



PRIMARY SOURCEBOOK SERIES

# THE HOLOCAUST

Jeff Hill



Foreword by  
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*OmniGraphics*

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## 4.7

**Poisoning the Minds of Children – 1935*****Text of “The Cuckoo and the Jew” by Helga Gerbling***

*The Nazi Party’s hateful rhetoric toward Jews became part of classroom instruction in German schools. Such lessons and other forms of propaganda turned a large number of German children into enthusiastic anti-Semites, as is shown in the following essay reprinted in the pro-Nazi newspaper Der Stürmer in 1935. Attributed to a nine-year-old girl named Helga Gerbling, this essay was praised by the newspaper’s editor as a clear indication that the girl was receiving proper classroom instruction.*

In school the other day we were talking about the Cuckoo. He is the Jew among birds; for in looks, deeds and behaviour he resembles him very much. His curved beak reminds us of the Jew’s hooked nose. His feet are small, that’s why he can’t run very well. This is very much like the Jew, who also can’t walk gracefully. When we call “Cuckoo, Cuckoo” he also scrapes and bows like the Jew merchant who always tries to be polite so that we Germans should buy from him. Both Jews, the one among the birds and the one among the humans, are parasites, which means to say that they want to become rich and fat at the expense of others. The female Cuckoo lays her eggs in the nests of other birds such as hedgesparrows and robin redbreasts and she wants them to brood them and bring up the little ones. (It’s funny that the Jew does not ask us to do that too.) As soon as the Cuckoo comes out of the egg he gets impudent. He snaps for the best morsels and always wants to have everything. He squeezes back the genuine little birds as soon as the parents come with dinner. He is envious and greedy. His motto is: self-interest before common weal! Just like the Jew who too thinks only of himself and his pocket. Only for his purse to be filled and himself to have a good time! When there is no longer enough room in the bird’s nest, then he tries to push the young birds out of their own home. He very often does throw a little one out. Just like the Jew wanted to do with us Germans. He came, an alien, into our “nest” and tried to drive us out. But we humans are not as stupid as the birds. We don’t let him do that to us and we throw the cheeky “Cuckoo” out of our land. We children in Roth do our bit too. Some of our class often stand in front of Baer’s shop and when people want to go in, we shout: “You ought to be ashamed, shopping at a Jew’s; fie be upon you!” Then the women blush crimson and go away. Well *Stürmer*, you like that, don’t you?

Heil Hitler!

In the name of Girls IVth Standard,

Helga Gerbling

Source: Gerbling, Helga, “The Cuckoo and the Jew,” *Der Stürmer* 32 (August 1935). Reprinted in *The Yellow Spot: The Outlawing of Half a Million Human Beings*, by Hensley Henson. London: Victor Gollancz, 1936.

## 4.8

### Anti-Semitism in Children's Storybooks – 1938

#### *Excerpt from The Poisonous Mushroom by Ernst Hiemer*

*Children's storybooks were used as another vehicle of anti-Semitic propaganda. The following excerpt is taken from a book published by Der Stürmer, a notorious disseminator of outrageous Nazi propaganda in Germany during the years of the Third Reich.*

Inge sits in the reception room of the Jew doctor. She has to wait a long time. She looks through the journals which are on the table. But she is [al]most too nervous to read even a few sentences. Again and again she remembers the talk with her mother. And again and again her mind reflects on the warnings of her leader of the BDM [League of German Girls]: "A German must not consult a Jew doctor! And particularly not a German girl! Many a girl that went to a Jew doctor to be cured, found disease and disgrace!"

When Inge had entered the waiting room, she experienced an extraordinary incident. From the doctor's consulting room she could hear the sound of crying. She heard the voice of a young girl: "Doctor, doctor leave me alone!"

Then she heard the scornful laughing of a man. And then all of a sudden it became absolutely silent. Inge had listened breathlessly.

"What may be the meaning of all this?" she asked herself and her heart was pounding. And again she thought of the warning of her leader in the BDM.

Inge was already waiting for an hour. Again she takes the journals in an endeavor to read. Then the door opens. Inge looks up. The Jew appears. She screams. In terror she drops the paper. Frightened she jumps up. Her eyes stare into the face of the Jewish doctor. And this face is the face of the devil. In the middle of this devil's face is a huge crooked nose. Behind the spectacles two criminal eyes. And the thick lips are grinning. A grinning that expresses: "Now I got you at last, you little German girl!"

