

# HOLOCAUST

## DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE

*8 days from the Sunday before Yom HaShoah  
to the Sunday after Yom HaShoah*

### **WHAT IS THE HOLOCAUST?**

*"If understanding  
is impossible,  
however,  
knowledge  
is imperative,  
because what  
happened could  
happen again.  
Conscience can  
be seduced  
and obscured  
again: even our  
consciences."*

*PRIMO LEVI*

Yad Vashem, the Holocaust Museum in Israel, defines the Holocaust as the "sum total of all anti-Jewish actions carried out by the Nazi regime between 1933 and 1945: from stripping the German Jews of their legal and economic status in the 1930s; segregating and starvation in the various occupied countries; the murder of close to six million Jews in Europe." The Nazi government also targeted other groups for persecution (Gypsies, individuals with mental and physical disabilities, Communists, Socialists, trade unionists, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses), but they reserved for the Jewish people an especially vehement and vitriolic hatred. This intense antisemitism led to the "Final Solution of the Jewish Problem." Once war was underway, the Nazis proved their efficiency through the implementation of the Final Solution, the eradication of European Jewry. Two out of three European Jews were murdered: six million souls.

The biblical word *Shoah* is Hebrew for catastrophe, devastation, or calamity and was used to indicate total destruction. In the early 1940s, *Shoah* became the standard Hebrew term for the Nazi-sanctioned murder of European Jews. The word *Holocaust* came into use in the 1950s as a comparable term. *Holocaust* is also a religious word, referring to sacrifices which were offered in the Temple. According to Rabbi Joseph Telushkin, when offering sacrifices, usually part of the animal was offered to God and the other part was eaten by priests. However, the *holocaust* was a wholly burned animal offered to God in its entirety.

# A Short History of the Jewish People and Antisemitism

## *Antiquity – Roman Empire*

**Rome conquers Jerusalem: 63 BCE.** In Judea, two brothers and their supporters were embroiled in a civil war over the throne. Hyrcanus II, the elder brother, had acceded to the throne, but his younger brother Aristobulus disputed Hyrcanus' claim and pushed him from the throne. The populace was divided also. Riots broke out, fanning into a flame civil war. In order to quell the unrest, the brothers decided to ask the Roman general Pompey the Great to mediate for them, to choose who would be king. Pompey chose Hyrcanus because he was malleable and easily influenced, with the intention of making him a puppet king for the Roman Empire. Fighting broke out again in Jerusalem; Pompey led his troops into the city to quell the fighting. By involving Pompey, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus inadvertently put Judea into Roman hands, which resulted in Judea becoming a client state of Rome.

**The Great Revolt and Destruction of the Second Temple: 66-70 CE.** The Jews were extremely distressed under Roman rule. High taxes created a heavy burden for them, and governors made the burden worse by increasing the amount of the tax and pocketing the difference. Also, the Jews had always chosen their High Priest. Under Roman rule, the Romans appointed the High Priest (usually someone who was pro-Rome). In addition to high taxes and Roman control of the High Priest, the Romans actively demonstrated their contempt for the Jews. Roman soldiers would expose themselves in the Temple, and once burned a Torah scroll, which was sacred to the Jews. The Jews were fed up. Some joined a radical faction called the Zealots, who sought to regain independence from Rome. The Sicarii (*sica-dagger*) were a small offshoot of the Zealots. These assassins targeted Romans, or Jews who cooperated with Romans.

In 66 CE, the Roman governor Florus stole a large amount of silver from the Temple. Enraged, Jewish masses rioted and managed to wipe out a small Roman garrison. The Roman ruler of neighboring Syria sent out a force, but the Jews defeated them also! The Roman army returned with 60,000 heavily-armed soldiers. They targeted Galilee, which was the most radicalized area of Judea. One hundred thousand Jews were sold into slavery.

In March of 70 CE, the Romans laid siege to Jerusalem. It turned into a stalemate. By the end of August, the Romans had succeeded in breaching the walls of Jerusalem. Once inside the city, a week-long battle ensued before the Romans gained control of Jerusalem. An enormous fire broke out during the battle, engulfing the Temple. When the fire died out, all that remained of the Second Temple was one outer wall – today known as the Western Wall. The Romans celebrated this victory by parading the Menorah and the Table of Shewbread through the streets of Rome. Up until the Roman sack of the Temple, these sacred objects had

only been seen by the High Priest. Today, Orthodox Jews still pray daily for the restoration of the Temple and the practice of offering sacrifices.

Many Jewish leaders were against the revolt; they realized it was impossible to defeat Roman forces. Rabbi Yochanan was one such leader who managed to escape. He met with the Roman general Vespasian, who allowed the rabbi to establish a school of learning in Yavneh, Israel. Rabbi Yochanan created a model of Judaism that could survive without the Temple, sacrifices, or a state. Judaism changed and adapted.

This was the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora – with the loss of Jerusalem and the Second Temple, the Jews began to scatter across the world. They were a stateless people for almost 2000 years, until the nation of Israel was formed in 1948.

**John Chrysostom: 387 CE.** John Chrysostom, an early Church Father who is revered in the Orthodox Church, preached eight homilies titled "Against the Jews," while bishop of Antioch. In the sermons, he demonized the Jews, referred to Jews as creatures of the devil, as well as stating that synagogues were annexes to Satan's lair. The sermons were directed against Christians who went to synagogues during Jewish feasts and fasts, and Christians who fraternized with Jews.

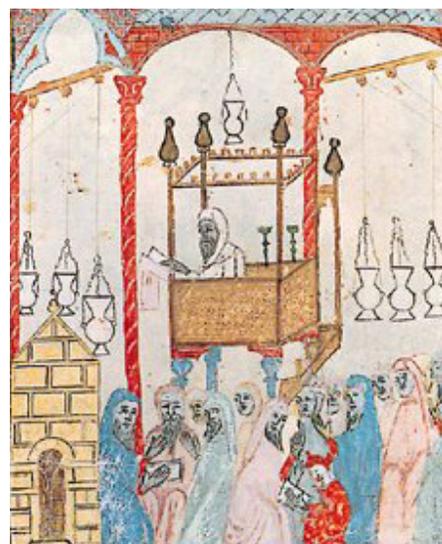
*"...Judaism would continue even if the worst came to the worst and its (the temple's) outward material trappings were obliterated, and that a teacher, ...not a high priest, would henceforth be the source of Judaic authority... It was the foundation moment of the litany of endurance."*

—SIMON  
SCHAMA

## *Golden Age of Spanish Jewry*

Much of Spain was under Muslim rule from 711-1492 CE. The tenth through the twelfth centuries in Spain are collectively called the Golden Age of the Jews. 'Golden Age' is a relative term; it was golden in comparison to the treatment of Jews in France and Germany during the same time. In contrast to French and German Jews, the Jews in Spain enjoyed freedom of movement and felt an integral part of the society. They felt fortunate to live under tolerant rulers, in a relatively liberal and tolerant society.

When the Almohad Dynasty came to power in the 12th century, life for the Jews changed. Under the Almohades, Jews had three choices: conversion to Islam, exile, or death. The Golden Age went dark.



# Crusades

Meanwhile, in 11th century Europe, the Crusades were just beginning. Pope Urban called for the First Crusade in 1095 to help the Byzantine Empire liberate Jerusalem from the Muslims. To recruit crusaders, the crusade was preached by various church leaders and Peter the Hermit. The preaching of the First Crusade often inspired anti-Jewish violence. Included in a French churchman's preaching were references to Jews, including: Jews as slayers of the Lord, murderers of prophets, advocates of the devil, assemblies of demons, and a brood of vipers. Godfrey of Bouillon swore "to go on this journey only after avenging the blood of the crucified one by shedding Jewish blood and completely eradicating any trace of those bearing the name of 'Jew'." So, it is perhaps not surprising that pogroms, violent attacks against Jews, occurred as the crusaders with their retinues encountered Jews on their way to the First Crusade. Bishops in many cities tried to protect the Jews, but it was difficult to put up much resistance against the might of the marching armies.

