

The Holocaust

This trail can be completed alone or followed and discussed in a pair or in groups. Some information you need is on display and some is on this print out.

1. The Rise of the Nazis



Timeline 1919 – 1939



Find the Hitler Youth dagger

It is in the second case of the 1919 - 1939 section of the Timeline (Object number 12)

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Why was the Hitler Youth important to the Nazi regime?

It was used as a tool of indoctrination. Members were indoctrinated into believing they were the 'master race' and that others were inferior to them. The activities undertaken in the Hitler Youth prepared boys for military service. Girls were prepared for motherhood in the German Girls' League. From 1939, membership was compulsory for children who qualified as 'Aryan' under Nazi racial ideology.

Why do you think children might have wanted to join this organisation?

Some children may have been attracted to the activities such as athletics and camping. Some may have felt a sense of belonging and superiority. Others wanted to be with friends or went because they had to. Some boys may have been attracted to fact that they would take part in military style training and receive a dagger like the one on display.

What do you think is wrong with an organisation like this?

You were only welcome if you were considered part of the 'Aryan race'. Jewish, Roma and Black children were excluded. Any child with any physical or mental health issues would also have been excluded. Even if you were considered 'Aryan'

you would not have been allowed to express your own opinions unless they conformed to Nazi ideology. Members were indoctrinated into Nazi ideology.

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Henry Mettelmann describes why he joined the Hitler Youth:

I loved it in the Hitler Youth. I really liked it because, when you come from a poor background ... when I went to town sometimes ... I saw people who were well dressed and I felt a bit shabby. Now I was in the Hitler Youth, I had a uniform the same as all the others so no differences, great in marching. The songs we sung, the military songs, some of them are quite melodic and I liked the sound of it and also bawdy songs. There was one that went: sings in German “And if the Jewish blood drips off our knives then things go doubly well.” Then I came home and sung it at home. “What are you singing? What’s this here” you know it was terrible and they were aghast, my parents.

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“”

Look at the medal, Object number 10.

What was the purpose of producing a medal such as this?

The Gold Mother cross was a reward given to healthy ‘Aryan’ German women who had eight children. It sent out a clear message that women’s primary role in Nazi Germany was to have children. The Nazis made it difficult for women to work in professions which were deemed more suitable for men.

The Nazis also introduced a ‘euthanasia’ programme called T4 which led to the sterilisation of approximately 400,000 adults and young people deemed mentally ill or disabled. Once the Second World War began this was escalated and thousands of sick and disabled children were murdered along with hundreds of thousands of institutionalised Germans. They were either starved to death, received lethal injections or were gassed. This all formed part of the Nazis desire to create a ‘pure’ Germany.

Which do you think is the most dangerous artefact in the case? Why?

Your group might choose objects as varied as the pistol, dagger, anti-Jewish propaganda or the copy of Mein Kampf.

2. Kindertransport

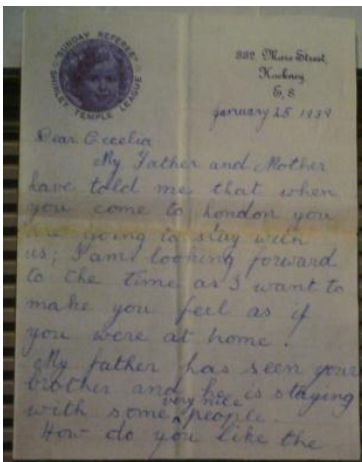


Go in Silo 1: *Experience of War* and find the Evacuees and Child Refugees case

Read the information to the left of the case. What does 'Kindertransport' mean? 'Kindertransport' translates to 'Children's transport'.

How many children escaped to Britain on the Kindertransport?

Between December 1938 and August 1939, 9,354 German and Austrian Jewish children under 18 years of age were brought to Britain by the Kindertransport. They were escaping the growing prejudice and violence against Jewish people.



Look for the artefacts relating to Celia Horwitz and read the letter written to her by Betty Watts Object number 4. Celia Horwitz would later go on to live with the Watts family.

These items consist of a letter written by Betty Watts; a photograph of Celia at Cockley Cley and a diary.

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What happened to Celia's brother?

Celia's brother joined the British Army and took part in the D-Day landings.

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Celia Horwitz spoke to the sound archive about reuniting with her mother and the difficulties following the end of the Second World War.

It was quite difficult. Mum, I think to her, part of love and being a mother was giving you things, and to me that was never that important. But you can't seem to get the years back of gradually growing into a relationship. It was difficult to talk about things. For one thing I had to get back to German, which I hadn't talked in ages. I found we didn't talk about books. I don't think I ever saw my mother read more than magazines and papers. We didn't talk about politics, we didn't talk about plays or music.

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You can discover more about her journey in Silo 6 on the touch screen *Personal Journeys of those forced to migrate during times of war* under her married name Celia Jane Lee.

3. Life before the Nazis



Go to the **Genocide** case on the Timeline 1939 – 1945



Find the photographs of Jewish people from the village of Frysztak, southern Poland. They are object number 1.

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What do the photographs tell you about these individuals?

You can see holiday snaps, days out, photos of family and friends. These people would have lived varied lives and had many different experiences.

Nothing is known of the fate of any of these people. Why do you think this is?

