



Lesson 4

1939–1942

Persecution and
Segregation

Persecution and Segregation

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KEY VOCABULARY

Aryan race
Einsatzgruppen
eugenics
euthanasia
Gypsies
Jehovah's Witnesses
Mein Kampf
SS
sterilization

OBJECTIVES

- Students will recognize and examine the escalation of state-sponsored persecution and segregation against any group perceived to be a threat to Nazi ideology.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

- How did government policy and social attitudes foster the persecution and segregation of Jews and others?
- How did German aggression and the outbreak of World War II globalize German national policies?

LESSON OVERVIEW

In this lesson students will trace Nazi racial policies that led to discrimination against various groups. They will also trace the expansion of Germany, which led to new policies aimed at the Jewish population.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN AND ACTIVITIES

Activity 1

- Review homework reading from *The Cage*. Lead students in a discussion of how and why the relationship between Mrs. Gruber's family and Riva's family changes from Chapter 2 to Chapter 3.

Activity 2

- Elicit from students the meaning of the Niemöller quote.

Activity 3

- Read aloud Documents 1 and 2, which exemplify Germany's "master race" and eugenics policies. Lead a discussion in which students will demonstrate an understanding of these policies.
- Divide the class into five sections and distribute a different Document 3 fact sheet to each. After examining the fact sheet, each section will share the identity of the group, tell what happened to members of the group, and explain why they were subject to German racial policies. Use Document 4 to see how each group was identified.

Activity 4

- Using Documents 5, 6, and 7, review the events from the beginning of World War II to late 1941 after Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union.
- Using Documents 8, 9, and 10, elicit from students why ghettos were created, where they were located, and what the conditions were in the ghettos.

Concluding Question

- How did the ideology of prejudice lead to discrimination, persecution, and segregation?

RESOURCES

- 1** Reading: Excerpt from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*
- 2A** Reading: Racial Hygiene
- 2B** Photo Racial Hygiene
- Reading: *Holocaust Resource Newsletter*
- 3A** "Handicapped and the Holocaust"
- 3B** "Homosexuals and the Holocaust"
- 3C** "Gypsies and the Holocaust"
- 3D** "Jehovah's Witnesses and the Holocaust"
- 3E** "Afro-Europeans and the Holocaust"
- 4** Poster: Stars, Triangles, and Markings
- 5** Time Line: World War II to 1941
- 6** Map: Jewish Populations in Europe's Nations, 1933
- 7** Maps: The Expansion of Germany
- 8A** Reading: "Ghettoization"
- 8B** Map: Poland: Major Ghettos
- 8C** Photos: Ghettos
- 11** World War II and Holocaust Time Line 1939–1941

Contemporary Connection

- Using newspapers and magazines, elicit discussion of contemporary events illustrating that man's inhumanity to man continues.
- Why is a threat to one group a threat to all?

Homework

- Read about ghetto life in Chapters 7 and 17 in *The Cage* by Ruth Minsky Sender.
- Read the poem "The Little Boy with His Hands Up."

QUOTATION

by Pastor Martin Niemöller

In Germany, first they came for the Communists,
And I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews,
And I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Jew.
Then they came for the trade unionists,
And I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a trade unionist.
Then they came for the Catholics,
And I didn't speak up, because I was Protestant.
Then they came for me,
And by that time there was no one left to speak for me.

—Pastor Martin Niemöller, Survivor

DOCUMENT 1

Excerpt from Hitler's *Mein Kampf*

“What we must fight for is to safeguard the existence and reproduction of our race and our people, the sustenance of our children and the purity of our blood, the freedom and independence of the fatherland, so that our people may mature for the fulfillment of the mission allotted it by the creator of the universe.”

Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* Translated by Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 71.

QUESTIONS

1. From whom does Hitler think Germany and the German people must be protected?
2. What is Hitler “safeguarding”?
3. Why is this an example of racist ideology?

DOCUMENT 2A

Racial Hygiene

German scientists, embracing eugenics, legitimized the racial ideology of the Nazi movement, and thus provided the “scientific” basis for radical policies of exclusion and mass murder. The eugenic movement was founded in the 19th century by the British naturalist Francis Galton, and had spread by the early 20th century to the United States and most European countries. Asserting that the discoveries of Charles Darwin could be applied to humans, the proponents championed social policies that would improve the human race through controlled breeding. Linking heredity not only to disease and retardation, but also to crime and anti-social behavior, they advocated limitations on the reproduction of humans considered inferior. The founders of eugenics were social activists and not specialists in biology or genetics, but the movement eventually attracted leading scientists from the fields of genetics, anthropology and psychiatry. Although the “science” of eugenics was flimsy when viewed from the vantage point of post-DNA genetics, it relied on scientific practices considered standard in its time.

Throughout Nazi Germany, racial “experts” examined eye color and hair color, and measured facial dimensions to determine whether or not individuals were racially “Aryan.” 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. Many Nazi laws and decrees applied differently to persons they labeled as “superior” and “inferior.” While individual Germans tried to prove their “superior” race, the regime was determined to identify persons of “inferior” race.

Washington, DC: US Holocaust Memorial Museum

Read the following definition:

Eugenics is a movement devoted to improving the human species by controlling heredity.

QUESTIONS

1. In your own words, define eugenics and explain its use.
2. According to the reading, what were the proposed benefits?
3. How did the Nazis use eugenics to fulfill their own agenda?

DOCUMENT 2B

Racial Hygiene



This photograph shows Dr. Sophie Ehrhardt (on the right), a staff member of Robert Ritter's Eugenic and Criminal Biological Research Station (Rassenhygienische und Kriminalbiologische Forschungsstelle), at the Reich Health Office, Berlin, matching a Gypsy woman's eye color with samples on an eye color chart, ca. 1939. Original photograph in color. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Bundesarchiv Koblenz, R 165. For educational purposes only.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Photo Archive

DOCUMENT 3A

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Handicapped and the Holocaust

HOLOCAUST RESOURCE NEWSLETTER

Handicapped and the Holocaust

Never a perpetrator.

Never a victim.

Never a bystander.

Never again.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Aryan: Refers to Germanic northern Europeans who were designated by the Nazis as the so-called “master race.”

Einsatzgruppen: mobile killing units, German special duty squads composed mainly of SS and police personnel, assigned to kill Jews, Gypsies, and others following the German invasion of Poland and the Soviet Union.

Eugenics: a movement devoted to improving the human species by controlling heredity.

Euthanasia: the practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured in relatively painless way for reasons of mercy.

Hereditary: inherited, passed on from parents to child.

Nazi: a short term for National Socialist German Workers Party, a right wing, nationalistic, anti-Semitic political party formed in 1919 and headed by Adolph Hitler from 1921–1945.

SS: the Defense Squad. Headed by Himmler, it was given the task of implementing “The Final Solution”.

Sterilization: an operation to make a person unable to produce children.

Did You Know? On July 14, 1933, soon after Hitler took power, the Nazis enacted the “Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Disease.” This law forced the sterilization of all persons who suffered from diseases considered hereditary, such as physical deformity, epilepsy, blindness, deafness, mental illness, retardation, and severe alcoholism.

