

World War II Project Week 2

Day 1

Complete the Women's Role section. See project guidelines for more information.

Days 2-4

Complete the Holocaust section. See project guidelines for more information.

Day 5

Complete the War Time Propaganda section. See project guidelines for more information.

*Also included are the political cartoons for next week as well as the extra credit opportunities, just in case you have extra time.

American Women in World War II - **History.com - Source**

Some 350,000 women served in the U.S. Armed Forces in World War II, both at home and abroad. They included the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, who on March 10, 2010, were awarded the prestigious Congressional Gold Medal. Meanwhile, widespread male enlistment left gaping holes in the industrial labor force and defense industry. Women were critical to the war effort: Between 1940 and 1945, the age of "Rosie the Riveter," the female percentage of the U.S. workforce increased from 27 percent to nearly 37 percent, and by 1945, nearly one out of every four married women worked outside the home. World War II opened the door for women to work in more types of jobs than ever before, but with the return of male soldiers at war's end, women, especially married women, were once again pressured to return to a life at home, a prospect that, for thousands of American women, had shifted thanks to their wartime service.

Women in the Armed Forces in World War II

In addition to factory work and other home front jobs, approximately 350,000 women joined the Armed Services, serving at home and abroad. At the urging of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and women's groups, and impressed by the British use of women in service, General George Marshall supported the idea of introducing a women's service branch into the Army. In May 1942, Congress instituted the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, later upgraded to the Women's Army Corps, which had full military status. Its members, known as WACs, worked in more than 200 non-combatant jobs stateside and in every theater of the war. By 1945, there were more than 100,000 WACs and 6,000 female officers. In the Navy, members of Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) held the same status as naval reservists and provided support stateside. The Coast Guard and Marine Corps soon followed suit, though in smaller numbers.

Did you know? On March 10, 2010, nearly 70 years after they were disbanded, the Women Airforce Service Pilots received the Congressional Gold Medal.

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One of the lesser-known roles women played in the war effort was provided by the Women's Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs. These women, each of whom had already obtained their pilot's license prior to service, became the first women to fly American military aircraft. They ferried planes from factories to bases, transporting cargo and participating in simulation strafing and target missions, accumulating more than 60 million miles in flight distances and freeing thousands of male U.S. pilots for active duty in World War II. More than 1,000 WASPs served, and 38 of them lost their lives during the war. Considered civil service employees and without official military status, these fallen WASPs were granted no military honors or benefits, and it wasn't until 1977 that the WASPs received full military status. On March 10, 2010, at a ceremony in the Capitol, the WASPS received the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest civilian honors. More than 200 former pilots attended the event, many wearing their World War II-era uniforms.

"Rosie the Riveter"

Though women had been joining the work force in greater numbers since the hardships of The Great Depression, the entry of the United States into World War II completely transformed the types of jobs open to women. Before the war, most working women were in traditionally female fields like nursing and teaching. Post-Pearl Harbor, women worked in a variety of positions previously closed to them, though the aviation industry saw the greatest increase in female workers. More than 310,000 women worked in the U.S. aircraft industry in 1943, representing 65 percent of the industry's total workforce (compared to just 1 percent in the pre-war years). The munitions industry also heavily recruited women workers, as represented by the U.S. government's "Rosie the Riveter" propaganda campaign. Based in small part on a real-life munitions worker, but primarily a fictitious character, the strong, bandanna-clad Rosie became one of the most successful recruitment tools in American history, and the most iconic image of working women during World War II.

In movies, newspapers, posters, photographs, articles and even a Norman Rockwell-painted *Saturday Evening Post* cover, the Rosie the Riveter campaign stressed the patriotic need for women to enter the work force—and they did, in huge numbers. Though women were crucial to

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the war effort, their pay continued to lag far behind their male counterparts: Female workers rarely earned more than 50 percent of male wages.

