

Integrated College Dungannon

History Department

GCSE Coursework



The Warsaw Ghetto

Your GCSE coursework is based entirely on sources related to the **Warsaw Ghetto** . You are not being tested on your knowledge of this topic but on your ability to use **historical sources** to answer **five** separate questions. However, you will need to have some background knowledge about the Warsaw Ghetto.

The five questions will test the following skills :

Comprehension

Understanding the information provided by the sources.

Analysis

Examining the sources in detail. This will include examining the information provided by the sources as well as their origins. (ie who produced them, when were they produced, why were they produced, who was the intended audience etc)

Evaluation

Making judgements about the value of a source in relation to the question being asked. This will involve thinking about a sources *reliability, authenticity and utility*

Reliability : Is it biased, ie written for a particular purpose or from a particular point of view

Authenticity : Is it genuine?

Utility : How useful is the source in answering a particular question?

You will also be tested on your understanding of **interpretation** and **representation**.

Interpretation

An interpretation is an attempt to explain the past. All historians make interpretations and they are often different, even though the same sources have been used.

Representation

A representation is an attempt to present the past in a particular way. For example museums offer representations of the past.

THE SOURCES

Source A

Video Clip : ***Hitler the Criminal*** (an extract from a documentary first broadcast on the Discovery Channel)

Source B

....a conference was held in Berlin on September 21st at which the long-term future of Polish Jewry was discussed. [Heydrich] said the "planned overall measures (ie the ultimate aim)" were to be kept "strictly secret". He also insisted that a distinction must be made between what he called "the ultimate aim, which requires a long period of time" and the "stages" leading to the fulfilment of this ultimate aim.

Heydrich told the conference that, as a prerequisite of the "ultimate aim", Polish Jews were to be concentrated in the larger cities...This "concentration of Jews in the cities" meant the creation of ghettos...to facilitate this "concentration", Heydrich noted, orders would probably have been given "forbidding Jews to enter certain districts of that city altogether."

Martin Gilbert : (*Holocaust: The Jewish Tragedy*. 1986)

Polish Jewry: the Jewish population of Poland
Ultimate: final. The overall goal.
Prerequisite: something which has to be achieved before the next step can be taken.

Source C

The edict for the creation of the ghetto was announced just before sunset on 12th. October 1940....all Jews living outside the walls must move inside them, and all Poles living inside the ghetto must leave it.

Martin Gilbert – *Final Journey : The Fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe 1979*

Edict : order

Source D

April 1941 – Overcrowding increased ..."average" of 13 people to a room, while thousands of others had no room at all ...Systematically, the Germans confiscated Jewish property even inside the ghetto.

Early 1942 – Fuel was extremely short with 718/780 dwellings having no heat at all...Food was desperately short, the food allocation allowed by the Germans being only 194 calories per Jew, per day. Without any means of earning a living and unable to keep themselves warm in winter, the Nazis ensured tens of thousands of Jews died of starvation. Despite this terrible oppression, and isolation, the Jews of Warsaw struggled to maintain, amid the starvation and sickness, a decent, civilised way of life...Charitable organisations were set up...Musical evenings, lectures and reading groups were formed. Financial aid from Jews in America...enable soup kitchens to be maintained ...illegal schools were organised and religious seminaries worked in secret...resistance groups were also organised (no weapons)...Illegal magazines and pamphlets published.

Martin Gilbert – *Final Journey : The Fate of the Jews in Nazi Germany. 1979*

Systematically: done with planning

Oppression: persecution. Treating inhumanely. Keeping under control.

Source E

There were occupational training programs, workshops, rationing systems, housing authorities, hospitals, ambulances and other services in the ghettos.

