



Resource and Activity Book
for
“LIT 2174”



“Multimedia & Literature of the Holocaust”

LIT 2174 CRN _____
Days & Hours Class Meets: _____
Location of Class: _____
Semester _____



Office Hours: _____

Professor Richard A. Gair
Office: Building 8, Room 132
407-582-2641
rgair@atlas.valenciacollege.edu
<http://faculty.valenciacollege.edu/rgair>



Student Name: _____

Student Valencia ID #:V _____

This booklet contains assignment sheets and weekly schedules, resource study sheets, activity sheets, a recommended reading list and other valuable resources to help you throughout the course.

It is **REQUIRED** that you have this Resource Binder or E-Book with you in each class as we will use many of the sheets in it to do in-class activities as well as homework assignments.

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PHOTO COLLECTIONS

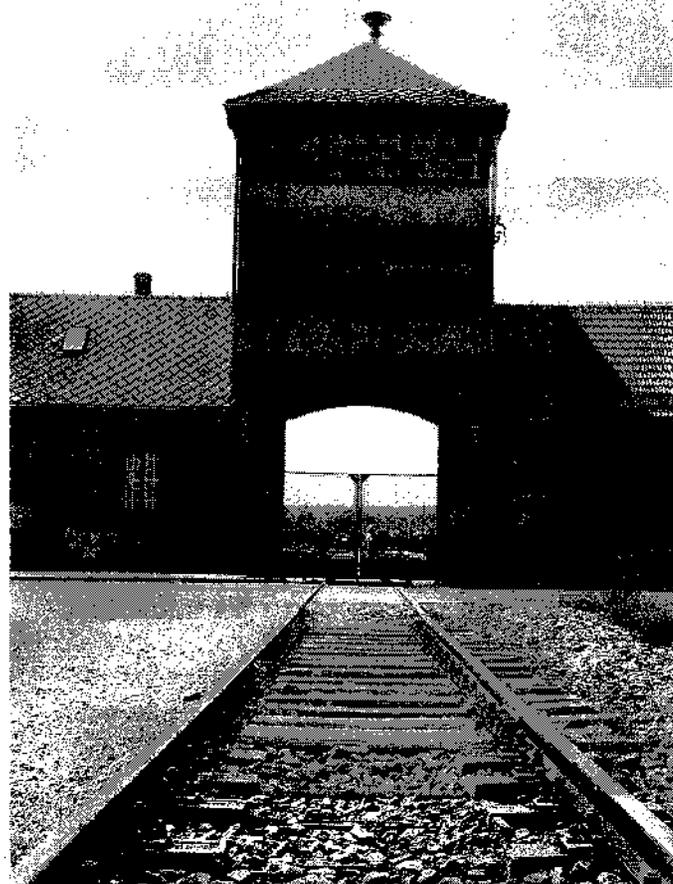
First section is for syllabus, assignments, etc. The rest are resources for reference and as needed during class. HOME OF TOC

Authored in part and compiled by
Professor Richard A. Gair, *Copyright*©2012
Valencia College

Student Name:



Introduction:
Syllabus, Schedules,
Text Questions, Worksheets, etc...



Course Syllabus



The entrance and inside of the Children's Memorial at Yad Vashem In Jerusalem, Israel.



Yad Vashem from the Air



Syllabus and Assignment Packet

For LIT 2174, Professor Gair, Fall 2012, 3 credits

This packet contains the syllabus, policies, procedures, major assignments by week, major due dates and deadlines, suggested resources for the midterm and final project and a page for you to sign after reading it.

ALWAYS BRING THIS PACKET TO CLASS.

Course Syllabus

Welcome from Professor Gair,

Thank you for signing up for my Holocaust course. I say that because I am grateful that Valencia has given me the opportunity to teach this course for the past several years. I am proud that it is such a popular course and that I have the privilege of teaching it. It is both an honor and a privilege to be blessed with the awesome responsibility of passing on the lessons and story of the Holocaust to you. Six million Jews and 5 million other victims of various groups lost their lives in this event we now call The Holocaust. The Jews were the primary target and only group slated for total worldwide annihilation. As the semester unfolds you will learn about the great drama and history around this event. You will be forced to rethink what you thought you already knew about people, mankind, hate, prejudice and the sanctity of life. You will embark on a journey that for some of you will continue for years to come. You will struggle to make sense of your new knowledge and at times find it does not make any sense at all. That sort of mental dissonance or conflict is what fuels intellectual thinking in the pursuit of knowledge. You may...no you will...be confronted with some very uncomfortable facts about your fellow human beings, your own faith, your own country and many other areas of life. Your faith may come into question, be weakened or grow as a result of this intellectual journey you are about to take. Some of the visuals you see during your study of this subject will be somewhat disturbing in nature. They will be very graphic and depict the real horror that took place. As your guide on this journey I will do everything possible to minimize the trauma you may be exposed to, but please understand it is not possible to avoid it completely. To tell the story, to understand the story one must see some of the horrors our fellow humans have perpetrated on others. Hopefully you will take many life lasting lessons away from this.

The Holocaust requires a great deal of you emotionally if you study it seriously. At times you will feel drained by the experiences you read about that others went through. Always keep in mind that although it is a story of 6 million or more, it is six million..one person at a time. Every single person of that number was a person who like you and I, lived, breathed, dreamed of the future, loved someone, was loved by someone, had a mother, father, husband, wife, sister, brother, child or other relative. In that six million might have been the person who could have found the cure for cancer or some deadly disease. The survivors' stories will at times make you cry and feel numb as you unsuccessfully try to imagine what it must have been like to be that person. You can't understand and all the study in the world will not bear the fruit of true understanding. So what do we do? We learn to remember. We read and listen to their testimony to remember. We watch the videos, documentaries and full length movies that tell the stories to remember. The Hebrew word ZACHOR means just that REMEMBER. That is all the six million plus victims ask of us, to remember them, to remember their story and never let it happen again. We owe them that. We owe their memory that promise...to remember and to pass their story on to others.

In closing, I again say I am blessed with the task of helping to tell their story and to helping

Course Syllabus

your generation to ZACHOR...to REMEMBER through my teaching. The responsibility I have been given is precious and it is what I feel I have been called to do with my life, to help ZACHOR. Feel free to come by my office at any time this semester and just talk, chat, probe, ask questions or just share your tears as you struggle with this most unusual subject matter. I will be there to guide you, to explain what I can, to comfort you when you are angry or sad or just confused about what you are learning.

Professor Rich Gair, MA



Zachor

HOLOCAUST STUDY ABROAD TRIP TO POLAND- JUNE

A word about study abroad. No doubt you have heard that each year I take a large group of students on a Holocaust Study Abroad trip to Poland. We visit several concentration camps. Usually most students are awarded a scholarship that pays for a large portion of the trip. The trip itself is a 3 credit elective course. To be eligible for the trip you must complete this course, LIT 2174 Literature and Multimedia of the Holocaust. If that sounds like something you would like to be a part of then do not wait. The trip fills up very very quickly, often within less than a month!!! Get your application in early to be first on the list for the scholarships. Once you are formally accepted to the trip you will be able to stretch out the payments a bit to make the balance of the money more affordable. It is a once in a lifetime, life-altering experience that will stay with you for the rest of your life. See me as soon as possible during office hours to get more details and get signed up.

Course Syllabus

A handwritten signature in red ink, reading "Richard O. Yon", is centered on a rectangular area of white paper with light blue vertical grid lines. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial 'R' and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Course Syllabus

LIT 2174- Literature and Multimedia of the Holocaust

SEMESTER: FALL 2012, 3 CREDITS CRN _____

Professor Gair

Instructor	Professor Richard A. Gair	Office: Building 8, Room 132	Office Hours
Phones	407-582-2641 or 407-299-5000 Ext. 2641 Cell: 609-744-6516	Web Address: http://faculty.valenciacollege.edu/rgair	Fill in here: Monday: Tuesday: Wednesday: Thursday: Friday:
E-mail & AOL AIM Screen Name	rgair@atlas.valenciacc.edu AIM Screen Name: <i>OrlandoProf</i>		

Stop by my office anytime you have something about the course you would like to discuss, ask questions about or just share your emotions related to what we are studying. Some of the material can be pretty emotional and we all need an opportunity to share and vent.

REQUIRED TEXTS (3)

- *Images from the Holocaust: A Literature Anthology* by Brown, Stephens and Rubin, National Textbook Company, 1996 ISBN 0844259209
- *A History of the Holocaust* by Yehuda Bauer, Franklin Watts Publishing, 2002 Revised Edition, ISBN 0531155765
- *I Never Saw Another Butterfly* by Hana Volavkova, Schocken Publishing, 1994, ISBN 0805210156
- Holocaust Literature Resource Book (Author: Professor Gair) available in the Valencia East bookstore. This will be placed in the loose-leaf binder listed below in supplies. **OPTIONAL: IF YOU HAVE A NETBOOK, IPAD, TABLET OR SOME LARGE SCREEN DEVICE (NOT A CELL PHONE) YOU MAY BRING THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF THIS BINDER TO CLASS AND AVOID THE BOOKSTORE CHARGE. I WILL MAKE IT AVAILABLE IN PDF (ADOBE ACROBAT) FORM.**

NEEDED SUPPLIES:

- A one and one half (1 ½) inch loose-leaf binder for the Resource Packet which you will purchase in the bookstore.
- One set of 15 tabbed dividers (Avery tab divider pages are best. The divider packet comes with a color coded Table of Contents cover page).
- A separate notebook or a section tabbed off in the loose-leaf for classroom note taking.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

The course will use the following types of literature to explore the topics listed:

Personal memoirs, interviews and diaries
Anthologies of literature
Essays and commentaries and stories
Reflections of survivors
Art, poetry and music produced by the victims and survivors
Video– documentaries, rare Nazi propoganda videos, Hollywood docudramas and printed matter
Children’s art and poetry
Survivor presentations to the class
Possible field trip to the Holocaust Resource Center of Central Florida

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Major Topics/ Concepts/ Issues

Genocide and the Holocaust
20th Century Events Leading to the Holocaust
Adolph Hitler and the Rise of the Nazi Party
The Refugee Crisis and the Persecution Years in Germany
The Ghettos
The Final Solution
Nazi Medicine
Resistance: Courageous Acts in Desperate Times
Women in the Holocaust
The Rescuers (Oscar Schindler and others)
Liberation: Aftermath and the Pursuit of Justice
Reflection, Remembrance and Responsibility
Holocaust Denial

Major Learning Outcomes:

1. Define and discuss the concept of Genocide and human rights.
2. Cite examples of German government actions directed at the Jews before and during the Holocaust.
3. Examine the rise of Adolph Hitler and the Nazi Party.
4. Discuss the implications of the Nuremberg Laws.
5. Describe and discuss the conditions and community in the Ghettos.
6. Identify and discuss the major aspects of the Final Solution.
7. Explain the use of medical knowledge for evil committed by the Nazis.
8. Distinguish the various forms of resistance and their activities.
9. Describe examples of rescuers and their motives.
10. Describe and discuss the Liberation of the concentration camps.
11. Analyze the lessons of the Holocaust in relation to reflection, remembrance, responsibility.

Assessment (Evaluation) of Learning Outcomes:

The course Learning Outcomes will be assessed through a variety of written reactions, analysis, interpretations and critical evaluations of historical content, first person narratives, film, art, poetry, monuments, memorials and survivor testimony.

CORE COMPETENCIES:

Core Competencies: Valencia faculty has defined four interrelated competencies that prepare students to succeed in the world community. In this course, through classroom lecture and discussion, group work and other learning activities, you will further develop your mastery of these core competencies.

VALUE: make reasoned value judgments and reasonable commitments

- * Recognize values as expressed in attitudes, choices and commitments.
- * Distinguish among personal, ethical, cultural and scientific values.
- * Employ values and standards of judgment from different disciplines.
- * Evaluate your own and others' values from individual, cultural and global perspectives.
- * Articulate a considered and self-determined set of values with empathy and fair-mindedness, individually and in groups.

THINK clearly, critically, and creatively. Analyze, synthesize, integrate and evaluate in many domains of human inquiry

- * Analyze data, ideas patterns, principles, perspectives
- * Employ the facts, formulas, procedures of the discipline
- * Integrate ideas and values from different discipline
- * Draw well-supported conclusions
- * Revise conclusions consistent with new observations, interpretation, or reasons with curiosity and consistency, individually and in groups

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COMMUNICATE with varied audiences using varied means

- * Identify your own strengths and need for improvement as communicator
- * Employ methods of communication appropriate to your audience and purpose
- * Evaluate the effectiveness of your own and others' communication by speaking, * listening, reading and writing, verbally, non-verbally and visually with honesty and civility in different disciplines and settings.

ACT purposefully, reflectively and responsibly

- * Apply disciplinary knowledge, skills and values to educational and career goals
- * Implement effective problem-solving, decision-making, and goal-setting strategies
- * Act effectively and appropriately in various personal and professional settings
- * Assess the effectiveness of personal behavior and choices
- * Respond to changing circumstances with courage and perseverance, individually and in groups in your personal, professional and community life

Prerequisites: This course can be used as one of your Humanities requirements. It is a level 2 (sophomore) course. You may not be enrolled in a Prep. Reading or English course at the same time. Those courses should be completed before enrolling in this course.

Students who complete this course are eligible to take LIT 2955 which is the Holocaust Study Abroad Trip. Typically that course is a trip to Poland and other Holocaust related sites. It is a 3 credit course and serves as a sequel to this course.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Class attendance- ONLY TWO ABSENCES ALLOWED
YOU WILL BE WITHDRAWN AFTER THE THIRD ONE...

DO NOT MISS CLASS UNLESS IT IS A REAL EMERGENCY....SCHEDULE YOUR DOCTOR APPOINTMENTS AT OTHER TIMES JUST AS I DO. IF YOU DO USE YOUR ABSENCES AND THEN COME TO ME WITH A REAL EMERGENCY OR LEGITIMATE ABSENCE AND THEN PLEAD WITH ME I, WILL REMIND YOU THAT THE FIRST TWO MISSED CLASSES WERE NOT EMERGENCIES NOR EXCUSED.

DO NOT ASK ME FOR SPECIAL PERMISSION...THAT'S UNFAIR TO THE OTHER CLASSMATES.

IF YOU ARE ABSENT WHEN A VIDEO-MOVIE IS SHOWN YOU MAY MAKE UP THE MOVIE BY VIEWING IT IN THE MEDIA CENTER IN BUILDING 4. I also have many of the DVD's in my office and they can be viewed there on the small TV I have.

THREE TARDIES WILL EQUAL A FULL ABSENCE. Chronic tardiness (more than 3 tardies) will result in your final grade being lowered by a full letter grade.

WITHDRAWAL POLICY:

If students withdraw, it will count as an attempt which will affect the cost of repeat classes. The Florida Legislature passed a bill which states that for the third attempt of a college-level class, the cost will be the same as out of state tuition. The Withdrawal Deadline is (**SEE COLLEGE CALENDAR**) Per Valencia Policy 4-07 (Academic Progress, Course Attendance and Grades, and Withdrawals), a student who withdraws from class before the withdrawal deadline of (**SEE COLLEGE CALENDAR**) will receive a grade of "W." A student is not permitted to withdraw after the withdrawal deadline. A faculty member MAY withdraw a student up to the beginning of the final exam period for violation of the class attendance policy. A student who is withdrawn by faculty for violation of the class attendance policy will receive a grade of "W." Any student who withdraws or is withdrawn from a class during a third or subsequent attempt in the same course will be assigned a grade of "F." For a complete policy and procedure overview on Valencia Policy 4-07 please go to: <http://valenciacc.edu/generalcounsel/policydetail.cfm?RecordID=75>.

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ALL WRITTEN WORK MUST BE WORD PROCESSED IN TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT, 12 POINT, AND DOUBLE SPACED WITH 1" MARGINS. RUN SPELL CHECKER AND GRAMMAR CHECKER AS NEEDED. PROOFREAD A HARD COPY BEFORE HANDING IT IN, MANY ERRORS ARE CAUGHT THAT WAY. HANDWRITTEN WORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Please include a standard heading on the upper left corner of all papers as follows:

Your Name
CRN # _____
Date _____
Professor Gair

Name of Assignment (Centered)

DO NOT EMAIL WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS TO ME!

Special Needs – Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who qualify for academic accommodations must provide a notification from the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) and discuss specific needs with the instructor, preferably during the first two weeks of class. The Office for Students with Disabilities determines accommodations based on appropriate documentation of disabilities. The East Campus Office is located in Building 5, Room 216.

CLASSROOM CONDUCT:

The culture of the college classroom requires individual responsibility and accountability for learning and classroom participation. All students are expected to engage in classroom and out-of-class learning activities in order to show proficiency in course skills at the college level. It is therefore necessary and expected that all students will have a positive attitude toward and participate in all classroom activities in a manner that is conducive to the learning process for themselves and others. Your presence, participation, and success in this class will be viewed as a partnership in the learning process. This includes viewing videos in class, taking class notes at that time and handing in requested notes after a video is viewed. Sleeping is an automatic ZERO AND ABSENCE. If, for any reason, a student's classroom conduct interferes with the teaching process or the learning of others, the student will be requested to leave the classroom and an absence for the day will be recorded. This includes respect for everyone else, attitude and cooperation. All of these are part of the assessment I make as to your final semester grade. Any subsequent disruption will be processed according to Valencia Community College Code of Student Conduct procedures.

YOU ARE NOT TO BE DOING WORK FROM ANOTHER CLASS DURING THIS CLASS. IF YOU ARE I WILL TAKE IT AND YOU WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE WITHOUT GETTING IT BACK.

CELL PHONES, BEEPERS, AND ANY OTHER COMMUNICATION DEVICES MUST BE INACTIVE (TURNED OFF) DURING CLASS TIME. A grade of "O" will be assessed when a phone or device interrupts class AND YOU MAY BE ASKED TO LEAVE.

PLEASE- DO NOT SIT IN CLASS WITH YOUR PHONE UNDER THE DESK AND TEXTING. You can live without your cell phone for the length of the class. It is also RUDE and DISRESPECTFUL.

DISCLAIMER:

Changes in syllabus and/or schedule may be made at any time during the term by announcement of the instructor. A

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revised syllabus or addendum may be issued at the discretion of the instructor.

HELPFUL RESOURCES: BLACKBOARD AND MY OWN WEB SITE.

Other

- Valencia Library- Building 4
- Valencia East Library Web Site- Research portal to LINCC to many journals and databases, publications and media clips.
- Reserve collection of DVD's for this course. The college has purchased a large number of DVD's that I requested, all related to the topics we will study. They are on reserve for my classes and you may check them out for a limited period of time to do assignments.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Students are held responsible for adhering to academic honesty policies and the results of violating them. These are outlined in the Valencia Student Handbook. Plagiarism is one of the offenses and is seen as a serious infraction. ALL work must be in your words, with appropriate citing of sources as needed. **DO NOT COPY THE TEXT WORD FOR WORD.** Cutting-pasting information from sources such as the Internet is strictly prohibited.

STUDENT ETHICS:

Students are expected to abide by the college's honesty policy and code of conduct as stated in the catalog. Students caught cheating on assignments or tests will receive a "0" which cannot be made up. Any additional action deemed necessary will be taken at the discretion of the instructor. You are bound by the college's academic code of honor and honesty policy.

YOU MAY BE WITHDRAWN WITH A COURSE GRADE OF F IF YOU PLAGIARIZE. IN ADDITION A WRITTEN REPORT WILL GO TO THE DEAN. DO NOT RISK IT!

MAKE UP POLICY:

Students who are absent or tardy are responsible for contacting the instructor or a classmate about the lessons and assignments missed. Make up work IS **DUE UPON YOUR RETURN TO THE NEXT CLASS.**

CAMPUS INFORMATION:

Instructional Media Center (IMC)	Building 4, Room 101, Phone: ext. 2337
Learning Resources Center (LRC)	Building 4, Room 201 (2nd floor), Phone: ext. 2459
Microcomputer Learning Center	Building 4, Room 122, Phone; ext. 2430
Reading/English Computer Lab	Building 4, Room 101
Hours: Mon-Thurs.	8:00 am to 7:30 pm
	Fri. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
	Sat. 8:00 am to 11:30 am
Testing Center	Building 4, Room 120

EVALUATION: NO TESTS OR QUIZZES...Yes, you are reading correctly.

I do not give tests or quizzes. Your grade is based upon the quality of the work you do in the areas listed in the grading chart here.

GRADING:

Grades

90 - 100	=	A
80 - 90	=	B
70 - 80	=	C
60 - 69	=	D

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Below 60 = F

INC=
INCOMPLETE
(50%)

Grade Weight Distribution

<p><u>HISTORY TEXT CHAPTER ESSAYS:</u> Each chapter in the Bauer text has one essay question you must answer. It is a question that requires thought and must be in your own words. It must be a minimum of half a page or more in length, It must be detailed and all parts of the question must be addressed. These will be due every Tuesday starting with the 2nd Tuesday of the semester. Follow the weekly schedule in this packet on pages 19, 20, 21.</p>	20%
<p><u>LITERATURE ANTHOLOGY- IMAGES & BUTTERFLY:</u> This includes weekly assignments in the <i>Images from the Holocaust: A Literature Anthology</i> text, and poems-art from <i>I Never Saw Another Butterfly</i> text), Weekly literature reactions to the Images readings are due every Thursday. See guidelines for reacting to literature (Handout # 32 on my web site). REACT-RESPOND-DO NOT JUST RETELL THE STORY. Just retelling will be graded with a 50%. Follow the weekly schedule in this packet on pages 19, 20, 21.</p>	20 %
<p><u>BlackBoard: (On Line)-</u> <u>Personal Journal:</u> A personal journal must be kept in Blackboard. Use it to express your reactions, feelings, observations, thoughts and new insights related to the Holocaust. There should be at least 4 entries by the due date. Print all entries in one file to hand in on due date. DUE DATE: <u>You Tube Lectures:</u> View any two video lectures on Professor Gair's You Tube Channel (they are in Blackboard under Discussion) and write a half page summary of what new knowledge you gained from watching it. Indicate the Lecture # and Title. DUE DATE: _____</p>	10 %
<p><u>MOVIE REACTIONS-RESPONSES:</u> (In the Media Center of the Library (Building 4) there is a large collection of Holocaust DVD's that I have on reserve for the class. You are to view any 1 DVD and write a one page minimum paper telling What the video was about. How it contributed to your knowledge of the Holocaust. What kind of video it was (documentary, Hollywood depiction of a historic event (Ex. <i>Uprising</i> is a movie that depicts the Warsaw Ghetto uprising). Describe the main focus, events, characters and it's historic contribution to Holocaust education, how well it depicted the historic event, it's educational value, and anything else you found interesting about the content or format of the video. This will also include responses to videos shown in class where I give you a viewing question and you hand in notes or a response after the end of class.</p>	10%

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DUE DATE:	
<p><u>MIDTERM PAPER: NO EXAM- DUE DATE:</u></p> <p><u>Survivor Testimony:</u> Please go to the following site: http://tc.usc.edu/vhiechoes/default.aspx?screen=1050 <u>I will place a link to the site on my web site and in Blackboard.</u></p> <p>Here you will find 51 testimonies from survivors. They can be selected from a master list or through the various topics such as Ghetto, Resistance, etc. Each testimony is broken up into a series of parts or Tapes. They are all listed in order on the pull-down menu on that person's page. Choose one person and view <u>all</u> the segments for that person's testimony. There will also be a downloadable one page biographical sketch about the person. Print that and include it stapled to the front of your report, sort of like a cover. They will take a while to view and absorb so leave yourself plenty of time to view all the segments. These are all part of the Visual Shoah Foundation project which contains a total of 52,000 taped interviews. The assignment is to watch the one survivor and then write a minimum 5 page report explaining the content and analyzing it in terms of how this type of research contributes to your knowledge and understanding of the Holocaust, victimization and survival in contrast to other forms of research.</p> <p>The following 7 areas are on the grading rubric which is Handout # 37 on my web site. A sample rubric is included in this syllabus packet. Print up a clean copy from the web site and attach it to the midterm paper when you turn it in to me. If you go to the Course Handouts link # 37 on my web site that link leads to two places., The left half opens the rubric, the right half which is all CAPS takes you to the site with all the required survivor testimonies.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Thesis statement: this should revolve around the idea of viewing of interviews in this format (technology) and the impact of such listening without the person, usually a victim, being there. Check your notes from prior writing courses on how to develop a Thesis Statement.2. You might think about what you have read thus far in this class-in our <i>Images Anthology</i> which also present the cases of victims who went through the Shoah and tried to make some sense of it to you as reader.3. Talk about the testimony: who the person is, where he or she is from in a report type of form. Yes, in this part you are giving a chronology of sorts.4. Given your major area of interest or discipline here are the Valencia, how does the material being talked about relate to what you are studying? History, psychology, journalism may be logical subjects to analyze what is being said.5. Is the testimony believable? Is it the subject's own testimony or does it sound to be derived from other sources that may have been read after the event? What is unique about the testimony?6. Think about 5 or 6 things that you might be impelled to talk about with your friends from	20 %

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the story. If they would be interested, chances are it is worth writing about.

7. Conclusion: what is the value of such testimony to studying the Holocaust and History generally. What was the effect on you personally of using this form of testimony, compared to reading literature selections in the Images text or hearing from a survivor in class? Include anything else that you think has to be said, or something that may appear abnormal in the testimony--perhaps not believable.

Students are to write a minimum 5 page critical report on the survivor testimony you view. It should include the basic information:

1. Name of survivor

2. Country of Origin

3. Summary of survival story

4. Most significant aspects

5. Analysis of how the story helps you understand the Holocaust.

FINAL PROJECT: DUE DATE:

20%

You have 5 choices here. You can do one of the following for a final.

1. Read a book from the reading list and write a paper following the rubric supplied. (Handout # 14 on my web site)
2. View two Holocaust movies and write a critique of each following the project guidelines on the handout (Handout # 33 on my web site.).
3. Visit the Holocaust Education & Resource Center in Maitland write a paper following the guidelines. (Handout # 35)
4. Visit the Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg and write a paper according to those guidelines. (Handout # 36)
5. Write a 6 to 8 page research paper on one aspect of the Holocaust, (see the list of possible topics here). The paper should follow MLA format, with a complete Works Cited page at the end and contain illustrations. You should use a minimum of 6 sources (web sites, online journals, primary and secondary sources, survivor testimony, books, etc.) Wikipedia is not an acceptable source. The paper must be submitted to Safe Assign for a plagiarism check before it is handed in to me. Use the online MLA Wizard and place a cover on the paper. See me in advance for topic approval.

The book, 2 movies or one museum visit must be approved by me in advance. Submit your choice on an index card by _____.

You will have a list of Holocaust books from which you will choose the one you want to read independently. Most of these books are available in the library here on East

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campus. Only one copy of each is there so do not waste time picking your book. If you do not find it there then you will have to get it from an outside source. The library at the Holocaust Education and Resource Center next to the JCC in Maitland has over 5,000 books. Ask for Mitch Bloomer or Pam Kancher and tell them you are my student. You should be able to borrow a book from there.	
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Gordon Rule- This is a Gordon Rule course.

State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.030, the Gordon Rule, requires that students complete with grades of C or better 12 credit hours in designated courses in which the student is required to **demonstrate college-level writing skills through multiple assignments** and six credits of mathematics course work at the level of college algebra or higher. These courses must be completed successfully (grades of C or better) prior to the receipt of an A.A. Degree and prior to entry into the upper division of a Florida public university.

You will receive grade report summaries every week or two. These are generated by the grading software I use. All assignments will be listed on it. A question mark means it has not been assigned yet (and may never be assigned). The entries most important are the ones with actual numbers as grades.

A zero means it was collected and graded and you never turned it in. INC means Incomplete assignment which counts as a 50%. To avoid INC make sure you read and do all parts of each assignment. If there are 3 questions to respond to in your paper then address all three in the response, etc.

A sample report is shown here. Note the weights for each category. This is an old sample from a past semester with different weights shown for illustrative purposes only. This information will be available to you through Web Grade which is part of the grading software I use. Directions and the link will be emailed to you with each report update. It will be your responsibility to log in and see how your grades are progressing. The percentages shown on this sample may not be the same as the actual ones shown elsewhere in this syllabus.



SAMPLE
REPORT
ON NEXT
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Student Summary (all assignments) for 'FALL 2009', 12/10/2009 Page 1
 Instructor: Professor Richard A. Gair File Name: LIT 2174 HOLOCAUST TU-TH 5.30- Fall 09.cls

Name: Grade: A (95%) E-mail 1: E-mail 2: ?

	Score	Grade
Texts- Assigned Chapters (20%, 2700)		99% A+
Bauer Chapter 1- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 2- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 3-Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 4- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 5-6 Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 7- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 8- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 9- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 10- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 11- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 12- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 13- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Bauer Chapter 14- Essay (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images Chapter 1 (3.7%, 100)	80	80% B-
They Had a System & Kristalln (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images Castout, Phimosi (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images -Sunflower, etc. (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
ImagesChapter4-Leave Ghetto (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images Chapter 5 (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Mans Search for Meaning.... (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images Chapter 6 (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images Chapter Vladka. (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images Chapter 8 (3.7%, 100)	?	
Images Happened-Mosaic (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Images Tell The, Mosaic, Babi (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Butterfly 1 (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Art DAVID OLERE (3.7%, 100)	100	100% A+
Video-Movie-Testimony React (20%, 200)		100% A+
Nazi Medicine DVD (50%, 100)	100	100% A+
5 Genocide Video Reaction (50%, 100)	100	100% A+
Class Participation (10%, 100)		65% D
WebCT Discussion BoARD (100%, 100)	65	65% D
Midterm Project (25%, 100)		100% A+
Midterm Book Paper (100%, 100)	100	100% A+
Final Project (25%, 200)		
Final -Book or ResearchPaper (50%, 100)	?	
FINAL Exam-Course Survey (50%, 100)	?	

Sample Report

Grading Period dates: 9/1/2009-12/18/2009, Days in Grading Period: 31, Attendance days to date: 29
 Attendance Codes Totals Dates
 Present 29

Print... Dialog... Cancel Next Zoom

The report also shows attendance and tardiness. Since this report is emailed weekly consider it as an official notice of your attendance status. No additional attendance warnings will be sent out if you are close to being WITHDRAWN. Keeping track of the number is your responsibility when these updates are sent

Course Syllabus

Writing Format Requirements:

ALL WRITTEN WORK MUST BE WORD PROCESSED IN DOUBLE SPACED, 12 POINT TIMES NEW ROMAN FONT, WITH 1" MARGINS. HANDWRITTEN ANSWERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

PLAN AHEAD AND PRINT EARLY. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN A COMPUTER-PRINTER GLITCH MAY ARISE; A PRINTER RIBBON OR TONER DIES, WHICH WILL MAKE IT NECESSARY TO GET TO CAMPUS EARLY TO USE ONE OF THE MANY COMPUTERS AND PRINTERS AVAILABLE. **DO NOT EMAIL IT TO ME AS AN ALTERNATIVE...PLAN AHEAD.**

Holocaust Literature Suggested Reading List For Final Paper

Use the Rubric (Handout # 12 on my web site) to write your paper. A copy of the rubric is included in this syllabus packet. Feel free to ask me about a book that is not on this list. There should be at least one copy of most of the book in the East Campus library. ** Means the book is a longer book than most and half can be read for the midterm and the second half for the final. See me for details.

Neighbors by Gross

** *All But My Life* by Klein (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *Heroes of the Holocaust* by Geir

Auschwitz by Przytyk

** *Conscience and Courage* by Fogelman

** *On Both Sides of the Wall* by Meed (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Dry Tears by Tec

This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentleman by Borowsky (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Assignment Rescue by Fry

Auschwitz by Nyisli

The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution by Roseman

Sobibor, The Forgotten Revolt by Blatt

** *Ordinary Men* by Browning (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *Hilter's Willing Executioners: The Men of Batallion 101* by Goldenhagen

The Sunflower by Wiesenthal (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Perpetrators, Victims and Bystanders by Hilberg

Europa Europa by Perl

The Survivor by De Pres

Survival in Auschwitz by Levi

Course Syllabus

Abe's Story by Korn

Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter by Kazik (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Hiding to Survive by Rosenberg

The Holocaust by Stadtler

The Hidden Children by Greenfield

Clara's Story by Isaacman

** *Women in the Holocaust* by Offer (VCC) (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

The Cage by Sender

Witness by Greene and Kumar

The White Rose by Scholl (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

The Pianist by Szpilman

From the Ashes of Sobibor, A Story of Survival by Browning

** *The Abandonment of the Jews* by Wyman

Child of the Holocaust by Kuper

Five Chimneys by Lengyel

The Anguish of the Jews by Father Flannery (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *The Catholic Church and the Holocaust, 1930-1965* by Phayer

Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory by Langer (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *Resistance* by Gutman

In My Hands: Memoirs of a Holocaust Rescuer by Opdyke

** *The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewery 1932-1945* by Yahill

** *The Bravest Battle: The 28 Days of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* by Kurzman (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Eyewitness Auschwitz by Muller

Ghetto Diary by Janusz Korczak (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *Mengele, The Complete Story* by Posner

Triumph of Hope: From Theresienstadt and Auschwitz to Israel by Elias

Hannah Senesh: Her Life and Diary by Senesh

Good and Evil After Auschwitz: Ethical Implications for Today by Bemporad (VCC)

Daily Life During the Holocaust by Nussbaum (VCC)

The World Must Know by Berenbaum

Voices from the Holocaust by Cargas (VCC)

The Holocaust in History by Marus (VCC)

Course Syllabus

Eyewitness Auschwitz by Muller

The Children of Willesden Lane...Beyond the Kindertransport: A Memoir of Music, Love and Survival by Golabeck & Cohen

Auschwitz and After by Charlotte Delbo (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

The Aftermath: Living with the Holocaust by Aaron Hass (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

In the Shadow of the Holocaust: The Second Generation by Aaron Hass (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Using and Abusing the Holocaust by Lawrence Langer

Denying the Holocaust by Deborah Lipstadt (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *Beyond Belief* by Deborah Lipstadt

** *History on Trial* by Deborah Lipstadt (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Sara's Children by Susan Hagstrom (This book is about Helen Greenspun who is the survivor who will visit our class.) (VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *Rethinking the Holocaust* by Yehuda Bauer

** *Defiance: The Bielecki Partisans* by Nechama Tec (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *Kristallnacht* by Martin Gilbert (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED) The best one on this topic.

Moral Responsibility in the Holocaust: A Study in the Ethics of Character by David Jones

** *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* by Burleigh and Wippermann

** *Auschwitz and After* by Charlotte Delbo

A Scrap of Time and Other Stories by Ida Fink

Hiding in the Spotlight by Greg Dawson

Gender and Destiny: Women Writers and the Holocaust by Marlene Heinemann

Youth Writing Behind the Walls: Avraham Cytryn's Lodz Notebooks by Yad Vashem Publications

War and Genocide by Doris Bergen (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

Defining the Horrific: Readings on Genocide and the Holocaust in the Twentieth Century

** *Ideology of Death: Why The Holocaust Happened in Germany*, by John Weiss

** *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It?* by Michael Neufeld & Michael Berenbaum, et. Al

** *Buried By The Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper* by Laurel Leff

** *Witness to the Holocaust* by Michael Berenbaum

** *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* by Robert Jay Lifton (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED)

** *The Jew in Cinema* by Omer Bartov

Course Syllabus

** *After Image: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust* by Joshua Hirsch

** *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* by Jeffrey Shandler

Speilberg's Holocaust: Crtiical Perspectives on Schindler's List by Yosefa Loshitzky

** *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary ** Holocaust Cinema* by Lawrence Baron

** *The Holocaust in American Film* by Judith E. Doneson

** *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* by Annette Insdorf

** *Holocaust and the Moving Image: Representations in Film and Television Since 1933* by Newman, et. al.

** *Nazism* by Neil Gregor

A Holocaust Reader: Responses to the Nazi Extermination by Michael L. Morgan

Among the Righteous: Lost Stories from the Holocaust's Long Reach Into Arab Lands by Robert Satloff

** *The Good Old Days: The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders* by Klee, Dressen & Riess

** *Who Will Write Our History?* By Samuel Kassow

** *Can It Happen Again? Chronicles of the Holocaust* by Chartock and Spencer

Why The Jews: The Reason for Antisemitism by Prager and Telushkin

The Eichmann Trial by Deborah Lipstadt

Children of the Flame By Lagnado & Dekel

I Was A Dr. in Auschwitz by Dr. Gisella Perl

Hiding In The Spotlight By Greg Dawson

Sexual Violence Against Jewish Women During the Holocaust By Sonia Hedgepath

OTHER TITLES: You may want to add titles that you personally come across. Check with me first.

Course Syllabus

- The long history of traditional Christian antisemitism
 - Germany losing World War I and the burden and effect of the Versailles Treaty in Germany
 - The outrageous inflation in the 1920's, the Depression in the 1930's, and the effects of both regarding the rise of the Nazi party
 - The rise of the Nazi party during the Weimar Republic
 - The Nazi takeover of Germany
 - The bureaucratic (devoted to the details of administrative procedure) nature of Nazi policies, including the "legalization" of "exclusionary" (The act or practice of excluding.) policies
 - The initial (and ongoing) legislation depriving Jews of their legal rights
 - The role of propaganda in the Nazis' effort to demonize (To represent as evil), ostracize (To exclude from a group), and isolate Jews and others
 - The use of terror by the Nazis to instill fear and dread
 - The concept of "racial hygiene"
 - The Nuremberg Laws
 - The Anschluss (A political union, especially the one unifying Nazi Germany and Austria in 1938.) The signing of the Munich agreement (Agreement concluded at Munich, September 29, 1938, between Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy)
 - Kristallnacht
 - The annexation of the Sudetenland (A historical region of northern Czech Republic along the Polish border. Long inhabited by ethnic Germans, it was seized by the Nazis in September 1938 and was restored to Czechoslovakia in 1945, after which the German population was expelled.) by Germany and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic
 - The invasion of Poland by Germany and the beginning World War II
 - Key groups involved (Germans and non-Germans)- perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, victims, and rescuers
 - The T-4 "euthanasia" of the mentally and physically handicapped
 - Operation Barbarossa (World War II was the largest war ever fought and *Operation Barbarossa*, the codename for the invasion of the Soviet Union, launched the most terrible and bloody theatre in that war. Hitler expected the war for "Lebensraum in the east" (or living space) to establish Germany as a great world power.)
 - The mass killings by the Einsatzgruppen
 - The Evian Conference and the Wannsee Conference
 - The establishment of the death camps
 - Death and life in the concentration and death camps
 - Rescue
 - The world's response to the Holocaust
 - Liberation of the camps
 - The Nuremberg Trials
 - *Women in the Holocaust
 - * The History of Antisemitism and the Holocaust in Movies
 - * The Effects of the Holocaust on Children and Grandchildren of Survivors
 - * Art, Music, Monuments as Vehicles of Expression, Remembrance and Reflection During and or After the Holocaust
 - *Parenting and Children of Holocaust Survivors
 - *Life After The Holocaust and How Survivors Rebuilt Their Lives
- The History (or Challenges) of the Development of the Holocaust in Film

MISSED WORK

If you are absent then the work you missed and the assignments given on the day you were out are due at the beginning of the class upon your return. It would be wise to get a phone number of a classmate in case you have trouble reaching me for the assignments.

Resource Guide Looseleaf Binder- Have your E Book with you on all Tuesdays (or the paper versiojn if that is what you bought)..

The resource guide is the large packet you bought and placed in the tabbed loose-leaf binder. Be prepared to DISCUSS the material. As long as you have read the material and can participate in a brief discussion of the material. We will follow the units in order starting with Unit 1 and going on .

Course Syllabus

The next page has a sample copy of the evaluation rubric I will use on your final if you read a book. Carefully follow it as I will look at each point as I grade the work. Note which sections carry the most weight. Copies of the rubric can be found at Handout # 12 on my web site.

When you hand in your paper attach a blank copy of this rubric form. It can be downloaded from the Holocaust Resources page of my web site on the bottom

Course Syllabus

Dimension	Evaluation Rubric for Survivor Testimony Video Analysis Midterm Project– LIT 2174, Professor Gair Student Name _____	Comment	Points
Format: 10 pts. (2 pts. Each)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover Sheet from Biographical Sketch Page Online • Times New Roman, 12 pt. Double Space, 1 in. margins • Graphic related to survivor’s personal story • Introduction, Body and Conclusion • Length– At least 5 pages with proper page numbering. 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> This is a SAMPLE. If you do a book project print a fresh copy (Handout # 37 on my website) to attach to the paper.) </div>	
Thesis Statement & Support: 15 pts. (5 pts. Ea.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly stated thesis statement in introduction • Adequate support for thesis statement in body. • Restatement of thesis statement in conclusion. 		
Basic Survivor Information: 10pts. (2 pts. ea.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivor’s full name • Survivor’s country of birth • Date of birth, and death (if deceased). • Summary of survivor’s story– use this as an introduction to the in-depth report (the remainder of the paper goes into greater details.) • Most significant aspects of this survivor’s story and why you consider them most significant. 		
Comparison to Images Text Selections 15 pts (5 pts. Ea.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describes events in the survivor’s story that are similar to a particular piece of survivor literature you have read in the Images text. Cite the specific selection. • Describes themes that are present in the survivor’s story and at least one <i>Images</i> selection with a similar theme. • Evaluate which method of survivor testimony (oral or written) is more effective for you as a learner. Support your evaluation with reasons. 		
Value of Video Testimony as a Form of Research. 15 pts. (5 pts. Ea.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies the best reasons why a student of the Holocaust should hear video testimony. How did it help you learn on a deeper level than the reading you had done up to that point.? • In what ways did the testimony relate to your other studies here at Valencia? How does it relate to subjects such as journalism, history, sociology, psychology, and others? • Explain the advantages of each type of testimony (oral and written) as historic documents for future learners. 		
Personal Observations, Reflections and Reactions: 25 pts. (5 pts. Ea.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain fully how the survivor’s oral testimony affected you as a learner intellectually, emotionally, and in other ways. • Describe your thoughts as you viewed the testimony and paused it to reflect and take notes. • What was most significant part of the survivor’s story? • What will you remember about this survivor’s testimony when you have completed this course? When you tell someone about it? • What lesson did this survivor’s story teach you about life? 		
Mechanics 10 pts. (2 pts. Ea.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spelling • Capitalization • Grammar and word usage • Paragraphing • Sentence structure and variety 		

Course Syllabus

LIT 2174 "Holocaust Literature" **Final Book** Project Grading Rubric– Professor Gair
 Student Name: _____ CRN: _____ Book Title _____

Dimension	Description Checklist	Comment	Points
Content: 20 pts. (2 pts. each item) Plainly Descriptive	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear focus of project– what inspired you to read this book? <input type="checkbox"/> Grabs attention of the reader right away. <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies significant events in the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Describes values of the culture of the victims <input type="checkbox"/> Describes values of the Nazi oppressors <input type="checkbox"/> Describes how the book challenged you and your thinking <input type="checkbox"/> What the book taught you about people and their actions <input type="checkbox"/> What new questions the book has raised in your mind about the Holocaust <input type="checkbox"/> Describes how the victims dealt with the oppressive conditions imposed on them <input type="checkbox"/> Discusses what lessons the book can teach us for today's world		
Organization: 20 pts. (4 pts. each item)	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear beginning, middle (body), ending <input type="checkbox"/> Paper is easily understandable to others, writing is clear and not confusing <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs each develop a main idea and contain supporting details <input type="checkbox"/> Clear connections to what we are learning in class are made <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap-up including your overall reaction to the book		
Creativity: 20 pts. (5 pts. each item)	<input type="checkbox"/> Expression of personal emotional reactions to specific events in the book <input type="checkbox"/> Paper is clear and vivid enough to create some images for the reader <input type="checkbox"/> Visually pleasing...format, photos that relate closely to the content <input type="checkbox"/> Effort made to write in own words (not copied from book). Merely quoting the book is not okay for most of the paper.		
Reflection: 32 pts. (8 pts. each item) Deeply Reflective	<input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how your view and perceptions changed as a result of reading this book (your emotional reaction) <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how this book might affected your understanding of people and what they do <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how this book might influence your future thinking, views and values in life and why you will remember this book <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how this book contributed to your understanding of diversity and the Holocaust		
Conventions: 8 pts. (2 pts. each item)	<input type="checkbox"/> All grammar, spelling, punctuation are correct and special vocabulary terms are explained <input type="checkbox"/> Neatly presented (all word processed) <input type="checkbox"/> Word processed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced <input type="checkbox"/> Pages neat, numbered and a cover page included		

This is a SAMPLE. If you do a book project print a fresh copy (Handout # 12 on my website) to attach to the paper.)

PLAGIARISM OF ANY KIND WILL BE CONSIDERED A SERIOUS INFRACTION OF ACADEMIC HONESTY.

LIT 2174- Literature & Multimedia of the Holocaust
Weekly Assignments Schedule- This can vary by semester. You will
receive a printed copy the first week with all dates shown.

WEEK 1: DATE:

Class 1- Course Introduction, Overview- Assignments, Expectations

Class 2- Online Resources, Online Into- Yad Vashem, USHMM, Prof. Gair's site-

WEEK 2- DATE:

In-Class Video- The Longest Hatred

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 1 essay due

Thursday- - Literature Reactions Due- Read "I Never Saw Another Butterfly" and Introduction and back cover. Choose one poem and artwork and write an analysis / reaction to it.

WEEK 3: DATE::

-In-Class Video-Image Before My Eyes, Triumph of the Will

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 2 essay due

Thursday Literature Due- 4 reactions to IMAGES Chapter 1- Why Remember, The Roots, They Wanted Everyone to Know, Before the Storm.

WEEK 4: DATE:

- In-Class Video-The Eternal Jew, Road to War

Index card with FINAL project choice due Tuesday.

Tuesday-. Bauer Chapter 3. essay due, Other Genocides- Video

Thursday- Literature due- IMAGES- Chapter1 reactions- Kristallnacht, They Had a System.

WEEK 5: DATE:

- In-Class Video- Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth

Tuesday- - Bauer Chapter- 4 essay due

Thursday- Literature- 4 reactions IMAGES due - Castout, The Children's Exodus, Phomosis is Not Circumcision, Escape from Sobibor.

WEEK 6: DATE:

- In Class Video- Kristallnacht, One Suivivor Remembers

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 5 essay due

Thursday- Literature- IMAGES Due 4 reactions to- The Sunflower, In the Ghetto, Collection of Valuables, Volunteers.

WEEK 7: DATE:

- In-Class Video- Ghetto, Unfinished Film, I'm Still Here with Salvaged Pages excerpts from I Pad projected.

Two reactions to Professor Gair's You Tube Lectures due Tuesday February 21

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 6 essay due

Thursday- Literature- IMAGES- Chapter 4- 3 reactions to- Leaving the Ghetto, Warsaw in April 1943, The Lemon.

WEEK 8: DATE:

- In-Class Video Clips- Uprising (Clips of Vladka Meed- Map in shoe scene), Escape from Sobibor

MIDTERM SURVIVOR PROJECT DUE DATE:

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 7 essay due

Thursday- Thursday- IMAGES- Chapter 5, Six (6) reactions due- Survival in Auschwitz, Terezin, Stars, September 1944, The Shawl, A Living Torch. Be prepared for an in-depth analysis – discussion of The Shawl in class.

WEEK 9: DATE:

You may submit the following two assignments early but not after the deadline.

Tuesday - Bauer Chapter 8. essay due- EMAIL BY MIDNIGHT MARCH 6

Thursday- Choose two poems in Butterfly book. Analyze and react to each with the accompanying artwork.

WEEK 10- DATE:

- In-Class Video- Defiance, The Grey Zone Clips

Tuesday Bauer Chapter 9 essay due

Thursday- Literature IMAGES Chapter 5, 2 reactions due- Man's Search for Meaning, This Way to the Gas Ladies and Gentlemen.

WEEK 11: DATE:

- In-Class Video- Nazi Medicine & Out of the Ashes Clips

Reaction paper to one full length DVD in library due Thursday March 22.

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 10 essay due. **IN CLASS YOU TUBE CLIP-** Babi Yar Scene from War & Remembrance

Thursday- Due IMAGES 3 reactions to- There Were Those, Jews Go Back to the Grave, Silence and a Starry Night.

WEEK 12: DATE:

- Video- Survivor Testimony- RUTH BRAND, OVADIA BARUCH, HANNAH BAR YESHA

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 11 essay due- Ruth Brand DVD Testimony

Survivor Testimony- Ovadia Baruch or Hannah Bar Yesha DVD

Thursday- Due IMAGES- reaction to 4 selections- What Happened That Day, The Mosaic Artist's Apprentice, Schindler's Legacy, I Gambled on What Mattered Most.

WEEK 13: DATE:

- Holocaust Art Study

4 or more BlackBoard personal journal entries printed as one file due:

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 12 essay due. Analysis of Samuel Bak's (Icon of Loss) artwork.

Thursday- Art Analysis- David Olere, slides-In class group work on art interpretation

WEEK 14: DATE:

- In-Class Video- Hollywood & the Holocaust- Part 1 & 2 (2 classes)

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 13 essay due

Thursday- IMAGES- 5 Reactions due- Tell Them I Was There, Survivor, Children of the Holocaust, Esther, Babi Yar. Babi Yar is a very deep and difficult poem. It is best read several times and out loud and discussed with a classmate before writing.

WEEK 15: DATE:

- In Class Video- Liberation, Nuremberg Trials-Clips

FINAL PROJECT DUE DATE:

Tuesday- Bauer Chapter 14 essay due – Liberation DVD

Thursday-Possible Topics: Women in the Holocaust, Denial, Life After The Holocaust, Children of Survivors. Nuremberg DVD

WEEK 16: DATE:

COLLEGEWIDE FINAL EXAM WEEK- CHECK MASTER SCHEDULE ON VALENCIA WEB SITE FOR SPECIFIC TIMES, DAYS AND FOR THID COURSE. WRITE THAT HERE:

FINAL EXAM DATE: (Fill In From Master Calendar on Valencia Website): A full length Holocaust movie will be shown during this period. Attendance is MANDATORY and failure to show up for the entire 2 ½ hours will be an automatic F in the entire course. That's COLLEGE POLICY!

DAY	DATE	TIME
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All assignments are due WHEN I TAKE

ATTENDANCE- NO EXCEPTIONS...NO LATE

ARRIVALS...NO EXCUSES EXCEPTED!

**Bauer Text Essay Questions for Each Chapter Due - Every
Tuesday-**
**DO NOT COPY WORD FOR WORD FROM THE TEXT-
THAT'S PLAGIARISM AND WILL RECEIVE AN ZERO.**

- Chapter 1- essay question - What relationship do you see between the official policies towards the Jews and the actions taken against them? How did this influence the actions of the Jews (their response)?
- Chapter 2- essay question -Define anti-Semitism. What were some of the false beliefs and rumors that existed towards the Jews? How did this relate to the rise of anti-Semitism?
- Chapter 3 essay Question– Describe the progression of attitudes and policies towards Jews from World War I to 1933.
- Chapter 4 essay question - Describe the relationship between Hitler’s Nazi ideology and the treatment of the Jews.
- Chapter 5 essay question- Summarize the gradual evolution and result of the Nazi policy towards Jews during 1933-1938.
- Chapter 6 essay question- Identify the reasons Jews wanted to emigrate and the various obstacles they faced to emigrate.
- Chapter 7 essay question- Distinguish between each ghetto and its conditions and leaders. How were they similar and how were they different? (compare and contrast) Describe each ghetto in detail. Do not skip a ghetto, do all that are described in the text for full credit.
- Chapter 8 essay question- - Summarize the conditions in the various ghettos and what restrictions they had on the Jews. Tell how the Jews resisted these restrictions.
- Chapter 9 essay question- Describe the “Final Solution” and the steps the Nazis took to implement it. When and where was it “finalized” ?
- Chapter 10 essay question- Western European Jewry, 1940-1944 essay question- Describe what was happening in the individual countries of Western Europe during this time period.
- Chapter 11 essay question-- Describe at least 3 specific instances of armed resistance by Jews in the camps and ghettos.
- Chapter 12 essay question- Describe the various attempts and failed attempts of rescuing Europe’s Jews. What is the Avenue of the Righteous? Where is it located? What is the purpose of it? What were the attitudes of the major world powers?

- **Chapter 13 essay question- Do you think another Holocaust is possible? Fully explain your reasons.**
- **Chapter 14 essay question- Write a paper summarizing what lessons you have learned from reading this book. Explain how those lessons and new knowledge can be used to create a better world. Are these lessons relevant to today? Is study of the Holocaust relevant to today's world? How or how not?**

Questions for Weekly IMAGES Readings- DUE EVERY THURSDAY

As each IMAGES selection of literature is read you should be prepared to write a response to the following questions. Where there are multiple questions about the same selection you must answer each one as they are often connected in some way. Length is not as important as content here. No need to be very lengthy but make sure you address each point in the questions fully. These are all due on Thursdays as your weekly assignment schedule shows. All responses are word processed with the formal Valencia heading required. Spelling, punctuation, grammar and format will all count.

Why Remember

Write an initial response to the question posed by the title or the selection, "Why Remember?" As you read other selections in this anthology, add to and revise your initial response. On page 6, Meltzer asks the question, Can it (the Holocaust) be understood by those who have come after? What do you think about this issue?

The Roots

When, and under what conditions, did the term anti-Semitism appear for the first time? What was significant about this new term? How did Hitler use the historical tradition of anti-Semitism to establish his power?

They Wanted Everyone to Know

Select one of the acts of persecution against the Jews in Germany. Imagine that you were living during that time witnessed what occurred. Protest the action by writing either a newspaper editorial or a letter to the editor.

Before the Storm

What were the factors that Plant (the author) identify as contributing to the unrest in Germany after WW I? How were the Nazis able to use the postwar social unrest to its advantage?

Kristallnacht

Kristallnacht was both physically and psychologically destructive. Describe the psychological terror such an event could produce. Why do you think that the events of Kristallnacht had such a far reaching impact on the fate of the Jewish people in Germany and then later in the countries occupied by Germany?

They Had a System

Look up the literary term "irony." Now fully describe how irony is used throughout the poem. Be specific. Is the title a form of "irony"?

Castout

Describe what you think the expression "castout" implies. Describe why the narrator of this poem said "it would have been / easier for me to die . . ." How do you think the narrator will regain a sense of her identity?

The Children's Exodus

In writing, compare and contrast the "personal" in stanza IV with the "impersonal" in stanza V. How does the narrator react to the parents' decision to send their children away? Describe how you feel

about her reaction,

Collection of Valuables

Describe whether you think the Jews should have given up their valuables.

Volunteers and Leaving the Ghetto

Describe the “irony” of the concept “voluntary surrender” in ghetto life under the Nazi occupation. Describe the conditions that led some Jews to “voluntarily” surrender for deportation. How does the ending of “Volunteers” affected you when you read it. What were your feelings and reactions?

Warsaw in April 1943

Why is this poem dedicated to the memory of a woman? Describe why the poet alludes only indirectly to the uprising. What does the phrase "The account is clear" mean?

The Lemon

Describe why Ervin wants the lemon. Describe the decisions Ervin has to make. Do you think Ervin makes the right choices? Explain your position.

Survival in Auschwitz

Describe an incident or scene from this selection that had a strong impact on you. Can you explain why it affected you as it did? Describe Levi's description and interpretation of how people act when they are condemned to death.

Terezin

What marks the difference between childhood and adulthood in this poem? What does the poet wish could happen? What images and emotions does this poem evoke for you?

Stars

Describe why Michael and his cousin promised each other that they would stay together. What impact do you think this promise had on their ability to survive?

September 1944

Write a short paper Describing how images of weather are used in this poem.

The Shawl

This story is from a book by the same name. In this short story, Cynthia Ozick describes how, in the face of all the brutality, a mother protects her infant daughter from the Nazis. This story of support and betrayal includes graphic and difficult material. I suggest you read it slowly, pausing often to think deeply about what events take place, the context in which they occur and why they occur.

Describe the emotions that this selection evokes in you . What does the author mean when she says of Magda , "You could think she was one of their babies"(page 257). Describe the symbolism of the shawl.

A Living Torch

Describe the emotions that this selection evoked in you.

Man's Search for Meaning

Describe how Frankl transcended the conditions of the concentration camp to find a way to survive spiritually. Describe the impact that nature seemed to have on Frankl. Describe the symbolism of the bird in the last sentence of this selection.

This Way to the Gas Ladies and Gentlemen

Write a paper comparing Borowski's portrayal of life in the camps with the portrayals in the other selections in this chapter. Write about your reaction to the following statement from this selection: "It is the camp law: people going to their death must be deceived to the very end. This is the only permissible form of charity."(page 283)

Jews Go Back to the Grave

Write a short essay explaining the title of this selection and how death gave birth to life.

Silence, and A Starry Night

Describe the mood of this poem and how the poet creates it. Given the traditional life that most women lived during this period, describe the significance of women as resistance fighters as described in this poem.

What Happened that Day

Describe in writing the images and emotions that this poem evokes in you.

The Mosaic Artist's Apprentice

Write a comparison of Jacob's mother with the parents in "What Happened That Day"

Schindler's Legacy

Explain whether you would describe Schindler as a hero or as a self-serving opportunist. Are these terms mutually exclusive? Write two descriptions of Schindler, one from the perspective of a Jew who survived because of him and the other from the perspective of a German official outwitted by him.

I Gambled on What Mattered Most

Describe the impressions you get about Hannah Senesh's life from her letters. Discuss how the poem "Blessed Is the Match" might be seen as analogous to Senesh's life. Discuss whether Senesh's decision to go back to Hungary was a reasoned one.

Tell Them I Was There

Adler poses the question: "Where was man?" (page 523) How would you answer this question, not only about the Holocaust but also about other horrific acts of hatred and destruction?

Survivor

What is the symbolism in the dream? Discuss the changes the survivor undergoes in this poem.

Children of the Holocaust

Write a short paper describing the issues that were continuing to trouble the children of Holocaust survivors. Choose a short passage from this selection that made an impact on you. Write about its significance to you.

Esther

What experiences did Esther have after the war that demonstrate that prejudice and discrimination against Jews did not end with the war?

Babi Yar

What images does this poem evoke for you? Describe the significance of the massacre at Babi Yar and its place in history now, more than fifty-five years after it occurred. The poet was a Russian but not a Jew. Describe why you think he felt compelled to write a poem about Babi Yar.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

YOU MAY HAND IN TWO (2) ASSIGNMENTS LATE. THEY CAN BE TURNED IN UP TO ONE WEEK LATE AND YOU MUST PRINT THE "WORD LATE-20 PTS" ACROSS THE TOP WITH THE ORIGINAL DUE DATE NEXT TO IT. IT WILL LOSE 20 POINTS FOR BEING LATE. AFTER THE ONE WEEK IT IS CONSIDERED A ZERO.

THIS DOES NOT COUNT FOR THE MIDTERM OR FINAL PROJECT. THEY MUST

BE IN ON TIME AND WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE AT ALL, THEY WILL BE DUE LIKE ALL ASSIGNMENTS AT THE START OF CLASS WHEN I TAKE ROLL. RUSHING IN LATE BECAUSE YOU ARE SOMEWHERE PRINTING IT UP THE LAST MINUTE WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED....THEY ARE DUE UPON ATTENDANCE BEING TAKEN.

DVD Titles in Media Center

DVD Titles in Media Center on Reserve for Assignments- Tell them you are in LIT 2174-Professor Gair's Holocaust Class. They can be checked out for a few days to complete assignments or for general use in your quest for knowledge.

Nazi Medicine: The Cross and the Star
Imaginary Witness Hollywood and the Holocaust
Conspiracy
Night and Fog
Out of the Ashes
Escape from Sobibor
The Last Days
The Pianist
Schindler's List
Sophie's Choice
The Pawnbroker
I'm Still Here: Real Diaries of Young People Who Lived During the Holocaust
Image Before My Eyes
Holocaust the Liberation of Auschwitz
Holocaust the Liberation of Majdanek
European Thought & Culture in the 20th Century
Amen
Europa, Europa
The Night of Broken Glass the November 1938 Pogroms
Memory of the camps
Exodus
Auschwitz--Inside the Nazi State
Downfall
The Final Days of Sophie Scholl
Uprising
Wannsee Conference 11 Million Sentenced to Death
Forgiving Dr. Mengele
The Grey Zone
Nuremberg
Olympia

Memory of the Camps
Blessed Is The Match: The Hannah Senseh Story
Border Street
Jud Suss
Europa Europa
How the Nazis Came to Power
Triumph of the Will
The Eternal Jew
The Rape of Europa
Inglorious Basterds
Katyn
Sarah's Key
In Darkness
La Rafle
Winds of War Complete Set of the Mini Series (2)
War and Remembrance (complete set of DVD mini series) (2)
Hidden in Silence
Broken Silence
God on Trial
Playing for Time
America and the Holocaust: Deceit and Indifference
Judgment at Nuremberg (original with Spencer Tracy)
Judgment at Nuremberg (remake with Alec Baldwin)
Nazi Concentration Camps: Nuremberg Trials
I Have Never Forgotten You: Life & Legacy of Simon Wiesenthal
Shoah (multi disk set) by Claude Lanzman (2)
Elie Weisel: First Person Singular
The Nazi Officer's Wife
Wallenberg: A Hero's Story
Remembrance of Love with Kirk Douglas
Resistance: Untold Stories of the Jewish Partisans
The Shop on Main Street
Gentleman's Agreement
WW II Collectors Set
Gestapo: Hitler's Secret Police
Bashert: Reflections on the Holocaust (2)
Ann Frank Remembered
Ann Frank: The Whole Story
Paragraph 175 (2)
Third Reich: Rise And Fall
Nazi Hunters
Death Mills: Nazi Concentration Camps
Architecture of Doom
Auschwitz: If You Cried You Died
Mauthausen
Voyage of the Damned
Escape from Auschwitz
Witnesses at the Eichmann Trial

A Generation Apart (2)
 Shanghai Ghetto
 Power of Conscience: The Danish Resistance and Rescue of the Jews
 Primo Levi's Journey
 The Wave
 The Last Witness
 Holocaust: Yad Vashem and Displaced Persons (set)
 Bonehoffer: Agent of Grace
 Heroes of the Holocaust
 The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler
 Korczak
 Paper Clips
 Hiding and Seeking: Faith and Tolerance After the Holocaust
 Life is Beautiful
 The Expanded Holocaust Testaments (6 DVD set)
 Beyond the Barbed Wire: An Artist's View of the Holocaust
 A Hand of Peace: Pope Pius XII and the Holocaust
 Among the Righteous: Lost Stories from the Holocaust in Arab Lands
 The Final Journey: Nazi Concentration Camps in the 3rd Reich
 Defiance
 Sophie Scholl
 Shtetl

Summary of Semester Assignments in Checklist Form for Easy Tracking

Suggestion: Use this as a simple checklist to see what you have completed and what you still have due. Add the due dates from the earlier section of weekly assignments.

1. _____ **DUE:** _____ Bauer Chapter Essay questions every Tuesday. One chapter per week. Check off as completed.

Chapters _____ 1, _____ 2, _____ 3, _____ 4, _____ 5, _____ 6, _____ 7, _____ 8,
 _____ 9, _____ 10, _____ 11, _____ 12, _____ 13, _____ 14

2. _____ **DUE:** _____ Images Text- Reaction to assigned selections due every Thursday as indicated.

3. _____ **DUE:** _____ Submit index card with choice of final project from the 5 offered.

4. _____ **DUE:**_____ **Two** Professor Gair You Tube Lecture reactions. See Discussions section in BlackBoard.
5. _____ **DUE:**_____ Midterm Paper-5 page paper on Shoah Foundation survivor testimony. Attach rubric Handout # 37 from my web site for evaluation.
DUE WHEN I TAKE ATTENDANCE- NO EXCEPTIONS...NO LATE ARRIVALS...NO EXCUSES EXCEPTED!
6. _____ **DUE:**_____ Reaction paper to one DVD movie from reserve collection in Media Center.
7. _____ **DUE:**_____ **4 or more** personal journal entries from BlackBoard printed as one file.
8. _____ **DUE:**_____ Final project- Choose one of the 5 projects offered in the syllabus. If choosing number 1 then attach the rubric, Handout # 14 from my web site. **DUE WHEN I TAKE ATTENDANCE- NO EXCEPTIONS...NO LATE ARRIVALS...NO EXCUSES EXCEPTED!**

Reminder: Assignments are due the day you return from an absence. Make sure you have a classmate bring in the Midterm or Final Project if for some strange reason you are absent that day. I will NOT take it late, THAT MEANS BE ON TIME AND TURN IT IN AT THE START OF CLASS.

Some last reminders..

- **No Cell Phones**
- **No Texting**
- **No Doing Other Courses' Work in Class**
- **3 Tardies= 1 Absent, 4 Tardies= Final Grade Lowered One Letter Grade**
- **3 Absences=Withdrawn**
- **Plagiarism= F and Possible Withdrawal**
- **2 Late Assignments Limit with 20 pts. Off On Each**

Important Notice

This PDF electronic version of your Resource Binder and syllabus does not have the due dates with the assignments. That is because the electronic version is a file which I will not be changing every semester. The assignments and questions and everything else will be pretty standard from semester to semester unless I make a major change. The due dates will be on the paper copy which you will be given the first day of class. You will also get an electronic file version of that one as well. Go by the dates in that copy as this one is a PDF file which you cannot edit on your own.

Student Syllabus Acknowledgement for

Professor Gair's LIT 2174, FALL 2012 (Student Copy-Keep this.)

I _____ have read this entire syllabus carefully at least one time during the first week of the course. My signature below indicates that I have read it AND am fully aware of the course requirements, expectations and policies regarding attendance, grading policies, tardiness, late assignments, weekly responsibilities, classroom attitude, and anything else that will contribute to my success or atmosphere of the class. I also understand that successful completion of this course will make me eligible to sign up for the Holocaust Study Abroad Trip (LIT 2955) which is a 3 credit course and will take place in June 2013.

I understand that this syllabus serves as a contract between the professor and me, but is subject to written changes which I will then receive as an addendum.

Student Signature _____

Date _____

**Student Syllabus Acknowledgement for
Professor Gair's LIT 2174, FALL 2012 (Turn this signed copy in at the
second class.)**

I _____ have read this entire syllabus carefully at least one time during the first week of the course. My signature below indicates that I have read it AND am fully aware of the course requirements, expectations and policies regarding attendance, grading policies, tardiness, late assignments, weekly responsibilities, classroom attitude, and anything else that will contribute to my success or atmosphere of the class. I also understand that successful completion of this course will make me eligible to sign up for the Holocaust Study Abroad Trip (LIT 2955) which is a 3 credit course and will take place in June 2013.

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Student Signature _____

Date _____

Reasons to Teach/ Learn About the Holocaust

Specific Course Related Reasons

- To develop an understanding of the pervasive nature and discrimination throughout history and world societies and human costs of that prejudice and discrimination in the past, present, and future
- To develop an understanding of the nature of a totalitarian regime, the strategies and tactics it uses to control and influence people, and the devastating impact it has on the people and groups the regime targets for repression and destruction.
- To develop a basic knowledge and understanding of the tragic horror and devastation of life in the camps and ghettos for the Jews and other targets of Nazi oppression and of the human spirit and creativity that persisted in the face of that oppression
- To develop an understanding of the extensive efforts made by the Jews and other victims of the Nazis to hide and to escape from their grasp and the vital role of the rescuer in saving many lives.
- To demonstrate an understanding and recognition of the many forms of resistance that occurs and the courage it takes to exercise any of these forms of resistance in situations of great repression and persecution.
- To recognize and demonstrate empathy for the immensity of the human destruction caused by the Holocaust, for the determination and courage required to go on to build new lives, and for the world's struggle to confront the issues of genocide and moral responsibility to act as "rescuer."

Other Reasons

- To develop empathy and sensitivity
- To develop an awareness of tolerance
- To understand hatred, racism, stereotyping and their consequences
- To understand how religion can degenerate into evil and dangerous prejudices
- To develop an understanding of how evil and politics can be related
- To recognize hatred

- To bear witness- through memory- to the victims
- To recognize that the Holocaust was a unique event in modern history
- To understand the sin of silence in the face of evil
- To understand that the Holocaust is a part of history that needs to be accurately retold
- To recognize the tragedy of a people (culture) that was once a rich source in Europe and how it was annihilated by evil
- To avoid xenophobia (aversion and hatred of foreigners)
- To distinguish between hatred, hostility and their relation towards people who are different
- To examine how one's own irrational attitudes can lead to collective (group) violence and crime
- To understand that evil springs from ignorance
- To recognize that people have moral choices (good-versus evil)
- To understand the role of personal responsibility when confronted with evil
- To pass on the truth about the crimes committed to the next generation

What reason motivated you to sign up for this course?

Affective-Cognitive Focus Issues in the Study of Holocaust Texts & Literature

- Morality
- Moral Choices
- Values
- Relevance to today's world and issues
- Obedience and punishment
- Obedience of immoral commands
- Moral dilemmas
- Moral reasoning- actions taken in different situations
- Empathy
- Multiculturalism
- Minority rights
- Moral corruption
- Relationship between the individual and society
- Nature of human behavior (psychological)
- Complexities of human behavior under various and extreme conditions
- Persecution
- Is man inherently good or evil?
- Moral responsibility to fellow humans
- Who is responsible?
- Action versus inaction as a responsibility when witnessing evil (Bystander-Upstander)
- Connections between cognitive and moral development – What is the connection?
- Individual decision making
- Connecting the Holocaust events to contemporary events and issues (Iraq, terrorism, racism in America, modern anti-Semitism)
- Looking at the Holocaust from one of the following views:
 - Philosophical
 - Psychological
 - Sociological
 - Cultural

Academic Dishonesty

(College Policy 6HX28:(10-16)

All forms of academic dishonesty are prohibited at Valencia Community College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, furnishing false information, forgery, alteration or misuse of documents, misconduct during a test situation, and misuse of identification with intent to defraud or deceive.

All work submitted by students is expected to be the result of the student's individual thoughts, research and self-expression. Whenever a student uses ideas, wording or organization from another source, the source shall be appropriately acknowledged.

Students shall take special notice that the assignment of course grades is the responsibility of the student's individual professor. When the professor has reason to believe that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred, and before sanctions are imposed, the student shall be given informal notice and an opportunity to be heard by the professor. Any student determined by the professor to have been guilty of engaging in an act of academic dishonesty shall be liable to a range of academic penalties as determined by the professor which may include, but not be limited to, one or more of the following: loss of credit for an assignment, examination or project; a reduction in the course grade; or a grade of "F" in the course. At the option of the professor, the campus provost may be furnished with written notification of the occurrence and the action taken. If such written notice is given, a copy shall be provided to the student.

Students guilty of engaging in a gross or flagrant act of academic dishonesty or repeated instances of academic dishonesty shall also be subject to administrative and/or disciplinary penalties which may include warning, probation, suspension and/or expulsion from the college.

The student may appeal action taken by the professor under the provisions of either Policy 6Hx28:10-13 or 6Hx28:10-15 as determined by the nature of the action taken.

Analysis Sheet for Historical Literature of the Holocaust

1. Describe the actions, locations, customs and cultural assumptions and aspects.
2. Is there symbolism, motif or theme present? Explain each one that you find with examples from the work.
3. Are historical circumstances specifically mentioned? What are they? Why are they important to this work?
4. Does the author describe conditions with photographic detail, or is he / she less concerned with pictorial details and more with human and political issues? Give specific examples from the book to support your answer.
5. What values do the characters display?
6. Are the characters religious or not? To what degree do religion or philosophical thoughts govern the actions of the characters?
7. What assumptions do you think the author had about the literary interests of the audience?

Critical Approaches to Holocaust Literature

Moral / Intellectual

This approach is concerned with context and values. Does the work convey a lesson or a message? If so, how can it help the reader lead a better life and

Topical / Historical

This approach:

Stresses the relationship of literature to its historical period.

Reflects on the intellectual and social world of the author.

Examines when the work was written.

Examines the circumstances that produced the work.

Examines the major issues the work deals with.

Women and the Holocaust Activity

Hanna Szenes Faces Her Judges "Blessed is the Match"

Get into groups of 4 or 5. Read the handout about Hanna Szenes and discuss the questions here. Have one group member record the group's responses and be ready to share with the rest of the class.

Discussion Questions

1. Hanna could have remained in Palestine safely. Instead she chose to place her life in great danger by returning to Hungary to save Jews.

What kind of person puts their life in danger when they don't have to?

What is loyalty? Is it one of Hanna's personality traits? How can you tell?

There was a movie made about Hanna named, "Hanna's War". Why is this a good title for the story of her life?

Read the poem Hanna wrote, "Blessed is the Match". What is blessed? What does the match symbolize? What is the flame? Does the flame symbolize anything?

Note: often you will see her name written as Hannah Senesh.

Blessed Is the Match
BY Hanna Szenes

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling
flame.

Blessed is the flame that burns in the heart's
secret places.

Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its
beating for honor's sake

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling
flame.

Movie...After Viewing the video:

Heil Hitler: Confessions of a Hitler Youth

Break up into 4 groups....

Discuss and answer the question for your group. Be prepared to share your results with everyone.

Group 1: Discuss the use of symbols and ceremonies- the pageantry and parades. Describe the reactions of the participants. Why do you think Hitler staged these rallies?

Group 2: What is patriotism? Is there such a thing as excessive patriotism? How do you react to the following: "My country, right or wrong"?

Group 3: Heck labels the Hitler Youth a "massive case of child abuse." Why do you think he feels this way? Do you agree or disagree?

Group 4: What are the pros and cons of conformity? Give specific examples.

Holocaust Literature Suggested Reading List for Midterm

NO MIDTERM AND NO FINAL EXAM...IN FACT NO EXAMS AT ALL. In place of exams, you may choose from the following list of Holocaust related literature. You are to choose one of these books and read the entire book and write a report which will be handed in at midterm time. Since most of the books on this list are in my personal collection and I have read them you need to get my approval on your choice before starting it. Upon approval I will then let you know what I want you to include in your report. This may vary with each book as they all cover a different aspect or take a different approach to the Holocaust. The book must be approved by me no later than the 4th class meeting. The books with an asterisk are large enough books that they may be done half as a midterm and the second half as a final paper in place of a final project. The ones with (VCC) at the end of the entry mean that Valencia East Library has the book in its collection. A HARD COPY WILL BE TURNED INTO ME. AN ELECTRONIC COPY WILL BE UPLOADED TO SAFE ASSIGN FOR A PLAGIARISM CHECK.

Neighbors by Gross

** *All But My Life* by Klein

** *Heroes of the Holocaust* by Geir

Auschwitz by Przytyk

** *Conscience and Courage* by Fogelman

** *On Both Sides of the Wall* by Meed

Dry Tears by Tec

This Way for the Gas Ladies and Gentleman by Borowsky

Assignment Rescue by Fry

Auschwitz by Nysisli

The Wannsee Conference and the Final Solution by Roseman

Sobibor, The Forgotten Revolt by Blatt

** *Ordinary Men* by Browning

** *Hilter's Willing Executioners: The Men of Batallion 101* by Goldenhagen

The Sunflower by Wiesenthal

Perpetrators, Victims and Bystanders by Hilberg

Europa Europa by Perl

The Survivor by De Pres

Survival in Auschwitz by Levi

Abe's Story by Korn

Memoirs of a Warsaw Ghetto Fighter by Kazik

Hiding to Survive by Rosenberg

The Holocaust by Stadtler

The Hidden Children by Greenfield

Clara's Story by Isaacman

** *Women in the Holocaust* by Offer (VCC)

The Cage by Sender

Witness by Greene and Kumar

The White Rose by Scholl

The Pianist by Szpilman

From the Ashes of Sobibor, A Story of Survival by Browning

** *The Abandonment of the Jews* by Wyman

Child of the Holocaust by Kuper

Five Chimneys by Lengyel

POSSIBLE Mini Research: DO THIS ONLY IF SPECIFICALLY ASSIGNED. Assignment #1
Literature and Media of the Holocaust

Use the Internet...Professor Gair's web site page *Holocaust Resources* and your own searching skills to find answers to the following questions. Use your word processor to type your answers (12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced). Answer in complete sentences and fully detailed paragraphs. At the end of each answer copy and paste the web address where you found the answer. Make sure to paraphrase your research in your own words, no copying and pasting from the web site.

1. Describe what happened at the Babi Yar ravine and why it is important to know about that event.
2. Explain what each one of these terms means:
 - a. Gestapo
 - b. Einsatzgruppen
 - c. SS
 - d. Judenrat

Fully describe what role each of these individuals played in the Holocaust. They are all perpetrators / collaborators.

- a. Joseph Goebbels
- b. Hermann Goring
- c. Heinrich Himmler
- d. Reinhard Heydrich
- e. Adolf Eichmann
- f. Albert Speer

What role did these two companies play in the Holocaust? What makes them collaborators (part of the group of perpetrators)?

I.G. Farben Company

J.A. Topf and Söhne (J.A. Topf and Sons)

5. Explain how each of the following reasons relates to the causes (or excuses) the Nazis used to single out the Jews for total annihilation. (Hint: try searching on the web site www.aish.com for the term "why the Jews." There is an entire online seminar that covers this question in detail. It will take you a while to work through all the screens in it, but it is well worth it.)
 - a. Economic
 - b. Chosen people
 - c. Scapegoat
 - d. Deicide
 - e. Outsiders
 - f. Racial Theory

Holocaust Poetry Response Worksheet
Possible Questions to Use In Your Analysis

1. What does the title contribute to your understanding?
2. Who is speaking? Where is the speaker as the poem unfolds?
3. What is the situation being described? Are past events or present events influencing what the author wrote?
4. Are there any special words in the poem? What words need explaining in order for you to understand the poem? How does the explanation of that word help you understand the poem?
5. How does the poem develop? Is it a personal statement? Is it a story? How do you know?
6. What is the main idea of the poem? What details make possible the formulation of the main idea?
7. Describe your response to the poem.

Literary Techniques to Look For
in Holocaust Literature

Major Themes (Fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work.)

Motifs (recurring structures, contrasts, or literary devices that can help to develop and inform the text's major themes.)

Symbols (objects, characters, figures, or colors used to represent abstract ideas and concepts.)

Memorialization Activity

Break into small groups of 4 or 5.

Task:

You and your partners are to spend 10 minutes discussing these issues...

You have been charged with the task of creating a memorial to the Holocaust (It could be September 11, Vietnam War, etc.).

Discuss:

1. What is right? Wrong?
2. Who designs it?
3. How do you address the issue of sensitivity?
4. How is politics an issue?
5. When do you create it? (right after the event or many years later)
6. How will it (we) remember?
7. What value will it have?

Consider

1. Who or what is being remembered?
2. What are the elements of the memorial? (material, space)
3. Where does it go?
4. What do you call it?

Examining Poetry on the Holocaust

1. How does the text affect you emotionally? Intellectually?
2. What meaning does this piece have for you? What new insights about the Holocaust have you gained from reading it?
3. Is this a literary work that you will remember? Why or why not?
4. Write a letter to a character in the literature, and comment on key insights you gained, the most important new ideas/concepts/insights you gained. Tell them what you may never forget from their account...what you will always remember, and why?

POSSIBLE HOLOCAUST RESEARCH TOPICS FOR INVESTIGATION

- Jewish life in Europe prior to the Holocaust years
- The long history of traditional Christian antisemitism
- Germany losing World War I and the burden and effect of the Versailles Treaty in Germany
- The outrageous inflation in the 1920's, the Depression in the 1930's, and the effects of both regarding the rise of the Nazi party
 - The rise of the Nazi party during the Weimar Republic
 - The Nazi takeover of Germany
 - The bureaucratic (devoted to the details of administrative procedure) nature of Nazi policies, including the "legalization" of "exclusionary" (The act or practice of excluding.) policies
 - The initial (and ongoing) legislation depriving Jews of their legal rights
 - The role of propaganda in the Nazis' effort to demonize (To represent as evil), ostracize (To exclude from a group), and isolate Jews and others
 - The use of terror by the Nazis to instill fear and dread
 - The concept of "racial hygiene"
 - The Nuremberg Laws
 - The Anschluss (A political union, especially the one unifying Nazi Germany and Austria in 1938.) The signing of the Munich agreement (Agreement concluded at Munich, September 29, 1938, between Germany, Great Britain, France and Italy)
 - Kristallnacht
 - The annexation of the Sudetenland (A historical region of northern Czech Republic along the Polish border. Long inhabited by ethnic Germans, it was seized by the Nazis in September 1938 and was restored to Czechoslovakia in 1945, after which the German population was expelled.) by Germany and the establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic
 - The invasion of Poland by Germany and the beginning World War II
 - Key groups involved (Germans and non-Germans)- perpetrators, collaborators, bystanders, victims, and rescuers
 - The "euthanasia" of the mentally and physically handicapped
 - Operation Barbarossa (World War II was the largest war ever fought and *Operation Barbarossa*, the codename for the invasion of the Soviet Union, launched the most terrible and bloody theatre in that war. Hitler expected the war for "Lebensraum in the east" (or living space) to establish Germany as a great world power.)
 - The mass killings by the Einsatzgruppen
 - The unique role of women in the Holocaust
 - The Wannsee Conference, in which the "Final Solution" was discussed
 - The establishment of the death camps
 - Various victim groups- while the Jews were the primary target group, the Gypsies were also targeted for total annihilation.
 - Death and life in the concentration and death camps
 - Rescue
 - The world's response to the Holocaust
 - Liberation of the camps
 - The Nuremberg Trials

Review of a Holocaust Literary Work Essay

The major aim of your essay is to write a critical (evaluative) review that provides a general overview of the work. Your essay should contain the following elements.

INTRODUCTION (1 paragraph): Tell how the work relates to the past and the present.

Give a general overview of the book and its characters and setting.

BODY (This should be more than one paragraph.): Describe the strengths and weaknesses (if there are any) of the work. Tell who the main characters are. Describe the major events that take place and the role of the main characters in those events. If the events develop over a period of time tell what that order is. Describe the author's role in the work. What is the final outcome of the work?

CONCLUSION (1 paragraph: Evaluate- Give your responses to the work and suggest how you think other readers might react to reading it. What were the main points, lessons, new insights that you gained from the work? Be specific.

Think-Pair-Share Activity

You will be assigned a prompt. Pair off with another person and designate who will be person **A** and person **B**.

Directions for Pairs:

1. Person A takes 2 full minutes to tell their story to B. B must be totally silent. B may not shake or nod his or her head. B **MUST** remain silent for the full 2 minutes.
2. If person A runs out of things to say before the 2 minutes are up the pair must still maintain total silence while A thinks of what he or she wants to say next.
3. After the 2 minutes are up, switch roles and repeat the process. Now A must be silent while B tells their story.
4. Finally, the last 2 minutes both person A and B may openly discuss their experiences.

The prompts are as follows (I will tell you which prompt your group or the entire class will use.)

1. Think of a time when you were discriminated against.
2. Think of a time when you acted against the norm.
3. Think of a time when you conformed to the rest of the group even though you knew it was wrong.
4. Think of the first time you realized that race or religion made a difference.

Questions to Consider as You Discuss the Prompts:

What happened?

How did you feel?

What was the outcome?

Group Activity

Each group will be assigned one of the following assignments. In your smaller groups spend about 5 minutes as a group discussing your assignment. One member of each group will be the recorder for the group. Be prepared to share your group's findings with the rest of the class.

Assignment 1- "Upstander-Bystander"

What is the difference between these two types of people? Give examples of each. Why do some people choose to be Upstanders and why do some choose to be Bystanders?

Assignment 2- "Antisemitism Lingers"

Why do notions of antisemitism continue to linger today when we see what the results of it lead to in Nazi Germany?

Assignment 3- "Judgment at Nuremberg"

The Nuremberg Trials had 4 distinct goals:

- 1- To set a precedent
- 2- To set or create an example.
3. To punish the leaders, policymakers, and professionals.
- 4- To bear witness for the victims.

The trial charged the defendants with 4 crimes:

- 1- conspiracy
- 2- crimes against the peace
- 3- war crimes
- 4- crimes against humanity

Discuss the following:

What was the purpose of judgment?

- To punish?
- To get revenge?
- To right wrongs?
- To seek reconciliation or rehabilitate?

Whom do you try? Why?

What is the relationship between **judgment** and **justice**?

Writing an Essay about Historical Holocaust Literature

Your essay should contain the following elements and content.

INTRODUCTION: State your central idea and thesis statement. Aim to place the work in a historical context. Identify the work (title), time of publication, how it was composed, and any biographical information available about the author. Also, state the pertinent historical facts concerning the events and ideas in the work.

BODY: Show how the introductory paragraph details apply to the entire work. Include one or both of the following:

- A. Discuss how the work embodies the facts, or how the facts shape the work.
- B. Discuss literary matters (style, structure, tone, point of view, imagery, symbolism, theme or motif).

CONCLUSION: Determine which elements you have discussed earlier in the essay that seem out of date and which ones are relevant and important.

Does the evil or events described seem relevant today? How?

