

ANTI-SEMITISM: A HISTORY OF HATE

Anti-Semitism means prejudice against Jews. People who are anti-Semites don't want their children to marry or even be friends with Jews. Anti-Semites don't like to buy from Jewish businesses. Some anti-Semites burn crosses on the lawns of Jewish homes and paint swastikas on their temples. They blame Jews for everything that's wrong and believe Jews are too smart or too rich or own too much land.

If you were a Jew in ancient times, you might have been enslaved by the Egyptians. You couldn't be a citizen in the ancient Roman Empire. If you were a Jew, Christians sometimes called you "Christ killer," an allegation so inflammatory that it became the rallying cry of anti-Semitism for centuries.

If you were a Jew in the Middle Ages, you were often forced to live in a walled ghetto. Non-Jews didn't want you to influence them or their children and merchants didn't want your businesses competing with theirs. Outside the gates of your ghetto, you were required to wear an identifying badge.

At the outbreak of the plague called the Black Death (1348), you might have been accused of poisoning the water. If you were a Jew in 15th-century Spain, the Inquisition, a series of religious trials, could have expelled you or worse.

If you were a German Jew in 1879, you would have been a target of Wilhelm Marr who taught that Germans belonged to the Aryan "master race," while Jews were by nature a "slave race." Marr founded the League of Anti-Semitism to keep Germany from being "taken over" by Jews.

If you were a Russian Jew in 1881, *pogroms*, or organized attacks, might have caused you and hundreds of thousands of others to emigrate to the United States or to establish colonies in Palestine.

In 1923, an embittered, young soldier named Adolf Hitler was jailed for his part in a failed government coup. Hitler used his prison time to write *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), a book filled with his plans for the creation of the Nazi party and world domination, his belief in Aryan superiority, and, most ominously, his fanatic anti-Semitism.

Upon release from prison, Hitler and a group of devoted followers began to preach the philosophy of Nazism. An explosive combination of economic depression in Germany and Hitler's powerful blend of treachery and inflammatory

speechmaking led to his appointment as Chancellor in 1933. In 1934 he was elected president and named himself *Führer* or supreme leader.

Once in power Hitler turned anti-Semitism into an official government policy. Within a decade that policy had led to the murder of nearly 6 million European Jews as well as gypsies, intellectuals, homosexuals, Marxists, and other "enemies of the state." While millions were murdered outright through the use of gas chambers and other methods of extermination, hundreds of thousands of others died from disease, starvation, and slave labor.



☘ Concentration Camp ☠ Killing Center

CONCEPT VOCABULARY

You will find the following terms and definitions useful as you read and discuss the selections in this book.

Aryan race "Aryan" was originally applied to people who spoke any Indo-European language (in India, western Asia, and Europe). The Nazis, however, primarily used the term to refer to people of Northern European racial ancestry—especially those with blue eyes and blonde hair.

concentration camp Upon their ascent to power on January 30, 1933, the Nazis established concentration camps for the imprisonment of all "enemies" of their regime: political opponents, Jehovah's Witnesses, gypsies, homosexuals, and other "asocials." Beginning in 1938, Jews were targeted for internment solely because they were Jews.

Final solution The cover name for the plan to destroy the Jews of Europe—the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question." It began in December, 1941. Jews were rounded up and sent to extermination camps in the East. The program was deceptively disguised as "resettlement."

genocide The deliberate and systematic destruction of a religious, racial, national, or cultural group of people.

ghetto The Nazis revived the concept of medieval ghetto in creating their compulsory "Jewish Quarter." The ghetto was a section of a city where all Jews from the surrounding areas were forced to reside, surrounded by barbed wire or walls.

Nazi From the German words for Na(tional-so)zi(alist). A nazi was a member or supporter of the National Socialist Party in Germany led by Adolf Hitler.

propaganda ideas or claims spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opponent's cause.

scapegoat a person or group that bears the blame for others. Scapegoating is the process of blaming others for one's problems.

Third Reich the German state during the Nazi period.

SS - Hitler's elite
paramilitary force.

Gestapo - German
secret police

MAJOR EVENTS OF WORLD WAR II AND THE HOLOCAUST

1933

January
Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany

March
Dachau concentration camp opens

April
One-day boycott of Jewish shops and businesses; Gestapo (German internal security police) established

May
Public burnings of books written by Jews, political dissidents, and others not approved by the state

1935

May
Jews barred from serving in German army

September
"Nuremberg Laws" passed. As a result, Jews no longer considered German citizens; Jews could not marry Aryans; nor could they fly the German flag



1937

July
Buchenwald concentration camp opens



1934

August
Hitler proclaims himself *Führer und Reichskanzler* (Leader and Reich Chancellor)



1936

March
Jewish doctors barred from practicing medicine in German institutions

August
Juden Verboten (No Jews) signs displayed outside many towns are removed during the Olympic Games in Berlin

1938

March
Hitler annexes Austria

August
Italy enacts sweeping anti-Semitic laws

October
Germans mark all Jewish passports with a large *J* to restrict Jews from leaving the country



September
Munich Agreement: Britain and France accept German takeover of part of Czechoslovakia

October
17,000 Polish Jews expelled from Germany

November
Kristallnacht (9-10)
Decree forces all Jews to transfer retail businesses to Aryan hands. All Jewish pupils expelled from German schools



CREATING CONTEXT



1939

September

Germany invades Poland; World War II begins

November

Jews in German-occupied Poland forced to wear an arm band or yellow star

1941

June

Germany invades the Soviet Union

July

Hitler appoints Reinhard Heydrich to implement the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question"

September

34,000 Jews massacred at Babi Yar outside Kiev, Russia

December

Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; United States declares war on Japan and Germany



1943

April

Warsaw Ghetto revolt begins

August

Revolt at death camp in Treblinka, Poland

1945

April

Hitler commits suicide

May

V-E (Victory in Europe) Day: Germany surrenders; end of Third Reich

August

First atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, Japan

September

Japan surrenders; end of World War II



1940

April

Germany invades Denmark and Norway

May

Germany invades Holland, Belgium, and France; concentration camp established at Auschwitz

June

France surrenders

August

Battle of Britain (Germany's attempt to bomb Britain into submission) begins

1942

January

Heydrich outlines plan to murder Europe's Jews; German 6th Army surrenders at Stalingrad

October

Armed revolt in Sobibor extermination camp

1944

June

D-Day: Allied invasion at Normandy, France

July

Group of German officers attempts to assassinate Hitler; Russians liberate Maidanek killing center

October

Revolt by inmates at Auschwitz



FACES OF THE HOLOCAUST



Allied leaders meet at Yalta, in Russia. (From left) **Winston Churchill (1875-1965)** British Prime Minister; **Franklin Roosevelt (1882-1945)** U.S. President; **Josef Stalin (1879-1953)** Dictator of Soviet Russia

Oskar Schindler (1908-1974)

German businessman who first profited from the war but later became a hero by saving 1300 Jewish workers from the gas chambers.



Adolf Hitler (1889-1945) *Führer und Reichskanzler.*

He promised glory for the Germans and destruction for the Jews.



Anne Frank (1929-1945)

Her diary, written while hiding from the Nazis, brought the horror of the Holocaust to the world.



Simon Wiesenthal (1908-)

A Holocaust survivor, he gave up a career in architecture to become a relentless Nazi hunter.