Six facts that make the Holocaust a singular event in human history

Based on Prof. Yosef Ben-Shlomo z”l

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1. *Judenrein* – a goal without precedent

For the first time in history, a government made the annihilation of an entire people a supreme national objective, even though the overwhelming majority of that people did not even live within its borders.

A people that had no historical, political, or territorial conflict with Germany.

Jews constituted less than one percent of Germany’s population.

Yehuda Bauer distilled the Holocaust to its defining core: an unprecedented form of genocide, driven not by territory, power, or circumstance, but by pure ideology—global in scope and total in intent.

No other genocide in human history—not the Armenians, not the Tutsis, not Cambodia—was driven by a systematic, explicit ambition to eradicate an entire people everywhere on earth.

For the first time in history, every Jew, everywhere, was marked for death solely for being born.

The difference was not in cruelty or suffering, but in the absolute nature of the aim: nothing less than complete eradication.

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2. Not a single voice of opposition

Wannsee Conference, January 1942: Breakfast was served at 9:00 a.m., followed by about 90 minutes of discussion.

At Wannsee, they planned the murder of 11 million Jews, including those in Britain, Ireland, Spain, and even 200 in Albania.

No one objected.
Not the army (which needed every man for the front).
Not the bureaucrats.
Not a single word.

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3. Germany acted against its own interests

1944. The Eastern Front is collapsing. The Red Army is advancing.

Yet Germany diverts 147 trains and thousands of men to deport 437,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz in just 56 days.

The Holocaust was not a side effect of the war.
It was the war.

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4. They were not monsters—they were ordinary Germans

No German was ever punished for refusing to kill Jews.

Yet in Reserve Police Battalion 101, when the commander offered the men the chance to step aside, fewer than 15 out of 500 did.

Professor Ben-Shlomo recounts reading the diary of Rudolf Höss.

Höss describes the moment he watches a mother holding her children on the way to the gas chamber. For a brief instant, thoughts of his own children surface—a flicker of pity.

And then, in one of the most chilling gestures ever recorded, he gives sweets to the Jewish mother's children and gently pats them on the shoulder to encourage them forward on their way to the gas chamber.

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5. Not a single bomb was dropped

The Allies knew much by 1941—and in detail from the Vrba-Wetzler report in April 1944.

Munitions factories located immediately adjacent to Auschwitz were bombed four times by the U.S. Army Air Forces between August and December 1944.

On September 13, 1944, stray bombs intended for those factories fell inside the Auschwitz camp itself and killed five SS men.

The target was accessible. Yet the gas chambers, crematoria, and rail lines leading to them were never deliberately targeted.

Historian David Wyman asked a question that is also an accusation:

"How is it possible that the governments of the two greatest

democracies knew there was a place where 2,000 defenseless human beings could be murdered every half hour, and yet felt no obligation to search for any way to disrupt it?”

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6. No way out

Unlike the religious persecutions in the eras of Greece, Rome, or the Inquisition—where escape was possible through conversion—in Nazi Germany even that option did not exist.

There was no alternative. No conversion. No escape.

Even the concept of choosing to die *al Kiddush Hashem*, out of refusal to convert, was not relevant—because no such choice was ever offered.