

Holocaust effects on jews during ww11



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The Holocaust is the time between 30th January, 1933 when Adolf Hitler was declared Germany's chancellor to 8th May, 1945 when Europe officially ended the Second World War. Throughout this period, Jews who were in Europe became subjected to increasingly harsher persecutions which eventually led to 5, 000 Jewish communities being destroyed and the killing of over 6 million Jews, in which 1. 5 million Jews were children. These deaths were two thirds of the Jews population in Europe and a third of all the Jews in the world.[1] Jews who got killed during the Holocaust were not the casualties involved in the European fight during WWII, but they were the fatalities of Germany's systematic and deliberate attempt to wipe out the entire population of Jewish in Europe, a plan that Hitler regarded as the "Final solution".[2] This essay describes several effects that the Jewish population endured during the Holocaust in WWII. The effects were physical, psychological, spiritual, and emotional. This paper intends to delve into the perceived reasons for the Holocaust, then explore the physical, psychological, spiritual, and emotional effects that plagued the Jewish population during WWII. The paper also highlights why the entire Jewish population had to engage and reevaluate how their human rights had been invalidated and why it took so long for other countries to come to their aid.

Background

Initially, Germany had been defeated in WWI, and was feeling humiliated by the Treaty of Versailles that lessened its prewar region, significantly lessened its military forces, authorized the country to recognize its guilt in engaging in the WWI, and specified it to compensate the allied authorities. Since, the

empire of German was destroyed, a fresh parliamentary government was formed called Weimer Republic. It suffered greatly from economic instability. Adolf was initially Nazi's (National Socialist German Workers) leader. He became the chancellor when his party won a considerable percentage of votes. As a result, the party gained threshold and provoked clashes among the communist.[3]

The Nazi party ruled Germany for 12 years. Within this period, there evolved an innermost believe that a certain group of people who were dangerous existed in the society and therefore, there was need for them to be eliminated in order to allow the Germany society to survive and flourish. These people included the Russians, the Poles and the Gypsies, but the central focus was the Jews. The Jews were conservative people in respect to their actions, beliefs and behaviors. However, in spite of the numerous actions and efforts that they made to appear transformed, that did not help to change the perceptions of the Germans towards them.[4]It also conducted a propaganda campaign that was vicious against weak political opponents such as the Weimar government, as well as the Jews who were perceived to be the cause of the ills of Germany. The Jews were declared by the Nazi in their weekly newspaper as the cause of the country's misfortune. The influence that the newspaper created was far reaching and resulted to a half a million newspaper copies being distributed weekly. Therefore, when Hitler became the chancellor, he called for fresh elections in order to gain full Reichstag control. The party employed government resources to crush other parties, banned political meeting and arrested party leaders.[5]

During the election campaign on 27th May, 1933, Reichstag building was set ablaze and the communist was blamed for the act. The fire symbolized the end of democracy in Germany because the day that followed, the government abolished individual protection and rights: press freedom, expression and assembly freedom, and privacy rights. The Nazis won the election and established a dictatorship government that devised rules and acts to silence critics. The party also established a military and police force that was sophisticated. Once the infrastructure of police was in place, Nazi opponents were beaten, terrorized and sent to the camps of concentration that were mainly constructed to imprison them. Dachau was one of such camps that were eventually converted to a brutal Jewish concentration camp.

[6]When Hitler gained Germany's absolute control, his campaign to eliminate the Jews progressed.

The Nazis complained that pure German culture had been corrupted by the Jewish mongrel and foreign influence. They proclaimed the Jews to be cowardly and evil, whereas the German honest, courageous and hardworking. On the other hand, Nazis claimed that the Jewish that majored in the press, commerce, finance, literature, arts and theater weakened the economy and culture of Germany. As a result, the massively supported government propaganda developed an anti-Semitism race that was diverse from the anti-Semitic tradition longstanding in Christian Churches. The Nazis started to isolate the Jews from the rest of the society. As the fittest and the strongest, the Germans were predestined to rule, while the racially adulterated and the weak, the Jews were destined to extinction.[7]

Hitler started to restrict all Jews with terror and legislation that entailed the burning of books that Jews wrote, eliminating Jews from public schools and professions, confiscating their property and businesses and barring them from participating and attending public events. This was the Nuremberg Law, the most renowned anti-Jewish legislation enacted on 15th September, 1935. This law formed the basis that was legal to exclude the Jews from the society of Germans. The majority of Jews tried to flee Germany. Thousands of Jews managed to immigrate to countries like England, Holland, France, Belgium and Czechoslovakia. It proved difficult for the Jews to escape from Europe. As a result, the Jews encountered immigration quotas that were stiff in the majority of the countries in the world. Even when the necessary documents were obtained, they could wait for long before they leave.[8] In some cases, desperate families sent their young ones first.

