The problematic aspects of the activity of the Jewish nationals in the countries of Central Europe, especially Germany and the territories of later Poland or Czechoslovakia, as well as the critique of the methods implemented to solve the problems presented by the situation.

Before proceeding with the wide-scale critique that is undeniably necessary when discussing this subject, a look back in time is necessary to gain an understanding of the socioeconomic situation of Central Europe in the first part of the 20th century.

To do so, the tragedy and even an attempt to discuss it have to be temporarily put aside, to allow the focus to remain for a moment on the events preceding what ultimately evolved into the Holocaust.

The Jewish nationals lived at the time on the aforementioned territories for centuries, held predominantly German citizenship but also a distinct ethnicity. Jews were of different faith, adhered to traditions that were not exactly widely accepted by then, and were inclined to lend money but expected a return with appropriate bonuses, which today would simply be called usury. Their tradition, which also came from their religion, encouraged entrepreneurship and multiplication of riches. Even though both of these ideologies and approaches existed in Europe and throughout the world, so did money lending, yet the Jews applied their own, not always accepted, and not by everyone, methods. For this reason, to understand this subject, a closer look at the life of a German a hundred years ago is necessary. Capitalism was nothing new, but the majority of the shops were owned by the Jews. The Jews did not hide their identity, they styled their hair differently and wore different clothes. A phrase developed in the Polish language: „Your streets, our properties", which, to simplify, meant that even though the names of the street may remain Polish, all the properties there would be Jewish-owned.

For this reason, a person has to try to at least understand the growing conflict back then. Did all the Germans and all the Poles show their growing hatred of the Jews? Of course not. Strong friendships existed. The Jews, often having a fully-staffed shop, still decided to employ more people, out of the goodness of their hearts. There was no complete and absolute hatred. But it is important to understand that a socio-economic problem still existed.

When we imagine the ruined and shattered, by their loss during World War I, Germans, forced to pay quite high reparitions, a feretile ground for national movements grows, and even though the freedom of speach and association should allow them to exist, when the movements started turning radical, the enforcement services should have been obligated to intervene.

After the absolute tragedy that was World War II, society may not be able to imagine how the world looked a hundred years ago. Photographs, films, recordings remain, but they do not make it possible to feel what people felt living in the world back then.

Any attempt to imagine the situation back then will, of course, be much less painful and rather easy to understand.

What happens later is not only hard to imagine, but again, putting aside the horrible images and big numbers, we have to focus on something different for a moment.

Every civilised country has a civilised government, whose duty is to find solutions for even the hardest issues, such as social or economic problems. Maybe the experience from the past, the First and Second World Wars, the genocides in Cambodia or Rwanda, gave society new and interesting solutions. Maybe creation of European Union, which is one of the major roles is to find solutions for social or regional barriers was one of them. But the period of Nazi rule is not so far in the past. It's a period of movies, radio, photography and press.

Let us leave the subject of how it was even possible for a Nazi party to come into power, but instead let us focus on the government itself. It is important to realise that even if the socio-economic problem associated with the Jewish nationals existed, the amount of tools to solve such a problem was a lot and with time, and good, continued policy, the government would not have to

reach for such radical steps.

Before we discuss the radical steps taken by those in authority, it is worth focusing once more on many solutions that existed then. They could introduce an antiusury policy, create grants for businesses owned by German nationals or even grants for joint German-Jewish commercial partnerships. Civilised and effective solutions were potentially many.

From a historical perspective, there should be no taboo subject, but the subject of the extermination of an entire nationality – a clear genocide that was the Holocaust stirs emotions, and it will most likely stir them for a very long time.

Is it possible to, even after the Nuremberg Trials, clearly point out who was responsible for such a tragedy? The subject can be quite complicated both ways. How many Poles died, sacrificing their lives to save Jewish people from their horrible deaths? Did anyone count every single one? How many German officers refused to comply with the orders to execute the Jewish people? How many murderers avoided punishment by escaping to Argentina or hiding in another way? This subject will never be truly solved.

What can be done, with a prefix that the Holocaust was a genocide, is to assess the government's decision at the time and the effectiveness of the method they chose.

Because, even if it sounds horrible, did the government not take steps to solve the socio-economic problem associated with the Jewish community?

The statistics will not be perfect, so we have to assume that millions of Jews were exterminated. That was the decision made by the then-Nazi government. A government that was guided not only by social issues but also war funding, propaganda and other aspects.

It was a government that decided to use the 'final solution'.[1]

Before we can begin criticising in full, we have to look at the promises made by the Nazi government and if they fulfilled their declarations.

It can not be looked over that the Jewish shops disappeared from the streets, as the Nazi government promised. It also can not be skipped that the apartment buildings seized from the Jewish owners were used to give places to live for German nationals. Jewish usury also disappeared, and mostly the Jewish community started disappearing from the streets.

Can it then be called the government's success from the point of view of Nazi Germany? Possibly, if not for World War II, Nazi Germany could be proud of many successes, not limited to the subjects of Jews only.

Would the so often mentioned 'final solution'[2] ever explained?

Maybe many Germans would be happy that the Nazi government was doing something about the Jews, the Jewish shops were disappearing, their properties were being seized, and possibly many of the citizens would be happy not to think about what was really happening...

