



Just Now

a toolbox
for teaching
human rights

Krzyżowa

JustNow timeline cards set

The “JustNow – A Toolbox for Teaching Human Rights” project is focused on the development of methodological-didactical materials relating to human rights education, combined with simulation games and diversity learning in non-formal and formal youth educational work.

This set of timeline cards focuses on Krzyżowa through history up until today, covering some key milestones, leading figures, events, and importance of this place nowadays. The cards can be used in history or civic education, or in other non-formal education settings. It is advised that educators supplement the cards with local (history) examples.

The cards were created using images and information researched online, with sources noted on the back of the cards. The cards are created for exclusively non-profit educational purpose and use, in classrooms or non-formal educational settings.

Created by: JustNow Team

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The Village of Krzyżowa

Krzyżowa is a small village in Lower Silesia in Poland focusing the history of three different generations: a Prussian Field Marshal, whose contribution to the unification of Germany under the Hohenzollern dynasty was instrumental, a young lawyer related to the former, who paid for his opposition to Nazism with his life, and Christian intellectuals, mainly from Poland and Germany, who – even before the collapse of the Communist bloc – dreamt of establishing an international meeting place for young people on the premises of a dilapidated former German estate. This dream could come true owing to the symbolic Reconciliation Mass held in Krzyżowa and attended by the first non-communist Prime Minister of Poland as well as the German Chancellor of that time.



Palace Complex

The austere baroque palace building was constructed between 1712 and 1726. Initially, it only comprised the elevated ground floor and the first storey, with a habitable mansard at the top. The attic was extended at the end of the 19th century with two side staircases added.



The family von Moltke in Kreisau

1867

On 1 August 1867 Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke (1800-1891) – a Prussian military commander in the rank of Field Marshal purchased the estate in Krzyżowa – then called Kreisau. A dotation enabled him to buy it after contributing to the Prussian military victory over the Austrian Empire, an important step towards the unification of German lands under the rule of the Prussian king. Moltke settled down in Kreisau with his family.



Move to the *Berghaus*

1928

The Moltke family moved to the *Berghaus* (“House on the Hill”) because staying in the Palace was getting too expensive due to the difficult economic situation in Germany and poor management of the estate. The family stayed in the House on the Hill until October 1945. Before 1928 it was inhabited by distant relatives.



Image source: Reich President von Hindenburg and Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler on the Day of Potsdam (21.03.1933). Photograph taken by Theo Eisenhart for New York Times. Provided by the German Federal Archives.

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tag_von_Potsdam#/media/Datei:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-S38324,_Tag_von_Potsdam,_Adolf_Hitler,_Paul_v._Hindenburg.jpg

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Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany

1933

On 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed Chancellor of Germany. This is the beginning of the rule of the National Socialists, who began to suspend civil liberties and eliminate political opposition. With his expansionist and racist ideology and policies, Hitler unleashed the Second World War, in which the National Socialists and their accomplices committed mass crimes and genocides.



Freya and Helmuth James von Moltke

Helmuth James von Moltke (1907 – 1945), great-grandnephew to Field Marshal von Moltke was born in Kreisau and brought up in a liberal and socially-oriented fashion. He studied law and political science. In 1931, he married Freya Deichmann (1911 – 2010), daughter of a banker in Cologne. Freya settled on his family estate in Kreisau but soon in 1932 the married couple moved to Berlin, where Freya obtained her doctoral degree in law. Later, in the absence of her husband who continued to work in Berlin, she supervised the management of the estate in Kreisau. Both rejected the national-socialist regime from the very beginning.

