

Unit Two: Nazi Germany 1933-1941 – Introduction

Background Information for Teachers:

For the purpose of study, the Holocaust can be divided into two distinct time periods. The first began on January 30, 1933 when Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and ended on September 1, 1939 with the beginning of World War II. The second period lasted until Germany surrendered (May 8, 1945) and the Nazi era came to an end. Many people associate the term “Holocaust” with the mass murder programs that began in 1941 (concurrent with the German invasion of the Soviet Union), but it is equally important to carefully examine the pre-war period. It was during the early years that the Nazis consolidated their power and created the environment in which they would attempt to implement their racist ideology to its fullest extent. Many lessons about prejudice emerge from this period with serious implications for today.

Main Points:

1. The Nazis did not begin their murder program against Jews immediately upon their ascension to power. Instead, they began a process that would eventually lead to that goal. They spread their ideology through a comprehensive indoctrination program that touched every area of German life. They also instituted a series of gradually increasing restrictions against the Jewish community aimed at social and political isolation and economic strangulation. Their goal, at first, was to force Jewish emigration through progressive hardship and hostility. Physical violence tended at first to be sporadic and localized. The *Kristallnacht* Pogrom of November 9-10, 1938 marked a turning point because of the organized nature and national scope of the action.
2. The Nazis had three main goals for the new German society they sought to build:
 - a. They wanted to politically and socially unify Germany under the unquestioned leadership of Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party. Individuality was to be subsumed for the common good.
 - b. They wanted to strengthen and purify the “Aryan master race” through population growth and the application of eugenics principles.
 - c. They wanted to obtain “living space” (more territory) for Germany to ensure the long-term growth and survival of their anticipated empire.
3. The three goals listed above explain the reasons why, according to Nazi ideology, certain people were considered unacceptable and were persecuted.
 - a. The Nazis imprisoned political opponents and religious dissenters because they threatened the complete unity of the German people. Individuals who were suspected as “politically unreliable” were always in danger, but groups that were labeled as opponents (i.e. – Social Democrats, Communists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, etc.) were specifically targeted. The Nazis opened the first concentration camp for opponents within two months of Hitler’s becoming chancellor.

- b. Handicapped Germans were sterilized or killed because they were considered a drain on scarce resources and their offspring would supposedly weaken the Aryan gene pool.
 - i) Jews and Gypsies were considered racially inferior aliens living in the midst of the German people. Jews, in particular, were said to be eager to pollute pure Aryan blood. They were subjected to continual slander, discriminatory laws, acts of violence, and were pressured to emigrate. Other measures, including genocide, would be used against them later.
 - ii) The Nazis considered German homosexuals to be asocial. They were often incarcerated in concentration camps on this charge.
 - c. Citizens of occupied countries to the east of Germany, particularly Poles and Russians, were persecuted and sometimes killed because their countries were to be absorbed into the new German empire. Their populations were to be dislocated and reduced and would continue to exist only to serve the new order. Of course, this would occur during the war, not during the period covered by this unit. Nevertheless, intense social, economic, diplomatic, and military preparations for war characterized this period.
4. The Nazis controlled all media outlets and carried on a continual propaganda campaign to maintain support for their programs and for their ideology.
 5. The Nazis sought to take over all organizations that might serve as rival centers of power. Other political parties were outlawed. Labor unions were disbanded and replaced by the Nazi Labor Front. School curricula were rewritten to inculcate Nazi ideology. Youth clubs were replaced by the various branches of the Hitler Youth. Through all such groups, people were encouraged to spy on each other and to report “disloyalty”.
 6. Organizations that the Nazis could not directly control, such as the churches, they sought to subvert through the influence of Nazi supporters from within. In cases where that didn’t work, intimidation was also used.
 7. All Germans did not support the Nazis, but most did - enough to make their rule possible. Some went along out of convenience rather than conviction. The consequences of dissent made it difficult, though not entirely impossible, for opponents to engage in resistance.
 8. During the 1930’s, Nazi policies created a refugee crisis as many Jews sought to leave Germany. Most nations expressed sympathy toward these Jews but refused to change restrictive immigration policies. The Nazi leadership was emboldened in their persecutions by the lack of concrete action of the world community on behalf of Jews.

