The New Jersey

Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission and the Commission on Holocaust Education

--- present ---

ITALIAN RESCUERS DURING THE HOLOCAUST

"Universality of Italian Heritage" Curriculum Lesson Plans
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## ITALIANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

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Dear Educator:

This curriculum, “Italians and the Holocaust,” is a cooperative project between the New Jersey Italian and Italian American Heritage Commission and the New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education. It meets the goals of each organization in that the Italian Commission has, as its charge, to highlight the impact and involvement of Italian Heritage on the world, and to combat negative stereotypes through education.

The New Jersey Holocaust Commission is legislatively mandated to instruct students about the Holocaust and genocide. One of the goals emphasized in the curriculum developed by the Commission is the issue of rescuers and upstanders. This cooperative curriculum presents issues regarding the importance of rescue and respect for all people. The curriculum makes reference to the general population of Italy including members of the clergy, but not the church or religion as a whole.

We hope that you find the curriculum useful in your classroom and that it will demonstrate the importance of caring and learning about others which is a principal way to reduce bias, bigotry and prejudice wherever and whenever they exist.

Sincerely,

Gilda Rorro Baldassari
Hon. Gilda Rorro Baldassari, Ed.D.
Honorary Vice Consul for Italy in Trenton
Vice Chair, Italian Heritage Commission
Chair, Curriculum Development Committee

Sincerely,

Dr. Paul B. Winkler
Executive Director
New Jersey Commission on Holocaust Education
Acknowledgements

Principal Writer:  Kevin T. Brady, Ph.D.
Additional Writer:  Robert Longo
American Institute for History Education

Appendices Provided by:  Vincent E. Marmorale,
Chairman Holocaust Committee, NY State Commission for
Social Justice, Order Sons of Italy in America (OSIA)

Content Input and Review:  New Jersey Italian and Italian
American Heritage Commission

Review and Edit:  New Jersey Commission on Holocaust
Education

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Box 658, Portland, Maine 04104

Dedication

This curriculum is dedicated to all those who performed
heroic deeds during the Holocaust to save their fellow
human beings and to those in the future who prevent acts of
bias, prejudice and intolerance wherever and whenever they exist by being an upstander and not a bystander, bully
or collaborator.
Italians and the Holocaust

Overview

Grades: 9-12
Sociology
New Jersey Core Curriculum Standard 6.3 World History

Time Needed: One 40-45 minute period

Objectives: Students will be able to:

1. Describe the level of support and non-support provided by Italians in World War II for the Holocaust against the Jews sponsored by Italy’s ally, Nazi Germany.
2. Speculate on reasons why many Italians, both in and out of the government, did not support or actively opposed the anti-Jewish policies of Nazi Germany.
3. Compare and contrast attitudes toward government institutions and the concept of patriotism between Italian and German citizens in the 1930’s and 1940’s.

Key terms:
Concentration Camps Labor and Death camps organized by the Nazis to concentrate slave labor and those destined for systematic execution.
Gentile A non-Jew
Holocaust The attempted extermination of the Jewish population and other people considered “undesirable” by the German Nazis.
Nazi The National Socialist German Workers’ Party in Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. They ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945.

Background:

Of all the horrific events that took place during the World War II era, none is more grotesque or unsettling than the Holocaust, the systematic plan of Nazi Germany to segregate, imprison, exploit and eventually exterminate groups that the Nazis defined as racially inferior or politically dissident. That Hitler and his staff could plan such a project is awful enough, but the fact that it was carried out, with the often un-coerced support of thousands of German citizens and citizens and officials in countries invaded
by the Nazi's like Poland, Russia and France, makes it even more terrible. Eleven million people, six million of them Jews, were murdered before the fall of Hitler’s Reich ended the “final solution.”

Few events in history have had as deep a moral impact on society as the Holocaust, even to the point that some deny it even happened. Few events in the history of the world are as well-documented as the Holocaust: the Nazi’s themselves kept meticulous records of their outrages, in written, statistical, photographic and motion picture form. The Allied forces that liberated the concentration camps also carefully recorded what they found. There are literally hundreds of thousands of people who personally witnessed these events. To deny the obvious truth behind these mountains of evidence only acknowledges the impact of the Holocaust. From the ashes of the Holocaust came the realization of re-establishing Israel after nearly 2000 years. In reaction to the newsreels and Life magazine photos of the Holocaust, Americans in the post-World War II years, black and white, began to rethink the smoldering condition of race relations in the U.S. by being forced to see what the ultimate result of racism could be. It could easily be said that the shock of the Holocaust revived the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S. that had been struggling in vain since the end of Reconstruction.

A little recognized but remarkable aspect of this history that actually leaves the researcher with some sense of cautious optimism is that the closest ally of Hitler’s Third Reich, Italy under the rule of Benito Mussolini, was an unwilling and often uncooperative partner in terms of the Holocaust. Italy, as other European countries, had a Jewish community for centuries and, although there was prejudice against them, the Jewish community had been assimilated into Italian society relatively well. Even under Mussolini’s rule, Jewish Italians were accepted. There were even Jewish members of the Fascist Party, in about equal proportion to the Gentile members. (About 8% of Italians, either Jewish or Gentile, were members of the Fascist Party.)

