

Striding Towards Justice: How the Nuremberg Trials Were a Frontier in International Law

Raegan Reicks

Junior Division

Individual Performance

Process Paper: 495 words

For my 2023 NHD project, I didn't know where to start, so I turned to the internet for ideas, and found the Nuremberg Trials. Instantly intrigued, I began research, finding a love for this topic that didn't translate to my other ideas. Connections I had to the trials, such as participation in a law program helped form fondness for my topic. I considered several ideas, such as Princess Diana, but in the end, the Nuremberg Trials won. It was a topic that always had something else to uncover, something new to learn, I had various connections to, and would stay interested in for months, so as they say, it's all history now!

My research was focused on having a diverse group of sources and source types. After my initial research, I located a book called, "Nazi War Criminals" at my school library that overviewed my topic. I then discovered numerous websites and a newspaper that gave a different opinion about the trials. I also found a myriad of primary sources, because I felt that they have more nuanced views of how people felt, and they are quite enjoyable to decipher. I particularly enjoyed interpreting political cartoons and quotes, and inferring why people may have had the opinion expressed. I even included quotes from actual opening statements in my performance, to add historical accuracy. One thing that my mentor noticed was my never getting burnt out while researching, I always was so invested in my project, and I think that is what got me through some tough writer's block.

At first, when thinking about my project category, I wanted to stay in my comfort zone and develop a documentary, something I was familiar with, but with some encouragement from my teacher, I finally decided that a performance *would* fit my topic, as I could accurately portray the feelings of people in the trials. I have always had a passion for theater; I just hesitated when it came to combining research and school with my outside activities. In the end, I am glad that I went with a performance because it lets my creative juices flow, and really brings my topic to

life, by presenting it as it happened in history.

The Nuremberg Trials were an impactful first, and include many frontiers and firsts in history. For example, the trials were where the term genocide was coined, the first time that individuals were tried for crimes against humanity, and were when simultaneous translation was televised internationally. The trials led to more significant developments in international law, such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the creation of the World Court, a permanent system that has been used if international crimes are ever committed, and this system may soon be put to the test again, as Vladimir Putin is being accused of war crimes. The trials truly revolutionized international law, and were a frontier and a gargantuan stepping stone that ultimately led to concrete international law policies.

Primary Sources

Bornstein, Michael. *Survivors Club : The True Story of a Very Young Prisoner of Auschwitz*.

Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017.

A memoir about a young boy's experience in the Holocaust, the book, "Survivors Club" helped me understand the point of view of a young child. This will help me gain multiple perspectives, and help me gain a closer connection to my character.

D'Addario, Raymond, et al. *History.com*, 1940,

www.history.com/.image/ar_233:100%2Cc_fill%2Ccs_srgb%2Cg_faces:center%2Cq_auto:good%2Cw_1920/MTg0MTg4OTAzNDIxMzg4Njc1/nuremberg-trials-gettyimages-84065338.webp. Accessed 6 Mar. 2023.

This is an image of Hermann Goring on the witness stand, trying to worm his way out of punishment. I understand that the security around him is immense, making sure that he does not try anything. I will use this to show that the Nuremberg Trials were very secure.

Fitzpatrick. "CARTOON: NUREMBERG TRIALS, 1946. "End of the Road." American Cartoon

on the Nuremberg Trials of Nazi Leaders for War Crimes. Cartoon by D.R. Fitzpatrick,

1946." *Www.bridgemanimages.com*, 1946,

www.bridgemanimages.com/en-US/noartistknown/cartoon-nuremberg-trials-1946-end-of-the-road-american-cartoon-on-the-nuremberg-trials-of-nazi/nomedium/asset/3154194.

Accessed 27 Jan. 2023.

This image depicts a large swastika, on which a noose hangs from an arm, and the swastika looms over a line of figures that appear to be trudging toward the noose. I

understand that this represents that being a Nazi would be punishable by death and that the entire cartoon represents the Nuremberg Trials. I will use this to visually corroborate other sources.

Kukryniksy. "Last Line of Fascist Defence." *Spartacus-Educational.com*, 2023,

spartacus-educational.com/00nurembergWT.jpg?ezimgfmt=rs:352x426/rscb1/ng:webp/ngcb1. Accessed 7 Mar. 2023.

This political cartoon depicts men sitting behind papers, poking holes through them with bazookas and various other weaponry. I understand that this means that the Nazis were using the law as their last line of defense. I will use this to show that the Nazis did not expect to be put in prison or executed.

Law, Dynamic, and Herman Phleger. *NUREMBERG -A FAIR TRIAL?* Emerson Collective, Apr. 1946.

