

Andrew Whiteley

Hitler und die Drittes Reich

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Histories of Hate: European Antisemitism and the Holocaust

The Germans are often thought of as the architects or root of Antisemitism in Europe. Without Hitler and the rise of the Nazi Party there would not have been the mass killing and expelling of Jews in Europe. That Jews across the world were safe from persecution from people and governments as long as they were not in Germany. As Hitler and the Nazi Party rose to power and annexed Austria, the *Anschluss*, Jews in Germany and their controlled areas were starting to be persecuted. Many Jews tried to flee, but countries around them closed their borders, increasing restrictions on immigration. An international conference was called by US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, FDR, to try to find a solution to the “Jewish Problem”. Many at the conference showed sympathy for these refugees but few made any movements to help. In his book, *Roots of Hate: Antisemitism in Europe before the Holocaust*, Professor William Brustein looks at how these countries responded to those trying to flee. Australian delegates said that allowing more Jews into the country would “disturb his country’s racial balance” (Brustein). Countries that bordered Austria asked at this conference for other countries to take the Jews they already had. Canada’s delegate proposed doing nothing, “in order to force Nazi Germany to solve its Jewish Question internally.” (Brustein). The inference of the world in the early days of the Holocaust would haunt them for the rest of time. Jews across the world faced Antisemitism and it was not just Nazi Germany and Hitler who formulated it.

Antisemitism has existed in Europe and across the world for centuries. From the days of the early church blaming Jews for the death of Jesus to Jews being blamed for bringing the black plague to Europe. They were casted out of cities and countries for hundreds of years. They were given only few occupational opportunities. The Holocaust was not an anomaly that came out of nothing, it was a product of the time. Changes in economics, science, and political structures caused the racial and religious tensions of Europe to boil over. In his book, *Why?: Explaining the Holocaust*, Peter Hayes claims that Europe's particular history caused the Holocaust, that, “... a

fixation on removing Jews from civil society as a magical solution to all social problems.”, arose all across Europe. Darwinism was rising as social theory and the results of such were racism and supremacy. Yet the question still remains, why the Jews? Why were the Jewish people, both ethnic and religious descent, persecuted across Europe and the world? Why were the Jews targeted in such a way that 6 million were killed over a few short years? What is the history and reasons behind Antisemitism and what caused German Antisemitism to erupt into the mass killing of Jews?

Chapter 1: History of Hate

A short disclaimer before the start of my research. Many times in the paper I will refer to the group of people who are ethnically and religiously Jewish as Jews. While the distinction between the religious and ethnic is not always necessary, during the mid-1800s the differences came to the forefront. If I am speaking on either specifically religious or ethnic Jews I will make the distinction clear. In addition, I will often refer to the Christian Church or Christian world. This encompasses all religions that follow Christ, but often I am using the term to refer specifically to the Catholic Church. In addition I will talk about the reign of Nazi's in Germany. By Nazi I am referring to the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP).

Judaism is one of the oldest monotheistic religions in the world, meaning that it follows one God as opposed to many. Its holy texts go back to the creation of the earth and follows the interactions of people with God for thousands of years. Discrimination and hate toward Jewish people, both religious and racial, have been around since the beginning of the modern era. Some claim that it goes back even to ancient times when the Jews were enslaved in Egypt. Either interpretation, Jews have been seen as lower or second class citizens for thousands of years. In Europe, the persecution against Jews was fueled by religious organizations, most importantly the Catholic Church.

Even though they share a large amount of biblical history, the leaders of the Church solidified a view towards Jews that would solidify their place as second-hand citizens in Europe. Jews were blamed for a number of things, mainly the crucifixion of Christ (“ANTISEMITISM IN HISTORY”). Biblical history tells that when Christ was on trial, the crowd lead by Jewish

hierarchy chanted for the release of Barabbas and for the crucifixion of Christ. Even though it was the Romans and Pontius Pilate who carried out the sentence, Jews still take the blame. Second, the Church blamed the Jewish people for the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem (“ANTISEMITISM IN HISTORY”). In 66 CE the people of Jerusalem revolted against Roman occupation. When the Romans retook the city in 70 CE, they destroyed the temple leaving it in ruins, except for the western wall (“Destruction of the Second Temple”). Though this sight was most important to those of Jewish faith, the Christians of the early church saw it as a religious site themselves, as Christ was Jewish. Lastly, the church blamed the Jewish people for their dispersion from their homeland. Diaspora, “the dispersion of Jews among gentiles after the Babylonian Exile(“Diaspora”)”, caused Jews to leave their ancestral homes and move across the Middle East, Northern Africa, and into Europe. By the 1st Century CE, the number of Jews living outside of Palestine outnumbered those who did (“Diaspora”).

