



Excursion to the past – teaching for the future: Handbook for teachers

This Handbook covers most of the articles as enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular those relating to Chapter I to IV - dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity and citizens' rights.

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Auschwitz, Poland

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Encyclopedia

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FOREWORD

The Holocaust has taught us that without respect and application of basic human rights the unspeakable can become a reality. There is therefore a close connection between the Holocaust and subsequent human rights developments. The adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, and later the adoption of European regional human rights instruments, was followed by a gradual coming to terms with the lessons of the Holocaust and its significance for the values that strengthen the European Union today. The European Union recognises the Holocaust as a key and seminal event in European history and heritage. The values that underpin the European Union and are common to all its Member States have key aspects related directly to the experience of the Jewish populations during the period before, during and after the Second World War. The concepts of the universality and indivisibility of human rights become even more pronounced when we look back at the Holocaust and realise the need to remain vocal and vigilant on the question of human rights.

The resolutions adopted by the European Parliament to keep alive the memory of the Holocaust, as well as the Stockholm Declaration signed in January 2000, are evidence of a general acknowledgement of the Holocaust as a specific historical crime. It is therefore vitally important that in the context of today's challenges we do not repeat the mistakes of the past. The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights wants to respect the lessons of the Holocaust and use those lessons to inform the education of our future generations, in particular using the human rights context of the Holocaust to teach about the importance of respect for human rights, diversity and the protection of minorities.

The loss of human diversity and cultural heritage during the Holocaust cannot be replaced. Teaching about the Holocaust makes it possible to address human rights violations and crimes, and it also helps to raise awareness and build understanding of this

historical event. Yet, it is not always easy to build a valid and meaningful bridge between the past and the present. Many of the teachers interviewed for the FRA research project, entitled ‘Discover the past for the future – The role of historical sites and museums in Holocaust education and human rights education in the EU’ stated that it is important for them to make a connection between the Holocaust and human rights and that they would wish a better guidance on how to do this.

Visits to Holocaust-related sites and exhibitions can be a powerful tool in connecting with the Holocaust and human rights learning. They offer, on the one hand, the possibility to study the particularities of a historical event such as the Holocaust and they provide, on the other hand, an important knowledge base for reflecting on universal human rights questions and contemporary concerns. Many of the sites in the Handbook bear direct witness to National Socialist crimes and the consequences of racist and anti-Semitic ideologies and practices leading to stigmatisation, discrimination, dehumanisation, and ultimately the deprivation of human beings of their right to life. Learning about the Holocaust in order to reflect about our present day societies also means dealing with the different – and sometimes competing – perspectives of all involved groups: victims, perpetrators, bystanders and rescuers.

This Handbook was developed in order to give inspiration to teachers on what to consider when visiting the Holocaust memorial sites and museums. It focuses on examples and exercises of how visits to memorial sites and museums dealing with the Holocaust can provide students with a concrete picture of the possible consequences of failing to respect human rights. It presents and discusses a number of questions and tools that could be useful for having students creatively and critically develop their knowledge of human rights on the basis of the knowledge of the Holocaust.

The FRA hopes that teachers will find this Handbook inspiring for their visits to the Holocaust related sites and museums. It is hoped that the Handbook will contribute to advancing the debate on how to preserve memory of the Holocaust and how to draw meaningful human rights lessons from it.

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Morten Kjaerum
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INTRODUCTION

The background of this Handbook

Marking 60 years from the 1938 Pogroms, also known as *Kristallnacht pogroms*, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) has launched a project on Holocaust Education and Human Rights Education. Initial pilot initiatives of video conferences between the Holocaust survivors and young people uncovered the relevance of the Holocaust for human rights learning for young people today. The FRA was granted an observer role in the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research (ITF) in 2006 and has based its work on Holocaust and Human Rights Education on the following ITF guiding questions: (1) Why to teach about the Holocaust? (2) What to teach about the Holocaust? and (3) How to teach about the Holocaust? The Agency has also harvested experiences and drawn on work of the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in this area.

On this basis, the project sought to further explore the link between Holocaust education and human rights education, existing practice with regard to pedagogical concepts, methodology, practices at memorial sites and in museums, and the needs of teachers when developing classes on Holocaust and Human Rights Education. The project outcomes have informed wider EU policy processes, such as the European Framework of Key Competences for Lifelong Learning and the Europe for Citizens Programme; they have also facilitated dialogue on the Holocaust and Human Rights Education.

The project contains commemorative, pedagogical, research and networking features, connecting to practitioners in the field.

List of project activities

- Research report, entitled *Discover the Past for the Future: The role of historical sites and museums in Holocaust education and human rights education in the EU*
- Handbook for Teachers on Holocaust and Human Rights Education
- Overview of emerging practice on Holocaust and Human Rights Education at original sites and in museums
- Toolkit on Holocaust and Human Rights Education.
- Network of teachers, memorial sites and museums and young people

The research report provides an assessment of inclusion of Holocaust and Human Rights Education at original sites and in museums dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust.

The Handbook for teachers provides teachers with inspiration and guidance on how they can best make use of visits to historical sites and museums to teach about the Holocaust and human rights.

The overview of emerging practice enlists practices at original sites and in museums on Holocaust and Human Rights education.

The online toolkit provides a practical guide on methodologies, and tips for teachers and educators on how to develop teaching projects on the Holocaust and Human Rights. The Toolkit results from a cooperation of the FRA and Yad Vashem, aimed at supporting pedagogical activities of teachers in the EU in teaching about the Holocaust and human rights while building a path to increased knowledge of the Holocaust and Human Rights.

Network of teachers, memorial sites and museums and young people resulted from numerous activities of this project. The active participation of students is central to effective human rights education, using active and critical involvement of students and teachers in discussions.

How to use this Handbook

In conducting a study of education about the Holocaust and human rights at historical sites and museums in EU countries, the FRA was breaking new ground. Before this study, there were only a few theories and practical examples of the way in which these two fields – teaching about the Holocaust and teaching about human rights – can inspire one another. The research report is available online on the FRA website **www.fra.europa.eu**.

This Handbook touches on a number of issues that should be taken into account by teachers before, during and after visiting a Holocaust-related site or exhibition. It provides a range of examples of how to raise interest in the subject and stimulate reflection among the students.

Teaching is always context sensitive and numerous factors play a role in the teaching process. Therefore, no uniform teaching approach exists in relation to the Holocaust and human rights. Teachers should use this Handbook as an inspiration for developing their particular approach to educating about the Holocaust, addressing the link between the human rights violations of the past and contemporary human rights challenges, and including visits to Holocaust-related sites in their education work.

What do teachers and students say?

“The students get the most out of it themselves, which is much more powerful because they draw their own conclusions. All we do is show them the way”

– Teacher, Czech Republic

- It is important, but not easy, to link teaching about the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes with teaching about human values and democracy.
- Visiting historical sites is a powerful and meaningful experience.
- When students themselves are active and able to explore various aspects more deeply, they feel that they learn and understand more about the significance of the Holocaust and human rights.

These were some of the most important findings of group discussions with students and teachers held in nine European countries in 2009. The students and teachers were asked about their experiences with visits to memorial sites and museums and about what they consider as most important for teaching about the Holocaust and human rights. Several aspects highlighted by the participants in the discussions will be highlighted in this handbook.

Research

The discussions with teachers and students were held within the framework of the FRA research project entitled ‘Discover the Past for the Future: The role of historical sites and museums in Holocaust education and human rights education in the EU’. The discussions were held in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom. A total of 118 people participated in the discussion groups. Both teachers and students had experience of visiting authentic memorial sites or museums linked with the Holocaust. In addition to the discussions, the project involved:

- a review of relevant literature;
- questionnaires sent to ministries responsible for education and the maintenance of memorial sites in all EU Member States;
- questionnaires sent to 22 memorial sites and museums dealing with the Holocaust;
- conducting visits to 12 such sites.

The results of the project are made available online on FRA website:

www.fra.europa.eu

Relating to ethics is important

The discussions demonstrated that many teachers and students think that teaching about the Holocaust should incorporate both historical facts and issues relating to ethics and human values. Historical knowledge and understanding of historical processes are necessary to be able to reflect and draw conclusions that are applicable to the present: this is a fundamental element of the teaching. Some teachers and students spoke of the importance of bringing up the significance of human rights and how they can be maintained and strengthened, using their knowledge of the Holocaust as a basis. On the other hand, teaching about the Holocaust rarely includes direct references to the legal tools that exist to preserve human rights today.

The participants highlighted that visits to historical sites linked to the Holocaust play a crucial role in gaining insight into the Holocaust. For example, students from Poland mentioned that for them, at the sites, “the annihilation of the Jews ceases to be an abstract concept”. Historical sites can provide knowledge of the suffering of the victims and their individual destinies as well as of the organisation, scope, and contexts of the Holocaust – knowledge that may be difficult to acquire in a classroom. Students also describe original documents, testimonies and authentic objects as important “links for getting a better understanding” to this period of history.

Students pointed out how important it is for teaching to be based on a multi-perspective view of history and to use explanatory, research-based and project-orientated learning methods. Varied teaching, approaching knowledge of the Holocaust and human rights from several different directions, facilitates and

“Visits to memorial sites can provide a broader understanding of what human rights are. They help you to understand how important it is to create a world with room for everyone.”

– *Student, Denmark*

deepens learning. This is important for education both about the Holocaust and about human rights, since both need to be explored by historical studies and political science as well as in ethics, philosophy and social studies. Students find motivation in investigating specific aspects when they have some control over the content.

Need for reflection

The students also emphasised the need for reflection. This is necessary to process the powerful experiences and feelings that can be aroused by the visit, and also to examine the relation of the knowledge to the present day and the students themselves. Teachers also stressed the importance of creating possibilities for discussion, exchange of views and reflection. The need for reflection time is related to students' ability and willingness to express their personal thoughts and independent opinions. Throughout the discussions the importance of the teacher's role was emphasised. The contribution of a knowledgeable and committed teacher, with a genuine willingness to discuss with students human rights, the equal value of all people and of democracy, is a key factor in students' participation in a learning process that requires the expression of their own feelings, reflections and thoughts. Involving students in the planning and formulation of the teaching increases their involvement and willingness to participate.

“A visit to a historical site makes it easier to understand what really happened there.”

– *Student, Italy*

The Holocaust and human rights

Long before the Holocaust took place, philosophers, authors and politicians had developed ideas about human rights. The Holocaust itself was not the starting point for the history of human rights. However, it was in the aftermath of the Second World War that the international community jointly declared these rights and the willingness to comply with them.

The Holocaust is a key historical event in Europe, and teaching it can be undertaken for its historical relevance, to understand modern Europe, or to remember the victims and honour their few rescuers.

The Holocaust is also linked historically with the emergence of several important conventions and mechanisms created to secure and protect human rights in the world. The United Nations formulated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with the events of the Second World War fresh in people's memory and it was adopted in 1948. The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted in the same year. A similar movement took place in Europe. On 5 May 1949, the Treaty of London, signed by 10 European countries, established the Council of Europe and one year later, on 4 November 1950, the European Convention on Human Rights was signed. In 1945-49, the Nuremberg Trials of a number of leading Nazis and other individuals who were in positions of responsibility were held. They were groundbreaking as international trials of perpetrators for offences of this kind; the trials established a basis for the development of international criminal law. It is thus difficult to teach about human rights without reference to the Holocaust.

Difficult to avoid moral interpretations

The Holocaust raises fundamental ethical questions. As a historical event, it is still so close in time and the crimes against innocent people are so extreme that it is difficult to avoid moral interpretations. Teaching about the Holocaust involves demonstrating the consequences of gross violations of human rights. The victims' stories and fates can provide an understanding of the significance of human rights. Documents produced by perpetrators, diaries and letters and their post war testimonies, can provide an insight into the thoughts and actions of people who organised and committed these crimes and how they tried to justify their deeds.

Several surveys show that both students and teachers make links between learning about the historical event called the Holocaust and discussing issues relating to the dignity and rights of people today. The historical knowledge provides an opportunity to reflect on contemporary human rights issues in a conscious and substantiated way.

The Nazi utopia of a "racially pure" nation, a community into which only specific people were invited, was one of the driving forces behind the Holocaust. This utopia was not invented by the national socialists nor restricted to one European country only, but the National Socialists made these thoughts

The Holocaust

The Holocaust was the genocide of Europe's Jews carried out by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1941 and 1945. Two further different genocides of the Roma and Sinti, and Poles, as well as the mass murder of millions of Soviet prisoners of war, were committed by the Nazis in parallel with the genocide of Europe's Jews. Several other groups – including political dissidents, people with disabilities, so-called 'a-socials', Jehovah's Witnesses, prisoners of war and homosexuals – were also victims of persecution, arbitrary torture and murder.



The Nuremberg Trials, 1945–49, were a watershed event in the international community's prosecution of crimes against humanity.

(Photo: Corbis)

fundamental to their political agenda – and it was they who were given the power to start implementing this agenda. The racist ideology implemented by the Nazis involved a hierarchical division of human beings according to their “value”, which is the antithesis of the idea that all people are equal in dignity and rights as stated in 1948 in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Nazi propaganda aimed to persuade people to believe in a system that denied some groups their most fundamental rights. The Holocaust occurred under conditions which made the most extreme crimes against humans and humanity possible, and it was committed because there were people brought to power who had the will, the means and sufficient support to carry it out. The Holocaust was neither the first nor the last genocide in history. More are likely to take place in the future, if the respect for human rights does not become fundamental to our societies. Ultimately, genocide is a conscious act and not simply a result of unfortunate circumstances.

A choice to defend human rights

Respect for human rights cannot be taken for granted. Human rights can only be safeguarded if a sufficient number of people commit themselves to the defence of these fundamental rights. In Europe and in other countries, the Holocaust and the Second World War represent an important reference point that can remind us of every person's right to life, liberty and personal security. Teaching about the Holocaust unquestionably has a role in teaching *about* human rights, in explaining the historical context that brought about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. However, teaching about the Holocaust can also play a significant part in teaching *for* human rights, that is to say helping to strengthen individuals' and societies' commitment to the defence of these fundamental rights. In the following four chapters we will provide some historical background information on human rights milestones, the Nazi period and juridical responses to it and to other crimes against humanity, including examples on how this information can be used in education.