When Hitler’s regime began to ratchet up the anti-Jewish program in Germany and its allied and occupied countries, Mussolini’s government unenthusiastically enacted legislation restricting some of the rights of Jewish citizens and complying with Nazi demands that they turn over Jews who were not Italian citizens to the Germans. At the enforcement level, however, Italian officials were usually slow to act on these orders. Italian officials and military personnel were often willing to ignore restrictions on the Jews and often assisted Jews in evading the edicts of Nazi Germany. Many private citizens and some Catholic clergy also went out of their way, at risk to themselves, to help Jewish people keep out of the reach of the Nazi’s.

When the Fascist government was overthrown and Mussolini was ousted in 1943 by anti-fascist Italians, the new Italian government made peace with the Western Allies, but the German Army occupied Italy north of Naples. It would take an American/British invasion force to liberate Italy. With the German Army on the ground in Italy, the persecution of Jews in Italy escalated. Attempts were made to round up the Jews in Italy and relocate them to concentration camps. But even in the face of hostile German troops, many Italians often ignored, refused compliance or forcefully resisted directives
by the Germans regarding the capture, relocation or killing of Jews in Italy. There developed an active armed resistance movement among Italian civilians against Nazi occupation in general. When the war ended in 1945, the Italians could take some pride in the fact that between 80-85% of the Italian Jewish population of about 40,000 people had survived the war. Most other countries under Nazi occupation could not make that claim.

Resources:

http://www.kimel.net/italians.html
"Holocaust Bystanders – Italians” article on how Italians avoided complying with anti-Jewish persecutions during WW II.

http://www.holocaust-heroes.com/credit_clergy.html
Article about how Catholic clergy helped Jewish people in Italy during WW II.

http://www.yadvashem.org/download/education/conf/Auretto1B.pdf
Detailed narrative about Jewish community in Italy and how the Holocaust was resisted by Jews and non-Jews in Italy during WW II.

Brief article from The Holocaust Encyclopedia about the Holocaust in Italy.

http://www.ushmm.org/research/center/lerman/bibliography/bibliography.php?country=italy
Bibliography on Italy in the Holocaust

Procedures:

I. Anticipatory Set: Students will answer a “DO NOW” question at the start of the period for five minutes:
Which countries would be most likely to support and actively participate in the persecution of Jewish people by Nazi Germany in the 1930’s and 1940’s:
a. Allies of Nazi Germany?
b. Countries that were attacked, invaded and occupied by Nazi Germany?

II. Briefly discuss student answers and reach some consensus. (Most would probably expect Germany’s allies to be more likely to support anti-Jewish actions.) Explain briefly to students that Germany’s chief European ally in World War II, Italy, actually was considerably less cooperative and more opposed to the activities leading to the Holocaust than several countries that were attacked by the Germans.

III. Students will be divided into five study groups and each will be assigned to read and discuss one of the five websites listed above on the history of Italy during the Holocaust.
IV. Students will answer the following questions in written form or in class discussions:
   a. What actions did the Italian government under Mussolini take against Jewish people in Italy?
   b. What actions did the Nazi leaders in Germany expect the Italians to take?
   c. What had been the history of relations between Jewish people and Gentiles in Italy before World War II?
   d. Did the Italians actively oppose any of the actions taken by the German government against the Jews? Which ones and how were they opposed?
   e. How did the collapse of Mussolini’s government in 1943 affect the persecution of Italian Jews?
   f. Approximately how many Jewish people were living in Italy at the start of World War II?
   g. How many of the Italian Jews were killed in the Holocaust?
   h. Was the survival rate for Italian Jews higher or lower than the survival rate for Jewish people living in other European countries during WW II?
   i. What aspects of Italian culture might explain the survival rate of Italian Jews during WW II?

Assessment:

- Each student will write a two paragraph essay explaining the reasons why the effects of the Holocaust were relatively minor in Italy, Nazi Germany’s main European ally. The essay will consider the relations between the Jewish community in Italy before the war and the characteristics of Italian culture that might have contributed to this result.

Homework / Extension:

Students can view the film, *The Garden of the Finzi-Cantinix*, which portrays the life of Jewish Italians in the 1930’s and 1940’s. Students will compare the way the film presents this time with the information developed in this lesson.
Primo Levi

Grades: 9-10
Language Arts, Character Education
New Jersey Curriculum Standard 6.3 – World History

Objectives:
Students will be able to:
1. Analyze a poem and determine what the composer was trying to express.
2. Interpret the emotions expressed in the poem.

Key terms:
Concentration Camps: Labor and Death camps organized by the Nazi to concentrate slave labor and those destined for systematic execution.
Gentile: A non-Jew
Holocaust: The attempted extermination of the Jewish population and other “undesirables” in Europe by the German Nazis.
Nazi: The National Socialist German Workers’ Party in Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. They ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945.

