**War & Genocide: The Holocaust [Matching Exercise, 10 points]**

**PRIMARY SOURCES:**

1. We were confronted by a scene that was so abominable and cruel that we were utterly shattered and horrified. The earth had been dug out and was piled up to one side of it. This pile of earth and the wall of the pit were stained red by streams of blood. The pit itself was filled with innumerable human bodies of all types, both male and female… Behind the piles of earth dug from it stood a squad of [Himmler’s] police under the command of a police officer. There were traces of blood on their uniforms. In a wide circle around the pit stood scores of soldiers from the troop detachments stationed there, some of them in bathing trunks, watching the proceedings.
2. The sadness grew with every kilometer and with every kilometer the emptiness became greater. What happened? Here we are approaching the ill-famed station of Treblinka, so tragic of the Jews, where, according to information which had filtered to us, the majority of Poles and Jews from abroad were swallowed up and wiped out.
3. As I said, I am in a very gloomy mood. I must pull myself out of it. The sight of the dead (including women and children) is not very cheering. But we are fighting this war for the survival or non-survival of our people. You back home, thank God, do not feel the full force of that…My comrades are literally fighting for the existence of our people. The enemy would do the same. I think that you understand me. As the war is in our opinion a Jewish war, the Jews are the first to feel it. Here in Russia, wherever the German soldier is, no Jew remains. You can imagine that at first I needed some time to get to grips with this. Please do not talk to Frau Kern about this.
4. As it concerns the Jewish Question, the Fuhrer is resolved to make a clean sweep. He had warned the Jews that if they again unleashed a world war, they would be destroyed. That has been no empty threat. The world war has arrived, and the destruction of Jewry must follow. This matter is to be considered without any sentimentality. It is not for us to have pity on the Jews, but on the German people. If the German people once again have sacrificed 160,000 men in the eastern campaign, then those who caused this bloody conflict must pay for it with their lives.
5. I was standing there not knowing what’s going on, overwhelmed with the amount of people around us, not believing that they threw us all out from these wagons in the manner they did. How they pushed and shoved and screamed. And these SS men with the dogs in front of us. I lost sight of what was going on. It was crazy. And I was standing with my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law with her little girl, when someone approached us, and said, “Give this child to the grandmother.” And my sister-in-law gave the child to my mother-in-law. They went to the left, and we went to the right.
6. The Jews must be finished one way or the other… But what will happen to the Jews? Do you imagine that they will be settled in the Ostland in villages?...Gentlemen, I must ask you to arm yourselves against any feelings of compassion. We must exterminate the Jews wherever we find them and wherever it is possible to do so in order to maintain the whole structure of the Reich here… The General Government must be just as free of Jews as the Reich is. Where and how that occurs is a matter for the agencies which we must establish and deploy here and I will inform you of how they will work in good time.
7. In the course of the Final Solution, the Jews are now to be suitably assigned as labor in the East. In big labor gangs, with the sexes separated, Jews capable of work will be brought to these areas, employed in road-building, in which task a large part will undoubtedly disappear through natural diminution. The remnant that may eventually remain… will have to be appropriately dealt with.
8. The train drew in, 200 Ukrainians detailed for the task tore open the doors and, laying about them with their leather whips, drove the Jews out of the cars. Instructions boomed from a loudspeaker, ordering them to remove all clothing, artificial limbs, and spectacles. Using small pieces of string handed out by a little Jewish boy, they were to tie their shoes together. All valuables and money were to be handed in at the valuables counter, but no voucher or receipt was given. Women and young girls were to have their hair cut off in the hairdresser’s hut.
9. The entire transport fit exactly in the room. The doors were closed and the gas [Zyklon B] was poured in through the opening in the roof. How long the process lasted, I don’t know, but for quite some time sounds could be heard. As the gas was thrown in some of them yelled ‘Gas!’ and a tremendous screaming and shoving started toward both doors, but the doors were able to withstand all the force. I really didn’t waste any thoughts about the killing of the Russian prisoners of war. It was ordered; I had to carry it out. But I must admit openly that the gassings had a calming effect on me, since in the near future the mass annihilation of the Jews was to begin.
10. The trains arrive full of bare bodies, which are unloaded by workers who live at the works. The men wear oilskin overalls and masks with mica eyepieces. They are equipped with long hooked poles, and push the bundles of bodies to an endless chain, which picks them with big hooks, attached at intervals of 2 ft. The bodies are transported on this endless chain into a long, narrow compartment, where they pass through a bath which disinfects them. They then go through a drying chamber, and finally are automatically carried into a digester or great cauldron, in which they are dropped by an apparatus which detaches them from the chain. In the digester they remain from six to eight hours, and are treated by steam, which breaks them up while they are slowly stirred by the machinery…. The process of distillation is carried out by boiling the oil with carbonate of soda, and some of the by-products resulting from this are used by German soap makers.
11. The deportees were carried off to three execution camps, at Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor. Here the trains were unloaded, the condemned were stripped naked and then killed, probably by poison gas or electrocution. For the purpose of burying the bodies a great bulldozer has been taken to Treblinka, and this machine works without stopping. The stench of the decomposing bodies has nauseated all the peasants for three miles around and forced them to flight. In addition to Treblinka, there are also camps at Belzec and Sobibor. It has not been possible to ascertain whether any of those who have been carried off have been left alive. We have information only of extermination.
12. [The Germans] are now carrying into effect Hitler’s oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe. From all the occupied countries Jews are being transported in conditions of appalling horror and brutality in Eastern Europe. In Poland, which has been made the principal Nazi slaughterhouse, the ghettos established by the German invader are being systematically emptied of all Jews except a few highly skilled workers required for war industries. None of those taken away are ever heard of again. The able-bodied are slowly worked to death in labour camps. The infirm are left to die of exposure and starvation or are deliberately massacred in mass executions. The number of victims of these bloody cruelties is reckoned in many hundreds of thousands of entirely innocent men, women and children.