This is a primary newspaper that was published in April of 1946. It details why the Nuremberg Trials may not have been such a great idea, helping me understand many points of view on this topic. I will use this to become well-rounded in knowing multiple perspectives.

Low, David. "BOOKS and WORKS on PAPER: Jeffrey Archer Political Cartoon Collection

Sells at Auction | Antiques Trade Gazette." *Www.antiquetrade gazette.com*, Nov. 1945, www.antiquetrade gazette.com/print-edition/2018/april/2336/auction-reports/books-and-works-on-paper-jeffrey-archer-political-cartoon-collection-sells-at-auction/. Accessed 7 Mar. 2023.

An intriguing political cartoon, this image shows a depiction of Nazi war criminals sitting on the bench, waiting for their turn to go up to the stand, saying, “we could have done it better”. I understand that the Nazis are displeased about the lack of glamor in the Trials. I will use this to show that the Nazis were disappointed in the Trials.

---. *Spartacus-Educational.com*, 2023,

spartacus-educational.com/00low3.jpg?ezimgfmt=rs:500x415/rscb1/ng:webp/ngcb1.

Accessed 7 Mar. 2023.

This is a primary political cartoon that demonstrates what each person looks like. I understand that they looked prideful, holding their heads up high. I will use this to show that the Nazis didn’t expect to get indicted.

---. *Spartacus-Educational.com*, 1945,

spartacus-educational.com/00low1.jpg?ezimgfmt=rs:494x389/rscb1/ng:webp/ngcb1.

Accessed 7 Mar. 2023.

This political cartoon shows drawings of men that were on trial with their arms crossed and heads held high. I understand that they are proud of what they’ve done. I will use this to show that the men were proud.

The Allies. “The Trial of German Major War Criminals : Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal Sitting at Nuremberg Germany.” *Yale.edu*, Government Printing Office, 2019, avalon.law.yale.edu/imt/imtchart.asp.

This is a primary legal document that is signed by representatives from France, Germany, the Soviet Union, and the USA. This document helps me understand some of the contexts before the Nuremberg Trials, and what set the wheels into motion. I will use this to provide background information.

“The Moscow Declaration on Atrocities.” *Www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org*,

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-moscow-declaration-on-atrocities. Accessed 1 Feb. 2023.

This is a copy of the Moscow agreement of 1943 and an interpretation. This helps me understand why the Allies had a commitment to prosecuting Nazi war criminals. I will use this to show what built up to the Nuremberg Trials.

“The Nuremberg Trials.” *Spartacus-Educational.com*, 1945,

spartacus-educational.com/00nuremburgWTD.jpg?ezimgfmt=rs:450x387/rscb1/ng:webp/ngcb1. Accessed 7 Mar. 2023.

This is a picture of the defendants at the Nuremberg Trials standing as the Tribunal enters the room. I understand that they look bored, not expecting to get indicted. I will use this to show that the defendants didn't know the amount of evidence that the Allies had.

The Robert H. Jackson center. “Nuremberg Trial Day 1 (1945) Chief Judge Lawrence Lawrence Begins Trial.” *Www.youtube.com*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=XCk_s39XZ5I. Accessed 18 Jan. 2023.

This is a primary video of the Nuremberg Trials and helps me understand exactly what the organized chaos looked like. I understand that the translation was a bit lagged, and caused the Trials to drag out. I will use this to show that while the simultaneous translation was good, it also caused the Trials to take longer.

Unknown Photographer. “Gallery - Nuremberg Trials- Photos.” *Fcit.usf.edu*,

fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/gallery/n1945.htm.

This is a website that offers many primary pictures that display what really went on at the Nuremberg Trials. This helps me understand really how many people were tried for war

crimes, crimes against peace, and crimes against humanity. I will use this to gain a better understanding of the setup of the Trials.

“Wartime Fashion: 45 Found Snaps That Defined Men’s Fashion during WWII.” *Vintage.es*, www.vintag.es/2018/11/1940s-men-fashion.html. Accessed 7 Mar. 2023.

This is a website that contains primary images of men’s fashion in 1945. Understanding that men wore bowler hats, I will use this to create a more historically accurate performance.

Wolfe, Tade. “Aerial View of the Nuremberg Palace of Justice.” *Encyclopedia.ushmm.org*, 1946, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/photo/aerial-view-of-the-nuremberg-palace-of-justice. Accessed 6 Mar. 2023.

This is an aerial view of the Palace of Justice, where Nazi war criminals were to be tried. I understand that this was the location of yearly Nazi propaganda gatherings. I will use this to show that the Palace was mainly unharmed.

Secondary Sources

Allen, Erica. “25 Best Songs from the 40s.” *Music Industry How To*, 10 June 2022, www.musicindustryhowto.com/songs-from-the-40s/. Accessed 9 Feb. 2023.