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Identification Cards Class Activity

The Holocaust was the murder of 6,000,000 Jews. We throw those numbers around often as we study the subject. We must remember (remembrance is one of the reasons we even study the Holocaust). Elie Weisel once said that if we do not remember the victims they die a second time. Think about that and why we are reading the stories of individuals today. Yes, 6,000,000 is the number, but each one of those was a person, an individual with hopes, dreams, aspirations, a family, a home, the skill and talent to grow into a famous person, scientist, actor, businessman, or someone's mother, father or someday another child's grandparent. Each person had the ability to love, feel, laugh, cry, be happy, be angry. Each one of us in this room avoided being one of the victims we are reading about by nothing more than the luck of genetics, time place, all things beyond our personal control. Any one of us could have been born back then, in that place, to Jewish parents and have become the person on your card. The world then changed due to the prejudice, hatred and evil of a nation lead by one man with a sick ideology that left no room for diversity, individual differences, rights or beliefs. The entire experience shakes our moral values to the core. The entire experience makes us stop and think about the nature of humankind, how hate can grow and spread and how people can be lead to make moral choices they never would have made in normal times. Today's activity is sort of a memorializing activity. At the end of class take a moment to pay your respects to these individuals by having a minute of total silence so you can reflect and silently offer whatever prayer your particular religion requires to pay respects to those who perished.

Read the Identification Card you were given and prepare to do the following:

After reading your card get together with a classmate and:

- 1- Tell your classmate in your own words about the person on the card.
- 2- Tell your classmate what touched you about that person's story.
- 3- Now let your classmate do the same to you about their person.
- 4- Now the entire class will form a circle so that we are facing each other. As we go around the circle, when your turn comes share the following with the whole class:

Who is the person?

What is their story?

What (if any) moral choices or dilemmas did your person have to make?

What happened to your person's family?

When you first read the card about your person what were your feelings, emotions and reactions to their story?

What happened to your person when the story ended?

If your person was in the room now what question(s) would you ask them or what would you say?

Holocaust Literature Final Reading Project Grading Rubric– Professor Gair
CRN: _____ Name: _____

Dimension	Description Checklist	Comment	Points
<p>Content: 20 pts. (2 pts. each item)</p> <p>Plainly Descriptive</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clear focus of project– what inspired you to read this book? <input type="checkbox"/> Grabs attention of the reader right away. <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies significant events in the story. <input type="checkbox"/> Describes values of the culture of the victims <input type="checkbox"/> Describes values of the Nazi oppressors <input type="checkbox"/> Describes how the book challenged you and your thinking <input type="checkbox"/> What the book taught you about people and their actions <input type="checkbox"/> What new questions the book has raised in your mind about the Holocaust <input type="checkbox"/> Describes how the victims dealt with the oppressive conditions imposed on them <input type="checkbox"/> Discusses what lessons the book can teach us for today's world 		
<p>Organiza- tion: 20 pts. (4 pts. each item)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clear beginning, middle (body), ending <input type="checkbox"/> Paper is easily understandable to others, writing is clear and not confusing <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs each develop a main idea and contain supporting details <input type="checkbox"/> Clear connections to what we are learning in class are made <input type="checkbox"/> Wrap-up including your overall reaction to the book 		
<p>Creativity: 20 pts. (5 pts. each item)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Expression of personal emotional reactions to specific events in the book <input type="checkbox"/> Paper is clear and vivid enough to create some images for the reader <input type="checkbox"/> Visually pleasing...format, photos that relate closely to the content <input type="checkbox"/> Effort made to write in own words (not copied from book). Merely quoting the book is not okay for most of the paper. 		
<p>Reflection: 32 pts. (8 pts. each item)</p> <p>Deeply Reflective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how your view and perceptions changed as a result of reading this book (your emotional reaction) <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how this book might affected your understanding of people and what they do <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how this book might influence your future thinking, views and values in life and why you will remember this book <input type="checkbox"/> Indicates how this book contributed to your understanding of diversity and the Holocaust 		
<p>Conven- tions: 8 pts. (2 pts. each item)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All grammar, spelling, punctuation are correct and special vocabulary terms are explained <input type="checkbox"/> Neatly presented (all word processed) <input type="checkbox"/> Word processed in Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, double spaced <input type="checkbox"/> Pages neat, numbered and a cover page included 		

Plagiarism will NOT be tolerated. You will receive a ZERO or be WITHDRAWN from the course!

Holocaust Literature MidTerm / Final Essay Peer Review Rating Sheet

You may use this form to have a classmate read and evaluate your paper before handing it in.

Author's Name _____

Date _____

Reviewer's Name _____

Elements of Critical Thinking and Writing	Peer Reviewer Rating	Comments Justifying Rating Please Be Specific and Constructive.
Content 20 pts.		
Organization 20 pts.		
Creativity 20 pts.		
Reflection 32 pts.		
Conventions 8 pts.		
General Comments and Suggestions:		

POSSIBLE Student Course Evaluation / Reflection Survey- "Holocaust Education" LIT 2174 CRN_____ Date:_____

THIS IS A TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM.

Name_ _ _ _ _ (Optional)

PLEASE ANSWER EACH QUESTION

What was the most important new learning that you gained from this course?

What part of the course touched you the most?

What lesson or lessons does the Holocaust teach you for today's world?

Which book did you enjoy the most? Why?

Which book did you enjoy the least? Why?

Were the questions you had about the Holocaust before the course answered by the end of the course? If not, what questions do you still have?

Did the course make you look at your fellow human beings differently? Explain?

What part of the course do you think your teacher needs to change or improve for next year's students?

Would you recommend this course to other students? Why or why not?

Unit 1

Genocide and the Holocaust

THE HOLOCAUST: AN HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims -- six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

The concentration camp is most closely associated with the Holocaust and remains an enduring symbol of the Nazi regime. The first camps opened soon after the Nazis took power in January 1933; they continued as a basic part of Nazi rule until May 8, 1945, when the war, and the Nazi regime, ended.

The events of the Holocaust occurred in two main phases: 1933-1939 and 1939-1945.

1.1933-1939

On January 30, 1933, Adolf Hitler was named Chancellor, the most powerful position in the German government, by the aged President Hindenburg, who hoped Hitler could lead the nation out of its grave political and economic crisis. Hitler was the leader of the right-wing National Socialist German Workers Party (called the "Nazi Party" for short); it was, by 1933, one of the strongest parties in Germany, even though -- reflecting the country's multiparty system -- the Nazis had only won a plurality of 33 percent of the votes in the 1932 elections to the German parliament (Reichstag).

Once in power, Hitler moved quickly to end German democracy. He convinced his cabinet to invoke emergency clauses of the constitution that permitted the suspension of individual freedoms of press, speech, and assembly. Special security forces -- the Special State Police (the *Gestapo*), the Storm Troopers (SA), and the Security Police (SS) -- murdered or arrested leaders of opposition political parties (Communists, socialists, and liberals). The Enabling Act of March 23, 1933, forced through a *Reichstag* already purged of many political opponents, gave dictatorial powers to Hitler.

Also in 1933, the Nazis began to put into practice their racial ideology. Echoing ideas popular in Germany as well as most other western nations well before the 1930s, the Nazis believed that the Germans were "racially superior" and that there was a struggle for survival between them and "inferior races." They saw Jews, Roma (Gypsies), and the handicapped as a serious biological threat to the purity of the "German (Aryan)(1) Race," what they called the "master race."

Jews, who numbered nearly 600,000 in Germany (less than one percent of the total population in 1933), were the principal target of Nazi hatred. The Nazis mistakenly identified Jews as a race and defined this race as "inferior." They also spewed hate-mongering propaganda that unfairly blamed Jews for Germany's economic depression and the country's defeat in World War I (1914-1918).

In 1933, new German laws forced Jews to quit their civil service jobs, university and law court positions, and other areas of public life. In April 1933, a boycott of Jewish businesses was instituted. In 1935, laws proclaimed at Nuremberg made Jews second-class citizens. These "Nuremberg Laws" defined Jews not by their religion or by how they wanted to identify themselves but by the religious affiliation of their grandparents. Between 1937 and 1939, new anti-Jewish regulations segregated Jews further and made daily life very difficult for them: Jews could not attend public schools, go to theaters, cinemas, or vacation resorts, or reside, or even walk, in certain sections of German cities.

(1) The term "Aryan" originally referred to peoples speaking Indo-European languages. The Nazis perverted its meaning to support racist ideas by viewing those of Germanic background as prime examples of Aryan stock, which they considered racially superior. For the Nazis, the typical Aryan was blond, blue-eyed, and tall.

Also between 1937 and 1939, Jews were forced from Germany's economic life: the Nazis either seized Jewish businesses and properties outright or forced Jews to sell them at bargain prices. In November 1938, this economic attack against German and Austrian(2) Jews changed into the physical destruction of synagogues and Jewish-owned stores, the arrest of Jewish men, the destruction of homes, and the murder of individuals. This centrally organized riot (pogrom) became known as *Kristallnacht* (the "Night of Broken Glass").

Although Jews were the main target of Nazi hatred, the Nazis persecuted other groups they viewed as racially or genetically "inferior." Nazi racial ideology was buttressed by scientists who advocated "selective breeding" (eugenics) to "improve" the human race. Laws passed between 1933 and 1935 aimed to reduce the future number of genetic "inferiors" through involuntary sterilization programs: about 500 children of mixed (African-German) racial backgrounds(3) and 320,000 to 350,000 individuals judged physically or mentally handicapped were subjected to surgical or radiation procedures so they could not have children. Supporters of sterilization also argued that the handicapped burdened the community with the costs of their care. Many of Germany's 30,000 Gypsies were also eventually sterilized and prohibited, along with Blacks, from intermarrying with Germans. Reflecting traditional prejudices, new laws combined traditional prejudices with the new racism of the Nazis which defined Gypsies, by "race," as "criminal and asocial."

Another consequence of Hitler's ruthless dictatorship in the 1930s was the arrest of political opponents and trade unionists and others the Nazis labeled "undesirables" and "enemies of the state." Some five to fifteen thousand homosexuals were imprisoned in concentration camps; under the 1935 Nazi-revised criminal code, the mere denunciation of a man as "homosexual" could result in arrest, trial, and conviction. Jehovah's Witnesses, who numbered 20,000 in Germany, were banned as an organization as early as April 1933, since the beliefs of this religious group prohibited them from swearing any oath to the state or serving in the German military. Their literature was confiscated, and they lost jobs, unemployment benefits, pensions, and all social welfare benefits. Many Witnesses were sent to prisons and concentration camps in Nazi Germany, and their children were sent to juvenile detention homes and orphanages.

Between 1933 and 1936, thousands of people, mostly political prisoners and Jehovah's Witnesses, were imprisoned in concentration camps, while several thousand German Gypsies were confined in special municipal camps. The first systematic round-ups of German and Austrian Jews occurred after *Kristallnacht*, when approximately 30,000 Jewish men were deported to Dachau and other concentration camps and several hundred Jewish women were sent to local jails. At the end of 1938, the waves of arrests also included several thousand German and Austrian Gypsies.

Between 1933 and 1939, about half the German Jewish population and more than two-thirds of Austrian Jews (1938-39) fled Nazi persecution. They emigrated mainly to Palestine, the United States, Latin America, Shanghai (which required no visa for entry), and eastern and western Europe (where many would be caught again in the Nazi net during the war). Jews who remained under Nazi rule were either unwilling to uproot themselves or unable to obtain visas, sponsors in host countries, or funds for emigration. Most foreign countries, including the United States, Canada, Britain, and France, were unwilling to admit very large numbers of refugees.

H.1939-1945

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and World War II began. Within days, the Polish army was defeated, and the Nazis began their campaign to destroy Polish culture and enslave the

(2)On March 11, 1938, Hitler sent his army into Austria, and on March 13 the incorporation (*Anschluss*) of Austria with the German empire (*Reich*) was proclaimed in Vienna. Most of the population welcomed the *Anschluss* and expressed their fervor in widespread riots and attacks against the Austrian Jews numbering 180,000 (90 percent of whom lived in Vienna).

(3)These children, called "the Rhineland bastards" by Germans, were the offspring of German women and African soldiers from French colonies who were stationed in the 1920s in the Rhineland, a demilitarized zone the Allies established after World War I as a buffer between Germany and western Europe.

Polish people, whom they viewed as "subhuman." Killing Polish leaders was the first step: German soldiers carried out massacres of university professors, artists, writers, politicians, and many Catholic priests. To create new living space for the "superior Germanic race," large segments of the Polish population were resettled, and German families moved into the emptied lands. Thousands of other Poles, including Jews, were imprisoned in concentration camps. The Nazis also "kidnapped" as many as 50,000 "Aryan-looking" Polish children from their parents and took them to Germany to be adopted by German families. Many of these children were later rejected as not capable of Germanization and sent to special children's camps, where some died of starvation, lethal injection, and disease.

As the war began in 1939, Hitler initiated an order to kill institutionalized, handicapped patients deemed "incurable." Special commissions of physicians reviewed questionnaires filled out by all state hospitals and then decided if a patient should be killed. The doomed were then transferred to six institutions in Germany and Austria, where specially constructed gas chambers were used to kill them. After public protests in 1941, the Nazi leadership continued this euphemistically termed "euthanasia" program in secret. Babies, small children, and other victims were thereafter killed by lethal injection and pills and by forced starvation.

The "euthanasia" program contained all the elements later required for mass murder of European Jews and Gypsies in Nazi death camps: an articulated decision to kill, specially trained personnel, the apparatus for killing by gas, and the use of euphemistic language like "euthanasia" that psychologically distanced the murderers from their victims and hid the criminal character of the killings from the public.

In 1940 German forces continued their conquest of much of Europe, easily defeating Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. On June 22, 1941, the German army invaded the Soviet Union and by September was approaching Moscow. In the meantime, Italy, Romania, and Hungary had joined the Axis powers led by Germany and opposed by the Allied Powers (British Commonwealth, Free France, the United States, and the Soviet Union).

In the months following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, Jews, political leaders, Communists, and many Gypsies were killed in mass executions. The overwhelming majority of those killed were Jews. These murders were carried out at improvised sites throughout the Soviet Union by members of mobile killing squads (*Einsatzgruppen*) who followed in the wake of the invading German army. The most famous of these sites was Babi Yar, near Kiev, where an estimated 33,000 persons, mostly Jews, were murdered. German terror extended to institutionalized handicapped and psychiatric patients in the Soviet Union; it also resulted in the mass murder of more than three million Soviet prisoners of war.

World War II brought major changes to the concentration camp system. Large numbers of new prisoners, deported from all German-occupied countries, now flooded the camps. Often entire groups were committed to the camps, such as members of underground resistance organizations who were rounded up in a sweep across western Europe under the 1941 "Night and Fog" decree. To accommodate the massive increase in the number of prisoners, hundreds of new camps were established in occupied territories of eastern and western Europe.

During the war, ghettos, transit camps, and forced labor camps, in addition to the concentration camps, were created by the Germans and their collaborators to imprison Jews, Gypsies, and other victims of racial and ethnic hatred as well as political opponents and resistance fighters. Following the invasion of Poland, three million Polish Jews were forced into approximately 400 newly established ghettos, where they were segregated from the rest of the population. Large numbers of Jews were also deported from other cities and countries, including Germany, to ghettos in Poland and German-occupied territories further east.

In Polish cities under Nazi occupation, like Warsaw and Lodz, Jews were confined in sealed ghettos where starvation, overcrowding, exposure to cold, and contagious diseases killed tens of

thousands of people. In Warsaw and elsewhere, ghettoized Jews made every effort, often at great risk, to maintain their cultural, communal, and religious lives. The ghettos also provided a forced labor pool for the Germans, and many forced laborers (who worked on road gangs, in construction, or other hard labor related to the German war effort) died from exhaustion or maltreatment.

Between 1942 and 1944, the Germans moved to eliminate the ghettos in occupied Poland and elsewhere, deporting ghetto residents to "extermination camps" -- killing centers equipped with gassing facilities -- located in Poland. After the meeting of senior German government officials in late January 1942 at a villa in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee, the decision to implement "the final solution of the Jewish question" became formal state policy, and Jews from western Europe were also sent to killing centers in the East.

The six killing sites, chosen because of their closeness to rail lines and their location in semi-rural areas, were at Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Chelmno, Majdanek, and Auschwitz-Birkenau. Chelmno was the first camp in which mass executions were carried out by gas, piped into mobile gas vans; 320,000 persons were killed there between December 1941 and March 1943 and between June to July 1944. A killing center using gas vans and later gas chambers operated at Belzec, where more than 600,000 persons were killed between May 1942 and August 1943. Sobibor opened in May 1942 and closed one day after a rebellion of the prisoners on October 14, 1943; up to 200,000 persons were killed by gassing. Treblinka opened in July 1942 and closed in November 1943; a revolt by the prisoners in early August 1943 destroyed much of the facility. At least 750,000 persons were killed at Treblinka, physically the largest of the killing centers. Almost all of the victims at Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka were Jews; a few were Gypsies. Very few individuals survived these four killing centers, where most victims were murdered immediately after arrival.

Auschwitz-Birkenau, which also served as a concentration camp and slave labor camp, became the killing center where the largest numbers of European Jews and Gypsies were killed. After an experimental gassing there in September 1941 of 250 malnourished and ill Polish prisoners and 600 Russian POWs, mass murder became a daily routine; more than 1.25 million people were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau, 9 out of 10 of them Jews. In addition, Gypsies, Soviet POWs, and ill prisoners of all nationalities died in the gas chambers. Between May 14 and July 8, 1944, 437,402 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz in 48 trains. This was probably the largest single mass deportation during the Holocaust. A similar system was implemented at Majdanek, which also doubled as a concentration camp and where at least 275,000 persons were killed in the gas chambers or died from malnutrition, brutality, and disease.

The methods of murder were the same in all the killing centers, which were operated by the SS. The victims arrived in railroad freight cars and passenger trains, mostly from ghettos and camps in occupied Poland, but also from almost every other eastern and western European country. On arrival, men were separated from women and children. Prisoners were forced to undress and hand over all valuables. They were then driven naked into the gas chambers, which were disguised as shower rooms, and either carbon monoxide or Zyklon B (a form of crystalline prussic acid, also used as an insecticide in some camps) was used to asphyxiate them. The minority selected for forced labor were, after initial quarantine, vulnerable to malnutrition, exposure, epidemics, medical experiments, and brutality; many perished as a result.

The Germans carried out their systematic murderous activities with the active help of local collaborators in many countries and the acquiescence or indifference of millions of bystanders. However, there were instances of organized resistance. For example, in the fall of 1943, the Danish resistance, with the support of the local population, rescued nearly the entire Jewish community in Denmark from the threat of deportation to the east by smuggling them via a dramatic boat lift to safety in neutral Sweden. Individuals in many other countries also risked their lives to save Jews

and other individuals subject to Nazi persecution. One of the most famous was Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who led the rescue effort that saved the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews in 1944.

Resistance movements existed in almost every concentration camp and ghetto of Europe. In addition to the armed revolts at Sobibor and Treblinka, Jewish resistance in the Warsaw ghetto led to a courageous uprising in April-May 1943, despite a predictable doomed outcome because of superior German force. In general, rescue or aid to Holocaust victims was not a priority of resistance organizations whose principal goal was to fight the war against the Germans. Nonetheless, such groups and Jewish partisans (resistance fighters) sometimes cooperated with each other to save Jews. On April 19, 1943, for instance, members of the National Committee for the Defense of Jews, in cooperation with Christian railroad workers and the general underground in Belgium, attacked a train leaving the Belgian transit camp of Malines headed for Auschwitz and succeeded in assisting several hundred Jewish deportees to escape.

After the war turned against Germany and the Allied armies approached German soil in late 1944, the SS decided to evacuate outlying concentration camps. The Germans tried to cover up the evidence of genocide and deported prisoners to camps inside Germany to prevent their liberation. Many inmates died during the long journeys on foot known as "death marches." During the final days, in the spring of 1945, conditions in the remaining concentration camps exacted a terrible toll in human lives. Even concentration camps never intended for extermination, such as Bergen-Belsen, became death traps for thousands, including Anne Frank, who died there of typhus in March 1945.

In May 1945, Nazi Germany collapsed, the SS guards fled, and the camps ceased to exist as extermination, forced labor, or concentration camps. Some of the concentration camps, including Bergen-Belsen, Dachau, and Landsberg, all in Allied occupied Germany, were turned into camps for displaced persons (DPs), which included former Holocaust victims unable to be repatriated.

The Nazi legacy was a vast empire of murder, pillage, and exploitation that had affected every country of occupied Europe. The toll in lives was enormous. The full magnitude and the moral and ethical implications of this tragic era are only now beginning to be understood more fully.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Teaching About the Holocaust: A Resource Book for Educators*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

CHILDREN AND THE HOLOCAUST

Up to one-and-a-half million children were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators between 1933 and 1945. The overwhelming majority of them were Jewish. Thousands of Roma (Gypsy) children, disabled children, and Polish children were also among the victims.

The deaths of these children were not accidental: they were the deliberate result of actions taken by the German government under the leadership of Chancellor Adolf Hitler. The children were killed in various ways. Many were shot; many more were asphyxiated with poisonous gas in concentration camps or subjected to lethal injections. Others perished from disease, starvation, exposure, torture, and/or severe physical exhaustion from slave labor. Still others died as a result of medical experiments conducted on them by German doctors in the camps.

During the Holocaust, children -- ranging in age from infants to older teens -- were, like their parents, persecuted and killed not for anything they had done. Rather, Hitler and the Nazi government believed that so-called "Aryan" Germans were a superior race. The Nazis labeled other people they considered inferior as "non-Aryans." People belonging to non-Aryan groups, including children, were targeted by the Nazis for elimination from German society. The Nazis killed children to create a biologically pure society.

Even children who fit the Aryan stereotype suffered at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. Non-Jewish children in occupied countries whose physical appearance fit the Nazi notion of a "master race" (fair skin, blond-haired, blue-eyed) were at times kidnapped from their homes and taken to Germany to be adopted by German families. As many as 50,000 Polish children alone may have been separated from their families in this manner. Some of these children were later rejected and sent to special children's camps where they died of starvation or as a result of the terrible living conditions within the camps. Others were killed by lethal injections at the concentration camps of Majdanek and Auschwitz.

The experiences of children who were victims of Nazi hatred varied widely. Factors such as age, gender, family wealth, and where a child lived affected their experiences under German domination. Generally, babies and younger children deported to ghettos and camps had almost no chance of surviving. Children in their teens, or younger children who looked more mature than their years, had a better chance of survival since they might be selected for slave labor rather than for death. Some teens participated in resistance activities as well.

Children who were victims of the Holocaust came from all over Europe. They had different languages, customs, and religious beliefs. Some came from wealthy families; others from poor homes. Many ended their schooling early to work in a craft or trade; others looked forward to continuing their education at the university level. Still, whatever their differences, they shared one commonality: by the 1930s, with the rise of the Nazis to power in Germany, they all became potential victims and their lives were forever changed.

Nazi Germany, 1933-39

Soon after the Nazis gained power in Germany, Jewish children found life increasingly difficult. Due to legislation prohibiting Jews from engaging in various professions, their parents lost jobs and businesses. As a result, many families were left with little money. Jewish children were not allowed to participate in sports and social activities with their "Aryan" classmates and neighbors. They could not go to museums, movies, public playgrounds, or even swimming pools. Even when they were permitted to go to school, teachers often treated them with scorn and encouraged their

humiliation by other students. Frequently, Jewish students were subject to being taunted and teased, picked upon and beaten up. Eventually, Jewish and Gypsy children were expelled from German schools.

Gypsy children, like Jewish children, faced many hardships in Nazi Germany. Along with their parents, they were rounded up and forced to live behind barbed wire in special municipal internment camps under police guard. Beginning in 1938, Gypsy teenagers were arrested and sent to concentration camps.

Murder Under Cover of War

With the outbreak of World War II in September 1939, life became much harder for children all over Europe. European children of all backgrounds suffered because of the war, experiencing displacement, inadequate diets, the absence of fathers and brothers, loss of family members, trauma, and confusion. However, only certain groups of children were singled out for "extinction."

Wartime, Hitler suggested, "was the best time for the elimination of the incurably ill." Among the first victims of the Nazis were disabled persons, and children were not exempt. Many Germans, influenced by Nazi ideas, did not want to be reminded of individuals who did not measure up to their idealized concept of a "master race." The physically and mentally handicapped were viewed by the Nazis as unproductive to society, a threat to Aryan genetic purity, and ultimately unworthy of life. Beginning almost simultaneously with the start of World War II, a "euthanasia" program was authorized personally by Adolf Hitler to systematically murder disabled Germans. Like disabled adults, children with disabilities were either injected with lethal drugs or asphyxiated by inhaling carbon monoxide fumes pumped into sealed mobile vans and gas chambers. Medical doctors cooperated in these so-called "mercy killings" in six institutions, and secretly at other centers, in Germany. Though some were Jewish, most of the children murdered in this fashion were non-Jewish Germans.

With the onset of war, Jewish children in Germany suffered increasing deprivations. Nazi government officials confiscated many items of value from Jewish homes, including radios, telephones, cameras, and cars. Even more importantly, food rations were curtailed for Jews as were clothing ration cards. Jewish children felt more and more isolated. Similarly, as Germany conquered various European countries in their war effort -- from Poland and parts of the Soviet Union in the east, to Denmark, Norway, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands in the west -- more and more Jewish children came under German control and, with their parents, experienced persecution, forced separations, and very often, murder.

Throughout eastern Europe, Jewish families were forced to give up their homes and relocate into ghettos -- restricted areas set up by the Nazis as "Jewish residential districts." Most of the ghettos were located in German-occupied Poland; most were established in the poorer, more dilapidated sections of towns and cities. Ghettos were fenced in, typically with barbed wire or brick walls. Entry and exit were by permit or pass only; like a prison, armed guards stood at gates. Families inside the ghettos lived under horrid conditions. Typically, many families would be crowded into a few rooms where there was little if any heat, food, or privacy. It was difficult to keep clean. Many people in the ghettos perished from malnutrition, starvation, exposure, and epidemics. Typhus, a contagious disease spread by body lice, was common, as was typhoid, spread through contaminated drinking water.

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Some children managed to escape deportation to ghettos by going into hiding with their families or by hiding alone, aided by non-Jewish friends and neighbors. Children in hiding often took on a secret life, sometimes remaining in one room for months or even years. Some hid in woodpiles, attics, or barns; others were locked in cupboards or concealed closets, coming out infrequently and only at night. Boys had it more difficult, because they were circumcised and could therefore be identified.

Children were often forced to live lives independent of their families. Many children who found refuge with others outside the ghettos had to assume new identities and conform to local religious customs that were different from their own in order to survive. Some Jewish children managed to pass as Catholics and were hidden in Catholic schools, orphanages, and convents in countries across Europe.

Everyday, children became orphaned and many had to take care of even younger children. In the ghettos of Warsaw and other cities, many orphans lived on the streets, begging for bread and food from others in the ghetto who likewise had little or none to spare. Exposed to severe weather, frostbite, disease, and starvation, these children did not survive for long. Many froze to death.

In order to survive, children had to be resourceful and make themselves useful. In Lodz, healthy children could survive by working. Small children in the largest ghetto in occupied Poland, Warsaw, sometimes helped smuggle food to their families and friends by crawling through narrow openings in the ghetto wall. They did so at considerable risk, as smugglers who were caught were severely punished.

Deportation To Concentration Camps

The Nazis started emptying the ghettos in 1942 and deporting the victims to concentration camps. Children were often the target of special round-ups for deportation to the camps. The victims were told they were being resettled in the "East." The journey to the camps was difficult for everyone. Jammed into rail cars until there was no room for anyone to move, young children were often thrown on top of other people. Suffocating heat in the summer and freezing cold in the winter made the deportation journey even more brutal. During the trip, which often lasted several days, there was no food except for what people managed to bring along. There were also no water or bathroom facilities and parents were powerless to defend their children.

Two concentration camps (Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek) and four other camps (Chelmno, Sobibor, Belzec, and Treblinka) functioned as "killing centers." All were located near railroad lines in occupied Poland, and poison gas -- either carbon monoxide or Zyklon B -- was the primary weapon of murder. At Chelmno, Sobibor, Belzec, and Treblinka, nearly everyone was killed soon after arrival. At Auschwitz and Majdanek, individuals were "selected" to live or to die. Stronger, healthier people -- including many teenagers -- were often selected for slave labor, forced to work eleven-hour shifts with minimum provisions for clothing, food, and shelter. Some who survived the camp "selection" process were used for medical experiments by German physicians.

The great majority of people deported to killing centers did not survive. For those who did survive the selection process, children and adults alike, life in the camps presented new challenges, humiliations, and deprivations. One became a prisoner: clothing and all possessions were removed. Hair was shaved off. Ill-fitting prison uniforms were distributed. One's name was replaced with a number often tattooed on the arm. Many people scarcely recognized their own family members after they had been processed in the camps.

Camp "inmates" were crowded into barracks fitted with wooden bunk beds stacked three or four on top of each other, and several people had to fit per level on the plank beds that had neither mattresses nor blankets. Lice were everywhere and contributed to the spread of disease, which was an ever-present enemy. Standing in roll calls for extended periods in all kinds of weather and working long hours took its toll on everyone. Daily rations of food consisted of a small piece of bread and coffee or soup. As a result of these brutal living conditions, many people died. Few lasted more than a month or two. Even among those that survived, one's vulnerability to "selection" had not ended at the point of arrival. The sick, the feeble, and those too exhausted to work were periodically identified and selected for gassing.

Liberation

Near the end of the war in 1945, the German concentration camps were liberated by Allied soldiers. By this time, many of the children who had entered camps as teenagers were now young adults. For most, the food and gestures of kindness offered by liberating soldiers were the links to life itself. Children who had survived in hiding now searched the camps trying to locate family members who might also have survived. Returning to hometowns, they had hopes that a former neighbor might know of other survivors.

It was rare for an entire family to survive the Holocaust. One or both parents were likely to have been killed; brothers and sisters had been lost; grandparents were dead. Anticipated reunions with family members gave surviving children some hope, but for many, the terrible reality was that they were now alone. Many found themselves sole survivors of once large extended families. A few were eventually able to locate missing family members.

Life as it had been before the Holocaust was forever altered. Though some individual survivors attempted to return to their former places of residence, Jewish and Gypsy communities no longer existed in most of Europe. Family homes had, in many instances, been taken over by others; personal possessions had been plundered. Because returning to one's home in hopes of reclaiming what had been lost was fraught with extreme danger, many young survivors eventually ended up instead in children's centers or displaced persons camps.

The future was as uncertain as the present was unstable. Many young people had had their schooling interrupted and could not easily resume their studies. Merely surviving took precedence over other concerns. Owning nothing and belonging nowhere, many children left Europe and, with assistance provided by immigrant aid societies or sponsorship from relatives abroad, they emigrated, usually to the United States, South Africa, and/or Palestine which, after 1948, became the State of Israel. There, in these newly adopted countries, they slowly developed new lives.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Teaching About the Holocaust: A Resource Book for Educators*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

VOCABULARY

TERMS

Aryan: Originally a term for peoples speaking the languages of Europe and India; in Nazi ideology, a Nordic-type, Caucasian Christian.

Bystander: One who is present at some event without participating in it; also a spectator or passerby.

Death Camps: Historians usually reserve the term "death camps" for those Nazi concentration camps set up for killing: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Included in this classification, because of the massive scope of the killing which took place, are two labor/killing complexes: Auschwitz/Birkenau and Majdanek. There was systematic murder by gassing at each of these six camps.

Final Solution: The term used as a coverword for the extermination of the Jews. The first official record of this decision is a *Fahrer* order which was transmitted to the High Command (from Hitler to Goring) on March 31, 1941: "TO KILL JEWS AND SOVIET COMMISSARS." Goring then notified Heydrich on July 31, 1941 "to make all necessary preparations...for bringing about a complete solution to the Jewish problem." The use of the word "problem" served as a reminder to use code words, an idea which was quickly adopted to refer to all stages of the Final Solution. The plan was expanded and logistics were finalized at the Wannsee Conference in 1942.

Fiihrer (leader): Adolf Hitler's title in Nazi Germany.

Genocide: The destruction of a religious, racial, or national group; also the destruction of an ethnic culture, usually implemented under the guise of "political necessity."

Ghettoization: The process of the creation of a compulsory closed "Jewish Quarter" established by the Germans where the Jewish population of the city and Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to live under inhumane and desperate conditions.

Holocaust: The systematic, bureaucratic annihilation of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators as a central act of state. Although Jews were the primary victims, hundreds of thousands of Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) and many thousands of mentally or physically disabled persons were also victims of Nazi genocide. As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe from 1933 to 1945, millions of other innocent people were persecuted and murdered. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were killed because of their nationality. Poles as well as other Sla^vs were targeted for slave labor, and as a result, tens of thousands perished. Homosexuals and others deemed "anti-social" were also persecuted and often murdered. In addition, thousands of political and religious dissidents such as communists, socialists, trade unionists, and Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted for their beliefs and behavior, and many of these individuals died as a result of maltreatment.

Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass): During November 9 and 10, 1938, a pogrom and riot was staged in which mobs of Nazis attacked, looted, vandalized, and set fires to Jewish shops, homes, businesses, and synagogues in Germany and Austria. The name *Kristallnacht* comes from the fact that so many shop windows were smashed, but the term is also an attempt to minimize what actually took place during the pogrom. More than 26,000 male German Jews between the ages of 16 and 60 were deported to concentration camps after this pogrom and riot.

Lebensraum (living space): Principle of Nazi ideology and foreign policy, expressed in the drive for the conquest of territories, mainly in the east.

Nazi: A member of the German fascist party controlling Germany from 1933 -1945 under the dictatorial leadership of Adolf Hitler.

Ottoman Empire: The Turkish Empire (1299-1919) in southwestern Asia, northeastern Africa, and southeastern Europe, whose capital was Constantinople. Also called "Turkish Empire."

Perpetrator: One who deliberately carries out an injurious act against an individual or a group.

Reichstag: Formerly, the legislative assembly of Germany from 1871 to 1945.

Shoah: Hebrew term for Holocaust. See Holocaust.

SS (Schutzstaffel or Protection Squad): Originally, guard detachments formed in 1925 as Hitler's personal guard. In 1929, under Himmler, the SS developed into the elite units of the Nazi party. These Nazi paramilitary, black-shirted storm troops used two symbols copied from Teutonic runes, a parallel jagged double S usually used as a symbol warning for high-tension wires or lightning. The SS was built into a giant organization and provided staff for the police, concentration camp guards, and the fighting units of the *Waffen SS*.

Victim: One who is subjected to oppression, hardship, or mistreatment.

NAMES AND PLACES

Bormann, Martin: Chief of the Chancery of the Nazi Party.

Eichmann, Adolf: Coordinated the deportation of Jews from their homes in German-occupied Europe to ghettos, concentration, and death camps in Eastern Europe. He headed Department IVB4 of *REICHSSICHERHEITSHAUPTAMT (Referat Juden)* and as such was the engineer of the "Final Solution." Eichmann was captured by Israeli agents on May 11, 1959 in Argentina where he had been living. After a lengthy trial in Israel, he was convicted and executed on May 31, 1962.

Heydrich, Reinhard: As Chief of RSHA, Heydrich was entrusted in 1941 with implementing the "Final Solution" of the Jewish question. He presided over the conference at Wannsee in Berlin in January 20, 1942. Czech partisans assassinated Heydrich in Prague in 1942. As a result, the entire village of Lidice was destroyed, and nearly all of its citizens were killed.

Himmler, Heinrich: Head of the SS and secret police.

Hitler, Adolf: *FC1hrer* (leader) of the Third *Reich* from 1933 until his suicide in 1945; he built a German regime unparalleled as an instrument of tyranny, oppression, and ruin. His conquests in Europe extended from the Pyrenees Mountains on the border of France and Spain to the Ural Mountains on the border between Europe and Asia. Hitler's tyranny and the German campaign to annihilate the Jewish people brought Western civilization to the brink of destruction.

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund, founded in 1946.

CONTENT OVERVIEW GENOCIDE AND THE HOLOCAUST

Genocide

The term genocide, the systematic, planned annihilation of a racial, religious, or cultural group, was first introduced by Raphael Lemkin in 1933 when he submitted a draft proposal to the League of Nations for an international convention on barbaric crimes and vandalism. Lemkin was responding in part to the Turkish massacre of Armenians during World War I, but was unsuccessful in having the convention passed.

Nevertheless, he persisted. He made combating genocide his life's work. It took another war and the systematic, planned murder of the Jews by the Germans and their collaborators to gain worldwide support for the Convention for the Prevention of the Crimes of Genocide, which was adopted by the United Nations on December 9, 1948.

The Genocide convention was designed to overcome the claims of Nazi war criminals that they had violated no law. By understanding what the Convention prohibits, we can outline the definition of genocide: The Convention forbids:

- the killing of persons belonging to a group;
- causing grievous bodily or spiritual harm to members of a group;
- deliberately enforcing upon the group living conditions which could lead to complete or partial extermination;
- enforcing measures to prevent births among the group;
- forcibly removing children from the group and transferring them to another group.

Each of these provisions applies to a different stage or deed associated with the Holocaust. The killing of persons clearly refers to the Final Solution, the plan to murder all Jews. It also refers to the killing of Gypsies -- Roma and Sinti -- by the Nazis during World War II.

Deliberately enforcing living conditions leading to extermination refers to ghettoization. Enforcing measures to prevent births outlines sterilization as a tool of group murder and forcibly removing children refers to the Nazi policy of kidnapping Polish children and removing them to Germany to be raised as "Aryans."

Although the United States had a major hand in drafting the Genocide Convention and signed the treaty, pressures during the McCarthy era did not allow the Senate to get the two-thirds majority required by the Constitution for ratification. Conservatives argued that by ratifying the Convention, the United States would be limiting its national sovereignty. Every day the Senate was in session, gadfly Senator William Proxmire of Wisconsin reminded his colleagues of the unfinished business of ratification. He gave thousands of speeches on behalf of the treaty. With the exception of President Dwight David Eisenhower, every American president from Harry Truman to Jimmy Carter advocated its ratification. None could muster the two-thirds vote needed for ratification.

When he first assumed office, President Ronald Reagan was non-committal. In 1987, the conservative president was persuaded to put his personal prestige behind the drive to ratify the treaty. On November 4, 1988, President Reagan signed the ratifying legislation, thus making the United States the 98th nation to ratify the Convention.

Genocide is not a crime restricted to the twentieth century. There have been many genocides in the past, but none of the ferocity, complexity or totality of the Holocaust. During World War I, the Armenians were subject to systematic slaughter by the Turks. Fearful of an Armenian-Russian alliance on their eastern border, the Turks deported many Armenians from their homeland, subjecting them to conditions of starvation and disease as well as attacks and massacres. They targeted Armenians in the East, but unlike the Nazis, they did not target all Armenians everywhere. Those living in the capital of Turkey and away from the battlefield were not murdered. Nevertheless, there are links between the slaughter of the Armenians in World War I and the annihilation of the Jews a quarter century later.

Like the Jews who were a non-Christian element in the heart of Western Christian Europe, Armenians were a non-Muslim element in Muslim Turkey. The Armenians were peasants, craftsmen, and middlemen, whose economic status and social position resembled the Jews of Poland and Russia. They were subject to attack by a declining empire. The Ottoman Empire had experienced the emancipation of Greece, the independence of Romania and Serbia, and self-rule of the Bulgarians. In a period of loss, the Turks were forced out of all of Europe with the minor exception of Salonika in contemporary Greece and Albania. The assault against the Armenians occurred during World War I, at a time in the war when the tide of early victories had turned against the Germans and their Turkish allies. During World War II, the major slaughter of Jews took place after German setbacks in the war. Unlike the Holocaust, where the assault against Jews was total and the goal of the Nazis was the annihilation of all Jewish men, women, and children everywhere, the slaughter of the Armenians was limited to the provinces. Those Armenians at a distance from the border with Russia and in major cities were not subject to killing. Nor was the murder of the Armenians considered essential to Turkish national salvation, as the murder of the Jews had been for the Germans.

A recent work, *Century of Genocide*, published in 1997, listed fourteen events of genocide in the twentieth century. Some were so-called "passive genocides," such as in the Ukraine during the 1930s, where deliberate state-sponsored acts led to mass starvation and massive death among the native population. Several million peasants, most of them Ukrainians living in the Ukraine and the traditionally Cossack territories of the North Caucasus, were starved to death when the government of the Soviet Union seized their crops and agricultural goods. For more than half a century this crime was denied, until the post-communist period, when the Ukrainian communist party admitted the "passive" slaughter and blamed Josef Stalin and his associates.

Other genocides or genocide-like events were the results of colonialism and imperialism, and the displacement of one population by another. After Indonesia invaded the Portuguese colony of East Timor in 1975, the forced integration reached genocidal proportions and resulted in a substantial decline in the native population. In the war for Bangladesh independence from Pakistan in 1971, thirty million Bengalis were displaced by the army, ten million Bengalis were forced to seek refuge in India, and perhaps as many as three million natives were murdered. Women and girls were raped and villages plundered.

Some genocides involved long simmering inter-ethnic conflict, such as the Tutsi assault against the Hutu in Rwanda and Burundi, and the decades -- even centuries -- long struggle between Serbs, Croats and Bosnians in the former Yugoslavia.

Some genocidal policies are political. During six months from October 1965 to March 1966, one million people, who had largely been members of the Indonesian Communist Party, were killed in a series of massacres in Indonesia. This was followed by an attempted coup d'etat in the

Indonesian capital of Jakarta, in which the PKI was implicated. An intense military propaganda program targeted this political party. This was also true in Cambodia, where in 1975, as the Khmer Rouge took control of the country, schools were closed, factories deserted, money and wages abolished, monasteries emptied, and libraries scattered. Everything disappeared for four years as eight million Cambodians were imprisoned by their own leaders. Perhaps as many as one in five were murdered.

In contrast to our perception of earlier ages of civilization as violent and inhumane and our own as moderate, temperate and civilized, genocide has characterized twentieth century existence. And unless we heed its lessons, it could not only define our past, but our collective future.

Rwanda

Between April and July of 1994, there was a slaughter of massive numbers of Tutsi by Hutu. The precipitating event for the genocide was the shooting down of the Air Force airplane carrying the president of Rwanda and Burundi. Before his death, the president of Rwanda had long exercised an authoritarian rule. The plane was hit by a surface-to-air missile, a sophisticated weapon that requires advanced training to operate. Someone knew that the two leaders were together, that they were flying that route on that specific plane. The Hutu used the interim period even before the next president was sworn in to have their way and to settle old scores.

The moment the president was shot down, there were radio appeals to initiate the killings. They indicated a systematic organization. Radio propaganda played a very important role in calling for and organizing the genocide. A systematic replaying of these broadcasts, monitored and recorded by Western intelligence will be required if we are to comprehend fully the role of propaganda in the genocide.

Rwandan officials speak of 500,000 to 1,000,000 dead. The figures themselves indicate the magnitude of the deaths. They may not, however, be accurate. The bulk of the slaughters were done by machete. One must better understand the killing process to come up with an accurate understanding of numbers.

Students of the Holocaust once had the naive belief that if only the world had known of the Holocaust, something would have been done to stop it. Experiences in both Bosnia and Rwanda challenge such a simple notion. In Rwanda, when the killing began, military forces from Belgium and France evacuated their troops, and only non-governmental organizations engaged in humanitarian relief efforts -- unarmed volunteers -- remained. The leaders of the Non-Governmental Organizations [NGO] were often young people, college students and post-graduates. Care, UNICEF, Save the Children, and Doctors without Borders remained to rescue, to relieve, and to alleviate pain and suffering. Meanwhile, soldiers, who were trained for combat, were called home by their governments, which were fearful of the political repercussions that would result if some harm befell them.

There is a price to be paid for not combating genocide, but the West was unwilling to pay it. Western countries feared losing the lives of heavily-armed volunteer soldiers and thus, turned and ran when the first signs of massive murders were perceived. Even the United States AID program was staffed by a contract employee, a Canadian, who if taken hostage, would have been less politically embarrassing to the administration than an American hostage. American soldiers came in but only to get Americans out. They did not come in to restore order.

In the aftermath of the genocide in Rwanda as well as the civil war and inter-ethnic slaughter in Bosnia, the world borrowed heavily from the experience of the Holocaust. A judicial response is being attempted by the international community, which is holding International War Crimes Trials, with differing degrees of success. And the survivors are seeking to learn from the Holocaust.

The Holocaust and Genocide -- The Holocaust As Genocide

Why study the Holocaust, the student may ask? Why not study all genocides, other instances of mass inhumanity? Why concentrate so intensely on this specific tragedy? Why not study evil that happened in our own country, such as the American policy toward Native Americans or slavery? All of these events are worthy of study, and there is no hierarchy of suffering. All suffering is personal. It offers no consolation to a person in pain or to people victimized in history to suggest that others have suffered more or suffered differently. Pain is pain and must be recognized.

Still, there are many answers to this question as to why we should study the Holocaust, perhaps almost as many as there are scholars who study the subject. Yet, the best answer is the simplest: the Holocaust was a paradigmatic event. We can see that this history echoes of other genocides, thereby enabling us to understand all manifestations of genocide. The Holocaust occurred in a modern, culturally-advanced industrial society that was somewhat like our own. It was initiated in the heart of Western Europe, in lands from which many Americans came to these shores. The Holocaust was the most extreme and intense manifestation of genocide.

There are many scholars who argue that the Holocaust was unique, an event unlike any other event in history. Some even go so far as to contend that the Holocaust can not be compared to any other event in history; it must be understood on its own terms apart from any other historical occurrence and thus, its singularity is affirmed. We share a different perspective. While the Holocaust was a unique event, singular in its manifestation, it can only be understood in the context of other genocides and other instances of massive inhumanity when we understand what it shared in common with other genocides and where it was singular.

Although there have been many instances of mass murder in human history, the Holocaust was unique for several reasons:

- The Holocaust was intentional and premeditated. Unlike other state policies in modern history which resulted in the death of entire populations -- such as the Australian treatment of the Aborigines and the British treatment of Irish peasants, which led to mass death from famine -- the murder of the Jews was the goal of Nazi policy from at least 1941 onward.
- The Holocaust served no political or territorial purpose. Unlike the native Americans who were crushed and then forced onto reservations because they stood in the way of the North American movement of Western expansion, the Jews posed no territorial threat to the Nazis. Their murder led to no geographical or political benefit; it yielded no territorial gain. The killing of Jews was not the means to an end but a fundamental goal in and of itself.
- The Holocaust was total and all-encompassing. Unlike the Turkish campaign against the Armenians, when Armenians living in Constantinople and

other cities were safe, while those living in the Eastern regions were victims, every Jew in Europe was targeted by the Nazis. At the Wannsee Conference, Reinhard Heydrich noted that the Final Solution would have to deal with eleven million Jews, including those in Britain and Ireland. The goal of exterminating all Jews was nothing less than a major realignment of the human species.

Jews sometimes mistakenly believe that the Holocaust is but another instance in the long history of antisemitism. The Holocaust was different from all previous anti-Jewish violence. In the past, attacks on Jews were episodic, confined to isolated geographic areas, and illegal in that the antisemitic outbursts that took place were most often not formally sanctioned by law. Throughout history, anti-Jewish violence was based on religion, not biology. Jews were killed for what they believed and practiced. Conversion and emigration were possible.

In contrast, Nazism was unrelenting. For twelve years, the persecution and then the destruction of the Jewish people was a national priority, even at the cost of rational policy. Jewish workers were killed in spite of an acute labor shortage, and railroad trains were made available to carry Jews to death camps even when every piece of rolling stock was needed to supply German troops on the Eastern front. Jews were hunted down throughout Europe, from central Russia to the Spanish border. Above all, the policy of extermination was sanctioned by law, decrees and official directives. The legal system itself served as the instrument of oppression and death. For example, in September 1942, Justice Minister Hierack turned over jurisdiction for Jews, Gypsies, Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, Czechs and asocial Germans to Heinrich Himmler. He explained his decision in a letter to Martin Bormann: "In doing so, I stand on the principle that the administration of justice can make only a small contribution to the extermination of these peoples."

In 1933, the Parliament gave over to Adolf Hitler emergency power to enact legislation. Thus over the next twelve years the Fiihrer's decrees had the force of laws. They were enforced by judges who took an oath of allegiance directly to Hitler, not to the constitution or even the state. Fifteen years after the defeat of Nazi Germany, under police interrogation in Israel, Adolf Eichmann cloaked himself in the mantle of legality: "I wouldn't have considered any of those actions illegal... The government was elected by a majority." As to his role, he reported, "Who is a little man like me to trouble his head about it? I get orders from my superiors. My job is to obey and comply."

Nazi Germany became a genocidal state. The goal of annihilation called for participation by every arm of the government. The policy of extermination involved every level of German society and marshaled the entire apparatus of the German bureaucracy. Parish churches and the Interior Ministry supplied the birth records that defined and isolated Jews. The post office delivered the notifications of definition, expropriation, denaturalization and deportation. The Finance Ministry confiscated Jewish wealth and property; the universities refused to admit Jewish students, denied degrees to those already enrolled, and dismissed Jewish faculty. German industrial and commercial firms fired Jewish workers, officers and board members, even disenfranchising Jewish stockholders. Government transportation bureaus handled the billing arrangements with the railroads for the trains that carried Jews to their death. German doctors enforced the so-called euthanasia program, participating in the murder of handicapped Germans. They signed false death certificates. They supervised the selection process, choosing who should live and who should die. In the concentration camps, they exploited the victims for vicious medical experimentation that served little scientific purpose and were administered without the consent of the patient; without even considering the patient as a person and thus, minimizing needless pain and suffering.

The location and operation of the camps were based on calculations of accessibility and cost-effectiveness: the hallmarks of modern business and administrative practice. The killing was done coolly and systematically under the supervision of bureaucrats. German corporations profited handsomely from the industry of death. Pharmaceutical firms tested drugs on camp inmates without any regard for toxic side effects. Companies bid for contracts to build ovens and supply the gas used for extermination. German engineers working for Topf and Sons supplied one camp alone with 46 ovens capable of burning 500 bodies an hour.

From the crude violence of the *Kristallnacht* pogrom in 1938, the murder process escalated to ever more sophisticated levels of bureaucratic management. Murder by mass shooting carried out by the mobile killing units, which was seen as having a dangerously unsettling effect on the perpetrators, gave way to death centers where a small staff could efficiently murder tens of thousands daily without coming directly in contact with the victims. The kind of ingenuity and control of inventory and cost that is prized in modern industrial practice was rationally brought to bear on the process of destruction.

In the eyes of the perpetrators, the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem was Germany's great achievement. In a speech to SS and police leaders in Posen, in western Poland, Himmler goaded them to greater self-sacrifice. He said:

"I also want to talk to you quite frankly on a very grave matter. Among ourselves it should be mentioned quite frankly and yet we will never speak of it publicly. I mean the evacuation of the Jews, the extermination of the Jewish race... Most of you know what it means when a hundred corpses are lying side by side or five hundred or a thousand. To have stuck it out and at the same time -- apart from exceptions caused by human weakness -- to have remained decent men, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history, which has never been written and is never to be written."

In 1942, Hitler boasted:

"In my Reichstag speech of September 1, 1939, I have spoken ... that if Jewry should plot another world war in order to exterminate the Aryan peoples of Europe, it would not be the Aryan peoples which would be exterminated, but Jewry."

At one time, the Jews of Germany laughed about my prophecies. I do not know whether they are still laughing or whether they have already lost all desire to laugh. But right now, I can only repeat: they will stop laughing everywhere, and I shall be right also in that prophecy."

In addition to mass murder, the Holocaust was the perverse perfection of slavery. Next to the extermination camp at Auschwitz/Birkenau, the SS ran a slave labor camp called Monowitz, or Auschwitz III, which housed profitable industrial operations, most notably I.G. Auschwitz, a division of the giant conglomerate, I.G. Farben. In combination with Birkenau, this vast petrochemical complex brought human slavery to its ultimate "perfection" by reducing human beings to consumable raw materials from which all mineral resources were systematically extracted. They were worked without adequate food or shelter, without rest or medical treatment until they died or until they were so worn out that they had no energy for life, and then they were selected or chosen to die in the gas chambers of Birkenau. Every part of the body was recycled to serve the Nazi war economy: gold teeth went to the treasury, hair was used to stuff mattresses, and ashes from the incinerated corpses became fertilizer.

Unlike the practitioners of slavery in both the ancient and modern world, the Nazis did not regard the slave as a capital investment, but as a commodity to be discarded and easily replaced. As one survivor put it: "They oiled the machines; they did not feed the workers."

The Final Solution was a managerial triumph. There was no budget for the program. With the cooperation of German industry and the ingenuity of the Nazi bureaucrats who harvested material from the dead, the entire killing operation was run in the black.

The Holocaust also represented a quasi-apocalyptic triumph for Nazi ideology. Its motivating sources of fear and hatred were transformed into the fervor of religion and took on the power of a religious crusade. In the Nazi world view, the annihilation of the Jews was essential to the survival and salvation of the German state.

As you will read in this curriculum, while the Holocaust was a unique event, unlike other events, it was so total, so complete that we can understand other genocides and even other manifestations of inhumanity by seeing the themes they share in common. Our purpose is not to pose one event alone as worthy of study, but to suggest that this one event, when understood on its own terms, can shed light on the other genocides and sensitize us anew to all manifestations of dehumanization. We will read about some of the worst that people have done to people, but we will also read about a few people who behaved differently. They may provide models for us as to how to respond to others, how to behave and how not to behave. We want you to learn many facts, but there is much more than facts in this resource manual. "Understand evil, but choose good." It may indeed be the hope of this generation.

The Nazis came to power in Germany in 1933. They came to power legally and then proceeded to use the power of that law to undermine democracy and to facilitate the dictatorship of one man, Adolf Hitler. Violence and terror, which had paved the way for his rise, intensified when Hitler became Chancellor. Increasingly, Hitler and the Nazis used terror as an instrument of their rule, at first at home and later with greater intensity abroad. They came to power with an ideology that was racist, believing in a hierarchy of race, the innate inequality of peoples, the superiority of their own race, which they called the "Aryan race," the inferiority of many races, and the "demonic" role of one people, whom they called the Jewish race.

In the pages that follow, you will learn the details of the Holocaust, event by event, detail by detail. You will also learn to understand what it shares in common with other genocides and where it is unique. A word of advice: the intellectual journey you are about to undertake is one filled with pain and anguish. It probes the depth of evil, but you will also discover all-too-rare moments of courage and compassion, moments that restore your faith in human decency. Almost all that you will learn will point in another direction, to a reality of evil and anguish.

Why commence this journey?

Permit me a story from the inferno. A survivor of the concentration camp of Sachsenhausen told new arrivals of the fate that awaited them. He told them the truth, directly, fully. He did not sugarcoat reality for them. When he finished he said the following:

"I have told you this story not to weaken you but to strengthen you. Now it is up to you!"

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Genocide

The atrocities committed by the Germans in attempting to exterminate the Jews of Europe led to the development of a new vocabulary to describe the horrors they perpetrated. One of the most important such words, "genocide," was coined by Professor Raphael Lemkin in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, published in 1944. Lemkin examined German occupation policies in relation to existing international law and explored possible means of adjudicating the crimes associated with those policies, particularly the attempt to exterminate Europe's Jews in the "Final Solution." The term quickly gained wide usage in the English Language.

Raphael Lemkin was a prominent Polish Jewish lawyer who supported international penalties for crimes of genocide. He escaped from Poland in 1941, where most of his family had been killed, after serving with the Polish RESISTANCE, and eventually reached the United States where he taught at Duke and Yale Universities. After the war he was instrumental in the passage of a United Nations resolution on the prevention and punishment of genocide.

New Word 'Genocide' Used In War Crime Indictment

By The Armlets! Prez/

LONDON, Oct 21—An article in *The Sunday Times* said today that last week's United Nations indictment against German war criminals had brought a new word into the English language—genocide—and that it has been coined by a Duke University professor.

The word occurs in count 3 in which it is stated that all twenty-four defendants "conducted deliberate and systematic genocide, viz., the extermination of racial and national groups, against the civilian populations of certain occupied territories."

The article said that it had been coined by Prof. Raphael Lemkin of Duke, who is now in London, from the ancient Greek word "genos," meaning race or tribe, and the Latin "cidere," meaning to kill.

*Reproduced from the New York Times, October 22, 1945
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Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *In Pursuit of Justice: Examining the Evidence of the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, page 193. © United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

A Partial Listing of Acts of Genocide During the Twentieth Century*

*1904—Botswana The German government massacred 65,000 (out of a population of 80,000) people known as the Hereros in southern Africa.

*1915-1922--Turkey The Ottoman Empire killed at least 1,500,000 Armenians in an attempt to "destroy all of the Armenians living in Turkey."

*1918-1921—Ukraine The Ukrainians slaughtered between 100,000 and 250,000 Jews in 2,000 different pogroms.

1932-1933--Soviet Union The Soviet Union purposely induced a famine in the Ukraine which resulted in 3 million to 8 million deaths.

1936-1939—Soviet Union At least 400,000-500,000 people were shot and killed in the Soviet Union for political reasons. In 1937-1938 there were days when up to 1,000 people were shot in Moscow alone.

*1939-1945—Europe 6,000,000 Jews in Europe were killed by the German Nazi government. This accounted for between 75 to 85 percent of all European Jews. The Nazis also murdered up to 6,000,000 other people which included Gypsies, handicapped individuals, homosexuals, political opponents, and huge numbers of Slavic peoples.

1940-1951—Soviet Union During this time Russia, under the dictatorship of Stalin, deported whole nations of people from their native lands which resulted in massive numbers of deaths. These included Germans, Crimean Tatars, Kalmuyks, Chechens, Ingushes, Meskhetians, Karachai, Balkarians, and Greeks.

1965—Indonesia The government of Indonesia slaughtered up to 600,000 people it accused of being "Communists." Many of these people were simply opponents of the government.

*1965-1972—Burundi The Tutsi killed between 100,000 and 300,000 Hutus in the African nation of Burundi.

1965-1990s—Guatemala More than 100,000 Indians in Guatemala have been killed by the military.

1966—Nigeria Genocidal massacre of Ibo people in northern Nigeria by government troops.

1971—Bangladesh The Pakistani government killed between 1,000,000 and 3,000,000 Bengalis in East Pakistan (now called Bangladesh).

*1972-1990s—Paraguay The Paraguayan government has enslaved, tortured, and killed thousands of Ache Indians in Paraguay.

*1975-1979—Cambodia Hundreds of thousands of Cambodians were killed in a series of purges by Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge government. Even more people died on forced marches from the cities to the countryside, during forced labor, and from starvation. Altogether, between 1,000,000 and 3,000,000 people were killed.

1975-1990s—East Timor An estimated 100,000 citizens (out of a population of 600,000) of East Timor have been slain by Indonesian troops.

1991-1995—Bosnia "Ethnic cleansing" practiced in Bosnia and other newly formed republics of former Yugoslavia.

1994—Rwanda Between 100,000 and 500,000, primarily Tutsi, were massacred in a civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi tribes.

* From the National Council for the Social Studies. Used by permission. An asterisk appears by those dates and incidents that the United Nations Report on Genocide (2 July 1985) notes as examples of genocide in the twentieth century. The other mass killings were not identified as genocide in the UN Report either because they had not yet occurred or because the UN Genocide Convention and Treaty does not include mass killings of political, class, or gender groups within its definition. Nevertheless, many scholars have argued that the exclusion of political, class, and gender groups is arbitrary at best and unconscionable at worst.

Source: *Social Education*, Volume 55, Number 2 (February 1991): 96. Reprinted by permission of the National Council for the Social Studies. Also found in *Understanding Prejudice: Social Studies Educator's Handbook*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Simon and Schuster Education Group. Reprinted by permission of Prentice Hall.

The Armenian Genocide

During 1915 and 1916, one and a half million of the two million Armenians living under the "Young Turk" government of the Ottoman Empire (now Turkey) were killed. This event has become known as the Armenian Genocide. It was planned by the Central Committee of the Young Turk Party, and the systematic fashion in which the genocide occurred proves that it was directed by the Turkish government.

First, under the pretext that an armed rebellion was about to occur, Armenians in the army of the Ottoman Empire were disarmed, placed into labor battalions, and killed. Then, on April 24, 1915, 600 Armenian leaders and intelligentsia (e.g. writers, thinkers, and professionals) were rounded up and killed in Constantinople (the nation's capital, now Istanbul). On that same day, 5,000 of the poorest Armenians were killed in their homes or on the streets of the capital. This activity was conducted by special "butcher battalions" made up of violent criminals released from prison.

Finally, the remaining Armenians were rounded up and told they would be relocated. They were marched off to concentration camps in the desert where they starved and thirsted to death in the burning sun. Many Armenians were brutalized by guards. Some Armenians were loaded on barges which were intentionally sunk at sea causing the victims to drown.

The Turkish government still denies that there was an Armenian Genocide, despite ample evidence that it occurred throughout many areas of what is now Turkey.

At the time, the Armenian Genocide was condemned by the then-major powers on both sides of World War I: its allies of Germany and Austria as well as Britain, France, and Russia on the other side of the conflict. The United States also condemned the Armenian Genocide and spoke out on behalf of the Armenians.

The Permanent People's Tribunal recognized the Armenian Genocide in 1984, and in 1987, it was also recognized by the European Parliament.

Most Armenian-Americans are children or grandchildren of the survivors of the genocide. In 1990, United States President George Bush called on all Americans to join with Armenians in commemorating the Armenian Genocide on April 24.

Questions:

Do you see any similar patterns in both the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust? If so, what are they?

What, if anything, could have been done to prevent this tragedy? What can we learn from the Armenian Genocide?

SOPHAL LENG STAGG Cambodian Survivor

In 1975, at the age of nine, Sophal Leng Stagg endured unspeakable physical and emotional trauma at the hands of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime. As the youngest of the Leng family, she still, to this day, cannot fully explain her need to be heard except as a testimony to those whose lives were lost and who can no longer speak for themselves to prevent any atrocities against mankind from recurring.

As painful as it may be to tell my story to others, I believe it needs to be passed, whole and without softening, from generation to generation. I cannot be satisfied with survival alone -- I must do more. Was the reason I survived the "killing fields" to tell my story? Could telling my story help prevent genocide from repeating itself? I have thought of this many, many times during the last seventeen years. And still I cannot answer these questions.

At the age of nine, I began a journey which not only changed my life and the lives of my family members but traumatized a civilization forever. The atrocities committed by the brutal Khmer Rouge Regime from 1975-1979 against the Cambodian people cannot be altered or forgotten. We can only look to the future and never permit genocide to be part of our world -- never again! In April of 1975 Pol Pot and his fanatical Khmer Rouge regime succeeded in decimating not only the people of my former country but a culture as well.

I remember the beauty of my home and the happiness my family enjoyed during the early years of my life. We were a middle class family living in the capital city of Phnom Penh. Imagine, one afternoon you are sitting in your house. The door is suddenly pushed open. Angry men dressed in black barge in and order you at gunpoint to pack a few belongings and follow them into the street -and that is the abrupt end of life as you know it.

Everything you owned was left behind. Your precious personal possessions would become only memories. You were stripped of everything. Your money had no value. My family and I were not alone. The Khmer Rouge forced the entire population of Phnom Penh, almost two million people, into the countryside.

At this point, my fear had begun. The date was April 17, 1975. All of a sudden, freedom of any kind was not part of my life. Comfort and kindness were not part of my life. Mercy did not exist. Pain was a constant companion. Starvation was commonplace. Death was everywhere.

Cambodia would become a cemetery. The young -- the old -- the sick -- the educated -- the innocent had suffered in ways which words cannot completely describe. We had become a part of the exodus.

Why were they doing this? Where were we going? We didn't know!

To this day, I can still hear the screams of the children who were separated from their parents. The suffocating heat choked us as we tried to obey the Khmer Rouge. They kept screaming at us, "Faster, faster, no time to rest. Go faster." Their anger grew as they began to shoot at us. Death was everywhere. I couldn't breathe as my heart pounded inside of me. I was so weak. I shook with terror.

We walked for five weeks deep into the countryside. We were then assigned to a work and reeducation camp far from our home. As we were led into this camp, we faced the hatred of the Khmer Rouge. We were considered their enemies. I recall the Khmer Rouge speeches during re-education. They said to me, "You have no parents. They are evil. Turn against them. Kill them. They hate you. You are a worthless being. You must work and sacrifice everything for Angka.(Angka is the Cambodian word for leading group or organization.) You will be hated until you prove yourself. You only have Angka. Angka will provide for you." Soon I began to shut out all words and all sounds. I was mute to their teachings. Regardless of how many times they said these things to me, they could not and would not make me turn against my loved ones. Our work assignments began as early as 3:00 or 4:00 each morning and lasted well into the darkness. We were forced to work every day without food or rest. We were being starved. During the first few months in this camp, I could still see my mom from a distance which gave me a sense of security. I was soon to find out how cruel Angka was. I would soon be alone. Before I was 11 years old, Angka took me away from my mother by force and sent me far away to another work camp.

Once again, I became silent. I would only speak to the moon during this time. I would ask it for help and answers as to why this madness existed. I knew the moon would not be cruel to me. It became my trusted friend. My spirit was broken as was my heart. My body was sick as starvation ripped its way through me. I did not want to die without my mom. I would not die without her. I waited another day.

During the worst time of starvation in 1978, I was yellow with hepatitis and lost my vision. I choked on worms as parasites infected my insides. My hair was gone leaving only infections in my scalp. I was unable to keep the leaches from attaching themselves to my body and sucking out the little life I had left. I begged for food. Angka just laughed at me.

I recall looking into the eyes of a killer. I begged him to have mercy on my older brother who attempted to escape the killing fields. I can still see the killer's face contorted with rage and the sharpness in his eyes as he beat me looking for answers as to my brother's whereabouts. The killer wanted only to kill. This killer was no more than fifteen years old.

A curious thing happened at that time. I began to feel intense anger as I had never before felt. I found strength from this anger. As powerful as Angka was, I was determined to live and tell my story. I would not die this way. One day I would tell my story. I would be heard and would speak for the millions of innocent Cambodians that can no longer speak.

In 1979 and after four years of Angka's unspeakable abuse, the North Vietnamese army invaded Cambodia attempting to drive out the Khmer Rouge. Our chance for escape had come. At this time, with mass confusion, my family had indeed experienced a miracle. One by one, we found each other and made the decision to run for our lives. To this day, my family is the only family I know of that survived Pol Pot's madness.

After months of living in the jungle and surviving on only what we could find growing wild, my family and I found freedom at the Thailand border. After we endured the unspeakable for so long, we experienced profound kindness at a refugee camp on the Thailand border called Khoa I Dang. At this camp, agencies from all over the world gave us the ultimate gift -- this gift was life. The kindness and help given to us can never be repaid. After ten months we were offered the chance to start a new life in a far away country -- America. My dream had come true.

Today I am an American, a wife and the mother of four beautiful sons. My dreams have come true for me and my family. I have only one more dream....to see a peaceful and non-violent world without senseless suffering: a world that offers kindness, hope and understanding for everyone regardless of color, race or where they come from...to give all people a chance at life.

I know the millions of people that perished in Cambodia would have understood why I struggle to tell my story. For them, I say, "Never again." We must give the young people of our world the opportunity to learn from our mistakes and never permit a repeat of what happened in my former country. We must kill the concept of genocide. I believe this is our responsibility.

When I was in captivity, I often thought of these words. Today it is my poem.

My world, sometimes harsh and cruel
Will my life end this day?
Sometimes kind and gentle
Sometimes changing by the day
Which way will it end?
Dream on -- dream on -- wait another day
My dreams are there but not known where
Find them and live another day
My cries not heard, not heard this day
No, I will not die this way
Stop the pain for now, and then
Let me live in peace one more day
My world is hurt as am I
The joy long gone -- must I say goodbye?
Not today, it's not my time
Dream on, dream on, wait another day.

Source: Taken from the presentation of Cambodian survivor, Sophal Leng Stagg, Student Awareness Day, Miami-Dade Community College, March 26, 1998.

Unit 2
20th Century Events Leading
To the Holocaust

TWENTIETH CENTURY ANTECEDENTS TO THE HOLOCAUST

“While not all victims were Jews, all Jews were victims.”

Elie Wiesel

Nobel Peace Prize Laureate (1986) and Holocaust Survivor

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Holocaust did not begin with World War II or even with Adolf Hitler. The historical roots of the Holocaust are deeply embedded in the history of world civilization. To a great extent, the Holocaust was the result of two major forces. First and foremost was the culmination of centuries of old prejudices, resurrected and magnified by the massive shifts in political, social, and economic factors throughout Europe. The second factor grew from industrialization and the advent of modern technology. Without the technology to implement mass murder, the possibility to obliterate whole populations, within short periods of time, would have been difficult to accomplish. It is for this reason that this unit concentrates on the twentieth century and specifically on those events in the twentieth century which culminated in the Holocaust. In reviewing the information in this unit, the reader is cautioned to remember that each condition discussed cannot be isolated from the long history which preceded it. The Holocaust was not the spontaneous result of a new political ideology. It was the result of centuries of apathy, frustration, ignorance, and aggression which have too often targeted an innocent minority as the cause of problems. To blame others, however illogical and unreasonable, has always served to shift the guilt from the perpetrators and deny their role in unfavorable events. This human tendency has often had tragic consequences in the past and has reached new extremes of horror in the twentieth century. The world looked on in a rather indifferent manner as these events took place.

VOCABULARY

Antisemitism: Modified from the term "Anti-Semitism" which was coined in 1879 to designate the then-current anti-Jewish ideology in Europe. Antisemitism is the preferred spelling today denoting all forms of hostility, opposition, or hatred toward the Jews throughout history.

Aryan: Originally a term for peoples speaking the languages of Europe and India; in Nazi ideology, a Nordic-type, Caucasian Christian.

Communism: System by which the means of production and distribution are owned and managed by the government, and the goods produced are shared by all citizens.

Euphemism: An inoffensive term substituted for one considered offensively explicit.

Fascism: A political philosophy, movement, or regime that exalts nation, corporate state structures, and race above the individual, and that stands for a centralized, autocratic government headed by a dictatorial leader, severe economic and social regimentation and forcible suppression of any political opposition.

Fifth Column: A clandestine subversive organization working within a given country to further an invading enemy's military and political aims.

Holocaust: The systematic, bureaucratic annihilation of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators as a central act of state. Although Jews were the primary victims, hundreds of thousands of Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) and many thousands of mentally or physically disabled persons were also victims of Nazi genocide. As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe from 1933 to 1945, millions of other innocent people were persecuted and murdered. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were killed because of their nationality. Poles as well as other Slavs were targeted for slave labor, and as a result, tens of thousands perished. Homosexuals and others deemed "anti-social" were also persecuted and often murdered. In addition, thousands of political and religious dissidents such as communists, socialists, trade unionists, and Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted for their beliefs and behavior, and many of these individuals died as a result of maltreatment.

Imperialism: The policy of extending a nation's territory or power by establishing dominance over other nations; also the repressive use of force to acquire colonies in other continents, as British Imperialism in 19th century India.

Mein Kampf (My Battle or My Struggle): A book written by Adolf Hitler in 1924-26 setting forth the

doctrine and precepts of the Nazi party.

Nationalism: Devotion to one's nation; excessive patriotism; doctrine that national interests are more important than international or individual considerations.

Pan-German movement : Sought to unite all Germans linguistically, culturally, and politically with the feeling that all things German were superior.

Pogroms: Attacks on Jews by mobs of non-Jews. Instigated by authorities who then stood by, these attacks led to injury, murder, rape, looting, and destruction of Jewish property.

Protocols of the Elders of Zion: A fraudulent pamphlet (exposed as a forgery) written to prove the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy, originally published in 1864.

Reparations: Payments made to make amends; a compensation.

Rhineland bastards: The derogatory term used by the Nazis to describe the children born to French North African soldiers and German mothers during World War I. This curriculum will use the term "African-German" to describe these children, although some scholars argue that only the term "Rhineland bastards" should be used. Such scholars fear that the term "African-German" is too neutral a term to describe the offspring who were never accepted as Germans, despite being born to German mothers on German soil.

Socialism: A system or theory of social organization in which the producers possess both political power as well as the means of production and distribution.

Third Reich (Third Empire): The Nazis called their government the Third Empire (1933-1945). The first Empire was the Holy Roman Empire (ninth century to 1806), the second was the German Empire (1871-1919), and the Third Reich followed the democratic Weimar Republic (1919-1933).

Untermensch: A German word for subhuman; a term used by the Nazis to describe "non-Aryans" such as Jews, Slavs, or non-Caucasians.

Versailles Treaty: The peace treaty signed at the end of World War I which stripped Germany of her colonies, treasury, and pride. This treaty forced Germany to pay significant reparations as a punishment for starting the war.

Darwin, Charles Robert (1809-1882): A British naturalist; expounded the theory of evolution by natural selection in *On the Origin of the Species*, published in 1859.

Hitler, Adolf : Führer (leader) of the Third Reich from 1933 until his suicide in 1945; he built a German regime unparalleled as an instrument of tyranny, oppression, and ruin. His conquests in Europe extended from the Pyrenees Mountains on the border of France and Spain to the Ural Mountains on the border between Europe and Asia. Hitler's tyranny and the German campaign to annihilate the Jewish people brought Western civilization to the brink of destruction.

Rothschild: One of the oldest, Jewish, banking families in Europe.

DEFINITION OF THE TERM: HOLOCAUST

It is critical that a study of the Holocaust begin with an understanding of definitions. In *Teaching About the Holocaust: A Resource Book for Educators*, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum provides the following explanation:

Define What You Mean by "Holocaust"

The Holocaust refers to a specific event in 20th-century history: the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims -- six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped, and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war, and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.

The term holocaust, without a capital "h," has a different meaning than the word Holocaust. While the "Holocaust" refers to the state-sponsored persecution and annihilation of European Jews by Nazi Germany, the definition of the term "holocaust" is complete destruction by fire or burning, or any widespread destruction. In the *Days of Remembrance: A Department of Defense Guide for Annual Commemorative Observances* (Second Edition), the Department of Defense and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum explain further the significance of using specific terminology:

Define Terms With Precision

To learn from history, we must record its events as accurately and as specifically as possible. We must use words with precision. With the passage of time, the word, "holocaust," has been used in many contexts, and has been given many meanings. For the purpose of recalling *the* Holocaust ... we must remember what this event was, within the context of history. To do that, it is equally important to identify what it was not.

The Holocaust is *not* a term for:

- all the evils of the world;
- any tragedy of great magnitude, or widespread death and destruction;
- all war or all world wars;
- all the terrors of World War II -- or all the many civilian deaths associated with that war, in cities throughout Europe.

THE OTHER VICTIMS OF THE NAZIS

INA R. FRIEDMAN

Fifty years after the end of World War II, few people are aware that Jews were not the only victims of the Nazis. In addition to six million Jews, more than five million non Jews were murdered under the Nazi regimes. Among them were Gypsies, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, blacks, the physically and mentally disabled, political opponents of the Nazis, including Communists and Social Democrats, dissenting clergy, resistance fighters, prisoners of war, Slavic peoples, and many individuals from the artistic communities whose opinions and works Hitler condemned.¹

The Nazis' justification for genocide was the ancient claim, passed down through Nordic legends, that Germans were superior to all other groups and constituted a "master race?"

Who constituted this "master race?" Blue-eyed, blond-haired people of Nordic stock, or "Aryans." As such, they had the right to declare who was worthy of life and who was not, who was to be maimed by sterilization or experimented upon in the interest of attaining racial purity, and who was to be used as slave labor to further the Nazi empire.

In the world the Nazis wished to create, Jews and Gypsies were to be eliminated as racially, socially, and physically defective. The deaf, the blind, the physically disabled, homosexuals, the mentally ill, and alcoholics were either to be sterilized or killed simply because they were viewed as "genetically defective?" Slavic people, though labeled racially inferior by the Germans, would be allowed to exist as slaves in order to supply the Nazis with free labor. Criminals, political enemies of the state, and homosexuals were pronounced socially undesirable

and subject to the will of the Nazis.

Barely two months after attaining power, the Nazis laid the constitutional foundation for Hitler's dictatorship with the passage of the Enabling Act on March 24, 1933. This legislation was subtitled "The Law to Remove Stress from the People and State." It gave Hitler the right to pass any law without the approval of the Reichstag. In effect, the implementation of this law allowed the Nazis to completely ignore the civil and human rights previously guaranteed by the German constitution.

In addition to passing laws legalizing their denial of human rights, the Nazis began a press and radio propaganda campaign to portray their intended victims as rats, vermin, and *Untermenschen* (subhumans). Inmates of concentration camps were listed as *Stuecks* (pieces), with assigned numbers, rather than being permitted the dignity of a name. If a German gave these victims a thought, he was to think of them as animals.

Although belief in the theory that one race was superior to others was not unique to Hitler and the Nazis, the enthusiastic support given to Nazis by all strata of German society, particularly the scientific community, was unique? Geneticists, scientists, doctors, and anthropologists from the internationally acclaimed Kaiser Wilhelm Institute cooperated in the process of experimenting on human beings to prove the theory of a master race. Spurious experiments to "show" the inferiority of non-Nordic groups such as blacks, Jews, Gypsies, Poles, and others were conducted. "Teachers embarrassed Jewish and Gypsy children by directing

"so-called scientific 'efforts that included measuring the sizes of their heads in order to prove so-called 'mental deficiencies' "

Other efforts by the scientific community included certifying that sterilization or annihilation was neces-

sary for "undesirable groups."

In 1943, Professor Eugen Fischer, director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Genetics, and Eugenics, wrote to a German newspaper: "It is a rare and special good fortune for a theoretical scientist to flourish at a time when the prevailing ideology welcomes it, and its findings immediately serve the policy of the state."³ Professor Fischer's "good fortune" included creating an environment that allowed Dr. Mengele and others who took the Hippocratic oath the right to experiment on human beings and to murder them in the "interest" of science. This included the experiments Mengele performed on Jewish and Gypsy twins in Auschwitz, injecting

them with chemicals and germs. If one twin died, the other twin was murdered to compare their physiognomy.

In efforts to breed a master race, more than 300,000 German Aryans were sterilized and countless numbers were gassed, under a law passed on July 14, 1933, the "Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring." In his book *Murderous Science*, Dr. Benno Mueller-Hill notes that the aforementioned statute provided for compulsory sterilization in cases of "congenital mental defects, schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, hereditary epilepsy . . . and severe alcoholism."⁴ This included the blind and the deaf, even those who became deaf or blind from illnesses such as scarlet fever or from accidents.

A few years ago, on a trip to Germany, I interviewed deaf people who had been sterilized by the Nazis. In one case, a nine year-old girl had been removed from her school and taken to a hospital by the principal for sterilization. "When I came to," she said, "I found my parents by my bed weeping." To prevent them from protesting, the state had not notified them beforehand.

The Nazis also had a significant impact on the lives of black children, who were the offspring of German women and African soldiers stationed in the Rhineland after World War I. Many of these so-called "Rhineland Bastards" were picked up from the streets or from classrooms and sterilized, often without anesthesia. Due to the application of the "Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Defects," which was passed in 1933, approximately 400 of these children were deprived of their right to reproduce.

Homosexuals were often given the choice of sterilization, castration, or incarceration in a concentration camp. This treatment was "legal" because of a law passed in 1871, under paragraph 175 of the German penal code, making homosexuality a criminal offense.⁵ Under the Nazis, thousands of persons were persecuted and punished on the charge of homosexuality. Many were sent to concentration camps, where they had to wear a pink triangle (*ma Windel*).

When the war broke out in 1939,

Hitler ordered the elimination of the severely retarded because they were "useless eaters Operating from headquarters at Tiergartenstrasse 4 in Berlin, the "T-4" program took the retarded to extermination centers and gassed them with carbon monoxide. In two years, from 1939 to 1941, more than 50,000 persons were killed in this program. In 1941, the Bishop of Muenster protested these gassings, and they were stopped. However, the victims had served their purpose as guinea pigs in the refinement of the use of gas for the mass killing of Jews and Gypsies. The lessons learned in these earlier executions were used in the death camps.

In *Mein Kampf* Hitler had made known his antipathy toward Christianity. Reverence would be shown to Hitler and not to the traditional symbols of Christianity. Statues of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary would be banished and, in their place, the Fuehrer's photographs would be displayed. The Old Testament was to be discarded as "a Jew book full of lies," and *Mein Kampf* would supersede the New Testament. In place of the banished cross would stand the swastika.

Both the priests and ministers who spoke out against the Nazis were labeled "political opponents," and "enemies of the state." Many of these dissenters were sent to Dachau concentration camp, where a special barracks was set aside for religious leaders. This isolation was to keep the clergy from giving solace or rites to the rest of the prisoners. In the camps, the clergy, like other inmates, were used as slave laborers and in medical experiments.⁷ Of the 2,270 priests and ministers from nineteen occupied countries who were interned in Dachau, 1,034 perished.

The handful of Catholic priests in Germany who protested the actions of the Nazis was also punished. For example, Provost Bernard Lichtenberg of St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin was arrested, imprisoned for two years, rearrested at the end of his sentence, and shipped to Dachau. He died en route.

In 1938, when Cardinal Michael von Faulhaber of Munich, a leader of the Catholic hierarchy, protested the persecution of Jews, the Nazis attempted to bum down his house.

Most clergymen either did not read *Mein Kampf* or ignored its foreshadowing of things to come, and thus the majority of Germany's religious leaders supported Hitler's nationalistic ambitions. Yet there were those among the religious community who did challenge the Nazis. Out of 17,000 Protestant clergy, three thousand were Evangelical Lutherans who opposed the Nazis. Some of the members of the group were arrested and sent to concentration camps—never to return. Others worked quietly in their opposition. Some spoke out because of Hitler's attacks on the church, and a few because of his actions against the Jews.

Jehovah's Witnesses, though few in number, also were seen as a threat to the Nazis. Not only did they oppose war and refuse to fight, but they also urged others not to serve. In addition, Witnesses refused to salute the flag or to say "Heil Hitler." To a Jehovah's Witness, saluting the flag or any authority other than Jehovah God is the same as worshipping idols.

Along these lines, my book *The Other Victims: First Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis* relates the story of the Kusserow family. Not only the parents, but also their eleven children, were punished for being Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1936, when the father, Franz Kusserow, refused to renounce his religion, he was put in jail until the end of the war. Two sons were executed because they refused induction into the army. Another son was incarcerated in Dachau, where he contracted tuberculosis and died shortly after the war. The three youngest children were sent to reform school for "re-education." Mrs. Kusserow and the older girls were taken either to prison or to concentration camps.

The Gypsies, like the Jews, were condemned by the Nazis to complete annihilation for being racially impure, socially undesirable, and "mentally defective."⁸ The persecution of Gypsies was not new in Germany. A "Central Office for the Fighting of the Gypsy Menace" had been established in 1899. In 1933, a plan to put thirty thousand

Gypsies aboard ships and sink the ships in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean was abandoned, but many Gypsies were sterilized under a law that permitted the sterilization of "mental defectives." In Dachau, Gypsies were used in experiments to test the amount of salt water an individual could drink before death occurred. At least a half million Gypsies were murdered by the Germans in the gas chambers, in experiments, or in general round-ups.

Although the Nazis declared Polish people *Untermenschen*, or subhumans, thousands of Polish children who were blond haired and blue eyed were separated from their families and sent to Germany to be raised in German homes as Aryans. The dark-haired, dark-eyed sisters and brothers remaining in Poland were to be taught only simple arithmetic, to sign their names, and to offer obedience to their German masters. Their purpose in life was to serve as slaves for the German empire. Anyone caught trying to give further instruction to Polish children was to be punished. Despite the ban on education, secret schools flourished in attics and basements.

Because of the ideological and racial antipathy toward Russian Communism, between two and three million Russian prisoners of war were purposely starved to death by the Nazi. Others were shipped in cattle cars to concentration or extermination camps. Most died of disease, exhaustion, or starvation.

No article on the non-Jewish victims would be complete without mentioning the first opponents of the Nazis: Germans who happened to be Communists or Social Democrats, judges and lawyers, or editors and journalists who had opposed the Nazis. They were the first to be arrested.

As soon as the Nazis came to power, the goal of eliminating all opposition took primacy. Trucks and police vans raced up and down the streets arresting any threat to Nazi rule, including those members of the artistic community who demanded cultural freedom. Books were burned. Authors and artists were either imprisoned or purposely denied the ability to earn a livelihood.

Even telling a joke about Hitler could lead to a death sentence. The evening before he was to give a concert, pianist Robert Kreitin remarked to the woman with whom he was staying, "You won't have to keep Hitler's picture over your mantle much longer. Germany's losing the war." The woman reported him to the Gestapo. The day of the concert, he was arrested and executed.

A few years ago, I conducted interviews in Germany for a biography, *Flying Against the Wind: The Story of a Young Woman Who Defied the Nazis*. The young woman, Cato Bontjes van Beek, was one of the few Germans to resist the Nazis. While she opposed the regime, her favorite cousin, Ulrich, supported Hitler and joined the Storm Troopers. Everyone I talked to described her blond-haired, blue-eyed cousin as "a sweet and sensitive person, an artist and a poet."

"How was it possible," I asked Cato's mother, "that Ulrich was so fanatical about Hitler? He came from the same background as Cato."

"When Ulrich looked in the mirror," she said, "he saw the Master Race."

It was people like Ulrich, along with the scientists and the judges who administered Nazi "justice," who gave Hitler the manpower and the consent to murder six million Jews and five million non-Jews.

