

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Growing Up in Nazi Germany:

Teaching *Friedrich* by Hans Peter Richter



MUSEUM
OF JEWISH
HERITAGE

A LIVING
MEMORIAL
TO THE
HOLOCAUST

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Introduction to the Museum

The Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is proud to present this Teacher’s Guide for the book *Friedrich* by Hans Peter Richter. The Museum is a place for people of all ages and backgrounds to learn about Jewish life over the past century — before, during, and after the Holocaust. The Museum creates an opportunity for witnesses to historical events to speak about their lives in person, as well as in videos, photographs, personal objects, and quotations. The powerful images and personal stories in the Museum show visitors how ordinary people from all walks of life got caught up in the terrifying tragedy of the Shoah. As a memorial, the Museum honors those who died in the Shoah by telling the stories of their lives. A visit to the Museum is recommended as an introduction to the period of the Holocaust, and especially for students studying this curriculum

This curriculum focuses on the young adult book of historic fiction, *Friedrich* (first published in German in 1961; Puffin Books, 1987). *Friedrich* provides a starting point for developing an understanding of the events, issues, and personal crises faced by all those living in Germany in the years 1930 to 1942, particularly 1930 to 1939. It can be used by the teacher as part of a more extended study of Holocaust history or Holocaust literature, or stand on its own as literature.

The curriculum is aimed at middle school students and high school students. It conforms to New York State Learning Standards in Social Studies and Language Arts. See next page for “Links with Standards.”

WHY TEACH FRIEDRICH?

- It provides an accessible and complex picture of the issues of this period, tied to a historically accurate chronology.
- Because the narrator and Friedrich are young people, students can readily engage with them and the situations they confront.
- It provides opportunities for discussion of difficult issues of prejudice, conformity, and historical forces that divide friends.
- *Friedrich* is written in a style that encourages the reader to develop a nuanced view of the characters and circumstances of the period.

FRIEDRICH: AN OVERVIEW

Friedrich, a work of fiction written in the style of a memoir, is about two German families, one Jewish and one

Christian, who live in the same apartment house. The author, Hans Peter Richter, was born in 1926 in Cologne, Germany. Upon finishing school, Richter served in the German army during WWII. Richter worked as a scholar and writer for many years. He is best known for his trilogy of historical novels for young people (*Friedrich; I Was There*; and *The Time of Young Soldiers*). When *Friedrich* was published in 1961, it was one of the first German books to deal with the Nazi period.

Friedrich is the story of the friendship of the non-Jewish narrator and his Jewish neighbors. *Friedrich* begins in 1925, when the narrator is four years old, and ends in 1942, when he is 17. It takes place during the period when the Nazis came to power and into the early years of World War II. Initially the Schneiders, the Jewish family, are much better off than the narrator’s family but gradually their lives become restricted and diminished, economically, politically, and socially. During this period the overwhelming majority of Germans came to believe in and support Hitler and the Nazi Party. The vast majority of Germans were neither sadistic nor perverted; they were normal people in extreme circumstances. The narrator’s father joins the Nazi Party and the narrator joins the “*Jungvolk*” (usually called “*Hitlerjugend*,” or Hitler Youth) and participates in *Kristallnacht*. One of the core issues that *Friedrich* allows students to explore is how, and why, the narrator and his family become Nazis.

As the events and incidents unfold, told from a boy’s point of view, we see the confusion and misunderstanding about the changes in society under the Nazis, and wonder who, if anyone, attempted to understand where things were heading.

LINKS WITH STANDARDS

LANGUAGE ARTS

To cultivate students' expertise in comprehension of written texts; writing for various purposes and in different forms; summarizing information; analyzing texts and other source materials; developing oral communication skills; understanding of the function of "point of view" in a novel.

RESEARCH SKILLS

To expand students' skills in research and use of primary sources.

HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

To develop students' knowledge and understanding in some or all of the following areas: basic historical knowledge of the history of Germany from 1925-1942, including the Nazi Party's rise to power; the nature of propaganda; Nazi racist ideology; youth movements; the rise of anti-Semitism; boycotts, book burnings, legislation, especially the Nuremberg laws, *Kristallnacht*; the response of various German citizens — resisters, bystanders, and perpetrators; responses of German Jews — particularly the dilemma of whether to leave Germany before 1939.

New York State Performance Standards — English Language Arts

E2B Produce a response to literature.

E3C Prepare and deliver an individual presentation.

E5A Respond to non-fiction, fiction, poetry, and drama using interpretive and critical processes.

New York State Social Studies Standard 2 — World History

New York State Social Studies — Global History and Geography Core Curriculum

Unit 6D: A Half Century of Crisis and Achievement

Unit 10 - I - WWII - A3 - Rise of Totalitarianism;

5E - The Nazi Holocaust

HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM

This curriculum provides lessons for individual chapters of *Friedrich*. Each chapter title includes the year of the events therein. Ideally, an educator can teach the whole book and take advantage of associated resource materials.

For a thematic approach to teaching all or parts of the book, please note that each *Friedrich* lesson plan includes a list of themes. Themes may be grouped together out of the chronological sequence. For example, issues of conformity are addressed in a number of chapters and could be grouped together to reflect the growing consequences of conformity over time in Nazi Germany.

Research questions and additional resources are included for potential expansion of each lesson-based chapter. These are supplementary to the core of the lesson. A research question from a chapter may be assigned as a final project for the whole book. See page 67 for additional bibliographical suggestions for further research.

To enrich your students' understanding of the period and to provide a comparison with other perspectives, we have provided the names of a number of sources, including memoirs and diaries in which the same period or events are described from a Jewish child's point of view.

For further background, including vocabulary items that your students are not familiar with, please visit the website of the Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, www.mjhnyc.org. There you will find a Teachers Guide with Glossary for the Museum's tour, *Meeting Hate with Humanity: Life During the Holocaust*.

Setting the Scene (1925)

Friedrich, pp. 1-3

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

This brief opening chapter introduces the main protagonists of the book and sets the historical context. The first character is Polycarp, a statue of a “garden dwarf” that is the pride and joy of Mr. Resch, the landlord. We meet the Narrator’s family and their neighbors, the Schneiders, a Jewish family. We read about how the families were affected by the economic troubles that plagued Germany in the 1920s. We learn that the Narrator and the Schneider’s son, Friedrich, were born within a week of each other.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Democracy was a relatively new form of government for the Germans. In the period after the First World War, there were difficult social conditions, with assassinations, an attempted revolution, and huge economic problems. In this first chapter of *Friedrich*, the narrator refers to the devaluation of the mark and Germany’s economic problems, though he doesn’t refer to the troubled political situation. The second half of the 1920s saw frequent changes of government. No party or coalition in the *Reichstag* (German Parliament) had a lasting majority.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Friendship between German boys, one Jewish, one non-Jewish
- Society in crisis and its impact on individuals/families

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- The novel opens and closes with Polycarp, the garden gnome, who oversees the garden of their apartment house. What is the purpose of including Polycarp at both the beginning and end of the book? What might Polycarp symbolize?
- How does the Narrator describe his life in Germany in this first chapter? Is he generally positive, negative, or neutral? What does he see as most important to “set the scene”?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Research the period of the Weimar Republic from 1919 until Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933. Students, or groups of students, could undertake specific topic areas, for example, the Treaty of Versailles, the Spartacist Uprising, the Munich Putsch, Hyperinflation, the beginnings of the Nazi Party, etc.
- The following books may be helpful resources on German Jewry for teacher or students for research questions throughout this curriculum.
 - Amos Elon. *The Pity of It All: A History of the Jews in Germany, 1743-1933*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002.
 - Marion A. Kaplan. *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
 - David A. Altshuler. *Hitler’s War Against the Jews: A Young Reader’s Version of the War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*, by Lucy S Dawidowicz. New York: Behrman House, 1978.

Potato Pancakes (1929)

Friedrich, pp. 3-6

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Frau Schneider asks the Narrator's mother to look after Friedrich for a few hours. The Narrator is new at sharing. *Friedrich* shows the Narrator a cuckoo whistle, and the two boys are soon the best of friends. Later, the boys help make potato pancakes and feast on them. After a long day, the boys are filthy, so the Narrator's mother puts them both in the bathtub and scrubs them clean.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

The previous chapter mentions that the Narrator's father is unemployed. By 1929, the year of this chapter, unemployment in Germany had increased tremendously. In October 1929, the major stock market crash in the US had serious effects in Europe. Germany was already in financial difficulties, and this made its economic difficulties more extreme, feeding widespread anger. Also in October 1929, Germany's moderate Foreign Minister Gustav Stresemann died. These events all had a devastating effect on Germany's politics and helped lead to increasing support for extreme political movements, like the Communists and the Nazi Party in 1930 and beyond.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Friendship between German families, (one Jewish, one non-Jewish)
- Shared German culture

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Both boys seem to like to eat the same foods and play with the same toys. What impression does this chapter give you about the differences between the daily life of Jews and non-Jews in Germany?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- *Friedrich* is a story of two boys. Other books tell similar histories from a girl's perspective. See the Resource Materials section at the end of this curriculum for more titles.
- The following book provides helpful background on the different experiences of Jewish women, men, boys, and girls in Nazi Germany: Marion A. Kaplan. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare the relationship of the Narrator and Friedrich to the memories of Bessie K below (Reprinted with the permission of The Free Press, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., from *WITNESS: Voices from the Holocaust*, edited by Joshua M. Greene and Shiva Kumar. Copyright © 2000 by Joshua M. Greene Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Further reproduction of this material is prohibited without written consent of the publisher.). Bessie was born in 1924 in Vilna, Poland. The Nazis did not arrive in Vilna until 1941. Like Friedrich, Bessie had non-Jewish friends, and the political turmoil did not at first affect these friendships:

"We had Christian friends, we had Jewish friends, and I think we were always protected. As I look back, the bad things were never told, they were never mentioned in the house. Because I went to a private school, only Jewish children went there. We heard that something is going wrong with Jewish people, but it was not there. So in other words, if it's not your home, it's okay." (p. 19)

- What do you think it means that Bessie felt "protected"?
- In what ways do children relate to each other differently than adults even in difficult times?

Also, see the "Jungvolk" chapter in this curriculum for more memoir excerpts on friendships between Jews and non-Jews. Compare the different periods of friendship.

Snow (1929)

Friedrich, pp. 7-12

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Friedrich and his mother are having a wonderful time playing in the snow, while the Narrator watches from the window, eager to join them right away. The Narrator's mother is busy with chores and can't take him downstairs. The chapter ends on a foreboding note, when Friedrich is yelled at by Herr Resch and called a "dirty Jewboy" (p. 12) for playing near Herr Resch's rosebush. The Narrator's mother does not respond, and tells her son to "come away from the window."

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters in this curriculum, "Setting the Scene" and "Potato Pancakes."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Jewish family life in Germany in 1929 seems normal and enjoyable
- Nonetheless, there is a beginning awareness that anti-Semitic behavior is more publicly acceptable

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Rewrite this scene from the point of view of Friedrich or his mother.
- What do you think of the response of the Narrator's mother to Herr Resch?
- What might you predict of her behavior when things get rougher and tougher?
- What might she have said and done? Connect to the bystander theme in later chapters, e.g., "The Ball" on p. 38. What responsibilities does a bystander bear?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Jews were emancipated in Germany in 1871. Research this time period and describe the integration of Jews into German society. How did emancipation affect the presence of anti-Semitism in Germany?
- What was life like in Germany for Jews right before the Nazis came to power? For background, see resource books mentioned in Research Questions after the first chapter of this curriculum, p. 3.

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare this chapter with this quotation from Frederic Zeller (*When Time Ran Out: Coming of Age in the Third Reich*. Sag Harbor, New York: Permanent Press, 1989. Courtesy of the Permanent Press, 4170 Noyac Road, Sag Harbor NY 11963.):

“We had some brand new games... We played Communists, Nazis, and Social Democrats. We addressed “mass meetings” through funnel-shaped, rolled-up newspaper, resembling the mechanical megaphones used by agitators in those pre-electronic days. We strutted up and down and gave fist or raised arm Nazi salutes.... We yelled party slogans at each other, staged street battles complete with ‘police’ who rushed with water hoses.” (p. 15)

- How was children’s play influenced by the events going on around them?
- What types of games do you and your friends play? Are any of these games influenced by contemporary culture and current events? Consider the game of Monopoly, for example, and how it is influenced by Capitalism. Can you think of other examples?

Grandfather (1930)

Friedrich, pp. 12-16

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator's grandfather arrives for a visit. He is a domineering, old-fashioned man who likes to give orders. With the Narrator's father out of work, the family is dependent on him financially. He forbids his grandson from having further contact with his Jewish friend, Friedrich. He talks about a former Jewish boss he disliked though it is not clear why. Friedrich rings the doorbell asking if his friend can come to play. The Narrator's mother, made anxious by her father, just says that it was "A child from the neighborhood," when her father questions her. (p. 16)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters in this curriculum, "Setting the Scene" and "Potato Pancakes."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Unemployment in Germany 1930
- Anti-Semitism
- German family's strict style of authority

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Grandfather tells a story about Herr Cohn (p. 15). What does he have against Herr Cohn? Why doesn't he want the Narrator to associate with "this Jew"?
- What does the grandfather's behavior tell us about judging others based on stereotypes? How does the grandfather try to influence his family? How did the Nazis try to scare people? Do you see any similarities?
- This chapter raises a major issue of the novel: What brings people together and what separates them? What makes people harm those who are different or weaker? What was the impact of conformity and fear in German society?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Chapters 2, 3, and 4 of *Friedrich* reveal the deep-seated anti-Semitism of German society in these years. Which incidents so far in the book portray this anti-Semitism? What is the basis of this anti-Semitism?
- The theme of conformity and its consequences runs through the novel. Find this theme in other chapters and write an overview on this issue.