Raul Hilberg – *The Destruction of European Jews*. 1948

Source F

In the second and third weeks of July (1942) news reached the ghetto from the rest of Poland of the shootings of hundreds of thousands...[Rumour followed rumour] Death is hard; harder still are the moments before death; and even hardest of all is being condemned to death which is inevitable, but whose time has not been set...Everyone must wait until his turn comes. This is when life becomes too hard to bear. The desire to live grows stronger at just that point. On the very eve of their death, the masses in the ghetto worry about their routine affairs as though they still had a long life ahead of them. But the intelligent and perceptive walk around like mourners.

From the diary of Chaim Kaplan, 11th. July, 1942

Perceptive : Those who realise what is intended for them

Source G

It fell to the head of the Jewish Council, Adam Czerniakow, to ensure that the deportation orders [from the Germans] were carried out. For 24 hours he tried to persuade the Nazis to rescind them. Asked to sign the deportation orders for children, he refused and then, on the evening of 23rd July he committed suicide – “I am powerless” he said... “They are demanding 10,000 for tomorrow.”

Chaim Kaplan noted that there were many ways in which the Jews were lured to their deaths stating on the 30th July “Besides the blockading of houses and hunting in the street, there is still a third method of expulsion – premiums. Large posters have been put in many courtyards to say that all those who voluntarily come to the transfer point will receive 3 kilos of bread and 1 kilo of marmalade to take with them in their wanderings. They are given until July 31st.

One Jewish boy recalled the temptation to go when he said that “Wherever it would be, we imagined it couldn’t be a worse place.”

Later the Nazis simply forced people from entire areas, sending them to the train station to make their final journey.

Martin Gilbert – *Final Journey : The fate of the Jews in Nazi Europe, 1979*

Rescind: Take back

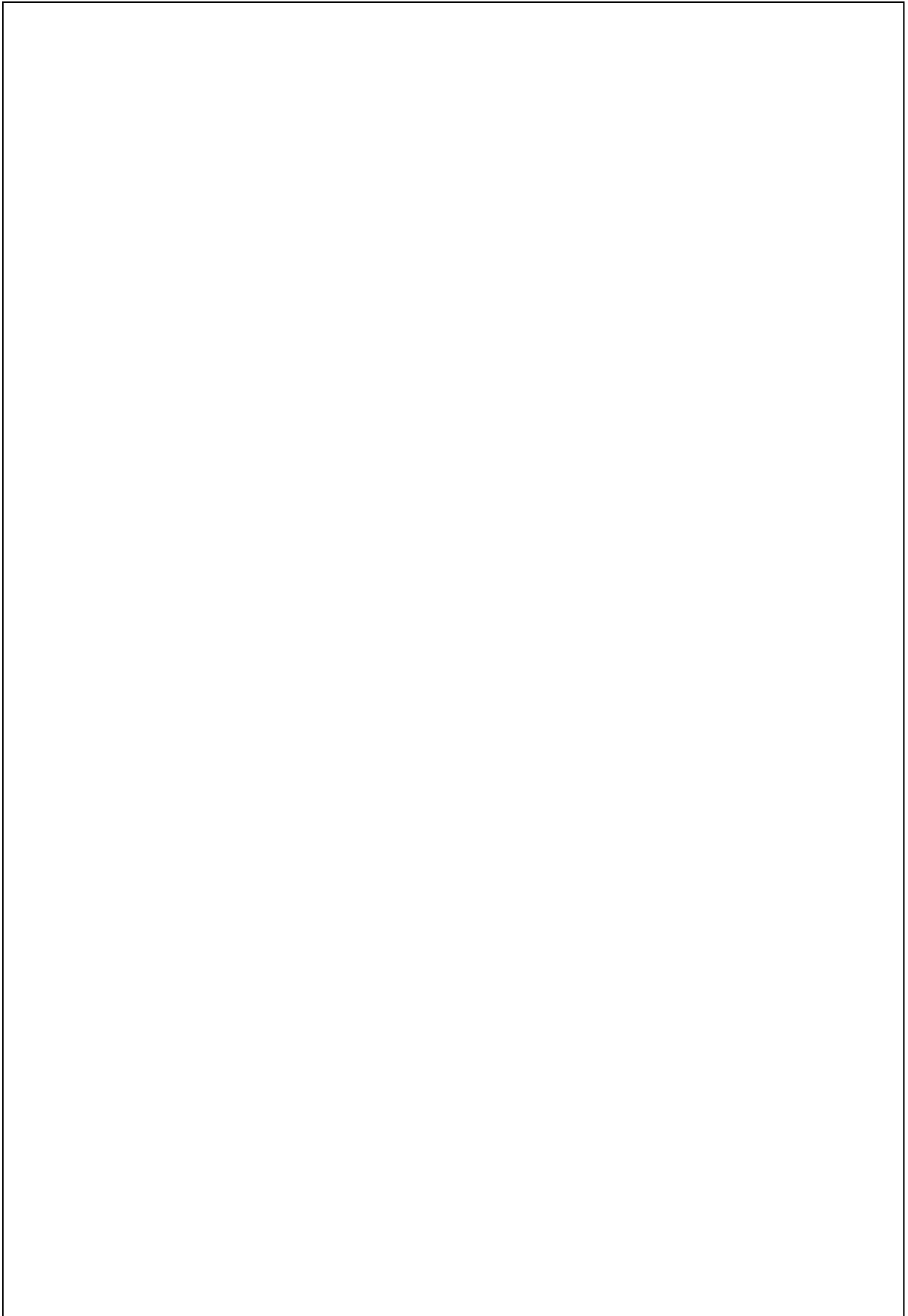
Deportation: Removal from the ghetto to the death camps