A secondary source of top music hits in the 1940s, this article tells me that jazz and blues music was most popular in the world war two time period. This helps me to gain a better understanding of the time period overall. I will use this to extend my understanding of the 1940s and gain a deeper connection with the time.

Cengage. “The 1940s Lifestyles and Social Trends: Overview | Encyclopedia.com.” *Encyclopedia.com*, 2019,

www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/culture-magazines/1940s-lifestyles-and-social-trends-overview. Accessed 8 Feb. 2023.

Understanding the mood of a decade helped me grasp a deeper understanding of what the public thought about the Nuremberg Trials. This article details that the mood was somewhat heavy even before the US entered world war two. I used this source to determine a second point of view on what the public thought of the Trials.

Dave. "The Keys to 1940s Fashion - Central Casting." *Centralcasting.com*, 27 Jan. 2020, www.centralcasting.com/keys-to-1940s-fashion/#:~:text=Lace%2C%20passementerie%2C%20silk%20tassels%2C. Accessed 8 Feb. 2023.

Fashion was important in the 1940s, and this article details what was popular in the time period. This helps me understand what I should wear for my performance to be true to the time period. I will use this to provide information on what costumes would be appropriate for my performance, and what small accessories I could add to symbolize a character change.

Gov.uk editors. "History of Clement Attlee - GOV.UK." *Www.gov.uk*, www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/clement-attlee#:~:text=Clement%20Attlee%20was%20leader%20of. Accessed 16 Feb. 2023.

A secondary government-made article, this website expounds on how lucrative Attlee's rule was to Britain. The webpage article helps me understand how Attlee looked and that he was a quiet personality. I will use this to accurately portray Attlee as a shy yet powerful character, and how he never sugarcoated things.

Hines, Sophie. "Men v. Women: 100 Years of Fashion." *Good Housekeeping*, 20 Jan. 2016, www.goodhousekeeping.com/uk/fashion/a558953/men-v-women-100-years-of-fashion/. Accessed 9 Feb. 2023.

A secondary timeline of fashion through the 1900s, this source is mainly pictorial. I understand that fashion in the 1940s included many vests and large hats. I will use this to help get ideas for my costuming to make it more appropriate and historically accurate.

Hingley, Ronald. "Joseph Stalin | Biography, World War II, & Facts." *Britannica*, 14 Mar. 2022, www.britannica.com/biography/Joseph-Stalin. Accessed 16 Feb. 2023.

Explaining in detail Joseph Stalin's life, rule, and reign, this secondary encyclopedia entry helps me understand that Stalin was an extremely harsh and cruel leader, but he also managed to revive his country after the largest death toll of World War Two. I understand that Joseph Stalin was famous for his mustache and that he was cruel and calculating, and I will use this to characterize him through my performance as such.

History.com Editors. "Nuremberg Trials." *History*, A&E Television Networks, 2 Oct. 2018, www.history.com/topics/world-war-ii/nuremberg-trials. Accessed 13 Jan. 2023.

This secondary website is a general overview of the Nuremberg Trials. It helped me understand various topics that relate to the Trials, such as defendants being charged with crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. I will use this source to prove what crimes the defendants were charged with.

History.com editors. "Harry Truman." *HISTORY*, 11 Oct. 2018, www.history.com/topics/us-presidents/harry-truman. Accessed 16 Feb. 2023.

Secondary articles like this one help me get a broad understanding of things, and this one helps me understand a little bit more about president Truman, like when he was

president and how he looked. I understand that Truman wore glasses, and was a president in the same time period that I am studying. I will use this to make my presentation more historically accurate by using glasses to represent this character.

“International Criminal Justice since Nuremberg.” *Www.ushmm.org*,

www.ushmm.org/genocide-prevention/simon-skjodt-center/work/ferencz-international-justice-initiative/transitional-justice/international-criminal-justice-since-nuremberg.

Accessed 8 Feb. 2023.

This is a secondary list of any significant war Trials that happened after the Nuremberg Trials. I understand that these Trials would likely not have been possible without the Nuremberg Trials establishing international law. I will use this to show that the Nuremberg Trials were extremely relevant in the long term, establishing laws that countries were forced to abide by.

Klein, Christopher. “10 Things You May Not Know about the Nuremberg Trials.” *HISTORY*, Sept. 2018,

www.history.com/news/10-things-you-may-not-know-about-the-nuremberg-trials.

Accessed 17 Jan. 2023.

This is a secondary webpage that details ten things that were unprecedented about the Nuremberg Trials. This helped me understand new facts that I had not yet learned, such as the term genocide was coined at the Trials, and helped me gain a second point of view, as the article claims the executions were botched. I will use this to show the criminal’s point of view and to deepen my understanding of this topic.