Background
Like many Jewish Italians of the early 20th Century, Primo Levi had almost thoroughly assimilated into Italian society. Primo came from a liberal Jewish family in Turin and had studied the classics in a notoriously anti-Fascist school that had been run by a large number of socialists and communist instructors. He then entered the University of Turin to study chemistry, but due to Italy’s new anti-Jewish laws of 1938, Levi had great difficulty finding a supervisor. Remarkably, he was able to complete his thesis on physics and graduated in 1941.

When Italian partisans overthrew the Mussolini regime in 1943, Levi joined an anti-Fascist partisan group in the Alps to fight against Mussolini’s Fascist followers and the Nazi Germans. Untrained for such adventure, Levi and his comrades were quickly captured by an Italian Fascist militia in December 1943. Once the Fascists found out Levi was Jewish, he was interned in a concentration camp in Fossoli, Italy. Two months later the Fascists sent him to the infamous Nazi death camp at Auschwitz. Only fifteen men and nine women out of 650 Jewish prisoners survived the horrific train ride from Italy.

At Auschwitz Levi worked as chemist making synthetic rubber for the German Army. His earlier training as a chemist had spared him an almost certain death in the Nazi gas chambers. Levi was able to survive by supplementing his meager rations by eating cotton. Eventually, he was liberated from Auschwitz by the Soviet Army and returned home to Turin.
cotton. Eventually, he was liberated from Auschwitz by the Soviet Army and returned home to Turin.

Once back in Turin, Levy decided to record his memories of Auschwitz. Unfortunately, his work, at first, did not sell well on the Italian market. While at Auschwitz, Levi had taught his friend, Jean Samuel, Italian by quoting Dante's *Inferno*. From the Ulysses story he contemplated on a passage which dealt with the crucial question, "What is a man?" Subsequently, he named these concentration camp memoirs, "Se questo è un uomo" (*If This Is a Man*). He then wrote *La Tregua* (The Truce) that was translated in the United States as "Survival in Auschwitz". Once his books were translated into other languages, Levi became a major literary figure and *La Tregua soon* became a standard text in Italian literature classes.

Following a career as a chemist and a general manager of a paint company, in 1977 Levi turned to his first love, writing, and produced a number of brilliant novels. After an extremely successful career, in an apparent suicide, Levi died in 1987.

**Procedure**


II. Read Primo Levy's *Schema* (Handout 1)

> You who live safe  
> In your warm houses,  
> You who find, returning in the evening,

    Hot food and friendly faces:  
    Consider if this is a man  
    Who works in the mud  
    Who does not know peace  
    Who fights for a scrap of bread  
    Who dies because of a yes or a no.

    Consider if this is a woman,  
    Without hair and without name  
    With no more strength to remember,  
    Her eyes empty and her womb cold  
    Like a frog in winter.

    Meditate that this came about:  
    I commend these words to you.  
    Carve them in your hearts  
    At home, in the street,  
    Going to bed, rising;
Repeat them to your children,  
Or may your house fall apart,  
May illness impede you,  
May your children turn their faces from you.

III. After reading the entire poem, ask students to look at each verse individually.  
IV. Have students complete the questions (Handout 2) regarding the Poem.

Schema

You who live safe  
*Who is Levi addressing?*

In your warm houses,  
*What does he mean by this verse?*

You who find, returning in the evening,  
Hot food and friendly faces:

*It seems Levi is somewhat cynical here. Why do you think he has this attitude?*

Consider if this is a man

*What does Levi say here? What does he imply?*

Who works in the mud  
Who does not know peace  
Who fights for a scrap of bread  
Who dies because of a yes or a no.
Explain what Levi is trying to describe in the four verses above, especially in the fourth verse.

Consider if this is a woman,  
*What does Levi say here? What does he imply?*

Without hair and without name  
With no more strength to remember,  
Her eyes empty and her womb cold  
Like a frog in winter.

Explain what Levi is trying to describe in the four verses above, especially in the fourth verse.

Meditate that this came about:  
I commend these words to you.  
Carve them in your hearts  
At home, in the street,  
Going to bed, rising;  

*Why is Levi issuing these commands? Who is he speaking to? What does this say about his vision of the future? What does that say about his past?*

Repeat them to your children,  
Or may your house fall apart,  
May illness impede you,
May your children turn their faces from you.

*Why does Levi issue this curse on those who don’t listen? Why the urgency?*

---

**Homework**

After reading the poem and answering the questions, students will write three paragraphs:

1. Explain why Levi would question the very humanity of the oppressed Jews in the concentration camps. Did the Nazis rob the Holocaust victims of their very manhood and womanhood?
2. By what authority does Levi write such a poem?
3. Have students write a paragraph explaining whether Levi’s warning has been heeded by modern generations.
Primo Levi
Handout 1

SCHEMA

You who live safe
In your warm houses,
You who find, returning in the evening,

Hot food and friendly faces:
Consider if this is a man
Who works in the mud
Who does not know peace
Who fights for a scrap of bread
Who dies because of a yes or a no.

Consider if this is a woman,
Without hair and without name
With no more strength to remember,
Her eyes empty and her womb cold
Like a frog in winter.

