they rebuilt their lives. In general, almost all of them succeeded in establishing themselves firmly in their new homelands. Through diligence they prospered and were renewed.



FOREWORD

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST IN AN AGE OF GENOCIDE

The unprecedented upheaval and destruction of European Jewry between 1941 and 1945 is, without a doubt, one of the most significant events of modern world history. The Holocaust depicts one of the most problematic and horrifying facets of human behaviour; for this reason alone, it is profoundly relevant to a range of subject disciplines.

It trumpets a dire warning to the entire world to be vigilant and to never place complete faith in the integrity of civilisation – a very thin veneer. The Holocaust is a grievous reminder of the horror that the misuse of political power, its machinery and a constantly developing technology can wreak. Teachers of the Holocaust have a solemn responsibility to make students aware not only of the evil that humankind is capable of but also the processes that allow such depravity to take root and flourish.

Sadly, even in the twenty-first century, an understanding of these events is still imperative. Within the not too distant past, thousands of civilians of Afghanistan, Africa, Cambodia, East Timor, Tibet, and the former Yugoslavia have had their civil, national and human rights violated. While most of us sat by, either uninformed or unwilling to become involved, people in these parts have been made refugees, raped, tortured and murdered. If we are to have a future and if we are to look forward with hope to the new millennium, the Holocaust and these tragedies demand that we examine and learn from the mistakes of the past fifty years.

Because we are still living in an 'Age of Genocide', students of the Holocaust must strive to discover its causes as well as consider procedures to prevent such an event ever happening again. Ronnie Landau in *Studying the Holocaust*, stresses that when teaching the Holocaust and its heinous atrocities, teachers must avoid the tendency to dehumanise Hitler or to portray Nazism and its crimes as "evils beyond the scope of human perception and our understanding".² The German perpetrators of the Holocaust (and their non-German accomplices) were human beings – therefore there must be a cogent explanation, however abhorrent, for their beliefs and behaviour.

Landau explains that to acquire a fuller understanding of the Holocaust it is both advisable and instructive to categorise it into a "range of more limited human experiences, motives, crises, voices and responses".³ Such analysis, while assisting identification with these events, also provides a better basis for comparison with similar

historical events. For example, the absolutely senseless annihilation of Jews during World War II (justified by the lie that they threatened German civilisation) evokes memories of the 1915 Armenian genocide committed by the Turks (a tragedy camouflaged by World War I). It set "a horrifying precedent of genocide and world indifference; and seemed to convince Hitler, for one, that the international community would always be prepared to turn the other way and consign even the worst atrocities to oblivion". The sheer 'powerlessness and lack of choice' of Hitler's Jewish victims, in many ways, anticipated the fate of millions of Cambodians and their systematic massacre in the mid-1970s.⁴

The cruel "indifference of the silent majority" (to which most of us belong) to "the suffering of others, not merely in distant parts of the world but even in our own countries, cities, neighbourhoods and schools", according to Landau, finds its antecedent in the Holocaust.⁵

Naturally, analogies are never precise but they do provide an excellent starting point for discussion. Although the Holocaust is a composite of numerous personal narratives, responses and choices – and no single situation will provide the answer to its causes or its prevention in the future – deconstructing it into many different components, however, its limitless horrors and its ephemeral victories, provides a clearer understanding of the forces that shaped, drove and maintained an environment in which human beings could act in such monstrous ways. Undeniably the Holocaust is a Jewish tragedy – but not exclusively. Therefore the implications, as well as the universal lessons of this 'man-made catastrophe', should be of major importance to teachers across a range of subject disciplines.

The following sections explore important historical questions through the analysis of many different forms of evidence: photographs, letters, newspaper reports, artefacts and oral testimony. Responsibility for highlighting the relevance of the Holocaust and for transmitting its memory from generation to generation requires a constructivist rather than a didactic approach. Students should be encouraged to discover for themselves the questions that are central to this most horrific episode in human history.

² Landau, R. 1998 *Studying the Holocaust*, Routledge, London, p.4

³ *Ibid*, p.5

⁴ *Ibid*, p.6

⁵ *Ibid*, p.6

UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE HOLOCAUST

SUBJECT AREAS:

All subjects

LESSON PLANS:

Introduction to the Holocaust (1.1)

ACTIONS:

After lesson 1.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

None

OBJECTIVES:

1. To establish the Holocaust within its historic context

1.1 LESSON PLAN INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST

PREPARATION:

None

Begin the lesson with a brainstorming activity:

1. Ask students what they understand by the term *Holocaust* and write their responses on the board.
2. Explore their ideas about:
 - when and where it happened;
 - who was involved;
 - why it happened; and
 - who was culpable.
3. Ask students to identify the people (individuals, groups, countries) involved in the Holocaust and write their responses on the board.
4. Introduce the terms *perpetrator*, *victim*, *rescuer*, *resister* and *bystander*.
5. Discuss the meanings of these terms.
6. Rearrange student responses to **step 1** under the broad groupings of **step 4**.
7. Consider ambiguities: Germans were not only *perpetrators* but in some cases *victims*, *resisters* and *rescuers*. At times an individual would be a *rescuer* and at another time a *perpetrator*.
8. Ask students to consider:
 - what these people would have been like; and
 - what qualities and characteristics they may have possessed.
9. Write these responses next to the relevant group or individuals already on the board.

Some suggestions:

 - *mad, evil, powerful;*
 - *courageous, good-hearted, heroic, altruistic and empathetic;*
 - *weak, pathetic, frightening.*
10. Ask students to **keep this work**. They will be asked to compare this task to a similar one at the end of their unit of study.
11. Do a similar task at the end of your study so that your students can see the development in their own understanding.

UNIT 2: COMMUNITY AND CITIZENSHIP

SUBJECT AREAS:

Geography
History

LESSON PLANS:

Introduction to Community & Citizenship (2.1)
A Sense of Community (2.2)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 2.1, teachers should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum to ensure they are able to draw students' attention to ways in which the Nazis excluded Jews and humiliated Germans who had any personal dealings with them.

After lesson 2.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Worksheet 2.1: A Sense of Community

OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore the factors that help to shape a sense of community and the prejudices that exclude/marginalise people from being accepted into communities;
2. To explore the rights and responsibilities of citizens at local, national and global levels;
3. To help students develop concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people;
4. To help students develop a commitment to act in a fair and responsible manner;
5. To help students develop a respect for and an acceptance of cultural diversity;
6. To help students recognise the positive role that communities play in supporting people and in creating a sense of belonging and identity.

2.1 LESSON PLAN INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNITY & CITIZENSHIP

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Worksheet 2.1

1. Begin the lesson with a class discussion of the following key terms:
 - community
 - citizenship
 - ethnicity
 - multiculturalism
2. Ask students to consider the **similarities** and **differences** between the following communities:
 - local
 - national
 - global
3. Discuss those factors that **contribute** to creating a sense of community and those that **destroy** it.
4. Ask students to consider what a **citizen** of the following communities should have in common:
 - a locality
 - a nation
 - the world
5. Discuss whether being part of a community is something important – what are your reasons?
6. Divide the board into the following headings and ask students to consider the implications of each side:
 - 'Being Part of a Community'
 - 'Being Excluded from a Community'
7. Ask students whether they feel any sense of community. Why or why not? Where do they feel a part of a community?
8. Ask students if their particular community is open and welcoming to **one and all** or are there people who would **not** be welcome.



2.2 LESSON PLAN SENSE OF COMMUNITY

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Worksheet 2.1

9. Ask them to explain the reasons.
 10. Ask students to individually complete Worksheet 2.1 and then examine:
 - similarities and differences in the membership of these communities;
 - strength and variety of community allegiances in the class (focus discussion on ways in which students feel that they benefit from belonging to one or more of these communities; and examine the responsibilities that the students have to their fellow members);
 - consider the position, reason and feelings of any student who claims **not** to belong to **any** form of community;
 - consider the ways in which different communities can bring people together as well as create conflict.
 11. Divide the class into halves and discuss the points raised by each side:
 - ask one half to consider the **positive** impact of multiculturalism on Australian society;
 - ask the other half to consider the ways in which it could be construed as being **divisive**.
 12. Consider whether we value **diversity** or is difference viewed as a **threat**.
 13. Discuss the **point** at which the outsider becomes a danger and a menace, threatening the fabric of life.
 14. Consider ways in which we can **build** community and **tolerance** towards difference.
1. Be prepared to discuss the **reason(s)** for your sense of belonging or not belonging to any or all of the communities you have in your table.
 2. Be prepared to discuss whether you consider the concept of community to be an **important** one.
 3. Are there **any** links between citizenship and community? If so, what do the two terms have in common?
 4. What are some of the **characteristics** and **responsibilities** of good citizenship?
 5. Complete Worksheet 2.1

**WORKSHEET 2.1:
A SENSE OF COMMUNITY**

TYPE OF COMMUNITY	DO YOU FEEL YOU BELONG TO ANY/ALL OF THESE COMMUNITIES? GIVE YOUR REASONS WHY OR WHY NOT?
SCHOOL:	
LOCAL:	
RELIGIOUS:	
ETHNIC:	
NATIONAL:	
ASIAN PACIFIC:	
GLOBAL:	



UNIT 3: HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

SUBJECT AREAS:

Geography
History
Society & Culture

LESSON PLANS:

Human Rights and Freedoms (3.1)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 3.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Handout 3.1: (Timeline) Racism in Action – Nazi Assault on the Rights and Freedoms of German Jews 1933-1943

Handout 3.2: The Nuremberg Laws 15 September 1935 (1) Laws for the Protection of German Blood and Honour

Handout 3.3: The Nuremberg Laws 15 September 1935 (2) Reich Citizenship Law

OBJECTIVES:

1. To establish the concept of rights and freedoms through an understanding of the rights and freedoms students enjoy today;
2. To help students develop an appreciation of the importance of individual rights and freedoms;
3. To explore reasons why people failed to speak out against the Nazi persecution of the Jews and other marginalised groups.

3.1 LESSON PLAN HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Handouts 3.1 – 3.3

1. Begin the lesson by discussing the meanings of the words 'rights' and 'freedoms'.
2. Ask students to suggest the rights and freedoms they currently enjoy or will enjoy once they turn 18 and write student responses on the board.

Some suggestions:

- *being able to say what you think*
- *reading books of your own choosing*
- *using any public facility—bus, train, pool, library, park*
- *owning a pet*
- *being engaged to or marrying the person of your choice*
- *choosing your own friends*
- *practising the religion of your choice*
- *voting for whomever you want or the party of your choice*
- *being protected by the law*
- *criticising the government*
- *having equal opportunities when seeking a job*

3. Ask students to **prioritise** for themselves these rights and freedoms.
4. Ask students to consider whether there are any **basic** freedoms that should be enjoyed by everyone. Make sure students can justify their choices.
5. Ask students how **they would feel** if they were denied these freedoms.
6. Ask students what **course of action** they would pursue if they were denied these freedoms.
7. Ask students to consider whose responsibility it is to protect individual rights and freedoms.

Some suggestions:

- *government*
- *law courts*
- *police*
- *media*
- *good citizens*

8. Ask students to read through Handout 3.1 (Timeline) and discuss how **they would have felt** if they had to experience the same deprivations.
9. Ask students to read Handout 3.2 and discuss their responses to the accompanying questions.
10. Ask students to read Handout 3.3 and discuss their responses to the accompanying questions.
11. Ask students to consider how “The Nuremberg Laws 1 & 2” and the “Nazi Assault on the Rights and Freedoms of German Jews 1933-1943” relate to the R. Hilberg quote at the top of the Handout 3.1.



HANDOUT 3.1

TIMELINE RACISM IN ACTION – NAZI ASSAULT ON THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF GERMAN JEWS 1933–1943

YOU CANNOT LIVE AMONGST US AS JEWS –
CONVERSION
YOU CANNOT LIVE AMONGST US – *EXPULSION*
YOU CANNOT LIVE – *ANNIHILATION*
R HILBERG

1933

- Jews were forced out of jobs in the civil service, teaching, law and journalism.
- April boycott—Germans told to boycott Jewish shops, goods, doctors and lawyers. SA and SS guarded doors of Jewish shops to deter entry by other Germans.

1935

- Marriage and sexual relations between Jews and 'Aryans' (pure-blooded Germans) were made illegal. Punishment for contravening this law was imprisonment or the death penalty.
- Jews were virtually excluded from parks, restaurants and swimming pools.

1936

- Jews were prohibited from owning bicycles, typewriters or other electrical equipment.

1938

- Jews had to have their passports stamped with a "J".
- On 9 November, the Nazis in Germany unleashed a pogrom in which Jews were murdered, synagogues were burned, sacred objects were desecrated, Jewish shop windows were smashed and thousands of German Jewish men between the ages of 16 and 60 were arrested and transported to concentration camps.
- Jewish children were banned from attending school.
- Jews were excluded from cinemas, theatres, concerts, beaches and holiday resorts.
- Jewish publishing houses and bookshops were closed down.

1940

- Jews were allowed to buy groceries only between 4 pm and 5 pm.
- Jews' telephones were disconnected.

1941

- Jews were only permitted to use public transport.
- All Jews over the age of six had to wear a yellow star with 'Jew' written on it.
- Mass deportations of German Jews to ghettos located in Nazi-occupied Poland commenced.

1942

- All Jewish homes were marked with a yellow star.
- Jews were prohibited from using public transport.
- Jews were not permitted to have pets.
- Jews were not to receive eggs or fresh milk.
- Jews were not allowed to buy newspapers, magazines or books.

1943

- May—Berlin was declared *Judenfrei* (free of Jews).

Source: This timeline is based on one published in 'Reflections – Imperial War Museum Holocaust Exhibition Teachers' Guide', pp.56-60



HANDOUT 3.2: THE NUREMBERG LAWS 15 SEPTEMBER 1935 (1): LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND GERMAN HONOUR

15 SEPTEMBER 1935

Entirely convinced that the purity of German blood is essential to the further existence of the German people, and inspired by the uncompromising determination to safeguard the future of the German nation, the Reichstag has unanimously resolved upon the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

Section 1

1. Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they were concluded abroad.
2. Only the Public Prosecutor may initiate proceedings for annulment.

Section 2

Sexual relations outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden.

Section 3

Jews will not be permitted to employ female citizens of German or kindred blood as domestic servants.

Section 4

Jews are forbidden to display the Reich and national flag or the national colours.

On the other hand they are permitted to display the Jewish colours. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.

Section 5

A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 1 will be punished with hard labour.

A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 2 will be punished with imprisonment or with hard labour.

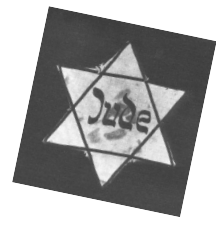
A person who acts contrary to the provisions of Section 3 will be punished with imprisonment up to a year and with a fine, or with one of these penalties.

Reichsgesetzblatt I, 1935, pp. 1146-1147

Source: Arad, Gutman, Margalit, (eds) 1981 'Documents of the Holocaust', Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, p.80

HANDOUT 3.2 QUESTIONS:

1. What acts have been declared illegal by the Nazis?
2. Why do you think the Nazis introduced this law?
3. How do you think German citizens reacted to this law?
4. Why? Before answering this question refer to German 'race crimes' in the exhibition at the Sydney Jewish Museum.
5. How do you think German Jews reacted to this law? Why?
6. Why do you think the majority of German citizens remained silent and/or indifferent to such examples of persecution?
(Hint: You need to consider Nazi domestic and foreign policy as well as look carefully at Section 5 of the Nuremberg Laws.)



HANDOUT 3.3: THE NUREMBERG LAWS 15 SEPTEMBER 1935 (2): THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW

15 SEPTEMBER 1935

Article 2

1. A citizen of the Reich is that subject only who is of German or kindred blood and who, through his conduct, shows that he is both desirous and fit to serve the German people and Reich faithfully.

The right to citizenship is acquired by the granting of Reich citizenship papers.

Only the citizen of the Reich enjoys full political rights in accordance with the provisions of the laws.

Reichsgesetzblatt I, 1935, p. 1333

Source: Arad, Gutman, Margaliot, (editors) 1981 'Documents of the Holocaust', Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, p.80

HANDOUT 3.3 QUESTIONS:

1. What were the essential requirements of a citizen of the Reich?
2. Under this Law, what groups of people would be disqualified from German citizenship?
(Hint: look very carefully at the wording of point 1, in particular the word 'fit').
3. Is the definition of citizenship provided in Article 2 similar to the one you have formulated in class discussion?
4. If not, how does it differ?
5. Which one do you think is a more accurate definition? Why?





UNIT 4: PROTECTING RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

SUBJECT AREAS:

English
Geography
History
Society & Culture
Religious Education

LESSON PLANS:

Protecting Rights and Freedoms (4.1)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 4.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Worksheet 4.1: Poetry (Human Rights & Freedoms):
'The Road Not Taken' by Robert Frost
'The Hangman' by Maurice Ogden
'And a Good Friday Was Had by All' by Bruce Dawe

OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore the question of whose responsibility it is to defend individual rights and freedoms.



4.1 LESSON PLAN PROTECTING RIGHTS & FREEDOMS

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Worksheet 4.1

1. Begin the lesson by reading Robert Frost's poem 'The Road Not Taken'.
2. Ask students to explain the theme of the poem, focusing in particular on the last two lines.
3. Ask students to consider and relate to the class an instance when they made a similar choice to that of Frost's. How had their choice 'made all the difference' to their lives?
4. Discuss the ways in which Frost's poem relates to the words of Albert Einstein and/or Ian Kershaw?
5. Ask students to read Ogden's poem 'The Hangman' and discuss their responses to the accompanying questions (remind the class that Ogden was **not** writing about the Holocaust but commenting on the response of the majority of Americans to the persecution of communists by Senator McCarthy in the 1950s).
6. Ask students to consider the **similarities** and **differences** between Dawe's poem 'And a Good Friday Was Had by All' and Frost's 'The Road Not Taken'.
7. Discuss the relevance of any or all of the poems to the question: whose responsibility is it to protect individual rights and freedoms?

Ask students to assess the extent to which individual action is important or can make a difference in the fight against discrimination, racism and persecution of minorities.

8. Ask students to suggest current issues that make these poems relevant?

Some suggestions:

- the plight of the boat-people or refugees;
- freedom fighters/terrorists;
- women in Third World countries, indigenous populations—all people who are oppressed;
- victims of racism or religious persecution.



WORKSHEET 4.1: POETRY (HUMAN RIGHTS & FREEDOMS)

THE WORLD IS TOO DANGEROUS TO LIVE IN—
NOT BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE WHO DO EVIL,
BUT BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE WHO SIT AND
LET IT HAPPEN.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ WAS BUILT BY HATE
BUT PAVED WITH INDIFFERENCE.

IAN KERSHAW

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

—Robert Frost

Source: "The Road Not Taken" from "The Poetry of Robert Frost", edited
by Edward Connery Lathem and published by Jonathon Cape.
Used by permission of the Estate of Robert Frost and The
Random House Group Limited.

AND A GOOD FRIDAY WAS HAD BY ALL

You men there keep those women back
and God Almighty he laid down
on the crossed timber and old Silenus
my offsider looked at me as if to say
nice work for soldiers, your mind's not your own
once you sign that dotted line Ave Caesar
and all that malarkey Imperator Rex

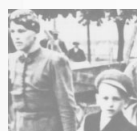
well this Nazarene
didn't make it any easier
really—not like ones
who kick up a fuss so you can
do your block and take it out on them
Silenus
held the spikes steady and I let fly
with the sledge-hammer, not looking
on the downswing trying hard not to hear
over the women's wailing the bones give way
the iron shocking the dumb wood.

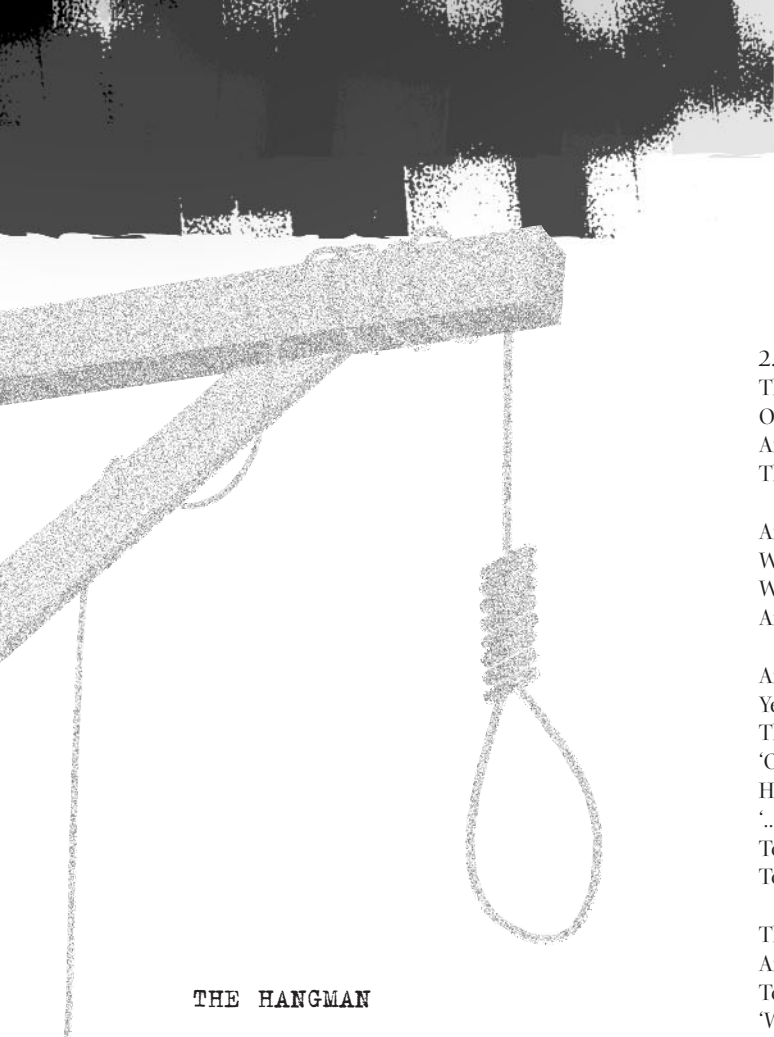
Orders is orders, I said after it was over
Nothing personal you understand—we had a
drill-sergeant once thought he was God but he wasn't
a patch on you

then we hauled on the ropes and he rose in the hot air
like a diver just leaving the springboard, arms spread
so it seemed
over the whole damned creation
over the big men who must have had it in for him
and the curious ones who'll watch anything if it's free
with only the usual women caring anywhere
and a blind man in tears.

—Bruce Dawe

Source: Dawe, B. 1993 'Sometimes Gladness - Collected Poems 1954 to
1992'. Pearson Education Australia (Longman), 5th edition, p.35.
Used by permission of Bruce Dawe, 2003.





THE HANGMAN

1.
Into our town the Hangman came,
Smelling of gold and blood and flame—
And he paced our bricks with a diffident air
And built his frame on the courthouse square.

The scaffold stood by the courthouse side,
Only as wide as the door was wide;
A frame as tall or little more
Than the capping sill of the courthouse door.

And we wondered, whenever we had the time,
Who the criminal, what the crime,
That Hangman judged with the yellow twist
Of knotted hemp in his busy fist.

And innocent though we were, with dread
We passed those eyes of buckshot lead,
Till one cried: 'Hangman, who is he
For whom you raise the gallows-tree?'

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye,
And he gave us a riddle instead of reply:
'He who serves me best,' said he,
'Shall earn the rope on the gallows-tree.'

And he stepped down, and laid his hand
On a man who came from another land,
And we gave him away, and no one spoke,
Out of respect for his hangman's cloak.

2.
The next day's sun looked mildly down
On roof and street in our quiet town
And, stark and black in the morning air,
The gallows-tree on the courthouse square.

And the Hangman stood at his usual stand
With the yellow hemp in his busy hand:
With his buckshot eye and his jaw like a pike
And his air so knowing and businesslike.

And we cried: 'Hangman, have you not done,
Yesterday, with the alien one?'
Then we fell silent and stood amazed:
'Oh, not for him was the gallows raised ...'
He laughed a laugh as he looked at us
'...Did you think I'd gone to all this fuss
To hang one man? That's a thing I do
To stretch the rope when the rope is new.'

Then one cried 'Murderer!' One cried 'Shame!'
And into our midst the Hangman came
To that man's place. 'Do you hold,' said he,
'With him that's meant for the gallows-tree?'

And he laid his hand on that one's arm,
And we shrank back in quick alarm,
And we gave him way, and no-one spoke
Out of fear of his hangman's cloak.

That night we saw with dread surprise
The Hangman's scaffold had grown in size.
Fed by the blood beneath the chute
The gallows-tree had taken root;

Now as wide, or a little more,
Than the steps that led to the courtyard door,
As tall as the writing, or nearly as tall,
Halfway up on the courthouse wall.





3.
The third he took—and we all heard tell—
Was a usurer and an infidel. And:
'What,' said the Hangman, 'have you to do
With the gallows-bound, and he a Jew?'

And we cried out: 'Is this one he
Who has served you well and faithfully?'
The Hangman smiled; 'It's a clever scheme
To try the strength of the gallows-beam.'

The fourth man's dark, accusing song
Had scratched out comfort hard and long:
And 'What concern', He gave us back,
'Have you for the doomed—the doomed and black?'

The fifth and sixth we cried again:
'Hangman, Hangman, is this the man?'
'It's a trick,' he said, 'that we hangmen know
For easing the trap when the trap springs slow.'
And so we ceased to ask no more,
As the Hangman tallied his bloody score;
And sun by sun, and night by night,
The gallows grew to monstrous height.

The wings of the scaffold opened wide
Till they covered the square from side to side;
And the monster cross-beam, looking down,
Cast its shadow across the town.

4.
Then through the town the Hangman came
And called in the empty streets my name.
And I looked at the gallows soaring tall
And thought "There is no-one left at all
For hanging, and so he calls to me
To help him pull down the gallows-tree."
And I went out with right good hope
To the Hangman's tree and the Hangman's rope.

He smiled at me as I came down
To the courthouse square through the silent town,
And supple and stretched in his busy hand
Was the yellow twist of the hempen strand.

And he whistled his tune as he tried the trap
And it sprang down with a ready snap—
And then with a smile of awful command
He laid his hand upon my hand.

'You tricked me, Hangman!' I shouted then,
'That your scaffold was built for other men
And I no henchmen of yours,' I cried.
'You lied to me hangman, foully lied!'

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye:
'Lied to you? Tricked you?' He said, 'Not I
For I answered you straight and I told you true:
The scaffold was raised for none but you.'

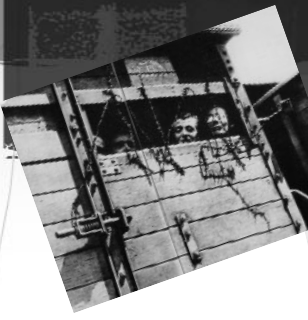
'For who has served me more faithfully
Than you with your coward's hope?' said he,
'And where are the others that might have stood
Side by your side in the common good?'

'Dead,' I whispered: and amiably,
'Murdered,' the Hangman corrected me;
'First the alien, then the Jew...
I did no more than you let me do.'

Beneath the beam that blocked the sky,
None had stood so alone as I—
And the Hangman strapped me, and no voice there
Cried 'Stay' for me in the empty square.

—Maurice Ogden

Source: Landau, R. 1998 'Studying the Holocaust: Issues, Readings and Documents', Routledge, London, pp.44-47



WORKSHEET 4.1 QUESTIONS

1. What is Ogden's theme?
2. Where does the Hangman set up his gallows and how tall is it at first?
3. For whom has the gallows been set up? (According to the Hangman, "He who serves me best ... shall earn the rope on the gallows-tree")
4. Who was the first victim?
5. How do the people react to the hanging? Why?
6. Could they have stopped the hangman at this point? If so, how?
7. Why is the second man hanged?
8. How do the people of the town react this time?
9. What happens to the gallows as more people become its victim? Why?
10. Who are the third and fourth victims?
11. What do all victims at this stage have in common?
12. Who is the last victim? Why does the hangman say that the gallows was built for "none but you"?
13. Explain the difference between the last victim's view of the people who had been hanged and that of the Hangman's? ("Dead, I whispered....."Murdered" the Hangman corrected me.")
14. Explain what the Hangman means when he speaks of the people standing 'side by your side in the common good'.
15. Explain the meaning of the line: 'I did no more than you let me do.'
16. What is the relevance of this poem to the issue of citizenship (civil decency)?
17. How can this poem be related to the events in Nazi Germany in the period 1933-43?
18. Has this poem any relevance for today? If it has, in what way?





UNIT 5: WHY DIDN'T MORE JEWS LEAVE GERMANY?

SUBJECT AREAS:

English
Geography
History
Society & Culture
Religious Education

LESSON PLANS:

Group Research (5.1)
Feedback (5.2)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 5.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Handout 3.1: (Timeline) Racism in Action – Nazi Assault on the Rights & Freedoms of German Jews 1933-1943 (see page 14)

Worksheet 5.1: The Evian Conference – Evian, France July 1938 (Research Topic 2)

Worksheet 5.2: Individuals and/or Groups who are Targets of Persecution (Research Topic 2)

Worksheet 5.3: Australia's Immigration Record & Refugees: 1930 to 1950 (Research Topic 3)

Worksheet 5.4: Australia's Current Immigration Record & the Refugee Problem (Research Topic 4)

Worksheet 5.5: Dilemmas Facing German Jews in the 1930s – or any other migrant group (Research Topic 5)

OBJECTIVES:

These lessons explore the difficult decisions that confront any person or group who might be seeking asylum. In particular, they examine the case of German Jews during the 1930s and, in so doing, they explain why more Jews did not seek asylum before 1939.

1. To develop an understanding of the processes by which people become refugees or asylum seekers;
2. To develop a concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people;
3. To develop a commitment to act in a fair, responsible and informed manner in regard to asylum seekers.

5.1 LESSON PLAN GROUP RESEARCH

PREPARATION:

- i. To ensure all students are familiar with the issues under consideration, ask them to:
 - scan the papers for articles relating to refugees or asylum seekers and/or current issues relating to government policy on immigrants;
 - read, clip out, and summarise them;
 - bring these articles to lesson two and be prepared to discuss their content.
- ii. Make sure students know the name of the Minister for Immigration and the responsibilities of his portfolio.
- iii. Try to locate the documentary/TV movie, *The Dunera Boys*
- iv. Divide your class into 5 groups and assign topics (refer overleaf)



RESEARCH TOPICS

WORKSHEET 5.1 GROUP 1: THE EVIAN CONFERENCE – EVIAN, FRANCE JULY 1938

(3-4 STUDENTS)

Devote most of lesson 5.1 to **group research**. Students will require access to the library and/or web resources.

Note: After the museum visit, students may ask why the Jews didn't leave Germany before it was too late.

Between 1933 and 1939 many Jews did leave Germany – the country of their birth. To leave, however, was a complex decision and therefore many chose to stay. They stayed in the hope that the sporadic Nazi excesses would abate and the situation would improve. *Kristallnacht* in November 1938 – unprecedented in its violence – proved to be decisive. It made most German Jews realise the gravity of their situation and made them desperately anxious to leave. But it proved to be too late: most found that the overwhelming majority of countries refused them refuge. The world's doors had closed.

1. Begin by discussing and establishing the meaning of the word refugee.
2. Ask students to consider the **emotive** connotations of the word refugee as well as the **literal** meaning: *individuals with well founded fears of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion*.
3. Ask students to consider whether the term asylum seeker has the same meaning? Consider the **similarities** and **differences** between the usage and meaning of the two words. Students need to understand that these two terms are not **completely** synonymous.
4. Consider a government's **motives** for using the term asylum seekers rather than refugees.
5. Discuss your students' attitudes to the global/national problem of *refugees/boat people*.
6. Ask your students to consider why questions/issues concerning immigrants are usually **controversial**. Why does the word migrant ring alarm-bells for so many?
7. Which institutions, individuals and group/s in our society would be the most sensitive to issues surrounding refugees?
8. Should these issues be of concern to us all? If so, why?

Advise **Group 1** to spend a portion of their museum visit in the Sydney Jewish Museum library.

GROUP 1 QUESTIONS

1. What events prompted the USA to convene a conference?
2. Did a genuine refugee 'problem' exist? If so, what was it and what was its extent?
3. Whose idea was it to convene this conference?
4. Which nations were to be represented?
5. How many nations were represented?
6. Was Australia one of these? If so, who was the Minister of the Interior?
7. What was Australia's policy and position on refugees?
8. Find the quote used by the Australian Minister for the Interior to justify Australia's response to this crisis.
9. What did the conference achieve?
10. What were the consequences of the 'solution' that was reached by the nations at the Evian Conference?



WORKSHEET 5.2

GROUP 2: INDIVIDUALS AND/OR GROUPS WHO ARE TARGETS OF PERSECUTION

(6-8 STUDENTS)

GROUP 2 QUESTIONS

1. List reasons why individuals and/or groups would decide to leave their home country.
2. Explore the political, social and economic situation in some or all of the following areas:
 - Afghanistan
 - Bosnia
 - Burma
 - Burundi
 - East Timor
 - Iraq
 - Rwanda
 - Vietnam
3. Consider ways that people from these countries could organise their passage or means of departure (both legally and illegally). You will need to take into account the obstacles as well as the risks (bureaucratic, personal, financial, etc).

WORKSHEET 5.3

GROUP 3: AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION RECORD AND REFUGEES: 1930 TO 1950

(3-4 STUDENTS)

If available, watch the documentary/TV movie *The Dunera Boys*

GROUP 3 QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. Who were Australia's Prime Ministers during these years? Which political party or parties did they represent?
2. Find out why the Labour party has been traditionally hostile to immigration.
3. Why do you think the Returned Servicemen's League (RSL) was particularly hostile to Jews or 'Europe's rejects'?
4. Who were the Ministers for the Interior during this period?
5. What was Australia's policy on immigration during these years? Did it remain constant or did it change over time? If it did change, who was responsible and why?
6. To which group/s of people did the term 'enemy alien' refer?
7. What power did the Commonwealth Government assume with the introduction of the National Security Act of 1939? List the various categories of 'internees'.
8. How did Australians treat immigrants in the late 1940s and 1950s – were they welcomed and well integrated? How can you account for their treatment?
9. Find out what happened to the 2,500 refugees who arrived on the *Dunera* (refer to the documentary *The Dunera Boys*).
10. Research life and conditions in migrant camps in Australia at this time in such places as Tatura and Hay.

Note: If any student is particularly interested in the treatment of refugees during this period, recommended reading is Garry Disher's *Pencil Man*.

WORKSHEET 5.4

GROUP 4: AUSTRALIA'S CURRENT IMMIGRATION RECORD AND THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

(6–8 STUDENTS)

Photocopy & distribute Handout 3.1
(Timeline)

GROUP 4 QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. What is our present government's policy regarding refugees?
2. How does the current Minister of Immigration justify the government's position?
3. Is it in keeping with or distinct from the international community's position?
4. How is the Australian position being viewed overseas?
5. Critically examine current events or news reports that highlight this issue.
6. Explore your fellow citizens' reactions to, and their personal views on, the refugee problem (ask your friends, fellow students, teachers, parents, neighbours). Tabulate your findings to show the reactions and views that are presently prevalent in our communities.
7. Draw up two columns: one headed **Fortress Australia**, the other **Refugees Welcome**. Consider the types of organisations, individuals and groups which would be found under each of these banners.
8. Evaluate Australia's human rights record in respect to the treatment of refugees.

WORKSHEET 5.5

GROUP 5: DILEMMAS FACING GERMAN JEWS IN THE 1930S—OR ANY OTHER MIGRANT GROUP

(4 STUDENTS)

Photocopy & distribute Handout 3.1
(Timeline)

GROUP 5 QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Students need to consider the political, social, economic as well as personal factors inhibiting departure.

1. Draw up two columns: **Reasons for Staying** and **Reasons for Going**.

Some suggestions:

- Jews had lived in Germany for many generations.
- Many German Jews were highly acculturated and felt more German than Jewish.
- Many German Jews had fought for Germany in World War One.
- Migrating meant leaving significant sections of family behind.
- Migration meant a drastic change in social and economic status with potential unemployment, homelessness and feelings of alienation.
- Migration often required learning a new language, adopting new customs and finding new bearings.
- Migration meant a fresh start and that required energy and tenacity.
- Persecution of Jews was increasing: rights and freedoms were being eroded. (Students need to consult the handout on 'Racism in Action').
- A sponsor as well as a country of refuge had to be found.
- Migrants needed considerable personal wealth to facilitate their relocation.
- Migration promised freedom from persecution and vilification.
- Wishful thinking: things will 'blow over' and the present excesses are only temporary.

2. Sort the above suggestions into the appropriate columns.
3. Add your own thoughts and findings to the columns.

Note: An outstanding film that explores the complexities and consequences of choosing to leave Germany during the 1930s is *Nowhere in Africa* – refer to the annotated video section at the end of this handbook.



5.2 LESSON PLAN FEEDBACK

PREPARATION:

None

1. Ask groups to report their findings to the class.
2. Briefly discuss the news reports that students have brought to class.
3. Ask students to consider to what extent Australian attitudes to refugees have changed, if at all.
4. Question the value of comparing the predicament of German Jews in the 1930s to that of persecuted people in current times.



UNIT 6: ANTISEMITISM, PREJUDICE AND STEREOTYPING

SUBJECT AREAS:

History
Society & Culture
Religious Studies

LESSON PLANS:

Discrimination (6.1)
Racism in Action (6.2)

ACTIONS:

After lesson 6.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS

Handout 6.1: Antisemitism, Prejudice & Stereotyping

OBJECTIVES:

- To establish the definition of:
 - Antisemitism
 - identity
 - persecution
 - prejudice
 - racism
 - stereotype
- To sensitise students to some of the effects of prejudice and stereotyping;
- To develop empathy with victims of stereotyping and to relate this to the Jewish experience in Nazi Germany.

6.1 LESSON PLAN DISCRIMINATION

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Handout 6.1 (refer Sources 1-6)

- Begin the lesson by discussing the definitions of anti-semitism, identity, persecution, prejudice, racism and stereotype.
- Consider the commonalities between antisemitism and prejudice, and racism and stereotyping.
- Discuss the ways in which the concept of 'identity' and 'stereotype' are antithetical.
- Explore reasons for the development of stereotypes and their negative connotations.
- Ask students to describe some stereotypes that have currency today. Compare these descriptions to people whom the students know and who are members of such groups.
- Examine Handout 6.1 and list the characteristics of an ideal 'Aryan' type on the board. Ask students to consider whether they would fit this 'ideal type'.
- Ask for a show of hands to see how representative the 'ideal type' is of the class composition.
- Debate the advantages and, more particularly, the disadvantages of people looking the same, thinking the same and acting the same.





6.2 LESSON PLAN RACISM IN ACTION

PREPARATION:

- i. Ask students to bring a passport-size photograph of themselves to class and to make their own personal passport. They will be asked to exhibit their final product and discuss it with the class. The passport should reflect the student's identity so that he/she can be immediately identified. It may take any form—collage, self-portrait, personal images and/or documents.
 - ii. Ask students to make a label/badge that highlights a personal attribute (e.g. short, thin, athletic), their religious faith or their ethnicity etc.
 - iii. Photocopy & distribute Handout 6.1 (refer Sources 2,3,5 & 6)
1. Ask each student to present his/her passports to the class.
 2. After the students make their presentations, display the passports on a board so that they can be referred to during the course of the lesson.
 3. Compare passports and ask students to consider whether there are any generic personality and character traits that appear on all passports.
 4. For each suggestion of commonality, ask the students to indicate by a show of hands whether they feel that they share in the commonality (this will demonstrate the prevalence of each trait in the class).
 5. Explore the finding that even with such a small number of people as one class, who in fact do have certain things in common (the same school, approximately the same age, often from similar socio-economic backgrounds), it is still difficult to find any **single characteristic that applies to all** (this is because a class consists of individuals).
 6. Examine **Source 3 and 4** – ask students how they would feel if they were not permitted to be part of this 'ideal set'.
 7. Tell students that Nazi propaganda portrayed Jews in the most negative and obscene ways – fat, ugly, sinister, lecherous, corrupt, mean and dangerous.
 8. Use **Source 5A and 5B** to show that every facet of the Nazi state was infused with antisemitic images – primary and secondary school textbooks, newspapers, magazines, films, plays and posters.
 9. Ask your students how they would feel if they were described in such odious ways.
 10. Ask your students to relate how they think the Jews in Nazi Germany must have felt. Ask them to give reasons for their responses.
 11. Ask your students to:
 - affix their labels/badges;
 - walk in front of the class, one by one, and focus on how it feels to be publicly labelled in this way;
 - consider how it would feel to have to wear such a badge all the time;
 - consider the message they send about themselves to others by wearing such labels/badges;
 12. Examine **Source 6** and discuss the reaction that the Nazis wanted to elicit from the German and all occupied populations towards someone wearing the *Judenstern* (Jewish Star).
 13. What was the hidden agenda of the Nazi's *Judenstern* edict? How did it impact on Jewish morale?
 14. Examine **Source 6** again. Do the people in this source bear any similarity to the stereotypes created by the Nazis?
 14. Discuss the dangers of prejudice and stereotyping and the ways in which they **destroy individuality** by attributing negative characteristics to the whole group.



HANDOUT 6.1: ANTISEMITISM, PREJUDICE AND STEREOTYPING

SOURCE 1: THE NAZI RACE, 1929

“The Nordic (Aryan) race is tall, long-legged, slimmale height of above 1.74m. The race is narrow-faced with a narrow forehead, a narrow high-built nose and a lower jaw and prominent chin, the skin is rosy, bright and the blood shines through ...the hair is smooth straight or wavy—possibly curly in childhood. The colour is blonde.”

Source: Lacey, G. & Shepherd, K. 2001 'Germany 1918-1945', John Murray Publishers, London, p.103

SOURCE 2: THE NAZI WEEKLY “RACIAL RESEARCH”

“We demand of a member of this noble race that he marry only a blue-eyed, oval-faced, red-cheeked and thin-nosed blonde woman. We demand that the blue-eyed Aryan hero marry an Aryan girl who like himself is of pure and unblemished past.”

Source: Ibid.

SOURCE 3: NORDIC (ARYAN) STEREOTYPE



The Aryan 'ideal'

Source: Ibid. From the Robert Hunt Library.



The German Labour Front

Source: Anderson, L. & Buckingham, P. 1999 'Germany Culture and Change in the 20th Century', Longman, New Zealand, p.24. From Ullstein Bilderdienst.

SOURCE 4: GERMAN CHILDREN SALUTE HITLER



Source: Anderson, L. & Buckingham, P. 1999 'Germany Culture and Change in the 20th Century', Longman, New Zealand, p.22. From Bundesarchiv.

SOURCE 5B



Poster for the film "The Eternal Jew"

Source: Lacey, G. & Shepherd, K. 2001 'Germany 1918-1945', John Murray Publishers, London, p.112. AKG photograph.

SOURCE 5: NAZI RACE SCIENCE

SOURCE 5A



A page in a Nazi's children's book.

'Trust No Fox and No Jew' compares an Aryan man "who can fight and work" with a Jew "the greatest scoundrel in the whole world".

Source: Anderson, L. & Buckingham, P. 1999 'Germany Culture and Change in the 20th Century', Longman, New Zealand, p.33

**SOURCE 6:
THE JUDENSTERN
(JEWISH STAR)**



Source: Gutman, I. (ed) 1990, 'Encyclopedia of the Holocaust' Vol I, Macmillan, New York, p. 79.



Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc., 1989



UNIT 7: CHOICES

SUBJECT AREAS:

History
Religious Education
Society and Culture

LESSON PLANS:

Case Studies (7.1)
Feedback (7.2)

ACTIONS:

After lesson 7.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Worksheet 7.1: Adam Czerniakow
Worksheet 7.2: Chaim Rumkowski
Worksheet 7.3: Janusz Korczak
Worksheet 7.4: Mordechai Anielewicz
Worksheet 7.5: Ghetto Youths' Choiceless Choices
Worksheet 7.6: The Couriers
Worksheet 7.7: Vladka Meed—Fejgele Peltel-Miedzyrзец
Worksheet 7.8: Roza Robota
Worksheet 7.9: Mala Zimetbaum

OBJECTIVES:

1. To enable students to examine and discuss the tortuously difficult situations faced by people during the Holocaust;
2. To encourage students to empathise with the choices the victimisers forced upon their victims;
3. To personalise statistics through individual narratives.

7.1 LESSON PLAN CASE STUDIES

PREPARATION:

- i. Photocopy Worksheets 7.1 – 7.9
- ii. Divide students into groups of four & distribute Worksheets to each group.

1. Ask your students to read and discuss the Worksheets and in each case, give considered thought to:
 - the possible actions available to each individual;
 - the consequences of each decision and/or action;
 - the particular moral and/or ethical dilemma that each person confronted.
2. Tell your class that they will need to use the Sydney Jewish Museum library and exhibition areas to complete their research.
3. Answers to Worksheets 7.1- 7.9 should be presented to the rest of the class in lesson 7.2 (this may need to be spread across two separate lesson times). Students will be expected to discuss:
 - the choices they thought the person would have made (before their visit to the museum);
 - the **actual** decisions that the person did make;
 - **their** responses to the choice that the person did make.
4. Students should consider whether the choices made were expected, courageous, moral or contrary to religious beliefs (e.g. suicide is a sin according to Jewish law).

Note: It is important that students do not form the impression that suicide was a **noble gesture**. In fact, you need to make them realise that the Nazi's victims were people who 'were plunged into a crises ... where crucial decisions did not reflect options between life and death but between one form of **abnormal** response and another ...' (Lawrence Langer)⁶.

⁶ Langer, L. 1982 'Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit', State University of New York Press, New York, p.72



WORKSHEET 7.1: ADAM CZERNIAKOW

On 21 September 1939, on orders issued by Reinhard Heydrich, *Judenräte* (Jewish Councils) were established in all ghettos of central and western occupied Poland. The *Judenräte* were fully responsible for the implementation of German policy regarding the Jews. In this way, the Jewish communities had forced upon them a body whose function was to receive and carry out Nazi orders.

The Jewish Councils were initially responsible for drafting people for forced labour; taking a census of the Jewish population; paying fines or ransoms; and confiscating valuables owned by the Jews. The Jews believed that by complying with Nazi demands they would convince them that their communities were vital to the German economy. In this way they hoped to gain time and ward off collective punishment. They even hoped to persuade the Nazis to reconsider their policy in view of the benefit they would derive from the Jews as a reservoir of manpower the Germans sorely needed.

In 1942 the situation changed dramatically. Nazi policy now stipulated the mass deportation of Jews from the ghettos. Ghetto inhabitants were lured into a false sense of hope – resettlement in the east. The Nazis assured the Jews that they were being sent to work camps and that families would stay together. Starving Jews were enticed by promises of extra rations of bread and jam if they volunteered for ‘resettlement’.

In time, when it became clear that the Nazis were using ‘resettlement’ as a euphemism for death; the leaders of the Jewish Councils were forced to make agonising choices. Should they comply, obey the Nazis and deport thousands upon thousands of men, women and children in the hope that those who remained would be allowed to survive – or should they refuse to co-operate and warn the ghetto population of Nazi duplicity? Should they encourage the ghetto population to resist – a decision that, in all likelihood, would mean death for them all?

In July 1942, Adam Czerniakow, the head of the Warsaw Ghetto’s Jewish Council, was ordered to compile deportation lists. Each list was to comprise 6,000 people. This was to continue until the ghetto had been completely ‘resettled’. If he refused, the Nazis threatened to send Czerniakow and his family on the first transport and appoint a new Jewish leader in his place.

WORKSHEET 7.1 QUESTIONS

1. Identify the choices Czerniakow had.
2. What do you think he should have done?
3. During your trip to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find out what decision he actually made or what action he actually took?
4. Do you think his choice was courageous, moral, reprehensible, cowardly or noble? Explain why?



WORKSHEET 7.2: CHAIM RUMKOWSKI

When the Germans occupied Lodz, on 8 September 1939, they appointed a Jewish Council, which in Lodz they called *Ältestenrat* (‘Council of Elders’). Rumkowski was appointed Elder of the Jews. The German authorities gave Rumkowski wide powers in all areas related to the day-to-day life of the imprisoned population: the establishment of factories, food distribution and appointments to available positions.

Rumkowski displayed great zeal and organisational ability in running the factories and the internal life of the ghetto. He fully exploited his wide reaching discretionary powers and ruled in a domineering, self-promoting manner, however well after all the other ghettos had been eradicated, the Jews who remained in the Lodz ghetto continued to labour in workshops in the belief that their work would save them.

At the end of 1941, the German authorities ordered Rumkowski to organise part deportation of the ghetto – ostensibly for ‘resettlement’ in the east. Again in early 1942, he and his staff were given the task of deciding who would be included in another massive deportation. In late 1944, when the Soviet army was advancing, the Germans once again ordered Rumkowski to organise a deportation on the pretext that the factories in the ghetto were to be transferred to Germany.

In the hope that liberation was at hand, the ghetto inhabitants resisted the deportation orders and refused to turn up to the required locations. Rumkowski, at an assembly called by the German ghetto administration, appealed to the ghetto population to obey the orders.

WORKSHEET 7.2 QUESTIONS

1. What choices were available to Rumkowski?
2. How do you think he responded to these Nazi decrees? Why?
3. Rumkowski is regarded as a highly controversial figure. Find the basis for the disparate range of opinions.
4. One of the foremost Holocaust historians, Professor Yehuda Bauer, once said that if it were up to him to judge Rumkowski, he would ‘put a medal around his neck and then hang him’. Explain Bauer’s judgement?
5. Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?
6. Is it fair to judge people with the benefit of hindsight?
7. During your visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find out the fate that befell Rumkowski.

Source: Bauer, Y. 1985 ‘Lectures on the Holocaust and Antisemitism’, Yad Vshem, Jerusalem



WORKSHEET 7.3: JANUSZ KORCZAK

Physician, writer and educator, Janusz Korczak devoted his life to children. His first books *'Children of the Streets'* and *'Child of the Salon'* were published at the turn of the twentieth century. He recognised that children had emotional needs and throughout his life, he urged that they be respected.

Before the war he worked in a children's hospital, took groups of children to summer camps, established a newspaper for children, and was appointed as director of a newly built Jewish orphanage in Warsaw.

The Nazis forced Korczak to move his orphanage into the Warsaw Ghetto. Although by this time he was an elderly man, he worked tirelessly to preserve and protect his charges from the horrors of ghetto life. Based upon his unique educational philosophy, he established an internal court of honour that had jurisdiction over both children and teachers. Even in the ghetto the children were encouraged to be fair and responsible citizens and to take part in cultural activities. He struggled to ensure that life for the children continued as usual. He provided food and clothing for them and tried to maintain order and cleanliness.

In July 1942 the resettlement of the Warsaw Ghetto began – it took three months to complete. It involved sudden waves of SS and police round-ups. Korczak's Polish friends warned him that it would be only a matter of time before his name, those of his staff and the children would appear on deportation lists. They offered him asylum on the Polish side but to accept would have meant abandoning the children.

WORKSHEET 7.3 QUESTIONS

1. What dilemma did Janusz Korczak face?
2. What decision do you think he made?
3. Look for Janusz Korczak in the Sydney Jewish Museum exhibition to find the choice he actually did make.
4. What was the fate of Korczak and his 200 children?



WORKSHEET 7.4: MORDECHAI ANIELEWIEZ

Before the war Mordechai Anielewicz was an organiser and leader of one of Warsaw's main Zionist youth movements – *HaShamer Hatzair*. After the German occupation of Poland he encouraged fellow members to resume the movement's educational and political activities.

By 1940 Anielewicz had become an underground activist. He set up youth groups in the ghetto and organised their activities. He helped publish an underground newspaper and arranged educational meetings and seminars. He successfully smuggled himself in and out of the ghetto in order to maintain links with his movement's chapters in the provincial ghettos.

In 1941, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union and after reports began to filter through of the mass murder of Jews in the east, Anielewicz began to create a self-defence organisation in the ghetto. It was, however, only in 1942 after mass deportations, with only 60,000 of Warsaw's 350,000 Jews left in the ghetto that Anielewicz embarked upon a determined course to build a serious Jewish fighting organisation.

In April 1943 the final deportation of Warsaw Jews was launched. By this time the majority of the ghetto inhabitants, numbed by starvation, disease and fear of further German reprisals, were completely demoralised and the membership of the Jewish Fighting Organisation was seriously depleted by deportations. Anielewicz was faced with grave dilemmas: Report for deportation in the hope that being young and strong he might be spared, or find a hiding place in the ghetto till the Germans leave and perhaps once again smuggle himself to the Polish side or offer armed resistance.

WORKSHEET 7.4 QUESTIONS

1. Consider the choices Anielewicz faced.
2. Discuss the possible consequences of each option.
3. Which choice do you think he should have made?
4. What were some of the main obstacles to resistance?

During your visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find answers to the following questions:

5. Which course of action did he take?
6. What do you think were his reasons?
7. Discuss the consequences.



Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc., 1989



Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc., 1989



WORKSHEET 7.5 GHETTO YOUTHS' CHOICELESS CHOICES

In *'Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit'*, Lawrence Langer refers to the 'choiceless choices' that victims of the Nazis were frequently forced to make. Individuals 'were plunged into crisis ...where crucial decisions did not reflect options between life and death, but between one form of abnormal response and another'.⁷

GHETTO LIFE

Use the Sydney Jewish Museum exhibition and your own research to construct the persona of an adolescent (male or female) who could have lived in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Be sure to consider the following:

- The family unit:
 - Are both your parents alive?
 - How old are your parents?
 - How many children are there in the family?
 - What position in the family are you – youngest; eldest?
 - What are the ages of your siblings?
 - How old are you?
- Consider the family dynamics:
 - What are your parents like?
 - What types of temperaments do they have?
 - What were the occupations of your parents before you had to move in to the ghetto?
 - Who are you closest to – your mother or father and why?
 - Which of your siblings are you closest to and why?
- How have the various members of your family responded to life in the ghetto in terms of lifestyle (social activities, emotionally, friendships)?
- Describe life in the ghetto. Pay particular attention to the following:
 - living conditions
 - availability of food
 - medical services
 - educational opportunities
 - social activities.
- Do any members of your family work in the ghetto? If they do, what is the nature of their employment?
- Have there been changes to the way in which the members of your family have responded to living in the ghetto over time (i.e. 1939 to 1942)? If so, detail these.

- How have you responded to living in the ghetto?
- What do you do to occupy yourself?
- Who are your special friends?
- What are your thoughts and hopes?

It is now July 1942 and the following notice has gone up on walls around the ghetto:

By order of the German authorities, all the Jews of Warsaw, regardless of age or sex, are to be deported. Only those employed in the German workshops, the *Judenrat*, the Jewish police and the Jewish hospital will be exempt. Each deported person is authorized to carry fifteen kilograms of luggage, including money and provisions for three days. Those failing to comply with this edict will be subject to the death penalty.

(signed) The *Judenrat*⁸

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Meed, V. 1993 'On Both Sides of the Wall', Holocaust Library in conjunction with the United States Memorial Museum USA, Washington, p.20

WORKSHEET 7.5 QUESTIONS

Which of the following choices would you have made? Why and with what results?

- remain with your family or 'go it alone';
- willingly register for deportation;
- evade the order and plan to go in to hiding;
- try to find work;
- join the Jewish police—their members were exempt;
- bribe your way out of the ghetto (Leaders of work battalions as well as smugglers could be persuaded to smuggle you across the wall to the Polish side.);
- join the fledgling, poorly equipped, Jewish Fighting Organisation;
- any other choices; if so, what?



Liza Chapnick



Lonka Kozibrodska



Tamar Schneiderman



Tosia Altman

WORKSHEET 7.6: THE COURIERS

The ghettos of Eastern Europe were a transitional phase in the Nazi's policy to permanently exclude, and then to exterminate the Jews. To date, the portrayal of Jews in the Holocaust has been one of hapless victims waiting to be swamped by the tidal wave of the Third Reich. The following profile pays tribute to the courage and daring of the young girl couriers of the various Jewish Underground Fighting Organisations. The heroic contribution of these young women has been completely overshadowed by the deeds of the male resistance fighters. There were about 40 female couriers, only a handful of whom survived the war.

A list of some female couriers:

Tosia Altman – captured by the Germans and tortured to death, aged 25

Freya Beatus – committed suicide, aged 17

Liza Chapnick – lives in Israel, mid 80s

Marysia Feinmesser-Warmnan – lived in the Bronx, died 2001

Lonka Kozibrodska – died in Auschwitz, aged 26

Ala Margolis – lives in France, mid 80s

Frumka Plotnizka – killed fighting in the uprising in Bendzin, aged 23

Hancia Plotnizka – captured and killed, aged 25 (Frumka's sister)

Maryla Rozyska – partisan courier, died in the 1950s, mid 30s

Tamar Schneiderman – captured and sent to Treblinka, died there aged 25

Leah Silverstein – lives in Washington, mid 80s

Bronia Vinicka-Klibanski – lives in Jerusalem, mid 80s



Frumka Plotnizka

WORKSHEET 7.7: VLADKA MEED-FEJGELE PELTEL-MIEDZYRZECKI

Warsaw, July 1942 – doors opening and closing: hurried footsteps on stairs. The courtyard of the house at Leszno 72 was already astir. Tenants were scurrying about in their attempts to learn the news about the latest Nazi round up. Horrible rumours had been circulating that the Germans were going to deport all the inhabitants of the ghetto – no one knew to where.

Like most of other ghetto inhabitants, 20 year old Vladka, her mother (her father had died of pneumonia the previous year), her brother and her sister all assumed that the approaching deportations were nothing more than a transfer to some other region. Vladka's mother had accepted the inevitable. She believed that it would not be so terrible as long as the family would be together.

Suddenly there was commotion in the courtyard, their front door was flung open and a neighbour yelled, "They have put up notices – about the deportations!" Vladka dashed outside. The street had become a human sea tossing incessantly as people milled about before the notices, elbowing forward determined to read and see for themselves. Only persons employed in German factories that had been set up in the ghetto were eligible to remain in the ghetto, all other Jews had to appear at the point of embarkation when ordered to do so. New notices began to appear calling on Jews to report voluntarily where they would be rewarded with 3 kilograms of bread and 1 kilogram of marmalade. Deportations went on for a week. Rumours reached them that their block was about to be sealed off by Germans. Everybody lived in fear of the imminent 'action'.



“*Alle Juden herunter!*” (All Jews come down). Commotion and turmoil as people hurried down the stairs. Outside the pavement swarmed with Jews. Everything was in confusion – a mass of parents, children, suitcases and bundles, and the sound of weeping. Names were being called out. Men and women clung to one another, to give themselves courage.

“Have your employment cards ready for inspection!” People became alert, pushing and jostling. The Germans began their ‘selection’. Standing at the curb, they glanced only cursorily at the outstretched cards.

“Left! Right! Left!”

“Man to the right, wife and child to the left!”

The ‘selection’ proceeded quickly. Vladka’s turn approached. Instead of a genuine employment card she carried a scribbled note that she had been given by one of her friends from *Skif* (a youth group of the Bund⁹), authorising her to go to the Toebbens factory to register. A German took the note and glanced at her for a moment, asking, “Is this your employment card?”

“Yes,” she muttered.

“To the right!”

She could hardly believe her ears: she was among the lucky ones.

She began to scan the huge throng for her mother, brother and sister but could see only the vehicles slowly filling with people. From where she stood, some Jews made a last desperate effort to join their doomed relatives. Her eyes were fixed on the vehicles, each one packed beyond capacity. “Faiga ... Faiga ...” She thought she heard her brother’s voice. She looked hard but it was difficult to make out the faces.

Alone and bewildered, she roamed the streets of the ghetto and scoured the *Umschlagplatz*. She returned to their deserted home where there was only a half spilled bag of flour on the table and an empty plate. Her mother had started to prepare dumplings for the soup when the ‘action’ had started. She just stood there – alone.

Weeks passed. She worked in one of the factories set up by the Germans – this provided a temporary reprieve from transportation.

One evening Abrasha Blum (the leader of the Bund), visited her apartment and asked her if she would consider becoming an underground courier. She would be required to smuggle herself across the ghetto wall and assume a new gentile persona – Wladyslawa Kowalska, nicknamed ‘Vladka’. The risks involved would be grave – to live amongst hostile and suspicious strangers, watch every word and gesture, a life lived ‘walking the streets’ between assignations and constantly on guard against *szmalcomicy* (‘blackmailers’) – insidious vultures who prowled the streets relentlessly looking for prey – the bane of Jews living on the Aryan side.

⁹ The Bund – League of Jewish Workers in Russia, Lithuania and Poland. A Jewish Socialist party. It was totally opposed to Zionism and Hebrew culture and language, regarding Yiddish as the national language of the Jews of East Europe. In the inter-war period, Poland became the major scene of the Bund’s activities. The party established a broad base of operations including children’s and youth organisations, a sports movement and a women’s organisation.

