



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1980 Volume VI: The Present as History

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## **The World War II Holocaust**

Curriculum Unit 80.06.01  
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During the past few years there has been a greater public awareness of the Holocaust. This interest is due in part to a continuous publishing effort which has produced a literature of the Holocaust, historical, autobiographical, and fictional. But the most powerful stimuli to public awareness have been the electronic media: news reports detailing the hunt for Nazi war criminals or, for example, the television drama, "Holocaust," which stirred great controversy when shown in West Germany. Here in New Haven, Connecticut, the first American monument was erected to the memory of the victims of the Holocaust. Only recently, special days of remembrance were set aside during which survivors of the concentration camps recounted their experiences before various audiences. At this moment, an oral history project is being carried out to preserve the memories of these survivors.

### ***Objectives***

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Why study about the Holocaust today? The importance of teaching the Holocaust is to counter the propaganda by some individuals (including the American Nazi Party) who claim that the Holocaust never happened. If teachers ignore the Holocaust, many students will believe such propaganda. Today, unfortunately, the world has not gotten rid of hatred. We still find people who can't stand others that are different. There still exists intolerance based on race, nationality, or religion.

The objectives of this unit are:

1. To learn about past relations between Jews and Christians in Europe.
2. To show how a dictatorial government became all-powerful enabling it to carry out the extermination of Jews all over Europe.
3. To show how the German government used military, civil, and professional cadres to implement its policy of extermination of Jews.
4. To indicate how laws were passed by the Reichstag (The German National Legislature) to isolate the Jews from the rest of the German population.
5. To point out how military orders passed down to the lower ranks made it "proper" and 'just' to exterminate the Jews.

6. To dispel the misconceptions students might hold about the Holocaust and its perpetrators.
7. To indicate how some Jews were able to survive the Holocaust.
8. To foster tolerance among students.

Students might learn the following moral lessons through the study of the Holocaust:

1. Prejudice is harmful to those that practice it and to whom it is directed.
2. To blame others for your own problems does not solve them.
3. To care about others in need of help is to do something for them.

I would ask teachers to set aside some time during the school year to confront the students with the Holocaust experience. This unit on the Holocaust could be incorporated as part of a study of World War II in the U. S. History or World History course, or as part of a general unit on prejudice. One could devote a few days to a week on this unit.

### ***Prejudice***

Throughout Europe over the many centuries there was widespread the death of Christ according to the Bible. There were three basic anti-Jewish policies:

- Conversion
- Expulsion
- Annihilation

When Constantine the Great made Christianity the state religion of the Roman Empire, the Jews refused to convert to Christianity. The Crusaders offered to the Jews the choice of baptism or death. As a result of their refusal, many died. In Europe, in the year 1215 Jews were required to wear a badge on their clothing to show that they were Jews. The Jews were blamed for everything that went wrong. The hatred of Jews was such that in 1290 they were expelled from England, in 1306 from France, and in 1492 from Spain. Jews ended up in

Turkey (The Ottoman Empire), the Balkans, Palestine, northern Italy and Holland, while the Jews of Germany fled to Eastern Europe. The Poles allowed them to become traders and money lenders. They were made to live in ghettos. During the 1500's Martin Luther wanted them to become Protestants, and again they refused. He wanted to burn their synagogues, seize their books, and expel them from all German lands. He called them poisoners, ritual murderers, usurers, parasites and devils. After Napoleon's time, Jews were redesignated outsiders in Germany. Anti-Semitic books were published in Germany and Austria by the thousands. In the last century, the German, Wilhelm Marr, claimed that the Semites had an inborn character that made them a slave race, while the Germans were the Master race. Hitler drew upon this tradition in fanning hatred toward the Jews. Before and during Hitler's time, some Jews converted to the Protestant religion, whereby the churches increased their membership. Other Jews, on their own, abandoned their Jewish faith and became assimilated into the German society, imbued with German culture. They thought of themselves as Germans who happened to be Jews.

### ***Scapegoating***

Hitler, with many other Germans, blamed the democrats, the radicals, the communists, the liberals, and the Jews for Germany losing the war in 1918. The popular term was: "The stab in the back". Those who signed the surrender papers and the Versailles Treaty and set up the Weimar Republic were traitors, according to "good" Germans. The German Prime Minister, Rathenau, was a Jew an object of hatred for the Nazis.