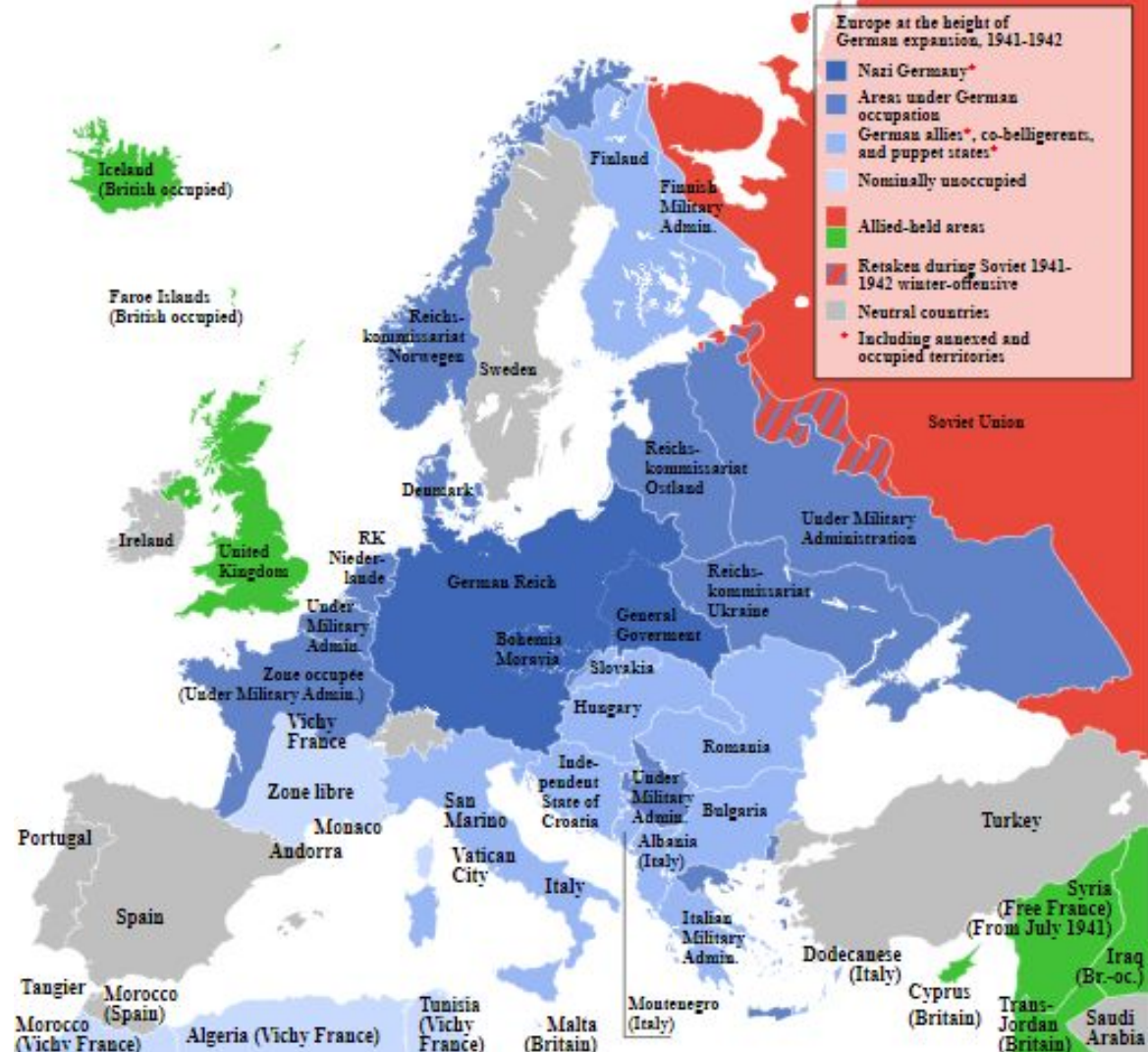


Image source: World War II in Europe, 1942.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nazi_Germany#/media/File:World_War_II_in_Europe,_1942.svg

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The beginning of World War II

1939

The invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 marks the beginning of the Second World War. Soon after the war began, Helmuth James von Moltke, who worked as a lawyer in Berlin at that time, was conscripted into service with the High Command of the Wehrmacht (German armed forces).



Image source: Signet of the Kreisau Circle created by Harro Siegel.

Taken from „Der Kreisauer Kreis. Portrait einer Widerstandsgruppe“, Landeszentrale für Politische Bildung Schleswig-Holstein, Kiel 1986.

