



## The Holocaust and its Impact on Society

**Enduring Understanding:** The influence of both world wars and the worldwide Great Depression are still evident. To understand the effects these events had on the modern world, you will analyze the Holocaust and its impact on European society and Jewish culture. This will include Nazi policies to eliminate the Jews and other minorities, the Nuremberg Trials, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the rise of nationalism in Southwest Asia (Middle East), the creation of the state of Israel, and the resultant conflicts in the region.



The **Holocaust** was a systematic plan of persecution and elimination of Jews and others deemed “undesirable”. This plan was coordinated by Hitler’s Nazi (National Socialist) Party prior to and during World War II. The prejudice that caused the Holocaust was based on **anti-Semitism** (hatred of the Jewish people), which was part of the Nazi ideology.



Hitler and Swastika

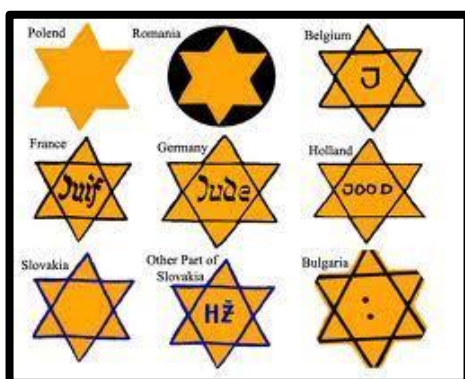


Depiction of Aryans

Religious and cultural differences coupled with suspicion and envy made the Hebrew (Jewish) people frequent scapegoats, or people to blame, during times of crisis throughout the history of Europe. Increased movement by Jews into the mainstream of European life led to increased prejudice. Jews were often stereotypically seen as more intellectual and successful and less nationalistic than others. Hitler’s anti-Semitism could have stemmed from these or numerous other irrational prejudices, but its existence was used as a rallying point to unite the German people in their quest for economic recovery, empire, Aryan glory, and world domination. Nazis claimed that the German people were a “master race” and used the word “**Aryan**” to describe them. Hitler claimed that all non-Aryan people were inferior, and he wanted to eliminate people he considered inferior, including those of Jewish ancestry, Poles, Russians, Communists, Gypsies, homosexuals and anyone considered physically or mentally deficient.

**Section Review:**

- 1) What was the Holocaust?
- 2) Who was the leader of Germany and the Nazi Party?
- 3) How were Jews stereotypically seen?
- 4) What was Nazi Germany’s goal?
- 5) What groups did Hitler want to eliminate?



Hitler and the Nazi Party passed the **Nuremberg Laws** in 1935, which denied German citizenship to Jews and prevented them from marrying non-Jews. Jews were also ordered to wear the **Star of David**, which is a Jewish religious symbol, so they could be immediately recognized in public.

On November 9, 1938 known as **Kristallnacht**, or “Night of Broken Glass,” Nazi troops attacked Jewish businesses, synagogues, and homes and killed approximately one hundred Jews. Next, Jews were ordered to move into **ghettos** (segregated areas of a city) and lived in terrible conditions.



Jewish people examining a store-front window after Kristallnacht

Jews were forced to wear the Star of David. The above image depicts the Star of David with the word “Jew” in various languages.





**Section Review:**

- 6) What laws did Hitler pass to discriminate against the Jewish people?
- 7) In what three major ways did the Nuremberg Laws discriminate against the Jewish people?
- 8) What is Kristallnacht?
- 9) Where were the Jews forced to live after Kristallnacht?



The worst, however, was yet to come. Hitler's "**Final Solution**" forced Jews across Europe into **concentration camps**, where many died en route in cattle cars. Most camps were located in Germany and Poland. Upon arrival, prisoners at the concentration camps were examined by SS doctors. The Nazi soldiers allowed the strong, mainly men, to live in order to serve as laborers. Others were subjected to brutal experiments, or barely survived in

work camps. Many of the women, elderly, young children, and the disabled were killed soon after arriving at the concentration camps. They were exterminated in specially designed gas chambers that were disguised as showers and the bodies were burned in **crematoriums**.

The **genocide** killed well over six million Jews, comprising two thirds of the European Jewish population. Estimates of the total number of fatalities range from eleven to seventeen million.



