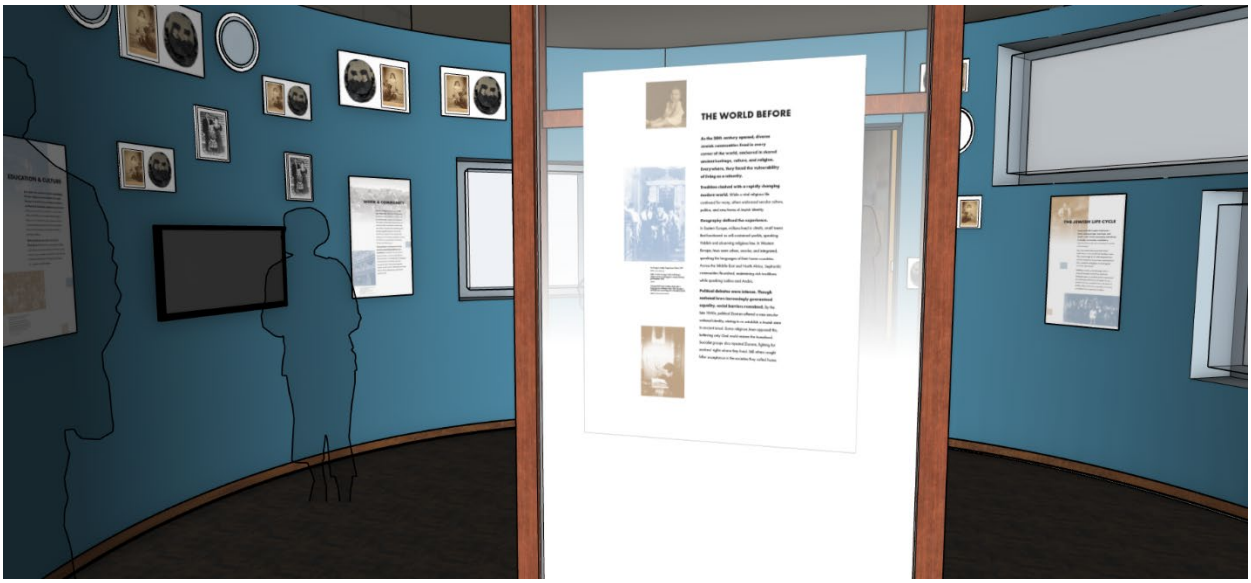



# 2026 KARKOMI HOLOCAUST EXHIBITION UPDATES


| **Karkomi Gallery** | **Pg #** |
|---|---|
| The World Before | 2 |
| Roots of Antisemitism | 9 |
| Rise of Nazism | 17 |
| Life under Nazism | 20 |
| November Pogrom | 23 |
| Paper Walls & St. Louis | 24 |
| WWII & The West | 26 |
| T4 & Murder of People with Disabilities | 29 |
| Groups Targeted by Nazism | 37 |
| Ghettos | 47 |
| Holocaust in the Soviet Union | 47 |
| Wannsee & Deception | 48 |

**THE WORLD BEFORE**




**Overview panel: The World Before** (front side)

**As the 20th century opened, diverse Jewish communities lived in every corner of the world, anchored in shared ancient heritage, culture, and religion. Everywhere, they faced the vulnerability of living as a minority.**

**Tradition clashed with a rapidly changing modern world.** While a vital religious life continued for many, others embraced secular culture, politics, and new forms of Jewish identity.

**Geography defined the experience.** In Eastern Europe, millions lived in shtetls, small towns that functioned as self-contained worlds, speaking Yiddish and observing religious law. In large cities throughout Europe, Jews were urban, secular, and integrated, speaking the languages of their home countries. Across the Middle East and North Africa, Sephardic communities flourished, maintaining rich traditions while speaking Ladino and Arabic.

**Political debates were intense.** Though national laws increasingly guaranteed equality, social barriers remained. By the late 1800s, political Zionism offered a new secular national identity, aiming to re-establish a Jewish state in ancient Israel. Some religious Jews opposed this, believing only God could restore the homeland. Socialist groups also rejected Zionism, fighting for workers' rights where they lived. Still others sought fuller acceptance in the societies they called home.

**Artifact: Central pole with the Czech Torah Scroll** (back side)
Torah scroll from the synagogue in Ivanice, Slovakia, early 20th century. The Torah scroll is hand written Hebrew on parchment containing the Pentateuch, the Five Books of Moses.

**Note: The gallery is divided into 2 sections:**

1. **Tradition: traditions & holidays, home, and life cycle (right side of gallery)**
2. **Jews in the Modern World: education, culture, sports, work, & community (left side of gallery)**

**TRADITION (Right Side)**

**Focus Panel: Traditions & Holidays**

**Jewish tradition organizes both time and space around rituals connecting families to history, faith, and one another.** The Sabbath, observed from Friday evening until the stars come out on Saturday, is the cornerstone of Judaism. A time of prayer, study, and rest. Traditionally, women light candles and preside over the household; men lead prayers and synagogue life. So central is the Sabbath that it is said to preserve the Jewish people as much as they preserve it.

The Jewish calendar marks a succession of sacred moments: the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); Passover, retelling the ancient liberation from Egypt; and Hanukkah, celebrating the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem.

**Artifacts: Shabbat**

- **Sabbath oil lamp**
  Sabbath oil lamp used by the Baum Family in Germany in the early 1900s, and brought to the United States in 1933. Traditional households refrained from lighting fires or kindling flames on the Sabbath, and used lamps that continually supplied light for 25 hours.
- **Havdalah candlesticks**
  A pair of brass candlesticks belonging to relatives of Dovie Horvitz in Russia pre-World War II.
- **Kiddush cup**
  Silver Kiddush cup, Augsburg, Germany, c. 18th century. The Kiddush, the prayer over wine, is recited on the Sabbath and at holiday meals. This Kiddush cup was looted by the Nazis from the Jewish Museum Frankfurt on *Kristallnacht* in 1938 and sent to the Hebrew Theological College in Skokie, Illinois, by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. in the 1950s.
- **Spice box**
  **Silver filigree spice container, Vienna, Austro-Hungary, 1866-1922.** Spice containers hold sweet spices for the Havdalah ceremony, which marks the end of the Sabbath with the lighting of a candle, blessing over wine, and smelling of the spices. This spice container was

looted by the Nazis and sent to the Hebrew Theological College, Skokie, Illinois, by the Jewish Cultural Reconstruction, Inc. in the 1950s.

**Artifacts: Holidays**

- **Children's Haggadah**
  **Die Haggadah des Kindes (Children's Haggadah),** belonging to Ruth Heimann (Arkiss), published in Berlin, Germany, 1933. The Haggadah tells the story of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt; this edition includes moveable illustrations.
- **Shofar**
  Shofar (ram's horn) blown on *Rosh Hashanah* (the Jewish New Year), Germany, 19th century.
- **Hanukkah lamp**
  Hanukkah lamp, Europe, early 20th century. Jews kindle the eight candles of the Hanukkah menorah, adding one candle per night during the eight nights of the festival. A “servant” candle is used to kindle the flame.
- **Dreidel**
  Dreidel (spinning toy), Germany, late 19th century. The dreidel game celebrates Hanukkah, the winter holiday marking the Maccabean victory and rededication of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. Its engraved initials stand for a “Great Miracle Happened There.”
- **Purim gragger**
  Wooden gragger (noise maker) used during the Jewish holiday of Purim, Europe, early 20th century, When the name of Haman is read during the reading of the Scroll of Esther, the congregation and especially young people make noise to blot out his name.

**Focus Panel: The Jewish Life Cycle**

**Jews mark life's major milestones — birth, coming of age, marriage, and death — with rituals connecting individuals to family, community, and history.** Even the most secular Jews mark these moments with ceremony.

Boys are named and circumcised on the eighth day, as was the biblical forefather, Isaac. They come of age at 13, celebrating their *bar mitzvah*, obliged to observe the commandments. Girls, named in synagogue, come of age at 12 at their *bat mitzvah*.

Wedding couples recite blessings under a chuppah (canopy) symbolizing the home, breaking a glass to recall Jerusalem's destruction during the age of the Second Temple. During funerals mourners recite the memorial prayer of *Kaddish*, then sit *shiva* for seven days, receiving consolation from community members.

**Artifacts: Birth**

- **Wimpel**

A ritual Torah binder (wimple), common in German-Jewish communities, made from the swaddling cloth of a baby boy. It is hand painted with the boy's name, his birth date and the traditional blessing that he grow to a life filled with Torah (religious learning), marriage and good deeds.

**Artifacts: Bar Mitzvah**

- **Tefillin bag**
- **Tefillin set**
  **Tefillin, or phylacteries, and tallit bag of Shalom Provisor, Poland, c. 1924.** The tallit bag was made by Shalom's mother for his Bar Mitzvah. Containing handwritten Hebrew verses from the Torah, tefillin are placed on the arm and the head during daily morning prayers.
- **Bar Mitzvah prayer book + portrait of Walter Rauscher**
  Bar Mitzvah prayer book and portrait of Walter Rauscher, Oselin, Czechoslovakia, July 16, 1932.
- **Bar Mitzvah Image**
  Edward Lust in his Bar Mitzvah suit and Tallit (prayer shawl). Belgium, 1935. For most young men, the Bar Mitzvah was the first time they wore a Tallit.

**Artifacts: Marriage**

- **Ketubah**
  **Ketubah (wedding contract) of Isidor Frommann and Ida Wolf, married December 15, 1912, in Neustadt a. d. Haardt, Germany.** A wedding contract is one of the central parts of a Jewish wedding held under a chuppah (marriage canopy), together with an exchange of a ring and blessings over wine.
- **Wedding table card**
  Tables card from the wedding reception of Leona Benschner and Herbert Levy. Inside details the dinner menu, Berlin, Germany, February 23, 1936.
- **Wedding photo**
  The wedding of Marta Gideon and Otto Hammel, Germany, 1927.

**Artifacts: Death**

- **Jahrzeit Calendar**
  Yahrzeit (Jewish anniversary of death) calendar for Ernestine Boas, who passed on June 27, 1929. Mourners traditionally recite the Kaddish, the prayer for the deceased, to mark the date of death. The Jewish calendar is both lunar and solar, so the Hebrew date occurs on different days in different years of the secular calendar.
- **Image of two boys leaning on Matzevas**
  **Jewish cemetery, Ukraine, early 1900s.** Jewish communities, both today and throughout history, maintained their own burial societies and cemeteries. Tombstones, traditionally in

Hebrew, noted the Jewish date of death and often a selected verse extolling the deceased's virtues or accomplishments.

**JEWS IN THE MODERN WORLD (Left Side)**

**Focus Panel: Education & Culture**

**Education was central to Jewish upbringing.** Private religious schools (*heders*) brought literacy to Jewish boys; promising students continued at Talmudic academies (*yeshivot*). Girls were historically excluded from formal study. In the mid-1800s, new secular schools taught in Hebrew and Yiddish alongside general subjects. As universities gradually opened to Jews, they entered academic and professional life in growing numbers.

**With modernity, Jewish cultural life flourished.** Within Jewish communities, Yiddish and Hebrew literature and theater thrived. Jewish writers, artists, scientists, and thinkers also became prominent contributors to European literature, art, science, and philosophy.

**Artifacts: Education**

- **Leather schoolbag**
- **School notebook**
- **Photo of Norbert Heimann**
  **Label for all three artifacts:** Norbert Heimann carrying his leather backpack on his first day of school at Muenchdamm-schule, Kaiserslautern, Germany, c. 1929. Norbert used these notebooks to complete his lessons before immigrating to Chicago with his family in 1936.
- **Report card**
  Report card for Thaddeus Poeller from the 1928/29 school year, Vienna, Austria, June 28, 1929.
- **Portrait**
  Drawing depicting Thaddeus Poeller, created by well-known Czech-Jewish artist Malva Schalek, 1922
- **Beitar Group Photo**
- **Betar Pin** - Zionist Youth movement.
  Caption, Betar photo and pin: Asher and Tzvi Konigsberg were active in the Uzhorod, Czechoslovakia (later Ungvar, Hungary) Betar Club, a Zionist Youth group, pictured here. This was one of their Betar Club pins, c. 1930. Zionism was a source of pride for young Jews throughout Europe.
- **Image of the graduates of Hebrew Gymansia**
  Class photograph featuring Liza Grochowska (Leah Gutman) (sixth from right; second row from bottom) along with her private Hebrew school class; Bialystok, Poland- 1937.
- **Image of boys learning in a *Cheder***
  David Eckstein, age seven, with fellow in a *cheder* (Jewish elementary school), Brody, Poland, ca. 1938. *Hedarim* brought religious literacy to Jewish boys across Eastern Europe,

where study by lamplight in cramped rooms was a familiar sight. Photograph by Roman Vishniac.

**SPORTS Label**

Excluded from mainstream European sports associations, Jews built their own, competing locally, nationally, and internationally. Jewish sports organizations like Maccabi promoted physical fitness, camaraderie, and Jewish identity. Their pinnacle was the Maccabiah Games, a quadrennial international competition of Jewish athletes, first held in Palestine in 1932.

