



**Kelvin Grove State College**  
*Humanities Department*

## **YEAR 12 MODERN HISTORY**

**INQUIRY TOPIC: UNIT 3 – NATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN THE  
MODERN WORLD: Nazi Germany and the Holocaust**

# **Independent Source Investigation**

**Student Name:** XXXXXXXXXXXXX

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# Historical Questions

## Key Inquiry Question

8/3/2020

To what extent is the survival of victims of the 'Final Solution' – implemented from 1941 – a contested form of resistance against the Nazi regime and the Third Reich?

## Sub-Questions

8/3/2020

1. What were the driving motives and ideologies behind the implementation of the 'Final Solution' by the Nazi regime?
2. What is the significance of acts of spiritual resistance in concentration camps during this period of the Holocaust?
3. What were the lived experiences of survivors of the 'Final Solution' at their liberation in 1945, what short- and long-term impact has the Holocaust had on their lives?
4. How does contestability arise concerning survival as a form of resistance of the 'Final Solution' and what are the implications of this?

## Rationale

In the autobiographical comic *Maus* by Art Spiegelman, a series of panels documents a conversation between the author and a Holocaust survivor. Spiegelman is asked whether he admires his father for his survival of Auschwitz concentration camp. When he tentatively answers in the affirmative, he is challenged, “Then you think it’s admirable to survive. Does that mean it’s NOT admirable NOT to survive?... it wasn’t the BEST people who survived, nor did the best ones die. It was RANDOM!” (Spiegelman, 1980). This debate captures the contestability surrounding the concept of survival as a form of resistance against the Nazi’s regime and the ‘Final Solution’ during the Holocaust, and piqued my interest in exploring this topic.

Some challenges in devising historical interpretations about the Holocaust is the sensitivity of the subject for many people today. It will be important for me to provide a breadth of victims’ perspectives, and ensure that their testimonies are appropriately represented for the purpose of this investigation. Furthermore, it is vital to include perpetrator perspectives from the time of the Holocaust, especially regarding the motives and ideologies driving the ‘Final Solution’, as recounts given after World War II may have been falsified in order to avoid punishment. The archives of Holocaust education centres such as Yad Vashem will prove useful in locating reliable primary sources and survivor testimonies.

At this stage, my tentative hypothesis is that whilst survival may be viewed as a form of resistance against the Third Reich and the ‘Final Solution’, the importance of spiritual resistance during the Holocaust should not be discounted.

