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A TEACHER'S GUIDE  
TO THE PENGUIN EDITION OF

# HOLOCAUST PROJECT

FROM DARKNESS INTO LIGHT

JUDY CHICAGO

WITH PHOTOGRAPHY BY DONALD WOODMAN

by

Michael Nutkiewicz

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## INTRODUCTION

The *Holocaust Project* is artist Judy Chicago's attempt to grapple with the tragic history of the genocide of European Jewry between 1939-1945. For Judy Chicago, as for teachers and students alike, this subject is painful. But it challenges us to think about such contemporary topics as racism, the power of ideas and slogans, ethical behavior, and the role of science and technology. In addition, the survivors of the Holocaust inspire us by revealing the ability of people to bear and overcome suffering.

Works by non-survivors like Judy Chicago and her collaborator Donald Woodman are attempts to make sense of the Holocaust, and are guided by the hope that understanding the history and issues surrounding the Holocaust will contribute to making this world a decent place in which all human beings can live. As Judy Chicago writes in her introduction, *The Holocaust Project* "is an invocation, a prayer for human awakening and [for] a global transformation."

## STRUCTURE OF THE TEACHER'S GUIDE

This Guide addresses the major themes represented in the exhibit and book *The Holocaust Project*. The Guide follows the book's and the exhibit's divisions. Because the basic themes presented in Judy Chicago's work are visual and representational, each section of the Guide begins with a short synopsis of the exhibit/book's theme. The educational objectives, background material, activities, and a selected bibliography that indicate material for teachers and students follow each section as well as a brief overview of internet resources for teachers. Judy Chicago's book also includes a selected bibliography. The Guide does not offer a complete overview of the Holocaust. For the history, teachers are urged to consult the bibliography.

The artist recorded her odyssey through history in the form of a diary. Much of what we know about life during the Holocaust comes from diaries written during the war. The most famous is that of Anne Frank. But there are other, lesser known, diaries that provide valuable information and moving accounts of the struggle to endure terrible hardship. Teachers may wish to have students keep a diary or journal of their feelings and questions as they encounter this painful and complex subject.

## THE FALL



### The Fall

*The Fall is a pictorial tapestry executed in the weaving technique associated with such medieval masterpieces as the Unicorn and Cluny cycles. Chicago selected this technique because the nature of the weaving, as well as the narrative, expresses the idea that the Holocaust grew out of the very fabric of Western civilization. The tapestry places the Holocaust in a long historical context and makes connections between anti-Semitism and antifeminism, which frequently share certain iconographic and linguistic themes and often occurred at similar times historically.*

### SYNOPSIS

Judy Chicago begins her story with a section entitled, *The Fall*. Explaining why she employed tapestry in this section, she writes that "the Holocaust grew out of the very fabric of Western Civilization." What does she mean by this statement?

### OBJECTIVES

1. To describe how the endeavor during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance to know and to conquer Nature contributed in part to the persecution of groups that were regarded as a threat to the social order.

2. To characterize the nature of traditional anti-Semitism and anti-feminism.
3. To understand the racist world view of the Nazis.

## BACKGROUND

For many centuries, the control of Nature was considered by many philosophers, scientists, artists, and religious leaders to be the highest achievement of civilization. Already in the Greek world, scientists and philosophers were fascinated by how things worked and introduced such ideas as matter, mechanical causality, and mathematical analysis in order to “master” the world around them. This spirit of inquiry, innovation, and confidence was greatly advanced during the period known as the Renaissance, from the French word for “rebirth.” Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) is perhaps the best example of Renaissance values: he was a painter, engineer, scientist, and inventor. In *The Fall* Judy Chicago reinterprets Da Vinci’s drawing, *The Vitruvian Man* to represent the idea of “man as the measure of all reality,” suggesting that this concept contributed to an arrogance towards Nature which was seen as something to be conquered.

Some people were seen as having a negative and evil influence over Nature, particularly women. It is estimated that about 100,000 women, and probably many more, were tortured and executed as witches between 1400 and 1700. Judy Chicago quotes Carolyn Merchant’s statement that: “The control and the maintenance of the social order and women’s place within it was one of the many complex and varied reasons for the witch hunts.”

The Jews were often identified with witches and blamed for natural disasters such as plagues and famine. Jews were especially vulnerable in Europe because the Church had long blamed them for the killing of Jesus. According to the Church, Jews were to remain a downtrodden and persecuted people as a punishment for their act.

In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Jews were not allowed to own land, employ Christians, attend universities, engage in certain trades and occupations. At the same time, women’s power was being steadily eroded in many of their traditional spheres of activity. During this period both women and Jews were demonized and regarded as aberrations of Nature itself. At times anti-Jewish feelings ran so high that Jews were violently attacked and even expelled from their homelands. In 1516 the first ghetto—an enclosed urban area where Jews were forced to live—was established in Venice.

