ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

Guide for Incorporating Antisemitism into Tours of Karkomi

In light of the increase of antisemitism in the United States and around the world, you may want to adjust the theme of your tour, or more intentionally focus on antisemitism during your tour. This guide is not a requirement, but rather a resource for you to consider. You may use some, none, or all of the below on your tours.

Please note the terms "anti-Jewish hate" and "antisemitism" can be used interchangeably, and depending on your group, "anti-Jewish hate" might be more accessible to students.

Introduction: Illinois Holocaust Museum's mission is remember the past; transform the future. We're going to talk a lot about the past and what happened in the Holocaust, but I want you to start to think about how this can relate to you, and what you might do with what you learn about today.

The Nazis were fueled by hatred for people who they saw as outsiders, or unlike them in a variety of ways. This largely included people who were Jewish, and antisemitism was the basis of Nazi ideology.

Ask: Can anyone tell me what antisemitism is?

Antisemitism is sometimes called the world's oldest hatred, and today we're going to learn about an extreme example of where antisemitism can lead—from social ostracism to legal discrimination and to genocide, when the Nazis enacted a plan to murder everyone who was Jewish.

Why were Jewish people targeted? [1]

Antisemitism didn't start or end with the Nazis. It began in ancient times when Jewish people were targeted primarily due to their religious differences. Throughout history, Jewish people were forced to live in separate areas, wear certain articles of clothing, and were barred from most professions, leading to further stereotypes and prejudices from the

[1] Note that this section is an extremely condensed narrative and can be over-simplifying the answer in the interest of time. These main points will help students partially understand why and how Jewish people have been targeted throughout history, but feel free to point them to the ADL's "Antisemitism in Global History," https://antisemitism.adl.org/antisemitism-in-global-history/ or refer them to the bookshop to obtain resources that provide a more complete explanation.

majority population. By the 1800s, "racial science" became popularized and Jewish people were then categorized as a race. This meant that Jewish people were viewed as being born with "Jewish blood" and therefore could not convert and stop being Jewish, which intensified their persecution and laid the groundwork for what we will eventually see in Nazi antisemitism.

Transition - Antisemitism doesn't completely change over time, but rather new layers are added to it. As we go through the Museum, think about the ways that antisemitism informed Nazi ideology; how it grew under Nazism; influenced the actions of Nazis, their collaborators, and bystanders; and how people chose to be Upstanders and take action against antisemitism.

Ideas to highlight antisemitism in Karkomi, gallery-by-gallery[2]

1. Life Before & Rise of Nazism

- Scissors – There were certain professions and a lot of stereotypes that Jews were known for. In part because of restrictions on land ownership, and because of a history of violent persecution, many Jewish people belong to what have been called "portable professions". The large scissors represent one of these: they were used by a tailor to cut cloth; tailoring is a skill and trade not dependent on a certain physical location. With portable tools, such as these scissors, the tailor can work anywhere. (See Fred Sinay's story in the Survivor Booklets for more on the scissors.)
- *Mein Kampf* – defined Jews as an active threat to the "Aryan race," and ultimately a threat to civilization itself; conspiracy theories to overthrow the world; Nazi antisemitism brought in new layers to antisemitism which made Jewish people an existential threat to Germany, German lives, and their (and their children's) futures.
- Engage in conversation with students and ask, "Why do you think Jews were a scapegoat?" when discussing WWI/Treaty of Versailles and the economic conditions in the Weimar Republic.

[2] These ideas were generated by Docent participants in the "Incorporating Antisemitism into Tours" training as part of the Docent Summer Learning Series in July 2024. You will find additional ideas in the Appendix at the end. We thank all who contributed.

2. Life Under Nazism, 'Kristallnacht', & Paper Walls

- Use the photo of the excerpt from the 'Poison Mushroom,' and discuss as propaganda. Discuss the use of harmful stereotypes and tropes in the illustration and the creation of propaganda to indoctrinate children into antisemitic ideology.
- November Pogrom: government-sponsored violence; synagogues and Jewish businesses burned while neighbors, firefighters, and police watched. Jews had to pay for and clean up the destruction. Use the photo of the man sweeping up debris in front of a store to discuss the scale of the destruction and the aftermath.
    - Ask: How do you think this young person sweeping up the glass is feeling about living in Germany? How do you think those neighbors passing by are thinking about the Jewish people or community?