Although Hitler is dead, the theories that he espoused remain alive. With the modern tools being developed by biologists and other scientists, it is important for young people to be made aware that knowledge can be manipulated and turned into tools of destruction.

In every generation, educating the young is an awesome task. Today, with new scientific advances, the rapid spread of knowledge through computer networks, and the ability to alter the material being transmitted, it is more important than ever that students learn to think for themselves. Part of that learning process should include the devastating effects of prejudice. A true understanding of the history of the Holocaust would make that lesson clear.

Notes

1 Susan Bachrach, *Tell Them We Remember: The Story of the Holocaust* (Boston: Little Brown, 1995), 20.

2 Nora Levin, *The Holocaust*. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968), II - 15.

3 Eugen Fischer, *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (Germany) Mach 28, 1943.

4 Benno Mueller-Hill *Murderous Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 28.

5 Richard Plant. *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York: Holt, 1986), 211-19.

6 Robert Jay Lifton. *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York, Basic Books, 1986), 46.

7 Barbara Distel. *Dachau* (Bruxelles: Comite International de Dachau, 1985), 11.

8 Ian Hancock. *The Pariah Syndrome* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Karoma Publishers, 1987), 63-69.

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Ina R. Friedman is the author of *The Other Victims: First Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990), which was cited in 1991 as one of the "Best Books" of the American Library Association-Young Adult Division. Her latest book, *Flying Against the Wind: The Story of a Young Woman Who Defied the Nazis, is a biography of a German Christian who resisted the Nazis* (Brookline, Massachusetts: Lodgepole Press, 1995).

Question: Summarize the groups of non-Jews who were victims of the Nazis. Explain the different reasons why each group was persecuted.

Source: Ina R. Friedman "The Other Victims of the Nazis." *Social Education*, Volume 59, Number 6 (October 1995): 339-341. Reprinted by permission of the National Council for the Social Studies.

THE VERSAILLES TREATY

Below are excerpts (in quotation marks) from the draft of the Versailles Treaty presented to officials of the Weimar Republic by the Allies on May 7, 1919. The treaty was signed on June 28, 1919.

Articles 27-41: The western boundaries of Germany are redefined.

Article 42: "Germany is forbidden to maintain or construct any fortifications on the left bank of the Rhine or on the right bank to the west of a line drawn fifty kilometers to the East of the Rhine."

Article 45: "As compensation for the destruction of the coal mines in the north of France and as partial payment towards the total reparation [war damages] due from Germany.... Germany cedes to France ... the coal mines situated in the Saar Basin." After fifteen years, the inhabitants of this region may vote to return to German control.

Article 51: "The territories [Alsace and Lorraine] which were ceded to Germany [at the end of the Franco Prussian War of 1870] ... are restored to French sovereignty."

Article 80: "Germany acknowledges and will respect strictly the independence of Austria This independence shall be inalienable."

Article 81: "Germany ... recognizes the complete independence of the Czecho-Slovak State."

Article 87: "Germany .. recognizes the complete independence of Poland." Poland's boundaries are to include large sections of what was eastern Germany.

Article 116: "Germany acknowledges and agrees to respect as permanent and inalienable the independence of all the territories which were part of the former Russian Empire.... Germany accepts definitely the abrogation [cancellation] of the Brest-Litovsk Treaties."

Article 119: "Germany renounces in favour of the Principal Allied and Associated Powers all her rights and titles over her overseas possessions."

Article 160: "The German Army [by March 31, 1920] ... must not exceed 100,000 men, including officers ... [and] shall be devoted exclusively to the maintenance of order within the territory and to the control of the frontiers."

Article 181: "The German naval forces in commission must not exceed: six battleships, six light cruisers, twelve destroyers, twelve torpedo boats.... No submarines are to be included." All other warships are to be surrendered to the Allies.

Article 198: "The armed forces of Germany must not include any military or naval air forces."

Article 231: "Germany accepts the responsibility of Germany and her allies for causing all the loss and damage to which the Allied and Associated Governments and their nationals have been subjected as a consequence of the war imposed upon them by the aggression of Germany and her allies."

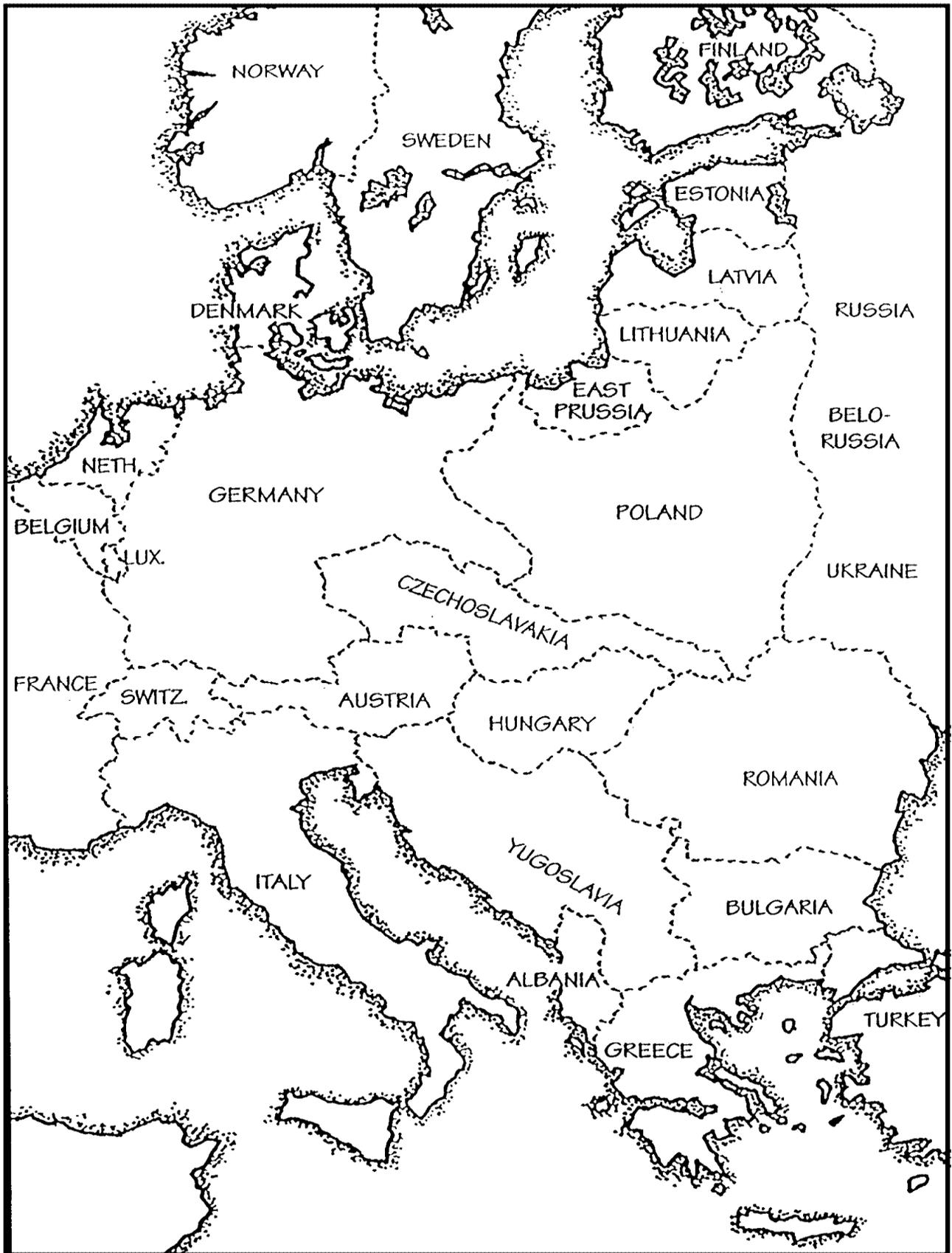
Article 232: "[Germany] will make compensation for all damage done to the civilian population of the Allied and Associated Powers and to their property." A commission will be established to determine the amount of reparations [war damages] Germany must pay.

Article 428: “As a guarantee for the execution of the present Treaty by Germany, the German territory situated to the west of the Rhine, together with the bridgeheads, will be occupied by Allied and Associated troops for a period of fifteen years.”

Questions on The Versailles Treaty

1. What articles of the treaty pose the greatest obstacles to the economic development and financial stability of postwar Germany?
2. According to the treaty, how do the Allies plan to ensure that Germany meets the terms of the agreement?
3. In your opinion, which article of the treaty is the most “vindictive” and why?

Source: Teacher’s Resource Book for Crisis, Conscience, and Choices: Weimar Germany and the Rise of Hitler. Choices for the 21st Century Education Project, Watson Institute, Brown University, Box 1948, Providence, RI 02912. Phone: (401) 863-3155. Fax: (401) 863-1247. Email: <http://www.choices.edu>. Reprinted by permission of Choices for the 21st Century Education Project.



Map of East Central Europe Prior to World War II

Canonical (Church) and Nazi Decrees and How They are Similar

<i>Canonical Law</i>	<i>Nazi Measure</i>	<i>Canonical Law</i>	<i>Nazi Measure</i>
Prohibition of intermarriage and of sexual intercourse between Christians and Jews, Synod of Elvira, 306	Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, September 15, 1935 (RGB1 I, 1146.)	The marking of Jewish clothes with a badge, 4th Lateran Council, 1215, Canon 68 (Copied from the legislation by Caliph Omar II [634-644], who had decreed that Christians wear blue belts and Jews, yellow belts.)	Decree of September 1, 1941 (RGB1 I, 547.)
Jews and Christians not permitted to eat together, Synod of Elvira, 306	Jews barred from dining cars (Transport Minister to Interior Minister, December 30, 1939, Document NG-3995.)	Construction of new synagogues prohibited, Council of Oxford, 1222	Destruction of synagogues in entire Reich, November 10, 1938 (Heydrich to Göring, November 11, 1938, PS-3058.)
Jews not allowed to hold public office, Synod of Clermont, 535	Law for the Re-establishment of the Professional Civil Service, April 7, 1933 (RGB1 I, 175.)	Christians not permitted to attend Jewish ceremonies, Synod of Vienna, 1267	Friendly relations with Jews prohibited, October 24, 1941 (Gestapo directive, L-15.)
Jews not allowed to employ Christian servants or possess Christian slaves, 3d Synod of Orléans, 538	Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, September 15, 1935 (RGB1 I, 1146.)	Jews not permitted to dispute with simple Christian people about the tenets of the Catholic religion, Synod of Vienna, 1267	
Jews not permitted to show themselves in the streets during Passion Week, 3d Synod of Orléans, 538	Decree authorizing local authorities to bar Jews from the streets on certain days (i.e., Nazi holidays), December 3, 1938 (RGB1 I, 1676.)	Compulsory ghettos, Synod of Breslau, 1267	Order by Heydrich, September 21, 1939 (PS-3363.)
Burning of the Talmud and other books, 12th Synod of Toledo, 681	Book burnings in Nazi Germany	Christians not permitted to sell or rent real estate to Jews, Synod of Ofen, 1279	Decree providing for compulsory sale of Jewish real estate, December 3, 1938 (RGB1 I, 1709.)
Christians not permitted to patronize Jewish doctors, Trullan Synod, 692	Decree of July 25, 1938 (RGB1 I, 969.)	Adoption by a Christian of the Jewish religion or return by a baptized Jew to the Jewish religion defined as a heresy, Synod of Mainz, 1310	Adoption of the Jewish religion by a Christian places him in jeopardy of being treated as a Jew. (Decision by Oberlandesgericht Königsberg, 4th Zivilsenat, June 26, 1942.) (<i>Die Judenfrage [Vertrauliche Beflage]</i> , November 1, 1942, pp. 82-83.)
Christians not permitted to live in Jewish homes, Synod of Narbonne, 1050	Directive by Göring providing for concentration of Jews in houses, December 28, 1938 (Bormann to Rosenberg, January 17, 1939, PS-69.)	Sale or transfer of Church articles to Jews prohibited, Synod of Lavour, 1368	
Jews obliged to pay taxes for support of the Church to the same extent as Christians, Synod of Gerona, 1078	The "Sozialausgleichsabgabe" which provided that Jews pay a special income tax in lieu of donations for Party purposes imposed on Nazis, December 24, 1940 (RGB1 I, 1666.)	Jews not permitted to act as agents in the conclusion of contracts, especially marriage contracts, between Christians, Council of Basel, 1434, Sessio XIX	Decree of July 6, 1938, providing for liquidation of Jewish real estate agencies, brokerage agencies, and marriage agencies catering to non-Jews (RGB1 I, 823.)
Prohibition of Sunday work, Synod of Szabolcs, 1092	Proposal by the Party Chancellery that Jews not be permitted to institute civil suits, September 9, 1942 (Bormann to Justice Ministry, September 9, 1942, NG-151.)	Jews not permitted to obtain academic degrees, Council of Basel, 1434, Sessio XIX	Law against Overcrowding of German Schools and Universities, April 25, 1933 (RGB1 I, 225.)
Jews not permitted to be plaintiffs, or witnesses against Christians in the Courts, 3d Lateran Council, 1179, Canon 26	Decree empowering the Justice Ministry to void wills offending the "sound judgment of the people," July 31, 1938 (RGB1 I, 937.)		
Jews not permitted to withhold inheritance from descendants who had accepted Christianity, 3d Lateran Council, 1179, Canon 26			

Source: *Destruction of the European Jews*, revised and definitive edition, by Raul Hilberg (New York: Holmes & Meler, 1985). Copyright © 1985 by Raul Hilberg. Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

Questions on "Canonical and Nazi Anti-Jewish Measures"

What does the comparison between "Canonical (Church) Law" and "Nazi Measures" help us to understand?

Which laws do you think were the most damaging to the Jews and why?

Unit 3
Adolph Hitler & The
Rise of the Nazi Party

VOCABULARY

TERMS

Allied Powers (Allies): During World War II, the Allies were over twenty nations led by Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union that fought against the Axis powers, mainly Nazi Germany, Italy, Japan, and their allies.

Aryan: Originally a term for peoples speaking the languages of Europe and India; in Nazi ideology, a Nordic-type, Caucasian Christian.

Axis Powers: The tripartite alliance among Germany, Italy, and Japan during World War II; also known as the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo Axis; the term Axis countries is also applied to other states allied with Germany, such as Hungary, Rumania, Slovakia, and Bulgaria.

Beer Hall Putsch (also called the Hitler Putsch or the Munich Putsch): A failed attempt by Hitler and the Nazis to take over the Bavarian government on November 9, 1923.

Deutsche Arbeitsfront: The official monolithic labor organization allied to the Nazi party, replacing the labor unions.

Einsatzgruppen (Task Forces or Action Groups): Task force of mobile killing units operating in German-occupied territories; responsible for the majority of people annihilated outside concentration camps in Eastern Europe.

Enabling Act: The name given to the "Law for Removing the Distress of People and *Reich*" passed on March 23, 1933. This law removed the power of legislation from the *Reichstag* (German parliament) and gave it to the Nazi-controlled government, thereby providing the constitutional and legal foundation for Hitler's dictatorship.

Führer (leader): Adolf Hitler's title in Nazi Germany.

Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth): Youth service for males between 10 and 18 years of age.

Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass): During November 9 and 10, 1938, a pogrom and riot was staged in which mobs of Nazis attacked, looted, vandalized, and set fires to Jewish shops, homes, businesses, and synagogues in Germany and Austria. The name *Kristallnacht* comes from the fact that so many shop windows were smashed, but the term is also an attempt to minimize what actually took place during the pogrom. More than 26,000 male German Jews between the ages of 16 and 60 were deported to concentration camps after this pogrom and riot.

League of German Maidens: The female counterpart of the Hitler Youth for girls between 10 and 18 years of age.

Lebensraum (living space): Principle of Nazi ideology and foreign policy, expressed in the drive for the conquest of territories, mainly in the east.

Mein Kampf (My Battle or My Struggle): A book written by Adolf Hitler in 1924-26 setting forth the doctrine and programs of the Nazi party.

Munich Conference: In an effort to negotiate with Hitler regarding the fate of the Czechoslovak region of the Sudetenland, the leaders of Great Britain, France, and Italy met with Hitler in Munich, Germany. Czechoslovakian leaders were not invited to attend the conference. Fearing that Hitler would invade the region, the leaders agreed to let Hitler annex the Sudetenland. Britain's Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain triumphantly told his people that he was responsible for "peace in our time." Germany invaded Czechoslovakia six months after the Munich Conference.

National Socialist German Workers Party (Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter Partei!): The Nazi party.

Nazi: A member of the German fascist party controlling Germany from 1933 -1945 under the dictatorial leadership of Adolf Hitler.

Nuremberg Laws: Two laws issued on September 15, 1935, followed by a series of regulations, providing a precise definition of "Jew" by origin, religion, and family ties. These laws reduced the rights of German Jews, since they could no longer vote or hold office, although they retained the right to German passports and did not lose their German citizenship until the 11th Citizenship decree in 1941. The concept of "non-Aryan" was first used in these regulations; marriage or sexual relations between a Jew and an "Aryan" were considered criminal offenses. Employment of "Aryan" household help under age 45 was forbidden. These laws were extended to apply to Christians whose parents or grandparents were Jews. In 1938, the letter "J" was ordered to be printed on all identity cards belonging to Jews. These regulations were the beginning of cruel repression sanctioned by law, designed to isolate the Jews socially as well as politically.

Reichstag: Formerly, the legislative assembly of Germany from 1871 to 1945.

Reparations: Payments made to make amends; a compensation.

Rhineland bastards: The derogatory term used by the Nazis to describe the children born to French North African soldiers and German mothers during World War I. This curriculum will use the term "African-German" to describe these children, although some scholars argue that only the term "Rhineland bastards" should be used. Such scholars fear that the term "African-German" is too neutral a term to describe the offspring who were never accepted as Germans, despite being born to German mothers on German soil.

SA (Sturmabteilung or Storm Troopers): Organized in 1922; comprised of an army of 15,000 toughs.

SS (Schutzstaffel or Protection Squad): Originally, guard detachments formed in 1925 as Hitler's personal guard. In 1929, under Himmler, the SS developed into the elite units of the Nazi party. These Nazi paramilitary, black-shirted storm troops used two symbols copied from Teutonic runes, a parallel jagged double S usually used as a symbol warning for high-tension wires or lightning. The SS was built into a giant organization and provided staff for the police, concentration camp guards, and the fighting units of the *Waffen SS*.

Third Reich (Third Empire): The Nazis called their government the Third Empire (1933-1945). The first Empire was the Holy Roman Empire (ninth century to 1806), the second was the German Empire (1871-1919), and the Third *Reich* followed the democratic Weimar Republic (1919-1933).

Thousand Year Reich: Hitler's vision that the Nazi government would live for 1000 years; it came to an end after twelve years and four months.

Versailles Treaty: The peace treaty signed at the end of World War I which stripped Germany of her colonies, treasury, and pride. This treaty forced Germany to pay significant reparations as a punishment for starting the war.

Wehrmacht : The German Armed Forces.

Weimar Republic: The German Republic from 1919 to 1933; its constitutional assembly had met in the city of Weimar in 1919.

NAMES AND PLACES

Braun, Eva: Longtime mistress of Hitler whom he eventually married in April 1945. They died together in a suicide pact on April 30, 1945.

Chamberlain, A. Neville: The Prime Minister of England during the Munich Conference in September 1938.

Dachau: A concentration camp located near Munich, Germany; it was the first major concentration camp opened in March 1933.

Goebbels, Joseph: Chief of Propaganda in the Nazi party who controlled all the newspapers and radio broadcasts to solidify support for Hitler.

von Hindenburg, Paul: President of Germany prior to Hitler's reign.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

ADOLF HITLER AND THE RISE OF THE NAZI PARTY

The Early Years

Adolf Hitler was born in a small town in Austria on April 20, 1889. He was born to a 52 year-old man who had, as his third wife, a woman more than 20 years his junior. Adolf was successful in elementary school, but he dropped out of high school two years after his father died.

In 1907, Hitler moved to Vienna where he hoped to become a student at the Academy of Fine Arts. He submitted drawings to the Academy, but they were rejected as unsatisfactory. When he reapplied to the academy a year later, he was not even allowed to take the entrance examination. Meanwhile, his mother had become ill with cancer. When she died, Hitler went home for the funeral but a few weeks later, he returned to Vienna where he spent the next four years.

Vienna was an important influence on Hitler's way of thinking. On the surface a sophisticated city with Strauss waltzes and gatherings of friends sharing pastries, it was also a hotbed of antisemitic politics.

During this period of time, Hitler read a great deal and was strongly influenced by German nationalistic and racist sentiments. He rejected all ideas of equality and democracy and thoroughly opposed socialism. He did admire, however, how the socialists organized themselves. He also rejected Christianity, although he recognized the importance of using pageantry and ritual to gain the loyalty of followers. Hitler found little in the world to like; he was a bitter man who felt no one recognized his genius.

In 1913 Hitler moved from Vienna, Austria, to Munich, Germany. In 1914 the "Great War," as World War I was called, began and Hitler volunteered for an infantry regiment. He served as a messenger on the western front for most of the war, was wounded in the leg, and suffered from temporary blindness caused by a poison gas attack. Although decorated twice for bravery, he never rose above the rank of corporal. By the time he recovered from the gas attack, the war was over. As a result of his war experiences, Hitler grew even more intensely nationalistic.

Germany lost the war, and the nation was left bankrupt. Millions of Germans were unemployed. A weak government, called the Weimar Republic, replaced the empire.

The Rise of the Nazi Party

Hitler joined a small political group which later became known as the National Socialist German Workers' (Nazi) party. He became the leader of the party and surrounded himself with people who shared his antisemitic views. He increased membership of the Nazi party by giving speeches in beerhalls in which he blamed the Jews for the loss of the war, hyperinflation, high unemployment, and the despair of the German people.

From a small, initial group of just a few hundred, which could have easily been stopped in the beginning, Hitler eventually organized a private army of 15,000 toughs who became known as Storm Troopers or SA. They were dressed in brownshirted uniforms bearing the swastika emblem which gave them a feeling of unity. They were armed and trained by active duty German Army officers. The Versailles Treaty had restricted the size of the German Army. The leading officers wanted the Stormtroopers available in case of a renewed war, a communist uprising, or to assist in a right-wing military takeover of the government.

When the Army refused to act to overthrow the government of the Weimar Republic, Hitler acted on his own. In November 1923, Hitler staged an ill-fated attempt to take over the Munich government. This attempt became known as the *Beer Hall Putsch*. When the plot failed, Hitler was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison for treason. He served only nine months of his sentence.

While in prison, he dictated his book, *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), to Rudolf Hess, in which he outlined his Master Plan. Hitler's racist intentions, as they evolved over his lifetime, included the following elements: Non-Jewish Germans were the "Aryan master race" with the right to rule over the "lower races." Other non-Jewish Western Europeans were to be divided into those of Nordic and non-Nordic backgrounds with the Nordic people to have privileges in ruling similar to but not as influential as the Non-Jewish Germans. Those considered among the "lower races" were the Slavs of Eastern Europe. These inferior peoples were to be deprived of their elites, including their priests, political leaders, and those who had been well educated. The "lower races" were to be turned into slaves of the Germans and to carry out manual labor. The "enemy races," especially the Jews, but also the Gypsies, were to be killed. The "enemy races" did not have homelands of their own and had traditional occupations which made them difficult to exploit as laborers. The Jews were traditionally either professionals or involved in mercantile occupations, such as trade, while the Gypsies pursued itinerant occupations such as selling horses, telling fortunes, serving as circus entertainers and musicians and were also beginning to develop a small middle class with merchants and civil servants (usually postal officials).

In order to make the Germans stronger as a "master race," Hitler favored sterilizing the mentally retarded, the physically handicapped, and people with hereditary diseases so they could not have children. He also wanted to kill Germans who were not "socially productive," including people with terminal illnesses, the mentally ill, the physically disabled, and the severely deformed.

In late 1924, Hitler was released from jail. After leaving prison, he reorganized the Nazi party. He created an elite unit of guards called the SS. This would later displace the Storm Troopers as the most important Nazi paramilitary unit. The SS became the party's internal police force and intelligence service. After the Nazis took power, SS men also served as concentration camp guards and large SS military units fought during the Second World War.

From 1924 to 1928, the Nazis were weak. But a farm crisis in 1928 allowed them to expand among peasants who were losing their land. In 1929 a depression hit Germany. Hitler blamed the reparation payments, which Germany was supposed to pay as a consequence of damages caused in World War I, as the cause of the depression. Hitler's opposition to the payments made him popular with many nationalistic Germans. When reparations were abandoned because of the depression, Hitler cleverly took full credit for ending them.

Hitler Becomes Dictator

The Nazis were still a minority when in November 1932, they won 33.1 percent of the vote and 33.5 seats in the *Reichstag* (Parliament).¹ As compared with previous elections, the Nazi party had lost two million votes. Thus, ironically, Hitler came to power just as the strength of the Nazi party was beginning to wane in Germany.¹ President von Hindenburg reluctantly offered Hitler a subordinate position in the cabinet. However, Hitler pressured the elderly president for more power. On a promise that Hitler would act lawfully if he were named to head the government, President von Hindenburg made him chancellor in January, 1933. As chancellor, Hitler immediately broke his pledge to the President and began to set up a government with himself as dictator.

On February 27, 1933 the *Reichstag* burned down. The circumstances of the fire were mysterious, and some said that the Nazis had done it themselves to create a crisis. In any event, the Nazis persuaded President von Hindenburg to issue a decree suspending constitutional

guarantees. Shortly thereafter, the so-called "Enabling Act" was passed granting the Nazi party emergency powers.

The following year the elderly President von Hindenburg died, and Hitler proclaimed himself both president and chancellor of the *Reich* (realm), immediately creating a government with himself as the *Führer* (leader).

With his power now consolidated, the Nazis could beat and jail opponents. No political parties other than the Nazis were allowed. Hitler outlawed freedom of the press and all individual rights, and the Nazis were allowed to imprison anyone without a trial. The secret police, the *Gestapo*, hunted down enemies who were beaten, shot, or jailed. Within months after Hitler came to power, the first permanent concentration camp, Dachau, was opened outside Munich. During the next several years, similar camps opened throughout Germany and political and religious opponents of the Nazi party, especially the socialists, communists, and Jehovah's Witnesses were imprisoned there. All courts were controlled by the Nazis, and judges were expected to decide on the basis of the new system rather than justice.

By the time the Nazis came to power, the economy was already recovering, but they received full credit. Once in power, the Nazis pushed the recovery faster with an enormous public works program. Unemployment continued to drop, and prices of agricultural commodities paid to farmers rose providing greater security to farm owners. Each of the work projects received publicity linking it with the triumph of Hitler. All radio broadcasts and newspapers were effectively controlled by a little man, Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi party's chief of the Department of Propaganda. Those who disliked Goebbels referred to him as the "poisonous dwarf." His cunning was both feared and respected. Unsuccessful in finding work, Goebbels had found a home for himself in the Nazi party. As Chief of Propaganda, Goebbels discovered his true talent -- organized lying. He used the media to publicize gross falsehoods and repeated them again and again. The idea behind this deception was, as he said, "A little lie may not be believed by all, but a big lie, if repeated with sufficient frequency, will eventually take deep root in the minds of the uninformed masses."

What the papers and broadcasts did not report was the fact that these economic gains were often temporary and came at the expense of freedom and democracy. Particularly vicious were the broadcasts in which Hitler spoke himself. He promised sweeping reforms and raged against the Jews as enemies and corruptor of the purity of Germany. The Nazis accused the Jews of wanting to do what they were out to do for themselves: control the world and annihilate their enemies.³ In his book, *Harvest of Hate*, Leon Poliakov noted: "But while Adolf Hitler...had nothing new to offer in the way of ideas and concepts (concerning anti-Semitism)...he immediately produced some revolutionary innovations... the *Führer's* main task was to transform 'static hate' into 'dynamic hate'."

All labor unions were outlawed, wages were not allowed to increase and workers were forcibly enrolled in the German Labor Front. Independent organizations for farmers were squashed and farmers had to join the Nazi farmers' group. Farm prices could not be raised in later years, even though the prices farmers had to pay for industrial goods went up and up. However, many farmers applied for and received slave labor. The "community" was fostered. In a society always class-conscious, the banker was encouraged to eat with the farmer and the factory boss with his assembly workers. Although the wealth was to be shared, the industrialists stayed rich. They had financed the Nazis when it became likely Hitler would win.

Children were taught to pray to Hitler instead of to God, and Nazi organizations were set up for boys and girls to assure the loyalty of future generations. The organization for boys was called the "Hitler Youth" and for the girls, the "League of German Maidens." They were required to drill, become physically fit, swear allegiance to Nazi beliefs, and learn the Nazi party songs. They were taught to spy on anyone who opposed Hitler's beliefs, even their own parents.

Discrimination Against the Jews

Initially many Germans dismissed Hitler's ravings against the Jews as a mere campaign strategy to gain attention. But as early as the spring of 1933, right after the Nazi seizure of power, Stormtroopers attacked Jewish businesses. They smeared graffiti with Stars of David on store windows and stood outside requesting the boycott of Jewish merchants, threatening potential customers. But an international boycott of German goods forced the Nazis to drop this tactic; it was also initially unsuccessful in Germany, where consumers tended to shop by habit or the availability of products at good prices.

In 1933, a systematic campaign against political opponents, some of whom were Jews, began to take place. "On March 21, 1933, the first prisoners were brought under guard to the Oranienburg concentration camp. In the next ten days, some 15,000 persons were taken into 'Protective Custody.'" In September of 1935, the Nuremberg Laws were adopted in which Jewish status was defined and segregated them from the non-Jewish population, called "Aryans" by the Nazis. People were defined as Jews according to the religious practices of their grandparents, not according to their own religion. Many Jewish converts to Christianity were thus considered to be Jews. Under these laws, Jews were removed from civil service, courts and commerce, schools and universities. Marriage between Jews and non-Jews was banned, as was the employment of female non-Jewish servants by Jews. By late 1935, these laws were also applied to other "non-Aryan" groups, including the Gypsies and African-Germans.

As the Germans moved toward war, the Nazis intensified the persecution of the Jews in Germany, including the expropriation and forced sale of their property at artificially low prices. On November 9, 1938, Storm Troopers attacked Jewish homes and businesses and burned synagogues throughout Germany and Austria. The Nazis looted thousands of Jewish businesses, and about 26,000 Jews were arrested. The streets were littered with glass from the many shop windows the Nazis had smashed. The evening of destruction became known as *Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass). To add to their misery, the Jews were forced to pay for the damage that the Nazis had done.

The War Years

As supreme commander or *Führer*, Hitler started a policy of rearmament soon after coming to power and made plans to seize other territories in order to provide *Lebensraum* (living space) for Germans. Hitler was able to make several military and territorial gains without conflict. He reincorporated the Saar (1935), occupied the Rhineland (March 1936), and incorporated Austria with Germany (March 1938). When Hitler claimed the necessity to take over the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia partially inhabited by Germans, an indecisive Britain and France sanctioned this partition in a pact signed in Munich, Germany, in September 1938. The Prime Minister of England, Neville Chamberlain, excused this act of betrayal by claiming that by appeasing Hitler, he had brought "Peace in Our Time." A year later, Hitler took control of the rest of Czechoslovakia.

The Germans signed a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union in August 1939 which freed Germany to attack Poland. Britain and France finally saw that they would have to go to war to stop Hitler from further aggression. Germany attacked Poland in September 1939 and Britain and France, who had guaranteed Polish independence, declared war on Germany. The Second World War had begun.

As they invaded Poland, many German soldiers, particularly the SS troops, deliberately killed any Jews they found. Once the country was conquered, its large Jewish population was forced to move to ghettos, slum neighborhoods in the larger cities where thousands of people were forced to live in a severely cramped space. These ghettos were deprived of adequate supplies of food and medicine, and their populations were condemned to a slow death.

The "non-aggression pact" Hitler had made with the Soviet Union allowed Germany to conquer much of Western Europe without interference. In return, the Soviets received some of the spoils of the war, including large territories of land in Eastern Poland and the Baltic countries. Then, after conquering much of Western Europe, Hitler attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941. In less than a month, the *Wehrmacht* (German army) had advanced 450 miles into Russia. Moscow, the capitol of Russia, was only 200 miles away. As great land masses were swallowed up, so, too, were entire Soviet armies. During the first weeks of the invasion, tens of thousands of prisoners were taken, sustaining Hitler's faith in Germany's invincibility.

A murderous phase of the Holocaust now began. SS military units, known as *Einsatzgruppen* (Mobile Killing Units), followed the advancing German Army and systematically shot and killed any Jews, Gypsies, or communists whom they captured. Trucks were set up so that the carbon monoxide fumes from the exhaust went directly into the rear compartment. As the trucks moved, Jews who had been forced into the rear compartments were killed by the exhaust fumes. Mass executions were conducted such as at Babi Yar or Ponary. And, finally, killing centers were established where millions of Jews and others could be killed by poison gas and other methods.

It is difficult to comprehend why a state would carry out the killing of millions of innocent men, women, and children. However, the Germans put resources into the effort of killing Jews which they might more rationally have put into winning the war. Railroad trains were used to transport Jews to their deaths, instead of taking supplies to the troops at the front. Jews were killed who could have supplied vital labor for German war industries. The Nazis were fanatical about their idea of killing the Jews. Some aspects which formed the motivation of Hitler and the Nazis are the following:

1. Some Nazis, including Hitler, seriously believed their own propaganda. They thought the Germans were involved in a war to the death with the Jews. They thought that either the Jews would control the world or they would. Other Nazis knew this propaganda was false, but they saw it as being politically useful.

2. The Nazis wanted to win the support of the people in Germany by uniting them against a common enemy. Businessmen and professionals could benefit by taking over formerly Jewish businesses and professional practices. Ordinary Germans could be told that the Nazis were pushing aside the "wealthy Jews." Most Jews were not wealthy, but the average Jew was in the middle class, and few Jews in Germany were workers or peasants.

3. The Nazis also wanted to use antisemitism to win support from people in the countries that they conquered. This was not always difficult, especially in Eastern Europe, even though the Nazis intended to turn the Slavic peoples into their slaves. By attacking the Jews, the Nazis could make some of the people in Eastern Europe believe that things would be better for them. The Nazis gave the homes and small businesses of Jews who were killed to Eastern Europeans who collaborated with them. Large Jewish-owned businesses were given to Germans.

4. Peer pressure and careerism also resulted in murderous behavior.

The Holocaust resulted in the deaths of six million Jews. Millions of non-Jewish civilians were also deliberately killed by the Nazis during the war as Germany conquered country after country in Western and Eastern Europe.

On March 11, 1941, The Lend-Lease Act was passed by the United States Congress in spite of objections by isolationists that it would draw America into the war. This act gave the president the authority to ship armaments to any country whose defense was in the interest of the United States. Britain was a major beneficiary of weaponry under this law. When Hitler's forces invaded the USSR on June 22, 1941 -- despite the non-aggression pact between the two nations

– the Lend-Lease Act made it possible for the United States to provide a huge amount of assistance to the Soviet effort to defeat the Germans in the east by supplying them with war materials and goods. The enormous shipments of materials were sent by Merchant Marine ships which became targets of German U-boat attacks. The Merchant Marines were truly heroic, risking their lives to ensure that the shipments made it across the Atlantic Ocean, thereby making an invaluable contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany.

On December 7, 1941, Japan, an Axis partner of Germany, bombed the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. That evening, President Roosevelt told the American people of the disaster in a special broadcast adding that this was a day that "will live in infamy!" The United States, shocked by the horrible damage and killings by the Japanese bombers, immediately entered the war. In 1944, a giant Allied force invaded Europe. Hitler became frantic and ordered death for any German soldier who retreated.

In the end, Germany was defeated by the armies of Allied forces. Underground resistance movements by the conquered peoples of Europe helped to defeat the Germans. And, in spite of their harrowing conditions, many Jewish people participated valiantly in fighting the Germans. Resistance organizations by Jews and non-Jews organized revolts even in the ghettos, concentration camps, and killing centers.

NAZI PROPAGANDA

In a period of a few months Hitler had established a one-party state. The next step was to win the allegiance of the German people and unite them behind his rule. Hitler had more than an intuitive understanding of the power of propaganda. Two chapters of *Mein Kampf* deal with the subject. To be successful, propaganda had to present a simple message to a mass audience. The German people had to believe they were involved in an urgent struggle with an evil enemy, a struggle of apocalyptic drama.

Dr. Joseph Goebbels (he had a Ph.D. in literature and philosophy from the University of Heidelberg) became the Nazis' master propagandist. As head of the Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, he controlled the flow of public information through the press, radio, and film.

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. Some of the most venerable newspapers in Germany were closed because they were owned by Jews, or were forced to get rid of their Jewish publishers and editors.

Twice a day, Goebbels's 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.

Goebbels also turned the state-owned broadcasting system into a propaganda vehicle. The Nazi government was the first to exploit the new technology of radio. (President Roosevelt also used the radio to successfully further his own political goals. Fireside chats brought him into the living rooms of the ordinary citizens and were effective in establishing an intimate rapport between the president and the American people.) The Nazis marketed a cheap wireless set -- the *Volksempfänger*. Local radio wardens encouraged neighbors to buy radios. Later, they reported on those who listened to foreign broadcasts, who were then subject to arrest. Radio reached a mass audience and became the most pervasive source of Nazi propaganda. German radio devoted most of its air time to playing martial music, telling human-interest stories about good deeds done by the noble young Aryan men of the Hitler Youth organization, and carrying Hitler's speeches.

Hitler was a powerful and spellbinding orator. In photographs, he does not appear to be a prepossessing person. But in the flesh he was able to exert a magnetism that persuaded even sophisticated Germans that he was not to be underestimated. Albert Speer, who later served as minister of armaments, recalled his first encounter with Hitler:

Three hours later I left that beer garden a changed person. I saw the same posters on the dirty advertising columns, but looked at them with different eyes. A blown-up picture of Adolf Hitler in a martial pose that I had regarded with a touch of amusement on my way there had suddenly lost all its ridiculousness.

The Nazis systematically created the cult of the Führer, the great charismatic leader. To veterans, Hitler was portrayed as the heroic corporal who had fought valiantly for the fatherland; to artisans, as an artist who had torn himself from his studio to answer the call to serve his nation. At public rallies, Hitler worked himself up to a pitch of near hysteria, and carried his audience with him. His experience as a street-corner speaker paid off. Hitler knew how to touch his audience, how to gain their sympathy and play on their fears.

Demonstrations were held at night in a sports stadium. Thousands of men carried banners. Torchlights illuminated the stadium, making it seem like a cathedral of light, or a tribal ceremony. The audience was held in breathless tension. Hitler's speech was punctuated again and again by

shouts of "Sieg Heil" from the frenzied crowd. William L. Shirer, the American journalist who reported from Berlin for CBS News, wrote that Hitler's audiences were caught up in emotion that took on the quality of a religious experience:

They reminded me of the crazed expressions I saw once in the back country of Louisiana on the faces of some Holy Rollers who were about to hit the trail. They looked upon him as if he were a Messiah, their faces transformed into something positively inhuman.

Nazi propaganda was designed to shape a folk community bonded to its leader. Allegiance to Hitler was direct, personal, and absolute; it superseded all other loyalties.

Hitler's frequent companion Leni Riefenstahl, the beautiful film star and pioneering director, glorified the Führer in *The Triumph of the Will*, a film that is still studied and shown as a prime example of brilliantly effective propaganda and suasion. Even the opening narrative frames the film as an epic:

September 5, 1934. Twenty years after the outbreak of the World War, 16 years after Germany's crucifixion, 19 months after the commencement of the German renaissance, Adolf Hitler flew to Nuremberg again to review a column of his faithful adherents.

The hour-and-a-half-long film is devoted to the 1934 Nazi party rally at Nuremberg. No effort was spared to accommodate Riefenstahl. Pits were dug in front of the speakers' platform so she could get the camera angles she wanted. Tracks were laid so that her cameraman could take traveling shots of the crowd. Aerial views of Hitler's arrival were shot from planes, and a blimp high above the stadium captured the massive crowd. More than 170 people were on the production staff. When the rough cuts were not quite right, major party leaders and high-ranking public officials were forced to reenact their speeches in a studio. All this was in order to set the scene perfectly before Hitler began his oration, which was the centerpiece of the film.

While Riefenstahl's work was a masterpiece of elegant technique, propaganda in the popular press was intended to be crude. Julius Streicher's tabloid, *Der Stürmer*, featured antisemitic cartoons and fanciful stories in which Jews were shown constantly engaged in international conspiracy, as ruthless businessmen whose god was money cheating honest Germans, and as sex-crazed monsters violating German women and children. Riefenstahl's epic works might appeal to cultured sophisticates, but coarse movies such as *The Eternal Jew* were featured in theaters and schools.

Perhaps the most impressive achievement of Nazi propaganda was the international public relations effort that surrounded the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Germany hosted athletes from fifty-two countries at an event staged on a colossal scale. It was an occasion to showcase the new Germany that had risen from the ashes of the Weimar Republic and the humiliating defeat of World War I. The Olympics gave the Nazis the opportunity to convince the international community that the new regime had been unfairly treated by the press and that stories of antisemitism and the suspension of political freedom had been overstated by journalists and diplomats alike.

In the United States and other countries, participation in the 1936 Berlin Olympics was a matter of controversy. Those who believed that American participation would be taken as tacit approval of the Nazi regime urged a boycott. Others made the case for the purity of a sports competition, arguing that sports and politics should not mix. They warned that a boycott could trigger antisemitism throughout the United States and would threaten the future of amateur sports. Despite the setting, the Olympics were an international, not a German event, they insisted.

The American Olympic Committee received assurances that all German athletes had a chance to participate on the German teams. In fact, Protestant and Catholic sports clubs had been closed down. Only Nazi sports clubs continued to operate. Jews were expelled from gymnastics

clubs and dropped from the Davis Cup team. Jewish athletes were totally excluded from participation. Avery Brundage, the president of the American Olympic Committee, publicly stated that he had witnessed no antisemitism in Germany, and that his impression of tolerance was confirmed in private meetings he had held with the Jewish community in Germany. He neglected to say that these meetings had been held in the presence of Nazi officials.

In anticipation of the Olympics, Berlin was cleaned up. Antisemitic billboards and posters were taken down, the pace of persecution slowed, and even the rhetoric of Nazi leaders toned down. Hitler was a constant presence throughout the games. His arrivals and departures were dramatically staged, and he made a point of personally congratulating the German medal winners.

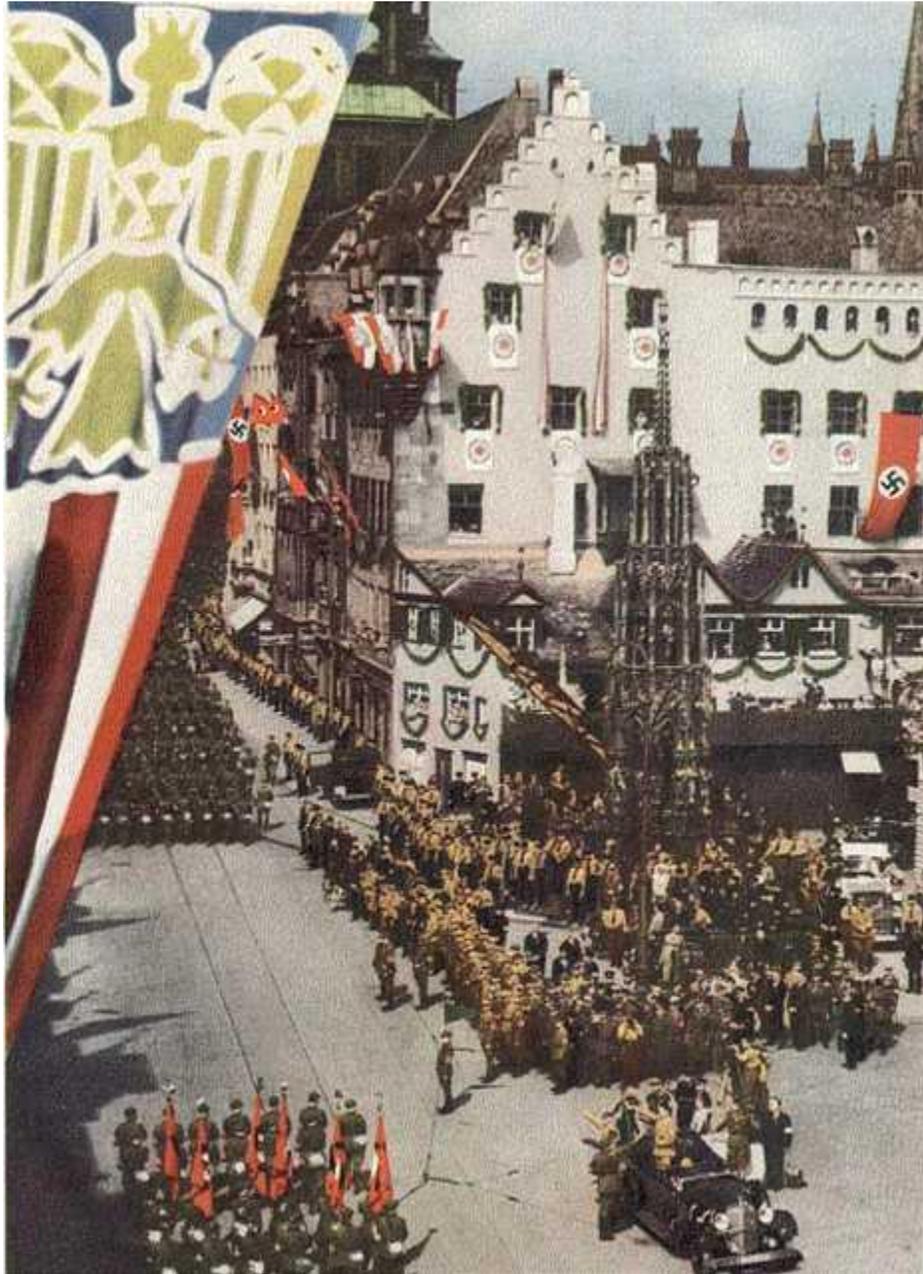
American schoolchildren learn that Jesse Owens, the superb African-American sprinter who won an unprecedented four gold medals in 1936, spoiled Hitler's plans for an Aryan triumph. Exhausted after his track feats as both a sprinter and broad jumper, and more than content with his victories, Owens had not planned to run in the 400-meter relay. Two Jewish runners, Marty Glickman and Sam Stoller, had competed and qualified for the event, and Owens felt that they had earned the right to compete. Mack Robinson, whose brother Jackie was to break the color line in major league baseball a decade later, was the third member of the relay team. Afraid that a victory by Jewish athletes would further offend the German hosts, a solicitous Avery Brundage excluded the two Jewish runners and ordered Owens to take the baton. In those days, athletes did as they were told. Glickman described the emotion that came back to him as he revisited Berlin some fifty years later:

I stopped and looked across at the stands, and saw where Hitler, Goring, Goebbels, Streicher and Himmler had sat. And suddenly a wave of anger swept over me so that I thought I was going to pass out... .

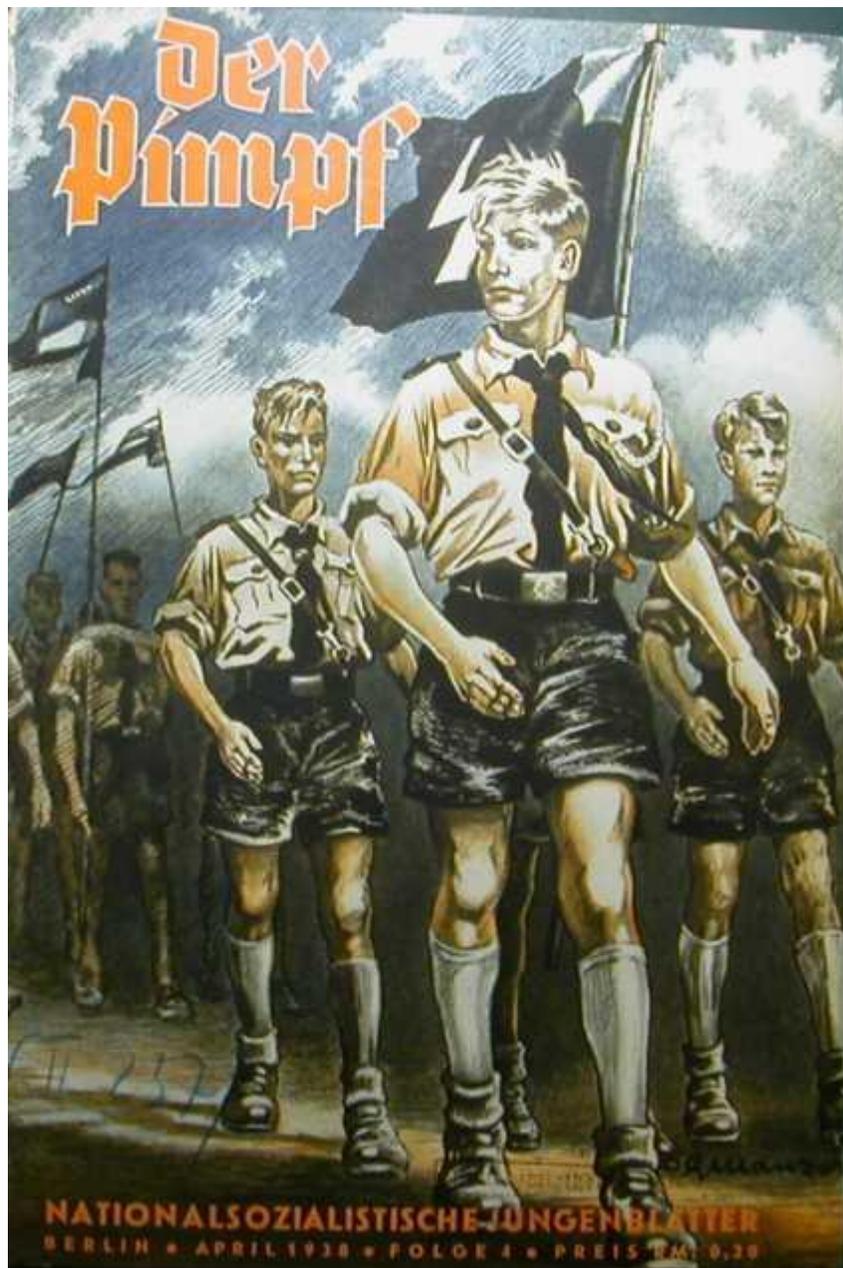
President Roosevelt, who had remained silent throughout the Olympic debate, reassured his friend Rabbi Stephen Wise, president of the American Jewish Congress. Tourists returned from Berlin had reported to Roosevelt that "The synagogues were crowded and apparently there is nothing very wrong."

Source: Berenbaum, Michael. *The World Must Know: the History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Dr. Michael Berenbaum, and Little, Brown and Company.

Nazi Propaganda Examples



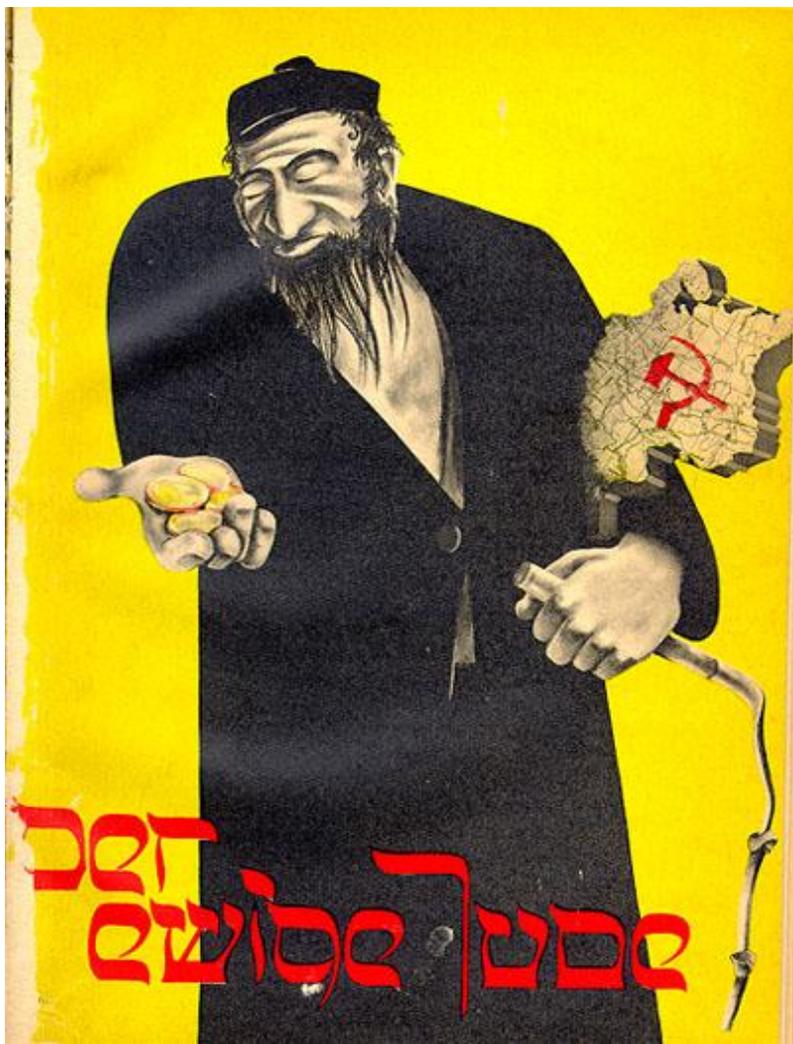
Nuremberg Rallies and all their pagentry



Der Pimpf was the monthly for boys 10-14 years old in the Hitler Youth organization. The first issue appeared in 1935 under the title *Morgen*. The title changed to *Der Pimpf* with the April 1937 issue. It contained a mixture of adventure and propaganda. Its frequency of publication diminished during the war.



Ad for the movie The Eternal Jew, which demonized the Jews like rats.



Clothing as propaganda

The evil money hungry Jew.

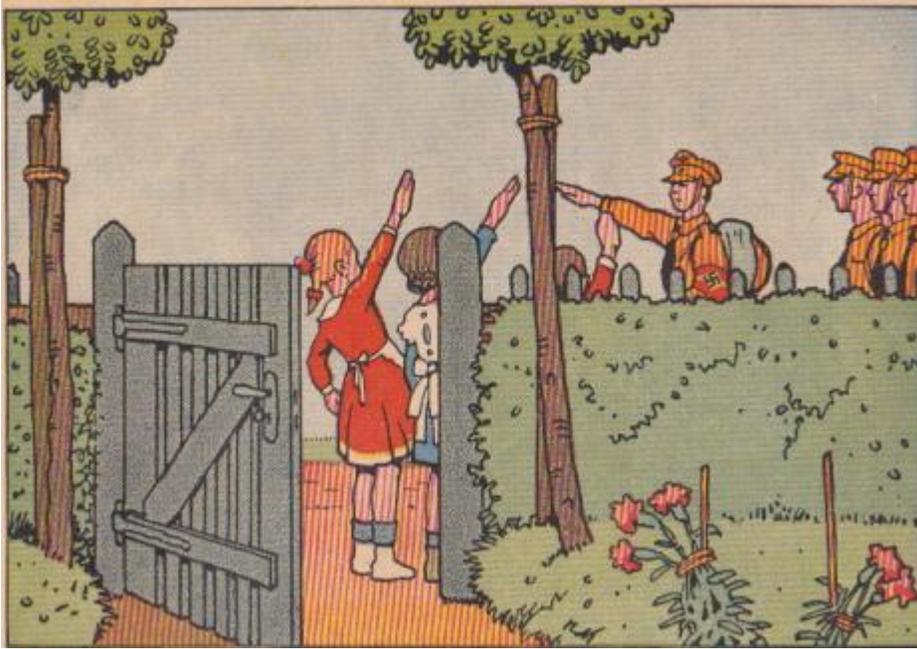


A book cover...The Jew as a Parasite



German Youth play concentration camp games.

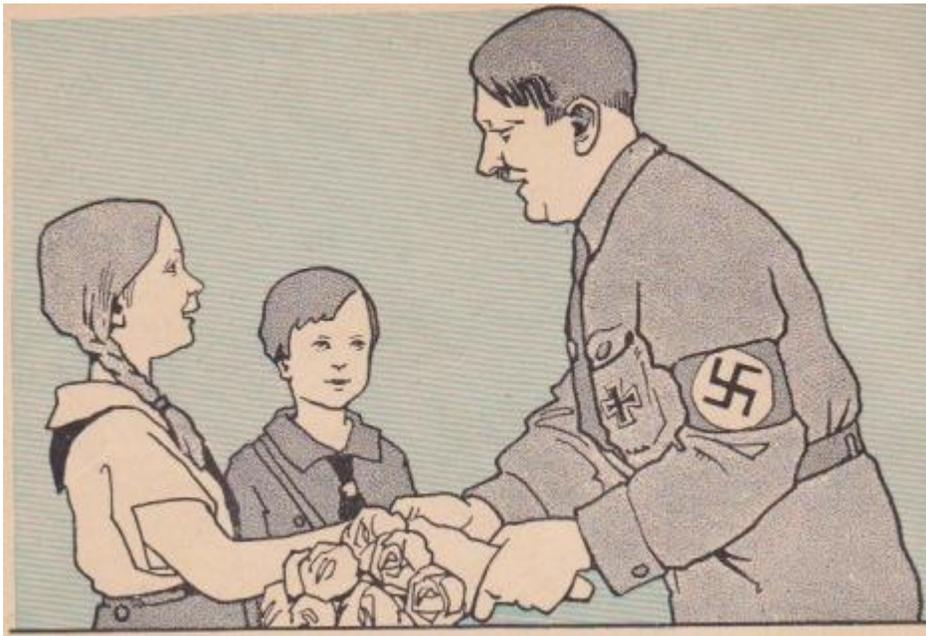
Hitler Youth!



The children stand at the gate by Lene's yard. Suddenly they hear: tromp, tromp — tromp tromp — Hey hey hey! Hitler Youth! Heil, heil heil!

Hurray, Hitler Youth! Let's follow them! They are marching past: tromp, tromp, right, left, *speck und schinken* [a kind of rhyming slang — the phrase more or less rhymes with the German for right, left] tromp, tromp, tromp... Hurray!

Listen to what they are singing: We are the Hitler Youth!



Mein Führer! (The child speaks):

I know you well, and love you as I do my father and mother.
I will always be obedient to you as I am to my father and mother.
And when I am bigger, I will help you, as my father and mother do,

And you will be proud of me, as my father and mother are!

Listen, the Führer speaks!

“...We want to be one people, and you, my boys and girls, will become this people. We want this people to be loyal, and you must learn to be loyal. We want this people to be obedient, and you must learn obedience. We want this people to be peace-loving, but also brave, and you must therefore both love peace and be brave. We do not want this people to become weak and soft, but rather hard, and you must learn in your earliest years to be hard. We want this people to love honor, and you should seek honor. We want this people become a proud people once more, and you should learn true pride. We of the older generation will pass away, but Germany will continue to live in you. You will hold our banners firmly in your hands! Heil Germany! Heil!”

The Youth Marches and Sings:

Forward! Forward! The fanfares sound.
Forward! Forward! Youth knows not danger!
Germany, you will stand shining,
Even if we perish.
No matter how high the goal may be,
Youth will achieve it!
We march man by man into the future.
We march for Hitler through night and poverty
With the banner of the youth for freedom and prosperity.
Our banners wave before us...

Boys become Soldiers

1. I am a Soldier!

A fine horse,
A shining weapon,
And a wooden sword,
What more could one want?

I am a soldier,
One see it by looking at me,
I already march straight,
In step like a man.

With determined courage
I leave the house each morning
And return in good spirits
Back home for lunch.

I exercise
Until late in the evening
Until I am ordered:
To bed, comrade!

Follow this link to an online web site
with many examples of Nazi
Propaganda.

<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/>

Unit 4

The Refugee Crisis & Years of Persecution

VOCABULARY

TERMS

Aryanization: The expropriation of Jewish businesses by German authorities.

Blitzkrieg (lightning war): The name given to the extremely rapid advance by German troops and tanks as they invaded western and eastern European nations during World War II.

Concentration camps: The notorious prisons designed for labor, torture, and murder, set up by the Nazis throughout the German *Reich*, Europe, and North Africa. At first used for political prisoners, many later held large numbers of different groups of prisoners (Jews, Gypsies, Sla^ys, the political resisters, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.) from numerous countries. The camps were centers of death where prisoners died by murder, gassing, torture, "medical" experimentation, overwork, disease, and hunger. The largest and possibly most infamous was Auschwitz where more people were interned than at any other prison site. While there were thousands of concentration camps, some of the better known ones were: Dachau, Sachsenhausen, RavensbrOck, Buchenwald, FlossenbOrg, Neuengamme, Gross-Rosen, Majdanek, Natzweiler, Mauthausen, Stutthof, Dora/Nordhausen, and Bergen-Belsen. Six concentration camps were developed and organized specifically and solely as killing centers: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz/Birkenau, and Majdanek. The last two also served as slave labor camps. A wide variety of prisoners were interned and killed in the Nazi camps, the largest groups being the Jews, Gypsies, Soviet prisoners of war, and Sla^ys. In addition to these, an untold number of other Nazi "undesirables" were held in these camps and killed. However, the Jews were by far the largest single group to be imprisoned in these camps and murdered there. All of the concentration camps were centers of forced labor and death.

Evian Conference: Conference on refugee problems held at Evian-Les-Bains in France, in July 1938 with delegates from 32 countries and representatives from 39 private relief agencies. Only the Dominican Republic offered to receive 100,000 Jews, but in the end, only a few were actually able to come.

Gestapo (Secret State Police): Founded in 1933 in Nazi Germany; the German non-uniformed political police. In 1939, the *Gestapo* became Office IV of the Central Office for *Reich* Security. All political opponents were crushed by the *Gestapo* which used terror, arbitrary arrest, and torture.

Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass): During November 9 and 10, 1938, a pogrom and riot was staged in which mobs of Nazis attacked, looted, vandalized, and set fires to Jewish shops, homes, businesses, and synagogues in Germany and Austria. The name *Kristallnacht* comes from the fact that so many shop windows were smashed, but the term is also an attempt to minimize what actually took place during the pogrom. More than 26,000 male German Jews between the ages of 16 and 60 were deported to concentration camps after this pogrom and riot.

Luftwaffe: The German Air Force.

Nuremberg Laws: Two laws issued on September 15, 1935, followed by a series of regulations, providing a precise definition of "Jew" by origin, religion, and family ties. These laws reduced the rights of German Jews, since they could no longer vote or hold office, although they retained the right to German passports and did not lose their German citizenship until the 11th Citizenship decree in 1941. The concept of "non-Aryan" was first used in these regulations; marriage or sexual relations between a Jew and an "Aryan" were considered criminal offenses. Employment "Aryan"

household help under age 45 was forbidden. These laws were extended to apply to Christians whose parents or grandparents were Jews. In 1938, the letter "J" was ordered to be printed on all identity cards belonging to Jews. These regulations were the beginning of cruel repression sanctioned by law, designed to isolate the Jews socially as well as politically.

S.S. St. Louis: German luxury liner that left Hamburg in May 1939 with 937 Jewish refugees seeking asylum first in Cuba and then in the United States. Entry was refused and most were returned to Europe to be murdered in the camps. Several hundred were admitted to Great Britain, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

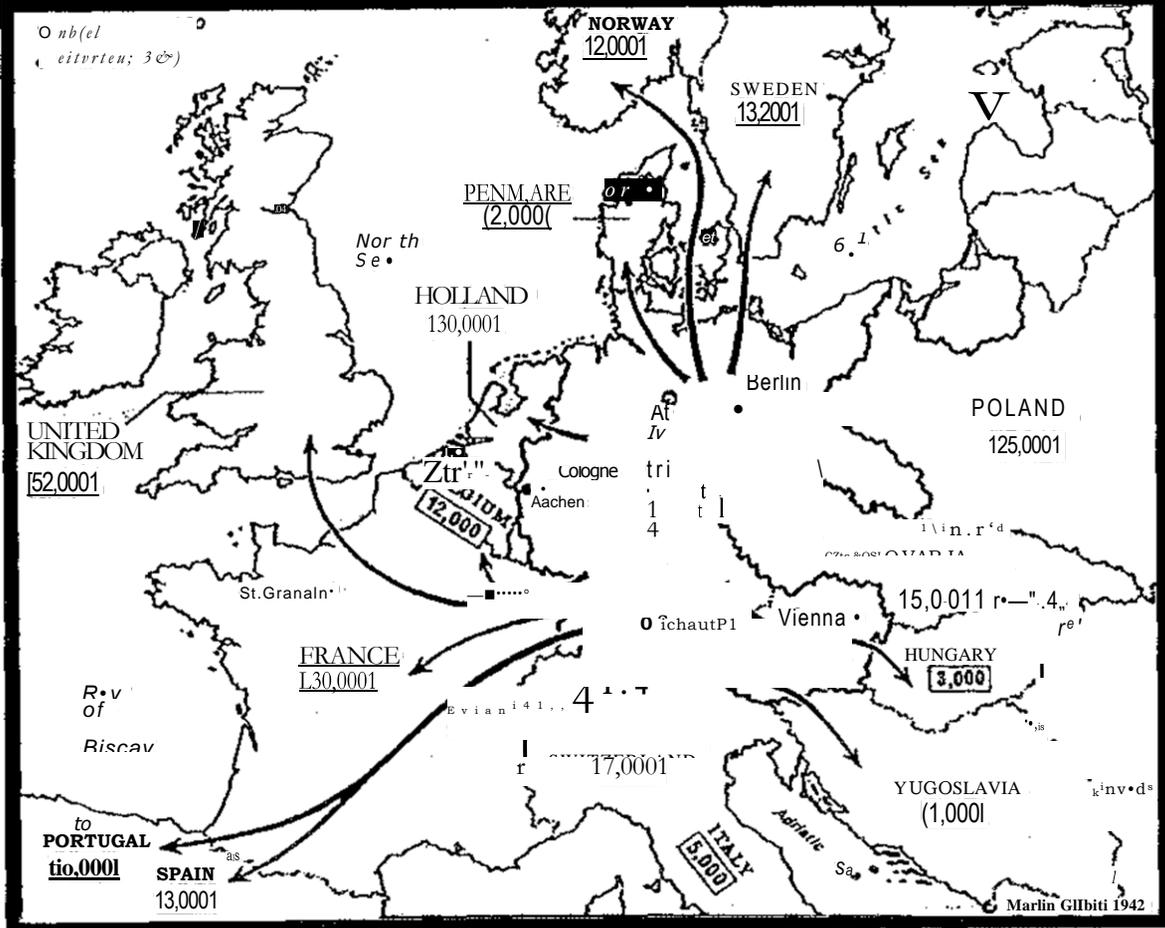
NAMES AND PLACES

Grynspan, Herschel: A 17 year old Jewish youth who shot and killed the third undersecretary of the German embassy in Paris when his Polish Jewish family was expelled as "stateless" from Germany into Poland at the end of October 1938. This act was used by the Nazis as a pretext for the beginning of *Kristallnacht*.

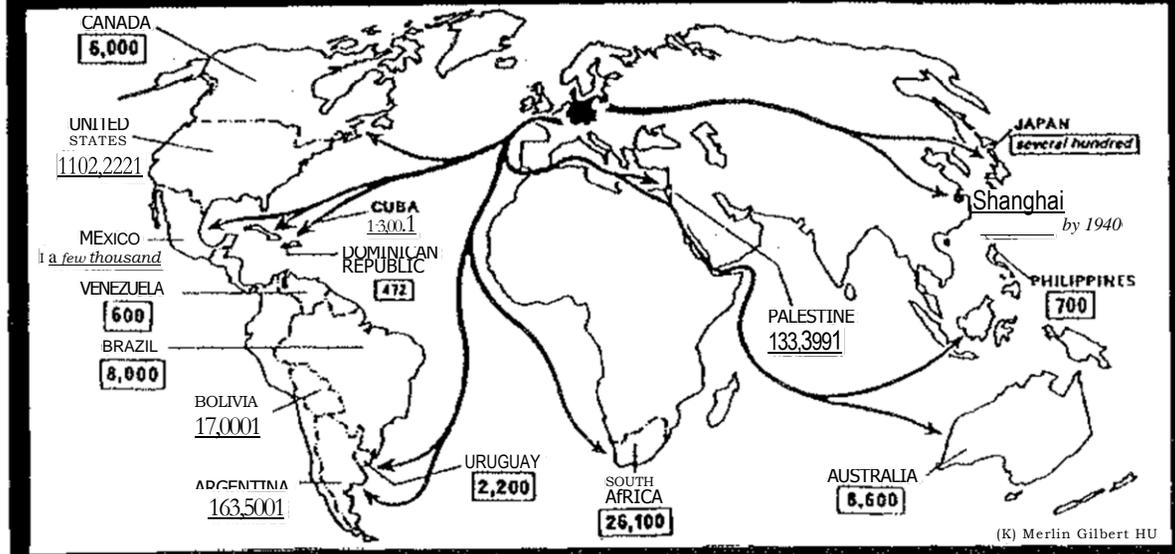
vom Rath, Ernst: Third undersecretary of the German embassy in Paris who was killed by Hershel Grynspan; his death touched off *Kristallnacht*.

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JEWISH REFUGEES FIND HAVENS IN EUROPE, 1933-1938



WORLD-WIDE RECEPTION OF GERMAN JEWISH REFUGEES, 1933-1938



Source: Copyright © by Sir Martin Gilbert. Reprint by permission.

Preface to *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945*

By David Wyman

This book has been difficult to research and to write. One does not wish to believe the facts revealed by the documents on which it is based. America, the land of refuge, offered little succor. American Christians forgot about the Good Samaritan. Even American Jews lacked the unquenchable sense of urgency the crisis demanded. The Nazis were the murderers, but we were the all too passive accomplices.

Between June 1941 and May 1945, five to six million Jews perished at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators. Germany's control over most of Europe meant that even a determined Allied rescue campaign probably could not have saved as many as a third of those who died. But a substantial commitment to rescue almost certainly could have saved several hundred thousand of them, and done so without compromising the war effort. The record clearly shows, though, that such a campaign would have taken place only if the United States had seized the initiative for it. But America did not act at all until late in the war, and even then, though it had some success, the effort was a very limited one.

This book is a report on America's response to the Nazi assault on the European Jews. It is not a new subject; others have written on it already, as have I, in my earlier book *Paper Walls: America and the Refugee Crisis, 1938-1941*. What is new about the present volume is that it brings out much information not previously published; and it offers several new answers to the key question: Why did America fail to carry out the kind of rescue effort that it could have?

In summary form, these are the findings that I regard as most significant:

1. The American State Department and the British Foreign Office had no intention of rescuing large numbers of European Jews. On the contrary, they continually feared that Germany or other Axis nations might release tens of thousands of Jews into Allied hands. Any such exodus would have placed intense pressure on Britain to open Palestine and on the United States to take in more Jewish refugees, a situation the two great powers did not want to face. Consequently, their policies aimed at obstructing rescue possibilities and dampening public pressures for government action.
2. Authenticated information that the Nazis were systematically exterminating European Jewry was made public in the United States in November 1942. President Roosevelt did nothing about the mass murder for fourteen months, then moved only because he was confronted with political pressures he could not avoid and because his administration stood on the brink of a nasty scandal over its rescue policies.
3. The War Refugee Board, which the President then established to save Jews and other victims of the Nazis, received little power, almost no cooperation from Roosevelt or his administration, and grossly inadequate government funding. (Contributions from Jewish organizations, which were necessarily limited, covered 90 percent of the WRB's costs.) Through dedicated work by a relatively small number of people, the WRB managed to help save approximately 200,000 Jews and at least 20,000 non-Jews.

4. Because of State Department administrative policies, only 21,000 refugees were allowed to enter the United States during the three and one-half years the nation was at war with Germany. That amounted to 10 percent of the number who could have been legally admitted under the immigration quotas during that period.

5. Strong popular pressure for action would have brought a much fuller government commitment to rescue and would have produced it sooner. Several factors hampered the growth of public pressure. Among them were anti-Semitism and anti-immigration attitudes, both widespread in American society in that era and both entrenched in Congress; the mass media's failure to publicize Holocaust news, even though the wire services and other news sources made most of the information available to them; the near silence of the Christian churches and almost all of their leadership; the indifference of most of the nation's political and intellectual leaders; and the President's failure to speak out on the issue.

6. American Jewish leaders worked to publicize the European Jewish situation and pressed for government rescue steps. But their effectiveness was importantly diminished by their inability to mount a sustained or unified drive for government action, by diversion of energies into fighting among the several organizations, and by failure to assign top priority to the rescue issue.

7. In 1944 the United States War Department rejected several appeals to bomb the Auschwitz gas chambers and the railroads leading to Auschwitz, claiming that such actions would divert essential airpower from decisive operations elsewhere. Yet in the very months that it was turning down the pleas, numerous massive American bombing raids were taking place within fifty miles of Auschwitz. Twice during that time large fleets of American heavy bombers struck industrial targets in the Auschwitz complex itself, not five miles from the gas chambers.

8. Analysis of the main rescue proposals put forward at the time, but brushed aside by government officials, yields convincing evidence that much more could have been done to rescue Jews, if a real effort had been made. The record also reveals that the reasons repeatedly invoked by government officials for not being able to rescue Jews could be put aside when it came to other Europeans who needed help.

9. Franklin Roosevelt's indifference to so momentous an historical event as the systematic annihilation of European Jewry emerges as the worst failure of his presidency.

10. Poor though it was, the American rescue record was better than that of Great Britain, Russia, or the other Allied nations. This was the case because of the work of the War Refugee Board, the fact that American Jewish organizations were willing to provide most of the WRB's funding, and the overseas rescue operations of several Jewish organizations.

Parts of this book are critical of the American Jewish leadership in the Holocaust era. The policies of Zionist leaders are particularly questioned, in part because their movement held the greatest potential for effective Jewish action. This criticism is made reluctantly. Yet it must be included if the report is to be honest and objective. Several of those leaders have since criticized their own failures in the face of the catastrophe.⁽¹⁾

I have written not as an insider. I am a Christian, a Protestant of Yankee and Swedish descent. But I have advocated a Jewish state for a very long time, and I would undoubtedly have backed the Zionist movement during the World War II era had I been old enough to be involved in political affairs. Today I remain strongly pro-Zionist and I am a resolute supporter of the state of Israel. My

commitment to Zionism and to Israel has been confirmed and increased by years of study of the Holocaust. I look upon Israel as the most important line of defense against anti-Semitism in the world. Had there been a Jewish state in the 1933 to 1945 era, it would be much less painful today for all of us to confront the history of European Jewry during World War II.

A final comment; then a question. The Holocaust was certainly a Jewish tragedy. But it was not *only* a Jewish tragedy. It was also a Christian tragedy, a tragedy for Western civilization, and a tragedy for all humankind. The killing was done by people, to other people, while still other people stood by. The perpetrators, where they were not actually Christians, arose from a Christian culture. The bystanders most capable of helping were Christians. The point should have been obvious. Yet comparatively few American non-Jews recognized that the plight of the European Jews was their plight too. Most were either unaware, did not care, or saw the European Jewish catastrophe as a Jewish problem, one for Jews to deal with. That explains, in part, why the United States did so little to help.

Would the reaction be different today? Would Americans be more sensitive, less self-centered, more willing to make sacrifices, less afraid of differences now than they were then?

Notes

1. Eg, *In The Dispersion*, Winter 1963-64, 6-7 (Nahum Goldmann); *Martyrdom & Resistance*, 11/83, 11 (Israel Goldstein); *Reconstructionist*, Summer 1983, 4 (Ira Eisenstein).

Questions:

1. In what ways were Americans accomplices to the Holocaust?
2. How do you feel when you read that the U.S. only admitted 10% of the number who could have been legally admitted from 1941-1945?
3. How could a state of Israel or a Jewish country have prevented or lessened the Holocaust?
4. What does the writer mean when he says, it was "a tragedy for all humankind?"

Source: Wyman, David S. *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1984. Reprinted by permission of David S. Wyman.

TESTIMONIES

Ernie Michel, née Wurzinger, was born on April 1, 1909 in Nuremberg, Germany. Two months after *Kristallnacht*, she left Germany -- at first to go to France -- and subsequently the United States.

Q. Why don't you tell me about the circumstances that led up to *Kristallnacht*, and then your experience there?

A. Ah, the circumstances leading up to the *Kristallnacht*, the Nazis used the excuse that one of their smaller employees of the Embassy in Paris was killed, allegedly by Jewish people. That was their excuse to break into all the homes on November 9th, 1938. All the Nazis who executed the breaking-in were well-trained, had fantastic tools to destroy everything, to break into homes which were not easily opened like ours.

We didn't open the door. They had to break in. They had heavy tools to open and push open anything. This is one example of how well they were trained. We had a big black piano. They knew exactly what to do. With the heavy hammers, they cut all the ivory keys and then with other instruments, they cut the wires in the back, so they made the grand piano completely useless. But the frame was still standing there, as it wasn't touched at all. We had a huge radio with a loudspeaker built in. They knew exactly where to hit the apparatus. The frame wasn't touched. They cut all the tubes in the back and then took their knife or whatever and cut the loudspeaker.

Q. So you feel that they had been trained beforehand for this?

A. Oh, they were trained marvelously before. They knew exactly what to do. They came with their lists. They had all the addresses. They knew how to break into the buildings. They were well-prepared. No, that was not a spur of the moment thing.

Q. How do you remember the whole thing starting?

A. Hitler was talking in the newspaper and in his speeches of destroying the Jewish population. In Nuremberg, there was also one of the greatest antisemites, Julius Streicher, and he had a very antisemitic newspaper [Ed. note: *Der StOrmer*, or The Attacker]. He was talking all the time about our bad influence and what terrible people we are and also that we have to be destroyed because we are not worth being on this earth.

The question was raised so often, over here particularly, why did you stay that long? I have two answers to that question. The most important one is that it was not a question of leaving your native country, it was a question of the other countries -- any other country who would let you in permanently, not with a three- or four-week visa, because you could never go back to Germany. So that was the most important thing to us, to find a country willing to take us in. Secondly, we lived a comfortable, normal lifestyle, just like American Jews living here. None of us were anxious to leave the country to start over with nothing and with mediocre jobs. When I finally saw after Hitler took over Austria and Sudetenland -- that was the first part of Czechoslovakia -- I knew that it looked bad, and I started to look around to leave the country.

Q. Was that before *Kristallnacht*?

- A. Yes, I started to try to get to America in January 1938.
- Q. That's when you wanted to start looking around?
- A. I wanted to leave.
- Q. Okay, let's get back a little to the *Kristallnacht*.
- A. It was a terrible experience for anybody who was there, of course for a Jew, but I would have to say it also was a terrible experience for all the gentile people living in the same buildings where Jewish people lived. The Nazis came in our place around one, one thirty in the night. We had no inkling, none whatsoever.
- Q. That this was going to happen that night?
- A. Right. Our entrance door had a glass portion and all of a sudden, we saw a lot of shadows.
- Q. Were you up . . . just happened to be up at that time?
- A. No, they rang the bell and made a lot of commotion and noise out there in front of the door, yelling, "Open up!" but we would not.

My father at that time was not home and that was a lucky break for him. He was visiting one of his friends from the first World War, from the army. He had been an officer. It was only my mother and I who were home.

The Nazis finally broke into our apartment, and there was a lot of noise right away. They stormed in, asked for my father, and we told them that he wasn't here. They spread out in every room. We were in a corner. We saw their big axe, and a very heavy instrument which you use on a construction site, I would say, and they started immediately with breaking things apart. Then they took their knives out, opened the wardrobe, cut the clothes, cut triangles in the fur coats and the Persian rugs, making everything absolutely worthless. It was for about an hour and a half. They totally destroyed our apartment. They dumped the crystal and the silver.

My mother was from a very fine family. Her father was a jeweler in Silesia for the court there. So when she got married, she had in her dowry beautiful silver and stuff. And they dumped the silver on the floor and stamped on it with their boots and just flattened it. Everything was a total destruction. The fine porcelain, they took the hammer and broke with all their might, through a stack of twenty-four plates or so.

The noise was unbelievable. The noise was damaging to our ears and, of course, for our nerves. I still cannot stand any noise. If I go to an assembly with a lot of people, I have to be extremely careful. They were well-prepared. In the corner were my skis standing, because it was wintertime. You know November in Germany is wintertime. They just broke off the tips. At the very end, they took glass pots and threw them in the open cut bedding, in the down comforters and everything, so that we couldn't use our beds. Once they left, there was nothing, not a chair, nothing. Everything was demolished, even the big furniture.

Q. Did they say anything to you during all of this?

A. No, I do not remember. Their faces were red and full of hate. I would assume that they had plenty of alcohol in them or something which made them strong and full of hate -- unbelievable -- and ready to fight. They did some stealing, but obviously they were told not to touch the women. So nobody touched my mother or me. They threatened us, but they would not hit us or touch us.

Q. What did they threaten you?

A. With their looks, with their behavior, and with their tools.

Q. How old were you at this time?

A. I was already twenty-eight years old. When they left, the very last thing they cut were the crystal chandeliers, so we were in total darkness more or less. Maybe they overlooked one of the other ones.

And no other apartment in your building was touched?

A. No, they were all gentiles and after they had left, the other people in the building saw them out there on the street and out of our neighborhood. They sneaked up quietly to our apartment and when they came, they put their finger in front of their mouths, not to speak to us, because they were afraid that maybe another party in the building was listening and would know that they came up and wanted to look at what had happened here. So slowly, most of them came up, tip-toeing to see what happened. All they could do is to shake their head with the most misbelieving eyes and touch our shoulders.

Q. Were the Germans clearly dressed as soldiers? They were in uniform?

A. They were not dressed as soldiers. They were dressed as Nazis. They came in their brown uniforms with the Nazi sign, with their hats, and their big, black boots. They were not soldiers. They were Nazis.

Q. What happened after they left? You just stood there in shock?

A. Yes. We couldn't believe our own eyes. They tore all the books. There was nothing left. Were standing there and the people in our back apartment were very nice and supportive. We had only one thought the next morning, how to find a workman who could fix the damage on our entrance door, so we could close the apartment again. And I was walking around completely dazed. I had to say, there were people around us and the people who knew us in our neighborhood. I went to the butcher who knew us also for fifteen years. When he saw me, he just silently shook his head and with his eyes let me know he felt sorry for me. Nobody would dare to say anything, but in the stores you saw the eyes and the unbelievable thinking of the people who knew you.

Q. So there was a lot of fear in everyone?

A. Oh, hundred percent fear in everybody.

Q. Was there more antisemitism after that?

A. That is a question which I cannot really answer. Maybe amongst the people who had no contact with Jewish people before, after they saw the synagogues all on fire, everything destroyed in the Jewish homes. The men had been picked up and put on trucks and brought into special halls. After they saw that and they announced over the loudspeakers and the radio, maybe some uneducated people then became future followers. They may have developed more antisemitism. They probably thought Hitler was right that we are a bad people and that we deserve it. But I do not think that people who knew other Jewish people would have been influenced. I think they felt more sorry for us, and, of course, it showed very clearly that there was no more time for Jewish people left in Germany.

Louis Scott was born on January 9, 1926 in Berlin, Germany. Baron Edward de Rothschild of Paris, France attempted to rescue Jewish youths, including Louis. He was brought to Paris and was sent to a children's home in Southern France until 1942. Because he turned 16 years of age, he was turned over to the Nazis and deported to several concentration camps in Germany.

Q. Louis, tell me a little bit about your early years.

A. Well, I had a very good life. I went to German public school the first four years, and later on I went to a Jewish middle school in Berlin. I had an enjoyable youth. I had everything that I wanted. I played a lot of soccer with the neighbors, and I belonged to a team. But then I had to stop playing with the team, and I couldn't understand why. I did not feel any persecution until November 9, 1938 on the infamous *Kristallnacht*. Then I first really found out what it is to be a Jew.

Q. Tell me about *Kristallnacht*. What was your actual experience?

A. I can vividly recall the police of the town where we lived telling my father to disappear. They took the men to the camp of Buchenwald at that time. My father disappeared for about ten days, and then he came back. I still did not understand what it was all about. The next day when I went to school, I saw a lot of destroyed windows. Being that we lived on the outskirts, we were the only Jewish family living in that small village.

Q. What was the name of the village?

A. Mardsdorf. At that time, I did not realize what the *Kristallnacht* was. But then the next day I went to Berlin to go to school which, naturally, was closed. The guard outside said, "Go home." He was mad at me, I recall, that I even came there. I didn't realize what had happened.

Q. Did you see any evidence of *Kristallnacht* on your way into school?

A. Oh, definitely. I saw a lot of goods laying in the street.

Q. Let's go back a little bit, Lou, and talk about how you first knew of your Jewish identity and the fact that you were different than your neighbors; the first incident of antisemitism that you can recall.

We knew in 1933 when Hitler came to power. We had a notion store where we lived, and big signs were outside, big placards that said, "Germans fight. Don't buy in Jewish stores."

Q. What about your young friends? What experiences did you have with them?

A. With my young friends until after *Kristallnacht*, I did not feel Jewish in any way. We played together. There were no remarks made. However, then after *Kristallnacht*, two boys that were a couple of years older than I am said, "You dirty Jew." I picked up my fist and fought them both. And I recall vividly that their mothers came to my mother in the evening saying that I shouldn't beat up their kids.

