



An introduction to *Night*

THE HOLOCAUST

Who were the Nazis?



- Political party formed in 1919 by unemployed German veterans of WWI.
- Adolf Hitler led party in 1921
- Promoted "scientific theory of racism"
- Believed Aryan Germans were superior race
- Created a chart of 'races' with the Aryans at the top and with Jewish people, Gypsies and black people at the bottom.

Holocaust

- Began in 1933 when Hitler came to power
- Ended in 1945 when Allies defeated Nazis
- Hitler-
 - wanted to be an artist
 - Lived in homeless shelters in Vienna from 1909-1914
 - Painted watercolors, sold few
 - Joined German army in 1914



How did Hitler take over Europe?

- How did a naturally lazy, friendless, minimally educated homeless man take over Europe?
- Hitler created jobs, generating a vibrant economy and restoring Germany's military might.
- William Shirer: *"Not many Germans lost sleep over the arrests of a few thousand pastors and priests or over the quarreling of the various Protestant sects .."*
- Apathy and moral indifference empowered Hitler.

Why did Hitler hate Jewish people?

- Holocaust happened because Hitler and the Nazis were racist. They believed the German people were a 'master race', who were superior to others. They even created a league table of 'races' with the Aryans at the top and with Jews, Gypsies and black people at the bottom. These 'inferior' people were seen as a threat to the purity and strength of the German nation. When the Nazis came to power they persecuted these people, took away their human rights and eventually decided that they should be exterminated.

Holocaust

- "Holocaust" (Greek for "sacrifice by fire")
- Refers to the Nazi's planned genocide of the Jewish people.