**Artifacts: Sports**

- **Soccer Shoes and Sports team photo**
  Theodore Kahn with his soccer team, Worfelden, Germany, c. 1930. Leather soccer shoes worn by Kahn.
- **Booklet** - "Ivria" Gymnastic Association.
  Program from the Jewish Gymnastics and Athletics Association jubilee performance, Groningen, Netherlands, February 23, 1924.
- Photo of **Leah Gutman and her basketball team**
  Leah Gutman with her basketball team, 1937. Gutman also competed in javelin, track, volleyball, and gymnastics.
- Photo of **Leah Gutman at Maccabiah training camp**
  Liza Grotchowsky (Leah Gutman) training at a camp in preparation for the 1938 Maccabiah Games in Palestine, 1937. The Games were cancelled that year and resumed after the establishment of the State of Israel.

**Artifacts: Culture**

- **Opera goggles**
  Opera glasses, Europe, early 20th century. Opera glasses were a fashionable accessory for attending the theater, opera, and concert hall: cultural institutions that formed a central part of bourgeois Jewish life in Vienna and other major European cities. These glasses belonged to the Fisher family, who emigrated from Vienna to Mexico in 1940.
- **Victor Aitay (left) and his friend Fritz, Budapest, Hungary, ca. 1929.**
- **Victor Aitay at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music, Budapest, Hungary, 1941.**
  Victor Aitay was born in Budapest in 1921 and began violin studies at the Franz Liszt Royal Academy at age seven. A prodigy, at 18 he went on to serve as concertmaster of the Hungarian Royal Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra. Though he lost much of his family in the Holocaust, Aitay survived with the help of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. He emigrated to the United States in 1946 and joined the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1954, eventually serving as its concertmaster for nearly two decades.

**Focus Panel: Work & Community**

**Jewish economic and communal life was shaped by centuries of exclusion.** European laws restricted Jews to trades such as moneylending, tailoring, and innkeeping. The modern world transformed their lives. As growing industry expanded economies and new ideals of equality and citizenship spread, barriers gradually lessened. Jews moved from the countryside to cities, entering new professions and universities alongside non-Jews. By 1900, Jews were laborers and artisans, doctors and entrepreneurs.

**Excluded from mainstream civic life, Jewish communities built their own institutions.** The *kehilla* — the community's governing body — oversaw everything from kosher slaughter to charitable relief. Synagogues served as places of worship, study, and communal courts. Communities supported charities: burial societies, orphanages, and soup kitchens. These institutions persisted into the modern world.

**Artifacts: Work**

- **Fabric scissors**
  Scissors and Business card from Fritz (Fred) Sinay's family business, "Si Ko" fine clothing factory, Vienna, Austria, c. 1930. Jews were active in retail sales throughout Europe.
- **Factory letterhead**
  Stationery from the Rehbock family metal factory, "Ruppel Geschutz", Germany, 1923-1935. German Jews were prominently involved in trade and small industries.
- **Roman Vishniac photo**
  Market day in the main square, Łask, Poland, ca. 1935–38. Jewish merchants and tradespeople were central to commercial life in small Polish towns, where the weekly market served as both an economic hub and a social gathering place. Photograph by Roman Vishniac.

**Artifacts: Community**

- **JNF Tzdaka blue box**
  Jewish National Fund Tzedekah box, Berlin, Germany, c. 1920. Donations contributed to the development of the land of Israel. Jews throughout the world contributed to buy and develop land, especially for agricultural farming.
- **Tzdaka Box**
  Money was collected for various charities using Tzedekah boxes. Charity is a central pillar of all Jewish communities. Social Welfare Tzedekah box, Netherlands, c. 1925. Donations contributed to those in need.

**ROOTS OF ANTISEMITISM**

*Note: This section is divided into two distinct layers: one for antisemitism, and one for the Jewish perspective/response. You'll notice the design first has the Jewish layer more prominent, but as you progress through the gallery the Jewish layer recedes to the background as the antisemitism layer becomes more dominant.*

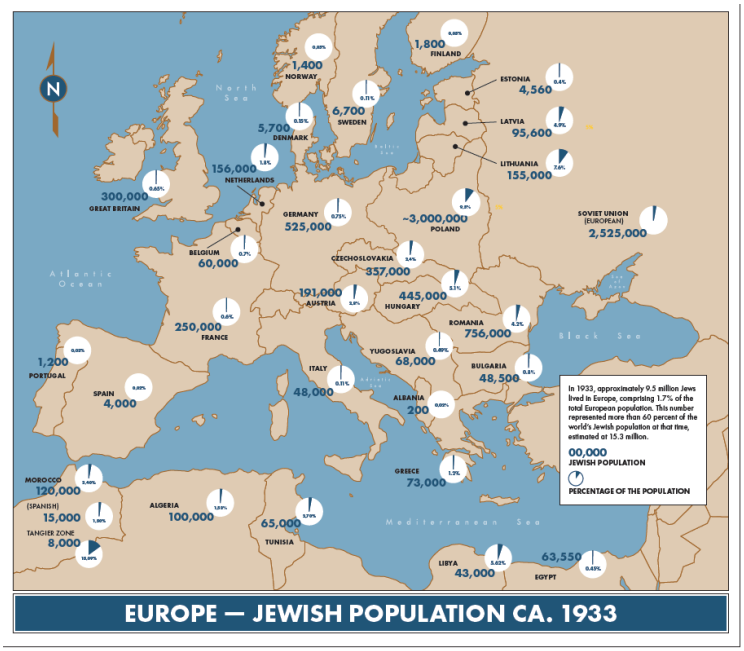
| Old gallery layout | New gallery layout |
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**Overview Panel**

**Antisemitism is hatred and prejudice against Jews. From antiquity to the present, it has evolved from religious hostility into a way of explaining social problems by blaming Jews.**

For much of their history, Jews lived as a minority community, maintaining distinct traditions while engaging continuously with surrounding societies. Although Jews were often cast as outsiders, stereotypes about Jews played a powerful role in shaping European public debate, politics, and culture. Jewish history, however, should not be understood solely as a story of persecution, but as an ongoing process of interaction, adaptation, and resilience.

**Hostility toward Jews has changed over time.** In antiquity and the Middle Ages, anti-Jewish ideas were primarily religious, targeting Judaism as a faith and Jews as people who practiced that faith. In the modern era, with the advent of new ideas about citizenship, science, and national belonging, "antisemitism" redefined Jews as an unchangeable group characterized by imagined racial traits and harmful stereotypes. Drawing on older myths and conspiracy theories, modern antisemitism portrays Jews as possessing hidden power and often resurfaces during moments of social and political crisis—spreading rapidly through new media, from print to newspapers, radio, and film in the 20th century.

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|  | Map of European states with the percentage of Jewish population in general population, 1939. |

**Focus Panel I: Blood Libel**

**The "blood libel" is a false accusation that spread in medieval Christian Europe, alleging that Jews sacrificed Christian children to use their blood for religious rituals. It drew on long-standing Christian teachings that blamed Jews for the death of Jesus, portraying them as demonic, violent, and hostile to Christian society.** Entirely fictional, accusations of ritual murder spread through sermons, religious histories, and printed illustrations. They often resulted in pogroms (violent mob attacks), exile, and legal persecution. They endured long after the Middle Ages, reappearing in later antisemitic conspiracies and continuing to spread into the modern era.

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|  | Front page of *Der Stürmer*, an antisemitic newspaper published by Nazi Party leader Julius Streicher. This "Ritual Murder" issue, the publication's best-selling ever, reprints a medieval illustration depicting the false blood libel accusation against Jews in Regensburg, 1476. The headline proclaims ritual murder "the biggest secret of world Jewry." Nuremberg, Germany, May 1939. |

**Focus Panel: Kishinev Pogrom (Jewish layer)**

In April 1903, gangs rampaged through Kishinev, in the Russian Empire, killing at least 45 Jews, injuring hundreds, raping women, and destroying property. The violence was instigated by a ritual murder accusation spread by local newspaper editor and staunch antisemite Pavel Krushevan through his paper *Bessarabets*. This massacre of Jews, known as a pogrom, shocked the world. The Jewish Historical Commission sent Jewish poet Chaim Nachman Bialik to interview survivors; deeply shaken, he wrote poems of mourning rather than the report he was commissioned to produce. Krushevan claimed international Jewish protest and relief efforts were proof of a secret global Jewish conspiracy and later became the first publisher of the notorious fabrication *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

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|  | Copy of sheet music for *Kishinever shekhita* [Kishinev Massacre Elegy], a programmatic piano elegy by American composer Herman S. Shapiro, written in response to the pogrom. |

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|  | A woman surveys her destroyed and ransacked home following the Kishinev Pogrom. Kishinev, Russian Empire, 1903. |
|  | Chaim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934), poet and journalist. |
| Heaven—have mercy.<br>If you hold a God (to whom there's a path<br>that I haven't found), pray for me.<br>My heart has died.<br>There is no prayer on my lips.<br>My hope and strength are gone.<br>How long? How much longer?<br>[...]<br>And cursed be he who cries out: Revenge!<br>Vengeance like this, for the blood of a child,<br>Satan has yet to devise.<br>[...] | Excerpt from Chaim Nachman Bialik, *Al ha-shechitah* (On the Slaughter) 1903. Translated from the Hebrew by Peter Cole. |

**Focus Panel II: The Dreyfus Affair**

**The Dreyfus Affair (1894–1906) marked a turning point in which antisemitism transformed from religious prejudice into a modern political force.** Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army, was falsely convicted of betraying his country during a period of heightened nationalism and antisemitic attacks. Although evidence proved his innocence, his opponents insisted that because Dreyfus was Jewish he was naturally disloyal. The affair revealed a new logic: Jews were increasingly portrayed as a political and social "problem" that did not belong in the nation. **It showed how antisemitism could thrive in modern, democratic societies by using the language of patriotism and national security to justify exclusion and discrimination.**

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|  | Front page of the newspaper *Le Petit Parisien*, with headlines following the Dreyfus Affair, Paris, August, 1899. |

**Dreyfus Affair (Jewish layer)**

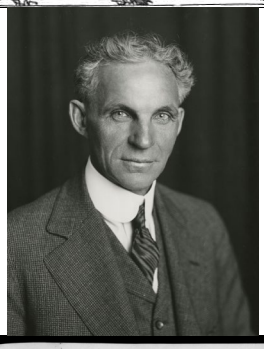
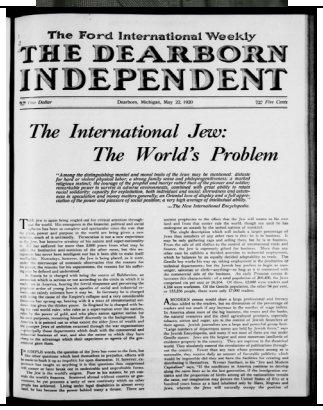
A Sergeant of the Republican Guard came up to me. He tore off rapidly buttons, trousers stripes, the signs of my rank from cap and sleeves, and then broke my sword across his knee. [...] I shouted again and again to the soldiers and to the assembled crowd the cry of my soul.

"I am innocent!"

--Alfred Dreyfus during the reading of his sentence

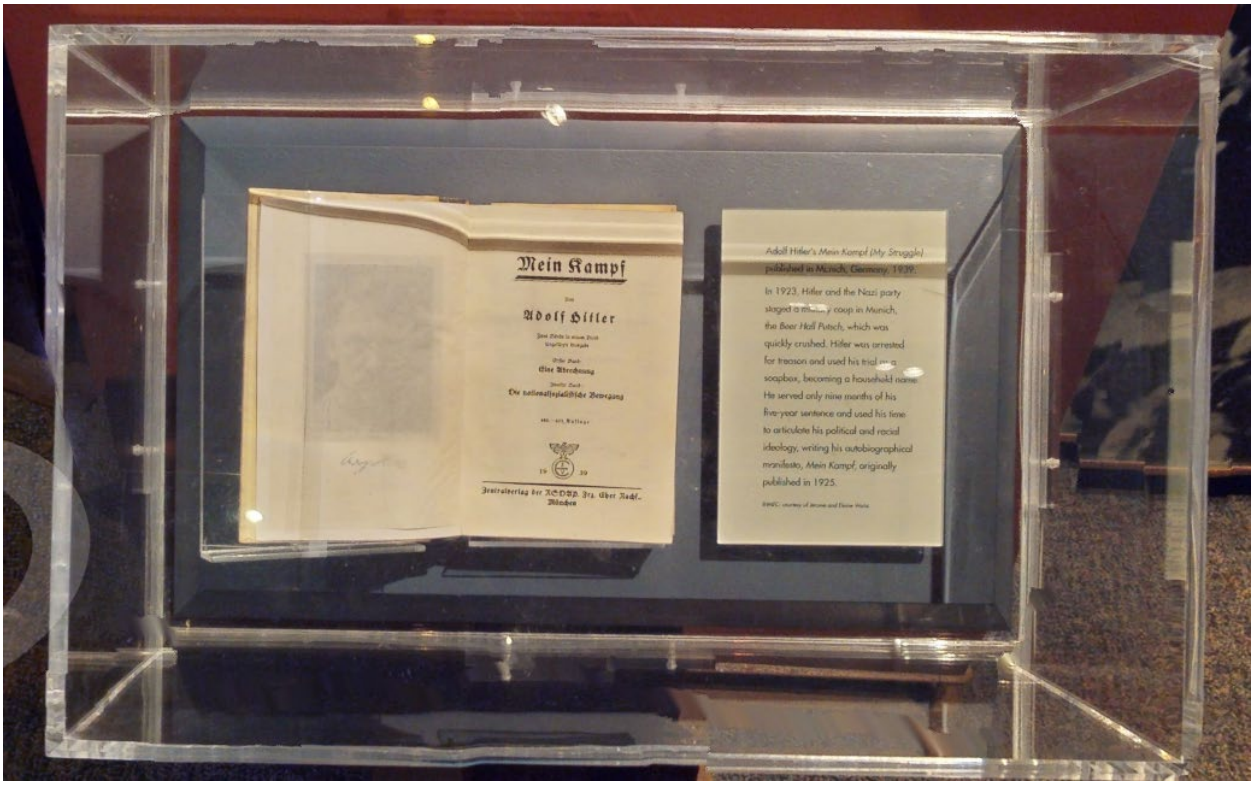
**Focus Panel III: The Protocols of the Elders of Zion & Henry Ford and the Dearborn Independent**

**In the early 20th century, antisemitism became a lethal global conspiracy theory.** It was fueled by *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, a fake book claiming a secret Jewish plot for world domination. This myth traveled from Russia to Germany, where it merged with the "stab-in-the-back" myth—the false claim that Jews had betrayed the country to cause its defeat in World War I. In the U.S., Henry Ford used his wealth to spread these same lies, claiming Jews secretly controlled global finance and media. These stories redefined Jews as a "racial" enemy rather than a religious group. By turning hate into a political tool, these conspiracies radicalized politics across the globe and were a factor in the Nazi rise to power.

