

WITNESS TO HISTORY

The Holocaust Remembered by Florida Survivors

An original exhibition of The Florida Holocaust Museum

**THE
FLORIDA
HOLOCAUST
MUSEUM**

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WITNESSTO HISTORY

The Holocaust Remembered by Florida Survivors



The arrival of a transport of Hungarian Jews at Auschwitz-Birkenau
Yad Vashem

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and their collaborators over a twelve-year period between 1933 and 1945.

The socioeconomic destitution following World War I, combined with harsh reparations demanded from Germany, contributed to the country's depression. With the political changes following the Treaty of Versailles, Germany became a democracy with a constitution and elections. Many political parties competed for votes and several new governments failed. The Nazi Party, a right-wing extremist group, was approached by President Paul von Hindenburg to create a coalition government in 1933, and Adolf Hitler was appointed as the new chancellor. The persecution of Jews began immediately and continued to grow into genocide.

Throughout World War II, governments, community leaders, and ordinary people made choices based on their circumstances, personal ethics, morality, or political forces. The Nazis carried out their plans to murder European Jews and others, while some individuals, groups, and governments chose, at great risk, to protect and rescue those who were targeted. Thousands of others chose to participate in the Nazis' racist schemes. Most people did nothing, although they were aware of what was happening. The majority of victims had no one to turn to for help.

The choices people made affected their behaviors under specific circumstances. Throughout this exhibition there are examples of perpetrators, bystanders, victims, and upstanders (people who speak or act in support of an individual or cause).

Witness to History examines how the actions of individuals, groups, and governments contributed to the Holocaust and explores the reactions of Florida Survivors to events as they unfolded.

TIME M E L I N E

January 30th, 1933

Adolf Hitler is appointed chancellor of Germany.

February 27th, 1933

The Reichstag (Germany's parliament building) is burned down. German President von Hindenburg signs the emergency decree allowing the government to arrest political opponents without a specific charge.

March 22nd, 1933

Dachau concentration camp is established for political prisoners.

April 1st, 1933

Members of the Nazi Party organize a nationwide boycott of Jewish-owned businesses.

August 19th, 1934

Hitler abolishes the office of president and assumes the role of dictator of Germany.

September 15th, 1935

The Nuremberg Race Laws strip German Jews of their citizenship and criminalize "interracial" marriage.

November 9th -10th, 1938

Kristallnacht ("Night of Broken Glass")

September 1st, 1939

Germany invades Poland, beginning World War II. Britain and France declare war on Germany two days later. German authorities immediately require Jews in Poland to wear an identifying symbol on their clothing and enforce other racial policies.

November 15th, 1940

The Warsaw ghetto is established and sealed, confining 350,000 Jews. Over the course of the war, the Germans established at least 1,000 ghettos in which to separate Jewish communities from non-Jewish populations in Nazi-occupied Poland and the Soviet Union.

October 15th, 1941

German authorities begin deportations of Jews from Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia to ghettos in occupied Eastern Europe.

December 8th, 1941

The first mass killing operation begins at Chelmno, located in Nazi-occupied Poland.

January 20th, 1942

The Wannsee Conference is convened outside Berlin. Reinhard Heydrich, chief of Reich Security, presents a plan for the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question". The Final Solution was the code name for the Nazis' plan to annihilate European Jews.

March 1st, 1942

Killing center Auschwitz-Birkenau is established.

April 19th, 1943

The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising begins when German forces enter the ghetto to begin its liquidation. Organized Jewish fighters led the revolt against German troops while other residents went into hiding. Lasting almost a month, the rebellion was the largest Jewish act of resistance during the war and inspired others held in ghettos and killing centers.

June 6th, 1944

Allied forces land in Normandy, France, ("D-Day").

Summer of 1944 - April 1945

Prisoners are forced to evacuate several concentration camps, in what are now known as death marches.

January 27th, 1945

Soviet Forces liberate approximately 7,000 prisoners from Auschwitz concentration camp. Later that spring advancing American and British troops liberate other camps in Western Europe.

A HISTORY OF HATE

Antisemitism



Massacre of Jews Woodcut, 1493

Antisemitism existed long before World War II. Jews have been falsely blamed for many misfortunes, including the death of Christ and even the Black Death. This woodcut from 1493 depicts the murder of Jews over their "involvement" with the Black Death.

The term antisemitism was coined in 1879 by Wilhelm Marr to describe the hatred of Jews, not only because of their religion but also because of perceived racial differences.

