

Multiple Perspectives on the Holocaust?

by Alan Singer, editor, *Social Science Docket*

Eli Wiesel challenges teachers to consider, “How do you teach events that defy knowledge, experiences that go beyond imagination? How do you tell children, big and small, that society could lose its mind and start murdering its own soul and its own father? How do you unveil horrors without offering at the same time some measure of hope?” (Totten and Feinberg, 1995, 323)

One way that social studies teachers have traditionally engaged students in examining and evaluating complex and sensitive issues is to present, and have them explore, multiple perspectives or points of view about a topic. But is it meaningful to present multiple perspectives on the “Holocaust” – the Nazi effort to exterminate European Jews during World War II?

While writing the New York State Great Irish Famine curriculum, Maureen Murphy and I grappled with a similar problem. Our solution, which we have discussed in a series of essays in *Social Science Docket* and *Social Education* (Murphy and Singer, 2001), is to use an essential or “big” question approach to studying about the Great Irish Famine and other controversial historical topics. For the Great Irish Famine curriculum, these questions include: What forces were shaping Ireland and the world before the Great Irish Famine (e.g., the Colombian exchange, the Reformation in Europe, and Colonialism)? Was the Great Irish Famine an act of nature or an act of man? How did the Great Irish Famine change Ireland and the world? What is the legacy of the Great Irish Famine?

We never pretended that the famine did not take place or tried to minimize its impact on Ireland and the world. Neither did we condemn Great Britain for acts of genocide. Instead of presenting British action or inaction in Ireland during the famine as an example of genocide, we provided documentary evidence that makes it possible for students to examine the question from different perspectives and to arrive at different conclusions.

I believe a similar “essential questions” approach lends itself to studying about and understanding the Holocaust. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (1993) in Washington DC identifies questions frequently asked by visitors that can be the starting point for a study of the Holocaust. In my high school social studies and teacher education global history classes, over the years we have explored a series of pointed, controversial, and I believe historically important questions that can be answered from different perspectives. A discussion of these questions, listed below, forms the basis for the rest of this essay.

Multiple Perspectives On Fascism

The first group of essential questions on my list are all related to the problem of defining Fascism. I start with Fascism rather than Nazism for two reasons. Fascism develops in other countries besides Germany. If Nazism is a subset of Fascism, it helps us to understand its origins. Defining Fascism also challenges historians to explain why a particularly virulent anti-Semitic variety emerged and seized power in Germany in the intra-war years. The Nazis “dehumanized” Jews to justify their extermination. I think it is a serious historical and philosophical mistake to “dehumanize” Nazis or Germans in order to separate ourselves from complicity with or the possibility of similar behavior. Unfortunately, the perpetrators of the Holocaust were all too human.

A number of historians, activists and political thinkers have explored the emergence of Fascism in Europe during the first half of the twentieth century and they have reached very different conclusions about its fundamental nature. In 1935, the Communist International called Fascism “the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital.” It accused the “ruling bourgeoisie” of using Fascist movements to enforce “predatory measures against the working people,” to rally support “for an “imperialist war of plunder,” and as a means for “attacking the Soviet Union.”

While the Soviet and German leadership viewed their respective systems as fundamental opposites, Hannah Arendt, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (1951), argued that Fascism and Communism are actually kindred totalitarian responses to the collapse of the nation-state system in Europe. Arendt believed that in the absence of traditional institutions in the era after World War I, an unfortunate, unprincipled and unrestrained alliance emerged in certain countries between elites and a mass movement of rootless people with no stake in society (She calls them “atomized, isolated, individuals”). According to Arendt, this alliance was the basis of both Fascist and Communist movements. In post-war Germany, anti-Semitism represented an effort to resurrect a battered German nationalism and was central to the conditions that produced Fascism, transformed it into Nazism and led to World War II (165). During the Cold War era of the 1950s and 1960s, Arendt ideas about the connections between Fascism and Communism became the dominant view in the United States (Schlesinger, 1949/1962).

Eric Hobsbawm, author of *The Age of Extremes, A History of the World, 1914-1991* (1994), shares Arendt's view that Fascism emerged from a "collapse of the old regimes" (126). However, in his interpretation, anti-Semitism, Fascism and "totalitarianism" played only minor roles in events leading up to World War II. Hobsbawm argues that World War II was neither fought over the fate of European Jewry nor to spread or stop totalitarianism. Instead, it was a continuation of the imperialist conflagration of the first World War following a brief respite to rebuild, rearm and repopulate. According to Hobsbawm, the second round of war started when Germany was attacked by England and France because of Hitler's attempt to create a pan-German nation including territories that had been stripped away from the Germanic central powers at the Versailles peace conference in 1919 (Austria, the Sudentland in Czechoslovakia, Alsace-Lorraine in France, and western Prussia in Poland). In this interpretation, the war would have taken place as soon as Germany had sufficiently recovered from World War I, regardless of the emergence of Hitler or Fascism.

That said, Hobsbawm believes that Fascism was successful in Germany because of very specific circumstances: there was "a mass of disenchanting, disoriented, and discontented citizens who no longer knew where their loyalties lay;" an oppositional socialist movement that appeared to threaten social revolution; and, nationalist resentment against the post-war treaties. He notes that Fascism made no progress in Britain, despite that country's endemic anti-Semitism, because its traditional conservative rightwing was able to maintain control after World War I.

Hobsbawm rejects (127-129) both the traditional liberal claim that Fascism was a social revolution from the right and the orthodox Marxist argument endorsed by the Communist International that Fascism represents the ultimate expression of "monopoly capitalism." Hobsbawm claims that Hitler quickly eliminated party factions that took the "revolutionary" rhetoric of National Socialism seriously and that German capital would have preferred more traditional conservative forces, even though it was able to come to terms with Fascism once Hitler had achieved power. He concludes that Fascism was no more inherent in monopoly capital than the American New Deal or British labor governments, and as a result, disappeared with the end of the world crisis in 1945.

Mein Kampf

One of the most surprising things I have read in recent years is a 1933 *New York Times* book review of Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf*. Essentially James Gerard of *The Times* gave it a positive review. Gerard argued that "(T)hose who would solve the riddle of Hitlerism and the present extraordinary attitude of the German people must search the history of Germany. . . Hitler could not have attained such power unless he represented the thoughts and aspirations of a majority of the population." The most startling section is toward the end of the review. According to Gerard, "Hitler is doing much for Germany; his unification of the Germans, his destruction of communism, his training of the young, his creation of a Spartan State animated by patriotism, his curbing of parliamentary government so unsuited to the German character; his protection of the right of private property are all good; and, after all, what the Germans do in their own territory is their own business, except for one thing – *the persecution and practical expulsion of the Jews*" (italics added). In other words, Fascism is not that bad, except for Hitler's unfortunate willingness "in his rise to power" to take "advantage of this prejudice."

I was raised as a Jew in the years after World War II and was taught that there was something unique and twisted about the German "national character" that brought Hitler to power and produced Nazism and the Holocaust (My father, who had close relatives exterminated by the Nazis, would not allow my younger brother and me to buy "flower power" Volkswagens because of their origins in Germany during the Nazi era). This position was supported by the work of Louis Snyder, an historian at my alma mater, the City College of New York. In *Hitler and Nazism* (1961), Snyder cites A. J. P. Taylor, who argued that "(t)he history of the Germans is a history of extremes. It contains everything except moderation . . ." (39). In addition, Snyder claims that there are four "basic facts" where "historians do not differ." "The Germans were politically weak even before Hitler. Hitler exploited the beliefs and fears of a frustrated people. His clear purpose was to destroy European civilization and replace it with a barbarian empire. The Germans accepted him as the Messiah for whom they were awaiting. This political monster brought disaster and ruin both to Germany and the world" (40-41).