In 1938 July, representatives from 32 countries at Evian town in France gathered to resolve the immigration and refugee problem that the Nazis had created in Germany. However, nothing useful was decided or done in the Conference. Therefore, it was apparent to the Nazis and their leader Hitler that no country needed the Jews, and thus, he could not encounter any resistance in implementing Jewish policies. In 1941 autumn, Europe became sealed in effect to the majority of legal emigration and as a result, the Jewish who had not escaped were trapped in Europe. In 1938, 9-10 November, attacks became violent, Jews were killed, their businesses and homes destroyed and looted, and synagogues burned. The majority of Jews were killed and beaten; 30 000 were arrested and taken to the concentration camps. The Germany employed the superiority of their military to terrorize

and crush the Jews. Worst of all is when the German started using massive reprisals threats. Hundreds of Jews were shot due to the opposition of one Jew. In thousands, Nazis, as well as their accomplices searched with greatest efficiency the European countryside and cities to capture the Jews, catching every Jewish who attempted to escape. The Jews became abandoned by the rest of the world. They had no ways to defend themselves, and no country they could turn to or call their own. As result, Jews remained unmoved to their doom, and many of them assisted the Nazi's in arresting and deporting their fellow Jews to the camps of death.[9]

In the start of WWII, Poland was invaded by German who established ghettos for Jews to reside. Out of the total population in Poland, 10% comprised of the Jewish. They were deported forcibly from homes to go and live in the ghettos that were crowded, isolating them from the society. This move aided the Jew's deportation to the camps of death. The ghettos lacked essential food, space, sanitary facilities and water needed by numerous people who dwelled within constricted boundaries.[10]As a result, the majority of the Jews who could not cope up died of starvation and deprivation.

In 1941 June, Germany invaded Russia and started its " Final Solution" operation. They formed killing groups of four namely Einsatzgruppen A, Einsatzgruppen B, Einsatzgruppen C, and Einsatzgruppen D. These groups gathered Jews from every town and marched them towards huge pits, which had been dug, stripped and lined them, then shot them using automatic weapons. The dying and the dead would fall to be buried massively, and above 1.3 million Jews were murdered in such a manner. In 20th January, 1942, German government top official held a Conference, " Wannsee

Conference” to coordinate civilian and military branches to arrange the killing of Jews in mass numbers. This meeting marked the start of comprehensive and full-scale extermination operation, and laid the basis for the organization that immediately started once the conference ended. While in the process of eliminating the Jews, other ethnic and national groups were murdered such as gypsies, Polish intellectuals, and Society wars prisoners, however, the Jews were systematically marked for total annihilation. In each country that the Nazis overrun, Jews were compelled to put on badges marking them. They would be rounded up in concentration camps or ghettos and then transported to centers where they would be killed. Death camps were specifically factories where the murdering of Jews took place. Thousands were shipped to the death camp and killed after being stripped of their possessions and valuables. They could be gassed until they die, then their corpses burned in crematoriums designed specifically for that purpose. The majority of young healthy and strong Jews were instantly killed.[11]

The Final Solution and the German effort in war needed a huge man power deal. As a result, Jews were reserved in huge pools to provide slave labor. The Jews who were imprisoned in labor and concentration camps were compelled to work whenever laborers were needed in munitions factories. They could work for morning to nightfall without adequate shelter and food. As a result, the majority of the Jews died in the factories. When Hitler retreated his army, the Jews were marched towards the controlled territories. The sick and the starving were forced to march for several miles. Many of them were shot and died as they marched.

The Jew's power to resist was limited due to the overwhelming repression of the Germans and the existence of many collaborators in several local populations. However, the resistance of the Jews did occur in various forms. Staying clean, alive and observing the religious traditions of the Jews constituted their resistance in the dehumanizing conditions that they were exposed by the Germans. The Jews also started an armed revolt in Vilna ghettos. The biggest ghetto revolt was the Uprising. The Jews fought hidden in sewers and bunkers for 27 days and evaded being captured. However, the Germans burned all buildings and crushed the Uprising. All the resistance acts that the Jews staged were immensely unsuccessful before the superior forces of Germany.^[12] However, they were extremely significant spiritually offering hope to the Jews that the Nazis will also be defeated eventually.

