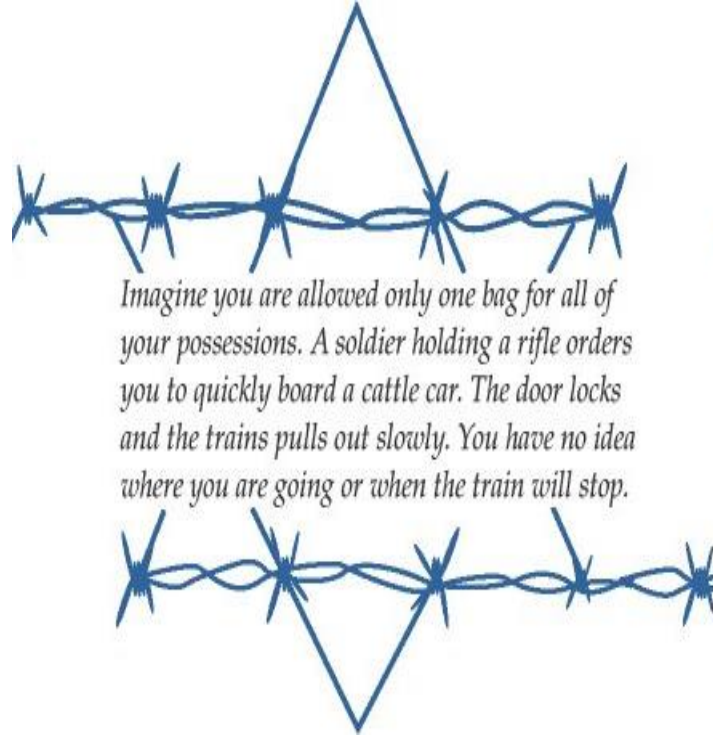


# People to Remember & Lessons to Recall



*Imagine you are allowed only one bag for all of your possessions. A soldier holding a rifle orders you to quickly board a cattle car. The door locks and the train pulls out slowly. You have no idea where you are going or when the train will stop.*

## Power Point #5

# From Homelessness to a Homeland

- By the middle of **June 1944**, Hitler's might on the battlefield had weakened further.
  - Allied forces crossed the English Channel and invaded German-occupied France.
  - In the south of Europe, Allied armies were defeating the Germans in their advance northward in Italy.
  - Allied bombers were destroying cities throughout the Reich.
  - The war had come home to German soil. German civilian and military casualties soared.
  - Soviet counterattacks began to push Nazi troops back into Poland, and the capture of Berlin became the Soviet Union's primary objective.
  - Worst of all for Hitler, on **July 20, 1944**, a group of German officers attempted to assassinate him, thinking that the killing of the Fuhrer would end the war and stop the terrible bloodshed.



- Even as total defeat loomed ahead for Hitler, his stubborn will and brutal acts of cruelty persisted.
  - Hitler had **invaded Hungary, Germany's ally, in March 1944** and had immediately ordered Eichmann to deport more than 400,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz.
  - In less than two months, trainloads of Jews were departing for that infamous place on a daily basis.
    - As many as 12,000 Jews arrived every twenty-four hours. Half a million were to die there.
  - In the face of his own catastrophes, a frenzied Hitler saw to it that the extermination of the Jews continued at an accelerated pace.
  - With the war taking its toll, railway tracks were frequently in need of repair. Boxcars were used to evacuate Nazi soldiers from the eastern front, which prompted German officers to march their Jewish prisoners to Auschwitz and other death camps.
  - Starting in November 1944, as many as 40,000 Jews were marched from Budapest, Hungary's capital city, to Austria. Needless to say, thousands fell by the wayside or were shot trying to escape.



