

AP EUROPEAN HISTORY READINGS
CHAPTER 27: WORLD WAR II

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Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin at the Yalta Conference

February 1945

104 A JUSTIFICATION OF JAPANESE EXPANSIONISM

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Western powers began to strongly criticize Japan for its expansionist policies. This criticism reached its height in 1931, after Japan's unprovoked attack on Manchuria. Stung by what they considered Western interference in their internal affairs, the Japanese immediately issued a defense of their policies. In the excerpt below from Sources of the Japanese Tradition, compiled by Ryusaku Tsunoda, a Japanese government official offers the standard justification of expansionism. As you read the excerpt, note how the official defends his government's policies.

We have already said that there are only three ways left to Japan to escape from the pressure of surplus population. We are like a great crowd of people packed into a small and narrow room, and there are only three doors through which we might escape, namely emigration, advance into world markets, and expansion of territory. The first door, emigration, has been barred to us by the anti-Japanese immigration policies of other countries. The second door, advance into world markets, is being pushed shut by tariff barriers and the abrogation of commercial treaties. What should Japan do when two of the three doors have been closed against her?

It is quite natural that Japan should rush upon the last remaining door.

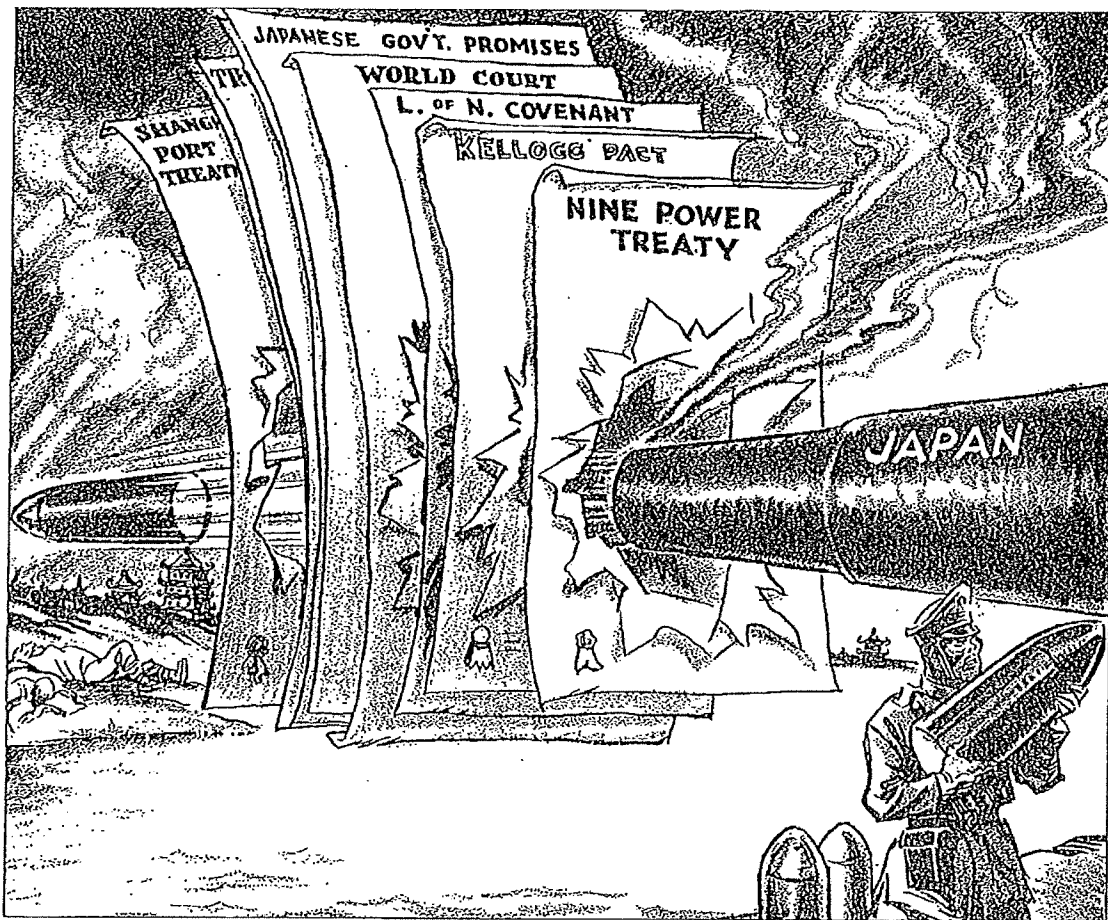
It may sound dangerous when we speak of territorial expansion, but the territorial expansion of which we speak does not in any sense of the word involve the occupation of the possessions of other countries, the planting of the Japanese flag thereon, and the declaration of their annexation to Japan. It is just that since the Powers [Western governments] have suppressed the circulation of Japanese materials and merchandise abroad, we are looking for some place overseas where Japanese capital, Japanese skills and Japanese labor can have free play, free from the oppression of the white race.

We would be satisfied with just this much. What moral right do the world powers who have themselves closed to us the two doors of emigration and advance into world markets have to criticize Japan's attempt to rush out of the third and last door?

If they do not approve of this, they should open the doors which they have closed against us and permit the free movement overseas of Japanese emigrants and merchandise. . . .

At the time of the Manchurian incident, the entire world joined in criticism of Japan. They said that Japan was an untrustworthy nation.