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|  | Political cartoon from an Austrian postcard depicting an antisemitic caricature of a Jewish figure stabbing a German soldier in the back, a visual expression of the *Dolchstoßlegende* (stab-in-the-back myth), the false conspiracy theory that blamed Jews and socialists for Germany's defeat in World War I. Artist unknown. Austria, 1919. |
|  | Henry Ford (1863-1947) used his fame as an American industrialist to spread antisemitism. Through his Detroit-based newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent,* he published "The International Jew," a series based on the fake *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Ford used his car dealerships to distribute these articles to millions, later influencing Nazi leaders in Germany. |
|  | *The Dearborn Independent*, May 22, 1920. |

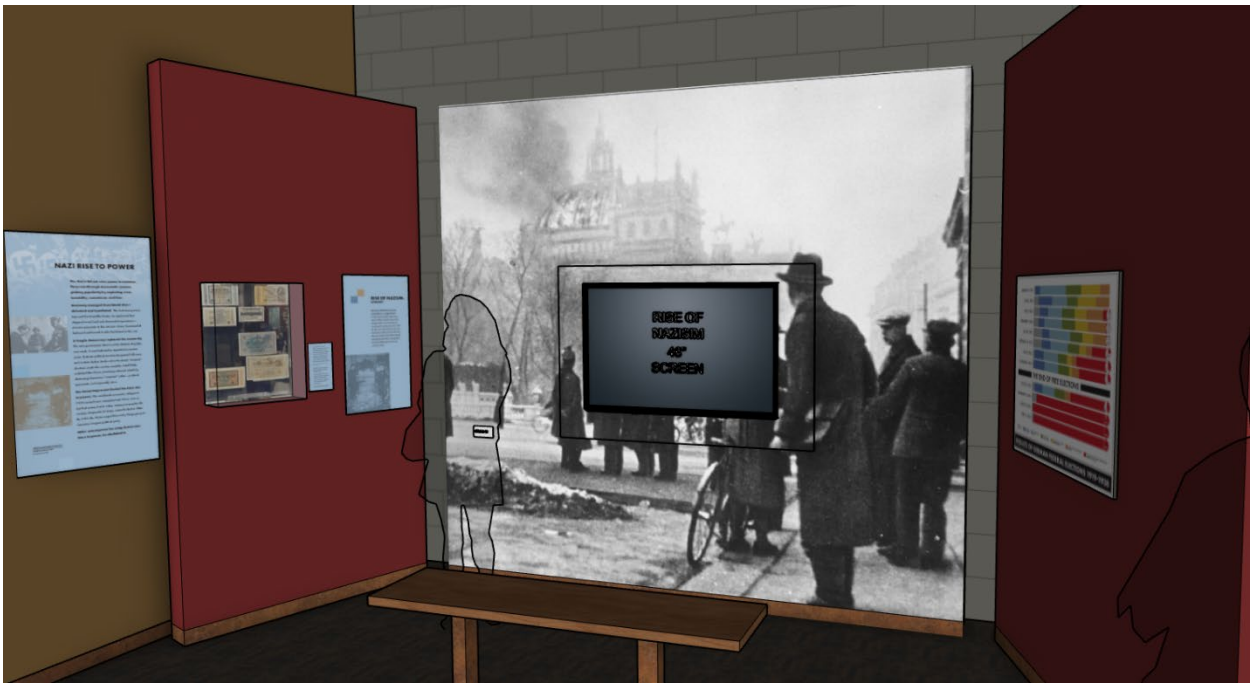
**Jewish Layer**

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|   | Dr. Siegfried Koppel (1890–1981) served as a decorated medical officer in the German army during World War I. He was one of approximately 100,000 Jews who joined the war effort to fight for their homeland. Here, Koppel is pictured in his military uniform (left) and at rest with fellow soldiers in a trench (right photo; Koppel is third from left). |
|  | Rabbi Stephen Wise (1874-1949), American Reform rabbi, a leading figure in the Jewish world in the twentieth century. |
| "Henry Ford needs to be reminded that America is not a matter of cheap engines but of a precious spirit. Henry Ford shall not be suffered to cheapen the spirit of America; he shall not be permitted to vulgarize and corrupt America's soul." | Rabbi Stephen S. Wise in a sermon titled "Henry Ford's Challenge and a Jew's Reply," delivered Sunday October 10, 1920, at Carnegie Hall before his congregation, the Free Synagogue. |




In 1923, Hitler and the Nazi Party staged a failed military coup in Munich known as the Beer Hall Putsch. Arrested for treason, he used his trial as a platform and served only eight months of his five-year sentence. In prison, he wrote his autobiographical manifesto, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), first published in 1925.

**RISE OF NAZISM**




**LEFT SECTION**

**Overview panel:**

**The Nazis did not seize power in isolation; they rose through democratic systems, gaining popularity by exploiting crisis, instability, resentment, and fear.**

**Germany faced ruin after World War I.** This devastating global conflict ended in German defeat. The victors forced the new government to sign the Versailles Treaty, an agreement which stripped away land and demanded reparations—huge payments to the winners. Many Germans felt humiliated and betrayed.

**A fragile democracy replaced the monarchy.** The new German state, known as the Weimar Republic, was weak. It was battered by economic crises, political violence, and deep divisions. Frequent elections made the country unstable. Adolf Hitler exploited this chaos. He promised to restore order by destroying "enemies" within: political enemies, and especially Jews.

**The Great Depression fueled the Nazi rise to power.** This worldwide economic collapse in 1929 caused mass unemployment. Desperate for hope, voters turned to extreme parties. By 1932, the Nazis surged from a tiny fringe group to Germany's largest political party, though Hitler never won a majority.

**Hitler used democracy to gain power. Once he was in power, he abolished democracy.**

**Focus panel: Economy**

**Germany suffered two economic catastrophes in a single decade.** In 1923, runaway inflation made money nearly worthless overnight, wiping out the savings of millions. Just as Germany was recovering, the Great Depression hit in 1929. By 1932, one in three German workers had lost their jobs. Families could not afford food. After years of crisis, many Germans stopped believing their government could help them. The Nazis offered simple answers, and someone to blame.

**Artifacts**

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|  | These banknotes show how fast Germany's currency collapsed. In late 1921, a Munich family spent 370 marks a week on food. By September 1922, the same groceries cost 2,615 marks. Prices rose so fast that two bread rolls cost more in the afternoon than they had that morning.<br><br>Other inflation period notes, Berlin, Germany, 1923. Massive inflation wiped out the savings of the German middle class. It helped radicalize German politics. The center was weakened. The radical right and left gained strength. |
|  | Workers sort through piles of nearly worthless paper marks. At the height of Germany's hyperinflation crisis, the mark lost so much value so rapidly that banknotes were collected by the basketful just to purchase basic goods. Germany, 1922. |
|  | A decorated World War I veteran begs on a Berlin street. As hyperinflation consumed the value of the mark, even small amounts received from passersby became worthless within hours. Berlin, Germany, 1923 |

**CENTER SECTION**

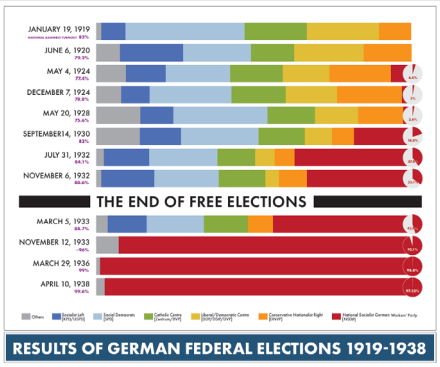
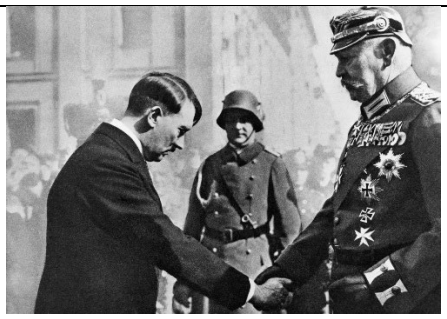
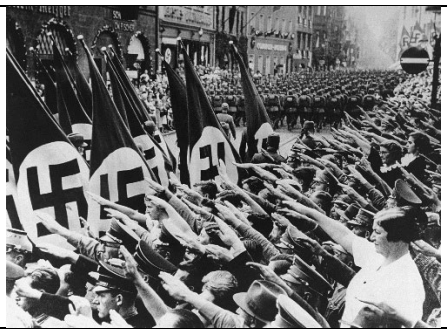
The video in the center section remains the same, though the background image is now the Reichstag Fire.

**RIGHT SECTION**

**Focus panel: Politics**

**In 1928, the Nazi Party held 12 seats in Germany's parliament. Two years later, amid economic collapse and political chaos, they held 107. By July 1932 they were Germany's largest party,** but still without a majority, and already losing ground. Despite the Nazi party's decline, President Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor in January 1933. In February 1933, Germany's parliament building burned. Hitler used the crisis to pass emergency laws, and within weeks parliament passed the "Enabling Act," voting away its own power. Democracy was over.

**Artifacts:**

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|  | Results of German Federal Elections, 1919-1938 |
|  | Adolf Hitler bows before President Paul von Hindenburg, Potsdam, Germany, March 21, 1933. Despite the Nazi party's electoral decline, Hindenburg and his advisors appointed Hitler Chancellor (prime minister). They thought they could end Germany's democracy and return to pre-Weimar authoritarian rule. They believed Hitler's popularity would help them, and that they could keep him under control. They were wrong. |
|  | People salute Hitler while attending a Nazi Party parade in Nuremberg, Germany, 1937. |

## LIFE UNDER NAZISM

This content remains the same, with the addition of the Nazi laws & decrees panels.

**Panel: Weaponizing the Law**

The Nazi regime enacted over 2,000 laws, regulations, and orders targeting Jews and other groups. The Jewish community was tasked with communicating these to Jews in Germany, primarily through circulars and Jewish newspapers. Framed as lawful governance, they served to dehumanize and exclude Jews from political, economic, and cultural life. The laws listed are only a partial list of these regulations.




**Left Panel:**

**1933**

February 28: “On the Protection of the People and the State,” decree restricts personal freedom of the individual, freedom of expression, press, and assembly.

April 1: Nazi Party launches one-day nationwide boycott of Jewish businesses.

April 7: Jews and real or perceived opponents of the Nazi regime excluded from university and government positions.

July 14: Citizenship of naturalized Jews and other targeted groups revoked.

July 14: Forced sterilization of people with disabilities and mental illness becomes law.

July 14: Germany declares a one-party state.

July 19: Jews expelled from German Chess Union.

August: Jews no longer allowed at public beaches and swimming pools.

Sept–Oct: All Jewish performers banned from participating in theater, opera, and other cultural activities. Jews barred from being news reporters and editors.

October 24: Nazis place people who are unhoused, unemployed, and have alcohol addictions in concentration camps.

November 13: Jews forbidden to serve as jurors.

**1934**

March 5: Jews not permitted to perform as actors on German stages.

July 9: All Jewish organizations must register with the Gestapo.

December 1: Jewish lawyers disbarred.

**1935**

April 1: Jehovah's Witnesses organizations banned due in part to their refusal to swear allegiance to the state, as it goes against their religion.

April 11: Shopping at Jewish-owned stores forbidden.

May 21: Jewish officers expelled from the army.

June 28: Paragraph 175 of the German criminal code revised to accelerate the systematic persecution of gay men.

July 10: Hiking by Jewish youth groups of more than 20 persons prohibited.

September 15: The Nuremberg Race Laws strip Jews of German citizenship and ban marriages and relationships with "Aryans." The state later extends these laws to Black, Roma, and Sinti people.

**1936**

April 3: Jews barred from nursing, veterinary, dental, and pharmacy professions.

April 15: Journalists required to prove Aryan ancestry back to 1800.

June 16: Jews excluded from active military service.

July 16: Berlin police implement the "Combating the Gypsy Plague" decree, establishing the Marzahn camp for Roma and Sinti.

August: All Jews held collectively responsible for the "crimes" of individual Jews

**Right Panel:**

**1937**

April 9: The Mayor of Berlin orders public schools not to admit Jewish children until further notice.

June 18: Post clerks married to Jewish women forced to leave jobs.

Dec 14: Imprisoning people based on suspected future crimes authorized under Basic Decree on Preventive Crime Fighting.