The crusaders successfully took Jerusalem from the Muslims. In the wake of the battle, Jews sought refuge in synagogues. The crusaders set fire to the synagogues, burning alive those inside. The First Crusade and subsequent crusades opened the door to centuries of violence against Jews, libelous accusations and a long series of expulsions.

## Yellow Badge and Expulsions

Pope Innocent III decreed at the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 that Jews must wear a "distinctive badge." The badge usually took the form of a yellow circle – inspiring Hitler hundreds of years later to force Jews to wear a yellow star. Innocent III wrote that "Jews, like the fratricide Cain, are doomed to wander about the earth as fugitives and vagabonds, and their faces must be covered with shame."

The first country-wide expulsion of Jews came from England in 1290. King Edward I (Longshanks) ordered the expulsion after years of conflict on the matter of usury. The ban would not be rescinded until 1656, under the rule of Cromwell.

### *Other expulsions:*

- France: 1306, 1394
- Hungary: 1349-1360
- Austria: 1421
- Spain: 1492
- German localities: 14-16th centuries
- Portugal: 1497
- Bohemia and Moravia: 1744-1745



## Ghettos

Ghettos originated in Italy. The term Ghetto, used for the area to which Jews were segregated, came about in rather interesting fashion. The earliest ghetto was in Venice, located next to a factory that made cannons. *Getto* is the Italian word for foundry. Because the Jewish neighborhood was next to the *getto*, it became customary to refer to the Jewish neighborhood as the ghetto.

A papal bull was issued in 1555 that required Jews to live in closed ghettos. Jews were allowed to leave the enclave during the day for work only and were forbidden to be outside the walls at night. Any Jew outside of the ghetto must wear a yellow hat.

Ghettos spread throughout Europe. From the 16th through the 18th centuries, most Jewish communities were located inside ghettos. Within the ghetto, Jewish residents had control over civic institutions, such as the law courts and schools. After the French Revolution, ghettos fell out of use. They were demolished in Italy, Germany, and Poland because segregation appeared too medieval in the Napoleonic era.

## Martin Luther

Martin Luther, the monk who inadvertently set off the Protestant Reformation when he posted his 95 Theses on the door of Wittenburg Castle church, expressed many contradicting views of the Jews during his lifetime. At one time he promoted elimination of anti-Jewish laws, but he earned a reputation as an antisemite with his virulent attacks against Jewish people. Hitler would use Luther's words to support his antisemitic beliefs and actions.



From Luther's *On Jews and Their Lies*:

*"My advice, as I said earlier, is: First, that their synagogues be burned down, and that all who are able toss sulphur and pitch; it would be good if someone could also throw in some hellfire... Second, that all their books-their prayer books, their Talmudic writings, also the entire Bible-be taken from them, not leaving them one leaf... Third, that they be forbidden on pain of death to praise God, to give thanks, to pray, and to teach publicly among us and in our country... Fourth, that they be forbidden to utter the name of God within our hearing. For we cannot with a good conscience listen to this or tolerate it... The rulers must act like a good physician who, when gangrene has set in proceeds without mercy to cut, saw, and burn flesh, veins, bone, and marrow. Such a procedure must also be followed in this instance. Burn down their synagogues, forbid all that I enumerated earlier, force them to work, and deal harshly with them. If this does not help we must drive them out like mad dogs."*

# Pogroms

Pogrom is a Russian word, coined to describe violent attacks on Jews in the Russian Empire by non-Jews. It means “to wreak havoc, demolish violently.” The first such attack to be labeled a pogrom was an outbreak of anti-Jewish rioting in Odessa in 1821. The term became popular after a wave of antisemitic riots in the Ukraine and the southern portion of Russia from 1881 to 1884. Two more waves came in 1903-1906 and 1918-1920.

The pogroms were often sanctioned by the government. False rumors of blood libels (stories about Jews using the blood of Christian children for ritual purposes) often fueled the anger of the rioters. The rioters raped, murdered, and looted. In 1881, half of all the world’s Jews lived in Russia. The Russian pogroms prompted many to emigrate elsewhere. Most of them made their way to the United States. A large number went to Palestine after the 1881-82 pogroms.

# The Great War (later “World War 1”)

**An Assassination Leads to a World War.** Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, was assassinated by a Serbian nationalist while on a state visit to Bosnia. The Balkan Peninsula was a powder keg, fraught with perennial tensions. No one was particularly shocked at the assassination, given the political climate and history of previous Balkan wars. However, no one could have imagined that this would ignite four years of battle and bloodshed, involving so many countries across the world.



Four major factors led to the eruption of war: militarism, alliances, imperialism, and nationalism. Years prior to the war, militarism led to an arms race between England, France and Germany. They were building up their navies and armies, creating more powerful and sophisticated armaments.

**Armenian Genocide: 1915-1923.** In the midst of wartime carnage, the first true genocide of the 20th century occurred. The Ottomans have the ignominious distinction of embarking upon the modern era’s first effort to eliminate a whole people. The Ottoman government initiated a policy of systematically murdering Armenians, cleansing them from the Ottoman Empire. There were approximately 1.5-2 million Armenians living in the empire. They were a Christian minority group, living as second class citizens who were denied normal safeguards, and were evidently considered expendable. By the end of the war, an estimated 1.2 million Armenians were killed. When Turkey was declared a republic in 1923, the entire Armenian population had virtually disappeared in this aghet (catastrophe). Medz Yeghern ( the great crime) became the standard Armenian term to refer to the Armenian Genocide just as Shoah became the Jewish term for the Holocaust. Turkey still denies the Armenian Genocide.

The genocide was committed under the auspices of and aided by the Germans. The German Reich provided the Ottomans with weapons, and provided military advice and training. Prussian officer von der Goltz had published a military book in 1883, which laid out an ideological foundation for total war, total destruction of the enemy. The Ottomans used this in dealing with the Armenians.

Tactics used to liquidate the Armenians:

- Social unrest and acts of Armenian self-defense were provoked in order to justify deportations.
- Deportations were disguised as resettlement. Most deportees were forced to walk to their alleged destinations (deserts in northern Syria), effectively becoming death marches.
- Once en route, convoys were attacked by government sanctioned “bands of butchers”, mostly convicts released from prison. Armenians were beaten, raped, brutalized.
- There were no provisions for feeding the deportees; denial of food and water was a killing method.

After the war, a German general compared the Armenians with the Jews in Germany: “...the Armenian is just like the Jew, a parasite outside of the confines of his homeland, sucking the marrow of the people of the host country. Year after year they abandon their native land—just like the Polish Jews who migrate to Germany—to engage in usurious activities. Hence, the hatred which, in a medieval form, has unleashed itself against them as an unpleasant people, entailing their murder.”

**Armistice: November 11, 1918.** The balance of power shifted after the United States joined the war in 1917. In March 1918, the Germans had 300,000 more soldiers than the allies, but by the end of July more than a million German soldiers were casualties. They had no replacements. France and Britain lost men and also had no replacements, but more than a quarter of a million American soldiers were arriving each month and going immediately into action. The Allies had more troops than Germany, and daily were putting more into the field. Despite this, the Germans held on. By autumn, rains slowed the Allies.



The situation finally got too desperate for the Germans. On October 27, 1918 the German government sent a capitulation note to President Wilson, which asked for armistice terms. The Allied commanders haggled over the Armistice terms. On November 8, the German delegates signed the Armistice, which went into effect on November 11 at 11 a.m.

French General Charles Mangin was not happy: “No no no!” he exclaimed. “We must go right into the heart of Germany. The armistice should be signed there. The Germans will not admit that they are beaten. You do not finish wars like this...It is a fatal error and France will pay for it!”