Meditate that this came about:
I commend these words to you.
Carve them in your hearts
At home, in the street,
Going to bed, rising;

Repeat them to your children,
Or may your house fall apart,
May illness impede you,
May your children turn their faces from you.
Righteous Italian Heroes

Grades: 9-12
World History, Character Education
New Jersey Curriculum Standard 6.3—World History

Objectives:
Students will be able to:
1. Analyze Italian gentiles who risked all to save Italian Jews and other Jews from Nazi concentration camps.
2. Identify character traits of a hero

Key terms:
Concentration Camps  Labor and Death camps organized by the Nazis to concentrate slave labor and those destined for systematic execution.
Gentile  A non-Jew
Holocaust  The attempted extermination of the Jewish population and other “undesirables” of Europe by the German Nazis.
Nazi  The force called The National Socialist German Workers’ Party in Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. They ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945.
Righteousness  In accordance with virtue or morality.

Background:

Historically, Italy’s treatment of its resident Jewish population, though by no means stellar, compares well when juxtaposed with many of its neighbors to the north and east. In 1848, the independent Italian Kingdom and Sardinia and Piedmont under the House of Savoy emancipated Jews from their confinement in special ghettos. The Jews were given civil and political equality with Catholic Italians. They no longer had to hide their ethnic and religious identities in the Savoy kingdom, nor later in the subsequent descendent Kingdom of Italy.

By the time Benito Mussolini (Il Duce) and the Fascists took control of Italy in 1924, Italian Jews had nearly assimilated into Italian society. Many Italian Jews had even joined the Fascist Party, had participated in the March on Rome to take power, and had held high government posts.

In 1929 Mussolini entered into the Italian Concordant with the Vatican; thus, Italy then recognized Roman Catholicism as the official state religion. Subsequently, in 1930 Mussolini’s government passed the Falco Laws that sanctioned the idea of a type of entente (or understanding) between Italy and non-Catholic religions. These laws contradicted article 8 of the Italian constitution that had allowed freedom of religion.
After he had later entered into an alliance with Nazi Germany in 1938, Mussolini produced his *Manifesto of Italian Racism*. He asserted that Italians were part of the "pure race" along with the Aryans. Italy then expelled Jews from all public services, such as the army and public schools. Many Jews quickly looked to escape Italy, in case the environment for Jews denigrated to the deleterious situation that fellow Jews were experiencing in Germany.

In 1940 Italy joined the German war against France and the Allied nations. To show solidarity with his German ally, Mussolini then ordered the Italian army to attack the Jewish ghettos throughout Italy. After *Il Duce* was overthrown in 1943, Germany marched into northern Italy, reinstated Mussolini, and quickly began to round up Italian Jews for deportation to Nazi concentration camps. Many Jews fled hoping to find shelter in the Alps, or in Roman Catholic convents, and monasteries. Others joined the resistance movement.

Nearly 8,000 Jews were taken from Italy and sent to the Nazi death camps, where over 95% of them were put to death. Forty thousand Italian Jews, however, were spared the horrors of Nazi death camps because courageous Italian citizens, Catholic clergy and religious orders, government officials, and even military officers daringly helped Italian Jews escape to southern Italy, then under Allied control. Many Italian individuals risked their lives and property to save their Jewish countrymen. Over 80% of the Italian Jews survived the Holocaust, in most cases, because of the heroic efforts of their gentile fellow citizens.

**Procedure:**

I. Give students some background regarding the actions of many Italians during World War II and their relationships with their Jewish Italian neighbors, both before and during the war.

II. Show students a copy of a brochure as a model.

III. Break students up into seven equal groups.

IV. Assign students the following names:
   a. Mother Donata
   b. Giorgio Perlasca
   c. Don Arrigo Beccari
   d. Cardinal Dalla Costa
   e. Don Raimondo Viale
   f. Padre Ruffino Niccacci
   g. Mother Mary Xavier Marteau

V. Instruct students to research their assigned person's role in rescuing Jews from Nazi concentration camps.

   a. Each group will prepare a tri-fold brochure that advances their particular person as a true, courageous hero.

   b. On the first page:
      i. Title
      ii. Picture or symbol
      iii. Subtitle
c. On the second page:
   i. Have students write a paragraph or two about how the Nazis had put German Jews and Jews from conquered and Axis countries into concentration camps.
   ii. Include a picture and caption.

d. On the third page:
   i. Have students write a paragraph describing the Italian government’s treatment of Jewish citizens prior to Fascist Italy’s alliance with Nazi Germany.
   ii. Include a picture and caption.

e. On the fourth page:
   i. Have students write a paragraph about how the Nazis began to send Italian Jews to concentration camps once they occupied Italy in 1943.
   ii. Include a picture and caption.

f. On the fifth page:
   i. Students will introduce their hero and tell how he or she contributed to saving Italian Jews from the concentration camps, at grave risk to his or her own safety or prosperity.
   ii. Include a picture and caption.

g. On the sixth page:
   i. Have students explain why their hero was courageous and why he or she should serve as a model of a heroic person.

