

Grade 9

The Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre is pleased to offer a series of eight (8) units covering the following Grade 9 CAPS topic:

Failure of the Weimar, the rise of Nazi Germany, outbreak of WW2 in Europe, the Holocaust, people's experiences and resistance.

Unit 6

- Nazi Foreign Policy Outbreak of WW2
- Ghettos , Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

By the end of the unit Learners should be familiar with

1. Nazi intentions and reasons for war
2. The use of Ghettos to separate, isolate and humiliate
3. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising

What do the Nazis Want?

- **Incorporation:**
Sudetenland and Austria
- **Domination:**
Western Europe
- **Colonisation:**
Eastern Europe – Why?

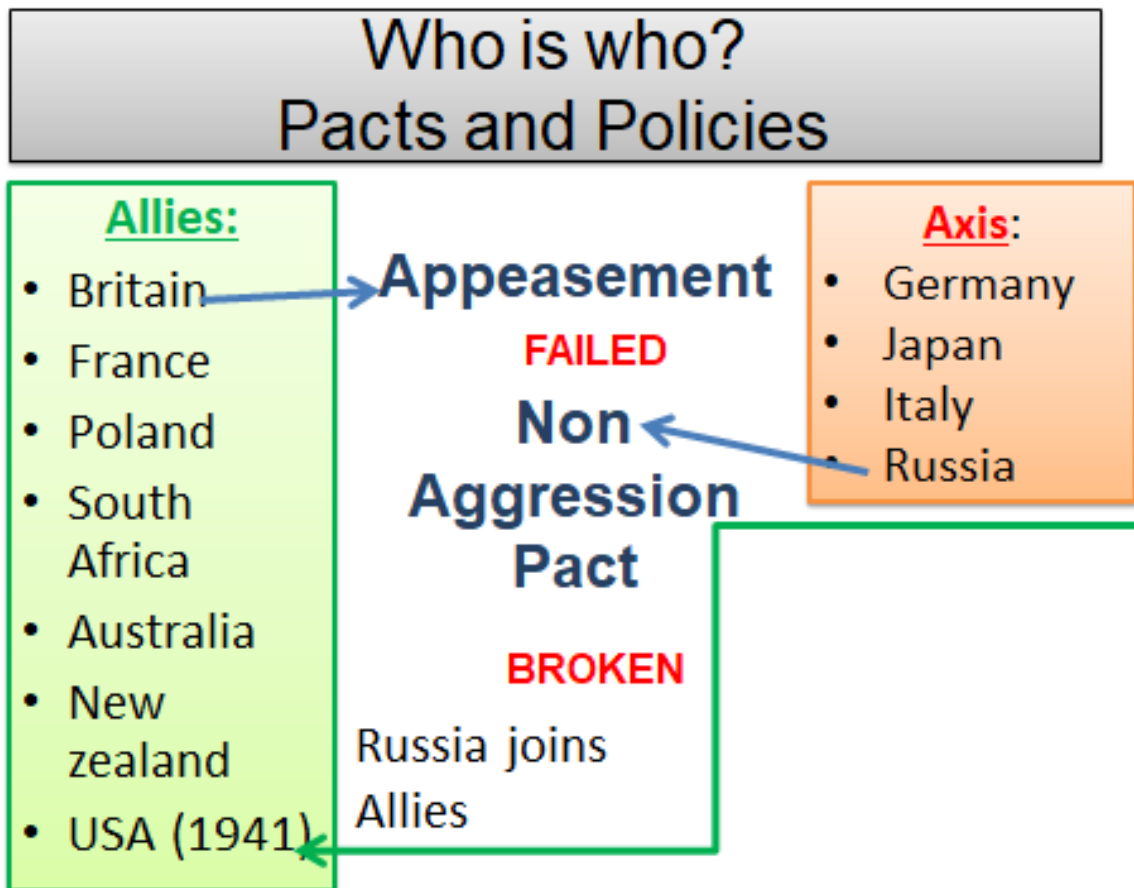
Lebensraum: Living Space

Judenrein: Free of Jews

ALL OF THIS WOULD REQUIRE WAR

- **Incorporation:** The Nazis want Austria back as it was taken from them during the Treaty of Versailles. Austria was very important to Hitler and he wanted the Anschluss which means the joining of Austria and Germany. He also wanted the Sudetenland which was at the tip of Czechoslovakia because the people living there were “ethnic” Germans.
- **Domination:** They wanted to dominate Western Europe in other words to be in control of all the countries in Western Europe
- **Colonisation:** They wanted to colonise Eastern. They wanted to take over Eastern European land and make it their own, so that they could have living space “Lebensraum”. But it had to be free of Jews “Judenrein”

The Nazis knew that countries would not submit to this and that there would be war.