**Treaties and Reparations.** *Treaty of Versailles June 28, 1919.* Germany believed Wilson’s Fourteen Points would be the basis for the peace treaty, but the European leaders didn’t share that desire. They saw Germany as chiefly responsible for starting the war, and wanted harsh terms. The head of the German delegation expressed his view of the treaty: “Germany renounces its existence.”

The terms included:

- Germany’s acknowledgment of sole responsibility for the war
- Loss of 13% of its territory (more than 27,000 square miles) and 10% of its population
- Occupation of Germany’s Saar region and territory west of the Rhine for 15 years
- No union of Austria and Germany
- Army limited to 100,000 men
- Germany to pay high reparations

According to historian G. J. Meyer, the terms of the treaty served to unite the warring factions of German society. They believed they had been deceived and betrayed. Also, the Allies had chosen to only deal with the Weimar government, leaving the German army out of the talks. The ground was prepared for claims that the army, never having surrendered and still in possession of conquered territories at the time of the armistice, had been “stabbed in the back” by cowardly and traitorous liberal politicians. Germans were given an excuse to despise their new government. With that hatred and the economic devastation after losing the war, the people were in search of something better. This created an opening for a new, strong leader who would soon begin his rise and subsequent drive towards another world war.

## THE COST OF THE GREAT WAR

10 million soldiers died

21 million soldiers wounded

Roughly 10 million civilians died (directly or indirectly as result of hostilities)

German, Austro-Hungarian, Russian, and Ottoman Empires ceased to exist



# Hitler's Rise to Power

**Peace Treaty.** Germans were outraged at the harsh terms of the Versailles Treaty. People protested in the German Reichstag (German Parliament) and on the streets. The German people felt humiliated by the Treaty, angered by the severity of the Treaty's terms, and burdened by the weight of reparations. This destabilized the country. Germany was economically devastated after the war (as was all of Europe). The Weimar Republic was a weak government; the public lacked confidence in its ability to govern well, especially given the challenges facing Germany in the aftermath of the war.

**National Socialist German Workers' Party.** Hitler joined the German Workers' Party in 1919; it was renamed the National Social German Workers' Party (commonly known as the Nazi Party) in 1920. His charisma and powerful speeches paved the way for him to take control of the party in 1921. Party membership was low at this point, but Hitler was gaining a higher profile through his speeches and meetings. He stirred up nationalist passion, placing the blame for Germany's difficulties on Socialists, revolutionaries, Marxists, and the "racial tuberculosis of the people in the international Jews."

Hitler led a coup of the regional Bavarian government, called the Beer Hall Putsch, but it failed. He used his trial as a platform to spread Nazi propaganda; as a result, he became well-known throughout Germany. During his imprisonment he wrote *Mein Kampf*, an exposition of his life, beliefs, and ideas.

In 1924, the United States made huge loans to Germany to help with their economic recovery. It proved to be the stimulus Germany needed, and the years 1924-29 were fairly prosperous. In the Reichstag elections of 1924 and 1928, the Nazi party never gained more than 3% of the vote. That changed in 1929 when the stock market crashed in New York City ushering in a world-wide depression. Germany was especially vulnerable, because much of their economy was based on loans from the US and foreign trade. When the loans came due, there was no money available for payment because the market for Germany's exports dried up. Production levels fell off, laborers were laid off, and banks failed, wiping out people's savings. It was a miserable time.

The German democratic government began to unravel under the pressures brought by the Great Depression. Hitler saw this as a great opportunity. His greatest assets were speech making and knowing what the people wanted to hear. He and others in the Nazi party campaigned tirelessly for the 1930 Reichstag elections. On election day, the Nazi party won 18.3% of the vote, a huge jump from the 3% garnered in the elections only two years prior. When parliament opened, the elected Nazis, dressed in brown shirts, marched in unison into the Reichstag and to their seats. During roll-call, each responded with "Present! Heil Hitler!"

The 1932 elections brought even greater gains to the party. Nazis were now the largest party in parliament, but still did not have a majority. (Elections held in 1933 cannot be considered truly democratic because of repression and intimidation tactics used by the Nazi party.)

**Ideology of the Nazi Party.** The chief documents that contain Nazi ideology are Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the National Socialists' 25 Points (written in 1920). Nazism was not a coherent whole, but had many internal inconsistencies. However, here are a few of the key elements:

- Nationalism: Concerned only with German interests, especially with restoring the economy and promoting their military supremacy
- Totalitarianism: Extended state control to all aspects of life
- Authoritarianism: Emphasized a strong government leader who wielded absolute power
- Militarism: Wanted to re-arm and expand the military, especially to execute the goal of *Lebensraum* (living space)
- *Lebensraum*: Expand German territory (by force) for living space for Germans
- Racism: Believed white, Germanic, Aryan, and Nordic races were superior; antisemitic, anti-Slav, anti-Gypsy; euthanasia and eugenics as "Racial Hygiene"

## *Germany 1933-1939*

**Dictatorship under the Third Reich.** By 1932, Germany had endured two years of a severe depression. Unemployment was at 32%. Millions of people were out of work. Thousands of businesses had failed. There was rioting in the streets. A shoot-out between Nazis and Communists killed 19 and injured close to 300. The situation was close to anarchy. Hitler's paramilitary SA (*Sturm Abteilung-Storm Troopers*) and SS (*Schutz Staffel-Protection Squadron*) did their part to contribute to the mayhem on the streets. After many machinations and secret deals, president Hindenburg was coerced into naming Hitler Chancellor of Germany. Hitler was sworn in January 30, 1933. The bankers and industrialists were happy – they trusted Hitler's promise to turn the economy around. But it was a dark day for German and European Jewry.

A suspicious fire broke out in the Reichstag on the night of February 27. Hitler encouraged Hindenburg to issue the "Decree of the Reich President for the Protection of the People and State," which suspended constitutional civil rights such as freedom of speech, assembly, privacy, and press. A month later, the Enabling Act was passed. Ironically, the formal title of the act was "Law to Remedy the Distress of People and Reich." The act achieved the polar opposite, for it effectively made Hitler dictator. Hitler could now begin implementation of Nazi policies.

When Hindenburg died, Hitler merged the powers of the president and chancellor together. Hitler's dictatorship combined the positions of President, Chancellor, and Führer (head of the Nazi party). The Führer principle allowed Hitler to determine matters of policy himself. Führerprinzip, in which the ruler embodies the political movement and the nation, was another tenant of Nazism. The first order of business was the persecution of the Jews. In the years leading up to the outbreak of war, more than 400 decrees were issued, which restricted the Jews in some form or fashion. One of Hitler's first decrees was a boycott of Jewish businesses.

## Beginning of Jewish Persecution.

### 1933-34: Laws Limiting Jewish Participation in Public Life

- Jews and those deemed “politically unreliable” were excluded from civil service
- Number of Jewish students at schools and universities restricted (eventually no Jews would be allowed)
- Number of Jews practicing law or medicine restricted
- Restrictions on the amount of reimbursement paid to Jewish doctors from state health insurance
- Jewish actors could not perform on stage or screen

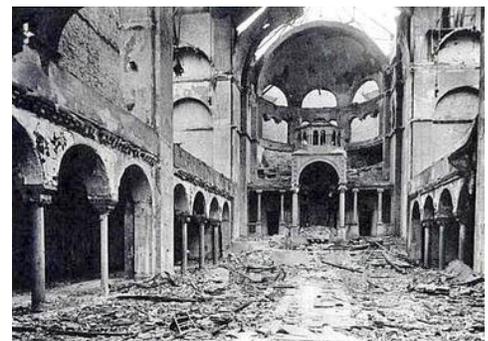
*1935: Nuremberg Race Laws.* The Nuremberg Laws were two race-based laws. The Reich Citizenship Law took German citizenship away from the Jews. They defined Jews by birth and blood, not by religion or culture. Therefore, only people of “German or kindred blood” could qualify for citizenship. Of course, there is no blood test for Germanness or Jewishness, so lawmakers used genealogy to define Jewishness. People with three or more grandparents born into a Jewish religious community were ‘racially’ Jewish.