Source: Gutman, I., (ed) 1990 ‘Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust’, MacMillan, New York, Vol I pp.272-273

WORKSHEET 7.7 QUESTIONS

1. Consider the choices Vladka faced.
2. Discuss the possible consequences of each choice.
3. Which decision do you think she made?
4. What do you think were her reasons?
5. What was the fate of Vladka Meed?
6. Choose another name/s from the list of female couriers and compare and contrast their roles and their fate/s.



WORKSHEET 7.8: ROZA ROBOTKA

Roza Robotka was a young girl of eighteen when the Germans occupied her home town of Ciechanow in Poland, in September 1939. Shortly thereafter, Roza and her family were forced into a ghetto.

In November 1942 the Nazis liquidated the ghetto of Ciechanow, deporting its inhabitants to concentration camps either at Treblinka or Auschwitz.

Auschwitz was the largest of all Nazi concentration and extermination camps. In 1941 Himmler ordered the erection of a second, much larger camp three kilometres from the original – Auschwitz II or Birkenau.

Roza and her family were transported to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, *Selektionen* were made – the infirm, those deemed too old to work, and mothers with young children were sent straight to the gas chambers. Younger people, like Roza, were spared and put into the women's camp at Birkenau. She was assigned to various work detachments while some of the other girls from Ciechanow were sent to work in the munitions factory – *Union*, one of the *Krupp* slave-labour camps.

In 1943, the camp's underground organisation was planning a general uprising and the destruction of the gas chamber and crematorium complexes. To accomplish this they needed explosives and explosive charges. Their plan could only succeed if they could gain the support of the Jewish girls in the explosives section of *Union*. As all previous efforts to make contact with these girls had failed because they were under constant surveillance, the underground leaders decided to try and establish contact through an intermediary in Birkenau. Roza was perfect – she knew the girls from Ciechanow and she was in touch with them daily, so the underground enlisted her help.

Roza accepted the assignment and soon a group of girls were smuggling dynamite and explosive charges out of the munitions factory. The explosives, passed out hand to hand in an elaborate network, were given to the underground and then to the *Sonderkommando* in the Birkenau crematoria.

In October 1944 the *Sonderkommando*, who were supposed to synchronise their revolt with the general uprising, learned that they were to be executed. Having no other alternative, they took unilateral action and blew up Crematoria III. They killed four SS men, threw a Nazi overseer into the crematoria and cut the barbed wire surrounding the camp, allowing hundreds of prisoners to escape. A large force of SS men pursued them until they were all killed.

Immediately the SS launched an investigation and Roza and three other female prisoners working in the *Union* factory were arrested and taken to the dreaded Block 11 for interrogation. Roza was the only one who knew the names of the leaders of the underground and its channels of communication.

WORKSHEET 7.8 QUESTIONS

1. Consider the choices Roza faced.
2. Discuss the possible consequences of each of her options.
3. Which choice do you think she should have made?

Use the Sydney Jewish Museum library to find answers for the following questions:

4. Which course of action did she take?
5. What do you think were her reasons?
6. Discuss the consequences of her choices.

WORKSHEET 7.9: MALA ZIMETBAUM

Mala Zimetbaum was born in Brzesko, Poland in 1920. When she was still a child, the Zimetbaum family immigrated to Belgium and settled in Antwerp.

In May 1940, the Germans occupied Belgium and began their round-up of Jews. In 1942 Mala was caught in one such round-up and transported to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, the *Selektion* (selection) was conducted and the aged, infirm and mothers with young children were sent straight to the gas chambers. Mala was sent to the women's camp at Birkenau. Since she was fluent in several languages she was used as an interpreter or 'runner' in the camp.

As a messenger Mala had a number of privileges. She was not required to have her head shaved and she could move about the camp freely – strictly forbidden to ordinary prisoners. She was able to establish contact between members of separated families and carry messages and sorely needed medicines. She also had access to the SS administrative offices and the guardhouse – the only places where special permits allowing prisoners to work outside the camp could be obtained.

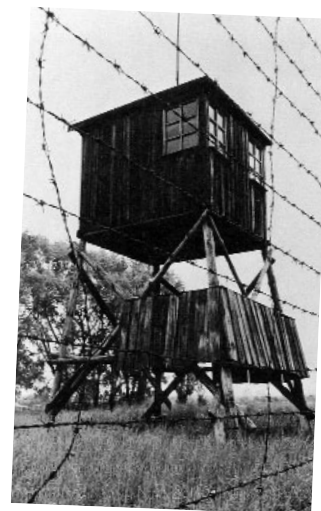
Through her work she gained the confidence of her superiors and became privy to information concerning the fate of other prisoners – especially *Selektions*. As one of her functions was to assign the sick to work details after their release from the hospital, Mala was able to warn patients in danger of *Selektion* and urge them to leave the hospital as soon as they could.

She met Adek Galinski, a young Polish prisoner, who was a mechanic and therefore able to enter the women's section of the camp. When they met, Adek had already been in contact with the underground and was preparing his escape.

Should she join him in order to try and tell the world about what was happening inside the camps, and risk everything?

WORKSHEET 7.9 QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the choices Mala faced.
2. What do you think she should have done?
3. During your visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find out what decision she actually made?
4. Do you think her decision was courageous, noble or selfish? Explain why?
5. What were the consequences of her decision – for the other prisoners and for herself?



7.2 LESSON PLAN CASE STUDIES – FEEDBACK

PREPARATION:

None

Use this lesson for students to present feedback from their research on the case studies.



UNIT 7: TEACHERS NOTES THE CHOICES THEY MADE

7.1: ADAM CZERNIAKOW

Adam Czerniakow could not take it upon himself to carry out the Nazi orders. He was willing to co-operate with them only up to a point. In his contact with the Nazis, Czerniakow sought ways to influence them and arouse in them some consideration for the ghetto. However these attempts were of no avail. In July 1942, after learning that the ghetto commissar, Heinz Auerswald, had misled him and had hidden from him the real facts of the mass deportations, he committed suicide. A note was found on his desk that read: "They are demanding that I kill the children of my people with my own hands. There is nothing for me to do but to die".

Czerniakow chose death at his own hands rather than cross the line between conducting ghetto activities and handing over his people.

The deportations continued and most of the Jews in the Warsaw ghetto were transported to their death in the Treblinka gas chambers.

7.2 CHAIM RUMKOWSKI

Rumkowski chose to comply with the Nazi orders. He appealed to the ghetto population to obey the Germans and report for deportations. Rumkowski's strategy to save himself nearly succeeded. Well after all the other major ghettos had been eradicated, the Jews who remained in the Lodz ghetto continued to labour in workshops, misguided in their belief that work would save them. Ultimately, however, all the Jews (save for a few hundred in hiding) were deported to their death in Auschwitz.

Rumkowski and his family were amongst the last to be deported. Rumkowski had been feared and despised as a collaborator and according to some sources it is believed that the Jews themselves murdered him on the transport to Auschwitz.



7.3 JANUSZ KORCZAK

Korczak refused to listen to the entreaties of his friends to save himself and escape from the ghetto – he was not prepared to abandon 'his children'.

On 6 August 1942, the Germans rounded-up Korczak, the staff of the orphanage and the two hundred children and marched them through the ghetto to the deportation trains. An eyewitness described the scene: "This was not a march to the railway cars, this was an organised, wordless protest ... The children marched in rows of four, with Korczak leading them, looking straight ahead, holding a child's hand on each side ... A second column was led by Stefania Wilczynska, his loyal assistant – with the children wearing blue knapsacks on their backs..."¹⁰

They were deported to the Treblinka death camp.

¹⁰ Gutman, I., (ed) 1990 'Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust', MacMillan, New York, Vol II p.18

7.6 MORDECHAI ANIELEWICZ

Mordechai Anielewicz led the young Jews of Warsaw in an uprising against the Nazis that was to amaze the world. On 18 January 1943, the Germans with guns and tanks launched the second mass deportation from the Warsaw Ghetto. The Germans expected the deportation to take a matter of days but found that for a time, they were unexpectedly driven back and delayed by Jewish fighters.



In April 1943 the deportations recommenced in earnest. This time the Jewish Fighting Organisation was unified and better prepared to resist. Although armed only with homemade grenades, limited ammunition, a pitiful number of pistols, guns and machine guns, the resistance fighters held out against the vastly superior might of the German army for an entire month.

On 23 April 1943, Mordechai Anielewicz wrote his last letter to his friend Yitzhak Zuckerman (a fellow staff member of the Jewish Fighting Organisation). "What has happened is beyond our wildest dreams. Twice, the Germans fled from the ghetto ... The die is cast. The main thing is: my life's dream has come true; I have lived to see Jewish resistance in the ghetto in all its greatness and glory".¹¹

Although the Jewish uprising took place against impossible odds, the Germans did finally raze the ghetto—burning it building by building. On 8 May 1943, Mordechai Anielewicz together with a large force of the Jewish Fighting Organisation was trapped in an underground bunker and killed.

¹¹ Gutman, I., (ed) 1990 "Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust", MacMillan, New York, Vol I p.46



7.7 VLADKA MEED

Vladka became an underground courier for the Bund . She carried out many dangerous missions and had a number of harrowing escapes. She gathered intelligence, smuggled weapons across the wall, found safe houses and rooms for underground meetings and also places of refuge for Jews fleeing the ghetto. She also smuggled women, and especially children, out of the ghetto. After the Warsaw Ghetto uprising she brought money, news and hope to Jews hiding in bunkers and in secret hiding places in Warsaw. She currently lives in New York.

She played an important role in the establishment of the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington. Well into her 80's she continues to lead groups of educators on trips to Poland.

Additional reference materials

- Meed, V 1993 "On Both Sides of the Wall", Holocaust Library in conjunction with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington
- Watch the film/CD **Uprising**

7.8 ROZA ROBOTA

After Roza's interrogation, the core of the underground leadership at the camp expected to be arrested. Though they had complete faith in Roza, they also had some knowledge of the methods of torture employed by the SS in Block 11.

They watched as each day, Roza was taken to Block 11 for questioning – her hair matted, her face distorted by bruising, her clothes dirty and torn. As the days passed, they saw that she was unable to walk and had to be dragged by two guards.

The underground made a desperate effort for one of their members to visit her. Noah, one of her fellow townsman, was chosen for the task. She told him that she had taken all the blame upon herself and that she had betrayed noone. She assured him that the only name



she had mentioned during the interrogations was that of a man in the *Sonderkommando*, who, she knew, was dead. She told her interrogators that he was her only contact with the underground.

Several days later, on 6 January 1945, just days before the camp was evacuated, Roza Robota and the three other young women – Ella, Tusia and Regina – were hanged.

7.9 MALA ZIMETBAUM

On 24 June 1944, Mala and Adek escaped from Auschwitz. She was the first woman to do so. Due to the position she had held, her escape had a profound impact on the prisoners.

They reached the Slovak border but were caught within weeks of their escape and taken back to the camp. They were held in Auschwitz I, Block 11 – renowned for the tortures that took place. Both were sentenced to hang (Mala in the women's camp and Adek in the men's) but both committed suicide while being taken to the gallows. Mala had concealed a razor blade with which she cut the artery on her wrist. She died shouting: "Murderers! You will soon pay for our suffering! Don't be afraid girls! Their end is near. I am certain of this. I know. I was free!"¹³

¹³ Shul, Y. 1990 'They Fought Back', Knopf Publishing Group, New York, p.212

UNIT 8: THE HOLOCAUST AS REPRESENTATION — WHOSE HISTORY IS IT ANYWAY

SUBJECT AREAS:

English
History
Visual Arts

LESSON PLANS:

Representing the Holocaust (8.1)
Feedback (8.2)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 8.2, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Handout 8.1: Henry Moore Quote

OBJECTIVES:

1. To encourage students to consider the meaning and/or importance of artefacts, symbols and images in exhibitions;
2. To enable students to become better acquainted with the historian's craft—the selection of evidence and the impact that these selections have on the interpretation of historic events;
3. To encourage students to analyse the Sydney Jewish Museum's interpretation of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust exhibition at the Sydney Jewish Museum is housed in a unique architectonic space that dictates the telling of the narrative.

As always, when compiling an exhibition, decisions must be made regarding the particular emphasis that the narrative requires: what artefacts, photographs and personal stories to include and what to exclude.

The following tasks demonstrate that this representation is just one interpretation of Holocaust memorialisation. The tasks have been designed to stimulate thought and discussion about the ways in which memory can be simultaneously preserved and limited by the interpretation of any given material. Naturally, the interpretation will, to some extent, depend on the interpreter's own experiences and knowledge.

Students are encouraged to consider the form and shape that Holocaust memorials should take for future generations. For such memorials to be meaningful, students need to reflect upon their own life experiences and knowledge of history:

“For what is remembered depends on how it is remembered; and how those events are remembered depends in turn on the shape memorial icons now lend them.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Young, J. 1990 'Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation', Indiana University Press, Indiana, p.173





8.1 LESSON PLAN REPRESENTING THE HOLOCAUST

PREPARATION:

- i. Divide your class into groups.
- ii. Advise your class that they will see the following artefacts in the exhibition at the Sydney Jewish Museum:
 - a Bible;
 - a yellow star with the word Jude (Jew) written on it;
 - a small piece of barbed wire;
 - a pile of shoes.
- iii. Photocopy & distribute Handout 8.1 to relevant groups

1. Assign one group to focus on the specific **architectural** design of the museum, as well as on the content of the exhibition. They should consider the following:
 - the impact of architectural style;
 - the manipulation of the exhibition space; and
 - the collaboration expected from the visitor in his/her act of remembrance.

Ask this group to find information or photos about the new Jewish Museum in Berlin. Ask students to identify what makes this museum unique.

Students should consider whether it is a valid representation of the Holocaust. They should also be able to justify their responses.

Students can find information about the museum at <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/gallery/bjml.htm>

2. Assign a second group to apply the quote on Handout 8.1 to their representation of the Holocaust – to be generated in a **written form** (personal response (eg. poetry).
3. Assign another group to apply the quote on Handout 8.1 to their representation of the Holocaust – in be generated in a **visual form** (eg. artistic/sculptural).
4. Remaining groups are to focus on the artefacts, photographs or items they will see in the Sydney Jewish Museum, using a maximum of **four** in their representation of the Holocaust.

Note: If you are teaching an art class, then groups should be asked to make their representation through various forms of art. Ask your students to consider the advantages as well as the limitations of their particular medium.

8.2 LESSON PLAN FEEDBACK

1. Each group presents its representation to the class.
Students are encouraged to question each group about its decisions – what they had put in, left out and the nature of their final product/s.
Groups must justify their choices and the form of their final product. They need to explain the difficulties they had experienced in producing their unique interpretation.
2. Discuss the difficulties involved in generating a representation of an historic event or in generating text, portraying ideas or building an exhibition.
3. The concept of representation suggests that there might be multiple ways of seeing an event, personality or situation. For example, personal understanding financial circumstances and gender will affect the ways in which a **composer** will represent a situation, event or piece. These same influences also determine the way in which the **reader**, the **viewer** interprets these events and situations. Therefore, in compiling an exhibition consideration needs to be given to the following:
 - space – shape and size;
 - material – availability and interaction with the shape and size of the space;
 - subjectivity – curator or curatorial team (can any representation be **objective?**);
 - artist – his/her vision as well as any cultural and political constraints upon him/her.

Ultimately, students should understand that any representation of text or history – whether through a museum, film, sculpture, textbook or painting – is just one representation. However accurate or real, it can never be the complete entity in any absolute sense.

It is hoped that this task will teach students to read all forms of representation critically – considering the value or, indeed, the possibility of objectivity; questioning why certain sources are included or excluded; and identifying perspectives that have been omitted. Furthermore, it is hoped that in the future students will pause to consider with **whose** meaning they have been left – that of the photographer, historian or curator. All representation is a **process** – its meaning is dynamic – framed by the creator, time and place and therefore ever evolving.



HANDOUT 8.1: HENRY MOORE QUOTE

The sculptor Henry Moore wrote:

“All art is an abstraction to some degree, in sculpture the material alone forces one away from pure representation and towards abstraction.’ To this ‘we might add that as his material forces the monument-maker away from pure representation it also forces his vision into particular shapes and sizes—all of which determine the texture of memory”.

Source: Young, J. 1990 ‘Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation’, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p.173

UNIT 9: THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOLOCAUST

SUBJECT AREAS:

English

LESSON PLANS:

Word Association (9.1)

Lost in Translation (9.2)

ACTIONS:

After lesson 9.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Handout 9.1: Lost in Translation

OBJECTIVES:

1. To make students sensitive to Holocaust testimony. This, however, will be best achieved through the thorough understanding of the following important concepts:
 - the power of words to hold radically different meanings for people, depending on their personal experiences or the particular context of the word.
 - the difficulties involved in describing the events of the Holocaust with everyday vocabulary.
 - the semantics of such words as: hunger, fear, killed, arrival, train, bowl, cold, liberation and silence, when used by survivors in their testimony.
 - the application of semantics to understand the difficulty survivors may have in expressing the gravity of what happened to them.
 - this difficulty creates for us the problem of how to understand that which is beyond our experience.

9.1 LESSON PLAN WORD ASSOCIATION

Note: This lesson will be most successful if students remain unaware that this task is connected to the Holocaust.

Teachers should make their students mindful of how language is used in reference to the Holocaust. Terms such as 'unimaginable' or 'unbelievable' are often used when speaking about the Holocaust. It is important to realise that these terms may suggest to students that the Holocaust was so 'incredulous' that it is beyond understanding or that it defies description. Sadly, the Holocaust did happen. Its crimes were perpetrated by ordinary men and women and therefore do not lie beyond human perception, understanding or expression.

Lawrence Langer in *The Age of Atrocity: Death in Modern Literature* explains this problem:

"What does it mean to say that an event is beyond the imagination? It was not beyond the imagination of the men who authorised it; or those who executed it; or those who suffered it. Once an event occurs, can it any longer be said to be 'beyond the imagination'? Inaccessible? Yes ... contrary to 'all those human values on which art is traditionally based', of course. What we confront is not the unimaginable but the intolerable – a condition of existence that so diminishes our own humanity that we prefer to assign it to an alien realm".¹⁵

Begin by informing the class that the lesson will focus on word association.

1. Write the following words on the board:
 - train
 - journey
 - hungry
 - arrival
 - selection
 - killed
 - smoke
 - work
 - bowl
 - shoes
 - liberation
 - silence
2. Ask students to call out words they associate with each of the above. These can include images, feelings or brief anecdotes of personal experience—something very special or radically different.
3. After the class has established the meaning of each word and have discussed the way in which usage is shaped by personal experience as well as context, introduce the lesson's connection to the Holocaust. Suggest that for survivors, in the context of their individual narratives, the connotations of these words might be quite different to their accepted meanings.

¹⁵ Langer, L. 1982 'Versions of Survival – The Holocaust and the Human Spirit', Slate University of New York Press, Albany

9.2 LESSON PLAN

LOST IN TRANSLATION

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Handout 9.1

1. Compare the two sets of meanings: Handout 9.1 'Lost in Translation' and the meaning of words from the lesson 9.1.
2. Ruth Wajnryb in *The Silence: How Tragedy Shapes Talk* argues that:
"What is experienced by the individual as the inability of language to express something is in fact the user's own lack of facility with the language. It is not language per se that lacks the resources, but rather an individual experiencing an extremity that outstrips his or her own linguistic ability".¹⁶
Discuss your students' reactions to the above statement.
3. Ask your class to consider the implications of Ruth Wajnryb's view of language when listening to a survivor's testimony. Do they agree with her conclusion or do they consider Lawrence Langer's interpretation to be closer to the truth?
4. Explore with your students the implications as well as the meaning of silences when listening to a survivor's testimony. Hopefully, students will come to the conclusion that silence (or what is omitted) is just as powerful as the spoken word. Remind your class that when sifting through verbal options, survivors are often reduced to silences in the face of such anguish.

¹⁶ Wajnryb, R. 2002 *The Silence: How Tragedy Shapes Talk*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, p.86

train

HANDOUT 9.1: LOST IN TRANSLATION—THE LANGUAGE OF ATROCITY¹⁷

When we speak about the Holocaust or listen to Holocaust testimony, we frame the meaning of words in the same manner as we use in everyday language or usage. The experience of the Holocaust, however, is so far removed from the realm of conventional human experience that these everyday words have to take on a completely new semantic meaning.

TRAIN

The trains for deportations are cattle cars – used to transport livestock. There are no passenger compartments with large windows, over-head-spaces for luggage, toilet facilities and dining cars. People are packed so tightly that there is only enough room to stand. Eighty to a hundred people in airless carriages with barred windows – allowing only slats of light.

JOURNEY

Travel in crammed cattle cars to an unknown destination, family members clutch each other for comfort. Strangers pressed together for days, often, with little air or water – suffocating. There is one bucket for water and one for a toilet, overflowing in no time – with waste and humiliation. Stench! Thirst! Hunger! Uncertainty!

HUNGER

This is not the slightly empty feeling of having missed one meal but gnawing stomach cramps, light-headedness and exhaustion. Desperate people guarding precious morsels – violent fights over stale crusts of bread.

ARRIVAL

After days of anguish, hunger, thirst and uncertainty the doors swing open to reveal a foreign world. Daunting sights and sounds: long platforms, people in striped uniforms unload the train and whisper words of advice, incomprehensible to the young and fit – 'say you have a trade' or 'say you are older than your years'. German guards bark orders while their dogs snarl ferociously at the slow and feeble. Bewildered, the human cargo is dragged from the cattle cars and shoved roughly into lines.



Study for 'Transports from the Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989, Photo © Donald Woodman.

SELECTION

At Auschwitz the myriad of new arrivals on every transport are forced into lines to undergo *Selektionen* – sorted by SS and medical officers. It is they who decide each prisoner's fate: to the right – **to life and work**; to the left – **death in the gas chambers**. Most of the transports – the old, the sick and women with young children are immediately condemned to the gas chambers. The young and fit are assigned to slave labour in the concentration camp.

KILLED

Langer in *'Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory'* recounts the story of an Auschwitz survivor, Irene, who returned to her home village in France in 1945. She had been transported to the camp at the age of fourteen. Her mother and three younger siblings were sent to the gas chambers, and her father and older brother were sent 'to the right'. She never saw any of them again.

When she returned to her village people asked about her family. She first tried to say, 'Everyone in my family was killed' but she rejected the words as hopelessly inadequate. 'Killed' is a word used for ordinary forms of dying. To say matter-of-factly that 'my mother and father and brother and two sisters were gassed when we arrived at Auschwitz' seemed equally unsatisfactory. Plain factuality could not convey the enormity of the event.¹⁸

SMOKE

Blood red sun
choked by darkened sky
agony rising like a silent scream.

Gut wrenching nausea,
disbelief and anguish—
of all who inhale

The sickly sweet smell—
of loved ones
burned to Ash.

WORK

The young and fit – temporarily reprieved from the gas chambers become slave-labourers, condemned to gruelling hours of labour, brutal treatment and starvation rations. Work is used both as punishment and reward. The most coveted reward is to be given work in the kitchen – being able to steal an extra piece of bread, carrot or turnip. Workers are expendable commodities and therefore driven beyond endurance – to death.

BOWL

Prisoners are given small enamel bowls – no eating utensils. Food is usually a thin soup, occasionally, accompanied by a piece of bread. Thus, bowls are precious possessions – without them you cannot eat!

SHOES

Prisoners are issued with ill matched, poorly fitting shoes with no laces and, in some cases, wooden clogs – to impede movement and reduce the likelihood of escape.

LIBERATION

Bereaved
Alone and dislocated
Herded to be processed—DP camps.

Returning
Through war-torn landscapes
To homes now claimed by strangers—neighbours!

Searching
For members of once large families,
Now—sole survivors.

Dispossessed
Disorientated
Grief stricken by the enormity—the loss.

Forced
To resume
—normal life.

SILENCE

In conventional communication or when listening to personal narratives, we pay little attention to silences. Yet these omissions are powerful statements; possibly more powerful than any word could ever be. The listener is left to frame the image or feel the emotion. For many Holocaust survivors the only option left is silence – their experience being too far removed from the realm of conventional human experience.

¹⁷ Langer, L. 1995 'Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays', Oxford University Press, Oxford

¹⁸ Langer, L. 1991 'Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory', Yale University Press, Yale, p.61

**UNIT 10:
NAZI 'DOUBLE SPEAK'
– EUPHEMISM FOR
ANNIHILATION**

SUBJECT AREAS:

English

LESSON PLANS:

Euphemisms (10.1)

Nazi "Double Speak" (10.2)

ACTIONS:

After lesson 10.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Handout 10.1: Euphemisms

Handout 10.2 Nazi Double Speak

Handout 10.3: Secret Memorandum from SS Reich Security Main Office' (RHSA) – 5 June 1942

OBJECTIVES:

1. To make students aware of the function of euphemism in the language of the perpetrators of the Holocaust.

**10.1 LESSON PLAN
EUPHEMISMS**

PREPARATION:

- i. Photocopy Handout 10.1 and cut words into cards as directed (you will need enough for each pair in the class to have at least three or four different cards).
- ii. Photocopy Handout 10.2 (but do not distribute at the start of class)

Note: This lesson will be most successful if students remain unaware that this task is connected to the Holocaust.

When teaching the Holocaust, it is important to be mindful not only of the way in which language is used by the survivors but also by the perpetrators.

The top echelons of the Nazi leadership, who determined the program of the 'Final Solution', were careful to ensure that killing orders were couched in coded language – *Sprachregelung* ('language regulation') the official language of propaganda – to disguise their gruesome truth. This linguistic technique was particularly effective in the promulgation of anti-Jewish policy. To hide acts of terror, brutality, destruction and murder from the international community, and even from the German people, words and phrases that had neutral or positive meanings were used. According to David Bankier's essay "Use of Anti-Semitism in Nazi Ideology" in M. Berenbaum and A. Peck (eds), 'The Holocaust and History – the Known, the Unknown, the Disputed and the Re-examined', this official language concealed from the victims not only:

"the fate intended, for them so as not to alarm them and in order to minimize resistance, it also fulfilled for the perpetrators a highly important function. It diminished responsibility, leaving it to the interlocutor to understand what he wished, thereby further reducing the unpleasantness of the whole operation and removing any remaining scruples".¹⁹

cleansing operations

1. Begin by informing the class that the lesson will focus on euphemism.
2. Distribute word cards to students and ask them to form pairs and decide who will be 'A' and who will be 'B'.
 Player A: reads out the word on the first card.
 Player B: must say the first euphemism that he/she associates with the word on the card (it can be a feeling, thought or image).
 Player A: must say the first euphemism that comes to his/her mind.
 Play continues with each player constructing a new word until no new substitute word can be thought up.
3. Write the list of words from Handout 10.1 on the board.
4. Ask students to call out their euphemisms for each word.
5. After the class has established the euphemism for each word, introduce the lesson's connection to the Holocaust.
6. Distribute Handout 10.2
7. Compare the two sets of meanings from handout 10.2 and the list of words on the board.
8. Explore with your students the **implications** of an official state-instituted language and the use of such linguistic techniques. Consider its impact on the following:
 - propaganda
 - state policy
 - individual psyche
 - role of bureaucracy
 - civil servants
 - individual and collective responsibility.

¹⁹ Bankier D. "Use of Anti-Semitism in Nazi Ideology" in Berenbaum, M. and Peck, A. (eds) 1998 "The Holocaust and History – the Known, the Unknown, the Disputed and the Re-examined", Bloomington, Indiana, pp.41-55

HANDOUT 10.1: EUPHEMISMS

Cut up the following words so that each word appears on a separate card:

bath installations

cleansing operations

delousing

evacuation

final solution

Jewish residential area

operation/action

relocation

resettlement

special treatment

work deployment

work liberates



Juden AKT

HANDOUT 10.2: NAZI “DOUBLE SPEAK”

AKTION OR JUDEN-AKTION

Commonly used terms referring to organised physical violence against the Jews. *Aktionen* included property confiscations, arrests, hunting, herding, murdering and deporting Jews to extermination camps.

JEWISH RESIDENTIAL AREA

This term was used by the Nazis to refer to Jewish ghettos – places far from images of home, privacy, leafy streets and a sense of permanence. Ghettos were places of slave labour and despair – overcrowded, unhygienic and diseased – way stations to the ‘Final Solution’.

FINAL SOLUTION

Phrase coined by the Nazis to conceal the genocide of European Jewry.

RESETTLEMENT

Term used by the Nazis to disguise the true destination – death camps – of deportees from the Jewish ghettos.

EVACUATION

Word used by the Nazis for the deportation of Jews to extermination camps. It was to delude Jews into believing that they were being sent to a place of resettlement.

RELOCATION

Another word employed by the Nazis to lull Jews into a false sense of security and hide the true destination – extermination camps – of the transports.

WORK LIBERATES

Though the words *Arbeit macht frei* (‘work sets you free’), placed on the gates of Auschwitz, grossly belied their redemptive promise, they did fulfil their cruel irony – those who were strong enough to work were worked to death – the rest were murdered – some, very few, by luck, survived.

BATH INSTALLATIONS AND DELOUSING

Both of these terms were used by the Nazis to obfuscate and deceive. In the death camps all Jewish inmates had to undress before they were forced to enter the gas chambers. In order to normalise this procedure, minimise resistance and ensure compliance as well as hide the fate that awaited the victims, the Nazis suggested that delousing was a hygiene precaution and referred to the gas chambers as *bath installations*.

SPECIAL TREATMENT

The prefix ‘special’ in the language of the Nazis denoted exceptional cases – those selected to be exterminated.

WORK DEPLOYMENT

Work deployment was the economic exploitation of the Jews by the Nazis. It was a method by which the Nazis simultaneously forced the Jews into slave labour, assured them that work would save them from death, hid the true intent of their policies from the international community and even from their own people.

CLEANSING OPERATIONS

Term used by the SS, police and the elite *Einsatzgruppen* shortly after the outbreak of war, to justify the killing of Jews in the interests of national security. Jews were initially shot on the pretext that they were snipers, insurgents or resisters. Later they were branded as agitators, hostile elements, partisans and bandits.

