

Lesson 3 Nazi Germany

STUDENT HANDOUT - Concentration Camps

The first concentration camps were established in Nazi Germany after Hitler came to power in 1933. In the first few years of the regime, the concentration camps were instruments of terror, control, and punishment, used for the incarceration of political dissidents; later, people defined by the Nazis as “asocial elements” — including the homeless, beggars, Sinti-Roma, and hardened criminals — were also taken there. Beginning in the summer of 1938, many Jews were held in these camps. The number of incarcerated Jews in Germany reached its peak following the *Kristallnacht Pogrom*. After the war broke out, local resistance activists, civilians whom the Germans wanted to punish, and tens of thousands of Jews were sent to them. Hundreds of thousands of prisoners were killed in concentration camps throughout Europe as a result of inhumane living conditions, brutal punishment, and slave labor, which was a form of ongoing abuse.



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