

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.

History of Antisemitism

- Jews have faced prejudice and discrimination for over 2,000 years and were often used as scapegoats.



A woman reads a boycott sign posted on the window of a Jewish-owned department store.

- Pogroms occurred in late-1800s Russia
- Before 1933 Jews were living in every country in Europe (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

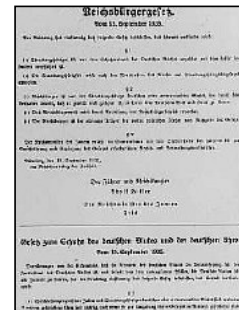
Antisemitism in Nazi Germany

Nazi teachers began to apply the “principles” of racial science by measuring skull size and nose length and recording students’ eye and hair color to determine whether students belonged to the “Aryan race.”

In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of their German citizenship. They were prohibited from marrying or having sexual relations with persons of “German or related blood.”



Jews, like all other German citizens, were required to carry identity cards, but their cards were stamped with a red “J”. This allowed police to easily identify them.



Persecution of the Jews



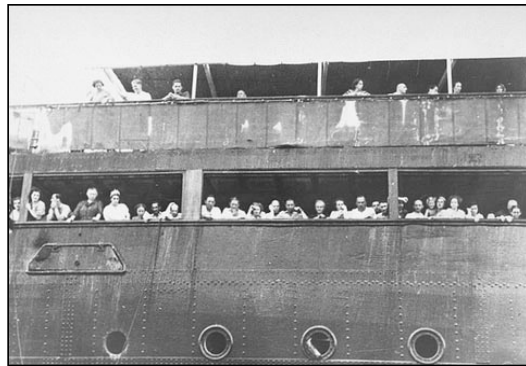
- Kristallnacht was the “Night of Broken Glass” on November 9-10, 1938
- Germans attacked synagogues and Jewish homes and businesses

- Einsatzgruppen were mobile killing squads made up of Nazi units and police
- They killed Jews in mass shooting actions throughout eastern Poland and the western Soviet Union



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** become a law.



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

Ghettos

Late 1939

- The Nazis aimed to control the Jewish population by forcing them to live in areas that were designated for Jews only, called **ghettos**.
- 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 on their clothing a yellow **Star of David** with the word **Jude** (Jew) in Hebrew-looking letters.
- The following year, the measure was introduced in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Slovakia, and other German-occupied lands.



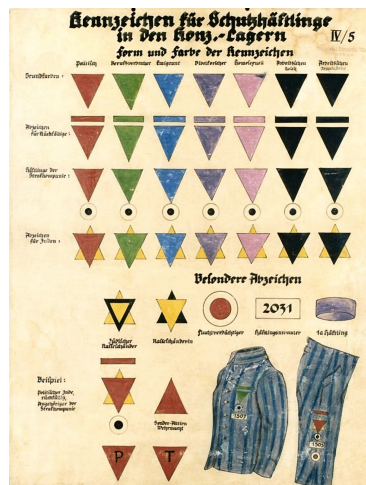
Members of a Jewish ice hockey team wearing stars of David on their shirts pose in the snow.

Concentration Camp System

1938-1945

After Germany's annexation of Austria in March 1938, the Nazis arrested German and Austrian Jews and imprisoned them in German **concentration camps**.

After Kristallnacht in November 1938, the Nazis conducted mass arrests of **adult male Jews** and put them in the camps as well.



Within the concentration camp system, **colored triangular badges** identified various prisoner categories.

This instructional chart shows how the Nazis distinguished between individuals with pure “German blood,” “Mixed blood,” and Jews.

Concentration Camp System

1938-1945

Following the German invasion of Poland in September 1939, the Nazis opened forced-labor camps. The **Nazi SS** were in charge of the German police forces, the identification of ethnicity, settlement and population policy, and intelligence collection and analysis (**spying**).

Death tolls were huge; prisoners died from a multitude of causes including exposure, exhaustion, starvation, extreme working conditions, torture, and execution.



Camp Locations



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 created, a detailed plan to establish death camps to exterminate the Jews
- There were six death camps that used gas chambers to murder the Jews: **Auschwitz** -Birkenau, Treblinka, Chelmno, Sobibor, Majdanek, and Belzec.
- Many gas chambers used carbon monoxide from engines - prisoners were told the gas chambers were “ **showers** .”
- Auschwitz and and Majdanek used “ **Zyklon B** ,” a highly poisonous insecticide that had previously been used to sterilize prisoners’ clothing
- 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 members of other persecuted groups, such as Gypsies and homosexuals, 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.

Beginning in 1953, the German government made payments to individual Jews and to the Jewish people as a way of acknowledging the German people’s responsibility for the crimes committed in their