Linder, Douglas. “The Nuremberg Trials: Chronology (2009).” *Famous-Trials.com*, 1995,

famous-trials.com/nuremberg/1902-chronology. Accessed 1 Feb. 2023.

This is a secondary timeline that puts the events and the short timeline of the Nuremberg Trials in perspective. I understand that the Nuremberg Trials may have only taken up two years, but that the effects spanned decades. I will use this to understand the impact of the Trials.

“Milestones: 1945–1952 - Office of the Historian.” *State.gov*, 2019,

history.state.gov/milestones/1945-1952/nuremberg. Accessed 27 Jan. 2023.

This is a secondary web page article that provides more information about the lesser-known Tokyo Trials that tried major war criminals of the far east. I understand that this was extremely similar to the Nuremberg Trials. I will use this to show that the Trials at Nuremberg set a precedent for international law.

“Nuremberg Timeline - Robert H Jackson Center.” *Www.roberthjackson.org*,

www.roberthjackson.org/nuremberg-timeline/. Accessed 1 Feb. 2023.

A timeline like this is a secondary source that helps put all of the events in chronological order. Helping me understand when everything happened, a timeline is a valuable resource. I will use this to corroborate other sources.

“Online Exhibition — United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.” *Ushmm.org*, 2019,

www.ushmm.org/information/exhibitions/online-exhibitions/special-focus/doctors-trial.

Accessed 1 Feb. 2023.

This secondary online exhibition is a virtual version of what can be found in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. It helps me understand that one of the subsequent Trials, the doctors’ trial, tried Nazi doctors that attempted many brutal “treatments” on Jewish people enslaved in concentration camps. I will use this to show that the

Nuremberg Trials were not just about major war criminals like high-ranking Nazi officials.

Pickles, Dorothy M. "Charles de Gaulle | Biography, World War II, & Facts." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 25 Feb. 2019,
www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-de-Gaulle-president-of-France.

This is a secondary encyclopedia entry about the President of France in 1945, Charles De Gaulle. I understand that he was well known as a military officer, hence giving him popularity when running for president. I will use this to provide me with information regarding the character of the leaders of each nation.

"Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings." *Ushmm.org*, 2019,
encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/subsequent-nuremberg-proceedings.
Accessed 13 Jan. 2023.

This is a secondary article that gives a general overview of the subsequent Trials. This source helps me grasp a general understanding of the subsequent Trials and their purpose. I'll use this to prove the short-term effects of the Nuremberg Trials.

The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. "Nürnberg Trials | Facts, Definition, & Prominent Defendants." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 20 Dec. 2018,
www.britannica.com/event/Nurnberg-trials. Accessed 17 Jan. 2023.

This encyclopedia entry details that 24 men were put to trial, and 22 got a verdict. 4 got acquitted, 4 were sentenced to 10-20 years in prison, 3 to life in prison, and 12 to death, even though only 10 were actually executed. This source helped me understand the exact numbers and gain a better understanding of why the numbers change as the Trials progress. I will use this to prove and corroborate the statistics.

“The Influence of the Nuremberg Trial on International Criminal Law - Robert H Jackson Center.” *Www.roberthjackson.org*,

www.roberthjackson.org/speech-and-writing/the-influence-of-the-nuremberg-trial-on-international-criminal-law/#:~:text=The%20Nuremberg%20trials%20established%20that.

A secondary webpage, this article details how the Nuremberg Trials influenced international law, and attempted international trials before the Nuremberg Trials. I understand that the Nuremberg Trials were an essential stepping stone that inaugurated international law and set up a precedent for future international court cases. I will use this to show what trials happened before, and how they failed, as well as the things that the case at Nuremberg initiated.

The National WWII Museum. “The Nuremberg Trials.” *The National WWII Museum | New Orleans*, The National WWII Museum,

www.nationalww2museum.org/war/topics/nuremberg-trials. Accessed 12 Jan. 2023.

This is a secondary source that details what the Nuremberg Trials were and how they were implemented, as well as who was put on trial and what crimes they committed. This source helped me understand that these Trials happened over a span of years, from 1945-1948. I will use this to gain a basic understanding of what the Trials were.

“The Nuremberg Trials: An Account.” *Famous-Trials.com*,

famous-trials.com/nuremberg/1901-home. Accessed 1 Feb. 2023.

An overview of the Nuremberg Trials, this secondary website gives a general recapitulation of the Nuremberg Trials, including the aftermath. It helps me understand that though Nuremberg was a revolutionary trial, it didn't quite reach the lofty goals set,

as war crimes are still being committed. I will use this to show that the Nuremberg Trials' importance has been disputed.