The concentration camps were gradually liberated when Allies started attacking the German troops. For instance, Maidanek was liberated in 1944 July and Auschwitz in 1945 January by the Soviet forces. Bergen-Belsen was liberated in 1945 April by the British forces, and Dachau the same year by Americans. Initially, there were various steps that the Nazis took before the Final Solution. The operation was reported and known to the public in Germany. In addition, several foreign correspondents reported on the operation. Even if the information failed to reach the West earlier enough, the report was smuggled and arrived in Britain in 1942. Thereafter, the details of the Final Solution operation reached every Ally, from the sources at the Vatican, and from Switzerland informants and Polish underground. The government of America confirmed the operation report to the leaders of the Jewish community towards the end of November 1942. The Allies were made aware of

the Nazis persecutions. In spite of being aware of the Nazis activities, the responses from the Allies towards the destructions and the perception of the Jews in Europe proved to be inadequate. It was only in the start of 1944 that an agency " War Refuge Band" was formed for the purpose of providing express endeavors to save the Nazi persecution victims. Before the agency was formed, all the Allies were extremely reluctant and little efforts were made. On 17th December, 1942, the Allies conveyed a condemnation to the atrocities that the Nazi had committed to the Jews. This was the lone declaration that the Allies made before 1944.[13]

The Allie failed to make any attempt to request the local people in Europe to stop from offering the Nazis assistance in their orderly Jews murder. Even after the War Refuge Band was established, as well as several rescue efforts initiated, Allies declined from bombing the Auschwitz death camp or the railroad that lead the camp, in spite of the fact that the bombers of the Allies were at that moment involved in factories bombing that were near the camp, and were all certain of its function and existence. On the other hand, Allies failed to deal with the refugee problem. Initially, the refugees had sought to gain access to America; however, they were excluded by the stringent policies of the American immigration system. Furthermore, the considerably small visa quotas that existed remained unfilled, even though the amount of applicants was relatively much more than the available number of places. The countries that the Great Britain, as well as the United States invited were informed that no single country will be requested to alter the laws of immigration. In addition to that, Britain agreed to get involved provided Palestine did not get considered. Consequently, the conferences that were

conducted in Bermuda (1943) and Evian (1938) to deal with the problem of refugees failed to contribute in providing a solution. At Bermuda, Conference delegates dealt with the issue of the Jews who had managed to escape to safer lands instead of handling the matter of the Jews entrapped in Europe.

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The Allies could have saved the Jews from further persecution by mobilizing practical evaluations which would have helped the Jews' rescue. These measures include the provision of permission to refugees to get temporary admission to Allies' countries, the Allies could have relaxed the entry requirements that are stringent. The Allies could also have offered unequivocal and frequent warnings to local populations and Germans throughout Europe that people who will participate in murdering the Jews will be held accountable. Alternatively, the Allies would have bombed the death camp to stop the murdering of the Jews.[15]

The Holocaust's major element as the genocidal machine of the Nazis aimed not only in destroying the Jewish Community in Europe, but also to destroy the Jewish seed. The Holocaust was not only focused on the racial existence of the Jews, but also against the proactive potential of the Jewish. The numbers of Jewish people who were imprisoned and killed in the camp network concentration can challenge the ability of a person to comprehend the suffering and enmity that the Jews experienced. Several exterminations were repeated in the ghettos which also continued when arriving at the camp, and repeated at each medical examination persistently. Any Jew that showed any physical disease signs was eliminated. This resulted in enormous deprivation and suffering.[16]

Another aspect is that those Jews who dwelt in Western Europe, as well as Germany failed to perceive themselves as the separate state minority in the countries they lived. The Jews claimed to be diverge from the rest of the citizens in regard to religion. They desired to possess equal and full rights as the nationalist since they felt that they had become an integral constituent of every country in regard to nationality. For instance, in Germany, Out of a half a million Jews, two-thirds of their population was involved in commerce and trade, one quarter working in industries and one-eighth in profession such as medicine and law and public service. Before the Second World War, during the Republic of Weimar, the socioeconomic position had become overwhelmingly upper and middle class.[17] On the other hand, the Jews gained high political area positions in the countries that they resided.

