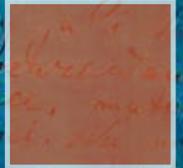


Exploring the Evidence

The Holocaust, Cambodian Genocide, and Canadian Intervention



Centre commémoratif
de l'Holocauste à Montréal

Montreal Holocaust
Memorial Centre

BRATISLAVA

Slovaquie.



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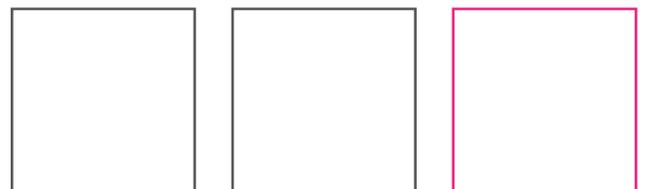
Produced by the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, 2012

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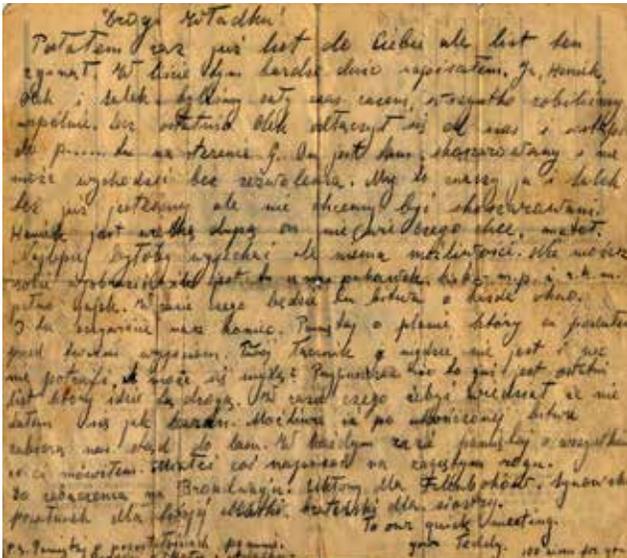
Activity 1

Initiating activity trigger

Initiating activity / trigger



Read the translation of the letter below. Then answer the questions as best you can.



Letter by T. Liebowitz to W. Biberkraut, smuggled out of the Warsaw Ghetto, (Poland), 1942.

© MHMC

Dear Wladek,

I've already written you, but that letter has probably been lost. I told you a lot in that letter.

Heniek, Olek, Salek, and I stayed together all the time, and we did everything together. Olek left us recently and joined p... in the g... region. He's fine there but he can't leave without permission. Heniek is stupid. He doesn't know what he wants - the moron. It would be best to leave this place, but that's impossible.

You have no idea how many weapons we have, many eggs, too.

Come what may, we'll fight for every square inch and that may certainly be our end. Do you remember the plan we had before you left the ghetto? Your intermediary is useless; am I wrong?

This will probably be my last letter to you. Whatever the case, know that I didn't let myself be led around like sheep!

It's possible we'll be taken into the forest after the battle. Come what may, remember everything I told you.

We'll meet on Broadway!

Give my regards to Felenboks. Give a son's kiss to your mother. A brotherly kiss to your sister!

Until we meet again,

Yours Teddy

1. Analysis of document

- Who is the author? What do we know about him?
- When was the letter written? What is the period?
- Is the document an original source or a translation?
- Is the document reliable? Is the information it contains plausible?

2. Questions on the content

- What situation is described in the letter?
- What is the context?
- In your opinion, what event is the subject of the letter? What is it about?
- Who are introduced in the letter?
- Where is the author of the letter?
- What place is he describing?
- In your opinion, why does the author use the letters “p” and “g” instead of naming the places he is talking about?
- What is the author’s plan?

3. Vocabulary

- What is a ghetto?

4. Ethical questions

- In what context would we be ready to fight, knowing that the outcome of the battle may be our own death?
- What would compel us to commit to this?
- What do we need to fight?

Activity 2

Activating students' knowledge

Being Jewish - Life before the war



Take some time to look at the following photographs that show Jewish communities in Europe before WWII, and then answer the questions below:

1. Describe the photos. What do you see?
2. What cultural elements (clothing, events, objects, etc.) or characteristics can you identify?
3. Can you define what it is to be Jewish by looking at these photos? Does that surprise you?
4. Based on what you see, is it possible to identify a Jew by his/her physical appearance alone?
5. Based on what you see in the photos, how would you describe the life of the Jews before WWII?

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Meeting of Labour Zionist party in Warsaw, 1919
Loaned by Frances Nemetz Lew © MHMC

World map

Activity 3

Historical examination
of the Holocaust



In your opinion, which countries were involved in the Second World War? Find them on the map.



Activity 3

Historical examination
of the Holocaust



Jewish population in Europe between 1930 and 1950

Study the table indicating the Jewish population in various European countries. What do you observe?

Can you explain the variations in population?

Country	Jewish population around 1930	Jewish population around 1950
Germany	565,000	37,000
Austria	250,000	18,000
France	225,000	147,680
Greece	100,000	7,000
Hungary	443,000	190,000
Italy	48,000	35,000
Poland	3,029,000	45,000
Czechoslovakia	357,000	17,000
Yugoslavia	70,000	3,500
Other European countries	4,413,000	2,999,820
Total in Europe	9,500,000	3,500,000

Source : United State Holocaust Memorial Museum

In the words of the survivors

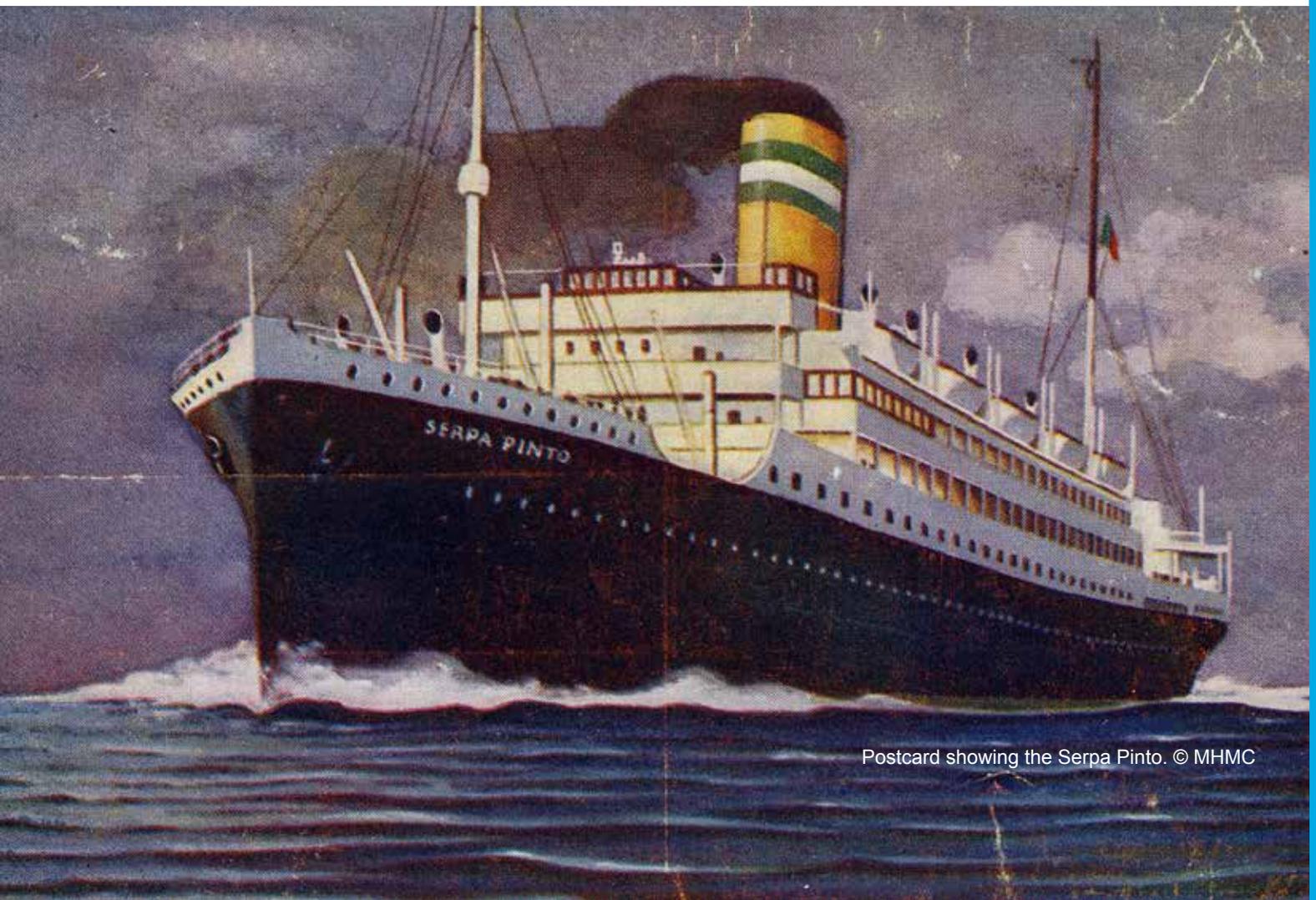
Activity 3

Historical examination
of the Holocaust



Listen to excerpts from the interviews with Erika Daniels (27 minutes), Maurice Baron (13 minutes), or Fred Ullman (17 minutes).

1. Give three characteristics about their way of life before the war.
2. Indicate how the war turned their life upside down.
3. Retrace the path they followed to escape the antisemitic plan of the Nazis:
 - Through which towns did they pass?
 - How did they travel?
 - Who helped them to escape?
 - Etc.



Postcard showing the Serpa Pinto. © MHMC

In the words of the survivors

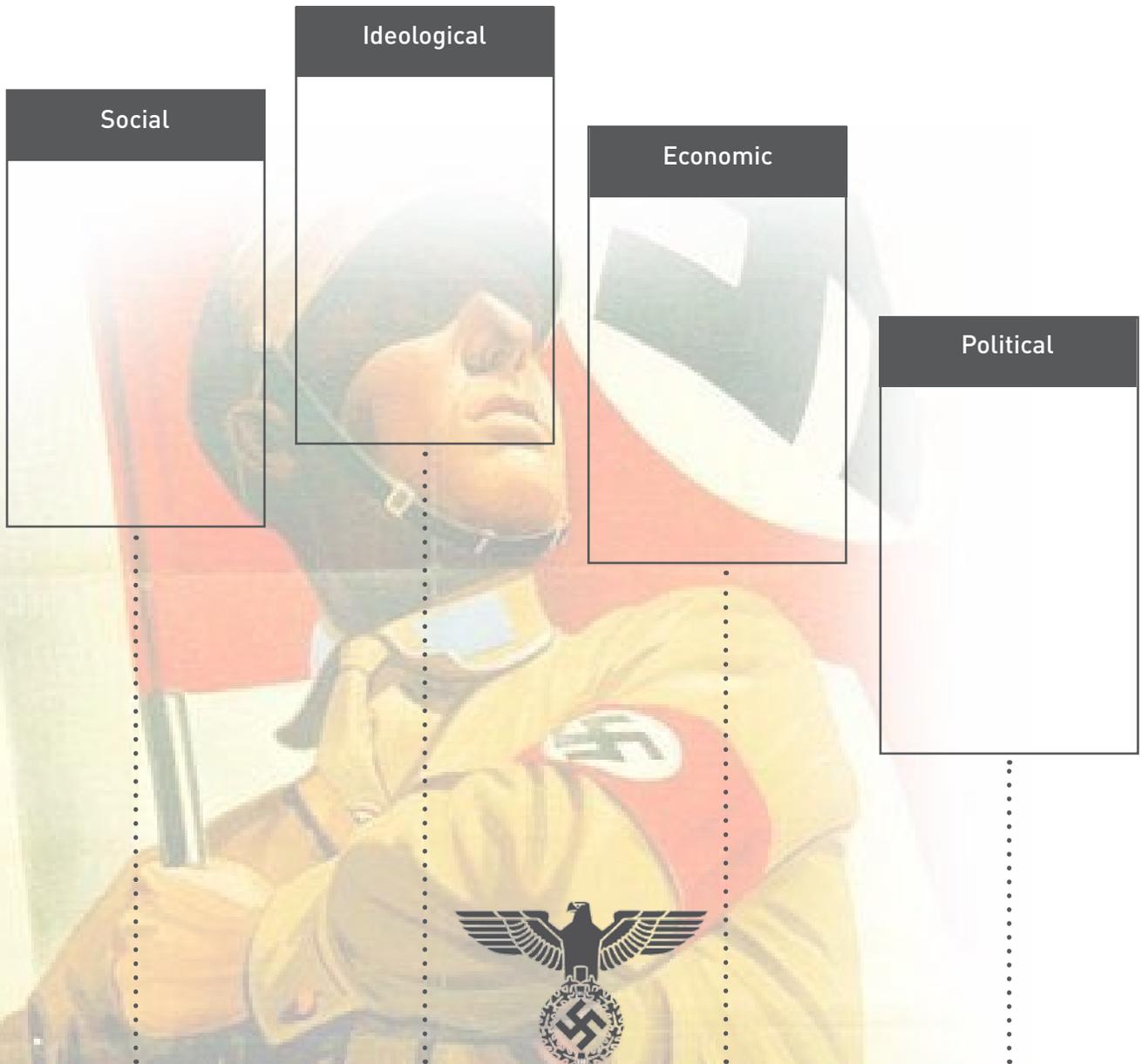
	Characteristics of way of life before the war	Upheavals caused by the war and Nazism	Path followed to escape Nazi persecution
Erika Daniels	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
Maurice Baron	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
Fred Ullman	1.		
	2.		
	3.		

Interwar period

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust



After reading the following texts, identify four factors that explain how the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933. Record your answers in the concept web.

