

# What Was The Holocaust

## The Holocaust

*The Holocaust* (/ˈhɒləkɒst/ *HOL*-? -kawst), known in Hebrew as the Shoah (/ʃoʊ-/ *SHOH*-?; Hebrew: שואה, romanized: Shoah, IPA: [ʃoʔa], lit. 'Catastrophe';)

The Holocaust ( *HOL*-? -kawst), known in Hebrew as the Shoah ( *SHOH*-?; Hebrew: שואה, romanized: Shoah, IPA: [ʃoʔa], lit. 'Catastrophe'), was the genocide of European Jews during World War II. From 1941 to 1945, Nazi Germany and its collaborators systematically murdered some six million Jews across German-occupied Europe, around two-thirds of Europe's Jewish population. The murders were committed primarily through mass shootings across Eastern Europe and poison gas chambers in extermination camps, chiefly Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Sobibor, and Chełmno in occupied Poland. Separate Nazi persecutions killed millions of other non-Jewish civilians and prisoners of war (POWs); the term Holocaust is sometimes used to include the murder and persecution of non-Jewish groups.

The Nazis developed their ideology based on racism and pursuit of "living space", and seized power in early 1933. Meant to force all German Jews to emigrate, regardless of means, the regime passed anti-Jewish laws, encouraged harassment, and orchestrated a nationwide pogrom known as Kristallnacht in November 1938. After Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939, occupation authorities began to establish ghettos to segregate Jews. Following the June 1941 invasion of the Soviet Union, 1.5 to 2 million Jews were shot by German forces and local collaborators. By early 1942, the Nazis decided to murder all Jews in Europe. Victims were deported to extermination camps where those who had survived the trip were killed with poisonous gas, while others were sent to forced labor camps where many died from starvation, abuse, exhaustion, or being used as test subjects in experiments. Property belonging to murdered Jews was redistributed to the German occupiers and other non-Jews. Although the majority of Holocaust victims died in 1942, the killing continued until the end of the war in May 1945.

Many Jewish survivors emigrated out of Europe after the war. A few Holocaust perpetrators faced criminal trials. Billions of dollars in reparations have been paid, although falling short of the Jews' losses. The Holocaust has also been commemorated in museums, memorials, and culture. It has become central to Western historical consciousness as a symbol of the ultimate human evil.

## Holocaust denial

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Holocaust denial is the negationist and antisemitic claim that Nazi Germany and its collaborators did not commit genocide against European Jews during World War II, ignoring overwhelming historical evidence to the contrary. Theories assert that the genocide of Jews is a fabrication or exaggeration. Holocaust denial includes making one or more of the following false claims: that Nazi Germany's "Final Solution" was aimed only at deporting Jews from the territory of the Third Reich and did not include their extermination; that Nazi authorities did not use extermination camps and gas chambers for the mass murder of Jews; that the actual number of Jews murdered is significantly lower than the accepted figure of approximately six million; and that the Holocaust is a hoax perpetrated by the Allies, Jews, or the Soviet Union.

Holocaust denial has roots in postwar Europe, beginning with writers such as Maurice Bardèche and Paul Rassinier. In the United States, the Institute for Historical Review gave Holocaust denial a pseudo-scholarly platform and helped spread it globally. In the Islamic world, Holocaust denial has been used to delegitimize Israel; deniers portray the Holocaust as a fabrication to justify for the creation of a Jewish state. Iran is the

leading state sponsor, embedding Holocaust denial into its official ideology through state-backed conferences and cartoon contests. In former Eastern Bloc countries, deniers do not deny the mass murder of Jews but deny the participation of their own nationals.

The methodologies of Holocaust deniers are based on a predetermined conclusion that ignores historical evidence. Scholars use the term denial to describe the views and methodology of Holocaust deniers in order to distinguish them from legitimate historical revisionists, who challenge orthodox interpretations of history using established historical methodologies. Holocaust deniers generally do not accept denial as an appropriate description of their activities and use the euphemism revisionism instead. Holocaust denial is considered a serious societal problem in many places where it occurs. It is illegal in Canada, Israel, and many European countries, including Germany itself. In 2007 and 2022, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolutions condemning Holocaust denial.

## Cannibal Holocaust

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Cannibal Holocaust is a 1980 Italian cannibal film directed by Ruggero Deodato and written by Gianfranco Clerici. It stars Robert Kerman as Harold Monroe, an anthropologist who leads a rescue team into the Amazon rainforest to locate a crew of filmmakers that have gone missing while filming a documentary on local cannibal tribes.