Q. Did you ever see Adolf Hitler?

A. Yes.

Q. When was that?

A. At the Olympic Games in 1936, I saw Adolf Hitler walk out of the Olympia Stadium in Berlin when Jesse Owens won the fourth gold medal. I didn't know at the time what it meant, but I saw him walk out.

Q. In the early years of Hitler's regime, from 1933 on, did your father and mother ever discuss leaving Germany?

A. My father, definitely. I know my father brought home at that time a visa for Uganda.

Q. What happened to these discussions about Uganda?

A. I do not believe my mother wanted to leave.

Q. When did you know for the first time that things were really bad in Germany, and that you might have to leave?

A. When I couldn't go to school anymore.

Q. When was that?

A. In early 1939. I went to school until March 1939. But I know it was already tough in the Jewish middle school. The studies that we got were different. I would say, without purpose.

Q. When did you first become aware that you would be leaving Germany?

A. Well, in the beginning of 1939, they had something where a lot of young Jewish children were leaving to go to Israel -- Palestine at that time -- but there was no room open for me.

Q. And who was making the effort to do this? Was this done through an organization in Berlin?

A. Yes. What you would call the Greater Jewish Community, something like that, was organizing these efforts to get the children out, if possible.

Q. What age children are we talking about?

A. Early teens.

Q. So then what happened next as far as your leaving the country?

A. I was prepared to go to France with the children's transport which was a whole group of children put into a train for transportation and sent to a children's home.

Q. Who was organizing these efforts?

- A. I do believe it had to do with the HIAS [Ed. note: Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society]. And other Jewish organizations, such as *Ha Sharah*. They also tried to take these children to France. I believe it was all sponsored by the Rothschild family, Baron Edward de Rothschild at the time, under the orders of HIAS. Not only that, but if I recall, he paid for all the train tickets and whatever it took.
- Q. Obviously your parents were making these arrangements. When was the first time that you found out that you were going to be leaving Germany?
- A. About a week before.
- Q. And what were your feelings at that time?
- A. I was sad to leave my parents. It was explained that we could not go to school here anymore, that we won't have an education, and that we must go there for a while. They said, "We'll see each other in a short while."
- Q. And that's the way it was explained to you?
- A. I met some of the children a few days before we left. I met some nice kids, which made it a little bit easier then to go.
- Q. This was March 1939?
- A. On March 28, 1939.
- Q. And you left your parents. Before we talk about the camp, let me get a little background about your parents. What happened to your parents from this time on?
- A. A short while after, my parents had to move to a ghetto in Berlin where they assembled the Jewish community. Most of them went to Riga, in Latvia.
- Q. And your parents went there together?
- A. Yes, my parents went there together.
- Q. And then what happened to your parents subsequent to that?
- A. My father was gassed in Stutthof about a year after that. My mother survived and was liberated by the Swedish Red Cross under the auspices of Count Bernadotte.
- Q. And taken to Sweden?
- A. Taken to Sweden.
- Q. Okay. We're now in March of 1939, and you are leaving Berlin. Tell me about it, the actual leaving itself and where you were going.
- A. After the paperwork on the frontier, we went to the Rothschild Hospital and got a complete examination.

Q. Where was that located?

A. In Paris. We got a complete examination, and I think everybody was well.

Q. You left with what size group?

A. Close to a hundred people.

Q. What were the ages?

A. I think from nine to fourteen. Or nine to fifteen.

Q. All German Jewish boys and girls?

A. Yes.

Q. And then what happened?

A. They separated the religious children. They went to a religious children's home run by rabbis and dedicated Jewish people. The others went to the hunting castle of Baron Rothschild.

Q. Where was that located?

A. About an hour's ride from Paris. It was called Chateau de la Guette, in Sandonnê.

Q. And how many children arrived there?

A. We were mixed with some children from Austria, and we were about 130 all together.

Q. And how long did you stay there?

A. Until the Germans were close to coming to Paris.

Q. Do you remember finding out about the war beginning?

A. Oh, yes, we found out. We had brilliant educators, most of whom had to leave Germany. They showed us what comradeship is. They had to leave earlier than we left, because they could not be caught, and they went underground.

Q. What was the change that was brought about because the war had begun?

A. The Germans came closer to the Maginot Line, which was supposed to be so great, and it didn't do anything. They just walked around it.

Q. You were still in this facility going to school?

A. Right.

Q. And when did you find out you were going to leave there?

- A. I would say at least three weeks before the German troops reached the outskirts of Paris, in May 1940.
- Q. And where did you go from there?
- A. It was a beautiful place called La Bulbul. We stayed in a hotel, all the children together.
- Q. Where was this located?
- A. It was close to a big town called Clermont-Ferrand, in the southern part of France, which afterwards became the unoccupied zone in France.
- Q. How long did you stay in this temporary setup?
- A. Oh, about five or six months. The children were placed in different schools. I was placed in an industrial preparation school by the OSE [*Organisation de Secours aux Enfants*, or Children's Aid Organization], which functioned with ORT [Organization for Rehabilitation and Training] in France.
- Q. Who financed this organization? Do you recall?
- A. If I am not mistaken, the money also came from the Rothschild family, plus money from HIAS [Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society] in the United States. All for the welfare of children. The organizations still exist today.
- Q. Were you following the progress of the war?
- A. Oh, yes, definitely. It was my deep opinion that the whole French government and most of the people were very antisemitic. I felt that more in France than I felt it in Germany.
- Q. Now somewhere along the way France had capitulated, had surrendered to the Germans. And they divided France into an occupied and unoccupied zone. You were in the unoccupied zone?
- A. Correct.
- Q. What did that mean? Did it mean that there were no German soldiers there, that it was like France before the war?
- Not at all. The French police were just as bad as the German troops, I would say. They didn't help you. They knew you were Jewish and not a French Jew. They had it against you right then and there.
- Q. Did you have any special identity cards, or did you have to wear any special identification?
- A. No.
- Q. You were in this industrial school, and then what happened?

NUREMBERG LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND GERMAN HONOR

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

Unit 4 - Page

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**Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor
September 15, 1935**

Moved by the understanding that purity of the German Blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people, and inspired by the inflexible determination to ensure the existence of the German Nation for all time, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following Law, which is promulgated herewith:

Sec. 1 1) Marriages between Jews and subjects of the state of Germany or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law. 2) Annulment proceedings can be initiated only by the State Prosecutor.

Sec. 2 Extramarital intercourse between Jews and subjects of the state of Germany or related blood is forbidden.

Sec. 3 Jews may not employ in their households female subjects of the state of Germany or related blood who are under 45 years old.

Sec. 4 1) Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich or National flag or to display the Reich colors. 2) They are, on the other hand, permitted to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right is protected by the State.

Sec. 5 1) Any person who violates the prohibition under Sec. 1 will be punished by a prison sentence with hard labor. 2) A male who violates the prohibition under Sec. 2 will be punished with a prison sentence with or without hard labor. 3) Any person violating the provisions under Secs. 3 or 4 will be punished with a prison sentence of up to one year and a fine, or with one or the other of these penalties. _____

Sec. 6

The Reich Minister of the Interior, in coordination with the Deputy of the Führer and the Reich Minister of Justice, will issue the Legal and Administrative regulations required to implement and complete this Law.

Sec. 7

The Law takes effect on the day following promulgations except for Sec. 3, which goes into force on January 1, 1936.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935 at
the Reich Party Congress of
Freedom

The Führer and Reich Chancellor Adolf
Hitler The Reich Minister of the Interior
Frick The Reich Minister of Justice Dr.
Gurtner The Deputy of the Führer

R. Hess

Reichsgesetzblatt, I, 1935, pp. 1146-1147.

**REGULATION FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE
JEWS FROM THE ECONOMIC LIFE OF GERMANY
NOVEMBER 12, 1938**

On the basis of the regulation for the implementation of the Four Year Plan of October 18, 1936 (Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p. 887), the following is decreed:

Sec. 1

- 1) From January 1, 1939, Jews (Sec. 5 of the First Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law of November 14, 1935, Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p. 1333) are forbidden to operate retail stores, mail-order houses, or sales agencies, or to carry on a trade [craft] independently.
- 2) They are further forbidden, from the same day on, to offer for sale goods or services, to advertise these, or to accept orders at markets of all sorts, fairs or exhibitions.
- 3) Jewish trade enterprises (Third Regulation to the Reich Citizenship Law of June 14, 1938 -- Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p. 627) which violate this decree will be closed by police.

Sec. 2

1) From January 1, 1939, a Jew can no longer be the head of an enterprise within the meaning of the Law of January 20, 1934, for the Regulation of National Work (Reichsgesetzblatt, I, p. 45).

2) Where a Jew is employed in an executive position in a commercial enterprise he may be given notice to leave in six weeks. At the expiration of the term of the notice all claims of the employee based on his contract, especially those concerning pension and compensation rights, become invalid.

Sec. 3.

1) A Jew cannot be a member of a cooperative.

2) The membership of Jews in cooperatives expires on December 31, 1938. No special notice is required.

Sec. 4

The Reich Minister of Economy, in coordination with the Ministers concerned, is empowered to publish regulations for the implementation of this decree. He may permit exceptions under the Law if these are required as the result of the transfer of a Jewish enterprise to non-Jewish ownership, for the liquidation of a Jewish enterprise or, in special cases, to ensure essential supplies.

Berlin, November 12, 1938
Plenipotentiary for the Four Year
Plan

Goring
Field Marshal General

Reichsgesetzblatt, I, 1938, p. 1580.

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE REICH CENTRAL OFFICE FOR JEWISH EMIGRATION

JANUARY 1939

Berlin, January 24, 1939

Plenipotentiary for the Four Year Plan

To The Reich Minister of the Interior Berlin

The emigration of the Jews from Germany is to be furthered by all possible means.

A Reich Central Office for Jewish Emigration is being established in the Reich Ministry of the Interior from among representatives of the agencies concerned. The Reich Central Office will have the task to devise uniform policies as follows:

1. Measures for the preparation of increased emigration of Jews. This will include the creation of a Jewish organization that can prepare uniform applications for emigration; the taking of

all steps for the provision and efficient use of local and foreign funds; and a decision on suitable target countries for emigration, to be selected in coordination with the Reich Center for Emigration.

2. The direction of emigration, including for instance, preference for the emigration of the poorer Jews.
3. The speeding up of emigration in individual cases, by means of speedy and smooth provision of the State documents and permits required by the individual emigrant, through central processing of applications for emigration.

The Reich Center for Emigration will be headed by the Chief of the Security Police. He will appoint a Responsible Manager and make rules for the operation of the Reich Center.

Regular reports on the work of the Reich Center will be forwarded to me. I will be consulted continuously on measures requiring decisions of principle.

In addition to representatives of other agencies involved, the Committee will include Ambassador Eisenlohr, who is responsible for official inter-state negotiations, and Ministerial Director Wohlthat, who is responsible for the negotiations in connection with the Rublee Plan.

Signed NG-2586-A Goring

An Olympic Athlete's Dilemma What Would You Do?

There are few situations in life that do not have as a component the necessity to make a decision based on moral and political values.

Anthony Peterson is 21 years old and a sprinter at the University of Pennsylvania. Anthony has been in training -- for over two years -- for the day he will participate in the 1936 Olympics in Munich, Germany. He is very excited about representing his country and about the glory that may be his.

However, much controversy surrounds this Olympics. Adolf Hitler has become Chancellor of Germany, and the Nazis have been persecuting Jews and all sorts of leftist political groups. Hitler has been gearing up for the Olympics where he intends to prove that the Germans are the most physically perfect "race" in the world. The Olympics will be a great propaganda event for the new German government.

Anthony has been approached by a group of athletes who have been reevaluating the situation. They tell Anthony that they should not participate in the Olympics in Germany because to do so is to legitimize Hitler's policies. After all, America's participation in the world Olympics is not as important as taking a moral stand against the Nazi policies.

Anthony must decide what to do. Should he participate in the 1936 Olympics?

Questions for Discussion:

1. What alternative courses of action are available to Anthony? What are the consequences of each alternative?

2. Does Anthony have a responsibility to his teammates? To himself? Explain your answers.
3. Relate this dilemma to the decision faced by American Olympic athletes who were asked by their government to boycott the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow. If you are not familiar with the events of the 1980 Olympics, research the background of the boycott. What are the similarities? Contrasts? What should American athletes have done?
4. Some critics argue that “sports boycotts” are symbolic, meaningless substitutes for real action that can be taken by governments. Such people believe that a boycott of the 1936 or 1980 Olympics would not have accomplished anything. How do you react to this argument?
5. At the 1972 Olympics held in Berlin, Palestinian terrorists attacked the Israeli pavilion and murdered many members of their Olympic team. In response to this event, Olympic officials held a ceremony in the stadium in which there were two minutes of silence in memory of the slain Israeli athletes. How do you react to this response?

Source: Furman, Harry, ed. *Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience*. New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1983, pages 78-79. Developed under the auspices of the State of New Jersey Department of Education. Reprinted by permission.

EXCERPTS ON KRISTALLNACHT

On the night of November 9-10, 1938, years of Nazi antisemitism climaxed in Kristallnacht, “the night of broken glass.”

In the words of Harry Furman, teacher, Holocaust historian:

On November 7, 1938, Ernst Vom Rath, a member of the German Embassy in Paris, was assassinated by Herschel Grynszpan, a young Polish Jew. Grynszpan had received a letter from his sister in which she stated that the Grynszpan family, together with all Polish Jews living in Germany, had been arrested and deported to Poland. Seeking revenge for the suffering of his family, Grynszpan, who was 17 years old, bought a hand gun, went to the German Embassy, and shot Vom Rath, who later died.

Supposedly in retaliation, the Nazis determined that all places of Jewish worship in Germany and Austria were to be destroyed. In reality, plans for such a riot had been made long before, and only awaited the appropriate moment for execution. Thus, on November 9, 1938, a “spontaneous” demonstration of anger was carried out. In fifteen hours, 101 synagogues were destroyed. The streets were filled with broken glass; thus the name given to this event was Kristallnacht, or “The Night of Broken Glass.” Then the government decided that the Jews would have to pay an “atonement payment” for having caused the damage. Millions of dollars had to be paid by the Jews and their insurance companies to the Nazi government. A new stage in the process of death had begun.

* *

In the words of Dennis B. Klein, author and Director, International Center for Holocaust Studies:

In retrospect the scale of destruction was modest in contrast to the events that immediately followed. (Close to 100 Jews were killed that night.) But for those who saw or learned about

the riots, Kristallnacht revealed for the first time the real horror of the Nazi regime, the inhuman face of National Socialism ... the shock of Kristallnacht forever shattered the world's innocence. No longer could anyone pretend that the German state stood for law and order. With Kristallnacht, state-organized violence became, if not normal, at least permissible, even acceptable political practice.

In the aftermath of Kristallnacht, the Nazi government implemented a policy of mandatory Aryanization that compelled Jews to surrender their property to Germans without compensation. Capital gained from these transactions was placed in blocked accounts which the state eventually confiscated. The intensification of antisemitic measures in Germany and Austria forced Jews in those countries to consider fleeing. But escape was no longer easy. Not only did Aryanization rob Jews of the financial means to relocate elsewhere, but foreign nations expressed little willingness to admit Jewish refugees. The same obstacles confronted any persecuted minority wishing to emigrate from Nazi Germany. The implications of Kristallnacht were clear to the Nazis.

The November 24, 1938 edition of *Das Schwarze Korps*, the newspaper of the SS, featured the following article:

So, we are now going to have a total solution to the Jewish question. The programme is clear. It reads: total separation, total segregation! What does this mean? It does not only mean the total exclusion of the Jews from the German economic system ... It means much more! No German can be expected to live under the same roof as Jews. The Jews must be chased out of our houses and our residential districts and made to live in rows or blocks of houses where they can keep to themselves and come into contact with Germans as little as possible. They must be clearly identified ... And when we compel the rich Jews to provide for the "poor" of their race, which will certainly be necessary, they will all sink together into a pit of criminality. As this happens, we will be faced with the harsh necessity of eradicating the Jewish underworld, just as we root out criminals from our own orderly state: with fire and sword. The result will be the certain and absolute end of Jewry in Germany: its complete annihilation!

Source:

***Days of Remembrance: A Department of Defense Guide for Annual Commemorative Observances (Second Edition).* Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, pages 56-57.**

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Destroyed Jewish prayer books and other religious texts.

(Courtesy of USHMM Photo Archives)

TESTIMONIES

Ernie Michel, née Wurzinger, was born on April 1, 1909 in Nuremberg, Germany. Two months after *Kristallnacht*, she left Germany -- at first to go to France -- and subsequently the United States.

Q. Why don't you tell me about the circumstances that led up to *Kristallnacht*, and then your experience there?

A. Ah, the circumstances leading up to the *Kristallnacht*, the Nazis used the excuse that one of their smaller employees of the Embassy in Paris was killed, allegedly by Jewish people. That was their excuse to break into all the homes on November 9th, 1938. All the Nazis who executed the breaking-in were well-trained, had fantastic tools to destroy everything, to break into homes which were not easily opened like ours.

We didn't open the door. They had to break in. They had heavy tools to open and push open anything. This is one example of how well they were trained. We had a big black piano. They knew exactly what to do. With the heavy hammers, they cut all the ivory keys and then with other instruments, they cut the wires in the back, so they made the grand piano completely useless. But the frame was still standing there, as it wasn't touched at all. We had a huge radio with a loudspeaker built in. They knew exactly where to hit the apparatus. The frame wasn't touched. They cut all the tubes in the back and then took their knife or whatever and cut the loudspeaker.

Q. So you feel that they had been trained beforehand for this?

A. Oh, they were trained marvelously before. They knew exactly what to do. They came with their lists. They had all the addresses. They knew how to break into the buildings. They were well-prepared. No, that was not a spur of the moment thing.

Q. How do you remember the whole thing starting?

A. Hitler was talking in the newspaper and in his speeches of destroying the Jewish population. In Nuremberg, there was also one of the greatest antisemites, Julius Streicher, and he had a very antisemitic newspaper [Ed. note: *Der Stürmer*, or The Attacker]. He was talking all the time about our bad influence and what terrible people we are and also that we have to be destroyed because we are not worth being on this earth.

The question was raised so often, over here particularly, why did you stay that long? I have two answers to that question. The most important one is that it was not a question of leaving your native country, it was a question of the other countries -- any other country who would let you in permanently, not with a three- or four-week visa, because you could never go back to Germany. So that was the most important thing to us, to find a country willing to take us in. Secondly, we lived a comfortable, normal lifestyle, just like American Jews living here. None of us were anxious to leave the country to start

over with nothing and with mediocre jobs. When I finally saw after Hitler took over Austria and Sudetenland -- that was the first part of Czechoslovakia -- I knew that it looked bad, and I started to look around to leave the country.

A. Yes, I started to try to get to America in January 1938.

Q. That's when you wanted to start looking around?

A. I wanted to leave.

Q. Okay, let's get back a little to the *Kristallnacht*.

A. It was a terrible experience for anybody who was there, of course for a Jew, but I would have to say it also was a terrible experience for all the gentile people living in the same buildings where Jewish people lived. The Nazis came in our place around one, one thirty in the night. We had no inkling, none whatsoever.

Q. That this was going to happen that night?

A. Right. Our entrance door had a glass portion and all of a sudden, we saw lot of shadows.

Q. Were you up . . . just happened to be up at that time?

A. No, they rang the bell and made a lot of commotion and noise out there in front of the door, yelling, "Open up!" but we would not.

My father at that time was not home and that was a lucky break for him. He was visiting one of his friends from the first World War, from the army. He had been an officer. It was only my mother and I who were home.

The Nazis finally broke into our apartment, and there was a lot of noise right away. They stormed in, asked for my father, and we told them that he wasn't here. They spread out in every room. We were in a corner. We saw their big axe, and a very heavy instrument which you use on a construction site, I would say, and they started immediately with breaking things apart. Then they took their knives out, opened the wardrobe, cut the clothes, cut triangles in the fur coats and the Persian rugs, making everything absolutely worthless. It was for about an hour and a half. They totally destroyed our apartment. They dumped the crystal and the silver.

My mother was from a very fine family. Her father was a jeweler in Silesia for the court there. So when she got married, she had in her dowry beautiful silver and stuff. And they dumped the silver on the floor and stamped on it with their boots and just flattened it. Everything was a total destruction. The fine porcelain, they took the hammer and broke with all their might, through a stack of twenty-four plates or so.

The noise was unbelievable. The noise was damaging to our ears and, of course, for our nerves. I still cannot stand any noise. If I go to an assembly with a lot of people, I have to be extremely careful. They were well-prepared. In the corner were my skis standing, because it was wintertime. You know November in Germany is wintertime.

They just broke off the tips. At the very end, they took glass pots and threw them in the open cut bedding, in the down comforters and everything, so that we couldn't use our beds. Once they left, there was nothing, not a chair, nothing. Everything was demolished, even the big furniture.

Q. Did they say anything to you during all of this?

A. No, I do not remember. Their faces were red and full of hate. I would assume that they had plenty of alcohol in them or something which made them strong and full of hate -unbelievable -- and ready to fight. They did some stealing, but obviously they were told not to touch the women. So nobody touched my mother or me. They threatened us, but they would not hit us or touch us.

Q. What did they threaten you?

A. With their looks, with their behavior, and with their tools.

Q. How old were you at this time?

A. I was already twenty-eight years old. When they left, the very last thing they cut were the crystal chandeliers, so we were in total darkness more or less. Maybe they overlooked one of the other ones.

Q. And no other apartment in your building was touched?

A. No, they were all gentiles and after they had left, the other people in the building saw them out there on the street and out of our neighborhood. They sneaked up quietly to our apartment and when they came, they put their finger in front of their mouths, not to speak to us, because they were afraid that maybe another party in the building was listening and would know that they came up and wanted to look at what had happened here. So slowly, most of them came up, tip-toeing to see what happened. All they could do is to shake their head with the most misbelieving eyes and touch our shoulders.

Q. Were the Germans clearly dressed as soldiers? They were in uniform?

A. They were not dressed as soldiers. They were dressed as Nazis. They came in their brown uniforms with the Nazi sign, with their hats, and their big, black boots. They were not soldiers. They were Nazis.

Q. What happened after they left? You just stood there in shock?

A. Yes. We couldn't believe our own eyes. They tore all the books. There was nothing left. Were standing there and the people in our back apartment were very nice and supportive. We had only one thought the next morning, how to find a workman who could fix the damage on our entrance door, so we could close the apartment again. And I was walking around completely dazed. I had to say, there were people around us and the people who knew us in our neighborhood. I went to the butcher who knew us also for fifteen years. When he saw me, he

just silently shook his head and with his eyes let me know
he felt sorry for me. Nobody would dare to say anything, but in the
stores you saw the eyes and the unbelievable thinking of the people
who knew you.

Q. So there was a lot of fear in everyone?

A. Oh, hundred percent fear in everybody. _____

Q. Was there more antisemitism after that?

A. That is a question which I cannot really answer. Maybe amongst the people who had no contact with Jewish people before, after they saw the synagogues all on fire, everything destroyed in the Jewish homes. The men had been picked up and put on trucks and brought into special halls. After they saw that and they announced over the loudspeakers and the radio, maybe some uneducated people then became future followers. They may have developed more antisemitism. They probably thought Hitler was right that we are a bad people and that we deserve it. But I do not think that people who knew other Jewish people would have been influenced. I think they felt more sorry for us, and, of course, it showed very clearly that there was no more time for Jewish people left in Germany.

Unit 5

The Ghettos

INTRODUCTION

The term ghetto, as it is used today, generally refers to an area within a city where people live who share a common ethnic background. Often the modern-day ghetto is further distinguished by the poor economic level of the majority of its residents. While many may feel they have no choice but to live there, all share the same basic freedoms as citizens of the country and all have the freedom, if not the financial means, to move should they choose to do so. Even the impoverished residents of our modern city ghettos can still participate freely in all areas of public life. The term ghetto, as it was used during the Holocaust also referred to an area where residents were united by common circumstances, but they were drastically different from those of the ghetto today.

During the Holocaust, the ghetto served as a collection point and assembly center where the Nazis imprisoned their victims. Technically, the ghetto was a way-station to death in the concentration camps and, in fact, was not very different from them. Conditions within the ghetto and the concentration camp were often so similar that in some cases, the terms were used interchangeably. For example, Theresienstadt has been referred to as both a ghetto and a concentration camp. Technically, under the Nazi German administrative structure, Theresienstadt was a ghetto, as it was not under the jurisdiction of the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps in the SS Central Office for Economy and Administration.

The Germans did not develop ghettos in Western Europe since the plan was to push all those intended for elimination or slave labor into Eastern Europe. A vast section of central Poland, called the General Government, was carved out for this purpose. Additionally, this area was to serve as a buffer zone for the uneasy alliance between Germany and Russia and as the "dumping ground" for all Poles. The very concept of Polish nationhood was to be eradicated.

The Jews in Western Europe often were held for months under dreadful conditions in internment centers which had been designated as "transit camps." In the East, the Jews lived for years in the deplorable conditions of the ghettos. Food rations were reduced below human survival causing mass starvation. Sanitary conditions were almost non-existent as were medical supplies. Crowding was insufferable. Often two or three families had to share one small room. In every ghetto, death was a daily reality from epidemics, starvation, exposure, and being forced to labor beyond physical endurance. Children with stomachs swollen from starvation begged for food. Corpses littered the streets, and epidemics were routine.

As a tactic for compliance or to flush out wanted persons in the ghetto, the Nazis took hostages and killed them publicly as a warning to others. Periodically, Jews would also be rounded up and deported by train or truck to the concentration camps and killing centers. As the war progressed, deportations increasingly included everyone as the ghettos were "liquidated." Gypsies who had earlier been transferred from the West to the ghettos in the East were now rounded up throughout Europe and deported to the camps with the Jews.

Some of those imprisoned in the ghettos in Eastern Europe were put into the position of carrying out the Nazi orders. This council, the *Judenrat*, was ordered by the Germans to fill a quota for the various deportations. However, in a few courageous cases, the leaders of the *Judenrat* committed suicide rather than fulfill the Nazis' demands, although this never stopped the implementation of deportations.

Thus, in the East, the ghettos served the Nazi "Master Plan" by providing controlled prisons within which its wretched inhabitants could be slowly starved to death or die "of natural causes" from sickness, exposure, or the daily brutalities. Confined and isolated within the ghettos, Germans had effectively collected and contained the largest mass of Jews in Europe. For those who remained in the ghetto, there was the fervent hope that they would live to see the Nazis overthrown and Germany defeated. Few could realize the priority that would be given to the "Jewish question." No matter how urgent Germany's military needs, nothing would outweigh the Nazi determination for a "Final Solution."

CONTENT OVERVIEW

THE GHETTOS

In 1939 Hitler expressed his wish to concentrate the Jews in ghettos: "Out with them from all the professions and into the ghetto with them; fence them in somewhere where they can perish as they deserve..."³ In spite of this statement, however, he never gave orders to establish ghettos, possibly because he saw them as an unnecessary delay in the plans for total physical annihilation. Yet, the suggestion to develop ghettos persisted and was soon enacted.

In Western Europe, the Nazis periodically moved targeted groups into specific areas of the cities in order to isolate and contain them. In Eastern Europe, this effort to concentrate persecuted minorities was far more intense in design. Massive groups of people were moved, first in one direction, then another. These round-ups were made easy because of the European registration system which required everyone to register his/her address with the police.

Due to the extremely complex nature of the ghetto situation and the other types of forcible movements of people practiced in all of the countries under German rule, only one country is described in this chapter: the case of Poland. Similarities with Poland existed in many other occupied countries, especially in the Nazis' treatment of the Jews and other persecuted groups, but the vast numbers moved to and within Poland provide a razor-sharp image of Nazi policies and procedures.

The Development of Ghettos in Poland

The ghettos were never developed as an answer to the "racial problem" and so were not established as permanent living quarters for the mass of people forced into them. The ghetto was conceived as an aid to the control and supervision of Jews (and the Gypsies who were to share their fate) by concentrating them within certain areas.

The ghetto, whether initially intended or not, also served two additional purposes. First, with the demands for hard labor, the insufficient food allotted, and overcrowded and substandard sanitary conditions, a large number of the Jews perished. This resolved at least part of the "Jewish question." Second, the ghettos provided a large concentration of cheap labor which the Nazis and their collaborators eagerly exploited.

In general, as soon as the German forces entered a city, a series of anti-Jewish measures would be introduced. These included assignments to forced labor, confiscation of Jewish businesses, real estate and other properties held outside of the ghetto, and a ban on using public transportation. It was also ordered that every Jew must be readily identifiable. In Poland this took the form of having to wear a white armband with a blue Star of David on it or yellow patches cut in the shape of the six pointed star. Armbands were used in the General Government; stars in the German incorporated areas of the Wartheland, including Łódź and Poznań. The patches had to be attached to both the front and back of all outer garments. These identification markers had to be worn at all times and were blatant measures introduced to isolate and identify the groups of intended victims from the general population.

Orders to move into the ghettos were given by large signs which were posted throughout the town and through loud speakers blaring announcements that the death penalty would be dealt to anyone who disobeyed. Movement into the ghettos was also facilitated by the victims' belief that this was the final measure of persecution against them and that the war would soon end. Unaware of the Nazis' plans to completely destroy them, they resigned themselves to the move. Furthermore, many of the Jews hoped that living together in mutual cooperation and self-rule would make it a little easier to withstand the Nazi brutality they had so often been exposed to as individuals. The assumption was (and the Germans encouraged this belief) that if they carried out the Nazis' orders and were beneficial to the Nazis by being productive, they would be left alone. However, it was not long before it was discovered that these were false hopes.

With the ghetto population now living isolated from any assistance whatsoever, and without resources to help themselves, the Nazis were free to be as cruel as they wished. Furthermore, repeated Aktions (round-ups) in which large numbers of the ghetto residents were arrested and transported to places from which no one returned, destroyed any illusion of a peaceful existence.

Ghetto Features and Conditions

In most cases, ghettos were established in the poorest sections of the cities in Poland. Before the war, these areas had frequently been crowded Jewish neighborhoods. When the ghetto was established, the

non-Jews had to leave (although many went to better apartments vacated by Jews who had been forced to abandon them), and Jews from other neighborhoods were ordered to move there. In order to concentrate Jews scattered throughout the countryside, those who lived in the rural areas were brought to the cities and also moved into the ghettos.

Conditions in almost all of the ghettos in Poland were inhuman. There was rationing of food to starvation levels. Since there were many ghettos, and conditions were different from the East to the West, it is impossible to provide an exact daily calorie count. However, this information is available for some specific locations. For example, in Warsaw, the largest of the ghettos in Poland, food allocation amounted to 183 calories per day; the Poles received 934, foreigners 1,790, and the Germans 2,310.4 The average ration per person each month was four pounds of bread. The bread dough was mixed with sand, sawdust, and chestnuts. Periodically jam, made from beets and saccharine, was distributed. The Germans also were quite willing to bring in potatoes and brukiew (a large squash) -- provided it had frozen and turned rotten. Hunger was never-ending. One survivor, who was 13 years old when she was in the Warsaw ghetto, related her memory of the evening her mother put before her a sort of brown meat which looked like liver. Half-starved she could not believe her good fortune. The liver was exceptional, without any veins or coarseness. The young girl asked, "How were you so lucky to get the meat?" Her mother confessed that the "liver" was actually blood that had been taken from a dead horse and boiled until it had jelled. The young girl was nauseous but held herself back from vomiting.

In the larger ghettos which were not near rural, agricultural areas, ghetto residents purchased food on the black market at exorbitant prices when they were able to find it and pay for it, while others slowly starved to death. There were soup kitchens which, for money, distributed some cooked oats with the chaff still on them. Hand-pulled carts rolled through ghetto streets every morning collecting the hundreds who had died in the night from starvation or exposure. Bands of children roamed the streets in search of food. Sometimes they would slip under the walls and return to the ghetto with their jackets and pants laden with vegetables which they had bought, stolen, or bartered. If patrols guarding the wall caught these children, they would be searched, thus exposing the life-giving food. In most cases, these children would be shot, at other times beaten, in any case, their food would be taken. For many parents, little brothers and sisters, this food meant the difference between life and certain death.

In some cases, food was thrown over the walls, often by those Jews on the "Aryan" side who were living on false papers. In other instances, food was thrown over by Poles who were being paid for their help. In other dangerous cases, young Jewish men and women who looked "Aryan" sneaked out of the ghetto, bought food, and smuggled themselves and their precious foodstuffs back in. By the end of 1941, the penalty for leaving the ghetto without permission was death.

There were little or no heating materials. Rooms were heated by a single stove providing there was wood or coal to burn in it. But such fuels were a luxury and were rarely available. During the bitter cold winter months, everyone had to wear, at all times, whatever clothes or blankets they could find in order to keep from freezing. Water froze in the pipes and the sanitary conditions were so poor that epidemics, especially typhoid and tuberculosis, raged throughout the ghetto. Electricity was provided only for one hour and usually it went on in the middle of the night such as at 3 a.m. The only light available was from carbide lamps which gave off an unpleasant odor and fumes that affected the eyes. There were little or no medical supplies and these were generally available only at the hospital. But going to the ghetto hospital was dangerous since it was frequently the target of German round-ups. All of this was added to insufferable overcrowding, where it was not at all unusual for eight to thirteen people to have to share one small room. As the Germans steadily reduced the size of many of the ghettos yet increased the numbers of Jews who had been sent there, thousands of families were left without shelter.

The Nazis imposed harsh rules. Curfews were enacted, and people were forbidden assembly. Attending or teaching school was largely forbidden and in many ghettos all cultural and religious activities were banned or, at best, permitted only occasionally and under severe restrictions. However, in the Warsaw ghetto, there was an open church for those who converted to Catholicism as they, too, were confined to the ghetto and treated as Jews because they were considered racially impure. There were no legal means to communicate with the outside world. All radios were to have been turned in after Poland was occupied, and all internal publications in the ghetto were forbidden. If caught for the slightest infraction of the rules, the death sentence was carried out publicly before the ghetto population. Frequently, a single individual's offense resulted in severe reprisals where hundreds would be randomly selected as hostages and killed as an example and warning to others.

There were, initially, two types of ghettos: open and closed. The open ghettos were marked by signs and the perimeters patrolled. Closed ghettos, as the name implies, were surrounded by fences or walls. Some of the closed ghettos were further reinforced by cementing broken glass onto the tops of the walls then extending the height of the wall another two feet with barbed wire. Gates to the ghettos were guarded by German soldiers, Polish and Jewish police. The distinction between closed or open ghettos lost all significance, however, when it came time to "liquidate" the population. In the open ghettos, all access roads would be blocked by the German police and their aides, and the ghetto surrounded just as completely as the walls of the closed ghettos. A more important distinction is that the Germans regarded the closed ghettos as virtual concentration camps.

Forced Labor in the Ghettos

The ghettos provided a captive population to exploit for forced labor. The wages paid were so low that the recipients could barely pay for rations let alone extra food on the black market. In areas where "minimum wages" were paid, the Nazis got around this by taking substantial deductions. Fifty to 80 percent of the wages were thus "legally" confiscated, reducing the amount rendered to a starvation income. In many cases, work was not paid at all and forced labor was, in reality, slave labor.

And yet, many people in the ghetto willingly volunteered for labor, even though the working conditions were brutal. The workers labored seven days a week, working in twelve-hour shifts, under strict supervision of the SS and later the Ministry of Labor.

Payment, although a pittance, depended on each worker producing massive amounts of piece-work to fill unreasonable and ever-expanding quotas for the German war economy. Yet, there were always more laborers willing to work than jobs available for them. The secret to this seeming paradox lay in the Nazis' effective threat of deportations for anyone who did not have proper working papers. Even if such papers were obtained, they were never a guarantee of protection from deportation. Whole factories would, periodically, be emptied and all the workers deported. Overnight, a type of work could be declared nonessential and the work papers declared worthless.

After the majority of the ghetto residents had been deported, those remaining had to keep working. They emptied out the vacated apartments and labored in sweat shops, sorting out the possessions of the deported Jews which would then be sent to Germany. They worked in various capacities, always under appalling conditions, serving the needs of the Reich. They made military uniforms, shoes, boots, brushes, ammunition and worked as furriers, jewelers, and engravers. They worked in airless factories, in the fields, and in quarries. In all cases, the degree of need for such services decided the survival of these slave laborers in the ghetto. Nevertheless, however horrible the conditions and the quality of their life, the people hung on with their last bit of strength to avoid the dreaded deportations.

Administration of the Ghetto

In the ghettos in Poland, the German authorities appointed a council of Jewish leaders to carry out their orders. These councils were called the Judenrat. Although their powers were extremely limited, these councils, under strict German supervision, were faced with the impossible task of trying to organize ghetto life under ceaseless pressure and threats. Certain Jewish activities, such as religious services, were either closely monitored or forbidden outright. All political activity was prohibited. The main task of

the Judenrat was to carry out the orders of their German overseers. In addition, they had to develop and provide health and welfare services and a police system. In the chaotic mass of frightened, impoverished, starving residents, the task of meeting basic human needs was impossible and developing a police system from within their own ranks -something completely foreign to the Jewish community -- was filled with problems and corruption. From the Nazi point of view, these councils served the darker purpose of having to collect and provide ransom money on demand, goods and services, and most important of all, people for deportations. The Germans savagely exerted their power over the Judenrat and Jewish police. For example, in the Warsaw ghetto, when deportations were stepped up towards the end of the ghetto's existence, Jewish police were ordered to deliver seven people per day. If they did not, their own families were taken.

The Nazis shrewdly recognized the potential of using Jewish leaders to coerce the population into their scheme of "resettlement." Initially, this deception was encouraged by the inducement of food which brought out many of the starving ghetto residents. However, if the Jewish leaders could convince their people that they were going to better living conditions, the task of evacuating the ghetto residents to the concentration camps would be substantially easier. Until the councils recognized the true fate of the deportations, some of them complied with the Nazi orders.

Members of the Judenrat were not accorded equal status, and usually one person carried the weight of responsibility for the Judenrat's decisions. This individual was charged with the moral dilemma of giving into the Nazi demands now (with the hope or expectation of saving the rest) or resisting these demands completely (with the expectation of severe reprisals). Particularly noteworthy was the reaction of the head of the Warsaw ghetto Judenrat, Adam Czerniakow. He interceded with the German authorities in every way possible to alleviate the suffering of the people in the ghetto. Tirelessly, he worked to overcome the German regulations imposed and to organize relief. Mass deportations from the Warsaw ghetto to the killing center Treblinka began on July 21, 1942. Three days later, following the Nazis' demand that Czerniakow cooperate with them in rounding up Jews destined for the deportations, he committed suicide. His diary, most of which was recovered, tells of the anguish and the hopelessness of his situation as increasingly stringent orders were issued, and he was forced to stand by and see his people die. Although exempted from the deportations (at least until the ghetto was liquidated -- a fact unknown to the council members), he chose death rather than to turn against his people.

The story of the Jewish councils has generated considerable controversy. Many of them have been condemned for willingly complying with Nazi demands. Yet, there were extreme differences among the councils. Some appear to have been corrupted by their status, using their position to escape their own impending death or to reap benefits not accorded to those in their care; others acted in ways that can

only be called heroic. Two examples illustrate these differences.

In the Łódź ghetto, Chaim Rumkowski, the head of the council, knew about the gassing very early on. He kept this information to himself, and he continued to participate in the deportations of Jews from Łódź to the death camp of Chelmno, knowing quite well that those who left the ghetto were gassed at Chelmno. His reasoning was that all could not be saved; therefore, some had to be sacrificed in order to preserve others. He allowed no food to be smuggled into the ghetto and suppressed any discussion or efforts of resistance. He forced Jews into slave labor and made impassioned pleas for those who could not be "productive" to be given up for the Nazi deportation quotas. In many testimonies gathered today, he is cast as a villain. He has even been called the Jewish Führer. He tried to justify his actions on the basis of providing essential labor to the Germans which, he claimed, would save some of them. His strategy was "salvation through labor." He reasoned that if the ghetto became a productive force serving essential German needs and enriching his German handlers, it would be in the self interest of both the army and the local leadership not to liquidate the ghetto.

Because of Rumkowski's compliance, approximately 60,000 Jews were alive in Łódź in August 1944, when they were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. No excuse could justify his orders to take the children. In order to "save" the mothers, their children were ripped from their arms. But what he saved were only the shells of the humanity entrusted in his care, for he had torn out their very hearts. Yet Rumkowski nearly succeeded with his warped rationalization. With the Soviet army only 60 miles away, plans to liquidate the ghetto were postponed so that the Łódź ghetto could make needed German army uniforms.

Unfortunately, the Soviets did not advance, and the ghetto was liquidated several months later. One account of Rumkowski's end described his deportation with his family to Auschwitz where he was recognized by some of the former Jewish slaves from Łódź, who strangled him. Another account claims that when he arrived at the concentration camp, he arrogantly approached an SS officer and announced his expectation of preferential treatment. His answer was a bullet, after which his body was thrown into a ditch.

In Kovno, the picture was a very different one. Here, a courageous and caring council led the people. The Jewish officials and Jewish police led dangerous double lives, going through the motions of maintaining order yet, actively working with the resistance in the ghetto. Children about to be deported were hidden. Young men and women were smuggled out to join the partisans. Then, one day, without warning, members of the Jewish police were arrested and horribly tortured for information. The Nazis wanted to know the location of the hiding places the police had helped to build; they wanted to know the routes that the young men and women had taken out of the ghetto and how the partisan units in the area were

operating. The chief of the Jewish police was singled out for particularly brutal tortures. Yet, he never revealed anything. He was killed along with 39 others.

Resistance in the Ghettos

Unarmed Resistance

Resistance took many forms. Since all large gatherings were forbidden, few cultural events were allowed. Yet, there was a strong effort to maintain morale. Many sought the spiritual comfort of religious services, and religious events and holidays were observed, although illegally. Educational lectures, literature readings, and musical evenings were given in secret when they could no longer be held in public. Although most schools were forbidden, many continued from rooms in various apartments. To give some protection against the continual danger of German raids, typhus quarantine signs were posted on the entrance to the building. While not a foolproof method, it was well known that the Germans were afraid of catching this highly contagious disease and usually avoided the contaminated areas. Similarly, medical, technical, and scientific instruction was hidden under the guise of trade school courses which, up to a point, were officially allowed. However, if a child was caught attending an illegal school (which almost all of them were), or a teacher was caught teaching in one, these were grounds for summary execution.

Another form of resistance was the reaction to the demands on ghetto residents to give up material goods, such as furs, gold, metal, and money. When, for example, fur coats, collars, and fur accessories were demanded by the Germans, word leaked out that the furs were to be re sewn for German soldiers fighting at the Russian front. Under pain of death should they be caught, most people burned the furs rather than turn them in.

Television did not yet exist and radios had been confiscated in the beginning of the war. Shut off from the outside world, the Jews in the ghetto were anxious to have news of the war, and so there were underground newspapers. These papers, printed on old fashioned hand presses, kept ghetto residents informed of German and Allied movements and general news of the world both inside and outside of the ghetto. Passed surreptitiously from hand to hand, these papers gave their secret readers hope for survival and for an end to the war.

Others, and particularly those trained in history, kept scrupulous records of what the Nazis were doing. Knowing full well that the penalty was death for keeping such accounts, notes were often recorded at night, using only a candle, and hidden in various places throughout the ghetto. It was hoped that after the writers' deaths, these records might survive as an indictment of the Nazis for all the world to know. Among the most treasured records to be discovered after the war were the archives of the Jewish

historian, Emmanuel Ringelblum, who established a secret society which understood the gravity of their mission to keep a documented record of what was happening.

In terms of unarmed resistance, possibly no ghetto resident more deserves the accolade of "hero" than Janusz Korczak (his real name was Henryk Goldschmit), the director of the Jewish orphanage in Warsaw. A respected physician and educator, and a famous Polish writer, he had numerous opportunities to be given safe passage out of the ghetto. Instead, he chose to stay with his beloved children. Many recall the day when the orphanage was liquidated. Dr. Korczak led his group of children, who walked in neat groups of four, and the medical assistants who had chosen to stay with him, to the Umschlagplatz (the transfer point to deportation trains). He carried an ill child in his arms. It is known that he, the hospital children who joined him, and all the children, were killed at Treblinka. However, the actual details during their deportation and arrival at the killing center are unknown. It was rumored that Korczak had carried poison with him which he distributed on the train so that all of them died before arriving at the camp. Another account claims that Korczak and his charges arrived at the camp alive. Although in a state of terrible exhaustion, and knowing full well the fate that soon awaited them, he nevertheless spent his remaining hours going among the children assuring them of his continued presence and comforting them in their fear.

The constant changes in the composition of the ghetto population (due to Aktions which took people out of the ghettos as well as the continual transfers of others into the ghetto) made it extremely difficult to formulate any planned uprising. The absolute isolation from the outside world also cut them off from acquiring arms with which to defend themselves. Even more important were the conditions of the ghetto itself which spiritually and physically weakened the inhabitants. These factors, plus the forced labor, unending anxiety, threat of round-ups, severe malnutrition, terrible crowding, epidemics, and general filth from lack of sanitary conditions, all worked against the possibility of establishing any form of combat-ready resistance. Counterbalanced against these conditions were the massive manpower and heavy arms of the Germans which predestined to failure any attempt to resist. And yet, there were revolts of stunning strength and defiance.

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

By the end of 1942, there were between 30,000 and 35,000 Jews living in the Warsaw ghetto. In addition, there were between 20,000 and 30,000 Jews who had somehow escaped the round-ups and deportations and were living there illegally.⁷ At this time, Jews were also moved into the ghetto from the surrounding labor camps which had been closed down. The Nazis now stepped up their search for Jews in hiding or living on false papers, and many were now seized and returned to the ghetto. Thus, added to

these numbers were Jews who had been living on the "Aryan" side. At this time, resistance in the ghetto intensified. A small number of arms were negotiated for with the Polish underground armies Molotov cocktails, and other Polish underground organizations. Several secret workshops manufactured homemade hand grenades and bombs, and some additional arms were bought on the black market.

Another wave of deportations began on January 18, 1943. The Nazis broke into the ghetto, cordoned off blocks, deported their inhabitants, liquidated the hospital, shot the patients, and deported the personnel. Nearby factories which used ghetto workers were likewise surrounded and their workers deported. The ghetto underground organizations, ill-prepared, nevertheless offered armed resistance which turned into four days of street fighting. This was the first case of street fighting in occupied Poland.

On April 19, 1943, a full German force, equipped with heavy artillery, moved into the Warsaw ghetto to resume the deportations. Yet, in spite of their superior numbers and armaments, they were unprepared for the resistance they were to confront. The revolt was led by a young man named Mordechai Anielewicz and a core of 700 - 750 young, Jewish fighters who rose on behalf of the 40,000 or so ghetto residents, all that remained out of the approximately half-million or more who had been transferred into and out of the ghetto or had already died or been deported. With many of the ghetto inhabitants helping as best they could and armed only with make-shift bombs, Molotov cocktails, pistols, and a small number of rifles and grenades which had been manufactured in the ghetto, the small band of fighters held out against a massive, heavy-armored, battle trained, German military assault. A dozen or more Germans were killed and many more injured. Unwilling to suffer further losses, the Germans changed their tactics. To avoid further street clashes, they began to systematically burn the ghetto down, building by building. When the end finally came and the ghetto was destroyed, the Warsaw ghetto resistance fighters had held out against the German army from April 19 to May 16, 1943, 27 days -- longer than had France, Belgium, or Poland. The Warsaw ghetto uprising marked the first instance in occupied Europe when any urban population had risen in revolt, but it was not the last. In 24 ghettos, groups of young Jewish fighters rose up against the Nazis in western and central Poland. Armed resistance soon developed in over 160 ghettos or places where Jews were concentrated.⁹ However, as in Warsaw, the end was inevitable. The courage of these ghetto revolts will always serve to distinguish the valor of the human spirit even in the face of unconquerable odds.

"Varshe" ("Warsaw")

The night does not end and the leaden hours drag,
The earth is like bloody coals.
The Jew arises like a storm-tossed flag,
A flag in the valley of dead souls.

The ghetto is in shambles -- oh, the Jews all fight
Through flame and smoke they stride.
Revenge! Revenge! They storm through the night,
For parents, for children, for pride!

The snow falls and falls, yet the earth is not white.
The red seething blood still shows through.
It calls for revenge on this icy night
For the blood of the heroic Jew.

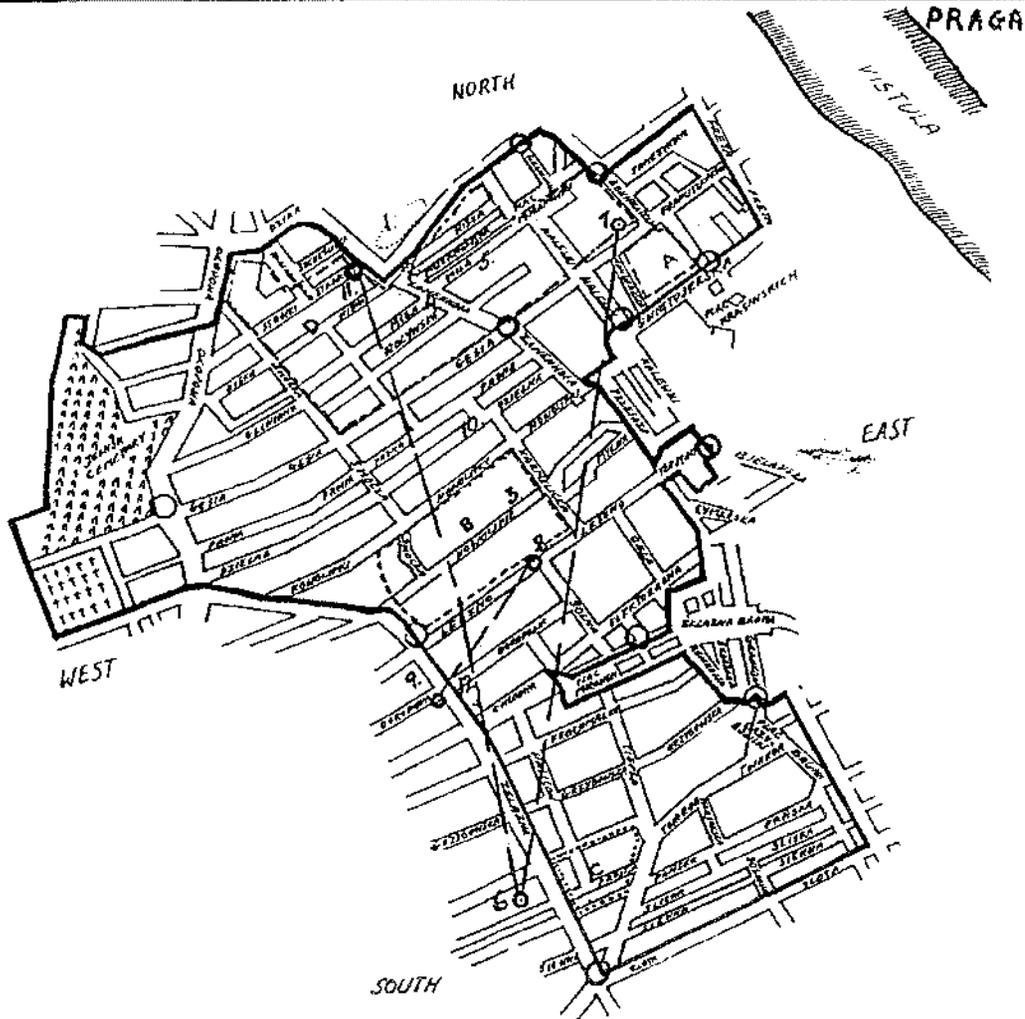
No day there will be, shouts the Jew, and no night.
The world we can never forgive!
Every man and woman who fell in the fight
In our hearts forever will live.

We shall always remember their courage and pain,
Our feverish souls will avenge.
Three words etched in blood in our hearts will remain:
Revenge! Revenge! Revenge!

Poem to commemorate the first anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising by partisan Shmerke Kaczerginski, 1944.

Source: Days of Remembrance: A Department of Defense Guide for Annual Commemorative Observances (Second Edition). Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, page 93.

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Map of the Warsaw Ghetto (according to M. Neustadt, Vol I, p. 321.)

The heavy line-- The ghetto borders before June, 1952. (Sic 1940)

The dotted lines-- The four ghetto areas after September, 1942.

- A. Area of the brushmakers' shop.
- B. Toebbens-Schulz shops.
- C. The "small ghetto," the Toebbens factories and the living blocks for the workers.
- I). The "central ghetto" area.
- O. The ghetto gates.

In between are the so-called wild areas.

1. The *Umschlagplatz*

2. Site of the first armed clash, January 18, 1943.
 3. Another center of fighting, January 18, 1943.
 4. Scene of the first German attack on April 19, 1943, passing through Zamenhofa and Mila Streets to Muranowski Square. Headquarters of the Jewish Fighting Organization, 18 Mila Street.
 5. Street.
 6. Sewer manhole on Prosta Street.
 6. Bunker on Franciszkanska Street, where the fighters entered the sewage system.
 7. Entrance to the sewage system from the Toebbens area.
 8. Manhole on Ogrodowa Street.
 9. Pawiak prison.
 - 10
 11. The place where a rescue squad from the "Aryan" side was supposed to find a group of ghetto fighters.
 12. The "Polish corridor" and the bridge connecting the two ghetto areas.
- The -- dotted lines:
- 6-7 Bird's eye view of the approximate route of the fighters from Franciszkanska Street through the sewage system to the manhole at Prosta Street.
 - 8-9 The exit route of another group of fighters, through the sewage system.
 - 6-11 Another way through the sewage system from the "Aryan" side to the ghetto.

VOCABULARY

TERMS

Aktion: Operation involving the assembling of Jews for transport to the concentration camps and killing centers; also the taking of hostages.

Concentration camps: The notorious prisons designed for labor, torture, and murder, set up by the Nazis throughout the German *Reich*, Europe, and North Africa. At first used for political prisoners, many later held large numbers of different groups of prisoners (Jews, Gypsies, Slavs, the political resisters, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.) from numerous countries. The camps were centers of death where prisoners died by murder, gassing, torture, "medical" experimentation, overwork, disease and hunger. The largest and possibly most infamous was Auschwitz where more people were interned than at any other prison site. While there were thousands of concentration camps, some of the better-known ones were: Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrack, Buchenwald, Flossenburg, Neuengamme, Gross-Rosen, Majdanek, Natzweiler, Mauthausen, Stutthof, Dora/Nordhausen, and Bergen-Belsen. Six concentration camps were developed and organized specifically and solely as killing centers: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz/Birkenau, and Majdanek. The last two also served as slave labor camps. A wide variety of prisoners were interned and killed in the Nazi camps, the largest groups being the Jews, Gypsies, Soviet prisoners of war, and Slavs. In addition to these, an untold number of other Nazi "undesirables" were held in these camps and killed. However, the Jews were overwhelmingly the largest single group to be imprisoned in these camps and murdered there. All of the concentration camps were centers of forced labor and death.

Deportation: Forcible transfer of Jews to Nazi concentration camps.

General Government: The administrative unit comprising those parts of occupied central Poland that were not incorporated into the German *Reich*. It included five districts: Galicia, Krakow, Lublin, Radom, and Warsaw.

Ghetto: A compulsory closed "Jewish Quarter" established by the Germans where the Jewish population of the city and Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to live under inhumane and desperate conditions.

Judenrat: The official Jewish leadership body in the ghetto consisting of a community council with jurisdiction confined to secular affairs. The Germans took control of these Jewish councils and forced them to accept German orders to facilitate the establishment of the ghettos and, ultimately the destruction of the Jews of Europe.

Molotov Cocktail: A makeshift bomb made of a breakable container filled with flammable liquid and provided with a rag wick.

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising: Jews in the Warsaw ghetto rose in revolt against the German occupation forces from April 19 to May 16, 1943.

NAMES AND PLACES

Anielewicz, Mordechai: Led Jewish fighters in revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Czerniakow, Adam: Head of the Warsaw ghetto *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) who committed suicide rather than obey the German orders.

Eichmann, Adolf: Coordinated the deportation of Jews from their homes in German-occupied Europe to ghettos, concentration, and death camps in Eastern Europe. He headed Department IVB4 of *REICHSSICHERHEITSHAUPTAMT (Referat Juden)* and as such was the engineer of the "Final Solution." Eichmann was captured by Israeli agents on May 11, 1959 in Argentina where he had been living. After a lengthy trial in Israel, he was convicted and executed on May 31, 1962.

Heydrich, Reinhard: As chief of RSHA, Heydrich was entrusted in 1941 with implementing the "Final Solution" of the "Jewish question." He presided over the conference at Wannsee in Berlin on January 20, 1942. Czech partisans assassinated Heydrich in Prague in 1942. As a result, the entire village of Lidice was destroyed, and nearly all of its citizens were killed.

Korczak, Janusz: [Real name - Henryk Goldszmit] A physician, educator, writer of children's stories, and the director of an orphanage. On August 6, 1942, Korczak, known as "Father of Orphans," accompanied his children on a three-mile march to the deportation train which led to Treblinka where they were all killed.

Ringelblum, Emmanuel: (1900-1944) A resident of the Warsaw ghetto who closely documented his life in the ghetto; these documents were discovered after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising hidden in milk cans buried under the rubble of the destroyed ghetto.

RSHA (*Reichssicherheitshauptamt*): Central Office for *Reich* Security; coordinated administration of security and police agencies including the *Gestapo* and Security Service.

Rumkowski, Chaim: Head of the b5c12 ghetto *Judenrat* (Jewish Council).

The Issue of Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto

Why didn't the Jews fight back? is a question you may well be asking yourselves at this time. Why didn't they resist during the Holocaust?

The first step toward understanding resistance is to comprehend how Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe perceived what was happening to them. For these individuals, there was no such event as "the Holocaust." Holocaust is our term. The Jews of Europe were not reacting to what we now know was the Holocaust, but to a certain reality as they saw it at that time, with information that they had at that time, and within the framework of their historical experience. So when the Jews of Warsaw became victims of humiliation, brutalization, and atrocities, they saw these experiences as manifestations of traditional anti-Semitism, because that is what these experiences had signified for two thousand years. Their thoughts and actions were different from what they would have been if they had known that Hitler planned to annihilate every single Jew in Europe. But they did not know. They could not have known, because the concept of the Holocaust was then unfathomable.

We cannot view historical events through the prism of what occurred afterward. We must instead explore the Holocaust as if we are looking at a series of photographs, with each one illustrating the increasingly difficult situation in which the Jews of Warsaw found themselves.

When people talk of resistance, they usually mean armed struggle. But such resistance was not realistic for most Jews during the Holocaust.

First, arms were not available to the Jews. Second, when Jews tried to defy the Germans, they faced "collective punishment," the German policy of killing many Jews for the actions of a few. Third, the Jews were still suffering from the shock of the German victory and the catastrophe it had brought.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Jewish goal was survival, at least in the beginning, when everyone was hopeful and looked for a quick ending to the war. "How can we see to it that as many of us as are alive today will still be alive at the end of the war?" If the answer was to endure hunger, beatings, and torment, to do what the Germans ordered to avoid collective punishment, then that was a form of resistance.

In view of the Jewish religious tradition underscoring the sanctity of life and the importance of hope, such accommodation to the environment was completely appropriate. Each Jewish survivor, a revered rabbi is said to have declared, "is a hero resisting the Nazis because he refuses to extinguish his precious life."

Another form of resistance embraced by Polish Jews was to record the events of the day to ensure that the outside world, and posterity, would know of the events happening in Poland. Emanuel Ringelblum, a social historian, chronicled, in a secret archive called *Oneg Shabbat* (Joys of the Sabbath), the day-by-day life and death of the Jews of Warsaw. Chaim Kaplan was one of the hundreds who kept diaries; Yitzhak Katzenelson and Wladyslaw Szlengel were just two of the ghetto poets who recorded the anguish of the times.

Others resisted by helping to improve the quality of their violently disrupted lives. For example, when the Germans invaded Poland, they closed all Jewish schools and made education punishable by death. Yet within six months of the invasion, religious and secular schools, retraining programs for adults, and classes and laboratories for medical students secretly flourished.

Resistance also took root in Jewish self-help groups. The Germans intended to destroy masses of Jews in Warsaw through economic and social ruination, but they did not count on the widespread system of public assistance that spread throughout the ghetto.

Religious resistance was yet another means of fighting back. Kaplan's diary entry of October 2, 1940, reads:

Everything is forbidden to us, and yet we do everything! We make our "living" in ways that are forbidden, and not by permission.

It is the same with community prayers: secret minyanim (group of ten adult males who make a quorum for communal prayers) in their hundreds all over Warsaw hold prayers together and do not leave out even the most difficult hymns. Neither preachers nor sermons are missing; everything is in accordance with the ancient traditions of Israel.

Questions on "The Issue of Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto"

1. Explain what is meant by the following statement:

"The Jews of Europe were not reacting to what we now know was the Holocaust, but to a reality as they saw it at that time, with information that they had at that time, and within the framework of their historical experience."

2. Explain the various kinds of Jewish resistance that occurred during the Holocaust.

3. Explain the Nazi policy of "collective punishment."

4. Emanuel Ringelblum notes that, "Everyone used to write in the ghetto, journalists, writers, social workers, teachers, young people, and even children." Why do you think this was so?

Source: Shawn, Karen. "The Warsaw Ghetto: A Documentary Discussion Guide to Jewish Resistance in Occupied Warsaw, 1939-1943." *Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies*, Volume 7, Number 2. Copyright © 1993. Reprinted by permission of the Anti-Defamation League.

JEWISH RESISTANCE IN THE WARSAW GHETTO

By Vladka Meed

Fifty years have gone by, and I can still see before my eyes the flames from the burning Jewish houses leaping over the ghetto walls, and through the clouds of thick smoke, I can still hear the sound of explosions and the firing of Jewish guns. In their glare, I see the Jews of Warsaw. I see their life, their struggle, their resistance during all the years of Nazi occupation. For it was the Jews' daily struggle, their vibrant drive for survival, their endurance, their spirit and belief, which the Nazis failed to crush, even with their most dreadful atrocities. This was the foundation from which resistance in all its forms was derived.

For Jewish armed resistance in the Warsaw ghetto, 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; and its significance is diminished if it is remembered only to glorify the honor of those who perished.

Today, many efforts are being made to learn more about the Holocaust, to understand it, to introduce Holocaust studies into the schools. Scholars are searching through documents in the newly opened archives of Moscow, Riga, and Kiev. Teachers are being trained, seminars and exhibits are being organized. Well-known photographs of life in the ghettos and concentration camps, of emaciated Jews near barbed wire fences, of half-naked beggars in the ghetto streets, are being displayed. Most of these pictures were taken by the murderers themselves, whose very purpose it was to demonstrate the helpless, spineless inadequacy of those whom they were planning to destroy. Of course, we survivors know that the pictures are real. They are seared into our memories and into our hearts. But we also know that they present only one part of what occurred under the German occupation, that beyond the murder and destruction, there was life. Yes, life, filled with meaning, with loyalty, even with holiness, of which hardly any photographs remain and all too little is known. The life of the individual Jew, who, in his day-to-day painful struggle, created a universe for himself, and sought to survive with his self-respect. He was overshadowed by the dreadful events around him. He was, most likely, ground to dust in the gigantic murder machine. He is still waiting to be extracted from the abyss of darkness.

I recall the streets of my ghetto, Warsaw, crowded with starving people. I remember the corpses covered with papers, lying unclaimed on the sidewalks, the carts loaded with books, and children, swollen from hunger, begging for a crumb of bread. The typhus epidemic reached into almost every house. I see my own home, my mother, with eyes puffed from hunger, hiding a slice of bread from us hungry children for my little brother's teacher, the melamed. I can see our neighbor, Mrs. Ziferman, hurrying with her little girl to a secret class. I recall the sounds of a sewing machine, amidst the hushed voices from a nearby hidden "shul" (synagogue), and, suddenly, the piercing voice of our ghetto clown, Rubinstein, calling aloud "Yingl halt sich" (translated freely, "Hang on, boy!"). Names come to mind, faces of friends, young and old people. There are the teachers: Virowski, Lindner, Rosa Synchourer, Emanuel Ringelblum, and so many others, whom I met at secret ghetto meetings. They were the ones who, together with the youth from various political groups, organized the extensive relief and cultural activities in the ghetto. Over 2,000 house committees came into existence, together with hundreds of public kitchens, in order to fight starvation. At the same time, a Jewish cultural organization, "Zkor," promoted a broad, clandestine program.

There were secret schools which thousands of children attended, a nursing school, courses on agriculture, heders, yeshivas, synagogues, hidden libraries, and choral groups. In addition, various political organizations in the ghetto conducted a vigorous traffic in underground publications. Let me recall a lecture, held on a cold winter's evening in 1941 in one of the soup kitchens. We were a group of youngsters, 15-16 years old, huddled together for warmth, and despite the hunger that gnawed at each of us, we listened to the leader speak about the writer Y. L. Peretz. Later, we had to spread out to various houses, to talk on the same subject. My assignment was on No. 30 Pawia Street. I managed to get there before the curfew. I remember the large room, in which 40 occupants of the house had gathered. The windows were blacked out. A guard had been stationed outside the room, in case of a surprise "visit" by the Germans. My talk was on the Peretz story, "Bontshe Shveig." I do not recall the discussion, but I can never forget the wonderful atmosphere, the feeling of being able, even for a short time, to get away from the bitter ghetto reality.

I see the twin sisters, Pola and Zosia Lipshyc, happy, dancing girls, full of life and enthusiasm. They became the souls of the so-called "children's corners" in the ghetto houses. Together with other youngsters, the two girls worked diligently, teaching children to write and to sing. They staged performances of operas -- which they themselves had learned before the war. They brought a bit of joy, of spirit, to the starving youngsters until they were caught in the Nazi vise.

The historian Emanuel Ringelblum, one of the cultural leaders of the Warsaw ghetto, formed the so-called "Oneg Shabbat Group" of writers and scholars; they did research on, and documented what was happening to the Jews.

Acts of violence against the Germans -- prior to the uprising -- were not committed because we in the ghetto did not believe that such acts would serve our purpose. The Germans enforced a diabolical method of collective responsibility: for every German killed by a Jew, hundreds of Jews would be killed. Our aim was to survive, to live, to outwit the enemy and witness his destruction. Every effort that lent strength to this goal, I see as an act of resistance. Our determination to resist derived from our desire to survive as a people: we refused to allow our spirit to be crushed.

But the Germans weren't satisfied with the slow pace of Jewish deaths from starvation, typhoid, casual persecution. They had different plans. The carefully coordinated Nazi machinery of mass murder eventually went into operation.

Blitz deportations: Suddenly, streets and houses were surrounded by soldiers and police and fast, fast, with the sounds of blows and shots, we were forced to line up. I can still remember the thousands and thousands in those lines. The German officers standing at the head of the lines, pointed with sticks -- left, right, left, right. I can still feel the fear as I stood in that line, left to the trains, right to a few more days of ghetto life. I still see them -- our ghetto Jews -- among them my dearest ones, walking on their last march, to the trains, in silence. As their footsteps echo in my mind, I can hear their unuttered outcry to God, and to the world that allowed this to happen.

Yet even then, many of those remaining in the ghetto still nourished the hope that those who were deported would somehow survive. Even I, who learned from my work in the underground the actual destination of the trains, could not believe, when my mother, brother, and sister were taken away, that they would be killed. I found myself hoping that maybe, after all, they had been sent, as the Germans claimed, to another city for resettlement. How could our people, who believed in human values, imagine such utter madness as an enemy who planned our total annihilation? How could we grasp, the scope of such a huge killing apparatus -- installed by

German scientists, operated by trained military and civilian squads, supported by German industry and the German people?

The deportations from the Warsaw ghetto began on July 22, 1942; soon after, a clandestine meeting of representatives of all the illegal ghetto organizations took place. Although reports of the killing of Jews in other ghettos had already been received, the majority attending that first meeting opposed an immediate Jewish counteraction in Warsaw, arguing that it would serve as an excuse for the Nazis to kill all the Jews. Painful as it is, some argued, "It is wiser to sacrifice 70,000 Jews for deportation, as the Germans demanded, than to endanger the whole ghetto, the lives of half a million. The Germans will not dare to do the same to the Jews of Warsaw, the capital of Poland, as they have done to the Jews of smaller towns."

Months passed before the ghetto residents started to recognize and believe the terrible truth of the gas chambers — a truth brought back by individuals who had somehow escaped the death camps. These reports, plus the sight of hundreds of thousands of Jews being deported, hammered into the minds of those who remained the brutal fact that the Nazis would spare no one.

Then, only then, did the idea of armed struggle -- the determination to go down fighting -come into its own.

In October 1942, the coordinated Jewish Fighting Organization of Warsaw, ZOB, was formed. I, a member of the Jewish Labor Bund underground, was ordered to live among the Poles outside the ghetto in order to obtain arms for our fighters' organization. More than 500 fighters were organized into 22 units. Other armed groups were also formed by other Jews. The core of the armed resistance was made up of the various illegal youth organizations: Zionists, Socialists, Bundists, Communists, remnants of the pre-war political youth movements. Most of the fighters were in their teens or early twenties and they were imbued with a spirit of idealism and a determination to act.

Those who say that organized Jewish armed resistance came too late in the ghetto would do well to remember that it was the earliest uprising of its kind in Europe. The other underground movements launched similar uprisings only when the Allied armies were practically at the gates of their major cities, so as to insure their success. This was true of the French in Paris and, later on, of the Poles in Warsaw. But the Jews, the most persecuted group in Europe, in the most hopeless position, were the first to revolt. On January 18, 1943, as soon as we got hold of a few revolvers, the first German soldiers fell in the Warsaw ghetto. The surprise act forced the Germans to halt the deportations. January 18th marked a turning point, for on that day, the ghetto dared to strike back in an organized fashion.

By setting fire to German factories, by carrying out death sentences against informers and collaborators, the Jewish Fighting Organization won the support of the remaining Warsaw ghetto Jews.

Through bulletins placed on the walls of ghetto buildings, the ZOB informed noncombatant Jews of the aims and work of the underground. The ZOB imposed a tax on the wealthy and on the remaining ghetto institutions. Money and jewelry were collected. Bakers and merchants secretly supplied bread and food to the Jewish fighting units. Those who still had possessions of value had to contribute them for armaments. "RESIST! Don't let yourself be taken away" -- was the call.

"I no longer have any authority in the ghetto," Mark Lichtenbaum, the head of the German-appointed Jewish Council, admitted to the Nazis when he was ordered to supervise further deportations. It was the Jewish Fighting Organization that expressed the will and the feelings of the remaining 60,000 Warsaw ghetto Jews.

Our biggest problem was obtaining arms. We sent out desperate pleas to the outside world, begging for guns, but in vain.

I can still recall when, as a courier, I came to one of the ghetto's fighting units in Swietojerska 32 and my young friends would repeatedly ask me about our relations with the Poles, with the outside world. "When will they send us help?" they would ask. "When will we receive arms; hiding places for our ghetto children?" And I would stand there, forlorn, unable to give them the answers they so desperately sought. Pitiful was the response from the Polish underground.

And so, our own Jewish resistance organization had to find its own way. I will never forget when Michael Klepfish, our armament engineer and I, together tested our first homemade Molotov cocktail in a big factory furnace outside of the ghetto walls. It worked!

With mounting excitement, some of us smuggled chemicals and some dynamite into the ghetto. I remember one incident. After a long search outside the ghetto, we were able to secure 10 pounds of dynamite, and I was entrusted to smuggle it to the Jewish fighters. Through a secret telephone, the ghetto underground was informed and arranged for some of my friends to wait for the dynamite at a location near a part of the ghetto wall where Polish smugglers sometimes bribed the guards to allow them to bring food into the ghetto. Against the ghetto wall, on the non-Jewish side, stood a ladder; we paid the Polish ringleader and waited our turn. It was necessary to climb quickly, cross over the top of the wall and descend to the ghetto side. As I reached the top, shots rang out from the street. A German patrol was approaching. In an instant, the smugglers snatched the ladder away and took cover. There I was, sitting on top of the wall, holding my parcel. The ghetto wall was over 3 meters high. I was afraid to jump because the explosives might go off. The shooting came closer and I was sure that my time had come. Just then, I heard shouts from the Jewish side of the wall: "Wait, we'll help you." Three of my ghetto friends came running to the wall. They had watched me from their hiding place. In a moment they had formed a human ladder, snatched my bundle, and helped me descend. In no time we ran away from the wall. Other colleagues were not so lucky.

On my missions, I could hear the sounds of hammering: Jews were secretly building bunkers and hiding places. Shots rang out; young people were learning to handle firearms. The whole ghetto was preparing to face a new deportation. The historic role of the young at that time has to become better known. None of them expected to survive a Nazi attack. Nor did we expect to influence, in the smallest way, the outcome of the war. But we were fueled by the conviction that the enemy must be fought.

On April 19, 1943, Passover, the German soldiers marched, in full gear, into the Warsaw ghetto, to make it "Judenrein." Suddenly, they came under fire. From buildings, from windows, from the rooftops of houses, Jews were shooting. The enemy withdrew. They set up artillery around the ghetto walls and systematically bombarded our positions. We were so poorly equipped; only a small number of grenades and revolvers and primitive Molotov cocktails against the combined might of the Wehrmacht. In the first days, the Jewish combatants tried to fight from fixed positions. Then they shifted to partisan methods. Groups would emerge from the bunkers to seek out the enemy. In these encounters, whoever saw the other first and was the quickest with a weapon, was the victor of the moment. Inexperienced, untrained civilians fought against a well-trained army. A primitive Molotov cocktail against a tank, a gun against a flamethrower, a revolver against a

machine gun. One side of the street against the other. The Germans set fire to block after block, street after street. The fires that swept through the ghetto turned night into day. The flames, the heat, and the suffocating smoke drove the Jews from their houses and bunkers. Men, women, and children jumped out of windows and ran through the burning ruins, looking for places where they could breathe. But where could they go when *everything* around them was burning?

At that time I was on a mission outside the ghetto. I can still see the towers of fire. I can still smell the stench of burning houses and hear the agonizing screams for help. In this flaming hell our Jews fought until the entire ghetto was charred rubble.

General Jurgen Stroop, who was in charge of destroying the Warsaw ghetto, stated in an official report that the Jewish uprising came to an end on May 16th, after four weeks of struggle. We know, of course, that after that date the ghetto was unable to continue organized resistance, since most members of our military organization had been killed. Many others were burned to death. But for long weeks after May 16th, Jews remained hidden in the still-smoldering ruins and bunkers and would not give themselves up. For weeks after the "official" end of the uprising, shots were still heard in the ghetto.

General Stroop, in another report, informed his superiors that he blew up or gassed 631 Jewish bunkers. This means that there were at least 631 bastions of Jewish resistance. No one knows exactly the number of Jews who perished in the bunkers. No one can describe their last hours and their death. Those final days united them all, those who had fallen with arms in hand, those who were gassed, those who suffocated in the smoking ruins, and those who were burned to death. They were all united in one great chain of resistance against their enemy.

During the days of the uprising, members of the Jewish underground stationed outside the ghetto radioed information to our representatives in the Polish government-in-exile in England. We pleaded for ammunition, for help. But the world sat silently by. During the final days of the uprising, outside the ghetto, not far from the ghetto wall in Krasinski Square, a carousel was turning, music was playing, children frolicked, and the joyous atmosphere of Easter was in the air. None of the visitors to the square seemed to pay attention to what was going on behind the ghetto walls. Our people were entirely alone, abandoned. Those of us who survived can never forget the feeling of desertion we experienced. We shall never be able to find justification for having been forsaken in our last hours of struggle. Only one year later, after the ghetto rebellion, I was in the Polish uprising in Warsaw. I remember at that time, the planes flying over the city, dropping arms and medical supplies for the Polish fighters. But when our ghetto fought, the skies over the ghetto were empty.

In the months after the ghetto rebellion, we learned that other Jewish uprisings were taking place. The news of the battle of the Warsaw ghetto had spread over the wall and through the barbed wire to other ghettos and camps.

What must be remembered is that, throughout the Holocaust, every Jew in his or her own way resisted the Nazis; each act of resistance was shaped by its unique time and place. The soup kitchens, the secret schools, the cultural events in the ghettos and camps, constituted forms of resistance, the goals of which were survival with dignity, with "menshlichkeit."

The Warsaw ghetto uprising erupted when we knew that the Nazis would spare no one. Our objective then became to choose how we would die, and the choice was to die with weapons in our hands. For other Jews, dying with dignity meant going to the crematoria wrapped in talismans and reciting a prayer. Their self assertion and our armed resistance intertwined in the chain of Jewish resistance, a chain that grew, link by link, through the long years of the Holocaust.

Yes, we now stand at a distance from the events which shaped our lives and which reshaped history; and, standing at a distance, we look back and remember. For our memory is the ringing warning to all people in all times.

Source: Meed, Vladka. "Jewish Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto." *Dimensions: A Journal of Holocaust Studies*, Volume 7, Number 2: 11-15. Reprinted by permission of the Anti-Defamation League and Vladka Meed.

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Unit 6
The Final Solution

THE FINAL SOLUTION

"I do not know how many Einsteins, how many Freuds, have been destroyed in the furnaces of Auschwitz and Majdanek. But there is one thing I know: if we can prevent it, it will never happen again."

Chaim Weizmann (1874 - 1952) First President of the State of Israel

INTRODUCTION

From early in Hitler's political career, he openly stated that the only answer to the "Jewish question" must be their removal. In later speeches and writings, he expressed the idea of removal in terms of exclusion or expulsion. Exclusion was generally described as methods which would legally deprive the Jews of all privileges including that of citizenship. The idea of expulsion was considered in a variety of plans, including the possibility of sending all Jews to Madagascar, an island colony off the coast of Africa. Periodically, however, between discussions for exclusion and expulsion, direct references were given to the idea of destroying them for the sake of Germany's health.

In the wake of Kristallnacht (November 9th and 10th, 1938), Hitler demanded that a coordinated effort be made to solve the Jewish question "one way or another."1 When no countries intervened on behalf of those being persecuted, Nazi policies became more threatening, and Hitler openly vowed that if war broke out, it would mean the "annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."

After Poland was invaded, the "Jewish question" took on a new urgency as Lebensraum (living space) was needed for the expanding Reich. With the prospect of Russia defeated and all of Europe under the German boot, plans evolved for a massive reorganization of Polish territory. Accordingly, it was determined that all Poles and Jews be expelled and their land given over to ethnic Germans. However, the idea of moving out all Poles was eventually discarded and plans to relocate the Jews to other territories never materialized.

At some indeterminate date, but at least by 1941, mass murder had become the goal of Nazi Jewish policy. Prior killings of whole groups of people had included Germans who were considered mentally or physically expendable. By 1941 it was already decided that Poland, as a nation, would be obliterated through the killing of all her intelligentsia. Mass murder, as a way to solve problems, had become routine. By the time Germany invaded Russia, a

special murder corps had been trained and developed. But this murder corps, the Einsatzgruppen, which followed the army and slaughtered tens of thousands of Jews and other "racial" or ideological enemies, did not prove satisfactory. Using Einsatzgruppen depended on consent of the army they followed and strong collaboration from the locals. Neither was always cooperative.

When, exactly, specific instructions were given to bring about the "Final Solution" is not known. What is known is that with the lethal methods devised from patterns of previous killings, the way was now clear to develop something entirely new. Specially trained SS, like those in the Einsatzgruppen would be used; gas, like that used in the trucks to kill those murdered in Eastern Europe, would be employed; railway lines already in place from earlier deportations would be the vehicles of transportation, and all of this would be centered on places especially developed to murder the Jews of Europe and all other "undesirables."

The final vision was for the enslavement of the Slavic peoples and a world Judenfrei (free of Jews) and a world free of all others considered unfit to live. Those who had not already been killed previously would be annihilated in the concentration camps.

To serve the "Final Solution," a network of camps, which had begun as soon as Hitler had taken power, spread during the war like a web of horror and desecration across the mutilated face of Europe. Although initially designed as prison sites for enemies of the Reich, the role of the camps now changed for the darker purpose of hiding the most barbaric crime Western Civilization would ever know -- mass annihilation. Moreover, a special force of trained killers had also been developed at the German "euthanasia" institutions, and they took their expertise with them when they were transferred to serve in the newly created killing centers in Poland (Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka). The Nazi concentration camp would forever be burned into the human conscience as the eternal monument to hell on earth.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

THE FINAL SOLUTION

From the inception of the war in 1939, Hitler intended to elevate Germany to the dominant power in Europe. In his book *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle) written while in prison in 1923, he envisioned an army of slave laborers who would be recruited from the Slavic nations. However, even more insidious was his plan for completely eliminating the Jewish "race" from Europe, together with other "undesirables." Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, African-Germans, Gypsies, homosexuals, political opponents, selected members of the Christian clergy, communists, socialists, union leaders and the mentally or physically infirm were among those slated for destruction. In sum, this was a plan to develop a "master race" which would rule Europe, then the United States, and eventually the world from a seat in Germany for a thousand years.

It has often been asked how it was possible for the Nazis to murder millions of innocent men, women, and children without world intervention. In the early years of the war, killing every single Jewish person in Europe did not seem possible. Yet, as the Nazis gained power in Europe and acts of brutality increased, the only major western power, the United States, had not, nor would they later, officially protest the treatment of the Jews. The spiritual center of Europe, the Vatican, also remained strangely silent to public pressure for response and assistance. However, if the precedent can be identified for the unequivocal venting of Nazi hatred for the Jews, then what happened in the Soviet Union may have been the turning point in the annals of the Holocaust.

Mobile Killing Units in the Soviet Union

Despite a previous non-aggression pact signed with the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941, Germany invaded the USSR (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics or Soviet Union). Totally unprepared, the Soviets were incapable of halting the German army. As the Soviet military rapidly withdrew to the interior, the German army steadily advanced until it was within 200 miles of the capitol of the Soviet Union, Moscow. As the German forces marched steadily forward, Hitler ordered that Leningrad (now St. Petersburg), the cultural center of Russia, be "wiped from the face of the earth." For the next 900 days under relentless air and ground fire, the citizens of Leningrad held the Germans off. Three quarters of a million lives were lost -- most from starvation -- until the city lake froze, and Soviet convoys could take supplies across the ice.

The German army was finally forced to halt their advance when stalled by the brutal Soviet winter. Nevertheless, their forces seemed invincible until they tried to take Stalingrad (now called Volgograd) in August 1942. The assault cost three million Soviet lives and left 90 percent of the city in rubble. However, for the first time, the legend of German mastery was dispelled.

With two-thirds of the German forces now directed against the Soviets, casualties were appalling. According to Soviet archives, one in three Russians died during the war. While the

winters allowed the Soviet troops time to prepare and defend themselves, warfare continued unabated for nearly four years. For the duration of the war, the Soviet Union remained partially occupied by the Germans.

When Germany invaded the Soviet Union, the plans for the Jews, communists and other "expendable groups" shifted from expulsion to mass murder. It was now possible to hide mass murder behind the natural barrier of the Soviet Front. The initial areas which were conquered had dense Jewish settlements. With the speed of the German advance, most of the Jews were trapped between Soviet orders which barred evacuation east, the German killing machine, and non-Jews living in the USSR who welcomed the Germans as liberators from the totalitarian Soviet

controls. Here in the western section of the Soviet Union, the Nazis were able to carry out massive slaughter campaigns due to the active collaboration of the local population. For example, in the Ukraine, the Germans were able to obtain particularly strong assistance in locating Jews in return for a promise that after the war they would be granted independence from the Soviet Union.

At the time Germany invaded the Soviet Union, there were two large groups of Jews living there. The first group of approximately two and a half to three million were citizens of the Soviet Union proper or one of her republics. A second group consisted of Polish refugees who had fled there when Germany had invaded Western Poland. After the German invasion of the Soviet Union, a third group came into the Soviet Union from Eastern Poland. This group had been living under Soviet occupation as a result of Hitler's "Non-Aggression Pact" in which Poland had been divided between Germany and the Soviet Union. With the German invasion of the Soviet Union, this pact was now void. The Jews living in Eastern Poland had to leave further east into the Soviet Union or find themselves under German control.

Once Germany invaded the Soviet Union, the Nazi effort to murder every Jew was unharnessed in a sweeping wave of devastation. In every area under their control, Jews were rounded up and forced into temporary ghettos where they were used as slave labor and then shot. Others were immediately forced to dig deep pits to serve as their graves, in front of which they had to undress and then were shot. In one place alone near Kiev, the capitol of the Ukraine, 33,771 Jews, Gypsies, and Soviet prisoners of war, were murdered within two days. Their bodies were pushed into a huge ravine called Babi Yar. In the months that followed, so zealous were the Ukrainians to inform on Jews that many more thousands were shot and their bodies left in the ravine. Today we can only estimate the loss as being near 100,000 people.

Later, when it became obvious that some of the killers were experiencing mental difficulties (which was attributed to their direct contact with the victims and particularly with having to shoot women and children) an alternative method of execution was employed. Instead of shooting,

sealed vans were used into which the trucks' exhaust fumes were piped. As the trucks traveled, the carbon dioxide would be released, and those shut up inside would be asphyxiated. This savage sweep of murders was primarily conducted by four groups called the *Einsatzgruppen* (action-groups).