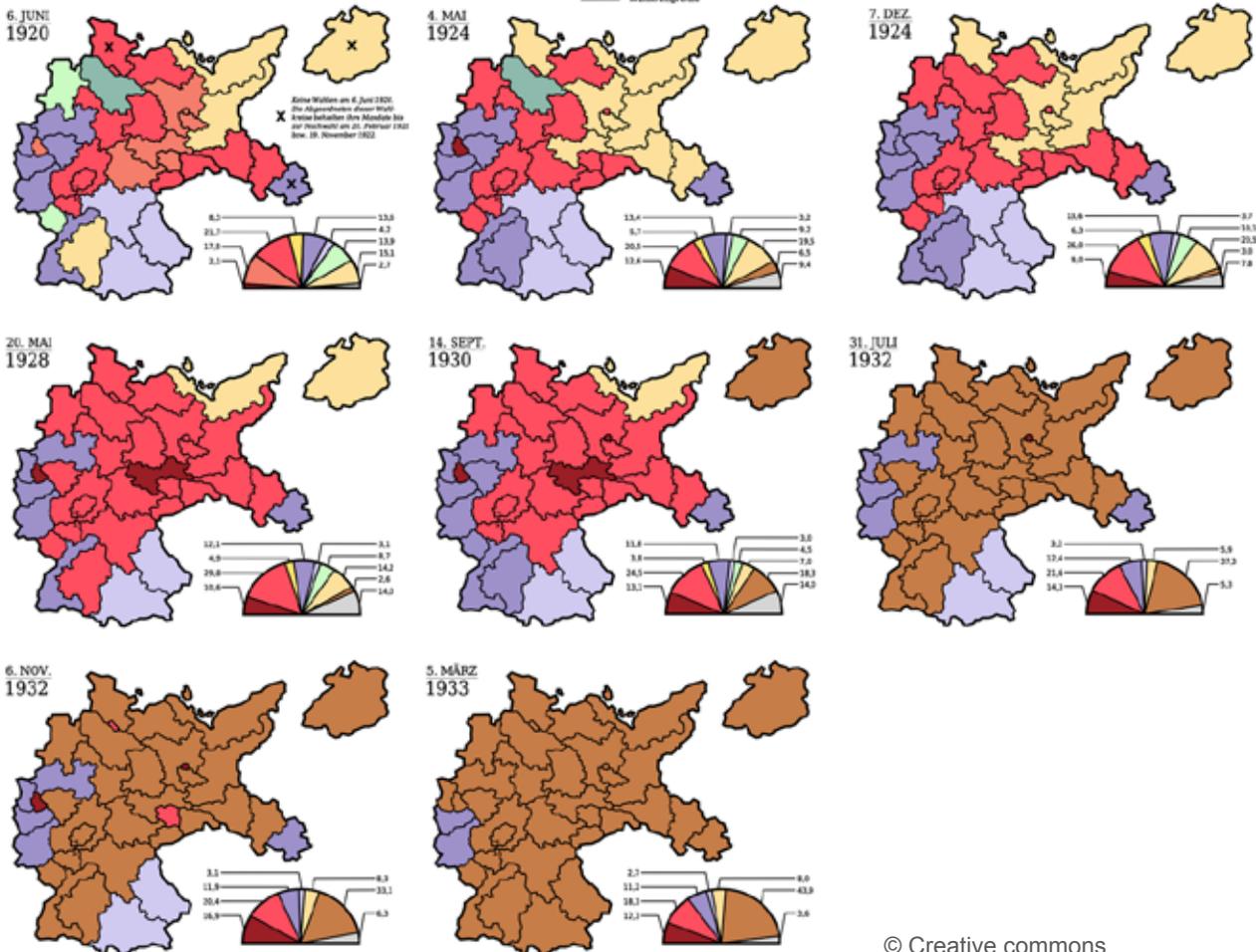
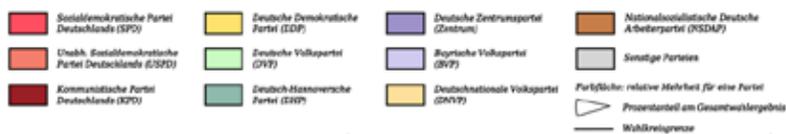


Factors leading to the election of the Nazis in Germany in 1933

Historical context

At the end of WWI, the German empire lay defeated and had to suffer the consequences. Only the democratic parties of Germany were viable in the aftermath; the German emperor who had directed the war was dismissed, as was the army. Therefore it was the democratic parties that were forced to sign the Treaty of Versailles. According to the terms of the treaty, Germany had to pay reparations for the war damage in Europe, give up its colonial empire, see its borders reduced, and more. The German population would not easily forgive the German democratic parties for signing the treaty. As a result, both the political stability and the democratization of the country were jeopardized.

REICHSTAGSWAHLEN IN DEUTSCHLAND 1920-1933 GESAMTWAHLERGEBNISSE UND WAHLKREISSIEGER



© Creative commons

The Weimar Republic came into being after a period of social and political unrest. This new political institution was Germany's first experience with democracy. Until then, the Germans had been led by an emperor and had never been involved in deciding on the political direction of their country. In 1919, a constitution enshrining the rights of citizens and allowing various political parties to run in elections was adopted. At the head of the government were the president and the chancellor. The chancellor was appointed by the president.

The diagrams above show the distribution of powers between 1920 and 1933. The large number of political parties visibly jeopardized political stability, and several coups took place. Hitler himself led a coup in 1923, but it failed and he was sent to prison where he wrote his famous work *Mein Kampf*.

Little by little, the authoritarian and anti-democratic parties (communist, NSDAP [Nazis], and others) seized more power, as can be seen in the diagram showing the distribution of power throughout the German provinces.

Hyperinflation 1914-1923

In addition to the continual political problems, the country's economy was seriously damaged. In fact, another consequence of the war was that Germany's currency, the mark, lost all its value. Millions of people lost their entire fortune and could hardly feed themselves.

In this excerpt from a letter sent by Wally Schorperle to his uncle Max on 18 Nov. 1919, the author describes the living conditions of the German workers:

Berlin, 18 November 1919

Dear Uncle Max!

You can imagine our immense joy when we finally heard from you, after five long years.

The most important thing is that you're healthy and that you saw nothing of the terrible war. My brother Hermann was called on for two years, but, thank goodness, he came back in good health. Unfortunately, jobs are few, and he was unemployed for a long time. Now finally, after a lengthy search, he found work with a local publisher.

My dear uncle, I can tell you that my mother is well, thank God. She is quite stressed, nonetheless, because of these terrible times. We hope that her suffering will soon subside.

Because everything is very expensive, Hermann's salary and mine are not enough; Mother has to continue working. From morning to night, she sews at the Jewish hospital. [...]

For about two years now, I've been working for one of the biggest paper merchants in Berlin. I like it and I have an enviable position: I am responsible for the account books, I write letters, and perform



People waiting for their weekly bread rations, 1923.

© MHMC archives

various other tasks in the business. I am also the boss's personal secretary. I receive a monthly salary of 225 marks and at times a bonus because of the high cost of living. Unfortunately even this is not enough because life becomes more and more expensive every day. We don't have enough food here. You may know that we have a rationing system. For months now, we haven't seen any butter, and even when it is on the shelves, we can purchase only 20 grams per person with our ration card. Butter is also available on the black market, but it's so expensive that we can't afford it. Only children and

the sick can receive milk – and only with a doctor's prescription. A litre of milk costs 7 marks on the black market. Each person receives one loaf of bread a week. Right now, we have hardly any potatoes. When we do receive any, thanks to the ration cards, the potatoes are frozen and uneatable. Rice costs about 6 marks a pound. During peacetime, before the war, it cost only 30 pfennig. That give you an idea of how difficult it is to feed ourselves, but – thank God – for now I'm not dying of hunger, and everything is fine at home. But the situation is worrisome. [...]

Thank God, the days of fear and fright are over. Let's hope they'll never come back. Right now, there is strong anti-Jewish sentiment. Antisemitic pamphlets are distributed in the streets. All of them contain accusations. But the Jewish community is taking precautions against more serious riots and for now, nothing has happened.

Greetings and kisses to the family.

Your loving niece,

Wally.

Source and translation: © MHMC

Great Depression 1929-1939

On October 29, 1929 a stock market crash shook the world and thrust it into a grave economic crisis. Germany was not spared, and once again the Germans were reduced to poverty and unemployment. With regard to this crisis, Hitler's words were reassuring. He promised jobs and the reconstruction of the country. He reassured the population that Germany's return as a strong and proud nation was imminent. In the same breath, however, he accused the Jews of causing Germany's defeat in WWI, of being behind the Versailles Treaty, of causing the economic crisis – in short, of causing all of Germany's problems. His antisemitic propaganda was virulent.

Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party come to power

In 1933, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party garnered 32% of the votes and came to power. Combining patriotism and racism, the Nazi party revived with melancholic momentum the historical myths of a pure Aryan race. The idea of such a nation charmed the population because it offered simple solutions to the problems of political and economic instability and promised to restore Germany to its position as a world power.

On 30 Jan. 1933, Hitler became chancellor of the German government. With the death of President Hindenburg in 1934, Hitler also received the title of president. He was now the sole ruler of Germany. Hitler declared himself dictator and supreme leader of Germany. This marked the end of the Weimar Republic and the beginning of the Third Reich. Nothing would prevent him now from using every means to serve his racist, antisemitic, anti-democratic, and anti-Marxist ideology. There was no longer any impediment to imposing anti-Jewish measures, as well as the Nuremberg laws which denied Jews the right to participate in the social, economic, and political life of the country, and which would soon exclude them altogether.



A German mother carefully cuts up a sausage to feed her family during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

© Commons :
Bundesarchives

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust

Hitler’s antisemitic ideology



Below are some excerpts from Hitler’s hate speeches against the Jews.

- How does he describe the Jews?
- What threats does he make against them?



© R. Bytwerk

“A purely emotional antisemitism will find its ultimate expression in the form of pogroms. An antisemitism based on reason must lead to systematic legal combat and elimination of the privileges of the Jews.”

Adolf Hitler, 16 Nov. 1919

Description of the Jews:

Threats:

“The Jews will be annihilated in our country. They did not bring about 9 Nov. 1918 with impunity. This day will be avenged.”

Adolf Hitler, 21 Jan. 1939

Description of the Jews:

Threats:

“The Jew will be identified! The same fight that Pasteur and Koch had to fight must be led by us today. Innumerable sicknesses have their origin in one bacillus: the Jew! We will get well when we eliminate the Jew.”

Adolf Hitler, 22 Feb. 1942

Description of the Jews:

Threats:

Nazi representations of the Jews

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust

? The documents below originate from Nazi propaganda against the Jews.

- How are Jews portrayed?
- What is the message behind the caricatures of the Jews?



© R. Bytwerk

Translation of a caricature published in *Der Stürmer* on 28 Sept. 1944:

Vermin

*Life is not worth living,
If we do not resist the parasite,
That increasingly eats away
We must and we will vanquish it.*

Description of Jews:

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Message being communicated by the caricature:

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© R. Bytwerk

Yellow star bearing the inscription “Jew” in the centre. The message reads as follows:

Whoever wears this symbol is an enemy of our people.

Description of Jews:

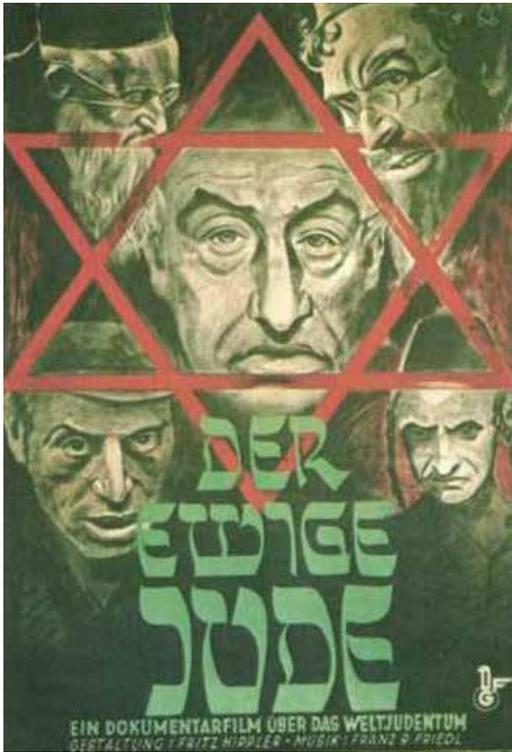
.....

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Message being communicated:

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© R. Bytwerk

Poster for the film *The Eternal Jew*, a propaganda “documentary” produced by the Nazis

Description of Jews:

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Message being communicated by the caricature:

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© R. Bytwerk

Program cover of Nazi exhibition entitled *The Eternal Jew*. The exhibition was part of the Nazis’ antisemitic propaganda in Germany.

Description of Jews:

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Message being communicated by the caricature:

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Germany under the Nazi influence – Historical context

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust

Adolf Hitler and his party were democratically elected in 1933. Hitler became chancellor of Germany and, in 1934, president of the Weimar Republic. He was thereafter the most powerful man in the country. Hitler abolished democracy and proclaimed himself supreme leader of Germany.

Hitler's hatred of the Jews then knew no bounds. In fact, antisemitic laws were soon to be passed.

Anti-Jewish laws and measures

1933 : Jews were banned from public service, cultural life, and professions. Stores owned by Jews were boycotted.

Nuremberg laws (1935)

Article 1 - Marriages between Jews and German citizens or people of kindred blood were prohibited.

Article 2 - Extra-marital affairs between Jews and German citizens or people of kindred blood were prohibited.

On 15 Sept. 1941, the Nazi government decreed that all Jews over the age of 6 must publicly wear the Star of David on their clothing.



1932 election ballot in Germany showing a vote for Adolf Hitler.

© MHMC



Nazi rally in Nuremberg – The crowds have turned out.

© R. Bytwerk



Wedding photo of Salomon Schrijver and Flora Mendels in Amsterdam, 1942.

Germany occupied the Netherlands in May 1940 and imposed anti-Jewish laws there. Salomon and Flora were forced to wear the Star of David on their wedding day. The wedding ceremony took place in the Great Synagogue of Amsterdam. It was one of the last to be celebrated in that synagogue which was closed by the Nazis in September 1943. Salomon and Flora were first deported to Westerbork and then to the death camp at Sobibor (Poland) where they were killed.



Even Jewish children were considered enemies.

© MHMC

Known as the Night of the Broken Glass, the events of 9-10 Nov. 1938 illustrate the violence hiding behind the antisemitic speeches of the Nazis. Spurred on by the Nazis, the German population was incited to ransack Jewish property. Many Jews were beaten and sent to concentration camps.



© MHMC

Law on citizenship – Who was considered to be Jewish?

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust



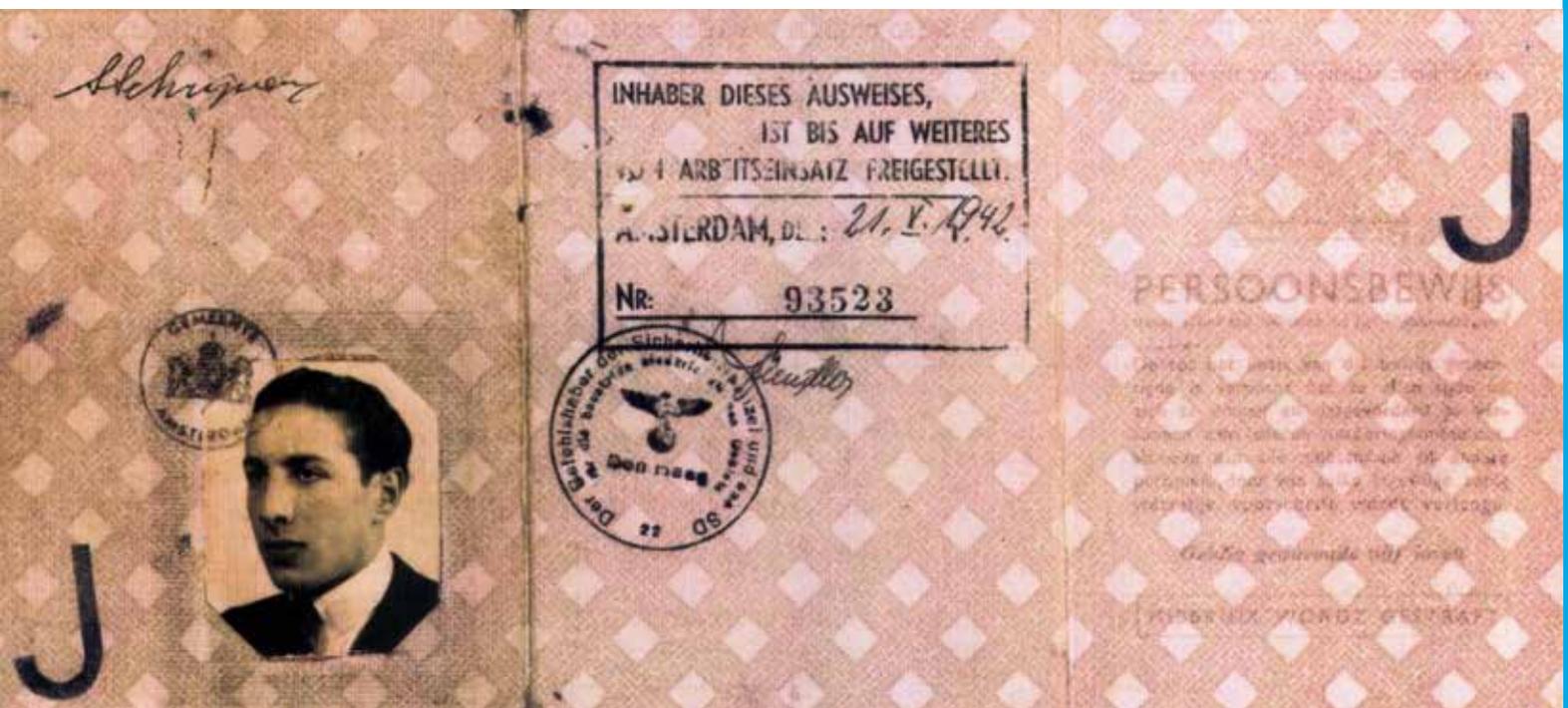
The Jews lost their German citizenship. Underline the characterizing traits of the Jews, as defined by the Nazis.