Nazi Germany 1933-1941 – Parallel Timelines

The Holocaust is generally considered to have begun on January 30, 1933 – the day Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. This may be true, but the Holocaust did not spring forth fully formed on that day. It developed gradually over time and in connection with other events. This activity is designed to help students understand the chronology of the pre-war years of the Holocaust in the context of the strengthening of Nazi Germany.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Interpret a chronology of Nazi Germany from 1933 to 1939, identifying events of significance to the development of Nazi control and persecution of minorities.
2. Create a timeline illustrating the strengthening of Nazi Germany.
3. Create a parallel timeline illustrating the Nazi persecution of Jews.
4. Create a third parallel timeline illustrating Nazi persecution of non-Jewish victims.

Materials:

1. Blank Timeline Assignment Sheet (Handout 1)
2. Holocaust Chronology Sheet (Handout 2 – 2 pages)

(Reprinted from the “Classroom Focus” section of *Social Education: Teaching About the Holocaust*, Volume 59, Number 6, October 1995.)

Procedures:

1. Pass out the blank timeline sheet.
2. Pass out the Holocaust Chronology Sheet.
3. Allow the students to complete the timelines, working individually or in small groups.
4. Conduct a class discussion of student responses, proceeding chronologically. Ask students to explain the reasons why they selected the items they included on their timelines.

Extension Activity:

There is a much more extensive chronology activity included in the “Classroom Focus” section of *Social Education: Teaching About the Holocaust*. It deals only with the progressive anti-Semitic measures in Nazi Germany, but in much greater detail. It could be used together with, or as a follow-up to this assignment.

Nazi Germany 1933-1941 - Propaganda

Public opinion was very important to the Nazis. We often think of Nazi rule as a brutal dictatorship. It was, but even a dictator needs supporters in order to be successful. This was especially true of Hitler, who valued propaganda for its ability to enhance his image and shape political views. The most important fact about propaganda is that everyone doesn't have to believe it in order for it to be effective. Propaganda, especially when it is pervasive, has the power to frame the public perception of people and issues even for "non-believers".

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Investigate the Nazi philosophy of the use of propaganda to ascertain its methods and effectiveness.
2. Read brief excerpts of written propaganda regarding Jews and analyze the prejudicial attitudes they conveyed.
3. View visual examples of Nazi propaganda and evaluate their likely emotional impact.
4. Identify examples of the use of propaganda techniques in contemporary modes of communication.

Materials:

1. Nazi Propaganda PowerPoint Presentation (separate download on this website page)
2. Slide Presentation Notes (to assist teachers in the class presentation)
3. Presentation Equipment (capable of showing a PowerPoint Presentation from the CD ROM or directly from the computer)

Procedures:

1. Introduce the idea of propaganda by asking students to brainstorm a list of examples (forms and vehicles) of advertising. Compare attempts to persuade for economic purposes with attempts to persuade for political purposes.
2. Introduce the presentation by challenging students to view the images and words as if they were the intended audience. Ask student to also assess the likely impact of this propaganda on Jews and other opponents of the Nazis.
3. Show the presentation. This is designed to be a teacher-narrated program, but feel free to depart from the on-screen text and to invite student feedback. Discuss the impact of the words and images as they are on screen. Be sure to let students know that these are just a few of the thousands of examples that were used by the Nazis.
4. Have students respond in their journals to one of these three prompts:
 - "If you had lived in Nazi Germany and had disagreed with this propaganda campaign, how could you have fought against it?"
 - "Imagine that it is 1935 and you, as an American, have a pen-pal living in Germany. Write a letter to your friend seeking to persuade them to reject the Nazi message."
 - "Which of the propaganda examples from today's class did you find to be most powerful? Explain your choice."

Extension Activities:

1. Ask students to keep a notebook in a handy place at home and to make a notation each time they encounter an attempt to persuade (not counting commercials). Discuss the results in class.
2. Have students do library or Internet research to find other examples of Nazi propaganda.

Nazi Germany 1933-1941

Readings in Primary and Secondary Sources

“Kristallnacht”: The Night of Broken Glass

By the night of November 9, 1938, German Jews had been experiencing social, political, and economic prejudice for over five years. Still, some felt that the situation couldn't get much worse and that their best strategy would be to endure until the Nazi regime ended. *Kristallnacht* was a turning point for Jews because it shattered those illusions. The extreme violence and the organized nationwide nature of the supposedly spontaneous riots convinced many that the Nazis wouldn't be satisfied until the Jews were completely gone. It was an ominous foreshadowing of things to come.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Read textbook accounts of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom and surrounding events and will analyze their cumulative impact on their victims.
2. Interpret primary source documents to supplement understanding of the events.
3. Evaluate the position of Jews within Nazi Germany based on the events and conditions described in the readings.