The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor banned marriage between Jews and non-Jewish Germans. Sexual relations between Jews and non-Jewish Germans were criminalized, because they “defiled the race.”

*Aryanization.* The goal of Aryanization was basically to exclude Jews from public life, largely by preventing them from earning a living. They were required to register all their assets, the beginning of Nazi expropriation of their wealth. Also, all businesses were to be owned and worked only by Aryans (non-Jewish Germans). Jewish business owners had to sell their businesses at prices fixed by the government, and Jewish workers were fired from their jobs.

**Kristallnacht (“Night of Broken Glass”).** On November 9-10, 1938, the Nazis unleashed pogroms against the Jews. Some 276 synagogues in Germany and Austria were battered and burned, of which 76 were utterly destroyed. The windows of Jewish homes and businesses were smashed and the interiors pillaged. Broken glass covered the sidewalks in thick, jagged sheets. Over 30,000 Jewish men were arrested, and some of whom were sent to Dachau, Germany’s first concentration camp.

After Kristallnacht, Jews were increasingly segregated from Germans. If Jews had non-Jewish first names, then they had to add either ‘Israel’ or ‘Sara’ to their names and were required to carry identity cards that designated their Jewish heritage. Passports were stamped with the letter J.



**Concentration Camps.** Concentration camps were established shortly after Hitler was appointed Chancellor. Initially, people viewed as subversive to the Nazi regime were imprisoned and tortured there, such as German Communists, Socialists, and other political opponents, as well as union organizers, Gypsies, and homosexuals. Imprisoning the Nazi's political opponents cleared the field, making it easier to implement Nazi policies. After Austria's annexation, German and Austrian Jews were sent to concentration camps in Germany. The Nazis built 938 concentration camps. Though concentration camps were not expressly built for killing *en masse*, as were the death camps, most people who entered concentration camps also died there, whether from torture, disease, or starvation.

There were different camps for different purposes. Besides the concentration camps, there were forced-labor camps and transit camps. Forced laborers would be used for the construction or expansion of the camps themselves, or as labor for stone quarries, coal mines or other extractive industries. Transit camps were short-term holding centers for Jews destined for deportation, usually to the death camps. In all, 1,830 labor and transit camps were built.

Five killing centers were established to efficiently murder large numbers of people. These were all erected in German-occupied Poland as part of the Final Solution (code name for the systematic annihilation of European Jewry). Mobile gas vans were first used, then gas chambers were built to increase the rate of the killings. An average of 6,000 Jews a day were gassed at Auschwitz-Birkenau, during the height of the deportations.

**Mass Murder: "Euthanasia" Program.** The goal of the so-called "Euthanasia" Program was to cleanse the Aryan race of defects by killing those with mental or physical disabilities. It was the Nazis' first program of mass murder. They initiated the program in 1939, targeting disabled children for the secret killing program. The Nazis required doctors, nurses, and midwives to report any child under the age of three who appeared to have severe mental or physical disabilities. Parents were then encouraged to admit their children into specific pediatric clinics for treatment. What the parents were not told was that the clinics were killing wards. The children would be killed by starvation or lethal drug overdoses. Eventually, the program included children up to 17 years old. At least 5,000 children were murdered in this way.

Adults with disabilities who lived in institutions were next in line for execution. The code-name for this program was "T4," taken from the address of the program's office. Six sites in Germany and Austria were established for gassing. The adults targeted were those with schizophrenia, epilepsy, dementia, encephalitis, those in institutions for longer than five years, and those who were not of German or "related" blood. The families and guardians of the victims received urns with ashes (not even their relative's ashes!) and a fictional death certificate. Over 70,000 people with disabilities were gassed. Meanwhile, child euthanasia continued until the end of the war. The program had expanded to include elderly patients, bombing victims, and foreign forced laborers. In all, it is estimated that 250,000 people perished through the "Euthanasia" Program.

**Steps toward War.** In 1936, Hitler began testing the waters of international tolerance by re-occupying the Rhineland, land taken from Germany in the Treaty of Versailles. No country voiced opposition to this occupation. In the spring of 1938, Hitler moved to fulfill one of his long-held ambitions – uniting Austria with Germany. Flouting the Treaty of Versailles once again, Hitler annexed Austria in a move called the Anschluss. In the fall of the same year, Hitler annexed the Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia, per the Munich Agreement (September 1938). The Munich Agreement allowed Hitler to acquire the Sudetenland, barring any further territorial claims. However, in the spring of 1939, Hitler flouted the Munich Agreement when he invaded and occupied all of Czechoslovakia. His subsequent invasion and occupation of Poland in September of 1939 triggered the outbreak of World War II.

## *Germany 1939-1945: World War 2*

**1939.** *Lebensraum* was part of what drove Hitler's invasions, a quest for 'living space' for his Aryan German Volk (Folk). He was also motivated by a desire for European dominance. A nationalist slogan of the Second Reich (the German Empire created by General Bismarck, 1871-1914) had been "One Volk, one Empire, one God." This was a common slogan, printed on postcards and postage stamps during the Second Empire. During Hitler's reign, the slogan was changed to "One Volk, one Empire, one Führer!" The Führer had replaced God. The army and all civil servants swore an oath to Hitler: "I swear by God this sacred oath to the Führer Adolf Hitler to render unconditional obedience..."

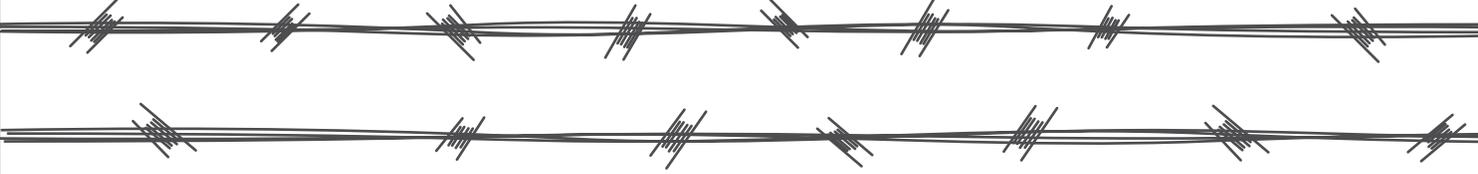
Hitler secured the neutrality of the Soviet Union, for the time being, with the German-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, signed in August of 1939. Both Germany and the Soviet Union invaded Poland weeks later, after which they divided the spoils. In Nazi-occupied Poland, the first ghetto was established, and Jews were forced to wear badges identifying them as Jewish. At this time, at least 1,000 ghettos were established in German-occupied Europe. They were intended as a means of segregating and holding Jews until the Nazis decided on a plan of action to annihilate the Jewish population.

**1940.** In April, Germany invaded Norway and Denmark in quick succession, followed by the Low Countries (the Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg) in May. France signed an armistice with Germany in June. Germany occupied northern France, while a regime loyal to Germany was set up in Southern France. The seat of this government was situated in Vichy.

Meanwhile, the Soviets occupied and annexed the Baltic States, and Italy joined the Axis powers (countries allied with Germany). The only blight, from Germany's perspective, was her inability to gain traction against the United Kingdom in the Battle of Britain (Germany's bombing offensive that pitted her Luftwaffe against the Royal Air Force of the UK). The United Kingdom prevailed in the Battle of Britain.

*Ghettos* The Nazis established ghettos to concentrate and segregate Jews from the German population. The first one opened in October of 1939. The ghettos served a dual purpose: they prevented the mingling of Jews with the supposedly superior Aryan race, and they made it more convenient to deport Jews to the extermination camps. Over a thousand ghettos were

built in German-occupied Poland, as well as in the Soviet Union – after the onset of Operation Barbarossa. Jews from western parts of Europe were deported to ghettos in the east.