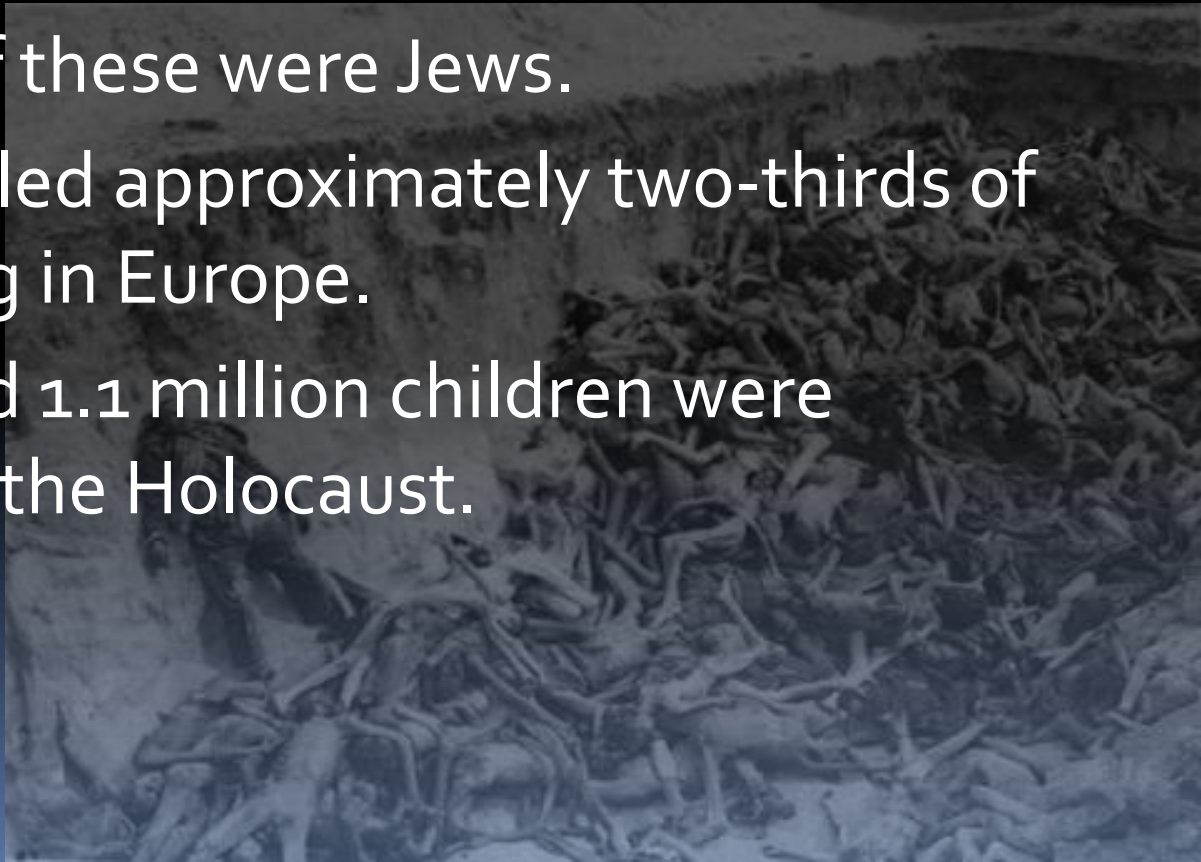
Nazis

- Nazis targeted Jews, Gypsies, Homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, and the disabled.
- Anyone who resisted the Nazis was arrested & murdered.
- Nazi is an abbreviation for "National Socialist German Worker's Party."
- "The Final Solution" – Nazi term for the plan to kill all Jewish people



The Big Numbers

- Approx 11 million people were killed during the Holocaust.
- Six million of these were Jews.
- The Nazis killed approximately two-thirds of all Jews living in Europe.
- An estimated 1.1 million children were murdered in the Holocaust.



Persecution Begins

- On April 1, 1933, the Nazis announced a boycott of all Jewish-run businesses.
- The Nuremberg Laws, issued on September 15, 1935, began to exclude Jews from public life. Included:
 - a law that stripped German Jews of their citizenship
 - a law that prohibited marriages and sex between Jews and Germans.
 - set the legal precedent for further anti-Jewish legislation.
- Other laws:
 - excluded Jews from places like parks,
 - fired them from civil service jobs (i.e. government jobs),
 - made Jews register their property
 - prevented Jewish doctors from working on anyone other than Jewish patients.

Persecution

- “Kristallnacht” (aka Night of Broken Glass)
 - November 9-10, 1938
 - Pillaged and burned synagogues
 - Broke windows and looted Jewish-owned businesses
 - Physically attacked many Jewish people
 - Approx 30,000 Jewish people were arrested and sent to concentration camps
- After WWII started in 1939, Jews were required to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothing for identification.



The Ghettos

- 1939 - All Jewish people had to leave their homes and move to areas of big cities called ghettos.
- Had to leave their homes and move into smaller apartments, often shared with other families.



The Ghettos

- The largest was in Warsaw - 445,000 occupants in March 1941.
- Jewish council - Nazis ordered the Jewish people to establish these to administer Nazi demands and to regulate the internal life of the ghetto.
- Jewish people were deported from ghettos to concentration or labor camps.
- Nazis kept the destination a secret so the Jewish people would cooperate.



The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising

- April 13, 1943
- Jewish resistance fighters held out against the entire Nazi regime for 28 days - longer than many European countries had been able to withstand Nazi conquest.