Today, as an historian and a social studies teacher, I have come to largely agree with Hobsbawm's assessment that Fascism, Nazism and the Holocaust grew out of specific historical circumstances after the first World War and are not tied to anything that is specifically German. I think this view is supported by a telling quotation from a speech by Winston Churchill where he said, "I have always said that if Great Britain were defeated in war I hoped we should find a Hitler to lead us back to our rightful position among the nations. . . . He (Hitler) embodied the

revolt of Germany against the hard fortunes of war . . . Adolph Hitler is Fuehrer because he exemplifies and enshrines the will of Germany. . . I will not pretend that if I had to choose between Communism and Nazism, I would choose Communism.”

As a social studies teacher, I found a useful document for teaching about the “climate” of the intra-war years in Europe was William Butler Yeats’ poem, “The Second Coming” (www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~benjamin/316kfall/316ktexts/yeatssecond.html). Yeats believed that World War I had unleashed the worst of humanity, signaling the arrival of the anti-Christ and the approach of Armageddon. Curiously, in the late 1920s and the 1930s, Yeats, who was a staunchly anti-British Irish nationalist, became sympathetic with the Fascist cause.

The idea that social change can be experienced as a profound, unsettling disaster, and unleash destructive forces, is also a major theme in Chinua Achebe’s book about European colonialism in Nigeria, *Things Fall Apart*, and much of the current discussion of the impact of globalization on non-Western countries. Students can discuss what they think would happen to political, economic and social institution in the United States if our way of life suddenly seemed to be falling apart.

Why Germany Targeted The Jews

If Fascism, even its Nazi variety, is not an inherently German evil, we have to find another explanation for the direction it took in Germany. Many people look at the 19th century music and ideology espoused by Richard Wagner and others as prophetic of what was to develop. In 1881, Wagner wrote, “I regard the Jewish race as the born enemy of pure humanity and everything that is noble in it; . . . perhaps I am the last German who knows how to stand up . . . against the Judaism that is already getting control of everything.” In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler described Jews as “a parasite in the body of other nations.” Lucy Dawidowicz, author of *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945* (1975), argues that “the idea of the mass annihilation of the Jews” had already been foreshadowed by “apocalyptic-minded anti-Semites during the nineteenth century” (3) and claims that “a line of anti-Semitic descent from Martin Luther to Adolph Hitler is easy to draw” (23). Paul Johnson, in *A History of the Jews* (1987), describes Luther’s 1543 pamphlet *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* (On the Jews and their Lies) “the first work of modern anti-Semitism, and a giant step forward on the road to the Holocaust” (242). In the pamphlet, Luther urged that Jewish “synagogues should be set on fire, and whatever is left should be buried in dirt so that no one may ever be able to see a stone or cinder of it.” Luther was not content with a verbal assault on Germany’s Jews. He was instrumental in having them expelled from Saxony in 1537 and his followers sacked the Berlin synagogue in 1572.

However, I do not think charges of traditional German anti-Semitism offer a sufficient explanation of what took place. The Germanic world also produced a series of world-class Jewish intellectuals who were highly respected and largely assimilated. These included people as diverse in achievement as Heinrich Heine, Felix Mendelssohn, Karl Marx, Gustav Mahler, Sigmund Freud and Albert Einstein. At the same time, other European countries had histories of anti-Semitism and they did not try to systematically exterminate their Jewish citizens. Jews were expelled and executed by the inquisition in Spain at the end of the 15th century. In the 1880s, there were violent anti-Jewish pogroms (riots) across western Russia. In the 1890s, the French military framed, convicted and imprisoned Captain Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer, blaming him for France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Few literary works by prominent authors are as overtly anti-Semitic as England’s William Shakespeare in *The Merchant of Venice*, where he describes the hardness of Shylocks’s “Jewish heart” or Charles Dickens in *Oliver Twist*, where the miserly Fagan is continually referred to as “the Jew.” I think a number of developments had to come together to make Jews particularly vulnerable in Nazi Germany rather than in these other countries.

First and foremost was the impact of Germany’s defeat in World War I, the one-sided Treaty of Versailles that forced Germany to pay war reparations, and the inflation, unemployment and depression that wracked the economy in the post-war years. As early as 1916, as the German military and government sought an explanation for impending defeat, Jews were targeted. Later, the Nazis Party accused Jews of betraying Germany during the war and causing its defeat, promoting leftist revolutionary movements, and mismanaging the German economy.

As conditions grew more desperate, many Germans (Dawidowicz argues the vast number) were willing to blame a vulnerable scapegoat for their misery. Much of what we know about Nazi ideas comes from *Mein Kampf* (My Battle), written by Adolph Hitler while he was imprisoned in 1923 and 1924 for leading a failed coupe. In this book, Hitler excoriates Jews for all of Germany’s troubles. For me, the key question is not what Hitler wrote or why, but “What conditions made it possible for his ideas to receive such a high measure of acceptance?” In November, 1933, the National Socialist (Nazi) Party received 33 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections and

in January, 1933, Hitler, as the representative of the government's largest party, took office as Chancellor. Students also need to consider whether the countries that foisted the post-war treaty on Germany and ignored its plight in the 1920s share responsibility for what happened.

The Jewish population of Germany was both large enough and small enough to be targeted and scapegoated in a time of crisis and dislocation. It was large enough that most Germans had some familiarity with Jews. It was small enough that it could be "removed" without major social dislocations. In 1933, Jews made up roughly 1 percent of the total population of Germany. Approximately 300,000 Jews fled Germany by 1939, while an estimated 200,000 German and Austrian Jews died in the "final solution." Students need to learn that other groups, especially socialists, communists, intellectual and religious dissenters, "Gypsies", Poles, the handicapped and homosexuals, were stereotyped and victimized as well.

A significant number of Jews were socially and economically prominent and some, especially Polish-Jewish immigrants, were distinctive because of their clothing and cultural practices. Small size, occasional prominence and distinctiveness made it possible to identify and scapegoat Jews for Germany's troubles. If the Jewish population had been significantly larger or less easy to identify, Fascism still would have triumphed in Germany, but Jews might not have been targeted in the same way.

One of the paradoxes of European anti-Semitism was that Jews could be attacked at the same time as monopoly capitalists and international communists. Hitler charged that Marxism was "Jewish doctrine." Some people identifiable as Jews were prominent in each group. In the popular mind, Jews represented the alien other, the outsider, the non-Christian. In a society experiencing sharp dislocation, Jews symbolized the forces (greedy capitalists, traitorous, atheistic socialists, modernization) threatening the traditional way of life and were easy to blame. A similar strand of anti-Semitism has been identified in populist rhetoric in the United States in the 1890s.

There was no Jewish nation-state to intervene in defense of Jews and respond to anti-Semitism, similar to Slavic Russia's support for Slavic Serbia at the start of World War I.

Jewish Losses in World War II

Country	Pre-war Jewish pop.	Jewish Loses	Percent Loses
Poland	3,300,000	2,800,000	85%
USSR (Nazi occupied)	2,100,000	1,500,000	71.4%
Czech.	315,000	260,000	82.5%
France	300,000	90,000	30.0%
Austria	60,000	40,000	66.6%
Italy	57,000	15,000	26.3%

It is important to remember that the "Final Solution," the plan to exterminate European Jewry, was not implemented until 1941, eight years after the Nazis came to power in Germany. Only 2.5% of the Jews who were exterminated by the Nazis were German. The rest were people, like my father's family, who were caught on the battlefields of Eastern Europe or trapped in occupied countries.

Individual And Collective Responses

As a child growing up in the 1950s learning about the history of my own people, and later as a teenager, I was angered and also devastated by the knowledge that Eastern European Jews, including my relatives, had died in the death camps of Nazi Germany. Knowledge of oppression did not satisfy me. I felt humiliated and I wanted to scream out, "Why didn't we fight back?" What finally helped me come to terms with the Holocaust was reading about Jewish resistance in Leon Uris' (1961) book about the Warsaw Ghetto and the creation and defense of the State of Israel. I realize that the key for my coming to terms with the 20th century history of Jews was recognition of human resistance. Even as an adult, I laughed uncontrollably during the movie *Genghis Cohn* (1995), when a Jewish comedian, moments before his execution by a firing squad, tells his Nazi murderers to "kush mir in tokhes" (kiss my ass). Sometimes "chutzpah" is the only defiance that is possible.

