



# Resources

## Holocaust Unit

### Choices - Resource A

#### **Adolf Eichmann's Biography**

Born in Solingen, Germany, Adolf Eichmann was the son of a businessman and industrialist, Karl Adolf Eichmann. In 1914, his family moved to Linz, Austria, and during the First World War, Eichmann's father served in the Austro-Hungarian Army. At the war's conclusion, Eichmann's father returned to the family business in Linz. In 1920, Eichmann's family moved back to Germany. His education incomplete, he left school in 1921. He worked at a variety of jobs, the most successful being as a sales representative for the Vacuum Oil Company.

On the advice of old family friend Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Eichmann joined the Austrian branch of the NSDAP (member number 889 895) and of the SS, enlisting on 1 April 1932, as an SS-Anwärter.

In September 1934 Eichmann landed a position in Heydrich's SD, the powerful SS security service. He was soon assigned to the Jewish section, which was busy collecting information on all prominent Jewish people.

He studied all aspects of Jewish culture, attended Jewish meetings and often visited Jewish sections of cities while taking volumes of notes. He became familiar with the issue of Zionism, studied Hebrew and could even speak a bit of Yiddish. He gradually became the acknowledged 'Jewish specialist,' realizing this could have positive implications for his career in the SS.

In 1939 Eichmann returned to Berlin where he was appointed the head of Gestapo Section IV D4 of the new Reich Main Security Office (RSHA). He was now responsible for implementation of Nazi policy toward Jewish people in Germany and all occupied territories (eventually totaling 16 countries). Eichmann thus became one of the most powerful men in the Third Reich and would remain head of IV D/B4 for the remainder of the Reich's existence.

In Poland, which had the largest Jewish population in Europe (3.35 million) Heydrich and Eichmann ordered the Jews to be rounded up and forced into ghettos and labour camps. Inside ghettos such as Warsaw, large numbers of Jewish people were deliberately

confined in very small areas, resulting in overcrowding and death through disease and starvation. The ghettos were chosen based on their proximity to railway junctions, pending the future "final goal" regarding Jewish people.

In the autumn of 1941, Eichmann, now an SS-Obersturmbannführer (Lieutenant Colonel) and the chief of RSHA section IV B 4, took part in discussions in which the annihilation of the European Jews was planned. Since Eichmann was to be in charge of transporting Jews from all over Europe to the killing centers, RSHA chief Reinhard Heydrich asked Eichmann to prepare a presentation for the Wannsee Conference, where RSHA officials advised the appropriate government and Nazi Party agencies on the implementation of the "Final Solution" Eichmann also relayed these plans to his network of officials who would help him to carry out deportation efforts in German-occupied areas, and in those countries that were Germany's Axis partners. Prominent among these "Eichmann-Männer" ("Eichmann's men") were his deputy Rolf Günther, Alois Brunner, Theodor Dannecker, and Dieter Wisliceny. In 1942, Eichmann and his henchmen organized the deportation of Jews from Slovakia, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium. In 1943 and 1944, came the turn of the Jews of Greece, northern Italy, and Hungary. Only in Hungary did Eichmann involve himself directly in the deportation process. From late April 1944, six weeks after German occupied Hungary, until early July, Eichmann and his aides deported some 440,000 Hungarian Jews.

At war's end, Eichmann found himself in US custody, but escaped in 1946. In the end, he succeeded, with the help of Catholic Church officials, in fleeing to Argentina. There he lived under a number of aliases, most famously Ricardo Klement. In 1960, agents of the Israeli Security Service (Mossad) abducted Eichmann and brought him to Israel to stand trial. The proceedings before a district court in Jerusalem drew international attention.

Source: <http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/holoprelude/eichmannbio.html>