University of Glasgow, Scotland

Persecution of the Jews did not begin with the Holocaust. Jews were seen as the "other" because of their monotheism (belief in only one god). Once Christianity became prominent, rumors of Jewish complicity in the death of Jesus Christ arose. By the fourth century, the responsibility of Jews for the death of Christ had been codified into the Gospels.

Often placed on the fringe of society, Jews were not permitted to join most professions. Frequently, their only options were to take jobs forbidden to Christians and, as a result, they worked as tax-collectors, peddlers, and money-lenders. This contributed to the negative stereotypes of Jews as money-focused and greedy.

Jews were forced into segregated ghettos and required to wear identifying symbols as early as the 13th century. During the Middle Ages and beyond, institutionalized discrimination and pogroms (violent attacks) became prominent and the Jewish community at large was subjected to targeted assaults. In most of Europe, Jews were not permitted to hold positions in the government and marriages between Jews and non-Jews were illegal.



Beginning with the French Revolution, conditions for the Jewish diaspora (those involuntarily sent away from their homelands) began to improve. Diasporic Jewish communities were emancipated and began to acculturate with those of their adoptive nations, and eventually seen as citizens in their own right. German Jews became an integral part of the nation's commercial and cultural landscape just as any other Germans. Assimilation did not mean acceptance, however. The rise of the eugenics (racial purity) movement led to a reframing of Jewish communities as a homogenous group, and religious oppression evolved into racism.

Nazi propaganda poster advertising a special issue of *Der Stürmer* on "Rassenschande" ("race pollution")

The popularity of eugenic practices during the interwar period helped fuel Jewish persecution during the Holocaust, as antisemitic rhetoric went so far as to blame the Jews for Germany's loss during World War I and for the "degeneration" of the German people in biological terms. This particular example of anti-Jewish propaganda warns against interracial relationships.

The Nazis used propaganda to spread their party's agenda and, under Hitler, created a government agency to incite hatred of the Jews. "The Reich Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda" regulated culture and enforced ideology through the use and control of art, books, film production, the national and foreign press, radio, and other forms of mass communication.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Page from *Trust No Fox...*
The book *Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid!* (*Trust No Fox in the Green Meadow and No Jew on His Oath!*) by kindergarten teacher Elvira Bauer is emblematic of more modern antisemitism. Specifically targeting children, the book demonizes Jews by depicting them as monstrous and was used to indoctrinate youth in Nazi ideology.

The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Dr. David Shapiro



ORDINARY PEOPLE

Jewish Life Before WWII



Edith Loebenberg

Edith "Edie" Loebenberg, née Lowengard, (young girl seated at bottom right) with members of her extended family at the matzoh factory they owned. Edie was born in Darnstadt, Germany, and had one sister. After the rise of the Nazis and experiencing increased antisemitism, her parents made arrangements for the family to escape Germany in 1938. The family of four arrived in New York and, soon after, moved to Chicago. Edie married Walter Loebenberg in 1948 and later moved to Florida. The couple founded The Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg.

The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by Edith and Walter Loebenberg

Jewish communities across the globe were no different from any other community. Western European Jews were assimilated into society and saw themselves as citizens first and Jews second. Some Jewish men served in the German Army during World War I, making it especially difficult for them to acknowledge the gradual changes in how they were treated. Many believed they would be exempt from anti-Jewish laws and persecution because they were war veterans.



Eva Gerson

Eva Gerson, née Kaiserova, with her mother and grandmother at the optometry shop her grandfather owned in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Eva and her mother survived Auschwitz-Birkenau. However, her mother died from typhus just weeks after liberation.

The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Eva Gerson, formerly of Gulfport, Florida

Though Jews consisted of less than 1% of the population after World War I, as a group they held a significant number of jobs in law, medicine, trade, banking, commerce, publishing, and print media. In 1933, Jews made up 16% of Germany's lawyers, 11% of its doctors, and owned 60% of all retail and wholesale clothing stores. Many were even involved in government service positions.

While there was some assimilation and acculturation, many Eastern European Jews lived differently from their western counterparts. In Poland, Hungary, Romania, and the Soviet Union, many chose or were forced to distance themselves from the general populace. Living separately in shtetls (predominantly Jewish towns or villages), most Eastern European Jews were not assimilated, spoke their own language (*Yiddish*), had their own distinct, traditional manner of dress, and were religiously observant.