The book, *Anne Frank, The Diary of a Young Girl* (Frank and Pressler, 1995) touches readers partly because of her innocence and normalcy, but also partly because of her decision, just before her family was captured, "to

publish a book called *The Secret Annex*,” based on her diary, that would help document wartime suffering in The Netherlands. The idea of keeping a diary and using it as a way to maintain our dignity and fight back against our oppressors is the only way most of us are able to confront such enormous horror.

Yet as an historian, I recognize that most Jewish resistance to Nazi oppression was symbolic and usually it was futile. We learn much about the human spirit from Anne Frank, the Warsaw ghetto fighters, the actions of German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was executed for participating in a plot to assassinate Hitler, the efforts of diplomats such as Rauol Wallenburg (Sweden) and Hirokio Sugihara (Japan) to help Jews escape, acts of decency (and self-interest) by people like Oskar Schindler, and the collective courage of the people of Le Chambon in France. However, how much should it be the focal point in a history-based social studies curriculum? We often have students read and discuss the statement on individual choices by Pastor Martin Niemoeller. But what does it explain about the causes of Nazism? Was the Holocaust simply the result of the failure of individuals to act while there was still time?

First They Came for the Jews

by Martin Niemoeller

First they came for the Jews
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Jew.
Then they came for the Communists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a Communist.
Then they came for the trade unionists
and I did not speak out
because I was not a trade unionist.
Then they came for me
and there was no one left
to speak out for me.

Meanwhile, other acts of organized resistance which had a much greater impact on the war and made significant contributions to the defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies are largely ignored in the curriculum because these freedom fighters believed in communism. In France, Italy, Greece and Yugoslavia, communists battled against great odds long after official government forces had surrendered and began to collaborate in the extermination of Jewish citizens. Meanwhile in Asia, Mao Ze-dung and Ho Chi Minh led communist revolutionary armies (supported by western aid, weapons and advisors) against the Japanese. Facing History and Ourselves (1994), an organization that I greatly respect, has produced *Holocaust and Human Behavior*, a 576 page resource guide on the Holocaust that includes over fifty pages on “Bystanders and Rescuers.” Communist involvement in the resistance is never mentioned.

The politics of the Cold War and its influence on the social studies curriculum have meant a series of errors of omission or emphasis as textbooks try to distinguish between the “good guys” (The U.S.) and the “bad guys” (the Soviet Union and the communists). Prentice Hall’s *World History: Patterns of Civilization* (Beers, 1991) has a subsection on “The Holocaust Revealed” that explains that while “the Allies had received reports about Hitler’s attacks on Jews,” it was not until “Allied troops marched into Germany” that “they learned the full horror of his campaign of genocide” (708).

While on some level this statement is true, on other levels it is at least misleading. Anne Frank’s diary says that the family learned of the mass execution of Jews from British radio broadcasts in October, 1942. As early as July, 1942, the United States State Department began inquiring into the massacre of Jews in Eastern Europe (Wyman, 1984: 24). Throughout the war, *The New York Times* reported on Nazi Germany’s attacks on Jews, though most reports were consigned to small pieces on the inside pages. In October, 1941, it published a story on the murder of

over 10,000 Jews in Galicia (Poland) based on reports from Hungarian army officers. In May, 1942, it reported that German troops had executed more than 100,000 Jews in the Baltic states (Wyman, 1984: 20-21). Also in May, 1942, the Jewish Labor Bund in Poland delivered an extensive report on the mass murder of Polish Jews to the Polish Government-in-exile in London. Information from the report, including the estimate of 700,000 casualties, was broadcast by the BBC on June 2, 1942. It was also the basis for a United Press release sent to the United States and the story appeared in different forms in the *Seattle Times*, *Boston Globe* and *The New York Times*. (Wyman, 21-22).

In 1944, the United States refused to bomb the rail lines being used to transport Jews to their death in Auschwitz. The military dismissed the idea as “impractical,” yet the United States bombed the area around Auschwitz on a number of occasions, including an attack on August 20, 1944 that released over one thousand bombs in the vicinity (Facing History, 1994: 407).

Prentice Hall also credits the United States, Great Britain and France with helping Germany rebuild after the war, while the Soviet Union is accused of wanting to punish them, but the willingness of the West to rehabilitate and use former Nazis during the Cold War is never mentioned (715). For example, Werner Von Braun, a scientist in charge of the German war-time rocketry program was later given a similar position in the United States. In another post-war action that bears scrutiny, the United States negotiated an agreement with the head of Germany’s Russian espionage unit and paid former Nazi agents millions of dollars a year to spy on its war-time ally. In the 1950s, this group was assigned to create West Germany’s espionage agency (Martin, 2002).

Even claims of victimization can be problematic. While Greek resistance fighters battled the Nazis even when villages were threatened with massacre and the Soviet Union withdrew its forces and factories east in order to continue the fight, France and The Netherlands quickly surrendered rather than risk destruction and most of their citizens passively collaborated with Nazi occupiers. One French town, Oradour-sur-Glane near Limoges, had a particularly interesting history. On Saturday, June 10, 1944, 4 days after the allied invasion at Normandy, a German SS Division entered the town without warning, rounded up its population, and slaughtered 642 people, including 205 children (*The New York Times*, 1944: 1:4; Hébras, 1994). No one is quite sure of the reason. Town residents had no known ties with resistance forces. Some chroniclers suspect the Nazis simply made a mistake and attacked the wrong village. Another possibility is that the German occupying army wanted to make a statement to the French people that despite D-Day the war and occupation were not over.

When local people rebuilt Oradour-sur-Glane after World War II, they decided to use a neighboring site, and keep the ruins of the original town as a tribute to the people who died there and as a memorial to the horror of Nazi occupation. However, the memorial presents only one portion of the town’s involvement in World War II. Why were the residents of Oradour-sur-Glane living peacefully on that Saturday in the middle of the bloodiest war in human history? The only answer I can conceive of is that they had sought safety and temporarily succeeded in withdrawing from the war by cooperating with the occupying forces.

Lessons of the Holocaust

The theme of the October, 1995 (v. 59, n. 6) issue of *Social Education* was “Teaching About the Holocaust.” In an introduction to the issue, Michael Simpson of the National Council for the Social Studies wrote: “Effective teaching about genocide must offer students more than the sensational facts and dates of atrocities. They need to understand the processes that can result in genocide, as well as the human forces that can prevent or resist it” (321). The key point here is that students and citizens need to understand the lessons of the Holocaust in order to “prevent or resist” genocide in the future. However, understanding the Holocaust, or even defining genocide, have not been simple tasks.

The word *genocide* was coined in 1944 by Raphael Lemkin in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Lemkin combined the Greek word for tribe, *genos*, with a Latin suffix designating a killer or destroyer, *cide*. In 1951, the United Nation’s approved (with the agreement of the United States), a “Convention on Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.” The Convention broadly defined genocide as “any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, such as: a) killing members of the group; b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.” This definition has stirred up continuing debate because of the difficulty of proving *intent*, and because it expands the

notion of genocide to include other kinds of victimization. For example, under this definition, Britain's decision to limit food aid during the Great Irish Famine, European involvement in the African Slave Trade and the decimation of the native population of the Americas by old world diseases during the Colombian exchange probably would not qualify as genocidal actions despite the magnitude of the devastation and the clear benefit some groups received from what happened.

In 1979, the President's Commission on the Holocaust described it as "a crime unique in the annals of human history, different not only in the quantity of violence – the sheer numbers killed – but in its manner and purpose as a mass criminal enterprise organized by the state against defenseless civilian populations" (330). Many groups that promote Holocaust education programs and memorialize its victims share this view. A problem, however, is if the Holocaust is a "unique" occurrence, an historical "singularity," it limits the broader lessons that can be drawn from understanding Nazi efforts to exterminate European Jewry. A very different view of the Holocaust was offered by Ali Mazuri of SUNY-Binghamton during debate over the New York State Curriculum of Inclusion in 1990-1991. He argued that "(w)hat was distinctive about Nazi Germany was that it was an extreme case of something much more widespread in the Western world – racism and a sense of cultural superiority. Hitler was the worst case of something which - in milder forms –is still rampant in the Western world. Racial and cultural arrogance" (Cornbeth, 1995: 113-118). Mazuri also argued that the Greek-derived word 'holocaust' should remain a generic metaphor applicable to the experience of other people who were victims of atrocities. These positions were widely and sharply attacked by political leaders, at public meetings and in the press.