They said that she had recklessly brought cannon and machine guns into Manchuria, which was the territory of another country, flown air-



A cartoonist's view of Japanese aggressions

planes over it, and finally occupied it. But the military action taken by Japan was not in the least a selfish one. Moreover, we do not recall ever having taken so much as an inch of territory belonging to another nation. The result of this incident was the establishment of the splendid new nation of Manchuria. The Powers are still discussing whether or not to recognize this new nation, but regardless of whether or not other nations recognize her, the Manchurian empire has already been established, and now, seven years after its creation, the empire is further consolidating its foundations with the aid of its friend, Japan.

And if it is still protested that our actions in Manchuria were excessively violent, we may wish to ask the white race just which country it was that sent warships and troops to India, South Africa, and Australia and slaughtered innocent natives, bound their hands and feet with iron chains, lashed their backs with iron whips, proclaimed these territories as their own, and still continues to hold them to this very day?

They will invariably reply, these were all lands inhabited by untamed savages. These people did not know how to develop the abundant resources of their land for the benefit of mankind. Therefore it was

the wish of God, who created heaven and earth for mankind, for us to develop these underdeveloped lands and to promote the happiness of mankind in their stead. God wills it.

This is quite a convenient argument for them. Let us take it at face value. Then there is another question that we must ask them.

Suppose that there is still on this earth land endowed with abundant natural resources that have not been developed at all by the white race. Would it not then be God's will and the will of Providence that Japan go there and develop those resources for the benefit of mankind?

And there still remain many such lands on this earth.

READING REVIEW

1. What three "doors" were open to Japan to solve the problem of a surplus population?
2. How did the government official answer the charges that Japanese actions in Manchuria were too violent?
3. How did the government official turn the expansionist arguments of the West to support his country's case?

105 TWO POEMS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

Many writers and artists served in the International Brigade in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. Among these were English poets Laurie Lee and John Cornford. Lee survived the war and went on to become a widely-respected author, writing what many people consider to be one of the finest books on childhood, Cider With Rosie. Cornford, the youngest unit commander in the International Brigade, was killed in action in 1936, just one day after his twenty-first birthday. The excerpt below from Poetry of the Thirties, edited by Robin Skelton, contains poems by Lee and Cornford on their experiences in Spain. As you read the excerpt, compare the two poets' attitudes to war.

A Letter from Aragon

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.
We buried Ruiz in a new pine coffin,
But the shroud was too small and his washed feet stuck out.
The stink of his corpse came through the clean pine boards
And some of the bearers wrapped handkerchiefs round their faces.
Death was not dignified.
We hacked a ragged grave in the unfriendly earth
And fired a ragged volley over the grave.
You could tell from our listlessness, no one much missed him.

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.
There is no poison gas and no H.E.

But when they shelled the other end of the village
And the streets were choked with dust
Women came screaming out of the crumbling houses,
Clutched under one arm the naked rump of an infant.
I thought: how ugly fear is.

This is a quiet sector of a quiet front.
Our nerves are steady; we all sleep soundly.

In the clean hospital bed my eyes were so heavy
Sleep easily blotted out one ugly picture,
A wounded militiaman moaning on a stretcher,
Now out of danger, but still crying for water,
Strong against death, but unprepared for such pain.
This on a quiet front.

But when I shook hands to leave, an Anarchist worker
Said: 'Tell the workers of England
This was a war not of our making,
We did not seek it.
But if ever the Fascists again rule Barcelona
It will be as a heap of ruins with us workers beneath it.'

John Cornford, 1936

Music in a Spanish Town

In the street I take my stand
with my fiddle like a gun against my shoulder,
and the hot strings under my trigger hand
shooting an old dance at the evening walls.

Each salt-white house is a numbered tomb
its silent window crossed with blood;
my notes explode everywhere like bombs
when I should whisper in fear of the dead.

So my fingers falter, and run in the sun
like the limbs of a bird that is slain,
as my music searches the street in vain.

Suddenly there is a quick flutter of feet
and children crowd about me,
listening with sores and infected ears,
watching with lovely eyes and vacant lips.

Laurie Lee, 1936

READINGS IN WORLD HISTORY

1. Some people have described Cornford's poem as ironic. What do you think they meant by this?
2. Why did Lee think his music was out of place in the Spanish town?
3. How do the two poets' views of war compare? Explain your answer.

106 THE EVACUATION OF DUNKIRK

In late May of 1940, it appeared that the war was practically over. Some 400,000 Allied troops were trapped on the beaches of Dunkirk in northern France, the sea behind them, in front of them the advancing German army. But an armada of close to 900 ships—minesweepers, tugs, paddle steamers, lifeboats, fishing vessels, yachts, practically anything that would float—embarked on a rescue mission and brought 335,000 of the trapped soldiers back to Britain. In the excerpt below from Masterpieces of War Reporting, edited by Louis L. Snyder, Douglas Williams, a reporter with the London Daily Telegraph, describes the evacuation of Dunkirk. As you read the excerpt, consider the great impact the rescue mission had on Allied morale.

AT A SOUTHEAST COAST PORT, JUNE 1, 1940. Undeterred by heavy German gunfire and constant bombing, which increased as the day wore on, the Navy today continued the stupendous task of ferrying the B.E.F. [British Expeditionary Forces] home to England across the Channel under the very noses of the encircling German army.

As the German forces thrust impatiently against the British rear-guard a number of boats of all sizes and descriptions shuttled to and fro across the 45 miles of water in an intensive effort to evacuate the large body of soldiers still remaining on the beaches around Dunkirk.

From dawn this morning I stood for hours on the dock and watched a succession of vessels, British, French, Dutch, and Belgian, unloading endless columns of tired, hungry, dirty but cheerful British and French soldiers, rescued as by a miracle at the eleventh hour from what had a couple of days ago appeared to them inevitable elimination.