### ***The Path Toward The Destruction of the Jews***

What anti-Jewish acts came about once Hitler gained power, after 1933? The Reichstag (German National Legislature) passed the Nuremberg Laws which defined Jews as full Jews and mixed-blood Jews, forbidding marriage between Jews and Aryans (Germans). In 1938 passports for German Jews were marked with the letter "J", in order to control their movements. The government organized attacks against Jewish businesses on November 7, 1938, later known as "The Night of Broken Glass" (Kristallnacht). Later 26,000 Jews were arrested and 1,000 died in concentration camps in Germany. Jewish children were thrown out of German schools. Organization (compulsory expropriation) of Jewish businesses was carried out in Germany.

Is it true that Hitler and the top Nazis are to be blamed for the Holocaust? The idea that only Hitler and a few military officers were responsible for the destruction of the Jews and many other European nationalities is false. Every sector of the German society was involved in the destruction process of the Jews:

- The lawmakers defined who was a Jew
- The bureaucrats stripped Jews of their personal property and citizenship rights
- The churches (religious authorities) gave evidence or lack of evidence of Aryan descent of the Jews
- The Post Office system carried messages of definition, expropriation, denaturalization, and deportation notices regarding the Jews
- The German State Railroad system transported the Jews to the various camps
- The German industrial companies built the crematorium ovens for the extermination camps
- The German chemical plants produced the poison pellets that killed the Jews
- The German army conquered territories where extermination camps were set up.

Both the early and later atrocities were committed by many Germans, as well as by their allies and collaborators in German occupied lands. Special *Einsatzgruppen* (Security Police and Security Service) were composed of fanatical Nazis who came from different social classes of Germans. Professors and doctors from different German universities were used as consultants and medical researchers in setting up the extermination camps. Collaborators in Slovakia, Norway, France and elsewhere carried out programs against the Jews. At the beginning of the occupation of an enemy country, the Germans took special care not to appear involved in any way with these early programs in order to implicate the indigenous population.

Were there any Germans in authority who tried to keep the Jews alive? The answer is yes, there were some. However, the military leaders were subordinate to the political authority of the SS commander Himmler. As an example, a lesser known fact is that in September of 1942 the German General Kurt Freiherr von Gienanth, who was in charge of occupied Poland, made a suggestion to his superior, General Jodl, to use the Jews for essential war production work. When Himmler heard about this suggestion, General von Gienanth was removed from his position. This incident shows that Himmler had greater political power than the regular German army leadership. All political power came from the Fuehrer, and Himmler was close to Hitler in the Nazi party. Himmler, on Hitler's order, wanted to proceed with the destruction of the European Jewry.

It is important to recall that the Holocaust did not occur at once but was a process that took more than a decade. The students generally have no idea how the Nazis ran Germany? It was a dictatorship that allowed no opposition. One way the Nazis controlled their own people in Germany was to make everyone carry identification papers at all times.

Why didn't the Jews flee from Germany? Many Jews did not realize the dangerous situation they were in during the 1930's. Many Jews refused to believe that they were in danger. Some that felt they were in danger managed to leave Germany, but more were unable to do so because other countries would not accept them, including the U. S. The British controlled Palestine before World War II and limited the number of Jewish immigrants there. Even though the American Jews contributed some funds for resettlement of Jews in Palestine, these were not sufficient to cover all the needs of all the refugees.

Why were the concentration camps set up first in Germany in the 1930's? They were set up to remove the Jews from the general German populace. The camps made it easier for the new owners of the confiscated Jewish properties to preserve their ownership with a minimum of guilt. The Jewish victims were absent. Since Jews were accused as possible trouble-makers and saboteurs, removing them to the camps eliminated that danger. By setting up the camps the Germans could localize all possible opposition. Suspecting the existence of the concentration camps Jews were induced to obey the Nazis.

How could the German Nazis be so successful in ensnaring millions of Jews? Whenever the army (the Wehrmacht) seized another country, its first act was to issue new identification papers for each individual to control their movements. In the beginning of the German occupation the Jews were able to move throughout the city (e.g. Warsaw, Poland), but only on the condition of wearing the yellow Star of David (symbol of Judaism) on the front and back of their clothing. The Jews were unable to leave the city because the local police and sometimes German soldiers controlled all the roads leading out of the city. Later, they were not given travel permits.