Holocaust survivors and educators have adopted the slogan, "Never Forget." While collective memory is vital, I believe it is an insufficient goal. In *Survival at Auschwitz*, Holocaust survivor Primo Levi (1996) writes that in order to stay alive, an inmate must quickly accept that "heir ist kein warum," "there is no why here" (29). As students, teachers and historians explore multiple perspectives on the Holocaust, our objective must always be to ask "Why?"

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High School Level Activity: Time Magazine's Man of the Year for 1938

Instructions: For its January, 1939 edition, *Time* magazine selected Adolph Hitler as its 1938 "Man of the Year. "

- Read the excerpts from the article that follows.
- List the key achievements of Adolph Hitler mentioned in the article.
- Based on these achievements, do you think Hitler merited selection as "Man of the Year "? Explain.
- Write a Letter-to-the-Editor of *Time* explaining your point of view.

A. When without loss of blood he reduced Czechoslovakia to a German puppet state, forced a drastic revision of Europe's defensive alliances, and won a free hand for himself in Eastern Europe by getting a "hands-off" promise from powerful Britain (and later France), Adolph Hitler without doubt became 1938's Man of the Year. Most other world figures of 1938 faded in importance as the year drew to a close. . . . But the figure of Adolph Hitler strode over a cringing Europe with all the swagger of a conqueror. . . . Hitler became in 1938 the greatest threatening force that the democratic, freedom-loving world faces today.

B. Rant as he might against the machinations of international Communism and international Jewry, or rave as he would that he was just a Pan-German trying to get all the Germans back in one nation, Fuehrer Hitler had himself become the world's No. 1 International Revolutionist . . . Fascism has discovered that freedom -- of press, speech, assembly -- is a potential danger to its own security. In Fascist phraseology democracy is often coupled with Communism.

C. To this man of no trade and few interests the Great War was a welcome event which gave him some purpose in life. Hitler took part in 48 engagements, won the German Iron Cross, was wounded once and gassed once, was in a hospital when the Armistice of November 11, 1918 was declared. His political career began in 1919 when he became Member No. 7 of the midget German Labor Party. Discovering his powers of oratory, Hitler soon became the party's leader, changed its name to the National Socialist German Labor Party, wrote its anti- Semitic, anti-democratic, authoritarian program.

D. The situation which gave rise to this demagogic, ignorant, desperate movement was inherent in the German Republic's birth and in the craving of large sections of the politically immature German people for strong, masterful leadership. Democracy in Germany was conceived in the womb of military defeat. It was the Republic which put its signature (unwillingly) to the humiliating Versailles Treaty, a brand of shame which it never lived down in German minds.

E. That the German people love uniforms, parades, military formations, and submit easily to authority is no secret. . . . What Adolph Hitler & Co. did to Germany in less than six years was applauded wildly and ecstatically by most Germans. He lifted the nation from post-War defeatism. Under the swastika Germany was unified. His was no ordinary dictatorship, but rather one of great energy and magnificent planning.

F. Germany's 700,000 Jews have been tortured physically, robbed of homes and properties, denied a chance to earn a living, chased off the streets. . . . But not only Jews have suffered. Out of Germany has come a steady, ever-swelling stream of refugees, Jews and Gentiles, liberals and conservatives, Catholics as well as Protestants, who could stand Nazism no longer.

G. Germany has become a nation of uniforms, goose- stepping to Hitler's tune, where boys of ten are taught to throw hand grenades, where women are regarded as breeding machines. In five years under the Man of 1938, regimented Germany had made itself one of the great military powers of the world today. . . . Despite a shortage of trained officers and a lack of materials, the German Army has become a formidable machine which could probably be beaten only by a combination of opposing armies.

High School Level Activity: What is Fascism?

Instructions: Read the quotes below and explain your views on the questions below:

1. How do you define Fascism?
2. Was the Nazi movement in Germany under the leadership of Adolph Hitler a uniquely German phenomenon or was it a special case of a broader Fascist movement in Western society between World War I and World War II?

A. The Encyclopedia of World History, 6th Edition (Source: Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001, 643)

“Fascist movements that emerged after World War I . . . shared an ideological perspective that subordinated the individual to the state, opposed class struggle, and affirmed nationalist identities and a corporate state. Structures were elitist rather than egalitarian, and there was an emphasis on the role of the great leader.”

B. Eric Hobsbawn’s The Age of Extremes (New York: Pantheon, 1994, 125-128)

“The optimal conditions for the triumph of the crazy ultra-Right were an old state and its ruling mechanisms which could no longer function; a mass of disenchanting, disoriented and discontented citizens who no longer knew where their loyalties lay; strong socialist movements threatening or appearing to threaten social revolution, but not actually in a position to achieve it; and a move of nationalist resentment against the peace treaties of 1918-1920.

Fascism was no more the ‘expression of the interests of monopoly capital’ than the American New Deal or British Labor governments. . . Big business in the early 1930s did not particularly want Hitler, and would have preferred more orthodox conservatism. . . . However, when he came to power, business collaborated wholeheartedly.”

C. Program of the Communist International (1929), The Crisis of Capitalism and Fascism

(Source: A Handbook of Marxism. NY: International Publishers, 1935, 978-979)

“Under certain special historical conditions, the progress of this bourgeois, imperialist, reactionary offensive assumes the form of Fascism. These conditions are: instability of capitalist relations; the existence of considerable declassed social elements, the pauperization of broad strata of the urban petty-bourgeoisie and of the intelligentsia; discontent among the rural petty-bourgeoisie and, finally, the constant menace of mass proletarian action. In order to stabilize and perpetuate its rule, the bourgeoisie is compelled to an increasing degree to abandon the parliamentary system in favor of the Fascist system. . . The Fascist system is a system of direct dictatorship, ideologically marked by the ‘national idea’ The combination of social-damagogy, corruption and active white terror, in conjunction with extreme imperialist aggression in the sphere of foreign politics, are the characteristic features of Fascism.”

D. British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (1941-1944)

(Source: George Seldes, The Great Quotations, New York: Lyle Stuart, 1960, p. 156)

“I have always said that if Great Britain were defeated in war I hoped we should find a Hitler to lead us back to our rightful position among the nations. . . . He (Hitler) embodied the revolt of Germany against the hard fortunes of war . . . Adolph Hitler is Fuehrer because he exemplifies and enshrines the will of Germany. . . I will not pretend that if I had to choose between Communism and Nazism, I would choose Communism.”

High School Level Activities: Rescuers and Resistance

(prepared by Jaimee Kahn, Farmingdale HS, Farmingdale, NY)

A. Resistance During the Holocaust

(Source: The United States Memorial Museum Resource Guide)

“From the Nazis’ rise to power in 1933 in Germany to the end of the Third Reich in 1945, Jews ...as well as other victims of Nazism, participated in many acts of resistance. Organized-armed resistance was the most direct form of opposition to the Nazis. In many areas of German-occupied Europe, resistance took other forms such as aid, rescue, and spiritual resistance. Resistance by partisan fighters using “hit-and-run” guerrilla tactics during the war provides an important and necessary context for understanding the limits and possibilities of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust. But one should not confuse partisan resistance to the German military effort and the German occupation of Europe, on the one hand, with Jewish resistance, on the other, even though the two sometimes overlapped. . . .

As the victims of Nazi genocide and an isolated, often scorned, minority among occupied populations, Jews were in a distinctively weak situation. Because they were doomed to destruction, they could not wait for the beginning of the German collapse in 1943 to act, as the nationalist and patriotic anti-Nazi resistance movements generally did. By the end of 1942, more than four million Jews had already been killed by mass shootings and gassings, or had died from starvation, exhaustion, and disease during their internment in Nazi ghettos and concentration and forced labor camps.