These early church teachings on Jews helped to solidify racial and religious stereotypes against them. Theories that Jews poisoned the water in wells to eliminate the Christian world during the black plague (Marcus) and others claiming that Jews used the blood of Christian children for rituals, called “blood libel” (“Medieval Antisemitism.”). Theories extended to the point where some Jews who converted to Christianity were suspected of doing so to bring about the Antichrist. Laws began to be enacted forbidding Jews from owning land or joining guilds of craftsmen, severely limiting their prospects. Trading became a key profession but it also played into the stereotype of a wandering Jew who has no homeland and is damned to wander the earth till the end of time. They had no homeland and therefore their only allegiance was to other Jews around the world. Another profession that Jews gravitated towards was money lending and banking. Christians were forbidden from participating in moneylending, as usury was a sin, so they left that to Jews (“Medieval Antisemitism.”). This also did not help, as it reinforced stereotypes that Jews controlled money and therefore the world later in history. Jews at multiple times in Europe were expelled from their countries. In 1290 England expelled their Jewish population, and the same happened in 1306 in France and in 1348 by Switzerland. The reasoning behind the banishment of Jews often fell into religious purity, protection of citizens from usury, or often for the personal gain of non-Jewish citizens who would profit from the absence of Jews

in their country (“Medieval Antisemitism.”). Views toward Jews began to improve during the Enlightenment and the beginning of the Rights of Man. France gave full rights and equal citizenship to Jews in 1789, following the French Revolution, and many more European countries followed suit. Legally Jews became equals, but the stereotypes that came with antisemitism were not so easily forgotten. And with the end of the Enlightenment, the prejudice towards Jews changed from religious bigotry to a racial and scientific one (“Modern Antisemitism.”).

Chapter 2: Modern Hate in Europe

In 1859 English biologist Charles Darwin published a book called *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*. In this book, Darwin outlined his theories for evolution and natural selection. Through adaptation and struggle species are able to survive and beat out others. The well-known concept of “survival of the fittest” is derived from the theory of natural selection. This gave way to the rise of Social Darwinism, an application of natural selection to humans. Social Darwinist believed that human existence was a struggle to survive and that some races were superior to others. With this *scientific* reasoning, racism became much more common and easier to defend (“Social Darwinism”). This time is an important turning point in the history of Antisemitism, as the hatred toward Jews moved from a religious one to a racial one. Jews, as a race, not a religion, were seen as inferior. Now the possibility of rejecting one’s Jewishness by converting was no longer possible. If you were born ethnically Jewish, you will always be Jewish.

Europe was once a land of Empires made up of tiny countries. The Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Napoleonic Empire, and the Holy Roman Empire to name a few covered vast parts of Europe and contained dozens of ethnic groups and languages. With the rise of Social Darwinism, one’s ethnic identity was strengthened. People felt more in touch with those who spoke the same language, looked the same, had similar customs more than those of the same empire. This rise in ethnic and geographical Nationalism caused more problems for Jews in Europe (“Modern Antisemitism.”). They often were forced to live together, so they developed cultures and customs independently. They spoke ancestral languages and looked different from those there were living around. They had been forced to wander Europe in the past so they were

seen as outsiders, not natives to the land. In almost every country the rise of nationalism caused the further ostracizing of Jews, as they were always the other. The further proliferation of Social Darwinism and the rise of nationalism in Europe lead to Jews being out of place in all of Europe. At the turn of the century tensions between the ethnic groups of Europe were getting worse. Civil and World Wars were starting to break out and the Jewish populations of each country were caught in the middle of it.