**1938**

January 1: Jews no longer allowed to be members of Red Cross.

January 5: Jews forbidden to change their names.

April 22: Jewish businesses forbidden to change their names.

April 26: Jews forced to declare all assets.

July 25: Jewish doctors forbidden to treat "Aryan" patients.

July 27: Streets with Jewish names must be renamed.

August 17: German Jews bearing first names of "non-Jewish" origin forced to adopt an additional name: "Israel" for men and "Sara" for women.

October 5: German passports held by Jews invalidated. Jews forced to surrender old passports, which become valid only after the letter "J" stamped on them.

November 12: All Jewish-owned businesses forced to close. Jewish employees able to be discharged without notice or benefits.

November 12: Jews prohibited from attending movies, concerts, and other cultural performances.

November 15: All Jewish children expelled from public schools.

November 28: Freedom of movement and travel restricted for Jews.

November 29: Jews forbidden to keep carrier pigeons.

December 3: Jews forced to hand in drivers' licenses.

December 5: Jewish civil servants stripped of pension benefits.

December 21: Jews banned from midwife profession.

**1939**

January 17: Decree issued pertaining to the expiration of permits for Jewish dentists, veterinarians, and pharmacists.

February 21: Jews forced to turn in gold, silver, diamonds, and other valuables to the state without compensation.

March 24: Jewish organizations made responsible for cleaning debris of destroyed synagogues. Synagogues ordered not to be rebuilt.

July 27: Last will and testaments of Jews deemed invalid.

August 1: Sale of lottery tickets to Jews not allowed.

September 1: Curfew is set for Jews – 8:00 pm in winter; 9:00 pm in summer.

September 12: Jews can only shop at assigned Aryan businesses.

September 23: Jews not allowed radios and forced to turn them into police.

**1940**

January: Jews not eligible for clothing rations. Jews compelled to turn in wool and furs.

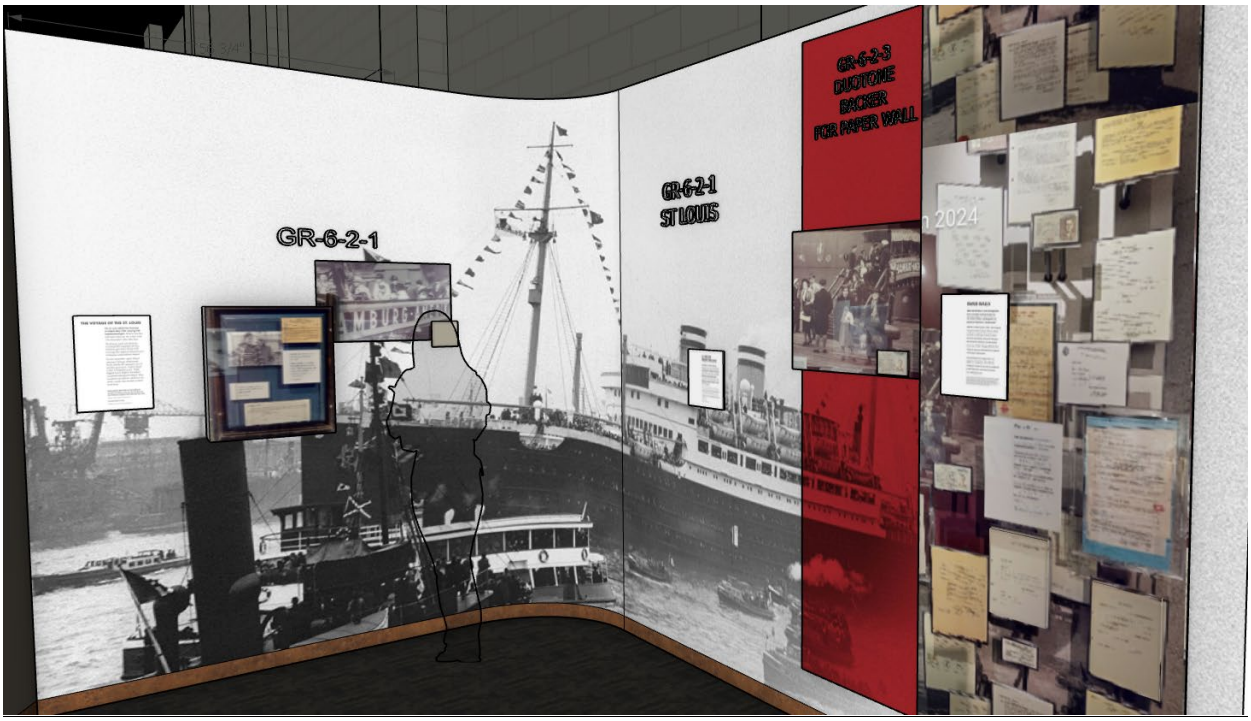
July 29: Jews not allowed telephones.

**<u>THE NOVEMBER POGROM</u>**

The propaganda photo of people with disabilities is replaced with the following painting:

| | |
|---|---|
|  | This painting hung for decades in the home of the Rothschild family in Bad Homburg, Germany. On the eve of the November Pogrom,1938, it was vandalized by Nazi rioters. After the war, it was recovered and reunited with Marianne Rothschild (Schwab), the sole survivor of her family. |

**PAPER WALL & ST. LOUIS**




**Panel: A Lifeline from Chicago**

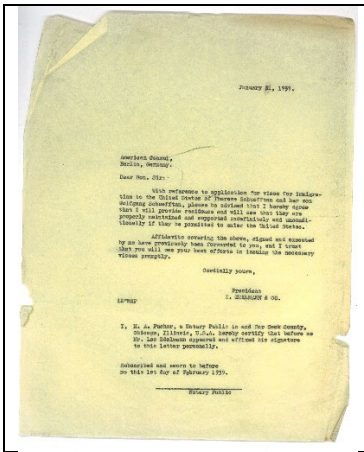
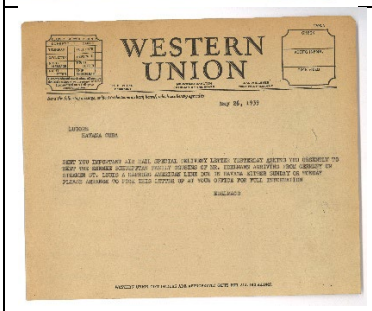
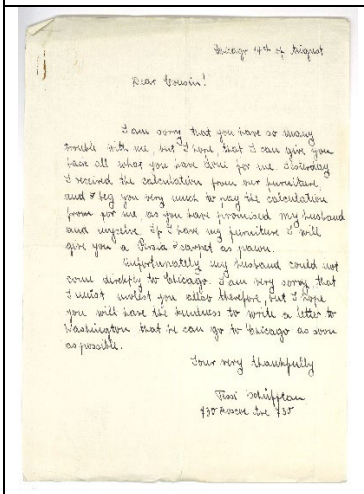
Leo Edelmann, a German Jewish immigrant, was owner of E. Edelmann and Company, a Chicago automotive parts factory. He became an unlikely lifeline for families fleeing Nazi persecution. He wired money, wrote affidavits, and offered jobs to newly arrived refugees.

How many he saved may never be known. Among at least twelve documented families, he guaranteed the Schuefftans' passage on the MS St. Louis and helped them resettle in Chicago.

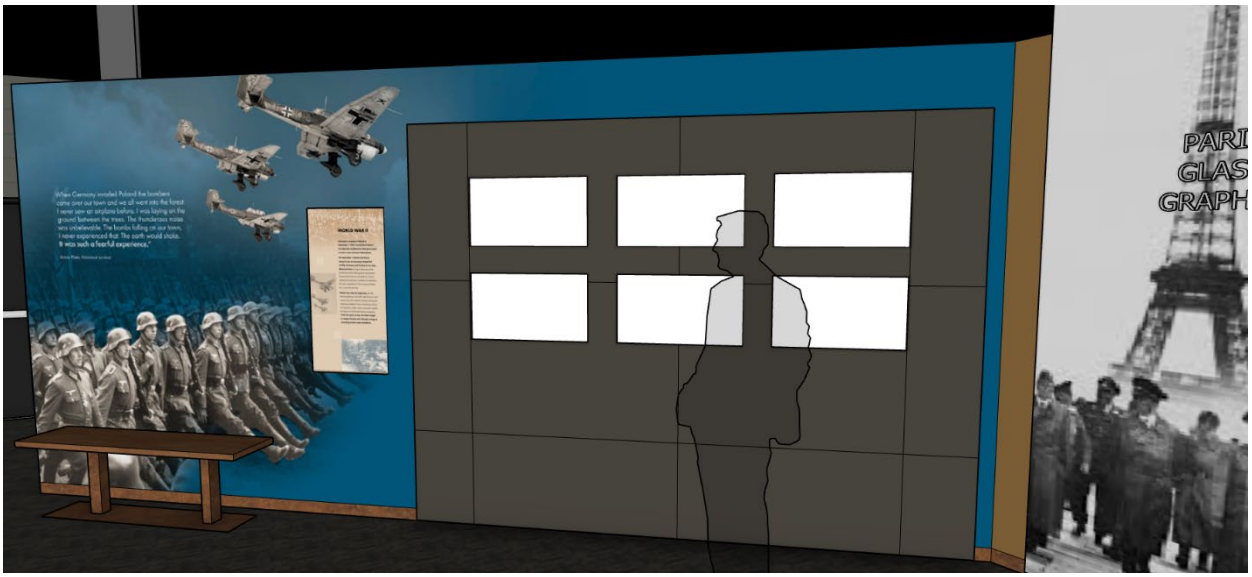
**The Schüfftan family story (not in the exhibition text)**

Walter and Therese Schüfftan, with their young son Wolfgang, were living near Breslau, Germany, when they turned to Leo Edelmann, Walter's cousin, a Chicago auto parts businessman, for help escaping Nazi Germany. Beginning in January 1939, Edelmann worked the case from Chicago: securing a notarized affidavit the German consulate demanded, then wiring 17,000 francs to Paris when the family's plans shifted toward a Cuban visa, personally authorizing the funds himself when a bank restriction threatened to hold up the transfer. On May 13, 1939, the family sailed from Hamburg aboard the MS St. Louis, radioing Edelmann from the ship mid-Atlantic that they were "happily underway." When Cuba refused to honor most passengers' landing permits and the ship anchored in Havana harbor for nearly two weeks, the Schüfftans were among a small number allowed to

disembark on June 1, 1939, narrowly avoiding the ship's forced return to Germany. Walter was later briefly detained in Miami before Edelmann and his nephew Robert secured his admission on bond; Therese and Wolfgang reached Chicago that summer, and by 1940 the family had resettled and become self-sufficient, with Walter writing to Edelmann as his "ever-grateful cousin" throughout.

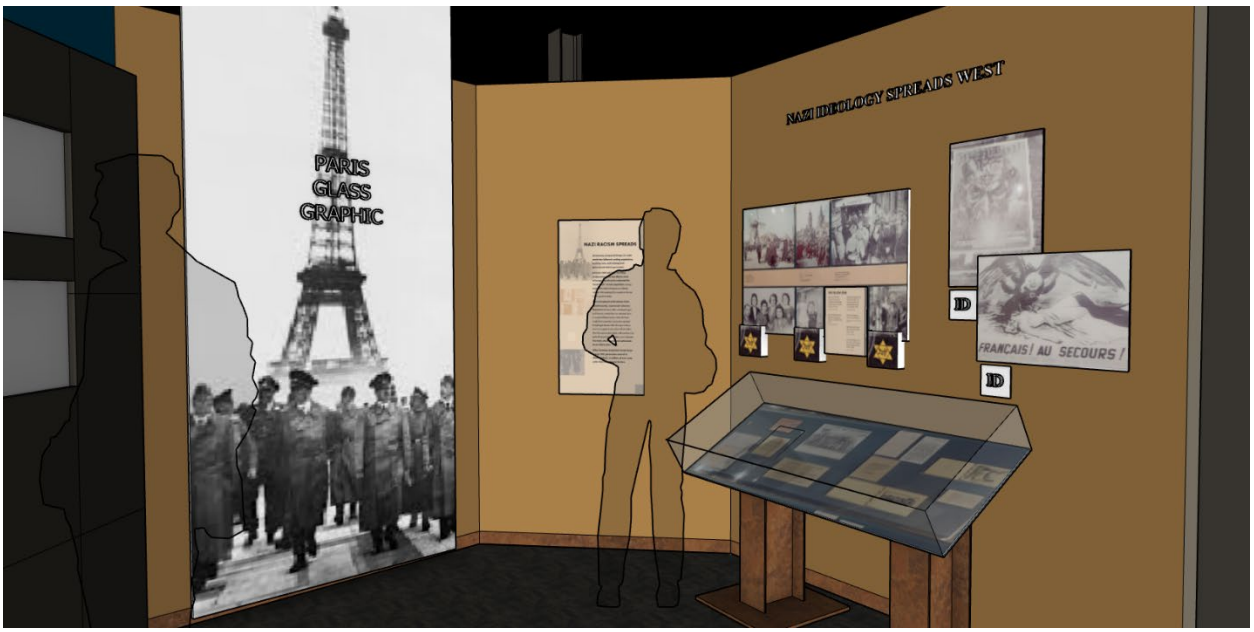
| | |
|---|---|
|  | Letter, Edelmann to the American Consul in Berlin, Jan 31, 1939.<br><br>Edelmann's own formal declaration to the consulate, guaranteeing support for Therese and Wolfgang. |
|  | Telegram, Edelmann to his Havana agent, May 26, 1939. Edelmann alerts his Cuban agent to meet the ship. Fixed hinge object in both options.<br>Text: "Sent you important air mail special delivery letter yesterday asking you urgently to meet the Schüfftan family, cousins of Mr. Edelmann, arriving from Germany on steamer St. Louis, a Hamburg American Line, due in Havana either Sunday or Monday. Please arrange to pick this letter up at your office for full information. Edelmaco" |
|  | Letter, Therese Schüfftan to Edelmann, Chicago, Aug 14, 1939. Written soon after arriving in Chicago, in her own developing English.<br>Text: "Dear Cousin! I am sorry that you have so many trouble with me, but I hope that I can give you back all what you have done for me. Yesterday I received the calculation from our furniture, and I beg you very much to pay the calculation for me, as you have promised my husband and myself. If I have my furniture I will give you a Persian carpet as pawn. Unfortunately my husband could not come directly to Chicago. I am very sorry that I must molest you also therefore, but I hope you will have the kindness to write a letter to Washington, that he can go to Chicago as soon as possible. Your very thankfully, Tessi Schüfftan" |

**WWII & THE WEST**



A wall quote from **Aaron Elster** was added to the beginning of this section:

> "When Germany invaded Poland the bombers came over our town and we all went into the forest. I never saw an airplane before. I was laying on the ground between the trees. The thunderous noise was unbelievable. The bombs falling on our town, I never experienced that. The earth would shake. It was such a fearful experience."




