

almost exclusively with the labor and death camps established by the Nazis.

**“final solution”** – the term used by the Nazis to mean the systematic extermination of all Jews in occupied Europe.

**genocide** -- The systematic destruction of a racial, political, or cultural group. The term was invented in 1944 to describe the Nazi extermination of the Jews.

**Gestapo** -- From “Geheime Staatspolizei,” or secret state police. The Nazi organization charged with apprehending persons suspected of disloyalty.

**ghetto** – enclosed community in European cities where Jews were forced to live, abolished after the French Revolution but employed again by Hitler during World War II.

**Holocaust** -- The term applied to the murder of 6,000,000 Jews by the Nazis during World War II. The term “holocaust” means sacrifice by fire.

**Mossad** -- The Israeli intelligence service.

**Sicherheitsdienst** -- “Security Service”; the intelligence branch of the SS.

**SS** -- Protective Force (Schutzstaffel), an elite Nazi paramilitary group, founded to be Hitler’s bodyguard; instrumental during the war in carrying out the Holocaust.

#### **Laws, Cases, and Legal Terms**

**Nuremberg Laws** -- A series of anti-Semitic laws passed by the Nazis in 1935. Two laws passed on September 15 were the “Reich Citizenship Law,” which makes Jews second-class citizens, and the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor,” which forbids marriage or sexual relations between Jews and German non-Jews.

#### **Things to Think About**

- Eichmann’s main defense, as it was for other Nazis tried after the war, was along the lines of “I was only following orders.” How valid can such a defense be? Was Eichmann really doing no more than that? Do you believe that it is realistic to expect a soldier or government official to disobey an order that that person perceives to be wrong or illegal?
- The Eichmann trial was the first trial to receive worldwide television coverage. Why do you think the Israelis chose to give it such exposure?
- The kidnapping of Eichmann stirred up controversy because of its international ramifications. Agents of a foreign government had sneaked into a sovereign nation to kidnap one of its inhabitants. Do you think the kidnapping was nevertheless justified? Could you see that happening to someone in the United States today?
- Before he joined the SS, Eichmann had not been especially successful -- a trait that was characteristic of many Nazis, most notably Hitler himself. Why do you think people like Eichmann were drawn to the Nazi party? Do you think the Nazi movement – and movements like it in other places and times - have a certain appeal to people of marginal ability? Why would that be?
- Adolph Eichmann was executed in 1962. What is the value of discussing his case now and in the future?

#### **Internet Resources**

<http://remember.org/eichmann/> -- Excellent site called “*The Trial of Adolf Eichmann.*” Includes a “*Teacher’s Guide to the Trial.*”

<http://www.wiesenthal.com/> -- Web site of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, an international center for Holocaust remembrance.

<http://www.ushmm.org> -- Web site of the United States Holocaust Museum.

<http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/e/eichmann-adolf/> -- A rich site containing complete transcripts of the trial.

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/h-eichmann.htm> -- A useful biography of Eichmann along with a Holocaust timeline.

#### **Other Resources**

*For students:*

**Atkinson, Linda.** *In Kindling Flame.* Beech Tree Books, 1985.

**Bachrach, Susan D.** *Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust.* Little, Brown, 1994.

**Richter, Hans Peter.** *Friedrich.* Puffin Books, 1987.

**Serrailier, Ian.** *Escape from Warsaw.* Scholastic, 1991.

*For adults:*

**Aharoni, Zvi.** *Operation Eichmann : The Truth About the Pursuit, Capture and Trial.* John Wiley, 1997.

**Arendt, Hannah.** *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil.* Viking Press, 1963.

**Harel, Isser.** *The House on Garibaldi Street.* Frank Cass, 1997.

**Hausner, Gideon.** *Justice in Jerusalem.* Harper & Row, 1966.

**Pearlman, Moshe.** *The Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann.* Simon and Schuster, 1963.

**Robinson, Jacob.** *And the Crooked Shall Be Made Straight: The Eichmann Trial, the Jewish Catastrophe, and Hannah Arendt’s Narrative.* Macmillan, 1965.

