Research Paper

Holocaust Overview

the Scope of the Tragedy Known As the Holocaust Is Immense. The Systematic Execution of 11 Million People by the Nazi Regime During World War II Is a Stomach-Churning, Yet Important Topic of Study and It Should Forever Remain So. How Did the Holocaust Occur, And How Can a Similar Tragedy Be Prevented in the Future? The Lessons Learned From World War II and the Holocaust Are Invaluable to the Advancement of Every Society On Earth.

nazi Rise to Power

according to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (Ushmm), On November 9th, 1918, Two Days Before World War I Is to End, The Emperor of Germany, William II, Gives Up the German Throne. On the Same Day, A Delegate From the Social Democratic Party of Germany Declares Germany a Republic. A Democratic Government Is Set Up and Led by Friedrich Ebert. On November 11th, 1918, After 21 Million Men Had Been Wounded in Combat, Fighting Ceases and World War I Is Over (World War I).

world War I Ends with a Series Treaties Imposed Upon the Defeated Powers by the Western Victors. In the Article “world War I: Treaties and Reparations”, Ushmm States That the Most Notable Among These Treaties Is Known As the Treaty of Versailles. The Treaty of Versailles Is Offered Up for German Leaders to Sign On May 7th, 1919. This Treaty Forces Germany to Limit It's Military to 100,000 Men. In Addition to This, Germany Is to Give Up Various Territories to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, And Poland. Also, Alsace and Lorraine, Which Were Won by Germany in the Franco-Prussian War, Are Given Back to France. While These Aspects of the Treaty Are Unwelcome by Germany, The Most Devastating Condition of the Treaty of Versailles Will Prove to Be Article 231.

ushmm Goes On to Explain That Article 231 Of the Treaty of Versailles Is More Commonly Known As the “war Guilt Clause”. This Is Because Article 231 Forces Germany to Concede That They Are Responsible for Initiating World War I and Are Therefore Liable for All the Material Destruction. The Western Powers Impose Large Reparation Payments On Germany and It's World War I Allies. France, Fearing a German Recovery and Renewed Aggression, Imposes Particularly Harsh Reparation Payments (World War I: Treaties and Reparations).

according to Ushmm, The Reparation Payments Imposed Upon Germany by the Western Powers in the Aftermath of World War I Coincide with a General Inflationary Period, Also Caused by World War I, In Europe in the 1920’s. As a Consequence of This, Hyperinflation Spins Out of Control in Germany by 1923. This Economic Uncertainty Coupled with Social Unrest Destabilizes the Newly-Formed Democratic Government in Germany. At This Time, The Desperate German Population Looks for Strong Leaders Who Are in Favor of Restoring German Prestige Through Remilitarization and Expansion. This Gives Rise to Various Radical Right Wing Political Parties, One of Which Is the Nazi Party.

in November of 1923, Adolf Hitler, The Leader of the Nazi Party, Leads the Nazi Party to the German State of Bavariaand Attempts to Overthrow the Government and Start a National Revolution. This Failed Attempt at a Governmental Coup Is Known As the Beer Hall Putsch. Hitler Serves Only Nine Months in Prison for It, During Which Time He Writes His Political Manifesto “mein Kampf”(World War I: Aftermath).

the Article “hitler Comes to Power” Explains That After Hitler’s Release From Prison, He Continues to Lead the Nazi Party. His Party Gradually Gainsfavor in Germany Because of It's Promises to Overturn Certain Aspects of the Treaty of Versailles Viewed As Unfair by the German Public. However, The Nazi Party Doesn’t Gain Any Significant Support in Germany Until the Elections Following the Stock Market Crash of 1929. By June, 1932, Six Million Germans Are Unemployed and Many Are Desperate Enough to Overlook Some of the More Radical Parts of the Nazi Platform; So Many, In Fact, That the Nazi Party Becomes the Majority Party in the German Parliament in July of 1932.

furthermore, The Article Explains That in the Following November Elections, The Nazi Party Loses a Majority in the German Parliament and Adolf Hitler Agrees to a Coalition with the Rival Conservative Party. After Many Months of Negotiations, Paul Von Hindenburg, The Distressed President of Germany, Appoints Adolf Hitler As the Chancellor. Finally, On August 2nd, 1934, Paul Von Hindenburg Dies and Hitler Becomes the Absolute Dictator of Germany Under the Title of “fuhrer”. Hitler Disassembles the Remnants of Germany’s Short-Lived Democracy to Make Way for His Third Reich (Ushmm).

anti-Semitism -- Nazi Views On Jews

according to an Article by Yad Vashem, The Concept of Anti-Semitism Can Trace It's Roots Back to the Earliest Christians - Their Belief Being That the Jews Deserve Punishment Because They Are the Ones Who Killed Jesus, Or Because They Had Failed in Their Role As the Chosen People of God (Antisemitism).

