

# KEY EVENTS IN HOLOCAUST HISTORY

## TIMELINE

Entries in *italics* indicate anti-Jewish legal restrictions and persecution. Entries in **bold typeface** indicate watershed events in Holocaust history.

<b>1919</b>	Amendments to the <i>Canadian Immigration Act</i> authorise the federal cabinet to prohibit immigrants of any “nationality, race, occupation and class” because of their “peculiar customs, habits, modes of life and methods of holding property and because of their probable inability to become readily assimilated.”
<b>1920</b>	<b>February</b> Founding of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (the Nazi Party) as a radical far-right movement in Germany. Its ideology was virulently antisemitic, racist, anti-democratic and nationalistic.
<b>1931</b>	<b>March 23</b> Canada’s Order-in-Council PC 695 imposes the most restrictive immigration policy in Canadian history. It would subsequently be used to deny admission to Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis.
<b>1932</b>	<b>July</b> Nazi Party elected to more seats in the German Reichstag (parliament) than any other party.
<b>1933</b>	<b>January 30</b> Nazi Party leader <b>Adolf Hitler appointed Chancellor of Germany</b> by President Hindenburg.
	<b>February 27</b> German Reichstag (parliament building) burned down due to arson. Hitler suspends civil rights (including freedom of speech, press and assembly) and due process of law.
	<b>March 22</b> Establishment of Dachau concentration camp in Germany.
	<b>March 23</b> Passage of the <i>Enabling Act</i> , allowing the Nazis to issue laws without the consent of the German Reichstag, effectively creating a Nazi dictatorship.
	<b>April 1</b> <i>Nazi state-led boycott against Jewish-owned businesses.</i>

**April 25**

*The Nazi government takes control of the public school system, introducing “race science” and Nazi ideology into the curriculum. Jewish teachers are fired, and a new law imposes limits on the number of Jewish students who could attend public schools.*

**April**

*Enactment of Nazi decrees excluding Jews from employment in German civil service and limiting their participation in various professions and sports clubs.*

**October 4**

*The Law on Editors bans Jews from working in journalism.*

**1934**

**August 19**

Following the death of President Hindenburg, Hitler declares himself *Führer* of the German Reich in addition to Chancellor, thus becoming the absolute dictator of Germany.

**1935**

**September 15**

*Enactment of the **Nuremberg Race Laws**, making Jews legally distinct from non-Jews. The Reich Citizenship Law strips Jews of their citizenship. The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour bans marriage and sexual relationships between Jews and Germans.*

**1936**

**August**

The Olympic Games are held in Berlin. Jewish and Roma athletes are barred from competing for Germany.

**1937**

**November**

The first run of *The Eternal Jew* exhibition in Munich, Germany, a propaganda tool used to promote hatred against Jews.

**1938**

**March 11–13**

Nazi troops invade Austria and incorporate it into the German Reich in what is known as the **Anschluss** (annexation of Austria).

**April 26**

*Order for the Disclosure of Jewish Assets requires Jewish assets to be registered with Nazi authorities by June 20, 1938.*

**July 6–15**

Representatives from 32 countries attend the **Evian Conference** to discuss the fate of European Jewish refugees seeking to escape the Nazis. Canada refuses to ease its immigration restrictions, along with every other country in attendance, except Brazil.

**August 17**

*An order under the Law on the Alteration of Family and Personal Names requires Jews to adopt the additional names “Israel” or “Sarah” if their first names are not obviously Jewish.*

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**October 3**

Decree on the Confiscation of Jewish Property *regulates the transfer of assets from Jews and non-Jews in the Third Reich (the territories and countries occupied by Nazi Germany).*

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**October 5**

*Jews in the Third Reich are required to have their passports stamped with a red letter "J" for Jude (Jew).*

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**November 9-10**

*In the state-sponsored **Kristallnacht pogrom**, Nazi members and their supporters burn synagogues, loot Jewish homes and businesses, and kill at least 91 Jews. Thirty thousand Jewish men are arrested and imprisoned in concentration camps.*

