


# Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust Teacher Guide 2012



Dear Teacher,

This Teacher Guide is designed to support you and your students in preparing for your field trip to the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust. In this guide, you will find basic information regarding the Holocaust and its main events. In addition to providing background materials, this guide also includes pre- and post-visit activities that will help prepare your students as well as debrief with them when back at school. The more you are able to cover in the classroom before your visit, the more your students will be able to take full advantage of their time at the Museum.

The Teacher Guide is organized in sections: Background Concepts and Guide to the Museum introduce key themes and historical events prominent in the Museum. The bold type words in these sections are defined in the Glossary at the end of the guide. The At the Museum box on the bottom of each page provides an introduction to the gallery's artifacts and interactive technology. The  symbol denotes an audio-guide prompt that students can listen to at the Museum. The At School section provides pre- and post- visit activities.

When learning about a sensitive subject like the Holocaust, it is always important to provide opportunities to share and discuss questions, reflections and feelings. For this reason, we think it is important to debrief after a tour. You can do so in the park surrounding the Museum or in your classroom.

We encourage teachers to visit our facility before your field trip so that you become familiar with the exhibition content. The Education Team will be available to meet with you and answer your questions.

Thank you for choosing the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust as your field trip destination.

Warmly,

Ilaria Benzoni-Clark  
Education Director

# History of the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust

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Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust (LAMOTH) is the oldest Holocaust Museum in the United States. In 1961, a group of Holocaust survivors taking English as a Second Language classes at Hollywood High School met to talk about their experiences. They realized that each of them had a photograph, an artifact, or other precious primary source object that they carried with them from the Holocaust era. They decided that these objects needed a permanent home; a place where they could be displayed safely and in perpetuity. The survivors also wanted a physical space where they could memorialize their lost loved ones and educate future generations about the Holocaust. For nearly five decades, Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust has created unique programming in the field of Holocaust education.

LAMOTH is a free museum. The founding survivors insisted that no visitors ever be turned away from the Museum because they could not afford an entry fee. LAMOTH continues its mission of providing free public education about the most horrific event in human history.

In October 2010, LAMOTH opened its new building in Pan Pacific Park. The Museum's exhibits display many of the Museum collection's artifacts and historical documents. The galleries are organized chronologically, covering Jewish life before the Holocaust, as well as key historical events between 1933 and 1945.

The Museum's architecture allows the physical building to be fully integrated into the surrounding park landscape. The building was designed by Belzberg Architects, under head architect Hagy Belzberg. The Museum is comprised of three different spaces. There is the internal museum space, the Goldrich Family Foundation Children's Memorial and the green roof of the building. The GFF Children's Memorial is an incredibly evocative space, where the 1.2 million children who perished in the Holocaust are remembered. A small Garden of the Righteous pays homage to those who risked their lives to save others.

The Museum's exhibits display many of the Museum collection's artifacts and historical documents. The galleries are organized chronologically, covering Jewish life before the Holocaust, as well as key historical events between 1933 and 1945. The museum's design also incorporates the Martyr's Memorial monument, which was built in 1991. These outdoor spaces provide students with opportunities for reflection and discussion.



# Your Field Trip to the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust

Visiting the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust is an important educational experience for schools in the LA area. It meets the California Content Standards related to Language Arts and Social Sciences, and also provides the once in a lifetime opportunity to meet a first-hand witness of history, a Holocaust survivor.

The Museum strongly believes in educating about the Holocaust in order to encourage civic and social responsibility in today's youth. These concepts are explored in our programs, along with issues of prejudice, intolerance and racism.

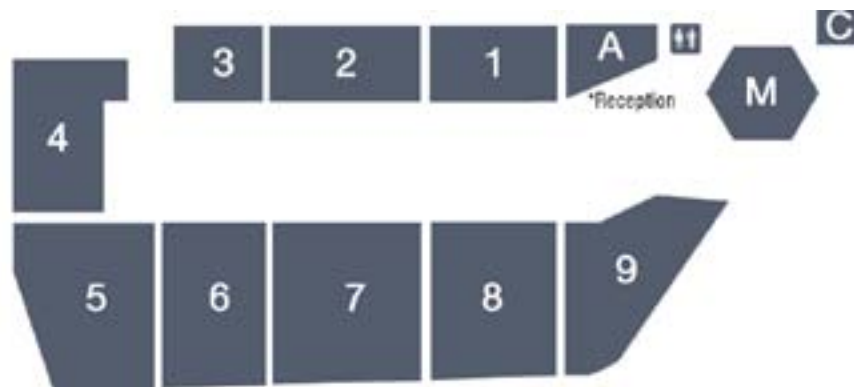
A typical school visit includes:

- An introduction to the Museum and the Holocaust
- A tour of the Museum collection
- A Holocaust survivor talk
- Q&A with a Holocaust survivor

Students come to the Museum to learn about the events that shaped European and World History between 1933 and 1945. Museum educators and docents stimulate conversations and provide tools for students to approach this sensitive subject and understand its continuing relevance. Visiting the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust informs students about history in an effort to inspire socially and civically responsible choices in their own lives.

Tours are led by trained docents. Some of our docents are Holocaust survivors or Second Generation (children of Holocaust survivors). They enrich the tour with their own personal and family histories. Students are also provided with our award-winning audio-guides which allow them the opportunity to explore images, documents and artifacts in greater depth. The audio-guide also allows students the ability to listen to music, poetry and audio from before, during and after the Holocaust.

The Museum works with a group of Holocaust survivors who volunteer their time to meet students and speak about their war experience. Our Holocaust survivors encompass a wide range of backgrounds; some were hidden children, others survived imprisonment in concentration camps and a few escaped and joined the Resistance. Our speakers have extensive experience in public speaking and have been involved in Holocaust Education for many years. We do our best to match the speakers to the needs and interest of the groups.



# Background Concepts: The Holocaust

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The Holocaust was the state-organized, systematic extermination of European Jewry perpetrated by Nazi Germany, its allies and collaborators. The Nazi leadership saw the extermination of the Jews as critical to establishing a new German order in Europe.

Hitler preached the superiority of the Aryan “master race”, with the ideal “Aryan” being blond, blue-eyed and tall. Hitler believed that only a pure race could achieve world domination. The Nazis strove to build the “Master German Race” and persecuted other minority groups including the Roma-Sinti, Jehovah’s Witness, and others who were considered “inferior”. In addition, real and perceived political opponents of the Nazi regime were persecuted. The Nazis also viewed people with disabilities to be a threat to the Master German Race. The Nazi euthanasia program, known as T-4, murdered over 185,000 adults and children with disabilities. The Jews, however, were considered to be the primary enemy of Nazi Germany.

The “Final Solution to the Jewish Question,” a euphemism for annihilation, was implemented through mass killing and forced labor in all German occupied and controlled countries and territories. The “Final Solution” was an unprecedented and unparalleled genocidal operation against the Jewish people. Its goal was not subjugation but annihilation of an entire people. As a result, six million, of the eleven million Jews living in Europe, were murdered.

While the term “Holocaust” has come to denote the destruction of European Jews by Nazi Germany, the word “holocaust,” generally means “burning”. The term “Holocaust” can be found in the Biblical text 1: Samuel 7-9 and refers to the consumption of a sacrifice by fire. The Hebrew term for the state-organized extermination of European Jewry is “Shoah,” which connotes a calamity, disaster, or destruction that cannot be fully described by human language.

# Background Concepts: Anti-Semitism

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The word anti-Semitism is understood to mean prejudice against or hatred of Jews. The Holocaust is history's most extreme example of anti-Semitism. In 1879, German journalist Wilhelm Marr coined the term anti-Semitism, denoting a general hatred of Jews.

Jews have experienced anti-Semitic incidents for thousands of years and have been the scapegoat for many social and political problems. During the rise of Christianity, the Jewish people were blamed collectively for Jesus' crucifixion. During the Crusades, a time of religious fervor between 1095 and 1291 CE, Jews were expelled from their homeland, their property confiscated and thousands were massacred. The 15th century Inquisition, a tribunal of the Roman Catholic Church to investigate heresy against the Church, resulted in tens of thousands Jews being tortured, imprisoned and burned at the stake. When Jews refused to convert to Protestantism during the Reformation, Jews were again expelled from their land and their property confiscated.

For hundreds of years, Jews have been forced to wear badges of shame (see Badges of Shame exhibit in Gallery 1). Forced segregation of Jews into ghettos originated in Venice, Italy in 1517 when Jews were required to live in the walled in quarter of the Ghetto Nuovo (New Foundry). This practice spread throughout Europe, and many cities created Jewish ghettos. Jews were also prohibited from attending certain schools and universities and from practicing many professions.

It was not until the 18th century Enlightenment that Jews in Western Europe began to be emancipated. Jews were gradually given equal rights and were allowed to live and dress as they pleased. Many Jews abandoned traditional Jewish practices in order to assimilate into their country's culture. Jews in Eastern Europe continued to face anti-Semitic persecution/attacks, which resulted in waves of pogroms.