Crematoriums in a Concentration Camp



**Section Review:**

- 10) What was the "Final Solution"?
- 11) Where were most concentration camps located?
- 12) What is genocide?
- 13) How many people were killed during the Holocaust?

The **Nuremberg Trials**, conducted in Germany from 1945-1946, saw twenty-two Nazi leaders charged with "crimes against humanity" for these actions, illustrating to the world that such behavior was indefensible and unacceptable regardless of the circumstances and that each individual bears responsibility for his own actions. An international military tribunal, representing twenty-three countries, conducted the trials and ten of the Nazi leaders were hanged and their bodies were burned at a concentration camp.



## Section Review:

14) What were Nazi leaders charged with during the Nuremburg Trials?

15) What type of tribunal conducted the Nuremburg Trials?

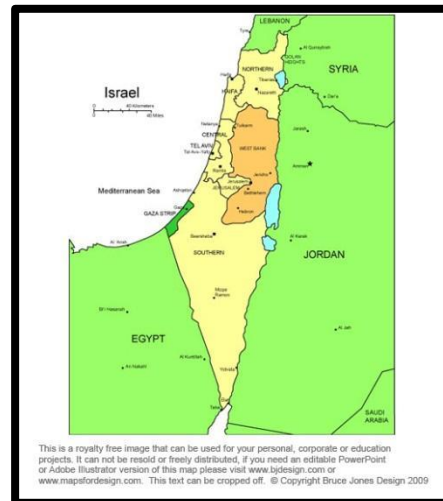
16) What were the results of the Nuremburg Trials?

## The Zionist Movement

Support for a Jewish state/homeland increased after the depth of the Holocaust's atrocities were revealed. The **Zionist** movement, which called for the reestablishment and protection of a Jewish nation in Israel, gained strength in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Many Jews returned to Palestine and called for a Jewish nation-state. With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, Palestine became a

British **mandate**, which is a country placed under the control of another country by an international agreement. Before World War I ended, the **Balfour Declaration** (1917) was issued by the British. It further increased the tension between the **Jews** and **Palestinians** because the British supported the creation of a Jewish state as long as the rights of the Palestinians were protected.

The United Nations, which replaced the League of Nations, decided to divide Palestine into a Jewish state and a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as an international city. The Palestinians were very upset with the partition (division) plan, since they made up the majority of the population.



## Section Review:

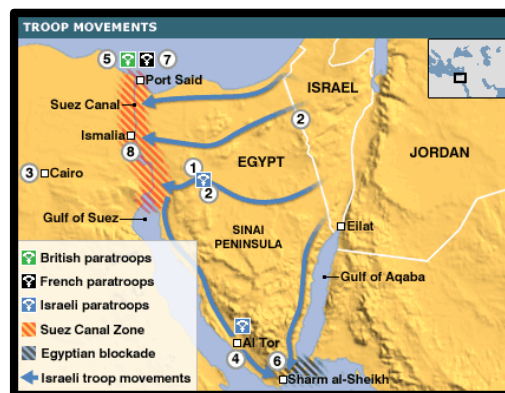
17) What was the main purpose of the Zionist Movement?

18) How did the Balfour Declaration increase tensions in the Middle East?

19) How did the United Nations try to ease the tensions between the Jews and Palestinians?

The country of Israel was founded in May 1948 as a response to the Holocaust as well as the **diaspora** (spreading out of the Jewish people beyond their historic homeland) of the Hebrew people throughout history. The creation of the state of Israel led to the rise of nationalism and conflicts in the Middle East, beginning with an immediate attack by the Palestinians.

Israel defeated the Palestinians and retained control of their land. The Israelis and the Palestinians fought brief wars over the disputed territory in 1956, 1967, and 1973. With its victory in the first war (1948-1949), the Israelis gained half of the land inhabited by the Palestinians. Egypt acquired the Gaza Strip, and Jordan took over the West Bank.



**Section Review:**

20) When and why was the country of Israel founded?

21) What is a diaspora?

22) How did Arab nations react when Israel was created?