After discussing this, there is now place for the critique and completely different facts which can not be looked over...

Definitely, the biggest extermination camp, used as means to achieve the goal of the 'final solution', was located near Warsaw – Treblinka. When discussing genocide, the number of dead is very hard to precisely count.

In the book *The Hell of Treblinka*, from 1945, Vasily Grossman states the number of dead to be at 3 million people,[3] at the same time, during the trial of Kurt Franz in Düsseldorfie in 1965, the Court stated this to be at 700,000 people.[4] In second trial in 1970, against Franz Stangl, the expert

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1 World Jewish Congress, *What Was The Final Solution,* website article, 2022, <https://abouthologocaust.org/en/facts/what-was-the-final-solution> [Accessed: 21st of July 2025].

2 World Jewish Congress, *What Was The Final Solution.*

3 Muzeum Treblinka, *Treblinka II – Number Of Victims,* website, <https://muzeumtreblinka.eu/en/informacje/number-of-victims/> [Accessed: 21st of July 2025].

4 Muzeum Treblinka, *Treblinka II – Number Of Victims.*

witness, Dr Wolfgang Scheffer from Berlin, counted the dead to be at 900,000.[5]

3 million, 700,000 or 900,000... numbers that today in its own special cruel way mean so little, as every single one of the victims had their own family, their own dreams... How extensive would have to be the work that would describe everything to do with every single one of these victims? It is impossible to even imagine if someone would read it from the beginning to the end...

But it is extremely important to start from this specific death camp to describe how the process of mass murder looked in its entirety.

It is important to highlight that a makeshift train station called „Treblinka" was put in place, to suggest that after a while, the train that arrives there will be moving on. Of course, it was only a psychological trick. Typical railway rolling stock amounted to around 60 cars, one of which contained between 80 and 120 people.[6] After arriving, every Jew was directed to rooms where they would leave their luggage, yet another manipulation, as for every piece of luggage or possession they deposited, they would be given a ticket, which was meant to suggest that after washing up, the items would be returned to them. Next on their journey was a barber who would shave off their hair. Next, they would surrender their clothes and move on in massive groups towards buildings called shower facilities. Often, there would be screams coming from those fake shower facilities, but the prisoners were told that the water there might be quite hot.

The men would enter one building, while women would enter the other. That was the end of their life. The end, unfortunately, was not swift. The gas chambers were connected to cars, which, through their exhaust pipes, slowly killed the prisoners over a period of over 20 minutes using exhaust fumes.[7]

Yet another factory of death was AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU, located nearby Cracow, with its famous entrance gate saying: „Arbeit Macht Frei"[8] which could be loosely translated to „The work sets you free" - which is a clear and horrible joke made on the expense of the jews held in that place. There, mostly in gas chambers, around 1,1 million people died.[9] These gas chambers, contrary to those in Treblinka used a different method, which used a gas called Zyklon B, which killed the victims quite quickly.

There were many other death camps, such as Majdanek or Gross-Rosen.

The crucial problem of the solution implemented to fix the socio-economic problem of Jews in Germany was their complete extermination. It is not possible to point every subsequent result of that decision with precision, besides, maybe, the fact that thankfully World War 2 ended and the horrifying mass murder of Jews ended together with it. It can be called nothing else, only a genocide. There are no other consequences. There is a lack of solutions as to what will happen later, as the problem was meant to be solved absolutely.

What comes next is another subject that requires attention, which is the ICC – the International Criminal Court, which was created due to the Holocaust. This court intervened only a few times afterwards, in the case of Cambodia as well as the genocide in Rwanda. The Criminal proceedings in ICC are extremely expensive, and the Court itself is described as not being as successful as it could be. The proceedings there take a long time.

Maybe, another hypothetical solution, such as a special Tribunal of the European Union, which for obvious reasons would have to be restructured, would give better results. But this would require a special EU Guard division as well as a general election for the position of President.

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5 Ibid.

6 Muzeum Treblinka, *Treblinka II – Method Of Killing,* website, <https://muzeumtreblinka.eu/en/informacje/method-of-killing/> [Accessed: 21st of July 2025].

7 Muzeum Treblinka, *Treblinka II – Method Of Killing.*

8 Auschwitz.org, *Oryginał Napisu „Arbeit Macht Frei" Powrócił Nad Bramę Do Byłego KL Auschwitz,* website, <https://www.auschwitz.org/muzeum/aktualnosci/oryginal-napisu-arbeit-macht-frei-powrocil-nad-brame-do-bylego-kl-auschwitz%2C426.html> [Accessed 21st of July 2025].

9 Auschwitz.org, *AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU,* website, <https://www.auschwitz.org/> [Accessed: 21st of July 2025].

Currently, the European Union mostly presents itself as an organisation that leads the fight for human rights, whilst also being considered one with the most complicated structure. Additionally, Brexit further weakened not only the United Kingdom but also the EU structures. At the same time, the war in Ukraine, right outside the European Union's borders, points to the fact that the EU is rather uninterested in changing its structure, but instead focuses more on putting pressure through economic sanctions.

Strictly hypothetically, with China growing in power, the USA being ruled in a distinctive way, and Russia being ready to do anything to achieve their goals, equally powerful historically, Europe could showcase strength equal to those other powerhouses. Maybe that solution would be best in retrospect.

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