Many Jews believed that assimilation was the only solution to anti-Semitism. In the face of new racial ideologies that were anti-Semitic in nature (theories proposed that groups of people inherited aspects of their character and behavior; even if one converted or assimilated, these behaviors could not be changed), Jews realized that assimilation was no longer an option. Zionism, the movement to establish a Jewish home in the land of Israel, became a prominent ideology within Jewish communities in the last decade of the 19th century. Jews began to see emigration to Palestine as a key tool to combat anti-Semitism.

Unfortunately, anti-Semitism did not end with the Nazis. Modern hate groups still propagate anti-Semitism and practice Holocaust denial.

# Background Concepts: The Jews of Europe

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The Holocaust concerns the murder and destruction of European Jews. Who were European Jews? The Torah or Jewish Bible is perhaps the oldest written chronicle of a history of a people and dates back to the time of King David (around 1000 BCE). The Jewish people lived primarily in and around Jerusalem, Israel. However, several times over the next thousand years, the Jewish kingdom was conquered and Jews were forced to live in exile, outside of Israel. But when it was safe, the Jews returned to Israel and re-established their religious community and statehood.

What initially set the Jews apart was their monotheism, their belief in only one all-powerful God. Around the time of Jesus, who was a Jew at the beginning of the Common Era, Israel (or Judea, as it was then called) was under Roman rule. As Roman subjects, Jews were able to practice their religion. As many as five million of the Roman Empire's fifty million people may have been Jews.

But when the Jewish rebellions against the Romans were defeated in 66-70 CE and 132 CE, many Jews were again driven into exile. Some settled in the north of Israel and in Babylonia (present-day Iraq), where they continued to practice their religion and later codified their practices in the books of the Talmud to preserve their culture. Others settled in Roman cities in Europe and North Africa. Although they no longer lived in Israel, Jews continued to practice their religion, to study the Torah, to observe the Shabbat, the dietary laws (kashrut), circumcision and various religious holidays such as Passover, which commemorates the liberation of the Jews from Egypt.

By 313 CE, when the Roman emperor Constantine adopted the Christian religion, Jews were perhaps the most visible religious minority group in Europe. But with Christianity now an official state religion, many Jews converted and abandoned their Jewish practices to avoid discriminatory laws. By 400 CE, the Jewish population had declined to under two million people. During the Early Middle Ages, from 400 –1100 CE, Jews lived wherever they were given the most religious freedom. When Christian persecution created great difficulties, Jews found refuge in Eastern Europe or in more tolerant Muslim areas in Southern Europe and the Middle East.

By 1930, Jews were living as they had for 2,000 years as a religious and cultural minority throughout Europe. In countries where Jews had been given freedom and economic conditions were favorable, Jews prospered with the rest of the population. However, in places where freedom was restricted and economic conditions were poor, Jews suffered. Jewish religious, social and political life varied from country to country. In terms of religious practice, Jews were everything from religious, non-religious or varying degrees in between. They were rich and poor; capitalist and communist; assimilated and religious. Basically, Jews were as varied as the non-Jewish Europeans with whom they had lived for centuries.

# Gallery 1: The World That Was



The first gallery of the Museum focuses on The World That Was. Artifacts in the gallery include every-day Jewish items as well as centuries-old religious items. The photo-wall of prominent Jews in the arts & sciences help visitors understand the accomplishments of Jews in Europe. The centerpiece of the gallery is The World That Was Interactive Table. The Table houses over 8,000 images of Jewish life prior to 1939. Each photograph provides an intimate look at Jewish life in Europe before the war. The images available on the Interactive Table are drawn from the Centropa Database and the Museum archives.

## LIFE BEFORE THE HOLOCAUST


Before the Nazis seized power in 1933, European Jewry was richly diverse. In many countries, Jews stood as cultural and political luminaries, and served alongside non-Jews in World War I. In little more than a decade, most of Europe would be conquered, occupied, or annexed by Nazi Germany and its Axis partners, and the majority of European Jews--two out of every three--would be dead.

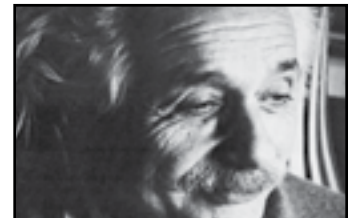
In 1933, approximately 9.5 million Jews lived in Europe, comprising 1.7% of the total European population. This number represented more than 60 percent of the world's Jewish population at that time, estimated at 15.3 million. The majority of Jews in prewar Europe resided in Eastern Europe. The largest Jewish communities were in Poland; Poland's Jewish population numbered around 3,000,000. Only 500,000 Jews lived in Germany, less than 1% of the total German Population.

The Jews in Eastern Europe lived primarily in all-Jewish towns known as shtetls. They lived separately from non-Jews and spoke Yiddish, a language that combines elements of German and Hebrew. This separation was largely a result of anti-Semitic laws that limited where Jews could live.

Jews in Western Europe tended to assimilate more. Jews lived in more urban environments and participated in both traditional Jewish practices and local European culture. Jews worked in a variety of professions ranging from farmers to doctors, tailors to teachers. The majority of Jews living in Central and Western Europe had been emancipated by the end of the 19th century. For the first time, Jews in these areas were granted equal rights

### At the Museum:

- Learn more about anti-Semitism and the clothing Jews were forced to wear throughout history by viewing our Badges of Shame exhibit.
- Use our World That Was Interactive Table to explore thousands of photographs of Jewish life in Europe.
- View Jewish religious artifacts and learn about their use.
- Learn about fifty Jews who made contributions to the Arts and Sciences in pre-war Europe. Listen to  126-181.



# Gallery 2: Nazi Rise To Power



Prominent historical events are discussed in detail in this gallery, including Hitler's rise to power, the Nuremberg Laws, the Anschluss, the Munich Olympics, the Evian Conference and the SS. St Louis. This gallery is particularly rich in artifacts. Some of the artifacts displayed are Nazi propaganda materials, original copies of books burned by the Nazi party, Nazi weaponry and emigration documents.

## NAZI RISE TO POWER: 1933-1938

World War I ended with the Treaty of Versailles which forced Germany to pay the victorious countries for the War's cost. This, and the chronic political instability of the democratic Weimar Republic, plagued Germany in the 1920s and led to economic and social strife throughout the country. Adolf Hitler capitalized on the despairing society and blamed Germany's defeat on Liberals, Marxists and Jews. Hitler asserted his hatred of Jews, whom he considered a "foreign race" and assured the supremacy of the Aryan Race and the need for racial purity.

Hitler's new nationalistic movement was called the National Socialist German Workers Party, or Nazi Party, for short. Soon the Nazis became the strongest party in the government after being democratically elected to Parliament. In January 1933, Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. The first concentration camp, Dachau, was established in March 1933 to detain political prisoners.

As the Nazis grew in power, Hitler appealed to the masses through propaganda. The Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda was established to ensure that the Nazi message was successfully communicated through art, music, theater, films, books, radio, educational materials, and the press. Nazi propaganda targeted a variety of age-ranges, backgrounds and demographics. Propaganda used negative stereotypes to propagate the Jews as a detested "other." Jews, and other non-Aryans, were depicted as dangerous enemies of Germany.

In the spring of 1933, the Nazi Party began to boycott Jewish businesses and dismiss Jews from government jobs. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were passed. Jews were excluded from having German citizenship and prohibited from marrying or having sexual relations with persons of "German or German-related blood." Additional laws took away political rights including the right to vote and hold public office.

The Nuremberg Laws did not identify a "Jew" as someone with particular religious convictions but someone with at least three Jewish grandparents. Many Germans who did not regularly practice Judaism or had converted to Christianity were now defined as Jews. Over the next few years, legislation was passed that denied Jews from practicing most professions, attending German schools, holding a driver's license, or attending theaters, movie cinemas, and concert halls.



Life for German Jews became increasingly oppressive. Kristallnacht, “Night of Crystal” or “Night of Broken Glass,” is traditionally viewed as the turning point in Nazi Germany’s persecution of the Jews. On November 9 and 10, 1938, anti-Jewish pogroms took place throughout Germany and Austria. The rioters destroyed 267 synagogues, desecrated over 1,400 synagogues and looted over 7,500 Jewish-owned businesses. At least 30,000 Jewish men were rounded up and deported to concentration camps, and 91 Jews were killed.

Kristallnacht marks the first instance in which the Nazi regime incarcerated Jews on a massive scale simply because they were Jewish though specific individual violent acts against Jews had been occurring since 1933.

In the wake of Kristallnacht, thousands of Jews tried to emigrate from Germany. Jews who wanted to emigrate were forced to relinquish their titles to homes and businesses, and were subject to increasingly heavy emigration taxes. The Nazis also restricted how much money could be transferred abroad from German banks, and allowed each passenger to take only ten reichsmarks (about U.S. \$4) out of the country. Those who tried to leave faced stiff fees and many were forced to bribe officials for documents. Most of the German Jews who managed to emigrate were completely impoverished by the time they were able to leave.

Many nations imposed significant obstacles to immigration; the world-wide economic depression reinforced an existing fear of foreigners and countries did not want to increase their immigration quotas. Representatives of 32 countries attended the Evian

Conference on July 6-15, 1938. The conference addressed the growing refugee situation. Representatives showed complete ambivalence towards the Jewish problem and few countries loosened their immigration quotas. Application processes for entry visas were elaborate and Jews found it increasingly difficult to leave Germany.