Allies means friends. The countries listed above under the heading all fought against the Nazis. Some like the USA joined the war later after the bombing of Pearl Harbour. Britain attempted to avoid a war with a policy of Appeasement, meaning they tried to compromise with Germany, as they really did not want a war they were just recovering from WW1.

But Germany wanted war. Russia and Germany signed a Non- Aggression Pact, a pact is an agreement, meaning they would not invade one another. Germany broke this in 1941 with its invasion of Russian occupied Poland. Russia joined the Allies and fought alongside them, greatly influencing the outcome of the war.

1 September 1939

Germany invades Poland WW2 begins and the world is at war.

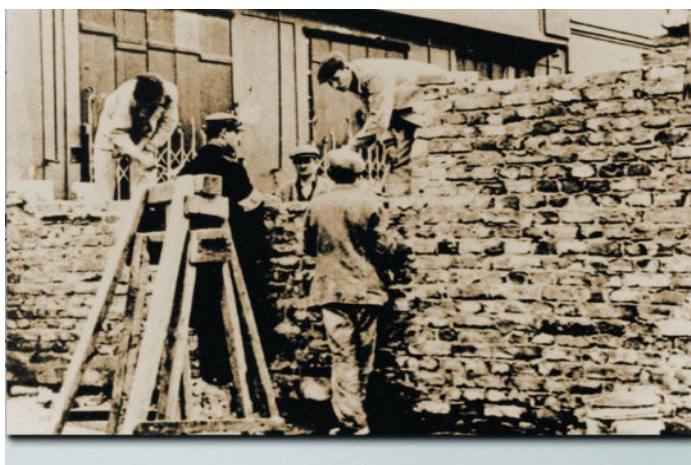
With the invasion of Poland, the Nazis began putting Jewish people into ghettos which were very specifically demarcated areas where all Jews were forced to go and live. In every city, town or village, Jewish residents were forced out of their own homes and into a demarcated area. One of the largest ghettos in Europe was the Warsaw ghetto, Warsaw being the capital of Poland and having a substantial Jewish community.



Jews being forcibly removed from their homes and moved to the Kovno Ghetto

'I looked out the window and saw a long wagon driving by. Amid the pathetic looking tables, chairs and mattresses that were piled up... along the street in single file – walked Jews with yellow stars on their backs.'

A diary entry by Elena Kutorgiene, 1941



A wall being constructed to separate the Warsaw Ghetto from the rest of the City

The images show the walls being constructed, and people being forcibly moved from their homes. The diary entry which is written by an eye witness who is not Jewish, tells of watching the Jews leaving their homes with their possessions and having to wear an identifying star on their clothing which is what the Nazis required all Jewish people to wear, in Germany and in every country they occupied.



If you look at this image above of the Warsaw ghetto taken in May 1940, you will see that the people are still reasonably dressed. They look fairly healthy. There are many people but they still look relatively well. Also, notice that every single one of them is wearing an armband with a Star of David on it. That was one of the laws that the Nazis passed. Every Jew had to identify himself or herself as a Jew.



The image on the left is taken a year later. And what you can see is that people were poverty stricken and starving. Why? This was because food was very, very scarce.

Sanitary conditions were almost non-existent. People had lice, which gave them typhus and because of poor sanitation people got typhoid.

People were dying by the thousands. This happened in most of the ghettos.



A young boy being caught smuggling food into the Warsaw Ghetto

Jewish children attending school in secret in the Warsaw Ghetto

In the first image above you see a young boy being caught by a Nazi for smuggling food into the ghetto. There was no food, there was no sanitation, no clean water, so people got sick very early on and starvation set in very quickly. Little boys who could fit through holes in the walls or through the sewerage pipes would go out to the other side of the ghetto and try and bring food back either by stealing or by bartering. Very often they were caught and beaten or even killed by the Nazis. In the image on your right you see children attending a secret school. This was forbidden but it was something that people continued to do even in the worst of circumstances education was seen as extremely important.

As time went on and more people died children were orphaned and could be seen begging on the streets and suffering from extreme starvation.

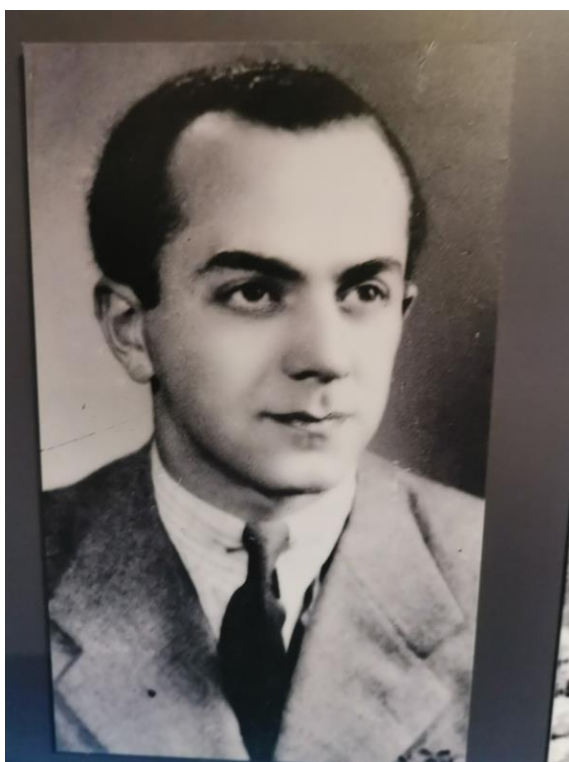
The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