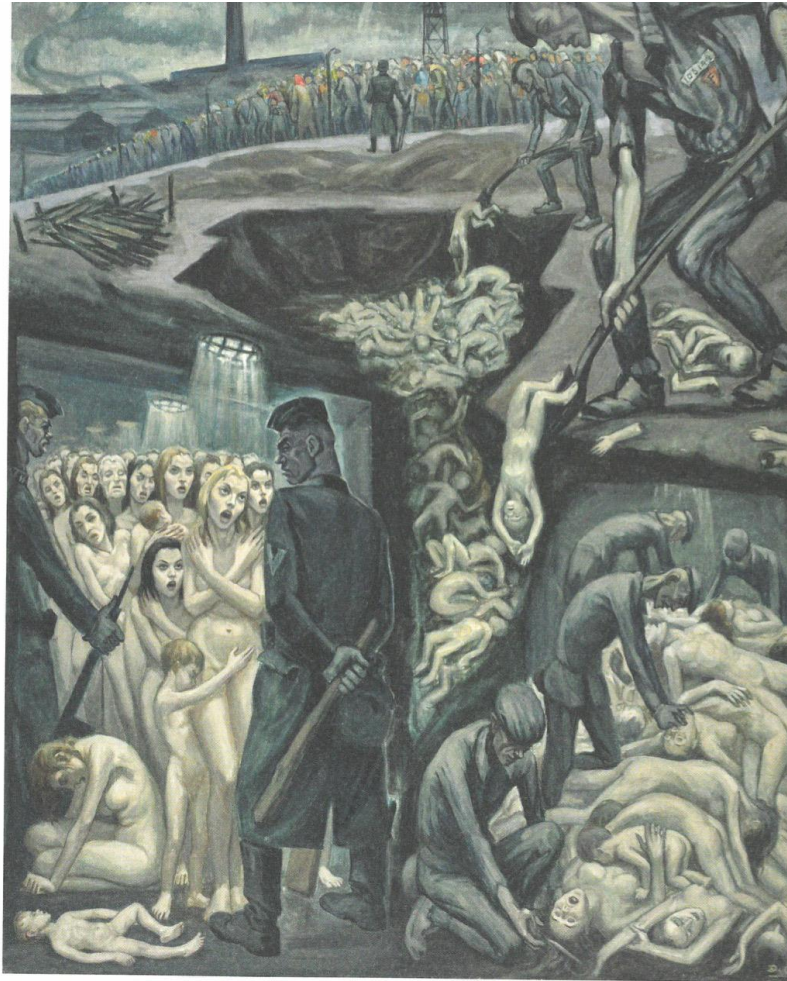
Word Count: 258

## Source Analysis and Interrogations

Source no. 1		
REFERENCE	Kershaw, I 2008, <i>Hitler, the Germans and the Final Solution</i> , Yale University Press, New Haven & London.	
Relevant sub-question(s)	AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit)	INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit)
1	<p>Despite the centrality of the Warthegau to the unfolding of what the Nazis called 'the Final Solution of the Jewish Question' – the systematic attempt to exterminate the whole of European Jewry – the precise course of development of Nazi anti-Jewish policy in the Warthegau, though mentioned in every account of the origins of the 'Final Solution' has not been exhaustively explored.</p> <p>To focus upon the Warthegau in the genesis of the 'Final Solution' can, however, help to contribute towards answering the central questions which have come to dominate scholarly debate on the emergence of systematic genocide: how the decision to wipe out the Jews of Europe came about, whether at the moment of German triumph in mid-summer 1941, or later in the year when the growing probability of prolonged war in the east ruled out as envisaged 'territorial solution'; Hitler's own role in the shift to a policy of outright genocide and whether the 'Final Solution' followed a single order or set of directives issued from Berlin as the culmination of a long-held 'programme' of the Nazi leadership, or unfolded in haphazard and piecemeal fashion, instigated by 'local initiatives' of regional Nazi bosses, improvised as a largely ad hoc response to the logistical difficulties of a 'Jewish problem' they had created for themselves, and only gradually congealing into a full-scale 'programme' for genocide.</p> <p>The deficiencies and ambiguities of the evidence, enhanced by the language of euphemism and camouflage used by the Nazis even among themselves when dealing with the extermination of the Jews, mean that absolute certainty in answering these complex questions can not be achieved...</p> <p>... On 17 October (1939) Hitler spoke to a small group of those leaders most directly concerned of a 'hard racial struggle' which did not allow any 'legal constraints' or comply with principles otherwise upheld. The new Reich territories would have to be purged 'of Jews, Polacks and rabble'...</p> <p>... It was at this juncture, however, in the summer of 1941, that talk began of new possibilities which might be contemplated. And the first evidence of such possibilities being envisaged can be witnessed in remarks issuing from the top echelon of the Warthegau administration. On 16 July 1941, the head of the Security Service (SD) in Posen, SS-Sturmabführer Rolf-Heinz Höppner – a man close to both Greiser and Koppe – sent to Adolf Eichman in the Reich Security Head Office in Berlin a summary, headed 'Solution of the Jewish Problem', of discussions, involving various agencies, in the Reich Governor's headquarters. A possible solution to the 'Jewish Question' in the Reichs-gau Wartheland had been broached... The next item addressed the issue of what to do about those Jews incapable of working. A new, ominous, note was struck, offering cynical rationalisation for genocide. 'There is the danger this winter', ran the minute, 'that the Jews can no longer all be fed. It is to be seriously considered whether the most humane solution might not be to finish off those Jews not capable of working by some sort of fast-working preparation. This would be in any event more pleasant than letting them starve'. Additionally, it was recommended that all Jewesses still capable of bearing children be sterilised, so that the 'Jewish Problem' would be completely solved within the current generation... (This is indicative of a functionalist perspective).</p>	<p>Ian Kershaw is a "highly acclaimed historian and professor of modern history" (Yale University Press, 2020). He is regarded as a "founding historian of the social history of the Third Reich" (Yale University Press, 2020), and therefore may be considered a highly reliable authority on the Nazi regime. His publication <i>Hitler, the Germans and the Final Solution</i>, a secondary source, is the product of "three decades of meticulous historiographical research" (Yale University Press, 2020); an extremely trustworthy source.</p> <p>This source explores the contestation surrounding the motives and ideologies of the Nazi regime that culminated in the implementation of the 'Final Solution to the Jewish Question' from 1941, and thus is highly useful to this inquiry. It was written for a contemporary audience with a historical, informative purpose, though its perspective implicitly privileges the 'functionalist' argument that the systematic extermination of the European Jewry was borne of "a cynical rationalisation for genocide" (Kershaw, 2008), as a response to practical barriers, rather than the 'intentionalist' perspective that the 'Final' Solution' was a purely ideological goal of Hitler and the Nazi regime.</p> <p>Word Count: 165</p>

