**Holocaust Document Packet** Name:

**Directions**: Read documents, then complete the following: 1.) highlight main points; 2.) in the margins or on a separate sheet of paper, write the significance of the document; 3.) write three deep & meaningful questions these readings raise for you in the box below titled “Deep Questions”. ⮋

**DEEP QUESTIONS**:

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

**Anti-Jewish Legislation:**

**The Nuremberg Laws**

The first phase of the regime’s anti-Semitic legislation prior to the beginning of the war was initiated not long after the seizure of power. The laws enacted during the period from April to October 1933 aimed to eliminate Jews from civil service positions and professional occupations such as law, medicine, and teaching. The Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service included paragraphs dealing with “non-Aryans.”

Following a brief respite, further anti-Jewish legislation was enacted in 1935, known collectively as the Nuremberg laws. The Reich Citizenship Law stripped Jews of their citizenship if they did not meet the requirement of having “German of kindred blood,” whereas the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor prohibited Jews from marrying Aryan Germans. These laws effected the political and social exclusion of Jews from the rest of German society, prompting many Jews to emigrate from Germany.

# Section 1

1. Marriages between Jews and nationals of German of kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they are concluded abroad.

2. Proceedings for annulment may be initiated only by the Public Prosecutor.

# Section 2

Relation outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German of kindred blood are forbidden.

# Section 3

Jews will not be permitted to employ female nationals of German or kindred blood in their household.

# Section 4

1. Jews are forbidden to hoist the Reich and national flag and to present the colors of the Reich

2. On the other hand, they are permitted to present the Jewish colors.

**Resolution of a Municipal Council in the Bernkastel District,**

## August 13, 1935

Judaism, which has brought such misfortune on our German Fatherland, is today once again rearing its head more boldly than ever. There parasites on the German body politic underestimate our sense of decency and are again making themselves at home within National Socialist Germany, which they hate so much, and are again pouring out their Jewish impudence and vulgarity.

In recognizing this situation, we have resolved to act accordingly:

• All city exits will be fitted with signs bearing the inscription: Jews Not Wanted Here.

• The journal *Der Sturmer*, on display in the news paper display box in the town center, will be

recommended to all citizens.

• No craftsman, businessman, or any other countryman will receive work contracts from the

community and will immediately forfeit entitlement to the use and enjoyment of communal

property if he or members of his family continue to traffic with Jews; that is, if he supports their

businesses.

• Making purchases from Jews, employing Jewish physicians or lawyers is tantamount to

committing a traitorous act against the German people and nation.

### “Euthanasia” and Operation T-4

In October 1939 Adolf Hitler wrote the following memo: “Reich Leader [Philip] Bouhler and Dr. med. [Karl] Brandt are charged with the responsibility of enlarging the authority of certain physicians, designated by name, so that patients who, on the basis of human judgement, are considered incurable, can be granted a mercy death after a discerning diagnosis.”

Those words authorized a systematic Nazi program to eliminate *lebensunwertes Leben* (“life unworthy of life”). These “worthless” people included mentally and physically disabled Germans and Austrians, children and adults, who were regarded as a blight on the Third Reich’s “racial integrity” and as an unacceptable economic burden for the state. Although Hitler signed the authorization for this so-called “euthanasia” program in October 1939, the document was backdated to September 1—the day World War II began—to create the impression that the “mercy killings” were a wartime necessity.

The euthanasia campaign, called Operation T-4, was code-named after the address of the confiscated Jewish villa at *Tiergartenstrasse* 4, which was the address the program’s central administrative offices, Hitler chose Bouhler, the head of his private Chancellery, and Dr. Brandt, one of his doctors, to oversee T-4. However, responsibility for its day-to-day implementation fell to Viktor Brack and his deputy, Werner Blankenberg. Statistics show that under the leadership of these men, 70,000 to 80,000 people—including 4,000 to 5,000 Jews—became victims of the euthanasia killings.

The Nazis tried to conceal what was happening, but when public protests exploded—many of them from Germany’s Catholic and Lutheran leaders—Hitler officially halted Operation T-4 on August 24, 1941. Nevertheless, the killing continued in greater secrecy until the spring of 1945. From 1939 through 1945, Operation T-4 and other euthanasia actions murdered between 200,000 and 250,000 disabled people.

