

The Holocaust

Notes to accompany the PowerPoint.

**A teaching resource created by the
Birmingham Holocaust Education Center**

July 2007

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Slide 1

How to Navigate PowerPoint

Slide 2

The Holocaust: Introduction

The Holocaust is often taught in terms of dictators, war, suffering and death; however, in order to more fully process the implications of the Holocaust, one must also consider the sorrows and the joys of the people who experienced this tragic event.

Recognizing that the Alabama Course of Study minimally addresses issues regarding the Holocaust and its relevance to today, and recognizing that resources can be both difficult to locate and overwhelming, this presentation seeks to assist teachers by providing them with an extensive, yet user-friendly format for middle and high school instruction that incorporates multi-disciplinary information.

Many students study historical events with the expectation that a closer examination will provide greater knowledge, understanding, and ultimately, a sense of closure. The study of the Holocaust often defies this notion by raising more questions than answers, and by leading students to grapple with important ethical issues such as:

- the importance of tolerance
- the dangers of being a bystander
- the qualities of a rescuer
- learning to speak out
- moral responsibility
- the power of ONE
- the dangers of indifference
- making our own decisions
- caring for our fellow man
- the power of hope

These questions, and the issues they raise, are important for students to ponder, but such study does not lead to a neat, orderly conclusion about the Holocaust.

Teaching about the Holocaust is not only a matter of teaching facts, but also cultivating empathy and sensitivity for others. The purpose of this presentation is to assist the classroom teacher in his/her efforts to provide a sound foundation for the study of the Holocaust. Included are the following:

- * Historical information
- * Maps, charts, graphs
- * Quotes
- * Artwork
- * Photographs
- * Political cartoons
- * Primary and secondary sources

Although some primary testimony is included, additional sources selected by the classroom teacher will enhance the student's ability to make personal connections with this atrocity.

How to Use this Presentation in the Classroom

Headings are arranged in descending, color-coded order:

- Main headings are in blue.
- Subheadings are in yellow.
- Sub-subheadings are in white.
- Sub-sub-subheadings are in red.

Between larger sections are outline slides (denoted as “breaker slides”) offering students a chance to organize their notes and teachers a chance to lead into the next topic.

Teachers may choose to use the supporting commentary as student handouts. All of the notes are available on this website as a MS Word Document.

Quotes and artwork are included to be used as writing or discussion prompts.

Slide 3

Definition of The Holocaust

Slide 4

The Holocaust was Unique

Slide 5

Map: Two Thousand Years of Jewish life in Europe by 1933

Most of the Jewish communities in Europe had come into existence hundreds of years before the founding of the nations of which they were to become a part. Others had subsequently been destroyed by expulsion and persecution in the Middle Ages, but had then been re-founded a second, a third, and even a fourth time. The Jews of Germany had already been living continuously in different parts of Germany for more than 1500 years when the German Empire was established in 1870, the year of German unity under Bismarck.

Slide 6

Graph: A Comparison - Jews in the World in the Early 19th C and Early 20th C

By 1933 there were approximately 9.4 million Jews in Europe, with more than 78% living in Poland, the Soviet Union, Romania, and Hungary.

Poland	3.1 million
U.S.S.R.	2.5 million
Romania	750,000
Hungary	440,000

The position of Jews in West and Central Europe (the latter including Germany, Czechoslovakia, Austria, and Hungary) was quite different from that of those in Eastern Europe.

Western Europe

In the developed countries of the industrialized West, the Jews were, by and large, an economically well-integrated group of merchants, industrialists, craftsmen and professionals.

Eastern Europe

In the East, with its relatively backward economic structure, there were no large-scale industries to absorb the Jewish working class or to support a commerce that would provide employment to Jewish traders. The peasants, the majority of the population, panicked by the economic crises, turned against the Jewish traders who sold their produce and provided them with industrial products. As urbanization increased, peasants settled in towns to compete with Jews in crafts and trade. Fired by economic competition and nationalistic slogans, the middle classes once again viewed the Jews as foreign competitors who had to be suppressed by the government.

The governments in Poland and Romania complied. Although the Jewish population of Poland was about 10%, these Jews paid 40% of the taxes. Although the Jews were 27.3 % of the Polish urban population, their participation in municipal administration was only 3.4% in 1931. Because they failed tests in Polish history, geography, and language, thousands of Jewish shoemakers and tailors were deprived of their licenses in 1927. When Poland nationalized the railways in the late 1920's, 6,000 Jews were dismissed. By 1931, 48.86% of Polish Jews had an income of less than \$10/week. An economic crisis hit everyone, not only the Jews, but 1/3 of Polish Jewry was on the verge of starvation or beyond in the 1930's.

Despite all this, there was a flourishing social and cultural life in Jewish Eastern Europe, especially in Poland: political parties, schools, theaters, orchestras, newspapers and books. The Polish and Romanian governments even tried to persuade the Western countries to permit Jewish immigration, but were not successful. This prelude to the Holocaust may serve to explain, in part at least, why the mass destruction that followed succeeded.

Slide 7

Jewish Life Before the War: Photos

Questions to consider:

- Why do adults save pictures of children?
- When people gather to look at picture of family members and friends, what do they usually talk about and notice?
- What do you notice about the facial expressions of the people in the pictures? The clothing? The objects?
- How are the children in these photographs different from you? How are they similar?
- Normally adults protect children, but many of the children shown here were killed during the Holocaust. Why would the Nazi regime kill children?
- Why did so many people who were victimized and persecuted during the Holocaust hide and save photographs such as the ones shown here?

Activity:

Using Holocaust photos online, have students find a pre-war photo of a Holocaust victim that is similar to one of their personal family photos.

These photographs enable us to glimpse the ordinary lives of Jews during the interwar period. We see a world of family celebrations, rites of passage, vacations and home life.

Jewish life was also intertwined with the life of the nations among whom the Jews lived. By the opening years of the 20th century, many Jewish homes and livelihoods were as secure as they had ever been, yet there were still large areas of poverty, particularly in eastern Poland and western Russia. Anti-Jewish prejudice, however, had not disappeared, even in the most modern and cultured states of Europe.

This is a good chance to instruct students on the differences between Orthodox Jews with their traditional dress and the more Reform Jews whose dress reflects their assimilated lifestyle.

Slide 8

Jewish Life Before the War: Photos

Slide 9

Jewish Life Before the War: Photos

Slide 10

Jewish Life Before the War: Photos

Slide 11

Perspectives Triangle: Victims

Teacher Notes:

- It is beneficial to examine the different roles that participants played in this complex event. These various roles were not always clear-cut, and in many instances were a result of choices made. Students need to understand the impact of the choices that were made.

- Later in the presentation we will re-visit the “Perspectives Triangle” from the different perspectives.

See slides: #70 Perpetrators
 #346 Bystanders
 #349 Rescuers

- Discuss the following quote by Martin Luther King, Jr.:

The ultimate measure of a person is not where one stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where one stands in times of challenge and controversy.

The victims were human beings, even though their human dignity was cruelly stripped away from them. The perpetrators were human beings, even though they committed inhuman acts. There were also many bystanders to these crimes, yet only a few became rescuers. The relevance, and indeed urgency, of the Holocaust and its most crucial issues are consequently not limited to Jews alone. It is a history that demands the attention of everyone who is a part of the human race.

Victims

This includes the approximately 6 million Jews and 6 million others who perished at the hand of the Nazis as well as all those who suffered.

Bystanders

Ordinary people who played it safe by complying with the law and avoiding terrorizing activities.

It is sometimes difficult to draw the line that divides the bystander from the perpetrator. This raises the question whether there is such a thing as a passive onlooker. Perhaps not taking action is also a decision, and therefore a form of action in itself. After all, non-action has ramifications and effects the outcome.

What was the responsibility of those who knew what was happening and chose not to get involved?

Rescuers

Those who, at great personal risk, actively helped members of the persecuted groups during the Holocaust in defiance of the Third Reich policies. They were ordinary people who became extraordinary because they acted in accordance with their own belief system, while living in an amoral society.

Perpetrators

Those who committed crimes against the Victims for many reasons: power, profit, ideology, or even following orders. Perpetrators were Nazi leaders, bankers, professors, military officials, doctors, journalists, engineers, judges, authors, lawyers, salesmen, police and civil servants.

One might ask, at what particular point did these people choose to become killers? What influenced such choices? To what extent do we share human traits with these men and women? What does this show us about the potential in all of us?

Slide 12

The Victims

Teacher Notes:

There is a tendency to associate the Holocaust with only the Jews. Please emphasize that other groups were targeted, but only the Jews were targeted for complete annihilation.

Jews

Jews were targeted for complete annihilation. Others in this list suffered restrictions, imprisonment, and/or death.

Political Opponents

These were some of the first prisoners in the early concentration camps. Remnants of the Communist and Socialist parties as well as members of the trade unions who resisted the Nazi regime. At the end of July 1933, about 27,000 political prisoners were being held in "protective custody." (80,000 were killed)

Communism, and its specific Soviet form, Bolshevism, were in fact the ideological creations of the Jewish race, Hitler maintained. He suggested that it was intentionally designed to infiltrate other human races, to weaken them from within, and finally to facilitate Jewish domination of the world.

Unlike the Jews, political prisoners were sent to the camps not to die, but as punishment and to "encourage" change in their behavior.

Habitual Criminals

Social criminals found in public jails were ultimately moved to concentration camps. Thus among the prison population in the camps, one could find murderers, thieves and rapists.

Handicapped

These people threatened the Nazi plan for human perfection. The Nazis did not want them to reproduce and did not want to be burdened financially with their care. Estimates exist that 200-250,000 were murdered under the T-4 and other euthanasia programs.

Homosexuals

The Nazi campaign against homosexuality targeted the more than one million German men who, the state asserted, carried a "degeneracy" that threatened the "disciplined masculinity" of Germany. Denounced as "antisocial parasites" and as "enemies of the state," more than 100,000 men were arrested under a broadly interpreted law against homosexuality. Approximately 50,000 men served prison terms as convicted homosexuals, while an unknown number were institutionalized in mental hospitals. Others—perhaps hundreds—were castrated under court order or coercion. Analyses of fragmentary records suggest that between 5,000 and 15,000 homosexual men were imprisoned in concentration camps, where many died from starvation, disease, exhaustion, beatings, and murder.

In the racist practice of Nazi eugenics, women were valued primarily for their ability to bear children. The state presumed that women homosexuals were still capable of reproducing. Lesbians were not systematically persecuted under Nazi rule, but they nonetheless did suffer the loss of their own gathering places and associations.

Nazi Germany did not seek to kill all homosexuals. Nevertheless, the Nazi state, through active persecution, attempted to terrorize German homosexuals into sexual and social conformity, leaving thousands dead and shattering the lives of many more.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Nazi ideology required complete allegiance. This religious group refused to recognize any supreme authority other than Jehovah. When asked to sign documents of loyalty to the Nazi party, they refused. Approximately 2,000-2,500 Jehovah Witnesses were sent to concentration camps. They were unique in that they were "voluntary prisoners." If they recanted their beliefs, they could be freed. Of those interned, approximately 1,400 perished. Several hundred were executed by German military tribunals for refusing to serve in the German military.

Roma & Sinti (Gypsies)

This group most closely paralleled the experience of Jews in Germany.

These nomadic people were viewed as asocial and racially inferior. Their existence was seen as a threat to "Aryan" blood purity. Gypsies were killed by the *Einsatzgruppen* as well as in the extermination camps. At Auschwitz II (Birkenau), a special camp was built to house Gypsy inmates. Gypsy children were subjected to brutal "medical experiments" by Dr. Mengele and his staff. It is estimated that 220-500,000 were murdered out of a total population of about 1 million before the war.

Poles

Poles were considered a subhuman race that was nothing more than an obstacle to gaining territory necessary for the superior German race. As such, they were often used as slave laborers in Germany, the ghettos and the camps. (3 million died)

Freemasons

Although there is no agreement about the origins of Freemasonry, one long-held belief is that it originated in England and Scotland during the early Renaissance with the cathedral building guilds.

Freemasons were a secret fraternal order whose Masonic lodges were regarded by antisemites as a cover for a Jewish conspiracy to destroy Christianity. Freemason lodges were open to Jews, and hence of added fascination to the antisemites.

Under Nazism, Freemasons were regarded as an ideological foe of the Third Reich as well as part of the Jewish problem. The Nazis believed that Jews exploited the Freemasons' international connections to achieve world domination. In his political testament, *Mein Kampf* (1925), Nazi party leader Adolf Hitler repeated the charge that the Jews used Freemasonry to achieve their political ends.

Nazi persecution of Freemasons was inconsistent. Masonic lodges dissolved themselves "voluntarily" or were closed by force. Freemasons were removed from the Civil Service. As the campaign against Jews intensified, the persecution of Freemasons slackened. Because many of the Freemasons who were arrested were also Jews and/or members of the political opposition, it is not known how many individuals were placed in Nazi concentration camps and/or were targeted only because they were Freemasons.

Immigrants

Immigrants did not comply with the Nazi Party platform which stated that Germany was for Germans only.

Soviet P.O.W.'s

From the time of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 to the end of World War II in May 1945, between 2-3 million Soviet prisoners of war (P.O.W.'s) died at the hands of the Germans as a result of mass executions, brutal mistreatment, intentional starvation, and lack of clothing or shelter. Most died during the first year of captivity. Comparatively, 57% of all Soviet P.O.W.'s died during their incarceration by the Germans as opposed to 3.6% of Anglo-American P.O.W.'s in German custody. In 1942, when the P.O.W.'s became essential to the German war economy, that death rate decreased. By 1943, ½ million Soviet P.O.W.'s were working as slaves. The fate of Soviet P.O.W.'s was doubly tragic because they were a disgrace at home. Stalin believed that no Soviet soldier should have ever allowed himself to be taken prisoner.

Second only to the Jews, Soviet prisoners of war were the largest group of victims of Nazi racial policy.

American P.O.W's

Often not thought of as a victim. Almost 5,000 American P.O.W.'s were imprisoned in German concentration camps.

African-Germans

The fate of black people in Nazi Germany and its occupied territories ranged from isolation to persecution, sterilization, medical experimentation, incarceration, brutality, and murder. The number of black people living in Nazi-occupied Europe was relatively small and there was no systematic program for their elimination.

There were approximately 20,000 Germans of African descent in Germany when the Nazis came to power. Most did not hold German citizenships and therefore left when the environment became hostile. Approximately 1,200 Germans of African descent were mixed race offspring of the French-African forces that guarded the Rhineland after World War I and German wives...the so called "Rhineland Bastards." The Nazis viewed the "Rhineland Bastards" as a threat to the purity of the Germanic race. There was no systematic attempt to identify this group nor systematic laws dealing with them. They were not subject to automatic arrests or deportations. Informally, there was a practice of tracking them down for forced sterilization. It is estimated that 500 such persons were sterilized in this manner.

Slide 13

Pyramid of Holocaust Progression

Teacher Notes:

- The Holocaust for the Jews was not pre-destined to the endpoint of extermination. When Hitler came to power, the Jews had no place in the future Reich, but their fate had not been determined. The Nazis did not start out with a pre-conceived concept of exterminating all of the Jews. It was a step-by-step process in which major turning points were made according to the situation at hand. This is a very important for students to understand.
- Each step of this pyramid, beginning with “Identification,” happened sequentially, in Germany and ultimately all countries taken over by the Nazis. While we know that the process occurred in this order, it is not true that one step ended before another began. For example, there were still some ghettos still in existence while the extermination process was occurring.
- Hindsight is 20/20. Students need to approach these lessons without the benefits of hindsight. That is, have your students place themselves in the moment you are studying and forget all that they know will happen. If the Jews had realized that their ultimate fate was complete annihilation, many more would have left Europe immediately.
- As you continue, it might be beneficial to refer back to this pyramid as needed.

Slide 14

Who Was Hitler? (opening breaker slide)

Slide 15

Who Was Hitler?
Born in Austria

Adolf Hitler was born April 20, 1889 in Braunau-am-Inn, Austria, a small town near Linz on the German border. The Austrians from this area spoke German and many considered themselves as Germans. At the age of 3, Adolf's family moved to Passau, along the Inn River, on the German side of the border. The family moved once more in 1895 to the farm community of Hafeld, 30 miles southwest of Linz.

Hitler became a German citizen on February 25, 1932, just in time to run for President of Germany.

Slide 16

Who Was Hitler?
Hitler's Family Tree

Teacher Notes:

There are rumors hinting that Hitler's grandfather was Jewish. Few reputable historians on the Holocaust believe that this is so. It is more likely that Hitler tried to keep the murky history of his family quite secret because there was a high incidence of insanity and feeble-mindedness among his ancestors.

This rumor arose during the Nuremberg Trials in 1945-46 when Hans Frank declared that Johann Hiedler was not the father of Alois Hitler. Anna Maria Schicklgruber was working in the town of Graz as a servant in the home of the Frankenberger family (Jewish) when she became pregnant with Alois. Frank claimed that Anna Maria was seduced by someone in the household and that Hitler's grandfather was the result of this liaison.

Later investigation by Simon Wiesenthal disclosed no evidence of any Jewish family named Frankenberger ever living in Graz.

Klara Polzl, Adolf's mother, was the daughter of Johann Polzl and Johanna Heidler. She was born next door to the house where her future husband, Alois Hitler, grew up under the care of her grandfather. Klara's grandfather, Johann Nepomuk Hiedler, was her future husband's step-uncle, and possibly his real father. She never got out of the habit of thinking of Alois as her uncle, not her husband. She was 23 years his junior. After they were married, she continued to call him "uncle."

Alois Hitler, Adolf's father, was a customs official for the Austro-Hungarian empire. He was the illegitimate son of Anna Maria Schicklgruber. His name at birth was Alois Schicklgruber. When Anna Maria married Johann Hiedler, Alois was adopted and his name was changed. The priest spelled the name Hitler.

Alois Hitler had been married twice before marrying Klara Polzl. He had 2 previous children from his second marriage: Alois Jr. and Angela. His second wife had died by the time he and Klara married so Alois Jr. and Angela grew up with Adolf as his step-brother & step-sister. Angela's daughter, Geli, later came to have a very close (some say incestuous) relationship with her Uncle Adolf. Geli ultimately committed suicide.

Adolf was the 4th of 6 children born to Alois Hitler and Klara Polzl. Alois and Klara's first two children, Gustav and Ida, died of diphtheria. A third child, Otto, died at birth. Adolf's younger brother, Edmund, died at the age of 6 of the measles. Only Adolf and a younger sister, Paula, survived to adulthood.

In 1936, Adolf made Paula change her name from Paula Hitler to Paula Wolff and asked her to remain incognito ("Wolff" was Adolf Hitler's nickname.). From 1929-1941 Paula saw her brother only once a year. Each year Adolf sent his sister a ticket to the impressive Nuremberg Rally. Until the last weeks of the war, Paula Hitler lived in Vienna where she was arrested by U.S. Intelligence officers in May 1945. Paula was released and returned to Vienna to work in an arts and crafts shop. On December 1, 1952, she moved to a two-room flat near Berchtesgaden, Hitler's mountaintop retreat on the German-Austrian border, where she lived in seclusion under the last name of Wolff until her death on June 1, 1960.

While Alois was very strict and abusive towards his son Adolf, Klara was totally devoted – so much so that she was unwilling or unable to acknowledge his unstable emotional behavior. Even at a young age, Adolf exhibited asocial characteristics.

As a young child, Adolf's family moved seven times, and Adolf attended five different schools. Even at a young age he exhibited anti-social characteristics. When he was 11, Adolf entered a private high school in Linz and discovered his talent for drawing. This did not please his father who wanted him to become a civil servant.

Adolf's father died in January 1903 of a pleural hemorrhage. Adolf dropped out of school in 1905. The only subjects in which he excelled were freehand drawing and gymnastics. He failed to take the final examinations and never received a diploma.

Slide 17

Who Was Hitler? (breaker slide)

Slide 18

Who Was Hitler?
Reared Catholic

Adolf Hitler was reared Catholic.

Hitler's parents are buried in the cemetery adjoining St. Michael's Catholic Church.

Slide 19

Who Was Hitler? (breaker slide)

Slide 20

Who Was Hitler?

Aspired to be an Artist / Rejected by Vienna Academy of Arts / Never Attended College

In 1907, Hitler persuaded his mother to allow him to go to Vienna to apply for admission to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. He was rejected; his drawings were judged unsatisfactory. He stayed in Vienna, living on money sent by his mother, and applied again the following year. This time he was not even admitted to the test.

Meanwhile his mother had developed breast cancer. She was a patient of a devoted Jewish doctor, Dr. Eduard Bloch. On December 21, 1908 she died, and Hitler came home for the funeral.

A few weeks later, Adolf left home for good and returned to Vienna where he would live in anonymity for 4 cheerless years, relying on his orphan's pension for support.

Slide 21

Who was Hitler? (breaker slide)

Slide 22

Who Was Hitler?

Exposed to antisemitic influences while in Vienna

By autumn 1909, Adolf was broke. He couldn't pay the back rent on his room. Soon he was sleeping on park benches and standing in line for free soup from church kitchens. Finally he was given a bed in a homeless shelter. At first he begged for handouts but then started to copy watercolors from photos of Viennese landmarks and peddled them to tourists, even selling some of his paintings to Jewish art dealers.

At the time, Vienna was a hotbed of antisemitic politics, organizations, writing, and propaganda.

Although a starving artist, Hitler is known to have purchased an ebony walking stick and strutted around Vienna like an aristocrat. He discovered the operas of Richard Wagner and identified with Wagner's writings which were violently antisemitic. In addition, he attended meetings and listened to speeches by Vienna's Mayor, Karl Lueger, and began to agree with Lueger's antisemitic theories. The newspapers he read and the pamphlets he perused for his self-education were antisemitic.

Vienna at the time had a population of 2 million (175,000 Jews or 8.6%). Some Jews were prominent in the fields of education, medicine, journalism and performing arts. Most, however, were poor, orthodox Jews from the empire's rural provinces who lived in the city's two ghettos. There were two political parties with antisemitic platforms and Adolf attended meetings of both.

As the decisive event of his transformation into an antisemite, Hitler mentions in *Mein Kampf* an encounter with an Eastern Jew. The "apparition in a black caftan and black hair locks" merely made him wonder: "Is this a Jew? was my first thought"...and "Is this a German?...Wherever I went, I began to see Jews, and the more I saw, the more sharply they became distinguished in my eyes from the rest of humanity."

Hitler would later re-formulate these views and blame the Jews for all that was wrong with Germany.

Slide 23

Who was Hitler? (breaker slide)

Slide 24

Who Was Hitler?

Moved to Germany to avoid Austrian draft. Fought for Germany in World War I

Teacher Notes:

- (Photo) Hitler is seated, far left.
- It is important to point out that Jews served in World War I alongside their fellow countrymen. Once Hitler came to power, Jewish names were removed from all war memorials.

In 1913, after receiving the inheritance from his father as a result of reaching his 24th birthday, Hitler moved to Munich to avoid being drafted into the Austrian army. Although born in Austria, he had always considered himself German.

Hitler enlisted in the German army and rose to the rank of lance corporal but was denied further promotion because he was not considered a potential leader. He served at the front as a dispatch runner. Hitler narrowly escaped death several times during the war and received the Iron Cross, Second Class after being wounded and then the Iron Cross, First Class, for an unknown act of bravery. The latter decoration was proposed by his Jewish commander.

In 1918, he was temporarily blinded by mustard gas. He was in the hospital when Germany surrendered in November. Like other disillusioned ex-soldiers whose only profession had been to fight and kill, Hitler joined in the search for the lost security of a hierarchical, authoritarian system that had collapsed.

Slide 25

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis (opening breaker slide)

After World War I, the Weimar government was not able to meet the needs of the people: i.e. jobs, food, shelter. As shown in the following slides, the country was in a downward spiral. The German people were looking for someone with fresh ideas, and that was the Nazi party.

Slide 26

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:

Treaty of Versailles – Map of New Nations Formed

Drafted by Great Britain, France and the U.S. at the end of World War I. Germany was not even allowed to attend negotiations.

League of Nations was formed

Most Germans condemned the government for signing the treaty. It destroyed the German people:

- emotionally (see “War Guilt Clause”)
- financially (see “Reparations”, “Lost Resources”)
- nationalistically (see “Loss of Military”, “Loss of Lands”)

War Guilt Clause – Germany had to admit 100% guilt for the start of the war.

Reparations – Germany had to pay reparations to the allied countries for civilian damages caused by the war; the bill was set in 1921 at \$33 billion to be paid at 6% interest over 37 years. This was said to be three times the amount the country could afford.

Lost Resources - Rich coal region of the Saar Valley was placed in French hands for 15 years.

Loss of Military - German army restricted to 100,000 men (all munitions had to be surrendered).
Navy restricted to 36 ships. No air force, tanks or submarines allowed.
No troops allowed in Rhineland between France and Germany.
The *Reichswehr* (National Defense) was the term for the military organization of Germany from 1919 until 1935. In 1935 it was renamed the *Wehrmacht* (Defense Force).

Loss of Lands – Germany lost about 13% of its pre-war territory and all her overseas colonies. This amounted to about 10% of her population (6.5-7 million Germans)

The productive German province of Alsace-Lorraine was given to France and the Sudetenland (3 million Germans lived here) was given to Czechoslovakia.

The Saar Valley, with rich coal deposits, was placed in French hands for 15 years.

Poland received the “Polish Corridor,” the narrow strip of land that cut off East Prussia from the rest of Germany and extended to the Baltic Sea near Danzig. The city of Danzig became a “free city,” politically independent, but economically available to Poland.

A large number of Germans found themselves living in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Polish citizens of the newly re-created Poland were as nationalistic as their German neighbors. They wanted a Poland for the Poles: a nation with a shared language, culture and history, not a multicultural society. And yet, one third of the population of the new Poland was not even Polish. They were Ukrainians, Jews, Byelorussians, and Germans.

Belgium received Eupen and Malmedy.

Denmark received northern Schleswig.

Many Central and East European nations won independence from what had been Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary: Yugoslavia, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Slide 27

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:
Treaty of Versailles – Map of German Territorial Losses

Slide 28

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis (breaker slide)

Slide 29

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis: Economics (breaker slide)

Slide 30

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:
Economics - Unemployment in Germany 1928-1933

Note the steady rise in unemployment after World War I (1919) and then the massive jump after the “Crash of 1929.” This provided the open door that Hitler needed.

After Hitler came to power (1933) he came through with his promise of jobs. Notice the decline in unemployment.

Slide 31

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis: Economics (breaker slide)

Slide 32

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:
Economics - Inflation in Germany

Germany was faced with a reparation bill of \$33 billion. An initial payment of \$250 million was made in September 1921. By 1922 the value of the mark had dropped considerably and the German government had to ask for a postponement of payments.

By 1923, the German mark had become almost worthless:

A penny postage stamp was 5 million marks.

One egg was 80 million marks.

One pound of meat was 3.2 billion marks.

Germans lost their life savings. Hunger riots broke out.

On Friday afternoons in 1923, long lines of manual and white-collar workers waited outside the pay-windows of the big German factories, department stores, banks, offices: dead-tired working men in grimy shirts open at the neck; gentlemen in shiny blue suits, saved from before the war, in mended white collars, too big for their shrunk necks; young girls, some of them with the new bobbed heads; young men in puttees and gray jackets, from which the tailor had removed the red seams and regimentals, embittered against the girls who had taken their jobs. They all stood in lines outside the pay-windows, staring impatiently at the electric wall clock, slowly advancing until at last they reached the window and received a bag full of paper notes. According to the figures inscribed on them the paper notes amounted to seven hundred thousand or five hundred million, or three hundred and eighty billion, or eighteen trillion marks – the figures rose from month to month, then from week to week, finally from day to day. With their bags the people moved quickly to the doors, all in haste, the younger ones running. They dashed to the nearest food store, where a line had already formed. Again they moved slowly, oh, how slowly, forward. When you reached the store, a pound of sugar might have been obtainable for two millions; but, by the time you came to the counter, all you could get for two millions was half a pound, and the saleswoman said the dollar had just gone up again. With the millions or billions you bought sardines, sausages, sugar, perhaps even a little butter, but as a rule the cheaper margarine – always things that would keep for a week, until next pay-day, until the next stage in the fall of the mark.

- *Der Fuehrer* by Konrad Heiden, p. 126

Hitler felt the time was ripe for the Nazi party to make its move...the failed Beer Hall Putsch occurred November 8-9, 1923. (see slide #45)

Slide 33

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:
Economics - Inflation in Germany – Photo of Children Stacking Money

Slide 34

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis: Economics (breaker slide)

Slide 35

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:
Economics - Worldwide Depression, 1929

By 1926 the economy of Germany was improving and unemployment was dropping. The U.S backed Dawes Plan (1924) allowed Germany to receive loans from the U.S. to pay war reparations. The Young Plan was initiated by the U.S. in 1929 to replace the Dawes Plan.

All seemed on the road to recovery until October 1929 when Wall Street crashed and U.S. banks closed. The Great Depression hit.

Germany had taken huge loans from U.S. banks in order to pay their war reparations. Suddenly the banks called in their loans and the Germans were worse off than before.

The crisis of the Great Depression created the instability that Hitler needed. He would provide the stability that Germany longed for. Unlike the Beer Hall Putsch where the Nazis tried to take power by force, power would be achieved by legal means this time.

Slide 36

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis (breaker slide)

Slide 37

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:
German Nationalism

Teacher Note:

Reich means realm or empire.

The German people had never experienced a democracy having for centuries lived in a monarchy. They had lived for centuries under a monarchy and had thrived under its strong guidance. This new democracy, known as the Weimar Republic, did not provide the strong leadership that the German people had once known.

This, coupled with the blows delivered by the Treaty of Versailles that stripped the German people of their national pride, provided a foundation for Hitler's rise.

Hitler would offer the German people a new empire, one with a strong leader to guide them to glory once again. He prophesized that this Third Reich (empire) would last 1,000 years. In truth, it would only last 12.

The First Reich, also known as The Holy Roman Empire (a continuation of the Roman Empire in Europe), started in the lands ruled by Charlemagne (Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Belgium, Czech Republic, Eastern France, Northern Italy and Western Poland), beginning in 800 when Charlemagne was crowned by Pope Leo III in Rome and finishing in 1806 when Emperor Francis II gave up his throne.

The Second Reich, also known as The German Empire, was ruled by the Hohenzollern Dynasty. It included the areas known as Prussia and Brandenburg, and lasted from 1871 to 1918, but fell at the end of World War I. During this Reich, the "Iron Chancellor" Otto Von Bismarck united Germany and set the roots for World War II.

From 1919 to 1933 was the period of the Weimar Republic, a fragile democracy sometimes called the pre-3rd Reich.

The Third Reich (1933 to 1945) or Nazi Germany, was under Adolf Hitler's control. He called it the Third Reich because he thought that under his leadership Germany could reunite the old Holy Roman Empire, bringing Germany back to its glorious days. This Reich was terminated with the fall of Germany at the end of World War II.

Slide 38

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis (breaker slide)

The quote, "The Jews are our misfortune," was coined in the 1880's by Heinrich von Treitschke, a German historian and antisemitic political writer. This phrase was later picked up by the Nazis and appeared frequently in their tabloid, *Der Stürmer*.

Slide 39

Factors Contributing to the Rise of the Nazis:
Antisemitism

Notes on Drawing

Mayer Amschel Rothschild (1744-1812) developed a banking institution and expanded his empire by installing each of his 5 sons in European cities to conduct business. The Rothschilds were supporters of the State of Israel. Baron Edmond James de Rothschild was a patron of the first settlement in Palestine at Rishon-LeZion. In 1917, Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild was the addressee of the Balfour Declaration which committed the British government to the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people. As prominent Jews, active in politics as well as business, the Rothschild family was a target for antisemitism throughout history. Many family members were persecuted by the Nazis.

The Nazis offered up the Jews as a scapegoat for Germany's current financial crisis, claiming that the Jews were hoarding the wealth and reaping profits while others suffered. In reality, the suffering was universal.

To bolster his case, Hitler reinvented the religious antisemitism of the past and added a racial component. The end result was an antisemitism unparalleled in history.

Antisemitism is the same as delousing: getting rid of lice is not a question of ideology, it is a matter of cleanliness.

- Heinrich Himmler

Slide 40

Hitler's Rise to Power (opening breaker slide)

Slide 41

**Hitler's Rise to Power:
Birth of the Nazi Party**

After World War I, Hitler stayed in the army, which was now mainly engaged in suppressing the various political uprisings that were breaking out across Germany.

In September, 1919, Corporal Hitler was ordered to investigate a small, potentially dangerous group in Munich, the German Worker's Party. In this disorganized party, Hitler saw opportunity. Its members expressed a right-wing doctrine consistent with his own.

At the age of 30, Hitler joined as member #555 (the numbering system began at #500 to make the group appear larger). He would later become the 7th member of the Executive Committee of the party (#7 represents "completeness" in Judeo-Christian theology).

It was here that Hitler discovered that he had two remarkable talents – public oratory and inspiring personal loyalty. His pounding fists, burning eyes, hoarse cries and hysterics aroused audiences to a fevered pitch.

In 1920 Hitler took control of the group and changed the name to the National Socialist German Worker's Party, *National Sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei*, NSDAP, or Nazi for short. He hoped the word "National" would attract nationalists who wanted to rebuild Germany and the word "Socialist" would attract socialists who wanted to improve the lives of working people in Germany. There were about 3,000 members.

In 1922, Major Joseph Hell, a German journalist, had the occasion to interview Adolf Hitler, and he wrote about the experience in his memoirs. Toward the end of his interview Major Hell asked Hitler, "What do you want to do to the Jews once you have full discretionary powers?" Hitler abruptly changed his demeanor, raising his voice and carrying on as if he were addressing an outdoor rally:

Once I really am in power, my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the Jews. As soon as I have the power to do so, I will have gallows built in rows – at the Marienplatz in Munich, for example – as many as traffic allows. Then the Jews will be hanged discriminately, and they will remain hanging until they stink; they will hang there as long as the principles of hygiene permit. As soon as they have been untied, the next batch will be hung up, and so on down the line, until the last Jew in Munich has been exterminated. Other cities will follow suit, precisely in this fashion, until all Germany has been completely cleansed of Jews.

Eleven years later, on Monday, January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler, the former Austrian corporal, was sworn in by President Paul von Hindenburg as Chancellor of Germany.

Slide 42

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 43

Hitler's Rise to Power:

The Weimar Republic – Organizational Chart

Teacher Notes:

As you teach about this new democratic government, it is important to help students understand and analyze how democratic values and institutions are not automatically protected. They require active, compassionate citizenship to sustain themselves, including the ability to recognize and act when confronting the “danger signals” of intolerance.

The Weimar Republic refers to the German government that was formed at Weimar, a town in the eastern part of the country, in February 1919, after Germany's defeat in World War I.

The new republic replaced the previous German monarchy. It was a parliamentary democracy with a multi-party legislature known as the *Reichstag*. The parties were elected by proportional representation (i.e. 10% of the votes = 10% of the seats). Several parties had to come together in order to achieve a majority and pass legislation.

President

Leading the government was a publicly elected President that served a 7-year term. His responsibilities included:

- Head of the armed forces.
- Power to choose the Chancellor and had legal right to dismiss him.
- Power to dismiss the government and call for new elections.
- Article 48 of the constitution allowed him to rule independently of the *Reichstag* in case of national emergency.

Chancellor

Appointed by the President. Usually the leader of the most powerful elected party of the *Reichstag*. The Chancellor chose his own Cabinet from the elected *Reichstag* deputies. The Cabinet members were to be approved by the President but could be removed from office by the *Reichstag*. The Chancellor and the Cabinet answered to the *Reichstag*. Should they lose the support of the majority, a vote of no confidence was sufficient for the President to dismiss the Chancellor and either call new elections or appoint an alternative Chancellor.

Reichstag

The *Reichstag* was the main legislative body. They debated issues and voted on proposed legislation. Once passed by the *Reichstag*, the legislation would then be debated in the Reichsrat, the second German House of Parliament where it would be either ratified or rejected.

Members were elected using a system of Proportional Representation. Germany was divided into electoral regions. Within each of these regions a political party would put forward a number of candidates. The number of these who became deputies within the *Reichstag* was based on the total number of votes the party received within that electoral region. One member could be sent for every 60,000 votes cast for the party. For this reason, the number of deputies in the *Reichstag* fluctuated depending on the number of voters.

Weaknesses of the Weimar Constitution

The Weimar Republic's constitution safeguarded basic democratic human rights such as freedom of speech and religion and even equality for women, including their right to vote in public elections (which had not yet been given to French and English women). Yet, the Weimar Constitution was fundamentally flawed in several ways.

The system of proportional representation was intended to avoid the wasting of votes. Instead it led to the rise of a multitude of splinter parties representing the ends of the political spectrum. This made it difficult for any party to establish and maintain a workable parliamentary majority. This factionalism was one contributing factor in the frequent changes in government. In the 1930 national elections, there were some 28 political parties. By 1933 there were 40!

The constitution allowed the President to dismiss the Chancellor, even if the Chancellor retained the confidence of the *Reichstag*. Similarly, the president could appoint a Chancellor who didn't have the support of the *Reichstag*. Article 48 gave the President broad powers to suspend civil liberties with an insufficient system of checks and balances. This presented an opportunity that Adolf Hitler was quick to seize once he became Chancellor.

There was an unbalanced distribution of power between the Reich and the state governments. Prussia was a disproportionately large state. Civil law enforcement was controlled by the States and not the Reich, giving Prussia a tremendous amount of power. The Republic might have been more stable with more power centralized in the hands of the Reich government.

Slide 44

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 45

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Beer Hall (Munich) Putsch - November 8-9, 1923

Teacher Note:

Putsch – German word that means a secretly planned and suddenly executed attempt to overthrow a government

Hitler's first attempt to take over the German government was by force.

On November 8, backed by the SA, Hitler stormed into a beer hall in the city of Munich in Bavaria (a German state) where the Bavarian Prime Minister was meeting with 3,000 businessmen. He kidnapped the Prime Minister and dramatically announced that the National Revolution had begun.

The next day Hitler hoped to take over the Bavarian government by force and ultimately move on to the remainder of the German states. The Nazis were confronted by the Bavarian police. During the ensuing battle, 16 Nazis and 4 policemen were killed. Hitler was wounded and whisked away by comrades. He was arrested 2 days later, charged with treason.

At first Hitler considered the Putsch a disaster; hysterically, he contemplated suicide. He soon recovered and used the ensuing trial as a vehicle for a propaganda attack on the hated democratic regime. Hitler was sentenced to 5 years in Landsberg Prison but served only 9 months.

Note: The judge in the trial was a Nazi sympathizer and thus lessened the sentence.

Slide 46

Hitler's Rise to Power:
Mein Kampf

During his short imprisonment, Hitler dictated *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) to his secretary, Rudolf Hess, in his well-furnished prison cell. This was Hitler's autobiography as well as his political philosophy. The text revolved around 4 basic themes:

1. Supreme importance of race.
2. Survival of the fittest.
3. Need for a militaristic state with a dictator.
4. Destiny of Germany to be the dominant world power.

Throughout the pages, Hitler heaps abuse on the Jews. He considered Jews an "inferior race" and blamed them for all of Germany's troubles.

Mein Kampf became the ideological basis for the Nazi Party's racist beliefs and murderous practices. By 1945 the book had sold over 6 million copies and was Hitler's sole source of income for the remainder of his life.

After Hitler's death, royalties from the sale of *Mein Kampf* have gone to various charities such as the Red Cross. In some instances, these monies were refused on the basis of their origin.

Slide 47

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 48

Hitler's Rise to Power:
Chart of Reichstag Deputies 1919-1933

Teacher Notes:

- The *Reichstag* was the term for the parliament of Weimar Germany.
- Green numbers represent the largest party in each year. Notice that the NSDAP (Nazis) becomes the largest party in 1932, but never attained the 2/3 majority of the *Reichstag* that was needed to alter the Constitution.
- The red, vertical line represents the end of "free" elections in Germany.
- These are only the major political parties. In 1930 there were approximately 28 parties; by 1933, there were 40.

Once released from prison in 1924, Hitler decided to rebuild the Nazi party as a legitimate political party with a national organization. He would need to seize power constitutionally rather than by force. On the chart we see the Nazis for the first time in 1924 with 32 elected *Reichstag* deputies.

1926-1929 were known as "The Quiet Years." The German economy was improving; the U.S. backed Dawes Plan had allowed Germany to receive loans from the U.S. to pay war reparations. The Nazis achieved only 3% of the *Reichstag* during this time, in part because the German people were content with the status quo...but not for long.

With the Worldwide Depression of 1929, Hitler knew his time had come. The crisis of The Depression brought disunity to the political parties of the *Reichstag*. As economic conditions in Germany worsened, Hitler and the Nazi party attracted a wider following from many different sectors of society. Unskilled and/or unemployed manual laborers and office workers were lured by promises of new and

better jobs. Soldiers and policemen responded to promises of increased personnel and improvements in equipment and benefits. Doctors, lawyers and businessmen were attracted by the prospect of benefiting from the confiscation of Jewish assets or the elimination of Jewish competition. Students were lured by the promise of more jobs and better careers. Farmers looked to the Nazis to bolster agricultural prices. Unlike the existing political parties, the NSDAP had no proven track record of failure and therefore offered hope.

The NSDAP stands for the opposite of what exists today. - Gregor Strasser

In preparation for the parliamentary elections of 1930, the Nazis waged a whirlwind campaign. They shifted their strategy to rural areas and fueled antisemitism by calling for the expropriation of Jewish agricultural property and by condemning large Jewish department stores.

In September 1930 the NSDAP became the 2nd largest party, with 18% of the seats in the *Reichstag*. The Nazi deputies had no intention of cooperating with the democratic government. It was to their advantage to let things get worse in Germany, thus increasing the appeal of Hitler to an ever more miserable people.

In March 1932 Hitler made his first attempt to run for President of Germany. In order to run in the election, Hitler became a naturalized German citizen on February 25, 1932. The incumbent, President Paul von Hindenburg, would have been 92 at the end of another 7-year term. He ran simply to prevent Hitler from taking over. A runoff was required when no one received a majority (Hindenburg 49%, Hitler 30%). Hitler lost the April runoff election (Hindenburg 53%, Hitler 37%) even though he did pick up an additional 2 million votes.

The *Reichstag* deputies found themselves unable to pass legislation. Without the NSDAP to help form a majority on any vote, the *Reichstag* was at a standstill. Under such circumstances, new elections were called.

In July 1932 the Nazis became the largest party in the *Reichstag* (37%). This was the peak of Nazi popularity in a free election, yet they still did not have the majority necessary to pass legislation. The Nazis continued to refuse to work with the other parties in forming a coalition to pass legislation. The government remained at a standstill.

As President, it was Hindenburg's job to appoint a chancellor, and it was customary for the leader of the largest party to hold this office. Again, Hindenburg overlooked Adolf Hitler. He did not believe Hitler's agenda would serve the nation well.

In the November 1932 elections, the Nazis actually lost 34 seats. The public was getting tired of elections; it was difficult to convince people to come out to the polls. The NSDAP was running out of money. The Nazis were on a downward trend.

In the meantime, a group of the country's most influential industrialists, bankers and business leaders sent a petition to Hindenburg asking him to appoint Hitler as Chancellor. They believed Hitler would be good for business.

After a threat of a military takeover of the government, a weary Hindenburg appointed Adolf Hitler Chancellor on January 30, 1933.

After the *Reichstag* Fire on February 27, 1933 and the passage of the Enabling Act of February 28, 1933, the Nazis wanted to make certain that the March election would provide them with the *Reichstag* majority they wanted. On March 1, 1933, the Communist Party was banned on the grounds they were preparing a takeover. In the week between the fire and the March 5 elections, many political opponents were arrested and taken into "protective custody." Despite all the advantages Hitler had created for himself, the Nazi party was still unable to achieve the 2/3 majority needed to alter the German Constitution. Only 44% of the people voted Nazi, which did not give the Nazis a majority in the *Reichstag*. Other measures would have to be taken.

Slide 49

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Nazi Election Poster – Aryan in Shackles

Note the Aryan male image, the fire as a symbol of force/destruction, the “Versailles shackles” that the NSDAP (Nazis) wanted to burn apart.

Slide 50

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Nazi Election Poster - Work & Bread

Teacher Note:

It should be noted, from a political standpoint, Hitler met many of his campaign promises.

Once Hitler assumed power in 1933, he began a series of public works programs that included the construction of the German autobahn system. This not only provided employment for construction workers and engineers, it simultaneously stimulated the automobile industry. In addition, the autobahn would be helpful during the war, providing quick transport for troops and materials.

Hitler had been given a blank check from all of Germany for the war because he had said, “Give me five years and you won’t recognize Germany anymore.” And that’s the way it was with the building up { of Germany }. There had been 8-9 million unemployed people and that was all done away with quickly. They were all called up for the Reich Labor Service. Everybody was busy. Nobody was unemployed anymore. People who had gone hungry found work. But nobody had thought that this would lead to war. My father knew better, but not the masses. The masses had seen that they were better off economically, and that was the main thing. And then, later on, they even had fun in this: The Young People, the dispatching of people to the countryside { to help with the harvest }, the Strength through Joy program, the vacation trips. The little guy was able to get something for himself, later on even the Volkswagen. The people were at work. It was all a lot of fun. I myself had a motorcycle and I earned a lot of money. When the war broke out, I was still a member of the National Socialist Motor Vehicle Corps.

- Ernst Walters, from *What We Knew – Terror, Mass Murder & Everyday Life in Nazi Germany*, by Eric A. Johnson and Karl-Heinz-Reuband

Life improved for the average German. Not so for the German Jews.

Slide 51

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 52

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Hitler Appointed Chancellor

Hitler was appointed Chancellor under Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution which granted the President the authority to invoke dictatorial power to protect the democratic order from overthrow, a clause originally inserted to ensure against a feared Communist revolution.

Two other cabinet posts were given to Nazis: Wilhelm Frick became Minister of the Interior and Hermann Goering became Minister without Portfolio & Minister of the Interior of Prussia. As Minister of the Interior of Prussia, Goering had control of police in the largest German state.

Even with Hitler's appointment, most high-ranking officers of the army maintained their loyalty to Hindenburg, the revered General Field Marshall of World War I and President of Germany. Looking down on Hitler, they considered him, an ex-lance corporal, a mere enlisted man, to be an ignorant, uneducated, and dangerous adventurer. Still, they recognized that Hitler's loyal SA militia, the nearly one million jackbooted storm troopers, were dangerous adversaries to their small army, which was restricted to 100,000 by the Treaty of Versailles.

The prevailing wisdom was that the Nazis had been tricked. They were a minority in the cabinet and the conservatives would control them. It was actually thought that the best way to deal with the NSDAP was to let them into power. They would then actually have to make policy. They could no longer be everything to everybody.

On his first day as Chancellor, Hitler manipulated Hindenburg into dissolving the *Reichstag* and calling for new elections on March 5, 1933. He hoped this would bring the Nazis closer to the majority they needed in the *Reichstag* to pass legislation. His goal was to pass the Enabling Act, a constitutional revision that required a 2/3 majority vote. This would allow him to abolish democracy in a legal fashion.

Slide 53

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 54

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Reichstag Fire (February 27, 1933) and Emergency Decree (February 28, 1933)

The *Reichstag* was set ablaze and reduced to ashes. Without firm evidence, it was put forth that the fire had been set by the Communists as the opening act in an attempt to overthrow the state. A Dutch anarchist, Marinus van der Lubbe, was arrested, charged with arson and later executed.

It has also been speculated that the fire was started by a Nazi gang who entered the building by means of a secret tunnel. Regardless, the Nazis would use this event to eliminate all political opposition. They arrested Communist leaders and Communist *Reichstag* deputies.

Hindenburg was persuaded to issue an Emergency Decree, "for the protection of the People and the State" (i.e. to protect the country from an alleged Communist revolution). The Emergency Decree invoked Article 48 of the Constitution and gave the Chancellor the authority to impose dictatorial power to protect the democratic order from being overthrown. This decree suspended civil rights, including freedom of assembly and association, freedom of opinion, privacy of letter, post, telegraph and telephone and the guarantee of private property. In addition, the national government was able to assume the powers of the state governments. In other words, Hitler's government was in complete control.

On March 1, 1933, the Communist Party was banned on the grounds they were preparing a takeover. In the week between the fire and the March 5 elections, many political opponents were arrested and taken into "protective custody."

With the March 5th elections, the Nazis hoped to obtain an absolute majority in the *Reichstag*. Despite all the advantages Hitler had created for himself after the *Reichstag* fire, the Nazi party was still unable to achieve the 2/3 majority they needed to alter the German Constitution.

NOTE: The first concentration camp, Dachau, opened on March 22, 1933, primarily to house political opponents of the regime. In the first few years of the regime, the concentration camps were instruments of terror, control and punishment, used for the incarceration of political dissidents; later, people defined by the Nazis as "asocial elements" – including the homeless, beggars, gypsies and hardened criminals – were also taken there.

Slide 55

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 56

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Enabling Act, "Law for Terminating the Suffering of People and Nation" (March 23, 1933)

Although Hitler won the office of Chancellor in a legal fashion, he was determined to rule Germany without the restraints of a democratically elected parliament. For this to happen, the Enabling Act needed to be passed.

The Enabling Act was a special power allowed by the Weimar Constitution that gave the Chancellor and his cabinet the power to pass laws by decree for a specified period of time, without *Reichstag* involvement. It was only to be used in times of emergency. Because it altered the Constitution, passing the Enabling Act required a 2/3 majority vote of the *Reichstag*. The Nazis would need the support of other parties in order to get a 2/3 vote.

The Catholic Centre Party, at this point the 3rd largest party in the *Reichstag*, decided to vote in favor of the Enabling Act in return for Nazi guarantees regarding the Church's liberties.

The Communist vote in the *Reichstag* was essentially non-existent because many of the Communist *Reichstag* deputies had been previously imprisoned after the *Reichstag* Fire while others were prevented from even entering the chamber.

When the Enabling Act came up for vote in the *Reichstag*, the SA lined the hallways and aisles of the make-shift chamber chanting, "Full power, or else!" and "We want the bill or there will be fire and murder!" These scare tactics intimidated many deputies into voting for the bill. All parties except the Social Democrats voted in favor of the bill. The Enabling Act readily passed and was dutifully renewed every four years, even through World War II.

Legislative powers of the *Reichstag* were transferred to Hitler's cabinet for a period of 4 years. Hitler had equipped his government with dictatorial powers. Within 4 months all political parties had either been banned or dissolved. Germany was now a one-party state. By the time the Enabling Act expired in 1937, the Nazi dictatorship was complete.

The disempowerment of the *Reichstag* is an example of the way the Nazis usurped Germany's governing institutions but refrained from destroying them in order to portray the dictatorship as a soundly functioning state.

During the spring of 1933, the other political parties were forced out of existence by a combination of threats and force. On July 14, a law was enacted declaring the Nazi party (NSDAP) the only legal party in Germany. In effect, the government as such ceased to function.

A period of Nazi "forced coordination" immediately began in which all German institutions and organizations were either Nazified or disbanded.

Slide 57

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 58

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Night of the Long Knives (the Roehm Putsch) - June 30, 1934

Teacher Notes:

This David Low political cartoon from July 3, 1934 shows Hitler (with a smoking gun) and Göring (shown as Thor, the God of War) glowering at terrified SA men with their hands up (not the traditional Nazi salute). Some SA men already lie dead on the ground. The caption reads: 'They salute with both hands now'. Low was fiercely anti-Nazi and portrays Hitler as a brazen murderer keeping his men in check by naked fear. Goebbels is shown as Hitler's poodle.

Sir David Alexander Cecil Low (April 7, 1891 - September 19, 1963) was a New Zealand-born political cartoonist. He worked in his native country before migrating to Sydney, Australia in 1911, and ultimately to London where he made his career and earned fame for his Colonel Blimp depictions and his merciless satirizing of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. Such stinging depictions led to his work being banned in Italy and Germany.

The SA (Storm Troopers or Brownshirts) were the "thugs" who Hitler had used to help him come to power. They were organized in 1921 as the Nazi's private army, defending Nazi meetings and attacking opponents. Ernst Roehm, Hitler's good friend, became Supreme Commander in 1931. By 1934 there were 4.5 million members.

Hitler liked Roehm. He had been one of his first supporters. Roehm had taken part in the Beer Hall Putsch and was one of those imprisoned afterwards. Although found guilty of treason, he was released and dismissed from the German Army. Roehm had been instrumental in obtaining party funds and the SA had played a vital role in destroying the opposition during the elections of 1932 and 1933.

By early 1934, a year after Hitler came to power, the SA's usefulness as a violent, threatening, revolutionary force had effectively come to an end. Hitler now needed the support of the regular Army generals and the big industry leaders to rebuild Germany after the Great Depression, re-arm the military and ultimately accomplish his long range goal of seizing more living space for the German people.

Powerful supporters of Hitler had been complaining about Roehm for some time. Generals were afraid that the SA would absorb the much smaller German Army into its ranks and Roehm would become its overall leader. Industrialists, who had provided the funds for the Nazi victory, were unhappy with Roehm's socialistic views on the economy and his claims that the real revolution had still to take place. Many people in the party also disapproved of the fact that Roehm and other leaders of the SA were homosexuals.

The average German also feared and disliked the SA brownshirts with their arrogant, gangster-like behavior, such as extorting money from local shop owners, driving around in fancy new cars to show off, getting drunk, as well as beating up and even murdering innocent civilians.

Hitler was aware that Roehm and the SA had the power to remove him as leader, so Hitler ordered Roehm's destruction in what became known as the Roehm Putsch or the Night of the Long Knives.

In the early morning hours of June 30, 1934, SS forces, followed by Adolf Hitler himself, burst into a country inn near Munich where Roehm and his SA staff had gathered together for a general conference. Roehm and his staff were literally dragged out of their beds and taken to Stadelheim Prison near Munich where Roehm and the entire SA command were summarily executed.

As for Ernst Roehm - on Hitler's order he had been given a pistol containing a single bullet to commit suicide, but he refused to do it, saying "If I am to be killed, let Adolf do it himself." Two SS officers, one of whom was Theodore Eicke, commander of the *Totenkopf* (Death's Head) guards at Dachau, entered Roehm's cell after waiting fifteen minutes and shot him point blank. Reportedly, Roehm's last words were "Mein Führer, mein Führer!"

There was further "cleansing" in Berlin. Included were:

- Gustav von Kahr, who had opposed Hitler during the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923 - found hacked to death in a swamp near Dachau;
- Father Bernhard Stempfle, who had taken some of the dictation for Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* and knew too much about Hitler - shot and killed;
- Kurt von Schleicher, former Chancellor of Germany and master of political intrigue, who had helped topple democracy in Germany and put Hitler in to power - shot and killed along with his wife;
- Gregor Strasser, one of the original members of the Nazi Party and formerly next in importance to Hitler;
- Karl Ernst, leader of the SA in Berlin, who was involved in torching the *Reichstag* building in February, 1933;
- Vice-Chancellor Papen's press secretary;
- Dr. Erich Klausener, Catholic leader.

The exact number of murders is unknown since all Gestapo documents relating to the purge were destroyed. Estimates vary widely from 200 or 250, to as high as 1,000 or more. Less than half of those murdered were actually SA officers.

The men of the SS had unconditionally and loyally obeyed orders to slaughter their comrades of the SA. Hitler justified the murders because, he said, those killed had been scheming with a foreign government to overthrow him. He also claimed that Roehm and others "deserved to die" because of their "corrupt morals."

The Night of the Long Knives, as the June 30th massacre came to be called was the Nazi regime's baptism by fire. It secured for Hitler the German Army's gratitude and unquestioning loyalty.

Hitler rewarded the SS for its role by raising the SS to independent status as an organization no longer part of the SA. Leader of the SS, Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler now answered to Hitler and no one else. Reinhard Heydrich was promoted to SS Gruppenführer (Lieutenant-General). Roehm was replaced by Victor Lutze as Head of the SA, but from this time on, the SA brownshirts would be diminished and all but disappear as its members were inducted into the regular army after Hitler re-introduced military conscription in 1935.

On July 13, Hitler gave a long speech to the Nazi controlled *Reichstag* in which he announced that seventy-four had been shot and justified the murders.

If anyone reproaches me and asks why I did not resort to the regular courts of justice, then all I can say is this: In this hour I was responsible for the fate of the German people, and thereby I became the supreme judge of the German people.

It was no secret that this time the revolution would have to be bloody; when we spoke of it we called it 'The Night of the Long Knives.' Everyone must know for all future time that if he raises his hand to strike the State, then certain death is his lot.

By proclaiming himself the supreme judge of the German people, Hitler in effect placed himself above the law, making his word the law, and thus instilled a permanent sense of fear in the German people.

The German Army generals, by condoning the unprecedented events of the Night of the Long Knives, effectively cast their lot with Hitler and began the long journey with him that would eventually lead them to the brink of world conquest and later to the hanging docks at Nuremberg after the war.

The German conspirators who attempted to overthrow Hitler and the Nazi regime from 1938 to 1944 never forgot the June 30th massacre. Many held it up as proof that Hitler would stop at nothing to achieve his demonic ends and could only be removed in the same manner.

Slide 59

Hitler's Rise to Power (breaker slide)

Slide 60

Hitler's Rise to Power:

Hitler Becomes Führer

Upon Hindenburg's death on August 2, 1934, Hitler combined the offices of President (the head of state) and Chancellor (the head of the government) and assumed the title of Führer and Reich Chancellor (Leader and Chancellor).

The day of the President's death, the cabinet ordered a plebiscite (direct vote) for August 19, 1934 in order for the German people to approve the combination of the two offices. About 95 percent of registered voters in Germany went to the polls and gave Hitler 38 million votes (90%). Hitler could now claim he was Führer of the German nation with the overwhelming approval of the people.

The following day, August 20, 1934, the cabinet decreed the "Law on the Allegiance of Civil Servants and Soldiers of the Armed Forces." All public employees – the military, the civil service, police, teachers, and the judiciary – now had to take a loyalty oath not to the constitution, not to their country, but to Hitler, the Führer. The Nazis' top jurist proclaimed, "In the old days we used to ask, 'What is the law?' Now we ask only, 'What does the Führer want?'" Thus Hitler became the State and Germans transferred their customary deference and loyalty from the German nation to Hitler personally.

Hitler came to power legally, but not as a result of an election victory or any wave of popular enthusiasm. The Nazis had never won over 37% of the popular vote in a free election. Hitler assumed the reins of government only with the assistance of the old conservative elites, who naively continued to believe that Hitler would pay them deference. What gave Hitler his break was the colossal miscalculation that Hitler could, as a junior politician, be tamed and used by the Establishment. Once in office, Hitler proved to be uncontrollable. He astounded and overwhelmed those who felt they had trapped him. Hitler made legal what others considered to be illegal. Sensible people were sure that Hitler could not last long, that decency, rationality, and political order would reassert themselves. What followed was a terrifying indictment of the power of human indifference and passivity.

Slide 61

What the Nazis Believed (opening breaker slide)

Slide 62

What the Nazis Believed:

Listing of Beliefs

The Nazis valued authority and order.

Democracy as a workable system was dead. The people needed a mystical savior to lead them. Hitler was their charismatic salvation. He was "Der Führer."

The Führer was infallible. He gave the laws to Germany.
Referring to the Führer: "In thy service is perfect freedom."

The Nazis quoted the German writer Goethe, "I would rather commit an injustice than endure disorder." Thus, the emphasis was placed on order, control, discipline, duty, and sacrifice. "Through the door of death we enter the door of true life ... He who does not risk his life to gain it ever anew is already dead, though he still breathes, eats, and drinks. Death is only a departure for the sake of a higher life ... We are born to die for Germany."

To justify Hitler's decision making, the Nazis quoted Gerhart Hauptmann. "If only life would demand no more solutions from us." Since people did not want to make decisions, Hitler would do it for them.

The Nazis valued emotion more than reason.

Thinking was criticized. A person should act spontaneously and without question.

The Nazis referred to the educated middle class as "acrobats of the intellect," and "intelligent beasts with paralysis of the spine." Hitler called them "rejects of nature." An SS paper stated that I.Q. was inversely proportional to male fertility. "Intellectuals validate their claim to existence within the community by a paucity of children."

The Nazis emphasized physical force and strength. Sports were important for developing the body to better serve the state. As one Nazi stated, "A young man who works with a spade for six months on the western fortifications has done more for Germany than an intellectual has done during his whole life."

War was the ultimate expression of man's capacity for sacrifice, courage and greatness. "The measure of the strength of a people is always and exclusively its readiness for military conflict."

The Nazis valued the community rather than the individual.

The overall goal was unity; as Hitler stated: "the preservation and fostering of living beings who are physically and mentally alike."

As befits the term "totalitarian," the state would largely control the life of the citizen. As Robert Ley put it, "Our state never releases the human being from the cradle to the grave." Individuals were to be measured by their usefulness to the state.

The Nazis had a strong belief in the traditional family.
The family was “the germ cell of the state.”

Women were not equal to men. Their purpose, *Kindersagen*, to be blessed with children.

Women were encouraged not to wear make-up (which was considered a conspiracy of the Jews) or pants.

Women were encouraged to have many children. Abortions were called “acts of sabotage against Germany’s racial future,” and strict penalties would be given to doctors performing them. Men were encouraged to be adulterous if their wives were barren.

The Nazis, like many in the early 20th century, were interested in eugenics. To prevent the spread of “bad genes,” the Nazis would recommend the sterilization of those suffering from physical malformation, mental retardation, epilepsy, deafness and blindness.

The Nazis were strong nationalists.

The Nazis used incited appeals to German patriotism. Germany was a nation wronged by history. To return to its rightful place, Germany should disregard any sense of “morality” in international life. They opposed German participation in any peace organizations such as the League of Nations.

The Nazis were critical of all people except those of the “Volk.” The Poles were “racial anti-types”; the British were worshippers of Mammon. Of the U.S., Hitler stated, “One Beethoven symphony contains more culture than America has produced in her whole history.” To Hitler, America was a Philistine, mongrelized community descended from convicts and the unwanted dregs of society. The Soviets were just above the Jews.

The Nazis saw politics as a religion.

Hitler was looked upon as someone greater than Jesus.

Acts against the state would be immoral in almost a religious sense.

Nazism became a mission: “The Reich must direct the life of nations, individuals and states. The Reich signifies a mission.”

Heinrich Himmler, Hitler’s right-hand-man and overseer of the concentration camps, once wrote to a friend:

I am to prepare a new Nazi religion. I am to draft the new Bible, the bible of the faith...The Führer has decided that, after the victory of the Third Reich, he will abolish Christianity throughout Germany and establish the faith on its ruins.

The latter will preserve the idea of God, but it will be very vague and indistinct. The Führer will replace Christ as the savior of humanity.

Thus, millions and millions of people will say only Hitler’s name in their prayers, and a hundred years from now nothing will be known but the new religion, which will endure for centuries.

The Nazis valued the concept of a select race.

The Germans were a superior race, a group they called the Aryan race.

Germany was destined to lead the world. Nature and fate would produce events to make this happen. The Aryan people would need more territory in which to grow. This desire to expand German boundaries was called *lebensraum*.

A lower race needs less room, less clothing, less food ... than a higher race. The German cannot live in the same fashion as the Pole and the Jew ... More bread, more clothing, more living room ... these our race must have or it dies.

- Robert Ley, Minister of Labor

Only those of true German blood could be citizens. The Nazis called them the *Volk*. Concern for the *Volk* led to a glorification of German "ancestry." Great Germans of the past, from Beethoven to Wagner, were honored. The Nazis studied Teutonic mythology and took pride in the heroic exploits of their ancestors. Praising the past led to an admiration for the medieval peasant. The peasant virtues of simplicity, honesty and physical labor were glorified.

As a result, Nazi education emphasized German history, biology and physical education.

One of the favorite images of the Nazis was the German painter Albrecht Durer's "The Knight, Death, and the Devil." The Nazis saw themselves as heroic, loyal and racially pure knights of the Round Table searching for the Holy Grail.

The Aryans would produce a Golden Age, a millennium which they called the "Third Reich." The First Reich was the Holy Roman Empire of Charlemagne, the Second Reich was under Otto von Bismarck. The Third Reich would last a thousand years.

Source: Furman, Harry, Editor-in-Chief, *The Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience – a Student Anthology*. New York: Anti-Defamation League, 1983.

Slide 63

What the Nazis Believed:

Dr. Seuss Editorial Cartoon - "Second Creation"

This editorial cartoon by Dr. Seuss, a.k.a. Theodor Seuss Geisel, appeared in a New York daily newspaper, PM. This short-lived tabloid took no paid advertising. Not until the late 1950's did Dr. Seuss receive recognition as a children's writer.

Depicted here is the Nazi desire to have "good" Nazis created from the same mold, i.e. appreciation of human differences was not consistent with Nazi philosophy. Of primary importance was the quality of blind obedience to the Reich. Those that don't fit the mold must be destroyed.

Slide 64

What the Nazis Believed (breaker slide)

Slide 65

What the Nazis Believed:
Racial Science

Teacher Notes:

- When studying the stereotypes and justifications used by the Nazis for their ideology of racial hygiene and mass murder, students need to be frequently reminded that just because these hateful policies and beliefs are being discussed in the classroom does not mean that they have any basis in scientific fact.

- Jews are not a race. Judaism is a religion that is practiced by Jews. In addition, Judaism has a distinct culture resulting from its unique practices that sets it apart from the Christian world.

The Nazis were the first to classify the Jews as a race; Jewishness became an issue of blood rather than religion.

The Nazis viewed Jews as a poisonous “race” which “lived off” other races and weakened them. All Jews, including children, had to be destroyed so as not to reproduce and infect the Aryan race.

Theories of race were central to Nazi ideology which professed a hierarchy of races. At the top were the Aryan, or Master Race. This “supposed” race included person with Nordic characteristics such as blonde hair, blue eyes, fair skin, tall and physically fit. Only Aryans were capable of true civilization, creativity and culture. At the bottom of the hierarchy were those the Nazis considered of mixed blood: the Slavs, Gypsies and the Jews. Life was a constant struggle between the inferior and superior races.

What the Nazis Believed – The Struggle for Existence

History is about the struggle of nations for living space and living space is about the continued existence of a race.

A healthy, vigorous people expands its population base of racially healthy individuals and expands its territorial base at the expense of its neighbors.

A dying people has a declining population, marred by race-mixing and territorial losses to its neighbors.

What the Nazis Believed – The Jews

Jews are special enemies of the German people.

Unlike other races, Jews have no living space of their own.

Jews seek to dominate host peoples by destroying the nation-state and establishing Jewish world domination.

The goals of Jews, by definition, is the genetic bastardization of all peoples and the elimination of all states.

We have the duty to ‘depopulate,’ much as we have the duty of caring for the German population. We shall have to develop a technique for ‘depopulation.’ You will ask what is ‘depopulation’? Do I propose to exterminate whole ethnic groups? Yes, it will add up to that. Nature is cruel; therefore we may be cruel too.

- Adolf Hitler in *The Burden of Guilt* by H. Vogt, p.146

History of Eugenics

The Eugenics Movement was founded in the 19th century by British naturalists. Taking Darwin's concept of natural selection one step further, the movement promoted the concept that "artificial selection" should aid the process of "natural selection" in order to prevent the degeneration of the human race.

In the early 20th century this concept migrated to the U.S. and attempts were made to wipe out human beings who were considered imperfect. The U.S. legal system supported this concept with laws forcing sterilization, segregation and marriage restrictions. Later this concept traveled to Europe and came to Hitler's attention.

Now more than ever, Germany needed every citizen to be 100% productive and eugenics was determined to be the way to accomplish this. It was the Nazis who later substituted the term "racial hygiene" for eugenics.

Originally the U.S. applauded Nazi efforts, but as things got out of control, the U.S. reconsidered their stance. While the American Eugenics Movement died by 1939, the Nazis pressed ahead, expanding the concept to include euthanasia.

Early Nazi Racial Hygiene

Shortly after Hitler came to power, a law was passed permitting the government to sterilize anyone suffering from diseases considered hereditary: schizophrenia, depression, retardation, physical deformity, epilepsy, congenital blindness or deafness, even severe alcoholism. This was the beginning of Nazi racial "breeding", creation of a "perfect race."

Following this, habitual criminals were sterilized and laws were passed prohibiting marriage or sexual relations between Jews and Germans.

It was also at this time that the "Rhineland Bastards" were sterilized. These were children of black, African soldiers who had been brought to Germany by the French to serve as occupation forces after World War I. These men had married German women and fathered children that Hitler considered an "insult" to the German nation.

Nazi Euthanasia

The loss of the right to reproduce life ultimately progressed to the notion of selectively eliminating those lives "unworthy of life." Unlike the widely accepted sterilization program, the Nazis never openly declared a formal euthanasia program. The Nazi T-4 Program (referring to the address of the program headquarters at Tiergartenstrasse 4) operated in secrecy, targeting adult patients in government sanitariums and nursing homes who were physically and mentally handicapped. These people were considered "useless consumers" and burdens to the taxpayer.

Victims were murdered by a variety of means and their bodies burned. The T-4 program was responsible for approximately 70,000 deaths, including 5,000 children and a few thousand Jews. Although the program was officially halted in 1941 because of the intervention of Protestant and Catholic clergy, the killings continued until the end of the war.