	<p>By July 1941, events elsewhere were already pushing German policy towards the Jews strongly in the direction of genocide (<i>This is indicative of a functionalist perspective</i>). The preparations for the 'war of annihilation' with the Soviet Union marked, it has been noted, a 'quantum jump' into genocide. Certainly, a genocidal climate was now present as never before. But orders for a general killing of Jews were, recent research indicates, not, as is often presumed, transmitted orally by Heydrich to the leaders of the Einsatzgruppen before the invasion of the Soviet Union. The Einsatzgruppen did not initially behave in a unified fashion, and there was a gradual escalation of killing during the first weeks of the campaign. Only after clarification of the tasks of the Einsatzgruppen had apparently been sought and provided by Himmler in August 1941 was there a drastic intensification of the slaughter of all Jews, irrespective of age or sex. Outside the Soviet Union, too, the obvious impasses in anti-Jewish policy were, from a number of differing directions, now developing a rapid, accelerating, momentum towards outright and total genocide.</p>	
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Source no. 2		
REFERENCE		
Sieradzka, A 2018, <i>David Olère</i> , Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Oświęcim.		
Relevant sub-question(s)	AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit)	INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit)
2, 3, 4	<p>When David Olère returned home in June 1945, ‘little was left of him other than his eyes’, wrote his son Alexandre. He was quite exhausted and emaciated. He was unable to eat, and unable to say what he had experienced. When he tried to tell his wife what he had seen in the Auschwitz crematoria, she was sure he had lost his mind. ‘He didn’t have the words to describe it, though he spoke five languages.’</p> <p>Instead he drew... All his later life he devoted to giving testimony, to drawing and painting what he had experienced in Auschwitz... His determination to reveal every detail is today appreciated by historians, who use his sketches to help find answers to various questions concerning that particular process of mass extermination...</p> <p>...His son, Alexandre, recalled: ‘Life was not easy... He remained behind the barbed wire and we, on the outside, could not reach out through that barbed wire to him.’...</p> <p>...“I must do everything to live, to be able later to tell people what I experienced here.” Jaakov Silberberg...</p> <p>... David Olère made two drawings of the work he had to carry out at the mass graves behind bunkers I and II in the spring of 1943, soon after his arrival at the camp...</p>	<p>This secondary source may be deemed a reliable biography of Olère’s experiences, which are reflective of the national lived experiences of survivors of the ‘Final Solution’. It was published by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in 2018, but contains direct quotations from victims such as <i>Sonderkommando</i> member Jaakov Silberberg (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2018), which may be considered primary perspectives on the Holocaust. The publication displays a comprehensive collection of David Olère’s works, and the accompanying text was written by art historian Agnieszka Sieradzka of the Collections Department of the State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 2020).</p> <p>The publication is intended for a contemporary audience and privileges David Olère’s perspective through its inclusion of his visual testimony of the horrors of Auschwitz. In emotive language, it details his lived experiences after liberation, explicitly suggesting that whilst he was physically free, mentally “he remained behind the barbed wire” (Sieradzka, 2018), touching upon the contestability surrounding the extent to which survival of the ‘Final Solution’ represents a triumph over the Nazi regime. However, the inclusion of Jaakov Silberberg’s conviction that “I must do everything to live, to be able later to tell people what I experienced here” (Silberberg, n.d.), corroborated with David Olère’s purpose to “reveal every detail... appreciated by historians” (Sieradzka, 2018), – as seen in his artwork depicting the gruesome tasks the <i>Sonderkommando</i> were forced to carry out (David Olère, n.d.) – is indicative of a balanced perspective on this topic. Thus, this source is quite useful in exploring the contestability that is the focus of this inquiry.</p> <p>Word Count: 237</p>



