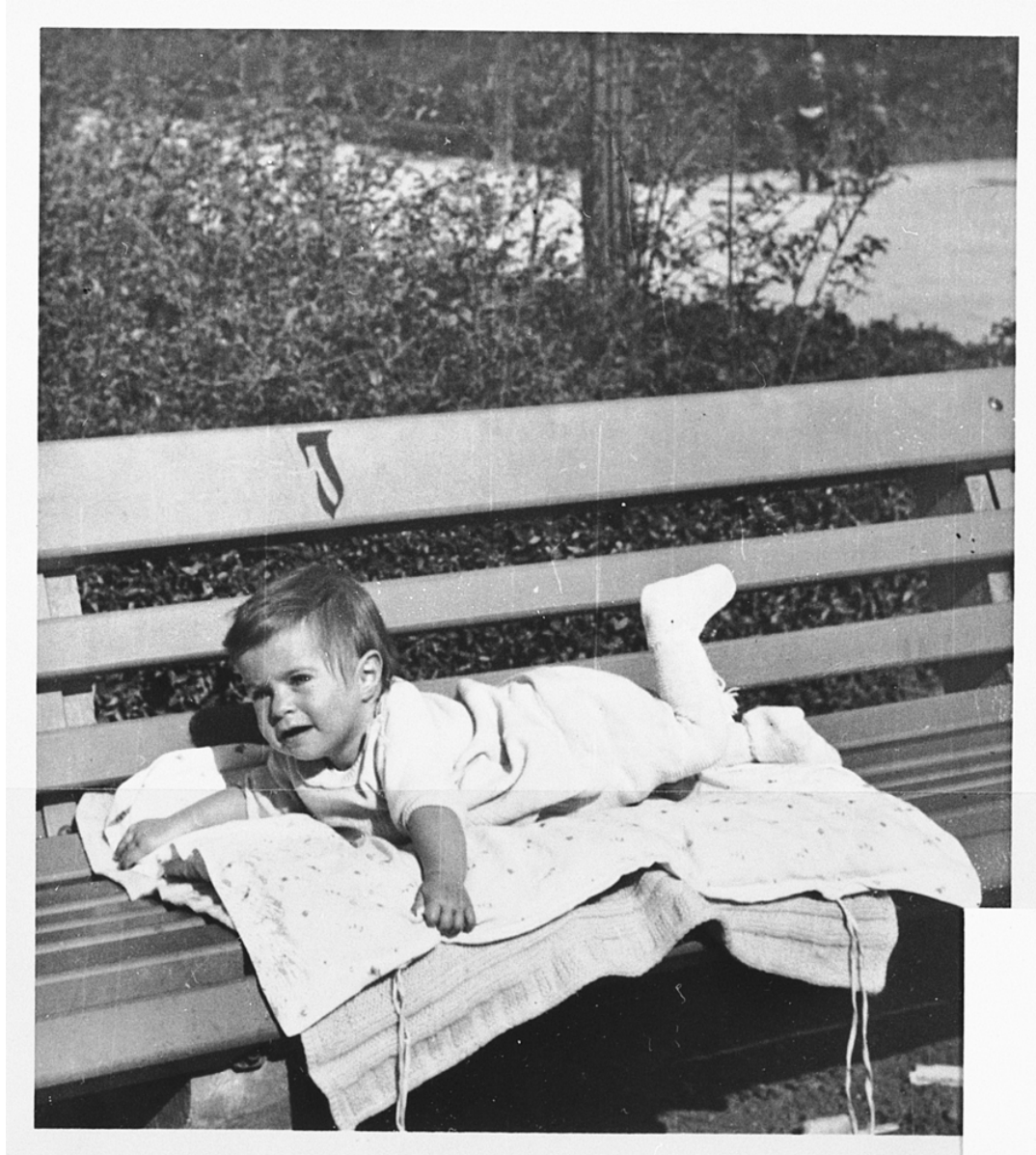




Kristallnacht

Caption: Local residents watch as flames consume the synagogue in Opava, set on fire during Kristallnacht.

Description of event: Literally, "Night of Crystal," is often referred to as the "Night of Broken Glass." The name refers to the wave of violent anti-Jewish **pogroms** which took place throughout Germany, annexed Austria, and in areas of the Sudetenland in Czechoslovakia recently occupied by German troops. Instigated primarily by Nazi Party officials and members of the SA (*Sturmabteilungen*: literally Assault Detachments, but commonly known as Storm Troopers) and Hitler Youth, *Kristallnacht* owes its name to the shards of shattered glass that lined German streets in the wake of the pogrom-broken glass from the windows of synagogues, homes, and Jewish-owned businesses plundered and destroyed during the violence.



Nuremberg Laws

Caption: A young baby lies on a park bench marked with a J to indicate it is only for Jews.

