# Holocaust and World War II Timeline

## 1933

**January 30**  
German President Paul von Hindenburg appoints Adolf Hitler Chancellor of Germany

**Feb. 27-28**  
German Reichstag (Parliament) mysteriously burns down, government treats it as an act of terrorism

**Feb. 28**  
Decree passed which suspends the civil rights granted by the German constitution

**March 22**  
Dachau concentration camp opens as a prison camp for political dissidents

**March 23**  
Reichstag passes the Enabling Act, empowering Hitler to establish a dictatorship

**April 1**  
Nationwide Nazi organized boycott of Jewish shops and businesses

**April 7**  
Laws for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service bars Jews from holding civil service, university, and state positions

**April 26**  
Gestapo established

**May 10**  
Public burning of books written by Jews, political dissidents, and others

**July 14**  
Law on the Revocation of Naturalization stripping East European Jewish immigrants, as well as Roma (Gypsies), of German citizenship

## 1934

**June 30**  
Night of the Long Knives – members of the Nazi party and police murdered members of the Nazi leadership, army and others on Hitler’s orders. Ernst Röhm, leader of the SA was killed.

**August 2**  
President von Hindenburg dies. Hitler proclaims himself Führer. Armed forces must now swear allegiance to him

**Oct. 7**  
Jehovah’s Witness congregations submit standardized letters to the government declaring their political neutrality

## 1935

**April 1**  
Nazis ban the Jehovah’s Witness organization

**May 31**  
Jews barred from serving in the German armed forces

**June 28**  
Ministry of Justice revises Paragraph 175 and 175a, providing the police with broader means of prosecuting homosexual men

**Sept. 15**  
Decree of the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of the German Blood and Honor, otherwise known as the Nuremberg Laws. These anti-Jewish racial laws defined who was a Jew, stripped Jews of their German citizenship and said that Jews could not marry Aryans.

## 1936

**March 3**  
Jewish doctors barred from practicing medicine in German institutions

**March 7**  
Germans march into the Rhineland, previously demilitarized by the Versailles Treaty

**June 17**  
Heinrich Himmler appointed the Chief of German Police

**July 12**  
Construction begins on Sachsenhausen concentration camp

**August**  
Berlin hosts the 1936 Olympic Games. Anti-Jewish signs are temporarily removed to present a more favorable picture to foreign tourists.
Oct. 25  Hitler and Benito Mussolini form Rome-Berlin Axis

1937
July 15  Buchenwald concentration camp opens

1938
March 13  Anschluss (incorporation of Austria in the Third Reich): all antisemitic decrees immediately applied in Austria
April 26  Mandatory registration of all property held by Jews inside the Reich
July 6 - 15  Evian Conference held in Evian, France to discuss the problem of Jewish refugees worldwide
August 1  Adolf Eichmann establishes the Office of Jewish Emigration in Vienna to increase the pace of forced emigration
Sept. 30  Munich Conference: Great Britain and France agree to German occupation of the Sudetenland, previously western Czechoslovakia, in the Munich Pact
Oct. 1 –10  German troops occupy the Sudetenland
Oct. 5  Following a request by Swiss authorities, Germans mark all Jewish passports with a large letter "J" to hinder Jewish immigration to Switzerland
Nov. 7  Assassination in Paris of German diplomat Ernst vom Rath by Herschel Grynszpan, a Jew. This event serves as a catalyst to the Kristallnacht pogrom.

Nov. 9-10  Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass): anti-Jewish pogrom in Germany, Austria, and the Sudetenland; 200 synagogues destroyed; 7,500 Jewish shops looted; at least 91 Jewish men killed, 30,000 male Jews sent to concentration camps (Dachau, Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen)

Nov. 12  Decree forcing all Jews to transfer retail businesses to “Aryan” hands
Nov. 15  All Jewish pupils expelled from German schools
Dec. 12  One billion mark fine levied against German Jews for the destruction of property during Kristallnacht

1939
March 15  German troops occupy the Czech lands and establish the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia
May-June  Cuba and the U.S. refuse to accept over 900 refugees aboard the St. Louis
August 23  Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed: non-aggression pact between Soviet Union and Germany

Sept. 1  Beginning of World War II. Germany invades Poland.
Sept. 3  Britain and France declare war on Germany
Sept. 21  Reinhard Heydrich issues directives to establish ghettos in German-occupied Poland
Sept. 28  Amendment to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact outlines the planned partition of Poland between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union
October  Hitler orders the killing of handicapped and disabled German citizens, beginning the T-4 euthanasia program
Oct. 12  Germany begins deportation of Austrian and Czech Jews to Poland
Oct. 26 Germany formally annexes the former Polish regions of Upper Silesia, Pomerania, West Prussia, Poznan and Danzig. The rest of German occupied Poland becomes the General Government.

Oct. 28 First Polish ghetto established in Piotrków

Nov. 12 Forced deportations of Jews in German annexed Poland to the General Government begins

Nov. 23 Decree that by December 1st, all Jews in German-occupied Poland wear an arm band or yellow star

1940

April 9 Germans occupy Denmark and southern Norway

May 7 Łódź Ghetto (Litzmannstadt) sealed: 165,000 people in 1.6 square miles

May 10 Germany invades the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France

May 20 Concentration camp established at Auschwitz (Auschwitz I)

June 22 France surrenders to Germany

June 30 Germans order the first sealing of a major ghetto in Łódź

August 8 Battle of Britain begins

Sept. 27 Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis

Nov. 15 Warsaw Ghetto sealed

1941

Jan. 21-26 Anti-Jewish riots in Romania

February 1 German authorities begin rounding up Polish Jews for transfer to Warsaw Ghetto

March Adolf Eichmann appointed head of the department for Jewish affairs of the Reich Security Main Office, Section IV B 4.