VI. Have students present their brochure to the class and in their presentation, explain why their person is truly a heroic courageous figure.

**Homework**

Have students write a letter to the present Italian government (*Il Ministro dell'Interno*), requesting that it take measures to acknowledge their particular person as a national hero.

**Some Resources**

Father Brunacci, Holocaust Hero

Holocaust Heroes
http://www.holocaust-heroes.com/convents.html

Italy and the Holocaust

Jewish Memoirists: The Role of Memory in the Discourse of Identity.
http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/modlang/carasi/articles/memorialistica2.html
Jews in Italy
http://www.initaly.com/regions/ethnic/jewish.htm

Yeshiva Hosts International Historical Conference on Italian Jewry and the Holocaust

http://www.jewishvirtuallib.org/jsource/anti-semitism/piusdef.html This site presents
documentary evidence regarding the Catholic Church’s actions in regard to the
Holocaust. The students should, of course, review this and other sources to reach his/her
own conclusions about this subject.

Margherita Marchione. *Yours Is a Precious Witness: Memoirs of Jews and Catholics in
Wartime Italy*, Paulist Press, 1997;
Guilty of Righteousness

Grades: 9-12
World History, Character Education

Objectives:
Students will be able to:
1. Determine whether Giovanni Palatucci deserved to be executed according to Nazi laws.
2. Determine whether Giovanni Palatucci was actually a hero unjustly sentenced to be executed by immoral Nazi law.

Key terms:
Concentration Camps Labor and Death camps organized by the Nazis to concentrate slave labor and those destined for systematic execution.
Holocaust The attempted extermination of the Jewish population and other "undesirables" in Europe by the German Nazis.
Nazi The National Socialist German Workers’ Party in Germany under the leadership of Adolf Hitler. They ruled Germany from 1933 to 1945.
Righteousness In accordance with virtue or morality.

After years of relative tolerance for Jewish Italians within the Italian government and within the Fascist Party, Benito Mussolini issued his anti-Jewish laws in 1938 to placate his new ally, Adolf Hitler. One Italian hero in particular, Giovanni Palatucci, ignored these laws and helped save as many as 5,000 Jews from almost certain death. Palatucci, a policeman in the port city Fiume, Italy (now Rijeka, Croatia), falsified travel documents of Eastern European Jews escaping persecution in Croatia and allowed them to settle in Fiume. He also helped many Jews escape to Palestine on ships that had originally left from the Italian port city. When the Italian Fascist government ordered Palatucci to send Italian Jews to Italian concentration (not death) camps, Palatucci made sure that they were sent to a large camp in Campania in southern Italy. His uncle, Bishop Giuseppe Maria Palatucci, had turned the camp into a refuge for Jews from Nazi and Fascist persecution. The Jews concentrated in Campania escaped the harsh conditions found in northern Italian concentration camps, and they were spared going to Nazi death camps, once the German Army had invaded the north in 1943.

After Italian partisans overthrew Benito Mussolini during the Allied invasion of Italy in 1943, Nazi Germany invaded northern Italy. They re-established a northern Italian Fascist puppet government. The German invaders quickly started to round up Italian Jews and sent them to Nazi death camps in Poland. Many Italians came to their fellow countrymen’s aid and worked to hide Jews or help them to escape to safer parts of Italy, under Allied control.
The Nazis ordered Palatucci to provide them with a list of all Jews in Fiume and in the nearby areas. Heroically, Palatucci ignored the Nazi orders and destroyed all of his records. The furious Nazis arrested Palatucci for conspiracy in September 1944 and sentenced him to death. The sentence was later commuted, and he was sent to Dachau, in Germany, where he died within a month.

Procedure:
I. Divide students into two equal groups.
   a. Prosecution team
   b. Defense team

II. Divide each team into sub groups
   a. Research team
   b. Writing team
   c. Presenting team

III. Over a three to five day period (in-class, as an out-of-class assignment, or both):
   a. All students will research whether Giovanni Palatucci had violated Nazi laws and had indeed sacrificed his own safety and comfort to save Jews from Nazi persecution.
      i. The prosecutors will record reasons why Giovanni Palatucci had indeed saved Jews from Nazi persecution, committed treason, and had violated Nazi law.
      ii. The defense team will record reasons why Giovanni Palatucci had not violated Nazi law and was innocent; thus, he should not be punished.
   b. The research team will organize all of the data so the writers and the orators can use the information in their presentations.
   c. The writers will organize the research data into a formal, five-page, double-spaced essay (with citations), explaining their position.
   d. The orators will organize their data into a speech to present at a fictitious Nazi court.