The gassing technology developed in the T-4 Program proved to be useful later in the elimination of "inferior races" in the extermination camps.

Slide 66

What the Nazis Believed (breaker slide)

Slide 67

What the Nazis Believed:
Nazi Platform

Teacher Notes:

- The entire Nazi Platform contained 25 points. This slide contains 10 of the key points.
- It should be noted that different people joined the party for different reasons:
 1. Only 15-20% of the party members “bought” the entire Nazi platform.
 2. 75-80% were represented by those who:
 - reluctantly accepted the platform due to pre-existing prejudices and later participated in mass murder
 - were not motivated by the ideology, but were motivated by careerism, greed, or blind obedience
 - remained indifferent, who asked no questions, who told themselves that the events had nothing to do with them
- *Lebensraum* - Once this had meant getting back the lands lost by the Treaty of Versailles so that the German people would have enough room to live. Under Adolf Hitler, *Lebensraum* would come to mean something quite different. The Nazis believed that since the Germans were Aryans and therefore superior, they had a duty to reproduce in large numbers. Aryan population growth was a major aim of the Nazis. Germany, even if its pre-World War I borders were restored, was not big enough to support such a growing population. There were not enough resources, farm land, or food. The German people would grow. The inferior people would be enslaved or killed. There would be land and food and resources for the Aryans

Slide 68

What the Nazis Believed (breaker slide)

Slide 69

What the Nazis Believed:
Nazi Symbols

Adolf Hitler

Hitler was a powerful and spellbinding orator. He was able to exert a magnetism that persuaded even sophisticated Germans that he was not to be underestimated. At public rallies, Hitler worked himself up to a pitch of near hysteria, and carried his audience with him. Hitler knew how to touch his audience, how to gain their sympathy and play on their fears.

Swastika (*Hakenkreuz* or Hooked Cross)

The symbol has appeared in religious art from the Byzantine Era (5th & 6th centuries) as well as from Indian tribes in the Americas. Today in India, it is a symbol for the Hindus and Buddhists.

At one point in Hitler's childhood, he lived across from a large Benedictine monastery. As a youngster, Adolf's dream was to enter the priesthood. The monastery's coat of arms' most prominent feature was a swastika.

Adopted as a Nazi symbol in 1920 and incorporated into the Nazi flag in 1935.

Today, it is illegal to display this symbol in Germany.

Runic Slashes

Thunderbolt symbol used by the SS.

The design was created in 1931 when Walter Heck, an SS leader, drew 2 Sig Runes side by side and noticed the similarity to the initials of the SS. For 2.5 Reichsmark, Heck sold the right of the Sig Runes to the SS.

Salute

Arm outstretched.

This salute was adopted from Mussolini and the Fascists.

"*Heil*" – Hail

"*Sieg Heil*" – Hail to Victory

"*Heil Hitler*" – Hail to Hitler (1st used by Rudolph Hess)

Rallies

Carefully planned mass gatherings to convey strength and power.

Flag

Red background for the social ideas of the movement.

White circle for nationalism.

Twisted cross for the Aryan struggle.

Slogans

"*Ein Reich, Ein Volk, Ein Führer*" – One State, One People, One Leader

"*Die Juden Sind Unser Unglück*" – The Jews Are Our Misfortune.

"*Deutschland ist Hitler! Hitler ist Deutschland*" – Germany is Hitler! Hitler is Germany!

Slide 70

Perspectives Triangle: Perpetrators

Who were the perpetrators?

The perpetrators were human beings, even though they committed inhuman acts.

Obviously the Nazi top command is easily identified as a perpetrator and the *Einsatzgruppen* officers who shot their victims at close range, but who else?

Looking exclusively at the process of deportations, officials from a variety of government agencies were involved in all of the stages of the deportations. City officials had to prepare the assembly points. Policemen accompanied the deportees to the selected spot. Doctors examined the Jews to declare them medically fit for deportation. The bureaucrats' work continued after the departure of the transport when all remaining matters had to be settled: payment of all outstanding bills, the transfer of confiscated funds, the return of unused ration cards as well as ID and labor cards. Tax forms and other declarations were forwarded to the appropriate agencies. The local registration office was notified of the deportation so that they could make the relevant changes in their files. The confiscated property was disposed of and sold.

And then there is the subject of the railroads. Schedules had to be arranged. Tickets were bought. Trains had to be loaded. Conductors and engineers were needed to run and maintain the railroads. Passengers left but never came back. Who is a perpetrator?

What motivated them to do it?

There are many different opinions on the matter of motivation.

Christopher Browning, author of *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solutions in Poland*, supports the theory that there was a complex interplay of peer pressure, careerism and socialized conformity to blame for the fact that so many ordinary Germans participated willingly in mass murder.

Daniel Goldhagen, on the other hand, supports a theory of "eliminationist antisemitism." In his book, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Goldhagen claims that the motivational element that moved German men and women to devote themselves to the Nazi cause was a belief "that Jewish influence, by nature destructive, must be eliminated irrevocably from society."

A third theory espoused by Yehuda Bauer states:

Due to the modern structure of a bureaucracy, where each person has a limited role in the creation of the general picture, the fact that each bureaucrat contributed just a small part to the general project made it easier for him or her (usually him) to do what he did. At the same time, it appears that a number of bureaucrats were fully conscious of what they did....they were fully aware of what they were doing and they knew that it was contrary to common morality. They did it because of that tremendous promise of a wonderful new society without Jews.

- Yehuda Bauer, *Eclipse of Humanity – the History of the Jews in the Holocaust* (Yad Vashem Multimedia Programme)

Slide 71

The Perpetrators

Nazi killers were perfect killers, as Elie Wiesel has often remarked, because they had been directed by their culture and political system to nullify the essential humanity of their victims. Moreover, as the killing process became more technological and bureaucratic, it became simpler to implement because the murderers were distanced from their victims.

Hitler's Leadership Style

Hitler dealt in the broad realm of ideas, aims and goals. Precise instructions were superfluous. His underlings "worked towards" these ideas, taking independent initiatives to promote what they surmised the Führer's wishes to be, even to anticipate them. This led to ferocious competition within the party. Hitler always endorsed the victorious person or faction and thus was never embarrassed.

Adolf Eichmann (SS Obersturmbannführer or Lieutenant Colonel)

- Born in Germany to a middle class Protestant family.
- Spent his youth in Austria. As a boy, was teased about his looks and dark complexion and was nicknamed "the little Jew" by classmates.
- Failed in his engineering studies. Tried various jobs including laborer and sales.
- Joined Austrian Nazi Party in 1932 at age 26 and became member of the SS. Promoted to the SD (SS Security Service).
- Developed a fanatical interest in Jews. Studied Jewish culture, attended Jewish meetings, studied Hebrew and could speak some Yiddish. Became a "Jewish Specialist."
- Assigned to investigate possible "solutions to the Jewish question." Visited Palestine in 1937 to discuss possible immigration of Jews with Arab leaders. British authorities ordered him to leave.
- With takeover of Austria, he established the Central Office for Jewish Emigration, issuing permits to Jews wanting to leave. Similar offices later opened in Prague and Berlin.
- 1939 he returned to Berlin as head of a Gestapo section responsible for implementing Nazi policy toward Jews in Germany and all occupied territories. The *Einsatzgruppen* came under his supervision.
- 1942 helped Heydrich organize the Wannsee Conference.
- Assumed leading role in coordination of the deportation of Jews to the ghettos and camps. Traveled throughout the Reich coordinating the Final Solution.
- Arrested at the end of the war and confined to an American internment camp, but managed to escape. In 1950, with help of the SS underground, he fled to Argentina and lived under the assumed name of Ricardo Klement for 10 years until Israeli agents abducted him in 1960.
- Stood trial in Jerusalem for crimes against the Jewish people, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Found guilty on all counts and sentenced to death by hanging in 1962. Although Israel has no death penalty, Eichmann became the only person ever to be executed in the country.

Joseph Goebbels (Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda)

- Due to childhood disease, wore metal brace on his leg for most of his life.
- Earned a PhD in literature and philosophy from University of Heidelberg in 1921. Worked as journalist and published author until joining the Nazi party in 1924. Married numerous times. On occasion reprimanded by Hitler for his promiscuous lifestyle.
- Initially opposed Hitler's leadership, but later committed himself to the Nazi party and its führer.
- Committed antisemite. His prolific, persuasive propaganda helped the Nazis achieve and retain power.
- In Hitler's will, Goebbels was appointed Chancellor and Admiral Karl Doenitz was appointed President without the title of führer. Goebbels was Chancellor of Germany for only one day. Goebbels was instructed to leave Berlin in order to lead the government in exile. For the first time, Goebbels disobeyed a command and remained in the bunker with his family, later to commit suicide together.

Hermann Goering (Commander-in-Chief of the *Luftwaffe* and 2nd in Command of the Third Reich)

- Born in Germany to an aristocratic family. His father had been governor of Germany's colony in Southwest Africa.
- Served as combat pilot in World War I and distinguished himself as flying ace. He had succeeded Manfred von Richthofen, the famed Red Baron, as squadron commander.
- After World War I was employed as a show pilot in Denmark and Sweden. His prestigious background made him a prize recruit for the Nazi party.
- Hitler appointed him the first to command the SA in December 1922.
- Seriously wounded in Beer Hall Putsch and forced to flee from Germany for 4 years. Escaped to Sweden and was admitted to a mental hospital for dangerous inmates. While here he became a morphine addict.
- Returned to Germany in 1927 and rejoined Nazis. Elected as one of the first deputies to the *Reichstag*.
- July 1932, became President of the *Reichstag*. In this position, he proclaimed the Nuremberg Laws in 1935.
- January 1933, put in charge of Prussian police and Gestapo and Commissioner for Aviation.
- March 1935, became Commander-in-Chief of air force and was responsible for organizing the rapid build up of aircraft and pilot training. Chief of the Four Year Plan to make Germany ready for war.
- Supervised the state-owned, Hermann Goering Works, a gigantic industrial center that enabled him to accumulate a huge fortune.
- Known for indulging in ostentatious luxury, living in a palace in Berlin and building a hunting mansion where he organized feasts and showed off his stolen art treasures. Known to have changed suits 5 times a day, flouting his medals and jewelry. Called himself the "Last Renaissance Man." This pompous air led to his ultimate downfall.
- September 1939, becomes Hitler's designated successor.
- Becomes director of the *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force) campaigns against Poland and France. The failed air battle against Britain in 1940 damaged his political standing with Hitler. Goering rapidly entered a world of illusions, forbidding any enemy reports that enemy fighters were making headway.
- When Hitler declared that he would remain in his bunker in Berlin until the end, Goering, who had already left for Bavaria, misinterpreted this as an abdication and requested that he be allowed to take over at once. Hitler dismissed him from all his posts, and expelled him from the party.
- Shortly afterwards, in May 1945, Goering was captured by U.S. forces and put on trial at Nuremberg. At the trial he frequently outwitted the prosecutors, but in the end, failed to convince the judges who found him guilty.
- October 1946, two hours before his execution, Goering committed suicide by taking a capsule of poison he had hidden from the guards. He had developed a close relationship with his young, U.S. guard. Upon realizing his fate, Goering offered the young guard a gift of his personalized watch given to him by Hitler. The young guard retrieved Goering's personal bag that contained the watch, and unknowingly, also contained the poison. The young guard later received a court martial for his actions.

Rudolf Hess (Deputy to the Führer)

- Did not live in Germany until age 14. Served in World War I. Attended University of Munich and it was there that he was introduced to a secret antisemitic political organization devoted to Nordic supremacy.
- Joined the Nazi Party as the 16th member after hearing Hitler speak.
- Was imprisoned with Hitler after the Beer Hall Putsch and served as his secretary in the writing of *Mein Kampf*.
- A shy, insecure man who displayed near religious devotion, fanatical loyalty, and absolute blind obedience to Hitler. Received various promotions within the Nazi party as reward for his devout loyalty to Hitler.
- One of his most visible tasks was to announce Hitler at mass meetings.
- Never given any major influence in matters of state because of lack of understanding of the mechanics of power and his inability to take any action on his own initiative. Unfortunately, the one time he did act on his own initiative was an unauthorized flight to England to allay the fears of Nazi aggression towards England. As a result, he was declared insane by Hitler, disowned by the Nazis, and imprisonment by the British for the duration of the war.
- At the Nuremberg Trials, he was sentenced to life in prison where he committed suicide in 1987.

Reinhard Heydrich (SS Obergruppenführer -2nd to Himmler)

- Nicknames: the Blonde Beast", Hangman Heydrich, Man with the Iron Heart, Butcher of Prague.
- From an affluent, cultured, German family. Trained as a violinist. His mother believed in harsh discipline and frequent beatings.
- Bullied throughout childhood because of his high-pitched voice and devout Catholicism. Also tormented with anti-Jewish slurs because of supposed Jewish ancestry. His grandmother had married for a second time (after the birth of Heydrich's father) to a man with a Jewish sounding name. As a result of his miserable childhood, he was driven to excel in academics and athletics.
- With obvious Aryan characteristics, he felt a kinship with early antisemitic groups which offered him an avenue to dispel rumors of his Jewish ancestry.
- Joined Nazi party and became member of the SS in 1931. Rose quickly through the ranks of the SS.
- Head of the SD and right hand man of Heinrich Himmler. In this capacity, he organized a subgroup of SS members to form the *Einsatzgruppen*.
- Organized and chaired the Wannsee Conference in Berlin in 1942 and thus a leading planner of the Final Solution.
- Instrumental in the creation of the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp in Czechoslovakia. On one hand he offered incentives to Czech workers that were loyal to the Reich, and on the other, he punished Czech resistance.
- Members of the Czech resistance plotted and carried out the assassination of Heydrich.
- Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka were name Operation Reinhard Camps in his honor.

Heinrich Himmler (Commander of the *Schutzstaffel* (SS))

- Born in Munich into middle class family.
- 1918 enlisted in the German army, but the war ended before he saw combat.
- Studied agronomy (study of growing crops) in Munich. Became active in the *Freikorps*, private armies of ex-German soldiers who were resentful of Germany's loss in the war.
- 1923 joined the Nazi party. Took part in the Beer Hall Putsch.
- Joined the SS in 1925 and in 1929 becomes the leader.
- In 1934-1945, the SS was given the task of organizing and administering Germany's concentration camps, under the leadership of Himmler.
- Himmler had a blind loyalty to Hitler, to the extent that he was known for having said that if Hitler were to tell him to shoot his mother, he would do it and be proud of the Führer's confidence.
- 1936 Himmler gained further authority as the SS absorbed all of Germany's law enforcement agencies.
- By 1941, the Nazis had invaded Russia and the *Einsatzgruppen* (division of the SS) was actively killing civilians. Upon witnessing such a killing and nearly fainting, Himmler ordered more "humane" methods be found in order to spare his SS men the ordeal of such direct killing.
- By the spring of 1945, Himmler had lost faith in German victory. He realized that in order to survive, Germany would need to seek peace with Britain and the U.S. He began negotiations to surrender in the west. When Hitler discovered this, he declared Himmler a traitor and stripped him of all his titles and ranks.
- After Hitler's suicide, Himmler contacted the headquarters of General Eisenhower, offering to surrender all of Germany if he was spared from prosecution. He even went so far as to send an application to Eisenhower, applying for the position of "Minister of Police" in the post-war German government. Eisenhower refused his requests and declared him a major war criminal.
- In an attempt to avoid arrest, Himmler attempted to disguise his identity with false documents. Unaware of his identity, the British arrested Himmler due to suspicions stemming from the fact that his paperwork was too orderly. In captivity he was soon recognized and scheduled to stand trial in Nuremberg.
- Himmler committed suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule before interrogation could begin. His last words were "I am Heinrich Himmler!"

Slide 72

Chart of Occupational Background of Nazi Leaders

Teacher Notes:

- Ask your students what type of people they think were responsible for the Final Solution? For building and operating the gas chambers? For shaving the heads of inmates and overseeing the sorting of clothes? (thugs, criminals, evil people?)
- What kinds of occupations are listed?
- The people who became Nazi leaders were educated, intelligent people including lawyers, doctors, professors and even clergy. Education does not ensure justice and humanity. Education needs to have a moral component.
- Any conclusions about the average age of many Nazi leaders?
- Does an "Educated" professional like a medical doctor or a lawyer have any special responsibility to people or to society?

Slide 73

Crucial Divisions of the Nazi Party

SA (Storm Troopers, Brown Shirts, *Sturmabteilungen*)

- Organized in 1921 as the Nazi's private army.
- Kept Nazi functions running smoothly while disrupting functions of opposition parties.
- Members mostly former soldiers or those who had lost jobs due to Germany's economic woes.
- Ernst Roehm, Hitler's good friend, became Supreme Commander in 1931.
- After Hitler took power in 1933, Roehm wanted the SA to take control of the German army. Hitler felt it vital to maintain the sanctity German army. In the "Night of the Long Knives," Hitler had his SS kill Roehm and other SA leaders. The SA was no longer a dominant organization within the Reich.

SS (Protective Squad, *Schutzstaffel*)

- Came into being in 1923 as a select corps drawn from the SA membership.
- Served initially as bodyguard for the party's leadership, answering to Hitler personally and swearing loyalty to him alone.
- Entrusted with the "Blood Flag," the flag stained with the blood of the men shot in the 1923 Beer Hall Putsch that became a holy relic symbolic of those that had fallen.
- Heinrich Himmler appointed leader in 1929.
- Himmler wanted the SS to be a higher class than the SA and thus instituted racial selection for its members. Member had to have perfect German ancestry, blonde hair, blue eyes and minimum height of 5'9". Ultimately even their brides had to be screened.

SD (Security Service, *Sicherheitsdienst*)

- Created in 1931 as an intelligence service for the Nazi Party and SS. Reinhard Heydrich was in charge.
- Obtained secret information about actual and potential enemies of the Nazi leadership, investigated loyalty of State officials, and spied on German people in their daily lives.

Gestapo (Secret State Police, *Geheime Staatspolizei*)

- Created in 1933 to deal with the "enemies" that had been rooted out by the SD.
- Had powers of incarceration without judicial review.
- Most feared entity due to ruthless and cruel methods.
- While the concentration camps were under the control of the SS, the Gestapo had power to send its victims there.

Death's Head Units (*Totenkopfverbände*)

- Created in 1936.
- Selected from the SS ranks to serve as concentration camp guards.
- On their caps was a silver emblem of a skull, the "death's head" signifying their loyalty until death.

Special Action Groups (*Einsatzgruppen*)

- Formed in 1938 from SS troops.
- Upon annexation of Austria, they apprehended those who opposed the Reich.
- With the invasion of Poland, they rounded up Jews and forced them into ghettos.
- The invasion of the Soviet Union marked their most treacherous role: destruction of the ideological infrastructure of the Soviet Union i.e. murder all Jews and Communists encountered.

Armed SS (*Waffen-SS*)

- Largest branch of the SS. Established 1940.
- Combat corps of the SS. The Death's Head Units provided troops for the first unit of the Waffen-SS.
- Fought alongside the *Wehrmacht*, the army of Nazi Germany.

Slide 74

Nazi Intentions Revealed (opening breaker slide)

Teacher Note:

One should note how quickly anti-Jewish actions began after Hitler assumed power. This included the implementation of anti-Jewish policies as well as the Boycott of Jewish Shops and Book Burnings which all occurred within Hitler's first 4 months in power.

This should have been the time for protest from the German constituency as well as foreign governments. All of these acts were documented in U.S. as well as other foreign newspapers. Protests did occur in the U.S., initiated by the Jewish community, but fell on deaf ears.

Slide 75

Nazi Intentions Revealed: Anti-Jewish Policies

Teacher Note:

It should be noted that the Jews of Germany represented less than 1% of the total population. They were assimilated both socially and culturally, enjoying the same civil rights as non-Jewish, German citizens when the Nazis took power.

Questions to Consider:

- Ask students if there is a difference between just and unjust laws?
 - What are the responsibilities of citizens when another group of citizens is targeted for violence?
-

There were two central objectives to the Nazi anti-Jewish policies: the "social death" of the Jews and the removal of Jewish presence and influence from German society. This was accomplished with verbal assaults, physical assaults and ultimately legal and administrative restrictions upon the Jews.

Verbal Assaults

The verbal assaults were meant to be heard not only by the Germans, but also by the Jews. It was intended to buttress German beliefs as well as terrorize the Jews. One Jewish survivor records this aspect of Nazi policy during the aftermath of the April 1, 1933 boycott:

The barrage of propaganda was directed against Jews with undiminished vehemence and intensity. In ceaseless repetitions, it was hammered into the heads of the readers and listening audiences that the Jews were subhuman creatures and the source of all evil.

Physical Assaults

The regime perpetrated, encouraged and tolerated violence against Jews. It became part of the Jews' everyday existence. It took the form of impromptu physical attacks and ritualistic degradation by local officers, and sometimes of centrally organized campaigns of violence, terror and incarceration in concentration camps. Similar to the verbal violence, these physical assaults announced to everyone that the Jews were beyond the moral community, and that they would best absent themselves from Germany.

Legal and Administrative Restrictions

Unlike the other anti-Jewish measures eventually adopted, the Nazis put these into effect almost immediately upon assumption of power. This legally promulgated social separation of Jews from Germans.

From 1933 to 1938 the Nazis systematically took away civil rights, personal rights, education, occupations and private property from Jews in an effort to force Jews to emigrate and to make Germany free of Jews. Between 1933 and 1939 there were over 400 separate pieces of legislation enacted against Jews. This policy climaxed on November 9-10, 1938 with *Kristallnacht*.

Slide 76

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies - Laws Restricting Civil Rights

Teacher Note:

The photo on the slide shows a Jewish man and a Christian woman being humiliated after having confessed to having sexual relations.

April 7, 1933

Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service

Required most Jews holding civil service jobs to retire.

Sept. 15, 1935

Reich Citizenship Law

Declared Jews were no longer German citizens.

Law for the Protection of German Blood & German Honor

Forbade either marriage or sexual relations between Jews and Germans.

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Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies - Laws Restricting Personal Rights

April 22, 1933

Kosher butchering is forbidden by law.

April 26, 1938

Jews must register all property in excess of 5,000 Reichsmark (about \$2000)

August 17, 1938

All male Jews must assume the name "Israel" and all females the name "Sarah" by January 1, 1939.

October 5, 1938

All Jewish passports must be marked with the letter "J" for Jew.

November 9-10, 1938....Kristallnacht !

November, 1938

*Jews can no longer own or bear arms.
Jews can no longer attend plays, movies or concerts.
Curfew imposed on Jews.*

September 1941

German Jews over the age of 6 ordered to wear a yellow Star of David.

Clubs, hotels, restaurants, movie theaters, youth organizations, even whole communities closed their doors to Jews. As public contacts were severed, private contacts unraveled as well. Non-Jews increasingly avoided Jews they knew, pretending they had never been acquainted. For Jews, who had long thought of themselves as an integral part of this society, the deepening division was disheartening and demoralizing, especially when perpetrated by long-trusted acquaintances.

Slide 78

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies - Laws Restricting Personal Rights

Photo of Jews Forced to Walk in the Street

Teacher Note:

This photo offers the opportunity to discuss the emotions experienced by both the non-Jews on the sidewalk and the Jews forced to walk off the sidewalk.

Questions to Consider:

- Non-Jews
 - Would/should they look at the Jews off the sidewalk?
 - Is there any sympathy for the plight of the Jews?
 - Is there embarrassment that they are accepting the status quo?
- Jews
 - Is there embarrassment?
 - Is there hatred?
 - Is there acceptance?
 - How would you feel?

Slide 79

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies - Laws Restricting Personal Rights

Photos of Jewish Passports

After the Austrian *Anschluss* (March, 1938), many Jews took advantage of a German-Swiss agreement for the abolition of the visa requirement to cross into Switzerland. In June of that year, the Chief of the Swiss Police protested to the German legation against what he called the “inundation” of Switzerland by Viennese Jews, for whom, he said, the Swiss had no more use than Germany did.

The Swiss government requested that the passports of German Jews clearly indicate that their holders were Jews.

October 5, 1938: Law issued requiring all Jewish passports to be marked with the letter “J” for “Jude” or Jew in German.

Slide 80

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies - Laws Restricting Education

April 25, 1933	Law Against Overcrowding in German Schools & Universities <i>Restricted the number of Jewish children in schools and universities to 1.5% of the total student body.</i> <i>All Catholic parochial and Protestant denominational schools were abolished.</i>
November 15, 1938	<i>Regulation expelled Jews from German schools and declared they must attend Jewish schools.</i>
July 4, 1939	<i>Newly established Reich Association of Jew in Germany has responsibility over the education of Jewish children.</i>
July 7, 1942	<i>Jewish schools closed in Germany after the first wave of deportations of German Jews to the East was complete.</i>

From the time that Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, Jewish children experienced rising humiliation and discrimination within German classrooms. The newly implemented “racial biology” classes targeted Jewish children as social outcasts and acted to isolated Jewish children by making them appear as a race separate from, and inferior to Germans.

On April 25, 1933, the “Law against Overcrowding in German Schools and Universities” was passed, restricting the number of Jewish children in schools and universities to 1.5% of the total student population. As a result, private German Jewish schools were developed where Jewish students met with Jewish teachers to continue their education.

The events of *Kristallnacht* on November 9-10, 1938, led to the November 15th ban of Jewish and Roma (Gypsy) children from German schools. One month later, Jewish students were banned from all universities as well. The 10th regulation of the Nuremburg Laws, dated July 4, 1939, gave the newly established Reich Association of Jews in Germany responsibility over the education of Jewish children.

Jewish schools continued to exist in Germany until they were finally closed on July 7, 1942, after the first wave of deportations of German Jews to the East was completed.

The ban against Jewish children in German schools was part of the effort to “Aryanize” society and remove Jews from German life. It was one of the many antisemitic laws established to isolate and discriminate against Jews, one that was remembered as particularly humiliating and dehumanizing by the children who suffered under it.

Slide 81

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies - Laws Restricting Occupation

Photos on Slide:

Erich Maria Remarque, author of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, came to the U.S. in 1939 from Germany. His successful 1929 novel, an exposé of the front-line horrors of World War I, was publicly burned in 1933, claiming that it “displayed treachery toward the soldiers of the World War.”

Mathematician **Albert Einstein** was a 1921 Nobel Prize winner for his Theory of Relativity. Vilified by Hitler as a Jew, Einstein renounced his German citizenship in 1933 and moved to the U.S.

Conductor **Otto Klemperer** came to the U.S. with his wife after he lost his job at the Berlin State Opera during the 1933 antisemitic purge.

Sigmund Freud, the Jewish founder of modern psychoanalysis, left Austria and fled to Britain in June 1938.

Summer 1933

Regulation stating that all Jewish artists and writers were prohibited from practicing their professions and all books published by or about Jews were to be burned.

July 1938

Regulation stating that the medical licenses of Jewish doctors had been canceled and they could only treat Jewish patients as non-licensed doctors.

Slide 82

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies - Laws Restricting Private Property and Business

Nov. 12, 1938	Regulation for the Elimination of the Jews from the Economic Life of Germany <i>Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses to Aryan hands.</i>
February 1939	<i>Regulation stating that all Jews must surrender all their gold, platinum, silver objects, precious stones, and pearls to the German government with the exception of one place setting of silver.</i>

In a process known as “Aryanization,” German authorities either seized Jewish businesses and property outright or forced Jews to sell assets at prices absurdly below market value.

The Nazis felt there was “Jewish domination” among stores and businesses, yet in truth, the percentage of Jews in commerce in Germany was 3.3% of the total population. It was this process of Aryanization, more than any other, that destroyed the capacity of Jews in Germany to survive economically, for over 60% of the Jewish population earned a living as independent owners of stores and businesses.

The first phase of Aryanization was January 1933 to November 1938. During this period of so-called “Voluntary Aryanization,” transfers of ownership were supposedly based on voluntary agreements.

The second phase following *Kristallnacht* was a so called “Compulsory Aryanization.” Jews were under pressure to sell. The longer they chose to wait, the greater the pressure and the smaller the compensation. By early 1938 there was some difficulty finding enough German buyers for the remaining Jewish-owned businesses. The German Economy Ministry stepped in to force price levels down by requiring official approval of all contracts for transfer of a business from a Jew to a German

As a result of the various anti-Jewish economic restrictions between 1933 and 1939, Jews were forced to move to urban areas. The Germans did not plan this movement. The migration was caused mainly by the gradual impoverishment of the Jewish community, which gave rise to increasing intra-Jewish dependence, particularly the dependence of poor Jews on Jewish relief organizations. This urbanization of the Jewish populations was a major step in the destructive process.

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Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Anti-Jewish Policies

Quote from Heinrich Hildebrandt noting the subtle progression of restrictions.

Teacher Note:

Milton Mayer, author of *They Thought They Were Free*, was a newspaperman and an American Jew of German descent who returned to Germany 7 years after the war to talk to average Germans. One of those was Heinrich Hildebrandt, a high school teacher in Nazi Germany.

Additional Quotes from *They Thought They Were Free*

- *Each act, each occasion, is worse than the last, but only a little worse. You wait for the next and the next. You wait for one great shocking occasion, thinking that others, when such a shock come, will join with you in resisting somehow. You don't want to act, or even talk, alone; you don't want to "go out of your way to make trouble." Why not? – Well, you are not in the habit of doing it. And it is not just fear, fear of standing alone, that restrains you; it is also genuine uncertainty.*
- *And you are an alarmist. You are saying that this must lead to this, and you can't prove it. These are the beginnings, yes; but how do you know for sure when you don't know the end, and how do you know, or even surmise the end?*
- *But the one great shocking occasion, when tens or hundreds or thousands will join with you, never comes. That's the difficulty. If the last and worst act of the whole regime had come immediately after the first and smallest, thousands, yes, millions would have been sufficiently shocked – if, let us say, the gassing of the Jews in '43 had come immediately after the "German Firm" stickers on the windows of non-Jewish shops in '33. But of course this isn't the way it happens. In between come all the hundreds of little steps, some of them imperceptible, each of them preparing you not to be shocked by the next. Step C is not so much worse than Step B, and, if you did not make a stand at Step B, why should you at Step C? And so on to Step D.*
- *And one day, too late, your principles, if you were ever sensible of them, all rush in upon you. The burden of self-deception has grown too heavy, and some minor incident, in my case my little boy, hardly more than a baby, saying "Jew swine," collapses it all at once, and you see that everything, everything, has changed and changed completely under your nose...You have accepted things you would not have accepted five years ago, a year ago, things that your father, even in Germany, could not have imaged.*

Slide 84

Nazi Intentions Revealed (breaker slide)

Slide 85

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Boycott of Jewish Shops (April 1, 1933)

Teacher Notes:

- Note the sign on the left is written in German and English. Why?
 - The boycott was organized as a test of German and international tolerance for anti-Jewish measures. Was this intended for publicity in the international community?
-

The boycott of Jewish shops and businesses was the first public, nation-wide attack by the Nazi Party against the entire Jewish Community. Its purpose, to damage the Jews economically, proved only a partial success.

The boycott was scheduled for Saturday, April 1, a day on which many Jewish shops and offices were closed for the Sabbath. In addition, many people crossed the lines, and the general reaction of the wider population was “markedly cool.”

President Hindenburg ordered that the boycott be limited to one day because of public apathy as well as foreign reactions and the danger of damaging the economy.

Slide 86

Nazi Intentions Revealed (breaker slide)

Slide 87

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

Nazi Book Burning (May 10, 1933)

The Nazi burning of selected books was an effort to cleanse the culture of ideas that were threatening to the Nazi philosophy and eliminate Jewish intellectualism.

Titles by Jewish authors were removed as well as books espousing individualism, overcoming physical challenges and the emotional cost of war. Targeted authors included Helen Keller, Ernest Hemingway, Jack London, Sinclair Lewis, and Jewish authors such as Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein and Heinrich Heine.

I held my breath while he hurled the first volume into the flames: it was like burning something alive. Then students followed with whole armfuls of books, while schoolboys screamed into the microphone their condemnation of this and that author, and as each name was mentioned the crowd booed and hissed. You felt Goebbels's venom behind their denunciations. Children of fourteen mouthing abuse of Heine! Erich Remarque's All Quite on the Western Front received the greatest condemnation ... it would never do for such an unheroic description of war to dishearten soldiers of the Third Reich.

- Lilian T. Mowrer, an American living in Germany, describing a book burning.
What We Knew – Terror, Mass Murder & Everyday Life in Nazi Germany,
by Eric A. Johnson & Karl-Heinz Reuband

In the U.S., public opinion was outraged. Journalists were dismayed at this German assault on intellectual freedom.

Helen Keller on the Nazi Book Burnings

By the time of the book burnings in Berlin, Helen Keller had become not only a noted writer and lecturer, but also a revered symbol of one person's victory over incredible adversity. Having lost both sight and hearing at the age of 19 months, she learned how to communicate by touch through her tutor and educator Ann Sullivan. Keller's lectures and writing on behalf of socialism, world peace and internationalism marked her books for inclusion in the book burnings – despite the fact that she was then donating all her German royalties to the relief fund for the blind German soldiers of World War I.

With her books slated for the bonfires, she confronted the German students in an open letter:

History has taught you nothing if you think you can kill ideas. Tyrants have tried to do that often before, and the ideas have risen up in their might and destroyed them.

You can burn my books and the books of the best minds in Europe, but the ideas in them have seeped through a million channels and will continue to quicken other minds. I gave all the royalties of my books for all time to the German soldiers blinded in the World War with no thought in my heart but love and compassion for the German people.

I deplore the injustice and unwisdom of passing on to unborn generations the stigma of your deeds.

Slide 88

Nazi Intentions Revealed (breaker slide)

Slide 89

Nazi Intentions Revealed:
Nuremberg Laws (September 15, 1935)

With these laws Hitler officially legalized antisemitism.

Jews were declared stateless and unprotected by German law. They were returned to the legal position they had occupied in Germany before their emancipation in the 19th century. A climate was created in which Jews were viewed as different, an inferior people.

Although these laws aimed to bring about a thorough racial separation, they could not systematically be implemented unless one knew to whom they applied. The word "Jew" was used in these laws, yet the term was not defined. Who constitutes a Jew?

This issue was not resolved until November 14, 1935 with the November Decree.

The Jewish reaction was mixed:

Some concluded that there was no future for Jews in Germany. Emigration jumped. Others welcomed the laws. With their status now defined (even as non-citizens) they hoped the violence would stop. They would be able to tolerate their lives as second class citizens until a new regime came to power. Many Jews who had immigrated in 1933-34 even returned after the Nuremberg Laws were passed.

A Jewry that had considered itself German first and foremost and Jewish only secondarily, now turned inward to develop a new-found Jewish identity. They maintained their dignity despite rejection by what they thought was their fatherland. Beginning in 1935, the leaders of German Jewry tried to inform the non-Jewish world outside of their predicament. When there was little response, they realized that to survive both physically and spiritually in an immoral society, they would largely have to depend on themselves.

Slide 90

Nazi Intentions Revealed (breaker slide)

Slide 91

Nazi Intentions Revealed:

The November Decree (November 14, 1935)

Teacher Notes:

- Mischlinge – mixed race; i.e. part Jew
- The Mischlinge were officially excluded from membership in the Nazi Party. They were drafted into the German army but could not attain the rank of officers. They were also barred from the civil service and certain professions.
- At the Wannsee Conference, during discussions of the “Final Solution,” it was suggested the Mischlinge who were neither married to Jews, nor members of the Jewish community, nor “behaved” like Jews, be given the option of deportation to death camps or “voluntary” sterilization. Although no clear policy was adopted, an undetermined number of Mischlinge were sterilized. Mischlinge included in deportation transports suffered the fate of the Jews. A number of “Aryan” spouses of Jews, mostly women who refused to leave their spouses went with them to the East and shared their fate.
- The date of September 15, 1935 that is used as a benchmark for the “exception” to the 1st degree Mischlinge rule noted on the slide, refers back to the date of the announcement of the Nuremberg Laws.

The November Decree provided the definition of a Jew that was lacking in the Nuremberg Laws.

The November Decree offered a profound and startling contradiction. The Nazis had previously called all decrees that defined people as Jews, “racial laws.” Yet note here that the criteria for determining Aryan versus non-Aryan is based on the religion of one’s ancestors, not on any racial characteristics.

According to the race definitions, there were nearly 500,000 Jews in Germany (less than 1% of the population) and 200,000 Mischlinge. Many who had never considered themselves Jewish were now given that designation by the government.

And what does one do with a pre-existing mixed marriage?

These were classified as privileged (Aryan husband + Jewish wife) and non-privileged (Jewish husband + Aryan wife).

 In a privileged couple, the wife never had to wear a yellow star.

 In a non-privileged couple, the husbands were ultimately deported.

Because these laws required proof of ancestry, and few families had such records at their disposal, genealogical researchers and black market certification became common place.

Nazi Propaganda (opening breaker slide)

Teacher Notes:

- Propaganda – the spreading of false information to purposely mislead people
 - A possible approach to this topic is beginning with a discussion of current advertising methods. Advertising persuades consumer opinions either for or against current products, even before purchase. At what point is this detrimental? When does advertising become propaganda?
-

Nazi propaganda was used to instill Nazi racist ideology and to change patterns of traditional behavior. Focusing on the major enemy (the Jew), the Nazis used false claims, deceptions and outright lies to justify and gain support for their murderous policies. Propaganda infiltrated all aspects of society including education, books, games, radio and movies. The average German was bombarded with Nazi ideology every minute of every day.

When Rosa Hirsch was asked why people did not protest or do something in the early years, she responded:

Because they really believed it; they really believed what they were taught. If they lived by the law, they didn't have to be afraid. They were taught that a Jew is not a human being, a parasite, so you leave it alone. They had nothing to be afraid of. But if they had been thinking that these people used to be my neighbors and we were friends, well, maybe not close friends, but we were acquaintances, and all of a sudden they are parasites, they are not worth anything anymore, then something isn't right. But as a whole, the German do not think for themselves. They are followers. They are not leaders. You see the difference here for instance in America. Somebody comes along like a McCarthy and all of a sudden people get mixed up. But then they come back to themselves and they say, "That man is crazy." They think for themselves. They are not followers. They are not like sheep like the Germans are. The Germans follow anybody.

- Rosa Hirsch, from *What We Knew – Terror, Mass Murder & Everyday Life in Nazi Germany*, by Eric A. Johnson & Karl-Heinz Reuband

Because of the significant role played by propaganda in the Nazi system, the Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda was created on March 5, 1933, with Joseph Goebbels at its head. Goebbels, a Ph.D. in literature and philosophy, was first appointed to attract public attention and media coverage to the Nazi party. Once the Nazis were in power, these efforts were re-directed to entrench the totalitarian regime and strengthen its hold on the population. Goebbels controlled the flow of all public information.

Slide 93

Nazi Propaganda:
The Hitler Youth

Philosophy

My pedagogy is hard. The weak must be chiseled away...young people will grow up who will frighten the world. I want a violent, arrogant, unafraid youth, who must be able to suffer pain. Nothing weak or tender must be left in them. Their eyes must bespeak once again the free, magnificent beast of prey...thus will I face the pure and noble raw material...I do not want an intellectual education. With knowledge I will spoil the young. I would vastly prefer them to learn only what they absorbed voluntarily as they followed their play instinct. They shall learn to overcome the fear of death through the most arduous tests. This is the historic state of heroic youth.

- Adolf Hitler quoted in *The Burden of Guilt* by H. Vogt, p.163

Development of the Hitler Youth

The concept behind the Hitler Youth was to turn out a generation of unquestioningly loyal Nazis who were racially "pure" and conditioned to military discipline.

The Hitler Youth first began in 1926. Hitler had just been released from prison after his failed putsch and he was re-building the Nazi party. Kurt Gruber, a law student and avid Nazi, was put in charge. The young people were attracted by the flags, uniforms and rituals of this youth movement. Gruber described the Hitler Youth as "a new youth movement of young social-revolutionary minded Germans" trained to risk their own lives if necessary to free Germany from "the shackles of Capitalists and the enemies of the German race."

By April 1929, the Hitler Youth was declared the only official youth group of the Nazi Party. They appeared at the annual Nuremberg rally in September where a group of boys from Berlin had marched 400 miles to attend. This became an instant tradition and would be repeated each year as the Adolf Hitler March.

The BDM was not established until 1930. Girls were taught the importance of being loyal Nazis and mothers of racially pure Germans. They were always to set a good example by not smoking or drinking in public. Great emphasis was placed on the girls' education and they were expected to learn a trade. This was quite unusual for women of that time.

Originally the Hitler Youth operated as a semi-independent entity within the SA. In April 1931, Gruber was placed directly subordinate to SA Chief Ernst Roehm. By October 1931, Gruber was gone and replaced with 24-year old Baldur von Schirach.

By the end of 1933 there were over 3.5 million members. By 1935, almost 60% of Germany's young people belonged to the Hitler Youth.

On December 1, 1936, a law was passed requiring all healthy young Germans "to be educated physically, intellectually and morally in the spirit of National Socialism." Membership in the Hitler Youth became compulsory for all German children age 10 and older. Three years later, in 1939, a tougher law was passed: parents who did not allow their children to join could have their children taken away.

These young people embodied the Nazi ideal and were encouraged to report anyone who denounced the party, including parents and friends. They were some of the Gestapo's best informers resulting in lost jobs, fines or even jail sentences.

Divisions of the Hitler Youth

Boys

(Hitler Youth, Hitlerjüngend)

Pimpfen (Little Fellows), age 6-10
Jüngvolk (Young Folk), age 10-14
Hitlerjüngend (Hitler Youth), age 14-18

Girls

(German Girl's League, BDM, Bund Deutscher Mädel)

Jungmädel (Young Girls), age 10-14
Bund Deutscher Mädel (League of German Maidens),
age 14-17
Glaube und Schönheit (Faith & Beauty), age 17-21+

Programming for the Boys

Members of the Hitler Youth wore paramilitary uniforms very similar to those of the *Sturmabteilung*, or SA, and the ranks and insignia were similar. Many of the boys' activities resembled soldier training, including throwing grenade-like objects, crawling under barbed wire, learning to jump off high platforms into the sea, and climbing over tall obstacles. Youths in *HJ* camps learned to use weapons, built up their physical strength, learned war strategies, and were indoctrinated in antisemitism.

At age 18, men graduated from the Hitler Youth to become members of the Nazi Party. The "elite" members were selected for SS service on the basis of their height, Nordic appearance and pure Aryan blood. The remainder would be pressed into other organizations such as the SA or Reich Labor Service. After 6 months in the Reich Labor Service, they reported for two years of military service.

Programming for the Girls

The BDM used campfire romanticism, summer camps, folklorism, tradition, and sports to educate girls within the National Socialist belief system, and to train them for their roles in German society: wife, mother, and homemaker. The programs offered to girls often appeared very interesting and seemingly allowed the girls more freedom within society than they had previously known. Prior to the BDM, it was nearly unheard of that girls would travel without their parents, or do such "boyish" things as camping, hiking, and playing sports.

The BDM helped the war effort in many ways. Younger girls collected donations of money, as well as goods such as clothing or old newspapers for the Winter Relief and other Nazi party charitable organizations. Many groups, particularly BDM choirs and musical groups, visited wounded soldiers at hospitals or sent care packages to the front. The older girls volunteered as nurses' aides at hospitals, or to help at train stations where wounded soldiers or refugees needed a hand.

At age 18, the women were expected to join the Reich Labor Service. They could also remain a member of the BDM until they got married or had children.

Uniforms

Boys: The uniform was black shorts or trousers, khaki shirt and hair the length of matchsticks.

Girls: Dark blue skirt, white blouse, black kerchief, hair in long braids or rolls

Songs

Hitler Youth songs contained antisemitic lyrics including one song that said: "Yes, when the Jewish blood splashed from the knives, things will go twice as well."

After the War

The Hitler Youth was disbanded by Allied authorities after the war. Some members of the Hitler Youth were accused of war crimes; however, as the organization was staffed with children, no serious efforts were made to prosecute these claims. While the entire Hitler Youth was never declared a criminal organization, the Hitler Youth adult leadership corps was deemed to have committed crimes against peace in corrupting the young minds of Germany. Many top Hitlerjüngend leaders were put on trial by Allied authorities, with Baldur von Schirach sentenced to twenty years in prison. Schirach was convicted of Crimes against Humanity for his actions as *Gauleiter* of Vienna, not his leadership of the Hitler Youth.

Slide 94

Nazi Propaganda (breaker slide)

Slide 95

Nazi Propaganda:
Education in Nazi Germany

Teacher Notes:

- Education – the development of knowledge, skill or ability through study or training; the individual not only learns facts and develops skills, but is given the opportunity to question, criticize and draw their own conclusion.
- Indoctrination – teaching someone to accept doctrines uncritically.
- In Nazi Germany, the education system was altered to a form of indoctrination that purported emotion over reason, community over the individual, and unquestioning acceptance of authority.

Discussion Points:

- Why is the control of education such a critical element in the forming of society's opinion?
- How does what the student learns in school affect their parents?
- What effect did the portrait of Adolf Hitler in every classroom have? Do we have a portrait of our U.S. President in every classroom? Why or why not?

Education played a very important part in Nazi Germany in trying to cultivate a loyal following for Hitler and the Nazis. The Nazis were aware that education would create loyal Nazis by the time they reached adulthood.

The Nazification of German schools began shortly after Hitler took power. Many teachers attended classes during school holidays in which the new Nazi curriculum was spelled out.

A portrait of Hitler hung in every classroom.

The school curriculum was re-shaped underscoring racial theory, discouraging analytical thinking and overemphasizing physical training. Hundreds of textbooks were replaced by Nazi material. New subjects were introduced, including genetics and the study of race and nation. As author Erika Mann said in *School for Barbarians*, German educators were warping pliable young minds in order to mold obedient young monsters.

Enforcing a Nazi curriculum in schools depended on the teachers delivering it. Any teacher considered disloyal was dismissed. In April 1933, laws were passed requiring that all teachers who were Jews or political opponents be fired. Shortly after that, Jewish pupils were restricted to 1.5% of the student body. By November 15, 1938, Jews were banned altogether from state schools and colleges.

The chief purpose of the school is to train human beings to realize that the State is more important than the individual, that individuals must be willing and ready to sacrifice themselves for Nation and Führer ... The basic principle to keep in mind is that we are not striving to inculcate as much knowledge as possible in the minds of our students. If students have learned to submit to authority, if they have developed a willingness to fit into that particular (place) chosen for them by the Party, then their education has been successful.

- Nazi Minister of Education's Goals of Education

In 1936, all Catholic parochial and Protestant denominational schools were abolished. Church holidays which had usually meant a day off from school, were now ignored.

By 1937, 97% of all teachers belonged to the National Socialist Teacher's League (NSLB). Every member of this union had to submit an ancestry table in triplicate with official documents of proof. 32% of NSLB members were members of the Nazi Party. This percentage was twice as high as that found in the Nazi Civil Servant's Association.

In addition to the traditional German school system, the Nazis established 3 types of elite schools for the training of young Nazis:

Adolf Hitler Schools - Run by the Hitler Youth organization; there were eventually 10; took boys at the age of 12 and provided 6 years of intensive, highly disciplined leadership training; top-level graduates were eligible for the *Napolas* or *Ordensburgen* for another 3 years of training.

Napolas (National Political Institutes of Education) – Run by the Nazi party.

Ordensburgen (Order Castles) - Run by the Nazi party.

Under Adolf Hitler, a school system that had once been considered among the finest in the world became substandard almost overnight. The Hitler Youth organization would gradually supplant the traditional elementary and secondary system and become the main force educating German youth. Students emerging from schools were in superb physical condition and thoroughly drilled in Nazi ideology but lacked basic skills in math and science.

Slide 96

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - The German National Catechism

Teacher Notes:

- Catechism – a summary or exposition of doctrine
 - This striking little book uses a clearly religious metaphor: It is a "German Catechism" for the instruction of young Germans. It goes through the 25 program points of the Nazi Party, and introduces the leaders of the party as well.
-

Here is the translation of one section on race entitled: **Of Race and People (*Volk*)**

What is a race?

A group of living creatures is a race when its individual members share the same appearance and genetic inheritance.

What do I understand under "appearance and genetic inheritance"?

Physical characteristics that are passed along: the color of the skin, the shape of the skull, and particularly facial features (shape of the nose, mouth, lips), etc.

What are the major races?

White, black, and yellow.

To which race do Europe's peoples belong?

The peoples of Europe do not belong to a particular race, but are rather a racial mixture. Our German people are comprised primarily of six races.

And what are they?

The Nordic, the Pfälzish (*fälische*), the Western (*westliche*), the East Baltic (*ostbaltische*), the Ostic (*ostische*), and the Dinarish (*dinarische*) races.

How can one tell that peoples are racially related?

First, from their languages, in which many words are the same or similar. A racial relationship is also evident in the same or similar cultural products, sagas, legends and customs.

What were and are the particular characteristics of the Nordic race?

Courage, bravery, creative ability and desire, loyalty.

The German people is, along with the English, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, the most racially pure of the European peoples. With regards to the purity of language, the Scandinavian peoples are in first place. Its Gothic script is particularly lovely, and it should be maintained.

Which race must the National Socialist race fight against?

The Jewish race.

Why?

The goal of the Jew is to make himself the ruler of humanity. Wherever he comes, he destroys works of culture. He is not a creative spirit, rather a destructive spirit.

How is that evident?

The work of Aryan peoples shows a true creative spirit. The Jew is mostly a merchant, as he was for millennia in the past. There are no Jewish construction workers in Germany, no smiths, no Jewish miners or seamen. Nearly all major inventions were made by Aryans.

How has the Jew subjugated the peoples?

With money. He lent them money and made them pay interest. Thousands and thousands of Germans have been made wretched by the Jews and been reduced to poverty. Farmers whose land had been in the family for more than 100 years were driven from their land because they could not pay the interest.

What happened to those farmers?

They had to move to the cities. Torn from the land to which they belonged, robbed of their labor that gave their lives purpose and meaning, they fell victim to poverty and misery. Worn down, their souls crushed, they accepted Jewish doctrines that denied the Fatherland and opposed all that was nationalistic. Their strength and ability faded. The Jew had reached his goal.

What other guilt does the Jew bear?

While the German people were fighting a life and death battle during the World War, the Jew incited people at home and seduced them into treason. The November Revolution of 1918 that brought about Germany's collapse was the work of the Jew.

In countless newspapers in Germany and abroad, he brought everything German into the mud, slandering us and inciting our enemies even more than they already were. His lackeys in leading positions in the Reich persecuted the National Socialist movement, bringing the fighters for a new Germany before judges and throwing them into prison.

He corrupted Germans through bad books, and mocked true literature and German music, replacing it with un-germanic music. Everywhere, his influence was destructive.

What is racial defilement?

Forgetting our spirit and our blood. A careless disregard of our nature and a contempt for our blood. No German man may take a Jewish woman as his wife, and no German girl may marry a Jew. Those who do that exclude themselves from the community of the German people.

What must the National Socialist movement do?

Adolf Hitler said: "Care must be taken, at least in our nation, that the deadliest enemy (the Jew) is recognized, and that the battle against him is seen as the shining symbol of a brighter day that will also show other peoples the path to the salvation of fighting Aryan humanity."

Which European people disregards the racial question?

France. It has accepted large numbers of blacks into its army. It has given them the same political rights as the whites. Thus it can happen that black officers command whites. Blacks and Moroccans fought against Germany in the World War. After the war, blacks raped German women and girls in the Rhineland. Germans — never forget that!

What does your people mean to you?

You are born into your people, my child, of a German mother. Your father is a German. And you belong to the German people just as every part of your body belongs to you. You are a link in a great chain, a part of the whole. Alone, you are nothing, but when you live for your people you are everything. Your people's destiny is your destiny. Its struggles and sorrows, its joys and its miseries, are yours. All Germans are your brothers. You may not think, want or do anything that harms your people! The history of your people is great and glorious, and you can be proud of it. The days of betrayal and the years of shame that Germany had to endure between 1918 and 1933 are a warning to you. You must work and create for the resurrection of your Fatherland.

The greatness of your people calls you to loyalty! Never forget that Frederick the Great and Bismarck were your brothers, as are those heroes of the World War who sleep in foreign soil or in the depths of the sea! The war memorials in the streets of the cities and the market places of the villages call to you. Never forget that we cheerfully shed our blood for you, for Germany's holy soil, for the good and the life of this great people!

Slide 97

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - Typical School Day

Teacher Notes:

- How do you suppose the Jewish students felt?
- Why do you suppose the Nazis felt it was imperative to humiliate and alienate the Jews before they tried to eliminate them?

Slide 98

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - Changes in the Curriculum

Teacher Notes:

- What Nazi concepts are imbedded in these simple math word problems?
- How does this type of indoctrination change the students' perception of the world?

In these twisted math problems, we are reminded of the "sub-human" value of both the handicapped and the Jews as well as the burden they place on society.

Subjects underwent a major change in schools. Some of the most affected were History and Biology.

History

History was based on the glory of Germany - a nationalistic approach was compulsory. The German defeat in 1918 was explained as the work of Jewish and Marxist spies who had weakened the system from within; the Treaty of Versailles was the work of nations jealous of Germany's might and power; the hyperinflation of 1923 was the work of Jewish saboteurs; the national resurgence started under the leadership of Hitler, etc.

Biology

Biology became a study of the different races to 'prove' that the Nazi belief in racial superiority was a sound belief. "Racial Instruction" started at the age of 6. Hitler himself had decreed that "no boy or girl should leave school without complete knowledge of the necessity and meaning of blood purity." Pupils were taught about the problems of heredity. Older pupils were taught about the importance of selecting the right "mate" when marrying and producing children. The problems of inter-racial marriage were taught with an explanation that such marriages could only lead to a decline in racial purity.

Geography

Geography taught pupils about the land Germany had taken away from her in 1919 and the need for Germany to have living space - *lebensraum*.

Science

Science had a military slant to it. The curriculum required that the principles of shooting be studied; military aviation science; bridge building and the impact of poisonous gasses.

Indoctrination became rampant in all subjects. At every opportunity, teachers were expected to attack the lifestyle of the Jews.

All teachers had to be careful about what they said, as children were encouraged to inform the authorities if a teacher said something that did not fit in with the Nazi's curriculum for schools.

Slide 99

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - Excerpt from Biology Textbook

Slide 100

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - Math Lesson for First Grade

Teacher Notes:

Notice the strong differentiation between the “girl” page and the “boy” page, especially the military equipment for the young boys to count. How might this impact early thinking?

Slide 101

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - The Poisonous Mushroom (Der Giftpilz)

The Poisonous Mushroom is an antisemitic children’s book published by Julius Streicher, the publisher of *Der Stürmer*. Streicher was executed as a war criminal in 1946.

This collection of children’s stories contains vivid illustrations portraying Jews as dangerous, lecherous and untrustworthy. One of these is the innocent story of a young child collecting mushrooms in the forest with his mother who warns him of the dangers of the “poisonous mushroom.”

The following stories refer to the pictures on the slide above:

The Poisonous Mushroom

Mother uses lessons from nature in teaching her son how to recognize a poisonous mushroom that may be similar to one that is edible. In the same way, a Jew may look like a regular person but must be treated with caution.

A mother and her young boy are gathering mushrooms in the German forest. The boy finds some poisonous ones. The mother explains that there are good mushrooms and poisonous ones, and, as they go home, says:

"Look, Franz, human beings in this world are like the mushrooms in the forest. There are good mushrooms and there are good people. There are poisonous, bad mushrooms and there are bad people. And we have to be on our guard against bad people just as we have to be on guard against poisonous mushrooms. Do you understand that?"

"Yes, mother," Franz replies. "I understand that in dealing with bad people trouble may arise, just as when one eats a poisonous mushroom. One may even die!"

"And do you know, too, who these bad men are, these poisonous mushrooms of mankind?" the mother continued.

Franz slaps his chest in pride:

"Of course I know, mother! They are the Jews! Our teacher has often told us about them."

The mother praises her boy for his intelligence, and goes on to explain the different kinds of "poisonous" Jews: the Jewish peddler, the Jewish cattle-dealer, the Kosher butcher, the Jewish doctor, the baptized Jew, and so on.

"However they disguise themselves, or however friendly they try to be, affirming a thousand times their good intentions to us, one must not believe them. Jews they are and Jews they remain. For our Volk they are poison."

"Like the poisonous mushroom!" says Franz.

"Yes, my child! Just as a single poisonous mushroom can kill a whole family, so a solitary Jew can destroy a whole village, a whole city, even an entire Volk."

Franz has understood.

"Tell me, mother, do all non-Jews know that the Jew is as dangerous as a poisonous mushroom?" Mother shakes her head.

"Unfortunately not, my child. There are millions of non-Jews who do not yet know the Jews. So we have to enlighten people and warn them against the Jews. Our young people, too, must be warned. Our boys and girls must learn to know the Jew. They must learn that the Jew is the most dangerous poison-mushroom in existence. Just as poisonous mushrooms spring up everywhere, so the Jew is found in every country in the world. Just as poisonous mushrooms often lead to the most dreadful calamity, so the Jew is the cause of misery and distress, illness and death."

The author then concludes this story by pointing the moral:

German youth must learn to recognize the Jewish poison-mushroom. They must learn what a danger the Jew is for the German *Volk* and for the whole world. They must learn that the Jewish problem involves the destiny of us all.

"The following tales tell the truth about the Jewish poison-mushroom. They show the many shapes the Jew assumes. They show the depravity and baseness of the Jewish race. They show the Jew for what he really is:

The Devil in human form.

How To Tell A Jew

Children are instructed by a teacher that embraces the Nazi doctrine. They are taught to recognize the stereotypical facial characteristics of Jews, for example, the "Jewish nose."

Things are lively in Mr. Birkmann's 7th grade boys' class today. The teacher is talking about the Jews. Mr. Birkmann has drawn pictures of Jews on the blackboard. The boys are fascinated. Even the laziest of them, "Emil the Snorer," is paying attention, not sleeping, as he so often does during other subjects. Mr. Birkmann is a good teacher. All the children like him. They are happiest when he talks about the Jews. Mr. Birkmann can do that well. He learned about the Jews from life. He knows how to put it in gripping terms such that the favorite hour of the day is the "Jewish hour." Mr. Birkmann looks at the clock.

"It is noon," he says. "We should summarize what we have learned in the past hour. What have we talked about?"

All the children raise their hands. The teacher calls on Karl Scholz, a small lad in the front row. "We have talked about how to recognize the Jews." "Good. Say more!"

Little Karl reaches for the pointer, steps up to the board and points at the drawings.

"One can most easily tell a Jew by his nose. The Jewish nose is bent at its point. It looks like the number six. We call it the Jewish six. Many non-Jews also have bent noses. But their noses bend upwards, not downwards. Such a nose is a hook nose or an eagle nose. It is not at all like a Jewish nose."

"Right!" says the teacher. "But the nose is not the only way to recognize a Jew..."

The boy goes on. "One can also recognize a Jew by his lips. His lips are usually puffy. The lower lip often protrudes. The eyes are different too. The eyelids are mostly thicker and more fleshy than ours. The Jewish look is wary and piercing. One can tell from his eyes that he is a deceitful person."

The teacher calls on another lad. He is Fritz Müller, and is the best in the class. He goes to the board and says:

"Jews are usually small to mid-sized. They have short legs. Their arms are often very short too. Many Jews are bow-legged and flat-footed. They often have a low, slanting forehead, a receding forehead. Many criminals have such a receding forehead. The Jews are criminals too. Their hair is usually dark and often curly like a Negro's. Their ears are very large, and they look like the handles of a coffee cup."

The teacher turns to the students.

"Pay attention, children. Why does Fritz always say 'many Jews have bow legs', or 'they often have receding foreheads,' or 'their hair is usually dark'?"

Heinrich Schmidt, a large, strong boy in the last row speaks.

"Every Jew does not have these characteristics. Some do not have a proper Jewish nose, but real Jewish ears. Some do not have flat feet, but real Jewish eyes. Some Jews cannot be recognized at first glance. There are even some Jews with blonde hair. If we want to be sure to recognize Jews, we must look carefully. But when one looks carefully, one can always tell it is a Jew."

"Very good," the teacher says. "And now tell me about other ways to tell Jews from non-Jews. Richard, come up here!"

Richard Krause, a smiling blonde lad, goes to the board. He says: "One can recognize a Jew from his movements and behavior. The Jew moves his head back and forth. His gait is shuffling and unsteady. The Jew moves his hands when he talks. He 'jabbers.' His voice is often odd. He talks through his nose. Jews often have an unpleasant sweetish odor. If you have a good nose, you can smell the Jews."

The teacher is satisfied.

"That is how it is, kids. You have paid attention! If you pay attention outside school and keep your eyes open, you won't be fooled by the Jews."

The teacher goes to the lectern and turns the board. On the other side a poem is written. The children read it out loud:

"From a Jew's face
The wicked Devil speaks to us,
The Devil who, in every country,
Is known as an evil plague.
Would we from the Jew be free,
Again be cheerful and happy,
Then must youth fight with us
To get rid of the Jewish Devil."

The Experience of Hans and Else with a Strange Man

Children are taught that Jews are morally decadent characters whose intentions are evil.

In this story a Jew tries to entice little children to his home, by giving them caramels. The little boy saves his sister by calling the police.

Else begins to have plenty of sweets.

Hans asks from where they are coming.

"I have got them from a strange man. But don't tell mother! The man strictly forbade me to do so!"

Hans is curious. They arrange to go together. The "man" wants them to go with him.

Hans hesitates — Hans thought:

'What does the man want of us? Why should we go with him?'

Suddenly a great fear comes over him.

"You are a Jew!" he cries and seizing his sister, runs off as fast as his legs will carry him. At the corner of the street he meets a policeman. Quickly Hans tells his story. The policeman gets on his motor-bike and soon overtakes the strange man. He handcuffs him and takes him to prison.

At home, subsequently, there is great rejoicing. The police praise Hans for being a brave lad. His mother gives him a large piece of chocolate while teaching him the following saying:

"A devil goes through the land,
The Jew he is, known to us all
As murderer of the peoples and polluter of the races,
The terror of children in every country!
He wants to ruin the youth.
He wants all peoples to die.
Have nothing to do with a Jew
Then you'll be happy and gay!"

How Jewish Traders Cheat

This story introduces a Jewish hawker who tries to sell bad cloth to a young German peasant girl.

It is a festival evening in the village when the Jew turns up with his wares. The Jew flatters the peasant woman and spreads out his wares.

"Everything the heart desires, Levy has for sale."

But the German peasant girl turns down his offers.

The Jew persists, and shows her some stuff of "... purest wool. That will make a dress for you, woman, so that you will look like a Baroness or a Princess, like a Queen. And cheap, too, that I can tell you!"

But the peasant woman knows the Jew too well.

"I am buying nothing from you," she says, and goes away.

The Jew packs up and goes away cursing. He consoles himself with the knowledge that there are lots of other peasants who can be more easily duped than this one.

The story concludes:

Woe to the woman, however, who lets herself be taken in by his chatter. It will happen to her. As has happened to so many other peasant women once they have let the Jew in. There is no escape. There is an old saying:

'The Jewish hawker
Is a cheat and seducer.
He lies all the time
And you — you pay the price.
So many have gone through the mill.
Would you be saved from these penalties.
Then don't let the Jew come in
And buy only from a German."

Slide 102

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany -“Juden Raus!” (Jews Out)

Children were taught from the earliest years to stay away from “the evil Jew.” Here is a popular children’s game called “Jews Out!” By throwing dice, the winner manages to get six Jews out of their homes and businesses – the circles – and on the road to Palestine. Notice the Jews in pointed hats, a reference to the Middle Ages when Jews, in fact, were forced to wear pointed hats. It sold over a million copies in 1938, when Nazi policy was forced Jewish emigration.

Slide 103

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - Additions to the Curriculum - Teaching Nazi Racial Ideology

Racial instruction became mandatory in German schools in September 1933.

This included teaching young children how to spot a Jew by describing the physical traits which Nazis believed were associated with inferior peoples. Charts such as the one above were hung in the classroom to reinforce this point. In some classrooms, where Jews were still present, a Jewish child would be brought to the front of the class as an example. The teacher would then use a pointer, highlighting certain facial characteristics.

This new curriculum allowed the Nazis to teach students to view Jewish people in a racist, socially humiliating manner, which alienated Jewish students from an education system and a world in which they had previously felt welcome.

It was not only in the street that I encountered such humiliation. In school, too. I was then in the final class of secondary school and it was the month before passing-out examinations...One teacher in particular went out of his way to humiliate me. He was a history teacher named Bencur. During one lesson he began to quote from a speech of Hitler's to the effect that the Jews should be wiped off from the face of the earth. Turning to me he asked what I thought of the speech and in that particular sentence. I did not know what to reply and I think I said nothing. So he began to shout, saying that I was treating the questions and him and all the teachers disrespectfully, and he finally dismissed me from the class.

At the next lesson he called me to the blackboard to answer a number of questions on our studies. I answered them well..., but as he said afterwards – such an answer was not satisfactory coming from a Jew, since the Jew is not capable of understanding the history of the Hungarian people....”

- Moshe S. (age 17), from *What We Knew – Terror, Mass Murder & Everyday Life in Nazi Germany*, by Eric A. Johnson & Karl-Heinz Reuband

Slide 104

Nazi Propaganda:

Education in Nazi Germany - Additions to the Curriculum - Teaching War Oriented Sports

Physical fitness became a very important part of the school curriculum. Hitler felt that physical fitness was much more important for his young people than memorizing “dead facts” in the classroom. In *Mein Kampf*, he stated that “... a less well-educated, but physically healthy individual with a sound, firm character, full of determination and willpower, is more valuable to the *Volkish* community than an intellectual weakling.” Hitler wanted boys who could suffer pain... “a young German must be as swift as a greyhound, as tough as leather, and as hard as Krupp's steel.”

The Nazis increased the hours devoted to sports for children from two hours per week in 1933 to two hours per day in 1938. Those who failed fitness tests could be expelled from their schools and face humiliation from those who had passed such tests.

Boxing became compulsory for boys. It was felt that boxing heightened aggressiveness.

Battle Ball was one of the most popular sports in Nazi Germany, especially in the Hitler Youth and SA. It supposedly promoted a “decisive, take-action not think”, “goal orientated” kind of approach to problem solving. The point of Battle Ball was to move a medicine ball through the opposing goal by ANY means possible.

For boys considered special, different schools were created. Those who were more physically fit and stronger than the rest went to Adolf Hitler Schools where they were taught to be the future leaders of Germany. Six years of tough physical training took place and when the pupils from these schools left at age 18, they went to the army or to university. The very best pupils went to Order Castles. These were schools which took pupils to the limits of physical endurance. War games used live ammunition and pupils were killed at these schools. Those who graduated from the Order Castles could expect to attain a high position in the army or the SS.

Slide 105

Nazi Propaganda (breaker slide)

Slide 106

Nazi Propaganda:
Media-Newspaper

All newspapers in the Reich were licensed. Those that refused to endorse the Nazi line were shut down. Editors had to be racially acceptable – of “Aryan” descent and not married to a Jew.

Twice a day, Goebbels’ ministry held a press briefing where reporters were told which events were to be covered. Editors were informed how a story was to be treated. Ministry officials read and censored all papers. Everyone understood the ground rules: failure to please the ministry by printing anything “to weaken the strength of the German Reich ... or offend the honor and dignity of Germany could result in heavy fines, even imprisonment in a concentration camp.

Der Stürmer (“The Great Storm”), edited by Julius Streicher, was one of the most important instruments of propaganda of the Nazi Party. It pronounced openly and vehemently the hatred of Jews. The paper was to appeal to the common man, the worker with little time to read: short sentences, simple vocabulary and repeated ideas appealed to its readers. It contained attention-grabbing headlines with articles about scandal, sex, and crime. Stories were exaggerated and facts were distorted. Cartoons were a major feature of the paper, often depicting Jews with large, hooked noses, bulging eyes, unshaven, short and fat. The slogan, “The Jews are our Misfortune,” appeared prominent in each issue. Favored by Hitler for its constant barrage of antisemitic writings humors and cartoons, the paper was disdained by Goebbels not because of its philosophy but because he found it banal, occasionally ‘pornographic’, and badly written and edited. Many even within the National Socialist [Nazi] Party were discontented with the paper because of its “scandal rag” approach. Streicher was so instrumental in raising racial hatred and violence, that he was tried for crimes against humanity in Nuremberg.

The *Völkischer Beobachter* (Racial Observer) was the official Nazi newspaper, edited by Alfred Rosenberg. It was the most popular paper in Nazi Germany.

When Walter Sanders (not-Jewish) was asked “What did people think happened to the Jews who were taken away?” he responded:

The worst. You can’t imagine what the agitation against the Jews was like. There was a newspaper called “Der Stürmer.” It was something you just can’t imagine, and it was spewed out week after week. And then there were the { antisemitic } films, such as “Jud Süß,” which I saw myself. We had to go to see it because of school. We had to go there as a group. That was indeed a kind of agitation. So when the Jews were deported, we knew that something was going to happen to them.

- Walter Sanders, from *What We Knew – Terror, Mass Murder & Everyday Life in Nazi Germany*, by Eric A. Johnson & Karl-Heinz Reuband

Eventually newspapers were so boring that people stopped reading them. One German worker joked with a foreign correspondent:

I told my wife that if I die, don’t let them put it in the newspaper because no one will believe it!