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare this chapter with the experience of Christa M., (Reprinted with the permission of The Free Press, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., from *WITNESS: Voices from the Holocaust*, edited by Joshua M. Greene and Shiva Kumar. Copyright © 2000 by Joshua M. Greene Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Further reproduction of this material is prohibited without written consent of the publisher.). Christa remembers the curriculum in her German elementary school:

[We were taught that] "Jews are dirty. They are the root of all evil. Whatever is going to happen to us that's bad, whatever that did happen that's bad, it's all the fault of the Jews. The Jews own all the money. The Jews are all crooks and all Jews are going to cheat you. Never to trust them. And then, of course, never to have a Jewish friend..." (p. 24)

- What is racism? How is Christa's "curriculum" an example of racism?
- How is this a new type of anti-Semitism, different from the previous ideas people had about Jews?
- What do you think the effect of this teaching of hatred was on students in German schools?
- Why did the Nazis focus their propaganda on children?

Friday Evening (1930)

Friedrich, pp. 16-19

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

As the economic situation in Germany gets worse, the Narrator's mother is forced to do washing for other people to support the family, while her husband searches for work. The Narrator, in turn, spends more time with the Schneiders, and becomes familiar with their religious customs. He asks about the *mezuzah*, and joins the family for a traditional Shabbat dinner while he waits for his own parents to come home. He is enchanted by the warmth of the family and intrigued by the rituals. Before he leaves, Mrs. Schneider gives him a gift of some pears to take down to his mother.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

A dramatic change occurred in the parliamentary election of 1930, when the full force of the worldwide depression hit the already weak German economy. Mass unemployment leads to social chaos and unrest. The Nazi Party and the Communist Party suddenly gained huge increases in the number of seats each held, promising better employment and different ways of dealing with the turmoil.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Unemployment in Germany 1930
- An “outsider’s” view of Jewish traditions and Shabbat

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

In this chapter the Narrator joins the Schneiders for Shabbat.

- What does he learn about Jewish rituals and beliefs? What is strange and new to him?
- How do you think spending time with Friedrich's family — a Jewish family — might influence how he thinks about Jews in the future? Do you think this connection was important?

The chapter ends with: “Before falling asleep, I could still hear the Schneiders singing together, softly and sadly.” (p. 19)

- Why sadly? What do you make of this sentence when the preceding chapter has focused on the peace and plenty of the Schneiders in comparison to the struggle of the narrator's family?
- Research the history of the Jews of Germany — assimilation, acculturation, economic situation, and political rights. What do we learn about Friedrich's family? Is the Schneider family typical of German Jewry in this period?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What was the German Jewish life like in terms of ritual practice? See resource books mentioned in this curriculum the first chapter of *Friedrich*, “Setting the Scene.”

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare the testimony of Abraham P., born in 1924 in Beclean, Romania (Reprinted with the permission of The Free Press, a Division of Simon & Schuster, Inc., from *WITNESS: Voices from the Holocaust*, edited by Joshua M. Greene and Shiva Kumar. Copyright © 2000 by Joshua M. Greene Productions, Inc. All rights reserved. Further reproduction of this material is prohibited without written consent of the publisher.):

“Friday we used to get ready for the Shabbes...we used [to] clean up the house, scrub the floor, clean the windows. My mother, may she rest in peace, was cooking and baking. It was delightful... We used to press our own shirts, then after that we went to the bathhouse because they didn’t have showers or bathtubs like we have over here... It was happiness!” (p. 20)

- What role do you think special times such as Shabbat (or Shabbes) had for children growing up during the Nazi era?
- In what ways did people try to keep their traditions as the situation got worse during the war?

School Begins (1931)

Friedrich, pp. 19-25

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

A child's first day of school was a big event in pre-war Germany. The Narrator's parents and the Schneiders pick the boys up when class is over, and reward them with a traditional cone of candy. Friedrich suggests that everyone go to the amusement park. At first, the Narrator's parents are uncertain: given their financial condition, they can't afford such luxuries, but the Schneiders convince them to come, and pay for most of the food and rides. The Narrator's father treats all to licorice sticks, and group photographs—one for each family—of everyone enjoying themselves. When they get home, the Narrator asks his mother what there is for lunch. She tells him that there is nothing, because they spent the last two marks at the amusement park.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters in this curriculum, "Potato Pancakes" and "Friday Evening."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Unemployment in Germany in the 1930s
- Friendship between German families, one Jewish, one non-Jewish

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Are the Schneiders aware of the financial problems of the Narrator's parents? If so, how do they deal with them? Why don't/can't the Narrator's parents admit their poverty?
- The popular German folk song, *Hänschen klein*, is about a little boy named Hans who leaves his home and his family to go out and explore the world. The little boy in the song has adventures, experiences life and at the end returns home to his mother. What do you remember about rituals on your first day of school?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What are the rituals that went with the first day of school in Germany? What are the rituals that go with the first day of school in your community?
- Research the *Upsherin* ritual for Jewish toddlers and their families. In some traditional Jewish communities, a young boy is given his first haircut at age three and introduced to Torah study with honey and sweetness.
- Research this period of the Weimar Republic focusing on how and why the Weimar Republic failed.

The Way to School (1933)

Friedrich, pp. 19-25

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Walking home from school, the two boys pass by Friedrich's pediatrician's office, and see the word "Jew" painted over the office sign. Later, they run into a crowd outside a popular Jewish-owned stationery store. A storm trooper with a sign, "DON'T BUY FROM JEWS" (p. 30) tries to prevent shoppers from entering the store. He orders the boys to leave, but Friedrich refuses. As the scene comes to a head, Friedrich's father appears in the crowd and quietly leads the two boys away.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

In January 1933 when Hitler was appointed Chancellor, Germany was still a democracy. How did Germany so quickly afterwards become a dictatorship? One week before the promised March 1933 elections, the *Reichstag* (Germany's Parliament building) burned down. Hitler was granted emergency powers. He suspended all civil rights and could arrest suspicious persons. Nazi thugs (the SA or Brown Shirts) beat up people who openly opposed Hitler. In every street, people were paid to spy for the Nazis. The Nazis encouraged boycotts of stores and businesses owned by Jews. They also began book burnings of writings by Jews and by others not approved by the Reich. The Nazis set up Dachau, the first concentration camp, and began imprisoning political opponents there.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Big change in public life in 1933: public anti-Semitic confrontations
- Boycott of Jewish-owned stores: mixed response from German public
- Jewish responses to government backed public expressions of anti-Semitism

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What does Friedrich's father understand that his son does not? Friedrich still behaves as if he is an equal, as if he has full rights. Is the father protecting his son from understanding the change in the situation for Jews?
- Note that the 8-year-old Narrator knows that what the doctor wears on his head is called a "*yarmulke*." (p. 27-28) What kind of daily interaction do you think the Narrator might have had with Jews before he met Friedrich? How does he describe some of these interactions?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Look at the chronology for 1933 in *Friedrich* on pages 139-140. For each entry, write a question. What more do you want to know about this historical fact? Then look up the answer to the question and rewrite it in your own words. What else happened in this year in Germany and in the U.S.?
- The proportion of Jews in the overall population of Germany in 1933 was less than one per cent and much smaller than in other countries, such as Poland. How many Jews lived in Germany before Hitler became Chancellor? How many Jews lived in Berlin? Compare the numbers and proportion in Vienna, Warsaw, Paris, and New York in 1933.
- Research the achievements of German Jews in the arts and sciences in the 1930s. What do these achievements indicate to you about Jews in Germany at that time?

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare anti-Jewish graffiti and signs in *Friedrich* (pp. 27-30) with anti-Semitic threats and laws in the memoir by Frederic Zeller (*When Time Ran Out: Coming of Age in the Third Reich*. Sag Harbor, New York: Permanent Press, 1989. Courtesy of the Permanent Press, 4170 Noyac Road, Sag Harbor NY 11963.):

“First there was a notice barring Jews here, then there, then suddenly everywhere, at cinemas, restaurants, shops, even food stores. What are we going to do if all of the food stores put up these signs? Some were forced on shopkeepers by the S.A.; many went up because people joined the pack.

Every day there was a new story. A wealthy Jew’s house in Dahlem was burned down. Another’s car tires were slashed. Near the Grenadierstrasse religious Jews were beaten up, their beards set on fire, by a bunch of jeering young kids.

The Hochmann store across the street had ‘The Jews are our misfortune’ painted in large white letters across two windows...But not only Jews were denounced. ‘Former friends’ had become dangerous even to Christians, even to Nazis who, denounced, couldn’t prove absolute loyalty.” (p. 74)

- How do you explain that fact that many German people who would not normally attack Jews started to get involved in anti-Semitic acts?

The Jungvolk (1933)

Friedrich, pp. 32-38

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Friedrich is excited to go to a meeting of the *Jungvolk*, a division of the Hitler Youth. He has made himself a neckerchief out of a piece of cloth, and even has a brown leather ring with a swastika stamped on it. The squad leader introduces a guest speaker, Special Delegate Gelko, who proceeds to launch into a virulent tirade against the Jews, including a vivid description of the practice of *shehitah*, the Jewish ritual slaughter of an animal for food. Friedrich is forced to repeat the slogan “The Jews are our affliction!” (p. 37) Once he has repeated it, Friedrich leaves the clubhouse, while Special Delegate Gelko clutches the ring of Friedrich’s neckerchief.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Two months after the Nazis came to power, Hitler called on Germans to participate in a one-day boycott of Jewish shops. On April 11, 1933, just three weeks later, *shehitah*, or Jewish ritual slaughter, was banned in Germany. Although *shehitah* is designed to be clean and humane, the Nazis took great efforts to portray *shehitah* as a cruel practice that caused unneeded suffering to the animal. Lurid descriptions of the animal’s death throes were common. The anti-Semitic propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* (The Eternal Jew) later featured scenes, made to look grotesque, of a cow being slaughtered according to Jewish law. The description of *shehitah* given by Special Delegate Gelko is inaccurate in many ways. Gelko places considerable emphasis on the blood — “He [the slaughterer] wants that blood.” (p. 36-37) — when, in fact, the consumption of the blood of animals is forbidden according to Jewish tradition.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Nazi propaganda
- German Youth movements
- Peer pressure and conformity
- Growing antagonism in how Jews are spoken about in public

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why does Friedrich want to join the Jungvolk?
- What don't the boys understand at the beginning of this incident? What have they been forced to recognize by the end?
- The book does not make it clear if Gelko knows that Friedrich is Jewish. Why do you think he addresses himself directly to Friedrich?
- Why does Friedrich give in to Gelko before leaving? What do you think his choices were?
- Look at the last line of this chapter — “I stayed where I was.” Could the Narrator have left with Friedrich, or in some other way supported him?
- Retell the “mythic” story of the squadron leader’s kerchief. Why does the Narrator say that the squadron leader is “a great fellow”? What are the values underlying this story and its appeal to the Narrator?
- Write a dialogue in which the Narrator or Friedrich argues against the point of view put forward by Gelko.
- For those who have been in the scouts, youth movements, or even sports teams, describe the similarities and differences to this portrayal of the Jungvolk, and consider the dangers associated with the power of mass movements.
- What makes Gelko’s distorted description of kosher slaughter seem so extreme?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What were the Nazis' views and actions towards the disabled? The author chose to make Special Delegate Gelko a hunchback. Do you think the author was using irony in having a disabled Nazi character? Research the issue of the disabled and the Nazis.

Suggested website:

www.ushmm.org

Go to link for Museum Exhibitions, then to Special Focus, then to Nazi Persecution of Persons with Disabilities

- Research the history of anti-Semitic propaganda, with its lies about the connection between Jews and blood.

Read the "Blood Libel" entry in Encyclopedia Judaica.

Suggested website:

www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/

View examples from Nazi propaganda at the German Propaganda Archive of Calvin University:

- Visit the websites below and consider how these lies have entered contemporary political life. Discover how Jewish organizations have responded to these recent blood libels. Why do you think today's Jewish organizations have a different response than those of the Nazi era?

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/>

Type "blood libel" in the search window, then read the articles on "The new anti-Semitism" and "An Evil Prejudice."

<http://www.adl.org/>

Type "blood libel" in the search window, then read the articles on recent accusations and Jewish responses.

http://www.adl.org/presrele/IsIME_62/3790_62.asp

- Create a PowerPoint presentation on the Hitler Youth using public domain images from websites in Resource Materials at the end of this curriculum.

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare the Hitler Youth experience described in *Friedrich* with that described by Zeller in his memoir (*When Time Ran Out: Coming of Age in the Third Reich*. Sag Harbor, New York: Permanent Press, 1989. Courtesy of the Permanent Press, 4170 Noyac Road, Sag Harbor NY 11963.). In *When Time Ran Out: Coming of Age in the Third Reich*, Zeller is secretly envious of his best friend's Hitler Youth uniform. Zeller's book is written from the point of view of a Jewish boy, and we read about his emotions. We can only guess at many of Friedrich's emotions, as *Friedrich* is written from the point of view of a non-Jewish Narrator. Zeller was born only a year before the fictional Friedrich, so the two boys experience historical events at similar stages of development.

- Read this quote from Zeller about his best friend Lothar. To what extent do you think Zeller's described emotions would correspond to Friedrich's, after the end of "The Jungvolk" chapter?

"One day in June, Lothar turned up in Hitler Youth uniform. I looked at the belt, the buckle with the Nazi emblem, the leather shoulder strap. I was both uneasy and secretly envious. The uniform made him appear somehow changed. We had been friends for two years, but now he looked like a stranger. I was puzzled and then I suddenly understood. The others, that's what it was. I could sense the others in their uniform when I saw him. They were a group, I was not one of them. And I felt a distance, a great pain, a new kind of loneliness." (p. 32)

- Zeller is trying to figure out whether he can do the same thing as his best friend. Both Friedrich's and Zeller's parents disapprove of their interest in joining the Hitler Youth. Compare how each boy deals with his parents on this issue.

"That evening I asked my mother hesitatingly, sort of sideways, avoiding her eyes. 'I can't join the Hitler Youth, can I?'"

From her tone I could see the surprise in her eyes without even looking at her. 'But why on earth would you want to do that?'"

I told her about Lothar and she asked: 'Did Lothar want to join?'"

'I don't know. He told me his mother thought it would be a good thing.'

She started to say something, then stopped. Then she started again hesitatingly: 'Maybe you should not be such close friends with Lothar.'