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kreisauer_Kreis#/media/Datei:0110Signet_des_Kreisauer_Kreises.jpg

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Kreisau Circle

Kreisauer Kreis (Kreisau Circle) is perceived as particularly important in the history of the German opposition to the Nazi regime. Compared to other anti-Nazi groups, this one was extremely heterogeneous. It was composed of intellectuals, officials, social activists, and clergymen, all of whom represented very diverse political and worldview options. The group lacked a coherent structure or even a proper name (not until the interrogation of its members by the Gestapo had it been called the Kreisau Circle).



Formation of the Kreisau Circle

1940

The Kreisau Circle was founded in 1940 as a network of contacts centred around two initiators: Helmuth James von Moltke and Peter Yorck von Wartenburg. It brought together people representing various milieus and walks of life who could not reconcile themselves to the situation in Germany and the actions of the German army across Europe, and who ultimately decided to stand against Adolf Hitler's rule. These people met many, many times during the Second World War, mostly in small groups.



Der Kreisauer Kreis



A Graf von Moltke
B Graf York von Wartenburg



The meetings of the Kreisau Circle

1942 and 1943

Only three meetings take place in a larger composition (twice in 1942 and once in 1943) - all three in Kreisau, in the *Berghaus*. The group members were fully aware that they did not have the means to remove the regime's leaders from power, let alone to stage an armed coup. They believed that the violent solution could only be put into motion by the military, which is why they devoted themselves to developing a political programme for post-war Germany and to convincing decision makers representing all circles of their project. They also believed that the military defeat of the Nazis was inevitable, and that a change in the country could mainly be triggered from within.



The work of the Kreisau Circle

The activists were working on a plan for a constitution for the future democratic Germany. They also conceptualised punishments for war criminals and compensation for the countries attacked and occupied by Nazi Germany. The members pondered on how to mould the future united Europe in such a manner as to prevent further conflicts from breaking out. They also saw a place for the Polish state, with which Germany should maintain good relationships, in post-war Europe. They successfully established contacts with opposition groups in the occupied Netherlands, Belgium and Norway, and attempted to gain support from the Allies, yet to no avail.



Image source: Destroyed interior of briefing room in Hitler's headquarter Wolfsschanze (July 1944). Provided by the German Federal Archives.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-S38324,_Tag_von_Potsdam,_Adolf_Hitler,_Paul_v._Hindenburg.jpg
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Assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler

20 July 1944

On 20 July 1944 the attempt to kill Hitler and end the Nazi-Regime by Colonel von Stauffenberg and other officers took place. It failed, the bomb detonated but Hitler survived. In the following weeks hundreds of men involved in the coup d'état were arrested and many of them killed. Among those also members of the Kreisau Circle, some of which had actively taken part in the plot.



Image source: Helmuth James von Moltke at the People's Court in Berlin (10.01.1945). Provided by Bildagentur für Kunst, Kultur und Geschichte.
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Helmuth_James_Graf_von_Moltke_vor_dem_Volksgerichtshof_in_Berlin.JPG
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Execution of Helmuth James von Moltke

23 January 1945

Nine members of the Kreisau Circle were sentenced to death for their opposition activity and subsequent involvement in Stauffenberg's assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler. Eventually eight of them were executed, including Peter York von Wartenburg and Helmuth James von Moltke, who lost his life on 23 January 1945 in the Plötzensee prison in Berlin.

