

LESSON H-UIII-L2

The Olympics: Terror at Munich

Unit III: Historical Context of Terrorism

Grade Levels: 9-12

Time: 150 Minutes



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Objective

- Examine a terrorist event and justify the choices and consequences of the involved groups.

Key Terms

- Anwar Sadat
- Black September
- Cold War
- Golda Meir
- NATO
- West/East Germany

Lesson Materials

- Film: *21 Hours at Munich* (MGM, 1976)
- Study Guide: Terror at the Munich Olympics: 21 Hours at Munich (see below; article and background for the DVD viewing)
- Study Guide: Centennial Olympic bombing at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996

Lesson Plan

- Distribute the Study Guide: Terror at the Munich Olympics: 21 Hours at Munich.
- Have the students read the background information on the Study Guide for the film. Discuss any questions as needed.
- Have the class view the film *21 Hours at Munich*. Then have them answer the discussion questions on the Study Guide.
- Lead a class discussion about some of the questions from the Study Guide and then assign the student essay.

Evidence of Understanding

- Formative Assessment: Evaluate the students' answers to the discussion questions on the Study Guide for the film.
- Summative Assessment: Ask the students to write an essay that addresses the questions: "Did Black September achieve its goals? What was gained through violence? If we are supposed to learn from history, what did we learn from this?"

Additional Activities and Resources

- Have the students watch the film, *Munich* (Universal Studios, 2005).
- Have students investigate the Centennial Olympic bombing at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996. Have them use the Study Guide: Centennial Olympic bombing at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996 found below.

Taking Action and Giving Service

- Ask students to discuss how athletes can take a stand against terrorism at athletic events (for example, using an athlete’s celebrity to persuade against the use of violence to achieve an end). Then divide the students into small work groups and have them develop a protocol for an athletic event in their own community or school.
- Ask students to research their favorite athlete/sport and learn if there is a specific “cause” or campaign that “celebrity athletes” support. Have the students research how they can be involved.

Study Guide

Unit III: Historical Context of Terrorism

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Name _____ Date _____

Period/Class _____

Terror at the Munich Olympics: 21 Hours at Munich

by Jill McCracken

What happened?

On September 5, 1972 as the Olympic village athletes lay sleeping, five Arab terrorists wearing track suits climbed the six-and-half-foot fence surrounding the Olympic Village in Munich, Germany. Once inside, they met up with three others who had managed to acquire fake identification cards. Within 24 hours, eleven Israelis, five terrorists, and a German policeman were dead.

Just before 5:00AM, there was a knock on the door of Moshe Weinberg, the Israeli wrestling coach. Opening the door and seeing the terrorists, he immediately realized something was amiss and shouted a warning. Weightlifter Joseph Romano joined Weinberg in trying to block the door, but they were killed by the terrorists. The Arabs then rounded up nine Israelis to hold as hostages.

At 9:30AM, the first demands were issued. After announcing they were Palestinian Arabs, they demanded the Israeli government release 234 Arab prisoners from jail. Likewise, West Germany was ordered to release two German terrorist leaders from a Frankfurt prison. Additionally, they demanded their own safe passage out of West Germany.

After hours of negotiations, a deal was struck with German authorities. They agreed that the terrorists and hostages would be taken to the NATO air base at Furstenfeldbruck, by bus. Then, they would board two helicopters to ferry them to a plane headed for Cairo, Egypt. Meanwhile, Furstenfeldbruck air base had West German sharpshooters ready to target the terrorists, intending to free the hostages.

Unfortunately, the rescue plan failed and a bloody firefight between the German officials and Palestinians terrorists followed. The Palestinians set off a grenade in one helicopter, killing all aboard, and terrorists in the second helicopter shot to death the remaining, blindfolded Israeli hostages. Three of the Palestinian Arabs terrorists were captured alive and held in Germany.

A month later, on October 29, 1972, a West German Lufthansa jet was hijacked by Palestinian terrorists. They demanded that the three captured Munich killers be released. The Germans capitulated and the imprisoned terrorists were freed.

Who were the Munich terrorists?

It was later discovered that the Munich operation was ordered by Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). It was executed by Fatah, a major Palestinian political party and the faction controlled by Arafat.