# Eighty Thousand Jews Freed

- In **December 1944**, a little more than three months before the around-the-clock gassings of the Hungarian Jews at Auschwitz, Soviet troops penetrated the Maidank death camp in Poland.
  - Jewish survivors were liberated and cared for.
  - In January 1945, as the Soviet troops took Warsaw and moved on Budapest, they were able to free eighty thousand Hungarian Jews scheduled to be sent to their death.
- Realizing that they had no chance of holding back the Soviet troops, Himmler and his Nazis fearing severe punishment at war's end, decided to take apart the Auschwitz gas chambers.
  - **The SS blew up the crematories.** Then, they tried to destroy any evidence of the killings. To keep the horrors that happened there a secret, they burned camp records, clothing, and other personal property that had been collected from the Jews.
  - At this time, the SS abandoned other concentration camps in Poland and the Baltic countries.
- During the subfreezing temperatures of the 1945 winter months, the Nazis continued their relentless mass murder of Jews.
  - Inmates from the camps being emptied in the east were forced back into Germany. Those able to march were compelled to walk as long as they could. **These were called death marches.**
  - Nearly fifty-five thousand were evacuated from Auschwitz. Those who staggered or lingered behind were shot.
  - Sometimes five hundred of the marchers were shot in one day. Some froze to death; others starved. In one incident, Jews were driven into a tunnel and one thousand purposefully suffocated when the passageway was boarded up.

- One of the worst of these death marches, involving some eight thousand prisoners, occurred in January 1945 on the edge of the Baltic Sea.
  - Celia Maniełewicz, a young girl at the time recalls: *The Germans had started a rumor that at the coast we'd be put on board ship for Hamburg; we didn't believe it... Then the rumor: The SS are driving us into the sea! This was true, we knew it at once. "We've had it," Genia [Celia's friend] whispered to me. I could only nod...SS men stood on the rocks to the left and right of us. They drove the prisoners to the edge of the precipice [cliff] and shot them down mercilessly... We said our goodbyes..."Get going!" the SS chief in charge of the operation shouted. "Get down," he yelled, "down you Jew filth." He swung his gun and hit Genia...in the small of the back. She staggered and...an SS man pushed her over the cliff edge...I saw the abyss before me and hurtled over.*
  - Miraculously, Celia, Genia, and one other girl survived the massacre and were hidden and nursed back to health by some nearby farmers.



# Liberation at Last

- With the war coming to a close, U.S. troops arrived at the Buchenwald and Dachau concentration camps and rescued the prisoners.
- British troops liberated those being held at Bergen-Belsen.
- Reported historian Louis L. Snyder:
  - *Battle hardened veterans used to the sight and smell of death, were sickened by what they saw in these pestholes. They could scarcely believe their eyes....staggering out to meet them were the walking skeletons--- human beings whose bodies were stripped of flesh, their eyes staring in disbelief, their voices hollow, their minds crippled by starvation and disease. Strong men wept in the presence of this miserable army of unfortunates.*
- On entering one of the camps, Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, the American commander, said that he had "never at any time experienced an equal sense of shock."
- Six days after the Buchenwald camp was liberated, Gene Currivan of *The New York Times* witnessed a group of German civilians visiting the camp.
  - *The German people saw all this today and they wept... They said they didn't know about it...Men turned white and women turned away. It was too much for them. These persons, who had been fed on Nazi propaganda since 1933, were beginning to see...with their own eyes what no quantity of American propaganda could convince them of. Here was what their own government had perpetuated.*
- In April 1945, after Soviet troops had reached the outlying parts of Berlin, the Nazis began to abandon the remaining concentration camps. Still, the Jews died. More than 400,000 of them died in the overcrowded camps, some while being forced to build the futile fortifications meant to defend the Reich to the end.
- The end came on **May 7, 1945**, when Germany surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. Hitler's mad dream of conquest and mass murder of millions was over.

# The Aftermath

- A week before the war in Europe ended, **Hitler and his wife, Eva Braun, killed themselves in Hitler's underground bunker** below the Reich chancellery building in Berlin.
  - They had married the day before the double suicide. Their deaths took place in Hitler's headquarters, the same complex from which he directed the Nazi war effort and ordered the killing of untold numbers of people.
  - Toward the end of his life, Hitler had a severe stomach disorder brought on by shattered nerves. His speech was impaired, and his mind had become disoriented. He was a broken man and a shell of his former self.
  - Himmler and Goebbels also committed suicide. None had the courage to face a court of justice.
- **After the war, only a small percentage of Europe's original Jewish population survived.**
  - Had World War II lasted a few months more, or if Hitler had won the war, perhaps all of that continent's Jewish population would have been annihilated.
  - As it turned out, the numbers of Jews murdered in each country depended on several circumstances, such as the number of Jews living in the country during the prewar years; the length of the Nazi occupation; and whether the country was a German ally.
  - Often, the nation's leader or its people played a role in preventing the murder of the Jews.
  - Bulgarian citizens were able to protect all of Bulgaria's fifty thousand Jews from the Nazis.
  - In Denmark, only five hundred of its six thousand Jews were lost because the Danes secretly ferried their Jewish neighbors to Sweden.
- Still, the final Jewish death toll was staggering. **Of the estimated total of 5,978,000 Jews killed by the Nazis, 2,800,000 were Poles, nearly 90% of all the Jews who had lived in Poland before the war.**
- Romania lost 425,000 Jews, 50% of its entire Jewish population.
- Czechoslovakia lost 260,000 (88%), Yugoslavia 55,000 (80%), Greece 60,000 (80%), the Netherlands 90,000 (75%), Belgium 40,000 (67%), and Hungary 200,000 (50%).