The difficulty of emigration was epitomized by the S.S. St Louis, a ship that set sail from Germany to Cuba in 1939 with 937 passengers. Although the majority of passengers had the correct paperwork, the Cuban government revoked their certificates. The ship then sailed to America but the U.S immigration quota policy did not allow them to enter. The ship returned to Europe and many passengers were subsequently killed during the Holocaust.

The British government eased immigration restrictions for its Kindertransport program; Jewish children under the age of 17 were allowed to emigrate. Families or organizations had to guarantee to pay for each child’s care, education and emigration fees. In return, the British government allowed 7,500 Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland to emigrate to Great Britain between 1938 and 1940. The majority of these children never saw their families again as those that could not leave were murdered during the Holocaust.

### At the Museum:

- Learn more about Nazi Propaganda by exploring the children’s books, anti-Semitic newspapers and posters
- View books burned by the Nazi party and learn about the authors of such books (in the artifact drawers)
- Listen to 241 to learn about Rita Berwald & her experience as a Kindertransport
- Examine the emigration documents displayed and listen to a family’s personal story (choose 251, 252 or 254)



# Gallery 3: World War II & Ghettos



Gallery 3 begins with the Invasion of Poland and focuses on the primary historical events between 1939 and 1942 including ghettoization, the Einsatzgruppen, Pearl Harbor and Japanese Internment in America. In addition to historical photographs, artifacts from ghettos are displayed in the gallery.

## WORLD WAR II & GHETTOIZATION

Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. Two day later, Great Britain and France declared war on Germany, beginning World War II. The Polish army was defeated within weeks and Poland was partitioned between Germany and the Soviet Union.

In the spring of 1940, Germany began its assault on Western Europe and invaded Denmark, Norway the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxemburg. In June 1940, France signed an armistice with Germany which allowed for German occupation of the northern half of the country.

Germany broke the German-Soviet Pact on June 22, 1941 when they invaded the Soviet Union. Einsatzgruppen (Mobile Killing Units) murdered those perceived to be racial or political enemies of the Soviet Union. Shooting was the most common form of killing used by the Einsatzgruppen. On September 29-30, Ukraine. Over one million Jews were murdered by the Einsatzgruppen in total.

The Nazis established thousands of ghettos throughout

Europe. A ghetto was a confined area of a city established to segregate Jews and serve as a holding place prior to deportation to the Camps. The first ghetto was established in Poland in October 1939.

Some ghettos existed for only a few days while others existed for years. Jews were forced to live in unsanitary conditions; starvation, inadequate healthcare, extreme overcrowding, disease and severe weather led to the death of tens of thousands. The Judenrat (Jewish Council) controlled daily life and administered the Nazi orders. Jews in the ghettos responded to Nazi oppression with various forms of spiritual resistance. They made conscious attempts to preserve the history, religious and communal life of the Jewish people. These efforts included: creating Jewish cultural institutions, continuing to observe religious holidays and rituals, providing clandestine education, publishing underground newspapers, and collecting and hiding documentation.

On December 7, 1941 Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and the United States declared war on Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States and the military conflict widened.

### At the Museum:

- Listen to excerpts of diaries written by Jews in the ghetto ( ♦ 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 342)
- Learn more about the Nazi Euthanasia program by examining the model of Schloss-Hartheim Castel and listening to ♦ 306.
- View Jewish religious artifacts and learn about their use.
- View artifacts from Lodz, Theresienstadt and Westerbork Ghetto in the display cases



# Gallery 4 & 5: The Nazi Camps



In this area, students learn about the location, purpose, operations and scope of the many concentration camps established during WWII. Touch screen monitors provide in-depth information on 18 different camps. The model of Sobibor illustrates the operations of an extermination camp and the acts of resistance that led to the 1943 prisoners' uprising and escape.

## THE BOXCAR

This exhibit is a replica of the cattle cars that were often used to transport Jews to concentration and death camps. The silent movie clip shows footage of the deportation of Jewish communities from Bulgaria, which started on March 4th, 1943. 3,000 Jews were driven by trucks to a railway station and put on trains without food or water. The people on this transport were sent to Treblinka

Jews were deported to death camps from Germany and German-occupied Europe by rail. To cover their plans of annihilation, Nazis often used euphemistic language. They referred to deportation as "resettlement to the East". Victims were told that they were being resettled

extermination camps. After the June 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union, SS and police units (Einsatzgruppen) began massive killing operations that targeted the entire Jewish population. On January 20, 1942, 15 high-ranking Nazi Party and German government officials gathered at a villa in Wannsee, Berlin. Among them were Reinhard Heydrich and Heinrich Himmler. During this meeting, they discussed and coordinated the implementation of the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question", the plan to systematically annihilate the European Jews.

To implement the Final Solution, six extermination camps were built. The extermination camps were: Chelmno, Belzec, Treblinka, Sobibor, Auschwitz-Birkenau, and Majdanek. All death camps were located in Poland. Gas chambers were built in the extermination camps to speed up the killing process. The poisonous gas Zyklon B was used in these facilities. Upon arrival to the camp, prisoners were ordered to leave their belongings and strip off their clothes. They were then assembled in large groups and taken to the gas chambers, where they were killed within minutes. It is estimated that at the height of the deportations, up to 6,000 Jews were gassed each day at Auschwitz-Birkenau alone.

## NAZI CAMPS

Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi Germany established around 20,000 camps to imprison millions of victims. There were three main types of Nazi camps: forced-labor, transit, and extermination. Beginning in 1933, the Nazi regime built concentration camps, where so-called "enemies of the state" were imprisoned. With the German invasion of Poland in 1939, forced labor camps were established. In these camps, prisoners were exposed to inhumane life conditions and slave labor. Prisoners died from starvation, exhaustion, diseases, and exposure. Transit camps functioned as a holding group for prisoners before they were deported to

### At the Museum:

- Learn more about deportation and transport to the Nazi camps by visiting the cattle car exhibit
- Students learn more about selection, slave labor and life conditions in the Nazi camps by visiting Rooms 4 and 5 and using the Museum's audio-guides
- Watch video testimonies of Holocaust survivors, available on each touch screen monitor. (See the At School Section for Pre-and Post-visit activities ideas)

## SOBIBOR

The death camp of Sobibor was one of the six extermination camps. The camp was located in the small village of Sobibor, Poland, in a wooded and scarcely populated area. The camp was surrounded by trees as well as a minefield 50 feet wide. Between 1942 and 1943, Jews were deported to Sobibor from ghettos in Poland, German-occupied Soviet territory, Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Bohemia and Moravia, the Netherlands, and France. It is estimated that at least 167,000 people were killed at Sobibor.

The uprising at Sobibor was one of the few camp uprisings that was successfully executed during the Holocaust. When news of other camps being liquidated and dismantled got to Sobibor, prisoners started planning an organized resistance.

With the arrival of Soviet-Jewish prisoners of war in late September 1943, Sobibor prisoners had new resources to effectively organize an uprising and escape. The uprising took place on October 14th, 1943. 250 prisoners participated in the uprising. Of the 100 prisoners that succeeded in escaping the camp, less than half of them survived the war.

Other examples of resistance took place in Treblinka and Auschwitz where prisoners of the Sonderkommando led the revolt.

### At the Museum:

- View the Sobibor model. This model was built by Thomas Blatt, a Holocaust Survivor. As a 15 year old in the camp, Thomas participated in the 1943 Sobibor uprising. The model is accompanied by a video featuring Thomas' testimony.
- On the Touch Screen monitors, research other death camps: Chelmno, Belzec, Treblinka, Auschwitz, and Majdanek.
- Visit the At School section for Pre- and Post- visit activities around the topic of Resistance during the Holocaust.



# Gallery 6: World Response & Rescue



It cannot diminish the enormity of the tragedy of the Holocaust to mention the acts of heroic resistance and rescue that took place in the midst of the catastrophe. Tens of thousands of Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe were saved from death by their neighbors. People who sheltered Jews faced great risks. In Western Europe the Nazis sent anyone caught assisting Jews to a concentration camp. In Poland and in the Soviet Union, the penalty for helping Jews was death by hanging. Poles who helped Jews not only faced death themselves, but the Nazis executed their entire families. Those who saved Jews showed extraordinary courage and

## WORLD RESPONSE

While under martial law, German-occupied Denmark carried out the most famous and complete rescue of Jews during the Holocaust. On September 28, 1943, the Danish authorities were warned of imminent plans to deport their Jewish population, scheduled for the night of October 1-2. In the following days, the Danish resistance transported 7,200 Jews in small fishing boats to safety in neutral Sweden.

## JEWISH RESISTANCE

In German-occupied Europe, Jews carried out acts of armed resistance in the ghettos, in the forests, and in the death camps - acting in groups and alone.

## WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

In April-May 1943, Jews in the Warsaw ghetto rose in armed revolt after rumors that the Germans would deport the remaining ghetto inhabitants to Treblinka killing center. As German soldiers entered the ghetto, members of the Jewish Fighting Organization, led by Mordecai Anielewicz, and other Jewish groups attacked the Germans with Molotov cocktails, hand grenades, and small weapons. Fighters were able to hold off the

German forces for nearly a month, after which the ghetto was completely liquidated.

## RIGHTEOUS GENTILES

Righteous among the Nations is the official title given to non-Jews who risked their lives in order to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. We highlight several individuals in the gallery including Miep Gies, Sempo Sugihara and Irena Sendler.

