

WINSTON CHURCHILL QUOTE

Resource 2-1

Begin this activity by telling students you are going to read an excerpt from a radio address made by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill to the British people on August 24, 1941, in which he describes atrocities committed by Nazis during the invasion of Soviet Russia. Churchill knew that Nazis were not limiting their killing to Russian soldiers, but that paramilitary groups were also murdering civilians in towns, cities, and rural areas. Churchill was a thoughtful speaker and a man with a rich vocabulary, but in this case, he found himself without the word or words he needed to name what was taking place.

Before reading ask a few students what they predict might be in the paragraph. Then read it aloud:

“

The aggressor ... retaliates by the most frightful cruelties. As his Armies advance, whole districts are being exterminated. Scores of thousands - literally scores of thousands - of executions in cold blood are being perpetrated by the German Police- troops upon the Russian patriots who defend their native soil. Since the Mongol invasions of Europe in the Sixteenth Century, there has never been methodical, merciless butchery on such a scale, or approaching such a scale.

And this is but the beginning.

Famine and pestilence have yet to follow in the bloody ruts of Hitler's tanks.

We are in the presence of a crime without a name.

”

Winston Churchill, from August 24, 1941 radio address

- After reading ask students if they know of the name or a name for the events Churchill was describing in 1941. Write any words, answers, or ideas they share on the board. Even if a student uses the word “genocide” right away, continue to gather responses for a minute or two.
- Then ask students if they are familiar with the word genocide enough to be able to define it. Ask a volunteer or two to define it.
- After students have offered their definitions, pass out the definition on the next page, and read through it with students. Ask them to compare how their personal/class definitions was the same as the official definition, and how it was different. Discuss.