

Nuremberg trials

[People](#), [Adolf Hitler](#)



Where Nazi officials judged fairly during the Nuremberg Trails that followed World War II? Twenty-four major political and military leaders of Nazi Germany, indicted for aggressive war, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Of the twenty-four twenty-one were taken into custody and put on trial; these were known as the Nuremberg Trials. These trials started on November 20th 1945 and were the first ever war crime tribunal. The Trials were held by the Allied forces of World War II and were held in the city of Nuremberg in Bavaria Germany out of the Palace of Justice.

Accusations placed against them were for their involvement in the Nazi Party during World War II. Nazi officials were judged unfairly during the Nuremberg Trails for a continent wide genocide that occurred within WWII and the world watched as Nazi officials got what they deserved. Lead by Adolf Hitler the Third Riech, the government in Germany at the time, adopted policies of aggressive war and persecuted minorities. Hitler started a Europe wide systematic killing of approximately six million Jews called theHolocaust. “ Holocaust” is a word of Greek origin meaning “ sacrifice by fire”. USHMM). The Nazis, who came into power in Germany in 1933, believed that Germans were the superior race and deemed all others inferior, mainly the Jews, and viewed them as a threat to the community. Nearly two out of three Jews that lived in Europe at the time lost their lives due to the systematic killing. (USHMM). After establishing concentration camps to detain political and people of importance in opposing forces, Germany’s SS and police officials detained Jews and other victims of ethnic and racial hatred in these camps.

The idea was to concentrate and monitor the Jewish population and also to make later deportation of the Jews easier. These camps changed into labor

camps and eventually assisted in the systematic killing. Germany invaded territories and began to expand early into Hitler's reign, such as Czechoslovakia and Poland. After the victory in Poland, Germany began to make its way into Denmark, France, and many others making concentration camps along the way to assist in the genocide. One of the most infamous concentration camps was known as Auschwitz, based in Poland under the command of Rudolf Hoss.

Auschwitz eventually became the largest Nazi camp and had an estimated total of over two million victims. The killing and building of concentration camps continue throughout 1941 and eventually become or were determined to be extermination camps. Germans begin experiments and other inhumane practices on prisoners which grows the tension throughout Europe. Towards the end of the war Nazi officials order liquidation of Jews in ghettos, a city locked down by German SS containing Jews, and in some camps, this meant the execution of the prisoners and workers. During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic people (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals (USHMM). During the final months of the war, SS guards moved camp prisoners by train or marches, often called "death marches," to try to stop and prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners.

As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives against Germany, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp

prisoners, as well as prisoners en route by forced march from one camp to another. The marches continued until May 7, 1945, the day the German armed forces surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, many of the survivors found shelter in displaced persons camps administered by the Allied powers. Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700, 000 Jews immigrated to Israel, including 136, 000 Jewish displaced persons from Europe.

Other Jewish DPs emigrated to the United States and other nations (USHMM). The twenty-two officials were being tried for aggressive war, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Herman Goring, the second highest ranking Nazi Official, he was the Commander of the Luftwaffe, Germany's air force. Goering was perhaps the most influential person, next to Hitler, in the Nazi organization. He was one of only 12 Nazis elected to the Reichstag in 1928. He orchestrated the Reichstag fire on February 27, 1933 and, with Goebbels assistance, used the fire as a propaganda tool against the communists.

In the mid-1930's Goering was in charge of the "Aryanization" of Jewish property (JVL). Goring was sentenced to death but committed suicide the night before his execution with a cyanide capsule. Rudolf Hess served as Hitler's deputy minister and was next in line if Goering should be unavailable for any reason. Rudolf Hess was sentenced to life imprisonment. He served over 40 years of that sentence at Spandau Prison and committed suicide in 1987 at age 93 (JVL). Hans Frank, Governor-General of the general government in Poland during World War II, was sentenced to death.