The Anne Frank bookcase was expanded to include artifacts from other children in hiding in Western Europe.



**Panel: Nazi Racism Spreads: Hiding**

**In occupied Western Europe, tens of thousands of Jews sought survival in the shadows.** With identities disguised or physically concealed, individuals and families faced constant danger. A careless remark, a denunciation, or a hostile neighbor could mean discovery and death.

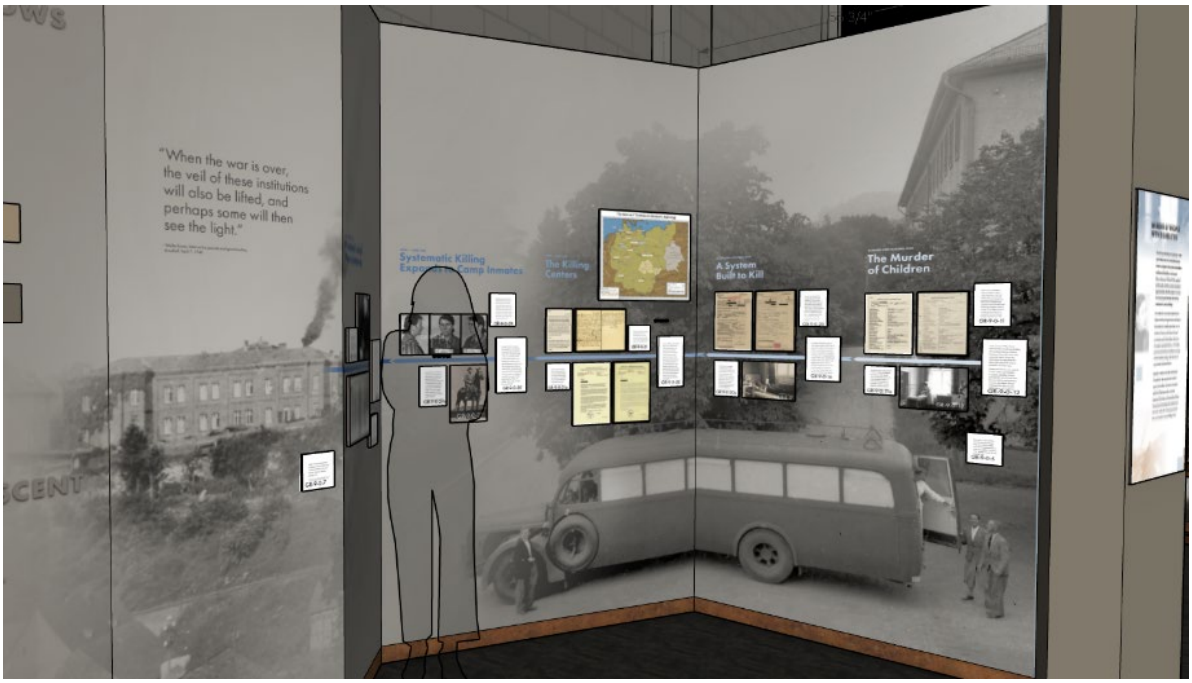
**Survival depended on others.** Those who helped took enormous risks to shelter neighbors and strangers. In France, networks guided families toward neutral borders. In Belgium, Jewish groups partnered with Christian volunteers to hide around 4,000 children.

In the Netherlands, roughly 28,000 Jews went into hiding. Among them was Anne Frank, whose diary endures as a voice for all those who went into hiding and did not survive.

**Artifacts:**

- Marion Deichmann's mother bought her this doll in 1940, shortly after the family fled Germany for Luxembourg. Two years later, Marion's mother was arrested in Paris and deported to Auschwitz, where she was murdered. Marion survived in hiding with a French family in Normandy.
- Ava Kadishson Schieber drew this street scene while hiding as a teen on a farm outside Belgrade, pretending to be deaf and mute to conceal her identity. She described it as reflecting her sense of loneliness and "light amongst darkness."

- Olga Weiss received this domino set from “St. Nicholas” on December 6, 1943, while hiding with her parents outside Brussels under a false name. Her parents made sure she received the traditional Belgian gift so she would not stand out among her Catholic classmates.




**T4/MURDER OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

*Note: This section tells the history by primarily, but not exclusively, focusing on two individuals: Walter Lauer (victim) and Johann Niemann (perpetrator). Their photos/documents are physically separated on the timeline and their experiences are not to be equated. Neimann is included to illustrate how the killers often transferred to various killing sites and used their knowledge and experience in the T4 program to murder Jews in killing centers in the east.*

**Overview Panel**

**The invasion of Poland in September 1939 gave Hitler the cover to launch the mass murder of people with physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, and mental illness. Between 1939 and 1945, medical professionals and SS personnel murdered approximately 250,000 people in a series of secret programs falsely described as "euthanasia" (mercy killing).**

The conditions for mass murder predated the war. Eugenics, the theory that governments could improve the population by controlling reproduction, was not exclusive to Germany; similar ideas had spread across Europe and the United States. Under Nazi rule, eugenics acquired lethal force: in 1933, Hitler's government ordered the forced sterilization of people it deemed disabled, resulting in the sterilization of approximately 400,000 individuals.

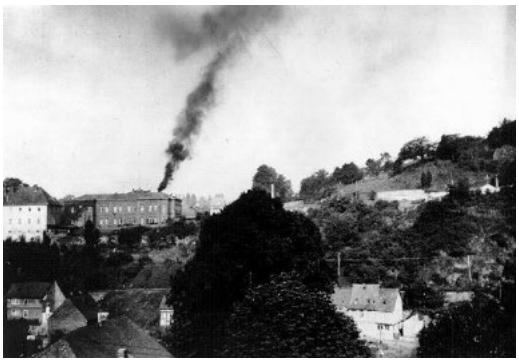
Beginning in October 1939, Hitler authorized the first organized, state-sponsored mass murder of people with disabilities. Nazi planners developed methods for killing large numbers of people, disposing of their bodies, and deceiving their families. The personnel

and technology they developed were later used to murder other victim groups, especially Jews, at concentration camps and killing centers.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Walter Lauer was born in 1922 in Wiesbaden, Germany. He began experiencing epileptic seizures at age seven. Medical treatment initially improved his condition, but the seizures worsened as he grew older. He missed significant periods of school. This photo was taken before his admission to Scheuern Institution, March 1938. |
|  | Johann Niemann was born in 1913 in Völlen, Germany. He joined the Nazi party in 1931 and the SS in 1934. He captioned this photo, taken at his desk at the Bernburg killing facility in winter 1940, "Letter to my wife." By then, he had already helped murder thousands of people with disabilities. |

Walter Lauer was a victim of the T4 program. Johann Niemann — a perpetrator. Follow the timeline to learn their paths.

**Background Supergraphic Photos**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Buses used to transport patients from the Eichberg hospital near Wiesbaden to Hadamar Killing Center. The windows were painted to prevent people from seeing those inside. Germany, between May and September 1941. |
|  | Smoke rising from the chimney at Hadamar, one of six facilities which carried out the Nazis' Euthanasia Program. Hadamar, Germany, probably 1941.<br><br>*[Note the houses of the town of Hadamar in the foreground.]* |

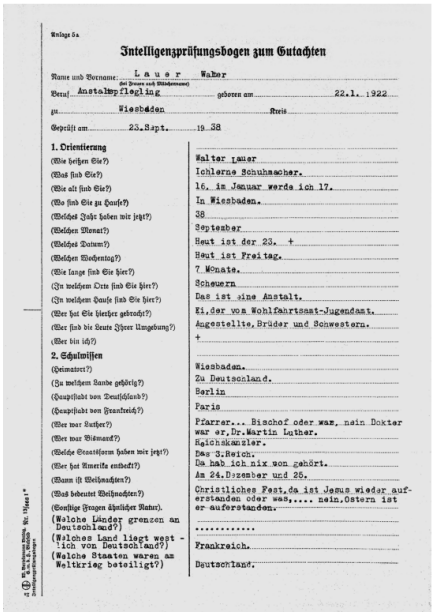
**Stop 1: The Murder of Children**

*Summer and Autumn 1939*

In the summer of 1939, a farmer petitioned Hitler to authorize the killing of his disabled infant son, Gerhard Kretschmar. The murder of one child, at parental request, became the authorization for state-sponsored killing. Hitler ordered the program extended to all similar cases.

Doctors and midwives were required to report children with disabilities for selection and killing. Children were placed in special wards where they were killed by lethal injections, starvation, and neglect. Between 1939 and 1945, approximately 5,000 children were murdered.

**Artifacts: Murder of Children**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Walter Lauer was admitted to Scheuern Institution in March 1938 on the orders of the Youth Welfare Office. His mother did not want to be separated from her child. Doctors recorded that he experienced up to three seizures per day and was "limitedly capable of working." This Intelligence test form (*Intelligenzprüfungsbogen*) was completed for Lauer at Scheuern Institution, September 23, 1938. |
|  | Ward photograph, Municipal Mental Hospital for Children Wiesengrund, Berlin-Wittenau, 1942. Between 1942 and 1945, doctors and nurses murdered at least 81 children out of 175 who were hospitalized at this institution. Children were also subjected to medical experiments. |

Anlage 5a

**Intelligenzprüfungsbogen zum Gutachten**

Name und Vorname: Lauer Walter
(bei Frauen auch Mädchenname)
Beruf: Anstaltspfleging geboren am 22.1. 1922
zu Wiesbaden Kreis
Geprüft am 23.Sept. 19 38

| | |
|---|---|
| **1. Orientierung** | |
| (Wie heißen Sie?) | Walter Lauer |
| (Was sind Sie?) | Ichlerne Schuhmacher. |
| (Wie alt sind Sie?) | 16. im Januar werde ich 17. |
| (Wo sind Sie zu Hause?) | In Wiesbaden. |
| (Welches Jahr haben wir jetzt?) | 38 |
| (Welchen Monat?) | Septesber |
| (Welches Datum?) | Heut ist der 23. + |
| (Welchen Wochentag?) | Heut ist Freitag. |
| (Wie lange sind Sie hier?) | 7 Monate. |
| (In welchem Orte sind Sie hier?) | Scheuern |
| (In welchem Hause sind Sie hier?) | Das ist eine Anstalt. |
| (Wer hat Sie hierher gebracht?) | Ei,der von Wohlfahrtsamt-Jugendamt. |
| (Wer sind die Leute Ihrer Umgebung?) | Angestellte,Brüder und Schwestern. |
| (Wer bin ich?) | + |
| **2. Schulwissen** | |
| (Heimatort?) | Wiesbaden. |
| (Zu welchem Lande gehörig?) | Zu Deutschland. |
| (Hauptstadt von Deutschland?) | Berlin |
| (Hauptstadt von Frankreich?) | Paris |
| (Wer war Luther?) | Pfarrer... Bischof oder was, nein Doktor war er,Dr.Martin Luther. |
| (Wer war Bismarck?) | Reichskanzler. |
| (Welche Staatsform haben wir jetzt?) | Das 3.Reich. |
| (Wer hat Amerika entdeckt?) | Da hab ich nix von gehört. |
| (Wann ist Weihnachten?) | Am 24.Dezember und 25. |
| (Was bedeutet Weihnachten?) | Christliches Fest,da ist Jesus wieder auferstanden oder was,.... nein.Ostern ist er auferstanden. |
| (Sonstige Fragen ähnlicher Natur). | |
| (Welche Länder grenzen an Deutschland?) | ..... |
| (Welches Land liegt westlich von Deutschland?) | Frankreich. |
| (Welche Staaten waren am Weltkrieg beteiligt?) | Deutschland. |

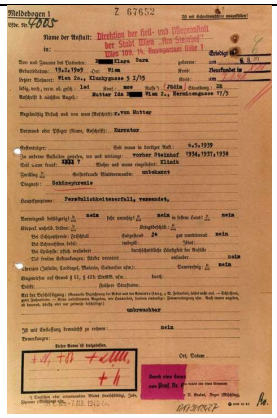


**Stop 2: A System Built to Kill**

*September–October 1939*

In October 1939, Hitler signed an order authorizing the killing of patients deemed "incurably ill." The murder of children was extended to adults in a program codenamed T4, named for its headquarters at Tiergartenstraße 4 in Berlin. Patients were selected based on their capacity for productive work. Jewish patients, Sinti and Roma, and those classified as asocial were targeted regardless of diagnosis. A committee of medical assessors marked each patient: a plus sign for death, a minus for survival.

