

## LESSON: Overview of the Holocaust (4-Day)

### PACKET 7

Instructions: Examine the sources in this packet and answer the following questions.

- Which aspect of the Holocaust do these sources best represent?
  - Antisemitic Propaganda
  - Exclusion and Legal Discrimination
  - Physical Separation and Ghettos
  - Theft and Confiscation of Property
  - Deportation
  - Concentration Camps and Forced Labor
  - Mass Killing
- What do these primary sources reveal about the ways that ordinary people were active participants or passive witnesses to persecution and even murder during the Holocaust?

### Testimony from Norbert Wollheim

[Norbert Wollheim](#)

#### Transcript

“We had the first day of experience when we were marched to the tremendous area of the factories called Buna. It was a vast area of mud in these days; it was March, rain had come down mercilessly, and it was, there were no real roads, and so to walk was very difficult, took a lot of strength to do it. And then we were put, especially for newcomers, this was the destiny, you were destined to do the most difficult work, which was transport and digging, and this was not just done in a, in a leisurely way, but mostly running around with cement and iron and things like that and there are certain techniques how to handle, for instance, a transport of iron in order to protect yourself, and, but with cement it was terribly difficult because especially when you, when the rain came down, and these bags, these cement bags opened, then cement turned into cake and it covered your clothing, and your body, and...the other side of our so-called existence or life there was that there was hardly any chance to keep clean because we were not allowed to possess anything, and no, there was certainly no money. We had no toothbrushes, we had no knives, we had, the only thing they gave us was just a bowl to be used for the soup, to which they treated us, but nothing else. And, so, it was difficult, almost impossible to keep yourself clean, especially under these working

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conditions, and we were fully aware that without being able to keep clean, all kind of disasters could strike, diseases and so on. One of the things, for instance, we learned very fast was that when the cement bags, which had three different layers of paper opened, you could use the middle layer to, for, as a kind of toilet paper, or to protect your wounds and things like that. So, in other words, you come back to a very, very primitive kind of existence to which not everybody was used.”

US Holocaust Memorial Museum, Interview with Norbert Wollheim, February 18, 1992, RG-50.042.0032

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#### Photograph



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Instytut Pamięci Narodowej

In [this photograph](#), Heinrich Himmler, the head of the Nazi-SS, discusses building plans for the Buna-Monowitz factories. Max Faust, who is wearing a suit, was a building engineer for IG Farben, the large German company that paid the Nazis in order to use concentration camp prisoner labor in the company's factories. Prisoners at Buna-Monowitz, part of the Auschwitz camp complex, were forced to work at the IG Farben plant for the German war effort.

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#### Photograph



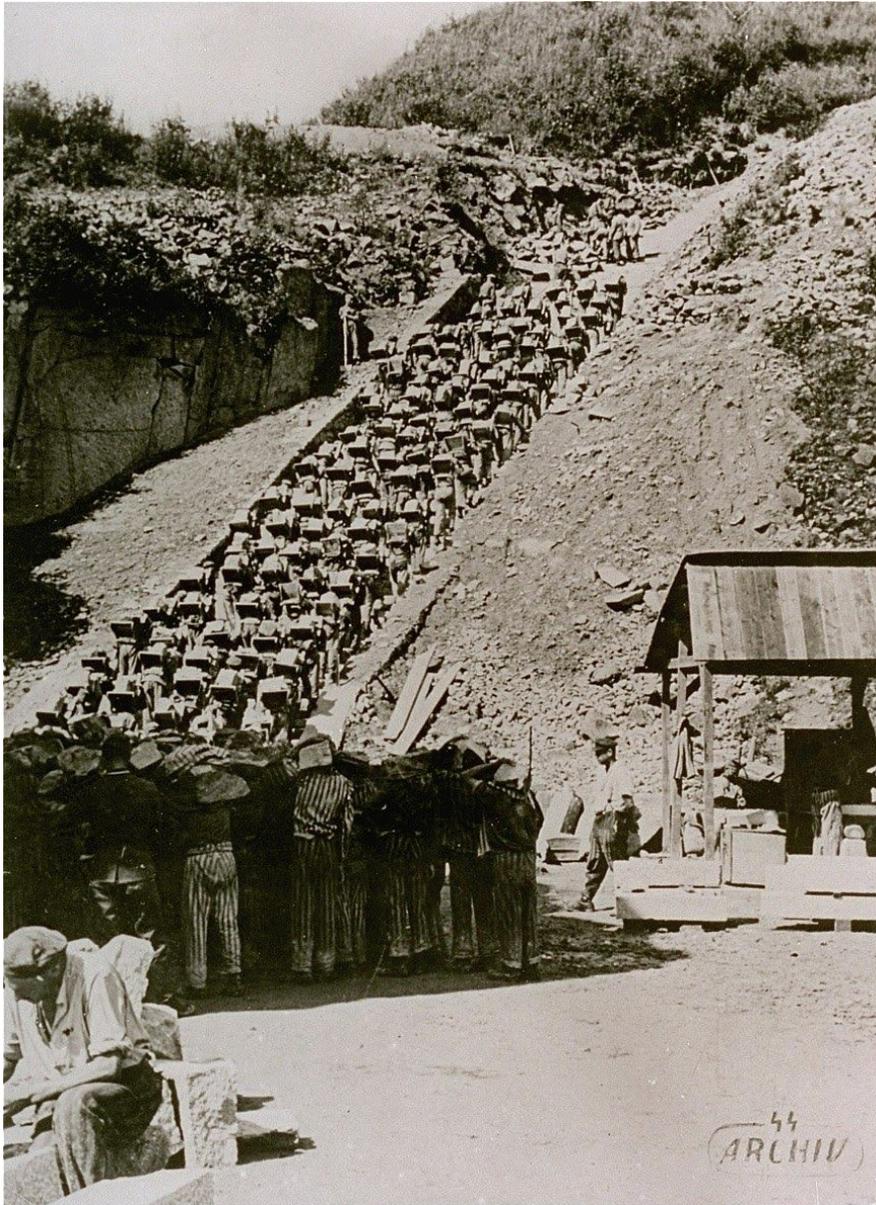
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Robert Schmuhl

[This photograph](#) was taken of prisoners during a roll call at the Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany sometime between 1938-1941. The prisoners wear striped uniforms with a prisoner number (used instead of the person's name) and a colored triangle sewn onto the front of the uniform. Different colored triangles indicated the "type" of prisoner. For example, Jewish prisoners were forced to wear yellow triangles and political opponents of Nazis wore red triangles.

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US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Archiv der KZ-Gedenkstaette Mauthausen

[This photograph](#), taken in 1942, shows prisoners from the Mauthausen concentration camp carrying granite blocks, each weighing as much as 100 pounds, out of a quarry. The prisoners referred to the staircase they climbed as the “stairs of death.” The quarry was owned by the city of Vienna and leased to a private company created by the Nazi-SS. Among other uses, the granite was used for construction projects in Vienna.