

BACKUP PLATFORM

Freedom and Movement in the Holocaust

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Freedom & Movement in the Holocaust

The overall focus of our media project will be on people who were victims and targets of the Holocaust and their stories of desperate escape and efforts to avoid the Nazi regime, as well as perspectives from the side of the Nazi party. We focus on movement as a means of escape, movement of ideas, and movement through immigration in search of a new home.

Video Link

<https://www.wevideo.com/view/1028217485>

The Jewish

During World War II, Jews were the largest group targeted by the Nazis. They faced harsh punishments and were treated extremely poorly until it got even worse. They were put into concentration camps and many were forced to provide labor for the Nazi war effort. All of their freedoms were taken from them in order to dehumanize them. The Nazis took an entire religious community and labeled them as nothing more than animals that needed to be exterminated. First they were forced from their homes and into low end Jewish slums until they were later transported to concentration camps. During all this there were brave souls who attempted escape and many others on the outside who wanted to give the refugees a place where they could feel safe.

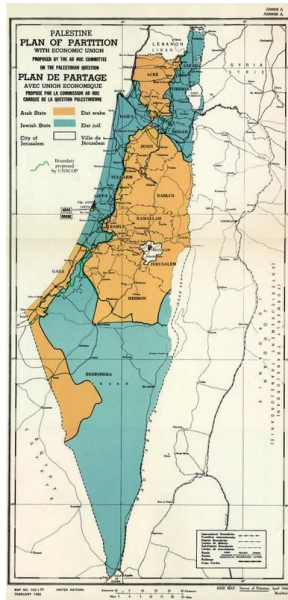
Video Link

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Story Map

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Burning pit at Ponar death camp



View of what the last thing the prisoners might have seen as they headed into the woods towards freedom.

Effects on Jewish Religion

The Jewish religion views God as the Provider and Protector. When God had let the evil toward the Jews (the Nazi party), kill such a huge number of Jews, a lot of them started to question multiple aspects of their religion such as the integrity of the whole Torah, whether the covenant had been broken between God and Israel, and whether God was dead, indifferent, or even a sadist. How He let the Holocaust happened made many Jews question why they needed him. In their eyes, if he could not live up to his reputation of pushing evil and rewarding good or being merciful, then he had no purpose in their

lives at all. Many groups of Jews would argue about whether being Jewish was religious, ethnic, or some sort of mixture of both.

For additional insight on how some Jews' perspective on their religion was altered by the events of the Holocaust, see the following links:

"How the Holocaust Challenged Faith" - MyJewishLearning.com

www.myjewishlearning.com/article/how-the-holocaust-challenged-faith/

"Jewish Identity after the Holocaust" - Yad Vashem / Shoah Resource Center

www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/microsoft%20word%20-%203858.pdf

"The Aftermath of the Holocaust" - Holocaust Encyclopedia

www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005129



Nazis burned works by Jewish authors that were considered "un-German" such as religious texts.

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?title=File:UN_Palestine_Partition_Versions_1947.jpg&oldid=215713278
8. Wikimedia Commons contributors, "File:1933-may-10-berlin-book-burning.JPG" Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository, (accessed December 2, 2017).
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_homosexuals_in_Nazi_Germany_and_the_Holocaust#/media/File:1933-may-10-berlin-book-burning.JPG

The Nazi Party

The Nazi party is often not focused on in historical sources of the Holocaust, with the exception of the way that they treated the targeted groups. Many of the soldiers of the Nazi party were drafted into their position and did not have a choice whether or not to be a party in the worst crimes committed by the Third Reich (the Nazi designation of Germany and its regime)(1). If they were to show any sort of resistance or disobedience to the higher authorities of the Nazi party, they would have been treated as a member of the other side of the war and killed immediately (3). When the time came for the major players in the Nazi party to be tried, most claimed that they were under the command of a higher authority (4). The Nazi soldiers lost certain freedoms in these ways while gaining other freedoms due to being on the winning side before the Nazi party was eventually defeated. Some of these freedoms came in the form of the draft (1), oaths such as the Oath to Adolf Hitler (2) that all members of the Nazi party had to take, and the overall dictator role that Hitler had.

Video Links:

- 1) <https://www.wevideo.com/view/1028111831>
- 2) <https://www.wevideo.com/view/1028132937>
- 3) <https://www.wevideo.com/view/1028128120>

Freedoms

During the Holocaust, their actions against the targeted groups had no consequence because of how their group of people (the Nazi party) were the ones in control and the soldiers simply did as they were told (1). When it came time for the Nazi party members to stand in trial, their main defense was that they were following orders of a higher authority and being obedient to those authorities in order to save their own lives. If they were to have shown any sign of disobedience

to their higher-ups, they would have been treated as a member of the other side of the war which meant automatic execution (3). They argued that they did not have the freedom of choice, a freedom considered as basic to most first world countries in the 21st century (1). The members of the Nazi party who were not high up on the list of people with authority have the influence of the whole Nazi party's views on every "choice" that they made. They were constantly facing obstacles of authority figures when faced with a choice, so their ultimate choice was seen to them as not a choice at all but something they are forced to do (1). In their perspective, it did not matter what the soldier's personal beliefs were because they had no choice but to do what they could in order to stay alive. It was survival of the fittest, with the fittest being those who carried out the orders they were given without hesitation. Hitler's sovereignal freedom (the power to act as one pleases, regardless of others wishes and freedoms), in the eyes of the Nazi soldiers, took away from each of their own personal freedom (the freedom from constraint or coercion by another person)(1). When considering the freedoms taken away from the targeted groups, the Nazi party members did not experience as much of a loss of their freedoms.