The first *Einsatzgruppen* appeared when Austria was incorporated into the German *Reich*. They were the intelligence units of the police and accompanied the invading army. Their initial purpose was to secure the political government of the area. To accomplish this purpose, their task was to expose "enemies of the State." On the eve of the German invasion in Poland, six *Einsatzgruppen* were organized. Charged with "combating hostile elements," they conducted terror operations murdering thousands of Jews as well as Polish leaders and intellectuals. When plans were developed for the invasion of the Soviet Union, four *Einsatzgruppen* were established. They were trained to carry out a specific order: to kill Soviet political activists, opponents of the German forces, Gypsies (except for those in one area who could prove a two-year residence), and all Jews. Most of the commanders of these groups were highly trained and educated. Three of the commanders of one such group held doctorates and a number of the lesser officers had university educations; one was a pastor.²

Due possibly to the mass destruction of their documents as the tides of war turned against Germany, there are no detailed records which completely document the full scope of the atrocities which swept across the western part of the Soviet Union, the Ukraine, and the Crimea. The Nazi crimes were further obscured by Soviet government reports of the killings, since these reports did not specifically describe the murder of Jews. Their losses were hidden within the statistics of "Soviet citizens."³

Historical estimates indicate that by the end of 1942, at least 1.4 million Jews⁴ and hundreds of thousands of Soviet nationals were murdered by the *Einsatzgruppen*. From within the barrier of the eastern front, no news of the massacre reached the western press. However, such a cloak of

secrecy was not possible in the cosmopolitan cities of West Europe. At this point, the character of the deportations became clear. Deportations would not be an end in themselves but the means by which people could be brought to the killing centers in the east.

The intended victims were scattered throughout Europe. Some were in countries directly under German control; others were in independent countries or areas only indirectly under German control. For the Jews in Poland, the system of previously deporting and relocating Jews into ghettos had already concentrated them. In other parts of Europe, they would have to be gathered together and moved east.

Wannsee Conference

While shooting by the *Einsatzgruppen* and carbon monoxide poisoning were the general modes of execution during the early years of the war, it soon became apparent that these methods were an inefficient and ineffective long-term "solution." Other complications included the need for slave labor to help the German war effort and massive facilities to hold prisoners.

In spite of the fact that there had been few protests against the massacres of the Jews conducted by the *Einsatzgruppen*, there was considerable dissension among the Nazi party ministers as to how best to effect the "Final Solution." Some of the ministers were concerned that in the quest to kill all Jews, military needs were being given second priority; others had requested that those Jews who could work should be saved and employed as slave laborers. With these conflicts in mind, Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Central Office of *Reich* Security (RSHA), was asked to call a meeting to discuss and coordinate the implementation of the "Final Solution."

On January 20, 1942, at a villa in the Wannsee suburb of Berlin, the state secretaries of the most important German government ministries met with Heydrich and his expert on Jewish affairs, Adolf Eichmann. While the mass murders were, by now, well known to the conference participants, open references had usually been cloaked in modest sounding terms. For the first time, these euphemisms were pushed aside and discussion was direct and unequivocal. As Adolf Eichmann was to testify years later at his trial, "They spoke about methods of killing, about liquidation, about extermination."

At this time, the actual method for the program of annihilation was still questionable. Clearly, the *Einsatzgruppen* could not shoot every Jew or even gas them all in trucks. However, Heydrich was more worried about gaining a consensus of approval for an annihilation program rather than determining exactly how it was to be accomplished. Surprisingly, except for prolonged discussions about the fate of Jews in mixed marriages and their part-Jewish offspring, not a single minister voiced any objection to the overall plan. In fact, it was accepted enthusiastically.

The actual methods to be used to kill the Jews had not been the prime target of discussion at the Wannsee Conference, in part because these methods were becoming quickly available. By this time, a vast network of prison camps had been established and more were being built. They were based on every conceivable rationale for a prison and ranged from killing centers to resettlement complexes, from penal colonies to POW prisons, from forced labor camps to transit camps and holding centers. Regardless of designation, all of them were prisons where people could be concentrated. For those who had not already been killed, the Nazi concentration camp was to be the "Final Solution."

Concentration camps and the killing centers to receive the deportees were readied for full operation. Adolf Eichmann, a petty bureaucrat who had risen in the ranks due to his considerable experience in "Jewish Affairs," became the architect of the evacuations department called "Section IV B 4" in the RSHA.

As the world was to learn, the deportations to murder were extremely well-coordinated by thousands of individuals. Eichmann's department was small. His work was facilitated by the vital support of thousands. His network of assistants ranged from those who helped to ease bureaucratic barriers to those who rounded up the victims. Chief among his agency supporters was the transport industry which provided the essential link in the deportation plans.

Deportations and Deceptions

From all over Western and Eastern Europe, trains destined for the German war effort were diverted to carry the Jews to their death. They were deported by train directly to the concentration camps and killing centers. Often tacked onto the final car, almost as an afterthought, were additional train cars specifically for Gypsies.

The railroad transportation system was critical to the execution of the "Final Solution." Location for a camp was often determined according to whether or not the site was near rail lines. The killing centers were remarkably close to major population centers, and each of these urban areas had a large Jewish population. Other concentration camps were built in rural areas where they would not be so easy to detect. Those which were to serve as slave labor compounds were built near the particular industrial supplies or commercial materials needed.

The transports were camouflaged under the term "special convoy." The SS had to pay the railroad for the use of the trains, and so they devised various schemes. In some cases, the victims themselves paid the rate of regular passengers: full price for adults, half-fare for children. Groups of more than 1,000 were charged half-price. So intense was the desire to kill every Jew that even towards the end of the war when the trains were desperately needed to move Germany military personnel, arms and materials, not a single train assigned for the "special convoy" was relinquished for this purpose.

Under the guise of "resettlement," the railways carried approximately three million people to places from which almost none returned. Rounding up people in Western Europe, although at times somewhat difficult, had been greatly facilitated by the possibility of being able to quickly remove them to the east. Those in Eastern Europe, not killed by the mobile killing squads, were now concentrated into ghettos. With promises of improved living conditions and extra food, the ghetto residents were called upon to present themselves voluntarily. When the real purpose of these deportations became obvious, the Nazis resorted to force. Deportation to the ghettos now

became deportations to the concentration camps and killing centers, the last essential step in a process coded by the words "Final Solution."

It was understood by all ranking Nazis that the true nature of the concentration camps and their purpose in the "Final Solution" was to be kept absolutely secret. When large scale deportations began, whole villages or ghettos were targeted for "relocation in the East." Relocation, another euphemism, meant transportation to the death camps. Once the Jews were pushed East into ghettos, the Nazis would periodically cordon off various sections or buildings in the ghetto. The Jews were then ordered to pack a single suitcase and appear within minutes. They were then marched under guard to central transit points. Already harassed by the Germans who occupied their country, people were told they would "work" for the *Reich* or be "resettled" where circumstances would be better.

Deportees were told all kinds of stories to encourage them to board the trains. This ruse was supported by numerous deceitful acts as when the Nazis had postcards sent back to relatives from those who were in the concentration camps. In reality, these postcards had been collected from prisoners forced to write that they were doing fine and were "resettled." Often these postcards were received long after the persons who had written them were dead. This gave the impression that survival was possible. "Resettlement" held the promise of jobs, adequate food, and housing and

for a people being steadily starved to death, this chance at survival was like an answered prayer. Life in the ghetto or out of the ghetto was so tenuous that some Jews were willing to believe in the "resettlement" program, at least in the beginning.

An advertised scheme of exchanging Jews for German prisoners of war led people in hiding to reveal themselves. Instead of the promised exchange, they were taken by passenger train to the death camps. The camouflage regarding the true intent of the deportations extended even to telling adults to pack the one allowed suitcase with any equipment needed to conduct their profession, giving the false idea of future work. In Western Europe, where people were evacuated earlier than in Eastern Europe, people often arrived at the concentration camps in their good clothes, riding in plush passenger cars for which they had bought first class tickets.

Eventually, however, word began to leak back about the true nature of the deportations. When the victims would not present themselves voluntarily, stronger action was taken. People were arrested on sight or removed forcibly from their homes. In Eastern Europe they were taken to a predetermined area called the *Umschlagplatz* (deportation point). From the *Umschlagplatz*, they were surrounded by soldiers with machine guns who forced them to board cattle cars on freight trains. Often more than two hundred people were pushed into a freight car that was originally designed to hold no more than eight cattle.

Once the people were inside the cattle cars, the heavy doors were slammed shut, locked and sealed from the outside. If food was given at all, it was usually one loaf of bread for everyone in an entire freight car. One small bucket was put in as a toilet. This small receptacle had to accommodate the 200 or more passengers and was quickly filled and overflowing. Perishing from the heat, the crush of bodies or, if in winter, the numbing cold, the terrified passengers rode in darkness without food or water to sustain them, choking on the fetid smells of their own wastes. The cars were so crowded that people were forced to stand shoulder to shoulder. If someone died, the person died where he or she stood. Few of the train cars had any windows. Many of the people who did have access to a window or some small opening, threw their babies out hoping to save them. Tragically, most of these infants died as they hit the telephone poles alongside the railway tracks.

After hours, days, or sometimes weeks, the cattle cars arrived at the camp. As the doors were opened, the passengers were confronted with vicious barking guard dogs, blaring orders from loudspeakers, and a mass of people from the other train cars all struggling to find loved ones from whom they may have been separated during the journey. The noise and commotion was terrifying. In an effort to control the mass of people, strict order was maintained by the guards and dogs.

Upon arrival, the true purpose of and conditions in the camp were concealed. Bizarre practices were used to deceive the prisoners and keep them calm. Some of the camps' entrance gates carried the standard slogan: "*Arbeit Macht Frei*" (Work Makes Freedom). At one concentration camp, Auschwitz, the train platform was decorated as a little village train station, and a camp orchestra played for the passengers as they were forced from the train.

At the death camps, there was still an effort made to deceive the doomed passengers. On some occasions, to continue the deception, the prisoners were told they were to be "disinfected" in showers. Before disrobing, they were told to remember the number of the hook where they put their clothes so that they could be reclaimed later. Slivers of soap were handed out as they entered the gas chamber which was variously named "bathhouse," "sauna" or "shower." However, at places like Sobibor and Chelmno, the people were immediately rushed into sheds where they were ordered to disrobe and were then chased with clubs from the disrobing barracks directly into the gas chambers.

At the concentration camp, the general procedure was to hurry the passengers from the train and have them line up for inspection. In many of the larger camps, this "selection" process was conducted by medical doctors. The men and women were separated. Pregnant women and those with young children, those deemed too young, too old or too ill for work were sometimes deceitfully invited to board trucks to the "living quarters" or "labor sites." These trucks followed a

procedure similar to that of the killing centers where the passengers went directly to the gas chambers.

After those for immediate death had been selected, the rest were sent to showers where they were disinfected. The prisoners' clothes were taken from them, and they were completely shaved by prison barbers. To add to their humiliation, Nazi guards usually stood around as the young girls were completely stripped and shaved. At a few of the larger camps, the inmates were then lined up and tattooed with numbers to permanently identify them. They were then forced to grab from piles of old clothes and rags or striped pajamas which served as their prison uniforms. Shoes were often heavy wooden clogs that continually abraded the skin. During each phase of the selection process, the guards screamed and beat the inmates with thick rubber or wooden sticks, often cracking open skulls or breaking the arms or legs of someone who was not, in their opinion, running fast enough. Few of the new prisoners could comprehend that the nightmare of being in a Nazi concentration camp had only begun.

The Nazi Concentration Camp System

Within months after Hitler came into power, the first concentration camps, Dachau, Oranienburg (later renamed and expanded as Sachsenhausen) and Buchenwald were set into operation in Germany. Under the law of "protective custody" which abolished constitutional guarantees, real or imagined opponents of the Nazi party which included intellectuals from all spheres, vanished mysteriously. The camps proved to be a formidable threat where thousands could be contained, starved, tortured, exploited as slave labor, and brutalized in ways impossible to imagine. In the early years, the camps were set up as prisons, primarily for political opponents of the Nazis, but as the war progressed they took on the ominous role as a place where hundreds, then hundreds of thousands, and finally, millions would be killed.

The Nazi concentration camps, which spread throughout Europe, could be counted in the thousands. Most of them were set up along railroad lines in Eastern Europe where the SS had absolute and direct control and where secrecy could be more easily maintained than in the rest of Europe.

Although initially classified by the Nazis as substantially different in terms of hardship, many concentration camps were very much alike in practice. They were often indistinguishable even as to differences in such basic necessities as sanitation facilities and food allotments.

The most notable difference, however, were those concentration camps set up specifically as "killing centers." These camps functioned strictly for the sole purpose of extermination. There was no chance to work or use any other means to continue life, however brief or torturous that life might be. A sober statistic makes this point more compelling than words can convey. At the

killing center, Belzec, where it is estimated that 600,000 prisoners entered, only five were known to have escaped, and only two of the escapees survived the war.⁵

The other concentration camps, which included the possibility of labor (or some other form of productivity before death), were initially categorized by the Nazis according to the function they were intended to serve.

According to Konnilyn Feig, author of *Hitler's Death Camps*, nineteen camps (including the killing centers and concentration camps) were listed by the Nazis in their official categorization as "primary centers" and these names are among those best known today:

The Killing Centers: Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka

The Official Concentration Camps:

(Labor/Extermination Complexes) - Auschwitz/Birkenau and Majdanek
(Concentration Camps): Buchenwald, Dachau, Dora/Nordhausen,
Flossenbürg, Gross-Rosen, Mauthausen, Natzweiler, Neuengamme,
Ravensbrück, Sachsenhausen, Stutthof

The Holding Center: Bergen-Belsen
Ghetto/"Model Camp": Theresienstadt (Terezín)

In spite of this formal classification, as the war progressed these camp categories were rarely considered and even the mild sounding "holding centers" also became scenes of mass murder. In fact, all of the concentration camps (which include the killing centers), shared a common goal: to murder their victims, either immediately upon arrival or slowly through starvation, slave labor, disease, beatings, sadistic "medical" experiments, and other forms of brutality. In the killing centers, everyone was slated for death immediately and, with few exceptions, this is exactly what happened. In the concentration camps, only the end of the war prevented all of the inmates from being killed or worked to death. Nevertheless, by the time the war did end, the tragic concentration camp statistics showed that only one person in 600 had managed to survive.⁶ Thus, most of the concentration camps, regardless of their official designation, became known as death camps.

Categories of Prisoners

IT IS IMPORTANT TO REALIZE THAT THE JEWS WERE NOT THE ONLY VICTIMS, ALTHOUGH THEY WERE THE MAIN ONES. LAWS SPECIFICALLY ELIMINATED JEWS

FROM CIVILIAN LIFE. OTHER GROUPS ALSO WERE TARGETED AS INFERIOR IN THE MASTER RACE PLAN.

A GOOD WAY TO REMEMBER THIS IS

“NOT EVERY VICTIM WAS A JEW, BUT EVERY JEW WAS A VICTIM”

EVERY SINGLE JEW WAS TO BE ELIMINATED UNDER THE FINAL SOLUTION.

The Category I - Killing Centers were reserved almost exclusively for Jews. While many of the people taken to the camps were incarcerated either as individuals (such as the Soviet prisoners of war and the French resistance fighters) or members of non-conforming groups (such as Jehovah's Witnesses and homosexuals), all Jews and Gypsies were targeted for extinction. Hitler could feel assured that the annihilation of the Jews would not cause consternation in a world which was, with few exceptions, at best indifferent and at worst intolerant of this group of people. The other types of camps generally held, in addition to Jews, large contingents of prisoners of war, Gypsies, criminals transferred from German prisons, political opponents, and others who did not fit the Nazi "ideal."

There were considerable differences in the treatment that was accorded to the various types of prisoners. The Germans carefully classified their prisoners among four major groups: political opponents, members of "inferior races," criminals, and "asocials," each of whom received a unique marking on his/her prison uniform to identify the group or groups to which the prisoner belonged. These groups were further subdivided and while there was not a single camp with but one category, the largest proportion to receive the worst treatment was unquestionably the Jews.

The category in which the prisoners were classified affected their chance of survival. Political prisoners who wore a red triangle and the criminals who wore the green triangle generally were able to be put into positions where they could supervise other inmates. These were prized positions of influence which sometimes allowed the prisoner in this position a small, private area in the barracks and extra food rations.

Generally, the German criminal prisoners were given the top positions within the camp. Many of those who were in charge of the other prisoners became as brutal as their SS overseers and exploited their position for their own benefit. Those in charge of work gangs, who were called *Kapos*, were particularly notorious for their brutality. However, not all those in a supervisory role took advantage of their status. There are notable accounts where prisoners were protected or otherwise cared for by their prisoner-supervisor. There was a wide variety of nationals who

comprised the prisoner population but the Soviet prisoners, Gypsies, and Jews usually had very little chance of obtaining any supervisory appointment outside of their own circle of prisoners.

Among the categories slated for destruction or slave labor, the following were prominent either by the sheer numbers incarcerated or by the role they played within the general prisoner population:

Jews - The Jews were identified by large yellow stars, patches, or painted yellow stripes. Those not sent directly to the killing centers made up the majority of the prison population in most ghettos and in many other types of forced labor camps and concentration camps. It has been estimated that four and a half to five million Jews died in the concentration camps. Before being killed, Jews were subjected to a wide variety of sadistic tortures, including forced medical experimentation. Jewish children who were twins were particularly susceptible at Auschwitz where a Nazi physician, Dr. Josef Mengele, performed infamous, medical experiments on them without anesthesia.

Gypsies - While no definite figures exist, scholars estimate that between 220,000 and 500,000 Gypsies were interned and killed in the concentration camps. In Auschwitz-Birkenau, approximately 30,000 from the Greater *Reich* and most other occupied European countries were gassed. Like the Jews, the Gypsies were transported in groups where, in a few camps, special sections were set aside for them. The Gypsies were used in numerous medical experiments in which they were dissected, supposedly as a means to examine their racial background. Castrations were performed on an unknown number of Gypsy men and many of the women were sterilized. Most died from the experiments or were killed when these experiments were completed.

Homosexuals - Those imprisoned as homosexuals were treated horribly, and many became the private instruments of torture by the sadistic guards. However, very little information is available regarding the numbers of homosexuals incarcerated. In part, this may be due to the stigma which was attached to their lifestyle and to write of their experiences could conceivably expose them to further harassment. It is estimated that tens of thousands of homosexuals perished in the concentration camps and prisons of Nazi Germany.

Russian Prisoners of War - Russian prisoners captured by the Germans were usually slaughtered outright, worked, or purposefully starved to death. In the fall of 1941, at the Auschwitz concentration camp, 600 Soviet prisoners of war (and 300 Jews) were first used to test the effectiveness of killing prisoners in the gas chambers using Zyklon B, a deadly form of cyanide prussic acid. Two and a half to three million Russian soldiers were killed in the concentration camps.

Spanish Republicans - These Spaniards, who had fled Spain after Franco established control, had been interned in France in September 1939 and deported to Mauthausen and Ravensbrück in 1940. There they were systematically worked to death in the stone quarry or shot. Less than 3,000 Spanish Republicans incarcerated at Mauthausen survived out of tens of thousands.

Jehovah's Witnesses - The Witnesses generally numbered a few hundred in each of the major concentration camps. Most of them were of German nationality who had been imprisoned because of refusing to renounce their convictions. They were highly supportive of each other and enforced stringent discipline on themselves. Due to their religious beliefs, they refused to join any resistance efforts or try to escape. When the Nazi guards discovered they could not break the bonds of strength between, or spiritual strength within the Witnesses, they became a subject of bemused attention. Since they would not try to escape, Witnesses were often employed in tasks within special, unguarded areas inside or outside the camp. About 10,000 Witnesses were imprisoned in the concentration camps and of these, about 2,500-3,000 died in Dachau, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, Auschwitz, Mauthausen, and other concentration camps.

German Criminals - When the concentration camps system extended throughout Eastern Europe, a number of criminals were released from German prisons and even when they had already served their full prison sentence, were often automatically remanded to further detention through incarceration in the camps. There they generally held positions of power over the other inmates. Marked by a green triangle or patch, accounts from survivors of the camps are almost universal in observing that the German criminal prisoner-supervisors were savage in their brutality. The criminals were known to frequently play horrifying, sadistic "games" of torture and death with the inmates (who were usually Jews) under their supervision.

The Slavic Peoples - Hundreds of thousand of Slavs, primarily Czechs, Russians, and Poles (other than prisoners-of-war) were killed in the concentration camps. The largest percentage of Slav camp inmates were the Poles of which 3,000 were Catholic nuns and priests. Poles were also subjected to forced medical "experiments" without anesthesia, and many young women were sterilized. Treatment for the Slavs largely depended on the reason for their arrest, whether they were members of the underground, political or intellectual leaders, prisoners-of-war, taken as hostage in reprisal for killed Germans, or caught dealing on the black market. (Many Slavs were also sent to German farms as forced labor.)

Others - The remaining categories of prisoners in the camps included, among others, political dissidents, West European resistance fighters and captured Allied soldiers. No figures exist which provide reasonable estimates of the numbers among these various groups who died within the Nazi concentration camp system.

Conditions Within the Camps

Physically the camps were "seas" of mud surrounded with electrified barbed wire supported every few meters by large gun towers. Some camps had special barracks reserved for barbarous medical "experiments" or other specialized torture chambers for interrogation.

Sleeping sometimes up to eight on a wooden shelf that could hardly accommodate one, the prisoners suffered terribly on their lice-infested pallets in the freezing barracks. Most agonizing was the effort to live with the continual contradictions of the Nazi orders. Without proper facilities to wash or to contain bowels weakened by the rotted gruel that passed for food and coffee, they were threatened with death if they did not keep themselves clean. Labor squads were appointed which often used prison inmates to direct them.

Of all the atrocities they suffered, many of the camp survivors recall the *Appells* as the most punishing. Each morning the prisoners had to rush from their barracks and line up to be counted. With the flimsiest of clothing, the prisoners were often made to stand in the searing sun or sub-zero temperatures hour upon hour as the guards slowly and repeatedly counted the prisoners from each barrack. Usually the same dreaded roll calls took place at night. In fact, the *Appells* could be ordered at any moment. Among the most fearful were the ones called for in the middle of the night --especially if there had been an attempted escape. For prisoners who had tried to escape, their fellow inmates were forced to watch as they were beaten mercilessly and hung. Then, once again, the prisoners would be counted off and in reprisal for the escape attempt, every fifth prisoner or so would be called out and executed. Exhausted, ill with typhoid, dysentery or a host of other life-threatening diseases, continually terrorized by the sadistic guards, these roll-calls, or *Appells*, epitomized the numbing reality of the prisoners horrifying "life."

Slave Labor

Concentration camp prisoners were forced to work in various factories and companies in need of man power, primarily the armaments industry. Originally, forced labor in the camps had been "an instrument of terror used for intimidation rather than for wholesale murder. During the war, however... the purpose became twofold: murder, and exploitation of the victims' labor prior to death." Labor in some camps (e.g., in Mauthausen at the quarry) was done under the harshest conditions with primitive equipment and methods where prisoners seldom lived longer than three months. Of the various major concentration camps, two were developed and combined to use slave labor specifically for the German war effort: Dora and Nordhausen. Inside the depths of mountains, the prisoners worked to build V-1 and V-2 rockets. All the prisoners lived in dark, damp tunnels chained to their machines, never seeing daylight. There was no hospital or gas chamber -they were not needed. Packed together, enduring impossible conditions, thousands of

prisoners died and were quickly replaced. Because of small spaces, labor transports to the camps usually included a number of children. They rarely survived more than several days or a few weeks.

An extensive number of major German industrial organizations paid the Nazis for use of slave labor and several companies built plants near the concentration camps specifically to facilitate the process of using the prisoners. Of the various industrial concerns which exploited the prisoners, the best known is I.G. Farben which built a camp near the town of Monowitz (about six kilometers from Auschwitz) to exploit inmate labor.

Sonderkommandos

The *Sonderkommandos* (Special Commandos or Special Teams) at the concentration camps were made up of prisoners whose main function was to work in the gas chambers and crematorium. They removed the bodies of those gassed for cremation or burial. Every few months they were removed from their hellish job and murdered only to be replaced by a new unit of prisoners. On October 7, 1944 at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, an uprising was staged by Jewish prisoners of the *Sonderkommando*. One of the crematoria was dynamited and destroyed.

Medical Experiments

In the isolation wards of the concentration camps, so-called "scientists" developed barbarous experiments with the cooperation of the German armed services and major industrial and chemical companies such as I. G. Farben, Siemens, and Behring Works.

Concentration camp inmates were used for grotesque "medical" experiments. Doctors removed sex organs from men and women and sterilized them by various methods. Women inmates had foreign substances injected into their ovaries. The result, as in most other such "experiments," was agonizing pain. At the Auschwitz concentration camp, one of the doctors, Josef Mengele, "whistled operatic arias while 'selecting' new arrivals for either the gas chambers, or the camp, including 'medical' experiments. His experiments concerned twins and dwarfs." Also added to Mengele's list of "medical" interests were hunchbacks. Sections of the twins, dwarfs, and hunchbacks were sent to provide the Berlin Institute of Anthropology with human organs.

Other experiments were performed which were theoretically designed to help the military as, for example, tests which measured the effects of high altitude for the German Air Force. In these experiments, which primarily used Jewish and Gypsy inmates, the prisoner was put into a high pressure chamber. The effect was massive decompression or death through loss of oxygen.

Similarly, low pressure tests were also conducted. Wounds were purposefully created and filled with dust and glass to examine the results of tetanus and gangrene. Other prisoners were chilled until frozen, supposedly to determine the best way to revive frozen German soldiers. Numerous foreign substances were injected including viruses (typhus, yellow fever, smallpox, cholera, diphtheria) and chemical warfare agents, to test new drugs. At the Buchenwald concentration camp, inmates were burned to the bone to test the effects of various pharmaceutical preparations on phosphorus burns. "The bones of living Polish women in the concentration camp, Ravensbrück, were removed from their bodies, usually without anesthetic, to see if they could be successfully transplanted.

As part of a prurient "sideline," the "medical" researchers collected and prepared human skins, heads, and skulls for the SS. A particularly prized possession for the SS was the shrunken head of a camp prisoner, through a process which a number of the SS doctors aspired to learn. Prisoners with interesting tattoos were immediately catalogued on entering the camp, usually killed by injection and the skin removed. The skin made "excellent" lampshades.

Death Marches

Towards the end of the war, the concentration camps were evacuated and masses of prisoners were driven out in "Death Marches." In long columns under heavy guard, in freezing weather, the prisoners were marched on foot or partially transported by train into territory still under German control. In the bitter cold, amid further beatings and with their physical health destroyed, many of the prisoners died during the march.

The Death Marches were not only conducted at the end of the war. Periodically prisoners were moved, on foot, hundreds of miles from one camp to another. Tens of thousands had also been moved in this way when the ghettos of Eastern Europe were liquidated.

The final marches began in the summer of 1944 when Majdanek was liberated, and their pace escalated as more camps were closed in the face of the advancing Allied armies. During the march, anyone too weak to continue was shot by the Nazis. Rarely were the prisoners given food or water or allowed to stop and rest. As an example, in one march, 76,000 Jewish men women and children were forced to walk from Budapest, Hungary to the border of Austria. Thousands were shot, starved to death or died from exposure. In another instance, 6,000 Jewish women and 1,000 Jewish men were driven for ten days, during the month of January 1945 to the Baltic Sea. When they arrived, the Germans drove all prisoners into the freezing water and machine gunned them. Only thirteen people are known to have survived this massacre. In January 1945, thousands were also marched from Auschwitz to camps in Germany and other points west.

To ensure that there would be no prisoners left in the camps, barracks were set on fire. As prisoners who were hiding tried to flee, they were shot. Others perished in the flames. Fortunately, some prisoners considered so ill that they were expected to die within hours or days were left in the camps. These constituted many of those who eventually were found when the camps were liberated.

Thousands of people who might otherwise have survived the war when the Soviet army liberated the cities and camps in the East, perished on the five and six-week journey through the snow back to camps in the German *Reich*, such as Bergen-Belsen. Today, in many pictorial history texts one can find photographs of railroad cars which were found standing abandoned on a railway siding, filled with the frozen bodies of Jews who were part of the long journey. There were about 28 such cars found at Dachau. The guards had run away leaving the box cars locked and sealed from the outside, so that no one could get out.

The evacuations and death marches were kept up until the very end of the war. Approximately a quarter of a million prisoners, who had somehow managed to survive the daily misery and brutality of the concentration camps, nevertheless died on the death marches. Most of these marches took place only months before Germany was defeated and the war ended.

Survival Against All Odds

However remarkable the circumstances under which someone survived the concentration camps, it is not, as one might initially assume, because certain individuals were more clever, younger, older, skillful, more or less intelligent. Many factors outside the control of the person determined his or her fate (e.g., age, sex, race, religion, food supply, camp and work assignment, physical strength, and health) but even so, the odds were overwhelmingly against survival. In a situation where only one out of 600 survived, to link survival to some special characteristics would be unreasonable. Survivors had a strong, stubborn will to live. The one overriding element that determined survival was luck. This is essential to understanding the repercussions of the "Final Solution," because overall it is the one fact that enabled any individual to survive the horrors of internment in a Nazi concentration camp. In addition to luck, extraordinary individual conditions had to prevail. Hence, it took rather extraordinary persons to survive through such generally lethal experiences as typhoid epidemics, beatings, starvation, back-breaking work, witnessing the deaths of loved ones, and other torments.

The concentration camp was a world unto itself whose boundaries literally could not be penetrated. Time in both a real and abstract sense was meaningless since death could be imminent or confinement permanent. There was little, if any, respite from the daily hardships. The camps were organized to systematically destroy the humans they contained. But first, for the prisoners, there was often a long, agonizing process of death by degrees. The ultimate aim of the Nazis, if extermination was not intended immediately, was to force the prison inmates into

a state of absolute helplessness both physically and mentally. To effect their purpose, the camp masters implemented a massive number of sadistic techniques. The opportunity for resistance against the pervasive forces was pathetically limited. Nevertheless, such resistance did occur, often as a heroic act of spiritual resistance. A mother who could have survived, might stay with her child, who was scheduled for death, so that the child would not be left to face death alone. Resistance was sometimes subtle and personal as in clinging to internal attitudes (e.g., They can strip me of my clothes but not my self-respect). There were also extraordinary group actions where prison inmates sabotaged war materials which the Germans needed at the front. Some inmates hid their fellow prisoners who had fallen ill. Others created art or kept diaries which they hid for future documentation. Because the Germans wanted all their prisoners to die, for many the most effective resistance was just to go on living, no matter how agonizing the life.

For many prisoners the hardest thing was to find some meaning within the senseless tragedy they were experiencing. There were, of course, many who simply could not go on under such conditions. They gave up, both mentally and physically. They wandered the camps, totally lost, without hope or awareness. For those who reached this stage of resignation, death was almost certain. Such people in the camps were so prevalent that the inmates gave them the name *musulmen*, an erroneous translation of the word "Moslem." Rarely did one return "to life" from the *musulman* stage without the active intervention of another.

The highly lethal conditions of the camp generally meant the death of all close friends and relatives. The most vulnerable were the children, almost all of whom, were killed immediately or succumbed to conditions in the camp soon after their arrival. Other children and particularly twins were killed or deformed in barbarous "medical" experiments. Eighty to 90% of the adult survivors lost the majority of close relatives during the Holocaust and 75 to 80% were totally isolated by the end of the war. Yet, of those few who did survive the camps, or survived by other means, almost all of them relate critical incidents where the intervention of a friend, or in some cases a stranger, turned the tides of fate in their direction.

Millions of men, women, and children were killed in the Nazi concentration camps. In the Auschwitz camp alone, it has been estimated that between 1.1 and 1.5 million persons were put to death by methods such as torture, starvation, shooting, hanging, and gas poisoning. At Auschwitz and the other camps, the liberating armies found abundant evidence of mass executions and famine. Many of the concentration camps were equipped with crematoria for the disposal of bodies. At Buchenwald, where some of the German personnel made a hobby of collecting and tanning human skin for book covers and lamp shades, the crematoria had a capacity of 400 bodies daily. At many camps, most notably Bergen-Belsen, scientists conducted monstrous experiments, using inmates as human guinea pigs.

The creation and operation of the Nazi concentration camp epitomized the absolute depths of depravity to which human beings could sink. No book, film, or photo can realistically express to someone who was not there the dreadful conditions contained within the electrified barbed wire fences. The Nazi concentration camps were centers of mass torture and mass execution.

The extent of the atrocities and brutalities committed against helpless inmates defy understanding. Yet, for those survivors who managed to escape deportations to these hells, another kind of agony awaited them.

Alternative Experiences

Not all those hunted and persecuted by the Nazis were deported to the concentration camps. In the early years (1933-39) many German Jewish parents, desperate to save their children, sent them out of the country on various rescue transports or tried to hide them with neighbors and strangers. In other countries where no such rescue transports existed, Jewish parents left their children at the gates of Catholic orphanages hoping against hope that the nuns would take them in. Some Catholic Orders knowingly accepted Jewish children. Other children were given up in the hope that their true identity would not be discovered. Some Jewish adults who could pass as "Aryans" procured false papers. The papers often cost a fortune and were rarely a guarantee of safety. Most often, the hastily forged documents could not pass close inspection. Individuals living on false papers were continually threatened by exposure and had to survive a marginal existence for years. Adding to this threat was the fact that persons with "legal" papers had to register their place of residence with the police.

Those without papers or legal ration cards, some of whom had escaped from transports and the German *Aktionen* (round-ups), tried to survive by hiding in woods, cellars, attics, barns, outdoor privies, closets, holes in the ground, or other decrepit shelters. They foraged for food at night and were continually threatened by exposure to the freezing elements, the Nazis, hostile locals or blackmailers. In constant fear of discovery, those in hiding often lived without any human contact in total isolation.

A person on the run could never trust anyone, no matter how friendly the offered overtures of help. If hidden, some of the "rescuers" demanded money. Initially, those who did not request money in exchange for protection often had to do so as the German occupation lengthened and food and supplies for those under their protection became exceedingly costly. When the money was gone, those in hiding were sometimes thrown out and denounced to the Germans for a reward. For those generous enough to provide protection, life was dangerous. The Nazis had made it clear that any individual helping a Jew or another person wanted by the Nazis would, if caught, suffer the same fate as the intended victims.

The "Final Solution" was not devised by madmen nor implemented by a few sadists. It developed and almost succeeded because normal people were willing to follow the dictates of a few national leaders rather than their own conscience. Historians have often portrayed the ordinary Germans who participated in the killing process as merely following orders, as being more obedient to their leaders' wishes than responsive to the demands of conscience or the

values of human rights or decency. But in truth, more than obedience was required. The bureaucracy was motivated; it had to initiate many new projects in order to accomplish tasks that were unprecedented. Many participated willingly; many offered all that they could do in order to further the killing process. Only a few -- very few -- refused. Ironically, they seldom faced punishment, but they did lose their position and their influence. At the War Crimes Trials held in Nuremberg, Germany after the war, one of the *Einsatzgruppen* commanders said, "I followed the *Führer's* orders. The unit under my command killed 90,000 Jews and if I would not have done it, someone else would. And I at least did it in a humane and military manner."

VOCABULARY

TERMS

Appel!: Daily roll call and head count in the camps; grueling punishment.

"Arbeit Macht Frei" ("Work will set you free"): This phrase was posted over the entrances to many concentration camps, notably Auschwitz. It was intended to mislead incoming prisoners and was in reality a cruel hoax.

Concentration camps: The notorious prisons designed for labor, torture, and murder, set up by the Nazis throughout the German *Reich*, Europe, and North Africa. At first used for political prisoners, many later held large numbers of different groups of prisoners (Jews, Gypsies, Sla^ys, the political resisters, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.) from numerous countries. The camps were centers of death where prisoners died by murder, gassing, torture, "medical" experimentation, overwork, disease, and hunger. The largest and possibly most infamous was Auschwitz where more people were interned than at any other prison site. While there were thousands of concentration camps, some of the better known ones were: Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Ravensbrück, Buchenwald, Flossenbürg, Neuengamme, Gross-Rosen, Majdanek, Natzweiler, Mauthausen, Stutthof, Dora/Nordhausen, and Bergen-Belsen. Six concentration camps were developed and organized specifically and solely as killing centers: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz/Birkenau, and Majdanek. The last two also served as slave labor camps. A wide variety of prisoners were interned and killed in the Nazi camps, the largest groups being the Jews, Gypsies, Soviet prisoners of war, and Sla^ys. In addition to these, an untold number of other Nazi "undesirables" were held in these camps and killed. However, the Jews were overwhelmingly the largest single group to be imprisoned in these camps and murdered there. All of the concentration camps were centers of forced labor and death.

Crematorium: A furnace used to dispose of bodies.

Death Camps: Historians usually reserve the term "death camps" for those Nazi concentration camps set up for killing: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Included in this classification, because of the massive scope of the killing which took place, are two labor/killing complexes: Auschwitz/Birkenau and Majdanek. There was systematic murder by gassing at each of these six camps.

Death Marches: Forced marches of concentration camp inmates (usually Jews). Although these marches began as early as 1941, the greatest number occurred during the winter of 1944-1945. At this time, the Allied forces were closing in on the Nazi concentration camps from both the eastern and western fronts, and the SS officials forced the inmates to march from the camps westward toward the heartland of Germany. The Nazi officials did not want eyewitnesses remaining in the camps when they were liberated, and attempts were made to conceal the crimes by destroying the evidence.

Einsatzgruppen (Task Forces or Action Groups): Task force of mobile killing units operating in German-occupied territories; responsible for the majority of people annihilated outside concentration camps in Eastern Europe.

Final Solution: The term used as a coverword for the extermination of the Jews. The first official record of this decision is a *Fahrer* order which was transmitted to the High Command (from Hitler to Goring) on March 31, 1941: "TO KILL JEWS AND SOVIET COMMISSARS." Goring then notified Heydrich on July 31, 1941 "to make all necessary preparations...for bringing about a complete solution to the Jewish problem." The use of the word "problem" served as a reminder to use code words, an idea which was quickly adopted to refer to all stages of the Final Solution. The plan was expanded and logistics were finalized at the Wannsee Conference in 1942.

Intelligentsia: The intellectual class within a society.

Judenfrei (free of Jews): Nazi term for the absence of Jews in a given area as a result of deportation and extermination operations.

Kapos: Concentration camp prisoners in charge of supervising a group of prisoners or a work detail.

Labor camps: Prisoner labor was used to build and maintain the camps themselves. Prisoners also worked on a mass scale in the construction materials industry as well as light industry such as uniform factories. Through an arrangement made by the SS with Minister of Armaments, Albert Speer, in 1942, concentration camp prisoners were forced to work in various factories and companies in need of power, primarily in the armaments industry. Those prisoners most often lived

and worked under the harshest conditions. Many were housed in concentration camps but went to work in the satellite camps surrounding them.

Lebensraum (living space): Principle of Nazi ideology and foreign policy expressed in the drive for the conquest of territories, mainly in the east.

Musulman (also: Muselmann): Concentration camp term for an inmate on the verge of death from starvation and exhaustion and who had given up the will to live.

Non-Aggression Pact (also called the Nazi-Soviet Pact): Poland was divided between Germany and the Soviet Union on September 28, 1939 after Germany had invaded Poland on September 1, 1939.

"Protective Custody": A Nazi euphemism to designate the reason for an arrest; "protective custody" particularly was used to apply to those opposed to the Nazis who did not meet the generally accepted "legal" grounds for arrest.

Reichssicherheitshauptamt (RSHA): Central Office of *Reich* Security.

"Selection": Nazi euphemism for choosing ghetto residents and concentration camp inmates for life or death; "selections" were also made periodically throughout the camp.

Sonderkommando (Special Squad): SS or *Einsatzgruppe* detachment; also refers to special units in the death camps who removed bodies of those gassed and transported them to the ovens where they were burned. *Sonderkommandos* also had to extract gold teeth and remove rings from the bodies; possessions of the dead were sorted in the "Canada" area. Gold, jewelry, and possessions of the deceased (including glasses, artificial limbs, hair, and other body parts deemed "useful") were sent to Germany. The *Sonderkommandos* were replaced every few months and killed.

Transit camp: This type of camp contained people who had been rounded up to be transferred to forced labor camps and death camps. Individuals from western and southern Europe were concentrated mainly in camps such as Drancy in France, Westerbork in Holland, Breendonck in Belgium, and Fossoli and Bolzano in northern Italy. Poles were concentrated in a total of thirteen transit camps, the largest being Pruszk6w, near Warsaw.

Umschlagplatz: A point of reshipment in Warsaw where freight trains were loaded and unloaded; during the deportations from the Warsaw ghetto, it was used as an assembly point where Jews were loaded onto cattle cars to be taken to Treblinka.

Untermensch: A German word for subhuman; a term used by the Nazis to describe "non-Aryans" such as Jews, Sla^vs, or non-Caucasians.

Wannsee Conference: Nazi conference held January 20, 1942 where the logistics of mass deportation were decided to implement the Final Solution.

Zyklon B: A deadly, poisonous gas produced from acid crystals used in the gas chambers to kill inmates in the camps.

NAMES AND PLACES

Auschwitz: A Nazi labor/killing complex located in southwestern Poland which incorporated 40 smaller camps in the region. The Auschwitz complex included three camps. Auschwitz I -- known as the "mother camp" -- was a concentration camp mainly for prisoners. Auschwitz II/Birkenau -- near the village of Brzezinka -- was a killing center where between 1.1 and 1.3 million Jews were murdered. Auschwitz III/Buna was a slave labor camp assigned to the I.G. Farben-Werke chemical factories in the neighboring town of Monowitz.

Babi Yar: The site of mass executions of Jews located outside Kiev, Soviet Union.

Eichmann, Adolf: Coordinated the deportation of Jews from their homes in German-occupied Europe to ghettos, concentration, and death camps in Eastern Europe. He headed Department IVB4 of *REICHSSICHERHEITSHAUPTAMT (Referat Juden)* and as such was the engineer of the "Final Solution." Eichmann was captured by Israeli agents on May 11, 1959 in Argentina where he had been living. After a lengthy trial in Israel, he was convicted and executed on May 31, 1962.

Heydrich, Reinhard: As Chief of RSHA, Heydrich was entrusted in 1941 with implementing the "Final Solution" of the Jewish question. He presided over the conference at Wannsee in Berlin in January 20, 1942. Czech partisans assassinated Heydrich in Prague in 1942. As a result, the entire village of Lidice was destroyed, and nearly all of its citizens were killed.

Mengele, Dr. Josef: SS physician at Auschwitz who selected prisoners for death and conducted perverse medical experiments on concentration camp inmates.

Excerpt from *All But My Life*

By Gerda Weissmann Klein

That was a day full of tension. Allied planes were constantly overhead, strafing the woods and our marching column. Obviously the pilots did not know who was marching, they saw only the green-gray uniforms of the guards.

In the evening when we got to a barn, I saw Liesel. She had been wounded in the leg.

"It's nothing," she said, "it does not even hurt."

The barn doors were closed, but the boards did not fit tightly so that light from the outside streamed in. We had stopped marching earlier than usual, probably because the guards were afraid of the planes.

I tried to talk to Liesel and Suse, but somehow the tie between us was broken. Our group was not the same. With Ilse gone, it seemed that they felt that the three of us who remained couldn't last long. Suse planned to ride in the wagon next day. She declared herself unable to walk any more. Liesel, whose legs were covered with pus-filled scabs, agreed to join her.

When morning came I started to follow Suse and Liesel into the wagon. Hanka pulled me back. "You can walk," she said firmly. "Don't ride again."

Meekly I obeyed, though it seemed to make little difference to me. At first my legs hurt so that I thought I could not continue, but as I marched on they felt better. Again and again I found myself turning to my left for Ilse, to my right for Suse. Girls I did not know were marching on either side of me.

We spent another night in a barn. In the morning at least fifty more girls were dead.

When we filed by to get some soup I heard a group of guards speaking excitedly.

"*Ist es möglich?*" one of them asked, and an SS woman answered hysterically: "*Ja, der Führer ist tot!*"

I felt myself tremble with joy.

"Suse, Suse, did you hear?" I whispered.

"Yes," she answered, "but I am sure that now they will kill us for revenge."

I wanted to say no, but something prevented me. Perhaps, I thought, Suse was right.

We marched on, waiting for something to happen. With Hitler dead, things had to change.

"It is happening now," I kept saying to myself. "This is the end. One or two more days, and it will be over."

But somehow it did not matter so much any more. With Ilse gone I did not care, even though I had promised her that I would not give in.

The third evening after Ilse's death we approached a little town in Czechoslovakia: Volary. It was a Friday, I learned later. My legs were hurting terribly; I felt that I could not go on. The SS woman now in charge told us to stand in a row in a meadow. Those who were no longer fit she ordered stand apart. I was swaying.

"You cannot walk any more," she barked, pointing at me. "Take off her shoes," she commanded Hanka, who stood beside me.

My shoes -- the ski boots that Papa insisted that I wear! The order gave me new determination.

Hanka pushed me behind another girl. "Don't let her see you," she whispered.

In the fading light the SS woman ordered our group into a truck.

"Shall I help you up?" Hanka asked.

There were few seats; the rest of the girls would have to stand jammed together. Girls were begging to get on.

"Not yet, Hanka," I said.

"Then you will have to go in the wagon," she said. "It will be here shortly."

"I am in no hurry now," I replied.

The truck rushed away with one SS man and one SS women and perhaps thirty shoeless girls. The rest of us sat in the meadow, waiting for the wagon or for the truck to come back.

I looked at the sky. The first stars were out. Occasionally a plane or the sound of artillery broke the silence of the spring evening. An hour passed. Neither the wagon nor truck appeared.

I did not feel cold or hungry, only lonely and sad. I allowed myself the rare luxury of thinking of home -- of Papa and Mama and Arthur strolling on a spring night in the garden under the darkening sky. I felt strangely consoled. It grew darker.

When the truck failed to return we were led across the meadow to some barracks adjoining a factory. There were a hundred and twenty of us left. After we were marched in, the doors and windows were barricaded. Soon afterward, from the silence outside, we gathered that our guards had abandoned us.

Much later I learned from one of the girls who survived that an American plane had strafed the truck that did not return. The woman guard was killed. The SS man on the truck shot a number of the girls. The rest jumped off the truck and ran away.

In the silence of our barracks we could hear a ticking. So the Germans were going to destroy us after all! We had waited so many years for the end of the war. How many times, years ago at home, in the ghetto, in Bolkenhain, in Marzdorf, in Landeshut and Grunberg, and while marching all those months, had I dreamed of this moment. And now we were not to survive....

Then it began to rain. It was a spring rain accompanied by loud thunder. The planes stopped roaring, the artillery fire ceased. And still the bomb outside continued to tick.

Then some Czechs came and broke the door open. They urged us to run -- the SS men were coming back to shoot us because their bomb had not gone off.

Later we heard many stories about that bomb, but we never learned why it failed to go off. We did not pause to look at it. Those who could, ran. Some of us headed toward the factory and hid there. Two other girls and I crawled into a long, metal cylinder lying on the floor. There we waited.

A couple of hours passed. There was shooting in the distance, and then close by, and again the planes roared overhead; we did not dare to move.

Perhaps, I thought, perhaps we will survive, but what then? I will go home, of course. . . And for the first time in all those years, the thought of going home did not ring right. No, I could not think of it. Not yet.

There was a loud commotion at the factory door, and we heard heavy boots pound along the concrete floor. A voice shouted in German, "Get out, out, you beasts, out!"

We did not stir.

Shots were fired in our direction. One bullet went through the cylinder, creasing my shoulder and one of the other girls' legs. There was more commotion, and then the Germans departed. We waited again. There was more firing in the distance.

Much later we heard shouting in Czech. A man and two women entered the factory calling: "If someone is inside, come out. The war is over!"

We crawled out of the cylinder, stiff and numb.

"Look!" said the man, pointing to a window. One of the women took my arm to steady me.

From the window, in the early-morning light, I saw a church on a hill. The white flag of peace waved gently from its steeple. My throat tightened with emotion, and my tears fell on the dusty window sill. I watched how they did not soak into the dust, but remained like round clear crystals, and that was all I could think of in that great hour of my life!

We went back to the barracks where most of the rest of the girls had gathered. We found chaos: crying, and shouts of joy. The hour had struck at last. Somehow I couldn't grasp it. There

were no golden trumpets to proclaim our freedom. There were no liberators in sight.

Liesel was lying on the littered floor. She knew we were free but did not seem elated.

"Where is Suse?" I asked her.

"She went out to get water and hasn't returned. She has been gone a long time."

I went out to look for Suse. She was not at the pump. I found her off a way lying in the mud. Her eyes were glassy, unseeing, but for a moment I did not realize she was dead.

"Suse, we are free!" I called to her. "We are free, the war is over!"

When I touched her, I knew the truth.

I did not tell Liesel. It was too sad for Liberation Day.

As I look back now, trying to recall my feelings during those first hours, I actually think that there were none. My mind was so dull, my nerves so worn from waiting, that only an emotionless vacuum remained. Like many of the other girls I just sat and waited for whatever would happen next.

In the afternoon a strange vehicle drove up. In it were two soldiers in strange uniforms, one of whom spoke German.

The German mayor of the town was with them. He was trying to tell the two soldiers that he really was not antisemitic. The soldiers were Americans; I knew as soon as I heard them speak to one another. Arthur had spoken their language a little.

Tears welled from my eyes as they approached us. The German-speaking soldier patted me with his clean hand. "Don't cry, my child," he said with compassion, "it is all over now."

CHILDREN OF THE HOLOCAUST: THEIR MEMORIES, OUR LEGACY

Nearly 1.5 million children perished in the Holocaust. Jewish children were murdered as part of a deliberate policy by the Nazis to systematically exterminate a whole people. Gypsy and mentally handicapped youngsters were also targeted for death. Yet children's voices are among some of the most powerful to survive the Holocaust. Captured in diaries, in poetry, in art, in oral histories, they reach across memory to instruct us.

The campaign against children began with laws prohibiting Jewish children from participating in organized sports and social activities with "Aryans." They were required to wear yellow Stars of David and were banned from museums, movies, playgrounds, and swimming pools. They were finally expelled from public schools. Yacov Langer, a Jewish teenager from Essen, Germany, wrote of the restrictions: "...what more will this day bring? Shrieks, terror, blows, abductions, imprisonment, messengers, humiliation and disgrace, posters with laws -- a sea of posters, white, green, yellow, new ones each day, but always with the same message: Jews are forbidden ... to buy, sell, study, pray, gather, eat, etc., etc., a string of prohibitions with no end!"

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the plight of Europe's children became truly desperate. The safe, predictable world they had known, anchored by their parents and other loved ones, shattered in the face of the Nazi advance. Dawid Sierakowiak, a 14-year-old Jew from Lodz, Poland, wrote in his diary, "...Panic, mass exodus, defeatism ... A neighbor telling us to leave. Where, go where, why? Nobody knows. To flee, flee farther and farther, trek, wade, cry, forget, run away ... just run as far as possible from danger. Father loses his head -- doesn't know what to do ... A moment of deliberation and finally the decision: stay put. Whatever will, be, will be."

Some fled into hiding. Young Otto Wolf and his family hid in the fields and woods outside the town of Olomouc, Czechoslovakia: "At 4:30 in the morning, we start looking for a permanent hiding place; we found it in the nearby bushes, so dense it is impossible to sit ... In the afternoon, dad shaved my head, cut his beard for the first time in his adult life and is unrecognizable."

Most were forced into ghettos. There, hunger, disease, and exposure stalked those children who survived German "actions." Older children and teenagers had a better chance of surviving because they might be selected for labor details. Children without parents or protection had little hope. Chaim Kaplan, a Warsaw Ghetto inmate, reported on the plight of the young: "These are children who were orphaned when both their parents died, either in wanderings or in the typhus epidemic. Every morning you see their little bodies frozen to death in the ghetto streets. It has become a customary sight."

Yet many children demonstrated enormous resilience and courage, sometimes becoming "breadwinners" for their families. In the Warsaw Ghetto, young Mary Berg recorded smuggling by children to keep others from starving: "Whole gangs of little children are organized, boys and girls from five to ten years of age. The smallest and most emaciated of them wrap burlap bags around their bony little bodies. Then they slink across to the Aryan side through the streets that are fenced off only by barbed wire ... A few hours later they return laden with potatoes and flour ... When the children return safe and sound with their trophies to their starving parents, there is boundless joy in the household."

In 1942, the Nazis began emptying the ghettos, transporting victims to concentration camps and killing centers. Among the most vulnerable themselves, many youngsters looked on helplessly as parents, grandparents, brothers, and sisters were taken from them. Eva Ginzova, a girl in Czechoslovakia's Terezin Ghetto, had already lost her parents when she watched as her older brother and a friend were transported to Auschwitz. "The train is here and both boys have gotten on already. Petr [her brother] is number 2392 and Pavel is 2626. They are together in one carriage. Petr is amazingly calm ... It was a terrible sight ... Now the boys have gone. All that is left are their empty beds."

Like Eva, but not her brother Petr, a handful of children survived the Holocaust. A lucky few escaped on *kindertransports*, sent by desperate parents to safety in England, Switzerland, and North America. Others survived in hiding -- in attics, cellars, forests, and convents, or precariously sheltered under new identities. But like many of their older counterparts, few achieved their dearest wish -- to return home.

Like their adult counterparts, many child survivors began their post-war lives in displaced persons camps, hoping to be reunited with loved ones and waiting to immigrate to places like the United States, Palestine, and South Africa. Even as they built new lives in their adopted countries, many have also dedicated themselves to the cause of remembrance, especially remembrance through the education of future generations. Linking the children of the past with the children of the future, they ensure the continuation of that sacred task.

Source: Taken from the program of the National Civic Commemoration of the Days of Remembrance. *Children of the Holocaust. Their Memories, Our Legacy*. Washington, DC: April 23, 1998. Produced by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

CHILDREN

The ultimate crime in the Holocaust was the murder of children. A poet has said that the death of a child is the loss of infinite possibility. What then can be said of the murder of more than a million children?

Approximately one million Jewish children under fifteen were murdered by the Nazis in their attempt to achieve the "Final Solution to the Jewish Problem." Although the murder of the children was a deliberate attempt to destroy the Jewish future, children were not a direct target of Nazi anti-Jewish policies. Caught up in the web of incomprehensible events, they were the most vulnerable of all the victims of Nazism.

The experience of children in the Holocaust varied from country to country, city to city, and year by year, week by week. The first sting of persecution often came in the classroom or schoolyard, when children were singled out by their classmates, stigmatized and isolated. Later, they were expelled from public schools. Wherever possible, the Jewish community established separate schools. There, Jewish children felt safe, if only for a while, from the torments of antisemitic classmates and teachers.

At first, some children were shielded. Even on a train to Auschwitz, a seven-year-old French child asked his father, "What is a Jew?" He had never heard the word. "All my life I tried to protect you from the reality," the father answered. Other children had no one to protect them. In the French transit camp of Drancy, Azriel Eisenberg reported:

There were two --, three --, and four-year-olds, little ones, who did not know their names. . . . We improvised names for those who were nameless and prepared wooden disks which we suspended by strings around their necks. Later we found girls wearing boys' disks and vice-versa. Evidently, they played with these disks and often exchanged them.

In Poland and Eastern Europe, children went into the ghettos with their families. Many became smugglers and beggars. The children were always hungry. Some continued to study and live with their parents but others roamed the streets. In Vilna and Warsaw, the Jewish Council went to great efforts to provide for the children, but in Lodz, Rumkowski allowed them to be deported in order to transform the ghetto into a work camp.

Young children could sense their parents' anguish, even though they could not grasp their predicament. Doriane Kurz, who survived Bergen-Belsen at the age of nine along with her seven-year-old brother, Freddie, recalls going into hiding:

One evening we were sitting in our living room. My brother was sitting on the bay window sill and looking out. He said: "Look at the fire engine out there." My parents rushed to the window and it wasn't a fire engine. It was a truck with men sitting on the outside. They all ran off and my parents grabbed us and we ran out of the house.

They ran to a storage room two floors above and escaped arrest for another eighteen months. "I remember the sound of boots coming up," she said of that night. She was only six at the time.

Children in Western Europe were sent with their families to the transit camps. In camps such as Theresienstadt and Gurs, adults made valiant efforts to create the semblance of a normal environment for the children. There were classes, games, even cultural activities. The children of Theresienstadt painted pictures and wrote poems that have survived and serve as memorials to their brief lives. The paintings of the children were a form of therapy -- a means of expressing their deepest fears. Older children at Theresienstadt took an active part as actors in plays, as recruiters for poetry contests and recitations held in the evening.

Teddy -- we don't know his last name or his fate -- wrote of the arrival at Terezin:

At Terezin

*When a new child comes
Everything seems strange to him.
What, on the ground I have to lie?
Eat black potatoes? No! Not !!
I've got to stay? It's dirty here!
The floor -- why, look, it's dirt, I fear!
And I'm supposed to sleep on it?
I'll get all dirty!*

*Here the sound of shouting, cries,
And oh, so many flies.
Everyone knows flies carry disease.
Oooh, something bit me! Wasn't that a bedbug?
Here in Terezin, life is hell
And when I'll go home again, I can't yet tell.*

Another child, Mif, wrote of the frustration:

Terezin

*A fourth year of waiting, like standing above a swamp
From which any moment might gush forth a spring.
Meanwhile, the rivers flow another way,
Another way,
Not letting you die, not letting you live.
And the cannons don't scream and the guns don't bark
And you don't see blood here.
Nothing, only silent hunger.
Children steal the bread here and ask and ask and ask.
And all would wish to sleep, keep silent and just go to sleep again . .
The heaviest wheel rolls across our foreheads.
To bury itself deep somewhere inside our memories.*

But in the end, children were deported along with their parents to concentration camps. Mothers and fathers could no longer protect their young. Parents who refused to be separated from their children were sent at once to the gas chambers. Pregnant women were also selected for immediate death. Only the able-bodied and the unencumbered could hope to survive. At the ramp in Birkenau a first *Selektion* was held. Arriving Jews were divided by sex. Fathers parted from their daughters and mothers from their sons -- often forever. The young children, and the parents who insisted on staying with them, went to their death.

Gypsy children and twins were subject to medical experimentation by Dr. Josef Mengele, who in his zeal to breed the master race was fascinated by twins. According to one observer, Mengele was rather fond of Gypsy children. He would bring them sweets and toys. The children trusted him. They called him "Onkle Mengele." The physician would often take them to the gas chambers himself, speaking tenderly until the end.

Vera Alexander, a Jewish woman who supervised fifty sets of Gypsy twins at Auschwitz, recalled:

I remember one set of twins in particular: Guido and Ina, aged about four. One day Mengele took them away. When they returned they were in a terrible state: they had been sewn together,

back to back, like Siamese twins. Their wounds were infected and oozing pus. They screamed day and night. Then their parents -- I remember the mother's name was Stella -- managed to get some morphine and they killed the children in order to end their suffering.

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 either together or individually. Parents did not know, could not know until it was too late, that "resettlement in the East" was an almost certain death sentence. In Amsterdam, Otto Frank took his whole family, including Anne, into hiding in Amsterdam in 1942. He alone survived. In 1944, Shlomo Wiesel advised his son Elie to stay with the family rather than hide on his own with a former family maid in Hungarian-controlled Sighet. Elie Wiesel survived Auschwitz and Birkenau, as did his older sisters. His father, mother, and little sister Tzipora were killed.

Should a young child be given to non-Jewish friends, or turned over to strangers in one of the organizations in Poland, the Netherlands, and France that tried to hide Jewish children? The dilemma was difficult. Parents who knew they could not protect their children were also unwilling to part with them, and for good reason. Andrew Griffel was less than a year old when his parents gave him to a Polish couple for safekeeping. When they returned three years later, he did not recognize and at first refused to go with them. The Polish couple had become his parents.

Even when a child was sent to safety, separation was agonizing. One eyewitness to the rescue of seventy children reports:

The young children, who could not understand the reasons for separation, clung to their parents and cried. The older ones, who knew how great their parents' anguish was, tried to control their own pain and clenched their teeth. The women clung to the doors of the buses as they left. The guards and even the police themselves could hardly control their emotions.

Young children often endangered their parents. A crying child could give away a clandestine hideout and endanger the lives of an entire group. In the concentration camp, an infant would spell doom for both mother and child. Judith Sternberg Newman, a nurse deported to Auschwitz, reported the following incident:

Two days after Christmas, a Jewish child was born on our block. How happy I was when I saw this tiny baby. It was a boy, and the mother had been told that he would be taken care of. Three hours later, I saw a small package wrapped in cheese cloth lying on a wooden bench. Suddenly it moved. A Jewish girl employed as a clerk came over, carrying a pan of cold water. She whispered to me, "Hush! Quiet! Go away!" But I remained, for I could not understand what she had in mind. She picked up the little package -- it was the baby, of course -- and it started to cry with a thin little voice. She took the infant and submerged its little body in the cold water. My heart beat wildly in agitation. I wanted to shout "Murderess!" but I had to keep quiet and could not tell anyone. The baby swallowed and gurgled, its little voice shuttering like a small bird, until its breath became shorter and shorter. The woman held its head in the water. After about eight minutes the breathing stopped. The woman picked it up, wrapped it up again, and put it with the other corpses. Then she said to me, "We had to save the mother; otherwise she would have gone to the gas chamber."

Should a child be hidden in a convent or monastery where she or he might be protected, but cease to be a Jew? It was easier to hide a Jewish girl than a Jewish boy. A circumcised boy could be identified as a Jew at any moment. Boys soon learned to go to the bathroom alone. Solomon Perels, whose childhood and adolescence were the subject of the film *Europa, Europa*, went to great lengths to avoid urinating or taking a shower in the presence of other boys. He could not consummate his wartime romance for fear of betrayal.

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. Frima Laub described her experience in the streets of Woloshisk:

Well, at that time I was infested already with lice because nobody gave me a bath and I slept in the same clothes and I lived in the same clothes and I lived in that pantry with the mice. And so I walked out of the house. And the first thing I did was go into a toy store, a religious articles store, and I bought a big cross and I spent my hundred rubles. And then I was so infested with the lice that my head, my skin was all rashes and bloody from scratching it so much.

I felt that I really needed help and I remembered this lady whom my parents were friendly with and I remembered that we used to visit them every so often. That it's quite a bit outside the city. I didn't remember the address and I didn't remember the name. But I just remembered how we used to walk. And I . . . that's how I walked. And I made it to the house. And it was winter and cold and there was maybe five or six inches of snow. And I made it to her house and as I got to her gate, her dog started barking so she came out to see who was at the gate and she sees me and she says, "My God, come in quick. Come in quick." And she takes me to her barn because obviously she must have noticed that I have lice crawling all over me. So she wouldn't take me into her house but she took me into the barn and she . . . quickly she took off my clothes and put on other clothes and she said to me, "Where are your parents?" I said, "Everybody is killed. Everybody is dead."

Because I wanted her to have pity on me. And so she did. She took me to her bathroom. She shaved off my head. She gave me a bath. She gave me a glass of hot milk and a piece of black bread.

Children like Frima hid their true identity while leading a facsimile of a normal childhood: going to school and church, playing, taking part in family life. The very young even forgot their true identities and became who they were supposed to be. The writer Saul Friedlander, who later became a distinguished historian of the Holocaust, was about to begin training for the priesthood when a friendly priest asked him if he had heard of Auschwitz. His parents had perished there. Friedlander had been adopted by a French Catholic family.

Jana Levi reports her deepest fear:

I didn't remember anymore what my real name was. I only dreamt about it at night. When I woke up in the morning, I wouldn't remember again. I knew I had a different name, but it was so important for me to forget it that I actually did completely forget. I knew that if my parents didn't know my name they couldn't find me.... Nobody would know who I was. I had completely become someone else and the real person, no one would know who it was, and they didn't know who I was either.

Children living in hiding were often confused about their religion, their identity, even their gender. At a 1991 conference on the hidden child, a fifty-three-year-old man rose to tell his story. He had spent the years from age four to seven as a girl. His hair had grown out. He wore dresses. He sat on the toilet to urinate even when alone. As he told his story, the audience grew quiet. He asked if others in the room had similar experiences. Several men raised their hands. It was easier to pretend to be a girl.

Source: Berenbaum, Michael. *The World Must Know: the History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Dr. Michael Berenbaum, and Little, Brown and Company.

Estimated Jewish Losses in the Holocaust		
COUNTRY	INITIAL JEWISH POPULATION	KILLED
Austria	185,000	50,000
Belgium	65,700	28,900
Bohemia and Moravia	118,310	78,150
Bulgaria	50,000	0
Denmark	7,800	60
Estonia	4,500	2,000
Finland	2,000	7
France	350,000	77,320
Germany	566,000	141,500
Greece	77,380	67,000
Hungary	825,000	569,000
Italy	44,500	7,680
Latvia	91,500	71,500
Lithuania	168,000	143,000
Luxembourg	3,500	1,950
Netherlands	140,000	100,000
Norway	1,700	762
Poland	3,300,000	3,000,000
Romania	609,000	287,000
Slovakia	88,950	71,000
Soviet Union	3,020,000	1,100,000
Yugoslavia	78,000	63,300
Total	9,796,840	5,860,129

1. Study the statistics above. List eight observations you have made based on the information in the chart.

2. Using an outline map of Europe, match the statistics on this chart to the appropriate countries on the map.

Source: Wigoder, Geoffrey, ed. *The Holocaust: A Grolier Student Library*. Volume 3. Danbury, CT: Grolier Educational, 1997, page 370. Reprinted by permission of Grolier Educational.

BABI YAR

The commander of the Sonderkommando (special command unit) 4-a reached the city of Kiev on the 21st of September, 1941. A proclamation was posted on the walls all over Kiev ordering the Jews to report to a place near the Jewish Cemetery on the 29th of September at 8:00 in the morning. They had to bring their valuables, jewelry and some warm clothing with them for the purpose of resettling. Believing this notice of "resettlement" some of the Jews came as early as daybreak in order to get a good seat on the train.

In groups of about 20, the people were led away from the mass who had gathered. Each group, in turn, was ordered to undress and deliver their properties. They were then marched to the edge of the ravine of Babi Yar and shot.

German records indicate that they expected 5,000--6,000 Jews to report. However, 33,771 Jews were shot on the 29th and 30th of September.

The following is the observation of the Engineer Friedrich Graebe who happened to be in the area and later described what he saw.

Moenikes and I went directly to the pits. Nobody bothered us. Now I heard rifle shots in quick succession, from behind one of the earth mounds. The people who had got off the truck - men, women and children of all ages - had to undress upon the orders of an SS man, who carried a riding or dog whip.

They had to put down their clothes in fixed places, sorted according to shoes, top clothing and underclothing. It was a heap of shoes of about 800 to 1,000 pairs, great piles of underlinen and clothing. Without screaming or weeping, these people undressed, stood around in family groups, kissed each other, said farewells and waited for a sign from another SS man, who stood near the pit, also with a whip in his hand.

During the 15 minutes that I stood near the pit, I heard no complaint or plea for mercy. I watched a family of about 8 persons, a man and woman, both about 50 with their children of about 1, 8 and 10 and two grown-up daughters of about 20 - 24. An old woman with snow white hair was holding the one year old child in her arms and singing to it, and tickling it. The child was cooing with delight. The couple were looking on with tears in their eyes. The father was holding the hand of a boy about 10 years old and speaking to him softly; the boy was fighting his tears. The father pointed toward the sky, stroking his head, and seemed to explain something to him. At that moment the SS man at the pit shouted something to his comrade. The latter counted off about 20 persons and instructed them to go behind the earth mound. Among them was the family which I have mentioned..

I well remember a girl, slim and with black hair, who, as she passed close to me, pointed to herself and said "23." I walked around the mound and found myself confronted by a tremendous grave. People were closely wedged together and lying on top of each other so that only their heads were visible. Nearly all had blood running over their shoulders from their heads. Some of the people shot were still moving. Some were lifting their arms and turning their heads to show that they were still alive. The pit was already two-thirds full. I estimated that it already contained about 1,000 people. I looked for the man who did the shooting. He was an SS man who sat at the edge of the narrow end of the pit, his feet dangling into the pit. He had a tommy gun on his knees and

was smoking a cigarette. The people, completely naked, went down some steps which were cut into the clay wall of the pit and clambered over the heads of the people lying there, to the place to which the SS man directed them. They lay down in front of the dead or injured people; some caressed those who were still alive and spoke to them in a low voice. Then I heard a series of shots.

I looked into the pit and saw that the bodies were twitching or the heads lying already motionless on top of bodies that lay before them. Blood was running down their necks. I was surprised that I was not ordered away, but I saw that there were two or three postmen in uniform nearby. The next batch was approaching already. They went down into the pit, lined themselves up against the previous victims and were shot. When I walked back, round the mound, I noticed another truckload of people which had just arrived. This time it included sick and infirm persons. An old, very thin woman with terribly thin legs was undressed by others who were already naked, while two people held her up. The woman appeared to be paralyzed. The naked people carried the woman around the mound. I left with Moenikes and drove in my car back to Dubno.

On the morning of the next day, when I again visited the site, I saw about 30 naked people lying near the pit - about 30 to 50 meters away from it. Some of them were still alive; they looked straight in front of them with a fixed stare and seemed to notice neither the chilliness of the morning nor the workers of my firm who stood around. A girl of about 20, spoke to me and asked me to give her clothes and help her escape. At that moment we heard a fast car approach, and I noticed that it was an SS detail. I moved away from my site. Ten minutes later we heard shots from the vicinity of the pit. The Jews still alive had been ordered to throw the corpses into the pit; then they had themselves to lie down in this to be shot in the neck. breathe, we couldn't sit, we couldn't lie down. There was not enough food, no water, no bathrooms. So you can imagine.

We finally stopped at Auschwitz. At the moment of arrival, we were ordered off the train.

Q. When did you arrive at Auschwitz?

A. It was early May 1944. The order was given that men and women stand in separate groups. I was immediately separated from my father, and I never saw him again. I was standing with my mother and my sister and my female relatives. Then we had to file past Dr. Joseph Mengele who was always there to sort the new arrivals. With a wave of his hand, he decided who will live and who will die. He would send people to the right or to the left. Those to the right were allowed to try to live. Those to the left were marched to the gas chamber upon arrival. And if I tell this story a thousand times, it doesn't make any sense to me ever, ever, how they devised a system for transporting people long distances only to be killed upon arrival. But the whole thing was based on secrecy and deception. So, this was the gigantic deception.

My mother, my sister and I filed by Dr. Mengele and his assistants. He looked at me and waved me to the right. My sister was twelve. No child under the age of fifteen or sixteen had a chance to survive. All the children under the age of fifteen or so were sent to the left with their mothers, grandmothers, and younger siblings. When I saw that happening, I took some steps to follow my mother and my sister, because I wanted to be together with them. A man in a striped uniform who worked there, who was a prisoner there for a long time, saw me do

this. He came, he like bounded up to me, quickly, grabbed my arm and very firmly and very sternly shoved me back to the right side where the young people were. And he said to me, "You were ordered to go in this side." Had he not intervened, Dr. Mengele would certainly not have stopped another Jewish kid from dying in the gas chambers.

Q. What was your first impression of what you saw when you got to the camp?

A. Oh, terror. Total terror.

Q. What did you see or smell or hear or think?

A. I saw armed SS men, rifles on their shoulders, guns in their holsters, dogs on leashes at their sides, milling about, barking orders, shouting, shoving people. I smelled a horrible odor. I had no idea what that was. Everybody was scared. We didn't know what was awaiting us. Conditions were horrifying.

There were thirty-two barracks in the sub-camp where I was sent. We were told to go outside and line up. Eventually the sun came out. We were standing there cold and shivering in the morning in rows of five. I remember holding onto the people in my row until the SS men or SS women or the guards came to our row and then, of course, we had to stand completely still and straight. But we would hold each other and try to get warm from each other's body heat.

After roll call, we were permitted to go to the washroom which was a large building with spigots of cold water trickling out of faucets, slow warm water. And you had to be quick about it if you wanted to get a few drops on your fingers and, perhaps, wash your eyes or face. That's all the bathing there was. After that, we were permitted to go to the latrine, which was again a large building with wooden benches and holes in the benches. And everyone was given, I think, a minute. Then we went back into the barracks where breakfast was served. A bowl of lukewarm, sweetish tasting, ersatz coffee -- imitation coffee -- was served in one bowl for ten people. And it went around from person to person with a pre-arranged number of sips everyone was allotted to take.

Q. That was all you had for breakfast?

A. That was it. The rest of the day was spent doing absolutely nothing. We were not taken to work. In the afternoon, there was another roll call for a couple of hours. Again, we were allowed to go to the latrine at that point. Twice a day. If you had to go in-between, you were just out of luck, and it was a horror. And after latrine, we were again ordered back into the bunks. There was no space to stand. A thousand people cannot stand in this space. So we had to be shelved, with three on our shelves, stacked on the shelves, literally. And we received a bowl, in the same bowl that we had the morning ersatz coffee, a bowl of vile-tasting, horrible soup that had no identifiable ingredients in it. It looked green most of the time, and it smelled horrible and tasted worse. And, again, we passed it from person to person.

Our food ration or so-called dinner was the few sips of soup that tasted so awful that I remember holding my nose and saying to myself, "Swallow, swallow. It means life. If you don't swallow, you'll die." And I did not want to die. A little piece of black bread, sometimes with a small pat of margarine, was also given to us at the end of the day. Once in a great while they gave us a little slice of salami or *wurst*, but most of the time we got only bread. And I tried to be very thrifty and save a little piece of it for the morning, which I didn't always succeed, because I was so hungry after just a little bit of time in Auschwitz that it was very

difficult to resist eating the little piece of bread that we received.

And as the days and weeks wore on, there were selections among us frequently. Those people who have lost weight or developed any kind of illness or problem or became mentally deranged were taken away. We found out about the gas chambers and knew where the people were taken to. If they selected people who were fairly able-bodied still, we were hoping that they were taken for some sort of work detail, to another section or to another camp. If they looked like they were sick, had blemishes on their bodies, had some scabs or scars or anything, then we were pretty sure that they were taken to the gas chambers. At each selection, we had to remove our dress and march by the selectors, the Nazi overseers, stark naked. Many times we were ordered to hold our arms up in the air so they could see whether the ribs showed, and what condition people were in. And you can well imagine, as time went by, people were getting to be in worse and worse condition. Not only did I lose weight, but I felt hungry constantly -- and it is not the kind of hunger that we feel when we skip a meal -- it is a total, all-pervading hunger that makes every muscle, every cell in your body hurt. It was more than hunger. It was starvation.

While in the camp, I was on my own and tried to help others whenever possible.

Q. How did you do that?

C. I'll tell you how I did that, and that was sort of a unique skill that I came upon accidentally.

I was always hungry, as I told you, and the odor was unbelievable -- the unwashed bodies, pressed together like sardines in a can. You cannot describe what it was like. But more than anything, I wanted to remember what was going on there. The horrible pain when one had to go to the bathroom and couldn't go; the gnawing pain of the hunger; the dirt; the smell; the crowding; the dehumanization when there were selections; the beatings. I kept thinking to myself, "I must remember everything, everything. I have to remember, because the world out there doesn't know what's happening. And I have to live so that I can tell people about it."

So I sort of made mental notes of everything that was going on around me. It was very brutal conditions. Then I noticed that some of the people around me were staring ahead with a blank stare, and they no longer laughed, no longer talked. That was the end of the line for those who gave up and simply did not respond. And I said to myself, "You can't do that. If you're going to remember, you can't become a zombie." So my survival skills evolved from that, and I started to give book reviews to my ten people around me. And I started telling them about movies I had seen and books that I had read. That kept me occupied, kept them interested, and kept my mind going. I did not lose my mind. I was very proud of that.

Q. And you never felt like giving up?

A. No. What helped me to survive was the strong will to live, the strong desire to remember, and the survival skill that I just described, plus, I noticed that whenever there were selections or whenever we were herded outside for roll call, those on the edges of the crowd got hit by either the *Kapo* who supervised us or the SS women who could reach somebody on the edge of the line or the edge of the crowd. So I would mingle into the middle as much as I could. This was another survival skill.

Q. Were there any religious practices that were ever attempted in the camp?

A. Yes, those girls who were very religiously oriented tried to fast on Yom Kippur, for instance. But there were no services or anything like that. There was no way but I remember having an argument with them, where I remember saying that even God doesn't want you to miss that miserable few sips of soup.

Q. Could you tell the functions of the following personnel? The *Kapo*?

A. The *Kapo* usually was the overseer of the work detail. Since my camp mates, my bunk mates and I did not work, we did not deal with a *Kapo*. We had what was called a *Block5Itester* [block supervisor or elder].

Q. And what were their functions?

A. They were supposed to keep order. But she was the one who told us at the very beginning, when we first arrived at Auschwitz, about the gas chambers. Since I was with young girls, as the days wore on, we were expecting to see our mothers. We were all expecting to see our family. So, there was crying and moaning and wondering whether we'll ever see our parents or how we get to where our parents are. She got tired of this scene. There was like a brick stove-like contraption in the middle of the building, but it didn't give us any heat or anything, it was just there. She got up on this height and said, "I want you all to shut up. I don't want to hear any crying, any moans, and any calls for your mothers. You are never going to see your mothers. Your mothers went out the chimney." And we didn't know what she was talking about. She said, "Well, I'm not supposed to tell you this, but since none of you will survive anyway, it doesn't matter. So you might as well know that when you first arrived, your mothers and grandmothers were taken to a place where they were gassed and burned." I thought she was trying to frighten us.

Q. You didn't believe her?

A. No. Not at first. But, then, the evidence pointed to her telling the truth, such as ashes floating in the air, the horrible stench that smelled like burning feathers, and the skies lit up red if ever I looked back at night.

As time went by, there were constant selections. They would take people away even if they didn't look emaciated. And we were terrified of the selections because, at that point, we had the sense of them wanting to vacate the camp by eliminating those who were still alive. And we really were beginning to feel the sense that there was no chance and no hope. And as much as I tried to dodge selections at times when I could, I found myself in a selection.

This was now November of 1944. By then, I was quite skinny, too. I still was on my feet, I didn't have to be carried or anything. I still marched along myself with a large group of people who were selected. I was taken to where I could smell the odors, those horrible, burning flesh odors, prominently. At that point, I knew that as much as I wanted to live, I was not destined to. We were taken into the anteroom of the gas chamber and told to undress. By then, the undressing process was sort of routine, and I didn't feel quite as horrified as the first time. Then we were told to sit on wooden benches stark naked, shivering, terrified, fully realizing that our turn has come. At that point, in front of me were the large, iron gate-like doors, very large doors. A couple of SS men and women came up and down the rows and counted to about half of the room. All those people were told to go through the doors, and the doors closed. That was the actual anteroom to the gas chamber, and those who went through went into the gas chamber.

I kept thinking to myself, as much as I want to live, it's not meant to be. Some of the girls around me were saying prayers. I wasn't particularly religious, I wasn't praying, but I said to myself, "I hope I have been as good a human being as I know how to be. This is the end of the road even though you wanted to come out of this alive." And a miracle happened. An air raid siren sounded. There were a lot of bombings and air raid sirens in those days at that point in the area. The lights went out, and the whole proceeding was interrupted. Those who were remaining in the room and were still alive, me among them, were herded out and sent back into the barracks where we came from. That was the closest I came. That was truly miraculous to me, that the others who went to the doors were gone, and the rest of us came out of it alive.

I was in Auschwitz for seven months. After that, I was taken to a labor camp near Berlin, called Guben. It was a small, little-known camp. Very soon after the arrival of some new prisoners, an order was given that our camp has to be evacuated because the Russians were advancing on Berlin. We were told that we had to leave and, naturally, under guard, in rows of five, we were given a piece of bread. We had no luggage. We had no possessions. We were taken on the road. And this was one of the most harrowing, horrible episodes in the entire system of the Holocaust -- the death march -- where we were forced to march through the roads of Germany for about eight to ten days in the winter of 1945, through forests and fields.

Q. Who was marching with you? The German soldiers?

A. Yes. But some of them came on horseback, and some were marching with us.

Q. You weren't clothed properly?

A. I had a coat at that point, but many of the people didn't.

Q. And how about shoes?

A. By then, my shoes wore out. I'm glad you asked me that. I had wooden clogs but no stockings. They rubbed blisters, bleeding sores on my feet. The road was snowy. It was very cold. It was wintertime. The snow accumulated on the bottom of these wooden clogs. It felt like I was walking on stilts. It was very difficult to walk, the little piece of bread was gone quickly, and there was no food the rest of the time.

Q. How long did you march?

A. About a week or so.

Q. And no food. Water?

A. No water. It was snowing. I reached up to the person's shoulder in front of me, and I scooped up the snow in my hand.

Q. How about resting? Any resting, any sleeping?

A. Every so often, they would let us, by permission, sit on the side of the road. Or every so often, we were permitted to move over to the empty side where there was no humanity sitting and use it for a toilet. But no food, not on a regular basis, anyway. All these guards sat down, encircling us. Try to picture this, while we were starving, they unpacked their sandwiches and

their thermoses of hot coffee, and they were eating right in front of us. It was torture to watch it. At that point, I encountered the one and only kindness from a German soldier that I've ever encountered personally. He was not an SS man. He was a *Wehrmacht* [regular German army] member, an older man. And he saw me staring in his face as he was eating this big, thick sandwich. So, when he came to the end of the sandwich, about towards the crust of the bread, he put it down on the ground, and he motioned with his head to come and get the crust. And I thought to myself that's what we used to do when we threw something for a dog, but I was so thrilled. I blessed him even for a little crust of bread.

Q. Of the number of people that marched, how many do you think survived the march? Half?

A. I don't know. Less.

Q. Less than that Much less. Then we were put into cattle cars and went on to our next destination which was Bergen-Belsen

This excerpt is adapted from the original testimony of Judy Freeman which is part of the Oral History Collection of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, Inc.

Source: Testimony of Friedrich Graebe, a German civilian engineer, from the court records (*Judgment*, pages 6695-6697) of Case No. 9 Einsatzgruppen, tried at Nuremberg in 1947-48.

BABI YAR

The wild grasses rustle over Babi Yar.

The trees look ominous, like judges.

Here all things scream silently, and, baring my head,

Slowly I feel myself turning gray.

*And I myself am one massive, soundless scream above
the thousand thousand buried here.*

Yevgeny Yevtushenko (B. 1933) Russian Poet

Questions:

1. Why is it appropriate for the poet to use the word "judges" to describe the trees at Babi Yar?
2. Why do you think "all things scream silently" at Babi Yar?
3. Create an original title for this poem.

A Partial Letter to President Roosevelt

December 8, 1942.

Dear Mr. President:

We come to you as **representatives of all** sections of the Jewish community of the United States.

Within recent months all Americans **have been** horrified by the verification of reports concerning the barbarities against the inhabitants of countries over-run by Hitler's forces. To these horrors has now been added the news of Hitler's edict calling for the extermination of All Jews **in** the subjugated lands.

Already almost two million Jews, men, women and children, have been cruelly done to death, and five **million more Jews live** under the threat of a similar doom.

The record of these heinous crimes against the Jews in Nazi Europe is detailed in the attached memorandum. Every device of a perverted and malignant ingenuity *is* being **employed to hasten** the process of their destruction. The result is a crime so monstrous as to be without parallel in history.

The victims of this **brutality** are guilty of no crime **pave that they are** the children of the people through whose divine law and through whose prophets the world was **given** the ideas which **constitute** a basic part of the civilization that the Nazis seek to **destroy**. **Through** the bodies of these innocent and **defenseless** victims the Nazis strike at civilization itself. Death **and destruction** follow everywhere in the wake of the Nazi armies. lands have been laid waste and their peoples destroyed or enslaved.

In the midst of their suffering, however, the peoples of Europe are *sustained* by a hope that the victory of the Democracies will destroy the Nazi scourge and restore freedom to the world. European Jews share that hope. But will they **live** to see the dawn of this day of freedom? Unless action is taken immediately, the Jews of Hitler Europe are doomed.

In this hour of deepest anguish and despair we turn to you, Mr. President.

You are the symbol of humanity's will to fight for freedom. Your voice awakened On 8 December 1942 a delegation of American Jewish leaders headed by Rabbi Stephen S. Wise met with President Roosevelt at the White House and presented him with 'Blue Print for Extermination,' a twenty-page outline of the war against the Jews. Reproduced here are the delegation's cover letter to the President and a report summarizing the meeting.

A Yellow Stripe to Designate Jews

Markings were used by the Germans to isolate their intended victims from the surrounding population. These included Stars of David, triangles, and prisoner numbers. Even as late as November 1944, when the Allied armies were approaching Germany from both east and west, the Germans introduced new cloth symbols for Jews in concentration camps. A decree dated 20 November 1944, issued by Office D—the Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps—in the SS Central Office for Economy and Administration (WVHA), required that Jewish prisoners at Monowitz (Auschwitz III) wear a narrow yellow stripe above their designated prisoner triangles. (This order is reproduced below.) The last sentence of the edict stipulated that the yellow Jewish star was not to be used in the future. It is probable that yellow cloth was not available at Auschwitz in November 1944, two months before liberation of this concentration camp and killing center. A similar narrow yellow cloth bar was also used to designate Jewish prisoners in the west at the Breendonck concentration camp in occupied Belgium.

