

THE HOLOCAUST

Remembering the Past; Safeguarding the Future



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WHY REMEMBER?

When it comes to the Holocaust, perhaps we should ask, "How can we forget?"

How can we forget that the Nazis of Germany shot, gassed, burned, starved, and tortured to death millions of innocent people during World War II?

How can we forget that the murders were born of prejudice and racism and initiated by the government of a seemingly civilized nation?

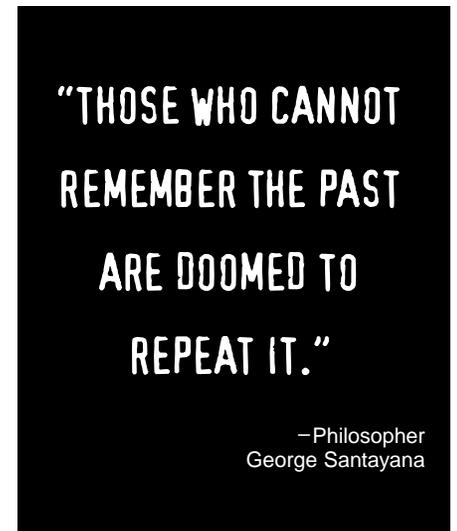
How can we forget that the same forces of hatred that led to the Holocaust still exist in our society today?

Indeed, how can we forget?

The Holocaust was one of the world's darkest hours — a mass murder conducted in the shadows of the world's most deadly war. The German government, controlled by the brutal Nazi Party and its leader Adolf Hitler, killed between five and six million Jews who lived in Europe. These were not the only victims, however. The Germans also tried to exterminate Europe's Gypsies, or Roma, and they targeted other groups, as well.

When all was said and done, 11 million people were murdered as a result of Germany's fanatical racial policies. It didn't matter their age — millions were infants and children. It didn't matter their social status or educational background — they were doctors and lawyers, laborers and tradesmen.

It mattered only that they were considered "enemies of the state"; a threat to the "purity" of the German race and the greatness of the German empire. In addition to Jews and Gypsies, they were Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses, the mentally dis-



abled, the physically handicapped, political opponents, homosexuals, and others deemed "unworthy of life."

Recounting the Holocaust is not easy. Few people come away untouched from a study of this tragic story. The graphic nature of the details, the shocking accounts of survivors, and the documented words of those who died make it a story both compelling and disturbing.

But rest assured, remembering the Holocaust is essential for all generations. Despite the pain, despite the horror, we must never forget, and we must never let it happen again. ■

THE "LADDER OF PREJUDICE"

Prejudice is defined as negative, irrational feelings or attitudes toward a group of people that are based not on fact but on preconceived ideas and notions. In his book, *The Nature of Prejudice*, Gordon W. Allport describes prejudice as a ladder with several rungs, or levels. As people "climb" up the ladder of prejudice, increasingly negative actions result.

While studying the Holocaust, see if you can identify how the Nazis and their followers climbed the ladder of prejudice and determine whether those same negative actions are present in our world today.

The first rung: **SPEECH**

Prejudice first manifests itself through talking about or making fun of a group of people. Such negative comments are usually the result of stereotyping — creating an oversimplified opinion, idea, or belief about that group of people.

The second rung: **AVOIDANCE**

The next step up the ladder of prejudice involves avoiding the group of people that has been stereotyped. Avoidance leads to lack of contact with the group and ignorance about the people involved.

The third rung: **DISCRIMINATION**

Avoidance of a group of people eventually leads to discrimination — treating someone differently. Discrimination takes many forms, from denying someone a job to segregation, which means separating a person from the rest of society.

The fourth rung: **PHYSICAL ATTACK**

People who are discriminated against are often the victims of physical attack. The attack is usually the expression of the anger or resentment that have built up through the first steps of prejudice.

The fifth rung: **EXTERMINATION**

Sometimes physical attacks against a group of people turn deadly. This final step in the ladder of prejudice has been present in society since the earliest days.



Dutch Jews, wearing prison uniforms marked with a yellow star and the letter N for Netherlands, stood at attention during roll call at the Buchenwald concentration camp.

THE STAGE IS SET

It's natural to think of the Holocaust as the inevitable result of prejudice and racism. But for a deeper understanding of this tragic episode, it's best to first look at the chain of events that enabled those forces of hatred to take hold.

The story begins in Germany in 1918 after the country's devastating defeat in World War I. Although Germany suffered little physical damage, some 1.6 million Germans had died and their nation's economy lay in ruins.

To compound the devastation of losing a war they were sure they'd win, the Germans were humiliated by the treaty that officially ended World War I. The Treaty of Versailles reduced Germany's beloved military, forced the country to give up territory it had seized from France and Poland before the war, and made it pay billions of dollars in damages to countries where much of the fighting took place. What's more, German officials had to publicly admit their country's role in starting the deadliest war the world had ever seen.

Germany's post-war troubles stabilized for a while and citizens enjoyed a period of prosperity. But things worsened when the New York

stock market crashed in 1929, causing a worldwide depression. Germany's citizens were once again hit hard by rising inflation, unemployment, and an overall feeling of hopelessness.

In the midst of these struggles, German citizens began to act out. Lawlessness and disorder were rampant as young and old alike lost faith in the country and its leaders. Not even the Weimar Republic, the government set up in 1919, could fix the problems that continued to plague Germany after World War I.

Offering a scapegoat

While Germany's major political parties stood helpless, a smaller, lesser-known party was rising to the occasion. Its leader, a man named Adolf Hitler, promised to bring political stability, work for millions, and greatness to Germany once again.

But Hitler also offered something more. He offered a scapegoat.

For years, many Germans had been looking for someone to blame for their country's problems. In Hitler's mind, the main culprits were the Jews. He blamed them for Germany's defeat

in World War I. He blamed them for the spread of communism in Europe. Hitler also insisted that the Jews had taken over the country's economy. He even claimed that they were taking over people's minds by using the press to tell them what to think.

Few people took Hitler seriously at first. In fact, many Germans had overcome their prejudices against the Jews and paid little attention to his rantings.

But Hitler's anti-Jewish rallying cry eventually struck a chord with Germany's beleaguered citizens and he slowly began to get people's attention — for himself and his National Socialist German Workers' Party, a.k.a. the Nazis.

The rise to power

In 1923, Adolf Hitler and the Nazis attempted to overthrow the German government. They failed miserably and Hitler and other party leaders landed in jail.

His nine months of jail time only strengthened Hitler's resolve, however.* When he was released, Hitler resurrected the Nazi party, put together his own private army called the Storm Troopers, and plotted to take over Germany.

As the Nazi leader, Hitler proved to be a skilled politician and vibrant speaker. German military and political leaders began turning to him for guidance as the Depression spread and the turmoil continued. Soon, other small right-wing groups collaborated with the Nazis. And during the 1932 elections for the German parliament, the Nazis emerged as Germany's strongest political party.

Although many people feared Hitler would become a dictator, there was no one else with enough power to lead Germany through the hard times. In 1933, aging President Paul von Hindenburg reluctantly appointed Hitler chancellor, the nation's most powerful position. Finally, Hitler was set to take control of Germany, and the nightmare would begin. ■



Jewish-owned businesses were among the first targets of the Nazi campaign of hatred. Here, Nazi SA members and a German civilian posted boycott signs, most of which read, "Germans defend yourselves against Jewish atrocity propaganda; buy only at German stores."

