

# Making of Modern World 15

Lecture #9: The Holocaust and the  
Banality of Evil

# Nazi Genocide and the Jews

- Jews primary target of Nazi genocidal efforts
  - Other groups also slated for destruction: Roma (Gypsies), Gays, Jehovah's Witnesses
- Nazis initially encouraged Jewish emigration
  - Few countries willing to accept Jewish refugees
- Aborted plans to deport Jews to Madagascar, reservation in Poland

# The Final Solution

- *Einsatzgruppen* (mobile killing squads) follow German army into USSR with Operation Barbarossa
- Round up of Jews and others, machine-gun executions of 1.4 million
- Later in 1941 decided on “Final Solution:” deportation of all European Jews to Death Camps
- Plans solidified at Wannsee Conference, January 1942

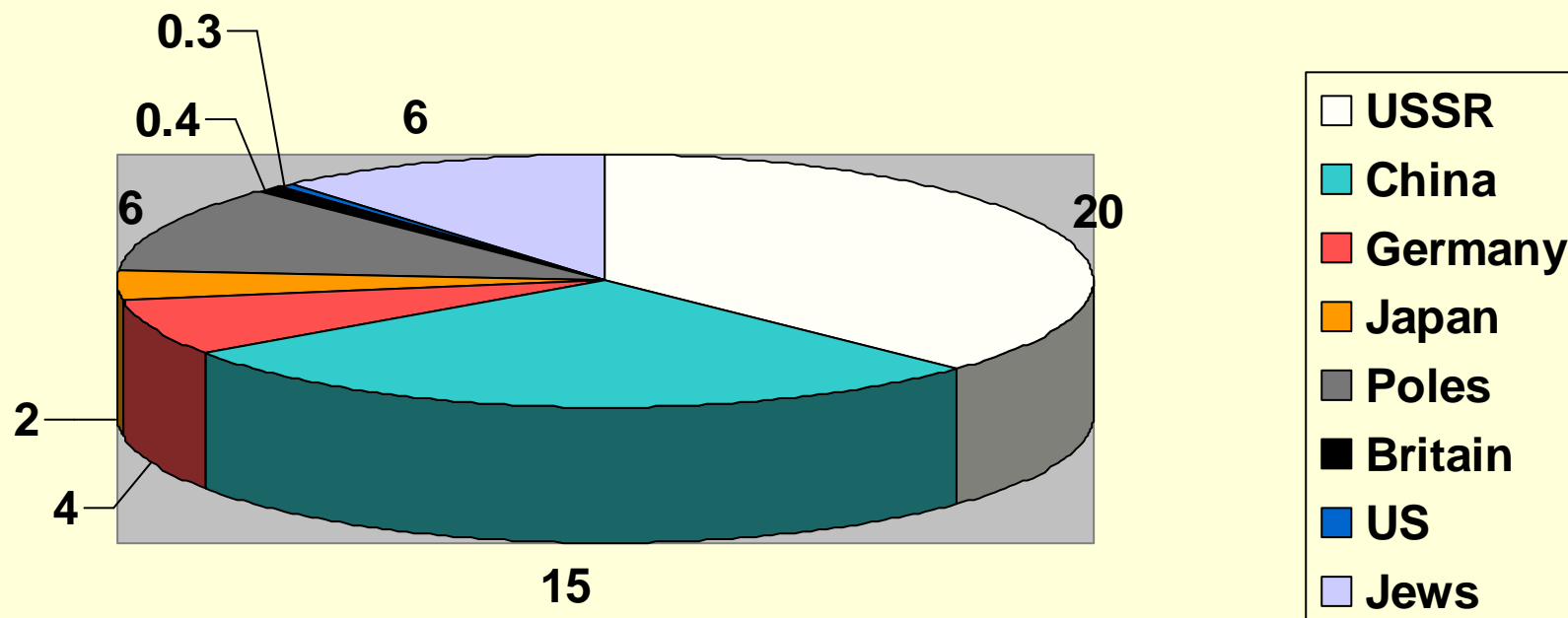
# The Holocaust

- Jews deported from ghettos all over Europe in cattle cars, spring 1942
- Destination: six specially designed Death Camps in Eastern Europe
- Technologically advanced, assembly-line style of murder through poison gas (Zyklon B)
- Corpses destroyed in crematoria
- Estimated number of Jews killed: 5.7 million

# The Holocaust in Europe, 1933-1945



# Deaths During World War II (millions)



# Adolf Eichmann



- How can we understand a man like Eichmann?
- 1906-1962
- One of the major organizers of the Holocaust
- Commits heinous evil that sends people to death
- Yet, seems to have a “normal” brain

# The Banality of Evil

- Eichmann's normality
  - Not particularly successful
  - Desires recognition
  - Normal relationships with family
- Doesn't seem to have been particularly anti-Semitic
- “joiner”
- “respectable voice of society”
- “who am I to judge”