Walls, barbed-wire, or fences were used to enclose the ghettos. Jews were forced to wear armbands or badges with a yellow Star of David. The ghettos were overcrowded and unsanitary. The combination of food shortages, harsh winters, and lack of fuel led to repeated infectious disease outbreaks. Despite these hardships, the ghettos were full of life. Inhabitants perpetuated knowledge and enjoyment of their rich culture through concerts and other events, youth movements, and religious worship.

Germany established the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland in October of 1940, sealing it off from outside contact in November. It was the largest ghetto, with more than 400,000 Jews confined in a 1.3 square-mile area. Jews were required to wear white armbands with a blue Star of David. The Nazis provided miserly food allotments, using starvation as a method of killing. The strategy proved successful: 83,000 Warsaw Jews died of starvation and disease between 1940 and mid-1942. Between July and September of 1942, Jews were moved to the Treblinka extermination camp in mass transports, as part of the Final Solution. 265,000 Jews from the Warsaw ghetto died by gas as a result.

**1941.** Germany invaded Yugoslavia and Greece in April of 1941. In June, Germany turned the tables on the Soviet Union and launched Operation Barbarossa against her former ally, in pursuit of Lebensraum and in direct violation of the German-Soviet pact. Hitler planned to enslave the Slavic population as well as take control of the oil reserves and the vast agricultural resources of the Soviet Union. Germany fielded three million soldiers, strung along a 1,800-mile front. Operation Barbarossa would not be the blitzkrieg of Germany's former campaigns, but rather a long, grueling offensive. As the harsh winter came, the German soldiers were not prepared for the extreme conditions they now faced. The Soviet Union gave Germany her first defeat on the ground in December. The defeat proved to be a turning point in the war.

Japan, an Axis power, attacked Hawaii's Pearl Harbor in December, a "Day of Infamy," and also a day that brought the United States into the war. Churchill, Stalin, and Roosevelt (the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the USA) now stood as a triumvirate of Allied leadership, ready to battle the Axis powers.

*here in this carload  
i am eve  
with abel my son  
if you see my other son  
cain son of man  
tell him that i*

*DAN PAGIS,  
"Written in Pencil in the Sealed  
Railway-Car"*

**Execution of the “Final Solution”: 1942-1945.** In 1922, Hitler told journalist Josef Hell, “Once I really am in power, my first and foremost task will be the annihilation of the Jews. I will have gallows built in rows...Jews will be hanged indiscriminately...until the last Jew in Munich has been exterminated...until all Germany has been completely cleansed of Jews.” True to his word, Hitler began implementation of what would later become the “Final Solution” to the “Jewish Problem” as soon as the Nazis rose to power, beginning with the boycotts of Jewish businesses. All of Nazi Germany’s antisemitic laws, regulations, and pogroms (such as Kristallnacht) were the early stages of this “Final Solution.” Also discussed in the late 1930s was forced mass emigration, or resettlement, of the Jews. The Madagascar Plan called for the relocation of four million Jews to Madagascar over a four-year period. The Nazis had officially endorsed the plan in August of 1940, but evidently shelved it in favor of murder. By the winter of 1941, roughly 1.5 million Jews had been shot by mobile killing squads called Einsatzgruppen, as well as by the Order Police.

The mobile death squads (utilizing guns or gas) followed the invading Germans into Poland and the Soviet Union. They targeted Jews, Roma, and, in the Soviet Union, Soviet state and Communist Party officials. However, SS commander Himmler saw the deleterious effects of programmatic killing on the mental health of the executioners. As a corrective, when the killing centers were developed, they distanced the executioners from their victims. With the advent of extermination camps, the rate and efficiency of killings greatly increased. The gassing facilities used either carbon monoxide or Zyklon B (hydrogen cyanide), and their efficiency was truly chilling. The largest of these death camps where such methods of mass murder were used was Auschwitz-Birkenau.

A secret meeting between Hitler and his top officials in December of 1941 and the Wannsee Conference in January of 1942 together crystallized Nazi policies regarding the annihilation of the Jews. The Nazis planned to systematically slaughter all Jews within their reach. In addition to German Jews and Western European Jews, the Germans included Jews from non-occupied Ireland, Sweden, Turkey, and Great Britain in their plans, estimating that the Final Solution would ultimately involve 11 million European Jews. In late 1941, Nazis began liquidating the ghettos and transporting Jews to concentration camps and death camps.

*Death Marches.* In mid-1944, Soviet armies overran the Majdanek concentration camp, the first of the camps to be exposed. The Soviets publicized the atrocities they discovered when they liberated the camp. The news roused public indignation and protests, which spurred American, Swiss, Swedish, and other governments to pressure the Hungarian government to halt the deportation of Jews to Auschwitz in July 1944. Although they succeeded in this, all appeals to American and British governments to bomb Auschwitz came to naught.

*“In those times there was darkness everywhere. In heaven and on earth, all the gates of compassion seemed to have been closed. The killer killed and the Jews died and the outside world adopted an attitude either of complicity or of indifference. Only a few had the courage to care. These few men and women were vulnerable, afraid, helpless – what made them different from their fellow citizens?... Why were there so few?... Let us remember: What hurts the victim is not the cruelty of the oppressor but the silence of the bystander.... Let us not forget, after all, there is always a moment when a moral choice is made.*

ELIE WIESEL

Both American and British war departments believed the best way to halt the genocide was to focus all resources and energy on defeating Germany and ending the war.

Since the SS didn't want any other camp inmates taken alive by the Allies, Himmler then ordered the evacuation of all concentration and death camps from near the fronts of the war toward the German interior. Initially, the evacuations were by train or ship, but by winter the Allies had gained control of the skies. Evacuations by foot began. The harsh winter conditions quickly turned the evacuations into death marches. Any prisoners who could no longer walk or keep pace were shot. As the Allied forces closed in on Germany, they liberated prisoners from the camps and evacuation marches. Still, the marches continued until the last days of the war.

*Liberation.* The Nazis tried to destroy the camps and hide evidence of mass murder before evacuating them, but often there was not enough time to completely demolish the sites. Auschwitz, the largest of the death camps, was liberated in January 1945. Seven thousand prisoners were found alive, emaciated and starved. The Allies also found millions of items of clothing – 370,000 men's suits, 837,000 women's garments, huge piles of shoes. Bales of human hair weighing a total of fourteen thousand pounds were discovered in warehouses. (Since the early 1940s, the Germans had sold hair from the death camps, for twenty pfennig per kilogram, to businesses in the textile industry. Human hair was also used in the production of delayed action bombs, as well as in the manufacture of thread, ropes, carpets, and cloth.) Auschwitz was, additionally, the site of disturbing, often torturous medical experiments. The notorious Dr. Mengele, who 'worked' there, liked to experiment on twins.

Auschwitz carries the tragic distinction of being the site of the largest perpetration of mass murder in human history: 1.1 million people were killed at Auschwitz between 1942 and 1945. In sum, the Nazis were responsible for killing six million Jewish men, women, and children.

## *The Righteous Among the Nations*

Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Israel recognizes those individuals they call the Righteous Among the Nations: non-Jews who risked their lives to help rescue Jews. Most often, the help given was hiding the Jews, providing false papers and identities, or smuggling or assisting Jews in escaping. As of 2017, Yad Vashem had recognized 26,513 righteous individuals. They came from 51 countries and nationalities: Christians, Muslims, and agnostics, men and women from all walks of life.

*"Great deeds are usually wrought at great risks."*

HERODOTUS

*"Attitudes towards the Jews during the Holocaust largely ranged from indifference to hostility. The mainstream watched as their former neighbors were rounded up and killed; some collaborated with the perpetrators; many benefited from the expropriation of the Jews' property. But in this world of moral collapse there was a small minority who mustered extraordinary courage to uphold human values. They were the Righteous Among the Nations."*

*"ABOUT THE RIGHTEOUS," [Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, 2019.](#)*

Primo Levi, Holocaust survivor and author, describes his rescuer, Lorenzo Perrone, Righteous Among the Nations:

*"I believe that it was really due to Lorenzo that I am alive today; and not so much for his material aid, as for his having constantly reminded me by his presence...that there still existed a just world outside our own, something and someone still pure and whole...for which it was worth surviving."*

Below are people who withstood the tide of evil, who put the persecuted Jews before themselves, who "mustered extraordinary courage" to resist the darkness and do what was good and right. As Elie Wiesel reminds us, one always has a choice: to help those suffering or to stand by and watch.