ION

10.2 LESSON PLAN NAZI “DOUBLE SPEAK”

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Handout 10.3

1. Ask students to form pairs and to silently read through the document.
2. Ask students to note their initial reactions to the passage:
 - what they **think** is the meaning of the document/text?
 - how they feel having read it?
3. Ask them to decode the document/text to find as many examples of euphemism as possible.
4. Ask them to list the **euphemisms** as well as each word's **actual** meaning.
5. Ask students to comment on the **style and tone** of the document.
6. Ask them to consider the ways in which the style (especially the use of euphemisms) would have made it easier for a civil servant to process this memorandum and to carry out his/her job.
7. Ask them to find examples in the document where it is impossible for the writer to disguise the subject matter and examples where there are illogical coupling of words or phrases (eg. 'the load naturally rushes towards the light').
8. Ask students to replace the euphemisms in the document with words that **actually** represent the writer's intention.
9. Ask students to reread the text either silently or aloud:
 - how has the decoding/deconstruction of the document changed **their** reaction to it?
10. Raul Hilberg, a foremost scholar on the role of the bureaucrats in the annihilation of Jews during the Holocaust and the author of *Documents for Destruction* (1971) and *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1993), states:

“You have all heard the saying that a bureaucrat is merely a cog in the wheel—it turns whenever the wheel is turning ... I have a different view: the bureaucrat drives the wheel—without him, it would not turn”.

 - ask students to relate the relevance of Raul Hilberg's words to the document.
11. Students should also be asked to consider the role language played in the defence that many ardent Nazi bureaucrats offered against accusations of complicity in the extermination process.



**HANDOUT 10.3:
SECRET MEMORANDUM FROM
SS REICH SECURITY MAIN
OFFICE' (RHSA)**

EXTRACT

5 JUNE 1942

**CHANGES FOR SPECIAL VEHICLES NOW IN
SERVICE AT CHELMNO AND FOR THOSE
NOW BEING BUILT**

Since December 1941, ninety-seven thousand have been processed (*verarbeitet* in German) by the three vehicles in service, with no major incidents. In the light of observations made so far, however, the following technical changes are needed:

The van's normal load is usually nine per square yard. The Saurer vehicles, which are very spacious, maximum use of space is impossible, not because of any possible overload, but because loading to full capacity would affect the vehicle's stability. So reduction of the load space seems necessary. It must absolutely be reduced by a yard, instead of trying to solve the problem, as hitherto, by reducing the number of pieces loaded. Besides, this extends the operating time, as the void must also be filled with carbon monoxide. On the other hand, if the load space is reduced, and the vehicle is packed solid, the operating time can be considerably shortened. The manufacturers told us during a discussion that reducing the size of the van's rear would throw it off balance. The front axle, they claim, would be overloaded. In fact, the balance is automatically restored, because the merchandise abroad displays during the operation a natural tendency to rush to the rear doors, and is mainly found lying there at the end of the operation. So the front axle is not overloaded.

The lighting must be better protected than now. The lamps must be enclosed in a steel grid to prevent them being damaged. Lights could be eliminated, since they apparently are never used. However, it has been observed

that when the doors are shut, the load always presses hard against them [against the doors] as soon as darkness sets in. This is because the load naturally rushes towards the light when darkness sets in, which makes closing the doors difficult. Also, because of the alarming nature of darkness, screaming always occurs when the doors are closed. It would therefore be useful to light the lamp before and during the first moments of the operation.

For easy cleaning of the vehicle, there must be a sealed drain in the middle of the floor. The drainage hole's cover, eight to twelve inches in diameter, would be equipped with a slanting trap, so that liquids can drain off during the operation. During cleaning, the drain can be used to evacuate large pieces of dirt.

The aforementioned technical changes are to be made to vehicles, in service when they come in for repairs. As for the ten vehicles ordered from Saurer, they must be equipped with all innovations and changes shown by use and experience to be necessary.

Submitted for decision to Gruppenleiter II D, SS-Obersturmbannführer Walter Rauff.²⁰

²⁰ Lanzmann, C. 1985, 'Shoah – An Oral History of the Holocaust', Pantheon Books, New York, pp.103-5

UNIT 10: TEACHER'S NOTES

HANDOUT 10.2: NAZI "DOUBLE SPEAK"

vehicle	means	van specifically designed for the gassing of Jews
processed	means	annihilated or murdered
pieces	means	Jews
load	means	Jews
operating time	means	gassing or annihilation
merchandise	means	Jews
liquids	means	urine
pieces of dirt	means	human excrement

However, when readers are confronted by the words 'screaming always occurs when the doors are shut', it becomes obvious that the 'load' has human characteristics. Ironically, the carefully chosen words, themselves, betrays the writer as an accomplice in the crime.

Students should be left to consider the power of words. "The key to successful transportation of the Jews to death and extermination from a psychological standpoint was never to utter the words that would be appropriate to the actions being taken".²¹

HANDOUT 10.3: SECRET MEMORANDUM FROM SS REICH SECURITY MAIN OFFICE (RSHA)

This memorandum is an example of *Sprachregelung* (language regulation), its odious official language demonstrates how bureaucrats, public servants and ordinary individuals actively colluded in the machinery of destruction.

In an objective and dispassionate style, the memo outlines specific technical problems – the main one being the stability of the gas van under consideration. The paramount issue being the attainment of maximum efficiency in processing and time. The author of the memo offers solutions.

Illogical coupling of words or phrases – 'when the doors are shut, the load always presses hard against them' or 'because the merchandise has a natural tendency to rush to the rear doors' – expose the attempt at linguistic deception. The absurdity of the writer's choice of words is revealed by describing inanimate objects as having the 'natural tendency to rush forward' or 'towards the light'.

²¹ R Hilberg quoted in Lanzmann, C. 1985 'Shoah – An Oral History of the Holocaust', Pantheon Books, New York, p.139



UNIT 11: POETRY

SUBJECT AREAS:

English

LESSON PLANS:

The Poetry of Lily Brett (11.1)

Response to Brett's Poetry (11.2)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 11.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Handout 11.1: Poetry – Lily Brett

OBJECTIVES:

1. To explore the representation of the Holocaust through poetry.

11.1 LESSON PLAN THE POETRY OF LILY BRETT

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Handout 11.1

1. Ask students to choose one of the poems (allow ten minutes to read and choose a poem).
2. Ask students to consider some of the following in making a personal response:
 - reason for their particular choice
 - meaning of the poem
 - feelings the poem elicits
 - effect of the Spartan use of words
 - use of irony
 - lay-out
 - mood conveyed
 - rhythm
 - choice/appropriateness of words



HANDOUT 11.1: POETRY - LILY BRETT

Lily Brett is a contemporary poet and novelist. The poems presented here have been taken from *'The Auschwitz Poems'* (1988) collection. Brett, a second-generation Holocaust survivor, grew up in Melbourne. She currently lives in New York and is a highly successful author.

Poems reproduced courtesy of *'The Auschwitz Poems'* by Lily Brett, published by Scribe Publications.

SLEEP

Jammed
on the
planks

they
could only
sleep on their sides

forced
to move
in unison

like
synchronised
swimmers
a
corps de ballet
with corpses

occupied
hell's
private hotel

POSSESSIONS

A bowl
was a life-saving
piece of equipment

any bit of bent metal
rusted tin
worn enamel

without
a
bowl

you
couldn't
eat soup

had
to
make do

with
sawdust-soaked
mud board

that
passed
for bread

a spoon
meant
good fortune

dignity
and
humanity.

ANOTHER SELECTION

Mengele looked
while the Kommandant
lightly whipped
the thin nipples
shriveled around
their empty bags of breast

rows and rows
of wrinkled pink tips
sitting on bowed ribs

the night sky
a romantic red
blazed with arms legs and heads

the thick air
sweet
with your mother's bones burning

the snow
clothed in
black ash
was mourning

and you stood
pushing out
what remained
of the flesh on your chest

it passed the test.



THE MARKET

The market

held mostly

behind the toilets

was quietly boisterous

a thin throng

of nervous onlookers

lived vicariously

while others

hawked and bought

the fear

brazened away

from their faces

bold deals

were negotiated

in bread and soup

40 grams of bread

bought rubber to sole a shoe

the price

for this

bit of shopping

if you were spotted

was

to be shot

on the spot

SOMEONE

If you had

someone to look after

someone to worry about

someone to protect

someone to push

someone to share with

someone to encourage

someone to accuse

it could save you.





11.2 LESSON PLAN RESPONSE TO BRETT'S POETRY

Students should be encouraged to discuss their responses to the poems. They could also explore the world of a second-generation survivor, a second-generation perpetrator and, even, a bystander.

Discuss with your students the collective guilt with which the youth of today's Germany seems to be struggling. There are more young German volunteers working in world aid programs than the combined number of all other nationalities. The novels, *The Reader* and *The Dark Room* are examples of second-generation preoccupation with the 'sins of the fathers' being visited upon the next generation, even up to the seventh.

UNIT 12: PERPETRATORS – THE “BANALITY OF EVIL”²²

SUBJECT AREAS:

History
Religious Studies
Society and Culture

LESSON PLANS:

The “Banality of Evil” (12.1)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 12.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Worksheet 12.1: Extracts from: Letters of SS-Obersturmführer Karl Kretschmer

Worksheet 12.2 Extracts from: ‘Verdict against SS-Untersturmführer Max Täubner,

Handout 12.3: ‘The Perpetrators’ – Motivations for Murder

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand why so many individuals willingly participated in the killing of millions.

The atrocities of the Holocaust are often attributed to evil and evil men. The crimes perpetrated by the Germans and their willing executioners – the Lithuanians, Latvians, Ukrainians, Hungarians, Romanians, Croats, Poles, and other European nationalities – are considered to be so monstrous that they lie beyond the range of our understanding. This explanation is too superficial and does not provide an adequate answer to why ‘ordinary’ people were prepared to willingly participate in such heinous crimes. The Germans and their non-German accomplices were, in the main, ‘ordinary’ men – human beings much like ourselves – who, whilst carrying out orders, found that they were also committing criminal acts.

Contrary to claims that ‘we were simply following orders’, claims often used as a means of defence and frequently voiced after the end of the Second World War, there is no evidence that those who perpetrated the Holocaust had no choice. Historians have found no record of military personnel being shot, sent to concentration camps or, indeed, being severely punished for refusing to participate in the annihilation of Jews. Why then did individuals participate willingly in mass murders?

In ‘Those Were The Days – The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders’²³ they try to explain themselves. What emerges is that the deeds were not the work of demons – undoubtedly there were some sadists – but the work of ordinary human beings.

Students wishing to study this topic in greater depth should read, Konrad Kwiet’s, *“Perpetrators and the Final Solution”* in St. McMahon-Kaye (ed), 2001 *‘The Memory of the Holocaust in the 21st Century: The Challenge for Education’*, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, pp.61-82.

²² H Arendt first used the expression the ‘banality of evil’ in *‘Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality Of Evil’*, New York, Viking Press, 1963

²³ Klee, Dressen & Riess 1991 *‘Those Were The Days – The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders’*, translated by Deborah Burnstone, Kocky & Kocky, New York



Banality of Evil / Struthof from the ‘Holocaust Project’, © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Sprayed acrylic, oil, and photography on photolinen, 30 " x 43 ". Collection of the artists and Through The Flower Corporation. Photo © Donald Woodman.

12.1 LESSON PLAN THE “BANALITY OF EVIL”

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Worksheets 12.1 & 12.2 and Handout 12.3

1. Ask students to provide:
 - profiles of the people who actively participated in the ‘Final Solution’;
 - factors (political, social and/or emotional) that might have motivated **ordinary** people to commit such appalling crimes.
2. Write suggestions on the board.
3. At the end of the lesson compare these to Handout 12.3
4. Ask students to read Worksheets 12.1 & 12.2 and consider the accompanying questions.

WORKSHEET 12.1: EXTRACTS FROM: LETTERS OF *SS-OBERSTURMFÜHRER* KARL KRETSCHMER

NO. 6

Sunday, 27 September 1942

My dear Soska,

You will be impatient because you have received no letter from me ...

I am in a very gloomy mood. I must pull myself out of it. The sight of the blood (including women and children) is not very cheering ... As the war is in our opinion a Jewish war, the Jews are the first to feel it. Here in Russia wherever a German soldier is, no Jew remains. You can imagine that at first I needed some time to get to grips with this.

I wrote to you that I might be able to find you a Persian rug. It now turns out that it won't be possible. First I'm no longer in the right area and second the Jewish dealers are no longer alive ... Obviously there is nothing I can do ... Today I dispatch parcels no. 2 (butter) and no. 3 (two tins of sardines in oil, 2 rubber balls, 1 tea and 2 packets of sweets for the children).

NO. 11

Kursk, 15. 10. 1942

Beloved wife, dear children,

... Of my life today I can tell you that things are going more or less smoothly. We have got hold of a nice little house similar to the one in Garden Street only not as nice ...

At 7.00 we have coffee, as much bread as you want, a blob of butter – about 60g – sometimes pure or artificial honey. I always have four slices of bread. Then we work until 12.00. There is always good food for lunch – a lot of meat, a lot of fat (we have our own livestock, pigs, sheep, calves, and cows). We have picked our own tomatoes and cucumbers. Our cook has a sideline at the home running a delicatessen and really knows what he's doing. Depending on my mood and appetite I can eat up to three helpings. Then back to work again until 18.00. For supper there is either something hot: roast potatoes with scrambled eggs or other dishes, or something cold: bread and some salami ...



We spend the evenings either playing cards, boozing or sitting together with the boss ...

I have already told you about the shootings – that I could not say ‘no’ here either. But they’ve more or less said they’ve finally found a good chap to run the administrative side of things. The last one was a coward. That’s the way people are judged here. But you can trust your Daddy. He thinks about you all the time and is not shooting immoderately ... There’s nothing going on in town ... How I love being at home with you all. How is the garden?

It’s nice that Herr Kern is going to France. I think he would have been too weak for the East, though people do change here. People soon get used to the sight of blood, but *Blutwurst* (blood sausage) is not very popular here.

I hope the package for Wurzel will get there in time for his birthday. It would make me very happy.

Lots of kisses and greetings for the children

For their dear mummy a long deep kiss

You are my everything

Your Papa.

O.U. (Headquarters), 19 October 1942

Dear Mutti, dear children,

I’m sending you a quick letter so you don’t think that Papa has forgotten you. I have a great deal to do at the moment but I hope that it’ll have let up within a couple of weeks ... Anyway you need not worry that we are living badly here. We have to eat and drink well because of the nature of our work, as I have described to you in detail. Otherwise we would crack up. Your Papa will be very careful and strike the right balance. It’s not very pleasant stuff.

If it weren’t for the stupid thoughts about what we are doing in this country, the Einsatz here would be wonderful ... Since it has put me in a position where I can support you all very well. Since, as I already wrote to you, I consider the last Einsatz to be justified and indeed approve of the consequences it had, the phrase: ‘stupid thoughts’ is not strictly accurate. Rather it is a weakness not to be able to stand the sight of dead people; the best way of overcoming it is to do it more often. Then it becomes a habit.²⁴

²⁴ Klee, Dressen & Riess 1991 ‘Those Were The Days – The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders’, translated by Deborah Burnstone, Kocky & Kocky, New York, pp.163-171

WORKSHEET 12.1 QUESTIONS

1. What are your general impressions of Karl Kretschmer – as an SS officer, man, husband and father? Quote from his letters to support your answer.
2. What was Karl Kretschmer’s attitude to his work – did he enjoy killing people?
3. What reasons does he provide for participating in the murders?
4. Would you describe Karl Kretschmer to be – evil, insane, antisemitic, an ‘ordinary’ man?
5. Do his reasons reflect the profiles and the motivations of perpetrators, as agreed to by the class?

WORKSHEET 12.2: VERDICT AGAINST SS-UNTERSTURMFÜHRER MAX TÄUBNER

Max Täubner was the commanding officer of a supplies workshop platoon and an officer in the SS. He was not a member of the *Einsatzgruppen*, whose task was to hunt down and eliminate Jews.

Täubner and his platoon participated in the murder of hundreds of Jews, frequently beating Jewish victims with spades. Many times he had been known to strike women in the face with a whip. Whenever there was a break during beatings or executions he would play 'You Are Crazy, My Child' on an accordion.

On 24 May 1943, the SS and Police Supreme Court found Max Täubner guilty of a number of crimes. Read the following extracts (information before the court and also from the transcripts of the verdict) and answer the questions that follow.

VERDICT AGAINST SS-UNTERSTURMFÜHRER MAX TÄUBNER

The accused is a fanatical enemy of the Jews. At the start of his service in the east he resolved to 'get rid' of 20,000 Jews. Together with his work platoon he was assigned to the SS-Brigade, in August 1942, in East Prussia ... The accused heard that the *Wehrmacht* was issuing Jewesses with certificates saying that they were not Jewish. As, in his opinion, the *Wehrmacht* were too sentimental he decided to carry out the execution with his platoon. Outside the village a grave was dug... by the side of which the Jews – men, women and children – had to kneel. They were then shot at close range in the nape of the neck when the order was given.

The accused shall not be punished because of the actions against the Jews as such. The Jews have to be exterminated and none of the Jews that were killed is any great loss ... Real hatred of the Jews was the driving motivation for the accused. In the process he let himself be drawn into committing cruel actions ... that are unworthy of a German man and an SS officer ... In so doing the accused gives rise to considerable concern. The accused allowed his men to act with such vicious brutality that they conducted themselves under his command like a savage horde. The accused jeopardized the discipline of the men. It is hard to conceive of anything worse than this. Although the accused may have otherwise taken care of his men, by his conduct he however neglected his

supervisory duty that, in the view of the SS, also means not allowing his men to be psychologically deprived. The accused is therefore to be punished under section 147 of the Military Penal Code.

The accused took a number of photographs of the executions – although he knew that the photographing of such incidents was not permitted ... The photographs were developed in photographic shops and the accused showed them to his wife and friends.

By taking photographs, the accused is guilty of disobedience. Such pictures could pose the gravest risks to the security of the Reich if they fell into the wrong hands. For this crime the accused is to be punished under section 92 of the MGB ...

Source: Klee, Dressen & Riess 1991 'Those Were The Days—The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders', translated by Deborah Burnstone, Kocky & Kocky, New York, pp.196-202

WORKSHEET 12.2 QUESTIONS

1. What are your general impressions of Max Täubner – as a man and officer? Quote from the extracts to support your answer.
2. What reasons explain his participation in the killings?
3. Do his reasons reflect the profiles and the motivations of perpetrators, as agreed to by the class?
4. Did he choose to participate or was he following orders?
5. How would you describe Max Täubner – antisemitic, evil, sadistic or psychopathic?
6. What crimes did Täubner commit according to the SS court?

HANDOUT 12.3: 'THE PERPETRATORS' MOTIVATIONS FOR MURDER

In most cases, the atrocities committed by the Germans and their collaborators were the acts of 'ordinary men'. There were some individuals, like the sadist Max Täubner, who enjoyed committing these crimes. However, such men were probably in the minority and are not representative of those involved.

Mass murders involved not only the immediate perpetrators but also thousands of others not physically involved in killing anyone – lawyers, doctors, accountants, bankers, clerks, railway workers and farmers. Although they were removed from the actual murder, they were all complicit in the monstrous machinery of destruction.

Christopher R. Browning (1998) in *'Ordinary Men'*, cites the main reasons why ordinary people were willing to participate in such barbarous activities. The following is a short list from Browning's *'Ordinary Men'*:

1. racism; in this particular case antisemitism – hatred of Jews
2. careerism; ambition or material incentives
3. deference to authority; they followed orders without question or conscience
4. conformity / peer pressure; they did not want to be ostracised as cowards
5. wartime brutalisation
6. segmentation and routine nature of the task
7. special selection of the perpetrators; in some cases 'professional' killers – members of the SS and the *Einsatzgruppen*
8. ideological indoctrination

UNIT 13: THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES: BYSTANDERS, RESISTORS, VICTIMS, RESCUERS AND PERPETRATORS

SUBJECT AREAS:

History
Society & Culture
Studies of Religion

LESSON PLANS:

Responsibility (13.1)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 13.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Worksheet 13.1: The Christian Churches and the Holocaust

OBJECTIVES:

1. To understand the role that the Christian churches and individual Christians played in the Holocaust.

13.1 LESSON PLAN RESPONSIBILITY

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Worksheet 13.1

1. After having considered the sources, ask the class to 'reach a verdict' on the role of the churches.

OR

2. Have a class debate on one of the following topics:

'It was unreasonable to have expected Pope Pius XII to come to the rescue of Jews.'

'The Churches as well as individual Christians could have done more to save the Jews.'

'Given the ferocity with which the Nazis dealt with their opponents, the public condemnation of Nazi crimes against the Jews by the Pope and/or members of other Christian Churches would have been futile.'



WORKSHEET 13.1: THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THE HOLOCAUST

SOURCE 1

The single most significant act on record of Galen's campaign against Nazism was his courageous denunciation of the Euthanasia Program; in a sermon he gave on 3 August 1941, when he declared euthanasia was simply murder. There is widely held belief that Galen's public statements on the subject caused Hitler to put an end to the project ... However, no such public protest was made by the churches or any other German institution, against Nazi policy on the Jews and the Final Solution.

Source: Gutman, I. (ed) 1990 'Encyclopedia of the Holocaust', Vol II, MacMillan, New York, p. 537.

SOURCE 2 BISHOP WURM TO THE HEAD OF HITLER'S CHANCELLERY 20 DECEMBER 1943

In agreement with the judgement of all truly Christian people in Germany, I must state that we Christians feel this policy of destroying the Jews to be a grave wrong, and one that will have fearful consequences for the German people. To kill without the necessity of war, and without legal judgement, contravenes God's commands even when it has been ordered by authority, and, like every conscious violation of God's law, will be avenged, sooner or later.

Source: Lee, S. J. 1998 'Hitler and Nazi Germany', Routledge, London, p.63

SOURCE 3: WORDS OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

I pray for a defeat of my Fatherland. Only through a defeat can we atone for the terrible crimes that we have committed against Europe and the world.

The question is really: Christianity or Germanism? And the sooner the conflict is revealed in the clear light of day, the better.

Hitler is the anti-Christ. We must therefore continue with our work and root him out.



From Süddeutscher Verlag Bilderdienst

Source: Lacey, G. & Shephard, K. 2001 'Germany 1918-1945', John Murray Publishers, London, p.152

SOURCE 4

No protest was heard from Pius XII when, in 1935, Germany promulgated its own infamous statutes of racial purity in the Nuremberg Laws ... The roundup of Jews by the Nazis began in Rome in the fall of 1943.

On October 18, over one thousand Roman Jews, more than two-thirds of them women and children, were deported from the Eternal City to Auschwitz. On October 28 the German ambassador, Ernst Heinrich von Weizsäcker, reported to Berlin: "Although under pressure from all sides, the Pope (Pius XII) has not let himself be drawn into any demonstrative censure of the deportation of the Jews from Rome..."

Source: Strom, M. J. & Parsons, W. S. 1962 'Facing History and Ourselves: the Holocaust and Human Behaviour', Intentional Educations Inc., Watertown

SOURCE 5

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist.

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

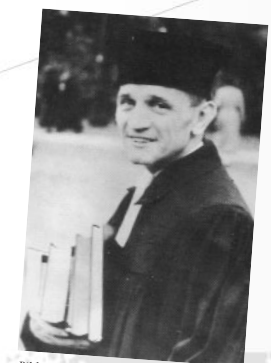
Then they came for me—
and there was no one left to speak for me.

Pastor Martin Niemöller²⁵

²⁵ Berenbaum, M. 1993 'The World Must Know', Little, Brown & Co., p.41



Reprinted from Cornwall, J. 'Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII', Penguin Group, USA



Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

WORKSHEET 13.1 QUESTIONS

- Based on the above sources, what is your assessment of the stance that the Christian churches and their leaders took during the Holocaust – bystander, victim, rescuer, resister or perpetrator?
- What other sources would you have to consult before you could establish the role of the Christian churches as rescuers and/or resisters or perpetrators?
- Examine the following:
 - the role that the Christian churches played in the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust;
 - Nazi response to the handful of Christian church leaders like Bishop Wurm, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller.
- Which of the five sources do you consider to be the most reliable? Give reasons for your answer.

UNIT 13: TEACHER'S NOTES BIOGRAPHIES

CARDINAL VON GALEN

Galen, a German Catholic leader, publicly attacked the Nazi policies as early as 1934. In 1941 he revealed that the Nazis were secretly killing mentally and physically handicapped people. He led a campaign that made Hitler call a halt to the 'euthanasia program'. The Nazis did not want to make Galen into a martyr so they took no action against him.

DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a Protestant minister whose Christian faith led him to act against the Nazi regime. This was at a time when church leaders in Germany actively supported or, at best, failed to oppose the Nazis.

Bonhoeffer believed that Christianity could not accept Nazi racist views; that churchmen had to be free to preach against the Nazis; and that Christians had a duty to resist Hitler and help victims of Nazi persecution.

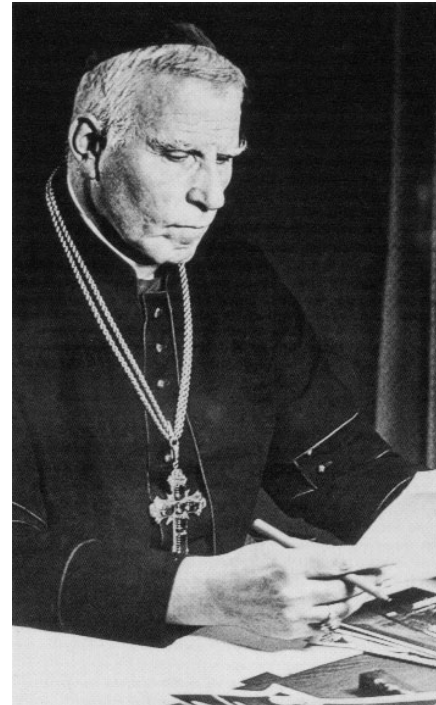
From the early 1930s Bonhoeffer consistently preached and published his views against the Nuremberg Laws. In 1936 the *Cestapo* closed his training college and banned him from preaching.

Bonhoeffer joined the underground and established contact with groups of German resisters who were working to overthrow Hitler. He was involved in devising 'Operation 7', a plan that helped a small number of Jews escape from Germany.

In April 1943, he was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. On 8 April 1945, Bonhoeffer was put on trial in Flossenbürg concentration camp and sentenced to death by hanging.

ERNST HEINRICH VON WEISZÄCKER

Weiszäcker was the German ambassador in Rome in the 1943 – during the time when Italian Jews were rounded-up in Rome and deported. After the war, he was sentenced at the Nuremberg Trials to seven years imprisonment for crimes against humanity but in 1950 he was pardoned.



From Süddeutscher Verlag Bilderdienst

UNIT 14: WHERE WAS GOD DURING THE HOLOCAUST?

SUBJECT AREAS:
Religious Education

LESSON PLANS:
A Question of Faith (14.1)

ACTIONS:
Before lesson 14.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:
Handout 14.1: Five Models of Response

OBJECTIVES:
1. To encourage students to debate the theological responses to the question of the existence of God.

TWO JEWS WALK THROUGH THE CAMP GATES AFTER LIBERATION. THE FIRST JEW TAKES OFF HIS YARMULKE (SKULL CAP), THROWS IT ON THE GROUND, STAMPS ON IT AND SAYS, 'GOD IS DEAD'. THE JEW BEHIND HIM PICKS UP THE YARMULKE, PUTS IT ON HIS HEAD AND SAYS, 'THANK GOD I'M ALIVE'.

ANONYMOUS

'NO AMOUNT OF RETRIBUTION, NO AMOUNT OF COMPENSATION, AND NO GOD CAN EVER REPAY WHAT WAS DONE TO US.'

IRENE HAVAS, HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

14.1 LESSON PLAN A QUESTION OF FAITH

PREPARATION:
Photocopy & distribute Worksheet 14.1

1. Introduce to the class the questions raised in your 'Teacher's Notes'.
2. Give your class time to think about these questions.
3. After a class discussion, consider the five archetypal models drawn from the Bible by leading scholars.

HANDOUT 14.1: FIVE MODELS OF RESPONSE

I. THE FIRST ADAM

Sin and punishment: Adam who sinned by violating God's command is expelled from the Garden of Eden and is punished.

Objection: Does there exist a sin enormous enough to justify such a punishment as the death of so many millions of individuals?

II. CAIN KILLS ABEL

God endowed human beings with free choice, with the capacity to choose between good – life and evil – death. According to Jewish law free will is bestowed on every human being. If a person desires to turn towards the good and righteous way he/she has the power to do so. And conversely, if a person wishes to turn towards evil and be wicked he/she is at liberty to do so.

Therefore – what happened in the Holocaust is not God's responsibility, but rather the responsibility of Man. Man used his God-given potential of free choice and chose evil.

God asked Cain, after he had killed his brother Abel: 'What have you done?' Cain avoided taking responsibility and asked in return: 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

The Holocaust is therefore not God's problem but Man's.

III. SILENCE

Silence is a legitimate religious response. It is argued that due to the magnitude of the question and out of respect for the victims we are obligated to respond with silence.

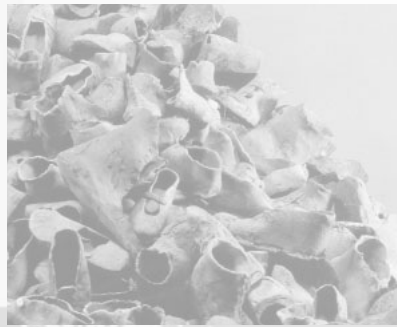
This answer is most difficult because at its edges doubts begin to form – how can one remain silent, is it possible?

IV. THE ECLIPSE OF GOD

God 'hid His face'. The period of the Holocaust was a period of 'the eclipse of God'. In Martin Buber's view, this is similar to the eclipse of the sun or the moon. The Bible attributes certain theological mysteries to God – sometimes He is hidden and sometimes revealed.

For God to be in hiding, to be in eclipse, as an explanation for the Holocaust has its difficulties because it begs the question: why did He go into hiding just at the time He was needed more than ever?





UNIT 14: TEACHER'S NOTES

V. THE DEATH OF GOD

Similar to the theory of the 'eclipse of God' but far more extreme is the 'Death of God'. This theory does not negate/deny the possibility that God does not exist nor that He revealed himself to human beings and to the people of Israel. The 'God is Dead' theology posits that God did exist once but at a certain moment – one horrible moment during the Holocaust – He ceased to exist, receding into a kind of **permanent** eclipse.

Zvi Kolitz breathes life into the 'Five Models of Response' through the discourse that takes place between God and the protagonist of his short story 'Yosel Rakover Talks to God'. Zvi Kolitz in this work of fiction – the dialogue of a religious Jew's last thoughts with his God – comes to the conclusion that although God had done everything He could to make the religious Jew lose his faith and to cease to believe in Him, the Jew dies praising God. Zvi's character, though disappointed in God, still cherishes His Torah. 'God commands religion, but His Torah commands a way of life – and the more we die for this way of life, the more immortal it is!'