I couldn't believe my ears. 'But he's my best friend. My very best friend!'"

'Yes, but you know, he is going to be kept busy with his Hitler Youth. He might not have a lot of time for you now. Anyway, I thought Norbert was your best friend?'"

I looked at her shocked. Lothar not have time for me? Out of the question. Mother saw my look, shook her head and walked away.

She was quite wrong. Now that the big school vacation had started Lothar had plenty of time for me. The weather was warm and we went almost everyday to splash around his father's boatyard. Lothar's father took us out for a run with a sailing-boat." (pp. 32-33)

- After feeling that nothing has changed in his friendship with Lothar, even though he cannot join the Hitler Youth, Zeller has this experience, described below. What does he now realize?

“One particularly nice August morning I went, as arranged, to Lothar’s house thinking, ‘If his father is home perhaps he’ll take us to the wharf today.’ I pushed the bell button and waited for Lothar. Nothing happened. I waited for a while and rang again. And waited. No call from the window, no Lothar. That was strange. I tried again, and still no answer. I wondered—did I make a mistake? Was I too early? Or too late? No, we had said ten o’clock. I rang again, stepped back, and looked up to the third floor. In the diagonal spy mirror outside the window I saw two faces. Lothar and his mother. They pulled back quickly when they saw me looking up and I watched the curtains fall across the window. I stood paralyzed. It felt as if a huge hand was squeezing my chest. Almost involuntarily I raised my finger to ring again and stopped in midair. I stood for a few seconds, finger an inch from the button. The pain descended into my gut and, crying, I slowly put my arm down without pushing the button. At home, creeping into my room, I fell on the bed, still in tears. Mother, who had not left for the store yet, followed me into the room. She sat down next to me, held my hand and told me: ‘No, you didn’t do anything bad. They’re doing something bad. Very bad. They all are.’”

That was the first time that I really understood that I had been made into something different. That the word Jew was more than just a word. That it was a feeling in the chest and in the gut. A pain that someone else could put there for you.” (p. 34)

- Both Zeller (in this quotation) and Friedrich (by the end of “The Jungvolk” chapter) realize that things have changed. How does each of them respond? How do they make sense of their non-Jewish friends’ behavior towards them?

RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER

WEBSITES

Museum of Tolerance: Simon Wiesenthal Center

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com/>

Follow the link to Multimedia Learning Center, then to The Nazis, then to Organizations, then to Youth Movements, and from there link to both Photos and Text.

Nizkor project: History of Hitlerjugend and Nazi Youth Education

<http://www.nizkor.org/>

Follow the link to Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression then to Vol. I, Chapter 7, and sections on reshaping of education and retraining of youth.

An article about a U.S. professor, a former Hitler youth, coming to terms with his past

<http://www.news.wisc.edu/>

Type Herbst or Nazi Youth in the search window.

<http://www.marysmoffat.co.uk/>

Go to link for Historical Fiction for Children, then to Contents and to Fascism and Persecution of the Jews. Includes review of *Friedrich* and of *I Was There* by Hans Peter Richter.

FILM/VIDEO

Outcast: Jewish Persecution in Nazi Germany 1933-1938

40 minutes. Produced by Yad Vashem, deals with the persecution of the Jews from 1933 through *Kristallnacht*. It includes the testimony of witnesses who were teenagers at the time.

Hitlerjunge Quex (Hitler Youth Quex)

Nazi Propaganda film, produced in 1933, tells the life story of a boy imbued with Nazi ideas.

BOOKS

<http://www.questia.com/library/>

Link to History to Germany to 1871-1944 to Hitler Youth. Full text of books and articles on this topic.

The Ball (1933)

Friedrich, pp. 38-42

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

While Friedrich and the Narrator are playing ball in the street, the ball accidentally shatters the window of a shop selling yarn. The shopkeeper accuses Friedrich, the “Jewboy” (p. 39), of breaking it intentionally and planning to steal her yarn. She does not listen to the Narrator’s protests that it was he who threw the ball. The policeman cautions the Narrator about trusting Jews. The woman warns Friedrich: “Hitler will show you yet!” (p.39). Finally, Friedrich’s father appears and challenges the woman to make a formal complaint, if she really believes that Friedrich broke the window intentionally. Finally, Mr. Schneider offers to pay for the damages, even though it was the Narrator who accidentally broke the window.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapter, “The Jungvolk.”

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- The continuing change in public life in 1933 (public anti-Semitic confrontations, threats, and false accusations)
- Yet some non-Jews are willing to defend falsely accused Jewish friends
- Jews still trusting in the role of law
- Many Germans play the role of quiet bystanders, as Jews are increasingly harassed

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why does the shopkeeper immediately assume Friedrich broke the window on purpose and will not be shifted from her view? (p. 39) What does this woman have against the Jews?
- What does the policeman advise the Narrator and why? (p. 40)
- List the prejudices that the people involved in this incident seem to believe about Jews.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- In groups or individually, students can investigate another significant event that occurred in Germany in 1933, for example, the burning of the Reichstag in February 1933, or the removal and burning of “un-German” books from German libraries in May of 1933. The students can present a class paper on their findings, or write a chapter to insert in the novel where the Narrator and Friedrich are affected by, or involved in, this incident.
- The shopkeeper’s husband is a simple example of a bystander. What do you think a bystander is? Look up bystanders in relation to the Shoah and try to list reasons why so many people did not get involved.

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare the Friedrich ball incident with a scene in Frederic Zeller’s memoir (*When Time Ran Out: Coming of Age in the Third Reich*. Sag Harbor, New York: Permanent Press, 1989. Courtesy of the Permanent Press, 4170 Noyac Road, Sag Harbor NY 11963.). In the Zeller book, when the narrator is attacked and called anti-Semitic names, he starts fighting back:

“Every so often one of my soccer friends would voice a pat anti-Semitic slogan like, ‘We can thank the Jews for that,’ then stop himself and look sheepish. I’d shrug my shoulders and ignore it, or if I felt in the mood I’d reply: ‘Yes, it’s all the fault of the Jews and the bicycle riders.’

If they hadn’t heard it before they would ask, ‘Why the bicycle riders?’

And I would ask, ‘Why the Jews?’” (Zeller, p. 65)

- How does Zeller use humor to protect himself against prejudice?
- How do the characters in *Friedrich* learn to protect themselves? In what ways do their personalities change?

Conversation on the Stairs (1933)

Friedrich, pp. 42-44

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Herr Resch, the landlord, meets Herr Schneider and Friedrich in the stairwell of their apartment building and tells Herr Schneider he is evicting their family from the building. They will have until the first of the month to move out. Herr Schneider is in shock at the news, and the Narrator's father tries his best to protect his neighbor, saying to Herr Resch, "Herr Schneider has his rights as a tenant." (p. 43) Herr Schneider asks Herr Resch why he is being evicted, and Herr Resch shouts loudly, "Because you are a Jew!" (p. 44)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters in this curriculum, "The Jungvolk" and "The Way to School."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- The growing power of Germans to express and act on their anti-Semitism
- Attempts to abrogate the civil rights of Jews (prejudiced landlord tries to evict Jews)
- Voices of reason are pitted against hatred

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why does Herr Resch say, "Never again will I set foot in your apartment"?
- Why does Herr Resch say he needs a witness?
- What reason does he give for evicting the Schneiders?
- Argue different points of views: The building is Herr Resch's property. It belongs to him. So, why shouldn't he have the right to decide who lives in it? Now defend the opposing viewpoint.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- In 1933, German Jews began to lose their rights. The Germans were responsive to world opinion, but there was very little protest. What do you think other governments might have done when they saw that Jews in Germany were losing their rights?
- Alfred Wiener, a German Jewish leader in the Central Association of German Citizens of Jewish Faith, wrote an article in a German newspaper in June 1933 entitled, “German Jewry on the Eve of Destruction” (C.V.-Zeitung, No. 22, June 1, 1933). More background can be found at <http://www.cs.brandeis.edu/~philip/dej-germanjews.html>. Imagine you are a young journalist. Your job is to rewrite this paragraph for a teen newspaper. Put the ideas below in simpler language and explain the meanings and background:

“...The great majority of German Jews remains firmly rooted in the soil of its German homeland, despite everything...But according to the ruling of the laws and regulations directed against us, only the “Aryans” now belong to the German people. What are we, then? Before the Law we are non-Germans without equal rights; to ourselves we are Germans with full rights. ...We wish to be subject as Germans with equal rights to the new government. Thus we are suspended between heaven and earth. We will have to fight with courage and strength in order to get back to earth, in the eyes of State and Law too...”

Herr Schneider (1933)

Friedrich, pp. 44-48

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Friedrich and the Narrator are sitting outside their house when Friedrich's father arrives home in the middle of the day, walking as if drunk. As Friedrich and his father walk into their building, the Narrator notices that the father is crying. Later Frau Schneider, very upset, visits the Narrator's mother. Frau Schneider begins to cry uncontrollably, and is only able to say, "I am afraid! I am so afraid!" (p. 46) Finally Frau Schneider calms down and says her that her husband has been fired from his job as a civil servant. When the Narrator's mother asks why, Frau Schneider pauses and then says, "We are Jews, aren't we?" (p. 48)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Nazi Propaganda Minister Goebbels regularly delivered hate-filled speeches on German national radio and in person "against the atrocities of world Jewry." Goebbels accused the Jews of spreading false information about the Nazis and of not being loyal citizens.

German Jews in the 1930s held a variety of political opinions. Some were radicals, Socialists, or Communists who would have welcomed a revolution. Others were conservatives who had supported the German monarchy before World War I. Most Jews were politically in the mainstream.

The Nazis blamed the Communists for the burning of the Reichstag, and used it as an excuse to strictly limit civil rights. They branded Jews as Communists. Six days after the Nazi boycott of Jewish stores, they passed "The Law of the Restoration of the Civil Service" which dismissed from government jobs "non-Aryans" who were seen as disloyal to the Nazis. The government's emergency powers strictly limited any dissent. Nazi Germany in 1933 was rapidly on its way to becoming a police state.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Firing of Jews from civil service related professions in 1933
- Jewish family confronts the changes taking place around them
- The Jewish family support system included non-Jewish friends

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why doesn't the Narrator recognize Herr Schneider from a distance?
- What most shocks the Narrator?
- Frau Schneider says, "I am afraid! I am so afraid!" (p. 46). This is the first expression in the book of such underlying feelings. Are men and women portrayed as responding to the events of these years differently? Examine the responses of the Schneiders and the Narrator's family and others.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- The Narrator's mother says, "But your husband is a civil servant, isn't he? ... I thought civil servants couldn't be fired?" (p. 48). What does Frau Schneider understand that the Narrator's family doesn't seem to recognize? Frau Schneider asks the rhetorical question, "We are Jews, aren't we?" (p. 48) This question implies that she understands that from now on anything could be done to the Jews.
- What kind of support system does Friedrich's family have to help each other? You will see how this changes as well.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The Nazis blamed the Jews for the difficult times Germany was going through, saying, for example, that the Jews were part of a worldwide conspiracy to destroy Germany.

- Examine definitions of the word "propaganda." Research three examples of Nazi propaganda and explain in each case what it was trying to do to public opinion.
- Mr. Schneider was fired from his government job. Further jobs began to dismiss or disallow "non-Aryans." But how would employers know who was a "non-Aryan"? There had been a lot of intermarriage in urban Germany. On April 11, 1933, the Nazis issued a legal directive defining exactly what "non-Aryan" meant. Anyone, for example, with only one Jewish parent or grandparent was considered a "non-Aryan," and could be legally excluded from German public life and discriminated against.
- Find out how Jews define who is a Jew. What was the difference between Jewish and Nazi definitions?
- What happens when discrimination becomes "legal"?
- Research the many laws passed in 1933 that were anti-Jewish. What were the rationales for these laws? Look back on previous chapters to see how the legislation affected characters in *Friedrich*.
- Nowadays when a law is passed, it becomes official policy and is defended by the police and the courts. If some people think that a law is not just, how might they work to change it? In Nazi Germany, on the other hand, Jews were beginning to lose the protection of the law. Research what the Jews or others might do if they felt discriminated against in the new laws in Nazi Germany. Did they have opportunities to protest?

BOOKS FOR TEACHERS ON PROPAGANDA/ANTI-SEMITISM

- Zosa Szajkowski. *An Illustrated Sourcebook on the Holocaust*. Volume 1. KTAV, 1977.
Very good source of visuals, e.g., pages from children's books of the 1930s, pamphlets, posters, anti-Semitic signs, photos of anti-Jewish boycotts, "For Jews Only" park benches, etc.
- Anthony Rhodes. *Propaganda. The Art of Persuasion: World War 2*. New Jersey: Wellfleet Press, 1987.
Very powerful reproductions and a fascinating discussion of Nazi propaganda methods including the use of film, in Chapter 1: The Propaganda of the Reich.

The Hearing (1933)

Friedrich, pp. 48-54

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Herr Resch and Herr Schneider are in court to settle the threat of the Schneiders' eviction from their apartment. Herr Resch's attorney says that the eviction is "a right which must surely be granted to every German today" (p. 49), as Herr Resch is an active member of the Nazi Party. He argues that having a Jew in the apartment building is a strain and creates a "constant threat of danger" (p. 51) Herr Schneider replies that he has lived there for 10 years; Herr Resch always knew that he was a Jew, and never before had a problem with this fact. The judge strongly challenges Herr Resch, who soon retracts his claim. When Friedrich begins to cry, the judge says to him, "You don't have to worry. Nothing will happen to you. That's why I am here, to see that justice is done." (p. 54)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters in this curriculum, "The Way to School", "The Jungvolk", and "Herr Schneider."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- The idea of "justice" and the law in German society during the early Nazi years. In 1933, a courageous judge might still express sympathy for the plight of a Jewish family. An anti-Semitic eviction of a family might be challenged in a court of law. This legal protection would be less and less frequent during the Nazi regime.
- The oppression of the Jews did not keep getting steadily worse. Sometimes there were short periods in which it might seem neutral or slightly better, before getting worse again.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why did Herr Schneider ask the narrator's family to come to court "just in case"? (p. 50)
- What is the argument for eviction?
- How is the Schneiders' presence in his apartment house allegedly harmful to Herr Resch?
- Since Hitler became Chancellor of Germany, what are some of the ways "times have changed"? Note what can now be said in court, and what Herr Resch and his lawyer assume are commonly known "facts." Do you think statements such as, "this Jew will ruin my business" (p. 52) would be acceptable in a US courtroom?
- What parallels does the Judge draw with Herr Resch's arguments for eviction of the Schneiders? "But that's something quite different..." (p. 53) says Herr Resch. Is it different?