**Knud Pedersen.** Fifteen-year-old Knud was appalled that the Danish people had not offered much, if any, resistance to the Nazi invasion and occupation of Denmark. He organized a resistance group with his brother and schoolmates. They named it the Churchill Club, after Winston Churchill. The club members stole Nazi weapons, sabotaged Nazi vehicles, and blew up train cars. They carried out 25 acts of sabotage before being caught and imprisoned. Even while in prison, they would sneak out at night to continue sabotage activities. They snuck out 19 nights in a row before getting caught. Knud was released in May of 1944, after serving his two-year prison term. He continued resistance work with the British SOE organization. The boys' Churchill Club inspired the formation of other resistance groups in Denmark.



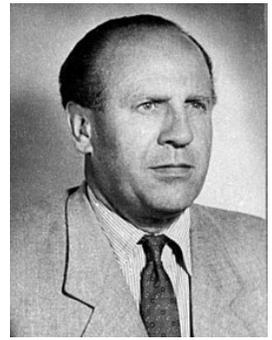
**The Danish Resistance.** When Germany decided to round up all the Jews on the night of October 1, 1943, the German maritime attaché Georg Duckwitz leaked the information to the Danish Resistance. The Resistance organized a massive rescue – ordinary citizens all over the country offered to help. On the night of the raid, the Germans only found 284 Jews out of almost 8,000 in the population. People throughout Denmark had hidden them. Then, slowly and secretly over a three-week period, the Jews were taken by boat or train to neutral Sweden. Thousands of Jewish people were saved.



**Captain Witold Pilecki.** This Polish resistance leader masqueraded as a Jew to achieve imprisonment in Auschwitz. His mission was to gather information about the camp. At that time, not much was known about Auschwitz, and it was believed to be an internment camp, not an extermination camp. He was imprisoned in 1940; his inmate number was 4859. After spending almost two and a half years in captivity, gathering important information, he escaped and smuggled the information to the Allies. His report was the first comprehensive intelligence report on Auschwitz.



*Oskar Schindler.* A German factory owner and member of the Nazi party, Schindler saved 1,200 Jews by employing them in his factories. When deportations to death camps began, he spent all of his money on bribes to the SS to keep his Jewish workers from deportation. He risked his life to save his Jewish employees, whom he called his children. His wife helped him in this endeavor. He died penniless, but without regrets, in 1974. He wanted to be buried in Jerusalem, because, he said, "My children are here..." There are now more than 7,000 descendants of the Jewish people he saved.



*Raoul Wallenberg.* This Swedish diplomat was tasked with saving Hungarian Jews. After 440,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz from Hungary, about 200,000 Jews remained in the country. Raoul and his diplomatic colleagues distributed special protective passes that, like passports, allowed Jewish bearers to be treated as Swedish citizens under the protection of Sweden. This pass also exempted the bearer from wearing the requisite Star of David. When Budapest was liberated, 100,000 Jews remained alive through the efforts of Raoul and his colleagues. Raoul died in a Soviet detention camp after the war.



*Sir Nicholas George Winton.* Himself the son of German-Jewish immigrants, Sir Winton organized the rescue of 669 children, mostly Jewish, from Czechoslovakia. He found homes for them and arranged their passage to his home country, Great Britain. US President Franklin Roosevelt refused Sir Winton's request of asylum for some of the children. Sweden was the only other country, besides Britain, willing to take in children.



*Roddie Edmonds.* This American sergeant major was taken by the Germans as a prisoner of war to a POW camp in Germany. Jewish POWs were also in the group going to Germany. The Germans' policy was to send the Jewish POWs to extermination camps. When the Germans ordered all the Jewish POWs to report the next morning, Edmonds assembled *all* of the POWs. The German officer said, "They cannot all be Jews!" Edmonds replied, "We are all Jews." The German officer threatened to shoot, but Edmonds did not back down. He told the German that if he shot him, he would need to shoot everyone, and he would be tried for war crimes after the war. The German officer left. No Jewish POWs were deported to death camps on that occasion.



# HOLOCAUST TIMELINE

Year	Event	Details
1918	World War I ends	Nov. 11, 1918 France, Britain, and Germany sign an armistice.
	Democratic Weimar Republic established in Germany	Nov. 11, 1918
1919	Germany signs Treaty of Versailles	June 28, 1919
1920	National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party) established	Originally founded as German Workers' Party in 1919. Hitler joined in 1919, took control and renamed the party.
1923	France invades Ruhr region of Germany	France tries to force Germany to pay reparations, but invasion sets off steep rise in inflation. German mark worth one trillionth of original value by autumn.
	Hitler's Putsch fails	Nov. 8-9, 1923 Hitler fails to topple Bavarian state government. Writes <i>Mein Kampf</i> while imprisoned.
1924	Reichstag Elections in Weimar Germany	Nazi party garners <b>3% of vote</b> .
1926	Germany joins the League of Nations	
1928	Reichstag Elections in Weimar Germany	Nazi party polls <b>2.6%</b> . Germany in economic recovery mode.
1929	Black Tuesday	Oct. 25, 1929 New York Stock Exchange collapses, leading to world-wide economic crisis.
1930	Reichstag Elections in Weimar Germany	Nazi vote surges to <b>18.3% of vote</b> ; economy in crisis.
1932	Reichstag Elections in Weimar Germany held in July and November ( <i>Last democratic elections</i> )	Nazi party rockets to <b>37.4% and 33.1% of vote</b> in July and November, respectively. Climate of economic depression and radicalization prevails. Last democratic elections.

Year	Event	Details
1933	Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany	
	Hitler presents <i>Lebensraum</i> program Rearmament, Resistance to Treaty of Versailles	By <i>Lebensraum</i> , he meant living space in the east for the German people.
	Reichstag Elections in Weimar Germany	Nazi party gets <b>44% of the vote</b> . (Because of repression and intimidation by the Nazi party, these elections cannot be considered truly democratic.)
	Dachau concentration camp established	The first of many concentration camps – initially used for those deemed political threats.
	First antisemitic race laws	Beginning of outright Jewish persecution. Boycott of Jewish businesses; quota limiting number of Jews allowed in schools; Jews excluded from civil service and army; limited activity in medical and legal professions.
	Germany is proclaimed a one-party state	July 14, 1933
	Forced sterilization	July 14, 1933
1934	Germany leaves the League of Nations and quits disarmament talks	Oct. 14, 1933
	Hitler makes himself <i>Führer</i> when President Hindenburg dies	Aug. 2, 1934
1935	Military conscription	Mar. 16, 1935
	Nuremberg Laws	Sept. 15, 1935 and Nov. 14, 1935 German citizenship taken from Jews; marriage and sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews outlawed; Jewishness defined by blood / race rather than religion; degrees of Jewishness defined. Hitler escalates anti-Jewish policies from 1935 onwards.
1936	German Army enters Rhineland	Violation of the Treaty of Versailles. Rhineland was demilitarized after WWI to provide a buffer between Germany and France.
	Olympic Games in Berlin	
	Four-Year Plan	Economic preparations for war