By the eighteenth-century many people wanted to create a new society. This led to the French Revolution (1774-1815). “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights,” wrote the revolutionaries. The revolutionaries ended monarchy and executed

King Louis XVI and his queen, Marie Antoinette. However, not all people were given the rights that the revolutionaries had written and spoken about so eloquently. For example, women were not given the right to vote. In addition, the revolutionaries fiercely debated whether Jews should be given the same rights as other citizens. Eventually, the Jews were given citizenship. Other countries were forced by the conquering French army to give Jews rights; women’s rights would not become prevalent in the Western world for many more decades.

Once the Jews were granted citizenship, a new form of anti-Semitism emerged. The Jews were accused of wanting to integrate into society in order to destroy it from within. This accusation is known as “the myth of the Jewish world-conspiracy”. It finds expression in an anti-Semitic document known as *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*, first printed in Russia in 1920 and still used by anti-Semitic groups around the world. In the 1930s, the Nazis used the world conspiracy myth to blame the Jews for Germany’s economic and political problems. The Nazis also destroyed the largest feminist movement in Europe.

## The Nazi Vision of the World

The Nazi version of anti-Semitism created a radically new ideology of hate. Nazi hatred of the Jews was not simply based on religious differences. The myth of racial purity was at its core. This new form of anti-Semitism has its roots in the late eighteenth century, when race first became the subject of scientific inquiry in Europe.

Early anthropologists attempted to understand the diversity of racial groups through a study of their distinctive characteristics. Many researchers assumed that a racial group known as the “Aryans” had migrated to Europe from India and eventually gave rise to all the various peoples of northern Europe, including the Germans. For many Germans, the Aryan represented the “ideal” race.

These researchers claimed that they could tell the inner worth of a person from the external features. In fact, they characterized whole peoples by comparing them to an idealized image of the Aryan.

The theorists and propagandists of National Socialism (Nazism) harnessed ancient prejudices against Jews in the service of an aggressive political movement that emphasized the inherent superiority of a pure German (Aryan) race. The Nazis regarded Jews—like gypsies, blacks, and Slavic peoples—as belonging to an inferior race which threatened to “pollute” the purity of Aryan blood and culture.

Nazi ideas about race affected other German citizens as well. There was no room for people with physical disabilities, mental diseases, and certain inherited disorders. Nazi physicians considered these "unfit" Germans as "the Enemy within." They "polluted" Aryan society with their lifestyles, artistic and musical tastes, political convictions and, worst of all, their inferior genes. When Hitler took power in Germany in 1933, he quickly turned his attention to this problem.

In Germany between 1933-1945 the Nazis enlisted the aid of a biomedical and scientific movement known as racial hygiene. Racial hygiene was also known as eugenics or social biology. "Biology and genetics," declared Rudolf Ramm, director of medical education, in 1943, "are the roots, from which the National Socialist world-view has grown." The aim of the racial hygiene movement was to promote policies that would encourage the propagation of Germany's fittest people. When the Nazis came to power they provided the political environment in which the more extreme and dangerous implications of racial hygiene became the official policy of the state.

The Reich Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring (known as the Sterilization Law) culminated over thirty years of activity by the German eugenics movement. Sterilization, declared as official policy in legislation of 1933, was praised by the lawmakers as a "truly beneficial deed for the hereditarily sick family." The hardest hit groups were the disabled community and women. Interestingly, reproductive rights have remained an issue around which social policy is constructed.

One per cent of the entire German population was legally sterilized in the dozen years between 1933 and 1945, some 360,000 people. An unknown number of foreign workers, as well as a host of Gypsies, mulattos, and Jews, were sterilized illegally. The control of reproduction was simply a first step. The infamous Nuremberg Laws soon broadened the impact of racial hygiene until almost no one in Nazi Germany was untouched.

The legalized medical killings initiated in 1939 are the most radical expression of German racial hygiene. In two years, between 70,000 and 95,000 German citizens were killed in euthanasia stations equipped with carbon monoxide gas. Institutionalized children were the first victims.

These related programs were direct precursors of the Holocaust. During the war, Hitler would turn to the physicians and scientific experts on racial hygiene who had administered the euthanasia program for advice on the most efficient way to kill millions of people.