Working Conditions For Women in World War II

With many fathers off fighting, mothers were faced with the burden of balancing childcare and work, and absenteeism became the symptom that caused factory owners—and the United States government—to finally acknowledge the issue. The Lanham Act of 1940 gave war-related government grants for childcare services in communities where defense production was a major industry. In 1942, Eleanor Roosevelt stepped in, encouraging her husband, [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#), to pass the Community Facilities Act, which led to the creation of the first U.S. government-sponsored childcare center. Roosevelt also urged for reforms like staggered working hours at factories to allow working mothers to go to grocery stores—stores that were often either closed or out of stock by the time women clocked out of work.

Not all women were treated equally in the workplace. African American women found that white women were not always welcoming at work—if they were even granted the same job opportunities in the first place—and were paid less than their white peers. Japanese American women fared even worse, as they were sent off to [Japanese Internment Camps](#) under Executive Order 9066.

Though women, as a whole, had access to more jobs than ever before, they were paid far less than men (roughly half, in most cases), and most found themselves pressured to relinquish jobs to the male soldiers returning home at war's end. But something had permanently shifted: [World War II empowered women](#) to seek new opportunities and fight for equal pay in the decades to come.

The Holocaust

Since 1945, the word has taken on a new and horrible meaning: the ideological and systematic state-sponsored prosecution and mass murder of millions of European Jews (as well as millions

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of others, including Gypsies, the intellectually disabled, dissidents and homosexuals) by the German Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945.

To the anti-Semitic Nazi leader Adolf Hitler, Jews were an inferior race, an alien threat to German racial purity and community. After years of Nazi rule in Germany, during which Jews were consistently persecuted, Hitler's "final solution"—now known as the Holocaust—came to fruition under the cover of World War II, with mass killing centers constructed in the concentration camps of occupied Poland. Approximately six million Jews and millions of others, targeted for racial, political, ideological and behavioral reasons, died in the Holocaust. More than one million of those who perished were children.

Before the Holocaust: Historical Anti-Semitism & Hitler's Rise to Power

Did you know? Even in the early 21st century, the legacy of the Holocaust endures. Swiss government and banking institutions have in recent years acknowledged their complicity with the Nazis and established funds to aid Holocaust survivors and other victims of human rights abuses, genocide or other catastrophes.

The roots of Hitler's particularly virulent brand of anti-Semitism are unclear. Born in Austria in 1889, he served in the German army during World War I. Like many anti-Semites in Germany, he blamed the Jews for the country's defeat in 1918. Soon after the war ended, Hitler joined the National German Workers' Party, which became the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP), known to English speakers as the Nazis. While imprisoned for treason for his role in the Beer Hall Putsch of 1923, Hitler wrote the memoir and propaganda tract "Mein Kampf" (My Struggle), in which he predicted a general European war that would result in "the extermination of the Jewish race in Germany."

Hitler was obsessed with the idea of the superiority of the "pure" German race, which he called "Aryan," and with the need for "Lebensraum," or living space, for that race to expand. In the decade after he was released from prison, Hitler took advantage of the weakness of his rivals to enhance his party's status and rise from obscurity to power. On January 30, 1933, he was

named chancellor of Germany. After President Paul von Hindenburg's death in 1934, Hitler anointed himself as "Führer," becoming Germany's supreme ruler.

Nazi Revolution in Germany, 1933-1939

The twin goals of racial purity and spatial expansion were the core of Hitler's worldview, and from 1933 onward they would combine to form the driving force behind his foreign and domestic policy. At first, the Nazis reserved their harshest persecution for political opponents such as Communists or Social Democrats. The first official concentration camp opened at Dachau (near Munich) in March 1933, and many of the first prisoners sent there were Communists.

Like the network of concentration camps that followed, becoming the killing grounds of the Holocaust, Dachau was under the control of Heinrich Himmler, head of the elite Nazi guard, the Schutzstaffel (SS), and later chief of the German police. By July 1933, German concentration camps (Konzentrationslager in German, or KZ) held some 27,000 people in "protective custody." Huge Nazi rallies and symbolic acts such as the public burning of books by Jews, Communists, liberals and foreigners helped drive home the desired message of party strength.