- Shortly after the war ended, Jews tried to reestablish themselves and to **renew a normal life**.
  - Some Jews, hidden by Christians, came out of hiding.
  - Others who had retreated to the woods after escaping their ghetto or camp confinements finally left their near-primitive existence in seclusion and reappeared.
  - A number of Jews lived out the war by fighting with partisan units.
  - Jews who merged with the Christian communities or who relied on false baptismal papers and counterfeit identity cards were also saved. After the war, they reclaimed their Jewish names and Jewish life.
  - Jewish orphans frequently protected by Catholic and Protestant clergy or other people were reunited with relatives. Many were turned over to Jewish organizations for eventual adoption.
- Despite their liberation and Hitler's downfall, **Jews continued to experience problems**. Some survivors, uncertain about what to do or where to go after their liberation, decided to return to their hometowns and cities. They wanted to find their missing families, relatives, and friends. They needed to reclaim their homes and possessions.
  - Some who returned to their homelands were shocked to learn that other people, particularly in Poland and Latvia, had taken their property and were living in their houses.
  - When the Jews protested, some were arrested.
  - Not only were they unwelcome but they were frequently blamed for the war and the destruction it brought to the land.
  - In 1945 and 1946, anti-Jewish riots broke out in Polish cities. Several hundred Jews were murdered.



# Slave Laborers

- The Jews also fled Europe to avoid becoming slave laborers.
  - The Soviets, in their quest to establish communism throughout the continent, if not the world, began to occupy most of the nations between East Germany and the Soviet Union.
  - Some countries were forced to establish communist governments that took their orders from officials in Moscow.
  - In order to rebuild their war-ravaged cities, the Soviets placed tens of thousands of slave laborers and war prisoners in work battalions and moved them around the Soviet Union and eastern Europe.
  - They were held as captives in postwar years.
  - For fear of being used as slave laborers, thousands of homeless and stateless Jews and others fled into West Germany, where the Allies had set up separate occupation zones that were administered by military governments.
  - These liberated but not yet free people were called **displaced persons**.
  - By the end of the war, there were **ten million Jewish and non-Jewish displaced persons** wandering around Europe. Their lives were shattered. Food, clothing, and medical supplies were hard to come by, and many therefore died. Some had to stay in the concentration camps.
  - By 1946, over 200,000 Jewish survivors were placed in displaced persons camps, but now these camps were administered by the United Nations Relief Organization and Allied armies.

- By 1946, over 200,000 Jewish survivors were placed in displaced persons camps, but now these camps were administered by the United Nations Relief Organization and Allied armies.
  - The camps, unlike the Nazi camps, were designed to save, rather than kill, displaced persons.
- Unfortunately, there was much bickering among the various army, government, and private agencies on how to take care of the displaced and what was to be done with them. This confusion made it difficult for the Jews to begin rebuilding their lives.
- The Jews who had survived the Holocaust needed to settle into homes so that they could reestablish normal lives and deal with their emotional scars, including guilt.
- Survivors frequently wondered why they had been spared when two out of every three European Jews had been murdered.

