

# Victim Mentality, Scapegoating, Dehumanization, are the Path to Genocide

The historical trajectory of pre-World War II Germany and the actions of Israel as of May 17, 2025, reveal a profound and unsettling similarity in how a nation's victim mentality can lead to the systematic targeting of a minority group, ultimately culminating in genocide. Both cases demonstrate a pattern of fostering a narrative of national victimhood, blaming a minority for societal challenges, dehumanizing that group, inciting violence against them, and resulting in genocidal acts. This essay examines Israel's actions against Palestinians—through public rhetoric, military operations, human rights reports, and academic analyses—comparing them to Germany's treatment of Jews in the 1920s and 1930s, which led to the Holocaust.

## I. Victim Mentality: The Foundation for Aggression

**Pre-WWII Germany (1919–1939):** Following World War I, Germany nurtured a deep sense of victimhood, fueled by the Treaty of Versailles, which imposed severe reparations and territorial losses. This narrative portrayed Germany as unjustly oppressed, betrayed by internal forces that weakened its position. Through propaganda, education, and public discourse, Germans were conditioned to see themselves as victims, focusing on national suffering and the need to reclaim their former glory. This mindset, marked by self-pity and a refusal to acknowledge the nation's role in its own challenges, laid the groundwork for aggressive policies against those deemed responsible for Germany's struggles.

**Israel (1948–2025):** Israel's national identity is profoundly shaped by the trauma of the Holocaust, which took the lives of 6 million Jews and left a lasting impact on Jewish consciousness. The principle of "Never Again" positions Israel as a perpetual victim, constantly under threat from forces seeking its annihilation, reminiscent of Nazi persecution. The Wikipedia article on victim mentality identifies traits such as self-pity, moral elitism, and lack of empathy, which are deeply embedded in Israeli society. Holocaust education, national commemorations, and political rhetoric reinforce this victimhood, often linking historical trauma to contemporary threats like Palestinian resistance. This mindset is evident in Israel's response to international criticism—such as South Africa's 2024 ICJ case—where accusations of genocide are dismissed as antisemitic attacks on Israel's right to exist, reflecting a hypersensitivity to criticism and a need for recognition of its suffering.

**Parallel:** Both nations cultivated a victim mentality that inverted the aggressor-victim dynamic. Germany portrayed itself as a victim of betrayal and oppression, while Israel sees itself as a victim of antisemitic aggression, rooted in Holocaust memory. This mindset, as described in the Wikipedia article, fosters a refusal to accept responsibility—Germany for

its role in WWI, Israel for its role in the occupation—enabling both to justify violence against a scapegoated minority.

## II. Scapegoating: Blaming the Minority for Societal Challenges

**Pre-WWII Germany:** During the 1920s and 1930s, Germany scapegoated Jews for its societal woes, attributing economic crises like the 1923 hyperinflation, unemployment, and cultural decline to their influence. Propaganda portrayed Jews as disloyal opportunists who exploited Germans, framing them as an internal enemy responsible for the nation's struggles. This narrative was reinforced through media, education, and public policy, such as laws excluding Jews from public roles, solidifying the perception that they were the root of Germany's troubles.

**Israel:** Since its founding in 1948, Israel has consistently blamed Palestinians for its security and political challenges, often overlooking the systemic oppression caused by the occupation. The 2023 article on the killing of 36 Palestinian children in the West Bank illustrates this, as Israeli forces justified the deaths by labeling the children as threats for minor acts like stone-throwing, scapegoating even the youngest Palestinians for unrest. The October 7, 2023, attack, initially reported as a Hamas-led massacre resulting in 1,195 Israeli deaths, was used to vilify the entire Palestinian population. However, investigations have since shown that the Israeli military's use of the Hannibal Directive—employing indiscriminate force to prevent the capture of Israeli soldiers, even at the cost of Israeli lives—contributed to these casualties, with reports indicating that helicopter fire and tank shelling killed Israeli hostages alongside Hamas fighters. Despite this, the broader narrative scapegoats all Palestinians, as reflected in human rights reports from December 2024 that document systematic violence against civilians. Public rhetoric, such as the “Death to the Arabs” chants at the 2023 Jerusalem Flag March, further scapegoats Palestinians, implying their mere presence is a problem, a sentiment echoed by far-right leaders who portray Palestinians as obstacles to Israel's survival.

