Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust

Throughout history, Jews have suffered anti-Semitism, acts of violence and hatred against the Jewish people. Some of the worst incidents occurred during the Middle Ages, when Jews were accused of using the blood of Christian children to make Passover matzah. During the crusades, Jews were massacred by Christians on their way to liberate the Holy Land from the Muslims, and in late 19th century Russia Jews were victims of pogroms, organized attacks. But the most tragic and horrifying of all may be what happened in Germany prior to and during World War II, known as the *Shoah,* or the Holocaust.

Adolf Hitler, leader of the Nazis, blamed Germany's problems on the Jews and other minority groups. As his army swept through Europe, they attempted to erase the Jewish population, imprisoning and murdering millions. Jews were placed in concentration camps where they were systematically killed. In total, about 6 million Jews, out of a world population of 18 million, were murdered during the Holocaust. The map below shows the estimated deaths in the countries besieged by the Holocaust.

Each year about a week after Pesach, Jews observe a special day called *Yom Hashoah,* Holocaust Remembrance Day, as a reminder of the horrifying consequences of hatred.

Minimum estimated deaths

4,6000,000	Poland/USSR 1
402,000	Hungary 2
277,000	Czechoslovakia 3
125,000	Germany 4
106,000	Netherlands 5
83,000	France 6
65,000	Austria 7
65,000	Greece 8
60,000	Yugoslavia 9
40,000	Rumania 10
24,000	Belgium 11
152,000	Other countries