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The Holocaust - Hitler's "Final Solution"

- the mass execution of "inferior" races, primarily Jews and Gypsies but also includes Slavs, and anyone resisting the Germans, begins with Germany's invasion of the USSR in June, 1941. Most of Europe's Jews lived in eastern Europe. The special action squads, Einsatzgruppen, killed 500,000 Russian Jews by the end of 1941.

- at first done by shooting but this deemed not efficient enough

"Their first action occurred along the Soviet frontier. For instance, at the village of Virbalis, the Einsatzgruppen made Jews lie down along two miles of an anti-tank trench and killed them with machine-gun fire. This process was repeated seven times. 'Only the children were not shot. They were caught by the legs, their heads hit against stones and they were thereupon buried alive. ' "

from D. Todd's "Decision at Wannsee: genesis of genocide." Vancouver Sun. p. D15, Jan. 4, 1992

- at the Wannsee Conference in Jan. 1942, outside Berlin, it appears the decision was made to set up efficient killing facilities in eastern Europe. Nazi's to expand their earlier program of gassing the mentally ill.

- largest of the 6 killing camps was Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland. Estimated that 1 million Jews perished there.

- by 1945 nearly 5 million in forced labour concentration camps, under conditions which usually lead to death.

- estimated that 6 million of Europe's 9 million Jews perished during World War II

- to carry this out, they needed the cooperation of the non-Jewish subject people's.