

ANTISEMITISM

Origin and Meaning of the Term.

The word antisemitism means prejudice against or hatred of Jews. The Holocaust, the state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945, is history's most extreme example of antisemitism.

In 1879, German journalist Wilhelm Marr originated the term antisemitism, denoting the hatred of Jews, and also hatred of various liberal, cosmopolitan, and international political trends of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries often associated with Jews. The trends under attack included equal civil rights, constitutional democracy, free trade, socialism, finance capitalism, and pacifism.

ANTISEMITISM IN HISTORY: FROM THE EARLY CHURCH TO 1400

Sometimes called "the longest hatred," antisemitism has persisted in many forms for over two thousand years. The racial antisemitism of the National Socialists (Nazis) took hatred of Jews to a genocidal extreme, yet the Holocaust began with words and ideas: stereotypes, sinister cartoons, and the gradual spread of hate.

In the first millennium of the Christian era, leaders in the European Christian (Catholic) hierarchy developed or solidified as doctrine ideas that: all Jews were responsible for the crucifixion of Christ; the destruction of the Temple by the Romans and the scattering of the Jewish people was punishment both for past transgressions and for continued failure to abandon their faith and accept Christianity.

In the tenth and eleventh centuries, these doctrines about Jews were hardened and unified in part because of the following: threat to the Church hierarchy from the impending split between Roman Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy (1054); successive waves of Muslim conquest; end of millennium fervour; successes in converting the heathen ethnic groups of northern Europe; and military-spiritual zeal of the Crusades.

England from 1066 to 1135.

Believing that their commercial skills and incoming capital would make England more prosperous, William I (William the Conqueror) invited a group of Jewish merchants from Rouen, in Normandy, to England in 1070. However, Jews were not permitted to own land (as most gentiles were not allowed to own land) or to participate in trades (except for medicine). They were limited primarily to money lending. As Catholic doctrine held that money lending for interest was the sin of usury, Jews dominated this activity. The earliest immigrants spoke Judeo-French founded on the Norman dialect.

Around 1092, Gilbert Crispin, the Abbot of Westminster (1085-1117), issued a disputation about his exchange with a Jew, entitled "Disputation of a Jew with a Christian about the Christian Bible." This disputation was notable for the even-handed presentation of both the Christian and Jewish points of view, and for the congenial tone of the exchange.

At first, the status of Jews was not strictly determined. An attempt was made to introduce the continental principle that all Jews were the king's property and a clause to that effect was inserted under King Henry I in some manuscripts of the so-called *Leges Edwardi Confessoris* "Laws of Edward the Confessor".

However, during Henry's reign (1100-1135) a royal charter was granted to Joseph, the chief rabbi of London, and all his followers. Under this charter, Jews were permitted to move about the country without paying tolls, to buy and sell goods and property, to sell their pledges after holding them a year and a day, to be tried by their peers, and to be sworn on the Torah rather than on a Christian Bible. Special weight was attributed to a Jewish person's oath, which was valid against that of twelve Christians, because they represented the king of England in financial matters. The sixth clause of the charter was especially important: it granted Jews the right of movement throughout the kingdom, as if they were the king's own property (*sicut res propriæ nostræ*). Jews did not settle outside of London before 1135.

From Stephen to Henry: 1135 to 1189.

Christian-Jewish relations in England were disturbed under King Stephen who burned down the house of a Jewish man in Oxford (some accounts say with the owner in it) because he refused to pay a contribution to the king's expenses. It was also during this time that the first recorded blood libel against Jews was brought in the case of William of Norwich (March, 1144).

While the crusaders in Germany were attacking Jews, outbursts against the latter in England were, according to the Jewish chroniclers, prevented by King Stephen.

With the restoration of order under Henry II, Jews renewed their activity. Within five years of his accession, Jews are found at London, Oxford, Cambridge, Norwich, Thetford, Bungay, Canterbury, Winchester, Newport, Stafford, Windsor and Reading. However, they were not permitted to bury their dead elsewhere than in London until 1177. Their spread throughout the country enabled the king to draw upon them as occasion demanded; he repaid them by demand notes on the sheriffs of the counties, who accounted for payments thus made in the half-yearly accounts on the pipe rolls.

Strongbow's conquest of Ireland (1170) was financed by Josce, a Jewish man from Gloucester; and the king accordingly fined Josce for having lent money to those under his displeasure. As a rule, however, Henry II does not appear to have limited in any way the financial activity of Jews. The favourable position of the English Jews was shown, among other things, by the visit of Abraham ibn Ezra in 1158, by that of Isaac of Chernigov in 1181, and by the resort to England of the Jews who were exiled from France by Philip Augustus in 1182, among them probably being Judah Sir Leon of Paris.

In 1168, when concluding an alliance with Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II seized the chief representatives of the Jews and sent them to Normandy, while tallaging the rest (5,000 marks). When, however, he asked the rest of the country to pay a tithe for the crusade against Saladin in 1186, he demanded a quarter of the Jewish chattels. The tithe was reckoned at £70,000, the quarter at £60,000. It is improbable, however, that the whole amount was paid at once, as for many years after the imposition of the tallage arrears were demanded from the Jews.

The king had probably been led to make this large demand upon English Jewry by the surprising windfall which came to his treasury at the death of Aaron of Lincoln. In this period, Aaron of Lincoln is believed to have been, probably, the wealthiest man in 12th-century Britain, in liquid assets. All property obtained by usury, whether Jewish or Christian, fell into the king's hands on Aaron's death; his estate included £15,000 of debts owed by some 430 debtors scattered around the English counties. In order to track down and collect these debts a special section of the Royal Exchequer was constituted, which was known as the "Aaron's Exchequer". The cash treasure of the Aaron's estate, which came into the king's hands, however, was lost on a shipwreck during a transport to Normandy.

In this era, Jews lived on good terms with their non-Jewish neighbours, including the clergy; they entered churches freely, and took refuge in the abbeys in times of commotion. Some Jews lived in opulent houses, and helped to build a large number of abbeys and monasteries. However, by the end of Henry's reign they had incurred the ill will of the upper classes, and anti-Jewish sentiment spread further throughout the nation, fostered by the crusades.

The Massacres at London and York: 1189-1190.

Among the worst outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence during this period were the massacres in 1189–90 in London, York, and other towns. Richard I had taken the cross before his coronation (3 September 1189). A number of the principal Jews of England presented themselves to do homage at Westminster; but there was a long-standing custom against Jews (and women) being admitted to the coronation ceremony, and they were expelled during the banquet which followed the coronation, whereupon they were attacked by a crowd of bystanders. The rumour spread from Westminster to London that the king had ordered a massacre of the Jews; and a mob in the Old Jewry, after vainly attacking the strong stone houses of the Jews throughout the day, set them on fire at night, killing those within who attempted to escape. The king was enraged at this insult to his royal dignity, but was unable to punish more than a few of the offenders, owing to their large numbers and to the considerable social standing of several of them. After his departure on the crusade, riots with loss of life occurred at Lynn, where the Jews attempted to attack a baptised coreligionist who had taken refuge in a church. The seafaring population rose against them, fired their houses, and put them to the sword. So, too, at Stamford Fair, on 7 March 1190, many were slain, and on 18 March, fifty-seven were slaughtered at Bury St Edmunds. The Jews of Lincoln saved themselves only by taking refuge in the castle. Isolated attacks on Jews also occurred at Colchester, Thetford, and Ospringe (Faversham Kent).

Ordinance of the Jewry, 1194.

During Richard's absence in the Holy Land and during his captivity, the Jews of England were harassed by William de Longchamp. The Jewish community was forced to contribute 5,000 marks toward the king's ransom, more than three times as much as the contribution of the City of London.

On his return, Richard determined to organise the Jewish community in order to ensure that he should no longer be defrauded of his just dues as universal legatee of the Jewry by any such outbreaks as those that occurred after

his coronation. Richard accordingly decided, in 1194, that records should be kept by royal officials of all the transactions of the Jews, without which such transactions would not be legal.

Every debt was to be entered upon a chirograph, one part of which was to be kept by the Jewish creditor, and the other preserved in a chest to which only special officials should have access. By this means the king could at any time ascertain the property of any Jew in the land; and no destruction of the bond held by the Jew could release the creditor from his indebtedness. This "Ordinance of the Jewry" was, in practice, the beginning of the office of Exchequer of the Jews, which made all the transactions of the English Jewry liable to taxation by the King of England, who thus became a sleeping partner in all the transactions of Jewish money lending. The king besides demanded two bezants in the pound, that is, 10 per cent, of all sums recovered by the Jews with the aid of his courts.

At this point in time Jews had many of the same rights as gentile citizens. However, their loans could be recovered at law, whereas the Christian money lender could not recover more than his original loan. They were in direct relation to the king and his courts; but this did not imply any arbitrary power of the king to tax them or to take their money without repayment, as is frequently exemplified in the pipe rolls. Jews were allowed to have their own jurisdiction, and there is evidence of their having a *beth din* with three judges. Reference is made to the *parnas* (president) and *gabbai* (treasurer), of the congregation, and to scribes and chirographers. A complete system of education seems to have been in vogue.

At the head of the Jewish community was placed a chief rabbi, known as "the presbyter of all the Jews of England"; he appears to have been selected by the Jews themselves, who were granted a *cong  d' lire* by the king. The latter claimed, however, the right of confirmation, as in the case of bishops. The Jewish presbyter was indeed in a measure a royal official, holding the position of adviser, as regards Jewish law, to the Exchequer of the Jews, as the English legal system admitted the validity of Jewish law in its proper sphere as much as it did that of the canon law. Six presbyters are known in the 13th century: Jacob of London, reappointed 1200; Josce of London, 1207; Aaron of York, 1237; Elyas of London, 1243; Hagin fil Cresse, 1257; and Cresse fil Mosse.

King John, 1205 to 1216.

