

Name _____ American History

Holocaust worksheet

Read the "Around the World" handout and answer the following questions:

1. What are two things the Nazi's blamed on the Jews?

2. How many Jews left Germany between 1933 and 1939? _____

3. How many Jews left Austria during that same time? _____

4. How many Jewish people lived in the countries of Central Europe which Germany conquered? _____

5. When Germany invaded Russia in 1941, what happened to Jewish people in the areas that were invaded? _____

6. - 10. At the "special" camps built in Poland, which prisoners were:

given striped uniforms and used as laborers _____

killed with poison gas _____

and _____.

11. How many Jewish people died at these camps? _____

12. What camp did American soldiers find in Germany in April of 1945?

13. How many survivors did they find there? _____

14. - 15. What are your thoughts after reading this?

Around the World

1945 The Holocaust

Of all the groups the Nazis considered enemies of the state, they despised Jews the most. Blamed for Germany's humiliation during World War I and for its economic woes afterward, they became targets of harassment as soon as Adolf Hitler was named chancellor.

About half of the country's half-million Jews fled persecution between 1933 and 1939, as did two-thirds of Austria's 180,000 Jews. But for the nine million Jews of central and eastern Europe there was little chance for escape. When their nations fell in 1939, they became the chief victims of the Nazis' attempt to destroy the Jews completely.

Thousands died of starvation, exposure, and disease in labor camps and ghettos, and thousands more were shot by execution squads following the 1941 invasion of Russia. Then, after the Germans agreed in 1942 on what they called a "final solution of the Jewish question," still more Jews were shipped by train to special camps in Poland. There the able-bodied were issued prison stripes and made to work while all others—the sick and the aged, the children, and most women—were stripped naked, shaved bald, and killed with poison gas. Some six million Jews—more than one-third of world Jewry—perished in this way.

When American troops liberated Buchenwald, a camp in central Germany, in April 1945, they found the story of the Holocaust written on the faces of some 20,000 slave laborers who had survived (right). They also found there and at other camps lifeless bodies "dumped like garbage rotting in the sun." Writer Martha Gellhorn accompanied American troops and witnessed such scenes. "There can never be peace if there is cruelty like this in the world," she wrote. "And if ever again we tolerate such cruelty we have no right to peace."