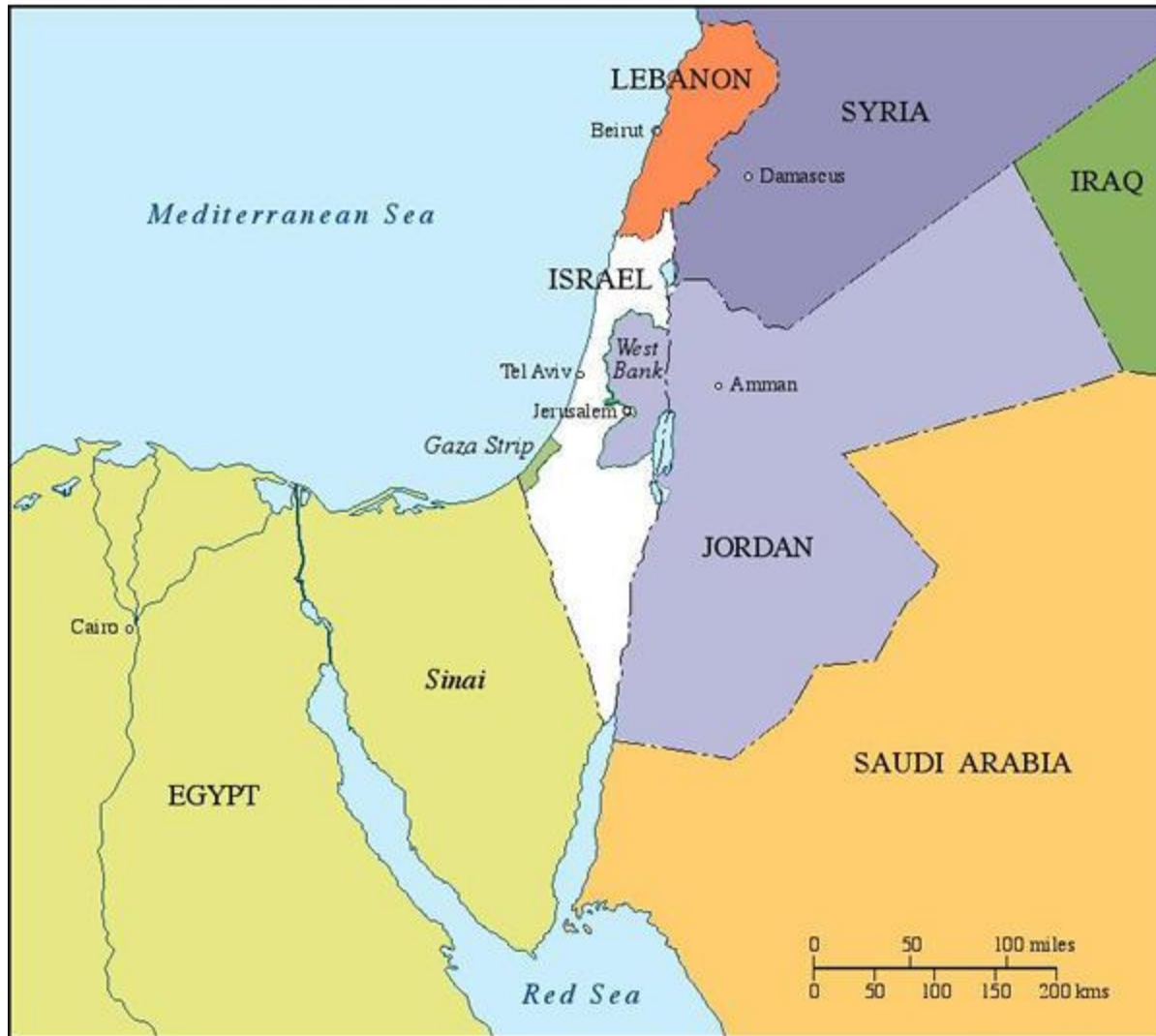


# Israel Becomes Home



- Many Jews had tried to escape from Europe during the war. As many as 238,000 Jews managed to flee Germany. Another 118,000 left Austria.
- Additionally, tens of thousands decided to uproot themselves from other European countries and seek out a safer nation in which to start a new life.
- After the war ended, Jewish displaced persons again sought refuge in other countries from their war-torn lives. **Many countries, however, had strict immigration quotas. Other simply did not want the Jews.**
- In an attempt to help find the Jews a home, the newly formed United Nations recommended that they be resettled in Palestine in the Middle East.
  - Palestine seemed a natural choice because many Jews had historic ties to the land and because Zionist Jews had been immigrating to Palestine since the 1880s.
  - Because of the large number of Arabs living in the area, it was suggested that Palestine be partitioned into Jewish and Arab states. The issue came before the United Nations General Assembly in 1947 and, after much debate, the state of Israel was created on May 14, 1948.
  - The Arabs, however, protested the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and war resulted when the armies of five neighboring Arab states invaded Israel.
  - **After a final armistice, or truce, was signed in 1949, Jews were encouraged to settle in Israel.**
  - By 1951, more than half of the European Jewish displaced persons had immigrated to the new country.