As early as 1198 Pope Innocent III had written to all Christian princes, including Richard of England, calling upon them to compel the remission of all usury demanded by Jews from Christians. This would render the Jewish community's very existence impossible. On 15 July 1205, the pope laid down the principle that Jews were doomed to perpetual servitude because they had crucified Jesus. In England the secular power soon followed the initiative of the Church. John, having become indebted to the Jewish community while in Ireland, at first treated Jews with a show of forbearance. He confirmed the charter of Rabbi Josce and his sons, and made it apply to all the Jews of England; he wrote a sharp remonstrance to the mayor of London against the attacks that were continually being made upon the Jews of that city, alone of all the cities of England. He reappointed one Jacob archpriest of all the English Jews (12 July 1199).

But with the loss of Normandy in 1205 a new spirit seems to have come over the attitude of John to his Jews. In the height of his triumph over the pope, he demanded the sum of no less than  100,000 from the religious houses of England, and 66,000 marks from the Jews (1210). One of the latter, Abraham of Bristol, who refused to pay his quota of 10,000 marks, had, by order of the king, seven of his teeth extracted, one a day, until he was willing to disgorge. Though John squeezed as much as he could out of the Jewish community, they were an important element on his side in the triangular struggle between king, barons, and municipalities which makes up the constitutional history of England during his reign and that of his son. Even in the Magna Carta, clauses were inserted preventing the king or his Jewish subjects from obtaining interest during the minority of an heir.

Increasing persecution in the thirteenth century.

With the accession of Henry III (1216) the position of the Jews became somewhat easier, but only for a short time. Innocent III had in the preceding year caused the Fourth Council of the Lateran to pass the law enforcing the Badge upon the Jews; and in 1218 Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, brought it into operation in England, the badge taking the form of an oblong white patch of two finger-lengths by four. The action of the Church was followed by similar opposition on the part of the English boroughs. Petitions were accordingly sent to the king in many instances to remove his Jews from the boroughs, and they were expelled from Bury St. Edmunds in 1190, Newcastle in 1234, Wycombe in 1235, Southampton in 1236, Berkhamsted in 1242, Newbury in 1244. Simon de Montfort issued an edict to expel the Jewish population from Leicester in 1231, "in my time or in the time of any of my heirs to the end of the world". He justified his action as being "for the good of my soul, and for the souls of my ancestors and successors". The Jews appear to have found refuge in the suburbs outside his control.

The Papacy continued to develop its theological commitment to restrictions on Judaism and Jews. In England, a number of Benedictine priories showed particular hostility to Jews, or sought to capitalise on it.

The fictional stories of Jewish ritual murder, for instance, emerged from Benedictine priories, apparently attempting to set competing local cults. In Worcester, Bishop William de Blois pushed for tighter restrictions on Jews, writing to Pope Gregory IX for assistance in enforcing segregation between Jews and Christians, including wearing of badges and prohibitions on Christians working for Jews especially within their homes.

The value of the Jewish community to the royal treasury had become considerably lessened during the 13th century through two circumstances: the king's income from other sources had continually increased, and the contributions of the Jews had decreased both absolutely and relatively. Besides this, the king had found other sources from which to obtain loans. Italian merchants, "poor's usurers" as they were called, supplied him with money, at times on the security of the Jewry. By the contraction of the area in which Jews were permitted to exercise their money-lending activity their means of profit were lessened, while the king by his continuous exactions prevented the automatic growth of interest.

By the middle of the 13th century the Jews of England, like those of the Continent, had become chattels of the king. There appeared to be no limit to the exactions he could impose upon them, though it was obviously against his own interest to deprive them entirely of capital, without which they could not gain for him interest. The great financial pressure Henry placed on the Jews caused them to force repayment of loans, fuelling anti-Jewish resentment. Jewish bonds were purchased and used by richer Barons and members of Henry III's royal circle as a means to acquire lands of lesser landholders, through payment defaults.

Henry had built the *Domus Conversorum* ('House of the Converts'), later Chapel of the Master of the Rolls, was a building and institution in London for Jews who had converted to Christianity, in London in 1232, and efforts intensified after 1239. As many as 10 percent of the Jews in England had been converted by the late 1250s in large part due to their deteriorating economic conditions.

Blood libels and Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln.

Many anti-Jewish stories involving tales of child sacrifice circulated in the 1230s-50s, including the account of "Little Saint Hugh of Lincoln" in 1255. The event is considered particularly important, as the first such accusation endorsed by the Crown. In August 1255, a number of the chief Jews who had assembled at Lincoln to celebrate the marriage of a daughter of Berechiah de Nicole were seized on a charge of having murdered a boy named Hugh. Henry intervened to order the execution of Copin, who had confessed to the murder in return for his life, and removed ninety-one Jews to the Tower of London. Eighteen were executed, and their property expropriated by the Crown. The king had mortgaged the Jewish community to his brother Richard of Cornwall in February 1255, for 5,000 marks, and had lost all rights over it for a year, so did not provide Henry with income, except when executed. The story was referred to in later English literature including Chaucer and Marlowe, and entered popular folk culture through a contemporary ballad. It was quoted as fact by Thomas Fuller in his posthumous 1662 book *Worthies of England*.

Further restrictions and the Statute of Jewry 1253.

Henry III passed the Statute of Jewry in 1253, which attempted to stop the construction of synagogues and reinforce the wearing of Jewish badges (rather than accepting fines). A prohibition on Christian servants working for Jews was to reduce the 'risk' of sexual contact, also prohibited. It remains unclear to what extent Henry actually implemented this statute. The laws themselves were following the Catholic church's existing pronouncements. In the later 1250s, as Henry was not fully in control over government, the Barons asked for limits on the resale of Jewish bonds. Jewish loans became a motivating factor in the following war. Henry's policies up to 1258 of excessive Jewish taxation, anti-Jewish legislation and propaganda had caused a very important and negative change.

Targeting of Jews during the conflict with the Barons.

While the level of debts to Jewish moneylenders was in fact lower in the 1260s than the 1230s, Henry III's policies had made the landowning classes fear that debts to Jews would lead to them being deprived of their lands, which were used to secure loans. Excessive taxation of Jews, forcing them to collect no matter what the circumstances, was one factor in this. The other was the King's support for courtiers and relatives who bought Jewish loans in order to dispossess defaulters of their landholdings. These were the fears that de Montfort and his supporters played on to bring support to their rebellion. With the outbreak of the Barons' war violent measures were adopted to remove all traces of indebtedness either to the king or to the higher barons.

The Jewries of London, Canterbury, Northampton, Winchester, Cambridge, Worcester, and Lincoln were looted (1263–65), and the *archæ* (official chests of records) either destroyed or deposited at the headquarters of the barons at Ely.

Simon de Montfort, who in 1231 had expelled the Jews from his town of Leicester, when at the height of his power after the battle of Lewes cancelled the debts and interest owed to Jews of around sixty men, including those held by his baronial supporters. Montfort had been accused of sharing the plunder but issued edicts for their protection after the battle. Nevertheless, his closest allies including two of his sons had led the violence and killing, so it seems implausible to regard him as ignorant of the consequences of the campaign.

Later Politics of Henry III.

Once de Montfort was dead and the rebels were defeated, Henry's policy went into reverse and as best as he was able, the debts were reimposed. However, Henry's finances were very weak, and he also wished to pursue the Crusade that he had tried to mount in the 1250s. Parliament refused to comply without legislation that restricted the abuse of Jewish finances, particularly by Christians. In 1269 Henry agreed to limits on perpetual fee-rents, an end to the sale of Jewish loans to Christians without the permission of the Crown and a prohibition on levying interest on loans purchased by Christians. These were the grievances that had helped fuel the wider crisis since 1239. In 1271 he conceded a ban on Jews holding freehold land and again ordered that the previous legislation be enforced. Nevertheless, these policies would not be adequate in allaying wider fears, which resurfaced under Edward I.

Edward I and Expulsion.

Jews were expelled from the lands of Queen Dowager Eleanor in January 1275 (which included towns such as Guildford, Cambridge and Worcester).

Statutum de Judaismo, 1275.

Edward I returned from the Crusades in 1274, two years after his accession as King of England. In 1275, he made some experimental decrees. The Church laws against usury had recently been reiterated with more than usual vehemence at the Second Council of Lyon (1274), and Edward in the Statutum de Judaismo (Statute of the Jewry) absolutely forbade Jews to lend on usury, but granted them permission to engage in commerce and handicrafts, and even to take farms for a period not exceeding ten years, though he expressly excluded them from all the feudal advantages of the possession of land.

This permission to own land, however, regarded as a means by which Jews in general could gain a livelihood, was illusory. Farming cannot be taken up at a moment's notice, nor can handicrafts be acquired at once. Moreover, in England in the 13th century the guilds were already securing a monopoly of all skilled labour, and in the majority of markets only those could buy and sell who were members of the Guild Merchant.

By depriving the Jews of a resort to usury, Edward was practically preventing them from earning a living at all under the conditions of life then existing in feudal England; and in principle the "Statute of the Jewry" expelled them fifteen years before the final expulsion. Some of the Jews attempted to evade the law by resorting to the tricks of the *Causines*, who lent sums and extorted bonds that included both principal and interest. Some resorted to highway robbery; others joined the *Domus Conversorum*; while a considerable number appear to have resorted to coin clipping as a means of securing a precarious existence. As a consequence, in 1278 the whole English Jewry was imprisoned, some 680 in the Tower of London; and at least 293 Jews were executed there.

Note: Coin Clipping is the act of shaving off a small portion of a precious metal coin for profit. Over time, the precious metal clippings could be saved up and melted into bullion or used to make new coins.

Expulsion, 1290.

After the failed experiments in legislation which Edward I made from 1269 onward, there was only one option left: If the Jews were not to have intercourse with their fellow citizens as artisans, merchants, or farmers, and were not to be allowed to take interest, the only alternative was for them to leave the country. He expelled the Jews from Gascony 1287, a province still then held by England and in which he was travelling at the time; and on his return to England (July 18, 1290) he issued writs to the sheriffs of all the English counties ordering them to enforce a decree to the effect that all Jews should leave England before All Saints' Day of that year. They were allowed to carry their portable property; but their houses escheated to the king, except in the case of a few favoured persons who were allowed to sell theirs before they left. Between 4,000 and 16,000 Jews were expelled. They emigrated to countries such as Poland that protected them by law. Between the expulsion of the Jews in 1290 and their formal return in 1655 there is no official trace of Jews as such on English soil except in connection with the *Domus Conversorum*, which kept a number of them within its precincts up to 1551 and even later.