In 1933, Jews in Germany numbered around 525,000, or only 1 percent of the total German population. During the next six years, Nazis undertook an "Aryanization" of Germany, dismissing non-Aryans from civil service, liquidating Jewish-owned businesses and stripping Jewish lawyers and doctors of their clients. Under the Nuremberg Laws of 1935, anyone with three or four Jewish grandparents was considered a Jew, while those with two Jewish grandparents were designated Mischlinge (half-breeds).

Under the Nuremberg Laws, Jews became routine targets for stigmatization and persecution. This culminated in Kristallnacht, or the "night of broken glass" in November 1938, when German synagogues were burned and windows in Jewish shops were smashed; some 100 Jews were killed and thousands more arrested. From 1933 to 1939, hundreds of thousands of Jews who

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were able to leave Germany did, while those who remained lived in a constant state of uncertainty and fear.

Beginning of War , 1939-1940

In September 1939, the German army occupied the western half of Poland. German police soon forced tens of thousands of Polish Jews from their homes and into ghettos, giving their confiscated properties to ethnic Germans (non-Jews outside Germany who identified as German), Germans from the Reich or Polish gentiles. Surrounded by high walls and barbed wire, the Jewish ghettos in Poland functioned like captive city-states, governed by Jewish Councils. In addition to widespread unemployment, poverty and hunger, overpopulation made the ghettos breeding grounds for disease such as typhus.

Meanwhile, beginning in the fall of 1939, Nazi officials selected around 70,000 Germans institutionalized for mental illness or disabilities to be gassed to death in the so-called Euthanasia Program. After prominent German religious leaders protested, Hitler put an end to the program in August 1941, though killings of the disabled continued in secrecy, and by 1945 some 275,000 people deemed handicapped from all over Europe had been killed. In hindsight, it seems clear that the Euthanasia Program functioned as a pilot for the Holocaust.

Towards the “Final Solution,” 1940-1941

Throughout the spring and summer of 1940, the German army expanded Hitler’s empire in Europe, conquering Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and France. Beginning in 1941, Jews from all over the continent, as well as hundreds of thousands of European Gypsies, were transported to the Polish ghettos. The German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 marked a new level of brutality in warfare. Mobile killing units called Einsatzgruppen would murder more than 500,000 Soviet Jews and others (usually by shooting) over the course of the German occupation.

A memorandum dated July 31, 1941, from Hitler’s top commander Hermann Goering to Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the SD (the security service of the SS), referred to the need for an

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Endlösung (final solution) to “the Jewish question.” Beginning in September 1941, every person designated as a Jew in German-held territory was marked with a yellow star, making them open targets. Tens of thousands were soon being deported to the Polish ghettos and German-occupied cities in the USSR.

Since June 1941, experiments with mass killing methods had been ongoing at the concentration camp of Auschwitz, near Krakow. That August, 500 officials gassed 500 Soviet POWs to death with the pesticide Zyklon-B. The SS soon placed a huge order for the gas with a German pest-control firm, an ominous indicator of the coming Holocaust.

Holocaust Death Camps, 1941-1945

Beginning in late 1941, the Germans began mass transports from the ghettos in Poland to the concentration camps, starting with those people viewed as the least useful: the sick, old and weak and the very young. The first mass gassings began at the camp of Belzec, near Lublin, on March 17, 1942. Five more mass killing centers were built at camps in occupied Poland, including Chelmno, Sobibor, Treblinka, Majdanek and the largest of all, Auschwitz-Birkenau. From 1942 to 1945, Jews were deported to the camps from all over Europe, including German-controlled territory as well as those countries allied with Germany. The heaviest deportations took place during the summer and fall of 1942, when more than 300,000 people were deported from the Warsaw ghetto alone. Fed up with the deportations, disease and constant hunger, the inhabitants of the Warsaw Ghetto rose up in armed revolt. The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising from April 19-May 16, 1943 ended in the death of 7,000 Jews, with 50,000 survivors sent to extermination camps. But the resistance fighters had held off the Nazis for almost a month, and their revolt inspired revolts at camps and ghettos across German-occupied Europe.