## ACTIVITIES

1. **Racism and Sexism:** Discuss the belief that external features reveal and express the inner quality of a person or a group. How does this notion help us understand why racism is difficult to eradicate? What is the difference between racism and a stereotype?
2. **Disseminating Stereotypes:** How do negative images and ideas about a particular group become popular? What can we do to help prevent the spread of stereotyping?
3. **Assignments:** What paved the way to Nazi Germany? Assign students to research and report on various components of the rise of Hitler and the Nazis. Most broadly these include: World War I and its effects on Germany; Hitler's rise to power; the role of the charismatic leader and Nazi propaganda.
4. **Art and History:** The relationship between art and the world it represents is complicated. Historians attempt to reconstruct truth based on evidence from documents, artifacts, and testimony. By contrast, the artist imaginatively reconstructs reality and also offers us truth. If art is fundamentally representational how does it contribute to our understanding of historical reality?

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## SECTION ONE

## BEARING WITNESS: THE HOLOCAUST AS JEWISH EXPERIENCE

**Wall of Indifference**

*This manipulated, hand-colored and painted image of a train going through the woods in Frankfurt, Germany, translates a historical truth into visual reality, i.e., the indifference of the Allies, the Vatican, and the International Red Cross to the transport of Jews to the death camps.*

*The train is an ordinary wooden train the artists came upon during their travels, and the painted stories of the victims' experience are derived from survivor testimony. Chicago absorbed these stories until she was ready to express them in a series of symbolic images. Shortly after the painting was completed, she read an article in the Jerusalem Post about a woman who journeyed to Israel from Poland in search of information about her parents, who had perished during the war. Her mother had thrown her out of a transport, and she was subsequently rescued and raised by a Polish family.*

**SYNOPSIS**

Judy Chicago attempts to capture the experience of the concentration and death camps, and to ask what the role of bystanders and the free world was during this period. She also considers the experience of women during the Holocaust.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To understand the role of the ghettos established by the Nazis.
2. To distinguish between ghettos and death camps.
3. To identify obstacles to resistance.
4. To understand the experience of women in the camps.
5. To explore the role of the bystander in occupied Europe and in the free world.
6. To learn the concept of "spiritual resistance."

**BACKGROUND**

The invasion of Poland by German forces on September 1, 1939 marks the beginning of World War II. Jews were forcibly concentrated in ghettos within major cities. The basic idea was not new. The term *ghetto* was first used in sixteenth-century Venice where Jews were forced to reside in walled quarters. From the middle ages to the nineteenth-century, ghettos were a fact of life in many parts of Europe. The Nazis simply revived this older form of anti-Semitism.

Although the Nazis made some effort to exploit Jewish labor for the war, most ghettos were prison-like islands of starvation, disease, and terror. The ghetto leadership had to negotiate with the local Nazi authorities for food rations. There was never enough. The daily food ration in Warsaw amounted to 220 calories: a mere 15% of the normal daily requirement. Severe shortages led to establishment of soup kitchens to feed the poorest and most vulnerable in the ghetto, especially children and families without a head of the household.

Despite the hardships, fear, and uncertainty regarding their future, the Jews attempted to organize their lives. They responded with soup kitchens and makeshift hospitals, underground schools, and religious institutions.

The forced isolation and hardships of ghetto life did not entirely kill a spirit of creativity. Theater, music, libraries, and popular entertainment were tolerated by the Nazis and provided the Jews some relief from their daily burdens.

One of our richest sources of knowledge about the ghetto comes from diaries and various archives—both secret and public—that were found after the war. Some of these diaries have been translated into English and are included in the bibliography.

### The Death Camps

During 1941-1942 the Nazis secretly built six death camps with gas installations in Poland. Their names were Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz, and Chelmno. With the establishment of these six death camps, the Nazis now possessed a bureaucratic machine capable of carrying out the efficient mass murder of millions of Jewish women, men, and children. The ghettos were reduced to places of squalid poverty and misery when deportations to the death camps reached their final stage in the summer of 1942. Jews in ghettos—living now simply in anticipation of being deported—saw little beyond disease, hunger, and mass expulsions.

There was no way for the Jews to have known where they were heading. Weak, demoralized, and terrorized, some believed the German lie that they were being sent “East” to work; most were primarily concerned that their families should stay together at whatever cost.

Death camps were camouflaged to look like labor camps. When the Jews arrived at the camps, they were separated into two lines: women and children in one, men in the other. This process was known as the selection.

The two lines of victims would pass before an SS inspector, often a doctor. The inspector decided with a glance who would be sent to the gas chambers. Most people were destined for immediate gassing. A handful were temporarily kept alive, mainly young men and childless young women. They would provide slave labor for nearby industrial plants, maintain the camps, and assist in the work involved in gassing the inmates and in burning the corpses.