Under his administration the approximately 2.5 million Jews in the occupied territories of Poland were exploited in slave labor. Also during his

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administration, the extermination camps in eastern Poland were constructed implemented (JVL). Wilhelm Frick, Hitler's Minister of the Interior, was sentenced to death due to his significant role in the formation of Nazi racial laws. He was credited with the creation of Nuremberg Laws of 1935 and 1938; laws were intended to take away rights and privileges formerly allowed to Jews.

However, Julius Streicher was non-military, he was not part of the planning process of the Holocaust, nor of the invasion of Poland or the Soviet Union. But his role in provoking the massacre of Jews was momentous enough; he was sentenced to death by hanging. Walther Funk, Hitler's Minister of Economics and was head of the Reichsbank, which funded the economic planning for the war; he was sentenced to Life Imprisonment. Fritz Sauckel was a general for the allocation of labor. Sauckel was involved in using 5 million laborers that were imported and forced to work.

He was charged with the solicitation of slave labor and sentenced to death by hanging. Alfred Jodl was Chief of Operations for the German Army, he was charged with aggressive war for invasion of the Soviet Union and the destruction of Czechoslovakia. Martin Bormann was known to be uncivilized, ruthless, and brutal. His whereabouts were unconfirmed during the trials but he made such an impact that he was sentenced in absentia to death by hanging; his reputation was based on the expulsion of millions of Jews to Poland and the exploitation of Ukrainian women as slave labor.

Going down the list we find Franz von Papen, Vice Chancellor of Germany, he supported views of Hitler but the prosecution had serious difficulties linking Papen to conspiracy to initiate an aggressive war. He was eventually one of

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the few that were acquitted. Joachim Von Ribbentrop had recommended and supported the deportation of Jews from France and Italy to the camps in the east and urged their extermination. Under cross-examination by the British assistant prosecutor, Ribbentrop admitted that he knew of Hitler's intention to deport all Jews from German territories and that he assisted in that process.

Ribbentrop was sentenced to death by hanging (JVL). The International Military Tribunal finished its work and handed down its verdicts on October 1, 1946, ironically, on the Jewish Day of Atonement. Of the 22 defendants, 11 were given the death penalty, 3 were acquitted, 3 were given life imprisonment and four were given imprisonment ranging from 10 to 20 years. Those sentenced to death were hanged at Spandau Prison on October 6, 1946. Those acquitted were placed in the inept de-Nazification program following the trial. Those who received prison sentences were sent to Spandau Prison.

The death sentences were carried out 16 October 1946 by hanging using the standard drop method instead of long drop. The U. S. army denied claims that the drop length was too short which caused the condemned to die slowly from strangulation instead of quickly from a broken neck. But evidence remains that some of the condemned men died agonizingly slowly taking from between 14 minutes to choke to death to as long as struggling for 28 minutes. The executioner was John C. Woods. The executions took place in the gymnasium of the court building which was demolished in 1983. In his closing remarks Robert Jackson, said " The reality is that in the long perspective of history the present century will not hold an admirable

position, unless its second half is to redeem its first. These two-score years in the twentieth century will be recorded in the book of years as one of the most bloody in all annals. Two World Wars have left a legacy of dead which number more than all the armies engaged in any way that made ancient or medieval history. No half-century ever witnessed slaughter on such a scale, such cruelties and inhumanities, such wholesale deportations of peoples into slavery, such annihilations of minorities.

The terror of Torquemada pales before the Nazi Inquisition. These deeds are the overshadowing historical facts by which generations to come will remember this decade. If we cannot eliminate the causes and prevent the repetition of these barbaric events, it is not an irresponsible prophecy to say that this twentieth century may yet succeed in bringing the doom of civilization"" (JVL). For most of the world, the Nuremberg Trials were a symbolic expression of outrage over the atrocities of the Nazi organization.