Though the Nazis tried to keep operation of camps secret, the scale of the killing made this virtually impossible. Eyewitnesses brought reports of Nazi atrocities in Poland to the Allied governments, who were harshly criticized after the war for their failure to respond, or to publicize news of the mass slaughter. This lack of action was likely mostly due to the Allied focus on

winning the war at hand, but was also a result of the general incomprehension with which news of the Holocaust was met and the denial and disbelief that such atrocities could be occurring on such a scale.

At Auschwitz alone, more than 2 million people were murdered in a process resembling a large-scale industrial operation. A large population of Jewish and non-Jewish inmates worked in the labor camp there; though only Jews were gassed, thousands of others died of starvation or disease. And in 1943, eugenicist Josef Mengele arrived in Auschwitz to begin his infamous experiments on Jewish prisoners. His special area of focus was conducting medical experiments on twins, injecting them with everything from petrol to chloroform under the guise of giving them medical treatment. His actions earned him the nickname “the Angel of Death.”

Nazi Rule Comes to an End, as Holocaust Continues to Claim Lives, 1945
By the spring of 1945, German leadership was dissolving amid internal dissent, with Goering and Himmler both seeking to distance themselves from Hitler and take power. In his last will and political testament, dictated in a German bunker that April 29, Hitler blamed the war on “International Jewry and its helpers” and urged the German leaders and people to follow “the strict observance of the racial laws and with merciless resistance against the universal poisoners of all peoples”—the Jews. The following day, Hitler committed suicide. Germany’s formal surrender in World War II came barely a week later, on May 8, 1945.

German forces had begun evacuating many of the death camps in the fall of 1944, sending inmates under guard to march further from the advancing enemy’s front line. These so-called “death marches” continued all the way up to the German surrender, resulting in the deaths of some 250,000 to 375,000 people. In his classic book “Survival in Auschwitz,” the Italian Jewish author Primo Levi described his own state of mind, as well as that of his fellow inmates in Auschwitz on the day before Soviet troops arrived at the camp in January 1945: “We lay in a world of death and phantoms. The last trace of civilization had vanished around and inside us.

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The work of bestial degradation, begun by the victorious Germans, had been carried to conclusion by the Germans in defeat."

Aftermath & Lasting Impact of the Holocaust

The wounds of the Holocaust—known in Hebrew as Shoah, or catastrophe—were slow to heal.

Survivors of the camps found it nearly impossible to return home, as in many cases they had lost their families and been denounced by their non-Jewish neighbors. As a result, the late 1940s saw an unprecedented number of refugees, POWs and other displaced populations moving across Europe.

In an effort to punish the villains of the Holocaust, the Allies held the Nuremberg Trials of 1945-46, which brought Nazi atrocities to horrifying light. Increasing pressure on the Allied powers to create a homeland for Jewish survivors of the Holocaust would lead to a mandate for the creation of Israel in 1948.

Over the decades that followed, ordinary Germans struggled with the Holocaust's bitter legacy, as survivors and the families of victims sought restitution of wealth and property confiscated during the Nazi years. Beginning in 1953, the German government made payments to individual Jews and to the Jewish people as a way of acknowledging the German people's responsibility for the crimes committed in their name.

Meet the Night Witches, the Daring Female Pilots Who Bombed Nazis By Night

They were a crucial Soviet asset to winning World War II.

BRYNN HOLLAND - History.com

They flew under the cover of darkness in bare-bones plywood biplanes. They braved bullets and frostbite in the air, while battling skepticism and sexual harassment on the ground. They were feared and hated so much by the Nazis that any German airman who downed one was automatically awarded the prestigious Iron Cross medal.

