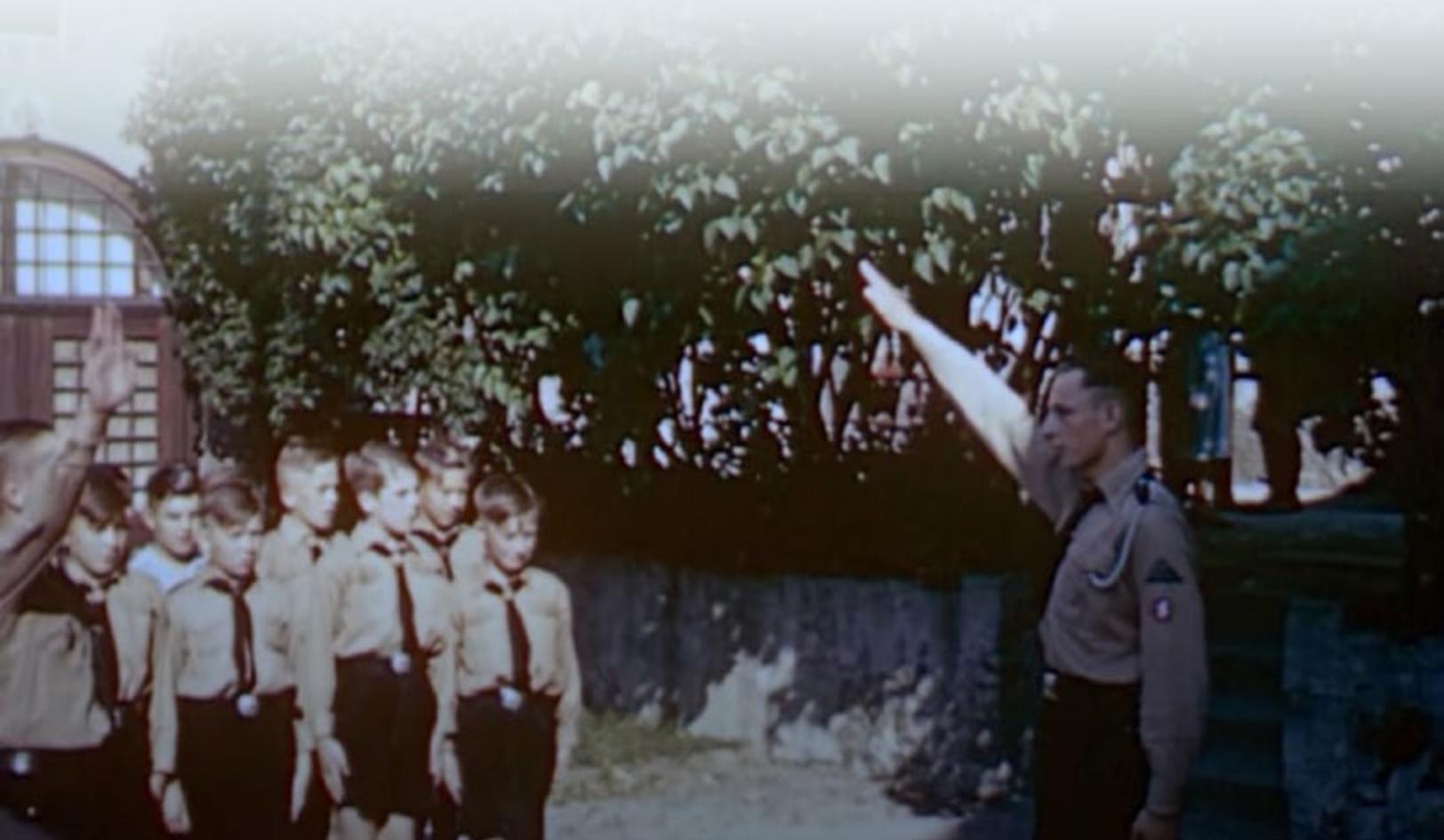


FINAL ACCOUNT

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Luke Holland's Documentary "Final Account"

In 2008, British filmmaker Luke Holland began interviewing Germans and Austrians who were witnesses from the Third Reich perpetrators' side. More than ten years later, he created the documentary "Final Account," composed of a selection from the more than 250 interviews he had conducted. The son of a Jewish refugee from Vienna and a descendant of Jews killed by the Nazis, Holland struggled with the question of how and why ordinary people actively supported a regime that committed genocide. "Final Account" was his final film; sadly, Holland passed away in June 2020.

"Final Account" does not aim to retell the history of the Nazi era, but rather to depict how these people relate to this history and reflect on their own role more than 60 years later. Thus it is a film not about history only but also about dealing with this history today. And there has never been a more important time to share this than now.

In a recent [survey](#) that studied U.S. Gen Z and Millennials' knowledge of the Holocaust, 63 percent of all respondents did not know that six million Jews were murdered, and 11 percent of all respondents believe Jews caused the Holocaust. Antisemitic hate crimes [spiked](#) in 2020 in the US and a study in Europe in 2018 found some alarming results: nearly [90 percent](#) of Jews reported feeling an increase in antisemitism, over 50 percent were worried about being insulted or harassed in public because they were Jewish, and over 60 percent feared being physically attacked.