“The Nuremberg Laws did not define a “Jew” as someone with particular religious beliefs. Instead, anyone who had three or four Jewish grandparents was defined as a Jew, regardless of whether that individual identified himself or herself as a Jew or belonged to the Jewish religious community. Many Germans who had not practiced Judaism for years and who had never been members of a synagogue found themselves caught in the grip of Nazi terror. Even people with Jewish grandparents who had converted to Christianity were defined as Jews.”

<http://www.ushmm.org/outreach/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007695>.
Web, 29 June 2012.

The same antisemitic laws were applied in the countries occupied by Nazi Germany. We see here the passport of Sam Schrijver of Amsterdam with the inscription “J” identifying him as Jewish.

© MHMC



Activity 3

Historical examination
of the Holocaust

Why were identity papers and citizenship important?



Using the anti-Jewish laws described above and the two excerpts below, answer the following questions:

- What is the message of the two authors?
- In your opinion, what purpose do a passport and identity papers serve? How do they ensure a citizen's security?
- In your opinion, does the State have an obligation to defend the rights of every individual?

Excerpt from *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt, 1906-1975, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, (1966, 1968), p.297

“Only with a completely organized humanity could the loss of home and political status become identical with expulsion from humanity altogether.”

Excerpt from *Auschwitz en héritage* by Georges Bensoussan, Les petits libres, 1998, p.90

“We can hardly imagine today a world without visas or passports. These are recent developments that reflect the growing hold of the State over the freedom of the ordinary citizen. “And I was compelled to continuously remember,” Stefan Zweig wrote a while back in Le Monde, “the words a Russian exile spoke to me a few years earlier. ‘In the past, man had only a body and a soul. Today, he also needs a passport, without which he will not be treated like a man.’”

Education under the Nazis

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust

In national socialist Germany, all social and political activities were influenced by the Nazi ideology. Here are the four principles that summarize Nazi education. All the nation’s children were subject to it:



Questions on the text below:

- Describe the four educational principles and the effects of this education on the children’s character and behaviour
- Which principles of the Nazi ideology are present in the excerpts?
- Why did the Nazis consider it important to control the educational system and the education of the Germans?

Educational principle	Description	Effects on the children	Principle of Nazi ideology that is illustrated
Race			
Military training			
Leadership			
Religion			

Why was it necessary to control religion?

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Educational principles of the “New Germany”

“German youth belong to the Führer!”

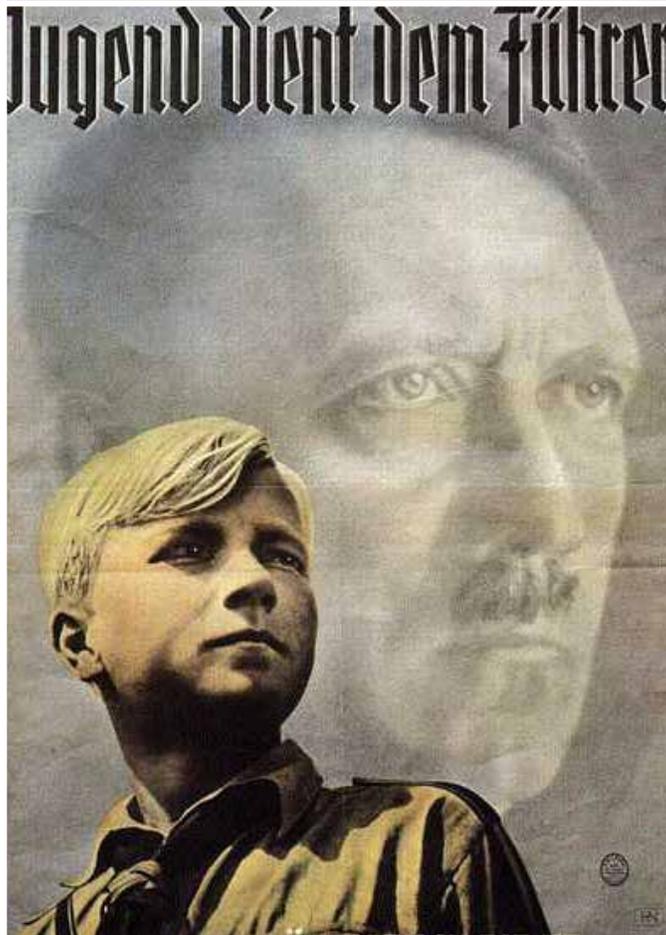
1. Race

National Socialist education is an education in the thinking of the German people, in understanding German traditions, in awakening the pure, uncorrupted, and honest people’s consciousness, their sense of belonging to the people. Only a pure member of the German race can have such an understanding of his people, crowning it with the willingness to sacrifice all for the people. He must know that without his people he is a miserable nothing, and that it is better if he himself dies than that his people and fatherland perishes!

[...] the German youth [...] must realize that the German people have a right to independence and freedom, honor and power. [...] We want to awaken in the German youth this free, just, and noble national pride so that at the thought of Germany’s past, present, and future their hearts will pound and their eyes will gleam.

2. Military Training

It is clear that the German youth must be resolved to defend their fatherland with their lives. [...] The German youth must learn military virtues. Their bodies must be steeled, made hard and strong, so that the youth may become capable soldiers who are healthy, strong, trained, energetic, and able to bear hardships. Gymnastics, games, sports, hiking, swimming, and military exercises must all be learned by the youth.



3. Leadership

A youth being trained for such important national duties must accept the idea of following the Führer absolutely and without question, without unhealthy carping criticism, without selfishness or opposition. They must learn to obey so that having themselves learned to obey, can believe in and trust their own leadership and can grow to be leaders themselves. Only he who has learned to obey can lead. Germany no longer believes that the masses can lead themselves by majority rule!

4. Religion

God and nation are the two foundations of the life of the individual and the community. We do not want shallow and superficial piety, but rather a deep faith that God guides the world, that he controls it, and a consciousness of the relationship between God and each individual, and between God and the lives of the people and the fatherland.

“The Educational Principles of the New Germany” published in a Nazi magazine for women

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/frau01.htm> Web, 29 June 2012.
Complete original reference: “Die Erziehungsgrundsätze des neuen Deutschlands”. *Frauen-Warte* #22 (1936-37), pp 692-693. Print.

The “Jew” as seen by a German adolescent girl

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust

Here is an excerpt from a children’s book that was published in the *Stürmer*, a newspaper that spread the vilest material about Germany’s Jews.



Answer the following questions:

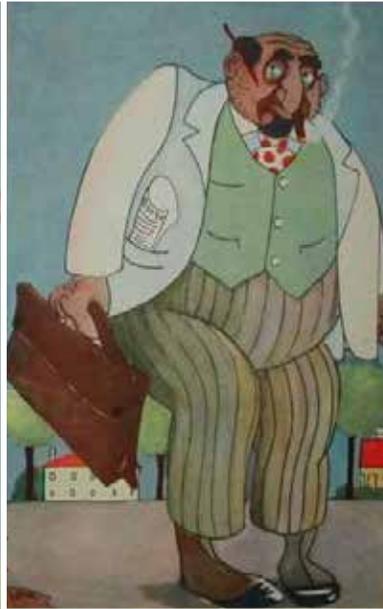
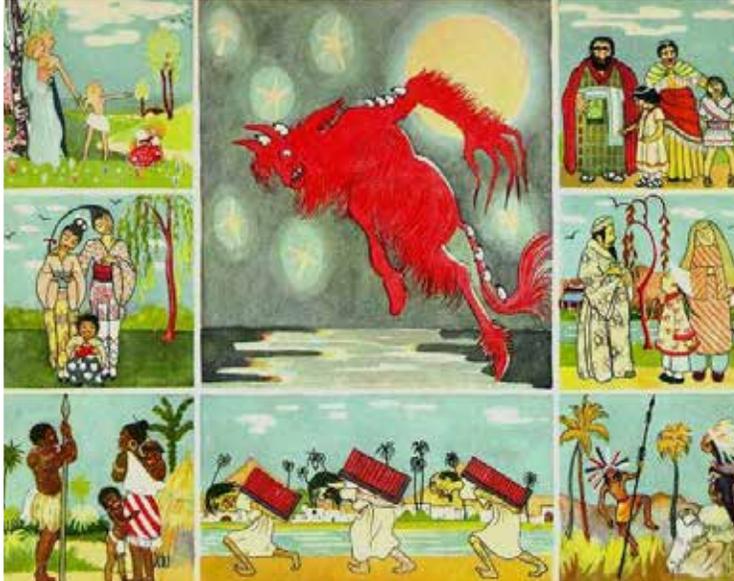
- The fable of the adolescent German girl summarizes the fundamentals of the Nazi ideology concerning race. Which elements of the Nazi vision are expressed here?
- How are Jews portrayed in the fable?
- How does the author wish children to perceive the Jews?
- Is the book giving children factual information? What type of information is being given?

Elements of Nazi ideology being expressed	
Description of Jews (traits)	
Desired effect on children’s perception of Jews	
Type of information / factual?	

Activity 3

Historical examination
of the Holocaust

Trust No Fox on his Green Heath And No Jew on his Oath



© R. Bytwerk

by Elvira Bauer,

*The Father of the Jews is the Devil
At the creation of the world
The Lord God conceived the races:
Red Indians, Negroes, and Chinese,
And Jew, too, the rotten crew.
And we were also on the scene:
We Germans midst this motley medley-
He gave them all a piece of earth
To work with the sweat of their brow.
But the Jew went on strike at once!
For the devil rode him from the first.
Cheating, not working, was his aim;
For lying, he got first prize
In less than no time from the Father of Lies.
Then he wrote it in the Talmud.*

[...]

*Look, children, and the two compare,
The German and the Jew.
Take a good look at the two
In the picture drawn for you.
A joke — you think it is only that?
Easy to guess which is which, I say:
The German stands up, the Jew gives way.
The German is a proud young man,
Able to work and able to fight.
Because he is a fine big chap,
For danger does not care a rap,
The Jew has always hated him!
Here is the Jew, as all can see,
Biggest ruffian in our country;
He thinks himself the greatest beau
And yet is the ugliest, you know!*

Bauer, Elvira. *Traue keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud auf seinem Eid*. Nuremberg: Stürmer Verlag, 1936.

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/fuchs/htm>. Web, 29 June 2012.

Destruction of the Jews in the Holocaust

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust

The list below shows the steps taken by the Nazis to successfully execute their plan of systematically destroying the Jews of Europe. The Nazis called the plan “The Final Solution to the Jewish Question.”



The steps/stages are presented in chronological order. What do you observe with respect to this type of structuring?

Hate and antisemitic speeches
1933 -1945

Enactment of Nuremberg laws
1935

Roundups and shootings of Jews by the special commando units (Einsatzgruppen)
1941 -1943

Displacement of Jewish populations to the ghettos
1939 -1945

Deportation of Jews to the concentration camps
1938 -1945

Deportation of Jews to the extermination camps
1941 -1945



Activity 3

Historical examination
of the Holocaust

Correspondence of the Holocaust

The letters below, written by Holocaust victims and by a Canadian soldier who took part in the liberation, show the manner in which each victim experienced the stages of genocide.



For each letter:

- Identify the stage (see preceding table).
- Record what you have learned about the victims' experience (at least two pertinent elements for each letter).

Letter	Stage illustrated	Victim's experience

The Jews' situation – Deportation, ghettos, camps

Activity 3 Historical examination of the Holocaust

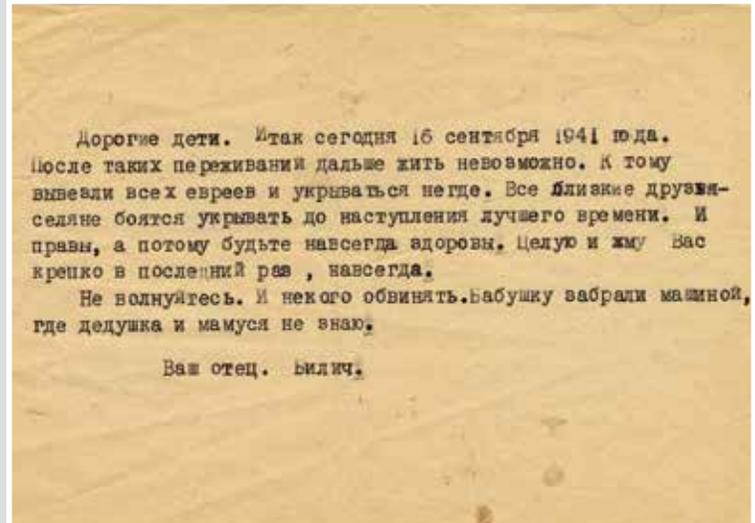
Dear children,

Today is 19 Sept. 1941. It's impossible to continue living after these horrible experiences. All the Jews have been arrested and there is nowhere to hide. Close friends are afraid to hide us until better times are here. And they have reason to.

I kiss you and hug you tightly in my arms for the last time and forever. No one is to blame. Grand-mama was taken away in a car; I have no idea where Grand-papa and Mama are to be found.

Your father,

Billich



Letter sent by a parent to his children, Ukraine, 19 Sept. 1941.
© MHMC

5057
 Berlin den 6. I. 43

Mein lieber, guter Sohn
 Loeben werden wir abgeholt und
 müssen die Fahrt in's Ungewisse
 antreten. Wir senden dir vollständig
 unsere besten Grüße und hoffen,
 dass diese Abschied nicht endgültig
 sein wird, sondern mit Gottes Hilfe
 ein Wiedersehen möglich ist.
 Halte das Andenken an deine Eltern
 hoch und versuche etwas für uns
 zu tun, falls irgendwie möglich.
 Wir stehen in Gottes Hand und
 fügen uns seinem Willen.
 Tausend meine Grüße mit einem
 von deinen lieben Eltern
 Vati
 1000 Küsse Deine Mutter

Final letter sent to Lothar
 Lewin in the internment
 camp in Sherbrooke
 (Canada) by his parents in
 Berlin (Germany), 6 Jan.
 1943.

© MHMC

My dear, gentle son,

They are coming to get us now and we must begin our long voyage to an unknown destination. We send you our last thoughts for the moment and hope that this adieu will not be the last. With God's help, we will meet again.

Remember your parents and try to help us, if ever that is possible.

From here on in, we are in God's hands and we accept His will.