Source H

The Germans kept the Jews in the dark about their intentions [of the final solution]. At the start, the Polish Jews viewed the ghettoization as the culmination of German plans. They failed to think in terms of a further, more drastic stage in the destruction process. Members of the Jewish Councils all over Eastern Europe, had fallen into a rhythm or pattern that did not allow for prolonged reflection about the real meaning of the ghettos in the nazi scheme of things....the Jewish communities were lulled by the continuation of sheer routines.

Paul Hilberg – The Destruction of European Jews, 1948

Source I



Source J

The inescapable truth is that, regarding Jews, German political culture had evolved to the point where an enormous number of ordinary, representative Germans became – and most of the rest of their fellow Germans were fit to be – Hitler’s willing executioners.

Daniel Goldhagen (revisionist historian), 1996

German political culture had evolved : Nazi antisemitic propaganda had been extremely successful in turning ordinary Germans against the Jews.

Source K

It is difficult to believe that there existed in Germany or German-occupied Europe anyone who did not know that most of the Jews had disappeared, and had not heard some story that they had been shot or gassed. Nor do I suppose that there was anybody who did not have a friend who knew somebody else who had seen a massacre. More than a hundred million people must have known such things and whispered about them.

Extract from *“The Final Solution”* – Gerald Reitlinger (1961)

Source L

News of the extermination centres reached the public in Germany through various channels. Despite the fact that the Final Solution was supposed to be a closely guarded secret, some of those involved in it, or knew about it, publicly divulged information. Some openly boasted about the liquidation of the Jews. Ruth Andreas Friedrich mentions an SS man who vaingloriously declared in a suburban train that 2,000 Jews were being murdered every week in Auschwitz. This sort of information, like that of the mass shootings, was divulged by army personnel in casual conversation...Those who still wavered after having heard about the existence of the inconceivable death factories could corroborate their impressions by listening to Allied broadcasts which were widely listened to and discussed. Allied stations conveyed extremely accurate information on the fate of the Jews. They stated that between 2 and 3 million Jews had been exterminated in Poland. Ludwig Haydn states *"With regard to the mass murder of Jews, the broadcasts merely confirms what we know here anyhow."* The BBC launched a massive broadcast campaign on the extermination of the Jews at the end of 1942. It provided information on the unparalleled murder and the numerous suicide of Jews who did not want to be transported to the east. The Allied radio also provided information on gassing methods...the leaflets dropped by Allied planes also relayed information on the annihilation policy, warning the population about the future consequences of these atrocities, and, as we know from the SS reports and other sources, people read and discussed the contents of the Allied leaflets. The US air-force scattered 9 million copies of a leaflet, referring specifically to the massive and systematic murder of European Jewry as one of the most terrifying crimes recorded in history. Various leaflets gave concrete details of the extermination centres.