Watching and discussing the film requires some prior knowledge about the Nazis, their organizations, and their crimes. Basic information can be found in the literature that is listed below under Resources for Exploring the Historical Background. Consulting it is recommended for contextualizing the statements of the interviewees.



Background: Nazi Germany and World War II

- The interviewees grew up in Nazi Germany. Which aspects of their youth do they emphasize?
- Which sites of Nazi crimes are shown in the film and what happened there?
- Explore the functions of the SS for Nazi rule in Germany and the occupied countries. Which crimes were committed by the Totenkopf units and the Waffen-SS?

The Messages of the Film

- A quote from Primo Levi is used as a motto: “Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions.” Does the film confirm this statement? How or how not?
- The second motto of the film reads: “Perpetrators are not born, they are made.” How does the film explain how Nazi perpetrators were made?
- The introduction of the film ends with the question of a man speaking about the mass-shooting of Jews: “Is this Germany?” How does the film answer this question?
- What do you think about the title of the film: “Final Account”?



The Interviewees

Please refer to the *Subject Guide* to help recall each interviewee.

- There are various explanations why these people became Nazis. To what extent are their explanations convincing? Which of the explanations given by the interviewees are supported by the visual material, which are not? Who created this footage? Why is it important to know the source?
- The interviewees try to explain their commitment in Nazi organizations. Interrogate their motivations and reasons for their decisions.
- Herbert Fuchs explains why he joined the SS: “I liked sports, I liked it tough.” What comes into your mind when you hear (or read) this statement?
- Which interviewees have remained ideological Nazis, which have undergone a significant change?
- How does the film depict the role of women during the Nazi period and its aftermath?
- Which scene of the film raised your interest most? Why?
- Analyze the controversy evolving in the scene at the House of the Wannsee Conference. How would you describe the intentions of the student who attacks Hans Werk? Which motivations does he ascribe to Hans Werk? How does Hans Werk respond? How do the other students behave?

Resources for Exploring the Historical Background

In the Internet:

- [Hitler Youth](#)
- [Indoctrinating Youth](#)
- [Napola: Adolf Hitler Visits the National Political Educational Institute \[Napola\] in Graz \(April 1941\)](#)
- [Waffen-SS](#)
- [SS-Totenkopfverbände \[SS-Death's Head units\]](#)
- [Encyclopedia of camps and ghettos Vol I, Part A, pp. 184 - 187](#)

Books:

Hitler Youth

by Michael H. Kater
Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004

Waffen-SS: Hitler's Army at War

by Adrian Gilbert
New York, NY: Da Capo Press, Hachette Book Group, Inc., 2019

The Order of the Death's Head: The Story of Hitler's SS

by Heinz Höhne
London: Penguin Books, 2000

IWitness:

[IWitness](#) is the digital education platform of USC Shoah Foundation.

SUBJECT GUIDE



Karl Heinrich Lübbert Hollander
b. Quakenbrück, 1914

*SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler,
Obersturmführer*
[Senior Lieutenant]



Herbert Fuchs
b. Bregenz, 1919

SS-Obersturmführer
[Senior Lieutenant]



Otto Duscheleit
b. Insterburg, 1925

Waffen-SS



Hermann Franz Ferdinand Knoth
b. Hamburg, 1927 (d.2013)

Waffen-SS



Hans Werk
b. Berlin, 1927

SS-Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler



Kurt Sametreiter
b. Gastein Valley, 1922 (d.2017)

SS-Oberscharführer
[Sergeant]



Klaus Kleinau
b. Bernburg, 1927

Napola, Waffen-SS



Heinz Hennig
b. Bernburg, 1923

Wehrmacht
[German Armed Forces]



Karl-Heinz Rinne
b. Berlin, 1922

Wehrmacht
[German Armed Forces]



Margarete Schwarz
b. Melk, 1925

Nannie of an SS-family



Franz Spalek,
b. Mühlviertel, 1925

Masonry apprentice
(conscripted into Wehrmacht, 1943)



Marianne Chantelau
b. Wilhelmshaven, 1924

Bund Deutscher Mädchen
[League of German Girls]
Accountant
U-Boot-Bunker Valentin
[Valentin submarine pens] built
through forced labor



Hugo Gote
b. Slawentzitz, 1923

Wehrmacht
[German Armed Forces]



Theresia Kratochwill
b. Ebensee, 1923

Hid and later married an SS-man



Siegfried Fröhlich
b. Köslin (today: Koszalin), 1915

Luftwaffe
[Air Force]



Regine Bernwardine Wolff
b. Oldenburg, 1924

Bund Deutscher Mädchen
[League of German Girls]



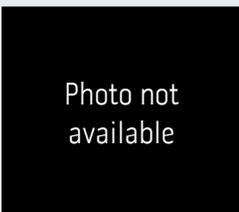
Heinz Kurt Schultka
b. Berlin, 1920

Wehrmacht
[German Armed Forces]



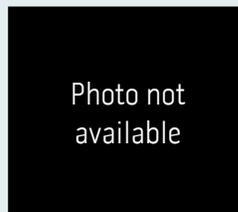
Friedrich Eder
b. Salzburg 1925,

Wehrmacht
[German Armed Forces]



Karl-Heinz Lipok
b. Brandenburg, 1921

SS-Totenkopfverband



Heinrich Hermann Werner Schulze
b. Celle, 1927

Wehrmacht
[German Armed Forces]

