

SCHOOL ASSEMBLY RESOURCES

SECONDARY VIDEO ASSEMBLIES





American athlete who won four gold medals at Hitler's 1936 Olympic Games.

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HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY [27 JANUARY]
'THE SAME BUT DIFFERENT'
ASSEMBLY NOTES

Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January) is a national event in the United Kingdom dedicated to the remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust. It was first held in January 2001, and has been on the 27th January every year since. The chosen date is the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp by the Soviet Union in 1945.

Today is Holocaust Memorial Day. All around the country, people are remembering the deliberate massacre of millions of people by the Nazis in their death camps during the Second World War. Jewish people call it the Shoah (which means Desolation).

Why should we remember the Holocaust?

One good reason is to learn from the mistakes and make sure it doesn't happen again.

One way is to focus on the real lives of the people the Nazis killed - like Anne Frank, a German girl who died in one of the camps. Another way is to keep a close eye on those who preach the same kind of dangerous message that Hitler did. If anyone starts talking about wiping countries off the map, or says that God wants you to kill lots of people, or that it is OK to attack someone just because of the colour of their skin or their religious beliefs - then that might be a clue that something is not quite right.

What is the Holocaust?

During the Second World War, Hitler and the Nazis systematically segregated, transported and murdered millions of people.

The Holocaust was the systematic, industrialised extermination of six million Jews. In 1933 approximately 11 million Jews lived in the 21 countries of Europe that were occupied by Germany during the war. By 1945 two out of every three European Jews had been killed. The European Jews were the primary victims of the Holocaust. But Jews were not the only group singled out for persecution by Hitler's Nazi regime. As many as 1 1/2 million Gypsies, at least 250,000 mentally or physically disabled persons, and more than three million Soviet prisoners of war also fell victim to Nazi genocide. Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, Social Democrats, Communists, partisans, trade unionists, Polish intelligentsia and other so called 'undesirables' were also victims of the hate and aggression carried out by the Nazis.

Basically, the Nazis were getting rid of everyone who didn't fit their picture of the world. If you didn't fit in, then you didn't deserve to live.

Prejudice, racism and discrimination : Why we should speak out.

"TAKE SIDES. Silence helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented."

"Sometimes we must interfere.

When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Whenever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must - at that moment - become the center of the universe."

Written by Eli Wiesel

A well known verse written by Martin Niemoeller

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out
because I was not a communist;
Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out
because I was not a socialist;
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist;
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew;
Then they came for me
and there was no one left to speak out for me.

Present Day

The holocaust was not the end of the systematic murder of people, for race or political belief. In Rwanda and Bosnia, in Indonesia, Cambodia and Iran even right now in the Sudan, there has been and is the same pattern of humiliation, segregation, destruction of life and massive displacement of entire peoples.

The Future

As time passes the victims of the Holocaust will no longer be alive to act as living testimonies to the horrors endured. We need to do more than to simply remember. We need to ensure that it never happens again.