BEZ TYTUŁU / UNTITLED, OLEJ, PŁÓTNO / OIL, CANVAS, 91,5 × 72 CM, FRANCJA / FRANCE 1960-1980,  
COLLECTION OF THE YAD VASHEM ART MUSEUM, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL



Source no. 3		
<b>REFERENCE</b>	Himmler, 1942, <i>Order for the Completion of the "Final Solution" in the Government General</i> , cited in <i>Documents on the Holocaust</i> 1999, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.	
<b>Relevant sub-question(s)</b>	<b>AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES</b> <b>Source work (Does not count towards word limit)</b>	<b>INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES</b> <b>Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit)</b>
1	<p><b>Order by Himmler On July 19, 1942, for the Completion of the "Final Solution" in the Government-General</b></p> <p>I herewith order that the resettlement of the entire Jewish population of the Government-General be carried out and completed by December 31, 1942.</p> <p>From December 31, 1942, no persons of Jewish origin may remain within the Government-General, unless they are in collection camps in Warsaw, Cracow, Czestochowa, Radom, and Lublin. All other work on which Jewish labor is employed must be finished by that date, or, in the event that this is not possible, it must be transferred to one of the collection camps.</p> <p>These measures are required with a view to the necessary ethnic division of races and peoples for the New Order in Europe, and also in the interests of the security and cleanliness of the German Reich and its sphere of interest. Every breach of this regulation spells a danger to quiet and order in the entire German sphere of interest, a point of application for the resistance movement and a source of moral and physical pestilence.</p> <p>For all these reasons a total cleansing is necessary and therefore to be carried out. Cases in which the date set can not be observed will be reported to me in time, so that I can see to corrective action at an early date. All requests by other offices for changes or permits for exceptions to be made must be presented to me personally.</p> <p>Heil Hitler!</p> <p>H. Himmler</p> <p>NO-5574.</p>	<p>This source is primary, a translation of orders issued by Himmler, Reich Leader of the SS, who is corroborated to have been a powerful figure of the Nazi regime (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.; Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). Thus, this source represents an authentic perpetrator perspective on the Nazi ideologies underpinning the 'Final Solution', explicitly stating that without "ethnic division of races" (Himmler, 1942), the German sphere of interest would be endangered by a "moral and physical pestilence" (Himmler 1942).</p> <p>The source is very useful as it was addressed to Nazi officials, and Himmler has adopted a persuasive tone in justifying his orders for the 'Final Solution', promoting Nazi ideologies of antisemitism and belief in a superior Aryan race.</p> <p>Significantly, Himmler's order contests the 'functionalist' perspective of Kershaw's work (Kershaw, 2008), implicitly privileging an 'intentionalist' perspective on the 'Final Solution', which asserts that this systematic genocide was provoked by the Nazi ideals of racial "cleanliness" (Himmler, 1942). However, Kershaw's statement regarding the "language of euphemism and camouflage used by the Nazis... when dealing with the extermination of the Jews" (Kershaw, 2008), is strongly corroborated by Himmler's order, which is disguised as one for "resettlement of the entire Jewish population" (Himmler, 1942), and his ambiguous reference to the "total cleansing... to be carried out" (Himmler, 1942).</p> <p><b>Word Count: 192</b></p>