All told, the pioneering all-female 588th Night Bomber Regiment dropped more than 23,000 tons of bombs on Nazi targets. And in doing so, they became a crucial Soviet asset in winning World War II.

The Germans nicknamed them the Nachthexen, or “night witches,” because the whooshing noise their wooden planes made resembled that of a sweeping broom. “This sound was the only warning the Germans had. The planes were too small to show up on radar... [or] on infrared locators,” said Steve Prowse, author of the screenplay The Night Witches, a nonfiction account of the little-known female squadron. “They never used radios, so radio locators couldn’t pick them up either. They were basically ghosts.”

Using female bombardiers wasn’t a first choice. While women had been previously barred from combat, the pressure of an encroaching enemy gave Soviet leaders a reason to rethink the policy. Adolf Hitler had launched Operation Barbarossa, his massive invasion of the Soviet Union, in June 1941. By the fall the Germans were pressing on Moscow, Leningrad was under siege and the Red Army was struggling. The Soviets were desperate.

The 588th’s first mission, on June 28, 1942, took aim—successfully—at the headquarters of the invading Nazi forces.

The squadron was the brainchild of Marina Raskova, known as the “Soviet Amelia Earhart”—famous not only as the first female navigator in the Soviet Air Force but also for her many long-distance flight records. She had been receiving letters from women all across the Soviet Union wanting to join the World War II war effort. While they had been allowed to participate in support roles, there were many who wanted to be gunners and pilots, flying on their own. Many had lost brothers or sweethearts, or had seen their homes and villages ravaged. Seeing an opportunity, Raskova petitioned Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin to let her form an all-female fighting squadron.

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On October 8, 1941, Stalin gave orders to deploy three all-female air force units. The women would not only fly missions and drop bombs, they would return fire—making the Soviet Union the first nation to officially allow women to engage in combat. Previously, women could help transfer planes and ammunition, after which the men took over.

Raskova quickly started to fill out her teams. From more than 2,000 applications, she selected around 400 women for each of the three units. Most were students, ranging in age from 17 to 26. Those selected moved to Engels, a small town north of Stalingrad, to begin training at the Engels School of Aviation. They underwent a highly compressed education—expected to learn in a few months what it took most soldiers several years to grasp. Each recruit had to train and perform as pilots, navigators, maintenance and ground crew.

Beyond their steep learning curve, the women faced skepticism from some of the male military personnel who believed they added no value to the combat effort. Raskova did her best to prepare her women for these attitudes, but they still faced sexual harassment, long nights and grueling conditions. “The men didn’t like the ‘little girls’ going to the front line. It was a man’s thing.” Prowse told HISTORY.

Making Do With Hand-Me-Downs and Relics

The military, unprepared for women pilots, offered them meager resources. Flyers received hand-me-down uniforms (from male soldiers), including oversized boots. “They had to tear up their bedding and stuff them in their boots to get them to fit,” said Prowse.

Their equipment wasn’t much better. The military provided them with outdated Polikarpov Po-2 biplanes, 1920s crop-dusters that had been used as training vehicles. These light two-seater, open-cockpit planes were never meant for combat. “It was like a coffin with wings,” said Prowse. Made out of plywood with canvas pulled over, the aircraft offered virtually no protection from the

elements. Flying at night, pilots endured freezing temperatures, wind and frostbite. In the harsh Soviet winters, the planes became so cold, just touching them would rip off bare skin.

Due to both the planes' limited weight capacity and the military's limited funds, the pilots also lacked other "luxury" items their male counterparts enjoyed. Instead of parachutes (which were too heavy to carry), radar, guns and radios, they were forced to use more rudimentary tools such as rulers, stopwatches, flashlights, pencils, maps and compasses.