The Germans used native anti-Jewish collaborators and *Volksdeutscher* (German people) settlers in occupied territories to track down the Jews. Once located, Jews were controlled through the JudenrŠte (Jewish councils). These councils were required to draw up long lists of all the Jews living in their district. The council was made responsible for correctly (100%) carrying out the German orders. Failure to carry out orders resulted in

punishment of death for all council members.

### ***The Jewish Ghetto***

Another way the Germans controlled the Jewish population of a occupied territory was to send them all into the ghetto. The ghettos were set up in major cities in occupied countries (e.g. Warsaw, Poland). The Jews came from smaller towns (shtetl) and farmlands into the urban ghetto. The ghetto was separated from the rest of the city by fences of barbed wire or walls.

Living in the ghetto caused tremendous hardships in housing, in obtaining food supplies and getting health care. Many Jews died from starvation. Because of overcrowding epidemic diseases raged such as typhoid and tuberculosis, resulting in many deaths. Infant mortality rates rose. Any Jew attempting to leave the ghetto was shot. These losses, by the thousands, further reduced the Jewish population. The Jews received ration books like everybody else in the occupied cities, but they were not always sold the food items to which they were entitled. This also happened to the non-Jewish population in the rest of the city, but it occurred more frequently among the ghetto dwellers. As conditions in the ghetto worsened the people began exchanging their valuables for food. As the scarcity of food became more pronounced they began to give away their clothing in exchange for food. To survive, the Jews resorted to smuggling food into the ghetto through the black market.

Many Jews also died in transit from the ghetto to the concentration camps, because they were packed tightly in railroad cattle box cars. There was no provision for toilets, drinking water, or food. Lack of ventilation caused many to faint or suffocate. The trip could last two to three days or more, depending upon which camp they were being taken to. When a train stopped, no one was allowed to get off until they reached their destination. Upon arrival the dead were removed. On some trips, quicklime was thrown on the floor which caused great pain and discomfort to their feet.

### ***The Camps***

There were three types of camps:

- concentration camps
- labor camps
- death or extermination camps

Sometimes a single camp could be any combination of the three types. (e.g. Labor and death camp—Auschwitz, Poland)

When Jews arrived at the camp they were ordered out of the railroad cars and told to march over to a German officer. An officer would decide which persons went right and which went left of him. The weaker people were sent to the right and went straight to the gas chamber. The healthier ones were sent to the left to the barracks to become laborers. Sometimes the officer asked individuals what age they were and what kind of work they did. Giving the right an answer to the officer saved some lives for a while. They were told to get rid of their clothes, take a bath, and then were sent to have their hair cut off. They were then given camp

uniforms. The men were separated from the women. Some children remained with the mother or the father. There was no rule about children.

The concentration camps were set up by the Nazis to keep people in “protective custody”. The prisoners in the concentration camps were:

- political prisoners (from opposition parties, opposition clergymen, Jehovah Witnesses, and purged Nazis)
- habitual offenders and sex offenders
- Jews and Gypsies (both considered of a inferior race)

The Gestapo (Secret State Police) could send anyone to the camps, guilty or not guilty, with or without a court trial.

By 1933 fifty concentration camps were set up in Germany. The most infamous ones were Dachau near Munich, and Buchenwald near Weimar.

The SS (Security Service) under Himmler took over the concentration camps by 1934.

The Labor camps were set up with factories built nearby for war production. The laborers worked seven days a week all year. They were sent to the factories to work for no pay. In some cases, laborers were hired out for 40¢ a day, which the camp authorities kept.

