

Our world's history has had its ups and downs, but in the years of the 1930s and 40s, our world faced one of its most lethal times when a young man named Adolf Hitler decided that the Jewish people did not deserve to have a rightful place on this earth. As a young boy, Hitler had dreams of becoming an artist. However, he was never able to manage a full grasp on a scholarship. Hitler left art with a crushed heart, but soon found a love for political speaking. His voice was powerful and persuading and he could lure anyone into his command. Hitler soon came into power as the Führer of Germany. Hitler believed in the Aryan race. Blonde hair and blue eyes. "The perfect human." So he stripped the Jewish people of their everyday rights. Hitler went down in history, and sadly took 6,000,000 of the Jewish people with him. This was the Holocaust.

Before Hitler, children roamed the streets, playing, and adults mingled freely. Life was normal. But on Kristallnacht (the night of the broken glass) life really changed for the Jewish people. Windows were smashed, homes were raided and trashed, and flames licked up the walls of every synagogue. S.S. men in brown uniforms showered the streets, beating up and mocking the Jewish community and calling them names such as "Dirty Jew." The Jewish people were soon rationed, limiting them on amount of food they were able to purchase/receive. Slowly death crept up on the Jewish community. Screams constantly filled the crowded streets as people were murdered for no reason except the pleasure of the Nazis. All hope was

torn and laws were soon passed, The Nuremberg laws, that the Jewish couldn't own books, radios and weren't even considered a citizen of Germany anymore. More laws were passed, forcing the Jewish to sew the yellow Star of David to every article of clothing, the symbol of the "Jew." The Jewish huddled together, praying for the best, as walls rose up around them overnight, the Ghettos. Ghetto. A disgusting, sour, filthy word.

Hitler could have stopped. But he didn't. Someone could've stepped up. But no one did. Hitler could have come to his senses, but sadly he didn't. He murdered the young, the old, the disabled and the sickly.

They began to get deported to work and death camps, tearing entire families apart. Children were ripped from their parents and parents from their children. Thousands of Jewish people were sent to concentration camps in crowded cattle cars as more and more Jewish people flooded in from everywhere around Europe. "Work will set you free" was the sign that hung over the entrance to Auschwitz, the death camp. That was what the Jewish saw as they were marched through the entrance. All their belongings were sent to a large barrack, which the prisoners called "Canada," the place where thousands of Jewish belongings lay. If they were lucky enough to survive the life or death selection, you were sent to bone breaking work. They were treated less than animals. They would be rounded up and counted every day.

The Nazis didn't stop at the terror of the Jewish. Thousands of Communists, Gypsies, and anyone that disagreed with Hitler were also among the millions sent to concentration camps. Millions. It was a crowded sea of stripes, and the fresh air was warded off by the constant thick stench of burning flesh. Each day they were given a small amount of watered down soup containing potato skins and such, along with stale crusted bread. And at night men/women would huddle together, all sharing a wooden cot, or even the floor of the barracks, if no room was available. The Nazis (the followers of Hitler) did not give the Jewish any lee-way. Guards called Kapos guarded the barracks. And sometimes they were even Jewish men, hoping to be treated better. The Kapos would torment and beat the Jewish. If they were caught escaping, they would be shot or hung, and possibly at the worst their whole barracks would be executed. As more and more Jewish people came in through the crowded cattle cars, more and more were killed to make room for the new or they were marched through the rain and snow to another camp.

Death ran rampant through the camps. If the prisoners weren't worked to death, they were gassed in large chambers, thousands of men, women, and children at a time. If they weren't gassed, they would die slowly from diseases, like typhus and yellow fever that swarmed like bees around the camps. The intention of these camps was death. And yet through all of this, still many held on to hope. That would turn out to be what really set them free.

When the concentration camps and Ghettos were finally liberated by the allied forces, 6 million Jewish people had been murdered. The freed prisoners had nothing but their ragged striped pajamas and wooden clogs. They were sent to DPC (displaced persons camp) with a hope of finding family. Sadly, most were left with very few family members still alive, or none at all. The Jewish, however, couldn't return to their normal lives. Through heartbreak and death, they had no businesses and their homes had been trashed and raided by Nazi soldiers. Hitler claimed his own life on April 30, 1945. Unfortunately, Hitler didn't die without leaving this tragic dent in our world's history. Roughly 6 million Jewish lives were claimed in almost 15 years, and 1.5 million of them children. It would take 20 panther stadiums to fill the seats with the amount of children's lives that were taken in the Holocaust.

Discrimination, prejudice and intolerance. These were all things the Jewish people faced. Their story reminds us about what these things can do and how they can severely hurt someone. And sadly this still happens around the world today in forms of bullying and racism, and even genocide (the mass killing of innocent people). We need to learn how we can step up and help others, whether it's in your community or just in your school. This was one of the many lessons that the Holocaust unfolded for us.

Though the Holocaust was something that scorched our history, people today are helping to teach others the lessons learned so nothing like this will ever happen again, by spreading awareness like in these essays, it can still can help spread the lessons and meanings of the Holocaust.