## THE WHITE ROSE

The White Rose is one of the few examples of German resistance to the Nazi Party. In 1942 Hans Scholl, a medical student at the University of Munich, his sister Sophie, Christoph Probst, Willi Graf, and Alexander Schmorell founded the "White Rose" movement. At great risk, "White Rose" members produced leaflets denouncing the regime and attempting to sabotage the war effort. "We will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace!" The efforts were eventually thwarted, and the youth were turned over to the Gestapo and executed on February 22, 1943.

### At the Museum:

- Explore the Karl Sinai-Charles Millet collection displayed in this room. Learn about the journey to safety of a Jewish family. The Millet family was lucky enough to receive the right visas and was able to flee Europe for Shanghai
- Listen to other stories of courage during the Holocaust with your audio-guide (you can also learn about Anne Frank)
- Visit the Garden of the Righteous in the park to commemorate those who risked their lives to save others during the Holocaust



# Gallery 7: Liberation



As Allied troops moved across Europe in a series of offensives against Nazi Germany, they began to encounter tens of thousands of concentration camp prisoners. Many of these prisoners had been forced to march from camps in Poland to Germany. These prisoners were suffering from starvation and disease. The Allied forces also found the bodies of thousands of victims and the evidence of mass murder.

## LIBERATION

Allied troops liberated the camps between July 1944 and May 1945. Surprised by the rapidly advancing Soviet Army, the Nazis tried to destroy any evidence of mass murder and completely demolished the extermination camps. Prisoners were forced to leave the camps and participate in a westward death march to Germany. Upon arriving at the camps, Liberators confronted unspeakable conditions. Piles of corpses lay unburied. Thousands of prisoners remained barely-alive. Disease was rampant. Only after liberation was the full scope of Nazi horrors exposed to the world.

## DISPLACED PERSONS CAMPS

From 1945 to 1952, more than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons (DPs) lived in camps and centers in Germany, Austria, and Italy. Immediately after liberation, survivors began to search for their families. In the aftermath of WWII, survivors tried to rebuild their lives. Many got married and started families in the DP camps. Schools, cultural and social centers were established and thrived, in spite on the often bleak conditions of the DP camps, many of which were former concentration or German army camps.

Jewish survivors increasingly chose British-controlled Palestine as their most desired destination. The DPs became an influential force in the Zionist cause and in the political debate about the creation of a Jewish state. From 1945-1948, the Brihah movement helped more than 100,000 Jews illegally enter Palestine.

On May 14, 1948, the British Mandate expired and Israel declared its independence.

By 1952, Jewish DPs had immigrated to the United States, Israel, and other nations, including Canada and South Africa. By the end of 1952, almost all of the DP camps were closed. The Jewish displaced persons were finally able to begin new lives in their new homelands.

## WAR CRIME TRIALS

After World War II, both international and domestic courts conducted trials of accused war criminals. The trials of leading German officials took place before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany. Between October 18, 1945, and October 1, 1946, 22 leading Nazis were tried on charges of crimes against humanity. Crimes against humanity were defined as “murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation...or persecutions on political, racial, or religious grounds.” Among those tried were physicians, Einsatzgruppen, members of the German justice administration and German Foreign Office, members of the German High Command, and leading German industrialists.

Between 1945 and 1949, 177 people were tried. Unfortunately, many perpetrators have never been tried or punished. In many cases, German perpetrators simply returned to their normal lives and professions in German society. Others, especially high ranking officials, disappeared. The hunt for German and Axis war criminals continues today.

### At the Museum:

- Read an account of liberation in American soldier Barry Ziff’s letter to his parents
- Explore the DP Camps displays to learn about life after the Holocaust. Find the polka-dot blue dress. This was a wedding dress worn by a Survivor on her wedding day in the DP camp

# At School:

## Pre- and Post Visit Activities

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We encourage teachers to prepare students for their visits to the Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust by exploring key events and themes in Holocaust history. This will assist students in better understanding the Museum's exhibits during their visit.

We also believe it is important to debrief students after their Museum visit. The Holocaust is a complex subject, on both an intellectual and emotional level. It is important for students to have the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences and to have conversations on the concepts covered in the Museum tour when they get back to school.

Here you can find suggestions of pre- and post-visit activities that can be used in the classroom. These activities are designed around our Museum exhibits content and encourage a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject. This guide also includes detailed timelines of the Holocaust and World War II as well as a glossary of Holocaust terms used in our Museum tours.

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## THE WORLD THAT WAS

The Museum's first gallery illustrates the life of Jewish communities before the Holocaust. In this room, students explore aspects of Jewish life such as religion, traditions, everyday life and professions. They also learn about the contribution made by Jewish people to the arts and sciences. The touch-screen table with images of pre-war European Jews. These images are organized to highlight the diversity of these communities. They also convey the multi-dimension of Jewish identity. Students are encouraged to think about their own identity in this room.

### PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY:

Students research the life of Jewish communities in Europe before the war.

Students choose a country and research its history before WWII.

- How large was the Jewish population of that country?
- What were the traditions of the Jewish Communities of that country?
- How were they integrated within society?
- What holidays did they celebrate?
- What professions did they practice?
- Are there similarities between their home and community life and your own?

### POST-VISIT ACTIVITY:

#### *Learning About Your Past: Oral History*

1. Students interview a family member from an older generation and ask them about:

- Their life when they were younger;
- What activities they were involved in;
- How life then was different from life nowadays;
- A defining event in their life;
- How life was different after that event;

2. Students interview a Holocaust Survivor:

- Students contact the Museum and set up interviews with a Holocaust Survivor. Students can think back about the Holocaust Survivor Talk they participated in at the Museum, and think of questions they would ask a Survivor.
- Students can also research Holocaust Survivor Testimonies on the UCS Shoah Foundation website: <http://dornsife.usc.edu/vhi/>.
- Students then prepare presentations based on their interviews.

#### *Identity Photography project:*

3. Students collect photographs of their life. These can be pictures of school life, sports, leisure, vacation, celebration, religion, and family. Students organize them in files and categories, just like the images they have seen in the World That Was exhibit. They write a description of their life based on these images.

4. Students collect objects and photographs that symbolize their life and their family's history. They organize them as if they were on display in a Museum. Students write labels for each object/image and a description of their exhibition for potential visitors. Students can add a short interview of a family member or a friend who is represented within the display. Students prepare a presentation about the display and discuss how it illustrates their identity and their family history.

## HOLOCAUST-ERA NEWSPAPERS

The main hallways of the Museum display front pages of Los Angeles newspapers from the Holocaust era. The headlines indicate just how much information was disseminated in America about the events occurring in Europe. The newspapers are dated from 1933-1945 and range in topic from increasing anti-Semitic violence in Germany to an announcement that half of Europe's Jews were killed by 1944.

### PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY:

Students read one article from the Newspaper Materials provided in the Activity Materials section. Students research the event discussed in the article (Boycott of Jewish Business, Kristallnacht or Liberation).

- What historical information did you learn from this article?
- How did the American press report on the event?
- Did their reporting seem fair or biased?

### POST-VISIT ACTIVITY:

Genocide, racism and hate crimes continue to occur all over the world. Look in today's newspaper for an example of such crimes. Compare today's newspaper article to one from the Holocaust-era.

- Are there any similarities between the Holocaust-era event and the event in today's newspaper?
- How did the newspaper articles differ? How are they similar?
- Do we have a responsibility to prevent these events from occurring?
- What actions can we take to help prevent these events?
- Research social action organizations that focus on current issues just explored.

## PARTISAN SONG

The most famous partisan song was written in Yiddish by Hirsch Glik in 1944 and is entitled *Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg* (“Never Say That You Have Reached the Final Road”). Glik, a poet and partisan imprisoned in the Vilna Ghetto, wrote the song after learning of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. He adapted a well-known march tune composed for the Soviet cinema as the melody. The song was adopted as the official resistance hymn of all Eastern European partisans. Glik is presumed to have died while attempting to escape from a forced labor camp in Estonia.

### PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY:

Listen to the Partisan Song in Yiddish and read the English translation

#### *Analyze the Partisan song as a text*

Students write down the feelings that the song evokes.

How would they describe the song?

Afterwards, have students read the English translation of the lyrics (see At School Materials).

Students discuss how their feelings of the song changed after reading the lyrics. Students can paraphrase the song and explain the meaning of words used in it. They share their interpretation with the rest of the class and discuss it. Students can further analyze the lyrics and look into metaphors and symbolism used in the song.

#### *The Partisans*

Students research the Jewish partisans, who they were and where and how they operated.

Who were the partisans?

What was their role during the Holocaust?

Who made up the partisans?

Why do you think young people were involved in acts of resistance?

What role did this song play?

What is the message of this song?

#### *Resistance during the Holocaust*

Students research acts of resistance during the Holocaust.

How would you define the term Resistance?

Were there different types of resistance? If so, what were they?

What challenges/obstacles did people face when attempting to fight back during the Holocaust?

How would you define this song? Is this an example of resistance? If so, what type?

### POST-VISIT ACTIVITY:

Students were introduced to many forms of resistance during the Holocaust. Have students discuss which stories inspire them (Miep Gies, Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Sempo Sugihara etc.).