And then the Jew approaches her. His fleshy fingers stretch out after her. But now Inge has her wits. Before the Jew can grab hold of her, she hits the fat face of the Jew doctor with her hand. Then one jump to the door. Breathlessly Inge runs down the stairs. Breathlessly she escapes the Jew house.

**Source:** Hiemer, Ernst. *Der Giftpilz (The Poisonous Mushroom)*. Nurnberg: Der Stürmer, 1938. Reprinted as Document 1778-PS in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Vol. 4. Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.

## 4.9

**Julius Streicher and the Anti-Semitic Newspaper *Der Stürmer*—1934***Text of an Article from Der Stürmer by Martin Froehling*

*Of all the pieces that comprised the Nazis' fearsome propaganda machine, perhaps no single part was as brutally effective as Der Stürmer, a weekly newspaper that specialized in crude and vicious condemnations of Jews. Helmed by Nazi Julius Streicher, the paper became enormously popular with young and poorly educated Germans who embraced its simple language, anti-Semitic cartoons, and lurid and hateful content. Today, it is still regarded by many as the most infamous newspaper in history. The following representative excerpt is from a 1943 issue of Der Stürmer.*

.... in all schools, in all influential offices of the Party, of the Armed Forces and of the authorities, only one sentence should be written on the walls like a Mene Tekel: Hate the Jew and his brood! But also hate everybody and everything connected and allied with the Jews—with sacred, burning hatred! And when the hour of revenge strikes, we shall not let ourselves be softened by sentimentality! Let us not forget what the Jew has done to humanity for thousands of years! Let us not forget that the Jew has to pay for all the misdeeds he has committed against humanity during thousands of years! Let us remember that the Jew himself has passed sentence upon himself in his own laws: An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! Let us oppose his criminal hatred with our great, sacred hatred! Let us remember that all the victims of Jewish hatred in German towns, in the graves of Katyn and Vinniza and all those mass graves which are still unknown today, the victims of the world war launched by the Jews, are crying out for revenge. When the hour of retribution strikes, our hearts must be and remain hard and must know no other sentiment and no other emotion. Juda must feel and realize that the hour of retribution and settlement has come, and that nothing will be forgotten and forgiven. Juda will then reap the hatred it has sown for centuries. Through this hatred Juda must perish.

Source: Froehling, Martin. Anti-Semitic Article, *Der Stürmer* 33 (12 August 1943). Reprinted as Document M-142 in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Supplement A. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.

## 8.7

**Heinrich Himmler Discusses “Extermination of the Jewish Race”  
– 1943***Excerpt from a Speech at the Meeting of S.S. Major-Generals*

*Heinrich Himmler was the head of the S.S., the military corps that ran the death camps, so he was perhaps the most prominent Nazi leader to be intimately involved in the logistics of the Holocaust. On October 4, 1943 (at which point the genocide was well underway), he addressed a meeting of S.S. officers at Posen, Germany, and discussed the “extermination of the Jewish race.” Himmler also notes the extreme secrecy that must be maintained about the Holocaust, comparing it to the silence that surrounded the murders that took place on the “Night of the Long Knives” in 1934, when a number of Nazi Party members were purged.*

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 30<sup>th</sup>, 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 1000. 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-Obergruppenfuehrer 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 for 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 ourselves 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.

Source: Himmler, Heinrich. Speech to S.S. Officers, October 4, 1943. Reprinted as Document 1919-PS in *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression*. Vol. 4. Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office, 1946.

## 15.2

## Bearing Witness – 1996

*Excerpt from an Interview with Holocaust Survivor David Mandel*

*In the following commentary, Holocaust survivor David Mandel recalls his family's experiences after the Holocaust. He touches on several reactions that were common among Holocaust survivors. His father, for example, struggled with a great deal of guilt because he had been unable to save the lives of five family members during those nightmarish years. Mandel himself coped with his horrible memories by building a new life for himself in the United States. As time passed, he also began to speak out about his wartime experiences, vowing to bear witness to the Holocaust so that such events might be avoided in the future. As he explains, part of his inspiration for speaking out came from a desire to refute the so-called Holocaust deniers—anti-Semitic extremists who say that the Holocaust never took place.*