Source no. 4		
REFERENCE	Mashbaum, Y 2020, <i>Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust</i> , Yad Vashem, viewed 13 March 2020, < <a href="https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/spiritual-resistance-during-the-holocaust.html">https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/general/spiritual-resistance-during-the-holocaust.html</a> >.	
Relevant sub-question(s)	AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit)	INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit)
2, 4	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>This article will introduce the concept of spiritual resistance during the Holocaust and present ways in which the lessons learned from such unarmed resistance can be taught in the classroom.</p> <p>By introducing students to examples of spiritual resistance, the teacher can facilitate discussions on how people survived during the Holocaust, and the personal values that contributed to their fight for survival.</p> <p>In Holocaust terminology, “spiritual resistance” refers to attempts by individuals to maintain their humanity and core values in spite of Nazi dehumanization and degradation. Such unarmed resistance came in many forms, religious and non-religious, cultural, and educational. It proved that physical survival was not the only decisive quality of a person and it certainly was not the only matter of importance even to people in the most dire conditions.</p> <p>While this article presents several examples of such resistance, its aim is to present a basis for a more general discussion on the global issues of morality, humanity, and core personal values.</p> <p><b>What was Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust?</b></p> <p>During the years of the “Final Solution” between 1942 and 1945, Jews and several groups of non-Jews targeted by the Nazi regime were interned, enslaved, humiliated, and exterminated in ghettos, concentration camps, and death camps. Finding food, staying warm, providing a roof over their heads, and taking care of their families were difficult challenges that they had to meet on a daily basis. Nazi restrictions and modes of degradation were definitely aimed to physically destroy. However, the isolation of ghetto life was intended to incur social separation in addition to controlling and monitoring Jews. It was under these circumstances that some Jews “found within themselves the inner strength to examine their situation and to try and find meaning in the events that controlled their very existence.”<sup>1</sup></p>	<p>This extract is taken from an article published by Yad Vashem, an internationally recognised authority regarding the Holocaust. It defines spiritual resistance as “attempts by individuals to maintain their humanity and core values in spite of Nazi dehumanization and degradation” (Mashbaum, 2020), corroborating with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.). Yad Vashem’s self-proclaimed mission statement being to educate the younger generations regarding the Holocaust (Shalev, 2020), the purpose of this source is clearly informative. Therefore, it presents an incredibly reliable description of the Holocaust.</p> <p>This source provides a highly useful secondary perspective, particularly regarding the significance of spiritual resistance during the Holocaust. It asserts that “physical survival was not the only decisive quality of a person and it certainly was not the only matter of importance even to people in the most dire conditions... spiritual resistance was not only a struggle against, but a struggle for... humanity... and for life” (Mashbaum, 2020), implicitly contesting survival as an active form of resistance against the Nazi regime, when compared to spiritual resistance.</p> <p>Word Count: 164</p>