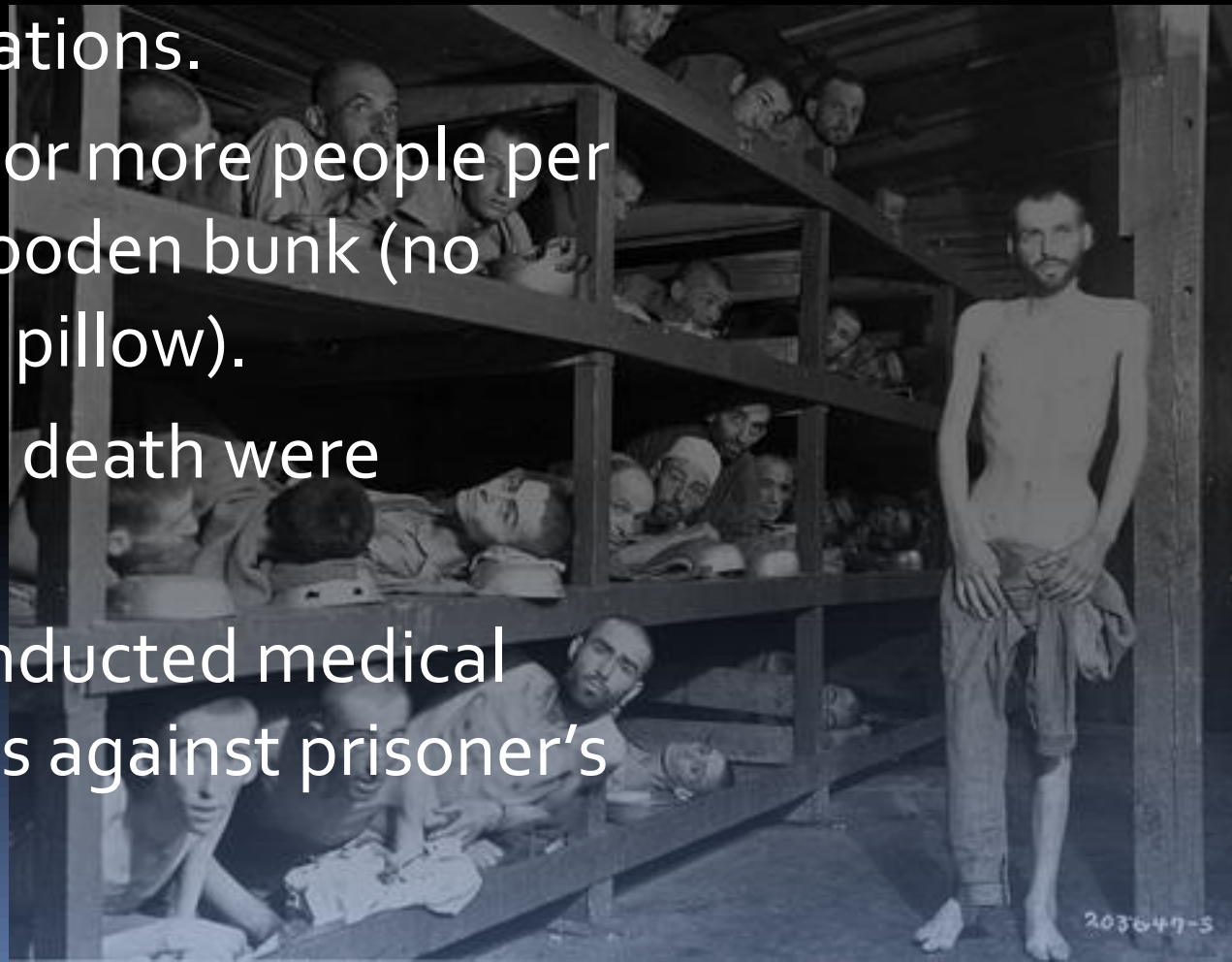
Concentration and Extermination Camps

- concentration camps, extermination camps, labor camps, prisoner-of-war camps, and transit camps.
- From 1933 to 1938 – most concentration camps housed only political prisoners (people who spoke out against Hitler)



Concentration and Extermination Camps

- Prisoners were forced to do hard physical labor and yet given tiny rations.
- Slept three or more people per crowded wooden bunk (no mattress or pillow).
- Torture and death were frequent.
- Doctors conducted medical experiments against prisoner's wills.



Purposes of camps

- Concentration camps - work and starve prisoners to death
- Extermination camps (aka death camps) - kill large groups of people quickly and efficiently
- Six extermination camps: Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka, Auschwitz, and Majdanek.



Concentration and Extermination Camps

- Prisoners transported to these extermination camps were told to undress to take a shower.
- Rather than a shower, the prisoners were herded into gas chambers and killed.
- Auschwitz – largest extermination camp – approx 1.1 million people killed