The Fatah terrorists called themselves Black September to prevent Fatah's international political image from being tarnished. Black September members deliberately refrained from publishing official statements, and its leaders kept their identity hidden. Violating this caution, in *Stateless*, a book by Abu Iyad, he explains that Black September was closely tied to Fatah. Abu Iyad frequently refers to his personal involvement in the organization:

“Black September was not a terrorist organization, but was rather an auxiliary unit of the resistance movement, at a time when the latter was unable to fully realize its military and political potential. The members of the organization always denied any ties between their organization and Fatah or the PLO. I myself am personally acquainted with many of them, and can state with conviction that most of them belong to various Fedayeen organizations.”

Abu Daoud, the mastermind of the terrorist assault at Munich, admitted his leadership role in his 1999 autobiography, *Memoirs of a Palestinian Terrorist*. Under interrogation by the Jordanian police in 1972, he was quoted in the *Al-Dustur* newspaper as saying:

“There is no such organization called Black September. Fatah announces its own operations under this name so that Fatah will not appear as the direct executor of the operation.”

Afterward

Following the murder of the Israeli Olympic athletes, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir gave instructions for Israeli agents to hunt down and kill those behind it. She told the Knesset on September 12, 1972:

“We have no choice but to strike at the terrorist organizations wherever we can reach them. That is our obligation to ourselves and to peace. We shall fulfill that obligation undauntedly.”

The Israeli Mossad, the Institute for Intelligence and Special Operations, put Operation Wrath of God into effect. It was one of the most ambitious covert counterterrorist campaigns in history. This story is featured in the 2005 film, *Munich*. The Israeli cabinet authorized the assassination of any Black September terrorists involved in the Munich incident. The Mossad assumed the responsibility for implementing the directive and developed several assassination teams. Over a period of years, it was revealed that five of the Munich terrorists were killed, and three more in joint Mossad-IDF (Israeli Defense Force) operations. They also eliminated four other terrorists associated with other crimes against Israel.

Abu Daoud, the leader and planner, remained at large even though he admitted his role in his autobiography. He claimed his terrorist agents never intended to harm the athletes. He blamed their deaths on the German police and the stubbornness Prime Minister Golda Meir. Daoud died in Syria of kidney failure on July 2, 2010 and was buried at the Martyrs Cemetery in the Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp in Damascus.

Resources

To see a photo of the 1972 Israeli Olympic team visit <http://commonamericanjournal.com/?p=1868>.

To see a photo of the Black September terrorists, go to <http://commonamericanjournal.com/?p=1868>

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- “Mastermind behind Munich Olympics Terror dies,” BBC News-Middle East, July 3, 2010. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10498912>

Film: 21 Hours at Munich

Participants

- Issa: Lead terrorist
- Willy Brandt: President of West Germany
- Han Detrich Bensher: West German Minister of the Interior
- Golda Meir: Prime Minister of Israel
- Anwar Sadat: President of Egypt
- Mr. Sedki: Prime Minister of Egypt
- Moshe Weinberg: Israeli Wrestling Coach, Olympic Village
- Dr. Schreiber: Head of Munich Police Dept.
- Merk: Bavarian Minister of the Interior
- Fraulein Reiss: International Olympic Committee Security
- General Zvir Zamir: Israeli Secret Service
- Avery Brundage: Pres. International Olympic Committee
- Mohammed Khadif: Egyptian member of the Arab League

Setting

- September 4–5, 1972
- XX Olympiad, Olympic Village, Munich, West Germany

Discussion Questions

1. As the terrorists make their way to the Israeli apartments, what security measures do they encounter?
2. What is the name of the group that took the Israeli athletes captive?
3. What are the goals of the terrorists? What are their demands?
4. After being informed of Israelis being taken hostage, Bavarian Minister Merk refers to the “6 million ghosts” who are watching. To what is he referring?
5. Why does Dr. Shreiber ask for Fraulein Reiss of the International Olympic Committee Security to approach the terrorist leader, Issa, rather than one of his police officers?
6. What tactics do Reiss and Shreiber use to negotiate with the terrorist leader, Issa? Cite examples of conflict resolution attempts.
7. As explained by Israeli Golda Meir, what is Israel’s position on compromising with the terrorists and partially meeting their demands?
8. What does Arab League member Mohammed Khadif suggest to Issa?
9. What startling information does Issa reveal about his family and past to Fraulein Reiss?
10. Given the standoff with the terrorists in the Olympic Village, what is the surrounding environment like?
11. What is Egypt’s view on this crisis?
12. Israeli General Azvir Zamir arrived in Munich and has been observing. What course of action does he suggest to Dr. Shreiber? What are Zamir’s concerns? What are Shreiber’s?
13. Describe the German plan at Furstenedbruck airport.
14. The terrorist, Issa, checks out the tunnel to the helicopters. Who is watching Issa do this? Why is the walking the tunnel unacceptable to Issa?
15. Fraulein Reiss tries a “last-ditch effort” mediation with Issa, with whom she has tried to establish a

rapport. Why does Issa reject her very reasonable suggestion?