To-day I saw one tiny craft measuring less than 25 feet long arriving loaded to the gunwales with 25 men having taken 12 hours to make the crossing.

The men so fortunately snatched from enemy hands had most of them been lying for hours—some for days—on beaches around Dunkirk, hungry and thirsty, constantly bombed and machine-gunned by low-flying aircraft, yet maintaining perfect discipline, raising no murmur of complaint and patiently awaiting the orders of their officers to embark.

The vessels waiting to transport them to safety were compelled owing to the shallowness of the water to lie at least half a mile off the beach, and to reach the small boats in which to cross this gap many of the men had to wade waist or even neck deep though water covered with a thick scum of oil from the petrol tanks destroyed by the Royal Air Force at Dunkirk. . . .

All day long and during the night evacuation continued. Rescue vessels raced across the Channel loaded with men to the fullest capacity as fast as conditions would permit, steamed back at full speed across the narrow strip of water to return again with undiminished enthusiasm for fresh batches. . . .

Their [the troops] position at Dunkirk becomes hourly more dangerous as German batteries begin to receive a full allotment of ammunition from their supply columns. Shelling of the town directed at the moles to destroy the landing jetties becomes more and more intense.

Parts of the town are in flames, and entire quarters in ruins. Outside, the main roads present scenes of confusion and destruction. Innumerable abandoned motor-cars and lorries lie ditched in every field, while others set alight blaze fiercely.

Bodies of refugees killed by German machine-gun bullets are seen at frequent intervals, and everywhere long lines of soldiers hurry down to the sea and safety.

Yet the work of evacuation continues uninterruptedly with calm efficiency, while a powerful rear-guard fights magnificently to delay the constantly increasing masses of German troops that are being thrown into the fight in one last desperate attempt to capture the remainder of our force before it can be embarked. . . .

Arrangements for receiving the thousands of men as they land are excellent. From the quayside, where each receives an apple and a piece of chocolate to stay their hunger, they are marshaled into waiting trains and proceed to a point where they find ready for them a hot meal. . . .

They are then reloaded into their trains and taken to a certain depot where they are routed to barracks in various Commands to be reclothed and relaxed by a bath and rest.

I was enormously impressed by their wonderful condition and good spirits. Many sang "Roll out the Barrel" as they waited to disembark or gave three cheers for the ships' companies.

All showed the strain of the past few days of hunger, sleeplessness and constant attack printed on their faces in heavy lines of fatigue.

Most of them had their equipment and rifles, and while their uniforms were soiled, very few showed any hint of untidiness or neglect. None showed the slightest sign of demoralization or discouragement. . . .

As I left the dock two young RMAC [Royal Medical Auxiliary Corps] doctors rushed up to me. "Which destroyer," they asked, "is the next to go back to Dunkirk? We have urgent orders to proceed there to reinforce the medical staff."

I stared at them in amazed admiration of their courage.

That the town was in flames, that every hour German occupation became more and more inevitable had apparently not entered their minds. They had their orders, they would carry them out.

"I stared at them in amazed admiration of their courage."

READING REVIEW

1. Why did many of the rescue ships have to lie at least half a mile off Dunkirk's beaches?
2. Why did the Germans throw more and more troops into the fight at Dunkirk?
3. In an editorial on the rescue mission, an American reporter wrote: "So long as the English tongue survives, the word Dunkirk will be spoken with reverence." What do you think the reporter meant by this?

exemplified by the establishment of a Labour government in Britain in 1945?

Fourth, European powers were unable to hold on to all their colonies in the two decades following the war. What were some of the arguments made and the strategies used in the struggle over decolonization? What role did the United Nations play in this struggle? How were problems in the Middle East related to the struggle over decolonization and the actions of the United Nations?

Fifth, several social and cultural developments marked this era. One of the most important of these was feminism. Art and the media took new turns during this period, challenging viewers' expectations. What was the nature of

these developments? How did they reflect the rapid pace of historical change during this period?

While these developments have undergone some modification in the last thirty years, they remain part of the present along with other trends that will be examined in the final chapter.

✎ For Classroom Discussion

Hold a debate between the two sides of the Cold War. Use the excerpts by Gornly, Ponomarev, and the selections from the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.



Primary Sources

The Battle of Britain

Mrs. Robert Henrey

In July 1940 the Germans unleashed massive air attacks against Britain in preparation for an invasion of the island nation. For almost two months, the Germans bombed London every night. In cellars and subway stations, the British people holed up while their planes and anti-aircraft guns fought off the Germans. By November, the British had won the Battle of Britain. The following excerpt is from account by Mrs. Robert Henrey, who lived in London's West End and survived the attacks.

CONSIDER: *The effects of the bombings on the morale of the British people; the symbolic importance of St. Paul's Cathedral.*

Bombs fell by day as well as by night. We became accustomed to the sudden drone of an airplane in the middle of the morning, the screech of a bomb, the dull crash of its explosion and the smell of cordite that filled the air a moment later. The sight of a burned-out bus unexpectedly in Berkeley Square, the ruins of a shop still half-hidden in a cloud of dust, streets that were impassable because of time bombs, enemy planes that burst in mid air sending down large chunks of fuselage, the pilots gliding down with their parachutes, became the normal things of life. . . . Almost every night some landmark near us would go up in dust. . . .

From the very first night of the battle for London [1940], because of the fires in the east which lit up the dome, St. Paul's Cathedral had become a symbol of

London's defiance. As long ago as the night of the 12th September a large delayed-action bomb hurtled down south of the granite posts and buried itself twenty-seven feet deep. Everybody knew that if it exploded there would be nothing left of St. Paul's. For three days men worked to dig it out. Then it was driven in state to Hackney Marshes on a lorry under the command of Lt. Davies, a Canadian who became a national hero.