Materials:

1. Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust by Susan Bachrach
2. The Holocaust: A History of Courage and Resistance by Bea Stadler
3. Worksheet: “*Kristallnacht*: Discussion Questions from Readings” (Handout 3)
4. Handouts: “Riots of *Kristallnacht* – Heydrich’s Instructions, November 1938” (Handout 4) and “Description of the Riot at Dinslaken” (Handout 5) from Documents on the Holocaust; Yad Vashem, 1981.

Procedures:

1. Introduce the topic of *Kristallnacht* by telling students that they are about to learn about a major turning point in the development of the Holocaust. The readings will not only describe *Kristallnacht*, but also events leading up to and coming after it.

Note: The wearing of the “yellow badge” was implemented at different times throughout areas under Nazi control. It became law in occupied Poland before it was required in Germany. The reason this chapter is included in the lesson on *Kristallnacht* is that the first official suggestion that Jews should be labeled nationwide in this way was brought up at a meeting of Nazi leaders held as a follow-up to *Kristallnacht*. Labeling can thus be seen as part of this process of destruction.

2. Read aloud the section entitled “Night of Broken Glass” from Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust.

3. Pass out the textbook The Holocaust: A History of Courage and Resistance and assign Chapters 2, 3, and 4 for reading.
4. Pass out the handouts: “Riots of *Kristallnacht* – Heydrich’s Instructions, November 1938” and “Description of the Riot at Dislaken”
5. Upon completion of the readings, pass out the worksheet “*Kristallnacht*: Discussion Questions from Readings”.
6. Discuss student responses to the questions in class.

Extension Activities:

- The map on page 12 (map #6) in Holocaust: Maps and Photographs provides an excellent review of the persecution of Jews up to 1938. This map-based review becomes even more powerful in comparison with the map on pages 27 and 28 (map # 13) that shows the plight of Jews seeking to leave Europe.
- There is an excellent web-based presentation on *Kristallnacht* on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum web site at www.ushmm.org. If you have classroom access to the Internet, you may choose to explore this site as a group. If not, you could recommend it on an individual basis.
- There are a number of excellent fiction and non-fiction accounts of the events of this period. Many of them are described in the two literature resource guides in the trunk. There is also an excellent bibliography in the Teacher’s Guide from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Students will greatly benefit from reading books (especially autobiographies) that provide a detailed, yet personal perspective on this history.

Nazi Germany 1933-1941 - The Victims of the Nazis

Under Nazi ideology, there were numerous reasons why a person might be considered unacceptable. People and groups that fit into this broad category could suffer various types of discrimination at the hands of the Nazis.

Objectives: Students will:

1. Conduct research with a group of fellow students into the reasons various people and groups were targeted for persecution by the Nazis.
2. Prepare material based on their research for a class presentation.
3. Compare their research results with those from other student groups to draw general conclusions about Nazi persecution of minorities.

Materials:

1. The Other Victims by Ina Friedman
2. The “victim group” pamphlets and the mini-posters published by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (in the USHMM Packet in the trunk)
3. The Documentary Photo Aids collections (in the trunk) Caution: Be sure to preview these photos. Take out any you are not comfortable having students view or use.
4. Tell Them We Remember by Susan Bachrach
5. Triangles, Badges, and Stars: Remembering the Mosaic of Victims of the Holocaust
6. Any other materials from the trunk or any other available source to facilitate research.
7. Handout: Oral Report Summary Sheet (Handout 6)

Procedures:

1. Set up independent workstations in your classroom so students can use materials from the trunk to do research and prepare their group project reports. Library and Internet sources can be used as well.
2. Introduce this activity by telling students that they are going to do research about different groups that were persecuted by the Nazis. Also tell them that they will be preparing oral reports to present in class.
3. Inform students that each group report will consist of the following:
 - Identification of the targeted group (i.e. the handicapped, Gypsies, etc.)
 - Explanation of the Nazis’ disdain for that group (quotes from Nazi sources would be particularly impressive)
 - Explanation of the discriminatory acts used by the Nazis’ against the group
 - Brief descriptions of several members of the group and what happened to them. First hand accounts or recollections would be a great addition to this part of the report.