WHAT HAPPENED:

- 1933 Forced sterilization “to prevent offspring with hereditary defects” was made legal in Germany. Between 1934–1944, an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people were sterilized in the largest eugenics movement in history.
- 1934 The forced sterilizations began in January 1934. Most of the people targeted were patients in mental hospitals and other institutions between 20 and 40 years of age. Most were Aryan Germans.
- 1935 The “Sterilization Law” was followed by the “Marriage Law” which required proof that any offspring from a marriage would not be afflicted with disabling hereditary disease.
- 1935 Hitler stated privately that “in the event of war, [he] would take up the question of euthanasia and enforce it” because “such a problem would be more easily solved” during wartime.
- 1939 In October, Hitler himself initiated a decree, which empowered physicians to grant a “mercy death” to “patients considered incurable according to the best available human judgment of their state of health.” The aim of this “euthanasia” program was to exterminate the mentally ill and the handicapped, thus “cleansing” the Aryan race of persons considered genetically defective and a financial burden to society.
- 1939 Hitler’s decree was backdated to September 1, 1939, on the day Germany invaded Poland. The killing of patients in mental asylums was carried out in secrecy. The code name for this project was “Operation T4”.

DOCUMENT 3A (continued)

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Handicapped and the Holocaust

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

The Mentally and Physically Handicapped Victims of the Nazi Era, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC, 1996).

- 1939–40 Outside Germany, thousands of mental patients in occupied territories of Poland, Russia, and East Prussia were killed by *Einsatzgruppen* squads.
- 1939–45 Between 200,000 and 250,000 mentally and physically handicapped persons were murdered under the T4 and other “euthanasia” programs.
- 1940 Patients were first killed by lethal injection; however, in 1940, carbon monoxide gas was used as the preferred method of killing. Gas chambers were disguised as showers complete with fake nozzles to deceive victims.
- 1940–41 70,273 deaths were recorded in six “euthanasia” centers between a January 1940 and August 1941.
- 1941 The secrecy surrounding the T4 program broke down and church leaders protested. Hitler ordered a halt to Operation T4 on August 24, 1941.
- 1941–42 The gas chambers were dismantled in some of the euthanasia centers and shipped to extermination camps in Poland where they were rebuilt and used for the “Final solution to the Jewish question”.
- 1941–45 Euthanasia killings continued under a different, decentralized form.

WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE:

Burleigh, Michael, and Wiperman, Wolfgang, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945* (London, 1991)

Gallagher, Hugh G., *By Trust Betrayed: Patients, Physicians, and the License to Kill in the Third Reich* (New York, 1990)

Lifton, Robert J., *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (New York, 1986)

Proctor, Robert, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis* (Cambridge, MA 1988)

Hene Kelly, Holocaust Education Program
San Francisco Unified School District

DOCUMENT 3B

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Homosexuals and the Holocaust

HOLOCAUST RESOURCE NEWSLETTER

Homosexuals and the Holocaust

Never a perpetrator.

Never a victim.

Never a bystander.

Never again.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Aryan: refers to Germanic northern Europeans who were designated by the Nazis as the so called "master race."

Gestapo: Secret State Police.

Nazi: a short term for National Socialist German Workers Party, a right wing, nationalistic and anti-Semitic political party formed in 1919 and headed by Adolf Hitler from 1921 to 1945.

Pink Lists: lists of suspected homosexual men compiled by police departments throughout Germany.

Reich: German word for Empire.

Reparations: compensation in money or materials payable by a defeated nation for damages to another nation. In this case reparations were made to people who had property taken from them, who were sent to concentration camps, or who were forced to work as slave laborers.

Did You Know? On January 30, 1933, soon after he assumed power, Hitler banned all homosexual and lesbian organizations.

WHAT HAPPENED:

- 1919 The "Institute for Sexual Science" was founded in Germany. It sponsored research and discussion on marital problems, sexually transmitted diseases, and laws relating to sexual offenses, abortion, and homosexuality.
- 1928 An estimated 1.2 million homosexual men resided in Germany.
- 1933 On May 6, 1933, Nazis ransacked the "Institute for Sexual Science" in Berlin; four days later, as part of a large public burning of books viewed as "un-German", thousands of books plundered from the institute's library were thrown into a huge bonfire.
- 1933-45 An estimated 100,000 men were arrested as homosexuals and 50,000 were sentenced. Most spent time in regular prisons. Between 5,000 and 15,000 were incarcerated in concentration camps. It is estimated that the death rate for these men was as high as 60%.
- 1933-45 Some homosexual men were given the choice of castration or deportation to concentration camps.
- 1934 A special Gestapo division on homosexuals was set up. One of its first acts was to collect the police "pink lists" from all over Germany on which police had been compiling names of suspected homosexual men since 1900.
- 1934-37 Nazi authorities sometimes used the charge of homosexuality to discredit and undermine their political opponents. (A propaganda campaign and two show trials in 1936-37 alleged rampant homosexuality in the priesthood and attempted to undercut the power of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany).
- 1935 A harsher, amended version of Paragraph 175 of the Criminal Code, originally framed in 1871, went into effect, punishing a broad range of "lewd and lascivious" behavior between men.

DOCUMENT 3B (continued)

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Homosexuals and the Holocaust

WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE:

Burleigh, Michael, and Wiperman, Wolfgang. *The Racial State: Germany 1933-1945* (Cambridge, England, 1991).

Heger, Heinz. *The Men with the Pink Triangle* (Boston, 1994).

Plant, Richard. *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War Against Homosexuals* (New York, 1986).

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Homosexuals: Victims of the Nazi Era, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC, 1996)

1936 Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler created a Reich Central Office for the combating of Homosexuality and Abortion: Special Office (II S), a subdepartment of the Gestapo. The linking of homosexuality and abortion reflected the conflict with the Nazis regime's population policies to promote a higher birthrate of its "Aryan" population.

1937-39 Prosecution of homosexuals under Paragraph 175 was stepped up. Meeting places were raided; address books were seized in the search for additional suspects. Informers were paid to compile lists of suspected homosexuals.

MORE FACTS:

- Some homosexuals, like other categories of prisoners, were victims of cruel medical experiments, including castration.
- The vast majority of homosexual victims were males; lesbians were not subjected to systematic persecution.
- The majority of homosexuals arrested under Paragraph 175 were Germans or Austrians.
- Homosexuality outside of Germany (which included Austria and other annexed territories) was not a subject generally addressed in Nazi ideology or policy.
- The uniforms of homosexuals in the camps bore various identifying marks including a large black dot and a large "175" drawn on the back of the jacket. Later the 175ers, as they were called, wore a pink triangular patch (*rosa Winkel*) on their jackets.
- Homosexuals were not deported to extermination camps in Poland.
- After the war, homosexuals were forced to serve out their term of imprisonment regardless of the time spent in concentration camps.
- After the war, homosexual concentration camp prisoners were not acknowledged as victims of Nazi Persecution, and all reparations were refused.
- The 1935 version of Paragraph 175 remained in effect in West Germany until 1969.

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DOCUMENT 3c

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Gypsies and the Holocaust

HOLOCAUST RESOURCE NEWSLETTER

Gypsies and the Holocaust

Never a perpetrator.

Never a victim.

Never a bystander.

Never again.

DEFINITION OF TERMS:

Einsatzgruppen: Mobile killing units; German special duty squads composed mainly of SS and police personnel, assigned to kill Jews, Gypsies, and others following the invasion of Poland and the Soviet Union.

Extermination camps: Concentration camps equipped with facilities used to kill with poisonous gas. They were also called killing centers. These camps (Belzec, Chelmno, Treblinka, Sobibor, Auschwitz Birkenau and Majdanek) were all located in Poland.

Gypsies: Popular term for Roma and Sinti, nomadic people believed to have originally come from Northwest India. Gypsies usually traveled in small caravans. They first appeared in western Europe in the 1400s and eventually spread to every country of Europe. Prejudice toward Gypsies was and is widespread.

Nazi: A short term for National Socialist German Workers Party, a right wing, nationalistic, and anti-Semitic political party formed in 1919 and headed by Adolf Hitler from 1921–1945.

Did You Know? The mass murder of the Gypsies closely paralleled that of the Jews.