3. WWII, Mosaic of Victims, Movement West

- More land, more Jews as Germany conquers additional countries. Increased numbers of "undesirable Jews" led to changes in policy and treatment.
- Racial propaganda/eugenics poster, pointing out antisemitic tropes. Physical characteristics associated with Jewish stereotypes are framed as negative and less human; physical characteristics associated with "Aryan" features are portrayed as desirable.

4. Ghettos

- Physical isolation from the rest of the world, segregation (which has historical precedent), starvation and overcrowding with the intent to starve & murder. Dehumanization.
    - Necessities for survival: smuggling, soup kitchen, breaking furniture for firewood.
- Trope that Jews spread diseases, despite the ghetto creating the conditions where disease was so rampant.

5. HSU, Wannsee, Deception

- Nazis & Einsatzgruppen tapping into the antisemitism of local populations to perpetrate the Final Solution/mass murder. Why did the Einsatzgruppen operate in Eastern Europe, but not in Germany or Western Europe?

- Deception of "relocating" when they mean death/murder, euphemism of "work will make you free". Why did the Nazis use these types of euphemisms?

6. Deportation, Camps, Armed Resistance

- Boxcar – Inhumane conditions, a train car not typically used for transporting human beings; people transported using a means intended for cargo, because they were not considered to be human.
- The misconception that Jews didn't fight back and that they passively went to their deaths; instead, highlight the many ways Jews fought back—spiritually, physically, and through armed resistance .

7. Rescue, Liberation, Return to Life

- Eisenhower brought media into camps so evidence could not be denied. Why did he do this? How did he know that collecting evidence against denial would be necessary?
- How did survivors decide where to move to, what countries would welcome them? How did pre-war immigration restrictions impact survivors' ability to move to new countries? What challenges did survivors face in building new lives in new countries?

8. Post War Justice, Immigration, Skokie

- Postwar antisemitism in the Soviet Union: How were survivors' experiences in the Soviet Union different than in the US or Israel? How has the arrival of Former Soviet survivors in our community increased our understanding of the Holocaust?
- Neo-Nazism in Skokie/neo-Nazi march in Skokie.
    - Skokie was one of the few cities to allow Jews to relocate there, while other North Shore communities did not (Kenilworth as an example).

ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

Conclusion 1: As we've seen, antisemitism didn't end with the Holocaust, and in fact is increasing today. In 2023 there was a 140% increase in antisemitic incidents in the U.S., which broke all previous records.[3] This is largely due to October 7 and the protests surrounding the resulting war in Gaza. There is nothing antisemitic about opposing the Israeli government's policies/actions, supporting the Palestinians' right to a state, or demonstrating for Palestinian rights. That said: Supporting a movement like Hamas (considered a terrorist movement by the US and other countries), whose aim is to destroy Israel, is antisemitism. Other things that cross the line into antisemitism include: suggesting Israel/Jewish people as having hidden power or control, holding Jewish people collectively responsible for Israel's policies or actions, suggesting Jews have more loyalty to Israel than the country in which they live, denying Jews the same individual or national rights as others (including the right to self-determination and/or physical safety), and any behavior that targets and harms someone because they are Jewish (whether through words or actions). [4]

- Where have you seen examples of antisemitism?
- What should you do when you encounter antisemitism?
- What were some examples of how people responded to antisemitism that we saw on our tour? [Make sure rescuers/Upstanders are mentioned.] What can we learn from those stories?
- Why is it important to speak up when you see antisemitism?
- It's important that when you do take action not only against antisemitism, hatred, injustice, human rights violations, etc., that you do so responsibly. Be diligent in your research and ensure that you fully understand the cause for which you're lending your voice. Make sure you're not amplifying antisemitic (or other hateful) rhetoric. Your words have power, and while you have the constitutional right to freedom of speech, be aware of the responsibility that comes with that right.