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- How do you think the judge would define “justice”?
- At the end of this chapter we see the contrast between the understanding by the Judge and by Friedrich about the situation Germany in 1933: “Why are you crying, eh?” the judge asked warmly. ‘You don’t have to worry. Nothing will happen to you. That’s why I am here, to see that justice is done.’ Friedrich wiped his eyes and said, ‘You, yes!’” (p. 54). What did Friedrich mean when he said, “You, yes!”
- What experiences made Friedrich cry, despite the result of the court case being in the Schneider’s favor?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- This chapter raises the question of how much protection should, and do, laws give us? Who can change a law when it is unjust?

In the Department Store (1933)

Friedrich, pp. 55-59

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Friedrich and the Narrator go to the toy section in a nearby department store where Friedrich's father is working. The Narrator comments on how elegant he looks. In conversation with Friedrich's father, the Narrator says that he enjoys the Jungvolk (Hitler Youth), and that his own father has also joined the Nazi Party, because he "thinks it can only be good for us." (p. 58) Friedrich's father sighs, and then kindly tells a saleswoman to show the boys the rest of the toys and allows them to choose a toy to take home.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters in this curriculum, "The Way to School", "The Jungvolk", and "Herr Schneider."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Jewish-owned businesses still operating
- Germans are joining the Nazi Party for better opportunities

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why did Herr Schneider obtain another job, in the Herschel Myer Department Store, a Jewish-owned business?
- Look at pp. 58-9 and explain what you think is going on in Herr Schneider's mind.
- Why has the narrator's father joined the Nazi Party? What does "...he thinks it can only be good for us" (p. 58) mean?

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

- The Narrator's father has joined the Nazi Party because he "thinks it can only be good for us"(p. 58). Compare this passage with the following in the same author's more autobiographical book, *I Was There*. Richter's father describes what Hitler has done for his family:

"You'll have to admit, he has accomplished quite a bit. Do you remember how we lived before 1933? We didn't have any veal cutlets then. I was out of work, and unemployment benefits barely covered the rent. We didn't have enough to eat. We suffered hunger, real hunger. It's hard to imagine that today." (p. 81)

- Compare both passages with the story below of Herr B on page 17 in *Flares of Memory: Stories of Childhood during the Holocaust* (Anita Brostoff with Sheila Chamovitz, Eds. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. By Permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.). This true story was told by Fritz Ottenheimer, born in Constance, Germany 1925 (the same year as Friedrich). Comment on this story, paying attention to Herr B.'s comment on smoke and fire, the issue of propaganda, the short-term benefits of joining the Nazi Party, and the response of many German citizens to the plight of the Jews:

Herr B, a friendly non-Jewish neighbor shows up with a Nazi Party insignia on his lapel in 1933. When asked about the Nazis' treatment of the Jews, he says: 'It's too bad that the good have to suffer with the bad!' Fritz's father asks him whether the Ottenheimers are the good Jews or the bad Jews. After Herr B. insists, laughing, that they are good, he finds himself eventually agreeing that all the Jews of the town seemed to be decent, honest people. Finally, he angrily insists that there are plenty of reports of the bad Jews in the newspapers or on the radio. As he is leaving, he warns his Jewish friends: 'Where there is smoke, there's fire.'

The Teacher (1934)

Friedrich, pp. 59-64

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Herr Neudorf, the Narrator's teacher, asks his students to stay after class so that he can tell them a story about the Jews. He tells about the history of the Jews and explains how the Torah is the same as the Christian Old Testament. He explains that although the Jews have been persecuted for thousands of years, they are a "very capable people!" and that if anyone sees a Jew being mistreated they should remember that Jews are "human beings like us!" (p. 63) Then he turns to Friedrich and tells the class that Friedrich is going to be leaving the class to go to a Jewish school, but that everyone should try to remain his friend. As Friedrich leaves, the teacher gives a "Heil Hitler!" salute and the students return the greeting.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

There were Jewish children in many German schools until November 1938, but many left in earlier years as the situation in schools got more uncomfortable. (See Chronology in *Friedrich*, p. 144).

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Jewish children were expelled from school and faced increasing exclusion from everyday German life

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- The Narrator's teacher shows compassion towards the Jews and a hatred of Nazi propaganda, yet still gives a "Heil Hitler" salute as Friedrich leaves the class. Do you think teachers had a special role in influencing their students to believe in a certain way? How much influence do you think teachers had on their students as compared to other Nazi propaganda?
- Why does the teacher tell this story of the Jews? What do you think of the teacher's version of the history of the Jews? Look at pages 62 and 63 in the book, *Friedrich*. What are some of the myths about Jews that the teacher accepts?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Find out about the Nazi children's story "How to Tell a Jew" at www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/story3.htm. This story is part of the Nazi children's book, *The Poisonous Mushroom*. View pictures and other stories from the book at: www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/thumb.

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Read the description below based on a memoir of a Jewish boy in public school in Berlin, (Steve Heims, Ed. *Passages From Berlin: Recollections of the Goldschmidt Shul*. Maine: Atlantic Printing, 1987). Compare this to the chapter, “The Teacher,” in *Friedrich*.

As a public school student, Steve participated in all the games and exercises, no matter what their political orientation. At age 8 or 9 he had to write on why Adolf Hitler was a great man. His essay was considered excellent. He noted that Hitler helps all children and youth.

Steve’s family felt that this kind of propaganda would at least keep Steve from being humiliated as a Jew. Together with the others, he sang patriotic German songs and gave the “Heil Hitler” salute. Nonetheless some teachers and students figured out that he was a Jew based on his looks. They bullied Steve and made him feel uncomfortable at school. He could not understand the so-called important differences between “Aryan” and “Jew.” (p. 73)

- Steve Heims’s parents probably knew some of the dangers of Nazi ideology, but they were “reassured” by what he was learning in school. Why do you think they felt this way? Was acting like the other students and pledging allegiance to Hitler and the Nazi Party enough to keep a person safe during the war? Note that Heims was “profoundly uncomfortable” at the school, even as he tried his best to act like the other students.

Another Jewish pupil, Eva Samo, talks about her experiences as Nazi ideology entered her school (pp. 164-165):

Eva was a happy and popular girl in her school. She was a good student and the best athlete. She had only one competitor—Lutte. In the middle of 1933, Lutte began wearing her Nazi youth outfit to school. Teachers required students at that time to salute ‘Heil Hitler.’ Eva would not say the words nor raise her right arm.

Not long after, the other Jewish girls moved away, and Eva was the only Jew left in her class. Lutte told everyone that Eva should not be included in any activities during recess or after school. She was suddenly alone. Only one girl dared walk with Eva, a crippled student who lived nearby. Eva switched her social life to a Zionist youth organization. They too had a uniform, in a different color, but similar in design to the one worn by the Nazi youth.

- Eva had a very different school experience than Friedrich. She endured two years of abandonment by her friends and loneliness, hoping things would get better. Imagine a conversation between two assimilated German Jewish parents. One believes in keeping their child at school and one believes in switching the child to a Jewish school. What does each say?

Most teachers were quite different from the one who was kind to Friedrich. Here is an excerpt from a memoir in the same book of a girl named Susi.

“Miss Schultz: ‘You, you there, get into the last row—you are not one of us.’

‘You?’ Why not ‘Susi?’ My favorite teacher, my hard earned seat in the front row ...What was happening, what had I done? This in grade school...” (p. 153)

And here is a description of an experience about a boy named Peter (pp. 155-156):

Some of his teachers were openly anti-Semitic. The physical education teacher would make the entire class do physical exercises as punishment because “one of the Jew-boys didn’t pay attention.” The music teacher had the boys sing Nazi songs, such as: “When Jewish blood gushes forth from your knife, you can work much better.” The teacher told the Jewish boys that they did not have to sing that lyric.

In the class called “Racial Theory,” the teacher made the three Jewish children stand up in front of the class. The teacher described Peter’s skull as a few inches shorter than that of others, which meant he was inferior.

These lessons gave a sense of superiority to the non-Jews, and at the same time they gave a sense of inferiority to the Jewish children. When the boys were playing in the playground, Peter asked meekly whether he was allowed to participate. Usually he was told “no Jews allowed.” Peter accepted this as normal, regretting being Jewish and thus inferior. He secretly wished that he were “Aryan” like the other boys.

- How do these anecdotes compare to the experiences described in *Friedrich*? What is similar? What is different?

The Cleaning Lady (1935)

Friedrich, pp. 64-68

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Frau Penk, the cleaning lady, assists the Schneiders and the Narrator's family with cleaning and other chores. One day Frau Penk tells Frau Schneider that she has enjoyed working for her family but can no longer do so because they are Jewish. Frau Schneider politely tells Frau Penk that she understands the situation. After Frau Schneider leaves, Frau Penk tells the Narrator's mother about the new laws forbidding Jews and non-Jews to marry, and forbidding non-Jewish women under thirty-five from working in Jewish houses. When she is asked what her husband thinks of these new laws, Frau Penk says he is a former communist and feels they should be careful and "not do anything wrong." (p. 68)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

At their annual rally held in Nuremberg in 1935, the Nazis announced new laws including "The Law to Protect German Blood and German Honor," and "The Law for Regulating Citizenship in the German Reich." The "Nuremberg Laws" made many of the Nazi racial prejudices into official government policy. These laws defined a Jew racially as anyone with three or four Jewish grandparents, regardless of whether he or she identified as a Jew or even was born of converted parents. The Nazis even had names for people of mixed parentage: "first-degree" or "second-degree" *Mischlinge*.

Terms like "Purity of German Blood" were common in Nazi ideology. People were officially subdivided into superior and inferior races. "German-like" or "Aryan" was a definition for European people "without alien blood."

The Nuremberg Laws forbade marriages between Jews and non-Jews and sexual relationships between these two groups. Offenses against these laws resulted in imprisonment.

In addition, Jews were neither allowed to hoist up the German flag nor to employ German women under the age of 45 in their households. Among many prohibitions enshrined in these laws: Jews, even quarter- and half-Jews, were no longer citizens of their own country (their official title became "subjects of the state"). Suddenly, they had no basic citizens' rights, e.g., the right to vote. This set the stage for harsher laws to be passed in the future against Jews.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Nuremberg Laws
- Relationships with Jews, both work and personal, move from being an individual's choice to being forbidden by law
- Even people who are on good terms with Jews are forced to reduce their interactions with them, further isolating Jews
- Communists and other political dissidents are not tolerated; they are also discriminated against and imprisoned during the Nazi regime

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THIS CHAPTER

- What reasons does Frau Penk give for stopping work for the Schneiders?
- What does Frau Peck mean when she says, “I would have known how to arrange it all right. But my husband used to be a communist and he feels we ought to be careful and not do anything wrong.”(p. 68) Note the irony around the idea of doing “wrong.”
- What happens to those who do not obey the law?
- The Narrator’s mother says, “I no longer understand anything!”(p. 66) What do you think of her alleged ignorance? Is it credible that she doesn’t know about the Nuremberg Laws? Many Germans, and others, said after the war that they did not know about the gas chambers or the program to exterminate the Jews and persecute Roma (Gypsies), communists and other “undesirables.” Do you think that it is possible that people could have had no knowledge of what was happening during the war?
- Think back to the judge in “The Hearing” chapter. What do you think happens to this judge in the next few years? What will he do after the Nuremberg Laws are passed in 1935?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Research the Nuremberg Laws further and describe the ways in which they had an impact on the lives of German Jews. The full text of the laws can be found at <http://www.mtsu.edu/~baustin/nurmlaw2.html>.
- Why do you think that non-Jewish women under 45 were forbidden from working in Jewish homes? (p. 67)
- What happened to the Communists, and those who used to be Communists, after Hitler took power in 1933?
- Research the Jim Crow Laws in the US. In what way do they resemble the Nuremberg Laws? In what ways do they differ? Jim Crow Laws were passed in 1877, upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in Plessy vs. Ferguson (1896) and remained in effect until the court reversed the “separate but equal” doctrine in Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka (1954).
- Research miscegenation in the U.S. and South Africa.
- Research other groups discriminated against by the Germans. What happened to them and why? Note the following important dates:
 - **October 1934:** First mass arrests of German homosexuals begin
 - **April 1935:** Jehovah’s Witnesses are banned from all civic service jobs and are arrested throughout Germany
 - **July 12, 1936:** First mass arrests of German Gypsies [Roma, Sinti] take place throughout Germany

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

www.adl.org/education/dimensions_18_2/apps.asp

Integrating Primary Sources in Teaching about The Holocaust: Nuremberg Laws

<http://academic.kellogg.edu/mandel/Littlefield.htm>

Life Prior to *Kristallnacht* (1933-1938), Mandel Fellowship Lesson Plans

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/nurlawtoc.html>

Nuremberg laws and other primary documents, including German Jewish responses to the laws

Reasons (1936)

Friedrich, pp. 68-74

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator's father returns home from a Nazi Party meeting, and invites Herr Schneider into their apartment. He ashamedly informs him that he has joined the Nazi Party, thinking it would be good for his family, not because he believes in everything the Nazi Party stands for. Knowing that Herr Schneider must know the danger that he is in as a Jew, the Narrator's father asks him why his family has not left their apartment. Friedrich's father reminds him that he and his family are German and Jewish and they will not have better luck anywhere else. The Jews have been persecuted for so long, that maybe they should learn to suffer "by staying where we are." (p. 73) As Herr Schneider leaves, he asks the Narrator's father to take care of his family if anything should happen to him.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Before the Nazis came to power, unemployment was very high in Germany. To build support, the Nazis began ambitious programs of public works; they required all males over 18 to do 6 months of labor service; they instituted military conscription; and they encouraged women to be at home and producing babies. In this way they greatly reduced unemployment and produced a new life for many. In doing so, they also destroyed the power of labor unions.

