

Genocide in germany – the holocaust

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



Genocide is by definition the intentional, methodical, and targeted destruction of a particular ethnic, religious, or racial group. The term genocide is derived from the Greek prefix *genos*, which translates to race or tribe, and the Latin suffix *cide*, meaning killing. The Holocaust, also known as Shoah, is the most notable and deadliest instance of genocide in the world.

The Holocaust began in Germany in the 1930s and expanded to Nazi occupied Germany, until the last liberation of death camps in 1945 . The Holocaust was a genocide in which the systemic and brutal killings of Jewish, Roma, Slavic, Serbic, Soviet, disabled, and homosexual, and many more, took place.

The Holocaust originated in Germany, was fueled by anti-semitism, and committed by the Nazis. Anti-Semitism is a term used to describe the prejudice, discrimination, and general hatred of Jewish people. It is equally important to remember, however, that there were other victims of the Holocaust as well, which included Roma, Slavic, Serbic, Soviet, disabled, and homosexual people. Anti-semitism, had already been present in much of Europe before Adolf Hitler and the Nazi party rose to power. Germany, in particular, looked to Jewish people as the cause of many of their problems. Firstly, Jewish people were blamed for the German defeat in World War I. With the defeat now resting on their shoulders, it was no wonder that the German people also accredited the War Guilt Clause that resulted from the Treaty of Versailles to them as well. The Treaty of Versailles required that Germany pay reparations to the victors of the war, and this absolutely crippled the German economy, angering citizens further. This belief was made even more damaging considering the fact that many Germans also

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perceived Jewish people to be economically successful, which added insult to injury during a time when many Germans struggled to make ends meet. Lastly, Jewish people were deemed inferior to the pure Aryan race; to the Germans, Jewish people were unpatriotic, sneaky, backsliding tricksters, whose differing customs and religion polluted the superior German race.

There is much speculation as to why Adolf Hitler may have hated Jewish people so fervently. Some historians suspect that it could be related to his heritage; Hitler's father Alois was born out of wedlock, and there were rumors that he might have been of Jewish descent. Adolf did not have a healthy relationship with his father, leading some to believe that this is a possible explanation for his contempt. Another possible cause for Hitler's disgust for Jewish people could relate to his mother's Jewish doctor, Eduard Bloch. Anna Hitler suffered from breast cancer and received treatment from Dr. Bloch towards the end of her life. Some people correlate the unsuccessful treatment and death of Hitler's mother by a Jewish doctor as a cause for his rage. However, these rumors have never been confirmed and remain conjecture. A more plausible explanation for Hitler's disgusting and severe animosity was his time in Vienna, Austria. Hitler moved to Vienna in 1908 in hopes of attending the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts. He was rejected, and instead spent his remaining time there living in squalor, at one point becoming homeless. Vienna at this time was characterized by vehement, socially accepted, and widespread anti-Semitism. Hitler lived out his formative years surrounded by anti-Jewish propaganda and persistent nationalism whilst dealing with rejection, poverty, and struggle. Hitler

himself stated in his book Mein Kampf that his experience and indoctrination in Vienna is what led to him becoming an anti-Semite.

Hitler and the Nazi Party's rise to power was fairly easy, considering the growing despair, outrage and unrest that was already present in Germany. The Nazis capitalized on this and convinced a desperate nation that Jewish, Romani, Polish, and Slavic people, along with homosexuals, communists and other minorities, were the reason for their misfortune. People belonging to these groups were consistently dehumanized, and considered a problem to be rectified. The Nazi party promised to restore Germany to its former glory, solve the Jewish question, and establish a new, larger state wherein pure Aryans could flourish. The star of the party, Adolf Hitler, was appointed as Fuhrer in January of 1933, and became Fuhrer, or leader, sometime in August 1934. Soon enough, the Nuremberg Laws were passed, marking the start of the systematic destruction of the Jewish population within Germany.