*It was during Hitler's prison stay that he wrote what would become the "Bible" of Nazi Germany, *Mein Kampf*.

WHO WAS ADOLF HITLER?

Looking at pictures of Adolf Hitler or listening to recordings of his speeches, many people find it difficult to understand his appeal. Yet, this squat, shrill-voiced man had an almost hypnotic quality that mesmerized those who heard him.

Hitler's abilities as a speaker and his mastery of propaganda won him legions of followers in his quest to return Germany to its glory days. In 14 short years, he would turn Germany into a brutal dictatorship.

Born in 1889 near the Austrian-German border, Hitler spent his early years reading, drawing, and daydreaming. He wanted desperately to be an artist but twice failed the entrance exam to Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts.

While living in Vienna, he continued to paint and draw and occasionally sold his work. In the meantime, he managed to make ends meet living off money his mother left her children after her death and an inheritance from his aunt. Since his father had also died, Hitler claimed an orphan's pension as well.

During his youth, Hitler developed a hatred for Jews and others he saw as "inferior." At the same time, he became swept up in an extreme form of patriotism, called nationalism, that engulfed Europe. Like many German-speaking Austrians, he wanted desperately to restore Germany to the powerful empire that he believed the Jews had destroyed.

In 1913, Hitler moved to Munich, Germany, where he would volunteer to serve in the German army during World War I. Temporarily blinded from exposure to mustard gas, Hitler was in a hospital when word came that Germany had sur-

rendered. Fearing Germany's unity would be destroyed, the young corporal vowed to try to "save" his adopted homeland and build it into an empire. ■



Nazi leader Adolf Hitler saluted the crowd during a Reich Party Day parade in Nuremberg.

AN EASY TARGET

Throughout history, Jews have been the victims of prejudice. This prejudice, called anti-Semitism, was based primarily on the belief that the Jews killed Jesus Christ, after whom Christianity was founded. As Christianity spread, the Jews' refusal to adopt Christian beliefs and practices further made them the target of anger and hostility.

While religious reasons were important in spreading anti-Semitism, so were economic and political ones. Banned from most occupations in the predominantly Christian countries of Europe, Jews turned to trading and moneylending. Christians resented their success, and the Jews were often accused of exploiting them.

To escape persecution, the Jews moved from

place to place in search of a "home" where they could live, work, and worship peacefully. By the early 1900s, they had lived in the area now called Germany for more than 1,600 years.

Despite the Jews' numerous contributions, they were often labeled outsiders who did not belong to the German "Volk," or people. Adolf Hitler counted on this underlying prejudice to help him rise to power.

But Hitler took the prejudice a step further. He claimed that the Jews were a separate race with inferior qualities, and he spread the notion that each race had its own blood and that Jewish blood should never be mixed with the superior blood of Germans, the "master race." ■

ACTIVITIES

1 Try to find newspaper articles that illustrate the different "rungs" of Gordon W. Allport's ladder of prejudice: speech, avoidance, discrimination, physical attack, and extermination. (See page 3 of this supplement.) For each article, write a paragraph explaining the consequences of the negative action reported. Be prepared to identify the victims and the perpetrators in each situation.

2 As a class, identify groups of people today that are victims of prejudice. Do some research to find out why these groups are targeted and by whom. Now, watch for newspaper articles about these groups and the negative actions used against them. For each article, identify the consequences of the negative actions and who is affected. Discuss how everyone in a society is affected when prejudice is allowed to thrive.

3 Review the criteria that made it possible for the Holocaust to take place:

- War or economic "hard times" that fan the flames of hatred or resentment within a nation;
- The existence of a feeling of overpowering hatred by the people of a nation and a target group against whom this hatred is directed;
- A charismatic leader who is able to identify the feelings of anger and alienation that exists within the nation and to convert those feelings into hatred of the target group;
- A governmental bureaucracy that could be taken over and used to organize a smoothly run policy of repression and, later, extermination;
- A highly developed state of technology that makes possible methods of mass extermination; and
- Government control of the media.

Now, discuss with your classmates whether it's possible for another Holocaust to happen today. Are any of these criteria being witnessed in modern-day countries? Watch for newspaper articles that demonstrate one or more of the six criteria taking place somewhere in the world today. Cut the articles out and mount them on poster board. Below each article, write an explanation of how the event in the article parallels the corresponding criteria. Discuss what can be done to prevent history from repeating itself.

THE REIGN OF TERROR BEGINS

From the moment Adolf Hitler assumed Germany's top post in 1933, he wasted little time dissolving the democracy and turning the country into a police state.

First, he suspended individual freedoms, including freedom of the press, speech, and assembly. German citizens lost their right to privacy as Nazi officials were allowed to read people's mail and listen in on telephone conversations.

To make sure Nazi policies were enforced, Hitler approved the formation of a special police force called the Gestapo. He gave members of the much-feared group the power to arrest people and send them, without trial, to concentration camps.¹ At the same time, the SS, an elite group of Nazi loyalists, grew more powerful and arrested or murdered political opponents of the Nazi regime.

Hitler then moved to take over the German parliament, called the Reichstag. When a suspicious fire destroyed the Reichstag building just before elections were held, the Nazis blamed it on their opponents, the Communists. As a result, an emergency decree was signed giving the Nazis almost unlimited powers to bring the Communists — and the country — under control.²

When the Reichstag elections were finally held, the Nazi party received nearly 44 percent of the vote — enough to give the Nazis and their Nationalist allies an absolute majority. At Hitler's urging, the Nazi-dominated parliament passed the Enabling Act, making the German government a dictatorship and Hitler its leader. He immediately suspended all remaining civil and human rights and began in earnest his reign of terror.

A campaign of hatred

By 1935, Adolf Hitler was in full control of Germany. President Hindenburg had died a year earlier, and others who would oppose the Nazi regime were too afraid to act. Now, Hitler was able to concentrate on another campaign: a campaign to rid Germany of the Jews and other "undesirables."

For years, Hitler had been obsessed with ideas about race. He believed the German race, which he called Aryan,³ was racially superior to others, such as Poles and Gypsies. He even sin-



Nazi leader Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Himmler, head of the German Police, reviewed SS troops during Reich Party Day ceremonies in Nuremberg, Germany, September 1938.

gled out the mentally ill and physically handicapped as "inferior" and sought to eliminate them from German society, as well. Only then, he believed, could the master German race thrive and expand.

In an attempt to find solutions to the refugee problem created by the Nazi takeover of Germany, representatives of 32 countries, including the United States, met in Evian, France, in July 1938. When those representatives failed to take decisive action, Adolf Hitler thought no one else wanted the Jews either. He continued to carry out his anti-Jewish policies, confident that no one — not even the powerful United States — would do anything about it.

But the primary target of this campaign of hatred was the Jews. Hitler and the Nazis mistakenly identified Jews as a separate race, a group with certain inherited qualities. Those qualities, they insisted, were wicked as well as inferior and posed the most serious threat to the "master race."

The initial plan was to make life so difficult for the Jews that they would leave Germany. The first action against them came shortly after Hitler became chancellor. It was a nationwide boycott of Jewish shops and businesses.

Then, in 1935, the Nazi-dominated parliament passed a series of laws, called the Nuremberg Laws, that declared Jews as "subjects" and stripped them of their citizenship. They also defined the Jews not by their religious

beliefs but by their ancestry. A Jew was said to be anyone with three or four Jewish grandparents. Many who had never considered themselves Jews before were now defined as such.