The boiling point for the ethnic tensions in Europe occurred in 1914. On a summer day in Sarajevo, heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Franz Ferdinand was shot and killed by a Serbian Nationalist Gavrilo Princip. Princip's actions, terrorism in the eyes of the Austrian but freedom fighting for the Bosnians, caused the outbreak of the first world war. National pride was the focus of the war and nationalism fueled much of the fighting. Countries wanted to be free of the Empires control, such as the case with the Austrian Empire. Jews fought for both the Allied and Central powers. Daniel Schwartz, the director of the Program in Judaic Studies at George Washington University, says in an interview said , "The number of Jews who are soldiers for different sides far exceeds any precedent to that point." (Isaacs) Though Jews had fought each other before, nothing compared to the scale of their involvement in the First World War. Many people in Europe did not trust Jews to be soldiers and doubted their fighting prowess. Schwartz believes that the war was a turning point for Jews in Europe, one because it made Zionism possible, but also due to the wars revival of antisemitism in Europe, especially in Germany.

Following the defeat of the Central powers, after the signing of treaties, and the fall of Empires, Jews found themselves again being blamed for the strife of others. Many people in the defeated nations, most specifically Germany, thought the defeat of the Central powers was from those within the nation. Yet Germany was not the only country to have problems dealing with Antisemitism. Romania, France and Great Britain all had large populations of Jews and had high numbers of crimes against Jews ranging from property crimes to murder. In Brustein's book he looks at newspaper articles and crime statistics among other things to try to figure out why Germany was different. The text falls short in offering a conclusive explanation as to why killed 6 million Jews and Romania only killed a hundred thousand in their Holocaust, when Romania had a larger per capita crimes against Jews rate (Brustein).

A veteran of the war wrote a book in which he blamed those on the home front who stabbed Germany in the back. Their lack of courage and honor, something real Germans did not lack, was the downfall of the mighty German army. They were the “enemy race” of the German people, and they were the Jews. They were to be excluded from the population to keep the German blood pure. Jews, along with communists, were using art, architecture, and culture to bring down the German people. This author would go on to control the government and lead a political movement that would shape Germany, and Europe as a whole, forever.

Chapter 3: Germany and the Jews

As Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany, his beliefs and ideals outlined in *Mein Kampf* ravaged the continent. The Austrian born veteran of the First World War, where he fought for Germany not Austria as the Austrians were too multicultural. He grew up on the border of Germany and Austria and was a believer in a United German State and supported politicians in Austria who followed such a belief. He was the son of a local official who wanted him to follow in his footsteps, though Hitler wanted to be an artist. After being rejected from Art school in Vienna, he started to join politics. He joined the Nazi Party, the NSDAP, which at the time was a party that housed both right and left leaning people. This populist party had core beliefs in racism and paramilitary culture. They believed in nationalism, uniting all the German speaking countries under one flag. There he was arrested during a coup on the Bavarian government, while in prison he wrote his manifesto, and afterwards he became arguably the most powerful man in all of Europe. He killed and manipulated his way to ultimate power and began to strive for a better Germany, at least his ideas for a better Germany. After the fire at the Reichstag, the house of power in the Weimar Republic, Hitler was given complete emergency powers to stop the communist whom he blamed for the fire. He was revered in Germany and even across the world in the early days of his reign. He began to implement policies that limited the freedoms of Germans, such as declaring Germany a one party state under the Nazi Party. Starting in 1933 the German persecution of Jews began. Starting as protests and boycotts of Jewish businesses across the country the persecution of Jews escalated quickly.

The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 legally reduced the status of Jews. All people were to register with the government based on religion. The laws targeted Jews as their blood was

impure. Citizens were forced to fill out forms that asked the religion of the grandparents, allowing the Nazi government to persecute even non practicing or converted Jews. This started the classification of Jews as lesser. This led to programs where Jews were forced to wear stars of David or arm bands to distinguish themselves from

Propaganda increased throughout Germany, lead by the Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels. Jews were shown as dirty and rat like. They were often shown with money, alluding to the conspiracy that Jews control the world economy. They were not only shown to be Jews but also as communist (“WW2: The Holocaust...”). The Nazis continued to put down Jews and seize territories like Austria and Bohemia. On the night of November 9th and 10th of 1938 a series of planned attacks on Jewish businesses occurred. *Kristallnacht*, the Night of Broken Glass in English, left hundreds of Jewish-owned businesses, homes, and places of worship vandalized or destroyed. At least 91 Jews died in the attacks (“WW2: The Holocaust...”) and nearly 30,000



Jewish men were arrested and sent to concentration camps (“KRISTALLNACHT”). After *Kristallnacht*, many Jews in Nazi controlled areas tried to flee, others were forced to emigrate, yet many places would not accept them.

