



Evolution to Genocide: Nazi Germany (1933-1941)

1933

- January 30 President **Paul von Hindenburg** appoints **Hitler** Chancellor of Germany following a Nov. Reichstag election in which Hitler's Nazi Party receives approx. 33% of the vote.
- February 12 Bloody Sunday, 1 communist dies, hundreds more wounded.
- February 22 **Göring** enrolls **SA** as auxiliary police and eventually gives "shoot to kill" orders to quell communist demonstrations.
- February 27 **Reichstag** set on fire.
- February 28 "**Decree for the Protection of Volk and State**" Under Article 48 of the Constitution President Hindenburg suspends civil rights including freedom of press, speech, assembly, privacy, house search without warrant and approves "protective custody" law.
- March 5 Reichstag elections; NSDAP wins 43.9% of vote.
- March 9 Rioting against Jews by **SA** (Brownshirts).
- March 20 -23 1st concentration camp (**SS**) opened by **Himmler** at **Dachau**, just outside of Munich.
- March 24 The Reichstag, with support of Catholic Centre Party, passes the **Enabling Act** giving Hitler emergency powers.
- April 1 Nazis (though not officially sanctioned by the Chancellery) proclaim a boycott of all Jewish-owned businesses. Though widely publicized, not widely supported. German Jewish newspaper has article entitled: "Wear the Yellow Badge with Pride."
- April 7 **Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service** is enacted, barring Jews and other non-Aryans from civil service, teaching, and state employment.
- April 11 In the "*First Regulation for the Implementation of the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service*," Nazis define non-Aryans as "anyone descended from non-Aryan, especially Jewish, parents or grandparents. One parent or grandparent classifies the descendant as non-Aryan...especially if one parent or grandparent was of the Jewish faith."
- April 21 Law forbidding kosher method of butchering meat.
- April 25 Law against overcrowding in German schools and universities limits the number of Jewish children admitted.
- April 26 Hitler orders Göring to establish the **Gestapo** (Secret State Police) in state of Prussia.
- May 2 Dissolution of free trade unions.
- May 10 Public burning of Jewish books and books by anti-Nazi writers is conducted in Berlin and throughout the Reich by **Joseph Goebbels**.
- June Week of Blood; 91 communists are killed in Berlin alone.
- July 14 Nazi Party proclaimed only legal party in Germany and political opposition declared punishable by law. Law passed depriving German citizenship to Jews not currently citizens (eastern European immigrants). "**Law for Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary (Genetic) Diseases**"; German doctors sterilize many disabled adults and children, and also Jewish, Gypsy and Afro-German children.
- July 20 Vatican and Germany sign **Concordat** supposedly guaranteeing the legal status of the Catholic Church in Germany.
- August 20 Boycott of Germany urged by American Jewish Congress.
- Sept 22 Reich Chamber of Culture excludes Jews from the fields of journalism, the arts, literature, music, broadcasting, and theater.
- October 14 Germany withdraws from the League of Nations.
- Nov 12 First Reichstag election in one-party state: 92% vote Nazi.

(1933-35): In schools it is taught that non-Aryans are racially inferior. Jewish children prohibited from sports clubs, school orchestras, and extra curricular activities. Jewish children banned from playgrounds, swimming pools and parks in many towns and cities. By the end of 1933, 27,000 politicals are interred in makeshift concentration camps.

1934

- January 26 Germany and Poland sign a ten-year non-aggression pact.
- April 20 **Himmler** is appointed head of the **Gestapo**; allocates power to **Reinhard Heydrich**.
- June 30 - The "*Night of the Long Knives*" as Hitler orders the **SS** to purge the leadership of the **SA**. Hundreds are murdered, including **Ernst Röhm**, chief of the SA.
- July 2 **SS** becomes an independent organization under **Heinrich Himmler**.
- July 20 **Hitler's** cabinet approves law combining offices of Chancellor and President and creates new title, *Reichsführer*.
- August 1 President Hindenburg dies; Hitler becomes Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of armed forces, whose members are now required to take a personal oath of loyalty to Hitler.
- August 2 90% of German voters approve in a plebiscite the granting of Hitler's new powers.
- October First wave of arrests of homosexuals occurs throughout Germany and continues into November.