Anti-Judaism did not disappear with the expulsion of Jews. Jeremy Cohen writes about accusations of host desecration: The story exerted its influence even in the absence of Jews ... the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw the proliferation of the Host-desecration story in England: in collections of miracle stories, many of them dedicated to the miracles of the Virgin Mary; in the art of illuminated manuscripts used for Christian prayer and meditation; and on stage, as in popular Croxton *Play of the Sacrament*, which itself evoked memories of an alleged ritual murder committed by Jews in East Anglia in 1191.

The behaviour of the Church during those times ranged from being a “complicit bystander,” as Anthony Julius phrases it, to the active support of Judeophobia through antisemitic teachings, legislation, and instigation of religious violence. Meanwhile, successive English kings created rulings detrimental to the well-being of Jewish communities, for example by appropriating a considerable share of profit through severe taxation. A particular characteristic of medieval English antisemitism was its grounding in conspiracy theories and religiously inspired rumours, such as the infamous blood libel, the accusation that Jews would kill Christians, including children, to use their blood for ritual purposes. One of the first cases of blood libel-inspired antisemitism was the murder of William of Norwich in 1144, whose death was attributed to the local Jewish community. From then on, ritual murder was a frequently reoccurring motif in anti-Jewish slander, providing a blueprint for different forms of defamations far beyond medieval England. It was not the only one. During the time of the Black Death in the 1340s, across Europe, Jews were accused of causing the pandemic through the poisoning of wells. Elements of these themes and other anti-Jewish canards originating in the Middle Ages, such as the accusations of host desecrations, continue to inspire antisemitism around the world until the present time.

Seeking to retain their beliefs and culture, Jews became bearers of the only minority religion on a now Christian continent of Europe. In some countries, Jews were welcomed from time to time, but, at a time in which faith was perceived as the principal form of self-identity and intensely influenced both public and private life, Jews found themselves increasingly isolated as outsiders. Jews do not share the Christian belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and many Christians considered this refusal to accept Jesus' divinity as arrogant. For centuries the Church taught that Jews were responsible for Jesus' death, not recognizing, as most historians do today, that Jesus was executed by the Roman government because officials viewed him as a political threat to their rule. As outsiders, Jews were objects of violent stereotyping and subject to violence against their persons and property.

Among the myths about Jews that took hold in this period was the "blood libel," a myth that Jews used the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes. Other myths included the idea that Jewish failure to convert to Christianity was a sign both of service to the anti-Christ as well as of innate disloyalty to European (read Christian) civilization. Conversely, the conversion of individual Jews was perceived as insincere and as having materialistic motives. This teaching provided the grounds upon which a superstructure of hatred could be built. Theological antisemitism reached its height in the Middle Ages. Among the most common manifestations of antisemitism throughout the ages were what we now call pogroms (riots launched against Jews by local residents, and frequently encouraged by the authorities). Pogroms were often incited by rumours of blood libel. In desperate times, Jews often became scapegoats for many natural catastrophes. For example, some clerics preached and some parishioners believed that Jews brought on the "Black Death," the plague that killed millions of people in Europe in the 14th Century, as divine retribution for their blasphemous and satanic practices.

Antisemitism in History: The early modern era, 1300 – 1800.

Especially after the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, antisemitism changed in ways that reflected new cultural, intellectual, and political realities. During the first centuries of the early modern era in Europe, Jews were invited to settle in central and eastern Europe—and to return to western Europe after expulsion from time to time with certain permissions and protections as well as restrictions on residence and occupation. Under the "protection" of early modern rulers and landholding aristocrats, Jews were permitted and encouraged to perform managerial and commercial tasks that the ruling classes had neither the skills nor inclination to perform themselves. Since the Catholic and Orthodox Churches banned usury (lending money at interest) and looked down upon business practices as immoral, Jews came to fill the vital (but unpopular) role of moneylenders for the Christian majority. Jews were permitted to engage in commerce, supply, manufacturing, finance, handicraft manufacturing, and the free professions—including art, music, literature, theatre, and, as it developed, journalism. Jews also were permitted to work as managers on landed estates and tax collectors. A small minority of Jewish individuals and families did very well and were therefore conspicuous. Most Jews engaged in commerce and handicrafts production for the local market, and were often as poor as the peasantry among whom they lived and who bought their wares.

On the other hand, central and east European rulers forbade the Jewish settlers from owning land, from serving as officers in the military, and from holding positions in state service unless they converted to Christianity (Catholicism, Orthodoxy, or, after the Reformation in the sixteenth century, one of the Protestant denominations).

Absolutist rulers consolidated modern states in the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries and loyalty to a nation increasingly competed with religious confession as a central human identifying marker in the nineteenth century. Jews, who still endured the above restrictions, hence did not become associated in the popular mind with the most "noble" professions of early modern central and eastern Europe (where the majority of Jews lived): landed aristocracy, military service, and state service.

As central and east European guilds increasingly denied membership to Jewish handicraftsmen (unless they converted), Jews were increasingly forced out of small-scale manufacturing. Among the stereotypes that were developed or reinforced by these special permissions and restrictions on the Jews were that:

- Jews did not work hard or produce goods with their hands
- Jews chose to work with money and to trade in goods they did not produce because of their skills, their greed, and their desire to manipulate and cheat Christians
- Jews were cowards in a fair fight and avoided military service
- Jews preferred meaningless study and frivolous entertainment to hard, creative work
- Jews were insincere and potentially disloyal in that they converted to Christianity to obtain material benefits.

Beginning in the nineteenth century with Great Britain and ending with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, the European nations established in constitutions the principle of equality under the law. They dropped all restrictions on residence or occupational activities for Jews and other national and religious minorities. At the same time, the societies of Europe underwent rapid economic change and social dislocation. The emancipation of the Jews allowed them to live and work among non-Jews, but exposed them to a new form of political antisemitism. It was secular, social, and influenced by economic considerations, though it often reinforced and was reinforced by traditional religious stereotypes.

The emancipation of the Jews enabled them to own land, enter the civil service, and serve as officers in the national armed forces. It created the impression for some others—particularly those who felt left behind, traumatized by change, or unable to achieve occupational satisfaction and economic security in accordance with their expectations—that Jews were displacing non-Jews in professions traditionally reserved for Christians. It also created for some the impression that at the same time, Jews were being overrepresented in future-oriented professions of the late nineteenth century: finance, banking, trade, industry, medicine, law, journalism, art, music, literature, and theatre.

The collapse of restraints on political activism and the broadening of the electoral franchise on the basis of citizenship, not religion, encouraged Jews to be more politically engaged. Though active all along the political spectrum, Jews were most visible—due to increased opportunities—among liberal, radical, and Marxist (Social Democratic) political parties. The introduction of compulsory education and the broadening of the franchise toward universal suffrage spawned the development of antisemitic political parties and permitted existing parties to use antisemitic rhetoric to obtain votes. Publications such as the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, which first appeared in 1905 in Russia, generated or provided support for theories of an international Jewish conspiracy.

As religious confession became subsumed in European political culture by national identity and nationalist sentiment, a new series of stereotypes that reinforced and was reinforced by older prejudices fuelled antisemitic politics:

- Enjoying the benefits of citizenship, Jews were nevertheless secretly disloyal—their "conversion" was only for material gain.
- Jews displaced non-Jews in traditionally "noble" professions and activities (land ownership, the officer corps, the civil service, the teaching profession, the universities), while they "clannishly" blocked the entry of non-Jews into professions that they controlled and that represented the future prosperity of the nation (for example, industry, trade, finance, and the entertainment industry).

- Jews used disproportionate control of the media to mislead the "nation" about its true interests and welfare
- Jews had assumed the leadership of the Social Democratic, and later, Communist movements in order to destroy middle class values of nation, religion and private property.

These prejudices bore little relationship to political, social, and economic realities in any European country. This fact did not, however, matter to those who became attracted to the political expression of these prejudices.

Racial Antisemitism, 1875–1945.

With the development during the last quarter of the nineteenth century of technological progress and scientific knowledge, especially about human biology, psychology, genetics, and evolution, some intellectuals and politicians developed a racist perception of Jews. This perception developed within a broader racist view of the world based on notions of "inequality" of "races" and the alleged "superiority" of the "white race" over other "races."

Belief in the superiority of the "white race" was both inspired and reinforced by the contact of European colonist-conquerors with native populations in the Americas, Asia, and Africa, and buttressed as pseudo-science by a perversion of evolutionary theory known as "social Darwinism." "Social Darwinism" postulated that human beings were not one species, but divided into several different "races" that were biologically driven to struggle against one another for living space to ensure their survival. Only those "races" with superior qualities could win this eternal struggle which was carried out by force and warfare. Social Darwinism has always been the product of bogus science: to this day, despite a century and a half of efforts by racists to find it, there is no biological science to support social Darwinist theory.

These new "anti-Semites," as they called themselves, drew upon older stereotypes to maintain that the Jews behaved the way they did—and would not change—because of innate racial qualities inherited from the dawn of time. Drawing as well upon the pseudoscience of racial eugenics, they argued that the Jews spread their so-called pernicious influence to weaken nations in Central Europe not only by political, economic, and media methods, but also literally by "polluting" so-called pure Aryan blood by intermarriage and sexual relations with non-Jews. They argued that Jewish "racial intermixing," by "contaminating" and weakening the host nations, served as part of a conscious Jewish plan for world domination. Though secular racists drew upon religious imagery and stereotypes to define hereditary Jewish "behaviour," they insisted that alleged Jewish "traits" were handed down from generation to generation. Since "Jews" did not form a religious group, but a "race," the conversion of an individual Jew to Christianity did not change his racial "Jewishness" and was therefore by nature an insincere conversion.

