

The Holocaust: Under the Cover of War

By Walter S. Zapotoczny

The Holocaust was not unique to history. The twentieth century has been the century of unrestrained global warfare in which the value of individual human life has been alarmingly cheapened. The First World War of 1914-18 inflicted massive casualties and with pointlessness. The continent of Europe became desensitized. Under cover of that war, in 1915, the Ottoman Turks massacred over a million Armenians in the century's first systematic genocide. As the Second World War progressed towards its third year, the Nazis' seeming invincibility strengthened their arrogant belief that nothing could stand in the way of their establishing the 'Thousand Year Reich' Hitler had promised them. The brutalizing theater of war could provide them with the context in which their ugly theories of racial domination could be put into practice.

By the end of 1934, Hitler was in absolute control of Germany, and his campaign against the Jews was in full swing. The Nazis claimed the Jews corrupted pure German culture with their "foreign" and "mongrel" influence. They portrayed the Jews as evil and cowardly, and Germans as hardworking, courageous, and honest. The Jews, the Nazis claimed, who were heavily represented in finance, commerce, the press, literature, theater, and the arts, had weakened Germany's economy and culture. The massive government-supported propaganda machine created a racial anti-Semitism, which was different from the longstanding anti-Semitic tradition of the Christian churches. The Nazis tried various policies to encourage the Jews to immigrate.

An emigration policy which had not been able to keep pace with Hitler's peacetime acquisitions fell apart almost completely with the outbreak of war. Yet, with each wartime acquisition the Jewish problem took on larger and larger dimensions. The imminent collapse of Russia would bring another 4 million Jews under Nazi control. If there were to be a solution to the Jewish problem, it would require a drastically new approach.

The absolute objectives envisioned for Jewish policies prior to the war virtually insured their failure. No Jewish policy could be pursued in the fantasy world created by Nazi propaganda. Policies had to be pursued in a world structured by unemployment, foreign currency shortages, a need for imports, German military weakness, pressure from outside Germany, and the very real fact of bitter intra-party rivalries. The search for a solution to the Jewish problem had been set in motion by the anti-Semitic energies, which constituted the heart of Nazism. It was driven forward by the frustrations of every successive policy failure. A more extreme approach appeared to be the only alternative to the less-than-total solutions, which had proved unsatisfactory or unworkable.

The Nazis, under cover of the war, developed the technology, bureaucracy, and psychology of hate to efficiently murder millions of 'undesirables' & Jews. Mass extermination of millions by shooting & gassing characterizes this 2nd phase, 1941-1945, of the period of World War II. In the months following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, on June 22, 1941, Jews, political leaders, communists, and many Gypsies were killed in mass.

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