

Who was responsible for the Holocaust?

- Are there rules for war?
- Who should enforce them?
- What happens if you break them?

What was the Holocaust?

Aim: Who is responsible for Nazi atrocities?

Holocaust: the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jewish people by the Nazi. "sacrifice by fire"

Genocide: wiping out an entire group of people

Concentration camps: large prison camps

Final Solution: the Nazi policy of exterminating European Jews

Number of Deaths

- Jews: up to 6 million
- Soviet civilians: around 7 million
- Soviet prisoners of war: around 3 million
- Non-Jewish Polish civilians: around 1.8 million (including between 50,000 and 100,000 members of the Polish elites)
- Serb civilians (on the territory of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina): 312,000
- People with disabilities living in institutions: up to 250,000
- Roma (Gypsies): 196,000–220,000
- Jehovah's Witnesses: around 1,900
- Repeat criminal offenders and so-called asocials: at least 70,000
- German political opponents and resistance activists in Axis-occupied territory: undetermined
- Homosexuals: hundreds, possibly thousands (possibly also counted in part under the 70,000 repeat criminal offenders and so-called a socials noted above)

- Why was the word **genocide** created?

United Nations definition of Genocide:

[G]enocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- *(a) Killing members of the group;*
- *(b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*
- *(c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*
- *(d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*
- *(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*



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- Who is guilty and who is responsible for the atrocities committed during the World War II?
- Are individuals responsible for wartime atrocities if they have obeyed the laws of their nation?

Nuremberg Trials – International Military Tribunal

CRIMES AGAINST PEACE: namely, planning, preparation, initiation or waging of a war of aggression, or a war in violation of international treaties, agreements or assurances, or participation in a common plan or conspiracy for the accomplishment of any of the foregoing

WAR CRIMES: namely, violations of the laws or customs of war. Such violations shall include, but not be limited to . . . murder, ill-treatment of prisoners of war or persons on the seas, killing of hostages, plunder of public or private property, wanton destruction of cities, towns or villages, or devastation not justified by military necessity;

CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY: namely, murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population, before or during the war; or persecutions on political, racial or religious grounds in execution of or in connection with any crime within the jurisdiction of the Tribunal, whether or not in violation of the domestic law of the country where perpetrated.

Defense:

- “I was only following orders”

The First Nuremberg Trial

- Chief of Council: Robert Jackson
- 18 of 21 defendants found guilty
- 12 sentenced to death

Who was responsible for the Holocaust?

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—

and there was no one left to speak for me.

- Poem by Martin Niemöller (1892–1984), a prominent Protestant pastor who emerged as an outspoken public foe of Adolf Hitler and spent the last seven years of Nazi rule in concentration camps.