THE POWER OF PREJUDICE

Persecution of Non-Jews

“The Holocaust” specifically refers to Jews targeted by the Nazis, but they were not the only victims of the Nazi regime. Other minority groups were also persecuted in a similar fashion, either as biological threats to the growth of the “Aryan” race or as political threats in their defiance of Nazi authority.

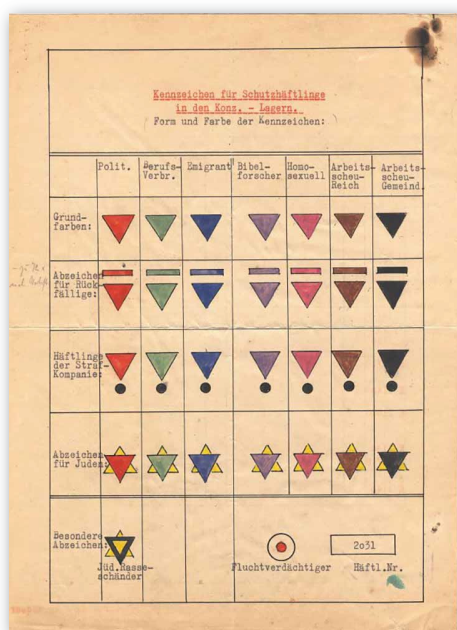


Chart of prisoner markings used to identify the reason for incarceration in German concentration camps. Criminals were marked with green triangles, political prisoners with red. Black was used for asocials (Roma, vagrants, and others) while Jehovah's Witnesses were identified by purple triangles. A pink triangle was used for homosexuals. A yellow triangle was paired with another of a different color to form a Jewish prisoner. A yellow star if Jewish prisoners were in more than one group.

Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by William Voigtlander

Poles

The Nazis invaded Poland on September 1st, 1939, to expand their *Lebensraum* (“living space”) in preparation for the projected growth of their “Aryan” population. Nazi officials targeted cultural and religious institutions as well as leaders throughout Poland in an attempt to prevent any resistance, resulting in the imprisonment of hundreds of thousands. Approximately one million people were sent to forced labor camps and hundreds of thousands to concentration camps. It is estimated that at least one million Polish citizens were murdered by the Germans during World War II.



Polish political prisoner Jerzy Guminski
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Wanda Lysikiewicz



Roma and Sinti (Gypsy) prisoners
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Archiwum Dokumentacji Mechanicznej

Roma and Sinti

The Nazis deemed Roma and Sinti (Gypsies) as racially inferior, and subjected them to forced labor, internment, and murder under the Nazi regime. Many Roma were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau where authorities had organized a special “Gypsy family camp”. They were specifically selected for medical experimentation. Some were exempt from forced deportations by having “pure Gypsy blood”, becoming assimilated, or having served in the military, but often these exemptions were simply ignored. Approximately 220,000 (25% of their entire population) were killed during World War II.

Jehovah's Witnesses

Facing incarceration for their beliefs in nonviolence, the sanctity of life, and political neutrality, Jehovah's Witnesses were among those who faced religious persecution by the Nazi regime. For refusing to obey Nazi authorities, approximately 6,000 Jehovah's Witnesses were incarcerated and 2,000 were sent to concentration camps. Another 250 were executed and nearly 1,000 perished in camps and prisons.



Jehovah's Witnesses prisoner
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Robert Buckley



German police officer arrested in October 1938 for suspicion of violating Paragraph 175, the criminal code that made homosexuality illegal.
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Landesarchiv, Berlin

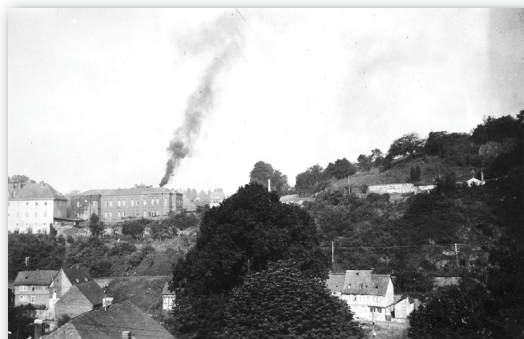
Homosexuals

Though technically a criminal offense, the previous German government did not pursue allegations of homosexuality. Under the Nazi government, however, authorities raided the more common locales of suspected individuals and actively made arrests. Most of those arrested were simply jailed, but anywhere from 5,000 to 15,000 were incarcerated in concentration camps. Approximately two-thirds died while imprisoned.