Year	Event	Details
1936	Rome-Berlin Axis Agreement	German-Italian alliance
1937	Jews encouraged to emigrate	Jews who chose to emigrate would be released from detention to do so but, if they returned, they would be sent to a concentration camp.
	Germany goes on the offensive – orders army to prepare for war	Nov. 5, 1937
1938	Anschluss: German annexation of Austria	Mar. 13, 1938
	Operation June	Jews arrested and banished to concentration camps.
	Munich Agreement	Great Britain and France sign off on Germany annexing the Sudetenland portion of Czechoslovakia. (They believed this would appease Hitler and prevent war.)
	17,000 Polish-born Jews deported to Poland	Oct. 28, 1938
	<i>Kristallnacht</i> , “Night of Broken Glass”	Nov. 9, 1938 Pogrom against Jews of Germany, Austria, and Sudetenland by Nazi government. Widespread destruction of Jewish businesses, synagogues, and homes. Approximately 91 people killed.
1939	Nazi-Soviet Pact	Aug. 23, 1939 The full name of the agreement was the “Treaty of Nonaggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.”
	World War II begins: Germany and Soviet Union invade Poland	Sept. 1, 1939 German invasion; Sept. 17, 1939 Soviet invasion Poland divided between Germany and USSR; first Jewish ghetto established in Nazi-occupied Poland; Jews in Nazi-occupied Poland must wear badges.
	"Euthanasia" Program implemented	Targets children with disabilities first, then extended to include adults with disabilities or mental illness. Gassing facilities established for adults. At least 5,000 children estimated killed.
1940	Germany invades Denmark and Norway	Apr. 9, 1940
	Germany invades Belgium and the Netherlands	May 10, 1940

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Details</b>
1940	Germany occupies Paris, France	June 14, 1940
	Vichy government loyal to Germany formed in southern France.	July 1940
	Germany begins Battle of Britain	Germany's air campaign against Great Britain
	Tripartite Pact between Germany, Italy, and Japan	Sept. 27, 1940
	Romania gives permission for German army to enter	Oct. 7, 1940 Romania later joins Axis powers.
	Warsaw Ghetto sealed	Nov. 16, 1940
1941	Germany invades Yugoslavia and Greece	Apr. 6, 1941
	Operation Barbarossa	In pursuit of Lebensraum, Germany attacks Soviet Union with 3-million-man army along 1,800-mile front.
	Romanians (with German aid) shoot 160,000 - 200,000 Jews	July 1941
	Göring prepares for "Final Solution of the Jewish Question"	Plan entailing murder of all European Jews.
	First experimental gassings at Auschwitz	
	Use of mobile gas vans authorized	
	Japanese attack Pearl Harbor	Dec. 7, 1941
	US declares war on Germany and Italy Germany and Italy declare war on US	Dec. 11, 1941
1942	Molotov, Soviet Foreign Minister, notifies allies of mass graves found by the Soviet army after towns liberated from German occupation	This news corroborates other reports of mass genocide. Western countries becoming aware of atrocities.
	Wannsee Conference: German State, Nazi Party, SS agencies cooperate to implement the Final Solution	
1943	German army reaches Stalingrad	Sept. 1942
	UK and US invade North Africa – "Operation Torch"	Nov. 8, 1942

Year	Event	Details
1943	Germans surrender at Stalingrad	Feb. 2, 1943
	4 crematoria finished at Auschwitz-Birkenau	June 28, 1943
	Allies invade Sicily – “Operation Husky”	July 10, 1943
	Belgian, Italian, Roman Jews deported to Auschwitz	Sept. Oct. By end of year, more than 4 million European Jews killed by Germany and Axis allies.
1944	Germany occupies Hungary	Mar. 18, 1944
	Mass deportation of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz	May 15, 1944
	D-Day – “Operation Overlord”	June 6, 1944 Allied armies of US and UK land on Normandy coast; successfully establish beachhead.
	Soviet forces begin offensive in Belarus, reaching outskirts of Warsaw in 6 weeks	June 22, 1944
	Warsaw Uprising	Aug. 1, 1944 - Oct. 2, 1944 Polish underground resistance-organized battle against the occupying Germans to coincide with Soviet advance. Battle lasted 63 days, but ultimately failed because Soviets halted outside city until Poles were defeated. Soviets wanted to ensure that a pro-Soviet Polish administration would gain control of Poland, rather than the Polish government, then in exile in London.
	Battle of the Bulge	Dec. 16, 1944 Germany’s last big push to gain the upper-hand on the Western Front fails.
1945	Soviets liberate Warsaw – but Germans had destroyed Warsaw after the uprising.	Jan. 14, 1945
	Auschwitz abandoned; death march begins	Jan. 18, 1945
	Auschwitz liberated by Soviets	Jan. 27, 1945
	Buchenwald liberated by US	Apr. 11, 1945
	Bergen-Belsen liberated by UK	Apr. 15, 1945

Year	Event	Details
1945	Hitler commits suicide	Apr. 30, 1945
	Victory in Europe Day – War in Europe over	May 8, 1945
	Nuclear bombs dropped on Japan	Aug. 6, 1945 – First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima; second dropped on Nagasaki three days later.
	War in Pacific ends	Aug. 14, 1945
	Nuremberg Trials begin	Oct. 18, 1945

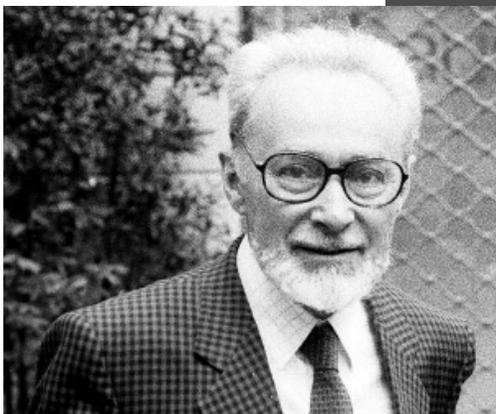
A POEM:

## *Shema*

*You who live secure  
In your warm houses,  
Who return at evening to find  
Hot food and friendly faces:*

*Consider whether this is a man,  
Who labours in the mud  
Who knows no peace  
Who fights for a crust of bread  
Who dies at a yes or a no.  
Consider whether this is a woman,  
Without hair or name  
With no more strength to remember  
Eyes empty and womb cold  
As a frog in winter.*

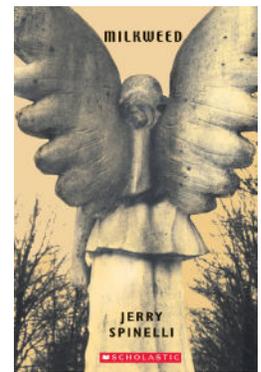
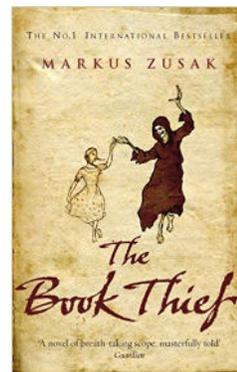
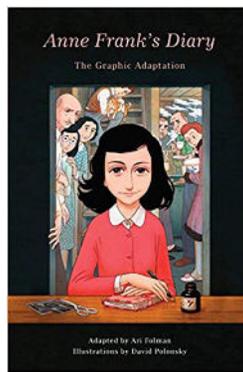
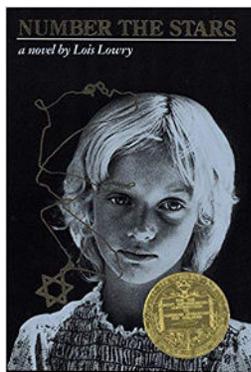
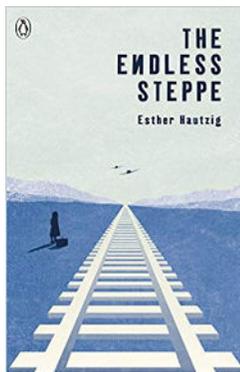
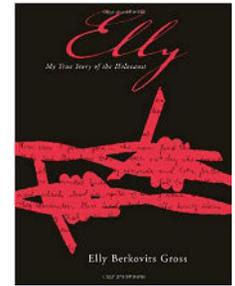
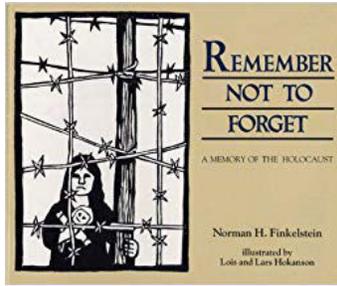
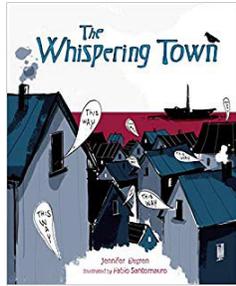
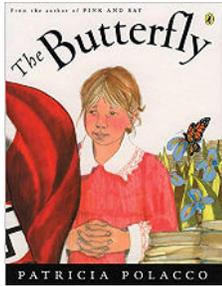
*Consider that this has been:  
I commend these words to you.  
Engrave them on your hearts  
When you are in your house, when you walk on your way,  
When you go to bed, when you rise.  
Repeat them to your children.  
Or may your house crumble,  
Disease render you powerless,  
Your offspring avert their faces from you.*



