

The Holocaust

Weimar Republic and the Jewish People

- Surprise to many Jews
- Weimar Republic was liberal and tolerant
 - o Had offered opportunity to the Jews
 - o The Weimar constitution was even written by a Jew
 - Hugo Preuss
 - o Walter Rathenau was a Jew
 - Headed the war effort in World War I
 - Organized reconstruction after the war
 - Served as foreign minister
 - Assassinated in 1922
 - Rightists did not want a Jew to be in such a prominent position
 - o *We Were So Beloved*
 - Book written after World War II
 - Expressing the question of how could it have happened

Worsening Persecution of Jews

- 1933
 - o April 1st- One Day Boycott of Jews
 - This was right before Easter
 - Biggest shopping day of the year
 - April 1st was also Shabbat
 - Overwhelming amount of Jews were irreligious and assimilated
 - o Had their stores open on Shabbat
 - o April 7th- Law for the Restoration of the Professional Standards of the Civil Service
 - Jews were fired from all influential jobs
 - Government, judges, lawyers, journalists, musicians, university professors
 - Hitler wanted to get rid of all people that affected public policy
 - o May- book burning
 - Burned Jewish books
 - Torah, Talmud and books written by Jews
 - o They even burned Freud!
 - o July- Jews who arrived in Germany after 1918 lost their citizenship
 - Shechita was outlawed
 - Humanitarians thought it was bad
 - Jewish farmers cannot inherit land
- 1934
 - o Von Hindenburg dies
 - Hitler became both chancellor and president
 - Heinrich Himmler became head of the SS
- 1935
 - o Nuremberg Laws
 - Defined Jews as subjects of the Reich
 - Had to obey all the laws with no protection
 - o Not citizens
 - Deprived Jews of citizenship

- Racial definition of “Jew”
 - Three or more Jewish grandparents qualifies as a “full” Jew
 - One or two Jewish grandparents qualifies as a mischlinge
 - Mixed Aryan and non-Aryan ancestry
- At first Jews were not physically killed
 - Instead were morally degraded
 - Discrimination built
- 1936
 - Jewish teachers cannot teach Aryan children
 - Jews were not allowed at health resorts
 - No Jewish books or music for non-Jewish audiences
 - No more intermarriage
 - **1936 Olympics in Berlin**
 - The Nazis hid their anti-Semitism
 - Took down all the anti-Jewish signs
 - Let Jews walk around and have shuls
 - Tried to make the rest of the world would think it was not that bad for the Jews
 - World disbelief later when the Jews complained
 - Once the Olympics were over, the signs went right back up
- 1937
 - **“Aryanization”**
 - Theft of Jewish property
 - Jews were forced to sell their stores at an extremely low price
- 1938
 - Jewish communities lost all recognition
 - Doctors and lawyers lost their licenses to practice
 - All Jewish women got the middle name Sarah
 - All males got the middle name Israel
 - Jews had to take inventory on all their assets
 - Marked a “J” on Jewish passports
 - Swiss idea
 - **Kristallnacht**
 - November 9-10
 - Turning point to violence



Efforts to escape

- Reichsvertretung der deutschen Juden
 - Tried to arrange emigration
- 1933 the League of Nations appointed James McDonald to find new homes for the Jews
 - The Germans opposed it
 - The League did not back him up
 - Eventually McDonald quit
- US and Latin America did not want Jews to come to their countries
 - Great Depression was occurring
 - Did not want more people competing for jobs
- England- kinder transport
 - England admits 10,000 Jewish children
 - limited Jews entry to Palastine

- Evian Conference
 - o Complete failure
 - o The countries were told that if they came they would not have to take Jews
 - Conference was set up to fail
- Rich Jews were able to get visas to Latin America
 - o Trujio allowed Jews in
 - Dictator of Dominican Republic

The “Final Solution” to the Jewish Question

- On conquest of an area the German army and local collaborators attacked the Jews
 - o Civilians were encouraged to attack Jews and bring them to the Nazis

- Ghettos

- o Open ghettos
 - Jews able to get up and leave
 - No high walls or guard towers
 - Really difficult to leave
 - There was nowhere else to live, get food
 - o If they left they would probably get killed
 - o Most stronger, younger people took their chances and risked leaving the ghetto
 - *Bielsky brothers*
 - Eastern Poland
 - Hid in the forest and fought the Nazis
 - Most people were too young, old, or sick to get out
 - Some people were just too weak
 - These ghettos were temporary
 - Open Ghettos soon became closed ghettos
 - o Or the people were deported/murdered
- o Closed ghettos
 - More organized
 - Guards, high walls
 - Bad conditions
 - Starvation
 - Overcrowding
 - Disease
 - Efforts to lift up spirit
 - Frum tried to organize learning, less religious tried to organize learning
 - These only had limited effect



- Deportations to the camps
 - o **Judenrat**
 - Jewish organization that carried out Nazi orders
 - o Kovno Ghetto
 - Nazis announced they needed 500 educated young men to work
 - Did this to get rid of potential leaders
 - September 1941 5,000 work permits were given to be distributed to skilled workers
 - People realized that these permits equaled life
 - Riots broke out with people trying to get permits
 - o Next day whole system scrapped

