

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

English 8: Novel Study

*The Cage*

**Directions:** Read the following document about the Holocaust and answer the questions that follow. Please remember to write in **complete sentences** or you will receive no credit for your responses.

### The 1930s in Europe

Hitler's rise to power demonstrates how a clever and ruthless leader can turn a country's institutions into racist endeavors in just a very few short years.

Germany in the 1920s: Germany suffered from an economic crisis and inflation during the 1920s. They were humiliated at the countries defeat in WWI and the subsequent Treaty of Versailles. The Great Depression, which began in 1929, caused furthered social and political tension. The country's democratic government was unable to resolve the situation and the German labor movement carried on the lion's share of the political struggle against extreme-right groups such as Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party.

By the end of 1932, more than 70,000 of Frankfurt's population was unemployed. The working class was hit particularly hard at this time. Workers lost their jobs; farmers, their land; civilians, their savings. The Nazi Party profited from this situation by recruiting more and more followers. Hitler blames Germany's problems not only on the government, which he described as weak, but also on the Jews. Hitler used society's need for a scapegoat for all the problems, and he blamed the Jews.

In 1932, Hitler won the German elections and was made chancellor in 1933. He eventually gained absolute power with the so-called Enabling Law, which allowed him to bypass the constitution and effectively, to pass whatever law he liked. On July 14, 1933, he declared all other parties besides the Nazi Party illegal.

Hitler's power was then absolute. He was effectively a dictator, supported and advised by a close circle. One of his advisors developed a protection squad into an elite unit in charge of concentration camps.

As of May 10, 1933, the German's Workers Front was the only union allowed to operate. All workers were forced to become members. Workers and their employees had to cooperate with the Nazis, and strikes were forbidden.

Teenagers and young adults are forced to work an allotted period of time for small wages, and while they worked, they were brainwashed in the Nazi ideology.

Nazism was dependent upon propaganda. Mass meetings, photographs, posters, and stamps were all used to distribute Nazi ideology. It was the most important instrument of the Gleichschaltung- the philosophy (idea) of making everyone think the same way.

On April 1, 1933, an official boycott of Jewish shopkeepers, doctors and lawyers was made. All civil servants with one or more Jewish grandparents were fired. Jewish business owners were forced to sell their property at a price fixed by the Nazis. After the Nazis would obtain the business, they would fire all Jewish workers.

The Nazi party appeared to take care of everything, from recreation and vacations to art, culture, and health care for mothers and children. This "care" only applied to those who were racially "pure" and mentally and physically healthy.

The Nazis believed that a healthy nation should not spend money on the mentally disabled. Beginning in October 1939, on Hitler's orders, thousands were quietly killed. 80,000 mentally and physically disabled people (men, women and children) were killed in two years. In the last years of Hitler's rule, another 130,000 patients died of starvation or cold.

The Nazis encouraged large families. More children meant more future soldiers, but they had to be Aryan-healthy and racially "pure".

Beginning in 1933, only one youth organization is allowed- The Hitler Youth Movement. Boys join the Hitler Youth; girls join the League of German Girls. For boys, the importance was on military training. For girls, the importance was on preparing for motherhood.

The systematic isolation of the Jews began as soon as the Nazis came to power. Numerous decrees were released against the Jews.

"Jewish store! Whoever buys here will be photographed!" People who shopped in Jewish owned stores were singled out for intimidation. Non-Jewish customers entering Jewish stores were photographed. Their names and pictures were published in the local press or displayed on billboards. Anyone not complying with Nazi decrees was labeled a "traitor to his people."

The Nazis used intimidation to instill fear in German citizens and humiliation to humiliate Jewish and other victims. The humiliation took many forms. Jews were forced to wear yellow stars of David on their clothing, and certain park benches in Berlin's "Tiergarten" were painted yellow, for Jewish use only.

Kristallnacht, the "Night of Broken Glass" took place throughout Germany and Austria on the night of November 9, 1938. Prior to Kristallnacht, Nazi police took safety measures to ensure that Jews could not fight back effectively. On November 8th, police entered Jewish households, removing anything that Jews could use to defend themselves. In the course of just a few hours on November 9th, hundreds of synagogues were burned, thousands of Jewish owned places of business were destroyed, almost one hundred Jews were killed, and thirty thousand Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps. The Kristallnacht prisoners who were released were forced to emigrate immediately, to have their properties "Aryanized," or both. The shards of broken window glass seen in front of Jewish owned stores all over Germany the next morning gave this event its name.

Kristallnacht marked a dramatic change in the policy of the Nazis toward the Jews of Germany and Austria. Ever since Hitler's accession to power in 1933, the Jews had been deprived of their status as citizens and had been subjected to increasingly harsh

measures of social and economic isolation. Yet there had been only periodic episodes of actual violence directed against them. Now this changed.

Jews had been leaving Germany in increasing numbers since 1933, but Kristallnacht caused a mass exodus (evacuation), and by spring of 1939, around half of the country's Jewish population fled.

The problem for the Jewish refugees was where to go, because they were not welcome everywhere. Many countries rapidly placed a quota on the number of Jews they allowed to enter, and in some cases, countries even closed their borders.

The reactions of other countries to the Nazi rule differed a lot. Some strongly opposed the developments in Germany. Others did not believe that Hitler would hold on to power for long and did not want to get involved.

By 1939, over 50% of German and Austrian Jews had succeeded in emigrating.

**AND SO BEGINS THE 1940s.....**

**Questions to Consider on the next page!!**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Questions to consider for *The 1930s in Europe*

**Directions:** To receive full credit, answer **all** of the questions about the story *in complete sentences*.

**Some questions have multiple questions – remember to answer all of them!**

1. What caused the social and political tension in Germany during the 1920's?

---

---

2. How does The Nazi Party profit from The Depression?

---

---

---

3. What 2 things did Hitler blame Germany's problems on?

---

---

---

---

---

4. What is *absolute power*?

---

---

5. Why was only 1 union allowed to form?

---


---

---

---

---

6. How did propaganda affect Nazism?



---

---

---

---

---


7. What is *Gleichschaltung*?

---

---

---

8. What does it mean to be *racially pure* and how did that factor into Nazism?



---

---

---

---

9. Give 2 characteristics of Hitler's "ideal family".

---


---

---

---

---

10. What is the purpose of The Hitler Youth Movement?



---

---

---

---

11. How were the Jews identified?

---

---

---

---



12. How did the Nazi police prepare for Kristallnacht?

---

---

---

---

13. What does Kristallnacht mean and how did it get its name?

---

---

---

---



14. What was the effect of Kristallnacht?

---

---

---

---

15. What was the problem for Jewish refugees? Why was it a problem? (Give examples)

---

---

---

---

---