Slide 107

Nazi Propaganda: **Media-Radio**

The Nazis were the first to exploit the new technology of radio. Radio reached a mass audience and became the most pervasive source of Nazi propaganda.

The Nazis made cheap radios readily available to the public such that by 1939, 70% of German homes had at least 1 radio (highest rate in Europe). Out of the 19-hour broadcast day, 5 hours were devoted to Nazi propaganda that included martial music, telling human-interest stories about good deeds done by the noble young "Aryan" men of the Hitler Youth, and carrying Hitler's speeches.

Radio broadcasts in factories and public areas were encouraged.

Local "radio wardens" encouraged neighbors to buy radios. Later they reported on those who listened to foreign broadcast, who were then subject to arrest.

By 1939, it had become illegal to listen to foreign radio stations. People who did were sentenced to three years in jail. People who listened and told others what they heard were sentenced to death.

Hitler's dictatorship differed in one fundamental point from all its predecessors in history. His was the first dictatorship which made complete use of all technical means for the domination of its own country. Through technical devices like the radio and the loudspeaker, 80 million people were deprived of independent thought. It was thereby possible to subject them to the will of one man.

- Albert Speer, Nazi Minister of Armaments & War Products,
His final speech at his trial after the war.

Slide 108

Nazi Propaganda: **Media-Film**

Both Hitler and Goebbels, both big movie fans, recognized the importance of explaining Nazi ideas in their simplest form. Film was an effective medium for doing this, but of course, Goebbels had to approve all scripts.

The Eternal Jew (Der Ewige Jude)

Produced in 1940, it depicts the Jews of Poland as corrupt, filthy, lazy, ugly, and perverse: they are an alien people who have taken over the world through their control of banking and commerce, yet still live like animals. This film was used in training of the Nazi Youth. It is to this day considered such dangerous propaganda that it is banned in Germany except under tightly controlled circumstances.

Jew Pests (Jud Sus)

Based on the true story of the Jew, Suess-Oppenheimer, the Jewish tax advisor to Karl Alexander in the early 1700's, who was publicly executed. The film is about a Jewish moneylender who committed crimes and raped an Aryan maiden, tortured her lover and father, eventually causing her to commit suicide. The movie was so horrifying that the actors asked Goebbels to send out a special press release telling the country that they themselves were not Jewish.

Triumph of the Will

The film covers the events of the 6th Nuremberg Party Congress, showing how the Nazi state drew in the masses through propaganda and Hitler's unique and terrifying ability to entice others to his beliefs by the very power of his words. This film is still banned in Germany.

Slide 109

Nazi Propaganda:

Media-Posters

The Nazis believed that a woman's place was in the home, her purpose was to produce babies, rear children and care for home and family. In keeping with this, a fully figured, motherly woman look was preferred. Make-up and trousers were frowned upon, a bun or plaits were the norm, processed hair was not. Hitler believed that women were ruled by emotion and thus were not allowed to take part in the government, the law, or education.

A law was passed in 1933 giving newly married couples a loan of 1000 marks (approximately 9 mos. wages). One quarter of that loan was cancelled for every child born to the couple.

Every August 12, the anniversary of the Hitler's mother's birthday, the "Honor Cross of the German Mother" was awarded to mothers with 4 or more children. A bronze medal was awarded for 4 children, a silver medal for 6 children, and a gold medal for 8 children.

Slide 110

Nazi Propaganda (breaker slide)

Slide 111

Nazi Propaganda:
1936 Olympics in Berlin

The choice of Berlin to hold the Summer Olympic Games in 1936 seemed a signal of Germany's return to the global community. The Nazis mounted a campaign of camouflage and spin that led many visitors and journalists to conclude that the country had, indeed, turned over a new leaf. Through pageantry and propaganda, Germany projected an image not only of order, discipline and strength, but also of tolerance and peacefulness.

In April 1933, the Nazis had expelled Jews and Romani from German sports facilities. Some Jewish athletes joined Jewish sports associations and found new facilities.

The Nazis took sports seriously. They saw athletic prowess as a measure of Aryan racial superiority and military might. Hitler hoped that the games would provide an opportunity for the Nazis to broadcast their racist ideas internationally. Vast effort was put into assembling a team of German athletes capable of beating all opposition. German Jewish athletes were not allowed to participate. The Germans did allow the part-Jewish fencer, Helene Mayer, to represent Germany at the Summer Games in Berlin. She was the only Jew on the German team.

The Nazis invested massive financial and human resources in carrying out the Games in both its grand scale and its grand deception. They built a huge sports complex and adorned it with the Olympic flags and swastikas. They also took down most anti-Jewish signs and had the press tone down its antisemitic rhetoric. Instead, they played up imagery that likened Nazi Germany to ancient Greece - racially pure, strong, and heroic. The German filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl, propagated this aesthetic in her documentary of the Games, *Olympia*, which debuted in 1938.

Despite movements in a handful of countries (including the U.S., U.K., France, Sweden, and the Netherlands) to boycott the Berlin Games, 49 teams from around the world ended up participating, more than in any previous Olympics. The United States brought 312 athletes (the second most behind Germany's 348), including 18 African Americans. Germany won the most medals, but more crucial was its victory in the press and in the public mind. A new Germany, more human and more peaceful, had emerged.

Hitler's grandiose Aryan image-building did not quite work out. The hero of the 1936 Olympics was the black, American sprinter and long jumper, Jesse Owens. The Nazis particularly wanted to show that an Aryan German could run faster and jump further than a member of any other race. Owens shattered these absurd delusions, by equaling or bettering Olympic records in nine field events and winning four gold medals. To show his displeasure at Owens' win, Hitler left the Olympic stadium before the athlete received one of his medals.

Interestingly, two Jewish American athletes in the 400m relay, Glickman and Stroller, were pulled from the line-up the morning of their race. Avery Brundage, American Olympic Official, was afraid that a victory by Jewish athletes would offend the German hosts, so he excluded Glickman and Stroller and ordered Jesse Owens to take the baton. Glickman and Stroller sat on the bench as their teammate, Jesse Owens, won.

Having rejected a proposed boycott of the 1936 Olympics, the U.S. and other western democracies missed the opportunity to take a stand that – some observers claimed – might have given Hitler pause and bolstered international resistance to Nazi tyranny. The persecution of Jews resumed after the spotlight left Berlin, as did the Nazis' plans for German expansion.

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Violations of Treaty of Versailles: Map

The Nazis took their first offensive step in October 1933 when they withdrew from the League of Nations.

In 1935, Hitler announced the formation of the *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force), the resumption of a military draft, and the increase in the strength of the German Army (*Wehrmacht*) – all in direct violation of the Treaty of Versailles. The Allies did nothing.

March 1936:

German troops entered the Rhineland (part of Germany), an area that had been designated by the Treaty to serve as a buffer zone between Germany and France. The Rhineland citizens welcomed the Nazi union. This territorial gain brought the Krupp Armaments Factory and the I.G. Farben Chemical Works back under the German flag. The Krupp Armaments factory would produce the tanks and cannons for early German victories. I.G. Farben would supply the formula for Zyklon-B that would be used in future gas chambers. The Allies did nothing.

March 1938:

The *Anschluss* ("joining") of Austria. Hitler's aggression into Austria neither restored lands lost by the Treaty nor increased German living space (*lebensraum*). The Germans viewed Austria as part of their rightful homeland and many Germans lived there. The Germans justified this "annexation" by referring to a clause in the Treaty which stated that all people of one nationality had a right to live under one government. The Nazis marched into Austria with little or no resistance. The Allies did nothing.

September 1938:

The Sudetenland, part of northwestern Czechoslovakia, had 3 million people of German ancestry. Hitler wanted to bring these people back into the Reich as well as gain control over Czechoslovakia's industrial capacity, its resources of gold and coal and above all *lebensraum* (living space) for the German people. After threatening an invasion, an international agreement was made between the British, French and Italians (note the Czechs were not involved) allowing a German takeover with the understanding that this would be Germany's last territorial gain. This agreement was known as the Munich Agreement. Although the Allies were reticent to give in to Hitler's demands once again, they believed this would achieve peace in Europe as well as satisfy Hitler.

Slide 113

Violations of the Treaty of Versailles (opening breaker slide)

Slide 114

**Violations of Treaty of Versailles:
The Rhineland Falls (March 1936)**

The Rhineland was a rich industrial area of Germany that bordered France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The Treaty of Versailles had mandated that it be a demilitarized zone.

When Hitler proposed that 2 battalions of the German army re-occupy the demilitarized Rhineland, his generals opposed it vocally as too risky, because of the vast superiority of French and British forces then arrayed against them.

We could not have done anything if England and France had made the slightest protest and backed it up by military action.

- Albert Speer in Nuremberg testimony

German troops entered the Rhineland in March 1936. The Rhineland citizens welcomed the Nazi union. This territorial gain brought the Krupp Armaments Factory and the I.G. Farben Chemical Works back under the German flag. The Krupp Armaments factory would produce the tanks and cannons for early German victories. I.G. Farben would supply the formula for Zyklon-B that would be used in future gas chambers. The Allies did nothing.

Germany's archenemies, by their passivity, had endorsed Hitler. His success made him a genuine German hero. By letting Germany break the Treaty that the victors of World War I had imposed on her, they allowed German dignity to be restored. Flags flew across Germany.

We should have understood then that there was no one left to remove Hitler. Not his legions of brown- and black-shirted fanatics, not the army whose fears about marching into the Rhineland had been ignored but which was now being rearmed, and not the 60 million Germans who went along for the ride. In 1936, we still did not yet equate Germany with Nazism or Nazism with extermination. And why would we? We still believed that Hitler would calm down, become more moderate. Didn't he promise that each new crisis he created would be the last? The commitment to antisemitism asked of Germans up to then involved no outrageous acts by ordinary citizens, only support of laws. When most Jews were not alarmed enough to leave Germany, why should most Germans have been upset?

Shunned and humiliated, but not yet mortally wounded by the Nazis, many German Jews began discovering their Jewish religion. Whether this sprang from a need for redemption, from forced identification, or from guilt, I cannot say. ...

-Richard W. Sonnenfeldt, *Witness to Nuremberg*

Slide 115

Violations of the Treaty of Versailles (breaker slide)

Slide 116

Violations of Treaty of Versailles:
Anschluss of Austria (March 13, 1938)

March 13, 1938: The *Anschluss* ("joining") of Austria.

Hitler's aggression into Austria neither restored lands lost by the Treaty nor increased German living space (*lebensraum*). The Germans viewed Austria as part of their rightful homeland and many Germans lived there. The Germans justified this "annexation" by referring to a clause in the Treaty which stated that all people of one nationality had a right to live under one government. The Nazis marched into Austria with little or no resistance. The Allies did nothing.

The arrest of political opponents was accompanied by massive action against the Jews. The process of degradation, terror, and expropriation that had taken 5 years in Germany, was completed – and even surpassed – in a few months in Austria. Men and women were forced to scrub streets on their knees while crowds of Viennese stood by and cheered; shops were invaded, robbed, and their owners beaten; arbitrary arrests deprived families of fathers who were never seen again.

The annexation of Austria increased the Jewish population of the Reich by approximately 200,000. The Jewish communities of Germany and Austria were quite different. The Jews of Germany were, for the most part, descendants of Jews who had settled there during the past 2,000 years. 80% were German citizens and only 20% were recent immigrants from Eastern Europe. They participated in German economic, cultural, and political life as members of the German community. They were loyal to Germany.

The Jews in Austria were, for the most part, a relatively new group, most having arrived over the past 100 years. Most lived in Vienna and engaged in small businesses and the professions.

AUSTRIA (200,000 Jews)

Advertising	90% Jewish
Furniture Manufacturing	85% Jewish
Newspapers & Shoe Manufacturing	80% Jewish
Lawyers	62% Jewish
Doctors/Dentists	51.6% Jewish

35.5% of the Jewish working population was unemployed

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Violations of Treaty of Versailles:
Austrian Antisemitism

10% of the population of Vienna was Jewish, the third largest Jewish community in Europe. Antisemitism, already a strong sentiment in Austria, found a willing vehicle in the Nazi regime.

Jews were subjected to discriminatory laws and policies, public humiliation, arrest and forced immigration. In six months, 45,000 Jews had left. By 1939, three-fourths of the Jews of Austria had left. Robert Rosner observed after the war:

We Viennese Jews had the Anschluss to thank for our survival, because things became so bad in Vienna that we realized after six weeks that we had to leave, while in Germany they didn't realize it.

Slide 118

Violations of the Treaty of Versailles (breaker slide)

Slide 119

Violations of Treaty of Versailles:
Sudetenland Falls (September 1938)

Teacher Note:

Had the Allies stood up to Hitler and not signed the Munich Agreement, would history have been re-written?

The Sudetenland, part of northwestern Czechoslovakia, had 3 million people of German ancestry. Hitler wanted to bring these people back into the Reich as well as gain control over Czechoslovakia's industrial capacity, its resources of gold and coal and above all *lebensraum* (living space) for the German people. After threatening an invasion, an international agreement was made between the Germans (Hitler), British (Chamberlain), French (Daladier) and Italians (Mussolini and Ciano), allowing a German takeover with the understanding that this would be Germany's last territorial gain. Note that the Czechs were not involved. This agreement was known as the Munich Pact or Agreement. Although the Allies were reticent to give in to Hitler's demands once again, they believed this would achieve peace in Europe as well as satisfy Hitler.

Many of the Jews of the Sudeten region fled to Prague, but were later caught in the Nazi net when the Nazis invaded the remainder of Czechoslovakia in March 1939.

REMAINDER OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA FALLS, MARCH 15, 1939

Hitler violated the Munich Pact on March 15, 1939 when he invaded the remainder of Czechoslovakia. With the fall of Czechoslovakia, the British and French finally realized the danger of their situation. They had deceived themselves into thinking that Hitler wanted only to unite people of German origin. By swallowing Czechoslovakia, he had demonstrated his real intention – to dominate all of Europe.

The Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia became a German protectorate. Slovakia became an independent state, closely allied with Germany. Germany's ally, Hungary, annexed the Transcarpathian Ukraine in May 1939.

Czechoslovakia ceased to exist as an independent nation.

Bohemia / Moravia

The western Czech provinces of Bohemia and Moravia became a German protectorate (under German control). Approximately 118,000 Jews lived there. Emigration from Prague, the capital, was slow due to the fact that the mass exodus from Austria had consumed most of the resources of the world's Jewish welfare organizations. Emigration was banned in October 1941; 26,629 Jews had managed to get out.

Reinhard Heydrich was appointed acting governor of the Protectorate in 1942. He immediately began to persecute the Jews. He decided to move all the Jews to ghetto/camp of Theresienstadt (established November 1941), in hopes they would die there; the remaining Jews would be deported to the east. Ultimately more than 73,000 Jews were sent to Theresienstadt and about 60,000 were sent to Auschwitz and other camps.

Czechoslovakia was liberated on May 5, 1945. Of the 92,199 Jews living there before deportations began, 78,154 died during the Holocaust. Only 3,277 survived the war.

Throughout the war, the Nazis collected many Jewish religious and cultural articles from communities in the Protectorate. They intended to display them in a planned "Central Museum of the Extinguished Jewish Race." Instead, their pillage turned into the most valuable Judaica collection in Europe, now exhibited in the Jewish Museum of Prague.

Slovakia

Slovakia became an independent state, closely allied with Germany. In 1938, there were 135,000 Jews in Slovakia (about 4.1% of the population), 40,000 of these lived in the Transcarpathian Ukraine. Slovakia was one of the first German-allied countries to agree to the deportation of Jews as part of the "Final Solution."

According to a December 15, 1940 census, there were about 90,000 Jews left in Slovakia. Shortly after the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Slovakia entered World War II as an ally of Germany. Even more stringent anti-Jewish laws were introduced. This culminated with the implementation of the so-called "Jewish Code" on September 9, 1941, based closely on the Nuremberg Laws. Jews had to wear a yellow armband with the Star of David. A Jewish star had to be affixed to every letter sent by a Jew. The police were empowered to open such letters and destroy them. The Slovak government enthusiastically embraced the idea of deporting their Jews. Between March and October 1942 almost 60,000 were deported to German-occupied Poland and killed. The remaining Jews were confined in labor camps in Slovakia.

After the Slovak National Uprising and German occupation of the country in 1944, an additional 10,000 Jews were deported, mostly to Auschwitz, but also to Theresienstadt and camps in Germany. In all, 70,000 Jews were deported and 65,000 were murdered.

Transcarpathian Ukraine

The Transcarpathian Ukraine was annexed by Germany's ally, Hungary, in May 1939.

Between June and August 1941, Hungarian authorities expelled about 20,000 Jews. The Jews were taken by train to the border and handed over to the Germans.

In May 1944, two months after the German occupation of Hungary, Hungarian authorities began the systematic deportation of Jews to Auschwitz. About 137,000 Jews were deported, most killed on arrival.

Kristallnacht, "Night of the Broken Glass", (November 9-10, 1938)

Questions to Consider:

- Why do you think the majority of the German people did not respond vigorously against the violence of *Kristallnacht*?
 - Can you think of a time when you should have intervened but did not? What kept you from doing what you thought was right?
-

Kristallnacht was a crucial turning point in German policy regarding the Jews. It was the first government organized act of mass violence against the Jews.

On October 18, 1938, on Hitler's orders, 15,000 Polish-born Jews residing in Germany were declared "stateless" and expelled. These Jews had been living in Germany for 10, 20, even 30 years. They were forced to leave their homes in a single night, to go to the nearest railway station, and allowed only one suitcase per person. They were taken by train to the Polish border. There they were held for several weeks in harsh conditions until the Polish government agreed to let them in. Zindel Grynszpan was one of these deportees. He sent a postcard to his son Herschel, who was in Paris, describing the severity of the expulsion and his family's plight.

On November 7, 1938, a 17-year-old Polish Jewish student named Herschel Grynszpan shot Ernst vom Rath, the Third Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris. Grynszpan, enraged by the deportation of his parents to Poland from Hanover, Germany, where they had lived since 1914, hoped that his dramatic action would alert the world to the ominous plight of Europe's Jews. The assassination attempt was successful; vom Rath died on November 9.

Vom Rath's death was a convenience for the Nazis, allowing them to justify mass action against the Jews as revenge for the death. But mass arrests had actually been planned long before the shooting in Paris. Barracks to accommodate tens of thousands of Jews had been built in concentration camps before November. The Nazi leaders simply capitalized on the death of Vom Rath by using it as public justification for celebrating the anniversary of the Beer Hall Putsch (November 9, 1923) with a mass pogrom (destruction) against the Jews. As luck would have it, the Nazi hierarchy was in Munich for the annual commemoration of the Putsch.

Orders had previously been issued to all Gestapo Stations calling for destruction of synagogues and Jewish properties throughout the Reich (which now included Austria and the Sudetenland). Jewish religious items (torah scrolls, prayer books, prayer shawls, etc.) were to be confiscated for safe-keeping. Care was to be taken to ensure the safety of surrounding structures, to the extent that the fire departments were called out to water-down neighboring non-Jewish buildings.

- More than 1,000 synagogues were desecrated and destroyed.
- 7,000 Jewish businesses were attacked and looted.
- Cemeteries and schools were vandalized.
- At least 91 Jews were killed, 1000's were beaten or tortured.
- Approximately 26,000 Jews were sent to concentration camps.

The Jewish community was blamed for the destruction, forced to clean up, and eventually had to pay for the destruction. In addition, a one billion Reichsmark fine (\$400 million) was imposed upon the Jews because of their "hostile attitude" toward the German people.

Most of the population did not support the violence; however, no public demonstrations opposed it. According to historian Daniel Goldhagen, "That day could have been the day for the German people to rise up in solidarity to support the Jews, but they didn't." Instead, the next night, a hundred thousand Germans attended an anti-Jewish rally in Nuremberg, where the *Kristallnacht* events were celebrated.

The term *Kristallnacht* originated three days after the event when Hermann Goering called a meeting to assess damage and responsibility. Nazi leader, Walter Funk, was the first to use the term.

Kristallnacht, the first massive pogrom on German soil, was also the last. The Nazis received many complaints from the general German population regarding the fires and broken glass as being messy and unsightly. The complaints were not against the actions themselves. From then on, all large scale attacks against Jews took place out of sight of the German population, either in the countryside or in Poland.

Kristallnacht was a wake up call for German Jews who understood that life would never be the same. As a result, thousands emigrated.

Although the atrocities perpetrated during *Kristallnacht* did arouse outrage in Western Europe and the U.S., little concrete action was taken to help the Jews of Germany. At a press conference on November 15th, President Roosevelt said:

The news of the past few days from Germany has deeply shocked public opinion in the U.S....I myself could scarcely believe that such things could occur in a 20th century civilization.

The President also instructed that the 12,000-15,000 refugees already in the U.S. on temporary visitor visas could remain in the country indefinitely. The U.S. withdrew its Ambassador to Germany in protest.

We now know that *Kristallnacht* was the first step toward Auschwitz, but no one – not even the Nazis – knew it then, and the future was not inevitable. No straight lines led to the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

Slide 121

Kristallnacht: Photos of Burning Synagogues

Slide 122

Kristallnacht: Photos of Destruction of Property

Letter by Margarete Drexler to the Gestapo
Mannheim, 24 November 1938
Margarete Drexler, Landau Pfalz Suedring St. 10

To the Secret State Police Landau (Pfalz).

The sum of 900 Marks in cash was confiscated from me in the course of the action of 10 November. I herewith request to act for the return of my money, as I need it urgently for me and my child's livelihood. I hope that my request will be granted, as my husband died as a result of his injuries during the war – he fought and died for his fatherland with extreme courage – and I am left without any income. Until recent years you could have found a photo of my husband on the wall next to the picture of Gerneralfeldmarschall von Hindenburg in the canteen of the 23 Infantry regiment in Landau. This was done to honour his high military performance. His medals and decorations prove that he fought with great courage and honour. He received: The Iron Cross First Class, The Iron Cross Second Class, The Military Order of Merit Fourth Class with swords. The Military Order of Sanitation 2 Class with a blue-white ribbon. This ribbon is usually bestowed only upon recipients of the Max Joseph Order, which accepts only members of the nobility. I can only hope that as a widow of such a man, so honoured by his country, my request for the return of my property will not be in vain.

With German greetings,
(signed) Frau Margarete Drexler, Widow of reserve staff surgeon Dr. Hermann Drexler
Presently in Mannheim, 11 Kant St.

Enclosed: 6 photos of medals and decorations.

[Margarete Drexler was deported to France in October 1940 with the other Jews of the Pfalz area. She died in the Gurs camp. The date of her death is unknown.]

Slide 123

Kristallnacht: Photos of Victims of *Kristallnacht*

The Gestapo, supported by local uniformed police, arrested approximately 26,000 Jewish men and incarcerated them in concentration camps. Several hundred Jewish women were also imprisoned in local jails. The lucky ones were released if they could prove they were about to emigrate and agreed to sell their businesses for a minute sum. Those released were physically and psychologically ravaged.

Slide 124

Kristallnacht: Map - Jews Sent to Concentration Camps, November 10, 1938

Immediately following *Kristallnacht*, Jews were seized throughout Germany and sent to concentration camps at Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald and Dachau. Hundreds died of ill-treatment, including 244 at Buchenwald alone in the first month of their imprisonment. Hundreds more committed suicide as a result of the harsh conditions and the brutality of the guards.

Slide 125

Jewish Emigration (opening breaker slide)

Slide 126

Jewish Emigration:
Chart - Jewish Emigration from Nazi Territories 1933-1941

Interpreting the Chart

After Hitler came to power in 1933, immigration from Germany took a sharp rise as many Jews realized that the future was dim. During this time, a record number of Jews committed suicide. Others, with more options, fled. Authors, artists, professors and others whose positions had been eliminated left the country (including Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein and American Hollywood film star, Marlene Dietrich).

Interestingly, immigration dropped considerably in 1934 as German economics improved, even though Jewish livelihood was unstable.

In 1935, after the Nuremberg Laws were passed, some Jews recognized there was no future for them in Germany and left. Others welcomed the laws because they resolved the status of Jews and allowed them to remain in Germany, even though as non-citizens. Many hoped that the official decree would reduce the random acts of violence they had been experiencing. In fact, many Jews who had immigrated to other countries during the terror-filled years of 1933 and 1934, returned to Germany after 1935.

Following the devastating events of *Kristallnacht* (November 9-10, 1938), Jews realized that life was no longer safe in Nazi Germany. It was apparent that the Nazis wanted to make the Reich *Judenrein*, or cleansed of Jews. Emigration soared in all of the Nazi occupied territories: Germany, Austria, and the Czech Republic. In the weeks following *Kristallnacht*, the Nazis unleashed a new wave of anti-Jewish legislation including the closing of Jewish schools, forbidding the practices of most Jewish professionals, as well as the forced Aryanization of Jewish businesses.

Slide 127

Jewish Emigration (breaker slide)

Slide 128

Jewish Emigration:
Why Not Leave?

Photo: From *Camera of My Family* by Catherine Hanf Noren

German Jews constituted only 1% of the population of Germany (approximately 500,000) and for the most part were fully assimilated into Germany life. They had flourished in the country for several generations, family members had fought in previous wars on behalf of Germany, and other deeply religious Jews were adamant about protecting their rightful place in Germany. The Jews of Germany were, for the most part, descendants of Jews who had settled there during the past 2,000 years. Leaving your homeland is never easy.

After 1937, Jews needed the following documents from German Authorities to leave the country:

- Passport
- Certificate from the local police noting the formal dissolution of residence in Germany.
- Certificate from the Reich Ministry of Finance approving emigration, which required:
 - Payment of an emigration tax of 25% on total assets valued at more than 50,000 Reichsmark.
 - Submission of an itemized list of all gifts made to third parties since January 1, 1941. If their value exceeded 10,000 Reichsmark, they were included in the calculation of the emigration tax.
 - Payment of a capital transfer tax of 25% of assets in addition to the emigration tax.
 - Certification from the local tax office that there were no outstanding taxes due.
 - Certification from a currency exchange office that all currency regulations had been followed.
- An emigrant was permitted to take 2,000 Reichsmark or less in currency out of the country. Any remaining assets would be transferred into blocked bank accounts with restricted access.
- A customs declaration, dated no earlier than three days before departure, permitting the export of itemized personal and household goods. This declaration required:
 - Submission of a list, in triplicate, of all personal and household goods accompanying the emigrant stating their value. The list had to note items acquired before January 1, 1933, those acquired since January 1, 1933, and those acquired to facilitate emigration.
 - Documents attesting to the value of personal and household goods, and written explanations for the necessity of taking them out of the country.
 - Certification from a currency exchange office permitting the export of itemized personal and household goods, dated no earlier than 14 days before departure.

With these documents, emigrants could leave Germany, if and only if they had valid travel arrangements and an entrance visa for another country.

Leaving Germany presented tremendous financial burdens:

- In the early years of the Reich, Jews had to pay a flight tax of 25% of their net worth. Wealthy people were less inclined to leave.
- By 1938, emigrants could take out only 10% of their net worth.
- After *Kristallnacht*, Jews who emigrated could take only 10 Reichsmark/person (\$4.00). These policies seem to contradict the government's desire to deport the Jews, because without money, Jews could not afford to emigrate.
- In October 1941 it became officially forbidden to emigrate from Nazi Germany.

Slide 129

Jewish Emigration (breaker slide)

Slide 130

Jewish Emigration:
Evian Conference (July 6-15, 1938)

Roosevelt was receiving pressure from constituents in the U.S. to do something about the refugee problem.

Eleven days after Austria had been annexed by Germany (March 1938), Roosevelt proposed an international conference to facilitate the emigration of refugees from Germany and Austria and hopefully to establish an overall solution to the refugee problem.

Hitler issued the following statement:

I can only hope that the other world which has such deep sympathy for these criminals (Jews) will at least be generous enough to convert this sympathy into practical aid. We on our part are ready to put all these criminals at the disposal of these countries, for all I care, even on luxury ships.

Roosevelt convened an international conference of 32 nations in the French resort town of Evian–les-Bains on the shores of Lake Geneva. American participation at Evian was less than enthusiastic. The U.S. delegation was headed not by the Secretary of State or even the Under Secretary, but instead Myron C. Taylor, a businessman who was a close friend of FDR.

In truth, the Evian Conference was designed to protect America's image, not to help the Jewish refugees. As the conference proceeded, delegate after delegate excused his country from accepting additional refugees. Only the tiny Dominican Republic agreed to accept 100,000 refugees for areas of agricultural colonization. In the end, only a few came.

The Evian Conference stands as a critical turning point. The world's democracies made it clear that they were willing to do next to nothing for the Jews of Europe. The German government was now able to state, with great pleasure, how "astounding" it was that foreign countries criticized Germany for their treatment of Jews, but none wanted to open the doors to them when "the opportunity offered."

Slide 131

Jewish Emigration:
New York Times Political Cartoon: Evian Conference

A British cartoon reprinted in the New York Times, July 3, 1938.

As was common in those days, the word "Jew" was not used, but non-Aryan, though the character is stereotypically Jewish.

The Jewish refugee in the center of a Nazi swastika represents the Jews caught up in the Nazi trap. Each end of the swastika has a stop sign indicating a dead end for the Jews in Nazi Germany. The sunrise on the horizon is the potential hope of the upcoming Evian Conference. Unfortunately for the Jews, the Evian Conference opened few doors for immigration.

Slide 132

Jewish Emigration (breaker slide)

Slide 133

Jewish Emigration:

Map - German Jews Find Refuge, 1933-1938

Slide 134

Jewish Emigration (breaker slide)

Slide 135

Jewish Emigration:

Chart - American Immigration 1820-2000

Interpreting the Chart

The bars represent all immigrants to the U.S. during these particular years. Note that the years showing the lowest number of immigrants corresponds to the years of Nazi persecution (1933-1945) when European refugees were seeking a haven.

Why was this so?

- The U.S. had just experienced the “Red Scare” of the 1920’s which resulted in increased isolationism and mindless fear of foreigners.
- FDR had promised the American people an answer to the Great Depression and that meant focusing on the needs of current American citizens.
- Antisemitism had been an existing force in the U.S. since the formation of the nation. Jews were not welcome in all aspects of American society, therefore, why should more be brought into the country.
- There was a fear of bringing potential Nazis and other undesirables (criminal, ill, indigent) into the U.S.

U.S. Immigration History

In 1920-21, 119,000 East European Jews entered the U.S. Anxious to prevent a recurrence of such magnitude, the restrictionists passed a quota law in 1924 that limited immigration to 2% of the members of any national group that lived in the U.S. in 1890. Between 1881 and 1924, some 2.25 million Jews had arrived in the U.S. from Eastern Europe. Of 4.5 million Jews in the U.S. in 1928, 3 million had East European origin. But by the end of the 1920’s, total yearly Jewish immigration was down to 11,000.

In 1938, the maximum number of immigrants to be admitted in one year was fixed in accordance with the following formula:

Yearly quota of admissible persons
born in a given country

=

Population of U.S. in 1920 whose “national
origin” was traced to such a country

150,000

Total population of European descent in U.S. in 1920

On April 28, 1938, the “national origin immigration quotas” were as follows:

Great Britain	65,721
Germany (including Austria)	27,370
Ireland	17,853
Poland	6,524
Italy	5,802
Sweden	3,314
Netherlands	3,153
France	3,086
Czechoslovakia	2,874
Soviet Union	2,712
Norway	2,377
Switzerland	1,707
Belgium	1,304
Denmark	1,181
Hungary	869

Roosevelt was acutely aware of the growing crisis in Europe. Confronted on one side by American Jews who wanted to throw open the doors of the U.S. to Jewish refugees, and on the other by antisemitic and xenophobic (fear of people of foreign origin) groups that desired to keep out unwanted foreigners, Roosevelt attempted to remain above the dispute. Ever the astute politician, Roosevelt welcomed lobbyists from both sides into the Oval Office, listened intently to their appeals, and perpetuated the status quo. Faced with an array of domestic problems, the crisis in Europe did not yet command his complete attention.

Slide 136

Jewish Emigration (breaker slide)

Slide 137

Jewish Emigration:

Kindertransport / Children's Transport (1938-1940)

The informal name of a rescue effort which brought thousands of refugee children (primarily Jewish) to Great Britain from Nazi controlled Europe between December 1938 and 1940.

An unspecified number of children under the age of 17 were allowed to enter Great Britain by train and boat. Private citizens or organizations had to guarantee to pay for each child's care, education, and eventual emigration out of Great Britain. Parents or guardians could not accompany their children. Children could bring only 10 Reichsmark, 1 suitcase and 1 handbag.

Upon arrival, children were sheltered in temporary facilities. Finding foster families was not always easy. Often the foster families were insensitive to cultural or religious differences. For some, their heritage was all but erased. A few of the younger children were given new names, even a new religion. Maintaining contact between parent and child was often difficult as the war progressed.

The first transport was December 2, 1938 from Berlin, and the last was May 14, 1940, the day the Dutch surrendered to Germany.

Most of the children survived the war, a small percentage were reunited with parents. The majority lost both home and family.

Approximately 10,000 children were saved. The Nazis and their collaborators killed nearly 1.5 million children.

The U.S. Response to *Kristallnacht*: The Wagner-Rogers Bill

In February 1939, three months after *Kristallnacht*, the Wagner-Rogers Bill was introduced in the U.S. Congress to permit one-time entry of 20,000 children (under the age of 14) above the quota limit for German immigrants. The bill stipulated that financial support for these children would be provided by private sources (Jewish organizations) so that no expenditure of public funds would be needed. Within days over 5,000 Americans offered to house these children.

The American Legion publicly opposed the bill on "moral" grounds, arguing that it was wrong to separate parents from children. A North Dakota senator argued that "charity should begin at home."

After 5 months of debate, the Wagner-Rogers Bill died in committee. The majority of these 20,000 children died in the Holocaust.

Slide 138

Jewish Emigration (breaker slide)

Slide 139

Jewish Emigration:

The S.S. St. Louis, "Voyage of the Damned," (May 13, 1939)

Photos on slide (clockwise):

- The S.S. St. Louis
- Passengers upon departing.
- Map of the journey.
- Twin sisters, Renee and Ines Spanier, on board the *St. Louis* after docking in Antwerp, Belgium. They were given asylum in Holland with their parents. After the German invasion, the family was sent to Westerbork where their father became the chief medical officer in the camp hospital. The family was not deported. The twins ultimately emigrated to the U.S.

The tragic story of the journey of the German ocean liner the *S.S. St. Louis* epitomized the desperate and futile struggle of Jews trying to escape Germany.

On May 13, 1939 the Nazis allowed 937 Jews to set sail for Cuba, a country with a more liberal immigration policy. Hopeful passengers carried what they believed were valid permits guaranteeing them temporary stay until visas and permanent refuge could be secured. Shockingly, on arrival at Havana, Cuba, only 29 were allowed to disembark. The rest were refused entry under revised Cuban immigration restrictions. When the ship was ordered to leave, several passengers attempted suicide. Cuban police boats shadowed the *St. Louis* in case passengers tried to jump ship.

In attempt to find a haven, the *St. Louis* set sail for the U.S. As the ship neared U.S. territorial waters off Florida, the Coast Guard fired warning shots and denied entrance into American waters. For three days the ship cruised slowly off the U.S. coast, waiting in vain for America to accept its human cargo. The U.S. government refused to open its doors.

In mid-June, after 35 days of aimless sailing, the *St. Louis* was forced to return to Europe, where England, France, Holland and Belgium finally agreed to divide the passengers between them. With the German occupation of Western Europe, most of the former passengers once again fell under Nazi rule.

For many years it was assumed that most of the passengers perished among the millions of Holocaust victims. Recent research shows that at least 460 passengers eventually arrived in the U.S.

Captain Gustav Schroeder survived the war. For his efforts to find a safe haven for his passengers, Captain Schroeder was honored posthumously by Yad Vashem as one of the "Righteous Among the Nations."

Slide 140

Jewish Emigration (breaker slide)

Slide 141

**Jewish Emigration:
Palestine Shuts Its Doors**

Due to Arab concern over increasing Jewish immigration, the British Parliament issued a White Paper (official decree) in May 1939 that placed severe limitations on Jewish immigration to Palestine (which was under British rule). This provided for only 10,000 Jewish immigrants per year for 5 years, closing yet another avenue for escape for the refugees from Nazi Germany.

Artwork

In this drawing, Arthur Szyk depicts a group of Jews trapped between a deadly Nazi vulture and the closed gates of Palestine, padlocked by the White Paper.

Job 6:27 - Yea, ye would cast lots upon the fatherless, and dig a pit for your friend.

The Jews feel rejected by Palestine just like Job felt rejected by his friends and even God. In Job 6:27, Job expresses disappointment toward his friends' lack of help and concern about the fact that he is physically suffering. He even pleads to them to tell him where he has gone wrong to deserve such suffering. It is interesting to note that Job eventually comes to the conclusion that his suffering wasn't necessarily due to the fact that he had done anything wrong. Many bad things happen, even if we live our lives in the right way. As the creator of mankind, God permits freedom of choice and thus holds human beings morally responsible for their acts of good or evil.

The Book of Job

The Book of Job in the Old Testament discusses why innocent people suffer. Job is described as a rich, blessed man who fears God and lives righteously. Then Satan appears and asserts that Job does not really love God, but fears God for blessing. To show that this is not so, God tests Job by giving Satan power over Job, resulting in tragedy: Job loses his children, wealth, and physical soundness. Job responds by tearing his clothes and shaving his head, and begins to worship, saying, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will depart. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised." Throughout all of this, Job refuses to insult God.

Job knows that God is good yet he does not understand why these things have happened. He thinks that God is not fair. He has so many troubles and so much pain that he wants to die.

Now Job's friend Eliphaz tries to explain to Job why bad things have happened. He says that God is kind to good people. And he punishes people who are bad. So if bad things have happened, Job must have done wrong things.

In Chapter 6, Job tells his friend Eliphaz that he has not done anything wrong. His friends have disappointed him because they have not been able to help him. And he is angry with God, too.

V15: *My brethren have dealt deceitfully as a brook, as the channel of brooks that overflow.*
But, my friends, you are not here to help me when I need you. You are like some rivers. Sometimes there is water and sometimes there is no water.

V21: *For now ye are become His; ye see a terror, and are afraid.*
Now you too have failed to help me. You see what has happened to me. And you are afraid.

V27: *Yea, ye would cast lots upon the fatherless, and dig a pit for your friend.*
But you would sell to be slaves, children who had no parents. You would even sell your best friend.

V28: *Now therefore be pleased to look upon me; for surely I shall not lie to your face.*
But now, please look at me. I only tell you things that are true.

Slide 142

German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact (August 23, 1939)

Geographically, Poland linked Europe and Russia. Blessed with rich soil, mineral wealth and large coal deposits, Poland consisted of 30 million inhabitants including a 10% Jewish population. Poland had the largest and oldest Jewish community in Europe.

In 1934, Hitler had drawn up a 10-year peace treaty with Poland so that he could increase his army. Poland signed, hoping to pacify Nazi aggression. Five years later, Hitler declared the treaty invalid. By 1939, the Germans had been spoiling for a fight with Poland. Nazi propaganda had lead the German people to believe that the Poles were mistreating ethnic Germans living in Poland.

Hitler and Stalin shocked the world on August 23, 1939 when they signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact:

1. The agreement guaranteed the Germans the import of essential raw materials from the Soviet Union.
2. Germany and Russia agreed not to go to war against each other for ten years.
3. In a secret protocol attached to the pact, the Germans agreed to another partition of Poland, in which Eastern Poland would be annexed by the Soviets, and Latvia and Estonia (and by a later addition Lithuania as well) would come under their so-called "sphere of influence." These previously independent states were subsequently annexed by the Soviets in 1940.

Both countries knew that war would one day come, but neither was yet ready for it. The non-aggression pact postponed the inevitable military clash between the two powers and set the stage for the German invasion of Poland.

Slide 143

World War II Begins:

Map - World War II: 1939-1942

According to Nazi ideology, the Germanic peoples were a superior part of the “Aryan” race, and along with other nations of similar “blood,” the rightful rulers of the world. They were the only true humans.

Because of the Germanic “blood” in their veins, certain nations (e.g. Scandinavians and the British) might become Germany’s allies. France, because it was supposedly under a Jewish-controlled administration, was considered an enemy. England, who was struggling against “Jewish domination,” was a friend, a potential German ally. Hitler refused to believe until the last moment that “Aryan” England would enter the war against Germany.

Other Europeans (e.g. Latins and Slavs), although they were “Aryans,” would be ruled by Germany because of their lack of Germanic blood. Due to past contacts between Germans and Slavs, the latter had absorbed some Germanic “blood,” which was to be “rescued” by kidnapping blue-eyed, blonde-haired Slav children, and by permitting Poles with German names or German ancestry (real or supposed) to be considered Germans. Some of the other Slavs were often termed “sub-humans” and though there never was any plan to completely annihilate any of the Slav nations, their leadership was to be eliminated along with their religious and educational institutions. With their culture reduced to a primitive level, the Czechs, Poles, Soviets, and others were to become slaves. Other Slavs, however, the Slovaks, Bulgarians and Croats, became allies of Nazi Germany, and were treated with relative respect.

Whereas some Slavs were subhuman, the Jews were non-human. Hitler saw the Jews as a kind of anti-race, a nomadic mongrel group. The Nazis described them as parasites, viruses, or loathsome creatures from the animal and insect world. As a parasitic force, the Jews corroded, and would ultimately destroy, the cultures of their host nations. Because contact with Jews would corrupt German blood and culture, Jews would be segregated, a segregation that led to the possibility of annihilation.

The Nazis, in essence, were accusing the Jews of wanting to do what they, the Nazis, were out to do themselves: control the world and annihilate their enemies. They described the Jews as the demonic force of evil that Nazism itself was.

Slide 144

World War II Begins (opening breaker slide)

Slide 145

World War II Begins:

The German Invasion of Poland (September 1, 1939)

Hitler's ultimate goals were the elimination of Jews and the conquest of living space in the east for Germany. He believed that Germany had to conquer a vast continental empire in the east so as to secure for Germans their place in the world as members of a "master race."

According to Nazi racial ideology, all Slavic peoples (including the Poles) were an inferior breed, although not in the vermin class of Jews. Both were what the Nazis called "sub-humanity." These "sub-human" Slavs were occupying land vital to Germany. Once conquered, the Poles were to become serfs, a labor force for the Nazi Reich and the lands in Poland were to become *Lebensraum* (living space) for ethnic Germans.

On September 1, 1939, German forces attacked Poland under the pretext of re-annexing lands lost by Germany to the new Polish state in Treaty of Versailles. World War II had begun.

Interesting Note:

German citizens were told that the attack was a retaliation for a recent attack by Polish partisans on a German military transmitter unit located on the border. The truth was revealed after the war. In reality on August 31, German soldiers, dressed as Poles and speaking Polish, attacked the transmitter unit, locked the staff in the cellar and interrupted the broadcast with speeches in Polish saying that they had come to invade Germany. For physical evidence, actual bodies of previously killed prisoners dressed in Polish uniforms were placed at the scene of the "attack." On September 1, Hitler told the *Reichstag* that Poland had tried to invade Germany and the *Wehrmacht* (German army) was returning fire.

Slide 146

World War II Begins (breaker slide)

Slide 147

World War II Begins:

Poland's Largest Jewish Communities on the Eve of War

This map shows Polish cities with 12,000 or more Jewish inhabitants at the time of the 1931 census as well as the percentage of Jews among the total population of the town.

In 1939 there were about 3.3 million Jews in Poland (approximately 10% of the population). Since its independence in 1918, the country had suffered economic crisis. The middle class, in particular, had been hurt. Bitter competition for employment had drastically increased antisemitic acts, including boycotts and pogroms. These antisemitic acts mounted in the mid-1930's. Jewish students, separated from others at Polish universities, were subjected to harassment and attacks by fellow students. Boycotts against Jews, with open government approval, occurred. Between 1935 and 1937, 118 Jews were killed and 1,350 were wounded in 16 pogroms. These pogroms were motivated by hatred of the stranger and the economic crisis.

In 1931, 1,123,025 Jews were gainfully employed in Poland, primarily as laborers, artisans and traders.

By 1935, 1 million Jews were unemployed or working part time.

Despite a hopeless and deepening poverty, intellectual, artistic, and political activities continued to be pursued.

Slide 148

World War II Begins (breaker slide)

Slide 149

World War II Begins:
The Blitzkrieg of Poland

The Invasion (September 1, 1939)

On September 1, 1939, in what is known as a Blitzkrieg or "lightening war," 1.5 million German troops and 2,000 tanks crossed into Poland. Simultaneously, *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force) bombers bombed Polish air fields, destroying most of the Poles' air power as it sat on the ground. Poland's army was totally unprepared. Polish ground forces consisted largely of cavalry, a poor match for Nazi military machinery.

By September 27, the capital of Warsaw had fallen. Despite military defeat, the Polish government itself never surrendered. A Polish government-in-exile established itself in London, coordinating and sending support to the various underground resistance groups in Poland.

During the September 1939 Nazi military campaign, about 600,000 men of the Polish Army, including 60,000 Jews, were taken prisoner by the German fascists. Most of the Jewish prisoners were murdered.

Allies Declare War

On September 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Both countries had previously pledged to help Poland if Germany attacked, but when the time came, Britain had only a small army and France was only prepared to defend its territory, not attack.

Both stood by while Poland collapsed.

Soviets Invade Poland (September 17, 1939)

On September 17, 1939, Soviet forces invaded Poland from the east. By late September, the Soviet Union occupied the eastern third of Poland.

Polish Losses

Poland suffered the highest percentage of deaths of any country during the war. In the end, 2.7-3 million Polish Jews perished. In addition, scholars believe 1.8-1.9 million non-Jewish Poles died at the hand of the Germans.

Slide 150

World War II Begins (breaker slide)

Slide 151

**World War II Begins:
The Division of Poland**

On September 28, Germany and the Soviet Union partitioned Poland into three major areas as previously planned by the non-aggression pact.

The western third (green) was annexed to the Reich.

These lands where many ethnic Germans resided were intended for complete Germanization. In the first months after the invasion, the Germans forcibly expelled both Jewish and Gentile Poles residing in these territories to the General Government. The re-settlement of large segments of the Polish population made room for the influx of the "superior Germanic race." Ethnic Germans from the Baltic and other regions were resettled in homes formerly occupied by Jews and Poles. It was the BDM that traveled from village to village to help new German settlers get established.

At the end of World War II, with the collapse of the Third Reich, these German settlers became displaced as the countries they occupied were no longer under German control. They were treated without mercy, harassed and thrown out of places where they were living. In Czechoslovakia, Poland and other countries overrun by Germany during the war, natives at last took revenge on the hated Germans.

The eastern third (purple) was annexed to the Soviet Union.

Soviet occupation was better than Nazi rule. The Soviets abolished the previous Polish restrictions that had prevented Jews from entering universities, the administration, and some trades. On the other hand, the Soviets restricted religious life, abolished all Jewish institutions, and confiscated property. Approximately 17-20% of the Jews in Soviet-occupied Eastern Poland were deported into Soviet exile or Soviet camps. The same can be said for Polish deportees. During the war itself, the Jews saw the Soviet regime as their only hope for rescue.

The central portion (yellow), now known as the General Government, became a German protectorate. This area became the designated holding center where Nazis sent Jews and all others deemed unfit for Reich citizenship.

Slide 152

World War II Begins (breaker slide)

Slide 153

World War II Begins:
Germanization of Polish Gentiles

Hitler saw the Poles (a Slavic people) as “subhuman.”

The Poles are especially born for low labor ... There can be no question of improvement for them ... Priests will preach what we want them to preach. If any priest acts differently, we shall make short work of him. The task of the priest is to keep the Poles quiet, stupid and dull-witted ... There should be one master only for the Poles, the German ... All representatives of the Polish intelligentsia are to be exterminated.

- Adolf Hitler, October 2, 1940

Quoted in *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* by William L. Shirer

Germany's campaign in Poland was devised to destroy the Polish culture and enslave the Polish people.

In order to prevent any organized resistance, the Nazis focused on killing or suppressing the Polish elite (political, religious and intellectual leaders) i.e. those who might attempt to lead a revolution. This was code named *A-B Aktion* (A-B Action). About 10,000 Polish priests, teachers, technicians and political leaders were murdered. Although the major annihilation occurred during the first months of occupation, it continued intermittently until the spring of 1940.

In addition to these measures, were those enumerated on the slide.

Thousands of men were sent to concentrations camps, and the Nazis began a mass expulsion of Poles from the newly annexed western Polish territories to the General Government. A rigid separation was maintained in Poland between the German master race and the Poles. Only Germans were allowed to frequent certain restaurants, cinemas and shops. When food rationing was introduced, Germans received much higher rations than Poles.

Slide 154

World War II Begins:
Germanization of Polish Gentiles - Photos of Forced Labor & Tearing Down of Monuments.

Slide 155

World War II Begins:

Germanization of Polish Gentiles - Photo of Polish Children Captured for Re-Germanization

The *Lebensborn* (Fountain of Life) program was founded by Heinrich Himmler in 1938. It started out running birthing homes where racially acceptable, mostly unwed mothers could bear their children for adoption by Nazi families. An estimated 20,000 children were born in German *Lebensborn* homes (roughly half of them anonymously) and another 12,000 or so were born to mostly non-German mothers and Nazi fathers in Norway.

After World War II broke out, *Lebensborn* took on an even more sinister role. It became an adoption agency for hundreds of "racially desirable" toddlers and young children seized from their families in Poland and other occupied territories and forcibly Germanized. They were a "gift for the Führer."

Approximately 40,000 eastern European children were transferred to Germany during the *Heuaktion*, a cover name for the kidnapping of children aged 10 to 14 deemed suitable for "re-Germanization" into the Reich. The *Heuaktion* was one of many such operations carried out by the SS with the cooperation of institutions administered by its youth and *Lebensborn* programs.

"Re-Germanization" was the legal and educational process by which "racially desirable" persons from the population of territories occupied by the *Wehrmacht* could become members of the German "Volk" and citizens of the Reich. In order to qualify for "re-Germanization," they had to provide proof of German racial origins or that they were sufficiently German-minded. "Re-Germanization," however, could be extended to "racially valuable" children belonging to foreign peoples, in some cases, even children who were Jews. The children transferred to Germany under the "Heuaktion" fell into this category.

Slide 156

World War II Begins (breaker slide)

Slide 157

World War II Begins:

Isolation of Polish Jews (initial breaker slide)

After the Polish campaign 2.3 million Polish Jews fell under German rule. This massive Jewish community was highly concentrated:

400,000 Jews in Warsaw (equaled the entire Jewish population of France)
200,000 in Lodz
150,000 in Kiev

In the past, the size and density of these Jewish communities enriched their creativity. Under the Nazis it would hasten their doom.

Unlike the German Jews whose developing persecution occurred over several years, the Polish Jews were bombarded with similar and even greater persecution within a matter of weeks. Emigration was not an option.

The moment the Germans entered a town, Jews became outcasts.

Slide 158

World War II Begins:

Isolation of Polish Jews - Humiliation & Terror

Photo Bottom Right:

Jewish men are publicly humiliated in the market square of Minsk Mazowiecki by being forced to race against one another while riding on the backs of their fellows.

These Jews were selected from a larger group (the spectators in the background) that was rounded up by Germans in the streets surrounding the market square. The Germans also assembled a group of Poles to watch the spectacle (not pictured).

Terror enveloped the Jews. Killing and senseless violence became daily rituals.

Once the German army had captured a Polish town, special SS “operational groups” roamed the town and amused themselves. Their refinements of cruelty were reserved especially for the pious Jews and rabbis, whose traditional Jewish garb – hat and long coat, beard and side-locks – identified them as quintessentially Jewish. They tormented individual Jews, kicking them, cutting off their beards or even forcing Orthodox Jews to pull at one another’s beards. “Games” were even played involving forcing Jews to eat pork or setting their beards on fire. These humiliating acts were often followed by acts of life-threatening brutality, severe beatings and even executions.

Jewish stores were confiscated or plundered. Individuals were forced to give up all possessions.

All Poles were subjected to food rationing, but the Jews were ejected from soup lines because “A lower race needs less food.” – Dr. Ley, Head of the German Labor Front.

The Germans deliberately forced observant Jews to desecrate and destroy their own sacred articles of Judaism, even to set fire to their own synagogues. All over Poland synagogues went up in flames. The Germans organized pogroms, rounding up the non-Jewish population to witness and learn how to mock, abuse, injure and murder Jews. In one place, thousands of half-naked men and women were beaten to bleeding in the town square, and then kept standing for hours in the freezing cold. The Germans arrested a beloved rabbi, tortured him and savagely displayed his head for several days in the window of a main-street store.

In the first 55 days of the German conquest and occupation of western Poland, 5,000 Jews were murdered. At the same time, the Germans killed more than twice that number of non-Jewish Poles, likewise executed at random.

Slide 159

World War II Begins:

Isolation of Polish Jews (breaker slide)

Slide 160

World War II Begins:

Isolation of Polish Jews - Forced Labor

October 26, 1939: Official decree requiring forced labor of all Jews aged 14-60.

Jews were seized to clean the streets of rubble, to scrub the floors of German residences, to haul and move, load and unload, to labor beyond fatigue. Sometimes they were released at the day's end and allowed to return home, but more likely they were kept for a week or two, incommunicado, unable to inform their families of their whereabouts or even of their very existence.

As the Germans consolidated their position in Poland, they set up labor camps outside the big cities, some of which – Treblinka and Majdanek – eventually became annihilation camps. Teams of forced laborers were assigned for periods of weeks and even months to construct these camps.

Prior to this Jews were randomly seized from their homes or off the streets for forced labor.

Slide 161

World War II Begins:
Isolation of Polish Jews (breaker slide)

Slide 162

World War II Begins:
Isolation of Polish Jews - Expulsion

As soon as the Germans occupied Poland, they began to direct a flow of human traffic that soon radically altered the age-old patterns of Jewish settlement in Poland. Within a few months, thousands of Jewish settlements were erased from the map of Poland, their inhabitants ejected without notice, forbidden to take the bare necessities, condemned to exposure, hunger and homelessness.

Tens of thousands of Jews fled eastward toward Russia.

Jews living in East Prussia, West Prussia and the Warthegau regions (lands that had been annexed into the Reich and were to become Germanized) were forced to move to the General Government region. Over 330,000 Polish Jews, 1/10 of the Jews in Poland, had become homeless refugees, beggars for bread and shelter, candidates for disease and death.

The fate of the Jews of Aleksandrow, seven miles west of Lodz, was typical. Aleksandrow, was the hosiery center of Poland. One-fourth of its 12,000 residents were Jews. It was the seat of one of the most distinguished Hasidic (ultra-orthodox Jews) dynasties in all of Poland. The Germans entered Aleksandrow on September 7 and the next day burned down its synagogues. After 3 months of terror, arrests, shootings, expropriations and impressments into forced labor, the Jews were expelled on December 17, 1939. In the depths of the Polish winter, they were marched out on the highway, men, women, children and infants, with the few belongings they were permitted to take in sacks, baby carriages, wheelbarrows, pushcarts, bicycles and sleds. The nearest town was Głowno, on the border of the newly incorporated area of the General Government, which most managed to reach.

An official order was decreed on September 21, 1939 that Jews were to be concentrated into large cities, such as Warsaw, Lublin and Krakow, with the intention of establishing ghettos. Judenraete (Jewish Councils) were to be established as a "go-between" between the Nazis and the Jews.

Slide 163

World War II Begins:
Isolation of Polish Jews (breaker slide)

Slide 164

World War II Begins:
Isolation of Polish Jews - The Jewish Badge

Teacher Note:

The drawing on left is by Arthur Szyk.

Although the proposal to create an official Jewish sign was not introduced until November 1938 (immediately after *Kristallnacht*), the practice existed in ancient times when Jews were forced to wear specific clothing colors and shapes to distinguish them from the rest of the population.

Reinhard Heydrich first suggested the Jewish badge concept after the *Kristallnacht* pogrom of November 1938. It was not until the invasion of Poland that his suggestion was put into practice.

In November 1939, Hans Frank (head of the General Government of Poland) ordered that by December 1 all Jews in the General Government (the section of German-occupied Poland not incorporated into the Reich) over the age of 12 were to don white armbands, at least four inches wide, inscribed with a blue Star of David. The Jews were responsible for buying and distributing the badges. If a Jew was caught without a badge, he was fined, imprisoned, or shot. In some ghettos, certain groups were given different badges to identify them as being unique among the Jews. These included Jewish police, doctors, Judenrat employees and factory workers, who no longer had to wear the regular Jewish badge and thus felt more favored than the rest of the Jews. Different symbols, all variations on the same theme, were introduced in different areas of the General Government and the Polish territories occupied by Germany. In 1941 the SS ordered the Jews to wear a yellow, six-pointed star, four inches high, on the left side of the breast and on the back.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, Jews there were also forced to wear Jewish badges.

By September 15, 1941 all Jews above the age of 6 within the Reich (Germany proper and all acquired lands) were ordered to wear the "Jewish star." This yellow star had the word "Jude" (Jew) with Hebraic looking calligraphy in black. The star, which also represented a public stigmatization, was introduced to facilitate the identification of Jews in preparation for their deportation to the East. In March 1942, the doors of all Jewish residences in Germany also had to be marked with a white Star of David.

In German-occupied countries in Western Europe, there was some opposition to the badge decrees. The implementation of the badges in France, for example, was delayed because of resistance by the French people and on the part of the Vichy regime in unoccupied France. However, the decree was finally announced in France on June 7, 1942.

The Nazis did not even try to make the Jewish badge obligatory in Denmark due to the Danes' strong opposition to anti-Jewish measures. A story is told that King Christian X himself donned the Jewish badge in solidarity with the Jews of Denmark. The story is fictional (as Danish Jewry was never forced to wear badges), but it powerfully demonstrates the Danish King's courage and commitment to his country's Jews.

Both Jews and non-Jews reacted strongly to the Jewish badge decree. Almost all Polish Jews cooperated with the law, in fear of severe punishment; however, diaries from the time speak with unabashed bitterness about having to wear the badge. In Germany, the introduction of the badge was followed by a wave of suicides. Many French Jews refused to wear the badge, and some French non-Jews expressed their empathy for the Jewish plight by wearing stars themselves. Even the French police did not enforce the decree. In Holland, an underground newspaper expressed its solidarity with the Jews by printing 300,000 stars, inscribed with the words: "Jews and non-Jews are one and the same."

The German government's policy of forcing Jews to wear badges, and then confining all who wore them to ghettos, was a tactic aimed at isolating the Jews from the rest of the population. It enabled the German government to identify, concentrate, deprive, starve and ultimately murder the Jews of Europe under its control.

These decrees are important to remember in teaching the Holocaust because they show the gradual implementation of the Final Solution, the importance to the Nazis of both racial law and separation, and the possibility of resistance. In some countries, the stars were symbols of degradation and isolation. In others, opposition to the badge and other anti-Jewish measures highlight the power of popular resistance.

Slide 165

World War II Begins

Isolation of Polish Jews - Photos of Jewish Badges

Questions to Consider:

- How are these markings similar or different?
- Why would a government feel it necessary specifically to identify certain groups of people?
- How do these objects have an impact on either a personal or a group identity?
- What are some of the ways in which an individual becomes labeled in our society?
- What effect do you think these marking had on society?
- How did these markings help the Germans achieve their goal?

Slide 166
The Ghettos

Slide 167
The Ghettos:
Map of Ghettos in Occupied Europe 1939-1944

Part of the Nazi propaganda effort was to persuade non-Jews that the ghettos were necessary in order to protect them from the Jews. Jews were said to be carriers of epidemic illnesses and were even accused of cooperating with Germany's enemies, thus the need to isolate them in ghettos.

The first ghetto was established in Piotrków-Trybunalski, Poland on October 28, 1939, shortly after the war broke out. The second was in the industrial center of Lodz on April 30, 1940. The largest ghetto in Europe, the Warsaw Ghetto, was set up in November 1940.

By the summer of 1941, ghettos were being established in the Soviet Union.
By 1942, most of the Jews of Eastern Europe were in ghettos.

With the exception of Theresienstadt (Terezin) in Bohemia, which was a ghetto-like concentration camp rather than a ghetto, no ghettos were established in Czechoslovakia, Austria, Germany or Western territories.

There were more than 800 ghettos in Eastern Europe.
By the Fall of 1944, no ghettos remained.

Each ghetto was unique in how and when it was set up, how it was sealed off from the rest of the city, and how it was governed. The ghetto was actually a city-within-a-city. The Jews were forced to run services and institutions for themselves for which they had no previous experience.

Although many Jews died in the ghetto, there is no proof that the ghettos were originally created for the distinct purpose of killing Jews. Nevertheless, the Germans were not troubled by the huge number of Jews dying from hunger and lack of other basic needs.

Slide 168
The Ghettos:
Chart of Major Jewish Ghettos / Country / Population

Slide 169

Ghetto Life (opening breaker slide)

Slide 170

Ghetto Life:
Judenrat

Teacher Note:

- Judenrat (singular)
 - Judenraete (plural)
-

By a government decree on November 28, 1939, every Jewish community in Poland with a population of up to 10,000 had to elect a Judenrat of 12 members, and every community with more than 10,000 people had to choose 24 members. These councils were to be filled with pre-war Jewish community leaders.

Once the ghettos were formed, the Judenrat had the following functions:

1. the transmission of German directives to the Jewish population
2. the use of Jewish police to enforce German will
3. the establishment of hospitals, kitchens, schools, recreation facilities, orphanages based on available resources
4. the over-seeing of taxes, banking, grievances, labor, public health, social welfare, postal service, housing and religious services
5. the delivery of Jewish property, Jewish labor, and Jewish lives to the Germans

Most Judenrat leaders were tragic characters placed in impossible situations. For example, when the Nazis decided to deport Jews, the Judenrat was ordered to deliver a certain number for deportation to the train station. Most complied, even sending "Jewish police" to bring those who refused to obey. Most Judenrat leaders rationalized such cooperation, claiming that it enabled them to save some Jewish lives. Jewish community members often viewed their Judenrat as betrayers.

Slide 171

Ghetto Life (breaker slide)

Slide 172

Ghetto Life:
Arrival

Photos:

(Left) Jews of Lodz move to the ghetto as the former Polish inhabitants leave, February 1940.

(Top Right) Jewish families on their way to the Lodz Ghetto.

(Bottom Right) Jews deported from Western Europe (e.g. from Vienna, Berlin, Prague and Luxembourg) arrive in the Lodz Ghetto, Fall 1941.

Initially, the inhabitants of the ghettos were from the immediate area, but eventually new inhabitants arrived from more distant cities as well as other countries. The population was economically and socially diverse. Some arrived with money and possessions that proved valuable for future bartering. Others, who had been forcibly evicted from their homes, arrived with little more than the clothes on their backs and the bundles they could carry.

Slide 173

Ghetto Life:
Map of the Lodz Ghetto / Building Ghetto Walls

Litzmannstadt was the German name for Lodz.

Ghetto boundaries were drawn by the Nazis encompassing existing neighborhoods in the most run-down areas, often lacking basic facilities such as sewers and lighting. The Nazis would evict non-Jewish residents before forcing Jews to move in. In the case of the Warsaw Ghetto, 113,000 Poles had to leave the newly demarcated ghetto and 138,000 Jews moved in.

Some ghettos were closed, while others were relatively open. In some cases, barbed wire would mark the "Jewish section." Later more permanent walls were erected by forced Jewish laborers.

The Warsaw Ghetto was surrounded by 11 miles of walls. Krakow was enclosed by a wall as well as barbed wire, while Lodz was enclosed by barbed wire. Piotrkow Trybunalski, Radom, Chelm and Kielce were "open ghettos," with access to other parts of town. Poles could go back and forth, and at first, Jews had little difficulty leaving.

Before the final deportations, however, all ghettos were sealed.

Slide 174

Ghetto Life (breaker slide)

Slide 175

Ghetto Life:
Daily Life

The Nazis' goal in the ghettos was to brutalize and break the spirit of the inhabitants. To combat this, underground social, religious, educational, and political organizations were created. Newspapers were published, classes held and religious services conducted, despite the threat of death for such activities.

While attempts were made to make life appear to be as normal as possible, conditions in the ghetto brought about a rapid deterioration in daily life. Students may notice variations in physical appearances in the following photos. This is indicative of the decline in human life that occurred over time.

Slide 176

Ghetto Life:
Daily Life - continued

Photo of ghetto orchestra:

In the midst of decaying life, many Jews found solace in retaining life's normalcy...including their musical entertainment.

Slide 177

Ghetto Life:
Daily Life - continued

Photo of communal kitchen for children:

It should be noted that many children became orphans as time progressed, and the ghettos tried to find ways to provide for them – food kitchens and orphanages were often the answer.

Photo of Lodz Ghetto bridge:

This particular street was for the non-Jews of Lodz. The Jews were not allowed to set foot on it.

- Why were the Jews not allowed to cross the street with the other people?
- How did this make the Jews feel?

Photo of the burial:

As the death rates increased, burials such as this became impossible. Bodies accumulated and the only answer was mass graves.

Photo of the street scene:

This photo was taken by a German soldier from inside a car. It is always important to consider the perspective of a photo.

- Why did the soldier take a picture of a crowd of Jews?

Slide 178

Ghetto Life (breaker slide)

Slide 179

Ghetto Life:

Jewish Life

Maintaining a religious lifestyle throughout the war required great spiritual strength, and in nearly every place, there were Jews who persisted in upholding Jewish religious observances at the risk of endangering themselves.

In the ghettos, the Nazis forbade all public religious practices, despite their claim that their antisemitism was racial, not religious. Religious life had to go underground, meeting in private homes to worship. Other aspects of religious life were also monitored. In the Warsaw Ghetto, for example, the kosher slaughter of animals was forbidden, yet pious Jews found ways of smuggling kosher meat into the ghetto.

Slide 180

Ghetto Life (breaker slide)

Slide 181

Ghetto Life:
Conditions

Starvation

Food was obtainable in 2 ways: from official German sources, and from the unofficial black market.

Officially, the Jews were given ration cards that allowed them to buy much less than the rest of the local population. By mid-1941, in Poland, the Germans were giving out ration cards that provided only 184 calories per day (7.5% of the minimum daily requirement). The Germans themselves received a full ration, while the Poles received a ration of 26% of the daily needs. In order to supplement their rations, Jews were forced to pay exorbitant prices for food sold on the black market. Most Jews had very little money, so many starved to death. Those that worked in German factories received extra rations or extra food on the job.

The rations for the ghetto included no meat, only bread and potatoes.

Hunger overwhelmed everyone. Hunger killed, but first it disabled peoples' bodies and minds. Fatigue, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea were daily complaints. Hunger weakened and debilitated its victims so as to make them fall prey to countless other diseases.

Overcrowding

Apartments might house several families. The average room had to accommodate 8-14 people. Heating fuel was scarce. Many resorted to chopping up furniture or destroying buildings for fuel. People froze to death.

Contagious Disease

Plumbing was often poor or non-existent. Human waste was thrown in the streets along with the garbage.

With no soap or hot water, people could not bathe or wash.

Bodies ravaged by hunger were more susceptible to disease. The young and the elderly were the most vulnerable.

Typhus, typhoid, bed bugs and lice were rampant.

Isolation

The ghettos were surrounded by walls with limited or no access. This isolation was compounded by the removal of telephones from private homes. Radios had long since been confiscated. Mail was erratic and undependable. Once the Jews were inside the ghetto, the Judenrat had to assume postal functions. Telegrams and cables could be sent only through the Judenrat and required Gestapo approval. Parcels of food and clothing were more often than not confiscated by the Germans before they ever reached the ghetto post office.

Slide 182

Ghetto Life (breaker slide)

Slide 183

Ghetto Life:
Smuggling

Without the ghettos' smugglers, the Nazis could very well have succeeded in starving the inhabitants to death.

Most of the smugglers were children 10-14 years old. Their small bodies could slip under a hole in the barbed wire or through a crack in the wall and get back. If they were successful, starvation was postponed another day. If they were caught, the penalty was death.

Paradoxically, thievery and sneaking became prestigious kinds of work.

Slide 184

Ghetto Life (breaker slide)

Slide 185

Ghetto Life:
Forced Labor

The Judenrat was responsible for issuing work permits which allowed the Jews to leave and work at factories outside the ghetto that supported the German war effort. The incentive was pay or extra food rations. Laborers often died from exhaustion or mistreatment.

Not all work was volunteer. Dragnet operations were staged without warning for the purpose of rounding up workers for forced labor.

Slide 186

Ghetto Life (breaker slide)

Slide 187

Ghetto Life:

Liquidation / Resettlement

Teacher Notes:

Students should understand that the flow of events from ghetto to “Final Solution” to extermination camps was not so clear cut. All the ghettos did not originate at the same time. All the ghettos were not immediately liquidated when the extermination camps became operational. Two months after D-Day, in 1944, there were still Jews in ghettos. The Lodz Ghetto was not liquidated until August of 1944.

Nazi Euphemisms:

In an effort to disguise actual intentions, the Nazis used language that was designed to deceive the general public, both Jew and non-Jew.

Liquidate – to dispose of needless products

In Nazi terminology, this term referred to the forced removal of ghetto inhabitants to camps.

Resettlement – to move from one place to another with the intention of establishing residence

This term was used by the Nazis to deceive the Jews into believing that they were being sent to a better place to live. In truth, they were being sent to their deaths.