Even for a very ordinary housewife living with her baby in the West End, St. Paul's could never for long be out of her mind. Almost every evening from the flat roof of Carrington House we peered east and prayed that it might stand.

A German Soldier at Stalingrad

William Hoffman

In June 1941 German forces turned eastward and invaded the Soviet Union. The German war machine advanced quickly until the Russian winter and Soviet resistance slowed them down. In June 1942 the Germans went on the offensive again. In August they reached the outskirts of Stalingrad, a crucial industrial city on the Volga River. The battle raged for six months and was so fierce that the city was virtually destroyed. More than a million Soviet soldiers and civilians lost their lives. In the end Russian forces managed to trap what remained of Germany's exhausted Sixth Army, win the battle of Stalingrad, and turn the tide on the eastern front.

The following are excerpts from the diary of a German soldier, William Hoffman, who lost his life in the fighting.

SOURCE: Mrs. Robert Henrey, *London Under Fire, 1940-1945* (London: J. M. Dent, The Orion Publishing Group, 1969), pp. 43-44.



SOURCE: Vasili Chuikov, *The Battle for Stalingrad* (Chelmsford, U.K.: Grafton Books, HarperCollins Publishers Ltd., 1964), pp. 248-254.

CONSIDER: *Hoffman's attitudes about the war in Russia, German prospects, and Hitler during July and August 1942; Hoffman's view of the Russians; the causes for Hoffman's discouragement and despair during September, October, and November 1942.*

July 3, 1942. . . . Today, after we'd had a bath, the company commander told us that if our future operations are as successful, we'll soon reach the Volga, take Stalingrad and then the war will inevitably soon be over. Perhaps we'll be home by Christmas.

July 29 1942. . . . The company commander says the Russian troops are completely broken, and cannot hold out any longer. To reach the Volga and take Stalingrad is not so difficult for us. The Führer knows where the Russians' weak point is. Victory is not far away. . . .

August 2. . . . What great spaces the Soviets occupy, what rich fields there are to be had here after the war's over! Only let's get it over with quickly. I believe that the Führer will carry the thing through to a successful end.

September 4. We are being sent northward along the front towards Stalingrad. We marched all night and by dawn had reached Voroponovo Station. We can already see the smoking town. It's a happy thought that the end of the war is getting nearer. That's what everyone is saying. If only the days and nights would pass more quickly. . . .

September 5. Our regiment has been ordered to attack Sadovaya station—that's nearly in Stalingrad. Are the Russians really thinking of holding out in the city itself? We had no peace all night from the Russian artillery and aeroplanes. Lots of wounded are being brought by. God protect me. . . .

September 8. Two days of non-stop fighting. The Russians are defending themselves with insane stubbornness. Our regiment has lost many men. . . .

September 13. . . . The Russians are fighting desperately like wild beasts, don't give themselves up, but come up close and then throw grenades. Lieutenant Kraus was killed yesterday, and there is no company commander.

September 16. Our battalion, plus tanks, is attacking. . . . Barbarism. The battalion is suffering heavy losses. . . .

September 18. . . . The Russians inside are condemned men; the battalion commander says: "The commissars have ordered those men to die in the elevator."

If all the buildings of Stalingrad are defended like this then none of our soldiers will get back to Germany. I had

a letter from Elsa today. She's expecting me home when victory's won.

October 10. The Russians are so close to us that our planes cannot bomb them. We are preparing for a decisive attack. The Führer has ordered the whole of Stalingrad to be taken as rapidly as possible.

October 22. We have lost many men; every time you move you have to jump over bodies. You can scarcely breathe in the daytime: there is nowhere and no one to remove the bodies, so they are left there to rot. Who would have thought three months ago that instead of the joy of victory we would have to endure such sacrifice and torture, the end of which is nowhere in sight? . . .

The soldiers are calling Stalingrad the mass grave of the Wehrmacht [German army]. There are very few men left in the companies.

October 28. Every soldier sees himself as a condemned man. The only hope is to be wounded and taken back to the rear. . . .

November 10. A letter from Elsa today. Everyone expects us home for Christmas. In Germany everyone believes we already hold Stalingrad. How wrong they are. If they could only see what Stalingrad has done to our army.

November 18. Our attack with tanks yesterday had no success. After our attack the field was littered with dead.

November 21. The Russians have gone over to the offensive along the whole front. Fierce fighting is going on. So, there it is—the Volga, victory and soon home to our families! We shall obviously be seeing them next in the other world.

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

During World War II the Soviet Union and the United States were allied against their common enemies, the Axis powers. Shortly after the end of the war, animosity began to reappear between the former allies. By 1947 that animosity had risen to

SOURCE: U.S. Congress, *Congressional Record*, 80th Congress, 1st Session (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947), vol. 93, p. 1981.

SOURCE: U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *A Decade of American Foreign Policy: Basic Documents, 1941–1949* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), pp. 1270–1271.

The Informed Heart: Nazi Concentration Camps

Bruno Bettelheim

Organized, official racial persecution, particularly of the Jews, was a direct consequence of Nazi theories, attitudes, and practices. During the 1920s and early 1930s, however, the extent of the persecution was unanticipated. The most extreme form of this occurred in the late 1930s, with the introduction of forced labor and concentration camps, later to be followed by camps in which a policy of literal extermination was pursued resulting in the killing of millions of Jews and others. In the following selection Bruno Bettelheim, a psychoanalyst in Austria at the time and later a leading psychoanalyst in the United States, describes his experiences in the concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald. He focuses on the dehumanizing processes involved and some of the ways prisoners adapted in an effort to survive.