IWM tells the stories of people's lives through personal artefacts and testimony. As the Nazis retreated they tried to destroy all evidence of their crimes which included the bodies of their victims and their personal artefacts. This is why the testimony of those who experienced the events of the Holocaust is so vital.

Post visit:

If you would like to find out more about what happened to the Jewish residents of Frysztak visit: <http://www.shtetlinks.jewishgen.org/Frysztak/frysztak.htm>

Look at object number 9. What happened to Celia's father, Walter Horwitz?

Walter Horwitz was taken to Minsk and murdered. He fought for Germany in the First World War.

4. Ghettos



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Find object number 8, coins from the Lodz Ghetto.

What did Lodz have in common with Manchester?

Both were cities with important textiles industries.

Find the touchscreen on the right of the Genocide case and touch the image of the Lodz Ghetto coins to find the answers to these questions.

Why did the Nazis move Jewish people into ghettos?

Jews were moved into ghettos to make it easier to control and then to deport them.

Why did ghettos have their own currency?

The money could only be used inside the ghetto – it was valueless outside.



Listen to Roman Halter. Why was it essential to find work in the Lodz Ghetto?
Work was essential as, without the money and rations provided to workers, the ghetto inmates starved.

5. Camps



Find Object 15 and read the text panel. Then on the touchscreen to right of the Genocide case, tap the photograph of the belt that belonged to Sam Pivnik.

Sam was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau camp in 1943. What work was he forced to do there?

To survive Sam became one of the 'cleaning squad' at Auschwitz-Birkenau. When the trains at the camp arrived and the newly deported Jewish prisoners had been sent to the gas chambers or selected for slave labour, the squad was set to work by the SS Guards. They had to clear away the belongings people had brought with them, remove the bodies of those who had not survived the journey and clean the cattle cars again.



Listen to his story. What happened to a fellow prisoner who tried to escape?

Use the touchscreen and listen to the interview with Sam. He explains how a fellow prisoner tried to escape by bribing a guard. He was missing overnight yet the following morning they brought him back to camp and shot him, displaying him for everybody to see. Sam adds 'and we were assembled and we were told that anybody else that will try to escape will suffer the same fate.' To illustrate this point further, draw your group's attention to Object number 13.

Look now at object number 13 in the Genocide case. What is it?

This is an insulator from an electric barbed wire fence which surrounded Auchwitz-Birkenau camp. This shows how difficult it would have been for prisoners to escape or communicate with the outside world.

What do object number 13 and Sam's story tell you about the choices open to camp inmates to resist their persecution?

Resistance could take many forms and people often ask why Jews did not resist. By this they often mean armed resistance. Even something like holding a religious service or hiding a sacred artefact – which so many did, despite the risks they ran – was an act of resistance.



Find this... Object number 12

Bowl from the Auschwitz-II Birkenau death camp

Over one million Jewish people were murdered at Auschwitz-II. Who else was murdered there?

Non-Jewish Poles, Roma (Gypsies), Jehovah's Witnesses and Soviet prisoners of war.



Why do you think a bowl like this would be important to someone imprisoned in a camp?

It would have been one of the few possessions an inmate would have in the camp. If it was lost, you could not eat, and so would starve. Those who had been in the camp a while knew to be at the end of the food queue, as any nourishment in the thin, watery daily soup would have sunk to the bottom of the stockpot.



Primo Levi, Italian Jewish inmate of Auschwitz II, 1944-1945 describes conditions in Auschwitz.

Hunger was a thing of every hour of every minute. It is difficult to explain to you what hunger is. It is quite different from the hunger normal people feel when they are late one hour for a meal. It is completely different. After some weeks of starvation it is a feeling in every cell in the body. Every cell in your body is hungry and as soon as you go to sleep you are dreaming of eating.



Look at the jacket, Object number 10. We do not know who wore it, we only know where it was found. Why is it on display?

To symbolise the millions of people who suffered and died during this time and to reflect upon the destruction of individuals, families and communities.

The Nazis removed all personal possessions from those imprisoned in camps. Even items of little or no value were confiscated. Why?

Upon arrival at Auschwitz inmates had their possessions removed. They were tattooed with a number, given a uniform and many had their heads shaven. It was an attempt to dehumanise the individual and remove any hope of freedom.

Think about how many possessions you have. How many have you brought with you today?

The clothes we choose, the things we use and wear are physical illustrations of our experiences, tastes, choices and personalities. For inmates at camps such as Auschwitz-II this was taken away.

6. Legacy



Find this... Object number 17

It is in the *Genocide* case on the Timeline.

Who made this doll and why?

This doll was made by former child prisoners during a therapy session after liberation at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. This suggests that the children made this doll as a way of coming to terms with what they had experienced. Your group may also answer that the doll was a gift of gratitude to the British soldier Gwyn Edmund Jones who was involved in liberating the camp.

The doll can help us to think about how the Holocaust has affected people's identity and to consider what it is like to live with its legacy.

Go to the touchscreen on your right and touch the image of the doll to find out more.



Write down some words below to describe some of the emotional, social and practical issues survivors might face after the camps were liberated.

Your group may describe a range of different issues, for example many survivors suffered from mental trauma as a result of their experiences. Survivors were often treated with great hostility by local people when they returned. They may have had no family, jobs, or homes to return to. As a result, many Displaced Persons Camps were set up across Austria, Germany and Italy, where survivors could begin to rebuild their lives.