A thousand greetings and kisses from the bottom of your faithful parents' hearts,

Papa

1000 kisses,

Mama

In this photo, Lothar poses
 with his parents Martin and
 Anna. 1938

© MHMC

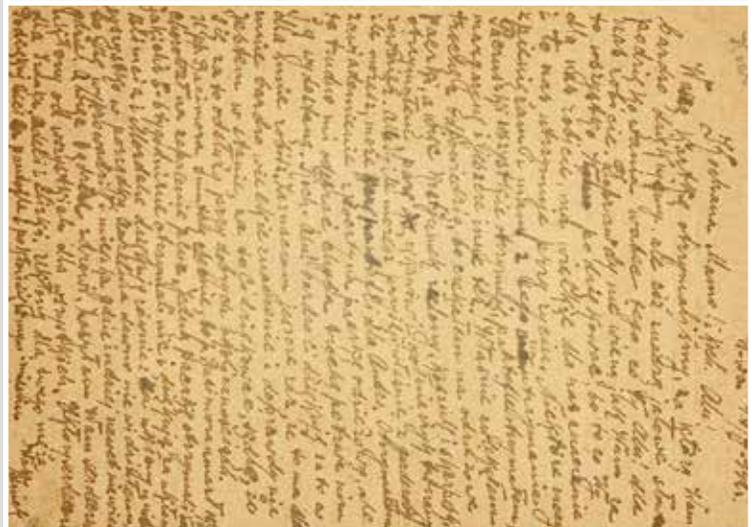


My dearest Mama and my dearest Ala,

We have received your cards and thank you for them. But what value do simple words have compared to everything that you and Ala have done for us? I really don't know how to thank you. What you are doing means so much to us and it is keeping us alive. Some things I sell, all the parcels that I receive with shoes, margarine, and other items, and I live off that.

I was late answering your letter because I was waiting for the parcel with the clothes, the green suit, the shirt, and the socks. I received them together with a fur collar, but, if it's possible, send me clothing and shoes for Andzia.

I've received a notice from the post office. They have a parcel of clothing for me, but there seems to be a problem, and it will take some time to get it.



Post card sent from Warsaw ghetto (Poland) to Paris (France), 19 Feb. 1942.
© MHMC



Warsaw ghetto, June 1942
© Wikimedia commons



A Jewish man is humiliated by Nazi soldiers who are cutting his beard, in retaliation for the uprising, Warsaw ghetto, 1943
© MHMC

Dear Ala,

Thank you for everything you do for me. I'm afraid I can't reciprocate, but I will as soon as the situation improves. There is sadness in the Racimora household presently because Mr. Racimora passed away on 15 Feb. of pneumonia. They received a parcel five or six weeks ago and they thank you for your care.

Blincia and Mordche also thank you and send greetings of friendship. All is well with them. I haven't seen Andzia in a while because they have moved, but I don't know where.

So stay well. I send friendly thoughts to everyone, to Izak, Adela, Eliza, your husband. Thank the children on my behalf for the shoes.



Deportation from the Lodz ghetto in Poland – Two major deportations occurred in 1942 and 1944.
© MHMC

My dear brother,

Destiny has chosen that you should survive the horrors of this hell and when it is over, you will resume your life.

Destiny has not been as generous to us and now that we are within inches of death, I turn to you, my brother, with a request.

Our tiny love Marika will probably survive this cataclysm. I beg you, please, take her into your home and raise her as if she were your own daughter. I implore you, take our place; be her mother and father. You will see that she is a gentle and affectionate child, and she, in return, will show you the innocent gratitude and love of a child.

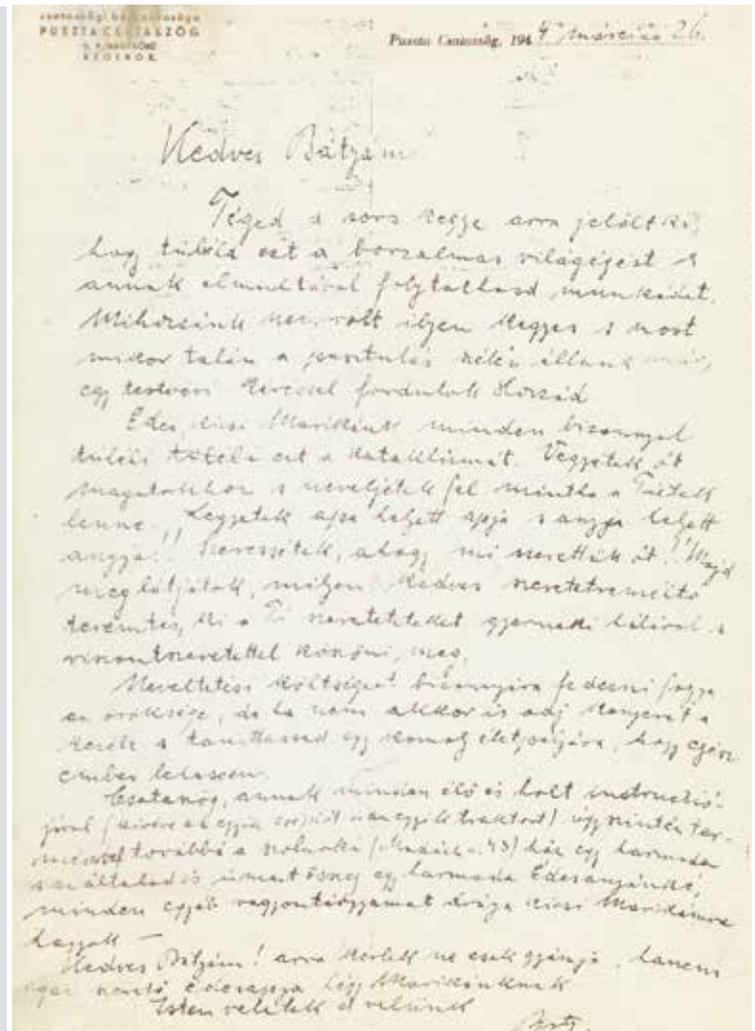
I believe her inheritance will be enough to cover the expenses of her education, but, if that's not the case, please raise her, look to her education, and guide her toward a serious career so that she may become an independent and fulfilled adult.

I bequeath to my dear little Marika Csatasgoeg and all the land, the livestock and equipment (except for one tractor and one reaper), all the fields, one-third of the house in Szolnok (Maduch u. 43), one-third of our mother's money, and everything I own.

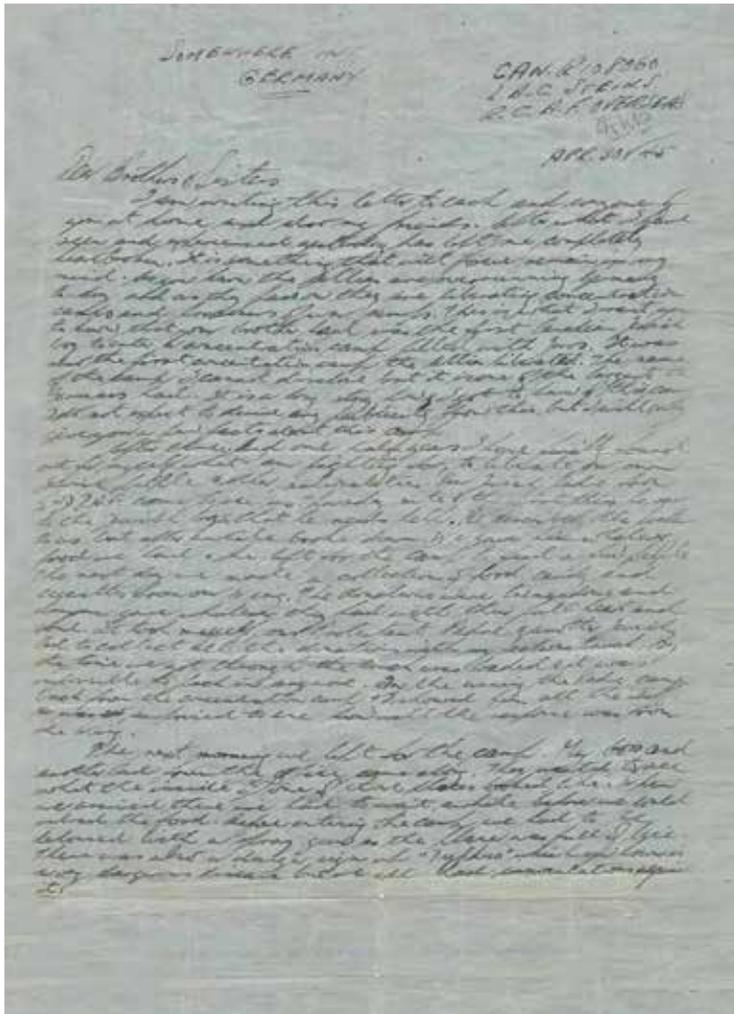
Dear brother! I beseech you to take my place and be not only her guardian but also the father who will adore her.

May God be with you and with us all.

Pista



Letter from a Hungarian father to his brother who has taken refuge in Italy; Hungary 26 March 1944
© MHMC



Somewhere in Germany
30 April 1945

Dear brothers and sisters,

I am writing this letter to each of you in the house and to my friends.

What I saw and experienced yesterday has broken my heart. It's an experience that will stay with me forever. As you know, the Allies are invading Germany and everywhere they pass, they liberate concentration camps and prisoners of war. I want to tell you that your brother Saul was the first Jewish-Canadian to enter a concentration camp filled with Jews. That was also the first concentration camp to be liberated by the Allies. I can't tell you the name of the camp, but it was one of the major ones set up by the Germans. How I learned of the existence of this camp is a long story. I expect it will draw publicity, but I'll give you only a few facts about it.

After three and a half years, I have finally understood, because I have seen it with my own eyes, the cause I'm fighting for –

the liberation of our Jewish people and of other nationalities. Our Jewish chaplain of the second CFTAF came to see us Thursday evening, and the first thing that he said to the Jewish boys was that he needed help. He described the scene to us, but after a moment, he couldn't go on.

We gave him all the food we had, and he left for the camp to distribute it. The next day, we collected food, candy, and cigarettes from our squadron. The donations were impressive, and everyone gave whatever they had with all their heart and soul. Our Protestant chaplain - another Jewish fellow - and I gathered the donations into my section's truck. When we had finished going around, the truck was full and couldn't hold anything more. In the evening, the chaplain returned from the camp; I showed him what we had collected. He was surprised by our squadron's generous reaction.

We left for the camp the next day. My superior and another fellow from the office came with us. They wanted to see what the inside of such a place looked like. We arrived but had to wait a bit before unloading the food. Before entering the camp, we had to be

Letter written by Saul Stein, a Jewish-Canadian soldier, and sent to his family in Montreal while he was serving in the Canadian army, Germany, 30 April 1945

© MHMC

deloused with a spray gun because the place was overrun with lice. There was also a sign warning of typhus, which, as you know, is a dangerous disease. But we had all been vaccinated.

While we waited, the chaplain gave us a tour of the camp. In all my life, I have never seen so many people in a camp. Bodies were lying on the ground everywhere we walked. Those who were alive looked almost dead, and everyone was starving. The army did its best to empty the camp and take people to hospital. The biggest problem was the lack of food and medical supplies. I can't begin to describe the seriousness of the scene. Something has to be done right away to help these people who are dropping like flies. Our own people must help them. I never imagined that I would, one day, see such a horrible scene. I can't believe that a race as fanatical as the cursed Germans could ever exist. The biggest pleasure I got in the camp was to see the German soldiers load the bodies, and, believe me, the army made them sweat.



Saul Stein in his Canadian air force uniform, June 1944
© MHMC



Prisoners liberated from Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, 1946
© MHMC



Prisoners who have just been liberated, Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, 1945
© MHMC

Those are some of the experiences I can tell you about, but when I come home, I'll see what I can do to help. If only more people could see this camp, they would understand how the Germans tortured their victims. I didn't sleep all night thinking about the camp.

All this has been told you by your brother who saw it all and who was the first to visit a concentration camp. Please relate it all to Micky and ask him whether he might write an article on it in the "Y" Beacon.

Good-bye for now and good luck.

I hope to see you soon.

Saul

Activity 4

Analysis of Canada's intervention



Historical context

Canada is known to be an open and tolerant country built by immigrants, but was that always the case?

In your opinion, did Canada welcome all immigrants?

The table below indicates the number of immigrants arriving between 1912 and 1947. What do you observe?

Jewish immigration to Canada – A government's position

Number of immigrants arriving in Canada between 1912 and 1947

	Year	Number
WWI	1912	375,756
	1913	400,870
	1914	150,484
	1915	36,665
	1916	55,914
	1917	72,910
	1918	41,845
	1919	107,698
	1920	138,824
	1921	91,728
Economic depression (+ or -)	1922	64,224
	1923	133,729
	1924	124,164
	1925	84,907
	1926	135,982
	1927	158,886
	1928	166,783
	1929	164,993
	1930	104,806
	1931	27,530
WWII	1932	20,591
	1933	14,382
	1934	12,476
	1935	11,277
	1936	11,643
	1937	15,101
	1938	17,244
	1939	16,994
	1940	11,324
	1941	9,329
1942	7,576	
1943	8,504	
1944	12,801	
1945	22,722	
1946	71,719	
1947	64,127	

Source: Statistics Canada

Jews settled in Canada from the 18th century onward, but their presence remained discrete, as is evident in the table below showing the first half of the 20th century:

Jewish presence in Canada between 1911 and 1951

Year	Number of Jews in Canada	Total population of Canada	Jewish presence (%) in population of Canada
1911	74,564	7,207,000	1.03
1921	125,197	8,788,000	1.42
1931	156,000	10,377,000	1.50
1941	169,000	11,507,000	1.46
1951	205,000	14,009,000	1.46

Source: Statistics Canada

Although the Jewish population increased relatively fast at the end of the 19th century and in the first decades of the 20th, it stagnated as of the 1930s when it represented about 1.5% of the total population of Canada. This situation did not change during the period of Jewish persecution in Europe, a time when the Jews were desperately searching for refuge.

In fact, of the total number of immigrants for the decade between 1931 and 1939; i.e. under 150,000 (according to Statistics Canada), only about 5,000 were Jewish - approximately 3% of the total number of immigrants.



Using the information in the preceding table and your knowledge of this historical period, can you form any explanatory hypotheses of why Canada did not open its doors to the Jewish refugees of Europe?

Canada intervenes to save the European Jews

The government of Prime Minister Mackenzie and the Jews



Roosevelt, Mackenzie King, and Churchill meet at the Quebec Conference, 1943
© Coll. Canada

Historical context

A foreign policy guided by two major principles

1. Between 1930 and 1940, Canada sought to come out from under Great Britain's authority and the United States' influence in order to attain real political freedom. It is true that the country attained its political independence only recently. The desire for autonomy, clearly expressed by Mackenzie King in his diary, greatly influenced the decisions taken by the Canadian government during this time.

2. The second principle that guided the decisions of the Canadian government at this time was the importance of maintaining national unity. The government sought to preserve the relative peace that existed between the two main linguistic groups of the country. In fact, the compulsory conscription crisis¹ of WWI that opposed the French- and English-speaking populations of Canada was still fresh in Prime Minister King's memory. He, therefore, wanted to keep harmony within the country throughout WWII. Thus it was that Canada's involvement in the war occurred on two levels: diplomatic and military.

Canadian immigration laws

It is a known fact that the immigration policies of Canada in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries were racist. In 1885, for instance, the Canadian government restricted Chinese immigration. In 1906, undesirable and handicapped persons could not immigrate to Canada. The government imposed more restrictions in 1910 and obtained the right to reject any groups it judged as being undesirable. In 1918, Canada refused to accept WWI refugees, and, in 1919, a new immigration law established criteria based on ethnicity and culture. These criteria allowed the government to reject immigrants because of their political beliefs or religion. The Canadian government then blocked all immigration in 1930 because of the economic crisis; only the wealthy and those who accepted to live on farms were welcome.