In the late nineteenth century in Germany and Austria, politicians took advantage of both traditional and racist antisemitism to mobilize votes as the electoral franchise widened. In his political writings during the 1920s, Adolf Hitler named two Austrian politicians who most influenced his own approach to politics: Georg von Schönerer (1842–1921), and Karl Lüger (1844–1910). Schönerer brought the racist antisemitic style and content to Austrian politics in the 1880s and 1890s. Lüger was elected mayor of Vienna, Austria, in 1897, not only because of his antisemitic rhetoric, which for him was primarily a political tool, but because of his oratorical skills and populist charisma that permitted him to communicate his message to broad sectors of the population. The specific hatred of Jews, however, preceded the modern era and the coining of the term antisemitism. Among the most common manifestations of antisemitism throughout history were pogroms, violent riots launched against Jews and frequently encouraged by government authorities. Pogroms were often incited by blood libels—false rumours that Jews used the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes.

In the modern era, anti-Semites added a political dimension to their ideology of hatred. In the last third of the nineteenth century, antisemitic political parties were formed in Germany, France, and Austria. Publications such as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* generated or provided support for fraudulent theories of an international Jewish conspiracy. A potent component of political antisemitism was nationalism, whose adherents often falsely denounced Jews as disloyal citizens. The nineteenth century xenophobic "voelkisch movement" (folk or people's movement) made up of German philosophers, scholars, and artists who viewed the Jewish spirit as alien to Germandom, shaped a notion of the Jew as "non-German." Theorists of racial anthropology provided pseudoscientific backing for this idea.

The beginnings of Nazi Antisemitism.

The Nazi Party, founded in 1919 and led by Adolf Hitler, gave political expression to theories of racism. In part, the Nazi Party gained popularity by disseminating anti-Jewish propaganda. Millions bought Hitler's book *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), which called for the removal of Jews from Germany.

On the night of November 9, 1938, the Nazis destroyed synagogues and the shop windows of Jewish-owned stores throughout Germany and Austria (an event now known as the Kristallnacht pogrom. [View This Term in the Glossary](#) or Night of Broken Glass). This event marked a transition to an era of destruction, in which genocide would become the singular focus of Nazi antisemitism.

What was the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored, persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945 across Europe and North Africa. The height of the persecution and murder occurred during the context of the Second World War. By the end of the war in 1945, the Germans and their collaborators had killed two out of every three European Jews. The Nazis believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that Jews, deemed inferior, were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community. While Jews were the primary victims, this genocide occurred in the context of Nazi persecution and murder of other groups for their perceived racial or biological inferiority: Roma; people with disabilities; some of the Slavic peoples (especially Poles and Russians), and Black people. Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological or behavioural grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, men who were accused of "homosexuality," and people whom the regime identified as "a-socials" and "professional criminals."

What does the word Holocaust mean?

Holocaust is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." By the late 19th century, holocaust most commonly came to mean "a complete or wholesale destruction." The word was applied to a variety of disastrous events ranging from pogroms against Jews in Russia, to the persecution and murder of Armenians by Ottomans during World War I, to the attack by Japan on Chinese cities, to large-scale fires where hundreds were killed. As early as 1941, writers occasionally employed the term holocaust with regard to the Nazi crimes against the Jews, but it was not the only term they used. After World War II, Holocaust (with either a lowercase or capital H) became a more specific term in English-speaking countries, and by the late 1970s became the standard English word used to refer to the systematic annihilation of European Jews by Germany's Nazi regime. In Israel, it is more common to use the word *sho'ah*, which is the Hebrew equivalent of "Holocaust."

When did the Holocaust happen?

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored, persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. The Nazi Party took control in January 1933, when its leader, Adolf Hitler, was appointed the chancellor of Germany. The Nazi Party quickly turned Germany from a weak new democracy into a one-party dictatorship. The German government began persecuting German Jews almost immediately after Hitler became chancellor. By 1935, Jews were stripped of their German citizenship, and in 1938, Jewish men began to be arrested and sent to concentration camps just for being Jewish.

Nazi Germany also annexed, invaded, and occupied neighboring countries to obtain *Lebensraum* (living space). In September 1939, the German invasion of Poland led Great Britain and France to declare war, and World War II began. As Germany's territory grew, millions of Jews were under Nazi control. German authorities rounded up Jews and forced many of them into ghettos. By the summer of 1941, Nazi Germany and its collaborators began to systematically murder European Jews, a plan the Nazis referred to as the "Final Solution." Sometimes Jews were killed outright—entire villages rounded up and shot, or murdered in killing centres—while in other areas, Jews were forced to labor for the German war effort until they died of overwork or starvation. The Allies defeated Nazi Germany in World War II in May 1945; by that time, the Nazis and their collaborators had murdered approximately six million Jews.

What caused the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was caused by many factors, including millions of individual decisions made by ordinary people who chose to actively participate in—or at least tolerate—the persecution and murder of their neighbours.

The following factors contributed to the Holocaust:

Racial Antisemitism: Antisemitism, the fear or hatred of Jews had existed in Europe for centuries. In the late 19th century, the pseudoscience of eugenics became popular. Eugenics was the theory, which has now been proven false, that humans can be categorized in specific races, each with its own unchangeable traits, and that some "races" were biologically, culturally, and morally superior to others. The Nazis promoted racial antisemitism. It did

not matter whether a person practiced the Jewish faith because the Nazis believed Jews belonged to a separate race and had distinct “Jewish blood.”

This belief was false: there is no biological difference between Jews and non-Jews. The Nazis attributed a wide variety of negative stereotypes to Jews and “Jewish” behaviour and saw Jews as the source of all evil: disease, social injustice, cultural decline, capitalism and communism.

Political Instability: Many Germans were willing to tolerate Nazi antisemitism because they believed the Nazi Party was restoring Germany’s status as an international power after its humiliating defeat in World War I (1914–1918).

The Nazis also promised to restore Germany economically after years of inflation and economic depression, and to end years of political instability and violence that immediately preceded Hitler’s appointment as Chancellor. Hitler was a strong and popular leader, and blamed Jews for all of Germany’s problems. The Nazi regime economically, politically, and socially marginalized the Jewish community over a period of years, attempting to force Jews to emigrate out of German territory. The Jewish community made up less than one percent of Germany’s population; the Nazi regime was easily able to marginalize such a small community with virtually no public protest.

War: In defiance of the Treaty of Versailles, Germany remilitarized and readied itself for war. The United States and other countries, still suffering under the Great Depression and remembering the needless destruction of World War I, did not meaningfully intervene to protest Nazi militarization or Nazi antisemitic policies until Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Even then, the United States remained neutral in World War II until December 1941, and prioritized the defeat of Nazi Germany militarily over the rescue of Jews. During World War II, as the German military invaded and conquered territories, millions of European Jews came under Nazi control. Nazi policy moved from forced emigration to mass murder. By 1945, when the Allied nations defeated Germany in World War II, the Nazis and their collaborators had murdered six million European Jews.

Collaboration: The Holocaust could not have happened without the active or passive participation of millions of people, each of whom acted for their own reasons. Some people recognized that they could personally benefit from the persecution and murder of Jews. Sometimes that meant acquiring the property or homes of Jews who were deported or murdered, or the businesses of Jews forced to immigrate or sent to concentration camps. Other people found jobs in the Nazi regime, which gave them newfound financial or political power and influence. In countries that Germany invaded, many collaborators saw the benefit of assisting their new leaders and took advantage of the opportunity to take revenge on their Jewish neighbours by denouncing them.

Propaganda and Societal Pressure: There was also a great deal of pressure to conform. Even if people were not antisemitic to begin with, Nazi leaders and propaganda provided ample reasons to help them, with time, to come around to this point of view. Nazi ideas about “race” and the supposed inferiority of Jews were taught in schools, and the government arrested political opponents or members of the press who criticized Hitler or the Nazi Party and put them in jails and concentration camps. Few people were brave enough to publicly speak out or to help Jews, especially when they could be arrested or executed for doing so.

Who were the Nazis?

The National Socialist German Workers’ Party—also known as the Nazi Party—was the far-right racist and antisemitic political party led by Adolf Hitler. The Nazi Party was founded in 1920. It sought to lure German workers away from socialism and communism and commit them to its antisemitic and anti-Marxist ideology. Adolf Hitler became the Führer (or Leader) of the Nazi Party and turned it into a mass movement. The Nazi Party grew steadily under Hitler’s leadership. It attracted support from influential people in the military, big business, and society. The Party also absorbed other radical right-wing groups. Hitler emphasized propaganda to attract attention and interest. He used press and posters to create stirring slogans. He displayed eye-catching emblems and uniforms. The Party staged many meetings, parades, and rallies. In addition, it created auxiliary organizations to appeal to specific groups. For example, there were groups for youth, women, teachers, and doctors. The Party became particularly popular with German youth and university students.

Political instability in Germany after World War I meant that Germany was a weak new democracy. Other politicians thought they could control Hitler and his followers, but the Nazis used emergency decrees, violence, and intimidation to quickly seize control. The Nazis abolished all other political parties and ruled the country as a one-party, totalitarian dictatorship from 1933 to 1945. Hitler and the Nazi Party aimed to lead the German

“master race” to victory in the “racial struggle” against “inferior” peoples, especially the Jews. The Party used its power to persecute Jews.

It controlled all aspects of German life and waged a war of territorial conquest in Europe from 1939-1945 (World War II), during which it also carried out a genocide now known as the Holocaust. The Nazis’ power only ended when Germany lost World War II.

Why the Jews?

It is important to remember that Jews were not to blame for the Holocaust, and did not do anything to “cause” antisemitism. Antisemitism, the specific hatred of Jews, had existed in Europe for centuries. The early Christian church had portrayed Jews as unwilling to accept the word of God, or as agents of the devil and murderers of Jesus. (This accusation was renounced by the Vatican in the 1960s.) During the Middle Ages, State and Church laws restricted Jews, preventing them from owning land and holding public office.

Jews were excluded from most occupations, forcing them into pursuits like money-lending, trade, commerce. They were accused of causing plagues, of murdering children for religious rituals, and of secretly conspiring to dominate the world. None of these accusations were true. The second half of the 19th century saw the emergence of yet another kind of antisemitism. At its core was the theory that Jews were not merely a religious group but a separate “race” set apart because of genetically inherited characteristics. Anti-Semites believed racial characteristics could not be overcome by assimilation or even conversion. Jews were said to be dangerous and threatening because of their “Jewish blood.” Antisemitic racism united these pseudoscientific theories with centuries old anti-Jewish stereotypes. These ideas gained wide acceptance. After World War I, the new Nazi Party and its leader, Adolf Hitler, blamed Jews for Germany’s defeat. They claimed that German Jews, a small minority of Germany’s population, had “stabbed Germany in the back.” This too, was untrue—German Jews fought and died for Germany during the war. Historians cannot trace Hitler’s antisemitism to any specific event or incident.