Students can research acts of resistance in the ghettos and camps. Many of those involved in acts of resistance were young people. Students research the role of young people during the Holocaust (e.g. The White Rose, the Warsaw Ghetto uprising).

Students are encouraged to pick a contemporary song that inspires them.

- What is your song of resistance?
- How does it inspire you?

## MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE

Los Angeles Museum of the Holocaust has recently opened a brand new building where the Museum's collection is housed. This new building was designed by a renowned architect: Hagy Belzberg. When planning the Museum's design, Mr. Belzberg thought about the Museum's function and content.

### PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY:

#### *Holocaust Museums and their Architecture*

Students look at pictures of Holocaust Museums provided in Activity Materials B and research the architecture of the buildings. Have students think about the following questions:

- Was the building designed to house a Museum?
- Did it have another function before becoming a Museum?
- How is the architecture used to teach about the Holocaust?
- How are these three museum buildings similar or different?
- Can you organize Holocaust Museums in groups based on their building (e.g. housed in old concentration camp/ new building)?
- What feelings do these buildings evoke?
- When you visit the Museum, pay specific attention to the architecture. Do you think the building's design helps teach about the Holocaust? How?

### POST-VISIT ACTIVITY:

#### *Reflecting on your field trip*

Thinking back on their field trip, students can write about:

- What feelings did the Museum building evoke in you?
- What aspects of the architecture did you like/not like?
- What elements of the architecture tell the story of the Holocaust?
- What was your reaction to the Children's Memorial? How would you describe this space?

Students research museums around the world and prepare a presentation regarding the relationship between museum architecture and content. They discuss their findings with the class.

# At School: Activity Materials

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## NEWSPAPER MATERIALS

### Los Angeles Examiner BERLIN, March 27

Adolf Hitler's Nazi party answered foreign threat of boycotts against German goods today by announcing a movement to boycott Jewish business establishments within the Reich. The purpose of this movement will be to retaliate against foreigners who have made protests based on reports of anti-Semitic outrages in Germany. Government toleration of the movement was seen in a communiqué issued by the Telegraphen-Union which denied that the boycott will have official support, but admitted the administration will "tolerate these measures so long as foreign governments take no steps against atrocity propaganda."

#### REICH ALLOWS REPORT

(Because of the interior censorship exercised in Germany it would have been impossible for the Telegraphen-Union to carry the communiqué had the government opposed it.)

In Munich the Hitlerite party press advised the government not to interfere in the boycott against the Jewish business houses in Germany until foreign nations have acted to suppress anti-German boycotts. The papers remarked that the government could use the boycott at home as a bargaining point in halting projected anti-German campaigns abroad.

The party announcement said that steps will be taken to reduce the numbers of Jews in the various professions in order that they might be proportionate to the number of Jews in the country.

#### HYMN OF HATE

"Thereby," the statement concluded, "will this Jewish international hymn of hate against Germany, because of a revolution in which no Jewish hair was ruffled,

produce the long-awaited declaration concerning the relations between the German people and those who have no conception of the hospitality guaranteed to them."

Hans Kerro, Nazi Prussian Commissar of Justice, declare in a speech tonight that "the Jew was born from a sin against the Holy Ghost and always has shown himself the servant of decay."

Joseph Goebbels, Nazi, Minister of Propaganda, announced his department will take "sharp counteractive measures against those responsible for reports of Jewish atrocities. He made this announcement as the result of a conference with Chancellor Hitler.

#### COMPULSORY LABOR

Dr. Mahkens, newly appointed Labor Commissioner, announced that a system of compulsory labor to remedy unemployment will be introduced shortly. Complete agreement has been reached, he said, with leaders of the old voluntary labor movement, whose experience will be utilized by distributing them in various parts of the country.

The work to be done will include cultivation of waste lands, reforestation and the drainage of swamps. The aim will be to inculcate duty in the fatherland and the conviction that manual work is not necessary evil but a blessing for workers.

#### CONSULATE OFFICIALLY NOTIFIED REPORTS FALSE

Reports of atrocities assertedly perpetrated against Jews in Germany are denied in two official communications from Berlin received here yesterday by Dr. Gustav of the local German consulate. The telegrams follow:

"Dr. Alfred Apfel, an attorney who was reported tortured to death, has declared on request of the Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (a newspaper)...

## Los Angeles Examiner New York, March 27

### JEWS HEAR SMITH LIKEN HITLER POLICY TO KU KLUX

NEW YORK, MARCH 27. Alfred E. Smith told thousands of Jews, massed in Madison Square Garden tonight in protest against anti-Semitism of the German Hitler government, that the "only thing to do is to drag it out in the open sunlight and give it the same treatment we gave the Ku Klux Klan."

Joining representatives of many races and creeds at the indignation meeting called by the American Jewish Congress, Smith said "it makes no difference to me whether it is a brown shirt or a nightshirt."

The former Governor elbowed his way through the throngs outside the Garden shortly before 10 o'clock and mounted the speaker's stand to the accompaniment of loud cheering.

The thousands present overflowed the great hall and the streets about it.

The theme of indignation was sounded by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, honorary president of the American Jewish Congress. "This protest is not against the German people whom we love and revere," the rabbi

said. "It is not against the political program for Germany, for Germany is master within its own household, but solely against the present anti-Jewish policy of the Nazi government." said Mayor O'Brien, William Green, president of the American Federation of labor, the German born United States Senator Robert F. Wagner, Bishop William T. Manning of the Episcopal Church, Bishop Francis McConnell of the Methodist Church, and Dr. John Haynes Holmes of New York's Community Church.

Throughout the meeting the mention of Hitler's name brought loud booing.

Soon after 7 o'clock all of the Garden's approximately 23,000 seats were filled and there were lines of persons standing.

Police Commissioner Edward P. Mulrooney estimate that 35,000 more persons were massed in Forty-ninth street, between Eighth and Ninth avenues, listening to amplifiers. Thousands more gathered at Columbia Circle.

## Los Angeles Examiner New York, November 18

### BATISTA OFFERS HAVEN IN CUBA

New York, Nov. 18.—A haven in Cuba was offered political refugees from Germany today by Col. Fulgencio Batista, commander-in-chief of the Cuban—

Monday morning, May 14, 1945

6,200,000 Jewish Deaths Laid to Nazis

Welfare Group Says One ‘Mein Kampf’ Plan Carried Out

Bern, May 13—At least one point in Adolf Hitler’s “mein kampf” program has been carried out thoroughly—the bestial extermination of European Jews.

Of the total of 8,000,000 Jews living in Germany and German-occupied countries before the war, 6,200,000 have died from either execution, cruel treatment or starvation, according to latest figures compiled by Jewish welfare organizations here.

In Germany, where the great majority of European Jews had been concentrated, only 500,000 are alive today—and the word “alive” is a mere figure of speech. Millions Imprisoned

First came the period of “extermination” proper, from the time of the declaration of war on Russia until the end of 1942. Millions of Jews were taken to camps at Auschwitz, Majdenek, and Treblinka, which boasted the most modern gas execution chambers and crematories. The S.S. hordes invading Russia were simultaneously instructed to shoot all Russian Jews wherever they were encountered.

By the end of 1942, however, Germany felt the need for foreign labor and the remaining able-bodied Jews were sent to work camps. The women, old men and children all disappeared into the gas chambers.

Frail Executed

The slavery of the able-bodied and the execution of the frail continued until the beginning of 1944, by which time the Nazis had reached the saturation point of their cruelty. More than 5,000,000 Jews had been

liquidated and the remaining ones were no longer regarded as a “problem,” as Hitler saw it. Rudolph Kastner, a Budapest lawyer who since April, 1944, has devoted his time to rescuing his fellows of Jewish faith from the Nazi grip, told how he “bought” 30,000 Jews from the Nazi S.S. member, Kurt Becher.

Jewish faith from the Nazi grip, told how he “bought” 30,000 Jews from the Nazi S.S. member, Kurt Becher.

Dealt With Gestapo

Becher was sent to Budapest “to detect everything in Hungary which might be useful to German economy.” He bargained Hungarian Jews, then in the hands of the Budapest Gestapo, against money or jewels and promises of more money and jewels.

Thirty thousand Jews were deported in this manner from Hungary and the S.S. promised that they would be allowed to leave for Switzerland. Only 10,000, however, finally arrived here.

## Los Angeles Examiner Manchester, November 19

GERMAN SLAUGHTER OF 200 JEWS REPORTED  
Concentration Camp Prisoners Declared Killed to  
Avenge Assassinated Envoy

Manchester (Eng) Nov. 18—The Manchester Guardian's diplomatic correspondent today reported he has learned reliably that 200 German Jews were executed at the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The Guardian, a critic of Chancellor Hitler and frequently banned from newsstands in German, said it has been confirmed that 70 Jews were executed on the night of Wednesday, Nov 9, two days after the shooting in Paris of a minor German diplomat by a 17-year-old Polish Jew.

The 70 executions occurred however, before the death of the diplomat, the newspaper said.

Since Nov. 9, it was asserted additional executions have brought the total number at Buchenwald to about 200.

The Nazi diplomat, Ernst vom Rath, died of his wounds in Paris on Nov. 9.

The executions assertedly were carried out by Nazi firing squads.