The teacher should make special note of these euphemisms and try not to gloss over the atrocities by using such benign vocabulary.

It is estimated that 1/5 of ghetto inhabitants died of disease and hunger-related illnesses. At that rate, the entire population of all of the ghettos would have died out within 5-6 years. But that was not fast enough for the Nazis.

Soon after the “Final Solution” began, the Germans began to eliminate the ghettos. The first ghettos were liquidated in the spring of 1942. The last Polish ghetto to be destroyed, Lodz, was emptied in the summer of 1944. Most of the Jews taken from the ghettos were deported to Extermination Camps where they were murdered. Only a small number were taken to Concentration Camps and Forced Labor camps near the end of the war.

Often these liquidations were sudden, un-announced, chaotic and violent. At other times, they were announced by the Judenrat and carefully orchestrated.

The German strategy of lies and deceptions convinced many Jews that they were being resettled for hard labor.

After information of mass shootings and gassings filtered into the ghettos, the first response was shocked disbelief. Even the unrestrained cruelties committed by the German had not prepared the Jews to grasp the facts of systematic mass murder. The Jews had no way of verifying the reports which came to them.

By the spring of 1943, 2.7 million of the 3.3 million Jews of Poland were dead. Hundreds of thousands had fled to the Soviet Union. The Jews remaining in Poland were in concentration or slave labor camps or hiding among the non-Jewish population. Only two ghettos remained: Bialystok in the east and Lodz in the west. In August 1943, the Bialystok ghetto was destroyed and its inhabitants murdered. Lodz remained, with 69,000 inmates in early 1944.

Slide 188

Ghetto Life:

Liquidation / Resettlement - continued

Slide 189

Ghetto Life:

Liquidation / Resettlement - continued

Teacher Note:

These photos offer writing opportunities or class discussion:

- What message might the young girl be writing and to whom?
- What would a mother tell her child that is being taken away?
- Assuming the young adults were left behind, what directives or message of hope might a parent give?

Slide 190

Ghetto Life:

Drawing by Samuel Bak, "The Ghetto"

According to the artist, the ghetto was "an inclined surface with no horizon and no possibility of escape. Indeed, when we were thrown into the ghetto like human garbage, it felt like being in a deep hole. This hole is in the shape of the Star of David, the emblem of the ghetto. Near it lies our badge of identification.

Samuel Bak

Samuel Bak was born in Vilna, Lithuania in 1933 to an educated, cultured, middle-class family.

On June 24, 1941, the Germans occupied Vilna and ordered the Jews to don the yellow Jewish Badge. Samuel, aged 8, was charged with preparing badges for his parents and extended family.

On September 6, the deportation of Jews to the Vilna Ghetto began. Samuel's father was sent to a labor camp while his mother fled the ghetto and found refuge in the city's Benedictine convent, where a nun took Samuel under her wing and supplied him with paint and paper.

When the Germans suspected the convent of collaborating with Soviet forces, they placed it under military jurisdiction and the Bak family was forced to return to the Vilna Ghetto.

In March 1943, the poets Avrom Sutzkever and Szmerke Kaczerginski invited the 9-year-old Samuel to participate in an exhibition organized in the ghetto. Sensing that their end was near, the poets decided to deposit the *Pinkas*, the official record of the Jewish community, into Samuel's hands in hopes that they both would survive. Paper was a precious commodity and the white pages of the *Pinkas* beckoned the young artist: he used them to satisfy his craving to draw. Over the next two years, Samuel filled the page margins and empty pages of the *Pinkas*.

Upon liquidation of the ghetto on September 24, 1943, Samuel and his mother were sent to the same forced labor camp that his father was in.

On March 27, 1944, a children's *Aktion* took place in the camp and 250 children were sent to their death. Bak's mother took advantage of the confusion in the camp and fled while Samuel hid under a bed in the living quarters of one of the camp buildings. A few days later, his father smuggled him out of the camp in a sack of sawdust. Outside, by a pre-arranged signal, they linked up with his mother. Again, they made their way to the Benedictine convent where they found shelter for 11 months, until liberation.

On July 2-3, forced laborers were rounded up, among them was his father. His father was shot to death in Ponary, ten days before Vilna's liberation.

After liberation, Samuel took various art lessons.

In 1948, at age 15, Samuel arrived in Israel carrying with him many artworks from the Landsberg DP camp. He ultimately joined the Israeli Defense Force and in 1956 moved to Paris to enroll at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts.

After studying and exhibiting in Rome, Venice, New York, Israel and Switzerland, Samuel settled in Boston in 1993.

Slide 191

Attack in the West

The fate of Jews in Western Europe differed from country to country. Three major factors determined what happened to the Jews of Western Europe:

1. the degree of control exercised by the Nazis in the conquered country
2. the history of Jews in the region
3. the behavior of the local population

Despite local distinctions, anti-Jewish policy followed a familiar scenario. The pattern set by Germany toward its own Jews between 1933 and 1939, and toward Austrian Jews in 1938, became the model imposed swiftly on occupied countries. The progression is noted on the slide.

Slide 192

Attack in the West (initial breaker slide)

Although England and France had declared war against Germany with the invasion of Poland, they had yet to engage troops. France moved troops to the Maginot Line, a belt of steel and concrete fortresses it had built after World War I along its border with Germany. Britain sent a small force into northern France. Germany stationed troops along the Siegfried Line, a strip of defenses Hitler built in the 1930's opposite the Maginot Line. The two sides avoided fighting in late 1939 and early 1940. Journalists called this period "The Phony War."

From the beginning, Hitler had designs on England for its shipyards and on France in retaliation for its brutal treatment of Germany after World War I.

Slide 193

Attack in the West:

Invasion of Denmark & Norway (April 9, 1940)

Teacher Note:

In the eyes of the British, the Norwegian campaign was a disaster. There was a vote of no confidence in the British Parliament. The government suffered a reduced majority, and Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain resigned.

The main architect of the Norwegian campaign, the British First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill, who had been responsible for many of the mistakes of the campaign, was the main beneficiary of these political events. He was the favored candidate to take over as prime minister, and thus became Britain's war leader on May 10, 1940. Such are the ironies of history.

When World War II broke out in 1939, all of Scandinavia had proclaimed itself strictly neutral in the event of war.

With Poland now secured and the Soviet Union safely on hold via the German-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, Hitler was eager to attack in the west, but bad weather forced the offensive to be postponed. In the meantime, Russia attacked Finland in November 1939, making Norway and Denmark vulnerable to a Russian takeover. Germany recognized the need to advance into Scandinavia first. Germany invaded Norway and Denmark on April 9, 1940.

Denmark (see slide #359, "Governments that Rescued")

The German attack on Denmark was an infringement on the German-Danish Non-Aggression Pact of May 30, 1939. The Germans claimed that this step was necessary in view of the threat of an Allied invasion of Norway...and that it was Germany's duty to take the Nordic countries under its protection to prevent the war from spreading to them.

The Germans invaded at 4:00 am on April 9 and by 6:00 am the Danish government had capitulated. The Danish people were taken completely by surprise and the tiny Danish army was quickly overpowered. King Christian X surrendered at once.

While the Poles were a "race" to be subjugated, the Danes were to be wooed. The Danes were seen as a "Nordic people," the highest sort of "Aryan." Germany offered Denmark a partnership and collaboration that initially worked.

The Germans permitted the Danish government to remain in place and govern. Free parliamentary elections were held as late as March 1943.

About 8,000 Jews, 0.2% of the total population, lived in Denmark at the time of the occupation. The Danish government insisted on certain conditions including no discrimination against Jews and no Danish forces to support the German army. The King remained in place until 1942 when the Nazis tried to push the government to adopt anti-Jewish measures.

Upon learning of Nazi plans to deport the Jews of Denmark, the King and his country organized one of the most effective resistance movements in all of occupied Europe. Most of Denmark's Jews were saved. The ones who were not were interred in Theresienstadt, where 51 died of natural causes.

The moderate attitude of the Germans toward the Danes is usually explained by the economic benefits that could be reaped from Denmark. The agricultural output the Danes were able to place at the disposal of the Germans far surpassed German calculations. Denmark supplied close to 10% of Germany's food needs. The Danes were allowed to continue their standard of living although price controls and rations were introduced. The Danes were the only people among the occupied areas whose standard of living was higher than that of the Germans.

Norway

Unlike the Danes, the Norwegians resisted the German attack. Germany's air power prevented British ships and French troops from assisting and Norway fell to the Germans on June 10, 1940. King Haakon VII and his cabinet fled to London to set up a government in exile. He returned after the war to re-establish his government.

Like the Danes, the Nazis perceived the people of Norway as "fellow Aryans" who had a future in a German-ruled Europe and their lands were seen as vital resources. Hitler knew that the Norwegian coastal waters were vital for the transport of Swedish iron ore to German blast furnaces. Wary that England might attempt to block shipments, submarine bases were to be placed on the Norwegian coast to provide protection. In addition, German control of Norwegian waters would make breaking the Allied blockade of Germany a little easier. Unfortunately, the Norwegians wanted nothing to do with Hitler and Nazi Germany.

At the time there were about 1,900 Jews living in Norway, including about 200 Jewish refugees.

Norway's Minister-President Vidkun Quisling, the Nazi collaborator whose name has become synonymous with betraying one's country, cooperated fully with the Reich Commissar in dealing with the Jews.

Approximately 800 Jews were deported to Auschwitz where most died. The remainder escaped to Sweden with the help of the underground. Approximately 55% of the Norwegian Jews perished.

More than 5,000 non-Jews were also deported to camps. Approximately 750 died in the camps.

Sweden

Sweden was neutral during the war and unlike other neutral countries; it was not invaded by the Nazis at any point. This was due to the fact that Sweden was able to provide resources to Nazi Germany, such as steel to build Panzer tanks. The Swedish government went to extraordinary means to save Jewish lives.

Finland (see slide #359, "Governments that Rescued")

Finland was invaded by the Soviets in 1939. In return, Finland joined Nazi Germany when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Finland provided a base of operations for the Germans, but was never actually occupied by the Germans, except in the northern regions. In early 1942, there were an estimated 2,300 Jews in Finland, but their death toll was remarkably low. Only 2.8% of the Jews of Finland perished.

Iceland

Iceland was, at the onset of the war, part of Denmark, but it was occupied early on by Allied forces to prevent any possible attack on the U.S. Its small Jewish population remained protected.

Slide 194

Attack in the West (breaker slide)

Slide 195

Attack in the West:

Invasion of the Lowlands (May 10, 1940)

The Lowlands refers to the countries of Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Belgium. All hoped to remain neutral after World War II began.

Germany attacked without declaring war. Allied assistance was requested, but it was too late. British and French forces were able to rush into Belgium, but only fell into a German trap (see Invasion of France).

Luxembourg surrendered in 1 day, the Netherlands surrendered in 5 days, and Belgium surrendered in 18 days.

Luxembourg

Luxembourg was overrun simply because of its location: on the way to Belgium's Ardennes Forest. After Luxembourg surrendered, Grand Duchess Charlotte fled to London. The Germans annexed Luxembourg to the Reich and began a rapid Germanization program.

In 1935, about 3,000 Jews lived in Luxembourg, 1% of the total population. Luxembourg Jews enjoyed complete equality and prosperity.

By the time of the invasion in May 1940, less than 4,000 Jews lived in Luxembourg, 30% were refugees of Nazi Germany. More than a thousand fled into France after the invasion. Those that remained were subjected to Nazi legislation. From August 1940 to October 1941, nearly 1,500 Jews left Luxembourg, many of them on transports to unoccupied France.

From October 1941 through April 1943, approximately 800 Jews were deported to Lodz, Auschwitz, and Theresienstadt. After liberation, about 400 Jews were found to have survived in Luxembourg.

At least 1,200 Jews from Luxembourg perished during the Holocaust.

The Netherlands

The Dutch forces fought back formidably. In response, the German air force, the *Luftwaffe*, unleashed a massive bombing attack on the city of Rotterdam, even while surrender negotiations were under way. Over 800 civilians were killed. The Dutch forces surrendered on May 15, 1940 under threat of further bombings. Queen Wilhelmina and other government officials went into exile in England. A civil administration controlled by the Germans ran the country. The Netherlands brought the Allies important resources: the Dutch navy, a large merchant fleet, and the oil and rubber-rich Dutch East Indies.

While the Danish and Norwegian people were seen by Hitler as "fellow Aryans," the Dutch were viewed as "blood relatives" bound to Germany by geography, history and language. Hitler planned to Nazify the Dutch to prepare them for ultimate reintegration into the Reich. Most Dutch people did not wish to take a place either in German history or the German future. They wanted to preserve their Dutch identity. As in Norway, the Germans failed.

At that time, the Netherlands had a Jewish population of 140,000, one of the oldest Jewish communities in Europe. Approximately 110,000 of these were Dutch, while the remainders were refugees mostly from Germany. Many German refugees had moved to the Netherlands upon Hitler's rise to power. Nearly 60%, 80,000 Jews, lived in Amsterdam alone. Dutch Jews enjoyed complete equality, received financial support from the government and were active in the social and political life of the country.

Those that entered the country illegally were interned in camps, the main one being Westerbork. Westerbork, along with Vught, later served as a transit camp to Auschwitz.

Beginning in August 1940, Jewish restrictions were put into place.

In February of 1941 a ghetto was established in Amsterdam. The only ghetto in Western Europe.

By May 1941, "Aryanization" of Jewish enterprises began.

In January 1942 forced labor camps were set up in Holland and in April 1942 the yellow star was introduced.

In the midst of the war and occupation, Anne Frank celebrated her 13th birthday and received a red and white plaid diary on June 12, 1942. Less than two weeks later, Anne wrote in her diary:

Our freedom was severely restricted by a series of anti-Jewish decrees: Jews were required to wear a yellow star; Jews were forbidden to use street cars...Jews were forbidden to visit Christians in their homes; Jews were required to attend Jewish schools. You couldn't do this and you couldn't do that. But life went on.

In October 1942, deportations to the East began. Few were able to escape since the country offered no thick forests, remote mountains or neutral borders to hide. Safety could only be found in attics and back rooms of sympathetic Dutch gentiles. Of the 24,000 Jews who went into hiding, about 2/3 survived.

During the next 2 years, 110,000 Jews were sent to the death camps, where fewer than 5% survived. Approximately 75% (100,000) of the Dutch Jews were killed.

During its 5 years of bondage, the Netherlands suffered the most hardship and famine of all the occupied countries in Western Europe.

Belgium

The Allied defense of Belgium was a disaster. The British and French planned to make a stand at a line of forts between the cities of Antwerp and Liege. Unaware that these forts had already been captured by German paratroopers, the British and French found themselves under siege. At the same time, a second German offensive emerged from the Ardennes Forest, south of the Allied troops. The Allied armies were trapped between two German forces, unable to protect Paris or stop the Germans from advancing to the English Channel.

Belgium was needed by the Germans to make a surprise invasion into France.

Belgium surrendered on May 28, a country in shambles. The Belgium government fled to Great Britain and formed a government in exile in London. King Leopold III remained in Belgium under house arrest during the German occupation.

The surrender left the Allied forces trapped in Belgium in great danger. They retreated toward the French seaport of Dunkirk.

Before the German invasion, about 90,000 Jews lived in Belgium, 1% of the total population. After the German occupation, about 66,000 Jews lived in Belgium. Of these, only 10% were citizens. The remainders were immigrants, predominantly from Eastern Europe. In 1938, the Belgian government had allocated a grant of 6 million francs toward the relief of German Jewish refugees. Most of Belgium's Jews had fled the country when the Nazis invaded. The rest were foreign or stateless Jews, mainly immigrants and refugees.

The Nazis did not show their intentions in Western Europe early on. Consequently, more than half of the Belgian Jews who had fled to southern France during the fighting returned. The war had severed all communications with Eastern Europe, thus the Jews of Western Europe were clueless to Nazi intentions. Even after discriminatory laws were implemented in late 1940 and 1941 and conditions seemed precarious, no danger to life was perceived.

By May 1942 the yellow star was introduced in Belgium (this occurred in France 2 days later).

People were first deported to forced labor camps in Belgium or northern France. A detention camp at Malines was converted into a transit camp for Auschwitz. The first transport from Malines to Auschwitz left on August 4, 1942.

Unlike the SS Chiefs that ran the Netherlands, the German General that controlled Belgium did not see the destruction of the Jews as his primary task. He even encouraged Jews to cross into France and when roundups began, he declared native Belgian Jews exempt.

Between 1942 and 1944 more than 25,000 Jews left Belgium, primarily for Auschwitz. The Belgian civilian administration refused to cooperate in the deportations, leaving the German military police to carry out the deportations largely without assistance from the Belgians. In 1942, the Jewish underground destroyed the registry of Belgian Jews, hindering deportations.

Approximately 34,801 Jews were imprisoned or deported during the Holocaust. Approximately 28,900 of these perished.

Slide 196

Attack in the West (breaker slide)

Slide 197

Attack in the West:

Invasion of France (May 13, 1940)

At the signing of the Treaty of Versailles (end of World War I), France chose to crush Germany into humiliation by making them pay unrealistic reparations and forcing them to accept the "War Guilt Clause" that stated that Germany was solely responsible for World War I. These vengeful actions created a bitter hatred among the German people. Hitler considered France an irreconcilable and mortal enemy. It was the country he most wanted to conquer and humiliate.

When Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933, Winston Churchill remarked, "Thank God for the French Army." The French army seemed a powerful bulwark against possible Nazi aggression. The defeat of this powerful army in a mere six weeks in 1940 stands as one of the most remarkable military campaigns in history.

At the time, France's military was larger and more technologically advanced than Germany's. The British and French commanders believed that German forces would attack through central Belgium, north of the Ardennes Forest, as they had in World War I. The Maginot Line, a sophisticated series of fortifications, was expected to protect France's frontier with Germany, even though it did not cover the Franco-Belgian border. The Ardennes Forest, a hilly and heavily forested area on the Belgian-French border, was believed to be impenetrable to German tanks.

Hitler was forced to rethink his original attack plans for France after a German plane crashed in neutral Belgium with a copy of the attack orders on board. Fearing his plans had fallen into enemy hands, Hitler took the advice of one of his generals to attempt a daring, unexpected military campaign. The German army would attempt to enter France just north of the Maginot Line through Luxembourg and the dense Ardennes Forest of Belgium. This campaign would rely heavily on the blitzkrieg tactics as well as the strength of the German tank units. Contrary to common belief, the Germans had fewer tanks than the Allies.

As expected, the British and French had responded to the German invasion of the Lowlands (May 10), sending their best forces into Belgium. As the Allied forces raced northward, the main German invasion cut behind them through the Ardennes Forest to the south. On May 13, the first German forces emerged from the Ardennes Forest in southwest Belgium. With the bulk of Allied forces fighting in Belgium, there was little to stop the German forces as they sliced across the Allied supply lines. The Allied forces in Belgium found themselves nearly surrounded and the only strategy left was to retreat.

Britain's Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, ordered his troops to flee via the French port of Dunkirk. He sent 165 ships of the Royal Navy to meet them, but the waters were too shallow for the navy vessels. London put out an emergency call for any boat that could cross the English Channel and rescue the soldiers. Some 850 boats responded while the *Luftwaffe* descended on the town. In the greatest air battle of the war, the British royal air Force held off the *Luftwaffe* while the makeshift fleet rescued more than 300,000 British, French and Belgium soldiers from Dunkirk. From May 26 to June 4, the Allied army was saved but had to leave behind all their tanks and equipment. France was now left unguarded.

Had Hitler pressed forward with ground troops, he might have wiped out the Allied forces at Dunkirk. Instead he decided not to risk losing more men and equipment with a ground battle and relied on the *Luftwaffe* to finish the job.

Slide 198

Attack in the West:
Invasion of France – Hitler Tours Paris

Drawing Lower Left:

“Occupied Paris” by Arthur Szyk, 1940

On June 14, 1940 German troops entered Paris. The French government had already fled and the city was nearly deserted. Less than 1/3 of the population remained. Prime Minister Paul Reynaud, who had just taken office in March, wanted to fight on. His Vice-Premier, Henri Philippe Pétain, and the commander of the armed forces insisted that the government should seek an armistice. Outvoted, Reynaud resigned, and a new French government led by Field Marshal Philippe Pétain agreed to an armistice on June 22, 1940.

The conquest of France was the zenith of Hitler's career and the peak of popularity for the Nazis among the German people. On June 23, Hitler flew to Paris for a brief sightseeing tour of the occupied city, during which the widely published photo was taken of Hitler standing against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower.

Slide 199

Attack in the West:
Invasion of France – Armistice (June 22, 1940)

Hitler presented France with conditions of surrender in the Forest of Compiègne, on the very spot of Germany's humiliating surrender at the end of World War I. The same railroad car where France had once dictated terms to Germany was dragged from a museum in Paris and erected again on now-rusty rails.

Under the terms of the armistice, France was divided into two zones:

Occupied France:

- Northern 2/3 of France and all of the Atlantic coastline down to the border with Spain
- Under German control.
- General Charles de Gaulle, who bitterly opposed Pétain's collaboration with the German's, fled to Great Britain and set up the “Free French” government in exile.

Unoccupied France / Vichy France:

- Southern 1/3 of France
- Under the control of a collaborative French government led by Field Marshal Henri Philippe Pétain.
- Established a capital in the town of Vichy.
- The Vichy government eagerly participated in the Holocaust, claiming it would soften the hardships of the occupation.

Several articles of the armistice were reminiscent of the Treaty of the Versailles:

- The French were allowed to maintain an army of 100,000 men to maintain domestic order, precisely the figure set for the Germans at Versailles.
- The French were required to pay 400 million francs per day for the privilege of German occupation (60% of the national income)...reminiscent of the required German reparations.

In addition:

- 1.2 million French P.O.W.'s would remain in captivity.
- The government had to prevent any French people from leaving the country.
- France was required to turn over to German custody anyone within the country whom the Germans demanded. This included refugees that the French had previously granted asylum.

The attack on France had been a rational military action, but no plan existed beyond conquest.

While it appeared that Hitler had offered France a partnership in his New Order, in truth he was only interested in exploitation. Allowing the French to maintain their sovereignty and government was a cheap and convenient way to get them to do the dirty work. The French were responsible for delivering the quotas the Germans set for agricultural products, industrial goods, gentiles to work as “volunteer” laborers in Germany, and Jews for deportation “to the east.”

During the interwar period, France was one of the more liberal nations in opening its doors to Jewish refugees from Poland, Romania, and Germany. In 1939, however, the French government imposed restrictions on Jewish immigration and set up internment camps for refugees. When Germany defeated France in June 1940, there were approximately 350,000 Jews in the country. 150,000 were native French Jews whose ancestors had lived in France for centuries, familiarly known as “Israelites.” They were largely middle-class businessmen and professional men that were well integrated in French society. The immigrant Jews were familiarly known as “Juifs” and were largely lower middle-class, left-wing, working people. Other “Juifs” were strictly orthodox and continued to speak Yiddish.

Following the collapse of the France, thousands of Jews and non-Jews fled to the south, away from the invading armies. Many Jews tried to cross the borders into the neighboring neutral countries of Switzerland, Portugal and Spain. Thousands managed to flee via Spain to Portugal, and in time escaped to North Africa and the Western Hemisphere. The Portuguese consul at Bordeaux, Aristides de Sousa Mendes, issued Portuguese transit visas to thousands of Jewish refugees contrary to his government’s instructions – perhaps the largest rescue action by a single individual during the Holocaust.

German resources were stretched thin in France, with only 3 battalions of German police (some 3,000 men) in the occupation zone. In order to carry out their anti-Jewish plans, the Germans needed French cooperation. They had little trouble finding it.

During the first 2 years of German occupation, the Vichy government implemented antisemitic legislation defining, isolating and impoverishing the Jews. By 1941, thousands of French Jews were penniless refugees.

At the same time that the ghettos of Poland were being emptied in the summer of 1942, deportations of Jews from France began. The French police were indispensable to the operation. They rounded up Jews, mainly those without French citizenship, in both the occupied and unoccupied (Vichy) zones. Throughout France, Jews were assembled in camps, loaded onto cattle cars, and sent to the transit camp of Drancy northeast of Paris. On March 28, 1942, the first deportation train left Drancy for Auschwitz. In Paris, on July 16-17, 12,844 non-French Jews, including women and children, were rounded up. Those without families were sent to Drancy. The remaining 9,000, including 4,000 children, were penned up in the vast sports stadium Velodrome d’Hiver, where they spent a week in horrible conditions before being shipped off to Auschwitz. Only 30 adults returned alive after the war; no child survived.

In six months, 42,500 Jews were shipped to Auschwitz from Drancy; one-third of them from the unoccupied zone.

By late 1942, Berlin realized that matters would run more smoothly if the German military occupied the whole country. Choosing the historical date of November 11, the German army crossed the demarcation line and occupied Vichy France.

Thousands of Jews fled to the southeast corner of France after the Italian army occupied territory east of the Rhone River in late 1942. The Italian authorities refused to hand over Jews to the Germans, despite repeated demands. While many Jews in the Italian zone were rounded up by the Germans after September 1943, thousands managed to hide or to escape to Switzerland. The last deportation from France to Auschwitz took place in August 1944.

During the war, over 77,000 Jews (24% of French Jewry) were deported from France and murdered in Nazi camps. Of these, 1/3 were French citizens and over 8,000 were children under the age of 13. More than three-quarters of the Jews who resided or had found refuge in France in 1939 managed to survive. This high survival rate was due to many factors, including dispersal of Jews in many localities, a minimal German police presence, and assistance from some non-Jews.

The Allied landing in Normandy, in northwestern France, on June 6, 1944 began the liberation of France from Vichy and German domination. On August 24, right after the liberation of Paris, Drancy was liberated. The number of Jews who were deported, executed by the Germans, or who perished in internment camps, is estimated at 90,000, most of them foreign born.

To avoid capture, many Vichy officials fled to Germany.
Marshal Pétain and his government were ultimately tried and found guilty of treason after the war.

Opposition to the German occupation was led by the French Resistance within France and the Free French Forces led by Charles de Gaulle outside of France.

Slide 200

Attack in the West:

"Stamps" - Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite

The Jews in France, both native-born and refugee, believed that French authorities would seek to safeguard them. France was the country of the "Rights of Man," of asylum, of "*Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite*." Those were the founding principles of the state. Jews who had fled to France from the Nazi regime elsewhere in Europe trusted in the national promise of protection. They were utterly betrayed.

Slide 201

Italy Joins the Axis (June 10, 1940) (see slide #359, "Governments that Rescued")

In 1938, some 57,000 Jews lived in Italy, about 0.1% of the Italian population.

On June 10, 1940, Italy enters World War II as a German ally hoping to establish a new Italian empire. Italy occupied territory in Yugoslavia (1941), Greece (1941), and a small portion of southern France (1942). Although allied with Germany, Italy did not willingly cooperate in the Nazi plan to kill the Jews of Europe. In fact, between 1941 and 1943, thousands of Jews escaped to Italy and Italian occupied territories from German-occupied territory.

After the invasion of Sicily, the Allies invaded southern Italy. Mussolini's dictatorship was overthrown and King Victor Emmanuel ordered Mussolini imprisoned. Pietro Badoglio, the new Prime Minister, negotiated a cease-fire with the Allies in early September 1943.

In the meantime, German forces occupied most of northern and central Italy. German paratroopers freed Mussolini from prison and installed him as the head of a pro-German puppet government in northern Italy. German forces also occupied the Italian zones in Yugoslavia, Greece and France.

It was only after the fall of Benito Mussolini's dictatorship in 1943, and the subsequent German invasion and occupation of northern Italy, was there a serious attempt to deport Italian Jews. In October 1943, as Denmark was saving its Jews, the roundups and deportations of Italian Jews began. Jews were interned in transit camps such as Fossoli di Carpi and Bolzano, and periodically deported to Auschwitz. Nazi officials deported about 8,000 Jews from Italy to Auschwitz and other Nazi camps. About 7,500 of those deported were murdered.

The Vatican had been informed of the planned deportations, but Pope Pius XII failed to issue any protest. Nevertheless, hundreds of priests, nuns, etc. came to the aid of Jews – hiding them in churches, convents and monasteries.

Because Italian authorities obstructed the deportations and many Italian Jews were able to hide or escape southward to the Allied-occupied areas of Italy, approximately 80% of the Jews of Italy survived.

In late April 1945, Communist partisans captured and executed Mussolini. German forces in Italy surrendered to the Allies on May 2, 1945.

Slide 202

Attack in the West (breaker slide)

Slide 203

Attack in the West:

The Battle of Britain (July 10, 1940)

After France was defeated and divided, there were still two great powers in Europe that frustrated Hitler: Great Britain and the Soviet Union. Hitler's plan was to take possession of London by August 1940 and to march into Moscow before winter.

The German navy had been reduced during the Norwegian campaign. The British invasion would therefore require German superiority in the air. Though smaller than the *Luftwaffe* (German Air Force), the British Royal Air Force (RAF) had the advantage of home territory as well as radar, which the Germans had not yet perfected.

For 3 weeks the Germans bombed British airfields and naval vessels, careful to avoid direct hits on London for fear of a retaliation on German cities. In August, the *Luftwaffe* mistakenly bombed London and as predicted, the RAF conducted retaliatory raids on Berlin. Although these caused only minimal casualties, the effect on German morale was devastating. Hitler had assured the German people that their capital would never be touched. An outraged Hitler ordered the *Luftwaffe* to raze British cities to the ground. In September, the attacks on London began. The attacks on British cities caused widespread damage and loss of life.

Germany's strategy was one of night bombings, which were destructive, but strategically ineffective against RAF radar. Without naval or air superiority, Germany was helpless against Britain. In October, Hitler postponed the invasion until the following spring. About 1,700 *Luftwaffe* bombers and fighters had been shot down in just a few months and Britain had lost more than 900 fighter planes. Nearly 500 British pilots and aircrew had also been killed. The British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, memorably said: "Never... was so much owed by so many to so few."

The Battle of Britain was the first major battle to be fought entirely in the air and was the first strategic defeat of the Nazi war machine. Britain's survival was crucial in the war because the country served as a base for the Allied liberation of Europe from Nazi rule.

Slide 204

Attack in the West:

Political Cartoon, "The Painter and the Clipper"

Teacher Notes:

- Discuss with students Hitler's intention to conquer all of Europe as well as Great Britain's sole responsibility to save the continent.
- It might be worth noting at this point that the U.S. was still claiming neutrality.
- The scissors say: "England"

Slide 205

The Tripartite Pact (September 27, 1940)

Teacher Notes:

- The Japanese Flag shown on the slide, a sun disc with 16 red rays, was used by Japan's military, particularly the Imperial Japanese Navy. It was first adopted as the naval ensign on October 7, 1889 and was used until the end of World War II.
 - The Italian Flag shown on the slide was the flag of the Kingdom of Italy 1861-1946.
-

World War II, which involved most of the world's nations, was fought chiefly between two major alliances: the Axis and the Allies.

On September 27, 1940, Japan joined Germany and Italy as Axis Powers.

As Hitler was gaining power as leader of Germany, Japan was growing increasingly powerful both economically and militarily. But Japan had 2 big problems:

Japan had very little land.

The only way it could keep growing was to import food and raw materials to feed its people and support its industry.

Japan had a lot of people.

Japan was not treated as an equal by other industrialized countries even though Japan had been an ally of Great Britain, France, the U.S. and Italy in World War I.

Between World War I and World War II, the Japanese army and navy grew more powerful and aggressive, eventually seizing control of the government. General Hideki Tojo was the Japanese Minister of War and one of the military leaders who believed that the only way Japan would be treated equally was if it took what it wanted and needed by force.

In 1937, instead of signing a trade agreement with China, Japan chose to attack and keep the parts of China it had invaded. The U.S. demanded that Japan halt its invasion of China and return the land it had conquered, but Japan refused. In protest, the U.S. stopped all shipments of raw materials that Japan so desperately needed, including oil, iron ore and other metals.

The Tripartite Pact (also called the Axis Pact or the "Pact of Steel") was signed on September 27, 1940 in Berlin, Germany by Saburo Kurosu of Imperial Japan (Japan's ambassador to Germany), Adolf Hitler of Nazi Germany and Benito Mussolini of Fascist Italy. It officially founded the Axis Powers of World War II. The three nations agreed that for the next 10 years they would stand by and cooperate with one another in order to establish a new order. It also stated that should one of the signatories be aggressed upon by the United States, the other two were obliged to send help. This was most beneficial for Japan, as they had the more to gain by drawing the United States into a European war than Germany and Italy did a Pacific one.

This agreement was a warning to the U.S. to remain neutral in World War II, or become involved in a war on two fronts.

The Tripartite Pact was subsequently joined by Slovakia (November 1940), Hungary (November, 1940), Romania (November, 1940) and Bulgaria (March, 1941). Finland fought with Germany against the Soviet Union but did not sign the Tripartite Pact and was not technically part of the Axis alliance. Yugoslavia joined the Axis alliance on March 25, 1941, but withdrew two days later after an anti-German coup.

Slide 206

Attack in the South (April 1941)

Believing that he could defeat the Soviet Union during the 3 summer months, Hitler planned a campaign for the spring of 1941. Once Soviet Premier Stalin was defeated, Churchill would certainly beg for mercy.

Now for the first time, maneuvers other than his own dictated Hitler's next move. His Italian allies attacked Greece unsuccessfully in October 1940. With Britain's help, the Greeks had trapped the Italian troops in the mountains. Worried that the British would establish a stronghold in the south, Hitler ordered the entire German force toward the Balkans (Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece) in April 1941. By the end of April, the Axis powers controlled Greece, but this caused a fatal delay in Hitler's plans to invade the Soviet Union.

Albania

On the eve of World War II there were about 600 Jews in Albania, of whom 400 were refugees from Germany and Austria who had gone to Albania in the hope of making their way to the U.S. or South America. There was no discrimination of Jews in Albania.

Italy had joined the Axis in June 1940.

On April 7, 1939, Italian troops entered Albania. For the most part, the Italian regime did not persecute Jews harshly. In the spring of 1941, the Kosovo Province of Yugoslavia was annexed to Italian controlled Albania. Germany demanded that the Jews be handed over, but the Italians refused. Eventually prisoners from jails were handed over to the Germans and murdered, including 60 Jews.

In September 1943, Albania came under German control and the situation for Jews became worse.

Albanian clerks gave identity papers to many of the Jews so that they could go into hiding. Other Jews obtained false papers from Albanian friends and avoided roundup. Albanian officials did not supply the Germans with lists of Jews living in Albania. Christian and Muslim Albanians regarded it as a matter of national pride to help Jews. No Jews were ever turned over to the Germans. The Jewish community survived the war.

Bulgaria (see slide #359, "Governments that Rescued")

Bulgaria had 50,000 Jews (less than 1% of the population) prior to the onset of war. On one hand, Bulgaria had a long history of sheltering persecuted Jews as far back as the 15th century. On the other hand, King Boris III was married to the daughter of King Victor Emmanuel of Italy and had been a German/Italian sympathizer since the 1930's.

On March 1, 1941, Bulgaria joined the Axis Alliance and participated in the German led attack on Yugoslavia and Greece. They hoped to recapture Macedonia from Yugoslavia and Thrace from Greece, both provinces that were stripped from Bulgaria after World War I. Bulgaria refused to enter the war against the Soviet Union in June 1941.

Although Hitler requested anti-Jewish measures, Bulgaria did not have a history of antisemitism and refused to comply. Laws were passed restricting Jewish rights, but the Jews were not deported or extinguished. When the Germans pressed the Bulgarian government to deport Jews in 1943, King Boris was caught between his own sympathies to the Reich and his country's refusal to hand over Jews. A secret agreement was reached by which at first, only the Jews of Thrace and Macedonia (territories awarded to Bulgaria by Hitler) would be targeted. Starting March 10, 1943, as a result of German pressure, 12,000 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia were deported to Treblinka.

In October 1944, Bulgaria switched allegiances and declared war on Germany. Bulgaria's 50,000 native Jews survived. Bulgaria was the only country in Europe whose local Jewish population in 1945 was larger than it had been before the war.

Greece

The Jewish population in pre-war Greece was close to 76,000 (0.9% of the population). On October 28, 1940, Greece was attacked by Italy. Unable to finish the job, Italy requested assistance from its new ally, Germany. Greece had remained neutral until the German invasion in April 1941. Nearly 13,000 Jews fought in the Greek army at the time of the German invasion. With the German onslaught, the British colonial powers withdrew from Greece.

Greece was occupied by Germany, Italy and Bulgaria. The occupying forces stripped the country of its resources.

80% of the Jews from Greece perished, over 60,000 were annihilated.

Hungary (see slide #359, "Governments that Rescued")

In 1930, 445,000 Jews lived in Hungary, about 5% of the population. The Jews were distinctively middle class.

Hungary had joined the Axis in November 1940 to protect its territory. During this time, Hitler allowed Hungary to control its own internal affairs – including its Jewish population. Although antisemitic legislation was passed, the Hungarians did not deport the Jews. Hungarian troops assisted German troops in the invasion of Yugoslavia (April 1941) and the Soviet Union (June 1941). As a result of the assistance, Germany awarded Hungary with part of Czechoslovakia. With these annexations, the Jewish population of Hungary now totaled approximately 725,000. Hungary seemed a haven of relative security for the Jews.

After the German defeat at Stalingrad in 1942-43, a battle in which Hungarian units suffered tremendous losses, Prime Minister Miklos Kallay recognized that Germany would likely lose the war. He therefore sought to negotiate a separate armistice for Hungary with the western Allies.

Fearing that the Hungarian government was seeking a separate peace with the Allies, the German occupied Hungary on March 19, 1944. Kallay was dismissed and the Germans installed General Dome Sztojay, a fanatical pro-German, as Prime Minister. Sztojay cooperated fully with the Germans in their efforts to deport the Hungarian Jews.

In early April 1944, Jews were moved into ghettos. By the end of the month, deportations to Auschwitz began. SS Colonel Adolf Eichmann was in charge. In less than 2 months, nearly 440,000 Jews were deported from Hungary in more than 145 trains. Most were deported to Auschwitz, but thousands were also sent to the border with Austria to be deployed at digging fortification trenches. By the end of July 1944, the only Jewish community left in Hungary was Budapest, the capital.

By October 26, 1944, another 35,000 Jews had been rounded up, but since Auschwitz was being liquidated, these Jews were to be used as slave laborers. Since the war had rendered railroad transportation impossible, the Germans marched 27,000 Jews on a trek of over 100 miles to Austria. The Hungarian government stopped these marches because of the high death rate. Some 160,000 Jews remained in Budapest, subject to terror and murder at the hands of the Arrow Cross (fascist party), as well as cold, hunger and disease in their ghetto-like quarters.

Attempts were made to inform the free world of the events in Hungary, but to no avail.

By February 1945, the Soviets had liberated Budapest.

Of approximately 825,000 Jews living in Hungary in 1941, about 63,000 died prior to the German occupation of March 1944. Under German occupation, just over 450,000 died. Less than 1/3 survived the Holocaust.

Romania

The Jewish population of pre-war Romania was 757,000 (4% of the population). It was home to the 3rd largest Jewish community in Europe. Only Poland and the Soviet Union had more Jews.

In November 1940, Romania joined the Axis Alliance and participated in the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941. One of the most notorious incidents was the Iasi Pogrom in June, 1941. In the northern Romanian town of Iasi, at least 8,000 Jews were killed during the pogrom and thousands were deported in sealed trains. On June 30, 4,322 survivors of the pogrom were loaded on 2 trains. One was scheduled for Calarasi, some 300 miles away. The cattle cars simply shuttled back and forth until their human cargo perished from hunger and dehydration in the heat of the Romanian summer. Before the journey was over, 2,544 people died.

In August 1944, as the Soviets were on the offensive and about to liberate Romania from German domination, Romania switched sides and joined the Allies. By wars end, approximately 271,000 Romanian Jews were dead. Two thirds were killed not by Nazis, but by Romanians and Hungarians.

An official report released by the Romanian government concluded, "Of all the allies of Nazi Germany, Romania bears responsibility for the deaths of more Jews than any country other than Germany itself. Not only within the country, but Romanian cooperation with the German *Einsatzgruppen* killed hundreds of thousands of Jews.

Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia had 78,000 Jews before the war (0.4% of the population). Yugoslavia joined the Axis in March 1941 and was then invaded by Germany in April 1941. The country was divided between Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. Nearly 60,000 Jews were caught and killed by the Nazis (this included Jews from Bosnia, Croatia, Rab, and Serbia).

Slide 207

Dr. Seuss Political Cartoon: “Pulling in Russia”

In this cartoon by Dr. Seuss, he illustrates the “heads” of all the countries in Western Europe and Southern Europe that have been overrun. The next country to be brought down, a real beast, is Russia.

Notice that Italy appears different from the other countries. Italy was a supposed ally at this time.

Slide 208

Attack in the East (initial breaker slide)

Slide 209

**Attack in the East:
The Invasion (June 22, 1941)**

According to the 1939 census, there were over 3 million Jews in the Soviet Union (2nd only to Poland). After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the traditional religious and communal organizations of the Jewish community were suppressed as were also the modern Jewish national movements promoting the establishment of a Jewish homeland. Jews enjoyed equal civic status in the Soviet Union, but popular antisemitism continued to exist, especially in the Ukraine.

The aim of the invasion of the Soviet Union went beyond military conquest. It was, in the words of Heinrich Himmler, “an ideological battle and a struggle of races.” Ideologically, Germany and the Soviet Union despised each other. Hitler had devoted much of *Mein Kampf* to his belief in the “menace of Communism.” With regard to the racial struggle, the Nazis saw the Slavs and Jews as barely human. It was only logical that killing these “inferior peoples” to ensure “Aryan racial supremacy” was permissible, if not essential.

Hitler’s 1939 Non-Aggression Pact with the Soviet Union had served its purpose of keeping the Soviet Union out of a war with Germany while Germany overran Western Europe. In direct violation of this pact, Germany invaded Russia on June 22, 1941 in what the Nazis called “Operation Barbarossa.” The goal was to take Moscow by October of that year.

Germany invaded with 80% of their entire army (3 million soldiers) in addition to ½ million allied Axis troops (Finnish, Romanian and Hungarian troops). The Soviet Air Force was defeated quickly. The aged Russian tankers were no match for the modern German ones. The Soviet army lost battle after battle slowly retreating to Moscow. By October 1941, 3 million Soviet soldiers were prisoners of war. All seemed lost.

Early in December 1941, against the recommendations of his generals, Hitler splintered his central attacking forces in hopes of acquiring more territory. This slowed the German advance into Moscow such that German forces found themselves in -40 degree temperatures wearing only summer uniforms. The Germans were forced to transport food from far away Poland because the Soviets had burned the crops behind them. The speedy German advance had also caused the forces to outrun their supply lines. German soldiers were starving and freezing to death.

The tables were turned when Hitler set in motion one of the bitterest conflicts of the 20th century – the Battle of Stalingrad. In the spring of 1942, he launched what he believed would be his final offensive in the East. The Battle of Stalingrad marked a turning point in World War II, halting Germany’s eastward advance.

The Germans had conquered an area in which more than 3,000,000 Jews were living. After the German attack, more than a million Soviet Jews fled eastward into the Asian parts of the country, escaping almost certain death. Despite the harsh conditions of the Soviet interior, those who escaped there constituted the largest group of European Jews to survive the Nazi onslaught. The remaining were left to the mercy of German soldiers.

The German invasion of the Soviet Union marked a turning point in the Holocaust. Mass killing of the Jews became operational policy. Approximately 1,000,000 Soviet Jews perished.

Slide 210

Attack in the East:

Photo of German Soldiers in the Soviet Union

Slide 211

Attack in the East (breaker slide)

Slide 212

Attack in the East:
Soviet P.O.W.'s

On June 22, 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Three million German soldiers were reinforced by Finnish, Romanian, Hungarian, Italian, Slovak, and Croatian troops. Within weeks, German divisions conquered the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. In September the Germans laid siege to Sevastopol and Leningrad, and by late October, the cities of Minsk, Smolensk, Kiev, Odessa, and Kharkov had fallen. Millions of Soviet soldiers were encircled, cut off from supplies and reinforcements, and forced to surrender.

For Nazi Germany this attack was not an "ordinary" military operation. The war against the Soviet Union was a war of annihilation between German fascism and Soviet communism; a racial war between German "Aryans" and subhuman Slavs and Jews. From the very beginning this war of annihilation against the Soviet Union included the killing of prisoners of war (P.O.W.'s) on a massive scale. German authorities viewed Soviet P.O.W.'s as a particular threat, regarding them not only as Slavic subhumans but as part of the "Bolshevik menace" linked in their minds to a Jewish conspiracy.

The brutal treatment of Soviet P.O.W.'s by the Germans violated every standard of warfare.

Existing sources suggest that some 5.7 million Soviet army personnel fell into German hands during World War II. As of January 1945, the German army reported that only about 930,000 Soviet P.O.W.'s remained in German custody. The German army released about one million Soviet P.O.W.'s as auxiliaries of the German army and the SS. About half a million Soviet P.O.W.'s had escaped German custody or had been liberated by the Soviet army as it advanced westward through eastern Europe into Germany. The remaining 3.3 million, or about 57 percent of those taken prisoner, were dead by the end of the war.

Second only to the Jews, Soviet prisoners of war were the largest group of victims of Nazi racial policy.

This death toll was neither an accident nor an automatic result of the war. It was the Nazi state's deliberate policy. German treatment of Soviet P.O.W.'s differed dramatically from German policy towards P.O.W.'s from Britain and the United States, countries the Nazis regarded as racial equals to the Germans. Of the 231,000 British and American prisoners held by the Germans during the war only about 8,300 -- 3.6 % -- died in German custody.

Soviet P.O.W.'s were the first victims of the Nazi policy of mass starvation in the east. Food rations were prioritized in the order below:

1. German forces in the East.
2. German forces elsewhere in Europe.
3. German home-front.
4. Other populations in the East including the Slavs of the Soviet Union.

In August 1941, rations for working Soviet P.O.W.'s were set at 2,200 calories per day, but in practice they actually received about 700 calories a day. The result was death by starvation.

The Germans made little provision to shelter most of the Soviet P.O.W.'s. Often the prisoners had to dig holes in the ground as improvised shelter from the elements. By the end of 1941, epidemics such as typhoid and dysentery emerged as the main cause of death. In October 1941 alone, almost 5,000 Soviet P.O.W.'s died each day. The onset of winter accelerated the mass deaths.

After January 1942, when the Germans realized they needed this P.O.W. manpower to support the war economy, the Soviet P.O.W.'s were given more food and support.

After the war, Soviet soldiers found themselves in a particularly wretched situation. Even though they had fought fiercely for their country during the war, upon their return to the Soviet Union, many were imprisoned or killed. According to Stalin, "any Soviet citizen - soldier or civilian - who had caught even a glimpse of life outside Russia without the guidance of political representatives, was no longer trustworthy.

Slide 213

Attack in the East (breaker slide)

Slide 214

Attack in the East:
Einsatzgruppen

Many scholars believe that the systematic killing of Jews in the occupied Soviet Union by the *Einsatzgruppen* was the first step of the Nazi program to murder all the Jews of Europe.

During the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* (also known as Special Action Groups, Task Squads, or Mobile Killing Units) followed the German army as it advanced deep into Soviet territory. Their primary task was to kill Jews, Communists, gypsies, political leaders and intelligentsia.

Made up of about 3,000 men, and divided into 4 battalions, the *Einsatzgruppen* were recruited mainly from the ideologically committed Nazi SS. The majority of the officers were professional men including a physician, a professional opera singer and a large number of lawyers. Most of the members of these battalions had never been in the army, had never been fired upon, had never seen brutal warfare, and had never encountered the enemy. They were neither criminals nor delinquents; nevertheless, they became efficient killers.

The *Einsatzgruppen* were under the command of Heinrich Himmler. Since the implementation of their tasks required additional manpower, they were often assisted by regular and reserve battalions of the German police, by units and members of the German army, and by local auxiliary forces. In many instances, local officials and citizens collaborated with the Nazis in the persecution of Jews. This occurred not just in the killings, but in making sure that all Jews were rounded up for elimination.

When the *Einsatzgruppen* crossed the border into Russia, 3 million Jews were living under the Soviet flag, most in the western parts of the country. Not only were the Jews concentrated in an area within reach of the German army, but they lived in the cities (almost 90% were urban). Unlike the rest of world Jewry, the Soviets Jews did not know how deeply the Nazis hated them because Stalin had censored all news reports of Nazi antisemitism. As a result, when the *Einsatzgruppen* arrived in a city or town and asked all Jews to present themselves, most complied. The killing operation was standardized throughout every city in the following manner:

1. Jews were rounded up to a central location such as a school or town square.
2. They were marched outside city limits and were forced to hand over all valuables and often clothing.
3. They were then shot, either individually or in mass execution style.

While the goal of this process was to be as uniform and efficient as possible, three major problems began to plague both the soldiers of the *Einsatzgruppen* and the Nazi leadership:

1. Hitler's plan for secrecy in carrying out these killings wasn't possible, as many non-Jews witnessed the disappearance and killing of Jewish citizens.
2. Although hundreds of thousands of Jews had already been shot by December 1941, there were still large communities of Jews untouched by the *Einsatzgruppen*. The mobile killing units were simply too "slow" and "inefficient."
3. The morale of some of the killers in the *Einsatzgruppen* units was being affected. The men doing the killings often became physically and mentally sick due to the grotesqueness of their work. Liquor was freely provided in an effort to make the process easier.

Despite the Nazi perception of the "inefficiency" of the *Einsatzgruppen* units, more than 1.2 million Jews were killed between July 1941 and March 1942.

Sporadic killings continued until late 1943. Most were killed in Poland, the Ukraine, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and western Russia. Within five weeks in mid-1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* had killed more Jews than had died at the hands of the Nazis during the previous eight years. Besides eradicating human lives, the mobile killing units erased a vast and complex Jewish culture. After the war, these ordinary men returned to their homes and lives as if nothing had happened.

It is interesting to note that a handful of these men had requested to be relieved of their unconscionable assignment. Individual soldiers who expressed a desire not to participate in the killings were transferred elsewhere and were not harmed in any way.

To this date, no written order by Hitler to kill the Jews has ever been found.

Even as these mobile killing actions were being carried out, the Nazis were planning and had begun construction of special gassing facilities at extermination camps to more efficiently and "humanely" murder the vast numbers of Jews now under German control.

Following this initial wave of mass murder by the *Einsatzgruppen*, ghettos were formed in the Soviet Union. The Vilna Ghetto in Lithuania followed the mass murders at Ponary, and the Riga Ghetto in Latvia was formed after thousands of Jews had been shot in the Bikernicki Forest.

Estonia

On the eve of World War II, there were 4,500 Jews in Estonia, out of a total population of more than one million. They were considered an important Estonian minority and were allowed a certain amount of self-rule.

Estonia was an independent country between the two world wars. In August 1940, the Soviets took control of the country as a result of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. Many Jews were arrested and about ½ left the country.

When the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, they entered and conquered Estonia. Many of the remaining Jews fled eastward. Those remaining were immediately treated to harsh restrictions: they were forced to wear the Jewish badge and stripped of their property. Then the *Einsatzgruppen* arrived and began murdering the Jews with the help of right-wing Estonian units. By October 1941, almost all Jewish males over 16 had been killed. By the January 1942 Wannsee Conference, authorities in charge of Estonia noted that the region was Jew-free.

In the fall of 1942, the Germans began sending tens of thousands of Jews to Estonia from other occupied areas. They were imprisoned in 20 labor camps, the main one being at Vaivara. Laborers built military defenses for the German army and mined shale oil.

By the fall of 1944, as the Soviet army began advancing towards Estonia, the Germans either killed or evacuated the Jews.

No Estonian Jews, of those remaining in the country after German occupation, survived. Approximately 1,500 were killed.

Latvia

In 1935, more than 93,000 Jews lived in Latvia (5% of the population). Approximately ½ lived in the capital city of Riga. Jews were represented in all social and economic classes.

After World War II broke out, Latvia was occupied and later annexed by the Soviet Union, according to the terms of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. In June 1941, when Germany attacked its former ally, the Soviet Union, Latvia was immediately occupied by German troops. At that point, some 70,000 Jews lived in Latvia.

At the end of July 1941, the mobile killing units of Einsatzgruppe A carried out the first mass murder of Jews. From July to October 1941 some 34,000 Jews were massacred.

At the end of October, about 32,000 Jews from Riga were forced into two ghettos. On November 30 and December 7, thousands of Jews were taken from the ghetto and shot to death in the Rumbala Forest in what is known as the Jeckeln Aktion. Detachments of German *Einsatzgruppen*, together with Latvian and Lithuanian auxiliaries, massacred most of the Latvian Jews.

In November 1941, about 20,000 Jews from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were brought to Latvia and moved into the Riga Ghetto in place of the Riga Jews who were being killed. A small number were used by the Germans as forced laborers, but the majority (some 14,000) were killed in the forest from January to July 1942.

By the beginning of 1943 only 5,000 Jews remained in Latvia, either in ghettos or forced labor camps. As the Soviets approached in 1944, the Jews were sent to camps in Germany; many died en route. By war's end, nearly all of the 70,000 Jews living in Latvia in 1941 had perished.

Lithuania

Before World War II, the Jewish population of Lithuania was about 160,000 (7% of the population). Jews had lived in Lithuania since the 14th century. From the 17th century, Lithuania's rabbinical academies were world-renowned, and during the 19th century the country was a center of Jewish culture, religion and Zionism. After World War I, Lithuania became an independent state.

Before World War II broke out, Lithuania became part of the Soviet sphere, as part of the Nazi-Soviet Pact. At that time, Lithuania's Jewish population had grown due to Jewish refugees who had fled to Vilna, Lithuania from Nazi-occupied Poland. Most of Lithuania's population was angered by the Nazi-Soviet Pact, which took away their country's independence. Their anger was directed toward the Jews and included attacks on the people and their property.

On June 15, 1940, the Soviet army occupied Lithuania and the country was officially annexed to the Soviet Union in August. On one hand, Jews were asked to join the government, and on the other hand, Jewish political, cultural and welfare organizations were closed down. Although the Jews suffered greatly under the Soviets, their fellow Lithuanians considered them supporters of the Soviets and harassed them.

By 1941 the Jewish population had swelled to 250,000 (10% of population). When Germany invaded June 1941, most of the Lithuanian population welcomed the Germans, feeling that the Germans would grant them independence. The Lithuanians willingly collaborated with the Germans against the Jews. Just weeks after the Germans arrived, they instituted a systematic campaign to exterminate all the Lithuanian Jews. Many stages of the annihilation, including rounding up the Jews, guarding them, and transporting them to the extermination sites, were performed by Lithuanian soldiers and police.

During the summer of 1941, most of the Jews were murdered. By late 1941, only 40,000 Jews were left in Lithuania. They were localized in 4 main ghettos and several labor camps.

By the time Germany surrendered in 1945, only a few thousand Lithuanian Jews had survived. The Nazis murdered over 90% of the Jewish population.

NOTE:

A 1948 book by Josef Gar, a Lithuanian, describes a horrifying event from 1941. That year, a champion-caliber Lithuanian basketball team was awarded a dubious prize for its victory over a team comprised of members from the occupying German military. After the match, the victorious team was told that it had won the right to kill some Jews. According to the book, each player accepted the prize. The team reportedly herded Jewish residents near a tower, where each player took their turn shooting about 10 people.

In 2004, 2 suspected members of that team (both in their 80's) were prosecuted in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Ukraine

In 1920, most of the Ukraine was incorporated into the Soviet Union, while portions were annexed to Poland (Volhynia and Eastern Galicia) and Romania (Bukovina). On the eve of World War II, there were 1.5 million Jews living in the Soviet Ukraine.

When war broke out in September 1939, the Soviet Union annexed Polish Ukraine, according to the Nazi-Soviet Pact. In June 1940, the Soviet Union took control of Romanian Ukraine (Bukovina) as well as Bessarabia. With these new borders, the Ukraine now housed 2.4 million Jews.

In June 1941, Germany attacked the Soviet Union and by October they occupied almost all of the Ukraine. Many Ukrainians had considered the Soviets unlawful occupiers and welcomed their German "saviors," whom they believed would grant them full independence. Many Ukrainians volunteered to join the Germany army and police.

Bukovina and Bessarabia were turned over to Romania, which was allied with Germany. Many of the Jews in these areas were deported to the Ukrainian region of Transnistria, where tens of thousands died of disease, malnourishment, exposure, ill treatment, or were murdered.

In the Ukraine proper, persecution of Jews commenced immediately. Thousands of Jews were massacred and Jewish property was either destroyed or looted. The Germans were more than happy to take advantage of Ukrainian antisemitism and encouraged the Ukrainian savagery.

The *Einsatzgruppen* began fulfilling their main task of annihilating Jews and Communists. Following the German arrival in each city, the Jews were ordered to wear a Jewish badge for easy identification, a Judenrat was established, the Jews were confined to certain streets and some were sent to forced labor. A short time later, the executions began. Jews were taken to empty quarries, ravines or anti-tank ditches. Upon arrival, they were shot by the *Einsatzgruppen*. In some cases, the Germans used gas vans to murder the Jews. The largest murder operation carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* took place in a ravine called Babi Yar (see slide #220), outside the city of Kiev. In many communities, Jews offered resistance or fled to the forests and swamps where they engaged in partisan activities.

The Ukraine was liberated by Soviet forces in August 1944.

Approximately 900,000 Jews perished in the Ukraine, including the 33,771 persons who perished at Babi Yar in September, 1941.

Slide 215

Attack in the East:

Einsatzgruppen Photos

Slide 216

Attack in the East:

Photo of *Einsatzgruppen*

Questions to Consider:

- Who is taking the picture? Why would they take this picture?
- Who is the victim looking at?
- What do you think is going through the mind of the man about to pull the trigger? How did he feel years later when this photo became widely published?
- How do these men justify these killings to themselves while maintaining an image of themselves as moral human beings?

Slide 217

Attack in the East (breaker slide)

Slide 218

Attack in the East:

Bialystok Massacre (June 27, 1941)

Teacher Note:

How was the leap made from burning synagogues in Germany during *Kristallnacht* in 1938 to the burning of 500-700 Jews within a synagogue in Bialystok in 1941?

Bialystok, a city in northeastern Poland, was an important Jewish center and home to about 40,000 Jews (greater than 50% of the population). The Germans invaded on September 15, 1939 and transferred the city to the Soviets, as promised by the Nazi-Soviet Pact.

The Germans invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, and 5 days later they retook control of Bialystok.

Immediately upon their arrival, the German policemen began to plunder Jewish shops, especially liquor stores. Around noon, the battalion commander gave the order to search the neighborhood around the synagogue and arrest all Jewish men. The search was conducted with extreme brutality and shootings. Doors were forced open. Jews were kicked and beaten, and their beards were set on fire. At the end of this part of the operation, there were at least 50 corpses strewn around.

More Jews were then brought to the marketplace. Some were taken to a nearby park or to a forest on the outskirts of town and shot. In spite of the ongoing killing, the number of assembled Jews increased steadily. Subsequently, someone proposed that the Jews be placed in the Great Synagogue, which stood just across from the marketplace, and that they be burned there. There had been no explicit order to do so – the idea was the result of one policeman's suggestion, which was then adopted by the unit.

Some 500-700 Jews were forced into the Bialystok synagogue. The building was locked. It was doused with gasoline and set afire. The Germans shot those who tried to escape. The others burned to death. June 27 became known as "Red Friday," because on that day the *Einsatzgruppen* murdered over 2,000 Jews.

Over the next two weeks, another 4,000 Jews were killed.

Slide 219

Attack in the East (breaker slide)

Slide 220

Attack in the East:

Babi Yar Massacre (September 28-29, 1941)

The most infamous *Einsatzgruppen* massacre occurred on the eve of Yom Kippur, September 28, 1941.

The Germans had reached Kiev (the capital of Ukraine) on September 19, 1941. Kiev was a city of 160,000 Jews (20% of the population). About 100,000 fled in advance of the occupation. Most of those who remained were women, children, the elderly, and the sick that had been unable to flee.

On September 28, signs were posted for Jews to appear the next morning at the Jewish cemetery for re-settlement. They were to bring documents, money, valuables, as well as warm clothes, underwear, etc. Failure to appear was punishable by death.

Most thought this meant the Jews were to be deported. The Nazis, however, had decided on September 26 that the Jews would all be killed in retaliation for a series of bombings against German installations for which they were blamed (they were actually set off by Soviet military engineers).

The Jews of Kiev gathered by the cemetery, expecting to be loaded onto trains. The crowd was large enough that most of the men, women, and children did not know what was happening, and by the time they heard machine-gun fire, it was too late to escape. They were driven in small groups of ten, and led down a corridor of soldiers, as described by A. Kuznetsov:

There was no question of being able to dodge or get away. Brutal blows, immediately drawing blood, descended on their heads, backs and shoulders from left and right. The soldiers kept shouting: "Schnell, schnell!" laughing happily, as if they were watching a circus act; they even found ways of delivering harder blows in the more vulnerable places, the ribs, the stomach and the groin.

Stripped of all clothing, the trembling Jews were led into the ravine. Ordered to lie down, each was shot in the back of the head. The massacre continued uninterrupted. New victims were forced to lie on those already dead. Corpses stacked up in layers.

According to the *Einsatzgruppen* reports, at least 33,771 Jews from Kiev and its suburbs were killed at Babi Yar on September 28 and 29, 1941. They were systematically shot dead by machine gun fire. In the months following the massacre, German authorities stationed at Kiev killed thousands more Jews at Babi Yar, as well as non-Jews including Roma (Gypsies), Communists, and Soviet prisoners of war. It is estimated that some 100,000 people were murdered at Babi Yar.

In August 1943, in the face of Soviet Army advances, the mass graves of Babi Yar were dug up and the bodies burned in an attempt to remove the evidence of mass murder. For more than a month, Nazi soldiers as well as concentration camp inmates dug up the bodies. Massive bone crushing machinery was brought to the scene. The bodies were piled on wooden logs, doused with gas and ignited. When the work was done, the Jewish forced laborers were killed. Twenty-five of them escaped and 15 survived to tell what they had seen.

This was one of the largest mass murders at an individual location during World War II. It is not just one site where Jews were exterminated; it is the place which became the symbol for the destruction of Soviet Jewry.

For 25 years after the war, the Soviet Union barely acknowledged Babi Yar. Only after Russian poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko drew international attention to the massacre with his 1961 poem "Babi Yar" did the Soviets put up a monument at the site, though it did not mention Jews (a commemorative menorah was put up by Jewish groups in 1991). Since that time, the ravine has been flooded with mud and runoffs from nearby quarries and has become a picnic ground where youths play football over the mass grave.

In September 2006, for the first time, a state memorial service was held and attended by Ukrainian officials. No major government-sponsored commemoration has taken place there in the 15 years of Ukrainian independence. Responding to accusations about Ukrainian callousness, President Viktor Yushchenko announced that the massacre site would be turned into "a state historical and cultural reserve, which would include a museum dedicated to the Jewish victims."

As of September 2006, only 10% of the Babi Yar victims have been identified. It is interesting to note that Yad Vashem knows the names of more than 90% of Jewish victims killed in western and central Europe, 35-40% of those killed in Romania, Hungary and Poland, yet only about 20% of those killed in the former Soviet Union.

Slide 221

Attack in the East:
Elegy for the Jewish Villages

Besides eradicating human lives, the mobile killing units erased a vast and complex Jewish culture. Jews had settled in Eastern Europe in the early Middle Ages and had built vibrant communities called shtetls (meaning "towns"). Evoked in the paintings of Marc Chagall, the shtetls were Jewish hometowns. Poor, often with crooked earthen streets, they were places where neighbors knew each other and where Jewish families had been in close contact for hundreds of years, one generation after the next. In many of the shtetls, Jews also lived side-by-side with Christians, whether Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, Lithuanian, or German. In these close quarters, there was a great deal of interaction, with each learning something of the other's language and custom. But there was also separation. Interfaith marriages, for example, were extremely uncommon. The Jews of the shtetls were deeply religious and marked out the days and year by the rituals of the Jewish calendar. They were also deeply committed to learning. The shtetls were centers of craftsmanship and trade. This, too, is what was lost.

Marc Chagall (1887-1985)

Marc Chagall was born Moishe Segal. His name was later "Russified" to Mark Shagalov and then further to Shagal. He was born in Vitebsk, Belarus, the oldest of nine children in a close-knit Jewish family. His father was a herring merchant. Chagall began to study painting in 1906. This period of his life, described as happy though impoverished, appears in references throughout Chagall's work.

Ultimately moving to St. Petersburg, Chagall became an active participant in the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Chagall later moved to Paris to be near the art community of the Montparnasse district. With the Nazi occupation of France in World War II, Chagall and his wife and daughter fled Paris. He hid in Marseille under the watchful supervision of American journalist Varian Fry. Fry assisted in Chagall's escape from France through Spain and Portugal. In 1941, he settled in the U.S.

After his wife's untimely death, Chagall returned to Provence, France. He remarried and had a son. His works of this period are dedicated to love and the joy of life, with curved, sinuous figures. He also began to work in sculpture, ceramics, and stained glass.

Chagall died at the age of 97 in France.

Slide 222

Japanese Attack Pearl Harbor (December 7, 1941)

Japan's military leaders were looking to build an empire. Their eyes were on China. By 1940, Japanese forces had occupied Indochina (today Laos and Vietnam). In October of that year, Japan realized that only the U.S. Navy had the power to block further expansions into Asia. They decided to cripple the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

On October 17, 1941, Hideki Tojo (newly appointed Prime Minister by Emperor Hirohito) told Emperor Hirohito that if Japan did not immediately take strong action against the U.S., he feared Japan would become a third class nation.

On November 5, 1941, with the Emperor's agreement, the Japanese government secretly made the decision to go to war.

On December 7, 1941, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The bombing was a great success for Japan at first. It disabled much of the Pacific Fleet and destroyed many aircraft. But in the long run it was disastrous. The U.S., Canada and Great Britain declared war on Japan on December 8, 1941. The next day, China declared war on the Axis. Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S. on December 11. World War II had become a global conflict.

By Christmas 1941, the Japanese had taken the British colony of Hong Kong, the U.S. islands of Guam and Wake, as well as Thailand. From there, Japanese forces advanced into Malaya and Burma (both controlled by Great Britain). By mid-February, Japanese forces captured Singapore. Then in March 1942, the Netherlands' Indies fell. Japan's string of victories astonished even the Japanese. It

In August 1942, U.S. Marines invaded the island of Guadalcanal where the Japanese were building an air base to attack Allied ships. The Japanese were defeated in 6 months. From late 1943 to the Fall of 1944, the Allies made significant inroads. By early 1945, superiority at sea and in the air enabled the Allies to close in on Japan.

In January 1945, the U.S. began dropping incendiary bombs on Japanese cities. Japan's military leaders continued to fight, even though faced with certain defeat. By the summer of 1945, the Allies gained control of the islands of Iwo Jima and Okinawa. The plan was to invade Japan in November. Fearing this invasion might cost up to a million U.S. lives, the Allies turned to the atomic bomb. The Allies threatened to destroy Japan unless they surrendered, yet the Japanese continued to fight.

On August 6, 1945, the American bomber, Enola Gray, dropped the first atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. The explosion killed 70-100,000 people and destroyed about 5 square miles. After Japanese leaders failed to respond, the U.S. dropped a larger bomb on Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. It killed about 40,000 people. Later, thousands died of injuries and radiation from the two bombings. Emperor Hirohito, who had traditionally stayed out of politics, urged the government to surrender.

On August 15, 1945 Japan surrendered and Victory over Japan (VJ Day) was declared.

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Wannsee Conference (January 20, 1942)

The “Final Solution” was the code name for the deliberate, planned destruction or genocide of all European Jews.

In a document dated July 31, 1941, Hermann Göring sent the following order to Reinhard Heydrich. It was here that the term “Final Solution” was used for the first time to describe mass murder:

I hereby commission you to carry out all necessary preparations with regard to organizational, substantive and financial viewpoints for a total solution of the Jewish question in the German sphere of influence in Europe.

Insofar as the competencies of other central organizations are hereby affected, these are to be involved.

I further commission you to submit to me promptly an overall plan showing the preliminary organizational, substantive, and financial measures for the execution of the intended final solution of the Jewish question.

The destruction of European Jewry had already begun in June 1941 with the invasion of the Soviet Union, and by the end of the year, approximately 500,000 Jews had been killed by the *Einsatzgruppen*. Starting in December 1941, the Germans had also begun to use gas vans to kill Jews in Chelmno, Poland. This document simply legitimized actions that were already underway. Nazi documents often regularized actions “after the fact.”

On January 20, 1942, SS Lieutenant General Reinhard Heydrich (Heinrich Himmler’s Deputy) called together 15 high ranking Nazi officials at a lakeside villa in Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin. The purpose was to discuss and coordinate the implementation of this “Final Solution” to the Jewish question in Europe. The Germans would abandon their earlier policy of expulsion and containment for a new policy of mass extermination. Heydrich held the meeting in order to involve key members of the German ministerial bureaucracy whose cooperation was needed to implement the killing measures.

The Wannsee Conference did not mark the beginning of the “Final Solution,” rather it was the place where the “Final Solution” was formally revealed to Nazi leaders and where Reinhard Heydrich announced that he was principally responsible for coordinating the efforts to exterminate the Jews of Europe.