What was life like in the labor camps? What was a typical day like? The camp inmates were awakened at pre-dawn hours. Upon waking up, the prisoners searched for lice on their bodies and in their clothing. They used the toilet facilities (a hole in the ground), and then reported for roll call outside (sun, rain, or snow). If they tried to steal potatoes they were shot. In another camp if they tried to steal potato peelings they were given 25 lashes. For breakfast they were given a bowl of some warmed-up liquid. It was not coffee. After roll call they had to march two to eight miles to their work places. Work intended for 20 people was carried out by ten. In another factory they worked with chemicals and acid without gas masks. Within a few weeks their lungs collapsed and their feet deteriorated. At another work site, sacks of cement of over 110-lbs. had to be carried at a running pace. In some labor camps new arrivals lost 50lbs. in a few months. If they were unable to work they were sent to the gas chamber. Some died while working. Some were shot while working. Some lost their limbs to the machines because of fatigue. No one could help the collapsed workers, for they would be beaten also. Frequent roll calls were made at the work sites. At one camp, work started at 6 a.m. and ended at 7 p.m. In another camp, one group of prisoners arrived on Christmas Eve and had to work through the night until 3:00 in the morning, after an arduous trip to the camp. Some workers committed suicide.

The housing conditions at the camps were deplorable. Some barracks had no roofs and the rain and snow came in. Two or three inmates were assigned to one sack of straw for sleeping. In another camp, three men were assigned to a bunk measuring 18 inches high, 5 ft. wide, with bunks above and below. If anybody could not get to the latrine during the night the filth landed on the inmates sleeping below. One camp had only one latrine for 32,000 women, and they were only permitted to use it during certain hours of the day. There was

no way to clean oneself totally in the morning. These conditions brought about diseases such as dysentery, typhoid, fevers, and tuberculosis. Many inmates watched family members and friends succumb to these terrible conditions causing them great grief. For some inmates nights were sleepless due to pain, fright, and anxiety. Many were found dead in their bunks. For the living, the dawn brought the nightmare back to life.

Due to the inmates' filthy and ragged appearance it became psychologically easier for the Germans to shoot them since they appeared as subhumans. With conditions as they were, some inmates welcomed death as a reprieve. If the inmates tried to escape from the camp roll calls were carried out at any time day or night. Inmates caught escaping were shot. Corpses were left hanging on the barbed wire as a reminder to those who might try to escape.

Medical experiments were carried out on many concentration and extermination camp inmates throughout the war years. Most did not survive the experiments. New patients were brought into the camp 'hospital' to continue the medical research.

The extermination camps became "The Final Solution of the Jewish Problem" for the Nazis. The death camps were put into operation once the gassing chambers were completed on July 22, 1942. (e.g. Treblinka in occupied Poland) The gassing chambers were made to resemble shower (bath) facilities, with cold and hot water faucets. The inmates were fooled into thinking that they were going to take a shower after the long train trip. Even when they were told by some camp inmate workers that they were going to die some couldn't believe it. After they were gassed, the bodies were burned in huge ovens (crematoriums). Some death camp inmates were kept alive for a while to do such ghastly chores as removing the gassed bodies and cremating them. These inmate helpers were eventually gassed and replaced by new teams. Later in the war, bodies of earlier mass executions were exhumed and also burned in order to leave no evidence of Nazi crimes.

### ***The Holocaust—Away From The Camps***

Were the extermination camps the only place that Jews were eliminated? No. The Security Police followed the regular army as a city was being conquered. Himmler, the German Reich (State) Commander, gave them orders to wipe out the Jewish population in each conquered city. The Jews were led out of the city to an open trench that the Russians had dug for anti-tank purposes. The Jews were then ordered to remove all their clothing and to line up along the edge of the open trench, whereupon they were mowed down by machine gun fire.

Whenever a German soldier was attacked somewhere in an occupied territory Jewish and non-Jewish hostages were rounded up by the Germans. For every German that was wounded, fifty hostages were shot. For every German that was killed one hundred hostages were executed in retaliation.

### ***Resistance and Non-resistance***

Students might wonder why more Jews did not fight back. How could a minority of Jews fight back when the majority of the conquered nations suffered defeat at the hands of the German army? The defeated soldiers and officers were kept in prisoner-of-war camps, so that there was no trained leadership group available to organize resistance to the Germans. If the general population (Poles, Serbs, Slovenes, etc.) had been unable to resist the power of the Germans, how could the Jews succeed, not knowing that this time they were destined for collective destruction. Jews remembered that through many generations in the past they had suffered similar persecutions and survived.

