

### **The Wannsee Conference and the Realization of the “Final Solution”**

Reinhard Heydrich, the Head of the Security Police and SD, invited high-ranking officials of the ministerial bureaucracy and the Nazi Party to the Wannsee Conference in order to discuss the “Final Solution” of the Jewish question in Europe. The protocol of the conference on the 20<sup>th</sup> of January 1942 reveals that this notion now meant expanding mass murder that the Nazis had already begun in Eastern Europe to genocide of all Jews on the whole European continent. No man, woman, or child defined by the Nazis as Jewish should survive. Controversial among the perpetrators was only the question how persons of “mixed blood” [*Mischlinge*] and “mixed marriages” should be treated. Participants of this study day will not only analyze the Wannsee Protocol and the historical relevance of the Conference. Studying the diverse conditions and procedures in selected countries that were occupied or allies of Nazi Germany, they will also explore how far and in which manner the perpetrators were able to achieve their goal.

#### **Points**

- The references in the Wannsee Protocol to steps in the process of destruction from definition to murder
- Eichmann’s statements concerning the Wannsee Conference in his interrogation by the court in Jerusalem
- The discussion in Wannsee about “*Mischlinge*” and “mixed marriages”
- The involvement of numerous administrations in the organization of the deportations from Germany
- Negotiations and interventions in various European countries aiming at the deportation of their Jewish citizens
- Characteristics of the Nazis’ course of action against the Jews

#### **Methods**

- Guided tour of the permanent exhibit focusing on the steps in the process of destruction
- Analysis of the Wannsee Protocol
- Interpretation of Eichmann’s statements in Jerusalem using excerpts from the minutes of the trial or video clips
- Using primary source material to compile and elucidate a list of institutions that participated in the organization of the deportations
- Reconstructing the intentions and procedures of German officials, foreign collaborators and opponents to compare the politics concerning Jews in various countries
- Presenting and discussing the results of group activities

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

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