After the Nuremberg Laws, hundreds of additional laws would further exclude the Jews from German society. Jews could not sit on park benches, go to the theater, or swim

in public pools. Their businesses and private property were seized. Jewish men and women lost their jobs and their children were expelled from public schools.

Stripped of their citizenship — and their dignity — as many as 300,000 Jews fled the country. But many more could not believe things could get worse. Germany was their home, and, in hopes that the anti-Jewish sentiment would subside, they decided to stick it out.

When things did become worse, it was too late. Many of the countries surrounding

Germany had stiff immigration laws and were unwilling to accept additional refugees. In essence, the Jews of Germany were trapped.⁴

The anger turns violent

Inspired by Hitler's massive propaganda machine, many Germans adopted his anti-Semitic beliefs and began openly displaying their prejudice against Jews.

In 1938, the attacks became violent. It happened after a 17-year-old Jewish boy, distraught

over the forced departure of his family from Germany, shot a German official in Paris. Nazi supporters in Germany retaliated with a night of destruction, now known as Kristallnacht, the "night of broken glass." With the German government's support, almost 1,000 Jewish synagogues were set on fire, more than 7,000 Jewish businesses and homes were looted, 100 Jews were killed, and some 30,000 Jews were rounded up by the police and sent to concentration camps.

The campaign of hatred entered a new and brutal phase. ■

¹ The first concentration camps were set up by the Nazis in 1933 to house political prisoners and dissidents. By the late 1930s, tens of thousands of people, including Jews, were being held in these camps. New camps were built in the 1940s with gas chambers disguised as showers. These were called extermination camps, or killing centers.

² Many historians believe the Nazis planned the Reichstag fire and blamed the Communists in an attempt to sway public opinion in their favor.

³ "Aryan" was originally used to refer to people who spoke

Indo-European languages. Adolf Hitler and the Nazis used it to support the racist belief that people of German heritage were superior. The perfect Aryan, to the Nazis, was blond, blue-eyed, and tall. Interestingly, Hitler himself fit none of those characteristics.

⁴ The United States, which had had a policy of open immigration, passed immigration laws in the 1920s that were among the strictest of all. The law significantly reduced immigration and built "walls" that would keep many European Jews from seeking refuge.

SPREADING THE WORD

Taking control of Germany and turning it into a dictatorship was only half the battle in Adolf Hitler's quest to build an empire for his "master race." He also had to win the loyalty and cooperation of the citizens he hoped would help him.

To that end, Hitler and the Nazis orchestrated one of the most vicious propaganda campaigns the world has ever seen. They took control of all forms of communication in Germany — newspapers, movies, radio programs, and books — using every means available to spread their beliefs. Any opinions contrary to those beliefs were censored or banned altogether.

Even textbooks and children's stories were rewritten by the Nazis to instill loyalty and anti-Semitism in young Germans. Such children's books as *The Poisonous Mushroom* portrayed Jews in a grotesque, evil manner, while textbooks promoted "racial science." Teachers were told to revise popular fairy tales with a Nazi slant. *Sleeping Beauty*, for instance, was the German nation after World War I and the prince who awakened her with a kiss was Adolf Hitler.

In one destructive campaign, Nazis raided bookstores and libraries and threw banned books into huge bonfires. Some of the books were written by Jewish writers, including Albert Einstein. But many were written by non-Jews whose ideas

were considered "different."

Before long, the Nazi propaganda fostered a blind obedience among German citizens. This obedience would become increasingly important as Hitler would push the Holocaust into its next tragic phase. ■



During a public burning of "un-German" books in Berlin, a member of the SA threw confiscated books into the fire.

ACTIVITIES

1 When Adolf Hitler took over Germany, he suspended individual freedoms, such as freedom of the press and freedom of speech. To give you an idea of what life would be like without these freedoms, go through the main news section of today's newspaper and mark out all the stories that would NOT have been published without freedom of the press. Then scan the editorial pages and mark out all the opinion pieces that would NOT have been published without freedom of speech. What conclusions can you draw? Now, in small groups, talk about the types of stories and information Hitler might have allowed to be published during his reign of tyranny. Remember, with a government-controlled press, the only information disseminated is that which reflects positively on the government and its leader. Write a few front-page headlines that might have appeared as Hitler gained control.

2 Read over the following Nuremberg Laws, passed by the Nazi-dominated parliament in 1935:

- Marriages between Jews and Germans are forbidden. Marriages performed despite this law are invalid even if the marriage was entered into outside of Germany.
- Relationships between male and female Jews and Germans are prohibited.
- Jews must not employ German maids in their homes who are under 45 years of age.
- Jews cannot display the German flag.
- Only one who is of German ancestry can be a citizen. Jews are subjects but not citizens of Germany.
- The Reich citizen, a person of German blood, is the only holder of full political rights.
- Jews cannot attend public schools, go to theaters, vacation resorts, or reside or even walk in certain sections of German cities.
- Jews are required to wear arm bands or badges bearing the six-pointed Star of David to publicly identify them as being Jewish.

How might life have changed for Jews after these laws were enacted? Create a fictional character — a Jewish teen-ager, for instance — and write a newspaper feature story about how life began to change for him or her. Conduct additional research, if necessary, to create realistic settings and characters.

THE "FINAL SOLUTION"

Adolf Hitler talked often about needing "living space" for the German race to expand. When he put those words into action, it would signal the beginning of World War II. Tragically, it would also be the beginning of the end for six million Jews and five million others who stood in his way.

This chapter in Holocaust history began largely without bloodshed. In 1936, Hitler sent troops to remilitarize the German Rhineland, an area neutralized following World War I. Then, in 1938, Hitler's army entered his native Austria to claim it as part of Germany. He brought Czechoslovakia under his control in 1938 and 1939.

With each move, Hitler was able to seize new land without war — and without repercussions. At first, not a single nation acted to stop him.

But when his modernized army invaded Poland in September 1939, it was clear Hitler's hunger for "living space" would not be satisfied until all of Europe was under his control. Britain and France were the first to act, declaring war on Germany two days later.

Britain and France were poorly prepared, though, especially for the new kind of mechanized warfare Germany introduced, called the Blitzkrieg, or lightning war. Plus, they had mistakenly counted on the Soviet Union to help them defend Poland. Instead, the Soviet Union signed a nonaggression pact with Germany, and the two countries secretly agreed to divide Poland between themselves.

Faced with little resistance, the Nazis had defeated Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, Denmark, and Norway by the middle of 1940. They had also conquered France, leaving only Britain to try to stop them.

Hitler considered invading Britain but turned his attention instead to his uneasy partner, the

Part of the Nazis' success as perpetrators of the Holocaust can be attributed to the fact that they concealed their actions behind misleading words, such as "deportation," which meant sending the Jews to the death camps, and "Final Solution," which stood for extermination. In addition, the Nazis ingeniously divided up the killing process so that those who carried it out did not feel personally responsible for what they were doing.

Soviet Union. To Hitler, the nonaggression pact he and Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union had made served merely to keep the Soviets out of the war while Germany overran Europe. Hitler still considered them "the enemy," and invaded the massive Soviet Union in 1941.

The Soviets, aided by weapons and supplies from the United States, began pushing the Germans back and eventually stopped the Nazi offensive. In one battle, the Soviet Union wiped out a German army of 300,000 men, an event that would prove to be a turning point in the deadly war.

