



The **Holocaust** by **Bullets**

A STUDY GUIDE FOR EDUCATORS

Written by
Urszula Szczepinska

A Joint Project of Yahad – In Unum
and The Florida Holocaust Museum



The Holocaust by bullets wasn't a tsunami. It is a criminal story. These were men who killed other men. Each victim saw his or her assassin. The assassins conducted these massacres in public across a continent, from Serbia to the Caucasus, over more than 4 years, killing more than 2 million Jewish victims.

The "Holocaust by bullets" exhibition and the study guide that accompanies it are unique tools that will help each teacher enable his or her students to understand the particular criminal process of the Holocaust by bullets, as identified by Yahad – In Unum. Step by step, from the arrival of the assassins in a village until their departure at night. These tools also prompt us to reflect on the presence of neighbors in the areas near the mass graves.

This criminal process has become, as it were, the model for mass violence today. To this day, human beings are assassinated in mass groups, in public and while seeing their assassins. This is why the transmission of the history of the Holocaust by bullets by educators is key. More than tools, these are weapons and shields to fight against mass violence today and tomorrow.

Father Patrick Desbois
President of Yahad – In Unum

Members of an Einsatzkommando shoot Jews in a field in Dubossary, Moldova.
Photo credit: Imperial War Museum



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The print version of this study guide is designed to be used in combination with its online version containing hyperlinks to various online resources. It is available at www.yahadinunum.org and www.flholocaustmuseum.org.





Execution site of Jewish refugees in Ladozhskaya, Krasnodar region, Russia
Photo credit: Markel Redondo, Yahad – In Unum Photographer

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Key concepts: how to work with video testimonies and museum collections; lessons from eyewitness testimonies; who are the witnesses; who were the victims; who were the perpetrators; relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors; forced requisitions of witnesses; investigating mass killings; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; motivations of the executioners; concept of empathy; remembering individual victims; personal lens of individual memories; teaching history through artifacts, archival photographs, and documents; curating a photo exhibition; exploring local history; lessons for today.

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The day of the execution of Jews in a village, the men of the Einsatzgruppen arrive with the local police into the homes of every Jewish person. They round up each family, shoving them outside with the ends of their rifles. They only let them take a few things, and they do not tell them where they are being taken. In this way, they gather the entire Jewish population into a building, a yard, or on the town square. The Jews are kept at the place of gathering for a few hours while everyone is being regrouped. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: public nature of the Holocaust by bullets; deception and euphemisms as tools of genocide during the Holocaust and other genocides; deception of Holocaust victims and their responses; responses and perspectives of non-Jewish neighbors; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; totality of the Holocaust by bullets; how to work with archival photographs and records; photographers during the Holocaust; five steps of the Holocaust by bullets as reflected in eyewitness testimony; investigating case studies of the Holocaust by bullets.

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Once gathered, the Jews are taken to the place of execution on foot or in trucks or wagons requisitioned from the local farmers to transport the elderly and the weak. They are herded there under the blows from the men of the Einsatzgruppen, the police batons, and under the gaze of their neighbors. Those who try to escape are shot on the spot. These future victims are unaware that they are being led to their death until the road bends and opens to a field, a ravine, or a forest where they will be executed. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: responses of non-Jews to the fate of their Jewish neighbors; choiceless choices faced by victims;¹ consequences of individual choices made by non-Jewish residents; collaboration; complicity; victims, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, witnesses as individuals; rescue efforts during the Holocaust; researching individual rescuers; complexity of behavior as reflected in eyewitness testimonies; investigating perpetrators' motivations behind the public nature of the Holocaust by bullets; forms of armed and unarmed resistance among Jews.

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When victims arrive at the execution site, the graves where they will be shot have just been dug by other Jews or by requisitioned villagers. Sometimes they must dig the graves themselves. Then, under the blows and shouts of the guards, the men, women, children, and the elderly are forced to undress completely, even in winter. They must put all their belongings on the ground or on carts until they are stripped of all their valuables. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

¹“Choiceless choices” is a term coined by Lawrence Langer. For more information see activity #12.

Key concepts: humiliation and dehumanization of genocide victims; the role of Nazi propaganda in dehumanizing Jewish victims; propaganda in pre- and post-Holocaust genocides; concept of exclusion in children’s education in the Third Reich; concept of “the other”; the role of media in our perception of fellow humans; can one person make a difference?; defiance against humiliation during genocide; the role of art during genocide; how do we respond to genocide in the context of media coverage; exploring local history.

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Having undressed, victims are forced to line up at the edge of the pit or inside the pit. The Einsatzgruppen or members of other Nazi units shoot the victims in the back, in the neck, in the head. Often, young children are thrown alive into the pit or shot in the arms of their mothers. Group after group, all victims fall into the pit under the gunfire of the executioners. Many of them are not yet dead when the requisitioned farmers fill in the pit. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: universe of obligation;² responsibility to protect; exclusion and inclusion of Jewish victims in perceptions of witnesses and perpetrators; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; defining genocide; international response to genocide (UN); moral and ethical challenges faced by peacekeepers; totality of genocide; what can we learn from archival photographs about ideologies and individual choices?; combating Holocaust denial through documenting the Holocaust by bullets; remembering individual victims; differences between the Holocaust by bullets and death camps; motivations of perpetrators; the impact of the crime on eyewitnesses; investigating a case study of the Holocaust by bullets.

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² “Universe of obligation” is a term coined by Helen Fein. For more information see activity #21.

While the victims are being murdered, and the mass graves filled in, the executioners and the police rummage through the victims' belongings trying to find any hidden valuables. The belongings are then loaded by the executioners or very often by the farmers into trucks or wagons. They are then stored in a building, taken to Germany or auctioned by the German or local administration. Jewish homes and ghettos are also fully probed and sometimes dismantled to the last piece of wood by the Germans, the police, and some of the local population. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: ethical aspects of individual decisions; responsibility during the Holocaust; motives of looters; reversal of professional, communal, and personal values; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; ideologies based on dehumanizing “the other”; survivors after liberation; justice after the Holocaust and other genocides; investigating a case study of the Holocaust by bullets; concepts of exclusion and inclusion; preserving the memory of individual victims; status and meaning of historic sites; landscape of genocide; long-term effects of genocide; lessons for today.

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Introduction

This study guide is designed to accompany the exhibition “Holocaust by Bullets: Yahad – In Unum, 10 Years of Investigation” which presents the results of Yahad – In Unum’s efforts to collect evidence of the massacres committed by German mobile killing units – the *Einsatzgruppen*,³ other German militarized units, their Axis supporters, and local collaborators in Eastern Europe. The exhibition and the study guide are built around eyewitness testimonies, research, and data shared by Yahad – In Unum.

Yahad – In Unum (“together” in Hebrew and Latin) is a Paris-based organization dedicated to collecting testimonies of eyewitnesses, and identifying and documenting sites of mass crimes committed against European Jews and Roma by the Germans and their collaborators during World War II. Stemming from the initiative of its founder and president, French Catholic priest Father Patrick Desbois, since 2004 the organization has conducted over 79 research trips, identified over 1,400 execution sites and interviewed close to 4,000 eyewitnesses in 8 countries.⁴ Yahad – In Unum works on 4 levels: it provides educational programs for academics and teachers; investigates the actual crimes, identifies the sites and videotapes interviews with the witnesses; conducts and promotes research; and by seeing the Holocaust by bullets as a model for mass violence, investigates other genocides to help us draw lessons and prevent similar atrocities in the future.



THE DEATH CAMPS

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| A – Auschwitz-Birkenau | M – Majdanek |
| B – Belzec | S – Sobibor |
| C – Chelmno | T – Treblinka |



SITES OF MASS SHOOTINGS

IDENTIFIED BY YAHAD – IN UNUM UP TO 2014

³ *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing units): mobile units of the German Security Police and SD augmented by Order Police and Waffen-SS personnel. These units followed the German army as it invaded the nations of central and eastern Europe. Their duties included the arrest or murder of political opponents and potential resistance. In Poland in 1939, these units were assigned to shoot Polish intellectuals and to concentrate the Jewish population into large cities. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, *Einsatzgruppen* personnel killed Jews, Soviet political commissars, Gypsies (Roma), mentally disabled persons, and other perceived “racial” and ideological enemies, usually by mass shootings. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Glossary.” <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007315>. Accessed on February 24, 2015. For more information check the suggested bibliography and resource recommendations at the end of the study guide.) While estimates of the number of Jewish victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* vary from over a million to over two million, according to Yahad – In Unum’s research, more than two million Jews were murdered in mass shootings in the territories of eight countries investigated by research teams.

⁴ Data current as of January 16, 2015. For most updated information visit www.yahadinunum.org.

Yahad – In Unum’s findings have made a significant impact on how the Holocaust is being taught and researched. It is at this 10-year mark – a moment of accomplishment and reflection – that the organization has stopped to ask: what are the next steps? First of all, we need to make the fate of the victims of the Holocaust by bullets better known to the general public, educators, and students. And secondly, we need to draw lessons. Atrocities committed during the Holocaust have not lost their relevance. Genocide is a crime committed by human beings against their fellow humans and impacts all of us as part of humanity, no matter when and where it happened. We *are* humanity. Not all pages of our shared history are admirable, many are disturbing. Father Patrick Desbois writes in his book “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews”: “I am convinced that there is only one human race – a human race that shoots two-year-old children. For better or for worse I belong to that human race and this allows me to acknowledge that an ideology can deceive minds to the point of annihilating all ethical reflexes and all recognition of the human in the other.”⁵ Humans have indeed shown too many times that we can turn against one another in the name of different ideologies, religions, and interests. The consequences of such acts are long term. No peace treaty ending a conflict can erase the damage done to the heritage we all carry as human beings. Facing this history can be unsettling. But not facing it can only lead to repeating similar acts of cruelty. We have an obligation, and the right, to know what happened, no matter how uncomfortable some of the facts may be. It is an effort we consciously need to make. In a symbolic way, we are also making this effort when visiting Yahad – In Unum’s exhibition. Thanks to its thoughtful design, in order to learn more about the crimes described by eyewitnesses, the visitor needs *to decide* to come closer and view the panels with archival photographs embedded in each exhibition module. It is each visitor’s choice how much truth about the atrocities he or she is ready to learn.

The Holocaust by Bullets – Genocide Committed in Broad Daylight

As Paul A. Shapiro, Director of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, points out in his foreword to Father Patrick Desbois’ book, for many people the first connotations that define the Holocaust are those of cattle cars carrying innocent victims to the death camps, equipped with gas chambers and crematoria.⁶ These are the images used in documentaries, articles, books, lesson plans, movies. Those death factories and the deportations preceding them are, and should be, among the strongest symbols of man’s inhumanity to man. However, mass murder with gas, first inflicted on the mentally and physically disabled in Germany as part of the infamous “Euthanasia” program, and then expanded to the genocide of European Jews at the death camps located in German-occupied Poland, were not the only Nazi method.⁷ Death camps with mass gassing installations were designed to kill more people in less time, and in a way that would be less burdensome for the perpetrators, including members of the *Einsatzgruppen* and other German units involved in shooting operations. These mass shootings took place mostly, but not only, in the occupied territories of the former

⁵ Patrick Desbois, *The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 67. In order to easily differentiate between Father Desbois’ book about his research in Ukraine, the exhibition, and the study guide, which all have a similar title, throughout the study guide the book will be referenced by its full title rather than just “The Holocaust by Bullets.”

⁶ See *ibid.*, p. vii.

⁷ The “Euthanasia” program (code-named Operation T4 after its headquarters address in Berlin), was the first program of mass murder implemented in Nazi Germany in 1939. The program targeted patients with mental and physical disabilities, at first children, then also adults. Children were murdered by overdoses of medication or by starvation, adults at gassing facilities in Germany and Austria: Brandenburg, Grafeneck, Bernburg, Sonnenstein, Hartheim, and Hadamar. In spite of an official halt due to protests, the program continued until the end of WWII with children and adults killed by lethal injections, drug overdose, and starvation. Historians estimate that over 200,000 people were killed in various stages of the program. The murder, mostly through shooting operations, also took place in the territories occupied by Nazi Germany. T4 personnel were later involved in the killing operations at the death camps at Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka. (Information obtained from: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Euthanasia Program.” Holocaust Encyclopedia. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005200>. Accessed on February 24, 2015. For more information, including the 14f13 program targeting concentration camp prisoners, check the suggested bibliography and online resource recommendations at the end of the study guide.)

Soviet Union following the invasion in 1941. The goal behind the shooting operations was to kill “enemies” of Hitler’s Third Reich: Jews, Roma and Sinti, Communists, partisans or their sympathizers. The majority of victims were Jews – over two million human beings were killed one by one, at close range. Women, men, children. This very direct killing process caused psychological strain in some of the executioners. “Frayed nerves led to insubordination, drunkenness, and mental breakdowns,” according to historians Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt.⁸ Concerned about the adverse impact of the shooting operations on their rank and file in the field, Nazi leaders introduced changes to the killing process by implementing a more industrialized method of murder through gassing that included gas vans, in the areas covered by the *Einsatzgruppen* and the first death camp at Chelmno, and stationary gas chambers in the death camps of Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, and Auschwitz-Birkenau.⁹

And yet, mass shootings continued. Victims of shooting operations were buried in anonymous pits, ravines, wells. Very few people survived. However, these crimes were committed in broad daylight, in the vicinity of the victims’ homes, in front of their neighbors. Therefore, there were also eyewitnesses. Yet, for decades no one spoke openly about them and Western researchers had nearly no access to the actual sites of mass murder. The Cold War rendered communication with countries behind the Iron Curtain difficult for all parties and risky for those on the Eastern side. As a result, this part of Holocaust history was for a long time known to Holocaust scholars, but its scope and depth was not realized until the collapse of the Soviet Union. Eventually, thanks to the efforts of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, millions of records from the former Soviet archives were copied and made available to researchers, although there were still linguistic and other challenges.

It was not until Father Patrick Desbois decided to explore the sites in person and publicize his findings that more researchers and the broader public came to appreciate the significance of this chapter of Holocaust history. Father Desbois was not the first person to interview some of the witnesses. Shortly after the war, the Soviets had carried out numerous investigations of Nazi crimes, supported by eyewitness testimony. But not every eyewitness was interviewed and the context and format of those interviews were different from Yahad – In Unum’s goals. Soviet investigations, while detailed, had been conducted in the specific political climate of Stalin’s regime. Consequently, the information collected in the process needed to be verified. First-hand accounts collected by Father Desbois and his team enabled that. Time and again, older archival records were verified by eyewitness testimony collected by Yahad – In Unum. This important corroboration worked both ways – eyewitness accounts were checked against archival records.¹⁰ What also makes Yahad – In Unum’s work different is a much more systematic approach – their research covers an entire area where the genocide took place in each country, and offers a meticulous analysis of the multifarious responses to the crime among the non-Jewish population, including the role played by the local administration.

Collecting Evidence of the Crime and Preserving Memory of Victims

Father Desbois says that “[e]stablishing the truth is [...] important to our understanding of our region. How can we build a new Europe based on the effaced memory of the victims of genocide, on the forgotten bodies of the victims, without in this way allowing for even greater injustices in the future? No one who is responsible for genocide should ever think it possible to hide their crime. My work is primarily an act of

⁸ Debórah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt, *Holocaust: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003), p. 276 (the authors also discuss challenges, both technical and psychological, caused by using gas vans). See also Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka: The Operation Reinhard Death Camps* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 8.

⁹ See Arad, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–11. Yitzhak Arad also writes about experimental executions with gas and other methods that preceded gas vans. For additional information about the death camps at Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek (with its mixed profile), and Auschwitz-Birkenau, see recommendations in the suggested bibliography, as well as articles from the USHMM’s Holocaust Encyclopedia in the glossary and on the list of online resources. The recommended print and online resources also have information about the genocide of European Sinti and Roma, and about Nazi persecution of other victim groups.

¹⁰ See Desbois, *op. cit.*, pp. x–xi.

justice toward the dead, with the aim of creating awareness of the barbarity and wrong of what occurred, but also of preventing future genocides. Another purpose of my work is to convey the message that, even if decades go by, someone will eventually uncover and get to the roots of a genocide, whomever the perpetrator may be. The blood of Abel will not cease crying out to the sky, and will continue to resonate in my conscience. As it is written in the book of Genesis: The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground! (Genesis 4.10)."¹¹

It is not just Europe that cannot be built on such a broken foundation. If we all are part of humanity, the truth about the crimes committed by human beings against their fellow humans needs to be known everywhere. The crime of genocide is not endemic to one location on the world map. Nor does it happen overnight. There are steps leading to it and ideologies that enable people to see their neighbors as subhumans who can be humiliated, tormented physically and emotionally, and murdered. Perpetrators of genocide do not act alone. They are enabled by their supporters who believe in the same ideology and by those who look away. We need to examine that process. Among the lessons we all need to learn is how to prevent it. And how not to stand by when faced with atrocity or injustice.

Collecting evidence about the atrocities at individual locations helps fulfill one of the major goals of Yahad – In Unum and The Florida Holocaust Museum, i.e., preserving the memory and bringing dignity back to the murdered Jews who were perceived as subhumans and treated as such. Those victims had their identities taken away from them, were humiliated before their deaths, murdered by their fellow humans, in their own communities, and buried anonymously after mass executions at unmarked sites. Father Desbois says in his book: “Each person is unique. In my eyes, they didn’t kill Jews, they killed Ossik, Tania, Anna. [...] For me, as a priest and a man, in village after village, interview after interview, I worked to recover the graves of Anna, David, and Anton.”¹² Both Yahad – In Unum and The Florida Holocaust Museum focus on remembering individual victims. The process of retrieving their identities and commemorating them as individuals needs to be continued by post-Holocaust generations. While proper marking of historic sites is crucial, even the best memorial will slip into oblivion without our ongoing effort to remember. It is our obligation to share the truth about what happened and preserve the memory of those whose lives were taken away. They need to be remembered not as anonymous victims but as human beings like us, who had their individual identities, lives, jobs, neighbors. Many witnesses interviewed by Yahad – In Unum seem to understand this very well. In one testimony after another we can hear: “I don’t understand how they could kill them,” “I asked myself why they had done this, we are all human beings.” Over seventy years later, these interviewees seem to still be bewildered by the dehumanization of their fellow humans at the hands of other human beings. We cannot bring the victims back, or take back the injustice that happened, but we can keep their memory alive by teaching about them. And here the testimonies collected by Yahad – In Unum are truly invaluable. As Paul Shapiro notes, these testimonies are unique because of the witnesses’ isolated living conditions – often they live in the same houses as during the war, in the same small communities, cut off from Holocaust research, testimonies, archival collections, or anything that could alter their memories.¹³ All these people have is what they remember. And while details are sometimes lost due to the passage of time, their memories are very vivid. These individuals witnessed – or were forced to participate in – a crime that is hard to describe. They have lived with violent memories, for many traumatic, all their lives until finally they had a chance to share their recollections with someone who wanted to hear their story.

We can see a range of responses in the interviews. Some witnesses get emotional, others barely mention their prewar Jewish neighbors. Their relationships with local Jews varied before the war as well. The history of local Jewish and non-Jewish relationships is complex but the interviewees are sharing their own memories from before and during World War II. Often, these are childhood memories. We are not equipped

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 123–124.

¹² Ibid., pp. 121–122.

¹³ See *ibid.*, p. xi.

to gauge the psychological dimension of these narrations – everybody expresses their thoughts and feelings differently and we have access only to what the witnesses decide, or are able, to share. The goal of Yahad – In Unum is to find out as much as possible about the atrocities witnessed by the interviewees, without examining the level of empathy displayed during an interview or passing judgment on the witnesses' decisions at the time of the crime. As Father Desbois put it in reference to his work: "What enabled me to go on was forcing myself not to judge the person who was speaking to me, as I kept making more and more surprising and horrid discoveries."¹⁴

The testimonies collected by Yahad – In Unum are very powerful. Through working with these first-hand accounts, we have an opportunity to analyze the information the witnesses convey, the behaviors they describe, as well as the ethical and moral observations they bring up. In many testimonies, the witnesses' moral indignation and emotional anguish evoked by the crime are palpable. They confront and openly talk about the atrocities committed not only by the occupiers of their countries but also by local collaborators from their own communities. They want us to know what happened – they all agreed to have their testimonies shared with the public. That is why they summoned up their courage to speak up, in spite of a sense of guilt some of them felt, emotional pain, and fear of the KGB [security agency in the former Soviet Union] or other ramifications.¹⁵ The political system in their respective countries may be different today, but being deported to Siberia for expressing one's opinions still seems real to some of these elderly individuals. Some of the witnesses were also afraid of their neighbors' reaction and needed to weigh the decision to speak up carefully as they would live among those neighbors after the research teams had left.

91-year-old Olena from Khvativ, Ukraine, was one of the witnesses who faced her fear of the KGB and defied reproaches from her neighbors. At first reluctant to talk, she eventually shared a harrowing story of witnessing a transport of local Jews being taken by trucks to the execution site. One of the victims recognized her and kept shouting "Olena, Olena, save me!" till the very end. Out of fear for her own life, Olena hid in the wheat. She has lived with that unanswered plea for help all her life. When she finally decided to break her silence, it was the first time a witness shared the last words of a victim with Yahad – In Unum's research team.

These testimonies are important voices that need to be heard as the witnesses provide detailed information about the killing process, but also about communities that no longer exist – about Jewish residents when they were still neighbors, not victims of murder. Time is of the essence – the witnesses were children, teens, or young adults at the time of these crimes. Today, they are very advanced in age. It is thanks to the efforts of Yahad – In Unum's research teams that these witnesses finally decided to share their memories and we can now pass their message on.

Accepting the Truth about Genocide

Father Desbois writes that in his experience, "the most difficult part of discovering and gaining personal knowledge of genocide is accepting the truth about what happened. To know all the details while at the same time being able to continue to live a full life, without forgetting or hiding what one knows about the past. It is no longer a question of getting stuck with certain impressions, of feeling sick, or worse, of remaining immobilized with terror. Terror is part of the strategy of those who commit genocide. Like predators, they create ways of petrifying their victims before killing them. [...] Terror can be generated by the sole mention of

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁵ You can find more examples of such situations in "The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest's Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews" by Father Patrick Desbois, e.g., p. 102, or watch video testimonies of eyewitnesses, e.g., testimony of Emilija B., who talks about wartime and post-WWII deportations of Lithuanians to Siberia by the Soviet regime (Broad Daylight, <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 131).

genocide, by the reading of a book on the subject, or at seeing archival images of it, or on visiting a former concentration camp. If, sixty years later, we allow ourselves to be terrified as well, though, we are allowing the people of the Third Reich who perpetrated genocide, an additional victory. Terror can immobilize thought and awareness, and hinder the ability to remain responsible, confrontational, and strong in front of the perpetrators of genocide.”¹⁶ He identifies two weapons used by perpetrators: one is the very unbelievable nature of genocide, which makes it hard for people to believe what they are hearing about, and the other is lack of compassion. “I am convinced,” he says, “that when genocide is taking place, many people can sleep easily at night – if they are sure that they will not be killed. [...] Accepting awareness of what happened – men individually and personally murdering a child, a grandmother, a couple in the open street, in the marketplace, behind the church, in a ditch – is to help new generations become resistant to genocide mechanisms which could be set in motion, again, anywhere in the world.”¹⁷

Among the challenges that need to be faced when studying Holocaust history is the realization that all participants, including the perpetrators, were human beings.¹⁸ When writing about war criminals from the former Yugoslavia (in reference to the atrocities of the 1990s), Croatian author Slavenka Drakulić concludes: “War criminals have committed indescribable acts, and nobody wants to be connected to them in any way. But this doesn’t bring us closer to the essential question: how were such crimes possible? If we believe their perpetrators are monsters, it is because we wish to create as great a distance as possible between us and them, to exclude them from humanity altogether. [...] At the bottom of such reasoning there is a syllogism: ordinary people could not have done what these monsters did; we are ordinary people, therefore we cannot commit such crimes. But once you get closer to the real people who committed those crimes, you see that the syllogism doesn’t really work.”¹⁹ When we look closer at the perpetrators of mass violence, we can see that many of them were well educated, had families of their own, children they cared for. They committed monstrous acts but, sadly, they were human beings able to dehumanize other people’s children, in the name of the ideology they believed in.

In this study guide, we examine different choices made by humans, some catastrophic, others brave, some challenging. We should remember that the testimonies are provided by witnesses who, as children or adults, did *not* willingly participate in the humiliation, murder, and robbing of Jewish victims. While some of them were requisitioned for various steps of the crime, it was not their choice. They do, however, share information about other community members who collaborated with the perpetrators and took part in the crime. We may be disturbed by some of the choices the witnesses discuss, but we need to examine those behaviors more closely if we wish to understand what happened, and seek to prevent it. At the same time, understanding does not mean justifying or condoning.

Through its work, Yahad – In Unum has identified three categories of witnesses:

1. Individuals who were forced to watch the executions. This measure was used by the perpetrators to discourage local non-Jews from helping Jews and from getting involved in any form of sabotage, including helping the partisans.
2. Individuals who watched the executions by choice, often out of curiosity. These were usually children or teenagers.
3. Individuals requisitioned to assist with various steps of the killing process. This group included mostly teenagers or young adults.²⁰

¹⁶ Desbois, *op. cit.*, pp. 61–62.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 62–63.

¹⁸ By participants, we mean those individuals who were present at the time of the events. It does not automatically imply active participation in the killing process or any other negative behavior.

¹⁹ Slavenka Drakulić, *They Would Never Hurt a Fly: War Criminals on Trial in The Hague* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), p. 188.

This is how Father Desbois describes the last group, whose role he found particularly difficult to grasp: “They could be requisitioned for a day or a week. A local policeman, an emissary from the mayor, or a German officer would go into people’s houses and order: ‘You come with me and bring a spade.’ They could be requisitioned to dig a pit at 5 in the morning. After they had finished digging, the Germans made them sit down while they brought in the Jews and shot them, and then they had them get up and fill in the pit. Some were assigned the task of gathering up the clothes, [...] to pull out teeth, [...] to transport the Jews in their carts when the pit was too far from the village and there weren’t enough trucks. Most of them were forced to act at gunpoint. They had no choice. *It took me years to understand the scope of these requisitions* [italics added].”²¹ In the testimonies, we are confronted with circumstances we did not experience firsthand. The behaviors described by witnesses are complex and do not translate easily into our lives today. Their experiences generate questions about ethics, complicity, resistance, choices. Some of these questions may not have one answer but rather evoke more questions and discussions. The lessons taught through the witnesses’ testimonies may stay with us and gain new meaning over time.

Awareness and Responsibility

When visiting The Florida Holocaust Museum on June 10, 2014, Father Desbois said to his audience: “You are a human being, so you are in charge.” Being human carries a responsibility. It is our responsibility to learn, to hear the truth about what happened, and to apply this knowledge to our lives, our reality, in the hope that the truth is not forgotten, but also that we better equip ourselves for making decisions that affect us and those around us. The words “Never again” have been repeated countless times since the Holocaust. Nonetheless, more mass violence and genocides have happened right in front of our eyes, with media coverage that makes it impossible not to know. Hopefully, once we understand that genocide does not happen to an abstract “someone someplace else,” but to individual human beings who have the right to live just as we do, we may feel more responsibility for our common good and the decisions we make.

In the testimonies used in this study guide and in the exhibition, one sees humanity at its best but also at its worst, with numerous variations in between. While the situations described in detail by the witnesses involved direct violence, we need to remember that pulling a trigger was the last step. In the study guide, we investigate what happened beforehand, what processes influenced the minds of human beings to an extent that enabled them to turn against their fellow humans.

The guide is designed to teach students about the power of choice and the consequences of our decisions. Students get to work with primary sources detailing individual experiences and choices. We help students understand that people are not born perpetrators. Nor are they born rescuers. Moral and ethical dilemmas faced by humans throughout their lives require repeated effort with every decision one makes. The testimonies show powerful examples of how, through individual choices, human beings were able to act against their fellow humans, help them, or look away. None of these behaviors applies to any human being once and for all, but is the result of a choice made every time anew.

²⁰ A previous definition of these categories can be found in the book “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews” by Father Patrick Desbois. The change is the result of Yahad – In Unum’s ongoing research. It is important to note that Yahad – In Unum identifies these members of the local populations as witnesses, rather than bystanders. The former allows for the complexity of their experiences. The witnesses who were requisitioned for parts of the crime are not considered collaborators as a group. Every case was different. According to Yahad – In Unum’s research, “requisitioning” was a system that functioned in Soviet village life and was used by the Nazis to help them carry out the murder. However, Yahad – In Unum understands collaboration as willing participation and emphasizes that those villagers who were requisitioned against their will cannot be called collaborators, even if they were offered the victims’ belongings for their work. Based on Yahad – In Unum’s findings, these individuals were not given a choice to opt out of their assignments. While their role is ethically challenging, their experiences varied and cannot be perceived collectively as collaboration. In some areas investigated by Yahad – In Unum’s researchers there were numerous cases of willing participation in the crime and these behaviors are clearly identified by Yahad – In Unum and by eyewitnesses as collaboration.

²¹ Desbois, *op. cit.*, pp. 74–75.

In the study guide, we are not telling teachers and their students what to do or giving ready answers. We offer topics that are challenging and thought-provoking. These are topics that generate more questions, discussions, dialogue. One of the biggest challenges for viewers and readers of the testimonies may be not to pass judgment. None of us, regardless of our ethical or moral values, knows how we would have behaved in any of the situations described by the witnesses. Wisława Szymborska, a Nobel laureate, wrote: “We know ourselves only insofar as we have been tested.” Therefore, we cannot ask our students how they would have acted in similar circumstances as nobody knows the answer to this question. The study guide gives students an opportunity to analyze and discuss what they hear and read, to conduct research, voice opinions, pose more questions, and draw lessons without assuming the role of a judge of situations they, fortunately, never experienced. Through working with eyewitness testimonies, students learn about the unique memories of individuals, rather than discuss anonymous groups or entities. Activities in the study guide are designed to teach students to avoid assigning collective responsibility. Instead, they will learn to contextualize situations described in the testimonies and analyze their complexity through the lens of individual experiences of every witness against the crucial backdrop of historical facts.

The study guide is designed as a platform for dialogue, for expressing one’s thoughts and hearing what others have to say. We want students to seek answers to questions and dilemmas and be aware that in some cases, there may not be one clear answer. We want them to be able to stand by their beliefs, but also be open to broadening their scope of knowledge and their perspectives. We encourage students to increase their understanding of the decision-making process and to build empathy needed for human rights awareness.

This study guide also gives educators and students specific information on where to seek help when faced with Holocaust denial or hate crime. We want them to know they are not alone and that there are organizations they can turn to for guidance.

Throughout the study guide, there is emphasis on the cognitive aspect of the learning process as we want students to analyze what attitudes and ideologies contribute to genocide, mass violence, and human rights violations, and to be able to make their own choices about how to apply these lessons to today. We would like students to see themselves as part of something bigger: of humanity, community, society, which we all are responsible for and where diversity is respected. Father Desbois said about the Holocaust by bullets: “It happened in 1941, 1942, 1943, and 1944, in the very heart of Europe, one of the oldest civilizations in the world that had been shaped by centuries of Christian religious thinking and by the Enlightenment – yet human beings had stopped recognizing their own fellows! Human beings had not seen that by killing others, they were killing themselves.”²² One of the lessons Yahad – In Unum teaches us is to be careful not to lose sight of the humanness in ourselves and in other people. We would like students to understand that each decision carries consequences and to see the connection between our individual acts as humans and the way we all build our shared heritage.

This exhibition and the study guide are designed to help educators teach some of the most important lessons we can draw from history and from human behavior. As we know from working with survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides, the crime of genocide hurts the next generations, their children and grandchildren. Trauma does not stop with those who experienced it directly. But we have also been repeatedly told by survivors that the only way to make a change is through education. Which would be impossible without dedicated educators. This change can start with you.

Urszula Szczepinska, M.A.
Curator of Education & Director of Research
The Florida Holocaust Museum

²² Ibid., p. 67.