Persons with disabilities

Operation T4 was a secret euthanasia program that targeted individuals with disabilities, as they were seen as a “biological threat” to the Nazis' vision of a “master race”. The target population was so large in scope that officials used gas chambers and crematoria for these mass killings. A pile of random ashes would be collected and sent to victims' family members, alongside a forged death certificate. In spite of public outcry, the program discreetly persisted, ultimately claiming approximately 200,000 to 250,000 lives.

In 1939, disabled children became the euthanasia program's first victims, murdered by lethal injection or starvation. Later that year the program was expanded to target adults living in institutions and continued to claim more victims. Hitler secretly signed an authorization that protected participating medical staff from prosecution. The name “T4” came from the street name of the program's office, Tiergartenstrasse 4.



Hartheim Euthanasia Center in Hartheim, Austria. Other facilities were in Bernburg, Brandenburg, Grafeneck, and Sonnenstein, in Germany, and at Hartheim, in Austria.

Diözesanarchiv Limburg

NAZIS IN POWER

Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich

"Before Hitler came to power, my parents were very highly regarded from all the other people, we had a very nice business. But once they [the Nazis] came there, the whole situation changed."

- Testimony of Herbert Karliner, Survivor

The stock market crash in 1929 caused a worldwide economic crisis and Germany greatly suffered. Many German businesses went bankrupt and millions were unemployed. The Treaty of Versailles ended World War I after Germany's surrender but was considered by many Germans to be unjust and vindictive. Germany had been forced to give up land, reduce the size of its military, and pay reparations totaling 132 billion gold marks. The atmosphere was ripe to exploit a growing sense of resentment among the German people.



Nazi Armband (Kampfbinde)

The swastika, (from the Sanskrit *svastika*, "good fortune"), was part of the religious iconography of Buddhist and Hindu traditions for more than *five thousand years* before its resurgence in the 1920s. Europeans adopted the symbol as a good luck charm, but the Nazis reappropriated it to symbolize German nationalism following the result of an archaeological dig that identified the symbol as significant to early German religious traditions.

Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum



Adolf Hitler greets members of the Arbeiterjugend ("Youth Workers") in the Reich Chancellery

Hitler sought to build support for the Nazi Party from the ground up, starting with German youth. Beginning in 1926, the program was originally meant to train boys for the SA (also known as the Brownshirts or paramilitary wing) but it eventually evolved into a recruitment tool for the German military.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of William O. McWorkman

Although the views outlined by Hitler's manifesto *Mein Kampf* ("My Struggle") did not gain much traction, crowds were won over by his ideology, promises, and charisma. On February 27, 1933, a month after he was appointed chancellor of Germany, the Reichstag (German parliament building) burned down. In consequence, Hitler and the coalition government convinced President von Hindenburg to grant them emergency powers over Germany. This gave them rights to confiscate property and persecute political opponents, and to suspend basic freedoms. The following month, Hitler established the first concentration camp. In the years that followed, he declared the Nazi Party to be the only legal political party. After President von Hindenburg died in 1934, he proclaimed himself *Führer*. Hitler called for an end to the Versailles Treaty and ultimately set off the events of World War II with the invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939.



Herbert Karliner of Miami, Florida, was born in Germany in 1926. After his family's store was destroyed on Kristallnacht and his father arrested, the family secured passage on the ocean liner *MS St. Louis* and sailed from Hamburg, Germany, to Havana, Cuba. Once the ship arrived in Cuba, however, passengers were not allowed to disembark and the ship returned to Europe. Herb's family was given temporary asylum in France. He survived the war by using a false identity and by hiding in the woods until France was liberated. His parents and sisters were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered. It is estimated that approximately 25% of the passengers were killed in death camps once they returned to Europe.

Scan the QR Code to hear Karliner discuss how he was affected by antisemitism after the Nazis rose to power.



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.

- T** **September of 1919**
Adolf Hitler joins the German Workers' Party.
- I** **February 24th, 1920**
The German Workers' Party is renamed the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP, "Nazi" for short).
- M** **1920**
The Nazi Party officially adopts the swastika as its symbol.
- E** **July of 1921**
Hitler becomes chairman of the NSDAP.
- L** **January 30th, 1933**
Hitler is appointed chancellor of Germany.
- I** **March, 1933**
Hitler gives himself the title of *Führer* ("leader").
- N** **July of 1941**
Nazi Chief of Security Reinhard Heydrich is authorized to plan the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question."
- E** **January 27th, 1945**
The Auschwitz-Birkenau camp is liberated by the Soviet Army, while concentration camps in western Europe are liberated by Allied powers later that spring.
- April 30th, 1945**
Hitler commits suicide.
- May 7th, 1945**
Germany surrenders.
- November 20th, 1945**
The Nuremberg Trials begin.