	<p>Others established cultural programs in ghettos and concentration camps as they realized that physical sustenance would not be the sole route to survival. Such religious, cultural, and educational activities are termed "spiritual resistance," for resistance is not only the struggle against, but it is also the struggle for. In ghettos and camps, Jews struggled for humanity, for culture, for normalcy, and for life.</p>	
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Source no. 5		
<b>REFERENCE</b>	<p><i>The Anguish of Liberation: Nachum Bandel, Rita Weiss, Miriam Akavia, Alisa-Lusia Avnoh, Herta Goldman and Walter Zwi Bacharach</i> n.d., DVD, Belfilms Ltd., Ayelet Heller Producers: Liat Benhabib, Noemi Schory, Liran Atzmor.</p> <p>Accessed on 15 March 2020 via <a href="https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/video-testimonies.html">https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/video-testimonies.html</a></p>	
<b>Relevant sub-question(s)</b>	<p><b>AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES</b></p> <p><b>Source work (Does not count towards word limit)</b></p>	<p><b>INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES</b></p> <p><b>Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit)</b></p>
3, 4	<p>The Anguish of Liberation: Nachum Bandel, Rita Weiss, Miriam Akavia, Alisa-Lusia Avnoh, Herta Goldman and Walter Zwi Bacharach</p> <p><i>Transcript:</i></p> <p><b>Rita Weiss:</b> "I couldn't imagine... By then I was indifferent. I always say it all came too late. I didn't know how to be happy anymore, I wasn't happy and didn't feel this life was worth anything."</p> <p><b>Miriam Akavia:</b> "My bones stuck out from under my skin. All my joints were full of pus – my knees and elbows, my throat... They thought it was diphtheria; it wasn't, it was the onset of death. Again, I was there somewhere, with some Czech boy and some people, I don't know, next to me was a toilet bowl, people had diarrhea, it was living hell. Suddenly Lusia came and said: "The war's over." I still remember the feeling, I thought, "Now? What for? It's no longer possible to live, there's nothing anymore. Where were they before? What's the use of it now?"</p> <p><b>Walter Zwi Bacharach:</b> I was walking with my brother, we were staggering along the road. At a certain point, five Americans came towards us. They stopped – this picture will stay with me til the day I die – they stopped, I think about 100 meters from us. They didn't take another step and we stopped. I can see their faces they simply did not grasp it. I think it was one of their first encounters with the German horror in our image. One of them walked towards me – I was the younger one – and he wanted to do a good deed. He took one of those things he had full of brandy, and poured it into my mouth, a person who hadn't eaten since time immemorial. That was the end of me; I collapsed on the spot. I don't know what happened with my brother, what he did, I know this: I woke up in an American field hospital.</p> <p><b>Alisa-Lusia Avnon:</b> They gave us their battle rations. People grabbed them and started eating, and they were fatty – those cans, the battle rations. And then dysentery broke out. After liberation, 20, 000 more died there. It was terrible. And my sister didn't want to live at all; she really didn't. She said in so many words that there was nothing to live for, and Mother's gone. I said: "But Father's alive." She didn't want to, and would not respond.</p>	<p>This source is of fair reliability. It contains filmed testimonies of Holocaust survivors regarding their lived experiences upon liberation, and thus offers a primary perspective, although the subjectivity of living memory somewhat discounts its reliability. It was accessed via an online platform by Yad Vashem, an institution whose motive is to raise the international historical consciousness regarding the Holocaust, and is considered the "ultimate source for Holocaust education, documentation, and research" (Yad Vashem, 2020).</p> <p>This source provides extremely useful insight into the devastating impact the Holocaust had on survivor's lives, and how this implicitly suggests the contestability of survival as a form of resistance against the Nazi regime.</p> <p>It details a range of survivor perspectives, each a unique account of an individual's liberation. These testimonies are bound together by the national lived experiences of the Third Reich, namely the struggles endured by survivors in their return to life. It is explicit that the great loss they experienced led many to question the value of their own lives – Rita Weiss feels that liberation "came too late... (She) didn't feel this life was worth anything" (Weiss, n.d.). These sentiments are corroborated by Miriam Akavia, who, upon hearing of her freedom, thought, "It's no longer possible to live, there's nothing anymore... What's the use of it now?" (Akavia, n.d.).</p> <p>Word Count: 209</p>

**Herta Goldman:** Slowly I was told that there was nobody left, none of mine remained, I was left alone. My hope that I have a family, that I have someone to go back to – all those years I prayed I would not remain alone in the world – that hope vanished, and despair set in.

