The Holocaust

Weimar Republic and the Jewish People
- Surprise to many Jews
  - Weimar Republic was liberal and tolerant
    - Had offered opportunity to the Jews
    - The Weimar constitution was even written by a Jew
      - Hugo Preuss
    - 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
    - We Were So Beloved
      - Book written after World War II
        - Expressing the question of how could it have happened

Worsening Persecution of Jews
- 1933
  - 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
        - Had their stores open on Shabbat
  - 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
  - May- book burning
    - Burned Jewish books
      - Torah, Talmud and books written by Jews
        - They even burned Freud!
  - 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
  - Von Hindenburg dies
    - Hitler became both chancellor and president
      - Heinrich Himmler became head of the SS
- 1935
  - Nuremburg Laws
    - Defined Jews as subjects of the Reich
      - Had to obey all the laws with no protection
        - 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 mischilinge
  - 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
  - Complete failure
  - 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
  - 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
  - Civilians were encouraged to attack Jews and bring them to the Nazis
- Ghettos
  - 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
        - If they left they would probably get killed
        - 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
      - Or the people were deported/murdered
  - 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
  - Judenrat
    - Jewish organization that carried out Nazi orders
  - 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
        - 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
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

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<th>COUNTRY</th>
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**TOTAL:** 5,907,900