After the Germans conquered Poland and great parts of Russia and the Ukraine they let it be known that many

of the conquered nations would be resettled elsewhere in the East. When Jews heard that they were also going to be resettled in the East, they at first believed it. The *JuderŠte* (Jewish Councils) were given the task of drawing up lists of families that were to be resettled. No one knew for sure what was to happen, and yet they had to obey the orders. There was general knowledge of concentration camps, labor camps, and prisoner-of-war camps. However, as escapees came out of the concentration camps they brought news to the ghetto Jews about mass killings. News and rumors spread.

When the Germans attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941, they entered the city of Vilna in Lithuania reducing the Jewish population of the city from 60,000 to 12,000. The survivors of this massacre organized themselves for self-defense.

Similarly, other self-defense organizations were set up in the Warsaw ghetto. The Jewish Combat Organization (ZOB) extended its influence through a network of couriers throughout Poland. Zionist youth groups were set up in Cracow, Bialystok, Bedzin, and Czestochowa. They carried out sabotage and diversionary actions against the Germans. Their first military action in Warsaw against resettlement of the Jews occurred in January 1943. However, the famous Warsaw Uprising of the Jews started on April 19, 1943. The fighting was so ferocious that the Germans were repulsed. The only way the Germans could defeat the Jews was by demolishing buildings, block by block, which they did systematically, thereby obliterating the Jewish Quarter (ghetto).

In responding to the students' questions about resistance, the teacher has an opportunity to demonstrate the dimensions of the threat faced by the inmates of the German camps. For Jews were not the only group to be destroyed. Among the five-million non-Jews who lost their lives in the camps were: Russians, Ukrainians, Little Russians, Czechs, Slovenes, Poles, Serbs, Luthenians (from Eastern and Southern Europe), French, Belgians, Dutch and Italians (from Western Europe). Many people do not realize that 100,000 Gypsies were also wiped out. The Germans found the Gypsies a difficult element to control because of their nomadic ways.

There was some resistance by Jews in the camps. One instance was when on October 14, 1943, 600 Jews killed all the German guards and Ukrainian wardens in the death camp of Sobibor (in Poland) and destroyed most of the camp. However, less than 400 managed to escape alive. Another uprising occurred at the Treblinka death camp where the gas chambers were destroyed. This time, only a small number of Jews escaped. Another example of resistance was when the Jews fought for more than a month against the Germans and Ukrainians in the city of Bialystok (in Eastern occupied Poland). The Germans had to use armored tanks to crush the rebellion.

### **Survival**

In addition to the escapees from the various camps there were those who survived *in* the camps by getting jobs where their skills were needed. The important thing for them was to overcome the initial shock of the horror they witnessed and felt upon arrival. The next step was to take care of oneself and appear somewhat cleaner than the others around them. Some used the morning breakfast liquid to clean themselves. These individuals were psychologically and physically stronger. There was also the element of luck and chance of not being eliminated. Some inmates helped others to survive by:

- supporting a fellow inmate about to collapse during a march;
- giving a bit of food (a boiled potato) to a fellow inmate;
- getting a job for a friend;
- advising a fellow inmate to lie to the German camp officials in order to stay alive.



Fortunately for some they were still alive when liberation came.

The story of the Holocaust also has an inspirational side, i.e. that man can help others. There were Poles, Danes, Russians, Dutch, Finns, and others in Europe who saved many Jews by changing their records, hiding them, feeding them, or transferring them to other countries at great risk to themselves. Those caught aiding the Jews perished also. However, only about a third of the European Jews saw the day of liberation.

### ***The Perpetrators—The Lower Echelon***

The students might ask what kind of a German would participate in carrying out such orders (e.g. torture, execution). The soldiers in the regular German army (Wehrmacht) were imbued with the idea of strict obedience and unquestioned loyalty. The SS troops were elite German troops that could be relied upon to carry out all orders because of their political adherence to Nazi ideals. Only after a careful selection (personal appearance) and thorough testing of their political beliefs could they join the SS units. The special units that were to round up and execute the Jews were called Einsatzgruppen (Security groups). These units consisted of about 3,000 officers and men. As the years of conquest followed mistreatment of many different subjugated nations appeared acceptable to them (e.g. the village Lidice in Bohemia, Czechoslovakia was wiped out). To those carrying out orders the liquidation process of the Jews seemed routine. They had liquidated countless others already. In brutalizing others, they had brutalized their own sensibilities. At some point even the executioners felt the mental pressure in carrying out such orders. The officers in charge realized that their men needed a break (furlough) from such work. If the soldiers did not obey orders, they could be executed.