Human rights timeline with a focus on Europe

There is a long history of developing, strengthening and enforcing human rights – a history with many setbacks and many challenges ahead. Our timeline begins in the 18th century in Europe – the century in which the philosophers of the enlightenment tried to found societies based on democratic principles, which guaranteed equality before the law to their citizens. All these principles were developed in the interest of allowing people to develop their full potential.

1789: Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen in France

The Declaration defined natural rights that are inalienable and sacrosanct, the most precious of these being liberty, for example: Article 1) Human beings are born free, equal and have rights. Article 2) The duty of all political associations was to preserve the natural rights of people, the rights of liberty and property, security and the right to resist oppression. The emphasis was on political and civil rights.

Article 3) Nobody can exercise power without the permission of the people.

France and the United States of America are among the first countries to establish human rights provisions. Many countries follow suit shortly thereafter. More and more human rights are embedded into national constitutions.

Most human rights provisions in the 18th century are created to protect individuals against the power of the state. These are called political human rights.

1791: France grants citizenship to the Jews. The Jews of the Netherlands receive citizenship shortly thereafter in 1796. Citizenship for Jews in other countries follows: Prussia in 1812; Denmark in 1814; Greece in 1830; Belgium in 1831; Hungary in 1867; Sweden in 1870; and Switzerland in 1874.

1807: British Act of abolition of slave trade.

1907: Norway is the first country in Europe to give women the right to vote.

1919: After the First World War the Treaty of Versailles is signed.

For the first time the international community considers holding heads of state accountable for human rights violations. Other treaties at Versailles stress minority rights.

1920: The League of Nations is established. The goal of the League of Nations is to prevent war through dialogue. This new institution fails when important nations (such as the United States) decide not to join. The League of Nations is officially replaced by the United Nations in 1945/46.

1945: The United Nations (UN) is established. The UN's task is to maintain world peace and security, and the promotion of economic, social, cultural and humanitarian cooperation. More than 185 nations have joined the UN. More information is available at: www.un.org/.

1946: Nuremberg trials take place in Nuremberg, Germany to prosecute Nazi war criminals.

The following charges are brought against the defendants: (1) crimes against peace; (2) war crimes; (3) crimes against humanity; and (4) conspiracy to commit any of the aforementioned crimes.

1948: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is signed.

Following the Second World War, the conscience of humankind was moved so profoundly that the United Nations Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Right to Self-determination of the Colonial Peoples. The Declaration represents the first global expression of rights to which all human beings are entitled. The document consists of 30 articles and has inspired many follow-up documents. The UDHR has been elaborated in subsequent international treaties, regional human rights instruments, national constitutions and laws. The declaration is not binding; however, it was explicitly adopted for the purpose of defining the meaning of the words 'fundamental freedoms' and 'human rights' appearing in the UN Charter, which is binding on all Member States. The full text is available online at:

www.un.org/en/documents/udhr.

1948: The UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is adopted.

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide entered into force in January 1951. The Genocide Convention is a far-reaching and legally binding international instrument for the punishment of the crime of genocide. Participating countries are advised to prevent and punish actions of genocide in war and in peacetime. As of 2010, 140 countries have ratified the convention. The full text is available online at:

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/genocide.htm.

1949: The Council of Europe is established. The Council of Europe, based in Strasbourg (France), was founded by 10 countries on 5 May 1949. The Council of Europe seeks to develop throughout Europe common and democratic principles ensuring respect of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. By 2010, the Council of Europe had grown to 47 Member States. More information is available at: www.coe.int/.

1950: The European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) is adopted. This Convention

draws from the UDHR; it entered into force in 1953. All 47 Council of Europe Member States are party to the ECHR. In contrast to the Universal Declaration, the ECHR is a binding treaty. Compliance is monitored by the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), which has its seat in Strasbourg. Alleged violations of the ECHR can be brought by states or individuals before the ECtHR. The full text is available at:

www.conventions.coe.int/treaty/en/Treaties/Html/005.htm.

1965: The UN International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) is adopted. ICERD entered into force in 1969. It commits its members to the elimination of racial discrimination. The Convention includes an individual complaints mechanism, effectively making it enforceable against its parties. This has led to the development of a limited jurisprudence on the interpretation and implementation of the Convention. The implementation of the Convention is monitored by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. As of 2010, it had 173 parties. The full text is available at:

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cerd.htm.

1966: The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights are adopted. Both Covenants entered into force in 1976.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights commits its parties to respect the civil and political rights of individuals, including the right to life, freedom of religion, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, electoral rights and rights to due process and a fair trial. The full text is available at:

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/ccpr.htm.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights commits its parties' work towards the granting of economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCR) to individuals, including labour rights and rights to health, education, and an adequate standard of living. The full text is available at:

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cescr.htm.

1989: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is adopted.

The UN General Assembly adopted the Convention on 20 November 1989, thirty years after the Declaration of the Rights of the Child. It came into force in 1990. The UNCRC is an international convention setting out the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of children. Ratifying nations are bound to it by

international law. Compliance is monitored by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child which is composed of members from countries around the world.

As of 2010, only Somalia and the United States have not ratified the convention. The full text is available at:

www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm.

1990: The UN Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their families is adopted.

The convention entered into force in 2003. The full text is available at: www2.ohchr.org/english/law/cmw.htm.

1998: The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court is adopted.

The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (often referred to as the International Criminal Court Statute or the Rome Statute) is the treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC). It was adopted at a diplomatic conference in Rome on 17 July 1998 and it entered into force in 2002. As of 2010, 111 states are party to the statute.

2002: The International Criminal Court is established in The Hague in the Netherlands. This UN court creates a permanent institution to try War Crimes, replacing the ad-hoc courts for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

2000: The Charter for Fundamental Rights of the European Union is proclaimed.

The EU Charter for Fundamental Rights became legally binding with the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009. Under six headings – dignity, freedoms, equality, solidarity, citizens' rights and justice – its 54 articles set out the European Union's fundamental values and the civil, political, economic and social rights of EU citizens. The full text is available at: www.eucharter.org/.

2006: The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) enters was adopted.

The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity. The CRPD came into force in 2008. By 2010, 87 countries had ratified the convention. The full text is available at:

www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml.

1919-1932

The rise of the Nazis

The First World War, sometimes referred to as ‘The Great War’, ‘The first of the modern wars’ or even as ‘The war to end all wars’, ended in 1918. Some nine million young men had died, many in trenches and in the freezing cold. Millions of others had been traumatised and cities across Europe had been reduced to rubble.

The War had come at a time when minority rights had started to make significant gains across the European continent and elsewhere. The First World War slowed this process in some ways but also served as a catalyst for further gains.

For instance, already before the First World War gains had been made around women’s rights. New Zealand had already given women the right to vote in 1893, and more than 10 European nations followed suit in 1918 and 1919, as soon as the war ended, including Germany and Poland.

The year 1918 was critical in other ways. The Paris Peace Conference, which opened on 12 January 1918, was the meeting of the Allied victors in World War I to set the peace terms following the Armistice of 1918. The key discussion

Examining the Treaty of Versailles

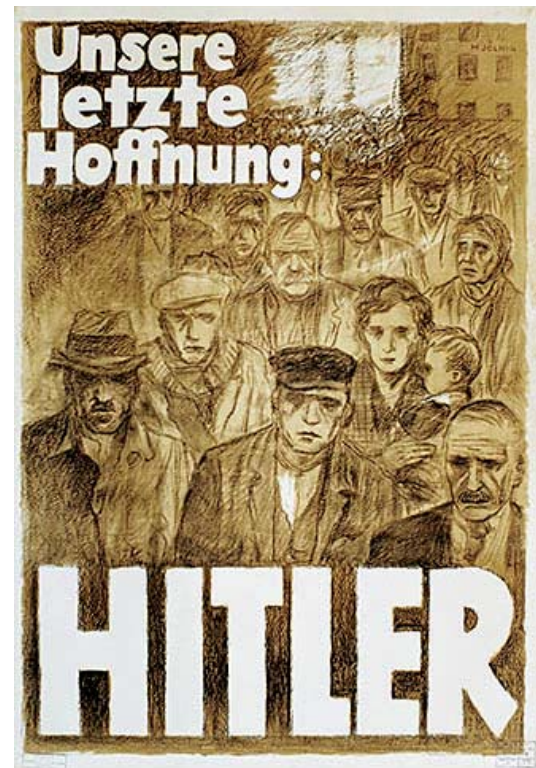
Have students read through some of the main provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, given below. Have each student then write down, individually, how they think these punishments would affect (a) the average German citizen and (b) a young person their age. Place the students in groups of four or five participants and have them compare and contrast their answers. After each group has presented its findings, debrief with the students. Was such punishment justified given the pain inflicted during the war? If not, what kind of punishment would have been more appropriate in their view?

Some of the main provisions of the Treaty of Versailles were:

1. Germany had to hand over the Alsace-Lorraine area to France
2. Germany had to hand over all its colonies, including Togo and Cameroon
3. Germany had to hand over the coal mines in the Saar-area to France
4. Germany had to hand over various areas of land to Belgium, including Malmedy and Eupen.
5. Germany had to hand over parts of West-Prussia and Posen to Poland (a new country)
6. Germany had to hand over all military hardware and materials to the allies
7. All German properties in foreign countries would be confiscated
8. Germany was forbidden to have a series of weaponry, including tanks and airplanes
9. The total size of the German army was not to exceed 100,000 men and the navy 15,000 men
10. Germany had to hand over large amounts of machinery and building materials, as well as trains and trucks
11. Germany had to give the allies coal, chemicals and fuel for a number of years, to be determined
12. All German sub-ocean telegraph cables had to be handed over
13. Germany would not be allowed to take part in the League of Nations
14. Germany had to pay a stiff monetary fine: 20 billion gold marks.

The sense of being humiliated and victimised led to a general sense of discontent among the German population. Only a year after the Treaty of Versailles was signed, the German Workers’ Party (DAP) was formed. In 1920, its name was changed to NSDAP, adding ‘National Socialist’ to ‘German Workers’ Party’. The party became known as the ‘Nazi Party’ and its members as the Nazis. The NSDAP strongly rejected the Treaty of Versailles and its ideology was grounded in a criticism of both communism and *laissez-faire* capitalism. A sense of revenge was palpable. It was severely anti-Semitic and promoted the “racial purity of the German people”.

revolved around how to best punish Germany for its role in the conflict. The meeting lasted eight days and involved diplomats from more than 30 countries; it was, however, dominated by Britain, France, Italy, Japan and the United States. The meeting resulted in five treaties (Peace of Paris Treaties) in an attempt to maintain a lasting peace. The most important treaty of the five was the Treaty of Versailles. For the first time in history, the world community moved towards imposing criminal penalties on heads of state for their responsibility in violating fundamental human rights. The Treaty required that Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany face trial for a “supreme offense against international morality and the sanctity of treaties”. He subsequently escaped to the Netherlands, which refused to extradite him. There was considerable talk during the conference about issues relating to minority group rights, including the right to life, liberty, freedom of religion, right to nationality of state of residence, complete equality with other nationals of the same state, and the exercise of civil and political rights. Nevertheless, the main effect of the Treaty was to severely punish Germany. It signed the treaty, given no choice, under protest.



“Our Last Hope: Hitler,” 1932. In the presidential elections of 1932, Nazi propagandists appealed to Germans left unemployed and destitute by the Great Depression with an offer of a savior.

(Photo: USHMM)

After a failed attempt to seize power and his subsequent imprisonment, Adolf Hitler published *Mein Kampf* in 1925. This document will prove to have far reaching consequences. In this book, Adolf Hitler outlines his ideology, deeply rooted in anti-Semitic beliefs. He writes, for instance: “Today I believe that I am acting in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator: by defending myself against the Jew, I am fighting for the work of the Lord.”

Though anti-democratic in nature, the Nazi Party participated in various democratic elections in the 1920s but with very little success. Despite multiple economic and social problems in Germany, the party polled only 3% in national elections in December 1924 and only 2.6% in 1928. The breakthrough came, however, after the Great Depression caused even more economic grief. The Nazi Party polled 18.3% of the vote during the September 1930 Reichstag elections. This made the party the second-largest one in the Reichstag after the Social Democrats. At the elections on 31 July 1932, the NSDAP received 37.4% of the votes and became the strongest party in Germany.

The philosophy and practice of Eugenics

Give students the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) and have them read selected texts on eugenics. If not available,

give a general description based on the text below. Have the students, in working groups, identify which rights contained in the UNDHR are violated, in their view, by the philosophy and practice of eugenics.

Throughout the 1920s, the pseudo-scientific study of race was gaining in popularity, especially in Europe and in North America. Eugenics is the study and practice of selective breeding of humans. The term was made popular by Sir Francis Galton in the 1880s, who defined eugenics as “the study of all agencies under human control which can improve or impair the racial quality of future generations”. The intent was to prevent ‘weaker’ individuals from having children, so that the human gene pool could be strengthened.

Overtone of racial supremacy and purity were clearly present and the principles of eugenics influenced leading Nazis. It is evident that the beliefs and practices of eugenicists involved attacks on fundamental rights, violations of the right to life, the right to establish a family, and freedom from discrimination. Today, new concerns about eugenics have emerged in the context of ethical and moral implications of the development of technologies of genetic testing, genetic engineering and human cloning.

Timelines as a useful tool

Timelines are useful to create an overview of historical events. Being able to follow political changes, legislation and individual people's lives on the same timeline helps students obtain a chronological picture of events, although care must be taken not to give the impression that events proceeded inexorably and inevitably along this apparently linear path.

At Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, students between the ages of 10 and 14 years are asked to place seven to eight pictures depicting Anne Frank's family history alongside the same number of pictures describing the major historical events of the Holocaust. The pictures illustrate events such as the Nazis coming to power, the November Pogrom (euphemistically referred to as *Kristallnacht* by the perpetrators) and the German invasion of the Netherlands. Students work in small groups to place the pictures on a timeline ranging from 1929, Anne Frank's year of birth, to the end of the 1940s. The pictures are gradually positioned on a common timeline, and the students and educators discuss the events and their impact on the Frank family. This helps to concretise the more abstract decisions that were made.