The signatory to the document, Richard Gliicks, was born in Odenkirchen in 1889. A veteran of World War I and a businessman in Düsseldorf, Gliicks joined the Nazi Party in 1933. A member of the SS, he was promoted to SS Major General (Gruppenführer) in 1943. He succeeded Theodor Eicke as Inspector of the Concentration Camps and Com-

mander of the Death Head Units in 1939 and became chief of Office D in the SS Central Office for Economy and Administration in 1942. Gliicks was last seen in May 1945.

The original documents is located in Suitland, Md., National Archives, Record Group 338, War Crimes Case Files ("Cases Tried") 1945-1959, Case 000-50-9. Translation by Sybil Milton.

Secret (stamp)

From the SS Central Office for Economy and Administration, Office D--the Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps, Oranienburg, 20 November 1944

To the Commandant of concentration camp Auschwitz III (Monowitz)

Re: The marking of Jewish prisoners

In the future Jewish prisoners are to be marked with a narrow yellow bar placed above their triangular prisoner designations. The yellow Star of David *is* not to be used any more.

Signed: Gliicks, SS Lieutenant General and Major General of the Waffen SS

The document is countersigned Schottl, SS First Lieutenant and Senior Commander of the Protective Custody Camp (Schutzhaftlagerführer)

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Fifty Years Ago: Darkness Before Dawn* (1994 Days of Remembrance). Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1994, page 156. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

HULL TELEGRAM, 25 AUGUST 1944

This telegram from Secretary of State Cordell Hull to Roswell McClelland of the War Refugee Board addresses reports "regarded as authentic" about the participation of Hungarian police in the arrest and deportation of Hungarian Jews.

Reprinted from documents in Washington, D.C., National Archives, Record Group 84, Foreign Service Posts, American Legation Bern, American Interest Section, General Records 1942-1947, Box 74, 840.1 Jews-Hungary.

RECEIVE

Ack. A.I. no. 9368 to DPI, Aug. 31 (with copy
McClelland)

OF ASHRICA

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES

TELEGRAM

URGENT
(for action)
(Copy sent to WRC Room)
[Signature]

to Mr.

PECT AUG 25 1944

Fronflp

Department

Date: August 25, 10 p.m., 194

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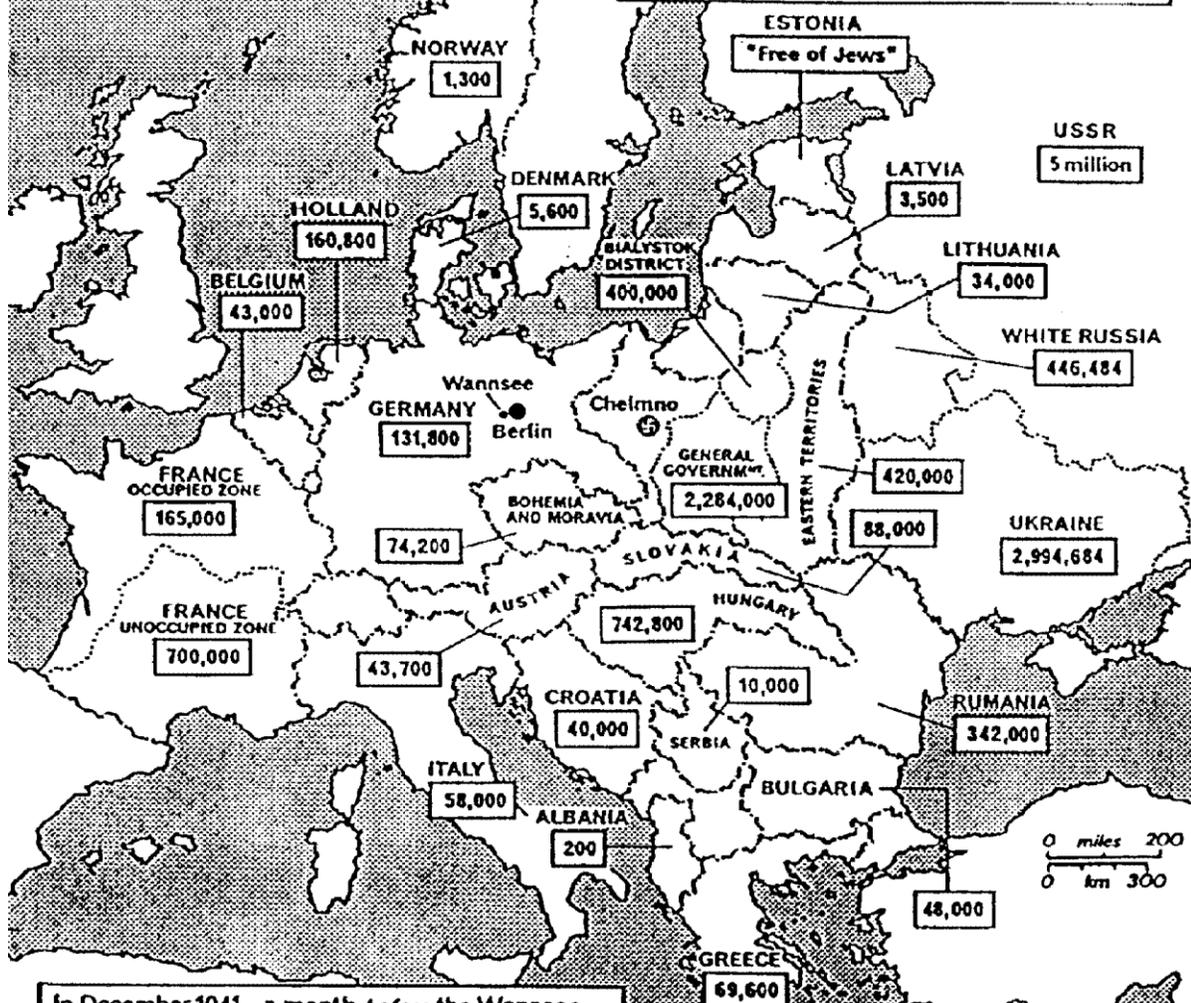
Received: August 26, 10 p.m.



GERMAN OFFICIAL PLANS FOR THE "FINAL SOLUTION", 20 JANUARY 1942

The number of Jews mentioned at the Wannsee Conference, country by country and area by area, for eventual deportation, and subsequent death. More than 14 million people were thus marked out for death.

One of the macabre features of the numerical list of the Jews submitted to 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 three months before the Wannsee Conference.



In December 1941, a month before the Wannsee Conference, the first Nazi extermination camp had already come into operation, at Chelmo, responsible for the mass-murder of Jews, Gypsies, and Soviet prisoners-of-war. After passing through corridors marked 'To the showers' and 'To the doctor', the victims were forced into a large truck which was in fact a gas-chamber, where they were killed within a few minutes. By the end of 1944 more than 360,000 Jews had been murdered in Chelmo alone.

The Wannsee Conference also specified 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.

Study this map and list ten facts that you have learned.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Hilda Kusserow

The community of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany was small and peaceful. But the Nazi state considered members of that group to be enemies. Thus, the Nazis tried to coerce the Witnesses into signing a declaration recanting their faith (see page 172). Witnesses who refused were imprisoned. One who suffered such a fate was Hilda Kusserow, a devout member of the community, who, at the age of fifty-five, was sent to the Ravensbrück concentration camp. She remained incarcerated there from 4 April 1943 to September 1945. She returned to her home in Eschborn, near Frankfurt am Main, where she died in 1979. This is the text of a letter Hilda wrote to her daughter Annemarie from Ravensbrück in August 1943. The letter was handwritten on preprinted forms that indicated the strict regulations for correspondence between prisoners in concentration camps and their families.

Reprinted from the archives of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Kusserow documents were made available through Robert Buckley.

(printed at the top of the letter)

Obscure and illegible letters cannot be censored and will be destroyed.

Concentration Camp
Ravensbrück
Fürstenberg in Mecklenburg

Every prisoner may receive or send one letter or card per month. It must be written in ink and be clearly legible. Letters may be no longer than four normal pages

of 15 lines per page, cards no longer than 10 lines. Each letter may contain only one 12-Pfenning stamp; additional stamps will be confiscated and forfeited to less fortunate inmates. Photographs may not be sent. All mail must be addressed with prisoner's identification or barrack number. Packages, regardless of contents, will not be received by prisoners. All necessities can be bought within the camp. Money may be sent; however this must be through postal draft. National Socialist newspapers are permitted; these, however, must be ordered by the prisoner himself through the office of postal censorship in the concentration camp. Petitions to the camp leadership for release from imprisonment are in vain.

The Camp Leadership
Ravensbrück, August, 1943

Dear Annemarie,

Many thanks for the letter and for the package from July 31. You put a lot of effort into it. I'm very glad that you visited your father, he had it the worst. Hopefully Karl is doing better. Were the little ones and Elis with you? We think about all of you very often, especially Hildegard and Waltraud. Best wishes to all the relatives and friends. Your loyal mother and (unreadable)

(printed on back of letter)

The prisoner is as before a determined Jehovah's Witness and refuses to relinquish its false doctrine. For this reason she has been refused the usual correspondence granted to prisoners.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Fifty Years Ago: Revolt Amid the Darkness* (1993 Days of Remembrance). Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1993, pages 171-172. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The Sufferings of a Gypsy Family

The Gypsies, like the Jews, were major targets of Nazi persecution. They were considered "asocials," and they were despised and hounded. As with the Jews, their victimization began before the war. First, their economic activities were limited. Then their physical movements were restricted. Later, they were sent to ghettos and concentration camps in the east, and finally they were killed. By war's end, some 500,000 Gypsies had died at Nazi hands.

This report focuses on Karl Stojka and his family of Romani Gypsies living in Austria. After Austria was absorbed into the Greater Reich in 1938, Austrian Gypsies were compelled to abandon their tradition of itinerant trading and came under increasing persecution. Many were sent to Dachau and Buchenwald. With the outbreak of war, other Austrian Gypsies were confined in internment camps. As the tempo of persecution quickened, Austrian Gypsies were shipped to ghettos in Lublin and Lodz, and in the end to the Auschwitz concentration camp and the Chelmno killing center. The majority of Austrian Gypsies died during the years of the Holocaust.

Karl Stojka, one of six children, was born in 1931. The Stojkas were members of the Lowara group of Romani and, like many other Lowara, made their living as itinerant horsetraders. In October 1939 the family lost their permits to work in that skilled occupation as a result of *Reichsführer SS* Himmler's forcible-residence order prohibiting all full or part-Gypsies—that is, all those not already interned—from changing their residence. The family felt compelled to move from the province of Burgenland to Vienna and convert their Gypsy caravan into a fixed residence. Karl's father and an older sister took jobs in a factory.

The Nazi fetish about racial purity, meanwhile, led to the creation of the Racial Hygiene and Demographic Biology Research Unit in the Reich Department of Health. Working in close cooperation with the Reich Security Main Office (RSHA), this unit carried out systematic genealogical and genetic registration of thirty thousand Gypsies and part-Gypsies in Germany and annexed Austria. The Stojka family members were photographed and registered in September 1940 in an internment camp in Vienna. Later, when the family was deported to Auschwitz, the prisoner number Z 5742 was tattooed on Karl's arm. The letter Z stood for *Zigeuner*, or Gypsy, and the tattoo also contained two dots after the letter, indicating that Karl was a full Roma and had been registered by the Racial Hygiene Unit.

In 1941 or early 1942, as Karl remembers, his father was arrested and deported to Dachau. Subsequently transferred to the brutally strict concentration camp at Mauthausen, Karl Stojka, Sr., was killed while trying to escape. The urn with his ashes was sent to his widow in Vienna—without explanation of any kind.

In March 1943, when Karl was approaching his twelfth birthday, the surviving Stojkas were arrested and held briefly

in a Vienna police station while a transport for Auschwitz was assembled. They arrived in the Birkenau subcamp of Auschwitz on 31 March and were assigned to Block 10 in the Gypsy camp within Birkenau. There, in late 1943, Karl's younger brother, Ossi, seven years old, prisoner number Z 5743, died of typhus and malnutrition. To survive, Karl pretended to be seventeen years old and simply short for his age. He was assigned initially to work in the stone quarry and later in the prisoner canteen. There he was accused of stealing six bars of soap and, as punishment, was severely beaten.

In August 1944 Karl was transferred to Buchenwald, where he worked in a stone quarry, and in early 1945 he was sent to the concentration camp of Flossenbürg. In April, as Allied armies closed in on Germany, the Germans organized a deathmarch of Flossenbürg inmates toward Regensburg. But after a week of the death trek, the U.S. Third Army arrived, and Karl was promptly hospitalized; he underwent several operations for the orthopedic injuries he had sustained at Nazi hands. The Stojkas were more fortunate than many other Gypsy families in that, although Karl's father and younger brother died in the Holocaust years, his mother, his three sisters, and one brother also survived their ordeals in other camps. However, more than thirty-five of their relatives had been sent to concentration camps, and very few of them survived. After the war the Stojkas returned to Vienna, where Karl transformed an itinerant carpet business into a store specializing in the repair of Oriental rugs. His work with these objects of beauty inspired him to take up painting. He has developed a reputation as a gifted amateur artist and has had two major exhibitions of his works in Vienna under official auspices. His paintings focus on the tragedy of Jews and Gypsies during the Holocaust, and particularly at Auschwitz. At a recent exhibition of his autobiographical art, he said:

"Since 1948, I have worked with carpets and their beautiful colors still fascinate me. Brown like the earth, blue like the sky, and green like the trees. I felt compelled to paint. I have traveled through the forests and fields and the beauty of nature made me paint. I am the artist who emerged from these colors.

I was born for a short stay on this earth. I brought nothing with me and will also take nothing with me.

God determined that I was born a Gypsy and I thank

God for that. I am always proud to be a Gypsy."

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Council. *Fifty Years Ago: In the Depths of Darkness* (1992 Days of Remembrance). Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Council, 1992, pages 124-125. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

THE HELL OF BERGEN-BELSEN

The BERGEN-BELSEN concentration camp was first established in spring 1943 on the site of a former prisoner-of-war camp. Originally constructed as an internment camp to hold candidates for prisoner exchanges, by mid-1944 prisoners from other CONCENTRATION CAMPS began to be transferred to Bergen-Belsen; the camp eventually became a full-fledged concentration camp by the end of the year. In early 1945, thousands of prisoners had arrived from other camps; conditions deteriorated quickly and life became a living hell for the prisoners.

Dora Sazfran, a Polish Jew arrested in May 1943, was first imprisoned in the MAJDANEK and later in the AUSCHWITZ concentration camps. During the evacuation of Auschwitz in January 1945, she was part of a FORCED EVACUATION on which hundreds died. She arrived at Bergen-Belsen later in the month, where she remained until its liberation by British troops in April 1945. She gave the following testimony about conditions in the camp just before its liberation at the BELSEN TRIAL in 1945.

Subsequently did you go to Belsen?—On 18th January I arrived at Belsen and was put into Block 28 [a barrack]. The conditions were so bad that it is impossible to find words in this world. In half a barracks there were 600 to 700 people. We were lying on the floor covered with lice and every other kind of vermin one could imagine. Our food depended very largely on the efforts of the senior of the block. If she was energetic we might get a quarter basin of soup at midday, if not, we might get it at three o'clock. There was no bread for four weeks before the arrival of the British troops. During the whole time I was at Belsen, people were not taken for baths nor were their clothes changed. Towards morning there were several hundred corpses in the blocks and around the blocks. When the Lager Kommandant or [defendant Irma] Grese came along to inspect people, the corpses were cleared away from the front of the blocks, but inside they were full of corpses.

What employment had you in Belsen?—I worked in the kitchen from three o'clock in the morning till nine o'clock

at night in order to have a bed and a little more soup.

You have already pointed out No. 16 (Karl Francioh) [another defendant] as the man in charge of your particular kitchen. Do you remember what happened the day before the British arrived?—When the S.S. ran away on that day and when they returned, the man I pointed out [Francioh] fired from the kitchen, through the window, killing several women.

Was he the only person firing?—From the other half of the kitchen there was another cook firing. About 50 people were killed altogether. . . .

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When did you go to Belsen?—At the beginning of January we were evacuated from Auschwitz to Belsen and quite a lot of people met their death on the way, for anybody who could not keep up was shot. We marched on foot day and night without receiving food and we were beaten at every step by the S.S. After eight days we were loaded on to open trucks, and, as the weather was cold and frosty, a large number of women died. At Belsen we were chased into the frost with just a nightdress on and had to parade for the shower-baths. We stood about outside lightly dressed for a very long time before we received any soup, and then we were sent to an empty hut. We should have received three-quarters of a litre of soup each day, but actually we only got half a litre, which was normally issued towards evening, and a crumb of bread. At the beginning we got this bread daily, but later on not at all.

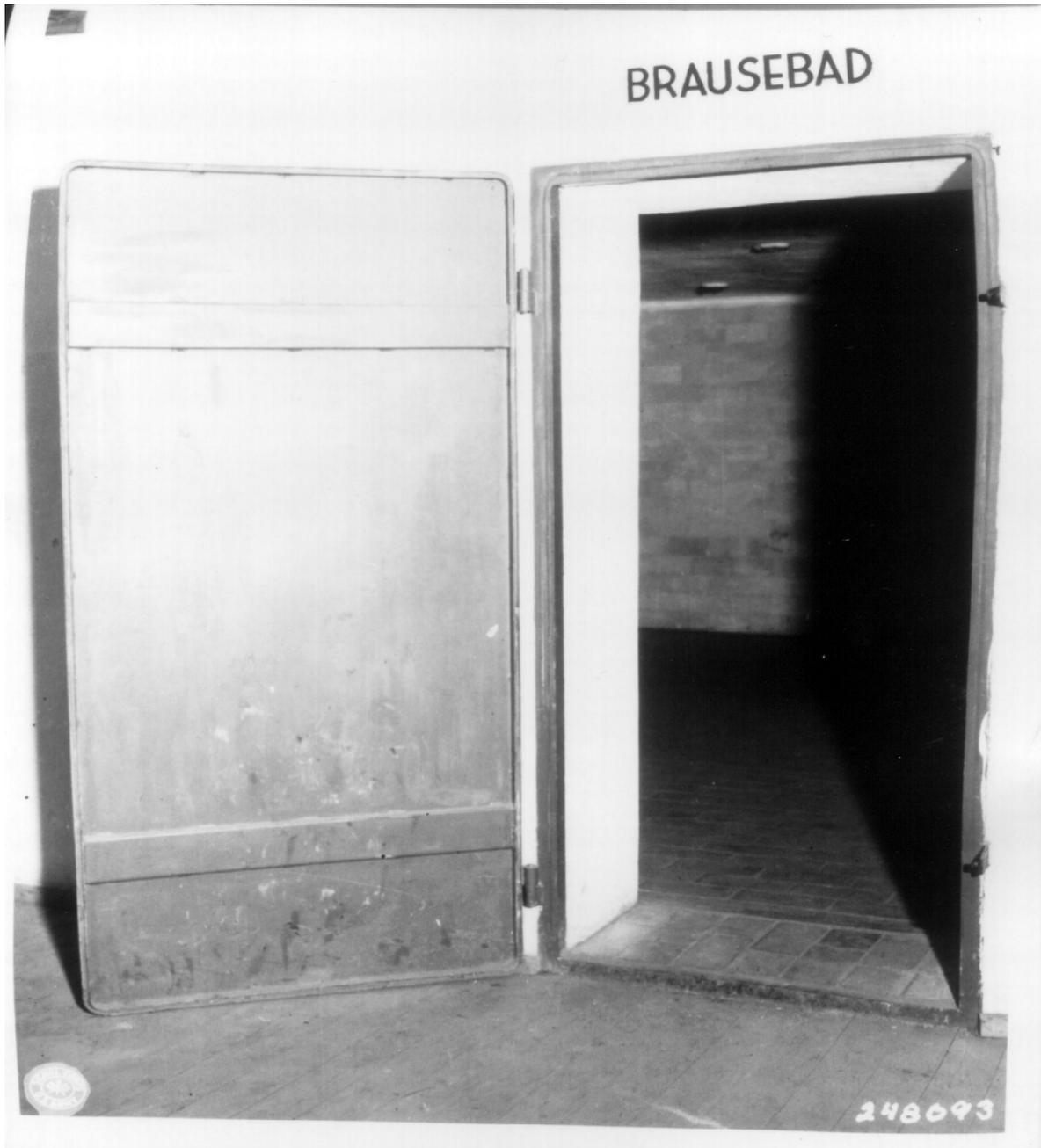
Did you see any persons beaten at Belsen?—One evening I saw how a young woman was being beaten, Kramer, Volkenrath and another female being present. She was kicked and beaten with a wooden stick. In the bath-house I remember how a woman officer beat the naked bodies of the women there with a rubber truncheon. I also saw Volkenrath and two others—one of whom I recognize as No. 8 (Herta Ehlert) [a defendant]—undress and severely beat a girl in a small hut where two Blockführerinnen [women barracks leaders] slept. . . .

When you were at Belsen did the conditions in the camp with regard to food and accommodation get worse gradually or suddenly?—They deteriorated gradually. By the beginning of March things had got into a very critical state.

Is it true that many of the people were very ill, and that many arrived dead with the transports?—No, when they arrived at Belsen they were alive, but after a short time many of them died.

— Reprinted from Raymond Phillips, Trial of Josef Kramer and Forty-four Others (The Belsen Trial) (London, 1949), 85,91-93.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *In Pursuit of Justice: Examining the Evidence of the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, page 124. © United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.



The door to the gas chamber in Dachau. "Brausebad" means shower-bath.
(National Archives, courtesy of USHMM Photo Archives)



Polish children in Auschwitz look out from behind the barbed wire fence. Approximately 40,000 Polish children were imprisoned in the camp before being transferred to Germany during the “Heuaktion” [Hay Action].

(Main Commission for the Investigation of Nazi War Crimes in Poland, courtesy of USHMM Photo Archives)

TESTIMONIES

Father John Januszewski was born on December 20, 1911 in Kolsadki, Poland. He was a Catholic priest who refused to cooperate with the Nazis, and consequently was sent to the concentration camps of Sachsenhausen and Dachau.

A. One evening, in February 1940, the chief of police and the manager of the district came to talk with me. "Now the church authority is closed. And the only thing for you to do is to work with us." I said, "Gentlemen, you took an oath, and you are faithful to your oath. I am in the same position. I took an oath, and I will remain faithful to it." "Oh," he said, "then we have concentration camps, and you will be sorry." I said, "The decision is in your hands."

Q. Was this the first time you had heard about concentration camps or had you heard about them from other sources?

A. I heard. There was one priest who wrote to his family, but naturally it was very little. And the way he presented it, it didn't look too bad.

Q. So you knew that the letters were sent under duress?

A. Yes. I wrote to my family, too, from Dachau and Sachsenhausen.

Q. Can you describe the day when you were sent to the concentration camp?

A. On the 26th of August, 1940, in the morning, I went to church with two altar boys. I had just started the liturgy when I heard some heavy motorcycles starting. I told one of the boys to go quietly and see what was going on. He said, "There are some policemen speaking with your assistant." So, I took the key and opened up the door. The chief of police told me I was being transferred to Germany. He said a German priest would be sent here. First, they brought me to a jail, and then some SS men came and brought me to a transfer camp for three days, where they assembled about 180 priests and seminarians. They took us to a train, and we went to Berlin. Some of us had been very optimistic that maybe we were being sent to a monastery. From the train, they put us on trucks and closed the trucks up, and after a while, we arrived at Sachsenhausen.

Q. Nobody told you where you were going?

A. Nobody.

Q. And you didn't know what Sachsenhausen was?

A. No. I understood German, but some of the priests did not. There was an older priest with a walking stick who didn't understand the orders. A guard took his stick and hit him over the head with it. He started to bleed. We saw right away what kind of place this was.

They put us in a big shower, took our clothing off, examined us, and cut off all our hair. They gave us different clothing, shirts, and wooden slippers. And then camp life began.

We had to learn how to make our straw beds. All the covers had to be in line. We had to stand outside to be counted. Then they started to use us to work, for example, to carry bricks from one place to another.

Q. Were the priests kept together?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you share the same barracks?

A. Yes. These were buildings made for 45 people, but by the end, we had 300 people in them. There was a time when they had ten men sleeping, pushed together on five small beds. One with a head here, one with feet there, like sardines.

Q. Was there any religious activity conducted in the camp?

A. Yes. For some time, we could attend mass with one priest early in the morning. The priest even got up early. That was for a short time. We had a chapel in Sachsenhausen.

Q. Do you know if there were any religious activities for the non-priest inmates of Sachsenhausen?

A. No, there were not, and we had to be very careful even to speak with someone. If some of the lay people knew we had the sacrament and the confession, I had to know who that person was. Otherwise, the spies wanted to catch us.

Q. Were you able to give the sacrament at confession as an individual priest?

A. Yes, we priests heard our confessions between ourselves. But if a lay person wanted to come, we would speak with them, and we would pray with them, but we had to be very careful.

Q. How long were you in Sachsenhausen?

A. From August 29, 1940 to December 13, 1940. Then we were put on a train. Again, the optimists thought maybe we were going to a monastery with better conditions. The next morning when we looked, we were in Dachau.

Q. Did you know what Dachau was?

A. Yes, we heard about it in Sachsenhausen.

Q. Were you in a special compound for priests in Dachau?

A. Yes. Special blocks. Blocks 28 and 30.

Q. Just priests? How many priests were there?

A. I don't know. But I have a book with the statistics. From 1940 to 1945, about 1,700 Polish priests were in Dachau. Of those, 857 died there, and 830 were liberated.

Q. What was different about the routine in Dachau than in Sachsenhausen?

A. In Dachau, sometimes a lot of snow fell overnight, and we had to clean the snow off the streets. We priests had to carry the coffee in the morning, the soup at mealtime, and the tea at night. That was our duty. And then we started to work in the fields.

Q. In the camp?

A. No. Outside the camp, they had a plantation where they planted different plants, herbs, and so on. We worked there.

Q. When you worked outside in these fields, were you working with other prisoners or were these just the fields where the priests were supposed to work?

A. Other prisoners.

Q. And were you able to talk with them and discuss what was going on?

A. It was very dangerous to talk. I was once almost punished for that, but it didn't happen.

Q. Were you aware of any extermination activities going on at Dachau that involved any of the prisoners?

A. No. There was a crematorium.

Q. You knew about the crematorium?

A. Oh, yes.

Q. And you knew what it was for?

A. Yes. I even worked as a bricklayer building the new crematorium. Oh yes, I knew. I saw how they put the bodies in the oven, and they got the bones out. When I worked around the crematorium, I saw a few executions. They shot people.

Q. Basically, what you saw in the crematorium were people who had died from overwork and hunger?

A. Malnutrition and beating and whatever.

Q. Did you ever think about giving up?

A. No. I knew that I was not guilty of anything. I didn't do anything wrong. My only guilt was that I was Polish, and I was a priest. That was the reason. Many times I even felt sorry for the SS. If they would just know what they were doing.

Q. Father, let's discuss for a moment your views on the reasons for the arrests of the priests throughout occupied Europe. What do you attribute that to?

A. I think generally, as Hitler wrote in *Mein Kampf*, he wanted to exterminate all organized religions. And so, there should be the only one religion, his own religion.

Q. Do you think he viewed the priests as a threat to his domination of Europe?

A. Not exactly, but I think he knew that the priests in Poland had great influence on the people. The people were very close to the priests. And so long as we would have been with the people, there still would be some resistance, some spiritual resistance, some strength which he wanted to break.

This excerpt is adapted from the original testimony of Father John Januszewski which is part of the Oral History Collection of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, Inc.

Abraham Bomba was born in Cz_stochowa, Poland on June 9, 1913. He was forced to live in the Cz_stochowa ghetto for one and a half years, during 1941 and 1942. He worked as a barber in the gas chamber at the Treblinka death camp, from which he escaped.

A. For me, the time which was the worst in my life was the evening before the holiday of Succoth, in September. That was when, in 1942, the second transport from the city of Cz_stochowa was sent to Treblinka. I was selected along with my wife, my baby, my mother, my brother, and other members of my family.

At seven o'clock in the morning, we were transferred to the trains, pushed into the wagons with rifles. They packed between 150 and 180 people into each car — one right on top of the other. You couldn't take a step or even turn around.

I was near the window. Early the next morning, I saw a sign, "Treblinka." I had never heard of it. It wasn't on the map. We came into Treblinka. They opened the doors, and we went out, those who could go out. We had over 300 dead people who choked to death inside the train. It was hot, very, very hot.

We went in, and right away they separated women and children to the left side, into the barracks, and men to a huge, open place. The women went in, and we never saw them again. I would say we were about 2,000 men. An order was given to take off our clothing. We undressed ourselves and were waiting. Then another order came to go into the extermination gate. I spotted a cousin of mine there. He said, "Look, I have an order to take out a few people. I am taking you out. Is there anybody with you?" So, he said he had two cousins, myself and another one. He called them to stay on the side. We got dressed, and we stood on the other side. After the people went into the gas chamber, all these packages were outside. They took us, about 10 or 15 of us, and we had to clean the place spotless.

Q. How did you know it was the gas chambers?

A. The minute you came in — not only there, but several kilometers away — you could feel the smell of it.

Q. You mean the crematoria?

A. Yes, that is the gas chamber. You shouldn't have to know about it or see it, but just the smell. . . . And when we cleaned up that place, we had to bring all those clothes from this undressing place to another, a very big place. It was the first time I saw a place like that in my life. I would say it was at least eight to ten stories high with the items separated: clothing, shoes, money, everything. I couldn't imagine what a thing this was. Some of us, about twenty-five people, thought maybe this isn't the gas chamber, but most of us knew this was the last way, that there was no way out from that.

Q. Did you see the other people moved into the gas chamber?

A. Yes. We saw them going in through the gate to the extermination camp. What was going on inside, no, at that time, we didn't see it.

Q. Did the Nazi guards tell these people anything at all?

A. No. They didn't talk to the people. The only thing they did was take out the kids and the old people, and they took them to an open place. They called it the hospital, but there was no hospital. There was a big ditch, I would say, 50 meters by 50 meters. At the end of that ditch, there were Ukrainians with their guns. They killed the children and the old people who couldn't walk to the gas chamber, and threw them into the ditch. And we had to clean that place up. Everyone started doing all kinds of jobs. My job was to look for pants, jackets, shirts, and other materials, and everything had to be separated according to what kind of material it was, wool, and so on. That was my job for a couple of hours until we finished. Then we got some coffee and a slice of bread and went into the barracks. That was our first night in Treblinka.

The barracks was made of wood. There was no floor, only sand, and at night it was pretty cold. At five o'clock in the morning, everybody had to get up, and they counted us. Each one of us got a number. Mine was 88. From my group of 25 whom they had taken out the day before, about 20 or 21 of them were taken to the gas chamber, and they gassed them. I don't know why me and two or three others were allowed to live longer. I will never know. Just a matter of luck, I don't know what to call it.

Q. In time, your whole family had been taken?

A. In fifteen minutes, there wasn't anyone left from my family, and this I knew from the first night on. I talked to people that first night. I couldn't sleep at all. Most of us were crying because in one minute you lost a family, which — I don't know how to describe it — it was more than life alone. And that was going on day by day, like that. Hundreds and hundreds of people were killed before they could even go into the gas chamber. One time there came an order, "Who is a barber?" I was a barber, so I met some people over there, who came with the first transport, and they knew people from my town. There were two or three of them, and they knew I was a barber, and they took me and about twelve or thirteen other barbers.

What was the job? To cut women's hair. Where? In the gas chamber. It was the first time I went through the gate. The wires were camouflaged with trees, so you couldn't look through and see what was going on on the other side of the camp. The camp where I had been working was called the first camp. The other side, where it was barbed wire with trees and grass around the wire, so it shouldn't be visible, they called the death camp or the number two camp. That was the first time I went through that gate and went into the gas chamber. The commandant said, "You have to do the job in a nice way and make the women feel like they are not going to die. They should just feel they're getting their hair cut and then going to take a shower."

And they transported every day, I don't know how many sacks and sacks of women's hair, and that was the job I did in the gas chamber. The minute we got through, we went out, and they closed the door from one side and from the other side, and about ten minutes after, from the other side where we couldn't see it, they took out the bodies. The new transport of women came in, and the same thing was going on until the transport was finished. Then we went back to the first camp for our usual work.

This excerpt is adapted from the original testimony of Abraham Bomba which is part of the Oral History Collection of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, Inc.

Dora Roth, née Goldstein, is a child survivor who was born on February 1, 1932 in Warsaw, Poland. She was forced into the Warsaw ghetto with her family in 1940. In 1941, they ran away from Warsaw to Vilna, but when the Germans re-occupied Vilna in 1941, they were forced to move to the ghetto there. In 1942, she was sent to the camps of Riga-Kaiserwald and Dünaberg, Latvia. Finally, she was sent to Stutthof concentration camp, where she was liberated by the Russians in April 1945.

Q. What concentration camp did you go to and how were you sent there?

- A. They took us to Riga and then to Dünaberg, where we were working. I remember that when they undressed us, I already knew that there were gas chambers where they put people in a room, opened the faucets, and gas came in. I got hysterical. I said, "I'm not going in." My mother didn't know what to do. I said to her, "Look, you lived enough. You're old enough. I want to live, I don't want to go in." But we had to go in. Everybody was so sure that this was the last time that they would be alive. They said the words *Shema Yisroel* [Hear O Israel] which is the last prayer which the Jewish people have. But it was just a shower. When we came out, we got our clothes.

We had to work in Dünaberg. I had to carry stones and bags of cement. One day, I couldn't pick up the stones because my hands were too small, so the German put me over his knee and spanked me ten times. He said, "You have to work exactly as all the others."

Q. Do you remember how you got from one camp to the other?

- A. Yes. We were transported by trains which were all closed, with no windows. I had only a two-inch place to stand, and I was pushed out of my place. I became a living bug, because nobody wanted me to stay or step on them. So, from one end of the wagon to the other, I was pushed around and all bruised. I sat down on someone and started to talk to that person, saying how grateful I was to have a place to sit, because I was so tired. When they opened the doors after three days, I turned around to say thank you, and the person didn't answer. She was dead.

Q. What happened when you got off the train?

- A. We were pushed by Nazis with boots. We were dirty and smelling and stinking. We went to this camp, and they had to shower us. They cut our hair. Twice before this in other camps, they didn't cut my hair, because I was good-looking. So, they had pity on me, but this time they cut my hair. We got numbers. We did not have numbers on our arms. We got numbers with a chain instead. We were always called by our number, not by our name. We lost our names.

In the camp, they came twice a week with trucks to take away the people that were about to die, or had infections, or were children. My mother always managed to hide me. One day, she didn't hear the noise of the truck, and she didn't know what to do with me. Now, we didn't have bathrooms. We had pits, as big as this room. She threw me in there, not knowing how deep it was, because they may or may not have emptied it. They covered it with earth, but she was so desperate. She hadn't heard them coming. They were already in the camp, and they went into the barracks. I was standing in whatever . . . you know, and she took me out, once they left. I stank for many weeks. There was no hot water, and nobody wanted to stand near me. Everybody said, "Take away the stinking little girl." But my mother saved my life. That I can never forget.

Q. Did you live in the same barracks with your mom and your sister at this point?

- A. Yes, until my mother died. That is also something I will never forget. I will never forget when someone came to me and said, "Look, your mother died now. Come, little girl, and say goodbye to her." And I said, "This is not my mother." It was a skeleton with big eyes that they threw by the legs into a mountain of skeletons. I just didn't want to say goodbye. There was no goodbye to a skeleton. I think now that I wanted to remember her as a mother and not as a skeleton or as a dead person.

Q. What happened with your sister?

- A. We were taken to the gas chambers. We were taken by numbers, this and this person has to get out. So they put us together from all the barracks. We were standing there in front of a gas chamber. You undressed and then you entered the second room. Then they opened the faucets, and you suffocated. So, we were standing in front of that room where you had to undress. I was taken out. My sister went in. If I would have gone in, I wouldn't be sitting here. Two Germans told me I had beautiful eyes, and they told me to get out. "Save yourself." My sister motioned

with her hand that I shouldn't follow her. She understood that she was not going out from there anymore, and she waved me away. So I went out.

From then on, my life became a life of loneliness. I was afraid that they would come and pick me up. It was a life which was not life anymore. The lice were eating me up. I was hungry. My stomach turned. I had infections and typhoid. I was lying there, and it was cold. It was not a life one can describe. It was the end. That was the end of humanity.

Q. How did you survive by yourself back in the barracks? Did you talk to anybody?

A. Who talked to a seven or eight year old child? What was there to say? Once my mother died and my sister was sent to the gas chamber, nobody talked to me. So, I pretty much stopped talking. I was hungry. No one could give me food because everybody was hungry. I didn't see any other children there.

My world was the barracks. It was very grey. Every woman looked the same, because they all had cut hair. When people are hungry, with thin faces, you see only eyes. We were wearing the same clothes, so there was no identity. Everyone looked the same, except for me, because I was smaller. I stayed in this concentration camp until the day of the liberation.

Q. Was that in 1945?

A. Yes. They took the prisoners on a death march, but I had typhoid. I couldn't walk anymore. So, they let me stay in the barracks. In the morning, two Germans came with machine guns and sprayed the bullets all over the people that couldn't walk. Because even on the march, if you couldn't walk, they killed you. They were in a hurry, because the war was coming to an end.

A few hours later, the first Russians came into the barracks. I was told that even the tough Russians fainted at the bloody picture that they found in there. Every Russian army unit came with a field hospital with nurses and doctors who were used to seeing blood. I don't know how much blood there was, because I lost consciousness. I woke up in a hospital. I really didn't have the pleasure of being liberated.

Q. Did you get hit by any bullets?

A. Two bullets in my back. I fainted, probably from the loss of blood. When the Germans had stormed the camp, they entered the barracks and fired the machine guns blindly. They were in such a hurry to kill everyone and escape, because the Russians were coming. Whoever had been sitting got it in the head. I was lying on my tummy. So, I got it in my back. Some people probably died, and some people didn't. A few hours later when the Russians came, they found me. I was still breathing. So, they took me into the field hospital, and there I was operated on for the first time. I woke up three or four days later, when I regained consciousness. They had to give me blood because I'd lost a lot. I eventually had four major operations, because they couldn't find the second bullet.

Later, in a refugee camp in Feldafing, Germany, I got a high fever. I was burning and nothing hurt me. So they took me to the hospital and they found out that I had double tuberculosis, which was very contagious. So I was sent to Italy, to a sanatorium, and there I stayed for three years with the nuns, recuperating from tuberculosis.

The story I tell is one of a Jewish child who still does not understand why she had to go through all this. The other day, my grandchild called me up and said, "Grandma, bring me a pair of sunglasses with birds on them." What a different life! She wants glasses with birds, and I just wanted a bigger piece of bread at her age. That's all I dreamed about, a bigger piece of bread. So, it is a very different story to hear it from a child. There were 1,500,000 stories like mine that you could have had, but they died. The real memorial for them is the story that we are leaving to the generations to come. I don't know if they will learn from me. I hope so. I do hope so. This excerpt is adapted from the original testimony of Dora Roth which is part of the Oral History Collection of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, Inc.

Unit 7

Resistance: Courageous Acts In Desperate Times

RESISTANCE: COURAGEOUS ACTS IN DESPERATE TIMES

*“The question is not why all the Jews did not fight, but how so many of them did.
Tormented, beaten, starved, where did they find
the strength - spiritual and physical - to resist?”*

*Elie Wiesel Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
(1986) and Holocaust Survivor*

INTRODUCTION

Since the end of World War II, there has been a deluge of documentation dealing with the horrors of the suffering and annihilation of six million European Jews during the Holocaust. Less well known is the account of the Gypsies who, like the Jews, were targeted for death on the basis of racial prejudice. Other groups and individuals who were persecuted by the Nazis were attacked for their political views or evaluated as unfit to live according to some distorted Nazi standard.

In light of the fact that only the Jews were singled out for complete destruction and because of the vast numbers murdered, the plight of their tragedy has received particular attention. Understanding what happened to the Jews also provides insight into understanding some of the experiences which other persecuted groups endured. For that reason, the assumption that the Jews went like "sheep to the slaughter" is particularly troubling. The answer to the question: "Why didn't the Jews resist?" has significance far beyond the events of the Holocaust itself.

The reality is that the Jews did resist, and their efforts may have been singular among all of the Nazis' intended victims. Jewish resistance took many forms, beginning in the 1930's while Hitler was rising to power, until the end of the war in 1945. No other persecuted group, with so few resources and so many forces against them, were able to resist their murderers so effectively. Nevertheless, their losses were great and the appalling numbers of people destroyed has tended to overshadow this important chapter of Holocaust history.

Another reason that little has been known until recently about the role of Jewish resistance rests on the fact that history must rely on evidence, narratives, or other accounts that are preserved through time. And these records must be both understandable and available. Yet, much of the documentation concerning the Jewish resistance was not collected and translated into English until years after the war. Also, some respected world historians relied upon German documentation for information on

Jewish resistance, much of which was inaccurate and favored the German point of view. on the fact that history must rely on evidence, narratives, or other accounts that are preserved through time. And these records must be both understandable and available. Yet, much of the documentation concerning the Jewish resistance was not collected and translated into English until years after the war. Also, some respected world historians relied upon German documentation for information on Jewish resistance, much of which was inaccurate and favored the German point of view.

We now know, through objective scholarship, that there were many dimensions to the Jewish resistance which required courage, self-sacrifice, and torturous choices. There were Jewish underground organizations in Western Europe and partisan movements in Eastern Europe that conducted persistent anti-Nazi activities. Resistance emanated from the forests, the ghettos, the concentration camps, and even the killing centers. There were Jewish underground organizations that worked to maintain prisoner morale and reduce the physical sufferings of the prisoners. They committed sabotage, organized escapes, collected weapons, planned and carried out revolts. Resistance was carried out by men, women and children, and protected and supported those who were forced to hide.

In addition to Jewish resistance, there were many Gentiles who, at great risk to themselves and their families, joined the Jews in the resistance movement. Conversely, many Jews also joined forces with Gentile resistance movements.

Much new evidence has become available in the last decade concerning armed revolts, which is now being carefully examined. No less important were the numerous instances of unarmed resistance. Perhaps, even more significant than any armed rebellion, the efforts to defy the Nazis by living a meaningful existence in spite of the torment endured -- quiet acts of defiance and courage in the face of the most miserable odds -- reveal the true face of resistance during the Holocaust.

CONTENT OVERVIEW

RESISTANCE: COURAGEOUS ACTS IN DESPERATE TIMES

Resistance to the Nazi process of annihilation is, to a great extent, difficult to separate from the general acts of resistance in World War II. In some cases, fighting the Germans had the same effect for either the general war cause or the Holocaust. That is, success in one arena meant success in the other. Unfortunately, in other instances, resistance (particularly acts directly concerned with the "Final Solution") had no effect on the war effort. In fact, some of the Jewish resistance efforts were sabotaged by others also fighting the Germans but whose personal prejudice against the Jews outweighed their national need to win the war.

In spite of the conflicting motivations behind various acts or movements of resistance, one thing is clear. As the Jewish people were singled out for complete destruction, any examples of resistance within their ranks (even if such acts were within military units and a part of overall military war strategy) may be correctly considered as resistance to the Holocaust.

In light of the above, this chapter focuses particularly on Jewish resistance. These numerous examples contradict, unconditionally, any assumption that the Jews went "like sheep

to the slaughter." In fact, as increasing numbers of documents are unearthed over time, especially since the break-up of the former Soviet Union, it has been confirmed that Jewish resistance -whether armed or unarmed -- was continual, in Eastern as well as Western Europe. In countless ways, the Jews resisted which allowed them to retain their dignity at the very moment the Germans were trying to disavow their status as human beings. In other instances, resistance took the form of carefully planned and executed rebellions with firearms and other weapons, always played out against overwhelming odds.

Resistance in West Europe

Between April and June of 1940, German armies overran six nations of Western Europe: Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, Holland (the Netherlands), Belgium, and France. Stunned by the incredible speed with which the Germans took over, most of the citizens of these countries appeared, at least in the beginning, to be paralyzed. Nevertheless, resistance began almost at once and escalated throughout the war as individuals joined small groups of fighters who eventually merged with other groups to form organized movements. Amateur resistance leaders became professional strategists. The contribution made by many resistance fighters to winning the war can only be guessed at; their remarkable efforts, for which many sacrificed themselves, substantially impeded Germany's advance.

Not everyone in the occupied countries tried to resist their invaders. In fact, the Germans were sometimes welcomed as "liberators." Others, believing Germany's propaganda, collaborated for reasons which were to prove dubious later when it was too late to undo the damage they had created.

For the Jews in the Western European countries, who had no idea of the fate that awaited them at the end of the deportations, illusions in the beginning of "resettlement" for better working and living conditions prevailed. Yet when the truth was revealed, Jewish resistance became intense. Marked for death, they fought fiercely. Many Jews who joined the resistance had been members of the communist party or extremist organizations in their own countries and were experienced in clandestine work. Others who joined these groups were apolitical yet, also wanted to fight the Germans. Among the resistance movements in Western Europe that were comprised mainly of Jews, the best known are the Jewish Army units in France and the Jewish communists,

many of whose members had originally come from Eastern Europe. Resistance organizations took part in the full range of underground activities. They maintained radio contact with other resistance groups and Allied leadership, made explosives, sabotaged German installations, assassinated Germans and their collaborators, forged identity papers and food ration cards, and gathered intelligence.

Jewish women and men played an active role in the resistance movements. The women were less likely to incur suspicion and also were less detectable than Jewish men who could be identified by their circumcision. Women smuggled in guns, diverted attention during acts of sabotage, flirted with officials for information, and acted as couriers for false documents and funds. At one university in France, where false documents were being made, so many female agents came to collect the forged papers that the chief of the operation, who was a student, was reprimanded by his professors for womanizing instead of working!

Early in 1941, in Holland, Jewish longshoremen repelled an attack from the Dutch Nazis who had entered the area where they were working. This may have been the first group to actively resist the Nazis in that country, and their action aroused the passion of their fellow

citizens. For the first time, the civilian population took part in something that had never dared be done to the German invaders. There was a citywide general strike.

As in the *Reich* and the other conquered territories, anti-Jewish measures were quickly instigated in Holland. At the suggestion of Swiss government, the letter "J" was added to identification cards; travel restrictions were imposed, and ghetto sections cordoned off. After May 1942, Jews had to wear the yellow Jewish star. Unlike other conquered territories however, many Dutch people rose in opposition to this decree. (The Netherlands did have a large number of collaborators and Nazi sympathizers as well.) To express their sympathy with the wearers of the yellow stars, many Dutch citizens wore yellow flowers on their coat lapels. In Rotterdam, signs were plastered throughout the city reminding the Dutch to show respect to Jews on the street. Intellectuals were outspoken, and in clearest contrast to the *Reich* realm in Germany, Austria and Poland, both the Protestant and Catholic churches strongly voiced opposition to and urged active resistance of the anti-Jewish decrees.

The Nazi oppression was too powerful, as reflected in the sad result. Not only were the Jews mercilessly hounded and rounded up, but 20,000 Dutch Christians were deported to the concentration camps, because they opposed Nazi racial decrees or because they tried to protect Jews.

In Belgium, as in Holland and the other conquered countries, the definition of "Jew" was formulated, Jewish-owned enterprises "Aryanized" or liquidated, accounts confiscated, curfews established, and the wearing of the Jewish star mandated. But there was one snag after another. The Belgians were averse to buying former Jewish property, the Brussels stock exchange refused to accept securities in the absence of their Jewish owners, and the wearing of the Jewish star became a *cause célèbre* (an issue arousing heated public debate) among Belgians - young and old alike. Teachers told their students that the star was a mark of distinction. Antwerp sold Jewish stars in the Belgian national colors. In Brussels, on the first Sunday after the decree was issued, the streets were filled with throngs of Belgians wearing Jewish stars. Even the German military units refused to implement the decree to force Jews to wear the star and when identification had to be made to round up Jews for deportation, the *Gestapo* had to rely on its own, albeit, powerful resources and connections.

The Belgian police were largely uncooperative, losing and misplacing files on Jews, an effort that would be refined to new heights of noble inaction by the Italians. The Ministry of Justice gave substantial sums of money to the Jewish Defense Committee enabling thousands to buy false documents or to survive in hiding. On April 19, 1943, the Jewish resistance in Belgium,

started by communists, derailed a train which was carrying Jews being deported to Auschwitz. This was the only time during the Holocaust when the deportation trains were interfered with. And, in no other country did the clergy take such an active stance in leading their congregants to pursue resistance to the Nazis and the saving of the Jews, particularly Jewish children.

Even in Germany, there was Jewish resistance. One example was made famous because all were caught and executed. A Nazi exhibition was set on fire by some Jewish communists.

When the news of the application of the Nuremberg Laws in Western Europe reached Denmark, it was reported in the American Press that King Christian threatened to abdicate if the laws were applied to Denmark. On the day the Germans decreed that all Jews must be identified

by wearing a yellow star, a legend sprang up that King Christian appeared on the palace balcony wearing the required badge and stoutly urged all of his countrymen to do likewise and wear the Jewish star as a badge of honor. Like most legends, the story is not completely true, but it took hold because it did accurately reflect national sentiment and policy. When the Danes found out that deportation of the Jews was imminent, they arranged to ferry them to safety in Sweden.

In spite of an internal Nazi movement, Norway offered strong resistance, particularly in sabotaging German efforts to manufacture "heavy water" which was a necessary component in developing nuclear warheads. Another mode of resistance developed in Norway when, in a move to promote antisemitism, the public school curriculum in history was changed to reflect the Nazi antisemitic view. All the history teachers in Norway refused to accept this change and, as a result, 1,300 teachers were arrested. Of those arrested, 500 were sent to work on docks near the Finnish border. The teachers refused to change their minds and were later released by the Nazi-sympathetic Norwegian political leader, Vidkun Quisling. (The term "quisling" has since entered the English language, defined as someone who becomes a puppet leader of the enemy occupying his country.)

In France, during June of 1942, the Jews were ordered to wear the Jewish star as they had done in the area of pre-war Poland since 1939 and in the rest of the Greater *Reich* since 1941. The decree went into effect in both the northern (occupied) and southern (unoccupied) zones. But the reaction to this decree was unexpected. Some Jews, for example, would not wear the star. On the day the decree was announced, Jewish war veterans pinned the stars next to their military decorations and paraded along Paris boulevards to the applause and cheers of large crowds.

Unfortunately, for the Jews in Western Europe, life was already dangerous and in the resistance doubly so. In order to join the national resistance groups, one had to live above reproach as a citizen of the country and be able to pass as a non-Jew as well as someone without interest or connections to the resistance. A few of the smaller or splinter groups from the national resistance refused Jews, but those that accepted them usually did so wholeheartedly. However, as time passed and German controls became tighter, fewer and fewer Jews were able to stay active in these groups for fear of further endangering their resistance colleagues.

Resistance in East Europe

The Underground and Uprisings in the Ghettos

In most of the ghettos of Eastern Europe, the armed underground movements evolved out of political youth movements whose members actually included a cross section of ages, political, and religious orientations. Already well-organized, these groups were among the first to be able to undertake the difficult task of armed resistance. Thus, they constituted the first cells (organized groups of resisters) of the ghetto underground movements. Generally, in the smaller ghettos, the underground movements were not organized on the basis of youth movements or ideological lines, but rather on the basis of social and sports groups which took on resistance activities.

The following are some of the problems encountered in resistance and ghetto uprisings:

1. The Nazis' mass or collective responsibility policy.

2. The difficulties and danger in obtaining weapons and maintaining communications.
3. The difficulties of organizing an armed underground movement inside isolated and enclosed ghettos which were under constant surveillance.
4. The surrounding of densely-inhabited ghetto areas by enemy troops.
5. The Jewish populations in the ghettos were largely untrained in military armaments or strategy.
6. The absence of any real chance of victory.
7. The improbability of the survival of the fighters and the ghetto population.

Given such circumstances, ghetto uprisings were not so much a fight for survival, as they were a fervent wish not to die without resisting (although hope was never completely abandoned). When the ghetto population rebelled, most of the people did not have arms. Nevertheless, resistance was given through any means possible: furniture was broken down to make clubs; kitchen knives served as bayonets; boiling water was thrown, and small, home-made bombs called Molotov cocktails were made and used against the German tanks and their heavy artillery. For the very young, the old, the ill, and others unable to fight, deep bunkers were built to protect them.

The characteristic mood predominant inside many of the ghettos and the attitude of the those who had escaped previous waves of deportations was that as long as the ghetto existed, the people living within its confines had a chance of remaining alive. The inhabitants of the ghettos believed that Germany could not win the war. Following the defeats of the German Army on the Eastern Front during the winter, and the failure of the Germans to capture the Soviet cities of Leningrad and Stalingrad, the ghetto inhabitants lived in the hope that the Nazi regime would finally collapse. They believed that the opening of a second front by the Western Allies or a successful attack by the Soviet Army would liberate the Jews in the ghetto before the Germans succeeded in massacring them. Possibly the most enduring, yet rarely mentioned, hope was that a successful attempt on Hitler's life would put an end to the murders which were decimating European Jewry. Throughout the entire period of the war, various rumors spread through the ghettos which raised and strengthened the hopes of the ghetto inhabitants.

As a general rule, the remnants of the Jewish population in the ghettos were sustained by a strong desire to survive the war. Under the conditions prevalent in the ghettos and in trying to endanger as few lives as possible, revolt was a last step taken only when no way for survival was open and when the ghetto inmates were on the verge of annihilation.

Underground Couriers

Some Jewish people resisted by living illegally outside the ghettos and joining underground movements in cities, towns, and villages. Very often, women became couriers because they could travel from place to place, arousing less suspicion of the Nazis than men could. They facilitated communication between the ghettos, and between the underground movements and partisan units. They often carried illegal documents, underground newspapers, and money. Underground couriers helped to smuggle weapons into ghettos.² They helped locate gentile families who would be willing to hide Jewish people, especially children, often in exchange for payment. They

would engage in delivering the funds on a regular basis. They continued to look after those who were hidden by trying to ensure that they were not mistreated or in immediate danger. If necessary, they would arrange to move them to a safer hiding place.

Controversy over the Jewish Underground Movement's Policy

Heated debates flared up among the members of the Jewish underground movement in some of the ghettos. In ghettos located near large forests, the debate centered on the issue of whether they should go into the forests and fight as partisans or rise up in revolt within the ghettos. (In other ghettos, such an alternative did not exist because there were no large forests nearby.) Some argued that warfare inside the ghetto was doomed to failure. They advocated sending into the forests groups of fighters to make contact with the partisans. In this way, they believed, it would be possible to save a large number of youths from the ghetto.

In order to gain an understanding of the background to these discussions, certain additional problems must be pointed out. All of the ghetto residents understood the tremendous odds against them. As a result, some of the ghetto residents felt that they must stay until the Germans were defeated and they could be liberated by the Allies. However, even among those who believed it was better or safer to stay in the ghetto, it was understood that this argument would hold true only until all other options to survive were exhausted, after which they, too, would support a revolt.

Others who wished to remain favored the argument that the fighters constituted an integral part of the ghetto population and by leaving for the forests, they were abandoning their fellow Jews. The young man who fled the ghetto usually left a family behind. More often than not, he was their main provider, and it was due to his work that they received whatever food they did. He was often the person who held the work permit which was, in some cases, the family's permit for life. By leaving the ghetto for the forests, he would be endangering the family's very existence, as in all likelihood, they would be the victims of any subsequent Aktion.

On the other side, those persons escaping to the forests had to take into consideration the possibility of being killed while escaping. An additional and serious factor which also deterred resistance or escape to the forest was the Nazi policy of collective responsibility. If the flight was discovered, the Germans would arrest the families of those who had escaped to the forests and often their colleagues at work as well and put them to death. These acts of reprisals strongly influenced the decisions taken by many of the ghetto inhabitants.

All of the above considerations were of little significance, however, when the ghetto was on the verge of liquidation.

A Schematic Outline of a Ghetto Uprising

The basic plan of an uprising in a ghetto included the following phases:

When it became apparent that the Germans were massing for the expected attack to liquidate the ghetto, the underground fighters would assemble, bring out their weapons from their hiding places, and organize themselves according to a prearranged defense plan.

The fighters would refuse to obey the orders issued by the Nazis to go to the assembly point from which they were to be sent to the death camps. The fighters were joined by those inmates of the ghetto able to take an active role in the struggle. All the other inhabitants took shelter in cellars, bunkers, and other hiding places.

The defenders of the ghetto repulsed the Germans as they tried to invade.

In some of the ghettos, the fighters, followed by other inhabitants, broke out of the ghetto in an attempt to find refuge outside. Part of the ghetto population remained in their hiding places within the boundaries of the ghetto. In other ghettos, including the Warsaw ghetto, the fighters remained to lead the population in armed resistance.

Those who survived the uprising and were able to reach the forests would try to join or organize guerrilla groups. Others remained in the cities and joined the underground while living under false identification papers.

The implementation of a ghetto uprising, according to the schematic plan outlined above, was dependent upon the existence of certain basic preconditions: that an organized fighting force had been developed; knowledge that an *Aktion* was imminent; a reliable relay system to inform the fighters that the Germans were amassing at the ghetto walls; a readiness of the majority of the population to refuse to obey the Germans' orders of deportation; and a willingness of the population to both go into hiding and help the fighters.

Although there were uprisings in 23 other ghettos, these conditions were realized in only one instance -- in the Warsaw ghetto on April 19, 1943.

Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

In the course of this uprising, 22 units of Jewish fighters, supported passively or actively by the majority of the ghetto population, inflicted heavy losses on the Germans until they were forced to bring up reinforcements. Recognizing that the Jews were going to fight back, regardless of the cost and the hopelessness of their situation, the Germans soon brought in heavy artillery including tanks. After several days of street fighting, the Germans changed their tactics. They cordoned off the ghetto and set fire to the buildings in systematic house-by-house military operations. As they moved forward, the ghetto residents were soon trapped in an ever-shrinking circle of flames which engulfed the resisters and choked them with the constant smoke and smell of burning flesh. Yet, they continued to resist.

Those who had been fighting from the rooftops continued from behind the rubble of the burned buildings. The battle continued over a period of four weeks, from April 19 to May 16, 1943. As supplies and food rapidly dwindled, the leaders of the uprising asked those who had a possible place outside of the ghetto to leave. Through smoke-filled, rat-infested sewers filled with fetid slime, those who thought they could find someplace to hide or reach the partisans tried to get out. Unfortunately, as the same tunnels were repeatedly used, it was not long before the Germans discovered these escape routes and threw poisonous gas and creosote (a malodorous liquid made from coal tar used as a preservative and disinfectant) down them. Others coming through were met on the outside by German guards who surrounded the sewer covers. More often than not, those who had come through the sewers were lined up and executed on the spot. Others were sent to the concentration camps.

Even after the uprising was put down, small groups of fighters continued to hold out in bunkers in the ruins of the ghetto for several more months. In the end, there was only a handful of survivors from among the fighters and population of the ghetto.

In other ghettos as well, Jews organized themselves in readiness for uprising but the Germans, who had learned their lesson from the ghetto revolt in Warsaw, increased their use of diversionary and surprise tactics in order to prevent the Jews from learning the date of the planned *Aktion*, thus reducing the possibility of an uprising.

Examples of Resistance Problems in Other Ghettos

In the Cz_stochowa ghetto, information was received on the morning of June 25, 1943, of the Germans' intention to begin the liquidation of the ghetto. The Jewish fighting force began to organize their defense. However, in the afternoon of that day, word was received that this had been a false alarm. The members of the fighting organization hid their weapons once more and returned to their homes and jobs. One hour later, the Germans stormed the ghetto and took control of it after a short lived attempt at resistance by some stalwart fighters. All the signs point to the fact that this was a deliberate diversionary tactic on the part of the Germans who apparently had their sources of information within the ghetto.

Two months later on August 15, in the Bia_ystok ghetto, the Germans announced that the ghetto inmates would be sent to labor camps. In compliance with the Germans' orders, the population presented itself for deportation. The Jewish underground, about 100 persons armed with rifles and pistols, succeeded in organizing themselves and mounted an attack. However, they remained isolated and were not joined by the other inhabitants of the ghetto who believed that they were being sent to labor camps. Most of the fighters fell in battle or were caught within the course of the next few days. Only a handful succeeded in escaping to the forests.

The Vilna ghetto was targeted to be liquidated in September of 1943, and all of the residents deported. The ghetto population did not rally to the call of revolt issued by the Jewish underground and followed the instructions of the *Judenrat* (Jewish Council) to continue their daily routine and to act in accordance with the expulsion orders issued by the Germans. In light of this situation, the members of the underground left for the forests after a skirmish with a small German unit and joined the partisan units.

In spite of the foregoing examples and the conditions of imprisonment and daily misery which were inflicted on those trapped inside the ghetto, there were still many accounts of strong Jewish resistance in other places, among them the ghettos of Brody, B_dzin, and Kraków.

Partisan Resistance

The partisans were composed of various sized fighting units which operated throughout Europe using guerrilla tactics. Their purpose was to agitate and disrupt enemy lines through assault and sabotage. Partisan warfare differed from other forms of fighting in two important aspects: partisan units offered a means of revenge on the murderous enemy and for the Jewish partisans, an attempt to save themselves and other Jews from the onslaught which was decimating their people with each passing day.

Partisan warfare was possible only in areas with special topographical conditions such as forests, mountains, and swampland, where small easily mobile units familiar with the terrain had a tactical advantage over regular army units with heavy equipment. These basic preconditions restricted the warfare of the partisans to certain main areas. Nevertheless, Jews participated in partisan movements throughout all of occupied Europe, from Russia in the East, to France in the

West, Greece in the South, and Norway in the North. The Jewish population which survived the first waves of extermination took an active part in the fighting, for example, in the Slovakian uprising in 1944 and in Yugoslavia where they joined Tito's partisan movement.

Another necessary precondition for partisan warfare was the support of the local population. This support was required for intelligence purposes, for the provision of food, supplies and shelter and to enable hiding when necessary. Without such support, a strong partisan movement was seriously hindered. Nevertheless, many partisan groups did manage without support, forcibly taking the supplies they needed when they could.

In the regions under Nazi domination in Eastern Europe where the topographical conditions were conducive to the development of a partisan movement, this second precondition was seriously lacking -- some of the local population was hostile to the Jewish partisans and even cooperated with the Nazis against them. Thousands of armed as well as unarmed Jews met their death through betrayal by the local population who, in some cases, were also the direct cause for the annihilation of Jewish partisans. Nevertheless, these people were often prepared to "tolerate" individual Jews in the ranks of the non-Jewish partisan units.

Partisans in Poland

Partisan movements were active in almost every area of Poland which could be used for guerrilla warfare. However, the question which remains is to what extent were these movements prepared to accept Jews into their ranks. In Poland, the Home Army (*A.K.* - *Armia Krajowa*), was considered to be the national Polish Partisan Movement, but it would not allow Jews to join. Moreover, groups of Polish rightist guerrillas within the *A.K.* took an active role in the killing of many Jewish families and partisans in the forests. Among their victims was also a group of Jewish fighters who had succeeded in breaking out of the Warsaw ghetto at the time of the uprising, had reached the forests, and launched guerrilla warfare against the Germans.

Another Polish partisan movement, the People's Army (*A.L.* - *Armia Ludowa*), which was mainly a socialist and communist organization, accepted a limited number of Jews into its ranks. This movement, however, was organized in Poland rather late in the war and set up its partisan movement only after the larger Jewish communities had been wiped out or were going through the last phases of the "Final Solution."

The smallest of the Polish partisan movements was the Peasant Army (*Armia Ch_opska*). This movement consisted mostly of farmers and particularly those who were wanted by the Nazis for some infraction. They generally formed groups in the woods near their own village and received support from the locals. With few arms in their possession, they fought with farm tools such as sickles and scythes.

Partisans in the Soviet Region

Two distinct phases can be defined in the attitude of the Soviet partisan movement towards Jewish partisans and other Jews. In the first phase, from the beginning of the Soviet-German war in June 1941 to the end of 1942, the Soviet partisan movement was in the western areas of Russia. Here the initial stages of the organization were established without links to the command staffs of the Soviet partisan movement. These partisan bands consisted primarily of

two groups: Soviet army deserters and Soviet prisoners of war who had escaped from the Germans.

During this first period, there were among these partisan groups those who posed as partisans but were in fact more like armed bandits. They saw no contradiction between posing as partisans and murdering Jews and, on more than one occasion, they killed Jewish partisans and took away their weapons. There were, in addition, considerable numbers of local groups who had no intention whatsoever of fighting the Germans but whose purpose was to exploit the situation for acts of robbery and violence. Many Jews were among their victims.

In the second phase, from the end of 1942, the Soviet partisan movement was organized within a more disciplined military framework. They maintained regular contact with the Soviet authorities, receiving supplies, weapons, and financing them from behind enemy lines. During this phase, battalions and brigades of partisans were set up which controlled entire regions. As a result of the authority vested in the organized Soviet partisan movement, the activities of the bands diminished but did not cease entirely. Even during this period, many Jews in the forests were robbed and humiliated by the partisan bands.

Following the great waves of extermination of 1941 -1942, thousands of the survivors from the ghettos of Lithuania, Bye_orussia, and the Western Ukraine sought refuge in the forests. By 1943 when the organized Soviet partisan movement was established, the vast majority of Jews in the areas where the movement was active had already been annihilated. The remaining groups and individuals often found their way to the Soviet partisans. However, not all of them were accepted into the partisan units. Only those Jews who had weapons were accepted into the ranks of the Soviet partisans, while non-Jews were accepted even without arms. Many of those who were not accepted by the partisans were forced to go into hiding, only to be later caught and killed.

There was further discrimination against Jews. The prevailing opinion was that Jews were bad fighters. Non-Jews were never required to prove themselves and were immediately accepted as equals. A Jew, on the other hand, was required to struggle constantly until he proved himself as a true comrade-in-arms. On many occasions, weapons belonging to Jewish partisans were confiscated by partisan commands and given to non-Jews.

Almost no independent Jewish partisan units existed within the Soviet partisan movement. The official policy was that partisan units were to be set up on a national territorial basis. In the Ukraine, it was the Ukrainian partisan movement; in Bye_orussia, the Bye_orussian movement; in Lithuania, the Lithuanian movement; etc. On the basis of the official Soviet line, the Jews, who did not have a territory of their own, were expected to join the national partisans units in their locale. The Jewish partisans, on the other hand, many of whom were members of the Zionist youth movements, saw the organization of Jewish partisan units as an expression of their national aspirations. In certain areas, such as the Vilna region, Jewish partisans units were successful in maintaining their identity within the framework of non-Jewish partisan brigades for a time, but in the long run, they were forced to merge with the non-Jewish units. The percentage of Jews who joined the partisans was proportionally much higher than that of the local non-Jewish population who did so. It must be stressed, however, that we are referring to those Jews who survived the mass annihilation perpetrated by the Germans in the first year of the war between Germany and the U.S.S.R.

There are no exact figures on the number of Jewish partisans active in Eastern Europe. An estimated 20,000 to 30,000 Jews fought in partisan groups in the forests of Eastern Europe. There were about 30 Jewish partisan detachments and approximately 21 additional non-Jewish partisan groups in which Jews fought.³ Many Jews fought and died under false non-Jewish names because of the adverse conditions for Jews among the partisans. Also, there are no official Soviet figures which specifically mention Jews as Jews. Nevertheless, the activities of the partisans, both Jewish and non-Jewish, succeeded in inflicting heavy losses on the enemy, in life and property, causing the Germans logistic confusion and disruption of their lines of supplies, including ammunition and troops. The actions of the partisans forced the Germans to keep strong forces in the rear which were needed at the front.

Family Camps

The threat of annihilation faced by all Jews and the fact that in much of Eastern Europe it was impossible to find refuge among the general population, gave rise to a unique phenomenon. Special communities came into existence inhabited by Jewish families who had fled to the forests. These settlements included men, women, and children and were called "family camps."

Some of the family camps were quite large, comprising 800 - 1,200 persons, but the majority were smaller. Some of the men had weapons in their possession and were thus able to defend the settlement as well as obtain food from the surrounding villages. Fighting units from the family camps also engaged in guerrilla activities, such as sabotaging trains or setting ambushes. These family camps, where the members often lived in "dug outs" to protect themselves from the elements, were concentrated in areas in which Jewish and non-Jewish partisans operated, and this provided some sort of security. They also fulfilled certain needed functions for all the partisans of the area. In these camps, there were Jewish artisans (tailors, shoemakers, etc.) who provided essential services for the partisan units, serving as a sort of logistic and maintenance company in exchange for which they received food.

Among the dangers which the family camps faced, one of the greatest was their immobility. Whenever the Germans concentrated their forces in preparation for a massive action designed to clear out the partisans from the area, the family camps, which contained women and children, were in greater danger than the mobile partisan units which could move more readily. As a result, the inhabitants of these family camps tried to prepare well-camouflaged hiding places, and in times of danger, they took refuge in them. But despite these precautions, many family camps were discovered and their inhabitants murdered when the Germans carried out their anti-guerrilla operations. There were even partisan units who attacked the family camps, taking away whatever weapons they possessed and killing quite a few of their inhabitants. At times, the Soviet partisans claimed that these family camps were a nuisance and a hindrance to their mobility. These partisans also claimed that large concentrations of the non-fighting population in the forests attracted the Germans' attention and thus constituted a security risk for them. Regardless of the validity of these claims, the family camps provided a way of survival and resistance for thousands of Jews in the forest areas.

Concentration Camp Resistance

Uprisings in the Concentration Camps

The nature of the uprisings in the death camps differed from that of the ghetto revolts. These uprisings proceeded along the following general pattern:

1. The persons who revolted were among the prisoners who worked in the camp.
2. Weapons were forcibly taken from the camp guards during the uprising and improvised weapons were made in secret.
3. The uprising took the form of a mass surge towards the barbed wire fences and the minefields surrounding the camps.
4. The great majority of those involved in the uprisings were killed during the battle.

The uprisings in the death camps were not carried out by the thousands of victims who were brought into the camp daily by train and immediately sent to the gas chambers. These people were not aware of the fate that awaited them and unsuspectingly went to the "showers" which, in reality, were gas chambers. The uprisings were carried out by the camp prisoners, several hundred of whom had been kept alive for various purposes. These inmates were engaged in various tasks connected with the gas chambers and the ovens, were occupied in sorting the possessions of those who were murdered, and worked in other capacities for the camp guards and administrators. Those people who were employed for a period of months were aware that their turn to die would also come. Sickened by the horrors they had witnessed, they were the ones who revolted.

There was no possibility of smuggling weapons into the death camps, and thus the sources of weapons were the camp guards and their stores of arms and explosive materials. The planners of the uprising prepared metal weapons of various types, but they obtained the firearms at the onset of the revolt by raiding the storehouses of weapons or by attacking the nearest guards.

The main leaders of the uprisings in the death camps were the Jewish inmates and the soldiers and officers among the prisoners of war. The timing of the uprising and the form it took

were determined by the conditions prevailing in the particular death camp. In most cases, the outbreak of the revolt was set either after information was received that the Germans were about to put to death groups of workers or if there was a possibility that the underground group was about to be discovered. At a fixed time and according to an agreed signal, the rebels attacked the guards who were inside the camp at that time. They raided the stores of arms, cut off the electricity to any fences that were electrified, broke through and ran across the minefields towards the forest. All of this was done while under fire by the guards in the guard turrets who turned their machine guns on the inmates as soon as they had detected the prisoners' revolt.

Those who succeeded in scaling the fences, passing through the minefields and escaping the guards' hail of bullets were still not free. The Germans sent out large forces with attack dogs in pursuit to catch the escapees. The majority of those who succeeded in breaking out of the camps were caught and killed in the course of the pursuit or were brought back to the camp where they were publicly hanged as an example to others. In two camps, Treblinka and Sobibor, uprisings took place on a large scale. Although very few people survived the escape attempts, the results of the uprisings in these two camps caused the Germans to close them down. Treblinka and Sobibor were killing centers and what happened there, as well as the attempts at revolt in the Auschwitz concentration camp are indicative of the minimal chance of success that existed for uprisings in all of the death camps.

Treblinka

Treblinka had initially operated as a forced labor camp in which 10,000 Poles were condemned to work. During this period, it is estimated that 75 percent of the slave laborers died. In July of 1942, Treblinka became a killing center where, in just over a year of its existence, between 750,000 and 900,000 Jews were murdered. Unlike the regular concentration camps, there was little need for housing of the prisoners since most were killed on the day of their arrival. Approximately 700-1,000 of the Jewish inmates were kept alive for the task of maintaining the camp, handling the arriving prisoners, removing the dead bodies, sorting their possessions, and maintaining the thirteen gas chambers. The revolt broke out on August 2, 1943. The rebels had in their possession firearms and hand grenades either stolen from the arms depot or seized at the time of the uprising. The arms' depot was blown up, and a fire broke out. The camp, apart from the "showers," was destroyed. Accounts vary widely, but between 200 and 600 inmates succeeded in escaping, and the rest were killed during the fighting. The others were caught by the Germans shortly thereafter. Of all those involved in the revolt, only twenty are known to have survived the war. After the revolt, small transports continued to arrive but it finally appeared that the Germans did not want to risk more revolts. In November 1943, the Germans blew up the remains of the camps, cleared and leveled the area of the mass graves and planted it over with pine trees.

Sobibor

As in the case of Treblinka, Sobibor was an annihilation center with approximately 1,000 prisoners generally kept alive for short periods of time to maintain the camp. During its operation, it is estimated that at least 250,000 Russian, Polish, Jewish, and Gypsy prisoners were murdered there. Sobibor commenced its deadly operations on May 8, 1942, and was closed down in October 1943. On October 14, 1943, 600 of the camp prisoners revolted but the attack on the arms' warehouse did not succeed. Insurgents killed eleven of the Nazis in the camp, including the camp commander and several Ukrainian guards. Four hundred persons managed to break out, but about half of them were killed in the minefields. Others were caught and killed by the Germans. Some 60 persons led by a Russian officer, Alexander Pechersky, joined the Soviet partisans. Two days after the revolt, Himmler ordered the camp destroyed. By the end of 1943, workers had plowed the camp under and planted crops to cover the place where, during its eighteen months of operation, the Nazis had murdered more than 250,000 Jews and many others.⁴

Auschwitz

Auschwitz was a massive extermination center which covered 40 square kilometers. The base camp was Auschwitz I. Three kilometers away stood Birkenau or Auschwitz II, several times larger than Auschwitz I. Like all of the Nazi concentration camps, Auschwitz had its own resistance movement. The movement was led by a Polish socialist lawyer, Josef Cyrankiewicz, the future prime minister of the Polish People's Republic. Two Auschwitz inmates managed to escape, and they brought with them a full report of the activities at the camp. The report reached government leaders of the major Allied nations. The report pleaded for the widest possible publicity to be given to it, knowing full well that this was the only hope of stopping the exterminations. It also asked that the Pope issue a strong condemnation of the crimes presented in the report. Should Allied warnings of reprisals still not stop the exterminations, then the report appealed for the gas chambers and crematoria to be bombed from the air, along with the railroad lines leading to the camp complex. Both the gas chambers and crematoria were easily

recognizable from the air by their high chimneys. Only the British Broadcasting Corporation reported the atrocities. Without further collaboration from other broadcast networks in the other Allied countries, the report, so hideous in its barbaric details, was considered mere propaganda by most people. No country bombed the camp or the railroad lines.

The only bombing that did take place at Auschwitz during the war was done on October 7, 1944, when some desperate members of the *Sonderkommando* (special squad of prisoners who worked in the extermination area and were themselves destined for ultimate execution), with the help of some Soviet prisoners of war, blew up one of the four crematoria at Birkenau. The leader of the revolt was a French Jew by the name of David. Four brave Jewish women, who were slave laborers at the Krupp works factory, smuggled in the explosives. Those planning the revolt learned that they were to be killed before the chosen time set for the general outbreak and, therefore, decided not to wait but to act immediately. They blew up the crematorium and broke out through the fences, killing some of the camp guards on the way. All the escapees were killed, either while breaking out or while being pursued. The four Jewish girls who smuggled the explosives were caught and tortured, but they betrayed no one. They were hanged.

Before the Gypsy camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau was liquidated on August 2, 1944, there had been organized resistance by the Gypsy prisoners there. Of the 18,736 Sinti and Roma interned in the camp in 1943, most of these men, women, and children died in the gas chambers. By 1944, only 6,000 of the Gypsies remained. On May 16, 1944, an SS attempt to obliterate the Birkenau Gypsy camp BIIe failed because of armed resistance. When the guards moved 2,897 of them to gas chambers in the middle of the night, the prisoners fought the SS with improvised knives, shovels, wooden sticks, and stones. The abortive attempt to prevent mass gassing failed.

Resistance in the Labor Camps

Many of the camps used slave labor to work in factories making ammunition, airplane parts, and other needed military goods. The prisoners systematically sabotaged their work, making "duds" (ammunition without powder), and faulty parts. For example, they sabotaged airplane parts, bombs, heavy artillery equipment and did anything they could in order to hinder the German war effort. Even in the clothing factories, the women making German uniforms purposely sewed the button holes together or made the clothing seams so poorly that the uniforms fell apart when worn. The engravers making counterfeit currency plates, which the Germans wanted to use to destroy the Allied economy, secretly marked them so that they were easily detected. Anyone caught sabotaging their work was tortured for the names of their accomplices, then shot or hanged.

Unarmed Resistance

In the early years of the war, the death camps were kept so secret that few people knew of them. Since arms were unavailable and cooperation from the non-Jewish population either did not exist or was uncertain, taking a stand against the German oppressors meant certain death. Yet, the absence of revolt did not mean that the persecuted quietly accepted their fate. Thus, when counseled to struggle to give life meaning, it was a strategy that seemed reasonable. Later, when it was fully recognized that the scope of the persecution was far beyond anything that had happened before and well beyond anything suspected, these same strategies continued to mark the spirit of resistance in a sea of despair and death.

In the ghettos in Poland, with the official food ration reduced to as few as 184 calories a day, a few of the starving ghetto residents were able to arrange for food from the outside to be thrown over the walls.⁶ Those who threw the food packages, either because they were living in hiding but had families and friends inside or because they were being paid, still threw the food into the ghetto at great risk to themselves and those waiting. Most families, however, knew no one on the outside and many depended for their lives on the smuggling activities of children. Slipping through holes in the guarded perimeters or walls, countless children left the ghetto, foraged for food, and returned with their life-giving goods. Yet, these brave children paid a high price. They were hunted mercilessly by the Germans and often their non-Jewish countrymen as well. Many of the children were caught as they smuggled themselves into or out of the ghetto and shot on the spot. In one heart-wrenching instance, a child climbing back through a hole in the wall of the ghetto became stuck. When discovered, the Germans beat his buttocks and back so severely that his spine was broken. He was left to die in agony.

Besides starving the ghetto dwellers, the Nazis also tried to cut off the basic community functions which gave life some semblance of normality. Religious services and study were usually forbidden. Yet, upon pain of death if discovered, services and religious studies in most ghettos continued. Until their strength was exhausted, cultural events, although officially reduced and closely monitored, were aggressively maintained. Clever plays about the plight of their condition provided humor in an otherwise dark and horrible landscape. Political life, although wholly illegal, continued to function, as did newspapers and a variety of other communication networks. Under seemingly impossible conditions, many ghettos in the east maintained libraries, poetry readings, mutual aid groups, concerts, and plays.

Of all the efforts of unarmed resistance, perhaps none is more poignant than the clandestine activities for children's education. In 1940, the Nazis passed a law disallowing school for Jews after the fourth grade. Usually, in fact, the effort to organize a school for these primary classes was met with so much red tape that such schools could only be set up after long delays. Meantime, however, most Jewish communities were maintaining complete educational systems. With teachers paid in food -- or not at all -- underground classes were set up, from grammar to graduate school. Most of these school systems continued to operate until the truth of the death camps became known or until the ghetto was liquidated. It should be recalled that the penalty for giving or receiving formal instruction was death.

In the west, small acts of defiance demonstrated a people imbued with hope and a strong will to live. Yet, unlike the east, the Jews were not concentrated into ghettos, and many of them lived isolated from the collective support of their fellow Jews, dependent completely on the response of their neighbors and, often, the official or unofficial government attitude. Some forged travel papers and made illegal documents and stamps for documents for those in hiding. Such stamps and documents were also needed by resistance fighters who had to gain entry into German compounds and installations to carry out their missions. Those Jews who could also gave aid to other resistance fighters, hiding them as well as hiding downed Allied flyers and escaped prisoners of war. Some formed networks which were used to smuggle those endangered out of the area, and many risked their own lives to take children to safety.

In both the ghettos and the concentration camps, some of the people strived to leave a written record of the atrocities they both witnessed and endured. Of course, such writings were composed with full knowledge that the penalty, if discovered, was instant death. Among the most

precious documents are those that were kept by Emmanuel Ringelblum in the Warsaw ghetto. When the war began, Ringelblum had been safely in Geneva, Switzerland but returned to Poland to carry on his work. Eventually he, his wife, and twelve-year-old son were caught and killed, but much of the diary and notes he had carefully hidden were eventually found in the ruins of the Warsaw ghetto after the war. This journal, composed by a trained historian, is an invaluable account of the destruction of Polish Jewry. Together with historians and other writers, artists, some of whom might have had a chance to survive and use their skills for the Germans, risked everything by making and hiding pictorial representations of scenes which they wanted to preserve before the Nazis erased all record of them.

Almost all of the survivors report that in spite of everything, whether hiding in cramped, airless spaces underground, terrified of discovery or enduring the horrific hardships within a death camp, they knew the greatest defiance was to live one more day. As Saul Nitzberg, medical doctor and survivor of Auschwitz, stated: "Not to die when they wanted you to die, that was truly courage and resistance."

Chronology of Resistance

1938

November 7

Herschel Grynszpan, a Polish Jew living in France, assassinates Ernst von Rath, a minor German embassy official in Paris, France, to protest the deportation of his parents to Poland. This act was used as a pretext for "*Kristallnacht*," the state-organized attacks against Jews and Jewish property carried out throughout the *Reich* on November 9-10.

1939

November 8

An attempt on Hitler's life in Munich fails as a bomb explodes but leaves him uninjured.

1940

May

Dr. Emmanuel Ringelblum founds the *Oneg Shabbat* ("Joy of the Sabbath") secret archives in the Warsaw ghetto to document the plight of Polish Jews.

1941

February 25

A strike protesting the deportation of Jews from the Netherlands begins in the Amsterdam shipyards and soon spreads throughout the city.

August 21

The first German soldier is killed in Paris, France, by a member of the French resistance.

December 31

Abba Kovner calls for armed resistance of Jewish youth groups in the Vilna ghetto.

1942

May 1

A successful one-day general strike of ghetto workers in the Bialystok ghetto in eastern Poland is organized by the ghetto resistance.

May 18

Members of the Herbert Baum resistance group set fire to an anti-Soviet propaganda exhibition in Berlin.

July

Members of the "White Rose" movement begin to distribute anti-Nazi leaflets in Munich.

July 22

Residents of the Niewiec ghetto in eastern Poland resist a German deportation with knives, axes, clubs, and a handful of firearms. A few Jews manage to escape to join the partisans.

August 30

Leaders of the *Rote Kapelle* (Red Orchestra), a German Communist resistance group working with Soviet intelligence from 1939, are arrested. They are executed in December.

September 2-3

The residents of Lachva, Byelorussia, stubbornly resist German attempts to massacre them. Up to 700 Jews are killed in the struggle, enabling some to flee into the forests to join partisan groups.

September 10-11

Meir Berliner, a Jewish prisoner at Treblinka, kills SS officer Max Bialis. In retaliation, Ukrainian guards massacre many Jews awaiting death in the camp's gas chambers.

September 23

Following a German order to assemble for deportation, Jews in the Tuczyni ghetto in western Ukraine set fire to the ghetto's houses, offering strong resistance. Up to 2,000 people escape into the forests.

1943

January 18

Several combat groups of the Jewish Fighting Organization (20B) fight German units attempting to deport Jews from the Warsaw ghetto.

February

Some 200 to 300 Christian women in mixed marriages protest for nearly one week outside several Berlin assembly centers after their Jewish husbands are arrested.

February 18

Hans and Sophie Scholl and other leaders of the "White Rose" are arrested for distributing anti-Nazi leaflets in Munich. On February 22, they are executed.

April 19

Members of the Committee for the Defense of Jews in Belgium cooperate with the Belgian resistance to attack a deportation train leaving the transit camp of Malines headed for Auschwitz.

Warsaw ghetto revolt begins. Fighting continues for nearly one month.

May 16

Warsaw ghetto uprising ends.

August 2

Armed revolt begins in the Treblinka killing center.

August 16

Fighting begins in the Bialystok ghetto as the Germans prepare to deport the residents to death camps. Resistance fighters hold out against German tanks and artillery until August 26. Several groups manage to escape into the surrounding forests. Some 40,000 Jews left in the ghetto are deported in the coming weeks.

September 1

Armed resistance is ordered by Vilna ghetto resistance leaders as the liquidation of the ghetto begins. Lacking arms, only a few fighters manage to fight to the death over the next few days. Others escape to join partisan bands outside the city.