**Nachum Bandel:** The truth is that we didn't know, because the whole time... they told us there, in Auschwitz, that evening we already knew: "You see the chimneys over there? All those who went to the left didn't survive." But we didn't believe it; we believed that maybe someone was left. The truth is that the whole time I thought of one thing only: Maybe someone would survive, that I might have a family. The truth is that no one survived. Neither my mother, nor my brother, not my uncle, not my grandfather... We had a large family. No one came back.

Source no. 6		
REFERENCE	Bergen-Belsen, Germany, Women survivors receiving clothing, April 1945 1945, Photograph, British Army, viewed 13 March 2020, < <a href="https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&amp;item_id=100086&amp;ind=8">https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&amp;item_id=100086&amp;ind=8</a> >.	
Relevant sub-question(s)	AUTHENTICATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Source work (Does not count towards word limit)	INTERROGATION OF EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES Analysis and Evaluation (Does count towards word limit)
3	 <p>Bergen-Belsen, Germany, Women survivors receiving clothing, April 1945.</p> <p>On the right, standing - Ita Deutsch (later Hoffman), to her left - her sister Friedel Deutsch, who died of typhus three days after the photograph was taken.</p>	<p>This source is a primary photograph taken at Bergen-Belsen camp, Germany, after its liberation in 1945. It is not a typical photograph of this time; rather than evidence of the crimes committed by the Nazi regime, it depicts “women survivors receiving clothing” (Yad Vashem, 2020) in their return to life. It was taken by the British Army and therefore is likely to be biased in favour of the relief services offered by the liberators. The focus of the photograph is a woman wearing a crumpled, makeshift garment who gratefully receives a dress (<i>Bergen-Belsen, Germany, Women survivors receiving clothing</i>, 1945). The photograph marginalises the great suffering undergone by survivor’s at their liberation – for example, its subject photograph died three days after it was taken (Yad Vashem, 2020) – by portraying this hopeful scene. Hence, it should not be examined in isolation, the message it implicitly portrays being only of moderate reliability, greatly contesting US army chaplain Klausner’s assertion, based upon his experiences in Dachau, that survivors were “liberated but not free” (Grobman, 1993).</p> <p>However, this source may be considered useful as it explicitly depicts suffering of the victims of the Holocaust through dehumanisation – being robbed of their dignity through lack of necessities such as clothing – and the effect of starvation, evident in Friedel Deutsch’s thin arms (<i>Bergen-Belsen, Germany, Women survivors receiving clothing</i>, 1945). This is corroborated with Sieradzka’s description of David Olère as “exhausted and emaciated” (Sieradzka, 2018) upon liberation.</p> <p>Word Count: 214</p>

## Critical Summary of Evidence

The sources analysed and evaluated in this task provide highly useful evidence with which to form a response to the historical questions posed.

Regarding sub question 1, sources 1 and 3 are exceedingly useful for gleaning a well-rounded insight into the motives and ideologies behind the 'Final Solution', a systematic genocide of the European Jewry and other select minorities under the Nazi regime. Source 1, a secondary source by Third Reich historian Ian Kershaw promotes a functionalist perspective, stating that events and logistical challenges were "pushing German policy towards the Jews strongly in the direction of genocide" (Kershaw, 2008). This may be contrasted with source 3, a highly relevant primary document by Himmler that reliably represents Nazi ideologies regarding the 'Final Solution'. Through its justification of the Nazi party's subsequent actions, it strongly supports the intentionalist perspective that the 'Final Solution' was motivated by ideologies of 'racial purity' underpinning the Nazi regime (Himmler, 1942). Thus, it may be theorised that a combination of factors led to the official orders for the 'Final Solution', both the practical barriers presented by the German custody of a large number of Jewish prisoners, and the racist ideologies integral to the Nazi regime.