Source: Pinchas Peli, Jerusalem Post, International Edition, 17 & 24 April 1983
Kolitz, Z. 1999 'Yosel Rakover Talks to God', Vintage, London, p.18

WORKSHEET 14.1 QUESTIONS

Have a class debate:

- We must accept that in trying to find answers to these questions it is not always possible to arrive at a reasonable explanation of what occurred. Some scholars argue that the greatness of many historical events lies precisely in the fact that they remain a mystery – *except to Him before whom all mysteries are revealed.*
- 'God commands religion, but His Torah commands a way of life – and the more we die for this way of life, the more immortal it is.'

The Holocaust forces us to grapple with many fundamental questions as well as with a number of other complex issues such as:

- Where was God during the Holocaust?
- What happens to faith in a post-Holocaust world – can a survivor believe in God after Auschwitz?
- Is religion the bane of civilisation?
- Does Good ultimately prevail over Evil?
- What does the Holocaust demonstrate about human nature?
- Has the post-Holocaust world learnt from History?

The following questions are integral to the whereabouts of God during the Holocaust:

- What was God's role before the event? Did He take part in the decision to let it occur?
- Where was God during the Holocaust? Was He there in the midst of the horrors and the dreadful suffering? How could He have been? He is a 'merciful' God.
- What was God's role after the Holocaust? Once the world had returned to normal? Can we go to houses of pray and fulfil His commandments as if nothing had happened to shake our faith?





UNIT 15: WHERE WAS MAN?

SUBJECT AREAS:

Geography
History
Religious Education
Society and Culture

LESSON PLANS:

Accountability (15.1)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 15.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Worksheet 15.1: Accountability

Worksheet 15.2: Vigilance

Worksheet 15.3: What Can We Do?

OBJECTIVES:

1. To examine why our civilised institutions failed to prevent the horror that was the Holocaust.

THE HOLOCAUST WAS BORN AND EXECUTED IN OUR MODERN RATIONAL SOCIETY, AT THE HIGH STAGE OF OUR CIVILISATION AND AT THE PEAK OF HUMAN CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENT, AND FOR THIS REASON IT IS A PROBLEM OF THAT SOCIETY, CIVILISATION AND CULTURE.

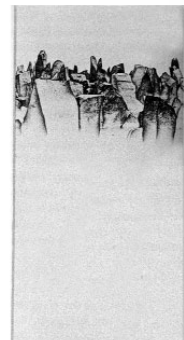
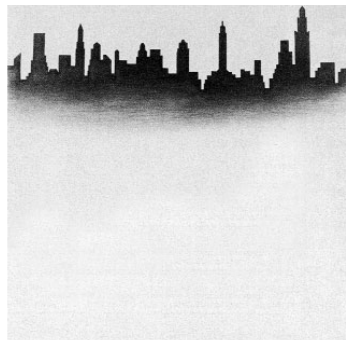
ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

15.1 LESSON PLAN ACCOUNTABILITY

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Worksheets 15.1 – 15.3

1. Introduce the idea that if we cannot or will not accept that the Holocaust was the work of God (retribution, punishment or absence), then Man – exercising his/her freewill – must be held accountable for it.
2. Students should discuss the degree of responsibility that Man has for conceiving or allowing events of such catastrophic proportion as the Holocaust.
3. Give your class time to read the Worksheets carefully and think deeply about the accompanying questions.



From the 'Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Manipulated photos on photolinen, ready to be sprayed and oil painted. Photo © Donald Woodman.

WORKSHEET 15.1

ACCOUNTABILITY

SOURCE A

Bauman in *Modernity and the Holocaust* presents the following view and argument:

*Evil can do its dirty work, hoping that most people most of the time will refrain from doing rash, reckless things – and resisting evil is rash and reckless. Evil needs neither enthusiastic followers nor an applauding audience – the instinct of self-preservation will do...Some individuals did choose moral duty over the rationality of self-preservation. What this demonstrates is that making a choice matters.*²⁶

SOURCE A QUESTIONS

1. Discuss how much freewill individuals do have. Is this the same in all societies and cultures?
2. Discuss with your class Bauman's proposition that 'making a choice matters'.

²⁶ Bauman, Z. 1989 'Modernity and the Holocaust', Polity Press, Cambridge, pp.206-207

SOURCE B

Hilberg believes that the "...ultimate lesson of the Holocaust is that it bears witness to the **advance of civilisation** ... The machinery of destruction, was structurally no different from organized German society as a whole. The machinery of destruction was the organized community in one of its special roles".²⁷

Inhumanity, such as that exemplified by the Holocaust, cannot be wrought by individual acts of cruelty. For it to be as complete and as all pervasive as it was – in the Holocaust and in other acts of genocide – it needs to be codified and accepted as lawful behaviour by the society within which it occurs. Therefore, society must never be allowed to shirk its responsibility for its evil acts.

*Cruelty is not committed by cruel individuals, but by ordinary men and women trying to acquit themselves well of their ordinary duties – while cruelty correlates but poorly with the personal characteristics of its perpetrators, it correlates very strongly indeed with the relationship of authority and subordination, with our normal, daily encountered structure of power and obedience.*²⁸

SOURCE B QUESTIONS

1. Discuss with your class the extent to which they agree with Milgram and Hilberg that 'organised society' and 'power and obedience' were major contributors to **allowing** the Holocaust to happen.
2. Students should also consider the "miming" factors – other essential contributing factors to allowing the Holocaust to happen.

²⁷ Hilberg, R. 1983 'The Destruction of European Jews', Vol.3, Holmes & Meier, New York, p.994

²⁸ Milgram, S.1974 'Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View', Tavistock, London, p.xi

SOURCE C

Rubenstein unequivocally asserts that the Holocaust is the product of both the society within which it was engendered, and of the societies that did nothing to stop it until it was too late.

*The world of the death camps and the society it engenders reveals the progressively intensifying night side of Judeo-Christian civilisation. Civilisation means slavery, wars exploitation, and death camps. It also means medical hygiene, elevated religious ideas, beautiful art, and exquisite music. It is an error to imagine that civilisation and savage cruelty are antithesis ... In our times the cruelties, like most other aspects of our world, have become far more effectively administered than ever before. They have not and will not cease to exist. Both creation and destruction are inseparable aspects of what we call civilisation.*²⁹

SOURCE C QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Rubenstein's proposition that there is always a 'flipside to the coin' – the 'night side' to religion, culture and science.
2. Discuss with the class the responsibility and the ability that a society has to control this 'night side'.

²⁹ Rubenstein, R. 1978 'The Cunning of History', Harper, New York, pp.91,195



WORKSHEET 15.2

VIGILANCE

SOURCE A

If we accept that man was responsible for the Holocaust, then we have a grave responsibility to try and ensure that it is never again allowed to happen. We must be vigilant and informed members of society. We must never allow governments to be secretive, nor must we ever abrogate our right to control our government's power.

*All those intricate networks of checks and balances, that the civilizing process has erected and which, as we hope and trust would defend us from violence and constrain all over ambitions and unscrupulous powers, have been proven ineffective. Time and time again victims have been fooled by an apparently peaceful and humane, legalistic and orderly society – their security – the most powerful factor of their downfall.*³⁰

A growing number of renowned and respected scholars warn us that we had better not be complacent for the following reasons:

- i. The Holocaust disclosed the fundamental weakness and fragility of man-made institutions, man-made systems and human nature...
- ii. Contrary to widespread opinion, bureaucracy is not a tool that can be used with equal facility at one time for cruel and morally contemptible, and another for deeply humane purposes. Even if it does move in any direction in which it is pushed, bureaucracy is more like a loaded dice. It has logic and a momentum of its own. Given an initial push (being confronted with a purpose), it will like the brooms of the sorcerer's apprentice easily move beyond all thresholds at which many of those who gave it the push would have stopped, were they still in control of the process they triggered. It is programmed to seek the optimal solution in such terms as would not distinguish between one human object and another, or between human and inhuman objects.

- iii. The Holocaust was the outcome ... of quite ordinary and common factors; and that the possibility of such an encounter could be blamed to a very large extent on the emancipation of the political state, with its monopoly of the means of violence and its audacious engineering ambitions, from social control – following the step-by-step dismantling of all non-political power resources and institutions of social self-management.
- iv. Pluralism is the best preventive medicine against morally normal people engaging in morally abnormal actions.

SOURCE A QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the above propositions with the class in light of their study of the Holocaust and their understanding of current world events and government responses to them.

³⁰ Kuper L. 1981 'Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century', Yale University Press, Yale, p.137

SOURCE B

In 1945, as the world was yet to fully recovered from the ghastly truth of the Holocaust, Dwight Macdonald warned, "we must now fear the person who obeys the law more than the one who breaks it".³¹

SOURCE B QUESTIONS

1. Bauman in his statement that "*The voice of individual moral conscience is best heard in the tumult of political and social discord*"³² seems to agree with Macdonald. Discuss these two statements with your class.
2. Discuss with your class the value of 'political and social discord'.

³¹ Bauman, Z. 1989 'Modernity and the Holocaust', Polity Press, Cambridge, p.151

³² Ibid, p.166

SOURCE C

In the study of the Holocaust, the failure of the international community to intervene becomes a glaring condemnation of the whole civilized world. As a global community we have global obligations. One of these obligations is to prevent genocide whenever and wherever possible. The United Nations was specifically established not only to ensure that the world never has another world war but that the horrors of the Holocaust may never be experienced again.

In "Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century", Leo Kuper states that:

*The sovereign territorial state claims, as an integral part of its sovereignty, the right to commit genocide, or engage in genocidal massacres, against people under its rule ... and the UN, for all practical purposes, defends this right.*³³

These words found a most sinister confirmation in the words of the Iraqi ambassador in London. Interviewed on 2 September 1988 about the continued genocide of Iraqi Kurds, the ambassador indignantly replied:

*The Kurds, their well being and their fate were Iraq's internal affairs and that no-one had the right to interfere with the actions undertaken by a sovereign state inside its borders.*³⁴

Genocide? (What else can you call it?)

- i. **Tasmanian Aborigines** – British colonisers 1803-36
no precise figures exist (3,000 to 5,000 estimated deaths)
- ii. **Armenians** – Turks 1915-16
1.5 million estimated deaths
- iii. **Hutu of Burundi** – Tutsi 1972
100,000 to 150,000 estimated deaths
- iv. **Cambodians** – Khmer Rouge
2 million estimated deaths
- v. **East Timor islanders** – Indonesian state 1975
60,000 to 200,000 estimated deaths

Source: Landau, R.S. 1988, 'Studying the Holocaust', Routledge, London, pp.99-117

SOURCE C QUESTIONS

1. Ask the class if they sympathise with the sentiments of the Iraqi ambassador.
2. Discuss with your class the implications of the genocide table above.
3. Discuss a world action plan that could prevent or immediately intervene in a case of genocide. Remember that it is often very difficult to directly intervene in a sovereign states affairs. What can the world do?

³³ Kuper L. 1981 'Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century', Yale University Press, Yale, p137

³⁴ Bauman, Z. 1989 'Modernity and the Holocaust', Polity Press, Cambridge, p.151



WORKSHEET 15.3

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Understanding how the Holocaust was possible is axiomatic to our understanding of our contemporary society and ourselves, and to securing the future.

Consider what solutions students could offer to the following questions:

1. How should society be organised?
2. How can phrases like 'the sanctity of human life' or 'moral duty' become commonly used in bureaucratic offices?
3. What responsibilities do individuals have to each other?
4. How do we safeguard our freedoms?
5. How do we learn to value diversity?
6. How do we fight prejudice and indifference?
7. What are the best constraints against the power of government?
8. How can we ensure that advances in science, technology and industrialisation are moral and fulfil ethical considerations?
9. When to obey and when is it one's moral responsibility to resist social manipulation?
10. How can we fight the monopolisation of media?
11. How to ensure the accountability of the press and public figures?
12. Where does the individual fit into the "power equation"? Can the **individual** make a difference?



UNIT 16: RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

SUBJECT AREAS:

Religious Education

LESSON PLANS:

Profiles – victims, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers (16.1)

Righteous Among the Nations (16.2)

ACTIONS:

After lesson 16.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum (allow time for students to use the library for their research)

STUDENT MATERIALS

Handout 16.1: List of The *Righteous*

OBJECTIVES:

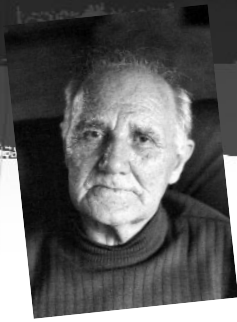
1. To help students develop a commitment to participating in society in a caring and humane manner, as individuals or as members of groups;
2. To help students develop concern for the welfare, rights and dignity of all people.

‘WHOEVER SAVES A SINGLE LIFE IS AS ONE WHO HAS SAVED AN ENTIRE WORLD.’
THE TALMUD

‘IN A PLACE WHERE THERE ARE NO HUMAN BEINGS, BE ONE.’
ANONYMOUS

Today, the currency of game shows is the humiliation of contestants, encouraging the meanest and toughest to win. Gone are the days of valuing mateship and teamwork. Now it’s all about ‘Number One’ – self-promotion and self-advancement – and a genuine lack of caring about ‘the other’.

If these shows reflect and reinforce society’s values then educators have a professional responsibility to counter these disturbing societal trends.



16.1 LESSON PLAN PROFILES – VICTIMS, PERPETRATORS, BYSTANDERS, RESCUERS

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute Handout 16.1 (remind the students that this is not an exhaustive list)

1. Point out to the class that:
 - The penalties for helping Jews were severe – anyone caught hiding and/or aiding Jews risked the death penalty or being sent to a concentration camp.
 - Family members of those helping Jews were also prosecuted under this law.
 - Antisemitism was rife in Europe and rescuers had to contend with the suspicion and malice of their neighbours.
 - Blackmailers, who were abundant in number, were prepared to betray victims to the authorities for money. They were not only the bane of Jews in hiding but also of their rescuers.
2. Discuss with your class whether it is possible to know to which of these four entangled categories they would have belonged. These are the commonly used 'participant' categories of the Holocaust:
 - perpetrators
 - victims
 - bystanders
 - rescuers
3. Ask your students to imagine themselves in each of the four categories:
 - **victims** – scrubbing pavements, labelled, ostracised, humiliated, shivering on the edge of open pits, shot, herded into death vans and death chambers;
 - **perpetrators** – blackmailing, informing, looting, torching, shooting, herding and gassing;
 - **bystanders** – watching, waiting, safe, staying home, not becoming involved when the Nazis expel Jews from next-door apartments, the neighbourhood, the city, the country – Europe;
 - **rescuers** – resisters, compassionate, brave, nerves of steel, Polish, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Hungarian, French, Swiss, Dutch and German, Catholic, Protestant, educated, uneducated, sophisticated and simple – the archetypes of goodness.
4. Ask students to consider the motives of rescuers. Just like perpetrators, rescuers continue to puzzle us! Write class suggestions on the board.
5. Divide your class into small working groups. Ask each group to construct a personality profile of rescuers.
6. Students/groups should use the **Sydney Jewish Museum library** to research one person from Handout 16.1
7. Students should note similarities and differences between their **constructed** profile and the profile of the person selected for their research.



© Gay Block



© Gay Block



© Gay Block



© Gay Block

HANDOUT 16.1 LIST OF THE *RIGHTEOUS*

Belgium

Germaine Belline
Liliane Gaffney
Esta Heiber
Andrée Guelen Herscovici
Marie Taquet

Czechoslovakia

Antonin Kalina

France

Marc Donadille
Emilie Gut
Ermine Orsi
Ivan Beltrami

Germany

Berthold Beitz
Gitta Bauer
Fritz Heine
Gertrud Luckner
Maria Countess von Maltzan

Hungary

Malka Csizmadia
Gustav Mikulai

The Netherlands

Johannes De Vries
Arie Van Mansum
Marion P. Van Binsbergen Pritchard
Bert Bochove
Marguerite Mulder
John Weidner
Louisa Steenstra
Pieter and Joyce Miedema
Semmy Riekerk
Tina Strobos

Poland

Zofia Baniecka
Gertruda Babilinska
Jan Karski

Russia

Amfian Gerasimov

16.2 LESSON PLAN RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS

This is the follow up lesson to the museum visit.

1. Ask each group to share with the rest of the class their profiles.
2. Write on the board any generic traits that become apparent.
3. Discuss possible reasons for the prevalence of women.

UNIT 16: TEACHER'S NOTES

COMPASSION AND ALTRUISM AMONG HOLOCAUST RESCUERS

Nechama Tec, a Professor of Sociology at the University of Connecticut, researched compassion and altruism among Holocaust rescuers. Although she did not find any pattern, she was able to provide a 'set of interdependent characteristics and conditions' the Holocaust rescuers share:

- They don't blend into their communities. This makes them less controlled by their environments and more inclined to act on their own principles.
- They are independent people and they are aware of this. They do what they feel they must do, what is right – and the right thing is to help others.
- They choose to help without rational consideration.
- They have universal perspectives that transcend race and ethnicity. They can respond to the needy and the helpless because they identify with victims of injustice.

Source: Block, G. & Drucker, M. 1992 'Rescuers', Holmes & Meyer, ONew York. p.6



UNIT 17: HOW YOU CAN SECURE THE FUTURE – ACTION PLAN

SUBJECT AREAS:

All Subjects (follow up)

LESSON PLANS:

'The Power of One' (17.1)

Agents of Change (17.2)

ACTIONS:

Before lesson 17.1, class should visit the Sydney Jewish Museum

STUDENT MATERIALS:

Handout 16.1: List of The *Righteous*

OBJECTIVES:

1. To make students realise that they can make a difference to the future if they choose to do so.
2. To encourage students to make connections between the suffering of people in the past and the plight of people they read about, hear about and see in our media today.

Students must not be allowed to feel overwhelmed, powerless and grief-stricken after their confrontation with the Holocaust. It is imperative that by studying the Holocaust and the other associated topics of genocide students are stirred to fight for a more just world.

THE PURPOSE OF HISTORY IS NOT TO DERIDE HUMAN ACTION, NOR TO WEEP OVER IT OR HATE IT BUT TO UNDERSTAND IT – AND THEN TO LEARN FROM IT AS WE CONTEMPLATE OUR FUTURE.

NELSON MANDELA

17.1 LESSON PLAN 'THE POWER OF ONE'

PREPARATION:

Photocopy & distribute handout 16.1

1. Have a class discussion about people who have changed society by their actions:

Some suggestions:

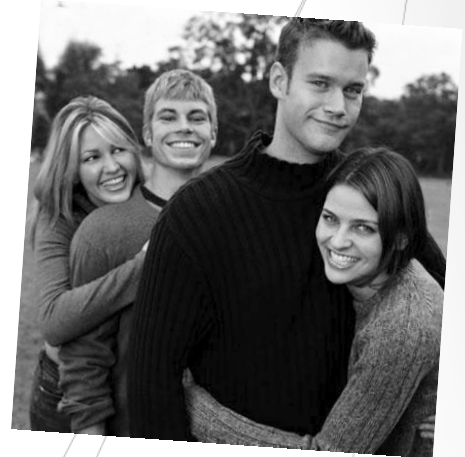
- Mahatma Gandhi
 - Martin Luther King, Jr
 - Jose Xana Gusmao
 - Erin Brokovich
 - Nelson Mandela
 - Steve Biko
 - Hurricane' Rueben Carter – Afro-American, World Light-Weight Champion, who is now the world wide champion of the wrongly convicted
 - the book and the film, 'The Power of One'
 - the film, 'The Insider' – an American testified against the cigarette companies
 - Aung San Suu Kyi – non-violent, pro-democracy fighter for Burma's freedom
 - Margo and Jason Alexander, organic farmers in Melbourne, Victoria. They believe that for the benefit of posterity and the environment new methods of farming must be explored.
2. Ask students to find information on a person who has made a difference to his/her society.
 3. Watch and discuss a video about a person of integrity who had the courage to defy his /her society.



17.2 LESSON PLAN AGENTS OF CHANGE

THE WORLD IS ONE STAGE AND THE ACTIONS
OF ALL INHABITANTS PART OF THE SAME
DRAMA.

NELSON MANDELA



1. Ask students to report on their research.
2. Discuss ways in which each student can make a difference to his/her environment.
3. Students should be asked to formulate their own personal action plans.

Some suggestions:

Construct a set of personal rules to secure the future:

- *love not hate*
- *look beyond stereotypes*
- *become better informed—read newspapers and watch the news regularly*
- *be active—join a pressure group or demonstrate for a cause.*

AND/OR

Construct a table of action, using the following headings:

I shall do the following to help secure the future	I shall begin by the date	My progress
--	---------------------------	-------------

4. Refer to these pledges at a later stage of the year to encourage student commitment to active citizenship and to empower them to act in the face of injustice, intolerance and persecution.
5. Stress the importance of becoming an active and responsible citizen – through the power of one!



GLOSSARY

Aktion attacks aimed at eliminating Jewish communities.

Antisemitism hatred of Jews
The roots of antisemitism lie deep in European culture; it is not an exclusively German phenomenon. Christian Churches well into the twentieth century have been the conduit of much historic anti-semitism. They disseminated the false teaching that Jews had murdered Jesus Christ. In part, this helps to explain why Nazi anti-semitism found so many willing adherents and why so many people in occupied territories collaborated with the Nazis in the persecution, deportation and murder of Jews.

Einsatzgruppen Operational Task Forces
Einsatzgruppen is the name given to the paramilitary, mobile killing units that followed the advancing German army into Poland and the Soviet Union. Renowned for their brutality, they subjugated newly vanquished lands by the removal of all local religious, intellectual and political opposition. Their responsibilities included shooting Jews into open pits or incarcerating them into the ghettos.

Final Solution a euphemism for the Nazis plan to annihilate European Jewry

Holocaust Greek word meaning *sacrifice*, complete destruction of people by fire
The Nazi Holocaust stands for the murder of six million European Jews.

Kapo a concentration camp overseer (male or female) of fellow prisoners
Selected by the Nazis, *Kapos* in many cases brutally abused their authority.

Kristallnacht the Night of Broken Glass
Organised by the Nazis, the night of 9 November 1938 was a pogrom against the Jews of Austria and Germany. More than 7,000 Jewish shops were plundered, leaving streets littered with shards of glass. Over ninety Jews were killed, many terrorised, beaten and incarcerated in concentration camps. Nearly half of the synagogues in Germany were razed or badly damaged.

Muselmann concentration camp slang for prisoners who had lost the will to live
Muselmann very quickly became emaciated and weak and survived only for a short time.

Sonderkommando special work detachments in death camps.

Members of the *Sonderkommando* guided victims to the gas chambers, and were assigned to take the bodies from the gas chambers to the crematoria. After a short period of time, they were also murdered.

SS (*Schutzstaffel*) protection squads

The elite order that implemented the 'Final Solution' and brutally administered the concentration and death camps.



VIDEOS — AN ANNOTATED GUIDE

Au Revoir Les Enfants

This film examines the friendship of two children left in a Catholic orphanage during World War II.

Life is Beautiful

A magical tale about one man's love for his family and the transforming power of his imagination. Begnini's film uses satire to represent as well as artistically transform the events of the Holocaust. It challenges our traditional understanding and response – even in its darkest moments it is filled with rays of hope.

Divided We Fall

A comic-drama about the difficult choices faced by citizens of German-occupied Czechoslovakia during World War II. The film explores the ambiguities of individuals who find themselves, at different times, victims and/or collaborators and/or persecutors and/or rescuers.

Uprising

The most spectacular episode of armed Jewish resistance against the might of German forces during World War II. This semi documentary tells the story of Jewish men and women who dared to defy Nazi tyranny. Their undaunted heroism is the focus of the powerful saga.

Escape From Sobibor

This is the story of the largest prisoner revolt and escape from an extermination camp in Poland during World War II.

Europa Europa

This is drama about the experiences of a German Jewish boy during World War II.

Father

The moving story of an Australian family whose lives are irrevocably changed – shattered – when their elderly father is accused of being a Nazi war criminal.

The Hiding Place

A drama based on the true story of a committed Christian family, the Ten Booms, who provide a hiding place for those people with their names on the Nazi death lists.

The Hill of a Thousand Children

Based on a true incident – a small French village comes to the aid of 5 000 Jewish children during World War II.

Insider

A recent film which recounts the chain of events that pit an ordinary man against the might of the tobacco corporate giants.

Nowhere in Africa

Based on an autobiography, this is an amazing story of a German Jewish lawyer who flees Nazi Germany in 1938. Against his family's wishes he brings them to Africa and in so doing saves their lives. This Oscar winning film is especially poignant as it is told through the eyes of his young daughter Regina.

The Pianist

Based on a memoir of a young Jewish pianist, Wladyslaw Szilman, *The Pianist* is a searing film of one Jew's survival in Warsaw against all odds during the Nazi occupation.

Schindler's List

During World War II a German businessman, Oskar Schindler, sets out to make a profit from the war, but finds himself saving 1,000 Jewish men and women from the Nazi death camps by employing them in his factories.

Rescuers – Stories of Courage

A series of compassionate stories about two remarkable families who risk everything to help Jewish refugees during the Holocaust. Portrays two courageous women who risk their lives to help Jewish refugees during the Holocaust.

Reunion

Returning to Germany as an old man, a Jewish lawyer recalls a schoolboy friendship destroyed by the Nazis' Antisemitism.

Shoah

Claude Lanzman's documentary took ten years to make. This masterpiece contains interviews with victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

The Shop on Main Street

Set during World War II in a small town in East Slovakia, this film tells the story of a man who is persuaded to take over the shop on Main Street belonging to an old Jewish widow. When the Jews are ordered to the concentration camps, he begins a desperate bid to save the woman's life.

Skokie

The American Nazi Party wishes to conduct a march in Chicago. The film shows the different reactions of the Jewish community (could be used to stimulate discussion on anti-Semitism in a contemporary setting).

Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness

A documentary that tells the remarkable story of Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese envoy, who from his consular post in Lithuania, prior to Nazi invasion, granted visas to fleeing Jews, saving them from almost certain death.

Sunshine

Traces the fortunes of a Hungarian family's journey from the beginning of the 20th century through Nazi occupied Hungary to 1950s Hungary.

Triumph of the Spirit

A Jewish boxer is forced by the Nazis to fight for his life in a series of boxing matches at Auschwitz.

The Wave

This is the story of a teacher who tried an 'experiment' in obedience with his class with frightening results.

FICTION AND NON-FICTION – AN ANNOTATED GUIDE TO A CONTEMPORARY SELECTION

Times Arrow
by Martin Amis

Time's Arrow tells the story of a man's life backwards in time. It is concerned with time being "out of joint", doctoring conscience and "the human talent for forgetting". It is an imagined world filled with pathos and cruel humour, but at its core it is what Amis does with Auschwitz that makes his vision profound.

The Fiftieth Gate
by Mark Raphael Baker

In *The Fiftieth Gate* Mark Baker – academic historian and the son of Holocaust survivors – explores the relationship of history and memory. He combines historical research skills with the personal need to discover and narrate his parents' stories, as well as to reconstruct family and cultural history.

The World of My Past
by Abraham H. Biderman

The World of My Past is a compelling personal memoir. Using eloquence, clarity and hope, Biderman takes the reader on a journey through some of the most hideous events in human history.

Hitler's Pope
by John Cornwall

Hitler's Pope is the story of one of the most controversial church leaders in modern times – Eugenio Pacelli – Pius XII. Pontiff from 1939-1958 he failed to speak out against Hitler's persecution of the Jews.

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay
by Michael Chabon

One night in 1939 Josef Kavalier, recently escaped from Prague, appears in the small New York bedroom of his cousin Sam Clay. This marks the beginning of a remarkable friendship and an even more successful partnership. Their comic strip character, a Nazi-busting super-hero – *The Escapist* - fights against world tyranny. *The Escapist* brings them untold fortune, but Joe's obsession becomes his desperate bid to organise the real-life escape of his family from the clutches of Hitler.

Taking Sides
by Ronald Harwood

Taking Sides is a provocative play that explores the collision between art and politics. Can art be above politics? How does an artist respond to a totalitarian society? Harwood's play is set in the American section of occupied Berlin in 1946. The moral debate that lies at the heart of the play centres on Wilhelm Furtwängler. One of the great conductors of the twentieth century, Furtwängler, unlike many of his fellow artists, chose to stay in Germany under the National Socialists. After the war he was accused of having served the Nazis.

Stones from the River
by Ursula Hegi

Stones from the River is set in a small German town of Burgdorf in the years 1914 to 1945. It examines the experiences of Trudi Montag, a dwarf, undesirable and different – the voice of anyone who has ever tried to fit in. Eventually, she learns – from her mother who finds peace in madness, and the Jews who find safety in her cellar – that being different is a secret that all humans share. This is a novel that explores the very nature of humanity and truth.

Maestro
by Peter Goldsworthy

Set against the backdrop of Darwin, a young boy becomes the student of the 'maestro' – a Viennese refugee with a hidden past. Through a series of encounters (piano lessons), Goldsworthy explores the landscape of a European exile and the chasm between talent and genius.

If This Is A Man / The Truce
by Primo Levi

Two books, but they should be read as one. In *If This Is A Man* Levi describes his time in 'hell' and in *The Truce* his journey to liberation. Levi does not flinch from describing that gruesome time, but what emerges is a sense of Man's dignity that ultimately prevailed in the face of cruelty.



The Lunenburg Variation
by Paolo Maurensic

In the garden outside Vienna, the body of an elderly man is found sprawled across a giant chessboard. In this gripping psychological drama Paolo Maurensic deftly binds the reader to horrors committed over 50 years ago.

On Both Sides of the Wall
by Vladka Mead

Vladka Mead or Feigle Peltel-Meidzyrzecki was a young girl of seventeen when the German army entered Warsaw. She became 'Vladka', an underground courier for the Bund, one of the political organisations preparing for armed resistance in the Warsaw ghetto.

Due to her Aryan appearance, her fluent Polish, resourcefulness and youthful optimism she carried out dangerous missions – gathering intelligence, smuggling weapons across the walls to the Jewish Fighting Organisation, find safe houses and rooms for underground meetings and also places of refuge for Jews fleeing the ghetto as well as smuggle women and children out of the ghetto. After the uprising she brought money, news and hope to Jews hiding in bunkers and other hiding places.

Fugitive Pieces
by Anne Michaels

Fugitive Pieces is a work of poetry. The novel explores the interlocking stories of two men from different generations whose lives have been transformed by war.

In the Memory of the Forest
by Charles T. Powers

Set in a small Polish village, *In the Memory of the Forest* follows history's footsteps through a dank forest as one man's search for the truth forces a community to confront its long-suppressed memories of the German occupation.