David Bankier – *Public Opinion Under Nazism 1992*

Corroborate: confirm

Source M

This is an extract from a pamphlet issued illegally in 1943 by Hans Scholl, a student who had served as a medical orderly on the eastern front and was aware of the atrocities carried out against both Jews and Russians. He was a member of an anti-Nazi movement known as "the White Rose"

Why, in the face of all this abominable and inhuman crime, is the German nation behaving so apathetically? Hardly anyone seems to worry about it. The situation is just accepted as such without further debate, and the German goes on sleeping its dull stupid sleep, giving these Fascist criminals the boldness and opportunity to storm ahead – and they do.

Apathetically: unconcerned

Source N

By an American serviceman who had participated in showing local Germans round a concentration camp after the war was over.

When the people saw what the camp was like and were led through the torture chambers and past the ovens, men and women screamed and fainted. Others were led away crying hysterically. All swore that during the past years they had no idea what had been going on in the camp just outside their town.

From : *The Era of the second World War* Philip Sauvain
1993

Source O

My mother....was convinced everything the Nazis did was right and essential, and she dismissed all the whispers of atrocities as stupid, malicious gossip ... In May of '45 her whole world collapsed...Mother was among those the Americans forced to tour Dachau and I had to go along. I'll never forget those heaps of emaciated corpses...Mother suffered a nervous breakdown. It took her a long time to recover.

Quoted in *In Hitler's Germany*: B. Engelmann 1988

The Tasks

Question 1

What was the nature and purpose of the Final Solution?

Question 2

According to Sources A, B and C, what were ghettos and why were they established by the Nazis?

Question 3

How reliable is Source A as a representation of life in the Warsaw Ghetto?

Question 4

To what extent do Sources A, D and E give a full/accurate picture of life in the Warsaw Ghetto?

Question 5

Source J states that a “number of ordinary representative Germans became – and most of the rest of their fellow Germans were fit to be –Hitler’s willing executioners.” Using Sources F, I, K, L, M, N, and explain whether or not you agree with this view.

Question 1

What was the nature and purpose of the Final Solution?

This Question should be done last. You should write no more than two sides of A4

You are being asked about two things :

- (a) The *nature* of the Final Solution ie how was it carried out?
- (b) The *purpose* of the Final Solution ie why was it carried out?

You can refer to any or all of the sources but this answer should also involve using your own knowledge.

Useful websites :

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holocaust>

<http://history1900s.about.com/library/holocaust/blholocaust.htm>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/holo.html>

<http://www.auschwitz.dk/>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/~baustin/holo.html>

<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/>

First Draft

Question 2 :

According to Sources A, B and C what were ghettos and why were they established by the Nazis?

This question is aimed at testing your comprehension of the three sources. Remember, you are being asked **WHAT** ghettos were and **WHY** they were built. You must look for evidence of both.

Write down **any** references to the ghettos in Source A

What can we learn about ghettos and their purpose from Source B?

Although Source C is very brief it does give us important information. Note down the key points :

How useful is the interview with the Polish Jew who survived the ghetto? What does it tell us about life in the ghetto?

Listen carefully to the commentary. Pick out any words/phrases that indicate the film-maker is anti-Nazi?

Listen carefully to the music. What do you think it contributes to the programme?

Taken as a whole, what kind of **representation** of life in the ghetto does this Source present?