Source: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com

¹ In 1917, the Canadian government obliged all eligible men to enlist. This led to a serious political crisis. The French-Canadians were greatly opposed to participating in the war, while English-Canadians supported it. The crisis shook the government and severely divided the Canadian population.

Was Canada indifferent?

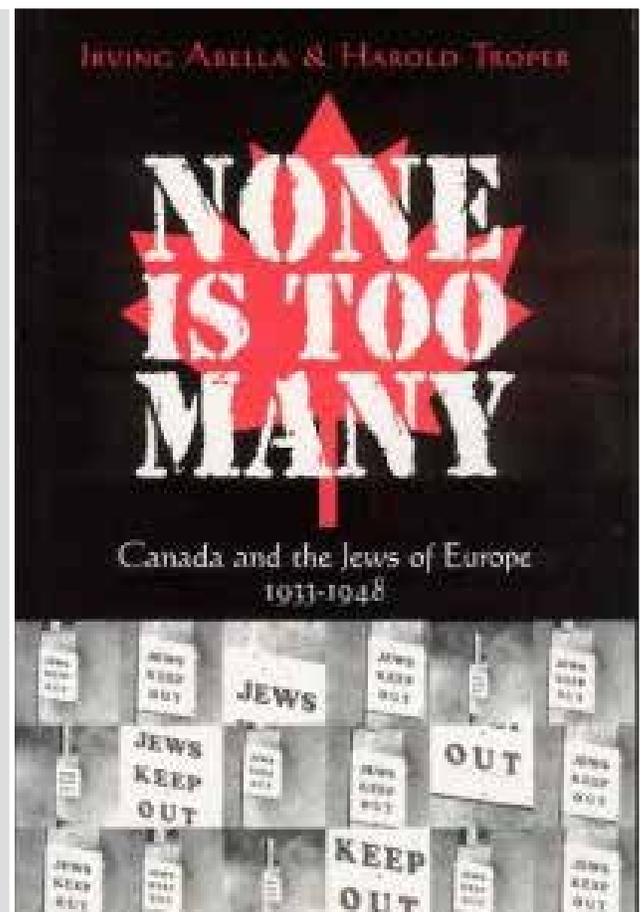
During WWII, the Canadian government did very little in response to the issue of the Jewish refugees and Nazi victims in Europe. The country's borders remained closed; very few Jews found refuge there. In fact, the position of the Canadian government, then led by Mackenzie King, was that, in order to help the Jews, the war must first be won.

In the excerpt below, Canadian historians Abella and Troper argue that Canada did not undertake any direct rescue operation because it was little concerned with the plight of the Jews.

“Like the other western liberal democracies, Canada cared little and did less. When confronted with the Jewish problem, the response of government, the civil service and, indeed, much of the public wavered somewhere between indifference and hostility.

In the prewar years, as the government cemented barriers to immigration, especially of Jews, Immigration authorities barely concealed their contempt for those pleading for rescue. There was no groundswell of opposition, no humanitarian appeal for a more open policy. Even the outbreak of war and the mounting evidence of an ongoing Nazi program for the total annihilation of European Jewry did not move Canada. Its response remained legalistic and cold. Historians may today debate whether once war began rescue was possible, but at the time Canada wanted no part of any such scheme.² And with the Allie’s victory the remnant of European Jewish survivors found no welcome, no succor in Canada. Though the holocaust was yet fresh in the public mind, the country was still attempting to barricade itself from the smoldering Jewish refugee question; when international pressure and economic self-interest compelled Canada to admit displaced persons, it took calculated steps to insure that Jewish admissions were kept within acceptable bounds – that is, that there were as few as possible.”

Abella, I., & Harold Troper. *None is Too Many*. Random House, 1983, 280-281



² J. Hope Simpson, *The Refugee Problem; Report of Survey* (London, 1934), 44-66; Lucy s. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* (New York, 1975)

Many factors explain the decision of the Canadian government regarding the “Jewish question.” The population’s indifference and hostility may have been one factor, as Abella and Troper suggest. Other authors have argued, however, that these decisions were mainly the result of the virulent anti-Semitism of Prime Minister Mackenzie King himself.



In his diary, King expressed his feelings and concerns regarding the situation of the European Jews. Read the excerpts below; then try to answer the following questions:

- What does King think of the Jews? Recreate his portrait of them.
- Identify the feelings he expresses with regard to the situation of the Jewish refugees in Europe, the problems he sees, and the solutions he proposes.
- In your opinion, was King indifferent or hostile toward the Jews, in the same way that Abella and Troper say the Canadians were?
- When King wrote about the Jews in his journal, it was often because he had been prompted by others. Who are the people who caused him to reflect on the situation of the Jews?
- What does this reflection teach you with regard to the governmental decision-making process? What reasons would cause a government to decide to help or not help a group of human beings that are being threatened?
- Do you perceive the desire to safeguard the two principles explained above: Canada’s political autonomy and harmony within the country?

King's positions regarding the persecution of Europe's Jews and their possible immigration to Canada

Historical Context

Between 1893 and 1950, William Lyon Mackenzie King filled more than 30,000 pages of his diary with his intimate thoughts. Reading his personal accounts, his religious or spiritual impressions, his view on the history of the country and on his political life helps the reader to better understand this statesman. In short, the reader is introduced to the vision of a political figure, with all his complexities and ambivalences.

Source: Library and Archives Canada

<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/database/king/index-e.html>

Important note concerning the analysis

Knowing that King did not want his writings to be published, consider what his intentions may have been in keeping a diary.

King was Canada's prime minister (Liberal party) between 1921 and 1926, 1926-1930, 1935-1948 (year of his resignation from his duties). Take note of the dates of the excerpts; the period covered is long, and the author's thoughts may vary. The vocabulary and literary style are characteristic of the period.

Activity 4

Analysis of Canada's intervention

Excerpts from King's diary



Mackenzie King, 1947.
© Col. Canada

On Hitler and the situation in Germany
Monday September 21, 1936

"I had a rest of three-quarters of an hour this afternoon and tonight had an interesting talk with young George Roy whom I had at dinner with me in my suite. He says the youth of Germany and the German nation generally; seem to be wholeheartedly behind Hitler. That Hitler has great emotional power in speaking, is very human, clearly loves the people and is able to reach their hearts. He feels the biggest thing Hitler has done is to clean out the Jews, that the Jews were possessing Germany, that Hitler and the Germans generally hate the Jewish mentality which they claim is the kind of cold and intellectual acuteness with no heart. He feels that anti-Jewish feeling will grow in France and hears that it is making much headway in America. He asked if there had not been anti-Jewish demonstrations in the Province of Quebec. The people he doesn't think care about war or want war but feels they will follow Hitler through anything. He says Hitler has exposed the ramifications of Jewish organizations as, for example, the masonic bodies in Germany which were largely Jewish; he has opened up their lodges and publicly exposed the methods of initiation and what it is they are aiming at. (I presume a sort of world conquest). The dislike of Russia is very much the dislike of Jewish control and government. Freedom in many of its aspects, he feels, has gone in Germany."

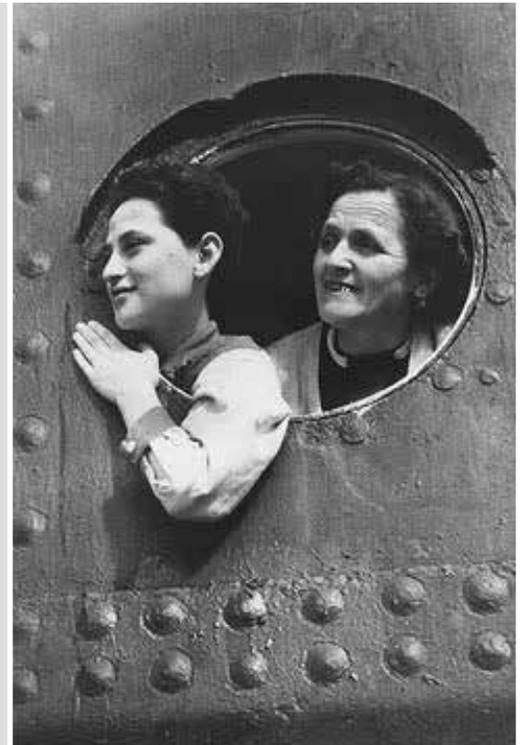
On accepting refugees
Tuesday March 29, 1938

"Attended council from 12 till 1.30. A very difficult question has presented itself in Roosevelt's appeal to different countries to unite with the United States in admitting refugees from Austria, Germany, etc. That means, in a word, admitting numbers of Jews. My own feeling is that nothing is to be gained by creating an internal problem in an effort to meet an international one. That we must be careful not to seek to play the role of the dog in the manger so far as Canada is concerned, with our great open spaces and small population. We must nevertheless seek to keep this part of the continent free from unrest and from too great an intermixture of foreign strains of blood, as much the same thing as lies at the basis of the Oriental problem. I fear we would have riots if we agreed to a policy that admitted

numbers of Jews. Also we would add to the difficulties between the Provinces and the Dominion. Council was very much of this view through Crerar, Rogers and Euler and, to some extent, Ilsley were more favourable to the open door on the humanitarian grounds. One has to look at realities and meet these situations in the light of conditions and not theories if the greatest happiness is to be obtained for the greatest number in the long run.”

On the Evian Conference
Tuesday April 26, 1938

“At Council, I took up anew the question of Canada being represented at Geneva on the invitation of the United States to consider political refugee. I had a communication re-drafted stating why we had to be careful in what we did, but agreeing to be present without making any commitment in advance. All the cabinet were favourable to being present at the Conference except Lapointe, Cardin and Rinfret. I had to say that my judgment made me feel that it would be unwise in an international situation of the kind for Canada to be classed only with Italy as refusing the invitation. I spoke of the danger of offending many Jews who were loyal supporter of the party as well as people of larger sympathies, who would think we ought, at least, to have sat in even if we could do nothing later on.”



Jewish women refugees aboard the SS St. Louis that would not be permitted to land in Canada, May 1939
© Commons



Election poster of Abraham Heaps, Liberal member of Parliament of Jewish origin
© Commons

On accepting refugees – Heaps
Tuesday May 17, 1938

“After the house opened, and proceedings got under way – agricultural supply – I had a deputation of Heaps, Factor, Jacobs, Woodsworth and Vien to ask that the Government agree to admit 1000 families refugees on the understanding that they would be cared for, and not become a public charge. I asked if it were proposed to have this done publicly. They agreed that it would not be wise, but that the numbers might be admitted quietly. After expressing sympathy with the persecutions of the Jews today, and outlining the dangers of raising a larger issue in Canada than the one we were trying to remedy by having protests which summon, I suggested that a Committee of the Cabinet should meet the Committee that had come to me to discuss the matter and it was agreed that the Committee would also take up with the individual Minister from Quebec, the position as they saw it.”

New York, Sunday November 6, 1938

“After breakfast in the large dining hall, had a talk with Mr. Myron O. Taylor, former president of the National Steel Corporation (a great friend of Mr. Rockefeller, Jr.) who is now special Ambassador regarding refugee immigration. He presented the problem in a very nice spirit. Said he appreciated I would wish to confer with my colleagues; also understood our difficulties. Tells me the US are taking 7500 refugees from Germany, practically all of whom are Jews. Invited me to lunch with him at any time I might be in New York.”

Saturday November 12, 1938, p.2

“I had decided to turn in before 10 when Joan told me of the evening paper’s making mention of Heap’s having lost his wife. Also, Mrs. Freiman had asked early in the day for an interview. The sorrows which the Jews have to bear at this time are almost beyond comprehension. It was too late to get flowers from anywhere so I took those which had come from Government house during the day and carried them over myself to Heaps, to his apartment in the Duncannon. I found him and his son very composed and brave. He himself has been through many illnesses. We had a quiet talk together, but particularly distressing when we touched on the problem of Jews seeking admission to Canada. Something will have to be done by our country to assist in this phase of the world

situation. I feel deeply concerned about the world's affairs. The way the Germans have allowed their younger to destroy Jewish property and others siding with the government to deal with Jews in higher position is appalling. Heaps told me privately that Miss Macphail had told him confidentially that she had been wrong in all her anti-military sentiments. I think others are beginning to see that what with the Germans and the Japs we are facing an era of barbarism."

Sunday November 13, 1938

"After dictation this morning and lunch on I attended the funeral of Heap's wife at the Jewish Synagogue, - a deeply touching service – upper room – small – all seated with hat on – the simple coffin in black to one side, only one wreath – opposite Heaps and his two sons. The Rabbi & leader in song behind the table – two lighted candles one on either side the coffin – a service partly in Jewish, partly English – a fine address by Rabbi of Montreal – Speaking of the dead of their race being happier than the living they being at peace, others like phantom figures fleeing in and about Europe. – I went out to the cemetery – a long journey along the Prescott highway, just a committal service. Poor Heaps looked very pale – his boys & himself quite brave. What a position the race is in. Freiman told me the cemetery now well filled and only a grave or two when he came to Ottawa in 1900. He spoke of our all being on the same level when death comes. Heap's wife has been ill for over a year – cancer – a beautiful woman as I remember her. I feel Canada must do her part in admitting some of the Jewish refugees. It is going to be difficult politically, and I may not be able to get the Cabinet to consent, but will fight for it as right and just, and Christian."

Monday November 14, 1938

“Mrs. Freiman called to plead for the Government doing something which would be of help to her compatriots. She spoke of the burden upon her husband and herself, in particular. Gave me the case of a young woman who, at the moment, has been allowed to land but may be returned to Germany, notwithstanding, within the interval, both her parents have been exiled, and she, herself, not knowing where they are today. I felt it was inhuman for our Department of Immigration to allow that child to be returned. I feel we must do something as a country to admit some of these refugees. In speaking with the Governor General, he told me he “would like to be in on” anything of this kind. That he had been on the Palestine Commission, and know the matters to be considered. He strongly advocated having an area set apart for development and obliging necessary capital, etc. to be supplied by the Jews themselves. I asked where they were to get their money. The Governor said it was amazing the amounts that they have, secreted away.”

On the Jewish orphans and the slow pace of bureaucracy
Friday May 24, 1940

“Crerar brought up the question of refugee children. Had a telegram of appalling length, very muddled in thought and expression, which he read. I openly opposed the sending of it, as being far too wide-open and under-taking too much in the way of government obligation.

Crerar, I find, is getting more difficult every day. He is losing ground rapidly. He blocks procedure, by not following what is being said, taking up everything just as he hears it discussed. I find it, too, very difficult to get Lapointe to take a large view of the Canada opening up to other peoples. We simply cannot refrain from sharing the burden of the democracies in Europe in taking refugees, especially children. I urged the most immediate steps or assistance be given to relieve France and England of Refugees.”

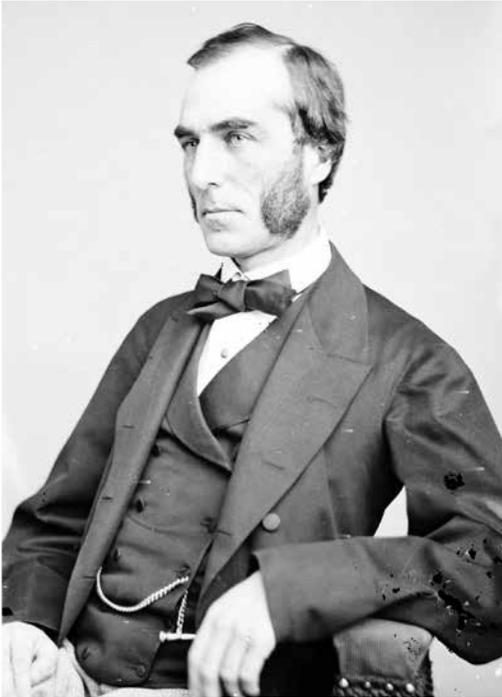


Minister responsible for
immigration to Canada
Thomas Alexander Crerar
© Coll. Canada

On Jewish immigration and the position of the
Canadian government
Sunday February 13, 1944

“I could see (Emil) Ludwig is very anxious about having Canada open its doors to Jewish people; immediately for those who are victims of Hitler’s persecution and later as a country having space for population. He thought it would be harder for the Jews to get into the US after the war than getting into Germany or Russia, or other European countries. He said quite frankly that he thought Roosevelt had too many Jewish advisers in conscious posts, citing Morgenthau, Judge Frankfurter, and named several others. That it gave his political enemies the chance to create an antisemitic prejudice. I told him I thought until our own forces were demobilized and re-established, the country could not stand for much immigration. That for a govt. to adopt any policy of open door would only cause the other parties to take an opposite stand and gain thereby in a general election.

