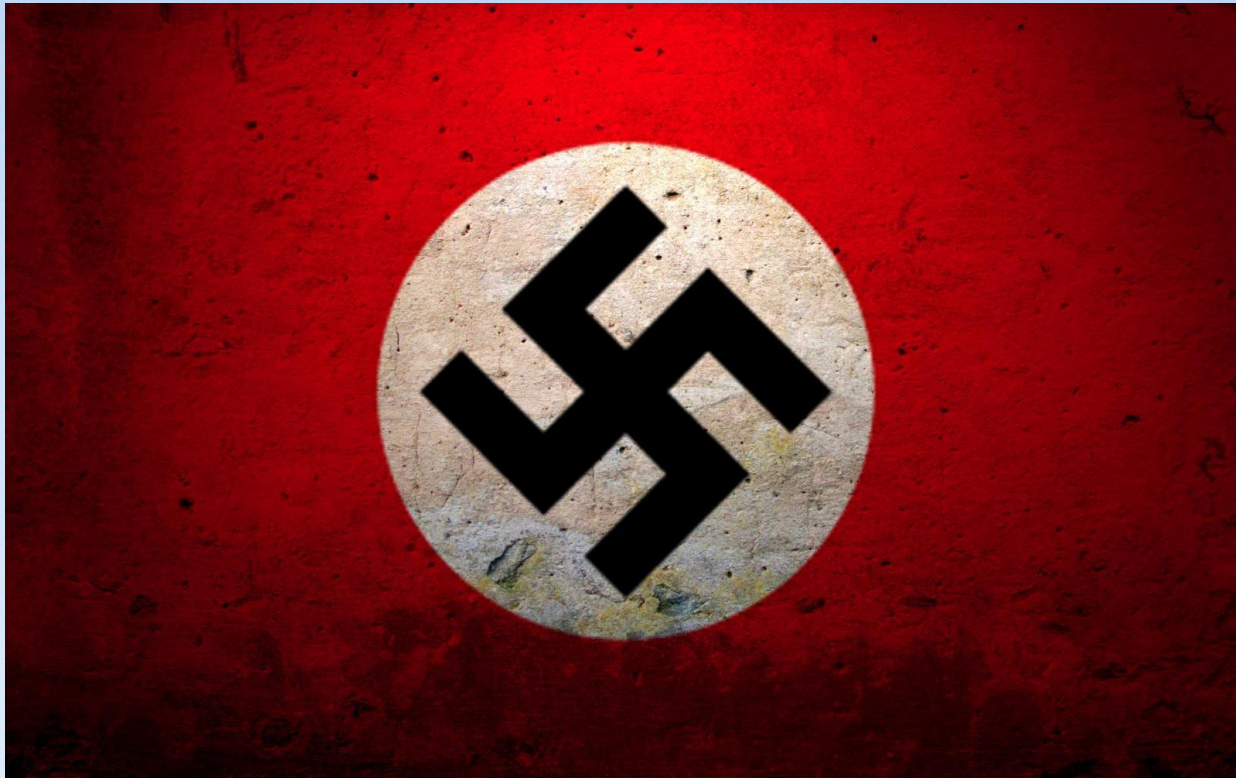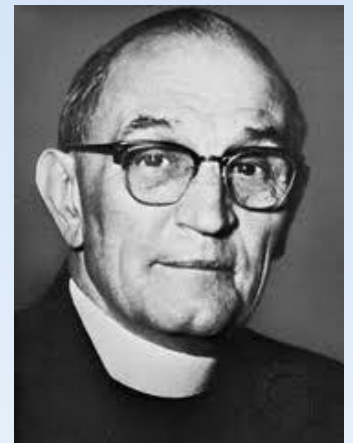# The Holocaust

A History

Nazi Germany From 1933 to 1945

- Meaning "third regime or empire," the Nazi designation of Germany and its regime from **1933-45**.
- Historically, the First Reich was the medieval Holy Roman Empire, which lasted until **800-1806**.
- The Second Reich included the German Empire from **1871-1918**.

"In Germany, the Nazis first came for the Communists, and I did not speak up because I was not a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak up because I was not a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak up because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I did not speak up because I was Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time, there was no one left to speak up for me."

Pastor Martin Niemöller, January 6, 1946

Historical Preconditions

- Anti-Semitism:
  - Biblical origins
  - Medieval Period in Europe
    - Role of the Catholic Church
  - German defeat in Napoleonic Wars
- Germany's defeat in WWI & Treaty of Versailles
  - Demoralizing effects
- Deplorable state of post WWI German economy
  - Country susceptible to the promises of a mad man
- Eugenics & Social Darwinism
  - Sterilization and selective breeding

The Term "Holocaust"

- The Jews chose this word to describe their fate during WWII.

- Origin of the word:
  - Greek: *holokauston* which is the Septuagint's (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible) translation of the Hebrew word *olah* meaning *"what is brought up"* and in English has come to mean *"an offering made by fire unto the Lord," "burnt offering," or "whole burnt offering."*
  - Shoah (שואה): Annihilation or complete destruction/catastrophe.

Definition of the Holocaust

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

Between 1933 and 1945, Germany's government, led by Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist (Nazi) party, carried out a deliberate, calculated attack on European Jewry. Basing their actions on anti-Semitic ideology and using World War II as a primary means to achieve their goals, they targeted Jews as their main enemy, killing six million Jewish men, women, and children by the time the war ended in 1945. This act of genocide is now known as the Holocaust. As part of their wide reaching efforts to remove from German territory all those whom they considered racially, biologically, or socially unfit, the Nazis terrorized many other groups as well, including political opponents, Roma (also known as Gypsies), Germans with mental and physical disabilities, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Poles, and Soviet prisoners of war. In the course of state sponsored tyranny, the Nazis left countless lives shattered and millions dead.

The term genocide was coined by a Polish lawyer, a Jew, by the name of Raphael Lemkin.

Revolted and deeply affected by the revelations of what became known as the Holocaust, Lemkin became a one-man force to get the then newly formed United Nations to outlaw government-sponsored terrorism and killings.

http://www.jewishjournal.com/world/article/my_moment_with_goering_20051209

Which One Are you?

- Intentionalists
  - Put the emphasis on Hitler's intentions from the start and consider the Holocaust as the result of long-term planning.

- Functionalists
  - Consider the Holocaust as a function of other developments, something that evolved over time in an improvised manner and put less emphasis on Hitler and more on events as they occurred over time.