(1934-1935) As Hitler consolidates power and rebuilds the armed forces, 50,000 Jews flee Germany. In the absence of any new anti-Jewish laws, with the SA purged, and with Hitler's announcement that the "revolution is over", at least 10,000 refugees return to their homeland.

1935

- January 13 Saar region returned to Germany following a Treaty of Versailles-stipulated plebiscite.
- March 16 Conscription resumed throughout Germany in violation of Treaty of Versailles.
- March 21 Jews are barred from serving in the German armed forces ("Aryan descent" required).
- April Jehovah's Witnesses are banned from civil service and arrested all across Germany.
- Summer "*Juden Verboten*" (No Jews) signs increase in number outside towns, villages, restaurants, dance halls, hotels and stores.
- Sept 15 "**Nuremberg Laws**". Nazi racist ideology legalized. The Reich Citizens Law and the "*Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor*" forbids marriage or sexual intercourse between Aryans and Jews.
- October 3 Italy invades Ethiopia.
- October 15 Ministry of Science and Education prohibits teaching by non-Aryans in public schools and bans private instruction by Jewish teachers.
- Nov 14 First "Supplemental Decree to the Reichs Citizenship Law" redefines "Jew."

1936

- February 6 Winter Olympics open in Garmiseh-Partenkirchen, Germany.
- March 3 Jewish doctors are barred from practicing medicine in German government hospitals.
- March 7 Germany remilitarizes the Rhineland in violation of the Treaty of Versailles.
- July **Sachsenhausen** concentration camp opens near Berlin; Spanish Civil War begins.
- July 12 1st German Gypsies arrested and sent to **Dachau** concentration camp.
- August Olympic Games in Berlin; temporary removal of all antisemitic signs. By now, one fourth (150,000) of Germany's Jews have fled their homeland.
- October 25 **Hitler** and **Mussolini** form Rome-Berlin **Axis** alliance.

1937

- March 21 **Pope Pius XI** issues statement against racism in Germany.
- April German aircraft bomb Guernica, Spain.
- July 2 Further restrictions imposed on number of Jewish students attending German schools.
- July 16 **Buchenwald** concentration camp is established outside Weimar.
- Nov 5 In a secret meeting, Hitler makes known his war plans.
- Nov 25 Germany and Japan sign a military and political pact.

