



1. Title: The significant of train to understand the Holocaust

2. Knowledge and didactic objectives

Objectives and knowledge that would be developed with this activity.

- Identify and understand the economic, social and cultural changes brought about by technological advances throughout history.
- Technological revolutions and work organization.

3. Timing

Duration of activity. Approximate sessions. Estimated time.

Three one-hour session, approximately.

4. Grouping of students

Individual, couples, small groups, large group.

5. Historical thinking skills

Point out the historical thinking skills that would be developed with the activity.
Historical thinking/reasoning model (source and evidence, historical argumentation, change and continuity, causes/consequences).

6. Development or sequence of the activity

To explain how the activity is developed, the phases of the teaching-learning process, the steps that students must follow and the role of the teacher in each of the sessions.

Didactic sequence:

1. Introduction. The emergence of the railway in England in the 18th century was key to understanding the improvement of communications, the expansion of the industrial revolution and the shortening of times in the movement of people and goods. In the 19th century, an extensive railway network was created in Europe and other parts of the world. This consolidated the capitalist economy and the colonial markets of the European powers. The origins and evolution of the railway until the

beginning of the 20th century are explained.

2. Presentation of contents. Using maps and texts by Holocaust survivors, the railway network on the European continent at the beginning of the Second World War is analysed. And how it facilitated the movement of troops, supplies, etc. Small working groups are set up for students to investigate the period, the context of the war and the existing vehicles (animal and mechanical traction).
3. Reflection on what has been learned. After the group tasks have been shared, doubts are discussed, and conclusions are proposed. Emphasis is also placed on correcting erratic preconceptions about everyday life, transport and mobility a century ago in Europe. It is checked whether and to what extent the initial objectives have been achieved, as well as possible improvements or shortcomings to be improved in the future.
4. Application of what has been learned. In three ways. Concepts, chronology and vocabulary about Europe in the 1930s and 1940s are consolidated. As a prior step to acquiring skills with regard to the elaboration of transport routes, communication nodes, times and quartermaster needs. Finally, attention is paid to the values of historical empathy with regard to the Shoah, the anti-Semitic ideology that generated it and the contribution of the railway convoys in making it possible.

Session 1. Commentary on texts, maps and photographs that provide a spatial and temporal framework for understanding the situation analysed, as well as the planning of the Final Solution and its implementation. They contain primary and secondary sources to introduce the activities.

Session 2. Analysis and commentary of documentary films about the Holocaust. With testimonies of victims, executioners and witnesses, including some Jewish survivors of extermination camps, SS agents and railway workers

in Poland. This would emphasise the need for oral history and interviews with protagonists of the events when analysing recent history.

Session 3. Literature on genocide and concentration camps. The work of prominent European writers who survived the Nazi camps provides an insight into the daily life of the prisoners. How they got to the camps, what their work was, why they were able to survive or, in exceptional cases, even escape. Based on objective facts, the memories provide a literary vision, in the form of diaries, with witnesses from Italy, Spain and Hungary.

7. Assessment techniques and instruments

How? When? and what to evaluate?

Evaluation criteria

- Understand the impact of technological advances and their use for violent purposes.
- Work with primary textual and audio-visual sources to understand the different roles in the Holocaust.
- Reinforce ethical and democratic values, raising awareness of Jewish genocide and extermination during the Second World War.

Evaluation instruments

- Portfolio of students' written productions.
- Direct observation of oral presentations and guided discussions.

8. Complementary resources (web links, bibliography for students, visits to heritage elements, press news, videos, documentaries, etc..).

