Causes of the Holocaust
2000 years of religious antisemitism?

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A. Diaspora under Roman rule: after 3 major revolts, Rome destroys Judea, Jews fan out
   1. Yet some emperors were pro-Jewish (See figure 1)
B. Crusades: Jews must convert or be massacred: in 1099 Jews in Jerusalem burned alive (See figure 2)
C. Black Death (1347-1350): 1 out of 3 Europeans die; Jews blamed and slaughtered
   1. Not in Islamic Europe; only where image of "Christ killer" makes into a target
D. Spanish Inquisition: tries root out false Christian converts - many Jews flee to Poland
E. Pogroms in Russia/Poland begin Easter 1881; murder of Jews causes exodus 1880-1920
F. Reformation & religious pluralism: reduce anti-Semitism in W. Europe, not E. Europe

The Holocaust

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A. Turning point for Jews of Europe--Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany on 1/30/33: Would lead to death of 6 million Jews, managed/sanctioned by modern technocratic state.
C. "Final Solution": Nazi bureaucratic code for elimination of 2000 years of civilization

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1. 2/3 of the world's Jews live in Europe in 1939.
2. Death camps: use of Zyklon B gas and crematoria in Auschwitz. (See figures 3 & 4)
3. Over 75% Jews killed in Hungary, Yugoslavia, Greece, Poland vs. 1% Denmark (See figures 5 & 6)

Is Christianity the Cause?

A. Christianity initially seen as competing Jewish sect; must distinguish from parent religion
   1. Competition: many converts to Christianity in turn converted to Judaism
   2. Mutual antagonism/intolerance results, much as in family feuds and civil wars
B. Christianity becomes official state religion under emperor Constantine:
   1. Sets in motion 16 centuries of persecution
      a. Pope Eugenius IV bans bathing, eating, living with Jews; special clothing
      b. Pope Paul (1555) reinstates special clothing for Jews; uses as slave labor
      c. Martin Luther, Of Jews and Their Lives (1543): antisemitic tract
C. Hitler refers to messianic mission in Mein Kampf
D. Jews do better in pagan times, in Roman empire, and in Moslem world
E. Yet (1) Jesus, apostles are Jews; Jews write 3 Gospels; (2) antisemitism decrease in West

Real Cause: Secular Eugenics Movement with Colonial Ideology of Racial Superiority

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A. "Race" is central doctrine in Mein Kampf - Jews seen more as a race than a religion
   1. Aryans must prove themselves by conquering living space to the East
   2. Jews seen as part of international Jewish conspiracy
B. Not only Jews targeted: partial exterminate Slavs (3,000,000 non-Jewish Poles, 3.3 million Russian prisoners of war); 250,000 Gypsies killed; gays; socialists; mentally ill.
Why didn’t the Jews Resist?

A. Given limited opportunity and no help, Jews did resist. Examples:
   1. Warsaw Ghetto uprising, April 1943 (See figures 7 & 8)
   2. Uprisings in Treblinka, August 1943
B. U.S. and Britain don’t aid Jews: many die in holocaust because of immigration policy

Does Rabid German Anti-semitism Explain?

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A. Germany was a relatively good place for Jews from 1870-1933.
   1. Education: Jews over-represented as students, faculty: 1% pop, 19% prof (1910)
      a. 1905-1931, 10 Jews out of 32 Germans get Nobel prize for science
   2. Income: prosperity indicated insofar as pay 4% of income tax, only 1% of pop
   3. Exogamy: in 1933, 44% marry non-Jews
   4. Over-represented in national legislature
B. Didn’t Germans vote for Hitler?

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1. 1/3 did, 2/3 did not; Hitler was appointed chancellor; military coup gives power
2. Many voting for Hitler wanted strong leader to pull out of chaos of depression
C. Kristallnacht (11/9/38): “Night of the broken glass” not supported by many in public

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1. SS, SA, Hitler youth burn synagogues, destroy businesses, arrest and kill Jews (See figure 9)
2. Because divisive: Propaganda Ministry bans news on anti-Jewish measures

Dynamics of Power and Privilege, Colonial Legacy of Eugenics Explain Holocaust

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A. Hitler gained support from two pillars of power: industrial elite, military elite
   1. Delivered on promise to eliminate trade unions and socialists
B. Jews were at wrong place at wrong time: most accessible target for eugenics ideology
   1. Ideology legitimating European colonialism makes “race” a central focus
C. Holocaust made possible by (1) highly centralized dictatorship, (2) cover of wartime
   1. Opponents terrorized by what happened to the Jews
   2. Secrecy of wartime, belief that rumors of death camps were war propaganda
D. Industrial world including U.S., not just Gemany, implicated in eugenics/anti-semitism

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