Ushmm Explains That Throughout History There Are Spurts of Anti-Semitic Rhetoric Which Usually Coincide with Economic or Political Strife. During the Period After the Crusades in Europe, Jews Are Often Accused of “poisoning the Well” Or “ritual Murder” - These Accusations Sometimes Leading to Massacres of Jews.

furthermore, Ushmm States That When the Nazis Come to Power, Germany Is Populated with More Jews Than Any Other Country in Europe. It Is Also Plagued by Severe Economic and Political Hardships. Some of the Wealthier Jews and Gentiles Are Able to Escape These Problems, But Thanks to Rhetoric From Radical Political Parties Such As the Nazis,The Public Eyes of Blame Are Fixed Solely On the Jews (Christian Persecution of Jews Over the Centuries).

the Article “hitler’s Views On Jews” Explains That Adolf Hitler and the Nazis View the Jewish Race As Inferior.In a Letter Written by Hitler to Herr Gemlich in 1919, Which Is Quoted in the Article, He Describes the Jews As Greedy Inbreds and Likens Them to Leeches On Society. These Are Views That Adolf Hitler Spouts in Many Political Speeches During His Rise to Power and Which Slowly Permeate Through the Minds of the German Public Who Are Desperate to Blame Someone for Their Misfortune (The Propagander).

According to the Thinkquest Education Foundation, The Nazisfavor a Race Known As the Aryans.The Perfect Aryan in the Mind of Hitler Is Tall and has Blonde Hair and Blue Eyes. During the Reign of Hitler’s Third Reich, The Nazis Attempt to Breed an Entire Population of Aryans. It Is for This Reason That Hitler Puts in to Place Various Policies to Segregate the More Aryan-Like People From Undesirables; Most Namely, The Jews(German Extremes).

Nuremberg Laws

following the Total Governmental Takeover of the Nazis and the Implementation of Hitler’s Third Reich, A Series of Anti-Semitic Laws Are Enacted. According to the Jewish Virtual Library, These Laws Are Known As the Nuremberg Laws And, “…by Their Generalnature Formalized the Unofficial and Particular Measures Taken Against Jews Up to 1935” (The Nuremberg Laws).

Furthermore, The Article Explains How the First Nuremberg Law Is Called the "Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor". This Outlaws Marriages and Extramarital Relations Between Jews and German Citizens, The Raising of the German Flag by Jews, And the Employment of German Maids Under the Age of 45 In Jewish Households.

Moreover, The Second of These Laws Is Entitled the "Reich Citizenship Law". This Law States That Only Aryans Can Be Citizens of the Third Reich. It Effectively Strips Jews of Their German Citizenship and Reduces Them to Mere Subjects of the State. Any Person Who Breaks These Laws Is Subject to a Prison Sentence And/or Fines(The Nuremberg Laws).

According to Yad Vashem, During the Next Eight Years, Thirteen More Decrees Are Added to the Nuremberg Laws Which Prove to Be the Final Nail in the Coffin for Jewish Status in Germany (Nuremberg Laws).

Propaganda

The German People Under Hitler’s Third Reich Are Bombarded with Propaganda at Every Turn. The Large Sum of This Propaganda Is Aimed at Cultivating a Chauvinistic, Anti-Jewish Civilian Population. According to the Article “culture in the Third Reich: Overview” By the Ushmm, In 1933,Joseph Goebbels, The Minister Forpopular Enlightenment and Propaganda, Begins a Process Known As Synchronization of Culture, By Which German Arts Are Brought in Line with Nazi Ideologies.

Additionally, As Part of the Synchronization of Culture, The Nazis Create a Reich Culture Chamber. This Chamber Consists of a Combination of the Reich Film Chamber, Reich Music Chamber, Reich Theater Chamber, Reich Press Chamber, Reich Writing Chamber, Reich Chamber for Fine Arts, And the Reich Radio Chamber. The Purpose of This New Chamber Is to Control Every Single Aspect of the German Culture.

