

REVIEW: Nazi Persecution of the Jews

Chapter 10: Nazi Persecution of the Jews

The Anschluss of Austria:

- After WWI, an independent Austria, led by **Engelberg Dolfuss**, outlawed Nazis.
- In 1934, the Nazis assassinated Dolfuss, and announced a pro-Nazi government.
- **Mussolini** (Italy) sent troops to warn Nazis to stay out of Austria.
- In 1936, Mussolini signed the 'Rome-Berlin Axis,' where he joined Germany's side.
- In 1938, the new leader of Austria, **Kurt von Schuschnigg**, uncovered a plot to overthrow his government. He met with Hitler to discuss it, but Hitler accused him of treason, and demanded he give him control of the government and military.
- In March of 1938, Hitler marched into Austria, and successfully annexed Austria.
- Hitler immediately passed anti-Semitic laws - including prohibitions of: owning radios, entering parks/theaters, education, Jewish newspapers, and holding jobs. They also persecuted, humiliated, attacked, arrested Jews, and sent many to Dachau.
- The Nazis passed the Nuremberg laws, and made 'Aryanization' the official policy of Austria, where they seized Jewish property, assets, and businesses, and gave them over to loyal Nazis.
- The Nazis forced Jews to leave their homes, and cram into apartments, making Jewish life in Austria unbearable.
- **Adolf Eichmann** was tasked with expelling the Jews from Austria, while taking as much money from them as possible.
- Most Austrian Jews escaped Austria and moved to other European countries, or Palestine.

Evian Conference:

- In July of 1938, 32 nations met to discuss helping the Jews of Germany.
- All of the nations did not want to be burdened by the Jewish immigrants:
 - America - kept same immigrant quota

- Britain - claims of unemployment problems, and did not want Palestine to be an option due to Arab pressure.
- Belgium - their climate was not suitable for Jews
- France - suggested that Jews go to South America
- Australia - did not want to import a racial problem
- Outcome of the Evian Conference - Germany saw that no country would do anything to help the Jews. 'Nobody Wants Them!'

Jewish Refugees:

- The St Louis - a boat of 937 Jewish refugees from Europe. When the St Louis arrived in Cuba, the US only allowed 22 passengers to enter. **President Franklin D. Roosevelt** refused to allow the refugees to stay. They returned to Europe, where they dispersed to Britain, France and Belgium. Approximately 450 of these Jews ended up in the hands of the Nazis, when their respective countries were overrun.
- The Quanza - a Portuguese boat of 317 refugees. When it arrived in New York, 121 passengers were refused entry. **First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt** defied orders and allowed them to stay.

Poland:

- In 1938, the Polish government decreed that only people with a stamp on their passports (showing that they returned to Poland for 5 consecutive years) would be allowed entry. Many Polish Jews did not have this stamp, and were not allowed back into Poland.
- On October 27, 1938, the German police rounded up 12,000 Polish Jews (who were living in Germany), and transferred them to the Polish border.
- Due to Poland's new law regarding the stamp, only 4,000 Jews were allowed entry, and 8,000 were stranded in Zbaszyn, for 3 days.
- **Emmanuel Ringblum** and volunteers from Warsaw formed a rescue committee to help these stranded Jews.
- In January 1939, the Germans allowed these Jews to return to Germany.
- Herschel Grynszpan - was in Paris when he was informed that his family was expelled, and suffered terrible conditions in Zbaszyn. He went to the German embassy and shot **Ernst von Roth**, and fatally wounded him.
- The Germans immediately closed Jewish newspapers, and expelled any Jewish students from German schools.
- Immediately after Ernst von Roth died, the Germans launched a terrible pogrom, known as *Kristallnacht*.

Kristallnacht:

- On November 9, 1938, Germany and Austria launched Pogroms.
- Staged to look like they were randomly carried out by angry citizens, but was carefully organized by the government.
 - Shuls were vandalized and set on fire - *Sefarim* and *Sifrei Torah* were burned.
 - Jewish homes (and orphanages) were invaded, and their valuables were destroyed.
 - Jewish businesses were robbed, and the windows were broken.
 - Jews were attacked, arrested and sent to concentration camps (20,000 - 30,000).
- Germans claimed that this was the fault of the Jews, and they were merely reacting to a Jewish crime. Jews were taxed with an 'Atonement Payment' to pay for the damages.
- The world leaders condemned Kristallnacht - with 'powerful statements'.
- America withdrew their German ambassador.
- Germany was no longer a safe place for Jews.
- Half of the German Jews left before the war started in 1939, but it was increasingly difficult to get visas to other countries.
- 'Flight Tax' - Jews leaving Germany needed to give up $\frac{1}{4}$ of their assets.
- Wagner-Rogers Bill - a US bill that Congress did not vote on, which would have allowed 20,000 Jewish people to enter the US.
- Britain did not allow Jews to enter Palestine, and Switzerland demanded that all Jewish passports be marked with a 'J'.