

Lesson 9 **PERPETRATORS, COLLABORATORS, AND BYSTANDERS**

Part 2. Reflect and Respond

Either in class or as homework, have students reflect and respond to the topic below or have them develop a topic that has meaning for them based on the material covered in the lesson.

In her testimony, Edith Coliver states: “We were hoping that this [the Nuremberg Trials] would pave the way for the vanquished to try the victors. It didn’t happen.” Many Holocaust survivors have said that justice after the Holocaust was never achieved. What do you think made survivors feel this way? What does the concept of “justice” mean to you? Do you think it is possible that justice could ever be served with an event the magnitude of the Holocaust?

Part 3. Reflect and Respond

Either in class or as homework, have students reflect and respond to one or more of the topics below or have them develop a topic that has meaning for them based on the material covered in the lesson.

- Write about your feelings toward your country and its role in the Holocaust. As you respond, consider what you see as the role of the United States in current world conflicts.
- Reflect on the meaning of British historian Sir Ian Kershaw’s assertion that “the road to Auschwitz was built by hate, but paved with indifference.” What do you think Kershaw means by this statement? What have you learned about bystanders that would support his sentiment?
- When human catastrophes occur, especially a catastrophe the magnitude of the Holocaust how is responsibility determined? Are there “levels” of responsibility or is everyone—perpetrator, collaborator, and bystander—ultimately equally responsible and, therefore, equally guilty for the crimes committed? What is the difference between responsibility and guilt?
- What is the role of the individual within a society to ensure that all of its citizens are free and safe? Is the responsibility of an individual in a democratic society even greater than that of an individual living in an autocratic society? Why or why not? Should the individual play the same or a similar role regarding the freedom and safety of people outside his or her community or country?