

Directions: Read the following passages and answer the questions that follow.

THE FINAL SOLUTION SPREADS

The "Final Solution" is a topic that is very difficult for sane people today to understand, and some refuse to believe it ever happened at all. However, the record is complete and cannot be denied: people lost their property, livelihoods, dignity, and lives because they were born Jewish. Hitler did not invent the segregation of the Jews, the ghetto, or the yellow Star of David patches. Abusing Jews was an old custom in many countries including Spain, Germany, Poland, and Russia. Some Jews saw trouble coming and left Germany before the worst came, but others thought it was a passing phase and would go away, just as pogroms (government-approved attacks on Jews) had in Russia under the czars.

Hitler never made a secret of his dislike for Jews; he held them responsible for the Treaty of Versailles, the terrible economic conditions of Germany, and almost every catastrophe that had hurt Germany. Yet Jews made up less than 1 percent of the German population, and only in Frankfurt were they more than 4 percent of a city's population. Despite their small numbers, they played a major part in the professions: 16 percent of lawyers, 15 percent of brokers, and 10.9 percent of doctors were Jews.

Shortly after Hitler came to power, the SA enforced a boycott of Jewish shops, accusing them of protesting to outsiders about attacks on synagogues and individuals. Police were instructed not to interfere with the boycott but to become involved only if life or property were threatened. The boycott didn't last long because most Germans did not like it. In April 1933 a law was passed limiting the number of Jewish civil servants and judges, and another law set a quota requiring that Jews could number no more than 5 percent of the students at any school.

In 1935 new laws were passed to (1) forbid marriage between Jews and citizens of German blood; (2) forbid Jews to fly the national flag, although they could fly a Jewish flag; (3) change the status of Jews from citizens to subjects; (4) prohibit Jews from using the library and attending the theatre; and (5) force Jewish men to add "Israel" as a middle name and women to add "Sarah" to theirs. Passports were stamped "Jew." Jews were still somewhat protected by public opinion, and there was confusion among the Nazis over the exact definition of who was a Jew and as to how far back to trace Jewish ancestry.

Because the Olympics were to be held in Berlin in 1936, Hitler feared that continuing his harsh treatment of Jews might cause the games to be moved elsewhere. Pressure on Jews eased until 1938 when a Jew was accused of murdering a minor German Foreign Office official in Paris. In a radio announcement Goebbels told Germans to demonstrate their outrage, and that night, November 10, 1938, mobs broke the windows at Jewish-owned



Laws restricting the freedom of Jews forced many to leave Germany, but most had nowhere to go and could not escape the persecution.

stores and synagogues. So much broken glass was left on the streets that this was called *Kristallnacht* (Crystal Night). The attacks on property and individuals were so savage that no one tried to stop them.

The Jewish question was now at a critical point, and Hitler was impatient with delays in ridding Germany of its Jews. His policies were already working. From 1933 to 1937, 129,000 Jews had left the country, and in 1938, 40,000 more left. On November 12, 1938, Goring announced that after January 1, 1939, Jews could no longer run businesses or be supervisors. Jews were being forced out, but to where? By now, most were very poor and could not afford to move. Other countries did not want them, and the British allowed only a few into Palestine because of Arab complaints.

World War 11 created a new and bigger Jewish problem for the Nazis because conquered nations like Poland, Russia, France, and the Netherlands were home to thousands of Jews. Even Denmark and Norway had small Jewish populations. In 1941 Hitler proposed the "Final Solution," the death of all Jews in Europe. The SS agency designated to accomplish this was the RSHA, headed by Rienhard Heydrich. He called a meeting of leaders of the departments whose help was needed to accomplish this at the Berlin suburb of Wannsee. With cold efficiency they discussed timetables and methods.

The Jews had many enemies in some countries, and these enemies were more than willing to help SS death squads locate Jews. The Germans often went to Jewish villages in Poland and the Ukraine and said workers were needed. Those chosen sometimes were put on work details or were sent to work as slave labor in a factory, but others were taken into the woods and shot.