WHAT HAPPENED:

- 1926 Bavarian law outlined measures for “combating Gypsies, vagabonds and the workshy,” and required the registration of all Sinti and Roma (Gypsies).
- 1933 “Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Heredity Defects”: Physicians sterilized an unknown number of Gypsies, part Gypsies, and Gypsies in mixed marriages.
- 1933 “Law against Dangerous Habitual Criminals”: Police arrested many Gypsies and imprisoned them in concentration camps.
- 1935 Nuremberg Race and Citizenship Laws enacted.
- 1936 Nuremberg Laws were interpreted to include Gypsies as “racially distinctive” minorities with alien blood. They were deprived of their civil rights.
- 1936 A Central Office to “Combat the Gypsy Nuisance” opened in Munich. It oversaw a national data bank on Gypsies and authorized Berlin police to conduct raids against Gypsies to remove them from that city during the Olympics. 600 Gypsies were placed in a Gypsy internment camp and forced to live in crowded, unsanitary conditions.
- 1937–38 A decree on “crime prevention” provided the pretext for police to round up Gypsies. 10,000 Roma and Sinti people from Germany and Austria were deported to concentration camps.
- 1938 Heinrich Himmler recommended “the resolution of the Gypsy question based on its essentially racial nature.” All Gypsies in the Reich were registered and classified.
- 1939 A German conference on racial policy discussed the removal of 30,000 German and Austrian Gypsies to occupied Poland with the deportation of Jews.
- 1939 Several thousand more Gypsies from Germany and Austria were sent to concentration camps.

DOCUMENT 3c (continued)

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Gypsies and the Holocaust

Nuremberg Race Laws: Laws were enacted in 1935 by the Nazis “for the protection of German Blood and German Honor.” They were special legislation which stated, in part:

- Marriage between Jews and German citizens is forbidden.
- Jews cannot be German Citizens, cannot vote, and cannot have an official occupation.

SS: The Defense Squad. Headed by Himmler, it was given the task of implementing the “Final Solution.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Sinti and Roma (“Gypsies”): Victims of the Nazi Era, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC 1996).

1939–40 Two internment camps for Gypsies were set up as forced labor camps and assembly centers for Nazi extermination and concentration camps.

1939–44 Throughout German-occupied Europe, Gypsies were interned, killed or deported to camps in Germany or Eastern Europe.

1941 Gypsies were excluded from public schools.

1941 Special SS squads, Einsatzgruppen, and units of the regular army and police began shooting Gypsies in Russia, Poland, and the Balkans at the same time they were killing Jews and communists.

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MORE FACTS:

- In concentration camps, Gypsies wore black triangular patches, the symbol for “asocials”; green triangles, the symbol for “professional criminals”; and sometimes the letter “Z”.
- Scholarly estimates of deaths in Sinti and Roma genocide range from 220,000 to 500,000.
- Discrimination against Sinti and Roma in Europe has continued to the present day.

WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE:

Burleigh, Michael, and Wiperman, Wolfgang, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945* (London 1991).

Crow, David, and Kolsti, John, *The Gypsies* (Cambridge, MA 1992).

Kenrick, Donald, and Puxon, Grattan, *The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies* (New York 1972).

United States Holocaust Museum, *The Story of Karl Stojka: A Childhood in Birkenau* (Washington, DC 1992)

DOCUMENT 3d

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Jehovah's Witnesses and the Holocaust

HOLOCAUST RESOURCE NEWSLETTER

Jehovah's Witnesses
and the Holocaust

Never a perpetrator.

Never a victim.

Never a bystander.

Never again.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Gestapo: Secret State Police

Jehovah's Witnesses: Members of a religious group. The Jehovah's Witness organization was founded in the United States in the 1870s and sent missionaries to Germany to seek converts.

Nazi: a short term for National Socialist German Workers Party, a right wing, nationalistic and anti-Semitic political party formed in 1919 and headed by Adolf Hitler from 1921-1945.

Regime: a form of government.

Did You Know? Jehovah's Witnesses were persecuted by the Nazis and sent to concentration camps in the 1930s and 1940s.

WHAT HAPPENED:

- 1930-32 Nazi brown-shirted storm troopers acting outside the law broke up Bible study meetings and beat individual Witnesses.
- 1933 After the Nazis came to power, persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses intensified.
- 1933 In April, Jehovah's Witnesses were banned in Bavaria and, by the summer, in most of Germany.
- 1933 Twice during this year police occupied the Witnesses' offices and the printing site in Magdeburg and confiscated religious literature.
- 1934 Jehovah's Witnesses lost their jobs as civil servants or employees in private industry and their unemployment, social welfare, and pension benefits.
- 1935 On April 1, the religion was banned nationally by law.

MORE FACTS:

- Witnesses saw themselves as citizens of Jehovah's Kingdom; they refused to swear allegiance to any worldly government. They were not pacifists, but as soldiers in Jehovah's army, they would not bear arms for any nation.
- Because of their religious beliefs, Jehovah's Witnesses refused to raise their arms in the "Heil, Hitler!" salute; they did not vote in elections; and they would not join the army.
- About 10,000 Witnesses were imprisoned in concentration camps. Most of these were of German nationality.
- An estimated 2,500 to 5,000 Witnesses died in the camps or prisons.
- More than 200 men were tried by the German War Court and executed for refusing military service.
- Witnesses wore purple triangular patches in prison.

DOCUMENT 3D (continued)

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Jehovah's Witnesses and the Holocaust

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Jehovah's Witnesses: Victims of the Nazi Era 1933-1945, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Washington, DC 1996).

- 1935 Germany reintroduced compulsory military service. For refusing to be drafted or perform war-related work, Witnesses were arrested and incarcerated in prisons and concentration camps.
- 1936 A special unit of the Gestapo began compiling a registry of all persons believed to be Jehovah's Witnesses, and agents infiltrated Bible Study meetings.
- 1936 An International Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses issued a resolution condemning the entire Nazi regime.
- 1939 An estimated 6,000 Witnesses from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia were detained in prisons or camps.
- 1940-44 Most active Witnesses were incarcerated in prisons and camps.

WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE:

Friedman, Ina R. *The Other Victims: First Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis* (Boston, 1990), pp 47-59

King, Christine E. "Jehovah's Witnesses under Nazism," in Berenbaum, Michael, ed, *A Mosaic of Victims: Non-Jews Persecuted and Murdered by the Nazis* (New York 1990), pp.188-193.

King, Christine E. *The Nazi State and the New Religions: Five Case Studies in Non-Conformity* (New York 1982).

On Video: *Purple Triangles, The Story of The Kusserow Family*. 1991. Watchtower, Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201.

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DOCUMENT 3E

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Afro-Europeans and the Holocaust

HOLOCAUST RESOURCE NEWSLETTER

Afro-Europeans
and the Holocaust

Never a perpetrator.

Never a victim.

Never a bystander.

Never again.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

Eugenics: a movement devoted to improving the human species by controlling heredity.

Gauleiter: regional leader.

Mein Kampf (My Struggles): This was a book written by Hitler that outlined his plans for the elimination of all Jews and other “undesirables”.

Mulatto: Children of mixed parentage (African and Caucasian).

Nuremberg Race Laws: Laws were enacted in 1935 by the Nazis “for the protection of German Blood and German Honor”. They were special legislation which stated, in part:

- Marriage between Jews and German Citizens is forbidden.
- Jews cannot be German Citizens, cannot vote, and cannot have an official occupation.

“Rhineland bastard”: mixed race child of a German woman and a Black French colonial soldier of the French garrison who served in the French Occupation Forces after World War I.

Sterilization: operation to make a person unable to produce offspring.

Did You Know? People of African descent were persecuted by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945.