Map 2: Israel Within the 1949 Armistice Lines (pre-1967 Borders)



- In Israel and throughout the world, Jews vow that the Holocaust should never be repeated. And they will never let the memory of the horror fade into the past.
- Late in March or early April, a special day is set aside for the world to ponder over the fate of the Jews throughout Europe during the time of Hitler.
- This day is called **Yom Hashoa**. The Israeli parliament also built a permanent monument on Mount Remembrance in Jerusalem.
  - It is named Yad Vashem, Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Museum.
  - An eternal flame burns there to remind the millions of visitors to the museum of the perseverance and continuation of the Jewish people.
  - The museum's statues and exhibits help tell the dreadful, true story of the Holocaust.





# People to Remember

- The majority of the world's population was unaware of what was happening to the Jews in Europe during the Hitler era.
- Many others stood by without protesting as their Jewish neighbors were being persecuted, sent away, and murdered.
- Some even cooperated with the Nazis in their war against the Jews.
- On the other hand, thousands of courageous and compassionate non Jews risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.
- These individuals are known as "**righteous gentiles.**" On the grounds of Yad Vashem, hundreds of trees line the Avenue of Righteous Gentiles.
  - Each tree was planted to honor those who were brave enough to hide Jews or to smuggle them to safe locations. In a number of instances, their heroic deeds prevented Jews from being deported.

Miep Gies



Oskar  
Schindler

# Saving Jews

- The countries of **Bulgaria and Denmark** displayed distinguished records in saving their Jews.
  - In Bulgaria, public outcry prevented Bulgarian Jews from being sent to Auschwitz.
  - Citizens sent thousands of letters to the Bulgarian parliament protesting harsh treatment of Jews.
  - Three bishops of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church preached against anti-Semitism.
  - They sent warnings to the Nazi occupiers not to deport Bulgarian Jews.
  - There was a large, violent street demonstration in favor of the Jews.
  - Some historians contend that King Boris deliberately delayed the Nazis from sending the Jews out of his country.
  - At war's end, forty-five thousand of Bulgaria's fifty thousand Jews left for Israel, where they proudly acknowledged the Bulgarian people's role in protecting the Jewish population.



# Denmark



- In Denmark in October 1943, there was a most daring and dramatic rescue of more than six thousand Danish Jews.
  - Just days before the notorious Gestapo planned a surprise roundup of all of Denmark's Jews, word of the secret plan was uncovered by some Danes.
  - The Danish community then warned the Jews that they were about to be sent to the camps in the east. With the exception of 600 older Jews who were unable to escape, the rest of the Danish Jews were placed in prearranged hiding places along the coast. In a cleverly designed operation, the Jews were concealed in the holds of a flotilla of fishing boats. At great risk of being sighted by Nazi patrol boats, the Danes ferried the Jews across a twenty-four mile strait to neutral Sweden, where they were able to live until the war was over.
- Throughout every country in Europe, even in Germany, there were those who helped Jews escape and hide. Those who were found out were killed.
  - In Poland, where the largest number of Jews died, Poles hid Jews and shared their own scarce amounts of food.
  - Organized groups such as the Christian clergy, Socialists, Communists, and anti-Nazi nationalist partisans often undertook campaigns to save Jews.



- Although the Vatican did not officially condemn the Nazi atrocities, there is considerable evidence that many priests, nuns, and Catholics hid Jews in monasteries, convents, schools, and hospitals.
- Especially in southern France and Italy, many thousands of children were safely guarded or smuggled into Spain, or Switzerland, two nations not involved in the war.
- In the small, wine-producing French town of Le Chambon, Jews were rescued and hidden. When the villagers refused to reveal to the Nazis where the Jews were being held, every one of the townspeople was arrested and tortured.
- In Greece, Jews were taken to mountain hideouts or hidden on islands. Some were smuggled into Turkey. In Italy, the Italian army rescued and protected Jews. Police in Italy were very helpful in making sure Italian Jews were shielded from the Nazis. One chief of police was actually deported to Dachau and executed for having helped Jews. It was not uncommon to find Italian government officials and Italian people acting to prevent Jews from being handed over to the Germans.



