

**WARNING: THIS CLIP EXPLAINS HOW HITLER AND HIS REGIME DEVELOPED "THE FINAL SOLUTION" AGAINST JEWISH PEOPLE. IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO WATCH, AND PROCESS. PROCEED WITH CAUTION.**

As World War II progressed, the Nazi Regime developed a "Final Solution" to deal with what they called "The Jewish Problem" (or, "The Jewish Question").

What was that problem? How to deal with Jews living in areas controlled by Hitler. The Nazis saw the problem through racial eyes. They sought to solve the "problem" with legal means.

But laws are not always moral, and the laws which Hitler's Nazis implemented were an example of this.

To prepare German citizens for the Third Reich's plan for Jews, Hitler's government published citizen handbooks. One of those books contains these words (translated into English):

*The Jewish Question is as old as the history of Jewry itself. From the days of antiquity to the present, peoples have always risen up to defend themselves against Jewish parasitism. The defense was often bloody.*

*Greater Germany is the first country in the world to find a legal way to separate from the alien Jewish people. In contrast to the views of the last century and of the so-called democrats of today, National Socialism sees the Jewish Question not as a religious problem, but rather as a racial question.*

*After Jews had been removed from the civil service and the press and cultural life had been cleansed, the most important step was the Nuremberg racial laws (see pages 36-47!). The world paid attention. It saw that it was no longer a matter of theory, that it was not merely the anti-Semitism of an earlier age, but rather that the final reckoning with Jewry had begun.*

*World Jewry also realized the inescapable fate that faced the Jewish people. For the first time in their history, the Jews faced a movement that transcended all borders and oceans, one that could no longer be stopped — regardless of whether other peoples resisted or hesitated.*

*The world-wide boycott movement against National Socialist Germany, the war agitation of the world Jewish press, and the gunshots by Jewish murderers that killed Wilhelm Gustloff and Ernst vom Rath, proved that.*

*National Socialism fights its battles to a victorious end with iron determination. It will solve the Jewish Question in a way it thinks right for the German people, regardless of the deadly enmity and songs of hatred on the part of the Jews and their democratic friends. It will do this legally, but without compromise, and finally.*

*It is no accident that the German people was called to do this. No other people gave the Jews such opportunity to carry out their drives as did the German people in the midst of its deepest need. No other people is strong enough to give the Jews the fate they deserve as is the German people!*

*As in so many other areas, National Socialist Germany has given the rest of the world the example of how to deal with the Jewish Question, as is shown by the racial laws of our ally Italy, and by the spread of the Jewish Question to many other countries. (From Max Eichler, *Du bist sofort im Bilde* [Erfurt: J. G. Cramer's Verlag, 1939] at pages 139-142 - online via the "[German Propaganda Archive](#)" at Calvin College.)*

These are harsh words. What happened as Hitler's plans took shape?

Killing vans, earlier used to end the lives of mentally ill people, were adapted to end the lives of Jews in Chelmno, Poland. Neighbors heard the screams of dying people, coming from the vans, and had choice names for those vehicles of death.

People (including police officers) who implemented Hitler's extermination plans believed what they were doing was legal. They were acting, as many later stated, upon orders from their national government:

*We were told by Captain Lange that the order for the extermination of the Jews came from Hitler and Himmler. And as police officers, we were drilled to regard any order from the government as lawful and correct. At the time, I believed the Jews were not innocent, but guilty. The propaganda had drilled it into us again and again that all Jews were criminals and sub-humans who were the cause of Germany's decline after the First World War.*

Even though killing of "sub-humans" had started, it was not yet systematic. That happened after a meeting at Wannsee, during January of 1942. "The Final Solution" was discussed, and a process decided-upon, at that meeting chaired by Reinhard Heydrich and recorded by Adolf Eichmann:

*As a first step in the Final Solution of the Jewish question, it is planned to put the Jews to work in the East. This will already eliminate a large number through natural wastage. The remnant will have to be dealt with appropriately.*

Living in the Lodz ghetto, Jewish people did not have enough food to appropriately sustain life. People traded clothes for butter, books for bread. Doing favors became a way of life.

Trust, in such a place, was not a common human characteristic. Jewish ghetto leaders often exploited their positions of power. Perhaps they thought such actions would give them life, when it came time for the Nazis to decide their fate. They were usually wrong about that.

It is estimated that 200,000 residents of the Lodz ghetto were ultimately murdered by the Nazis.

The situation for targeted people, however, worsened when Zyklon B (prussic acid) - first used against Soviet prisoners and ill camp inmates - was selected for use on a widespread basis. The chemical, which restricts a human's ability to breathe, causes a very anguished death.

A label for Zyklon B, warning "GIFTGAS!" (Poison Gas!), was introduced as evidence during the 1945 Nuremberg war crimes trial.

**See, also:**

**[Auschwitz and the Final Solution](#)**

**[Deportation and Gassing Begins](#)**

**[Eyewitness Stories from Auschwitz and Slovakia](#)**

**[Auschwitz Through the Eyes of Its Commandant](#)**

Credits:

Clip from *Auschwitz - Inside the Nazi State*, produced by the BBC and online, via PBS.

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### **Music**

Gorecki Symphony No 3

Arvo Pärt's "Spiegel im Spiegel"

Handel's Harpsichord Suite No. 4 In D Minor, HWV 437: Sarabande

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See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Final-Solution-and-Zyklon-B>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