To introduce a theme and to find out more about the interests and knowledge of the participants, colleagues at the Buchenwald memorial in Germany offer a set of 100 photos and paintings showing situations of the site's history. The participants' »

1933-1939

Setting the stage for the Holocaust

After a series of elections in 1932, the Nazi party became the largest party in Germany, though it still could not attract a majority of voters and though it was starting to decline in popularity. Nevertheless, sitting President Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Reich Chancellor on 30 January 1933. The consequences were immediate. The anti-democratic sentiments of the Nazi leaders were translated into anti-democratic actions that served to secure the Nazi hold on society and eliminate all opposition.

By using exemption laws, restrictions were placed on the freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of organisation. All vestiges of democracy and fundamental rights of its citizen were removed. On 28 February 1933, a set of decrees removed important civil liberties under the pretence that the country was under threat and that a coup was imminent. Political opponents were arrested and sent to internment camps where they could pose no threat to the government. The Enabling Act of 23 March 1933 gave the Cabinet the authority to enact laws without the participation of the *Reichstag* for a period of four years. In essence, a dictatorship had been established.

Shutting down all opposition and eliminating press freedom allowed the Nazi government to completely dominate all spheres of life, including the content of formal and non-formal education for its young citizens. Government propaganda went unchallenged in the public sphere and carried more severe penalties as time passed. Much of this propaganda was anti-Semitic in nature. The propaganda proved successful and served to justify measures against the Jewish population. Step by step, Jews were separated from their neighbours and removed from all societal institutions. Their fundamental rights were eroded to such an extent that survival became difficult.

The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 represented a key moment in the history of the persecution of the German Jewish population and the implementation of Nazi racial ideology. The laws, for instance, defined according to 'blood

Denial of rights of Jews in Nazi Germany

One way to work with the step by step denial of rights for Jews in Germany is the following. Below is only a short list of restrictions that were aimed at Jews from 1933 until 1940. Give the students (in groups of 4) the following list of human rights restrictions in random order. Then have them place these in the correct order.

Next, have them work together to create four 'categories of restrictions' and place all the restrictions into these four categories. Have them share what categories they have come up with. As a next step, for each category they should identify which restriction, in their view, had the most severe consequences for a young person their age at that time and why. Finally, they should discuss what they think the Nazi government was trying to accomplish by these step by step restrictions.

1933

Jewish teachers banned from state schools
Jewish lawyers are banned from practising their profession
Jews are refused the right to health insurance
Jewish civil servants are fired
Jews excluded from choirs
Jews are no longer allowed to go to the beach

1935

Jewish musicians are not allowed to practice their profession
Jews are only allowed to sit on special park benches
Jews are no longer allowed to marry non-Jews
Jews lose their national (Reich) citizenship
Jewish art and antique dealers are no longer allowed to practice their trade



“Adolf Hitler listening to parliamentary election results on the radio in early 1933. Soon, only the Nazi Party was legal. All other political parties were banned”.

(Photo: USHMM)

relations’ who could be German and not. They also banned marriage between ‘Jews and Germans’. It is noteworthy that Jews were given certain rights that might not be considered rights at all. Section 4 of the Laws for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour:

1. *Jews are forbidden to display the Reich and national flag or the national colours.*
2. *On the other hand they are permitted to display the Jewish colours. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.*

As no powerful dissenting voices could be heard when introducing such measures, anti-Semitic propaganda served to reinforce already existing anti-Jewish feelings among the German population. As life became more difficult for Jews, they were blamed for their own predicament. This ‘blaming the victim’ dominated the discourse at the time. Even the first mass murders and arrests of Jews throughout Germany during the November Pogrom on 9-10 November in 1938 was blamed on the Jews.

» descriptions of the images are a starting point to explain Buchenwald’s history from the 1930s until the present in a multi-perspective access. The method helps to understand that there is no “history of Buchenwald” but many stories of people involved: science and art support a debate about different perspectives and the actual importance of these stories and developments for the participants.

In a second step, the images are fixed with magnets to a timeline on the wall: some moments are well documented, other time spans remain empty. Students’ knowledge depends on their interests; it therefore becomes visible how different groups depict images according to their versions of the past. The method offers a broad variety to involve the participants, their views and positions regarding the past and present. It also allows for connecting and discussing the development of norms leading to injustice and crime, such as the Nazi ideology, as well as the origin of human rights as a tool to support justice and equality. A timeline that stretches from the 1920s right up to the end of the 1940s covers the process on how the rights of Jews and other groups were removed through legislation. Furthermore, it highlights the post-war work to establish Conventions protecting human rights.

Young Jews not allowed to go on walks in groups larger than 20 people
Marriages between Jews and non-Jews are annulled

1936

Jews are forced to give up their typewriters
Jews have to hand in their bicycles
Jews have to hand in their records
Journalists have to prove that they have Aryan descent back to 1800

1937

Jews are forbidden to obtain University doctorate degrees

1938

Jews can no longer own land
Jewish assets can be seized by the government

Jewish street names changed
Jewish doctors may no longer practice
Jewish children can no longer attend German schools
Jews are forced to take the additional names of Israel and Sara for men and women respectively
Jews can no longer be the sole owners of businesses
Jews may not choose freely where they settle.

1939

Jews can no longer possess radios
Jews may not remain outdoors after 8 o’clock in the evening
Jews can be evicted from their homes without being given a reason or forewarning.

From Nuremberg to The Hague

The Nuremberg Trials and the Treaty of Rome

The Nuremberg Trials defined crimes against humanity as murder, slavery, deportation and similar actions against the civilian population. Also included were the actions committed in concentration camps, and death camps, as well as persecution with political, racist and religious objectives. Individual murders, mass assassination initiated by SS troops and the *Einsatzgruppen* or paramilitary units were also addressed, as were the annihilation of the two Czech cities of Lidice and Ležáky in June 1942 and the French city of Oradour-sur-Glane in June 1944. According to the Treaty of Rome of 17 July 1998 that regulates the actions of the International Criminal Court, crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes now constitute crimes against the primary International Law, the Universal Jurisdiction. In other words a perpetrator can be sentenced for the crime in all states, irrespective of whether any Convention has been ratified. States are thus entitled to detain those suspected of these crimes, irrespective of where the crimes were committed and the nationality of the perpetrators or victims. Not all states have ratified the treaty.



A Bosnian woman cries as she watches former Yugoslavian President Slobodan Milosevic on television during his trial at the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague, Thursday, Feb. 14, 2002. She is in a refugee centre for Srebrenica widows in Tuzla. All the male members of her family have been missing since the Srebrenica massacre. Milosevic was accused of war crimes committed against non-Serbs in Kosovo, Croatia and Bosnia, including the Srebrenica massacre.

(Photo: AMEL EMRIC)

The Holocaust and the Second World War had long-term consequences for how the world subsequently perceived matters relating to rights and obligations across national borders. One of the most important events in this transformation was the establishment of the war crimes court in Nuremberg between 1945 and 1949.

These courts were the result of an agreement between the Allied countries; the actual directive was issued in London on 8 August 1945. A total of thirteen trials were held of people who had made decisions and issued orders alleged to constitute crimes against humanity, crimes against the rules of warfare and against international Conventions. The decision was also taken to prosecute those who were active in the administrative departments that underpinned the crimes, for instance, the SS Economic and Administrative

Main Office (SS WVHA) which managed the concentration camps, including Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Those who were prosecuted maintained in their own defence that they had acted in accordance with current Third Reich legislation. For some of the crimes under trial, the legislation was already in place before 1939. For other crimes, no legislation existed at the time they were committed.

Integrity of human life stands above all

The question of how to hold someone accountable retrospectively is complex, but the idea that the integrity of human life is an inalienable natural right was an important starting point for the Nuremberg trials. This means that irrespective of what the majority of society thinks or how people choose to act, the integrity of human life stands above all specific laws and policies. The idea is that crimes against humanity are always crimes, irrespective of any agreements or social contracts existing in the society where the crime is committed.

This principle and way of defining human life – and thereby our responsibility for it – is fundamental to how we perceive and relate to human rights today, both in international law and national legislation.

International conventions and agreements regulating the relationship between states and other states and their citizens are called international law. These laws are a recognition that some crimes are so grave that they transcend the sovereignty of nations and require other states to intervene.

When the UN Charter first became valid in 1945, it laid the basis for written international law. This was followed by the creation of the International Court of Justice, the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and the International Criminal Court.

In 2002, the International Criminal Court (ICC) was established as a permanent tribunal to prosecute people for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes if the states, where the crimes were committed, are unable or unwilling to prosecute the perpetrators. The tribunal is legally registered in The Hague in the Netherlands.

Coming to Justice

Coming to Justice is an international project for young people aged 17 and over that takes place in Amsterdam and The Hague several times a year. Organised by the Anne Frank House, about 25 students are brought together from several countries to discuss and explore issues relating to (in)justice and war crimes. The highlight of the four-day programme is a trip to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague (ICTY), where students witness an actual trial of a suspect accused of war crimes.

The four-day programme, most of which takes place at the Anne Frank House, is organised as follows:

Day 1: Exploration of (in)justice and the Holocaust, the Nuremberg trials. Key question: Was justice done? And to whom?

Day 2: Studying the conflict in the Balkans – background on the conflict.

Day 3: Visit to the War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague; debriefing by expert.

Day 4: Meet with survivors of the Holocaust and a founding member of the Serbian student movement Otpor (in English: *Resistance*), which was involved in the struggle to overthrow the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Slobodan Milošević. Evaluations of the project show that students recognise this as one of the most meaningful experiences of their educational career because they are watching history in the making. Evaluations also show that students' concepts of justice and injustice become more complex through this process.

Patterns of continuity

Ethnic diversity in focus

The Risiera di San Sabba memorial site lies in Trieste. Formerly a rice-washing factory, the Nazis used it as a prison, interrogation centre and transit camp from 1943–1945. Almost 20,000 people were imprisoned there. In the police detention camp, equipped with a crematorium, thousands of political opponents – members of the Italian, Slovene and Croatian resistance – were tortured and killed, along with dozens of Jews. In the transit camp thousands of prisoners were held for reasons of their race or political belief before being deported to extermination camps and concentration camps elsewhere. The area around Trieste has been characterised by ethnic diversity for centuries, and during the first half of the 1900s, an ethno-territorial conflict developed between Italian nationalists and Slovenian and Croatian nationalists. The exhibition at the memorial site and the place itself emphasise not only the Holocaust, but also a balanced historical portrayal of Italian-Slavo co-existence in the area. This includes the fascist regime's repressive measures against the Slavic-speaking population, as well as the German occupation's extremely brutal treatment of the civilian population in connection with anti-partisan warfare. In this respect, Risiera di San Sabba helps visitors to relate critically to different nationalistic measures in the regional history of the 1900s.

As well as disseminating historical information, teaching about the Holocaust often also aims at providing a perspective on the contemporary situation. It may be through highlighting racism and xenophobia, counteracting prejudice or persuading students to look at their own views and interpretation of events. Students who took part in discussions prior to this handbook stressed the importance of looking at these present-day issues.

In the Europe of today, the majority of people distance themselves from the ideas developed by the Nazi regime during the 1930s and 1940s. However, the view of humanity and the values that lay behind National Socialist policy still persist in many places. Anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, prejudice against the Romani people, homophobia and other forms of intolerance, prejudice and stigmatisation flare up at regular intervals in all of Europe's countries.

Studying the Holocaust and the Nazi period naturally implies studying the theory and practice behind these ideas. Examining the process up to 1939 can demonstrate that several of these ideas form part of a long-ranging historical concept in Europe. This tradition was neither introduced by the Nazi regime, nor did it conclude with them, but it was expressed at that time in its most extreme form.

Studying history provides no direct answers as to how these ideas can be counteracted today. The historical context is different. However, we can study how these ideas and values were integrated in the historical context and how they influence our own contemporaries. Even if the conditions are different, many of the ideas can still be found today. We cannot easily dismiss the racism of today by saying that our world is very different from that of the 1930s – because the ideas are similar and seem more difficult to change than the socio-political and economic environment.

History also shows us the potential consequences if ideas of this kind are not taken seriously and counteracted promptly.

Racism

Racism is the idea that distinctive human characteristics, abilities etc. are invariably determined by “racial” origin, and that there are superior and inferior “races”. Biological racism came about during the 17th and 18th century and had a crucial influence on both justifying the oppression of populations and population groups that already existed and further prolonging and intensifying it. Where the German Nazi Party was concerned, racism was an integral component of their world picture. They were setting biological requirements for the possibility of individuals to belong to their group of “superior human beings” (“Herrenmenschen”), and they depicted others, particularly Jews, as a separate ‘race’ that should never under any circumstances be able to become part of their own people's community. This biological perception had a direct consequence for the way in which legislation was used to define who was a Jew because a distinction was already made between “full Jews” and



Gravestone of a Jewish soldier among memorials in a Jewish cemetery desecrated with Nazi swastikas and fascist insignia by far-right extremists.

(Photo: Corbis)

“Mischlingen”, that is, “partial Jews”. The idea that the biological origin of the individual is crucial for participating in society as a “full member” is still common in several chauvinistic movements in Europe. Today, however, it is much more common to use references to “invariable cultural differences” to divide societies apart and justify exclusion and the denial of rights.

Anti-Semitism

Hatred of Jews existed in the Christian world since Christianity became established in its own right as a religion outside Judaism. Anti-Semitism can be defined as any acts or attitudes that are based on the perception of a social subject – individual, group or institution – as “the (‘deceitful’, ‘corrupt’, ‘conspiratorial’, etc.) Jew”, with “the Jew” being an imaginary figure invented by anti-Semitic ideology. For a more extensive discussion on the question of defining anti-Semitism, see the 2004 FRA report on *Manifestations of Anti-Semitism in the EU 2002 – 2003*.

Accusing Jews of being responsible for things such as Jesus’ death, spreading diseases, poisoning the drinking water or carrying out ritual murders is what has formed part of stirring up spiteful hatred over the centuries that has generated into pogroms and physical attacks against Jews.

During the 1800s when the interest in classifying people into different “races” arose, the Jews were singled out as a separate “race”. Wilhelm Marr, a German journalist, coined the expression “anti-Semitism” in 1879, thereby forming a concept for all the thoughts, ideas and feelings that were aimed against Jews.