That I thought after I was out of politics altogether, I might sometime speak on the need of Canada following Britain’s example and becoming a home for peoples of all countries who were refugees from political persecution, especially if there was a careful selection of standards, etc. He admitted I was taking the situation as he, himself, saw it. He seemed greatly concerned lest there might be a movement to have the war end before Germany was completely overthrown. Asked me if the bankers in Canada were working toward that end. I said distinctly not. He said there was no doubt some of the New York bankers were.”



Goldwin Smith, a notorious
Canadian anti-Semite
© Commons

Sunday June 11, 1944

“At breakfast, he (Emil Ludwig) excused him for venturing to ask if he might say a word about the life of the Jews to me, and the possibility of some of them being given a refuge in Canada provided they could stay in rural areas and not come into the cities. I explained to him again the nature of the political problem, the difficulty of a leader of a govt. bringing up this question on the eve of an election but agreed that Canada would have to open her doors and fill many of her large waste spaces with population once our own men had returned from the front, and that we would have to be generous and humanitarian in our attitude. I promised to meet a friend of his to discuss the rural settlement of some members of the Jewish community. I must say when one listens to accounts of their persecutions; one cannot have any human sympathies without being prepared to do much on their behalf.”

On the writing of his biography
Wednesday June 21, 1944

“It is a strange thing indeed that my life would come to be written by one who is a German (Emil Ludwig), at a time of war, and also by a Jew.”

On the prejudices against the Jews
Wednesday February 20, 1946

“I recall Goldwin Smith feeling so strongly about the Jews. He expressed it at one time as follows: that they were poison in the veins of a community. Tom Eakin (Rakin?), from whom I have a letter this morning, has a similar feeling about them. I myself have never allowed that thought to be entertained for a moment or to have any feeling which would permit prejudice to develop, but I must say that the evidence is very strong, not against all Jews, which is quite wrong, as one cannot indict a race any more than one can a nation, but that in a large percentage of the race there are tendencies and trends which are dangerous indeed.”

The efforts of the Canadian Jewish community

Activity 4 Analysis of Canada's intervention

Excerpts from a speech made by Samuel Bronfman, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, at the Montefiore Club in Montreal on 4 March 1941.



- What is the situation of Europe's Jews as described by Bronfman in 1941?
- To what events is he referring? What is the land of freedom he speaks of?

"Fate has scattered and broken us enough. We have been sufficiently driven and divided in the lands of oppression for us to neglect the practice of solidarity in this land of freedom, a solidarity which must inevitably result in greater patriotic, educational, cultural and social achievement. At home and abroad, we have duties to perform, and we will best perform them united. For the period through which we are living is unparalleled in the history of mankind. Never before was wickedness so endowed with power, and never did power so dedicate itself to the tasks of destruction. Above all, no war before has seen its causes so unambiguous, its objectives so unclouded, its issues so clear cut. Civilization defending itself against barbarism, the true order opposed to the New Order, light against darkness - to utter the contrasts is to describe the combatants. In the forefront of this battle is the Empire of which we are proud citizens, and in the vanguard is England."

P. 6



Samuel Bronfman, CJC
© JPL



- What position does he propose that his community adopt? In your opinion, why?
- How does Bronfman’s position with respect to the means of remedying the situation of Europe’s Jews differ from that of King?

The British Empire

“If as it has been said, the true barometer of a people’s civilization is its treatment of its Jews, the British Empire stands as the most civilized commonwealth of nations in the history of mankind. For here it was, that our people, driven from pillar to post, found refuge and sanctuary. [...] The rights of its Magna Charta were not kept from us; its constitutional benefits democratically accorded. In time of peace, we manifested our gratitude to the glorious Empire by the service, the contribution, the loyalty of daily good citizenship. Now, as that Empire is engaged in a life and death struggle, battling for those truths without which we cannot live, fighting for those principles without which we surely perish, shall we not say, we its citizens, say in the words of the good book:

Whitber tbou goest I shall go, and where tbou lodgest I will lodge. Thy people shall be my people; where thou diest I will die; the Lord do so to me, if aught but death part thee and me.

Believe me, my friends, it cannot be otherwise. How imperative it is for us, living in the land of freedom, to do all that we can, and more, to preserve the Empire, to save Europe from itself, to safeguard the principles of decent human conduct, and, by glorious deed, to ransom our brothers from their captivity.

p. 7

Source: Archives of the Jewish Public Library (Montreal)

Excerpts from Bronfman's presidential address delivered before the Canadian Jewish Congress, 8th plenary session, Toronto, 1949



- Using the information in the excerpts and what you already know of the context, identify the attempts by the Canadian Jewish Congress to save Jewish lives.
- According to Bronfman, what was the situation of the Holocaust survivors at the end of the war? What were their needs?
- How does he view the United Nations Organization?
- In Bronfman's opinion, what should Canada's role be in the future? Do you agree?

"I am proud from this vantage point to declare that in the momentous events the recollection of which I am about to evoke, Canadian Jewry – [...] played the role not of a mere spectator, but of an active, a valiant, an energetic participant (contribution to the war effort)."

p. 2

[...]

"Consider it: in this one decade we participated unto victory in the most terrible war which ever threatened mankind. We saw the crematoria rise, and saw them razed to the ground. We rescued – alas, after so great loss – the remainder of our brothers in Europe. We sustained them, until their brighter day too shall shine. We participated in the effecting of great migrations of people. We made possible for them, not without the generous help of our Government, a great sanctuary. We stopped the dark history of Hitler; we helped to turn history towards brighter tomorrows."



Samuel Bronfman and the Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to help the war victims, Paris, 1948
© JPL

“The Canadian Jewish Congress also made, within the limits of its essential Canadianism, its contribution to international discussion and decision. We were present at the founding sessions of the United Nations at San Francisco, concerned there with the declarations touching human rights and the stipulations for minority protection; our Mr. Hayes participated in the Paris Conference on peace treaties;”

p. 2-3

[...]

“I am proud as a Canadian to declare that in the constitutional accomplishment of this end our own statesmen, Prime Minister Mr. Louis St. Laurent, the Honourable Mr. Lester B. Pearson, the Honourable J.L. Hsley, Mr. Justice Rand and the great mentor of Canadian statesmanship, the former Prime Minister Mr. Mackenzie King, played most distinguished and effective roles. All Jewry is grateful to them for the voices they raised on behalf of a just and peaceful settlement.”

p. 4

[...]

“Thus Canadian Jewry was able, through its support of this movement of sanctuary, to help rescue its European brothers towards the east. It rescued them also towards the west. Beginning with its facilitation of the settlement in Canada of Jewish refugee farmers as early as 1939; moving on toward its efforts to empty the local refugee camps and to bring their innocent detainees – students, technicians, able-bodied men – into the Canadian army, Canadian schools, and the Canadian economy; bringing to these shores refugee rabbis and other men of culture; making arrangements for the admission of 1000 Jewish orphans from unoccupied France, an enterprise unfortunately then frustrated; attending before Government with briefs touching the immigration laws – in all of these undertaking, the Canadian Jewish Congress laboured with zeal and energy. The immediate retrospect of the past two years is even more gratifying with rescue and achievement. Following upon a statement of immigration policy enunciated by the Prime Minister Mr. Mackenzie King, the Canadian Jewish Congress implemented an Order-in-Council for the admission of 1000 Jewish war orphans, an admission later extended to another 210. As a result of the liberalization of immigration rules covering the admission of relatives, thousands of Canadian citizens and their next of kin have been happily reunited on our shores. The special schemes sponsored by our Government for the entry of tailors, furriers, milliners, lumber workers, domestics, nurses,

and rabbinical students helped further to swell the quota of new Jewish Canadians. It is, indeed, estimated that 1948 saw the largest Jewish immigration into Canada in perhaps 35 years. We are grateful to, and proud of, our Canadian Government.”

p. 4-5

[...]

“The success which we have recorded would have been impossible if Canada were not a free and prosperous democracy.”

p. 5-6

[...]

“Much, much, very much still remains to be undertaken. There is, first of all, the consolidation and final windup of our overseas work, work which entails not only the clearing of the DP camps which still remain in Europe – no little task – but also the sustenance and the keeping of those thousands who have been moved from Europe to Israel but have not yet been assimilated into an economy which in one year saw its total population increased by twenty-five percent.”

p. 6-7

[...]

“It is unfair – and indeed, impossible – that that population which while in camps at Belsen was the concern of all world Jewry should become, in camps near Haifa, the sole concern of a state still struggling towards viability. Until in their own country they can stand on their own feet, it is upon us to uphold and support them.” [...]

p. 7

[...]

“Moreover, of those eleven million, only five – the Jews of this continent – can be said to be leading unpressured lives. The privilege brings with it its duty! The duty, humbly but with determination, we assume.”

p. 7

[...]

“This is our country, and here, with the resources of our Judaic tradition, and through the channel of our country’s progress, we mean to make our contribution to civilization.”

p. 8

[...]

“Tomorrow, October 24th, is an anniversary date of some significance to all Canadians. This is the day set aside throughout the civilized world to commemorate United Nations and is called “United Nations Day”. There can be no question that the only hope for Canada and its citizenry is if the United Nations day by day, week by week, month by month and year by year, gets stronger and stronger so that in truth it becomes the ethical voice of mankind with increasing respect for it and authority vested in it. [...] The United Nations is the cornerstone of Canadian foreign policy. The extent to which the United Nations is weakened, Canadian foreign policy is in a perilous position. The extent to which the United Nations is strengthened, strengthens Canada’s public position and the security of its inhabitants.”

p. 12

[...]

“We look forward indeed to an era, not yet with us but surely in the coming, when our energies will be devoted not to the mending of things destroyed but to the active creation of positive values – an era in which our Canadian cultural institutions will move from strength to strength and in which our contribution to the further growth of Canada will be greater than ever before.” p. 12

Source: Canadian Jewish Congress Charities Committee National Archives

Presidential Address delivered before the Canadian Jewish Congress Eighth Plenary Session, King Edward Hotel: Toronto

Jewish Immigration to Canada after WWII

Refugee policy

It was only after WWII when the world discovered the exact nature of the Nazi death camps and realized the need to look after the survivors that a debate erupted in Canada on accepting people displaced by the war and living in the refugee and displaced persons camps that were set up by the UN in Europe. Mackenzie King announced in 1947 that Canada would accept thousands of these refugees. He added, however, that that must not change the fundamental character of the country; in other words, immigrants who shared the same values and culture of other Canadians would receive preferential treatment. One thousand Jewish orphans were immediately accepted by Canada.



The Honorable Humphrey Mitchell, minister of labour, welcomes two children newly arrived to Canada from Germany at the Displaced Persons Reception Centre at St. Paul L'Ermite, January 1948.
© Coll. Canada

It should be noted that the majority of people living in the UN refugee camps were Jewish Holocaust survivors. Between 1947 and 1952, 250,000 displaced persons arrived in Canada. Canada (mainly Montreal) became the third destination of choice, after Israel and the United States. In 1947, Canada also created Canadian citizenship. Prime Minister Mackenzie King became the first Canadian citizen.

Source: www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com Web, 14 March 2012.



In 1947, Canada changed its position on immigration and opened its doors to European refugees, including the Jews. Do you believe that the acceptance of refugees is an effective measure to protect the victims of genocide or crimes against humanity?

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Activity 1

Human Rights and Intervention

International texts

Summary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* 1948

- Article 1 Everyone is entitled to freedom and equal dignity and rights.
- Article 2 Everyone has the right not to suffer discrimination.
- Article 3 Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.
- Article 4 No one shall be held in slavery or servitude.
- Article 5 No one shall be subjected to torture or to degrading treatment.
- Article 6 Everyone has the right to recognition as a person before the law.
- Article 7 All are equal before the law.
- Article 8 Everyone has the right to a remedy before a competent tribunal.
- Article 9 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
- Article 10 Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing.
- Article 11 Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty.
- Article 12 No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence.
- Article 13 Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.
- Article 14 Everyone has the right to asylum.
- Article 15 Everyone has the right to a nationality. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.
- Article 16 Everyone has the right to marriage and protection of the family.
- Article 17 Everyone has the right to property.
- Article 18 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and religion.
- Article 19 Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information.
- Article 20 Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
- Article 21 Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country and to free and genuine elections. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
- Article 22 Everyone has the right to social security.
- Article 23 Everyone has the right to work and to equal pay for equal work.
- Article 24 Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
- Article 25 Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for health and well-being.
- Article 26 Everyone has the right to education.
- Article 27 Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.
- Article 28 Everyone is entitled to a social order that guarantees human rights and freedoms.
- Article 29 Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
- Article 30 The right to freedom from intervention by any State, group, or person aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Excerpts from the *Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* 1948

Approved and submitted for signature and ratification or adhesion by the United Nations General Assembly in Resolution 260 A (III) of 9 December 1948

Entered into force on 12 January 1951 in accordance with Article XIII

The Contracting Parties,

Having considered the declaration made by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 96 (I) dated 11 December 1946 that genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world

Recognizing that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity, and

Being convinced that, in order to liberate mankind from such an odious scourge, international co-operation is required.

Hereby agree as hereinafter provided:

Article I

The Contracting Parties confirm that genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish.

Article II

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such:

- a. Killing members of the group;
- b. Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- c. Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- d. Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- e. Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article III

The following acts shall be punishable:

- a. Genocide;
- b. Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- c. Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- d. Attempt to commit genocide;
- e. Complicity in genocide.

Article IV

Persons committing genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III shall be punished, whether they are constitutionally responsible rulers, public officials or private individuals.

Article VIII

Any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide or any of the other acts enumerated in article III.

Source: Convention for the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide 1948
<http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/357?openDocument> Web, 30 June 2012.

Justice



Read the two Declarations of the Allies and answer the questions that follow:

- According to these documents, what did the Allies know about the special treatment reserved for the Jews?
- Is it correct to say that the world did not know what was happening then?
- What action did the Allies threaten to take against the Nazis?
- What did the Allies mean by the declaration: “Those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution.”?
- Are you able to identify the means available to the Canadian State and allied countries to intervene in 1942 and 1943?
- In your opinion, was the Allied declaration to punish those responsible for these crimes at the end of the war justified?
- Why was it difficult to intervene directly to save the millions of Jews?

Activity 2

Declarations of the Allies and the Nuremberg international military tribunal

Excerpt from United Nations Declaration

7 December 1942, vol. 385, cc2082-7

“The attention of the Governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Yugoslavia, and of the French National Committee has been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities, not content with denying to persons of Jewish race in all the territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended the most elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler’s oft repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe. From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported, in conditions of appalling horror and brutality, to Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invaders are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labour camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.

