How did the outbreak of war affect the Jews?
The outbreak of the war transformed the treatment of the Jews.

Firstly, the war meant that Pre war restrictions on their treatment for example media scrutiny were much more controlled and severe.

Secondly, the Germans could portray the Jews as the cause of the war - just like the stab in the back myth. This could be used to legitimise their harsh treatment. Hitler himself had mentioned destroying the Jews if they 'caused another war'

Thirdly, the war would stop other avenues apparently being pursued such as emigration to countries like Madagascar

Finally, the war would lead to the conquest of vast amounts of land and people- millions of them Jewish. Jews only made up 1% of Germany's population but there were over 3 million in Poland alone!

SEVERE RESTRICTIONS
Hitler, had always warned that any future war would lead to the ‘destruction of the Jews’ as they would be blamed.
The SS were placed in charge of Jewish policy and soon draconian restrictions began
- Rations were severely restricted for Jews
- Radio sets were removed
- Jews were forced to wear Star of David badges in Sept 1941 prior to deportation plans. Failure to comply could lead to a concentration camp

NAZI TREATMENT OF THE JEWS IN WAR 1939-45

Fate of the Jews

Death marches were carried out by the SS at the end of the war. These were attempts by the SS to keep their crimes hidden by marching their remaining inmates across the bitter winter to the camp again. Out of the 9 death marches nearly 50% died.

Death marches were in occupied Eastern Europe where they were subjected to harsh working conditions. Many died under the very poor working conditions.

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AUSCHWITZ BIRKENAU
Auschwitz was a camp like no other designed as a mixture of a huge work camp and mass killing centre. It was in Poland but connected to the railway system and close to Berlin, and other countries such as USSR, Hungary, Czechoslovakia etc. Its vast camp was built to house slave workers selected from the transports. However, gas chambers were constructed along with crematoria and these were kept continually processing. They were manned by SS guards but these were augmented by Jewish Sonderkommando - these were Jewish recruits who would sign up to do the awful work in the camps such as sorting and burning bodies in return for having their life prolonged.

Over 1 million would die in this one camp!

The Wannsee Conference Jan 1942 and a Final Solution

The Wannsee conference was perhaps the most chilling in history as it was established to set up the so called ‘FINAL SOLUTION’ to the Jewish problem. From this conference the mechanisms of mass killing were established. The term final solution had been mentioned by Goering to Heydrich in July 1941. By Jan 1942 at the small lakeside villa of Wannsee at least 15 top Nazis met up to discuss how to implement this plan.

This included the head of the gestapo HEYDRICH the heads of Nazi controlled areas in the east, the head of the railways and Adolf EICHMANN - who was to have overall control.

It was a coordinated and planned outline of mass murder. It took 90 minutes to discuss and agree the fate of well over 6 million people.

The first thing agreed was that ALL European Jews were to be deported to Eastern Europe. They were to be killed in specially constructed DEATH CAMPS with specialist gas chambers and ovens.

DEPORTATION - October 1941
Goebbels had always wanted policies towards the Jews to be more severe. In October 1941 deportations to the east began. The Nazis realised they could do what they liked there.
The Jewish population of Greater Germany shrank from 318,000 to only 15,000 in 1945- many of whom had been sheltered by very brave Germans who faced concentration camp and death.

DEATH CAMPS
Death camps were set up as part of the huge concentration camp network. All were connected by railways to make deportation easier in wartime. There was even a price per ‘passenger’ agreed by German railways. All death camps were in occupied Eastern Europe, well away from Germany.

Death camps included. Treblinka, Sobibor, and Belzec. Up to 2 million were killed in these camps alone.

GHETTOS
The conquest of large areas of Eastern Europe transformed the amount of Jews under Nazi control. Jews from all over the occupied territories were transported to areas of Nazi occupied Poland on the orders of Himmler and Heydrich.

They were to be concentrated in Ghettoes - areas of towns and cities which were sealed off and Jews moved in until the 'next stage' of 'RESETTLEMENT' was worked out.

There were over 300 Ghettoes. These Ghettoes were notoriously overcrowded, with terrible living conditions, lack of food and medicines and high incidences of diseases like typhus and dysentery. Examples include WARSAW, LVOV and LODZ. The ghetto in Warsaw alone held up to 400,000 people in a tiny area of under 4 km square.

Up to 450,000 Jews would die in the ghettos.

EINSATZGRUPPEN
Operation BARBAROSSA in 1941 was the invasion of the Soviet Union. This transformed the levels of killing completely! This became a RASSENKRIEG-race war.

Einsatzgruppen were specialised SS units (called One Sentence Groups) they were set up with the Prime role of eradicating the Jews in the occupied territories.

There were only 4000 of these dedicated SS soldiers but they would kill almost 700,000 in western Russia alone.

They set up mobile gas units at CHELIMO in 194. This killed up to 150,000 Jews alone in its operation. Hitler ordered that during his invasion of the Soviet Union 'Jewish Bolshevism (Communism) be eradicated' this prompted Himmler and Heydrich to encourage these SS mobile killing units to wipe out whole communities of Jews using mass killings. This was to become known as the HOLOCAUST BY BULLETS, in the first few months of the invasion of the USSR it is estimated that up to 700,000 Jews were murdered.

One notorious site was at BABI YAR near Kiev, Ukraine. Up to 34000 were killed here.