There was some upside to the older aircraft. Their maximum speed was slower than the stall speed of the Nazi planes, which meant these wooden planes, ironically, could maneuver faster than the enemy, making them hard to target. They also could easily take off and land from most locations. The downside? When coming under enemy fire, pilots had to duck by sending their planes into dives (almost none of the planes carried defense ammunition). If they happened to be hit by tracer bullets, which carry a pyrotechnic charge, their wooden planes would burst into flames.

Long Nights, Stealth Tactics

The Polikarpovs could only carry two bombs at a time, one under each wing. In order to make meaningful dents in the German front lines, the regiment sent out up to 40 two-person crews a night. Each would execute between eight and 18 missions a night, flying back to re-arm between runs. The weight of the bombs forced them to fly at lower altitudes, making them a much easier target—hence their night-only missions.

The planes, each with a pilot upfront and a navigator in back, traveled in packs: The first planes would go in as bait, attracting German spotlights, which provided much needed illumination. These planes, which rarely had ammunition to defend themselves, would release a flare to light

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up the intended target. The last plane would idle its engines and glide in darkness to the bombing area. It was this “stealth mode” that created their signature witch’s broom sound.

There were 12 commandments the Night Witches followed. The first was “be proud you are a woman.” Killing Germans was their job, but in their downtime the heroic flyers still did needlework, patchwork, decorated their planes and danced. They even put the pencils they used for navigation into double duty as eyeliner.

Disbanded and Overlooked

Their last flight took place on May 4, 1945—when the Night Witches flew within 60 kilometers (approx. 37 miles) of Berlin. Three days later, Germany officially surrendered.

According to Prowse, the Germans had two theories about why these women were so successful: They were all criminals who were masters at stealing and had been sent to the front line as punishment—or they had been given special injections that allowed them to see in the night.

Altogether these daredevil heroines flew more than 30,000 missions in total, or about 800 per pilot and navigator. They lost a total of 30 pilots, and 24 of the flyers were awarded the title Hero of the Soviet Union. Raskova, the mother of the movement, died on January 4, 1943, when she was finally sent to the front line—her plane never made it. She was given the very first state funeral of World War II and her ashes were buried in the Kremlin.

Despite being the most highly decorated unit in the Soviet Air Force during the war, the Night Witches regiment was disbanded six months after the end of World War II. And when it came to the big victory-day parade in Moscow, they weren’t included—because, it was decided, their planes were too slow.

The London Blitz, 1940

The appearance of German bombers in the skies over London during the afternoon of September 7, 1940 heralded a tactical shift in Hitler's attempt to subdue Great Britain. During the previous two months, the Luftwaffe had targeted RAF airfields and radar stations for destruction in preparation for the German invasion of the island. With invasion plans put on hold and eventually scrapped, Hitler turned his attention to destroying London in an attempt to demoralize the population and force the British to come to terms. At around 4:00 PM on that September day, 348 German bombers escorted by 617 fighters blasted London until 6:00 PM. Two hours later, guided by the fires set by the first assault, a second group of raiders commenced another attack that lasted until 4:30 the following morning.

This was the beginning of the Blitz - a period of intense bombing of London and other cities that continued until the following May. For the next consecutive 57 days, London was bombed either during the day or night. Fires consumed many portions of the city. Residents sought shelter wherever they could find it - many fleeing to the Underground stations that sheltered as many as 177,000 people during the night. In the worst single incident, 450 were killed when a bomb destroyed a school being used as an air raid shelter. Londoners and the world were introduced to a new weapon of terror and destruction in the arsenal of twentieth century warfare. The Blitz ended on May 11, 1941 when Hitler called off the raids in order to move his bombers east in preparation for Germany's invasion of Russia.

"They came just after dark..."

Ernie Pyle was one of World War Two's most popular correspondents. His journalism was characterized by a focus on the common soldier interspersed with sympathy, sensitivity and humor. He witnessed the war in Europe from the Battle of Britain through the invasion of France. In 1945 he accepted assignment to the Pacific

Theater and was killed during the battle for Okinawa. Here, he describes a night raid on London in 1940:

"It was a night when London was ringed and stabbed with fire.