**Note:** Read the primary sources carefully, and then match them up with the correct paraphrased description identifying the author and date for each source. You may need to read them more than once. Do this assignment on a separate sheet; keep the handout because you’ll see some of these sources again on Exam Two.**DESCRIPTIONS/AUTHORS/DATES**

1. The writer describes a horrible massacre in which Heinrich Himmler’s police piled many bodies, both males and females, into a large pit while German soldiers watched. This is part of Major Karl Rosler’s letter to General Rudolf Schniewindt describing an incident witnessed near Zhitomir, Ukraine in late July 1941.
2. The source summarizes Hitler’s ideas for solving the *Judenfrage* or “Jewish Question.” Clearly the destruction of Jews is planned, not their deportation. The quote is from six months into the German invasion of the USSR. Taken from Propaganda Minister [Joseph Goebbels](http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/g/goebbels-joseph/goebbels-1948-excerpts-01.html)’ diary referring to Hitler’s speech of December 12, 1941, five days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.
3. The excerpt describes riding on a deportation train toward Treblinka station & knowing of its terrible reputation. The Jewish writer and his family were deported from the Polish town of Luna in November 1942. Salmen Gradowski kept this secret diary after obtaining writing materials late in 1943. He was a member of the *Sonderkommando* at Auschwitz.
4. This survivor of Auschwitz, Sara Grossman, describes in an interview from 1987, the unloading of the trains and the chaotic “selection” of people into lines: right and left. Those who went to the right were chosen for slave labor; the other members of her family went to the gas chambers.
5. The source explains the absolute necessity of exterminating all Jews and warns against any feelings of compassion. Hans Frank, the top official of the General Government in Poland, speaking shortly before the Wannsee Conference, in December 1941.
6. The article refers to three of the main extermination centers which were called Operation Reinhard camps collectively. It describes the unloading of the trains, and the killing process that follows. Part the information for this report came from [Jan Karski](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6Z2vrmL5eo&feature=related), member of Polish underground; his detailed account was based on visit to Belzec disguised as a Latvian policemen, originally published in *Polish Fortnightly Review*, 1 December 1942.
7. The source refers to the Final Solution in the East which will involve forced labor of large numbers of Jews for road building; it also assumes that large numbers of them will disappear (i.e., die ) in the process. Reinhard Heydrich speaking at the,[Wannsee Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wannsee_Conference) outside Berlin, January 20, 1942.
8. The eyewitness describes the mass murder of Russian prisoners of war using Zyklon B. He makes reference to using the same procedure to annihilate Jews in the near future. Auschwitz SS Kommandant [Rudolf Höss](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/biography/Hoess.html), in 1946 war crimes’ testimony recalling the killing of 900 Soviet POWs on September 16, 1941 by gassing.
9. The excerpt summarizes the treatment of the Jews in Eastern Europe, especially in Poland. It estimates that hundreds of thousands have already been killed. [British Declaration](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/17/newsid_3547000/3547151.stm) condemning the murder of the Jews, read at the House of Commons, British Parliament, 17 December 1942.
10. This account describes, in great detail, the processing of some sort bodies for their by-products. At the end, it makes reference to using some materials for making soap. This is an untrue WWI atrocity story describing a German processing plant, published as “[The Corpse Factory](http://www.mercatornet.com/articles/the_art_of_faking_credentials/),” in *The Times* (London), 17 April 1917.
11. The source recalls Ukrainian assistants at Belzec driving Jews from the train cars by whipping them. It details the victims removing all clothing & personal belongings and the shaving of women’s heads. Head of Disinfection Services, Waffen-SS, [Kurt Gerstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Gerstein), eyewitness description of Belzec, 1942.
12. The writer refers to the war as a “Jewish war” and seems depressed by the constant sight of dead bodies, particularly of women & children. He claims that in Russia there are no Jews remaining. Letter written by SS Karl Kretschmer to his wife back home in Germany, 27 September, 1942.