

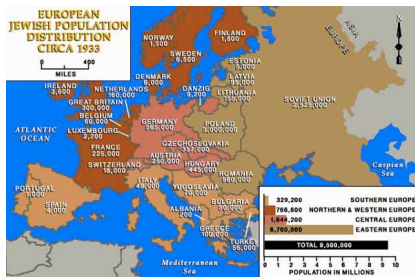
The Holocaust

Between 1933 and 1945, the German government led by Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party carried out the systematic persecution and murder of Europe's Jews.

This genocide is now known as the Holocaust.

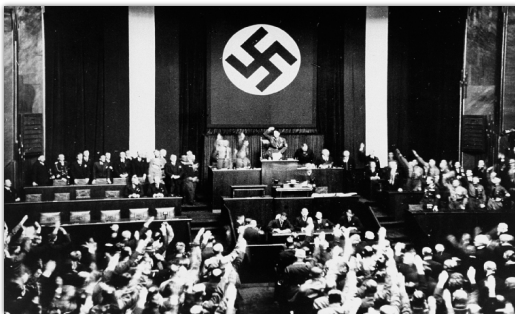
Pre-War Jewish Population

- Jews were living in every country in Europe before the Nazis came into power in 1933 (totaling approx. 9 million)



- Poland and the Soviet Union had the largest populations
- Jews could be found in all walks of life: farmers, factory workers, business people, doctors, teachers, and craftsmen

Hitler Assumes Power

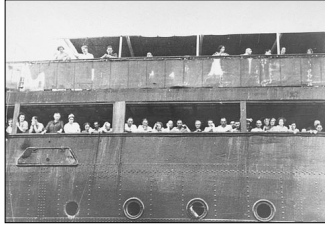


In March 1933, Adolf Hitler addressed the first session of the Reichstag following his appointment as Chancellor.

After this photograph was taken, members of the Reichstag passed the "Enabling Act" giving Hitler the sole power to rule.

US and World Response

- Evian Conference: 32 countries met in the summer of 1938 in Evian, France to discuss what to do about the Jewish refugees who were leaving Germany and Austria.
- Despite voicing feelings of sympathy, most countries made excuses for not accepting more refugees.
- Some American congressmen proposed the Wagner-Rogers Bill, which offered to let 20,000 endangered Jewish refugee children into the country; the bill did not pass.



The SS St. Louis, carrying refugees with Cuban visas, were denied admittance both in Cuba and in Florida. After being turned back to Europe, many of the passengers perished in the Holocaust.

Ghettos

Late 1939

- areas that were designated for Jews only; Nazis aimed to control the Jewish population by forcing them to live here
- ghettos were established across all of occupied Europe, especially in areas where there was already a large Jewish population



- Many ghettos were closed by barbed wire or walls and were guarded by SS or local police.

- Jews sometimes had to use bridges to go over Aryan streets that ran through the ghetto.

The Yellow Star

September 1941

- the Nazis ordered all German Jews over the age of six to sew a yellow Star of David with the word *Jude* on their clothing
- the following year, the measure was introduced in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and other German-occupied lands



Members of a Jewish ice hockey team wearing stars of David on their shirts pose in the snow.

The Final Solution

- On January 20, 1942, 15 high-ranking Nazi officials met at the Wannsee Conference to learn about how the Jewish Question would be solved.
- The Final Solution was outlined by Reinhard Heydrich who detailed the plan to establish death camps
- There were six death camps that used gas chambers to kill the prisoners: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Chelmno, Sobibor, Majdanek, and Belzec.
- prisoners were told the gas chambers were “showers”
- many gas chambers used carbon monoxide from diesel engines, but Auschwitz and Majdanek used gas from “Zyklon B” pellets, a highly poisonous insecticide
- After the gassings, prisoners removed hair, gold teeth and fillings from the Jews before the bodies were burned in the crematoria or buried in mass graves.

The Holocaust - Legacy



Over 6 million Jews and other persecuted people were murdered by the Nazis.

Survivors rarely returned home - many had lost their families and been denounced by their non-Jewish neighbors.

The Allies held the Nuremberg Trials in 1945-46 to punish the perpetrators. During these trials, the atrocities committed by the Nazi were brought horrifyingly to light.

Increasing pressure to create a homeland for Jewish Holocaust survivors led to the creation of Israel in 1948.

In 1953, the German government began to make payments to individual Jews and to the Jewish people as a way of acknowledging the German people's responsibility for the crimes committed during the Holocaust.