Medical personnel selected who would die based on data gathered from hospitals, nursing homes, and other public health facilities. The patients selected to die were transported to one of sic euthanasia centers in Germany and Austria: Hartheim, Sonnenstein, Grafeneck, Bernburg, Hadamar, or Brandenburg. The doctors, nurses, and other specialists who worked at these centers employed different methods of murder. Starvation and lethal injection were used at first, but eventually the method of choice was gassing with carbon monoxide in chambers disguised as tiled showers. After gold teeth were harvested, the corpses were burned in crematoria.

Operation T-4 anticipated the Holocaust. The euthanasia program’s ideology of racial purity, methods of destruction, and administrative personnel would play key roles in the “Final Solution.”

**Copy of Teletype from Munich, 10 November 1938, 1:20 a.m.**

To all Headquarters and Stations of the State Police.

To all Districts and Sub-districts of the SD {Sicherheitsdienst, or Security Service}

Urgent! Submit immediately to the Chief or his deputy!

Re: Measures against Jews tonight.

Because of the attempt on the life of the Secretary of the Legation vom Rath in Paris tonight, 9-10 November 1938, demonstrations against Jews are to be expected throughout the Reich. The following instructions are given on how to treat these events.

1. The Chiefs of the State Police, or their deputies, must get in telephonic contact with the political leaders {Gauleitung oder Dreisleitung} who have jurisdiction over their districts and have to arrange a joint meeting with the appropriate inspector or commander of the Order Police {Ordnungspolizei} to discuss the organization of the demonstrations. At these discussions the political leaders have to be informed that the German Police has received from the Reichstuhrer SS and Chief of the German Police the following instructions, in accordance with which the political leaders should adjust their own measures.

a. Only such measures should be taken which do not involve danger to German life or property. (For instance synagogues are to be burned down only when there is no danger of fire to the surroundings.)

b. Business and private apartments of Jews may be destroyed but not looted. The police is instructed to supervise the execution of this order and to arrest looters.

c. On business streets, particular care is to be taken that non-Jewish business should be protected from damage.

d. Foreigners, even Jews, are not to be molested.

2. The demonstrations which are going to take place should not be hindered by the police provided that the instructions quoted above in section 1 are carried out. The police has only to supervise compliance with the instructions.

3. Upon receipt of this telegram, in all synagogues and offices of the Jewish communities the available archives should be seized by the police, to forestall destruction during the demonstrations. This refers only to valuable historical material, not to new lists of taxes, etc. The archives are to be turned over to the competent SD offices.

4. The direction of the measures of the Security Police concerning the demonstrations against Jews is vested with the organs of the State Police, inasmuch as the inspectors of the Security Police are not issuing their own orders.

In a speech to SS leaders made during a three-day conference in Posen in October of 1943, Himmler spoke of the duty of the SS and of the necessity of following orders—even if those orders were unpleasant.

I also want to talk to you, quite frankly, on a very grave matter. Among ourselves it should be mentioned quite frankly, and yet we will never speak of it publicly. Just as we did not hesitate on June 30th, 1934 to do the duty we were bidden, and stand comrades who had lapsed, up against the wall and shoot them, so we have never spoken about it and will never speak of it. It was that tact which is a matter of course and which I am glad to say, is inherent in us, that made us never discuss it among ourselves, never to speak of it. It appalled everyone, and yet everyone was certain that he would do it the next time if such orders are issued and if it is necessary.

I mean the clearing out of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish race. It’s one of those things it is easy to talk about—“The Jewish race is being exterminated,” says one party member, “that’s quite clear, it’s in our program—elimination of the Jews, and we’re doing it, exterminating them.” And then they come, 80 million worthy Germans, and each one has his decent Jew. Of course the others are vermin, but this one is an A-1 Jew. Not one of all those who talk this way has witnessed it, not one of them has been through it. Most of *you* must know what it means when 100 corpses are lying side by side, or 500 or 1,000. To have stuck it out and at the same time—apart from exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history which has never been written and is never to be written, for we know how difficult we should have made it for ourselves, if with the bombing raids, the burdens and the deprivations of war—we still had Jews today in every town as secret saboteurs, agitators and trouble-mongers. We would now probably have reached the 1916/17 stage when the Jews were still in the German national body.

We have taken from them what wealth they had. I have issued a strict order, which SS-Leiutenant General Pohl has carried out, that this wealth should, as a matter of course, be handed over to the Reich without reserve. We have taken none of it four ourselves. Individual men who have lapsed will be punished in accordance with an order I issued at the beginning, which gave this warning: Whoever takes so much as a mark of it, is a dead man. A number of SS men—there are not very many of them—have fallen short, and they will die, without mercy. We had the moral right, we had the duty to our people, to destroy this people which wanted to destroy us. But we have not the right to enrich ourseves with so much as a fur, a watch, a mark, or a cigarette or anything else. Because we have exterminated a bacterium we do not want, in the end, to be infected by the bacterium and die of it. I will not see so much as a small area of sepsis appear here or gain a hold. Wherever it may form, we will cauterize it. Altogether, however, we can say, that we have fulfilled this most difficult duty for the love of our people.