sanction

The Night of Broken Glass



Germans pass the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business destroyed during Kristallnacht

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

On November 9, 1938, anti-Jewish demonstrations erupted across Germany. Jewish-owned businesses and synagogues were ransacked nationwide over the span of two days. These riots were not as “spontaneous” as was alleged. In reality, they were part of a state-sponsored sanction of the nation’s Jewry in response to the assassination of a German official in Paris just a few days before. This event came to be known as *Kristallnacht* (“Night of Broken Glass”).



Herschel Grynszpan, the man who killed German diplomat Ernst vom Rath

On November 7th, 1938, Herschel Grynszpan, angered by the forced deportation of his parents and thousands of other Polish Jews from Germany, shot and killed Ernst vom Rath, third secretary of the German embassy in Paris. The resulting rioting in Germany led to the arrest of 30,000 Jews, the death of 90, and a fine of one billion Reichsmark in damages billed to the entire German Jewish community.

Yad Vashem



Walter Loebenberg was born in Wachterbacht, Germany. In 1936, his family moved to Frankfurt due to antisemitism. He became an apprentice in a Jewish bakery at age 14. On Kristallnacht, he arrived to find the bakery ransacked and was detained by the German police later that day. Immediately following Kristallnacht, the family made plans to leave the country.

In 1939, they arrived at Ellis Island in New York but were forced to remain there for four months. They eventually moved to Chicago where Walter attended high school. After graduation, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and became a citizen. Walter married Edie Lowengard after returning from military service and, in 1992, the couple founded The Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg.

Scan the QR Code to hear Walter’s recollection of Kristallnacht.

Walter Loebenberg (seated, second from left) and his family in Frankfurt, Germany



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.



The destroyed interior of the Hechinger synagogue the day after Kristallnacht

As referenced by Walter Loebenberg in his on-line testimony (QR Code above), Boernestrasse synagogue in Frankfurt, Germany, was one of many synagogues burned down during the chaos of Kristallnacht. Torah scrolls, prayer books, and other ceremonial objects were destroyed along with the synagogues.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

the rising tide

Discrimination and Isolation

“Life was not pleasant, but we will survive if we just follow the rules. This was until all of the rules were implemented such as the Star of David, public transport bans, phone bans, and other rules to make life more miserable for the Jews. But after a while we found that we could live without the phones and all of that stuff. And we did...”

- Sabine van Dam, Holocaust Survivor from Naples, Florida

Germany did not erupt with antisemitic fervor over the course of a single night. With Hitler's appointment to the position of chancellor in 1933, the Nazi Party ratified *hundreds* of anti-Jewish laws. These laws were insidious, slowly excluding *all* Jews (practicing Judaism or not) from German public life by 1941. A number of economic sanctions were enforced, and Jews were barred from certain professions and from operating their own businesses. They were also required to declare assets and turn over valuables. Effectively ostracized from the rest of society, Jews were not allowed to visit most public institutions or belong to organizations. Jews were forced to identify themselves by using “Israel” (males) or “Sarah” (females) as middle names, required to use marked passports, and to wear a Star of David patch on their clothing at all times.



Salomon and Flora Schrijver's wedding with visible Star of David patches, Amsterdam, Holland, 1941.

The Germans had invaded one year prior and forced Jews to wear the Star of David patch at all times. They immediately issued similar anti-Jewish laws once they occupied other countries.

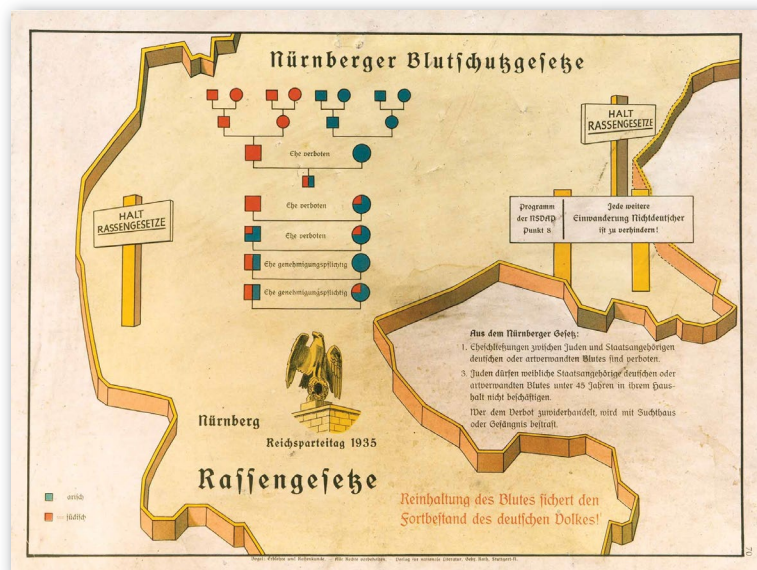
The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Samuel Schryver, formerly of Clearwater, Florida