Heydrich made the following points at the conference:

1. His office was responsible for the central direction of the Final Solution regardless of boundaries.
2. The evacuees were to be organized into huge labor groups. During this process, a majority would “fall away through natural decline.” The survivors of this process would have to be “treated accordingly” since these Jews were the core of Jewry and were people who could rebuild Jewish life.
3. Jews who had distinguished themselves on the German side in World War I were to be sent to Theresienstadt – a model camp.
4. Various types of “solution possibilities” were being explored by the Reich and needed to be refined.

The 15 men seated at the conference table at the Conference were considered the Reich’s best and brightest. More than half of them held doctorates from German universities. Each understood that the cooperation of his agency was vital if such an ambitious policy was to succeed. During the conversations there was no evading the subject. “They spoke about methods of killing, about liquidation, about extermination,” Eichmann reported. As they talked, butlers served brandy. There was no opposition, nor were there qualms of conscience. Everyone was enthusiastic about doing their part.

Within ninety minutes, the implementation of the “Final Solution” had been planned and the death sentence of 11 million Jews had been passed down. Not one of the men present at Wannsee objected to the announced policy. The importance of Wannsee lies in the fact that at that place and at that time the entire German bureaucracy became involved in the conscious effort to murder a nation. This marks the first time in history that a modern state committed itself to the murder of an entire people.

The following May, Heydrich’s car was bombed in Prague by members of the Czech resistance and he died shortly thereafter. The Gestapo and SS tracked down and killed the attackers as well as other resistance members and anyone suspected of being involved in Heydrich’s death – more than 1,000 people. In addition, Hitler ordered the Czech mining village of Lidice to be liquidated as retaliation for Heydrich’s murder. On June 9, 1942, German police shot all the men of Lidice and deported the women and children to concentration camps in Germany. The village was completely leveled.

In honor of Heydrich, the extermination of the Jews of Poland was given the name Operation Reinhard. Three extermination camps (Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka) were constructed to carry out Operation Reinhard. They became known as Operation Reinhard Camps.

For historians, a central interpretive issue has been the degree to which Adolf Hitler intervened in decision making and at what level. The evidence points to what one historian calls “government by announcement.” Hitler announced his intentions and subordinates worked out the precise details.

An important such announcement could be heard in a now-famous speech delivered eight months before the outbreak of World War II, in which Hitler prophesied that a coming war would bring about the “annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.” The speech strongly suggests that Hitler had envisioned the annihilation of the Jews even before the war, though concrete plans for annihilation were neither commissioned nor forthcoming until 1941.

Since January 1992 (the 50th anniversary of the Wannsee Conference) the villa has been a museum and conference centre dedicated to the study of the Holocaust.

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Wannsee Conference: Documentation

Picture on Left:

- List “A” gives the countries under direct German rule.
- List “B” gives the countries allied to Germany, neutral or at war with Germany. The USSR figure is far too high: less than a million Jews were still alive in the German-occupied regions of the Soviet Union.
- Note that this list also specifies the number of Jews in unconquered countries for eventual destruction, including 330,000 from Britain, 18,000 from Switzerland, 6,000 from Spain, and 4,000 from Ireland.

Picture on Right:

One of the macabre features of the numerical list of the Jews submitted at the Wannsee Conference was the fact that no figure was given for the Jews of Estonia, merely a brief note that Estonia was “free of Jews.” This was true. The 1,000 Estonian Jews who had come under German rule in October 1941 had all been murdered during the 3 months prior to the Wannsee Conference.

At the Wannsee Conference, Heydrich gained formal authority over the “Final Solution” and the use of the Jews as a slave labor force. Heydrich calculated there were about 11 million Jews in Europe – including England and Ireland – and outlined a plan whereby they would be deported to the east, put to work, and then killed. The Jews would build the German utopia, a proposed 80 billion Reichsmark construction project. It was understood that those who were not worked to death would be systematically murdered.

The Evolution of Death

Teacher Note:

Zyklon-B was manufactured by DEGESH (German Vermin Combating Corporation) in Germany.

The Nazis did not start World War II with a plan to eliminate the Jews. This solution evolved.

It began with the *Einsatzgruppen's* elimination of Jews in the Soviet Union. The methodology of killing human beings at close range proved to be psychologically devastating to the killers.

...these men are finished for the rest of their lives. What kind of followers are we producing here – either neurotics or brutes?

-SS General Erich von dem Bach-Zelewski

A more efficient, impersonal and cost effective alternative was needed and various methods of killing were tested.

The Nazis had already experimented with poisonous gas for the purpose of mass murder in late 1939 with the killing of those considered “useless eaters” – those who were physically and mentally handicapped. This was known as the T-4 Program. Six gassing installations, using carbon monoxide gas, were established for this purpose. Gas chambers disguised as showers, complete with fake nozzles, were used. When this program received public outcry, it was halted “publicly” in August 1941; although, it continued secretly throughout the war years. Nazi T-4 personnel transferred their expertise to the extermination of the Jews. The gas chambers from some of these euthanasia killing centers were dismantled and shipped to extermination camps in Poland.

The use of explosives was explored as a means of mass extermination. As early as September 1941, an *Einsatzgruppen* battalion was faced with the task of liquidating the patients in a mental asylum in the occupied Russian city of Minsk. Twenty-five people were locked in bunkers and an explosion was set off, killing only a few. It took a second explosion to complete the job.

A few days later, a different test was conducted at a mental asylum in Mogilev. This time 20-30 patients were locked in a sealed room with two pipes driven into the walls. A car was parked outside and its exhaust pipes were attached to one of the pipes. After 8 minutes and no deaths, a second car was connected to the pipe in the wall. With both cars running simultaneously, all in the room were dead within minutes.

In another experiment, using deported Jews from the Lodz Ghetto, mobile gas vans were used. These vans resembled modern day refrigerator trucks with a rear cargo area that was airtight. The Jews were herded through a hallway to a windowless room that turned out to be the cargo area of a large van. Once full, the van doors were shut, and as it was driven to a nearby forest, exhaust fumes were routed into the back, asphyxiating the trapped victims. Eyewitnesses describe hearing “hellish” screams from inside the vans, earning them the name “Hell Vans.”

The first gas vans in the Soviet Union were used by the *Einsatzgruppen* in Poltava in November 1941. The killing process took 15-30 minutes. In addition, there was difficulty with the hose connections, there was no means to dispose of the bodies, and the issue of mental stress was still a factor.

On December 8, 1941, Chelmno (1st Nazi extermination camp) began using gas vans for killings. By June 1942 there were 20 gas vans in operation, and another 10 were being prepared. Some of the trucks could hold up to 50-60 victims; others could only handle 25-30 people.

Ultimately, the gas vans could not handle the large number of Jews that the Nazis intended to murder, so the more effective gas chambers were developed.

On September 3, 1941, gas from Zyklon-B crystals was tested at Auschwitz for the first time on Soviet POW's. Zyklon-B was an amethyst blue crystal of hydrogen cyanide (prussic acid) and had originally been sold for disinfection and pest control in industrial settings. At Auschwitz, it was originally used for these purposes. By August of 1941, Zyklon-B was first used experimentally, and then routinely, as an agent of mass annihilation. Due to its volatility, the Zyklon-B granules were supplied to the camps in sealed metal canisters. When the crystals were exposed to air, they turned into poisonous gas. The crystals were dropped into hermetically sealed rooms through a small opening in the ceiling. After a few minutes of intense suffering, the victims died. The first victims were Soviet soldiers who had been taken prisoner.

Rudolf Hess, commandant of Auschwitz, witnessed the killing and was satisfied with the gassing procedure which took only 3 to 15 minutes to kill. Now he only needed large gassing chambers.

"In mid-March 1942, some 75-80% of all victims of the Holocaust were still alive, while 20-25% had perished," according to Holocaust historian Christopher R. Browning. "A mere eleven months later, in mid-February 1943, the percentages were exactly the reverse."

Deportations

Teacher Note:

With over a million people operating and maintaining the train system leading to the camps, one has to wonder if after the war, when everyday Germans declared that they had no idea what was going on, could this be?

Discuss with students whether those involved with the railroad were perpetrators or bystanders.

According to the Wannsee Conference of January 1942, there were approximately 11 million Jews for the Nazis to eliminate.

Railroads would be the essential link to the killing process.

The deportation of the Jews was a tremendous operation. The overall planning and supervision of the trains was the job of Adolf Eichmann, the Gestapo specialist in charge of the Reich Center for Jewish Emigration. Eichmann secured cooperation from local authorities in rounding up their Jewish populations and loading them onto the trains. They also worked closely with those who ran the railroads in all countries through which they would pass, making sure the rail lines were kept clear for their passage.

This effort required the coordination of numerous German government ministries and state organizations, including the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), the Transport Ministry, and the Foreign Office. The RSHA coordinated and directed the deportations; the Transport Ministry organized train schedules; and the Foreign Office negotiated with German-occupied countries about handing over their Jews. All Jews for transport had to be booked as passengers, and one-way fares were charged and billed to the RSHA. The SS even used travel agents to book the passages, even though they would be traveling in freight cars.

The *Reichsbahn*, the German railroad, was one of the largest organizations in the Third Reich. It had 1.4 million workers, of whom 500,000 were civil servants who kept the system in operation. During the Holocaust, their job was to allocate personnel, obtain freight cars, coordinate train schedules, keep the tracks open, drive the locomotives, and clean cars.

The Germans went to great effort to disguise their intentions from their victims. They often employed euphemisms to keep the victims in the dark about where they were going until they got there. Forced deportation was called "Resettlement in the East." Anxious victims were told they were being sent to labor camps. The ruse often worked. Even as late as the spring of 1944, many Hungarian Jews had not heard of Auschwitz.

Towards the end of the war, as the supply lines needed for a 2-front war lengthened, there was a chronic shortage of trains. The railroad system was stretched thin in its efforts to provision the army. Even with allied bombing raids on the lines disrupting traffic, the trains carrying Jews continued to roll. Transports were given additional cars, more Jews were crammed into fewer trains and indirect routes were taken so the human traffic could keep moving. Even as Germany was losing the war and their troops were in need of supplies, the trains were prioritized for the deportation of Jews.

The process of deportation varied, depending on the region of origin.

Deportations from the East:

In the east (Poland, Soviet Union, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, etc.) most Jews were in ghettos by 1942. They had already abandoned their homes and many possessions. Deportations from the ghettos might take the entire population at once, or only a portion. When deportations were gradual, the elderly were taken first. Then those who could not work or had no work permits. Later, children and those without influence or family connections were removed.

In the smaller ghettos, the Nazis carried out this process in just one or two days. In the larger ghettos, which sometimes contained hundreds of thousands of Jews, the deportation could not be carried out in only one day. The Judenrat would be instructed to gather several thousand people at a time. If the Judenrat could not or would not provide the Germans with the number of people they had requested, German troops would be sent in to apprehend Jews in hiding. The Jews were then marched out of the ghetto to the local railroad station, where they were jammed into cattle cars. The trip to the extermination camp sometimes took only a few hours, but often took days.

Deportations from the West:

In the west (France, Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Austria, etc.), the Jews were deported directly from their homes and often were given advanced notice to prepare for their journey.

When notified by the German authorities of their impending deportation, the Jews often received specific instructions. The SS and police made it clear to all deportees that failure to adhere to these instructions would result in prosecution or death. These rigid orders included instructions to pack approximately 50 kg. (110 pounds) of their possessions to take with them. Since it was now clear that the SS intended to kill these people either on arrival at a killing center or through forced labor, those instructions revealed the extent of Nazi deception. For the deportees, those instructions created an illusion of survival to the very end and enabled the SS to control the large numbers of deportees arriving in the camps.

Steps prior to deportation from one's home:

Complete a property inventory form, detailing possessions to be left behind. This property was then confiscated by authorities and the forms were countersigned by the deportee. House keys were to be marked and delivered to the police. Desk and closet locks were to be left open.

- All rent and debts were to be paid prior to deportation. All utilities were to be shut off.
- All currency, bank books, etc. were to be surrendered to the police. Cameras, bicycles and typewriters were to be surrendered.
- The deportation transport number was to be printed on one side of a piece of cardboard and the home address on the other side. The cardboard was to be attached to the outermost article of clothing worn by the deportee.
- Deportees were allowed to carry 2 types of luggage: a suitcase with blankets, clothing & kitchen utensils that could weigh no more than 50 kg (110 pounds); the other a knapsack with bedding and linens as well as food for the trip.
- The baggage was to be marked with the name and evacuation number of the deportee.
- All deportees were searched bodily at the assembly centers and all contents were searched by the Gestapo before the trains departed, enabling the authorities to confiscate hidden valuables.

In some instances, Jews were not given the luxury of prior notification of their deportation. Unannounced "razzias" (evictions of families from their own apartments) were carried out in full light of day, capturing Jewish residents unaware as well as spreading terror throughout the neighborhood.

The Germans used both freight and passenger cars for the deportations. The freight cars were packed with up to 100 victims/car such that most passengers were not able to sit. The trains carried 1 – 2,000 people, sometimes 5,000. This weight slowed travel to 30 mph, prolonging the ordeal.

The deportees were not provided with food or water, even when the transports had to wait days for other trains to pass. The people deported in sealed freight cars suffered from intense heat in summer, freezing temperatures in winter, and the stench of urine and excrement. Aside from a bucket, there were no provisions for sanitary requirements. Without food or water, many deportees died before the trains reached their destinations. Armed guards shot anyone trying to escape. When the doors of the train cars were finally opened upon arrival at the camps, grateful passengers thought that the worst of the ordeal was behind them.

The Story of Ethel Katz

Born in Bialystok in 1930, Ethel's story begins in August 1943 in the terrifying darkness of a boxcar on its way to the Treblinka death camp. The thin 13-year-old girl nicknamed Edjya sat on the floor listening to the thudding rail ties, trying to understand the terrible events that had befallen her family.

Her mother nudged her and whispered, "You're a skinny one, Edjya, always a skinny one," as she eyed the tiny vent at the top of the boxcar. "Quickly, up there," she said. "Edjya, go through," her mother repeated. "Quickly, I said. We'll let you down slowly. Hold onto the towel."

Edjya inched out of the vent and down the horizontal wooden slats of the boxcar's exterior until her elbows and then finally her wrists cleared. With one foot resting on an exterior bolt, and hanging onto the towel against the wind, Edjya cried out, "Take me back up. I can't do it."

"Get ready," her mother instructed. "When you hit the ground, run, Edjya, run. And tell someone. Tell someone what is happening!" Edjya jumped. On the ground, she was shot by militiamen and then buried in a snowy mass grave. But when Herschel, a teenaged Polish forest fighter, came upon her leg protruding from the snow, he pulled her out to life and survival. They lived in the woods for two years. Later, the couple married.

After a brief stay in a post-war Displaced Persons Camp, the young survivors reached America, settled in Chicago and as her mother enjoined, "she told someone." Ethel's dramatic and unique escape from a boxcar – one of a few that occurred – was retold many times.

Hitler placed Ethel and millions of other European Jews in boxcars, and gave them numbers instead of names to wipe out the Jewish people and eradicate their memory. To defeat Hitler's plan, Jews like Ethel only needed to survive to tell their story. Ethel Katz died on February 9, 2005.

Rudolf Vrba's Memoirs

Rudolf Vrba was deported from his home in June 1942. He ultimately ended up at Auschwitz and in 1944 escaped to tell the world what he had experienced. In his memoirs, Rudolf Vrba recalled how, in a cattle wagon with 80 other deportees being transported to Poland, the following thought processes occurred:

They were all imprisoned mentally by unanswerable questions. How had it happened? Why had it happened? What was going to happen to them and to those they had left behind? And, of course, where were they going? Snatched from civilization, yet still attached to it by the umbilical cord of domesticity, they worried, too, about trifles. Had they turned the gas off at the main? Had they locked the back door? Had they remembered to cancel the milk and the newspapers?

One of Vrba's fellow deportees foretold their future:

You're fools, if you think you're going to resettlement areas. We are all going to die! Soon, in fact, he was forgotten, though later his words were remembered.

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Deportations:

Drawing, "In the Railway Car" by Ella Shiber

Ella Shiber (born Liebermann) was born in Berlin in 1927 to a well-off family. Her father was a fur merchant, and her mother, a native of Poland, was a midwife. In addition to Ella there were three more children: Bertha (b. 1919), Alexander (b. 1922) and Leo, (b. 1929). They received a Jewish-Zionist education at home.

In 1938 the family was forced to leave Germany because of her mother's Polish origin. They moved to Bendin, where her mother's family lived. During World War II the extended family was moved to the local ghetto. In the last *Aktion* (roundup) in August 1943, Ella, her brother (Leo) and her parents went into hiding in a pit that they had dug beneath the garbage container beside their house. (Bertha and Alexander had previously been sent to labor camps in Germany). Their food was provided by thirteen-year old Leo, who used to sneak into the house at night, as well as by the Polish janitor of the building, who risked his life and brought additional essential products to their hiding place. One day an SS officer asked the Polish janitor to explain what he was doing beside the hiding place, and when he refused to hand over the family, he was apparently beaten to death. In light of this, the father understood that the hiding place was no longer safe, and the family came out and turned themselves in to the Germans. They lived in the ghetto until December 1943, and then the parents, Ella and her brother were deported on the last transport to Auschwitz.

In the concentration camp the women were separated from the men. The latter were immediately sent to the crematoria, while sixteen-year old Ella and her forty-two year old mother were sent to work in the munitions factory where they worked extremely long days under dreadful conditions. During this time one of the SS officers learned that Ella was an artist, and she was asked to paint the picture of one of his relatives who had been killed on the front, based on his photograph. He provided the drawing materials as well as food for mother and daughter. The SS officer asked that she comply with the requests of his comrades to draw portraits of their relatives. Thanks to these drawings, the mother was not transferred elsewhere, and they remained together the entire time.

In January 1945, Ella and her mother took part in the Death March. They were brought to Neustadt camp, which was a satellite camp of Ravensbrück.

Ella and her mother were liberated by the Allies on May 2, 1945, and they decided to return to Poland to search for relatives. They arrived in Bydgoszcz-Bromberg where Ella met the man who would become her husband, Emanuel Shiber, a Jewish officer in the Polish army who was stationed in the area and had heard that there were Jewish survivors of the camps there. Ella and Emanuel were married on February 2, 1946 and on May 23, 1946, together with her mother, they left Poland and reached a DP camp near Munich from where they hoped to continue on to Israel.

The ship on which they sailed, the Ben Hecht, was captured on the shores of Israel by the British on March 12, 1947, and its six hundred passengers were taken to a camp in Cyprus on a British warship. During the short trip, Ella drew a picture on the side of the ship's hull of a rifle and a hand driving out the British. During their detention in Cyprus, Emanuel taught a course in military training and prepared an instruction book which contained drawings of weapons, their parts and how to use them, which was illustrated by the Ella. Later on (1985), she was awarded the "National Fighter's Medal" by the Israeli Defense Ministry "for her part in the fight for the rebirth of Israel".

The period of detention in Cyprus ended in May 1948 and the family made their home in Haifa, Israel where Ella studied painting and art at Haifa University.

In 1945 the artist began to create a series of drawings, *On the Edge of the Abyss*, which depicts the daily atrocities during the war. The work was begun at the urgings of her husband, who thought that the artistic expression would help her free herself of the traumas she had experienced. The series was completed in Haifa in 1948 and was first exhibited in a Haifa cinema in 1950. Two years later the drawings were exhibited at the Ghetto Fighters' Museum, and afterwards were donated to its permanent collection.

Ella Liebermann-Shiber passed away in Haifa in 1998. Her husband and three children continue to work at perpetuating the artist's memory. After her death she received "a certificate of merit and appreciation" from the wife of the President of Israel for her work and for her major contribution to "Holocaust remembrance and assurance of the future."

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Deportations:

"Written in Pencil in a Sealed Railway Car" by Dan Pagis

Teacher Notes:

- Adam and Eve's first two sons were Cain and Abel.
- According to the Jewish Talmud, when Cain killed Abel, he killed any descendants that may have emerged from Abel. Not only did he destroy Abel's life and presumably Adam and Eve's lives by murdering their son, he destroyed future generations which Able may have fathered.
- Nazi ideology sought to undermine the ethical imperative, "Thou shalt not murder." Nazi racial ideology was based not on the biblical assumption that all human beings are brothers, but rather on a racial theory that divided humanity into distinct "races" and endorsed a struggle between them, even to the point of eliminating the allegedly rival race – the Jews.

Questions to Consider:

- What is different about the setting of the poem as compared with the original creation story in Genesis 2-4? How does this different setting affect the meaning of the poem?
 - Who is the "you" in the fourth line of the poem? (Note that in the original Hebrew version of the poem, "you" is a plural pronoun.) What does this imply about our responsibilities as readers and as persons in a post-Holocaust world?
 - Why can "eve" not finish the poem?
 - What do you imagine comes after the "in," in the last line?
-

This poem was written by Dan Pagis, a Holocaust survivor. Dan Pagis was born in Bukovina (formerly part of Austria, then Romania, and finally Russia) in 1930. He spent his early years in a concentration camp in the Ukraine from which he escaped in 1944. He eventually settled in Israel where he became a well known poet. Dan Pagis died in 1986.

From the title to the poem itself, many students are puzzled by this "odd" poem. Dan Pagis uses the first murder in the Bible as a metaphor for the Holocaust.

In a few words, Dan Pagis presents Eve's heart-wrenching cry to whoever may hear her – to pass a message to her son, Cain. Her message, left open, denotes her intense need to convey some form of will and testament that she, in extremis, is incapable of formulating. The title of the poem immediately catapults us directly into the throes of the annihilation process together with the human need to leave some testimony, even if it is written in pencil.

The Biblical Story of Cain and Abel, Genesis, Chapter 4, 2b-12 (New International Version)

2b Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3 In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord.

4 But Abel brought fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5 but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7 If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it."

8 Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field." And while they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9 Then the Lord said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

10 The Lord said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground.

11 Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

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Deportations:

Map of Deportations to Auschwitz

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The Camps (Initial Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Types of Concentration Camps

Teacher Notes:

The term concentration camp refers to a camp in which people are detained or confined, usually under harsh conditions and without regard to legal norms of arrest and imprisonment. Concentration camps (Konzentrationslager; KL or KZ) were an integral feature of the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945.

It is estimated that the Nazis established 20,000 camps in the occupied countries. There were several small camps which were created for limited operations against the local population. Most of these camps were destroyed by the Nazis themselves, sometimes after two or three months of activity.

Camps filled a variety of purposes: labor camps, prisoner of war camps, transit camps, extermination camps. Even among these categories, each camp was unique in its administration, physical attributes and severity of conditions.

Only 6 camps were designated as extermination/death camps. In these camps, all or part of the prisoner population was gassed upon arrival. All were located in Poland, in semi-rural area and near a railway line.

After the Nazis came to power, detention facilities were established to imprison "enemies of the state" who were taken into "protective custody" to be "re-educated." The "Protective Custody Law" of February 28, 1933 authorized the police to make arrests on suspicion of criminal activity and incarcerate without benefit of legal counsel or trial. The Gestapo engaged in a policy of arrest aimed at frightening and intimidating the population – a strategy of deterrence. The prisoners in these early concentration camps were primarily political opponents of the regime, including German Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian clergy. These individuals suddenly "disappeared," returning after a certain time both depressed and frightened. The first such SS-run camp was Dachau, established on March 22, 1933 in Germany.

By 1936, the SS began constructing new concentration camps as part of a 4-year plan to "clean up" the cities as well as a means to fund the SS-owned building material industry. Roundups now focused on groups such as Gypsies, homosexuals, and others accused of "asocial" behavior. These camps included Oranienburg (later re-named Sachsenhausen, est. 1936), Buchenwald (est. 1937), Flossenburg (est. 1938), Mauthausen (punishment/work camp in Austria, est. 1938), and Ravensbrück (for women, est. 1939). Location of the camps was based on proximity to production facilities for building materials, granite quarries, and tile & brick factories.

After *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, the Nazis conducted mass arrests of Jews. They were briefly incarcerated with the hopes of "encouraging" emigration.

By the late 1930's there were hundreds of camps scattered throughout the Reich. While conditions in the camps were horrible, and while the death rates were high due to malnutrition, typhus and exhaustion, there is no evidence that these camps were used for extermination purposes.

With the outbreak of World War II, the number of Jewish prisoners in German concentration camps rose exponentially. With the invasion of Poland in September 1939, the Nazis opened **Labor Camps** where thousands of prisoners died of exhaustion and starvation. Following the June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazis increased the number of **Prisoner of War Camps**.

By the winter of 1941, 1.5 million Jews had been eliminated, but as pointed out at the Wannsee Conference, there were 11 million Jews targeted for annihilation. The current killing methods were too slow.

Using Germany's scientists, businessmen, engineers and officials, the Nazis built a modern and efficient way to eliminate the Jews:

1. An elaborate train system was developed that involved over one million people to operate and maintain.
2. In Eastern Europe, the Nazis had already moved most of the Jews to ghettos which were conveniently located near railroad lines. Between 1942 and 1944 these ghettos were "liquidated," deporting the residents for "Resettlement in the East." This "resettlement" was to **Labor Camps** or **Extermination Camps**.
3. In the Soviet Union, the *Einsatzgruppen* killed Jews on the spot. There was no need to collect and ship people to extermination camps.
4. In Western Europe, the situation was more complicated. There were no closed ghettos and Jews had long been integrated into society. Local sensibilities might be offended if people were crammed into cattle cars in the central train station.

The Germans decided to send Jews by third-class rail to an isolated transit camp within the country, and from there to the east. And so it was that Jews were deported to intermediate **Transit Camps** that served to control and organize the flow of victims to the awaiting gas chambers. Here, Jews got a taste of life under Nazi control – a life that included constant hunger, systemized humiliation, disease and death.

The ultimate destination was the **Labor Camps** or **Extermination Camps**.

Slide 232

The Camps:

Photos of Different Types of Concentration Camps

Slide 233

The Camps:

Photos of Different Types of Concentration Camps

Slide 234

The Camps (Breaker Slide)

Slide 235

The Camps:

Chart of the Extermination Camps

Teacher Notes:

- There were 6 extermination camps:

Auschwitz-Birkenau
Belzec
Chelmno
Majkanek
Sobibo
Treblinka

Although there were deaths in other camps due to work, conditions or murder, these were the only camps with organized extermination facilities.

- Approximately half of all the Jewish victims of German gas chambers were supposedly gassed with Diesel exhaust. In other words, the Diesel gas chambers are as important, at least in terms of numbers of alleged victims, as the gas chambers that used Zyklon-B.

- Hitler never visited an extermination camp. Heinrich Himmler did and even witnessed a gassing which supposedly made him quite ill.

Interpreting the Chart:

- The main thing to point out in the chart above is the rapid acceleration of exterminations beginning in early 1942 with the creation of the Operation Reinhard camps of Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka. Their primary purpose was the extermination of the Jews of Poland.
- Another point to consider is that the U.S. landed on European shores in June 1944. By that time, the majority of the victims of the Holocaust were already dead.

Unlike the earlier phases of the destruction process, the extermination camps were unprecedented. Never before in history had people been killed on an assembly-line basis.

Of the approximately 6 million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, more than half were systematically killed in the Nazi extermination camps.

All extermination camps were located in German occupied Poland near railroad lines. Poland was chosen as the main killing site for several reasons:

1. There was a large Jewish population in Poland.
2. It was geographically feasible, i.e. land was available.
3. Local anti-Jewish sentiments lent itself to little resistance.
4. This was far from "core" Germany and outside the spotlight of the German as well as the international public.

Secrecy was paramount. Everything connected with the "Final Solution," including the term itself, was carefully camouflaged.

Chelmno

Chelmno was the first Nazi camp where gassings were used to exterminate Jews on a large-scale basis, and the first place outside of the Soviet Union where Jews were slaughtered en masse as part of the "Final Solution." This pilot extermination project was rude and crude – conferring death by 3 gas vans borrowed from the eastern front. There were no crematoria, just mass graves in the woods.

The Germans called the camp Kulmhof. It was 37 miles northwest of Lodz, the 2nd largest city in Poland. The camp opened on December 8, 1941. Killing operations were conducted until March 1943, with a brief re-opening in June/July 1944 to take care of the liquidation of the Lodz Ghetto.

No railroad tracks reached Chelmno directly, so the deportees were brought by train to a nearby station, and then loaded onto trucks that delivered them straight to the camp. Upon arrival, prisoners were greeted by SS officials, often wearing white coats to induce the impression that they were physician. The "doctors" explained to the deportees that they would go to Germany as laborers, but first had to bathe and have their clothes disinfected. The Jews entered a house and were led to a back room where they undressed and handed over their valuables for a receipt. The naked prisoners were led to the cellar, where they had to walk down a ramp sloping into the back of a large paneled truck that could hold 50-70 person. When the back of the van was full, the doors were closed and sealed. The mechanic on duty attached a tube to the van's exhaust pipe and then started the engine, pumping carbon monoxide gas into the space where the prisoners were crowded, killing them by asphyxiation. It usually required 10-15 minutes to murder all who were inside. The driver then drove the bodies to the pre-dug graves in the forest where Jewish workers unloaded the bodies into the graves. The van then returned to the camp and the operation was repeated.

On January 14, 1942 an inmate, Jacob Grojanowski, succeeded in escaping and reached the Warsaw Ghetto where he gave detailed information to the underground Oneg Shabbat Archives. By June 1942, through the channels of the Polish underground, his report reached London and was published.

Estimates of the number of people killed at Chelmno vary from 170,000 to 360,000, virtually all Jews. Most authorities agree on the higher estimates. Late in 1944 there were plans to shut down the camp; however, Soviet troops arrived before these plans could be implemented. The Germans abandoned Chelmno on January 17, 1945.

Operation Reinhard Camps: Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka

In 1942, the Nazis opened Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka to systematically exterminate the 2+ million Jews of the General Government of Poland. This was known as Operation Reinhard in memory of Reinhard Heydrich, the main organizer of the "Final Solution," who had been assassinated by Czech resistance fighters on May 2, 1942. These 3 camps were known as Operation Reinhard Camps.

Belzec (near Lublin, Poland) was established a forced labor facility shortly after the Germans invaded Poland. Prisoners were used to build fortifications and anti-tank ditches along the Bug River, which formed the demarcation line between German- and Soviet-occupied Poland. By mid-August 1940 the camp housed 11,000. Conditions were deplorable and inmates died by the 1,000's due to overwork, starvation, disease and execution. The labor camp was dismantled at the end of 1940.

In November 1941, construction began for a killing center on the site of the former Belzec labor camp. It was the first camp in which large gas chambers were built. Killing operations began on March 17, 1942. Belzec was the model for the other two Operation Reinhard Camps.

Each arriving train consisted of 40-60 cars. Twenty cars at a time, carrying over 2,000 Jews, were detached from the train and pulled into the camp. The Jews would disembark the trains onto the platform where they were assured they had arrived at a transit camp. They were told that before being assigned labor duties elsewhere they would be disinfected and showered. Older people, the sick and invalid, and those unable to walk were told that they would enter an infirmary for medical treatment. In reality, they were taken on carts straight to the open ditches where they were shot. Men were separated from women and children and marched off to large huts where they undressed. Women had their hair shaven off. They were then brutally pushed and prodded through "the tube" a narrow passageway leading to the gas chambers which were disguised as showers. For the first few months,

extermination was accomplished using diesel fumes. The carbon monoxide gas was piped in from a diesel engine mounted outside of the building. The killing process took up to 30 minutes. By August 1942, Zyklon-B was used experimentally. The corpses of the victims were stripped of valuables and buried in nearby mass graves.

At first this entire process of killing 2,000 Jews lasted 3-4 hours, but as the Nazis gained more experience, they cut the time down to 60-90 minutes. Frequently, the entire procedure was accompanied by beatings and other acts of cruelty on the part of the German and Ukrainian guards.

Extermination ceased in late 1942, and early the next year the bodies were exhumed and cremated and the camp was closed. To deter scavengers, the camp was ploughed over and turned into a farm. One of the Ukrainian guards was made the farmer.

Sobibor was built in March 1942 near the village of Sobibor. It was the smallest of the Operation Reinhard Camps and was surrounded by a minefield 50 feet wide.

The camp was designed after Belzec. One important technical change in Sobibor was a narrow-gauge mine-track which ran from the railroad platform to the mass graves. Belzec had only a trolley pulled by prisoners or horses to transport the dead, sick and invalid from the train to the ditches.

The camp operated from May 1942 until October 1943. Very few historic facts remain concerning this camp. On October 14, 1943, about 300 Jewish inmates assigned to the *Sonderkommando* (special work units) rose in revolt, killing several SS supervisors. Several inmates were also killed during the rebellion or during the escape attempt. The number of inmates who managed to escape is not certain, but all who stayed behind were shot the next day. Following their revolt, the installations for mass extermination were destroyed and the area was planted with trees. About 50 prisoners survived to tell their stories.

Treblinka was located 62 miles from Warsaw, Poland and 4 km. from the village of Treblinka. It was the 2nd largest killing center after Auschwitz.

Treblinka was originally a punitive labor camp for Poles. Construction to convert it to an extermination camp began in late May 1942 after Belzec and Sobibor were already operational. It was ready for operation in July 1942. The construction was carried out by Jewish and Polish slave laborers. Learning from the mistakes of the previous 2 camps, the Nazis were able to construct an unusually efficient destruction instrument that managed to destroy the lives and bodies of almost 1,000,000 human beings in only 12 months. The SS technicians and experts had no precedents on which to rely. They had to depend on original thinking to accomplish this task.

As the Warsaw Ghetto was liquidated, the majority of its inhabitants were transported to Treblinka. The killing process at Treblinka was very similar to that of Belzec and Sobibor. Upon arrival by rail cars, the victims were separated by sex as well as adults from children. They were told they were being transported to other work camps but first had to bathe and be disinfected. They were stripped of their clothing and other possessions and forced to run naked along a fenced-in path to the gas chambers known as the "tube." Many realized that they were going to their death and, when they resisted, were beaten or clubbed with rifles and whips by the camp staff. The gas chambers were deceptively labeled "bathhouses." There was even a Hebrew inscription on a curtain at the entrance that read, "This is the gate through which the righteous pass." Here they were gassed with carbon monoxide gas produced by diesel engines and pumped in through ceiling pipes camouflaged as shower heads. The staff at Treblinka was minimal. They made extensive use of Jewish prisoners called *Sonderkommandos* (special work units). When these workers became too weak to do their work they were killed and replaced by younger and stronger inmates. The *Sonderkommandos* were forced to transport the corpses to mass graves for burial, and later, when the bodies were exhumed, they burned the victim's bodies on iron grates.

On August 2, 1943, in a planned rebellion by a *Sonderkommando* group, one SS guard was killed and more than 200 inmates escaped. Most were hunted down and killed or recaptured. The facilities at Treblinka were closed at the end of November, 1943.

Auschwitz

Unlike the Operation Reinhard Camps, Auschwitz developed slowly into a death camp. It was established in 1940 as a concentration camp for Poles, and in 1941 it was to become a camp for Soviet P.O.W.'s. It became a death camp for Jews in 1942.

The camp of Auschwitz was established by the Nazis in the suburbs of Oswiecim, a Polish city that was annexed into the Reich and had its name changed to Auschwitz. Auschwitz was 37 miles west of Krakow, Poland near the border of Czechoslovakia. Before the war, it was a town whose residents were of German descent and supported the Nazis. It had a Jewish population of 7-8,000.

Auschwitz ultimately consisted of 3 main subcamps:

Auschwitz I

Auschwitz I was the first camp built. It utilized the site of World War I Polish military barracks and was designed to hold 10,000 political prisoners. It first opened in May 1940 as a concentration camp for Polish civilians. It was here that prisoners first saw the sign that gave them false hope, "*Arbeit Macht Frei*" (work will make you free). Contrary to these words, prisoners were brutally tortured and used as a source of labor for the war effort. Death was the only real escape.

Auschwitz I was surrounded by double barbed-wire electric fences and nine watch towers. It consisted of the commandant's office and living quarters, the administration building, kitchen, infirmary, the main guard station, one gas chamber and crematorium, the Gestapo camp, location for medical experiments, gallows and execution area. Barracks housed the criminals. These barracks also housed the "court rooms" where the prisoners were "tried" and usually sentenced to death. In the execution area, prisoners were lined up against the "Black Wall" and shot. Their bodies were placed in gravel pits in and around the main camp.

Auschwitz I also became a location for medical experiments that used humans as guinea pigs.

Auschwitz I became a camp for Soviet P.O.W.'s in 1941. It was here, on September 3, 1941, that Soviet P.O.W.'s were used in trials of Zyklon-B. They were gassed in underground cells.

Auschwitz II (Birkenau)

Auschwitz II (Birkenau) was the largest part of the Auschwitz complex. The Nazis began building it in October 1941 on the site of the village of Brzezinka, 3 km from Oswiecim. The Polish civilian population was evicted and their houses confiscated and demolished. Construction was completed in March 1942. About 10,000 Soviet P.O.W.'s died in the process.

Originally Auschwitz II functioned as both a concentration camp to aid in subduing the area's Polish population and as the site of the German Earth and Stone works, an SS-owned enterprise which turned sand and gravel from the Sola River into building materials for the Reich. The camp was also home to an experimental farm, intended to serve as the center of a vast agricultural empire providing food and employment for the ethnic German migrants Himmler planned to settle in the *Lebensraum* made available by the ethnic cleansing of the local population.

Another aspect of this same project was the construction of the I.G. Farben "Buna" synthetic rubber plant. To lure Farben to his site, Himmler promised the company a slave-labor pool of 100,000 Soviet prisoners of war (a byproduct of the expected conquest of the Soviet Union) to build and work in the plant. In return, Farben agreed to finance and provide building materials for Himmler's Germanization project inside the SS's surrounding 15 square mile "Zone of Interest."

By early 1942, when it was becoming clear that Soviet prisoners would not be in such plentiful supply, Himmler decided Jews would take their place. Although the mass murder of Jews by the *Einsatzgruppen* was well underway, Himmler was still committed to his racial utopia. His plans required laborers, and when, in January 1942, Hermann Goering directed that Soviet P.O.W.'s be sent to work in German armament factories, Himmler used the power he had to order the transport of Jews to Auschwitz.

The camp was divided into more than a dozen sections separated by electrified barbed-wire fences. The camp included sections for women, men, a family camp for Roma, a family camp for Jews, and a camp for holding and sorting plundered goods.

Rudimentary gas chambers, in two converted farmhouses, went into operation in September 1941. They used Zyklon-B. A "provisional" gas chamber I went into operation in January 1942 but was later dismantled. "Provisional" gas chamber II operated from June 1942 through the fall of 1944. When this proved inadequate, four large structures, each containing a disrobing area, gas chamber and crematorium were constructed between March and June 1943. More than 20,000 people could be murdered and their bodies burned in a single day. The single day's highest output was 24,000 with Jews comprising the largest number of victims.

Over a million Jews and tens of thousands of Roma, Poles, and Soviet P.O.W.'s were gassed at Auschwitz.

Auschwitz III (Monowitz or Buna)

Buna is the term for a synthetic rubber.

Auschwitz III (Monowitz or Buna) was established to house prisoners assigned to work at the Buna-Werke synthetic rubber and fuel plant, 6 km. from the Auschwitz main camp. It was completed in October 1942. The Buna factory was built by the German I.G. Farben Industries, and the SS agreed to supply the prisoner labor.

Other Subcamps

There were 39 other sub-camps of Auschwitz. These camps provided a cheap source of labor for mines, quarries, fisheries, armaments industries, and other enterprises. Auschwitz inmates were also employed on huge farms, including the experimental agricultural station at Rajsko. The conditions in these sub-camps were often worse than in the main camps.

When the SS realized that the end of the war was near, they attempted to remove all evidence of their atrocities. They dismantled the gas chambers, crematories and other buildings. They burned documents and evacuated all prisoners who could walk (about 58,000). When the Soviet army marched into Auschwitz to liberate the camp on January 27, 1945, they found about 7,600 survivors abandoned there.

Majdanek

Majdanek was located on the outskirts of Lublin in an entirely open area with no trees to hide the activities inside. It was originally constructed in October 1941 as a labor camp for Polish and Soviet prisoners. After the "Final Solution" was unveiled at the Wannsee Conference in January 1942, mass transports of Jews began arriving at Majdanek beginning in April 1942, during the same time period that Auschwitz was also being converted to an extermination camp for Jews.

In October 1942, a gassing facility was installed consisting of crude wooden barracks using carbon monoxide gas. Later more sophisticated concrete structures were constructed with air-tight steel doors. The use of Zyklon-B was implemented after its successful use at Belzec.

Unlike Belzec and Sobibor, Majdanek was set up to produce military goods. There was some industrial activity at the camp as well as agricultural and forestry work.

In late 1943, plans were made to dismantle the camp. At that time there were several thousand Jews still in the camp. In October 1943, prisoners were ordered to dig 3 huge trenches in preparation for Erntefest (Operation "Harvest Festival"). At the morning roll call on November 3, Jews were separated from the other prisoners, sent to the trenches and shot. Dance music blared from the camp loudspeakers to drown out the screams and machine gun fire. Murders continued until nightfall. Majdanek has the distinction of being the most deadly sight of the German's largest one-day killing operation against the Jews. 18,000 Jews died in Majdanek's trenches that day.

The Soviets liberated Majdanek on July 24, 1945 and found 800,000 shoes, filling 4 barracks. The shoes from nearby camps were sent here for repair and reuse.

About 170,000 prisoners died in Majdanek; virtually all of them Jews, Soviet soldiers and civilians, and Polish civilians.

Slide 236

The Camps (Initial Breaker Slide)

Slide 237

The Camps:
Treblinka

Teacher Notes:

Treblinka is included here as an example of the highly sophisticated Operation Reinhard Camp developed exclusively for extermination. Notice on the map that there are very few barracks, only enough to house the officers and prisoners to run the camp. Even those prisoners were routinely executed and replaced.

Note # 4, the zoo, located on Zoo Street near the vegetable garden. Early in 1943 a zoo was built where SS men could relax from their bloody work. The zoo contained foxes, birds and other captured forest animals.

In 1942, the Nazis opened Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka to systematically exterminate the 2+ million Jews of the General Government of Poland. This was known as Operation Reinhard in memory of Reinhard Heydrich, the main organizer of the "Final Solution," who had been assassinated by Czech resistance fighters on May 2, 1942. These 3 camps were known as Operation Reinhard Camps.

Treblinka was located 62 miles from Warsaw, Poland and 4 km. from the village of Treblinka. It was the 2nd largest killing center after Auschwitz.

Treblinka I was a punitive labor camp for Poles. Here, the prisoners were forced to work in quarries to extract materials for the construction of fortifications along the German-Soviet demarcation line in occupied Poland.

Construction on the Treblinka killing center began in May 1942 and was completed in July 1942. (Deportations to the Operation Reinhard camps of Belzec and Sobibor had already begun.) The construction was carried out by Jewish and Polish slave laborers. Learning from the mistakes of the previous 2 camps (Belzec and Sobibor), the Nazis were able to construct an unusually efficient destruction instrument that managed to destroy the lives and bodies of almost 1,000,000 human beings in only 12 months. The SS technicians and experts had no precedents on which to rely. They had to depend on original thinking to accomplish this task.

A branch railway track was built leading from the labor camp, Treblinka I, to the extermination camp, Treblinka II, and continued to the nearby railway station in the village of Treblinka. The upper camp at Treblinka was unable to receive lengthy trains because of its' short ramps. Therefore, only a few cars at a time were backed in to the camp compound and unloaded.

The camp was laid out in a trapezoid. The site was heavily wooded and hidden from view. Branches woven into the barbed-wire fence and trees planted around the perimeter served as camouflage, blocking any view into the camp from the outside. Watchtowers 26' high were placed along the fence and at each of the four corners.

The camp was divided into three parts:

1. the reception area
2. the living area
3. the extermination area.

The living area contained housing for German and Ukrainian guards assigned to the camp, offices, a clinic, storerooms and workshops. One section contained barracks that housed Jewish prisoners forced to work in the camp.

As the Warsaw Ghetto was liquidated, the majority of its inhabitants were transported to Treblinka. Incoming trains of about 50 or 60 cars first stopped at the Treblinka village railway station. Twenty cars at a time were detached from the train and brought into the camp. Victims were ordered to disembark in the reception area. Here the deportees would hear a speech by an SS officer that told them they had arrived at a transit camp. Prisoners were then moved into two barracks: women and children were separated from the men. Those too sick to walk on their own, unbeknownst to the others, were taken to a pit near the infirmary and shot.

Once in the barracks, the prisoners' hair was shorn, they had to undress, and their valuables were taken. From here they would be directed to the gas chambers.

A camouflaged, fenced-in path, referred to as the "tube," led from the reception area to the extermination area. Victims were forced to run naked along this path to the gas chambers, labeled as "bathhouses." Many realized that they were going to their death and, when they resisted, were beaten or clubbed with rifles and whips by the camp staff. Once the gas chamber doors were sealed, an engine installed in a room attached to the gas chambers was started. Carbon monoxide was funneled into the gas chambers via camouflaged shower heads, killing those inside. The bodies of the gassing victims were interred in huge trenches. The process was then repeated.

Treblinka opened with three gas chambers in operation but quickly expanded to at least six.

Like all of the other death camps, Treblinka adhered to a specific routine that supported the ruse of resettlement and which minimized the chances of Jewish rebellion or resistance. Details were added in each of the death centers to support the lie of Jewish resettlement. The Star of David on the front wall of Treblinka's gas house, and the Hebrew inscriptions on the curtain that hung at the entrance that read, "This is the gate through which the righteous pass," are just two examples. Upon arrival, postcards were often written by the prisoners and were later sent by the camp personnel. These postcards encouraged relatives to move east for resettlement.

The staff at Treblinka was minimal. They made extensive use of Jewish prisoners called *Sonderkommandos* (special work units). When these workers became too weak to do their work they were killed and replaced by younger and stronger inmates. The *Sonderkommandos* were forced to transport the corpses to mass graves for burial, and later, when the bodies were exhumed, they burned the victim's bodies on iron grates.

Treblinka Revolt: August 2, 1943

In May 1943, one of the last transports from Poland arrived in Treblinka. The ghettos of Warsaw and the Bialystok district had been emptied. Only a small crew of some 1,000 prisoners remained in the camp. Their assignment was to exhume and burn the bodies that had been buried in shallow pits. When it was completed, they, too, would be dispatched to join their dead brethren.

The underground group that planned the Treblinka revolt had been inspired by the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, of which they learned in May 1943. They began to acquire weapons and plan a strategy for taking over the camp, which was scheduled to be destroyed and then abandoned. Inmates had to make do with the weapons at hand – shovels, picks, and a few homemade grenades.

On August 2, 1943, the arsenal was opened and a small number of weapons removed and distributed to resistance fighters. The plan was to destroy the gas chambers, free the penal camp, and get out. Instead, fire was set to the garages and the warehouse chambers and within moments the Germans began shooting. Prisoners were running for their lives. As many as 300 prisoners escaped, but only about 1/3 survived the German dragnet set to recapture them.

From July 1942 through November 1943, the Germans killed between 870,000 and 925,000 Jews at the killing center.

In the fall of 1943, the Germans dismantled Treblinka II. The German SS and police authorities shot the surviving prisoners. A farm was built on the site and it was offered to a Ukrainian to run it for income.

Treblinka I, the forced-labor camp, continued operations until late July 1944. While the killing center was in operation, some of the arriving Jews were selected and transferred to Treblinka I, while Jews too weak to work at Treblinka I were periodically sent to Treblinka II to be killed.

Soviet troops overran the site of both labor camp and killing center during the last week of July 1944.

Slide 238

The Camps (Breaker Slide)

Slide 239

The Camps:

Map of Auschwitz I, II, III

Teacher Note:

Auschwitz is used in the following slides as a prototype for conditions and procedures in the extermination camps. Please remind students that Auschwitz was unique and that all 6 extermination camps did not follow the same procedures.

Map:

This map shows the 3 large sub-camps of Auschwitz: Auschwitz I, Auschwitz II (Birkenau), and Auschwitz III (Monowitz/Buna).

Auschwitz ("Oswiecim" in Polish) was the largest Nazi extermination and concentration camp. It was located in the Polish town of Oswiecim, 37 miles west of Krakow. One-sixth of all Jews murdered by the Nazis were gassed at Auschwitz. It has come to represent the epitome of Nazi brutality.

Slide 240

The Camps:

Map of Auschwitz I

Teacher Note:

The slides of Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II (Birkenau) are included to provide students and teachers with an understanding of the complexity and efficiency of this extermination center.

Slide 241

The Camps:

Map of Auschwitz II (Birkenau)

Slide 242

The Camps:

Photos of Auschwitz

Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II (Birkenau) were surrounded by electrically charged, four-meter high, barbed wire fences guarded by SS men armed with machine guns and rifles. The two camps were further closed in by a series of guard posts located 2/3 of a mile beyond the fences.

Slide 243

The Camps:

Map of Auschwitz Sub-Camps

There were over 40 sub-camps associated with Auschwitz. Most were labor oriented and located in close proximity to the designated workplace.

Slide 244

The Camps (Breaker Slide)

Slide 245

The Camps:

Auschwitz - Arrival

Many perished on their journey to the camps. By the time the trains came to a halt, surviving prisoners were frightened, exhausted, filthy, hungry and thirsty. When doors were finally thrown open, the passengers were blinded by their first glimpse of daylight and were greeted by vicious, barking dogs and the harsh commands of *Alle heraus!* (Everybody out!) and *Alles dort lassen!* (Leave everything there!).

The area where prisoners were unloaded was known as “the ramp.” They were thrilled to be freed from the boxcar yet wary of leaving personal possessions. What would become of their warm coats, bed linens, baby diapers, food, family pictures, medicines, etc. that would be left behind? These were their last vestiges of normal life.

Upon disembarking, the passengers were forced into 2 lines: one for women and one for men. It was here that families were separated: mothers from their children, husbands from their wives, and brothers from their sisters.

Slide 246

The Camps (Breaker Slide)

Slide 247

The Camps:

Auschwitz - Selection

Photo Bottom Right:

Note that the photo includes a Jewish prisoner assisting in the selection process. He is located on the far right in a striped uniform.

These prisoners became unwilling accomplices to the Nazi tactics. Jewish prisoners acting in this capacity would try to keep the incoming prisoners calm and even saved lives on occasion with their seasoned advice.

On “the ramp”, after forming lines for men and women, new arrivals experienced selection by SS officers who determined which prisoners would go immediately to the gas chambers and which would be assigned to forced labor.

Most women, children and those that looked unfit for work were sent to one side of the ramp – their ultimate fate would be death. At Auschwitz, children were usually killed upon arrival. Children born in the camp were generally killed on the spot. Near the end of the war, in order to cut expenses, living children were often placed directly in the ovens or thrown into open burning pits.

Most young men and others that were physically fit were sent to the other side of the ramp – receiving a reprieve from death and entry into the camp’s labor force. At camps maintaining labor installations, like Auschwitz, 10% of the arrivals were selected for work.

Camp doctors were often present at selection in hopes of finding suitable subjects, such as twins or dwarfs, for medical experimentation.

Jewish prisoners were used to assist the SS in controlling the crowd. It was hoped that the Jewish prisoners would impart a sense of reassurance among their own people by speaking their native language and that this would minimize panic situations. These Jewish prisoners sometimes took advantage of their position and offered words of advice to the new arrivals. Occasionally they warned parents to abandon their children in order to save their own lives. The following example depicts the traumatic experience of making hurried responses to such suggestions.

A young woman holding a baby is approached by a Jewish worker who politely says:

Madame, I see next to you an elderly woman that could be the child's grandmother or an aunt. Leave the child with her so to be able to get out of this column and join those that will walk to the Camp.

Some accepted and conformed with the request, temporarily saving their own lives. Others embraced their babies even harder. She begins crying and shouting hysterically:

I am not giving up my baby. It is mine! I would rather die than be separated from my baby!

Madame please do not provoke panic here. I did not order you to do anything. I just made a suggestion. If you do not want to, that is fine. Please continue on your way.

The woman, happy of the outcome, holds her baby tightly with one hand and with the other, wipes her tears on her way to the gas chambers that were nearby.

In another instance, a mother refuses to be separated from her 13-year-old daughter and physically resists the SS officer who attempts to force her into another line. The officer in charge of selection drew his gun and shot both the woman and child. As a blanket punishment, all of the people from that transport who had previously been selected for work were sent to the gas chambers. The officer in charge condemned them with the comment, "Away with this shit!"

Age, skill and physical strength were favorable factors in selection for work. Children above the age of 14 were considered capable for work. Those with special skills were needed for a camp's daily operation. A strong body was capable of hard labor. The Jewish workers would often warn adolescents to lie about their age in order to save their lives.

Slide 248

The Camps:

Auschwitz - Selection - continued

Photo Top Right:

An elderly Jewish woman is being held in place by three Jewish men after having been separated from family members during the selection.

Slide 249

The Camps:

Auschwitz - Artwork by David Olère, "Selection"

Teacher Note:

Have students take note of the following in the artwork:

- In the background of this painting, smoke rises from the crematorium to form the SS insignia.
 - The elderly woman's star.
 - The faceless masses on the left, next to the fence...arrivals?
 - The workers on the right
 - The baby doll.
 - The guard's arm on the left: notice the SS insignia as well as the death's head insignia.
 - The arching corpse embracing the family.
 - The dark hand reaching down from the upper left...the hand of God?
 - The innocent baby going to its death.
 - The multiple generations that were annihilated.
-

The Artist:

David Olère is well-known as an artist whose work testifies to the enormity of the Holocaust.

David Olère was born in Warsaw, Poland on January 19, 1902. At a young age, he was accepted into the Academy of Fine Arts, and remained in Poland until he was sixteen. During his teenage years he exhibited woodcuts at museums and art houses in Danzig and Berlin. He was later hired by the Europäische Film Allianz as a painter, sculptor, and architect. So began his short career as a set designer in the film industry. Olère even worked briefly for Paramount Pictures in Europe and befriended the company's president. In 1930 Olère was married to Juliette Ventura, and the couple moved to a French suburb. They had a son, Alexandre. Once war was declared in Europe, Olère was drafted into the infantry regiment at Lons-le-Saunier. On February 20, 1943, he was arrested by French police during a round up of Jews. Olère was detained at Drancy, then deported to Auschwitz.

From March 2, 1943, to January 19, 1945, David Olère was interned at Auschwitz. There he worked as a *Sonderkommando*, part of a special labor unit responsible for emptying the remains from the ovens of the crematory and for removing the bodies from the gas chambers. The horrors he witnessed there are incomprehensible to anyone who did not personally experience the Holocaust. He saw the victims of the gas chamber undress in the cloakroom, paralyzed with fear and the knowledge of certain death. He saw the incineration of countless bodies. He saw the so-called medical experiments performed on the weak and the sick and the old. He saw the SS rape and torture young Jewish girls. He saw prisoners suffer terrible cruelties while living under the most deplorable of conditions. And on a regular basis, he saw disease, despair, and death. David Olère was one of the few laborers to penetrate the dark interiors of the crematoria and the gas chambers of Auschwitz and to emerge alive. He took part in the evacuation death march of Auschwitz in January of 1945 and was finally liberated by the Americans at Ebensee in May of that year.

While at Auschwitz, David Olère was forced to work as an illustrator and to write and decorate letters for the SS. The works of art he produced after his release were created out of an obligation he felt to those who did not survive. He believed he had to tell the true story of their fate, and he did so in the best way he could, through his art. In his paintings he himself is sometimes present as a ghostly face, floating in the background, a silent, pained witness observing the inhuman scenes that could not ever be erased from his memory.

In 1962, David Olère retired from his work as an artist. He died in 1985.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - "Canada"

Questions to Consider:

- How would the loss of one's suitcase contribute to this feeling of total loss?
- How could these suitcases be regarded as a symbol of deception?

Interesting Fact:

The SS ordered prisoners to squeeze toothpaste into buckets in search for hidden diamonds.

"Loot" was a central element in the Nazi persecution of the Jews. The murder of 6 million people provided a source of rich booty for the SS, for the German war machine and for the Germans in general.

When prisoners arrived at Auschwitz II (Birkenau), all personal belongings were left on the arrival ramp.

Under strict supervision of SS guards, these possessions were loaded onto trucks and taken to a special warehouse area known as "Canada" (so-called because Canada represented the land of plenty and prosperity to the prisoners). Here inmates, mostly Jewish women, sorted, cleaned and disinfected the contents. Any money, jewelry, precious stones, pearls or the like were sent directly to the German Reich Bank. Watches, clocks, pencils, electric razors, scissors, flashlights and wallets were distributed among the German front-line troops. Most of the clothing was ear-marked for Germans who had been living outside the borders of Germany.

In 1942, the clothes taken from Jews who had been murdered were sent to Germany to be distributed as part of the Winter Aid Campaign. On at least one occasion, the recipients complained that the clothes sent to help them out over the winter were bloodstained.

According to a report from Majdanek, the Nazis had calculated that by February of 1943, from this one camp alone, they had recovered over 100 million Reichsmark (\$40 million) in valuables.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Registration

Photo Upper Right:

Washing and shaving newly arrived Polish prisoners in the Buchenwald concentration camp.

Questions to Consider:

Can you retain your personal identity when forced to abandon your personal belongings?

How would having to wear someone else's clothes and/or shoes affect your identity?

Those selected for forced labor were sent to a part of the camp called the "quarantine." Here new arrivals spent 4 weeks, supposedly to stop the newcomers from bringing infections into the camp. In fact, it was to terrorize them into good behavior. These prisoners experienced the following before being sent to one of the nearby satellite labor camps.

Disinfection

Prisoners were forced to take showers before entering the work camp. Often they underwent a de-lousing process that involved the use of Zyklon-B. This was the same poison used in the gas chambers for extermination, but at a lesser concentration.

Shaving

The Nazis shaved the heads of each prisoner, supposedly to prevent typhus. Although this may be true, shaving the prisoners' heads made it easier to identify escapees. At Auschwitz, prisoners had their body shaved of all body hair. The instrument of choice was usually a blunt razor, which was painful.

The victims' hair was sold by the government to industries to use in socks for submarine crews and to manufacture felt stockings for railroad workers. It was also used for hair cloth, the ignition mechanism of bombs, ropes and cords for ships, as well as stuffing for mattresses.

To the barber!

Belt and shoes in hand I let myself be dragged off to the barbers. They took our hair off with clippers and shaved off all the hair on our bodies.

- Elie Wiesel, *Night*

Uniforms

Sometimes, personal belongings and clothes were traded in for a striped prison uniform, often the wrong size and much too thin for the cold Polish winter. Their prison number was sewn onto their uniform. At Auschwitz, women were often given wooden shoes, replacing their own comfortable leather shoes.

Death begins with the shoes; for most of us, they show themselves to be instruments of torture, which after a few hours of marching cause painful sores which become fatally infected. Whoever has them is forced to walk as if he was dragging a convict's chain ... He arrives last everywhere, and everywhere he receives blows. He cannot escape if they run after him; his feet swell and the more they swell, the more the friction with the wood and the cloth of the shoes becomes insupportable.

- Primo Levi, survivor, speaking of his shoes

Tattoos

Tattoos were just one of the ways in which the Nazis dehumanized their prisoners. They understood the individuality in a name. Remove the name and the victims cease to be human:

Numbers have no history.

Numbers have no character.

Numbers have no reason to fight.

Numbers are lost in the pool of collectivity.

It was much easier to exterminate numbers rather than people with names.

Beginning in 1941, registration consisted of a tattoo which was placed on the left breast of the prisoner. Later, the tattoo location was moved to the left inner forearm. It was not only Jews who were marked: all prisoners other than ethnic Germans and police prisoners were tattooed. The tattoos were made with a special metal stamp containing rather thick needles about ½ inch long. High and low prisoner numbers were also significant, revealing the duration of imprisonment; a low number indicated that a prisoner had survived a long time and a high number usually indicated a newcomer.

Despite the perception that all Holocaust prisoners were given tattoos, only the prisoners of Auschwitz after 1941 were branded this way.

The operation was slightly painful and extraordinarily rapid: they placed us all in a row, and one by one, according to the alphabetical order of our names, we filed past a skillful official, armed with a sort of pointed tool with a very short needle. It seems that this is the real, true initiation: only by "showing one's number" can one get bread and soup....And for many day, while the habits of freedom still led me to look for the time on my wristwatch, my new name ironically appeared instead, its number tattooed in bluish character under the skin.

- Primo Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz*

Photos

Until 1943, all but the Jewish prisoners, who seldom entered the records at all because they were expected to die quickly, were photographed for the records. After 1943, photos were often were not made.

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Registration - Camp Badges

The Nazis used triangular badges or patches to identify prisoners in the concentration camps. Different colored patches represented different groups.

PURPLE	Jehovah's Witnesses
RED	Political Prisoners
BLACK	Asocials (prostitutes, vagrants, murderers, thieves, lesbians, and those who violated laws prohibiting sexual intercourse between Aryans and Jews)
PINK-	Homosexuals
GREEN	Criminals
BROWN	Gypsies
YELLOW	Jews

Some patches included letters on the triangles to further distinguish among the various groups in the camps. Most commonly the letter indicated nationality. e.g. "F" for *franzosisch* (French), "P" for *polnisch* (Polish), "T" for *tschechisch* (Czech), etc.

Letters could also denote special sub-categories of prisoners. For example, the white letter "A" on a black triangle signified a labor disciplinary prisoner (*Arbeitserziehungshaftling*), while a black "S" on a green triangle identified a *strafthft*, or penal prisoner. In addition, the word *Blod* on a black triangle marked mentally retarded inmates, and a red and white target symbol set apart those who had tried to escape.

For Jewish offenders, triangles of two different colors were combined to create a six-pointed star, one triangle yellow to denote a Jew, the second triangle another color to denote the added offense. For example, a Jewish criminal would wear a yellow triangle overlaid by a green one; Jewish homosexuals wore pink triangles over yellow.

"Penal Company" - political prisoners considered especially dangerous.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Barracks

Picture Left:

Former prisoners of the "little camp" in Buchenwald stare out from the wooden bunks in which they slept three to a "bed."

Elie Wiesel is pictured in the yellow circle.

The dreadful living conditions at Auschwitz were one of the reasons for the epidemics and contagious diseases that prevailed there.

Barracks were dark, gloomy, smelly and overcrowded. At Auschwitz, inmates slept on three-tiered, wooden shelves with each allowed a space equal to that in a coffin. Some of the barracks at Auschwitz II (Birkenau) were wooden, pre-fabricated horse barns, used because they were quick to assemble and disassemble. They were built to hold 48 horses; they housed 800 prisoners.

Dampness, leaky roofs, and the fouling of straw and straw mattresses by prisoners suffering from diarrhea made difficult living conditions worse. The barracks swarmed with various sorts of vermin and rats. Typhus was spread through these rodent hosts and then spread to humans through fleas, mites and lice. Typhus flourished under these poor living conditions and was a major cause of death.

NOTE: Anne Frank died from a typhus outbreak at Bergen-Belsen.

A constant shortage of water for washing, and the lack of suitable sanitary facilities, aggravated the situation. Until 1943, the only drinking water was provided by one tap in the camp lavatory.

The barracks had stoves available for heating although they did not necessarily produce adequate heat.

Prisoners would relieve themselves in a bucket, and when the bucket was filled, it had to be emptied in the lavatory.

The latrine, serving 250 people at a time, was a wooden hut with rows of holes sunk through a concrete floor. It was filled in the morning by prisoners routinely suffering from dysentery as a result of camp food.

Whereas most viewed their bunks as refuge from the day's precarious and dangerous existence, the nights were also filled with terror. The nocturnal ragings of drunk *Kapos* (prisoners given authority over other prisoners), ceaseless struggles with bunkmates, and the relentless trips to the latrines and chamber pots punctuate the memory of survivors.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Roll Call

Teacher Note:

On February 6, 1943, a marathon roll call at Auschwitz forced inmates to stand motionless in snow without food for over 13 hours. Many died on their feet and many others who were too weak to dash back to the barracks at day's end were sent to the gas chamber.

Wake Up

4:00 A.M. awakenings were brutal, involving savage commands, freezing temperatures, hurried washings and a trip to the latrine.

Morning Roll Call

All prisoners, including those that died during the night, had to be present at roll call. The day before, they had been standing numbers at the roll call, now, they were lifeless.

During roll call, prisoners were required to stand at attention, regardless of the weather. Talking and moving was forbidden. Some prisoners died during the roll call itself because they were too weak to stand at attention for hours.

SS guards, officers and *Kapos* counted thousands of prisoners. One mistake during the counting and everything must start again.

Evening Roll Call

Again, *Kapos* count prisoners and the dead. The survivors would carry the bodies of the prisoners who died during the day. If a prisoner tried to escape, all other prisoners would stand at attention at roll call until the escapee was retrieved. Evening roll call could sometimes take 10 hours.

It was at evening roll call that punishments were delivered. This included hangings and beatings. Sometimes prisoners were forced to watch as a deterrent.

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Artwork by Jan Komski, "Roll Call"

Komski was a Roman Catholic Pole who was arrested for attempting to reach the Polish army in exile located in France. He was carrying false identity papers under an assumed name. He was first taken to the prison at Tarnow and then to Auschwitz, arriving on June 14, 1940. This was the very first prisoner transport to Auschwitz. He was prisoner #564. Fortunately, early numbers were not tattooed on prisoner's arms. After spending 2-1/2 years in the camp, Komski and 3 other comrades participated in one the most famous escapes at Auschwitz. The escape was significant because it was the first to be organized by the illegal camp resistance movement and with the help of the local population. Using a stolen SS uniform, the 4 men, one dressed as an SS officer, walked out of the camp. In a nearby village, they met a resistance woman who gave them civilian clothes. Komski eventually reached Krakow, where he was arrested in a routine roundup. Normally an escaped prisoner would have been hanged very soon after return to Auschwitz. Komski was not recognized, and his identity papers now bore a different name. He was eventually sent to Buchenwald, back to Krakow, to Gross-Rosen, to Sachsenhausen, and ultimately to Dachau where he was liberated by Patton's army on May 2, 1945. He immigrated to the U.S. and became a citizen. He died at age 87 in 2002.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Food

Artwork Lower Left:

"The Food of the Dead for the Living" by David Olère:

Drawing of prisoner stealing food that has been left behind by a recent arrival. If caught, this could mean death.

Teacher Note:

- This is a good chance to discuss terminology. Ask students to define the meaning of hunger and give examples.
- Hunger is a term that we use today, but does not describe what camp prisoners felt. Hunger is missing a meal, maybe two. How do you describe coming into a camp and hardly eating for months, maybe years. And then when nourishment is provided by the liberating troops, it causes death.

Every day in Auschwitz was a fierce struggle to survive. Food was always a problem. Always. Prisoners were constantly hungry.

The SS calculated that a prisoner could exist on the daily food ration for about 3 months, then he/she was supposed to die.

Food was cooked in the kitchen block, then taken to the barracks in barrels or big metal pots. By the time the SS officials and the prisoners in charge of the blocks had helped themselves to the most nutritious foods, such as sausage and margarine, the 1,700 calories that prisoners were supposed to be getting had fallen to 1,300 or less.

...we queue with our bowls ready and we all have an animal hurry to swell our bellies with the warm stew, but no one wants to be first, as the first person receives the most liquid ration....the Kapo mocks and insults us for our voracity and takes care not to stir the pot, as the bottom belongs notoriously to him.

- Primo Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz*

The prisoners were served food that was barely edible. One Auschwitz survivor recalled,

The containers were dirty and smelly...we didn't care. It was warm and it was food, even if there were pieces of wood, potato peeling and unrecognizable substances swimming in it ...Ten miserable mouthfuls and it was over. We were hungrier than before.

After several weeks on such starvation rations in the camp, most prisoners began to experience organic deterioration that led to the so-called "Muselman" state, extreme physical exhaustion that ended in death.

Prisoners often developed dysentery, caused by the ingestion of food or water containing microorganisms. Dysentery, a highly contagious disease, causes inflammation of the intestines and ultimately diarrhea. This loss of nutrients coupled with poor caloric content in the diet causes swelling of limbs --- a sickness known as "starvation disease." Even under these conditions, the prisoners were required to continue working.

To endure such misery, many prisoners found comfort in helping one another, trading for rations and goods in an underground "black market" and maintaining hopes for survival.

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Drawings of Food Distribution by Ella Liebermann Shiber

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Slave Labor

Picture Lower Left:

The Buna Factory at Auschwitz III (Monowitz) produced synthetic rubber and oil.

In 1942, the concentration camps, which had been established initially to carry out Nazi policies, became an indispensable part of the war economy.

People who survived quarantine were organized into work groups which were regularly changed. The SS rationalized that a combination of a high death rate and the constant shifting around would prevent prisoners from forming resistance groups. Being selected to work upon arrival in the camp was far from a guarantee of survival; however, the ability to work was essential for survival.

Initially at Auschwitz, prisoners worked to build the camp: leveling the ground, erecting new blocks and buildings, laying roads, and digging drainage ditches. After morning roll call, prisoners were off for a 12-14 hour work day. If lucky, prisoners received a good tool, a shovel or pickax. Otherwise, they worked with their hands; however, this might mean death because of inability to work as fast as the guards requested. The work was difficult and often useless: moving heavy sand bags from one point to another, extracting and carrying heavy stones, digging trenches or boring tunnels. Working in a factory did not necessarily improve the condition of life. Everything had to be done as fast as possible, and always with insults and beatings from the *kapos* and the SS. If a guard thought work was not being completed quickly enough, prisoners were beaten, perhaps to the point of death.