A move toward destruction

While Hitler was leading Germany's quest to take over Europe, he was also waging war against the millions of additional Jews who fell under Nazi control when their countries were invaded. The Nazis carefully planned and exe-

cuted this "war within a war," issuing orders restricting the Jews and stripping them of their rights. And, to control the increasing number of Jews now in Nazi hands, they resorted to an age-old tactic: They forced the Jews to move to designated sections called ghettos.¹

Many of the ghettos were set up in Poland and were in the oldest, most dilapidated areas of cities and towns. They were often enclosed with barbed wire or surrounded by walls. More than 400 ghettos were set up throughout Europe, the largest of which was in Warsaw, Poland. Almost 450,000 Jews were crammed into an area in Warsaw that originally housed only 145,000 people.

In all the ghettos, disease was rampant and medical supplies few. But the biggest threat was hunger. Because they had to depend on the Nazis for food, the Jews were limited to less than 800 calories a day.² Many died of starvation.

Despite the horrible conditions, many Jews managed to survive. Little did most know, however, that their efforts would be in vain. What awaited them next would prove more gruesome than anyone could comprehend.



Jews captured by German police were led down a Warsaw street in the fall of 1939. They were eventually taken to a site where they were forced to clear rubble.

¹ The Nazis didn't originate the idea of ghettos. Throughout history, Jews often lived together in designated areas, either to escape persecution or because others wanted them separated from Christians.

² A typical adult male requires 2,000 calories a day to maintain his normal body weight.



Prisoners of Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany stood in columns under the supervision of a camp guard.

A plan is put in place

Setting up the ghettos accomplished an important goal in Hitler's master plan: isolating the Jews from the rest of society. That was not their purpose, however. The ghettos were merely a stopover to the Jews' final destination — death.

In 1942, at a gathering of Nazi leaders in Berlin, a plan for killing all the Jews in Europe was carefully outlined. The "Final Solution to the Jewish Question," as it was called, would mark the first time a modern government would commit itself to murdering an entire group of people.

In the following months, the Nazis herded hundreds of thousands of Jews onto crowded railroad cars and transported them from the ghettos to special camps. Jews from territories newly occupied by Germany were also "deported" to these camps.

At Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Nazis operated a "killing center" and several factories where some of the Jews were forced to work. When the prisoners arrived, they were lined up and selected to live or die. The young and able-bodied were to be used for slave labor. All others — many women and children and the sick and elderly — were sent to specially constructed gas chambers that looked like showers. Within 20 to 30 minutes after arrival at these killing centers, the victims were poisoned by carbon monoxide or Zyklon B, an insecticide.

Many of those who were selected for slave labor were unable to withstand the horrible conditions of the labor camps. They were subjected to unusually harsh working conditions and suffered from exhaustion and hunger. Those who were too weak to work were shot or

left to die. Others suffered at the hands of Nazi doctors who performed cruel medical experiments on them. And still others committed suicide.

At the other extermination camps — Treblinka, Chelmno, Belzec, and Sobibor — there were no work camps. The prisoners were gassed as soon as they arrived. Only a few were kept alive to do the camp's dirty work — hauling the corpses of their comrades to another area, where they were forced to remove hair and gold teeth

The Final Solution, Continued on page 12



Containers of Zyklon B, the poisonous gas used to kill prisoners at the Majdanek killing center in Poland, were confiscated during liberation of the camp.

ACTIVITIES

1 Look up the definition of the word ghetto. Discuss how the term, first used to describe designated areas where Jews were separated, eventually came to describe any area in which minority groups live or are restricted by economic or social pressures. Look on the Internet or in the local library's newspaper archives to find a story about a modern ghetto. What are the living conditions inside the ghetto? How are ghettos today different from ghettos during the Holocaust? Summarize your findings in a few brief paragraphs.

2 Inside the heavily populated Warsaw Ghetto, there was an official newspaper called *Gazeta Żydowska*, or Jewish Gazette. One of its primary responsibilities was to publish the death rate in the ghetto. Imagine that you are the editor of the Jewish Gazette and want to publish information to help the residents survive — physically and spiritually. In small groups, brainstorm a list of stories you would publish in the next issue of the newspaper. Remember, living conditions were terrible inside the ghetto, and residents had to smuggle most of their food and other staples in. As editor, you will want to provide as much helpful information as possible. What would you risk in order to provide this help?

3 As Jews marched to the gas chambers at the five extermination camps, other Jewish prisoners were forced to play light marching music to keep them calm. One woman's experience as a member of a camp orchestra is recalled in the memoir, *Playing for Time*. Read this memoir. Then write a newspaper-style review of it.

4 The sight of hungry children looking for food troubled many of the Polish women living outside the ghettos. Sometimes, these women would leave leftovers outside their homes for the children to eat or to smuggle into the ghetto. Pretend you are one of these children and want to let someone outside the ghetto know that you need more food for yourself and your family. Using the newspaper, cut out words and symbols to make a secret message that you can slip under someone's door. How might a Jewish ghetto child's needs and wants be different from your needs and wants today? Discuss.

A STORY TO TELL

“There are 350,000 survivors of the Holocaust alive today ... There are 350,000 experts who just want to be useful with the remainder of their lives. Please listen to the words and the echoes and the ghosts.”

Steven Spielberg during his Academy Award acceptance speech for *Schindler's List*

The millions who died in the Holocaust were part of an important story. Those who survived the nightmare were left to tell it.

Here, on these pages, are some of the stories of Holocaust survivors. They are among the hundreds of thousands who, either by luck, the help of others, or their own fortitude, managed to rewrite the final chapter for future

generations to hear.

For the most part, their's are stories of hope in the midst of despair. But most important, their stories are reminders that behind the staggering numbers of those who suffered and died were people — people just like your neighbors, friends, and family. They were people just like you.

A VOICE HEARD THROUGH THE AGES

For 25 long months, a young Jewish girl and her family hid in the cramped attic of an Amsterdam warehouse to avoid being captured by the Nazis. For more than 50 years, the world has shared those experiences through her detailed, written account.

The girl, of course, was Anne Frank, one of the world's most famous children. Her account is *The Diary of Anne Frank* — a poignant glimpse of the Jewish experience during the Holocaust and a testament to the endurance of the human spirit.

The diary, at times serious, at times humorous, was a confessional as well as a vivid description of the day-to-day struggles Anne and her family encountered. Writing, she said, “is the finest thing I have.”

“I can shake off everything if I write; my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn,” she wrote. “Anyone who doesn't write doesn't know how wonderful it is ...”

For those left to read her words, they provide inspiration. It's almost as if Anne was

trying to remind future generations never to give up hope.

“I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death. I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever-approaching thunder, which will destroy us too. I can feel the sufferings of millions, and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquility will return again. In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out.”

As we now know, Anne never got the chance to carry out her dreams and “ideals.” While in hiding, she and her family were betrayed to the Nazis and captured. Anne was taken to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where she died of typhus just weeks before British troops liberated the camp. Her father was the only member of the Frank family to survive. ■



Noah Ginzburg

With a gun pointed squarely at his head, 12-year-old Noah Ginzburg of Poland had no reason to reveal the whereabouts of his father to invading German soldiers in 1941. But bravely, he told the men that he was the only one there. The others, he said, had already been rounded up and taken away.

Noah's bravery temporarily saved his grandmother, aunts, sisters, and mother, who had hidden in the attic while Noah remained downstairs to confront the soldiers. But, during another roundup of Jews in 1942, Noah's family was not so lucky. Hiding in a tunnel leading from an outdoor toilet, the Jews were discovered and executed by German and Ukrainian soldiers. Noah survived only by quickly thinking of his mother, who pushed him back underground before being shot herself.

