

# Oath and Opposition: Education Under the Third Reich

“At crucial junctures, every individual makes a decision...and every decision is individual.”

—Raul Hilberg, *Holocaust Scholar*

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Answer the following questions after viewing the introductory film for *Oath and Opposition: Education Under the Third Reich*:

<b>In the film, what were the three institutions that worked to control the education of the youth in Germany?</b>		
<b>How was it possible for individual teachers to make independent decisions within the framework of these institutions??</b>		
<b>In the film, what can you infer may have been the motives and pressures that may have influenced these decisions and behaviors of the teachers? Keep in mind that we cannot really know for certain what motivated them to make decisions, but instead are considering human nature in general: What <i>could have</i> influenced a person’s decisions and/or behaviors?</b>		

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## Jeanne Daman



Country:

Religion:

Choices of Individuals:

Reaction to Nazi influence in school:

Choices of Institutions:

Age when she became headmistress of Nos Petits:

Motives/Pressures for Jeanne:

## Teachers and Sterilization



City where Lehmann and Schurmann worked:

Choices of Individuals:

City where Director Wegge worked:

Percentage of students recommended:

Choices of Institutions:

Tone of the letters written about young people sterilized:

Motives/Pressures:

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## Wilhelm Becket

Country:

Grade level taught:

Choices of Individuals:

To whom did he send the Christmas letters?

Choices of Institutions:

On what two occasions were children "encouraged" to send gifts to Hitler?

Motives/Pressures for Wilhelm:



Date of Norway's surrender to Germany:

Percentage of teachers who resigned from the union:

\_\_\_ out of every \_\_\_ teachers was arrested and pressured to retract their protest.

Number of teachers who had salary withheld:

An elderly teacher's response to signing an apology to the Nazis in front of 600 teachers:

## Teachers in Norway

Choices of Individuals:

Choices of Institutions:

Motives/Pressures:



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## SURVIVORS RECALL THEIR EXPERIENCES AT SCHOOL

While listening to these survivors recount their experiences with teachers, highlight or underline one line from each testimony that best summarizes the experiences of each survivor:



LILI ARMSTRONG (Berlin, Germany)

“She came into the class with a big book under her arm, and she addressed us. She spoke as lightly old-fashioned German. She would say, ‘*Meine Kinder*— my children—*meine Kinder*, today we are changing our lecture and from now on, we are going to read *Mein Kampf*, written by our Führer, Adolf Hitler. And we have to interrupt our Romantic literature like Eichendorff and can’t read anymore Goethe or Schiller.’ And she was upset. She was very upset. And I think she had tears in her eyes. At the time, I wasn’t quite sure whether she was joyful about Hitler or tearful about that we have to change our literature.”



EVA BREWSTER (Berlin, Germany)

“When that Nazi teacher—she was the only one that was a party member at that time, and she recruited all the kids she could to the Hitler Youth. And she was also working with the Gestapo, the secret police, and so she spied on parents, on kids, on other teachers, and so everybody was really afraid of her .....



WERNER HALPERN (Nördlingen, Germany)

“There was at least one teacher who tried to be kind. He rescued me a few times when, after school, I was being threatened by my fellow students in the school courtyard, and he happened to come by and chase them away so I could go home. But that occurred two or three times. He kindly took some special effort to make sure I’d be all right. But that was only one teacher.”



EMMA MOGILENSKY (Cronheim, Germany)

“A real serious change that I noticed was when we found one morning when we went to school that all the other children had formed two lines in front of the schoolhouse door, and, as we walked through those two lines, they beat us up. And I went to the teacher and I complained, and he said, ‘Well, what did you expect, you dirty Jew?’ And, from that, we figured that he had the children every morning in church—they had to go for Masse every morning—and we figured that what he had done is organize the children to beat us up.”

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LEONARD KATZ (Dresden, Germany)

“The whole class was asked to go there by bicycle, you know, physical exercise. So, everybody had a bicycle but one of the kids in the school. And so the teacher said, ‘Well, Katz, you’re Jewish, you can give your—you’re not going anyway—can’t you give this kid the bike?’ And about, I’d say, 90 percent of the class said—I mean, they stood up as one—‘if Katz doesn’t go, we all don’t go.’ Now that was a very lifting experience. It turned out that he borrowed a bike from somebody else and we all went, but just the attitude of the class—that was really something.”



HANNAH ALTBUSH (Cologne, Germany)

“After November, after Kristallnacht, I—the day after—I got up in the morning. I said, ‘I’m going to school.’ And my mother said, ‘I don’t know, you know, how you’re going to be received.’ And I said, ‘I am going to school. I’m going to face them all and show them all that I’m coming to school.’ By this time I was angry. I was scared, but I was also very angry. And I told Ilse, ‘I’m going.’ And she said she’s coming with me. So the two of us went to school the next morning. And the effect on the—all the students—there was like very strange because they wanted to show us that they were with us. Our desks were filled with fruit and candy.”



RUDY KENNEDY (Rosenberg, Germany)

“Early in the morning and there were a lot of people lining up the streets, jeering, laughing. And out of that crowd came a friend of my father. His name was Studienrat Lüdtker, a teacher, Catholic. And he had been discharged from—he was no longer allowed to teach—because one of his nine children had denounced him to the Nazis that he still had a Jewish friend and he didn’t believe in Hitler.”



ROSA MARX (Vienna, Austria)

“The girls in the classroom, who had some of them had been my best friends, just completely ignored me. They put their head down or looked elsewhere. And I was considered an outcast. I just was zero. I think that part really was the greatest shock: that you can be close friends with somebody, that you can trust a person, and suddenly that they would turn against you just because you’re Jewish.”

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**ESTHER BEM** (Osijek, Yugoslavia; hid in Italy)

“And I also want to say that I have---as I was passionately going after this business of living---I feel today such a gratitude to those people that saved us. And these are ordinary---these were ordinary people that will never be in the history books, that I unfortunately don’t even remember their names and probably they’re not alive anymore. And I probably wouldn’t have even the emotional strength to find them. But I want to say in the era, when goodness was very rare, they cultivated it. And they showed that human decency and heroism, which was so rare in those times, they did

it for us. And I am aware today that to be heroic is so unpredictable. They probably wouldn’t have known by themselves that they are going to behave the way that they did. They simply reacted to our despair with compassion. They didn’t think of themselves. They didn’t care what happens to them, and when you think, we were not family, we were not even friends. We were strangers that fell from somewhere into their laps, and they never looked for an excuse to say, “Well, we can’t, I’m sorry, we have a young family.” Never. And they were---never made us feel even that we are intruding on them. And this is something that I want the post-Holocaust generation to know, that people have choices. And they have proven it.”

**Go back and review the one line in each testimony that you highlighted or underlined and pick just one of them that resonates the most with you after completing this lesson. Write it here:**

**Why did you choose this one line? Why did this testimony stand out to you more than all of the others?**

**Answer in one complete sentence:**

**Now, take what you think the most powerful word in that one line you chose is and write it below, along with an explanation of your choice:**

Most powerful word from the line you chose:	Explanation for why you chose this one word: