



Auschwitz-Birkenau © Wiener Library

The Holocaust and Nazi persecution 1933 – 1945

The Nazis murdered approximately 6 million Jews in a systematic state-sponsored campaign which attempted to wipe out European Jewry. By May 1945 close to two out of every three Jews in Europe had been murdered.

The Nazis used historical anti-semitism which had existed since ancient times to justify the removal of human rights from Jewish people. The Nazis began to restrict the lives of Jews immediately, introducing laws which forbade Jews from running businesses, children attending school, banning Jews from marrying non-Jews and other measures which excluded Jews from civic life. Whether practicing or not, all Jews had to wear yellow stars to identify them. By 1940, Jews all over Nazi-occupied Europe were forced to live in ghettos where families were crammed together in single rooms and food was scarce. Many died through starvation, cold and overcrowding.

Deportations to specially constructed concentration, extermination and prison camps began. Hundreds of people were crowded together in cattle trucks and sent to camps for work, imprisonment or mass murder. Life in the camps was incredibly hard, and if not murdered on arrival, the life expectancy of a prisoner was 1 – 3 months.

Hundreds of camps were established in Europe with the aim of systematically destroying millions of men, women and children. Throughout late 1944 and 1945, these camps were liberated by Allied troops. The liberation of the camps exposed the full extent of the Nazi's 'Final Solution' to the rest of the world.

Many survivors of the Holocaust live in the UK today, they have rebuilt their lives, brought up families, and today they share their stories with us in order that we learn what happens when discrimination, anti-semitism and prejudice is left unchecked.

To find out more about the Holocaust visit:
www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/the-holocaust

Victims of Nazi Persecution

The Nazis hated anyone who did not fit their narrow idea of who or what was 'normal'. Millions of lives were destroyed or changed beyond recognition due to the things that made them different.

The Porrajmos

The Nazis murdered Roma and Sinti (Gypsy) men, women and children in their campaign to 'combat the gypsy nuisance' of Europe. Targeted for eradication, the Roma and Sinti had their citizenship rights removed and they too were forced to live in ghettos and were deported to the camps in Europe where they were imprisoned, forced to endure heavy manual labour or were sent to the gas chambers.

Those deemed *untermenschen* – sub-human, unworthy of life, included those who did not agree with Nazi views so Jehovah's Witnesses, Political opponents such as Communists and Socialists, Trade Unionists and Freemasons were persecuted and incarcerated. Those who did not conform to the Aryan ideal were also targeted. Black Germans, Gay men and Lesbians, and mentally or physically disabled people were identified within this group and their lives were destroyed or irrevocably damaged.

Millions of lives were lost or changed beyond recognition during the Nazi regime of hatred. Families, communities, cultures and towns were completely wiped out. On HMD it is our duty to ensure that the memory of these people is never ignored or forgotten.

To find out more about the Holocaust and victims of Nazi persecution, visit:

<http://www.hmd.org.uk/genocides/the-holocaust/>