Star of David patch worn by Inge Lewkowitz, née London, from Berlin, Germany

Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by Judith Lewkowitz of Pal Beach Gardens, Florida

The most condemning of these laws were passed on September 15th, 1935, during a special session of the Reichstag held in Nuremberg. Collectively known as the Nuremberg Laws, the Reich Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor simultaneously stripped Jews of most of their rights and standardized the racialization of Nazi antisemitic rhetoric. The Reich Citizenship Law revoked German Jews' citizenship, while the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor defined a “Jew” as someone with three or four Jewish grandparents, regardless of whether or not they practiced Judaism. There were also other individuals who were neither German nor Jew, but known as *Mischlinge*. These were people with one or two grandparents born into the Jewish community. “Interracial” relationships or relations between Jews and non-Jews were outlawed. Later addendums forbid relationships with black Germans, Roma, and those with biological or communicable illnesses.



Eugenics poster entitled "The Nuremberg Law for the Protection of Blood and German Honor" United States Holocaust Memorial Museum courtesy of Hans Paul/Hans Pauli

appeasement & silence

The World's Response

"I don't think that anyone who didn't live through it can understand what I felt at Evian – a mixture of sorrow, rage, frustration, and horror."

- Golda Meir, British Mandate Palestine delegate to the Evian Conference

Anti-Jewish laws and violence prompted many of Germany's 600,000 Jews to leave the country. Over 150,000 had fled Germany by 1938. When Germany annexed Austria, the number of Jews living under Nazi rule rose by 185,000 people. Many sought out opportunities to leave but were unable to find countries that would accept them.



Munich, Germany

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland,
from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for an international conference to discuss the refugee crisis. In the summer of 1938, representatives from 32 countries and non-governmental aid organizations met in Evian-les-Bains, France. While the participants of the Evian Conference expressed sympathy for the refugees, most only offered excuses for not accepting more Jewish refugees into their countries. The conference ended with no resolution and most of the participating countries enforced even stricter immigration policies in the aftermath.