Description of event: **Antisemitism** and the persecution of Jews represented a central tenet of Nazi ideology. In their 25-point Party Program, published in 1920, Nazi party members publicly declared their intention to segregate Jews from "Aryan" society and to abrogate Jews' political, legal, and civil rights. Nazi leaders began to make good on their pledge to persecute German Jews soon after their **assumption of power**. During the first six years of Hitler's dictatorship, from 1933 until the outbreak of war in 1939, Jews felt the effects of more than 400 decrees and regulations that restricted all aspects of their public and private lives. Many of those laws were national ones that had been issued by the German administration and affected all Jews. But state, regional, and municipal officials, on their own initiative, also promulgated a barrage of exclusionary decrees in their own communities. Thus, hundreds of individuals in all levels of government throughout the country were involved in the persecution of Jews as they conceived, discussed, drafted, adopted, enforced, and supported anti-Jewish legislation. No corner of Germany was left untouched.



Boycott of Jewish businesses

Caption: SA men picket Jewish-owned business during the boycott.

Description of event: It was the first nationwide, planned action against Jews: a boycott targeting Jewish businesses and professionals. The boycott was both a reprisal and an act of revenge against *Gruehpropaganda* (atrocity stories) that German and foreign Jews, assisted by foreign journalists, were allegedly circulating in the international press to damage Nazi Germany's reputation. On the day of the boycott, Storm Troopers (Sturmabteilung; SA) stood menacingly in front of Jewish-owned department stores and retail establishments, and the offices of professionals such as doctors and lawyers. The Star of David was painted in yellow and black across thousands of doors and windows, with accompanying antisemitic slogans. Signs were posted saying "Don't Buy from Jews" and "The Jews Are Our Misfortune." Throughout Germany, acts of violence against individual Jews and Jewish property occurred; the police intervened only rarely. Although the national boycott operation, organized by local Nazi party chiefs, lasted only one day and was ignored by many individual Germans.



T4 Operation

Caption: Smoke rising from the chimney at Hadamar, one of six facilities which carried out the Nazis' Euthanasia Program.

Description of event: The term "euthanasia" (literally, "good death") usually refers to the inducement of a painless death for a chronically or terminally ill individual who would otherwise suffer. In the Nazi context, however, "euthanasia" represented a euphemistic term for a clandestine murder program which targeted for systematic killing mentally and physically disabled patients living in institutional settings in Germany and German-annexed territories. The so-called "Euthanasia" program was National Socialist Germany's first program of mass murder, predating the genocide of European Jewry, which we call the **Holocaust**, by approximately two years. The effort represented one of many radical eugenic measures which aimed to restore the racial "integrity" of the German nation. It endeavored to eliminate what eugenicists and their supporters considered "life unworthy of life": those individuals who--they believed--because of severe psychiatric, neurological, or physical disabilities represented at once a genetic and a financial burden upon German society and the state.



The Voyage of the St. Louis

Caption: Passengers aboard the "St. Louis." These refugees from Nazi Germany were forced to return to Europe after both Cuba and the U.S. denied them refuge.

Description of event: the German transatlantic liner *St. Louis* sailed from Hamburg, Germany, for Havana, Cuba. On the voyage were 938 passengers, one of whom was not a refugee. Almost all were Jews fleeing from the Third Reich. Most were German citizens, some were from Eastern Europe, and a few were officially "stateless." The majority of the Jewish passengers had applied for U.S. visas, and had planned to stay in Cuba only until they could enter the United States. But by the time the *St. Louis* sailed, there were signs that political conditions in **Cuba** might keep the passengers from landing there. The U.S. State Department in Washington, the U.S. consulate in Havana, some Jewish organizations, and refugee agencies were all aware of the situation. The passengers themselves were not informed; most were compelled to return to Europe.



Ghettoization

Caption: A synagogue has been converted into a temporary shelter to house Jewish families forced to move into the ghetto in Krakow-Podgorze.

Description of event: During World War II, ghettos were city districts (often enclosed) in which the Germans concentrated the municipal and sometimes regional Jewish population and forced them to live under miserable conditions. Ghettos isolated Jews by separating Jewish communities from the non-Jewish population and from other Jewish communities. The Germans established at least 1,000 ghettos in German-occupied and annexed Poland and the Soviet Union alone. German occupation authorities established the first ghetto in Poland in Piotrków Trybunalski in October 1939. The Germans regarded the establishment of ghettos as a provisional measure to control and segregate Jews while the Nazi leadership in Berlin deliberated upon options to realize the goal of removing the Jewish population. In many places ghettoization lasted a relatively short time. Some ghettos existed for only a few days, others for months or years.



The Wannsee Conference

Caption: Site of the January 1942 Wannsee Conference, convened by Reich Security Main Office chief Reinhard Heydrich, on the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question." Wannsee, Germany.

Description of event: 15 high-ranking Nazi Party and German government officials gathered at a villa in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee to discuss and coordinate the implementation of what they called the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." Heydrich convened the Wannsee Conference (1) to inform and secure support from government ministries and other interested agencies relevant to the implementation of the "Final Solution," and (2) to disclose to the participants that Hitler himself had tasked Heydrich and the RSHA with coordinating the operation. The men at the table did not deliberate whether such a plan should be undertaken, but instead discussed the implementation of a policy decision that had already been made at the highest level of the Nazi regime.

All photos and writings are from www.ushmm.org, the website for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.