The Article Describes Further That the Nazis in the Reich Culture Chamber Value All Forms of Artwork Simply for Their Propagandistic Merits and Endorse Only Artists Who Fall in Line with Their Political Beliefs, Such As Hitler Youth Poet Hans Baumann and Adolf Bartels. The Nazi Regime Subsidizes Films and Theater Productions Which Glorify Hitler and the Third Reich or Perpetuate Negative Jewish Stereotypes.Contrarily, The Works of Authors Such As Bertolt Brecht, Lion Feuchtwanger, And Others Like Them Who Cannot Meet the Standards of the Reich Culture Chamber Are Deemed “un-German”, Removed From Libraries, And Burned.

In Addition to Libraries and Theaters, The Nazi’s Control All News Media and Are Constantly Promoting Their Agenda in Newspapers and On Radio Waves Throughout Germany. For the German Citizen, Nazi Propaganda Is Impossible to Escape(Culture in the Third Reich: Overview).

Kristallnacht

The Term “kristallnacht” Refers to a Single Event in History Also Known As the “night of Broken Glass”. According Toan Article About This Incident by Pbs (Public Broadcasting Service), Kristallnacht Takes Place On the Night of November 9th 1938. Throughout That Night, The Sound of Shattering Glass Fills the Air in Cities All Over Germany While Fires Are Being Set to Jewish Synagogues. By the End of the Riot, Gangs of Nazi Storm Troopers Had Killed 91 Jews, Destroyed 7,000 Jewish Businesses, Burned More Than 900 Synagogues and Deported About 30,000 Jewish Men to Concentration Camps. In the Article Pbs Wrote About Kristallnacht, A U.S. Official Who Was Stationed in Germany at the Time Is Quoted, Saying “…the Insatiably Sadistic Perpetrators Threw Many of (The Jews) Into a Small Stream That Flows Through the Zoological Park, Commanding Horrified Spectators to Spit at Them, Defile Them with Mud, And Jeer at Their Plight” (Kristallnacht).

Furthermore, The Article Explains How Several Days Before the “night of Broken Glass”, On November 7th, A Jewish Student Named Hershel Grynszpan Shoots Ernst Vom Rath, The Third Secretary of the German Embassy in the Capital of France. Grynszpan Is Angered by the Deportation of His Parents From Germany, Where They Had Lived Their Whole Lives, To Poland. He Hopes That by Shooting the Third Secretary of the German Embassy He Will Alert the Entire World of the Plight of the Jews. When the French Police Arrest Grynszpan, He Cries, “being a Jew Is Not a Crime. I Am Not a Dog. I Have the Right to Live and the Jewish People Have the Right to Exist On Earth. Wherever I Have Been, I Have Been Chased Like an Animal” (Kristallnacht). Ernst Vom Rath Dies Two Days Later.

Additionally, Pbs’s Article Says That Itdoes Not Take Long for News of Ernst Vom Rath’s Death to Reach the Ears of Nazi Officials in Germany. On the Evening of Vom Rath’s Death, The Minister for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, At a Dinner in Munich, Gives Aprovocative Speech About the Assassination. In His Speech, He Urges the Assembled Crowd to Take to the Streets and Make the Jews Pay for the Death of Ernst Vom Rath. A Series of Orders Sent by the Head of the Secretary Service, Reinhard Heydrich, Gives All Police State Offices the Authority to Destroy Jewish Business and Homes, And Arrest As Many Jews As Would Fit in the Local Jails. The “night of Broken Glass” Ensues.

In the Month Following Kristallnacht, A Series of Decrees Are Issued by the Third Reich Which Totally Eliminate Jews From German Public Life. The “night of Broken Glass” Produces Outrage in the United States and Western Europe, But Little Action Is Taken to Help the Jews (Kristallnacht).

Rounding Up the Jews – Ghettos

During Wwii, As Hitler’s Army Invades and Occupies Various Territories, They Round Up As Many Jews As Possible and Place Them in Walled Off Municipalities Known As Ghettos. According to Ushmm in the Article “ghettos”, The Germans Establish at Least 1,000 Ghettos in the Soviet Union and in Poland From 1939-1941.

The Same Article by Ushmm Explains That the Nazis View the Ghettos As Temporary Establishments Meant to Control and Segregate the Jews While They Debate On How Best to Eliminate Them. Thelargest of the Ghettos Established in Poland Is Called the Warsaw Ghetto. It at One Time Holds Over 400,000 Jews, Gypsies and Homosexuals. Other Major Ghettos Are Set Up in the Cities of Lodz, Krakow, Bialystok, Lvov, Lublin, Vilna, Kovno, Czestochowa, And Minsk. In Addition to These Ghettos, Tens of Thousands of Western European Jews Are Also Deported to Ghettos in the East.