Some Christians saw what was happening to the Jews and helped them escape, hid them away, or took Jewish children into their homes and forged papers showing they were the children of relatives who had died in the war. When Nazi officials told Denmark's King Christian X to solve his Jewish problem, he told the Nazis that Denmark did not have a Jewish problem: "We know we are their equals."

1. What had the systematic persecution of Jews in Russia been called? _____
2. What was the SA excuse for the boycott in 1933? _____

3. Name two prominent Jews who left Germany in 1933. _____
4. What names did Jews have to add to their given names in 1935? _____

5. Why did pressure on Jews let up in 1936? _____

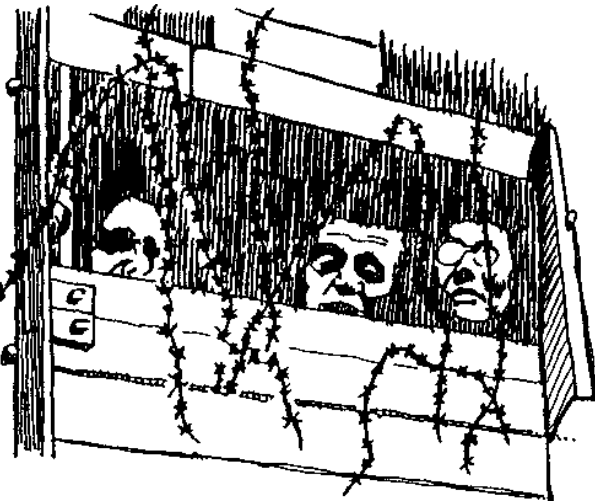
6. Where did the name "Crystal Night" come from? _____

7. What was Hitler's "Final Solution" to be? _____

8. What agency was to carry it out? _____

CONCENTRATION CAMPS: CENTERS FOR GENOCIDE

Even in its beginning, the Nazi regime was cruel. Captured resistance workers, conquered Polish and Russian civilians, and Russian prisoners of war were victims of oppression. At best their ^ needs were neglected; at worst they were tortured, deliberately starved, or worked to death. The SS found special pleasure in dealing with the "subhuman" Jews, gypsies, insane, and deformed. Reinhard Heydrich, the "Blond Beast," was the head of the SD, which specialized in carrying out Hitler's Jewish policies.



The concentration camps were centers for carrying out Hitler's policy of exterminating the Jews.

Two terms are important in understanding Hitler's "Final Solution" for the Jewish problem. *Holocausts* defined as "a great or complete devastation or destruction." *Genocide* is "deliberate extermination of a national, racial, political, or cultural group." Hitler wanted Europe's Jewish population entirely destroyed.

In September 1941 Hitler ordered that all German Jews be shipped to the ghettos (Jewish sections) of Polish cities. That December the camp at Chelmno opened to "clear" Jews from the annexed area. They were killed as soon as they arrived.

In 1942 two British-trained Czechs killed Heydrich near Prague. In revenge Hitler put his finger on a map and picked the town of Lidice to be destroyed. The men were murdered, the women sent to concentration camps, and the children sent to Germany to be raised as Nazis. Heydrich's replacement was Ernst Kaltenbrunner, a huge brute of a man who devoted his energies to finding new ways to kill.

Some of the most cruel people in human history worked in the concentration camps. A few became notorious. Adolf Eichmann was the SD Jewish expert. Even though he claimed that he had nothing personal against the Jews, he sent millions to their deaths. His motto was "obey," but Eichmann continued gassing Jews even after Himmler ordered him to stop in 1944. Dr. Josef Mengele was the "angel of death." A man with the "face of an angel," he met trains coming into Auschwitz. As people got off the cattle cars, he decided with his thumb to the right or left who was to be gassed and who lived a little longer. Mengele was responsible for the deaths of 400,000 Jews.

Some of the larger prison camps will be remembered for centuries to come. DACHAU was the first concentration camp (1933), and its gate mocked the new inmates with the words "*Arbeit Macht Frei*" (Work Brings Freedom). BUCHENWALD was located near Weimar and was used to provide labor for local arms factories. Deaths averaged 6,000 a month, but survival chances were better there than in other camps.