- Display of any visual aids that illustrate the material in the report (i.e. an appropriate photo from the trunk collection, mini-poster set, map book, etc.)
4. Each report should last from 5 to 15 minutes depending on the amount of available material on the selected group. Each member of the group should be responsible for one segment of the report lasting from 1 to 3 minutes.
 5. Allow students to group themselves by choosing a topic, or group the students yourself. You will probably want to keep the number of students in each group fairly even (perhaps 3-5 students apiece). Using all the resources in the trunk, the greatest amount of information is available about the following groups:
 - The Sinti and Roma (Gypsies)
 - Jehovah's Witnesses
 - The Handicapped
 - Homosexuals
 - Poles
 - Children (as a sub-group of persecuted groups)

The following groups also represent good choices, but may require outside sources to find enough material:

- Black Germans
 - Christian religious dissenters
 - Political opponents (i.e. members of the Social Democratic or the Communist Parties)
 - Members of other national groups under Nazi occupation
6. On the day that you choose for the group presentations, pass out the "Oral Report Summary Sheet". Instruct students to fill it out with brief responses during the oral reports.

Extension Activity:

Prejudice against many of the groups listed above was not unique to Nazi Germany and sometimes even continued after its defeat. Students could do "follow-up" investigations into the conditions facing these groups since the Holocaust, using a worldwide perspective.

Handout 1

Name: _____

Date: _____

Period: _____

Nazi Germany Before the War – Parallel Timelines

Directions: Study the Holocaust Chronology handout carefully. You will be making three timelines from the events on the handout. On the first timeline, place seven events you think were important to the growth of Nazi military power. On the second timeline, place seven events you think illustrate the worsening situation for Jews. On the third, place seven events you think were significant in the persecution of non-Jewish victims of the Nazis. You do not have to place an event in each year of the timelines, but you must not skip more than one consecutive year on any of the timelines. You will not place every event from the handout on the timelines. Choose the ones that seem most important to you. Be prepared to explain why you chose the events that you used.

	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Nazi Power							
Persecution of Jews							
Persecution of Other Minorities							
	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939

Holocaust Chronology

STEPHEN FEINBERG

1933

- Jan. 30** Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany.
- Feb. 27** *Reichstag* fire.
- Feb. 28** Hitler given emergency powers by presidential decree.
- Mar. 5** *Reichstag* elections; Nazis win 44% of the vote.
- Mar. 20** First concentration camp opens at Dachau.
- Mar. 24** "Enabling Law" passed by *Reichstag*; used to establish dictatorship.
- Apr. 1** Nationwide boycott of Jewish-owned businesses.
- Apr.** Jews excluded from government employment; includes teachers and university professors.
- Apr. 26** Formation of the Gestapo (*Geheime Staatspolizei*).
- May 10** Public burning of books by Jews and opponents of Nazis.
- Jul. 20** Concordat signed in Rome between the Vatican and the Third Reich.
- Oct. 14** German withdrawal from the League of Nations.
- Nov. 12** *Reichstag* elections; Nazis "win" 93% of the vote.
- Dec. 1** Legal unity of German state and Nazi Party declared.

1934

- Jan. 26** Ten-year nonaggression pact signed with Poland.
- Jun. 30** "Night of the Long Knives"; Ernst Roehm, head of the SA, is murdered; SA purged.
- Aug. 2** Death of President von Hindenburg; Hitler declares himself Fuehrer of the German state; armed forces are required to take a personal oath of loyalty to Hitler.
- Oct.-Nov.** First major arrests of homosexuals throughout Germany.

1935

- Mar. 16** In violation of Treaty of Versailles, military conscription introduced; no response from other powers.
- Apr.** Jehovah Witnesses banned from civil service jobs; many arrested throughout Germany.

- Sep. 15** Nuremberg Laws announced; Jews deprived of citizenship.

1936

- Mar. 3** Jewish doctors no longer permitted to practice in government institutions in Germany.
- Mar. 7** Nazi army enters Rhineland in violation of Treaty of Versailles; no response from other powers.
- Jul. 12** First arrest of German Gypsies; sent to Dachau.
- Aug. 1** In anticipation of 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, anti-Semitic signs removed from most public places.
- Oct. 25** Rome-Berlin Axis agreement signed.

1937

- Jul. 16** Establishment of Buchenwald concentration camp.
- Sep. 7** Hitler repudiates Treaty of Versailles.
- Nov. 25** Political and military pact signed by Germany and Japan.