The Nuremberg Laws passed in September 1935, consisted of the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor. They were designed to directly discriminate against Jewish people; the Reich Citizenship Law revoked Jewish German's citizenship, and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor forbade non-Jews from marrying Jews. Under Hitler's reign, anti-Semitism increased as did anti-Jewish propaganda and school curriculum. Jewish people were forced to wear yellow stars, identifying themselves as Jewish to the public, and were denied the right to their own businesses. More tragedy befell the Jewish people when Kristallnacht, a series of attacks on Jewish business, synagogues,

people, occurred in November of 1938. Following the invasion of Poland, the Nazi party began establishing ghettos in order to further segregate and separate Jewish people and other minorities from society, and to make it easier to transport them to the concentration camps so they could begin the genocide.

The preliminary step in implementing the horrific and systematic killings was Operation Reinhard, an operation that consisted of liquidating ghettos and transporting survivors to the concentration camps. The deportation and transportation of Jewish people occurred over several days. They were often times loaded like animals into boarded up, cramped train compartments, where they would have to endure long journeys without food, water, or a place to relieve themselves. Many died due to this inhumane treatment. Upon arrival at the camps, Jewish people and individuals from Germany, Poland, Holland, Belgium and other countries were stripped of their belongings, shaved, sometimes tattooed with a prisoner number, and given striped uniforms. This was meant to strip them of their dignity and dehumanize them further. The victims were then separated into groups; those designated to work as slaves or subjects of experimentation, and those who would be killed immediately by gas chamber or firing squad. Surviving prisoners suffered from disease, were starved of food, crammed into inadequate living spaces, and worked to the bone. The population of the concentration eventually grew too large, so the Nazis established even more camps that were expressly reserved for killing. Many more horrors occurred in these camps, the depths of which many people today can't imagine.

There will always be people who choose to disregard or downplay tragic occurrences, and the holocaust is no different, despite the multitude of evidence. Holocaust denial is a serious and racist issue that remains prevalent today, and describes multiple and incorrect beliefs on what happened; it includes minimizing the number of victim's deaths, claiming that the Final Solution culminated in Nazis deporting the Jews without killing them, that the gas chambers were not used for execution but delousing, and that the Jews died of disease or were casualties of war, just to name a few. Many Holocaust deniers operate under the guise of historical revisionism, but the method of Holocaust deniers are faulty and differ from actual historians. Holocaust denial is without a doubt completely wrong, inaccurate, and anti-Semitic. The various testimonies of survivors, Nazis, and Allied soldiers who liberated the concentration camps, not to mention the undeniable evidence, are testament to what happened during the Holocaust. Holocaust denial is used as another tool with which to hate Jewish people, and by minimizing the pain and suffering of the victims of the Holocaust, Holocaust deniers are effectively continuing the hate that has persisted against the Jewish community for centuries.

The results of the Holocaust are absolutely devastating. After the liberation of the concentration camps upon the victory of the Allied powers, millions of Holocaust survivors and refugees still could not return home, due to the anti-semitism that was still rampant. They lost their families, belongings, and suffered tremendously from trauma. Those who tried to emigrate to the west lived in displaced persons camps where they remained for years, and some were turned away at the borders of multiple countries . Numerous people

advocated for an exodus to Palestine, where they could form a safe haven and an independent Jewish state, but were still turned away. However, Israel was eventually established on May 14, 1948. The Holocaust not only decimated the European Jewish population, but affected them for the rest of their lives. The number of victims of the Holocaust has not been definitively proven, because it was never properly recorded, and what records were kept had been destroyed by the Nazis prior to their loss. With that being said, most estimates place the total victims combined as low as 6 million and as high as 20 million.

In the end, the Holocaust was an evil, methodical, deliberate, and completely barbaric genocide that ended and destroyed the lives of millions of people. The Nazi party, including Adolf Hitler, capitalized on the anger of the German people in order to facilitate hatred for the Jewish people, amongst others. Through established law, they identified and then removed Jewish people and other victims from their homes, and transported them to concentration camps. Evil within the concentration camps knew no bounds, and millions of people were killed, living the remainder of their life in fear and agony. The Nazis dehumanized their victims and acted with infinite cruelty. The Holocaust must never be forgotten, and stands as a reminder to the unparalleled malevolence that human beings are capable of.