16. What is the outcome at Fursteneldbruck airport? This is important: Have the terrorists achieved their goals by embarking on this terrorist action?

17. Fifty-three days after the end of the terrorist incident at Munich, what did West Germany do regarding the remaining three Munich terrorists?

Study Guide

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Centennial Olympic bombing at the Atlantic Olympic Games in 1996

by Jill McCracken

Atlanta Georgia, U.S.A. was the site of the greatly anticipated Summer Olympic Games of 1996. Established as a “town center” for the competing athletes and visiting spectators from all over the world, Centennial Olympic Park would be the site of a terrorist bombing that marred the games.

The perpetrator would prove to be American Eric Robert Rudolph. During the night of July 27, 1996, Rudolph placed a green U.S. military field pack under a bench near where a concert would be held the next day. The field pack contained three pipe bombs packed in nails, designed to cause severe bodily harm to those in the area at detonation.

The next day, in a stroke of luck, Security Guard Richard Jewell noticed the bag and called in an alert to the Georgia Bureau of Investigations. Rudolph himself would call 911 minutes later to warn that a bomb was going to explode. Jewell and other security guards began clearing the immediate area, waiting for the arrival of the bomb squad. Before they arrived, the bomb exploded at 1:20PM, killing two people and injuring 111 visitors to the games. Turkish cameraman, Melih Uzunyol, died of a heart attack suffered as he fled the area. Alice Hawthorne was killed when a nail stuck her in the head. The bomb was determined to have weighed over 40 lbs, making it one of the largest in American history.

Denouncing the explosion as an “evil act of terror”, President Bill Clinton promised to do everything possible to track down and punish those responsible. Clinton said, “We will spare no effort to find out who was responsible for this murderous act. We will track them down. We will bring them to justice.”

At first, Richard Jewell was hailed as a hero for acting and dispersing the crowd, which saved many lives. However, he came under investigation by the F.B.I. Eventually Jewell was exonerated. Two additional bombings, one at an abortion clinic and another at a lesbian nightclub, were so similar to the Centennial Park bombing that the F.B.I concluded a terrorist was at work, and he was not Richard Jewell. A third bombing at another abortion clinic, which killed a policeman working as a security guard and seriously injured nurse Emily Lyons, gave the FBI crucial evidence. A partial license plate led the FBI to identify Eric Robert Rudolph as the perpetrator.

After more than five years on the run, Rudolph was arrested on May 31, 2003, in Murphy, North Carolina. On April 8, 2005, the government announced Rudolph would plead guilty to all four bombings, including the Centennial Olympic Park attack.

Rudolph is serving four life terms without the possibility of parole. To be spared a possible death sentence, Rudolph agreed to a deal with federal prosecutors and revealed the whereabouts of dangerous explosives he had buried in H-45 Cherokee County, N.C.

Rudolph’s justification was political; in his statement he said:

“In the summer of 1996, the world converged upon Atlanta for the Olympic Games. Under the protection and auspices of the regime in Washington millions of people came to celebrate the ideals of global socialism. Multinational corporations spent billions of dollars, and Washington organized an army of security to protect these best of all games. Even though the conception and purpose of the so-called Olympic movement is to promote the values of global socialism, as perfectly expressed in the song Imagine by John Lennon, which was the theme of the 1996 Games even though the purpose of the Olympics is to promote these despicable ideals, the purpose of the attack on July 27 was to confound, anger and embarrass the Washington government in the eyes of the world for its abominable sanctioning of abortion on demand. The plan was to force the cancellation of the Games, or at least create a state of insecurity to empty the streets around the venues and thereby eat into the vast amounts of money invested.”

In a statement at his sentencing, Rudolph apologized to the victims and families only of the Centennial Park bombing. He repeated that he was angry with the American government and hoped the Olympics would be cancelled.

To see the cover of TIME magazine from this event, go to

<http://www.time.com/time/covers/0,16641,19960805,00.html>

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Discussion Questions

1. Why would events such as the Olympic Games be attractive to terrorists as the site for an attack?
2. Do you think the Munich terrorists or Rudolph have anything in common? Explain.
3. Munich is an example of international terrorism; Rudolph is an example of a domestic terrorist. How do these types of terrorism differ?