Once done, however, it seems that the major concern was to put the whole matter in the past and forget it. To use Justice Jackson's words, that we have eliminated " the causes" and laid the basis for preventing " the repetition of these barbaric events. " In words that might portray his view today, what happened was now in history books around the world, and if something like this ever did happen again we would have a basis to be able to punish them correctly and more effectively. Not only having the basis but also having this also as a deterrent to those in later generations who may try something like this again.

The question if justice was actually served can be debated for centuries because of the amount of devastation the men were involved in. Two distinct

punishments of history and justice during the examination and action of Nazi war crimes and crimes against humanity has been the theme of debate ever since the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal. This was particularly debatable, and more times than not it was poorly understood, by the role of historians in the trials of National Socialist perpetrators of genocide.

Addressing this issue in its logical, practical and real-world scopes, even though the objectives were similar, a comparative analysis demonstrates that both law and justice benefited from this interaction. Assuming that the humanities and injustices were served correctly and done so in a civilized manor, which in my views it was, but I believe it almost wasn't enough. The Nazi officials had no problem knowingly and publicly displaying their views to the entire world and were not afraid during war time.

Once war was over and they were at the mercy of the world they publicly embarrassed, the officials knew nothing of the plans or how they were executed, almost like they were never involved. Said best by Henry David Thoreau, " It is not a man's duty, as a matter of course, to devote himself to the eradication of any, even the most enormous wrong; he may still properly have other concerns to encourage him; but it is his duty, at least, to wash his hands of it, and, if he gives it no thought longer, not to give him practically his support.

If I devote myself to other pursuits and contemplations, I must first see, at least, that I do not pursue them sitting upon another man's shoulders" (RWLA). In other words, as a man, he has the knowing ability to dedicate himself to what he wishes; it was the Nazi official's choice to stand with Hitler and support his ideas. Maybe some were afraid of death if they didn't

comply but as a man it is his obligation to own up to it and not blame the views of Hitler of his actions.

The action and paths these men picked put them down a dark road and they paid for it. Millions of people exterminated to support one mad man's views, and when all was said and done and defeat was admitted no one wanted to admit the monstrosities they assisted in. James Fenimore Cooper's *The Slaughter of the Pigeons*, Cooper talks about the sport of killing pigeons becoming more for business and less for sport. " This expedient produced the desired effect , for every urchin on the ground went industriously to work to wring the necks of the wounded birds.

Judge Temple retired towards his dwelling with that kind of feeling that many a man has experienced before him, who discovers, after the excitement of the moment has passed, that he has purchased pleasure at the price of misery to others. Horses were loaded with the dead; and , after this first burst of sporting, the shooting of pigeons became a business, for the remainder of the season, more in proportion to the wants of the people. I liked this excerpt especially because I believe as it was almost written with the Nuremberg Trials in mind. Pigeons can be interchanged with those killed during the Holocaust. To an extent, the killing and " purification" went on for so long that it, at least in my eyes, became a business for many of these officials. With the world watching, 22 defendants, 11 were given the death penalty, 3 were acquitted, 3 were given life imprisonment and four were given imprisonment ranging from 10 to 20 years.

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over and they were at the mercy of the world they publicly embarrassed, and they were treated fairly and got their just deserts, maybe not enough sprinkles. Works Cited De Nevers, Renee. " Modernizing the Geneva Conventions. " The Washington Quarterly 29. 2 (2006): 99-113. Project MUSE. Web. . Haberer, E. " History and Justice: Paradigms of the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes. Holocaust and Genocide Studies 19. 3 (2005): 487-519. Project MUSE. Web. . James, Missy, and Alan Merickel. Reading Literature and Writing Argument. Boston: Longman, 2011. Print. Henry David Thoreau, Civil Disobedience 245-259 James, Missy, and Alan Merickel. Reading Literature and Writing Argument. Boston: Longman, 2011. Print. James Fenimore Cooper, The Slaughter of the Pigeons. 277-283 Prusin, Alexander V. " Poland's Nuremberg. " The Seven Court Cases of the Supreme National Tribunal, 1946-1948 24. 1 (2010): n. pag. Project