Arab nationalism (loyalty amongst Arab Islamic Middle Eastern nations) was further evident in the **Suez Crisis of 1956**. Egyptian President **Gamal Nasser** sent troops to take the Suez Canal, which had been built by British investors using Egyptian labor. Nasser was upset that the British did not provide him with financial support in the construction of the Aswan Dam and wanted to rid Egypt of foreign influence.

Great Britain wanted to retake the canal and convinced Israel to send in troops, while collaborating with the French to provide air support. Egypt was defeated, but the United States and the Soviet Union forced Great Britain, France, and Israel to give up the land they had captured and return the canal to Egypt.

**Section Review:**

23) Who was Gamal Nasser?

24) What was the result of the Suez Canal Crisis?



In 1964, the **Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO)** came into existence in order to promote the creation of a Palestinian state. **Yasir Arafat** became its leader. Guerrilla groups soon began to gain power within the PLO and claimed that they had to use military force in order to create a Palestinian state.

In 1967, Nasser and other Arab leaders prepared for war against Israel. Israel, however, made the first move and attacked Egypt, wiping out most of Egypt's air force in just six days. Israel tripled its size by winning the Sinai Peninsula, the West Bank, Golan Heights, and Jerusalem in what is now called the **Six Day War**.

The **Yom Kippur War** occurred in 1973 when Egypt and Syria attacked Israel on Yom Kippur, a major Jewish holiday. This attack took Israelis by complete surprise. The United States intervened on Israel's behalf, which greatly angered Arab nations. Arab nations responded by placing an oil embargo against the United States. This created a major shortage of oil and drove up the price of gas. A cease-fire was signed several weeks later.

The first major peace agreement in the region occurred in 1979 when Israeli Prime Minister **Menachem Begin** and Egyptian President **Anwar el-Sadat** met with United States President **Jimmy Carter** at Camp David. They signed the **Camp David Accords** in which Egypt agreed to recognize Israel as a country and Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula. Many Arabs, however, were upset with the peace agreement, and a group of Muslim radicals assassinated Sadat.

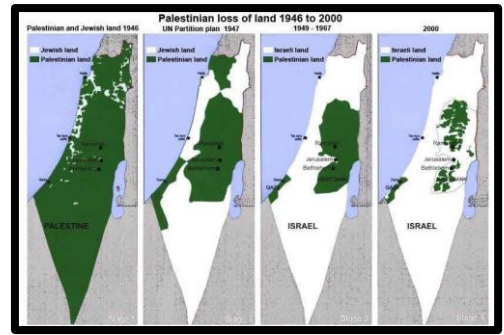


Sadat, Carter, and Begin—Camp David Accords



Palestinians launched the **intifada**, or uprising, in 1987, which consisted of demonstrations and attacks against Israeli troops.

In 1993, progress was made with the **Oslo Peace Accords**. Israel agreed to give the Palestinians self-rule in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, starting with Jericho. However, Israeli Prime Minister **Yitzhak Rabin** was assassinated by a Jewish extremist and a lasting peace in the area remains elusive to this day.



### Section Review:

25) What is the PLO?

26) Who was the leader of the PLO?

27) What was the result of the Six Day War?

28) Who attacked Israel during the Yom Kippur War?

29) What nation intervened on Israel's behalf during the Yom Kippur War?

30) What was the first major peace agreement in the region?

31) What is intifada?

32) What was agreed upon in the Oslo Peace Accords?

The 1948 **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was also developed as a result of the major atrocities of World War II, including the Holocaust. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights set human rights standards for all nations, listing specific rights that every human should have. Former First Lady and first U.S. delegate to the United Nations, Eleanor Roosevelt, served as chairperson for the Commission on Human Rights. This document is still considered the most important statement on human rights.

World organizations, such as **Amnesty International**, have worked to increase global awareness of human rights violations. Increasingly, issues of human rights are difficult to enforce. In a direct response to the Holocaust, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights defined **genocide** as the deliberate killing of a large group of people or ethnic group. It is difficult, however, for worldwide organizations to determine what role they can or should take in mediating in the affairs of a sovereign nation, even one that seems to be in violation of basic human rights.



### Section Review:

33) What is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and why was it developed?

34) Who served as chairperson for the writing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

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