Those who were to be killed were stripped and their hair was shorn. Fearful and uneasy, there was still no way that they could have known what was waiting. The victims were herded into chambers that looked like rough public showers. The doors were sealed and the gas was turned on. For Jews sent to labor camps, conditions were very different from life in the ghetto. In the ghetto, they still retained a semblance of autonomy. In the camps, by contrast, the Nazis carefully scheduled and determined every hour of their day.

All the concentration camp inmates experienced constant hunger, exposure to freezing weather, and omnipresent filth due to the lack of basic sanitary facilities. These conditions often produced epidemics of typhus, dysentery, and other diseases. In the overcrowded barracks where they lived, inmates slept on wooden planks. Backbreaking work, beatings, starvation, and terror were an integral part of daily life in the camps by design.

For the Nazis, German women had a special role to play: the propagation of healthy, genetically-correct children. During the Weimar Republic, Germany had a feminist movement which advocated women’s rights. The Reich League for Child Rich Families was established in the early 1920s to combat the new feminism. Families with four children were considered “child rich” and women, a significant proportion of the labor force, were now discouraged from working outside the home.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933 they established concentration camps in Germany. Jews, gypsies, political prisoners, homosexuals, and women who were considered “unnatural” and “degenerate,” such as lesbians and prostitutes, were incarcerated: Camps for women only were also established. During the war some women prisoners were used for spurious research experiments in reproduction and genetics. This knowledge, the Nazis hoped, would enable German women to give birth to an increased number of children and thus ensure Aryan supremacy. The most notorious Nazi doctor was Josef Mengele, who conducted experiments on ninety sets of twins in his efforts to discover a genetic cause for multiple births. Nazi medicine, in short, was an extension of Nazi ideology. Its vision of racial purity encouraged doctors to treat Jews as subhuman or dehumanized victims, as expendable as laboratory animals.

After the war, the Allies held a special “doctors’ trial” in Nuremberg that led to execution or prison sentences for a number of the doctors involved. Mengele himself escaped and was never caught.

### Bystanders, Collaborators, and Rescuers

The response of bystanders, both inside and outside occupied Europe, is a difficult issue. Although most Jews were trapped, between 1933-1941 a fair number had the means to leave Europe—if they could find a haven. In the United States, empathy for the plight of the Jews developed slowly. Genuine disbelief, sketchy news coverage, anti-Semitism, fears of the negative economic impact of the refugees, and a diplomatic focus on getting military materiel to the Allies colored the American response. The United States did not lift the strict emigration quota that had been established in the 1920s. In addition, the British closed the door to emigration to Palestine.

Most historians believe that the German decision to implement a policy of genocide was made in mid-1941. By late 1941 and throughout 1942, the United States and independent refugee organizations received numerous reports from occupied Europe about deportations and massacres. Yet the United States and Great Britain still made no commitment to assist or to rescue Jews. In November 1941, Cavendish Cannon, head of the State Department's Division of European Affairs, put it this way: "So far as I know we are not ready to tackle the whole Jewish problem."

The Vatican never formulated a strong position regarding the Jews. It tried to maintain a delicate balance between its moral obligations and its political interests. The dilemma proved difficult. Where papal representatives intervened, it was usually on behalf of individual baptized Jews. The Vatican also worked to secure safe passage to neutral countries for small numbers of individual Jews. Although it protested the deportation of Rome's Jews in 1943, the Vatican did not employ the full weight of its diplomatic relationship with Germany and its allies to attack the basic injustice of anti-Jewish policy.

It would have been virtually impossible for the Germans to have undertaken and maintained such a vast destructive process without the active support and passive acquiescence of people in the occupied areas. Fascists, anti-Semites, or opportunists from the occupied countries served as auxiliary police and guards in concentration and death camps.

In this atmosphere of fear, most people avoided unnecessary danger. People who risked their lives to shelter Jews provide a rare light amid the darkness. Jews were hidden by people in every country. In some cases the rescue was spontaneous. For example, Anne Frank and her family were hidden in Amsterdam by Dutch friends. In other cases, such as the French village of Le Chambon and in Denmark, the effort and cooperation for rescue was community wide. The rescuers' extraordinary courage and compassion should be remembered, honored, and cherished in any history of the Holocaust.

## ACTIVITIES

1. **Diaries:** Pick a diary from among those listed in the bibliography and discuss (or write) its significance for the individual who wrote it and for you as the reader.
2. **Armed Resistance:** Discuss some of the obstacles to armed resistance that the Jews would have encountered.

3. **Spiritual Resistance:** In her book *Judy Chicago* writes: "When we were at Ravensbruck [a concentration camp for women] we saw a number of small, embroidered objects that the prisoners had created for their children....Somehow I had never imagined people doing "normal" activities, but the numerous images we viewed of inmates mending, playing cards, and socializing attest to these human activities" (p. 124). Can this sort of activity in the ghettos and concentration camps be considered resistance? Why or why not?