Left alone, Noah found new hiding places and, again, narrowly escaped attempts by German soldiers to shoot the Jews. Noah was liberated from Strachoslaw, Poland, in July 1944 at the age of 12. Accompanying other orphans, Noah emigrated to the United States in 1946 and completed his education and eventually married Betty Hellner, another hidden child from Poland.



Helen Verblunsky

While her parents worked in forced labor brigades, Helen Verblunsky spent her days in the Kovno ghetto watching her younger brother, Avramaleh. That is, until Avramaleh was seized from her in March 1944.

A few months later, Helen and her parents were deported to Stuthoff. Upon their arrival, Helen's father was shipped to Dachau, where he was reported to have died.

Helen and her mother, Tova, managed to stay together, even as they were moved from camp to camp. On Jan. 19, 1945, the two were forced to evacuate their camp and join a death march. Before heading out, however, Helen's mother suggested they return to the barracks to get straw for warmth. When they returned to the assembly point, the march had already begun, and Helen and Tova were ordered back to the camp. There, along with 50 other women, they were ordered to lie down and were injected with a syringe.

About half the women died from the injection, but Helen and Tova survived. A lone Russian scout liberated the camp and the Verblunskys on Jan. 24, 1945.

Helen and her mother made their way to Austria, where Helen met her future husband. All three moved to Canada.



Sally Wasserman

As one of many Jewish children incarcerated in the Polish ghetto at Dabrowa, Sally Wasserman's* chances for survival were slim. Her mother, Toba, knew it, as did Mikolei Turkin, a public school teacher who had been assigned to read electrical meters in the ghetto. Mikolei took a liking to the little girl and, realizing the impending danger, offered to smuggle Sally out and keep her safely hidden from the Nazis.

During the last week of July in 1943, Toba accepted Mikolei's offer and arranged for Sally's escape. To help her daughter remember them, Toba prepared a packet of family photos for Sally to take along.

Toba and Sally's brother, Wolf, were killed a month later, after being "deported" from the ghetto. Unbeknownst to Sally, her father, Izak, had died earlier at Auschwitz.

Sally remained with Mikolei's family until May 1945. She was placed in a Jewish orphanage for a while, but friends of her parents finally located her and took her in. Sally, still close to Mikolei and his family, ran away to be with them.

Finally, Sally's uncle found her and persuaded her to join him at a camp for displaced persons. From there, the 11-year-old emigrated to the United States and eventually was smuggled into Canada to live with her aunt.

* Sally Wasserman was born Salusia Goldblum in Katowice, Poland, Jan. 23, 1935.



Nachman Aaron Elster

But for a child's cry, Nachman Aaron Elster, his parents, a sister, and several neighbors might have remained hidden in the attic of a home in a Polish ghetto in 1942. Instead, soldiers found the Jews and herded them into a crowded marketplace to await deportation to Treblinka death camp.

Amid the chaos, Nachman's father urged him to escape and find the family who had taken in another of Nachman's sisters. Obliging, the youngster crawled through a gutter and ran into an empty house to hide. The next day, Nachman escaped the ghetto.

Eventually Nachman was reunited with his mother, and the two spent the next several weeks hiding and begging for food. Finally, Nachman located the family who was hiding his sister. Although they told him he could only stay a few days, Nachman hid in their attic until the war was over two years later.

Only Nachman and one sister survived. He later emigrated to the United States.

THE 'FINAL SOLUTION' CONTINUED



Mass executions of Jews were common in the Soviet Union. The Jews assembled in this photo are believed to have been executed in October 1941 in Lubny. Nearly 1,400 Jews, Communists, and partisans died at the hands of the same platoon of German soldiers who murdered the young mother and others shown here.

Shortly after Germany invaded Poland, many Polish citizens were resettled or sent to concentration camps. This created the much talked about "living space," and Germans flocked into the emptied Polish country side.

At the same time, the Nazis initiated a campaign to kill Polish leaders and intellectuals, and they kidnapped up to 50,000 "Aryan-looking" Polish children to take to Germany, where they were to be adopted by German families. Those who were rejected as incapable of "Germanization" were sent to special children's camps. Many died of starvation, lethal injection, and disease.

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and fillings. (The gold was melted down and deposited in the bank and the hair was used to make a variety of products for private businesses. The bodies were cremated or burned in open pits.)

Even in the last months of the war, as the Allied Forces (including the United States, Great

Britain, and the Soviet Union) closed in on Germany, the slaughter continued. The Nazis — in an attempt to keep their atrocities hidden — dismantled the camps and forced Jewish prisoners to march to concentration camps in Germany. With the harsh winter weather and few provisions, thousands died. So many died, in fact, that these last brutal acts became known as death marches. ■

DEATH ON THE RUN

Although the "Final Solution" officially outlined the Nazi plan to kill the Jews, the slaughter had already begun. Even as this plan was being announced in Berlin, mobile killing squads were murdering hundreds of thousands of innocent Jews.

The squads, called Einsatzgruppen, included four units of 500 to 900 men that followed invading German troops into the Soviet Union. These squads were merciless, rounding up Jewish men, women, and children and taking them to the outskirts of towns to be shot and dumped into mass graves. In one horrifying spree at Babi Yar, near Kiev, the mobile killing squads massacred 34,000 Jews in two days.

By the time these squads were ordered to stop killing in 1942, 1.5 million Jews were already dead. ■



SS troop members walked past a block of burning buildings during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising in 1943. The uprising, a 20-day battle led by Jewish fighting forces, began when German troops entered the ghetto to begin the final round of deportations. Despite the Jews best efforts, the Nazis prevailed. Some 56,000 Jews were reportedly killed or captured.



Young survivors of Buchenwald concentration camp awaited help behind a barbed wire fence.

There were several different types of camps set up by the Nazis during the Holocaust. There were concentration camps, which were originally designed to “concentrate” political prisoners in one area. There were also forced labor camps, transit camps, prisoner-of-war camps, and finally, death camps. Not all the camps were set up solely for killing, but many people died because of the horrible conditions that existed.

LIFE IN A POLISH GHETTO

For many Jews during the Holocaust, the nightmare began — and ended — in the ghettos of Poland, the cramped, rundown areas where they were forced to live before being sent to concentration or death camps. Many died of starvation, disease, and exposure within months of their internment.

For those who did survive, living conditions were almost unbearable. Apartments in a typical Polish ghetto during the Holocaust might house up to 15 people, often from different families. Unsanitary conditions prevailed as residents were forced to throw human waste and garbage in the streets.

To make matters worse, the Nazis tried to starve the Jews to death, allowing them to buy only bread, potatoes, and fats. Many people,

including children, had to beg or steal food just to survive.

During the winter months, the Nazis also withheld heating fuel from the Jews, and many died from the cold. Diseases were widespread as they became weakened by exposure and hunger.

In spite of these wretched conditions, many Jews did survive — physically and spiritually. As author Seymour Rossel wrote, they fed their spirits “even as their bodies starved.”

Youngsters continued to study, read, and write, even though schools were forbidden. Families worshipped and secretly observed Jewish holidays. Even young children made their own toys and played, in spite of the death and suffering that surrounded them. ■

ACTIVITIES

1 Look up a definition for the term genocide. Then find out if the systematic killing of national or ethnic groups still occurs today. If so, look for newspaper articles and material about modern-day genocide. In each case, identify the victims, the perpetrators, the bystanders, and the rescuers. Also, describe in a few paragraphs what you or your government can do to help the victims or stop the problem altogether.