CONSIDER: *The methods used to gain control over the prisoners; the psychological means developed by Bettelheim and other prisoners to cope with and survive this experience; how the existence, nature, and functioning of these camps reflect the theory and practice of Nazi totalitarianism.*

Usually the standard initiation of prisoners took place during transit from the local prison to the camp. If the distance was short, the transport was often slowed down to allow enough time to break the prisoners. During their initial transport to the camp, prisoners were exposed to nearly constant torture. The nature of the abuse depended on the fantasy of the particular SS man in charge of a group of prisoners. Still, they all had a definite pattern. Physical punishment consisted of whipping, frequent kicking (abdomen or groin), slaps in the face, shooting, or wounding with the bayonet. These alternated with attempts to produce extreme exhaustion. For instance, prisoners were forced to stare for hours into glaring lights, to kneel for hours, and so on.

From time to time a prisoner got killed, but no prisoner was allowed to care for his or another's wounds. The guards also forced prisoners to hit one another and to defile what the SS considered the prisoners' most cherished values. They were forced to curse their God, to accuse themselves and one another of vile actions, and their wives of adultery and prostitution. . . .

The purpose of this massive initial abuse was to traumatize the prisoners and break their resistance; to change at least their behavior if not yet their personalities. This could be seen from the fact that tortures became less and

less violent to the degree that prisoners stopped resisting and complied immediately with any SS order, even the most outrageous. . . .

It is hard to say just how much the process of personal-ity change was speeded up by what prisoners experienced during the initiation. Most of them were soon totally exhausted; physically from abuse, loss of blood, thirst, etc.; psychologically from the need to control their anger and desperation before it could lead to a suicidal resistance. . . .

If I should try to sum up in one sentence what my main problem was during the whole time I spent in the camps, it would be: to protect my inner self in such a way that if, by any good fortune, I should regain liberty, I would be approximately the same person I was when deprived of liberty. So it seems that a split was soon forced upon me, the split between the inner self that might be able to retain its integrity, and the rest of the personality that would have to submit and adjust for survival. . . .

I have no doubt that I was able to endure the horrors of the transport and all that followed, because right from the beginning I became convinced that these dreadful and degrading experiences were somehow not happening to "me" as a subject, but only "me" as an object. . . .

All thoughts and feelings I had during the transport were extremely detached. It was as if I watched things happening in which I took part only vaguely. . . .

This was taught me by a German political prisoner, a communist worker who by then had been at Dachau for four years. I arrived there in a sorry condition because of experiences on the transport. I think that this man, by then an "old" prisoner, decided that, given my condition, the chances of my surviving without help were slim. So when he noticed that I could not swallow food because of physical pain and psychological revulsion, he spoke to me out of his rich experience: "Listen you, make up your mind: do you want to live or do you want to die? If you don't care, don't eat the stuff. But if you want to live, there's only one way: make up your mind to eat whenever and whatever you can, never mind how disgusting. Whenever you have a chance, defecate, so you'll be sure your body works. And whenever you have a minute, don't blabber, read by yourself, or flop down and sleep."

Witness to the Holocaust

Fred Baron

In the 1940s, the Nazis instituted the "final solution" to exterminate Jews and others that Hitler considered enemies of the state. The Nazis built several huge death camps, employing terror and factory-like methods to kill their victims. Only a

SOURCE: Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart: Autonomy in a Mass Age*. Reprinted by permission of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. Copyright © 1960 by The Free Press, a corporation.

SOURCE: Rhoda G. Lewin, ed., *Witnesses to the Holocaust: An Oral History*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1990, pp. 10-12.

few survived, but some who did managed to tell the story. One of these was Fred Baron, an Austrian Jew who was sent to the death camp at Auschwitz in occupied Poland. Here he tells of his deportation and experiences at the camp.

CONSIDER: *The methods used by Nazis to gain obedience and effect extermination; the nature of life for those in the camps.*

Deportation: I was marched with the local Jewish population—men, women, and children—eight or ten hours, to a small railroad station. Nobody told us where we were going. We were forced into railroad cars, 100 to 120 in one car, like sardines, without food, without water, without any sanitary facility. The cars were sealed and we stood there for maybe half a day before even moving. Finally, began the slow trip to nowhere.

There were children in our car, and old people. People got sick, died, and some went insane. It was an absolute, indescribable hell. I really don't know how many days and nights we were in that living hell on wheels.

When we finally stopped, they tore open the railroad cars and we were blinded by light, because our eyes were just not used to light any more. We saw funny-looking characters wearing striped pajama-like uniforms with matching caps, with great big sticks in their hands. They were screaming and yelling in all languages to jump out of the cars.

I didn't know where I was. All around us were barracks and barbed wire and machine gun towers, and in the distance I saw what looked like a huge factory with black smoke coming out of chimneys. I noticed a peculiar smell in the air and also a fine dust, subduing the light. The sunshine was not bright but there were birds singing. It was a beautiful day.

We were marched through a meadow filled with yellow flowers and one of the fellows next to me just turned and walked straight into the meadow. The guards cried out to him to stop, but he didn't hear or he didn't want to. He just kept slowly marching into the meadow, and then they opened up with machine guns and the man fell down dead. And that was my reception to Auschwitz.

Auschwitz: We were separated, men and women, and formed rows of fives. I found myself in front of a very elegantly dressed German officer. He was wearing boots and white gloves and he carried a riding whip, and with the whip he was pointing left or right, left or right. Whichever direction he pointed, guards pushed the person in front of him either left or right. I was twenty-one years old and in pretty good shape, but older people were sent to the other side and marched away.