Produced as part of the contemporary cannibal trend of Italian exploitation cinema, Cannibal Holocaust was inspired by Italian media coverage of Red Brigades terrorism. Deodato believed the news reports to be staged, an idea that became an integral aspect of the film's story. Additional story elements were also influenced by the Mondo documentaries of Gualtiero Jacopetti, particularly the presentation of the documentary crew's lost footage, which constitutes approximately half of the film. The treatment of this footage, which is noted for its visual realism, innovated the found footage style of filmmaking that was later popularized in American cinema by The Blair Witch Project. Cannibal Holocaust was filmed primarily on location in the Amazon rainforest of Colombia with a cast of indigenous tribes interacting with mostly inexperienced American and Italian actors recruited in New York City.

Cannibal Holocaust achieved notoriety as its graphic violence aroused a great deal of controversy. After its premiere in Italy, it was ordered to be seized by a local magistrate. Deodato, screenwriter Gianfranco Clerici, and producers Francesco Palaggi, Alda Pia, and Franco Di Nunzio were convicted of obscenity. The film was released from seizure in 1982. It was banned in the United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa and several other countries due to its graphic content, including sexual assault and genuine violence toward animals. Although some nations have since revoked the ban, it is still upheld in several countries. Critical reception of the film is mixed, although it has received a cult following. The film's plot and violence have been noted as commentary on journalism ethics, exploitation of South American countries, and the difference between Western and non-Western cultures, yet these interpretations have also been met with criticism, with any perceived subtext deemed hypocritical or insincere due to the film's presentation.

## Aftermath of the Holocaust

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The Holocaust had a deep effect on society both in Europe and the rest of the world, and today its consequences are still being felt, both by children and adults whose ancestors were victims of this genocide.

## Evidence and documentation for the Holocaust

*The Holocaust—the systematic killing of about six million Jews by Nazi Germany from 1941 to 1945—is the most-documented genocide in history. Although*

The Holocaust—the systematic killing of about six million Jews by Nazi Germany from 1941 to 1945—is the most-documented genocide in history. Although there is no single document which lists the names of all Jewish victims of Nazi persecution, there is conclusive evidence that about six million Jews were murdered. There is also conclusive evidence that Jews were gassed at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the Operation Reinhard extermination camps, and in gas vans, and that there was a systematic plan by the Nazi leadership to murder them.

Evidence for the Holocaust comes in four main varieties:

Contemporary documents, including a wide variety of "letters, memos, blueprints, orders, bills, speeches"; Holocaust train schedules and statistical summaries generated by the SS; and photographs, including official photographs, clandestine photographs by survivors, aerial photographs, and film footage of the liberation of the camps. More than 3,000 tons of records were collected for the Nuremberg trials.

Later testimony from tens of thousands of eyewitnesses, including survivors such as Sonderkommandos, who directly witnessed the extermination process; perpetrators such as Nazi leaders, SS guards, and Nazi concentration camp commandants; and local townspeople. Moreover, virtually none of the perpetrators put on trial denied the reality of the systematic murder, with the most common excuse (where one was given) being that they were just following orders.

Material evidence in the form of concentration and extermination camps, which still exist with various amounts of the original structure preserved, and thousands of mass graves containing the corpses of Holocaust victims.

Circumstantial evidence: during World War II, the population of Jews in German-occupied Europe was reduced by about six million. About 2.7 million Jews were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, Kulmhof extermination camp, and the Operation Reinhard camps never to be seen or heard from again.

The perpetrators attempted to avoid creating explicit evidence and they also tried to destroy the documentary and material evidence of their crimes before the German defeat. Nevertheless, much of the evidence was preserved and collected by Allied investigators during and after the war, and the overwhelming evidence of the crimes ultimately made such erasure attempts futile. Collectively, the evidence refutes the arguments of Holocaust deniers that the Holocaust did not occur as described in historical scholarship.

IBM and the Holocaust

*IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation is a book by investigative journalist and historian*

IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation is a book by investigative journalist and historian Edwin Black which documents the strategic technology services rendered by US-based multinational corporation International Business Machines (IBM) and its German and other European subsidiaries for the government of Adolf Hitler from the beginning of the Third Reich through to the last day of the regime, at the end of World War II when the US and Germany were at war with each other.

Published in 2001, with numerous subsequent expanded editions, Black outlined the key role of IBM's technology in the Holocaust genocide committed by the German Nazi regime, by facilitating the regime's generation and tabulation of punched cards for national census data, military logistics, ghetto statistics, train traffic management, and concentration camp capacity.