In 1943 there was an uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto.

Why in 1943? Because by then they knew what was happening to people who had been taken away from the ghetto and had not been seen or heard from since.

Who organised the uprising?

A GROUP OF MAINLY YOUNG PEOPLE, USING SMUGGLED SMALL GUNS AND HOME-MADE WEAPONS. THEY KEPT THE NAZI ARMY AT BAY FOR THREE AND A HALF WEEKS....



Israel (Izio) Teitelbaum 1918 – 1943 (Warsaw Ghetto Fighter)

- At the outbreak of WW2 Izio was at university
- He was rounded up and sent to the Warsaw ghetto
- He was one of the organisers of the uprising
- Came to Miriam, his sister, to say goodbye
- Told her that he would rather die resisting than in a chamber.

We know this because his sister Miriam Lichtermann (nee Teitelbaum) lives in Cape Town.

She told us the story of the day her brother spoke to her about needing to take part in the uprising. It was the last time she ever saw her brother.

How was this possible? How did these young people do this?

They did it with courage, determination and they made a “choiceless choice”. Many people during the Holocaust were faced with “choiceless choices”.

What does this mean? It means you choose to do something when you know that whatever choice you make will have a desperate and deadly outcome for you.

- They fought against the German army for three -and -a -half weeks
- Forced to surrender when finally the German army set fire to the whole ghetto
- 13 000 residents were killed and 56 065 were captured
- 7000 were immediately deported to the Treblinka killing Centre. The remainder to forced labour camps including Majdanek
- Some resistance fighters succeed in escaping from the ghetto and join partisan groups in the forests around Warsaw



The Great Operation... terminated on May 16, 1943 at 8.15pm, with the blowing up of the Warsaw synagogue... All the buildings and everything else have been destroyed. The Jewish Quarter in Warsaw no longer exists.'

Extract from Major General Stroop's Concluding Report at the end of the Warsaw ghetto operation.

The quote above is from the concluding report of General Stroop of the German army. He calls the fight against the people in the ghetto The Great Operation.

Who was the mighty army fighting? You can see in the top right hand image German soldiers having set fire to the buildings, but look at who they are rounding up; women, children and old men. And of course the brave young people who fought valiantly for 3 and a half weeks.

June 22, 1941

Under the codename
“Operation Barbarossa”
**Nazi Germany invaded the Soviet
Union in the
largest German military operation
of World War II.**

**They take the decision not to put
the Jews in the conquered territory
into ghettos**

What's going on, on the war front?

Remember that Germany and the Soviet Union had a **non-aggression pact?**

Germany had invaded Poland from the West and the Soviet Union had invaded Poland from the east.

The Nazis just voided that treaty with the Soviets and they invaded Russian occupied Poland. Once they did this, the Soviet Union joined the allies and was at war with Germany.

Having invaded the Soviet Union the Nazis took the decision that they were not going to put Jewish people in conquered territories into ghettos. They decided to murder all Jewish people in the conquered territories. This is the point at which what the Nazis call The Final Solution begins and this we will study in Unit 7.

QUESTIONS

1. Why did the USA only join the allies in 1941?
2. What made the Russians join the allies
3. Why did the Nazis put Jewish people in ghettos? What was their aim?
4. Why did the Warsaw ghetto uprising begin in 1943 and not before?
5. How did the Nazi army finally manage to put down the uprising?
6. Explain what you understand by the term “choiceless choice”.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre:

<http://ctholocaust.co.za/>

Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCwVBUs5VqvsumuwDdzYIAaQ>

Yad Vashem.org

https://www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/warsaw_ghetto_testimonies/index.asp?qclid=Cj0KCQiA4L2BBhCvARIsAO0SBdbbo2rRWCRUJJBvUQWaAOoAnoHeaP_c2ogAnShJUbf_VfC4bl-ZI2MaAq7cEALw_wcB

<https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/ghettos/daily-life.html>

<https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about/ghettos/warsaw.html>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ghettos>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/life-in-the-ghettos>

USHMM.org

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/ghettos>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/life-in-the-ghettos>