WHAT HAPPENED:

- 1924 While in prison, Hitler writes *Mein Kampf*. In it, he states that he would eliminate all traces of half black half German children born in the Rhineland. He refers to them as an “insult” to true Germans.
- 1933 Forced sterilization “to prevent offspring with hereditary defects” was made legal in Germany. In the next decade, an estimated 300,000 to 400,000 people were sterilized in the largest eugenics movement in history.
- 1933 Herman Göring ordered mandatory police registration of the so-called “Rhineland Bastards” with state health officials.
- 1935 Germany enacted the Nuremberg Race Laws.
- 1935 The demilitarized region in the Rhineland voted to become part of Germany.
- 1935 Nazi doctors and civil servants plan the sterilization of the “Rhineland bastards”.
- 1936 Nuremberg Laws were extended to state that “neither Jews, nor Blacks nor Gypsies could be part of the German State”.
- 1937 Approximately 500 Afro-German children from the Rhineland between the ages of 6-14 were sterilized.
- 1938 Afro-German children were prohibited from attending schools.

MORE FACTS:

Most of the “Rhineland Bastards” were the children of German women who had married African soldiers.

Hitler stated, “The mulatto children came about through rape or the white mother was a whore. In both cases, there is not the slightest moral duty regarding these offspring of a foreign race.”

DOCUMENT 3E (continued)

Holocaust Resource Newsletter: Afro-Europeans and the Holocaust

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Red Series, International Military Tribunal, v. 8: p. 122 (Document R-114)

Reich Citizenship Laws (Nuremberg Laws: 1935) Stuttgart-Globke Commentary-1936

AFRICAN PEOPLE IN EUROPE:

Between 1918 and 1933 approximately 500 mixed race children were born to European women and Black French colonial soldiers in the Rhineland.

These children lived in the demilitarized zone in the Rhineland area between France and Germany. This zone was set up after World War I as a buffer between Germany and Western Europe.

1942 Gauleiter Robert Wagner of Alsace, in reviewing the measures he had implemented to deport the “undesirables”, stated that they included: “colored persons and their offspring (Gypsies, Jews, Afro-Europeans), asocials, and the incurably insane”.

1942–45 It is not known where the Black citizens of Alsace were deported to or what happened to them.

WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE:

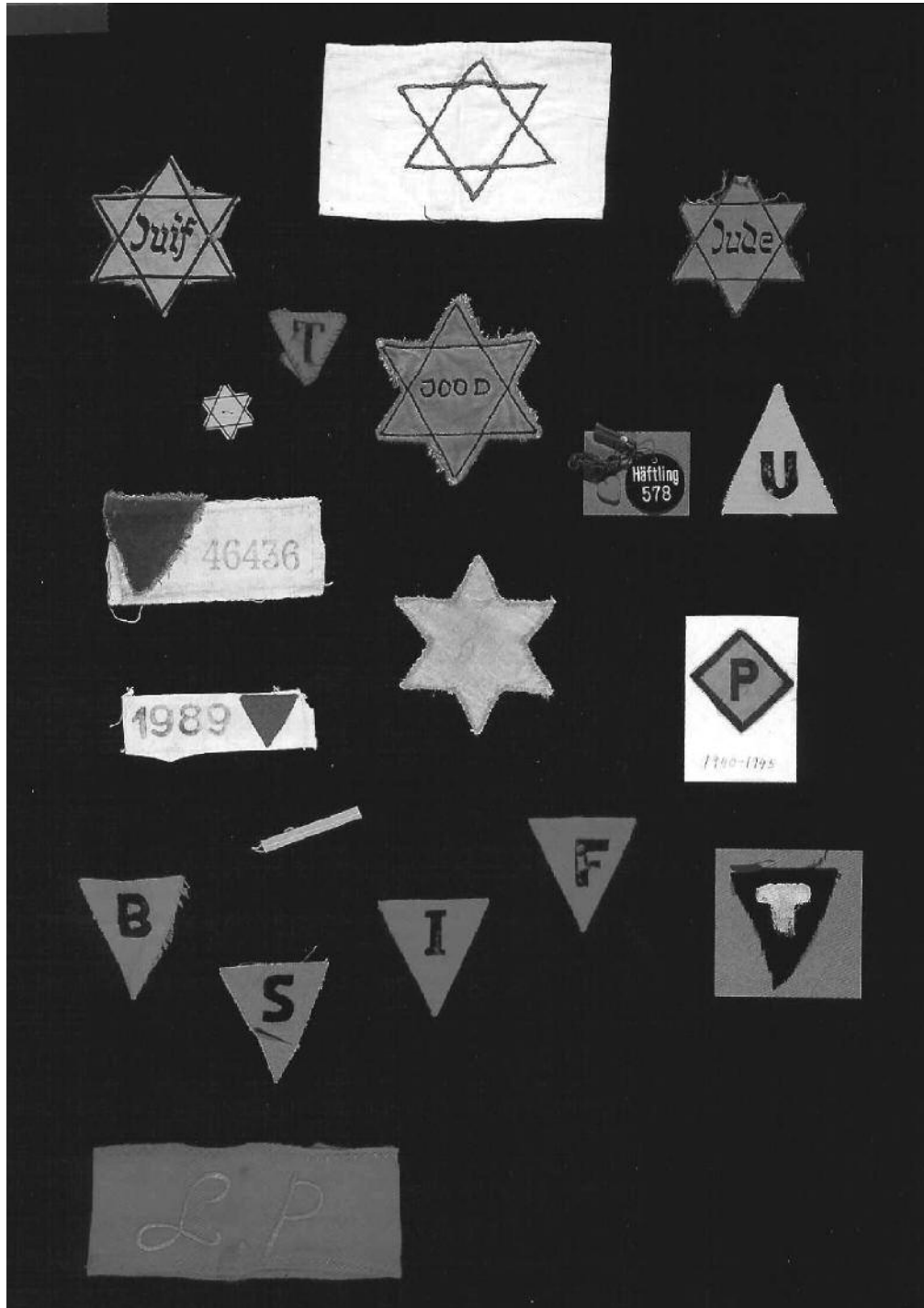
Burleigh, Michael, and Wiperman, Wolfgang, *The Racial State: Germany, 1933–1945* (London, 1991)

Friedman, Ina R. *The Other Victims* pp. 91-94 (Boston 1990).

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DOCUMENT 4

Washington, DC: US Holocaust Memorial Museum
Stars, Triangles, and Markings

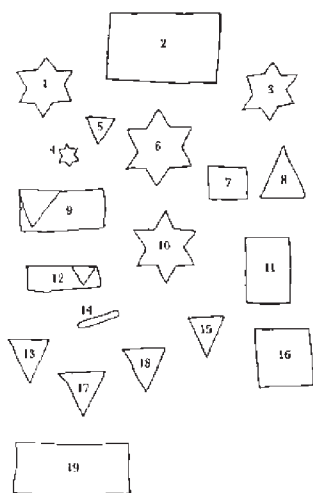


DOCUMENT 4B

Washington, DC: US Holocaust Memorial Museum

STARS, TRIANGLES, AND MARKINGS

The stars, triangles, and markings in this poster are symbols used by the Nazis to isolate and identify their victims. Almost everywhere under Nazi rule Jews were forced to purchase and wear a six-pointed star of David whenever they appeared in public. The yellow or blue star was worn on an armband or pinned on a shirt or coat. All concentration camp prisoners wore triangular badges that identified them by their arrest category; many badges also identified the bearer's race or nationality. Yellow triangles were for Jews; red triangles for political prisoners; purple for Jehovah's Witnesses; pink for homosexuals; green for criminals; black for Gypsies and "asocials"; and blue for emigrants. Letters printed on badges usually indicated nationality.