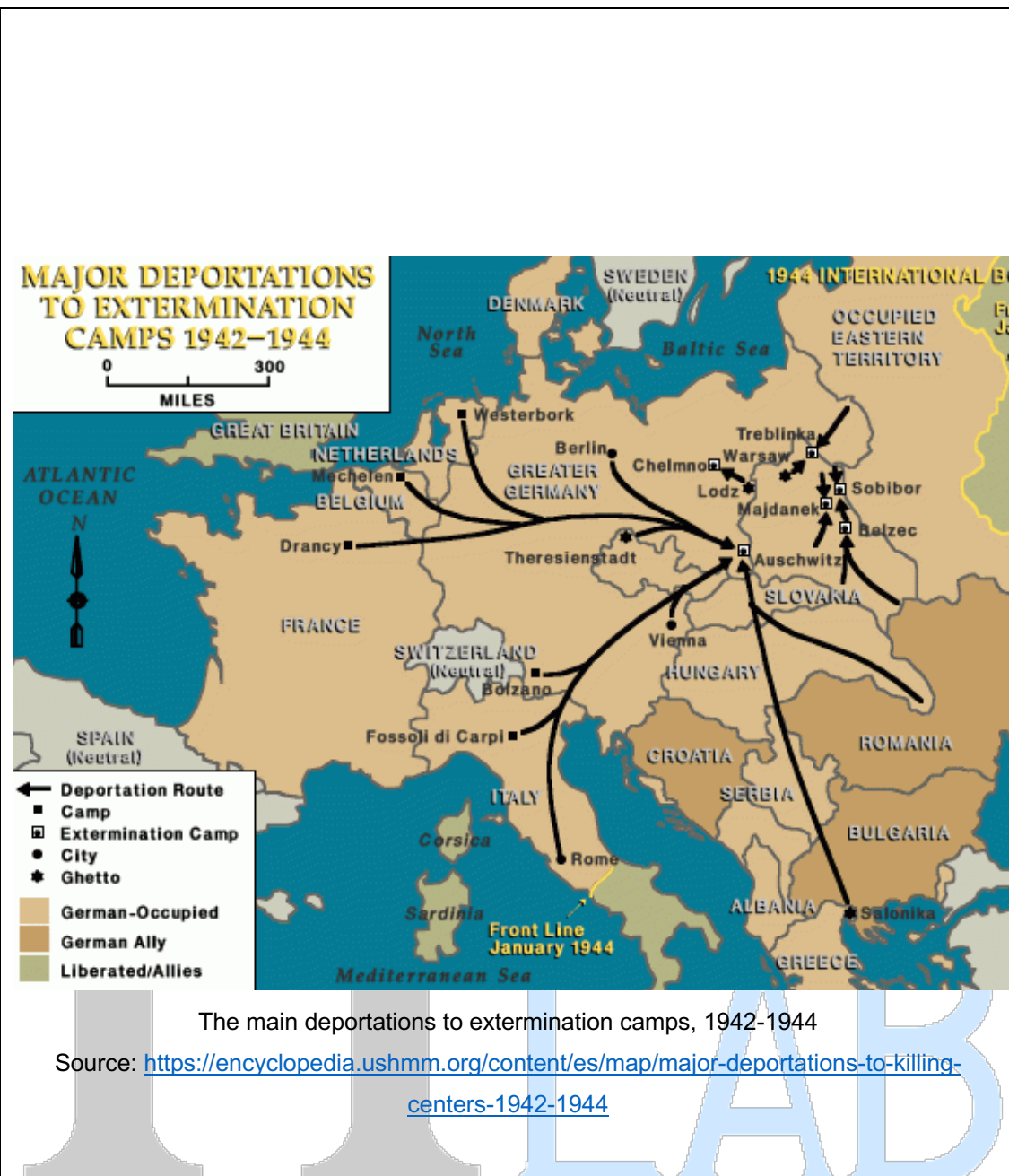
SESSION 1

Two maps and a photograph are analysed to understand the Shoah.



The European railway network in 1939

Source: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/es/map/european-rail-system-1939?parent=es%2F5789>





A transport of Hungarian Jews lined up for selection on arrival at the Auschwitz extermination camp (May 1944).

Source: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/es/photo/arrival-of-hungarian-jews-at-auschwitz>

Questions:

1. What was the Wannsee Conference (1942) and why is it considered central to the planning of the Final Solution?
2. The Central European railway network facilitated the mass deportation of millions of prisoners. Reflect on the use of technology as a means to organise genocide.
3. How many Jews lived in Europe before 1939 and how many remained after 1945? In which areas did they make up the largest percentage of the population?
4. Point out the differences between concentration camps and

extermination camps.

SESSION 2

It works with fragments of four documentaries: Shoah, The Last of the Unjust, The Eichmann Trial and The Most Dangerous Man in Europe. Otto Skorzeny in Spain.

The first two are available on the Filmin platform. The other two can be seen on Netflix.



Shoah 's image

Source: <https://www.infobae.com/america/cultura-america/2018/07/10/shoah-el-documental-que-narra-el-holocausto-a-traves-de-las-voces-de-sus-sobrevivientes-y-victimarios/>

In Shoah (1985), directed by Claude Lanzmann, several fragments are analyzed that confront testimonies of:

- SS agents, who worked in Treblinka, Sobibor and Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- Jewish survivors of these camps.
- Polish neighbours of the deported Jews and former railway workers, who transported prisoners from the ghettos to the camps.



Poster of the documentary *Le dernier des injustes*

Source: <https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film790902.html>

In *Le dernier des injustes* (2013), directed by Claude Lanzmann, the role of the Jewish Councils, with the testimony of the last president (and sole survivor) of the council of the Terezín camp (Czech Republic), as well as the controversy over their collaboration with the Nazis. The decisions taken to save as many Jews as possible, knowing in advance that it was impossible to save them all. Also, Eichmann's important role in the organisation of the Final Solution.