HOLOCAUST IN THE DEATH CAMPS

September 1, 1939:
Nazi Germany invades Poland

January 20, 1942:
Wannsee Conference

1939

1941

1942

HOLOCAUST BY BULLETS

September 1, 1939:
Nazi Germany invades Poland

June 22, 1941: German
invasion of the Soviet Union

July 10, 1941: 300 Jews
shot in Pepeni, Moldova

August 27-28, 1941:
More than 23,000 Jews shot
in Kamenets-Podolsk, Ukraine

September 29-30, 1941:
More than 33,000 Jews shot
in the ravine Babi Yar, near Kiev

October 16, 1941:
Thousands of Jews
shot in Lubny

November 9, 1941:
Between 1,300 and 1,500
Jews shot in Mir, Belarus

Early July 1941: 4,000 Jews
shot in Lvov, Ukraine

September 4, 1941: Mass
shooting of 1,300 Jews
from Berdichev, Ukraine

October 28, 1941: Around
9,000 Jews killed in
Kaunas (Kovno), Lithuania

July 1941: 10,000 Jews shot in
the Ponary forest, near Vilnius,
Lithuania

October 8, 1941: Mass shooting
of at least 16,000 Jews from
the Vitebsk ghetto, Belarus

January 27, 1945:
Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau

1943

1944

1945

December 1941 – July 1944: Killing operations at Chelmno

January 1942 – January 1945: Killing operations at Auschwitz-Birkenau

March 1942 – Dec 1942:
Killing operations at Belzec

May 1942 – October 1943: Killing operations at Sobibor

July 1942 – August 1943:
Killing operations at Treblinka

October 1942 – November 1943:
Killing operations at Majdanek

September 1-9, 1942:
10,000 Jews killed in
Mineralnyie-Vody, Russia

September 23, 1943:
Mass shooting of thousands
of Jews from the Vilnius ghetto

January 27, 1945:
Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau

December 16-17,
1941: 1,500 Jews
shot in Yalta, Crimea

February 2, 1943:
German defeat
at Stalingrad

Spring 1944: Hundreds of
Jews killed in Kaunas,
Lithuania

November 27, 1941:
1,800 Jews killed
in Orsha, Belarus

October 29, 1942: Pinsk,
mass shooting of 20,000 Jews

November 3, 1943: Aktion Erntefest
("Harvest Festival"). Around 42,000
Jews killed in the Lublin region

July 15, 1942: Between
1,200 and 2,000 Jews shot
in Smolensk, Russia

June 1, 1943: Mass shooting
of Hundreds of Jews from
the Lvov ghetto

Some of the mass executions investigated by Yahad – In Unum

© Yahad – In Unum

How to Use This Study Guide

The exhibition “Holocaust by Bullets: Yahad – In Unum, 10 Years of Investigation” presents the results of hundreds of days of fieldwork that enabled Yahad – In Unum to collect evidence of the mass shootings in order to commemorate the murdered Jewish victims and reclaim their dignity. It also underscores the Holocaust by bullets as a precursor and model for mass crimes today. It consists of five modules representing the steps of the killing process: The Arrestation, The Road, The Undressing, The Shooting, and The Looting. Each of the five exhibition modules combines evidence collected by Yahad – In Unum and obtained from archival collections.

The study guide follows the narrative of the exhibition and its thematic modules. It is designed to assist educators teaching about the Holocaust by bullets with incorporating first-hand accounts of eyewitnesses and Yahad – In Unum’s research results into their curriculum in diverse ways. The content of the study guide is multidisciplinary and uses a variety of print and digital formats. Activities can be used before and after touring the exhibition. The guide may also be helpful to educators who are unable to view the exhibition but are teaching about this subject matter and are looking for credible resources. The study guide is built around meaningful conversations, research, and continuous processing of the newly learned content. There is a variety of activities to choose from and educators are encouraged to combine them in the way that is most suitable for their curricula. All activities help students be active participants in the learning process. In many activities, the guide gives students an opportunity to work as a group focused on cooperation, mutual support, and task sharing. But it also emphasizes independent thinking and the ability to build and express one’s opinions. The ethical nature of many of the situations described in the testimonies requires each of us to make our own decisions about what we have learned. Nobody can process those often challenging truths for us.

Activities are designed to help develop reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. The guide enhances critical thinking, as well as analytical, cognitive, and communication skills. It teaches students to work with complex text, video, and audio content. Students work with new vocabulary and lots of factual information. They have a unique opportunity to work with archival documents, photographs, and first-hand accounts.

The study guide is intended for educators teaching senior high school or post-secondary courses. Due to the graphic and complex nature of the history of the Holocaust by bullets and other genocides, educators are advised to choose activities that are best suited for their students’ sensitivity and maturity level. It is best to use the study guide with students who have already studied other units on the Holocaust or World War II history and are prepared for the complexity of the exhibition’s content. The guide covers the subject matter discussed in the exhibition – it does not focus in detail on prewar Jewish life, experiences in ghettos, camps, or on other Holocaust-related themes. It does refer teachers to helpful resources where they can find that information. It includes activities that help make connections between the Holocaust by bullets and other genocides and examine lessons that can be drawn for humanity today.

The study guide starts with an introductory section designed to help students get acquainted with the resources and with the subject matter. This part of the guide opens with “Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust” developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum which educators should find particularly helpful in establishing and maintaining the best teaching practices in their classrooms. Introductory activities help educators familiarize students with working with video testimonies and archival collections. They help students build connections between history lessons and their own lives and reflections. Through using introductory activities, educators and students will be able to analyze who the witnesses, victims, and perpetrators were and examine relationships between neighbors at the locations covered in the study guide and in the exhibition. They will explore the complexity of the Holocaust by bullets and a variety of challenging topics brought up in eyewitness testimonies. This section also allows students to investigate the multilayered impact of genocide on individual human beings.

The core of the guide is divided into five sections corresponding with the five parts of the exhibition: The Arrestation, The Road, The Undressing, The Shooting, and The Looting. Some of the concepts discussed in the five sections may overlap as each of the five steps of the crime was part of the killing process rather than an isolated occurrence. One of the overlapping themes is the public nature of the Holocaust by bullets – it was a crime committed in broad daylight at each of the five steps. We look at different ways this crime impacted individual members of the communities discussed in the testimonies.

Each section has five different activities to choose from, and the study guide has numerous primary and secondary source recommendations to support them. Educators are advised to choose activities and concepts from every section of the study guide, including the introductory one, in order to help students understand the scope of the crime of the Holocaust by bullets and its relevance to teaching about mass violence.

1. “The Arrestation” section focuses on the first step of the killing process, when victims were gathered at assembly points. Students analyze how and where victims were assembled, the ways they were deceived about what awaited them next, and how they responded to these circumstances. Responses of non-Jewish neighbors are closely examined. Students also have an opportunity to analyze archival photographs and study the historical context in which they were taken as well as the role and motivation of some of the photographers. Through the online map and database of execution sites created by Yahad – In Unum, they will be able to investigate case studies showing this and other stages of the Holocaust by bullets.

2. “The Road” section focuses on the stage of the killing process during which Jews were marched or taken to the execution sites in front of their neighbors. Activities are designed to help students examine the public nature of this step, responses of Jewish victims and of non-Jewish eyewitnesses, and the consequences of individual decisions. Students discuss examples of choiceless choices faced by the victims. We look into examples of rescue prior to, during, and after this stage of the crime, and the risks and obstacles faced by the rescued and the rescuers. Students also have an opportunity to explore if resistance was possible, what forms it took, and what examples of resistance one can find in the testimonies and archival photographs featured in the study guide and in the exhibition.

3. “The Undressing” section focuses on the themes of dehumanization, humiliation, and defiance. Victims of the Holocaust, including those murdered by bullets, were no longer perceived as human beings by those humans who humiliated, beat, abused, and murdered them. Activities in this section help examine the role of propaganda prior to genocide and the way it shapes perception of “the enemy,” “the other,” “a threat to us.” How do neighbors become enemies? How can a child start seeing his or her friend as a deadly enemy of the country they share? Students analyze the role of media in the context of the gradual dehumanization of victims that preceded the murder during the Holocaust and other genocides. They examine how modern media affects the way we perceive our fellow humans, and how media coverage impacts individual responses to genocide and human rights violations.

4. “The Shooting” section focuses on the crime of genocide in the context of the Holocaust by bullets and post-Holocaust genocides that used the method of direct murder, rather than industrialized death camps with gas chambers and crematoria. Yahad – In Unum sees the Holocaust by bullets as a model for mass violence repeated by perpetrators of other genocides. We analyze the definition of genocide, the totality of the crime, the concept of society built on exclusion, and a place of Holocaust victims within the universe of obligation of their fellow humans. How do we define our own universe of obligation? Students discuss what lessons have or have not been learned from the way the world responded to the Holocaust. How do we understand the role of the United Nations in preventing and responding to genocide? We examine ways to combat Holocaust and genocide denial. One of the most important aspects of this section is helping students understand that people involved in or affected by the crime of genocide are not anonymous. They are human beings with individual identities and responses. In the case of the Holocaust by bullets, the

murders occurred in the vicinity of the victims' homes. Eyewitnesses and victims were neighbors, friends, schoolmates. Local collaborators, including shooters, looters, and those who betrayed Jews in hiding, knew most of the victims. In this section, we examine the words of the victims, eyewitnesses, but also of the perpetrators. Students have an opportunity to conduct research about individual human beings who were murdered at the locations discussed in the exhibition.

5. “The Looting” section focuses on ethical and legal aspects of the crime of genocide. Students work with testimonies and archival photographs pertaining to the looting of Jewish belongings before, during, and after the executions. They examine motivations of the looters and the way such individual decisions impacted other members of a given community. We give examples of various responses to the looting. Students also examine levels of responsibility during the Holocaust and other genocides as well as attempts to bring perpetrators to justice. This section helps investigate the way professional, communal, and personal values were reversed during the Holocaust and other genocides and how neutral professionals can turn into perpetrators or supporters of ideologies built on hatred. Finally, students analyze how the crime of genocide, through all its steps from the planning through the implementation and aftermath, abuses and changes the landscape we all share and how it can be perceived by present-day communities.

The guide includes a **glossary** with hyperlinks to **the Holocaust Encyclopedia articles developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, suggested bibliography and webography, maps**, as well as **direct links to helpful online resources**. Each part of the guide has numerous activities, quotes, and resource recommendations to choose from.

Three core resources which are essential to understanding the content of this exhibition are used throughout the study guide:

1. Quotes and images from the exhibition;

2. Video testimonies of witnesses (some videos feature witnesses quoted in the exhibition but not all). These videos can be found on Yahad – In Unum’s website, in the online research album “Broad Daylight” at <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, or viewed directly in the guide via the application ONprint;

3. Quotes from “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews” by Father Patrick Desbois which needs to be treated as a textbook for this study guide and for the exhibition.

Below is a list of all video testimonies used in the study guide. While the interviews are in the original language of every witness, all videos have English subtitles, as seen in the provided screenshot.



Most videos chosen for the study guide are less than an hour long and we recommend that at least one testimony be shown in its entirety in the classroom. It is understandable that this may not always be possible due to time constraints but, in that case, it is essential that educators watch an entire video testimony and

decide which clips to show. To assist with this process, banners with some of the poignant comments made by the witnesses have been placed next to the links to respective videos (these comments are direct copies of the subtitles). It needs to be noted that the banners have just one or two sentence quotes and should not be used on their own, but rather in the context of the entire testimony, containing information that is essential for a deeper understanding of the quotes. Watching a full testimony will help educators contextualize events at the locations referenced in the interviews or in the exhibition. Many interviewees share detailed information about prewar life in their villages and towns; about social, national, political, and economic structures; positive and negative relationships among neighbors; about drastic changes imposed by the occupying forces and local collaborators; ghettoization; different steps of the killing process; and about postwar reality.

Each video testimony covers various themes. Therefore, in many cases the same testimony is recommended for different activities. Some of the quotes from Father Desbois' book are also used more than once for the same reason. Sometimes, there are multiple quotes from one witness in the same activity – they are divided by quotation marks in one banner. Please note that the quotes may refer to separate segments of a given testimony and watching an entire video is necessary to understand the context. We recommend using more than one video testimony as it broadens the scope of experiences discussed by eyewitnesses and enhances our understanding of the Holocaust by bullets. More testimonies are available in the “Broad Daylight” album and educators may choose to use a video that is not in the study guide. In the same online album, educators will also be able to find video testimonies pertaining to the genocide of European Roma.

An alphabetized list of eleven video testimonies from “Broad Daylight” used in the study guide (page numbers correspond with the numbers in the page navigation window of the album):

Testimony of Adolf S., b. 1928,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 81), Siemnice, Poland;

Testimony of Aniceta B., b. 1931,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 122), Žagarè, Lithuania;

Testimony of Anna B., b. 1926,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 24), Ambariv, Ukraine;

Testimony of Emilija B., b. 1930,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 131), Šeduva, Lithuania;

Testimony of Eugenija S., b. 1927,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 128), Šiauliai, Lithuania;

Testimony of Ievgueni S., b. 1926,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 17), Ingulets, Ukraine;

Testimony of Iossif P., b. 1927,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 22), Bibrka, Ukraine;

Testimony of survivor, Klara A., b. 1934,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 37), Shklov, Belarus;

Testimony of Maria J., b. 1932,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 113), Hincăuți, Moldova;

Testimony of Stanislav M., b. 1913,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 27), Grymailiv, Ukraine;

Testimony of Vasile B., b. 1921,
(<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 108), Scaieni, Moldova.

While the study guide and the exhibition focus on the voices of non-Jewish eyewitnesses to the murder of their Jewish neighbors, we encourage educators to incorporate the testimony of Klara A. from Belarus into their lessons. Klara provides a unique perspective as a Jewish survivor who, rescued at the last minute, mingled into the crowd of local non-Jews forced to observe the execution in which she would have perished. She also gives us insight into other steps of the Holocaust by bullets as seen through the lens of a victim of that crime. Klara’s testimony shows a broad range of responses of the local non-Jewish population towards their Jewish neighbors – from help, to indifference, to abuse and betrayal – and the long-lasting impact of these experiences on her life.

It is crucial that educators put the lessons in broader historical context. Eyewitnesses are not historians. They share with us their memories and their own perspectives. While preparing to teach any of the activities, in addition to the resources they are already using to teach this subject matter, educators are advised to use some of the resources from the suggested bibliography, webography, and from the list of online resources recommended at the end of the study guide.

We highly recommend that educators use an interactive online map and database of execution sites that can be found on Yahad – In Unum’s website at <http://www.yahadmap.org/#map/>. Launched in June 2013, the map indicates the mass execution sites of Jews identified by Yahad – In Unum throughout Eastern Europe. To date, there are 250 sites with information available online.²³ The goal of this project is to raise public awareness about the extent of the Holocaust by bullets by providing access to the information and testimonies collected by Yahad – In Unum’s researchers. Using this map, any researcher, student, educator, or relative of a victim, has open access to an outline of research results for a specific location.

The red dots on the map mark the sites that are available for viewing; the blue ones are in preparation and will soon be put online. One village can contain several executions sites.



The database is searchable by the name of a country or village, or by clicking on the red dot, which automatically directs viewers to the profile of the site. It is also searchable by keywords or the media wall with images from the locations researched by Yahad – In Unum. Each site profile includes a historical overview about a given location before and during the Holocaust, information about postwar memorials,

²³ Data current as of January 16, 2015. For most updated information visit www.yahadinunum.org.

excerpts from German, Romanian, Polish, or Soviet archives, as well as video and text excerpts from eyewitness testimonies. Prewar, wartime, and current photographs pertaining to locations of mass graves, ghettos, forced labor camps, former synagogues, are also provided. When available, there are prewar photographs of the victims. Yahad – In Unum partners with JewishGen (<http://www.jewishgen.org/>) to make the information available to a larger audience and to help commemorate individual victims of the Holocaust by bullets.

Last but definitely not least, staff from Yahad – In Unum and The Florida Holocaust Museum are ready to assist educators with any questions they may have. We welcome feedback from educators about the exhibition and how our resources are used in the classroom. We can be contacted at:

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The Florida Holocaust Museum

Urszula Szczepinska

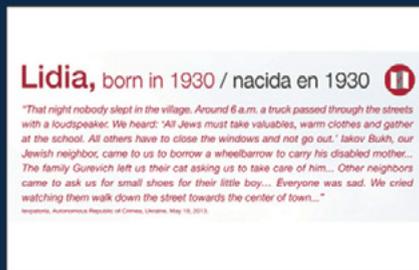
Curator of Education & Director of Research

727.820.0100, ext. 241

education@flholocaustmuseum.org



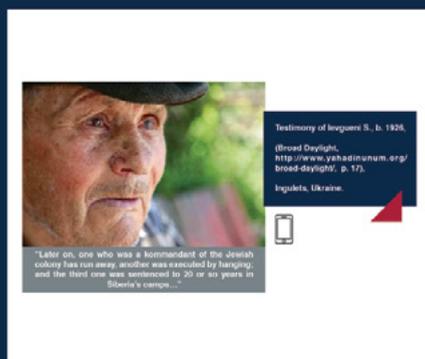
Icon Legend for the Main Resources Used in the Study Guide



Exhibition Quotes



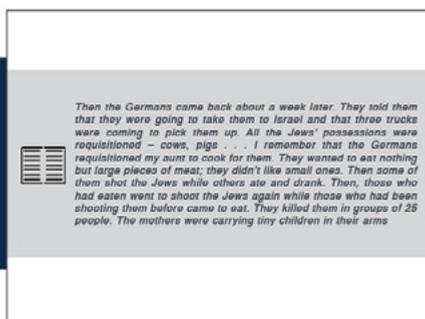
Quotes and images from the exhibition panels of “Holocaust by Bullets: Yahad – In Unum, 10 Years of Investigation.” (Photographs – current and archival – from the exhibition that are unaccompanied by quotes from the witnesses are not marked by the icon but are a very important teaching tool used throughout the study guide. Not all photographs used in the study guide are part of the exhibition.)



Video testimony



Video testimonies of witnesses from Yahad – In Unum’s online research album “Broad Daylight.” Every time this icon appears in the study guide, you will be able to watch the testimony on your smartphone or tablet via the application ONprint (downloadable from the App Store and Google Play). After installing the app, scan the photograph of a witness, press the shutter button on the screen, and the testimony will be viewable on your electronic device. The album can also be accessed via Yahad – In Unum’s website at <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>.



Quotes from “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews” by Father Patrick Desbois.



Yahad – In Unum’s online map and database of execution sites that can be found at <http://www.yahadmap.org/#map/>. Map entries contain excerpts from archival records and eyewitness testimony, historical and present-day photographs, a clip from a video testimony of one of the witnesses, and information about memorials.

Symbols for Activities:

- Main part of each activity. Some activities have several main parts with subsections to choose from.
- ▶ A subsection of the main part of the activity. Educators can choose subsections that best support their lesson.

Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust

Developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Define the term “Holocaust”

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived “racial inferiority”: Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and homosexuals.

Do not teach or imply that the Holocaust was inevitable

Just because a historical event took place, and it is documented in textbooks and on film, does not mean that it had to happen. This seemingly obvious concept is often overlooked by students and teachers alike. The Holocaust took place because individuals, groups, and nations made decisions to act or not to act. Focusing on those decisions leads to insights into history and human nature and can help your students to become better critical thinkers.

Avoid simple answers to complex questions

The history of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about human behavior and the context within which individual decisions are made. Be wary of simplification. Seek instead to convey the nuances of this history. Allow students to think about the many factors and events that contributed to the Holocaust and that often made decision making difficult and uncertain.

Strive for Precision of Language

Any study of the Holocaust touches upon nuances of human behavior. Because of the complexity of the history, there is a temptation to generalize and, thus, to distort the facts (e.g., “all concentration camps were killing centers” or “all Germans were collaborators”). Avoid this by helping your students clarify the information presented and encourage them to distinguish, for example, the differences between prejudice and discrimination, collaborators and bystanders, armed and spiritual resistance, direct and assumed orders, concentration camps and killing centers, and guilt and responsibility. Words that describe human behavior often have multiple meanings. Resistance, for example, usually refers to a physical act of armed revolt. During the Holocaust, it also encompassed partisan activity; the smuggling of messages, food, and weapons; sabotage; and actual military engagement. Resistance may also be thought of as willful disobedience, such as continuing to practice religious and cultural traditions in defiance of the rules or creating fine art, music, and poetry inside ghettos and concentration camps. For many, simply maintaining the will to live in the face of abject brutality was an act of spiritual resistance.

Try to avoid stereotypical descriptions. Though all Jews were targeted for destruction by the Nazis, the experiences of all Jews were not the same. Remind your students that, although members of a group may share common experiences and beliefs, generalizations about them without benefit of modifying or qualifying terms (e.g., “sometimes,” “usually,” “in many cases but not all”) tend to stereotype group behavior and distort historical reality. Thus, all Germans cannot be characterized as Nazis, nor should any nationality be reduced to a singular or one-dimensional description.

Strive for balance in establishing whose perspective informs your study of the Holocaust

Most students express empathy for victims of mass murder. However, it is not uncommon for students to assume that the victims may have done something to justify the actions against them and for students to thus place inappropriate blame on the victims themselves. One helpful technique for engaging students in a discussion of the Holocaust is to think of the participants as belonging to one of four categories: victims, perpetrators, rescuers, or bystanders. Examine the actions, motives, and decisions of each group. Portray all individuals, including victims and perpetrators, as human beings who are capable of moral judgment and independent decision making.

As with any topic, students should make careful distinctions about sources of information. Students should be encouraged to consider why a particular text was written, who wrote it, who the intended audience was, whether any biases were inherent in the information, whether any gaps occurred in discussion, whether omissions in certain passages were inadvertent or not, and how the information has been used to interpret various events. Because scholars often base their research on different bodies of information, varying interpretations of history can emerge. Consequently, all interpretations are subject to analytical evaluation. Strongly encourage your students to investigate carefully the origin and authorship of all material, particularly anything found on the Internet.

Avoid comparisons of pain

A study of the Holocaust should always highlight the different policies carried out by the Nazi regime toward various groups of people; however, these distinctions should not be presented as a basis for comparison of the level of suffering between those groups during the Holocaust. One cannot presume that the horror of an individual, family, or community destroyed by the Nazis was any greater than that experienced by victims of other genocides. Avoid generalizations that suggest exclusivity such as “The victims of the Holocaust suffered the most cruelty ever faced by a people in the history of humanity.”

Do not romanticize history

People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide useful, important, and compelling role models for students. But given that only a small fraction of non-Jews under Nazi occupation helped rescue Jews, an overemphasis on heroic actions in a unit on the Holocaust can result in an inaccurate and unbalanced account of the history. Similarly, in exposing students to the worst aspects of human nature as revealed in the history of the Holocaust, you run the risk of fostering cynicism in your students. Accuracy of fact, together with a balanced perspective on the history, must be a priority.

Contextualize the history

Events of the Holocaust, and particularly how individuals and organizations behaved at that time, should be placed in historical context. The Holocaust must be studied in the context of European history as a whole to give students a perspective on the precedents and circumstances that may have contributed to it.

Similarly, the Holocaust should be studied within its contemporaneous context so students can begin to comprehend the circumstances that encouraged or discouraged particular actions or events. For example, when thinking about resistance, consider when and where an act took place; the immediate consequences of one’s actions to self and family; the degree of control the Nazis had on a country or local population; the cultural attitudes of particular native populations toward different victim groups historically; and the availability and risk of potential hiding places.

Encourage your students not to categorize groups of people only on the basis of their experiences during the Holocaust; contextualization is critical so that victims are not perceived only as victims. By exposing students to some of the cultural contributions and achievements of 2,000 years of European Jewish life, for example, you help them to balance their perception of Jews as victims and to appreciate more fully the traumatic disruption in Jewish history caused by the Holocaust.

Translate statistics into people

In any study of the Holocaust, the sheer number of victims challenges easy comprehension. Show that individual people – grandparents, parents, and children – are behind the statistics and emphasize the diversity of personal experiences within the larger historical narrative. Precisely because they portray people in the fullness of their lives and not just as victims, first-person accounts and memoir literature add individual voices to a collective experience and help students make meaning out of the statistics.

Make responsible methodological choices

One of the primary concerns of educators teaching the history of the Holocaust is how to present horrific, historical images in a sensitive and appropriate manner. Graphic material should be used judiciously and only to the extent necessary to achieve the lesson objective. Try to select images and texts that do not exploit the students' emotional vulnerability or that might be construed as disrespectful to the victims themselves. Do not skip any of the suggested topics because the visual images are too graphic; instead, use other approaches to address the material.

In studying complex human behavior, many teachers rely upon simulation exercises meant to help students “experience” unfamiliar situations. Even when great care is taken to prepare a class for such an activity, simulating experiences from the Holocaust remains pedagogically unsound. The activity may engage students, but they often forget the purpose of the lesson and, even worse, they are left with the impression that they now know what it was like to suffer or even to participate during the Holocaust. It is best to draw upon numerous primary sources, provide survivor testimony, and refrain from simulation games that lead to a trivialization of the subject matter.

Furthermore, word scrambles, crossword puzzles, counting objects, model building, and other gimmicky exercises tend not to encourage critical analysis but lead instead to low-level types of thinking and, in the case of Holocaust curricula, trivialization of the history. If the effects of a particular activity, even when popular with you and your students, run counter to the rationale for studying the history, then that activity should not be used.

Introductory Activities

Key concepts: how to work with video testimonies and museum collections; lessons from eyewitness testimonies; who are the witnesses; who were the victims; who were the perpetrators; relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish neighbors; forced requisitions of witnesses; investigating mass killings; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; motivations of the executioners; concept of empathy; remembering individual victims; personal lens of individual memories; teaching history through artifacts, archival photographs, and documents; curating a photo exhibition; exploring local history; lessons for today.

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1. The Last Eyewitnesses and Their Memories

- Yahad – In Unum, The Florida Holocaust Museum, and other Holocaust organizations strive to ensure that first-hand accounts are captured on tape in order to serve as a teaching tool today and for the generations to come. As an introduction to working with numerous testimonies in this study guide and to help students understand the role of these particular eyewitness accounts, prepare a group discussion based on the analysis of the quotes from “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews” by Father Patrick Desbois and video testimonies from Yahad – In Unum’s online album “Broad Daylight” (choose which video testimony to show in its entirety). Help students understand that the witnesses are recounting experiences, often traumatic, from several decades ago. Over time, some details pertaining to these experiences have been lost, others have remained etched in the witnesses’ memory to this day. It is important that students understand that this is the last moment these elderly individuals are able to share their experiences with us. Without these testimonies, the invaluable information and the witnesses’ unique perspectives would have been lost.

Prior to the analysis, write the following tasks on the board:

1. Based on the text excerpts and a video testimony you have just read/watched, why do you think it is important to collect and publicize these testimonies?
2. List words or phrases used by the witnesses that may suggest that time is of the essence for videotaping testimonies. Pay attention to phrases like “These women are no longer alive” – when an interviewee is talking about other eyewitnesses who would have had their own perspectives, “It’s hard to remember now” – when a witness is trying to recall some specific information.
3. What is the average age of these witnesses? Pay attention to the year of birth or age listed by witnesses’ names. How old were they during the events? What does it mean if you think about the content of their testimonies and some of the perspectives they are providing?
4. How long ago did the events described in the testimony take place? What lessons can we draw?
5. What types of information do these witnesses provide? Why is it important that we can learn about the prewar life of their communities as well as the circumstances of the destruction during the Holocaust?

A.

Several months earlier we had searched this same place in the forest for two hours with two elderly villagers without finding anything. One of them had had trouble walking but had absolutely wanted to uncover the place. With his wooden cane, he had poked into the brambles, muttering, “It’s a long time since I was here. It has changed a lot . . . I think that it was here . . . no, over there . . .” They had the greatest difficulty in orienting themselves, but they were driven by a certainty: the Jews had been killed here. Since World War II, the forest had been known throughout the region as the Lis na jevrjakh, the “Forest over the Jews.”²⁴



²⁴ Desbois, *op. cit.*, p. 56. Father Patrick Desbois on the team’s work with one of the witnesses in Khvativ, Ukraine.

B.



P.D.: Did the Germans ask to be served food near the pit?

H.S.: Son, the Germans didn't ask! They took the animals from the Jews by force and they made Russian cooks prepare food for them. These women are no longer alive. My aunt was among them. She is dead now. They threatened them with a machine gun. They had made a fire and turned houses upside down, taking pots. They had vodka in their trucks.²⁵

Maria is talking about young people from her village who were forced to kill local Jews.



Testimony of Maria J., b. 1932,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 113),

Hincăuți, Moldova.



“These young people were named Tadarascu, Alisoa and the third, I don’t remember.”

Aniceta is trying to remember the names of some of her Jewish neighbors.

Testimony of Aniceta B., b. 1931,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 122),

Žagarė, Lithuania.



“It’s hard to remember now. There was a doctor, a dentist... Fridmanas was working as a dentist. Repšys was a doctor. Nokumienė was a kind shopkeeper. She lived with her daughter. I knew many names, but I forgot them.”

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 90–91. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Hanna S., 74 at the time of the interview in 2006, Romanivka, Ukraine.

- Paul A. Shapiro, Director of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, points out in his foreword to “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews” that the witnesses interviewed by Yahad – In Unum in most cases “have lived in isolated locations, with little access to outside sources of information that might have seeped into and altered their memories. [...] They were condemned to remember.”²⁶ Their isolation makes them unique – their memories have not been influenced by books or films about the Holocaust. They are unaware of Holocaust research, new findings, and numerous museum collections. Most of these individuals have lived at the same location, some in the same houses as during World War II, all their lives. While some details have been erased or fogged by the passage of time, most of their memories survived.

For many witnesses, the memories of the atrocities they witnessed are still part of their lives. Some of the witnesses were interviewed after World War II by the Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory, others were not. Even if they had provided their testimony before, their words had stayed in the archives. It was not until Yahad – In Unum started to interview witnesses in 2004 that they were able to share their first-hand accounts out loud, on tape, to be shared with anyone willing to hear their words. As one of the witnesses Hanna S. put it: “No one has ever asked me such questions in my life. Thank you for what you are doing and excuse me for not remembering everything. I have told you everything I remember. I have invented nothing.”²⁷

Watch with students one of the testimonies recommended below and look for any indication that the events the interviewees witnessed are relevant to them today or are still fresh in their memory.

Why is Maria associating the atrocities committed during World War II with her community’s current misfortunes?



Testimony of Maria J., b. 1932,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 113),

Hincăuți, Moldova.



“Where you live, does it rain during this season?
Well, in our region it doesn’t rain, God is angry at us
because of the evil we did to the Jews.”

²⁶ Ibid., p. xi.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 94.

During their interviews, the witnesses sometimes imitated the sound of the shots they had heard during the executions of their neighbors. What does it tell us about their memories of the events from over half a century ago?



Testimony of Anna B., b. 1926,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 24),

Ambariv, Ukraine.



“It was a burst of automatic fire. Again and again... They shot a line of people; their corpses fell down into the pit; then another line of people and on and on. I sheltered behind my dad.”

- ▶ Every witness interviewed by Yahad – In Unum saw part of the genocide and recounts the events as filtered through his or her own lens, shaped by individual memory and life experiences. Think about the limits of visual memory in our own lives, outside of genocidal circumstances, and discuss with students examples of situations known to them first hand. Then compare it to the concept of community memory – how do our experiences and memories contribute to the process of building local history?

Have students choose an event known to all of them and create an art project incorporating quotes and input from every member of the group and their own perspectives. Ask students to journal throughout this creative process and provide feedback upon its completion.

2. Witnesses’ Relationships with Their Jewish Neighbors

When talking about witness Olena from Khvativ (previously discussed in the introduction to the study guide), Father Patrick Desbois concluded: “With this interview I discovered that the witnesses knew the victims by name, but that they could do nothing.”²⁸ Yet, it seems that being able to finally share their memories has turned these individuals from onlookers or in the case of many requisitioned villagers, forced participants in the atrocities, into active participants in the crucial process of making the truth about the atrocities known. They all agreed to have their testimonies made available to the public, in spite of fears or pressures some of them may have felt. Their responses to what they had witnessed vary. These eyewitness testimonies provide unique insight into a world that was destroyed and allow us to examine everyday relationships between Jews and non-Jews before the Holocaust and individual responses to genocide.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

- Either watch one entire video testimony with students or choose clips from one or more testimonies to use in the classroom. Have students read the quotes below, analyze eyewitness testimony, and discuss the following questions:

1. What were the relationships of these particular witnesses with their Jewish neighbors?
2. What prewar and wartime behaviors and attitudes among neighbors do they describe? Were there cases of antisemitism, collaboration, or other negative attitudes? What were the positive aspects of communal interactions?
3. How do the witnesses remember the local Jewish communities?
4. Some witnesses describe residents of different national, religious, political, and cultural backgrounds living in the same area. How did people of different backgrounds get along on a daily basis?
5. How do witnesses remember the German invasion of the area where they lived? What happened to their Jewish neighbors? How soon did persecution begin?
6. How did local Jews respond to persecution?
7. How did the atrocities witnessed by the interviewees impact them at the time? How do they talk about it today?
8. Are any stereotypes about Jews brought up in the testimonies?
9. What can we learn from the interviews? How can we apply these lessons to our lives?
10. In the students' opinion, why did the witnesses agree, or in some cases volunteer, to speak now? What could have prevented them from sharing their accounts earlier?
Some of the concepts to discuss: a sense of guilt; fear; shame; a sense of irretrievable loss of friends and neighbors; a sense of injustice; moral indignation; sadness; unprocessed grief and trauma; wanting to act on behalf of those who no longer can; ethical dilemmas; political situation; meeting someone who wants to hear their story; a sense of the eleventh hour.

Lidia, born in 1930

"That night nobody slept in the village. Around 6 a.m. a truck passed through the streets with a loudspeaker. We heard: 'All Jews must take valuables, warm clothes and gather at the school. All others have to close the windows and not go out.' Iakov Bukh, our Jewish neighbor, came to us to borrow a wheelbarrow to carry his disabled mother... The family Gurevich left us their cat asking us to take care of him... Other neighbors came to ask us for small shoes for their little boy... Everyone was sad. We cried watching them walk down the street towards the center of town..."

