

# 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 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 Belzec
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
<b>June 6</b>	<b>D-Day: Allied invasion at Normandy</b>
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	<i>Sonderkommando</i> 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

## 1945

- January 17 Death march from Auschwitz begins as the Germans try to evade the advancing Soviets
- January 25 Beginning of death march for inmates of Stutthof
- January 27 Soviet troops liberate about 8,000 remaining prisoners at Auschwitz
- 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**
- May 9 German armed forces surrender unconditionally in the East
- 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.
- Oct. 16 Ten defendants executed by hanging. Hermann Göring commits suicide before his execution.

## 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.