Nazi methods of deception and terror and the superior power of the German police state and military severely inhibited the abilities of civilians in all occupied countries to resist. But the situation of Jews was particularly hopeless, and it is remarkable that individuals and groups resisted to the extent they did.

In addition to many acts of unarmed resistance in the ghettos and camps and the armed and unarmed resistance of Jewish partisans operating underground in both eastern and western Europe, armed Jewish resistance took place in 5 major ghettos, 45 small ghettos, 5 major concentration and extermination camps, and 18 forced labor camps. With few exceptions (notably three major uprisings by partisans in late summer 1944 in Warsaw, Paris, and Slovakia as Allied liberators approached), Jews alone engaged in open, armed resistance against the Germans. They received little help from anyone on the outside. . . . Courageous young men and women facing certain death had little to lose.”

A. Obstacles to military resistance by Eastern European Jews:

1. Superior, armed power of the Germans
2. German tactics of “collective responsibility” (entire families and communities were responsible for individual acts of resistance and thus would be punished as a whole)
3. Isolation of Jews and lack of weapons
4. Secrecy and deception of deportation by the Germans

B. Spiritual Resistance in the Ghettos and Concentration Camps by Eastern European Jews:

1. Underground schools and libraries to learn religious and secular subjects
2. Documenting the Holocaust and the world around them as evidence of the horrors taking place
3. Cultural activities such as the creation of works of art, songs, theatrical productions, concert, cabarets and lectures. One such place was Theresienstadt where adult had young children write poems and paint pictures to psychologically deal with the world around them.
4. Clandestine prayer (secret prayer)

Questions

1. Why was armed resistance to the Nazis by Eastern European Jews so difficult?
2. What other ways did Eastern European Jews resist during the Holocaust?
3. Write a poem or design a plaque or exhibit to commemorate Eastern European Jewish resistance?

B. Appeal to Resistance in the Warsaw Ghetto, January 1, 1942

(Source: R. Ainsztein, *Jewish Resistance in Nazi-Occupied Eastern Europe*, NY: Barnes and Noble, 1974)

Let us not go to slaughter like sheep! Jewish youth, do not trust the deceivers. Of the 80,000 Jews in Jerusalem of Lithuania only 20,000 remain. With our own eyes we saw our parents, brothers and sisters snatched away forever. Where are the hundreds of men arrested by the police supposedly to do some job of work? Where are the naked women and children taken away in the horrifying night of the great provocation? Where are the Jews captured on Yom Kippur? And where are our brothers who were locked up in the Second Ghetto? Those who were taken from the ghetto will never come back, for all roads from the Gestapo lead to Ponary. And Ponary means death!

Cast off the illusions of people blinded by despair: your children, your wives, your husbands are no more! Ponary is no camp. They have all been shot. Hitler has invented a system for the destruction of all the Jews in Europe. It has been our fate to be the first.

Let us not go like sheep to slaughter! It is true that we are weak and we have nobody to help us. But our only dignified answer to the enemy must be resistance!

Brothers, it is better to die like free fighters than to live by the murderer's grace. Resist until your last breath!

Questions

1. Why are the Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto being called on to resist the Nazis?
2. Why does the appeal demand that Jews not act like "sheep"?
3. The "Appeal" ends with the statement, "Brothers, it is better to die like free fighters than to live by the murderer's grace. Resist until your last breath!" Do you agree or disagree? Why?
4. If you were in Warsaw, would you have joined the resistance? Explain.

C. A Rescuer Named Fiodor Kichailovitch Kalenczuk

(Source: *The Record: Holocaust in History, 1933 - 1945*, The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and The National Council for the Social Studies)

"On a tree in Jerusalem is the name Fiodor Kichailovitch Kalenczuk. Four Jews from the Ukraine survived the war because Kalenczuk, at peril to himself and his family, hid them on his farm for seventeen long months. The Jewish survivors were Pessah Kranzberg, a grain merchant from the town of Hoszcza, his wife, his 10-year-old daughter Rasia, and Rasia's little friend Miriam. In 1942 the Nazi invaders marched across Poland and Russia. Kranzberg and the others managed to escape from the burning ghetto in Hoszcza and fled to Kalenczuk's farm. The two men had known, respected and liked each other for five years; never imagining what dark days would come. When the world around the Kranzbergs collapsed, Kalenczuk came forth with support. First he sheltered the fugitives in his own home. Then he fashioned a secure hiding place for them in his stable, bringing them meals three times a day, taking care to provide only kosher food. Kalenczuk himself had to struggle to support his wife and eight children. In 1943 he had to surrender part of his harvest to the Germans, yet he continued to feed the four who were hiding in his stable. His wife feared that the Jews were endangering a Christian household. But he refused to deny them refuge. At last, in January 1944 the Red Army advance made it safe for the Kranzbergs and little Miriam to leave their hiding place. Eventually they reached Israel. And one day in 1967 Fiodor Michailovitch Kalenczuk stood with them in Jerusalem at the ceremony enshrining his name in the Garden of the Righteous."

Questions

1. What did Fiodor Kalenczuk do for Pessah Kranzberg, his family and friend?
2. What could have happened to Fiodor Kalenczuk if the Nazis had caught him?
3. Write a report about the Garden of the Righteous at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.
4. Write a poem or design a plaque or exhibit to commemorate Fiodor Kalenczuk or another rescuer.

High School Level Activities based on Holocaust and Human Behavior

(prepared by Michelle Sarro)

Lesson 1. Who was Responsible?

A. This section is based on the video of the Milgrim Experiment (Source: Holocaust and Human Behavior, 210-212), which observed the effect of authority on individual behavior. The experiment was conducted in the 1960s and consisted of a control group of participants chosen to be “learners” and another group chosen to be teachers (the teachers are the focus of the experiment). Learners are taken into another room out of view of the teacher and the teacher is instructed to ask questions and give a shock to the learner for each incorrect answer. The video shows the “teachers” reactions to the increased shocks, the apparent auditory pain it causes the learner as well as the reality that most “teachers” administered the full 450 volts possible. After watching the video on the “Milgrim Experiment” answer questions 1-4.

Questions

1. What consequences did those administering the shock face if they did not comply?
2. What reasons did they give for continuing against their will?
3. Considering that 65% of subjects administered the full 450 volts, what can you imply about the effect of authority on human behavior?
4. Is being “told to do something” a justification?

B. At the Nuremberg Trials and the other courts that tried Nazis for war crimes, the defendants argued that they were innocent of criminal charges because they were simply “following orders”. Read the excerpts below before turning to the next page (Source: Holocaust and Human Behavior, 433-436).

- “Don’t you see, we SS men were not supposed to think about these things: it never even occurred to us. And besides, it was something already taken for granted that the Jews were to blame for everything... We just never heard anything else... We were all so trained to obey orders without even thinking that the thought of disobeying an order would simply never have occurred to anybody... Himmler had ordered it and had even explained the necessity and I never really gave much thought to whether it was wrong. It just seemed a necessity. - Rudolph Hoess, Commander at Auschwitz
- “I was a German engineer and key member at the Topf works and I saw it as my duty to apply my specialist knowledge in this way in order to help Germany win the war, just as an aircraft construction engineer builds planes in war time, which are also connected to the destruction of human beings.” - Kurt Prufer, designer and builder of furnaces for crematoriums

Questions

1. In your opinion, are Hoess and Prufer guilty of war crimes? Explain.
2. C. P. Snow, a writer, argues that “When you think of the long and gloomy history of man, you find more hideous crimes have been committed in the name of obedience than have ever been committed in the name of rebellion.” Do you agree or disagree? Explain.

Lesson 2. Do Bystanders Share Responsibility?

Instructions: Read the excerpts and answer the questions.

