



Making Connections

The ideas below are offered as ways to extend the lessons in this unit and make connections to related historical events, current issues, and students' own experiences. These topics can be integrated directly into Echoes & Reflections lessons, used as stand-alone teaching ideas, or investigated by students engaged in project-based learning.

1 Leon Bass served in a segregated military unit in World War II. He and thousands of other Black Americans faced racism and discrimination at home even as they fought for freedom in Europe. The Langston Hughes poem, "**Beaumont to Detroit: 1943**," explores this contradiction by setting Nazi persecution abroad against race riots that took place in Beaumont, Texas and Detroit, Michigan in 1943. Read the poem and write an essay in which you explore some of the following questions:

- What comparisons does Langston Hughes make between Nazism and Jim Crow racism? What is he trying to say by associating the two, even though there are many significant differences between them?
- How do you think it felt for Black servicemen and their families to sacrifice for their countries during World War II when Jim Crow racism was widespread in the U.S.?
- What do you think it was like for Black servicemen to return to the U.S. after helping to liberate Europe? How might their perspectives and their expectations have changed?
- How do you view the struggles of people like Leon Bass and Roman Kent in light of current challenges related to race in the U.S. and the Black Lives Matter movement? How are they all connected?

2 This unit uses diaries and autobiographies to explore the worlds of Jewish teenagers and their fates. Another way to investigate the prewar world is through the use of artifacts. Refer to Yad Vashem's online exhibition "**Don't Forget Me: Children's Albums from the Holocaust**" for some of these artifacts. In particular, **Lydia Hönig's autograph book** gives a glimpse into the prewar life of this girl who lived in Novi Sad, Yugoslavia. After studying Lydia's autograph book, answer these questions: What does Lydia's autograph book tell you about her? What do her photos tell you about the type of life she lived before WWII?

3 The start of WWII marked the end of an era for Jews, and the almost complete destruction of the Jewish way of life in small towns or *shtetls*, such as the one in which Esther lived. Research shtetl life and write a reflection in which you discuss why it is important to study these communities that no longer exist, and what they tell us about the people who lived in them and their way of life.

4 This lesson references languages spoken by the Jews before the Holocaust, including Yiddish, Esperanto, Hebrew, and the local languages of the countries Jews lived in. Research the role of Yiddish, Esperanto, or Hebrew in Jewish prewar culture. Prepare a short dictionary that includes a brief history of the language, how the language is still used today, and some key phrases that you can teach to your classmates.

- 5** The biography of Victor “Young” Perez introduces us to the notion of Jewish sports organizations. Research the Maccabi World Union and the Maccabiah to understand the role that these sports clubs played in the lives of Jews in different places. In addition, refer to Yad Vashem’s exhibition, ***Jews and Sport before the Holocaust: A Visual Retrospective***. Choose one athlete or one sport that interests you. Prepare and share an oral or multimedia report on your findings.

- 6** The autobiography of Jakub introduces us to the concept of youth movements. Research the rise of youth movements in 19th century Europe, and the different Jewish youth movements that sprang up. Refer to Yad Vashem’s ***description*** of some of these movements, as well as its exhibits on youth movements in the cities of ***Vilna*** and ***Mir***. Prepare and share an oral or multimedia report on the role youth movements played in the lives of Jews in various cities in Europe.