In May 1923 Ludendorff had an agreeable first meeting with Adolf Hitler, and soon he had regular contacts with Nazis. On 8 November 1923, the Bavarian Staatskommissar Gustav von Kahr was addressing a jammed meeting in a large beer hall, the Bürgerbräukeller. Hitler, waving a pistol, jumped onto the stage, announcing that the national revolution was underway. The hall was occupied by armed men who covered the audience with a machine gun, the first move in the Beer Hall Putsch. Hitler announced that he would lead the Reich Government and Ludendorff would command the army. He addressed the now enthusiastically supportive audience and then spent the night in the War Ministry, unsuccessfully trying to obtain the army's backing. The next morning 3,000 armed Nazis formed outside of the Bürgerbräukeller and marched into central Munich, the leaders just behind the flag bearers. They were blocked by a cordon of police, and firing broke out for less than a minute. Several of the Nazis in front were hit or dropped to the ground. Ludendorff and his adjutant Major Streck marched to the police line where they pushed aside the rifle barrels. He was respectfully arrested. He was indignant when he was sent home while the other leaders remained in custody. Four police officers and fourteen Nazis had been killed, including Ludendorff's servant. They were tried in early 1924. Ludendorff was acquitted, but Heinz Schmidt was convicted of chauffeuring him, given a one-year suspended sentence and fined 1,000 marks. Hitler went to prison but was released after nine months. Ludendorff's 60th birthday was celebrated by massed bands and a large torchlight parade. In 1924, he was elected to the Reichstag as a representative of the NSFB (a coalition of the German Völkisch Freedom Party (DVFP) and members of the Nazi Party), serving until 1928. In 1925, he founded the Tannenbergbund, a German nationalist organization which was both anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic, and published literature espousing conspiracy theories involving Jews, Catholics—especially Jesuits—and Freemasons. The Nazis falsely defined Jews as a “race.” Whether a person participated in the rituals of the Jewish faith didn't matter, because the Nazis falsely believed Jews had distinct “Jewish blood.” The Nazis attributed a wide variety of negative stereotypes about Jews and “Jewish” behaviour and saw Jews as the source of all evil: disease, social injustice, cultural decline, capitalism and communism. When the Nazi Party took power in Germany in 1933, their antisemitic racism became official government policy.

Did Hitler brainwash the Germans? Why did so many people go along with his plans?

Hitler and other Nazi Party leaders played a central role in the Holocaust. Nazi propaganda demonized Jews, but the German people were not brainwashed, nor were any of the Nazis’ collaborators. In countries across Europe, tens of thousands of ordinary people actively collaborated with German perpetrators of the Holocaust, each for their own reasons, and many more supported or tolerated the crimes. Millions of ordinary people witnessed the crimes of the Holocaust—in the countryside and city squares, in stores and schools, in homes and workplaces. The Holocaust happened because of millions of individual choices. Some people were motivated by antisemitism, the centuries-old hatred of Jews, or at least tolerated their neighbours’ antisemitism.

As early as the Middle Ages, religious antagonism towards Europe's Jews had resulted in anti-Jewish legislation, expulsions, and violence. In much of Europe, government policies, customs, and laws segregated Jews from the rest of the population, relegated them to particular jobs, and prohibited them from owning land. Although life for Jews had improved in many parts of Europe, including Germany in the century prior to the Holocaust, these prejudices remained. When the Nazi Party came to power in Germany in 1933, many Germans tolerated Nazi antisemitic policies because they supported Nazi attempts to improve the country economically. Hitler was a strong and popular leader, and they believed the Nazi Party was restoring Germany's status as an international power after its humiliating defeat in World War I (1914–1918). Some people recognized that they could personally benefit from the persecution and murder of Jews.

Sometimes that meant acquiring the property or homes of Jews who were deported or murdered, or the businesses of Jews forced to immigrate or sent to concentration camps. Other people found jobs in the Nazi regime, which gave them newfound financial or political power and influence. In countries that Germany invaded, many collaborators saw the benefit of assisting their new leaders and took advantage of the opportunity to take revenge on their Jewish neighbours by denouncing them. There was also a great deal of pressure to conform. Even if people were not antisemitic to begin with, Nazi leaders and propaganda provided ample reasons to help them, with time, to come around to this point of view. Nazi ideas about "race" and the supposed inferiority of Jews were taught in schools, and the government arrested political opponents or members of the press who criticized Hitler or the Nazi Party and put them in jails and concentration camps. Few people were brave enough to publicly speak out or to help Jews, especially when they could be arrested or executed for doing so.

Did Hitler have Jewish relatives?

There is no credible evidence that Hitler had any Jewish ancestors. Hitler's rivals in the early days of the Nazi Party (1919–1921) spread this rumour, and Hitler's own refusal to talk about his ancestors led the rumour to continue. Hitler's father, Alois, was born to an unwed mother, and historians have not been able to confirm the identity of Alois's father. However, there is no evidence that Alois's mother had any contact with anyone who was Jewish. Read *Adolf Hitler: Early Years 1889–1913* to learn more.

How did the Nazis know who was Jewish?

It's important to remember that the Nazis considered Jews to be a separate race from Germans. Jews were said to be dangerous and threatening because of their "Jewish blood." The Nazis considered the Jewish religion irrelevant, so Jews could not just convert to Christianity to escape persecution. The Germans and their collaborators used paper records and local knowledge to identify Jews to be rounded up or killed. Records included those created by Jewish communities of their members, parish records of Protestant and Catholic churches (for converted Jews), government tax records, and police records, including registries of Jews compiled by local, collaborating police. In both Germany and occupied countries, Nazi officials required Jews to identify themselves as Jewish, and many complied, fearing the consequences if they did not. Some were forced to wear markings, like stars on their clothing, or to add the new middle names of "Israel" or "Sara" to their identification documents. In many countries occupied by or allied with Germany during World War II, local citizens often showed authorities where their Jewish neighbours lived, if they did not themselves help in rounding them up.

Jews in hiding everywhere lived in constant fear of being identified and denounced to officials by individuals in exchange for money or other rewards. Some Jews in larger cities tried to "pass" as non-Jews, particularly if they had lighter hair or eyes. (German propaganda often highlighted blonde hair and blue eyes as markers of the "Aryan" race, the supposed superior race to which non-Jewish Germans purportedly belonged. Of course, Hitler and many Nazis leaders did not have blonde hair or blue eyes, but as with all racists, their prejudices were not consistent or logical.) It was dangerous for Jewish people to openly "hide" with papers identifying them as Christians, if they were recognized by a former neighbor and denounced, they could be killed. This was especially true for Jewish men: circumcision is a Jewish ritual, but was uncommon for non-Jews at the time. Jewish men knew they could be physically identified as Jewish. Read *Locating the Victims* to learn more.

Why didn't the Jews just leave?

Similar to their fellow Germans, German Jews were patriotic citizens. More than 10,000 died fighting for Germany in World War I, and countless others were wounded and received medals for their valour and service. The families of many Jews who held German citizenship, regardless of class or profession, had lived in Germany for centuries and were well assimilated by the early 20th century. At first, Nazi Germany targeted the 525,000 Jews in Germany at a gradual pace, attempting to make life so difficult that they would be forced to leave their country. Up until the nationwide anti-Jewish violence of 1938, known as Kristallnacht, many Jews in Germany expected to

be able to hold out against Nazi-sponsored persecution, as they hoped for positive change in German politics. Before World War II, few could imagine or predict killing squads and killing centres. Those who tried to leave had difficulty finding countries willing to take them in, especially since the Nazi regime did not allow them to take their assets out of the country. A substantial percentage tried to go to the United States but American immigration law limited the number of immigrants who could enter the country. The ongoing Great Depression meant that Jews attempting to go to the United States or elsewhere had to prove they could financially support themselves, something that was very difficult since the Germans were robbing them before they could leave. Even when a new country could be found, a great deal of time, paperwork, support, and sometimes money was needed to get there. In many cases, these obstacles could not be overcome.

By 1938, however, about 150,000 German Jews had already left. But after Germany annexed Austria in March 1938, an additional 185,000 Jews came under Nazi rule. Once Germany invaded and occupied Poland, millions of Jews were suddenly living under Nazi occupation. The war made travel very difficult, and other countries, including the United States—were still unwilling to change their immigration laws, now fearing that the new immigrants could be Nazi spies. In October 1941, Germany made it illegal for Jews to emigrate from any territory under its control; by then, Nazi policy had changed from forced emigration to mass murder. Visit the Americans and the Holocaust online exhibition and the Challenges to Escape lesson plan for more information.

Why didn't the Jews fight back?

The idea that Jews did not fight back against the Germans and their allies is false. Jews carried out acts of resistance in every German-occupied country and in the territories of Germany's Axis partners. Against impossible odds, they resisted in ghettos, concentration camps, and killing centres. There were many factors that made resistance difficult, however, including a lack of weapons and resources, deception, fear, and the overwhelming power of the Germans and their collaborators.

Was the Holocaust a secret?

In Europe, the Holocaust was not a secret. Even though the Nazi government controlled the German press and did not publicize mass shooting operations or the existence of killing centres, many Europeans knew that Jews were being rounded up and shot, or deported and murdered. Many individuals—in Germany and collaborators in the countries that Germany occupied or that were aligned with Germany during World War II, actively participated in the stigmatization, isolation, impoverishment, and violence culminating in the mass murder of six million European Jews. People helped in their roles as clerks and confiscators of property; as railway and other transportation employees; as managers or participants in round-ups and deportations; as informants; sometimes as perpetrators of violence against Jews on their own initiative; and sometimes as hand-on killers in killing operations, notably in the mass shootings of Jews and others in occupied Soviet territories in which thousands of eastern Europeans participated as auxiliaries and many more witnessed. Many more people, the onlookers who witnessed persecution or violence against Jews in Nazi Germany and elsewhere—failed to speak out as their neighbours, classmates, and co-workers were isolated and impoverished, socially and legally, then physically. Only a small minority publicly expressed their disapproval. Other individuals actively assisted the victims by purchasing food or other supplies for households to whom shops were closed; providing false identity papers or warnings about upcoming roundups; storing belongings for those in hiding that could be sold off little by little for food; and sheltering those who evaded capture, a form of help that, if discovered, especially in Nazi Germany and occupied eastern Europe, was punished by arrest and often execution.