A. During the Holocaust, railroad cars were used to transport millions of people to concentration camps. Below is an excerpt from an interview with Walter Stier, who was the person responsible for the “special trains” that transported the Jews to labor camps and an almost certain death (Source: Holocaust and Human Behavior, 365-366).

Interviewer: But you knew that the trains to Treblinka or Aushwitz were—

Stier: Of course we knew. I was the last district; without me these trains couldn’t reach their destinations. So I had to

Interviewer: Did you know Treblinka meant extermination?

Stier: Of course not.

Interviewer: You didn’t know?

Stier: Good God, no. How could we know? I never went to Treblinka. I stayed in Krakow, in Warsaw, glued to my desk.

Interviewer: You were a . . .

Stier: I was strictly a bureaucrat.

B. Jan Karski, a courier (someone who carries information, letters, packages, etc.) for the Polish resistance movement, talking about his conversation with United States Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter (Source: Holocaust and Human Behavior, 368).

“No one was prepared to grasp what was going on . . . not because of ill will, but simply because the facts were beyond human imagination . . . When I was in the U.S. and told Justice Felix Frankfurter the story of Polish Jews, he said at the end of our conversation, “I cannot believe you.” We were with the Polish Ambassador to the U.S., Jan Ciechenowski. Hearing the Justice’s comments, he was indignant. “Lieutenant Karski is on an official mission. My government’s authority stands behind him. You cannot say to his face that he is lying.” Frankfurter’s answer was, “I am not saying that he is lying. I only said that I cannot believe him, and there is a difference.”

C. When the Nazi’s took over Hartheim Castle in Vienna in 1939, it soon became an extension of a nearby labor camp (Source: Holocaust and Human Behavior, 371).

- According to Sister Felicitas, “when there was intense activity it smoked day and night. Tufts of hair flew through the chimney onto the street. The remains of bones were stored on the east side of the castle and in ton trucks driven first to the Danube, later also to the Traun.”
- Christian Wirth, the director of the operation, met with local residents. He told them that his men were burning shoes and other “belongings.” The strong smell? “A device had been installed in which old oil and oil by-products underwent a special treatment through distillation and chemical treatment in order to gain a water-clear, oily fluid from it which was of great importance to U-Boats [German submarines]. Wirth ended the meeting by threatening to send anyone who spread “absurd rumors of burning persons” to a concentration camp. The townspeople took him at his word. They did not break their silence.

Questions

1. What reasons do the bystanders give for not taking action?
2. What consequences, if any, did they face by resisting?
3. Justice Frankfurter acknowledges that he does not think Karski “is lying”, but still “cannot believe him.” What do you think he means?
4. Do bystanders, such as these, bear any responsibility for the events of the Holocaust? Explain.

Lesson 3. The Rescuers

Instructions: Read the excerpts and answer the questions (Source: Holocaust and Human Behavior, 383-393).

- The father, the two boys, and the baby girl moved in and we managed to survive the next two years until the end of the war. Friends helped us take up the floorboards, under the rug, and build a hiding place in case of raids. These did occur with increasing frequency, and one night we had a very narrow escape. Four Germans, accompanied by a Dutch Nazi policeman came and searched the house. They did not find the hiding place, but they had learned from experience that sometimes it paid to go back to a house they had already searched, because by then the hidden Jews might have come out. Then the Dutch policeman came back alone. I had a small revolver that a friend had given me, but I had never planned to use it. I felt I had no choice except to kill him. I would do it again, under the same circumstances, but it still bothers me and I still feel that there “should” have been another way.
- The people of Le Chambon, a tiny mountain town in south-central France, were also aware that Jews were being murdered and took action to save as many people as possible...Magde Trocme, the wife of a local minister explains what happened: “Those of us who received the first Jews did what we thought had to be done—nothing more complicated...There was no decision to make. The issue was: Do you think we are all brothers or not? Do you think it is unjust to turn in the Jews or not? Then let us try to help.”
- Many people attributed the success of Le Chambon to the work of “le major”, the Nazi occupation governor of the region who, although he was later replaced, stayed on as second-in-command. The Trocmes claim he was responsible for the anonymous phone calls they received just before the raid. When he was brought to trial by the French resistance at the end of the war, he was greeted with kindness and gratitude from nearly everyone in the room, despite the accusations brought against him. Of his role in helping the people of Le Chambon rescue so many Jews, he said the meeting was almost painful and that: “He was glad for their praise and their affection, but didn’t they realize decency is the normal thing to do? Didn’t they realize that decency needs no rewards, no recognition, that it is done out of the heart, now, immediately, just in order to satisfy the heart now?”
- Oskar Schindler...began by turning his factory into an official subcamp of a newly constructed labor camp at Plazow. For a time it was a haven for about five hundred Jews. Then in the fall of 1944, the Nazis ordered both camps closed and the workers shipped to Auschwitz. Schindler refused to let that happen. He put together a list of eleven hundred men, women and children that he claimed as his workers. He then used his own money and influence to transport the workers to a new factory he was building in Brinnlitz, Czechoslovakia. When the Jewish women who worked in his factory were transported to Auschwitz by mistake, he accomplished the impossible. He managed to get the women back by offering Nazi officials a fortune in bribes.

Questions

1. In passage A, the “rescuer” is forced to take one life, in order that she might save four others. Do you consider her action heroic or tragic? Explain.
2. Do you think as Protestants in a nation of Catholics, the oppression felt by the people of Le Chambon influenced their decision to help the Jews? Explain.
3. Should “le major” be considered a hero, despite the fact that he served the Nazis until the end of the war and as such, was likely responsible for as many deaths as he was for lives saved? Explain.
4. Schindler has been accused of profiting from cheap Jewish labor during the Holocaust. Even if profit was his original motive, does it make him less of a hero? Explain.

Lesson 4. The Resisters

Instructions: Read the chart and answer the questions (Source: Holocaust and Human Behavior, 373-377).

Who were they?	What did they do?	What was the consequence?
Hans and Sophie Scholl, Students	Formed a group known as the <i>White Rose</i> which published and then distributed a leaflet which exposed the death of more than 300,000 Polish Jews.	Arrested by the Nazis and brought to trial. Freely admitted their responsibility and were found “guilty.” Both were guillotined later the same day.
Helmuth von Moltke, German Aristocrat	Smuggled copies of the <i>White Rose</i> , a leaflet that exposed the he plight of Polish Jews, to friends in Allied countries. The fliers were then dropped over German cities. Worked for The Kreisau Circle, a group dedicated to fighting the Nazis and creating a new Germany.	He was executed in January, 1945, after a member of the Kreisau Circle, Klaus von Stauffenberg, placed a briefcase containing a bomb under a table where Hitler and his top officials were meeting. Hitler and the other officials survived. Twelve thousand people were put to death for this act.
On February 27, 1943, women of mixed Aryan-Jewish marriages that openly protested the kidnapping and deportation of their children and husbands.	Went to Rosenstrasse 2-4 where their “Jewish” relatives were being held. A Jewish woman married to an Aryan did not have to wear a yellow star, but a man did. Many of the women were themselves secretly Jews and risked being picked up. They stayed for days despite SS threats to shoot and chanted the phrase “murderer, murderer” in the face of machine guns.	After several days of protest Joseph Goebbels ordered the release of all Jews married to an “Aryan”. An underling of Goebbels later claimed that Jews were released “so that others didn’t take a lesson from it, so that others didn’t begin to do the same.”

Questions

1. Compare the experiences of the resisters. Did anyone have more at stake than the others did?
2. Is the choice to resist harder for a non-Jew like Moltke or the Scholls than it is for the women who protested to save their families? Explain your answer.
3. Does the fact that they were killed for their actions make them less successful? Defend your answer.

Lesson 5. The Survivors

Instructions: Read the following accounts by survivors and then answer the questions below.

A. Out of convoys which, when they left their homes...numbered from two to three thousand...only two or three hundred arrive. All the nourishment they receive is a daily ration of a little meal sprinkled over their hands...a mass of about four hundred emaciated forms, the remnants of such convoys is lying in one of the [yards]...most of them are suffering from typhoid and dysentery . . . weakened by months of starvation...they just lie there quietly waiting for death . . .