It was a rough life for my dad, especially, having lost most of his family. I remember I noticed it more than ever—started to notice it in the D.P. [displaced persons] camp—how in the middle of the night he would cry out. He took on the responsibility that it was his fault. See, my sister, who was five years old, there was a gentile family who loved her very much, and they begged my father to have her stay with them [before the Mandels were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau]. And at the time my father thought about it, but he came to the decision, you know, that families have to stick together. No normal person would have thought at the time that in the twentieth century they would kill men, women, and even little children. [The sister died in a gas chamber along with her mother and three brothers.] Also, the fact that [upon arrival at the concentration camp] he sent my younger brother back to the mother—trying to help out my mother and his younger children, and [as a result] he sent him to his death. My father lived for thirty years after having survived the Nazi death camps...

We were lucky to have come to the United States. On July 15, 1946, we arrived in New York... Then after that we came to Pittsburgh, and we lived with our aunt. My father got a job as a carpenter. I got a job, and I went to night school to learn English. My brother went to continue on as a dental technician. And we started a new life. My father was matched up with a lady in Detroit whose husband passed on, and so we eventually moved to Detroit. My father remarried to a wonderful lady who comes from the same part of the world as we do, but she lived here

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David Mandel, Videotaped Interview conducted by Elissa Schosheim, 1 February 1996. Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, Beverly Hills, CA, USA.



for some thirty-odd years before [and therefore wasn't in Europe when the Holocaust took place]. She had her own children and also comes from a very religious home, and my father was religious. He was a God-fearing, very pious man....

And somehow I never married. And I moved eventually to Grand Rapids, Michigan. I went to work for a man in a men's store, I remember, [in] 1948 for \$25 a week. Eventually became his partner, and then I bought him out. And I enjoyed working. I kept busy. I kept my mind occupied. I took up golf. And I keep busy. I'm a very hyper person—I gotta keep going all the time. And I'm retired now to Florida....

For the first thirty-five years I didn't speak about the Holocaust, but I'm committed [now] to bear witness to what happened for all those who died. And the fact that there are people—deniers, revisionists—who claim that the whole thing is a hoax, and they're doing it while survivors are still alive, I have to speak up. Even though every time I speak, it pains me.

And I've made up my mind to speak to the youth, the future generations. They want to know. They are our future historians. They are our future voters. They are our future leaders. It's important that they have to know about the Holocaust, that they have to study the Holocaust. The Holocaust is part of history. It's important to mankind to know what took place. God forbid that it should ever happen again. Maybe by [my] being a witness, [others] can become witnesses to avert a Holocaust like this from ever happening again.

Source: Mandel, David. Videotaped interview conducted by Elissa Schosheim, 1 February 1996. Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, Testimony 11722.

### 15.3

#### “I Don't Know the Answer” – 1995

#### *Excerpt from an Interview with Holocaust Survivor Peter Hersch*

*Peter Hersch was born Pinchas Herskovics in 1930 in Loza, a town that was then in Czechoslovakia and later was annexed by Hungary. In 1944, when he was thirteen years old, his family was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where his mother and three younger siblings were killed. His father also likely died in Auschwitz. Hersch and his older sister were the only members of the family to survive the Holocaust. In the following passage from an oral interview conducted by the Shoah Visual History Foundation, Hersch recounts how a chance encounter delivered him from the Nazi gas chambers soon after his arrival at Auschwitz. This fateful event helped shape the atti-*

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Peter Hersch, Videotaped Interview conducted by Ruta Osborne, 2 July 1995. Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation Testimony 3658.

*tude that Hersch has developed toward the Holocaust—a mix of wonder at the fact that he survived and incomprehension that people were capable of willfully wreaking so much death and misery on other people.*

I was with my father ... and I don't know, somebody was watching over me. This woman walked up to me. And she asked me, "how old are you?" I said, "I'm thirteen." And she said quickly, she said "don't say you're thirteen. Say you're seventeen." And she was with the S.S. there, walking around, you know?

So I said to my father, "you know, she told me to say I'm seventeen." And he said, "say you're seventeen, if she told you." And that saved my life, you know, in a way, because they were walking around, the S.S., and asking "how old are you?" .... Everybody they were asking, you know? And they came to me, too. So of course I didn't look seventeen. I'm short, and I was with those clothes ... the [oversized] striped uniform. So I said I was seventeen. He looked me up and down and up and down, and he left me there, left me with my father.