4. **Witnessing through Art:** Can art bear witness? Compare Picasso's *Guernica*, a mural that captures the barbarism of war, to Judy Chicago's *Wall of Indifference*. Other examples of art which express a social conscience include the American artist Ben Shahn (*The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti*), William Gropper's *Migration*, which dramatized the suffering of dispossessed farmers described in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, Philip Evergood's *Don't Cry Mother*, and Marc Chagall's *White Crucifixion*.

5. **Interview with a Survivor:** If there is a local Holocaust museum or resource center, call and request that a survivor visit your class to speak about his or her experience. The local B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League (ADL) may also know survivors who lecture.

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SECTION TWO

POWER AND POWERLESSNESS: THE HOLOCAUST AS PRISM



**Im/Balance of Power**

*In Im/Balance of Power, the global treatment of children today provides the visual context for the center image-based on a famous photo of the Warsaw ghetto—which symbolizes the Nazis' murder of one and one half million Jewish children during the Holocaust. The central panel is surrounded by images that contrast the privilege of a few fortunate people on the planet with the suffering of countless unfortunate children. What links the treatment of children during the Holocaust with conditions today is exactly what the title and image imply: the total "imbalance" of power in the world. This is expressed by the off-balance scale that provides the formal structure for the overall image.*

**SYNOPSIS**

The *Holocaust Project* examines the relationship of the Holocaust to other genocides and to human rights. The artist points out that there is still much to learn about the Holocaust: for example, historians have not fully considered the treatment of homosexuals and lesbians. Children's experiences during the Holocaust have also not received extensive treatment.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To define the terms "genocide" and "Holocaust" and to characterize the crime.
2. To learn about other genocides in the 20th century.
3. To learn about the plight of children in repressive societies today.

**BACKGROUND**

*Genocide*, from the Latin *genus* (race) and *cide* (killing), is defined by the United Nations as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group."

Nearly eleven million civilians were killed during World War II. Poles, gypsies, homosexuals, the physically and mentally handicapped, dissident priests and nuns, political opponents, and intellectuals who were considered "enemies of the state" were eliminated. But Hitler and the Nazis waged a special war that resulted in the genocide of nearly six million Jews—fully two thirds of European Jewry.

The Nazis employed the code term "The Final Solution" to refer to this particular war. The word *Holocaust*, which derives from the Greek word meaning "fully burnt," is now most commonly used to refer to the genocide of European Jewry. The term *Shoah*, from the Hebrew meaning "utterly destroyed," also refers to this crime.

**ACTIVITIES**

1. **Genocide in the Twentieth Century:** Assign your students a case study of a twentieth-century genocide. Examples are the Armenian Genocide; Stalin's "Great Purge" in the USSR; Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge regime; the Indians of the Amazon; Rwanda; and the Serbian "ethnic cleansing" policy in the former Yugoslavia.
2. **Children's Rights:** Children constitute more than one-third of the world's population. Many live on the margins of society—exploited, abused, and even murdered. Do children have special rights? In 1989 the United Nations adopted the Convention on the Rights of Children. Write to the United Nations Human Rights Center in New York for a copy. The National Council for the Social Studies devotes the April/May 1992 issue of its journal, *Social Education* to the rights of children and includes classroom activities. See the bibliography for the address. Have students find an organization in their city that helps young people and volunteer for a day (for example: rape crisis, suicide prevention, substance abuse, etc.).

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## SECTION THREE

## ECHOES AND REOCCURRENCES: THE HOLOCAUST AS LESSON

**Arbeit Macht Frei/Work Makes Who Free?**

*This multimedia installation examines issues of race, class, and oppression through an exploration of the connections between the Nazi slave labor campaign and American slavery. The work also looks at the way unjust systems are enforced by tyranny and result in benefit only to those people "at the top of the pyramid."*

*The welded sign recreates the sign on the gate to Auschwitz; the welded sign is held up by two wooden column form, which refer to Auschwitz (on the right) and to a Southern plantation (on the left). Surrounding the center images are paintings that describe the treatment of slave laborers in Nazi camps and of African-Americans in the Southern plantation system.*

**SYNOPSIS**

Judy Chicago introduces some contemporary social issues and examines the difficulties in motivating citizens to care about the future of their society. Her pieces entitled *See No Evil/Hear No Evil* and *Banality of Evil/Then and Now* call us to be aware of and engaged in today's social problems.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. To look at the relationship between racism and anti-Semitism.
2. To discuss our moral responsibility to engage in social and political issues.

**BACKGROUND**

Historians, sociologists, and psychologists have offered several theories for why some people became oppressors, others stood by idly, and still others put their lives at great risk to assist the Jews.

