

# NEVER AGAIN

## WHAT IS THE HOLOCAUST?

The Holocaust, also known as the Shoah, was a systematic, German state-sponsored persecution of the Jewish religion. Six million Jewish lives perished.

It took place between 1933-1945.

Antisemitism was the foundation of the Holocaust meaning: hostility to, or prejudice against, Jewish people. The Nazis were instrumental in leading the persecution of the Jewish race. The Nazis believed that Jews were the cause of Germany's social, economic, political, and cultural problems. The Nazi leader was Adolf Hitler, who was a German dictator in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Street by street Jews were cleared out of their homes and transported to concentration camps as prisoners. Nearly 7 out of 10 Jews in Europe were murdered because of their religion. However, it wasn't only Jews who were imprisoned in concentration camps. The Nazis also incarcerated homosexuals, Romany's, and disabled people. The conditions in concentration camps were inhuman and brutal. The SS, a fearsome military wing of the Nazis, ran the camps and used gas chambers to 'weed out' prisoners who were not able to work. Families were split up and forced to do hard labour. Many prisoners died of disease and some of starvation. The SS soldiers meted out brutal beatings.

The Holocaust is remembered every year on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January. It is known as the Holocaust day.

## WHO IS ADOLF HITLER AND WHY DID HE HATE JEWS?

Adolf Hitler was born in Austria in 1889. He lived in a city called Vienna (which had a big Jewish community) from 1907 to 1913. The mayor of Vienna, at that time, disliked Jews greatly. In fact, most of the city disliked Jews. Hitler joined the German army in World War 1 (1914-1918) at the age of 25. At the end of the war, like many German soldiers, he could not accept the defeat. They believed that they had been 'stabbed in the back'. Hitler bought into the myth that Jews and communists had betrayed the country and brought a left-wing government to power, who surrendered unnecessarily. By blaming the Jews for the defeat, Hitler created a stereotypical enemy. In the early 1920s and 1930s, Germany was still in a terrible economic crisis, so, according to the Nazis, expelling the Jews was the solution to the problems in Germany. Jews became their scapegoats.



## AUSCHWITZ

Auschwitz was originally a Polish army barracks. In September 1939 Nazi Germany invaded Poland and occupied Auschwitz, turning it into a jail for political prisoners. The Nazis developed this 'political prison'. They built gas chambers which would take millions of lives. When prisoners arrived, they were assessed to determine if they could work. If they could work, they would be put to hard labour in abominable conditions. If they couldn't, they were stripped naked and put into gas chambers where they were gassed to death. Auschwitz became the centre of the Nazis Holocaust and at one point 12,000 prisoners were gassed each day.

## CASE STUDY: ANNE FRANK

Anne Frank was born in the city of Frankfurt am Main in 1929. She was a Jew. When Adolf Hitler came into power, her parents (Otto and Edith Frank), decided to move to the Netherlands. Anne Frank wrote a famous diary of her life. She helped hide Jews in a custom-made hiding space in a hollow wall. Her life story is inspirational. Sadly, Anne was caught by the German police and was sent to Auschwitz. Doctors assessed her to see if she could cope with heavy labour, which she could not. She was there for despatched to the gas chamber and killed.