They came just after dark, and somehow you could sense from the quick, bitter firing of the guns that there was to be no monkey business this night.

Shortly after the sirens wailed you could hear the Germans grinding overhead. In my room, with its black curtains drawn across the windows, you could feel the shake from the guns. You could hear the boom, crump, crump, crump, of heavy bombs at their work of tearing buildings apart. They were not too far away.

Half an hour after the firing started I gathered a couple of friends and went to a high, darkened balcony that gave us a view of a third of the entire circle of London. As we stepped out onto the balcony a vast inner excitement came over all of us—an excitement that had neither fear nor horror in it, because it was too full of awe.

You have all seen big fires, but I doubt if you have ever seen the whole horizon of a city lined with great fires - scores of them, perhaps hundreds.

There was something inspiring just in the awful savagery of it.

The closest fires were near enough for us to hear the crackling flames and the yells of firemen. Little fires grew into big ones even as we watched. Big ones died down under the firemen's valor, only to break out again later.

About every two minutes a new wave of planes would be over. The motors seemed to grind rather than roar, and to have an angry pulsation, like a bee buzzing in blind fury.

The guns did not make a constant overwhelming din as in those terrible days of September. They were intermittent - sometimes a few seconds apart, sometimes a

minute or more. Their sound was sharp, near by; and soft and muffled, far away. They were everywhere over London.

Into the dark shadowed spaces below us, while we watched, whole batches of incendiary bombs fell. We saw two dozen go off in two seconds. They flashed terrifically, then quickly simmered down to pin points of dazzling white, burning ferociously. These white pin points would go out one by one, as the unseen heroes of the moment smothered them with sand. But also, while we watched, other pin points would burn on, and soon a yellow flame would leap up from the white center. They had done their work - another building was on fire.

The greatest of all the fires was directly in front of us. Flames seemed to whip hundreds of feet into the air. Pinkish-white smoke ballooned upward in a great cloud, and out of this cloud there gradually took shape - so faintly at first that we weren't sure we saw correctly - the gigantic dome of St. Paul's Cathedral.

St. Paul's was surrounded by fire, but it came through. It stood there in its enormous proportions - growing slowly clearer and clearer, the way objects take shape at dawn. It was like a picture of some miraculous figure that appears before peace-hungry soldiers on a battlefield.

The streets below us were semi-illuminated from the glow. Immediately above the fires the sky was red and angry, and overhead, making a ceiling in the vast heavens, there was a cloud of smoke all in pink. Up in that pink shrouding there were tiny, brilliant specks of flashing light-antiaircraft shells bursting. After the flash you could hear the sound.

Up there, too, the barrage balloons were standing out as clearly as if it were daytime, but now they were pink instead of silver. And now and then through a hole in that pink shroud there twinkled incongruously a permanent, genuine star - the old - fashioned kind that has always been there.

Below us the Thames grew lighter, and all around below were the shadows - the dark shadows of buildings and bridges that formed the base of this dreadful masterpiece.

Later on I borrowed a tin hat and went out among the fires. That was exciting too; but the thing I shall always remember above all the other things in my life is the monstrous loveliness of that one single view of London on a holiday night - London stabbed with great fires, shaken by explosions, its dark regions along the Thames sparkling with the pin points of white-hot bombs, all of it roofed over with a ceiling of pink that held bursting shells, balloons, flares and the grind of vicious engines. And in yourself the excitement and anticipation and wonder in your soul that this could be happening at all.

These things all went together to make the most hateful, most beautiful single scene I have ever known."

References:

This eyewitness account appears in: Pyle Ernie, *Ernie Pyle in England* (1941), Reprinted in Commager, Henry Steele, *The Story of the Second World War* (1945); Johnson, David, *The London Blitz : The City Ablaze, December 29, 1940* (1981).