**Artifacts: System Built to Kill**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Jews were also targeted in the campaign against people with disabilities. This form identified Klara B. (1909–1940), an Austrian-Jewish patient with schizophrenia, admitted at Am Steinhof Institution, Vienna, August 7, 1940. All incoming patients were registered with this form at T4 headquarters in Berlin. The "+" mark at bottom left of the form marked Klara for death. |
|  | Johann Niemann was assigned to T4 killing centers in 1940, transferring murdered patients from the gas chamber to the crematorium. He married Henriette Frey that December, and his son August was born the same year. Over two years he served at Grafeneck, Brandenburg, and Bernburg killing centers. Here, Niemann poses for the camera in his room at Bernburg, staging leisure far from his gruesome daily work. |

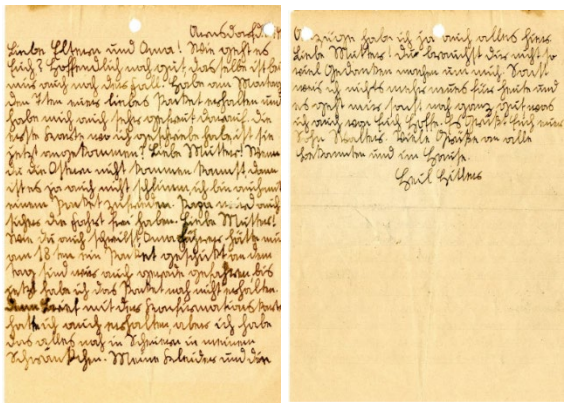
**Stop 3: The Killing Centers**

*January 1940*

In January 1940, systematic gassings began at six centralized facilities: Grafeneck, Brandenburg an der Havel, Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Bernburg, and Hadamar. Patients were transported in buses with painted-over windows, told they were being transferred to improved care. On arrival, groups of 20 to 30 individuals were led into rooms disguised as showers, where they were gassed with carbon monoxide. SS men like Niemann disposed of the bodies in the crematorium. Between 1940 and 1941, approximately 70,000 people were murdered at these facilities.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Map of the six T4 killing centers: Grafeneck, Brandenburg an der Havel, Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Bernburg, Hadamar.<br><br>Walter Lauer's path: Wiesbaden → Scheuern → Arnsdorf → Sonnenstein<br><br>Johann Niemann's postings: Esterwegen → Sachsenhausen → Grafeneck → Brandenburg → Bernburg → Belzec → Sobibor |

**Artifacts: Killing Centers**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Walter Lauer's last letter to his parents and grandmother, written from Arnsdorf in April 1941. He asked after an Easter package, noted he was working in the shoemaking shop, and told his mother not to worry. He was transferred to Sonnenstein T4 Killing Center on April 28 and killed there the same day. He was nineteen years old. |
|  | Death notice sent to Emil Lauer, Walter's stepfather, May 8, 1941. Both the cause and date of death were falsified. The letter attributed Walter's death to a severe epileptic seizure. He had been killed in the gas chamber ten days earlier. |

**Stop 4: Systematic Killing Expands to Camp Inmates**

*April–June 1941*

In spring 1941, the T4 program was extended to the concentration camp system under the codename Aktion 14f13. T4 physicians visited camps across Germany to select prisoners deemed “unfit for work,” including Jews, political prisoners, and those classified as asocial. Aktion 14f13 claimed the lives of between 10,000-20,000 concentration camp inmates. By late 1941, approximately 120 T4 personnel were redeployed to establish and operate the killing centers at Bełzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka, where at least 1.6 million Jews were murdered.

**Artifacts: Systematic Killing Expands to Camp Inmates**

| | |
|---|---|
|   | Identification photograph of Mary Pünjer, Ravensbrück concentration camp, March 1941. Pünjer, who was Jewish, was arrested under the suspicion of engaging in romantic relations with a woman. She was selected for death under Aktion 14f13. She was murdered in 1942 in Bernburg, the same T4 killing center where Niemann had served. |
|  | Johann Niemann was selected to move east in late 1941, after two years operating T4 killing centers. He helped establish Bełżec and then served at Sobibór killing center as deputy director. He was killed in a 1943 prisoner uprising. Here, Niemann poses on horseback at Sobibór's arrival ramp, casting himself as dignified. At Sobibór, he oversaw the murder of 167,000 people, mostly Jews. |

**Stop 5: Protest and Persistence**

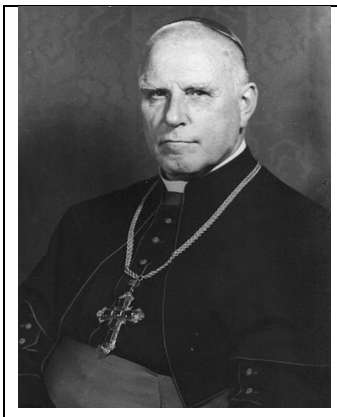
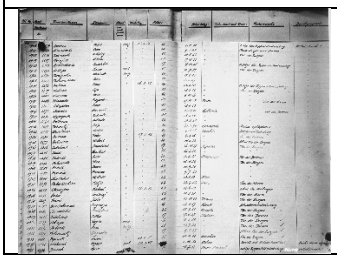
*August 1941–1945*

In August 1941, Bishop Clemens August von Galen publicly condemned the killing of disabled people from his pulpit in Muenster. A number of medical professionals, lawyers, family members, and church leaders also voiced their resistance. Fearing losing support for the war, Hitler issued a verbal order halting the centralized gassings.

However, murder did not stop but became more secretive. Between 1941 and 1945, physicians and nurses in institutions across occupied Europe continued killing patients

through starvation and lethal overdose. This later, less organized phase, known as “wild euthanasia,” claimed approximately 200,000 lives.

**Artifacts: Protest and Persistence**

| | |
|---|---|
|  | Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen (1878-1946) |
|  | Death registry, Hadamar killing center, 1945. Victims are predominantly Soviet and Polish forced laborers killed in the final weeks of the war. Recorded causes of death were tuberculosis of the lungs, pneumonia, intestinal tuberculosis - falsified throughout. |

**Large quote on the wall:**

"When the war is over, the veil of these institutions will also be lifted, and perhaps some will then see the light."

— Walter Lauer, letter to his parents and grandmother, Arnsdorf, April 7, 1941

**GROUPS TARGETED BY NAZISM**




*Note: This section features individuals targeted by Nazism for various reasons. Our goal is to present them as people first. The order of the photos and the categories that appear around the border are placed randomly in order to show the scale and diversity of people targeted. Importantly, the labels are not associated with the photos nearest them. We do not want to assign labels or limit their individuality, humanity, and intersectionality of identities.*

*As you take groups through this section, do not simply point to pictures and share the Nazi-assigned label to them, but rather provide more context on who the person was.*

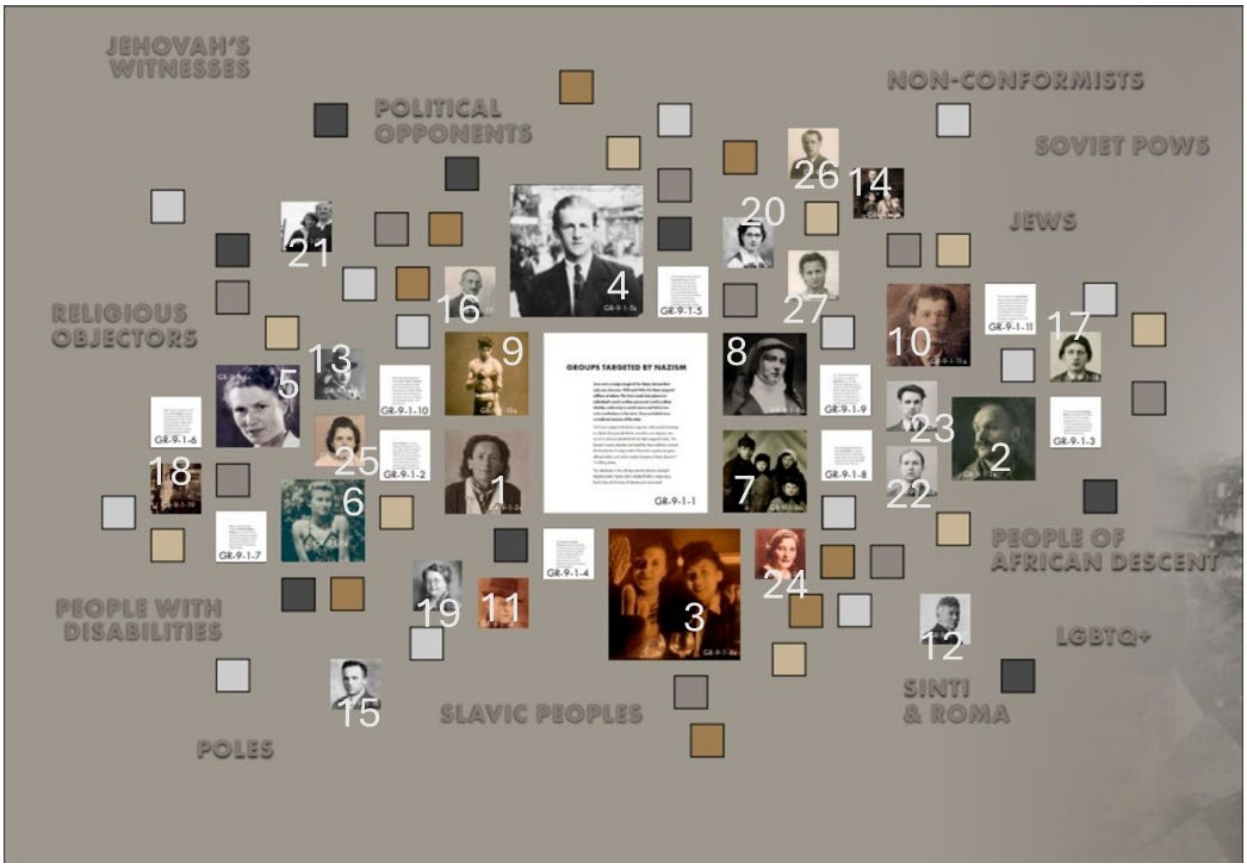
*Also note that some of the people featured were also Jewish. The purpose of this gallery is not to continue only focusing on the Jewish story, but rather to talk about the multitude of reasons the Nazis targeted individuals. Since no person has only one identity, many of these identities were intertwined and multiple aspects of an individual's identity often played a role in their persecution and murder.*

**Overview Panel:**

> **Jews were a major target of the Nazis, but not their only one. Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis targeted millions of others. The Nazi racial state placed an individual's worth on their perceived racial or ethnic identity, conformity to social norms and behaviors, and contributions to the state. Those excluded were considered enemies of the state.**
>
> The Nazis assigned individuals categories, reducing their humanity to a label. Many people fell into more than one category, and not all would have identified with the label assigned to

them. The hatred of various identities that fueled the Nazi worldview crossed the boundaries of categorization. Persecution against one group affected others, such as the murder of people of Slavic descent in T4 killing centers.

The individuals on this wall represent the diversity of people targeted under Nazism. Each individual holds a unique story, but the fates of all victims of Nazism were intertwined.