Ievpatoria, Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine. May 19, 2013.





“We knew those people, we lived together, and we had friends among them...”

Testimony of Ievgueni S., b. 1926,
(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 17),
Ingulets, Ukraine.



Testimony of Stanislav M., b. 1913,
(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 27),
Grymailiv, Ukraine.



“I knew them; we went to school together.”

“When I got to the site, I saw the corpses all along
the bank. I was so shocked that I could not even eat
for three days.”

Testimony of Iossif P., b. 1927,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 22),

Bibrka, Ukraine.



“We carried the stuff there as well – we took the wardrobes. In these wardrobes there was a lot of Russian money in tchervonets. We were just kids, so we threw the bills in the air. Stupid kids, we should have taken the money. Because afterwards the Soviets took over, and we could have paid with those bills. The older people were more sensible, they picked it all up.”

A.



Marfa had lived in Roter Poyer, one of the 15 Jewish villages of the district. As a child, she saw the Jews being brought to the village from other villages, in carts. They had been told to bring food for two or three days because they were going to Palestine. Pits had been dug and guards had been requisitioned in the villages. She remembered that she had said goodbye to them. Marfa and her husband remembered all their childhood friends; she counted them out on her fingers: Fridman, Udliar . . . She counted and recounted the number of Jewish friends whom she had seen leaving, giving us their first and last names.²⁹

B.



P.D.: Do you remember the name of this shopkeeper?

E.N.: Havner. I don't remember his first name. When I was little, I went to light the fire at their house on Saturdays. It was a holiday for them. They gave us matches because they weren't allowed to use them and we lit the fire to bake a large loaf of bread.

P.D.: Did Mr. Havner have children?

E.N.: Yes, he had a son and a daughter, Gousia. That was why my father called me Gousia.³⁰

²⁹ Ibid., p. 134. Father Patrick Desbois about witnesses Marfa and Ivan L., (Marfa b. 1931, Ivan b. 1929), Novozlatopol, Ukraine.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 189. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Eugenia N., b. 1934, Busk, Ukraine.

3. Forced Requisitions of Witnesses

- The perpetrators requisitioned local non-Jews, mostly teens and young adults, to assist with the different steps of the killing process. They were assigned to dig and/or cover up execution pits, collect belongings of the victims, transport victims to the execution sites, and other tasks. According to Yahad – In Unum’s findings, these individuals were not given a choice to opt out. Their responses need to be analyzed individually. They did not always know what the purpose of their assigned task was before the victims were brought to the killing site. While they were sometimes offered compensation for their work (which some took, some did not), usually in the form of some of the victims’ belongings, the villagers interviewed by research teams were not willing participants in any of the five steps of the Holocaust by bullets and did not perceive requisitioning as an opportunity. In some cases, the line between being requisitioned and guilty was thin. Yet, these individuals were not the villagers who looted their neighbors’ homes or willingly shot their fellow villagers in exchange for their belongings. The interviewees did not volunteer for the tasks the perpetrators ordered them to carry out and Yahad – In Unum does not view those villagers who acted against their will as collaborators (see footnote #20). Cases of collaboration are identified and discussed in the testimonies collected by Yahad – In Unum and in the research findings.

Have students read the quotes about the requisitioned villagers in the excerpts from the exhibition and from “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews” (points A and B). Together, discuss requisitions of villagers and the value their testimonies have for the narrative of the Holocaust. At the end of the discussion, read out loud Father Desbois’ observations from point C and D and let the students express their responses to his words in writing.

Viktor, born in 1931
"I saw them get off the wagons one by one. They were forced to undress in the wagons and they were taken one by one to the pit."
Bronnaya Gora, Brest region, Belarus. April 8, 2009.

Viktor, born in 1928
"My father was requisitioned with his shovel to dig the pit."
Grodzianka, Mogilev region, Belarus. July 21, 2013.

Ivan, born in 1921
"I was forced to follow the column of Jews. Once we arrived at the spot, we received shovels."
Krichev, Mogilev region, Belarus. June 17, 2013.

Maria, born in 1922
"The pit was dug by local people, at the edge of the forest. People who had dug it saw the entire shooting of the Jews."
Lanchyn, Ivano-Frankivsk region, Ukraine. September 8, 2013.

A.



“My father was requisitioned.” I was stunned. By this point I had known Adolf for a long time and it was the first time he had told me that his father had played a role in this massacre. “A German came in with a machine gun and told us that we had to come with the cart to transport bodies. There were already bodies all over our garden. We made several trips to bring them all to the fire. We saw everything. Everyone thought my father would be killed at the end, my mother cried, but the Germans let us return home.” Some witnesses needed a lot of time to tell us everything they knew. Often they would start by describing the scene between assassinated and assassins without mentioning themselves, before revealing their role as a witness. Exhausted, my head sank on my shoulders. As I got back into the van with Adolf I asked him: “Did you never come back?” He shook his head and said: “No, for me, this is hell.”³¹

B.



When we went back to see Ivan, he told us that his brother had been requisitioned by force to guard the Jews during the night, and that other peasants had been recruited in the morning to bang saucepans to muffle the cries of the Jews. One of the villagers had been requisitioned to play the Ukrainian drum every morning. One day, the drummer had not been able to take it any longer. Seeing a Feldgendarme beating Jewish children, he had thrown himself at him. The German had shot him and thrown his body in the pit along with the Jews from the 15 villages. In this case, we were able to recreate an entire assassination scene.³²

C.



The point of view of the outsider, of the “requisitioned” that I met, took in both the assassinated and the assassins in a single gaze. [...] The point of view of the outsider allows us to understand the Shoah by integrating both victim and oppressor. It is an untenable point of view. It is difficult to hear that a German gunman asked for cold meat and vodka because he was hungry and thirsty, and that he placed his pistols on the table while naked Jews were to be murdered less than 10 meters away from him. It is difficult to hear about the everyday life of the assassins of the Reich while their victims, without barbed wire or camp, waited for death, weeping, with all their family. Yet that was the Shoah. Human beings who killed other human beings, believing they were superior beings killing sub-humans.³³

D.



My thoughts went to the young people requisitioned by the Nazis to dig a pit or fill it, and to all the little people I met during my research – all those people who do not exist anywhere, neither in official reports nor in German or Soviet archives. At the very best, they are mentioned with use of the passive form: “The bodies were evacuated,” “The pits were dug,” “The clothes were taken.” But by whom? They were the invisible outsiders. Neither victims of the crime nor guilty of it, just present.³⁴

³¹ Ibid., p. 114. Father Patrick Desbois about witness Adolf W., b. 1930, Lisinitchi, Lviv, Ukraine.

³² Ibid., p. 136. Father Patrick Desbois about witness Ivan L., b. 1929, Novozlatopol, Ukraine.

³³ Ibid., p. 95.

³⁴ Ibid., p.102.

- With students, watch the testimonies of Ievgueni S. and Anna B. who represent two separate categories of witnesses identified by Yahad – In Unum (these categories are explained in the introduction to the study guide). Ievgueni was requisitioned for part of the crime; Anna was forced to watch an execution. We are using these two testimonies together to provide a broader context of the circumstances that local non-Jews were confronted with in reference to the Holocaust by bullets. It is best to watch both testimonies in their entirety; if it is impossible due to time constraints, the class can watch the full testimony of Ievgueni with clips from Anna’s interview. It is important that you as an educator see full interviews prior to the lesson and choose the clips from the second testimony for your students.

Discussion points:

1. What type of relationships did these witnesses have with their Jewish neighbors?
2. What type of task was Ievgueni requisitioned for?
3. What effect did it have on him?
4. How did Anna end up being a witness to the massacre? What was her response then and now?
5. How did Anna’s father respond to what they had seen?
6. Discuss the process of dehumanization of Jewish victims.
7. Who were the perpetrators?
8. How was the local population in the German-occupied territories perceived within Nazi ideology? Why did the perpetrators expose local non-Jews, including children, to these crimes?
9. In what ways does Yahad – In Unum’s research and its collection of eyewitness testimonies contribute to our understanding and to the discussions of complicity and collaboration?



“We were told to approach the carts to a pile of clothes, to load it into carts and to take to the village.”

Testimony of Ievgueni S., b. 1926,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 17),

Ingulets, Ukraine.



Testimony of Anna B., b. 1926,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 24),

Ambariv, Ukraine.



“I kept asking why, for what reason those people had been killed, but he remained silent.”



4. A Case Study of Reserve Police Battalion 101

- With students, analyze the experiences of Reserve Police Battalion 101 from Christopher Browning’s book “Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland.” Who were the perpetrators of the crimes committed by this battalion in German-occupied Poland? At the end of the study guide you will find resource recommendations that can help prepare this analysis.

Discussion points:

1. Who were the members of Reserve Police Battalion 101? What do we know about their lives before World War II?
2. What training did they receive prior to the shooting operations they were involved in?
3. What were Christopher Browning’s observations about the policemen, ordinary men, and the choices they made in Eastern Europe? What factors played a role in making those choices?
4. Pay attention to the policemen’s justifications of their own actions as seen in pretrial interrogations analyzed by Christopher Browning. What kinds of motivation may have been behind their choices?
5. Christopher Browning concludes that, in spite of having been given a choice, only a small group of the battalion members decided not to take part in the shootings. Discuss with students why they think it was the case.
6. According to Christopher Browning’s findings, among those policemen who opted out of the shootings, very few did so because they did not want to kill innocent human beings. Most of those who did not want to carry out the executions opted out because of the gruesome physical aspect of the close-range shootings. Browning notes that while the policemen did not mention it in their postwar testimonies, the revulsion may have originated from the basic humane instincts that Nazi ideology tried to squelch, but nonetheless these men did not see a conflict between what they may have felt and what they were encouraged to believe about their fellow humans.³⁵

“Pervasive racism and the resulting exclusion of the Jewish victims from any common ground with the perpetrators made it all the easier for the majority of the policemen to conform to the norms of their immediate community (the battalion) and their society at large (Nazi Germany).”³⁵ How do students understand these policemen’s behavior and responses? In what ways can ideology affect a sense of empathy and people’s perceptions of their fellow humans?

7. How does Christopher Browning analyze the experiences of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in the context of Philip Zimbardo’s and Stanley Milgram’s experiments?

5. Remembering Individual Victims

Yahad – In Unum, The Florida Holocaust Museum, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Yad Vashem, and other major Holocaust organizations emphasize the importance of remembering individual victims in their work. Through their programs and research, these organizations focus on retrieving individual identities of those who were murdered during the Holocaust, in an effort to ensure they are remembered as individual human beings, rather than as anonymous victims.

- Read the quotes below and design a project through which students can commemorate individual victims of the Holocaust, focusing on who the victims were and how these stories impacted students’ lives (check the USHMM’s Guidelines for Teaching about the Holocaust at the beginning of the study guide for recommendations of responsible methodological choices). The goal of the project is to encourage students to research authentic stories about individual human beings.

Students are encouraged to use images from the exhibition and archival resources available online (educate students about copyright and permission requirements), clips of video testimonies, images of artifacts. Links to online resources and website recommendations can be found at the end of the study guide.



When researching stories of the individuals they would like to commemorate, students can visit Yahad – In Unum’s online map and seek additional information about a relevant site at <http://www.yahadmap.org/>. Help students locate these places on the map to see that these locations were in the heart of Europe and covered entire areas in different countries.

³⁵ See Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), p. 74.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

- ▶ Throughout your course on the history of the Holocaust, including the Holocaust by bullets, help students curate an exhibition made of photographs, and quotes from text excerpts as well as video testimonies they have viewed and examined. Ask students to focus on the choices, decisions, and experiences of individual human beings, instead of looking at anonymous categories of victims, perpetrators, witnesses, rescuers. The exhibition should be a platform for expressing one’s reflections about what had been studied and for building connections with your students’ lives today. Teach students how to credit the sources and seek permission from copyright owners, where to look for reliable information (sample website recommendations and links to online resources can be found at the end of the study guide). Share photographs of your completed exhibition with Yahad – In Unum and The Florida Holocaust Museum.

Helpful links to information about artifacts donated by Yahad – In Unum to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

<http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn36907>

<http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn42865>

<http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn43136>

Links to the samples of some of the major video testimony collections available online – collections of Yahad – In Unum, The Florida Holocaust Museum, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USC Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem:

<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>

<https://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/explore/testimonies/>

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_list.php?MediaType=oh

<http://sfi.usc.edu/clipviewer>

<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/multimedia.asp#!prettyPhoto>

A.



In the far distance they caught sight of two German military trucks, filled with Jewish women, standing up. The trucks approached until they passed them. In one of the trucks she suddenly recognized a friend of her mother’s who began shouting “Olena, Olena, save me!” She paused for breath. “The more she shouted, the more I hid myself in the wheat. I was young, and I was afraid that the Germans would kill us like they were killing the Jews. That woman shouted until they took her to the pit. Right until the last moment I heard her shouting: “Olena, Olena, save me!” These words punctuated her tale again and again. It was the first time a witness had communicated to us the last words of a Jewish person executed by the Nazis.³⁷

³⁷ Desbois, *op. cit.*, p. 58. Father Patrick Desbois about a witness in Khvativ, Ukraine.

B.



It seemed impossible to imagine that this bucolic landscape was the backdrop to such a massacre. She was talking about her experiences for the first time since 1943. Several times she mentioned a memory of her childhood friend, a young Jew from the ghetto. He was taken by the police to this field with all his family. He knew that Anna was watching the execution, hidden with her friends in a hay barn. This barn, very close by, behind the Jewish cemetery, was made of uneven planks through which she could watch. Anna was 14. He was pushed far from the others who were waiting, standing in front of the pit with his family, stripped of all their clothes. Just before the shooting, he had turned toward Anna and made her a little hand gesture as if to say goodbye, and then shouted “Farewell life!” Then the assassins started shooting. My heart tightened. For more than 60 years, Anna had kept inside herself the last words of her childhood friend whose life was stolen from him.³⁸

Artifacts found by Yahad – In Unum’s teams of researchers on execution sites

1



2



3



4



³⁸ Ibid., p. 165. Father Patrick Desbois about a witness in Busk, Ukraine.



5



6



7

1. Mykolaiv region, Ukraine
2. Nova Zorya, region of Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine
3. Bronnaya Gora, region of Brest, Belarus
4. Kolosivka, region of Mykolaiv, Ukraine
5. Motol, region of Brest, Belarus
6. Raygorod, region of Vinnytsia, Ukraine
7. Putilovka, region of Dnipropetrovsk, Ukraine



The day of the execution of Jews in a village, the men of the Einsatzgruppen arrive with the local police into the homes of every Jewish person. They round up each family, showing them outside with the ends of their rifles. They only let them take a few things, and they do not tell them where they are being taken. In this way, they gather the entire Jewish population into a building, a yard, or on the town square. The Jews are kept at the place of gathering for a few hours while everyone is being regrouped. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: public nature of the Holocaust by bullets; deception and euphemisms as tools of genocide during the Holocaust and other genocides; deception of Holocaust victims and their responses; responses and perspectives of non-Jewish neighbors; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; totality of the Holocaust by bullets; how to work with archival photographs and records; photographers during the Holocaust; five steps of the Holocaust by bullets as reflected in eyewitness testimony; investigating case studies of the Holocaust by bullets.

Activities in this section:		Page
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8.	Deception and Euphemisms as Tools of Genocide	54
9.	Victims' Responses to Deception	57
10.	Perspectives in Archival Photographs	60

German soldiers prepare for a raid in the Kovno ghetto,
as some Jewish residents look on, 1941–1943.

Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of George Kadish/Zvi Kadushin



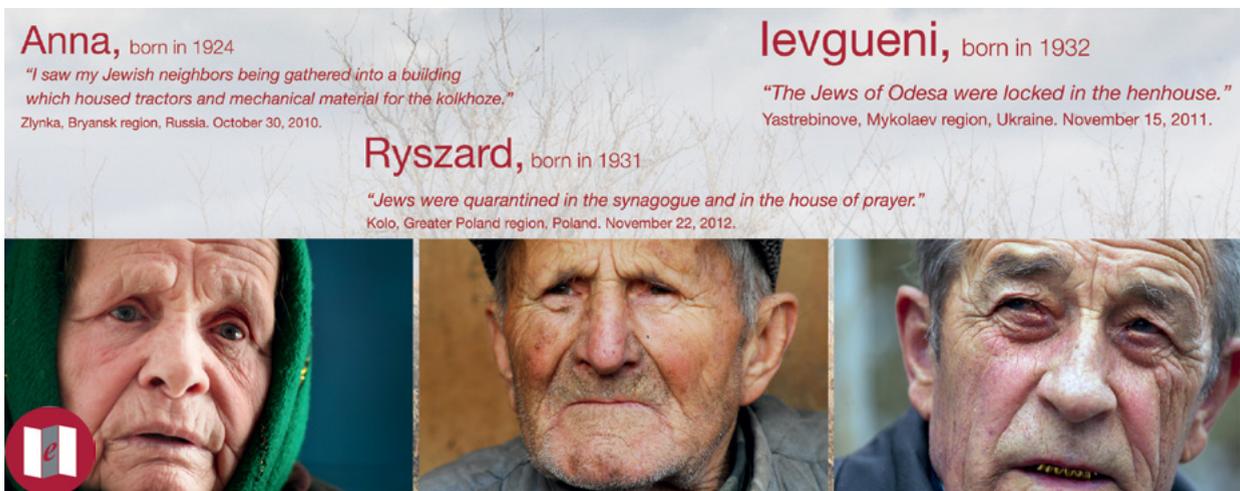
The
Arrestation

6. Public Nature of the Crime

- Ask students to look at the words of Alexander, Vladimir, Anna, Ryszard, Ievgueni, Galina, and Anatoli from “The Arrestation” section of the exhibition and discuss the following questions:

1. What do these quotes tell us about the nature of the crime?
2. Were the Jews kept in a secret place or in locations known to everybody?
3. How could this step of the crime impact the community? What could be the perpetrators’ motives for carrying it out in public?
4. What does each of these witnesses add to our understanding of the crime?

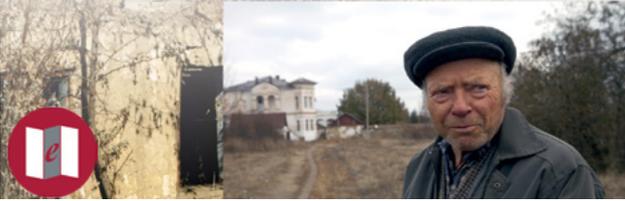
Following the discussion, have students investigate case studies of Dovgivka in Ukraine and Zbylitywska Góra in Poland.



Anatoli, born in 1930

"It was already cold outside and every night the Jews died of cold in the school building."

Mostove, Mykolaev region, Ukraine. November 12, 2011.



Galina, born in 1930

"The Germans gathered all the Jews in front of the building of the rural council to take them elsewhere. The starost himself went into houses to tell the Jews to gather there."

Izloutchysté, Dnipropetrovsk region, Ukraine. May 26, 2010.



Case Studies of Dovgivka in Ukraine and Zbylitowska Góra in Poland

Through the links provided below, with students, visit Yahad – In Unum's online map and database of execution sites and research events pertaining to the Holocaust by bullets in Dovgivka in Ukraine and Zbylitowska Góra in Poland. The map entries have quotes from witnesses, archival records, historical data, brief clips of video testimony, and other useful information. Based on the data students will be able to collect from these two entries, and the short bios provided by Yahad – In Unum, discuss the following questions:

1. Who are the two witnesses interviewed by Yahad – In Unum?
2. How old were they during the events described in their testimonies?
3. Based on eyewitness testimony, can we tell what the relationships between Jewish and non-Jewish residents were like?
4. What was the nature of the Holocaust by bullets? Why do we say that it was a crime committed in broad daylight?
5. The Holocaust by bullets had 5 steps: The Arrestation, The Road, The Undressing, The Shooting, The Looting. Which of the steps can be identified in these map entries and clips from video testimonies accompanying them?
6. What can we learn from the witnesses about the first step of the Holocaust by bullets, i.e., arrestation? Was violence used? Who was involved in this step?
7. What role did the local administration play?
8. Who were the perpetrators?
9. How did the non-Jewish neighbors respond to the atrocities?
10. Were local non-Jews requisitioned for any part of the killing process? If so, what jobs were they assigned?
11. Did any looting of Jewish belongings occur? If so, who took part in it? Are any motivations mentioned by the witnesses?

12. What words or situations imply the totality of genocide committed against Jews?
13. Were there any attempts to help victims?
14. Were there any escapes or other forms of resistance?

1. Dovgivka – link to the map:

<http://www.yahadmap.org/#village/dovgivka-former-jewish-colony-n-8-dnipropetrovsk-ukraine.60>

Witness #974U: Petro N. was born in 1930 in Kirovograd, Dnipropetrovsk region. In 1937, his family settled in Jewish Colony #8 where his parents began to work in the Jewish *kolkhoze*.³⁹ During the war, a few months after the arrival of the Germans, local police with *starosta* ⁴⁰ entered Jewish houses, made all the Jews go out and put them, family by family, in the club building. They were imprisoned there for several days. Petro and other residents brought them food. One day, the police requisitioned some villagers with carts and ordered them to come to the club. The Jews were taken out of the club building, put on the carts and taken to the execution site.



Petro N. is showing Yahad – In Unum’s research team how the Jews were assembled.
Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum

³⁹ A *kolkhoz* was an agricultural co-operative in the Soviet Union that replaced the *artels*, the associations of craftsmen and other workers. The word is a contraction of the Russian for “collective economy.” *The kolkhozes* were established by Joseph Stalin after the abolition of private agricultural estates in 1928 and their conversion to collectives. *The kolkhozes* started being privatized in 1992, in a process that was completed after the fall of the Soviet Union. *Ibid.*, p. 221.

⁴⁰ On the entire territory of the Russian Empire until the Soviet Union, the head of various administrative units (village community, city or county administration), depending on the region. One can say this is the equivalent of a mayor. Under the Soviets, the *starosta* system was disbanded. During the occupation, the German authorities reimplemmented the *starosta* system. The functions of the *starosta* were limited and they were under the authority of the German administration. Their involvement in the executions varied from case to case, but sometimes they were active, willing participants. (definition by Yahad – In Unum)

2. Zbylitowska Góra – link to the map:

<http://www.yahadmap.org/#village/zbylitowska-gora-little-poland-poland.806>

Witness #222P: Jan S. was born in 1922 in Miłowka, a small village located 17 km from Tarnów, Poland. His parents were farmers. He was 17 years old when Germany invaded Poland in 1939. In 1942, at the age of 20, Jan was requisitioned to become a member of the *Baudienst* [labor battalion] in Tarnów. During this period of forced labor, he witnessed the arrest and murder of Jews from Tarnów at Zbylitowska Góra. One day in July 1942, at 11 a.m., the German inspector gathered the *Baudienst* together and told them to follow his orders. As Jan S. recalls: “Following the order of the SS, we had to help them and execute all the orders they gave us. Otherwise we would suffer the same fate as the Jews.” Then, the *Baudienst* were taken to the Krakowska market place. It was filled with Jews. The Germans showed the *Baudienst* what kind of bags they had to take away from the Jews. Those who refused were beaten. An hour later, the Jews were arranged in a column and taken away.

Information about both witnesses provided by Yahad – In Unum

7. Language of Deception

■ Analyze with students the announcement from “The Arrestation” section of the exhibition:

1. What is the language of this announcement? Apart from the German-language version, is it written in the local language/s understandable to everyone? What is the reason for that?
2. What words or phrases could instill fear and intimidate residents, Jewish and non-Jewish?
3. What words or phrases could mislead Jews into believing this announcement meant relocation rather than an impending execution?
4. Did the Jewish residents have any options? E.g., could they escape? What were the obstacles? Explain your point of view.
5. Does any of the wording directed to non-Jews encourage collaboration? What effect could it have on Jews and non-Jews reading the announcement?

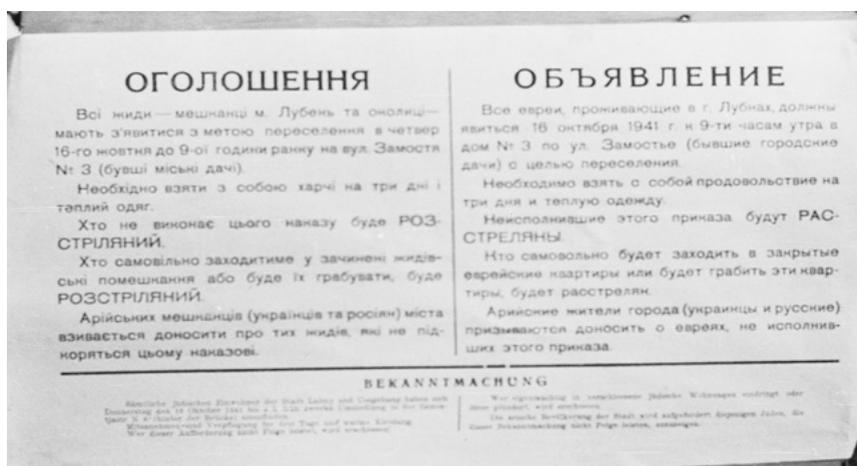


Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research

An announcement, Ukraine, October 16, 1941.

“All Jews residing in the city of Lubny must report on October 16, 1941 at 9 o’clock in the morning to 3 Zamostie Street (formerly ‘Gorodskye Dachi’) for relocation.

It is essential to take food for three days and warm clothing.

Those who do not comply with this order will be SHOT.

Whoever trespasses into the closed Jewish apartments or engages in the looting of these apartments will be shot.

Aryan residents (Russians and Ukrainians) are called to denounce Jews who do not comply with this order.”

(translation: Yahad – In Unum & The Florida Holocaust Museum)

8. Deception and Euphemisms as Tools of Genocide

Based on their previous studies, your students may be familiar with euphemisms used by the Nazis, such as “resettlement in the East” that really meant deportations to the death camps in German-occupied Poland, or with other methods of deception, e.g., disguising gas chambers as shower rooms. Announcements ordering Jews to assemble did not reveal their destination. Victims were deceived – they were told they would be going to a place where they would be able to work, and advised to take some of their belongings with them, especially valuables.

In the case of the mass murder committed by the *Einsatzgruppen*, other units and local helpers, Jews were not transported to the death camps. They were murdered in the vicinity of their villages or towns, close to their homes. They were also deceived about what awaited them.

- Ask students to familiarize themselves with the quotes from the exhibition and from “The Holocaust by Bullets: A Priest’s Journey to Uncover the Truth Behind the Murder of 1.5 Million Jews” and discuss the following points:

1. In what ways were the victims deceived by the perpetrators? Can students identify the language of deception (look for phrases like “Notices announced that the Jews had to go to the prison with enough food for three days because they were being taken to Palestine.”)
2. Why did the perpetrators deceive Jews about the real purpose behind the announcements? (Some concepts to consider: to prevent resistance, to murder as many people as possible.)
3. After discussing the quotes, have students look at the image of the announcement ordering Jews to assemble (previously used in activity #7) and analyze an archival photograph showing a column of Jewish residents marching to the assembly point from where they would be led to their deaths. These photographs are from the same location.

Have students write a short analysis of these images. Use some of the questions from activity #7 regarding the first image. What are the details of the photograph showing a column of people? Do the students think the people in the photograph knew where they were going? Ask students to elaborate.

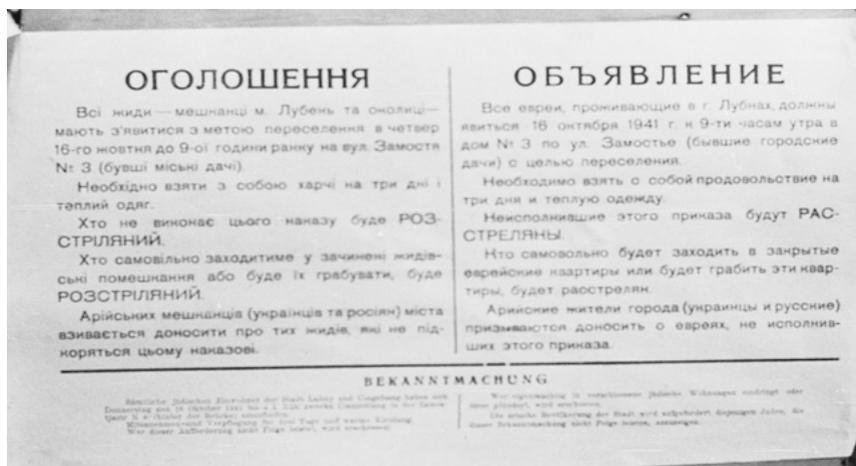


Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research

An announcement, Ukraine, October 16, 1941.

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Aryan residents (Russians and Ukrainians) are called to denounce Jews who do not comply with this order.”

(translation: Yahad – In Unum & The Florida Holocaust Museum)



Jews with their belongings on their way to the assembly point. Lubny, Ukraine, 1941

Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research



Leonid, born in 1930

“In the beginning, it was announced that all Jews would be brought to a ghetto in Poland. The first Jews were brought in comfortable buses to keep the illusion of deportation until the end. When the buses turned towards the forest, they explained that it was a stop to rest a bit before the long road... And then they were taken to the pit.”

Radomyshl, Zhytomyr region, Ukraine. June 8, 2013.



Afanassia, born in 1916

“They had told the Jews that they were being moved to another camp. Then, suddenly, the carts turned towards the woods. Four motorcyclists followed. These unfortunate people understood that something was going to happen to them. They began to scream.”

Pogorila, Vinnystia Region, Ukraine. December 22, 2010.



Oleksii, born in 1934

“A few days after the arrival of the Germans, the Jews were told to take their valuables and gather in the club with their goods. We saw them going there. They had no choice, Tatar police followed them. They were told that they would be brought to Palestine but... The club was a large building and the Jews were gathered in the biggest room. They were beat up there, we could hear their cries...”

Saki, Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Ukraine. May 16, 2013.



A

P.D.: What happened to the Jews?

T.L.: I don't know. Notices announced that the Jews had to go to the prison with enough food for three days because they were being taken to Palestine. Before that, they had to wear a star.



P.D.: Did they go?

T.L.: Yes, they all went. They received the order in the morning, I don't remember what time, and they went; trucks took them. We were forbidden from going near the prison.⁴¹

⁴¹ Desbois, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–209. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Tamara L., b. 1927, Feodosia, Ukraine.

B.

 ... Or that Ukrainian who saw her Jewish friends being taken away in a cart. Seeing her crying, one of them got down, took her in her arms and said: "Don't cry, we are going to Palestine." She told me: "I knew very well they weren't going to Palestine because very early that morning I had gone to look after my cows and I saw the pit that had been dug at the edge of the village."⁴²

C.

P.D.: Were the people in the column adults or children?

 *N.O.: There were people of every age – children, old people. They had been told to gather because they were going to be taken to work somewhere and that they should take some food and their children because there would be nurseries in which they would be looked after . . . The Jews had a sort of red armband. Then they were told to undress and they were thrown into the pits. At the end of the day I went to look; the earth was moving.*

P.D.: Were the gunmen already in place before the column arrived?

N.O.: Yes. They were already there with submachine guns and machine guns.⁴³

- Have students research examples of deception during other genocides, e.g., in Srebrenica in Bosnia and Herzegovina where Serb officers used UN equipment and made promises of security to Bosniak men in order to encourage them to surrender. These acts of deception were followed by executions.

9. Victims' Responses to Deception

- Analyze with students the ways Jewish residents responded to the roundups as described in the quotes and video testimonies recommended for this activity. The announcements ordering Jews to assemble did not reveal the real purpose, i.e., an impending execution. While there were attempts to defend themselves or to escape, most residents followed the order to assemble. Have a group discussion about possible reasons for that, e.g., isolation; no information from the outside; immediacy of the *Aktion*; having nowhere to go; hope as the last resort; a sense of responsibility for one's family; fear of retribution in case of any protest; no way of knowing what would come next.

Following the discussion, divide students into two study groups. In addition to the quotes and video testimonies, advise students to use online resources recommended at the end of the study guide. Members of both groups will research the following concepts (you can assign specific tasks within each group):

1. risk factors and obstacles faced by Jews trying to seek help from the local population, e.g., occupying forces; death penalty for unauthorized leaving of the ghetto; blackmailers among local non-Jews; antisemites among partisans and other local residents; collaborators; death penalty for helping Jews; collective responsibility imposed on rescuers and their families by the occupying forces.

⁴² Ibid., p. 122. Father Patrick Desbois about a witness.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 76. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Nikolai O., 11 years old at the time of the events described in the interview, Konstantynivka, Ukraine.

2. challenges for survival in hiding or while passing as an “Aryan,” e.g., language; gender (circumcision); unfamiliarity with non-Jewish religious practices; lack of anonymity among neighbors; hunger; age.
3. forms of resistance mentioned by eyewitnesses (you can combine this activity with activity #15 focusing specifically on resistance during the Holocaust)

Each group should have a reporter who will summarize Eugenija’s or Adolf’s testimony, share information retrieved from text excerpts, and provide research results. Groups should compare feedback and have a panel discussion about the findings.