The Berlin 1936 Olympics were a big propaganda success for the Nazis. They temporarily suspended anti-Jewish actions and created a big attractive spectacle for the world. After a big debate in America, the US decided to join the Olympics, but many international Jewish athletes either boycotted the Games or were excluded by the Nazis. During the Olympics, a major concentration camp, Sachsenhausen, was under construction 18 miles north of Berlin. On March 7, 1936, only twelve days after the Winter Olympics, and five months before the Summer Games, German troops crossed the Rhine River and entered the demilitarized zone between France and Germany, in violation of the treaties of Versailles and Locarno, a serious international provocation.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Difficult choices facing non-Jews as German society changes: Whether or not to join the Nazi Party and whether to remain friends with Jews
- Jews' difficult decisions to stay or leave Germany by 1936
- Lessening Nazi persecution of Jews during Berlin Olympics

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THIS CHAPTER

- List the reasons Herr Schneider gives for staying in Germany. What shows that Herr Schneider is an optimist? Why does Herr Schneider take comfort that it's the government that is anti-Semitic? (p. 73)
- Why did many Germans join the Nazi Party? What are the Narrator's father's justifications for his Party membership? (p.70) What impression do you get of this man? How unusual do you think he was?
- Why do you think Herr Schneider says, "I understand you very, very well. Perhaps — if I weren't a Jew — perhaps I would have acted just like you. But I am a Jew"? (p. 70)
- The Narrator's father is disturbed by what he overheard at his Party meeting that night in 1936. He says, "I don't by any means agree with the Party in everything it does or demands. But then... doesn't every party and every leadership have its dark side?" (p. 70) Write a series of notes for a debate about the extent a person owes loyalty in a work or social setting. What loyalties does a person owe to their company they work for or political party? Examine those who work for companies whose policies you disagree with.
- The Narrator's father accepts the situation under the Nazis and has also joined the Party. Encouraging the Schneiders to leave Germany, he asks, "Are you just going to accept slavery and injustice?"(p. 73) How do you understand this dichotomy?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

This chapter shows some ways German Jews responded to prejudice and anti-Semitism.

- Find examples of Jews who left Germany at this time and the arguments they put forward for going. Explore the 1938 *kindertransports* of German children to the U.K.
- Investigate the issue of emigration. How easy or difficult was it to leave at this time? Where could you go, and under what conditions would you be accepted?
- Why didn't other countries want to take Jewish refugees? Research the policy of the United States and European countries, as well as that of the Dominican Republic.
- Research the story of the SS St. Louis, a ship of refugees from Germany to Cuba in 1939; passengers were refused entry both to Cuba and then to the US. The St. Louis went back to Europe, though England, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium took in the refugees.
- Herr Schneider's comments about wandering sound suspiciously like an image from Christian folklore about the wandering Jew. Look into the history of this motif and comment. Is Herr Schneider's response believable?
- Herr Schneider says, "Now that the year of the Olympics has begun, we're hardly bothered." (p. 72) Why did many Jews interpret this as a sign that they could "ride out the storm"?
- Other research projects about the Berlin Olympics could include:
 - Attempts at boycotts and why they failed
 - Black American athletes at the Games
 - Did anti-Semitism influence decisions made about the US Olympic team?
 - Show whether or not the Olympics were a propaganda success for Hitler and the Nazis.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Anita Brostoff, Ed. *Flares of Memory: Stories of Childhood during the Holocaust*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1998.
Short personal accounts of emigration dilemmas: P. 24. “Leaving Germany, Leaving Home” (after *Kristallnacht*); P. 26 “Escape to England” (confiscation of property).
- Lila Perl and Marion B. Lazan. *Four Perfect Pebbles: A Holocaust Story*. NY: Avon, 1996.
 - Ch. 1: Family trapped in Germany; Marion’s search for four perfect pebbles, believing that thus all four would survive (p. 9). (Read chapter one online at www.fourperfectpebbles.com).
 - Ch. 2: “A Small Town in Germany” dramatic changes from 1933-8; Views about why Hitler came to power (pp.13-14); Neighbors turn against them; Elderly parents “That’s why they stayed” (pp.15-16).
 - Ch. 3: Departure for Holland, 1939; Short description of difficulties of emigration (pp. 20-22).
- Mark M. Anderson, Ed. *Hitler’s Exiles: Personal Stories of the Flight from Nazi Germany*. NY: New Press, 1998.
- Ursula Pawel. *My Child is Back*. Library of Holocaust Testimonies, London: Valentine Mitchell, 2000.
Ursula’s parents brush away advice to leave in 1933 (p. 20); Difficulties of emigration, including fake emigration schemes (pp. 33-36).
- For research on the 1936 Berlin Olympics and its controversies, see:
 - <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/olympics>
Online exhibition of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.
 - www.historylearningsite.co.uk/1936_berlin_olympics.htm
 - http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/past/index_uk.asp?OLGT=1&OLGY=1936
International Olympic Committee site on 1936 Olympic Games
 - Mogulof, Milly. *Foiled: Hitler’s Jewish Olympian*. Oakland, CA; RDR Books, 2002.

In the Swimming Pool (1938)

Friedrich, pp. 74-78

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Seeking relief from the hot weather, Friedrich and the Narrator decide to take a trip to the swimming pool. After swimming, Friedrich finds he has lost his clothes tag. When the attendant looks at Friedrich's identity card, she finds out that he is Jewish. She reads his name: Friedrich Israel Schneider. Shocked, she loudly berates him and throws his clothes on the ground, saying, "Think of it! Jewish things among the clothes of respectable human beings!" (p. 77). Friedrich puts on his clothes over his wet suit and the boys head to their bikes. A boy's bike was stolen, and Friedrich says that he saw the person who stole it. The boy tells him that even if he told the police, they would not believe a Jew.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

After the Berlin Olympics, the Nazis began to pursue their military and social plans more openly. For example, in 1937, Jews were systematically removed from the economy (called, "Aryanization"). The Nazis took over Austria in March 1938 and applied all anti-Semitic laws immediately. In April 1938, Jews had to register all their property, and valued Jewish property was seized. In July, the Evian International Conference failed to find refuge for German Jews. Jews were now required to carry identification cards. In August 1938, the Nazis ordered all Jews who did not have obvious "Jewish" first names to add the middle name "Israel" [for men] or "Sarah" [for women] to all their legal documents, thereby making it easier for Nazi soldiers to identify Jews.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Nazi racism is enshrined in law as well as in popular sentiment: publicly expressed sense of disgust in mingling with Jews
- Nazi propaganda and its effectiveness: Jews publicly rebuked and humiliated
- Jews now identified on their identity cards and by middle names of "Israel" or "Sarah"

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The shape of this chapter is similar to the earlier ones — the boys have fun riding their bikes and swimming up until Friedrich's Jewishness is revealed.

- How is Friedrich treated?
- Compare Friedrich's responses to how he behaved in "The Ball" and "The Jungvolk." How do you account for the differences? (Note that times have changed and that Friedrich is now older.)
- Write an account from the point of view of either Friedrich, the swimming pool attendant, or the boy whose bike was stolen, telling their family about this incident when they get home that evening. Include dialogue and details from the incident itself in your account.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Racism in Nazi Germany and elsewhere

- In the 1930s, racism was institutionalized not only in Germany but also in the U.S., South Africa, and many other countries. Investigate and compare segregation policies and practices in 1938 in Germany with those in the U.S., or another country, in the same period.
- How is segregation related to racism?

Propaganda

- Find and analyze samples of Nazi propaganda produced from 1933 to 1938 — leaflets, children’s books, posters, cartoons. What themes are repeated from earlier pre-Nazi anti-Semitic literature? How does race play a different role?
- How do you think propaganda wins people over to its perspective?
- Discuss the behavior, language, and responses of the swimming pool attendant and the boy whose bike was stolen in terms of how effective Nazi propaganda was by 1938.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

To the Teacher: One of the values of using *Friedrich* is that it enables readers to examine their own prejudices and fears. The Narrator and his family are not portrayed as bad people, and we sympathize with them. For Jewish students (particularly in Jewish schools) it is important to focus not just on anti-Semitism but also on racism in general. The swimming pool chapter provides an opportunity for the teacher to move to the broader topic of race-hatred, looked at then and now, in regard to Blacks, Asians, Muslims, and Arabs. Resources include:

http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%205618.pdf

“Everyday Antisemitism in Pre-War Nazi Germany: The Popular Bases,” by Michael H. Kater, *Yad Vashem Studies XVI* (Jerusalem, 1984), pp. 129-159 discusses daily questions such as admission to swimming pools.

http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3883/is_200503/ai_n13248478

Watermarks is an award-winning film of a Jewish Austrian championship swimming team during the Nazi era.

Destined to Witness, Growing Up Black in Nazi Germany by Hans J. Massaquoi, NY: Morrow, 1999.

The Festival (1938)

Friedrich, pp. 78-85

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator is invited by Friedrich to join him at his synagogue for his bar mitzvah. Once inside, Friedrich prays in Hebrew, and is called up to the podium (*bima*) to read a section of Torah. The rabbi continues with a sermon giving praise to Friedrich for his Torah reading and welcomes him as an equal member of the congregation. He also reminds the congregants that despite their troubles, they must remember that only God determines their fate. After the service, the Schneiders have a festive Shabbat dinner in which Friedrich is honored and given gifts by the guests. The chapter ends with a visit by Herr Neudorf, Friedrich's old teacher, who presents him with an engraved fountain pen.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Conditions continued to worsen for Jews during 1938. See previous chapter for further details. By November 9, 1938, synagogues in Germany and Austria were attacked and bar mitzvahs were less likely to be publicly celebrated.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Power of ritual and tradition during difficult times
- Jewish rituals seen from the perspective of a non-Jew (This chapter works well with the earlier chapter, "Friday Evening", pp. 16-19).

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The Narrator goes with Friedrich despite his father saying "Don't show yourself so often with the Schneiders; otherwise, I'll have difficulties." (p. 79)

- What is surprising and odd to the Narrator about the ceremony?
- What is your response to the rabbi's sermon?
- Look back at the reasons Herr Schneider gave for staying in Germany. Do these still make sense?
- As he promised in the chapter "The Teacher," Friedrich's teacher, Herr Neudorf, has kept in touch (p. 84). Would you have predicted this? Were there any dangers to his continuing relationship with Friedrich?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

It would be interesting for students to compare Friedrich's bar mitzvah with their own or with those they have attended. Friedrich's bar mitzvah is not typical for Europe at this time. It is only recently that the bar mitzvah has become a huge party, rather than just a religious ceremony. Students may research the history of bar mitzvah and bar mitzvah during the Holocaust.

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare Friedrich's bar mitzvah with the bar mitzvah in Zeller's memoir (*When Time Ran Out: Coming of Age in the Third Reich*. Sag Harbor, New York: Permanent Press, 1989. Courtesy of the Permanent Press, 4170 Noyac Road, Sag Harbor NY 11963.):

"I wanted a bar mitzvah because I believed in God, but there were other reasons as well. My eyes finally had been opened about the Jews. There was constant proof in the newspaper and the radio, every day. Millions of good, stolid burghers were accepting it. It was written in black and white and there just had to be something to it. Jews were filthy-rich Bolshevik-Capitalist, hook nosed, scum. They were powerful beyond words and ready to dominate Germany and the world from Moscow. I didn't want to go to Moscow, but can anyone blame me if I wanted to declare my allegiance to such a rich and powerful people?"

Perhaps more important, a bar mitzvah was an official recognition that I was no longer a child. Being a child hadn't been all that much fun—with everyone always telling you what you want, or ought to want, and what was good for you." (Zeller, p. 116)

- How do you understand Zeller's description of Jews in this passage? What are the differences in how the bar mitzvah was described from Zeller's perspective as a Jew, and from the Narrator of Friedrich as an outsider?

The Encounter (1938)

Friedrich, pp. 85-88

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator describes a session of his school gym class, which is led by Herr Schuster, a former storm trooper commander. All the students are scared of him, and no one dares disobey his orders. Before gym, Herr Schuster orders everyone to empty their bags and fill them with heavy bricks for a forced march. They march outdoors, chanting a song praising the Führer and blaming the “Traitors and Jews.” (p. 87) When, exhausted, they are heading back to school, they notice another class walking nearby. It is Friedrich’s class from the Jewish school. Not to be outdone, Herr Schuster orders the class to straighten up, march in perfect time, and loudly chant a song about the “Crooked Jews.”(p. 88)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Storm troopers, also known as the SA, were members of the Nazi militia, noted for their brutality and violence. The storm troopers were influential in Hitler’s rise to power, but lost their influence after 1936. They were also called “brown shirts” because of the color of their uniform and to distinguish them from the SS who were known as black shirts.

Also, see notes on “Jungvolk” chapter for background on Hitler Youth. Note that German society was becoming more militarized, since the beginning of conscription in 1935. Education was essential in Nazi Germany in trying to create fanatical followers of Hitler and the Nazis. The Nazis knew that starting early in schools they could mold loyal Nazis by the time the young people reached adulthood. All teachers had to be evaluated by local Nazi officials.

