

Anne Frank

Born in June of 1929, she was a young girl who hid with her family when Germany captured Amsterdam. During her time in the "Secret Annexe", for about two years, she wrote in a diary, vivid impressions on the people around her. She talked about wanting to be free, and her optimism in humanity, even in the face of mass genocide. She was Jewish, so the Gestapo were constantly on the look out for her. Some people helped her family. Alongside the Franks, the Van Daans lived with her as well as Mr. Dussel, who were also in hiding. The whereabouts of all of them were eventually betrayed to the Gestapo, and they were all separated. Otto Frank, Anne's father was taken to Auschwitz alongside Peter Van Daan. Margot and Anne Frank were taken to Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, where they died, at unspecified dates. The only survivor of the Frank family was Otto Frank. The Van Daans were all believed to have died. One of the helpers, Miep, hid Anne's diary when the Gestapo came. She showed it to Mr. Frank after he was rescued, and he published her diary some time later.

Today, Anne is a prominent figure of the Holocaust and its effect on innocent people. She wasn't sixteen yet when she died. Her time was cut short. One famous line in her diary is "In spite of everything, I still believe people are really good at heart."

Adolf Hitler

Born April 20, 1889, he was the Chancellor of Germany from 1933-1945. Seen as a military dictator, he invaded Poland in 1939, which started World War II. He was a ruthless man, who engineered the Final Solution, the mass murder of six million Jews. He is a famous anti-semitist, almost to the point of insanity. When he was young, he wanted to attend art school, but he was rejected. He joined the German army for World War I. He was strongly against the Treaty of Versailles, thinking it unfair. He created the Nazi party, as people grew uneasy and upset against the government. He became leader of the Nazi party and planned a coup, which failed. While in jail, he authored the book *Mein Kampf* (My struggle), outlining his radical ideology about Jews. The Nazi party gained power, and eventually took over Germany, transforming it into a one party nation.

He convinced his people that Jews were the enemy, that they were the source of all things bad: modern art, Treaty of Versailles, Great Depression, anything Germany was unhappy with. Many were against his radical ideas, but overtime he convinced them Jews were the enemy. He restricted their rights when he came into power, prohibiting Jews rights gradually. They were not allowed to hold public office, go to school, vote, own property, almost anything. Eventually his hatred of Jews deepened even more, to the point where he deemed Jews unfit for life. He had them all murdered, each one rounded up and taken to death camps. Approx. six million Jews died at his hand.

As the war progressed, his people slowly began losing. Due to fear of capture, he committed suicide on April 30, 1945. He had recently married his longtime girlfriend, Eva, and they both died together in a room underground. His people claimed to hear a gunshot, then nothing.

Adolf Hitler is a prominent figure in the Holocaust. Majority of the Germans supported him, found him a wonderful leader, and were more than willing to follow him as he invaded other nations.

Oskar Schindler

Born April 1908, Oskar was a German spy who is credited with saving over a thousand Jews from the Holocaust. He is the inspiration for the academy-award winning movie, *Schindler's List*. He employed a thousand Jews in his factories in Poland, which saved many from deportation to death camps and capture. Oskar Schindler joined the Nazi party in 1939. He collectively gained information about the party. He worked for Abwehr for a long time, a Nazi intelligence company.

At its max, his factory employed 1750 workers, 1000 of them Jewish. Often, soldiers would come and try to take his workers. Oskar would bribe them with money to keep them from taking his workers away. This eventually caused him to grow bankrupt.

After the war, his businesses failed. He ended up relying on donations from the Jews who helped him. He was named Righteous Among the Nations, an honor given to non-Jews who helped save Jews during the Holocaust.

He died in 1974, and he was buried in Jerusalem on Mount Zion, the only member of the Nazi party to be honored like this.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Born Jan 1882, he was the president of the United States during most of World War II until his death in 1945.

After graduating Harvard, he began working as a politician. In 1902, he met his future wife and distant cousin, Eleanor Roosevelt. They met on a train to New York, and afterwards maintained correspondence. He became a New York senator in 1910. He was also re-elected in 1912.

He supported Woodrow Wilson, and was appointed the Assistant to the Secretary of the Navy.

Later in 1920, the Democratic convention choose Roosevelt as their Vice President nomination. He failed to the Republicans by a wide margin.

In 1921, he contracted the illness Polio, which left him almost permanently paralyzed. He was careful never to let the public know how the illness affected him, almost never using a wheelchair and learned to walk on his own. He remained out of the public's eye for a long time, turning to legal practice.

Later in 1928, he became the governor of New York. He established a number of social programs.

As the Great Depression sunk in, people wanted a new voice. Herbert Hoover, the sitting president, was being criticized and people wanted change. He won the Democrat's nomination for president in 1932. He won the election by a large margin.

In 1933, after Hitler became Chancellor, Roosevelt went to work. He established the New Deal, a program to combat the Great Depression, pumping money into the economy and establishing jobs for those unemployed. At first the people were hesitant, but as the economy grew, his support did as well.

As a world war became more apparent, he tried to keep the US out of the growing war. He supported the British by sending them aid. After the attack on Pearl Harbor of December of 1941, the US entered the war. Roosevelt boosted military spending.

He met with Winston Churchill and Joseph Stalin to discuss war planning. As time progressed, his health declined. On April 12, 1945, Roosevelt died of a stroke. He had recently been elected for his fourth term, a feat no president had ever done before (and no other did with the 22nd Amendment later passed). Harry S. Truman was sworn in soon, and the war ended a few months later.

Questions

1. Why do you think Anne Frank is so popular?
2. What is the significance of her quote?
3. Do you think you could have faith in humanity, even in the environment Anne was in?
4. Do you think if Hitler had been accepted into art school, history would have ended differently?
5. Based on your knowledge, why was the Treaty of Versailles upsetting Germany?
6. Why do you think the Germans would allow such things to happen?
7. Why do you think he committed suicide?
8. What does Hitler's leadership and his role in society teach us?
9. Why would a Nazi party member save all those Jews?
10. Would you have done the same as Oskar?
11. Do you think FDR was a good president? Use your knowledge and evidence from the text to support your answer.
12. Why are these four people significant? Are they similar? And how are they different?
13. All four of these people served different roles during this time period. Which person would you most likely have been? And would you have done what they did?
14. If you could go back into any one of these four people's lives, and change something or do something different, what would you do?
15. Out of the four, who do you think is the most important? Who do we learn the most from? What do we learn from them?