Lidia, born in 1927



“The column walked slowly and the Jews would come out of the houses and join it. Gradually, the column grew and grew, and when it arrived at the bridge, it was like a flow of lava, slowly advancing. This mass of people was not walking like youngsters do, full of health, no, they crept slowly, dragging their feet. They did not want to die, they clung to the last minutes of life.”

Pavoloch, Zhytomyr region, Ukraine. June 3, 2013.

A.



P.D.: Were there Jews who refused to go?

I.L.: Of course, but what could they do? The police had truncheons and weapons. [...]

P.D.: Were there Jews who tried to escape?

I.L.: A very beautiful young girl with very long hair jumped over the fence. She managed to run to the shop where she was caught and dragged by the hair back to the pit.⁴⁴

B.



P.D.: Did some Jews try to escape?

N.O.: Some tried but they didn’t get very far from the pit because they were shot very quickly.

P.D.: Were they shot in the pit or above it?

N.O.: They were shot in the pit itself. They made them climb down into it and then they shot them directly in the pit, then threw earth on top of the bodies. The pit was very long.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 139–140. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Ivan L., b. 1929, Novozlatopol, Ukraine.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 77. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Nikolaï O., 11 years old at the time of the events described in the interview, Konstantynivka, Ukraine.

Eugenija talks about a woman who survived the execution.

Testimony of Eugenija S., b. 1927,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 128),

Šiauliai, Lithuania.



“She said that she had nowhere to go, but they told her to run away. And she left.”

Adolf talks about a Jewish neighbor whom he tried to warn against going to the assembly point.



Testimony of Adolf S., b. 1928,

(Broad Daylight
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 81),

Siemnice, Poland.

“She responded: ‘Let it happen to me the same way that it will happen to everyone else’.”

- ▶ Have students read an excerpt from Samuel Willenberg’s “Revolt in Treblinka.” Treblinka was one of the death camps established by the Nazis in occupied Poland. Willenberg (nicknamed by other prisoners “Katzap”) quotes his conversation with Dr. Chorążycki, a fellow prisoner. Both had been temporarily selected to live and work (e.g., Samuel Willenberg worked in a *kommando* sorting belongings of those prisoners who had been murdered).

How do students understand Dr. Chorążycki’s words? Have them express their reflections in writing and follow up with individual presentations and a group discussion.

You should know that we have cyanide pills which were in the possession of self-confident, big-mouthed prisoners like you, Katzap. The fact that you can take the pill out of your pocket and use it whenever you want makes you more self-assured. It's easier to survive here when you feel you're in charge of your life. But you should know that people who had pills like these, and who intended using them at the critical moment, refused to believe what was awaiting them to the very end. As they ran stark naked down Death Avenue to the gas chambers, with SS men prodding them along, the pills stayed in their clothes in the yard. [...] I, too, am unsure if we'll have the strength or the courage to use the poison at the right moment. [...] You always hope that perhaps, everything notwithstanding, you'll survive this hell.⁴⁶

To complement this activity, have students read more about responses of victims in ghettos and in camps, some of which they may have discussed in the previous Holocaust study units at your school. Suggested readings: "Hope is the Last to Die: A Coming of Age Under Nazi Terror" by Halina Birenbaum, "Winter in the Morning: A Young Girl's Life in the Warsaw Ghetto and Beyond" by Janina Bauman, "The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak: Five Notebooks from the Łódź Ghetto" edited by Alan Adelson (see suggested bibliography).

10. Perspectives in Archival Photographs

- The events that took place during the Holocaust can be analyzed from various perspectives. We know the descriptions from the perpetrators' depositions during some of the postwar trials, from their reports sent to their supervisors at the time of the Holocaust, or from letters sent home. There are also trial records of some of the local collaborators. Most of the victims did not live to share their story but some of them left behind diaries or letters. Survivors who shared their experiences after the war provided an invaluable source of first-hand testimony. There were also thousands of eyewitnesses to the atrocities. Some of the witnesses were requisitioned to participate in various stages of the Holocaust by bullets. Their voices can now be shared through Yahad – In Unum's video testimonies.

Archival photographs carry information and perspectives of their authors and participants. Have students look at the black and white archival photographs from the exhibition and create a list of different points of view each of these situations could be described from. Without adopting the role of any of the narrators, discuss possible different narratives depending on whose perspective one investigates. What can we expect from the perpetrators' depositions? What perspective can witnesses provide? What input can be provided by survivors' testimonies?

⁴⁶ Samuel Willenberg, *Revolt in Treblinka* (Warsaw: Jewish Historical Institute, 2000), pp. 75–76.



German soldiers prepare for a raid in the Kovno ghetto, as some Jewish residents look on, 1941–1943.
Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of George Kadish/Zvi Kadushin



Jews wearing circular badges walk through town during a deportation action from the Krzemieniec ghetto, 1942.
Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Instytut Pamięci Narodowej

- Have students research photographers among perpetrators, victims, and witnesses who took pictures during the Holocaust. What motivated them to take these photographs? How different were these motivations? What risks did any of the photographers encounter? What happened to the photographers and how and when were the photographs made public? Were the perpetrators of the Holocaust by bullets allowed to take pictures of the executions? What perspectives can we see in the photographs taken during the Holocaust?

Helpful links:

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/29/who_took_picture.asp

<http://digitalassets.ushmm.org/photoarchives/detail.aspx?id=2956>

<http://digitalassets.ushmm.org/photoarchives/detail.aspx?id=1699>

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto/german_soldier.asp

- ▶ Based on their previous studies, can students identify any clandestine archives organized by Jews during the Holocaust (e.g., Oneg Shabbat in the Warsaw ghetto)? What were the reasons and motivations behind establishing such archives? What happened to those who made such efforts?

Helpful links:

<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/ringelbum/overview.asp>

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005416>



Execution site in Radomyshl, Ukraine
Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum



Once gathered, the Jews are taken to the place of execution on foot or in trucks or wagons requisitioned from the local farmers to transport the elderly and the weak. They are herded there under the blows from the men of the Einsatzgruppen, the police batons, and under the gaze of their neighbors. Those who try to escape are shot on the spot. These future victims are unaware that they are being led to their death until the road bends and opens to a field, a ravine, or a forest where they will be executed. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

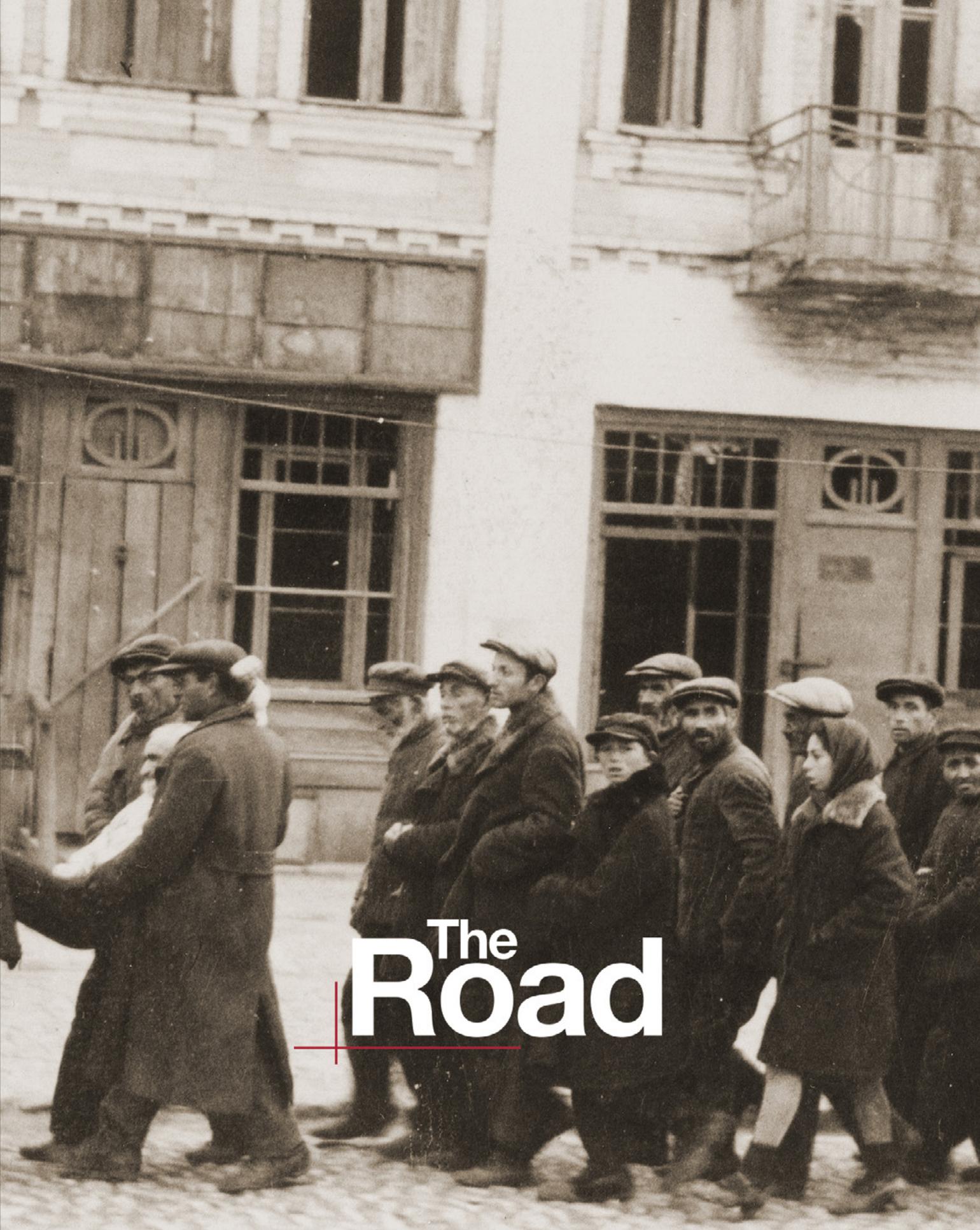
Key concepts: responses of non-Jews to the fate of their Jewish neighbors; choiceless choices faced by victims; consequences of individual choices made by non-Jewish residents; collaboration; complicity; victims, perpetrators, bystanders, rescuers, witnesses as individuals; rescue efforts during the Holocaust; researching individual rescuers; complexity of behavior as reflected in eyewitness testimonies; investigating perpetrators' motivations behind the public nature of the Holocaust by bullets; forms of armed and unarmed resistance among Jews.

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Jewish deportees march through the streets of Kamenets- Podolsk
to an execution site outside of the city, August 27, 1941.

Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Ivan Sved



The
Road

11. Responses of Non-Jewish Neighbors to the Fate of Local Jews

- Jews were marched or transported through villages and towns to the nearby execution sites in broad daylight, in front of local non-Jewish residents – their neighbors or other villagers in the areas where the execution was about to take place. Ask students to read the quotes and watch at least one video testimony together in the classroom. Divide students into teams and have each team discuss positive and negative ways in which the non-Jewish neighbors and other participants responded to these scenes. What factors could have influenced their behavior? Have each team present their findings and follow up with a group discussion.



Elena, born in 1927

"Jewish refugees had come from the Ukraine, from Rostov. After the arrival of the Germans, I saw Jews being brought in column along the train station to the site of the shooting.."

Proletarsk, Rostov Region, Russia. October 4, 2011.



Ion, born in 1933

"The column of Jews passed through the village. There were men, women and children. Some villagers made the sign of a cross on themselves as the column passed. Everyone was walking, there were no carts."

Gura, Moldova. May 27, 2012.



Leszek, born in 1925

"I worked at the airport with the Jews. One evening, a truck came to get them. They did not bring the Jews to the market place as usual, but to the Jewish cemetery. There, pits had been dug in advance."

Komarow-Osada, Lublin Region, Poland. August 9, 2012.



Emilija recalls that her neighbors wanted to put branches in the wheels of the trucks taking Jews to the executions. In the end, they were too afraid for their lives to carry out the plan and did not believe it would have saved anyone. She also talks about local collaborators.

Testimony of Emilija B., b. 1930,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 131),

Šeduva, Lithuania.



“They wanted to take sticks and put them in the wheels to stop the trucks.”

“The white arbanders were Lithuanians who obeyed German command.”

In Maria’s village, entire families of non-Jewish residents waited outside the homes of their Jewish neighbors and began to steal their belongings the moment these families started to march towards the execution site. What we can see here are the two stages of the Holocaust by bullets, “The Road” and “The Looting,” overlapping through the choices some of the non-Jewish residents had made.



“But I know how that is, when you see someone starving, give him a little bit of bread.”

“Even the plates and the glasses, they had taken them.”

Testimony of Maria J., b. 1932,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 113),

Hincăuți, Moldova.



Maria gets emotional while recounting how her family gave food to the Jews passing through their village. Despite her family’s poverty they shared what they had with their fellow humans in need. In her testimony, Maria also describes dramatic circumstances in which a woman gave birth during “The Road” stage of the killing process.

Stanislav describes the tragedy of the victims being led to their deaths.

Testimony of Stanislav M., b. 1913,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 27),

Grymailiv, Ukraine.



“They were screaming and crying, and tearing their hair out.”

“It was a nightmare.”

12. Choiceless Choices Faced by Victims

- Lawrence Langer coined the term “choiceless choices” in reference to excruciating decisions Jews had to face under the circumstances imposed on them during the Holocaust.⁴⁷ Ask students how they understand this term. Do they remember any examples of experiences from their previous Holocaust studies that could be described as a choiceless choice?

Have students analyze the quotes and video testimony below in reference to the difficult decisions regarding rescue of Jewish children. What affected the decision making process? Some concepts to consider: fear of what comes next; lack of information; fear of separation; hope against hope; love for one’s family; anguish; unbearable conditions in ghettos.

Suggested readings: “Shielding the Flame” by Hanna Krall, “The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak: Five Notebooks from the Łódź Ghetto” edited by Alan Adelson, “Salvaged Pages: Young Writers’ Diaries of the Holocaust” by Alexandra Zapruder (see suggested bibliography).

⁴⁷ For more information about Lawrence Langer and his concept of choiceless choices visit:
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0012_0_11861.html

A.

P.D.: Did the Krymchaks⁴⁸ also have a yellow star?

T.L.: No. It happened very quickly for the Krymchaks. They announced that all the Krymchaks had to assemble and they killed them.

P.D.: You never saw your Krymchak friend again?

T.L.: No, she was killed with all the other Krymchaks, in a ravine outside the town.

P.D.: Did people hide so as not to go to the prison?

T.L.: No, they all went. We wanted to hide my friend but her parents refused, they wanted the whole family to stay together.

P.D.: Did you go to the execution site after the war?

T.L.: I have never been there. It is outside the town in the anti-tank ditches. There is a memorial. That is where they shot them. Before shooting them, they made them undress, took their clothes, and their valuable possessions. The earth moved for three days because people were still alive.⁴⁹

B.

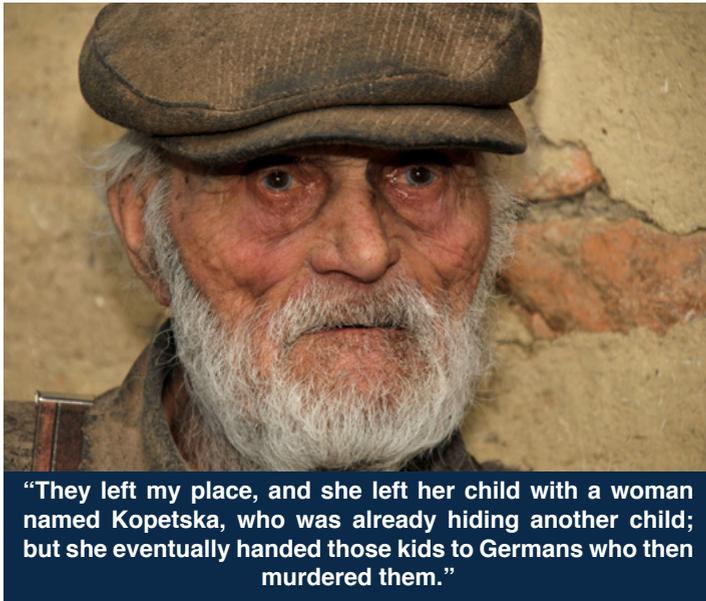
I remember the story of that Ukrainian grandmother who had accompanied her Jewish daughter-in-law Tsilya Meerovna to Babi Yar, thinking the family was going to be deported and she was going to look after her granddaughter Raissa, then aged three. As they had approached the valley of death, the mother, understanding that the whole family was going to be assassinated, shouted to the Ukrainian grandmother: "Take her, say it's your daughter." So the grandmother took Raissa in her arms and ran toward a Ukrainian policeman, saying to him: "I am not Jewish, I'm Ukrainian." The policeman's only response was to try and hit the child's head with the butt of his gun to kill it. In protecting the infant, the grandmother took the blow on the shoulder and fell under the shock. Seeing her on the ground, a German lifted her up and forced her to return into the crowd of people waiting to be shot. The grandmother, crazed with rage and pain, began running with the child in the opposite direction. Gunshots were fired in her direction but she managed to reach the Jewish cemetery, not far from the execution site, without being wounded. She ran between the tombs, for fear that she was being followed, then hid with the little girl behind a tombstone until night fell. She hid the child for many months. Raissa eventually became a dancer with the opera ballet. It was Raissa who, at Babi Yar, all dressed in red, her eyes hidden behind large sunglasses and holding her own granddaughter by the hand, had talked to us. She came to Babi Yar to tell us that tale of survival from horror.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Krymchaks: Jews living in Crimea for many centuries. Unlike Karaim, most of the Krymchaks were targeted for annihilation by the Nazis. (definition by Yahad – In Unum)

⁴⁹ Desbois, *op. cit.*, p. 209. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Tamara L., b. 1927, Feodosia, Ukraine.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 195–196. Father Patrick Desbois about one of the survivors.

Stanislav gave shelter to a Jewish woman and her 4-year-old child. When it became too dangerous for them to stay with Stanislav, the mother hid her child with someone else.



Testimony of Stanislav M., b. 1913,

(Broad Daylight, <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 27),

Grymailiv, Ukraine.



“They left my place, and she left her child with a woman named Kopetska, who was already hiding another child; but she eventually handed those kids to Germans who then murdered them.”

- While some of the best-known images pertaining to ghettoization are from the Warsaw ghetto with a brick wall surrounding it, there were other types of ghettos, many of them without walls or even guards. With students, watch Stanislav’s and/or Iossif’s testimony, read the quotes below and think about the circumstances that contributed to the choiceless choices victims had to face (not only with regard to rescue). Discuss how the choiceless choices experienced by victims were generated by the choices of other human beings who turned against them.

Help students understand that the most crucial factor for survival outside the ghetto, with or without walls, was a fellow human ready to risk his or her life by offering help to those in need. Analyze how rare such help was, and what types of challenges affected the choices made by the victims in ghettos (e.g., occupying forces; death penalty for unauthorized leaving of the ghetto; fear of betrayal; blackmailers among local non-Jews; fear of the unknown; separation for an unknown period of time; entrusting one’s life or that of a family member to strangers; isolation; lack of information).

Testimony of Iossif P., b. 1927,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 22),

Bibrka, Ukraine.



“Some of the Jews stayed back because they’d made hiding places. They hid behind wardrobes, between walls, etc.”

C.

P.D.: Did the Jews have to wear the star straight away?

S.D.: They had to put an armband with a star from the first days of the ghetto. They had to make it themselves. They were allowed to go only where they were authorized, otherwise they were shot on the spot.

P.D.: Did they send the Jews to work just in businesses? Solely inside the ghetto?

S.D.: In general it was for work such as digging ditches or loading up trains in railway stations. Everything was organized. They were accompanied by soldiers and Jewish police who had batons.⁵¹

D.

P.D.: Did you have an Ausweis to go in and out of the ghetto?

S.D.: Yes, I had a kennkarte. There was no guard at the entry to the ghetto but if a German stopped me and asked me what I was doing in the ghetto, I showed him this paper. There was no one at the entrance; the Jews knew that they shouldn’t go out or they would be killed.

P.D.: Could the Jews buy food outside?

S.D.: They couldn’t buy items freely. It occurred in secret. People brought food and exchanged it for other things. I myself took food to Jews who were poor.⁵²

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 180. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Stepan D., b. 1935, Busk, Ukraine.

⁵² Ibid., p. 181. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Stepan D., b. 1935, Busk, Ukraine.

E.

P.D.: How did you know something was happening down there?

E.N.: Everyone knew that they were killing Jews. In every village they made a ghetto, put all the Jews in it, then killed them.

P.D.: What did you see from where you were?

E.N.: I was little, I didn't understand everything that was going on. I saw that there were a lot of people, Germans, Ukrainians who had been requisitioned to fill in the pits because the Germans were not going to do that. [...]

P.D.: Were they killed one by one or in groups?

E.N.: They placed them around the pit, shot them and they fell in the pit. And so on. They all fell in the pit, they were in such hysteria. Some fell when they weren't even dead. I remember a woman who managed to get out of the pit; she took refuge with another woman from the village. The woman denounced her and the Jewish woman was caught and killed.⁵³



13. Consequences of Individual Choices

- Discuss with students the definitions they may have already learned during their Holocaust history studies: concepts of a victim, perpetrator, bystander, and rescuer. Add the concept of a witness. Have them investigate the testimony of Eugenija S. – a witness, and/or the testimony of Klara A. – a victim, and analyze in writing whether any of those definitions could be applied to the individuals in these accounts. (While it is understandable that due to time constraints it may not be possible to view both testimonies, it is important that students watch the testimony you choose in its entirety). Ask students to summarize their notes for the rest of the class and discuss their conclusions. Are there similarities in what they wrote? Any major differences?

Next, divide students into small groups and discuss the following points:

1. Ask students to think about the complexity of each of these testimonies. E.g., Klara was rescued more than once. One of the rescuers was a stranger ready to risk her own life by offering Klara shelter. At the same time, the rescuer's son continued to abuse Klara and repeatedly tried to betray her to the police. The Jewish woman from Eugenija's testimony was betrayed by the very man she took shelter with, while the people who tried to save her life were the German occupiers in charge of the execution she managed to survive.

Are the roles of each of the individuals who the victims met set once and for all? Could these roles have changed depending on the negative or positive choices these individuals made?

2. Klara is a Jewish survivor who was rescued during "The Road" stage of the Holocaust by bullets. Such attempts were rare. Discuss with students what the motivation of the perpetrators could be for carrying out the crime in front of non-Jewish neighbors? How could it have influenced the responses and choices made by the neighbors? Watch Klara's testimony and analyze her explanation.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 185. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Eugenia N., b. 1934, Busk, Ukraine.



Testimony of Klara A., b. 1934,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 37),

Shklov, Belarus.

“Up to the end of the war I lived in such conditions – they hated me, Nikishka helped me though.”



Testimony of Eugenija S., b. 1927,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 128),

Šiauliai, Lithuania.



“They found her and shot in the forest behind the sawmill.”

14. Whoever Saves One Life...

While the overwhelming majority of Jewish victims had no one to turn to for help, there were brave individuals and organizations that offered help to those in need. With students, visit the websites of The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous and of Yad Vashem. The JFR is an organization dedicated to preserving authentic stories of the rescuers and the rescued. It unites survivors with their rescuers, provides financial assistance to impoverished rescuers, and offers educational programs and resources for teachers and students. Yad Vashem is Israel's Holocaust memorial dedicated to perpetuating the memory of the 6 million Jewish victims through its research, documentation, and educational programs. It also grants the title of the Righteous Among the Nations to non-Jews who risked their lives saving Jews during the Holocaust.

- The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous designed a poster set representing character traits of rescuers. The character traits are derived from authentic rescue stories and include: moral leadership, integrity, courage, ingenuity, compassion, and others.⁵⁴ Divide students into teams and have each team analyze a different set of character traits and examples of corresponding rescue stories. Have each team report on the character traits they studied and follow up with a group discussion. Are there any other character traits students would like to add?

After students have analyzed individual rescue efforts, watch a video showing a reunion of the rescuer with the rescued (reunion videos since 2005 are available for viewing at <https://jfr.org/video-library/>). Have students create a list of words that come to their minds after watching this video. How do these words correspond with the traits of character they have just studied?

- ▶ Through the JFR's website students can ask a rescuer a question. Visit <https://jfr.org/ask-a-rescuer/>, review some of the previously asked questions, ask students which rescuer they would like to contact and work with them on preparing their own questions.

Once the students hear back from a rescuer, have them journal and share what impact this interaction had on them. Is there anything it changed within themselves or in the way they perceive others, their own community? Were they inspired by the story? If so, define how.

- ▶ Research with students how the title of the Righteous Among the Nations is bestowed by Yad Vashem. Discuss the meaning of the saying: "Whosoever saves a single life, saves an entire universe" (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:5) in the context of the individual rescue stories students have just examined.

<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/program.asp>

- Have students investigate rescue efforts from the locations featured in Yahad – In Unum's exhibition. For this activity students can use the JFR's website at <https://jfr.org/> and Yad Vashem's Database of the Righteous Among the Nations at <http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/search.html?language=en>. Rescuers and the rescued from the following locations discussed in the exhibition can be found in Yad Vashem's Database of the Righteous: Pochev, Žagarè (Zagare), Bibrka.

⁵⁴ The poster set and the handouts can be downloaded from the JFR's website at <https://jfr.org/resources/> or used as part of The Florida Holocaust Museum's teaching trunks shipped free of charge to schools throughout the United States. To reserve a teaching trunk visit the Museum's website at <https://www.fiholocaustmuseum.org/learn/teaching-trunks/>.



For important background information about these three locations in the context of the Holocaust by bullets, students should use Yahad – In Unum’s online map and database of execution sites at <http://www.yahadmap.org/#map/>.

- ▶ In 2013, Yahad – In Unum’s research team interviewed Leonas L., b. 1931, whose parents had been recognized by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations for their rescue efforts in Žagarė. Have students investigate their stories at:

<http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/righteousName.html?language=en&itemId=6999217>
<http://db.yadvashem.org/righteous/righteousName.html?language=en&itemId=6999257>

Excerpts from the transcript of the interview with Leonas L. can be accessed through the online map entry: <http://www.yahadmap.org/#village/agar-zhager-zhagare-scaron-iauliai-lithuania.680>

- When teaching about any aspect of Holocaust history, including rescue efforts, it is necessary to provide larger context and examine specific situations from more than one angle. The testimonies recommended for this activity give us insight into different parts of the interviewees’ experiences and help raise important questions about different human behaviors. With students, watch the testimonies of Stanislav M. and Klara A. from the collection of Yahad – In Unum and discuss their experiences with rescue and postwar outcomes.



Testimony of Stanislav M., b. 1913,
(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 27),
Grymailiv, Ukraine.



1. How does Stanislav describe his relationships with Jewish residents before the Holocaust?

2. How many rescue attempts does Stanislav mention in his interview?
3. What happened to the individuals he provided shelter to?
4. Did Stanislav encounter cases of betrayal of Jews looking for help among their neighbors?
5. What risk factors does he discuss in reference to rescue efforts?
6. Who participated in the persecution of Jews and in the killing operations?
7. Does the hideout built by Stanislav still exist? What could it mean with regard to his memories and their relevance for him several decades since the events?
8. What other negative and positive behaviors of local residents towards Jews seeking help does he talk about?



Testimony of Klara A., b. 1934,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 37),

Shklov, Belarus.



“He fell down and began beating his head against the floor all upset that I couldn’t recognize him.”

1. What were the relationships between Jews and non-Jews in Klara’s community before the Holocaust?
2. What happened to the local Jews during the German occupation? How did it affect Klara’s family?
3. Did anyone offer help to Klara and her mother? What were the circumstances?

4. How did Klara get separated from her mother? How did local non-Jews respond to Klara's pleas for help?
5. How was she treated by the family of her rescuer? How does she remember the time spent with them?
6. What were the circumstances in which Klara was reunited with her father?
7. What happened to the woman who had given her shelter?
8. What were the difficulties faced by Klara and her father while trying to rebuild their lives?
9. Can students recall from their previous studies any other examples of rare reunions of rescued children with their biological parents? Have they met a survivor who shared that experience?
10. How does Klara respond to the interviewer's question about having her testimony made public? What could be the reason for her response?

15. Various Forms of Resistance

- Share with the class the picture of Jews gathered at the assembly point, awaiting execution in Lubny, Ukraine. Discuss with students their thoughts and feelings evoked by this image. Have their reflections recorded on the board.



Jews at the assembly point. Lubny, Ukraine, 1941
Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research

After discussing the image, ask students what they know from their previous studies about various forms of resistance during the Holocaust. Have they met with an opinion that there was no resistance among Jews? What is their opinion?

Next, divide students into research groups. Have all groups explore the following concepts and compare their findings:

1. Discuss examples of armed resistance in ghettos (e.g., Warsaw, Bialystok, underground movements in other ghettos) and camps (e.g., Treblinka, Sobibor, Auschwitz-Birkenau, underground movements in other camps). What was the motivation of the insurgents (check the suggested bibliography and online resources at the end of the study guide)?



As a case study, have students investigate armed resistance in Lakhva, Belarus. Information about Lakhva, including eyewitness testimony, photographs and excerpts from archival records can be found through Yahad – In Unum’s online map and database at: <http://www.yahadmap.org/#village/lakhva-brest-belarus.409>

2. Ask the students what forms of unarmed resistance they have heard about or can think of, e.g., self-help in ghettos, cultural life, religious life, escape. Help students understand that staying human amidst the inhumanity surrounding the victims was one of the most important forms of resistance. Use online resources recommended at the end of the study guide to support this discussion.
3. What forms of resistance are mentioned in the quotes and video testimonies recommended for this activity? E.g., discuss ways in which victims tried to protect their loved ones against the brutality surrounding them; escape attempts; responses of forced laborers. Choose at least one full video testimony and clips from another interview to watch with students.

A.



Then the Germans came back about a week later. They told them that they were going to take them to Israel and that three trucks were coming to pick them up. All the Jews’ possessions were requisitioned – cows, pigs . . . I remember that the Germans requisitioned my aunt to cook for them. They wanted to eat nothing but large pieces of meat; they didn’t like small ones. Then some of them shot the Jews while others ate and drank. Then, those who had eaten went to shoot the Jews again while those who had been shooting them before came to eat. They killed them in groups of 25 people. The mothers were carrying tiny children in their arms.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Desbois, *op. cit.*, pp. 89–90. Witness Hanna S., 74 at the time of the interview in 2006, Romanivka, Ukraine.

B.

 *The last commando of requisitioned Jews who burnt the prisoners attempted to escape by exchanging secret messages in bottles of milk with Polish partisans, and they attacked the Germans from both sides. Some Jews managed to escape but most of them were shot. There were bodies of Jews in all the fields. Peasants were requisitioned to put the bodies on two huge fires that burned permanently.⁵⁶*

“There were women, mothers carrying their children, fathers holding the older ones by hands.”



Narashevichi, Brest region, Belarus. April 4, 2010.

Emilija talks about local Jews being forced to clean the streets and do other public work.

Testimony of Emilija B., b. 1930,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 131)

Šeduva, Lithuania.



“I saw them working in Šeduva. They seemed reserved and proud. I never saw them crying, complaining, begging or scared.”

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 113–114. Witness Adolf W., b. 1930, Lisinitchi, Lviv, Ukraine.

Klara, a Jewish survivor, witnessed the execution during which she would have been murdered if not for the help of some of the local non-Jews.



Testimony of Klara A., b. 1934,
(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 37),
Shklov, Belarus.



“The Jews stood in small groups along the edge holding each other’s hands and they fell like that.”

Ievgueni discusses responses of Jewish victims to the atrocities, and answers the interviewer’s question about whether physical violence was used against them.



Testimony of Ievgueni S., b. 1926,
(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 17),
Ingulets, Ukraine.



“One Jew, a hairdresser, attempted to run away. Unfortunately he did not succeed and when caught he cut his throat with a straight razor.”

“It was on the site of the shooting when they were pushed toward the pits because there were many Jews who resisted.”

Now have students look again at the image from the assembly point in Lubny and ask if they can see any form of unarmed resistance or defiance. Record their reflections on the board and compare with the notes from the beginning of this activity.



Jews at the assembly point. Lubny, Ukraine, 1941
Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research

- Ask students to write a journal entry in response to the quote from Primo Levi's "Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity." How do students understand Levi's words in the context of unarmed resistance?

[...] I believe that it was really due to Lorenzo that I am alive today; and not so much for his material aid, as for his having constantly reminded me by his presence, by his natural and plain manner of being good, that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole, not corrupt, not savage, extraneous to hatred and terror; something difficult to define, a remote possibility of good, but for which it was worth surviving. The personages in these pages are not men. Their humanity is buried, or they themselves have buried it, under an offence received or inflicted on someone else. [...] But Lorenzo was a man; his humanity was pure and uncontaminated, he was outside this world of negation. Thanks to Lorenzo, I managed not to forget that I myself was a man.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), pp. 121–122.