The danger of anti-Semitism was not just the accusations themselves or the driving anti-Semitic propagandists but the fact that these ideas were also largely accepted by people who were actually quite indifferent towards Jews. For this reason, after losing the war in 1918 it was easy for anti-Semites in Germany to accuse Jews of having caused this loss by acting disloyally towards Germany and choosing only self-enrichment from the war.

Anti-Semitism is still very much in existence today. It is not possible to say that anti-Semitism and racism are the same because anti-Semitism is still based on specific ideas that include, for example, the belief that Jews control and dominate the world.

Discrimination against Roma and Sinti

Nazi policy against Roma and Sinti was not as consistent and was not discussed by Nazi leaders in the same way and extent as their policy against

Examine racist argumentation then and today

Ask your students to compare newspaper articles, letters to the press and propaganda from the 1930s with letters to the press, leaflets and homepages today. Focus on the kind of arguments people use in writing about issues such as refugees or members of minorities in general, what they are accused of and how they are described. Ask the students to note both similarities and differences. This will also allow them to see how arguments have changed and help them to see through new racist currents. Also encourage students to consider how the conditions for expressing and realising ideas have changed. The FRA is doing work about, for and with the media in order to increase critical media literacy among media consumers and human rights awareness among media professionals. See the FRA website for more information: www.fra.europa.eu



Roma people, accused of collaborating with the Serbs during the Balkan war, are protected by UN-soldiers behind a fence because of harassment by Albanians, Djakovica Kosovo 1999.

(Photo: Sven-Erik Sjöberg)

Jews. Some of the Nazis, like for example the head of the SS, Heinrich Himmler, thought of the Roma and Sinti as a kind of origin of the 'Arya race'. This totally unscientific attitude led to an ambivalent policy. On the one hand, so-called 'pure-bred' Roma and Sinti would be interned and constitute a sort of anthropological research base and, on the other hand, in practice they were classified as "sub-humans" and exposed to full-scale genocide.

There are several important reasons why Nazi policy against the Roma and Sinti shifted from racist and anthropological internment that was contrary to international law into genocide. One of the foremost reasons was the attitudes of the mobile mass murder units that operated on the Eastern Front. When these units received orders to seek out suspected saboteurs and political enemies, it was natural for them, given their own prejudice and hatred of Roma and Sinti, to attack Roma and Sinti without further reason – this largely amounted to summary executions. On 16 December 1942, Heinrich Himmler gave out the directive that all "Gypsies" still living in the "German Reich" were to be deported to Auschwitz.

The attitudes that existed among perpetrators were based on prejudices against Roma and Sinti that existed before the Nazi seizure of power and still remain today. For historical reasons, we must examine how these attitudes had a direct effect on the genocide of Roma and Sinti. However, in our human rights work, we must also examine how these attitudes still remain in several European countries today. The historical link is very obvious. The Roma people were forced to wear a black triangle on their camp uniform. This colour showed that they belonged to the so-called a-social category. And still today it is very common that Roma people are considered as strangers and outsiders from society.

In many countries the survivors of the Roma genocide were initially not recognised as victims of racist persecution and it took years before they received any compensation payments for their sufferings. They were never compensated for their demolished houses or for their teams of horses and their wagons. Many doctors in Germany and Austria refused to recognise the ailments of the survivors as long term consequences of the brutal treatment in the concentration camps. It was only in the 1990s that commemoration of the 'forgotten' genocide against Roma and Sinti began.

Today, the Roma are still subjected to discrimination and racist crime in many EU Member States. In 2009, the FRA released the results of its European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey (EU-MIDIS) – a survey of over 23,000 individuals from ethnic minority and migrant backgrounds about their

experiences of discrimination in the European Union Member States. The survey results reveal high levels of discrimination and harassment experienced by the Roma on a daily basis. Every second Roma respondent was discriminated against at least once in the 12 months preceding the survey. Roma who were discriminated against experienced on average 11 incidents of discrimination over a 12 month period. Discrimination and exclusion happens in all areas of life: education, employment, housing, healthcare and access to service.

To know more about the history of the Roma, please visit the websites of the Council of Europe: at www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/roma/histoCulture_en.asp you will find factsheets about the history of Roma in Europe, and at www.romagenocide.org/ you will find information on the genocide committed on the Roma.

Neo Nazism and racist extremism

The final stage of genocide is the perpetrators' desire to conceal and deny their crime. This is the basis on which we must understand denial of the Holocaust. Without necessarily understanding it themselves, Holocaust deniers form part of the genocide process.

Neo Nazism and racist extremism, which have anti-Semitism, xenophobia and racism on their agenda, exist in large parts of Europe today. Their hatred of ethnic minorities is the driving force that attracts sympathisers to them and allows them to form organisations. With few exceptions, they have no ambition to kill people, but they want to limit the rights and freedoms of minorities or expel these groups from what they perceive as "their country" or "their Europe".

The driving force behind the Holocaust, as in other genocides, was a desire to remove a group of people. What this 'removal' means varies at different times, but it does not necessarily mean mass murder. The aim is to render invisible the group(s) hated by perpetrators (or future perpetrators), and the solutions can range from restrictions on the right to live with one's own identity to restrictions on the right to life itself.

Teachers who want to discuss this type of issue should beware of becoming too moralising. It is important to encourage students to reflect themselves and draw their own conclusions, rather than to lead them into an analysis with only one solution. This approach requires students to participate with a genuine desire to understand rather than to adopt the attitude of getting through a required element of the curriculum. Teachers must allow questions that are prompted by students' genuine curiosity and interest to form the focus of the analysis. The students and teacher may seek historical material to help answer these questions. The teacher's task at this stage is to provide knowledge about the historical context and initiate questions about the intentions and possibilities for action – and thereby responsibility – of the perpetrators and bystanders.

In the discussions held in preparation to this handbook many students asked questions about parallels of this kind between historical knowledge and the contemporary situation. The Italian students commented on the need to actualise the teaching and principles learned when studying a subject like the Holocaust in order to deal with issues related to the treatment of minorities and migrant communities. Danish students who had been taught the Holocaust also expressed an interest in more comparative studies that also focused on the present day and on the processes that occur in different genocides, such as dehumanisation.

Facing History and Ourselves

Facing History and Ourselves is an organisation that engages students in an examination of different forms of inter-group conflict in order to develop multiple perspectives, critical thinking and moral decision making. The educational goal is to stimulate reflection on the causes and consequences of prejudice, discrimination and group violence. Facing History and Ourselves takes examples from different times and geographical areas, with a focus on the Holocaust. They offer lesson plans, study guides and educational programmes for teachers: www.facinghistory.org.

An experience that makes a difference

Places and museums in Europe

The majority of European countries have institutions whose task is to preserve the memory of the victims of the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes and to teach about the Nazi dictatorship and Second World War. Many of these institutions are former concentration and death camps. Others are places and buildings linked in different ways to the events of the Nazi period. One example is the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam where Anne Frank and her family hid; another example is the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin where the administration of the “Final Solution” – that is, the murder of the European Jews – was coordinated. In some countries, museums are located at places that are not directly related to the Holocaust, such as the Living History Forum in Sweden and the Imperial War Museum in the UK. Many of these institutions offer exhibitions and educational programmes. There is often the opportunity to have a guided tour or participate in a short workshop. A number of institutions also arrange courses lasting for one or several days, in which students have the opportunity to work more actively and independently. For further information about institutions in Europe, please visit the following website www.memorial-museums.net/WebObjects/ITF.

Every year, millions of young Europeans visit memorial sites and museums linked with the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes. For example, the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland counts more than 1.1 million visitors a year, the Anne Frank House in the Netherlands counts almost one million visitors a year, the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site in Germany about 800,000 visitors a year, and the Terezin Memorial in the Czech Republic, the Shoah Memorial in France and the Mauthausen Memorial in Austria each count about 200,000 visitors a year.

At many memorial sites and museums more than 50 per cent of the visitors are under the age of 18 years. The majority of these young visitors come within the framework of their school education. Teaching about the Holocaust is obligatory in many countries, and some governments also recommend visits to historical sites.

Visits to original sites, but also to historical museums, often make a lasting impression on students. The actual site in many cases becomes compelling evidence of the facts learnt at school. It also offers the opportunity for clarification and to experience something that cannot be experienced in another way, such as the enormous geographical distribution of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death and concentration camp and the very limited area of Belzec death camp, both on Polish territory. This experience provides insight into certain aspects of the organisation and everyday elements of the genocide. Auschwitz-Birkenau had different functions and developed over time from a concentration camp to a combined concentration and death-camp. At Belzec death camp, from the very beginning, no one was expected to survive overnight and so only a few buildings were needed.

The teaching situation at a historical site or museum differs in many ways from the teaching situation in the classroom. Memorial sites and museums offer unique learning opportunities. The student can explore the site and the traces which remain, in the form of artefacts and structures. They can see exhibitions, explore authentic documents and visit memorials.

Focus on the history of the site

During the visit to an original site, the main focus is usually on the particular site being visited, along with the facts, stories and individuals linked to that place. In group discussions conducted in nine European countries both students and teachers pointed out that it is important to concentrate on the history of the site while you are there. It is therefore important for the teacher to prepare the students prior to the visit in order to enable them to place the site in a correct historical context and reflect on related human rights questions.



Every year, more than one million people visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, one of hundreds of institutions in Europe that commemorate and educate about the Holocaust and other crimes committed by Nazi Germany and its collaborators.

(Photo: Corbis)

“A visit to a historical place can give a sense of scale, organisation and details.”

– Teacher, United Kingdom

One aspect raised by students was the risk of the visit becoming an instrumental ritual. If students do not understand why they are there and what is expected of them, a visit to an authentic site such as a former concentration camp can become a negative experience.

Another aspect raised by both students and teachers is the limited time available to visit museums and historical sites. The majority of visits are short – usually only a few hours. Bearing in mind that the visit may be one of few occasions during their education when students are confronted with difficult ethical and moral questions about death, compassion, responsibility and evil, preparations and follow up are essential. It is important for students to be able to assess the experience and draw their own conclusions. This requires time, and the teacher should plan the visit accordingly.

Structuring your visit to a memorial site

A study visit to a historical site or museum supplements and enriches ordinary classroom teaching; it does not replace it. Teachers can determine and control how the visit fits into the teaching plan and helps the group to achieve the established objectives. It is therefore important to plan the study visit's objectives in good time before the visit, and also to work out the preparation and follow-up work that will be needed. The educational aim may also influence the choice of site or museum to visit.

Before the visit

A visit to a memorial site focuses on the specific place and what happened there. Emphasis is on the history of the site, its past and the individuals and events linked to it. Even if student groups are given a brief general introduction to the history of the Nazi period and the Holocaust at the site, it is usually fairly concise. Before the visit, therefore, it is important for students to have understood the general historical context, the context of the particular site and how this site relates to other sites. For example, a concentration camp, built to terrorise the inmates and exhaust their power to live by slave labour under unbearable conditions, is different from a death camp and a labour camp. The death camp was planned and built solely to murder those who were taken there. The labour camp was built to house a large number of people who would be put to work as forced labourers.

It is also important that teachers take into account that certain Holocaust-related sites, in particular original sites of crime, should not be visited by children below a certain age. Before the visit, young people should have a preparatory lesson on the history of the Holocaust in order to be able to understand what they see and to reflect on it. Memorial sites and museums usually provide information on the appropriate minimum age of visitors.

If the teaching aims to focus on a specific theme, it is important for students to have understood how the relevant site or institution is linked to this theme. If you for example focus on political oppression, Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany might be a natural place to visit, since there, among others, political prisoners and Jehovah's Witnesses were interned.

When visiting a site in a country where a foreign language is spoken, try to obtain an educator or guide who speaks the students' native language in order to achieve maximum understanding. If this is not possible, check at the site that the students have understood the key issues correctly.

At original sites, as well as at museums, the students will probably be confronted with original documents and historical material, which may contain propagandistic and ideologically laden elements. Students need to be prepared on how to critically read and understand such elements – and to distinguish between information about history and historical artefacts.

Preparatory material

Some institutions offer preparatory material that students and teachers can consult. Schloss Hartheim in Austria, a castle where persons with disabilities were murdered from 1940 as part of the so-called 'Euthanasia' programme, sends out a DVD containing five short films for students to watch before visiting. The films describe the contemporary life of persons with disabilities in Austria by example of five persons, who were asked to come by means of public transport to the Memorial Site Hartheim Castle. Imperial War Museum in London also sends schools a video, describing Jewish life in Europe before the Holocaust. Other locations have comprehensive lesson material available. Books, research-material, maps, photocopies of documents, lesson scenarios, pictures etc can also be found, and it is a good idea to check the websites of these sites before visiting. Another way to prepare for the visit is to read survivors' testimonies linked to the particular site, which can sometimes be found with the help of the institution you intend to visit. It is worth contacting the institution in advance to ask about materials of this kind and for advice on how best to prepare your students.



A study tour fulfils many functions, one of which is to consolidate the learning and discussions that took place in the classroom prior to the visit. Students, teachers and guides at the institutions all benefit from good preparation.

(Photo: Scanpix)

Focus during the visit

The teacher and students should decide together how the visit can be incorporated into the chosen teaching theme. The majority of institutions are open to discussing particular needs in advance, but otherwise offer various standard visits. It helps the guide leading a group to know the students' level of knowledge, the role of the visit in the teaching process (as an introduction, middle or conclusion) and what the expectations are.

When the students arrive at the memorial site or museum, their impression will naturally be dominated by what that particular institution has chosen to emphasise. To ensure that students feel secure and informed, it is important for them to understand in addition to the historical context, the main idea behind their particular visit. It may be for them to explore a particular part of this period of history, to follow individual human stories and tragedies, or to link with work done at school before the visit.

After the visit

After the visit, apart from having an opportunity to share their experiences, students should be able to link their experience to the theme you are working on in class. Follow-up work and reflection will enable the students to develop and review the knowledge and attitudes they had when they started this work. This helps students to reinforce their knowledge while also giving them some perspective on how their own knowledge and perhaps new questions have developed. To facilitate continued learning, it is also important to be able to debrief the powerful emotional experiences that often result from visits of this kind.

The Holocaust and human rights as an educational subject

“What is human dignity?”