The other Holocaust element was because anti-Semitism became much more evident due to social antagonism, inferior status and economic depression of Jewish that existed in some parts of Europe, more especially, Eastern Europe. On the other hand, in Rumania, Hungary and Poland, the Jews were claimed to be foreign elements in the indigenous population who occupied high civil and profession positions that belonged to the nationalist by right. In spite of the anti-Jewish policies and the depression of the economy, religious and self identity led to increased levels of cultural creativity. Jews were the one responsible for publishing periodicals and daily newspapers, Jews in thousands, joined various political parties, their trade unions, Zionist movements of the youth, and the Jewish theaters exhibited drama of high quality. In some parts of Europe, more especially Lithuania and Poland, there existed Yiddish and Hebrew school systems that several young men learned

in yeshivot whose superiority, Poland in particular was recognized all over the world of the Jews. This elements above majorly contributed to the Holocaust.[18]

On 8th May 1945, WWII ended. At the end of the war, around 10 million people were in the concentration and Nazi camps, war camps prisoners and units of forced labor. Out of the 10 million, 200, 000 Jews survived from their population of around 6. 5 million. They had no countries or homes to go to. Jews from France, Hungarian, Belgium and Holland returned to their origin country. However, many Lithuania and Poland Jews who survived declined from going back to their country of origin in spite of the persuasion and efforts of America and other nations. This was because they had no friends or family in their original communities and homeland. On the other hand, the Holocaust survivors found themselves living in DP (Displaced Camps) awaiting to be immigrated to Israel. These were Jewish survivors from Austria, Poland, Italy, and Germany. The Jewish found Poland to be no longer viable to the Jewish community, furthermore, those Jews who survived became objects of murder by the nationalist of Poland. The Holocaust survivors were predestined to wait several times and for long months and even years to be able to be immigrated to Israel.[19]The determinations of the survivors go back to their homeland became the major contribution towards the gaining of Israel's independence, as well as the Jewish life and State renewal.

Psychological Effects

The Holocaust psychological effects were long range on the mental condition of the survivors, as well as complex and multitudinal. For the survivors to

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recover from the Holocaust shock that they experienced, they had to go a psychic splitting. This implied that psychic or denial numbing, depersonalization or idealization had to occur. On the other hand, the senses of the survivors became heightened, or in some cases lived as animals that are hunted, constantly being alert for threat. Furthermore, any vengeful, aggressive impulse by the survivors became constant. Apathy became a period that was filled with acute danger in that any Jew who arrived and exhausted from the ghettos or transport dehumanizing conditions and remained being in shock died. Alternatively, the Holocaust survivors who retreated to themselves for long became shunned by the rest of the group and became deprived of support. The survivors developed ways to manage with the Holocaust horrors through sustenance of the hope of family union. However, upon liberation, they were not only confronted with the perishing of their family members, but a lost with the horrifying circumstance of their death. The survivors became pervasive and developed a depressive temper with a behavior that is morose and the withdraw tendency. They also developed general apathy that alternated with irregular helplessness feeling, anger outbursts, shortness and insecurity, less interest and initiative, significant psychosomatic stress prevalence, persecutory expression and attitude.[20]

The Holocaust survivors developed a silence reaction that proved to be extremely damaging to the psychological state of the affected, their families, as well as the integration of new cultures. As a result, the silence reaction intensified the isolation sense of the survivors that resulted to the formation of another barrier to the process of mourning. On the other hand, the silence

that others imposed proved to be particularly painful towards those survivors determined to be witnesses.[21]Therefore, these offered the survivors the option of withdrawing completely to newly formed families.

The other psychological effects of Holocaust was the inability to talk and work, fears and anxieties of other persecutions, for instance, the fear of police officers who were uninformed became apparent. The Holocaust survivors also developed guilt feeling as to why they had to survive the persecution than the rest, they showed signs of nightmares, death, panic attacks, as well as several psychosomatic symptoms. On the other hand, the survivors became agitated and anxious of their inner tensions, valuelessness feelings and appeared constantly afraid and apprehensive to be unaccompanied. The personality of the survivors changed, they showed less or more radical disruption in behavior, outlook and development. The deaths that occurred from the Holocaust denied the survivors the chance to not only have a physical mourning arrangement like the remains, the grave or the service, but also denied them, the psychological ability to feel and absorb the deaths of their loved ones and finish the process of mourning.[22]

Physical Effects

The camps' conditions and the nutrition at the concentration camps were worse in that it turned the survivors to living corpses, musclemen. The rate of mortality was extremely high due to frost bites, multiple infections, atrocities injuries, respiratory tract disease, diarrhea, and chronic malnutrition. There was no housing or clothing, There were rampant cases of scabies and lice infections, as well as several infectious diseases like typhus. Even after liberation, in spite of the diseases being treated extensively, some