- (1) Star of David with the French word *Juif* (Jew). France, 1942. (1989.045.01)
- (2) Star of David armband, General Government, ca. November 1939 - May 1943. (1990.051.08)
- (3) Star of David with the German word *Jude* (Jew), Czechoslovakia. (1989.205.01)
- (4) Star of David button, Bulgaria, 1942. (1991.135.01)
- (5) Red triangle embroidered with black initial "T" for *Tschechoslowakei* (to indicate wearer was Czech). (1989.303.27)
- (6) Star of David with the Dutch word *Jood* (Jew). The Netherlands, 1942. (1990.145.01)
- (7) Identification tag issued at Radom, Poland to Polish forced laborer Bronia Eiger-Sitner at a munitions factory, ca. 1944. Attached to identification tag with blue string are a red plastic heart and a mezuzah (a Jewish ritual scroll). Gray paper background is used for photographic purposes. (1989.173.01)
- (8) Yellow triangle with "U" (*Ungarn* or Hungary), Buchenwald, April-May, 1945. (1989.295.07)
- (9) Purple triangle with prisoner number 46436 issued in Sachsenhausen to Albert Jahndorf. (1989.240.02)
- (10) Star of David used in Hungary, March 1944. (1988.064)
- (11) Patch used to identify a Pole in the German Reich, ca. 1940-1945. (1990.259.02)
- (12) Purple triangle with prisoner number 1989 issued in Ravensbrück to Luise Jahndorf. (1989.240.01)
- (13) Pink triangle with the letter "B" (Belgium) from Langenstein-Zwieberge, also known as "Malachit," a subcamp of Buchenwald, ca. 1940s. (1991.198.08)
- (14) Yellow strip of cloth placed above inverted triangle marking Jews in Monowitz, November 1944. (1991.198.04)
- (15) Red triangle with "F" (France), Buchenwald, April-May, 1945. (1989.295.03)
- (16) Black triangle with "T" (Czechoslovakia) from Langenstein-Zwieberge, also known as "Malachit," a subcamp of Buchenwald, 1940s. Gray paper background is used for photographic purposes. (1991.198.12)
- (17) Green triangle with "S." Buchenwald, April-May, 1945. "S" probably means *Sicherheitsverwahrter* or preventive arrest prisoner, 1940s. (1989.295.10)
- (18) Red triangle with "I" (Italy), Buchenwald, April-May, 1945. (1989.295.04)
- (19) Armband embroidered with "L.P." (*Lagerpolizei*) from Malchow, a labor subcamp of Ravensbrück concentration camp producing ammunition and explosives, February - May 1945. (1988.082.03)

For educational purposes only. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Photograph by Arnold Kramer.

See questions on page 175

Persecution and Segregation

DOCUMENT 4B *(continued)*

Washington, DC: US Holocaust Memorial Museum

QUESTIONS: (Refer to the photo on page 174 to answer these questions.)

1. Why did the Nazis develop an elaborate system of identification?
2. How did the wearing of these badges make segregation and persecution easier?
3. What are some of the ways individuals are labeled in our society today?
4. How does labeling affect both the individual and society?

DOCUMENT 5

Time Line: World War II to 1941

DATELINE

1935–1937

U.S. passes neutrality laws to keep U.S. out of war

- U.S. will not send guns or loan money to countries at war.
- U.S. can sell nonmilitary goods to countries at war, but these countries must pay cash and carry the goods in their own ships.

1936

October Germany and Italy make pact—agree to help each other take over Europe

1937

July Japan goes to war with China—Japan wants land in China

1938

March Germany takes over Austria

September Hitler demands German-speaking Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia

- England and France give Sudetenland to Hitler in Munich Pact.
- Now they hope Hitler will not take any more land.
- Hitler says now he will keep peace.

1939

March Germany takes over the rest of Czechoslovakia

- U.S., France, and England are angry, but do not want to fight.

April Italy invades Albania

August Russia and Germany sign pact—agree not to fight each other

September Germany attacks Poland on the west. Russia attacks Poland on the east.

November U.S. changes neutrality laws to help England and France fight Germany

- U.S. can sell guns to a country at war if the country pays in cash and carries the goods on its own ships.

November Russia attacks Finland

DOCUMENT 5 (continued)

Time Line: World War II to 1941

DATELINE

1940

- April** Germany attacks Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and northern France
- England sends troops to France.
- May** Germany traps English troops in Dunkirk, a seaport in northern France
- England sends ships to rescue the troops.
 - English troops leave behind most of their war weapons at Dunkirk.
- June** France surrenders to Germany
- August** Germany attacks England
- English navy and air force keep German troops out of England

World War II

- Germany's new warfare: the Blitzkrieg ("Lightning War")
- In a Blitzkrieg, tanks and guns fire on enemy lines. Dive bombers and fighter planes attack at the same time. German troops then move in as fast as they can across enemy lines.
- September** **U.S. Gets Ready for War**
- U.S. Congress passes Selective Service Act
- All U.S. men between 21 and 35 must sign up for the first-time draft into the armed forces.

1941

- March** Congress passes Lend-Lease Act
- England does not have money to pay for war goods, so the U.S. will lend or lease (rent) the goods to England.
- June** Germany attacks Russia—breaks pact
- U.S. says Russia can take part in Lend-Lease Act to get supplies.
- July** Japan takes over French Indochina
- U.S. stops all trade with Japan.
- August** U.S. and England sign Atlantic Charter
- U.S. President Roosevelt and English Prime Minister Winston Churchill say their countries will work together
1. To make the world free from war
 2. To let people be free to choose their own government.

DOCUMENT 5 (continued)

Time Line: World War II to 1941

DATELINE

1941

Japan Bombs Pearl Harbor—U.S. to Declare War

December 7 In a surprise attack this morning, 183 Japanese airplanes bombed the U.S. Naval and Air Force base at Pearl Harbor. The president will ask Congress to declare war on Japan within 24 hours.