When visiting a historical site linked with serious brutality, the history of the site and the students' impressions highlight the significance of the rights of individuals.

In order to reinforce an understanding of what human rights involves, students can be asked in the preparatory phase to write short essays on important concepts or ideas. These could be on subjects like “What is human dignity?”, “What does it mean when we say that people must be of equal value?” and “What does responsibility mean?” During the visit to the memorial site, when the group finds itself in situations or places that reflect the violence, it may be appropriate to read out a selection of the students' own thoughts.

This shifts the focus from the guide and the teacher to the students themselves. It is their words and thoughts that are linked to the historical site. When discussing these rights and responsibilities, it is important for students to be given freedom to express their thoughts and questions. This reduces the risk of an artificial conversation in which students only say what they think is expected of them rather than developing a deeper insight and commitment. If the discussion is to be open and permissive, preparation is required. Teachers can discuss with students the value of this type of discussion. The students should be aware of the sensitivity of the subject, but not afraid of it. The teacher should not force a discussion on them, as this may be perceived as manipulative. Another benefit of this preparatory work is that students gain an understanding of the fundamental concepts necessary to comprehend human rights, including basic concepts such as human life and human dignity.

After the visit, the teacher can ask students to re-read the texts they wrote earlier and consider whether and how their perceptions and attitudes have or have not been changed by the visit.

The active participation of students is central to effective Human Rights Education. Teaching in this field means being active, having a critical approach and being prepared to engage in discussions. It is important that the teaching itself is in line with the philosophy behind human rights, namely democratic and non-authoritative.

Human rights education (HRE) aims at contributing to both understanding and applying human rights, while teaching about the Holocaust is an area of knowledge aimed more at understanding than action. One could therefore regard the two areas as complementary to each other, with Holocaust education (HE) informing the understanding of human rights, and Human rights education adding an action oriented perspective to knowledge about, and the understanding of, history.

In discussions with teachers and students conducted for this handbook, both groups expressed their view that studying the Holocaust would be particularly important where it could be linked to issues relating to responsibility and fundamental human rights. Linking the Holocaust to teaching about human rights does fulfil a real interest and need.

Interdisciplinary approach

In choosing to implement such a link you as an educator have chosen an approach that will involve more disciplines than history. The strength of this interdisciplinary work method lies in bringing together knowledge, perspectives and methodology from several different fields to create a new knowledge and understanding that is deeper than the insight that can be achieved by studying the areas separately. This approach is necessary to examine how the Holocaust has affected the past and present generation's understanding of, and commitment to, human rights.

Developments within Germany in the years preceding the Holocaust provide an example of how some groups were denied various human rights, and thereby an insight into the importance of these rights. The actual genocide is evidence that some people are capable of depriving others of all their rights – including the right to life.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) teaching about human rights has several different aims:

- to disseminate knowledge about human rights and the mechanisms to protect them;
- to disseminate knowledge about how people can protect, preserve and apply human rights;
- to create the attitudes and behaviour necessary to maintain human rights for all members of a society.



Buchenwald's memorial plaque is always heated to 37° C, to represent the warmth of the human body.

(Photo: Stiftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora)

Teaching about human rights is often universal, present and future oriented and hands-on. Historical examples are sometimes used to demonstrate the importance of human rights, but exploring the historical context in greater detail is unusual. Human rights constitute an area of knowledge that in itself covers several disciplines such as ethics, philosophy, social studies, and history.

Conversely, Holocaust education must first be about exploring and attempting to understand and explain the historical context of the Holocaust. To be meaningful, it is vital that the past is not shaped to serve the needs of any moral, political, social or ideological agenda. History teachers are often responsible for teaching about the Holocaust. For them, it is important to describe, interpret and explore the historical context in which the Holocaust took place, but it is less self-evident to link this to human rights.

While the subject of history can support the understanding of the way in which human rights have developed, more subjects are needed to examine the significance that they hold in our societies. In cross-fertilising history with literature, art and philosophy, the students are given the opportunity of exploring how people in different contexts have described and understood key themes within human rights.

Human rights play an important role in the identity and social structure of European nations. Compliance varies, however, and human rights are not always undisputed and obvious. Like democracy, they must always be protected and their significance clarified.

As a historical event, the Holocaust has impacted on the whole of Europe in various respects. The Holocaust is therefore a natural starting point, in Europe, to concretise human rights and make them visible.

Human rights in Buchenwald

The Buchenwald Memorial in Germany offers students a project day entitled "Human Rights". Its objective is to highlight exclusion and discrimination as social phenomena in the camp, and thereby create an understanding of human rights in our era.

The identities of the participants themselves form the point of departure for the critical examination of the historical past. Diversity in the group – and in society – and its social significance are explored under methodological guidance. A discussion is then held on the universal aspects of human rights and ideologies that threaten human rights, both past and present. The abuse of human rights is a main issue in the presentation of the former concentration camp. During the day the participants have the possibility to examine at the historical site topics such as the system of arrest and commitment by the National Socialists, victim groups, the self-image of the perpetrators or the relationship of Weimar's citizens to the concentration camp. The research can be done on the site, in the archives, library and digital collection.

Authenticity – a feeling of genuineness

Local traces

– the example of Sweden

The Holocaust was a global event, which means that it left traces in many regions of the world. These traces are naturally more evident in areas where the murders took place, but they can also be found in countries not directly affected by the Holocaust. Examining local traces can give students knowledge of the links and roles in events of their own local society.

Given the different experiences of nations and populations during the Holocaust, these local traces are different. There is an enormous difference between, for example, Poland, which was occupied and destroyed and where the Nazis built the death camps, and Sweden, which had declared itself neutral. In Sweden, there were no concentration camps and no deportations took place. However, also in Sweden you can find many local connections – reports in local newspapers, refugees arriving at various times, or being denied to stay in the country, Swedish companies that used concentration camp prisoners in their subsidiaries.

For Swedish students, it has proven to be a valuable exercise to read a local newspaper from the beginning of November 1938 when the *Kristallnacht* pogrom or “Night of Broken Glass” took place. There is usually fairly detailed reporting of the event. Such articles describing the society of the country where students themselves are living – albeit from almost seventy years ago – can create a feeling of proximity. Students discover that people were confronted with what happened in Germany in 1938.

“When we were in Majdanek, I understood that this was real. I may have done so before as well, but not in the same way.” Student, 15 years old

Teachers who have taken students to sites linked to the Holocaust will probably recognise this kind of reaction. The visits make a powerful impression on many students and they feel that their understanding of events has increased.

A feeling of authenticity, i.e. of proximity, reality or genuineness is common when visiting memorial sites of the Holocaust. People often expect the experience to be special, powerful and emotional.

Authenticity is a mix of knowledge, expectations and experience. The authenticity of a historical site stems from the knowledge that “real” historical events once occurred there. It is the expectation that the site can provide an impression of what happened in the past, and it is the experience of how it feels to be at the historical site and be confronted with objects of history. Authenticity requires some preliminary understanding of what is being viewed. Authenticity does not exist as a metaphysical phenomenon independent of its viewers. It is the individuals and group viewing the object/place/ story who attach a certain importance to it. This capacity of the individual to experience authenticity is a fact that can be used to reinforce teaching.

In this context, one can use the term ‘didactic authenticity’.

Didactic authenticity results from the teacher consciously reinforcing the value of a teaching element by using a place or an object to make the content more tangible, so that the object can be touched physically or otherwise affect the viewer emotionally.

However, authenticity can also be misused. Erroneous content can be communicated to students, artefacts that are not historical can be used and some elements reinforced in such a way that the picture becomes unbalanced. The emotional elements can be prominent without any knowledge actually being communicated.

Didactic authenticity in practice

The historical sites that we visit today are not identical and do not provoke the same feelings as they did during the Holocaust. Our ability to imagine how it would have looked or felt in the past varies from person to person – and this image and feeling, even if it never even comes close to the past as it was, can influence our thinking and stimulate reflection. The teacher can make this easier for students by using historical images of the sites during the Holocaust as well as testimonies and other texts describing events that took place there and how people experienced these events. Pictures and texts will reinforce the impression made by the site and the location itself and will consolidate the content of the texts. It is important to use illustrations and texts showing structures that are still visible on site, or perceptible in some other way.



Graffiti in Fort IX, Lithuania, scratched onto the wall of their cell by Jewish deportees from Drancy, Paris, hours before their murder.

(Photo: Olivia Hemingway)

Names on the wall bear witness

The following activity was created by Paul Salmons at the Imperial War Museum in London.

Outside Kaunas in Lithuania stands Fort IX, a defensive building dating from the beginning of the 1900s which was used as a site of execution during the Holocaust. Jews were brought to Fort IX from several different locations in Europe and shot to death there. During the relatively short time between arrival and execution, a few of the victims were kept locked up in the old fortress. A number of French Jews, deported from Drancy, scratched their names, home towns and other details on the wall of their cell, and these can still be seen today.

These names bear witness to the identities of the people taken there and the places they came from. Students can compare the names on the walls with actual deportation lists to see whether the dates, places and names correspond. In several cases, they will discover differences between the dates, spellings and places. This is an excellent starting point for students to examine which names on the deportation lists tally with the names on the walls, and to reflect on how incorrect sources of information might arise.

Students can also be asked to search for the photographs of the people they identified from the graffiti; a small display panel elsewhere in the room has photographs of some of the deportees and a couple of those who scratched their names can be found. This search can be highly motivating, and students can feel a great sense of achievement in this process of discovery. One general discussion subject at the close of the activity might be why the deportees wrote their names on the walls, and whether the students' own efforts to interpret these names might be partly what the deportees wanted to achieve, i.e. they did not want to disappear without trace.

Examining installations at memorial sites

At the majority of the memorial sites you will find artistic installations that represent different perspectives on the history of the site. These installations are a good starting point for bringing up human rights issues. During the sixty years that have passed since the end of Second World War installations have been created in different historical contexts that present different interpretations of the past. They often reveal more about the time when they were established than about the events they refer to. These installations can help students to understand and interpret how history is presented at different times in different contexts. There are for instance differences between installations that focus on the struggle between ideologies, and installations that focus on individual suffering. There is also a difference between installations that strive to reclaim the individual dignity of victims, and installations that present the victims as an anonymous mass.

An installation could be interpreted by a few simple questions, or you could spend hours elaborating the details. A good starting point is to ask the students to find out how old the installation is, who created it, in which context and what the focal point of the installation is. This can be continued by discussions of their own contemporary situation and views both on the installation and the history. This activity would benefit from cooperation with an art lesson. After analysing various installations students can be asked to create an installation for themselves. This could very well include a task that allows them to explore relations between history and human rights issues today.

On your way to Auschwitz you may see nothing – unless you look closely

The notion of the Holocaust

In western Europe, the perception of the Holocaust is to a large extent dominated by Auschwitz-Birkenau and camps in Germany such as Dachau and Bergen-Belsen. One reason for this is that media in this part of Europe focused on the concentration camps in Germany after the liberation. Another reason is that Auschwitz-Birkenau, which was a combined concentration and death camp, had more survivors than for example the pure death camps. Survivors from Auschwitz who had been transferred to camps further west, were liberated by the western Allies or settled in western Europe after the end of the war, and told about their experiences. There are also national experiences of the period of the Holocaust that have a significant impact on how people in different European countries interpret and relate to the Holocaust. This has meant that today we have, to various extents, an unbalanced picture of the Nazi terror and how it affected Europe. The majority of those who were murdered lost their lives in the death camps of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka, as well as in mass shootings by 'mobile killing squads' known as *Einsatzgruppen*, primarily in areas now in the Baltic States, Belarus and the Ukraine. All these actions had extremely few survivors. The majority of those murdered in the Holocaust originated from countries in eastern Europe, and the stories of those few who survived have seldom reached the countries in western Europe. We still know little about what their lives were like before the Holocaust. Whether your visit is to a memorial site in eastern or western Europe, it is important to take note of this aspect of the Holocaust.

The word "genocide" conjures up a variety of images in our minds, many of them from what we know about the Holocaust. When teaching about genocide, emphasis is placed on what actually happened and an analysis of how this was able to happen. However, it is also important to look at the long-term results of genocide.

As a result of the Holocaust and Second World War, there was a dramatic demographic change in Europe. One aim of Nazi policy was to create the conditions and space for a racist utopia. In order to create this space, plans to eradicate several different ethnic groups were developed and implemented, thus creating a number of human and cultural "voids".

In some places in Europe, few remnants of the lives and diverse culture of Jews remain. In many more, this culture has been completely obliterated. It is difficult to perceive these voids but if you take time to search for indicators of remnants of Jewish culture, it will deepen your understanding of the consequences of genocide beyond the timeframe of the conflict itself.

Total absence was the aim

The Holocaust cannot be understood simply through the violent methods that were utilised during the period since these were, in most cases, not an end to themselves. The perpetrators principal aim was to achieve the total absence of the groups they aimed to eliminate. A new order in Europe based on racist ideas was the aim, and ethnic cleansing was the means.

One way of tracing a thread of the Holocaust is by visiting a town that had a thriving Jewish population before the Second World War, which was then eradicated. Visiting swimming baths that were previously a synagogue, a forest with a mass grave but no sign of a memorial, or a burial ground that is overgrown because there is no one left to take care of it – these experiences give a deeper understanding of what the Holocaust actually meant.

The impact of this approach will be particularly powerful if it is used in connection with a visit to a former concentration camp. Since this might be difficult to realise due to distances, time limits and financial resources, photos, texts, maps and statistics can be used in the classroom.

The website www.polin.org.pl is a good source of information and rich visual material about places in Poland where Jewish life flourished before the Second World War.

In the Czech Republic, a project has been initiated called Neighbours Who Disappeared (www.zmizeli-sousedede.cz/aj/). Young Czech people between 12 and 18 years search for information about Jewish inhabitants who lived in their own neighbourhood before the war. About 1,180,000 Jews lived within the territory of the former Czechoslovakia in 1939, most of them side by side with non-Jews. Through interviewing survivors of the Second World War and witnesses, searching mostly in local archives and other sources, the young people try to discover what happened to these people and record it through posters, websites and local newspapers.

What was lost in Rhodes

This exercise will help students discover a consequence of the Holocaust that is not immediately visible to the naked eye.