We had to undress and throw away all belongings except our shoes. We were chased through a cold shower, and we stood shivering in the night air until we were told to march to a barracks. We were handed prisoner uniforms—a jacket, pants, and a sort of beanie—and a

metal dish. We didn't really know what happened yet. We were absolutely numb.

A non-Jewish kapo, an Austrian with a hard, weather-beaten face, told us, "You have arrived at hell on earth." He had been in prison since 1938, and he gave us basic concepts on how to stay alive.

"Don't trust anybody," he said, "don't trust your best friend. Look out for yourself. Be selfish to the point of obscenity. Try and stay alive from one minute to the other one. Don't let down for one second. Always try and find out where the nearest guards are and what they are doing. Don't volunteer for anything. And don't get sick, or you will be a goner in no time."

Auschwitz was gigantic—row and rows of barracks as far as the eye could see, subdivided by double strings of electric barbed wire. There were Hungarians and Polish Jews and a great number of Greeks, many Dutch Jews, some French, Germans.

Food was our main interest in life. In the morning we received what they called coffee—black water. We worked until noon, then we got a bowl of soup. In the evening we received another bowl of either vegetable or soup, a little piece of bread, and sometimes a tiny little piece of margarine or sugar or some kind of sausage. And that was the food for the day.

Suicides happened all the time, usually by hanging, at night. One fellow threw himself in front of a truck. It just broke his arm, but the S.S. guards beat him to a pulp, and in the morning he was dead.

A tremendous number of transports were coming in. The gas chambers could not keep up, so they were burning people in huge pits. Some of the smaller children were thrown in alive. We could hear the screams day and night, but sometimes the human mind can take just so much and then it just closes up and refuses to accept what is happening just 100, 200 feet away.

Problems of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R.: Soviet Collectivization

Joseph Stalin


Joseph Stalin (1879–1953) rose from his working-class origins to become a leading member of the Bolsheviks before the 1917 revolution, the general secretary of the Russian Communist party in 1922, and the unchallenged dictator of the U.S.S.R. by 1929. In 1927 Stalin and the leadership of the Russian Communist party decided on a policy for the planned industrialization of the U.S.S.R.—the First Five-Year Plan. At the same time they decided on a policy favoring the collectivization

SOURCE: J. V. Stalin, "Problems of Agrarian Policy in the U.S.S.R.," in *Problems of Leninism*, ed. J. V. Stalin (Moscow: Foreign Languages, 1940), pp. 303–305, 318–321. Reprinted by permission of the Copyright Agency of the U.S.S.R.

READING QUESTIONS

1. What are the different ways in which Soviet soldiers are portrayed in the two images? How might this reflect a changing appreciation of the nature of the war?
2. How could the use of aristocratic generals from the nineteenth century be reconciled with the official Soviet emphasis on breaking with that tradition?
3. Why might Soviet citizens have found the later poster more inspiring than the earlier one?

27-5 | Freedom's Last Line of Defense


WINSTON CHURCHILL, *Speech Before the House of Commons* (June 18, 1940)

Once World War II began in 1939, much of central and western Europe quickly fell to the German *blitzkrieg* strategy. After sending troops to aid the French against the Germans in 1940, the British army lost most of its tanks, trucks, and other heavy equipment while evacuating from Dunkirk following a decisive Nazi victory. Germany held the deep-water ports along the English Channel crucial for an invasion, and had the most feared air force in Europe. Facing these grim prospects, Churchill addressed the House of Commons to rally a nation unenthusiastic about another war.

The military events which have happened during the past fortnight have not come to me with any sense of surprise. Indeed, I indicated a fortnight ago as clearly as I could to the House that the worst possibilities were open, and I made it perfectly clear then that whatever happened in France would make no difference to the resolve of Britain and the British Empire to fight on, "if necessary for years, if necessary alone." During the last few days we have successfully brought off the great majority of the troops we had on the lines of communication in France—a very large number, scores of thousands—and seven-eighths of the troops we have sent to France since the beginning of the war, that is to say, about 350,000 out of 400,000 men, are safely back in this country. Others are still fighting with the French, and fighting with considerable success in their local encounters with the enemy. We have also brought back a great mass of stores, rifles, and munitions of all kinds which had been accumulated in France during the last nine months.

From Winston Churchill, "June 18, 1940, *Speech Before House of Commons*," in *The Past Speaks*, 2013. <https://www.britain.gov.uk/education/learning-resources/1940-1945>

We have, therefore, in this island to-day a very large and powerful military force. . . . This brings me, naturally, to the great question of invasion from the air and of the impending struggle between the British and German air forces. It seems quite clear that no invasion on a scale beyond the capacity of our land forces to crush speedily is likely to take place from the air until our air force has been definitely overpowered. In the meantime, there may be raids by parachute troops and attempted descents of airborne soldiers. We should be able to give those gentry a warm reception both in the air and if they reach the ground in any condition to continue the dispute. But the great question is, can we break Hitler's air weapon? Now, of course, it is a very great pity that we have not got an air force at least equal to that of the most powerful enemy within striking distance of these shores. But we have a very powerful air force which has proved itself far superior in quality, both in men and in many types of machine, to what we have met so far in the numerous fierce air battles which have been fought. In France, where we were at a considerable disadvantage and lost many machines on the ground, we were accustomed to inflict losses of as much as two to two and a half to one. In the fighting over Dunkirk, which was a sort of no man's land, we undoubtedly beat the German air force, and this gave us the mastery locally in the air, and we inflicted losses of three or four to one. . . .