Documentary *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann*

Source: <https://somosseries.com/fichas-de-peliculas/el-juicio-a-adolf-eichmann-netflix/>

In *The Trial of Adolf Eichmann* (2011), directed by Michaël Prazan, one can see the arguments of the accused downgrading his role to that of a mere bureaucrat of the Third Reich, in the face of the testimonies of Jewish survivors and the final conviction of the Israeli justice system.



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Cartel de El hombre más buscado de Europa. Otto Skorzeny en España

Source: <https://www.filmaffinity.com/es/film600439.html>



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In *El hombre más poderoso de Europa. Otto Skorzeny en España* (2020), directed by Pedro de Echave and Pablo Azorín, describes the exile of this prominent Belgian Nazi in Spain and his business success, protected by Franco's dictatorship. In short, Spain's status as a refuge for Nazi war criminals and a safe passage to exile in Latin America after World War II.

Questions:

1. Investigates the origins of anti-Semitism in Europe and its evolution up to the 20th century.
2. Before the construction of the gas chambers and the large extermination camps in Poland, how was extreme violence against Jews carried out? What role did technology play in this criminal machine?
3. The role of the Jewish councils has been labelled as collaborationist and submissive. Do you think the rabbis had a choice or were they able to oppose German orders?
4. Look up information about Operation Odessa and the escape routes of SS criminals after the end of World War II.
5. What role did Spain play in the escape of prominent Nazi leaders? Apart from Skorzeny, which others used this country as a hiding and living area?

SESSION 3

Based on two texts by the Hungarian Jewish writer Imre Kertész, a survivor of the Nazi concentration camps and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (2002), the tragic journey of the deportees to the death camps is analysed. There is an entire literature on these camps.

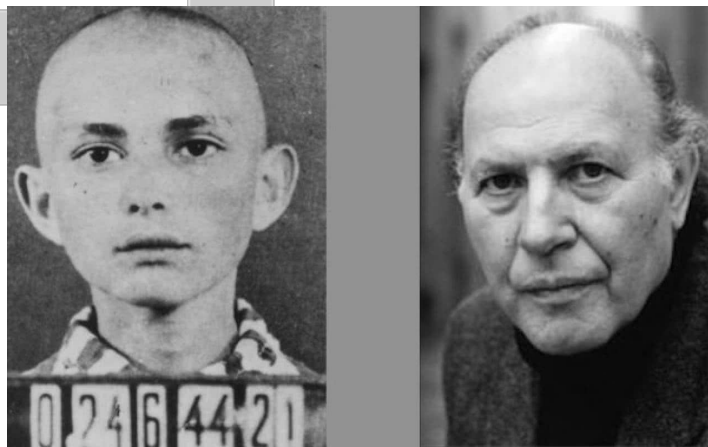
On the train, the scarcest thing was water. The food seemed to be enough for several days, but we had nothing to drink, and that was very unpleasant. The other travellers told us that it was the first thirst, that it would pass soon, even, that we would forget it. Until it came again. It is possible to last six or seven days without water, the experts said, considering the hot weather, as

long as you are healthy, don't sweat too much and don't eat meat or spices. For the time being, they encouraged us, we still had time: it all depended on how long the trip lasted, they added.

Kertész, I. (2006). *Sin destino*. Acantilado, p. 63.

Surprisingly enough, I was only in Auschwitz for three days. On the evening of the fourth day, I was once again sitting on a train, in one of the familiar freight cars. Our destination, we were told, was Buchenwald (...). I can't tell you much about the journey: everything happened in the usual way. There were eighty of us, not sixty as before, but there was no luggage, nor did we have to worry about the women. We had a bucket for our needs, it was hot and we were thirsty, like the other time, but we endured hunger better (...) we had not been told that the journey would last three days.

Kertész, I. (2006). *Sin destino*. Acantilado, pp. 124-125.



Two images of Imre Kertész (1929-2016). On the left as a prisoner of the Nazis (1944-1945).

Source: https://www.hoyesarte.com/literatura/imre-kertesz-el-superviviente_224535/

Questions:

1. A prisoner convoy could take a week to reach its destination. Given the climate and the lack of hygiene and food, many of the prisoners died en route. Find information on how the sick, elderly and children were discarded when they reached their destination as unfit for work and sent



directly to the gas chambers.

2. Discusses the role of other Jewish prisoners in the most thankless tasks, the so-called Sonderkommandos. And how they were periodically sacrificed, after having carried out the work of cleaning the gas chambers.
3. Look for testimonies of other writers who survived the Nazi camps and whether there are differences between the memories of Jews and non-Jews (Primo Levi, Jorge Semprún).

Disclaimer

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