

Unit Title: **The Aftermath****Holocaust Education - Historical Notes and Teaching Suggestions for Educators:**

More than seventy years have passed since the end of the Holocaust and the ramifications of that human tragedy are with us as much as ever. In some ways, it has taken the passage of years to even begin to understand the scope of the harm that has been done. Questions of responsibility, moral and ethical values, and the meaning of civilization continue to be raised in a variety of ways. As a subject for study, the Holocaust has assumed a position of importance greater than ever before. In light of this fact, we can consider our own teaching of the Holocaust to be part of the aftermath. It is wholly appropriate to ask if the world has yet learned the appropriate lessons and, if not, what we can do to make a difference.

Main Points:

1. Crimes of genocide and gross human rights violations have been committed in many places in the years since the Holocaust, up to the present time. The forces that give rise to such crimes are still a part of the world and demand our active opposition.
2. Questions of responsibility are still current. In recent years, several European nations, such as France and Switzerland, have reassessed their roles in the events of the Holocaust. So too have other groups. The Red Cross, the Vatican, IBM, Ford, the U.S. State Department, and many others have been confronted with questions about their actions or inaction. Of course, there are still some individuals alive who bear some of the responsibility as well.
3. Issues of restitution and compensation are still current. In recent years, information has been uncovered concerning looted art, frozen or hidden bank accounts, and insurance policies that were never honored. Those seeking justice in this area also want to communicate the message that the passage of time will not erase responsibility.
4. Racist, neo-Nazi, and other anti-Jewish/antisemitic organizations and terrorist groups, continue to be active in recruiting followers and in carrying out acts of violence. Their ideology represents as much of a threat today as the original Nazis did in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. Holocaust denial is part of the agenda as well.
5. Bystanders, through their indifference, helped to make the Holocaust possible. Recognition of this fact reminds us that we have a responsibility to proactively resist attitudes and acts of prejudice whenever we encounter them.
6. Our responsibility regarding the Holocaust lies mainly in the realm of learning and applying lessons and preserving memory. Holocaust survivor testimony can help us accomplish these tasks. It should be incorporated into our teaching in ways that help us to remember our common bond of humanity with victims of persecution and oppression.
7. If the goal of “Never Again” is to be realized, it is up to us to help to make it so. The dream may not be fully realized in our lifetimes, but we have the responsibility to carry it forward nonetheless.