When victims arrive at the execution site, the graves where they will be shot have just been dug by other Jews or by requisitioned villagers. Sometimes they must dig the graves themselves. Then, under the blows and shouts of the guards, the men, women, children, and the elderly are forced to undress completely, even in winter. They must put all their belongings on the ground or on carts until they are stripped of all their valuables. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: humiliation and dehumanization of genocide victims; the role of Nazi propaganda in dehumanizing Jewish victims; propaganda in pre- and post-Holocaust genocides; concept of exclusion in children's education in the Third Reich; concept of "the other"; the role of media in our perception of fellow humans; can one person make a difference?; defiance against humiliation during genocide; the role of art during genocide; how do we respond to genocide in the context of media coverage; exploring local history.

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Jewish prisoners are ordered to disrobe prior to their execution by Ukrainian auxiliaries.

Chernigov, Ukraine, 1942

Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum Történelmi Fényképtár

The Undressing



16. Humiliation and Dehumanization of Victims

One of the main aspects of Nazi ideology was dehumanization of its Jewish victims. It was reflected in the concepts taught to children at school, in propaganda film and publications, in depriving Jews of their rights, mistreatment of Jewish victims in ghettos, prisons, camps, and in their murder. Victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* and their helpers were deceived as to where they were going, humiliated by having to undress in public, robbed, beaten, shot at close range and buried in mass graves. Jews were to disappear. Within Operation 1005, their bodies were dug up and burned, to erase any traces of the crime.⁵⁸

Yahad – In Unum tries to stop this chain of humiliation. The often unmarked execution sites are getting identified, marked on the maps, and are treated with respect. Yahad – In Unum works in accordance with Jewish Law, *Halakhah*, which does not allow for human remains to be moved or disturbed. Therefore, mass graves on Holocaust-related sites remain closed. Sometimes team members come across sites that were plundered by members of the local population and try to restore some dignity to those graves.

It was late and we had to go back. In the morning, discreetly, Micha had asked me how Jews were buried . . . usually. I saw him move off and place, one by one, the scattered bones that had been thrown into the open hole of the plundered pit, cover them with earth, place a stone and then, in silence, cut several green branches, and make a Magen David (Star of David) on the grave. We all stood still as though time were suspended. Tears came to my eyes with the feeling that I had, at my humble level, helped reestablish dignity for these Jewish women and men who had been shot here one day in the summer of 1942, summarily buried, and then desecrated.⁵⁹

- Have the students analyze photographs of belongings of the victims. Prepare a worksheet on which students can describe what they see and include their reflections. What do these images tell us about what happened? Who were the victims? How were they treated by the perpetrators?



Belongings of the Jews killed at Babi Yar, Ukraine
Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research

⁵⁸ To read more about Operation 1005 follow the links: http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205721.pdf; <http://digitalassets.ushmm.org/photoarchives/detail.aspx?id=10007>. In 2009, Yahad – In Unum in partnership with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Collège des Bernardins, and Université Paris IV-Sorbonne organized an international conference: “Operation 1005: Nazi Attempts to Erase The Evidence of Mass Murder in Eastern and Central Europe, 1942–1944.” Yahad – In Unum is working on making the results available on its website at www.yahadinunum.org.

⁵⁹ Desbois, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

- Read quotes from the exhibition about victims having to undress right before being shot. Mikhail says that the victims walked to their deaths in groups of six, holding hands. What, in the students' opinion, was the meaning of this final gesture?

Ouliana remembers that the clothes of the victims were used as rags to wash the floors of the Gestapo building. In numerous other instances clothes were looted. What do such actions tell us about the way the victims were perceived by their perpetrators?

“The Jews walked in groups of six, holding hands.”

Mikhail, born in 1928



“They had to undress at the edge of the pit.”

Kostiukovichi, Mogilev region, Belarus. June 14, 2013.



“The Jews had to undress completely.”

Ouliana, born in 1925



“These clothes were used as rags to wash the floor in the Gestapo building.”

Velikorita, Brest region, Belarus. March 31, 2009.



- ▶ Have students research execution sites from other genocides, e.g., in Armenia, Cambodia, former Yugoslavia, Rwanda. Who were the victims and perpetrators? How were the victims treated prior to executions? Did the massacres take place in broad daylight? Where were the killings carried out? Were there attempts to cover up the crime?
- ▶ Look up definitions of the words “respect” and “dignity.” Do concepts of respect or dignity fit into ideologies based on hatred and exclusion? Can students give examples of mass violence or human rights violations in post-Holocaust history when the concepts of respect and dignity were missing or misused?

17. The Role of Pre-Genocide Propaganda in Dehumanizing Victims

- Nazi ideology was supported by men and women from different age groups and walks of life.⁶⁰ This activity focuses on young people from Germany. When membership in Nazi youth groups (the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls) became mandatory for “Aryan” boys and girls, millions of young people were exposed to Nazi propaganda. Many of them did not know any other mindset. “Education in the Third Reich served to indoctrinate students with the National Socialist worldview. Nazi scholars and educators glorified Nordic and other ‘Aryan’ races, while denigrating Jews and other so-called inferior peoples as parasitic ‘bastard races’ incapable of creating culture or civilization. [...] In the classroom and in the Hitler Youth, instruction aimed to produce race-conscious, obedient, self-sacrificing Germans who would be willing to die for Führer and Fatherland.”⁶¹

Research with students and watch the documentary, “Heil Hitler! Confessions of a Hitler Youth.” Have students write a list of examples of Nazi propaganda shown in it (e.g., film, “racial hygiene” lessons in front of the class) and ask them to analyze Alfons Heck’s responses. How did his perception of himself and of his community gradually change? What consequences did it have for his life?

- In many interviews conducted by Yahad – In Unum’s research teams, witnesses talk about young Germans committing the atrocities. As Father Desbois puts it, Yahad – In Unum gathers the testimonies of witnesses who, “as children, had witnessed the assassination of their Jewish neighbors, perpetrated by youths from Germany who were told they were saving humanity.”⁶²

Have students review images from Nazi propaganda publications for German children, think about Alfons Heck’s experiences, and answer the questions:

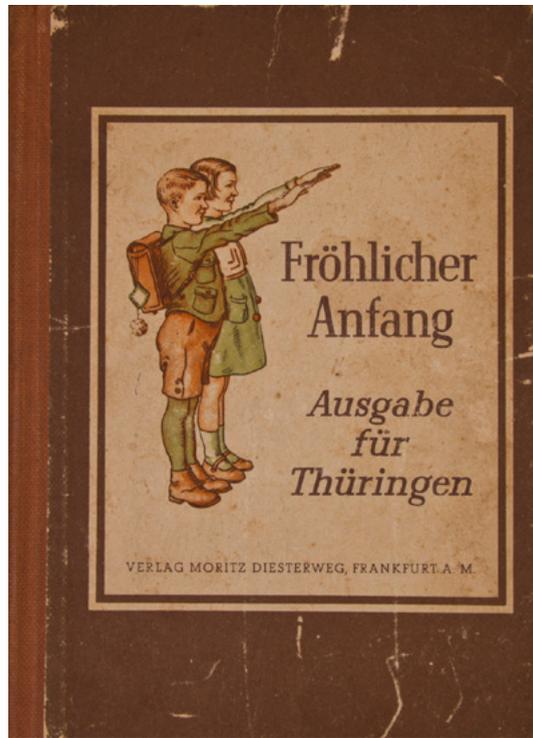
1. What words and images are associated with the Jews in these publications?
2. What does it tell us about the reality in which young people were growing up under Nazi leadership?
3. What values and goals were young people encouraged to pursue? Was it a culture of exclusion or inclusion?
4. Was it the only possible mindset? Who could show these children other values?
5. Research the anti-Nazi opposition among young people in Germany before and during WWII.

To support this activity, help students work with resources recommended at the end of the study guide.

⁶⁰ For information on the role German women played during the Holocaust see Wendy Lower, *Hitler’s Furies: German Women in the Nazi Killing Fields* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013) and other book recommendations in the suggested bibliography.

⁶¹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “Indoctrinating Youth.” Holocaust Encyclopedia. <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007820>. Accessed on February 20, 2015. For more information follow the link and check the list of books and online resources recommended at the end of the study guide.

⁶² Desbois, *op. cit.*, p. 99.



Cover of “Cheerful Beginnings,” a primer for Hitler Youth movement
Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Susan Fader



A page from “Trust No Fox on Green Heath and No Jew on His Oath,” a German antisemitic picture book for children published by Julius Streicher, who was later indicted at Nuremberg
Loaned to The Florida Holocaust Museum by David Shapiro

- Have students analyze propaganda used before and during pre- and post-Holocaust genocides.
 1. What words or phrases were used by the perpetrators in reference to the victims (e.g., Tutsis in Rwanda were called cockroaches)?
 2. What images were used in propaganda materials?
 3. Is it possible to identify the target audience?
 4. What motivation was shared with the audience?
 5. What are the similarities and differences in various types of propaganda used by the perpetrators?

Recommended websites (students can also research other genocides not covered in the links below):

USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive Online – video testimonies of Armenian witnesses
[VHAOnline.usc.edu](http://vhaonline.usc.edu); <http://sfi.usc.edu/news/2015/04/9134-first-armenian-interviews-go-live-visual-history-archive-delegation-attends>;

Kwibuka <http://www.kwibuka.rw/>;

USHMM <http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases/bosnia-herzegovina>;
<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/cases>;

LGen Roméo Dallaire <http://www.romeodallaire.com/>;

Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, sample transcripts from the radio broadcasts in Rwanda prior to and during the genocide:
<http://migs.concordia.ca/links/RwandaRadioTranscripts.htm>.

18. The Concept of “The Other” in the Context of Genocide

The world under Nazi rule was based on racial pseudo-science and categories of those who deserved to be part of “Aryan” society and those who were perceived as subhumans and the “enemy.” One of the most brutal implementations of that ideology were the mass executions of Jews carried out in Eastern Europe by the *Einsatzgruppen* and other units as well as local collaborators. Nobody was to be spared. In his speech in Poznan, occupied Poland, Heinrich Himmler said: “We were asked: What about the women and children? I made up my mind to find a clear solution here too. You see, I did not feel I had the right to exterminate the men – i.e. kill them or have them killed – while allowing the children to grow up and take revenge upon our sons and grandsons. We had to reach the difficult decision of making this nation vanish from the face of the earth.”⁶³

- Croatian author, Slavenka Drakulić, observed some of the trials of war criminals at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague. These war criminals were tried for the crimes committed in the 1990s. In the book “They Would Never Hurt a Fly: War Criminals on Trial in The Hague,” she analyzed the concept of “the other”:

⁶³ Matthias Schmidt, *Albert Speer: The End of a Myth* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), p. 196.

Perhaps it is far-fetched to compare Nazi Germany with any part of the former Yugoslavia. But one element makes such a comparison feasible, and that is the construction of the other as the object of hatred. To begin with, it is important to identify that object and give compelling reasons for hatred. The reasons do not have to be rational or even necessarily true. The most important thing is that they are convincing, because this makes them acceptable to people. Such explanations are usually based on myths [...] and prejudices [...]. And it helps if these myths and prejudices are rooted in reality, either in the history of earlier wars or in cultural and religious differences. As we still see in many parts of the world, the object of hatred can also be people belonging to another tribe (Hutu, Tutsi) or a different race. The task of propaganda is to shape this difference so that it creates a feeling that there is a threat from the other side and strengthens the urge for homogenization. Most important is the method of introducing hatred: it is most effective if people get used to it slowly, step by step, until they have absorbed it into their daily life. In light of the “evidence” of differences, often in the form of detailed descriptions of pressures and suffering in the mass media, either real or invented, in time those others are stripped of all their individual characteristics. They are no longer acquaintances or professionals with particular names, habits, appearances, and characters; instead they are members of the enemy group. When a person is reduced to an abstraction in such a way, one is free to hate him because the moral obstacle has already been abolished. If it has been “proved” that our enemies are no longer human beings, we are no longer obliged to treat them as such.⁶⁴

Discuss with students how they understand Slavenka Drakulić’s reflections and follow up with a group analysis of the following concepts:

1. Discuss how the concept of “the other” contributes to humiliation afflicted on the victims of genocide.
2. Discuss words and phrases used in Nazi propaganda materials to describe Jews, e.g., rats, parasites. What words and phrases were used by perpetrators of other genocides before or after the Holocaust? (Links to helpful resources can be found in activity #17 and at the end of the study guide.)
3. Analyze this archival photograph showing women and children from Mizoch getting undressed before the execution. Who were these human beings to their executioners?



Jewish women and children from Mizoch getting undressed before they were murdered, Ukraine, 1942
Photo credit: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej

⁶⁴ Drakulić, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–193.

19. The Role of Modern Media in Our Lives

Media played an undeniable role as tools for spreading propaganda before various cases of genocide and during the bloodshed. Radio was one of the most popular propaganda tools in Nazi Germany. All citizens had access to propaganda filled messages broadcast daily, along with other Nazi controlled media. Radios also played a big role in the pro-genocide propaganda organized by Hutus in Rwanda before and during the genocide of 1994. Humiliation and dehumanization of future victims of mass violence was a process that started before the atrocities took place.

- Have students analyze the positive and negative impact of modern, instantaneous media coverage and online sharing in the twenty-first century. Ask students to give examples of stories concerning genocide or human rights violations that they have seen or followed on social media. Have they seen the concept of “the other” used in modern media? Have they been inspired or concerned about some of the coverage? Discuss if there is anything they would like to change in this type of coverage from the perspective of a media viewer. How can modern media help raise awareness about the Holocaust by bullets? Have students prepare short presentations about their reflections.

E.g., students may have noticed the story of Malala Yousafzai, a teenage activist for the right to education for all. Malala was shot in the head for sharing her views, which were against the religious rules of the local Taliban in Pakistan. Her story generated a global outpouring of support via various international media outlets and social media. Having recovered from her injuries, Malala Yousafzai continues to spread her message and in 2014 she became the youngest Nobel Peace Prize winner for her fight for children’s rights and access to education.

What other stories caught the students’ attention and why?

Links to media coverage about Malala:

http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/10/world/asia/teen-school-activist-malala-yousafzai-survives-hit-by-pakistani-taliban.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

<http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-24379018>

http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/press.html

- ▶ Did anything negative or positive happen in the students’ community that went unnoticed but deserved to be talked about? Was there a situation in which media helped their school or local community?
- ▶ Encourage students to create a special edition of their own newspaper or newsletter for the class, school, community or any other entity they are part of, or contribute to the newspaper or newsletter that already exists. Do they feel their voices were heard? Do they think they made a difference? Did their input generate feedback? Did this assignment make them explore local history? Would they like to continue to write about their community?
- Have students research and watch a video clip to a U2 song “Miss Sarajevo.” The clip shows authentic footage from a documentary directed by an American journalist, Bill Carter. The song was a result of Carter’s efforts to alert U2 to the tragic fate of Sarajevans under the longest siege in modern European history. Carter showed their resilience to dehumanization and deprivation at the hands of their former neighbors, acquaintances, fellow citizens.

Helpful link:

http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/click-track/post/be-specific-miss-sarajevo-directoractivist-bill-carter-talks-about-how-u2-changed-his-life/2011/06/22/AGpCFyfH_blog.html

Discussion points:

1. Analyze with students the authentic footage used in this video: people crossing streets at a run in order to avoid sniper shots, their physical condition, their modern dress. Ask students to check how long the siege of Sarajevo lasted. Research the history of Sarajevo – what were the relationships between people from different cultures and religions?
2. Sarajevo hosted the 1984 Winter Olympics. Have students interview their family members or neighbors who are old enough to have watched the Olympics in 1984 and ask them about their responses to the media coverage of the siege of Sarajevo in the 1990s. Was the coverage adequate to raise awareness? What were their feelings then and/or now about the Olympics and a war happening at the same location only a decade apart?

Students should share the summary of their interviews (in a format of their choice, written, video, PowerPoint presentation) with the rest of the class.

20. One Person Can Make a Difference – Individual Assistance Efforts during Genocide

- Some of your students may be media producers in the future. They are the first generation to be so actively involved and influenced by the rapid change of the media format.

Look for examples of media coverage pertaining to genocide or human rights violations. Have students research news reports about regular citizens who, in response to media coverage, led or participated in efforts to help those affected by genocide or human rights violations. What are students' thoughts about these individuals' decisions and actions?

After conducting the research, discuss with students why it was important for genocide victims to let the world know of their fate and to receive responses. Can we draw lessons from the way the world responded to the Holocaust and to other genocides?

Helpful links:

Sally Becker, the “Angel of Mostar” <http://www.sallybecker.co.uk/>

Sally Becker is a British artist who decided to help severely wounded children in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Throughout the war, she helped organize aid and evacuate wounded children from all sides of the conflict.

Linda Beekman <http://www.warcake.com/>

Linda Beekman is a resident of Florida and provides house cleaning and other home-care services. Under the influence of media coverage from Sarajevo, she decided to try to get through to the besieged city and help total strangers. She ended up returning nine more times with additional help.

- In the summer of 1993, teachers at a school in the neighborhood of Ciglane in Sarajevo organized an art project for elementary school students. The goal was to let students express their feelings about the war and to share how it had affected the way they perceived their lives and their future. Teachers then gave these drawings to Linda Beekman, an American humanitarian, “to take to the United States, in hopes of helping people understand the reality of children suffering in the siege of Sarajevo.”⁶⁵ Ms. Beekman donated the collection to The Florida Holocaust Museum.

With students, analyze the drawings at <http://www.warcake.com/art.html> and discuss the following points:

1. What reflections do these drawings evoke?
2. Is it possible to research what happened to the authors?
3. What does war and violence deprive children of?
4. Why is it important to share these images online for the broader public to see?
5. Discuss the role of art in genocidal circumstances. Research artists or examples of artwork from the time of the Holocaust and other genocides.

Helpful links:

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/educational_materials/arts.asp

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/27/coping_art.asp

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/pressroom/pressreleases/pr_details.asp?cid=529

<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/art-landscapes/index.asp>

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/death_march/art/02.asp

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/32/The_Legend_of_Lodz.asp

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/resource_center/item.asp?gate=4-6

http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/education/newsletter/16/new_yv1.pdf

- Have students share with the rest of the group if they were inspired by a community or family member who selflessly helped others. Encourage students to create an art collage about these stories to inspire them as individuals and as a group. What were the responses of others in the school/community (depending on where it was displayed)? How do students feel about their participation in the project? Has it affected them or anyone they know in a positive way? Share photographs of your work with Yahad – In Unum and The Florida Holocaust Museum.

⁶⁵ Retrieved Dec 16, 2014 from <http://www.warcake.com/art.html>.



Witness Vasile B. showing Yahad – In Unum’s research team the execution site in Scaieni, Moldova
Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum



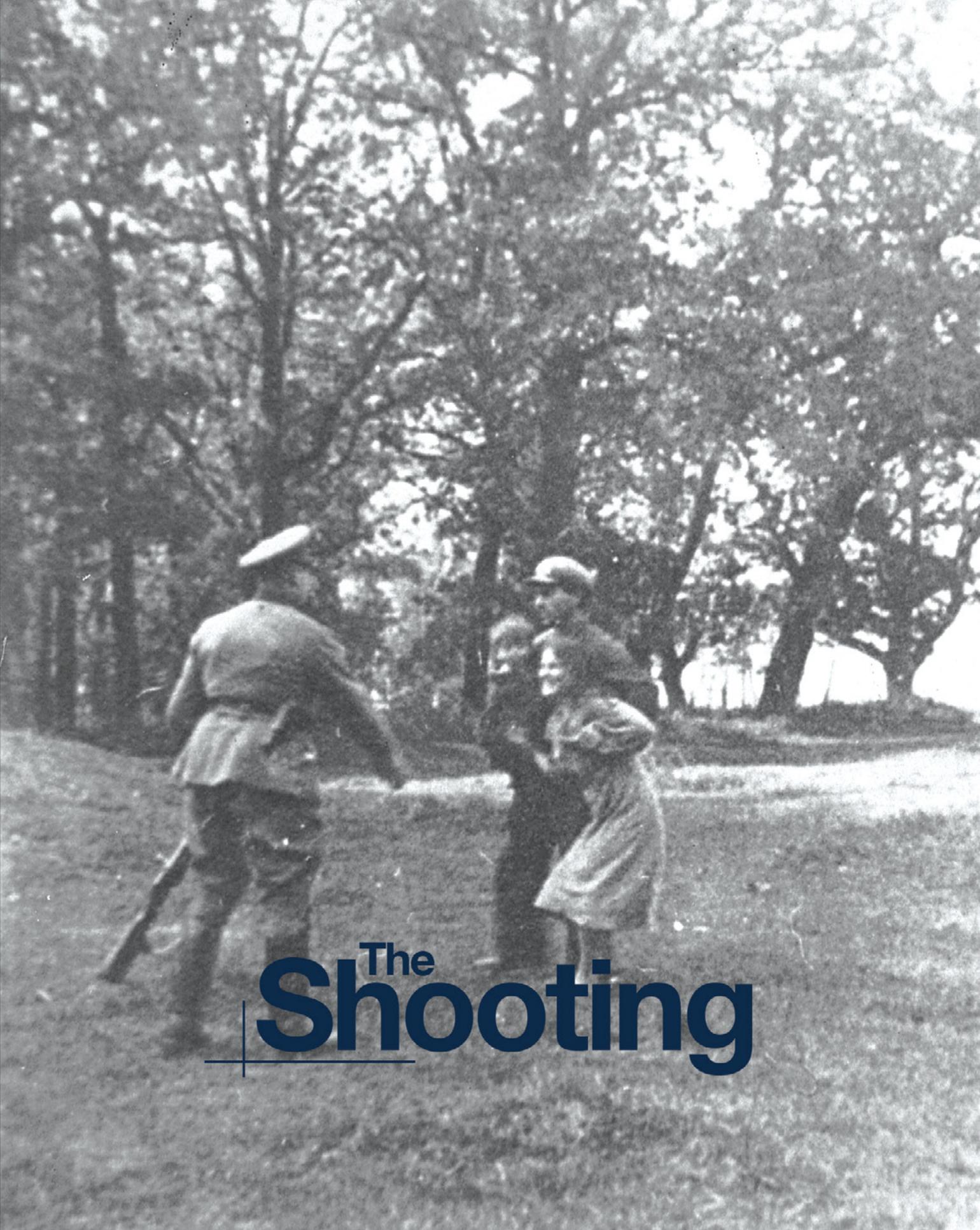
Having undressed, victims are forced to line up at the edge of the pit or inside the pit. The Einsatzgruppen or members of other Nazi units shoot the victims in the back, in the neck, in the head. Often, young children are thrown alive into the pit or shot in the arms of their mothers. Group after group, all victims fall into the pit under the gunfire of the executioners. Many of them are not yet dead when the requisitioned farmers fill in the pit. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: universe of obligation; responsibility to protect; exclusion and inclusion of Jewish victims in perceptions of witnesses and perpetrators; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; defining genocide; international response to genocide (UN); moral and ethical challenges faced by peacekeepers; totality of genocide; what can we learn from archival photographs about ideologies and individual choices?; combating Holocaust denial through documenting the Holocaust by bullets; remembering individual victims; differences between the Holocaust by bullets and death camps; motivations of perpetrators; the impact of the crime on eyewitnesses; investigating a case study of the Holocaust by bullets.

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A German police official orders a Jewish family to the edge of a mass grave where they will be shot. USSR, June 22, 1941–1943

Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Lydia Chagoll



The
Shooting

21. The Concept of the Universe of Obligation in the Context of Genocide

Helen Fein is a historical sociologist, Executive Director of the Institute for the Study of Genocide and an Associate of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. She is the author of numerous publications on genocide, collective violence, and human rights. During a lecture at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1995 Helen Fein said:

What is common among genocides besides the will of the perpetrator to eliminate a significant part of a people, the organization of that will, is the exclusion of the Other – or victim group – from the universe of obligation. The universe of obligation is the limits of the common conscience; those whom we are obligated to protect, to take into account, and to whom we must account.⁶⁶

Throughout Yahad – In Unum’s exhibition you will encounter numerous examples where victims had been removed from the universe of obligation of the perpetrators who organized and carried out the shooting operations. We also have witnesses who cared about their neighbors, often their friends, and who were traumatized by their violent deaths. We have individuals risking their own lives to save and protect their neighbors. Some protested against the executions and paid with their lives. We have human beings who were ready to kill their neighbors in order to get their clothes or valuables. There were others who looted their neighbors’ homes and businesses right after the Jews had been taken away to the execution sites. Some individuals betrayed those who had turned to them for help. Finally, though extremely rare, we have examples of perpetrators choosing to help a victim in the midst of the carnage organized by them. Each person has their universe of obligation and makes choices that alter the way it is shaped.

- Have students read two letters from perpetrators to their loved ones. The first letter was written by Karl Kretschmer who was *Obersturmführer* with *Einsatzgruppe* 4a responsible for the Babi Yar massacre. The second letter was written by Walter Mattner, SS and Police Lieutenant, about the mass shootings in Mogilev, Belarus.

Discuss with students the limits of the universe of obligation within the concept of society built in accordance with Nazi ideology. What was the place of Jews in German society under the Nazis and within a broader worldview as presented by Kretschmer and Mattner in their letters?

(Links with more information about Nazi ideology and antisemitism can be found at the end of the study guide.)

Focus points:

1. What do these two men say about Jews in their letters?
2. How do they describe the executions? What words do they use? Are they writing about what they saw or did in direct terms?
3. Do they say anything about the effect the executions had on them or other men from their units?
4. What motivations or justifications for the executions do they share with their wives?
5. How do they describe the local non-Jewish population?

⁶⁶ A full transcript of the lecture can be found at: <http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/speakers-and-events/all-speakers-and-events/genocide-and-mass-murder-in-the-twentieth-century-a-historical-perspective/genocide-and-other-state-murders-in-the-twentieth-century>

6. What do they say about their own families?
7. How do they perceive the war? Who do they blame for it?
8. Why in the midst of a world war, with resources needed on the battlefronts, is so much effort put into killing civilians? Are there any phrases in the letters that indicate a “racial” war the Nazis were fighting?
9. Do they use any words that indicate genocide? (Remind students of the definition of genocide that can be found at <http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/defining-genocide>. You can combine this activity with activity #23 where students work with the definition of genocide in more detail.)
10. Have students identify “the other” in these letters.

Letter of SS-Obersturmführer Karl Kretschmer (SK 4a):

Sunday, 27 September 1942

My dear Soska,

You will be impatient because you have received no letter from me since Monday, 21 September 1942 but I really could not write sooner. First because I once again traveled a thousand kilometers during the past few days (this time by car, two days of dust and rattling) and second because I'm ill. I am feeling wretched and am in horribly low spirits. How I'd like to be with you all. What you see here makes you either brutal or sentimental. I am no longer in the area of Stalingrad but farther north in the middle of the front. Not directly at the front but close enough for an aerial bomb to hit me one of these days. But then I have as much chance of being hit by one here as I do in Karlsruhe. As far as I know, up to now you have been spared by the English. Let's hope that's how it stays. After my experiences in Russia, my lovely home means more to me than anything else in the world. If I could pray, I would ask for you and the Homeland to be kept safe. It will be wonderful to be reunited. I know you will be surprised to hear me say that.

As I said, I am in a very gloomy mood. I must pull myself out of it. The sight of the dead (including women and children) is not very cheering. But we are fighting this war for the survival or non-survival of our people. You back home, thank God, do not feel the full force of that. The bomb attacks have, however, shown what the enemy has in store for us if he has enough power. You are aware of it everywhere you go along the front. My comrades are literally fighting for the existence of our people. The enemy would do the same. I think that you understand me. As the war is in our opinion a Jewish war, the Jews are the first to feel it. Here in Russia, wherever the German soldier is, no Jew remains. You can imagine that at first I needed some time to get to grips with this. Please do not talk to Frau Kern about this.

I am also ill (diarrhea, fever, cold shivers). It seems that everybody here has got it. The change in diet and no water to boot. After you have the great cities of Western Russia behind you you come to the endless steppe. Africa can't be worse. The country is terrible. Just dust, dust and more dust. The people vegetate in it. The damage caused by the war is soon repaired as the houses are nothing but a few beams and boards. Everything else is made out of mud, which is provided by nature. The roofs are covered with straw and hay and then mud is smeared over them. The sun bakes everything hard. As there is also a lot of chalk, everything is painted white and that's it. The women do all these jobs. There are also men about, but they must work somewhere where you can't see them. Everybody spits. Old and young. You see people taking a mouthful of sunflower seeds and then out it all shoots. The whole day. Like parrots. In the cities I encountered some kind of culture still. In the country there's nothing more to see. Everything is primitive. The only thing I still don't understand is where Stalin got his military power and arms from. The only answer must be that the entire population has been engaged in the war effort and nothing else over the last twenty years. It could not have been possible any other way.

So much for that. Now to food. I always said to you that a soldier does not go hungry. There's just one catch: food is obtained from the countryside and when you leave the rich fields of the Ukraine behind and get to the steppes some things are in short supply, e.g. butter. The army command then helps by providing us with canned and preserved food. I personally have been lucky, because we are able to buy food in view of our hard work. Buy is not the right word, the money is worth nothing, we barter. We happen to be in possession of old clothes, which are very much sought after. We can get everything here. The clothes belonged to people who are no longer alive today. So you don't need to send me any clothing or the like. We have got enough here to last us for a year. Please could you get hold of some salt for me – the white Kaisers-Kaffee type in packets. When I go on leave I'm going to bring back at least fifteen kilos of it. It is more valuable than money here.

I wrote to you that I might be able to find you a Persian rug. It now turns out that it won't be possible. First I'm no longer in the right area and second the Jewish dealers are no longer alive. What is more, a lot of people are trying to obtain carpets like that. I also heard people have paid a fortune for them. Obviously that's not something I can do. Perhaps, though, fortune is smiling on us. This is my sixth letter. Today I dispatched parcels no. 2 (butter) and 3 (two tins of sardines in oil, 2 rubber balls, 1 x tea and 2 packets of sweets for the children). ... Once the cold weather sets in you'll be getting a goose now and again when somebody goes on leave. There are over 200 chattering here, as well as cows, calves, pigs, hens and turkeys. We live like princes. ... Today, Sunday, we had roast goose (1/4 each). This evening we are having pigeon. I spread butter thick on bread. We sweeten everything with honey because there is no sugar available. Please send me your empty cans with lids (not more than 100g in weight) but no large ones. We have them filled and sealed here. We can send parcels weighing up to 1 kg in any quantity. You can send me a parcel weighing up to 1 kg with the enclosed stamps. I am just in the process of taking over the business. At the moment I have counted over 110,000 in the kitty – RM in roubles. ...

Take care of the children for me.

With longing and love

in my heart,

your Karl

Please send me the Führer and other newspapers every day. We can't get any of them here.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Klee, Ernst, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *"The Good Old Days": The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders* (New York: Konecky & Konecky, LLC, 1991), pp. 163–165.

Kretschmer, Karl. Pharmacist. Member of *Schutzpolizei* 1928–38. From mid-1938 member of Stapo. Joined NSDAP in [1939]. Was not accepted by SS following failure to satisfy requirements during a course on ideology. In August 1942 sent for service in Russia as *Obersturmführer*. September to end [of] November 1942 officer in charge of administration (*Verwaltungsführer*) in a *Teilkommando* of *Sonderkommando* 4a in Kursk. Then posted to *Kommandeur* of *Sicherheitspolizei* and SD (KdS) in Zhitomir, KdS Stuhlweissenburg in Hungary and to *Sonderkommando Ost*, which supervised the staff of the Vlasov Army. After 1945 application to return to police force turned down.⁶⁸

Letter of Walter Mattner:

Mogilev, October 5, 1941

There is still something else I have to tell you. As a matter of fact, I was also at the big mass killing the day before yesterday. During the first few truckloads, my hand was shaking a little bit when I was shooting, but you get used to it. By the tenth truck I was already aiming calmly and was shooting at the many women, children and babies in a confident manner. I was thinking about my two babies at home, but this pack of hounds would do the same thing to them, if not ten times worse. The death, which we gave them, was a beautiful short death, compared to the hellish tortures of the thousands and thousands of people in the prisons of GPU.⁶⁹ Babies flew in a wide arc through the air and we started to shoot them as they flew, before they fell into the pit and into the water. Let's get rid of this brood, which led entire Europe into war and now also agitates in America, until they finally drag them into the war. The words of Hitler, who once said before the beginning of the war: "If the Jews think, that they can incite Europe once more into a war, then the result will not be the victory of Jewry, but the end of the Jewish race in Europe!" are becoming a reality. Then, I also grasped the words of Theodor Körner's poem for the first time: "No child in the womb is going to be spared!" – ugh, yuck! I have never seen so much blood, dirt, bones and flesh before. Now I am able to understand the word blood rage. K. is again one number and three zeros poorer, but it doesn't matter. Actually, I am already excited, and a lot of people here say that about returning back to our homeland, because then our local Jews are next. Well, I shouldn't tell you too much. Enough of that, more when I come back home.

(translation by The Florida Holocaust Museum & Yahad – In Unum)

For more information about Walter Mattner and about mass shooting operations visit:

http://www.yadvashem.org/untoldstories/database/germanReports.asp?cid=234&site_id=196

http://collections.yadvashem.org/photosarchive/en-us/77431_75569.html

<http://www.yadvashem.org/untoldstories/database/homepage.asp>

■ Our Own Universe of Obligation

Have students reread Helen Fein's definition of the universe of obligation and discuss its meaning outside of genocidal circumstances. Lead a group discussion about the following concepts:

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 296–297.