*The TV movie, “The Man Who Captured Eichmann,” starring Robert Duvall as Adolf Eichmann, aired in 1996. A film entitled “Operation Eichmann” was released in 1961. Adolf Eichmann was also a character in the TV miniseries “War and Remembrance” (1989). A TV documentary, “The Trial of Adolf Eichmann,” first aired in April 1997; the videotape is available for purchase at <http://remember.org/eichmann/>. “The Specialist,” a French film (with English subtitles) about Eichmann, came out in 1999 and is available on tape.*

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## **LANDMARK WAR CRIMES TRIALS**

As devastating as wars have been over the course of centuries, some actions have been so heinous that even the reality of war cannot excuse them. Such actions have often called for the pursuit of justice across existing national boundaries.

LANDMARK WAR CRIMES TRIALS examines four such trials and describes the notorious events leading up to them as well as the testimony which brought these war criminals to final justice.

### **THE TRIAL OF ADOLF EICHMANN**

In the event now known as the Holocaust, the Nazis systematically exterminated some 6,000,000 Jews during the last years of World War II. Once the extent of that crime became known, it became imperative to bring as many as possible of its perpetrators to justice. But in the confusion of postwar Europe, finding the criminals was difficult, and many slipped through the authorities’ fingers. One of the most prominent was Germany’s “Minister of Death,” Adolf Eichmann, who eluded capture for years. How he was tracked down and brought to justice is this segment’s compelling story.



## Timeline

### Remembering the Holocaust

Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibór, Majdanek, Auschwitz -- these were once nothing more than the names of some inconspicuous Polish towns. Today they cause a shudder in those who know what these towns became. They were the sites of horrifying death camps in which the Nazis systematically murdered millions of Jews.

When the Nazis took over power in Germany in 1933, anti-Semitism had long been a major part of their program, and they soon began to discriminate against Jews, who were classified as “non-Aryans” and second-class citizens. Originally the Nazis contended that their aim was to rid the nation of Jews through a program of forced emigration, and for a time they did consider settling the Jews on the African island of Madagascar. But when the Germans conquered Poland in September 1939, more than 2 million Jews fell under their control and they forced the Polish Jews to move into ghettos. By the time Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, its troops were accompanied by special “action squads” that were ordered to shoot as many Jews as possible. When German officers began complaining that these operations were disturbing some soldiers, the “final solution” was devised and extermination camps were erected in Poland. Most of the early victims came from nearby locations, but eventually Jews from throughout Nazi-occupied Europe were sent to the killing centers, usually in crowded railroad cars.

Although other groups, including homosexuals and political dissidents, died in the camps, the gypsies were the only people besides Jews whom the Nazis marked for systematic extermination. Numbers are still hard to come by, but the generally accepted figure of Jews killed by war’s end is 6 million. The man put in charge of seeing to it that the “final solution” was a success was one Adolf Eichmann.

Ironically, it could be said that Hitler’s killing program was instrumental in the founding of Israel. World recognition of the Holocaust motivated sympathy for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in the Middle East. Once the Jews had a separate state, many Jews worldwide determined that the world should not forget the Nazi barbarity, and one of the main items on the agenda was the arrest of escaped Nazi war criminals. Adolf Eichmann, the “Minister of Death,” was high on the list.

When World War II was still going on, it is doubtful that anyone in the Allied nations were aware of who Eichmann was -- he was a bureaucrat, not one of the Nazi elite. But his trial was a landmark because it came at a time when Jews were coming to realize that the events of the Holocaust were receding in time and could be forgotten if the memories were not kept alive. With the trial of Adolf Eichmann, Jews could show the world what the Holocaust really was and what it meant.

### Important People

**Aharoni, Zvi** -- Mossad agent sent to Buenos Aires, Argentina, to investigate Eichmann’s whereabouts.

**Bach, Gabriel** -- Assistant prosecutor at the Eichmann trial; he insists on calling witnesses from each of the Nazi-occupied countries.

### Events of the Trial of Adolf Eichmann

**1947** -- Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal finds Eichmann’s wife and three sons living in Austria.

**1950** -- The Vatican issues Eichmann a refugee passport under the name Ricardo Klement.

**1956** -- Dutch Fascist Willem Sassen interviews Eichmann in Argentina and tapes the conversation.

**1957** -- The Israeli foreign office learns that Eichmann may be living in Argentina.

**April 1960** -- Mossad (see Vocabulary) concludes that Eichmann is indeed living in Buenos Aires.

**May 11, 1960** -- Israeli agents capture Eichmann. Two days later he signs a statement that he is willing to stand trial in Israel.