Furthermore, The Article States That a Ghetto Is Run Much Like a Normal City, Complete with a Jewish Police Force, Jewish Firefighters, And a Jewish City Council, Except Nobody Is Allowed to Leave. The City Council of a Ghetto Exists Under the Direct Control of the Nazis for the Purpose of Conveying Their Orders to the Population of the Ghetto and Making Sure They Are Carried Out. This Sometimes Includes Deportations of Jews to Killing Facilities. The Nazis Do Not Hesitate to Kill Anyone Caught Disobeying Orders (Ghettos).

daily Life for a Jew in a Ghetto Is Horrible. The Ghettos Are Over-Crowded, Riddled with Disease, And Affected by Extreme Poverty. According to an Article About the Kovno Ghetto by Ushmm, In the Kovno Ghetto, All Jews Over the Age of 16 Are Forced to Work Twelve Hours Days of Manual Labor for the German War Machine with Little or No Compensation (Inside the Ghetto).

With a Lack of Basic Sanitation and Sufficient Food and Water, A Sense of Hopelessness Often Prevails in the Ghettos. Holocaust Survivor, Yosef Charny in a Holocaust Survivor Testimony, Describes Sifting Through the Garbage for Food in a Ghetto and Being Excited When He Finds Half of a Loaf of Moldy Bread. He Runs Home with It in His Coat, But Is Too Late to Save His Father From Starvation (Youtube). Another Holocaust Survivor,Irving Barowsky, On the Other Hand, Reminisces About Getting Together with His Friends at School in the Ghetto to Play Card Games (Youtube).

Resistance

According to Ushmm, On the Morning of January 18th, 1943, A Group of Jewish Resistance Fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto Secretly Infiltrate a Column of Jews Being Forced Out of Their Homes and to a Transfer Point From Which They Will Be Taken to Killing Facilities. At a Predetermined Signal, They Break Ranks and Fight Their German Captors. Most of the Fighters Die in This Battle, But It Allows Time for the Jews Who Were About to Be Deported the Chance to Escape. Encouraged by This Success, The Remaining Ghetto Population Starts to Create Bunkers and Shelters in What Will Mark the Beginning of a Month-Long Resistance Known As the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (Warsaw Ghetto Uprising).

Similar Rebellions Occur in Other Camps and Ghettos, But Not All Resistance Takes Place in the Form of Armed Uprisings. According to Yad Vashem in an Article About Resistance,Within Ghettos and Camps, Unarmed Resistance Is Widespread and a Part of Everyday Life. In the Ghettos, The Jews Resisted the Nazis’ Intolerable Economic Restrictions by Smuggling in Food, Medicine and Clothing. They Founded Jewish Newspapers, Schools, Theaters, And Orchestras to Sustain Their Spiritual and Metal Strength. In Some Cases, They Even Buried Archives of Journals and Documents to Preserve History. In Camps, They Kept Themselves Clean in the Face of Unsanitary Conditions. They Also Continued to Pray, Despite the Fact That If They Were Caught It Would Mean Certain Death. The Jewish People Call This Attempt to Maintain Their Humanity “kiddush Ha-Hayyim”, Which Means "Sanctification of Life."

Moreover, The Article Goes On to Explain How Resistance Against the Nazis Occurs Outside of the Realm of Camps and Ghettos As Well. Numerous Rescue Organizations Are Created Throughout Europe. The Specific Aims of These Organizations Vary, But They Are All Basically Created to Help the Jews Escape Capture and Deportation (Resistance, Jewish).

Wannsee Conference – The Final Solution

On January 20th, 1941, A Conference of Nazi Leaders Is Held in Berlin for the Purpose of Discussing the “jewish Question”. This Conference Is Known As the Wannsee Conference. According to the Center for Programs in Contemporary Writing at the University of Pennsylvania, Who Quotes the Transcript of This Conference, The Nazis Plan to Evacuate the Jews From the German Reich by Various Means, Mostly to Russia(The Wansee Protocol).