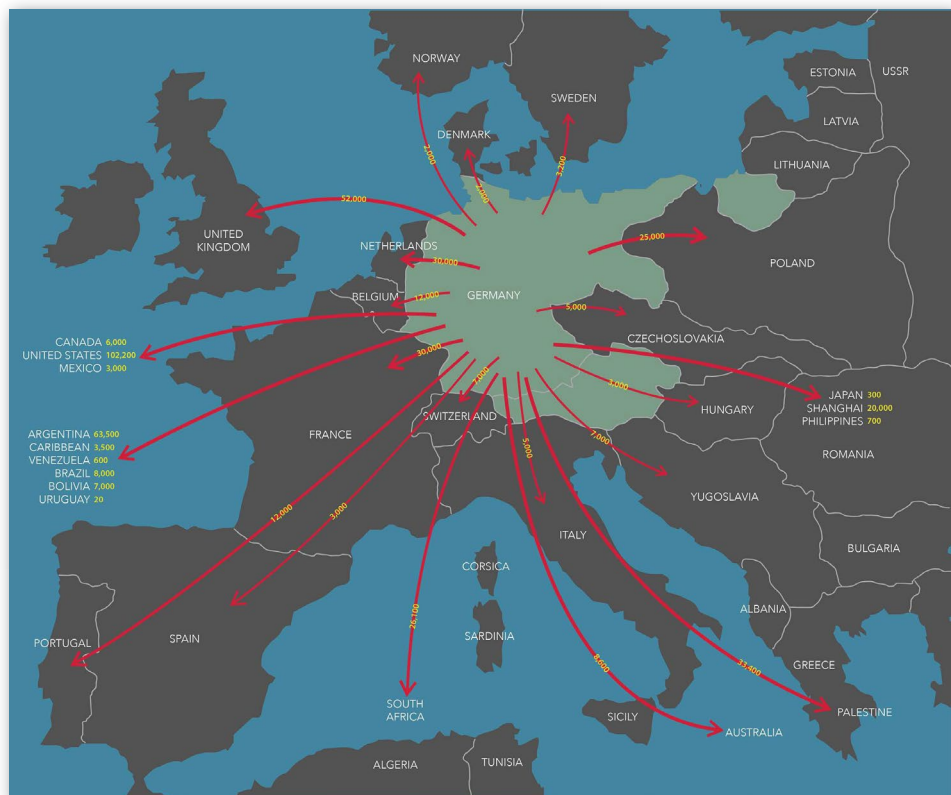


The Evian Conference

Yad Vashem

uprooting a culture

Deportation and Separation



German Emigration from Germany, 1933-1939

More than 400,000 Jews emigrated from Germany between 1933 and 1938. Forced deportation of Jews from Germany began in October of 1941, and by May of 1943 the authorities declared that the Reich was *judenrein* ("free of Jews"). The onset of war, German occupation of territory, and the reluctance of most countries to raise immigration quotas meant that most Jews who were deported were sent to ghettos and concentration camps.



Jewish refugees aboard the MS *St. Louis* in Havana, Cuba

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

In May 1939, the ocean liner MS *St. Louis* left Hamburg, Germany, for Havana, Cuba. Almost all of the 937 passengers on board were Jewish refugees seeking asylum. The passengers possessed landing certificates issued by the Cuban government, but a week before the ship set sail, the Cuban president issued a decree invalidating the documents.

It was not until the ship arrived at the port of Havana that passengers learned of the decree denying them entry. The *St. Louis* was soon ordered out of Cuban waters. It was then sailed near Florida with the hope that its passengers would receive permission from the U.S. government to disembark. The ship was once again prohibited to land and forced to return to Europe. Instead of returning to Germany, 288 passengers were allowed to disembark in Great Britain, the Netherlands accepted 181, Belgium another 214, and the remainder disembarked in France. When Germany invaded Western Europe, those passengers still in Belgium, France, and the Netherlands found themselves under Nazi rule. Only 278 of the *St. Louis* refugees living in those countries survived.



Miriam Kassenoff, née Klein, was born in 1936 in Košice, Czechoslovakia. After the Nazis occupied Czechoslovakia, her family received papers from Miriam's aunt in Chicago, allowing them to emigrate to the U.S. However, it was not until her father was arrested and interned in a labor camp that her mother made plans for the family to leave. The family left their home and most of their belongings and together with her younger brother and parents, Miriam arrived in New York in 1941.

Scan the QR Code to hear Miriam tell more of her family's emigration story.



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.

Miriam Klein Kassenoff, Miami, Florida

removal&confinement

The Ghettos

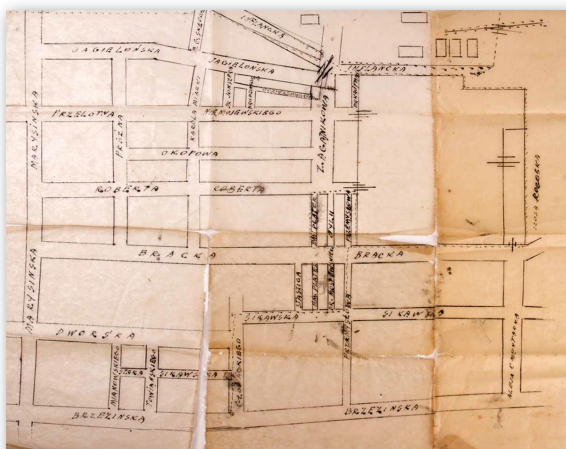


The Warsaw ghetto

Jews purchase produce from street vendors in the Warsaw ghetto. The Warsaw ghetto was the largest with more than 400,000 Jews crowded into an area of only 1.3 square miles.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Rafael Scharf

Ghettos were created long before the Nazi era, with the first established in 1516 in Venice, Italy. Over 1,000 ghettos were established throughout Nazi-occupied Europe between 1939 and 1945. The ghettos were usually located in the poorest areas of cities and towns and enabled the Nazis to separate Jews from local non-Jews. Some ghettos were closed and others were open, but Jews were forbidden to leave. Ghettos became hugely overcrowded as the Nazis liquidated smaller Jewish communities and forced people into them. The severe lack of basic human necessities contributed to the spread of diseases and high mortality. Ghetto dwellers were plagued by hunger, inhumane living conditions, and hard labor.