October 14

Armed revolt begins at the Sobibor killing center.

December 22

Kralow's underground Jewish Fighting Organization carries out a daring attack on German officers sitting in the city's Cyganeria cafe. Eleven Germans are killed and thirteen wounded.

1944

March 7

Emmanuel Ringelblum and his family are executed by the Germans. After the war, his *Oneg Shabbat* histories are discovered and published.

May 16

Gypsies at Auschwitz resist the destruction of the Gypsy family camp.

July 20

A group of dissident German officers and politicians attempt to assassinate Hitler. The attempt fails, and a number of those implicated are either summarily shot or executed after sentencing by a "People's Court" within a few days.

August 1

The Warsaw uprising begins as Polish resistance forces (AK) occupy important parts of the city. The fighting continues until October 2, when remnants of the Polish forces surrender. Tens of thousands of Polish citizens and fighters are killed and the rest are evacuated.

August 19

An insurrection begins in Paris, France, to prevent the Germans from destroying the city as the western allies approach. The city is liberated on August 25.

September 1

The Slovakian uprising begins. Partisan units battle the Germans until October 27, when surviving partisans flee into the mountains.

September 8

Italian partisans seize the Val d'Ossola near the Swiss border. They proclaim a republic, which lasts for five weeks, until the Germans recapture the area.

October 6-7

Prisoners blow up Crematorium IV at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

October 20

Belgrade is liberated by Yugoslav partisan units and Soviet troops.

1945

January 6

Four women prisoners -- RO2a Robota, Ella Gaertner, Esther Wajcblum, and Regina Safirsztain -are hanged in the women's camp at Auschwitz. They had smuggled the explosives that were used during the *Sonderkommando* revolt of October 7, 1944.

February 2

During the night, more than 570 prisoners, many of them Soviet prisoners of war under death sentences, revolt and escape from a barrack in the Mauthausen concentration camp. All but seventeen are later caught and killed.

April 9

Dietrich Bonhoeffer is hanged at FlossenbOrg concentration camp.

April 11

Prisoners at Buchenwald revolt to forestall the planned evacuation of the camp as the Allies draw near. Some 150 Germans are taken prisoner a few hours before units of the American forces enter and liberate the camp.

Activity: Using this chronology as a guide, students can choose a specific event to research in more detail. Given the number of events listed, no two students should have to investigate the same incident.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Derived from *Resistance During the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Used by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

**Did Jews Go Like Sheep to the Slaughter?
by Miles Lerman, Chairman
United States Holocaust Memorial Council**

There is a prevailing myth that Jews offered no resistance to their annihilation by the Nazi murderers.

Did they? Let us look at the facts.

It is not easy to reverse a misconception that has embedded itself in history and has gone unchallenged for so many years. The misrepresentation that Jews accepted their annihilation in a passive manner is an historic fallacy, which must be challenged and done away with.

This task will not be accomplished with emotional arguments nor with oratory. Instead, we aim to challenge it by presenting undeniable facts substantiated by eyewitness accounts of those who took part in the uprisings or were close observers of these dramatic events. To accomplish this, the Holocaust Memorial Museum has created a Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance.

The question that our critics such as Hannah Arendt and a few others who observed this tragedy from a safe distance across the ocean kept posing is "Why was there so little resistance to so much murder?" Our reply is -- look and marvel at how much was accomplished with so little help from the outside world, a world that was indifferent and stood by idly with their hands folded while the Jewish communities of Europe, one after the other, were gradually disappearing from the surface of the earth.

What the critics of Jewish behavior during the Nazi occupation fail to understand is that the efforts to organize armed resistance took place under terribly difficult conditions. Let me cite for you just a few of the major obstacles:

1. Jews were immediately ghettoized and isolated from the outside world.
2. Most of the young Jews had no military training and had practically no weapons to defend themselves.
3. The diabolical method of holding entire communities responsible for the acts of a few prevented many young men and women from risking the lives of their families.

Yet in spite of all these obstacles, we know of active resistance in many ghettos. Not only in Warsaw but also Vilno, Bialystok, Kovno, Krakow, and many other communities.

Let me share with you a personal incident that may give you an insight to the complexity of the dilemma. In 1941, I was arrested and deported to a slave labor camp not far from the city of Lvov. When we came to realize the true purpose of the camp, we began to prepare for an escape. Our camp consisted of 450 men of different ages. When the news spread among the prisoners that a small group was preparing for a breakout, the Jewish elders of the camp summoned the leadership of our group to a secret meeting and asked us the following question:

"Who gives you -- the young and the healthy -- the moral right to buy your freedom at the price of the lives of those who will not be able to escape with you?" After pondering this question, we simply couldn't bring ourselves to carry out our plans.

Looking at this incident in retrospect I ask you, "Had we disregarded the pleas of our elders, would this have been bravery or recklessness on our part for jeopardizing the safety of others?"

As you will learn, even in the death camps, Jews rose in successful rebellion. To be blind to all of these facts, of extraordinary bravery and to accuse Jews of passivity is sheer intellectual callousness.

Another concern is the issue of Jewish partisans. For some unexplainable reason, the Holocaust literature has failed to espouse sufficiently the heroic deeds of Jewish partisans. The facts are that Jewish partisans fought bravely in all the territories occupied by Nazi Germany.

To further dispel the inaccuracies of those accusations, we must look at some broader statistics taken from the history of World War II. The Soviet military archives reveal that 500,000 Jews fought in the ranks of the Red Army. Two hundred thousand of them lost their lives in the battles from Leningrad to Berlin. Three hundred five Jews earned the rank of general or admiral of the Red Army. Forty-five Jews received the highest military medal, "The Hero of the Soviet Union" which is equivalent to the Congressional Medal of Honor. This represents thirty-five percent of all recipients of this outstanding award.

These heroic achievement medals were carefully evaluated and checked by the military command of the Red Army who were never known to be Jew lovers. The general records of military history of the Second World War show that about 1,200,000 Jewish men and women fought in military units of all allied armies, many of them volunteers. It is estimated that 20,000 to 30,000 Jews fought as partisans in underground units in all occupied territories.

A special page of glory in the history of Jewish resistance belongs to Jewish women. They came from the ranks of various youth organizations. Their daring missions stand out in a very special way. Those young girls were the most effective couriers who, at great personal risk, organized the contacts between the ghettos and the outside world.

These facts of heroism are undeniable and will stand for time immemorial as irrefutable evidence that Jews fought and died courageously to defend the honor of their people. A people who stood all alone, isolated and abandoned, while the entire world stood idly by and did pitifully little to stop it.

History will recognize and applaud the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Center for the Study of Jewish Resistance for the steadfast gathering of facts and the debunking of the myth that Jews went to their deaths without offering any resistance.

Let me leave you with a thought. The young men and women who fought and died in defense of the honor of their people, demand of us that we set this record straight, once and for all. They have earned their spot in the annals of history, and we must see to it that justice is done to their glorious memory.

Miles Lerman has served as Chairperson of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council since 1993. A member of the Advisory Board of the President's Commission on the Holocaust, he was appointed to the first United States Holocaust Memorial Council in 1980 by President Carter. Prior to his appointment to lead the Council, Mr. Lerman directed its International Relations Committee and served as National Chairman of the Campaign to Remember. During the Holocaust, he fought as a partisan in the forests of southern Poland.

GERMAN REPORT ON WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING

19 April 1943. Ghetto sealed off from 3:00 hours. At 6:00 hours deployment of the Waffen ss for the combing of the remainder of the ghetto. Immediately upon entry strong concerted fire by-the Jews and bandits.

We succeeded in forcing the enemy to withdraw from the roof-tops and strong-points situated in high positions to the cellars or bunkers and sewers. Shock patrols were then deployed against known bunkers with the task of clearing out the occupants and destroying the bunkers. The presence of Jews in the sewers was established. Total flooding was carried out, rendering presence impossible.

22 April 1943. It is unfortunately impossible to prevent a proportion of the bandits and Jews from hiding in the sewers under the ghetto where they have evaded capture by preventing the flooding. The city administration is not in a position to remove this inconvenience. Smoke-bombs and mixing creosote with the water have also failed to achieve the desired result.

23 April 1943. The whole Aktion [operation] is made more difficult by the cunning tricks employed by the Jews and bandits, e.g., it was discovered that live Jews were being taken to the Jewish cemetery in the corps carts that collect the dead bodies lying around, and were thus escaping from the ghetto.

24 April 1943. At 18:15 hours the search party entered the buildings after they had been cordoned off and established the presence of a large number of Jews. As most of these Jews resisted I gave the order to burn them out. Not until the whole street and all the courtyards on both sides were in flames did the Jews, some of them on fire, come out from the blocks of buildings or try to save themselves by jumping from the windows and balconies into the street onto which they had thrown beds, blankets, and other things. Time and time again it could be observed that Jews and bandits preferred to return into the flames rather than fall into our hands.

8 May 1943. There must still be about 3,000 to 4,000 Jews in the underground cavities, sewers, and bunkers. The undersigned is determined not to terminate this Aktion until the very last Jew is destroyed.

10 May 1943. The resistance put up by the Jews today was unabated. In contrast to previous days, the members of the Jewish main fighter groups still in existence and not destroyed have apparently retreated to the highest ruins accessible to them in order to inflict casualties on the raiding parties by firing on them.

13 May 1943. For two days the few Jews and criminals still in the ghetto have been making use of the hiding places still provided by the ruins to return at night to the bunkers known to them, eating there and supplying themselves with food for the next day.

Total number of **Jews caught or** verifiable exterminated: 56,065.

From the reports of SS General Jurgen Stroop, in charge of the German Forces

Mordechai Anielewicz's Last Letter

The Warsaw ghetto uprising assumed a significance beyond the revolt itself. As news of the heroic Warsaw ghetto fighters spread through the underground network, Jews in other ghettos were inspired to resist deportation to their deaths. The Warsaw ghetto uprising would become a defining moment in Jewish history, as ZOB leader Mordechai Anielewicz seemed to recognize when he wrote his last letter two weeks before his death on May 8, 1943:

It is now clear to me that what took place exceeded all expectations. In our opposition to the Germans we did more than our strength allowed -- but now our forces are waning. We are on the brink of extinction. We forced the Germans to retreat twice -- but they returned stronger than before.

One of our groups held out for forty minutes; and another fought for about six hours. The mine which was laid in the area of the brush factory exploded as planned. Then we attacked the Germans and they suffered heavy casualties. Our losses were generally low. That is an accomplishment too. Z. fell, next to his machine gun.

I feel that great things are happening and that this action which we have dared to take is of enormous value.

We have no choice but to go over to partisan methods of fighting as of today. Today, six fighting groups are going out. They have two tasks -- to reconnoiter the area and to capture weapons. Remember, 'short-range weapons' are of no use to us. We employ them very rarely. We need many rifles, hand-grenades, machine guns and explosives.

I cannot describe the conditions in which the Jews of the ghetto are now 'living.' Only a few exceptional individuals will be able to survive such suffering. The others will sooner or later die. Their fate is certain, even though thousands are trying to hide in cracks and rat holes. It is impossible to light a candle, for lack of air. Greetings to you who are outside. Perhaps a miracle will occur and we shall see each other again one of these days. It is extremely doubtful.

The last wish of my life has been fulfilled Jewish self-defense has become a fact. Jewish resistance and revenge have become actualities. I am happy to have been one of the first Jewish fighters in the ghetto.

Where will rescue come from?

Source: UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM: *Resistance During the Holocaust*. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Rosa Robota-Heroine of the Auschwitz Underground **By Yuri Suhl**

[EDITOR'S NOTE: "The truth about Auschwitz? There is no person who could tell the whole truth about Auschwitz." These words were spoken by Jozef Cyrankiewicz, Premier of Poland, who was one of the top leaders of the Auschwitz underground.

With each new memoir about that camp a little more of the truth is brought to light, as in the case of Rosa Robota who helped make possible the only revolt there. Yet it was only recently that her role in this uprising became known in many of its details.]

On Saturday, October 7, 1944, a tremendous explosion shook the barracks of Birkenau (Auschwitz II), and its thousands of startled prisoners beheld a sight they could hardly believe. One of the four crematoriums' was in flames! They were happy to see at least part of the German killing-apparatus destroyed; but none was happier than young Rosa Robota, who was directly involved in the explosion. For months she had been passing on small pieces of dynamite to certain people in the Sonderkommando. Daily she had risked her life to make this moment possible. Now the flames lighting up the Auschwitz sky proclaimed to the whole world that even the most isolated of Auschwitz prisoners, the Sonderkommando Jews, would rise up in revolt when given leadership and arms.

Rosa was eighteen when the Germans occupied her hometown, Ciechanow, in September, 1939 three days after they had invaded Poland. She was a member of Hashomer Hatzair and, together with other members, was deeply interested in the organization of an underground resistance movement in the ghetto.

In November, 1942, the Germans liquidated the ghetto of Ciechanow, deporting some Jews to Treblinka and some to Auschwitz. Rosa and her family were in the Auschwitz transport. Most of the arrivals were sent straight to the gas chambers from the railway platform. Some of the younger people, Rosa among them, were marched off in another direction and later assigned to various work details. Rosa was sent to work in the *Bekleidungstelle* (clothing supply section). Some Ciechanow girls were sent to the munitions factory, "Union," one of the Krupp slave-labor plants in Auschwitz, which operated round the clock on a three-shift basis. Rosa, as well as all the women who worked in the munitions factory, lived in the Birkenau barracks.

One day Rosa had a visitor -- a townsman named Noah Zabladowicz who was a member of the Jewish section of the Auschwitz underground.² As soon as they managed to be alone he told her the purpose of his visit. The underground was planning a general uprising in camp, which included the blowing up of the gas chamber and crematorium installations. For this it was necessary to have explosives and explosive charges. Israel Gutman and Joshua Leifer, two members of the underground who worked on the day shift in "Union," had been given the task of establishing contact with the Jewish girls in the *Pulver-Pavilion*, the explosives section of "Union." But all their efforts were in vain because the girls were under constant surveillance and any contact between them and other workers, especially men was strictly forbidden. It was decided, therefore, to try to contact them through some intermediary in Birkenau. Since several of the girls who worked in the *Pulver-Pavilion* came from Ciechanow and Rosa knew them and was in touch with them, she seemed to be the ideal person to act as intermediary between them and the underground.

Rosa was only too glad to accept the assignment. Ever since that day of November, 1942, when she saw her own family, together with the rest of the Ciechanow Jews, taken to the gas chambers, the strongest emotion that suffused her being was a burning hatred of the Nazis, coupled with a deep yearning to avenge the murder of her people. Now the underground gave her the opportunity to express these feelings in the form of concrete deeds.

Rosa set to work and in a short time twenty girls were smuggling dynamite and explosive charges out of the munitions factory for the underground. They carried out the little wheels of dynamite, which looked like buttons, in small matchboxes which they hid in their bosoms or in special pockets they had sewn into the hems of their dresses. These "buttons" would then pass from hand to hand through an elaborate underground transmission belt that led to the Russian prisoner Borodin, an expert at constructing bombs. For bomb casings he used empty sardine cans. The finished bombs then started moving again on the transmission belt to various strategic hiding places in the sprawling camp. The Sonderkommando had its cache close to the crematorium compound.

Israel Gutman and Joshua Leifer concealed their "buttons" in the false bottom of a canister which they had made especially for that purpose. They always made sure to have some tea or leftover soup in the canister at the time of the SS inspection after work. Since it was customary for prisoners to save a little of their food rations for later, a canister containing some liquid would usually get no more than a perfunctory glance from the inspecting SS man.

One day after work as they were standing in line during the SS inspection, Leifer whispered to Gutman: "I had no time to hide the stuff in the canister. I have it in a matchbox in my pocket." Gutman grew pale and began to shake all over. The SS had been known to look into matchboxes also. He could not stop thinking that they were at the brink of disaster, and the more he thought of it the more nervous he became. So much so that the SS man became suspicious and gave him a very close and thorough inspection. Behind him stood Leifer, appearing very calm. Frustrated at having spent so much time on Gutman and finding nothing, the SS man gave Leifer a superficial inspection and passed on to the next man. This was one time, Gutman writes in his account of the incident, when nervousness paid off well.'

Moishe Kulka, another member, recalls that "the entire work was carried on during the night-shift when control was not so strict. In the morning, when the night-shift left the plant, I waited around. A Hungarian Jew I knew handed me half a loaf of bread. Concealed in the bread was a small package of explosives. I kept it near my workbench and later passed it on to a German Jew who worked on the railway.'

Rosa was the direct link with the Sonderkommando. The explosives she received were hidden in the handcarts on which the corpses of those who had died overnight in the barracks were taken to the crematorium.

The Sonderkommando, which according to plan was supposed to synchronize its revolt with the general uprising, one day learned through underground sources that it was about to be liquidated. For them it was a matter of acting now or never. Not having any other choice they acted. They blew up Crematorium III, tossed a sadistic German overseer into the oven, killed four SS men, and wounded a number of others. Then they cut the barbed wire fence and about six hundred escaped. They were hunted down by a large contingent of pursuing SS men and shot.' (As it turned out the general uprising never took place and the Sonderkommando action was the only armed revolt in Auschwitz.)

The political arm of the SS immediately launched a thorough investigation of the revolt. They wanted to know where the explosives came from and how they got into the hands of the Sonderkommando. With the aid of planted agents, the SS in a matter of two weeks came upon the trail of the explosives. They arrested several girls from the munitions factory, and after two days of interrogation and torture released them. The investigation continued and soon other arrests were made. Four girls were taken to the dread Block 11 for questioning. Three were from "Union"; the fourth was Rosa Robota.

Gutman, Leifer, Noah, and others whom Rosa knew now expected to be arrested at any moment. They had full faith in her trustworthiness, but they also knew something about the torture methods the SS employed in Block 11. At one point they considered suicide. They feared that what might happen to Rosa under questioning could happen to them too.

In the meantime they watched from a distance how Rosa was being led daily to Block 11 for questioning. Her hair was matted, her face puffed up and bruised beyond recognition, her clothes torn. She could not walk and had to be dragged by two women attendants.

One day the underground decided on a daring step. Moishe Kulka was acquainted with Jacob, the Jewish kapo of Block 11. He asked him if he would be willing to let someone see Rosa Robota in her death cell. Jacob agreed and asked that the visitor bring along a bottle of whiskey and a salami. Her townsman Noah was chosen to see her. The kapo introduced him to the SS guard as a friend of his. The two plied the SS man with drinks until he fell to the floor unconscious. Then Jacob quickly removed the keys from the guard and motioned to Noah to follow him. Noah describes the incident as follows:

I had the privilege to see Rosa for the last time several days before her execution. At night, when all the prisoners were asleep and all movement in Camp was forbidden, I descended into a bunker of Block 11 and saw the cells and the dark corridors. I heard the moaning of the condemned and was shaken to the core of my being. Jacob led me through the stairs to Rosa's cell. He opened the door and let me in. Then he closed the door behind me and disappeared.

When I became accustomed to the dark I noticed a figure, wrapped in torn clothing, lying on the cold cement floor. She turned her head toward me. I hardly recognized her. After several minutes of silence she began to speak. She told me of the sadistic methods the Germans employ during interrogations. It is impossible for a human being to endure them. She told me that she took all the blame upon herself and that she would be the last to go. She had betrayed no one.

I tried to console her but she would not listen. I know what I have done, and what I am to expect, she said. She asked that the comrades continue with their work. It is easier to die when one knows that the work is being carried on.

I heard the door squeak. Jacob ordered me to come out. We took leave of each other. It was the last time that I saw her.⁶

Before Noah left Rosa's death cell, she scribbled a farewell message to her underground comrades. She assured them that the only name she mentioned during the interrogations was that of a man in the Sonderkommando who she knew was dead. He, she had told the interrogators, was her only contact with the underground. She concluded her message with the Hebrew greeting of Hashomer Hatzair, "Khazak V' Hamatz" -- Be strong and brave.

Several days later all the Jewish prisoners were ordered to the Appel-Platz to witness the hanging of the four young women -- Esther, Ella, Regina, and Rosa.

Source: Suhl, Yuri. *They Fought Back*. New York: Paperback Library, 1967. Reprinted by permission of Mrs. Beverly Spector, Literary Executor.

TESTIMONY

On April 7, 1944, two Jewish prisoners escaped from AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU concentration camp. During their escape preparations, Alfred Wetzler and Walter Rosenberg (who later changed his name to Rudolf Vrba) gathered clandestine notes describing the camp and the extermination operation. These notes, hastily scribbled on dirty scraps of paper, had been prepared by inmates working in the Auschwitz camp offices, on construction crews, and in the SONDERKOMMANDOS. Along with this data, Wetzler and Rosenberg also took with them a label from an empty canister of ZYKLON B. After their escape, the men wrote a fifty-page report describing the layout and operation of the Auschwitz complex and listed, by country of origin, the number of victims gassed prior to their escape. Later passed on to the ALLIES, it was one of several reports of NAZI atrocities to be received by the West. It was released to the American press by the WAR REFUGEE BOARD in November 1944.

In his testimony at the AUSCHWITZ TRIAL reproduced below, Rudolf Vrba describes how he and Wetzler escaped from the KILLING CENTER. In German courts, the trial judge may take an active role in questioning witnesses.

Dr. Vrba: I fled from Auschwitz on 7 April 1944 with my friend Wetzler. We had made up our minds to warn the world of what was happening in Auschwitz and especially to prevent the Hungarian Jews from letting themselves be transported to Auschwitz without offering any resistance. At this time we in Auschwitz already knew that large Hungarian transports were already planned. Along with Wetzler I put together complete statistics of the death actions. When we came upon Jewish organizations in Slovakia, we were questioned separately because they did not want to believe our accounts. What we said independently of each other was exactly the same and was recorded in a protocol. I can present the court with a copy of this protocol. I found it in the White House Library.

Presiding judge: How did you prepare the statistics?

Dr. Vrba: As soon as I was assigned to the clean up commando in the ramp service, I thought about escaping. I have a good head for numbers and tried to remember the number of survivors of every transport. I can still to this day remember the telephone numbers of my friends. I continuously tallied these numbers whenever I talked with acquaintances who came from these transports. So by the end of April 1944, we determined the number of killed inmates to be 1.75 million [historians now estimate the number killed to be 1.2 million.

Prosecuting Attorney Vogel: Is this number of 1.75 million gassed inmates based on your own observations, or is the number of those gassed before your arrival at Auschwitz and your assignment to the clean up commando on the train ramps also included?

Dr. Vrba: The number during the time before mid-1942 was relatively small. I knew that from conversations. But so far as we are able to determine, that is also taken into account.

Representative of the Co-Plaintiff Ormond: When did you consciously start recording these figures? Because you were preparing to escape?

Dr. Vrba: Looking back now it is hard to say. I systematically observed the transports and the numbers.

Ormond: While you were preparing to escape, did you continue to tally the numbers, up until 7 April 1944, or were you so busy with escape preparations that you could no longer do so?

Dr. Vrba: The liquidation of the family camp in March was for me such a monstrous thing. It made a deeper impression on me than all of the others. The number of these victims is certainly there, as well as the victims of the Greek transports that came to Auschwitz in March 1944. The notes go up to this time.

Alternate Judge Hummerich: How did you and Wetzler organize your escape together, and how did you meet with him?

Dr. Vrba: We met in Sector III, the so-called Mexico camp. A bunker was built near the block leader's room. We waited there three days and three nights until the evening of 11 April, because the sentries stood guard in chain fashion for three days whenever an escape was noticed. Four prisoners who had escaped before us had used this hiding place. They were caught but did not divulge the place despite torture. At 6:00 P.M., after our escape, the alarm was sounded. They looked for us for three days. We left the following night, when we heard that the sentry chain had been removed.

Ormond: Where did you find refuge after you managed to escape?

Dr. Vrba: We crossed the Polish-Slovakian border on 21 April. A farmer on the other side of the border hid us. We got in contact with the Jewish Community in Zilina, and there we went to Dr. Pollak, a physician. He arranged a meeting for us with the leaders of the Jewish Community in Bratislava. This took place either on 24 or 25 April.

Ormond: What was these people's first reaction?

Dr. Vrba: At first our report seemed unbelievable to them. These were people who had grown up in a civilized world and could not image such atrocities. But when we gave details on the transports that arrived at Auschwitz from Slovakia, they looked at the lists that they had of these transports. Wetzler and I were separated for cross-examination. They soon determined that our information corroborated with their records on the departures of the transports. Finally we were taken to a monastery and introduced to the papal nuncio residing in Bratislava. He had already read the protocol beforehand. He gave us his word of honor that he would pass our report on to the Vatican and the western governments.

- Reprinted from Hermann Langbein, Der Auschwitz-Prozess: eine Dokumentation (Frankfurt am Main, 1995), 122-124. Translated from the German by Ned Guthrie.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *In Pursuit of Justice: Examining the Evidence of the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, pages 207-208. © United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

JEWISH PARTISAN SONG

By Hersh Glick

The "Jewish Partisan Song" became the unofficial song of Jewish partisans across occupied Europe. Hersh Glick (1922-44), a poet in the ghetto of Vilna, Lithuania, wrote the song in Yiddish in 1943, after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. It was set to music by two Soviet-Jewish composers, the brothers Dimitri and Daniel Pokras. The song gained instant popularity. Jews sang it in attics, cellars, and in underground hideouts. Some even hummed it in the presence of their German guards in concentration camps. Glick was killed after he and other partisans tried to escape from a concentration camp in Estonia in the summer of 1944.

Never say there is only death for you.
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue --
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: We are here!

From land of palm-tree to the far-off land of snow,
We shall be coming with our torment and our woe.
And everywhere our blood has sunk into the earth.
Shall our bravery, our vigor blossom forth!

We'll have the morning sun to set our day aglow,
And all our yesterdays shall vanish with the foe,
And if the time is long before the sun appears,
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead;
It's not a song that birds sing overhead,
It was a people, among toppling barricades,
That sang this song of ours with pistols and grenades.

So never say that there is only death for you.
Leaden skies may be concealing days of blue --
Yet the hour we have hungered for is near;
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: We are here!

Questions on "Jewish Partisan Song"

1. What do you think motivated Glick to write this song?
2. Analyze the choice of words in this song. What words are used to reflect the partisans' hopes for the future?
3. Inspirational songs written by oppressed people have been common in history. What does this tell us about the will of the oppressed?
4. What other songs have been written throughout history that have a significant message of resistance?
5. Can you think of any contemporary songs with messages which might have been motivated by similar thoughts? If so, bring one to class and explain to a listener how you think they are similar. If the song is one of resistance, what is it resisting?
6. How do you respond to revenge as a motive for survival?
7. The first and last verses of this song are similar and provide the song with a clear beginning and end. Create another verse for the middle of this song.

Source of poem: Glatstein, Jacob, Israel Knox, and Samuel Margoshes. *Anthology of Holocaust Literature*. New York: Atheneum, 1980. Copyright © 1968 by the Jewish Publication Society of America. Reprinted by permission of the Jewish Publication Society of America.

Source: Furman, Harry, ed. *Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience*. New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1983, page 151. Developed under the auspices of the State of New Jersey Department of Education. Reprinted by permission.

Background information provided by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *Resistance During the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Questions adapted from the March of the Living, Central Agency for Jewish Education, Miami, Florida. Reprinted by permission.

"WHITE ROSE LETTERS"

THE WHITE ROSE

There was scattered resistance to the Nazi regime even in Germany. Some opposition to Hitler came from members of aristocratic families



who viewed Hitler as a crude upstart and were appalled by his policies and the transformation of Germany into a police state. The small group of active opponents put their lives on the line.

Virtually all of them were killed. Men like Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a distinguished Lutheran minister, and Hans von Dohnanyi, a jurist who served in the army, were part of a conspiracy to oust Hitler. For years, a group within the German officer corps gingerly plotted Hitler's overthrow, gaining adherents as the military tide turned against Germany. These army officers planned to assassinate Hitler, seize power, and negotiate peace with the Allies. After a series of abortive plans, a serious assassination attempt was finally made in July 1944, when it no longer took any special insight to see that Hitler's continued rule was leading to Germany's inevitable defeat. Hitler escaped the bomb blast with only minor injuries. All those who were involved in the conspiracy were killed.

The White Rose movement, which culminated in a remarkable public demonstration by students against the regime, was organized and led by young people. At its head were a medical student at the University of Munich, Hans Scholl, his sister Sophie, and Christoph Probst, who were outraged by the acquiescence of educated men and women in the Nazi treatment of Jews and Poles. Their anti-Nazi campaign was guided by a philosophy professor, Kurt Huber, a disciple of Immanuel Kant, the eighteenth-century moral philosopher who taught that human beings must never be used as a means to an end.

In 1942, the group set out to break the cycle in which "each waits for the other to begin." Their first leaflet was a call for spiritual resistance against an immoral government. "Nothing is so unworthy of a civilized people as allowing itself to be governed without opposition by an irresponsible clique that has yielded to base instinct," they wrote. "Every people deserves the government it is willing to endure."

In correspondence that became known as the "White Rose Letters," the group established a network of students in Hamburg, Freiburg, Berlin, and Vienna. "We will not be silent," they wrote to their fellow students. "We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace." After mounting an anti-Nazi demonstration in Munich, in February 1943, the Scholls distributed pamphlets urging students to rebel. They were turned in by a university janitor. Hans and Sophie Scholl and Christoph Probst were executed on February 18, 1943. Just before his death, Hans Scholl repeated the words of Goethe: "Hold out in defiance of all despotism."

Professor Huber was also arrested. To the end, he remained loyal to Kant's ethical teaching that one must act as though legislating for the world. Huber's defense, his "Final Statement of the Accused," concluded with the words of Kant's immediate disciple, Johann Gottlieb Fichte:

*And thou shall act as if
On thee and on thy deed
Depended the fate of all Germany
And thou alone must answer for it.*

Huber and other students of the White Rose were executed a few days after the Scholls.

Source: Berenbaum, Michael. *The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1993. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Dr. Michael Berenbaum, and Little, Brown and Company.

Unit 8

The Rescuers

UNIT 8

THE RESCUERS

"There are stars whose radiance is visible on earth though they have long been extinct. There are people whose brilliance continues to light the world though they are no longer among the living. These lights are particularly bright when the night is dark. They light the way for mankind."

*Hannah Senesh
A parachutist with the Haganah*

INTRODUCTION

From early in the Nazis' ascendancy to power, numerous groups became targeted for expulsion or death. For some of these groups, no public efforts for rescue were ever taken (e.g., the Gypsies and homosexuals). For others, there were intermittent proclamations of condemnation against killings (e.g., the mentally and physically handicapped in Germany), but such protests usually were too few or too late to achieve substantial rescue. With immigration almost everywhere hardened into firm, restrictive policies, the fate of those being persecuted by the Nazis was perilous.

As the largest targeted group, the Jews of Europe tried in vain to seek asylum. Two international conferences were called to deal with the problem of rescue, one before the war and one during it, but neither was effective. As country after country fell under German occupation and became allies or collaborators with Germany, the situation for the Jews became increasingly desperate. As the war progressed, so did the Nazi murders. Yet, within every country under German domination, there were often pockets of protection. Most curious is the fact that help sometimes existed even in those countries which had joined Germany. Often, this assistance took unusual forms since "officially" it could not be condoned.

The largest number of those rescued were not saved due to any international or even national rescue efforts. The great majority of those who survived through rescue owe their lives to acts of daring performed by a single courageous individual or a small community of involved citizens. Very often the rescuers did not know the people being helped. That is, more often than not, the person in need was a complete stranger.

During times of great moral and spiritual crises, some people perform heroic acts motivated by nothing more than a sense of human decency. In all the German occupied countries, anyone who tried to help the Jews, even in the slightest ways, put their own lives in extreme danger. In

In addition, all non-Jews who had the conviction and the courage to protect, help, or rescue a Jew were risking, not only their own lives, but the lives of their families as well. Yet, confronted with this violent attack on humanity, an undetermined number of remarkable people were their brothers' and sisters' keepers and acted to protect and rescue their Jewish friends and neighbors from certain death at the hands of the Germans. These rescuers' heroic efforts truly made a difference by saving lives. A few of these remarkable individuals are profiled in this lesson.

Those non-Jewish heroes who helped save Jews during the years of the Holocaust have come to be called "Righteous Among the Nations." These are individuals who acted in accordance with their conscience; who could not remain indifferent and stand idly by while innocent persons were persecuted for the "crime" of being Jewish. In 1962, a commission was formed at Yad Vashem, the Israeli national Holocaust museum and memorial, to identify and recognize the "Righteous Among the Nations" with the purpose of honoring them as heroes.

The commission, headed by an Israeli Supreme Court Justice takes into consideration all the circumstances relevant to the rescue story, including how the original contact was made between the rescuer and the rescued, a description of the aid, whether any compensation was paid in return for the aid, the dangers and risks faced by the rescuer, the rescuer's motivations (e.g. friendship, altruism, religious beliefs, humanitarian considerations, or others), the evidence available from rescued persons, and other documentation that authenticates the story.

A person who receives the title "Righteous Among the Nations" is awarded a medal bearing his or her name, a certificate of honor, and the addition of his or her name to the "Righteous Among the Nations" Wall of Honor at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. (In the past, trees were planted in honor of those recognized.) The inscription on the medal says, "Whoever saves a single soul, it is as if he had saved the whole world."²

The deeds of these courageous individuals took many forms, such as protecting the hunted within the rescuer's home; smuggling Jewish children to homes of safety or across borders to neutral countries; aiding resisters; making falsified documents; and providing food, clothing, and transportation for escaping Jews.

Common among almost all of the rescuers was their feeling that they were not heroes. In reflecting upon their reasons for helping others, most of them state that they only did "what had to be done." Bystanders questioned after the war as to their reasons for remaining uninvolved excused their behavior by claiming that, with the stringent German penalty, they had no choice; the rescuers, however, often remark that they had no choice but to help.

However, it should be mentioned that not all rescuers, however, protected others out of a purely altruistic sense of duty or compassion. Some took advantage of the situation and helped others only insofar as it would benefit themselves. For the most part, these are the people who provided assistance in exchange for payment. However, even those who requested payment were appreciated for at least they offered hope and a safe place for a little while longer. Those Jewish people who still had the means to do so, voluntarily contributed money to a rescuer's household to pay for food and other necessities.

Governments of the allied nations learned about Nazi atrocities as early as 1942 and did little or nothing to stop the violence. This served the Nazis and not the victims. The Vatican was well-informed about the fate of the Jews through its churches all over Europe and sadly, remained silent. "The decision of whether to agree to those [Hitler's racist] policies or to defy them was left to the individual. On the one hand lay authority, safety, and institutional neutrality, if not approval. On the other hand lay human decency. Each person made his or her choice."³



In general, when the data available to the commission at Yad Vashem shows 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 concentration or death camps, not having asked first to be paid for offering the aid, the person in question is eligible to be awarded, whether or not that person is still living. To date, over 13,000 men and women have been recognized as "Righteous Among the Nations." In the pages that follow, you will become familiar with some of these heroes and heroines.

Place names that figure in Oskar Schindler's story.

CHRONOLOGY

September 1, 1939 Germany Invades Poland; World War II begins.

October 26, 1939 Cracow becomes capital of German-occupied Poland.

December 1939 Schindler takes over enamelware factory In Cracow.

1940-early 1941 Germans expel many Jews In Cracow to other towns.

March 1941 Germans establish ghetto In Cracow.

June 1942 Germans construct PraszOw forced labor camp.

June-October 1942 Cracow ghetto population is reduced through deportations and mass shootitkp.

February 1943 Cl5th takes over command of PlaszOw.

March 1943 Germans liquidate Cracow ghetto. Soon after, Schindler sets up branch camp at his factory.

August 1944 Schindler's factory is dosed; his Jewish workers are taken back to PlaszOw.

October 1944 Schindler's list of Jews to be protected as "essential workers" in Brftntitz Is drafted, and workers are transferred from PlaszOw via Gross Rosen and Auschwitz.

January 1945 PlaszOw camp is closed; remaining prisoners are deported to Auschwitz-tiltitenau.

May 8, 1945 World War II ends In Europe.

May 9, 1945 Brønnøysund subcamp is liberated by Soviet army.

April 26, 1962 Schindler is named 'Righteous Among the Nations'
by Yad Vashem,

October 8, 1970, Schindler dies in Frankfurt,

Source: Map and chronology of Oskar Schindler's story. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Oskar Schindler

Excerpted from the introduction to *Schindler's Legacy: True Stories of the List Survivors*, by Elinor J. Brecher.

The Nazis invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. They took Krakow on the sixth, then home to 60,000 Jews, 26 percent of the city's population. By year's end, Jews lost the right to attend school, keep bank accounts, own businesses, or walk on the sidewalks. They were tagged by a yellow Star of David. By the following April, evacuation orders would pare Krakow's Jewish community to 35,000.

All this transformed Poland into the land of economic opportunity for German entrepreneurs. They swarmed the cities, snapping up forfeited Jewish firms as their Treuhänders, or trustees. One of them was a young salesman named Oskar Schindler, born April 28, 1908, in the Sudetenland. He applied for Nazi Party membership on February 10, 1939. By then, he was an agent of the German Abwehr, the intelligence. In fact, he had been jailed in 1938 as a spy by the Czechs (he was released when Germany annexed the Sudetenland). Oskar Schindler provided Polish Army uniforms to the German provocateurs who attacked a German border radio station the night before the invasion.

Schindler took over an idled enamelware plant at 4 Lipowa Street in Krakow, capital of the occupation government. A Jew named Abraham Bankier had owned the plant. Schindler renamed it Deutsche Emallwaren Fabrik, and began turning out pots, pans, and mess kits for the German military. He had come to seek his fortune, and with Jewish slave labor, he made one.

By the end of 1942, Schindler employed 370 Jewish workers, all from the Krakow ghetto. He paid their wages directly to the Nazi general government. Word quickly spread that his factory, outside the ghetto, in the Zablocie district, was a safe haven. With copious bribes, Schindler kept the SS at bay, so nobody was beaten on the job. He winked at the flurry of illegal "business" between the factory's Jewish and Polish workers. He lied for people so they could bring in friends and relatives. Most of his "skilled" workers had no skills at all. Eventually one thousand Jews would gain sanctuary at the DEF (called Emalia by its workers).

Hans Frank, the Nazi governor of the Krakow district, established the Krakow ghetto in March 1941; there were 320 residential buildings for 15,000 Jews (the rest had been driven off into the suburbs). Transports and massacres decimated the ghetto population over the next two years. Between June and October 1942, 11,000 ghetto dwellers were sent to the Belzec death camp. Then, on March 13, 1943, *Untersturmführer* Amon Goeth liquidated the ghetto. Those who lived through it became inmates at the Krakow-Piaszow labor camp — later a concentration camp — on the outskirts of the city, under Goeth's bloodthirsty command.

For a few months, Schindler's workers lived in the camp barracks and marched every day to the factory at 4 Lipowa Street. At the end of their shifts, they would return to Amon Goeth's hell, and the very real possibility of ending up dead on Chujowa GOrka, the camp's notorious execution hill.

Daily life at Piaszow proved unbearable for some people: They lost the will to live and so they died. Conditions were so bad that only internal fortitude kept people going. "You knew when people stopped washing themselves, stopped pushing themselves in the line, they were giving up," says Cleveland survivor Jack Mintz. "They didn't answer or ask questions. They became like zombies. If they got torn shoes, they didn't try to find something else to put on."

Schindler's Emalia subcamp extracted his workers from that hell, but in August of 1944 he was ordered to reduce his workforce by about seven hundred. In September, the Emalia subcamp shut down and its remaining workers were sent to PiaszOw. In October, Schindler moved his operation to a new plant at Brinnlitz, Czechoslovakia, near his hometown. A second list was drawn up, providing the nucleus of the one in circulation today. The October list consisted of three hundred original Emalia workers and seven hundred replacements for those shipped out in August.

Before Schindler's workers got to Brinnlitz, they made intermediate stops: the women at Auschwitz, the men at a transit camp called Gross-Rosen. Memories vary, but most survivors think the men stayed about a week at Gross-Rosen. It was nightmarish, even by PiaszOw standards. Chaskel Schlesinger of Chicago remembers the humiliating body searches when they arrived: "You had to open your mouth and spread the fingers and bend over and lift up your feet because you could have [something taped] on the bottom."

The men were run through delousing showers, and then, soaking wet and naked, they were made to stand outside in frigid temperatures. Brooklynite Moses Goldberg remembers a German officer on a white horse approaching the group and yelling to the guards, "Those are *Schindlerjuden!* Put them in a barracks and give them nightshirts, otherwise our hospital will be full of them tomorrow."

Schindler's three hundred women left PiaszOw two days after his men and spent about three weeks at Auschwitz. It's clear that he knew they would have to stop there, and that a few of the women knew it, too. However, neither he nor they realized they would languish there so long. He had to bribe their way out. In one of the most dramatic scenes in the film *Schindler's List*, the women — stripped and shaved—are shoved into a locked, windowless room. Shower heads stud the ceiling. The Auschwitz gas chambers are no longer a secret. Suddenly, the lights go out, as someone throws a heavy switch. The women are hysterical. Then water blasts from the jets. The women survivors confirm that it actually happened.

"There were old prisoners who were quite rough," remembers Betty Schagrin, a Florida survivor. "They were saying, 'You go in through the big doors and you go out through the chimney.' In the shower, they waited ten minutes to panic people. We started to go crazy."

As awful as they looked, the women were a welcome sight to the worried men at Brinnlitz, where the copy of Schindler's list currently circulating was drawn up on April 18, 1945. The April 18 list is a jumble of inaccuracies: phony birth dates — some off by decades — and altered identities. Some mistakes are intentional; others resulted from confusion or disinformation, or simple typos.

Canadian journalist Herbert Steinhouse, who interviewed Schindler at length in 1949, estimates that about eighty names were added from the "frozen transport": men from GolezOw, an Auschwitz subcamp, who had been locked in two sidetracked freight cars without food or water for ten days in subzero temperatures. Abraham Bankier, the enamelware plant's original owner, appears twice, and some people who unquestionably were at Brinnlitz don't appear at all. According to Steinhouse, Schindler also gathered in Jewish fugitives who escaped transports leaving Auschwitz, including Belgians, Dutch, and Hungarians.

All in all, the composition of the list is as much of a puzzle as Oskar Schindler's motives, a topic of endless debate among the *Schindlerjuden*. Was he an angel masquerading as an opportunist? An opportunist masquerading as an angel? Did he intend to save eleven hundred Jews, or was their survival simply one result of his self-serving game plan? Did he build the Emalia subcamp to protect Jews or to keep Amon Goeth from interfering in his lucrative black marketeering?

"I think he was a gambler and loved to outwit the SS," says Rena Finder of Massachusetts. "In the beginning, it was a game. It was fun at first. He joined the [Nazi party] to make money. But he had no stomach for the killing. He enjoyed the wheeling and dealing and doing outrageous things — living on the edge. But then he realized if he didn't save us, nobody would." Did he have a sudden change of heart, or undergo a gradual metamorphosis? It's hard to say. Henry Rosner of Queens, New York, claims that there was a definitive moment: "Two girls ran away to Krakow. Goeth sent two Jewish policemen and said, 'If you don't find them, ten OD men will be hanged.' They found those girls. All women [were ordered] to Appel/for hanging. Schindler came and saw Goeth shoot them two seconds before they died hanging. Schindler vomited in front of everybody. He would never be working for the Germans again, he said to me."

In 1964, a decade before Schindler's demise from alcoholic complications, a German television news crew caught up with him on the streets of Frankfurt and asked him the question directly. He replied "The persecution of the Jews under the General Government of Poland meant that we could see the horror emerging gradually in many ways. In 1939 the Jews were forced to wear the Star of David and people were herded and shut up into ghettos. Then in the years 1941 and 1942, there was plenty of public evidence of pure sadism. With people behaving like pigs, I felt the Jews were being destroyed. I had to help them."

The bottom line for most is this: "If I hadn't been with Schindler, I'd be dead." And that's all that matters. (It's thought that nearly four hundred *Schindlerjuden* are still alive; about half live in Israel.)

[Schindler] permitted the Jews to observe holidays (secretly) and, at Brinnlitz, to bury their dead traditionally. He got them extra food and rudimentary medical care. He accepted the frozen transport when no one else would, and, with his wife, Emilie, lavished personal attention and resources on the half-dead survivors.

According to Steinhouse, the Schindlers "never spent a single night" in their comfortable "villa" at Brinnlitz, sleeping instead in a small room at the factory, because Oskar understood how deeply the Jews feared late-night visits by the SS.

It's hard to say what was in that sort of thing for him, except the creation of goodwill, which in itself was a valuable commodity. Were his humane actions really planned to ensure that the grateful Jews would protect him after the Germans lost and support him for the rest of his life? Some people think so.

Sol Urbach of New Jersey has one theory:

"Oskar Schindler, on April eighteenth, recognized that everything was over, so he told somebody in Brinnlitz, 'Make me a list of all the people who are here.' That's when Oskar Schindler hatched his plan of escape. There is no question in my mind that that was going through his mind. He needed this list of who survived in his camp because he was going to go to Germany and take this list into some agency."

When Oskar left Brinnlitz, he was accompanied by Emilie, a mistress, and eight Jewish inmates assigned to safeguard him. The group left the factory on May 8, 1945, in Oskar's Mercedes. A truck pulling two trailers followed. The interior of the Benz—the seats and door panels—had been stuffed with valuables. The Schindlers also carried a letter, signed by some of his workers, explaining his role in saving their lives.

The entourage headed southwest, first getting stuck in a Wehrmacht convoy, then halted by Czech partisans. They stopped over for the night in a town called Havlickuv Brod. They spent the night at the town jail — not as prisoners, but for the accommodations — then awoke to find their vehicles stripped, inside and out. They proceeded by train, then on foot.

In the spring of 1945, Kurt Klein, an intelligence officer in the US Army—a German-born Jew — encountered Oskar's traveling party near the Czech village of Eleanorenhain, on its way from Brinnlitz to the Swiss border. Klein got permits for the group to remain in the American Zone of Occupation until it could find transportation for the rest of the trip.

"Nobody knew who he was at the time," Klein has said. "They were all dressed in prison uniforms and presented themselves as refugees from a German labor camp. They didn't let on that Schindler, their Nazi labor camp director, was in their midst, probably because they were afraid I would arrest him as a POW. They were correct, because my assignment was to interrogate and segregate Germans caught fleeing from Russian and Czech guns." Klein (now retired in Arizona) enlisted the aid of other Jewish American servicemen to ensure the group's safe passage to the Swiss border town of Konstanz.

When Steinhouse met Oskar, he found that the forty-year-old Schindler was "a man of convincing honesty and outstanding charm. Tall and erect, with broad shoulders and a powerful trunk, he usually has a cheerful smile on his strong face. His frank, gray-blue eyes smile too, except when they tighten in distress as he talks of the past. Then his whole jaw juts out belligerently and his great fists are clutched and pounded in slow anger. When he laughs, it is a boyish and hearty laugh, one that all his listeners enjoy to the full."

According to Steinhouse, Schindler helped American investigators gather evidence against Nazi war criminals by "presenting the occupying power with the most detailed documentation on all his old drinking companions, on the vicious owners of the other slave factories ... on all the rotten group he had wined and flattered while inwardly loathing, in order to save the lives of helpless people."

But in 1949, Oskar Schindler was "a lost soul." Everyday life became more difficult and unsettled. A Sudeten German, he had no future in Czechoslovakia and at the time could no longer stand the Germany he had once loved. For a time, he tried living in Regensburg. Later he moved to Munich depending heavily on Care parcels sent to him from America by some of the *Schindlerjuden*, but too proud to plead for more help.

"Polish Jewish welfare organizations traced him, discovered him in want, and tried to bring some assistance even in the midst of their own bitter postwar troubles."

A New York woman and PfaszOw survivor who had relatives on the list recalls that in the summer of 1945, Schindler told her that he'd been warned to stay out of Poland, "because he'd meet the same fate as had Dr. Gross and Kerner, the OD men [Jews killed for their war crimes]. He'd meet it at the hands of those who got knocked off the list."

The Jewish Joint Distribution Committee gave Oskar money and set up the Schindlers in Argentina on a nutria ranch, where they tried raising the minklike animals. He failed. Survivors bought him an apartment in Buenos Aires, but he left Emilie in 1957 and went back to Germany. He tried running a cement plant but failed at that, too. He just couldn't seem to adjust to the banality of life in peacetime.

He visited Israel in 1962. The *Schindlerjuden* there received him like a potentate. From then on, he never lacked for support from his "children." Before he died in 1974, he asked that the *Schindlerjuden* take his remains to Israel and bury him there. He lies in the Catholic cemetery on Mount Zion.

Whatever he was between 1939 and 1945, he has come to represent so much more than a mere flesh-and-blood mortal. He has become, in legend, what most people want to believe they themselves would become in situations of moral extremis. "Each one of us at any time, faced with the particular circumstances, has the power to stand on the side of right," a California survivor named Leon Leyson told me. "Ninety-nine percent of the time, we simply don't. This is an ordinary man, not a special hero with super powers, and yet he did it."

He also has allowed hundreds of men and women to answer at least part of the imponderable question: *Why did I survive and six million perish?* Answer: Because of Oskar Schindler.

Source: "Introduction," from *Schindler's Legacy* by Elinor Brecher. Copyright © 1994 by Elinor Brecher. Used by permission of Dutton Signet, a division of Penguin Putnam Inc.

STEVEN SPIELBERG

On movie and memory

Editor's Note:

Steven Spielberg is not only one of the most respected film makers in the world, he is also, arguably, the most successful. Two of his films - *E.T.* and *Jurassic Park* - are the highest grossing movies ever made. But Spielberg is more than a commercial success. *Schindler's List*, his 1993 film of the Holocaust, has become a modern classic. The film won seven Academy Awards, including those for best picture and best director. Here, Mr. Spielberg talks about the making of the movie and what it means to him.

LC *Were you surprised that Schindler's List was seen by so many people all over the world?*

Spielberg Yes. I never expected it to attract such large audiences in theaters. I thought it could eventually reach some audience on videotape, in schools and television. Its theatrical success was an unexpected vindication of a difficult subject.

LC *You were first offered this film in 1982. Why did you wait until 1992 to make it?*

Spielberg This is the most realistic movie I've ever made. I wasn't mature enough, wasn't emotionally resolved with my life, and I hadn't had children. Yet, without knowing it, I had been preparing for it, I guess, all my life, back to the time I was a little kid in Cincinnati. My grandma would teach English to German, Polish, and Russian Jews, and I remember quite well a man who I thought was a fantastic magician because he rolled up his sleeve and there were all these numbers stamped on his arm. He taught me my numbers. Then one day, he said, "I'll show you some magic," and he pointed out a nine and then he turned his arm and said, "now it's a six." I learned what a nine and six was on somebody's tattoo - that never left me.

LC *The film is so different from anything you've ever done. Why did you make it?*

Spielberg I made it for the millions who had never heard the word *holocaust*, and for the shocking numbers of Americans who had the barest knowledge of its existence, and for those in denial that the 6 million murders ever took place. I had been looking at schoolbooks where there was either a loud absence of information or a simple footnote. A footnote! For younger people - and they were the ones I thought about most - it had the potential for a plague of ignorance.

I can't do much to fix the past, but a film like this can make a strong statement about what must never happen again.

If people don't know about the Holocaust, how much do they really know about slavery and segregation? Wounded Knee and the Cherokee Nation, the Ku Klux Klan, the internment of the Japanese in World War II, or even the death threats to Hank Aaron when he was being considered for the Hall of Fame?

When I made *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* in 1977, I was obsessed with the theme that we are not alone in the universe. I am still obsessed with that theme - that we are not alone with our pain. People all over the world who are oppressed share the same history. The common link between slavery and the Holocaust is the pain of racial hatred. That's why I can say to my kids, and to the audience, "This didn't happen a long time ago. It happened as recently as yesterday in Bosnia, in Rwanda, in our own neighborhoods. You saw it on the news."

We cannot forget the lessons of the past. To deny and forget the hate crimes will guarantee their recurrence.

LC *What was your most memorable experience during the making of the movie?*

Spielberg It was frightening for me every day. I never had a day where I didn't think that where I was standing, being a Jew, 50 years ago, was an automatic death sentence. I felt I was working on the most notorious killing field in recorded human history; all of us felt that way.

LC *After you made the film, could you define what made Schindler do what he did to save the lives of 1,100 men, women, and children?*

Spielberg The witnesses that I've met are not able to tell me with any great clarity, in terms of agreement, why he did what he did. I think the film continues to pose more questions than the survivors can give answers. He did come to know his workers as people, and he was a man who enjoyed acts of kindness which made him feel pretty good about himself at a time when there was no kindness in the world. Oskar Schindler was a shining star in an otherwise stormy sky. He was a party giver. He loved women, and he loved to drink all sorts of spirits. He was a German, a Catholic, a war profiteer who was in the Oskar Schindler business for most of his career, but something happened along the way that made him risk it all to rescue 1,100 human lives from the incinerators at Bergen-Belsen and Auschwitz-Birkenau.

LC *What do you want people to talk to each other about the day after they see the film?*

Spielberg About the need to acknowledge that such events happened, must never be forgotten, and must never happen again, and the need to understand each other and our differences. And I hope they recognize that one person can make a difference. Oskar Schindler made a difference and so can all of us, each in our own way.

Questions:

1. If you had the opportunity to speak with Mr. Spielberg, what other questions would you like to ask him?
2. In your opinion, is it important for film makers to create movies like *Schindler's List*? Why or why not?

Source: "Steven Spielberg: On Movies and Memory." *Literary Cavalcade*, February 1997, page 25. Reprinted by permission of Scholastic, Inc.

SAVING LIVES

Journey with me in space and time to meet a most remarkable young woman: Irene Gutuvna, born in 1922 in Poland, a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust in her own right, but more uniquely, one of the few Christian rescuers.

Irene was from a middle-class Catholic family who grew up in a small town near the German border and was accustomed to sharing with Jewish children: "We children were a United Nation. We played together regardless of nationality or religion, being more concerned about what mischief we could get into."

When the possibility of a war became the topic of conversation in Irene's house, being the oldest daughter to a family with no sons, she valiantly offered to join the Polish army. "It was my responsibility." Shortly after that, she chose a career which would change her whole life. "I developed the desire to become a nurse...maybe even a nun. So in 1938, my father enrolled me in the best nursing school which was in Radom, a town in the middle of Poland. I wanted to be another Florence Nightingale, traveling, helping others. All of a sudden, it was September 1st, 1939 and my dreams came to a halt.

It was early morning. I was going from my dormitory to the hospital when I heard a big noise. I quickly hid in a ditch...planes everywhere, explosions, fire. When the planes left, there were wounded and dead people everywhere. I was alone without my parents, so I ran to the hospital, my second home now.

It was bedlam there. They had already started to bring in the wounded, and although I was still a student nurse, I rolled up my sleeves and started to work helping to save lives.

Rumors came telling of the speed with which the Germans were pushing through my country. At that time, some of the older nurses said they were leaving to join the Polish army.

I being young and having nowhere to go, went along with them fearful, but proud that they would take me. It would have been impossible for me to try to cross Poland alone and reach my parents' home.

We joined an army unit. It was a dangerous time. We were constantly on the run, and the Germans did not respect the Red Cross on our truck, so we often had to hide in the woods during bomb raids. Three weeks later, we were near the Russian border and Poland surrendered. This was tragic to me!"

The group dispersed and Irene was picked up by some Russian soldiers who brutally raped her in the forest and left her there, badly beaten, to die in the snow. The following day, though, she woke up in a Russian hospital where she recovered and spent quite some time helping to heal people. This lasted until 1941 when Polish citizens were given the opportunity to repatriate. She chose to return.

Irene returned to a much changed Poland. In the summer of 1941 after passing a three week quarantine, she found herself in Radom, which was now under Nazi rule. For the first time, she saw the "different" treatment that the Jews were suffering.

"...I went into town. I was alone and no one was expecting me, but I remembered an older nurse from the hospital and I went to her house. She took me in and during one of our outings, I noticed a group of people that was being pushed in the street. This is when she explained to me that the Jewish people were being taken from their houses and put into special places to work.

....I went to church one day and on my way out, I found it surrounded by Nazis who plucked the young people out of the confused crowd. I was one of them. We were taken to a place with barbed wire and barracks, where we were told that we would soon be taken to Germany as workmen for their fields and factories. Just before my transport was to leave, a small group of officers came to select a few of us out of the lines. We were simply pointed out. We (the few chosen) were taken to an ammunition factory where we were to work for a German major in his sixties.

We lived in barracks as prisoners and worked every day in the factory. My job was to pack ammunition into small boxes, but soon the sulphur in the ammunition made me very sick and I fainted right in front of the major during one of his inspection rounds by my station. Next thing I knew, I was sitting on a chair in an office, having to answer to his questions in my high school German and pleading for work that wouldn't put me in direct contact with the sulphur to which I was allergic. I knew that only work would keep me from trouble. Impressed by my honesty, he offered me a different job.

My new job was in the officer's diner, serving meals to them. I was blond and blue-eyed. I looked nice and spoke a little German, so I guess he thought it could work out well. This work allowed me more freedom and I could now sleep in town at my girlfriend's house.

One day, while preparing for a big dinner party at the Officers' Club, I heard a lot of commotion, yelling, screaming, coming from the street below. I went towards the windows and drew open the heavy velvet curtains. Below I could see the Radom ghetto...

There the Nazis were beating Jews up, killing them. There was blood everywhere. My boss, Sergeant Schultz, quickly shut the drapes and told me I should never speak of this to anyone, for "they" could think I was a Jew-lover. He could see I was very shaken up. That night I could not pray...I could not believe in God."

In the winter that same year, the whole operation moved to Lvov. Irene went with them, not having been offered a choice. During one of her outings to church, she met a lady who lived in town; her name was Helen and she was a Catholic married to a Jew. He, of course, was in Nazi hands. The two women struck a friendship. Shortly after that, news came of a prisoner transport to a town nearby. In hopes of perhaps finding her husband, Helen decided to travel there, not without first asking Irene to join her. Irene managed to get the day off and so they went. What they were to witness they would never forget...

"...The SS opened a barbed wire gate and were beating, kicking, pushing the people out. Some faces I still see today: beautiful women, children, elderly, men on crutches, sick people. All being led in a march. We were crying. We could do nothing for them. Then I saw a group of children and all alone without their parents; big ones, little ones, two, three, four years old, crying and yelling "mama, mama" very scared. I saw a young woman holding an infant. All of a sudden, an SS man tore the baby from her arms and threw him to the ground head first. She screamed and was shot instantly. I watched her fall near her baby, both dead now. This all took place in March, 1942, and God was not there. We quickly left and heard shooting. We knew what was happening. The dead were the lucky ones...

When I returned to my encampment, I was so shaken up that Schultz gave me the evening off. I never spoke of what I saw.

In May that year, we moved to Tarnopol. There was the hotel which we used for the officers, a laundry building where their clothes were washed and pressed and the factories. I was assigned to sleep in a small room near the kitchen. My duties still involved serving meals, plus as of that moment, I was in charge of transferring the clothes to and from the laundry and supervising the end results before redistributing them to the different officers.

I went to the little building and there is where I met twelve people, all Jewish -- the laundry work force who was brought daily from the camp nearby.

In the beginning they did not trust me, but soon I discovered that Helen's husband was one of them: Henry Weinbaum. This quickly broke the ice and we all became friends. They were Dr. Lipschitz, Mr. Heller and his wife Aida, Morris, Mr. Steiner, Mr. Rosenbaum and a few others. I delivered the clothes daily, sometimes with a little food. They told me awful stories of their camp life.

As I served dinners for the officers, I discovered that often a guest of the major's was the FOhrer in charge of their camp. I picked up valuable information about raids, etc., passed it on to them, and they, in turn, alerted the other prisoners. This way sometimes at least a few were spared cruelty.

Some Jews had escaped and were living in the forest. When Helen and I found out, I started to request Schultz for food, clothes and blankets for my imaginary large family. He often complied and Helen delivered the goods to the forest in her horse and buggy. In the meantime, the major was very pleased with me. I was a hard worker and a pretty girl.

One day, I heard over dinner that the area was to be made *Judenrein*, free from Jews. Liquidation was the order and I had to tell my friends. It was a tragedy! Six chose to flee to the forest. Helen and I helped them. The other six remained.

Some four days later, the major found a beautiful villa and decided to move there, taking me in as his housekeeper. This was a miracle from God -- it had to be. All of a sudden, I had a place for my friends.

One by one, the six came in and hid in the cellar. I soon discovered however, that six more had joined them; people I had never met before. Twelve people stood there with frightened eyes like little children.

I was then instructed by the major to tidy the house and get it ready to be repainted. I panicked...what to do? Well, we found a way, and when the ground floor was being painted, I hid them in the attic and vice-versa. Miraculously, it worked. God helped us a lot...yes...God.

The major then said he was bringing in his orderly to help with the work; that would be the end of us for sure. In desperation, I pleaded with the major, promised to do the work of two people or more, if only he wouldn't bring the man in. I told him of my rape experience. He agreed...for now...

My twelve and I soon found a secret tunnel that led to a little room under the gazebo in the garden...a hiding place. We provisioned it well to last them for three days if ever need be, and we drilled often.

Helen often came to visit her husband and they would go in there alone. We called it the honeymoon hotel.

...One day, Dr. Lipschitz asked me to fill a prescription for Aida...it would make her abort. Aida? Pregnant? The baby should live, of course. After that day in Lvov when I saw so many Jewish children die, there was no choice for me. Also I believed in God's help. He had been there for us so far... I managed to convince them all and we kept her pregnancy.

One autumn day in 1943, I went into town and had to witness the hanging of two families: one Polish, one Jewish...with their babies, too. It was the punishment for harboring the Jews.

I ran home and was trembling. I was so flustered, I made unusual mistakes. The key was always to be left in its keyhole so that the major could never let himself in and surprise us. This time I put it in my pocket. The women had just come out to greet me, when all of a sudden the major walked in. He had discovered us. I will never forget his eyes, blazing with anger. He silently turned and went to the library. I followed him...I had to face him. I begged for his forgiveness, I cried, I pleaded on my knees. He was furious. He stormed out of the house saying: "When I come back, I will give you my decision. I don't know yet what I'll do with you and I need to think." I had deceived him. I had disappointed him.

I quickly went to my friends who were thinking of leaving. I encouraged them to stay and hide, for only three had been found...why imperil them all? They stayed and hid; we said good-bye and we waited for the major to return...

Hours later, he walked in drunk. I nervously followed him to his room. He pulled me on his lap and kissed me. Trembling, he said: "Irene, I'll help you; I'll keep your promise, but you have to be mine whenever I want you." He never hurt me...For me it was a small price to pay for so many lives...He kept his promise. Soon he became used to the three women, for we all waited on him during his meals now. He never knew who else was harbored in his house.

One day in February 1944, he announced that the villa had to be evacuated, for the front was closing in. I knew that the forest is all we had left. Early in March, he left for a three day trip to Lvov and Helen and I moved our little group then in her horse and buggy. We covered three at a time with blankets and things and made a few trips through countless soldiers into the forest, until all were out of the house and some provisions and valuables were gathered for all of us. Our "cover" had been Helen's husband Henry, who sat up front. He was a good fit for the major's extra uniform and spoke a beautiful German. So far, so good...

On May 15th, 1944 the Russians liberated that part of Poland. I never saw the Major again.

On May 4th, 1944 a little boy was born to Aida in the home of a forest ranger. He was named Roman Haller. My birthday is on the 5th...He was my birthday gift. I left the forest at the end of May. I joined the partisans. The war was still on and this was a way for me to inch back home.

In the summer of 1945, I reached a town with a rabbi. There I inquired about the twelve names and the Hailers he knew. They lived close by and on my way to them, I was arrested by

the Soviets for my partisan work. I was imprisoned, but luckily enough to have been able to escape ten days later.

The Hailers and I hugged and kissed. They made inquiries about my family. My father had been killed during the war and my mother and sisters arrested, then released and disappeared, whatever that meant. It was clear that I was not safe in Poland. They smuggled me out to Germany, to a Jewish repatriation camp, and gave me a notarized account of our story, which would prove I had indeed helped Jews, thus entitling me to some help and refuge.

I wanted to go to Israel, where I now felt I belonged and began to learn Hebrew. Scarlet fever infected me though, and I had to remain in the camp until late 1949 when, with the help of HIAS, I was allowed to come to America.

The Yiddish I learned with my Jewish friends helped me in New York. I worked hard, and five years later I became a U.S. citizen.

One day while sitting in a cafeteria a man recognized me from Europe. He was an American soldier who had interviewed me in the camp. He invited me to one dinner, two...six weeks later we were married. He is not Jewish, but today Mr. Opdyke is ill in California and being cared for at the Jewish Hospital free of charge. We had a daughter, Janina, who also lives there not far from me.

In 1982 I was invited by the State of Israel to receive the medal of valor. A tree was planted for me in the Avenue of the Righteous.

In 1985 I went back to Poland for the first time. There I met my sisters, all of whom survived. My mother had died in 1957. On my way back, I stopped in Munich, Germany to meet little Roman. Now married, he has two children, a girl and a boy. He told me about the major's fate...

The major had been kicked out by his family after the war. He was left a pauper living practically on the streets. Aida found him and took him to the Jewish community, where they found him shelter, and in this way, he passed his final years, becoming like an old grandfather to Roman. Schultz, I heard, was killed at the end of the war.

Irene spoke of a lesson we should apply beyond the Holocaust..."We all belong to one big human family and we must help one another, do what is right."

All twelve survived the war.

Source: Opdyke, Irene. From testimony given to the Oral History Archives of the *Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, Inc.*, Miami, Florida, February 2, 1990. Explanation notes and excerpts provided by the interviewer, Jeannette Strelitz.

Unit 9
Liberation and the
Pursuit of Justice

AN AMERICAN SOLDIER WRITES HOME

Paris, France
May 19, 1945

Dear Mother:

In just a few days I will be in an airplane on my way back to the APO to which you write me. Before I leave Europe, I must write this letter and attempt to convey to you that which I saw, felt and gasped at as I saw a war and a frightened peace stagger into a perilous existence. I have seen a dead Germany...If it is not dead, it is certainly ruptured beyond repair. I have seen the beer hall where the era of the inferno and hate began, and as I stood there in the damp moist hall where Nazism was spawned, I heard only the dripping of a bullet pierced beer barrel and the ticking of a clock which had already run out the time of the bastard who made the Munich beer hall a landmark. I saw the retching vomiting of the stone and mortar which had once been listed on maps as Burnheim, Begensberg, Munich, Frankfurt, Augsburg, Linz, and wondered how a civilization could ever again spring from cities so utterly removed from the face of the earth by weapons the enemy taught us to use at Coventry and Canterbury. I have met the Germans, have examined the Storm trooper, his wife and his heritage of hate, and I have learned to hate almost with as much fury as the G.I. who saw his buddy killed at the Bulge, almost as much as the Pole from Bridgeport who lost 100 pounds at Mauthausen, Austria. I have learned now and only now that this war had to be fought. I wish I might have done more. I envy with a bottomless and endless spirit, the American soldier who may tell his grandchildren that with his hands he killed Germans.

That which is in my heart now I want you and those dear to us to know and yet I find myself completely incapable of putting it into letter form...I think if I could sit down in our living room or the den at 11 President, I might be able to convey a portion of the dismal, horrible and yet titanic mural which is Europe today. Unfortunately, I want to be able to do that for months or maybe a year, and by then the passing of time may dim the memory. Some of the scenes will live just so long as I do -- some of the sounds, like the dripping beer, like the firing of a Russian tommy gun, will always bring back the thought of something I may try to forget, but never will be able to do.

For example, when I go to the Boston Symphony, when I hear waves of applause, no matter what the music is, I shall be traveling back to a town near Linz where I heard applause unequalled in history, and where I was allowed to see the ordeal which our fellow brothers and sisters of the human race have endured. To me Poland is no longer the place where Chopin composed, or where a radio station held out for three weeks -- to me Poland is the place from which the prisoners of Mauthausen came, when I think of the Czechs, I will think of those who were butchered here, and that goes for the Jews, the Russians, the Austrians, the people of 25 different lands -- yes, even the Germans who passed through this Willow Run of death. This was Mauthausen. I want you to remember the word ... I want you to know, I want you to never forget or let our disbelieving friends forget, that your flesh and blood saw this. This was no movie, no printed page. Your son saw this with his own eyes and in doing this aged 10 years.

Mauthausen was built with a half-million rocks which 150,000 prisoners -- 18,000 was the capacity -- carried up on their backs from a quarry 800 feet below. They carried it up steps so steep that a Captain and I walked it once and were winded, without a load. They carried granite and made 8 trips a day . . . and if they stumbled, the S.S. men pushed them into the quarry. There are 235 steps, covered with blood. They called it the steps of death. I saw the shower room (twice or three times the size of our bathroom) a chamber lined with tile and topped with sprinklers where 150 prisoners at a time were disrobed and ordered in for a shower which never gushed forth from the

sprinklers because the chemical was gas.

When they ran out of gas, they merely sucked all the air out of the room. I talked to the Jews who worked in the crematory, one room adjacent, where six and seven bodies at a time were burned. They gave these jobs to the Jews because they all died anyhow, and they didn't want the rest of the prisoners to know their own fate. The Jews knew theirs, you see. I saw their emaciated bodies in piles like cords of wood...the stench of death, the decomposition of human flesh, of uncontrolled body fluids, of burned, charred bones. I saw the living skeletons, some of whom regardless of our medical corps work, will die and be in piles like that in the next few days. Malnutrition doesn't stop the day that food is administered. Don't get the idea that these people were all derelicts, all just masses of people...some of them doctors, authors, some of them American citizens, a scattered few were G.I.'s. A Navy Lt. still lives to tell the story. I saw where they lived, I saw where the sick died, three and four in a bed, no toilets, no nothing. I saw the look in their eyes, I shall never stop seeing the expression in the eyes of the anti-Franco former prisoners who have been given the job of guarding the S.S. men who were captured.

And how does the applause fit in. Mother, I walked through countless cell blocks filled with sick dying people -- 300 in a room twice the size of our living room and as we walked in --there was a ripple of applause and then an inspiring burst of applause and cheers, and men who could not stand up sat up and whispered though they tried to shout it -- vive L'Americansky...Vive L'Americansky...the applause, the cheers, those faces of men with legs the size and shape of rope, with ulcerated bodies, weeping with a kind of joy you and I will never, I hope, know. Vive L'Americansky...I got a cousin in Milwaukee...We thought you guys would come...Vive L'Americansky...Applause -- gaunt, hopeless faces at last filled with hope. One younger man asked me something in Polish which I could not understand but I did detect the word "Yid"...I asked an interpreter what he said -- the interpreter blushed and finally said..."He wants to know if you are a Jew." When I smiled and stuck out my mitt and said "yes" ...he was unable to speak or show the feeling that was in his heart. As I walked away, I suddenly realized that this had been the first time I had shaken hands with my right hand. That, my dear, was Mauthausen. There but for the Grace of God....

I will write more letters in days to come. I want to write one on the Russians...I want to write and tell you how I sat next to Patton and Tulbukhin at a banquet at the Castle of Franz Joseph. I want to write and tell you how the Germans look in defeat, how Munich looked in death, but those things sparkle with excitement and make good reading. This is my Mauthausen letter. I hope you will see fit to let Bill Braude and the folks read it. I would like to think that all the Kacheheimers and all the Friendlys and all our good Providence friends would read it. Then I want you to put it away and every Yom Kippur I want you to take it out and make your grandchildren read it.

For, if there had been no America, we, all of us, might well have carried granite at Mauthausen.

All my love, F.F.*

*F.F. stood for the initials of noted journalist, Fred Friendly

REPORT ON GERMAN MURDER MILLS

Joseph Pulitzer, the editor of the St. Louis Post Dispatch, was one of a number of journalists who traveled to several liberated concentration camps in Germany after Allied troops had arrived. His report on Buchenwald and Dachau -- like stories by other prominent civilian journalists -- was featured in Army Talks, the weekly publication from the Education Division of the European Theater of Operations, United States Army, that informed American soldiers in Europe in depth about important issues.

- From Joseph Pulitzer, "Report on German Murder Mills," Army Talks 4 (July 10, 1945): 7-11.

Report on German Murder Mills

by Joseph Pulitzer

I was dismayed within an hour after getting home from my European trip to learn that there are still Americans who are saying, in effect, "This talk of atrocities is all propaganda. There may have been something wrong here and there but the German people would not stand for such things. It is outrageous to have these atrocity pictures forced upon us by the newspapers and the movie houses."

All I can say in reply is that persons who talk this way are tragically mistaken. They should visit their family doctors and have their heads and perhaps their hearts examined. I should say that 99 percent of what has appeared in the American press has been understatement. I urge the skeptics who because of prejudice or other reasons refuse to believe the truth of the atrocity stories and the many good people of America who have difficulty in believing them, not to take my word for it but to see the Signal Corps moving pictures which I trust will be shown. No honest person can refuse to believe the evidence they portray from a dozen or more different concentration camps, all of them telling the same unbelievable story.

What It Would Be Like in the US

These camps, there were about 100* of them in all of Europe, as the reader knows, were filled with "political enemies." I think there is significance in that word "enemies." Perhaps the easiest way to bring it home to the American reader is to remind him that if the Nazi system were in effect in St. Louis, where there happens to be a Republican administration in office, every Democrat and every independent voter and every member of a labor union and every Jew and every person of Russian or Polish extraction and many ministers would find himself or herself rotting to death down at Jefferson Barracks. There would be some six to sixteen of them -- the women in separate barracks - - sleeping in a bunk the size of a large American double bed. The great majority of them would die of starvation. American surgeons stated that the adult corpses weighed only 60 to 80 pounds, having in practically all cases, lost 50 per cent to 60 per cent of their normal weight, and also having shrunk in height.

Some people are just naturally tough and a very few would survive in spite of starvation, dysentery and raging typhus epidemics. Some 125 of them would have died last night. If the picture of Dachau were repeated there would be standing on the Missouri Pacific spur which runs through the camp some 39 box cars recently arrived from another prison camp. Upon being opened, the contents would consist of the cadavers lying three or four tiers deep, with a few still alive among them, of prisoners who had been on the road without food or water for 20 days. It was the sight of this train which we newspaper men all saw, which, we were told, so enraged our troops when they overran the camp that they showed no mercy whatever for the German guards and troops who were still to be found.

*Editors note: There were actually over 1,000 concentration camps throughout Europe and parts of North Africa.

Watch "The Hook"

At these same Jefferson Barracks there would be found, as we found it at Buchenwald, the much-pictured and much-described strangling chamber, with some 40 hooks protruding from the walls of a room perhaps 30 feet square. It was here that those, who for one reason or another had incurred the displeasure of the camp authorities, would not be hanged, for hanging breaks the neck and brings death comparatively quickly, but literally choked to death. When the bodies were lowered, if there was any life left in them, the victims were clubbed to death with that much pictured club resembling a large rolling pin. The bodies were raised in an elevator and cremated. In this crematory appeared this typically sadistic German expression, inscribed on an artistic bronze tablet high on the wall and seemingly addressing itself to the victims in the ovens. Translated it read: "Let not worms eat my body. Let it be consumed by fire flame. I love always warmth and light. Therefore burn, do not bury me."

Again, at these same Jefferson Barracks there would be found a well-designed, well-built brick building containing in its center section a number of efficiently designed gas-operated crematory ovens. The reader may say to himself, as I at first did, why not a crematory in a large camp built to contain some 32,000 prisoners? The visitor to the barracks, however, would soon change his mind.

Reception for Death

At one end of this rather handsome building and adjoining the crematory he would find a small ante-room containing a desk and a chair. At this desk sat a reception clerk. Usually the desk was decorated with a small vase of flowers -- those flowers that grow so beautifully in beautiful Germany. The reception clerk would record the names and numbers of a group of prisoners. My estimate is -- and it is only an estimate -- that the group would consist of not more than 20 or 30 persons. Probably the first thing that would catch their eye after noticing the flowers on the desk would be a neat gilt sign over a door reading "Spritz Bad," or, in English, "shower bath."

Mass Production Murder

The new arrivals would each be given a piece of soap and a towel and, after disrobing, would be directed to enter the shower bath. The door through which they entered the shower room, a room perhaps 20 feet square, would then be closed behind them. They may or may not have noticed that the door -- I did not measure it exactly -- was some 10 or 12 inches thick. Certainly they would not have noticed the pipes overhead connected with the pipes leading to the crematory ovens, nor would they have noticed that on one side of their shower room was a round glass circular peephole, some five inches in diameter, with a sliding metal plate to block off vision when that seemed desirable. This shower bath was, of course, the much-described gas chamber. The nozzles overhead discharged not water but gas. Indeed, there were no water pipes that we could see. It did not take long to dispose of the bodies in the adjoining crematory. Crematory and shower baths don't mix, and there is not the slightest doubt in my mind but that it was a well-designed plan to "liquidate" the undesirables and to leave no tell-tale evidence being.

The Persistent "Why"

Why, I am often asked, did the Nazis take the trouble to starve, strangle and gas their prisoners to death? Why did they not shoot them? I do not know the answer to that question. I can only guess and my guess is that, having confined the undesirables within the limits of a concentration camp, they felt that they had better get what work they could out of them on adjoining farms or in nearby factories, and that when they were too weak to work, they merely let

them die, with the strangling and gassing processes used on the obstreperous and on the Jews.

Is all this unbelievable? Perhaps it is. To a normal American these facts are very difficult to believe. I can only say that the groups of newspaper and magazine editors, whom I accompanied to Europe, made the most painstaking and scrupulous effort to sift the true from the false, to dismiss exaggerations or unprovable assertions of the prisoners and to present the true value of the evidence disclosed. I can only say that inspecting these two prisoners' camps at Buchenwald and Dachau I leaned over backwards in using my four senses -- those of seeing, hearing, touching and smelling.

I have seen the bodies and the crematories and the gas chamber and many other things with my own eyes. I have seen the sinister appearance of one black barracks after another at Buchenwald, with the intervening streets of side-walks paved with small cobblestones, without a blade of grass or a tree to be seen anywhere. I have seen the pathetically sick lying on the floor on clean mattresses and with clean bedclothes and wearing clean clothing, all recently supplied by the United States Army. They were lying on the floor because cots were not yet available.

We were told that the great majority of them would die. When we entered the room, all but one of them were too sick even to raise their heads. All they could do was to roll their eyes in our direction.

"Because I am a Jew"

There was one exception. He was a Polish lad of perhaps 17. His hair was closely cropped; his face thin and very grey, his black eyes blazed as he told us his story. He spoke pretty good English. He was strong enough to be able to sit up, but from time to time he would bring the back of his hand up to his forehead to wipe off the sweat of extreme fatigue. Pathetically enough, the Signal Corps men were taking flashlight photographs, as they did wherever we went, and whenever a flashlight would go off, the boy's entire body would shiver.

We asked him why he was in this camp. He replied: "Because I am a Jew. You understand that? Because I am a Jew."

I have seen a half-acre of the dead, the crop of the previous night who perished at Dachau. I have seen and I took intense satisfaction in seeing lying near this field of dead, but separated from them, as though to avoid contamination of these helpless victims of the SS, eight bodies of SS prison guards. They were dressed in camouflaged coats and pants with brown and green spots on them, not unlike the camouflage outfit of our Army. There were various explanations of how they happened to be there. Some said they had been killed when our troops overran the camp for days before. Others said that the inmates had killed them. I shall always remember with intense satisfaction looking down at one hideous wretch.

"How Could this Have Happened to Me?"

He must have been even more hideous in life than in death. He had curly red hair and very blue eyes which seemed to stare up at me and to say, "How on earth could this thing have happened to me, a member of the SS?" We shall not have to trouble about trying those particular rats.

At Dachau it was a common sight to see bodies, two or three of them at a time, lying out in the street. They were still dying off so fast that as they died the surviving inmates would throw them outside to await the arrival of a pushcart which would take them away.

Joke -- SS Variety

In demonstration of one of the SS's little jokes I have seen a prisoner lie on his stomach with his hands theoretically tied behind his back wriggling along on the ground. I have seen another

demonstrating how they would tie a man's wrists together behind his back and then hang him up by his wrists for perhaps an hour, letting all his weight fall on his shoulders. Try it yourself and imagine what it would do to your shoulders. I have heard the testimony of many prisoners and of honorable American officers who had preceded us into Dachau by about for days.

I have heard a glorious and sublime sound, one which I shall never forget. As our group walked into a hospital ward of post-operative patients lying in double deck bunks and with everything, thanks to our Army doctors, spick and span, the patients observed the uniforms of the officers who preceded us and perhaps recognized the appearance of ourselves as American civilians. They tried to applaud and they tried to cheer, but they were so weak that the sound they made was almost plaintive. They were cheering the Americans. Hearing that sound made me proud to be an American.

The Unforgettable Smell

I have touched the emaciated hands of a considerable number of prisoners and of several hospital patients who insisted on shaking hands with the Americans, and I have smelt the unforgettable stench of the scores of bodies piled up in two rooms of the Dachau crematory which the Army had not yet had an opportunity to dispose of. On another nice, spring day I smelt the stench too, that came out of an open window of a bunk house at Buchenwald which the Army had evacuated, had not yet had an opportunity to disinfect and which they had locked up. I believe that peering into that dark, filthy pesthouse, with its very few windows and its bunks still filled with the bedding of the inmates and smelling that smell, shocked me worse than anything else. Curiously enough, the bodies I was to see later shocked me comparatively little, for these poor creatures were so emaciated, literally down to skin and bones, that they appeared unreal. It was difficult to believe that they were corpses of human beings. They rather resembled caricatures of human beings.

Overwhelming Evidence

I have found exaggeration in previously published reports to be absolutely negligible. The evidence of the atrocities is so overwhelming that I feel, as we newspaper men all did, that it would weaken the case to report anything that was not obviously the truth. I will cite one such example. The wife of the commandant at Buchenwald had herself made a lamp shade and other objects of tanned human skin, much of it bearing tattoo marks. Photographs proving this have been published in the newspapers and should appear in the forthcoming Signal Corps film. The report was published in the United States that these pieces of skin were removed, probably under local anesthetic by the grafting process familiar to all surgeons, from living victims. I found no evidence to indicate the victims were alive.

Gen. Eisenhower gave us the assignment to come to Europe and to report the existence of atrocities in Germany. I have met Gen. Eisenhower and I know that he is not a revengeful man. His purpose in giving us this assignment was to make the American people realize the incredible extent of the Nazi crimes so that those who were guilty would be justly punished -- and here I repeat and emphasize the words "justly punished," not by Gestapo-like lynchings but by fair trials where a guilty man is found guilty and an innocent man has a fair opportunity to prove his innocence. If this report will help to bring about that result, I shall feel that my trip in Europe was justified.

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. 1945: The Year of Liberation. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1995, pages 151-156. © United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

EXCERPTS FROM EYEWITNESSES

The United States and the Soviet Union fought together as Allies in World War II. In 1944-45, the armies of the two countries moved toward Germany from opposite directions. The American Army moved East across Germany toward Berlin in early 1945. As the troops progressed they liberated scores of concentration camps. Soldiers of all ranks were amazed and horrified at what they saw.

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In the words of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe, 1945:

The same day I saw my first horror camp. It was near the town of Gotha. I have never felt able to describe my emotional reactions when I first came face to face with indisputable evidence of Nazi brutality and ruthless disregard of every shred of decency. Up to that time I had known about it only generally or through secondary sources. I am certain, however, that I have never at any other time experienced an equal sense of shock.

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 at first hand about these things in case there ever grew up at home the belief or assumption that "the stories of Nazi brutality were just propaganda." Some members of my visiting party were unable to go through the ordeal. I not only did so but as soon as I returned to Patton's headquarters that evening I sent communications to both Washington and London, urging the two governments to send instantly to Germany a random group of newspaper editors and representative groups from the national legislatures. I felt that the evidence should be immediately placed before the Americans and British publics in a fashion that would leave no room for cynical doubt.

In the words of David Malachowsky, Staff Sergeant, VII Corps, 104th Infantry Division, 329th Medical Battalion company D:

As we kept moving in closer, about three miles from the town, we came across oh, maybe eight to ten huge warehouses set on a field. We could see these from a great distance away and as we got closer we went to these warehouses and were amazed to find what was in there. We more or less broke in. They were unattended. There were no guards or anything. The Germans were pulling out before us as we kept moving along. We got into these warehouses and it was an astounding sight. They were each approximately eight to ten stories high, and each floor had a different food commodity on it, as far as the eye could see. Thousands of boxes, say, tins of salmon, would be in one, sardines in another. Another floor had chocolate ... chocolate from all the countries the Germans had been in. It seems that every time they would literally strip the country of all the commodities and ship it back and this evidently was one of the depots where all these supplies were stored, commodities, foods, primarily wines of all sorts in the baskets and all. I remember I was impressed by the fact that there was enough food there to feed the entire countryside. Of course, we "liberated" lots of cases. The liquor we took out with us and the wines and I remember taking cans of sardines and having trouble opening them. But at any rate, in contrast to what we found when we went into Nordhausen ... That's what really bugged me. Here was all this food stocked in warehouses and yet three miles away there were people eating horses' heads, because that's all they had. People, who literally had not eaten or been given water for weeks at a time.