The significance of spiritual resistance during the 'Final Solution', as well as the lived experiences of survivors of the Holocaust, were well documented in several sources studied. Source 4, a secondary article published by the internationally recognised Holocaust centre Yad Vashem, a highly trustworthy source, discusses the importance of spiritual resistance, the processes by which victims of the Holocaust attempted to "maintain their humanity and core values" (Mashbaum, 2020). This may be corroborated with the experiences of David Olère, who strove to create artworks even whilst in Auschwitz concentration camp, as detailed in Source 2 (Sieradzka, 2018). Further, the suffering that pervaded survivors return to life is widely corroborated (Sieradzka, 2018; *The Anguish of Liberation: Nachum Bandel, Rita Weiss, Miriam Akavia, Alisa-Lusia Avnol, Herta Goldman and Walter Zwi Bacharach*, n.d.; *Bergen-Belsen, Germany, Women survivors receiving clothing*, 1945), through irrefutable survivor testimonies (*The Anguish of Liberation*, n.d.), primary photographs that provide visual evidence for the emaciation of the survivors (*Bergen-Belsen, Germany, Women survivors receiving clothing*, 1945) and secondary documentation (Sieradzka, 2018). This brings into light the contestability surrounding survival as a true victory over the Nazi regime, in light of the trauma survivors faced (Sieradzka, 2018; *The Anguish of Liberation*, n.d.). However, as proclaimed by inmate Jaakov Silberberg during his time in the camps, "I must do everything in order to live, to be able later to tell people what I experienced here" (Jaakov Silberberg, n.d.). This quote is a primary source promoting a victim's perspective of the 'Final Solution', highly useful in relation to this sub-question. It supports the conclusion that bearing witness in the aftermath of the Holocaust may be recognised as a form of resistance by survivors.

Based on this range of evidence, an initial hypothesis may be formed in response to the key inquiry question. The survival of the victims of the 'Final Solution' is only somewhat contested as a form of active resistance to the Nazi regime, and spiritual resistance of its victims is of enduring significance. Whilst many survivors suffered greatly in their return to life, their mere survival undermined the Nazi goals for complete extermination of the Jewish population, and further, their testimonies may be seen as a form of resistance in promoting remembrance of the Holocaust. To examine this topic in greater detail, more survivors' testimonies could be explored, as well as primary documents promoting perpetrator perspectives such as those from the Wannsee Conference in 1942. However, this hypothesis reached upon initial inquiry is a sound one.

Word Count: 554

Total Word Count: 1993



## Reference List

*The Anguish of Liberation: Nachum Bandel, Rita Weiss, Miriam Akavia, Alisa-Lusia Avnoh, Herta Goldman and Walter Zwi Bacharach* n.d., DVD, Belfilms Ltd., Ayelet Heller Producers: Liat Benhabib, Noemi Schory, Liran Atzmor. Accessed on 15 March 2020 via <https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/video-testimonies.html>

Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum 2020, *Agnieszka Sieradzka*, Oświęcim, viewed 15 March 2020, <[http://auschwitz.org/en/contact/agnieszka-sieradzka,38.html?id\\_dzialu=6](http://auschwitz.org/en/contact/agnieszka-sieradzka,38.html?id_dzialu=6)>.

*Bergen-Belsen, Germany, Women survivors receiving clothing, April 1945* 1945, Photograph, British Army, viewed 13 March 2020, <[https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item\\_id=100086&ind=8](https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item_id=100086&ind=8)>.

Grobman, A 1993, *Rekindling the Flame: American Jewish Chaplains and the Survivors of European Jewry, 1944-1948*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit.

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