

History Knowledge Organiser HT1 - The Holocaust

What is the Holocaust? Key definitions.

- The mass murder of Jews under the German Nazi regime during the period 1941-5. More than 6 million European Jews, as well as members of other persecuted groups, were murdered at concentration camps such as Auschwitz.
 - Holocaust comes from Hebrew and means destruction or completely burnt. Many Jews use the term Shoah which comes from the Hebrew and means catastrophe.

Three Historical Reasons for Anti-Semitism:

1. Jews were blamed for the crucifixion of Christ.
2. Jews were blamed for the Black Death although many Jews were killed by the disease.
3. Jews were driven out of many Western European countries in the Middle Ages. They were expelled from England in 1290, from France in 1306 and 1394.

All of these actions made the Jews outliers from the rest of their community and therefore different and victims of prejudice and discriminations



Hitler's Persecution of the Jews

Hitler's dislike of the Jews was based on the economy. He blamed them for making Germany weak.

- **1st April 1933:** Hitler's first action directly against the Jews was a Boycott of all Jewish businesses
- **April 11, 1933** - Nazis issue a decree defining a non-Aryan as "anyone descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents."
- **May 10, 1933** - Burning of books in Berlin and throughout Germany.
- **In Sept** - Nazis establish Reich Chamber of Culture, then exclude Jews from the Arts.
- **Summer 1935** Placards saying Jews not wanted displayed in resorts, public buildings, restaurants and cafes. (these were removed during the 1936 Olympic Games).
- A massive, coordinated attack on Jews throughout the German Reich on the night of **November 9, 1938** into the next day, has come to be known as **Kristallnacht** or The Night of Broken Glass.

The Rise of Hitler and the Nazis:

Nazis is an abbreviation for the National Socialist German Workers Party that existed from 1919-1945. Their leader was Adolf Hitler

Reasons for the Nazi's gaining support.

- Nazi's had support from big business
- The rise in unemployment
- Hitler promised a stronger Germany and Hitler's use of propaganda
- The Nazis promised different things to different people: jobs to the unemployed, ideas to the young, pensions to the old
- Hitler blamed the Jews for the economic collapse and struggles of Germany

Hitler takes power in Germany:

July 1932 the Nazis were the largest party in the Reichstag.
Hitler is made Chancellor on the 30th January 1933.
Hitler starts his persecution of the Jews.



The Road to the Holocaust World War Two.

The Nazis invaded Eastern Europe and used The Einsatzgruppen who were special mobile killing squads created in 1939. In 1941 the Einsatzgruppen would move through Nazi controlled areas and round up Jews, gypsies, undesirables and disabled people. They rounded them up and shot them.

The Final Solution

The **Wannsee Conference** was a meeting of senior government held in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee on 20 January 1942. It was decided whereby most of the Jews of German-occupied Europe would be deported to occupied Poland and murdered.

The Death Camps: Auschwitz Birkeneau, Chelmo, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, Majdanek in the far east of Poland.

The death camps used gas chambers to murder Jews and others on an industrial scale. Jews were brought from all over Europe. Selection happened when you arrived. Women with children, the Elderly and the unfit went straight to the gas chambers. The Jews were told they were being taken to showers but the showers were in fact gas chambers. To the camps usually 14 years of age upwards and if they were fit and healthy as well as children taken from parents (if they were lucky) were taken to showers to clean them up. The showers were either really hot or extremely cold. They would then be tattooed with a number their hair shaven and given a uniform.

The Holocaust is significant as it is a point in human history where religious discrimination and overt racism led to the deliberate attempt to wipe a single group of human beings from the face of the planet by mass murder. This genocide can never be forgotten as it stands as an example of what can go wrong when hate and prejudice go unchallenged.