2 Imagine that you are a German newspaper editor in 1941. You receive a letter and photographs that prove Jews are being killed only 20 miles from your town. Would you publish the information you received even though it would put your own safety at risk? Debate this question in small groups. Ask a spokesperson to share your group’s thoughts.

3 On February 19, 1942, during World War II, the United States issued Executive Order 9066 authorizing the internment of all Japanese living on the U.S. West Coast. Research back issues of the newspaper (at the local library or on the Internet) to find out why some people in the United States thought Japanese-Americans on the West Coast were a threat to the nation’s security. Was the forced confinement necessary? How did an internment camp compare to a concentration camp? Share your findings with the class.

4 Read a personal account of someone who survived the Holocaust. How did this person survive — emotionally and spiritually? If he or she had the opportunity to give someone advice for surviving a similar ordeal, what would it be? Respond in the form of a letter, similar to one you would find in an advice column in your newspaper (Dear Abby, Ann Landers, etc.).

5 Under your teacher’s supervision, segregate your class into two groups — blue-eyed people and everyone else. Those without blue eyes will design a patch (like the Star of David) that the blue-eyed people will wear in class every day for a week. Then they will create a list of “laws” restricting the blue-eyed people during class (cannot sharpen pencils, etc.). Throughout the week, both groups will record their thoughts in a journal. Allow group discussion to follow.

ESCAPING THE NIGHTMARE

Rescue, resistance, and liberation

Despite the overwhelming persecution and death that surrounded them, hundreds of thousands of Jews survived the nightmare of the Holocaust.

Some survived thanks to the heroics of others — non-Jews who took great risks to help their neighbors, friends, and even strangers in need. Some survived out of their own will to live, even when there was little to live for. And some, though broken in body and spirit, were liberated by the Allied Forces at the end of World War II.

These stories of survival provide the only glimpse of “goodness” that comes from the terrible story of the Holocaust. It proves that, even in history’s darkest

hour, there was a glimmer of hope; that in a world that seemed to be falling apart, good still had the capacity to overcome evil.

The ‘Righteous Gentiles’

As the horror of the Holocaust unfolded in

Faced with important moral choices, people who lived in Europe during the Holocaust reacted differently. There were, of course, the perpetrators — those who carried out the Nazi plan to destroy the Jews. There were also collaborators, people who helped the Nazis commit their crimes or took advantage of their victims. There were also the bystanders, people who chose to do nothing. And there were rescuers, the “Righteous Gentiles” who saw injustice and acted to stop it.

Europe, non-Jews were faced with a choice: Do I stand up and help those in need or do I stand by and watch while people suffer and die?

Motivated by fear,¹ many non-Jews chose to be silent bystanders. But there were those who ignored the risks and reached out to help their fellow man. It is those people, the “Righteous Gentiles,” who clung tightly to their moral convictions and acted in the face of great danger.

Who were the Righteous Gentiles?

They were rich and poor, individuals and organized groups, men, women, and even children. They were from all religious backgrounds and different social classes. Yet, they had something in common: They had compassion and courage.

Also common among the rescuers was their belief that they did nothing special. They often resisted being called heroes because they were only “doing what was right.”

Rescuers helped in many ways, including aiding Jews in their escape from Germany, hiding them in their homes, and providing food and clothing. Some warned the Jews when danger was near, while others distracted the Nazis who were hunting for them.

As the world learned about the atrocities of the Holocaust, attention initially focused on the victims, the perpetrators, and the survivors. Only in recent years have the rescuers received recognition for their role in helping so many Jews survive. As one man wrote:

“Let the epic of heroic deeds of love, as opposed by those of hatred, of rescue as



Members of a youth movement in the Kovno ghetto of Lithuania posed for a group portrait. The movement, called the Irgun Brit Zion, or IBZ, was founded during the Soviet occupation in 1940-41. Its members originally fought to preserve Jewish, Hebrew, and Zionist culture, but they soon found themselves fighting for physical preservation as well. Most were 15 or 16 years old.

¹ As a warning to others, the Germans shot or publicly hanged anyone who attempted to help the Jews.

² Quote from Sholem Asch as published in *The Righteous Gentiles* by Victoria Sherrow.

³ Quote from *The Evil Men Do*.

opposed to destruction, bear equal witness to unborn generations.”²

Fighting back

Contrary to popular belief, wrote Arnold P. Rubin, “the Jews did not all go like sheep to their deaths.”³ Some did fight back.

Jewish resistance against the Nazis was both planned and spontaneous, armed and unarmed, physical and spiritual. It took many forms and met with varying degrees of success — and failure.

Many Jews resisted persecution by escaping from Europe as the Nazis came to power. Those who were trapped survived by smuggling food, medicine, and other necessities. They also secretly participated in Jewish traditions and observances, printed underground newspapers, kept written accounts of their lives, held concerts and plays, and committed other acts that defied the authorities and helped them cling to hope.

As the Jews realized that the Nazis’ ultimate plan for them was death, they turned to more violent forms of resistance. They formed guerrilla groups and organized ghetto and camp upris-



Among those captured during the suppression of the Warsaw ghetto uprising were these female members of the Jewish resistance.

ings. One of the largest revolts occurred at the Warsaw Ghetto in January 1943. When the Germans entered the ghetto to take several thousand people away, small groups of Jews with smuggled weapons attacked. After four days of fighting, the Nazis withdrew, taking fewer Jews than they had intended.

They returned, however, in April of that same year and tried to remove the remaining Jews. This time, the resisters greeted the Nazis with homemade bombs and additional weapons. They fought from bunkers and sewers, evading the Germans for 27 days. Eventually, the superior German army brought in tanks and machine guns and killed many of the 60,000 Jews who remained in the ghetto.

There were other revolts, including those at the death camps of Sobibor, Treblinka, and Auschwitz. And although the Germans always outlasted the Jews, those attempts provided reminders that one day the Nazis might be defeated and the horror would end.

Liberation

As the Allied Forces advanced on the German army in the final days of World War II, they slowly began to liberate the concentration camps. It’s safe to say none of the soldiers was prepared for what he found inside the barbed wire fences.

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ACTIVITIES

1 It’s difficult for people today to comprehend how the average person could stand by as the Final Solution was carried out. How much did the German citizens know about what was going on? How much did the people in other countries, including the United States, know? And what could they have done to stop it? Research these and other questions surrounding the Final Solution, and form an opinion about what the bystanders could have done differently. Share your opinion in the form of a newspaper editorial.

2 When many people and governments turned their backs on the victims of the Holocaust, there were those brave people who risked their lives to save others, including Father Marie Bent, Oscar Schindler, and Raoul Wallenberg. Find out more about one of these men or another “Righteous Gentile.” If you had the opportunity to interview this person, what would you want to know? Prepare a list of reporter’s questions you would ask. For extra credit, write a newspaper feature story about the person and the impact of his or her heroic deeds.

3 At the death camp Sobibor, 250,000 prisoners had already died or been exterminated when, in October 1943, 300 Jews and Soviet POWs broke out of the camp and escaped into the nearby woods. Find out the five W’s of this story of resistance and write a newspaper lead (the opening paragraphs of a story) that might have appeared at the time of the breakout.