Six Months Later, As Yad Vashem Explains in the Article “the Beginning of the Final Solution -The Wannsee Conference”, Shortly After Thegerman Invasion of Russia,An Order Comes Down to Make Preparations for the “final Solution of the Jewish Problem in the German Sphere of Influence in Europe.” This Means the Total Inhalation of the Jews. Yad Vashem States That They Currently Have No Documentation That Indicates Who Makes the Order, In What Way, And at What Time. They Believe It May Be Given Orally by Hitler Himself. Shortly After the Final Solution Is Ordered, The Mass Deportation of Jews From the Ghettos to Death Camps Begins(The Beginning of the Final Solution -The Wannsee Conference).

Death Camps

The Term “death Camps” Refers to the Sites Where Jews Are Systematically Deported to and Murdered by the Nazis After the Final Solution Is Ordered by the Third Reich. They Are Sometimes Referred to As “extermination Camps” Or “extermination Sites”. According to Yad Vashem, During the Holocaust, There Are More Than 56 Death Camps in Europe Alone (Main Nazi Camps and Killing Sites).

Pbs Explains That the Most Notorious Death Camp Is Known As Auschwitz. At the Height of Auschwitz’s Efficiency, It Takes in and Executes More Than 4,400 People Per Day (Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State).

Selection – Selektion

Nearly Every Group of Jews Being Deported From a Ghetto Goes Through a Process Known As “selection” Or “selektion”. In an Abc News Article, Christel Kucharz Writes About How the Term “selektion” Is Used by the Nazis to Refer to the Death Camp Practice of “selecting” Those to Be Executed (Beware of Nazi Words).

The Teachers’ Guide to the Holocaust States That, Starting in 1942, There Is No Selection Process in the Death Camps of Auschwitz, Treblinka, Belzec, And Sobibór, Where All Jews Are Sent Immediately to Their Deaths (The Camps).

Extermination Methods

According to Pbs, In the Fall of 1941, After the Final Solution Had Been Ordered, Nazi General Erich Von Dem Bach-Zelewski Tells His Superior Heinrich Himmler That the German Soldiers Had Been Shooting Jews at Close Range, Including Women and Children All Summer. This Method of Killing Is Known As “death by Firing Squad.” Soon After It's Implementation, It Proves to Bepsychologically Straining On the German Soldiers. The Nazi Commanders Know That They Must Think of a More Effective Way to Kill All of the Jews.

Furthermore, Pbs States That Over the Next Several Months, The Nazis Experiment with Various Different Methods of Extermination. One of Those Methods Is Known As Carbon Monoxide Poisoning. The Nazis Lead the Jews to Large Shower Facilities, Lock Them In, And Trick Them Into Thinking They Are About to Take a Shower; But Instead of Water Coming Out of the Showerhead, Carbon Monoxide Gas Pours Out. Another Way That Nazis Poison the Jews with Carbon Monoxide Gas Is a Method Known As “hell Vans”. Jews Are Led From the Ghetto Through a Basement Corridor and Then Up a Ramp to a Small, Windowless Room, Which Turns Out to Be the Carriage of a Large Van. The Exhaust From This Van Is Routed Back Into Itself so the Jews Are Exposed to the Fumes. A Driver Takes the Van to a Nearby Forest and Dumps the Deceased Bodies Into a Giant Hole, Or Burns Them. These Procedures Prove to Be Much More Effective Than Firing Squads, And They Save the Nazi Soldiers the Psychological Trouble of Killing Human Beings at Close Range.

Pbs Goes On to Explain That the Most Efficient Technique for Killing Jews, However, Is Zyklon B Gas. Zyklon B Gas Is Derived From the Pesticide Used to Kill Lice in Prisoners Clothing, So It Is in Plentiful Supply. Exposed to the Right Temperature of Air, The Zyklon Crystals Produce a Highly Lethal Gas(Auschwitz: Inside the Nazi State).

Liberation

According to a Timeline On Jewishgen.Org, Beginning in 1945, The Allied Forces of Wwii Are Advancing On Rapidly and Liberating Previously German-Held Territories. These Include Territories Where Death Camps and Ghettos Are Located. As the Allied Forces Move in On Death Camps, The Nazis Stationed at a Death Camps Retreat and Take with Them As Many Jews As They Can in What Are Known As a Death Marches. Additionally, The Timeline On Jewishgen.Org Shows That As the Allied Forces Approached Closer, Hitler Commits Suicide. Then Finally, On May 8th, Germany Surrenders and the Third Reich Collapses. Four Months Later, Wwii Comes to an End (A Timeline of the Holocaust 1939-1945).

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