Did the Nazis only go after Jews or other people too?

Although Jews were the main target of Nazi hatred, they were not the only group persecuted. Other individuals and groups were considered "undesirable" and "enemies of the state." Once the voices of political opponents were silenced, the Nazis stepped up their terror against other "outsiders." Some were targeted because of their perceived racial and biological inferiority: Roma, people with disabilities, some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others), Soviet prisoners of war, and Black people. Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological or behavioural grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, men who were accused of "homosexuality," and people whom the regime identified as "a-socials" and "professional criminals."

Did Americans know about the Holocaust and what did they do?

American newspapers reported frequently on Hitler and Nazi Germany throughout the 1930s. Americans read headlines about book burning, about Jews being attacked on the street, and about the Nuremberg Race laws in 1935, when German Jews were stripped of their German citizenship. The Kristallnacht attacks in November 1938 were front-page news in the United States for weeks. Americans staged protests and rallies in support of German Jews, and sent petitions to the US government calling for action. But these protests never became a sustained

movement, and most Americans were still not in favour of allowing more immigrants into the United States, particularly if the immigrants were Jewish.

It was very difficult to immigrate to the United States. In 1924, the US Congress passed the Johnson-Reed Act in order to set limits on the maximum number of immigrant visas that could be issued per year to people born in each country. These quotas were designed to limit the immigration of people considered “racially undesirable,” including southern and eastern European Jews. Unlike today, the United States had no refugee policy, and Jews could not come as asylum seekers or migrants. Approximately 180,000-220,000 European Jews immigrated to the United States between 1933-1945, most of them between 1938-1941.

The US Government learned about the systematic killing of Jews as soon as it began in the Soviet Union in 1941. In late November 1942, just weeks after American and British troops began to battle the Germans and their allies in North Africa, newspapers reported that two million Jews already had been murdered as part of the Nazi regime’s annihilation plan. In response, the United States and eleven other Allied countries issued a stern declaration, vowing to punish the perpetrators of this “bestial policy of cold-blooded extermination” after the war had been won. Yet saving Jews and others targeted for murder by the Nazi regime and its collaborators never became a priority.

As more information about Nazi mass murder reached the United States, public protests and protests within the Roosevelt administration led President Roosevelt to create the War Refugee Board in January 1944. The establishment of the War Refugee Board marked the first time the US government adopted a policy of trying to rescue victims of Nazi persecution. The War Refugee Board coordinated the work of both US and international refugee aid organizations, sending millions of dollars into German-occupied Europe for relief and rescue. The War Refugee Board also recommended to the War Department that the US military bomb the gas chambers at Auschwitz Birkenau, but the War Department responded that it was not a military priority. The War Refugee Board’s final report estimated that it rescued “tens of thousands” of people and assisted “hundreds of thousands” more.

The US military fought for four years to defend democracy during World War II, and more than 400,000 Americans died. The American people, soldiers and civilians alike, made enormous sacrifices to free Europe from Nazi oppression. The United States could have done more to publicize information about Nazi atrocities, to pressure the other Allies and neutral nations to help endangered Jews, and to support resistance groups against the Nazis. Prior to the war, the US government could have enlarged or filled its immigration quotas to allow more Jewish refugees to enter the country. These acts together might have reduced the death toll, but they would not have prevented the Holocaust. Visit the Americans and the Holocaust online exhibition for more information.

How did the Holocaust end?

The Holocaust ended in May 1945 with the military defeat of Nazi Germany and its European collaborators in World War II. Although the liberation of Nazi camps was not a primary objective of the Allied military campaign, Soviet, US, British, and Canadian troops freed prisoners from their SS guards, provided them with food and badly needed medical support, and collected evidence for war crimes trials.

How do we know how many people died in the Holocaust?

The Holocaust is the best documented case of genocide. Despite this, calculating the exact numbers of individuals who were killed as the result of Nazi policies is an impossible task. There is no single wartime document that spells out how many people were killed. Historians estimate that six million Jews were murdered during the Holocaust, including approximately 2.5 million in killing centres, two million in mass shooting operations, and more than 800,000 in ghettos. Although the Holocaust specifically refers to the murder of European Jews, Nazi Germany and its collaborators also killed non-Jews, including seven million Soviet citizens, three million Soviet prisoners of war, 1.8 million non-Jewish Polish civilians, between 250,000-500,000 Roma, and 250,000 people with physical and mental disabilities.

What happened to the Nazis after the Holocaust?

Beginning in the winter of 1942, the governments of the Allied powers announced their intent to punish Nazi war criminals. In August 1945, three months after the end of World War II, France, the Soviet Union, Great Britain, and the United States created an International Military Tribunal (IMT) to try German leaders. After much debate, twenty-four defendants were chosen to represent a cross-section of Nazi diplomatic, economic, political, and military leadership. Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, and Joseph Goebbels could not be tried because they committed suicide at the end of the war or soon afterwards.

The trial began on November 20, 1945, in the Palace of Justice in Nuremberg, Germany. The Nazi defendants were indicted on four charges:

- Conspiracy to commit crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity;
- Crimes against peace;
- War crimes; and
- Crimes against humanity.

The Holocaust was not the main focus of the trial, but considerable evidence was presented about the “Final Solution,” the Nazi plan to exterminate the Jewish people. This information included the mass murder operations at Auschwitz, the destruction of the Warsaw ghetto, and the estimate of six million Jewish victims. The trial hearings ended on September 1, 1946. On October 1, 1946, the judges delivered their verdict. They convicted nineteen of the defendants and acquitted three. The judges of the IMT sentenced twelve defendants to death.

The IMT trial is the most famous of the war crimes trials held after World War II. During the five years that followed the end of the war, hundreds of thousands of Nazi perpetrators and their collaborators were tried by other courts in Germany and in the countries that were allied to or occupied by Nazi Germany. The Allied military authorities, which now occupied the defeated Germany, began a process of denazification. “Denazification” entailed renaming streets, parks, and buildings that had Nazi or militaristic associations; removing monuments, statues, signs, and emblems linked with Nazism or militarism; confiscating Nazi Party property; eliminating Nazi propaganda from education, the German media, and the many religious institutions which had pro-Nazi leaders and clergymen; and prohibiting Nazi or military parades, anthems, or the public display of Nazi symbols. The distribution of Nazi propaganda continues to be illegal in Germany today.

Why do we study the Holocaust?

The Holocaust was a watershed event, not only in the 20th century but also in the entire course of human history. Studying the Holocaust reminds us that democratic institutions and values are not automatically sustained, but need to be appreciated, nurtured, and protected. The Holocaust was not an accident in history; it occurred because individuals, organizations, and governments made choices that not only legalized discrimination but also allowed prejudice, hatred, and ultimately mass murder to occur. It also teaches us that silence and indifference to the suffering of others, or to the infringement of civil rights in any society, can, however unintentionally, perpetuate these problems.

What were the conditions that made the Holocaust possible?

IMPACT OF WORLD WAR I.

The mass destruction and loss of life caused by World War I (1914-1918) ushered in a new era of instability. In the wake of this instability, extremist movements such as Communism, Fascism, and National Socialism emerged.

Centuries-old monarchies dissolved in the face of widespread social unrest. The Russian Revolution of 1917 that led to the downfall of the Russian tsar stoked fears of communist revolution in middle- and upper-class circles in western societies. The Russian communist rulers abolished private property and banned religious worship. They also aimed to start revolutions all over the world, especially Germany.

In Germany, people of all political leanings were traumatized by war, the nation’s humiliating defeat, and the harsh terms of the peace settlement, the Treaty of Versailles. The Weimar Republic, which replaced Germany’s monarchy and signed the Treaty of Versailles, struggled to gain support. Many Germans blamed the Weimar Republic for their nation’s fall from greatness. Its leaders were unable to control street violence waged by armed groups of Germans on both the extreme left and right. Leaders of the republic were forced to put down coup attempts, while no political party was able to win a majority after 1919. The country also faced severe economic crises.

The worldwide economic Depression, starting in 1929, hit Germany particularly hard. The inability of the old political parties to give the unemployed, hungry, and desperate Germans hope gave the Nazi Party its chance. The leader of this young, extremist, and openly anti-democratic party, Adolf Hitler, skilfully played on the fears and grievances of Germans to win popular support. In 1933, leading conservatives, who supported authoritarian or non-democratic rule, lobbied for Hitler’s appointment as head of government (Chancellor).

They wrongly assumed they could control him. Having lost faith in the ability of democratic institutions to improve their lives, many Germans went along when the Nazis suspended the constitution, replaced the German republic with a dictatorship, and allowed Hitler alone to become the highest law of the land. In exchange for a loss of individual rights and freedoms, they hoped that Hitler would improve the economy, put an end to the Communist threat, and make Germany a powerful and proud nation again.

THE NAZIS.

The Holocaust could not have happened without the Nazis' rise to power and their destruction of German democracy. When Adolf Hitler took power in January 1933, Germany was a republic with democratic institutions. Its constitution recognized and protected the equal rights of all individuals, including Jews. The Nazis established a dictatorship that limited basic rights and freedoms. They promoted the ideal of a "national community" made up of "German-blooded" people.

Excluded from this community and viewed as threats to it were Jews, Roma, individuals with physical and mental disabilities, and others seen as racially inferior or whose beliefs or behaviour were not tolerated by the Nazis.

The Nazi regime sought to remove Jews from Germany's political, social, economic and cultural life. Many Germans assisted or accepted the regime's efforts. Active Nazis, including Hitler Youth, used intimidation against Jews and non-Jews to enforce the new social and cultural norms. Members of Nazi professional organizations participated in excluding Jews from most professions. Government employees, lawyers, and judges drafted and enforced laws and decrees that deprived German Jews of their citizenship, rights, businesses, livelihoods, and property, and excluded them from public life.



