

The Wannsee Conference and the Decision Process Leading to Genocide

The protocol of the conference which took place on 20 January 1942 at Wannsee in Berlin is one of the key documents relating to the genocide of the European Jews. This study day looks at both the issues discussed at the conference and the veiled style and National Socialist idiom of the protocol language. The process of how and why the National Socialists' antisemitic policy was radicalized to ultimately propose complete genocide, and the role that the conference played in this process, is examined using written and audio documents containing information on the decision process prior to the Wannsee Conference.

Points

- The course leading to the mass murder of the European Jews
- Hitler's prophecies on the annihilation of the Jews in Europe
- Heydrich's commission to plan a 'final solution to the Jewish question'
- The decision process as reflected by Himmler's 1941 diary
- Authorities participating in the Wannsee Conference
- Protocol of the Wannsee Conference
- CVs of the conference participants
- Eichmann as a participant in the Wannsee Conference, author of the Wannsee Protocol and accused in Jerusalem
- Himmler's statements of 1943 and 1944 as attempts to legitimize the genocide

Methods

- Guided tour of the permanent exhibit, focussing on rooms 7, 8, 9, 10
- Analysis of the Wannsee Protocol
- Selection and explanation of key sentences in the Wannsee Protocol
- Presentation and discussion
- Critical viewing of excerpts from the feature film "Conspiracy" (2001)

This study day is available to older students (17+) and adults.