1938

- March 13 German troops enter Austria and annexes it to the Third Reich (the **Anschluss**); All anti-Jewish decrees are now applied in Austria. **Eichmann** begins to build a reputation as an expert on Jewish affairs.
- March 15 Mass anti-Nazi rally in New York sponsored by the American Jewish Congress.
- March **Mauthausen** concentration camp, near Linz, Austria, is established.
- April 6 Nazi law requiring Jews to register all their belongings.
- May 13 German government passes decree requiring registration of all Gypsies without a fixed address by June. All Gypsy children over age 14 have to be fingerprinted.
- May 17 Special questionnaire for registration of Jews and **mischlinge** used for national census.
- June 12-18 First major wave of arrests of German and Austrian Gypsies, including male teenagers (14 or older). Sent to **Dachau**, **Buchenwald**, **Sachsenhausen** and **Mauthausen**. Females 14 or older sent to **Lichtenberg** and its successor camp at **Ravensbrück**.
- June 14 Decree mandating the registration of Jewish enterprises.
- June 15 Arrest of all previously convicted Jews including all traffic offenses.
- July 6 **Evian Conference** on German refugees is convened at the behest of the United States.
- July 11 Jews prohibited from going to German spas and vacationing at German beaches.
- July 23 Introduction of identity cards for Jews over age 15; to go into effect on 1 January 1939.
- July 25 Licenses of Jewish doctors to expire on 30 September.
- August 17 Jewish middle names of "Sarah" and "Israel" required to be entered on all documents; to go into effect 1 January 1939.
- August 26 "Central Office for Jewish Emigration" opens in Vienna headed by **Adolf Eichmann**. Assembly line techniques are applied to Jewish deportation.
- Sept 27 Compulsory retirement of all Jewish lawyers by 30 November.
- Sept 29-30 **Munich Conference**. Great Britain and France appease Hitler by agreeing to the annexation of part of Czechoslovakia (Sudetenland) to Germany.
- October Beginning of **Aryanization** of property of German Jews.
- October 5 Passports of Jews are marked with the letter "J" at the request of the Swiss government.
- October 6 Germany annexes the Sudetenland.
- October 28 Over 17,000 Polish Jews suddenly expelled from Germany to Poland (before deadline of 31 October). Most stranded at Polish frontier town of Zbaszyn.
- Nov 7 17 year old **Herschel Grynszpan**, whose parents had been expelled from Germany to Poland on 28 October, shoots **Ernst vom Rath**, 3rd Secretary of the German Embassy in Paris.
- Nov 9 Vom Rath dies of his wounds at 4:00 p.m.
- Nov 9-10 **Kristallnacht**. Goebbels-organized pogrom throughout the Reich vandalizes over 7,500 shops and businesses; also cemeteries, hospitals, schools and synagogues. At least 91 Jews are murdered, and 25-26,000 Jewish men arrested.
- Nov 12 **Göring** declares that Jews must pay one billion reichsmarks for the damages of **Kristallnacht**. Jews arrested over the past few days sent to **Buchenwald**, **Dachau**, and **Sachsenhausen** concentration camps.
- Nov 15 Last of Jewish children expelled from German public schools by decree.
- Nov 22 Nazis warn democracies publicly that Jews will be wiped out unless evacuated by them
- December Kindertransports begin to England.
- Dec 2-3 Decrees ban Jews from public streets on certain days. Jews forbidden driver's licenses and car registrations.
- December 3 **Aryanization** decree: expropriation of Jewish businesses, shops and industries. Jews must sell their businesses and real estate and hand over their securities and jewelry to the government at artificially low prices.
- December 8 Jews may no longer attend universities as teachers and/or students.
- December 14 Göring announces to Reich officials that he is taking charge of Jewish affairs.

1939

- January 30 Under the “*Measure for the Elimination of Jews from the German Economy*,” Jews are prohibited from working with Germans. Hitler speaks to the Reichstag and predicts the end of Jews in Europe in the event of war.
- March 15 Germany occupies the remainder of Czechoslovakia.
- April 30 German Jews lose all legal protection as renters. Many are expelled from apartments and forced to move to smaller residences in less desirable neighborhoods.
- May 13 Voyage of the emigrant ship *St. Louis* begins. 734 German Jewish refugees on board.
- May 15 A concentration camp for women established at **Ravensbrück**, 50 miles north of Berlin.
- June 5 2,000 Gypsy males over 16 arrested in Austria and sent to **Dachau** and **Buchenwald**. 1,000 girls and women over age 15 sent to **Ravensbrück**.
- June 13 Great Britain, France, Holland and Belgium accept *St. Louis* refugees.
- July 26 **Eichmann** is placed in charge of Prague branch of the emigration office.
- August 23 Soviet/German non-aggression pact signed by Molotov and Ribbentrop. It contains a secret protocol for the partition of Poland.
- Sept 1 World War II begins as Germany invades Poland. German and Austrian Jews subjected to night curfew and restricted shopping hours during the day. **Einsatzgruppen** accompany invading German army.
- Sept 3 Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- Sept 7 **Heydrich** orders **Einsatzgruppen** to arrest all Polish Jews.
- Sept 17 Red Army (U.S.S.R.) invades eastern Poland.
- Sept 21 **Reinhard Heydrich** orders ghettos to be established in occupied Poland with each under a **Judenrat** (Jewish governing council).
- Sept 23 Jews forced to turn in radios, cameras, and other electric devices to police. Jews receive more restrictive ration coupons for food and clothing.
- Sept 27 Warsaw surrenders.
- October Hitler confirms “*euthanasia*” program known as **Operation T-4**, authorizing doctors to kill institutionalized mentally and physically disabled; backdates order to 1 September 1939.
- October 8 The first German-enforced Jewish ghetto is established in Poland.
- October 12 First deportation of Jews from Austria and Moravia to Poland.
- October 28 Jewish star introduced for the first time into Poland.
- Nov 23 Wearing a yellow six-pointed Jewish star is made mandatory throughout Poland for all Jews over the age of ten.
- Dec 5-6 German authorities expropriate Jewish-owned property in Poland.