The large extermination camps were in Poland. The three largest were Auschwitz, Maidanek, and Treblinka. AUSCHWITZ was the largest; at its peak, it housed 100,000 prisoners with 12,000 killed per day. Its gas chambers could execute 2,000 at a time using Zyklon B gas.

The prisoners were told they were going to shower and to remove all of their clothes. Once packed inside, gas poured from the shower heads, and death followed 3 to 15 minutes later. TREBLINKA received 5,000 Jews a day from the Warsaw ghetto; all were sent to "shower" after they arrived. In two months in 1942, 300,000 died there. MAJDANEK had some work projects, but it was mainly a mass murder factory; about 1.5 million were gassed there.

The dead were robbed of anything of value, including their hair, gold teeth, watches, and jewelry. The hair was used for lining army boots. Gold paid for the expense of the war machine; watches and jewelry were given to the SS and wounded soldiers. Clothes were given to the poor. Stealing any of this wealth was a death penalty offense, but some camp officials built large bank accounts. Another way that money could be made was by renting prisoners out. In return for a small payment, Jewish laborers were rented out to private companies. If they died from overwork or starvation, it was no problem. Bribes were given to the officials providing the laborers, increasing corruption in the concentration camp management system.

The years of suffering and malnutrition weakened the prisoners' desire for revolt or revenge, but occasionally, they struck back. By January 1943 the once crowded Warsaw ghetto had only 60,000 remaining Jews, and the Nazis intended to eliminate them. Armed with smuggled guns, the Jews forced the Germans to retreat. More arms came in from the outside, and the defenders fought to the last man. The battle ended in April.

Treblinka inmates stole grenades and rifles from the arsenal and surprised the guards with a sudden attack. About 150 to 200 got away, but they were easily picked off one by one, and very few survived the war.

What is remarkable about the Holocaust is not that six million Jews died, but that many survived. Christians risked their own lives by hiding Jews or helping them escape. Danes saved 90 percent of their Jews, the French 78 percent, but the Dutch could only save 25 percent of theirs.

Only Holocaust survivors know how truly bad conditions were in these camps. Allied soldiers who liberated the camps were shocked by the conditions. When Eisenhower and Patton visited the camp at Ohrdruf, it was even worse than they had imagined it, and Patton became so ill that he vomited. Eisenhower ordered every soldier not at the front lines to come to the camp, so that if they did not understand what they were fighting for, at least they would know what they were fighting against.

1. What is a holocaust? _____

2. What is the purpose of genocide? _____

3. Where were German Jews shipped in 1941? _____

4. For what crime did the innocent people of Lidice suffer? _____

5. What doctor was known as the "angel of death"? _____

6. What did the sign on Dachau's gate mean in English? _____

7. How many inmates were killed at Auschwitz each day? _____

8. How many Jews were killed at Majdanek? _____

9. What happened to the watches and jewelry of those executed? _____

10. What percentage of Denmark's Jewish population survived the war?

“How Do You Think You Would Have Behaved Under Hitler?”

Looking for Good Germans

David Davidson

The concentration camps posed a disturbing question for the rest of the world: how would you have acted in Hitler's Germany? For David Davidson, who helped the U.S. Army establish anti-Nazi communications in Germany after its surrender, the question was a literal one.

Even before the last shots were fired in Europe in World War II and the dust had begun to settle over the ruins of Hitler's Thousand-Year Reich, teams of Americans in Army uniform were moving into Germany to begin sitting in judgment of the defeated enemy. . . .

I was one of these moralists in khaki. A newspaperman and radio writer in civil life, only a few days after the German surrender in May 1945, I took my place behind a battered pine desk in a bomb-cracked building in Munich. . . .

Our mission . . . was to suspend immediately every activity in public communications—press, book, and magazine publishing, radio, theater, opera, and even the circus—and root out all practitioners tainted with Nazism. Next we would search out, investigate, and license provably anti-Nazi Germans to build up a whole new democratic establishment of communications over which there would be no need to exercise censorship. . . .