- A Jew killed a policeman
 - 1,000 Jews were killed in retaliation
- October- all the Jews were ordered to assemble
 - 10,000 were selected out and killed
 - Moral dilemma- Jews knew that assembly meant that only few would survive
 - Asked chief rabbi, Rabbi Shapiro if they should cooperate or resist
 - Came to the conclusion that they should cooperate
 - It is better to guarantee the lives of some Jews
- In the Kovno case, the Judenrat complied with the Nazi's orders

4 approaches to dealing with the Nazis

- Lvov
 - Nazis asked for a list of people deported, and the Judenrat refused
 - Approach: total non-cooperation
 - Eventually, the ghetto leader Joseph Parnes was executed
 - By being tied to the back of a car
- **Warsaw**
 - Cooperated on confiscation of property
 - Not when they were ordered by the Nazis to give a list of names
 - Leader Adam Czerniakow committed suicide
- Lodz
 - Leader Mordechai Rumkowski was ordered to provide victims
 - He decided to give in the young, old, and sick
 - Preserve the lives of the healthy
- Budapest
 - Head of the Judenrat was Rudolph Kasztner
 - Cooperated completely and gave a lot of Jews as victims
 - Nazis rewarded him with a train that carried 14,000 Jews to freedom and survival in Switzerland
- *Resistance Communiqué*
 - Nothing in this communiqué had any shred of hope
 - It emphasized strength and love for the Jews as a whole

Camps

- Labor camps
 - Intended to kill the Jews by overwork and starvation
 - Oskar Schindler
 - Saved close to about 1,000 Jews
 - Death camps



The World Responds

- No Jews killed in...
 - England
 - The Nazis never took over there
 - Spain
 - They were officially neutral but leaned on the Nazi side
 - Franco believed he descended from marranos
 - Franco did not completely open his border
 - Refused to send his Jews over to Hitler

- Switzerland
 - Neutral country
 - Did not kill Jews
 - But they did rob them
 - Denmark
 - Jews were very integrated
 - *Danes refused to give over lists of Jews*
 - Instead, they saved them
 - Bulgaria
 - Ally of the Germans during the war
 - Leaders would not hand over Jews
 - The king of Bulgaria went to meet Hitler
 - Died a few days later
 - He was young and healthy, so it was odd for him to die
 - Wife believed that he was poisoned by Hitler for not cooperating
 - Dimitar Peshev, the Prime Minister, ruled Bulgaria
 - Did not want to get rid of the Jews, so he stalled whenever the Nazis asked him about it
 - Started deporting Jews living in Bulgaria that were not Bulgarian
 - Peshev continued to stall towards the end of the war
 - Saw Hitler was going to lose
 - Realized that deporting its Jews would put Bulgaria on trial for mass murder after the war
 - Ended up saving 48,000 Jews
- Many Jews were killed in...
 - Lithuania
 - Holland
 - Poland
 - **Warsaw Ghetto Uprising**
 - By 1943, the Nazis got serious about deporting the Jews of the ghetto
 - Jewish Combat Organization
 - Organized resistance
 - Nazis surrounded the ghetto in January and faced the first armed resistance
 - Jews appealed to the world to send help through small radios
 - They got nothing
 - Pesach/ April 19th
 - Nazis began their final assault as a moral insult to the Jews
 - House to house resistance
 - Jews used the little weapons they had
 - Nazis used tanks and flame throwers
 - Killed many Jews and sent the rest to camps
 - Some Jews committed suicide
 - It took the Nazis three weeks (May 8th) to get to the Jewish headquarters
 - Gas bombed the headquarters so the Jews could not attack back



- Two days later the resistance was over
- 75 survivors left through the sewers, the rest were deported

Liberating the Concentration Camps

- As allied forces moved in Concentration Camps either moved their prisoners, killed them, or abandoned them
 - Or combination of the three
- Death marches
- Mass Executions
- **Auschwitz**
 - Largest extermination camp
 - Located in Southern Poland
 - Liberated by Soviets Jan, 1945
 - Most prisoners gone
 - Germans had fled west with prisoners
 - Left behind some buildings and personal belongings of prisoners
 - 800,000 women's suits
 - "Arbeit macht frei"
 - Site of Josef Mengele's infamous "medical experiments"
 - Used prisoners as guinea pigs
 - Particular interest in twins
 - Estimated 1 million killed at Auschwitz alone
- **Buchenwald**
 - Large Camp complex near Weimar in Germany
 - Forced labor camp
 - Liberated by Americans
 - April 11, 1945
 - 28,000 Prisoners had been evacuated
 - 1/3 died en route
 - Prisoners rioted early morning and rushed guards
 - Seized control of camp and waited for Americans
- Conditions of Camps
 - Allies found evidence of Nazi war crimes
 - Rushed Exits by guards
 - Mass executions quickly
 - Burned down huts
 - Where prisoners were burned alive
 - Mass Graves
 - Piles of bodies still waiting to be buried
 - Found ovens
 - Prisoners barely alive
 - Like skeletons
 - Lack of food
 - Disease
 - Many will die once liberated from sickness or malnutrition



**Jewish Deaths by Country
(Approximate)**

COUNTRY	CASUALTIES
Poland	3,000,000
Ukraine	900,000
Hungary	450,000
Russia	352,000
Romania	300,000
Baltic Countries	228,000
Germany/Austria	210,000
Netherlands	105,000
France	90,000
Slovakia	75,000
Greece	54,000
Belgium	40,000
Yugoslavia	26,000
Bulgaria	14,000
Italy	8,000
Luxembourg	1,000
Norway	900
TOTAL:	5,907,900