

# Poland's Important Role in World War II

## Lesson 2

**Hitler and Stalin Invade and Occupy Poland**

***The First Two Years (1939-1941)***

# Hitler and Stalin Divide Poland Between Them



*Having been annexed by Hitler and Stalin, Poland ceased to exist as a nation state.*

# Hitler's Destructive Actions against Poles

150,000 to 200,000 civilians were killed during Hitler's invasion.

After Hitler's invasion – up to 100,000 Polish elite arrested and murdered

- “Intelligenzaktion” – *another step in Hitler's genocide of the Poles*

Imprisonment in concentration camps where many Poles died

- Auschwitz, Majdanek, Stutthof, Gross-Rosen, Neuengamme, Sachsenhausen, Dachau, Gusen

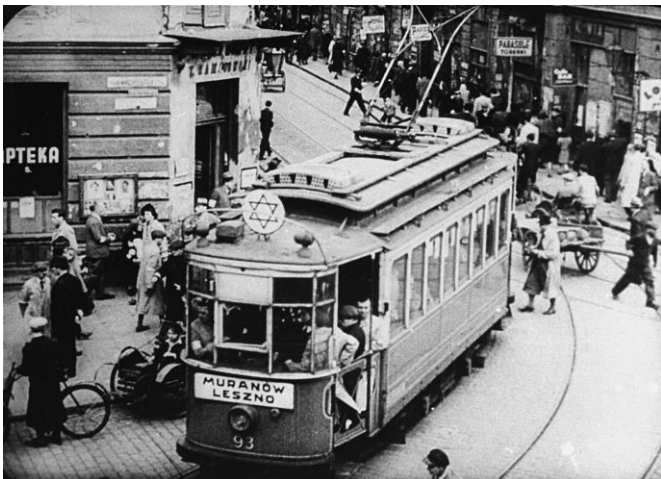
Hitler's order to his senior generals before invading:

“...I have placed my death-head formation in readiness...with orders to them to ***send to death mercilessly and without compassion, men, women, and children of Polish derivation and language.*** Only thus shall we gain the living space (Lebensraum) that we need.”

# Hitler's 1<sup>st</sup> Destructive Action against Polish Jews

Poland's Jews were forced to relocate into German-run ghettos.

- Jews were confined to the ghettos under strict control.
- Jewish Councils were created to carry out German orders.
- Jewish Ghetto Police were established to enforce German orders.
- Disease and starvation began taking the lives of many.



Street trolley in Warsaw Ghetto



Destitute Jews in Warsaw Ghetto



Homeless children in Warsaw Ghetto



# Hitler's 2<sup>nd</sup> Destructive Action against Jews

## “Operation Barbarossa”



**June 1941 - Hitler invades the USSR to:**

- Create more Lebensraum
- Destroy the Communists

**Germans soon began killing Jews in:**

- Eastern Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia

**In 6 months, 500,000 Jews died.**

# Stalin's 3 Destructive Actions against Poles

**Deported up to 1.5 million Poles to Soviet slave labor camps**

- Up to half died due to the harsh conditions

**Executed up to 30,000 Poles while retreating from the Germans**

**Executed 22,000 Polish officers at Katyn**



*Soviet mass deportations of Poles to the gulags and slave labor camps*



*Poles identify relatives executed by the Soviets before the Soviets fled from the advancing Germans.*



*Priests perform Mass for Polish officers executed at Katyn.*