And our spirit, our soul, our character has not suffered injury from it.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The Extermination Process In this excerpt from his autobiography, Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of the Auschwitz death camp, discusses the actual process of extermination. Various methods were tested at Auschwitz, but gassing the victims with Cyclon (Zyklon) B proved to be the most efficient “solution.” The SS attempted to dispose of the evidence of the killings afterward.  Cyclon B gas was supplied by the firm of Tesch & Stabenow and was constantly used in Auschwitz for the destruction of vermin, and there was consequently always a supply of these tins of gas on hand. In the beginning, this poisonous gas, which was a preparation of prussic acid, was only handled by employees of Tesch & Stabenow under rigid safety precautions, but later some members of the Medical Service were trained by the firm in its use and thereafter the destruction of vermin and disinfection were carried out by them.  During Eichmann’s next visit I told him about this use of Cyclon B and we decided to employ it for the mass extermination operation.  The killing by Cyclon B gas of the Russian prisoners of war transported to Auschwitz was continued, but no longer in block II, since after the gassing the whole building had to be ventilated for at least two days.  The mortuary of the crematorium next to the hospital block was therefore used as a gassing room, after the door had been made gasproof and some holes had been pierced in the ceiling through which the gas could be discharged.  I cannot say on what date the extermination of the Jews began. Probably it was in September 1941, but it may not have been until January 1942. The Jews from Upper Silesia were the first to be dealt with. These Jews were arrested by the Kattowitz Police Unit and taken in drafts by train to a siding on the west side of the Auschwitz-Dziedzice railroad line where they were unloaded. So far as I can remember, these drafts never consisted of more than 1,000 prisoners.  On the platform the Jews were taken over from the police by a detachment from the camp and were brought by the commander of the protective custody camp in two sections to the bunker, as the extermination building was called.  Their luggage was left on the platform, whence it was taken to the sorting office called Canada situated between the DAW and the lumberyard.  The Jews were made to undress near the bunker, after they had been told that they had to go into the rooms (as they were also called) in order to be deloused.  All the rooms, there were five of them, were filled at the same time, the gasproof doors were then screwed up and the contents of the gas containers discharged into the rooms through special vents.  After half an hour the doors were reopened (there were two doors in each room), the dead bodies were taken out, and brought to the pits in small trolleys which ran on rails.  The victims’ clothing was taken in trucks to the sorting office. The whole operation, including assistance given during undressing, the filling of the bunker, the emptying of the bunker, the removal of the corpses, as well as the preparation and filling up of the mass graves, was carried out | by a special detachment of Jews, who were separately accommodated and who, in accordance with Eichmann’s orders, were themselves liquidated after every big action.  While the first transports were being disposed of, Eichman arrived with an order from the Riechsfuhrer SS stating that the gold teeth were to be removed from the corpses and the hair cut from the women. This job was also undertaken by the Special Detachment.  During the summer of 1942 the bodies were still being placed in the mass graves. Toward the end of the summer, however, we started to burn them; at first on wood pyres bearing some 2,000 corpses, and later in pits together with bodies previously buried. In the early days oil refuse was poured on the bodies, but later methanol was used. Bodies were burned in pits, day and night, continuously.  Shortly after the visit of the Reichsfuhrer SS, Standartenfuhrer Blobel arrived from Eichmann’s office with an order from the Reichsfuhrer SS stating that all the mass graves were to be opened and the corpses burned. In addition the ashes were to be disposed of in such a way that is would be impossible at some future time to calculate the number of corpses burned.  Standartenfuhrer Blobel had been authorized to seek out and obliterate all the mass graves in the whole of the eastern districts. His department was given the code number “1005.” The work itself was carried out by a special detachment of Jews who were shot after each section of the work had been completed. Auschwitz concentration camp was continuously called upon to provide Jews for department “1005.”  From Benjamin Sac and Dieter Knutz’s, Inside Hitler’s Germany: A Documentary History of life in the Third Reich. Lexington. D.C. Health: 1992 (441-44). (Their source was Rudolf Hoess, Commandment of Aushwitz. New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1959: pp.208-211). |