The Reader
by Bernhard Schlink

The Reader is set in post-war Germany. It recounts a young boy's sexual awakening by an older woman who later vanishes and reappears in a trial for war crimes. Her attitude during the trial is bizarre and suddenly the boy (now a young lawyer) understands that her behaviour conceals a secret buried deeper than her terrible crimes. Through this extraordinary story, Schlink explores modern Germany's complicated relationship with its past.

The Emigrants
by W. G. Sebald

On appearances *The Emigrants* chronicles the lives of four Jewish exiles in the twentieth century. Gradually the four narratives merge into one poignant story of exile and loss.

The Dark Room
by Rachel Seiffert

Rachel Seiffert, a Booker Prize nominee, tells her story through the eyes of three ordinary Germans. The first is a photographer who uses his work to display his sympathies for the Nazi regime. The second is a child who crosses devastated Germany with her young siblings after the Allies catch her Nazi parents. And the third is a teacher haunted by the knowledge that his loving grandfather committed dreadful acts during the war.

Reunion
by Fred Uhlman

Reunion traces the doomed friendship between a German Jewish boy during the 1930s and the son of the aristocratic Hohenfels family in Württemberg. This haunting tale remains with the reader long after its reading.

Night
by Elie Wiesel

Elie Wiesel is an internationally acclaimed writer and Nobel Peace Prize winner. Born in Romania in 1928, he was deported with his family to Auschwitz and from there to Buchenwald while he was still a boy. His parents and younger sister were killed there. In *Night* he recounts his childhood recollections of those inhumane times.

Café Scheherazade
by Arnold Zable

The characters of Arnold Zable's book are Jewish survivors who tell their mesmerising tales of journeys from Kobe to Paris, from Vilna to Melbourne. They stand as testaments to the courage and resilience of refugees everywhere. An exquisitely written set of tales.



RECOMMENDED REFERENCES

GENERAL TEXTS

Bauer, Y. 2001 'Rethinking the Holocaust', Yale University Press, New Haven.

Bauer, Y. 2001 'A History of the Holocaust', Franklin Watts, New York.

Clendinnen, I. 2000 'Reading the Holocaust', Text Publishing, Melbourne.

Dawidowicz, L. 1987 'The War Against the Jews', Penguin, New York.

Hilberg, R. 1993 'Perpetrators, Victims and Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933-1945', Harpers Collins, London.

Kwiet, K. 2001 "*Perpetrators and the Final Solution*" in St. McMahon-Kaye (ed) 'The Memory of the Holocaust in the 21st Century: The Challenge for Education', Yad Vashem, Jerusalem.

Wistrich, R. S. 2001 'Hitler and the Holocaust', Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London.

Browning, C. 1992 'Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution', Harper Perennial, New York.

Klee, E., Dressen, W. & Riess, V. (eds.) 1991 'The Good Old Days', Konecky & Konecky, New York.

ADVANCED ENGLISH

Lang, B. (ed) 1988 'Writing and the Holocaust', Holmes & Meyer, New York.

Schwarz, D. R. 2000 'Imagining the Holocaust', Palgrave, Hampshire.

Spiegelman, A. 1986 'Maus – A Survivor's Tale' (Part 1 My Father Bleeds History; Part 2 From Mauschwitz to the Catskills), Penguin, London.

Wajnryb, R. 2001 'The Silence – How Tragedy Shapes Talk', Allen & Unwin, Australia.

Young, J. E. 1988 'Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust – Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation'" Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to thank Konrad Kwiet, Adjunct Professor of Jewish Studies and Roth Lecturer of Holocaust Studies at the University of Sydney, for his time, encouragement, professional advice and critique of this education pack. Special thanks are due to Dr Suzanne Rutland, Department of Hebrew, Biblical and Jewish Studies at the University of Sydney, for being generous with her time and knowledge of Australia's response to the plight of European Jewry during the 1930s to 1950s. I would also like to thank Rabbi Apple from the Great Synagogue, Sydney, for providing material for the lesson 'Where Was God During the Holocaust' and 'Where Was Man?'.

I am also indebted to Marti Marosszeky, for her meticulous editing, advice and support throughout this project; to Lea-Ellen Schneller, for her help with formatting; and to Avril Alba, Education Manager at the Sydney Jewish Museum, for her administrative and emotional support.

I am particularly grateful to the team of educators who compiled *Reflections—Imperial War Museum Holocaust Exhibition Teachers' Guide*. I have incorporated some of their ideas and models into the lesson plans contained within this Education Resource Pack produced for the Sydney Jewish Museum.

Sophie K Gelski

Sophie Gelski
2003

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sophie Gelski (BA (Hons), Dip Ed. M Ed. is an educator with 25 years experience in teaching English and History. Her Honours thesis focused on the lives of the female couriers of the Warsaw and Bialystock Fighting Underground Organisations.

From 1995-2000 she was the Gifted and Talented Programs co-ordinator at Moriah College, a Jewish Modern Day school in Sydney, NSW.

In 1986 she completed the Yad Vashem Certificate Course on the Holocaust and Anti-Semitism. From 1988 to 1991 she was an interviewer for the Sydney Twelfth Hour Holocaust Oral History Project.

Currently an educational consultant, she is also working on her PHD at Sydney University. Her doctoral thesis will explore how the personal history of English and History teachers' shape their teaching and representation of the Holocaust.

PHOTOGRAPHIC ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Every effort has been made to contact or trace all copyright holders. The publishers will be grateful to be notified of any additions, errors or omissions that should be incorporated in the next edition.

page 03: Double Jeopardy from the 'Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1990. Sprayed acrylic, oil and photography on photolinen, silk screen and embroidery on linen, 43 " x 22 1/5 ". Collection of the artists and Through The Flower Corporation. Photo © Donald Woodman.

pages 31, 32, 34 & 66: Images from "Lodz Ghetto Inside a Community Under Siege" compiled and edited by Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides (Penguin Books, 1991) Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc., 1989

page 32: Image of Chaim Rumkowski from "Lodz Ghetto Inside a Community Under Siege" compiled and edited by Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides (Penguin Books, 1991) Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc., 1989

page 45: Study for Transports from the 'Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Photo © Donald Woodman.

page 57: Banality of Evil / Struthof from the 'Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Sprayed acrylic, oil, and photography on photolinen, 30 " x 43 ". Collection of the artists and Through The Flower Corporation. Photo © Donald Woodman.

page 63: Cornwell, J. 'Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII', Penguin Group, USA

page 63: Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

page 67: From the 'Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Manipulated photos on photolinen, ready to be sprayed and oil painted. Photo © Donald Woodman.

pages 72-74: © Gay Block. From 'Rescuers: Portraits of Moral Courage in the Holocaust', Gay Block and Malka Drucker, Holmes & Meier, Nwe York, 1992.

FEEDBACK

I am most interested to obtain your feedback and personal comments regarding the quality of the lesson plans and resources, as well as any suggestions for further improvements. I ask that you please take a few minutes to complete the questions below.

Thank you for your time

Sophie Gelski

1. Which lesson(s) worked best for you and why?

2. Did you find the Worksheets and handouts easy to use, or would you have preferred these to be provided separately on loose sheets of paper, ready to photocopy?

3. Did you find the layout user friendly?

4. What content areas and/or skills would you like to see included in a future edition of this education pack?

5. Did you find the annotated video and fiction sections useful?

6. What changes would you recommend for a future edition of this education pack?

7. Did the pack enhance your visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum? If so, how?

8. Any other comments?

Please return your feedback to the Sydney Jewish Museum:

mail to:
148 Darlinghurst Road
Darlinghurst NSW 2010

fax to:
02 9331 4245

e-mail to:
education@sjm.com.au

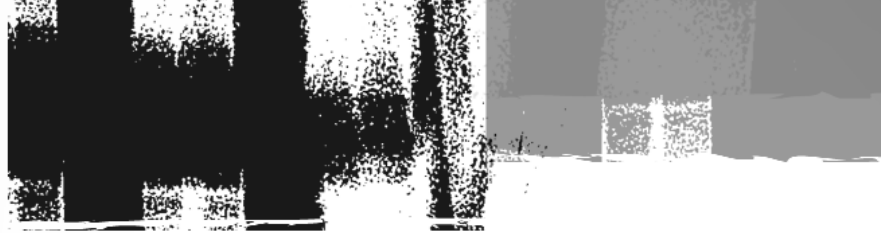


TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST

YEARS 9-12

STUDENT

WORKSHEETS & HANDOUTS



HANDOUT 3.1

TIMELINE: RACISM IN ACTION – NAZI ASSAULT ON THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF GERMAN JEWS 1933–1943

YOU CANNOT LIVE AMONGST US AS JEWS – *CONVERSION*

YOU CANNOT LIVE AMONGST US – *EXPULSION*

YOU CANNOT LIVE – *ANNIHILATION*

R HILBERG

1933

- Jews were forced out of jobs in the civil service, teaching, law and journalism.
- April boycott – Germans told to boycott Jewish shops, goods, doctors and lawyers. SA and SS guarded doors of Jewish shops to deter entry by other Germans.

1935

- Marriage and sexual relations between Jews and ‘Aryans’ (pure-blooded Germans) were made illegal. Punishment for contravening this law was imprisonment or the death penalty.
- Jews were virtually excluded from parks, restaurants and swimming pools.

1936

- Jews were prohibited from owning bicycles, typewriters or other electrical equipment.

1938

- Jews had to have their passports stamped with a “J”
- On 9 November, the Nazis in Germany unleashed a pogrom in which Jews were murdered, synagogues were burned, sacred objects were desecrated, Jewish shop windows were smashed and thousands of German Jewish men between the ages of 16 and 60 were arrested and transported to concentration camps.
- Jewish children were banned from attending school.
- Jews were excluded from cinemas, theatres, concerts, beaches and holiday resorts.
- Jewish publishing houses and bookshops were closed down.

1940

- Jews were allowed to buy groceries only between 4 pm and 5 pm.
- Jews’ telephones were disconnected.



1941

- Jews were only permitted to use public transport.
- All Jews over the age of six had to wear a yellow star with 'Jew' written on it.
- Mass deportations of German Jews to ghettos located in Nazi-occupied Poland commenced.

1942

- All Jewish homes were marked with a yellow star.
- Jews were prohibited from using public transport.
- Jews were not permitted to have pets.
- Jews were not to receive eggs or fresh milk.
- Jews were not allowed to buy newspapers, magazines or books.

1943

- May – Berlin was declared *Judenfrei* (free of Jews).

Source: This timeline is based on one published in 'Reflections – Imperial War Museum Holocaust Exhibition Teachers' Guide', pp.56-60





HANDOUT 3.2

THE NUREMBERG LAWS 15 SEPTEMBER 1935 (1): LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND GERMAN HONOUR

15 SEPTEMBER 1935

Entirely convinced that the purity of German blood is essential to the further existence of the German people, and inspired by the uncompromising determination to safeguard the future of the German nation, the Reichstag has unanimously resolved upon the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

Section 1

1. Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they were concluded abroad.
2. Only the Public Prosecutor may initiate proceedings for annulment.

Section 2

Sexual relations outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden.

Section 3

Jews will not be permitted to employ female citizens of German or kindred blood as domestic servants.

Section 4

Jews are forbidden to display the Reich and national flag or the national colours.

On the other hand they are permitted to display the Jewish colours. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.

Section 5

A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 1 will be punished with hard labour.

A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of Section 2 will be punished with imprisonment or with hard labour.

A person who acts contrary to the provisions of Section 3 will be punished with imprisonment up to a year and with a fine, or with one of these penalties.

Reichsgesetzblatt 1, 1935, pp. 1146-1147

Source: Arad, Gutman, Margaliot, (eds) 1981 'Documents of the Holocaust', Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, p.80

QUESTIONS:

1. What acts have been declared illegal by the Nazis?
2. Why do you think the Nazis introduced this law?
3. How do you think German citizens reacted to this law?
4. Why? Before answering this question refer to German 'race crimes' in the exhibition at the Sydney Jewish Museum.
5. How do you think German Jews reacted to this law? Why?
6. Why do you think the majority of German citizens remained silent and/or indifferent to such examples of persecution?
(Hint: You need to consider Nazi domestic and foreign policy as well as look carefully at Section 5 of the Nuremberg Laws.)





HANDOUT 3.3

THE NUREMBERG LAWS 15 SEPTEMBER 1935 (2): THE REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW

15 SEPTEMBER 1935

Article 2

1. A citizen of the Reich is that subject only who is of German or kindred blood and who, through his conduct, shows that he is both desirous and fit to serve the German people and Reich faithfully.

The right to citizenship is acquired by the granting of Reich citizenship papers.

Only the citizen of the Reich enjoys full political rights in accordance with the provisions of the laws.

Reichsgesetzblatt I, 1935, p. 1333

Source: Arad, Gutman, Margalio, (editors) 1981 'Documents of the Holocaust', Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, p.80

QUESTIONS:

1. What were the essential requirements of a citizen of the Reich?
2. Under this Law, what groups of people would be disqualified from German citizenship? (Hint: look very carefully at the wording of point 1, in particular the word 'fit').
3. Is the definition of citizenship provided in Article 2 similar to the one you have formulated in class discussion?
4. If not, how does it differ?
5. Which one do you think is a more accurate definition? Why?



WORKSHEET 4.1

POETRY (HUMAN RIGHTS & FREEDOMS)



THE WORLD IS TOO DANGEROUS TO LIVE IN—NOT BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE WHO DO EVIL, BUT BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE WHO SIT AND LET IT HAPPEN.

ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE ROAD TO AUSCHWITZ WAS BUILT BY HATE BUT PAVED WITH INDIFFERENCE.

IAN KERSHAW

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

—Robert Frost



Source: “*The Road Not Taken*” from “*The Poetry of Robert Frost*”, edited by Edward Connery Lathem and published by Jonathon Cape. Used by permission of the Estate of Robert Frost and The Random House Group Limited.



AND A GOOD FRIDAY WAS HAD BY ALL

You men there keep those women back
and God Almighty he laid down
on the crossed timber and old Silenus
my offsider looked at me as if to say
nice work for soldiers, your mind's not your own
once you sign that dotted line Ave Caesar
and all that malarkey Imperator Rex

well this Nazarene
didn't make it any easier
really—not like ones
who kick up a fuss so you can
do your block and take it out on them
Silenus
held the spikes steady and I let fly
with the sledge-hammer, not looking
on the downswing trying hard not to hear
over the women's wailing the bones give way
the iron shocking the dumb wood.

Orders is orders, I said after it was over
Nothing personal you understand—we had a
drill-sergeant once thought he was God but he wasn't
a patch on you

then we hauled on the ropes and he rose in the hot air
like a diver just leaving the springboard, arms spread
so it seemed
over the whole damned creation
over the big men who must have had it in for him
and the curious ones who'll watch anything if it's free
with only the usual women caring anywhere
and a blind man in tears.

—Bruce Dawe

Source: Dawe, B. 1993 'Sometimes Gladness - Collected Poems 1954 to 1992', Pearson Education Australia (Longman),
5th edition, p.35. Used by permission of Bruce Dawe, 2003.

THE HANGMAN

1.

Into our town the Hangman came,
Smelling of gold and blood and flame—
And he paced our bricks with a diffident air
And built his frame on the courthouse square.

The scaffold stood by the courthouse side,
Only as wide as the door was wide;
A frame as tall or little more
Than the capping sill of the courthouse door.

And we wondered, whenever we had the time,
Who the criminal, what the crime,
That Hangman judged with the yellow twist
Of knotted hemp in his busy fist.

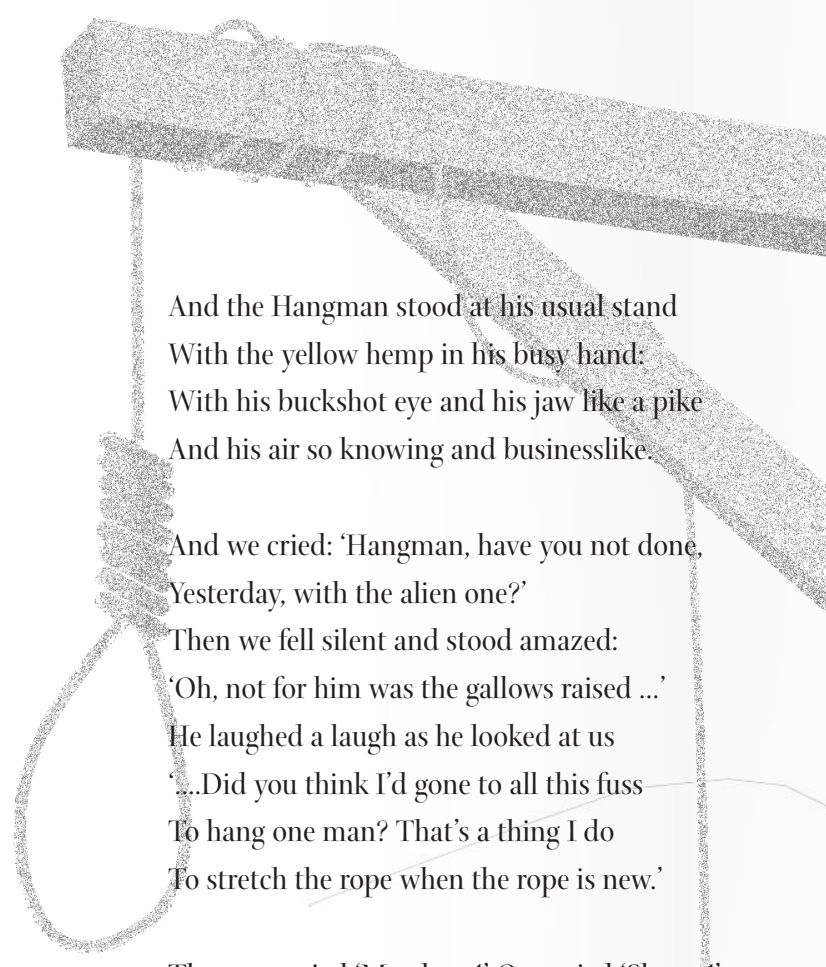
And innocent though we were, with dread
We passed those eyes of buckshot lead,
Till one cried: 'Hangman, who is he
For whom you raise the gallows-tree?'

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye,
And he gave us a riddle instead of reply:
'He who serves me best,' said he,
'Shall earn the rope on the gallows-tree.'

And he stepped down, and laid his hand
On a man who came from another land,
And we gave him away, and no one spoke,
Out of respect for his hangman's cloak.

2.

The next day's sun looked mildly down
On roof and street in our quiet town
And, stark and black in the morning air,
The gallows-tree on the courthouse square.



And the Hangman stood at his usual stand
With the yellow hemp in his busy hand:
With his buckshot eye and his jaw like a pike
And his air so knowing and businesslike.

And we cried: 'Hangman, have you not done,
Yesterday, with the alien one?'
Then we fell silent and stood amazed:
'Oh, not for him was the gallows raised ...'
He laughed a laugh as he looked at us
'...Did you think I'd gone to all this fuss
To hang one man? That's a thing I do
To stretch the rope when the rope is new.'

Then one cried 'Murderer!' One cried 'Shame!'
And into our midst the Hangman came
To that man's place. 'Do you hold,' said he,
'With him that's meant for the gallows-tree?'

And he laid his hand on that one's arm,
And we shrank back in quick alarm,
And we gave him way, and no-one spoke
Out of fear of his hangman's cloak.

That night we saw with dread surprise
The Hangman's scaffold had grown in size.
Fed by the blood beneath the chute
The gallows-tree had taken root;

Now as wide, or a little more,
Than the steps that led to the courtyard door,
As tall as the writing, or nearly as tall,
Halfway up on the courthouse wall.

3.

The third he took—and we all heard tell—
Was a usurer and an infidel. And:
‘What,’ said the Hangman, ‘have you to do
With the gallows-bound, and he a Jew?’

And we cried out: ‘Is this one he
Who has served you well and faithfully?’
The Hangman smiled; ‘It’s a clever scheme
To try the strength of the gallows-beam.’

The fourth man’s dark, accusing song
Had scratched out comfort hard and long:
And ‘What concern’, He gave us back,
‘Have you for the doomed—the doomed and
black?’

The fifth and sixth we cried again:
‘Hangman, Hangman, is this the man?’
‘It’s a trick,’ he said, ‘that we hangmen know
For easing the trap when the trap springs slow.’
And so we ceased to ask no more,
As the Hangman tallied his bloody score;
And sun by sun, and night by night,
The gallows grew to monstrous height.

The wings of the scaffold opened wide
Till they covered the square from side to side;
And the monster cross-beam, looking down,
Cast its shadow across the town.

4.

Then through the town the Hangman came
And called in the empty streets my name.
And I looked at the gallows soaring tall
And thought ‘There is no-one left at all
For hanging, and so he calls to me
To help him pull down the gallows-tree.’
And I went out with right good hope
To the Hangman’s tree and the Hangman’s rope.

He smiled at me as I came down
To the courthouse square through the silent town,
And supple and stretched in his busy hand
Was the yellow twist of the hempen strand.

And he whistled his tune as he tried the trap
And it sprang down with a ready snap—
And then with a smile of awful command
He laid his hand upon my hand.

‘You tricked me, Hangman!’ I shouted then,
‘That your scaffold was built for other men
And I no henchmen of yours,’ I cried.
‘You lied to me hangman, foully lied!’

Then a twinkle grew in the buckshot eye:
‘Lied to you? Tricked you?’ He said, ‘Not I
For I answered you straight and I told you true:
The scaffold was raised for none but you.’

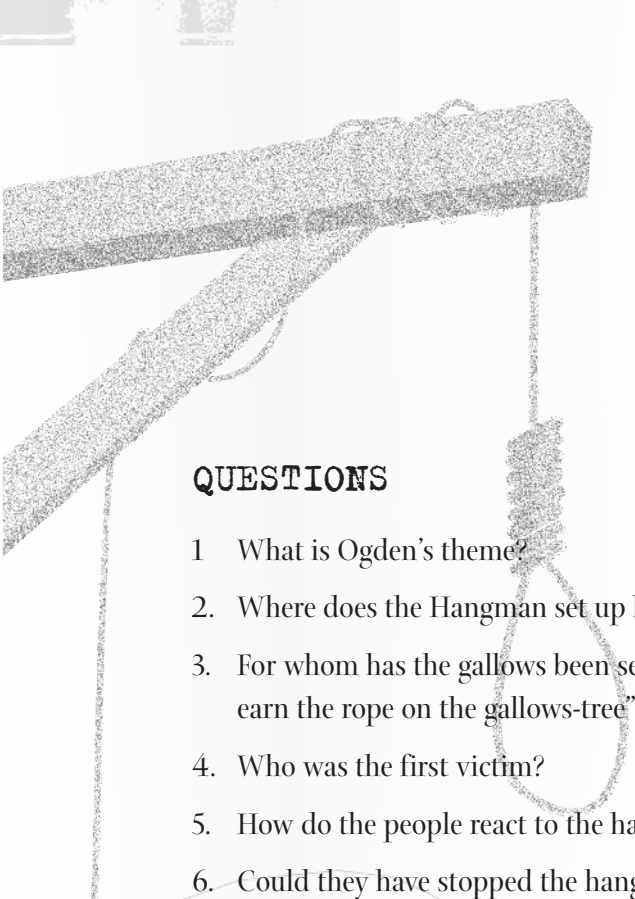
‘For who has served me more faithfully
Than you with your coward’s hope?’ said he,
‘And where are the others that might have stood
Side by your side in the common good?’

‘Dead,’ I whispered: and amiably,
‘Murdered,’ the Hangman corrected me;
‘First the alien, then the Jew...
I did no more than you let me do.’

Beneath the beam that blocked the sky,
None had stood so alone as I—
And the Hangman strapped me, and no voice there
Cried ‘Stay’ for me in the empty square.

—Maurice Ogden

Source: Landau, R. 1998 ‘Studying the Holocaust: Issues,
Readings and Documents’, Routledge, London,
pp.44-47



QUESTIONS

1. What is Ogden's theme?
2. Where does the Hangman set up his gallows and how tall is it at first?
3. For whom has the gallows been set up? (According to the Hangman, "He who serves me best....shall earn the rope on the gallows-tree")
4. Who was the first victim?
5. How do the people react to the hanging? Why?
6. Could they have stopped the hangman at this point? If so, how?
7. Why is the second man hanged?
8. How do the people of the town react this time?
9. What happens to the gallows as more people become its victim? Why?
10. Who are the third and fourth victims?
11. What do all victims at this stage have in common?
12. Who is the last victim? Why does the hangman say that the gallows was built for "none but you"?
13. Explain the difference between the last victim's view of the people who had been hanged and that of the Hangman's? ("Dead, I whispered...."Murdered" the Hangman corrected me.")
14. Explain what the Hangman means when he speaks of the people standing 'side by your side in the common good'.
15. Explain the meaning of the line: 'I did no more than you let me do.'
16. What is the relevance of this poem to the issue of citizenship (civil decency)?
17. How can this poem be related to the events in Nazi Germany in the period 1933-43?
18. Has this poem any relevance for today? If it has, in what way?





WORKSHEET 5.1

GROUP 1:

THE EVIAN CONFERENCE - EVIAN, FRANCE JULY 1938

(3-4 STUDENTS)

Group 1 should spend a portion of their museum visit in the Sydney Jewish Museum library.

GROUP 1 QUESTIONS

1. What events prompted the USA to convene a conference?
2. Did a genuine refugee 'problem' exist? If so, what was it and what was its extent?
3. Whose idea was it to convene this conference?
4. Which nations were to be represented?
5. How many nations were represented?
6. Was Australia one of these? If so, who was the Minister of the Interior?
7. What was Australia's policy and position on refugees?
8. Find the quote used by the Australian Minister for the Interior to justify Australia's response to this crisis.
9. What did the conference achieve?
10. What were the consequences of the 'solution' that was reached by the nations at the Evian Conference?



WORKSHEET 5.2

GROUP 2: INDIVIDUALS AND/OR GROUPS WHO ARE TARGETS OF PERSECUTION

(6-8 STUDENTS)

GROUP 2 QUESTIONS

1. List reasons why individuals and/or groups would decide to leave their home country.
2. Explore the political, social and economic situation in some or all of the following areas:
 - Afghanistan
 - Bosnia
 - Burma
 - Burundi
 - East Timor
 - Iraq
 - Rwanda
 - Vietnam
3. Consider ways that people from these countries could organise their passage or means of departure (both legally and illegally). You will need to take into account the obstacles as well as the risks (bureaucratic, personal, financial, etc).





WORKSHEET 5.3

GROUP 3: AUSTRALIA'S IMMIGRATION RECORD AND REFUGEES: 1930 TO 1950

(3-4 STUDENTS)

If available, watch the documentary/TV movie *The Dunera Boys*

GROUP 3 QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. Who were Australia's Prime Ministers during these years? Which political party or parties did they represent?
2. Find out why the Labour party has been traditionally hostile to immigration.
3. Why do you think the Returned Servicemen's League (RSL) was particularly hostile to Jews or 'Europe's rejects'?
4. Who were the Ministers for the Interior during this period?
5. What was Australia's policy on immigration during these years? Did it remain constant or did it change over time? If it did change, who was responsible and why?
6. To which group/s of people did the term 'enemy alien' refer?
7. What power did the Commonwealth Government assume with the introduction of the National Security Act of 1939? List the various categories of 'internees'.
8. How did Australians treat immigrants in the late 1940s and 1950s – were they welcomed and well integrated? How can you account for their treatment?
9. Find out what happened to the 2,500 refugees who arrived on the *Dunera* (refer to the documentary *The Dunera Boys*).
10. Research life and conditions in migrant camps in Australia at this time in such places as Tatura and Hay.



Note: If any student is particularly interested in the treatment of refugees during this period, recommended reading is Garry Disher's *Pencil Man*.



WORKSHEET 5.4

GROUP 4: AUSTRALIA'S CURRENT IMMIGRATION RECORD AND THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

(6-8 STUDENTS)

Collect Handout 3.1 (Timeline) 'Racism in Action – Nazi Assault on the Rights and Freedoms of German Jews 1933-1943'

GROUP 4 QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

1. What is our present government's policy regarding refugees?
2. How does the current Minister of Immigration justify the government's position?
3. Is it in keeping with or distinct from the international community's position?
4. How is the Australian position being viewed overseas?
5. Critically examine current events or news reports that highlight this issue.
6. Explore your fellow citizens' reactions to and their personal views on the refugee problem (ask your friends, fellow students, teachers, parents, neighbours). Tabulate your findings to show the reactions and views that are presently prevalent in our communities.
7. Draw up two columns: one headed **Fortress Australia**, the other **Refugees Welcome**. Consider the types of organisations, individuals and groups, which would be found under each of these banners.
8. Evaluate Australia's human rights record in respect to the treatment of refugees.





WORKSHEET 5.5

GROUP 5:

DILEMMAS FACING GERMAN JEWS IN THE 1930S – OR ANY OTHER MIGRANT GROUP

(4 STUDENTS)

Collect Handout 3.1 (Timeline) 'Racism in Action – Nazi Assault on the Rights and Freedoms of German Jews 1933-1943'.

GROUP 5 QUESTIONS & ACTIVITIES

Students need to consider the political, social, economic as well as personal factors inhibiting departure.

1 Draw up two columns: Reasons for Staying and Reasons for Going.

Some suggestions:

- *Jews had lived in Germany for many generations.*
- *Many German Jews were highly acculturated and felt more German than Jewish.*
- *Many German Jews had fought for Germany in World War One.*
- *Migrating meant leaving significant sections of family behind.*
- *Migration meant a drastic change in social and economic status with potential unemployment, homelessness and feelings of alienation.*
- *Migration often required learning a new language, adopting new customs and finding new bearings.*
- *Migration meant a fresh start and that required energy and tenacity.*
- *Persecution of Jews was increasing: rights and freedoms were being eroded (consult the handout on 'Racism in Action').*
- *A sponsor as well as a country of refuge had to be found.*
- *Migrants needed considerable personal wealth to facilitate their relocation.*
- *Migration promised freedom from persecution and vilification.*
- *Wishful thinking: things will 'blow over' and the present excesses are only temporary.*

2. Sort the above suggestions into the appropriate columns.

3. Add your own thoughts and findings to the columns.



Note: An outstanding film that explores the complexities and consequences of choosing to leave Germany during the 1930s is *Nowhere in Africa*

HANDOUT 6.1

ANTISEMITISM, PREJUDICE AND STEREOTYPING

SOURCE 1:

THE NAZI RACE, 1929

“The Nordic (Aryan) race is tall, long-legged, slimmale height of above 1.74m. The race is narrow-faced with a narrow forehead, a narrow high-built nose and a lower jaw and prominent chin, the skin is rosy, bright and the blood shines through ...the hair is smooth straight or wavy—possibly curly in childhood. The colour is blonde.”

