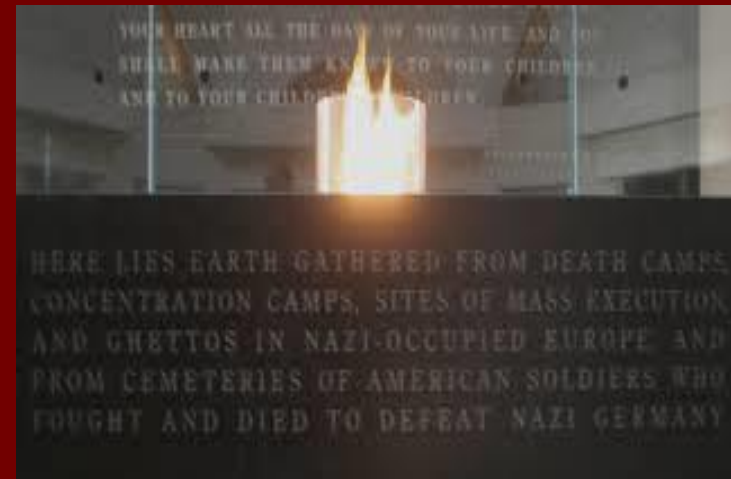


THE HOLOCAUST
Historical Information

Holocaust

- Holocaust: The persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime.
- “Holocaust” is a word of Greek origin meaning “sacrifice by fire.”



The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in 1933, believed that Germans were “racially superior” & that the Jews were “unworthy of life.”



- During the Holocaust, the Nazis also targeted other groups because of their perceived “racial inferiority”:

Gypsies, the handicapped,
Slavic people (Poles, Russians),
Communists, Socialists,
Jehovah's Witnesses,
and homosexuals.



- In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over **nine million**.
- By 1945, almost **two out of every three European Jews** had been killed.

How did this happen?

- The leader of the German National Socialist (Nazi) Party, **Adolf Hitler**, came to power in **1933**, using **campaign propaganda** that blamed the Jews for Germany's depression after World War I.



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- Germany embraced Hitler's argument for the superiority of the Nordic peoples, which Hitler called the **Aryan race**.



- Germany soon implemented a set of laws, including the infamous **Nuremberg Laws of 1935**, designed to dehumanize German Jews and **subject them to violence and prejudice.**



- As World War II continued, Hitler and his followers developed the “Final Solution”- the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe.



- Soon after Hitler was appointed chancellor in 1933, the Nazis established **concentration camps** to imprison Jews, and other victims of ethnic and racial hatred.

- **Dachau** was the first concentration camp, located on the **grounds of an abandoned factory**.



The term “concentration camp” was a **form of propaganda** to hide the extermination and forced labor of the prisoners.

The prisoners were “**concentrated**” or **placed in a camp**; they were sometimes told it was for their **safety** during the war.

- During the war years, the Nazis created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps.



- Between 1942 and 1944, Nazi Germany **deported** millions more Jews to **extermination camps**, where they were murdered in specially developed killing facilities.



- In the final months of war, SS guards forced camp inmates on **death marches** in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners.



- As Allied forces moved across Europe, they found and liberated concentration camp prisoners, many of whom had survived the death marches.



- World War II ended in Europe in 1945.
- The Allies were advancing to the heart of Germany, liberating camps as they went. Hitler and his bride, Eva Braun, killed themselves on April 30, 1945.
- Germany officially surrendered on May 7, 1945.

- After the Holocaust, many of the survivors found shelter in **displaced persons (DP) camps** set up by the Allied powers.



- Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews emigrated to Palestine; others came to America.



- The crimes committed during the Holocaust devastated most of the European Jewish communities.