Later in the course of the war, prisoners were hired out to German manufacturers, often companies making supplies for the war. Concentration camp labor was central to the Reich's wartime manpower needs. Despite being starved, ill and weak, the Jews were expected to perform heavy industrial tasks – and when they inevitably fell short, prisoners were beaten and shot. The well-known companies that lined up to receive workers included I.G. Farben (rubber, fuel), BMW (airplane parts), Siemens (industrial electronics), Messerschmitt (fighter planes), Daimler-Benz (cars & military vehicles), and Krupp (steel). The decision to use slave labor was entirely voluntary.

Under the brutal conditions of slavery in the antebellum American South, a slave was still considered a crucial economic resource. By contrast, the Nazis viewed the forced laborer not as a capital investment, but a dispensable commodity, a replaceable waste product.

- *The World Must Know* by Michael Berenbaum

Other Slave Labor Camps:

Ravensbruck

At Ravensbruck, the German industrial firm of Siemens built barracks to house 2,500 women who worked in a factory manufacturing electrical switches for aircraft. The factory was located 5 miles from Auschwitz.

Mauthausen

Mauthausen was a punishment camp where the inmates had to do hard time in a rock quarry. The Mauthausen concentration camp was built at the edge of the quarry so that prison labor could be used to take the granite for Hitler's grandiose building plans. The quarry was known as the "Wiener Graben" because the streets of Wien (Vienna) had been paved with stones taken from it. Those on the punishment detail had to carry granite boulders placed on wooden "backpacks" (shown on slide) up the steep "stairs of death" (shown on slide) out of the quarry.

Sub-camps:

During 1942-1944, hundreds of sub-camps were established for each concentration camp. Sub-camps were located in or near factories or sites for the extraction of raw materials. For example, Wiener Neudorf, a sub-camp of Mauthausen established in 1943, was located near an airplane factory on the east side of Vienna, Austria; Sosnowitz was established in the vicinity of a coal mine as a sub-camp of Auschwitz III (Monowitz); prisoners incarcerated at Dora-Mittelbau worked under brutal conditions in underground factories for the production of rockets.

Central SS authorities tried to induce camp commandants to focus their efforts on keeping the prisoners alive, if only to serve the German war effort. However, few of the commandants took these instructions seriously and none were concerned about changing the murderous culture of the camps.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Brutality

Teacher Notes:

- Have students write their impressions of this artwork by Zinovi Tolkachev.
- Even faced with the deprivations and tortures of Auschwitz, the desire of many prisoners to give artistic expression to their experiences remained strong. Painting materials had to be improvised, traded for, or stolen from the SS. Art often became a method of self preservation, a way for inmates to detach themselves temporarily from the brutal realities of life. Many artists were also aware of their role as witnesses and made conscious efforts to preserve their works as historical evidence by burying them in secret hiding places or arranging to have them smuggled out of the camps.

Although the vast majority of artistic works were lost or destroyed with the artist, the portraits and drawings which did survive provide a remarkable document of life in Auschwitz. Among the soldiers who liberated Auschwitz were also artists who tried to record the scenes which confronted them. Zinovi Tokachev was one of them. He was a Russian soldier and painter. He dedicated his works, exhibited throughout Poland after the war, to “those of all nations – that they may never forget.”

- Note that the figure has no face, the one feature that identifies us. This is indicative of the universality of the brutal SS soldier. The SS did not consider themselves to be acting individually in their brutality, they were working collectively, following orders to carry out the mission of the Reich.
- Note the irony in the belt buckle, imprinted with the German slogan– *Gott mit Uns* (God is With Us).
- Note the heavy boots trampling the fragile body of a helpless child.

In addition to deaths by starvation and disease, prisoners had to endure random beatings, shootings, hangings and torture. If one showed even the slightest sign of weakness or frailty, the result could be death.

One prisoner later wrote of the terror of trying to blend in as the Nazis selected who would be murdered,

I tried to make myself as inconspicuous as possible, not too erect, yet not slouching; not too smart, yet not sloppy; not too proud, yet not too servile, for I knew that those who were different died in Auschwitz, while the anonymous, the faceless ones, survived.

Executions by hanging were carried out sporadically in the camp. Hangings were carried out in front of other prisoners, usually during roll call. The goal was to intimidate the witnesses, and the victims were most frequently prisoners trying to escape, or suspected of aiding escapees.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Daily Life: Survival

Teacher Notes:

- Remind students to avoid passing judgment on the life decisions that were made by prisoners in the camps. We can never understand what these people endured and the decisions they were forced to make.
- The camp system was designed to kill Jews, either immediately upon arrival or after utilizing their labor. Their survival chances were somewhat higher if they arrived at the camp late in the war, because of the increased need for labor, or if they had special skills or were assigned relatively easy jobs.
- *Muselmann* was the German term used widely among concentration camp inmates to refer to prisoners who were near death due to exhaustion, starvation or hopelessness. The word *Muselmann* literally means "Muslim." Some scholars believe that the term originated from the similarity between the near-death prone state of a concentration camp *Muselmann* and the image of a Muslim prostrating himself on the ground in prayer.

Many prisoners reached this stage soon after their arrival in a camp, due to their inability to adapt to the conditions and their unwillingness to accept the harsh regime. Other succumbed to sickness, physical abuse, hunger and overwork. Many prisoners were sick, but sought to hide their condition for fear that their admittance to the camp hospital would lead to their being designated for death.

One could identify *Muselmanner* by their physical and psychological decline: they were lethargic, indifferent to their surroundings, and could not stand up for more than a short period of time. There was a lack of flesh on their bodies, their skin was tight over their bones, and there was a dull, expressionless look in their eyes.

Most other prisoners avoided contact with *Muselmanner*, in fear of contracting the condition themselves. The Nazis running the camps considered the *Muselmanner* undesirable because they could not work or endure camp rule. Thus, during selections, these victims were the first to be sentenced to death. A person at the *Muselmann* stage had no chance for survival; he/she would not live for more than a few days or weeks.

Questions to Consider:

- What factors might help a person survive under such circumstances?
faith, imagination, hope (either of rescue or reuniting with loved ones), desire to document the atrocities through testimony, age, physical condition upon entering the camp

Imagine now a man who is deprived of everyone he loves, and at the same time of his house, his habits, his clothes, in short, of everything he possess: he will be a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs, forgetful of dignity and restraint, for he who loses all often easily loses himself.

– Primo Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz*

All lived and worked in the shadow of death. For some prisoners, living in the presence of death became too much. Some committed suicide, others simply gave up.

For those who had lost the desire to live, suicide was a means of escape. The camp was surrounded by two rows of electrical, barbed-wire fences, with guardhouses set all along them. Prisoners were not supposed to go near the fence. Survivors of the camp say that some guards deliberately threw prisoners' caps close to the fence and sent them to fetch the caps – knowing the prisoners would be shot for approaching the fence. Many people chose deliberately to run at the fences to commit suicide.

Those prisoners who did not resort to taking their own lives simply deteriorated, becoming dazed and apathetic through starvation, thirst, maltreatment and sheer exhaustion. They were little more than walking dead. These prisoners were called *Muselmann* (singular) / *Muselmanner* (plural) and were ultimately gassed.

My sister just didn't want to live. She refused to eat. She became very depressed. Each day I would force open her mouth. We would get one day a piece of margarine with the bread, and one day a piece of wurst, so I would change the wurst for margarine so that I could push the margarine in her mouth ... it should melt, that she should swallow.

We were surrounded by electrified wires. She only wanted we should go and kill ourselves. She would say she doesn't want to live, she wants to go to the wires. I always told her, "You tell me when you want to go," because this way I felt I have control and I can talk her out of it.

Each time she would say, "Let's go today," I would always tell her, "Not today. Look, today it's too warm. Why don't we wait?" Then it was very cold. "Let's wait. We always have time to kill ourselves." But I wanted very much to live. I had a lot of zest and a lot of life in me; and also, I felt that somebody must remain alive to tell all this. Because just like we didn't know, we thought nobody else knew in this world. And this is how I kept her.

- Cecile Klein, Survivor

For some, religion provided the strength to endure. Jewish religious life persisted in the camps, even though the Nazis had no patience for Jewish prayers or rituals. Prayer books were smuggled into Auschwitz, and rabbis continued their roles as sources of spiritual and legal wisdom even inside the camps. Although keeping kosher or observing festivals was nearly impossible in a death camp, many religious Jews did the best they could to remain faithful to their God and their traditions.

While some Jewish prisoners found comfort in their religion, others felt abandoned by their God, ultimately losing faith.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

Slide 270

The Camps:

Auschwitz - Medical Experiments

Teacher Notes:

After World War II, in October of 1946, the Nuremberg Medical Trial began, lasting until August of 1947. Twenty-three German physicians and scientists were accused of performing vile and potentially lethal medical experiments on concentration camp inmates and other living human subjects. Josef Mengele was not among the accused. Fifteen defendants were found guilty, and eight were acquitted. Of the 15, seven were given the death penalty and eight imprisoned.

After the war, Joseph Mengele found asylum in Argentina. Facing extradition, he lived in Brazil and Paraguay, managing to avoid capture. He died a free man in 1978.

Perhaps the most gruesome aspect of life in the camps was the fact that some prisoners were subjected to horrific medical experiments.

In Dachau, German scientists experimented on prisoners to determine the length of time German air force personnel might survive under reduced air pressure or in frozen water. In Sachsenhausen, various experiments were conducted on prisoners to find vaccines for lethal contagious diseases such as typhoid and tuberculosis. Many of the experiments were designed to find the most efficient way to sterilize people – so the Nazis could continue to wipe out “inferior races” and “undesirables.” Women were injected with chemicals, men had their testicles amputated, and many prisoners were given high doses of radiation. Many “patients” became crippled or died from the brutal maltreatment.

At Auschwitz I, SS physicians carried out medical experiments in the hospital, Barrack (Block) 10. They conducted pseudoscientific research on infants, twins and dwarfs, and performed forced sterilizations, castrations and hypothermia experiments on adults.

In November 1943, SS Captain Dr. Josef Mengele became the chief physician Auschwitz II (Birkenau). Mengele wanted to “prove” the superiority of the Nordic race. He conducted experiments on twins to seek ways of increasing the German population by breeding families that would produce twins. He would also experiment on them by trying different poisons or tortures on each and comparing the reactions. Mengele subjected his experimental group to all possible medical analyses that could be performed while they were still alive. The test he conducted were painful, exhausting and traumatic for the frightened and hungry children who made up the bulk of his subjects. When the research was completed, some subjects were killed by lethal injection and then their organs were autopsied and analyzed.

One twin recalled the death of his brother:

Dr. Mengele had always been more interested in Tibi. I am not sure why – perhaps because he was the older twin. Mengele made several operations on Tibi. One surgery on his spine left my brother paralyzed. He could not walk anymore. Then they took out his sexual organs. After the fourth operation, I did not see Tibi anymore. I cannot tell you how I felt. It is impossible to put into words how I felt. They had taken away my father, my mother, my two older brothers – and now, my twin...

Between 1939 and 1945, at least 70 different medical-research projects took place in concentration camps. More than 7,000 people were part of these forced experiments which broke all the rules and norms of medical research. About 200 Nazi doctors participated.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Extermination: Photo of Women and Children Prior to Extermination

Teacher Note:

The euphemistic term, "extermination," was one used by the Germans. It is a term that implies getting rid of something not needed or wanted, as in pests. Point out to students that this is not extermination, but murder, murder on a massive, pre-calculated scale.

This photo was taken by an SS photographer. It is part of an album discovered after liberation by a female prisoner. Most people create family albums containing photos of their children, wives, husbands, mementos of places visited... evidently this SS photographer was proud of the work he and his comrades were doing. The people in the photo had only just been brought from the trains where they had been crammed in cattle cars with no food, water or sanitation. Look closely at them, these were the people the Nazis considered dangerous. Not long after this photo was taken, they were gassed, and their bodies were burned.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Extermination: Gassings

Photo Bottom Right:

In order to calm the fears of Jews as they came off the trains, the camp orchestra, composed of inmates, was forced to play happy tunes. The orchestra also played cheerful music for fellow forced laborers on their way to work, as well as on their way to the gas chambers.

Teacher Notes:

Two German firms, Tesch/Stabenow and Degesch, produced Zyklon-B gas after they acquired the patent from Farben. Tesch supplied two tons a month, and Degesch three quarters of a ton. The firms that produced the gas already had extensive experience in fumigation. After the war the directors of the firms insisted that they had sold their products for fumigation purposes and did not know they were being used on humans. But the prosecutors found letters from Tesch not only offering to supply the gas crystals but also advising how to use the ventilating and heating equipment. Rudolf Hoess, Commandant of Auschwitz, testified that the Tesch directors could not help but know of the use for their product because they sold him enough to annihilate two million people. Two Tesch partners were sentenced to death in 1946 and hanged. The director of Degesch received five years in prison.

During World War II, only one man managed to get prisoners out of Auschwitz – Oscar Schindler.

By a mistake, 300 Schindler-women were routed on a train to Auschwitz. Certain death awaited. A Schindler survivor, Anna Duklauer Perl, later recalled, "I knew something had gone terribly wrong...they cut our hair real short and sent us to the shower. Our only hope was Schindler would find us..."

Anna and the other Schindler-women were being herded off toward the showers. They did not know whether this was going to be water or gas. Then they heard a voice, "What are you doing with these people? These are my people." Schindler! He had come to rescue them, bribing the Nazis to retrieve the women on his list and bring them back.

The women were released – the only shipment out of Auschwitz during World War II.

During the summer and fall of 1941, Zyklon-B gas was introduced into the German concentration camp system as a means for murder. In September, the SS first tested Zyklon-B as an instrument of mass murder at Auschwitz I. The victims were some 600 Soviet prisoners of war and 250 ill prisoners. The "success" of these experiments led to the adoption of Zyklon-B for all the gas chambers at the Auschwitz complex.

The facilities for mass killing were later located at Auschwitz II (Birkenau). Here, the SS initially converted two farmhouses for use as gas chambers. "Provisional" gas chamber I went into operation in January 1942 and was later dismantled. "Provisional" gas chamber II operated from June 1942 through the fall of 1944. The SS judged these facilities to be inadequate for the scale of gassing they planned.

During the summer of 1942, plans were made to build newer and more efficient gas chambers and crematoria ovens to dispose of corpses. The project was completed under the direction of J.A. Topf and Sons by the spring of 1943, allowing Auschwitz to become the Nazis' main killing center. Four large crematorium buildings were constructed between March and June 1943. Each had three components: a disrobing area, a large gas chamber, and crematorium ovens. The gassing chambers were built to resemble shower rooms.

In Crematoriums 2 and 3, where the gas chambers were located in underground buildings, the Zyklon-B pellets were inserted through holes in the roof. In Crematoriums 4 and 5, which were at ground level, they were tossed in through window-sized openings covered with metal shutters.

At the height of the deportations, more than 10-12,000 Jews were gassed at Auschwitz each day. The SS continued gassing operations at Auschwitz II (Birkenau) until November 1944. Over a 4-year period, more than a million people were gassed to death at Auschwitz.

Children, the elderly, pregnant women and the disabled were told they were being sent to work, but first needed to shower and be disinfected. The unsuspecting victims were taken as quietly as possible down a flower-lined path to the crematorium which contained both gassing chambers and crematoria. Elaborate deception was practiced, with buildings clearly marked "Bath and Disinfection." These "showers" were realistically outfitted with shower heads and water pipes. Once inside, prisoners were instructed in their own languages by members of the *Sonderkommando* to hang their clothes on numbered hooks so that they could reclaim their possessions after "showering." Sometimes, in order to expedite the process, women were not separated from men, thus adding to the indignity of being forced to disrobe in front of men. It was at this point that women's heads were shaved. It was essential that the prisoners who made up the *Sonderkommando* maintain a sense of calm and order to ensure that the operation proceeded efficiently and smoothly. Having just arrived after a difficult journey to the camp, some prisoners asked for food or water and were assured that after the shower and de-lousing, their needs such as food and water would soon be supplied.

They were brought into the chambers for undressing. There were benches, and there were hangers with numbers. Sometimes women would be separated from the men, but when there was not time, they were put into those chambers together, and had to undress all together. The SS men would warn them, 'Please remember the number of your hanger for the clothes. Tie both shoes well, and put your clothing in one pile, because they will be handed back to you at the end of the showers.

They would ask for water. They were thirsty after the long journey in those sealed trucks. They were told, 'Hurry. Coffee is ready in the camp. The coffee will get cold.' And similar things to calm them, to mislead them.

- Yehuda Bakon, a deportee from Hungary, giving evidence at the Eichmann trial in 1961.

Before entering the gas chamber, prisoners were forced to march between rows of police who prodded them on with whips, sticks, and guns. Women went into the gas chambers first, along with children; men followed last. The Jews were rammed in, one person per square foot. To keep the prisoners calm, members of the prison's *Sonderkommando* and a member of the SS would remain inside the chamber with the prisoners until the last moment.

The SS doctors and other SS men did the actual killings by introducing the gas into the chambers. The airtight door would now be quickly closed and the gas immediately discharged through vents in the ceilings and down a shaft that led to the floor. Zyklon-B, a form of hydrogen cyanide previously used as an insecticide, was the gas being used. It came in a pellet form and converted to lethal gas when exposed to air. The gassing lasted from 10 - 30 minutes, depending on the facility. In Belzec, according to an eyewitness, it took 32 minutes and "finally, all were dead," he wrote, "like pillars of basalt, still erect, not having any space to fall." To make room for the next load, the bodies were tossed out immediately and either taken to the crematoria or other methods of disposal.

It could be observed through the peephole that those standing nearest the vents were killed at once. It can be said that about 1/3 died straight away. The remainder staggered and began to scream and struggle for air. The screaming soon changed to the death rattle and in a few minutes all lay still. After 20 minutes at the latest no movement could be discerned.

Johann Paul Kremer, an SS doctor at Auschwitz, was one of the defendants at the Auschwitz trial. All SS physicians on duty in the camp took turns participating in the gassings. An avid diarist, Kremer reports on September 2, 1942:

Was present for the first time at a special action at 3 a.m. By comparison Dante's "Inferno" seems almost a comedy. Auschwitz is justly called an extermination camp!

The purpose of modern technology was supposed to liberate society; without science and technology, Auschwitz would not have been possible.

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Extermination: Artwork by David Olère, "Gassings"

Teacher Notes:

- Notice the bodies are already emaciated. Why?
- The container in the lower right is labeled Zyklon-B.
- Note the Jewish star at bottom right.
- What is the symbolism of the skulls just behind the wall on the right?

When the Auschwitz victims filed into the gas chamber, they discovered that the imitation showers did not work. Outside, a central switch was pulled to turn off the lights, and a Red Cross car drove up with the Zyklon. An SS man, wearing a gas mask fitted with a special filter, lifted the glass shutter over the lattice and emptied one can after another into the gas chamber. Although the lethal dose was one milligram per kilogram of body weight and the effect was supposed to be rapid, dampness could retard the speed with which the gas was spreading. ... as the first pellets sublimated on the floor of the chamber, the victims began to scream. To escape from the rising gas, the stronger knocked down the weaker, stepping on prostrate victims in order to prolong their own lives by reaching gas-free layers of air. The agony lasted for about two minutes, and as the shrieking subsided, the dying people slumped over. Within fifteen minutes (sometimes five), everyone in the gas chamber was dead.

The gas was now allowed to escape and after about half an hour, the door was opened. The bodies were found in tower-like heaps, some in sitting or half-sitting positions, children and older people at the bottom. Where the gas had been introduced, there was an empty area from which the victims had backed away, and pressed against the door were the bodies of men who in terror had tried to break out. The corpses were pink in color, with green spots. Some had foam on the lips, other bled through the nose. Excrement and urine covered some of the bodies, and in some pregnant women the birth process had started. The Jewish work parties (Sonderkommandos), wearing gas masks, dragged out the bodies near the door to clear a path and hosed down the dead, at the same time soaking the pockets of poison gas remaining between the bodies. Then the Sonderkommandos had to pry the corpses apart.

The Destruction of the European Jews by Raul Hilberg, p.248-249.

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Extermination: Quote from J.S. Toft & Sons

Both gas chambers and crematoria were built by German companies who knew exactly what they were building – they even made a profit.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Crematorium I

Cleaning the bodies and disposing of them was a huge job. At first the dead were buried in lime pits, but the mass graves were soon packed to overflowing. The process later became more sophisticated. Ovens were built for cremation.

Crematorium I, at Auschwitz I, was in use for only a short time before being converted into a bomb shelter. It was at the edge of the camp, a small nondescript structure built into the ground. It remains as it was, complete with gas chamber, iron body carts, and furnaces. It had undressing rooms and gas chambers in which the air could be completely changed. The gas chamber at Crematorium I could contain between 7-800 people. It did not have dummy shower fittings on the ceiling. The bodies were taken to the ovens on the floor above by means of a lift. Notice in the background is the building used by the Gestapo as a regional headquarters.

The name *Sonderkommando* was assigned to those groups of Jewish prisoners in the Nazi extermination camps who were forced to work in the gas chambers and crematoria. The Jewish inmates were rewarded with better food. *Sonderkommando* members helped prep the Jews who were about to be gassed. They cut the women's hair (sometimes doing this after the gassing). Others removed the corpses from the gas chambers, removed gold teeth and fillings, searched body cavities for hidden valuables and transferred the bodies to pits or to the crematoria. Some *Sonderkommandos* cleaned the gas chambers, while others dealt with the victims' personal possessions, sorting them and readying them for shipment to Germany.

After a few months of such gruesome work and in an attempt to eliminate the possibility of revolt, the *Sonderkommando* were themselves executed and replaced with new prisoners. Some committed suicide. The *Sonderkommando* could not be transferred to another detachment, for no witnesses were to be available to testify. Some managed to survive.

The bodies of Jews were burned in large ovens called crematoria. Crematorium I could cremate about 2,000 bodies in less than 24 hours.

The burning lasted about ½ hour. The stench given off by the crematoria contaminated the surrounding countryside. At night, the red sky over Auschwitz could be seen for miles. Ashes and bones from ovens of Auschwitz crematoria were crushed with wooden mortars, then buried in pits or sunk in the Sola and Vistula Rivers or in ponds near Birkenau. They were also used as fill in the terrain and as fertilizer for camp fields.

Some bodies were disposed of while the victim was still alive. Fourteen-year-old Shony Alex Braun described his work for the special units that operated in the vicinity of the gas chambers:

My job for the Sonderkommando was to go around the camp and pick up dead or nearly dead bodies, put them on a cart, and push them up to the crematories where another group of people, Sonderkommandos, would take over and they would shove them into the oven. Some of these people were far from being dead. They were just helpless, very ill or dehydrated, they just didn't have any more power even to stand. So they fell. On one occasion, I went to the kapo (prisoner foreman) and I said, "This man is not dead!" I got such a terrible slap in the face that I made a somersault. And he says, 'You were not supposed to think or say anything! Your job is to pick them up and put them on a cart and shove them up to the crematorium, just as you were told.'

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Pictures of Crematorium I

Corpse caddies (wagons shown in picture on lower left) that ran on tracks were used to assist the *Sonderkommando* in transporting the bodies to the ovens. Bodies were placed onto metal slides that were then pushed like a drawer into the ovens.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Crematorium II

Top Photos:

Taken by Nazi SS officer, 1943.

Photo Bottom Left:

Beyond the ruins of Crematorium II, notice the guard tower.

Photo Bottom Right:

The steps in foreground led to an underground undressing room. The gassing chamber is out of view on the right in the distance and was also built underground.

The first mass murder at Crematorium II occurred on March 13, 1943.

Crematorium II had 15 ovens located above a subterranean gas chamber that could contain a maximum of 2,500. The gas chamber had false shower heads to deceive the victims. Because it took a while for all victims to undress and enter the gas chamber, the first ones had time to inspect the room. Sometimes those who had entered early became suspicious, panic broke out, and they were brutally put down by armed SS men.

Elevators transported 10-15 corpses at a time from the gas chamber to the ovens one floor above. The maximum oven capacity at any given moment was between 45-75 bodies. In one day, 2,000 bodies could be cremated.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Crematorium III

Drawing top left:

Drawing by David Olére, 1946.

David Olére was a professional painter in France before being deported to Auschwitz II (Birkenau). He was forced to work in the *Sonderkommando* unit. He also helped the SS-men by illustrating postcards and working as a translator. These skills made him so valuable that he avoided being executed when the *Sonderkommando* was to be replaced, which happened every 3-4 months. He is one of very few to have survived the *Sonderkommando*.

Photo top right:

Taken by SS officer, 1943.

Photo bottom right:

Collapsed roof of Crematorium III, with the unloading ramp on the right. This structure was a mirror image of Crematorium II, out of the photo to the right.

Crematorium III was a mirror image of Crematorium II.

A vast incineration room with 15 ovens took up most of the main floor of the building. A large undressing room and the gas chamber were located underground.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Crematorium IV

Photo Top:

Taken by Nazi SS officer, 1943.

Photo Bottom Left:

All that is left of Crematorium IV. It was burned by the *Sonderkommando* in their revolt of October, 1944 and subsequently dismantled by the SS before running from the advancing Soviet Army. The room in the foreground is one of two gas chambers used here. In the background is the "little wood" where Jews just off transports waited their turn for "special treatment," as the creators of the policy of murder called it.

Photo Bottom Right:

One of the largest problems facing the murderers was what to do with the bodies. Gassing was no problem, but the system was often overloaded by the sheer number of corpses, thus slowing the entire process. Cremation, rather than burial, was their solution, but even then the ashes had to be disposed of with some care. Into this pond were dumped the ashes of many tens of thousands of people, mostly Jews, who were gassed at Crematorium IV, just behind and to the left. The "little wood" can be seen behind the pond. In those days, a fence of interwoven branches blocked the waiting victims' view of what lay ahead.

Crematoria IV and V were built above the ground to economize. They were planned as pure extermination facilities from the very beginning and were much simpler in construction and function than II and III. They were identical.

Each contained 4 gas chambers, 2 of which were rather large.

On October 7, 1944, the *Sonderkommando* unit that worked in Crematorium IV staged their own revolt after learning that they were going to be killed. During the uprising, the prisoners killed three guards and blew up the crematorium and adjacent gas chamber. The prisoners used explosives smuggled into the camp by Jewish women who had been assigned to forced labor in a nearby armaments factory. The Germans crushed the revolt and killed all of the prisoners involved in the rebellion. The Jewish women who had smuggled the explosives into the camp were publicly hanged in early January 1945. Some of those involved in the revolt had authored diaries that were later found in the ruins of the crematorium. The diaries described the daily anguish of being in constant contact with murder, and begged the world to understand how the *Sonderkommando* prisoners had not willingly done their jobs but had been forced by the Nazis to participate in the extermination process.

Gassing operations continued, however, until November 1944, at which time the SS, on orders from Himmler, disabled the gas chambers that still functioned. The SS destroyed the remaining gassing installations as Soviet forces approached in January 1945.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

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The Camps:

Auschwitz - Crematorium V

Photo top left:

Taken by a Nazi SS officer, 1934.

Photo top right:

One of only three photographs ever taken by prisoners at Auschwitz II (Birkenau) and successfully smuggled out. This was taken in 1944 by a camp inmate assigned to one of the special prisoner teams (*sonderkommando*) who were forced to work in the gas chamber/crematorium. This photo shows prisoners burning naked corpses freshly removed from the gassing facility at Crematorium V. This was the practice when the crematoria could not keep up with the volume of bodies.

Photo bottom left:

Note guard tower and fence in background, right of center.

Photo bottom right:

At the end of the war, the Nazis blew up the crematorium in an effort to destroy any evidence of their crimes. Among the brick rubble are the iron reinforcements of the ovens which were made of brick. Brick needs room to expand when it gets hot, but with so many ovens next to each other, the bricks had little area to expand. The bricks sometimes cracked which compromised the structure of the ovens. These iron reinforcements were added to keep the ovens intact.

The ovens at Auschwitz could cremate as many as 4,000 people a day – which by 1944 was not enough to destroy the up to 10,000 Jewish victims of the camp each day. At that point the Nazis began to burn the bodies in open pits. The pits had indentations at one end from which human fat drained off. To keep the pits burning, the stokers poured oil, alcohol and large quantities of boiling human fat over the bodies.

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The Camps:

Artwork by Yehuda Bacon, “In Memory of the Czech Transport to the Gas Chambers”

A short time following his liberation from Auschwitz, 16-year-old Yehuda Bacon drew this portrait of his father who perished in the death camp. Bacon conjures up the thin, exhausted face and blazing eyes of his father, the disembodied face ascending from the smoke. The image of the father whose life was ended in the furnaces of Auschwitz is reconstructed by the son who still remembers the father he was recently separated from. In the lower section of the drawing, where we would expect to see his father's body, we detect the crematoria and a body hanging off the barbed wire fence which surrounded the camp. In the right-hand corner, the artist has added the date and time: 10.VII.44, 22:00 - marking the exact moment when his father perished.

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The Camps (Breaker Slide)

Slide 290

The Camps:
The Value of Life

Photo Lower Right:

This photo was taken inside a huge glass case in the Auschwitz Museum.

Question to Consider:

How does it make you feel when you consider that all that is left of these lives...their dreams, their parent's dreams for them, their hopes for the future...is merely a pair of shoes or a ring?

These camps were envisioned by ideologues, organized by bureaucrats, financed by industrialist, serviced by technocrats, operated by ordinary men and supported by millions of Germans whose daily lives were improved by the goods shipped home to the Reich for their use.

These shoes reflect life before arrival at the camps: there are men's, women's and children's shoes; hand-stitched shoes, as well as shoes custom made for the wealthy and those mass produced from cheap leather for poorer people. These shoes look backward to a time before...to life in a ghetto, or even to times of relative normality before the war. They symbolize a loss of connection to a person's identity and are a vivid and jarring reminder of the cataclysmic loss of self that occurred in the camps.

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The Camps:
Calculation by the SS of Profit Value of Prisoners

Teacher Note:

In 1941, \$1 = 2.5 Reichsmark

Deprived of their belongings and standing naked before the gas chambers, the deportees, unknowingly, still possessed value to the executioners. Women's hair for example, could be sold for 50 pfennig (50 cents) to Bavarian factories which processed it into felt, used it for mattresses on submarines, or wove it into slipper linings for these same crew men. At Auschwitz, as much as 5-10 kilos (12-25 pounds) were produced daily.

In addition, gold teeth, bridges and crowns were removed from corpses and melted down into molds for shipment to the German Reich Bank.

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The Camps:
Quote by Primo Levy Describing the Camps

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Resistance (Initial Breaker Slide)

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Resistance:

Obstacles to Resistance

Due to the careful organization and overwhelming military might of the Nazi German state and its supporters, few Jews and other Holocaust victims were able to resist. This was due, in part, to the following obstacles:

1. Superior armed power of the Germans.

The possibility of resisting the Nazis was very slim, especially for mostly unarmed civilians with limited access to weapons.

2. German tactic of “collective responsibility.”

The Germans vowed to hold entire families and communities responsible for individual acts of armed and unarmed resistance. One of the most notorious single examples of German retaliation as punishment for resistance involved the Bohemian mining village of Lidice and its 700 residents. After Czech resistance fighters assassinated Nazi leader Reinhard Heydrich in 1942, the Nazis retaliated by “liquidating” nearby Lidice, whose citizens were not involved in the assassination. The Germans shot all men and older boys, deported women and children to concentration camps, razed the village to the ground, and struck its name from the map.

3. Secrecy and deception of deportations.

Jews most often did not know where they were being sent. Nazis went so far as to force new arrivals at Auschwitz to write postcards to relatives before they were gassed saying, “Arrived safely. I am well.”

4. Family ties and responsibilities.

Any individual who considered escaping from a ghetto knew that such an action could mean death for family members who remained behind. Because family members depended upon each other for moral support as well as assistance in smuggling food, any decision to retaliate was often viewed as abandonment by those left behind. Thus, many waited to resist until after they had seen the rest of their families deported.

5. Absence of a non-Jewish population willing to help.

Even if individuals did escape from a Nazi ghetto or camp, they faced great difficulties finding hiding places, food and sympathetic people to help them.

Resistance (Breaker Slide)

Teacher Note:

In most Holocaust narratives, Jews are regrettably described as victims who were ruthlessly murdered, with little knowledge of who they were as individuals or as a community. These German-centered narratives routinely highlight Nazi persecution and destruction, without relating to the perspective of how the Jews responded during the Holocaust. Hence, Jews under German domination are depicted as either mere objects in the evolving drama of Nazi butchery, or worse, as passive victims of Nazi persecution.

It is not surprising then that many students – both Jewish and non-Jewish – raise questions that imply partial blame to the Jewish victims. For example, when relating to the response of German Jews prior to the outbreak of World War II, students have asked why the Jews did not take the opportunity to flee Nazi Germany. Likewise, when the almost exclusive depiction of Jewish reactions to German persecution is that of armed resistance, this conveys a problematic message: “If the Jews who rose up in arms were able to decipher the Nazi plans of total extermination, why didn’t others reach this conclusion and respond accordingly?”

Both these queries imply that the victims could have taken an alternative course of action and that by not doing so the victims were “wrong” or, even worse, might be somewhat responsible for their own demise. These questions pose – perhaps unconsciously – a value-laden judgment that finds fault with the Jewish victims, rather than creating empathy with their plight. This widespread depiction of Jews as innocent but passive victims also prevents students from viewing them in a positive light: “Victims” rarely serve as positive role models. There is a critical need, therefore, to present students with a more contextualized presentation of how Jews perceived and vigorously responded to the evolving persecution.

In discussing Jewish Resistance, the Jews should be presented as active agents who exhibited resourcefulness and vitality within the limitations imposed by the tragedy and calamity they were experiencing.

It is essential that students recognize that the Jews could not anticipate their fate. While our post-war generation clearly knows that German anti-Jewish policy ended in systematic mass murder, this historical awareness was not available to wartime Jews. In fact, it was nearly impossible for anyone to believe that an advanced Western nation such as Germany could plan and implement the brutal murder of millions of innocent men, women and children. Understanding the pre-Holocaust mindset is critical in understanding the context of Jewish responses and demands that students suspend their own historical hindsight.

While most Jews ultimately fell victim to the brutality that engulfed them, they did not, as a rule, succumb to demoralization or moral collapse. Students should learn to appreciate and respect the dignity and strength of both the victims and the survivors. In doing so, they will understand why, as one resister reflected, the miracle was not that Jews could occasionally take up arms, but that such diverse forms of resistance existed at all.

- Taken from the Teacher’s Guide to *Daring to Resist: Jewish Defiance in the Holocaust*, a publication of the Museum of Jewish Heritage.

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Resistance:

Jewish Resistance

Resistance is often thought of in terms of armed resistance only. Equally important was the more common, unarmed resistance.

Armed Resistance:

- espionage
- sabotage of the Nazi war effort

Unarmed Resistance:

- smuggling of food, clothing and weapons
- forging identity documents
- distributing anti-Nazi literature
- assisting in covert escape & rescue efforts
- underground radio programs
- clandestine prayer
- underground schools and libraries
- documenting the Holocaust
- cultural activities

At first, armed resistance was not the way Jews responded to Nazi oppression. Jews were more practiced in the art of spiritual resistance. They initially attempted to thwart German intentions by nonviolent means, stopping short of direct confrontation in which Jews would inevitably be overpowered. Later, it became clear that death could not be evaded by cooperation or negotiation. Armed resistance was almost always an act of desperation when all hope was lost. When Jews fully understood what the Nazis intended, the fighters were motivated to uphold Jewish honor and avenge Jewish deaths.

The Nazis wanted to murder all the Jews of Europe and ban Jewish culture from the continent forever. In this atmosphere, merely participating in Jewish rituals, reading Jewish religious books or speaking Hebrew was a form of resistance. Thousands of other Jews chose more active ways of resisting such as printing illegal newspapers, destroying records, stealing German army supplies, sabotaging trains and factories, or blowing up bridges and roads. Thousands also took up arms and joined partisan groups in the forests. Any kind of armed resistance or sabotage was extremely dangerous. One was not only risking one's own life, but the Nazis often took revenge by killing innocent civilians. Those who took this course of action had a real dilemma. Doing severe damage to the German war machine meant an even harsher response by the German military against innocent men, women and children.

Hannah Senesh and the Tzanchanim

In the summer of 1942, reports of the systematic extermination of Jews in Nazi-occupied countries began to travel to the free world. When the shocking news reached Jewish settlers living in British-occupied Palestine, many decided to attempt rescue missions. After considerable debate, the British agreed to train volunteers as parachutist agents. These agents would be dropped behind enemy lines in order to carry out specific missions. They were known as the Tzanchanim.

Because many of the Tzanchanim were natives of the target countries, they had the necessary language skills and familiarity with the terrain to blend in with the citizens and perform the desired duties. Some 250 men and women volunteered, 110 received training. Only 32 actually parachuted in missions between 1943 and 1945. One of these was 23 year-old Hannah Senesh, a Hungarian Jew who immigrated to Palestine in 1939. Senesh was one of five parachutists who was able to penetrate into her target country.

Senesh parachuted into Yugoslavia on March 13, 1944, determined to cross into Hungary to warn Hungarian Jews about the extermination camps. Before crossing the border into Hungary on June 7, 1944, Senesh, a poet, handed a poem to one of her companions. It ended with these lines:

*Blessed is the heart with strength to stop
its beating for honor's sake
Blessed is the match consumed
in kindling flame.*

Senesh was captured the next day in Nazi-occupied Hungary. After 5 months of imprisonment and torture in a prison in Budapest, she was brought to trial and convicted of treason against Hungary. Senesh was executed shortly before the city of Budapest fell to the advancing Soviet Army.

Today, Senesh is considered a national heroine in Israel, where her legacy symbolizes courage and moral strength.

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Resistance (Breaker Slide)

Quote on Slide:

Philosophy professor Kurt Huber guided the “White Rose” Movement until they were discovered by the Nazis.

He was eventually arrested. At his trial Huber concluded his defense with these words from 18th century German philosopher Immanuel Kant’s disciple, Johann Gottlieb Fichte.

Kurt Huber was executed.

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Resistance:

Non-Jewish Resistance

The White Rose

In June 1942, Hans Scholl, age 24, and Alexander Schmorell, age 25, both medical students at the University of Munich, founded “The White Rose,” an opposition group established to resist the Nazis. They were later joined by Hans’s 22-year-old sister Sophie, 24-year-old Christoph Probst, and others.

The members of The White Rose were outraged that educated Germans went along with Nazi policies. They distributed anti-Nazi leaflets and painted slogans like “Freedom!” and “Down With Hitler!” on walls of the University. The last White Rose leaflet, which the Scholls scattered in the entrance hall of the University of Munich on February 18, 1943, aroused a particular stir. The leaflet declared that “The day of reckoning has come, the reckoning of German youth with the most abominable tyranny that our people have ever suffered.” The building janitor saw Hans and Sophie distributing this flyer and reported them to the Gestapo. They, along with Christoph, were arrested. Within days, all three were brought before the People’s Court in Berlin. On February 22, 1943, in a trial that lasted only a few hours, they were convicted of treason and sentenced to death. Only hours later, the court carried out that sentence by guillotine. All three faced their deaths bravely, Hans crying out his last words, “Long live freedom!”

Later that same year, other members of the White Rose – Alexander Schmorell (age 25), Willi Graf (age 25) and Kurt Huber (age 49) – were tried and executed. Most of the other students convicted for their part in the group’s activities received prison sentences.

The Rosenstrasse Protest

In what has become known as the Rosenstrasse Protest, a group of non-Jewish Germans defied the Third Reich and saved their spouses or “mischling” children from deportation through a weeklong, non-violent protest.

Before dawn on Saturday, February 27, 1943, the Gestapo began a massive action to arrest and deport the last Jews remaining in Berlin. Pulled from their jobs and homes or snatched off the streets, these Jews were herded into trucks that took them to pre-designated assembly points. After the initial collection, the Nazis weeded out one group selected to be housed at a separate location: Jews married to non-Jews and children from the intermarriages (“mischling”). They were separated in an attempt to mislead their families into believing that they would not suffer the same fate as the others.

As word spread that their spouses and children had been arrested, many Germans, mostly women, rushed to the holding site at Rosenstrasse 2-4, a local Jewish community center. The crowd demanded to speak to or see their loved ones. Determined to prevent their deportation, the protesters yelled, chanted, or simply kept their presence on the street, even in the face of threatened gunfire. A day of protest lengthened to a week and news of the demonstration spread throughout the country and eventually to the international press.

In an effort to alleviate this public relations nightmare and to prevent further protest, Joseph Goebbels ordered the release of the prisoners on March 6, promising to resume deportations in a few weeks. This declaration was only partially true. Though the roundup of Jews continued and Goebbels declared Berlin "Jew free" in May 1943, intermarried Jews were permitted to remain with their families. Goebbels even initiated the return of a group of 35 intermarried Jews who had previously been deported to Auschwitz.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Defied laws and practices that conflicted with their religious beliefs.

Refused the "Heil Hitler" salute.

Did not vote in elections.

Refused to join the army.

Ignored the ban on their activities and continued to meet and distribute their literature.

Six thousand Jehovah's Witnesses were detained in prisons and camps. Because they refused to escape or physically resist, camp officers and guards sought them as domestic servants. There was no fear that witnesses would ever slash their throats as they shaved them.

Assassination Attempts on Hitler

There were many plots to assassinate Hitler during the war. The most serious attempt took place on July 20, 1944 when it looked as though the tide was turning against the German army. The assassins believed Hitler was leading "their Germany" to disaster. A bomb in a briefcase was left under the table in a room where Hitler and his staff were having a conference. The briefcase had been moved from its original location where it would have killed Hitler. Hitler escaped the bomb blast with minor injuries. Hitler ordered the round-up of the men and women involved. Those who were taken into custody, who had not committed suicide, were hanged in an especially cruel way and their death filmed for his enjoyment.

Christian Opposition

The opposition of the Christian Church was very limited. Protestant churches, which represented about 2/3 of the German population, were politically conservative and did not oppose the regime or its persecution of political opponents, Jews and gypsies. The same was true of the Catholic Church. However, some individual clergy and members of religious orders did speak out against Nazi German policies and assisted Jews in fleeing the country. Karl Barth, Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer opposed efforts to Nazify the Protestant Churches. They formed an alliance known as the "Confessing Church" which was committed to a "conscientious struggle against...every use of force and coercion of conscience in the Church."

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Resistance (Breaker Slide)

Slide 300

Resistance:

Resistance in the Ghettos and the Camps

The Jews knew that their resistance would not stop the Germans, yet they still made the decision to resist.

Resistance in the Ghettos

The deprivations of living in the ghettos and under the constant fear of Nazi terror made resistance dangerous but not impossible. Between 1941 and 1943, underground resistance movements developed in about 100 Jewish ghettos in Nazi-occupied eastern Europe. Acts of unarmed resistance predominated, as Jewish ghetto activists did not usually take the risk of armed resistance against overpowering military force until the last days and weeks before the destruction of the ghetto.

From the beginning of their confinement in the ghettos – when they could not begin even to imagine the idea of gas chambers and crematoria – underground activists were focused on survival, not only physical survival, but on standing up in defiance against their enemies' goals of persecution, degradation and dehumanization.

Jewish armed resistance..., when it came, did not spring from a sudden impulse; it was not an act of personal courage on the part of a few individuals or organized groups: it was the culmination of Jewish defiance, defiance that had existed from the advent of the ghetto.

- Vladka Meed, Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Fighter

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

Perhaps the most famous ghetto uprising was the one that took place in the Warsaw Ghetto of Poland.

Between July and mid-September 1942, the Germans deported at least 300,000 Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto. For the 60,000 Jews remaining in the Warsaw Ghetto, deportation seemed inevitable. In response to the deportations, several Jewish underground organizations created an armed self-defense unit known as the Jewish Fighting Organization (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa; ŻOB). The Ż.O.B., led by 23-year-old Mordecai Anielewicz, issued a proclamation calling for the Jewish people to resist going to the railroad cars.

The Germans tried to resume mass deportations of Jews from Warsaw in January 1943. A group of Jewish fighters infiltrated a column of Jews being forced to the Umschlagplatz (transfer point) and, at a prearranged signal, broke ranks and fought their German escorts. Fighters used a small supply of weapons that had been smuggled into the ghetto. After seizing 5,000-6,500 ghetto residents to be deported, the Germans suspended further deportations. Encouraged by the apparent success of the resistance, which they believed may have halted deportations, members of the ghetto population began to construct subterranean bunkers and shelters in preparation for an uprising should the Germans begin the final deportation of all remaining Jews in the ghetto.

The Germans intended to begin deporting the remaining Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto on April 19, 1943, the eve of Passover. When they entered the ghetto that morning, its streets were empty. The renewal of deportations was the signal for an armed uprising within the ghetto. 750 fighters fought about 2,000 heavily armed and well-trained Germans. Anielewicz and those with him were killed in an attack on his command bunker, which fell to German forces on May 8.

Ultimately the Germans set fire to or blew up buildings to force the Jews out of their bunkers. The ghetto fighters were able to hold out for nearly a month, but on May 16, 1943, the revolt ended. Of the more than 56,000 Jews captured, about 7,000 were shot, and the remainder were deported to killing centers or concentration camps. A small number escaped through the sewer system and eventually joined the Polish resistance fighters.

On May 16, 1943, SS General Juergen Stroop ordered the Great Synagogue on Tlomacki Street destroyed to symbolize German victory.

The liquidation was only to have taken 3 days, but instead took nearly a month. The Warsaw ghetto uprising was the largest, symbolically most important Jewish uprising, and the first urban uprising, in German-occupied Europe.

Emanuel Ringelblum's Oneg Shabbat Archives

The most comprehensive effort to document ghetto life was undertaken in Warsaw by a group of several dozen writers, teachers, rabbis and historians led by Dr. Emanuel Ringelblum in a secret operation code-named Oneg Shabbat (Joy of the Sabbath). They wrote diaries, collected documents, commissioned papers, and preserved the posters and decrees that comprised the memory of the doomed community. They had no illusions; their only hope was that the memory of the Warsaw Ghetto would endure.

On the eve of destruction, when all seemed lost, the archive was placed in metal milk cans and metal boxes and buried deep beneath the streets of Warsaw. One can was found in 1946. It is on display at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. A second can, on display at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, was discovered on December 1, 1950. Scholars speak of a third milk can. Despite repeated searches for this can and other metal containers, they remain buried.

After being discovered hiding on the "Aryan side" of Warsaw following the final destruction of the Warsaw Ghetto, Ringelblum was shot by the Germans in March 1944.

Resistance in the Concentration and Death Camps

The atmosphere of total terror and isolation in the camps as well as the chronic starvation of most prisoners severely inhibited the will of the prisoners and the possibilities of resistance. Barbed and high voltage electrically wired fences and numerous guard towers left little hope of escape.

While the conditions of imprisonment made armed resistance extremely difficult, it was not impossible. The most dramatic examples of armed resistance were revolts planned and carried out by organized underground groups of Jewish inmates at Treblinka, Sobibor, and Auschwitz II (Birkenau). As was the case with the ghetto revolts, these uprisings occurred with little hope of success against the superior German forces. But, like the ghetto revolts, the Jewish prisoners realized their days were numbered anyway.

Treblinka

By 1943, Treblinka's work was nearly completed. The Jews of Poland were almost all dead. Prisoners believed rightly that Treblinka would be demolished and themselves killed when the camp went out of operation.

After learning of the Warsaw Ghetto revolt from new arrivals who smuggled in a few concealed weapons, organizers decided their time had come. On August 2, 1943, the plan was put into action: steal additional arms from the warehouse, eliminate the German and Ukrainian guards on duty, set the camp on fire, destroy the extermination area, then help the remaining prisoners escape to the forest.

The camp underground, about 100 men, made careful plans for the uprising. A locksmith, called to repair the lock on the SS arsenal, made a wax impression of the lock. Over several months, a copy of the key was made. SS arms would be used to fight the SS.

Approximately 800 prisoners joined in the uprising. Many were killed during the rebellion, including all the resistance leaders. As many as 200 prisoners escaped to the neighboring forest, but only half survived German efforts to recapture them.

A few months after the revolt, the Germans closed the camp, leveled it, and planted pine trees to hide all traces of the mass murders. No Nazi records of the uprising have been found.

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Resistance:

Map of Jewish Armed Resistance in Ghettos and Camps 1941-1944

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Resistance:

Artwork by Arthur Szyk, "Battle of the Warsaw Ghetto"

In April 1945, the second anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Arthur Szyk created this tribute to the fighters. He shows the diversity of the fighters, including a woman firing from the battlements and an aged man bearing the Torah. The Jewish heroes are seen fighting under the Zionist flag. Szyk's image is one of defiance: the Jewish fighters, having killed an SS officer, hold aloft his order from Himmler to murder all the Jews of the ghetto. The painting bears the dedication "Samson in the ghetto," a clear reference to Judges 16:30 that tells of a blinded Jewish hero who pulled down the pillars supporting his enemy's palace, killing himself and his people's oppressors while crying out, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Surrounding the entire image is Szyk's curse upon the Germans: "To the sons of Cain, be ye doomed forever and ever amen."

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Resistance (Breaker Slide)

Quote on Slide:

The day before Hannah Senesh crossed into occupied Hungary, knowing of the risk she was taking, she had handed a poem to one of her companions. It ended with these lines:

Blessed is the heart with the strength to stop its beating for honor's sake. Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.

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Resistance:
Partisan Activity

Some of those who escaped from trains, ghettos and even concentration camps fled to the forests where they joined underground movements – partisan fighters. The fighting groups could be found all over occupied Europe and consisted of young men and women, mainly teenagers, who stole or bought guns and attacked Germans whenever possible. Dense forests served as their protective home.

Partisan groups were both Jewish refugees and nationals who shared the same goal of defeating the Nazi invaders. In Yugoslavia, Russia, Bulgaria and Greece, Jews fought as equals alongside native partisans. Some Polish partisan groups permitted Jews to join. Others hated Jews almost as much as the Nazis did. Sometimes Jews formed their own partisan groups.

The Bielski Brigade

Young Jewish inhabitants of the Vilna Ghetto in occupied Lithuania escaped to the forests of Western Belorussia and formed armed partisan units which engaged in operations against the Germans. A unique partisan group known as the Bielski Brigade lived in the Belorussian forests. By 1944, the Brigade had more than 1,200 Jewish members. Though the brigade did engage in armed combat, its primary mission was to provide a safe haven for Jewish civilians who escaped to the forest. The Bielski Brigade was essentially a small Jewish community residing in the forest with a synagogue, law court, workshops, school and medical dispensary.

The Avengers

In the winter of 1941, a charismatic young poet named Abba Kovner formed a Jewish guerrilla group in the Vilna Ghetto in Lithuania. They sneaked through the city's sewers, blowing up German transports and outposts with homemade bombs. After the war, Kovner and his Avengers hatched a plan to poison 8,000 Nazis imprisoned at Stalag 13 in Nuremberg. By sneaking poison into a bakery that made bread for the Nuremberg prisoners, the Avengers successfully poisoned approximately 2,238 Nazis. It was never clear just how many people were killed in the attack.

The most lethal chemical poisoning ever, outside of the Nazi gas chambers, appears to be the arsenic poisoning of several thousand captive German SS soldiers in April 1946 by the Jewish reprisal organization Nokmim (Avengers).

-America's Achilles Heel

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Resistance:
Maps of Jewish Partisan Activity in Eastern & Western Europe, 1942-1944

Slide 306

The Final Stages of War (Initial Breaker Slide)

Slide 307

The Final Stages of War:
Map of Allied Invasions

Slide 308

The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

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The Final Stages of War:
Allied Invasion at Normandy, D-Day (June 6, 1944)

Teacher Notes:

- D-day is an official military term referring to the day chosen for the beginning of a military operation. Because of the scale and importance of the Allied Invasion of Normandy, the term has become synonymous with this event.
- The Free French Forces were French fighters in World War II who decided to continue fighting against Axis forces after the surrender of France and subsequent German occupation. They were led by General Charles de Gaulle. De Gaulle was part of a small group of politicians who argued against a negotiated surrender to Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

In 1942, the U.S. and Britain began to discuss a large-scale invasion across the English Channel. After two years of planning, Allied troops swarmed ashore June 6, 1944 in northern France in the largest land, air and sea invasion in history. With the success of the Normandy invasion, the Allies had secured a safe harbor for unloading troops and supplies for further advances into Europe.

Paris was liberated by American and Free French forces on August 25, 1944. Vichy officials fled to Germany and French General Charles de Gaulle returned from exile in Great Britain as leader of Free France. British forces swept into Belgium capturing Antwerp on September 4.

The Germans were not ready to give up. As a last attempt, Hitler sent troops into the Ardennes Forest of France, trying to drive a wedge between American and British armies. The Battle of the Bulge was the bloodiest battle of the war. It was over by January 16, 1945. There was no clear victor, but Germany suffered severe losses. Hitler was in denial of his losses.

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The Final Stages of War:
Artwork by Simon Jeruchim, "Invasion of Normandy"

Simon Jeruchim was born in 1929 in Montreuil, France. After hearing rumors of Jewish deportations, his parents placed him and his two siblings in hiding. In 1942 his parents were arrested and eventually sent to Auschwitz where they perished. Posing as a Catholic, Simon found refuge at the home of a non-Jewish woman who was hiding other children. He met a schoolmaster who gave him a sketchpad and watercolor set.

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The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 312

The Final Stages of War:

The Allies Close In: Map of Soviet Advances

Supplies poured into the Soviet Union from Britain and the U.S. Soviet forces moved slowly forward during the summer and fall of 1943. By late July 1944, Soviet troops had reached the outskirts of Warsaw, Poland. Poland's Home Army rose up against German forces in Warsaw on August 1, without Soviet assistance. Stalin permitted the Germans to destroy the Home Army, fearing they might have resisted his plans to set up a Communist government in Poland after the war. Soviet forces then took Warsaw from the Germans in January 1945.

Soviet troops drove into Romania and Bulgaria. The Germans pulled out of Greece and Yugoslavia. Vienna, Austria fell to the Soviets in April 1945. Soviet troops now occupied most of eastern Europe.

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The Final Stages of War:

The Allies Close In: Map of the Allied Push to Central Germany 1942-1945

This map depicts the Allied advances from all sides, squeezing the German troops toward Berlin, the capital of Germany. In the process, Allied troops were startled to find the evidence of Nazi atrocities – the camps. The rumors of Nazi deeds were actually true. The camps they found were often evacuated or destroyed, both to remove the prisoners, as well as to hide the evidence of wrongdoing. These evacuations were known as death marches.

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The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 315

The Final Stages of War:

Artwork by Ella Liebermann Shiber, "Death March"

As early as the autumn of 1942, German SS and police officials began to remove or conceal the evidence of genocide and mass murder. Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka were dismantled and the sites were plowed over and seeded with trees. The surviving prisoners at each of these killing centers were either shot at the site or transferred to another location and shot there.

During 1942, to further conceal the evidence of mass murder, the Germans searched the territory of the occupied Soviet Union to locate mass graves filled with the victims of the *Einsatzgruppen* operations that occurred in 1941-42. Jewish forced laborers were deployed to dig up the bodies and burn them.

By November of 1944, the Germans knew the war was lost. As the Allied armies closed in on the Nazi concentration camps – the Soviets from the east, and the British, French and Americans from the west – desperate SS officials tried frantically to evacuate the camps. They wanted no eyewitnesses remaining when the camps were overrun. A concerted effort was made to conceal the crimes that had been committed. The concentration camps were dismantled or abandoned. But Germany still needed slave labor and more time to complete the "Final Solution." In the dead of winter, prisoners were taken first by train and then marched by foot toward the heartland of Germany. Thousands froze to death or died as a result of Allied air attacks on German troops retreating into Germany. These became known as the "death marches." An estimated 100,000 Jews died during these "death marches."

Hugo Gryn, a survivor of several death marches, later reflected:

For the Nazis, the destruction of the Jews had an unchanging function until the very end of the war; it was the only thing about which they have never changed their policies. I have never ceased to be amazed by the priority they gave it, even when everything was collapsing.

Daniel Jonah Goldhagen has described the death marches as the antithesis of deportations. This dispersion sent the Jews off in various paths toward Germany, which on the brink of defeat was receiving back the Jews it had once so proudly expelled.

There were 59 different marches from concentration camps during the final winter of Nazi domination, some covering hundreds of miles. The largest death marches took place in the winter of 1944, when the Soviet army began its liberation of Poland. The prisoners were given little or no food and water, and hardly any time to rest or take care of bodily needs. Those who paused or fell behind were shot. Many reached the end of their strength and collapsed. Many of those still alive after the evacuations and death marches were incarcerated in concentration camps throughout central Germany (Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, Sachsenhausen and Ravensbruck). Thousands died of exposure, starvation and disease in these camps.

The marches often passed through German towns and villages. Gisela Teumann recalls:

We passed through some German town. We asked for food. At first they thought that we were German refugees. The SS man who accompanied us shouted: 'Don't give them anything to eat, it's Jews they are.' And so I got no food. German children began to throw stones at us.

In early November 1944 the Auschwitz gas chambers were dismantled.

When the liberating Soviet army arrived at Auschwitz on January 27, 1945, only a few thousand ill persons remained. Days earlier, on January 18, 1945, there was last minute mass murder, and then the marches began for those able to walk into the German-held interior. Some 66,000 prisoners were marched to Wodzislaw, where they were put on freight trains to Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald, Dachau, and Mauthausen concentration camps. Almost one in four died en route. Thomas Buerghenthal, at the age of nine, was one of the youngest survivors of the Auschwitz death march. He recalled:

In January the liquidation of Auschwitz happened. They lined us all up. They came in to announce that the camp was being liquidated. They gave us some food and began to march us out of the camp. We were marched first for about 3 days to a town in Upper Silesia called Gleiwitz. The three of us kids were together. The children's camp group was put in front when we first marched out. But in Poland, January is very cold. After about a 10-12 hour walk we began to be very tired. The children began to fall back.

People from the back were pushing, that we weren't going fast enough. And whoever sat down was shot by guards at each side of the road.

The three of us developed a system of resting, which was to run up to the front, and then sort of stop almost, until we reached the back. And by that time, we had rested, and then we could run up again and we would stay warm. Suddenly in the evening they stopped the column and asked for all the children to come forward, that they were going to put us on a farm. And we wouldn't have to march anymore. Well, we had had experience. And we didn't go. All the children from that group were taken away, and apparently shot. So we were the only three that stayed.

In April and May 1945 the camps in Germany itself and the wandering columns of women and men were finally liberated. Buchenwald was freed on April 11 by the Americans, Bergen-Belsen by the British on April 15, Dachau and Mauthausen on April 29 and May 3, respectively, by the Americans. Terezin on May 9 by the Soviets.

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The Final Stages of War:

Photos of Death Marches

When, in the last days of the war, prisoners were evacuated on forced marches before the approaching Allied armies and thousands of people saw the miserable skeletons dragging themselves through their towns, with the SS beating and shooting those who faltered, the population's responses ranged from hard indifference, even active participation in murder, to surreptitious kindness toward the prisoners.

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The Final Stages of War:

Photo of Civilians Viewing Deaths from Marches

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The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 319

**The Final Stages of War:
Liberation**

Teacher Notes:

- In 2006, the date of January 27 was declared “International Holocaust Remembrance Day” by the United Nations. This day marks the liberation of Auschwitz by Soviet troops.

- This is once again a chance to discuss terminology with your students.

Liberation means to be set free. Indeed for the camp prisoners, they were free from the Nazi madmen controlling their lives. But free to do what? To go where? Lives had to be repaired both physically and mentally. Families had to be reunited and/or re-created. Would the survivors use this term to describe what they experienced?

As we entered the camp, the living skeletons still able to walk crowded around us and, though we wanted to drive farther into the place, the milling, pressing crowd would not let us. It is not an exaggeration to say that almost every inmate was insane with hunger. Just the sight of an American brought cheers, groans and shrieks. People crowded around to touch an American, to touch the jeep, to kiss our arms – perhaps just to make sure that it was true. The people who couldn't walk crawled out toward our jeep. Those who couldn't even crawl propped themselves up on an elbow, and somehow through all their pain and suffering, revealed through their eyes the gratitude, the joy they felt at the arrival of Americans.

- Captain J.D. Pletcher, 71st Division Headquarters

You can't imagine how really pathetic it was to see these people walking with shallow faces, their eyes sunk in. They were just beaten human beings – they were destroyed and no amount of food or anything like that was going to bring them out of it. It was going to take love and understanding to make them human beings again. But they looked so gruesome. People can't imagine what it was like to see people who were actually nothing but skin and bones. You can't imagine a human being starving other human beings so badly they would get in that condition.

- Anonymous soldier of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, liberation of Dachau

But here, on this day in April in 1945, I was going to have the shock of my life because, you see, I was going to go through the gates of Buchenwald and I was totally unprepared for that experience. I knew something had happened to me. I was not the same anymore. I had changed. I came into that camp thinking and feeling one way. I was an angry young black soldier. Angry at my country for what it was doing to me: making me fight and die, and then telling me at the same time that I'm not good enough. So, I was angry, yes! But after I came into Buchenwald and I saw what I saw, things changed. My blinders came off. My tunnel vision dissipated. I could see more clearly now. I recognized that human suffering is not just left to me and mine. Human suffering can touch all of us. And I also came to the realization that on this day in April 1945, I had seen the face of evil. I had come to know that racism is evil. When any group of people can get so powerful that they can control other people and dictate terms of life and death, that's evil. And the Nazis thought that they were super men; they were superior to others. They were the 'Aryan race.' And now I recognize racism and what happens when it is carried to the ultimate. And so I knew somehow that I had to fight it.

- Leon Bass, nineteen-year-old African American soldier

The Allied soldiers who entered the concentration camps did so as liberators. In every camp that they reached in April and May 1945 they found as many prisoners dead as alive. Sometimes they reached a camp while killings were still taking place.

The first camps were liberated by the Soviet Army as they invaded German-occupied territory from the east.

On July 23, 1944, Soviet troops liberated Majdanek, just outside the Polish city of Lublin. The Germans had left with no time to destroy the evidence of their crimes. Upon entering the camps, the soldiers were shocked by what they saw. They found few prisoners, but ample evidence, including 800,000 pairs of shoes.

The West was not prepared for what they saw. The first British reporter to visit Majdanek had his story spiked as “a propaganda stunt.” In the U.S., the editors of *Christian Century* found the parallels between Majdanek “and the ‘corpse factory’ atrocity tales of the First World War ... too striking to be overlooked.”

The Soviet capture of Majdanek was viewed as a propaganda disaster for Hitler. The Nazis raced to eliminate the evidence of what they had done in other camps. Documents were burned. The *Sonderkommando* (prisoners who disposed of corpses, tended the crematoria and emptied the gas chambers) were executed and when possible, facilities were destroyed.

SS leader Heinrich Himmler ordered the destruction of the killing facilities at Auschwitz II (Birkenau) in November 1944.

Roman Karman, a well-known Soviet correspondent, filed this report on August 21, 1944:

In the course of my travels into liberated territory I have never seen a more abominable sight than Majdanek near Lublin, Hitler's notorious extermination camp, where more than a half a million European men, women, and children were massacred ... This is not a concentration camp; it is a gigantic murder plant.

During the summer of 1944, Soviet forces overran the sites of the Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka.

These killing centers had been closed a year earlier when the annihilation of Polish Jews was virtually complete. The SS had dismantled these camps and turned them into farms. Soldiers found bones protruding from the ground.

In late 1944, the first major concentration camp to be overrun and liberated by British and American troops was Natzweiler (near Strassburg, France).

On January 27, 1945, the Soviets liberated Auschwitz, but the SS had already forced the majority of its prisoners on death marches into the German interior. At Auschwitz III (Monowitz) they found 600 sick prisoners from the I.G. Farben plant. In the main camp, 1,200 prisoners had been too ill to join the 60,000 sent on the death march to the west. At Auschwitz II (Birkenau), 5,800 inmates remained. Hoping to avoid the propaganda disaster that followed the discoveries at Majdanek, the Nazis had dismantled the gas chambers, blown up the crematoria, and burned 32 storage huts to the ground. The Soviet troops still found 348,820 men's suits, 836,255 women's coats, tens of thousands of pairs of shoes, more than 7 tons of human hair, huge quantities of toothbrushes, shaving brushes, glasses, crutches, false teeth and even 13,964 rugs.

Among the survivors was Anne Frank's father, Otto Frank.

In April-May 1945, British troops overran and liberated Bergen-Belsen (Germany) and Neuengamme (Germany).

Neither a death camp nor even a concentration or labor camp, Bergen-Belsen was a “convalescent” camp. Prisoners too weak to work were transported there in large numbers in February and March 1945 in hopes they would regain strength and thus boost the free labor force. By that time the camp administration was breaking down. The water supply was no longer sufficient and the food was a watery soup with rotten vegetables. By April 15 there was no food at all to feed 60,000 people who were dying of starvation and typhus. Thousands of bodies lay unburied and rotting in the sun. The uncontrollable typhus epidemic was so lethal that the camp had to be burned.

Prior to liberation 37,000 died. After liberation another 14,000 died, despite the efforts of a British medical team. Most of the inmates were Jewish.

Former inmates were moved to a school 2 miles down the road, which became the site of a displaced-persons camp. The British colonel in charge of medical efforts marched the local civilians through the camp to show them the horror at their doorstep. Speaking to them he said:

You must realize that according to those wretched victims who experienced other camps, this camp was in some respects one of the better ones. Chiefly because in this camp it was possible in most cases, though not in all, to die fairly quietly from hunger or typhus. In certain other camps, the inmates were done to death and hurled into massive graves, sometimes before they were dead...

Also in April and May of 1945, Soviet troops encountered Sachsenhausen (Germany), Ravensbruck (Germany), and Theresienstadt (Czechoslovakia).

U.S. troops came upon and liberated Buchenwald (Germany), Dachau (Germany), Flossenburg (Germany), and Mauthausen (Austria).

American troops entered Buchenwald on April 11, 1945. The SS had left hours earlier, so inmates had taken over the camp when the Americans entered. Days before, 25,000 prisoners had been taken out of the camp...many did not survive. The prisoners who were still alive were living skeletons. Those left alive were remnants of human beings, so sick, so starved and weak, they could not even survive being free. “Many died from sheer joy,” reported a witness. “They had lived on hope, on fear and on their sheer nerves for so long that the sudden relaxation, when it came, was too much for them.”

American troops approached Dachau on April 29, 1945. Realizing the camp was still guarded by the SS, the troops were fearful. As they chanced upon train boxcars filled with dead bodies, the fear turned to hatred. As one soldier recalled:

Control was gone after the sights we saw, and the men were deliberately wounding guards that were available and then turned them over to prisoners and allowed them to take their revenge on them.

The last of the camps encountered by the Americans were Mauthausen and Gusen on May 5-6, 1945. Several days later, the war was over.

Survivors had mixed reactions to their new-found freedom. While a few looked forward to being reunited with other family members, some felt guilty for surviving when so many of their relatives and friends had died.

For the great part of the liberated Jews of Bergen-Belsen, there was no ecstasy, no joy at our liberation. We had lost our families, our homes. We had no place to go, nobody to hug, nobody who was waiting for us, anywhere. We had been liberated from death and from the fear of death, but we were not free from the fear of living.

- Hadassah Rosensaft, a survivor who organized medical efforts at Bergen-Belsen

As Jews, the survivors had no place in society. As human beings, they returned to nothing. Of the 200,000 Jews liberated from the camps, roughly ¾ returned to their own countries. Survivors came home to find that their loved ones would never join them and that the Jewish community itself had been destroyed. Nothing they had left in their homes was to be found, and little that had been entrusted to friends and neighbors was recovered. They were greeted with hostility by their neighbors, many of whom had profited from looted Jewish property.

It fell to the survivors to recreate a material and moral universe in which they could live once again.

Slide 320

The Final Stages of War:
Liberation Photos - Conditions

Slide 321

The Final Stages of War:
Liberation Photos - Food & Medicine

Allied troops, physicians and relief workers tried to provide nourishment for the surviving prisoners. They were fed, but they had been starved for so long that some of them could not eat anymore. Hundreds died from the first food given to them. Their feeble beaten bodies could not deal with such “richness” as powdered milk, sugar, salt, oatmeal and canned meat. Doctors reported that the average prisoner weighed between 60-80 pounds. They had lost 50-60% of their body weight and inches off their normal height. In the areas freed by the Americans, French and British, 60,000 Jews were found alive. Within one week, 20,000 had died. In Bergen-Belsen alone, the death count was 500 each day.

Slide 322

The Final Stages of War:
Liberation Photos - Witness to the Atrocities

The sight of the emaciated corpses at Ohrdruf created a wave of revulsion that spread back to Great Britain and the U.S.

I saw Eisenhower go to the opposite end of the road and vomit. From a distance I saw Patton bend over, holding his head with one hand and his abdomen with the other. And I soon became ill. I suggested to General Eisenhower that cables be sent immediately to President Roosevelt, Churchill and de Gaulle, urging people to come and see for themselves. The general nodded.