⁶⁹ GPU was a Soviet secret police agency.

1. How do students define a universe of obligation in their own lives?
2. How do they understand obligation?
3. Is a universe of obligation the same as a universe of choice?
4. Is it set at a certain point in life or evolves based on our experiences?
5. Is it possible to expand the boundaries of one's universe of obligation?
6. Is there anyone or anything (e.g., a different culture) students have added to their universe over the years? What brought about that change?
7. Is there anyone or anything they would like to add to their universe of obligation but still have not and why (e.g., because of peer pressure or other limitations)?
8. As a homework activity, ask the students to write a journal entry about the concept of exclusion. Have they ever felt excluded? Do they know anyone who was excluded in any way? If so, what were the consequences and were they able to overcome it? If they could, what would they have changed in the situation of exclusion they had experienced or witnessed?

22. Individual and Communal Exclusion and Inclusion as Depicted in Personal Memories of Eyewitnesses and in Archival Photographs

- Have students read the quotes and watch the testimony of Vasile B., Maria J., Ievgueni S., or Adolf S. It is important to watch at least one testimony in its entirety. Discuss the concepts of exclusion and inclusion in reference to the following questions:
 1. What were the relationships of Jews and non-Jews before the Holocaust at the locations discussed in the testimonies?
 2. How do these witnesses feel about the murder of their neighbors?
 3. Who participated in the atrocities?
 4. How did the perpetrators know where to find Jewish residents?
 5. How were the witnesses affected by the crimes they had witnessed?
 6. What were the different individual choices of the people described in these testimonies?
 7. How were the massacre sites treated after the Holocaust by the interviewees and members of the local population? What does it tell us about ways in which victims may have been perceived?
 8. Can we identify universes of obligation of various participants in these events?

A.

P.D.: Did the Jews try to buy food outside?

E.N.: You know, our people, the Ukrainians, tried to take them food. They were people like us, we had grown up together, our parents knew their parents. We lived together, we did our shopping in their shops. The Ukrainians liked the Jews. They were good people. I remember my mother had sold a plot of land to a Jew for him to build his shop on. When I was little, we went to steal eggs there, to buy ourselves sweets.

P.D.: Do you remember the name of this shopkeeper?

E.N.: Havner. I don't remember his first name. When I was little, I went to light the fire at their house on Saturdays. It was a holiday for them. They gave us matches because they weren't allowed to use them and we lit the fire to bake a large loaf of bread. [...]

P.D.: Did you see what happened to the Jews in the cemetery?

E.N.: I saw everything that happened.

P.D.: They let you pass?

E.N.: I was able to get to the river. After that there were a lot of police. My father didn't even see me from where he was. The Jews dug the pits and it was our people who filled them in because no one was left to do it . . . The Germans asked the desiatniki to gather our men to do it. If they didn't go, they shot them. [...]

P.D.: Did they kill the children or throw them alive into the pit?

E.N.: No, they shot everybody. They were all killed together. The mothers were carrying their children in their arms. If I had been in their place, I would have wanted to die with my child. They brought them all together. Perhaps they shot people who tried to escape along the way. But Ukrainians must have buried them because that was what was done. They were human beings like me and you. [...]

P.D.: Did your father tell you what had happened that evening?

E.N.: Yes. Everyone cried when he told what had happened. There was me, my mother, and my two sisters.⁷⁰



B.

P.D.: Did the Germans ask to be served food near the pit?

H.S.: Son, the Germans didn't ask! They took the animals from the Jews by force and they made Russian cooks prepare food for them. These women are no longer alive. My aunt was among them. She is dead now. They threatened them with a machine gun. They had made a fire and turned houses upside down, taking pots. They had vodka in their trucks.

P.D.: Do you remember what the Germans wanted to eat that day?

H.S.: They would certainly have said what they wanted in advance. The starosta and the police would have given the order to slaughter animals and prepare them. There were 25 Germans with us. They arrived in three trucks. They sat down behind the truck on the edge of the pit. They had schnapps and other items in their trucks. My aunt told me not to go far from the house as I looked like a little Jewish girl; I was very thin with curly black hair. [...]

P.D.: Who guarded the Jews during the shootings? The Germans, the police?

H.S.: The Germans and the police, including Kotyha Gricha, a man from the town of Kaluga . . . But they all died in prison and are no longer alive. They were sentenced to 25 years in prison. It was mainly the Germans who guarded the Jews. [...]



⁷⁰ Desbois, *op. cit.*, pp. 186, 188, 189. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Eugenia N., b. 1934, Busk, Ukraine.



P.D.: Did people fall into the pit wounded, not dead?

H.S.: Yes. I don't know if it's true but I was told that a Jewish man who spoke Russian very well, without an accent – the Jews often pronounced 'a' in a very strong way, but he didn't – jumped into the pit without being wounded. He waited until the end of the shooting to get out. The Germans never went near the pit. They appointed Kotyha to guard the pit. The man asked Kotyha to let him come out of the pit but he killed him instead.⁷¹

Maria shares her reflections about the murder of local Jews and describes how the occupiers were able to find Jewish residents. In her testimony, Maria also discusses cases of rape of young Jewish women.



Testimony of Maria J., b. 1932,

(Broad Daylight, <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 113),

Hincăuți, Moldova.



“I asked myself why they had done this, we are all human beings.”

“The villagers showed the policemen where the Jews lived.”

Adolf talks about a small group of German gendarmes, one of whom shot the Jews while the rest were watching.

Testimony of Adolf S., b. 1928,

(Broad Daylight, <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 81),

Siemnice, Poland.



“They were all gendarmes but maybe some of them had a conscience.”



⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 90–91, 92. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Hanna S., 74 at the time of the interview in 2006, Romanivka, Ukraine.

Vasile describes how some of the villagers participated in the executions. He also discusses the profound impact the murder of Jewish children had on his belief system.

Testimony of Vasile B., b. 1921,
(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 108),
Scaieni, Moldova.



“The Jews were shot by the people of the village with the guns given by the gendarmes.”

“I saw with my own eyes how the children watched their parents being shot, then the children jumped in the pit, terrified. After, the pit was filled with the living children... God help us! Ever since, I don't believe in anything.”

Ievgueni talks about initiatives to commemorate Jewish and non-Jewish victims.



Testimony of Ievgueni S., b. 1926,
(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 17),
Ingulets, Ukraine.



“We always visit it on the 9th of May to commemorate them along with ours, because they were our compatriots too.”

- As part of the discussion about exclusion and inclusion, examine these archival photographs (one from Latvia, two from unknown locations in the former Soviet Union):
 1. Discuss with students the changes that took place in Germany since 1933, the gradual process of excluding Jews from the framework of society.

2. Ask students what were the necessary factors that made this change possible (e.g., support of enough members of society and silence of too many).
3. In what ways could Nazi ideology have influenced the way the perpetrators perceived these innocent Jewish victims?
4. What was the situation of Jews in Latvia prior to and during the Holocaust?
5. Research the historical background of the massacres of the Jews of Liepaja. Who organized them, who participated apart from the *Einsatzgruppen*? Who took pictures and filmed the scene and how did these images survive?
6. What lessons can we draw today as human beings?

Helpful links (some content is graphic):

Historical film footage: Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units); Liepaja, Latvia, 1941
http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_fi.php?MediaId=183

Latvia, USHMM's Holocaust Encyclopedia
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005443>

Archival photographs – Yad Vashem Archives
http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/museum_photos/skeden_1.asp
http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/museum_photos/skeden_2.asp

The visual evidence of the murder of the Jews of Liepaja
<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/stories/related/liepaja.asp>

Latvia
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Latvia.html>



Max Epstein and his sister Malka, who were forced to undress before being executed in pits by German forces and Latvian collaborators. The photograph is part of a series of photos documenting the massacre of some 2,800 Jews from Liepaja. Most of them were women and children. Skeden, Latvia, 15–17 December, 1941

Photo credit: Photo Archive, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem



A German police official orders a Jewish family to the edge of a mass grave where they will be shot. USSR, June 22, 1941–1943
Photo credit: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Lydia Chagoll



Members of an *Einsatzkommando* firing squad shoot a group of men standing below them in a trench, USSR 1941–1942.
Photo credit: Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW)

23. Defining, Combating, and Preventing Genocide

- Discuss with students the concept of genocide. Do they recall the definition from their previous studies or readings at school or from other sources? Put the key words students provide on the board or chart paper and ask what words they would like to add, based on their own understanding of the concept. Then help them research a full definition of genocide and its origins. How does it correspond with the definitions suggested by the students?

If your students have never studied the concept of genocide, discuss it at the beginning of your unit on the Holocaust by bullets. Activity #23 can be combined with other activities in the study guide the way you find most useful for your lesson plan.

Helpful links:

<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/defining-genocide>

<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/how-to-prevent-genocide>

<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/justice-and-accountability>

- ▶ Examine the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. What is the history of these documents? What role do they play today? What wording in these documents do the students find particularly important and why?

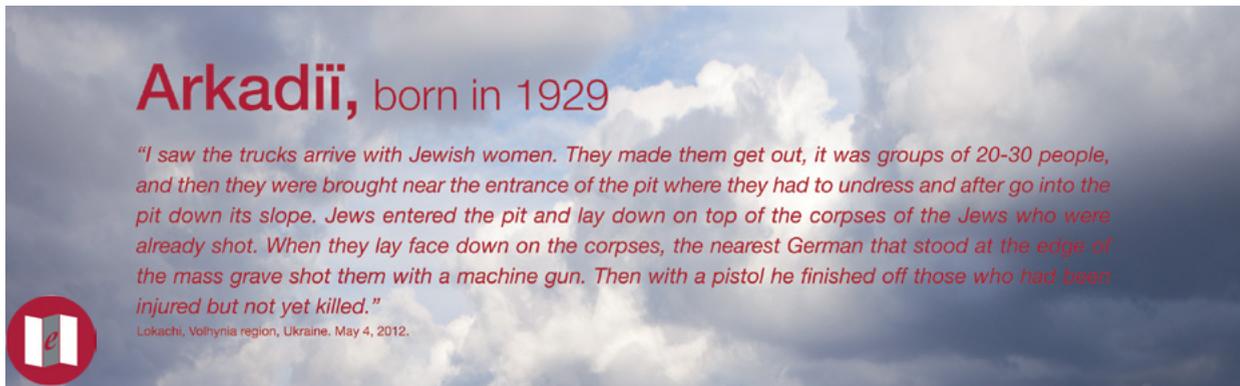
Helpful links:

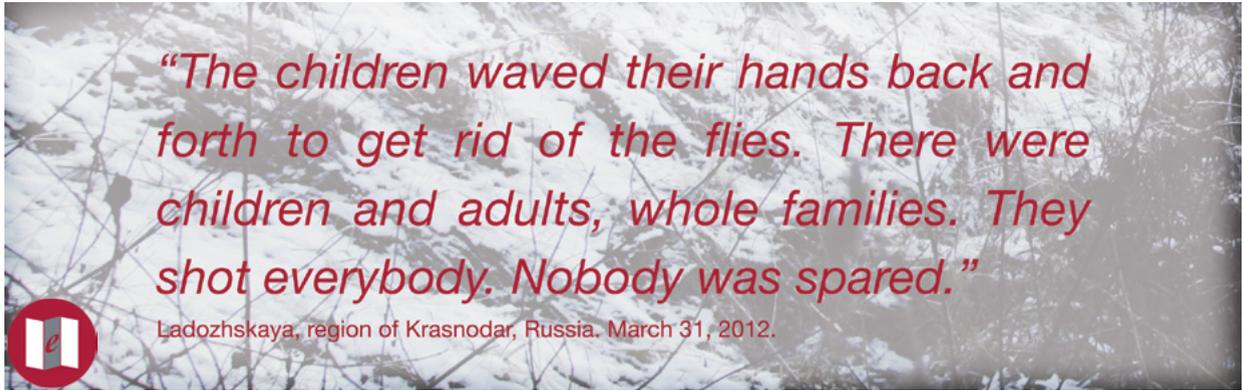
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx>

<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/defining-genocide>

- ▶ Ask students to work in pairs and try to find in the excerpts from the exhibition panels phrases or words that point to the definition of genocide, as explained in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Have students look for more phrases like this during the tour of the exhibition.





- Watch video testimony of Maria J., Aniceta B., or Stanislav M. Choose fragments with wording that corresponds with the definition of genocide. With students, discuss the differences between the Holocaust by bullets and other forms of genocide, including mass murder in gas chambers. E.g., proximity of execution sites to victims' homes; familiarity of victims with onlookers, some of the shooters, looters, rescuers; public nature of the crime; close physical distance between executioners and victims.



“There was everyone, children, women, adults...”

Testimony of Maria J., b. 1932,
(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 113),
Hincăuți, Moldova.



Testimony of Aniceta B., b. 1931,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 122),

Žagarė, Lithuania.



“Yes, everyone. Some women were carrying their children.”



Testimony of Stanislav M., b. 1913,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 27),

Grymailiv, Ukraine.



“They killed everyone.”

■ The Role of Holocaust Research in Combating Holocaust Denial

Yahad – In Unum pays a lot of attention to precise archival research, making sure the information provided by the witnesses is corroborated by the records from various archival collections. Research teams also use ballistic techniques and modern technology, including GPS, to locate exact sites of mass executions, without disturbing any of the mass graves.

Have students read the quotes below, examine the images, and discuss the significance of documenting these crimes with such precision. How can it help combat Holocaust denial?



For this activity, have students investigate a case study of Bronnaya Gora in Belarus through Yahad – In Unum’s interactive map and database at: <http://www.yahadmap.org/#village/bronnaya-gora-brest-belarus.375>. Students will be able to read excerpts from archival records, view historical and present-day photographs, and watch a clip from a video testimony of one of the witnesses.

A.



In addition to gathering testimonies on the ground, we continued with our research in the Soviet archives at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. There, far from the geese and horses of Busk, in the peace and quiet of the research center, we spent hours sitting in front of microfilm readers. We found several names of other Ukrainian witnesses from Busk who had given evidence in 1944 to the town district attorney. The Soviet archives are proportionate to the size of the country they come from: 16 million pages. In 1944, the district attorney of Busk had interrogated Ukrainian witnesses who lived in Chevtchenko Street, that long street that bordered the Jewish cemetery. Without realizing it, in 2006 we had knocked at the same doors as the district attorney did 62 years earlier. The degree to which the testimonies dovetailed with each other was astounding, in terms of both form and content.⁷²

B.



When I found out about Operation 1005, I realized that it represented the practical implementation of the Reich's denial of the genocide. All perpetrators of genocide deny their genocide, and the Third Reich did the same. The Reich set up a large machinery employing a large number of personnel in order to destroy the traces of its assassinations. For the Third Reich, denial was above all a technical issue. The 1005 commandos had the task of identifying the communal graves of the Jews, digging up the bodies, counting them, and then burning them. [...] There were various reasons for this operation. One was anti-Semitic, and could be summed up by the phrase: "They have no rights, not even to our soil." There was also a strategic reason behind this operation. The Germans had learned that whenever the Soviets arrived in a village, the first thing they would do was open the graves, photograph the bodies, and draw up a document with the help of the inhabitants of the village, the teacher, the priest, and any surviving Jews. They would also proceed with a thorough scientific analysis of the bodies. The Reich destroyed the corpses so that the Soviet commissions could not establish proof of their crimes: the war of the dead.⁷³



Cartridges found by Yahad – In Unum on site of the massacres
Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum

⁷² Ibid., p. 173. Father Patrick Desbois on fieldwork and archival research regarding Busk, Ukraine.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 155. Father Patrick Desbois on Operation 1005.

- ▶ As a follow-up, with students, visit the websites of the Anti-Defamation League, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Southern Poverty Law Center and investigate their daily work to expose and combat Holocaust denial and hate groups in the United States and elsewhere. Focus on the area where you live and discuss what steps anyone can take when faced with Holocaust denial or hate crime.

Show students where to find information online about Holocaust history (see examples of reliable websites in the webography at the end of the study guide) and discuss how to avoid Holocaust denial sites.

Research with students other organizations or programs, national and local, where residents can turn to for help when faced with Holocaust or genocide denial, hate crime, cyberhate, or civil rights violations, e.g., The Enough Project at <http://enoughproject.org/about>.

Helpful links:

for the ADL <http://www.adl.org/regions/>; <http://www.adl.org/combating-hate/>; <http://www.adl.org/about-adl/>

for the USHMM <http://www.ushmm.org/confront-antisemitism/holocaust-denial-and-distortion>; <http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/take-action-against-genocide>

for the Southern Poverty Law Center <http://www.splcenter.org/who-we-are>; <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/hate-map>; <http://www.splcenter.org/get-informed/hate-incidents>; <http://www.splcenter.org/get-involved/your-community>.

24. The Role and Perception of the United Nations in Preventing and Responding to Genocide

- With your students, find examples of pre- and post-Holocaust genocides. Research the international response to these genocides. What were the biggest challenges in responding to genocide?

What is the role of the United Nations in today's world? Have students research the goals and work of the UN, including the ways the UN responded to some of the post-Holocaust genocides, e.g., in Rwanda, Bosnia, Darfur.

Following the links provided below, with students, watch the documentary "A Good Man in Hell" about General Roméo Dallaire and read the transcript from an event featuring General Dallaire at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. General Dallaire was the commander of the UN peacekeeping mission, UNAMIR, i.e., the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda. Having received information from one of the locals, he warned his superiors at the UN about possible mass violence against the Tutsi minority. Yet he was ordered not to take action and eventually his troops were reduced to a number unable to protect anyone, including their own men. General Dallaire witnessed the genocide first hand in a community he felt he was there to protect. He has since then struggled with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and speaks openly about the psychological damage this experience caused him and his soldiers.

Transcript:

<http://www.ushmm.org/confront-genocide/speakers-and-events/all-speakers-and-events/a-good-man-in-hell-general-romeo-dallaire-and-the-rwanda-genocide>

“A Good Man in Hell”:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVX3WWj2drQ&feature=youtu.be>

Discussion points:

1. What moral and ethical dilemmas does General Dallaire point out regarding his experiences in Rwanda? How did these dilemmas affect him and his soldiers?
2. What are our expectations of the organizations created to build and maintain peace? Have your students followed media coverage of some of the UN peacekeeping missions and their outcomes?
3. How do we build our opinions about historical events?
4. What do we mean when we talk collectively about organizations or entities (including nationalities and countries)? Are these entities abstract notions?
5. With students, research the story of one of General Dallaire’s soldiers, Major Stefan Stec. What are their reflections about this particular story? How do the questions listed above relate to this individual experience?

Stefan Stec was on a patrol that discovered the first massacre documented by UNAMIR in a church in Gikondo. In his report for the UN, Major Stec used the word “genocide” for the first time in reference to the atrocities in Rwanda. He was one of the soldiers who stayed with General Dallaire throughout the bloodshed and who, in their very limited capacity, made attempts to help the victims. Like many UNAMIR soldiers, Stec suffered from PTSD. Having returned to Europe, he spoke at schools and other venues about his experiences in Rwanda. In 2005, eleven years after the genocide, Stec was one of the guests at a special screening of “Hotel Rwanda,” a movie about the genocide that also discusses the role of the UN. During a panel discussion following the screening, he was publicly criticized by members of the audience for the failure of the UN in Rwanda. Stec was gravely affected by that and died a few months later at the age of 41 from PTSD complications.⁷⁴

- General Dallaire said in “A Good Man in Hell” that “there are no humans more human than others.” Have students write a composition on how they understand this statement in light of their Holocaust and genocide studies.

⁷⁴ Information based on the content from the website of the Amahoro Foundation established by Stefan Stec (the website was accessible in the past but no longer exists), Roméo Dallaire’s “Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda,” Stefan Stec’s obituary by Linda Melvern at <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/major-stefan-stec-317771.html>, and my conversation with General Dallaire, April 2, 2011.

25. Who Were the Victims of the Holocaust? Researching Individual Stories

- Divide students into research teams and teach them how to use the Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names compiled by Yad Vashem at <http://db.yadvashem.org/names/search.html?language=en>. The database is part of the Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project whose goal is to memorialize individual Jews murdered during the Holocaust, by recording their biographical details on special forms called Pages of Testimony. These submissions are stored in Yad Vashem's Hall of Names but are searchable online through the database. The Central Database of Shoah Victims' Names currently contains 4.3 million names, approximately 2.6 million of which came from the Pages of Testimony (the remaining names were retrieved from archives and other sources). The search engine will provide either a list of names from various types of sources (e.g., archival records, lists of victims) including Pages of Testimony, or one can choose just "Pages of Testimony" in the advanced search option. Please note that there are different ways to spell names of individuals and geographical locations. The search engine automatically cross-references phonetics and synonyms in Latin, Hebrew and Cyrillic characters. The search engine also helps locate a place even if due to political changes its host country has changed. Every Page of Testimony has its English translation and a Google Maps connection to the actual location with current photographs. See a sample translated Page of Testimony at the end of this activity.

Below are several locations investigated by Yahad – In Unum that also have matching Pages of Testimony submitted over the years by various individuals independent of Yahad's project. While the exact circumstances of death in each of these cases may not always be known (and so we may not know if these were victims of mass executions), students will have an opportunity to find out who some of the individual residents of the Jewish communities were. They will be able to get a glimpse into a world that no longer exists and better understand the scope of destruction.

Each team should be assigned a separate location from among the following areas investigated by Yahad – In Unum and research corresponding Pages of Testimony:

Busk, Poland (present-day Ukraine); Novozlatopol, Poland (present-day Ukraine); Borove, Poland (present-day Ukraine); Vorokhta, Poland (present-day Ukraine); Nikolayev, Ukraine; Romanovka, Ukraine.



Students should also read about these locations through the online interactive map and database at <http://www.yahadmap.org/#map/>. Reporters from each research team should present the results of their work to the rest of the class.

Focus points for working with Pages of Testimony:

1. How many Pages of Testimony did the research teams find?
2. Who were the submitters (relatives, friends, researchers)?
3. What did students learn about the individuals commemorated on each Page?

4. Were photographs attached? What reflections did the photographs evoke?
 5. Did students come across more than one Page commemorating the same person? Who were the submitters?
 6. Based on the information missing from the Pages, what challenges did the submitters encounter while gathering the information?
 7. Some of the survivors who submitted Pages of Testimony through The Florida Holocaust Museum (Yad Vashem's partner on this project) pointed out that for the first time in their lives they felt their family members had been commemorated. Pages of Testimony commemorate victims as individuals, under their own names and identities. How did students feel working with information about individual victims of the Holocaust?
 8. Was there a Page of Testimony that students found particularly meaningful to them and why?
 9. Did the individual stories help students understand the scope of what happened at those locations?
- Through various forms of murder, the perpetrators wanted the Jews to disappear during the Holocaust. Even in the case of the executions carried out in the vicinity of the victims' homes, Jews were buried in anonymous mass graves, wells, ravines. Efforts were made to cover up traces of the crime, whether on the sites of the death camps or mass executions. The most powerful traces of the victims' existence that could not be obliterated are in the memories of those who survived and remember them.

With students, watch and discuss the testimony of Klara, who was rescued while being led to the execution site and managed to join the non-Jewish neighbors forced to observe the execution of local Jews. Klara's testimony provides a unique perspective, as she became a witness to the execution that would have ended her life. She describes the responses of Jewish victims to the atrocities as well as positive and negative ways in which non-Jewish neighbors behaved under those circumstances. What lessons can be drawn from her testimony?



“Everybody was crying and screaming...”

Testimony of Klara A., b. 1934,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 37),

Shklov, Belarus.



Have students write an essay on the significance of passing those memories on and the role of future generations as guardians of memory on behalf of those who can no longer speak for themselves. How can the Shoah Victims' Names Recovery Project help with that goal? Can students recall video testimonies used in the study guide where the eyewitnesses speak about their Jewish neighbors who had been murdered? Have students elaborate in their essays on the ways such eyewitness testimony can help retrieve and preserve identities of victims, information about their prewar life, and the circumstances of their death.

English translation of a sample Page of Testimony:

Below is a sample of what a translation of a Page of Testimony looks like. Once on Yad Vashem's website, viewers will be able to see the actual Page of Testimony by clicking on the image in the upper left-hand corner. If there are photographs available, that is where they will be located as well. Next to names of geographical locations (showing where a victim was born, resided, or died) there is an icon of a magnifying glass, clicking on which will show viewers a list of other individuals who were born, resided, or were killed at that location. Clicking on a green marker takes one to Google Maps with current images of a particular location.

Fredri Munster



Attach Image or Documentation

Fredri Munster was born in 1935 to Bernard and Sall nee Avraham. Was a child. Prior to WWII lived in Worochta, Poland. During the war was in Worochta, Poland.

Fredri was murdered in the Shoah.

This information is based on a Page of Testimony (displayed on left).

During the Shoah, Jews were murdered in a variety of ways, among them gassing, shooting, burning, drowning or burial alive, exhaustion through forced labor, starvation, epidemic diseases, deprivation of medical care and minimal hygienic conditions, and more.

Last Name:	Munster
Last Name:	Monaster
First Name:	Fredri
Age:	7
Date of Birth:	1935
Father's First Name:	Bernard
Mother's First Name:	Sall
Mother's Maiden Name:	Avraham
Marital Status:	CHILD
Permanent Place of Residence:	Worochta,Sokal,Lwow,Poland
Place during the war:	Worochta,Sokal,Lwow,Poland
Status in the source:	murdered
Submitter's Last Name:	Monaster
Submitter's First Name:	Yehoshua
Source:	Yad Vashem - Pages of Testimony Names Memorial Collection
Type of material:	Page of Testimony
Item ID:	8612866

Galina K. from Borislav, Ukraine



Marcel F. from Iasi, Romania



Valentina O. from Mstislav, Belarus



Sergueï P. from Polykovichi, Belarus



Ievguenia B. from Pskov, Russia



Photographs of eyewitnesses interviewed by Yahad – In Unum
Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum

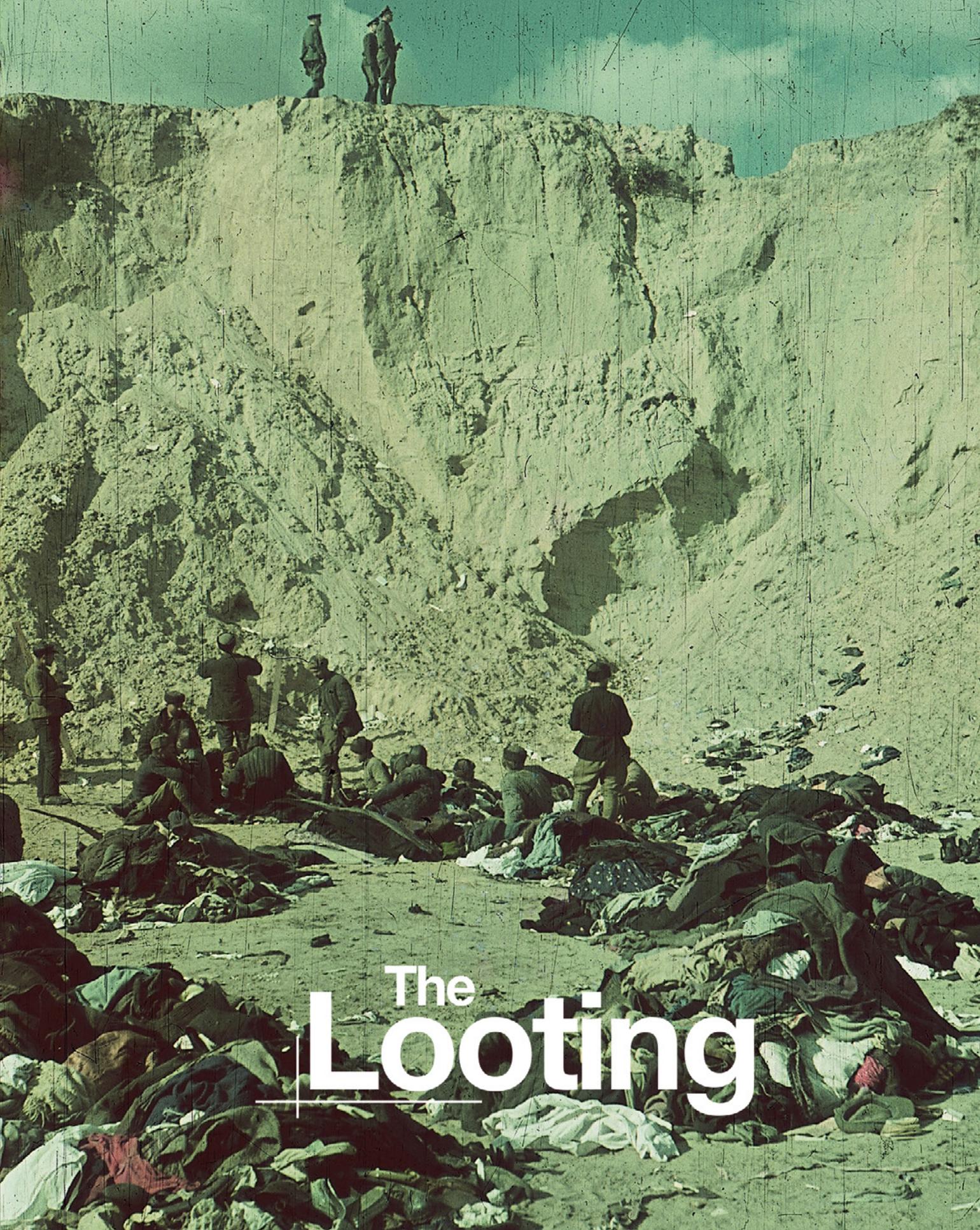


While the victims are being murdered, and the mass graves filled in, the executioners and the police rummage through the victims' belongings trying to find any hidden valuables. The belongings are then loaded by the executioners or very often by the farmers into trucks or wagons. They are then stored in a building, taken to Germany or auctioned by the German or local administration. Jewish homes and ghettos are also fully probed and sometimes dismantled to the last piece of wood by the Germans, the police, and some of the local population. (excerpt from the exhibition; definition by Yahad – In Unum)

Key concepts: ethical aspects of individual decisions; responsibility during the Holocaust; motives of looters; reversal of professional, communal, and personal values; antisemitism; collaboration; complicity; ideologies based on dehumanizing “the other”; survivors after liberation; justice after the Holocaust and other genocides; investigating a case study of the Holocaust by bullets; concepts of exclusion and inclusion; preserving the memory of individual victims; status and meaning of historic sites; landscape of genocide; long-term effects of genocide; lessons for today.

Activities in this section:		Page
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28.	The Reversal of Professional, Communal, and Personal Values during the Holocaust	122
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German policemen looking through the belongings of Jews who were murdered in the ravine of Babi Yar, Ukraine, 1941
Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research



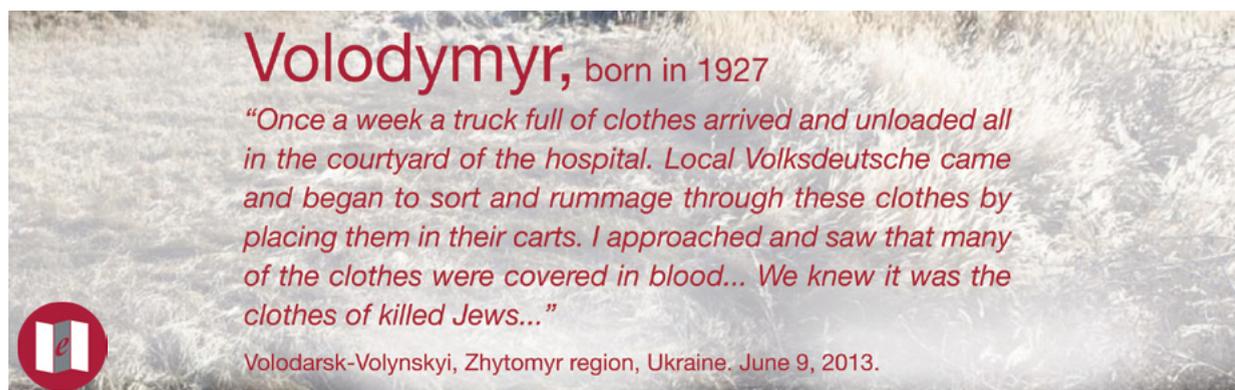
The
Looting

26. The Ethical Weight and Impact of Individual Decisions

- With students, read the quotes pertaining to the looting of Jewish belongings and watch at least one video testimony in its entirety. Have students think about the choices of the individuals described by the witnesses. Discuss the ethical dimension of these choices. Can students point out examples of specific situations in which non-Jewish neighbors participated in the looting of Jewish belongings and the opposite situations when someone objected to it? What types of motivation were behind the decisions of those who took Jewish belongings and those who were against it?

How do the interviewees feel about the different behaviors they had witnessed? Can unethical behavior of someone else have an impact on those who witnessed it?

What other steps of the Holocaust by bullets can be identified in the text excerpts and video testimonies below?