# What happened to the Nazis?

- After the war, many of the leaders of the Third Reich were captured by the Allies and were placed on trial in Nuremberg, Germany, for committing war crimes.
- The court sessions lasted for eleven months, **from November 1945 to October 1946**. The judges in this world-famous trial disregarded the defendants' pleas that they should not be blamed for following Hitler's orders.
  - 19 of the Nazis were found guilty of enslavement and murder and of violating "international moral laws" against peace.
  - 12 were of these were hanged.
  - Air Marshal Hermann Goring committed suicide.
  - Later, smaller trials were held over the years, and more than 80,000 Germans were convicted of committing crimes against humanity. Many local criminals and Nazi collaborators in various countries occupied by the Germans were brought to justice and sentenced for their crimes. Even in Germany, 6,000 Germans were convicted for the crimes committed, but lighter punishments were handed out.

# Some Fled Punishment

- The case of **Adolf Eichmann** and his crimes was loaded with intrigue.
  - Eichmann was the field coordinator of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps.
  - He was arrested at the end of the war by U.S. soldiers, but he escaped and went underground, living a life of disguise and hiding in Argentina.
  - In May 1960, members of the Israeli Secret Service tracked him down in Argentina and smuggled him to Israel.
  - He was put on trial in Jerusalem a year later, convicted of his cowardly and dreadful crimes, and executed on May 31, 1962.
- At the conclusion of the war, **Josef Mengele** also dropped out of sight and fled to South America, where other Nazis took refuge.
  - He was able to successfully hide from his pursuers for nearly thirty-five years.
  - In 1985, it was revealed that he drowned in 1979 while swimming in Brazil.
- Practically all Germans now regret that the Nazis once came to power in their country.
  - It is a dark chapter in their history. For many years, Germany has accepted blame for Nazi crimes and has admitted its responsibility for the Holocaust.
  - The government has paid billions of German marks in reparations to Israel and to Jewish individuals.
  - Reparations and payments are made for wrongdoing and for losses suffered by those who have been injured.

# Valuable Lessons

- The people who lived through the horrors of the Holocaust believe that each new generation should be thoroughly educated about what the Nazis did.
- They hope this knowledge will keep such atrocities from being committed in the future.
- The events of the Holocaust reveal graphically that **some people have the capacity for committing inhumane acts against others.**
  - Said Viktor Frankl, who survived one of the Nazi death camps, "Life in a concentration camp tore open the human soul and exposed its depths...The rift dividing good from evil, which goes through all human beings...is laid open by the concentration camp."
  - In such an extreme situation, Frankl seems to be saying, it is revealed who is moral and who is without morals, who is compassionate for fellow human beings and who is cold-hearted and brutal.
- Another lesson of the Nazi crimes is that it is **morally wrong to remain silent in the face of evil.**
  - Many people knew what was happening in the death camps but did not speak out or try to get word to people in other countries.
  - This allowed the Nazis to continue with their killing.
  - Many who committed these mass murders claimed they were only following orders given by their superiors. This excuse was not accepted at trials of the Nazi criminals after the war.
  - The Allied judges stated that there are some orders which are so terrible and immoral that they must be disobeyed, even in the face of death.

- Yet another lesson is **“there’s no such thing as a free lunch”** - all actions/choices have consequences.
  - Too much power in one person’s hands is dangerous.
- The German writer Gerhard Schoenberner has spoken often about the guilt that Germans must bear for what their countrymen did during World War II.
  - He believes, just as do many Jews and other concerned people, that the Holocaust must never be forgotten.
  - “There remains a shared guilt,” he says, “which one cannot easily buy oneself out of, and which cannot be ‘made good.’ No one can bring the dead back to life. What is done cannot be undone.”
- But humanity can and must remember, says Schoenberner. What happened must be constantly laid bare and examined, the horrors repeatedly retold so that young people with no memory of those times will know the awful truth.
- “Belated moral condemnation and human regret are not enough,” Schoenberner insists.
  - He says: “The historical facts must be made known, the social causes that made them possible must be understood, and we must become aware of our own responsibility for what goes on around us. We do not escape the past by thrusting it to the back of our minds. Only if we come to terms with it and understand the lessons of those year, can we free ourselves of the legacy of Hitlerite barbarism.”



