

The Murder of Millions in the Pursuit of Pseudoscience: The Psychology Behind the Doctors' Trial

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Abstract.

During the Holocaust, over six million Jews were systematically murdered under the Nazi regime, with many subjected to forced labor and horrific medical experimentation. Within Nazi-controlled work camps, physicians carried out unethical and uninformed experiments on human subjects, violating fundamental human rights in the name of scientific progress. The postwar Nuremberg Trials, specifically the Doctors' Trial, exposed the psychological rationalizations used by these physicians, many of whom showed no remorse and justified their actions as scientific duty or national responsibility. This study explores how Nazi doctors engaged in moral disengagement, dehumanization, and pseudoscientific reasoning to legitimize torture and mass murder. The trial culminated in the publication of the Nuremberg Code, a pivotal document that established principles of voluntary consent and ethical boundaries in human experimentation. This paper examines the psychological profiles and justifications of the defendants, and traces how their actions, and society's response, helped shape the modern understanding of medical ethics and human rights. Nearly eight decades later, the legacy of the Nuremberg Code continues to influence international standards of biomedical research and the psychological accountability of professionals in wartime.

Keywords: crime psychology, human rights, war crime psychology