Conclusion 2: As we've seen, antisemitism didn't end with the Holocaust, and in fact is increasing today. In 2023 there was a 140% increase in antisemitic incidents in the U.S., which broke all previous records. This is largely due to October 7 and the protests surrounding the resulting war in Gaza. There is nothing antisemitic about opposing the

[3] ADL: https://www.adl.org/resources/press-release/us-antisemitic-incidents-soared-140-percent-2023-breaking-all-previous

[4] Nexus Project: https://nexusproject.us/guide-to-identifying-antisemitism-in-debates-about-israel/

Israeli government's policies/actions, supporting the Palestinians' right to a state, or demonstrating for Palestinian rights. That said: Supporting a movement like Hamas (considered a terrorist movement by the US and other countries), whose aim is to destroy Israel, is antisemitism. An example of antisemitism frequently seen/heard at protests is "From the River to the Sea." This antisemitic slogan is fundamentally a call for a Palestinian state extending from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea, territory that includes the State of Israel, which would mean the dismantling of the Jewish state. It is an antisemitic charge denying the Jewish right to self-determination, including through the removal of Jews from their ancestral homeland. Usage of this phrase has the effect of making members of the Jewish and pro-Israel community feel unsafe and ostracized. It is important to note that demanding justice for Palestinians, or calling for a Palestinian state, should not mean, as this hateful phrase posits, denying the right of the State of Israel to exist. [5]

- Where have you seen examples of antisemitism?
- What should you do when you encounter antisemitism?
- What were some examples of how people responded to antisemitism that we saw on our tour? [Make sure rescuers/Upstanders are mentioned.] What can we learn from those stories?
- Why is it important to speak up when you see antisemitism?
- It's important that when you do take action not only against antisemitism, hatred, injustice, human rights violations, etc., that you do so responsibly. Be diligent in your research and ensure that you fully understand the cause for which you're lending your voice. Make sure you're not amplifying antisemitic (or other hateful) rhetoric. Your words have power, and while you have the constitutional right to freedom of speech, be aware of the responsibility that comes with that right.

[5] ADL, "Slogan: From the River to the Sea Palestine Will be Free," https://www.adl.org/resources/backgrounder/slogan-river-sea-palestine-will-be-free

ILLINOIS HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
& EDUCATION CENTER

Appendix

The above are suggestions for ways to incorporate the theme of antisemitism into your tour. Alternatively, you may not want to change the theme of your tour. This appendix provides examples of additional ideas (though not comprehensive) from Docents on how to integrate antisemitism into the tours that you already give. This list can provide ideas for how to pull out certain objects you already highlight on your tours and connect them to antisemitism.

1. Life Before & Rise of Nazism

- Point out that even when things were good and considered "normal," there was still antisemitism. And that antisemitism was not unique to Germany or even to Europe.
- Less than 1% of the German population was Jewish; a tiny minority group was given outsized important/blame for Germany's problems, well beyond what could possibly have been true; the vast majority of pre-war Germans didn't actually know any Jewish people.
- The photo where the words "Jews are our misfortune" in German are shown on a banner at a Nazi Party rally.
- Mentioning or bringing up the Dreyfus Affair.
- Themes to consider: Indoctrination/propaganda, public humiliation, racial shaming.