The procession of Germans who came before us were, by our rough-and-ready rule of thumb, soon classified as falling into one of three categories: black, white, or gray.

Black denoted applicants with an out-and-out Nazi background and on whom little time need be wasted except for a few calculated insults to themselves and their fallen Führer. White denoted “good Germans,” those who had never given in to Nazism during the Hitler era.

Gray was the tragic group, consisting of good Germans who had gone bad under pressure; people of decent anti-Nazi convictions who, because of the necessities of making a living, pursuing a career, or even staying out of the Gestapo dungeons, had finally caved in to one degree or another. . . .

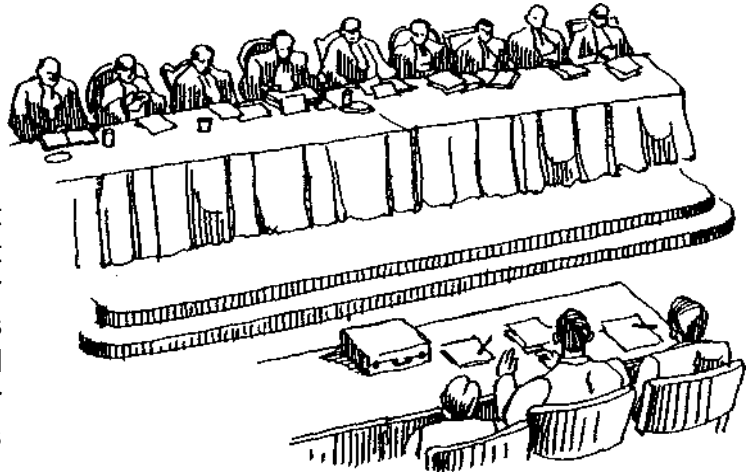
Interrogating the grays was always the most painful—for the interrogator as well as for the applicant. To the grays we represented the conscience they had betrayed. And the consequences of these interrogations could be painfully dramatic. One applicant, after being faced with the record of his concessions to Nazism, killed himself.

In my case, an applicant whom I had accused of fighting Hitler “with your fist in your pocket” turned on me and shot a barbed question that stings to this day: “How do you think *you* would have behaved under Hitler?”

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1. Do you think the Nazis who ran concentration camps were just obeying orders as they claimed?
 2. How could a greedy camp commander make a profit from his job?
 3. Why might a Christian help Jews he barely knew to escape the camps?

JUDGMENT DAY FOR WAR CRIMINALS

At Yalta, Stalin had remarked that 50,000 Germans should be taken out and shot. Whether he was kidding or not no one knows, but Churchill was shocked by the statement and said that the English public would never allow such a massacre. It is estimated that 50 million people died in the war, many of deliberate starvation in concentration camps or at the hands of death squads.



Nazis accused of war crimes were tried at Nuremberg, Germany.

The innocent often suffer in war, but when cruelty becomes the official policy of a government, then a feeling of righteous indignation demands that the guilty be punished.

The subject of whom to punish was very complicated. There were many questions to be answered. Is a person who only obeyed the order of his superior a war criminal? If so every guard at Auschwitz was responsible for the genocide. Who would try a person who committed an atrocity in France, the French or an international court? Would it be fair to try a person for an offense that was not a crime when it was done? The U.S. Constitution forbids *ex post facto* trials, which means that a person cannot be punished for something done before a law was passed. Some felt that the United States should not get involved in the trials, but others pointed out that the Russians were less concerned about legal limits and might execute thousands or perhaps millions of Germans. Most puzzling of all was trying to define a war crime.

The trial for Nazi war criminals took place at Nuremberg, the site of early Nazi rallies. Defendants and groups (Gestapo, SD, and so on) were tried for four types of offenses: (1) conspiring to use the Nazi Party to seize control of government in Germany, (2) crimes against peace (planning and carrying out wars of aggression), (3) war crimes (cruel treatment of civilians in occupied areas, plundering, and deliberate destruction of cities and towns of no military value), and (4) crimes against humanity (murder, enslavement, and persecution of political, racial, and religious groups).