In his study of the Nazi doctors, Robert Lifton introduced the term "doubling" to describe how doctors were able to participate in the killing process and not feel that they were violating their professional pledge to sustain life. Lifton suggests that doctors "split" their identities into the "Auschwitz self" and the "original self." Although moral principles were in place, the Nazi doctors used those principles for contradictory ends. Lifton writes: "In doubling, one part of the self 'disavows' another part. What is repudiated is not reality itself—the individual Nazi doctor was aware of what he was doing via the Auschwitz self—but *the meaning of that reality*....The Nazi doctor knew that he selected, but did not interpret selections as murder" (p. 422; emphasis added).

What allowed doctors and other human beings who were often good fathers and husbands to reinterpret and deny the true meaning of their murderous acts? Part of the answer lies in what we learned about the role of ideology and beliefs. Nazi ideology concerning the "Aryan race" and the evils of Jews, gypsies, Slavs, and others was taught in school, proclaimed in print, preached in churches for years *before* the Nazis came to power. The Nazis provided the political environment to establish policies based on this ideology.

**Racism and Anti-Semitism**

Racism in the United States has expressed itself as white hatred or discrimination against blacks and other peoples of color. The history of the Holocaust reveals that racism can transcend skin color. The Nazis regarded both Jews and blacks as by nature perverted and detrimental to a healthy society.

Racists not only attack particular peoples or groups on the basis of skin or origin, but also believe in the superiority of their own values and civilization. Thus, even when racism does not lead to genocide or enslavement, it advocates discrimination and separateness.

## ACTIVITIES

1. **Racism and Anti-Semitism:** Racism based on skin color and anti-Semitism do not necessarily lead to mass killings or enslavement. They may show themselves in less dramatic but still harmful ways in social policy, laws, attitudes, and even casual speech. Have students discuss the various ways in which racism and anti-Semitism are evident in their school, neighborhood, and society. What common traits can be found in racist and anti-Semitic sentiments?

2. **Current Events:** Have students identify what they think are the five most important world crises where rescue or massive aid is involved or needed. If they have difficulty naming current events, a trip to the library where students can leaf through a month's worth of daily newspapers should help. The following organizations can be contacted: High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Plaza, New York, NY 10017; American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017; Amnesty International, 32 Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10001; Catholic Relief Services, 209 W. Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21201; Human Rights Watch, 485 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017; Oxfam America, 115 Broadway, Boston, MA 02116.

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Lifton, Robert and Markusen, Eric. *The Genocidal Mentality: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat*. New York: Basic Books, 1990. For teachers.

Sachs, Marilyn. *A Pocket Full of Seeds*. New York: Puffin Books, 1994. For junior high school students.

## SECTION FOUR

### FOUR QUESTIONS: THE MORAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES RAISED BY THE HOLOCAUST



#### Four Questions

*This image is named after the four questions asked every year at the Passover Seder. These four traditional questions have known answers; the four questions raised by the images comprise complex moral quandaries. The fact that many ethical questions were left unanswered after the Holocaust allowed them to grow more complex over the years. As a metaphor for the formidable and perplexing dilemmas that these questions pose, the boundaries between the painting and photoimages become entirely blurred.*

*When viewed from the left, one sees four Holocaust images: the high-altitude experiments at Dachau, the V-2 rocket program, the T-4 euthanasia program, and the Nazi sterilization program. When the images are viewed from the right, they reveal contemporary situations, which include the use of animals in experiments; the American moon landing; sophisticated medical technology and the unequal access to health care; and genetic engineering, reproductive technology, and the development of surrogate motherhood. The roots of many of these developments reside in the Holocaust, and the implications grow steadily more troubling. The questions the artists are raising become clear when the panels are viewed straight on, but the visual images become jumbled in order to convey the extreme complexity of the issues involved.*

## SYNOPSIS

Judy Chicago raises four basic questions about ethics and social policy that she believes we should be asking: Where Should the Line Be Drawn? When Do Ends Justify the Means? What Determines Quality of Life? Who Controls Our Human Destiny? She brings these questions to bear on the relationship between science, technology, and values—specifically, recent advances in genetics and biotechnology.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To examine complicity and moral action during the Holocaust.
2. To become acquainted with contemporary questions about science, ethics, and social policy.

## BACKGROUND

The German racial hygiene movement shows that reshaping nature is never a simple or clear matter of technique. Such intervention, whether in the name of sympathy or charity or civilization, ultimately comes under the power of political forces which science cannot ultimately control.