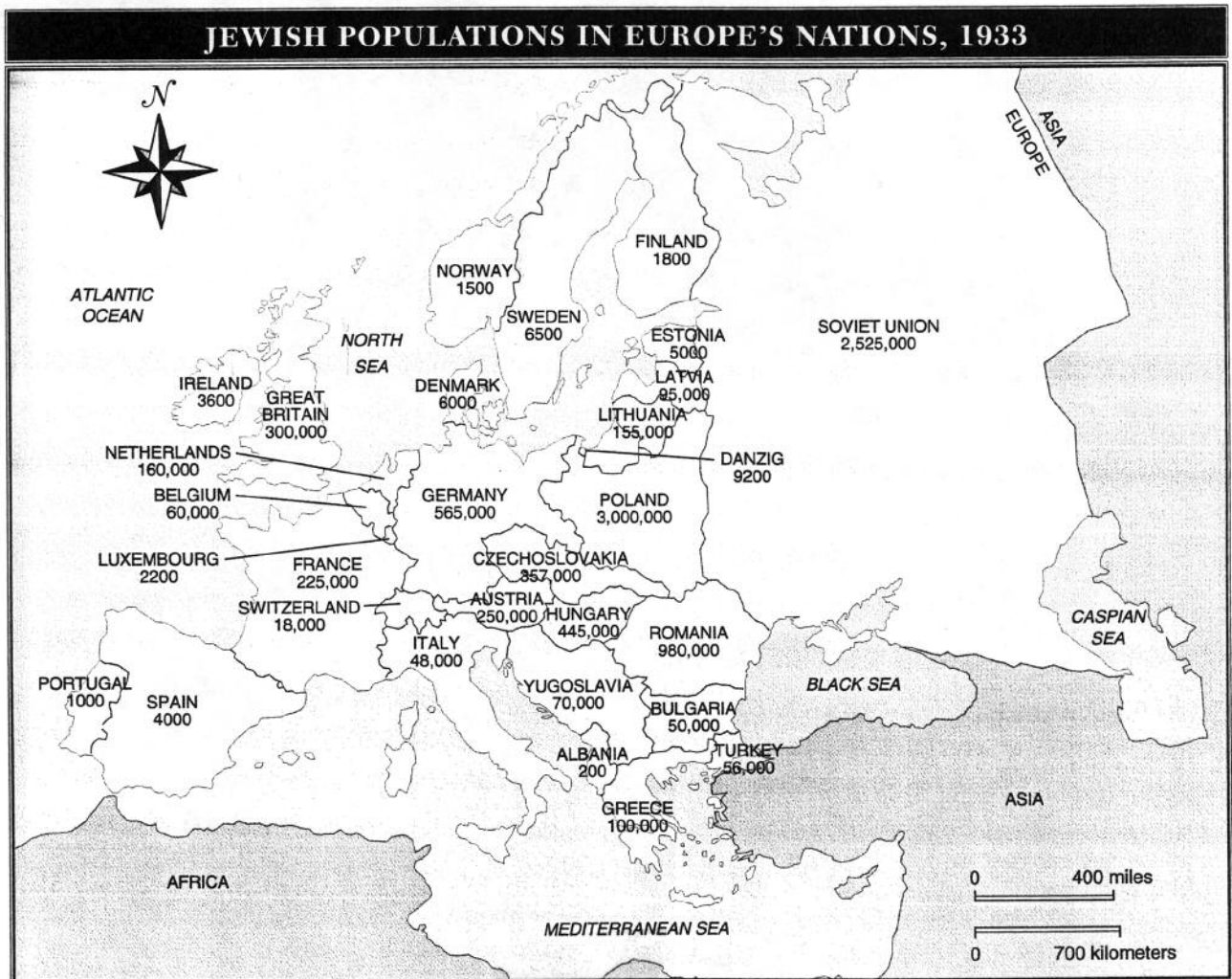
In the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese:

- Killed over 3,000 Americans
- Destroyed almost all U.S. airplanes at the base
- Sank or badly hurt most U.S. ships

With most U.S. ships and airplanes gone, Japan controls the Pacific Ocean. Now Japan can go on with its plan to drive the U.S. and England out of Asia. Japan wants to take over Asian countries.

DOCUMENT 6

MAP: JEWISH POPULATIONS IN EUROPE'S NATIONS, 1933



Hogan, David J., and David Aretha, eds., *The Holocaust Chronicle: A History in Words and Pictures*. (Lincolnwood, IL: Publications International, 2000), 69. Reprinted by permission.

QUESTIONS:

1. Which two countries had the largest Jewish population in 1933?
2. Which two countries had the smallest Jewish population in 1933?

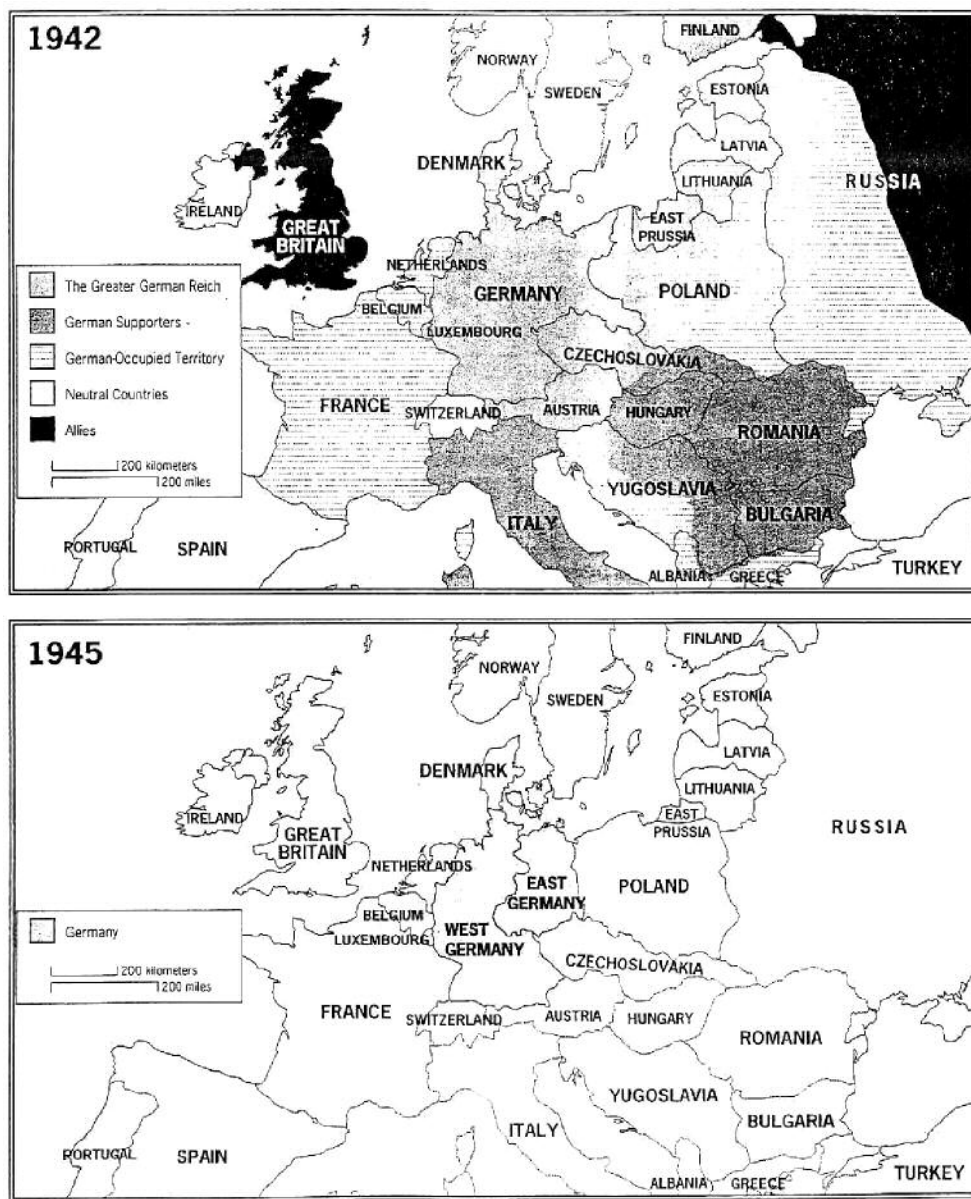
DOCUMENT 7

Maps: The Expansion of Germany



DOCUMENT 7 (continued)

Maps: The Expansion of Germany



Martin Gilbert, *Atlas of the Holocaust* (New York: William Morrow, 1982), 278.

QUESTIONS

1. How did Nazi expansion result in the outbreak of World War II?
2. Given the wide distribution of Jews across Europe as seen in the previous maps how did the German territorial expansion create a need for new strategies to implement Nazi ideology?

DOCUMENT 8A

"Ghettoization"

1939 THE WAR AGAINST THE JEWS

Ghettoization

"What has today brought us?" wrote Chaim Kaplan, a Jew, on November 5, 1939. "A ghetto in Jewish Warsaw!"

First used in Venice, Italy, in 1516, the word "ghetto" originally referred to a city area occupied only by Jews who had been segregated there. The Germans made that concept much more deadly. The ghettos they established soon after their 1939 invasion of Poland initially were intended to be transitional concentration areas to hold Jews, all of whom were to be excluded from Aryan resettlement of desirable, formerly Jewish areas. Later, the only possible Jewish "escape" from the ghettos was via deportation to extermination/slave-labor camps built by the Nazis in Poland.

