

HOLOCAUST:

RESISTANCE, RESCUE AND SURVIVAL

Jewish Victims of the Holocaust.

By Ilana Cone Kennedy, Education Coordinator at the *Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center*

"While not all victims of the Holocaust were Jews, all Jews were victims ..."

— Elie Wiesel

Eleven million people were murdered during the Holocaust; six million were Jewish.

In 1933, when the Nazis came to power, Jews were living in every country in Europe. Jews could be found in all areas of life — as farmers, factory workers, tailors, doctors, teachers, accountants and small business owners. Although some families were wealthy, many more were poor. Some children had to give up their schooling to work, while others went to university.

The Nuremberg Laws, which we read about in the last article, took away the rights of the German-Jewish people and separated them from non-Jewish Germans. More and more laws were passed, and the Jewish people saw their rights and choices being taken away. In some areas, Jews were forced to wear a star or an armband to identify them as Jewish. The laws made it legal to treat the Jews as subhuman.

"One time my mother and my cousin got caught not wearing the armband. The reason you didn't want to wear them was because anybody can throw rocks at you or hit you, because who was going to protect you? Nobody was out to protect the Jew. So if people went to an area where they were afraid to walk with the armband, they might take it off. Well, the police did catch my mother and my cousin not wearing it. My mother they beat with a ball, a rubber ball, but inside was a piece of steel and her arms were beaten up, were all swollen. My cousin was about seventeen years old, they made her clean an outhouse with her hands."

— Henry Friedman, Holocaust Survivor living in Seattle.
Member of the Holocaust Center's Speakers Bureau

In January 1942, in Wannsee, Germany, the Nazi leaders held a conference and made plans to destroy the entire Jewish population. They called their plan **The Final Solution**.



In many areas, Jews were forced to wear stars on their clothing. On this star is the word "Jude," German for "Jew." On display at the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center.

In many places the Nazis moved Jews into **ghettos** — a section of the city where all Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to live. Ghettos were surrounded by barbed wire and walls, and Jewish people inside did not have the freedom to go in and out. The ghettos often did not have enough living space, and could not provide enough food for all the people forced to live there.

The Nazis regularly went through the ghettos in an **aktion** where they rounded up the Jews. Some were able to hide, others were lucky enough to be taken in by rescuers, but most were taken with their families to concentration camps, labor camps or death camps.

"They put us into cattle trains, luckily, they were not tightly built so that we had enough air, but we were packed so tightly that we had to stand. It was wall to wall people, and I think we were going about four days, the destination was Auschwitz. Now in these four days, maybe a fourth of the people died while standing there because it was impossible, the stench and hunger, and older people couldn't take it, so they didn't even fall because the people held them together ... We came to Auschwitz, and all of a sudden the doors open, and all we heard was barking dogs, shouting, screaming, Jews out."

— Anne K., Holocaust survivor living in Seattle.
From "Never Again I Hope."

Of the nine million Jews who lived in Europe, about six million, that is two-thirds, were murdered between 1935 and 1945.

activities

1. As a class, discuss the ways Jewish people in Nazi Germany were oppressed. Why do you think non-Jewish citizens went along with these new laws and treatment of Jewish citizens? Do you think this could happen today? Why or why not?
2. As a class, brainstorm a list of words to describe what you're feeling. Make a list and then identify the opposite feeling of that — what is a word (antonym) that describes this opposite feeling? Next, chose two sets of words/feelings and locate an image/article in today's Seattle Times that represents both.

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