## ***Conclusion***

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The task of this unit is to impart knowledge about the Holocaust to the students and to awaken them to the danger of fanatical prejudice.

What does the Holocaust mean to both Jews and non-Jews today? To those who care about their fellow men the Holocaust is the most horrible and important event in this century. Speaking of the Holocaust as a human issue is to talk about a moral issue.

Will history repeat itself? If anything resembling the Holocaust were to happen again, the knowledge about the Holocaust would help students make the right decision. The choice would be: to support evil or to resist it. One hopes they will make the right choice.

The enormity of the crime of the Holocaust might be too difficult for the students to comprehend. Nearly six million Jews lost their lives in the Holocaust two out of every three Jews in Europe. Perishing along with them were another five million European civilians. Eleven million in all. This total does not include the military casualties on both sides of the conflict.

We must learn never to forget that prejudice can bring about the destruction of innocent people. Intolerance of others, who seem different from us, can only bring about hatred.

We as teachers must attempt to provide a feeling for tolerating differences of race, religion and nationalities among our fellow men. Above all, we must show respect for each other. The teacher must reinforce the values the parents and religious leaders instill in the children.

## ***SAMPLE LESSONS***

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### ***First Lesson : World War II Map***

*Activities: (Geography Lesson)*

The students have two maps of Europe in their textbook “American History” (Fifth Edition) by Jack Abramowitz. The first map they should look over is on page 632 entitled “Europe before World War II 1939”. The second map that the students should study and compare with the first map is on page 650 entitled “Europe After World War II 1949”.

It is suggested that the teacher make copies of the following map in this unit and to hand them out to the students at the beginning of the lesson.

The students should first study the map of Europe in 1939 in their textbook. The teacher should direct them to fill in the following items on their blank map:

*Bodies of Water:*

- Mediterranean Sea
- Atlantic Ocean
- Black Sea
- Baltic Sea
- North Sea
- Caspian Sea
- Adriatic Sea

*-Western European Countries:*

- England
- Denmark
- occupied France
- Vichy France
- Italy
- Belgium
- Holland

-Germany

*Central and Eastern Europe:*

-indicate where Poland was

-Slovakia

-Hungary

-Rumania

-Bulgaria

-U.S.S.R.

parts of:

-Russia

-White Russia

-Ukraine

-Transnistria (territory added to Rumania on the Black Sea)

-Serbia

-Croatia

-Greece

*Cities: (underline the following)*

- London
- Paris
- Vichy
- Rome
- Berlin
- Warsaw
- Leningrad
- Moscow
- Vilna
- Budapest
- Bucharest

*Middle East :*

- Palestine

The teacher may select, add or omit items from the above list.

*(figure available in print form)*

### **Second Lesson: Learning concepts**

Since this is a unit that falls within the scope of the study of World War II, the following concepts would be helpful to the student to understand this topic.

1. Choose words that would cover the ideological and historical background of the Nazi Era.

Example:

- |                         |                                   |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| (a) definition of words | -Volksdeutscher (German settlers) |
| -Nazi                   | -nationalist                      |
| -Nazism                 | -nationalism                      |
| -Master Race            | -patriotism                       |

-subhumans	-superiority (attitude)
-The Big Lie	-propaganda
-ethnic minorities	-Anschluss (annexation)
-Chancellor	-ghetto
-Prime Minister or Premier	-quisling
-collaborator	-Lebensraum (living space)
-neutrality	-dictator
-The Fuehrer (The Leader)	-Sieg Heil!
-Reichstag (Legislature)	-Kristallnacht (Night of the Broken Glass)
-Judenrat (Jewish Council)	
-concentration camp	-detention camp
-extermination camp	-crematorium
-pogrom	-shtetl (a small Jewish town)
-deportation	-resettlement
-Mischling (mixed Jew)	-hostage
-Holocaust	-The Final Solution
-appeasement	-Wehrmacht (German army)
-SS Troops	-Einsatzgruppen (Security Police)
-Jewish Pale	-anti-Semite
-Semite	-Aryan
-Arganization	-prejudice
-intolerance	-identification
-immigrants	-emigrant
-refugee	-escapee
-Star of David	-cooperation
-laborers	-kapo (trustee in a camp)
-persecution	-survivor
-massacre	-uprising
-resistance	-partisan (Guerrilla fighter)

The teacher may select, from the above list of words, items for a spelling or a definition test.