1940

- February 8 Order for the establishment of the Lodz Ghetto is issued.
- February 12 Deportation of Jews from Germany to occupied Poland begins.
- April 9 Germany occupies Denmark and southern Norway.
- April 27 **Himmler** directive to establish a concentration camp at **Auschwitz**.
- April 30 Ghetto at Lodz, Poland (approx. 230,000 Jews) is sealed off from the outside world.
- May **Aristides de Sousa Mendes**, a Portuguese diplomat, issues transit visas to help 10,000 Jewish refugees escape Nazi-occupied France. Recalled by his government within months, Mendes is dismissed from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and stripped of his pension.
- May 10 Germany invades Holland, Belgium and France.
- May 20 The former Polish army barracks at **Auschwitz** are converted into a concentration camp under Kommandant **Rudolf Höss**.
- June 4 Evacuation of British army from Dunkirk completed.
- June 10 Italy enters the war on the side of Germany.
- June 22 France surrenders.
- July 9 German bombing of London begins.
- July 19 German Jews are denied telephones.

- July 27 ***Chiune Sugihara**, Japanese consul in Kovno, Lithuania, begins issuing transit visas to Jewish refugees in defiance of his government's orders. He issues over 2,100 such visas, enabling the recipients to travel, via Russia and Japan, to safety in China, where they remain until the war's end. For his insubordination, Sugihara will be dismissed from the Japanese Foreign service after the war.*
- August 10 Anti-Jewish laws are passed in Romania.
- Sept 27 Berlin/Rome/Tokyo Axis formed.
- October 3 Anti-Jewish laws passed in **Vichy** (southern France) government modeled after Germany's **Nuremberg Laws**.
- October 16 Order for the creation of the Warsaw Ghetto issued.
- October 28 Italy invades Greece.
- Nov 15 Warsaw ghetto (approx. 400,000 Jews) is sealed off from the outside world.
- Nov 10-24 Hungary, Romania and Slovakia join the Axis.
- December *The village of **Le Chambon**, France, begins to provide refuge for 5,000 Jews.*

1941

- January 10 All Jews in the Netherlands are required to register with the authorities.
- Feb-April Deportation of 72,000 Jews to the Warsaw ghetto.
- March **Adolf Eichmann** is appointed Head of the Department for Jewish Affairs of the Reich Main Security Office. German physicians begin sterilization experiments on female prisoners at the **Ravensbrück** concentration camp.
- March 1 Bulgaria enters the war on the German side.
- March 3-20 A Jewish ghetto in Cracow is decreed, established, and sealed.
- March 22 Ministry of Research and Education prohibits Gypsy and Afro-German children from attending German schools because of the ostensible danger to Aryan children.
- March 24 Germany invades North Africa.
- April 6 German and Bulgarian armies come to Italy's aid by invading Yugoslavia and Greece.
- April 13 Japan and the Soviet Union sign a neutrality pact.
- April 17 Yugoslavia surrenders.
- April 20 Greece surrenders.
- April 24 A Jewish ghetto in Lublin, Poland, established in late March, is sealed.
- May 14 More than 3,600 Jews are arrested in Paris by French police.
- May 15 Romania passes laws condemning Jews to forced labor.
- May 16 In a radio broadcast, Marshal **Philippe Pétain**, leader of the **Vichy** government in France, endorses French collaboration with Nazi Germany.
- June **Vichy** government revokes civil rights of French Jews in North Africa.
- June 6 **The Commissar Order**, signed by General Walter Warlimont and approved by the OKW Chief of Staff, General Wilhelm Keitel, directly implicates the German army in involvement in, and responsibility for, war crimes in the occupied territories. In the summer of 1941, Keitel has all copies of the Commissar Order destroyed, in order to remove evidence of the army's crimes.
- June 18 Turkey and Germany sign a friendship treaty.
- June 22 Germany launches massive invasion of the Soviet Union, called "**Operation Barbarossa**." **Einsatzgruppen** follow regular army troops and begin mass murders of Jews, Roma and Sinti, and communist officials.
- June 25 Approximately 15,000 Jews killed in **Iron-Guard**-inspired **pogrom** in Jassy, Romania.
- June 27 Hungary enters the war on the side of the Axis powers.
- June 29 Several thousand Jews shot in the courtyard of the Jassy police HQ.
- July Jewish ghettos established in the cities of Kovno, Lithuania; Minsk and Vitebsk, Belorussia; and Zhitomir, Ukraine.
- July 8 Wearing of the Jewish star decreed in occupied Baltic states.
- July 12 The Soviet Union and Great Britain sign a military treaty.
- July 31 **Heydrich** appointed by **Göring** to carry out a "Total Solution" of the Jewish Question.
- August Jewish ghettos established in Bialystok, Poland and Kishinev, .