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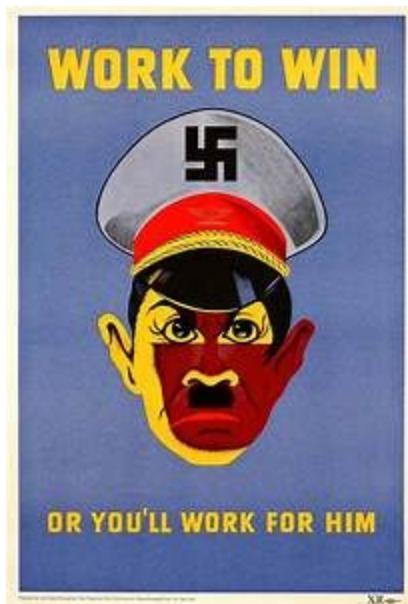


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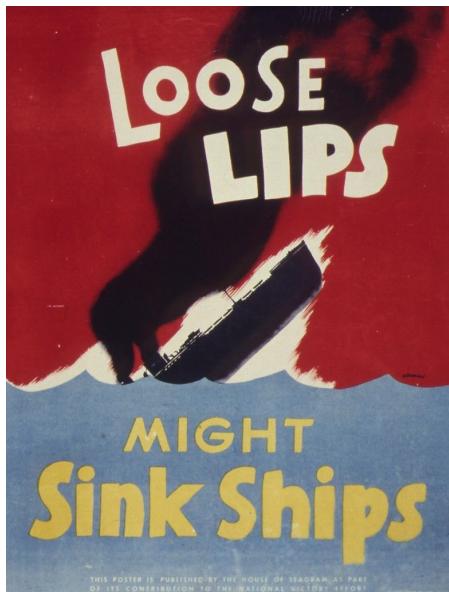


Holocaust death camp 1941-1945

Propaganda Posters



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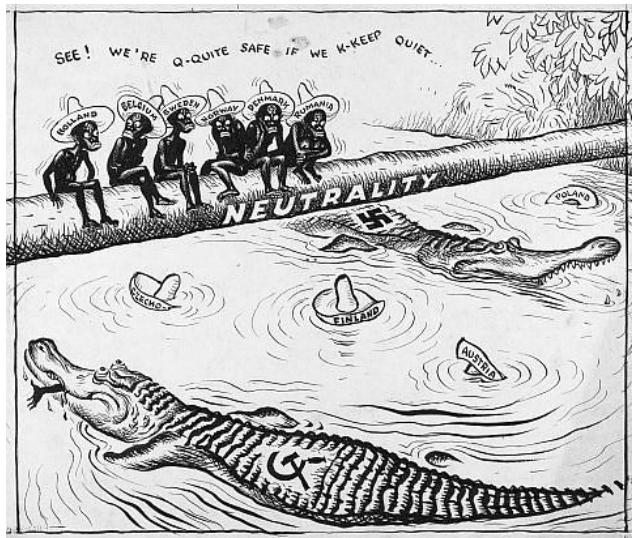
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Political Cartoons



"GERMANY SHALL NEVER BE ENCIRCLED."

'Remember . . . One More Lollipop, and Then You All Go Home!'



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Women pilots of the “Night Witches” receiving orders for an up-coming raid. (Credit: Sovfoto/UIG via Getty Images)



A partisan airplane, the Polikarpov Po-2, during World War II. (Photo by: Sovfoto/UIG via Getty Images)

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(Credit: Nikolai Ignatiev/Alamy Stock Photo)



Captain Polina Osipenko (Co-Pilot and Commander of the plane), Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Valentina Grizodubova (Navigator), and Senior Lieutenant Marina Raskova right before taking flight. (Credit: Sovfoto/UIG via Getty Images)

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Sept. 7, 1940 - the beginning of the London Blitz



Dec. 29, 1940 - St. Paul's Cathedral emerges from the flames during one of the most devastating raids.



Children sit among the rubble of their home
September 1940