**Primo Levi**

(Translated by Ruth Feldman & Brian Swann)

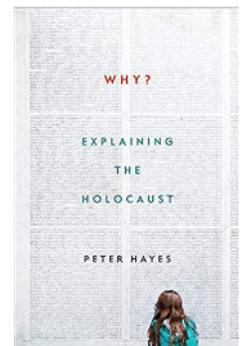
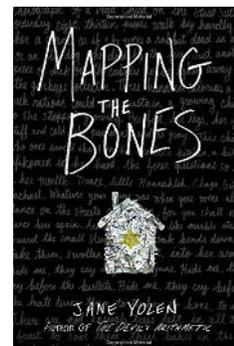
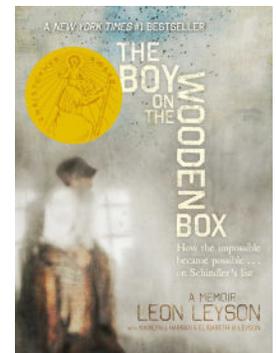
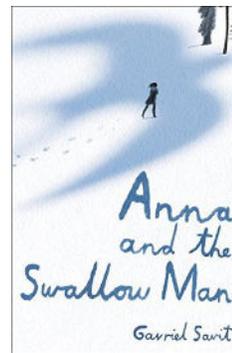
# a small selection of books



parents + educators:

**PLEASE PREVIEW  
ALL MATERIALS  
BEFORE SHARING  
WITH YOUR CHILD**

You are the best judge of what is appropriate for your child(ren) and what they will enjoy. Try checking [goodreads.com](http://goodreads.com) for reviews.



**SEE NEXT PAGE FOR DETAILS**

# a small selection of books

TITLE	AUTHOR	LEVEL
<i>One Candle</i>	Eve Bunting	Pri/Int
<i>Terrible Things: An Allegory of the Holocaust</i>	Eve Bunting	Pri/Int
<i>Benno and the Night of Broken Glass</i>	Meg Wiviott	Pri/Int/LM
<i>The Butterfly</i>	Patricia Polacco	Pri/Int/LM
<i>Star of Fear, Star of Hope</i>	Jo Hoestlandt	Pri/Int/LM
<i>The Whispering Town</i>	Jennifer Elvgren	Pri/Int/LM
<i>Hidden: A Child's Story of the Holocaust</i>	Dauvillier, L. & Salsedo, G.	Int/LM
<i>Jars of Hope</i>	Jennifer Roy	Int/LM
<i>Hana's Suitcase</i>	Karen Levine	Int/LM
<i>Yours, Anne</i>	Lois Metzger	Int/LM
<i>Remember Not to Forget</i>	Finkelstein, Hokanson, & Hokanson	Int/LM
<i>Greenhorn</i>	Anna Olswanger	Int/LM
<i>Anne Frank</i>	Josephine Pool	Int/LM
<i>The Harmonica</i>	Tony Johnston	Int/LM
<i>Yellow Star: Legend of King Christian X of Denmark</i>	Carmen Agra Deedy	Int/LM
<i>Projekt 1065</i>	Alan Gratz	Int/LM
<i>The Kats in Krasinski Square</i>	Karen Hesse	Int/LM/UM
<i>The Story of the Holocaust</i>	Clive Lawton	LM
<i>Elly: My True Story of the Holocaust</i>	Elly Gross	LM/UM
<i>The Upstairs Room</i>	Johanna Reis	LM/UM
<i>The Endless Steppe</i>	Esther Hautzig	LM/UM
<i>The Devil's Arithmetic</i>	Jane Yolen	LM/UM
<i>Number the Stars</i>	Lois Lowry	LM/UM
<i>Anne Frank (Graphic Adaptation)</i>	Ari Folman	LM/UM
<i>His Name Was Raoul Wallenberg</i>	Louise Borden	UM

# a small selection of books

TITLE	AUTHOR	LEVEL
<i>Surviving the Angel of Death</i>	Eva Moses Kor	UM/HS
<i>The Boy on the Wooden Box</i>	Leon Leyson	UM/HS
<i>A Bag of Marbles: The Graphic Novel</i>	Joseph Joffo	UM/HS
<i>The Book Thief</i>	Markus Zusak	UM/HS
<i>Maus: A Survivor's Tale (Graphic Novel)</i>	Art Spiegelman	UM/HS
<i>Mapping the Bones</i>	Jane Yolen	UM/HS
<i>A Man's Search for Meaning (Young Adult ed.)</i>	Viktor Frankl	UM/HS
<i>Anna and the Swallow Man</i>	Gavriel Savit	UM/HS
<i>Resistance: Book 1 (Graphic Novel)</i>	Carla Jablonski	UM/HS
<i>Hidden Like Anne Frank: 14 True Stories of Survival</i>	Prins, M. & Steenhuis, P.	UM/HS
<i>Milkweed</i>	Jerry Spinelli	UM/HS
<i>An Unlikely Warrior: A Jewish Soldier in Hitler's Army</i>	Georg Rauch	HS
<i>The Last Jew of Treblinka: A Memoir</i>	Chil Rajchman	HS/Adult
<i>Anne Frank: The Book, The Life, The Afterlife</i>	Francine Prose	HS/Adult
<i>Surviving Auschwitz</i>	Primo Levi	HS/Adult
<i>This Way for the Gas, Ladies &amp; Gentlemen</i>	Tadeusz Borowski	HS/Adult
<i>The Lost: A Search for Six of Six Million</i>	Daniel Mendelsohn	HS/Adult
<i>The Unwanted: America, Auschwitz, and a Village Caught In Between</i>	Michael Dobbs	HS/Adult
<i>The Zookeeper's Wife: A War Story</i>	Diane Ackerman	HS/Adult
<i>In the Garden of Beasts</i>	Erik Larsen	HS/Adult
<i>Why? Explaining the Holocaust</i>	Peter Hayes	HS/Adult
<i>Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland</i>	Christopher R. Browning	HS/Adult
<i>Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law</i>	James Q Whitman	HS/Adult

# MOVIES + TELEVISION

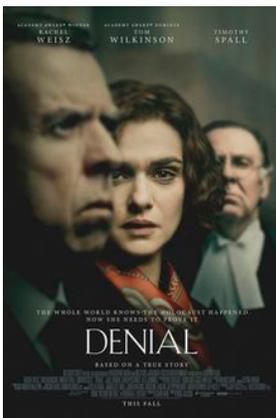


*parents + educators:*

Common Sense Media is a good online resource to see whether or not a movie is appropriate for your child.



[Movies for Holocaust Remembrance Day](#)  
[18 Righteous Holocaust Rescuers Movies](#)  
[Holocaust Movies for Middle School and High School](#)  
[The 50 Most Moving Holocaust Films](#)  
[Wikipedia List of Holocaust Films](#)



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)  
[Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum in Israel](#)  
[Jewish Virtual Library](#)

