

lit Circle I

In My Hands

Your Name

The Last Chance for Justice



Defendant Oskar Gröning, a former SS member, at a courtroom in Lüneburg, Germany, April 21, 2015. Gröning, age 93, was found guilty of aiding in the murder of 300,000 Jews at Auschwitz and sentenced to four years in prison.

Does your circle think that Nazi soldiers who are still alive should be punished for crimes committed in World War II? Write down three exact opinions and who said it.

Opinion One of Student _____

They said, “

Opinion Two of Student _____

They said, “

Opinion Three of Student _____

They said, “

2. As fewer and fewer of the Holocaust generation remain, prosecutors bring a renewed sense of urgency to finding and prosecuting perpetrators. But these efforts were controversial. Images of aged men standing trial in wheelchairs sometimes create sympathy for the defendants. A columnist for the London Times argued that “it is wise and humane to let the matter rest,” and another journalist called the trials of elderly Nazis “a new and frankly distasteful blood sport. . . . Some critics questioned the usefulness of using government money to try men with only a few years left to live, and others called the attempts simply too little, too late. **Why does your circle believe people argue that the trials are still necessary? For whose benefit are the trials being held?**

3. Andreas Brendl, a German investigator, argued, “We have an obligation to the families of the victims and the victims themselves to pursue this. . . . That’s indisputable. It doesn’t matter to me whether the accused is 25 or 92. Do people honestly think we shouldn’t pursue people who may have been part of the Nazi machinery?” “Are we supposed to abstain from prosecution now just because we weren’t able to pursue them in the past?” “They included six-month-old infants as well as elderly people. The perpetrators at the time had absolutely no compassion, and it is fair to ask whether they themselves deserve any pity today.

Explain these quotes. What are some thoughts from your circle?

4. Leon Schwarzbaum, a 95-year-old survivor who lost 35 members of his family in the Holocaust, was a witness at a 2016 trial of two former Auschwitz guards. “I want to know what their motivation was, why so many joined in killing millions of people,” he said. “I just hope they all talk eventually. I want to hear it out of their mouths, what they did and why. I want them to tell the truth. **Will this bring closure or an end to the suffering of the holocaust? Explain.**