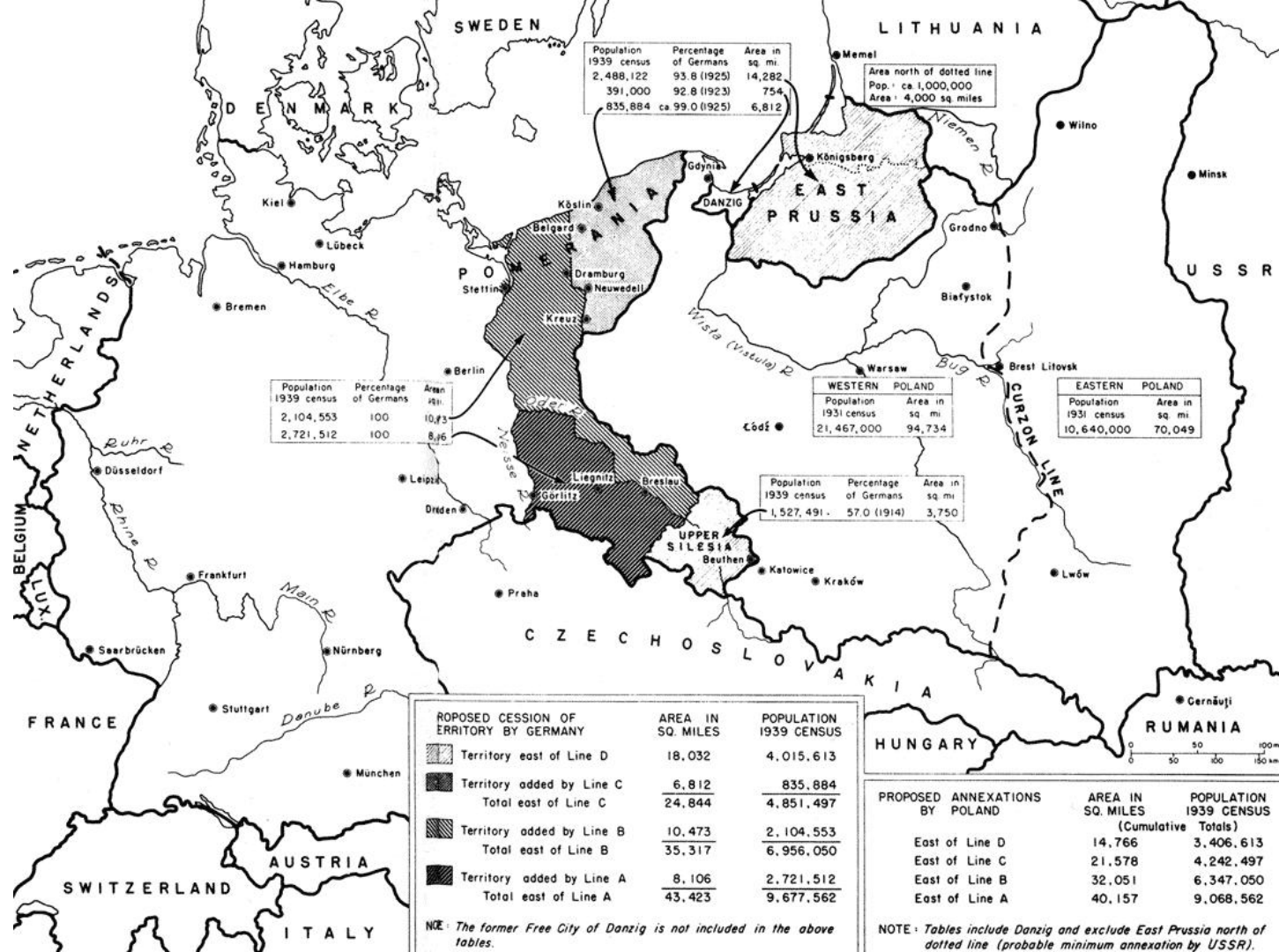


Image source: United States Department of State, Potsdam Conference. The possible expulsion area with population.
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flucht_und_Vertreibung_Deutscher_aus_Mittel-_und_Osteuropa_1945%E2%80%931950#/media/Datei:Vertreibungsgebiet.jpg
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End of the Second World War

8 May 1945

With the surrender of Germany on 8 May 1945, the Second World War came to an end in Europe. As one of the consequences the borders of Poland were shifted westwards so the whole region of Lower Silesia wasn't part of Germany anymore. Having lost the property in Kreisau, Freya von Moltke moved with her two sons, Konrad and Caspar to South Africa and settled in her husband's grandparents estate, where she engaged herself in social work. She returned to Germany in 1956. Next, in 1960, she moved to Vermont (USA), where she lived until she passed away in 2010.



