

Introduction the jews,  
romani and the  
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## **Introduction**

Holocaust refers to the state sponsored genocide that took place in Nazi Germany in the duration preceding the World War 2.

The major targets were the Jews. It is estimated that over three million men, two million women and a million children of Jewish descent died in this incident. About two thirds of the Jews who were staying in Germany were executed. Led by Adolf Hitler, the Nazi party did not limit themselves to the Jews alone. They eliminated any government enemy, both real and imagined. Some of the victims were Germans, Russians and people from other descents. Cold war refers to the military and political tension between the United States of America and the Soviet Union immediately after the World War 2. This was caused by economic and political differences between these two countries.

Even though they did not engage directly in military fights, they supported supposed enemies of each other. Germany, once feared state before the wars, became the center stage for these wars leading to creation of the Berlin walls in 1948-1949. The Berlin Crisis later followed this in 1961. The Germans found themselves between the two evils. They got involved both in the holocaust either directly or indirectly by either supporting or opposing the ideologies of Nazism, Capitalism and Communism. Adolf Hitler and the entire Nazi party propagated Nazism.

Capitalism was propagated by the western block led by the United States of America while the eastern block was led by the Soviet Union, which propagated Communism. This article focuses on the role played by German

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citizens in promoting or opposing these ideologies and the consequences of their actions. It is established that both the Nazi party and German nationals played a role in propagating capitalism, communism and Nazism. This means that without citizens, the three ideologies could not have materialized.

## **Nazism**

Nazism was an ideological concept that was propagated by Hitler and other Nazi party loyalists. Nazism started out as a movement against communism immediately after the World War 1. Started by Anton Drexler, this ideology was soon adopted by Adolf Hitler and attracted a large following.

It soon changed strategy and started fighting capitalism and big businesses in Germany. The Jews owned the majority of such businesses. It changed tone in 1930s to oppose Marxism in a bid to win the support of the industrial owners who sponsored the party. Once in power, this party maintained that Aryan race was the future of German and in extension, the world. Other races were considered as a threat to this ' holy' race and therefore had to be eliminated. The targeted races were the Jews, Romani and the blacks. The homosexuals, physically and mentally challenged individuals, political opponents and Jehovah Witness followers were also considered undesirable elements in this society.

This was the onset of holocaust. Browning in his book ' Ordinary Men' reports that there was a well-organized mass murder of the Polish Jews in various ghettos and camps. The targets for the mass murder in the ghettos were women, children and the aging population.[1] The Order Police carried out the execution. This involved mass shooting of the victims by the firing squad,

while some were taken to gas chambers and gas vans where they were introduced to poisonous gases. The condition was very serious and tragic to other races. The ordinary Germans played part in fanning or fighting this ideology. A population of the Germans believed that the Nazism was the best ideology for this particular nation.

They believed that the mass execution done by the soldiers and police was very normal as they acted in the interest of the populace. They were in solidarity with the state and some even accepted to be recruited into the military and the police force to enforce this ideology. They maintained that the state was within its mandate to authorize the mass murder as it was doing so in the interest of its citizens.

A section of women played a very active role in the persecution of the perceived state enemies.[2] However, a category of citizens was vehemently opposed to this notion and defended the social diversity of the nation. Some indigenous Germans, who were members of the Jehovah Witness Church, believed in moderation and publicly rebuked the extremist actions of the government. They advocated for a policy that would enable all the Germans-Aryan or otherwise-exercise their democratic rights as citizens of this nation. They advocated for equality and non-discriminatory policies.

## **Capitalism v Communism: the Cold War Era**

Immediately after the world war two, the United States of America and the Soviet Union emerged as the super powers. They developed suspicion towards each other as they differed in ideology. Each wanted the world to adopt the ideologies they were propagating. Germany was, until the close of

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the world war two, considered a strong country both economically and militarily. When it fell to the hands of the allied forces, both the super powers wanted to control the country. This led to the split of the country into two: West Germany and East Germany.

After the fall of Nazi party and death of its leader, Germany was divided into East and West, with the larger West going to the United States of America and the East going to the Soviet Union. The tension between the super powers grew and they expressed this in their spheres of control. Berlin, the capital city of Germany, had to be split into two, in what was famously referred to as the Berlin Wall. This was aimed at cutting off any link between the east and the west completely.

No German citizen was allowed to cross the wall from one territory to the other. To this end, most civilians in both parts of Germany found themselves victims of the circumstance. They had not anticipated that such eventualities would arise in their country. With Stalin taking East Germany as a satellite state of Soviet Union, the ordinary Germans were ushered into a new era of dictatorial leadership. No one was allowed to cross the mighty wall to the West. The police and the military were keen to ensure that this was followed. The Germans had showed their dislike towards communism. However, the Eastern German had limited choice as they were under the control of a communist state.

Many tried to move to the West, which was apparently fairing well but a number of citizens met their death in the attempt from bullets of officers who were under strict instructions never to allow the cross over. Those who were

on the West German prospered. They embraced capitalism and worked very hard to ensure that they reconstruct their nation. With the help of the US, West German developed its infrastructure and was soon on its feet. It recovered very fast and the ordinary citizens tolerated the idea of capitalism.

## **Ordinary Germans: Victims of Cold War and the Holocaust**

The history of the cold war and holocaust depicts ordinary Germans as victims other than active agents of these wars. Schneider's book, 'The Wall Jumper' depicts a scenario where ordinary Germans are trying to flee from the communist East to the capitalist West.[3] Those who were not successful enough to cross over had to withstand the harsh economic situation in the east.

The 'Ordinary Men' by Browning introduces us to the reality in the military set up. Even though the police officers did the executions, most of them were not enthusiastic with the holocaust. Major Wilhelm Trapp instructed his battalion of the planned execution but appreciated that the plan was nasty, but he had no choice but to do as per the instructions of the highest office. [4] They found themselves swept along the wave, made to fight a battle that was not theirs and in the ensuing confusion, ended up to being victims after the end of the World War 2, which was their creation.

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