IV. Hold a mock trial (debate) in the class.
   a. Have the prosecutors offer written and oral arguments showing how Giovanni Palatucci had rescued Jews from Nazi persecution and how they had violated Nazi law.
      i. Give the prosecutors fifteen minutes to offer their evidence.
         1. Allow the defense team to ask the prosecutors two questions.
         2. Allow the prosecutors one minute to answer each of the questions.
   b. Have the defenders offer written and oral evidence to show that Giovanni Palatucci had not violated Nazi Law.
      i. Give the defense fifteen minutes to offer their evidence.
         1. Allow the prosecutors to ask the defense two questions.
         2. Allow the defense team one minute to answer each of the questions.
V. Homework
   a. Have the students read copies of both presentations.
   b. Have students write a paragraph explaining why they will vote to convict Palatucci or exonerate him according to Nazi law.

VI. On the following day:
   a. Have students vote whether Palatucci was guilty or not guilty of violating Nazi Law.
   b. Once the vote has been recorded and reported, tell the students that the Nazis had tried Palatucci for treason and had sentenced him to death. The sentence was commuted and Palatucci was sent to the Nazi death camp at Dachau, where he died within one month.
      i. Students have already been aware of the outcome from their report and research.
         1. Ask them whether this was a just verdict and sentence since they were in accordance to the Nazi law.
            a. If they say yes, ask them whether the state’s law is supreme and why that is so.
         2. If they say no, ask students to what law can they appeal? What makes the verdict unjust? By what authority?

Homework Extension:
Have students answer the following questions in paragraph form.
1. Does an individual have a moral obligation to ignore or violate an unjust law? Explain.
2. How can one determine whether a law is unjust?
3. Must that authority that determines whether a law is just or not be greater than mere personal opinion or personal feelings? Explain.
4. To what authority can one appeal in order to violate an unjust national law that has been upheld by a national court and/or political system? Explain.

Some Resources for Giovanni Palatucci:

Holocaust Survivors’ Network
   • http://isurvived.org/Rightheous_Folder/Palatucci_Giovanni.html
Giovanni Palatucci, Policemen and Man of God
   • http://www.cwtn.com/vnews/getstory.asp?number=1947
A Tribute to Giovanni Palatucci and Righteous Heroes of the Holocaust
   • http://www.adl.org/education/curriculum_connections/palatucci/
   Articles on Giovanni Palatucci on International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation
   • http://www.raoulwallenberg.net/?en/saviors/others/palatucci/
Uncovered: Correspondence of Pius XII
   • http://www.catholicculture.org/docs/doc_view.cfm?recnum=4685
APPENDICIES
THE ITALIAN SHINDLER

“What would you have done in my place?”

Marina & Marmorale

This is a story of a very ordinary man who single-handedly saved 5,000 Jews during the Holocaust in Hungary. Within a period of forty-five days he impersonated a Spanish diplomat and kept 5,000 people in safe houses, in Budapest, under the protection of the fascist country headed by Generalissimo Francisco Franco. He visited the houses two and three times daily to bring them news and food. To show that he had diplomatic immunity, Hungarian fascists carried the Spanish flag behind him while German soldiers stood by.

Giorgio Perlasca was 34 years old when he found himself in Hungary. He was on a business trip to purchase beef to sell to the Italian Armies. There was nothing extraordinary about this man. He had been an Italian Fascist who fought in Abyssinia, (Ethiopia) in 1935 and Spain in 1936-37. He left Spain with a letter from Franco indicating that the Spanish government would give him protection if he ever needed it. All he had to do was to present the letter to any Spanish diplomat.

It was in October 1943 when Germany started rounding up all Italian nationals and soldiers because Italy had allied itself against Germany. Perlasca was arrested and detained until he had an opportunity to escape from the Germans. Later, he presented himself, with the letter of introduction to Angel Sanz Briz, the Spanish consul in Budapest. They became friends and Giorgio became Jorge and was given a Spanish passport. Mr. Sanz Briz was sympathetic to the Jews of Hungary, especially to the Serphadic (Spanish) Jews. They were given Spanish papers and were sent to Spain.

By December 1, 1944, Sanz Briz was sensing too much pressure so he decided to secretly escape to Switzerland. He offered to take Perlasca with him but Jorge felt that he was needed in Budapest. Two days later, the Minister of Internal Affairs found out about Sanz Briz’s departure, he started evacuating the Spanish houses due to the interruption of diplomatic relations between Hungary and Spain. It was at this moment that Perlasca made his decision to stay. “Hold everything! You’re making a mistake. Sanz Briz has not fled; he has simply gone to Bern in order to communicate more easily with Madrid, seeing as it’s no longer possible to communicate from here. You’re making a very serious mistake. Go ask the Ministry of Foreign Affairs! Sanz Briz informed officials there of his departure. His trip involves a most important diplomatic mission! Sanz Briz left a specific note naming me as his replacement during his absence. You are speaking with the official representative of Spain!”

The scam worked because the Minister of Foreign Affairs had asked for protection when the Russians arrived. He believed that his was the mission Sanz Briz was working on. The suspended the evacuation of the Spanish safe houses “for a few days.” Perlasca returned to the Spanish embassy that afternoon and ably convinced the two remaining Spanish embassy employees, Madame Tourne’, a French woman of Hungarian origin and a Hungarian attorney, Zoltan Farkas, to go along with the scheme.
From December 2, 1944 through January 16, 1945 Perlasca picked up Jews, as he was able to, provide them with papers, brought them and food to the Spanish safe houses. He worked together with the Swiss Red Cross, the Papal Nuncio and the Swedish government, represented by Raoul Wallenberg. During these daily trips he always went out with a car carrying the Spanish flag for protection. Later, when he could no longer get gasoline, he used the Hungarian fascist guards to carry the flag.