The above mentioned Governments and the French National Committee condemn in the strongest possible terms this bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination. They declare that such events can only strengthen the resolve of all freedom loving peoples to overthrow the barbarous Hitlerite tyranny. They re-affirm their solemn resolution to ensure that those responsible for these crimes shall not escape retribution, and to press on with the necessary practical measures to this end.”

Source: United Nations Declaration, 17 December 1942
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1942/dec/17/united-nations-declaration>
Web, 30 June 2012.

Moscow Declaration on Atrocities

Made on 1 Nov. 1943 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt,
Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Premier Joseph Stalin

“The United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union have received from many quarters evidence of atrocities, massacres and cold-blooded mass executions which are being perpetrated by the Hitlerite forces in the many countries they have overrun and from which they are now being steadily expelled. The brutalities of Hitlerite domination are no new thing and all the peoples or territories in their grip have suffered from the worst form of government by terror. What is new is that many of these territories are now being redeemed by the advancing armies of the liberating Powers and that in their desperation; the recoiling Hitlerite Huns are redoubling their ruthless cruelties. This is now evidenced with particular clearness by monstrous crimes of the Hitlerites on the territory of the Soviet Union which is being liberated from the Hitlerites, and on French and Italian territory.

Accordingly, the aforesaid three allied Powers, speaking in the interests of the thirty-two (thirty-three] United Nations, hereby solemnly declare and give full warning of their declaration as follows:

At the time of the granting of any armistice to any government which may be set up in Germany, those German officers and men and members of the Nazi party who have been responsible for, or have taken a consenting part in the above atrocities, massacres and executions, will be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the free governments which will be created therein. Lists will be compiled in all possible detail from all these countries having regard especially to the invaded parts of the Soviet Union, to Poland and Czechoslovakia, to Yugoslavia and Greece, including Crete and other islands, to Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Italy.

Thus, the Germans who take part in wholesale shootings of Italian officers or in the execution of French, Dutch, Belgian or Norwegian hostages or of Cretan peasants, or who have shared in the slaughters inflicted on the people of Poland or in territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy, will know that they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the peoples whom they have outraged. Let those who have hitherto not imbrued their hands with innocent blood beware lest they join the ranks of the guilty, for most assuredly the three allied Powers will pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to their accusers in order that justice may be done.

The above declaration is without prejudice to the case of the major criminals which will be punished by the joint decision of the Governments of the Allies.”

Source: Moscow Declaration on Atrocities
www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/Dip/AxisInDefeat/Defeat-1.html. Web 30 June 2012.

Nazi leaders at the Nuremberg international military tribunal, circa 1945-1946: Herman Göring, Rudolph Hess, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Wilhelm Keitel (first row); Karl Dönitz, Erich Raeder, Baldur von Schirach, Fritz Sauckel (second row).
© Wiki commons



Activity 1

Initiating event / trigger

Who is this man?



- Who do you think this man is?
- Where does he live?
- What work does he do?
- Using what you see, try to imagine his life.



© DCCAM (Photograph © 2000 Stuart Isett/Corbis Sygma)

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The rules at Tuol Sleng

Activity 2

Historical examination of the Cambodian genocide



Here are the rules that the detainees of Tuol Sleng prison, also called torture centre S-21, had to follow:

1. *You must answer accordingly to my question. Don't turn them away.*
2. *Don't try to hide the facts by making pretexts this and that; you are strictly prohibited to contest me.*
3. *Don't be a fool for you are a chap who dares to thwart the revolution.*
4. *You must immediately answer my questions without wasting time to reflect.*
5. *Don't tell me either about your immoralities or the essence of the revolution.*
6. *While getting lashes or electrification you must not cry at all.*
7. *Do nothing, sit still and wait for my orders. If there is no order, keep quiet. When I ask you to do something, you must do it right away without protesting.*
8. *Don't make pretext about Kampuchea Krom in order to hide your secret or traitor.*
9. *If you don't follow all the above rules, you shall get many lashes of electric wire.*
10. *If you disobey any point of my regulations you shall get either ten lashes or five shocks of electric discharge.*



Torture victim at Tuol Sleng prison
© DCCAM

Note: These rules are posted today outside the Tuol Sleng Museum. The incorrect grammar is the result of faulty translation from the original Khmer. Source: "Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum". http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuol_Sleng_Genocide_Museum Web. 1 July 2012.



- These rules illustrate the state of mind of the Khmer Rouge as they exercised their authority. Based on these rules, what can you say about the Khmer Rouge view of authority?
- Were the people who were arrested and brought before Duch at S-21 treated humanely? Were their rights respected?

Activity 2

Historical
examination of the
Cambodian genocide

Laws under the Khmer Rouge



Here are excerpts from the constitution of the State of Kampuchea, established after Brother number one Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge seized power in Cambodia on 17 April 1975:

The Khmer Rouge ideology is expressed in the constitution. Identify the main tenets of this ideology with regard to the individual, the State, justice, economy, labour.

Chapter One - The State

Article 1 The State of Kampuchea is an independent, unified, peaceful, neutral, non-aligned, sovereign, and democratic State enjoying territorial integrity.

The State of Kampuchea is a State of the people, workers, peasants, and all other Kampuchean labourers.

The official name of the State of Kampuchea is «Democratic Kampuchea».

Chapter Two - The Economy

Article 2: All important general means of production are the collective property of the people's State and the common property of the people's collectives.

Chapter Three - Culture

Article 3: The culture of Democratic Kampuchea has a national, popular, forward-looking, and healthful character such as will serve the tasks of defending and building Kampuchea into an ever more prosperous country.

This new culture is absolutely opposed to the corrupt, reactionary culture of the various oppressive classes and that of colonialism and imperialism in Kampuchea.

Chapter Four - The Principle of Leadership and Work

Article 4 Democratic Kampuchea applies the collective principle in leadership and work.



This photo shows Angkor Wat Temple, symbol of ancient Cambodian culture.

© Commons

Chapter Seven - Justice

Article 9 Justice is administered by people's courts, representing and defending the people's justice, defending the democratic rights and liberties of the people, and condemning any activities directed against the people's State or violating the laws of the people's State.

The judges at all levels will be chosen and appointed by the People's Representative Assembly.

Article 10 Actions violating the laws of the people's State are as follows:

Dangerous activities in opposition to the people's State must be condemned to the highest degree.

Other cases are subject to constructive re-education in the framework of the State's or people's organisations.



One way of making everyone equal was to impose the same dress code on all students.
© DCCAM

Chapter Nine - The Rights and Duties of the Individual

Article 12 Every citizen of Kampuchea enjoys full rights to a constantly improving material, spiritual, and cultural life.

Every citizen of Democratic Kampuchea is guaranteed a living.

All workers are the masters of their factories.

All peasants are the masters of the rice paddies and fields.

All other labourers have the right to work.

There is absolutely no unemployment in Democratic Kampuchea.

Article 13 There must be complete equality among all Kampuchean people in an equal, just, democratic, harmonious, and happy society within the great national solidarity for defending and building the country together.

Men and women are fully equal in every respect.

Polygamy is prohibited.

Source: Jennar, Raoul. "DK Constitution"
<http://onwardoverland.com/angkorwat/polpot/cons.html>. Web. 1 July 2012.

Activity 2

Historical examination of the Cambodian genocide

How to be a good Khmer - Khmer Rouge slogans and theories



Photo of a child arrested by the Khmer Rouge
© DCCAM

- Strengthen and expand the absolute stance of proletarianism while absolutely sweeping out non-proletarian stances.
- Keeping you is no gain, losing you is no loss.
- Destroy communication networks!
- Hunger is the most influential disease.
- Must love Angkar with no limit!
- Be committed to sacrificing our lives in fulfilling Angkar's³ labour tasks!
- Revolution against imperialism is not an action of inviting guests to have meal, writing articles, braiding, education, softness or fear of enemy. But it is a class wrath seized to topple another class.
- Those who have never laboured must be made to do so in agricultural production.
- Loss of life is a simple thing for a man of war.

Source: Sayana, Ser. "Khmer Rouge Slogans and Theories."
www.dccam.org/Archives/Documents/.../Slogans_KR_Songs.htm.
Web. 1 July 2012.

³ *Angkar*, name given to the government



- From these slogans and theories, pick out the elements that define the Khmer Rouge social, economic, and political system.
- According to this information, which people were valued in the new society created by the Khmer Rouge?
- What qualities were essential to survive in this regime?

<p>Definition of Khmer Rouge social, economic, and political system</p>	
<p>Which individuals were valued in Khmer Rouge society?</p>	
<p>Values necessary for survival</p>	

Activity 2
 Historical
 examination of the
 Cambodian genocide

Resistance and Survival – Pin Yathay



Read the story of Pin Yathay that follows then complete the table below. Note the elements that describe:

- Cambodian life under the Khmer Rouge regime
- The Khmer Rouge ideology
- The means used by the Khmer Rouge to enforce submission

Elements of Cambodian daily life under the Khmer Rouge	Elements of the Khmer Rouge ideology	Means used to enforce submission

Pin Yathay and his family were categorized as “New” by the Khmer Rouge. Like thousands of other Cambodians, they were forcibly evacuated and re-educated so that the communist utopia of an egalitarian⁴ society could be achieved. Many died of starvation, exhaustion, and disease. Yathay’s story shows the stages and difficulties of resistance and rebellion, as well as daily life under the Khmer Rouge.

Pin Yathay published his first book *Murderous Utopia* in 1980. *Stay Alive, My Son* was his second book on his life and on the Khmer Rouge regime. The title of his life story was inspired by the words of his sick father who bid his son farewell on his deathbed.

⁴ The term “equality” has a positive connotation when it refers to equality between men and women or equality before the law, etc. The Khmer Rouge, however, sought absolute equality through forced collective labour, food rationing, and the abolition of all private property. Equality under the Khmer Rouge was characterized by the absence of freedom and democracy.

“I knew from the beginning that this regime would be bad, but I couldn’t convince you,” he said, with a ghost of a smile. [...] ‘Too much thinking obscures wisdom,’ he whispered, stroking my hand. ‘You must keep your feelings pure. Don’t worry about me’. My death is deliverance. But you, you must get out. Act ignorant, do not speak, do not grouse, do not argue. Stay alive, my son. Stay alive to escape. Escape, to stay alive.”

p. 122-123



Student life in Quebec and return to Cambodia

Pin Yathay was born in Phnom Penh in 1944. He immigrated to Quebec to study engineering at the École polytechnique of the Université de Montréal (U de M) between 1961 and 1965. After obtaining his degree, he returned to Phnom Penh where he became a director in the Ministry of Public Works. He had three sons; his wife's name was Any.

Forced evacuation

When the Khmer Rouge seized power in 1975, Yathay and his family - like all the “new” Khmer - were expelled from Phnom Penh. They were forced to embark on a voyage to an unknown destination. Once they arrived in the countryside, they had to build their own cabin in the jungle to have a roof over their head, and they – with the exception of the children – began forced labour in the rice fields.



The Khmer Rouge army invades Phnom Penh.
© DCCAM

The Pin family, the “new people”

Yathay and his family were seen as “new people”, according to the Khmer Rouge ideology, because they lived in the city of Phnom Penh and because Yathay had a university degree. The Pin had no experience in agrarian work, unlike the villagers who were called the “old people.” After the forced evacuation, Yathay hid his true identity as an engineer because he was afraid of being considered an intellectual and being sent to prison. The “new” villagers were unaccustomed to the living conditions in the countryside and to the exhausting physical work. They

especially lacked the technical know-how of growing grain. As a result, the yields were poor and insufficient to feed everyone. There were deaths from the outset.

“It was not long before the dying started. Even in the first week, I saw several people carrying corpses down the trail. It was hardly surprising, given the amount of people in the forest near us, and their state of health.”

p. 84

First death in the family

After only a few weeks, Yathay and Any lost their youngest son who literally died of starvation.

To run away or not to run away

Beginning in September 1975, Pin Yathay and his immediate family considered escaping. The border with Thailand was 110 km from their village.

“I repeated the arguments for going. An escape now, in mid-October, was a risky enterprise at the best of times, but it was a risk we’d all accepted. Better to die in the forest than rot in the village.”

p. 95

Their first attempt to escape with other villagers failed because their leader stopped them.

Undernourishment and disease

Living conditions in the village of Veal Vong were very difficult: the inhabitants depended on communal meals which often consisted of a single bowl of rice soup or rice. The abusive work finally sapped people’s strength and diseases spread. Despite this, however, small acts of resistance were carried out in the village.

“A few hundred New People held a peaceful demonstration in the village with five teachers as their leaders to protest at the lack of food. I kept well clear, and I warned my brother, Theng, the teacher, to do the same. But I was told afterwards what happened. In a slow and dignified procession, the protesters moved towards the guardhouse, the wood-and-thatch place where rice was distributed every evening. There were three Khmer Rouge officers present at the time. In front of the guardhouse, the leaders came forward. One of them improvised a short speech, pouring out grievances to the village chief. [...] The food system had no sense. The rations were pathetic. The work was too hard. There was no medicine, and no hospital. [...] The rations came the next day. But a week later, the five teachers and some other villagers involved in the protest disappeared.”

p. 101

“Besides, we had no arms and no food. Even if we’d been able to procure arms and kill the fifty Khmer Rouge in the village, what would happen to us? We didn’t have enough food to build up any reserves to sustain a guerrilla army. In our state of weakness, after a few days of wandering in the jungle, death would have been inevitable.”

p. 102

The family is separated

Despite the poor conditions, Yathay remained optimistic and spoke of his hope for resistance, even when he was forced to leave his wife and children to work as a fisherman on Lake Tonlé Sap.



The Khmer Rouge army invades Phnom Penh.
© DCCAM

“Rebellion”, as defined by the Khmer Rouge Under the Khmer Rouge regime, trivialities could be considered acts of defiance.

Yathay gives a disturbing example of the Khmer Rouge definition of “rebellion” that carried heavy consequences.

At one point, Yathay became ill (most probably with paludism). For this reason, the Khmer Rouge allowed him to return to his family to be cared for. While on the road, he no longer had the strength to return to Don Ey, the village where his family was living. He stopped at the home of a family of “small capitalists”⁴ who gave

him food and tried to get him to his family’s village by car with an uncle who worked for the Khmer Rouge.

“Later, back at Don Ey, on the return of our fishing group, I was to learn from the others on the fishing team what happened to the family who had helped me. The young girl had found her uncle in the company of a Khmer Rouge soldier and asked him outright whether he would give me a lift. Of course, such friendliness towards a New Person, expressed by someone not in a position of authority, was entirely unacceptable to the Khmer Rouge. The uncle, frightened, reproached the girl. When the details came out, the young girl and her family were accused of counter-revolutionary attitudes – showing humanitarian feelings to a stranger. To the Khmer Rouge, it was bad enough to feel generosity towards a family member or a neighbour, let alone towards a stranger, and a New Person at that. It was an act that smacked of rebellion. The whole family had been arrested and deported to another province. I never knew what became of them.”

p. 119

⁴ According to the Khmer Rouge, these were people who had a secondary school education, or perhaps owned several rice fields or a small business.

Youth brigades

One day, the Khmer Rouge announced the forced departure of Pin's eldest son, Sudath, who was to join a youth brigade.⁵ When he was summoned, Sudath had a wounded knee; he died just five days later. His family never learned the circumstances of his death.

Death by starvation

Yathay, like many of the “new people” around him, was becoming more and more ill.