We had no knowledge at all of what we were going to find. When we came to the source of this big, heavy odor, we had gone through the factory, through the town and now on the other side of the town here was Nordhausen, the camp. It had barbed wire fences and all. We had no concept of what we'd find there. We heard machine guns fire as we came into the one end of the camp. We discovered later that that machine gun fire was the last German troops pulling out, indiscriminately machine-gunning anyone who was still able to stand on their feet, any one of the prisoners in the camp. But there weren't too many of these, because when we actually got into the camp through the barbed wire, we saw row upon row of bodies just stacked like cordwood maybe five feet high as far as the eye could see. We later were told there were approximately five or six thousand inmates of whom just a handful were able to ambulate. All the others had either been shot down or were in an advanced state of emaciation. Even though they were working in the factory they'd be herded through the gate, through the town into the underground factory and herded back again like cattle. No food was given to them and as they died of hunger that's where they lay. The guards would stack them in these rows. And that's what we found when we came through the gate. The stench was coming from this area. This was the smell that covered the entire countryside ... for miles around.

And yet, when we asked these people in the town, the civilians, a couple of days later, how could they permit such things to exist, they said they did not know there was a camp like that next to them. They were just townspeople who minded their own business, etc. etc.

The first thing we saw after the barbed wire entanglement that we went through was, like, cordwood stacks, but as we got closer we saw they were human beings, were bodies, totally emaciated, many of them naked, no clothes. The ones that had clothes had the striped uniforms which we learned after a while were the typical uniforms of the concentration camps. The ones that were naked were just bones. I have pictures that I took which I look at once in a while to remind me it actually happened. Just bones. Eyes -- all you saw were wide, huge eyes because the sockets were shrunken and I just can't describe it. The thing that really bugged me was bodies were lying there stacked up, but when we saw movement, like three bodies down, an arm was moving, you realized that among these people, there were living people who were in these piles. So immediately we got to work trying to separate, trying to pull out the ones that were alive and that's when we realized that we're gonna have to give them medical attention. Being with the medics I left half my platoon there to untangle them, get them on litters. Meanwhile other groups came up, other medical battalions and units; infantry men dropped their rifles, dropped their guns and began sorting these people out. I took the first load of trucks and ambulances back to our clearing station, about a mile or so out of town from the camp where we had set up a station, for the handling of wounded soldiers, primarily those who'd been hit in battle. But we stopped all that and began taking care of them from a medical standpoint. These were all political prisoners and they were lumped together indiscriminately. We ran across Poles, Russians, Frenchmen, Spaniards. You name it. It just seemed as though it was a microcosm of the entire world and each one of those nationalities had Jewish representation. In other words, I remember talking to someone who looked about, oh, I would say, just, just old and emaciated. It turned out to be a seventeen year old girl. We spoke in Yiddish, too, I remember this very vividly. And she kept asking for water, "Wasser." But we had learned by then if we give them water orally it would kill them.

In the words of Dr. Philip Lief, Captain First Army, 3rd Auxiliary Surgical Group:

Our hospital went into Buchenwald about two hours after the Germans had left. The first sight that greeted me when I entered the camp with my operating room truck was a horse and wagon. And as I looked into the contents of the wagon, I could see it was filled with human bones. One

could recognize the humeri, the femurs, the spinal bones and the pelvis and skulls of many of the deceased prisoners who had been in the camp. Where this wagon was going I really did not know, but I was horrified at this sight.

I had studied German literature while an undergraduate at Harvard College. I knew about the culture of the German people and I could not, could not really believe that this was happening in this day and age; that in the twentieth century a cultured people like the Germans would undertake something like this. It was just beyond our imagination.

Many of the people were asking about their kinfolk, a brother, a father, a mother -- and wanted to know what happened to the rest of the family. Unfortunately, in many cases, most of the members of their families had perished in Buchenwald concentration camps or in other similar camps. Most of the inmates had signs of malnutrition. Those who had been at the camp for longer periods of time showed more intense signs of malnutrition. That meant very little skin on the face, sunken bones, eyes, eyeballs sunken in their eye sockets, very little muscle tissue on the legs or arms. One could see all the bones of the thoracic cage, the ribs were very prominent. If the inmate took off his shirt you could see the spinal column very, very prominently. The mental disturbance of the inmates was very, very apparent. Many of them did not realize the significance of having been liberated. Many of them spoke to us and said that they were ordered that morning to go on a forced march and they were sure they were going to be shot at that time, because they had heard rumors that the Americans were approaching. The Germans left in a hurry and the inmates were free and wandered about without any purpose, aimlessly, not realizing fully that finally they had been liberated.

In the words of Leon Bass, Sergeant, 183rd Combat Engineer Battalion:

We had gone through the Bulge, we had seen the horrors of war: death, people who were wounded. Many of us came very close to losing our lives during that period. But we had no knowledge, and our first encounter came one day when we were asked to go to a place outside of Weimar, Germany. It wasn't a mission of battle, it was just to go. And we came to this place, which was somewhat like a security place, a place you might see in any urban center that was a prison. But we were totally unprepared -- at least I was, for what I encountered when I went into Buchenwald. The outside was very beautiful. It was in a suburban-type community, the grass was well manicured and cared for. And then you go inside, and then all of a sudden the stark horror of it all strikes you. And that's the way I encountered it at the age of 19. When I walked in I saw what should be considered human beings, that had been reduced to the point where they were just merely surviving. I called them the walking dead, because I felt they had reached the point of no return.

We all expressed horror. We were aghast at what we saw. How deep that feeling was is hard to say. I cannot even speak for myself, in terms of how deep that hit me because I felt that I pushed it aside. I sort of covered it up; I didn't want to deal with that. It was too traumatic. And like most people, you have to find some kind of security blanket, some way to insulate yourself from the horror. And I sort of pushed it away, and I never talked about it at all.

There were those survivors who hadn't been there very long, who were much more healthy. But then I got to those who had probably been there for some time or who had gone through the tortures and the dehumanizing kind of things. There was a variety there, you might call it a smorgasbord. I talked to a young fellow who was there who spoke very good English. He said that at first the camp had held something like 300,000. But when we came on the scene it was less than 20,000. And we talked to him and he said that the Germans got rid of political prisoners first. They were really frightened of them, and then they began to systematically work on Jews. Jews had high priority for extermination. And of course Gypsies, and others. I had been told by this young man that most of the Jews had been exterminated.

We saw the whole works. The crematorium ... There was a fellow there who spoke English -a young fellow -- and he must have been a student before being incarcerated. He walked around with us. And as we walked I looked at different things -- people defecating in the holes in the ground, there were no tissues, no sense of dignity -- just go ahead. Someone retching out of a window, where they had been encapsulated in such large numbers in a small space in the barracks. I saw clothing, it must have been baby clothing that they had piled up for their own use, later I guess. Then we saw the crematorium where the dead bodies were outside, stacked up like cordwood, and we went into the crematorium and you could see the residue in the ovens -- the rib cages, the skulls. And it was so hard to believe -- to try to understand why. What did these people do that merited this kind of treatment? And it boggles the mind when you think that it had gone on for almost ten years before we got into the war! Why wasn't it dealt with? Why did nobody scream and shout, "Stop?" They never did. And we saw the laboratory where they were experimenting on different people, and the parts of the body. And then there was the torture chamber, and you could see the stains of the blood on the stone, and on the wall. They even had the instruments. Some of them were still there.

In the words of Ben Berch, Private First Class, 102nd Infantry Division, 701st Tank Battalion:

There was an area near the Elbe River called Gardelegen, a small town. It was just another area, nothing special. Outside of the town there was a red barn and it veered with the wind. And there was smoke coming up from this and, somehow, it didn't look right, so it was examined and it was found that there were over a thousand people, dead, in this place. Dead! What happened was, the SS in that town heard the American guns, they heard us coming, and they knew, as all the way down the line they had known, that we would be there. So, in this town, they decided they wouldn't give the slave laborers the satisfaction of surviving. So they herded all the slave laborers from the town, over a thousand, into this barn. And they set them on fire, they put hay and gasoline in there, and if anyone tried to get out, they were machine-gunned. So there were a thousand.

Now here were men who had been through some very fierce fighting. Men who had been in tanks that were torn open, pieces of metal ripped right through them. They had seen all this, had been through everything, had been burning in tanks, tanks are very flammable; a lot of them, a lot of men had burned to death. All kinds of horrors these men had been through, beyond everything. But this wasn't war. This goes beyond: "You hit him, he hits you." This was total horror.

In the words of Chaplain Major Judah Nadich, US Army, American Rabbi, adviser on Jewish affairs to General Eisenhower:

Now, the first concentration camp that I visited in my new duties [as adviser on Jewish affairs to General Eisenhower] was Dachau. I want to make it clear that I did not visit Dachau upon its liberation, or shortly thereafter. Yet, when I did visit Dachau, it had not as yet been prettied up. The corpses had been removed and buried, and the sick had been taken to hospitals, and those who were comparatively well, even though suffering from the effects of malnutrition and from various other conditions in the concentration camps, had been moved to displaced persons camps.

When I came into Dachau, I saw soon after entering a large enclosure in which there were dog kennels. In my naivete, I thought that the dog kennels must have been kept for the pets of the German officers of Dachau.

I was soon disillusioned when I was told that these kennels were for guard dogs who were deliberately kept famished, and a prisoner in the camp, for some infraction of the rules, in some

cases not even for an infraction of the rules, was tossed into that enclosure. The dogs were let loose to leap upon the poor victim and the victim was torn apart. That was my introduction to what I was to see later in Dachau.

I moved on in the camp and came to the anteroom to the gas chamber, and the anteroom had some hooks for the hanging of clothing with a large sign in German on the door leading into the gas chamber itself reading "shower bath." I went through that door into the gas chamber and tried to imagine what it must have been like to have been packed like sardines into that area and suddenly to have begun smelling the gas that was to take away one's life.

One cannot really imagine it, because one cannot put oneself in that position. But then I looked at the inside of the door, and I saw thousands of scratches upon it, scratches that must have been made by the fingernails of so many men and women and children because the scratches covered the entire door from high up all the way down to a low position.

I went from the gas chamber into the next area, which was the crematorium, and looked into the mouths of the furnaces, into which the bodies were shoveled, one after the other, and burned in the fires.

My attention was suddenly caught by some sacks that looked like potato sacks standing at the side of the crematorium. I went over to the sacks to see what they were. On the front of them was stamped the German word for fertilizer, and I looked into the sacks and what I saw there I soon realized was human ash that had been taken from the furnaces in the crematoria, ready for shipment to German farms in order to make the soil more fertile to grow more crops for the Herrenvolk [master race].

I plunged my arm into one of the sacks up to the elbow and pressed the "fertilizer," the human ash, with the fingers of my hand into my palm and ground it into my palm so that I might never forget what I had seen there.

From Edward R. Murrow's CBS Radio Broadcast from London, April 15, 1945:

... Permit me to tell you what you would have seen and heard had you been with me on Thursday. It will not be pleasant listening. If you are at lunch or if you have no appetite to hear what Germans have done, now is a good time to switch off the radio, for I propose to tell you of Buchenwald.

It is on a small hill about four miles outside Weimar, and it was one of the largest concentration camps in Germany. And it was built to last ...

I looked out over that mass of men to the green fields beyond where well-fed Germans were plowing. A German, Fritz Kersheimer, came up and said, "May I show you around the camp? I've been here ten years." An Englishman stood to attention saying, "May I introduce myself? Delighted to see you. And can you tell me when some of our blokes will be along?" I told him, "Soon," and asked to see one of the barracks. It happened to be occupied by Czechoslovakians.

When I entered, men crowded around, tried to lift me to their shoulders. They were too weak. Many of them could not get out of bed. I was told that this building had once stabled 80 horses; there were 1,200 men in it, five to a bunk. The stink was beyond all description ...

There was a German trailer which must have contained another 50 [bodies], but it wasn't possible to count them. The clothing was piled in a heap against the wall. It appeared that most of the men and boys had died of starvation; they had not been executed. But the manner of death seemed unimportant - murder had been done at Buchenwald. God alone knows how many men and boys have died there during the last 12 years. Thursday I was told that there were more than 20,000 in the camp; there had been as many as 60,000. Where are they now?

In the words of Isabella Leitner, Auschwitz survivor:

Tanks, trucks, ammunition carriers, blood spattered soldiers, bedraggled soldiers--worn, dying, on horses, on feet, pitiful, not brave, just spent, wretched looking. They have no nationality, no politics, no ideology. They are just battle weary and worn. Who are they? What do they want from us? Why don't they go home and get bandaged with gauze and love? Men, you need care. Do not spend the little strength you have on killing us. Seek solace, not hate. Seek out your children. They need your love. They need to give you theirs. Stop killing. Stop it.

But wait. Wait. These men are wearing strange uniforms. They are not German or Hungarian. They are unfamiliar. And there is a red flag -- red, red.

What is red?

Red is not German, red is Russian.

We are ... we are -- What? What are we? We are ... we are ... we are liberated!

Barefoot, wearing only a single garment each, we all surge out into the brutal January frost and snow of eastern Germany and run toward the troops. Shrieks of joy. Shrieks of pain. Shrieks of deliverance. All the pent-up hysteria accumulated over years of pain and terror suddenly released.

I have never since heard sounds like those we uttered, sounds released from the very depths of our being. The sheer force of it must have scattered the ashes of Auschwitz to every corner of the universe, for our cries of joy suddenly turned into a bitter wail: "We are liberated! But where are they all? They are all dead!"

*

Following the War an international tribunal was convened at Nuremberg in Germany to consider the crimes against humanity committed by the Nazi regime. This was the first time in history there had been an attempt in international law to define such crimes.

According to the Nuremberg Tribunal:

The following acts, or any of them, are crimes coming within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal for which there shall be individual responsibility...(c) CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population before or during the war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.

Leaders, organizers, instigators and accomplices participating in the formulation or execution of a common plan or conspiracy to commit any of the foregoing crimes are responsible for all acts performed by any persons in execution of such plan.

Source: Days of Remembrance: A Department of Defense Guide for Annual Commemorative Observances (Second Edition). Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, page 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 89, 112 .

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The Nuremberg War Crimes Trial

With the defeat of Germany in 1945, the world saw firsthand photographs of the concentration camps. The Allies made plans to bring to justice the Nazis responsible for what happened during the war.

Millions of Germans and other Europeans were considered eligible for possible prosecution. Of these, only a small number were actually prosecuted, the most famous in the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal. Nineteen major Nazis were brought to trial. The defense questioned the legality of Germans being tried by the Allies. Even today, some people doubt that "war crimes" can be defined in legal terms adequate enough to prosecute people's actions. The Germans responded by arguing that they followed orders of the government and that they could not be tried for breaking laws that did not exist until after the war. The defense charged that Allied airmen were also guilty of war crimes when they bombed German cities to terrorize civilians. Germans spoke of the fire-bombing of Dresden.

Many Germans, according to surveys, regarded the photographs of atrocities in the concentration and death camps with disbelief and without sorrow. This refusal to accept the reality of the death camps continues today with the publication of books such as Arthur Butz's *The Hoax of the Twentieth Century*. Butz denies that the camps served as death factories and that 6 million Jews were killed. He claims that the Holocaust never happened, that it is a Zionist propaganda hoax.

Many Germans could not understand why they were being prosecuted. Consider this exchange between a German prisoner and his Allied captors quoted in *The Jew as Pariah* by Ron H. Feldman:

- Q: Did you kill people in the camp?
 A: Yes.
 Q: Did you poison them with gas?
 A: Yes.
 Q: Did you bury them alive?
 A: It sometimes happened.
 Q: Were the victims picked from all over Europe?
 A: I suppose so.
 Q: Did you personally help kill people?
 A: Absolutely not. I was only paymaster in the camp.
 Q: What did you think of what was going on?
 A: It was hard at first but we got used to it.
 Q: Did you know the Russians will hang you?
 A: (Bursting into tears) Why should they? What have I done?

November 12, 1944

As the trials proceeded, Holocaust victims slowly began to reintegrate their lives. It soon became clear to many survivors that they had lost almost their entire families. Many experienced the normal responses of loss and depression. Many survivors were placed in Displaced Persons (DP) camps while the Allies discussed the issue of where these people were to go. Poland and Germany were no longer nations in which most Jews felt they had any future. Some Jews boarded ships and attempted to run the British blockade of Palestine. Many were caught and sent back to DP camps. But in 1948, the United Nations voted for partition of Palestine, resulting in the creation of the state of Israel. In the ensuing years, many Jews went to Israel; and when immigration barriers were lifted in the early 1950s many Jews came to North and South America, most especially the United States, where survivors of the Holocaust began new lives.

The four counts of the Indictment were (1) Common Plan or Conspiracy; (2) Crimes against Peace; (3) War Crimes, (4) Crimes Against Humanity.

Defendants

Wilhelm Frick: Reich Minister of the Interior and Director of the Central Office for all Occupied Territories:

"The whole Indictment rests on the assumption of a fictitious conspiracy."

Guilty 2, 3, 4

Death

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Derived from *In Pursuit of Justice: Examining the Evidence of the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, pages 220-230. Copyright © United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Walter Funk: Press Chief, later Minister of Economics: "I have never in my life done anything which could contribute to such an Indictment. If I have been made guilty of the acts which stand in the Indictment, through error or ignorance, then my guilt is a human tragedy, and not a crime."
 Guilty 2, 3, 4 Life in prison

Hjalmar Schacht: Reich Minister of Economics and President of the Reichsbank: "I do not understand at all why I have been accused."
 Acquitted

Karl Donitz: Commander in Chief of the German Navy: "None of these Indictment counts concerns me in the least—typical American humor."
 Guilty 2, 3 10 years

Erich Raeder: Admiral of the German Navy
 Guilty 1, 2, 3 Life in prison

Baldur Von Schirach: Reich Governor and Leader of Youth: "The whole misfortune came from racial politics."
 Guilty 4 20 years

Fritz Sauckel: Reich Governor and General in the SS: ". . . The terrible happenings in the concentration camps has shaken me deeply."
 Guilty 3, 4 Death

Alfred Jodl: Army General and Chief of Staff to General Keitel: "I regret the mixture of justified accusations and political propaganda."
 Guilty 1, 2, 3, 4 Death

Martin Bormann: Chief of Staff to Rudolf Hess and Hitler's secretary. Bormann disappeared and has never been found. He is reputed to be in South America.
 Guilty 3, 4 Death (in absentia)

Franz Von Papen: Reich Vice-Chancellor and Ambassador in Vienna and Turkey: "I believe that paganism and years in totalitarianism bear the main guilt."
 Acquitted

Alfred Von Seyss-Inquart: Deputy Governor General of occupied Poland and the Netherlands: "Last act of the tragedy of the second World War, I hope!"
 Guilty 2, 3, 4 Death

Albert Speer: Reich Minister for Armament and Munitions. "The trial is necessary. There is a common responsibility for such horrible crimes . . . even in an authoritarian system."
 Guilty 3, 4 20 years

Konstantin Von Neurath: Foreign Minister before Ribbentrop and Protector of Bohemia and Moravia. "I was always against punishment without the possibility of defense."
 Guilty 1, 2, 3, 4 15 years

Hans Fritzsche: Director of Propaganda: "It is the most terrible Indictment of all times."
 Acquitted

Hermann Goering: Chief of the Air Force, ranked second after Hitler: "The victor will always be the judge, and the vanquished the accused."
 Guilty 1, 2, 3, 4 Death

Rudolf Hess: Reich Minister Without Portfolio, ranked third after Goering: "I can't remember."

Guilty 1, 2 L i f e i n p r i s o n _____

Joachim Von Ribbentrop: Foreign Minister: "The Indictment is directed against the wrong people."

Guilty 1, 2, 3, 4 D e a t h _____

Ernst Kaltenbrunner: Head of the Security Police: "I do not feel guilty of any war crimes; I have only done my duty as an intelligence organ."

Guilty 3, 4 _____ Death

Wilhelm Keitel: Army General and Chief of the German High Command: "For a soldier, orders are orders."

G u i l t y 1 , 2 , 3 , 4 D e a t h

Alfred Rosenberg: Nazi Party Leader for Ideology and Foreign Policy: "I must reject an Indictment for conspiracy."

G u i l t y 1 , 2 , 3 , 4 D e a t h

Hans Frank: Reich Minister Without Portfolio: "I regard this trial as a God-willed world court, destined to examine and put an end to terrible era of suffering under Adolf Hitler."

Guilty 3, 4 _____ Death

Julius Streicher: Editor of *Der Sturmer*, an anti-Jewish newspaper and a favorite of Hitler: "This trial is a triumph of World Jewry."

Guilty 4 Death

Questions for Discussion

1. Robinson Jeffers, the poet, has written:

"Justice and mercy are human dreams; they do not concern the birds nor the fish nor eternal God."

How could justice really be served after the Holocaust?

2. Do you think it was possible for survivors to forget their past and forgive those who committed acts of atrocity against them? Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal wrote a novel called *The Sunflower* in which just such an issue is raised. A 21-year old soldier lies on his deathbed just after the war. Wiesenthal is called in to hear the soldier's last words, in which he confesses his acts during the war and begs Wiesenthal to forgive him so that he can die in peace. What should Wiesenthal have done?

3. Examine the chart on the preceding pages of those Nazis judged in the most famous of all Nuremberg Trials. On what basis do you think the decisions were reached? Examine the quotations; did any of the Nazi leaders repent?

Source: Furman, Harry, ed. *Holocaust and Genocide: A Search for Conscience*. New York: Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, 1983, pages 180-183. Developed under the auspices of the State of New Jersey Department of Education. Reprinted by permission.

A PERPETRATOR'S TESTIMONY

One of the commanders of the four EINSATZGRUPPEN active in the Soviet Union was Otto Ohlendorf, a lawyer who had joined the Isltzi PARTY and SS in the mid-1920s. Joining the SD in 1936, he was on the staff of the CENTRAL OFFICE FOR REICH SECURITY by 1939, and became the commander of Einsatzgruppen D in June 1941. His Einsatzgruppe swept through the southern Ukraine to the Crimea and the northern Caucasus, killing Jews, GYPSIES, and Communist functionaries. The largest single massacre of Jews took place in his operational area, in Odessa (Ukraine), during October 1941, when up to 75,000 Jews and Communists were killed by troops of Germany's ally, Romania, with the help of SS troops under Ohlendorf's command.

After the war, Ohlendorf testified quite freely to the murders committed by his Eitsatzgnippe at the NIERNA77014.11 MILITARY TRIBUNAL, as is shown by his testimony below. A year later he was one of the defendants at the LINSATZ-GRUPPEN TRIAL, where he was convicted and sentenced to death. Ohlendorf was hanged for his crimes in 1951.

COL AMEN: Do you know how many persons were liquidated by Einsatz Group [sic] D under your direction?

OHLENDORF: In the year between June 1941 to June 1942 the Einsatzkommandos reported 90,000 people liquidated.

COL AMEN: Did that include men, women, and children?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL AMEN: On what do you base those figures?

OHLENDORF: On reports sent by the Einsatzkommandos to the Einsatzgruppen.

COL AMEN: Were those reports submitted to you?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL AMEN: And you saw them and read them?

OHLENDORF: I beg your pardon?

COL AMEN: And you saw and read those reports, personally?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL AMEN: And it *is* on those reports that you base the figures you have given the Tribunal?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL AMEN: Do you know how those figures compare with the number of persons liquidated by other Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: The figures which I saw of other Einsatzgruppen are considerably larger.

COL AMEN: That **was** due to what factor?

OHLENDORF: I believe that to a large extent the figures submitted by the other Einsatzgruppen were exaggerated.

COL AMEN: Did you see reports of liquidations from the other Einsatz groups from time to *time*?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL AMEN: And those reports showed liquidations exceeding those of Group D; is that correct?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL AMEN: Did you personally supervise mass executions of these individuals?

OHLENDORF: I was present at two mass executions for purposes of inspection.

COL AMEN: Will you explain to the Tribunal in detail how an individual mass execution was carried out?

OHLENDORF: A local Einsatzkommando attempted to collect all the Jews in its area by registering them. This registration was performed by the Jews themselves.

COL AMEN: On what pretext, if any, were they rounded up?

OHLENDORF: On the pretext that they were to be resettled.

COL AMEN: Will you continue?

OHLENDORF: After the registration the Jews were collected at one place; and from there they were later transported to the place of execution, which was, as a rule, an antitank ditch or a natural excavation. The executions were carried out in a military manner, by firing squads under command.

COL AMEN: In what way were they transported to the place of execution?

OHLENDORF: They were transported to the place of execution in trucks, always only as many as could be executed immediately. In this way it was attempted to keep the span of time from the moment in which the victims knew what was about to happen to *them* until the time of their actual execution as short as possible.

COL AMEN: Was *that* your idea?

OHLENDORF: Yes.

COL AMEN: And after they were shot what was done with the bodies?

OHLENDORF: The bodies were buried in the antitank ditch or excavation.

COL AMEN: What determination, if any, was made as to whether the persons were actually dead?

OHLENDORF: The unit leaders or the firing-squad commanders had orders to see to this and, if need be, finish them off themselves.

COL AMEN: And who would do that?

OHLENDORF: Either the unit leader himself or somebody designated by him.

COL AMEN: In what positions were the victims shot?

OHLENDORF: Standing or kneeling.

COL AMEN: What was done with the personal property and clothing of the persons executed?

OHLENDORF: All valuables were confiscated at the time of the registration or the rounding up and handed over to the Finance Ministry, either through the RSHA

[CENTRAL OFFICE FOR REICH SECURITY] or directly. At first the clothing was given to the population, but in the winter of 1941-1942 it was collected and disposed of by the NSV [NATIONAL SOCIALIST PEOPLE'S WELFARE SOCIETY].

COL. AMEN: All their personal property was registered at the time?

OHLENDORF: No, not all of it, only valuables were registered.

COL AMEN: What happened to the garments which the victims were wearing when they went to the place of execution?

OHLENDORF: They were obliged to take off their outer garments immediately before the execution.

COL. AMEN: All of them?

OHLENDORF: The outer garments, yes.

COL AMEN: How about the rest of the garments they were wearing?

OHLENDORF: The other garments remained on the bodies.

COL AMEN: Was that true of not only your group but of the other Einsatz groups?

OHLENDORF: That was the order in my Einsatzgruppe. I don't know how it was done in other Einsatzgruppen.

COL AMEN: In what way did they handle it?

OHLENDORF: Some of the unit leaders did not carry out the liquidation in the military manner, but killed the victims singly by shooting them in the back of the neck.

COL AMEN: And you objected to that procedure?

OHLENDORF: I was against that procedure, yes.

COL AMEN: For what reason?

OHLENDORF: Because both for the victims and for those who carried out the executions, it was, psychologically, an immense burden to bear.

COL AMEN: Now, what was done with the property collected by the Einsatzkommandos from these victims?

OHLENDORF: All valuables were sent to Berlin, to the RSHA or to the Reich Ministry of Finance. The articles which could be used in the operational area, were disposed of there.

COL AMEN: For example, what happened to gold and silver taken from the victims?

OHLENDORF: That was, as I have just said, turned over to Berlin, to the Reich Ministry of Finance.

COL AMEN: How do you know that?

OHLENDORF: I can remember that it was actually handled in that way from Simferopol.

COL AMEN: How about watches, for example, taken from the victims?

OHLENDORF: At the request of the Army, watches were made available to the forces at the front.

COL AMEN: Were all victims, including the men, women, and children, executed in the same manner?

OHLENDORF: Until the spring of 1942, yes. Then an order came' from Himmler that in the future women and children were to be killed only in gas vans.

COL. AMEN: How had the women and children been killed previously?

OHLENDORF: In the same way as the men—by shooting.

COL. AMEN: What, if anything, was done about burying the victims after they had been executed?

OHLENDORF: The Kommandos filled the graves to efface the signs of the execution, and then labor units of the population leveled them.

COL AMEN: Referring to the gas vans which you said you received in the spring of 1942, what order did you receive with respect to the use of these vans?

OHLENDORF: These gas vans were in future to be used for the killing of women and children.

COL AMEN: Will you explain to the Tribunal the construction of these vans and their appearance?

OHLENDORF: The actual purpose of these vans could not be seen from the outside. They looked like dosed trucks, and were so constructed that at the start of the motor, gas was conducted into the van causing death in 10 to 15 minutes.

COL AMEN: Explain in detail just how one of these vans was used for an execution.

OHLENDORF: The vans were loaded with the victims and driven to the place of burial, which was usually the same as that used for the mass executions. The time needed for transportation was sufficient to insure the death of the victims.

COL AMEN: How were the victims induced to enter the vans?

OHLENDORF: They were told that they were to be transported to another locality.

COL AMEN: How was the gas turned on?

OHLENDORF: I am not familiar with the technical details.

COL. AMEN: How long did it take to kill the victims ordinarily?

OHLENDORF: About 10 to 15 minutes; the victims were not conscious of what was happening to them.

COL. AMEN: How many persons could be killed simultaneously in one such van?

OHLENDORF: About 15 to 25 persons. The vans varied in size. ...

COL AMEN: Did you receive reports from those who were working on the vans?

OHLENDORF: I received the report that the Einsatzkommandos did not willingly use the vans.

COL AMEN: Why not?

OHLENDORF: Because the burial of the victims was a great ordeal for the members of the Einsatzkommandos.

— *Reprinted from Trial of the Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal, 42 vols. (Nuremberg, 1947), 4: 319-23.*

Source: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. *In Pursuit of Justice: Examining the Evidence of the Holocaust* Washington, DC: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, pages 158-160.0 United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Reprinted by permission of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Meeting Again*

By Elie Wiesel

Some thirty-six and thirty-seven years ago, we experienced, together, a moment of destiny without parallel -- never to be measured, never to be repeated; a moment that stood on the other side of time, on the other side of existence.

When we first met, at the threshold of a universe struck by malediction, we spoke different languages, we were strangers to one another, we might as well have descended from different planets. And yet -- a link was created among us, a bond was established. We became not only comrades, not only brothers; we became each other's witnesses.

I remember -- I shall always remember the day I was liberated: April 11, 1945. Buchenwald. The terrifying silence terminated by abrupt yelling. The first American soldiers. Their faces ashen. Their eyes -- I shall never forget their eyes, your eyes. You looked and looked, you could not move your gaze away from us; it was as though you sought to alter reality with your eyes. They reflected astonishment, bewilderment, endless pain, and anger -- yes, anger above all. Rarely have I seen such anger, such rage -- contained, mute, yet ready to burst with frustration, humiliation, and utter helplessness. Then you broke down. You wept. You wept and wept uncontrollably, unashamedly; you were our children then, for we, the twelve-year-old, the sixteen-year-old boys and girls in Buchenwald and Theresienstadt and Mauthausen knew so much more than you about life and death. You wept; we could not. We had no more tears left; we had nothing left. In a way we were dead and we knew it. What did we feel? Only sadness.

And also: gratitude. And ultimately, it was gratitude that brought us back to normalcy and to society. Do you remember, friends? In Lublin and Dachau, Stuthoff and Nordhausen, Ravensbruck and Maidanek and Belsen and Auschwitz, you were surrounded by sick and wounded and hungry wretches, barely alive, pathetic in their futile attempts to touch you, to smile at you, to reassure you, to console you and most of all to carry you in triumph on their frail shoulders; You were heroes, our idols: tell me, friends, have you ever felt such love, such admiration?

One thing we did not do: We did not try to *explain*; explanations were neither needed nor possible. Liberators and survivors looked at one another -- and what each of us experienced then, we shall try to recapture together, now, at this reunion which to me represents a miracle in itself ..

And so ... I suddenly had the idea of bringing together liberators from all the allied forces. To listen to you and to thank you. And -- why not admit it? -- to solicit your help. Our testimony is being disputed by morally deranged Nazis and Nazi-lovers; your voices may silence them. You were the first men to discover the abyss, just as we were its last inhabitants. What we symbolized to one another then was so special that it remained part of our very being.

Well -- here you are, friends from so many nations, reunited with those who owe you their lives, just as you owe them the flame that scorched your memories.

On that most memorable day, the day of our liberation -- whether it took place in 1944 or in 1945, in Poland or in Germany -- you embodied for us humanity's noblest yearning to be free, and even more; to bring freedom to those who are not.

For us, you represented hope. True, six million Jews were annihilated, millions of brave men and women massacred by the Nazis and their collaborators, but we are duty-bound to remember always that to confront the fascist criminal conquests, a unique alliance of nations, gigantic armies, transcending geopolitical and ideological borders, was raised on five continents, and all went to war on behalf of humankind. The fact that millions of soldiers wearing different uniforms united to fight together, to be victorious together, and, alas, sometimes to die together, seemed to justify man's faith in his own humanity -- in spite of the enemy.

***A speech delivered at the International Liberators Conference in Washington, D.C., on October 26, 1981.**

We thought of the killers and we were ready to give up on man; but then we remembered those who resisted them -- on open battlefields as well as in the underground movements in France, Norway, Holland, Denmark, and the U.S.S.R. -- and we reconciled ourselves with the human condition. We were -- can you believe it? -- naive enough to think that we who had witnessed, for a while, the domination of evil would prevent it from surfacing again. On the very ruins of civilization, we aspired to erect new sanctuaries for our children where life would be sanctified and not denigrated, compassion practiced, not ridiculed.

It would have been so easy to allow ourselves to slide into melancholic resignation. Instead we chose to become spokespersons for the human quest for generosity and need and capacity to turn suffering into something productive, something creative.

We had hoped then that out of so much grief and mourning a new message would be handed down to future generations, a warning against the inherent perils of discrimination, fanaticism, poverty, deprivation, ignorance, oppression, humiliation and injustice, and war -- the ultimate injustice, the ultimate humiliation.

Yes, friends; we were naive.

And perhaps we still are.

Together we have the right and the duty to issue an appeal to which no one can remain deaf: an appeal against hatred, against human degradation, and against forgetfulness.

We have seen that which no one will ever see. We have seen what fanaticism leads to: mass cruelty, imprisonment, and death.

We have seen the metamorphosis of history, and now it is our duty to bear witness. When one people is destined to die, all others are implicated. When one ethnic group is humiliated, humanity is threatened. Hitler's plans to annihilate the Jewish people and to decimate the Slavic nations bore the germ of universal death. Jews were killed, but humankind was assassinated.

You, friends, liberators, stopped this process. Be proud. We are grateful.

If we unite our memories and wills, as we did then, everything is possible. Forgetfulness leads to indifference; indifference to complicity and thus to dishonor.

Friends, I speak to you as brothers. The ties that bind us to one another are powerful and timeless. Together we constitute a community that has no equal. Yet it diminishes from day to day. Who among you will be the last messenger? Our moral judgment, both past and present, determines our dignity. Yes, we are against prisons, against dictatorships, against fear, against confrontation, nuclear or otherwise. We give proof that it is possible for men and women to join forces and affirm the right to live and dream in peace.

I may be naive but I believe with all my heart that if we speak loudly enough, Death will retreat.

To paraphrase Nietzsche, we looked deep into the abyss -- and the abyss looked back at us. No one comes close to the kingdom of night and goes away unscathed. We told the tale -- or, at least, we tried. We resisted all temptations to isolate ourselves and be silent. Instead we chose to affirm our desperate faith in testimony. We forced ourselves to speak -- however inadequately, however poorly. We may have used the wrong words -- but then there are no words to describe the ineffable. We spoke in spite of language, in spite of the void that exists between what we say and outsiders *hear*. We spoke and ... explosions in Paris, bombs in Antwerp, murderous attacks in Vienna. Is it conceivable that Nazism could dare come back into the open so soon -- while we are still alive, while we are still here to denounce its poisonous nature, as illustrated in Treblinka?

Again we must admit our naiveté. We thought we had vanquished the beast, but no: it is still showing its claw. At best, what a gathering such as this could do is to shame the beast into hiding. If we here succeed -- and I hope and pray that we shall -- in rising above politics, above the usual recriminations between East and West, above simplistic propaganda, and simply tell the world what both liberators and liberated have seen, then something may happen; the world may choose to pay more attention to what hangs as a threat to its very future.

If we succeed -- and I hope and pray that we shall -- in putting aside what divides us -- and what divides us is superficial -- if we dedicate ourselves not only to the memory of those who have suffered but also to the future of those who are suffering today, we shall be serving notice on mankind that we shall never allow this earth to be made into a prison again, that we shall never allow war to be considered as a solution to any problem -- for war *is* the problem. If we succeed, then our encounter will be recorded as yet another of our common victories.

If we do not raise our voices against war, against hate, against indifference -- who will? We speak with the authority of men and women who have seen war; we know what it is. We have seen the burnt villages, the devastated cities, the deserted homes, we still see the demented mothers whose children are being massacred before their eyes, we still follow the endless nocturnal processions to the flames rising up to the seventh heaven -- if not higher ...

We are gathered here to testify -- together. Our tale is a tale of solitude and fear and anonymous death -- but also of compassion, generosity, bravery, and solidarity. Together, you the liberators and we the survivors represent a commitment to memory whose intensity will remain. In its name we shall continue to voice our concerns and our hopes not for our own sake, but for the sake of humankind. Its very survival may depend on its ability and willingness to listen.

And to remember.

Elie Wiesel was raised in Transylvania and in 1944 was deported to Auschwitz with his family. Liberated from Buchenwald, he later took up studies at the Sorbonne in Paris and became a foreign correspondent. Elie Wiesel has since written over thirty books and was the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize laureate. He served as chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council from 1980 to 1986. In his words and deeds, Wiesel has helped to bring the Holocaust to the frontiers of American consciousness. He is a professor in the humanities at Boston University.

Source: Excerpts from "Meeting Again" in Wiesel, Elie, *From the Kingdom of Memory*. New York: Summit Books, 1990. Copyright © 1990 by Elirion Associates, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Georges Borchardt, Inc. on behalf of the author.

Our connections finally put enough pressure on the government of France to obtain the extradition of Barbie to Lyon, France for his trial. It was a trial against the deportation of the Jews, and a trial for the resistance fighters, because Barbie, as the chief of the Gestapo in Lyon, was a brutal man. He tortured resistance fighters. This trial was well-known and well-covered by the media all over the world. Klaus Barbie was condemned to life imprisonment. Here again, as always, my husband represented the associate plaintiffs, the mothers of the children deported from Izieu. We delivered this most important indictment against him. It was a telegram he signed in 1944 to send the Jewish children to Auschwitz. It was a very historic trial.

Q. If you were to leave one message to the young people of the world today, what would that message be?

A. My husband and I consider ourselves to be ordinary people. We didn't have a special background, even though my husband is a specialist in history, preparing us for the work we did. I think that everybody can do something. It was our experience in the very beginning that you can do much more than you even realize. Sure, there are always limits for everybody. Not everyone went as far as we did, but I think that young people today have to protest against xenophobia, against right-wing parties, and against antisemitism. I would like to tell today's youth to act immediately, not to wait, because if you see that something is wrong, you have to talk- about it, and you have to do something about it. You have to shout against this and protest immediately. I think all our actions were a kind of education for the young people. If we have inspired some of them and they want to follow in our footsteps, I would be very happy.

Liesel Appel, née Steffens, was born on September 14, 1941 in Klingenberg, Germany. Her father was a high-ranking Nazi. During World War II, he was the Minister of Education in Poland who shut down all the schools and enacted policies denying an education to Polish, Jewish, and Gypsy children. He was put on trial in Nuremberg after the war.

A. Maybe I should tell you first that I was actually created as a gift to Adolf Hitler. My brother was already twenty years old, but my parents had wanted another child to dedicate to Adolf Hitler. I was this child. My mother had to undergo a special operation to be able to bear another child. There was a special doctor who performed this operation on her, and she was absolutely delighted when I was born in 1941. I was dedicated to Adolf Hitler at two weeks old.

Q. How did your parents earn a living?

A. My father was an educator. He was headmaster of the local school and later became Minister of Education in Poland.

Q. What was life like in those days in post-war Germany?

A. My childhood was really idyllic. My father adored me. We had a large, loving family with lots of uncles and aunts, and we were very close. There was also an uncle whose name was Erich Koch. He was constantly in our home when I was a young girl. He was my father's best friend and my uncle, and he was later condemned to death for the murder of 500,000 Jews and Poles.

Q. When did you first become aware of the war years?

A. Father and I went on long walks in the forest. Quite often I saw some smoke in the distance. I remember the smell of burning flesh. But I don't remember if I asked him about it.

Q. Was there a concentration camp nearby?

A. There was a concentration camp in Hadamar [Germany], just one of the smaller camps. I also remember being on the balcony of our house and watching the soldiers, the German army, go by with their goose steps. My father was making the salute. Then my father disappeared for a period of time. I later found out that he went to Poland with his friend Erich Koch and had been made Minister of Education of Poland. And Erich Koch was the governor of Poland.

After the war, I wanted to find out what a Minister of Education did in Poland in those years. And I found out, in fact, that all schools were closed, since Jewish, Polish, and Gypsy children were not entitled to an education. That, in fact, was the achievement of my father. But as a young child, I really adored him.

Q. How old were you when he returned from Poland?

A. I must have been six or seven years old. And then, later, in my very early childhood, something changed. All of a sudden, my parents, who had always been happy, were very secretive and withdrawn. My father had to go into hiding. He took off at night on his bicycle, and then soldiers came to our house. They were American soldiers who were looking for him. My father was riding his bicycle at night and hiding in the fields during the day. But, eventually, he was caught and put on trial.

This excerpt is adapted from the original testimony of Beate Klarsfeld which is part of the Oral History Collection of the Holocaust Documentation and Education Center, Inc.

Q. How old were you at that time?

A. About seven years old. He was put into a denazification camp. I later found out what that was like, but that's the first time I heard about a camp. And, in fact, I heard the term "concentration camp" used for the first time. He was released for a short time. We took a vacation to help him recover while he was waiting for his trial. He was walking with me at the ocean shore in northern Germany, and suddenly he went onto his knees. He tried to get up, but he fell backward and he, in fact, died in my arms. I was nine years old.

Six months after my father had died, I was playing outside of our house when a man came walking down the street. He looked very different from any man I'd ever seen. He had a little cap on the back of his head, and he carried a brief case. He asked me, "Little girl, where do you live?" I pointed to our house and he nodded and said, "This is where I used to live. I used to live in the house right next door to you." And he looked at me again.

He said, "You were probably way too young, but I'm looking for a special man, a man who saved my life during *Kristallnacht*." I had no idea what *Kristallnacht* was. I'd never heard of it before. So, I asked him to explain to me, and he told me that his life had been saved by a neighbor. The Nazis had broken into the house. His parents were killed, and all the furniture had been thrown from a balcony on the second floor. Somebody had picked him up and thrown him from the balcony also. He was sure he was going to die, but a neighbor had stepped forward and caught him in his arms. So, his life had been saved. He had come back to Germany -- this was now 1951 -- to find the man who had saved his life and thank him.

I was very excited and told him, "This man was my father." I took him by the hand and rushed him into my house, thinking that my mother would be just as excited to see him as I was. The man and I rushed into the living room. There was my mother with another neighbor, a *Frau* [Mrs.] Lauder, and they were whispering. We came into the room, and the man froze by the door. Mother and *Frau* Lauder also stopped talking, so there was something going on between these people that I wasn't privy to. I didn't know what was going on. Then my mother told *Frau* Lauder to take me out of the room and put me into my own room and lock the door. I kept banging on the door. They wouldn't let me out.

I looked out the window. I pulled myself up on the window sill -- we had those large German window sills -- and I saw the man walking down the street, very sadly. His head was bent. Soon after, my mother opened the door and said, "I want you to come to the living room." She was very angry. I had no idea what was going on. I had no idea what I had done. She said to me, "Don't you ever do anything like that again." And I said, "*Mutti*, anything like what?" She said, "Don't you bring anybody like that into our house again." I said, "*Mutti*, anything like what?" She said, "You brought in a Jew." I had no idea what a Jewish person was. That was the first time I actually heard the word "Jew." And I said, "*Mufti*, did we not save this man?" And she said, "Why should we have saved a Jew? Your father was a good man." I was so outraged, and my mother got bright red. She took me and she shook me.

It was just a terrible confrontation. I had never stood up to my mother before. I'd always been a very well-brought up little girl, but this was the first time I stood up to her. I pushed her away from me and said, "Don't you ever touch me again. You're a murderess." And I just went out of the room and slammed the door shut. It was basically the end of my childhood. My mother and I never talked about anything important after that and I held onto this for over 37 years.

Q. With not knowing anything before that, how did you know that they had done something wrong?

A. In a split second, I connected what this man -- his name, I found out later, is Willie Meyer -- had told me. It was so horrible. I couldn't picture that my family was part of that but, in a split second, I connected that after my mother told me off in a very severe way for bringing him into the house. So, I realized that they were part of this terrible thing that had happened in my neighborhood and that the people that I had idolized had, in fact, betrayed me.

Q. And after that, what did you do?

A. I just became very difficult. I wouldn't let my mother touch me again. I was very alone. I was looking at people and thinking "Were they part of it?" Soon we had the first books coming into our local libraries so I got those and read them, like *The Diary of Anne Frank*. The total world of horror opened up to me. I just looked around and felt so terribly burdened by things that were living around me.

Q. What were they teaching you in school?

A. Nothing. They were teaching us nothing about it. I did my own research. I read books. But, basically, everybody was in denial. My mother never talked about it. People never mentioned those times. And then after, I didn't mention them anymore either. I only had that one confrontation with my mother. After that, I didn't speak about it for over 30 years. I didn't tell anyone where I came from. I didn't tell anyone about my family. In fact, I developed a story that my father had been the man who had saved the Jewish boy. That was the only way I could survive with my terrible guilt.

Q. Did you have anyone to talk to about it?

A. No one, absolutely no one. I didn't talk to other people my age, to my mother, or to my teachers. I was totally isolated and couldn't wait to leave Germany. As soon as I finished school, I just put a few things into a suitcase and took off for London. I couldn't wait to get out of Germany.

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**The Broadcasts of
Edward R. Murrow:
An Appreciation of
The Man & His Words**

**A Resource for
Social Studies
teachers & students**

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Frank Baker,
media educator



THE LIBERATION OF BUCHENWALD CONCENTRATION CAMP

Murrow was one of a number of journalists who witnessed the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp on April 15, 1945.

What follows is from a radio interview with author Bob Edwards about that experience:

"It was very clear in his Buchenwald broadcast, he was very angry. And he didn't record it until three days later. He was furious, and it really shows in the broadcast. In fact, he says, if anything I have said about Buchenwald disturbs you, I'm not in the least bit sorry. I think he was angry on several fronts, angry of course at the Nazis for what they had done, but I think he was also angry that we didn't know. He had had some hints of the Holocaust, or the "final solution," as the Germans called it, a couple of years earlier, and he had broadcast them. He was very skeptical. He said these reports, if they're true, it just seems too horrific to be true.

Liberating Buchenwald, he not only found out they were true, it was even worse than you could conceive. The other thing was, in the surrounding villages the people looked like they had not been at war. The people were well fed, well clothed, they had suffered no effects of this war so far. They were well inside Germany, and here, just over the fence was the worst man can do to another human being. That upset him, too.

As the armies liberated the camps one by one, the commanding officers of the liberating troops would go round up the Germans in the neighborhood and have them come to see. I think in some cases they put them to work. But mostly they wanted them to see—look, your country did this." (Source)

Listen: [Visting Buchenwald - 4/15/45](#)

Read the [full transcript of this broadcast](#)

This page was updated on: 11/20/2005

*Legendary
CBS
reporter
Edward R.
Murrow
described
the scene at*

Edward R. Murrow's Report From Buchenwald

Buchenwald when he entered the camp after liberation:

There surged around me an evil-smelling stink, men and boys reached out to touch me. They were in rags and the remnants of uniforms. Death already had marked many of them, but they were smiling with their eyes. I looked out over the mass of men to the green fields beyond, where well-fed Germans were ploughing....

[I] asked to see one of the barracks. It happened to be occupied by Czechoslovaks. When I entered, men crowded around, tried to lift me to their shoulders. They were too weak. Many of them could not get out of bed. I was told that this building had once stabled 80 horses. There were 1200 men in it, five to a bunk. The stink was beyond all description.

They called the doctor. We inspected his records. There were only names in the little black book — nothing more — nothing about who had been where, what he had done or hoped. Behind the names of those who had died, there was a cross. I counted them. They totaled 242 — 242 out of 1200, in one month.

As we walked out into the courtyard, a man fell dead. Two others, they must have been over 60, were crawling toward the latrine. I saw it, but will not describe it.

In another part of the camp they showed me the children, hundreds of them. Some were only 6 years old. One rolled up his sleeves, showed me his number. It was tattooed on his arm. B6030, it was. The others showed me their numbers. They will carry them till they die. An elderly man standing beside me said: "The children — enemies of the state!" I could see their ribs through their thin shirts....

We went to the hospital. It was full. The doctor told me that 200 had died the day before. I asked the cause of death. He shrugged and said: "tuberculosis, starvation, fatigue and there are many who have no desire to live. It is very difficult." He pulled back the blanket from a man's feet to show me how swollen they were. The man was dead. Most of the patients could not move.

I asked to see the kitchen. It was clean. The German in charge.... showed me the daily ration. One piece of brown bread about as thick as your thumb, on top of it a piece of margarine as big as three sticks of chewing gum. That, and a little stew, was what they received every 24 hours. He had a chart on the wall. Very complicated it was. There were little red tabs scattered through it. He said that was to indicate each 10 men who died. He had to account for the rations and he added: "We're very efficient here."

We proceeded to the small courtyard. The wall adjoined what had been a stable or garage. We entered. It was floored with concrete. There were two rows of bodies stacked up like cordwood. They were thin and very white. Some of the bodies were terribly bruised; though there seemed to be little flesh to bruise. Some had been shot through the head, but they bled but little.

I arrived at the conclusion that all that was mortal of more than 500 men and boys lay there in two neat piles. There was a German trailer, which must have contained another 50, but it wasn't possible to count them. The clothing was piled in a heap against the wall. It appeared that most of the men and boys had died of starvation; they had not been executed.

But the manner of death seemed unimportant. Murder had been done at Buchenwald. God alone knows how many men and boys have died there during the last 12 years. Thursday, I was told that there were more than 20,000 in the camp. There had been as many as 60,000. Where are they now?

I pray you to believe what I have said about Buchenwald. I reported what I saw and heard, but only part of it. For most of it, I have no words.

If I have offended you by this rather mild account of Buchenwald, I'm not in the least sorry....

"They Died 900 a Day in 'the Best' Nazi Death Camp," *PM*, April 16, 1945.

Unit 10
Reflection, Remembrance
And Responsibility

"HAVE YOU LEARNED THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSON OF ALL?"

By Elie Wiesel

May I share with you one of the principles that governs my life? It is the realization that what I receive I must pass on to others. The knowledge that I have acquired must not remain imprisoned in my brain. I owe it to many men and women to do something with it. I feel the need to pay back what was given to me. Call it gratitude.

Isn't this what education is all about? There is divine beauty in learning, just as there is human beauty in tolerance. To learn means to accept the postulate that life did not begin at my birth. Others have been here before me, and I walk in their footsteps. The books I have read were composed by generations of fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, teachers and disciples. I am the sum total of their experiences, their quests. And so are you.

You and I believe that knowledge belongs to everybody, irrespective of race, color or creed. Plato does not address himself to one ethnic group alone, nor does Shakespeare appeal to one religion only. The teachings of Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. do not apply just to Indians or African-Americans. Like cognitive science, theoretical physics or algebra, the creations and philosophical ideas of the ages are part of our collective heritage and human memory. We all learn from the same masters.

In other words, education must, almost by definition, bring people together, bring generations together.

Education has another consequence. My young friends, I feel it is my moral duty to warn you against an evil that could jeopardize this generation's extraordinary possibilities. That evil is fanaticism.

True education negates fanaticism. Literature and fanaticism do not go together. Culture and fanaticism are forever irreconcilable. The fanatic is always against culture, because culture means freedom of spirit and imagination, and the fanatic fears someone else's imagination. In fact, the fanatic who wishes to inspire fear is ultimately doomed to live in fear, always. Fear of the stranger, fear of each other, fear of the other inside him or her.

Fanaticism has many faces: racism, religious bigotry, ethnic hatred. What those faces have in common is an urge to replace words with violence, facts with propaganda, reason with blind impulses, hope with terror.

For a while we might have believed that fanaticism was on its decline. It is not. Quite the contrary, it is on the rise in our cities, in our country and in our world.

In Western Europe -- in Germany and France, Belgium and Austria -- we are seeing a resurgence of yesterday's demons of fascism and intolerance. In Eastern Europe, ethnic factions are rekindling old conflicts. In the Middle East, deeply held hatreds seem ever on the verge of sparking more raging conflagrations. "It's us against them" has been taken as an essential truth. Strangers are being greeted with animosity almost everywhere.

Let us look at our own country. As this last decade of a century, which is also the last decade of a millennium, runs to its dazzling denouement, we seem ever more divided. Can't all our citizens - white Americans and African-Americans, Hispanics and Asians, Jews and Christians, Jews and Moslems, young and old -- live together, work together and face together their common challenges? Must they -- must we -- constantly subject ourselves to useless social tensions and dangerous ideological conflicts that could turn joy into dust and creation into ashes?

We face many difficulties and must find answers to thorny questions if our nation is to flourish: What has happened to our economy? What went wrong with elementary and secondary education? Why are so many youngsters seduced by crime? By drugs? By hate? Why is there so much bloodshed in so many quarters?

The answers to these questions do not lie with the cliches, senseless stereotypes and absurd accusations that are being used to justify religious or ethnic hatred....

I insist: All collective judgments are wrong. Only racists make them. And racism is stupid, just as it is ugly. Its aim is to destroy, to pervert, to distort innocence in human beings and their quest for human equality.

Racism is misleading. There are good people and bad people in every community. No human race is superior; no religious faith is inferior. We all come from somewhere, and we all wonder where we are going.

I know: You have been tested during your years in school, more than once. But the real tests are still ahead of you. How will you deal with your own or other people's hunger, homelessness, sexual or gender discrimination, and community antagonisms?

The world outside is not waiting to welcome you with open arms. The economic climate is bad; the psychological one is worse. You wonder, will you find jobs? Allies? Friends? I pray to our Father in heaven to answer "yes" to all these questions.

But should you encounter temporary disappointments, I also pray: Do not make someone else pay the price for your pain. Do not see in someone else a scapegoat for your difficulties. Only a fanatic does that -- not you, for you have learned to reject fanaticism. You know that fanaticism leads to hatred, and hatred is both destructive and self-destructive.

I speak to you as a teacher and a student -- one is both, always. I also speak to you as a witness.

I speak to you, for I do not want my past to become your future.

Message from Benjamin Meed, President of American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors

In the years immediately following the Holocaust, a small group of activists among the survivors demanded - yes, demanded - that the world remember the catastrophe that befell mankind and especially the Jewish people. Most of the time, our stories of pain, grief and unimaginable evil were met with silence.

Perhaps people didn't know how to respond. Maybe they felt ashamed that nothing had been done to help the victims. Maybe - in spite of the horrible photographs and chilling stories - they still could not believe man could be so barbaric, so ugly. Or, maybe because it happened to Jewish people, it just didn't matter to others.

Whatever the reasons, our early attempts to describe what had been done to us were met, typically with silence. Mostly, when we spoke, people responded with annoyance, a cold shoulder, or blank expressions on their faces.

Not only had the world shut its eyes when we were being murdered, after the war, it did not want to be reminded of the appalling consequences of its failure to act against the German Nazi murderers and their collaborators. Abandoned during the war, we were ignored after the war. And we survivors again felt alone and forsaken: no one wanted to listen; no one seemed to care about our experiences.

But we persisted. We were driven to tell our stories; and to motivate others to learn, to be vigilant, to remember. This ever-burning drive in us to communicate our message, and to have others remember what had happened, eventually made us the spark and catalyst behind many projects of remembrance.

If not the survivors, there would be no Yom Hashoa commemorations in the nation's capitol or around the country; there probably would be no museum in Washington, or memorials in Miami and elsewhere. And if not for our inspiration, there would be far fewer academics, scholars, authors, and film-makers involved in Holocaust remembrance-related activities.

The world still needs to learn much from the Holocaust. Just glance at any newspaper or listen to a news report. Killings continue around the world as democracies debate how to avoid becoming involved; a vicious antisemitic leader grows popular in Russia; Arab countries ban "Schindler's List" - it is too Jewish, they say; and vicious hate groups spew poison about Jews. In addition, there are specific, direct threats to memory. The remaining physical evidence of the Holocaust deteriorates. The Holocaust related education most students receive is appalling. The most widely used school text books, for instance, contain very general, and often misleading, statements about the Holocaust. Thus, the magnitude of the German Nazi atrocities is lost.

There is also a blatant attempt by well-financed deniers to falsify history. These sick minded anti-semites want to kill our Six Million Kedoshim again, erasing their murders from history. More sophisticated now, the deniers no longer dress as Nazis, skinheads or thugs. They wear suits, pretending to be professionals engaged in serious scholarship. However, their lies are as preposterous as ever.

Most of this country's population, born after the war, is far removed from and uneducated about the Holocaust. Because of the shocking level of ignorance, the deniers may be able - on television talk shows; in college newspapers -- anywhere they can get publicity -- to plant seeds of doubt about our memory. But this is not a legitimate debate between the "view" that the Holocaust happened and the "view" that it didn't. It is a war between the truth and the chronic disease, antisemitism. And the real danger posed by the deniers is not today, next week, or next year; but ten to twenty years from now when there are no more eyewitnesses. Thus, our mission to communicate and guard the truth of what happened to us must continue.

Survivors -- in person, on tape, or on paper -- offering personal testimony about what they endured are now, and will become even more, important. For such testimonies will remain in our voice and our legacy as our presence fades.

Those who fight the drive to introduce Holocaust studies in the schools should know that such instruction not only teaches you, the students, about the nightmare we endured, but educates you as to the reasons behind much of the violence you watch on the daily news. The study of the Holocaust teaches what can happen when we fail to be vigilant and meet hatred with indifference.

Source: Adapted from Benjamin Meed's remarks, from The Holocaust Documentation and Education Center's Tribute Luncheon at Turnberry Isle Country Club, Miami, Florida, April 21, 1994.

Benjamin Meed was born in Warsaw, Poland. He worked as a slave laborer for the Nazis, survived in the Warsaw Ghetto and was an active member of the Warsaw Underground. A member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council since its inception, he chairs the Museum's Days of Remembrance Committee. He is the President of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and a leader of a number of other organizations. Mr. Meed founded the Benjamin and Vladka Meed Registry of Jewish Holocaust Survivors permanently housed at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

**Message from Dr. Irving Lehrman, Founding Rabbi of Temple
Emanu-El of Greater Miami**

I was born in Europe and all my life, I yearned to revisit my birthplace, a little town in Poland, Tykocin -- or Tiktin, as we called it. This is where my parents were married and where I was raised and lived until we left the country when I was about seven years old.

When I last visited Poland in 1947 immediately after the Holocaust, I wanted desperately to go to Tiktin, which I remembered as a prosperous, bustling, happy town. I was discouraged by everyone. I was told that the entire Jewish community had been destroyed by the Nazis, that the cemetery had been desecrated and that the beautiful synagogue that I attended with my family had been converted to a storehouse. I did not go.

Dr. Louis Finkelstein, Chancellor of The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, often remarked that when Hitler wiped out the Jewish communities of Europe, he did not just destroy cities, towns and villages. He destroyed universities -- for every city, town and village, large or small, housed a great academy of learning where Torah was studied and taught, where students of all ages pored over sacred tomes, day and night. Such a community was Tiktin, home of three thousand Jews and widely acclaimed for its brilliant scholars and sages.

Years passed and my heart was heavy whenever I thought of my childhood in Tiktin. I deeply regretted not having gone there in 1947.

It was only by chance that I recently learned that the Tykocin synagogue had been restored by the Polish government and is now a museum, a tourist attraction. I was determined to re-live my childhood.

From Israel, we boarded an El Al flight to Warsaw where we were greeted by the guide who was to escort me home. Through the years, I often spoke of the huge statue in the city square that dominated my world, where I played with my friends and bloodied my bare feet on the cobblestones during the summer months. I remembered the home in which we lived situated on the shore of the Nirew River, by which my grandfather, a lumber merchant, shipped logs to Germany. What a thrill it was to find it all still there and to be able to re-trace my steps from the statue of Marshall Zarnecki (a hero of the Polish military) right to my home, a two-story building on the corner of Brovarna. Miraculously, it was one of the few original buildings still standing. On the outside, it seemed as I remembered it, but the shabby interior had been remodeled into small apartments and when the guide explained to one of the residents who I was, she immediately remembered my grandfather's family name, Dinowitz.

I visited the cemetery hoping to find some remnant of my grandfather's grave but alas, it was desolate. Every headstone had been removed to construct houses or pave roads, and there was nothing to see or mourn.

Finally, I entered the synagogue and my heart beat faster as I looked about. There were the same great bronze chandeliers hanging from the high ceiling; there were the walls on which an unknown artist had lovingly inscribed Hebrew quotations from the Book of Psalms, the Prophets, the Talmud.

There was the ornate blue and gold trim that decorated the ark and the columns. For three hundred years, it was admired as one of the most beautiful synagogues in Poland and today, with the destruction of so many others, it is the largest synagogue remaining in the country. There I stood, in the empty sanctuary, looking back into the past. I could see my father and my grandfather sitting in their customary seats and as recorded cantorial music filled the silence around me, I broke down and I wept. A glorious synagogue, without Jews. A magnificent Torah ark -- empty, devoid of its Scrolls of the Law. This was a community dating from the 14th century, a community steeped in Jewish living and rich in spiritual and cultural values with nothing remaining but a deserted shell as a reminder of a glorious past.

But then I suddenly remembered the miracle of re-birth in the land of Israel and my tears became tears of joy as I thanked God that there is a state of Israel today, and I thanked Him that there is a United States of America.

Simon Wiesenthal, the famed Nazi hunter, calls hatred the greatest problem that mankind faces. It was hatred that was responsible for the destruction of my Tiktin and all the Tiktins in human history. If we are to learn anything constructive from the agony of the Holocaust, we must always remember the terrible evil that hatred inflicts on all who are touched by it. It was the prophet Malachi who asked, "Have we not all one Father? Hath not one God created us all? Why shall we deal treacherously one with another?"

I pray that the day will come when the world will heed this sacred plea and live by it.

Message From
The Most Reverend John Clement Favalora, D.D., S.T.L., M.ED.
Archbishop of Miami

The Catholic Church has declared a Great Jubilee for the year 2000, the opening of a new millennium. For the Jubilee, a custom rooted in Hebrew Scripture, all persons are called to repent of past sinful failures -- be they personal or corporate -- which have promoted hatred, prejudice and discrimination among members of the human family. Preparation for the new millennium requires conversion -- a turning away from whatever separates us from God and embracing his commandments of justice, peace and charity. The Catholic Church firmly condemns all forms of genocide as well as the racist theories that have inspired and claimed to justify them. Racism is a negation of the deepest identity of the human being, who is a person created in the image and likeness of God.

It is important to reflect together on the sins of the past, particularly that of the *Shoah*. This is not an occasion of vengeance but rather an opportunity to remember. When we remember we can draw closer to the Truth and work toward a common spirit of reconciliation. We must also remember that, in the mist of sin, we also share a history of virtue. Many, Christians and non-Christians alike, did everything that they could to save those who were persecuted during the *Shoah*, even to the point of risking and losing their own lives. Such examples of virtue should serve to inspire our young people.

The Catholic Church invites all persons of good will to use this historical moment of preparation for the new millennium to reflect and meditate on the catastrophe which befell the Jewish people, and on the moral imperative to insure that never again will selfishness and hatred grow to the point of sowing such suffering and death.

Living in a country of religious diversity and tolerance, it is especially the young who must hold fast to their innate ability to accept others. The historical failures and jaded perspectives of some should never be allowed to corrupt this gift nor hinder young persons from developing bonds of respect and friendship with those who are of a different race or ethnic background or who profess another faith. In so doing, the young will offer a living witness that humanity has indeed learned the hard universal lessons of the horror of the *Shoah*.

**Message from David Lawrence, Former Publisher
of The Miami Herald**

I am an optimist -- unashamedly and unabashedly so -- living with the daily expectation that people can, and frequently will, exercise great individual power to do good things. But even the most optimistic soul knows that the greatest faith in people will not be enough to forestall the tragedy of a Holocaust. It can happen again. You and I are simply required to be eternally vigilant.

Memories even of the greatest tragedies -- the Holocaust itself -- can fade. Today in our midst are people, some of them more foolish than hateful, who question whether Hitler's Third Reich actually claimed the lives of 6 million Jewish men, women and children. Some, idiotically and hatefully so, are the skinheads, the Klan members and followers of racial and ethnic supremacy. Others are simply misguided out of touch.

Let us pledge, you and I, that we will fulfill our obligation to make sure that no one is ever permitted to forget the true and terrible stories of one of history's saddest chapters.

We need to hear, every chance we get, from those Holocaust survivors who can still describe what really happened in Nazi death camps. But we also need younger generations with as much passion for telling stories that will never lose their importance.

Meanwhile, my own craft must insist that uncomfortable truths be brought to light, as we did recently in reporting, even a half-century after the fact, how so-called "neutral" countries in World War II profited from possessions stolen from murdered Jews.

We in journalism ought to remember that we generally failed to cover the Holocaust as it occurred (failing, for instance, to heed the calls of individuals such as Dr. Stephen Wise, past chairman of the World Jewish Congress, who in November 1942 held a press conference to announce that the Nazis had already murdered more than a million and a half Jews. His news failed to make most front pages, getting only brief mentions). Imagine how many lives might have been saved if editors around the world had responded differently.

It would be too easy, and inadequate, to blame the press, failings in covering this story on simple, ugly anti-Semitism. And it would be fair to point out the difficulty faced by journalists, who have a responsibility to check before printing those allegations of horror beyond most people's beliefs. But there were clearly many clues to know that something monstrously evil was occurring. Our own government certainly knew a great deal.

We are all endangered if we fail to learn the lessons of history. We are all endangered if we fail to appreciate the humanity that resides in every human being.

It is up to you and to me. We must make a difference. You and I have the privilege of living in South Florida, which previews the future of a demographically diverse America. It is up to us to show the rest of the nation -- indeed, the world -- that a community of so many cultures can reach out to understand one another, that we can celebrate what we have in common, and that we can respect our differences. In so doing, we will set an example for all. And we will have prevailed over those who would blame their troubles on "different" people, those who would preach the politics of division.

Our sense of caring and compassion will serve as evidence that the Holocaust's painful lessons have indeed been heeded.

If we fail to learn the lessons of the horrors of the Holocaust, then we will have simply compounded the tragedy.

I could not bear that. Nor could you, I am sure.

Yours in vigilance all our lives...

Dave Lawrence Jr.

Our Presidents Remember...

Although words do pale, yet we must speak. We must strive to understand. We must teach the lessons of the Holocaust. And, most of all, we ourselves must remember ... The world's failure to recognize the moral truth forty years ago permitted the Holocaust to proceed. Our generation -the generation of survivors -- will never permit the lesson to be forgotten.

-- Jimmy Carter

Remembrance has a power for good that is all its own, and each of us must use that power as we contemplate the Holocaust -- and its impact on the entire world ... We know that remembrance is possible for both those who have witnessed and those who have heard. My generation cannot forget, but neither must any generation ... Let us make our remembrance, then, always in the manner and spirit of those who liberated the concentration camps and freed and cared for survivors. Those soldiers came not in conquest but in compassion, not to kill and enslave but to free and heal. Let our remembrance ever be thus and it will be a resolution true and noble -- "Never Again."

-- Ronald Reagan

Our challenge today is to insist that time will not become the Nazis' friend, that time will not fade our sense of specificity, the uniqueness of the Holocaust, that time will not lead us to make the Holocaust into an abstraction. Our challenge today is to remember the Holocaust, for if we remember we will, as our soldiers did, look its evil in the face ... For memory is our duty to the past, and memory is our duty to the future.

-- George Bush

The Holocaust transformed the 20th century, sweeping aside the facile Enlightenment hope that evil can somehow be permanently vanquished; demonstrating there is no war to end all war, that the struggle against the basest tendencies of our nature continues forever and ever and demands eternal vigilance.

The Holocaust began when the most civilized country of its day unleashed unprecedented acts of cruelty and hatred, abetted by perversion of science, philosophy and law. A culture which produced Goethe, Schiller and Beethoven brought forth Hitler and Himmler's merciless hordes, and because the educated stood by, or worse, participated, the innocent perished ...

To build bulwarks against the evil, there is but one path to take. We have our differences but we cannot separate ourselves from each other. This is the dynamic tension in the life of the contemporary world. Organizing a civil society, a civil world, requires us to honor diversity even as we reaffirm our common humanity. The framework within which individuality, ethnicity, and nationality can exist without turning murderous is constitutional democracy, and the respect in international law for human rights.

EXCERPTS ON REMEMBRANCE

In the words of an American high school student, during a discussion with Holocaust survivors:

You wonder if you could know that there's a concentration camp in your town and not do anything about it. It would upset you, because you would feel ashamed that people saw what was going on, but wouldn't stop it. You feel really guilty for being a human being. Not for being part of a certain group -- but just for being in the human race at all.

In the words of Senator Claiborne Pell, National Civic commemoration, April, 1985:

We can ask ourselves why we are memorializing the most massive and darkest example of man's inhumanity to man. Why? The reason is to seek to prevent such inhumanity from occurring again and to be alert to the need to snuff out those same dreadful instincts that turn human beings like you and me into beasts.

Let us remember, too, Dante's words so oft quoted by a noted colleague, Robert Kennedy: "He who sees, stands by, and does nothing as evil is performed, is just as guilty as he who performs it." Here we must remember how we stood by as millions of Jews and Gentiles and gypsies were murdered. Examples: we returned the passenger vessel St. Louis with its load of 900 Jews back to Bremen and the concentration camps of Europe; we declined to change our own immigration laws one jot and then declined to take in most of these unfortunate human beings who were clamoring at our consulates for visas. In fact, in 1944, only nine percent of our visa allotment for Europe was used. As reads our War Department telegram, exhibited at Yad Vashem [the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Israel] we even refused to bomb the rail line that carried the Nazi victims to Auschwitz. We did all too little 40 years ago; what can we do now?

*

In the words of Secretary of State Alexander Haig, International Liberators conference, October 1981:

I believe that we can hear the memory of the Holocaust only if we strive to prevent its recurrence. Let us, therefore, remember well the signposts on the road to genocide. First, individual rights were revoked. Then, individual dignity was denied. Finally, in the abyss of despair, came the murder itself. It began with the most defenseless, but it did not stop with them

The victims and the survivors of the Holocaust have shown us, each in their own ways, that man need not succumb to this evil. Those who went to their deaths singing of their belief in God did not lose their souls. Those who fought against hopeless odds did not lose their dignity. Those who survived did not despair ...

The liberators, too, bear witness. You will tell us that the values we cherish become meaningful only if we are prepared to work for them, to defend them, and to fight for them. A generation unwilling to bear the burden of its own beliefs makes possible a Holocaust of its dreams. I know this as a former soldier, and we are all soldiers for our beliefs...

There is an old Jewish saying, "The memory of the righteous shall be for the blessing." As we remember the righteous today, let us resolve to act in such a way that we merit their blessing.

In the words of Sigmund Strochlitz, survivor; member, USHMC, International Liberators Conference, October 1981:

Many years have passed since the Allied armies entered the camps. The Russian armies entered the camps in the East, being first to expose to the world the horrors committed by the Nazis and their collaborators. The English army entered the camps in the North and confirmed to the western world the brutal realities of death factories in the heart of Europe, next to big towns and small villages, while the inhabitants went about their daily work, unconcerned, undisturbed, and yet knowing very well that mass murder was taking place in their backyard. In the south, American armies entering the camps and suspecting that time may erase the memory of Nazi behavior, brought a high-ranking congressional delegation to record for posterity the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany.

Survivors will never forget the valiant effort made by the Allied armies to save even those who were beyond help and to help restore a semblance of normal life to those who were at that moment not even able to respond to human decency or to react to human compassion ...

Those who fought in the last war and those who have been victims of hate, prejudice, and indifference owe it to present and future generations to sound the warning that we live in times when military forces of unimaginable destructiveness, religious fanaticism that caused so much misery in the past, and blind hatred that transcends boundaries are building up around the world that can in one summer day or winter day drive mankind to madness again. Let's hope, therefore, that today's eyewitness testimonies to acts of evil will stand as a permanent witness to an event that must be remembered and transmitted to younger generations, not only by us, the victims, but also by you, the victors. You and we are partners to a legacy forced on us by fate: to uphold the truth, to prevent the dead from being murdered again, and to save the conscience, the decency, and the humanity of mankind.

Source: *Days of Remembrance: A Department of Defense Guide for Annual Commemorative Observances* (Second Edition). Washington, D.C.: Office of the Secretary of Defense, page 109, 113, 114, 116, 117, 123, 124, 125.

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Pastor Martin Niemoeller's Quote

Pastor Martin Niemoeller was a highly decorated commander in World War I. He later became a preacher and the most prominent leader of the anti-Nazi Confessing Church in Germany. In 1934, he formed the Pastors Emergency League. He was later arrested for attacking the state and was sent to a concentration camp. From 1937 until the end of the war, he was held in prison as well as in Sachsenhausen and Dachau.

*"First they came for the Communists
and I did not speak out --
because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the Socialists
and I did not speak out --
because I was not a Socialist.
Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out --
because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out --
because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for me --
and there was no one left
to speak out for me."*

Have the students rewrite this poem in their own words so that the people and groups apply to today's society.

HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Holocaust Remembrance Day (also known as Yom Hashoah) has been set aside for remembering the victims of the Holocaust and for reminding Americans of what can happen to civilized people when bigotry, hatred, and indifference reign. The day's principal message is that another Holocaust must never be allowed to happen.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Council was created by a unanimous act of Congress in 1980 and was charged to build the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and to encourage annual, national, civic commemorations of the Days of Remembrance of the victims of the Holocaust.

After a study of the Holocaust, you might want to plan to have a classroom Day of Remembrance. This could include a variety of activities:

- A candle lighting ceremony which the students could write
- The reading of names of victims killed in the Holocaust
- The reading of names of concentration camps
- Original poetry done by the students
- Poetry or diary excerpts written during the Holocaust
- A pledge of remembrance
- Original art work, short stories, essays or music
- A survivor guest speaker
- A presentation of a tile or quilt project

My Father's Shadow

Peter Sussman was one of the few people to survive the Nazi concentration camps. For years, he didn't speak of the Holocaust. But recently, he began writing his children a series of letters looking back on that time. Here, his daughter explains her family's struggle with his legacy.

By Deborah Sussman

dearest children... I am not reluctant to talk about my experiences; it is not too painful for me. It is, however, a very special memory, and I don't like to share it with people who are unwilling or unable to understand what I have to tell.... When I tell my story in America, I rarely come across anyone who has had an experience that is even vaguely similar. Such people can understand my tale only if they are somehow able to construct a frame of reference. That takes compassion, imagination, and something like a sense of history."

I think I was about 10 when my father first told me. We were in Aspen, Colorado, on vacation; my brothers and I were looking through some history books with pictures, and one of them was about World War II. I remember my father explaining about the concentration camps—what they were, and how they worked, and that he'd been in one. And I remember looking at the black-and-white photographs of bodies heaped on top of each other, like animal carcasses. The idea of those camps, of what people did to each other there, and what had happened to my father, was impossible for me to understand.

"I knew that I would want to tell

you all about my life in due course, but not before you were ready. I

Peter Sussman, shown here on his father's shoulders as a child. He was



4 years old when Hitler came to power.

didn't think you should be burdened with it when you were little, and were just beginning to form a concept of what the world is all about. It seems to me cruel to cast a dark shadow on those early years, which ought to be largely imbued with optimism."

My father was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1928. In 1933, after Adolf Hitler became chancellor, my father and his parents fled to Czechoslovakia, then, in 1938, to the Netherlands. They were picked up by the Nazis on September 30, 1943. My father was 15 years old. They spent four months in Westerbork, a transit camp. From there they were assigned to Bergen-Belsen, a concentration camp in northern Germany. It is the camp where Anne Frank, a former classmate of my father's who documented her experiences in her

famous diary, died.

"We were in Bergen-Belsen for one year. I have been trying to figure out how to describe that year to you, but it's difficult. It was a long succession of grim, undifferentiated days. Very few dramatic things happened. There was very little besides death, disease, filth, and hopelessness. There was no beauty of any kind."

After that talk in Aspen, my father asked my brothers and me not to tell people that he'd been in a camp. I said I wouldn't, but I tried the secret out on a couple of my friends. If my father had really been in a concentration camp, they said, how come he didn't have a number on his arm? I couldn't answer them, and I didn't know how to ask my father.

By the time I was 16, though, I was ready to start asking questions. My father was ready to answer. He showed me the yellow star that he had to wear in Holland, a piece of worn fabric with the word "Jew" stenciled on it in Dutch. He also showed me the notebook he kept in the camp. There's not much in it: a few pages of signatures—my father was experimenting with the way his name looked on paper—and then row after row of neat X's to mark the days. There's a drawing in the notebook, too. I couldn't figure out what it was at first. It looked like a kind of map, with little circles and squares, all different sizes. From the circles and squares my father had drawn lines that led to a larger square in the center of the page.

"I was trying to remember how to make a cake," he explained. "See?" The little circles were eggs, the other smaller squares were flour, sugar, butter. The larger square in the center was an oven.

"From my earliest childhood I

knew that Hitler was evil incarnate, and that he had to be stopped. I also knew that nobody was stopping him.... Those 10 years of persecution before the camp did affect me, and loom in my memory as far more frightening than the camps themselves. The camp, once it came, was the final test: within a relatively short time we'd either be dead or finally at the end of the 10-year nightmare."



"Growing up," says Deborah, "my two brothers and I all felt we were supposed to have perfect childhoods, to make up for the fact that my father didn't have a childhood at all."

I still can't imagine the camp and my father in it. I try instead to imagine the long slide of days leading into the camp. I try to understand that of all the things the Nazis did to my father, the fact that they took away his bicycle seems to outrage him the most. He'd bought the bicycle with his own money when he got to Holland, and says he loved it for the sense of freedom it allowed him.

Growing up, my two brothers and I all felt we were supposed to have perfect childhoods, to make up for

thefact that our father didn't have a childhood at all. Today, as adults, we tend to see our own lives and problem as trivial compared to our father's. (Sometimes we joke about it, dark jokes we know other people would find offensive: it's a tremendous relief.) And we're extraordinarily cautious about whom we trust. I think all three of us feel that no one outside the family can ever really understand us. Our family is so close that my boyfriends and my brothers' girlfriends have always felt shut out.

"From the age of 4 on, I fit hunted and an outcast. In 1940, when the Germans invaded Holland, they smashed my world to smithereens. The three-and-a-half years before our deportation were awful. It was like being caught in a vise that tightens slowly but inexorably, until, finally, everything that makes life worth living is gone and you wait to be thrown away."

How much of who I am is shaped by my father's experience? I'll probably never be able to answer that question. But I do know that I need to keep writing about it. I've been struggling with this issue for half my life, and only now do I feel as if maybe I'm beginning to understand. Now I tell people about my father's past not because I want to shock them, but because I want them to know what my father lived through, and what millions of others didn't make it through. It is not just a chapter from a history book. The victims of the Holocaust were real people. They had hopes and faults and passions, as you and I do. They were fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters. Their lives touched other lives, and we need to—we must—remember their stories. I begin with my father's.

Deborah Sussman is currently working on a book based on her father's letters.

HOW MANY DIED?

Objective: To help the students realize the enormous amount of life lost in the Holocaust.

Materials Needed: Lots of books and 1" strips of construction paper.

- Step One: Explain to the students how hard it is to comprehend that 6,000,000 Jews died in the Holocaust. To illustrate the magnitude, have students complete some simple calculations.
- Step Two: Suppose you decide to observe a minute of silence for each of the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust. If you start your silence now, when will you speak?
- Step Three: If you counted one second of your life for every 100 Jews killed, how old would you be by the time they had all been remembered?
- Step Four. Suppose you were asked to type out a list of the names of all the six million **Jews** who died in the Holocaust. You can put 250 names on each page. How many pages long will your list be?
- Step Five: Use books to make a stack this many pages high.
- Step Six: Distribute strips of colored construction paper to the students. Have them make a ring for every 5,000 Jews that perished. Connect all the rings and hang the chain around the room.

Photo Collection

A sample of Holocaust related pictures taken by Professor Gair at various Holocaust sites.

Photo Links

The following web links will take you to sites where I have posted many photos and videos of my trips to the camps during our study abroad program as well as on my own.

[**Valencia Sage Flickr Site**](#)

[**Facebook**](#)

[**You Tube**](#)

[**Vimeo**](#)



AKCJA „BURZA”

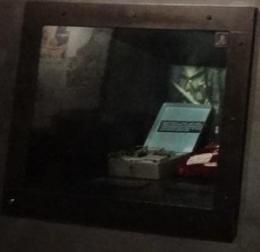
W listopadzie 1943 Delegat Rządu RP na Kraj wydał odezwę do ludności ziem wschodnich oraz nakazał tajnej administracji wypracować wobec Armii Czerwonej w charakterze gospodarczy. W tym samym czasie dowódcy AK wywołali ruch rozporządzenia „Burza”, czyli akcji zbrojnej na tyłach wycofujących się wojsk niemieckich. 4 stycznia 1944, w obliczach Sokoła, Armia Czerwona przekroczyła granicę RP. Realizacja „Burzy” rozpoczęła się 15 stycznia w Okręgu AK Włocławek. W następnych miesiącach do jawnej walki przystąpiły oddziały AK w Okręgach: Polesie, Wilno, Nowogródek, Białystok, Stanisławów, Wieruszki, Łódź. W lipcu „Burza” rozpoczęła się w Okręgach: Kraków, Lublin oraz na Olsztynie Warszawskim. W Okręgach: Wrocław, Łódź, nie przystąpił do wojny. Mimo militarnych sukcesów, Akcja „Burza” nie przyniosła spodziewanych efektów. Po początkowym zwycięstwach Sowietów nastąpiła odwrócenie akcji, aresztując dowódców wojskowych i przywódców politycznych.

OPERATION „BURZA” (“TEMPEST”)

On November of 1943, the Government Delegate at Home issued an appeal to people living in the east and ordered the underground government to act as hosts towards the approaching Red Army. At the same time, Commander-in-Chief of the Home Army (AK) gave an order to initiate Operation „Burza” (“Tempest”), a military combat action in the rear of the retreating German troops. On 4 January 1944, the Red Army crossed the Polish border in the Sarny area. Operation „Tempest” began on January 15 in the Home Army District of Włocławek. In the following months, the Home Army troops engaged in open combat with the Germans in the Districts of Polesie, Wilno, Nowogródek, Białystok, Stanisławów, Tarnopol and Lublin. In July, „Tempest” began in the Districts of Cracow and Łódź as well as in the Warsaw area. Despite its military success, Operation „Tempest” did not yield the expected results. After a period of initial cooperation, the Soviets discussed the Home Army units arresting their commanders and political leaders.



CHRONIŁY WŁOŚCIWY
WŁOŚCIWY
WŁOŚCIWY













Ostrze sztyletu Hitlerjugend zdobi napis „Blut und Ehre” (Krew i Honor). W 1943 roku przy ulicy Prascati darczyńca zabiera młodemu Niemcowi jego powód do dumy.

A blade of a Hitlerjugend dagger decorated with an inscription „Blut und Ehre” (Blood and Honour). W. Marcinkiewicz takes away this object of pride from a young German in 1943 at Prascati Street.

Dziękuję W. Marcinkiewiczowi / Thank you W. Marcinkiewicz.



attack on the

Oficer SS traci swą op Królewską a Czackiego. zostaje ukryta w szybi Domu Braci Jabłkowskich

An SS officer loses his between Królewska and Cz As a trophy it gets hidd of Jabłkowski Brothers













ש"ס
קדושי ישראל שנפלוקתו ויימוקד
האומה ונהרסו רוצה
ברמניה ועושיהם

TU SPOCZYWAJA ZWŁOKI BŁOPIAD
NARODU ŻYDOWSKIEGO ZMALTRETOWANE
I ZA MURÓWANYCH PRZEZ ŻBRÓD NIEMIECKICH
KONCENTRACJI DO KAMPU W BUKOWI
TARNOBUŻY W DNIU 24 XI 45
H-M-BOCHNER H-SHILWICZ

NAZWISKO	IMIE	LAT	MIEJSCE	DATA
LIST	NECHA	19	MORÓJ	PILZNO 24.11.43
CHILWICZ	IZAR	32		
"	REIZLA	30		
"	IZAK	7	POŁOMCZA	9.9.43
"	BEAG	5		
FURMAN	LAZAR	35		
"	GITKA	28		
APPEL	HIRSCH	28		
"	ETHEL	25		
"	MIKEL	48		
"	ROZINE	35	JAWORZE	18.9.43
"	ITZEL	32		
"	SARAH	34		
LIST	REIZEL	35	ŁĘKI	15.9.43
"	JOZEF	11	WAROWICZ	GITLA
"	ABRAHAM	31	BUDYN	14.4.43
"	ETHEL	30	BUŁCZÓWKA	26.10.43
"	SARA	35		
"	MALKA	35		







Y. JEŃCY WOJENNI OKLIPOWANE OBSZARY ZSRR 1941



DROGA ŚMIERCI

THE ROAD OF DEATH















































