

Events of the Holocaust

The Holocaust rapidly progressed to genocide during WWII. As difficult as it can be to hear about this tragic period in history, the Yad Vashem International School for Holocaust Studies contends that the break out of genocide happened first among the German occupied territories to the east of Germany—that the peoples and militias in occupied territories combined with German forces to commit the first murders. These first executions were more because of the "murderous spirit" against Jewish peoples than because of orders from Hitler, which came later to erect the death camps.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GPXPjZurupc>

Numbers of the Holocaust

Often, we hear the statistic that approximately 6 million people were killed in the Holocaust, but to understand that statistic, we must be aware that:

- **the number 6 million represents a vast number of people**—more than we can easily imagine. One way to think of this number of people is to realize that it roughly equals the entire population—adults, children and infants—of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta.
- **the number 6 million applies specifically to the Jewish victims.** The Jews were the target of the largest, most brutal and concentrated Nazi atrocities, but we must remember that the Nazis treated all people they saw as inferior or non-Aryan in similar ways. The Nazis subjected groups including Roma people (once called "Gypsies"), homosexuals, people with disabilities, Serbs, Poles, Russians, and prisoners of war to imprisonment, starvation, forced labor, mass execution and other forms of abuse. The actual number of European citizens exterminated by the Nazis is much higher than 6 million!
- **the number 6 million is composed of 6 million individuals.** Every single victim of the Holocaust had a name, a family, a story, and a future that ended too soon in death.