The picture shows the former Jewish quarter in Rhodes, Greece. Rhodes has a long history of Jewish-Greek relations. Until the beginning of the 1900s, nearly 4,000 Jews lived on the island, half of whom fled after 1938 when the Italian fascists controlling the area introduced anti-Semitic laws. Germany occupied Rhodes in 1943 and introduced extremely repressive measures against the Jewish population, including summary executions. In the summer of 1944, 1,700 Jews were deported to the concentration and death camp Auschwitz, of whom around 150 survived and only a handful returned to the island. Today, there are no Jews left on Rhodes and the old quarter lies in the middle of the tourist centre. Every week, thousands of tourists pass through it without knowing that they are walking in the long shadow of Auschwitz. For many Europeans today, Jewish culture has a stronger link to Auschwitz than to all the Jewish quarters that used to exist in many towns. Most of these have now been forgotten.

Ask your students to look at the picture and try to decide where it was taken. The aim of this introduction is to get them to focus on the picture rather than on your actual objective. Ask them what they can see in the picture – the details and theme. Then ask them a question about what is not obviously shown in the picture, i.e. the things that you cannot see, but lie behind it.



A tourist photo of Rhodes. Nothing in the picture – or at the site – reveals that this was once the Jewish quarter of Rhodes with a 2,000-year history.

(Photo: Christer Mattsson)

“Addressee unknown”

City Gate – Theatre NN Centre is working for education and the preservation of cultural heritage in Lublin, Poland. For centuries, Lublin was a place where cultures representing a variety of ethnic and religious groups met. Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Jews lived together. Poles, Jews, Ukrainians, Byelorussians, Russians, Armenians and Germans were neighbours. The Centre’s activities are connected with restoring the memory of Jewish life in Lublin. During the Second World War, the German occupiers made Lublin their headquarters for the eastern SS-district. This meant that during the Holocaust Lublin was the centre for the mass extermination of Polish Jews. In 1939, 42,000 Jews lived in the town; today there are fewer than 50. The former Jewish quarter has been totally destroyed. NN stands for the unknown names of the former Jewish inhabitants. The Centre’s “Letters to the Ghetto” project has been in existence since 2001. Lublin schoolchildren write letters to Jewish people

who used to live in the town before the Holocaust. The children learn about the history and fate of the Jewish citizens of Lublin, and write letters to selected people. The letters are sent to the correct addresses, where these people used to live – but the named receiver of course no longer lives at that address. Almost all of them were murdered.

When the letters are returned to the senders (the children and their parents), with the post office stamp “addressee unknown”, it raises awareness of the loss of Jewish people, their homes and culture.

In 1998, the Centre began a programme entitled “The Great Book of the City,” gathering archive materials connected with the Polish-Jewish history of Lublin (photographs, oral history and documents). A constantly expanding documentary exhibition based on these materials describes this aspect of the pre-war multi-cultural city of Lublin.



The teacher's role and responsibility is to prepare the group for the various emotional reactions that are likely to occur during or after the visit.

(Photo: Scanpix)

Strong feelings upon visiting the sites

Process feelings

It may promote learning if the teacher help the students to process their feelings in connection with a visit. At exhibitions and sites there are some objects, photographs, stories or physical structures that make a greater impression than others on individual visitors. Ask the students to choose one such object and to describe it by sketching, writing or drawing. In this way, students can quickly find an outlet for their feelings, and this will often make it easier to move on to a new stage in the learning process or change to another theme. During the follow-up work after the visit, students can use their drawings or notes to recall memories of the visit and link them to the theme discussed.

Visits to memorial sites and museums connected to the Holocaust often involve both knowledge and feelings. Students often feel sadness, distress or anger about the terrible suffering people had to endure. These feelings can lead to greater involvement on the part of students, but sometimes – if deliberately aroused by teachers or guides – they can become so strong that they block the learning process and frighten students.

A memorial site or museum fulfils the function of bringing history “closer” to the visitor. In reality, this “proximity” is a metaphor for an emotional experience. The people who were there – victims and perpetrators – are actually no closer to the student in a museum than in the classroom, but students may very well feel this to be the case. This emotional reaction can give students a greater understanding of the importance of the subject, as well as increasing their interest in the subject, thereby stimulating learning.

Feelings always play a role in learning – if students feel loathing, happiness or fear, this influences the teaching situation. Neuropsychological research shows a connection between emotional involvement and cognitive learning. A certain measure of emotional involvement is a precondition for long-term learning: we learn more about a subject we are interested in,. Involvement can also grow on

“Feelings opened the doors to understanding the people behind these crimes.”

Student, Denmark.

the basis of the student’s previous experiences, the teacher’s personal involvement and, of course, the actual subject. A visit to a historical Holocaust site or museum will prove a powerful experience for many students.

Unfamiliar to interpret emotional reactions

It is usual for students to describe the emotional experience of visits to memorial sites and museums, and they will, of course, do this in different ways. In other teaching contexts, students do not normally discuss emotional reactions to subject content. For students, therefore, interpreting both their own reactions and those of their friends is an unfamiliar situation.

The students that took part in discussions conducted before producing this handbook said that they feel pressured either when their emotional reactions are repressed by teachers, guides or friends, or when they feel that a particular reaction is expected. This pressure can result in students demonstrating an undesirable type of behaviour that they themselves subsequently had difficulty explaining, or of which they were ashamed. They giggled, were distracted or tried in other ways to hide their own reactions or those of their friends. Other strategies might include focussing on technical details, thus creating distance from those bereavement situations.

After a visit, some students may say, “I don’t understand why, but I couldn’t cry,” in a tone suggesting that they had done something wrong. It is important to point out that you are not a bad person if you do not feel affected in any way. It must also be stated that you may not feel anything particular at all. This forewarning may prevent students from feeling guilty if they react in this way.

As teachers, it is important to consider how people will relate to the emotional content of the visit, as well as being aware that one cannot make assumptions about how things will turn out. It can be valuable to discuss things with the students beforehand and agree on which rules will apply. It may help the students if before the visit they have considered the fact that it might not be easy for them to come to terms with expectations connected to a place that represents the outcome of anti-humanistic ideologies and where dreadful crimes took place. The students should also be aware that some historical sites are also burial places which deserve respect: certain behaviour might cause disturbance to other visitors.

As teachers, you might also want to prepare yourself for your own reactions, and make decisions about how much of your own sentiments should be communicated to the students. This obviously depends very much on you yourself, your relationship with your students, and your own teaching situation.

The role of the moment of reflection

Should there be a commemoration ceremony? This is something that both students and teachers often ask before a visit to a former concentration and death camp. A moment of reflection can feel significant and important, but it can also be considered a forced experience that constitutes a violation of integrity. It is not unusual for students to feel uncomfortable when looking at pictures in an exhibition of people who were humiliated or murdered. They may obviously experience this feeling as well when visiting sites where people were executed and buried without the slightest trace of dignity. In this situation, there may be a need to give back some dignity to the victims, and this can take place by showing respect and involvement – perhaps by lighting a candle, reading a poem or singing a song. In a project in Lithuania, students were asked to collect stones and write on them the name of a person murdered in the Holocaust. The stones were then placed on a pile that became a memorial.

It is mainly the teachers’ responsibility to discuss the issue and ask the students if they feel comfortable with a ceremony. It is important for the students to have some control over the situation and have the option not to participate. If the teacher does not discuss the possibility of a moment of reflection, students may think it is unsuitable or not allowed.

Remember to ask the staff at the memorial site or in the museum what is permitted.

Yad Vashem's database of names

Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial institution for the victims of the Holocaust, has as one of its main tasks to preserve the memory of each individual victim by collecting as many details as possible about as many victims as possible. These details are stored on a database called the Hall of Names that can be accessed over the Internet.

Yad Vashem's database preserves the names of around three million individuals. In some cases, you can discover when and where the victims were born, where they were during the war, the relatives they had and where they were murdered.

When a group is planning to visit a memorial site, as part of the preparations, students could use this database of names to find people linked to the site you intend to visit. Students can use the database to research what happened to those people during the Holocaust.

Several institutions have archives that keep records of former inmates of concentration and extermination camps, death books and other individual records. Some archives are fairly complete, and some contain only fragments of their original content. It should be understood that even a complete record will in itself only cover fragments of the situation for the inmates. It is not uncommon for sites to provide opportunities both to visit the archive and to participate in workshops on how to make use of archival material. It is worth finding out in advance of a visit what opportunities might be available.

Diary starting point for visit to Majdanek

"We want to give the students an opportunity to learn in a creative and active way. We think this is positive for their learning and for their future interest in these topics. Since the students only spend some hours here at Majdanek, I think we should try to make an impact, do something they remember for a long time, to inspire them and influence them to continue learning." »

The individuals behind the statistics

About six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. More than one million people died at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Ninety per cent of Jewish children in Nazi-occupied Europe were killed or died because of the conditions they were exposed to.

The statistics are overwhelming and difficult to grasp, but they are important in order to understand the Holocaust's enormous impact on Europe and on the groups affected by the Nazis' eradication policy. At the same time, it is important to understand and show that behind each figure an individual with a name, an age, thoughts, feelings, family and friends can be found.

Repression starts in the prelude to what would become genocide, with the future perpetrators defining the victims in particular categories. This group categorisation is often based on a long pre-history of stigmatisation of groups that are redefined according to the perpetrators' ideology and intent. The next step is for people in the victim groups to be de-individualised. They will be seen as one homogeneous group instead of individuals with diverse characteristics, needs, lifestyles.

Individuality lost

In 1938 all German Jews were forced by a law to add an additional middle name determined by the Nazis – "Sara" for women and "Israel" for men. When the deportees arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau they were given a number that was tattooed on their arm – they became nameless. Their hair was cut, their personal clothes taken away and they were given the same kind of prison uniform. It became more difficult to see differences between individuals. They became one mass. In the end, the victims were buried in mass graves – or no grave at all – and their individuality was completely lost.

To a certain degree the de-individualisation started already long before the immediate process that led to the genocide, namely with the history of stigmatisation of human beings and their perception as a group with common characteristics. The Nazi policy of de-individualisation of Jews and of persons that they classified as Jews built on this – and even though this policy was not planned altogether in advance, one step led to another. The process facilitated the perpetrators' crimes, even if it didn't have that initial intention, because they felt there was a great distance between themselves and the victims.

In their minds, the perpetrators also focussed on the negative characteristics that they associated with the group they were removing. One way of doing this is to dehumanise the victims. For instance, victim group members are sometimes compared to animals. During the Holocaust, Jews were compared to rats and vermin. Similar instances of dehumanisation have been reported from other genocides: for example, in Rwanda, Tutsis were described as cockroaches before and during the genocide that was carried out against them – a genocide that led to the systematic mass murder of about 800,000 Tutsis.



A group of young friends on an excursion in Seklutski forest, Poland.

From right to left: Motl Replianski's brother, Miriam Koppelman, Hanan Polaczek, Malka Nochomowicz, Dvora from Ivinitz, Motke Burstein, Szeine Blacharowicz, Malka Matikanski and Munia Zahavi. Munia Zahavi, Hanan Polaczek and Malka Matikanski immigrated to Palestine. Szeine Blacharowicz survived the Holocaust hiding in the forest. All the others perished.

(Photo: USHMM)

Dorrieth Oppenheim's grandmother reads her a fairytale. In 1939, Dorrieth's parents sent her with the Kindertransport organisation from Kassel, Germany, to Scotland. Her parents were not allowed to join her and were later deported to Auschwitz, where they were murdered.

(Photo: USHMM)



Yehudit and Lea Csengeri from Transylvania, Hungary, were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1944 and selected for medical experiments because they were twins. They refused to be separated from their mother, Rosalia, so she was allowed to stay with her daughters. They managed to survive and were liberated in January 1945.

(Photo: USHMM)

» This is the view of Thomas Kranz, Director of the State Museum at Majdanek, Lublin, in eastern Poland. This museum works using project-based education, in which the main idea is to motivate the students, to encourage them to acquire knowledge independently and develop their self-study skills. Mr Kranz believes that this method of teaching allows for the possibility of critical thinking and new thinking patterns, which he considers fundamental in a democratic society. One programme is based on the diary of Jadwiga Ankiewicz, a 17-year old Polish girl who was an inmate in the camp for some months. Her diary is the only one preserved from the concentration camp of Majdanek. Students work from the diary writer's perspective. Before they start their own investigations, they are given an introduction about the camp and the different victim groups, and they are shown pictures of Jadwiga Ankiewicz and her diary. Small groups of students examine part of the diary, focusing on a chosen aspect of the camp's history, for example, working conditions, persecution of the Jews or life in the camp. The students use documents, artefacts, letters, books and testimonies provided by the museum. At the end of the programme, the students guide other students to places in the camp mentioned in the diary. They tell their classmates what happened to Jadwiga and about the history of the camp. They are accompanied by an educator, who talks about the general history of the camp and fills in any necessary knowledge. In another programme, students can work using photographs of the camp taken during the 1940s. The images are combined with testimonies, and the students themselves research the relevant places in the camp. They find out what is missing on the site today and what has changed. Students often conclude their projects by producing a poem, poster, booklet or drawing, and these are kept by the museum.

Stories of survivors

Students who have been able to meet survivors of the Holocaust often describe this as a very significant and poignant experience. They obtain knowledge from the survivor, are given an insight into the brutality of his or her suffering, and may also come closer to understanding how these crimes affected individual people. Moreover, they have an opportunity to ask more personal questions. Today, increasingly fewer survivors are able to visit schools and participate in activities at institutions and museums. Nothing can replace a direct meeting with a survivor, but their stories – and thereby their legacy – are preserved for the future in different ways. Several institutions have produced films in which survivors tell their stories, and these can be ordered or in some cases are available on the Internet. Many survivors have also written books about their experiences and reflections. There are several organisations and institutions that provide both audio and video testimonies on their websites, see:

www.yadvashem.org

Israel's official memorial institution to the Holocaust

www.ushmm.org

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/

Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University

www.college.usc.edu/vhi/

USC Shoah Foundation Institute

www.vha.fu-berlin.de/

Visual History Archive at the Freie Universität Berlin (directly connected to the USC Shoah Foundation Institute)

www.bl.uk/learning/histcitizen/voices/holocaust.html "Voices of the Holocaust" page of the British Library

From a learning perspective, it may be a good idea to use stories of individuals. It can be easier for students to take in the existing facts about an individual and, from that basis, develop their knowledge of a particular period of time further with regard to how society was organised and what the impact of certain ideologies was. The individual gives students a starting point that they can more readily feel acquainted with, and from there they can continue their educational journey. Examining who the victims were – their names, lives and destinies – and comparing this with how the Nazis portrayed them is one useful way of making students reflect on the importance of the individual's right to define her-/himself within the framework of her/his culture. It can also be seen as an attempt – as far as possible – to recreate the victims' former individuality that was brutally taken away from them. Furthermore, it can illuminate more powerful ways of understanding the world in bringing recognition that the lens of prejudice and hatred distorts reality and prevents us seeing the world as it is.