As the Germans continued on the quest to cleanse their country of Jews, Jews from Germany were eager to leave. By 1938 one in four Jews had left Germany. Those who had not yet left were pressured through hate and humiliation to leave yet many could not find homes away from Germany. Feeling pressure from within the country, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt called a conference in Evian, France. There delegates from 32 countries met to talk about Germany and its “Jewish Problem”. Australian, British, and American delegates all refused to admit more Jewish immigrants into the country, claiming that the “racial balance” of their countries would be disrupted by the influx of Jews. Peter Blair, who represented Canada at the conference, proposed that the international community should let Germany solved its Jewish problem internally. Other countries, such as Romania and Poland, that attended the conference

used it as an opportunity to propose that the international community take their Jewish populations as well. Only the small countries of Costa Rica and the Dominican Republic extended more visas to those fleeing. In response to the conference, the German government showed great pleasure with how other countries criticized them for their treatment of Jews yet they shut the doors on immigrant Jews when they needed it most. This conference shows that the International community was indifferent to the plight of Jews in Europe ("Evian Conference").

As the Second World War breaks out, Germany invades Poland. They planned to deport all remaining Jews to Poland. Of the Jews that resided in Poland at that time many were rounded up and shot. The levels of restriction on second class citizens (Jews, Homosexuals, Physically and Mentally Handicapped) were tightened and new programs of euthanasia were approved by Hitler. Jews in newly controlled German territories were forced to move out of their homes into Ghettos. These slums were partitioned for the rest of the city, often surrounded by walls, barbed wire, and soldiers ready to shoot those trying to escape. Prison camps, which had existed in Germany for years, started to be built specifically to hold Jewish prisoners. This not only restricted the rights of Jews, but it also gave *Lebensraum* to ethnic Germans.

As the German Army, along with its allies in Italy, took more and more land across Europe they needed an answer "Jewish Question". They tried to scare them out with the *Kristallnacht*, they reduced their rights and forced them into Ghettos, they deported them to camps but they still were dealing with the problem of the Jews. Germans believed that Jews had cost them the war last time so they could not just leave them be. The solution that the Nazi government had was the final one. Starting with the invasion of the USSR in the summer of 1941 SS members began to target Jewish communities. Jews living in the farming lands of the western USSR were shot and gassed to create more room for Germans to farm and live. These acts, part of the German Operation Barbarossa, were the first steps taken in the German Final Solution to exterminate 11 million Jewish men, women, and children ("FINAL SOLUTION": OVERVIEW").

Autumn 1941 saw the beginning of Operation Reinhard, lead by General Odilo Globocnik. Reinhard purpose was for the systematic murder of all Jews under German control. Three new camps opened in Poland for the express killing of Jews. Other camps, most famously

the Auschwitz II camp, were converted from prison camps to death camps. Over the next 4 years over 6 million Jews were killed by gas, bullets, and starvation (“FINAL SOLUTION”: OVERVIEW”). Jews were rounded up in Ghettos, placed in box cars on trains, and shipped to camps. Camps like Auschwitz II, Treblinka, and Belzec had death tolls in the hundreds of thousands. Of the 430,000 Jews that were sent to Belzec in Poland two survived the camp. As the years went on and the Allied powers reached the borders of Germany, Nazis began to try to destroy the evidence of the Holocaust. They burned camps to the ground, marched Jews in the cold through the woods until they died, and left people to starve out. It is hard to conceptualize the amount of death that occurred in that short amount of time. Looking at the pictures and reading stories from victims can make one sick and depressed. How can racial or religious prejudice lead to something as horrifying and terrible as the Holocaust.

Chapter 4: German Hate and why it is different

The question of why comes up a lot when talking about the Holocaust. Why the Jews? Why the Germans? Why now? To answer these questions is a tricky task, one that many historians and scholars have tried to answer. Antisemitism is not a German ideology. Antisemitism is not new. So why? In research many possibilities came up, including the state of post-war Germany, emergence of Hitler as a demagogue, the threat of communism, and twisted philosophies used to promote racism.