B. First they asked people to hand over their money, saying they would spare those who paid. But after taking the money they killed them anyway . . . there were children begging for pity but they killed them straight away. . . for the next 43 days [I] lived among the rotting corpses, too weak to stand up and convinced the world had come to an end. . . I prayed that I would die because I could not see a future life.

C. We all sort of got used to such relocations. . . however, the place was not an ideal resting area. We have always known that it was a “processing center”. . . they called it a “work camp”, but we all knew it simply as “Death Camp” . . . There were thousands and thousands of people working...many died in front of me from heat stroke, sickness, exhaustion and starvation. . . and many were taken away during the cover of night to almost a certain destination, death. All that time I was wondering when our turn would come . . .

D. Everyday people were being brought to the camp. I knew many of them from before. As far as I know, five thousand men, two hundred forty boys age eleven to fourteen, and thirty-six women were there. The meal consisted of one piece of bread and a bit of cooked stuff, mainly beans. . . people would faint everyday from physical weakness and hunger . . . I was desperately hoping I’d be killed with a bullet. . . trucks took the bodies away, we don’t know where.

E. There were those who fell—we were not allowed to help them rise. They were shot - right there - wherever the fell. . . and finally my turn came. . . and then he turned my head. . . and shot me. . . I was praying for another bullet to put an end to my suffering. . . I felt bodies pulling at me. . . not all of them dead, but in their last sufferings . . . children crying “Mother,” “Father,” . . . I could not stand. . .

Questions

1. How are the stories told in these passages similar or different?
2. What words and experiences are repeated in each passage?
3. Does any one experience seem worse than the others? Why?
4. Passage A describes events in Armenia, 1914-1918; passage B describes events in Rwanda, 1994; passage C describes events in Cambodia, 1975-1979; passage D describes events in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1992-1995; and passage E describes events in the European Holocaust, 1938-1945. Did you realize they were describing different places and times? Why or why not?
5. In your opinion, are these all examples of genocide? Explain.
6. In your opinion, could something like this happen in the world today or in the future? Explain.

1. Nazi Ideology and Popular Culture

(Based on material from “Crisis, Conscience, and Choices: Weimar Germany and the Rise of Hitler,” 21st Century Education Project)

A. Horst Wessel Song: Many of Weimar Germany’s political parties adopted songs as their unofficial anthems. The *Horst Wessel Song* became the Nazi anthem.

Hold high the Banner! Close the hard ranks serried!
S.A. marches on with sturdy stride.
Comrades, by Red Front and Reaction killed, are buried
But march with us in image at our side.

Gangway! Gangway now for the Brown Battalions!
For the Storm Trooper clear roads o’er the land!

The Swastika gives hope to our entrenched millions,
The day for freedom and for bread’s at hand.

The trumpet blows its shrill and final blast!
Prepared for war and battle here we stand.
Soon Hitler’s banners will wave unchecked at last,
The end of German slav’ry in our land!

Questions

1. Who were the “Brown Battalions”?
2. According to this song, what does the “Swastika” represent?
3. The Red Front is a communist youth group. What does the song say about these youth?
4. What is the message of the “Horst Wessel Song”?
5. In your opinion, why were songs like the “Horst Wessel Song” used to teach Nazi ideals?

B. The Hitler Youth Quex (1931): This book by Karl Schenzinger was written to teach Nazi political and social values to young readers. It tells the story of Heini, who is the 15-year-old son of an alcoholic, unemployed communist father. Heini’s mother suffers terrible abuse at the hands of her husband, who yells that he is a “class-conscious proletariat” while he beats her. During the book, she commits suicide. Despite the opposition of his father, Heini makes friends with members of the local Hitler youth group. He admires the Nazis because of their concept of German strength and honor, and is attracted to their military discipline. Two excerpts from the book follow. In the first excerpt, Heini describes seeing a group of Hitler Youth. In the second excerpt, Fritz, a Nazi youth leader, explains to Heini the importance of preserving the purity of the German people.

1. “He really liked the S.A. (*Strumabteilung* or Storm Detachment). They looked orderly, clean, robust, and their leather shone. They reminded him of order, good breeding, and discipline - just like it was in the old stories. . . Those lads, too, had worn leather gaiters. They marched past him one day; each one like the other, shining, lively and fresh, a flag up in front. For an hour he marched alongside them, with only one wish in his heard - to be allowed to march along in these rows, with these chaps, who were young like him, who sang songs. He was almost brought to tears with pride and happiness. These are Nazis!”

2. “I want to train, inside and out, so that I understand courage. I want to smell my blood and the blood of others who have the same blood as me. The word ‘Volk’ (people) has become ridiculous here in Germany. Man, just think! We should be ashamed whenever we see a herd of deer or an elephant herd. They don’t mix with one another. There, too, each animal has his place according to what he is and what he does for the herd. Isn’t it so? The zoo is the best university that I know of.”

Questions

1. Why does Heini admire the *Strumabteilung*?
2. Why does Fritz say that “the word ‘Volk’ has become ridiculous”?
3. What does Fritz mean when he says “the zoo is the best university that I know of”?
4. In your opinion, why is Heini’s father portrayed as a brute who drives his mother to suicide?
5. In your opinion, why were stories like *The Hitler Youth Quex* used to teach Nazi ideas?

2. Legal And Ideological Underpinnings Of The Nazi Regime

(Based on material from “Crisis, Conscience, and Choices: Weimar Germany and the Rise of Hitler,” 21st Century Education Project)

Instructions: Between February, 1933 and a series of speeches and laws established the legal and ideological underpinnings for the Nazi regime in Germany. Working in teams, examine the statements below. Identify the main idea in each passage. Select three of the speeches or laws that you believe were most important in establishing Nazi control over Germany. Explain why your team selected these passages.

Homework: Write an editorial for an American newspaper explaining why Americans should be concerned with events in Germany.

- **Hermann Goering, Orders to Prussian Police, February 17, 1933.** “I expect all police authorities to maintain the best relations with these organizations [S.A. and Stahlhelm, the ultra-nationalist veterans organization] that comprise the most important constructive forces of the state. . . The activities of subversive organizations are on the contrary to be combined with the most drastic methods. Communist terrorist acts are to be countered with all severity, and weapons must be used ruthlessly if necessary. . . Every official must constantly bear in mind that failure to act is more serious than errors committed in acting.”
- **Enabling Law, March 24, 1933.** This critical legislation passed with a two-thirds majority of the Reichstag. With the Center Party also voting to grant dictatorial powers to Hitler’s government. “National laws can be enacted by the National Cabinet [Hitler and his ministers] as well as in accordance with the procedure established in the Constitution. . . The national laws enacted by the National Cabinet may deviate from the Constitution so far as they do not affect the position of the Reichstag and National Council. The powers of the President remain undisturbed.”
- **Law for the restoration of the Civil Service, April 7, 1933.** “Officials of non-Aryan descent [primarily Jews] are to be retired. Those who have honorary status are also to be dismissed. . . Those officials who have indicated by their previous political activity that they may not exert themselves for the national state without reservation may be dismissed.”
- **Speech by Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, at Mass Book Burning, May 10, 1933.** Thousands of students in coordinated demonstrations in over thirty university towns burned books by Albert Einstein, H.G. Wells, Jack London, Erich Maria Remarque, Sigmund Freud, Thomas Mann, Upton Sinclair, Karl Marx, and other writers “un-German.” “You have done well in the middle of the night to throw into the flames these unspiritual relics of the past. It is a strong, great, and symbolic performance that should document for all the world that here, tonight, the spiritual foundations of the November [Weimar] Republic sink to the ground. But out of these ruins there will arise the phoenix of a new spirit, a spirit that we bear, that we demand, a spirit on which we have stamped its decisive character and its decisive features. So I beg you, my fellow students, to stand up for the Reich and for its new authorities. So I bet you to dedicate yourselves to the work and duty and banners of responsibility.”
- **Decree for the Coordination of All Activities, June 30, 1933.** “. . . all of the following are transferred to the jurisdiction of the Minister for Public Enlightenment and Propaganda [Joseph Goebbels]:. . . general public enlightenment on the domestic scene, the Academy of Politics, setting up and celebrating national holidays and state ceremonies. . . the press, the radio, the German Library in Leipzig, art, music, including philharmonic orchestras, theater, cinema. . .
- **Law Concerning the Formation of New Parties, July 14, 1933.** “The National Socialist German Workers’ Party is the only political party in Germany. Anyone who seeks to maintain the organization of another political party or to organize a new political party is to be punished by confinement in a jail.”