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of the survivors had developed defective conditions that were permanent. The survivors developed failing memory, increased fatigability, concentration inability, irritability, emotional liability, restlessness, and sleep disturbance. The survivors also developed premature aging, ulcers, cardiovascular disease, coronary disease, arteriosclerosis cerebrovascular, arthrosis and kidney stone.[23]

Spiritual Effects

Religion was one of the major contributions of the Holocaust. This led to the Jews who faced the most realities that were painful. The Holocaust was the aspect that gave the Jews the options of choosing to remain a Jew or continue being a Jew. The earliest experiences of psychological reaction when Jews learned on the Holocaust resulted to extreme unconscious and conscious anger in the world of no-Jewish. It was observed as the effect of gentile indifference and assault. This was a painful experience since for the last thousands years, the gentile world had persecuted the Jews. Initially, from the time of Emancipation around 1815, Western Europe Jews desired equally treatment, with the law protecting the right of people. Therefore, the Holocaust extremely affected the religion relationships. Since then, there has existed an irreversible burst in the relationship between the Jewish and the Christians. Initially, the anti-Semitic regimes allowed the Jew to convert, flee or assimilate his persecutors, however, during the Holocaust, no Jew escaped the executioner.[24]The silence of the world smashed all the Jewish believes and traditions that the Gentiles would, and could control themselves for hate expressions.

The Holocaust experiences made the survivors desire to develop a purpose in the happenings that resulted to the development of a belief system that was viable. Some of the survivors found meaning with their lives through the use of creative resources in searching for a rationale or simply transmitting the horrifying incidents of the Holocaust to the world unknown. On the other hand, some of the survivors accomplished a similar goal by the relentless Nazi pursuit thus, reaffirming the belief that they had; justice exists even in the experience. For other survivors, the development of Israel as state was a meaningful and good outcome. The majority of the survivors were in need of a life purpose, an aspect that resulted to the unending reliving horrors of the past, or displacement or blanket denial. Such survivors started to believe that God does not exist, neither does a believe system exist that can maintain them during the times of a crisis like the Holocaust. The majority of the survivors started questioning the existence of God. The silence of God during the Holocaust raised painful questions, the awful reality that God's chosen nation and people were almost wiped from the earth while God remained silent. Therefore, the faith that the Jews had in their God became under scrutiny.[25]

Emotional effects

Holocaust survivors who were emotional affected were families, children and mothers who had children. Jewish families traditionally invested everything on their children since they were highly valued, more especially mothers who played the larger part in upbringing offering them heritage foundational values and self worth. However, the holocaust changed the perceptions of such emotions. Because of the difficulties encountered by the parents, they

developed severe ability impairment in responding to their growing children appropriately, setting limits, encouraging curiosity, and accepting their robust activity. The Holocaust experiences led to parents who viewed their children as the rewind of their personal encounter with destruction and death. This resulted to some parents varying their responses towards their children. Some of them became unable to vest in their offspring's emotionally. They became preoccupied with their losses and mourning. On the other hand, the majority of them became emotionally spent. As a result, the resources that could have been used formerly in handling an extended family catastrophe became unavailable.[26]Furthermore, the manner in which parents administered discipline became chaotic or rigidly ineffectual and hardly ever related to the children's' needs.

After WWII, the entire Jewish population engaged in serious evaluation of how Allies had invalidated their human rights and why it took so long for them to be rescued from persecutions. As a result, the UN (United Nations) was established in 1945 with the dedication to learn the lesson of failed experiments. However, the founding of principles of human rights in the UN founding charter was not uncontentious. It involved sustained campaigns by respected NGOs lobby, inclusive of the Jewish Committee of America. Together with other councils and federations, they argued that human dignity contempt that the world witnessed throughout the Holocaust needed the introduction of international human rights. The mass killing of women, children and men all over Europe needed a passive or active alliance of their fellow Jews. An injunction of the Universal Declaration was formed that deem

every human being to be endowed with conscience and reason, and should therefore act towards other fellow human beings in a brotherhood spirit.[27]

Conclusion

The essay above has comprehensively discussed the how the Holocaust severely affected the Jewish population during the Second World War. The essay has also elaborates the factors that led to the Holocaust and several spiritual, emotional, physical, as well as psychological effects of Holocausts on the Jews. It is apparent from the essay that the atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews were severe and against the dignity and rights of humanity.

Discussion

It is no doubt from the essay that the effects of the Holocaust transformed the life of the Jewish people. The Jewish cultures and economic situations have changed in comparison to the times of the Holocaust. Usually, the passing of time assists relieving loss and helps to diminish the degree of grief in lo