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The influence of the Nuremberg Trials: A Research Review

Out of all the possible topics related to The Holocaust, I have selected The Nuremberg Trials as my inquiry topic. The Nuremberg Trials were a series of trials that took place from 1945 to 1949, during the post - World War II period. These trials were created or started with the goal of judge all the people that were perpetrators of the holocaust and bring justice to the survivors and their families. However, my inquiry topic is still very broad so I have decided to treat more specifically talking about the consequences that these trials have had in the world from their creation until now, and also how they affected the society back in 1945-49.

For this research review I have selected two sources that I have used previously, and I think were the best ones I have read until now because they clarified a lot of things about my topic. These two sources are two different online articles, “Nuremberg Trials” from *History.com* and “International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg” from the *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* website.

The first article I selected was very broad, giving a general and summarized explanation about why the trials were created and what happened inside of the trials themselves, giving the reader a good idea of how things happened and how did they ended in the consequences that we live nowadays in different ways. In the other hand, the second article was a little bit more specific and focused in the International Military Tribunal that was in charge of the Nuremberg Trials, providing the reader with many more details and interesting things that will help you understand the bigger picture.

One of the main reasons I had to select this topic was that I wanted to learn more about the impact that the trials had in the international law that is used in the juridical systems around the world nowadays. While reading “Nuremberg Trials” I happened to understand a lot about different consequences that affect different aspects of society, but the article claimed, “Nonetheless, most observers considered the trials a step forward for the establishment of international law.” When I read this sentence, the idea that I had before just connected again and made me stop and think much more about it. And of course, research much more about it. The fact that many of the international laws, conventions and declarations that we have today, like The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, were created based in things happened during both the holocaust and the Nuremberg trials, as well as many other events. This realization means a lot to me, because it’s the reason I first thought about this inquiry topic and seeing how it really happened in the way that I initially imagined it makes me wonder how much more is there to find out.

Therefore, I decided that maybe I should have a deeper understanding of how this relation with the trials affected the international conventions that we have now, because I know a lot about them and how they work since I was in high school, but I don’t have that much knowledge about their background. To understand that, I read the article “International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg” because it looked like a good lecture about the background of the trials themselves. When reading this article, I found that the authors claimed, “The IMT had indicted the defendants on charges of crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity”, which made me stop and think about four conventions that I read about a few years ago: The Geneva Conventions. Of course, I did some reading on that too to find out if those conventions were related at all or not to the trials, and I found out that they actually had their foundation in decisions made in the Nuremberg Trials. This little fact made me much more interested in my own inquiry topic, because I had finally found a specific example of what I had been reading for several weeks now. I really like how everything is related in here, because small details from the past are the ones that started the big things that we have today.

Knowing now how the past can affect so clearly the society that we have now, I got a little surprised when I was reading my first article for the first time because it contains a very interesting detail that I was not aware about before I started this research. Or more specifically, before I read “Nuremberg Trials” itself. The History.com staff explained, “As the accused men and judges spoke four different languages, the trial saw the introduction of a technological innovation taken for granted today: instantaneous translation.” Nowadays, this is a must have in pretty much all the trials around the world, or at least is very common for most countries. For some reason, I never thought about the fact that in past this wasn’t a regular practice in court, and it surprised me that the Nuremberg Trials were the first time that this practice was used. However, this means that the trial not only affected our laws, but also brought some “technological advantages”, as I like to call the instantaneous translation, because it showed how useful and necessary that can be.

By researching all this new information, I have realized that the real impact of this trials was much bigger than I was expecting when I first started to do my research about this inquiry. However, there is one important point that I think is fundamental for me in the influence of the realization of the Nuremberg Trials and it is the fact that, to my understanding, this event was the first time that a society decided to take all the measures that they had to claim justice over such a horrible thing. According to the information in “International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg” by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, besides all the efforts used in Nuremberg, there were many criminals from the Holocaust that didn’t go through trial and never paid the price of their actions. I think that this fact was a very disappointing thing for a lot of people that lived in the time of the holocaust but it was also a relief that most major criminals got to be judged in the trials. This effect is more social than anything else, because it has repercussions in the society nowadays too.

Researching about the Nuremberg Trials has been very interesting, and I realized that now I am using my knowledge in my daily life. To do so, I have read a lot and the pieces of writing that I have chosen to include in this paper were the most special ones for me. The gave meaning to the sources that I used and made me feel more confident about the topic and I now know that I own reliable information about my inquiry, that will stay with me forever.

Works Cited

History.com Staff. “Nuremberg Trials”. *History.com.* A+E Networks, 2010. Web. Oct 21, 2015.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. “International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg.” *Holocaust Encyclopedia, ushmm.com.* n.d. Web. Oct 26th, 2015.