**May 23, 1960** -- Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion announces Eichmann’s capture.

**April 11, 1961** -- Eichmann’s trial begins.

**June 20, 1961** -- Eichmann takes the stand.

**August 1961** -- The defense rests.

**December 11, 1961** -- Eichmann is convicted of every major crime for which he was tried.

**December 15, 1961** -- Eichmann is sentenced to death by hanging.

**May 31, 1962** -- Eichmann is hanged at midnight.

### Other Events

**March 19, 1906** -- Eichmann is born in Solingen, Germany; his family later moves to Linz, Austria.

**April 1, 1932** -- Eichmann joins the Austrian Nazi party.

**November 1932** -- Eichmann joins the SS; he becomes a clerk in the intelligence branch but soon volunteers for the Department of Jewish Affairs.

**January 20, 1933** -- Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor of Germany.

**1935** -- The “Nuremberg Laws” are enacted in Germany (see Laws, Cases, and Legal Terms).

**March 12, 1938** -- In an event known as the “Anschluss,” Nazi troops march into Austria and Hitler annexes the country.

**September 1, 1939** -- World War II begins with the German invasion of Poland.

**June 22, 1941** -- German forces invade the Soviet Union.

**September 1941** -- The Jews of Germany are ordered to wear badges or armbands bearing a yellow star.

**January 20, 1942** -- Reinhard Heydrich and Eichmann host the Wannsee Conference, where they lay out the plan for the extermination of the Jews.

**May 1942** -- Heydrich is assassinated in Czechoslovakia.

**November 20, 1945** -- The world’s first international trial for crimes against peace and humanity begins in Nuremberg, Germany.

**October 1, 1946** -- The verdicts in the first Nuremberg trial are handed down. On October 16 ten of those convicted are hanged.

**May 15, 1948** -- The new state of Israel is born.

**Diamant, Marcus** -- An agent enlisted by Simon Wiesenthal to get information from Nazi wives. He secures a photograph of Eichmann from Eichmann’s former mistress.

**Eichmann, Adolf** -- Nazi official given first the task of deporting Jews from Austria, and then, during World War II, as Chief of the Jewish Office of the Gestapo, put in charge of “the final solution to the Jewish question.”

**Eitan, Rafi** -- Leader of the Eichmann kidnap team.

**Harel, Isser** -- Director of Mossad during the Eichmann capture; he goes to Buenos Aires and directs the operation from a distance.

**Hausner, Gideon** -- Lead prosecuting attorney at the Eichmann trial.

**Hermann, Lothar** -- A blind German-Jewish immigrant living in Argentina; he tips off the Israelis about Eichmann’s possible presence there.

**Heydrich, Reinhard** -- Chief of the German Reich Security Main Office; assigned to develop a “final solution to the Jewish question” in all of German-dominated Europe. He is assassinated in Czechoslovakia in May 1942.

**Himmler, Heinrich** -- Head of the Nazi SS and the Gestapo; minister of the interior and head of the concentration camp system. He commits suicide two days after his capture on May 21, 1945.

**Hitler, Adolf** -- Leader (Führer) of Germany from 1933 to 1945. Committed suicide on April 30, 1945.

**Hess, Rudolf** -- Commander of the Auschwitz extermination camp. Excerpts from his memoirs are read at the trial.

**Klement, Ricardo** -- Alias used by Eichmann.

**Landau, Moshe** -- Presiding judge at the Eichmann trial.

**Leibl, Veronica** -- The maiden name of Eichmann’s wife, who claims he was killed at the end of the war.

**Less, Avner** -- Eichmann’s Israeli interrogator.

**Mosenbacher, Maria** -- One-time mistress of Eichmann. She gives a photograph of Eichmann to Marcus Diamant.

**Sassen, Willem** -- Dutch Fascist who tapes an interview with Eichmann in 1956. The tape is a damning piece of evidence in the trial.

**Servatius, Robert** -- Eichmann’s defense attorney.

**Wellers, George** -- Witness at the Eichmann trial who testifies about the deportation of children from France.

**Wiesenthal, Simon** -- The most prominent hunter of Nazi war criminals in the postwar period.

### Vocabulary

**Anschluss** -- The Nazi occupation and annexation of Austria in 1938.

**Aryan** -- In Nazi racial theory, a term used to describe the “superior” race. Used to justify the oppression or extermination of “inferior” or “slave” races.

**concentration camp** -- A place of detention or punishment or, under the Nazis, extermination. Types of concentration camps were used by the Spanish in Cuba and by the British during the South African Boer War, but the term has come to be associated