Source: Lacey, G. & Shepherd, K. 2001 'Germany 1918-1945', John Murray Publishers, London, p.103

SOURCE 2:

THE NAZI WEEKLY “RACIAL RESEARCH”

“We demand of a member of this noble race that he marry only a blue-eyed, oval-faced, red-cheeked and thin-nosed blonde woman. We demand that the blue-eyed Aryan hero marry an Aryan girl who like himself is of pure and unblemished past.”

Source: Ibid.

**SOURCE 3:
NORDIC (ARYAN) STEREOTYPE**



Source 3A: The Aryan “ideal”

Source: Ibid. From the Robert Hunt Library.



Source 3B: The German Labour Front

Source: Anderson, L. & Buckingham, P. 1999 'Germany Culture and Change in the 20th Century', Longman, New Zealand, p.24. From Ullstein Bilderdienst.

SOURCE 4:
GERMAN CHILDREN SALUTE HITLER



Source: Anderson, L. & Buckingham, P. 1999 'Germany Culture and Change in the 20th Century', Longman, New Zealand, p.22. From Bundesarchiv.

SOURCE 5:
NAZI RACE SCIENCE



Source 5A: A page in a Nazi's children's book.

'Trust No Fox and No Jew' compares an Aryan man "who can fight and work" with a Jew "the greatest scoundrel in the whole world".

Source: Anderson, L. & Buckingham, P. 1999 'Germany Culture and Change in the 20th Century', Longman, New Zealand, p.33



Source 5B: Poster for the film 'The Eternal Jew'

Source: Lacey, G. & Shepherd, K. 2001 'Germany 1918-1945', John Murray Publishers, London, p.112. AKG photograph.

SOURCE 6:
THE JUDENSTERN (JEWISH STAR)



Source: Gutman, I. (ed) 1990, 'Encyclopedia of the Holocaust', Vol I, Macmillan, New York, p. 79.

WORKSHEET 7.1

ADAM CZERNIAKOW

On 21 September 1939, on orders issued by Reinhard Heydrich, *Judenräte* (Jewish Councils) were established in all ghettos of central and western occupied Poland. The *Judenräte* were fully responsible for the implementation of German policy regarding the Jews. In this way, the Jewish communities had forced upon them a body whose function was to receive and carry out Nazi orders.

The Jewish Councils were initially responsible for drafting people for forced labour; taking a census of the Jewish population; paying fines or ransoms; and confiscating valuables owned by the Jews. The Jews believed that by complying with Nazi demands they would convince them that their communities were vital to the German economy. In this way they hoped to gain time and ward off collective punishment. They even hoped to persuade the Nazis to reconsider their policy in view of the benefit they would derive from the Jews as a reservoir of manpower the Germans sorely needed.

In 1942 the situation changed dramatically. Nazi policy now stipulated the mass deportation of Jews from the ghettos. Ghetto inhabitants were lured into a false sense of hope – resettlement in the east. The Nazis assured the Jews that they were being sent to work camps and that families would stay together. Starving Jews were enticed by promises of extra rations of bread and jam if they volunteered for ‘resettlement’.

In time, when it became clear that the Nazis were using ‘resettlement’ as a euphemism for death, the leaders of the Jewish Councils were forced to make agonising choices. Should they comply, obey the Nazis and deport thousands upon thousands of men, women and children in the hope that those who remained would be allowed to survive – or should they refuse to co-operate and warn the ghetto population of Nazi duplicity? Should they encourage the ghetto population to resist – a decision that, in all likelihood, would mean death for them all?

In July 1942, Adam Czerniakow, the head of the Warsaw Ghetto’s Jewish Council, was ordered to compile deportation lists. Each list was to comprise 6,000 people. This was to continue until the ghetto had been completely ‘resettled’. If he refused, the Nazis threatened to send Czerniakow and his family on the first transport and appoint a new Jewish leader in his place.



QUESTIONS

1. Identify the choices Czerniakow had.
2. What do you think he should have done?
3. During your trip to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find out what decision he actually made or what action he actually took?
4. Do you think his choice was courageous, moral, reprehensible, cowardly or noble? Explain why?

WORKSHEET 7.2

CHAIM RUMKOWSKI

When the Germans occupied Lodz, on 8 September 1939, they appointed a Jewish Council, which in Lodz they called *Ältestenrat* ('Council of Elders'). Rumkowski was appointed Elder of the Jews. The German authorities gave Rumkowski wide powers in all areas related to the day-to-day life of the imprisoned population: the establishment of factories, food distribution and appointments to available positions.

Rumkowski displayed great zeal and organisational ability in running the factories and the internal life of the ghetto. He fully exploited his wide reaching discretionary powers and ruled in a domineering, self-promoting manner, however well after all the other ghettos had been eradicated, the Jews who remained in the Lodz ghetto continued to labour in workshops in the belief that their work would save them.

At the end of 1941, the German authorities ordered Rumkowski to organise part deportation of the ghetto – ostensibly for resettlement in the east. Again in early 1942, he and his staff were given the task of deciding who would be included in another massive deportation. In late 1944, when the Soviet army was advancing, the Germans once again ordered Rumkowski to organise a deportation on the pretext that the factories in the ghetto were to be transferred to Germany.

In the hope that liberation was at hand, the ghetto inhabitants resisted the deportation orders and refused to turn up to the required locations. Rumkowski, at an assembly called by the German ghetto administration, appealed to the ghetto population to obey the orders.

QUESTIONS

1. What choices were available to Rumkowski?
2. How do you think he responded to these Nazi decrees? Why?
3. Rumkowski is regarded as a highly controversial figure. Find the basis for the disparate range of opinions.
4. One of the foremost Holocaust historians, Professor Yehuda Bauer, once said that if it were up to him to judge Rumkowski, he would 'put a medal around his neck and then hang him'. Explain Bauer's judgement?
5. Do you agree or disagree with him? Why?
6. Is it fair to judge people with the benefit of hindsight?
7. During your visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find out the fate that befell Rumkowski.

Source: Bauer, Y. 1985 'Lectures on the Holocaust and Antisemitism', Yad Vshem, Jerusalem



Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc. 1989





WORKSHEET 7.3

JANUSZ KORCZAK

Physician, writer and educator, Janusz Korczak devoted his life to children. His first books *'Children of the Streets'* and *'Child of the Salon'* were published at the turn of the twentieth century. He recognised that children had emotional needs and throughout his life, he urged that they be respected.

Before the war he worked in a children's hospital, took groups of children to summer camps, established a newspaper for children, and was appointed as director of a newly built Jewish orphanage in Warsaw.

The Nazis forced Korczak to move his orphanage into the Warsaw Ghetto. Although by this time he was an elderly man, he worked tirelessly to preserve and protect his charges from the horrors of ghetto life. Based upon his unique educational philosophy, he established an internal court of honour that had jurisdiction over both children and teachers. Even in the ghetto the children were encouraged to be fair and responsible citizens and to take part in cultural activities. He struggled to ensure that life for the children continued as usual. He provided food and clothing for them and tried to maintain order and cleanliness.

In July 1942 the resettlement of the Warsaw Ghetto began – it took three months to complete. It involved sudden waves of SS and police round-ups. Korczak's Polish friends warned him that it would be only a matter of time before his name, those of his staff and the children would appear on deportation lists. They offered him asylum on the Polish side but to accept would have meant abandoning the children.

QUESTIONS

1. What dilemma did Janusz Korczak face?
2. What decision do you think he made?
3. Look for Janusz Korczak in the Sydney Jewish Museum exhibition to find the choice he actually did make.
4. What was the fate of Korczak and his 200 children?



WORKSHEET 7.4

MORDECHAI ANIELEWIEZ



Before the war Mordechai Anielewicz was an organiser and leader of one of Warsaw's main Zionist youth movements – *HaShamer Hatzair*. After the German occupation of Poland he encouraged fellow members to resume the movement's educational and political activities.

By 1940 Anielewicz had become an underground activist. He set up youth groups in the ghetto and organised their activities. He helped publish an underground newspaper and arranged educational meetings and seminars. He successfully smuggled himself in and out of the ghetto in order to maintain links with his movement's chapters in the provincial ghettos.

In 1941, following the German invasion of the Soviet Union and after reports began to filter through of the mass murder of Jews in the east, Anielewicz began to create a self-defence organisation in the ghetto. It was, however, only in 1942 after mass deportations, with only 60,000 of Warsaw's 350,000 Jews left in the ghetto that Anielewicz embarked upon a determined course to build a serious Jewish fighting organisation.

In April 1943 the final deportation of Warsaw Jews was launched. By this time the majority of the ghetto inhabitants, numbed by starvation, disease and fear of further German reprisals, were completely demoralised and the membership of the Jewish Fighting Organisation was seriously depleted by deportations. Anielewicz was faced with grave dilemmas: Report for deportation in the hope that being young and strong he might be spared, or find a hiding place in the ghetto till the Germans leave and perhaps once again smuggle himself to the Polish side or offer armed resistance.

QUESTIONS

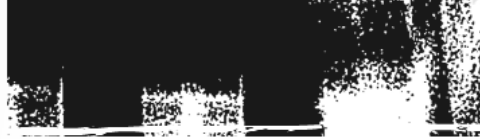
1. Consider the choices Anielewicz faced.
2. Discuss the possible consequences of each option.
3. Which choice do you think he should have made?
4. What were some of the main obstacles to resistance?

During your visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find answers to the following questions:

5. Which course of action did he take?
6. What do you think were his reasons?
7. Discuss the consequences.



Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc., 1989



WORKSHEET 7.5

GHETTO YOUTHS' CHOICELESS CHOICES

In *'Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit'*, Lawrence Langer refers to the 'choiceless choices' that victims of the Nazis were frequently forced to make. Individuals 'were plunged into crisis ... where crucial decisions did not reflect options between life and death, but between one form of abnormal response and another'.⁷

GHETTO LIFE

Use the Sydney Jewish Museum exhibition and your own research to construct the persona of an adolescent (male or female) who could have lived in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Be sure to consider the following:

1. The family unit:

- Are both your parents alive?
- How old are your parents?
- How many children are there in the family?
- What position in the family are you – youngest; eldest?
- What are the ages of your siblings?
- How old are you?



2. Consider the family dynamics:

- What are your parents like?
- What types of temperaments do they have?
- What were the occupations of your parents before you had to move in to the ghetto?
- Who are you closest to – your mother or father and why?
- Which of your siblings are you closest to and why?

3. How have the various members of your family responded to life in the ghetto in terms of lifestyle (social activities, emotionally, friendships)?



4. Describe your life in the ghetto. Pay particular attention to the following:

- living conditions
- availability of food
- medical services
- educational opportunities
- social activities.



5. Do any members of your family work in the ghetto? If they do, what is the nature of their employment?
 6. Have there been changes to the way in which the members of your family have responded to living in the ghetto over time (i.e. 1939 to 1942)? If so, detail these.
7. How have you responded to living in the ghetto?
 8. What do you do to occupy yourself?
 9. Who are your special friends?
 10. What are your thoughts and hopes?

It is now July 1942 and the following notice has gone up on walls around the ghetto:

By order of the German authorities, all the Jews of Warsaw, regardless of age or sex, are to be deported. Only those employed in the German workshops, the *Judenrat*, the Jewish police and the Jewish hospital will be exempt. Each deported person is authorized to carry fifteen kilograms of luggage, including money and provisions for three days. Those failing to comply with this edict will be subject to the death penalty.

(signed) The *Judenrat*⁸

7 Ibid.

8 Meed, V. 1993 "On Both Sides of the Wall", Holocaust Library in conjunction with the United States Memorial Museum USA, Washington, p.20

QUESTIONS

Which of the following choices would you have made? Why and with what results?

- remain with your family or 'go it alone'?
- willingly register for deportation?
- evade the order and plan to go in to hiding?
- try to find work?
- join the Jewish police—their members were exempt?
- bribe your way out of the ghetto (leaders of work battalions as well as smugglers could be persuaded to smuggle you across the wall to the Polish side)?
- join the fledgling, poorly equipped, Jewish Fighting Organisation?
- any other choices; if so, what?



WORKSHEET 7.6

THE COURIERS

The ghettos of Eastern Europe were a transitional phase in the Nazi's policy to permanently exclude, and then to exterminate the Jews. To date, the portrayal of Jews in the Holocaust has been one of hapless victims waiting to be swamped by the tidal wave of the Third Reich. The following profile pays tribute to the courage and daring of the young girl couriers of the various Jewish Underground Fighting Organisations. The heroic contribution of these young women has been completely overshadowed by the deeds of the male resistance fighters. There were about 40 female couriers, only a handful of whom survived the war.

A list of some female couriers:

Tosia Altman –
captured by the Germans and tortured to death, aged 25

Freya Beatus –
committed suicide, aged 17

Liza Chapnick –
lives in Israel, mid 80s

Marysia Feinmesser-Warmnan –
lived in the Bronx, died 2001

Lonka Kozibrodka –
died in Auschwitz, aged 26

Ala Margolis –
lives in France, mid 80s

Frumka Plotnizka –
killed fighting in the uprising in Bendzin, aged 23

Hancia Plotnizka –
captured and killed, aged 25 (Frumka's sister)

Maryla Rozyska –
partisan courier, died in the 1950s, mid 30s

Tamar Schneiderman –
captured and sent to Treblinka, died there aged 25

Leah Silverstein –
lives in Washington, mid 80s

Bronia Vinicka-Klibanski –
lives in Jerusalem, mid 80s



Frumka Plotnizka



Tamar Schneiderman



Liza Chapnick



Lonka Kozibrodka



Tosia Altman

WORKSHEET 7.7

VLADKA MEED-FEJGELE PELTEL-MIEDZYRZECKI



Warsaw, July 1942 – doors opening and closing; hurried footsteps on stairs. The courtyard of the house at Leszno 72 was already astir. Tenants were scurrying about in their attempts to learn the news about the latest Nazi round up. Horrible rumours had been circulating that the Germans were going to deport all the inhabitants of the ghetto – no one knew to where.

Like most of other ghetto inhabitants, 20 year old Vladka, her mother (her father had died of pneumonia the previous year), her brother and her sister all assumed that the approaching deportations were nothing more than a transfer to some other region. Vladka's mother had accepted the inevitable. She believed that it would not be so terrible as long as the family would be together.

Suddenly there was commotion in the courtyard, their front door was flung open and a neighbour yelled, "They have put up notices – about the deportations!" Vladka dashed outside. The street had become a human sea tossing incessantly as people milled about before the notices, elbowing forward determined to read and see for themselves. Only persons employed in German factories that had been set up in the ghetto were eligible to remain in the ghetto, all other Jews had to appear at the point of embarkation when ordered to do so. New notices began to appear calling on Jews to report voluntarily where they would be rewarded with 3 kilograms of bread and 1 kilogram of marmalade. Deportations went on for a week. Rumours reached them that their block was about to be sealed off by Germans. Everybody lived in fear of the imminent 'action'.

"*Alle Juden herunter!*" (All Jews come down). Commotion and turmoil as people hurried down the stairs. Outside the pavement swarmed with Jews. Everything was in confusion – a mass of parents, children, suitcases and bundles, and the sound of weeping. Names were being called out. Men and women clung to one another, to give themselves courage.

"Have your employment cards ready for inspection!" People became alert, pushing and jostling. The Germans began their 'selection'. Standing at the curb, they glanced only cursorily at the outstretched cards.

"Left! Right! Left!"

"Man to the right, wife and child to the left!"

The 'selection' proceeded quickly. Vladka's turn approached. Instead of a genuine employment card she carried a scribbled note that she had been given by one of her friends from *Skif* (a youth group of the Bund⁹), authorising her to go to the Toebbens factory to register. A German took the note and glanced at her for a moment, asking, "Is this your employment card?"

"Yes," she muttered.

"To the right!"

She could hardly believe her ears: she was among the lucky ones.

She began to scan the huge throng for her mother, brother and sister but could see only the vehicles slowly filling with people. From where she stood, some Jews made a last desperate effort to join their doomed relatives. Her eyes were fixed on the vehicles, each one packed beyond capacity. "Faiga ... Faiga ..." She thought she heard her brother's voice. She looked hard but it was difficult to make out the faces.

Alone and bewildered, she roamed the streets of the ghetto and scoured the *Umschlagplatz*. She returned to their deserted home where there was only a half spilled bag of flour on the table and an empty plate. Her mother had started to prepare dumplings for the soup when the 'action' had started. She just stood there – alone.

Weeks passed. She worked in one of the factories set up by the Germans – this provided a temporary reprieve from transportation.

One evening Abrasha Blum (the leader of the Bund), visited her apartment and asked her if she would consider becoming an underground courier. She would be required to smuggle herself across the ghetto wall and assume a new gentile persona – Wladyslawa Kowalska, nicknamed 'Vladka'. The risks involved would be grave – to live amongst hostile and suspicious strangers, watch every word and gesture, a life lived 'walking the streets' between assignations and constantly on guard against *szmalcomicy* ('blackmailers') – insidious cultures who prowled the streets relentlessly looking for prey – the bane of Jews living on the Aryan side.

⁹ The Bund – League of Jewish Workers in Russia, Lithuania and Poland. A Jewish Socialist party. It was totally opposed to Zionism and Hebrew culture and language, regarding Yiddish as the national language of the Jews of East Europe. In the inter-war period, Poland became the major scene of the Bund's activities. The party established a broad base of operations including children's and youth organisations, a sports movement and a women's organisation.

Source: Gutman, I., (ed) 1990 'Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust' MacMillan, New York, Vol I pp.272-273

QUESTIONS

1. Consider the choices Vladka faced.
2. Discuss the possible consequences of each choice.
3. Which decision do you think she made?
4. What do you think were her reasons?
5. What was the fate of Vladka Meed?
6. Choose another name/s from the list of female couriers and compare and contrast their roles and their fate/s.



WORKSHEET 7.8

ROZA ROBOTA

Roza Robota was a young girl of eighteen when the Germans occupied her home town of Ciechanow in Poland, in September 1939. Shortly thereafter, Roza and her family were forced into a ghetto.

In November 1942 the Nazis liquidated the ghetto of Ciechanow, deporting its inhabitants to concentration camps either at Treblinka or Auschwitz.

Auschwitz was the largest of all Nazi concentration and extermination camps. In 1941 Himmler ordered the erection of a second, much larger camp three kilometres from the original – Auschwitz II or Birkenau.

Roza and her family were transported to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, *Selektionen* were made – the infirm, those deemed too old to work, and mothers with young children were sent straight to the gas chambers. Younger people, like Roza, were spared and put into the women's camp at Birkenau. She was assigned to various work detachments while some of the other girls from Ciechanow were sent to work in the munitions factory – *Union*, one of the *Krupp* slave-labour camps.

In 1943, the camp's underground organisation was planning a general uprising and the destruction of the gas chamber and crematorium complexes. To accomplish this they needed explosives and explosive charges. Their plan could only succeed if they could gain the support of the Jewish girls in the explosives section of *Union*. As all previous efforts to make contact with these girls had failed because they were under constant surveillance, the underground leaders decided to try and establish contact through an intermediary in Birkenau. Roza was perfect – she knew the girls from Ciechanow and she was in touch with them daily, so the underground enlisted her help.

Roza accepted the assignment and soon a group of girls were smuggling dynamite and explosive charges out of the munitions factory. The explosives, passed from hand to hand in an elaborate network, were given to the underground and then to the *Sonderkommando* in the Birkenau crematoria.

In October 1944 the *Sonderkommando*, who were supposed to synchronise their revolt with the general uprising, learned that they were to be executed. Having no other alternative, they took unilateral action and blew up Crematoria III. They killed four SS men, threw a Nazi overseer into the crematoria and cut the barbed wire surrounding the camp, allowing hundreds of prisoners to escape. A large force of SS men pursued them until they were all killed.

Immediately the SS launched an investigation and Roza and three other female prisoners working in the *Union* factory were arrested and taken to the dreaded Block 11 for interrogation. Roza was the only one who knew the names of the leaders of the underground and its channels of communication.



QUESTIONS

1. Consider the choices Roza faced.
2. Discuss the possible consequences of each of her options.
3. Which choice do you think she should have made?

Use the Sydney Jewish Museum library to find answers for the following questions:

4. Which course of action did she take?
5. What do you think were her reasons?
6. Discuss the consequences of her choices.



WORKSHEET 7.9

MALA ZIMETBAUM

Mala Zimetbaum was born in Brzesko, Poland in 1920. When she was still a child, the Zimetbaum family immigrated to Belgium and settled in Antwerp.

In May 1940, the Germans occupied Belgium and began their round-up of Jews. In 1942 Mala was caught in one such round-up and transported to Auschwitz. Upon arrival, the *Selektion* (selection) was conducted and the aged, infirm and mothers with young children were sent straight to the gas chambers. Mala was sent to the women's camp at Birkenau. Since she was fluent in several languages she was used as an interpreter or 'runner' in the camp.

As a messenger Mala had a number of privileges. She was not required to have her head shaved and she could move about the camp freely – strictly forbidden to ordinary prisoners. She was able to establish contact between members of separated families and carry messages and sorely needed medicines. She also had access to the SS administrative offices and the guardhouse – the only places where special permits allowing prisoners to work outside the camp could be obtained.

Through her work she gained the confidence of her superiors and became privy to information concerning the fate of other prisoners – especially *Selektions*. As one of her functions was to assign the sick to work details after their release from the hospital, Mala was able to warn patients in danger of *Selektion* and urge them to leave the hospital as soon as they could.

She met Adek Galinski, a young Polish prisoner, who was a mechanic and therefore able to enter the women's section of the camp. When they met, Adek had already been in contact with the underground and was preparing his escape.

Should she join him in order to try and tell the world about what was happening inside the camps, and risk everything?

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the choices Mala faced.
2. What do you think she should have done?
3. During your visit to the Sydney Jewish Museum, find out what decision she actually made?
4. Do you think her decision was courageous, noble or selfish? Explain why?
5. What were the consequences of her decision – for the other prisoners and for herself?





HANDOUT 8.1 HENRY MOORE QUOTE

The sculptor Henry Moore wrote:

“All art is an abstraction to some degree, in sculpture the material alone forces one away from pure representation and towards abstraction.’ To this ‘we might add that as his material forces the monument-maker away from pure representation it also forces his vision into particular shapes and sizes—all of which determine the texture of memory”.

Source: Young, J. 1990 ‘Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation’, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, p.173



HANDOUT 9.1

LOST IN TRANSLATION – THE LANGUAGE OF ATROCITY¹⁷

When we speak about the Holocaust or listen to Holocaust testimony, we frame the meaning of words in the same manner as we use in everyday language or usage. However, the experience of the Holocaust is so far removed from the realm of conventional human experience that these everyday words have to take on a completely new semantic meaning.

TRAIN

The trains for deportations are cattle cars – used to transport livestock. There are no passenger compartments with large windows, over-head-spaces for luggage, toilet facilities and dining cars. People are packed so tightly that there is only enough room to stand. Eighty to a hundred people in airless carriages with barred windows – allowing only slats of light.

JOURNEY

Travel in crammed cattle cars to an unknown destination, family members clutch each other for comfort. Strangers pressed together for days, often, with little air or water – suffocating. There is one bucket for water and one for a toilet, overflowing in no time – with waste and humiliation. Stench! Thirst! Hunger! Uncertainty!

HUNGER

This is not the slightly empty feeling of having missed one meal but gnawing stomach cramps, light-headedness and exhaustion. Desperate people guarding precious morsels – violent fights over stale crusts of bread.

ARRIVAL

After days of anguish, hunger, thirst and uncertainty the doors swing open to reveal a foreign world. Daunting sights and sounds: long platforms, people in striped uniforms unload the train and whisper words of advice, incomprehensible to the young and fit – ‘say you have a trade’ or ‘say you are older than your years’. German guards bark orders while their dogs snarl ferociously at the slow and feeble. Bewildered, the human cargo is dragged from the cattle cars and shoved roughly into lines.

SELECTION

At Auschwitz the myriad of new arrivals on every transport are forced into lines to undergo *Selektionen* – sorted by SS and medical officers. It is they who decide each prisoner’s fate: to the right – to life and work; to the left – death in the gas chambers. Most of the transports – the old, the sick and women with young children are immediately condemned to the gas chambers. The young and fit are assigned to slave labour in the concentration camp.



KILLED

Langer in *'Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory'* recounts the story of an Auschwitz survivor, Irene, who returned to her home village in France in 1945. She had been transported to the camp at the age of fourteen. Her mother and three younger siblings were sent to the gas chambers, and her father and older brother were sent 'to the right'. She never saw any of them again.

When she returned to her village people asked about her family. She first tried to say, 'Everyone in my family was killed' but she rejected the words as hopelessly inadequate. 'Killed' is a word used for ordinary forms of dying. To say matter-of-factly that 'my mother and father and brother and two sisters were gassed when we arrived at Auschwitz' seemed equally unsatisfactory. Plain factuality could not convey the enormity of the event.¹⁸

SMOKE

Blood red sun
choked by darkened sky
agony rising like a silent scream.

Gut wrenching nausea,
disbelief and anguish—
of all who inhale

The sickly sweet smell—
of loved ones
burned to Ash.

WORK

The young and fit – temporarily reprieved from the gas chambers become slave-labourers, condemned to gruelling hours of labour, brutal treatment and starvation rations. Work is used both as punishment and reward. The most coveted reward is to be given work in the kitchen – being able to steal an extra piece of bread, carrot or turnip. Workers are expendable commodities and therefore driven beyond endurance – to death.

BOWL

Prisoners are given small enamel bowls – no eating utensils. Food is usually a thin soup, occasionally, accompanied by a piece of bread. Thus, bowls are precious possessions – without them you cannot eat!

SHOES

Prisoners are issued with ill matched, poorly fitting shoes with no laces and, in some cases, wooden clogs – to impede movement and reduce the likelihood of escape.



LIBERATION

Bereaved

Alone and dislocated

Herded to be processed—DP camps.

Returning

Through war-torn landscapes

To homes now claimed by strangers—neighbours!

Searching

For members of once large families,

Now—sole survivors.

Dispossessed

Disorientated

Grief stricken by the enormity—the loss.

Forced

To resume

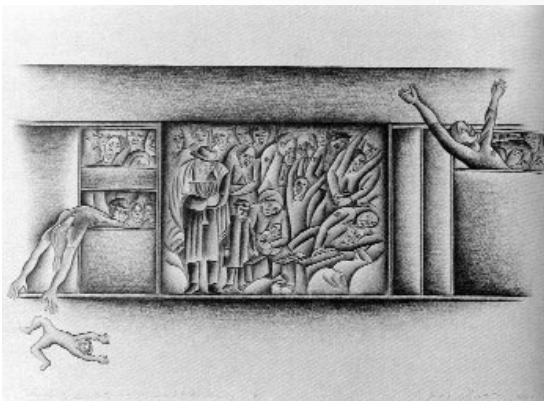
—normal life.

SILENCE

In conventional communication or when listening to personal narratives, we pay little attention to silences. Yet these omissions are powerful statements; possibly more powerful than any word could ever be. The listener is left to frame the image or feel the emotion. For many Holocaust survivors the only option left is silence – their experience being too far removed from the realm of conventional human experience.

¹⁷ Langer, L. 1995 'Admitting the Holocaust: Collected Essays', Oxford University Press, Oxford

¹⁸ Langer, L. 1991 'Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory', Yale University Press, Yale, p.61



Study for Transporters from the Holocaust Project, © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Photo © Donald Woodman.

HANDOUT 10.1

EUPHEMISMS

Cut up the following words so that each word appears on a separate card:

bath installations

operation/action

cleansing operations

relocation

delousing

resettlement

evacuation

special treatment

final solution

work deployment

Jewish residential area

work liberates

Juden AKTION

HANDOUT 10.2

NAZI “DOUBLE SPEAK”

AKTION OR JUDEN-AKTION

Commonly used terms referring to organised physical violence against the Jews. *Aktionen* included property confiscations, arrests, hunting, herding, murdering and deporting Jews to extermination camps.

JEWISH RESIDENTIAL AREA

This term was used by the Nazis to refer to Jewish ghettos – places far from images of home, privacy, leafy streets and a sense of permanence. Ghettos were places of slave labour and despair – overcrowded, unhygienic and diseased – way stations to the ‘Final Solution’.

FINAL SOLUTION

Phrase coined by the Nazis to conceal the genocide of European Jewry.

RESETTLEMENT

Term used by the Nazis to disguise the true destination – death camps – of deportees from the Jewish ghettos.

EVACUATION

Word used by the Nazis for the deportation of Jews to extermination camps. It was to delude Jews into believing that they were being sent to a place of resettlement.

RELOCATION

Another word employed by the Nazis to lull Jews into a false sense of security and hide the true destination – extermination camps – of the transports.

WORK LIBERATES

Though the words *Arbeit macht frei* (‘work sets you free’), placed on the gates of Auschwitz, grossly belied their redemptive promise, they did fulfil their cruel irony – those who were strong enough to work were worked to death – the rest were murdered – some, very few, by luck, survived.

BATH INSTALLATIONS AND DELOUSING

Both of these terms were used by the Nazis to obfuscate and deceive. In the death camps all Jewish inmates had to undress before they were forced to enter the gas chambers. In order to normalise this procedure, minimise resistance and ensure compliance as well as hide the fate that awaited the victims, the Nazis suggested that delousing was a hygiene precaution and referred to the gas chambers as ‘bath installations’.

evacuation
evacuation

SPECIAL TREATMENT

The prefix 'special' in the language of the Nazis denoted exceptional cases – those selected to be exterminated.

WORK DEPLOYMENT

Work deployment was the economic exploitation of the Jews by the Nazis. It was a method by which the Nazis simultaneously forced the Jews into slave labour, assured them that work would save them from death, hid the true intent of their policies from the international community and even from their own people.

CLEANSING OPERATIONS

Term used by the SS, police and the elite *Einsatzgruppen* shortly after the outbreak of war, to justify the killing of Jews in the interests of national security. Jews were initially shot on the pretext that they were snipers, insurgents or resisters. Later they were branded as agitators, hostile elements, partisans and bandits.

cleansing operations
cleansing operations

operation/action
operation/action

Juden

AKTION

HANDOUT 10.3

SECRET MEMORANDUM FROM SS REICH SECURITY MAIN OFFICE (RSHA)

EXTRACT

5 JUNE 1942

CHANGES FOR SPECIAL VEHICLES NOW IN SERVICE AT CHELMO AND FOR THOSE NOW BEING BUILT

Since December 1941, ninety-seven thousand have been processed (*verarbeitet* in German) by the three vehicles in service, with no major incidents. In the light of observations made so far, however, the following technical changes are needed:

The van's normal load is usually nine per square yard. The Saurer vehicles, which are very spacious, maximum use of space is impossible, not because of any possible overload, but because loading to full capacity would affect the vehicle's stability. So reduction of the load space seems necessary. It must absolutely be reduced by a yard, instead of trying to solve the problem, as hitherto, by reducing the number of pieces loaded. Besides, this extends the operating time, as the void must also be filled with carbon monoxide. On the other hand, if the load space is reduced, and the vehicle is packed solid, the operating time can be considerably shortened. The manufacturers told us during a discussion that reducing the size of the van's rear would throw it off balance. The front axle, they claim, would be overloaded. In fact, the balance is automatically restored, because the merchandise abroad displays during the operation a natural tendency to rush to the rear doors, and is mainly found lying there at the end of the operation. So the front axle is not overloaded.