April 6 Axis invasion of Yugoslavia and Greece

June 22 Germany invades the Soviet Union – Operation Barbarosa. Mobile killing squads known as Einsatzgruppen travel with the advancing army, conducting mass shootings of Jews and Communists

July 20 Minsk ghetto established

July 31 Reinhard Heydrich appointed by Hermann Göring to implement the "Final Solution"

August 15 Kovno ghetto sealed

Sept. 3 first experimental gassing using Zyklon B performed at Auschwitz

Sept. 6 Vilna ghetto established in Lithuania

Sept. 29-30 34,000 Jews massacred at Babi Yar outside Kiev

Oct. 15 deportation of German Jews to ghettos of Łódź, Riga and Minsk

Oct. – Nov. Operation Reinhard preparations begin (Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka)

Nov. 24 Theresienstadt (Terezin) ghetto established in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia

Nov. 26 Auschwitz-Birkenau (Auschwitz II) established.

Dec. 7 Japanese attack Pearl Harbor – bring United States into World War II

Dec. 8 Gassing operations begin at Chelmno (Kulmhof) extermination camp

Dec. 11 Germany and Italy declare war on the United States

1942

January 16 deportations from the Łódź ghetto to Chelmno begin
January 20 Wannsee Conference in Berlin: Reinhard Heydrich outlines plan to murder Europe's Jews
March 17 Extermination begins in Bełżec
March 27 Deportations from France begin
May Extermination by gas begins in Sobibór killing center
May 4 First selection of victims for gassing at Auschwitz-Birkenau takes place
May 31 Germans open the I.G. Farben plant at Monowitz (Auschwitz III)
July 15 deportations of Dutch Jews from Westerbork transit camp begin
July 22 deportations from the Warsaw ghetto to Treblinka concentration camp begin
July 23 gassing operations at Treblinka begin
August 4 deportations from Belgium begin
Winter Deportation of Jews from Germany, Greece and Norway to killing centers

1943
Jan. 18-22 Jewish Fighting Organization (ŻOB) mounts armed resistance during deportations from Warsaw ghetto
January German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad
March Liquidation of Kraków ghetto
March 15 deportation of Greek Jews from Salonika begin
April 19 Warsaw Ghetto uprising begins as Germans attempt to liquidate 70,000 inhabitants; Jewish underground fights until May 16
June 21 Heinrich Himmler orders the liquidation of all ghettos in Poland and the Soviet Union
August 2 Prisoner revolt at Treblinka. Initially over 300 inmates escaped, though most were recaptured and killed. The camp was closed and dismantled after the revolt.
Oct. 14 Prisoners mount armed revolt at Sobibór Approximately 300 escaped, though more than 100 were recaptured. The camp was closed and dismantled after the revolt.
Nov. 3-4 Operation Harvest Festival – liquidation of several camps in the Lublin area. At least 42,000 Jews killed at Majdanek, Trawniki, and Poniatowa

1944
March 19 Germany occupies Hungary
May 15 Nazis begin deporting Hungarian Jews
June 6 D-Day: Allied invasion at Normandy
June 22 Soviet offensive destroys German front in Belorussia
July 20 Group of German officers attempt to assassinate Hitler
July 22 SS authorities evacuate most prisoners from Majdanek westward to evade the advancing Soviet Army
July 23 Soviet troops liberate Majdanek killing center – the camp was captured intact
Aug. 7-30 Łódź ghetto liquidated - inhabitants deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau
October 6 Sonderkommando at Auschwitz-Birkenau revolt, blowing up Crematorium IV and killing the guards
Oct. 30 last transport of Jews from Theresienstadt arrive at Auschwitz
Nov. 25 SS begin to demolish gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau
February 22: Beginning of death march for inmates of Stutthof

April 11: U.S. troops liberate over 20,000 prisoners at Buchenwald

April 29: U.S. troops liberate approximately 32,000 prisoners at Dachau

April 30: Hitler commits suicide in his Berlin bunker

May 2: German units in Berlin surrender to the Soviet army

May 5: U.S. troops liberate over 17,000 prisoners at Mauthausen and more than 20,000 at Gusen concentration camp

May 7: German armed forces surrendered unconditionally in the West

May 8: V-E Day: proclaimed end of the war and of the Third Reich

August 3: U.S. special envoy Earl Harrison made a public report to President Truman on the treatment of Jewish displaced persons in Germany. The report contained a strong indictment of Allied military policies, underscored the plight of Jewish DPs, and eventually led to improved conditions for them in the American zone of occupied Germany.

Sept. 2: Japan surrenders to the United States - end of World War II

Nov. 20: The International Military Tribunal (IMT), made up of U.S., British, French, and Soviet judges, began a trial of 21 major Nazi leaders at Nuremberg, Germany

Dec. 22: President Truman issues a directive giving Displaced Persons preference in receiving visas under the existing U.S. immigration quotas

1946

July 4: Mob attack against Jewish survivors in Kielce, Poland following a ritual murder accusation. More than 40 Jews killed and dozens injured.

Aug. 1: The IMT passes judgment on the major Nazi war criminals. Eighteen are convicted, three acquitted. Eleven are sentenced to death.


1947

Nov. 29: In response to a proposal submitted by the British government, the United Nations partitions Palestine into two states. The proposal is accepted by the Jewish leadership and rejected by the Arab leadership.

1948

May 14: David Ben-Gurion, leader of the Jews of Palestine, announced the establishment of the State of Israel. Between 1948 and 1951, almost 70,000 Jews immigrated to Israel, including more than two-thirds of the Jewish DPs in Europe.