Further, the racial hygiene movement raises key questions about science itself. Is science ever wholly objective? ever wholly value-free? Can scientists ever fully separate their work from their loves and hates, hopes and fears? What role, then, should scientists play in promoting the uses of their discoveries? The scientist who testifies at a public hearing is a person with a professional reputation to uphold, with a budget to defend, with a family to feed. Is it always clear where science ends and politics begins?

Eugenics has been an unfashionable word for the past fifty years. Recent advances in genetics and in biotechnology, however, raise new questions bordering on eugenics (see Judy Chicago's thoughts on the matter, pp. 146-152). Experimental gene therapy on humans is already underway in the continuing research on disease. Other conditions have been traced beyond doubt to genetic abnormalities. How far can we go in the effort to reshape nature?

Science, despite its wishes and pronouncements, is probably never wholly value-free: never entirely disengaged from the social world where its work proceeds. Further, the uses to which science is put—both good science and bad science—are ultimately social uses. Nazi racial hygiene policy illustrates a peril always implicit in science. Their lessons are well worth our continuing contemplation.

## Complicity and Moral Action

We must also ask what motivated those who stood on the side of goodness. "If perpetrators and collaborators constitute the tragedy of this human experience," write the sociologists Samuel P. and Pearl Oliner, "rescuers constitute its hope." In their pioneering study on rescuers, the Oliners found that an acute empathy toward other's pain set rescuers apart from non-rescuers. "Values of caring" and "human attachments" were highly developed in the personality that the Oliners term "the altruistic personality."

## ACTIVITIES

1. **Science, values, and social policy:** Identify some of the critical advances in biotechnology. What are the ethical issues involved? For example, gene modification; reproductive technology; life-prolonging technologies; performance enhancing techniques (steroids, growth hormones, intellect-enhancing agents). Is it ethical to change the gene pool of the human population?
2. **Debate:** Some claim that science is always value-free but that its *uses* are not. Have your students debate this proposition.
3. **Discussion:** How will we ration health care when our resources begin to dwindle? For example, which patient should receive the single available donated heart? The youngest, the person with a family, the most prominent, the most productive, or the one who can pay for it?
4. **The Altruistic Personality:** Write the definition of "altruism" on the board. What is meant by the "altruistic personality"? How would we recognize someone with these traits? How might we develop these qualities in our own personality?

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Fogelman, Eva. *Conscience and Courage: Rescuers of Jews During the Holocaust*. New York: Anchor Books, 1994. For junior high and high school students.

Gallagher, Hugh Gregory. *By Trust Betrayed: Patients, Physicians, and the License to Kill in the Third Reich*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1990.

Lewontin, R.C. *Biology as Destiny: The Doctrine of DNA*. New York: Harper Collins, 1993. For high school students and teachers.

Munson, Ronald. *Intervention and Reflection. Basic Issues in Medical Ethics*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1992. For high school students and teachers.

Oliner, Samuel P. and Oliner, Pearl. *The Altruistic Personality: Rescuers of Jews in Nazi Germany*. New York: Free Press, 1988. For teachers.

SECTION FIVE

SURVIVAL AND TRANSFORMATION:  
THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE AS PATHWAY TO ACTION



**Rainbow Shabbat**

*Painted in the traditional stained-glass method, the center panel of Rainbow Shabbat presents the Jewish experience of the Friday night Sabbath ceremony as an image of international sharing and global peace. The centers of the rainbow side panels contain yellow stars; the humiliating badges Jews were forced to wear are transformed into glorious symbols of courage and a testament to the power of the human spirit. Sandblasted into the windows, in Yiddish and its English equivalent, is a prayer based on a poem by a Holocaust survivor. These words, which embody the goal of the Holocaust Project, read:*

*Heal those broken souls  
who have no peace and  
lead us all from darkness  
into light.*

## SYNOPSIS

The triptych entitled *Legacy* is an homage to the survivor. To a great extent, survivors of the Holocaust built the new State of Israel which was established in 1948. In her final piece *Rainbow Shabbat*, Judy Chicago employs the Jewish holy day, the Shabbat, as a symbol of universal friendship and solidarity.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about the establishment of Israel and the Jewish concept of *tikkun olam* or repairing the world.

## BACKGROUND

Nazi Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies on May 8, 1945. The unthinkable vastness of Nazi atrocities was revealed to the world as the Allied armies liberated the concentration camps. Cameramen recorded scenes of corpses stacked like cordwood, and these films, made into newsreels, soon horrified audiences in America and Great Britain. Yet it is important to remember that these camps, no matter how brutal, were not the worst: that is, they were concentration camps rather than death camps. The death camps in Poland—in particular Majdanek, Belzec, Treblinka, and Auschwitz—were liberated by the Russians, with little impact on the Western media.