4 In Jerusalem, in front of Yad Vashem (the memorial to the children who perished in the Holocaust) is a special garden of trees. Each tree honors a Christian who risked his or her life to save one or more Jews. In addition, each tree has a plaque with a brief description of the hero. Select a Righteous Gentile, one whom you think should be honored with a tree in the garden at Yad Vashem, and write a letter to the editor or an editorial expressing your thoughts.

5 Discuss the importance of being unselfish and helping others in distress. Look in today’s newspaper and find either a picture of or an article about a person who put someone else’s needs above his own. What were the consequences of the unselfish act? What might have happened if the person had not acted?



Survivors of the Dachau camp cheer approaching U.S. troops during liberation in April 1945.

ESCAPING THE NIGHTMARE CONTINUED



Among the items left behind at the Majdanek camp in Poland was this mound of victims' shoes.

Stacks of dead bodies lay rotting in the sun. Those who were still alive had gone without food for so long that they looked like living skeletons. Many died even after Allied troops and relief workers arrived with food and medical supplies. At Bergen-Belsen, where 60,000 prisoners were found alive, 14,000 died shortly after liberation and another 14,000 wouldn't make it past the next few weeks.

Some Allied soldiers were so shocked by what they saw that they attacked the remaining Nazi guards. A few also allowed prisoners to take out their revenge. And when American General

George Patton led troops into the Buchenwald camp, he was so upset that he ordered his troops to go into a nearby town and bring back 1,000 German civilians to see what had happened "in their own back yards." The soldiers brought back 2,000 civilians instead, some of whom were forced to bury the dead.

The liberators were often greeted with cheers from camp survivors. But just as often, they were met with apprehension and a sense of disbelief. Freedom, at last, was almost too difficult to grasp. ■

Even today, people still wonder why more Jews didn't resist or escape during the Holocaust. But when you consider that there was a war going on and that most of the countries in which the Jews lived were strongly anti-Semitic, it's not so difficult to understand. Most Jews were so accustomed to anti-Semitism, in fact, that they had a hard time believing that the Nazi menace was as dangerous as it was.

Plus, it was difficult for the Jews to "disguise" themselves because, in many of the European countries, they didn't speak the local languages; they spoke Yiddish. Even their accents gave them away. And, if they tried to escape, it meant breaking up families and abandoning the elderly and small children, something most Jews were reluctant to do.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Lewis H. Weinstein was a lieutenant colonel on General Dwight D. Eisenhower's staff when he helped liberate a Nazi concentration camp in April 1945. Here is what he recalled:

"Someone broke the silence with a curse and then with a roar the men (soldiers) started for the camp on the double. ... The men were plain

fighting mad. They went down that road without any regard for cover or concealment. ...

"I saw Eisenhower go to the opposite end of the road and vomit. From a distance I saw (General George) Patton bend over, holding his head with one hand and his abdomen with the other. And I soon became ill. I suggested to General Eisenhower that cables be sent immedi-

ately to President Roosevelt, Churchill, DeGaulle, urging people to come and see for themselves. The general nodded."

Eisenhower himself wrote in a letter to Chief of Staff George Marshall:

"I have never felt able to describe my emotional reaction when I first came face-to-face with indisputable evidence of Nazi brutality and ruthless disregard of every shred of decency. ... I visited every nook and cranny of the camp because I felt it my duty to be in a position from then on to testify 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." ■

With his Nazi war machine grinding to a halt and Allied forces closing in, Adolph Hitler committed one last desperate act: He killed himself. By his own orders, Hitler's body was taken outside his specially built bunker in Berlin and burned. His wife of one day, Eva Braun, died along with him.



Prisoners of the "little camp" in Buchenwald slept in wooden bunks, three to a bed. Among them was Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel.

A SURVIVOR'S STORY

Growing up in a close-knit Jewish community in Sighet, Romania, Elie Wiesel enjoyed a childhood "blessed with love and hope and faith and prayer." Wiesel and others felt safe from the ravages of World War II and from the persecution other Jews were suffering.

That sense of security ended, though, when the Nazis entered Sighet in 1944. Wiesel, then 15, and other Jews were rounded up and deported to concentration camps in Poland.

Wiesel and his family were sent to Auschwitz. His mother and sister were separated from him, but Wiesel managed to stay with his father for the next year. The Wiesel men were starved, beaten, and worked almost to death. They were also moved from one camp to another in the middle of winter without the proper provisions.

As the war drew to a close, Wiesel's father was unable to hold on. He died from dysentery, starvation, exhaustion, and exposure. When the war was over, the younger Wiesel sought asylum in France and began the process of

rebuilding his life.

While in France, Wiesel devoted himself to his studies and supported himself as a choir master and teacher of Hebrew. He later became a journalist and wrote for newspapers in France and Israel.

It wasn't until the 1950s, however, that Wiesel used his gift for words to write about his Holocaust experience. He removed his self-imposed vow of silence and penned his memoir, *Night*. From then on, Wiesel dedicated himself to describing the horrors of the Holocaust. At the same time, he decided to help other victims of oppression and racism. For his work, Wiesel won the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize.

Wiesel's writings are some of the most well-known in the world. Today, he is considered a leading spokesman for Holocaust survivors.

"No one has the right to speak for the dead ...," he once wrote. "Still, the story had to be told. In spite of all risks, all misunderstandings. It needed to be told for the sake of our children." ■

ACTIVITIES

1 Look further into the reasons more Jews didn't resist or escape during the Holocaust. Then put yourself in their shoes. Would you have broken up your family to save yourself or a brother or sister? Where would you have hidden? Who would you have trusted? Write a poem expressing your thoughts about this subject. Create a bulletin board display featuring your class' poems.

2 There are many Holocaust survivors who, like Elie Wiesel, want to share their experiences. Invite a Holocaust survivor to speak to your classroom. Prior to his or her visit, prepare a list of reporter's questions to ask. Then, after your interview, help this person share those experiences by writing a feature story for your school newspaper.

3 The obituary section of the newspaper can provide us with information about individuals and their influence on the course of history. Read the obituary section in your newspaper for a period of days and make note of the writing style used. Then write an obituary for Adolf Hitler that might have appeared, first, in German newspapers and then in American newspapers. Consider the differing views the Germans and Americans might have had about Hitler and make sure the obituary accurately depicts his life and how he changed the world forever.

4 Imagine you are a reporter present as the Allied Forces liberate a Nazi camp where some prisoners are still alive. Write down your observations — and your feelings — about what you "see." How would you describe the scene so your readers could better understand the Holocaust? Now, look for a newspaper story in which the reporter was able to give his or her readers a true "picture" of what happened. Underline words and phrases that were most graphic in their description of the situation and the people involved.

5 Write a character profile of Elie Wiesel. Discuss how his life was shaped by the Holocaust. How might his life have been different if the Holocaust had never occurred?

THE AFTERMATH

Although there had been newspaper accounts and confirmed reports about Nazi crimes, few people outside Europe knew the extent to which they carried out those crimes. As word of the atrocities spread, the world reacted with shock.

There was little time, however, for people to contemplate the horror of what had happened. Instead, two pressing needs arose in the aftermath of the Holocaust that demanded the world's attention — and quick action.

Paying for their crimes

When the world finally awoke to the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes, it was too late for 11 million innocent people. But it wasn't too late to avenge their deaths.

Within two weeks after World War II was over and Nazi Germany was dead, plans were made to bring those responsible for these "crimes against humanity" to trial. Allied leaders who had vowed during the war to bring Nazi leaders to justice were even more determined after seeing for themselves the morbid conditions of the concentration and death camps they liberated.