1938

- Mar. 13** Anschluss: Austria is annexed by Germany.
- Jul. 6-15** Thirty-two countries at Evian Conference discuss refugee policies; most countries refuse to let in more Jewish refugees.
- Aug. 17** All Jewish men in Germany will be required to add "Israel" to their names; all Jewish women will be required to add "Sarah."
- Sep. 29** Munich Agreement is signed by Germany, France, Italy and Great Britain; Czechoslovakia loses Sudentenland to Germany.
- Oct. 28** First deportation of Polish Jews from Germany.
- Nov. 7** Shooting of Ernst vom Rath, a low-level Nazi functionary, in Paris by Herschel Grynszpan, a Polish Jew.
- Nov. 9** "*Kristallnacht*," a nationwide pogrom; 30,000 Jews sent to concentration camps.

- Nov. 12** Fine of 1 billion *reichsmarks* levied on Jews of Germany.
- Nov. 15** All Jewish children expelled from public schools.
- Dec. 2-3** Gypsies in Germany required to register with police.

1939

- Mar. 15** Nazis invade Czechoslovakia; no immediate response from other powers.
- May 15** Ravensbruck concentration camp for women established.
- Jun.** Jewish refugees aboard the S.S. *St. Louis* denied entry to the United States and Cuba; forced to return to Europe.
- Aug. 23** Hitler-Stalin Pact signed.
- Sep. 1** Germany invades Poland; World War II begins.
- Sep. 2** Stutthof concentration camp established in Poland.
- Sep. 3** Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- Sep. 21** Reinhard Heydrich (SS) orders establishment of *Judenrate* and concentration of Polish Jews.
- Sep. 28** Partition of Poland between Germany and USSR.
- Oct.** Hitler authorizes "ethanasia program" (T-4) in Germany; doctors to kill institutionalized mentally and physically disabled.
- Oct. 8** First Polish ghetto established in Piotrkow Trybunalski.

1940

- Feb. 8** Establishment of Lodz Ghetto.
- Apr. 27** Heinrich Himmler (SS) orders establishment of Auschwitz concentration camp; first prisoners, mostly Poles, arrive in early June.
- Apr. 30** Lodz Ghetto is sealed.
- Spring** Nazis conquer Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, and France.
- Sep. 27** Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis established.
- Oct. 3** Anti-Jewish laws passed by Vichy government in France.
- Oct. 12** Establishment of Warsaw Ghetto.
- Nov. 15** Warsaw Ghetto is sealed.
- Nov. 20** Hungary, Rumania, and Slovakia join the Nazis and Italians.

1941

- Mar. 1** Himmler orders construction of camp at Birkenau (Auschwitz II); construction begins in October 1941 and continues until March 1942.
- Mar. 3 - 20** Krakow Ghetto established and sealed.

Mar. 24 Nazis invade North Africa.
Apr. 6 Nazis invade Yugoslavia and Greece.
Apr. 24 Lublin Ghetto is sealed.
Jun. 22 Operation "Barbarossa," the Nazi invasion of the USSR.
Jun. 23 *Einsatzgruppen* begin their mass murder of Jews, Gypsies, and Communist leaders in the USSR.
Jul. 20 Minsk Ghetto established.
Jul. 21 Hermann Goering gives Reinhard Heydrich the authority to prepare a "total solution" to the "Jewish question" in Europe.
Aug. 1 Bialystok Ghetto established.
Sep. 1 "Euthanasia program" (T-4) in Germany ended; between 70,000 and 93,000 people had been murdered in Germany during the course of this program.
Sep. 3 The first experimental gassing of Soviet prisoners of war at Auschwitz.
Sep. 3-6 Two ghettos established at Vilna.
Sep. 19 German Jews required to wear yellow badge in public.
Sep. 29-30 At Babi Yar, 33,771 Kiev Jews murdered.
Oct.-Nov. First deportation of German and Austrian Jews to ghettos in Eastern Europe.
Oct. Construction of Majdanek-Lublin extermination camp.
Nov. 1 Construction of Belzec extermination camp begins.
Nov. 24 Theresienstadt (Terezin) concentration camp established.
Dec. 7 Japan attacks Pearl Harbor.
Dec. 8 Gassing operations begin at Chelmo extermination camp.
Dec. 11 Germany and Italy declare war on the United States.

1942

Jan. 20 Wannsee Conference (coordination of the "Final Solution" planned).
Feb. 8 First Jews from Salonika, Greece sent to Auschwitz.
Mar. 1 Construction of Sobibor extermination camp begins; Jews first killed there in May 1942.
Mar. 17 Killings begin at Belzec extermination camp.
Mar. 28 First Jews from France sent to Auschwitz.
Apr. 29 Dutch Jews ordered to wear yellow badge.
May 27 Belgium Jews ordered to wear

yellow badge.