After the defeat of the Central Powers in 1918 Germany was in turmoil. In November Kaiser Wilhelm II abdicated the throne after losing the support of the military. The Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to surrender 13% of its land to the Allied Forces, losing a large portion of the country's iron and coal productions. Limits on their army were placed, limiting them to a force of less than 150,000 men. Reparations were to be paid to the Allies that slowly strangled the struggling economy of the new Republic. Revolutions began to pop up across the country by communist groups looking to improve conditions in the country. Myths of communists and Jews stabbing the army in the back caused antisemitism and anti-communism to rise. The new system of government brought democracy to Germany but it also brought political instability. Coalition governments were difficult to form in a time of great disagreement. The ultimate downfall of the republic came when the money basically stopped working (“The Weimar Republic”).

At the end of the war one British pound was worth 250 Reichsmarks. This low valued currency was constrictive on government spending, including the payment of reparations. In order to compensate the government began to print more marks. This caused hyperinflation to occur and the price of the mark was falling fast. Germany requested a pause in payments to the Allies while their economy recovered. Reparation payments were to be paid in a fixed value, so the cost in marks kept increasing. The Allies refused the request and when payments stopped they invaded a resource rich region of Germany, the Ruhr. The economic problems continued to the point where in 1923 a loaf of bread was over 200 billion marks and prices would rise so quickly that workers wages would be worthless after a shift ("The Weimar Republic"). After reworking their economy and currency on the value of international loans the Republic was able to prosper for a number of years, until the stock market crash that rocked the whole world economy. This led to the eventual downfall of the Republic and the rise of Nazism.

The definition of a *Demagogue* is "a leader who makes use of popular prejudices and false claims and promises in order to gain power" ("Demagogue."). They are often very charismatic, using their oral abilities to gain support. They use common language to appeal to the masses. Hitler was a perfect example of a demagogue. In *Mein Kampf* he came out against the written word favoring speaking. He gained his political power early on in beer halls speaking to the common people. By utilizing the people a demagogue is able to rise to power quickly. The following that Hitler had was one of loyalty. Those who opposed him were killed and those who spoke against him were imprisoned, like the Night of the Long Knives, where Hitler had his opponents killed. Through fear mongering Hitler was able to increase the Antisemitism of those who followed him. He used their fears to gain emergency powers after the burning of the Reichstag, the last step in him becoming the pseudo-dictator of Germany.

The Nazi party did not only oppose those who were genetically inferior but also those they saw as culturally inferior. German speaking states had created some of the world's most renowned artists, musicians, architects and more. As the modern era moved on, culture started to move away from that of the old masters. Hitler and the Nazis saw this as a culture war. They saw modern art and architecture as inherently Bolshevik and labeled those who created such as "cultural Bolshevik". Bolshevism was the form of government adopted by the USSR and the

Nazis saw communism as the death of western civilization. As many of these artists were Jewish the two became intertwined. In order to rid Germany of the scourge of communism it must be rid of the art of communist and anyone associated with it. Yet these explanations do not explain why the prejudices moved to murder. In order to understand that we have to look at the philosophical ideals of the time. Two prominent thinkers of the 19th century heavily influenced the thoughts of Adolf Hitler, Charles Darwin and Friedrich Nietzsche. By combining ideas from both men Hitler was able to turn antisemitism to genocide.

Charles Darwin's work played a big role in the policies of Nazi Germany. Hitler subscribed to the belief that as farmers could produce better livestock through selective breeding, so could a country. Darwin's theories are the basis behind eugenics and euthanasia in Germany. In order to keep those of inferior genes from reproducing and muddying the gene pool actions had to be taken in the eyes of Hitler and his staff. Yet Darwinism, more specifically Social Darwinism, was not only accepted by Hitler but by many in the scientific and academic communities. They believed that selectively breeding with those of superior races would benefit mankind and therefore was inherently good and moral. In a book by Arthur Keith we can see a connection between the commonly accepted Social Darwinism and the idea of genetic superiority. "Thus developed the doctrine of Germany's inherent right to rule the world on the basis of superior strength ... [of a] "hammer and anvil" (Bergman) relationship between the Reich and the weaker nations." Ayrans not only that they had a right but a duty to subjugate the lesser. In the beginnings of the Eugenics movement in Germany, Jews were not seen as different in fact there were often seen as Aryan. Those Jews in German society who had gained prominence and power saw themselves as Germans first and Jews second. Things changed however when Hitler came to power, as his Antisemitic ideas either could not be overcome or they were a convenient means to an end. Hitler did not see Jews as Ayrans and therefore they could not be allowed to pollute his superior race of Germans. "The Germans were the higher race, destined for a glorious evolutionary future. For this reason it was essential that the Jews should be segregated, otherwise mixed marriages would take place. Were this to happen, all nature's efforts "to establish an evolutionary higher stage of being may thus be rendered futile"" (Bergman). These ideas of evolution and Social Darwinism are not explicitly what Darwin

himself would have thought. His ideas were applied to animals and the extension of his theories to humans to justify racism was a step outside that of his book. Yet Social Darwinism does not say that the German or Aryan people were superior, for that one must look to Nietzsche.