Finally, on Nov. 20, 1945, 22 high-ranking Nazis, charged primarily with launching an illegal war, were put on trial in the ancient German city of Nuremberg. Ironically, Nuremberg had been the site of many Nazi rallies during the party's heyday.

Presiding over the hearings were judges from the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union. An unprecedented 42 volumes of testimony and documents were presented against the defendants, including former Deputy Fuhrer Rudolph Hess and Hermann Goering, the second most powerful man in Nazi Germany.

Although most of the defendants claimed they were just following orders, 12 of them were sentenced to death, three received life sentences, and four got shorter prison terms. Three were found not guilty.

Missing from the trials was the Nazi's supreme leader, Adolf Hitler. He committed suicide as the war came to a close. Several other high-ranking Nazis also killed themselves before they were brought to justice. And many fled Germany to escape prosecution.

The Nuremberg trials were the first to bring Nazi criminals to justice but they weren't the last. Many trials took place in Germany, as well as in other countries. One of the most notorious was the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Israel. Eichmann had been in charge of coordinating the trains that transported victims to camps. He

escaped to Argentina and lived under a false name until 1960, when he was located and taken to Israel. He, too, was found guilty and was executed in 1962.

Rebuilding lives

Making the Nazis stand trial for their crimes was an important step in writing the final chapter of the Holocaust. But justice did little to ease the real-life burdens of the survivors of this horror story.

Scattered throughout Europe and separated from their loved ones — if they were still alive — many Jews had nowhere to go. Even if their homes hadn't been destroyed or taken over by others, many of the sur-

vivors could not go back and live among those who had harbored so much hatred for them.

Some of the survivors went to displaced persons (DP) camps set up by the Allies in western Europe. They waited in these camps until the United States or other countries would allow them to emigrate. The United States finally

To counter the Nazis' claims that their actions had not violated any laws, the United Nations passed the Genocide Convention in 1948. The convention made it illegal to commit genocide — the organized extermination or mistreatment of a group of people because of their nationality or religious affiliation.

eased its immigration restrictions and allowed many Jewish refugees to enter.

Although most Holocaust survivors had settled somewhere, there was no place for many Jews to call "home." By 1947, the United Nations stepped in and voted to provide a place for the Jewish people to live in Palestine, the ancient Jewish homeland. Palestine was divided into a Jewish state and an Arab state, and, in 1948, the Jewish state became the State of Israel.

A never-ending search for justice

A lot has been said and done in retribution for the Holocaust. But as long as Nazi perpetrators who escaped prosecution are alive, the search for justice will never be complete.

Famed Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal, himself a Holocaust survivor, is one who has devoted much of his life to searching for Nazis. In all, the Austrian Jew has brought 1,100 Nazi criminals to justice.

Wiesenthal's Jewish Documentation Center, established in 1961, continues to collect evidence of Nazi crimes and organize searches for those who avoided prosecution. Among those brought to trial by Wiesenthal were Adolf Eichmann and Karl Silberbauer, who arrested Anne Frank.

In addition to tracking down Nazi criminals, efforts have also focused on uncovering "one of the greatest thefts by a government in history." It's believed that nearly \$9 billion of Jewish money, goods, and property were taken from Jews during the Holocaust.

A study released in the United States in 1997



Many of the defendants, shown seated in "the dock" at the Nuremberg trial of war criminals, were charged primarily with launching an illegal war.

showed, among other things:

- During the Holocaust, Nazi Germany took gold, jewelry, coins, and dental fillings from concentration camp victims and resmelted them into gold bars that were traded to other countries.

- Nazi Germany transferred \$400 million (\$3.9 billion in today's dollars) worth of looted gold to the Swiss National Bank in exchange for money and materials needed for the German war effort.

In addition to valuables, the Nazis also took the Jews' clothing, shoes, suitcases, baby bottles, eyeglasses, artificial limbs, and anything else that could be used by the Germans. The gates and monuments of Jewish cemeteries were resold, and even the tombstones of Jews were used to pave the streets in German cities.

"We have written a glorious page in our history," said Heinrich Himmler, the man in charge of the concentration and death camps. "We have taken everything they (the Jews) owned." ■



Jewish children at the Buchenwald Displaced Persons camp waved goodbye to friends as they prepared to depart to France. From France, some traveled on to Palestine, part of which later became the State of Israel.

DEAR TEACHERS/PARENTS:

Whether you are mandated to teach a complete unit on the Holocaust or you want to integrate the topic into other subject areas, this special Newspaper in Education supplement will provide the ideal foundation upon which to build your lesson plans. It is based on numerous hours of research and consultation and was written using educational guidelines established by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The purpose of this supplement is not to provide a comprehensive history of the Holocaust. Rather, our intent is to give students a synopsis of the events that define this tragic period.

Furthermore, this supplement is written to help students understand the implications of the Holocaust. When used in conjunction with your daily newspaper, it will provide students a "real-world" view of history and how it relates to them today.

Keep in mind, too, that a study of the Holocaust can help students understand what can happen when prejudice, racism, and other negative attitudes are fostered by society. Likewise, it can provide a context in which to learn about the dangers of remaining silent, apathetic, or indifferent to the suffering of others.

Like any study of the Holocaust, this supplement will raise many difficult questions, some of which you will not be able to answer. It's important to let the students explore, discuss, and draw conclusions in an age-appropriate fashion.

For additional information about teaching the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has detailed guidelines available on its Web site. The address is: <http://www.ushmm.org>. Numerous other resources are also available, many of which are listed below. ■

Resources:

World Book Encyclopedia

The Holocaust by Seymour Rossel

The Evil That Men Do, The Story of the Nazis by Arnold P. Rubin

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, America Keeps the Memory Alive by Eleanor H. Ayer

We Are Witnesses, Five Diaries of Teenagers Who Died in the Holocaust by Jacob Boas

Tell Them We Remember, The Story of the Holocaust by Susan D. Bachrach

The Righteous Gentiles by Victoria Sherrow

Never to Forget, The Jews of the Holocaust by Milton Meltzer

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum <http://www.ushmm.org>

The Hall of Public Service <http://www.achievement.org>

A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust Produced by the Florida Center for Instructional Technology <http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust>

The Jewish Student Online Research Center (JSOURCE) <http://www.us-israel.org>

The History Channel <http://www.historychannel.com>

The Simon Wiesenthal Center <http://www.wiesenthal.com>

ACTIVITIES

1 The Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal, established by the Allies in 1945 to try the highest leaders of Nazi Germany, sentenced 19 people to death or prison. Three were set free. Obviously, not everyone involved paid for their crimes. In recent years, though, some former Nazis were found in the United States and accused of committing war crimes. Although several denied the accusations, some were stripped of their American citizenship and are awaiting deportation. What do you think should be done to former Nazis who are located more than 50 years after the Holocaust? Research the issue further, and conclude the activity by sharing your thoughts in an opinion piece — a letter to the editor, an editorial, an editorial cartoon, or a personal column.

2 Although it seems unimaginable that another Holocaust could occur, even today individuals and groups are the targets of racism, stereotyping, bigotry, discrimination, and, yes, extermination. "Hate crimes" are fast becoming an international crisis. Watch your newspaper for stories about hate crimes, and for each one create a web illustrating who is affected. Then, prepare a newspaper ad encouraging people to stop the violence. Display the ads on a classroom or school bulletin board.

Educational consultation by:

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