Jun. 7 Jews in occupied France ordered to wear yellow badge.
Jul. 22 Treblinka extermination camp completed; by August 1943, 870,000 Jews murdered at Treblinka.
Jul. 22-Sep. 12 Mass deportations from Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka.
Jul. 28 Jewish fighting organization set up in Warsaw Ghetto.
Aug. 13-20 Majority of Croatian Jews sent to Auschwitz.
Oct. 16 Over 1,000 Roman Jews are deported to Auschwitz.
Nov. 24 Knowledge of the extermination of the Jews of Europe publicly announced in U.S. by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise.

1943

Jan. 18-22 First Warsaw Ghetto uprising breaks out.
Feb. 2 Nazis defeated at Battle of Stalingrad.
Feb. 26 First transport of Gypsies arrive at Auschwitz; Gypsy Camp established.
Apr. 19-May 16 Warsaw Ghetto uprising; Jews resist Nazis' effort to deport them to death camps.
Jul. 21 Himmler orders the liquidation of all ghettos in Poland and USSR.
Aug. 2 Inmate uprising at Treblinka extermination camp.
Aug. 16 Revolt in Bialystok Ghetto.
Oct. 2 Nazis attempt round-up of Danish Jews; Danish people use boats to smuggle most Danish Jews (7,200) to neutral Sweden.
Oct. 14 Inmate revolt at Sobibor extermination camp.
Oct. 20 United Nations War Crimes Commission established.

1944

Mar. 19 Nazis occupy Hungary.
Apr. 5 Hungarian Jews ordered to wear yellow badge.
Apr. 7 Alfred Wetzler and Rudolf Vrba escape from Auschwitz with detailed information about the extermination of the Jews; their report, from Slovakia, reaches the free world in June.
May 2 First transport of Hungarian Jews reach Auschwitz; by July 9, over 437,000 Hungarian Jews are sent to Auschwitz; most of them are gassed.
Jun. 6 Allied invasion of Normandy.
Jul. 20 Unsuccessful attempt made to assassinate Hitler.

Jul. 24 Soviet army liberates Majdanek extermination camp.
Aug. 2 Gypsy camp at Auschwitz destroyed by Nazis; 3,000 Gypsies gassed.
Oct. 7 Prisoners blow up one of the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp.

1945

Jan. 17 Nazis evacuate Auschwitz; "death marches" toward Germany.
Jan. 27 Soviet army liberates Auschwitz.
Apr. 11 American army liberates Buchenwald concentration camp.
Apr. 15 British army liberates Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.
Apr. 28 Mussolini executed by Italian partisans.
Apr. 29 American army liberates Dachau concentration camp.
Apr. 29-30 Ravensbruck concentration camp liberated.
Apr. 30 Hitler commits suicide in Berlin.
May 2 Soviet troops capture Berlin.
May 3 Nazis hand over Theresienstadt to the International Red Cross.
May 5 American army liberates Mauthausen concentration camp.
May 7 Nazi Germany surrenders; end of World War II in Europe.
Aug. 14 Japan surrenders; end of World War II.
Nov. 20 First major Nuremberg War Crimes Trials begin.

1946

Oct. 1 Conclusion of first major Nuremberg Trials; twelve Nazis to be executed, three sentenced to life imprisonment, four receive various prison terms, and three are acquitted.
Oct. 16 Execution of Nazi war criminals.

1948

May 14 State of Israel established.

Sources

Bachrach, Susan D. *Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1994.
Gutman, Israel (Ed.). *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*. New York: Macmillan, 1990.
Hilberg, Raul. *The Destruction of the European Jews*. New York: Holmes and Meier, 1985.
Reidinger, Gerald. *The Final Solution: The Attempt to Exterminate the Jews of Europe 1939-1945*. New York: Beechhurst Press, 1953.

HANDOUT 3

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Kristallnacht: Discussion Questions from Readings

Directions: After reading the assigned selections, answer the following questions. Use the back of this page or a separate sheet of paper if you need more space.

1. What was the incident that the Nazis used as an excuse for the *Kristallnacht* riots?

2. Describe the different ways Jews were attacked during and as a result of *Kristallnacht*.

3. How did the Nuremberg Laws of 1935 attack Jews?

4. List at least 4 other restrictions placed on Jews by discriminatory laws.

5. What did the Nazis begin to do to the Jews of Germany in October of 1941?

6. What did the police order German Jews to do beginning on September 1, 1941?

7. Describe the damaging effects of the Nazi requirement for Jews to wear a star badge.

8. How did some people fight back against the intent of the decree? List one way for Jews and another for non-Jews.

9. Why do you think the man describing the riot in Dislaken was bitter toward the police?

10. How do you think he felt about the bystanders? Explain why you think this was so.

**RIOTS OF KRISTALLNACHT* —
HEYDRICH'S INSTRUCTIONS, NOVEMBER 1938**

Secret

Copy of Most Urgent telegram from Munich, of November 10, 1938, 1:20 A.M.