2. Homework assignment: Students can look up the following individuals and write short biographies of each.

(b) Persons to know:

- Adolf Hitler
- Reinhard Heydrich
- Heinrich Himmler
- Adolf Eichmann
- Menahem Begin
- Elie Wiesel
- Simon Wiesenthal
- Anne Frank

### **Third Lesson : Class discussion**

Students might want to know why there wasn't more Jewish resistance to Germany's "Final Solution". The teacher might ask the students to put themselves in the place of Jews living in ghettos patrolled by an army that had conquered half of Europe and seemed on the brink of defeating Russia.

The following are questions the teacher could ask the students to stimulate class discussion:

1. How would you react if you saw the enemy soldiers appear suddenly on your street? What would you do?
2. What would you do if your neighborhood was surrounded by the enemy troops blocking your way out?
3. What would you do if soldiers with rifles and sub-machine guns knocked on your door ordering you to come out?
4. Ask the students to name some of the concentration camps that they have heard of. Some possible answers are: in Germany: Dachau, Buchenwald, Ravensbruck, Mauthausen, Theresienstadt, Bergen-Belsen.  
The teacher could point out the location of these camps, mentioned above, on the classroom map. Example: Dachau near Munich, Germany; or Sachsenhausen near Berlin, Germany.
5. The teacher could ask the students to name some of the extermination camps that they have heard of. Some possible answers are: in occupied Poland: Treblinka, Chelmno, Auschwitz, Maidanek, Sobibor, Belzec. The teacher could again point out the location of these camps, mentioned above, on the classroom map. Example: Auschwitz, west of Cracow, Poland; or Treblinka, northeast of Warsaw, Poland.
6. If you were to be deported, what items would you take with you? How would you feel if you were forbidden from taking them?
7. If you were to resist deportation, how would you go about it?
8. If you were a ghetto dweller, how would you try to escape?
9. Can you imagine what life was like in the ghettos?
10. Would you have helped the Jews in such dangerous times?
11. Would you have hidden the Jews in your house?
12. Would you smuggle food and medicine into the ghetto?
13. How would you try to survive if you were in a concentration camp where you are put to work long hours?
14. How would you have organized resistance against the Germans in the camps?
15. Would you, at any time, refuse to help the Jews? Why?
16. Having studied about the Holocaust, do you think the Jews could have saved themselves from mass destruction? How? (if answer is yes)

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Feron, James: *At The Wall in Warsaw , 30 years later* . Article, New York Times Magazine, April 15, 1973.

The story of a Warsaw survivor returning to the Jewish ghetto 30 years later, meeting other survivors and seeing how they live today.

Green, Gerald. *Holocaust . A Novel of Survival and Triumph* . Bantam Book, paperback. 1978.

The novel from which the TV film was adapted.

Halperin, Irving. *Messengers From The Dead . Literature of the Holocaust* . Philadelphia: The Westminster Press. 1970.

Hilberg, Raul, (ed.). *Documents of Destruction — Germany and Jewry 1933-1945* . Chicago: Quadrangle Books. 1971.

An anthology with commentaries on selected original documents. The selection gives a clear presentation of the historical record of the Holocaust.

Lester, Elenore and Werbell, Frederick E. *The Lost Hero of the Holocaust* . Article, New York Times Magazine, March 30, 1980.

The Search for Sweden's Raoul Wallenberg, a story of a diplomat who saved Hungarian Jews, during World War II.

Meltzer, Milton. *Never To Forget . The Jews of the Holocaust* . New York: Harper & Row, Publishers. 1976.

An easy-to-read book.

Mosse, George L. *Toward the Final Solution — A History of European Racism* . New York: Howard Fertig. 1978.

Reck-Malleczewen, Friedrich Percyval. *Diary of a Man in Despair* . London: The MacMillan Company. 1970.

Personal reflections of a German anti-Nazi, who was arrested and liquidated.