## United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

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The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) is the United States' official memorial to the Holocaust, dedicated to the documentation, study, and interpretation of the Holocaust. Opened in 1993, the museum explores the Holocaust through permanent and traveling exhibitions, educational programs, survivor testimonies and archival collections. The USHMM was created to help leaders and citizens of the world confront hatred, prevent genocide, promote human dignity, and strengthen democracy.

## The Holocaust Industry

*The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering is a book by Norman Finkelstein arguing that the American Jewish establishment*

The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering is a book by Norman Finkelstein arguing that the American Jewish establishment exploits the memory of the Nazi Holocaust for political and financial gain and to further Israeli interests. According to Finkelstein, this "Holocaust industry" has corrupted Jewish culture and the authentic memory of the Holocaust.

The book was controversial, attracting both praise as well as criticism. Supporters of the book, such as preeminent Holocaust scholar Raul Hilberg, described it as a substantive engagement with issues such as the politics of memory. On the other hand, critics of the book argued that it reused and empowered antisemitic tropes and was written in a style that was harsh and not respectful enough considering the delicate subject.

## Holocaust (miniseries)

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Holocaust (full title: Holocaust: The Story of the Family Weiss) (1978) is an American television miniseries which aired on NBC over five nights, from April 16–20, 1978.

It dramatizes the Holocaust from the perspective of the Weiss family, fictional Berlin Jews Dr. Josef Weiss (Fritz Weaver), his wife Berta (Rosemary Harris), and their three children—Karl (James Woods), an artist married to Inga (Meryl Streep), a Christian woman; Rudi (Joseph Bottoms); and teenage Anna (Blanche Baker). It also follows Erik Dorf (Michael Moriarty), a fictional "Aryan" lawyer who becomes a Nazi out of economic necessity, rising within the SS and gradually becoming a war criminal.

Holocaust highlights numerous events which occurred both up to and during World War II, such as Kristallnacht, the construction of Jewish ghettos, the Nazi T4 Euthanasia Program, and, later, the construction of death camps and the use of gas chambers.

The miniseries won several awards and received positive reviews, but was also criticized. In The New York Times, Holocaust survivor and political activist Elie Wiesel wrote that it was "Untrue, offensive, cheap: As a TV production, the film is an insult to those who perished and to those who survived." However, the series played a major role in public debates on the Holocaust in West Germany after its showing in 1979, and its impact has been described as "enormous".

The series has been widely credited with bringing the term "Holocaust" into popular usage to describe the extermination of the European Jews.

## Victims of Nazi Germany

*Discrimination was institutionalized through legislation under the Nazi Party and perpetrated at an industrial scale, culminating in the Holocaust. Men, women*

Nazi Germany discriminated against and persecuted people on the basis of their race or ethnicity (actual or perceived), religious affiliation, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and, where applicable, mental or physical disabilities. Discrimination was institutionalized through legislation under the Nazi Party and perpetrated at an industrial scale, culminating in the Holocaust. Men, women, and children who were deemed mentally or physically unfit for society were subject to involuntary hospitalization, involuntary euthanasia, and forced sterilization.

The vast majority of the Nazi regime's victims were Jewish, Romani, or Slavic. Jews, along with some Romani populations, were deemed unfit for society on racial or ethnic grounds and largely confined to ghettos, then rounded up and deported to concentration or extermination camps. The beginning of World War II marked a colossal escalation in the Nazis' efforts to eliminate "inferior" communities across German-occupied Europe, with methods including: non-judicial incarceration, confiscation of property, forced labour (and extermination through hard labour), sexual slavery, human experimentation, malnourishment, and execution by death squads. For Jews, in particular, the Nazis' goal was total extermination—the genocide of the Jewish people, first in Europe and eventually in other parts of the world. This was presented by Adolf Hitler as the "Final Solution" to the Jewish question.

According to Alex J. Kay, the groups subjected to mass killing by Nazi Germany, on the order of tens of thousands of victims or more, were 300,000 disabled people, as many as 100,000 Polish elites, nearly six million European Jews, 200,000 Romani people, at least 2 million Soviet urban residents targeted by the hunger policy, nearly 3.3 million Soviet prisoners of war, about 1 million rural inhabitants during anti-partisan warfare (excluding actual partisans), and 185,000 Polish civilians killed during and after the Warsaw uprising. The total number of deaths from mass killing would thus amount to at least 13 million. Kay argues that all these groups, including Jews, "were regarded by the Nazi regime in one way or another as a potential threat" to Germany's war effort. However, viewing them as a threat was informed by Nazi racial theory, making it hard to separate racist versus strategic reasons for killing. Nazi policies in the occupied eastern territories resulted in the deaths of tens of millions of people, especially during Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, which began in 1941 and opened up the Eastern Front, where 35% to 45% of all World War II casualties occurred.

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