By the end of 1946, there were 250,000 Jewish displaced persons scattered across Germany, Austria, and Italy. This homeless mass of people represented a new tragedy for individual Jews who had been lucky enough to survive. Entire communities had been wiped out. A whole way of life had been destroyed. Where were they to go?

Thus, the demand for a Jewish state gained momentum. Survivors in displaced persons camps demonstrated for the right to emigrate to Palestine. Meanwhile, illegal immigration continued. Ships such as the *Exodus* tried to run the British sea blockade. The *Exodus* was apprehended by the British navy, and returned to Europe, where its 4,200 Holocaust survivors were forced to return to Germany.

In May 1945 the leadership of the Zionist movement petitioned the British government to declare Palestine a Jewish state. They also presented the United Nations with a plan for the establishment of a democratic Jewish state in Palestine. In 1947 the British announced that it was submitting the consideration of Palestine to the United Nations.

On November 29, 1947 the United Nations voted to recommend the establishment of a Jewish state. On the day the British left, the Jewish provisional government under David Ben-Gurion met and declared itself a state on May 14, 1948. The first country to recognize Israel was the United States.

## Rainbow Shabbat

For Jews, the Shabbat is the holiest day of the week. In the Biblical account of creation, God rests on the seventh day. Jews too cease their creative work in order to rest on the seventh day. But the rabbis and Jewish mystics believed that the Shabbat is more than simply the day when Jews refrain from work: it represents a completely different sphere, dedicated to personal reflection and spirituality. On the Shabbat, Jews greet one another with "Shabbat Shalom" (*shalom* means peace) because the day is supposed to be imbued with tranquility and feelings of wholeness.

Judy Chicago's stain-glass installation reflects some of the customs and rituals of the Shabbat meal on Friday night. The woman ushers in the Shabbat by lighting candles. A festive meal is eaten and guests are often present at the table. The feeling is one of peace and ease and the achieving of a global healing expressed in the concept of *tikkun olam*.

## ACTIVITIES

1. The Czech dissident novelist Milan Kundera wrote: "The struggle of man [human beings] against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." What does Kundera mean?
2. Write a *one paragraph* "epilogue" about what you would like future generations to know about the Holocaust. Divide the class into small groups to discuss what the students wrote and why.
3. Art, like literature, reflects multiple levels of experiences to present its message. In her *Rainbow Shabbat*, Judy Chicago brings together disparate ethnic symbols and images to create her message of peace. (See pages 137-145 in the *Holocaust Project* for a discussion on the thinking that went into *Rainbow Shabbat*. Have students use art to present their own vision of a just and peaceful world.)

To purchase slides that accompany classroom teaching of the *Holocaust Project* contact: SANDAK, 180 Harvard Avenue, Stanford, CT 06902 (203) 348-3722.

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Laqueur, Walter. *A History of Zionism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

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Roiphe, Anne. *A Season for Healing: Reflections on the Holocaust*. New York: Summit Books, 1988.

Roth, John and Berenbaum, Michael. *The Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Implications*. New York: Paragon, 1989.

## INTERNET RESOURCES ON THE HOLOCAUST FOR TEACHERS

The proliferation of cyberspace as an information resource for students and teachers has come on fast in the last few years. Here are a few sites where you can find historical background, survivor statements, photographic images and art reproductions, listings of Holocaust organization, as well as teaching tips, bibliographies, and research leads:

<http://www.ushmn.org/>  
The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

<http://www.best.com/~mddunn/cybrary//>  
Cybrary of the Holocaust

<http://www.peg.apc.org/~iearn/hgppproject.html>  
I\*EARN Holocaust/Genocide Project, Australia

<http://yvs.shani.net/>  
Yad Vashem Museum, Jerusalem

<http://nizkor.almanac.bc.ca>  
Nizkor Project

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

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In addition to **HOLOCAUST PROJECT**, PENGUIN USA also publishes the following titles in Holocaust studies:

DENYING THE HOLOCAUST, by Deborah Lipstadt (Plume)

PRESERVING MEMORY, by Edward T. Linenthal (Viking)

SCHINDLER'S LEGACY by Elinor J. Brecher (Plume)

THE HOLOCAUST IN HISTORY, by Michael R. Marrus (Meridian)

ANNE FRANK: Beyond the Diary,

by Rian Verhoevan and Ruud van der Rol (Viking/Puffin)

CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST, by Helen Epstein (Penguin)

MOMENTS OF REPRIEVE, by Primo Levi (Penguin Classic)

TREBLINKA, by Jean-François Steiner (Meridian)

LODZ GHETTO, edited by Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides (Penguin)

EICHMANN IN JERUSALEM, by Hannah Arendt (Penguin Classic)