So that was unbelievable. I mean, it was just luck that she walked over to me... She wasn't dressed in a uniform. She was walking around with these S.S. Whether she was [one of the soldier's] girlfriends—I don't know what it was....

What the Germans did to us, I can't forget. I cannot forget. And I still can't, for the life of me, understand how it could have happened. I cannot understand, and I—I don't know. I just don't know. Yet, I can't blame all the Germans. In the young generation, how can I say that it's their fault, too? I can't. But I've never been back to Germany since then, since I left.

I do want to, before I die, I do want to go back one day. And my sister wants to go back to Auschwitz to say Kaddish [the Jewish prayer for the dead] for my parents and my brothers and sisters because that's where they died.

I tried to survive—number one. I tried. I didn't give in. I never gave in for one minute. And I'm also lucky that I wasn't shot.... That I had this girl in Auschwitz coming to me and telling me to say that I'm older. Why would she say something like that to me?

So it's a miracle, anyway. I mean it's—I mean I don't know the answer. I don't know the answer. But I survived.

Source: Hersch, Peter. Videotaped interview conducted by Ruta Osborne, 2 July 1995. Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, Beverly Hills, CA, USA.

# GLOSSARY

## *Leading Figures of the Holocaust*

- Anilewicz, Mordecai** (1919-1943) – Leader of the Jewish resistance movement in the Warsaw Ghetto.
- Chamberlain, Charles Stewart** (1855-1927) – English author who praised Germanic peoples as genetically superior and characterized Jews as a drag on the advance of civilization; described by Adolf Hitler as the “prophet of the Third Reich.”
- Eichmann, Adolf** (1906-1962) – Nazi official with the paramilitary SS (*Schutzstaffel*) who played a leading role in implementing and executing the “Final Solution”—the Third Reich plan to exterminate all Jews in Europe.
- Frank, Anne** (1929-1945) – Jewish teenager who wrote *The Diary of a Girl*, a famous Holocaust memoir detailing her family’s desperate efforts to avoid capture by the Nazis.
- Frank, Hans** (1900-1946) – Nazi official who was head of the Government General in occupied Poland; his actions contributed to the murder of millions of Polish Jews and Poles during World War II.
- Gobineau, Joseph Arthur Comte de** (1816-1882) – French writer who promoted the idea of Aryan genetic superiority.
- Goebbels, Joseph** (1897-1945) – Deeply anti-Semitic Nazi leader who served as propaganda minister for the Third Reich.
- Göring, Hermann** (1893-1946) – Leading Nazi official who founded the Gestapo—Nazi Germany’s secret police—which played a major role in identifying Jews and other “enemies of the Third Reich” for forced deportation and murder.
- Heydrich, Reinhard** (1904-1942) – Head of the intelligence unit of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*), the paramilitary arm of the Nazi Party, and a major architect of the Holocaust.
- Himmler, Heinrich** (1900-1945) – Commander of the SS (*Schutzstaffel*), the paramilitary arm of the Nazi Party, and one of the leading organizers of the Holocaust; he

# CHRONOLOGY

*Note: This Chronology of Holocaust events includes a see reference feature. Under this arrangement, many events listed in the chronology include page references to relevant primary documents featured in the book.*

## 1871

The independent states of Germany are unified into the German Empire.

## 1889

April 20 Adolf Hitler is born in Braunau, Austria.

## 1914

August 2 The German army invades Luxembourg, beginning World War I.

## 1918

November 11 The Armistice is declared, ending the fighting in World War I.

## 1919

January Germany's first postwar election is held. The results lead to formation of the Weimar Republic.

June 23 The German National Assembly accepts the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. It requires Germany to accept responsibility for World War I, give up European territory and foreign colonies, reduce its military, and pay reparations to other nations. *See p. 37.*

September Adolf Hitler joins the German Workers' Party, soon to become the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) or Nazi Party. *See p. 43.*

## 1923

November 8-9 The Nazis stage a failed revolt against the German government. Hitler is arrested and convicted of treason but serves only eight months in prison. *See p. 51.*

# FURTHER READING

## *General/Overview*

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