- Lewis H. Weinstein, Lieutenant Colonel and Chief of the Liaison
Section of General Eisenhower's staff, April 1945.

Eisenhower was so shocked that he at once telephoned Churchill to describe what he had seen. He then sent photographs of the scene to Churchill, who circulated them to each member of the British Cabinet and arranged for a delegation of British members of Parliament to be flown to Germany to witness the sight first hand.

I have never felt able to describe my emotional reaction when I first came face-to-face with the indisputable evidence of Nazi brutality and ruthless disregard of every shred of decency ... I visited every nook and cranny of the camp because I felt it my duty to be in a position from then on to testify firsthand about these things in case there ever grew up at home the belief or assumption that the stories of Nazi brutality were just propaganda.

- General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander, Allied Forces, Europe,
In a letter to Chief of Staff George Marshall, April 12, 1945

U.S. Congressmen were flown to Dachau to witness the atrocities. In addition, local German civilians were forced to confront the horrors that occurred in their “backyards.” In some cases, civilians as well as Nazi officials were forced to assist in the removal and disposal of thousands of corpses.

Slide 323

The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 324

The Final Stages of War:

Yalta (Crimea) Conference / February 4-11, 1945

Photo of F.D.R & Churchill:

Just think of the power these two leaders had at that moment...carving up Europe as if it was a piece of pie. Roosevelt was obviously suffering from congestive heart failure and some critics say that he wasn't thinking clearly at the conference. Perhaps he knew that he was going to have to pacify Stalin by giving him Poland and all the other countries that he demanded. At this point, Roosevelt was afraid that the U.S. military would need the help of the Soviet Union in fighting the Japanese in the Pacific.

The Yalta Conference took place at Yalta, a famous Black Sea resort in the Crimea from February 4-11, 1945.

Great Britain (Prime Minister Winston Churchill), the U.S. (President Franklin D. Roosevelt) and the Soviet Union (Premier Joseph Stalin) participated. France was absent.

Allied forces had pushed Nazi Germany to the brink of collapse, and all sides recognized that the end of the war was imminent. Roosevelt hoped to use the conference not only as a planning meeting for the postwar period, but also as a forum to establish a warmer personal relationship with Stalin. Although weakened by a deteriorating heart condition that took his life two months later, Roosevelt believed he could use his charm and skills of persuasion to win Stalin's confidence in American goodwill, thereby ensuring a peaceful postwar world order.

Stalin drove a hard bargain at Yalta. Roosevelt's physical weakness as a dying man and Churchill's political weakness left Stalin in the strongest bargaining position of the three. The fact that Soviet forces had numerical superiority over their American and British allies on the continent of Europe further strengthened Stalin's hand.

Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin agreed on several points:

1. The priority would be the unconditional surrender of Nazi Germany. This policy had previously been adopted at the Casablanca Conference.
2. After the war, Germany and Austria would be split into four zones that would be occupied by Great Britain, the U.S., the Soviet Union and France. Berlin and Vienna (the capitals) would be shared by all four powers.
3. Germany would undergo demilitarization and de-nazification. Germany was to have its industrial base rebuilt, but its armaments industries were to be abolished.
4. Nazi war criminals would be brought to trial.
5. The Allies would help the freed peoples of Europe set up democratic and self-governing countries by helping them to (a) maintain law and order; (b) carry out emergency relief measures; (c) set up governments; and (d) hold elections.
6. The most troublesome issue was the fate of Eastern European countries that Germany had conquered during the war. The Soviet army currently occupied most of the territory, making it difficult for Churchill and Roosevelt to bargain with Stalin on this point. It was agreed that interim governments in these countries would give way to democratically elected regimes as soon as practicable.

7. The new eastern border of Poland would follow the Curzon Line, giving the Soviet Union about 1/3 of pre-war Poland. Poland would be given unspecified German territory in the north and west as well as a new, freely elected, democratic Polish government. This excluded the Polish government-in-exile that had evacuated in 1939.

8. A new world peace organization, the United Nations, should be set up to replace the failed League of Nations.

At Yalta, Roosevelt sought Stalin's approval of the U.N. Charter, which had already been drafted. Stalin had previously insisted on representation for each of the 16 Soviet Republics in the General Assembly as well as permanent members of the Security Council having veto power on all issues, not just those involving sanctions or threats to peace. Stalin agreed to 3 seats for the Soviet Union in the General Assembly and a limited veto power.

The Conference asked China and France to join them in sponsoring the founding conference of the United Nations that was to be held in San Francisco on April 25, 1945.

9. The Soviet Union agreed to enter the war against Japan in exchange for control of the Kuril Islands, the southern half of Sakhalin Island and two strategic ports. These islands are north of Japan, off the eastern coast of Russia.

Roosevelt came to Yalta seeking early Soviet participation in the war against Japan. He promised Stalin the return of territories lost following the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. Stalin agreed to declare war on Japan, but required a waiting period of 90 days after the surrender of Germany. With the surrender of Japan in August 1945, the Soviet Union did obtain the promised territories even though they only contributed minimal effort.

10. A commission would be set up to look into reparations.

The Yalta conference is often cited as the beginning of the "Cold War." Contrary to Roosevelt's hopes, the conference failed to establish a spirit of trust between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Relations between the two steadily deteriorated and the "Cold War" developed between the two rival superpowers. The Yalta conference became a major point of friction with Americans charging that Stalin violated several points of the Agreement. Although Stalin had agreed to support freely elected democratic governments in the liberated territories, he broke his pledge and suppressed democratic movements across Eastern Europe. Roosevelt's critics accused the Roosevelt administration of having capitulated to Stalin's demands at Yalta.

Slide 325

The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 326

The Final Stages of War:
Hitler's Last Days

The Allies began their final assault on Germany in early 1945. Hitler ordered his soldiers to fight to the death, but large numbers of German soldiers surrendered each day. Hitler Youth, as young as 12, were recruited as a last resort to defend the streets of Berlin. In the midst of the ceremony with the Hitler Youth shown in the photo above, Hitler was noted to have unexplained physical tremors.

I had the image of a very strong vital person with charisma, but what I saw was a sick old man. His right arm was injured by the attempt (assassination attempt) on his life and his figure had changed. His head was sunk into his shoulders. His left hand was very weak and his left foot dragged behind him. The eyes were pale and without expression any more.

- Major Bernd Freytag von Loringhoven, Aide to army chiefs, housed Hitler's bunker

By April 25, 1945, the German capital of Berlin was encircled by Allied troops. Adolf Hitler and his closest aides retreated to the shelter of the underground bunker located beneath the Chancellery building in Berlin. Unwilling to concede defeat, Hitler commanded his forces to fight to the last man.

Hitler declared that he had decided to stay in Berlin, lead its defense, and then at the last moment shoot himself ... for he could not run the risk of falling into enemy hands. We all attempted to bring him over from this decision ... His answer was that everything was falling to pieces anyway, and that he could do no more.

- Alfred Jodl, Chief of Staff of the German Armed Forces

Most of the top Nazi leaders had no wish to share Hitler's fate. They left their Führer in his underground refuge and began to make their own plans for survival.

In his final days, Hitler split the offices of Chancellor and President, both of which he had held since the death of Hindenburg. According to his Last Will and Testament, Joseph Goebbels was appointed Chancellor and Admiral Karl Doenitz was appointed President without the title of führer. Goebbels was Chancellor of Germany for only one day. Goebbels was instructed to leave Berlin in order to lead the government in exile. For the first time, Goebbels disobeyed a command and remained in the bunker with his family, later to commit suicide together. Doenitz became the last ruler of Nazi Germany for a little over a week.

In those last days, the bunker in Berlin housed nearly 50 people who attempted to coordinate the defense of Berlin and sustain the Nazi government. Included in the group in the bunker was Hitler's mistress, Eva Braun. To fulfill Braun's dearest wish, Hitler consented to marry her before they committed suicide. They wed on April 29, 1945 in the bunker. Hitler then retired to his office to dictate his Last Will and Testament. He ended his testament with the following advice for future leaders of Germany:

Above all I charge the leaders of the nation and those under them to scrupulous observance of the laws of race and to merciless opposition to the universal poison of all peoples, International Jewry.

On the following day, April 30, 1945, Hitler and Braun committed suicide. Eva apparently took poison and Hitler shot himself. According to his wishes, their bodies were taken into the Chancellery garden and burned.

Hitler himself was perfectly consistent. He began his political career with an expression of his view that the central problem facing the world was the removal of the Jews. The day he committed suicide he wrote;

Centuries will pass away, but out of the ruins of our towns and monuments the hatred against those finally responsible, whom we have to thank for everything, international Jewry and its helpers, will grow...I left no one in doubt that this time...the real criminal would have to atone for his guilt, even if by more humane means...Above all I command the leadership of the nation and the followers to observe punctiliously the racial laws and to show unrelenting resistance to the poison of all the nations of the world, international Jewry.

Nazism ended the way it began – by attacking Jews.

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The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 328

**The Final Stages of War:
The Fall of Berlin (May 2, 1945)**

Hitler was briefly encouraged by Roosevelt's death on April 12, 1945, but that was only short-lived.

The Soviet advance toward Berlin began on April 16. The U.S. army captured Nuremberg, the site of Nazi party rallies in the 1930's on April 20. Four days later, Soviet armies closed a ring around Berlin. The next day the Soviets and the Americans made contact on the Elbe River and Germany was split into two parts which ultimately delineated the division that became known as East and West Germany.

German forces surrendered to the Soviets on May 2, 1945.

The fall of Berlin marked the end of World War II in Europe.

We Americans, after being attacked by the Japanese and having received a declaration of war from Hitler, had fought to defend our land and our belief in human rights, not to glorify an all-powerful leader or subjugate others. Our president was the servant of our country, not the other way around. When Roosevelt died, we were shocked and sad, but our values were intact. When Hitler was gone and, with him, any chance of victory, Germans had nothing left to fight for. The object of their oath was gone and nothing took its place. There were no humanistic ideals, no defense of the rights of man, no definition of nobility or honor, only blind obedience. It was as though Goethe, Beethoven, Brahms, Schiller, Luther, and the great German philosophers had never existed. The only goals of Nazis had been to make slaves of their neighbors and to advance in their own hierarchy. When their enemies defeated them, Germans were made to confront the stupidity of Nazi delusions and the perversity of their crimes, survey their utterly destroyed cities, and long for the imprisoned men to come home.

- Richard W. Sonnenfeldt, *Witness to Nuremberg*

Slide 329

The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 330

The Final Stages of War:

Surrender in the West (May 8, 1945)

On May 8, 1945, the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces (*Wehrmacht*) was signed by Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel in Berlin, ending World War II for Germany. The German people were suddenly confronted by a situation never before experienced in their history: the entire German territory was occupied by foreign armies, cities and infrastructure were largely reduced to rubble, the country was flooded with millions of refugees from the east, and large portions of the population were suffering from hunger and the loss of their homes. The nation-state founded by Otto von Bismarck in 1871 lay in ruins.

May 4:

German forces in Holland, Denmark, and northwest Germany surrendered to British Field Marshall Montgomery.

May 6:

After Hitler's death, Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz (now Reich President without the title of *führer*) had no course open to him other than surrender. Doenitz authorized General Jodl to "conclude an armistice agreement" with General Eisenhower. The Germans wanted a separate peace with Allied troops in the West in order to continue their battle with the Soviets in the East. Eisenhower refused.

May 7:

At Eisenhower's headquarters in the French city of Reims, the first "Act of Military Surrender" was signed by General Alfred Jodl, Chief of the Operations Staff in the German High Command, as the representative for the new Reich President, Grand Admiral Karl Doenitz.

This "Act of Surrender" applied to all military forces on land, at sea, and in the air who were at that point in time under the control of the German High Command. Pursuant to this "Act of Surrender," the German High Command issued orders to all forces under its command to cease active operations on May 8, 1945. Thus, this Act of Surrender legalized unconditional surrender of all armed forces under German control, officially ending combat in Europe.

The Soviet Union's only representative in Reims was General Ivan Susloparov, the Military Liaison Mission Commander. General Susloparov's scope of authority was not entirely clear, and he had no means of immediate contact with the Kremlin, but nevertheless decided to risk signing for the Soviet side. Stalin was displeased by these events. He believed that the German surrender should have been accepted only by the envoy of the U.S.S.R. Supreme Command, and insisted the Reims protocol be considered preliminary, with the main ceremony to be held in Berlin.

May 8:

The cessation of fighting took effect at 11:01 P.M.

The second "Act of Military Surrender" was signed shortly before midnight in Berlin. The German command representatives, headed by Wilhelm Keitel, signed the final "German Act of Unconditional Surrender," explicitly surrendering to Soviet forces.

V-E Day (Victory in Europe Day)

After 6 catastrophic years, the war was over in Europe but not yet in the Pacific.

August 6:

First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan.

August 9:

Second atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.

August 14:

Japanese agree to unconditional surrender.

September 2:

Japanese signs the surrender agreement.

V-J (Victory over Japan) Day. World War II is over.

Slide 331

The Final Stages of War (Breaker Slide)

Slide 332

The Final Stages of War:
Allied Occupation & Denazification

Allied Occupation of Germany & Austria:

The German people were suddenly confronted by a situation never before experienced in their history: the entire German territory was occupied by foreign armies, cities and infrastructure were largely reduced to rubble, the country was flooded with millions of refugees from the east, and large portions of the population were suffering from hunger and the loss of their homes. The nation-state founded by Otto von Bismarck in 1871 lay in ruins.

The total breakdown of civil administration throughout Germany required immediate measures to ensure the rebuilding of civil authority. After deposing Admiral (Führer) Karl Doenitz, Hitler's successor as head of state, and his government, the Allies issued a unilateral declaration on June 5, 1945 that proclaimed their supreme authority over German territory. The Allies would govern Germany and Austria through four occupation zones, one for each of the Four Powers: the United States, Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. These zones of occupation had been decided at a series of conferences and were finalized at the Yalta Conference. The boundaries of these zones generally followed the borders of the former German States.

Each occupation power assumed rule in its zone by June 1945. The powers originally pursued a common German policy, focused on denazification and demilitarization in preparation for the restoration of a democratic German nation-state.

The zones were governed by the Allied Control Council (ACC), consisting of the four supreme commanders of the Allied Forces. The ACC's decisions were to be unanimous, but as circumstances will have it, occupation policies soon varied.

The French, for instance, vetoed the establishment of a central German administration, a decision that furthered the country's eventual division. Because they had not participated in the Potsdam Conference, the French did not feel bound to the conference's decision that the country would remain an economic unit. Instead, the French sought to extract as much as they could from Germany and even annexed the Saar area for a time.

The Soviet occupiers likewise sought to recover as much as possible from Germany as compensation for the losses their country had sustained during the war. Unlike the French, however, they sought to influence Germany as a whole and hoped to hold an expanded area of influence. In their own zone, the Soviet authorities quickly moved toward establishing a socialist society like their own.

The United States had the greatest interest in denazification and in the establishment of a liberal democratic system. Early plans, such as the Morgenthau Plan to keep Germans poor by basing their economy on agriculture, were dropped as the Soviet Union came to be seen as a threat and Germany as a potential ally.

Britain had the least ambitious plans for its zone. However, British authorities soon realized that unless Germany became economically self-sufficient, British taxpayers would bear the expense of feeding its population. To facilitate German economic self-sufficiency, U.S. and British occupation policies soon merged, and by the beginning of 1947 their zones had been joined into one economic area--the Bizone.

Ultimately the three western zones merged to form the Federal Republic of Germany when that state was declared in May 1949, and the Soviet zone emerged as the German Democratic Republic in October 1949.

Denazification:

The program of denazification was launched after the end of the Second World War and solidified by the Potsdam Agreement. At its high point, the Nazi party had 8 million members. After the war, any remnants of the Nazi regime were to be removed from German society, culture, press, economy, judiciary and politics. Denazification also referred to the removal of the physical symbols of the Nazi regime as seen in the photo above.

Though all the occupying forces had agreed on the initiative, the methods used for denazification and the intensity with which they were applied differed between the occupation zones. The American and British only weakly enforced the denazification. With the economy in chaos, millions homeless, refugees overflowing, the Allies felt the only way the country could rebuild was by using the skills and talents of former Nazi leaders. Only 170,000 people were tried for wartime activities and most received only minor punishment.

In practice, denazification was not limited to Germany and Austria. In every European country with a vigorous Nazi or Fascist party (such as France, the Netherlands or Norway), effective measures of denazification were carried out.

Slide 333

The Aftermath (Initial Breaker Slide)

Slide 334

The Aftermath:
Jewish Losses

Teacher Notes:

- What country had the greatest number of Jews killed? (Poland)

- What country had the highest percentage of Jews killed? (Lithuania)

The citizens of Lithuania actively participated in the killing of Jews. Lithuania had a very vibrant, scholarly Jewish population who were killed, in many instances, by their fellow citizens. In Eishyshok, Lithuania, the town's 3000 Jews were murdered in 2 days with the help of their neighbors.

When the Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933, Jews lived in every country of Europe. A total of roughly 9 million Jews lived in the 21 countries that would be occupied by Germany during World War II. By the end of the war, almost 2 out of every three of these Jews were dead, and European Jewish life was changed forever.

Holocaust statistics include wide margin of error because:

- Not all victims were registered.
- Countless records that did exist were destroyed by the Nazis, or lost, burned or damaged in military actions.
- Records often contain fragmentary information, failing to include, for example, the victim's ethnic, national, or religious affiliation.

In addition, one should critically examine any statistics presented because:

- Different scholars have used different base dates for computing their figures, a situation that results in statistical differences due to the changing national borders of the Holocaust period.
- Figures for victims of a given country usually include not only citizens but also resident aliens and stateless refugees.
- Scholars have sometimes wrongly equated data about the arrests of various victims with fatalities, particularly in the case of non-Jewish victims.

Albania (See slide #206)

On the eve of World War II there were about 600 Jews in Albania, of whom 400 were refugees from Germany and Austria. There was no discrimination of Jews in Albania until September 1943 when Albania came under German control. Albanian officials did not supply the Germans with lists of Jews living in Albania. Christian and Muslim Albanians regarded it as a matter of national pride to help Jews. No Jews were ever turned over to the Germans. The Jewish community survived the war except for one family of 6 that had only 1 survivor.

Austria (See slide #116)

At the time of the *Anschluss*, March 13, 1938, 185,000 Jews lived in Austria. Thousands fled after the *Anschluss* and subsequent *Kristallnacht* pogrom. After this, most of the Jews were concentrated in Vienna. Approximately 50,000 Austrian Jews perished in the Holocaust.

Belgium (See slide #195)

Before the German invasion, about 90,000 Jews lived in Belgium, 1% of the total population. After the German occupation, about 66,000 Jews lived in Belgium. Of these only 10% were citizens. The remainder were immigrants, predominantly from Eastern Europe. In 1938, the Belgian government had allocated a grant of 6 million francs toward the relief of German Jewish refugees.

Approximately 34,801 Jews were imprisoned or deported during the Holocaust. Approximately 28,900 of these perished.

Bohemia & Moravia (See slide #119)

Approximately 118,000 Jews lived here when the Germans took over in March 1939. Emigration was banned in October 1941 so by the time deportations began, only 92,199 Jews were left.

During the war, over 77,000 Jews (20% of French Jewry) were deported from France and murdered in Nazi camps. Of these, 1/3 were French citizens and over 8,000 were children under the age of 13. More than three-quarters of the Jews who resided or had found refuge in France in 1939 managed to survive. This high survival rate was due to many factors, including dispersal of Jews in many localities, a minimal German police presence, and assistance from some non-Jews.

Bulgaria (See slide #206)

Bulgaria had 50,000 Jews (less than 1% of the population) prior to the onset of war.

Starting March 10, 1943, as a result of German pressure, 12,000 Jews from Thrace and Macedonia were deported to Treblinka. In October 1944, Bulgaria switched allegiances and declared war on Germany.

Bulgaria's 50,000 native Jews survived. Bulgaria was the only country in Europe whose local Jewish population in 1945 was larger than it had been before the war.

Denmark (See slide #193)

About 8,000 Jews, 0.2% of the total population, lived in Denmark at the time of the occupation. The Danish government insisted on certain conditions including no discrimination against Jews and no Danish forces to support the German army.

The King and his country organized one of the most effective resistance movements in all of occupied Europe. Most of Denmark's Jews were saved. The ones who were not, were interred in Theresienstadt where 51 died of natural causes.

Estonia (See slide #214)

Estonia had 4,500 Jews prior to the war. No Estonian Jews, of those remaining in the country after German occupation, survived. Approximately 1,500 were killed.

Finland (See slide #193)

Finland was invaded by the Soviets in 1939. In return, Finland joined Nazi Germany when Germany invaded the Soviet Union. Finland provided a base of operations for the Germans, but was never actually occupied by the Germans, except in the northern regions. In early 1942, there were an estimated 2,300 Jews in Finland, but their death toll was remarkably low. Only 2.8% of the Jews of Finland perished.

France (See slide #199)

During the interwar period, France was one of the more liberal nations in opening its doors to Jewish refugees from Poland, Romania, and Germany. In 1939, however, the French government imposed restrictions on Jewish immigration and set up internment camps for refugees. When Germany defeated France in June 1940, there were approximately 350,000 Jews in the country. 150,000 were native French Jews whose ancestors had lived in France for centuries.

Germany

When the Nazis seized power in 1933, 500,000 Jews (1% of population) lived in Germany. On September 15, 1941, a police decree was issued for all Jews over 6 years of age to wear the yellow star. In October 1941, deportations began to major ghettos in Poland and Russia. Over 40,000 "privileged" deportees were sent to Theresienstadt. In May 1943, Berlin was declared "free of Jews." Approximately 134,500 German Jews perished.

Greece (See slide #206)

The Jewish population in pre-war Greece was close to 76,000 (0.9% of the population). 80% of the Jews from Greece perished, over 60,000 were annihilated.

Hungary (See slide #206)

In 1930, 445,000 Jews lived in Hungary, about 5% of the population. Of approximately 825,000 Jews living in Hungary in 1941, about 63,000 died prior to the German occupation of March 1944. Under German occupation, just over 450,000 died. Less than 1/3 survived the Holocaust.

Iceland (See slide #193)

Iceland was, at the onset of the war, part of Denmark, but it was occupied early on by Allied forces to prevent any possible attack on the U.S. Its small Jewish population remained protected.

Italy (See slide #201)

In 1938, some 57,000 Jews lived in Italy, about 0.1% of the Italian population.

Although Italy had become part of the Axis Alliance in June 1940, the Italians generally refused to participate in the genocide of the Jews. Between 1941 and 1943, thousands of Jews escaped to Italy and Italian-occupied territory from German-occupied territory.

After the invasion of Sicily, the Allies invaded southern Italy. Mussolini's dictatorship was overthrown and King Victor Emmanuel ordered Mussolini imprisoned. Pietro Badoglio, the new Prime Minister, negotiated a cease-fire with the Allies in early September 1943.

In the meantime, German forces had occupied most of northern and central Italy. German paratroopers freed Mussolini from prison and installed him as the head of a pro-German puppet government in northern Italy. German forces also occupied the Italian zones in Yugoslavia, Greece and France.

In October and November 1943, the Germans rounded up Jews in the major cities of northern Italy. Jews were interned in transit camps such as Fossoli di Carpi and Bolzano, and periodically deported to Auschwitz. Nazi officials deported about 8,000 Jews from Italy to Auschwitz and other Nazi camps. About 7,500 of those deported were murdered. A high proportion survived because the Italian authorities obstructed the deportations early on, many succeeded in hiding or escaping southward to Allied-occupied areas of Italy, and many received aid from the Italian population and the local Catholic priesthood.

In late April 1945, Communist partisans captured and executed Mussolini. German forces in Italy surrendered to the Allies on May 2, 1945.

Latvia (See slide #214)

Latvia had more than 93,000 Jews in 1935. By the time the Germans invaded that number had decreased to 70,000. Approximately 70,000 perished during the Holocaust.

Lithuania (See slide #214)

Lithuania was home to 160,000 Jews. The Nazis murdered over 90% of the Jewish population, one of the highest victim rates in Europe.

Luxembourg (See slide #195)

In 1935, about 3,000 Jews lived in Luxembourg, 1% of the total population. Luxembourg Jews enjoyed complete equality and prosperity.

By the time of the invasion in May 1940, less than 4,000 Jews lived in Luxembourg, 30% were refugees of Nazi Germany. More than a thousand fled into France after the invasion. After liberation, about 400 Jews were found to have survived in Luxembourg.

At least 1,900 Jews from Luxembourg perished during the Holocaust.

Netherlands (See slide #195)

The Netherlands' death toll is the highest in Western Europe.

At the time of the Nazi invasion, the Netherlands had a Jewish population of 140,000, one of the oldest Jewish communities in Europe. Approximately 110,000 of these were Dutch, while the remainder were refugees, mostly from Germany. Many German refugees had moved to the Netherlands upon Hitler's rise to power. Nearly 60%, 80,000 Jews, lived in Amsterdam alone. Dutch Jews enjoyed complete equality, received financial support from the government and were active in the social and political life of the country.

Several reasons have been suggested to explain the large number of deaths:

- the occupying regime was composed of fanatical Austrian Nazis
- the efficiency of the pre-war Dutch administration
- the Dutch landscape (no trees or mountains) made it difficult to hide
- the majority of Dutch Jews lived in the big cities, thus easy targets
- Jewish leaders chose collaboration with the Nazis to "prevent worse"
- active assistance from Dutch collaborators

Approximately 75% (100,000) of the Dutch Jews were killed.

Norway (See slide #193)

At the time of the Nazi invasion there were about 1,900 Jews living in Norway, including about 200 Jewish refugees.

Norway's Minister-President Vidkun Quisling, the Nazi collaborator whose name has become synonymous with betraying one's country, cooperated fully with the Reich Commissar in dealing with the Jews.

Approximately 800 Jews were deported to Auschwitz where most died. The remainder escaped to Sweden with the help of the underground.

Approximately 55% of the Norwegian Jews perished. More than 5,000 non-Jews were also deported to camps. Approximately 750 died in the camps.

Poland (See slides #147 and #149)

In 1939 there were about 3.3 million Jews in Poland (approximately 10% of the population). Poland suffered the highest percentage of deaths of any country during the war. In the end, 2.7-3 million Polish Jews perished. In addition, scholars believe 1.8-1.9 million non-Jewish Poles died at the hand of the Germans.

Romania (See slide #206)

The Jewish population of pre-war Romania was 757,000, about 4% of the population. It was home to the 3rd largest Jewish community in Europe. Only Poland and the Soviet Union had more Jews.

By wars end, approximately 271,000 Romanian Jews were dead. Two thirds were killed not by Nazis, but by Romanians and Hungarians.

Slovakia (See slide #119)

In 1938, there were 135,000 Jews in Slovakia (about 4.1% of the population). Slovakia was one of the first German-allied countries to agree to the deportation of Jews as part of the "Final Solution."

According to a December 15, 1940 census, there were about 90,000 Jews left in Slovakia. Shortly after the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Slovakia entered World War II as an ally of Germany. Between March and October 1942 almost 60,000 were deported to German-occupied Poland and killed. The remaining Jews were confined in labor camps in Slovakia.

After the Slovak National Uprising and German occupation of the country in 1944, an additional 10,000 Jews were deported, mostly to Auschwitz, but also to Theresienstadt and camps in Germany. In all, 70,000 Jews were deported and 68,000 were murdered.

Soviet Union (including Ukraine) (See slide #209)

According to the 1939 census, there were over 3 million Jews in the Soviet Union (2nd only to Poland). After the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, the traditional religious and communal organizations of the Jewish community were suppressed as were also the modern Jewish national movements promoting the establishment of a Jewish homeland. Jews enjoyed equal civic status in the Soviet Union, but popular antisemitism continued to exist, especially in the Ukraine.

Approximately 1,000,000 Soviet Jews perished.

Sweden (See slide #193)

Sweden was neutral during the war, and unlike other neutral countries, it was not invaded by the Nazis at any point. This was due to the fact that Sweden was able to provide resources to Nazi Germany such as steel to build Panzer tanks. The Swedish government went to extraordinary means to save Jewish lives.

Ukraine (See slide #214)

Ukraine had a Jewish population of 2.4 million. Approximately 900,000 perished including the 33,771 persons who perished at Babi Yar in September, 1941. This figure is lumped into the figure for the Soviet Union on the chart above.

Yugoslavia (See slide #206)

Yugoslavia had 78,000 Jews before the war (0.4% of the population). Yugoslavia joined the Axis in March 1941 and was then invaded by Germany in April 1941. The country was divided between Germany, Italy, Hungary and Bulgaria. Nearly 60,000 Jews were caught and killed by the Nazis (this included Jews from Bosnia, Croatia, Rab, and Serbia).

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The Aftermath (Breaker Slide)

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The Aftermath:

Displaced Persons (DP's)

May 8, 1945 marked the end of hostilities and a turn toward peace for war-ravaged Europe. For those who had survived the Nazi Holocaust, however, the end of the war brought the beginning of a long and arduous period of rebirth.

Following the defeat of Nazi Germany in the spring of 1945, as many as 100,000 Jewish survivors found themselves among the 7-9 million uprooted and homeless people classified as displaced persons (DP's). The roads of Europe were filled with people going home. The liberating armies were intent on returning these multitudes to their homes both to ease the pressure on scarce military resources and to aid the liberated countries to reactivate their economies.

In the months after the war, as many as 6 million non-Jewish DP's, who had been deported to Germany as forced laborers for the Nazis, wandered through Germany and Central Europe toward their homelands.

By the summer of 1945, less than a million Jews were still living in Europe. Liberated Jews were plagued by illness and exhaustion. Many of them had to learn that they were the only ones left alive from a large family, sometimes the last from an entire community. They emerged from concentration camps and hiding places to discover a world in which they had no place.

Bereft of home and family, some Jews tried to return home. Again and again, their homecoming was marked by violence. Returning to pre-war homes, Jews were often met by a slammed door, a gun, or even worse. In the years after World War II, 1,500 Jews died in such attacks. One of the worst post-Holocaust killing spree occurred in Kielce, Poland. Before the war, 18,000 Jews lived in Kielce. By 1946 only 200 remained. One night, when a Christian child was found dead in the town, the Jews were accused of the Blood Libel. A million Jewish children had been killed in Poland during the war, and now, one year later, the people of Kielce were accusing survivors of murdering a child. Within an hour, the citizens were storming the homes of Jews...forty-two died. The message to the Jews was clear, "Get out of Europe."

The 100,000 Jewish survivors would be joined in a matter of months by more than 150,000 other Jews fleeing fierce antisemitism in Poland, Hungary, Romania and Russia. Together, these 250,000 Jewish survivors became known as *Sh'erit ha-Pletah*, a biblical term that means "the Surviving Remnant."

From 1945 to 1952, Jewish DP's lived in camps and urban centers in Germany, Austria and Italy known as DP Camps. These DP Camps were administered by Allied authorities and the United Nations Rehabilitation and Relief Administration (UNRRA). They provided the basic necessities of food, clothing and medical supplies. The former concentration camp of Bergen-Belsen was the largest and only all-Jewish DP Camp in the British zone of Germany. The original barracks had been burned down as a health precaution and over 11,000 Jews were housed there.

Neither free nor enslaved, unwanted by the community of nations, and caught in the lands of their oppressors, the Jewish DP's created flourishing communities in the camps. The *Sh'erit ha-Pletah* transformed from a disorganized group into a powerful moral and political force. As *Sh'erit ha-Pletah* leader Zalman Grinberg declared, "What we, the *Sh'erit ha-Pletah* must do is show that we, the victims of Nazism, have always been and will always be the carriers of humanity."

Soon after liberation survivors began searching for their families. A Central Tracing Bureau was established to help survivors locate relatives who had survived the concentration camps. Public radio broadcasts and newspapers contained lists of survivors and their whereabouts. The attempt to reunite families coincided with the creation of new ones; there were weddings and births in the DP Camps. Within one year, 2,000 babies were born in Bergen-Belsen alone. These children and others born out of the flames of the Holocaust are now known as "Children of Survivors of the Holocaust."

By the fall of 1945 the relief effort was taken over by Jewish welfare organizations. Schools were soon established and teachers came from Israel and the U.S. Orthodox Judaism also began its rebirth and religious schools were founded in several camps. The first Jewish newspaper, hand written, appeared only weeks after liberation. Religious holidays became major occasions for gatherings and celebrations. Theater and musical troops toured the camps and athletic clubs from various DP centers challenged each other.

The main hope of the survivors was to leave the camps, resettle outside Europe and begin new lives. But the world was not welcoming the Jewish people with open arms. Little had changed regarding immigration policy. Neither the U.S. nor Great Britain relaxed their immigration policies and British-controlled Palestine would not let Jews enter. Thousands of Jewish survivors were forced to live in the camps for 2-3 years. By 1947, even though thousands had left, one million DP's still remained in camps. For many, the promise of finding work abroad was their only hope; however, with millions of soldiers returning home to flood the job market, work was scarce. The more highly educated the DP, the more absolute was his hopelessness.

In May 1948, Israel became an independent nation after the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. Almost 2/3 of the survivors eventually settled in Israel. In 1948, the U.S. government passed special immigration legislation known as the Displaced Persons Act, which relaxed immigration quota restrictions and authorized the State Department to issue hundreds of thousands of immigration visas. Approximately 80,000 were issued to Jewish DP's.

By 1952, only one significant Jewish DP Camp, Foehrenwald, remained.

In an unparalleled six-year period between 1945 and 1951, European Jewish life was reborn in the DP Camps.

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The Aftermath (Breaker Slide)

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The Aftermath:

Potsdam Conference (July 17 – August 2, 1945)

The Potsdam Conference took place at Cecilienhof Palace in Potsdam, Germany, near Berlin. Although Germany had been defeated, the U.S. and Britain were still at war with Japan.

At Potsdam, the “Big Three” Allied powers (U.S., Soviet Union, Great Britain) convened to clarify and implement agreements reached at Yalta earlier in the year as well as to reach an accord on the war in the Pacific.

The participants had changed significantly:

- U.S. President Harry S. Truman (replacing FDR who died in April 1945)
- Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin
- British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (Clement Attlee succeeded Churchill as Prime Minister on July 26 and represented Great Britain for the rest of the conference.)

The foreign ministers of the three nations were also present.

Potsdam Declaration:

Previously at the Yalta Conference (February 1945), Stalin had promised to enter the war with Japan within three months of the defeat of Germany. Originally, it was planned that the conference at Potsdam would confirm this decision; however, since the previous meeting, the U.S. had successfully tested the atom bomb. The Allies no longer needed the cooperation of the Soviet Union.

Truman's advisers were urging him to use this bomb on Japan. They also pointed out that its employment would avoid an invasion of Japan and thus save the lives of up to two million American troops. When Truman told Stalin that the U.S. had a new powerful bomb, he appeared pleased and asked no further questions about it. Truman did not mention that it was an atomic bomb, and it appeared that Stalin did not initially grasp the significance of this new weapon.

Before the end of the Conference, on July 26, the U.S., British, and Chinese governments issued an ultimatum to the Japanese government called the Potsdam Declaration. This presented Japan with a choice between unconditional surrender and total annihilation. Since the Soviet Union was not yet at war with Japan, it was not part of the ultimatum. Prime Minister Suzuki of Japan announced to the world on July 28 that he would ignore the ultimatum.

With the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki August 6 and 9, 1945, the Japanese quickly surrendered and the Allies were successful in preventing Soviet gains in the Far East.

Potsdam Agreement:

A declaration was issued at the close of the conference known as the Potsdam Agreement. It contained the following decisions reached by the participants:

1. Authority in Germany would be transferred to the American, Soviet, British and French military commanders in their respective zones of occupation and to a four-power Allied Control Council for matters regarding the whole of Germany.

2. Reversal of all German annexations in Europe after 1937 and a separation of Austria from Germany.

3. In determining reparations, the Allies estimated their losses and damages at \$200 billion (U.S.).

Remembering the political costs of financial reparations after World War I, the Allies decided that reparations consisting of payments "in kind" were less likely to imperil the peace after World War II.

Germany was obliged to pay off only \$20 billion in German property, current industry products, and work force. The four occupying powers of Germany should take reparations from their respective zones of occupation.

Because the Soviet Union had suffered greater loss than any of the other major powers, provision was made for additional compensation to the Soviet Union. Nearly a quarter of Soviet property had been destroyed during the Second World War. The Soviet Union would receive a third of Germany's ships and some industrial equipment as payment for war damages.

The Cold War ultimately prevented the full payment.

4. Nazi war-criminals would be brought to trial.

5. The Polish Provisional Government of National Unity would be recognized and hold "free and unfettered elections as soon as possible."

6. Poland would be re-aligned. The Oder-Neisse line was established as the border of areas administered by the government of Poland. The German population in these territories and in other parts of Eastern Europe was to be transferred to Germany.

7. Rigid measures of control were designed to prevent Germany from ever again becoming a threat to world peace:

- Germany would be disarmed and remilitarization would be forbidden.
- The Nazi Party, government and laws would be destroyed. "German education shall be so controlled as completely to eliminate Nazi and militarist doctrines and to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas."
- The economy would be decentralized and reorganized with emphasis on agriculture and peaceful domestic industries. During the period of occupation Germany shall be treated as a single economic unit.
- German political life would be restructured based on democratic principles

8. The Council of Foreign Ministers was entrusted with preparing peace terms for Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Austria, Hungary and Finland.

The Potsdam Conference turned out to be the last conference among the Allies. Although the Potsdam Conference was considered successful, many of the agreements reached were dishonored within a year as a result of the growing rift between the Soviet Union and Western Europe.

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The Aftermath:

Map of Europe after World War I and World War II

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The Aftermath (Breaker Slide)

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The Aftermath:

The Nuremberg Trials (November 20, 1945 – October 1, 1946)

Teacher Notes:

- Given the realities of time and money, who should be judged? The people who gave the orders? The people who carried out the orders? The people who simply stood by and watched it happen?
- Can justice ever be achieved after such horrific crimes?

Picture Top Right:

Front row, from left to right: Hermann Goering, Rudolf Hess, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Wilhelm Keitel, Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Alfred Rosenberg, Hans Frank, Wilhelm Frick, Julius Streicher, Walther Funk, Hjalmar Schacht. Back row from left to right: Karl Doenitz, Erich Raeder, Baldur von Schirach, Fritz Sauckel, Alfred Jodl, Franz von Papen, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, Albert Speer, Konstantin van Neurath, Hans Fritzsche.

Development of Procedural Policy

By the spring and summer of 1942, reports detailing the unspeakable horrors occurring in Nazi-occupied Europe poured into London and Washington. The Europeans had learned much earlier about the true nature of the Third Reich, and in fact, had tracked German war crimes from the moment of their countries' defeat. Yet even in late 1942, the Allies were not quite certain as how to proceed against German criminality. Both London and Washington were reluctant to do anything tangible before German surrender was more tangible.

The Soviets, in the meantime, set up an Extraordinary State Commission to investigate Nazi crimes on Soviet territory and staged its own trials beginning in 1943 in the Caucasus region. The Soviet army was the first to come upon the concentration camps when it liberated Majdanek (July 1944) and Auschwitz (January 1945). Starting on November 27, 1944, and lasting for 6 days, the Polish authorities put six SS guards from Majdanek on trial. They were found guilty of torturing, raping, and killing prisoners. They were executed.

A joint Allied policy first appeared in November 1943 when there were clear indications that the war was being won. Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin announced that as soon as the war was over they would bring the Nazi leaders to justice. Just how this was to occur was yet to be determined. At the Teheran Conference (November 28 – December 1, 1943) Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin expressed very different ideas of how justice should be served.

Stalin – Felt German military strength should be destroyed. The German General Staff should be liquidated. The 50,000 or so of Hitler's officers and technicians that support the army should be rounded up and shot.

Churchill – Although opposed to mass executions, he supported a handful. He felt that a trial would take too long and was inappropriate for ringleaders such as Hitler, Himmler, Goering, Goebbels and Ribbentrop. Such a trial would degenerate into a platform for Nazi propaganda. Better that the Nazi leadership be summarily executed.

Roosevelt – Received conflicting suggestions from his advisors. Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson urged a policy that would promote postwar Germany's economic and industrial development. All of those accused of war crimes would be dealt with in the spirit of the Bill of Rights and "in a dignified manner consistent with the advance of the civilization." This would provide a record of the Nazi system of terrorism and the efforts of the Allies to terminate the system and prevent its recurrence. On April 12, 1945, Roosevelt died without taking a stand on any policy. His successor, Harry S. Truman, adopted Stimson's plan.

Two weeks after the German surrender, an agreement was reached by the Allies to conduct joint trials of those responsible for the murder of noncombatants. It was Henry Stimson's plan that was adopted.

The International Military Tribunal

On August 8, 1945, the London Agreement was announced calling for the establishment of an International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany for the trial of war criminals whose offenses had no particular geographical location.

The city of Nuremberg, Germany was chosen over Munich because Nuremberg's Palace of Justice could be restored in time for the trials, while its cavernous, virtually undamaged jail could house the Nazis awaiting trial, along with witnesses. Nuremberg was also the city where Hitler had evoked Nazi mass hysteria and venomous xenophobia and where Goering, as President of the *Reichstag*, had proclaimed the infamous Nuremberg Laws, which terminated the civil rights of German Jews and demolished their ability to earn a livelihood. Nuremberg had also been the base of Julius Streicher and his antisemitic paper, *Der Stürmer*.

The interrogation division of the American prosecution flew almost daily to Germany and Austria, to Warsaw and Prague, to interview prospective defendants and witnesses. One visit to Austria took us to the concentration camp at Mauthausen. We were seeking witnesses to prove that Ernst Kaltenbrunner, the senior surviving SS officer who was likely to be a defendant at Nuremberg, had personally observed the butchery going on at Mauthausen during repeated visits. Though "only" a few hundred thousand had been killed at Mauthausen as compared to millions at Auschwitz, this concentration camp was not just an ordinary death factory. Mauthausen was infamous for the extreme cruelties and satanic tortures invented and practiced by Franz Ziereis, its commandant. Ziereis himself had died before we arrived, wounded mortally while trying to escape. Although we did talk to Ziereis's wife and teenage son.

Although I have forgotten the son's name, my conversation with him is burned in my memory. He was a fresh-faced and could have been an American kid by his looks, but not by his words or experience. I asked him, "How did you get along with your dad?"

"My father was okay," he said. "The only thing I have against him is that he gave me a rifle as a present on my tenth birthday then had six prisoners lined up, and I had to shoot until they were dead. That took a long time and it was very hard and I did not like it."

I later found out that the gun was of a very small caliber and that Commandant Ziereis had invented this particular pastime because he knew it took dozens of shots to kill prisoners this way.

– Richard W. Sonnenfeldt, Chief Interpreter for the U.S. Prosecution,
Witness to Nuremberg

The International Military Tribunal lasted from November 20, 1945 until October 1, 1946. This was the largest war crime trial in history. The majority of the proceedings dwelt on the aggressive war conducted by Nazi Germany rather than the assault on the Jews and other non-Aryan minorities.

The International Military Tribunal was organized as follows:

- 4 main judges (and 4 alternates): Lord Geoffrey Lawrence – Great Britain
Frances Biddle – United States
Henri Donnedieu de Vabres – France
Major General I.T. Nikitchenko – Soviet Union
- 4 teams of attorneys representing the major Allied nations: France, Great Britain, Russia, U.S.
- Justice Robert Jackson of the U.S. Supreme Court was named to lead the U.S. prosecution.
- Decision was by a majority vote.

The International Military Tribunal tried only 22 of the central leaders of the Nazi party. The 4 counts of the indictment were:

1. Conspiracy to Commit Crimes

Leaders, organizations, etc. who formulate a common plan are responsible for all acts performed by any person in execution of such a plan.

2. Crimes Against Peace

Planning, preparing, starting or waging a war of aggression, or participating in a plan for such a war.

3. War Crimes

The murder, ill-treatment or deportation to slave labor of civilians in occupied territory, the murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war, the killing of hostages, the destruction of cities, towns and so on, not justified by military need.

4. Crimes Against Humanity

The murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhuman acts committed against civilian groups on the basis of religion, race or politics.

The American prosecutors collected evidence for count #1, while their British counterparts took charge of count #2. The French and Soviets shared the task of preparing evidence for the last 2 counts.

Of the 22 that were tried, all but two pleaded "Not Guilty."

The defense first claimed that the Tribunal had no legal authority. They said the court was just a way for the Allies to take "revenge"; that it was a "show trial" to justify executing individual Nazis, when really it was the government of Nazi Germany that was at fault. The defense argued the *Führer-prinzip*, the Nazi "leadership principal." That Hitler had been the absolute dictator. All orders given in Germany were Hitler's orders, and the punishment for not obeying was death. All other Nazis were innocent; only Hitler could be held responsible. The defendant's excuse was constantly repeated: "I was only following orders."

Seven key precedents were embodied in the decision of the IMT:

1. The initiating and waging of aggressive war is a crime.
2. Conspiracy to wage aggressive war is a crime.
3. The violation of the laws or customs of war is a crime.
4. Inhumane acts upon civilians in execution of, or in connection with aggressive war constitute a crime.
5. Individuals may be held accountable for crimes committed by them as heads of state.
6. Individuals may be held accountable for crimes committed by them pursuant to superior orders.
7. An individual charged with crime under international law is entitled to a fair trial.

The judges declared that all people are aware of certain basic laws such as the law against murder, the law against enslavement, and the law against extermination. Duty to these human laws comes before duty to any state or nation, and a person will not be forgiven for "following orders" in violation of these laws. In fact, the higher a person is in military or governmental authority, the greater his or her accountability.

Sentencing

- 12 Sentenced to hang on October 16, 1946.
Hermann Goering committed suicide before he could be executed.
Martin Bormann was tried in absentia, his whereabouts never determined.
- 7 Received prison sentences: 3 received life terms, 4 received 10-20 years.
- 3 Found not guilty.

Speaking of the Nuremberg defendants, Richard Sonnenfeldt, Chief U.S. Interpreter said:

The mediocrity, the lack of distinction of intellect, knowledge, or insight, of virtually all defendants was appalling. At first I was surprised to find such lack of education and absence of character. Shielded by their ignorance of history, familiar only with past German triumphs and tales of Teutonic knights, ignorant of the rest of the world, unsuccessful in ordinary life, driven by ambition without integrity, servile to their superiors and arrogant with all others, how had these sycophants risen to such exalted positions? To serve a dictator, one must be gullible and ambitious and have no scruples. One must not mind being insulted by a Fuhrer or else have an intellect so deficient as not to notice insults. Who else would fawningly and forever feed the vanity of a man who never listened but only spouted inane theories of conquest, racism, and economic nonsense, no matter how hypnotic his delivery? The length of service of these men and their closeness to Hitler was a perfect measure of their lack of personal stature and morality.

The 12 Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings

Since Nuremberg fell within the American zone of occupation, it was convenient to continue to use the Palace of Justice for the subsequent trials between December 1946 and April 1949. During this time, U.S. military tribunals tried almost 200 persons in 12 trials known as the Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings.

The following are the case names, charges and defendants of the 12 Subsequent Nuremberg Proceedings:

Doctors & Medical Case:	23 Nazi physicians and administrators charged with conducting inhumane experiments on German civilians and nationals of other countries.
Milch Case:	Former German Field Marshall Erhard Milch charged with murder and cruel treatment of POW's.
Justice of Judges Case:	9 members of the Reich Ministry of Justice and 7 members of the People's and Special Courts charged with using their power as prosecutors and judges to commit war crimes and crimes against humanity.
Pohl/WVHA Case:	Oswald Pohl and 17 other members of the WVHA (Economic & Administrative Office) charged with war crimes against P.O.W.'s.
Flick Case:	6 members of the Flick Concern, a group of industrial enterprises, charged with using concentration camp inmates and P.O.W.'s for well as plundering private property.
I.G. Farben Case:	24 defendants with I.G. Farben charged with plunder and spoliation of private property in German-occupied territories.
Hostage Case:	12 defendants, officer in the German Armed Forces, charged with murdering thousands of civilians in Greece, Yugoslavia and Albania, committing acts of devastation in Norway and other countries, and ordering the slaughter of P.O.W.'s.
R.U.S.H.A. Case:	14 defendants, officials of the Race and Settlement Office and the Office for Strengthening of Germanism, charged with crimes against humanity relating to murder, deportation, and torture on political, racial and religious grounds.
<i>Einsatzgruppen</i> Case:	24 defendants, all members of the <i>Einsatzgruppen</i> , charged with murder and ill-treatment of P.O.W.'s and civilians in occupied countries.
Krupp Case:	Alfred Krupp and 11 other defendants, all members of Krupp Industries, charged with enslavement and other war crimes.
Ministries Case:	21 defendants, including 3 Reich Ministers as well as other members of the Nazi Party hierarchy, charged with waging wars of aggression, violating international treaties, and committing various crimes of war and crimes against humanity.
High Command Trial:	High ranking generals of the German <i>Wehrmacht</i> and members of the High Command, all charged with participating in or planning the execution of numerous atrocities committed in countries occupied by the German forces during the war.

Other War Crime Trials

In Germany, each of the Allied occupation administrations (U.S., France, Great Britain, and Soviet Union) tried individuals accused of perpetrating crimes against Allied nationals in the territory of their respective zones.

In the American zone of occupation in Germany, which included Dachau, 462 war criminals were sentenced to death.

In the British zone, 240.

In the French zone, 104.

Leniency, which the war criminals themselves had never shown, was granted. Of the 806 Allied death sentences imposed, only slightly more than ½ were carried out. Among them was both the owner and the manager of the company that had manufactured Zyklon-B, used by the SS in Auschwitz and other death camps.

Finally, other German officials and collaborators were captured and returned to the country in which they perpetrated their crimes to be tried by local national tribunals. Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz (not to be confused with Rudolf Hess that was tried at Nuremberg) was extradited to Poland, where a separate trial devoted to Auschwitz was held. Norwegian proceedings were held against wartime Prime Minister Quisling. French trials were held for Marshall Petain, head of the Vichy Regime, and Pierre Laval, Petain's prime minister.

In the 40 years following 1945, as many as 5,000 convicted war criminals were executed; 10,000 were imprisoned.

Some War Criminals Escaped

Adolf Eichman, responsible for so much of Hitler's Final Solution, went to Argentina where he was captured by the Israelis in 1961 and executed in 1962. Adolf Eichmann was described by Rudolf Hoess as the "only SS officer who was allowed to keep records" concerning liquidations.

Dr. Josef Mengele, the doctor who had conducted cruel experiments at Auschwitz, escaped to South America and lived in hiding until his death.

Heinrich Muller, an important Gestapo chief, reportedly died when the Soviets captured Berlin; rumors spread he was still alive and living in Argentina, and he was put on the list of most-wanted Nazis in 1973.

Martin Bormann, Hitler's right-hand man, was never found.

Klaus Barbie, the SS "Butcher of Lyons," was sentenced to life imprisonment by a French court in 1987.

In 1972, the Austrians finally got around to trying Walther Dejaco, the man who designed the gas chambers.

Trials continue up to the present, both in Germany and elsewhere.

Nazis in the United States

Immediately after the war, the U.S. government imported ex-Nazi scientists to work in the U.S. space program. In 1948, the U.S. eased the immigrant quota system to allow World War II refugees from Europe to come to America. By 1952, some 400,000 Europeans, many of them Jews, arrived. With so many immigrants to process, records were not carefully checked, and Nazis could enter by just inventing an imaginary past and presenting a few false papers.

In the 1960's, the World Jewish Congress (WJC) compiled a list of 59 names and addresses of known Nazi war criminals living in America. The list was given to the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. Investigations began, but very little action was taken. By the mid-1970's, 17 persons on the WJC list had died of natural causes.

In 1974, Elizabeth Holtzman, a member of Congress, demanded that the Justice Department report on Nazi investigations. Why were Nazi criminals not being deported to stand trial for their crimes? Her campaign led to the creation of a special investigating unit within the U.S. Justice Department. The Office of Special Investigations has since researched hundreds of cases. One ex-Nazi was living in Detroit posing as a bishop in the Catholic church. Another was a Long Island housewife who had once been a guard at the Majdanek concentration camp. She had hanged a girl for sport and beaten another to death with a whip.

How many more Nazi criminals still live peacefully in the United States? It is difficult to know. Yet, with the passage of time, bringing them to justice becomes a race against death.

Current Connections

In 2002, prosecutors for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda made connections between the Julius Streicher case and the roles of Rwandan newspapers and radio prior to and during the 1994 genocide. In an interview with *The New York Times*, Stephen Rapp, the senior prosecutor on the case said, "A key question will be what kind of speech is protected and where the limits lie. It is important to draw that line."

On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

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The Aftermath:

Chart of Nuremberg Defendants

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The Aftermath:

Chart of Nuremberg Defendants - continued

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The Aftermath:

Chart of Nuremberg Defendants - continued

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The Aftermath:

Rudolf Hoess Quote – Why he did it?

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Perspectives Triangle: Bystanders

Teacher Notes:

- Bystanders were the ordinary people who played it safe by complying with the law and avoiding terrorizing activities.
- It is sometimes difficult to draw the line that divides the bystander from the perpetrator. This raises the question whether there is such a thing as a passive onlooker. Perhaps not taking action is also a decision, and therefore a form of action in itself. After all, non-action has ramifications and affects the outcome.
- What was the responsibility of those who knew what was happening and chose not to get involved?

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Bystanders

The Mauthausen concentration camp was established in Austria in 1938. Inmates were forced to work at the infamous Vienna Ditch Stone Quarry where they were forced to carry heavy stones up a steep flight of 186 steps. Here they were crushed by the heavy weight, beaten, and often pushed off the cliffs. Many inmates were killed at this site.

The Austrian inhabitants in the area of Mauthausen witnessed the plight of the prisoners. Those who lived beyond the quarry had to use a road leading through the camp compound in order to get into town. They would traverse the camp escorted by guards. Although they were only passing through, they were within the confines of this world and in the presence of absolute terror for a short while.

The existence of the camp brought economic benefits to the population. It created employment and provided slave laborers, who were used by many enterprises and farms.

When Soviet prisoners of war broke out of the camp in February 1945, a time when it was clear that the war was lost, the people in the area joined the camp guards in catching and killing the escapees. Only two families are known to have helped the hunted Soviets.

Most of the bystanders – the residents of the area – chose to avert their eyes from the unpleasant and disturbing sights. Many had internalized Nazi allegations that the inmates were criminals and enemies. Most probably never really did ask themselves what the events behind the barbed wire actually meant and whether it required them to take a stand.

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Bystanders:

Quote from Bystander of Mauthausen

Perspectives Triangle: Rescuers

Questions to Consider:

- Why do you think so many people reacted with indifference to the plight of the Jews during the Holocaust?
 - What do you think motivates some people to help others and what prevents others from doing so? Do you think these values are innate or learned?
 - What insights can we gain from the history of the bystanders and rescuers of the Holocaust that will help us formulate our responsibility as ethical human beings?
-

Bystanders were the rule. Rescuers were the exception.

Contrary to the bystander and the perpetrator, the rescuers regarded the Jews as fellow human beings who came within the bounds of their universe of obligation. Most rescuers started off as bystanders in the earlier stages of the persecution, but at some point there came a boundary they were not willing to cross.

In most cases it was the Jew who turned to the non-Jew for help. The bystander was faced with a situation in which he or she had to make an instant decision. This was usually an instinctive human gesture, taken on the spur of the moment, and only then followed by a moral choice.

The price the rescuer had to pay for their actions differed from one country to another. In Eastern Europe, the Germans executed not only the people who sheltered Jews, but their entire family as well. Punishment was less severe in Western Europe. In Germany, strangely enough, there was no law against hiding Jews, and people mostly risked detention, though some of those caught were put in concentration camps. There are many documented cases of denunciations; demonstrating that German society in general was hostile. This increased the risk and made it more difficult for ordinary Germans to defy the conventions and rules of their society.

Most rescuers were ordinary people. Most of them were not idealists who wanted to solve the world's problems, but human beings who cared about the people around them. In most cases, they never planned to become rescuers and were totally unprepared for the moment in which they had to make such a far-reaching decision.

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Rescue (Initial Breaker Slide)

Teacher Notes:

People who risked their lives to rescue victims of Nazi oppression provide useful, important and compelling role models for students. The qualities of rescuers and the feats they accomplished are amazing life stories that we would certainly want our students to emulate.

It is important to remind students that less than ½ of 1% of the total non-Jewish population under Nazi occupation helped to rescue the Jews. Given that only a small fraction of non-Jews under Nazi occupation helped to rescue Jews, an overemphasis on heroic tales in a unit on the Holocaust can result in an inaccurate and unbalanced account of the history. Similarly, in exposing students to the worst aspects of human nature as revealed in the history of the Holocaust, you run the risk of fostering cynicism in your students. Accuracy of fact along with a balanced perspective on the history must be priorities for any teacher.

Rescuers are those who, at great personal risk, actively helped members of persecuted groups, primarily Jews, during the Holocaust in defiance of Third Reich policy. They were ordinary people who became extraordinary people because they acted in accordance with their own belief systems while living in an immoral society. It took great courage. The Nazis did everything they could to prevent people from helping. People who hid Jews were often shot or sent to concentration camps themselves. A person who did not report someone else for hiding a Jew faced the same penalties. Sometimes the Nazis punished an entire family when one of its members helped a Jew. These measures, however, did not stop everyone.

Rescue took many forms. Some rescuers acted on their own; others worked in cooperation with family, neighbors and friends. Entire communities took the responsibility of sheltering Jews, and in the case of Denmark, an entire nation rallied to prevent the deportation of its Jewish citizens.

Each rescue story is different. Yet, what rescuers had in common was a combination of awareness, resourcefulness, empathy, vigilance, inventiveness, courage, compassion, and persistence.

First, a rescuer had to recognize that a person was endangered, something that was not always clear because of the propaganda and the secrecy of the Nazis.

Second, rescuers had to decide whether or not to assume the responsibility of helping and risk the potential consequences. Public hangings, deportation to concentration camps, and on-the-spot shootings were very real consequences of helping enemies of the Third Reich.

Third, the rescuers had to take action. Sometimes the entire transformation from bystander to rescuer took just seconds, and in certain cases, was not even a conscious decision.

Thousands survived the Holocaust because of the daring of these rescuers. Although in total their number is statistically small, rescuers were all colossal people. Whether they saved a thousand people or a single life, those who rescued Jews during the Holocaust demonstrated the possibility of individual choice even in extreme circumstances. These and other acts of conscience and courage, however, saved only a tiny percentage of those targeted for destruction.

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Rescue:

What Motivated Rescuers?

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Rescue (Breaker Slide)

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Rescue:
Methods of Rescue

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Rescue (Breaker Slide)

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Rescue:
Individuals Who Rescued

When citizens stood by and did nothing, Jews were murdered; however, when citizens took it upon themselves to act as rescuers, Jews had a chance.

Individuals who rescued Jews came from:

- all social classes
- all educational background
- all religious belief
- all political background
- all different degrees of antisemitism

But most shared some of these character traits:

- They were individualists.
- They had a history of doing good.
- They were independent.
- They shared a “matter-of-fact” attitude, i.e. “It was the only thing I could do.”
- Their help given was not based on rational thinking.
- They had a universalistic perception of mankind. They did not see a Jew, they saw only a person needing help.

Some rescuers were even antisemitic – statements like “I don’t like Jews, but I can’t kill them,” are not uncommon in accounts of rescue.

Irena Sendler (Sendlerowa)

Irena Sendler was the director of the Children’s Bureau of *Zegota*, a unit within the Polish underground established to help Jews in hiding. As a health worker, she had access to the Warsaw Ghetto and led hundreds of Jewish children out of the ghetto to safety. Some of the children were sedated and carried out in potato sacks; others in coffins. Still others entered a church in the ghetto that had 2 entrances. One entrance opened into the ghetto, the other into the Aryan side of Warsaw. Children entered the church as Jews and exited as Christians. When the Germans became aware of her activities, she was arrested and imprisoned by the Gestapo. Irena was tortured but refused to betray either her associates or any of the Jewish children in hiding. She was sentenced to death but was saved at the last minute when *Zegota* members bribed the Germans to halt the execution. She escaped from prison, assumed a new identity and continued her work for *Zegota*. Sendler was pursued by the Gestapo for the rest of the war.

By 1943, in addition to those in private homes, the Children’s Bureau found homes for 600 children in public and religious institutions. Over time, some 2,500 children were registered by the Warsaw branch of *Zegota*.

Oskar Schindler

Oskar Schindler: drinker, womanizer, gambler, profiteer, briber, wheeler-dealer, Nazi. Not the description of a saint, yet he saved 1,200 Jews.

After the German invasion of Poland in 1939, Schindler took charge of an enamelware factory in Krakow, Poland that made mess kits and field kitchenware for the German army. The contracts he received from the German army brought in big profits. He settled into an upscale lifestyle with a mistress. He dealt cleverly on the black market acquiring luxuries such as silk, furniture, jewelry, clothing and liquor -- some for himself and some to seduce Nazis in high places.

The Nazi brutality and killing of Jews enraged Schindler, who was himself a Nazi. When he took over the Krakow factory it had only 45 workers. As contracts came in, the number grew to 125. His accountant, Itzhak Stern, was a Jew. Stern asked him to hire his Jewish friends and soon there were 150 Jewish employees.

In the spring of 1941, when the Nazis ghettoized the Jews of Poland, Schindler's plant became a haven for Jews. His employees could go in and out of the ghetto to work.

Sometime later, Schindler made a deal with the Germans to enlarge his factory, adding production of anti-tank shells. He even added a night shift to take on even more Jews.

By 1942, Schindler's factory employed 550 Jews, for whose labor he paid the SS a fixed rate of so much per day per person. In the fall, Schindler traveled to Budapest to give Jewish leaders the first full-scale report of the horrors occurring in Poland.

In March 1943, the ghetto of Krakow was closed. Those who could work were marched to the nearby forced labor camp of Plaszow. The others were either shot or shipped to Auschwitz. Schindler had been assured that his workers, now living in Plaszow, would arrive on time. But it was never so. He came up with a bold idea -- build a sub-camp where his workers could live in his own factory yard. He would feed the Jews at his own expense and pay the cost of the building. The Plaszow commander was thrilled to be able to make room in his camp.

Six new barracks were built to house 1,200 people. Most importantly there were no SS. No one died of overwork or beatings.

In April 1944, the Soviets were moving west on the offensive. The SS was emptying the death camps and destroying all traces. Plaszow was to be closed and Schindler's sub-camp as well. The prisoners would go back to Plaszow to await "relocation." Schindler knew what that word meant -- extermination. He would not give in.

He asked to move his factory west to Czechoslovakia and take his skilled workers with him. It was accepted. Schindler began preparing a list of people to be moved to the new plant -- a "Schindler's List". The new camp had been built at tremendous cost to Schindler, yet now he had no intention of producing anything useful for the Nazis.

In mid-October 1944, 800 men and 300 women (who came later on a train) boarded freight cars. Unfortunately, the women's car had accidentally gone to Auschwitz. These *Schindlerfrauen*, as they were called, spent weeks in Auschwitz until Schindler bribed their way out with liquor, hams and diamonds.

On May 7, 1945, news of the German surrender was heard. Afraid of the approaching Soviets, Schindler and his wife dressed in prisoner stripes, and eight Jews volunteered to travel with them to protect them. They carried a letter attesting to the record of Schindler's good deeds. Schindler was given a farewell gift of a ring made of gold from the bridgework of a Jewish prisoner. On it was inscribed the Talmudic verse:

Whoever saves a single soul, it is as if he saved the whole world.

Eventually, Schindler found safety with the American forces. Everything he owned was confiscated by the Soviets. He was penniless. But his “family” – the *Schindlerjuden* (Schindler’s Jews) – would care for him the rest of his life. In 1974, he died in Germany and at his request, was buried in the Latin Cemetery in Jerusalem.

Schindler is responsible for saving 1,500 Jewish lives.

Miep Gies

During the Nazi occupation of Holland, this Austrian-born Dutch woman risked her life daily to hide Anne Frank and her family from the Nazis. For more than two years, Miep helped the Franks and four other people evade the Gestapo by bringing food, comfort and news of the world to their tiny hideout in the canal-side building that housed the family business.

It all ended on August 4, 1944, when their hiding place was betrayed and the family was arrested by the Nazis. A few hours later, wandering mournfully through the four small upstairs rooms, Miep discovered the plaid, cloth-covered diary kept by young Anne.

By saving the diary from the debris left by the Nazis, Miep Gies made sure that Anne Frank’s name was known around the world. After the Bible, it is the most widely read book in the world - for many children, their first direct brush with the horrors of the Holocaust.

Corrie Ten Boom

During the Second World War, the Ten Boom home became a hiding place for fugitives and those hunted by the Nazis. By protecting these people, Casper and his daughters, Corrie and Betsie, risked their lives. This non-violent resistance against the Nazi-oppressors was the Ten Booms' way of living out their Christian faith. This faith led them to hide Jews, students who refused to cooperate with the Nazis, and members of the Dutch underground resistance movement.

In February 1944, the Gestapo arrested Corrie ten Boom, her father, her brother (Willem) and two sisters (Betsie and Nollie), and other family members for their rescue efforts. After holding them briefly in the penitentiary in Scheveningen, a seaside town close to The Hague, the Gestapo released all but three of the ten Boom family members: Corrie ten Boom, her older sister Betsie, and her father Casper remained in prison. Casper ten Boom became sick in prison and died in a hospital corridor only ten days after the arrest. The sisters remained in the Scheveningen prison until June 1944, when officials transferred them to an internment camp at Vught, in the Netherlands. In September 1944, the Nazis deported Corrie and Betsie ten Boom to the Ravensbrück concentration camp in Germany. In Ravensbrück, the sisters managed to stay together until Betsie died that December.

The camp administration released Corrie ten Boom in late December 1944. She traveled across Germany by train until she reached the Netherlands, where she reunited with surviving members of her family.

Corrie Ten Boom documented her experiences in *The Hiding Place*.

American Friends Service Committee (Quakers)

The Quaker movement, also called the Society of Friends, was founded in England during the middle of the 17th century. The group took its name from the "quaking" that is sometimes associated with the agitation of religious feeling. The early Quakers were often persecuted, fined and put in jail for violating religious and civil laws. They refused to attend established churches, to take oaths of office, to pay tithes, or to bear arms. They insisted on holding meetings of their own and in proselytizing even where it was forbidden.

During and after World War I the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), a U.S.-based Quaker aid society, was instrumental in providing relief services in Germany and later throughout Europe. These activities created a great deal of good will in Germany and elsewhere. In the early years of the Nazi regime, AFSC activities on behalf of refugees were limited. This has been attributed to the dilemma faced by Quakers who feared that speaking out against the persecution of Jews would compromise their reputation in Germany, which they had built up over many years. After *Kristallnacht*, the AFSC became more active in the refugee cause. In 1939, they championed the ultimately unsuccessful Wagner-Rogers Bill that was introduced in the U.S. Congress to permit one-time entry of 20,000 children (under the age of 14) above the quota limit for German immigrants.

The AFSC supported many groups who helped refugees -- primarily Jewish children -- resettle from Europe to the United States. The actions of the AFSC showed that interfaith activity on behalf of European Jews could be successful.

Pastor Andre Trocmé

Le Chambon-sur-Lignon is a small village in the mountains of southern France. Most of the people of the village are Huguenots, or French Protestants. The Huguenots had long been a minority in France, which is mainly Catholic. As a result, they often were the victims of persecution themselves. Perhaps their own persecution explains why the Huguenots in this small village could not turn away the Jews who came to them for help.

The religious leader of Le Chambon was Pastor Andre Trocmé. He and his wife, Magda, organized a network to hide Jews and to get them out of France, appealing to Catholics and Protestants to help.

Jewish children whose parents had been deported were hidden in children's homes in the region. One of the homes was run by Daniel Trocmé, a second cousin of the Pastor. In June 1943, the Gestapo rounded up the children, arrested Daniel and sent him to Majdanek. Some Jewish children survived and reported that Daniel had been gassed and incinerated in April 1944. It was the Gestapo's only successful raid on Le Chambon.

Most of the Jews did not stay in hiding, but were smuggled into Switzerland or Spain.

The people of Le Chambon saved over 5,000 Jewish men, women and children.

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Rescue (Breaker Slide)

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Rescue:

Diplomats Who Rescued

Teacher Note:

Of the over 21,000 people recognized by Yad Vashem as "Righteous Among the Nations," only 9 were diplomats, but their actions were decisive in the saving of tens of thousands of Jews. Six of the nine are represented here.

Dr. Feng Shan Ho

Dr. Feng Shan Ho was one of the first diplomats to save Jews by issuing them visas to escape the Holocaust. He was responsible for saving thousands (estimated 18,000) of Jews in Nazi-occupied Austria in 1938 and 1939.

Following the *Anschluss* in March 1938, all foreign embassies and legations in Austria were closed. In May 1938, Ho was appointed the Chinese Consul General in Vienna (served 1938-1941). The legation staff was reduced to Consul General Ho and one subordinate.

With the German takeover, Austrian antisemitism erupted in full force. The Jews of Austria were increasingly in danger. Less than a month after the annexation, the first Austrian Jews were deported to Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps. They were told that if they emigrated immediately, they would be released. Many Jews wanted to go to the United States, but even though the U.S. had not filled its Austrian quota, it imposed stringent emigration restrictions. Those who wished to go Palestine found that Britain, under Arab pressure, had severely reduced the quota for Jewish emigrants. The plight of Austrian Jews was further exacerbated by the Evian Conference, which made it evident that none of the 32 participating nations was willing to open its doors to Jewish refugees.