“Through the third quarter of 1976, nothing changed. People continued to die. The Ancients said that rice was not all that scarce, but that Angkar wanted to starve us to death. Indeed, the policy was made quite explicit. I remember an officer at one political meeting coming out with some particularly chilling words: ‘In the Kampuchea, one million is all we need to continue the revolution. We don’t need the rest. We prefer to kill ten friends rather than keep on enemy alive.’”

p.147-148



Child soldiers under the command of the Khmer Rouge
© DCCAM

Despair

The Khmer Rouge waited for people who were of no use to the revolution to die; Pin Yathay and others waited for foreign assistance, especially from the West. He explains why any resistance by the Cambodians seemed impossible:

“Without help, however, we were doomed. We could not help ourselves. Conspiracy was hard, an uprising unthinkable. Travel was banned, whispering was prohibited, and there were informers everywhere. Acts of heroism were suicidal. I heard of two young people in a neighbouring village who seized a rifle from a Khmer Rouge and fled into the jungle. One was shot, the other vanished. [...] If there were guerrillas, we knew nothing of them. How could you feed guerrillas in a country where all food was in the hands of Angkar? [...] I could see no way of organizing any resistance.”

p. 149

⁵ The youth brigades of Kampuchea were militarized and violent. Public officials used propaganda to indoctrinate the adolescents. The young were forced to work and to follow the rules of the Khmer Rouge so that they could transmit these “values” to the next generation. The *Angkar*, the Organization, took the place of their families. Values such as friendship and love for the family no longer counted. The *Angkar* taught them how to carry out orders and be good revolutionaries.



Child soldier under the command of the Khmer Rouge
© DCCAM

Denunciation

In November 1976, Yathay was recognized by a former worker of a site – as we have previously mentioned, Yathay was a director in the Ministry of Public Works in Phnom Penh. He would have to flee as soon as possible to escape death.

A son is left behind

When he spoke to Any of his plan to escape, she insisted on coming with him and leaving their younger son Nawath with another family.

“She knew what she was doing, knew that in any event she and Nawath would die, knew that we were in the process not of choosing life over death, but of choosing different ways of dying.”

p. 153

First stage of the flight

The escape of Yathay, Any, and another ten people was more spontaneous than well-planned. Passes were required to leave the village; Yathay forged the signature of the village leader. The false passes allowed them to “move” to another village in Leach where they remained for two months – November and December 1976.

Resistance

Beginning in 1977, there was more and more talk of guerilla warfare and rebellion. Yathay gives as examples the attack in Pursat where five Khmer Rouge soldiers were killed and the roneotyped (replicated MHMC) leaflets that called for insurrection and were dispersed along the roads.

People were called on to join clandestine networks. The big revolt of 17 April 1977, however, did not come to pass.

“Slowly, surreptitiously, we gathered in three separate groups of four at the edge of the village. Darkness fell, revealing a clear, starlit night. Two other conspirators had joined Any and me, and we walked on slowly into the forest, to the next meeting point, a huge tree we all knew. Then, when Yann, Lang, Eng and the others had joined us, we set off along a trail southwards, in single file, each person following the shadowy figure in front, keeping in touch with each other by whistling, imitating the sound of birds.

Half a mile from Leach, deep in the forest, the trail gave out. On, then, away from Leach, through the virgin jungle. Two of our companions, a former adjutant and a former staff sergeant, knew the area, and led us on southwards. I felt exhilarated, keyed up. Liberty or death! My head was clear and I was confident in my companions.”

p. 189-190

Lost

Just after their departure, Yathay, Any, and a female friend lost sight of their group in the forest as they tried to hide from the Khmer Rouge.

A few days later, Yathay became separated from the two women because of a forest fire. Finding one’s way through the jungle seemed impossible.

Finding the strength to continue

With the disappearance of the two women, Yathay wavered between hope and despair but the wish to continue stayed with him.

“I headed west, a dead soul, pushed on by my voice. I felt strangely light, freed of hope, freed of fear. I, who had once been so ambitious and so confident, had lost everything. I had been unable to save two of my children, I had abandoned a third, and now I had lost my wife. I had nothing left to lose. What was there to fear? No longer fearing destruction. I was indestructible.”

p. 201

“Despite the physical exhaustion, despite my weakness, despite the loss of Any, I found that my morale was inexplicably high. I supposed it was because I had nothing more to lose. If I survived, I gained my life; if I died, I regained my family; either way, I won. I had passed the stage of physical fear. That was what kept me alive – the feeling of having overcome fear.”

p. 205

Surviving in the jungle

Because he had no food, Yathay ate jungle animals such as turtles, freshwater crab, and snakes, as well as fruit and mushrooms, which may have been poisonous.

« I had to survive not only for Nawath, but also for those who had died – for my parents, for Any, for the other children. Only through my survival would their lives have continued meaning. Stay alive, my son, my father had said. Now I knew why. In me, he lived on. Through me, even the dead would live.

And there was another reason to survive. Now that freedom was within my grasp, I wanted to tell the world what had happened, [...] I wanted to live to appeal to the world to help the survivors escape total extermination.”

p. 216

Prisoner of the Khmer Rouge

Believing he had arrived in Thailand, Yathay walked about freely. But he soon met three young Khmer Rouge soldiers who hauled him to a camp. Once again, he was a prisoner of the Khmer Rouge. His death then seemed imminent. Ironically, he was right next to the Thailand border, clearly demarcated by the Me Tuk river, the “mother of all waters”.

On the run

Taking advantage of a moment’s inattention on the part of the Khmer Rouge, Yathay succeeded in breaking away and escaping during a storm:

A refugee camp
© DCCAM



“All at once, I stepped out of trees on to the edge of the plateau. There ahead lay a beautiful sight, the sight I had so long dreamed of, and so long despaired of seeing. More than three thousand feet below, along the foot of a mountain range, beyond the forest, lay a highway, with traffic roaring by, and toy-like houses scattered beside fields, and, in the distance, the sea. Thailand.”

p. 234

“I rolled over, and lay flat on my back, too exhausted to move, my head turned to the road, watching the magical sight of traffic –

motorcycles, taxis, cars, trucks. I felt reborn, as happy as if I had arrived in paradise. It was June 22nd, 1977, and I was free, at last.”

p. 235

At the border, he reunited with his cousin Yann and two other acquaintances that had been lost en route. He was sent to the Maï Rut refugee camp.

Informing the world

In October 1977, Yathay left for Paris. In an attempt to convince the Western world that they must put an end to the Khmer Rouge crimes, he gave conferences on the events in Cambodia in Paris, Brussels, Geneva, Montreal, Ottawa, and Washington. Not one of the Western powers intervened.



Watch the video on Pin Yathay (5mins, in French ONLY), from Radio-Canada in November, 1978:

<http://archives.radio-canada.ca/politique/international/clips/2512/>

The search for his son goes on

Pin Yathay lost 17 members of his family during the Khmer Rouge regime and because of it. He is still looking for the son he left with another family before escaping with his wife in 1977.

Activity 3

Analysis of Canada's intervention

Intervention by a Canadian citizen, Québec Minister Jacques Couture



Here is an excerpt from a speech given by Jacques Couture, minister of immigration, on the issue and the objectives of Québec's immigration policy.

- Do you agree with Couture when he states that Quebeckers have a duty to be concerned about the fate of fellow human beings elsewhere in the world?
- What does he consider to be the best means of intervention in the interest of the victims?
- What do you think of this solution as a means of protecting human rights?



Cambodian refugees in Thailand. © DCCAM

“There are other aspects that should guide not only our reflection but also our actions in developing an immigration policy. And that is where I wish to speak of the humanitarian dimension. [...] Québec's citizens, as members of the international community, have responsibilities with regard to their fellow human beings.

There are many ways in which a government can come to the aid of those who are less fortunate on our planet. This aid can be financial, material, scientific, or technical.

As minister of immigration and especially as a responsible human being, I cannot remain deaf to the numerous calls to help the refugees.

There are, it seems, between eight and nine [...] million refugees in the world. Be they from Latin America, the Middle East, Africa, Southeast Asia, or Eastern Europe, these are men, women, and children who for various reasons and under various circumstances have lost their homeland.

Some are looking for a country of adoption; others for a temporary refuge. I have visited the refugee camps. I receive multiple accounts from our agents (Quebec guides who advise federal immigration agents) as they circulate in the camps. To describe to you the state of the refugees will undoubtedly go beyond anything you can ever imagine.

Several of these refugees owe their life to their tenacious will to survive. Can we, in good conscience, remain indifferent to the plight of the Vietnamese boat people, the Chileans, the Cambodians, or the Lebanese?

All the so-called industrialized countries have been called on by the UN to make an effort and to show that, in this century of economic rationality and of individualism, nobler objectives, worthy of human beings, still have their place.

We do not have the right to leave it to other countries to open the way for a human solution to this global problem. Our contribution must, nonetheless, be within our capabilities. And I pay homage to the people of Québec for their continued support of our efforts to accept refugees.

[...]

We have concluded that the formulation of Québec's immigration policy must take into account, on the one hand, Québec society's capacity for accepting immigrants and, on the other, humanitarian considerations. Our policy is meant to be [...] open and generous, as is our population.

[...]

The migrant selection policy will be conceived and implemented in a manner that promotes the interests of Québec and fulfills the responsibilities toward the international community. [...]

Source: Couture, Jacques. "Immigrations: intérêts et responsabilités du Québec. Le Devoir. 8 Nov. 1978.
http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=Qh5Z_vBjo80C&dat=19781108&printsec=frontpage&hl=en Web, 5 May 2011.

Speech given in National Assembly during introduction of bill allowing the implementation of the Cullen-Couture Accord

To learn more about the sponsorship program, listen to the following 25-minute report:
<http://www.radio-canada.ca/audio-video/pop.shtml#urlMedia%3D/medianet/2008/CBFT/toutLeMondeEnParlait200805131930.aspx>

Activity 3

Analysis of Canada's intervention

Canadian intervention in Cambodia during and after the genocide



Using the documents below, answer the following questions:

- Did Canada know what was happening in Cambodia during the genocide?
- Did Canadian economic interests in this region of the world come into play? What effect could these have on the desire to intervene?
- Did Canada have the means to intervene?
- Give reasons to explain why Canada did not intervene in the genocide
- How do you assess Canada's intervention after the genocide?

Sponsorship project

A particular situation caused [the principles of Jacques Couture] to be put into practice. Toward the end of the 1970s, the refugee question came to occupy a prominent place on the political agenda. Beginning in 1975, with the collapse of its political regimes that were once supported by the United States, Indochina experienced a massive refugee movement – especially in 1978 and 1979 – under the combined pressures of the political repression in Vietnam and the genocide perpetrated by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia.

[...]

In Québec, the State assumed part of the responsibility of welcoming refugees. Hospitality, however, also became the responsibility of the citizens, thanks to a refugee sponsorship program that was established in July 1979. The program called for sponsor groups to meet refugees' essential needs for a year and to "receive with warmth and dignity individuals or families" that had lived through "inhuman conditions." Displaying a definite openness toward others, Québec's citizens answered the call.

Thus it was that, between July 1979 and March 1981, 518 groups in 215 municipalities across Québec sponsored 7847 refugees. In a survey by the minister of immigration, two-thirds of the sponsor groups indicated that they were still willing to welcome new families. Adjustment by the refugees, once they had overcome their initial cultural shock, depended on knowing French and especially on getting a job, which was not easy, given the economic recessions of the 1980s.

In the eyes of Québeckers, [Jacques Couture] not only gave Québec an immigration policy consistent with its needs and responsibilities but also etched in the collective memory one of the most important acts of civic generosity ever seen in the last century [i.e. the refugee sponsorship program].

Pâquet 2008

“With great generosity Canadians have welcomed thousands of refugees from Southeast Asia, and for those individuals who were helped it has been a wonderful thing. But for the overall problem in that part of the world it has only been a band-aid treatment. What is needed is an end to sending arms to the region, and massive development aid so the countries can live in peace and feed their own people. Canada as a country could follow the example of her generous citizens and give the kind of aid these countries need to care for their people at home”

Pocock, Refuge, vol. 1, no. 3, 1981 Canada Must Help, p. 8

“When I saw my first snowbanks through the porthole of the plane at Mirabel Airport, then too I felt naked, if not stripped bare. In spite of my short-sleeved orange pullover purchased at the refugee camp in Malaysia before we left for Canada, in spite of my loose-knit brown sweater made by Vietnamese women, I was naked. Several of us on the plane made a dash for the windows, our mouths agape, our expressions stunned. After such a long time in places without light, a landscape so white, so virginal could only dazzle us, blind us, intoxicate us.”

Personal account of Kim Thuy, Indochinese refugee who arrived in Québec through the sponsorship program (Taken from “Ru”, Libre expression, p. 18)

In theory, the aim of Canada’s national policy as a whole is to stimulate economic growth, preserve its sovereignty and independence, work toward peace and security, promote social justice, enrich the quality of life, and maintain a harmonious natural environment.

Foreign Policy for Canadians, Ottawa, Department of External Affairs, 1970, p.14

Democratic Kampuchea held diplomatic relations with China, North Korea, Cuba, and Romania [...] Cambodian exports, although minimal, were sent mainly to China, the only country to have an influence over Cambodia. D

C-CAM, A History of Democratic Kampuchea, 2000, p. 54



Visit by Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau to China, 1973
© Coll. Canada

Negotiations continued throughout 1969 and 1970. At 11:00 a.m. on October 13, 1970, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mitchell Sharp announced that an agreement had been reached by both Canada and the People's Republic of China «concerning their mutual recognition and the establishment of diplomatic relations.» Once recognition was finalized, both countries moved quickly to put the diplomatic arrangements in place, opening embassies and exchanging ambassadors. [...] The Canadian cabinet document announcing the mutual recognition stated that it was «considered around the world as the most important recent initiative taken by Canada in the field of external relations.» “Canada-China: Celebrating Forty Years of Diplomatic Relations”.

Library and Archives Canada

“Canada has been a contributor to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), also known as the Khmer Rouge Tribunals. Canada provided initial funding of \$2 million in 2005 and an additional funding contribution of approximately \$900,000 in 2009 to the international side of the court. “Canada-Cambodia Relations”.

Government of Canada. <http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca>

“The events that shook Indochina in 1975 had little effect on Canada’s position. When the Khmer Rouge took Phnom Penh on 17 April, overturning the regime of Lon Nol, Canada recognized the new government of Kampuchea without having to establish diplomatic relations.”

“Les missions de paix et le Canada”. International Development Research Centre http://web.idrc.ca/openebooks/872-4/#page_54

Recommendations from the Canadian Government

Activity 2 Reflection on intervention in the present day

Adapted from the W2I policy report, *mobilizing the will to intervene*:



Here are some of the policy recommendations formulated by the W2I project for the government of Canada:

Recommended measures to increase the efficacy of Canadian intervention to protect human rights in order to prevent genocide or other mass atrocities, we propose that:

1. *The prevention of mass atrocities become a priority for Canada*
2. *The Government of Canada promote public discussion on Canada's role in preventing mass atrocities*
3. *Parliamentarians exercise individual initiative and use their existing powers*
4. *A Coordinating Office be created to inform and disseminate intelligence concerning the risks of mass atrocities in certain regions of the world*
5. *The Government of Canada increase its presence in humanitarian aid programs and in countries with fragile democracies or in countries at risk*
6. *The Government of Canada grant more funding to the Canadian Forces and establish training programs to support civilian protection*
7. *Canadian citizens use social media (or other) to inform their government and ask that action be taken to prevent the violation of human rights worldwide.*



- Are the recommendations in line with your ideas on intervention?
- Do you believe that these measures will truly prevent future genocides?
- What would you suggest?
- When should the government of Canada intervene to protect the rights of other human beings on the planet?
- Identify one or two contemporary issues where Canada's intervention to prevent genocide and other human rights violations would be desirable.
- Decide whether you wish to answer the appeal made to Canadians to use social media to let the government know your position on these issues and your expectations of it.



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