- **Law for the Protection of Hereditary Health, July 14, 1933.** “Anyone who suffers from an inheritable disease may be sterilized surgically if, in the judgment of medical science, it could be expected that his descendents will suffer from serious inherited mental or physical defects. . . Sterilization may also be recommended by 1) the official physician, 2) the official in charge of a hospital, sanitarium, or prison. . . The proceedings of the Health Inheritance Courts are secret.”
- **Law to Promote National Labor, January 20, 1934.** “A labor trustee will be appointed for every large industrial area. It will be the duty of this officer to promote the maintenance of industrial peace. . . Each member of a working community is responsible for the conscientious performance of the duties entailed by his position in that community. His conduct must be such as to deserve the consideration attached to his position, and in particular he must be constantly mindful of his duty to devote his energies wholeheartedly to the service of the undertaking and to subordinate himself to the general good.”
- **Law for the Reorganization of the Reich, January 30, 1934.** “The popular assemblies of the individual states are hereby abolished. The sovereign rights of individual states are hereby transferred to the Reich. The governments of the individual states are to be subordinate to the Reich government. . . The Reich government may draw up new constitutional laws.”
- **Armed Forces Oath of Personal Loyalty, August 2, 1934.** “I swear before God this holy oath: that I shall give absolute obedience to the Fuehrer of the German Reich and people, Adolf Hitler, the Supreme Commander of the Wehrmacht [army], and as a courageous soldier will be ready at all times to lay down my life for this oath.”
- **Law Regarding Labor Service, June 26, 1935.** “All young Germans of both sexes are obligated to serve their country in the Reich Labor Service. It is the purpose of the Reich Labor Service to educate German youth in the spirit of National Socialism so that they may obtain a true national community sentiment, a free conception of labor, and above all, a due respect for manual work.”
- **Nuremberg Laws on Citizenship and Race, September 15, 1935.** “A citizen of the Reich may be only one who is of German or kindred blood, and who, through his behavior, shows that he is both desirous and personally fit to serve loyally the German people and the Reich. . . Only a citizen of the Reich may enjoy full political rights in consonance with the provisions of the laws.”
- **Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor, September 15, 1935.** “Any marriages between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are herewith forbidden. . . Extramarital relations between Jews and citizens of German or kindred blood are herewith forbidden. . . Jews are forbidden to employ as servants in their households female subjects of German or kindred blood who are under the age of forty-five years. Jews are forbidden from displaying the Reich and the national flag and from showing the national colors.”
- **Supplementary Decree on Citizenship, November 14, 1935.** “A Jew cannot be a citizen of the Reich. He cannot exercise the right to vote; he cannot occupy public office. Jewish officials [government employees] will be retired as of December 31, 1935. . . A Jew is an individual who is descended from at least three grandparents who were racially full Jews. . . A Jew is also an individual who is descended from two full Jewish grandparents if. . . [four specific conditions are met].”

Recommended Holocaust Web Sites Assembled by Michael Sangirardi and Daniel Gross

Anne Frank Center (www.annefrank.com). Organized around the life and diary of Anne Frank.

Anne Frank House (www.annefrank.nl). A website tied to the Anne Frank House Museum in Amsterdam. Includes activities that involve students in exploring the broader implications of the Holocaust and human rights.

Anti-Defamation League (www.adl.org/7th_heaven/7th_chrono_rev.html). Chronological look at the years 1933 through 1945 and the major events during World War II. Includes a look at the life of children during the Holocaust. Lists Nazi Anti-Jewish Laws and contains a useful glossary.

Beyond the Pale: The History of Jews in Russia (www.friends-partners.org/partners/beyond-the-pale/english/guide-exp.html). Survey of the Jewish experience in Eastern Europe from the Middle Ages on. Provides statistics on the number of people killed around Europe. Detailed maps and contemporary cartoons. First hand accounts of people who worked for and against the Jews.

Father Ryan High School, Nashville Tennessee: (fatherryan.org/Holocaust). Created by students in a Genocide studies course at Father Ryan High School. Easy to navigate with tons of information dealing with the Holocaust. Students research and reports included.

History Place- The Holocaust (www.historyplace.com). The World War 2 section includes events that led to Adolf Hitler's coming to power. Chronology describes what happened on a particular date.

Holocaust - Glossary of Terms (www.mtsu.edu/~baustin/glossary.html). Quick and easy reference with introduction to Holocaust facts and terms. Useful supplemental source. Developed by a professor at Middle Tennessee State University.

Holocaust History Project (www.Holocaust-history.org). The Holocaust History Project is an archive of documents, photographs, recordings, and essays including direct refutation of Holocaust-denial. A resource for teachers and advanced students. Essays present different points of view.

Holocaust Pictures Exhibition (www.fmv.ulg.ac.be/schmitz/Holocaust.html). Pictures on this site show the true horror of the Holocaust. Includes mass graves and medical experiments on human subjects.

Holocaust Names (www.Holocaustnames.com). Dedicated to putting faces and names to people killed during the Holocaust. Visitors can post information about themselves and family members. Links to other Holocaust related sites.

Jewish Network (shamash.org). Graphic Holocaust photographs accompanied by a brief description. May not be suited for younger students.

Photographs of the Holocaust (history1900s.about.com/library/Holocaust/blpictures.htm). This site contains photographs with short descriptive statements. Pictures show the faces of the Holocaust victims and victimizers. Part of the History Net.

Remember.org (www.remember.org). First hand accounts of life in concentration camps and under the Nazi regime. Includes art, photos, and poems. Numerous links to other Holocaust related web sites and shop where you can purchase Holocaust books. Includes student work.

Southern Institute for Education and Research (www.tulane.edu/~so-inst/dl.htm). Tulane University site explores the history of anti-semitism in Europe leading up to the Holocaust. Provides a guide and lesson ideas for teachers who want to use Schindler's List as an instructional resource. Designed for teachers, but useful for anyone who want to learn about the Holocaust.

Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust (fcit.coedu.usf.edu/Holocaust). An overview of the people and events of the Holocaust through photographs, documents, art, music, movies, and literature This site shows how Jewish children viewed and were viewed during the Holocaust. Time line allows teachers to show events that led to the Holocaust. Students can track the experience of a Jewish family or individual. Produced by the Florida Center for Instructional Technology, College of Education, University of South Florida.

Teaching the Holocaust Through Stamps (web.macam98.ac.il/~ochayo/einvertnew.htm). This site allows young learners to compare images of the Holocaust that have appeared on postage stamps. Eliminates the experience of sorting through terrifying pictures.

United States Holocaust Museum (www.ushmm.org). Permanent exhibit shows conditions in the concentration camps. Includes drawings by captive artists who were opponents of the Nazis, poems, songs, and stories. Special on-line exhibits including the music of the Holocaust, voyage of the St. Louis, Kristalnacht and the 1936 Berlin Olympic games.

Voice/Vision: Holocaust Survivor Oral Histories (Holocaust.umd.umich.edu). Includes archive of interviews by Dr. Sid Bolkosky with over 150 Holocaust survivors. Survivors talk about their lives before, during and after the war. People explain how they dealt with the impact of the Holocaust and the way it continues to affect their lives. Sponsored by University of Michigan-Dearborn

Voices of the Holocaust (voices.iit.edu/maps.html). First hand accounts by concentration camps survivors and their relatives. Often upsetting. Students can compare different interviews. Includes maps showing locations of concentration camps. Maintained by the Illinois Institute of Technology.