There remains the danger of bombing attacks, which will certainly be made very soon upon us by the bomber forces of the enemy. It is true that the German bomber force is superior in numbers to ours, but we have a very large bomber force also which we shall use to strike at military targets in Germany without intermission. I do not at all underrate the severity of the ordeal which lies before us, but I believe our countrymen will show themselves capable of standing up to it. . . .

What General Weygand¹ called the "Battle of France" is over. I expect that the battle of Britain is about to begin. Upon this battle depends the survival of Christian civilization. Upon it depends our own British life and the long continuity of our institutions and our empire. The whole fury and might of the enemy must very soon be turned on us. Hitler knows that he will have to break us in this island or lose the war. If we can stand up to him all Europe may be free, and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands, but if we fail then the whole world, including the United States, and all that we have known and cared for, will sink into the abyss of a new dark age made more sinister, and perhaps more prolonged, by the lights of a perverted science. Let us therefore brace ourselves to our duty and so bear ourselves that if the British Commonwealth and Empire lasts for a thousand years men will still say, "This was their finest hour."

¹General Weygand: General Maxime Weygand took command of all French forces on May 17, 1940, and held that post until the French surrender, after which he collaborated with the German occupation.

READING QUESTIONS

1. What reasons would Churchill have for mentioning the United States specifically in the last paragraph? For what audiences might this speech have been intended?
2. What could this speech reveal about Churchill's attitude toward the British citizenry and the concept of democratic rule in general?
3. How did Churchill characterize the situation facing the British people? Do you find his assessment convincing? Why or why not?

27-6 | Legislating Racial Purity

The Nuremberg Laws: The Centerpiece of Nazi Racial Legislation (1935)

Anti-Semitism was never a mere aspect of Hitler's political ideology; it was central to his vision of a new Germany. In Hitler's view, the achievement of Germany's national potential, its historical destiny, depended on the exclusion of the Jews from German life. The Jews were responsible for all of Germany's past miseries and, if left to their own devices, would do everything in their power to sabotage and undermine the construction of the glorious National Socialist future. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws, excerpted here, were the first formal steps toward Hitler's goal of a "Jew-free" Germany.

Article 5

1. A Jew is anyone who descended from at least three grandparents who were racially full Jews. Article 2, par. 2, second sentence will apply.
2. A Jew is also one who descended from two full Jewish parents, if: (a) he belonged to the Jewish religious community at the time this law was issued, or who joined the Jewish community later; (b) he was married to a Jewish person, at the time the law was issued, or married one subsequently; (c) he is the offspring from a marriage with a Jew, in the sense of Section 1, which was contracted after the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor became effective. . . . (d) he is the offspring of an extramarital relationship, with a Jew, according to Section 1, and will be born out of wedlock after July 31, 1936. . . .

From U.S. Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), vol. 4, doc. no. 1417-PS, pp. 8–10; vol. 4, doc. no. 2000-PS, pp. 636–638.

Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor of 15 September 1935

Thoroughly convinced by the knowledge that the purity of German blood is essential for the further existence of the German people and animated by the inflexible will to safe-guard the German nation for the entire future, the Reichstag¹ has resolved upon the following law unanimously, which is promulgated herewith:

Section 1

1. Marriages between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden. Marriages concluded in defiance of this law are void, even if, for the purpose of evading this law, they are concluded abroad. . . .

Section 2

Relation[s] outside marriage between Jews and nationals of German or kindred blood are forbidden.

Section 3

Jews will not be permitted to employ female nationals of German or kindred blood in their household.

Section 4

1. Jews are forbidden to hoist the Reich and national flag and to present the colors of the Reich. . . .

Section 5

1. A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of section 1 will be punished with hard labor.
2. A person who acts contrary to the prohibition of section 2 will be punished with imprisonment or with hard labor.
3. A person who acts contrary to the provisions of sections 3 or 4 will be punished with imprisonment up to a year and with a fine or with one of these penalties.

¹Reichstag: German legislative assembly; a holdover from Bismarck's Second Empire (1871–1919) that had little real power after it granted Hitler "temporary" dictatorial powers in March 1933.

READING QUESTIONS

1. According to the law, what made someone a Jew? Why is it important to the Nazis to establish a legal definition of Jewish status?
2. What do the laws tell you about the importance of biological "purity" in Nazi ideology?
3. Why might Jews have been forbidden to raise the national and Reich flags? What does this provision of the law suggest about the Nazi vision of the relationship of German Jews to the German nation as a whole?

27-7 | The First Steps Toward a "Final Solution"

ALFRED ROSENBERG, *The Jewish Question as a World Problem* (1941)

German military conquests in the early years of World War II allowed the Nazis to expand the scope of their anti-Jewish policies. What began as an effort to create a "Jew-free" Germany became a global crusade to resolve, once and for all, the "Jewish question." The Nazi propagandist and party official Alfred Rosenberg gave this speech on the "world Jewish problem" in a radio address in March of 1941. A few months later, he was appointed Reich Minister for the Occupied Eastern Territories. In the speech, Rosenberg rejected the idea of a Jewish state, outlined Germany's plans for Europe's Jews, and argued that world peace would be possible only when these plans had been brought to fruition.

The war which is being waged today by the German armed forces under the highest command of Adolf Hitler, is therefore a war of an immense reform. It does not only overcome the world of ideas of the French revolution, but it also exterminates directly all those racially infecting germs of Jewry and its bastards, which now since over a hundred years could develop without check among the European nations. The Jew question which for 2000 years was a problem for the European nations which was not solved, will now find its solution through the national socialistic revolution for Germany and whole Europe.

