



LESSON PLAN: Perpetrators and Collaborators of the Holocaust

1 Write the following words on the board or on chart paper: “guilt” and “responsibility.” Allow time for students to brainstorm the meaning of each term. Leave the brainstorming activity visible, and encourage students to add to the definitions as they proceed with the lesson.

2 Introduce students to **Jan Karski (bio)** and **Dennis Urstein (bio)** and show their testimonies. Follow with a discussion using the questions below.

- In his testimony, Jan Karski talks about his meeting with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. How does he say Roosevelt responded to his questions about what he should tell the Polish people?
- Does Jan Karski feel the President’s response was adequate? How do you know?
- What does Dennis Urstein say about what was learned from the Holocaust?
- In his testimony, Dennis quotes Freud. To whom is he referring? Why do you think he quotes Freud?
- Who does Dennis believe was guilty for the Holocaust and why?
- Dennis uses the question “What are we doing about it?” as a call to action. What is he asking people to do?

3 Provide students with background information on the role of the railroad system in the implementation of the “Final Solution” in the corresponding **Note**.

4 Divide the class into small groups and distribute the **Salitter’s Report** handout. Before they begin reading the document, share with students that men who took jobs like Salitter’s were not forced to do so and that the job was considered prestigious. As students study the document, have them pay close attention to both the tone and language used in the report.

5 While reading the report, instruct each group to select a recorder to keep a list of all the people appearing in the document who participated in this deportation. When students have finished reading the document, have them add other people who are not mentioned in the document but who also must have taken part in this deportation (e.g., someone had to write the lists of people who would be sent to their deaths, the neighbors, the people in Riga, the people who would murder them later, the officers who gave the orders).

6 In a whole-group discussion, have students answer the questions below, citing textual evidence for their responses whenever possible.

- What are the main issues that Salitter refers to in the report?
- In his report on the argument he had with the stationmaster, Salitter complains that the latter

clearly does not know the meaning of the term “Jew” and its implications. What does this seem to indicate about Salitter’s attitude toward the task he is performing?

- What appears to be Salitter’s reason for recommending that the Jews be provided with water?
- Why might Salitter have attempted to put children with their mothers?
- Is there any evidence of Salitter’s attitude toward his role or toward Jews in the report? If so, explain his attitude toward each.
- Based on the report, how would you characterize Salitter’s role in the murder process?
- Who of the perpetrators mentioned in the report is not German? What was their role?
- What were their possible motives for collaborating with the Germans?

7 Using the notes from the students’ small-group work, prepare a composite list of all the people appearing in the document who participated in the deportation and ultimate fate of Jews in the transport. Have groups also offer additional names of those not mentioned in the document. Next to each person’s name on the list, have students determine, on a scale of 1 to 4, each person’s level of responsibility in what happened to the Jews. Have students support their choices and discuss areas of disagreement.

- 1 = Not responsible
- 2 = Minimally responsible
- 3 = Somewhat responsible
- 4 = Guilty

8 To ensure that students understand the meaning of the words “collaboration” and “collaborator” within the context of World War II and the Holocaust, distribute the **Collaborators** handout and read together. Follow with a discussion using some or all of the questions below.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 90-120 MINUTES