Story Map

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As the main goal of the Nazi party was to eliminate the target groups in order to promote the Aryan race, the targeted groups were put into concentration camps and forced to provide labor for the Nazi war effort and oftentimes deported. When they got ill or physically weak and ineffective to use for labor, they were killed via mass shootings, gas chambers, and crematoriums. After the war ended in 1945, the Nazi party as a whole was taken into POW camps and tried for their war crimes (5). The Nuremberg trials sentenced twelve prominent Nazis to death. Most of the Nazis on trial admitted to their accused crimes, but claimed that they were just following the orders of a higher authority. Many of the Nazi criminals were never tried because they fled Germany or committed suicide (Adolf Hitler). And most of the individuals who were not directly involved in the killing of the targeted groups received short sentences or no penalty for their crimes. The overall verdict of Nuremberg was 12 death sentences, 3 life imprisonments, and 4 prison terms of 10-20 years. (4)



Bones of anti-Nazi German women can be seen in the crematoria in the German concentration camp at Weimar. (1)



SS and police officials speaking among themselves during a roll call of Polish prisoners at Buchenwald. (2)



Defendants in the dock at the Nuremberg trials. (3)



Nuremberg Trials defendants in the dock. (4)



The door to Rudolf Hess' cell. During the Nuremberg trials, the cell doors were constantly guarded, mainly to prevent any suicide attempt. (5)

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Image sources:

- (7) Bones of anti-Nazi German women still are in the crematoriums in the German concentration camp at Weimar, Germany by The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration is in the public domain
- (8) Buschenwald Prisoners Nazis 13129 by Work of the United States Government is in the public domain
- (9) Defendants in the dock at the Nuremberg Trials by Work of the United States Government is in the public domain
- (10) German War Crimes Trials. Nuremberg & Dachau - NARA 292606 by Unknown is in the public domain
- (11) Nuremberg Trials defendants in the dock 1945 by United States Army Signal Corps photographer is in the public domain

Homosexuality

During the time of the German Nazi regime, the term "homosexual" was viewed as a deformity as opposed to a type of sexuality like in today's world. Many homosexuals took cover from their emotions through lying and deceit. They lived as though heterosexual to avoid persecution from the Nazis. Many of them married the opposite sex and even had children. The movement of gay men and women during the Holocaust ranged between England and the United States. Their positive freedom of thinking was enslaved throughout their time in Nazi Germany. They were not free to act on the feelings they were experiencing. Once they reached these places many of them left their spouses or had affairs with other escaped homosexuals as well. The approach to understanding this movement and why these individuals had to live their life of lies were to ask the questions, "why did they leave Nazi Germany", and "what happened when they got to their place of escape?". There are not too many personal accounts of

homosexuality documented about the holocaust because of protection, but through explaining personal stories of movement, the freedom they lacked is evident. (3)

Video Link

<https://www.wevideo.com/view/1027220633>

Hitler's reign in Germany was in pursuit of the so called "Aryan Race". Men were supposed to be strong, and women, fertile. With over 1.2 million men in 1928 "out" in Germany, many were sent to mental hospitals and concentration camps for treatment. Bearing a pink symbol on their garments, gay men and women were seen as criminals under Hitler's reign in 1935.

Story Map

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=ed333b3901a346eaa769b68b722e8230>

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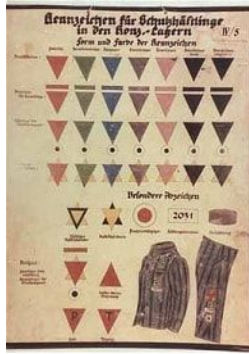
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Movement

During the Holocaust many people tried to escape but only a few were successful. The movement of escaping the concentration camps was so terrible but needed to be done. Not many people think about the process the Jews had to go through to make it out alive and be free. Rudolf Vrba is well known Jew who escaped from Auschwitz but almost died during that time. With not having much help he made it to Slovakia, but just try to imagine the pain and suffering he endured while on the journey to find his deserved freedom (1).

Video Link

<https://www.wevideo.com/view/1028146609>





Rudolf Vrba, escapee and survivor of the Holocaust (4)

Story Map

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Welcoming Countries

The concept of movement to various countries to escape persecution is essential when discussing Holocaust survivors. The sole purpose of each person fleeing Europe was to remove oppression and infringement upon their freedoms. Some countries' governments and societies were more welcoming to foreigners seeking refuge than others; however, no matter what country the oppressed people arrived in, they faced many challenges in order to obtain desirable freedoms. Many of the Holocaust survivors movement sent them to Israel where they were placed in private institutions and initially did not receive adequate care (1). Other Holocaust survivors fled to countries in North America. Canada in particular was a country during 1933-1945 who did not allow many Jewish immigrants to seek refuge in their country (2). The survivors needed to assimilate to the culture of the new country they lived in due to societal norms and cultural values. The reception of Holocaust survivors in new countries is significant because it shows the freedoms that the people wanted to escape from through movement, and it also brings attention to the freedoms upheld and restricted in a new country once movement has been obtained.

Video Link

<https://www.wevideo.com/view/1027234208>

Story Map

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