**Parallel:** Both nations scapegoated a minority for societal issues. Germany blamed Jews for economic and cultural problems, while Israel blames Palestinians for security threats, often ignoring the occupation's role in fueling resistance and its own actions, such as the Hannibal Directive's contribution to Israeli deaths on October 7. The Wikipedia article's trait of “identifying others as the cause for an undesired situation” is evident in both cases, with Germany denying its own failures and Israel deflecting responsibility, justifying aggressive actions against the scapegoated group.

## III. Dehumanization and Incitement of Violence

**Pre-WWII Germany:** Dehumanization was a cornerstone of Germany's pre-WWII policies, with propaganda depicting Jews as subhuman threats to the “Aryan” race. Media and public campaigns stripped Jews of their humanity, portraying them as societal dangers. This rhetoric incited violence, with mass rallies glorifying German superiority while vilifying Jews, normalizing hostility. By 1938, state-sanctioned violence against Jewish communities

erupted, a direct result of years of dehumanizing propaganda that desensitized the population to Jewish suffering.

**Israel:** Israel's dehumanization of Palestinians is evident in both rhetoric and actions. The 2023 Jerusalem Flag March, where participants chanted "Death to the Arabs," reflects a public incitement to violence, portraying Palestinians as a collective enemy deserving of death, akin to the hostile slogans of German rallies. The 2023 article on the killing of Palestinian children in the West Bank further demonstrates this dehumanization, as children were treated as threats to be neutralized, with Israeli forces showing little regard for their humanity, often justifying lethal force against minor acts. In Gaza, the December 2024 human rights report highlights systematic violence, including attacks on civilian infrastructure like hospitals and the imposition of starvation conditions, reducing Palestinians to mere targets in a military campaign, with no consideration for their basic humanity.

**Parallel:** Both nations dehumanized a minority to incite violence. Germany used overt propaganda to portray Jews as subhuman, while Israel's dehumanization is practical, treating Palestinians as threats to be eliminated, as seen in the evidence. The Wikipedia article's "lack of empathy" trait is evident in both cases—Germany ignored Jewish suffering, and Israel disregards Palestinian lives, normalizing violence against the dehumanized group.

## IV. Culmination in Genocide

**Pre-WWII Germany to WWII (1939–1945):** Germany's trajectory culminated in the Holocaust, beginning in 1941, resulting in the genocide of 6 million Jews.

This was the outcome of years of indoctrination, scapegoating, and dehumanization, with the state employing systematic methods—death camps, mass shootings, and starvation in ghettos—to eradicate the Jewish population. The intent to destroy the group was clear, meeting the UN Genocide Convention's definition, and was justified by a victim mentality that framed Jews as an existential threat to Germany's survival, desensitizing the population to the atrocities committed.

**Israel (2023–2025):** Israel's actions against Palestinians, following the October 7, 2023, attack, have culminated in genocide, as confirmed by the May 2025 Genocide Studies NRC article, which notes that researchers unanimously qualify Israel's actions in Gaza as "genocidal," and the December 2024 Amnesty International report. The evidence includes:

- **Systematic Violence and Deprivation:** The December 2024 report documents attacks on civilian infrastructure, such as hospitals, and the imposition of starvation conditions, alongside a death toll of over 44,000 Palestinians and 1.9 million displaced by November 2024, according to UNRWA.
- **Intent:** The systematic nature of these actions, aimed at making Gaza uninhabitable, aligns with the UN Genocide Convention criteria—killing, causing serious harm, and inflicting conditions to bring about physical destruction.

Israel's victim mentality, as outlined in the Wikipedia article, enables this genocide through traits like moral elitism (viewing Israel as morally superior), lack of empathy (ignoring Palestinian suffering), and rumination (focusing on Israel's trauma), justifying the systematic destruction of Palestinians as a "defensive" act against a perceived threat.

**Parallel:** Both nations culminated their trajectories in genocide, driven by a victim mentality. Germany's Holocaust and Israel's genocide in Gaza involve state-driven violence targeting a minority for destruction, using systematic methods (killings, deprivation) and exhibiting a clear intent to eradicate the group. The scale differs—6 million Jews versus 44,000+ Palestinians—but the intent and mechanisms are strikingly similar.