One potential risk of concentrating on the fates of specific individuals is that students may have difficulty understanding contexts and more complex matters. It is therefore important for teachers to use their knowledge and continuously place individual lives in a wider context. This might, for example, involve compiling events in the individuals' lives on a timeline that also includes historical events, and at the same time discussing in class how the lives of individuals are intertwined with the larger events. Another way is for the teacher to select a few recurring themes from several life stories and discuss them with students, or ask students to investigate their chosen individuals more deeply. Essential in this process is an attempt to understand people's dilemmas and actions from the context of their own time and perspectives, rather than to judge them with the benefit of hindsight.

Learning by examining the perpetrators

Teaching about the Holocaust also involves looking more closely at perpetrators. When we consider the Holocaust today, it is of course natural for us to judge the perpetrators by the crimes they committed. It is also easy to be caught up in these acts in trying to understand their brutality and bestiality. However, the murder itself creates a chasm between us and them. We do not want to identify with people who can carry out such acts.

An approach to teaching that describes the perpetrators as rash monsters capable of grotesque acts is far too simplified from a historical point of view. Paradoxically enough, it is also dehumanising. It prevents us from examining the perpetrators' motives and gaining an insight into how they constructed their concept of the world to justify acts of this kind.

By examining perpetrators as the complex, thinking individuals that they were, we can gain an insight into how values change, and how a racist and anti-Semitic ideology can spread and pave the way to genocide.

Examining the worldview, historical context and thought processes of perpetrators enables us to follow the process to genocide and to begin to understand how it was possible. We cannot seek answers from the victims. They were dragged into events that were planned and implemented by others.

Photographs provoke questions

Photographs from the Sauna exhibition of Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, showing pictures that the victims took with them when they were deported, which were found on the site after liberation.

(Photo: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum)



One tangible way of individualising the victims is to use the photographs they themselves took before the Holocaust. In these pictures, they are shown as they wanted to be seen – together with those they loved, in places where they chose to be and wearing the clothes they had chosen. Students will not find it difficult to detect similarities and differences between the people shown in the photos and themselves. They will also discover that the victims were a particularly heterogeneous group. They can look at the photos and form an idea of who these people were. These perceptions may well be based on their previous knowledge and their own prejudices, but above all they will provoke questions about how these images of people from another age should be interpreted and understood.

The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum has a large collection of private photographs that the victims had with them when they arrived at the camp. In the majority of cases, these are the only remaining pictures of the victims. Before a study trip, students could be asked to examine a selection of these photographs – perhaps one each. On the basis of what they have learned about this historical period, they might be asked to use their photograph to create a story about the person portrayed, or perhaps write a letter to that person. Students will of course understand that this is a fictitious task, but it may help to make the past more vivid. The teacher can guide students towards using realistic background material for these stories such as letters, diaries and other authentic material, thereby helping them towards a greater understanding of what happened and the extent to which it happened.

The photos mentioned can be accessed by ordering the book *Before they perished – photographs found in Auschwitz* by Kersten Brandt, Hanno Loewy and Krystyna Oleksy from Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum at

www.auschwitz.org.pl. There is also a CD devoted to the children who were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, which contains numerous photographs: *We should never forget them* by Helena Kubica.

Perpetrators, victims and bystanders

It is important to provide students with concepts that they can use to analyse this period of history, and help them draw conclusions from it. Some of the most fundamental concepts are those that define the main protagonists of the Holocaust. In research and education, these have long been defined as perpetrators, victims and bystanders.

Using these main protagonists as a basis can help students to gain a more complex picture of historical events. At the same time, it can clarify the world in which choices and decisions were made, enabling students to judge different people's actions on that basis.

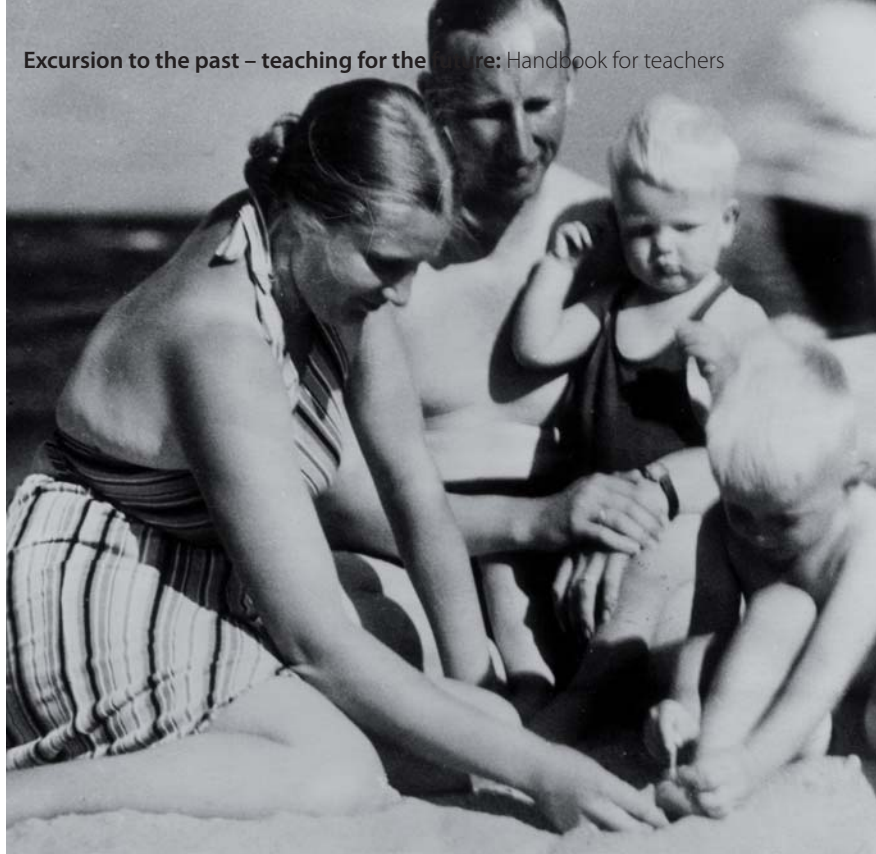
These categories are easy to define in theory, but it often proves difficult to draw the line between perpetrators and bystanders. It is particularly complicated when we want to use the categories to assess their actions from an ethical point of view. Although it is problematic on the one hand, it does nevertheless create opportunities to discuss human conduct, levels of individual choice and the meaning of standards.

The absolute precondition for facing this challenge is that students must be able to view the historical players as context-linked representatives of human conduct rather than as extreme exceptions. During the 1930s and 40s, people acted on the basis of the context in which they found themselves. It was the context, to which many contributed, that became more and more extreme, rather than the individuals themselves, even though such people did also exist.

The past is written and understood through the actions and decisions of people in relation to their surroundings. The victims of the Holocaust acted within a level of very restricted choice – the surrounding society set the frameworks for this restriction through legislation, injustice, violation and indifference. The victims' situation often prompts questions from students such as "Why didn't they escape?", "Why didn't they offer any resistance?" and "How could they steal from one another in the camp?" In order to avoid idealising the victims (which is also a form of de-humanisation and distancing), students can research and find out the answers to these questions. It is a pedagogical task for the teacher to help students phrase their questions in an adequate way.

It is equally important to avoid demonising the perpetrators. The perpetrators' actions give us an insight into how genocide can develop. By examining them we can discover the underlying thoughts and ideas that, in the majority of cases, explain the actions in the given context. The perpetrators are the ones who carried out the atrocities and disregarded human rights. If we describe them as incomprehensible evil monsters, we miss this opportunity to explore motivation and cannot then explain what happened except at a very basic, simplistic and unsatisfactory level.

The bystanders is the most difficult group to define, but the one that students find easiest to recognise. It is easier to understand passivity than atrocity.



The Heydrich family. Reinhard Heydrich was in charge of the state security police in Nazi Germany until 1942, and was thus directly responsible for the mass murder of millions. The picture is taken from a private family album.

(Photo: Bildagentur für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte)

The bystanders of an event play a major role – they are the ones who confirm a prevailing standard. In some ways, the bystanders are the ones who have the opportunity to stand up and defend human rights. However, it is easy for us to impose our own generation's context and values on their actions, which could be seen as moralising. It must be clear for the students that the scope for action is different during the dictatorship of Nazi-Germany than it is in our contemporary world.

A way to understand the complexity

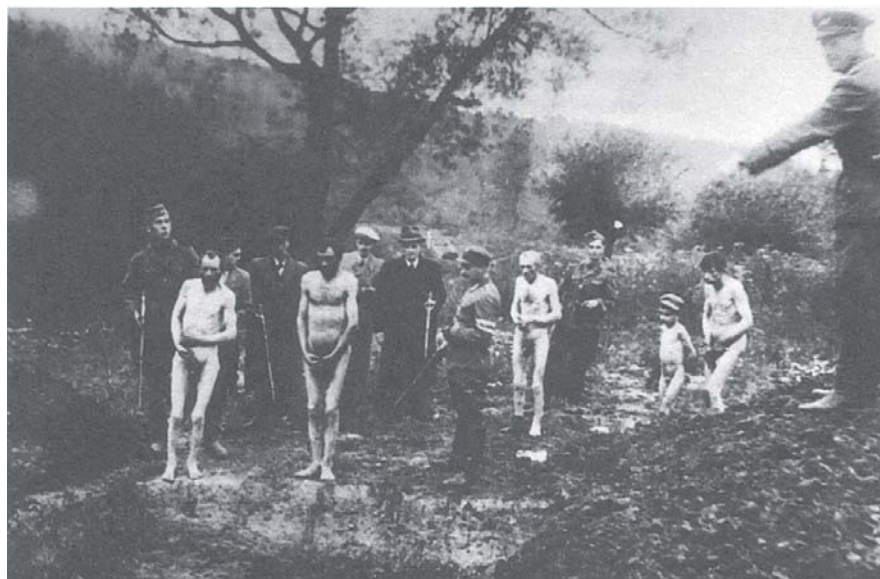
By avoiding demonising the perpetrators, idealising the victims and moralising on the bystanders, we can create an opportunity to examine the circumstances and possibilities of action and the motives of the different players. Examining history in this way can clarify for students the complexity of the world in which choices and decisions were made, and through which people's actions can be judged in the historical context. Only then can we draw meaningful conclusions that are relevant to today.

Very few people intervened to help the victims during the Holocaust. But, there were people who showed enormous courage and reached out to help. Even if this group cannot be seen as an important category in the sense that they changed history, they are still important as role models. They stood up for the most fundamental human right we know, namely the right to life. Therefore their deeds should be a vital component in combining Holocaust Education with Human Rights Education. Yad Vashem has the official record of those who were granted the honour of being called Righteous among the Nations by the state of Israel. It is accessible on its website together with documents related to some of the righteous.

Investigating perpetrators and victims

Civilians and soldiers taking part in a mass shooting, probably of Jews, in Sniatyn, Ukraine. The circumstances surrounding this photo are unclear in many ways; we do not know the identity of the people, or why the civilians took part.

(Photographer unknown)



The fate of the victims is often the main focus when teaching the Holocaust. There are many reasons for this. However, we must not forget that it was not the victims who created history. Most of them had absolutely no options. In order to understand what happened, students need to try to comprehend the views, attitudes and context of the perpetrators and bystanders. These are the people who can answer the question “why?”

Ask students to look at the photograph. It was taken during a mass execution in what today is the Ukraine. It shows soldiers, civilians and officers in the process of executing Jewish men and a small boy, who enters the picture from the right side. The boy’s innocence and inability to understand his own traumatic end captures our attention. The fact that he is naked apart from his cap, and is standing with adult men, who are also naked, intensifies our perception of horror, confusion and humiliation. Many of us have seen this picture, or something similar, and can guess that it is from the Holocaust. It is possible to recognise the distinction between perpetrators and victims. With this type of photograph there is a serious risk of missing its implications because of the student’s previous experience of similar material. One way to overcome this is to encourage students to deepen their perspective of understanding using the following task.

Ask the students the following questions: Imagine that you could talk to the people in the photo. You have the opportunity to ask each person one, or at most two, questions. What would you ask?

Students are now obliged to identify the people in the picture and consider what questions it would be interesting and meaningful to ask them. This will lead them to discover differences between the victims and their murderers

which at first sight seem banal, but are in reality fundamental. We ask perpetrators completely different questions from those we ask victims. Students are usually primarily interested in putting questions to the plain-clothes man in the black coat with a gun on his arm. They want to know what he was doing there and why. Through their questions to this man, students can gain an insight into the fact that it is the perpetrators who define the situation. They are the ones who can provide the answers to why what is shown by the photo happened. When all the questions have been compiled, ask students to organise them according to which questions are based on compassion/sympathy, curiosity and desire to understand, as well as on prejudice and condemnation.

During this task, it must be made clear that we cannot answer all questions with complete historical accuracy since we do not have additional source material to explain the content of this particular image.

SS Doctor Heinz Thilo selecting people to be gassed on arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau and those to be worked to death.

(Photo taken by SS)



Heinz Thilo at the 'world's anus'

Heinz Thilo was one of the SS physicians at Auschwitz-Birkenau. He served voluntarily during the selection of newly-arrived prisoners, who would either be murdered immediately or worked to death. Thilo called Birkenau '*Anus Mundi*' – the world's anus. He was convinced that the people undergoing the selection process were "dross" that must be "cleaned out" of European society.