To

All Headquarters and Stations of the State Police

All Districts and Sub-districts of the SD

Urgent! For immediate attention of Chief or his deputy!

Re: Measures against Jews tonight

Following the attempt on the life of Secretary of the Legation vom Rath in Paris, demonstrations against the Jews are to be expected in all parts of the Reich in the course of the coming night, November 9/10, 1938. The instructions below are to be applied in dealing with these events:

1. The Chiefs of the State Police, or their deputies, must immediately upon receipt of this telegram contact, by telephone, the political leaders in their areas — *Gauleiter* or *Kreisleiter* — who have jurisdiction in their districts and arrange a joint meeting with the inspector or commander of the Order Police to discuss the arrangements for the demonstrations. At these discussions the political leaders will be informed that the German Police has received instructions, detailed below, from the *Reichsführer* SS and the Chief of the German Police, with which the political leadership is requested to coordinate its own measures:

- a) Only such measures are to be taken as do not endanger German lives or property (i.e., synagogues are to be burned down only where there is no danger of fire in neighboring buildings).
- b) Places of business and apartments belonging to Jews may be destroyed but not looted. The police is instructed to supervise the observance of this order and to arrest looters.
- c) In commercial streets particular care is to be taken that non-Jewish businesses are completely protected against damage.
- d) Foreign citizens — even if they are Jews — are not to be molested.

2. On the assumption that the guidelines detailed under para. 1 are observed, the demonstrations are not to be prevented by the Police, which is only to supervise the observance of the guidelines.

3. On receipt of this telegram Police will seize all archives to be found in all synagogues and offices of the Jewish communities so as to prevent their destruction during the demonstrations. This refers only to material of historical value, not to contemporary tax records, etc. The archives are to be handed over to the locally responsible officers of the SD.

4. The control of the measures of the Security Police concerning the demonstrations against the Jews is vested in the organs of the State Police, unless inspectors of the Security Police have given their own instructions. Officials of the Criminal Police, members of the SD, of the Reserves and the SS in general may be used to carry out the measures taken by the Security Police.

5. As soon as the course of events during the night permits the release of the officials required, as many Jews in all districts—especially the rich—as can be accommodated in existing prisons are to be arrested. For the time being only healthy male Jews, who are not too old, are to be detained. After the detentions have been carried out the appropriate concentration camps are to be contacted immediately for the prompt accommodation of the Jews in the camps. Special care is to be taken that the Jews arrested in accordance with these instructions are not ill-treated.

signed Heydrich,
SS Gruppenführer

PS — 3051.

* "Night of the Broken Glass."

DESCRIPTION OF THE RIOT AT DINSLAKEN

...I recognized a Jewish face. In a few words the stranger explained to me: "I am the president of the Jewish community of Düsseldorf. I spent the night in the waiting-room of the Gelsenkirchen Railway Station. I have only one request—let me take refuge in the orphanage for a short while. While I was traveling to Dinslaken I heard in the train that anti-Semitic riots had broken out everywhere, and that many Jews had been arrested. Synagogues everywhere are burning!"

With anxiety I listened to the man's story; suddenly he said with a trembling voice: "No, I won't come in! I can't be safe in your house! We are all lost!" With these words he disappeared into the dark fog which cast a veil over the morning. I never saw him again.

In spite of this Job's message I forced myself not to show any sign of emotion. Only thus could I avoid a state of panic among the children and tutors. Nonetheless I was of the opinion that the young students should be prepared to brave the storm of the approaching catastrophe. About 7:30 A.M. I ordered 46 people—among them 32 children—into the dining hall of the institution and told them the following in a simple and brief address:

"As you know, last night a Herr vom Rath, a member of the German Embassy in Paris, was assassinated. The Jews are held responsible for this murder. The high tension in the political field is now being directed against the Jews, and during the next few hours there will certainly be anti-Semitic excesses. This will happen even in our town. It is my feeling and my impression that we German Jews have never experienced such calamities since the Middle Ages. Be strong! Trust in God! I am sure we will withstand even these hard times. Nobody will remain in the rooms of the upper floor of the building. The exit door to the street will be opened only by myself! From this moment on everyone is to heed my orders only!"

