

Why did the Holocaust Happen?



1921 was the year that Adolf Hitler became the leader of the Nazi Party in Germany. The Nazi's had very racist views towards many other races include those who were Jewish. They believed that their Aryan race was much superior to others. They thought neighbouring countries were not as important as Germany. Adolf Hitler believed in these racist views and pushed them farther than anyone else could imagine.

In January 1933, the Nazi Party as the largest political party running for election, they were invited to form a government. When the Nazi party came into power Hitler immediately started forcing Nazi values onto every aspect of German life using fear and terror to take control. After the death of the German President Hindenburg in 1934, Adolf Hitler proclaimed himself as 'Supreme Leader' of Germany or 'Fuehrer'.



HOLOCAUST – NEVER AGAIN!

Facts

The Holocaust was a mass murder of millions of Jewish people, people with disabilities and many other groups persecuted by the Nazi party during WWII.

The word Holocaust comes from the Greek word "holokauston" which refers to a sacrifice by fire.

In 1939 the Nazi government ordered everyone of Jewish religion to wear a yellow star of David on their clothes so they could easily be identified.

After Germany invaded Poland the Nazi's forced Jews to live in confined areas called 'Ghettos'. These areas were often closed off from other parts of cities using fencing or barbed wire.

Concentration Camps

When the Nazi's came into power in 1933 they immediately began persecuting those who they thought were not worthy members of society. They also opened the first concentration camp in March 1933, it was called Dachau and it was just outside Munich.

Concentration camps were originally used for making Jews and those who did not support the Nazi regime to work as unpaid labourers. Over the next years running from 1933 to 1945 over 40,000 concentration/work camps set up across the areas under Nazi control.

Different types of camps were made for different uses such as work camps, transit camps to process prisoners and extermination camps which first opened in 1941. Over a number of years the Nazi's would use extermination camps to kill large numbers of people at a time. Some prisoners were even murdered by guards in the camps for no reason and many others died as a result of sickness caused by malnutrition and unsanitary living conditions.

Case Study – Henri Kichka



Henri was born in Brussels to parents who had fled anti-semitism in Eastern Europe to build new lives in the West.

When the Nazi part invaded Belgium they had nowhere to hide. In early September 1942, they were forced to leave their home by German soldiers shouting "Alle Juden raus" (all Jews out). Within a week the family were transported by the Nazis in Cattle wagons to Poland.



Henri and his father were separated from the female family members and taken to work as slave labourers with other men ultimately destined for the gas chambers. The women in the family were taken immediately Auschwitz and murdered in the gas chambers.

Miraculously Henri, who was by then 19 years old, survived until the Soviet Army invaded and pushed the Nazi's back toward Germany. At this point he described himself as follows: "I was 90% dead. I was a skeleton. I was in a sanatorium and forms and in hospital".