The Nazis established their first ghetto on October 8, 1939. It stood at Piotrkow Trybunalski in the Lodz district of occupied Poland. A year later Kaplan was among about 500,000 Jews in Warsaw, Poland, who struggled to survive in constantly deteriorating ghetto conditions. Afflicted by hunger, squalor, overcrowding, sickness, and despair, the Warsaw Ghetto and others like it—in cities such as Lodz and Lublin (Poland), Lyon and Minsk (Soviet Union), Kovno and Vilna (Lithuania), and Riga (Latvia)—became places of immense suffering and death.

During 1942 and 1913, the Nazis "liquidated" the ghettos by deporting and murdering their inhabitants. Kaplan was gassed at the Treblinka, Poland, extermination camp.

David J. Hogan and David Aretha, eds., *The Holocaust Chronicles: A History in Words and Pictures*. (Lincolnwood, IL: Publications International, 2000), 181. Reprinted by permission.

DOCUMENT 8B

Map: Poland: Major Ghettos



David J. Hogan and David Aretha, eds., *The Holocaust Chronicles: A History in Words and Pictures* (Lincolnwood, IL: Publications International, 2000), Page 181. Reprinted by Permission.

DOCUMENT 8c

Photos: Ghetto



QUESTIONS

1. How did the Nazis legally segregate the Jews from the rest of the population?
2. How was the creation of the ghettos another step in the implementation of Nazi policy?
3. What conclusions can be made by examining the vast number of ghettos indicated by the map and the photos illustrating ghetto conditions?

WORLD WAR II/ HOLOCAUST TIMELINE

ROAD TO WAR

ROAD TO HOLOCAUST PERSECUTION

1939

- August** Germany and USSR sign nonaggression pact.
Russia invades Eastern Poland.
- September 1** Beginning of World War II. Germany invades Poland.
- September** France and Britain declare war on Germany.

- September** Ghettoization of Polish Jews ordered. Judenrat established.
- October** Hitler authorizes “euthanasia program” (T-4).
- November** Jews in occupied Poland forced to wear distinguishing badge.

1940

- February** Lodz Ghetto established, sealed in April.
- April** Concentration camp established in Auschwitz.
- May** Nazis conquer Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland and France.
- August** Battle of Britain begins.
- September** Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis formed.
- October** Warsaw Ghetto established, sealed in November with 500,000 people.
- November** Hungary, Romania and Slovakia join Axis.

WORLD WAR II/ HOLOCAUST TIMELINE

ROAD TO WAR

ROAD TO HOLOCAUST PERSECUTION

1941			
		January	Anti Jewish riots in Romania.
		January	Dutch Jews required to register.
		March	Himmler orders construction of camp at Birkenau.
May	Nazis invade North Africa and occupied Yugoslavia and Greece.	Spring	Ghettos established at Lublin, Minsk, Krakow, Vilna and others.
June	Nazis invade the USSR.	June	Einsatzgruppen begin mass murder of Jews and Gypsies.
		July	Authority given to prepare a “total solution” to Jewish problem.
		September	First experiment gassing at Auschwitz.
		September	Jews in the Third Reich must wear the Star of David.
		September	33,000 Jews massacred at Babi Yar.
		September	First deportation of German and Austrian Jews to ghettos in East.
		October	Construction of extermination camps at Majdanek, Belzec and Birkenau.
December 7	Japan attacks Pearl Harbor		
December 11	Germany and Italy declare war on U.S.		
December	Gassing operations begin at Chelmno.		

HOMEWORK READING

"The Little Boy with His Hands Up" Yala Korwin

Your open palms raised in the air
like two white doves
frame your meager face,
your face contorted with fear,
grown old with knowledge beyond your years.
Not yet ten. Eight? Seven?
Not yet compelled to mark
with a blue star on white badge
your Jewishness.

No need to brand the very young.
They will meekly follow their mothers.
You are standing apart
against the flock of women and their brood
with blank, resigned stares.
All the torments of this harassed crowd
are written on your face.
In your dark eyes—a vision of horror.
You have seen Death already
on the ghetto streets, haven't you?
Do you recognize it in the emblems
of the SS man facing you with his camera?
Like a lost lamb you are standing
apart and forlorn beholding your own fate.

Where is your mother, little boy?
Is she the woman glancing over her shoulder
at the gunmen by the bunker's entrance?
Is it she who lovingly, though in haste,
buttoned your coat, straightened your cap,
pulled up your socks?
Is it her dreams of you, her dreams
of a future, Einstein, a Spinoza,
another Heine or Halévy,
they will murder soon?
Or are you orphaned already?
But, even if you still have a mother,
she won't be allowed to comfort you
In her arms.
Her tired arms loaded with useless bundles
must remain up in submission.

Alone you will march
among other lonely wretches
toward your martyrdom.

Your image will remain with us
and grow and grow
to immense proportions,
to haunt the callous world,
to accuse it, with ever stronger voice,
in the name of the million youngsters
who lie, pitiful rag-dolls,
their eyes forever closed.

Korwin, Yala. "The Little Boy with his Hands Up." In *To Tell the Story: Poems of the Holocaust*. Washington, DC: US Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1987, Reprinted by Permission

See questions on page 188

HOMEWORK READING (continued)

"The Little Boy with His Hands Up" Yala Korwin

SUMMARY

Examining a photograph of a crowd of people being herded off by German soldiers, the speaker of the poem reflects on the thoughts and feelings of the young boy at the center of the picture. The speaker eulogizes the boy's martyrdom at the hands of the Nazis.

QUESTIONS (Refer to the poem on page 187 to answer these questions.)

1. To what does the poet compare the boy's hands? What message does this image convey?
2. What other comparisons are used to describe the children and the women? What do these comparisons imply?
3. Why does the poet refer to "useless bundles"?
4. Through the use of figurative language (imagery, similes, metaphors, diction, and symbolism), the poet conveys information about events, perpetrators, bystanders, and victims of the Holocaust. How might the impact of this poem differ from that of a newspaper account of the same circumstances? Why is the poem effective?

HOMEWORK READING

The Cage: Chapter 7 and 17 Ruth Minsky Sender

CHAPTER 7

Slowly life in the ghetto begins again. With the help of friends, I manage to get a job that I can do from the house: From a rug factory I receive scraps of fabric, which I braid and roll into large rolls to be used in the making of rugs for the Germans.

As a “home-worker,” I lose the right to the daily soup given at the factory. But I get to stay home with Laibele and care for him.

Motele and Moishele save their portions of soup until they come home at five. We all share their soup for our dinner.

Laibele’s condition worsens, and the gallstones that I developed two years ago cause painful attacks—with Mama’s love and care, the pain was easier to endure—but we try to comfort each other with our devotion.

My legs swell up more and more, but there is nothing I can do about it. I try to keep my brothers from noticing it.

They cannot help; why make them worry?

One morning, as I get out of my bed, my legs buckle. I lose my balance and fall back against the bed. I feel silly and try to smile. Startled, Laibele looks at me from across the room. But, seeing my embarrassed smile, he makes a joke of it: “Well, well, my sister is drunk today. I bet you can’t walk a straight line from your bed to mine.”

“Oh, so you are a wise guy now.”

I stand up, but my legs give way again, and I fall to the floor. We stop smiling. I try to hide my fear. “Well, you win. I am drunk.”

“You must be very tired. You have to rest a little more today.” Laibele’s eyes are filled with worry.

I pull myself up and get back to bed. Several hours later I try again and fall again. My feet

refuse to hold me up. Day after day, I keep trying; day after day, I keep falling.