After breakfast the pupils were sent to the large study-hall of the institution. The teacher in charge tried to keep them busy.

At 9:30 A.M. the bell at the main gate rang persistently. I opened the door: about 50 men stormed into the house, many of them with their coat- or jacket-collars turned up. At first they rushed into the dining room, which fortunately was empty, and there they began their work of destruction, which was carried out with the utmost precision. The frightened and fearful cries of the children resounded through the building. In a stentorian voice I shouted: "Children, go out into the street immediately!" This advice was certainly contrary to the order of the Gestapo. I thought, however, that in the street, in a public place, we might be in less danger than inside the house. The children immediately ran down a small staircase at the back, most of them without hat or coat—despite the cold and wet weather. We tried to reach the next street crossing, which

was close to Dinslaken's Town Hall, where I intended to ask for police protection. About ten policemen were stationed here, reason enough for a sensation-seeking mob to await the next development. This was not very long in coming; the senior police officer, Freihahn, shouted at us: "Jews do not get protection from us! Vacate the area together with your children as quickly as possible!" Freihahn then chased us back to a side street in the direction of the backyard of the orphanage. As I was unable to hand over the key of the back gate, the policeman drew his bayonet and forced open the door. I then said to Freihahn: "The best thing is to kill me and the children, then our ordeal will be over quickly!" The officer responded to my "suggestion" merely with cynical laughter. Freihahn then drove all of us to the wet lawn of the orphanage garden. He gave us strict orders not to leave the place under any circumstances.

Facing the back of the building, we were able to watch how everything in the house was being systematically destroyed under the supervision of the men of law and order—the police. At short intervals we could hear the crunching of glass or the hammering against wood as windows and doors were broken. Books, chairs, beds, tables, linen, chests, parts of a piano, a radiogram, and maps were thrown through apertures in the wall, which a short while ago had been windows or doors.

In the meantime the mob standing around the building had grown to several hundred. Among these people I recognized some familiar faces, suppliers of the orphanage or trades-people, who only a day or a week earlier had been happy to deal with us as customers. This time they were passive, watching the destruction without much emotion.

At 10:15 A.M. we heard the wailing of sirens! We noticed a heavy cloud of smoke billowing upward. It was obvious from the direction it was coming from that the Nazis had set the synagogue on fire. Very soon we saw smoke-clouds rising up, mixed with sparks of fire. Later I noticed that some Jewish houses, close to the synagogue, had also been set alight under the expert guidance of the fire-brigade. Its presence was a

necessity, since the firemen had to save the homes of the non-Jewish neighborhood...

In the schoolyard we had to wait for some time. Several Jews, who had escaped the previous arrest and deportation to concentration camps, joined our gathering. Many of them, mostly women, were shabbily dressed. They told me that the brown hordes had driven them out of their homes, ordered them to leave everything behind and come at once, under Nazi guard, to the schoolyard. A stormtrooper in charge commanded some bystanders to leave the schoolyard "since there is no point in even looking at such scum!"

In the meantime our "family" had increased to 90, all of whom were placed in a small hall in the school. Nobody was allowed to leave the place. Men considered physically fit were called for duty. Only those over 60—among them people of 75 years of age—were allowed to stay. Very soon we learned that the entire Jewish male population under 60 had already been transferred to the concentration camp at Dachau. During their initial waiting period, while still under police custody, the Jewish men had been allowed to buy their own food. This state of affairs, however, only lasted for a few hours.

I learned very soon from a policeman, who in his heart was still an anti-Nazi, that most of the Jewish men had been beaten up by members of the SA before being transported to Dachau. They were kicked, slapped in the face, and subjected to all sorts of humiliation. Many of those exposed to this type of ill-treatment had served in the German army during World War I. One of them, a Mr. Hugo B.C., had once worn with pride the Iron Cross First Class (the German equivalent of the Victoria Cross), which he had been awarded for bravery....

Y. S. Herz, "Kristallnacht at the Dinslaken Orphanage," *Yad Vashem Studies*, XI, 1976, pp. 345-349.

HANDOUT 6

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

The Victims of the Nazis: Oral Report Summary Sheet

Directions: Fill out the following chart with brief descriptions about each group report.

Name of Group	Reason for Nazi Persecution	Discriminatory Acts Suffered

Do these groups have anything in common besides victimization at the hands of the Nazis?