In a well-known photograph, Thilo looks at an older Jewish man during a selection and sends him to death with a single movement of the hand. With the help of the photo and Thilo's role at Birkenau ask students to consider how Thilo sees and perceives the old man. With the information given above, students will be able to understand that Thilo sees the man as excrement. However, can they understand what it means to look at someone in this way? Maybe they can, if considering how they themselves or others view people around them. Why do they themselves – or others around them – feel strong dislike because someone is different or behaves in a particular way? Why do they

have these strong feelings? And are these feelings based on generalisations and homogenisations that form the first step towards denying people their right to equality?

By looking at these feelings in themselves and others, students can see a similarity between themselves and Thilo. Perpetrators are not incomprehensible monsters who are essentially different from us. It was the context, and not only and primarily their outlook on humanity, that was radically different.

Bystanders – the silent majority

The term bystander is a broad concept covering everyone apart from the victims, perpetrators or those who helped the victims of the Nazi policy. Bystanders can be on the borderline of belonging to the other categories and they have an option, although to a different extent, of doing so. An individual who is a bystander in one context can be a rescuer in another – the role is context-linked.

We often don't know the thoughts of the substantial silent majority (if we cannot substantiate them through historical research) and we cannot operate on the basis that they would have made the same ethical and moral judgments as we would today. However, what we do know is that the size of this group would potentially have been sufficient to change the course of history if bystanders had acted in a specific way. Bystanders also represent the standard for the society in which they live. They justify actions through their silence and their choice not to intervene and take action.

Activities for Students

Ask the students to examine how different individuals acted at different times and then to assess the consequences of their actions for themselves and their community. Below there is a description of three people who acted differently. Ask the students to read and analyse the stories as follows:

- What makes the people in these individual events take action?
- What risks do they take?
- Who gained and who lost due to their actions?
- Would you call them bystanders?

Example 1

In March 1938, Germany had annexed Austria and immediately introduced the same anti-Semitic legislation that was already in place in Germany. Many Austrians greeted the Nazi seizure of power with enthusiasm and some were willing to participate in both spontaneous and organised anti-Semitic actions. These usually consisted of the public humiliation of Jews where they were forced to do things like cleaning the pavements using toothbrushes. These spectacles attracted bystanders who looked on with curiosity. The seventeen year old Gitta Sereny came to observe one such street scene in March 1938, which she later described as follows:

“On Graben, one of Vienna's most beautiful roads, we saw a group of men in brown uniforms with swastika armbands who were surrounded by a large group of Vienna's residents, many of whom were laughing. As we approached, I saw in the centre of the group a dozen or so middle-aged people, men and women, who were on their knees scrubbing the pavement with toothbrushes. I recognised one of them. It was Dr Berggrün, our paediatrician, who had

saved my life when I was four years old and had diphtheria. I will never forget that night: time after time he had wrapped me in cool, soft sheets and when the dawn came, I heard his voice saying: “*Sie wird leben,*” (She’ll survive).”

“Dr Berggrün saw me go to one of the uniformed men, shook his head and mouthed a silent “no” as he continued to scrub the street with his toothbrush. I asked the man in uniform what they were doing – were they mad?”

Example 2

Concentration camps were introduced immediately after the Nazis had seized power and gradually their functions and operations developed and certainly this led to an increasing status of cruelty. Even if what took place in the camps wasn’t reported in detail, many people in Germany and even the wider context of Europe knew what went on. However, generally not many expressed divergent opinions.

Eleonora Gusenbauer lived close to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria. It was impossible for her to avoid witnessing the murders that took place in the camp, and she decided to object to them in the following letter she sent to the local police authority.

“In the concentration camp of Mauthausen at the Wiener-Graben quarry prisoners have repeatedly been shot. Those who have not died immediately have often lain among the dead for hours, sometimes for half a day. My home is on a hill close to the Wiener-Graben quarry and so I have often been an involuntary witness to such outrages.

I am in poor health myself and seeing such things exposes my nerves to such stress that I shall not be able to cope with it much longer.

Therefore I request that such inhuman treatment be stopped, or that it at least takes place out of sight.”

A crowd waiting for the public sale of furniture owned by the merchant M. Weil, Grabenstrasse 15, Lörrach, Germany, November 27, 1940.

(Private owner)

Example 3

1940 saw the beginning of the deportation of German Jews to ghettos in occupied Poland. These deportations continued throughout the war and from December 1941, Jews were not just sent to the ghetto and concentration camps, but also to death camps. Deportees were only allowed to take with them a very limited quantity of luggage and they had to leave behind their homes and many belongings. These belongings were regularly and spontaneously plundered, even though this was forbidden. On the whole, the German finance administration chose to confiscate deportees’ belongings and sell them at auctions, etc. The picture shows an occasion of this kind, when people in Lörrach, Germany, are trying to enter a building in which the belongings of their deported Jewish neighbours are to be sold.



Active participation promotes learning

Many students feel that there is an imbalance between how strongly they become involved in the subject and how active they are encouraged to be when learning about the Holocaust and during visits to historical sites and museums. Students want to be active and participate to a much greater extent than is the norm. This was shown in the discussions with students conducted prior to this handbook.

When a school class visits a historical place or a museum, the most common form of activity is a guided tour. During the tour, educators from the institutions provide information and historical context, life stories and statistics about the site being visited and major events during the Nazi regime.

If this guidance is not adapted for the particular group and does not take into account the work they have done in the classroom before the visit, it bears a great risk of repetition. Student participants perceive this as negative, because they want to make active progress in their search for knowledge. This can be avoided if contact is made prior to the visit to discuss what programme and guided tour would best meet the needs of the group.

Asking students to examine a particular area or theme of the site themselves is one way of getting them to work using their own level of knowledge and involvement, encouraging them to be active and have some control over their learning. This can be done as a part of a guided tour or after it. The majority of students do this with great interest. Arriving at conclusions for oneself stimulates learning, as the meanings arrived at are 'owned' rather than 'borrowed'.

At the same time, it is very important for the teacher or another educator to be available for support and as a source of knowledge for the students. The educator is the leader of active learning. He or she must control and set frameworks, prepare sources and suggestions for activities that will form the basis of the student's inquiry. It is also important for students to have a fundamental knowledge of the events of the Holocaust in order to facilitate progress.

Many museums and memorial sites have programmes organised in this way. However, the teacher can also set up a programme in which the visit to the institution forms part of a longer process.

The language of the perpetrators

When visiting memorial sites and museums one must be aware that much of the exhibited material in many respects represents the perspective of the perpetrators. This is particularly true in the visual material such as the historical photographs. The photos taken by the perpetrator were often taken for propagandistic reasons and certainly from the view of the perpetrator. It is a task in itself to teach students to interpret the material from different perspectives and to create an understanding of the difference between their own view, that of the perpetrators, and also of course the view of the victims. At the same time one should sensitise the students to the euphemistic language used by the perpetrators when they describe their own deeds and the devaluating character of phrases used to characterise the victims. The students should be able to learn the difference between outspoken views and concealed actions. This means that they should understand the euphemisms in expressions such as "special treatment" and "resettling": both were code words for mass murder.

Students creating a representation of the pre-war Jewish community of Warsaw in the cemetery in Okopowa Street.

(Photo: Alexander Kaplar)



The multicultural classroom

Pedagogy of appreciation

The House of the Wannsee Conference in Germany has developed several different methods to reach out to ethnic minority students. This approach is based on listening to the students' own stories and experiences and showing the universality that exists with regard to vulnerability and repression. When the students' experiences have been heard, they are better prepared to listen with open minds to the history that is told at the House of the Wannsee Conference.

"I have found that very often the teacher's worries are much of a self-fulfilling prophecy. They are worried about how to address the issue of the Holocaust with students from the Middle East. But my experience of what I call the Concept of Pedagogy of Appreciation is successful: we acknowledge the family histories of these students and we do treat them as German citizens, which they are."

This says Elke Grylewski. The House of the Wannsee Conference has also developed special materials and programs for this group:

"We have developed a so-called Multicultural Suitcase containing documents which show shared history. We looked for documents from the time of National Socialism (1933-1945) from all over the world, race theories toward different groups, sterilisation and so on, showing that this issue is a matter of concern also for the non-European part of the world and the people living there."

Students with backgrounds and experience of different regions and cultures of the world come together in many European classrooms. They have different family histories; they have heard different stories about the past; and they have different perspectives on current human rights issues. The experience of students from areas where human rights have been seriously violated can provide an invaluable starting point in class. The discussions with students and teachers held prior to the creation of this Handbook stressed the fact that these students bring valuable insights to the group. Both students and teachers referred to this aspect. For example, teachers in Italy stated, "The presence of students originating from several different countries represents a crucial opportunity for teaching and learning. They can involve Italian students in their own accounts and are real witnesses of the violations of human rights."

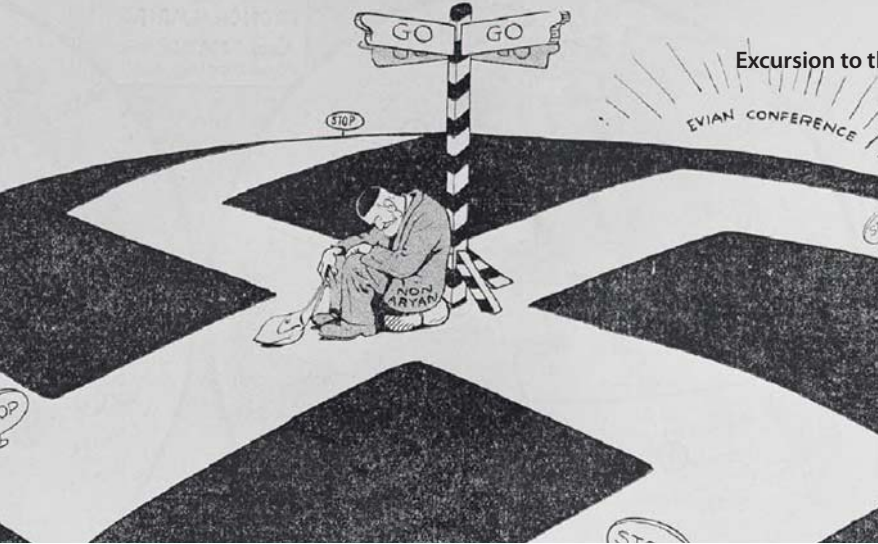
These students' stories may provide an opportunity to make these issues real, while at the same time increasing understanding between students. However, including these stories in the lessons requires great sensitivity from the side of the teacher, and students should only talk about their experiences, if they want to.

Teachers feel uncertain

The majority of surveys of how teaching the Holocaust is affected by a multicultural class show that this rarely creates any problems. However, many teachers feel uncertain about this issue, and some students with strong views on issues relating to Arab-Israeli relations may be resistant or even hostile to learning about the Holocaust.

One way of approaching these students is to point out the more general aspects of the Holocaust, the racist and exclusionist ideas that formed the basis of Nazi ideology. Some of the ideas central to the Nazis' worldview are to be found in many other regimes and are fairly often the reason why people flee from their home countries. Students can compare this with their own experiences of these ideas and values. In doing this it is important not to distort the past.

Students with a non-European background may also be motivated if there are links to their own regions in the historical facts provided. The Holocaust was a global event that left a worldwide impression. Jews fled from Europe to all of the world's continents to avoid Nazi persecution. The Nazis planned to



A cartoon published in *The Sunday* 3rd July 1938 with the caption "Will the Evian Conference Guide him to Freedom?" Several representatives of countries in the free world recognized the need for Jews to flee from Germany, but most of them were reluctant to fulfil this need by providing them shelter in their own territories.

(Photo USHMM)

relocate European Jews to Madagascar and, after the Holocaust, many countries shared in the task of receiving and rehabilitating survivors. Introducing this kind of information gives students an insight into the global character of the Holocaust, and they can also appreciate the links to their own regions and countries of origin.

The Evian Conference

In July 1938 US President Franklin D Roosevelt took the initiative in organising a conference to discuss the issue of increasing numbers of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. Some 32 states and 24 voluntary organisations met at the city Evian-les-Bains in France.

The conference delegates expressed sympathy for the refugees, but did not commit their countries to letting more refugees in. The fact that the conference did not pass a resolution condemning the German treatment of Jews was widely used in Nazi Propaganda.

In 1938, the Nazi repression of the Jews and other groups was evident for the participating states, although it might not have been possible to foresee the Holocaust.

Examining your own view of history

The State Museum at Majdanek in Eastern Poland arranges exchanges between Polish young people and young people from Germany, the Ukraine and Belarus. The aim of these exchanges is to reduce prejudice between them – prejudices that are often based on historical experiences and narratives. By getting to know one another and examining their different interpretations of history, the young people can discover their own perspective and see that there is more than one way of interpreting the past. This can provide openings for new interpretations and an understanding of other people's perspectives.

The students remain together for one week and speak English. At the start of the week, they are given work in mixed groups with questions about prejudice. This part of the programme is carried out at a school. They also do sports activities together and get to know one another. The latter part of the week is spent at the museum, examining and learning about their common, violent history. As well as having guided tours, they do their own work in the museum archive and meet survivors. During these programmes, the students themselves often raise questions relating to human rights.

Open for discussion

As much as Holocaust education and human rights education is about activating young people to reflect about the past and the present, this Handbook is about inspiring teachers on what to consider when visiting the Holocaust memorial sites and museums and reflect about teaching approaches. The FRA regards this Handbook as a tool to spark reflection and dialogue among teachers and to enter into dialogue with them.

This Handbook aims to help to move forward debates in the field and support teachers in their effort to activate and empower young people to attain knowledge about history, and relate this knowledge to our world today.

Please let us know if you found this Handbook useful. Inform us if and how it helped you in making best use of visits to historical sites and museums for teaching about the Holocaust and about human rights. Please send your feedback to information@fra.europa.eu

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights

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This Handbook by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) is closely related to the research on the role of historical sites and museums in Holocaust education and human rights education in the EU. The main and summary reports *Discover the past for the future* present the key findings and are available online at www.fra.europa.eu.

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What is the role of Holocaust-related sites in today's societies? What do they offer to young people?
What should be considered by schools and teachers when planning a visit to such a site?
And how can teachers make best use of such visits for teaching about the Holocaust and human rights?

This Handbook provides a number of examples, hints and historical background information, which will help teachers and students to make visits to Holocaust-related sites and exhibitions a meaningful and enriching experience.

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