



UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM, WASHINGTON, DC, U.S.

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored, persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945 across Europe and North Africa. The height of the persecution and murder occurred during World War II. By the end of the war in 1945, the Germans and their collaborators had killed nearly two out of every three European Jews. The Nazis believed that Germans were racially superior. They believed Jews were a threat to the so-called German racial community.

While Jews were the primary victims, the Nazis also targeted other groups for persecution and murder. The Nazis claimed that Roma, people with disabilities, some Slavic peoples (especially Poles and Russians), and Black people were biologically inferior. The regime persecuted other groups because of politics, ideology, or behavior. These groups included Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, gay men, and people the Nazis called "asocials" and "professional criminals."

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The Holocaust was unprecedented genocide, total and systematic, perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, with the aim of annihilating the Jewish people. The primary motivation was the Nazis' antisemitic racist ideology. Between 1933 and 1941, Nazi Germany pursued a policy that dispossessed the Jews of their rights and their property, followed by the branding and concentration of the Jewish population. This policy gained broad support in Germany and much of occupied Europe. In 1941, following the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazis and their collaborators launched the systematic mass murder of the Jews. By 1945, nearly six million Jews had been murdered.

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM, LONDON, UK

The Holocaust was the systematic murder of Europe's Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators during the Second World War. For the first time in history, industrial methods were used for the mass extermination of a whole people.

Between 1933 and 1945, Jews were targeted for discrimination, segregation and extermination. On coming to power in 1933, the Nazis began to actively persecute the Jews of Germany with the introduction of discriminatory legislation accompanied by vicious antisemitic propaganda. With the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, the process escalated and Jews throughout Nazi-controlled Europe came under the threat of death.

The Nazis enslaved and murdered millions of others as well. Political opponents, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), homosexuals, prisoners of conscience, people with physical and mental disabilities, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and others were killed or died in camps as a result of neglect, starvation or disease.

Definitions excerpted from:

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. "Introduction to the Holocaust." <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/introduction-to-the-holocaust>.

Yad Vashem. "What was the Holocaust?" <https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about.html>.

Brosnan, Matt. "What was the Holocaust?" Imperial War Museum, June 12, 2018. <https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/what-was-the-holocaust>.