Vienna became the center for emigration of Austrian Jews. All foreign consulates in the city were besieged by desperate Jews, but most did not offer help. The British consulate posted a sign saying no visas would be issued; the French would not accept any visa applications; the Swiss demanded that passports be stamped with the red "J" in order to bar them from crossing the border.

The "means" Consul General Ho used to help Jewish refugees was to issue them visas to Shanghai, China. Shanghai, which was under Japanese occupation, did not require a visa for entry, but a visa – as proof of destination – was necessary for Jews to leave Austria. Ho knew that Chinese visas to Shanghai were actually used as means for people to get to the U.S., England and other destinations.

Consul General Ho practiced a "liberal" visa policy, authorizing the issuing of visas to any and all who asked. Having been turned down by many consulates, Jews soon discovered that they could get visas at the Chinese Consulate. For the next 2 years, the compassionate Chinese Consul General in Vienna issued visas to any and all Jews who requested them. After exhausting their supply of official forms, they even used ordinary paper stamped with the consular seal.

In 1973, after 4 decades in the diplomatic service, Feng Shan Ho retired to San Francisco. Once he had retired, the Chinese Nationalists in Taiwan launched a political vendetta to discredit Ho publicly with false allegations of a petty misappropriation of funds at his last posting. Ho presented evidence of his innocence, but it was futile. The real reasons behind this political vendetta were never revealed. Ho was denied a pension for his 40 years of service to China, and more than 2 decades later, his name has not been cleared.

Why was Feng-Shan Ho willing to help the Jews of Austria when most others would not? His reason was simple: "I thought it only natural to feel compassion and to want to help. From the standpoint of humanity, that is the way it should be."

Aristedes de Sousa Mendes

After the Nazis had invaded France and began deportations of the Jews, thousands sought refuge. Many were helped by the Portuguese Consul-General at Bordeaux, Aristedes de Sousa Mendes. Nearly 100,000 Jews in the area had but one desire – to escape to Spain and into Portugal, a neutral country. But the Portuguese government refused to grant entry visas to any refugees, especially to Jews.

Mendes could not close his eyes. He took a great many Jews into his own home and thousands of others lined up outside, hoping the visa policy would change. On his own volition, Mendes decided to grant visas to all, even at risk of losing his position. He sat down in front of his house and for 3 days stamped visas for thousands of Jews. His government learned of this and in a rage ordered him back to Portugal.

Mendes saved the lives of more than 10,000 Jews. For defying orders, his government stripped him of his post and his right to practice law. Though he had a family of twelve children, Mendes said afterward that he had no regrets; he was proud of what he did:

If thousands of Jews can suffer because of one Catholic (he meant Hitler), then surely it is permitted for one Catholic to suffer for so many Jews. I could not act otherwise. I accept everything that has befallen me with love.

Mendes died in poverty in 1954.

Chiune (Sempo) Sugihara

Sugihara was the Japanese Consul to Kovno, Lithuania. Several thousand Jews who had fled Nazi-occupied Poland were left stranded in Soviet-occupied Lithuania. Realizing that Lithuania would soon be occupied by the Nazis as well, the Jews sought freedom in other countries. Sugihara wanted to help. Japan, now allied with Germany, did not want to get involved. Sugihara realized that he could supply the Jews with Japanese visas, legitimately or otherwise, but these would be transit visas only and the holder would still need to declare a final destination. Curacao, a Dutch possession in the Caribbean, was suggested by the Dutch Consul in Lithuania who had obtained a written statement saying no visa would be required to enter the colony. With Japanese transit visas, the Jews could get to Curacao.

Sugihara began issuing visas on his own accord, working day and night. The Soviet government announced its plans to close the Japanese consulate in Lithuania. Sugihara continued to sign and stamp Japanese transit visas until the moment of his departure. According to some witnesses, he threw blank, stamped forms from his train window even as his train pulled away from the station.

Defying his government, Sugihara granted visas to as many applicants as possible – at least 3,500. The Japanese government cited him for insubordination and stripped him of his post. He died in Japan in relative obscurity.

In Japan, the Jews were treated without discrimination. When their transit visas expired, they were allowed to leave Japan and go to Shanghai, China to wait out the war. Curacao, it turned out, was closed to them. After the war, some returned and settled in Japan.

Jan Zwartendijk

Jan Zwartendijk from Rotterdam, Holland represented the Philips Corporation in Lithuania. A few days before the Soviet occupation (June 1940), he became Acting Consul for the Netherlands.

A few Dutch Jews turned to their diplomatic representatives for help in obtaining a visa to somewhere close to the U.S. Investigations revealed that visas were not required for the Dutch-controlled Caribbean Islands of Surinam and Curacao since entry to them was rarely granted and if granted, permission would be given by the local governor.

Zwartendijk knowingly wrote a half-truth into Jewish passports saying that visas were not required to enter those islands. He failed to mention that entry was nearly impossible. These visas enabled refugees to purchase a train ticket across the Soviet Union and survive the war in Japan or in Shanghai. No one ever attempted to get to the Dutch Islands.

Harry Bingham

Bingham came from an illustrious family. His father (on whom the fictional character Indiana Jones was based) was the archeologist who unearthed the Inca City of Machu Picchu, Peru, in 1911. Harry entered the U.S. diplomatic service and, in 1939, was posted to Marseilles, France as American Vice-Consul.

The U.S. was then neutral and, not wishing to annoy Marshal Petain's puppet Vichy regime, President Roosevelt's government ordered its representatives in Marseilles not to grant visas to any Jews. Bingham found this policy immoral and, risking his career, did all in his power to undermine it.

In defiance of his bosses in Washington, he granted over 2,500 U.S. visas to Jewish and other refugees, including the artists Marc Chagall and Max Ernst and the family of the writer Thomas Mann. He also sheltered Jews in his Marseilles home and obtained forged identity papers to help Jews in their dangerous journeys across Europe. He worked with the French underground to smuggle Jews out of France into Franco's Spain or across the Mediterranean and even contributed to their expenses out of his own pocket. In 1941, Washington lost patience with him. He was sent to Argentina, where later he continued to annoy his superiors by reporting on the movements of Nazi war criminals.

Eventually, Bingham was forced out of the American diplomatic service completely. Bingham died almost penniless in 1988. Little was known of his extraordinary activities until his son found some letters in his belongings after his death. He has now been honored by many groups and organizations including the United Nations and the State of Israel.

Raoul Wallenberg

Raoul Wallenberg came from a wealthy Swedish banking family. Sweden was one of the few European countries that was neutral during World War II. As a young man he worked at a family bank in Haifa, Palestine and met refugees from Germany who told him about the sufferings of the Jewish people. From that moment on, he felt deep empathy for them.

In 1938, after invading Austria, Hitler applied enormous pressure on the Hungarian monarchy. The government appeased Hitler with some anti-Jewish decrees. When World War II began in 1939, Hungary joined Germany as an ally. Hitler let her retain her "independence" and let her troops take over some of the territories lost after World War I. Still, the Hungarian government avoided joining in on the "Final Solution." Thousands of desperate Jews from Nazi occupied Poland, Czechoslovakia and other areas crossed into "independent" Hungary in hope of shelter.

By 1943, 800,000 Jews were in Hungary and the Nazis demanded they be surrendered for deportation. The Hungarian government stalled until March 1944 when Hitler forced the issue and sent in troops to occupy the country. The existing government resigned and a Nazi "puppet" regime took over. It issued sweeping anti-Jewish decrees, set up ghettos, and began deportation. Adolf Eichmann was the SS officer in charge.

By 1944, almost half a million Hungarian Jews had already been deported to the death camps in Poland. Another 250,000 were still in the ghettos of Budapest awaiting forced removal to their terrible fate. At about the same time, Raoul was approached by certain influential people to gain his assistance. In the spring of 1944, the Swedish government sent Wallenberg as a special envoy with diplomatic protection. His mission was to help the Jews of Hungary. The Swedes, the surviving Hungarian Jews and the War Refugee Board of the U.S. all provided funds for Wallenberg's mission.

Wallenberg reached Budapest (the capital) in July. He immediately began to help the remaining Jews receive food and medical care. He also gave out specially designed passports and other papers to about 16,000 Jews, putting them under Swedish protection. Thousands of lives were saved this way and Wallenberg acquired the title of "Angel of Rescue." To further refine his rescue missions, he purchased several buildings in Budapest. Due to his persistence, the buildings were granted extraterritorial rights similar to an embassy. At one point these buildings provided refuge to more than 5,000 Jews. Among his many feats were the establishment of hospitals, medical care centers, orphanages, and soup kitchens for the rescued.

About 144,000 Jews survived in Budapest. Wallenberg is credited with saving approximately 70,000. They were the only Jewish community of considerable size left in Europe.

Wallenberg's story, however, has a tragic ending. It is thought that the Communist leaders thought Wallenberg was an American spy because he had taken money from the U.S. War Refugee Board. They couldn't fathom why a Swede would be doing this. He was arrested and sent to a Siberian prison. He was never seen again. The Soviet government refused to tell Wallenberg's family or the Swedish government exactly what happened to him. To this day, his fate remains a mystery.

NOTE: The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is located at 100 Raoul Wallenberg Plaza in Washington, D.C.

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Rescue (Breaker Slide)

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Rescue:

Governments that Rescued

Bulgaria

Starting in March 1943, Jews in Bulgarian-occupied zones were deported as a result of German pressure. But when the deportation order came for the Jews of pre-war Bulgaria, there was an outcry from the Bulgarian people, including many Orthodox church leaders. Even King Boris III intervened. As a result, all Jews in custody were released, and the deportation order was rescinded. Bulgaria was the only country in Europe whose local Jewish population in 1945 was larger than it had been before the war.

Denmark

Initially, the German occupation of Denmark was one of mutual cooperation. After the Germans declared martial law in August of 1943 and revealed their intentions to deport the Jews of Denmark, the public, the churches, and even King Christian X voiced their opposition. In anticipation of the forthcoming deportations, the citizens of Denmark organized a massive rescue effort, ferrying the endangered Jews across the sea to neutral Sweden. When the Germans began searching for Jewish deportees, they found only 500 Jews, mostly old people that were too frail to make the sea journey. These Jews were sent to Theresienstadt where the Danish authorities continued to monitor their safety. As a result, most survived the war. The Danish Jews who had been ferried to Sweden survived and even returned to find their homes and jobs waiting for them.

Note: According to popular legend, King Christian X of Denmark chose to wear a yellow star in support of the Danish Jews during the Nazi occupation. In another version, the Danish people decided to wear a yellow star for the same reason. In fact, unlike Jews in other countries under Nazi rule, the Jews of Denmark were never forced to wear an identification mark such as a yellow star. However, the legend conveys an important historical truth: both the King and the Danish people stood by their Jewish citizens and were instrumental in saving the overwhelming majority of them from Nazi persecution and death.

Finland

Before and during World War II there was almost no antisemitism in Finland, in fact, the Finnish Government refused to condone the Nazis' anti-Jewish platform. When the Soviet Union attacked Finland in 1939, the country's Jews joined the army to fight the Soviets. In 1941, Germany deployed troops to northern Finland and Finland joined Germany in its attack on the Soviet Union. Some 300 Jews served in the Finnish army fighting with the Germans.

In mid-1942, when SS Chief Heinrich Himmler requested that the Finnish government hand over its Jewish community, the Finns refused. Prime Minister Johann Wilhelm Rangell stated that the country had but 2,300 respected Jewish citizens and the issue was closed to discussion. The Germans did not press the issue, as they were afraid to lose Finnish cooperation against the Soviets.

Later that year, Gestapo Chief Heinrich Muller convinced the head of the Finnish State Police to deport Jewish refugees. Undertaken in secret, the deportation plan was discovered by the Finnish cabinet, which managed to stop it from being fully implemented. Nevertheless, eight Jews were handed over to the Germans. Ultimately, only one of the eight survived. Many clergymen and politicians condemned the deportation, and as a result, the Finnish government refused to surrender any more Jews to the Germans.

Apart from that one incident and those Finnish Jews who died on the battlefield, the Jews of Finland, both local and refugees, went through the war unharmed. The Finns did, however, hand over to the Germans Soviet soldiers taken prisoner during the winter war in 1940 as part of scheme to exchange prisoners. Among them were Jews who perished in German custody.

In the winter of 1944, the Finns began fighting the Germans, and successfully expelled German forces from Finland.

Hungary

Hungary joined the Axis in November 1940 and even took part in the German invasion of Russia. However, on April 17, 1943, when Hitler urged Hungary to allow the Jews to be "resettled," Hungary refused. This was the status quo until March of 1944 when the German army invaded the country. The 750,000 Jews living within the extended borders were in immediate danger. Many were deported.

Italy

As long as Mussolini ruled Italy, no Jews were deported to death camps. Only when Germany occupied Italy in 1943 were SS units able to move in, and the deportations to Auschwitz began.

Vatican

On October 16, 1943, the Germans searched Rome for Jews to be deported. There were more than 7,000. Pope Pius XII personally ordered the Vatican clergy to open the Sanctuaries of the Vatican to all "non-Aryans" in need of refuge. 477 Jews were given refuge in the Vatican itself and another 4,238 Jews were given sanctuary in Church institutions throughout Rome. When the round-ups began, only 1,015 Jews were found and deported.

United States

It is said that the United States did "too little, too late." In spite of that, the U.S. did rescue some Jews.

A private group known as The Emergency Rescue Committee, formed in 1940 and sent Varian Fry to Europe and successfully rescued more than 1,000 refugees (only some were Jewish).

The War Refugee Board, a federal agency formed in 1944, played a crucial role in the rescue of as many as 200,000 Jews. Enlisting the help of Raoul Wallenberg, approximately 70,000 Jews of Budapest were saved, and Ruth Gruber assisted in the rescue of approximately 1,000 Jewish refugees from Europe.

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Rescue (Breaker Slide)

Questions to Consider:

The medals awarded to rescuers by Yad Vashem are engraved with the Jewish Talmudic saying: "Whosoever saves a single life, saves the entire universe." Explain.

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Rescue:

Chart of Righteous Among the Nations

Yad Vashem in Jerusalem is Israel's national memorial to the approximately six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

In 1963, Yad Vashem embarked upon a worldwide project to grant the title of "Righteous Among the Nations" or "Righteous Gentiles" to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust. To this end, Yad Vashem set up a public committee headed by a retired Supreme Court justice, which is responsible for granting the title. This project is the only one of its kind in the world that honors, using set criteria, the actions of those individuals who rescued Jews during the war.

In general, when the data on hand clearly demonstrates that a non-Jewish person risked his (or her) life, freedom, and safety in order to rescue one or several Jews from the threat of death or deportation to death camps without receiving any monetary compensation, this qualifies the rescuer for serious consideration to be awarded the "Righteous Among the Nations" title. This applies equally to rescuers who have since passed away.

As of January 2006, 21,309 people have been recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations."

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Rescue:
American Righteous Gentiles

Yad Vashem has named 3 Americans to its list of “Righteous Among the Nations”: Waitstill & Martha Sharp and Varian Fry.

Waitstill and Martha Sharp

Waitstill was a minister in the Unitarian church in Wellesley, MA. His wife, Martha, was a noted social worker. In 1939, the Sharps accepted an invitation by the Unitarian Service Committee to help members of the Unitarian church in Czechoslovakia. Shortly after their arrival, Prague came under Nazi control. Fearing possible arrest, they left Prague in June, 1940, landing in Portugal on a mission to help refugees from war-torn France. They made their way into Vichy-controlled France, seeking ways to help Jewish and non-Jewish refugees from Nazi terror. Lion Feuchtwanger, a world famous German-Jewish author of historical fiction, had settled in France, together with other German anti-Nazi intellectuals. He was wanted by the Nazis. Hearing of Feuchtwanger's plight from Varian Fry, an emissary for the U.S. Emergency Rescue Committee, Waitstill and Martha Sharp took it upon themselves to organize Feuchtwanger's escape. Using forged identity cards and bribes, Waitstill and Martha successfully smuggled Feuchtwanger and his wife into Spain then Portugal and on to the U.S.

Martha then returned to Vichy, France to plead the case for a group of 9 Jewish children. All 9 children made it to the U.S.

Martha Sharp died in 1999. Waitstill had passed away in 1984. Both were honored posthumously on June 13, 2006 at Yad Vashem.

Varian Fry

The cease fire agreement between Germany and France had stated that France was obligated to turn over any anti-Nazi refugees on the Gestapo's list – a large number of whom were Jews. In response to this, an organization was established in the U.S. known as the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC), whose purpose was to aid intellectuals stranded in France and bring them to the U.S. In June 1940, the U.S. government agreed to provide entry visas to 200 intellectuals who were in danger of being arrested. Varian Fry was selected to be the ERC representative in France. His job was to reach Marseilles, which held the largest concentration of these refugees, and to find a way to get them out. He had a list of 200 names of those eligible for visas and a sum of \$3,000 on his person.

Arriving in Marseilles in August 1940, he summoned the refugees on his list. Rumor of his arrival had already spread and hundreds of people came to ask for assistance. Fry decided to find ways – most of which were illegal – to smuggle out these refugees who faced immediate danger of falling into German hands. He rented an office and put together a staff to deal in legal as well as illegal emigration – forging documents and smuggling refugees across border by land and sea.

As evidence mounted that Fry was operating illegally, the Vichy administration sought his removal from the country. In this effort they were assisted by the U.S. State Department, which was seeking to prevent American entry into the war for as long as possible. Not long after the Vichy government obtained American cooperation in 1941, Fry was arrested and deported back to the U.S. after 13 months of operation. The ERC's activities were halted indefinitely.

Fry estimates that his office dealt with some 15,000 cases by May 1941. Of these, assistance was provided to approximately 4,000 people, over 1,000 of whom were smuggled from France in various ways. Among the Jews Fry helped to smuggle were a number of well-known figures such as Hanna Arendt (writer), Marc Chagall (artist), Jacques Lipchitz (sculptor), Siegfried Kracauer (film critic), Franz Werfel (author), Peter Pringsheim (physicist) and many others. When asked as to his motives, Fry responded that when he had visited Berlin in 1935, he saw SA men assaulting a Jew, and he felt he could no longer remain indifferent.

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Rescue:

Avenue of the Righteous, Yad Vashem

The name “Yad Vashem” means “a hand (or monument) and a name.” It is derived from the quote from Isaiah 56:5:

I will give them in My house and in My walls, a monument and name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall never be effaced.

At Yad Vashem there is a special avenue lined with carob trees (known for their sturdiness and strength) leading to the Holocaust Museum. Plaques adjacent to each tree record the names of those being honored along with their country of residence during the war. More plaques appear on walls of honor in the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations.

This avenue is called the “Avenue of the Righteous” and each of the more than 21,000 trees planted along the avenue and the hillside behind it was planted to honor the non-Jews who risked their lives to save the Jewish people. This was a way for the Jewish people to pay a tribute to people who went out of their way to help others.

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America & the Holocaust (Initial Breaker Slide)

Teacher Note:

It is tempting to look back and declare what should have been done – to ask what was moral.
It is more difficult to look back and think about what was possible at the time.

The rabbi and philosopher Emil Fackenheim once asked the distinguished Holocaust scholar Raul Hilberg why the Nazis attempted to murder all the Jews. Hilberg responded:

They did it because they wanted to do it.

He then asked why America had not done more to save the Jews?

*It didn't, I would say, because it decided not to.
We all live with the consequences of that decision.*

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America & the Holocaust:
Antisemitism in the U.S. / Emergency Rescue Committee

Photo Right:

Right to left - Varian Fry briefing Andre Breton (poet), Andre Masson (painter), and Jacqueline Breton on escape routes.

Throughout the war, the U.S. State Department insisted that the best way to save victims of Nazi Germany's policies was to win the war as quickly as possible. Rescue was not a priority, nor was it clear to Allied policy makers how they could pursue large-scale rescue actions behind German lines. Due in part to antisemitism, isolationism, the Depression and xenophobia, the refugee policy of the U.S. State Department made it difficult for refugees to obtain entry visas.

Antisemitism in the U.S.

The U.S. in effect closed its gates to emigrants during the Nazi reign. This was due, in a large part, to the strong antisemitic climate that existed in the U.S.

Leonard Dinnerstein, author of *Antisemitism in America*, observes:

FDR's tenure in the White House coincided with the worst period of antisemitism in the history of this country.

During this time Jews were actively discriminated against in universities where there were quotas for Jewish students and outright bans on hiring Jewish faculty. Discrimination was equally virulent in business and the professions. Even after America went to war, one study found that 30% of employee advertisements in the *New York Times* and *Herald Tribune* expressed a preference for Christians. Housing discrimination was widespread

1937 Roper Poll:	32% named Jews as the ethnic group to whom "you object." 53% displayed signs of strong anti-Jewish feelings. 41% felt Jews had too much power in the U.S. 39% felt Jews should be treated like everyone else.
November 1938, <i>Kristallnacht</i> :	85% of U.S. opposed any change in our restrictive immigration quotas.
December 1938:	94% of those polled disapproved of the Nazi treatment of Jews in Germany.
1939 Roper Poll:	39% said Jews should be treated like everyone else. 53% said Jews were different and should be restricted. 10% said Jews should be deported.
1939 Wagner-Rogers Bill:	A one-time-only quota exemption that would have allowed 20,000 refugee children into the country (10,000 children a year for two years) was opposed by 61% of those polled. The bill was killed in Senate Committee.
1942:	1/6 of those Americans questioned thought Hitler was correct to have "taken away the power of the Jews in Germany."

- January 1943: Polish Jewry had been destroyed and the rest of European Jewry was on the verge of destruction.
- A poll asked Americans a simple question:
Would it be a good idea, or a bad idea to admit more refugees (i.e. Jews) after the war?
- 78% of the respondents answered it would be "a bad idea."
- 1944: A survey of Americans identified "the most dangerous group to the U.S." as:
1. Jews (24%)
 2. Japanese (16%)
 3. Germans (8%)
- Summer 1944: Pollsters asked a large sample of Americans which of the following they would refuse to allow into the U.S.:
Germans, English, Japanese, Mexicans, Jews, Chinese, Swedes, or Russians
- 46% wanted to ban the Jews
- About the same time, 48% of those surveyed thought that "Jews have too much power and influence in this country." This figure rose to 57% by Christmas.

Dinnerstein points out that Roosevelt was always alert to the public mood; he was sensitive to charges that he presided over the "Jew Deal" – an administration run for the benefit of Jews. Because of this, he rarely took steps to reform the nation's highly restrictive – and strongly anti-Jewish – immigration policy. When he did make attempts to do so, he was rebuffed by a staunchly conservative Congress. Although it might have been impossible for Roosevelt to liberalize American immigration laws, critics note that his administration never worked to ensure that the maximum number of refugees eligible to enter the U.S. under the existing laws be allowed to do so.

David Wyman had this to say about President Roosevelt's reaction to the Jewish catastrophe in Nazi-occupied Europe:

One of the key reasons Roosevelt didn't act, I'm convinced, and definitely the key reason the State Department wouldn't act, was the fear of the antisemites in Congress, and the hell they'd raise if any moves were made in that direction. The antisemitism in Congress was reflective of the antisemitism in American society.

The man primarily responsible for overseeing America's refugee policy during much of the war was a zealous antisemite, Breckinridge Long of Missouri, the Assistant Secretary of State in Charge of the Special Problems Division. Roosevelt appointed him to the position in 1940. One of Long's responsibilities was to supervise the State Department's Visa Division. It was his fervent wish that U.S. consuls abroad delay and obstruct the granting of visas even to those refugees who were qualified for them under existing laws. As David Wyman pointed out in his book *Paper Walls* (1969), consular officials received great praise from their superiors for refusing to approve visas for Jews; they obtained no support for liberal interpretations of immigration policies.

Had Roosevelt made a firm decision that the quota slots provided for under the existing immigration laws were going to be filled, it is quite possible that at least 75,000 more European refugees would have been admitted to the U.S. between 1938 and 1944.

See slide #135, Chart of American Immigration.

Emergency Rescue Committee: May 1940

In May 1940, German forces overwhelmed the unprepared French forces. Throughout the 1930's, people had fled to France from Germany and other countries Hitler dominated. Now that the Germans were in France, the refugees were panic stricken and tried desperately to find ways to escape. What alarmed them most was the pact the French and the Germans signed. Article 19 of the armistice, or the "surrender on demand" clause, required the French government in Vichy to surrender any German nationals that the Nazis demanded. That meant that the refugees fleeing Germany or any of the countries Hitler overran – including Czechoslovakia, Austria and Poland – were threatened with return to Germany where they most certainly would be interned in concentration camps.

In New York, the news from France alarmed Americans who were concerned about the fate of these refugees. The day after the armistice was signed, a group called the Emergency Rescue Committee (ERC) met in New York to raise money to help the refugees caught in France. They were a private, American relief organization including Karl B. Frank (an Austrian Jewish political activist who had recently fled to the U.S.), Reinhold Niebuhr (Protestant theologian), Frank Kingdon (Methodist churchman) and Raymond Gram Swing (radio commentator). The members of the ERC feared for the lives of hundreds of anti-Nazi refugee intellectuals and artists who had fled the Reich and were now trapped within the closed borders of Vichy France.

From the outset, the ERC enjoyed strong support from influential members of New York's literary community. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt also actively provided help, linking the ERC to the power corridors of Washington. With that help, the ERC convinced President Roosevelt to authorize a limited number of "emergency visas" that would enable several hundred refugees to come to the U.S.

Under the chairmanship of Frank Kingdon, the committee set itself the mission to locate a group of approximately 200 prominent refugees and to arrange for their escape from France and transport to America. The mission was intended to last approximately three weeks.

For their emissary to France, the ERC selected Varian Fry, an editor for the Foreign Policy Association with ties to the International YMCA. This connection allowed Fry to secure a visa to France at a time when they were difficult to obtain, as well as give him a cover for his rescue work.

Varian Fry traveled to France on August 3, 1940. His assignment was to help rescue people who were in danger of persecution by the Nazis. He assisted refugees in acquiring visas and other documents necessary for a quick escape, but was quickly overwhelmed by the sheer volume of people who needed assistance. Fry responded by establishing a legal relief organization under the auspices of the French government, using it as a cover in order to evacuate endangered refugees through illegal means. These included falsified documents and clandestine escape routes.

During the 13 months that Fry actively aided refugees, he succeeded in helping more than 1,500 leave Vichy France, in addition to providing support to some 2,500 others. Although many of the refugees Fry helped were Jewish, the ERC did not offer aid specifically to Jews. The people it helped were mostly political refugees (socialists, leaders of trade unions who opposed Hitler), artists, writers and scholars who refused to be silenced by the Nazis. They included Hannah Arendt (writer), Marc Chagall (artist), Wanda Landowska (harpsichordist) and Andre Breton (writer).

Upon his return to America, Fry continued to speak out about the plight of the refugees. He left the ERC and began writing for *The New Republic*, a political magazine. Fry wrote regularly about the U.S.'s restrictive immigration policies. After he gathered information about the Nazis' efforts to wipe out the Jews of Europe, he wrote an article titled "The Massacre of the Jews: The Story of the Most Appalling Mass Murder in Human History." In this piece which appeared in *The New Republic* in December 1942, Fry called on the U.S. to allow unrestricted entry of all who were suffering at the hands of the Germans. The article went largely unnoticed.

In 1942 the International Relief Association and ERC joined together to form the International Rescue Committee, an organization that remains committed to refugee relief operations to this day.

Varian Fry was recognized by Yad Vashem as one of the Righteous Among the Nations in 1994.

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America & the Holocaust (Breaker Slide)

Slide 367

America & the Holocaust:

Bund Report: June 2, 1942 / The Riegner Telegram- August 8, 1942

The Bund Report: June 2, 1942

The first detailed account of mass murder reached the West in June 1942. The report, prepared by the Bund (Jewish socialist party) leadership in Poland, said that the Germans had “embarked on the physical extermination of the Jewish population on Polish soil.” It described the Special Action Groups, the mobile killing vans and the killing operations that had begun at Chelmno in December 1941. The number of victims was estimated at 700,000.

The first sentence of the Bund Report read:

From the day the Russo-German war broke out, the Germans embarked on the physical extermination of the Jewish population on Polish soil.

The Report described the Germans' tactics of driving Jews into a town square, a cemetery, or nearby woods, having them dig their own graves, and then shooting them with machine guns or killing them with hand grenades. It listed the numbers killed at specific locations: 30,000 in Lvov, 15,000 in Stanslavov, and 5,000 in Tarnopol. One thousand Jews a day were being gassed in Chelmno, the report said.

The details given in the Bund Report were precise, and, as we now know, accurate.

- Martin Gilbert, Holocaust historian

The Polish government-in-exile, which had received the report, disclosed its content to the British Broadcasting Corp. The BBC broadcast the information on June 2, 1942. Four days later, the Polish cabinet sent a note to the Allied governments stating that the “extermination of the Jewish population is reaching an unbelievable scale, with the Nazis slaughtering tens of thousands of Jews in town throughout Poland.”

On June 13, *The New York Times* published Goebbels' pledge to “carry out a mass extermination” of Jews in reprisal for Allied bombings of German cities, yet the paper had not yet written about the Bund Report. The *New York Herald Tribune* was the only U.S. newspaper to give the story front page prominence. Jewish organizations held protest rallies. The government did nothing. The general consensus was that it could not be true - it was exaggerated; things like that did not happen in the 20th century.

The Riegner Telegram: August 8, 1942

The American press had reported Nazi violence toward Jews as early as 1933, and by 1938 it had published reports of anti-Jewish measures such as the Nuremberg Laws and other incidents of antisemitic violence. In 1941, as the magnitude of anti-Jewish violence increased, newspapers began running descriptions of the Nazi mass murder of Jews, some even using the word "extermination" to refer to these large-scale killings. However, it wasn't until late 1942 that the American public received official confirmation of these reports.

Though intelligence data and news reports revealed Nazi violence against Jews as early as 1933, and a dramatic increase in that violence in 1941, scholars generally agree that the United States government did not receive reliable confirmation of the full scope of the Nazis' "Final Solution" until August, 1942.

On August 1, 1942, Dr. Gerhard Riegner, the World Jewish Congress representative in Geneva, Switzerland, received information from a German source regarding a Nazi plan to exterminate all the Jews of Europe. Due to the shocking and somewhat unbelievable nature of the report, Riegner refrained from passing on this information until he investigated its source. The information had been provided by an anti-Nazi German industrialist who had free access to top Nazi leaders.

One week later, satisfied with the reliability of the informant, Riegner took the information to the American consulate in Geneva, where he asked the Vice-Consul, Howard Elting, Jr. to send the information via the London Foreign office to Sidney Silverman, a member of the British Parliament and via the U.S. State Department to Rabbi Stephen Wise, President of the World Jewish Congress and America's most prominent Jewish leader.

Silverman received the information. Rabbi Wise did not. The U.S. State Department did not forward it to Rabbi Wise, deciding that the information was nothing more than a "fantastic war rumor." It was Silverman who ultimately sent a copy to Rabbi Wise in August 1942, who in turn passed the information on to Under Secretary of State Sumner Welles at the State Department, again. Wise was told not to talk to the press until the information could be confirmed.

Received alarming report that in Führer's headquarters plan discussed and under consideration, according to which all Jews in countries occupied or controlled by Germany numbering 3.5-4 million should, after deportation and concentration in the east, be exterminated ... The actions planned for autumn; methods under discussion including prussic acid.

Four months later, on November 24, 1942, Rabbi Wise was permitted to hold a press conference. He disclosed that the State Department had investigated and confirmed reports about the Nazis' extermination campaign against European Jews. A few weeks later, on December 17, the United States, Britain, and ten Allied governments released a formal declaration confirming and condemning Hitler's extermination policy toward the Jews. Despite the official status of these announcements, most major newspapers in the United States minimized their importance by burying them on inner pages. *The New York Times*, for example, allocated space on the front page for only the latter of these official reports, relegating Wise's press conference to page ten.

Considered to have been the first official source of information regarding the mass murder of the Jews, the cable set in motion a process that ultimately made the West at least partly aware of what was happening.

Note on the Source of the Information:

It is now known, after many years of investigation, that the information on which the cable was based was transmitted by Eduard Schulte, a Leipzig businessman who had official business in Switzerland and used the opportunity to transmit information to the western Allies. He contacted a Swiss intermediary, who in turn informed Dr. Benjamin Sagalowicz, a Jewish journalist who ran the Swiss Jewish press agency. Sagalowicz conveyed the information to Riegner on August 1.

Copy of Memorandum that Howard Elting forwarded to Rabbi Wise and Sidney Silverman:

MEMORANDUM

Subject: Conversation with Mr. Gerhart M. Riegner, Secretary of World Jewish Congress

This morning Mr. Gerhart M. Riegner, Secretary of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, called in great agitation. He stated that he had just received a report from a German business man of considerable prominence, who is said to have excellent political and military connections in Germany and from whom reliable and important political information has been obtained on two previous occasions, to the effect that there has been and is being considered in Hitler's headquarters a plan to exterminate all Jews from Germany and German controlled areas in Europe after they have been concentrated in the east (presumably Poland). The number involved is said to be between three-and-a-half and four millions and the object is to permanently settle the Jewish question in Europe. The mass execution if decided upon would allegedly take place this fall.

Riegner stated that according to his informant the use of prussic acid was mentioned as a means of accomplishing the executions. When I mentioned that this report seemed fantastic to me, Riegner said that it struck him in the same way but that from the fact that mass deportation had been taking place since July 16 as confirmed by reports received by him from Paris, Holland, Berlin, Vienna, and Prague it was always conceivable that such a diabolical plan was actually being considered by Hitler as a corollary.

According to Riegner, 14,000 Jews have already been deported from occupied France and 10,000 more are to be handed over from occupied France in the course of the next few days. Similarly from German sources 56,000 Jews have already been deported from the Protectorate together with unspecified numbers from Germany and other occupied countries.

Riegner said this report was so serious and alarming that he felt it his duty to make the following requests: (1) that the American and other Allied Governments be informed with regard thereto at once; (2) that they be asked to try by every means to obtain confirmation or denial; (3) that Dr. Stephen Wise, the president of his organization, be informed of the report.

I told Riegner that the information would be passed on to the Legation at once but that I was not in a position to inform him as to what action, if any, the Legation might take. He hoped that he might be informed in due course that the information had been transmitted to Washington.

For what it is worth, my personal opinion is that Riegner is a serious and balanced individual and that he would never have come to the Consulate with the above report if he had not had confidence in his informant's reliability and if he did not seriously consider that the report might well contain an element of truth. Again it is my opinion that the report should be passed on to the Department for what it is worth.

There is attached a draft of a telegram prepared by Riegner giving in his own words a telegraphic summary of his statements to me.

Howard Elting, Jr.
American Vice Consul

American Consulate
Geneva, Switzerland

Note:

This report was inaccurate in its warning that the annihilation of the Jews was about to begin. Mass murder had, in fact, been taking place since June 1941. The cable was nonetheless a crucial step in the uphill battle that Rabbi Wise and others waged to convince the Allies to intervene.

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America & the Holocaust (Breaker Slide)

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America & the Holocaust:
The Bergson Group

On the morning of November 25, 1942, a small but shocking article in *The Washington Post* caught the attention of Peter Bergson, a young Jewish Palestinian who was staying in Washington, D.C. The headline read "Two Million Jews Slain." The story went on to explain that World Jewish Congress Chairman, Rabbi Stephen Wise had confirmation from the State Department that the Nazis were planning to annihilate the entire Jewish population of Europe.

Bergson and a handful of other young Palestinian Jews had arrived in the U.S. in 1940 hoping to create a Jewish Army to aid in the establishment of a Jewish state. Their group was known as the Committee for a Jewish Army (CJA). After reading this article, their focus became the rescue of Europe's Jews.

Unlike American Jewish leaders who were at times hesitant to be too vocal for fear of exacerbating antisemitism, the "Bergson Boys" had no qualms about whom in America they offended. In addition, they were unfettered by allegiances to existing political organizations. Consequently they enjoyed greater success than most American Jewish activists.

The "Bergson Boys" took out ads in the papers demanding that the Allied countries "immediately appoint an inter-governmental committee" to devise plans to end the Holocaust. Their unorthodox methods horrified American Jewish leadership. They argued that foreigners had no mandate to speak for American Jews. Government leaders in Washington and London were not pleased either. In fact, the State Department repeatedly tried to have Peter Bergson drafted or deported. Bergson and his followers remained undeterred.

December 13, 1942

America's most popular broadcaster, Edward R. Murrow reported the following:

Millions of human beings, most of them Jews, are being gathered up with ruthless efficiency and murdered...It is a picture of mass murder and moral depravity unequaled in the history of the world. It is a horror beyond what imagination can grasp...There are no longer 'concentration camps,' we must speak now only of 'extermination camps'.

We Will Never Die Pageant : March 9, 1943

On March 9, 1943, with the help of Academy Award-winning screenwriter Ben Hecht (*Gone with the Wind*, *Scarface*), composer Kurt Weill and director Moss Hart, the "Bergson Boys" mounted a huge pageant in New York City's Madison Square Garden called *We Will Never Die*, which publicized the plight of the Jews. The cast featured 200 rabbis, 200 cantors, 400 actors and 100 musicians. Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni, Sylvia Sydney and Luther Adler had the leading roles.

Forty thousand people turned out for the performance in New York dedicated to the murdered Jews of Europe. With this success, the producers tried to schedule performances in dozens of other cities. In Washington, Eleanor Roosevelt, 6 Supreme Court Justices and some 300 Senators and Congressmen watched the drama. In all, some 100,000 people saw the pageant in six cities, yet it failed to have the impact the producers had hoped for, partly because of the American Jewish Community's distrust of the CJA.

Emergency Committee (EC) to Save the Jewish People of Europe: July 1943

With the U.S. government's continuing lack of action, the "Bergson Boys" were convinced that they needed to step up both their propaganda campaign and their lobbying efforts on Capitol Hill. In July of 1943 they co-sponsored a six-day conference that took place in New York City. Fifteen hundred people took part. At the conclusion of the meeting, participants formed the Emergency Committee (EC), which was charged with launching a national publicity campaign and lobbying Congress to create an independent agency devoted to saving Jews.

For Peter Bergson and the Emergency Committee, the dramatic evacuation of almost 7,500 Jewish refugees from Denmark in October 1943 pointed to other possible rescue activities. The committee published a full page ad in *The New York Times* with headline, "It Can Be Done." The group's efforts culminated in November 1943 when members of Congress introduced a Bergson-inspired resolution calling for creation of a U.S. government agency to rescue refugees. President Roosevelt fast-tracked the process in January 1944 when he established the War Refugee Board, WRB. He did so in part because Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau had demonstrated that there had been an intentional cover-up of the reports of genocide from Europe and intentional obstruction of action by the State Department.

To raise funds for their work, the Bergson Group organized an all-star "Show of Shows" at Madison Square Garden on March 13, 1944. More than 20,000 people attended, including 150 servicemen whose tickets were paid for by the famous Jewish boxer (and WWII hero) Barney Ross. The evening featured skits and comedy routines by Bob Hope, Gracie Fields, Jimmy Durante, Ethel Merman, Zero Mostel, Molly Picon and others. Milton Berle served as master of ceremonies. Musical numbers were performed by Perry Como, the Andrews Sisters, the Count Basie Band, and others. The evening also included a dramatic reading by Helen Hayes of a Ben Hecht poem about the Nazi massacres. According to *The New York Times*, the "Show of Shows" netted \$80,000 for the rescue campaign.

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America & the Holocaust (Breaker Slide)

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America & the Holocaust:

Jan Karski (July 1943) / War Refugee Board (January 22, 1944)

Jan Karski (July 1943)

Jan Karski (born Jan Koziński) was an official in the Polish Foreign Office before the war. During the war he became a liaison officer in the Polish underground conveying information between underground authorities and the Polish government in exile in London. In the spring of 1942, he met with leaders of the Jewish resistance and arranged to be smuggled into the Warsaw Ghetto, as well as into a transit camp so he could see first hand the extent of Nazi atrocities.

In February 1943, Karski took his information, including microfilm, to London. In July 1943 he arrived in the U.S. where he met with President Roosevelt and other government officials. Karski said that 1.8 million Jews had already been killed in Poland and that in the next year and a half, the Jews of Poland would "cease to exist." Roosevelt responded that the military defeat of Germany would remain the Allies' primary objective.

Mr. Karski believed that he failed to move Roosevelt to any real action. John Pehle, who became the head of the War Refugee Board, a federal agency that helped rescue and settle surviving Jews, said that Roosevelt decided to establish the board as a consequence of his talks with his Polish visitor. The Karski mission, said Mr. Pehle, "... changed U.S. policy overnight from indifference to affirmative action."

Polish authorities realized that Karski's identity had become known in Germany. He therefore remained in the U.S. where he promoted Poland's cause and publicized information about the Holocaust. In 1982 he was honored by Yad Vashem and designated as one of the Righteous Among Nations.

The War Refugee Board, WRB: January 22, 1944

By the end of 1942, the American State Department had confirmed reports of the systematic mass murder of European Jewry. Roosevelt was under pressure to act.

In the meantime, word had leaked out that the U.S. State Department was not only not interested in the refugee problem, but that they were actively suppressing information about the extent of the Holocaust by sending instructions to their legation in Switzerland not to permit private Jewish agencies to transmit such stories.

Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau, brought a report to Roosevelt prepared by Treasury aides that in effect accused the United States of acquiescing in mass murder because State Department officials "have not only failed to use the Governmental machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Governmental machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews." To avoid the imminent scandal, Morgenthau suggested an agency be established outside the State Department to handle the refugee policy of the U.S. Roosevelt quickly established the War Refugee Board (WRB) on January 22, 1944.

The War Refugee Board was to deal with rescue, transportation, maintenance and relief; it was to deal with civilians whose lives were endangered both in and out of Nazi-controlled territories. The WRB worked with Jewish organizations, diplomats from neutral countries, and resistance groups in Europe to rescue Jews from occupied territories and provide relief to inmates of Nazi concentration camps.

The agency, run by Executive Director John Pehle and a staff of 30, made plans to evacuate Jews and other endangered people from enemy territory, find safe havens for them, send relief supplies to concentration camps, and use psychological threats such as war crimes trials against the Germans to stop deportations. The actual rescue programs were put into effect by a small number of WRB workers stationed in Europe.

Officially, the WRB was given much authority. All U.S. government agencies were supposed to cooperate with it; however, only the Treasury Department, led by Morgenthau, did its part. In addition, the WRB was strapped for money: Roosevelt only allocated \$1 million for organizational costs. The board had to collect money from private Jewish organizations to fund the actual rescue programs.

WRB SENDS RAOUL WALLENBERG TO RESCUE JEWS: (see slide #357)

In the spring of 1944, the WRB set out to rescue Hungarian Jewry by attracting international attention to the Hungarian government and putting pressure on them to stop deportations. The board also sent Swedish diplomat, Raoul Wallenberg, and others to protect the Jews of Budapest.

The WRB, along with the World Jewish Congress, consulted with the Swedish government about possible rescue efforts in Budapest. All three agencies agreed to send a young Swedish businessman named Raoul Wallenberg to Hungary to attempt the rescue of the more than 200,000 remaining Jews in Budapest. Wallenberg handed out official-looking diplomatic papers to thousands of Jews and saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from the extermination camps. Wallenberg is credited with saving approximately 70,000 Jews in Budapest.

WRB SENDS RUTH GRUBER TO RESCUE JEWS:

In June 1944, President Roosevelt announced his plan to create a free port at Fort Ontario in Oswego, NY. Roosevelt extended an invitation to 1,000 European refugees who had been carefully screened in terms of occupation, levels of education, and so on, to come to the U.S. as "guests." This "guest status" allowed him to circumvent existing immigration laws and quotas, but gave the refugees no legal standing and required them to return to Europe once conditions were better.

The WRB, acting on Presidential orders, selected the precious few who would make the journey. These 982 refugees from 18 different countries were mostly Jews, but also other groups that were among Hitler's victims.

The government officials making the selection chose families and survivors with skills that could help run a camp in America. The first priority was refugees who had been in concentration camps and escaped.

- Ruth Gruber

Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, sent Special Assistant Ruth Gruber to Italy to bring back the refugees to America. Ruth Gruber, a young American Jewish journalist who worked for the U.S. government, risked her life to escort these refugees to Fort Ontario. It took the group 2 weeks to cross the ocean, fighting limited space conditions, seasickness and extreme heat. It was not a pleasant trip. Along the way she played the role of protector, comforter, friend and teacher, and she worked diligently for their rights once they arrived in the U.S.

While the Statue of Liberty brought tears to the eyes of the weary refugees, the train ride to Oswego brought reminders of trips to Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. Barbed wire fences and military personnel greeted them at their new home. Within the camp, the refugees lived under security restrictions and were not allowed to work outside the camp. Refugee Walter Greenberg commented:

I felt deceived. I felt that I should have been free. I mean, I felt wonderful. I had doctors. I had nurses. I had food. I came to school. Oswegonians were very kind ... What good is it to have all the amenities of life if one still isn't free?

By the end of the war, the refugees had begun to rebuild their lives in the camp, and many dreaded returning to Europe, where they had watched their families perish and where they no longer had a home. This created a political nightmare for Roosevelt and others who genuinely wanted to allow them to become "official Americans."

Through political maneuvers, letter writing, and a little hope, the refugees and their American supporters won the ultimate freedom for the refugees, American citizenship. Their freedom was granted on December 22, 1945 by President Harry Truman.

The WRB had intended to create other such places of asylum, and thus also influence other countries to provide sanctuary for World War II victims. Roosevelt, however, refused to establish any other havens besides Oswego. This was the only attempt by the United States to shelter Jewish refugees during the war. The journalist I. F. Stone remarked that Oswego was "... a kind of token payment of decency, a bargain counter flourish in humanitarianism."

OTHER WRB ACTIONS:

The WRB also lobbied Roosevelt to publicly condemn the mass murder of Jews by the Nazis. They also argued that the U.S. army should bomb Auschwitz. This was never done.

WRB ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

By the end of the war, almost 200,000 Jews had been rescued by the WRB. About 15,000 Jews and more than 20,000 non-Jews had been evacuated from Nazi domain. At the very least, about 10,000 Jews were protected within Nazi-controlled territory by underground programs funded by the WRB. The board removed the 48,000 Jews in Transnistria to safe areas of Romania. About 120,000 Jews from Budapest also survived in part to the WRB's activities.

Despite its best intentions, the WRB was never able to accomplish what it was charged with doing because of the lack of cooperation extended by the U.S. government and even President Roosevelt. John Pehle, a Treasury Department official who lent his full energies to Jewish rescue, had this to say about the War Refugee Board: "What we did was little enough. It was late...late and little." One can only speculate how many more might have been saved had the WRB been established in August 1942 when Gerhart Riegner's message reached the U.S.

There are opposing viewpoints on the effectiveness of FDR's humanitarian efforts regarding Jewish refugees. According to historian William E. Leuchtenburg, FDR's record on the Holocaust was "shameful." The U.S. government could not have prevented the Holocaust, but it took little advantage of opportunities to help its victims.

Author Robert Herzstein is a little kinder by saying that whatever his failures in dealing with the refugee issue, FDR was "the most consequential anti-Nazi leader of his time." He quietly fought antisemitism at home and took enormous political risks in preparing the U.S. to join the Allies at a time when most Americans favored neutrality.

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America & the Holocaust (Breaker Slide)

Slide 373

America & the Holocaust:
Why Auschwitz Was Not Bombed?

Teacher Note:

From the beginning, America's involvement in World War II was to stop Nazi aggression. The salvation of those being persecuted was never a priority.

For many, the failure to bomb Auschwitz II (Birkenau) in the summer of 1944 has become a symbol of U.S. indifference to the fate of the Jews.

On April 7, 1944, two men escaped from Auschwitz – Rudolph Vrba and Alfred Wetzler. They made contact with Slovak resistance forces and reported the killing process at the camp in detail. Their report was forwarded to Western intelligence officials along with an urgent request to bomb the camps. Part of this report made its way to the U.S. War Refugee Board (WRB) in July 1944; the remainder did not arrive until November, although it could have been forwarded earlier had there been urgent interest in receiving it.

Because of the Vrba-Wetzler Report, Jewish leaders in Slovakia, some American Jewish organizations and the WRB all urged the Allies to intervene. Requests were made to Churchill and American officials to bomb Auschwitz. All requests were denied.

It should be noted why the bombing of Auschwitz was a viable option:

1. Bombing was technically possible.

The question of bombing the crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau arose only in the late spring and summer of 1944, more than two years after the gassing of Jews had begun, and at a time when more than 90% of the Jews who were killed in the Holocaust were already dead. By this time, bombing the camps was technically possible: information regarding the nature of the camps and their function was available to those undertaking such a mission. German air defenses were weakened, and the accuracy of Allied bombing was increasing. All that was required was the political will to do so.

The rail lines from Hungary were also well within range. On July 7, 1944, American bombers flew over the railway lines to Auschwitz. On August 20, bombs were dropped on the I.G. Farben synthetic oil factory less than 5 miles east of Birkenau. The factory was damaged but not destroyed. A second bombing mission occurred on September 13. German oil reserves were a priority American target, and the I.G. Farben plant ranked 9th on the target list.

We began to hear the airplanes. Almost at once the barracks began to shake. 'They're bombing Buna (Buna was the German synthetic rubber factory at Auschwitz III that relied on slave labor),' someone shouted. I thought of my father: But I was glad all the same. To see the whole works go up in fire – what revenge! ... We were not afraid. And yet if a bomb had fallen on the blocks it would have claimed hundreds of victims on the spot. But we were no longer afraid of death; at any rate not of that death. Every bomb that exploded filled us with joy and gave us new confidence in life.

- Elie Wiesel, *Night*

2. Bombing would have saved lives.

By mid-summer 1944, Auschwitz remained the only functioning killing center. Hundreds of thousands of Hungarian Jews were being deported there. A new railroad spur had been built directly into the Birkenau camp, where more than half of the arriving Jews were sent directly to their deaths. As many as 10,000 people a day were being killed in the gas chambers. The crematoria were so overtaxed that bodies were being burned in pits with body fat fueling the flames.

Some argue that bombing the camps would have made no difference; that millions of Jews still would have been killed. Destroying Crematoria II and III at Birkenau would have eliminated 75% of its killing capacity at a time when it would have been difficult, if not impossible to rebuild. Without the extermination facilities, the SS would have been forced to slow or altogether halt the deportations while they resorted to other, less efficient means of killing.

The U.S. gave several reasons for not bombing Auschwitz:

1. Military resources could not be diverted from the war effort.

In January of 1944, the U.S. War Department had decided that army units would not be “employed for the purpose of rescuing victims of enemy oppression” unless a rescue opportunity arose in the course of routine military operation. In February, an internal U.S. War Department memo stated: “We must constantly bear in mind that the most effective relief which can be given the victims of enemy persecution is to insure the speedy defeat of the Axis.”

Note that the Allies did attempt to drop supplies of food, medicine and, in some cases, arms to support the Warsaw Uprising, the fight of Polish non-Jews in 1944. Nothing comparable was attempted at Auschwitz.

Tragically, by the end of June and beginning of July 1944, the vast majority of the Hungarian Jews deported to Auschwitz had already died.

2. Too many civilians would be killed...it might even provoke more vindictive German action.

For the Allies, Auschwitz II (Birkenau) was a civilian target, not a military one, and the civilians at the camp were not the enemy but persons imprisoned against their will. Defenders of the Allied policy argue that Auschwitz should not have been bombed even if it were possible because many prisoners would have been killed. It remains open to debate, even now, as to whether more people could have been saved than might have been killed by bombing the camp. It should be noted that Birkenau prisoners worked outside the camp, so the number of casualties would not have been as high as some critics suggest.

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America & the Holocaust (Breaker Slide)

Slide 375

America & the Holocaust:
The New York Times

What kept American journalists from recognizing the significance of the systematic murder of six million people?

- Worldwide carnage on an unprecedented scale obscured the plight of the Jews.
- There was skepticism bred by false reports of atrocities during the previous world war.
- The Roosevelt Administration downplayed the news.
- *The New York Times*, the leader in world news, failed to give the Holocaust adequate attention.

The New York Times played a critical role in the downplaying of the Holocaust in all media. It failed in its journalistic responsibility. Not that it didn't cover the war -- it did, with exceptional professionalism; it simply did not cover the Holocaust.

The Times deliberately de-emphasized news of the Holocaust, reporting it in isolated, inside stories. The few hundred words about the Nazi genocide *The Times* published every couple days were hard to find amidst a million other words in the newspaper. *Times* readers could legitimately have claimed not to have known, or at least not to have understood, what was happening to the Jews. During the six years of World War II, *The New York Times* published 1,186 stories about what was happening to the Jews of Europe or about 17 stories a month; however, these stories only made the front page 26 times out of 24,000 front-page stories, and most of those stories referred to the victims as "refugees" or "persecuted minorities." In only six of those stories were Jews identified on page one as the primary victims.

On May 18, 1942, *The New York Times* reported from Lisbon that the Germans had machine-gunned more than 100,000 Jews in the Baltic states, another 100,000 in Poland, twice that many in western Russia. The news appeared on an inside page -- several inches of neutral copy.

On June 10, 1942, *The New York Times* carried a report from the World Jewish Congress that the Germans had massacred 1 million Jews and that the Nazis had established a "vast slaughterhouse for the Jews" in Eastern Europe. It was buried in the back pages of the newspaper. It was not until December 18, 1942 that the paper ran a story about the atrocities in Europe on the front page.

On July 2, 1944, *The Times* published what it called "authoritative information" to the effect that 400,000 Hungarian Jews had been deported to their deaths, and another 350,000 were earmarked for similar action. This news was published as four inches of copy on page 12.

The Times was making a statement with editorial judgments of this sort, and other editors, other reporters, other news organizations, all took their cues from *The Times*. Everyone knew that its foreign coverage set the standard. A perception then spread that if the Jewish-owned *Times* covered the Holocaust in this skimpy manner, then so could they, with impunity.

Across the desks of the Associated Press and the United Press came stories from Europe about the systematic killing of Jews, but few were put on the news agency wires for mass distribution. Few newspapers published such stories. Aside from a paragraph here and there -- *Time*, *Newsweek* and *Life* -- the national news magazines maintained a steady silence on the subject. In February 1943, when the United States first disclosed the Nazi plan for the extermination of the Jews, *The Reader's Digest*, *American Mercury* and *Collier's* allowed themselves a momentary flush of editorial excitement -- then quickly resumed their detached approach to the story.

One exception to the rule occurred in late 1944, when *Collier's* and *American Mercury* published vivid accounts of the slaughter of Polish Jews written by Jan Karski, a leader of the Polish underground who had been an eyewitness to a Nazi killing camp. Karski had earlier informed Roosevelt in a private meeting that "the Germans are out to exterminate the entire Jewish population of Europe." Disappointed by the President's response, Karski decided to go public.

There was little radio coverage of the Holocaust. Hollywood, though populated by many Jewish producers and writers, did many films on Nazi atrocities, but not one on the Holocaust. The very popular newsreel, *The March of Time*, never touched on the killing of the Jews. One of the most momentous events of the modern era was allowed to pass virtually without comment.

Personal relationships at the newspaper, the assimilationist tendencies of *The Times'* Jewish owner, and the disposition of America citizenry, all led *The Times* to consistently downplay news of the Holocaust. Arthur Hays Sulzberger, publisher during the war, had ancestors that came to America in 1695. Sulzberger considered himself to be a member of the establishment, an American, who just happened to be Jewish. Sulzberger was an ultra-assimilationist, a civilized man who simply wanted to avoid being categorized as a Jew.

Was it then any surprise that bylines, such as A.H. Raskin and A.M. Rosenthal appeared, rather than Abraham Raskin and Abraham Rosenthal? Cyrus Sulzberger, a columnist covering the war, used his clout as a member of the publisher's family to discourage the hiring of too many Jewish reporters. Daniel Schorr said that he was told in the early 1950's that he would not be hired by *The Times* because there were already too many Jews on the paper.

Decisions were made at *The Times* that ultimately resulted in the minimizing and misunderstanding of modern history's worst genocide. News of Hitler's "Final Solution" was hidden from readers and - because of the newspaper's influence on other media - from America at large. *The Times'* judgment that the murder of millions of Jews was a relatively unimportant reverberated among other journalists trying to assess the news, among Jewish groups trying to arouse public opinion, and among government leaders trying to decide on an American response. It partly explains the general apathy and inaction that greeted the news of the Holocaust.

It is clear that had *The Times* and other news organizations decided that the extermination of the Jews was important, the paper could have and should have highlighted it, regardless of whether it would have saved lives. The press alone could not have altered the currents of public discourse that swamped the news of the Jews' destruction, and certainly a single newspaper by itself could not have accomplished that. Still, *The Times* had a moral and professional obligation to do more than be swept along with the tide.

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Monuments & Memorials:

Yad Vashem's Memorial to the Deportees

Monuments and memorials are sites where individuals and nations go to remember and bear witness, where individuals go to mourn and nations attempt to work out their relationship to their historical past. They are places of individual, as well as national memory.

Since the Second World War, many thousands of monuments have been erected at the sites of the mass murder of Jews and of the killing of individual Jews. In the last two decades of the 20th century, the number of such monuments grew considerably.

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Monuments & Memorials:

Janusz Korczak

Janusz Korczak was a teacher and a social worker who ran an orphanage in Warsaw, Poland. He also did a weekly radio show for children and wrote a series of children's books in which the central character was a boy king named King Matt.

The Germans occupied Poland in September 1939, and the Warsaw Ghetto was established in November 1940. The orphanage was moved inside the ghetto. Korczak received many offers to be smuggled out of the ghetto, but he refused because he did not want to abandon the children. Janusz Korczak and the nearly 200 children and staff of his orphanage were sent to the Treblinka death camp on August 5, 1942. According to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Korczak marched with his 192 orphans to the *Umschlagplatz* (boarding area for the trains) with one child carrying the flag of King Matt with the Zionist flag on the other side of it.

Memorial at Yad Vashem

This sculpture of the great Polish-Jewish educator Dr. Henrik Goldschmidt (known by his pseudonym, Janusz Korczak, which he borrowed from the title of a book to use when he entered a writing contest when he was 20) stands in the center of a group of children and shelters them with his body and his outstretched, embracing arms. The figure of Korczak is considerably bigger than the figures of the children. Only his face and hands are visible, uniting the group with their embrace. The children are tall and skinny, their hands are long and lifeless, and their heads are drooping.

Every year on this date a memorial ceremony is held at the monument, attended by members of the Korczak Society in Israel, including several of the children under his care who survived the war.

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Monuments & Memorials:

Treblinka

The Treblinka memorial site was built between 1959 and 1963. In February 1960, the Warsaw Regional Council selected the design of Polish sculptor Franciszek Duszenko and Polish architect Adam Haupt for the Memorial Stone and the Symbolic Cemetery.

Located on a knoll at the top of a gentle slope, on the site of the former Treblinka extermination camp is a large circular area with 17,000 stones of various sizes and colors set into concrete representing a symbolic cemetery.

Some say the 17,000 stones represent the number of people who were murdered each day when the camp was in full "production." Others say the 17,000 stones represent the sites of the places from which the murdered in Treblinka came from. There is only one stone with a personal name, and that is Janusz Korczak.

130 of the stones have specific names of cities or towns from which the victims were deported to the death camp. The largest stone is the one for Warsaw, from where the largest number of Jews were transported to Treblinka. In 1940 the Jewish population of Warsaw and the surrounding area, about 400,000 people, were first crowded into a walled ghetto, then later sent to Treblinka and other camps. According to historian Martin Gilbert, there were 265,000 Jews from Warsaw deported to Treblinka.

In the center of this "mass grave" lies a 26-foot granite memorial tombstone with a big crack in it intended to express the wickedness of the place. This is located approximately on the spot where the gas chambers once stood.

The back side of the memorial tombstone has a menorah on the top.

The sign at base of memorial tombstone reads "Never Again" in six languages.

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Monuments & Memorials:

Plaszow Memorial

This monument at the former Plaszow concentration camp commemorates the victims who died there, Polish Catholics as well as Jews. It was erected in 1964 and faces the city of Krakow, Poland in the distance,.

The Plaszow camp, established in 1942, was initially a forced-labor camp for Jews. It later housed Poles as well. The camp had factories, warehouses and a men's camp and a women's camp. Thousands were killed there, mostly by shooting.

The German industrialist, Oskar Schindler, established an enamelware factory in Krakow, adjacent to Plaszow. He attempted to protect his Jewish workers, some 900 people, from abuse in Plaszow and from deportation to extermination camps.

The camp was destroyed as the Soviet army approached in the summer of 1944. The mass graves were opened and the bodies were exhumed and burned.

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Monuments & Memorials:

Sculpture of Love and Anguish / Miami Beach, Florida

This memorial was commissioned in 1985 and executed by Kenneth Treister, sculptor, who has described his intent as: "a large environmental sculpture...a series of outdoor spaces in which the visitor is led through a procession of visual, historical and emotional experiences with the hope that the totality of the visit will express, in some small way, the reality of the Holocaust." The dominant image is the large, 42-foot-high bronze arm rising from the ground, with sculptured people climbing the arm seeking escape.

A Garden of Meditation

Some artists depict the Holocaust only in the dimensions of its horrors, with concrete, metal and barbed wire. The theme is broadened here to include a serene and peaceful garden ... dedicated to the memory of the beautiful European culture and its six million Jewish souls ... now lost. The garden is composed of a large plaza of Jerusalem stone, a 200-foot-diameter water lily pond, and a classic semicircular colonnade and arbor... all set against a backdrop of a dense green palm forest.

The Sculpture of Love and Anguish

Portrayal of the Holocaust ... frozen in a patina bronze. A giant outstretched arm, tattooed with a number from Auschwitz, rises from the earth, the last reach of a dying person. Each visitor has his own interpretation ... some see despair ... some hope ... some the last grasp for life . . . and for some it asks a question to God... "Why?"

A Series of Vignettes

130 bronze tormented figures precariously cling to the skin trying miraculously to escape. The entire scene is a series of vignettes where families try to help each other in a final act of love. Caught in the abyss, fathers help mothers ... mothers gather children ... children comfort babies ... all expressing the mixed emotions of terror and compassion.

Sensing Both Love and Fear

The free-standing bronze figures surrounding the base are life-size so that the viewer becomes part of the sculpture ... he touches and fondles ... he senses both love and fear.

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Monuments & Memorials:

Shoes on the Danube Bank / Budapest, Hungary

The memorial was created by Gvula Pauer along the banks of The Danube River which divides the city of Budapest into the "old town" sections of "Buda" and "Pest." It is located on the Pest side of the Danube Promenade near the Hungarian Parliament (shown on the slide).

Inaugurated in April 2005, this memorial consists of bronze casts of shoes commemorating those who were shot along the banks of the Danube River during World War II. The shoes depict those left behind by the victims when they were forced to take off their shoes before being shot and falling into the icy waters.

Miklós Horthy, Regent of Hungary, resisted German demands for mass deportation of Hungarian Jews, and most survived until 1944 when Horthy fell from power and was replaced by the fascist Arrow Cross regime. In November 1944, the Arrow Cross ordered the remaining Jews of Budapest into a closed ghetto. Jews who did not have protective papers issued by a neutral power were to move to the ghetto by early December. Between December 1944 and the end of January 1945, the Arrow Cross took as many as 20,000 Jews from the ghetto, shot them along the banks of the Danube, and threw their bodies into the river.

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Monuments & Memorials:

Rosenstrasse Memorial / Berlin, Germany (Site of the Rosenstrasse Protest, March 1, 1943)

This memorial (called "Block Der Frauen" or "Block of Women") is dedicated to the non-Jewish German women who, in early 1943, came to Rosenstrasse to demand the release of their Jewish husbands and relatives. It was dedicated in 1995 and carved by sculptor Ingeborg Hunzinger. The imagery is of protesting and mourning women. The inscription on the rear reads: "The strength of civil disobedience, the vigor of love overcomes the violence of dictatorship; Give us our men back; Women were standing here, defeating death; Jewish men were free."

The Nazis exempted Berlin Jews in mixed marriages from deportation until February 28, 1943. On that day, the Fabrik-Aktion took place, where between 1,500 and 2,500 Jewish men were rounded up and held in the Jewish community building on Rosenstrasse. For the next five days, unarmed and unorganized, the wives protested their husbands' arrest and secured their release from probable death in government-sponsored concentration camps. Their unexpected release is usually cited as linked to several causes:

- (1) the demonstrators, mostly women, were not protesting against the Nazi regime, but the Nazi violation of their own directives not to deport intermarried Jews and mischlinge (half-Jews);
- (2) some respect for women;
- (3) the regime's wish to avoid a larger demonstration and avoiding a bloodbath in the center of Berlin.

(See slide #298, Non-Jewish Resistance.)

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Monuments & Memorials:

Valley of the Communities / Yad Vashem / Jerusalem, Israel

The idea of commemorating the destroyed communities of Nazi Europe appears in the Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Law (1953):

A memorial authority, Yad Vashem, is hereby created in Jerusalem... for the communities, synagogues, movements and organizations, public, cultural, educational, religious, and charitable institutions that were destroyed and ruined by the evil stratagem to wipe the name of Israel and its culture off the face of the earth.

This memorial was created by sculptor Peter Boiger. Located at the western edge of the Yad Vashem complex, the Valley of the Communities (designed by Lipa Yahalom and Dan Zur and dedicated in 1992) is made up of over one hundred open-air sections separated from each other by walls of Jerusalem stone. Seen in its entirety from above, the site looks like a maze of ruins, depicting a world that has all but disappeared. The labyrinth of courtyards, walls, and dead ends that make the visitor feel trapped and insecure.

At the entrance to the valley is the inscription:

This memorial commemorates the Jewish communities destroyed by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, and the few which suffered but survived in the shadow of the Holocaust. For more than one thousand years, Jews lived in Europe, organizing communities to preserve their distinct identity. In periods of relative tranquility, Jewish culture flourished, but in periods of unrest, Jews were forced to flee. Wherever they settled, they endowed the people amongst whom they lived with their talents. Here, their stories will be told...

Each section in the valley represents a region in pre-War Europe with a large Jewish population. The name of the region's main community is engraved in Jerusalem stone; the names of other communities are inscribed on marble plaques. The words that appear in Hebrew characters are the names of towns as they are known to the Jewish community. The Latin versions were the names used by non-Jews. The script resembles that used on gravestones throughout Europe.

The layout of the Valley of the Communities roughly corresponds to the geographic map of Europe and North Africa.

Over 5,000 communities are identified.

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Survivors:

Photo of Survivors in Birmingham, AL

What did it take to survive?

Primarily luck! Other survivors will attribute their survival to personal courage, resourcefulness, strength, optimism or faith.

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Survivors:

“Non Sequitur” Cartoon

Teacher Notes:

- Yom HaShoah

Yom HaShoah, “the day of the Shoah.” Shoah in Hebrew means “catastrophe.”

Yom HaShoah is the Holocaust Remembrance Day in most Jewish communities. It is a day set aside for remembering the six million Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Yom HaShoah was instituted in 1959 by Israeli law and is a national memorial day.

It is held in the early spring, on the 27th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan. According to the secular calendar, this day usually falls in the month of April.

The original proposal was to hold Yom HaShoah on the 15th of Nisan, the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising (April 19, 1943), but this was the first day of Passover. The date was moved to the 27th of Nisan, which is eight days before Israeli Independence Day.

Most Jewish communities hold a solemn ceremony on this day, but there is no institutionalized ritual. Lighting memorial candles and reciting the Kaddish (the prayer for the departed) are common.

- International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27)

In November 2005, the United Nations designated January 27th as Holocaust Remembrance Day. This is the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz on January 27, 1945.

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The Children “A Loss of Infinite Possibility”

A poet has said that the death of a child is the loss of infinite possibility. The ultimate crime of the Holocaust was the murder of children.

More than 1.5 million Jewish children under the age of 15 were murdered by the Nazis in their attempt to achieve the “Final Solution to the Jewish Question.” In addition, the childhood of millions of European children were irretrievably stolen.

Although the murder of the children was a deliberate attempt to destroy the Jewish future, the Nazis did not target children for being children, but for being Jews. Caught up in the web of incomprehensible events, they were the most vulnerable of all the victims of Nazism. Young children could sense their parents' anguish, even though they could not grasp their predicament. The presence of children forced their parents to make impossible choices, what the literary critic Lawrence Langer has called “choiceless choices.” Throughout Europe, parents had to decide if the family should stay together and face the future, or go into hiding together or individually. Young children often endangered their parents. A crying child could give away a clandestine hide-out and endanger the lives of an entire group. Some children spent the war years hiding in basements or attics, passed from family to family. They could not go outside or be seen in public. Others, because of the color of their hair and the absence of an accent could pass as non-Jews. In the end, children were deported along with their parents to concentration camps. Mothers and fathers could no longer protect their young. At Auschwitz, children were often killed upon arrival. Parents who refused to be separated from their children were sent at once to the gas chambers. Children born in the camp were generally killed on the spot. Near the end of the war, in order to cut expenses and save on gas, an order was given to place living children directly into the ovens or throw them into open burning pits.

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