At one point Perlasca found himself at the freight station in Budapest where they were loading railroad cars with people, mostly Jews. The diplomatic representatives of the neutral nations made regular visits to see what they could do to snatch anybody from the death shipment. Perlasca spotted two boys in the middle of a moving line. They must have been twelve or thirteen years old. They were identical twins; he later found out that one was a girl.

As they passed in front of me I reached out and grabbed them, pulled them out of line, and threw them into my car. I yelled out, “these two people are under the protection of the Spanish government!” A German major came over to take them back, I stood my ground and we went into a shoving match. Raoul Wallenberg was standing nearby. He turned to the major and said, in a very decisive tone, “You don’t realize what you are doing! You are committing an act of aggression against a territory of a neutral country! You’d better think very carefully about the consequences of your actions!”

The major wouldn’t give up. He started waving his pistol under my nose and said, “Give me back those two boys, you’re interfering with my work.” I said to him, “Is this what you call work?” Then a colonel came over to us. The major put his gun away and explained the situation to him. I too gave him my explanation and again repeated that the two boys were under the protection of the Spanish government and that the car was an extra-territorial zone. The colonel gestured with his hand to the major, indicating that he should desist. Then he turned to me and said, very calmly, “You keep them. Their time will come for them too.” After the Germans walked away, Wallenberg said to me, under his breath, “you realize who that was, don’t you?” “No” I said. “That was Eichmann.”

After the Red army liberated Budapest, Perlasca found his way back to Padua, his hometown in Italy and his family. It took almost forty-five years for history to finally acknowledge Perlasca’s significant feat and action of bravery. By this time he was eighty years old. You can read about Giorgio Perlasca in The Banality of Goodness, written by Enrico Deaglio, translated from the Italian by Gregory Conti and published by the University of Notre Dame Press.

The name of the book was taken from Hannah Arendt who wrote Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil. Arendt shocked public opinion when she maintained that Eichmann’s evil was not an expression of a monster but an evil that can exist in an ordinary human being. Likewise, the goodness and heroics expressed by Perlasca came from an ordinary human being that rose to the occasion as he asked, “What would you have done in my place?”
Giovanni Palatucci is making a comeback.

Overshadowed by Oskar Schindler and generally unknown like most other Righteous Among the Nations, Palatucci's courage has been recalled with increasing frequency of late.

A drive to declare Palatucci a saint is underway, and his actions may indirectly exonerate Pope Pius XII. But on Thursday -- the 40th anniversary of Palatucci's death at Dachau -- the unlikely hero is to be commemorated by senior Italian and Israeli officials in a special ceremony at Yad Vashem for having saved as many as 5,000 Jews from the Nazi genocide.

Palatucci was a young Italian policeman in charge of the occupied Adriatic seaport of Fiume &endash; now called Rijeka, in what would become Croatia &endash; when Benito Mussolini's anti-Jewish "racial laws" took effect in 1938. He used his authority to falsify travel documents which allowed hundreds of Jews to flee persecution in Eastern Europe and settle in Fiume.

He also helped hundreds of refugees dodge Germans and Nazi sympathizers in their precarious attempts to sail to Palestine. Some he hid or provided with money.
When ordered to arrest and deport the area's Jews, Palatucci made sure that they were sent to the large internment camp in Campania, southern Italy. His uncle, Bishop Giuseppe Maria Palatucci, had managed to turn the camp into a sort of refuge from fascist and Nazi rule, and hid the "illegal foreigners" that the younger Palatucci sent to him.

This risky endeavor became far more dangerous for Palatucci in 1943, when Mussolini's government fell and the German occupation swallowed the Fiume area.

Thousands of Jews from the rest of Croatia were then being deported to Auschwitz.

The Nazis wanted Palatucci to provide them with lists of Jews and "foreigners" to round up for a similar fate. He refused, however, tipping off the local Jews and destroying records to frustrate the Nazis' plans.

The Gestapo came for Palatucci in September of 1944, when he was tried for treason and sentenced to death.

A month later he was sent to Dachau, where he died shortly before his 36th birthday.

Before his arrest, Palatucci was offered refuge in Switzerland by his friend, the Swiss ambassador to Trieste. He refused, but sent his Jewish fiancee instead. After the war, she moved to Israel; she recently passed away.

After 1953, when the city of Ramat Gan planted 36 trees in Palatucci's name on Rehov Hapodim, his heroism went largely unnoticed until he was named a Righteous Among the Nations in 1990. But his efforts are also related to the controversial debate between (mostly Jewish) critics and (mostly Catholic) defenders of Pius XII over his actions during the Holocaust.

In 2003, Vatican journalist Antonio Gaspari revealed "newly discovered" letters to Bishop Palatucci in which the pope explicitly offered monetary help for the care of Jews and others interned at Campania.