The question of whether this was to be a trial or a lynching was settled when the elderly Gustav Krupp did not understand that he was accused of being a war criminal; doctors found that in his mental and physical condition he could not understand trial proceedings. The prosecutors admitted that defendants in their own country could not be tried if they were in Krupp's condition. His name was dropped from the list.

Of the Nuremberg defendants, twelve were sentenced to death, three to life in prison, two to 20 years, one to 15 years, and one to 10 years in prison. Three were found not guilty. Goring was sentenced to death but killed himself with poison. Rudolf Hess was the only inmate of Spandau Prison for many years, finally dying in 1987. Martin Bormann's whereabouts remained a mystery, but he was found guilty and sentenced to death *in absentia*.

Some of the "smaller fish" were tried in other courts. Josef Kramer, commandant at the Belsen concentration camp, was sentenced to death by a British military court. Those responsible for the conditions at Auschwitz were tried from December 1963 to August 1965. Punishment ranged from life at hard labor to three years and three months at hard labor.

Japanese accused of war crimes were also tried in United Nations courts. The accused were divided into three groups: CLASS A (those planning war in violation of international agreements), CLASS B (those violating the customs of war), CLASS C (those who carried out orders to torture or murder). These crimes were to go back to the 1931 invasion of Manchuria. No action was to be taken against the emperor. General Tojo was found guilty of war crimes and hanged in 1948. General Yamashita was tried in Manila, found guilty of war crimes, and hanged. General Homma, responsible for the Bataan Death March, was tried in Manila and executed by firing squad.

Some Axis leaders avoided the humiliation of a trial by committing suicide. Joseph Goebbels' last radio speech to the German nation on April 21 blamed the failure of the Third Reich on treason and cowardice. "Well, the venture has failed.... But when we depart, the earth shall tremble." On May 2 Goebbels poisoned his wife and children and then shot himself. Heinrich Himmler disguised himself in the uniform of an SS enlisted man, but was caught going through British lines. When a British doctor examined him, he found poison in his coat and ordered Himmler to put on an old British uniform coat. The doctor told his superior about the poison and was told to examine Himmler's mouth; he might have hidden poison there. When he came back, Himmler crushed a vial between his teeth and died minutes later. The earth did not tremble.

In 1941 Tojo had told his officers that death, even suicide, was better than surrender. War Minister Anami committed *hara-kiri* (ritual suicide) shortly before the emperor's surrender speech was broadcast. General Sugiyama, commander of home defense at the end of the war, committed suicide in September. Prince Konoye poisoned himself. Hundreds of other officers had killed themselves when their positions were overrun or they felt responsible for the loss of a battle. Now others who had killed or abused prisoners of war and civilians were killing themselves. Tojo tried to kill himself after he was captured but failed. He was criticized for not only doing a poor job of running the war, but bungling suicide as well.

Many "smaller fish" got away and were never found or were considered too unimportant to bother with. Some who escaped at the time were found later by Israeli Intelligence. One was Colonel Adolf Eichmann, who killed many Russian Jews. He was captured by the Israelis in Argentina in 1961 and taken to Israel for trial. Found guilty, he was hanged.

1. A Nazi was accused of crimes against Jewish prisoners in a concentration camp. Which charge was brought against him? _____

2. A Nazi was accused of planning the invasion of Poland. Which charge was brought against him? _____

3. A German officer was accused of destroying a small village. Which charge was brought against him? _____

4. A Nazi was accused of plotting the overthrow of the democratic Weimar Republic in Germany. Which charge was brought against him? _____

5. Why was Gustav Krupp not brought to trial? _____

6. Who was the last remaining prisoner at Spandau prison? _____

7. Who were three of the Japanese generals who were sentenced to death? _____

8. How did Goebbels escape trial? _____

9. Name three Japanese leaders who committed suicide. _____

10. What happened to Eichmann? _____