The Nazis began to defy the provisions of the Versailles Treaty and build up their military. By September 1938, Germany convinced Britain and France to agree to the German annexation of the Sudetenland (part of Czechoslovakia where many people of Germanic origin lived) in exchange for Hitler’s assurance that he would not attack the remainder of Czechoslovakia.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Conformity and authoritarianism in German society
- Popular culture (songs, etc.) that denigrate the Jews
- Militarism in German schools
- Jewish children in Jewish schools

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What are the aims of Herr Schuster, the physical education teacher? What sort of a physical education class is this?
- What effect does seeing their ex-classmate Friedrich have on the students?
- What do you think is the effect on the students of singing anti-Semitic songs?
- The Narrator never says how he feels about seeing Friedrich on the march. What do you think he feels? Do you think he might say anything?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Compare this class with the physical education classes you are familiar with. Note that Herr Schuster was also a commander of storm troopers. This chapter took place in 1938. Research the Nazi military build up at that time. Could it be that these 13-year-old boys are being prepared for the military?
- By 1938, most Jewish children in Germany went to Jewish schools and not to the public schools. Do you think that propaganda against Jews was more effective when children did not mix? Describe both the benefits and the disadvantages of different religious and ethnic groups attending school together.
- Look into Nazi education of German youth and see how schooling attempted to create loyal Nazis. Review for example: http://www.saskschools.ca/curr_content/history20/unit2/sec2_10.html and http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/Nazis_Education.htm
- Even mathematics was designed to indoctrinate the youth of Germany. Read this math problem from a German Math Textbook, 1938: *“A bomber aircraft on take-off carries 12 dozen bombs, each weighing ten kilos. The aircraft takes off for Warsaw, international center of Jews. It bombs the town. On take off with all bombs on board, and a fuel tank containing 1000 kilos of fuel, the aircraft weighed about 8 tons. When it returns from the crusade, there are still 230 kilos of fuel left. What is the weight of the aircraft when empty?”* What might be the effect on young Germans of working on a problem like this?
- In Adolf Hitler’s 1938 “Speech on Germany’s Future” he stated: “The weak must be chiseled away. I want young men and women who can suffer pain. A young German must be swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp’s steel.” Comment on the impact of this directive on Germany’s schools.

The Pogrom (1938)

Friedrich, pp. 88-95

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator leaves his school in the afternoon to find Dr. Askenase's shop in ruins. A rowdy group of people is heading towards a Jewish home for apprentices. They break down the door, and ransack everything in their sight. The Narrator finds it "strangely exhilarating" (p. 91), and soon is smashing objects along with the mob. Back home, he hears noises and sees a crowd making its way up to Friedrich's apartment. The mob destroys everything they touch. Frau Schneider is lying on the floor in shock. The Narrator and his mother both begin to cry.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

On the night of November 9, 1938, violent mobs in Germany and Austria attacked Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues, setting hundreds of buildings on fire. That date was called *Kristallnacht* by the Nazis ("Night of Broken Glass") because of the thousands of broken windows. Approximately 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and deported to concentration camps. After experiencing this violence, many Jews tried to leave Europe to find refuge. But where could they go? Most countries did not accept Jewish refugees. In July 1938 at a conference in Evian in France, 32 nations discussed the crisis of thousands of Jews trying to flee Europe, yet took very little action to help.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- The psychology of mobs: How an ordinary person, with no hatred for Jews, gets carried away in the excitement of destruction.

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- During *Kristallnacht*, destruction was encouraged and went unpunished by the authorities. What did the police do in this chapter? Why?
- How did the Narrator react to the orders to participate in the destruction? How does the mob react to his resistance?
- The Narrator says, "I felt so strong! I could have sung I was so drunk with the desire to swing my hammer." (p. 92) Why do you think Friedrich's friend enjoyed smashing? Do you think that pleasure in destruction is a common emotion?
- The mob didn't steal anything in the Schneiders' apartment. Why did they smash the Meissen china [fancy porcelain dishes] and tear the books? What might the author be saying about the desire to hurt and destroy?

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

We have provided short descriptions of experiences from a collection edited by Steve Heims entitled, *Passages From Berlin: Recollections of the Goldschmidt Shul*. This book contains autobiographical reminiscences of many former students at a German-Jewish school in Berlin between 1935 and 1939. Schools like the Goldschmidt Shul became more important as Jewish teachers and students were increasingly excluded from public schools due to Nazi anti-Jewish laws of 1933 and 1935.

- Compare the description of *Kristallnacht* in *Friedrich* with the one described below in *Passages from Berlin* by Klaus G. Scheye. Klaus was 13 years old in 1936. He had a wonderful time at his bar mitzvah and at the Berlin Olympics. In November 1938, things were different. Here is what he wrote:

“... the Kristallnacht burning of the temples, the organized pogroms and smashing of Jewish store windows, which I saw personally on the way home from a Spanish class, my father being collected the next day at noon by the local police...[He] returned [from Sachsenhausen] a physically beaten man. But he mobilized what strength he had left to get me out of this whirlpool... an immigration permit and a British transit visa.” (p. 174)

- In the chapter on the pogrom in *Friedrich* there is no description of arrests. Klaus Scheye tells of his father's arrest, and how this became the springboard for getting Klaus out of the country. *Friedrich's* family never leaves Germany. List some of the reasons that families in Germany decided to stay and reasons why some chose to leave their homeland.
- Compare the description of *Kristallnacht* in *Friedrich* with the one described below in *Passages from Berlin*. Mina G. had been a good pupil. She mentioned in an earlier passage that she began to be shunned by the other students at her public school. Her parents sent her to the Goldschmidt Shul from 1936. Here is what she wrote:

Kristallnacht brought happy school days to an end. On the first night of the pogrom, the schools' wooden shutters were closed. The students could hear dogs barking all night long. The Stormtroopers were tracking down those hiding in a nearby park. The next morning in class, Dr. Goldschmidt told students that she had received a threatening phone call warning that the school was to be “stormed” by the Gestapo. She asked the older children to take the younger ones across the street, and if possible to the nearby school. Mina always will remember the band of Hitler Youth carrying stones lined up outside the school, shouting and threatening the little children as they filed out. (p. 62)

She describes how the Nazis threatened her school. Why do you think the Nazis would attack children?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To what extent was the violence of *Kristallnacht* spontaneous? What was the excuse the Nazis gave to launch it?
- Compare how *Kristallnacht* was reported in the press in Germany and in the U.S. What were the differences and similarities?
- How did the US and other governments respond to news of *Kristallnacht*?
- How did *Kristallnacht* change German Jews' understanding of their future in Germany?
- Research the difference in German Jewish emigration statistics before and after *Kristallnacht*. What was the process involved in emigration?
- Read Marion Kaplan's account of the "November Pogrom" in *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998). Research the numbers of Jewish men arrested, how families coped, and family dilemmas about leaving Germany.
- The title of this chapter in *Friedrich*, "The Pogrom," connects *Kristallnacht* to other attacks upon the Jews through the centuries. Research and prepare a presentation on earlier pogroms [e.g., Kishinev 1903, Bohdan Khmel'nitski raids of 1648, etc.].

RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER

WEBSITES

US Holocaust Memorial Museum—*Kristallnacht* online companion exhibition

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/kristallnacht/frame.htm>

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has an excellent site that includes print data, photographs and other visuals. It also provides a first person narrative and opportunities for teachers and students to study topics via direct access to primary sources in the museum's collection. Entering the keyword *Kristallnacht* via The Learning Center accesses encyclopedia articles, photos, maps, and films.

RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER (CONTINUED)

Online Multimedia Learning Center, Museum of Tolerance

<http://motlc.learningcenter.wiesenthal.org/>

Thorough print resource includes historical dates, fact sheet, brief biographies of significant personalities, and eye-witness accounts.

Jewish Virtual Library

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/kristalltoc.html>

Individual testimonies, photographs, primary documents, including Report of the American Consul in Stuttgart to the State Department.

The History Place

<http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/timeline/knacht.htm>

Includes photos and links to primary documents and World War II timeline.

FILM/VIDEO

Kristallnacht

60 min / Color / JHS+ / VHS

Produced by Brookdale Community College in New Jersey. Documentary footage and interviews with survivors of *Kristallnacht*.

Kristallnacht: The Journey from 1933-1988

60 min / Color & BW / HS+ / VHS

Narrated by Eric Sevareid on the 50th anniversary of *Kristallnacht*. Included are personal testimonies and archival film footage.

BOOKS

Inge Joseph Bleier and David E. Gumpert. *Inge: A Girl's Journey through Nazi Europe*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004.

Adele Geras. *Flashbacks: Candle in the Dark*. London: A & C Black, 1998. (Historical novel for ages seven to eleven)

Marion Kaplan. *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*. NY: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Laurel Leff. *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Ursula Pawel. *My Child is Back. Library of Holocaust Testimonies*. London: Valentine Mitchell, 2000. (The effects of *Kristallnacht*, pp. 37-39)

Lila Perl and Marion Blumenthal. *Four Perfect Pebbles A Holocaust Story*. NY: Greenwillow Books, HarperCollins, 1996. (Hamburg *Kristallnacht*, pp. 25-33)

Frederic Zeller. *When Time Ran Out: Coming of Age in the Third Reich*. NY: Berkley Books, 1989.

The Death (1938)

Friedrich, pp. 95-100

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Herr Schneider wakes up the Narrator's family in the middle of the night to borrow a table lamp, as his wife is very ill. Herr Schneider again comes to their door, this time with Dr. Levy, who he needs to give Frau Schneider an injection. He has been unable to sterilize the syringe by boiling it, as the Schneiders no longer have a stove. The Narrator and his mother go up to the Schneiders' apartment, which they find in disarray from the pogrom. Frau Schneider is on the bed, very weak. Dr. Levy, knowing that her death is near, tells her to "Confess your sins to your husband." (p. 98) She takes her last breaths. Herr Schneider and Friedrich join in a prayer, and then she becomes still. Herr Schneider falls on his knees, and he and Friedrich rip their shirts as a sign of mourning.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Tremendous damage was done towards Jewish property during *Kristallnacht*. The Jews were actually blamed for the damage done to them. A fine of one billion marks was levied for the slaying of Vom Rath, the embassy official whose killing sparked the pogrom, while six million marks, paid by insurance companies for broken windows, was to be given to the state coffers.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- The responsibility of the bystander (Compare other chapters: "Snow," "The Way to School," and "The Ball.")
- Jewish religious ritual during the Holocaust

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why does Herr Schneider not tell the Narrator's family what is happening during his first nighttime visit? "Such excitement!" the Narrator's mother says (p. 96) and wonders if she "should go and see how Frau Schneider is? ...But then she went back to sleep." She knows what has happened to the Schneiders, yet this is her response. How do you explain the changes in her behavior? What might be some of the reasons she has chosen not to respond?
- Chart how the Narrator's mother has come to be this woman who turns over and goes back to sleep. Do her actions (or lack of actions) represent the behavior of other German women?
- Note the reaction of the Narrator's mother when she sees Frau Schneider (p. 98): "*But you can't leave her like that! Mother burst out in a horrified voice... 'Too late for that!' murmured Dr. Levy, preparing the syringe.*" (p. 98) Might the Narrator and his family have done something earlier? If so, what could they have done and when?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

When Frau Schneider died, Herr Schneider, the doctor, and Friedrich started reciting Jewish rituals for the dead. "*At that moment Herr Schneider fell on his knees before his wife. With both hands he gripped his shirt collar and tore the shirt.*" (p. 100)

- Research the Jewish traditions for the dead. Look at the traditions in other religions. What are the similarities in each religion for honoring the dead? How are they different?

Lamps (1939)

Friedrich, pp. 100-103

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator stops by the Schneiders' apartment to give them a letter that was mistakenly delivered to his apartment. Friedrich's father answers the door, looking tired and scared, and leads the Narrator to the kitchen where he finds Friedrich sitting with a variety of lamps that he is fixing. Since his father cannot work anymore, Friedrich must provide for both of them. His father collects lamps and Friedrich fixes them. The letter that the Narrator had brought over is an eviction notice from Herr Resch. Friedrich breaks down in tears as his father leads the Narrator to the door pleading to him: "Don't give us away; otherwise, they'll take even the little we have left."(p. 103)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Almost 200,000 Jews were still in Germany when World War II began. In September 1939, the government passed new laws: a curfew for Jews; restrictions on movement in certain urban areas; reduced rations for Jews, etc. Jews were limited as to when they could purchase food and other supplies. They had to turn in their radios, electrical appliances, bicycles, and cars to the police. Jews could only live in certain parts of the city. The first deportations of German Jews took place in February 1940; systematic deportations began in October 1941. With these harsh restrictions and expropriations, the Nazis first dehumanized the Jewish population, before physically murdering them.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- How do you imagine Friedrich earns enough money for himself and his father? Who do you think their customers are?
- What would you expect Friedrich's friend, the Narrator, might do when he sees the situation his friends are in?
- How do you think Friedrich acquired the strength to look after his father?
- Have you ever had to look after a family member? What was that like?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Friedrich's father is no longer permitted to work and Friedrich is earning a living for them by mending lamps, although this is illegal. The last line of this chapter is "Don't give us away; otherwise, they'll take even the little we have left." (p. 103) The Narrator now lives in a completely different world than Friedrich.

- Research the period after *Kristallnacht* and up to the outbreak of World War II to add to the timeline in the *Friedrich* book, pp. 144-145. Explain how Jews were gradually excluded from German society at this time.

The Movie (1940)

Friedrich, pp. 103-108

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Friedrich and the Narrator decide to go see the popular movie *Jud Süß* (The Jew Süss) at the movie theater. The Narrator is worried about being seen in public with a Jew, and Friedrich is worried that he will be forced to show his Jewish identity card, so he sends the Narrator to the window to buy the tickets alone. Luckily there are no problems, and even the woman inside the theater doesn't ask for any identification. After they are seated, there is an announcement that all teenagers will need to show their ID cards. When the usherette reaches Friedrich, he jumps up and nervously tells her that he left it at home. The Narrator tries to help, but soon the usherette finds Friedrich's ID, sees that he is a Jew, and takes him to the side exit ready to kick him out. By the exit she tells him: "You must be tired of life! You must be dying to go to a concentration camp, eh!" (p. 108)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapter of this curriculum, "Lamps."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Further restrictions on Jews
- Attempts by some Jews to ignore restrictions
- Propaganda movie *Jud Süß*
- Concentration camps are being discussed in German life

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- The narrator says, "*I had once been reprimanded in the Hitler Youth for consorting with a Jew. Since then, we only met in those places where we were unlikely to meet people we knew.*" (p. 104). What is the Narrator risking? Why does he continue to see Friedrich?
- Friedrich says, "*...a movie like this is really important for me, isn't it?*" (p. 105). Why did Friedrich want to see *Jud Süß* so much? Why was he prepared to take such a risk? Was it because it was the hit movie of the day, or was it to see how he and his people were being portrayed?
- Friedrich says, "*'Upholstered,' he said with pleasure, and stroked the soft armrest.*" (p. 105). What does this comment say about Friedrich's life?

