

OVERVIEW - PATH TO NAZI GENOCIDE

Film Chapters

Prologue (Starts at 00:00)

Aftermath of World War I and the Rise of Nazism, 1918–1933 (Starts at 00:58)

In the aftermath of World War I, Germans struggled to understand their country's uncertain future. Citizens faced poor economic conditions, skyrocketing unemployment, political instability, and profound social change. While downplaying more extreme goals, Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party offered simple solutions to Germany's problems, exploiting people's fears, frustrations, and hopes to win broad support.

Discussion Question

- How did conditions in Germany and Europe at the end of World War I contribute to the rise and triumph of Nazism in Germany?

Building a National Community, 1933–1936 (Starts at 12:22)

With the rise of support for the Nazi Party in the 1920s and early 1930s, President Paul von Hindenburg invited Hitler to serve as Chancellor in a coalition government. After Hindenburg's death, Hitler declared himself Führer and Reich Chancellor, leader of the nation and head of the government. The Nazi Party boosted the economy's recovery and national morale with huge public works projects for the unemployed and with open defiance of the Treaty of Versailles. They were delivering on their promises to restore and strengthen the nation. Their achievements encouraged many people to overlook, or even to support, radical Nazi policies.

Discussion Question

- How did the German government under Nazi rule build support among the German people?

From Citizens to Outcasts, 1933–1938 (Starts at 18:12)

Through hundreds of legal measures, the Nazi-led German government gradually excluded Jews from public life, the professions, and public education. The goal of Nazi propaganda was to demonize Jews and to create a climate of hostility and indifference toward their plight. On Kristallnacht—the Night of Broken Glass—Jewish businesses and synagogues were destroyed in the first act of state-sponsored violence against the Jewish community. Many Jews who had the means tried to leave Germany but encountered countless bureaucratic hurdles.

Discussion Question

- How did Nazi Germany gradually isolate, segregate, impoverish, and incarcerate Jews and persecute other perceived enemies of the state between 1933 and 1939?

World War II and the Holocaust, 1939–1945 (Starts at 24:34)

GEORGIA COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST

With the start of the Second World War and a swift succession of German victories, the Nazi regime began realizing its longstanding goal of territorial expansion. Under conditions of war and military occupation, they could pursue racial goals with more radical measures. The German Army, military, SS,

and German police units took an active part in authorized mass murders of Jews in the Soviet Union. The Germans and their collaborators deported roughly 2.7 million Jews and others from occupied Europe to killing centers in German-occupied Poland. At the largest of the camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau, transports arrived from all across Europe. The camps of Majdanek and Auschwitz were the first liberated, as Soviet troops reached Poland. As more Allied soldiers saw the camps with their own eyes, the truth was undeniable.

Discussion Questions

- How did the Nazis lead Germany to war in Europe and, with their collaborators, kill millions—including systematically murdering six million Jewish people?
- Why is learning about the Holocaust important?

Sources and Credits (Starts at 37:25)

Teacher Resources

- **Lesson Plan: The Path to Nazi Genocide (PDF)**: Organized around the 38-minute documentary, *The Path to Nazi Genocide*, these materials and discussion questions provide students with an introduction to the Nazi rise to power and the Holocaust.
- **Lesson Plan: Connecting the Timeline Activity to The Path to Nazi Genocide (PDF)**: This lesson the impact of state-sponsored antisemitism and the intersections of World War II and the Holocaust using *The Path to Nazi Genocide* and the Timeline Activity.
- **Viewing Guide and Answer Key (PDF)**: Questions for students to answer while watching *The Path to Nazi Genocide*.