Establishing racial descent by measuring an ear at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology. Germany, date uncertain.

Before World War II, the ultimate aim of the Nazi regime's persecution of the Jews was to drive them to emigrate. Many Jews looked for safe havens abroad, including the United States. But emigration was difficult, costly, and complicated, and few countries even offered chances to relocate. However, World War II all but cut off the possibility of flight. And, under the cover of war, the Nazis' ideological hatred of Jews became genocidal.

ANTISEMITISM

Jews, a small religious and ethnic minority in Christian Europe and a very tiny minority in Germany (less than one percent of the population), had faced longstanding discrimination and persecution. They suffered periods of violence in Russia and other parts of eastern Europe, where the population was concentrated in the early twentieth century. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, millions of Jews left Russia. Many of them were seeking better lives in

the United States. Before the Nazis took power, their intolerance of Jews and other minorities was well known. Yet most Germans who voted for the Nazi Party in the early 1930s did not do so primarily because of antisemitism. Once the Nazis were in power, however, antisemitism became public, official government policy. Beliefs that Jews were a dangerous threat were spread through propaganda that pervaded daily life: radio, schools, police, military, and Hitler Youth training, and all forms of popular culture. The Nazis' abolition of freedom of speech and a free press ensured that Germans heard no voices advocating tolerance.

The constant barrage of antisemitic propaganda had its intended effect. It contributed to a climate of indifference toward the persecution of Jews in Germany. German Jews, who had been granted equal rights in Germany in 1871 and who had seen those rights protected by the state until 1933, were quickly transformed from citizens into outcasts. During the war, the Nazis used propaganda and other means to stir up existing anti-Jewish prejudices in countries that came under their rule. These actions helped when they needed local support in persecuting Jews.

IDEOLOGY.

Nazi beliefs or ideology were based on extreme forms of racism and antisemitism. The Nazis claimed that humankind is divided into groups, and the members of each group share the same "blood" or racial characteristics. "German-blooded" people were "superior" to the other groups, while some groups were so "inferior" as to be "subhuman." According to the Nazis, "the Jews" (people of Jewish descent, regardless of whether they practiced Judaism) made up a group that was not only "subhuman" but also "the most dangerous enemy of the German people." Without these beliefs, the Nazis' development of a program of genocide could not have happened.

The Nazi drive to develop the Germans into a “master race” that would dominate Europe for generations to come involved several requirements. One was to ensure that the Germans were racially “pure” and healthy. This meant barring Germans from marrying persons viewed as inferior, especially Jews, or as defective, such as persons with physical or mental disabilities. Another requirement was to conquer territory that would serve as “living space” for the German master race. The results were persecution and, during wartime, the murder of civilians seen as threats to this quest for long-term survival and domination.

WORLD WAR II.

The genocide of Europe’s Jews and murder of other targeted groups could not have happened without World War II and German military successes. The war, which Hitler declared was for the survival of the Germans, provided the Nazi regime with the motive as well as the opportunity to commit systematic mass murder.

This began with disabled patients living in mental health facilities and other care institutions in Germany, whom Nazis considered to be a drain on resources and “life unworthy of life.” Because the Nazis believed the Jews were the Germans’ most dangerous enemy, the Nazis undertook efforts to destroy them entirely. Germany’s military victories extended its reach to almost all the Jews in Europe. There were fewer than 300,000 Jews in Germany when the war began; the vast majority of the almost six million Jews who were killed lived in territory Germany conquered.

What was the role of leaders and ordinary people?

Nazi leaders received the active help of countless officials and ordinary people in Germany and the seventeen other countries where the victims lived. Reasons for the help of non-Germans included self-interest and involved political and personal calculations. Foreign leaders, officials, and ordinary people were more cooperative when it looked like Germany would win the war and be the master of Europe for the future. Most people stood by as Jews were rounded up to be shot or transported “to the East.” They witnessed the suffering of their neighbours. Sometimes, they benefited, as they looted property and took over homes after the owners were gone. A few tried to help the victims.

The Impact of World War I.

World War I was one of the most destructive wars in modern history. The opposing sides in World War I were the Entente Powers and the Central Powers. Nearly ten million soldiers died. The enormous losses on all sides resulted in part from the introduction of new weapons like the machine gun and gas warfare. Military leaders failed to adjust their tactics to the increasingly mechanized nature of warfare. A policy of attrition, particularly on the Western Front, cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of soldiers. No official agencies kept careful track of civilian losses during the war years. Scholars suggest that as many as thirteen million non-combatants died as a direct or indirect result of the war. The conflict uprooted or displaced millions of persons from their homes in Europe and Asia Minor. Property and industry losses were catastrophic, especially in France, Belgium, Poland, and Serbia, where fighting had been heaviest.

The "Fourteen Points"

In January 1918, some ten months before the end of World War I, US President Woodrow Wilson had written a list of proposed war aims which he called the “Fourteen Points.” Eight of these points dealt specifically with territorial and political settlements to accompany a victory of the Entente Powers (Great Britain, France, and Russia). One important point was the idea of national self-determination for ethnic populations in Europe. Other points focused on preventing war in the future. The last principle proposed a League of Nations to arbitrate international disputes. Wilson hoped his proposal would bring about a just and lasting peace: a “peace without victory.”

German leaders signed the armistice (an agreement to stop fighting) in the Compiègne Forest on November 11, 1918. Many of them believed then that the Fourteen Points would form the basis of the future peace treaty. But when the heads of the governments of the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy met in Paris to discuss treaty terms, the European countries of the “Big Four” rejected this approach.

After the devastation of World War I, the victorious Western powers (Great Britain, the United States, France, and Italy, known as the “Big Four”) imposed a series of treaties upon the defeated Central Powers (Germany, Austria–Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey).

Viewing Germany as the chief instigator of the conflict, the European Allied powers decided instead to impose harsh treaty terms upon defeated Germany. The treaty was presented to the German delegation for signature on May 7, 1919, at the Palace of Versailles near Paris. The Treaty of Versailles held Germany responsible for starting the war and liable for massive material damages.

Provisions of the Versailles Treaty.

Germany lost 13 percent of its territory, including 10 percent of its population. The Treaty of Versailles forced Germany to:

- concede Eupen-Malmédy to Belgium
- concede the Hultschin district to Czechoslovakia
- concede Poznan, West Prussia, and Upper Silesia to Poland
- return Alsace and Lorraine, annexed in 1871 after the Franco-Prussian War, to France.

The treaty called for:

- demilitarization and occupation of the Rhineland
- special status for the Saarland under French control
- referendums to determine the future of areas in northern Schleswig on the Danish-German frontier and parts of Upper Silesia on the border with Poland.

Further, all German overseas colonies were taken away from Germany and became League of Nation Mandates. The city of Danzig (today Gdansk), with its large ethnically German population, became a Free City.

Perhaps the most humiliating portion of the treaty for defeated Germany was Article 231, commonly known as the "War Guilt Clause." This clause forced the German nation to accept complete responsibility for starting the War. As such, Germany was to be held liable for all material damages.

France's premier, Georges Clemenceau, in particular, insisted on imposing enormous reparation payments. While aware that Germany would probably not be able to pay such a towering debt, Clemenceau and the French still greatly feared rapid German recovery and a new war against France. The French sought to limit Germany's potential to regain its economic superiority and also to rearm. The German army was to be limited to 100,000 men. Conscription was forbidden. The treaty restricted the Navy to vessels under 10,000 tons, with a ban on the acquisition or maintenance of a submarine fleet. Germany was forbidden to maintain an air force. Finally, Germany was required to conduct war crimes proceedings against the Kaiser and other leaders for waging aggressive war. The subsequent Leipzig Trials, without the Kaiser or other significant national leaders in the dock, resulted largely in acquittals. They were widely perceived as a sham, even in Germany.

Impact of the Treaty.

The harsh terms of the peace treaty did not ultimately help to settle the international disputes which had initiated World War I. On the contrary, the treaty got in the way of inter-European cooperation and intensified the underlying issues which had caused the war in the first place. For the populations of the defeated powers—Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Bulgaria—the peace treaties came across as unfair punishment. Their governments quickly resorted to violating the military and financial terms of the treaties. This was the case whether the governments were democratic as in Germany or Austria, or authoritarian in the case of Hungary and Bulgaria. Efforts to revise and defy provisions of the peace became a key element in their foreign policies and became a destabilizing factor in international politics.

A "dictated peace?"

The newly formed German democratic government saw the Versailles Treaty as a "dictated peace" (Diktat). The war guilt clause, huge reparation payments, and limitations on the German military seemed particularly oppressive to most Germans. To many Germans, the treaty seemed to contradict the very first of Wilson's Fourteen Points, which called for transparency in peace negotiations and diplomacy. Revision of the Versailles Treaty was one of the platforms that gave radical right-wing parties in Germany such credibility to mainstream voters in the 1920s and early 1930s. Among these parties was Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party. Promises to rearm, reclaim German territory, remilitarize the Rhineland, and regain European and world prominence after the humiliating defeat and peace appealed to ultranationalist sentiment. These promises helped some average voters to overlook the more radical tenets of Nazi ideology.

Stab-in-the-Back Legend.

Finally, the efforts of the Western European powers to marginalize Germany through the Versailles Treaty undermined and isolated German democratic leaders. Some in the general population believed that Germany had

been “stabbed in the back” by the “November criminals”—those who had helped to form the new Weimar government and negotiate the peace. Many Germans “forgot” that they had applauded the fall of Germany’s emperor, initially welcomed parliamentary democratic reform, and celebrated the armistice. They recalled only that the German Left—commonly seen as Socialists, Communists, and Jews—had surrendered German honor to a shameful peace. This Dolchstoßlegende (stab-in-the-back legend) helped to discredit the German socialist and liberal circles who were most committed to Germany’s fragile democratic experiment. The difficulties caused by social and economic unrest in the aftermath of World War I and its peace undermined democratic solutions in Weimar Germany. German voters ultimately found this kind of leadership in Adolf Hitler and his Nazi Party.