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

- Friedrich says: “*We are suffering, and not just because there’s a war on.*” (p. 105); he has to inform the Narrator that Jews are no longer allowed into cinemas (p. 106). Again, we are shown the Narrator’s ignorance. How do you understand the Narrator’s ignorance? How well informed are 15-year-olds these days about the news?
- In your class the teacher can run a quick quiz about current affairs as a basis for comparing students’ knowledge or ignorance, in this way assessing whether the Narrator’s lack of information is credible.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Investigate segregation in other countries at this time and find out in which countries it was practiced. Compare the policies and practices of segregation in, for example, the USA and South Africa, with Germany. Note that segregation usually applied to cinemas. Why do you think this was so?
- Friedrich knows the cost of being discovered, and the usherette knows too: she is another example in the author’s quick portraits of Germans. This is the first mention of concentration camps. Research the camps that were in existence in the Reich in 1940, and who was sent there.
- Research and write a plot summary of *Jud Süß*. Explore how Nazis used film as an important propaganda tool. Websites below provide information: <http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/judsuss2.htm> and <http://www.jafi.org.il/education/juice/media/week2.html>

Benches (1940)

Friedrich, pp. 109-113

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

Friedrich meets up with the Narrator in the center of town and tells him about Helga, a girl he has fallen in love with: She works in a kindergarten and her father is a soldier. During their first date, Helga wanted to sit down on a park bench. Friedrich was hesitant to sit on a bench for “Aryans only,” but agreed. Helga noticed his nervousness, so she got up and led Friedrich to a bench marked “For Jews Only,” asking him if he would feel more comfortable there. Friedrich was shocked that she knew he was Jewish, but she did not seem to care. She even invited him on another date in the country, away from all the people. Nevertheless, Friedrich was so nervous about being caught, that he decided not to go. As he tells the Narrator: “The girl would be sent to a concentration camp if she were seen with me!”(p. 113)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapter in this curriculum, “The Cleaning Lady” on the 1935 Nuremberg Laws against the mixing of the races.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Romance between Jews and non-Jews in Germany after 1935
- Some individuals connect with each other despite propaganda, prejudice, and punishment

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Why do you think Helga decided to take the risk of being with Friedrich in public? Can just interacting with someone from a different background change one’s view of a group of people?
- Friedrich tells the Narrator, “...*Helga behaved the whole time as if it were natural to go out with a Jew.*” (p. 113). Why do you think some people did not fall into the “trap” of Nazi propaganda? What do you think helped some people resist the ideas of the Nazis? Helga was a teacher in a kindergarten and worked with children every day. Do you think this affected how she related to Friedrich?
- Students might want to share their own experiences about friendship or friendly encounters with people from other backgrounds and how it changes their perceptions about others.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Look into what happened to Jews who were married to non-Jews and vice versa. One story is that of the non-Jewish wives of Jewish men who protested the arrest of their Jewish spouses in 1943 and won their release: At <http://www.fcit.usf.edu/holocaust>, go to Timeline, 1942-1944, then to Rosenstrasse Protest.
- Were there Germans who resisted the Nazis? Check the site below to see one example to discuss:
<http://www.dbonhoeffer.org/>
- Research the White Rose resistance movement:
<http://www.jlrweb.com/whiterose/>
- In Germany, the Nuremberg Laws prevented Jews and non-Jews from having relationships with each other. Students can research similar laws in apartheid South Africa and in recent US history. Discuss the concept of creating laws to govern personal relationships. Can you think of any more recent examples?

The Rabbi (1941)

Friedrich, pp. 114-117

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator is given a basket of potatoes to take upstairs to give to the Schneiders. After one failed attempt, he hears Friedrich's footsteps on the stairs, runs up to the apartment, and begins knocking loudly, and screaming. Finally, Friedrich's father, who scolds him for being so noisy, lets him in. The old bearded rabbi, whom the Schneiders have been hiding, comes out, saying: "No one should quarrel because of me...I am leaving."(p. 116) Friedrich tells him that his friend will not tell anyone what he saw. The rabbi explains that he knows other people who can hide him. Even more, he says, it is too dangerous for the Narrator if he doesn't tell others what he saw. He says "You, and you alone, must decide our fate." (p. 117) The chapter ends with the Narrator standing in the doorway confused about what he should do.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapter of this curriculum, "Lamps."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Responsibility and power differences between Jews and non-Jews
- Danger of Jews in hiding
- Spying and informing

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Here is the classic dilemma for all non-Jews under the Nazis, as well as for Jews:

"Herr Schneider, the rabbi, and Friedrich all looked at me. I didn't know what to do. The rabbi was a stranger to me. And what about my mother and father? Didn't they stand closer to me than this Jew? Might I endanger myself and them for the sake of a stranger? Would I never give myself away? Would I be able to bear the secret or would I suffer under it like Herr Schneider?" (p. 117)

- To whom, or what, does the Narrator have the primary obligation? What should he do?
- How does the rabbi deal with the choice that the Narrator must make? How do you think his faith in God helps inform his decisions?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- There are numerous Jewish laws relating to making life-threatening decisions and saving a person's life. Research these laws and discuss how they relate to the Narrator's situation.
- Anne Frank's diary and other memoirs attest to the continuation of normal feelings and behaviors — people fall in love, argue, like and dislike each other in the midst of horror. Find passages to compare.

Stars (1941)

Friedrich, pp. 118-123

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator goes upstairs to the Schneider's apartment, and is ushered in by the rabbi. Friedrich is not home, and the rabbi explains to the Narrator how all Jews must again wear yellow stars on their clothing "because we are different, ...we are persecuted and killed." (p. 120) The rabbi tells a story about a king who ordered his followers to kill and rob from the Jews. One family decides that they will sacrifice their lives for the sake of their son, and in the end they hide their son from the mob, ultimately saving his life. The son never knows his parent's sacrifice.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

By September 1941, German Jews could no longer use public transportation and were required to wear the yellow star. Jews were forced into certain areas of German cities, and many had to work in labor service. Regular deportations of Jews from Germany began in late September 1941. See previous chapter of this curriculum for further background, "Lamps."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Living with fear
- Attempts to understand suffering
- Sacrificing one's life to save another
- Love of family/love of parents for their children

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- What is the rabbi's response to the Narrator's question about why the Jews might be burned as they were in the Middle Ages? (p. 120) How do you respond to his answer? What do you think of the rabbi's view of Jewish history?
- The rabbi's story (pp. 120-123) is a parable — a story that teaches a lesson. Why is the rabbi telling the Narrator this story? What is his hope? Do you think it will be fulfilled? How is the story connected to the yellow stars?
- Research the history of the yellow star that Jews were made to wear in Europe in the Nazi era and during the Middle Ages.
- Great Jewish teachers have often used parables to teach lessons. *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust* by Yaffa Eliach shows the continuation of parable tradition during the Holocaust. Choose one story and explain its lesson.

RESOURCES FOR CHAPTER

WEBSITES

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/gerjew41.html>

“The Situation of the Jews in Germany in the Summer of 1941”

From a report dated August 18, 1941, by Robert Prochnik, Vienna Jewish Community official in charge of emigration, in which capacity he was sent temporarily to Berlin.

http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/Chronology_1941.html

Holocaust chronology of 1941

<http://www.othervoices.org/2.1/staub/preventing.html>

“Preventing Genocide: Activating Bystanders, Helping Victims and the Creation of Caring” by psychologist, Dr. Ervin Staub

<http://www.marysmoffat.co.uk/>

Go to link for Historical Fiction for Children, then to Contents and to Fascism and Persecution of the Jews. Includes review of *Friedrich* and of *I Was There* by Hans Peter Richter.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

How was it Humanly Possible: A Study of Perpetrators and Bystanders during the Holocaust

An educational program developed by Yad Vashem’s International School for Holocaust Studies. Through an interdisciplinary approach using historical documents, photographs, art, and literature, the unit attempts to probe the disturbing questions of human behavior during the Holocaust.

BOOKS

Yaffa Eliach. *Hasidic Tales of the Holocaust*. New York: Vintage (reissue), 1988.

Rabbi Ephraim Oshry. *Responsa from the Holocaust*. New York: Judaica Press (rev.), 2001.

A Visit (1941)

Friedrich, pp. 123-125

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator's family is once again woken up by sounds. They hear a group of men, identifying themselves as police, pounding on the Schneiders' door trying to get in. Herr Resch offers them a key to the door. "Hands up!" (p. 124) is heard and then heavy footsteps. The rabbi and then Herr Schneider are taken away in handcuffs. When Herr Schneider sees the Narrator's father, he says, "You were right, Herr..." (p. 125) and then is punched by one of the men. As he sees the Narrator's father, Herr Resch smiles and tells him how happy he is that he finally got rid of the Schneiders.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters of this curriculum for background, "Lamps" and "Stars."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Extreme deterioration in life of Jews
- Jews arrested while bystanders watch, without protests
- Sadistic behavior of some Germans

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Might the Narrator and his family have done something to help Herr Schneider and the rabbi? If so, what? When? In what ways was it difficult for people to help others?
- Describe and discuss the extreme cruelty of the landlord.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Compare the arrest of Herr Schneider and the rabbi to a modern police arrest. What is needed to arrest someone today?
- Find out about the Jews who continued to live in Germany during the war years. Include in your research a discussion of non-Jews who helped Jews survive. The Yad Vashem website (www.yadvashem.org) specifies that over 400 Germans were "Righteous among the Nations." Choose one of the 18 highlighted on the website to write about in your own words.

Vultures (1941)

Friedrich, pp. 126-128

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

With Friedrich's father and the rabbi gone, the Narrator's family is waiting impatiently for Friedrich to come home. Finally they hear his footsteps, but they are unable to catch him before he enters his apartment. Friedrich is standing in the living room, watching Herr Resch, who is packing up all of the Schneiders' belongings to take away. Papers, letters and photos were all over the floor. After a few moments of silence, Friedrich spits into Herr Resch's face, calling him a "vulture." (p. 128) His face filled with anger, Herr Resch grabs the Shabbat candlestick and attempts to attack Friedrich, but Friedrich manages to run away down the stairs before anything happens.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapters of this curriculum for background, "Lamps" and "Stars".

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Looting of Jewish property
- Loss of Jewish homes
- Non-Jews claim to be under attack by Jews
- Jewish ritual objects violated by Nazis

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THIS CHAPTER

- What could Friedrich have done when he found Herr Resch packing up his apartment? Since they were alone in the apartment, why do you think he chose not to do more? What might have been the consequences?
- Why do you think the author made Herr Resch threaten Friedrich with the Shabbat candlesticks?
- At the end of the chapter, the Narrator tries to get Friedrich's attention, but Friedrich ignores him. Why do you think he does this? Now that his father and the rabbi are gone, does Friedrich need to act differently to protect himself? Who can Friedrich trust?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Was Herr Resch breaking any laws by taking the Schneider's belongings? Near the end of the chapter he yells for the police, saying that Friedrich is attacking him. Who would have been found at fault if the police came?
- Research what happened to Jewish people's belongings when they were arrested or taken away to the camps. If a person survived the war, were they allowed to regain possession of their belongings? Research reparations and the current news about the issue. A good resource is the Jewish Virtual Library:
<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/assetoc.html>
- Herr Resch shouts that a Jew is attacking him, but really he was the one attacking, looting and threatening his Jewish tenants. Why do you think Herr Resch does this? Research Nazi propaganda about Jews. In what way did Nazi propaganda do something similar to what Herr Resch does in this chapter?

The Picture (1942)

Friedrich, pp. 129-143

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator's family is preparing to go to the air-raid shelter when they hear a knock at the door: it's Friedrich, nervous, dirty, and hungry. The Narrator's family is friendly and concerned. Friedrich tells them that he has a hiding place, but that he is lonely and sad because he forgot what his parents look like. He would like the family's photograph of his own family. They go looking for it when the air-raid siren sounds, and they get ready to leave. It is decided that Friedrich will stay in the apartment until the family returns from the shelter. They are afraid of Herr Resch. The chapter ends with the sound of guns and the sight of two flares lighting up the sky outside the apartment.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

Allied forces [First the British Royal Air Force, then later, the U.S. Army Air Force] began dropping bombs on German cities, after the German air force had already dropped bombs on British civilian targets. World War II pioneered the use of airplanes in combat.

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- History of WWII air raid shelters in Germany
- The continual compassion of some non-Jews for Jewish friends, with all the changes in German life
- Jews are alone and vulnerable
- Jews in hiding in Nazi Germany

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Friedrich has changed much since he left his apartment a year earlier. He is dirty, and shows obvious signs that he has become more fearful of other people. Why do you think that he still trusts the Narrator's family enough to visit them, but not to say where he is hiding?
- Friedrich visits the Narrator's family in order to get a photograph of his parents. Why do you think that he risked his own safety to do so? What made the photograph so important for him?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Research the topic of Jews living in hiding during the war years in Germany.
- Look at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum website about Hidden Children, called Life in Shadows:
<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/hiddenchildren/>
- Also see, diaries of Jews who lived in Germany during the Nazi era. For example, Victor Klemperer, a very articulate professor who lived in Dresden during the Nazi era. He was semi-protected because he had converted and married a non-Jew. He wrote in great detail about the fear and the daily humiliations:
<http://www.salon.com/books/sneaks/1998/11/23sneaks.html>

In the Shelter (1942)

Friedrich, pp. 133-136

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The Narrator's family is in the air-raid shelter. Herr Resch is acting like an air-raid warden. Outside they hear the sounds of guns and bombs, and they can feel the vibrations. Suddenly there is a voice at the door: it's Friedrich! Herr Resch lets him in, and Friedrich begs to stay. Herr Resch insists that he would never let a Jew in, however the sergeant on duty and the other people in the shelter tell him to let him stay. After Herr Resch says that he will report the sergeant if he lets Friedrich stay, the sergeant backs down, and Friedrich is forced outside. The Narrator's mother begins to cry.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapter in this curriculum, "The Picture."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Jews not protected, even during aerial bombing of German cities
- Fear, spying, and threats in Nazi Germany

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THIS CHAPTER

Herr Resch orders Friedrich out (p. 136) and when the sergeant protests:

"Do you know who that is?" Herr Resch sputtered. "That's a Jew!"