Reith, Adolf. *Monument to the Victims of Tyranny* . New York: Frederick A. Praeger, Publishers. 1969.

Photographs of camp sites and monuments from all over Europe.

Stroop, Juergen. *The Stroop Report . The Jewish Quarter of Warsaw Is No More !* New York: Pantheon Books. 1979.

The German Commander's report to Himmler on his task of destroying the Jewish ghetto. Facsimile reproduction and English translation. Includes daily reports and a personal photographic report.

Wiesel, Elie et al. *Dimensions of The Holocaust* . Lectures. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University. 1977.

## **READING LIST FOR STUDENTS**

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Arad, Dr. Yitzhak. *The Partisan . From the Valley of Death to Mount Zion* . New York: Holocaust Library. 1979.

Available in paperback. Personal experiences of a young Jewish survivor.

Dribben, Judith Strick. *A Girl Called Judith Strick* . New York: Cowles Book Company, Inc. 1970.

Memoirs, in the form of a novel, recalling the years 1941-1954 in the life of a Jewish girl from Pinsk.

Frank, Anne. *The Diary of Anne Frank* . New York. Pocket Books, 1971. paperback.

The personal account of a young girl hiding from the Germans. She was caught and liquidated.

Jacobs, William Jay. *Hitler* . Beverly Hills, California: Benziger. A Div. of Benziger Bruce & Glencoe, Inc. 1976. paperback. 96 pgs.

An easy-to-read biography of Hitler. The chapter entitled "The Inferno" pages 71-81 describes the Holocaust. It contains many photographs.



Leitner, Isabella. *Fragments of Isabella — A Memoir of Auschwitz* . Dell Book paperback. 1980.

An easy-to-read, passionate retelling of experiences and survival in the camp.

Meed, Vladka. *On Both Sides of The Wall* . *Memoirs from the Warsaw Ghetto*. New York: Holocaust Library. 1979.

Available in paperback. A story of a 17-year old Jewish girl who worked as an underground courier and helped Jews escape from the ghetto, as well as inmates from the labor camps. A survivor.

Bar Oni, Bryna. *The Vapor* . Chicago, Illinois: Visual Impact, Inc. 1976.

A personal story of a young girl (Jewish) who survived the Russian and German occupation by joining the Russian partisans.

Rabinsky, Leatrice and Mann, Gertrude. *Journey of Conscience* . *Young People Respond to the Holocaust* . Cleveland, New York: William Collins Publisher, Inc. 1979.

American students visit the sites of camps in Germany and Poland; it shows their thinking before and during the trip; it records their reactions and change of viewpoint about the Holocaust.

Wiesel, Elie. *A Jew Today* . New York: Random House. 1978.

A collection of short pieces of reminiscences, interviews, short articles, about the Holocaust, and Jewish contemporary problems, and imaginative pieces of literature.

Korman, Gerd. ed. *Hunter and Hunted* . *Human History of the Holocaust* . New York: The Viking Press. 1973.

Original testimonies of survivors and non-survivors, as well as American views, pro and con, about admitting refugees to U.S. *For advanced students* .

## **MATERIALS FOR CLASSROOM USE**

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1. *Human Rights and the Holocaust* by Lillian Dubsky. Freeport, New York: Educational Activities, Inc. 1978 copyright Activity Records, Inc. AKC #322. (Audio-visual aid)

Components of the unit consist of two cassettes, six transparencies which illustrate major points in the cassette narrations, four true stories printed in one book, and the teacher's guide. The above audio-visual aid is located at Wilbur Cross High School, New Haven, CT., History Dept.

2. Postage-size photographs depicting scenes from the Holocaust.

Available at Wilbur Cross High School, History Dept., New Haven, CT.

3. Any available film on the Holocaust (e.g. "Night and Fog").

The classroom teacher *should PREVIEW* any film on the Holocaust *prior* to any class showing, in case the film might be too sensitive or difficult for certain students to experience. Care must be taken to prevent any trauma or future nightmares.

4. For use of the Opaque Projector, in a dark room.

The teacher selects photographs from the following books that would show actual interior and exterior scenes of camp sites. The scenes are not too upsetting to the viewers.

-Hitler by William Jay Jacobs

-Monuments to the victims of Tyranny by Adolf Keith

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