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**November 12**

Decree on the Elimination of the Jews from Economic Life *bars Jews from operating any business in the Third Reich.*

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**November 21**

Decree on an Atonement Tax *forces Jews to pay a tax totaling 25% of their wealth for the damages caused by rioters during the Kristallnacht pogrom.*

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**November 15**

*The Reich Ministry of Education expels all Jewish children from public schools.*

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**December 3**

Decree on the Utilization of Jewish Property *freezes all Jewish assets and orders Jewish businesses to be "Aryanized" or liquidated.*

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**December (–May 1940)**

Kindertransport rescue effort transports approximately 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi Europe to safety in Britain.

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## 1939

**March**

All eligible German youth (ages 10 to 18) were required to join the Hitler Youth.

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**June 7**

Canada refuses asylum to nearly 1,000 Jewish refugees aboard the SS *St. Louis* who were fleeing Nazi persecution. This followed similar refusals by Cuba and the US. The ship is forced to return to Europe with its Jewish passengers on the eve of war.

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**September 1–3**

Germany invades Poland. Two days later, Great Britain and France declare war on Germany, and the **Second World War** begins.

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**September 10**

Canada declares war on Germany.

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**September**

Nazi mobile killing units called **Einsatzgruppen** begin operations in Eastern Europe.

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**1940**

**May 10**

Nazi Germany invades the Netherlands, Belgium and France.

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**May 20**

Auschwitz concentration camp complex established.

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**June 22**

The Nazis invade the Soviet Union and the scale of **Einsatzgruppen** murder operations vastly increases.

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**November 15**

Nazis establish the Warsaw ghetto, forcing all Jewish residents of Warsaw into the designated area sealed off from the rest of the city by a heavily guarded wall.

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**Summer**

In Britain, nearly 2,300 Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria were forced onto ships and sent to Canada, where they were held in internment for the next three years as "enemy aliens."

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**1941**

**September 1**

All Jews in the Third Reich over the age of six are required to wear the yellow star badge on their outer clothing in public.

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**October 23**

Order Prohibiting the Emigration of Jews bars all Jews from leaving the Third Reich.

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**October**

Deportation of German, Austrian and Czech Jews begins. Jews are deported to ghettos, concentration camps and death camps in occupied Eastern Europe.

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**1942**

**January 10**

First round of Dutch Jewish men sent to forced labour camps in the Netherlands. By September 1942, more than 5,000 Jewish men would be sent to labour camps.

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**January 20**

Senior government officials of Nazi Germany gathered at the **Wannsee Conference** on the "final solution to the Jewish question." They address the implementation of the plan for the mass murder of all European Jews.

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**July 16–17**

*Vélodrome d'Hiver roundup of Jews in Paris, France.*

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**July**

*Deportation of Dutch, French and Belgian Jews begins. Jews are deported by train to death and concentration camps in occupied Eastern Europe.*

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**1943**

**April 19–May**

Small groups of armed Jewish resistance groups fight in the **Warsaw ghetto uprising** against large German police and military forces.

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**1944**

**May–July**

*The Nazis deport more than 440,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz-Birkenau.*

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**July 23**

The Soviet Red Army liberates Majdanek concentration camp.

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**1945**

**January 27**

The Soviet Red Army liberates Auschwitz-Birkenau.

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**April 15**

British and Canadian Forces liberate Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

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**May 7**

**Germany surrenders** unconditionally to the Allied forces.

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**November**

The International Military Tribunal convenes in Nuremberg, Germany, where 21 Nazi leaders are tried for crimes against humanity and war crimes.

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**1945  
(–1952)**

Displaced persons camps house more than 250,000 displaced Jewish survivors of the Holocaust.

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**1947**

Canadian government allows 1,000 Jewish orphans of the Holocaust to immigrate to Canada in an initiative called the Jewish War Orphans Project.

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**May**

Canada announces the relaxation of its exclusionary immigration policies, allowing Jewish Holocaust survivors to be sponsored for immigration to Canada by close relatives and through labour schemes, including the Tailor Project.

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