The lighting must be better protected than now. The lamps must be enclosed in a steel grid to prevent them being damaged. Lights could be eliminated, since they apparently are never used. However, it has been observed that when the doors are shut, the load always presses hard against them [against the doors] as soon as darkness sets in. This is because the load naturally rushes towards the light when darkness sets in, which makes closing the doors difficult. Also, because of the alarming nature of darkness, screaming always occurs when the doors are closed. It would therefore be useful to light the lamp before and during the first moments of the operation.

For easy cleaning of the vehicle, there must be a sealed drain in the middle of the floor. The drainage hole's cover, eight to twelve inches in diameter, would be equipped with a slanting trap, so that liquids can drain off during the operation. During cleaning, the drain can be used to evacuate large pieces of dirt.

The aforementioned technical changes are to be made to vehicles, in service when they come in for repairs. As for the ten vehicles ordered from Saurer, they must be equipped with all innovations and changes shown by use and experience to be necessary.

Submitted for decision to Gruppenleiter II D, SS-Obersturmbannführer Walter Rauff.²⁰

²⁰ Lanzmann, C. 1985, 'Shoah - An Oral History of the Holocaust', Pantheon Books, New York, pp.103-5

HANDOUT 11.1

POETRY - LILY BRETT

Lily Brett is a contemporary poet and novelist. The poems presented here have been taken from *'The Auschwitz Poems'* (1988) collection.

Brett, a second-generation Holocaust survivor, grew up in Melbourne. She currently lives in New York and is a highly successful author.

Poems reproduced courtesy of *'The Auschwitz Poems'* by Lily Brett, published by Scribe Publications.



SLEEP

Jammed
on the
planks

they
could only
sleep on their sides

forced
to move
in unison

like
synchronised
swimmers
a
corps de ballet
with corpses

occupied
hell's
private hotel

POSSESSIONS

A bowl
was a life-saving
piece of equipment

any bit of bent metal
rusted tin
worn enamel

without
a
bowl

you
couldn't
eat soup

had
to
make do

with
sawdust-soaked
mud board

that
passed
for bread

a spoon
meant
good fortune

dignity
and
humanity.



ANOTHER SELECTION

Mengele looked
while the Kommandant
lightly whipped
the thin nipples
shriveled around
their empty bags of breast

rows and rows
of wrinkled pink tips
sitting on bowed ribs

the night sky
a romantic red
blazed with arms legs and heads

the thick air
sweet
with your mother's bones burning

the snow
clothed in
black ash
was mourning

and you stood
pushing out
what remained
of the flesh on your chest

it passed the test.



THE MARKET

The
market

held
mostly

behind
the
toilets

was
quietly
boisterous

a
thin
throng

of
nervous
onlookers

lived
vicariously

while
others

hawked
and bought

the
fear

brazened
away

from
their
faces

bold deals

were
negotiated

in
bread
and soup

40 grams
of
bread

bought
rubber
to sole a shoe

the
price

for
this

bit
of

shopping

if
you
were
spotted

was

to
be
shot

on
the
spot



SOMEONE

If you had

someone
to look after

someone
to worry about

someone
to protect

someone
to push

someone
to share with

someone
to encourage

someone
to accuse

it
could
save you.



HANDOUT 12.1

**EXTRACTS FROM: LETTERS OF SS-OBERSTURMFÜHRER
KARL KRETSCHMER**

NO. 6

Sunday, 27 September 1942

My dear Soska,

You will be impatient because you have received no letter from me...

... I am in a very gloomy mood. I must pull myself out of it. The sight of the blood (including women and children) is not very cheering ... As the war is in our opinion a Jewish war, the Jews are the first to feel it. Here in Russia wherever a German soldier is, no Jew remains. You can imagine that at first I needed some time to get to grips with this.

I wrote to you that I might be able to find you a Persian rug. It now turns out that it won't be possible. First I'm no longer in the right area and second the Jewish dealers are no longer alive..... Obviously there is nothing I can do ... Today I dispatch parcels no. 2 (butter) and no. 3 (two tins of sardines in oil, 2 rubber balls, 1 tea and 2 packets of sweets for the children).

NO. 11

Kursk, 15. 10. 1942

Beloved wife, dear children,

...Of my life today I can tell you that things are going more or less smoothly. We have got hold of a nice little house similar to the one in Garden Street only not as nice...

At 7.00 we have coffee, as much bread as you want, a blob of butter – about 60g – sometimes pure or artificial honey. I always have four slices of bread. Then we work until 12.00. There is always good food for lunch – a lot of meat, a lot of fat (we have our own livestock, pigs, sheep, calves, and cows). We have picked our own tomatoes and cucumbers. Our cook has a sideline at the home running a delicatessen and really knows what he's doing. Depending on my mood and appetite I can eat up to three helpings. Then back to work again until 18.00. For supper there is either something hot: roast potatoes with scrambled eggs or other dishes, or something cold: bread and some salami ...

We spend the evenings either playing cards, boozing or sitting together with the boss ...

I have already told you about the shootings—that I could not say 'no' here either. But they've more or less said they've finally found a good chap to run the administrative side of things. The last one was a coward.

That's the way people are judged here. But you can trust your Daddy. He thinks about you all the time and is not shooting immoderately ... There's nothing going on in town ... How I love being at home with you all. How is the garden?

It's nice that Herr Kern is going to France. I think he would have been too weak for the East, though people do change here. People soon get used to the sight of blood, but *Blutwurst* (blood sausage) is not very popular here.

I hope the package for Wurzel will get there in time for his birthday. It would make me very happy.

Lots of kisses and greetings for the children

For their dear mummy a long deep kiss

You are my everything

Your Papa.

O.U. (Headquarters), 19 October 1942

Dear Mutti, dear children,

I'm sending you a quick letter so you don't think that Papa has forgotten you. I have a great deal to do at the moment but I hope that it'll have let up within a couple of weeks ... Anyway you need not worry that we are living badly here. We have to eat and drink well because of the nature of our work, as I have described to you in detail. Otherwise we would crack up. Your Papa will be very careful and strike the right balance. It's not very pleasant stuff.

If it weren't for the stupid thoughts about what we are doing in this country, the *Einsatz* here would be wonderful ... Since it has put me in a position where I can support you all very well. Since, as I already wrote to you, I consider the last *Einsatz* to be justified and indeed approve of the consequences it had, the phrase: 'stupid thoughts' is not strictly accurate. Rather it is a weakness not to be able to stand the sight of dead people; the best way of overcoming it is to do it more often. Then it becomes a habit.²⁴

²⁴ Klee, Dressen & Riess 1991 'Those Were The Days—The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders', translated by Deborah Burnstone, Kocky & Kocky, New York, pp.163-171

QUESTIONS

1. What are your general impressions of Karl Kretschmer – as an SS officer, man, husband and father? Quote from his letters to support your answer.
2. What was Karl Kretschmer's attitude to his work – did he enjoy killing people?
3. What reasons does he provide for participating in the murders?
4. Would you describe Karl Kretschmer to be – evil, insane, antisemitic, an 'ordinary' man?
5. Do his reasons reflect the profiles and the motivations of perpetrators, as agreed to by the class?

HANDOUT 12.2

VERDICT AGAINST SS- UNTERSTURMFÜHRER MAX TÄUBNER

Max Täubner was the commanding officer of a supplies workshop platoon and an officer in the SS. He was not a member of the *Einsatzgruppen*, whose task was to hunt down and eliminate Jews.

Täubner and his platoon participated in the murder of hundreds of Jews, frequently beating Jewish victims with spades. Many times he had been known to strike women in the face with a whip. Whenever there was a break during beatings or executions he would play 'You Are Crazy, My Child' on an accordion.

On 24 May 1943, the SS and Police Supreme Court found Max Täubner guilty of a number of crimes. Read the following extracts (information before the court and also from the transcripts of the verdict) and answer the questions that follow.



VERDICT AGAINST SS-UNTERSTURMFÜHRER MAX TÄUBNER

The accused is a fanatical enemy of the Jews. At the start of his service in the east he resolved to 'get rid' of 20,000 Jews. Together with his work platoon he was assigned to the ss-Brigade, in August 1942, in East Prussia ... The accused heard that the *Wehrmacht* was issuing Jewesses with certificates saying that they were not Jewish. As, in his opinion, the *Wehrmacht* were too sentimental he decided to carry out the execution with his platoon. Outside the village a grave was dug... by the side of which the Jews – men, women and children – had to kneel. They were then shot at close range in the nape of the neck when the order was given.

The accused shall not be punished because of the actions against the Jews as such. The Jews have to be exterminated and none of the Jews that were killed is any great loss...Real hatred of the Jews was the driving motivation for the accused. In the process he let himself be drawn into committing cruel actions...that are unworthy of a German man and an ss officer ... In so doing the accused gives rise to considerable concern. The accused allowed his men to act with such vicious brutality that they conducted themselves under his command like a savage horde. The accused jeopardized the discipline of the men. It is hard to conceive of anything worse than this. Although the accused may have otherwise taken care of his men, by his conduct he however neglected his supervisory duty that, in the view of the SS, also means not allowing his men to be psychologically depraved. The accused is therefore to be punished under section 147 of the MGB (*MilitärStrafgesetzbuch* – the Military Penal Code).

The accused took a number of photographs of the executions – although he knew that the photographing of such incidents was not permitted ... The photographs were developed in photographic shops and the accused showed them to his wife and friends.



By taking photographs, the accused is guilty of disobedience. Such pictures could pose the gravest risks to the security of the Reich if they fell into the wrong hands. For this crime the accused is to be punished under section 92 of the MGB ...

Source: Klee, Dressen & Riess 1991 'Those Were The Days – The Holocaust as Seen by its Perpetrators and Bystanders', translated by Deborah Burnstone, Kocky & Kocky, New York, pp.196-202

QUESTIONS

1. What are your general impressions of Max Täubner – as a man and officer? Quote from the extracts to support your answer.
2. What reasons explain his participation in the killings?
3. Do his reasons reflect the profiles and the motivations of perpetrators, as agreed to by the class?
4. Did he choose to participate or was he following orders?
5. How would you describe Max Täubner – antisemitic, evil, sadistic or psychopathic?
6. What crimes did Täubner commit according to the SS court?



HANDOUT 12.3

'THE PERPETRATORS' MOTIVATIONS FOR MURDER

In most cases, the atrocities committed by the Germans and their collaborators were the acts of 'ordinary men'. There were some individuals, like the sadist Max Täubner, who enjoyed committing these crimes. However, such men were probably in the minority and are not representative of those involved.

Mass murders involved not only the immediate perpetrators but also thousands of others not physically involved in killing anyone – lawyers, doctors, accountants, bankers, clerks, railway workers and farmers. Although they were removed from the actual murder, they were all complicit in the monstrous machinery of destruction.

Christopher R. Browning (1998) in *'Ordinary Men'*, cites the main reasons why ordinary people were willing to participate in such barbarous activities. The following is a short list from Browning's *'Ordinary Men'*:

1. racism; in this particular case antisemitism – hatred of Jews
2. careerism; ambition or material incentives
3. deference to authority; they followed orders without question or conscience
4. conformity / peer pressure; they did not want to be ostracised as cowards
5. wartime brutalisation
6. segmentation and routine nature of the task
7. special selection of the perpetrators; in some cases 'professional' killers – members of the SS and the *Einsatzgruppen*
8. ideological indoctrination



Banality of Evil / Struthof from the 'Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Sprayed acrylic, oil, and photography on photolinen. 30 " x 43 ". Collection of the artists and Through The Flower Corporation. Photo © Donald Woodman.

WORKSHEET 13.1

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES AND THE HOLOCAUST



SOURCE 1

The single most significant act on record of Galen's campaign against Nazism was his courageous denunciation of the Euthanasia Program; in a sermon he gave on 3 August 1941, when he declared euthanasia was simply murder. There is widely held belief that Galen's public statements on the subject caused Hitler to put an end to the project ... However, no such public protest was made by the churches or any other German institution, against Nazi policy on the Jews and the Final Solution.

Source: Gutman, I. (ed) 1990 'Encyclopedia of the Holocaust', Vol II, MacMillan, New York, p. 537.

SOURCE 2

BISHOP WURM TO THE HEAD OF HITLER'S CHANCELLERY 20 DECEMBER 1943

In agreement with the judgement of all truly Christian people in Germany, I must state that we Christians feel this policy of destroying the Jews to be a grave wrong, and one that will have fearful consequences for the German people. To kill without the necessity of war, and without legal judgement, contravenes God's commands even when it has been ordered by authority, and, like every conscious violation of God's law, will be avenged, sooner or later.

Source: Lee, S.J. 1998 'Hitler and Nazi Germany', Routledge, London, p.63

SOURCE 3:

WORDS OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

I pray for a defeat of my Fatherland. Only through a defeat can we atone for the terrible crimes that we have committed against Europe and the world.

The question is really: Christianity or Germanism? And the sooner the conflict is revealed in the clear light of day, the better.

Hitler is the anti-Christ. We must therefore continue with our work and root him out.



From: Süddeutscher Verlag Bilderdienst

Source: Lacey, G. & Shephard, K. 2001 'Germany 1918-1945', John Murray Publishers, London, p.152

SOURCE 4

No protest was heard from Pius XII when, in 1935, Germany promulgated its own infamous statutes of racial purity in the Nuremberg Laws ... The roundup of Jews by the Nazis began in Rome in the fall of 1943.

On October 18, over one thousand Roman Jews, more than two-thirds of them women and children, were deported from the Eternal City to Auschwitz. On October 28 the German ambassador, Ernst Heinrich von Weizäcker, reported to Berlin: "Although under pressure from all sides, the Pope (Pius XII) has not let himself be drawn into any demonstrative censure of the deportation of the Jews from Rome..."



Reprinted from Cornwall, J. "Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII" Penguin Group, USA

Source: Strom, M. J. & Parsons, W. S. 1962 'Facing History and Ourselves: the Holocaust and Human Behaviour', Intentional Educations Inc., Watertown

SOURCE 5

First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—
because I was not a trade unionist.

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

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

Pastor Martin Niemöller²⁵

²⁵ Berenbaum, M. 1993 'The World Must Know', Little, Brown & Co.



Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin

QUESTIONS

1. Based on the above sources, what is your assessment of the stance that the Christian churches and their leaders took during the Holocaust – bystander, victim, rescuer, resister or perpetrator?
2. What other sources would you have to consult before you could establish the role of the Christian churches as rescuers and/or resisters or perpetrators?
3. Examine the following:
 - the role that the Christian churches played in the rescue of Jews during the Holocaust;
 - Nazi response to the handful of Christian church leaders like Bishop Wurm, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Martin Niemöller.
4. Which of the five sources do you consider to be the most reliable? Give reasons for your answer.

HANDOUT 14.1

FIVE MODELS OF RESPONSE



I. THE FIRST ADAM

Sin and punishment: Adam who sinned by violating God's command is expelled from the Garden of Eden and is punished.

Objection: Does there exist a sin enormous enough to justify such a punishment as the death of so many millions of individuals?

II. CAIN KILLS ABEL

God endowed human beings with free choice, with the capacity to choose between good – life and evil – death. According to Jewish law free will is bestowed on every human being. If a person desires to turn towards the good and righteous way he/she has the power to do so. And conversely, if a person wishes to turn towards evil and be wicked he/she is at liberty to do so.

Therefore – what happened in the Holocaust is not God's responsibility, but rather the responsibility of Man. Man used his God-given potential of free choice and chose evil.

God asked Cain, after he had killed his brother Abel: 'What have you done?' Cain avoided taking responsibility and asked in return: 'Am I my brother's keeper?'

The Holocaust is therefore not God's problem but Mans.



III. SILENCE

Silence is a legitimate religious response. It is argued that due to the magnitude of the question and out of respect for the victims we are obligated to respond with silence.

This answer is most difficult because at its edges doubts begin to form – how can one remain silent, is it possible?

IV. THE ECLIPSE OF GOD

God 'hid His face'. The period of the Holocaust was a period of 'the eclipse of God'. In Martin Buber's view, this is similar to the eclipse of the sun or the moon. The Bible attributes certain theological mysteries to God – sometimes He is hidden and sometimes revealed.

For God to be in hiding, to be in eclipse, as an explanation for the Holocaust has its difficulties because it begs the question: why did He go into hiding just at the time He was needed more than ever?



Copyright © The Jewish Heritage Writing Project Inc., 1989

V. THE DEATH OF GOD

Similar to the theory of the ‘eclipse of God’ but far more extreme is the ‘Death of God’. This theory does not negate/deny the possibility that God does not exist nor that He revealed himself to human beings and to the people of Israel. The ‘God is Dead’ theology posits that God did exist once but at a certain moment – one horrible moment during the Holocaust – He ceased to exist, receding into a kind of **permanent** eclipse.

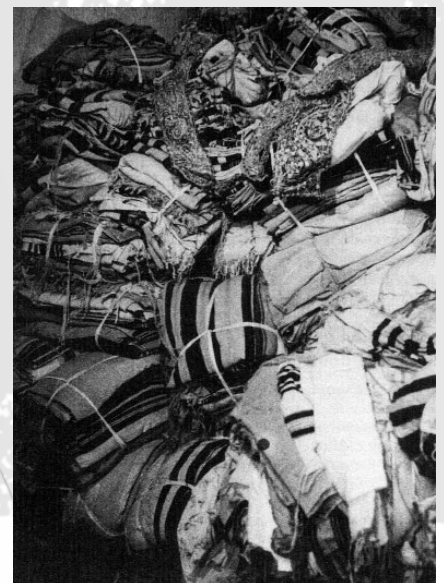
Zvi Kolitz breathes life into the ‘Five Models of Response’ through the discourse that takes place between God and the protagonist of his short story ‘*Yosel Rakover Talks to God*’. Zvi Kolitz in this work of fiction – the dialogue of a religious Jew’s last thoughts with his God – comes to the conclusion that although God had done everything He could to make the religious Jew lose his faith and to cease to believe in Him, the Jew dies praising God. Zvi’s character though disappointed in God, still cherishes His Torah. ‘God commands religion, but His Torah commands a way of life – and the more we die for this way of life, the more immortal it is!’

Source: Source: Pinchas Peli, Jerusalem Post, International Edition, 17 & 24 April 1983
Kolitz, Z. 1999 “Yosel Rakover Talks to God”, Vintage, London, p.18

QUESTIONS

Have a class debate:

- We must accept that in trying to find answers to these questions it is not always possible to arrive at a reasonable explanation of what occurred. Some scholars argue that the greatness of many historical events lies precisely in the fact that they remain a mystery – *except to Him before whom all mysteries are revealed.*
- ‘God commands religion, but His Torah commands a way of life – and the more we die for this way of life, the more immortal it is.’



Prayer shawls

WORKSHEET 15.1

ACCOUNTABILITY

SOURCE A

Bauman in *Modernity and the Holocaust* presents the following view and argument:

*Evil can do its dirty work, hoping that most people most of the time will refrain from doing rash, reckless things – and resisting evil is rash and reckless. Evil needs neither enthusiastic followers nor an applauding audience – the instinct of self-preservation will do ... Some individuals did choose moral duty over the rationality of self-preservation. What this demonstrates is that making a choice matters.*²⁶

SOURCE A QUESTIONS

1. Discuss how much freewill individuals do have. Is this the same in all societies and cultures?
2. Discuss with your class Bauman's proposition that 'making a choice matters'.

²⁶ Bauman, Z. 1989 'Modernity and the Holocaust', Polity Press, Cambridge, pp.206-207

SOURCE B

Hilberg believes that the "...ultimate lesson of the Holocaust is that it bears witness to the **advance of civilization** ... The machinery of destruction, was structurally no different from organized German society as a whole. The machinery of destruction was the organized community in one of its special roles".²⁷

Inhumanity, such as that exemplified by the Holocaust, cannot be wrought by individual acts of cruelty. For it to be as complete and as all pervasive as it was – in the Holocaust and in other acts of genocide – it needs to be codified and accepted as lawful behaviour by the society within which it occurs. Therefore, society must never be allowed to shirk its responsibility for its evil acts.

*Cruelty is not committed by cruel individuals, but by ordinary men and women trying to acquit themselves well of their ordinary duties – while cruelty correlates but poorly with the personal characteristics of its perpetrators, it correlates very strongly indeed with the relationship of authority and subordination, with our normal, daily encountered structure of power and obedience.*²⁸

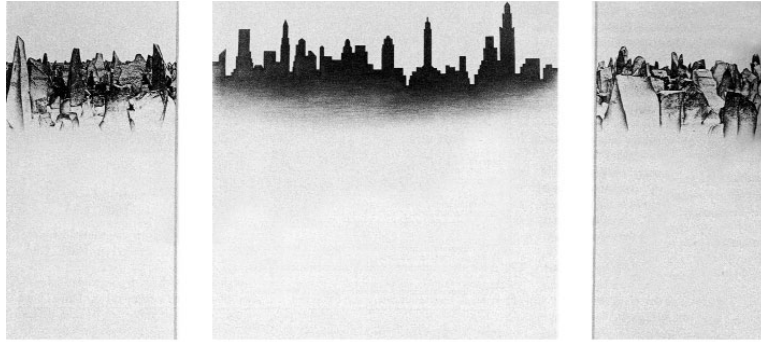
SOURCE B QUESTIONS

1. Discuss with your class the extent to which they agree with Milgram and Hilberg that 'organised society' and 'power and obedience' were major contributors to **allowing** the Holocaust to happen.
2. Students should also consider the "miming" factors – other essential contributing factors to allowing the Holocaust to happen.

²⁷ Hilberg, R. 1983 'The Destruction of European Jews', Vol.3, Homes & Meire, New York, p.994

²⁸ Milgram, S.1974 'Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View', Tavistock, London, p.xi





From the 'Holocaust Project', © Judy Chicago and Donald Woodman 1989. Manipulated photos on photolinen, ready to be sprayed and oil painted. Photo © Donald Woodman.

SOURCE C

Rubenstein unequivocally asserts that the Holocaust is the product of both the society within which it was engendered, and of the societies that did nothing to stop it until it was too late.

*The world of the death camps and the society it engenders reveals the progressively intensifying night side of Judeo-Christian civilisation. Civilisation means slavery, wars exploitation, and death camps. It also means medical hygiene, elevated religious ideas, beautiful art, and exquisite music. It is an error to imagine that civilisation and savage cruelty are antithesis ... In our times the cruelties, like most other aspects of our world, have become far more effectively administered than ever before. They have not and will not cease to exist. Both creation and destruction are inseparable aspects of what we call civilisation.*²⁹

SOURCE C QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Rubenstein's proposition that there is always a 'flipside to the coin' – the 'night side' to religion, culture and science.
2. Discuss with the class the responsibility and the ability that a society has to control this 'night side'.

²⁹ Rubenstein, R. 1978 'The Cunning of History', Harper, New York, pp.91,195

WORKSHEET 15.2

VIGILANCE

SOURCE A

If we accept that man was responsible for the Holocaust, then we have a grave responsibility to try and ensure that it is never again allowed to happen. We must be vigilant and informed members of society. We must never allow governments to be secretive; nor must we ever abrogate our right to control our government's power.

All those intricate networks of checks and balances, that the civilizing process has erected and which, as we hope and trust would defend us from violence and constrain all over ambitions and unscrupulous powers, have been proven ineffective. Time and time again victims have been fooled by an apparently peaceful and humane, legalistic and orderly society – their security – the most powerful factor of their downfall.³⁰

A growing number of renowned and respected scholars warn us that we had better not be complacent for the following reasons:

- i. The Holocaust disclosed the fundamental weakness and fragility of man-made institutions, man-made systems and human nature...
- ii. Contrary to widespread opinion, bureaucracy is not a tool, that can be used with equal facility at one time for cruel and morally contemptible, and another for deeply humane purposes. Even if it does move in any direction in which it is pushed, bureaucracy is more like a loaded dice. It has logic and a momentum of its own. Given an initial push (being confronted with a purpose), it will like the brooms of the sorcerer's apprentice easily move beyond all thresholds at which many of those who gave it the push would have stopped, were they still in control of the process they triggered. It is programmed to seek the optimal solution in such terms as would not distinguish between one human object and another, or between human and inhuman objects.
- iii. The Holocaust was the outcome ... of quite ordinary and common factors; and that the possibility of such an encounter could be blamed to a very large extent on the emancipation of the political state, with its monopoly of the means of violence and its audacious engineering ambitions, from social control – following the step-by-step dismantling of all non-political power resources and institutions of social self-management.
- iv. Pluralism is the best preventive medicine against morally normal people engaging in morally abnormal actions.

SOURCE A QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the above propositions with the class in light of their study of the Holocaust and their understanding of current world events and government responses to them.

³⁰ Kuper L. 1981 'Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century', Yale University Press, Yale, p.137



SOURCE B

In 1945, as the world was yet to fully recover from the ghastly truth of the Holocaust, Dwight Macdonald warned, “we must now fear the person who obeys the law more than the one who breaks it”.³¹

SOURCE B QUESTIONS

1. Bauman in his statement that “*The voice of individual moral conscience is best heard in the tumult of political and social discord*”³² seems to agree with Macdonald. Discuss these two statements with your class.
2. Discuss with your class the value of ‘political and social discord’.

³¹ Bauman, Z. 1989 ‘Modernity and the Holocaust’, Polity Press, Cambridge, p.151

³² Ibid, p.166

SOURCE C

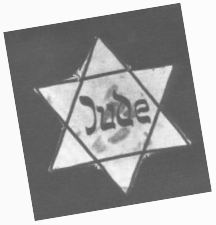
In the study of the Holocaust, the failure of the international community to intervene becomes a glaring condemnation of the whole civilized world. As a global community we have global obligations. One of these obligations is to prevent genocide whenever and wherever possible. The United Nations was specifically established not only to ensure that the world never has another world war but that the horrors of the Holocaust may never be experienced again.

In “*Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*”, Leo Kuper states that:

*The sovereign territorial state claims, as an integral part of its sovereignty, the right to commit genocide, or engage in genocidal massacres, against people under its rule, ...and the UN, for all practical purposes, defends this right.*³³

These words found a most sinister confirmation in the words of the Iraqi ambassador in London. Interviewed on 2 September 1988 about the continued genocide of Iraqi Kurds, the ambassador indignantly replied:

*The Kurds, their well being and their fate were Iraq’s internal affairs and that no-one had the right to interfere with the actions undertaken by a sovereign state inside its borders.*³⁴



Genocide? (*What else can you call it?*)

- i. **Tasmanian Aborigines** – British colonisers 1803-36
no precise figures exist (3,000 to 5,000 estimated deaths)
- ii. **Armenians** – Turks 1915-16
1.5 million estimated deaths
- iii. **Hutu of Burundi** – Tutsi 1972
100,000 to 150,000 estimated deaths
- iv. **Cambodians** – Khmer Rouge
2 million estimated deaths
- v. **East Timor islanders** – Indonesian state 1975
60,000 to 200,000 estimated deaths

Source: Landau, R.S. 1988, 'Studying the Holocaust', Routledge, London, pp.99-117

SOURCE C QUESTIONS

1. Ask the class if they sympathise with the sentiments of the Iraqi ambassador.
2. Discuss with your class the implications of the genocide table above.
3. Discuss a world action plan that could prevent or immediately intervene in a case of genocide. Remember that it is often very difficult to directly intervene in a sovereign states affairs. What can the world do?

³³ Kuper L. 1981 'Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century', Yale University Press, Yale, p137

³⁴ Bauman, Z. 1989 'Modernity and the Holocaust', Polity Press, Cambridge, p.151



WORKSHEET 15.3

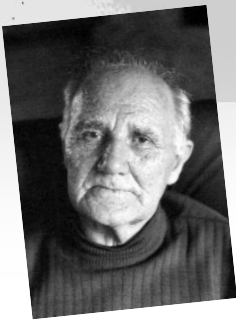
WHAT CAN WE DO?

Understanding how the Holocaust was possible is axiomatic to our understanding of our contemporary society and ourselves, and to securing the future.

Consider what solutions students could offer to the following questions:

1. How should society be organised?
2. How can phrases like 'the sanctity of human life' or 'moral duty' become commonly used in bureaucratic offices?
3. What responsibilities do individuals have to each other?
4. How do we safeguard our freedoms?
5. How do we learn to value diversity?
6. How do we fight prejudice and indifference?
7. What are the best constraints against the power of government?
8. How can we ensure that advances in science, technology and industrialisation are moral and fulfil ethical considerations?
9. When to obey and when is it one's moral responsibility to resist social manipulation?
10. How can we fight the monopolisation of media?
11. How to ensure the accountability of the press and public figures?
12. Where does the individual fit into the "power equation"? Can the **individual** make a difference?





© Gay Block



© Gay Block



© Gay Block



© Gay Block

HANDOUT 16.1 LIST OF THE *RIGHTEOUS*

Belgium

Germaine Belline

Liliane Gaffney

Esta Heiber

Andrée Guelen Herscovici

Marie Taquet

Czechoslovakia

Antonín Kalina

France

Marc Donadille

Emilie Gut

Ermine Orsi

Ivan Beltrami

Germany

Berthold Beitz

Gitta Bauer

Fritz Heine

Gertrud Luckner

Maria Countess von Maltzan

Hungary

Malka Csizmadia

Gustav Mikulai

The Netherlands

Johannes De Vries

Arie Van Mansum

Marion P. Van Binsbergen Pritchard

Bert Bochove

Marguerite Mulder

John Weidner

Louisa Steenstra

Pieter and Joyce Miedema

Semmy Riekerk

Tina Strobos

Poland

Zofia Baniecka

Gertruda Babilinska

Jan Karski

Russia

Amfian Gerasimov



© Gay Block



© Gay Block



© Gay Block



SYDNEY JEWISH MUSEUM
THE HOLOCAUST & AUSTRALIAN JEWISH HISTORY

CELEBRATING
1992 – 2002
& FOREVER



Member of the JCA
Family of Organisations