# Is the Holocaust Unique?

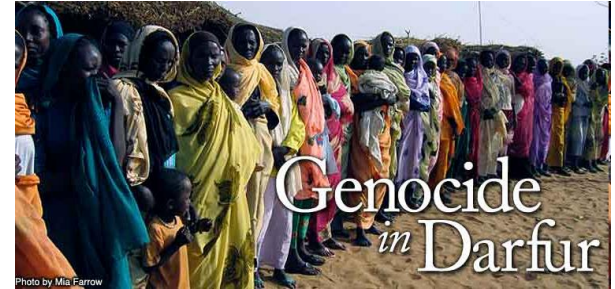
- Native Americans (United States)
  - US underwent a great expansion in 19<sup>th</sup> century
  - Thousands upon thousands of Indians in the Southeast and Southwest were forcibly rounded up and taken from their land by the federal gov't
  - Unaccustomed to the cold, hundreds froze to death
  - Others starved when their supplies ran out, still others died of disease
  - The Cherokees called their forced trek "The Trail of Tears"
  - Thousands of Native Americans were killed
- The Armenians (Turkey)
  - In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a movement for independence developed among the 2.5 million Christian Armenians in Muslim Turkey
  - Police rounded up all educated Armenians and killed them
  - The remaining were marched on foot across hundreds of miles of desert and mountain---dying of thirst, starvation, and disease
  - Close to 1.5 million Armenians died
- "The Rape of Nanking" (China)
  - Japan and China were at war
  - In December of 1937, 50,000 Japanese soldiers captured the city of Nanking, the country's capital
  - Given the order to kill all captives, they proceeded to carry out a bloody massacre
  - The Chinese were used for target and bayonet practice
  - Japanese soldiers held decapitation contests
  - Massacre continued for approximately 7 weeks
  - An estimated 200,000-300,000 Chinese were killed





## • Darfur (Africa)

- Located in Africa, a region of the Sudan (about the size of Texas), ethnically diverse
- Two groups fighting...one a government supported militia who is trying to eliminate local peasants
- Genocide has claimed over 400,000 lives and displaced 2.5 million. Also, more than 100 people die each day, 5,000 a month.
- Their "purpose" is racial cleansing, trying to eliminate those that do not belong
  - They have used rape, displacement, organized starvation, threats against workers, and mass murder
- Also fighting for natural resources like water, farmable land



## Present Day Hate Groups "Skinheads"

Similar to the Nazis of Hitler's time

Usually these are young men who have shaved their heads to the skin---the reason for their name—and wear racist Nazi tattoos

Skinheads are always white

They do not consider Jews to be white

They may call themselves "white supremacists" and demand "White Power"

Many are drawn to violence



# Holocaust Denial

- Many survivors of the Holocaust remember being told by the SS:
  - "However this war may end, we have won the war against you; and even if some proof should remain and some of you survive, people will say the events you describe are too monstrous to be believed; they will say they are exaggerations of...propaganda"

## Revisionists: those who deny the Holocaust happened

- The deniers say there is "another side" to the history of the Holocaust
- What "other side"? The Holocaust happened. Six million Jews were murdered. There is no "other side".
- Those who deny the Holocaust may be extremists, openly racist, ferociously anti-Semitic but often they come clothed in the look of respectability and the appearance of scholarship. They present themselves as historians. They do not call their argument denial, and they do not call themselves deniers. They have named themselves "revisionists".
- They call their version of events "revisionism" as though they have revised and corrected the facts that have been accepted as true---until they came along.
- Those who call themselves Holocaust revisionists deny accepted facts and manufacture new ones.
- They have written books and articles, and they too make use of the Internet



# The Final Message

- NO ONE IS SAFE FROM HATE
  - You can NEVER believe that it won't be you.
  - You must stop it before it begins!
  - A survivor said, "All that it takes for evil to triumph is for the good to do nothing."

This is the message of the Holocaust!

The last, the very last,  
So richly, brightly, dazzlingly yellow.  
Perhaps if the sun's tears would sing  
against a white stone...  
Such, such a yellow  
Is carried lightly 'way up high.  
It went away I'm sure because it wished to  
kiss the world goodbye.  
For seven weeks I've lived in here,  
Pinned up inside this ghetto  
But I have found my people here.  
The dandelions call to me  
And the white chestnut candles in the court.  
Only I never saw another butterfly.  
That butterfly was the last one.  
Butterflies don't live in here,  
In the ghetto.

