

HSE13
Prompt #2

In the year 2024, Donald Trump was re-elected into the White House. Since his time in office resumed, the current administration has made large strides in the effort to completely erase immigrants from the country. There are many alarming details that correlate with the treatment of German Jews, and the rise of fascism. Immigrants are being scapegoated, villainized by world leaders, and treated violently by law enforcement. These are all things that led to the tragedy of the Holocaust, but those who follow Trump blindly refuse to acknowledge it. These two situations still have their differences though. While immigrants are not being murdered en masse in extermination camps, their treatment is still comparable because that was not the only act of cruelty in the Holocaust.

The Holocaust did not start with enormous concentration camps, and millions being killed, but it developed slowly over time. When the First World War ended, Germany was left in total disarray (Rise of the Nazis). Hitler and his young Nazi party saw the divide between the Jews and the Germans, who were already blaming the Jews for their defeat (Rise of the Nazis). One of the best ways to unite people is by giving them a common enemy. When you turn a minority into a scapegoat, that absolves the majority of their own guilt or share of the blame. Today in the United States, we can see this same tactic taking root. Immigrants are blamed for higher crime rates, taking jobs from Americans, and tainting the culture MAGA seeks to protect (Terkel and Lebowitz). Like the immigrants are to the United States, German Jews were integral to Germany, and its many successes. They were hardworking and patriotic, flourished in science and the arts, and made up 24% of the Nobel Prize recipients from Germany (Rise of the Nazis). The impact of immigrants differs from that of the Jews, since immigrants tend to gravitate towards physically laborious jobs. From the U.S. Department of Labor, a statistic from 2025 states that immigrants make up 19.2% of the workforce. This means that removing them would have devastating effects on the economy. Outside of this, immigrants have given this country so much more culture than people tend to realize, just like the Jews did (Rise of the Nazis). Despite all of this, these people are targeted simply because they are considered outsiders.

Persecution of Jewish people in the early stages of the Holocaust included denying their citizenship, boycotting and shutting down Jewish owned businesses, and removing their political rights (The Holocaust). This is almost exactly what is happening to immigrants today, or just to people of foreign descent, citizen or not. The people who supported this felt justified because the Jews were blamed for everything. Their leader, Hitler, is quoted to have said “no salvation is possible, until the bearer of disunion, the Jew, has been rendered powerless to harm”

(The Holocaust). The way Jews were being degraded and villainized by Hitler is mirrored by President Trump's own words on immigrants. He has made many defiling comments that do nothing but harbor fear and resentment among the American people. When speaking about undocumented immigrants, Trump said “when they do that, we got a lot of work to do. They’re poisoning the blood of our country” insinuating that they are impure (Terkel and Lebowitz). Hitler referred to Jews as “bloodsuckers” and “parasites” while Trump has openly stated “they’re not humans. They’re animals” (Terkel and Lebowitz). Because Hitler, a man in power who was regarded as intelligent and needed for Germany’s success, spoke this way of Jews, it justified their mistreatment to his followers. If these people are subhuman, and a parasite to their country, why would a good German citizen not want them gone, even in the most violent way possible? Trump and MAGA are in the process of doing this right now. They have already convinced hundreds of thousands of people that immigrants are a poison to the United States. It is because of this that many overlook how much the persecution has escalated.

During the Holocaust, Hitler’s infamous police force, the Gestapo, were known for terrorizing German communities and capturing Jews in hiding (Lauerman). They were used to control the entire population, regardless of citizenship or religion (Lauerman). The Gestapo and Hitler used fear and the threat of violence to keep people in line (Lauerman). Compared to the United States today, ICE has taken it upon themselves to detain people regardless of citizenship, violate their first amendment, and even kill multiple protestors and detainees (Thompson). Thirty two people were killed by ICE in 2025, and eight have joined them this year already (Ramirez). In response to the violent treatment of immigrants and opposition, the Trump administration has argued for total immunity for ICE agents, something the Gestapo had and exploited (Sanchez and Ray). Even without immunity, agents have been getting away with violence against civilians, just as the Gestapo harmed Germans. Facilities such as Alligator Alcatraz have been built specifically for detaining captured immigrants. Many have referred to these places as concentration camps, eerily similar to those German Jews were forced into. Even though there are no mass executions, this comparison is not wrong. The exact definition of a concentration camp is a massive detention center that holds captured people without any sort of trial for political gain (Pitzer). Extermination camps such as Auschwitz did not come to be until later into the Nazi rule (Pitzer). If we follow what happened to the German Jews, the situation in America will only worsen until the country is faced with genocide.

While it seems hopeless, and there is no way to tell when or if the persecution against immigrants will reach the scale of the Holocaust, there is still something everyone is capable of. We need to educate ourselves and

others on the mistakes of the past so they can be avoided today. More people need to learn about how dangerous people get into power, and how they weaponize fear and xenophobia to make their citizens complicit in genocide. It does not happen overnight, and nobody is truly safe from it. Jewish or not, all Germans and every nation that fell under Nazi control suffered greatly from the Holocaust. The words “never again” mean nothing if we refuse to take action now. It may be a different time, and many things have changed since then, but America is not immune to a Holocaust of their own. “History does not repeat itself, but it does rhyme” (Mark Twain) is a phrase that aligns itself with these parallels perfectly. The treatment of German Jews does not exactly match that of immigrants in the United States, but it should not have to for people to take it seriously. If more people can realize this, the comparison between the Jews and the immigrants can stop here.

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