Motele tries to get a doctor to come to the house. No luck. Our neighbor, Mrs. Avner, shriveled and hardly holding herself up, looks in on us daily. Her son-in-law, Moishe, spends the evening with us, trying to keep up our spirits.

It is heartbreaking to see the fear in Laibele’s eyes. Now that I am his mother, will he lose me, too?

“Rifkele, please eat my bread. It will help you get stronger,” he pleads. I refuse; he gets angry with me. But he finally gives in and eats his meager portion of bread.

One evening, Moishele, his blue eyes shining, bends over my bed, his hands hidden behind his back. “Close your eyes and open your mouth.”

“What are you up to?” I ask.

“Come on, listen to him,” Motele and Laibele join in. “Open your mouth, close your eyes. Trust us.”

They are excited and very mysterious.

“All right, I’ll play your game.” I open my mouth slightly.

Moishele slips something soft through my lips. “Bite into it,” he urges. “Come on, bite into it.”

Slowly, cautiously I bite into the plump, soft object. A burst of sweet, tangy juice fills my mouth suddenly with a delightful, long-forgotten taste.

Is it real? Is it possible? A tangerine? A real tangerine in the ghetto? In our home? In my mouth?

I open my eyes. Motele’s joyous smile, his proud look tells me it is real. Holding the tangerine in his hand, Moishele says, “We traded our bread for it at the black market. This will help you get well. You’ll see, you’ll see.”

HOMEWORK READING (continued)

The Cage: Chapter 7 and 17 Ruth Minsky Sender

Tears choke me. My darling brothers, they gave up their bread—they will go hungry a whole week—for one tangerine. I should be angry at them, but they are my miracle. Their devotion is the greatest wonder in this cage.

My tears finally break loose. “I love you all so much.” I take the tangerine, break it into sections, put it on a plate. “I will not eat it alone. We’ll give Laibele half—he is sick—and we’ll share the rest. We’ll have a party.”

QUESTION

Despite desperate circumstances, Ruth manages to care for her brothers, and they, in turn, demonstrate the strength and tenacity of their love for her. Describe how the family now functions in the ghetto, and discuss how their actions might be interpreted as a form of resistance to the oppression of the Nazi regime.

CHAPTER 17

An order comes from the ghetto government. We must vacate our home within a few weeks. The building we live in is going to be torn down and used for firewood. We have expected this to happen. Still, it shakes us up.

The ghetto suffers a shortage of heating supplies. The cold in the homes brings more sickness and more death. The ghetto population is getting smaller and smaller. To help the people to survive, the older buildings are being torn down and used for heating.

I look around me. This place has been our home all our lives. My entire family fills the house with memories. I feel Laibele’s presence around us. I hear his sweet, gentle voice.

Courage, my dear sister, courage.

Motele and Moishele speak very little as we pack our belongings. We all know in our hearts

“But it’s for you, to make you well,” they protest.

I push the plate aside. “We’ll share, or I will not eat. I mean it.” We share. I swallow the sweet pieces of the fruit slowly, savoring each drop of the delicious nectar, my heart bursting with love for those three beautiful kids, my kids.

I must get well. I must get well.

that we are attending a funeral. There are no words to ease the pain. We are the last three survivors of our family, parting forever with the traces of our childhood, with memories that still live here.

I stare at the empty house.

My feet stay nailed to the floor, refusing to take the last step that will cut us off from here forever.

Yulek [a friend who visits daily] takes my arm gently, walks me to the door. “They will always live in your heart and mind. You are taking them all with you,” he says.

Our new home, a one-room walk-in, was once a small grocery store. It has a front and back entrance and a very large cellar.

“It may be of great value to us,” Motele says while he examines the huge, clay opening in the

HOMEWORK READING (continued)

The Cage: Chapter 7 and 17 Ruth Minsky Sender

floor. "It is big and deep.

It will make a good hiding place from the Nazis. Just think: This place that was used to store potatoes, vegetables, coal—this dark, cold hole—will now be used to hide people for as long as possible."

I listen to the sound of Motele's voice and try to picture this place filled with sacks of flour, sugar, rice, beans. This cellar filled with vegetables. Shelves of bread and rolls. Buckets of milk, butter, eggs. And people: mothers with children by their sides, buying food for their families, busy with their daily chores.

Where are they all now? Where are the mothers? Where are the small children? Where are the people whose voices filled this room?

"Riva!" Moishele startles me. "Are you wandering in the past again? What were you thinking of?" He looks at me with so much warmth, this sweet, young child who never had any childhood.

He was only eight years old when the Nazis marched into Lodz. They crushed his world. He is twelve now, an orphan with a heart full of sorrow but also love and tenderness. A gentle soul, full of hope.

"Riva, this is our home now. Life must go on." He swallows hard. "Let's get organized. Let's keep going."

I put my arms around him and hold him close. I kiss his light brown hair.

"I am so lucky to have you two, my wise and darling brothers. I still have you two to hold onto. I love you both so much."

Moishele touches my hand, slightly embarrassed by my show of emotion.

"We love you, too, Riva, but let's not get

mushy. We have work to do." But his voice betrays the fullness of his heart.

Motele puts his arms around Moishele. "Hey, look at those shoulders," he says with a twinkle in his eyes. "Boy, you are growing so big. Big enough to move furniture around. So let's get going. Let's start with the beds. How about putting them against the wall over here?" He points to the wall on our right and stops, his eyes fixed on the corner of the left wall as if writing invisible to our eyes but clear and calling to him were written there.

"The library! The secret library!" he cries out with excitement. "This corner will be perfect for it! Look closely. It is right near the back door. Easy for people to come and go without the neighbors noticing. We'll put curtains over the shelves, and it will look like a closet. Riva! Moishele! Let's do it! Let's bring the library over to our house!"

Moishele and I look at his radiant eyes, burning with an inner flame. We, too, feel his excitement. We, too, are caught up in his vision. The library!

It took so long for the members of the adult socialist movement, the Bund, to get the library together. Young and old, risking their lives, slowly collected, slowly salvaged hidden books that were not burned by the Nazis, forming the secret library.

Books are not allowed in the ghetto. Still, they are here! We read. We study. We learn and we draw strength from the books.

The library is hidden at the home of the Rosenfarb family now. But its popularity, the traffic it brings to the Rosenfarbs', is putting those kind, dedicated people in constant danger.

HOMEWORK READING (continued)

The Cage: Chapter 7 and 17 Ruth Minsky Sender

The time has come to move the library to a different place.

Learning takes the place of food now. The books give us hope; strengthen our will to live, to plan for a better, brighter tomorrow. The knowledge they bring to our hungry minds gives new energy to our weak bodies.

We cannot give up the library. But what price do we have to pay to house it? We must put our lives in danger. Motele's, Moishele's, my own.

I look at Moishele. I look at Motele. Their faces show no fear. Only determination. They are waiting for a sign of my approval.

"Well, someone has to do it, so why not us? Why not here?"

The boys from the woodworking shops steal wood for the shelves piece by piece, risking their lives with each little board they smuggle out of the shops. I make curtains from fabric that Mama never had a chance to use up. I wonder, What would Mama say if she knew what we were doing? I think she would approve.

Slowly but surely, a few books at a time, we move three hundred books to their new home at 18 Berka-Joselewicha Street.

QUESTIONS

1. Life in the ghetto involves daily struggles to survive; how could Ruth wistfully refer to the ghetto as home?
2. Motele speaks of the new dwelling, a former grocery store, as a great place to hide from the Nazis, and Riva (Ruth) dreams of families who used to shop from the well-stocked shelves. How do both practical thinking and wishful thinking contribute to a person's ability to survive?
3. How does the creation of a library exemplify both a survival strategy and a means of resistance?

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Photos

Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Acknowledgments

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