The estate as a state agricultural farm

After World War II, a state agricultural farm (PGR in Polish) was established on the von Moltke family property and the surrounding land. The buildings remained in use, but were slowly deteriorating. In the 1970's, the estate falls completely into ruin.



Image source: Flag with logo of "Solidarity". 02.09.2011 in Gdańsk.
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/platformaobywatelskarp/6105820307/>
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Polish legislative election

1989

In June 1989 free elections took place in Poland for the first time after the end of the Second World War. Though the elections were only partly democratic, they lead to Tadeusz Mazowiecki becoming the first post-war non-communist Prime Minister since 1945. Independent Self-Governing Trade Union "Solidarność" won all of the freely contested seats in the Sejm, the lower house of the bicameral parliament of Poland.



Conference of the Wrocław KIK

2-4 June 1989

On 2-4 June 1989, the Wrocław Catholic Intelligentsia Club (KIK) organised a conference in Wrocław entitled „Christians in the Society“, bringing together attendees from Poland, both divided German countries, the Netherlands, and the United States. The conference participants discussed the matters of civic responsibility, resistance, opposition, democracy, and education. They sent a joint proposal to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Polish People's Republic that an international meeting house should be founded in Krzyżowa. They also presented an idea of creating a museum of European anti-Nazi resistance at the same place.



Image source: West and East Germans at the Brandenburg Gate on 09.11.1989. Provided by the Senate of Berlin.
https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berliner_Mauer#/media/Datei:West_and_East_Germans_at_the_Brandenburg_Gate_in_1989.jpg
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Fall of the Berlin Wall

9 November 1989

In 1989, starting in September, peaceful mass demonstrations took place in the German Democratic Republic, demanding a substantial change in the country. In a press conference on 9 November 1989, in which Günter Schabowski announced freedom of travel, a journalist's question led to the "instant" fall of the Berlin wall. After Berlin had been divided by this wall for over 28 years, this marked an important historical moment in Germany's history.



Reconciliation Mass

12 November 1989

In November 1989 the Chancellor of Western Germany Helmut Kohl came for a state visit to Poland and met Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. On 12 November, three days after the fall of the Berlin wall, they both attended a Holy Mass in Krzyżowa, called Reconciliation Mass. The choice of the place was symbolic as well as the sign of peace exchanged by Mazowiecki and Kohl during this mass. The international initiative formed under the aegis of the Wrocław KIK publicly presented the project of an international meeting centre in Krzyżowa.



krzyżowa
kreisau

Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe

On 9 July 1990, the “Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe” is established by KIK in Wrocław. The Foundations task is to promote dialogue and peaceful coexistence of nations, social groups and individuals. When the Foundation officially took over the estate, the buildings were in a disastrous condition, although some of the buildings were still in use for agricultural purposes. After eight years of renovation, the Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek and the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl inaugurated the new centre in Krzyżowa in 1998. Today, the buildings can be used in different ways, for example as accommodation or training facilities.



Poland and the European Union

1 May 2004

On 1 May 2004 Poland joined the European Union as well as nine other countries in the course of the EU's eastward enlargement. Already five years earlier Poland had joined the NATO.

Msza pojednania

Versöhnungsmesse

Mass of Reconciliation



The exhibition “Courage and Reconciliation” 2014

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Reconciliation Mass the permanent exhibition “Courage and Reconciliation”, telling the story about the Polish-German relations across the 20th century, is set up in Krzyżowa. The inauguration takes place in the presence of the Polish Prime Minister Ewa Kopacz and the German Chancellor Angela Merkel on 20 November 2014.



International Youth Meeting Center

The operations of the International Youth Meeting Center in Krzyżowa comprise the most important project implemented by the “Krzyżowa Foundation for Mutual Understanding in Europe”. It fosters a desire to get to know other people and the surrounding world, to look for similarities, and to strive for understanding of differences, and teaches openness and communication skills to the young people gathering in Krzyżowa.