

Item name: Invasion of the Soviet Union and Implementation of the Final Solution



Holocaust victims

| Victims (enlarged) | Killed |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Jews | 5.93 million |
| Soviet POWs | 2-3 million |
| Ethnic Poles | 1.8-2 million |
| Serbs | 300,000-500,000 |
| Disabled | 270,000 |
| Romani | 90,000-220,000 |
| Freemasons | 80,000-200,000 |
| Slovenes | 20,000-25,000 |
| Homosexuals | 5,000-15,000 |
| Jehovah's Witnesses | 2,500-5,000 |
| Spanish Republicans | 7,000 |

Description:

The invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 was what led to a radicalization of Nazi racial policy. This occurred in large part because ever greater numbers of Jews were now under German control in occupation in eastern Europe.

During the invasion of the Soviet Union, mobile killing squads of the SS, called the Einsatzgruppen (special action groups), had orders to round up and shoot communist officials, and Jews in every town the army conquered and in every surrendered Soviet unit.

These killings took place under the official goal of combating Bolshevism and guerilla warfare. Gradually, however, even the Einsatzgruppen got demoralized by their bloody role.

Far behind the frontlines the SS therefore started to look for less conspicuous ways to kill masses of people. The "Final Solution" took shape, while the war on the eastern front assumed ever new proportions of horror and barbarism.

The Germans developed extermination sites in eastern Europe based on the technology (extermination by gas) that they had used during the T-4 program, but on a much larger scale.

In all, the Holocaust claimed roughly six million Jewish victims. Around five million other people were killed as well, including between two and three million Soviet prisoners of war, a quarter million gypsies, German resisters, communists, homosexuals, and other groups.