The Guardian gave its estimate of the number of Jews arrest throughout Germany, not including Austria and the Sudetenland, as 40,000.

HULL IMPLORES AID FOR JEWS  
Calls on All Nations to Relieve Plight of German  
Refugees

Washington, Nov. 18—Secretary Hull urged the active participation of all governments in seeking a solution for the problem of German Jewish refugees today, asserting that recent developments had made the problem more than ever urgent.

He made this assertion in a formal statement, announcing that Myron Taylor will return to London to attend, as the representative of the Washington government, an early meeting of the intergovernmental committee on political refugees.

### NEW DEVELOPMENT

The day was filled with other developments arising from Nazi treatment of the Jews, which President Roosevelt has denounced "unbelievable."

The President asked the Labor Department to permit 12,000 to 15,000 German and Austria refugees, here on six-month visitors' visas, to remain in the country an additional half-year. He told a press conference it would be inhuman to send them back to face the rigors of a concentration camp or other persecutions.

### ADDS VOICE

Attorney General Cummings joined the still growing list of prominent individuals who have denounced Germany's treatment of the Jews, asserting it had "shocked the conscience of the world" and is "as uncivilized as the cruelties of 19 centuries ago when Christians were fed to wild beasts."

## THE PARTISAN SONG LYRICS

*Zog nit keynmol az du geyst dem letstn veg*  
Never Say That You Have Reached the Final Road  
Lyrics: Hirsch Glik  
Translation: Irving Greenberg

Never say you are going on your last road,  
[Not even] when leaden skies block out days of blue.  
The hour we long for will yet come,  
The tread of our footsteps will pound out—We are here!  
From lands green with palms to lands white with snow,  
We come, bearing our pain and our woe,  
And wherever a spurt of our blood fell,  
There will blossom our courage and our strength!  
The rising morning sun will yet light up our today,  
And yesterday—with our foe—will fade away.  
But if the sun be delayed and the dawn held back,  
Let this song go forth as a password from generation to  
generation!  
This song was written with blood, not with lead,  
It is not the melody of a bird soaring free,  
A people, standing between collapsing walls,  
Holding gun in hand, sang this song!  
Never say you are going on your last road,  
[Not even] when leaden skies block out days of blue.  
The hour we long for will yet come,  
The tread of our footsteps will pound out—We are here!

## HOLOCAUST MUSEUM ARCHITECTURE

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### Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site

In 1960, a temporary museum was opened in the former crematorium at Dachau. On May 9, 1965 the Dachau Memorial Site was dedicated and in 1968, the International Memorial was erected on the square where prisoners had been forced to gather for roll call. The bronze sculpture by Holocaust survivor Nandor Gild depicts emancipated human bodies caught in barbed wire. Two of the original barracks have been rebuilt and the other 32 barracks are indicated by concrete foundations. The Memorial Site also includes four chapels for the various religions represented by the prisoners.



Anne Frank Museum, Amsterdam

The Museum opened on May 3, 1960 in the house where Anne Frank, her family and four other Jews hid from the Nazis. The Museum closed between 1970 and 1999 in order to build new exhibition spaces.



## Jewish Museum Berlin

The Jewish Museum Berlin consists of two buildings: the Kollegienhaus, a former courthouse built in the 18th century and the wing designed by architect Daniel Libeskind. The original Jewish Museum in Berlin was founded in 1933 but the Nazi regime closed it in 1938. It was not until 1975 that talks to establish a new Jewish Museum began. The Museum opened in September 2001.



# At School: Resources

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## HOLOCAUST TIMELINE

### January 1933

Nazi Party, led by Adolf Hitler, rises to power. On January 30, 1933, the Nazis succeed in parliamentary elections, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor.

### March 1933

Nazis establish Dachau, the first major concentration camp for political opponents. After the November Pogrom (Kristallnacht) in 1938, 10,000 Jewish men are incarcerated in this camp as a “protective custody.”

### 1933-1939

Nazis enact over 400 anti-Jewish laws.

### September 1935

Nuremberg Laws or Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor are passed on September 15, 1935. Restrictive anti-Jewish legislation defines who is a Jew. These laws denied citizenship to Jews and forbade intermarriage with non-Jews. The Laws were expanded to Nazi-occupied countries and territories.

### March 1938

Anschluss of Austria (in German union). Anti-Jewish laws are immediately implemented for the Austrian Jewish population.

### September-October 1938

Munich Agreement and annexation of Sudetenland, resulting in the partition of Czechoslovakia.

### November 9 – 10, 1938

Kristallnacht or November Pogrom. Nazis ravage the Jewish communities in Germany, Austria, the Sudetenland, and Danzig (Gdansk) as a revenge for the assassination of Ernst vom Rath, third secretary of the German embassy in Paris by a Jewish young man, Herschel Grynszpan. Hundreds of synagogues and Jewish businesses are vandalized or destroyed.

### March 15, 1939

Nazi regime dismembers the Czechoslovakian state. On March 15, 1939, German troops march in Prague. Slovakia is established as a German-satellite state. The Protectorate Bohemia and Moravia is created out of two Czech provinces. The Jewish population is subjugated to all anti-Jewish laws and eventual deportation to the East or to Theresienstadt Ghetto.

### September 1, 1939

German invasion of Poland. The Second World War begins. On September 3, Great Britain and France declare war on Germany. The Polish Government goes into exile in London. Polish resistance to German occupation begins. The Polish underground army, the Home Army (Armia Krajowa) unites the multiple resistance units in February 1942; it is 400,000 men strong and receives orders from the Polish Government in London.

**August 23, 1939**

Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact between Nazi Germany and the USSR is signed by Soviet foreign minister Viacheslav Molotov and German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. The secret protocol to this treaty provisioned the division of Poland between Germany and USSR and the annexation of East European countries and territories in favor of the USSR. In return, the USSR withdrew from the anti-German negotiations with Great Britain and France. After the German Army invaded Poland, the Soviet Army entered the Polish provinces from the East. Despite the Soviet betrayal, the Polish Army courageously fought for one month. The Jewish population of Poland demonstrated valor defending the common homeland.

**1939 - 1940**

Nazi authorities divide Poland, annexing its western part to the Greater Germany and establishing on the rest of Polish territory the General Government with the capital in Krakow. Anti-Jewish measures including ghettoization are implemented. Five major Jewish ghettos in Poland are created, namely Warsaw, Łódź, Kraków, Lwów, and Lublin. Many other ghettos are formed in other cities. The Jews are confined to the ghettos and destined to starvation, disease, and eventual deportation to death and labor camps.

**April - May 1940**

German armies invade Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France. Anti-Jewish measures and actions vary from country to country. Eventually, from 1942 on, the deportations of Jews from western Europe to the death camps in Poland begins.

**June 22, 1941**

Invasion of the Soviet Union, “Operation Barbarossa,” begins. The Soviet Army, depleted by the Stalin’s purges and taken by surprise, rapidly retreats. Suffering great casualties, millions of Soviet soldiers are taken prisoners of war by the German Army. Einsatzgruppen (special action units) composed of German police and security forces follow the advance of the army. They carry out mass killing of the Jewish population on the occupied Soviet territories (Ukraine, Belorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Bessarabia, and western part of the Russian Federation). Instead of ghettoization, the German killing squads and the army perpetrated mass killing of the Jewish population in the wake of invasion.

**September 29-30, 1941**

Babi Yar Massacre. On these dates, at the outskirts of Kiev, the German police battalions (part of the Einsatzgruppen C) and Ukrainian auxiliary police killed 33,800 Jewish men, women, and children. It was an extraordinary massacre even on a Nazi scale. The mass murder at Babi Yar came as the Nazi retaliation to the Soviet NKVD’s (security police) subversive activities in the first days of German presence in Kiev. The Germans claimed that the Jews were part of this conspiracy.

**January 20, 1942**

The Wannsee Conference, the meeting of the highest SS, Security, and Economic authorities of Nazi Germany to discuss “The Final Solution to the Jewish Question” in Europe, a euphemistic term for the total extermination of the European Jewry. A plan was developed to establish and convert several concentration camps into the institutions of mass murder and slave labor spurring the systematic, industrialized annihilation of the Jewish population in the German occupied and controlled territories.

**June 1942**

Operation (Aktion) Reinhard, named after Reinhard Heydrich, SS General and chief of the Security Police and SD, after he was assassinated by a Czech patriot in Prague on May 27, 1942. The Operation entails the so-called

“resettlement” of the Jews in the General Gouvernement, specifically in the Lublin area with the clandestine construction of death camps, namely Sobibór, Chelmno, and Treblinka. SS and Police Leader Odilo Globocnik is placed in charge of Operation Reinhard. Operation Reinhard claims the lives of 1.5 million Jews and non-Jews from eastern and western Europe.

## **1942**

Six death camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Chelmno, and Majdanek, are in full operation.

## **1942 - 1944**

The death tolls for the camps are as follows: Treblinka, (750,000 Jews); Belzec, (550,000 Jews); Sobibór, (200,000 Jews); Chelmno, (150,000 Jews) and Majdanek (also called Lublin, 50,000 Jews). Auschwitz continued to operate through the summer of 1944; its final death toll was about 1.2 million Jews and up to 300,000 non-Jews.