Friedrich Nietzsche was a German philosopher who is best known for his “God is dead” belief. Nietzsche was anti-religion, anti-democracy, and believed in a type of person called the *ubermensch* (Kalish). He believed that religion, alcohol, and society makes us all slaves. He did not comply to the enlightenment and modern philosophers belief in an objective truth. Those who are able to think for themselves and rise above this become the *ubermensch*. Hitler believed this to mean that the Germans were the *ubermensch* and that other races were inferior, *untermensch*. Nietzsche’s other ideas also fit into the doctrine of the Nazi party. Nazis were anti-religion, as one cannot have any higher authority than the party. The anti-democracy worked as well. Nietzsche himself was not a fan of the Nazi party or any other Antisemitic party, saying once in a letter, “my disgust with this party ... is as outspoken as possible” (Kalish). However, after his death his sister Elizabeth gained control of his works and censored his writings to promote her own ideals, those of the Nazi Party. By putting these camps of ideas together the Nazis were able to create a culture of thought that promoted them as the superior race while also giving them options and avenues to secure their place as the superior race.

All of these ideas put together create a perfect storm that ends with the Holocaust. Post-war Germany was struggling with defeat as well with its economy. The distrust in their leaders came as their money was worthless not once but twice. The people of Germany were looking for something new and along came a charismatic demagogue who spoke to them. He used common words and spoke to their prejudice. He scapegoated the Jews and communist by claiming it was them who lost the war for mighty Germany. The fear mongered the people into believing Jews and communist were destroying Germany. He appealed to their distrust of media and distaste of modern art. He used *science* and *philosophy* to say the things people were already thinking. He let the people believe that they were superior to others. He told the people he would make them better and give them better lives. Hitler was able to seize power at a time where the people were incredibly malleable, they could be pushed left or right, forward or back, and they would follow because everything else was not working.

As the war came to an end and the Holocaust was uncovered the questions that this paper tried to answer began to emerge. Why? Why did this happen? Why were the Jews targeted? In the years following the war those accused of crimes, including those from the Holocaust, were put on trial in Nuremberg Germany ("THE NUREMBERG TRIALS"). Many of the top officials of the Nazi party had committed suicide in the final days of the war, including Adolf Hitler himself. 11 of Hitler's surviving deputies were sentenced to death ("WW2: The Holocaust...").

Yet the question still remains, what caused the Holocaust? What caused the Germans to turn to murder? Looking back on the history of Jews in Europe one can see the progression from religious discrimination, being blamed for the death of Christ and stereotyped as greedy moneylenders, to racial antisemitism. The emergence of science and pseudo-scientific rationales for racism. The answer is not black and white, as many would say they were simply doing their duty and did not believe in all the hate. They were trying to help their country during *Kristallnacht*, when they destroyed shops and temples. Yet, 6 million Jews and millions of others died for the expansion and preservation of the Aryan race. The twisted forms of Social Darwinism and Nihilism coupled with the charismatic nature of Hitler allowed him to rise up at a time of great political and social struggle in a defeated and downtrodden country like Germany. These factors allowed for the atrocities of the Holocaust to occur. The factors and beliefs of Hitler were so vile and hideous millions, civilian and combatant, died for the betterment of his race. We vilify Hitler today and reject his ideals and beliefs. We ask the questions and we try to rationalize the events of the war and the Holocaust. What we don't fully understand often is that the political and social culture of the time may have led to something like the Holocaust no matter what. Hitler was integral to the Holocaust and mass murder of Jews and without him it probably would never have happened. Something else may have transpired that could have been worse or nothing at all. Nevertheless the Holocaust did happen and we must remember that something like this could happen again and we should try to prevent the ideas that lead to it in the first place.

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