And if one asks, in which form, then we have to say the following to this: During these decades a lot has been talked about a Jewish state as solution, and Zionism appears to some harmless people perhaps even today as an honest attempt to contribute on the part of the Jews also something toward the solution of the Jewish question.

In reality there never was nor will there ever be a Jewish State.

Contrary to the other nations on this globe, Judaism is no vertical organization which comprises all professions, but has been always a horizontal class

among the different nations, that class which carried on material and spiritual intermediate trade. Secondly, the space being considered in Palestine is in no way suitable for any Jewish state. It is too small to absorb what was formerly 10 and is now 15 million Jews; in other words, therefore impractical for solving the Jewish question. The purpose of Zionism, in reality, was not to solve the Jewish question in the sense of the coordination of the whole Jewish people, but lay in an entirely different direction.

It was intended to build in Palestine a purely Jewish center, a real legitimate Jewish state in order to be able, at first, to be represented at all diplomatic conferences with full rights as national Jew.

Secondly it was intended to make Palestine into a huge, economic staging area against the entire Near East. Thirdly, this Jewish state should have been an asylum for all those Jewish adventurers in the world who were evicted from the countries in which they acted. And, finally, nobody was even thinking of limiting even in the slightest, the so-called state civil rights of the Jews in Germany, England, America, and also France. The Jews therefore, would have maintained the rights of the Germans, Englishmen, Frenchmen etc., and the spaceless Jewish world state would have come constantly closer toward its realization, that is, an all-Jewish center without any interference of non-Jews and the Jewish high finance at the state rudder in all other countries of the world.

This dream is now finished. Now, just the reverse, we have to think of how and where to put the Jews. This can, as mentioned, not be done in a Jewish state, but only in a way which I shall call the Jewish reservation.

It is to be hoped that future statesmen will get together in order to gradually institute a settlement of Jews who, under experienced police supervision, now should do such useful work as they wanted to see done until now by non-Jews.

From an almost unlimited Jewish rule in all European countries to such a radical reverse, to an evacuation of this same Jewish race after 2,000 years of parasitism on the European continent, then only can one conceive through this an idea what an enormous philosophical and political revolution is in the making in Europe today.

Today the Jewish question is somewhat clear before our eyes. It is the problem of a simple national purity. It means the necessity for defense of inherent national tradition for all nations which still value culture and future. It is still a problem of economy for all those who cannot solve the social questions under the Jewish financial dictatorship. It is a political problem of power, because in many states the will has not yet been found to break this financial dictatorship of the Jewry. And, lastly, it is a historically ideological problem, given to the Europeans since the days when the first Jews immigrated to Rome. The totality of this as national socialist, have but one clear answer for all these questions:

For Germany the Jewish Question is only then solved, when the Last Jew has left the Greater German space.

Since Germany with its blood and its nationalism has now broken for always this Jewish dictatorship for all Europe, and has seen to it that Europe as a whole will become free from the Jewish parasitism once more, we may, I believe, also

say for all Europeans: For Europe the Jewish question is only then solved, when the last Jew has left the European continent.

At that, it does not matter whether such a program can be realized in five, ten or twenty years. The transportation facilities in our time, if all nations join, would be strong enough to institute and to execute such a resettlement to a great extent. But the problem must and will one day be solved as we have visualized it from the first day of our fight—then accused utopists—and now proclaim it as strict realistic politicians. All nations are interested in the solution of this question, and we must declare here with all passion:

In this cleaning-up even Mr. Roosevelt with his Baruchs and his trophy film Jews will not be able to hamper us, but wholly to the contrary, just this proclamation that the Jewish parasitical spirit shall represent today the freedom of the world, will especially awaken all resistance of the German character, and the strongest military instrument which history has seen, the German Armed forces of Adolf Hitler, will take care of it that this last furious attempt to let the white race once more march against Europe for the benefit of the Jewish financial dominion, will find an end for all times.

We are of the opinion that this great war constitutes also a cleansing biological world revolution and that also those nations which are still opposed to us, will recognize at the end of the war, that Germany's business is today the business of the whole European continent, the business of the whole Jewish race, but also the business of all other cultured races on this globe who fight for a safe national cultural and state life. Thus we hope that one day, in a reasonable distribution of the great living spaces of this globe the nations will find that peace, that work and that prosperity which for decades have been harassed by never-tiring parasitical activity. Thus, we consider today the Jewish question as one of the most important problems among the total politics of Europe, as a problem which must be solved and will be solved, and we hope, yes, we know already today, that all nations of Europe will march behind this cleansing at the end.

READING QUESTIONS

1. Why did Rosenberg reject the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine?
2. What solution did Rosenberg put forward for the "Jewish question"? Does it seem practical to you? Why or why not?
3. How did Rosenberg justify the expulsion of Europe's Jews and their confinement in a Jewish "reservation"?
4. In what ways did Rosenberg's speech foreshadow the Nazis eventual efforts to exterminate Europe's Jews? In your opinion, were schemes such as the one Rosenberg outlined ever truly entertained, or did Nazi leaders have extermination in mind from the beginning?

■ COMPARATIVE AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ■

1. What similarities can you see between German and Soviet attitudes toward their citizens, and how might this contrast with the British attitude expressed by Churchill?
2. Apply Hitler's definition of effective propaganda to Churchill's speech. Where does it seem Churchill agrees with Hitler's principles, and where does it seem he departs from them?
3. What connections can you make between the Nuremberg Laws and Rosenberg's speech on the "Jewish question"? In what ways was Rosenberg's plan a logical extension of the laws?
4. How might Child have responded to Churchill's speech? How might he have characterized the coming war?