**Featured Bios (alphabetical order)**

| | |
|---|---|
| 1 | **Eve Adams** was a Jewish-Polish lesbian immigrant who ran The Grey Cottage, a tearoom for lesbians, leftists, and nonconformists in 1920s Chicago. The U.S. government later imprisoned and deported Eve over her book Lesbian Love. She was arrested in France and murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau at the age of 52. |
| 2 | A German farmer, **Franz Xaver Bremm** was excluded from his family's inheritance because of his disability, leaving him without work or a home. He was arrested multiple times and sent to workhouses before being murdered at Eglfing-Haar Psychiatric Hospital in 1943. He was 56 years old. |

| | |
|---|---|
| 3 | **Zoya Gertrud Aqua-Kaufmann** wanted to study medicine but was forced to work as a dancer due to racial discrimination. The daughter of a Black Cameroonian father and white German mother with one Jewish grandparent, she went into hiding, was denounced, imprisoned, and forcibly sterilized. |
| 4 | After joining the Polish underground, **Jan (John) Krawiec** published a weekly resistance bulletin, moving printing presses each week to avoid detection. Arrested by the Gestapo in a case of mistaken identity, he was tortured, then sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau and Buchenwald. After liberation, he immigrated to the United States, eventually becoming editor-in-chief of Chicago's largest Polish daily newspaper. |
| 5 | A German housekeeper and shop assistant, **Erna Ludolph** was arrested for refusing to give the Nazi salute and distributing Jehovah's Witness material. She was imprisoned in multiple camps, including Ravensbrück, where she joined Jehovah's Witnesses' resistance by refusing to perform forced labor related to the war effort. |
| 6 | A member of the Czech resistance, **Jaroslava Praglova Matejkova** was arrested in Prague for writing an underground newspaper and sent to Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Ravensbrück. After the war she returned to Prague. Her descendants settled in Chicago. |
| 7 | A Soviet locksmith and Red Army colonel, **Pavel Nikitin** was captured by the Wehrmacht two months after the German invasion. He was sent to multiple camps and was murdered in Flossenbürg in 1944. Pavel was 42 years old. |
| 8 | A Jewish German philosopher who converted to Catholicism, **Edith Stein** joined a Carmelite convent in the Netherlands. She was arrested because of her Jewish identity after the Catholic Church protested the persecution of Dutch Jews, and murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1942 at the age of 50. She was later canonized as one of Europe's six patron saints. |
| 9 | A Sinto German professional boxer, **Johann "Rukeli" Trollmann** won the German light-heavyweight title in 1933. He faced discrimination, went into hiding, was forcibly sterilized, and imprisoned in Neuengamme concentration camp. He was murdered in the Wittenberge subcamp in 1944 at the age of 36. |
| 10 | An Austrian artist, **Leopold Zobel** supported himself by painting and selling portraits in pubs and on the street. After Austria's annexation, he refused to join the military or Nazi organizations. He was arrested due to his unemployment and nonconformity and murdered in Flossenbürg concentration camp in 1942. He was 35 years old. |

**Photos without full bios (alphabetical order)**

11. **Rudolf Brazda**, survived

- Rudolf was a roofer from Germany with Czech citizenship.
- He was a gay man arrested under Paragraph 175.
- He was imprisoned in Buchenwald concentration camp and wore a pink triangle while there.
- Speaking of his time in Buchenwald: "There are strong friendships, solidarity, mutual aid and humanity that prevail over barbarity."
- Rudolf didn't speak out about his experiences during the Holocaust until 2008, at the age of 95.
- https://www.pinktrianglelegacies.org/brazda; https://hmd.org.uk/resource/rudolf-brazda/

12. **Ignacy Chzranowski**, murdered, 73

- Ignacy was a Polish intellectual, historian, & professor at Jagiellonian University in Krakow.
- He was murdered because he was part of the Polish intelligentsia (teachers, priests, physicians, and other prominent members of Polish society).
- Members of the Polish intelligentsia were targeted because they were seen as possible leaders of resistance and as part of a larger attempt to Germanize occupied Poland.
- He was murdered in Sachsenhausen concentration camp.

13. **Benjamin Engländer**, murdered, 39

- Benjamin was born in Hamburg to Polish-Jewish parents.
- He worked as a merchant, and was diagnosed with epilepsy at age 22.
- In August of that year he was diagnosed with a "psychological shift," for which he was treated for a few weeks as a patient in a hospital's psychiatric ward. From there, he was sent to various institutions.
- He was murdered in Brandenburg as part of the T4 program, under a special operation against Jews in public and private nursing institutions.
- https://www.t4-denkmal.de/eng/Benjamin-Englaender
- https://www.stolpersteine-hamburg.de/en.php?MAIN_ID=7&BIO_ID=2970

14. **Erich Frey**, murdered, 54

- Erich was from Berlin and worked as a banker. He also fought for Germany in WWI.
- He was Jewish, and by 1939, almost fully blind.
- His daughters escaped to Palestine via England in 1939, but he couldn't join them due to being blind.
- He worked as a brush maker at the Otto Weidt Workshop for the Blind in Berlin. Otto and Else Weidt employed – and eventually hid – blind, visually impaired, and hearing-impaired Jews during the war.

- Erich and his wife, Elsbeth, were hidden in the basement of the workshop, then hid in two other locations in Berlin. Their hiding place was discovered in 1944. They were deported to Theresienstadt and murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- https://www.museum-blindenwerkstatt.de/en/topics/otto-weidt-and-his-help-for-people-at-risk/failed-rescue-attempts/erich-frey

15. **Franciszek Gawryluk**, survived

- Franciszek was from an area of eastern Poland that was part of Russia until WWI, and is currently bordering Belarus.
- After the Germans occupied Poland, the occupation authorities sent Franciszek to Germany as a forced laborer.
- The Nazis arrested an acquaintance of his because he had written a complaint to a newspaper about the low wages for Polish forced laborers. The police found a letter from Franciszek in his possession, which resulted in Franciszek's arrest at the age of 18.
- The Nazis issued a protective custody order against him for "inflammatory propaganda," and he was sent to various prisons before ending up in Flossenbürg concentration camp.
- He had various forced labor assignments in Flossenbürg, but was working in the infirmary when the camp was liberated, which saved him from the forced march. He was liberated in April, 1945.
- https://www.gedenkstaette-flossenbuerg.de/en/history/prisoners/franciszek-gawryluk

16. **Siegfreid Geyerhahn**, survived

- Siegfried was a Freemason from Vienna, Austria. He also Jewish and worked as a lawyer.
- He was the "Meister des Stuhl" or Master of the Chair of the Masonic lodge Zukunft (Future) in Vienna, Austria.
- Following the Anschluss, the Freemasons in Vienna, especially those who held high ranking positions, were subjected to searches, interrogations, arrests, incarceration, and the property of the lodges, including the Zukunft, was raided and confiscated.
- He was arrested by the Gestapo in 1938 and imprisoned in Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps due to his involvement with the Freemasons.
- He was released in January 1939 and immigrated to the United States via London.
- In a letter from 1946, Siegfried stated that, "You may be aware that in March 1938, as Master of the Lodge 'Zukunft,' I was arrested by the Gestapo, then taken to Dachau and later to Buchenwald. In January 1939, I was released and, after a longer stay in London, emigrated to America. The unbelievable atrocities I experienced certainly generated boundless hatred and deep contempt for Nazism, but only strengthened me in the ideals of our Royal Art." ["Royal Art" is what Freemasons call their craft.]

17. **Fritz Kitzing**, survived

- Fritz was a gender-nonconforming German bookkeeper who lived in Berlin.

- Fritz dressed in women's and men's clothing at various points, and used "he" as a pronoun in a police report (though this might have been done for self-protection). We do not know how Fritz would have identified today, so historians use they/them pronouns when referring to them.
- Fritz was arrested as early as 1933 while wearing women's clothing and charged under the law against homelessness and begging. They escaped in 1934 and fled to London, where they were arrested for wearing women's clothing and extradited to Berlin. The following year, they were detained for allegedly making a sexual advance on an undercover member of the SA, though Fritz denied it.
- A neighbor made a complaint to the police about Fritz in 1935, and in 1936 they were arrested again. The police report still exists from this arrest. In it, the police claim Fritz was "dangerous to the public," though Fritz "could not be proven to have committed an illegal act." The police report goes on to state, "If K[itzing] is placed in a concentration camp, both the public and the utterly degenerate [man] would be better served thereby."
- Fritz was imprisoned in Lichtenburg and Sachsenhausen concentration camps through 1937. After his release, a former prisoner at Sachsenhausen recognized them in the street wearing women's clothing and denounced them. During a search, the police found letters Fritz had written about Sachsenhausen and they were arrested again.
- During WWII, Fritz was conscripted into the Wehrmacht and stationed in Belgium.
- They survived and opened an antique shop in Berlin after the war.
- https://www.pinktrianglelegacies.org/kitzing; https://perspectives.ushmm.org/item/police-report-on-fritz-kitzing

18. **Anna Lehnkerig**, murdered, 24

- Anna was a German woman with an intellectual disability.
- She had a difficult time at school and often had to repeat grades. One doctor report stated that she was good natured and obedient. A school report claimed that due to illness her attendance suffered, and therefore her knowledge was inadequate.
- According to family members, Anna loved playing with children and wanted to work in a daycare when she was older. She was also religious and enjoyed going to church, where she spent time with other girls who had disabilities.
- At 16, she was sent to an institute for children with intellectual disabilities.
- She was forcibly sterilized at age 19.
- Anna was later admitted to a hospital due to kidney disease. While there, the doctor persuaded Anna's mother that she needed to be institutionalized. Anna was given intelligence tests and various diagnoses.
- When she was 24 years old, Anna was murdered by gas at Grafeneck as part of the T4 program.
- Anna's mother later received a letter that falsely claimed that Anna died of peritonitis, an inflammation of the tissue lining the stomach. The date of death was also falsified.

- https://hmd.org.uk/resource/anna-lehnkering/

19. **Rosa Manus**, murdered, 60

- Rosa was a Jewish Dutch feminist and a key figure in the international women's suffrage and peace movements of the interwar era.
- She was a feminist liberal internationalist who believed that organized womanhood could make a difference to the world and that women had a responsibility to bring peace.
- Rosa also had relationships with women and surrounded herself with lesbian friends.
- In 1935 Rosa founded the International Archives for the Women's Movement (IAV), part of the International Institute of Social History. Its purpose was to preserve books and documents endangered by fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism, and it included Rosa's personal papers and correspondence. Only weeks after the Nazis invaded the Netherlands, they closed the archives and moved all its contents to Berlin. Portions of the archive were discovered in 1992 and returned to Amsterdam in 2003.
- Rosa was arrested by the Gestapo because of her political activism – specifically her pacifism – but was deported to Auschwitz because she was Jewish. Both of these identities played a role in what happened to her. (It does not appear the authorities were aware that she had relationships with women.)
- She was transferred to Ravensbrück concentration camp, and likely murdered in Bernburg as part of the 14f13 program (the expansion of T4 into concentration camps).
- https://brill.com/edcollbook/title/33577?contents=toc-138058

20. **Constanza Martinez Prieto**, survived

- Constanza was from Madrid and was 19 years old when the Spanish Civil War began. She was a left-wing activist who joined the United Socialist Youth (Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas).
- She worked for the editorial office for a newspaper that supported those who fought against the Nationalists in the war.
- Constanza fled to France in 1939. When WWII broke out in France, she was urged to return to Spain, but she chose to remain.
- In France, she taught children of other Spanish refugees and joined the French resistance.
- She was arrested and eventually deported to Ravensbrück concentration camp.
- Source: "The Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp: History and Memory", edited by Alyn Bessmann and Insa Eschebach

21. **Mary Pünjer**, murdered, 37

- Mary was born in Hamburg to a Jewish family that owned a successful women's clothing store.
- She married a childhood friend, Fritz, and they had no children. Fritz wasn't Jewish and was enlisted as a truck driver in Poland when the war broke out in September 1939.

- While Fritz was in Poland, Mary was arrested, presumably in a lesbian space which, according to Nazi reports, she frequently visited. She was imprisoned and sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp. The reason for her imprisonment was listed as "asocial," with the note "lesbian" – her Jewish identity was not noted.
- Mary was transferred back to the Hamburg police department and subjected to multiple interrogations, some of them by the division responsible for sexual crimes. The list that documented her transfer was marked "asocial (lesbian)."
- Selections for Operation 14f13 (the extension of T4 in concentration camps) took place at Ravensbrück in January 1942. The doctor's reports still exist, including the "diagnoses" from these selections. In the report on Mary Pünjer, the doctor wrote: "Married full Jew. Very active lesbian. Continually visited 'lesbian establishments' and exchanged caresses in the establishment." As we see in this quote, her identity as a Jewish woman in combination with her lesbian identity contributed to the decision to kill her.
- Mary was selected for transfer to the Bernburg killing center, where she was murdered by gas. Camp administration claimed that Mary died of heart failure in Ravensbrück.
- https://www.stolpersteine-hamburg.de/en.php?MAIN_ID=7&BIO_ID=903

22 & 23. **Franz and Erich Sass**, murdered, 35 and 33

- Franz and Erich were brothers from Berlin who became celebrities due to their spectacular burglaries. Scholars have referred to them as "Germany's most gifted, daring, ingenious, persistent and beloved thieves" (Kord, 2020).
- They robbed a bank in 1929, which drew a lot of media attention. They entered the bank through a tunnel they dug and stole 2.5 million Reichsmarks, which was never recovered. While many clues pointed to the brothers, there wasn't sufficient proof they did it. They robbed other banks but were able to evade arrest due to lack of evidence.
- The brothers had massive support from the German population, in part because of their upbringing in extreme poverty, which many Germans were experiencing during the economic collapse in the Weimar era. The press also loved the Sass brothers, calling them "gentlemen crooks."
- Legend has it that the brothers gave away some of the money in mailboxes in a working class neighborhood in Berlin. The brothers also never carried weapons or physically hurt anyone, and were hailed as Robin Hood-like heroes to a large portion of the German population.
- There were even jokes circulating in Germany in 1933:
    - Q: Who burned down the Reichstag? A: The Brothers SA-SS.
    - Q: How do you spell Germany's most famous criminals? A: SA-SS.
- After the Nazis came to power in 1933, Franz and Erich moved to Copenhagen, where they were sent to prison for burglary and falsifying passports. After serving their sentences they were extradited to Germany, where they were given long prison sentences. They were then taken to Sachsenhausen concentration camp and shot upon arrival.

- Rudolf Höss was the First Camp Officer in Sachsenhausen at the time, and wrote about the Sass brothers: "Two days after their conviction, the RFSS [Reichsführer SS, i.e. Himmler], on the basis of his special powers, had the two of them brought from the remand prison and taken to Sachsenhausen to be shot. They were to be shot immediately without notice. They were driven in the car right up to the sandpit in the Industrial Yard. The policemen who brought them said that they had been behaving fairly insolently and provocatively and wanted to know where they were being taken. When they arrived at the place of execution, I read the order for them to be shot out to them. They immediately began yelling and shouting, 'That can't be true, what are you thinking? We want a priest,' etc. There was no way they were going to stand at the stake, and I had to have them tied up. They resisted violently. I was really glad when I could give the order to fire."
- German newspapers reported that Franz and Erich had been shot "while resisting the police."
- Their story represents the Nazis' desire to appear tough on crime through targeting those they categorized as "career criminals," the majority of whom were people convicted of non-violent offenses, and also included re-arresting those who were formally incarcerated.
- Sources: "Murder and Mass Murder in Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp, 1936-1945," by Günther Morsch; Kord, Susanne, "Berlin 1927," *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*, Autumn 2020, Vol. 53, No. 2 (Autumn 2020), pp. 20-33.

