

# Economic collapse and the second global war: 1930- 1945



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Economic Collapse and the Second Global War: 1930-1945 IBM and The Holocaust The pinpoint accuracy and precision with which the brutal massacre of Jews was carried out in Nazi Germany suggests that “ there was collusion between the autocratic regime and some of the mighty American corporations like Ford, GM, and IBM etc”. (Finzer, 14). Amongst them, the case of IBM is unique in the sense that it just clearly automated the process and thus the largest mass execution in the history of mankind had occurred. The strategies included in the execution process were “ identification of Jews and then they were targeted for asset confiscation, ghettoization, deportation, and ultimately extermination” (Black, 1). Though the holocaust occurred during 1930s -1940s, introspection is required to find out the perpetrators of this heinous crime and bring them to justice.

The unfortunate alliance of the mighty American corporation, International Business Machines (IBM) and the Nazi Germany led to the genocide of approximately six lakh European Jews during World War II. This was the result of deliberate extermination program planned and executed by Hitler, the leader of the Nazi regime in Germany.

The “ unending quest for profit of the IBM chairman, Thomas J. Watson, who surpassed all ethical and moral obligations by his corporate profit making mantras” (Black, 1), was the one Hitler was looking for. Hitler and his hatred for the Jews was the main reason for such a massive extermination program. The first step was the identification of Jews, which was the most complex of all. This process was so enormous that it would call for computers, but there were no computers at that time, but “ IBM punch card and card sorting system, surely existed” (Black, 1). The machine was used to accomplish

Hitlers Third Reich mass human destruction program. The Jews were  
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targeted for “ asset confiscation and send to ghettos, deported, and ultimately annihilated” (Black, 1). All this was a massive task which could have had never materialized to its full extent had the IBM not helped the Nazis. IBM Germany deputed its own staff and equipment, designed, executed, and supplied the vital technologic assistance Hitler's Third Reich needed to carry out what had never been done before-“ the automation of human destruction” (Black, 1). IBM Germany with the consent of IBM NY, custom designed these complex machines and also carried out their servicing at the site once a month. IBM used its connections with the top ranked Nazi officials to spread their business throughout Nazi dominated Europe. Punch cards could only be designed, printed, and purchased from one source: IBM. The machines “ were not sold; they were leased, and regularly maintained and upgraded by IBM” (Black, 1). Thus IBM created the basis of impunity with which such a large number of Jews were killed in such less time.

In my opinion it was the lust, the ingenuity and craving for profit and greater business and money making opportunity that made people overlook the end effect this deal would lead to. They played with human lives, surpassing humanism, morals and ethics. It simply reasserts that even if IBM would have denied the alliance, the persecution of Jews would have occurred nevertheless, but not with such a speed and accuracy. IBM with its technological expertise, helped to a great extent in the execution of the program, providing all that was needed to carefully carry out the holocaust, the biggest crime in history.

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#### Reference

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