

The Holocaust In Memory of Millions Video Vocabulary and Questions

Vocabulary

Cognizant

Definition: Knowledgeable of something, especially through personal experience.

Context: The people who designed the Nazi death camps were cognizant of the intended use of the facilities.

Demoralize

Definition: To weaken the morale of; to upset or destroy the normal functioning of.

Context: Concentration camp prisoners were forced to complete difficult and pointless tasks in order to discourage and demoralize them.

Fascism

Definition: A political philosophy, movement, or regime that stands for a centralized autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation, and forcible suppression of opposition.

Context: Fascists believe in placing one's nation and race before oneself.

Ghetto

Definition: A quarter of a city in which members of a minority group live especially because of social, legal, or economic pressure.

Context: Jews in Nazi Germany were forced to live in ghettos.

Nazi

Definition: A member of a German fascist party controlling Germany from 1933 to 1945 under Adolf Hitler.

Context: The fascists who ruled Germany under Hitler were known as the Nazi Party.

Propaganda

Definition: The spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.

Context: Propaganda convinced many Germans that Hitler's lies about Jews were reality.

Questions

1. What factors led to Hitler and the Nazi Party taking power in Germany? Why do you think the German people supported their actions?
2. The Holocaust was a human tragedy on a global scale. Millions of lives were exterminated by Hitler and the Nazis, and many more people died trying to stop them. Do you believe it's possible that a similar tragedy could still happen in the world today, even though the human race has already experienced it before? Why or why not? Are similar, smaller events going on right now (and in the recent past)? If so, why do you think they are happening?
3. Imagine what it would have been like to be a German person your age during World War II. Do you think you would have been able to resist the propaganda and not join one of the many Hitler youth programs? Explain your response.
4. Anne Frank is famous for her statement that, despite her experiences during World War II, she still believed in the goodness of people. Knowing what you know about the events that transpired in Nazi concentration camps, do you have the same belief? Discuss the argument that the Nazi soldiers "were following orders" when they committed these war crimes. Discuss other factors that might also have contributed to their behaviors, such as propaganda and mob psychology.
5. Which do you think is a more effective way to learn about the Holocaust—through a careful analysis of historical facts or through listening to a wide selection of stories told by survivors? Does one of these methods offer a more realistic portrait of history? Explain your response.
6. It is said that we must learn about the past in order not to relive it. At the same time, however, we are told not to dwell in the past. How do you think these adages should or should not be applied to the Holocaust? Is one of them more applicable than the other? Can they both be true? Explain and defend your answers.