FREEMASONRY

Hitler based his hatred of Freemasonry on the belief that through it, Jews sidestepped the racial and legal barriers that marginalized them in European society. Consequently, one of Hitler’s first acts after seizing power was to shut the lodges down; a task that was completed in just two years.

When war broke out four years later, Hitler’s anti-Masonic attitude spread along with his invading armies, prompting Sven Lunden, a correspondent with the American Mercury, to proclaim that “there is only one group of men whom the Nazis and the Fascists hate more than the Jews. They are the Freemasons.”

Though an intriguing declaration, to be sure, Lunden was wrong; the Nazis did not hate Freemasons more than Jews. In fact, Nazis didn’t hate Freemasons at all; the Nazis hated “Freemasonry,” but not necessarily “Freemasons.” The ideology was what the Nazis hated, not the men. On the contrary, the men who made up the bulk of the German Masonic lodges were very people that had increasingly gravitated toward the regime during the Weimar Republic and supported it after the seizure of power. They were established, educated, middle-class and professional men of good German stock. The only thing keeping the Nazis from welcoming these men was their membership, either past or present, with a fraternity that, in the words of Alfred Rosenberg, “worked for the loosening of state, national and social bonds.”

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government by Command of Her Majesty December 2016.

Introduction Anti-Semitism continues to be a problem in this country and it is right that as a Government we are able to demonstrate the seriousness with which we take it, as we do for other forms of hate crime. Anti-Semitism must be understood for what it is – an attack on the identity of people who live, contribute and our valued in our society.

Our relationship with the Jewish community has been built on the solid work of the cross-Government working group on tackling anti-Semitism which ensures that we are alive to any issues and concerns of the Jewish community and can respond quickly. The Home Affairs Select Committee report’s recommendations are in the main addressed to political parties and their leadership. This response focuses on the recommendations made to Government.

Defining Anti-Semitism. We recommend that the IHRA definition, with our additional caveats, should be formally adopted by the UK Government, law enforcement agencies and all political parties, to assist them in determining whether or not an incident or discourse can be regarded as antisemitic. ‘Additional Caveats’ (point 3) We broadly accept the IHRA definition, but propose two additional clarifications to ensure that freedom of speech is maintained in the context of discourse about Israel and Palestine, without allowing antisemitism to permeate any debate. The definition should include the following statements: It is not antisemitic to criticise the Government of Israel, without additional evidence to suggest antisemitic intent. It is not antisemitic to hold the Israeli Government to the same standards as other liberal democracies, or to take a particular interest in the Israeli Government’s policies or actions, without additional evidence to suggest antisemitic intent.

Response. Government has agreed to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition on anti-Semitism. We believe that references within the definition stating that “criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic” are sufficient to ensure freedom of speech. It is worth noting that an earlier version of the definition is being used by the police and forms part of the National Police Chief’s Council Hate Crime Manual for officers. We believe that the definition is a useful tool for criminal justice agencies and other public bodies to use to understand how anti-Semitism manifests itself in the 21st century.

‘Zionism’ as a concept remains a valid topic for academic and political debate, both within and outside Israel. The word ‘Zionist’ (or worse, ‘Zio’) as a term of abuse, however, has no place in a civilised society. It has been tarnished by its repeated use in antisemitic and aggressive contexts. Anti-Semites frequently use the word ‘Zionist’

when they are in fact referring to Jews, whether in Israel or elsewhere. Those claiming to be “anti-Zionist, not antisemitic” should do so in the knowledge that 59% of British Jewish people consider themselves to be Zionists. If these individuals genuinely mean only to criticise the policies of the Government of Israel, and have no intention to offend British Jewish people, they should criticise “the Israeli Government,” and not “Zionists.” For the purposes of criminal or disciplinary investigations, use of the words ‘Zionist’ or ‘Zio’ in an accusatory or abusive context should be considered inflammatory and potentially antisemitic. This should be communicated by the Government and political parties to those responsible for determining whether or not an incident should be regarded as antisemitic. Response The Crown Prosecution Service will consider the words ‘Zionist’ or ‘Zio’ for inclusion as part of its current guidance for prosecutors. The guidance covers lessons from practice and reflects on the changing nature of language and terminology in relation to anti-Semitism. As with all terminology, consideration would be given to all the facts and the specific circumstances of its use.

The rise of anti-Semitism.

Police-recorded antisemitic crime is almost non-existent in some parts of England, as illustrated by the data provided as an Annex to this report. We question why some police forces, operating in counties in which thousands of Jewish people live, have recorded few or no antisemitic crimes. The NPCC should investigate the causes of this apparent underreporting and provide extra support, where needed, to police forces with less experience of investigating antisemitic incidents. Response The National Police Chiefs’ Council has agreed an Information Sharing Agreement with the Community Security Trust (CST): NPCC One of its purposes is to allow the sharing of crime information to identify gaps in the hate crime data. The police and the CST hold regular meetings to examine and compare the two sets of data. The findings of these meetings are considered by ACC Mark Hamilton, who is the National Policing Lead for hate crime. Advice is also being provided to individual police areas as part of the commitment to provide disaggregated data for all religious hate crime data within the Annual Data Requirement for police.

Although the UK remains one of the least antisemitic countries in Europe, it is alarming that recent surveys show that as many as one in twenty adults in the UK could be characterised as “clearly antisemitic.” The stark increase in potentially antisemitic views between 2014 and 2015 is a trend that will concern many. There is a real risk that the UK is moving in the wrong direction on antisemitism, in contrast to many other countries in Western Europe. The fact that it seems to have entered political discourse is a particular concern. This should be a real wake up call for those who value the UK’s proud, multi-cultural democracy. The Government, police and prosecuting authorities must monitor this situation carefully and pursue a robust, zero tolerance approach to this problem. Response In response to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on anti-Semitism, the Government, Police and CPS highlighted a wide range of activities and commitments which together provide a proactive response to anti-Semitism. This approach not only provides for tangible improvement in terms of services and outcomes but allows for the monitoring of trends over time, in partnership with core partners, the Community Security Trust and supported by stakeholders involved on the cross Government Working Group on anti-Semitism.

It is concerning that the Crime Survey of England and Wales (CSEW) is not able to provide reliable baseline figures on the prevalence of self-reported experiences of antisemitic crime. The majority of British Jewish people live in Greater London, so a national sample would have to be prohibitively large in order to obtain reliable data on antisemitism. CST figures, while valuable, may reflect trends in reporting as well as overall prevalence. The Home Office and the Office for National Statistics should commission enhanced samples in Greater London and other areas with large Jewish populations, to ensure that the CSEW can collect reliable data on the prevalence of antisemitism. Response This Government has done more than any other to ensure that crime statistics are independent, accurate and can be trusted - including the decision to transfer responsibility for publishing them to the Office for National Statistics (ONS). Decisions on changes to CSEW are for the ONS to consider.

We express our gratitude to Community Security Trust for the impressive and professional work that they do to keep British people safe. It is appalling that such stringent measures are necessary to ensure the safety of British Jewish people, and it is right that funding for that security should come predominantly from the Government: the safety of any British community should never be reliant on the generosity of individuals within that community. We recommend that this funding stream continues on an annual basis, rather than being dependent on a Government Minister making an announcement at CST’s annual dinner. The Government should also be responsive to any requests for increased resources arising from any ongoing increase in antisemitism. Response Following the national threat level increase in August 2014, there was extensive mapping of Jewish community sites by the police, protective security advice was provided and patrolling arrangements put in place.

These arrangements were reviewed and further supplemented following events in Paris, and there has been increased patrolling at key sites (including synagogues, Jewish schools and other Jewish community sites). Following a series of terrorist attacks on the Jewish community in Europe (Toulouse, Brussels, Paris, Copenhagen) the Prime Minister determined that funding to support enhanced security measures for the UK Jewish community beyond the ongoing and extensive policing efforts was required to further enhance security and provide reassurance to the whole community, with a grant put in place in June 2015 with the CST as the Grant Recipient. For 2016-17 onwards the Home office Jewish Community Protective Security Grant has also incorporated the Department for Education Schools Security Grant, providing security guarding at Jewish state and Free schools. This combined Grant funds, predominantly, security guarding for all Jewish state, free and independent schools, colleges and nurseries. It also funds security guarding at Jewish community sites and synagogues during operational hours on a risk assessed basis. It is currently too early to confirm specific spending for the next financial year. These and other security arrangements remain under review by Government and the police, and all appropriate measures will be put in place to combat any threats and to ensure the safety and security of all our communities.'

Campus Anti-Semitism. Free speech must be maintained, and it is perfectly legitimate for students to campaign against the actions of the Israeli Government. But resources should be provided to ensure that students are well-informed about both sides of the argument, both Israeli and Palestinian, and to support them in developing a sensitive, nuanced understanding of Middle Eastern politics in general. Universities UK should work with appropriate student groups to produce a resource for students, lecturers and student societies on how to deal sensitively with the Israel/Palestine conflict, and how to ensure that pro-Palestinian campaigns avoid drawing on antisemitic rhetoric. This should be distributed widely via student unions, university staff and social media. Response The Government agrees with the Select Committee's criticism of the National Union of Students' failure to take sufficiently seriously the issue of anti-Semitism on campus, and we concur with the Select Committee's analysis that left-leaning student political organisations have allowed anti-Semitism to emerge. Universities should ensure there is a safe environment for both academic inquiry and freedom of speech within the law. Students should be exposed to challenging views; so-called "safe space" policies should not be used to suppress healthy and legitimate debate. But there can be no justification for hatred, extremism, discrimination or intimidation that seeks to curtail fundamental British liberties of freedom of speech, freedom of association and freedom of worship, or which disregards British values of tolerance and respect to others.

In November 2015, the Universities Minister Jo Johnson invited Universities UK (UUK) to convene a sexual violence and harassment taskforce to "build on existing efforts to bring about cultural change and provide new guidance for the sector".

The taskforce published recommendations on 21 October 2016 for dealing with harassment, sexual violence and hate crimes in universities. The report emphasises that a high-visibility zero tolerance approach should be embedded and regularly reaffirmed at universities, to ensure staff and students understand the importance of fostering a zero tolerance culture. Government has asked UUK to survey the sector six months after publication of the report to assess institutions' progress in implementing the recommendations.