Volodymyr, born in 1927

“Once a week a truck full of clothes arrived and unloaded all in the courtyard of the hospital. Local Volksdeutsche came and began to sort and rummage through these clothes by placing them in their carts. I approached and saw that many of the clothes were covered in blood... We knew it was the clothes of killed Jews...”

Volodarsk-Volynskyi, Zhytomyr region, Ukraine. June 9, 2013.



“You can’t even imagine our childhood in those days, we were very poor. Shoes were a real luxury back then. My classmates were dressed in Jewish clothes.”

Pabalai, Siauliai region, Lithuania. November 25, 2013.

Ion, born in 1923
"The shops of the Jews, their lands, their vineyards and furniture were auctioned by the primar after the shooting."
 Olanesti, Stefan Voda region, Moldova. August 20, 2013.




Guenrikh, born in 1931
"Jewish belongings were confiscated by the Germans."
 Boryslav, Lviv region, Ukraine. August 31, 2013.



Ion, born in 1930
"The Jewish houses and shops were looted right after the shooting. They took everything: meat, gas, yeast..."
 Fintina Alba, Edinet region, Moldova. November 5, 2012.

Emilija, born in 1930
"All the Jewish belongings were brought to a warehouse. The father of my classmate was in charge of this. His son was wearing clothes of a Jewish boy, so we gave him a nickname 'Leibukas' ... that was the name of that Jewish boy."
 Seduva, Siauliai region, Lithuania. November 29, 2013.



A.

P.D.: What did they do after the executions?

H.S.: They left immediately, after having eaten and drunk well. They left policemen to guard the pit and to deal with the clothes and the papers that were in the school.

P.D.: What did the police do with the clothes?

H.S.: They took what they wanted. They took all the Jews' horses, carts and clothes. The following day, they sold all the clothes at a sort of market. They sold clothes, furniture, chairs . . .

P.D.: Were these things sold for a lot of money?

 *H.S.: I don't remember anymore. My mother was in the hospital and she said to us: "Children, don't take any of those things – they are full of blood. I may be poor but I don't want blood in my house." We didn't go. We were only children in the house; my father was at the front. They were three very difficult days, you know. The cattle roamed free in the village, coming and going, the cows mooing because they were swollen with milk. The seven Russian families of the village were afraid that they would be shot in the remaining pit. My mother had told us not to go out. And that if we had to die that we should go and get her with a wheelbarrow so that she could die with us.*

P.D.: Did they also take the animals that were left in the Jews' houses?

H.S.: It wasn't the Germans that came to take them, it was the Russians. They came to take them, kill them and sell them.

P.D.: Did they also sell the tableware?

H.S.: Yes. They only took the good things – the bad ones were left in the houses.⁷⁵

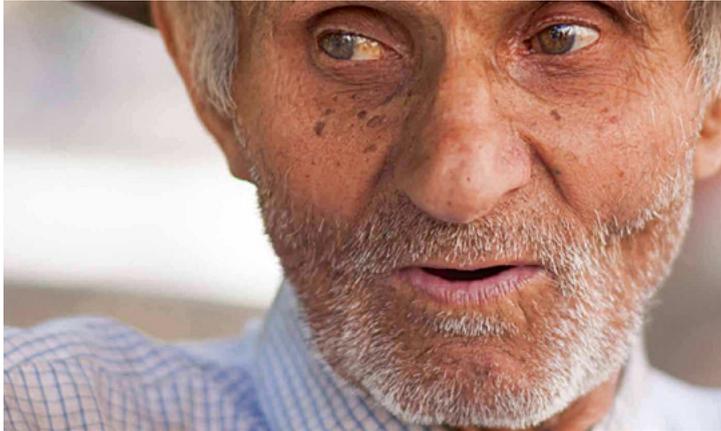
⁷⁵ Desbois, *op. cit.*, pp. 93–94. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Hanna S., 74 at the time of the interview in 2006, Romanivka, Ukraine.

B.



P.D.: Did the Germans leave the clothes or did they take them in trucks?

E.N.: They left them for the people of the village. The villagers were poor. Those who didn't have enough to clothe their children took them.⁷⁶



Testimony of Vasile B., b. 1921,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 108),

Scaieni, Moldova.



“The farmers from my village shot just for the clothing.”

Testimony of Maria J., b. 1932,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 113),

Hincăuți, Moldova.



“The villagers, they were on the outside of the fence, they were waiting for him to take them. After he took them, the villagers started to loot the house.”

“My father had educated us like that, never take anything that doesn't belong to us.”

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 188. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Eugenia N., b. 1934, Busk, Ukraine.



“There were some people collecting their shoes and clothes. I can’t understand that.”

Testimony of Aniceta B., b. 1931,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 122),

Žagarė, Lithuania.



Testimony of Emilija B., b. 1930,

(Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 131)

Šeduva, Lithuania.



“Most of the Jewish belongings were collected by those in power.”

“One should never take anything that belongs to others. If a person dies, his belongings should disappear with him. Only those without conscience can take it.”

- Visit the online version of the exhibition of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum “Some Were Neighbors: Collaboration & Complicity in the Holocaust” and examine different types of choices made by ordinary people, and their motivations:

<http://somewereneighbors.ushmm.org/#/exhibitions>

27. Levels of Responsibility during the Holocaust

- With students, watch a documentary series of PBS “Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State” and focus on the case of Oskar Gröning (DVD with the series can be borrowed from The Florida Holocaust Museum’s library). Information about the series, transcripts, and additional resources can be found at: <http://www.pbs.org/auschwitz/about/transcripts.html>; <http://www.pbs.org/auschwitz/learning/>; <http://www.pbs.org/auschwitz/40-45/victims/perps.html#groning>).

Discussion points:

1. With students, research the four counts on which the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg indicted the defendants. What were the charges in the Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings? Information about the Nuremberg trials can be found in the links to online resources at the end of the study guide and via Yad Vashem’s website at: <http://www.yadvashem.org/YV/en/exhibitions/nuremberg/about.asp>
2. How would the students define the role Oskar Gröning played during the Holocaust? Without taking upon themselves the role of judges, have students discuss whether actions of Oskar Gröning and others in similar jobs, fall into any of the categories of crimes tried at Nuremberg. Should such behavior be tried? (Students can also research other trials of the perpetrators of the Holocaust.)
3. Discuss with students the motivation behind Oskar Gröning’s public sharing of his story. Ask them what they think about his decision and whether such confessions can be an educational tool.
4. Have students research and discuss the latest developments pertaining to Oskar Gröning’s role during the Holocaust – his trial will not be over before the study guide goes to print so the links provided only contain updates as of mid-April 2015. Assign students to do more research about this trial.

Helpful links:

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/04/22/world/europe/oskar-groning-auschwitz-birkenau-guard-trial.html?_r=0

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32392594>

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/21/bookkeeper-of-auschwitz-oskar-groning-admits-moral-guilt-as-trial-opens>

28. The Reversal of Professional, Communal, and Personal Values during the Holocaust

- Have students analyze the archival photograph of a German policeman looking through the belongings of Jews who had been murdered. Ask students to read the articles provided in the links below, explaining changes in the daily work of the police after the Nazis had come to power. What contributed to the reversal of the role of those German policemen who turned from neutral professionals into some of the worst perpetrators during the Holocaust? Was the role reversal a process? How long did it take? What were the steps?

Helpful links:

German Police in the Nazi State

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005464>

German Police: From Weimar Republic to Nazi Dictatorship

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005465>

Law and Justice in the Third Reich

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005467>



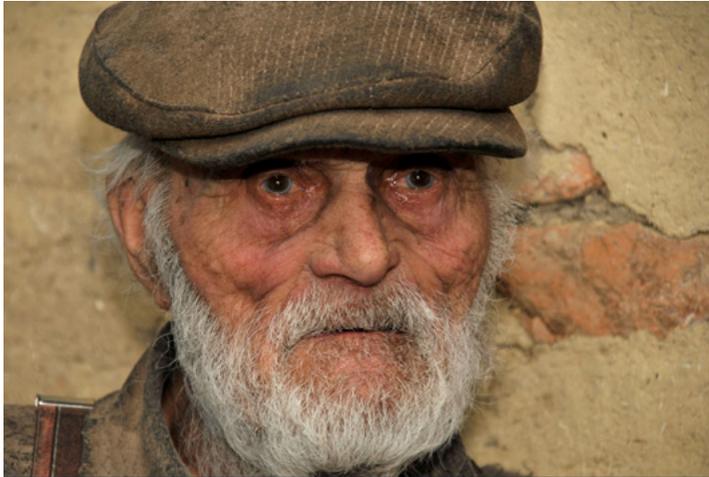
German policeman looking through the belongings of Jews who were murdered in the ravine of Babi Yar, Ukraine, 1941
Photo credit: Archives of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research

- ▶ Have students find quotes from witnesses who talk about looting in excerpts from the exhibition panels from activity #26. Go back to activity #21 and ask students to reread the letter of Karl Kretschmer. Find a passage about possessions that had belonged to the victims. Point out to students that while the murder of Jews was allowed and encouraged, stealing their belongings by the German occupiers for personal gain, officially, was not. Have students analyze the justification of this ideology in Heinrich Himmler's speech of October 4, 1943:

http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%204029.pdf

- ▶ Ask students to think about the paradox that the belongings of the victims or goods created by them were to be used or worn by the perpetrators perceiving themselves as a "superior race" whereas the human beings who owned or produced those goods were perceived as subhumans, unworthy of life. What was the system of values in Nazi ideology that supported these attitudes?

In the suggested bibliography, you will find books that will help facilitate this discussion with numerous examples showing how Jews were exploited as forced laborers, but their lives were considered worthless and mattered only as long as their work was needed. You can also use the video testimonies of Stanislav M. or Adolf S.



Testimony of Stanislav M., b. 1913,

(Broad Daylight, <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 27),

Grymailiv, Ukraine.



“There were 6 Jewish tailors that worked for Germans, but for 3 weeks only... During the day they worked in a house that was situated in a valley; and in the evening they would go back to the ghetto. One day at about 5 or 6 in the morning, Gestapo officers came to where they lived and took them some place, where they were killed.”

Testimony of Adolf S., b. 1928,

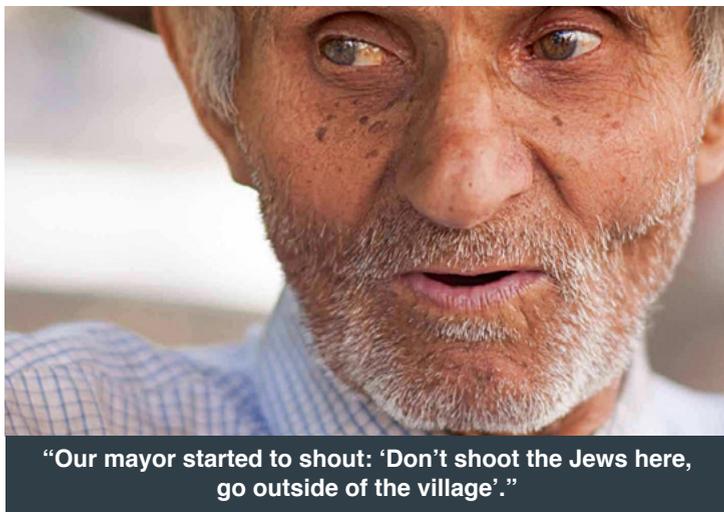
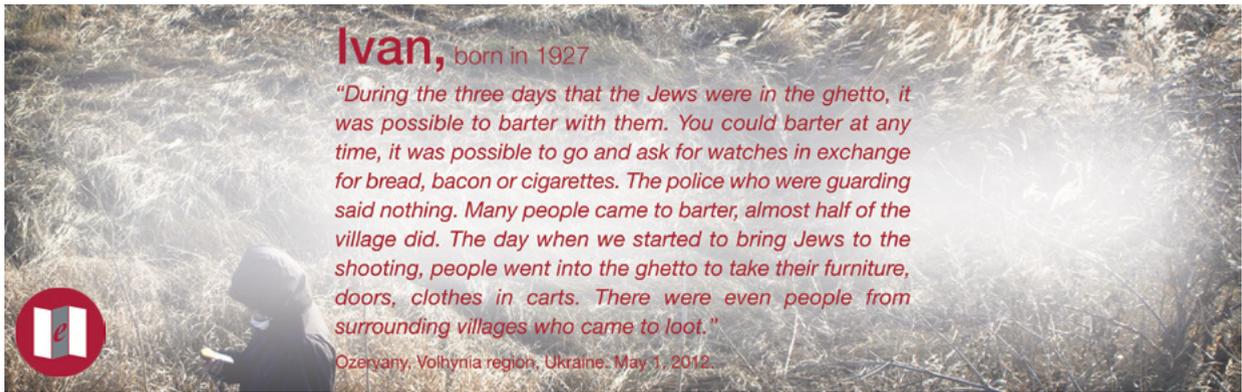
(Broad Daylight, <http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 81),

Siemnice, Poland.



“They all thought that the Germans wouldn’t kill them because they needed them to work.”

- Ask students what responses to the murder of local Jews they can identify in eyewitness video testimonies and in the exhibition. E.g., the mayor from Vasile’s testimony, when faced with the execution of Jewish residents, objected to the location where they were going to be murdered, not to the killing itself; policemen in Iossif’s testimony celebrated after the execution of local Jews and went through their belongings; neighbors in Ivan’s testimony proceeded to steal the belongings of local Jews who were being taken to the execution site. What role did the local collaborators play in the atrocities? Who were they before the war and how did the roles change?



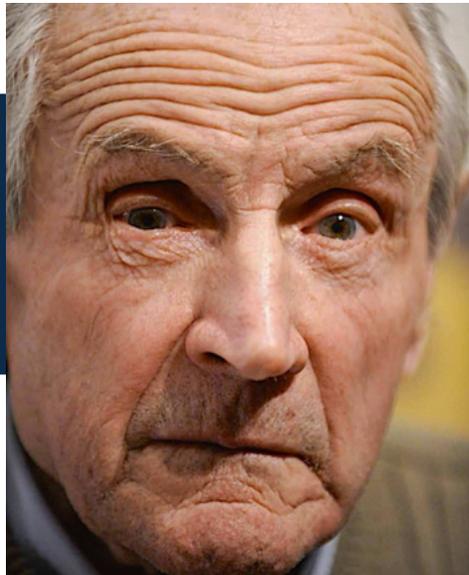
Testimony of Vasile B., b. 1921,
 (Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 108),
 Scaieni, Moldova.



Testimony of Iossif P., b. 1927,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 22),

Bibrka, Ukraine.



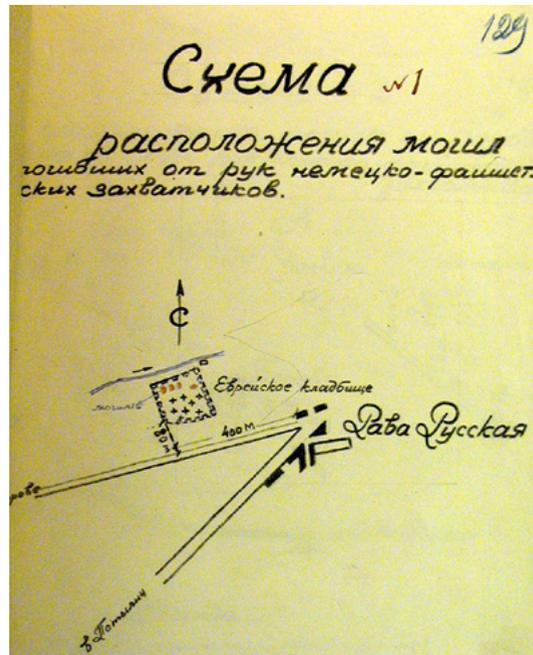
“After all that the Jews’ things were brought to a bojnitsa,⁷⁷ and they went through them in the hope of finding dollars, valuable objects, etc. They took everything. I also know that afterwards – we saw this because we were hidden behind some bushes – they drank vodka in celebration at what they had done.”

29. The Concept of Justice after Genocide

- Have students read the quotes below and watch the testimonies of Klara A. and Ievgueni S. from two separate locations. Klara is a Jewish survivor, Ievgueni was requisitioned for transporting Jewish belongings from the site of the shooting. What type of legal consequences in their respective countries do they mention with regard to the crimes they experienced?

Divide students into research teams and have them look for information about the trial of the *Einsatzgruppen* during the Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings, as well as other trials pertaining to these massacres, including trials of local collaborators (use resources recommended at the end of the study guide). Can one talk about a sense of justice? How could the notion of justice be perceived from the perspectives of various participants in the events?

⁷⁷ synagogue



A drawing from the records of the Extraordinary State Commission to Investigate German-Fascist Crimes Committed on Soviet Territory showing mass graves in Rava-Ruska, Ukraine.

Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum



For this activity, have students investigate a case study of Rava-Ruska in Ukraine through Yahad – In Unum’s interactive map and database at: <http://www.yahadmap.org/#village/rava-ruska-rava-russkaya-rawa-ruska-iviv-ukraine.244>. Students will be able to read excerpts from archival records, view historical and present-day photographs, and watch a clip from a video testimony of one of the witnesses.

Helpful links:

Nuremberg Trials 60th Anniversary: The Einsatzgruppen

http://archive.adl.org/education/dimensions_19/section3/einsatzgruppen.html#.VH6SNYfwvIU

Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings, Case #9, The Einsatzgruppen Case

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007080>

War Crimes Trials: Crystallization of the Principles of International Criminal Law

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0020_0_20618.html

P.D.: Who guarded the Jews during the shootings? The Germans, the police?

H.S.: The Germans and the police, including Kotyha Gricha, a man from the town of Kaluga . . . But they all died in prison and are no longer alive. They were sentenced to 25 years in prison. It was mainly the Germans who guarded the Jews. [...]

P.D.: Did people fall into the pit wounded, not dead?

H.S.: Yes. I don't know if it's true but I was told that a Jewish man who spoke Russian very well, without an accent – the Jews often pronounced 'a' in a very strong way, but he didn't – jumped into the pit without being wounded. He waited until the end of the shooting to get out. The Germans never went near the pit. They appointed Kotyha to guard the pit. The man asked Kotyha to let him come out of the pit but he killed him instead.⁷⁸



Testimony of Klara A., b. 1934,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 37),

Shklov, Belarus.



“The other one was locked in a jail, then thanks to me testifying for him, I testified at his trial, and he was released.”



Testimony of Ievgueni S., b. 1926,

(Broad Daylight,
[http://www.yahadinunum.org/
broad-daylight/](http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/), p. 17),

Ingulets, Ukraine.



“Later on, one who was a kommandant of the Jewish colony has run away, another was executed by hanging; and the third one was sentenced to 20 or so years in Siberia's camps...”

⁷⁸ Desbois, *op. cit.*, p. 92. Father Patrick Desbois and witness Hanna S., 74 at the time of the interview in 2006, Romanivka, Ukraine.

- ▶ Encourage students to research attempts to bring perpetrators of other genocides to justice. They can seek information about The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the Gacaca court system in Rwanda, and other initiatives. In the links below, students can find information about trials, interviews with victims and perpetrators, and recommendations of other resources (books, videos, links to testimony collections).

Helpful links:

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

<http://www.icty.org>

Background Information on the Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda

<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgjustice.shtml>

USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive Online

<http://vhaonline.usc.edu/login.aspx>

Kwibuka, Testimonies – Personal Stories from the Genocide against the Tutsi

<http://www.kwibuka.rw/learn/testimonies>

- Have students look for testimonies of Holocaust survivors discussing liberation (links are provided below). What challenges did survivors face after the liberation (e.g., realization that they had lost all their relatives, loneliness, antisemitism of former neighbors, new political system, a sense of injustice, prolonged stay in DP camps, difficult beginnings in new countries)? How did they try to rebuild life? What do survivors say about moral, legal, and religious aspects of the post-Holocaust reality?

Links to the samples of some of the major video testimony collections available online – collections of Yahad – In Unum, The Florida Holocaust Museum, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, USC Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem:

Helpful links:

<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>

<https://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/explore/testimonies/>

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_list.php?MediaType=oh

<http://sfi.usc.edu/clipviewer>

<http://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/remembrance/multimedia.asp#!prettyPhoto>

30. Landscape of Genocide

- Ask students to share their reflections evoked by this image, without letting them know that it shows an execution site in Odelsk, Belarus. Have them write on the board words they would use to best describe it.



Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum



After completing this part of the activity, share with students what the image shows, and together study the information about Odelsk through Yahad – In Unum’s interactive map and database at <http://www.yahadmap.org/#village/odelsk-grodno-belarus.439>. Students will be able to read excerpts from archival records, view historical and present-day photographs, and watch a clip from a video testimony of one of the witnesses.

What words and reflections would they add to the list compiled earlier?

Follow up with a discussion of the points below:

1. Discuss with students other present-day images of the execution sites they saw during the tour of the exhibition. Investigate sites of other genocides, e.g., in Rwanda. Research the story of Rwandan survivor Immaculée Ilibagiza and see the contrast between the way Rwanda was described before the genocide and how the landscape was transformed into a site of carnage by the génocidaires. Discuss other examples of how humans destroyed a land or used objects against their original purpose in order to kill others (e.g., a cattle car to transport people to their deaths).

2. Analyze with students the following comment from Father Patrick Desbois and, as a homework assignment, ask them to write a short essay reflecting their own understanding of the comment and of the feedback provided by other students during the discussion:



The Nazis had taken away beauty from everything. The most luscious green landscapes became extermination fields, and Ukrainian children became the hired hands of death. The perpetrators of genocide used everything – cliffs, grain silos, beaches, irrigation wells, ditches. Everything that could be closed off was used as a prison. Schools, town halls, synagogues, wine cellars, police stations, shops, the kolkhoze pigsties, chicken houses, and stables, had become, one after the other, the antechambers of death. The landscape, buildings, and children became, in the hands of the assassins, tools to exterminate the people of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.⁷⁹

- Genocide does not only transform landscapes but can also impact “mindscapes,” the way people think of their surroundings, their communities, and themselves. Despite the passage of time, the site of mass violence remains a place where crime was committed and where people suffered. Nevertheless, it does not necessarily mean that it is recognized as such or acknowledged. Yahad – In Unum identifies individual killing sites and establishes their coordinates on the maps, interviews eyewitnesses, conducts research and educates about the atrocities. Decisions whether to mark the sites and how to preserve the memory within present-day communities are made by community members and local authorities. The goal of this activity is to help students understand why it is important to mark the killing sites and to raise awareness about the Holocaust by bullets. Discussion points focus on how members of present-day communities but also visitors, educators, and students, can help commemorate individual victims and what lessons can be drawn from this part of Holocaust history. How can eyewitness interviews collected by Yahad – In Unum contribute to those efforts? How can we use survivor testimonies to help educate post-Holocaust generations?

Yahad – In Unum’s research confirms that some execution sites are marked, some memorials reflect the political climate they were built in, sometimes memorials were built after Yahad – In Unum’s researchers had left. Some sites have been desecrated, some are acknowledged by the local community, others remain identified only in the witnesses’ memory. While some of the sites are located in isolated areas, others are part of present-day communities.

Discussion points:

1. In the interviews and data collected by Yahad – in Unum, one sees various types of responses to the massacre sites. Divide students into pairs or small groups and discuss the following concepts:

a. Think about the questions from the first activity in the study guide, about the relevance of this part of Holocaust history for eyewitnesses today. In the video testimonies or text excerpts you have studied for other activities, have students find comments indicating the way witnessing genocide affected the interviewees. How do they talk about these experiences and the actual sites today? How did it impact survivors?

b. In some cases, atrocities of the Holocaust by bullets were committed on the witnesses’ property. Analyze Father Desbois’ reflections after meeting Galina B. and her mother Anna who shared her story on her deathbed. Anna’s family hid a Jewish girl during the war. Unable to bear the confinement, she ventured out to play but was noticed by a passing German and shot to death against the door of Anna’s house.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 98.



Galina B. on the doorstep of Anna's house. Photo credit: Yahad – In Unum



“Mama wanted that to be known before she died. For us, it was a great trauma that that young girl whom we hid was assassinated so savagely against the front door to our house.” I left them, reflecting on the limitless barbarity that all these people had undergone. Every street and house was wounded, bleeding, and blood-stained.⁸⁰

2. What responses from eyewitness testimonies do students recall with regard to the landscape of genocide and present-day communities? Were the sites of atrocities examined in the case studies from previous activities marked and commemorated (see activities #6, 15, 23, or 29)?

With students, watch the entire testimony of Adolf S. from Siemnice, Poland. Adolf identifies the unmarked spot where the execution of Jewish residents had taken place and explains how the area right next to it is being used by the villagers today. In 2005, the remains of the victims were moved to the Jewish cemetery in a nearby village.

Have a group discussion about the following points:

- a. What do we learn from Adolf's testimony about the execution site and its current status (current as of the date of the interview)?
- b. What can precise marking of execution sites mean for survivors, relatives of victims, post-Holocaust generations, and local communities? Why is identifying individual sites significant in the era of Holocaust denial?
- c. What is the role of the next generations among the residents of a given area in ensuring the atrocities are not forgotten and victims are remembered?

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 194.

- d. How do students understand the concept of exclusion and inclusion in individual and communal memory?
- e. How could local initiatives help maintain the memory of pre-Holocaust community life, with its complexity, as part of shared local history and heritage?
- f. In what ways can honoring the victims and raising awareness about the atrocities help teach lessons about man's inhumanity to man that are relevant to new generations?
- g. Why is it important to remember victims as individuals?
- h. How can educators and students, both local and long distance, assist with commemorating those who perished? What educational projects can be part of this process?
- i. Adolf provides detailed information about the crime. Would we have a chance to learn so much about the Holocaust by bullets and its victims without the eyewitnesses interviewed by Yahad – In Unum? What lessons can we draw from these individual first-hand accounts?



“We organize weddings and other parties there.”

“The pit was right here.”

Testimony of Adolf S., b. 1928,
 (Broad Daylight,
<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 81),
 Siemnice, Poland.



In addition to Adolf's testimony you can also discuss the interviews of Ievgueni S. or Vasile B.: testimony of Ievgueni S., b. 1926, (<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 17), Ingulets, Ukraine; testimony of Vasile B., b. 1921, (<http://www.yahadinunum.org/broad-daylight/>, p. 108), Scaieni, Moldova.

- Have students research post-genocide reality in Rwanda where victims often have to live alongside perpetrators. Discuss the ongoing impact such circumstances can have on these individuals. How does Immaculée Ilibagiza describe the way she and those around her had been affected by the crime? How did perceptions of themselves, their lives and of the world at large change? (Titles of Immaculée Ilibagiza's books can be found in the suggested bibliography.)

- Based on the students' previous studies of Holocaust history, discuss the Wannsee conference held on January 20, 1942, its participants, goals, and outcome. Together, look at the images of the site where the conference took place, and talk about the way it was misused by humans who gathered to discuss the logistics of annihilating their fellow human beings. Have students research the history of the villa in Wannsee and what purpose it serves today.

Further discussion points:

1. Discuss the role of historic sites in Holocaust education. How do your students, as representatives of the young generation, envision Holocaust education in the future?
2. Have your students met a survivor of the Holocaust or another genocide? Prepare pages of easel pad paper on which students can share inspirational messages from the survivors they have met and which they would like to share with others. Did meeting a survivor change the way students think about historic sites referenced in testimonies?
3. How do students understand the role of historic sites after studying the eyewitness testimonies collected by Yahad – In Unum? Why is it important to maintain them but also to raise awareness about the events that took place there? Has it altered the way they perceive historic sites in their own vicinity in relation to local history?
4. What has been the most meaningful learning experience with regard to studying Holocaust history, including the Holocaust by bullets, that students would like to share with others?



Photo credit: Urszula Szczepinska

Glossary

Developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Entries in blue are hyperlinks to the USHMM's Holocaust Encyclopedia

Antisemitism: hostility toward or hatred of Jews as a religious or ethnic group, often accompanied by social, economic, or political discrimination.

Appellplatz: German word for roll call square where prisoners were forced to assemble.

Aryan: Term used in Nazi Germany to refer to non-Jewish and non-Gypsy Caucasians. Northern Europeans with especially "Nordic" features such as blonde hair and blue eyes were considered by so-called race scientists to be the most superior of Aryans, members of a "master race."

Auschwitz: the largest Nazi concentration camp complex, located 37 miles west of Krakow, Poland. The Auschwitz main camp (Auschwitz I) was established in 1940. In 1942, a killing center was established at Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II). In 1941, Auschwitz-Monowitz (Auschwitz III) was established as a forced-labor camp. More than 100 subcamps and labor detachments were administratively connected to Auschwitz III.

Birkenau: Nazi camp also known as Auschwitz II (see Auschwitz above), Birkenau contained systematic mass killing operations. It also housed thousands of concentration camp prisoners deployed at forced labor.

Buchenwald: a large [concentration camp](#) established in 1937 by the Nazis. It was located in north-central Germany, near the city of Weimar.

Buna: Industrial plant established by the I.G. Farben company on the site of Auschwitz III (Monowitz) in German-occupied Poland. I.G. Farben executives aimed to produce synthetic rubber and synthetic fuel (gasoline), using forced labor. Thousands of prisoners died there.

Concentration camp: Throughout German-occupied Europe, the Nazis established camps to detain and, if necessary, kill so-called enemies of the state, including Jews, Gypsies, political and religious opponents, members of national resistance movements, homosexuals, and others. Imprisonment in a concentration camp was of unlimited duration, was not linked to a specific act, and was not subject to any judicial review. In addition to concentration camps, the Nazi regime ran several other kinds of camps including labor camps, transit camps, prisoner-of-war camps, and [killing centers](#).

Crematorium: a facility containing a furnace for reducing dead bodies to ashes by burning.

Criminal Police (Kripo): German police detective force responsible for investigating non-political crimes.

Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units): mobile units of the German Security Police and SD augmented by Order Police and Waffen-SS personnel. These units followed the German army as it invaded the nations of central and eastern Europe. Their duties included the arrest or murder of political opponents and potential resistance. In Poland in 1939, these units were assigned to shoot Polish intellectuals and to concentrate the Jewish population into large cities. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941,

Einsatzgruppen personnel killed Jews, Soviet political commissars, Gypsies (Roma), mentally disabled persons, and other perceived “racial” and ideological enemies, usually by mass shootings.

Euthanasia: “euthanasia” (literally, “good death”) usually refers to the inducement of a painless death for a chronically or terminally ill individual. In Nazi usage, however, “euthanasia” was a euphemistic term for a clandestine program which targeted for systematic killing institutionalized mentally and physically disabled patients, without the consent of themselves or their families.

Fascism: a political movement that exalts the collective nation, and often race, above the individual and that advocates: a centralized totalitarian state headed by a charismatic leader; expansion of the nation, preferably by military force; forcible suppression and sometimes physical annihilation of opponents both real and perceived.

“Final Solution”: the Nazi plan to annihilate the European Jews.

Generalgouvernement (General Government): that part of German-occupied Poland not directly annexed to Germany, attached to German East Prussia, or incorporated into the German-occupied Soviet Union.

Gestapo: the German Secret State Police, which was under SS control. It was responsible for investigating political crimes and opposition activities.

Ghetto: a confined area of a city in which members of a minority group are compelled to live. The first use of the term “ghetto” for a section of a city in which Jews lived was in Venice, Italy, in 1516.

Gypsy: a traditional term, sometimes perceived as pejorative, for **Roma**, a nomadic people whose ancestors migrated to Europe from India. Nazi Germany and its Axis partners persecuted and killed large numbers of Roma during the era of the Holocaust.

Heydrich, Reinhard: (1904–1942) SS General and chief of the Security Police and SD. Sometime in December 1940, Heydrich was tasked with developing a “Final Solution” of the Jewish question in Europe.

Himmler, Heinrich: (1900–1945) *Reichsführer*-SS (Reich Leader of the SS) and Chief of German Police, a position which included supreme command over the Gestapo, the concentration camps, and the Waffen-SS. After 1943, Himmler was Minister of the Interior of Nazi Germany, principal planner for the aim of Nazi Germany to kill all European Jews.

Hitler, Adolf: (1889–1945) *Führer* (leader) of the National Socialist (Nazi) movement (1921–1945); Reich Chancellor of Germany 1933–1945; *Führer* of the German Nation (1934–1945).

Holocaust: The Holocaust was the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims. Six million were murdered.

Kapo: a concentration camp prisoner selected to oversee other prisoners on labor details. The term is often used generically for any concentration camp prisoner to whom the SS gave authority over other prisoners.

Killing centers: The Nazis established killing centers for efficient mass murder. Unlike **concentration camps**, which served primarily as detention and labor centers, killing centers (also referred to as “extermination camps” or “death camps”) were almost exclusively “death factories.” German SS and police murdered nearly 2,700,000 Jews in the killing centers either by asphyxiation with poison gas or by shooting.

Kommando: German word for detachment, such as a detachment of concentration camp prisoners at forced labor.

Kristallnacht: usually referred to as the “Night of Broken Glass.” It is the name given to the violent anti-Jewish **pogrom** of November 9 and 10, 1938. Instigated primarily by Nazi party officials and the SA (Nazi Storm Troopers), the pogrom occurred throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and the Sudetenland region of Czechoslovakia.