2. Life Under Nazism, Kristallnacht, & Paper Walls

- Testing the boycott of Jewish businesses, "don't buy from the Jews."
- Highlighting the Nuremberg Laws and other discriminatory laws (over 400 of them) and loss of citizenship.
- Incremental implementation of Hitler's ideology.
- Kindertransport & Shanghai
- Gallery of newspapers – the world was a bystander. Also tying in the Evian Conference and the story of the St. Louis.
- U.S. Antisemitism: Father Coughlin on the radio, Henry Ford publishing the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, immigration quotas targeted at Eastern European Jews (Breckenridge Long)
- Artifacts & stories to utilize/point out:
    - Photo of "racially mixed" couple being humiliated

- Walter Hesse having to sell his business; invoice issued to Walter Hesse for the damage caused on Kristallnacht
- Photo of the menorah
- Photo of WWI Jewish veteran
- Image of Jewish man sitting on a bag of money
- "J" on Passports and assigned middle names ("Sara" and "Israel")

3. WWII, Mosaic of Victims, Movement West

- German citizens that successfully protested the T4 program but did not protest the mistreatment of Jewish people throughout Germany.
- Having a Jewish identity in addition to a disability recognized by the doctors in the T4 program made it much more likely the individual would be selected and murdered.
- Pointing out other victims and the intersectionality of different groups. (Jewish people do not all fit into one identity – Jewish people can also be communists, LGBTQ+, Black, have disabilities, etc.)
- Showing the French and Dutch propaganda posters and mentioning how they're locally made, displaying Jews as non-human sexual predators.
- Artifacts & stories to utilize/point out:
  - Eugenics poster
  - French and Dutch propaganda posters
  - The yellow stars in different languages (can mention historical precedent)
  - Anne Frank bookcase

4. Ghettos

- Creation of the Judenrat with the intent of turning Jews against each other.
- Choiceless choices.
- Jewish life (religion, art, etc.) was outlawed, highlighting that with resistance.
- Women couriers not "looking" Jewish and therefore being able to carry out their roles in resistance.
- Artifacts & stories to utilize/point out:
  - Krakow ghetto tombstone wall & streets
  - Photos of nonphysical resistance
  - Models of the Warsaw/Lodz ghetto
  - Cipora's blanket

5. HSU, Wannsee, Deception

- Dehumanization, Jews not being viewed as people or being given humane treatment.
- Discussing the intent to kill 11 million Jews specifically during Wannsee Conference.
- Artifacts & stories to utilize/point out:
    - Graphic of red dots/mass killing sites
    - Matus/Lena story of rescue
    - 11 million tally in Wannsee
    - Photos of Terezin/bundles in Deception gallery

6. Deportation, Camps, Armed Resistance

- Singling out Jewish prisoners with a Jewish star/yellow triangle
- Jewish prisoners were more likely to be selected for unfavorable labor assignments and to receive harsher punishments than prisoners assigned to other categories. Antisemitism did exist amongst prisoners (though not all, so be careful when making generalizations)
- Non-Jewish Partisans, some were antisemitic.
- Artifacts & stories to utilize/pull out: Uniform with red and yellow triangles

7. Rescue, Liberation, Return to Life

- Pogroms and antisemitic incidents/propaganda still happen and circulate even after liberation. (Jewish survivors murdered by former neighbors and coworkers when they returned home; General Patton as antisemitic during liberation/antisemitic letter.)
- Question why Albania and Denmark chose to save their Jewish populations.
- Why did survivors not return to their hometowns?
- Why were there Jewish DP camps versus non-Jewish DP camps?
- Jews had to be separated from Nazis in DP camps.
- Did the Holocaust eliminate antisemitism?
- Rat Lines – Vatican officials helping Nazis escape to South America.
- Artifacts & stories to utilize/include:
    - Stories of rescuers who purposefully helped Jewish people.

- Aaron Elster's story during the bombing and liberation (the Gorskis not wanting to die with Jews).

8. Post War Justice, Immigration, Skokie

- Nuremberg & Eichmann Trials as antisemitism put on trial, discussing Julius Stricker (propaganda).
- Majority of Nazis were protected, sent to other countries, released to rebuild Germany's population.
- Antisemitism existing all over the world.
- Discussing immigration quotas; Britain restricted immigrants to only going to Palestine; colleges had quotas for Jews.
- Explosion of antisemitism since October 7th, 2023 (refusing Israel's right to exist, holding all Jewish people responsible for the actions of the Israeli government, etc. – see the Israel communication toolkit for more examples and details on how to have conversations on this topic)