24. **Theresia Seidl**, murdered, 26 or 27

- Theresia was from Austria. She started working at a grocery store at the age of 14.
- She married a carpenter and became a housewife. The following year she started having severe mood swings and confusion.
- Her husband couldn't provide the care she needed because he had to work, so he had her admitted to an institution.
- He soon realized that she was not getting the care she needed there and demanded her release, writing: "If the doctors are not in a position to help, they need not imprison her for months, they might just as well release her. On my last visit on 1 November 1940, I saw that my wife is very much neglected; my wife is not a head of cattle that one can lock up for months at a time and pay no further attention to."
- Theresia's husband's request was denied and less than two months later she was murdered in Hartheim as part of the T4 program.
- https://www.t4-denkmal.de/eng/Theresia-Seidl

25. **Anna Sölzer**, murdered, 25

- Anna was from Cologne, Germany, and everything we know about her is from a police file the Cologne Criminal Police kept on her. She was persecuted and murdered because she was a sex worker.
- According to the police report, Anna's parents died when she was young and she spent her childhood in orphanages.

- She was placed under police surveillance due to her profession as a sex worker. Her place of residence was closely watched and she was given strict limitations on where she could work.
- Anna was first arrested when she was 22 due to her having been in apartments where she was not registered. In the police file for that arrest, it was noted she had served a 4-week prison sentence earlier that year for an alleged theft. She was released but arrested again a couple months later and placed under "preventive custody."
- Anna was sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp. Her exact cause of death there is unknown.
- https://www.die-verleugneten.de/en/biography/anna-soelzer/

26. **Georg Tauber**, survived

- Georg was from Germany and worked as an illustrator.
- After an injury, he was given morphine for pain relief. He became addicted to it.
- He was admitted to psychiatric hospitals on multiple occasions trying to end his dependence on morphine but was unsuccessful.
- He was arrested for forging prescriptions and committing fraud, directly related to his addiction. He was sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp for a few months, then was transferred to Dachau, where he spent 5 years.
- In Dachau he made many drawings which were smuggled out of the camp and survived; he created more art about the camp after his liberation.
- In 1946 Georg co-founded an association called "The Forgotten Ones," which advocated for recognition of all victim groups—particularly those categorized as "career criminals" and "asocials" which were completely overlooked in the post-war period. It was banned after just a few months.
- Georg died of tuberculosis in 1950. The groups he advocated for did not receive official recognition from the German government for being victims of Nazism until 2020.
- https://www.die-verleugneten.de/en/biography/georg-tauber/
- https://www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de/en/coming-dates/evidence-for-posterity-the-drawings-of-the-dachau-survivor-georg-tauber/

27. **Franziska Votypka**, survived

- Franziska (Fanny) was born in 1927. She was from Vienna and rejected Nazism, the League of German Girls, and the societal expectations placed on her.
- She called herself a "*Schlurf* girl," an Austrian slang term evoking idleness or taking things easy, having fun, going out, and not following the norm.
- Fanny wrote this song in an exercise book, which describes how she saw herself and what it meant to her to be a "Schlurf girl":

  You don't need to worry about us,
  because we Schlurf girls are here to stay.
  Lock us away in some institution,

we'll get out of there anyway.
We'll whistle at their work, toss it aside,
Nights spent out, no need to abide.
So girls, don't let them shape how you'll be, or it's bye-bye to freedom, just wait and see.

- Fanny's parents didn't approve of her behavior. Her mother reached out to Vienna's Youth Welfare Office and its "educational counseling service." Fanny was admitted to a reformatory and spent time in multiple institutions.
- She found work as a domestic servant but was fired for "various accounts of theft." The courts ordered her to be placed in "correctional education" indefinitely. Reports from another institution described her as "work-shy" and "morally degenerate." A doctor from another institution wrote that Fanny "contaminates the institution with '*Schlurf* mentality'" and recommended that Fanny be educated through work with "iron discipline and utmost severity."
- Fanny was put in various institutions and workhouses. She tried to escape, was put in isolation, and attempted suicide. Her parents requested she be released or transferred somewhere closer to Vienna but their request was denied.
- Fanny was sent to Uckermark youth camp, a "youth protection camp" located next to Ravensbrück concentration camp. She was first admitted to Ravensbrück for a few days before being transferred over to Uckermark. She survived but details of her life are unknown. She was 18-years-old when the war ended.
- https://www.die-verleugneten.de/en/biography/fanny-vesela/
- More info on Uckermark youth camp: https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/uckermark-youth-camp

**GHETTOS**

Content remains the same, though the layout is slightly shifted.

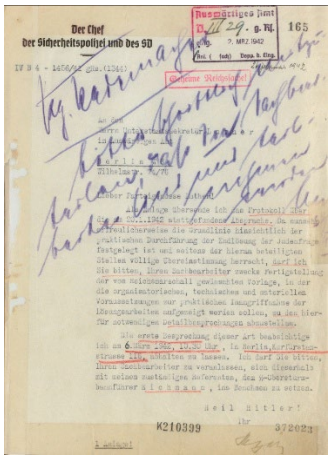
**THE HOLOCAUST IN THE SOVIET UNION**

Content remains the same.

**WANNSEE & DECEPTION**




**Letter from Reinhard Heydrich to Undersecretary Martin Luther, February 26, 1942.** Heydrich transmits the Wannsee Protocol to the Foreign Office. He references the Endlösung der Judenfrage (Final Solution of the Jewish Question) as agreed upon policy. He names senior SS official Adolf Eichmann as coordinator of follow-up measures. Eichmann was responsible for organizing the deportation of Jews across occupied Europe.

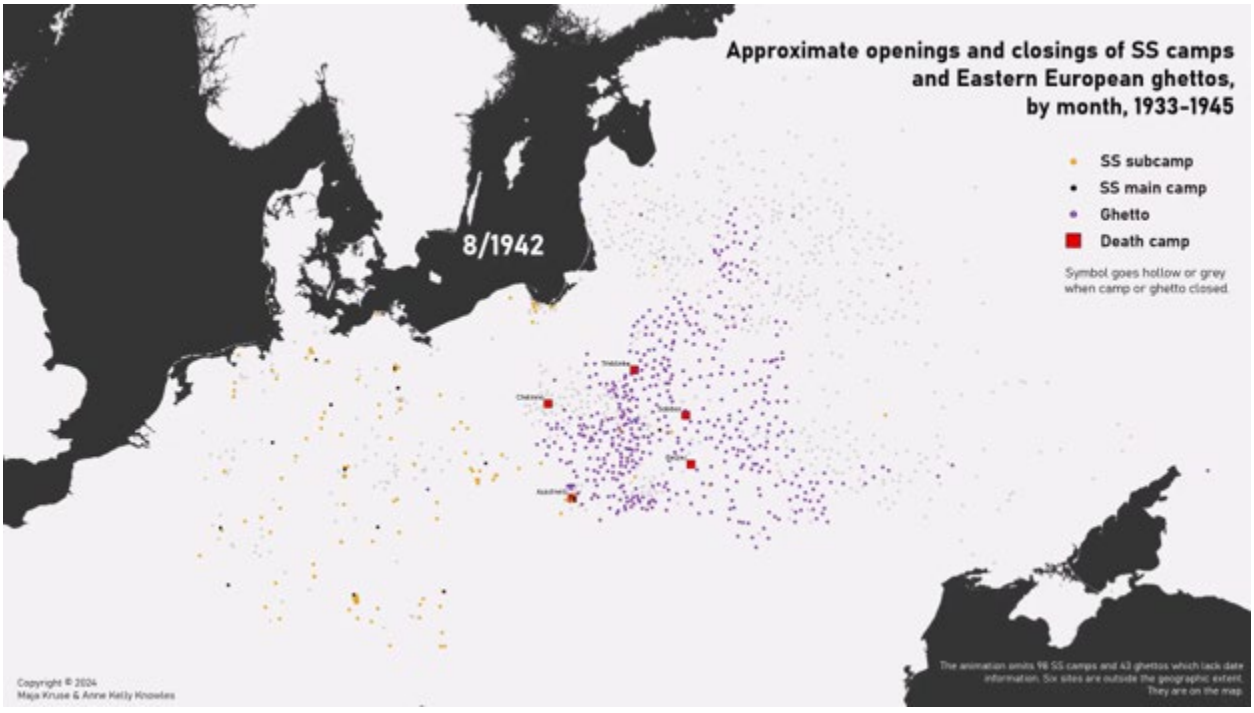
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|---|---|
|  | Follow-up letter to the Wannsee Conference invitation sent by Reinhard Heydrich to Martin Luther of the Foreign Office, dated February 26, 1942, forwarding the minutes of the Wannsee Conference.<br><br>February 26, 1942<br>Dear Fellow Party Member Luther!<br>Enclosed I am sending you the minutes of the proceedings that took place on January 20, 1942. Since the basic position regarding the practical execution of the final solution of the Jewish question has fortunately been established by now, and since there is a full agreement on the part of all agencies involved, I would like to ask you at the request of the Reich Marshal to make one of your specialist officials available for the necessary discussion of details in connection with the completion of the draft that shows the organizational, technical, and material prerequisites bearing on the actual starting point of the projected solutions.<br>I want to schedule the first discussion along these lines for 10:30 a.m. on March 6, 1942 at 116 Kurfürstenstrasse, Berlin. I therefore ask you that for this purpose your specialist official contact my functionary in charge there, SSObersturmbannführer Eichmann. |

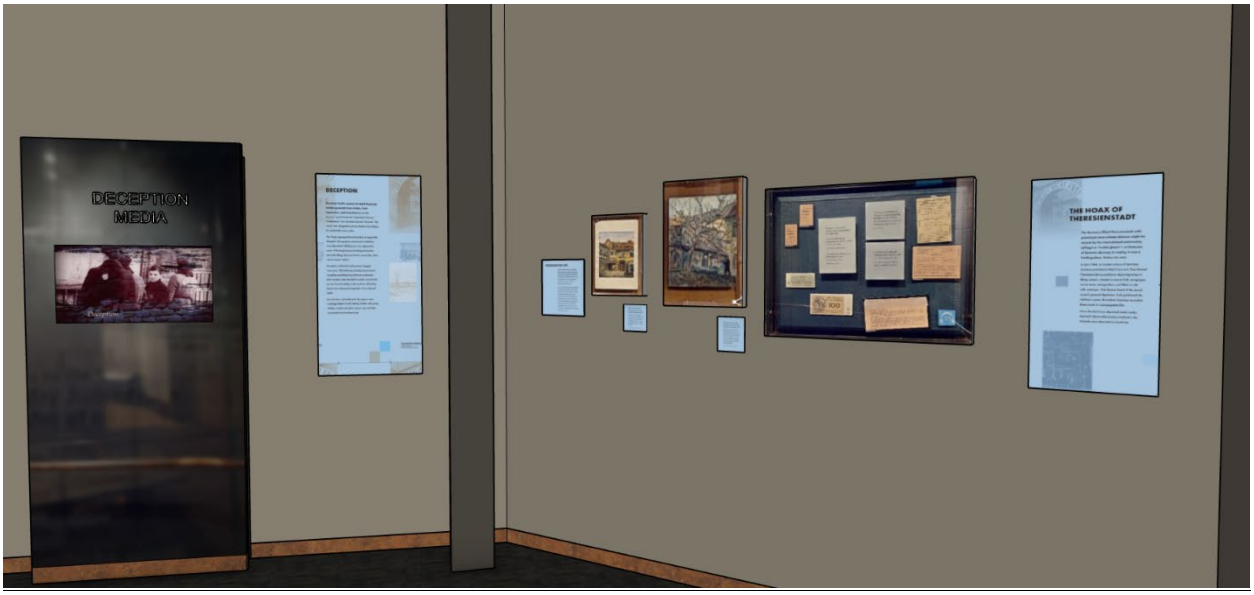
| | |
|---|---|
| | Heil Hitler!<br>Yours<br>Heydrich<br><br>Two days after Heydrich signed the document, Martin Luther writes an instruction across the page using a purple pencil. His colleague Pg (Parteigenosse, Party Comrade) Franz Rademacher is to attend the follow-up meeting scheduled for March 6, 1942: "Party Comrade Rademacher, please send notice that you are a specialist and will attend." |

The reader rail remains the same, with photos and info on the attendees of the Wannsee Conference.

**Mapping the Holocaust (WILL BE A 'FILM' PROJECTION)**

This map animation plots 4,231 of the approximately 44,000 locations across occupied Europe and North Africa where the Nazi regime and its allies established camps and other incarceration sites between 1933 and 1945. The Nazis and their collaborators used these places to imprison, torture, and murder Jews, Sinti and Roma, among others.






This wall has the same content that was on the walkway to the deportation videos: the deception/Theresienstadt video, and Theresienstadt artifacts. They are now in the gallery that once was dedicated solely to Wannsee.




**Railcar/Nazi Euphemisms**

The Nazis deliberately chose bureaucratic terms to describe mass murder. These terms allowed perpetrators to speak openly while hiding the truth. Here is what they actually meant.