## V. Nietzsche's Warnings: The Transformation Through Victim Mentality

The Nietzsche quotes—"Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster" and "If you stare into an abyss, the abyss stares back into you"—offer a philosophical lens to understand how victim mentality transforms both nations into perpetrators of genocide.

### Fighting Monsters

- **Pre-WWII Germany:** Germany framed Jews as the "monster" threatening its survival, using this narrative to justify their exclusion and eventual extermination. In fighting this perceived evil, Germany became monstrous, dehumanizing Jews through propaganda and committing genocide during the Holocaust.
- **Israel:** Israel positions Palestinians as "monsters," often likening them to historical oppressors, as a justification for its actions. However, in doing so, it adopts monstrous tactics—killing children in the West Bank, attacking civilian infrastructure in Gaza, and committing genocide, as evidenced by the 2024 human rights report and the 2025 NRC article. The victim mentality, with its moral elitism, excuses these acts as necessary for survival, mirroring Germany's justifications.

### Staring into the Abyss

- **Pre-WWII Germany:** Germany's fixation on its post-WWI grievances—the "abyss" of national humiliation—led it to reflect that darkness, descending into moral corruption with the Holocaust, as it became the evil it claimed to oppose.
- **Israel:** Israel's obsession with Holocaust trauma—the "abyss" of historical suffering—reflects in its actions, as it commits genocide in Gaza, mirroring the atrocities it vows to prevent. The Wikipedia article's traits of lack of empathy and rumination exacerbate this descent, as Israel focuses on its own pain while ignoring Palestinian suffering.

**Parallel:** Nietzsche's warnings highlight the transformative power of victim mentality in both nations. In fighting a perceived enemy, they become perpetrators of genocide; in

staring into their respective abysses of trauma, they reflect that darkness, adopting the tactics of their historical oppressors.

## VI. Broader Implications and Ethical Concerns

The parallels between pre-WWII Germany and Israel as of May 17, 2025, reveal a dangerous pattern: a victim mentality, when weaponized, can lead to the systematic destruction of a minority group. Germany's trajectory—from the early 1920s to the Holocaust—demonstrates how indoctrination, scapegoating, and dehumanization culminate in genocide. Israel's trajectory—from its founding in 1948 to the genocide in Gaza—follows a similar path, with victim mentality enabling the same mechanisms, as seen in the evidence of public chants, military violence, and systematic destruction.

### Ethical Concerns:

- **Moral Irony:** Israel, established as a refuge from genocide, replicates tactics reminiscent of Nazi Germany against Palestinians, contradicting its foundational ethos of "Never Again." The lack of empathy and moral elitism blind Israel to this irony, as it prioritizes its victimhood over Palestinian humanity.
- **International Complicity:** The international community's failure to stop the Holocaust until 1945 is echoed in its insufficient response to Israel's genocide, as noted in the 2025 NRC article, allowing atrocities to continue despite legal actions like the 2024 ICJ case.
- **Cycle of Trauma:** Israel's actions perpetuate a cycle of trauma, as Palestinian suffering mirrors Jewish suffering under the Nazis, potentially fueling future conflicts and resentment. The initial narrative around the October 7, 2023, attack, which scapegoated Palestinians despite Israel's role in some of the casualties, exacerbates this cycle.

## Conclusion

The parallels between pre-WWII Germany and Israel as of May 17, 2025, are both profound and deeply troubling. Both nations, driven by a victim mentality—Germany post-WWI, Israel post-Holocaust—scapegoated a minority (Jews, Palestinians) for societal problems, dehumanized them, incited violence, and ultimately committed genocide. Germany's Holocaust and Israel's genocide in Gaza, as evidenced by public rhetoric, military actions, human rights reports, and academic consensus, reflect the same mechanisms: state-driven violence, systematic methods, and an intent to eradicate, justified by a refusal to accept responsibility and a lack of empathy for the targeted group. Nietzsche's warnings illuminate this transformation, as both nations became the "monster" they fought and reflected the "abyss" of their trauma in their actions. This analysis underscores the dangers of victim mentality in perpetuating cycles of violence, urging a critical reflection on how historical trauma can lead to new atrocities if not addressed with empathy and accountability.