Italian police have pushed to have Palatucci declared a saint, raising awareness of his courageous sacrifice in a 2000 television movie.

Amos Luzzatto, head of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, was quoted then as saying of Palatucci: "There are two forms of heroism, the one stemming from an unexpected need or impulse, and Palatucci's: a daily heroism, which is repeated and confirmed in face of the certainty of danger being risked. ...He acted knowing that he was moving toward his own sacrifice; for him, it was worthwhile to give his life for just one man."

Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the pope's vicar for Rome, opened Palatucci's cause of beatification in October 2002.

It was completed and presented to the Vatican last year.
Italian Rescuers/Righteous Gentiles

01. **Marshal Italo-Balbo** – refused to deport the Jews of Libya.


03. **Count Luca Pietromarchi** – Chief of the Department of Occupied Territories, Italian Foreign Ministry (later became Ambassador) who obstructed German attempts to deport Jews from Italian areas of occupation.


05. **Angelo Donati** – Advisor to Guido Lospinoso who formulated plans for saving Jews and obstructed deportation.

06. **General Mario Roatta** – Commander of the Italian Second Army in Yugoslavia who refused German demands for Jewish deportation and used force to protect Jews.

07. **General Mario Robotti** – replaced General Roatta as Second Army Commander in Yugoslavia and continued Roatta’s policy of protecting the Jews.

08. **Vittorio Castellani** – Liaison Officer with the Second Army in Croatia who implemented obstruction plans which saved Jewish lives.

09. **Giuseppe Bastianini** – Under Secretary in the Foreign Office who rebuffed German diplomatic attempts to deport Jews from Italy.

10. **Ambassador Egido Ortona** – obstructed German plans to deport Jews from occupied France.


12. **Father Francisco Repetto** – Secretary to Cardinal Pietro Boetta of Genoa who implemented plans to save Jews.

13. **Bishop Placido Nicolini of Assisi** – opened the monasteries, convents and churches to shelter Jews.

14. **Father Rufino Niccacci of Assisi** – coordinated the rescue efforts and provided false documents for Jews throughout Italy.

15. **Mario de Marco** – Police Commander of Rome who was tortured by the Gestapo for helping Jews.

16. **Police Chief Dr. Giovanni Palatucci of Flume** – was deported to Dachau by the Nazis for helping Jews.

17. **Luigi Brizi and Trento Brizi (son)** – printed false documents in Assisi.

18. **Bishop Angelo Roncalli** – Papal Delegate to Turkey and The Balkans signed baptismal certificates issued
“Though 7,600 perished, most of the Italian Jews survived the Holocaust. This was primarily, because the Italian authorities obstructed the Nazi program of deportation and genocide, and because of the relative lack of anti-Semitism among the Italians.”

_Inscription at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC_
Jewish survivor, savior recall Assisi’s wartime compassion

Assisi, Italy – For more than 700 years, pilgrims have made their way to Assisi, drawn by a tender promise of compassion. On a cold October day in 1943, Graziella Viterbi, a 17 year old Jewish girl, found herself among them.

The city of St. Francis did not disappoint her. Viterbi, her parents and her younger sister, were among the Jews saved from the savages of the Holocaust by the Assisi underground, a network of Roman Catholic priests, nuns and lay people.

“It was the only place where they saved everyone.” Viterbi says. “Not a single person was deported.”

The underground, now a nearly forgotten chapter of World War II, hid around 200 Jews in Assisi, secreting them in convents and monasteries and providing them with false documents, ration books, gentile names.

The bishop of Assisi presided over the underground and his right-hand man was a young priest named Aldo Brunacci. Now 84, Brunacci looks back on those days as a golden, God-given chance to do the right thing.

“We did it because we had to.” Says Brunacci, who was later named by Israel as one of the "Righteous Among Nations," an honor bestowed on gentiles who risked their lives to save Jews from the Holocaust.

Jews started arriving in Assisi in the fall in 1943, after the German army seized control of Italy when its Axis ally dropped out of the war. “That’s when the real persecution began,” Viterbi recalls.

The Viterbi family lived in Padua in northern Italy. They were vacationing in the mountains of northern Italy when the occupation began. “We couldn’t go home. We were known there.” Viterbi says.

They went to Assisi by car, by train and, finally, on foot. Shortly after they arrived, they ran into some people they knew from Padua, who put them in touch with Brunacci.

The priest provided them with a new identity: They became the Vitelli family from Puglia, a province in southern Italy in the hands of Allied forces.

On May 15, 1944, the Nazis stormed into Brunacci’s house while Viterbi’s parents were there trying to arrange for other family members to escape. He managed to hide the couple before the Germans hauled him off to a detention camp.

Later, Brunacci was released to Vatican custody on the condition he stay away from Assisi. When the war ended, Brunacci was back home. The Viterbi’s never went back to Padua.

After seven years in Assisi the family moved to Rome. He got a law degree, then met and married a “freethinking" Catholic. They raised two sons. She was the town’s only Jewish resident.