## **July 1942**

Mass deportation from Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka and other death camps begins. From July-September 1942 and to the Spring of 1943, over 300,000 were deported to death from Warsaw ghetto.

## **April 1943**

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The Uprising begins on April 19, 1943 when 90% of the ghetto population had been annihilated and 56,000 Jews still remained in the ghetto. The Jewish underground of 800 -1000 young men and women rose against superior Nazi forces. The latter were soon reinforced by the special SS forces and the auxiliary Ukrainian and Lithuanian troops. The Uprising lasted until May 16, 1943, demonstrating to the whole world unparalleled courage, self-sacrifice and heroism. After the revolt, the Ghetto was completely destroyed, 5,000 – 6,000 Jews were killed during the Nazi assault and the survivors were deported to concentration and death camps.

## **1940 - 1944**

Auschwitz-Birkenau or Auschwitz II operating fully. The camp operated from June 1940 to January 1945. The first inmates were Jews, Soviet POWs, and Polish political prisoners. Most of the 1.6 million people murdered at the Auschwitz camps were gassed at Birkenau. The Jewish death toll amounted at 1.2 million. In May 1944, hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews were murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

## **April - May 1944**

After German military marched into Hungary, the Hungarian authorities, guided by the Nazis, concentrated around 450,000 Jews from Hungary proper and the Hungarian-annexed territories of Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia in the ghettos and transit centers. Soon after, they were deported mainly to Auschwitz-Birkenau, to other concentration camps, and to the Austrian border to build fortification lines.

## **January 27, 1945**

Red Army liberates the Auschwitz camps. Approximately 7,600 inmates remain in the camps at liberation.

## **Spring, 1945**

The Allied forces liberate Nazi concentration camps in Germany and Austria. Horrendous evidences of the Nazi atrocities are revealed to the world .

## **May 7, 1945**

German Armed Forces High Command signs unconditional surrender. Nazi Germany lost the war against the Allied Nations but persisted in the completion of the war against European Jewry.

## WORLD WAR II TIMELINE

### 1939

After securing the neutrality of the Soviet Union (through the August 1939 German-Soviet Pact of nonaggression), Germany started World War II by invading Poland on September 1, 1939. Britain and France responded by declaring war on Germany on September 3. Within a month, Poland was defeated by a combination of German and Soviet forces and was partitioned between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

### 1940

The relative lull in fighting which followed the defeat of Poland ended on April 9, 1940, when German forces invaded Norway and Denmark. On May 10, 1940, Germany began its assault on western Europe by invading the Low Countries (Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg), which had taken neutral positions in the war, as well as France. On June 22, 1940, France signed an armistice with Germany, which provided for the German occupation of the northern half of the country and permitted the establishment of a collaborationist regime in the south with its seat in the city of Vichy. With German encouragement, the Soviet Union occupied the Baltic states in June 1940 and formally annexed them in August 1940. Italy, a member of the Axis (countries allied with Germany), joined the war on June 10, 1940. From July 10 to October 31, 1940, the Nazis waged, and ultimately lost, an air war over England, known as the Battle of Britain.

### 1941

After securing the Balkan region by invading Yugoslavia and Greece on April 6, 1941, the Germans and their allies invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, in direct violation of the German-Soviet Pact. In June and July 1941, the Germans also occupied the Baltic states. Soviet leader Joseph Stalin then became a major wartime Allied leader, in opposition to Nazi Germany and its Axis allies. During the summer and autumn of 1941, German troops advanced deep into the Soviet Union, but stiffening Red Army resistance and a brutal winter prevented the Germans from capturing the key cities of Leningrad and Moscow. On December 6, 1941, Soviet troops launched a significant counteroffensive that drove German forces permanently from the outskirts of Moscow. One day later, on December 7, 1941, Japan (one of the Axis powers) bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States immediately declared war on Japan. On December 11, Germany and Italy declared war on the United States as the military conflict widened.

### 1942-1943

In May 1942, the British Royal Air Force carried out a raid on the German city of Cologne with a thousand bombers, for the first time bringing war home to Germany. For the next three years, Allied air forces systematically bombed industrial plants and cities all over the Reich, reducing much of urban Germany to rubble by 1945. In late 1942 and early 1943, the Allied forces achieved a series of significant military triumphs in North Africa. The failure of French armed forces to prevent Allied occupation of Morocco and Algeria triggered a German occupation of collaborationist Vichy France on November 11, 1942. Axis military units in Africa, approximately 150,000 troops in all, surrendered in May 1943.

On the eastern front, during the summer of 1942, the Germans and their Axis allies renewed their offensive in the Soviet Union, aiming to capture Stalingrad on the Volga River, as well as the city of Baku and the Caucasian oil fields. The German offensive stalled on both fronts in the late summer of 1942. In November, Soviet troops launched a counteroffensive at Stalingrad and on February 2, 1943, the German Sixth Army surrendered to the Soviets. The Germans mounted one more offensive at Kursk in July 1943, the biggest tank battle in history, but Soviet troops blunted the attack and assumed a military predominance that they would not again relinquish during the course of the war.

In July 1943, the Allies landed in Sicily and in September went ashore on the Italian mainland. After the Italian Fascist Party's Grand Council deposed Italian premier Benito Mussolini (an ally of Hitler), the Italian military took over and negotiated a surrender to Anglo-American forces on September 8. German troops stationed in Italy seized control of the northern half of the peninsula, and continued to resist. Mussolini, who had been arrested by Italian military authorities, was rescued by German SS commandos in September and established (under German supervision) a neo-Fascist puppet regime in northern Italy. German troops continued to hold northern Italy until surrendering on May 2, 1945.

### **1944**

On June 6, 1944 (D-Day), as part of a massive military operation, over 150,000 Allied soldiers landed in France, which was liberated by the end of August. On September 11, 1944, the first U.S. troops crossed into Germany, one month after Soviet troops crossed the eastern border. In mid-December the Germans launched a counterattack in Belgium and northern France, known as the Battle of the Bulge. Allied air forces attacked Nazi industrial plants.

### **1945**

The Soviets began an offensive on January 12, 1945, liberating western Poland and forcing Hungary (an Axis ally) to surrender. In mid-February 1945, the Allies bombed the German city of Dresden, killing approximately 35,000 civilians. American troops crossed the Rhine River on March 7, 1945. A final Soviet offensive on April 16, 1945, enabled Soviet forces to encircle the German capital, Berlin. As Soviet troops fought their way towards the Reich Chancellery, Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945. On May 7, 1945, Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Western Allies at Reims and on May 9 to the Soviets in Berlin. In August, the war in the Pacific ended soon after the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, killing 120,000 civilians. Japan formally surrendered on September 2.

World War II resulted in an estimated 55 million deaths worldwide. It was the largest and most destructive conflict in history.

## GLOSSARY

**Anti-Semitism:** hostility toward or hatred of Jews as a religious or ethnic group, often accompanied by social, economic, or political discrimination.

**Aryan:** Term used in Nazi Germany to refer to non-Jewish and non-Gypsy Caucasians. Northern Europeans with especially “Nordic” features such as blonde hair and blue eyes were considered by so-called race scientists to be the most superior of Aryans, members of a “master race.”

**Auschwitz:** the largest Nazi concentration camp complex, located 37 miles west of Krakow, Poland. The Auschwitz main camp (Auschwitz I) was established in 1940. In 1942, a killing center was established at Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II). In 1941, Auschwitz-Monowitz (Auschwitz III) was established as a forced-labor camp. More than 100 subcamps and labor detachments were administratively connected to Auschwitz III.

**Babi Yar:** On September 29-30, 1941, the Jewish population of Kiev was murdered at Babi Yar, a ravine northwest of the city. 33,771 Jews were massacred in two days. It is estimated that some 100,000 people, including Jews, Roma-Sinti, Communists and Soviet Union prisoners of war, were murdered at Babi Yar.

**Birkenau:** Nazi camp also known as Auschwitz II (see Auschwitz above), Birkenau contained systematic mass killing operations. It also housed thousands of concentration camp prisoners deployed at forced labor.

**Boycott:** The refusal to use or support a business or organization; refusal is generally based on political or ideological differences.

**Brihah:** The post-war movement of illegal emigration to Palestine. It is estimated that 150,000 Jews reached Palestine with help from the Brihah organization.

**Buchenwald:** a large concentration camp established in 1937 by the Nazis. It was located in north-central Germany, near the city of Weimar.

**Civil Rights:** Personal and property rights guaranteed by the Constitution and by law.

**Concentration Camp:** Throughout German-occupied Europe, the Nazis established camps to detain and, if necessary, kill so-called enemies of the state, including Jews, Gypsies, political and religious opponents, members of national resistance movements, homosexuals, and others. Imprisonment in a concentration camp was of unlimited duration, was not linked to a specific act, and was not subject to any judicial review. In addition to concentration camps, the Nazi regime ran several other kinds of camps including labor camps, transit camps, prisoner-of-war camps, and killing centers.

**Crematorium:** a facility containing a furnace for reducing dead bodies to ashes by burning.

**Death March:** Forced marches of concentration camp prisoners toward Germany. These marches occurred when camps were evacuated at the end of the war because of advancing Soviet and Allied troops. Many prisoners died or were killed during these marches.