Mengele, Dr. Josef: (1911–1979) SS physician assigned to Auschwitz; notorious for conducting so-called medical experiments on inmates, especially twins and dwarfs.

Ordnungspolizei (Order Police; Orpo): regular uniformed German police force. Central Headquarters were in Berlin. Municipal Police (Schutzpolizei) served as the urban police forces. Gendarmerie, or rural police, served in the countryside. There were also larger units of Order Police called Police Battalions.

Preventive Arrest (Vorbeugungshaft): Instrument of detention that permitted criminal police detectives to take persons suspected of engaging in criminal activities into custody without warrant or judicial review of any kind. Preventive arrest usually meant indefinite internment in a concentration camp.

Protective Detention (Schutzhaft): Instrument of detention that permitted secret state police detectives to take persons suspected of pursuing activities hostile to state interests into custody without warrant or judicial review of any kind. Protective custody most often meant indefinite internment in a concentration camp.

Red Army: the army of the Soviet Union.

Reich Security Main Office (Reichssicherheitshauptamt; RSHA): Headquarters of the Commander of the Security Police and SD. Included the central offices of the Gestapo, the Kripo, and the SD. Commanded by Reinhard Heydrich and, later, Ernst Kaltenbrunner.

“**Resettlement**”: a Nazi euphemism for **deportation** and murder.

Reich Commissariat Ostland: a German civilian occupation region that included the Baltic States and most of Belarus.

SS: German abbreviation for *Schutzstaffel* (literally, protection squads). A paramilitary formation of the Nazi party initially created to serve as bodyguards to Hitler and other Nazi leaders. It later took charge of political intelligence gathering, the German police and the central security apparatus, the concentration camps, and the systematic mass murder of Jews and other victims.

Sachsenhausen: the principal Nazi concentration camp for the Berlin area.

Security Service (Sicherheitsdienst; SD): an SS agency which served as the political intelligence service of the Nazi party and, later, of the German Reich. The SD also claimed to be the repository of the intellectual elite of the Nazi SS. The SD played a central role in carrying out the Holocaust. All key departments of the Security Police were commanded by SD officers.

Sonderkommandos (special detachments): in killing centers, Sonderkommandos consisted of those prisoners selected to remain alive as forced laborers to facilitate the killing process, particularly the disposal of corpses.

Synagogue: in Judaism, a house of worship and learning.

Upper Silesia: an area that Nazi Germany annexed in 1939 after invading and conquering Poland.

Weimar Republic: Name for the parliamentary democracy established in Germany from 1919–1933, following the collapse of Imperial Germany and preceding Nazi rule.

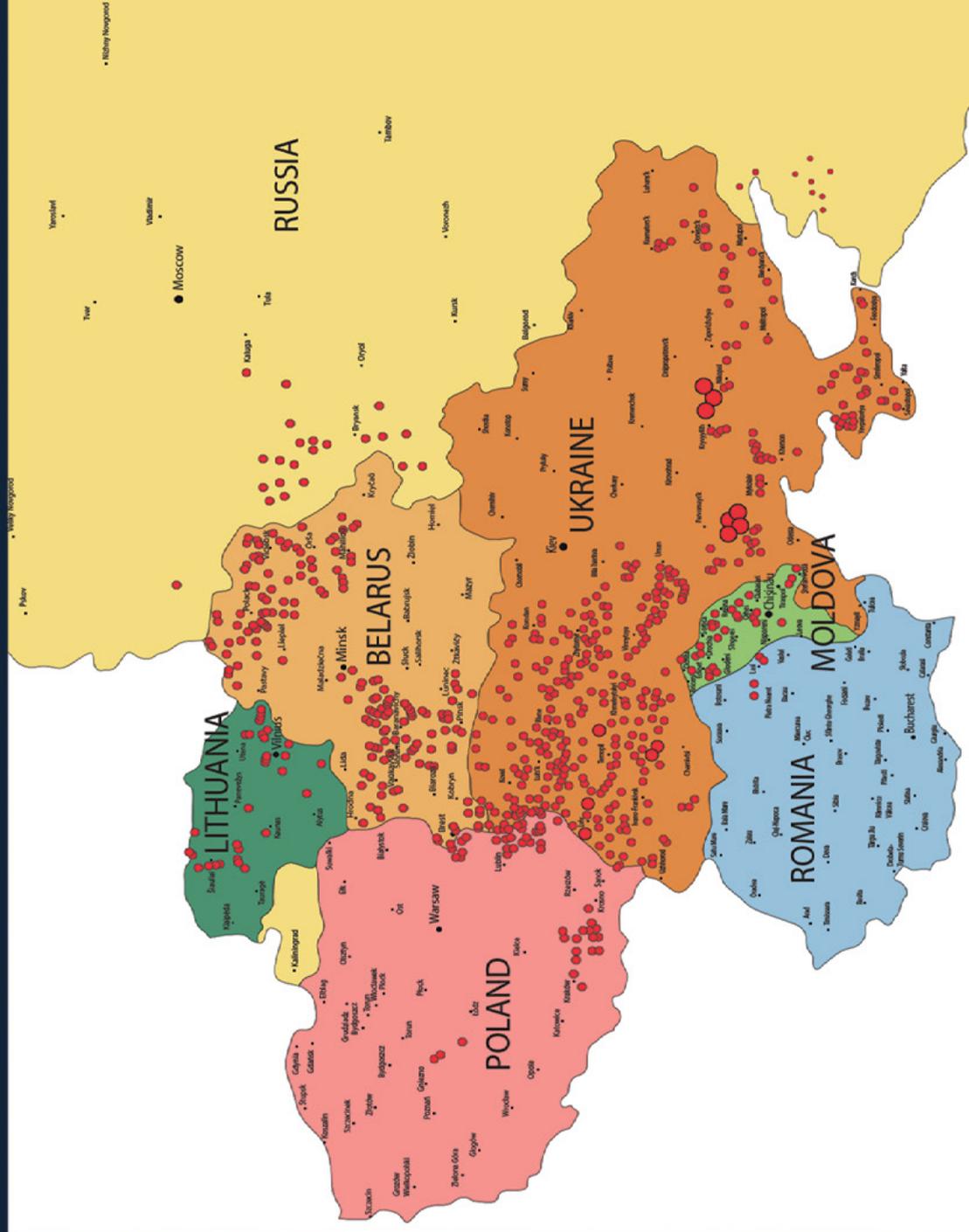
Yellow star: a badge featuring the Star of David (a symbol of Judaism) used by the Nazi regime during the Holocaust as a method of visibly identifying Jews.

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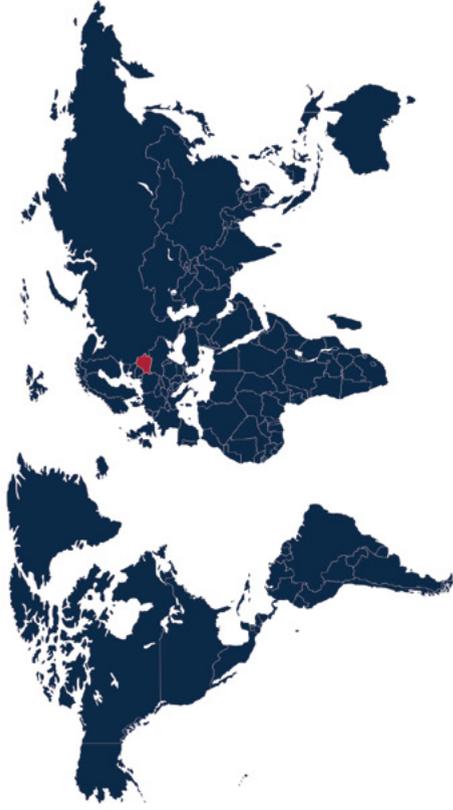
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Maps from the collection of Yahad – In Unum



Execution sites of Jewish victims investigated by Yahad – In Unum



BELARUS

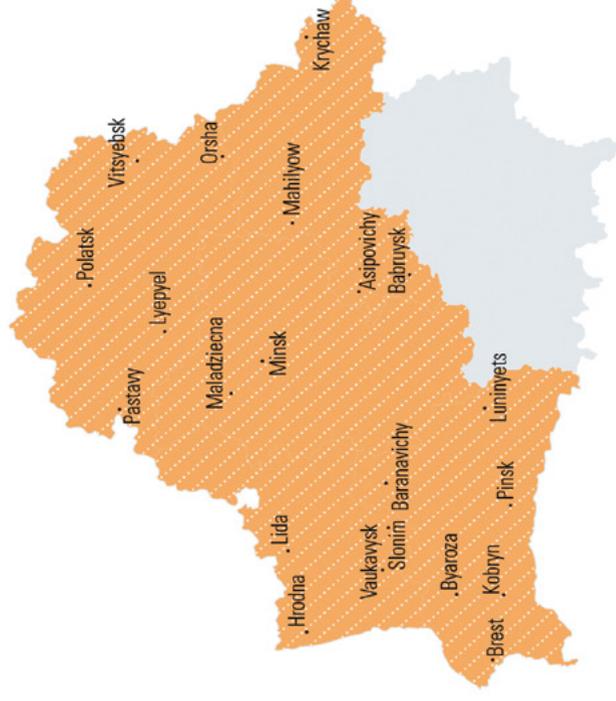
So far, Yahad – In Unum has interviewed 701 witnesses in Belarus and located 279 sites of execution by shooting.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Before the war, almost one million Jews lived in the territory of present-day Belarus. From the beginning of the occupation, the Germans began to execute the Jews, the intelligentsia and the Soviet activists. The creation of ghettos was frequently accompanied by shootings. But the biggest mass shootings took place during the liquidation of the ghettos, especially between April of 1942 and the winter of 1942/1943. The last ghetto in Belarus, located in Minsk, was liquidated in October of 1943.

In addition, many Jews, including specialists, were detained and exploited in labor camps (Lida, Ivie, Chtchoutchine, Novogrodek). They were eliminated some time later. As part of their policy of extermination, the Nazis deported thousands of Jews from Minsk and Lida to the death camps in German-occupied Poland.

Following the amplification of the partisan movements, particularly active in the region, the Germans accelerated the process of extermination of the Jews, and also massacred thousands of Belarussian civilians, burning and destroying whole villages.





LITHUANIA

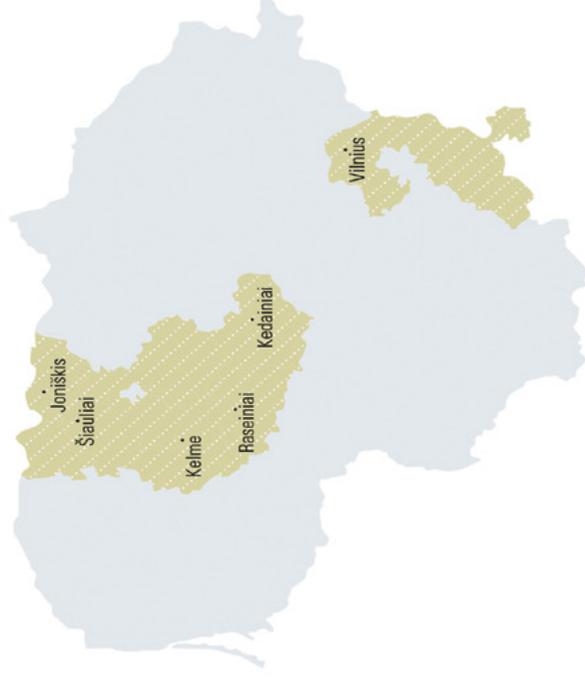
Yahad – In Unum has conducted 3 research trips in 2013–2014. During the investigation, 76 witnesses have been interviewed and 44 mass graves have been located in 2 different regions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Once known as the Jerusalem of the North, the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius was home to a large Jewish community for many centuries. Some 100,000 Jews, called Litvaks, lived in Vilnius before World War II, making up about 45% of the city's total population. About the same number lived in other regions of Lithuania during the same period.

During the Nazi occupation that lasted from June 1941 to January 1945, more than a dozen Jewish ghettos were established, as well as several concentration camps. A total of 90% of Lithuania's Jews were murdered by occupying forces and local collaborators, however there were hundreds of Lithuanians who risked their lives sheltering the Jews.

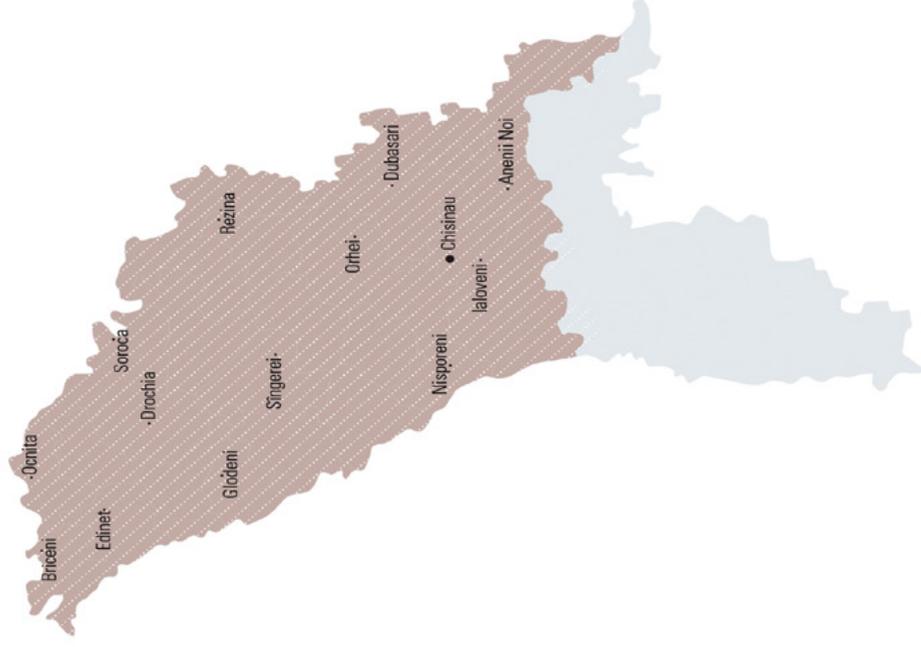
Most of the Holocaust victims in Lithuania were taken into the woods to be shot in graves they were forced to dig themselves. The woods of Paneriai outside Vilnius and the Ninth Fort in Kaunas, which is the second largest city of Lithuania, were the sites of large-scale massacres.





MOLDOVA

Yahad – In Unum has conducted 4 research trips to Moldova. During its investigation, Yahad – In Unum collected 158 testimonies about the Holocaust in Moldova and identified 57 sites of execution.

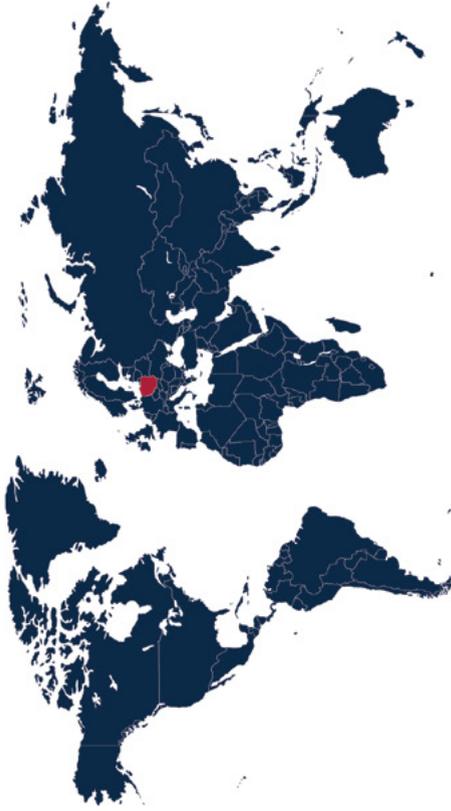


HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Yahad – In Unum's first research trip to Moldova took place in 2012. The former Bessarabia experienced a wave of violent and rapid massacres against the Jews in the summer of 1941. From the first days of Operation Barbarossa, Romanian troops allied with the Reich exterminated the Jews of Moldovan villages by shooting, beating, and drowning. Hundreds of thousands of Jews were murdered in Bessarabia during the single month of July 1941.

Jews who remained alive were gathered and packed into transit camps. Then, they were deported to Transnistria (now Southern Ukraine) without water or food. During the interminable marches, numerous Jews died of exhaustion on the road or were shot by Romanian gendarmes on Moldovan territory or beyond the Dniester River in Transnistria.

The survivors of these long marches were herded into labor camps or ghettos in Transnistria where many of them died.



POLAND

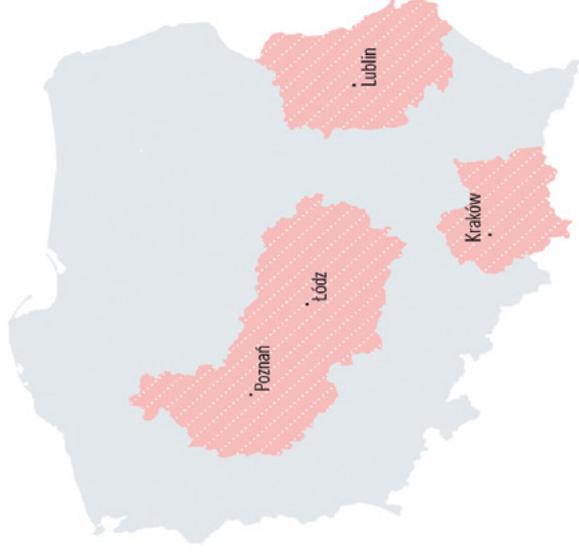
Yahad – In Unum sent a team to the region of Lublin in 2010, marking the beginning of research on the Holocaust by bullets in Poland. Since then, Yahad – In Unum has also investigated in the regions of Lodz, Greater Poland, Podkarpackie and more recently in Lesser Poland.

During these investigations, Yahad – In Unum interviewed 294 witnesses and located 121 execution sites.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Three weeks after the outbreak of World War II, Poland was divided between the two signatories of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Hitler's Germany and the Soviet Union. The Polish territory that was not annexed by Nazi Germany was administered by German authorities as the General Government. In August 1941, the Eastern Galicia (extreme West of present-day Ukraine), formerly occupied by the Soviets, was integrated. According to Generalplan Ost, Poland would become a new focus of German settlement.

More than three million Jews lived in Poland before the war began; they made up approximately 10% of the total population. The Nazis put in place six extermination camps: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek, and Chelmno, where the Jews of Europe were deported and murdered. Alongside these camps, genocide also took the form of shootings at the edge of mass graves. The Einsatzgruppen committed their first massacres here, starting from 1939, before continuing their task of extermination into the Soviet Union. More than 90% of the prewar Polish Jewish population was killed during the Holocaust.





ROMANIA

The research trips conducted by Yahad – In Unum in Romania, Moldova, and in the regions of Odessa, Mykolaiv, and Vinnytsya in Ukraine, led to the collection of hundreds of testimonies on the fate of Romanian Jews as well as the identification of sites where they were exterminated.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

As part of its research on the persecution of Roma, Yahad – In Unum conducted four research trips to Romania. During its interviews with Roma survivors deported to Transnistria, it turned out that they had also witnessed the genocide of the Jews on Romanian soil. The pogrom in Iasi that some Roma witnessed was one of the most terrible manifestations of violence. When they were not slaughtered in the streets of the city, the Jews were herded into freight trains without food or water, in the sweltering heat of late June of 1941. Several thousand Jews perished during these few days of extermination.

Jews from the Eastern regions of Romania were deported through Bessarabia and Transnistria. During World War II, the Romanian occupied zone extended to the Bug River. Some of the Romanian Jews deported were detained in forced labor camps (road construction, work in quarries), before being shot.





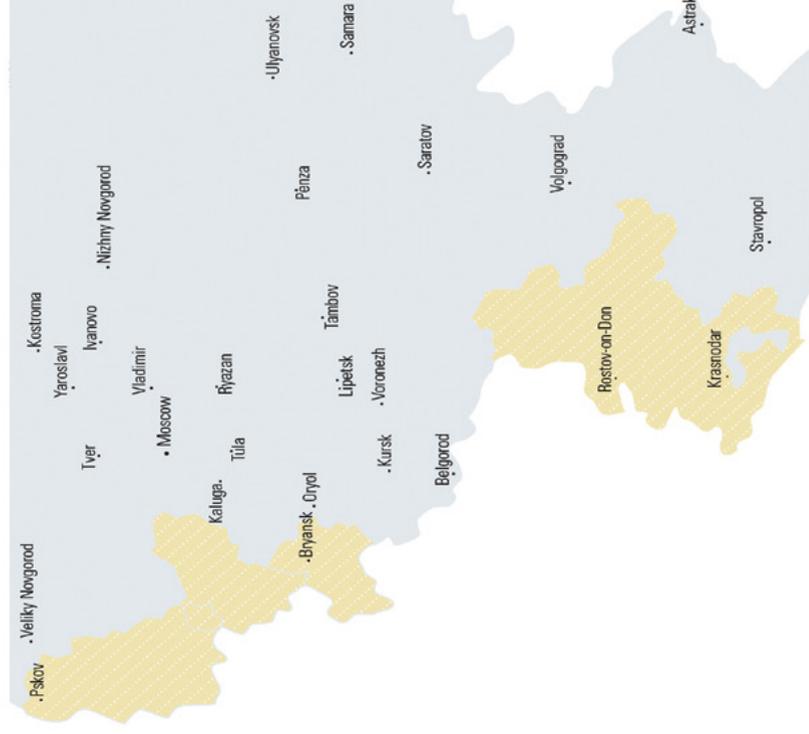
RUSSIA

To date, Yahad – In Unum’s research teams have conducted 9 research trips to Russia, in the regions of Pskov, Smolensk, Bryansk, Rostov and Krasnodar at the foot of the Caucasus. 391 witnesses were interviewed and 122 execution sites were identified in 5 different regions.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Yahad – In Unum began research in Russia in 2009. The challenge was the huge territory as the German occupation zone in this country spanned from Leningrad to the Caucasus. Between 100,000 and 140,000 Jews were killed between 1941 and 1944 on the territory of modern Russia, shot or gassed in vans. Among the victims, there were many Jewish refugees from Poland and Western Ukraine who tried to escape the German advance.

Hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war and civilians as well as Roma people were murdered in the area under the administration of the Wehrmacht at the edge of the front.





UKRAINE

Yahad – In Unum began its research in Ukraine in 2004. In its past 10 years of work in the country, Yahad – In Unum’s research teams have interviewed 1,867 witnesses and have localized 730 execution sites in 15 different regions.

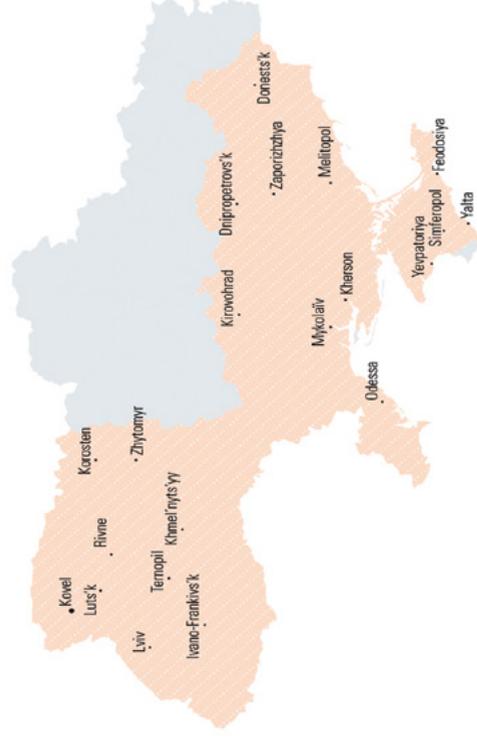
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On the eve of the invasion of the Soviet Union by German troops, 2.5 million Jews lived in the territory of present-day Ukraine. It was the largest Jewish community living in the USSR.

Following Operation Barbarossa, the Ukrainian territory was divided into 3 German administrative and territorial units: the General Government, the Reichkommissariat Ukraine, the military administration as well as the Romanian sub-administration for part of the south of the country.

From the first days of the occupation, massacres of the Jewish population began, including leaders and public community figures, rabbis, communists. The first large-scale massacre was perpetrated in Kamenets-Podolsk on the 28th and 29th of August, 1941, when more than 25,000 Jews were murdered.

In the Ukrainian territory, the Jews were imprisoned in ghettos or in forced labor camps, deported to death camps farther west in German-occupied Poland or directly shot on the spot in mass graves, mines, wells, ravines. More than 1.5 million Ukrainian Jews were exterminated by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1941 and 1944.



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Links to online resources developed by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

AN OVERVIEW OF THE HOLOCAUST: TOPICS TO TEACH

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007262>

ANTI-JEWISH LEGISLATION IN PREWAR GERMANY

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005681>

ANTISEMITISM

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005175>

AUSCHWITZ

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005189>

AXIS ALLIANCE IN WORLD WAR II

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005177>

BELZEC

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005191>

BIALYSTOK

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005170>

CHELMNO

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005194>

COLLABORATION

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005466>

COMBATING HOLOCAUST DENIAL: EVIDENCE OF THE HOLOCAUST PRESENTED AT NUREMBERG

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007271>

DEADLY MEDICINE: CREATING THE MASTER RACE

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007063>

DEFINING THE ENEMY

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007819>

DEPORTATIONS TO KILLING CENTERS

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005372>

EINSATZGRUPPEN

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005130>

EINSATZGRUPPEN (MOBILE KILLING UNITS) – HISTORICAL FILM FOOTAGE

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_fi.php?MediaId=183

EINSATZGRUPPEN AND OTHER SS AND POLICE UNITS IN THE SOVIET UNION

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005518>

EINSATZGRUPPEN MASSACRES IN EASTERN EUROPE – MAP

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_nm.php?MediaId=355

EINSATZGRUPPEN TRIAL: US PROSECUTION OPENS CASE AGAINST EINSATZGRUPPEN MEMBERS
HISTORICAL FILM FOOTAGE

http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_fi.php?MediaId=184

EUTHANASIA PROGRAM

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005200>

“EUTHANASIA” KILLINGS

<http://www.ushmm.org/learn/students/learning-materials-and-resources/mentally-and-physically-handicapped-victims-of-the-nazi-era/euthanasia-killings>

“FINAL SOLUTION”: OVERVIEW

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005151>

GASSING OPERATIONS

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005220>

GENOCIDE OF EUROPEAN ROMA (GYPSIES), 1939–1945

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005219>

GERMAN FOREIGN POLICY, 1933–1945

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GERMAN POLICE: FROM WEIMAR REPUBLIC TO NAZI DICTATORSHIP

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GERMAN POLICE IN THE NAZI STATE

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GERMANY: ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NAZI DICTATORSHIP

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GHETTOS

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INDOCTRINATING YOUTH

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INTERNATIONAL MILITARY TRIBUNAL AT NUREMBERG

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INTRODUCTION TO THE HOLOCAUST

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INVASION OF THE SOVIET UNION, JUNE 1941

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JEWISH RESISTANCE

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JEWISH UPRISINGS IN GHETTOS AND CAMPS, 1941–1944

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005407>

JEWS IN PREWAR GERMANY

<http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007687>

KIEV AND BABI YAR

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005421>

KILLING CENTERS: AN OVERVIEW

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LATVIA

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LAW AND JUSTICE IN THE THIRD REICH

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LIBERATION OF NAZI CAMPS

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LITHUANIA

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NAZI CAMPS

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NAZI PROPAGANDA

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NAZI RULE

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OPERATION REINHARD (EINSATZ REINHARD)

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POGROMS

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RESCUE AND RESISTANCE

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RIGA

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005463>

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<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007062>

SOBIBOR

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SPIRITUAL RESISTANCE IN THE GHETTOS

<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005416>

SS POLICE STATE

<http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007675>

SUBSEQUENT NUREMBERG PROCEEDINGS, CASE #9, THE EINSATZGRUPPEN CASE
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007080>

THE BIOLOGICAL STATE: NAZI RACIAL HYGIENE, 1933–1939
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007057>

THIRD REICH: AN OVERVIEW
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005141>

TREBLINKA
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005193>

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WAR CRIMES TRIALS
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<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005188>

WHAT IS GENOCIDE?
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007043>

WRITERS AND POETS IN THE GHETTOS
<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005653>

USHMM’S RESOURCES AT A GLANCE: VIDEOS; MUSICAL SELECTIONS; NAMES LIST OF VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST; SELECTED READINGS BY THEME; HISTORICAL ESSAYS BY THEME; POSTER SETS BY THEME; POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS BY THEME; PERSONAL STORIES; HISTORICAL OVERVIEW:
<http://www.ushmm.org/remember/days-of-remembrance/resources>

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www.yahadinunum.org

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www.flholocaustmuseum.org

The Florida Holocaust Museum

www.annefrank.org

Anne Frank House

www.auschwitz.org.pl

Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum

www.buchenwald.de

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Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site

www.facinghistory.org

Facing History and Ourselves

www.gfh.org.il

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www.holocaustatlas.lt

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<https://www.het.org.uk>

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International Tracing Service

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<http://www.wienerlibrary.co.uk>
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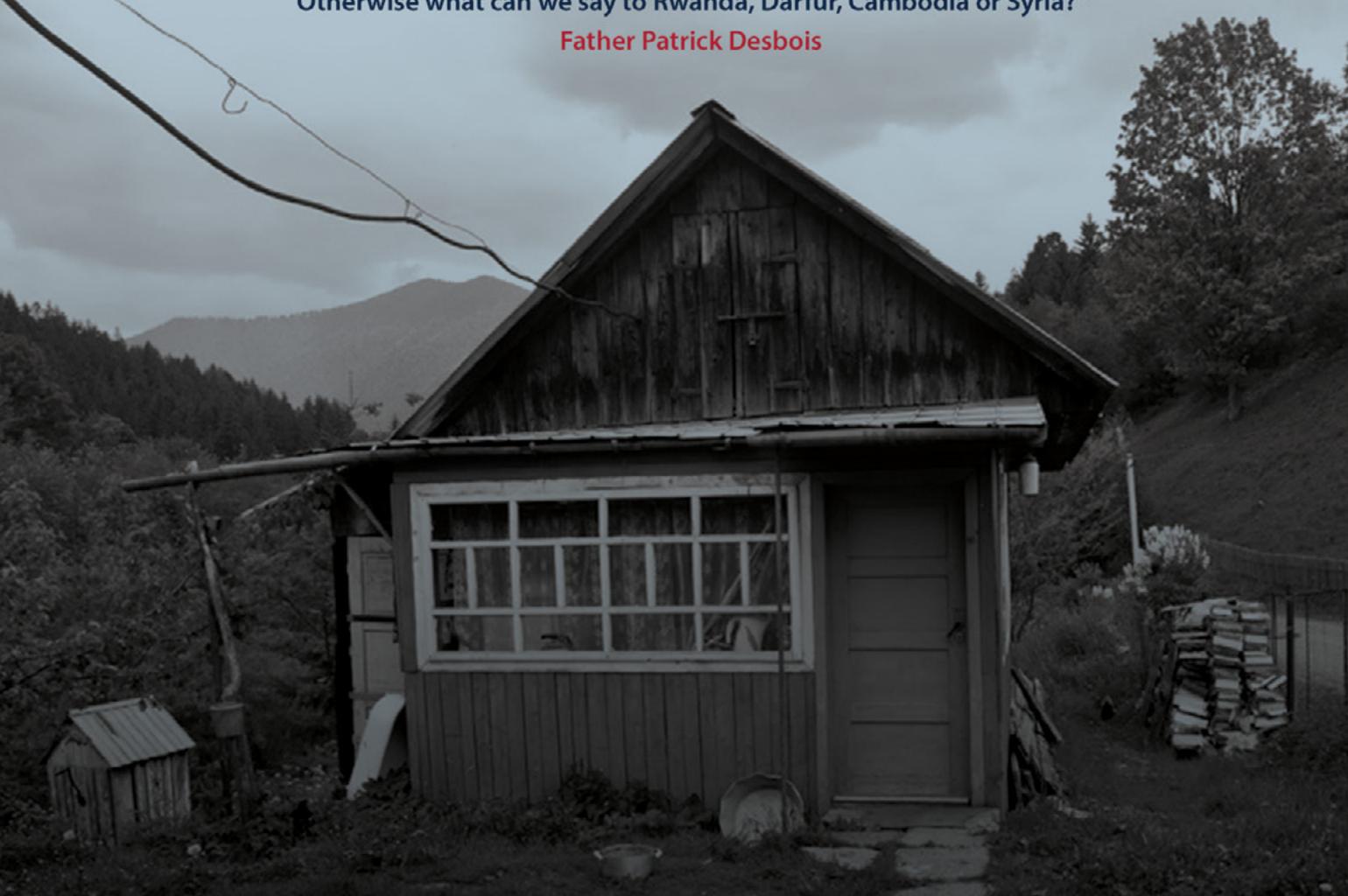
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Yad Vashem

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**“We cannot build a modern society on the mass graves of Jews.
Otherwise what can we say to Rwanda, Darfur, Cambodia or Syria?”**

Father Patrick Desbois



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www.flholocaustmuseum.org



House of a witness in the Carpathians, Lopushne, Ukraine
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