Sept 1	Hitler "officially" ends Operation T-4 , as public protest concerning the "euthanasia" program grows. The program nevertheless continues clandestinely. Between 70,000 and 93,000 people are killed in the German Reich during the course of the program.
Sept 3	First experimental gassing using Zyklon B carried out at Auschwitz on 600 Soviet prisoners of war and 250 other prisoners. The initial attempts failed and the intended victims are taken out and made to wait until the technical flaws are corrected.
Sept 6	A ghetto in Vilna, Lithuania, housing 40,000 Jews, is established.
Sept 15	Wearing of Jewish star decreed throughout greater Reich. German Jews over age 6 forced to wear yellow star on left side of chest with " <i>Jude</i> " printed on it in black.
Sept 29-30	Einsatzgruppen murders approximately 34,000 Jews at Babi Yar, near Kiev, Ukraine. <i>Raisa Dashkevich climbs out of the mass grave at Babi Yar and escapes to the home of her friend, Ludmila Bondarenko. The family welcomes Raisa, sharing their home and their meager food with her. The Bondarenko family hides and protects Raisa until the liberation of Kiev in 1943.</i>
October	Construction of the Majdanek camp begins near Lublin, Poland.
October	Construction begins on an addition to Auschwitz , known as Birkenau . It includes a killing center which begins operation in early 1942.
October 12	Germans approach Moscow.
October 15	Deportation of German Jews begins.
October 23	Massacre of 19,000 Odessa Jews.
Nov 5-9	5,000 Gypsies deported from labor and internment camps in Austria to Lodz ghetto.
Nov 6	Massacre of 15,000 at Rovno.
Nov 7-20	32,000 Jews killed in Minsk, Belorussia.
Nov 20-Dec 7	30,000 Jews killed in Riga, Latvia.
Nov 24	Establishment of Theresienstadt , near Prague, Czechoslovakia. Germany will use this "model ghetto" for propaganda purposes.
Nov 25	Proclamation that all Jewish property will be confiscated upon deportation.
Dec 7	Japan attacks the American naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.
Dec 8	Opening of Chelmno extermination camp near Lodz, Poland. United States declares war on Japan. Massacre in Riga, Latvia kills 27,000. Meeting in Berlin suburb of Wannsee postponed to 20 January.
Dec 11	Germany and Italy declare war on United States. <i>Struma</i> sets sail from Romania to Palestine.
Dec 13	Bulgarian and Hungary declare war on the United States.
Dec 22	Massacre in Vilna, Lithuania. 32,000 victims.

1942

January 20	The Wannsee Conference , attended by senior Nazi and German government officials, is held to plan the annihilation of the Jews in Europe. It lasts 87 minutes.
January 21	Jewish resistance and partisan groups organize in Vilna and Kovno, Lithuania.
March-Oct	Killing centers in occupied Poland at Auschwitz-Birkenau , Belzec , Sobibor , Treblinka , and Majdanek become operational and continue mass murder of Jews in gas chambers. (This is later code-named " Operation Reinhard " by Himmler on 19 July following Heydrich's death after an assassination attempt by members of the Czech underground.)