'So?' the sergeant asked with astonishment. 'And even if it were but a dog, you'd let him stay until the raid is over.'

The other people in the shelter also took part now. 'Let the boy stay!' came from all sides.

...Herr Resch screamed, '... You follow my orders, is that understood? Otherwise, I'll report you.'"

- People responded in a humanitarian way to Friedrich briefly. What made them sympathetic to Friedrich? Why did they shut off their feelings?
- How have the Narrator's mother and father changed over the past few chapters? Do they relate differently to other people?

COMPARE THE CHAPTER WITH A SELECTION FROM A MEMOIR

Compare this with Ursula Pawel's experience in an air raid shelter in *My Child is Back*:

Ursula's family felt very uncomfortable in the shelter. Feeling like outcasts, they stayed near the door to keep away from their "Aryan" neighbors. One of the women seemed a bit more friendly than the others. She had once criticized the Nazis and the war during an extremely severe air raid attack. Ursula and her family were too frightened to look at her or anybody else in the shelter. Hunched in a corner away from their fellow tenants, they pretended not to see or hear. A middle-aged couple on the third floor eventually shunned them entirely. (p. 45)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Write a report about bombings during WWII, after learning more at:
<http://www.spartacus.schollnet.co.uk/2WWstrategic.htm> and <http://www.feldgrau.com/rlb.html>.

The End (1942)

Friedrich, pp. 137-138

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTER

The final chapter begins with a description of the destruction after the air raid. Buildings have been turned into rubble, and bombs are lying on the ground. The Narrator's family makes its way home, accompanied by Herr Resch. They find their house still standing, but with no glass in the windows. The garden gnome in the yard had its cap blown off by a piece of shrapnel. The Narrator's mother finds Friedrich sitting on the stoop of the house, his face pale. Herr Resch yells at Friedrich to go away, and kicks him. Friedrich had died during the air raid, and the kick knocks him on the ground as blood drips from his head. The book ends with Herr Resch having the last word: "His luck that he dies this way." (p. 138)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR CHAPTER

See previous chapter in this curriculum, "The Picture."

THEMES OF CHAPTER

- Jews die in air raids on German cities because not protected in shelters
- Total lack of sympathy of some Germans for Jews, even dead Jews

QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES FOR THIS CHAPTER

- The very last line of the novel is Herr Resch's: "His luck that he died this way." (p. 136) What do you think he means by this statement?
- Has Herr Resch been influenced at all by the events happening around him? Has his personality or relationships with others changed since the beginning of the book?
- What do you make of the abrupt ending of the last chapter? The Narrator's family returns to their apartment and finds Friedrich dead. Compare this to the future of the Narrator and his family.
- The Narrator is 17 years old in 1942. How do you understand his behavior in relation to Friedrich throughout the book?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

- Throughout the book, the thoughts and feelings of the Narrator are rarely elaborated on. Choose a chapter and fill in what might be going on in the Narrator's mind during the action described.

Resource Materials

WEBSITES

www.mjhnyc.org

Website of the Museum of Jewish Heritage —
A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

www.teachit.co.uk/pdf/fdscheme.pdf

Free resource from the English Teaching Online
association Teachit

[www.flholocaustmuseum.org/ frameworks/pdf/Friedrich.pdf](http://www.flholocaustmuseum.org/frameworks/pdf/Friedrich.pdf)

A *Friedrich* teacher's guide prepared by the Florida
Holocaust Museum

www.gale.com/pdf/samples/sp654140.pdf

Biographical and historical information on Hans Peter
Richter and *Friedrich*

www.mtsu.edu/~baustin/knacht.html

Information about *Kristallnacht*

www.mtsu.edu/~baustin/holocamp.html

Materials on the Concentration Camps

www.readingmatters.co.uk/book.php?id=82

Review of *Friedrich*

www.marysmoffat.co.uk/bibliography/twenty/fasc.htm

Summary and review of other books by Hans Peter Richter

[www.casadejacob.com/index.html?target=p_1162.htm l&lang=es](http://www.casadejacob.com/index.html?target=p_1162.html&lang=es)

Link to the Spanish version of *Mi Amigo Friedrich*

[www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/germ/courses/german201/ friedrich/friedrich.html](http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/germ/courses/german201/friedrich/friedrich.html)

Study aids for *Friedrich* (partly in English with photo
materials, web-links and excellent background information)

www.goethe.de/os/hon/naz/derich.htm#story

Information on Hans Peter Richter and *Friedrich* by the
Goethe Institute (in German)

<http://motlc.wiesenthal.com>

Simon Wiesenthal Center Online Multimedia Learning Center
Website with Holocaust glossary and resources for teachers

<http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/resource.htm>

A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust with many resources,
including glossary from the Florida Center for instructional
technology

CD ROM

Into That Dark Night:

Nazi Germany and the Jews, 1933-1939

Educational program that deals with the rise of Nazism in
Germany and the persecution of German Jews during this
period. Provides access to abundant historical documents
and to the interpretations of noted scholars. Sponsoring
institution: Yad Vashem

FILMS ABOUT NAZI GERMANY: 1933-38

Hitler's Germany: 1933-1936

Videotape, 20 minutes, color.

Through political persuasion and violence, Adolf Hitler and
the Nazi Party took over Germany by 1933. This film describes
that period and the subsequent reoccupation of the Rhineland
in 1936, the persecution of the Jews, and the growth of the
Nazi propaganda machine under Joseph Goebbels.

Make Germany Pay

Videotape, 20 minutes, color.

Life in Germany after World War I. The Armistice
Agreement and Treaty of Versailles humiliated the
German people and laid the groundwork for the rise
of Nazism. This film shows the issues raised by the
French and Belgian occupation of the Ruhr.

The Making of the German Nation

Videotape, 94 minutes, B&W.

A vivid account of German history from the creation of
the German empire through Nazism and World War II.
This film illustrates the impact of Bismarck and the rise
of militarism, Germany's defeat in World War I, the
Weimar Republic, Hitler and the Nazis in power, and the
events leading to World War II.

A New Germany 1933-1939

Videotape, 52 minutes, B&W

Part of the award-winning “World at War” series, narrated by Sir Laurence Olivier. This program depicts embittered Germans rallying to Hitler following the humiliating defeat in World War I and the ensuing Depression. State-sponsored anti-Semitism arises. Europe watches with growing apprehension as Hitler re-arms the Rhineland, annexes Austria and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, and threatens Poland.

Outcast: Jewish Persecution in Nazi Germany 1933-1938

Videotape, 40 minutes

Produced by Yad Vashem, this video examines the persecution of the Jews from the period of Hitler’s rise to power through *Kristallnacht*. It includes the testimony of witnesses who were teenagers at the time.

The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich (Two Parts)

Part I: The Rise of Hitler

Videotape, 28 minutes, B&W

This film chronicles how Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party manipulated events following World War I to achieve power.

Part II: Nazi Germany: Years of Triumph

Videotape, 28 minutes, B&W

Recommended for junior high school grades and up

The period of time between 1933 and 1939 when Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power. Through intimidation and the brilliant use of propaganda, 67 million people become puppets of the Nazi regime.

The Rise of Nazism: Terror and Tragedy

Filmstrip, 36 minutes

Recommended for junior high school grades and up

Part I: The emergence of the Nazi Party

The humiliating defeat and the onerous reparations Germany was required to pay the Allies following WWI laid the groundwork for Hitler’s rise to power.

Part II: Events following Hitler’s installation as Chancellor

The burning of the Reichstag; the promulgation of the Nuremberg Laws; the assumption of control by the Nazi Party over all media, as well as educational, and economic institutions.

Nazi Propaganda Films from Noontide Press

Five original propaganda films produced in Germany between 1933 and 1940.

(Please consider the nature of these films carefully before using them with students. Your students must fully understand the context in which and for which they were produced as propaganda.)

I: “Bleeding Germany” (1933)

The rise and popularity of Hitler’s National Socialist movement, with a look at the strife and despair of the pre-Hitler democratic Weimar era.

II: “Hans Westmar”

A “trailer” from the movie based on the life of Horst Wessel, the Berlin student who wrote the Nazi Party anthem and was murdered by Communists.

III: “For Us” (1937)

The ill-fated 1923 Munich Putsch is memorialized in this 1937 anniversary re-enactment ceremony featuring Hitler, Himmler, Streicher, Göring, Wagner, etc.

IV: “Party Day of the NSDAP” (1933)

The first Nuremberg Party Congress after Hitler assumes power; recorded by NSDAP cameramen; rare newsreel footage.

V: “Young Germany Cheers the Führer” (1933)

Hitler’s immense popularity with the German people is celebrated.

*The Wonderful Horrible Life of Leni Riefenstahl:
(Die Macht der Bilder)*

*Directed by Ray Müller (Germany/US, 1993), 35mm, B&W
and color, 181 min*

Leni Riefenstahl was best known as Hitler's official filmmaker. This award-winning documentary is a biographical account of her life. Confronted with the filmmakers' probing questions about her career, Riefenstahl delivers an emotional defense of her relationship with Hitler and other Nazi leaders. Analyzing many sequences from her films in a manner that is both passionate and sophisticated, she attempts to vindicate her infamous past.

Triumph of the Will

Directed by Leni Riefenstahl (Germany, 1934), B&W

Pure Nazi propaganda, yet still considered a major work of art. Using fluid camera movement, beautiful compositions and impressionistic editing techniques, the director creates an homage to Hitler and the Nazi Party that almost succeeds in transcending its subject matter.

The Architecture of Doom

*Directed by Peter Cohen (Sweden, 1989), 35mm,
B&W and color, 119 min*

This acclaimed documentary explores the inner workings of the Third Reich and illuminates Nazi aesthetics in the visual arts, architecture, and popular culture. Cohen argues that the difficulty in defining Nazism in traditional political terms is due to an overlooked but tremendously powerful motivation beyond the scope of politics: the force of the aesthetics of beauty. Building on this Nazi cult of the beautiful, *The Architecture of Doom* explores the eccentric cultural ambitions of Hitler's Third Reich.

Hitler Youth Quex

Directed by K.A. Schenzinger (Germany, 1933)

Considered the first Nazi film of consequence. A German youth faces a conflict of ideals between his Communist father and his own growing allegiance to the Hitler Youth movement that will eventually lead him to his own death.

*Marion's Triumph—Surviving
History's Nightmare*

Directed by John Chua (US, 2003), color, 58 minutes

In 1938, the Blumenthals began their journey to the US as refugees from Nazi Germany. They were trapped and spent six-and-a-half years of horror in Hitler's camps, finally arriving in the US in 1948 with tickets paid for ten years earlier. Marion Blumenthal Lazan co-wrote her memoir, *Four Perfect Pebbles*.

Europa, Europa

Directed by Agnieszka Holland (Poland, 1991), color, 115 mins

The true story of Solly, a 13-year-old German Jewish boy who survives by his wits, after being captured first by the Russians and later by the Nazis. He first joins the Communist youth organization and later trains at an exclusive German school for Hitler Youth. Solly is miraculously reunited at the end of the war with his brother, Isaac, who has survived a concentration camp.

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VIDEOGRAPHY

The following videos are available in the Museum's Resource Center:

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|-------------|---|-------------|---|
| U1 | <i>Alle Juden Raus (All Jews Out)</i>
Directed by Emanuel Rund
NCJF, Germany, 1992 | U537 | <i>Hitler's Germany 1933-1936</i>
by Paul Mitchel
BBC TV, England, 1981 |
| U250 | <i>Born in Berlin</i>
Directed by Nomi Ben Natan,
Leora Kamenetzky
NCJF, Israel, 1991 | U639 | <i>The Holocaust:
Through Our Own Eyes</i>
by Jack Casnill
Midwest Center for Holocaust Education,
USA, 1994 |
| U341 | <i>Die Juden sind weg
(The Jews are Away)</i>
by Ernest Hirsch and Ullrich
Teschner, DOK-Film, Germany, 1997 | U643 | <i>Times of Darkness</i>
Directed by Karoline Frogner
Women Make Movies, Norway, 1997 |
| U346 | <i>The Nasty Girl</i>
Directed by Michael Verhoeven
Facets, West Germany, 1990 | U741 | <i>Wohin soll ich gehen
(Where am I to go?)</i> 1987 |
| U349 | <i>Ship of Fools</i>
Directed by Stanley Kramer
Columbia/Tristar Studios, USA, 1965 | U840 | <i>Jecke</i>
Directed by Jens Meurer and Carsten Hueck
First Run, Icarus, France, 1997 |
| U425 | <i>Two Sisters</i>
Directed by Ben K. Blake
NCJF, USA, 1938 | U445 | <i>We Were So Beloved: The German Jews
of Washington Heights</i>
Directed by Manfred Kirchheimer,
First Run, USA, 1985 |
| U518 | <i>The Restless Conscience:
The Story of the German Resistance</i>
Directed by Hava Kohav Beller
Direct Cinema Limited, USA, 1991 | U418 | <i>My Knees were Jumping: Remembering
the Kindertransports</i> (DVD)
Directed by Melissa Hacker, New Video Group,
USA, 2003 |
| | | U888 | <i>Into the Arms of Strangers:</i> |
| | | U925 | <i>Stories of the Kindertransports</i>
Directed by Mark Jonathan Harris 2001,
Sabine Films, USA, 2001
Academy Award Winner |

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PHOTO CREDITS (COVER)

Left: *Photograph of friends Walter Faerber and Dirk Rosenbluh, Berlin, Germany, mid-1930s. Gift of Walter and Phyllis Ferber.*
Right: *Cover of the book, Utz Fights for Hitler, Leipzig, Germany, 1933. Gift of Yehuda Nir in memory of his father, Samuel Grunfeld.*



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