**Deportation:** Forced transfer of Jews to ghettos, concentration camps or killing centers. Jews were generally placed in cattle cars without food, water, windows or toilets.

**Discrimination:** Action based on prejudice or racist beliefs that results in unfair treatment of individuals or groups; unjust conditions in areas such as employment, housing and education.

**Displaced Persons Camps:** Camps set up after World War II for survivors of the Holocaust who had no place to go. Thousands of Jews lived in these camps for up to 5 years.

**Einsatzgruppen** (mobile killing units): mobile units of the German Security Police and Sicherheitsdienst (SD) augmented by Ordnungspolizei (Order Police) and Waffen-SS personnel. These units followed the German army as it invaded the nations of central and eastern Europe. Their duties included the arrest or murder of political opponents and potential resistance. In Poland in 1939, these units were assigned to shoot Polish intellectuals and to concentrate the Jewish population into large cities. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, Einsatzgruppen personnel killed Jews, Soviet political commissars, Gypsies (Roma), mentally disabled persons, and other perceived “racial” and ideological enemies, usually by mass shootings.

**Evian Conference:** In the summer of 1938, delegates from 32 countries met in Evian, France to discuss the refugee problem, particularly for German Jews. Most countries offered excuses for why they did not let in more refugees and no quotas were substantially changed.

**Euthanasia:** Euthanasia (literally, “good death”) usually refers to the inducement of a painless death for a chronically or terminally ill individual. In Nazi usage, however, “euthanasia” was a euphemistic term for a clandestine program which targeted for systematic killing institutionalized mentally and physically disabled patients, without the consent of themselves or their families.

**“Final Solution”:** the Nazi plan to annihilate the European Jews.

**Gas Chambers:** Gas chambers were built in the death camps, and used the deadly Zyklon B gas. These specially constructed rooms were designed to kill as many Jews as quickly as possible.

**German-Soviet Pact:** An economic agreement and non-aggressive pact, known also as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. Signed on August 23, 1939, the pact was destroyed on December 18, 1940 when Hitler signed Directive 21, the order to invade the Soviet Union.

**Gestapo:** abbreviation for Geheime Staatspolizei, the German Secret State Police, which was under SS control. It was responsible for investigating political crimes and opposition activities.

**Ghetto:** a confined area of a city in which members of a minority group are compelled to live. The first use of the term “ghetto” for a section of a city in which Jews lived was in Venice, Italy, in 1516.

**Heydrich, Reinhard:** (1904-1942) SS General and chief of the Security Police and SD. Sometime in December 1940, Heydrich was tasked with developing a “Final Solution” of the Jewish question in Europe.

**Himmler, Heinrich:** (1900-1945) Reichsführer-SS (Reich Leader of the SS) and Chief of German Police, a position which included supreme command over the Gestapo, the concentration camps, and the Waffen-SS. After 1943, Himmler was Minister of the Interior of Nazi Germany, principal planner for the aim of Nazi Germany to kill all European Jews.

**Hitler, Adolf:** (1889-1945) Führer (leader) of the National Socialist (Nazi) movement (1921-1945); Reich

Chancellor of Germany 1933-1945; Führer of the German Nation (1934-1945).

**Holocaust:** The Holocaust was the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims. Six million were murdered.

**Human Rights:** The “rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled.” In the aftermath of World War II, the United Nations created the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that introduced the notion in the public realm that rights are universal, inalienable, and inherent to the well-being of an individual.

**Judenrat:** The German-established Jewish Council in the ghettos. The Jewish administrators were required to ensure that Nazi orders were implemented.

**Kashrut:** Literally meaning “fit”, the term applies to anything that is suitable to eat according to Jews dietary laws. According to these laws, certain kinds of meat may be not eaten, animals must be slaughtered in a specified manner and milk and meat may not be eaten together.

**Kapo:** a concentration camp prisoner selected to oversee other prisoners on labor details. The term is often used generically for any concentration camp prisoner to whom the SS gave authority over other prisoners.

**Killing centers:** The Nazis established killing centers for efficient mass murder. Unlike concentration camps, which served primarily as detention and labor centers, killing centers (also referred to as “extermination camps” or “death camps”) were almost exclusively “death factories.” German SS and police murdered nearly 2,700,000 Jews in the killing centers either by asphyxiation with poison gas or by shooting.

**Kindertransport:** The informal name given to a series of rescue efforts to bring Jewish children to Great Britain between 1938 and 1940.

**Kommando:** German word for detachment, such as a detachment of concentration camp prisoners at forced labor.

**Kristallnacht:** usually referred to as the “Night of Broken Glass.” It is the name given to the violent anti-Jewish pogrom of November 9 and 10, 1938. Instigated primarily by Nazi party officials and the SA (Nazi Storm Troopers), the pogrom occurred throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia.

**Mengele, Dr. Josef:** (1911-1979) SS physician assigned to Auschwitz; notorious for conducting so-called medical experiments on inmates, especially twins and dwarfs. Known as the “Angel of Death,” for his coldly cruel demeanor on the ramp, Mengele is remembered for his coldly cruel demeanor while selecting prisoners for experimentation.

**Partisan:** A member of an organized group fighting against the Nazis. Some Jews formed their own partisan groups and others joined local resistance efforts.

**Pogrom:** A violent attack against a particular group of people. The word derives from a Russian word for “havoc.” Pogroms against Jews were often supported by the local government.

**Prejudice:** A preconceived attitude, opinion or feeling, usually negative, formed without adequate knowledge,

thought or reason.

**Propaganda:** The deliberate spreading of ideas or information, true or untrue, with the purpose of manipulating public opinion to gain support for one's cause or to discourage support for another.

**Racism:** A set of beliefs based on perceived 'racial' superiority and inferiority. A system of domination that is played out in everyday interactions, and the unequal distribution of privilege, resources and power.

**Red Army:** the army of the Soviet Union.

**“Resettlement”:** a Nazi euphemism for deportation and murder.

**Roma-Sinti:** a nomadic people whose ancestors migrated to Europe from India. Roma is the correct term for Gypsy, which is sometimes perceived as pejorative. Nazi Germany and its Axis partners persecuted and killed large numbers of Roma during the era of the Holocaust.

**SS:** German abbreviation for Schutzstaffel (literally, protection squads). A paramilitary formation of the Nazi party initially created to serve as bodyguards to Hitler and other Nazi leaders. It later took charge of political intelligence gathering, the German police and the central security apparatus, the concentration camps, and the systematic mass murder of Jews and other victims.

**S.S. St. Louis:** On May 13, 1939, the S.S. St. Louis sailed from Germany to Cuba with 900 Jewish refugees. The passengers were not allowed to disembark in Cuba, and America's restrictive quotas also did not allow them to enter. The ship returned to Europe and many of its passengers were murdered during the Holocaust.

**Sachsenhausen:** the principal Nazi concentration camp for the Berlin area.

**Scapegoat:** An individual or group unfairly blamed for problems not of their making.

**Shabbat:** The Jewish Sabbath, which starts on Friday evening and ends on Saturday night. It is the day of spiritual rest and reflection.

**Sonderkommando** (Special Detachments): in killing centers, Sonderkommandos consisted of those prisoners selected to remain alive as forced laborers to facilitate the killing process, particularly the disposal of corpses.

**Stereotype:** A simplistic, firmly held belief, often negative, about individual characteristics generalized to all people within that group.

**Synagogue:** in Judaism, a house of worship and learning.

**Tolerance:** A fair and objective attitude toward those whose opinions and practices differ from one's own. The commitment to respect human dignity.

**Torah:** The first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). A Torah scroll is handwritten and read out loud in synagogue three times a week.

**Weimar Republic:** Name for the parliamentary democracy established in Germany from 1919-1933,

following the collapse of Imperial Germany and preceding Nazi rule.

**Yellow star:** A badge featuring the Star of David (a symbol of Judaism) used by the Nazi regime during the Holocaust as a method of visibly identifying Jews.

**Zionism:** A movement to establish a Jews State in the land of Israel. Modern Zionism began in the late 19th century, and included several fractions with different ideologies.

## RESOURCES

Anne Frank House  
<http://www.annefrank.org/>

Anti-Defamation League  
[www.adl.org](http://www.adl.org)

Auschwitz Museum  
<http://www.auschwitz.org.pl/>

Bergen-Belsen Memorial  
<http://www.bergenbelsen.de/en/>

Facing History and Ourselves  
[www.facinghistory.org](http://www.facinghistory.org)

The Ghetto Fighters' House  
<http://gfh.org.il/Eng/>

Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center (Chicago, Illinois)  
<http://www.ilholocaustmuseum.org/>

Imperial War Museum's Holocaust Exhibition (London, UK)  
<http://london.iwm.org.uk>

Jewish Partisans Educational Foundation  
[www.jewishpartisans.org](http://www.jewishpartisans.org)

Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust (New York City)  
<http://www.mjhnyc.org/index.htm>

Simon Wiesenthal Center's Museum of Tolerance (Los Angeles, California)  
<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com>

Theresienstadt  
[http://www.bterezin.org.il/en\\_general\\_info.htm](http://www.bterezin.org.il/en_general_info.htm)

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, D.C.)  
<http://www.ushmm.org/>

USC-Shoah Foundation  
<http://college.usc.edu/vhi/>

Yad Vashem  
<http://www.yadvashem.org>