The Lodzghetto

Benjamin Frankel, father of artifact donor and Survivor Solomon Frankel, sketched this map of the Lodz ghetto from memory shortly after liberation. Father and son were confined to the Lodz ghetto after the Germans occupied Poland and were later deported on the same transport to Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by Solomon Frankel of Davenport, Florida

In spite of the terror and deprivation, Jews showed bravery in trying to survive one more day. They helped one another within families, organized self-help with communal soup kitchens, and arranged for the clandestine schooling of students. Doctors and nurses continued to provide care for patients. Artists continued to create art and to perform in order to defy dehumanization at the hands of the perpetrators. There were also different kinds of religious responses.

Ghettos were intended to be temporary. In some cases they existed for only a few days, while others were inhabited for years. When the “Final Solution” was implemented in 1941, ghettos were eventually destroyed. Some ghetto inhabitants were rounded up and shot in mass graves nearby. Other Jews were deported to killing centers and a small number were deported to concentration camps and forced-labor camps.



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

While the father of Yetti Sterensis was placed in a concentration camp, Yetti and the rest of her family were sent to a ghetto. She was shocked to find her closet empty one day. Her mother confessed to having traded everything, save for one dress. As they no longer had a stable source of income, she had to provide for the family. Yetti lived in St. Petersburg, Florida.

Scan the QR Code to hear Yetti's recollections of her family's move into the ghetto.



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.



Holocaust by Bullets

As part of what is now known as the “Holocaust by Bullets”, between 1.5 and over 2 million Jews were murdered by the *Einsatzgruppen*, German mobile killing squads following the German army with the goal of murdering “the enemy”: communists, partisans, Sinti and Roma, and Jews. These victims were not deported to camps but taken from their homes, marched to the execution sites, and murdered in broad daylight close to their homes. The *Einsatzgruppen* were helped by local collaborators. Entire Jewish communities were destroyed in this manner.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

who knew?

U.S. Response to the Holocaust

Before World War II, America was recovering from the Great Depression and many feared the prospect of having to compete with immigrants for already scarce employment opportunities. These looming anxieties eventually honed in on the coming Jewish refugees, leading to the rise of American antisemitism and strict immigration quotas.

With the United States forced into World War II when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, the U.S. military and other Allied powers worked to defeat the Nazis. Reports of the Nazis' plan to murder all European Jews reached the U.S. State Department by 1942, and was reported on in the American press, yet no effort was made to aid Europe's Jewish community.



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Eric Saul



Rabbi Stephen S. Wise

Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, an American reform rabbi and Jewish political leader, met with President Roosevelt as early as 1942 to report the existence of the Final Solution. One of the founders of the World Jewish Congress, Wise was present at the Bermuda Conference in 1943 and presented "A Program for the Rescue of Jews from Nazi Occupied Europe", which included an agreement by Great Britain to open Palestine for Jewish refugees. Unfortunately, division in the American Jewish community led to Wise's inability to present a strong, unified voice to the government.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Despite public outcry and pleas for action made to President Roosevelt, winning the war was prioritized over providing humanitarian aid. It wasn't until January 22, 1944, that Roosevelt signed an executive order to create the War Refugee Board to rescue and aid Jews and others persecuted by the Nazis. By the war's end, the United States accepted only 982 refugees from Europe, who were interned at Fort Ontario in Oswego, New York.



Fort Ontario Emergency Refugee Shelter, Oswego, New York

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

hope for the victims

Upstanders

"I always emphasize that the reason I'm here is because there were people that helped us."

- Jacqueline Albin, Survivor, of St. Petersburg, Florida



Toni Rinde was hidden by a Polish woman she knew only as Aunt Koniosna from 1941 to 1945. She was provided false papers, named "Marisha", and raised as a Catholic. After the war, Toni was fortunate enough to be reunited with her parents. Other Jewish children like Toni managed to escape persecution by living under assumed identities with their non-Jewish family friends, or even with complete strangers sympathetic to their plight.

Scan the QR Code to hear Toni's story of survival.



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.

Toni Rinde with the woman who kept her in hiding during the war
Toni Rinde, née Igel, of Clearwater, Florida



kindertransport

In spite of its reluctance to deal with the Jewish refugee crisis as a political actor, Great Britain did take some action to rescue Jewish refugee children. Known as the Kindertransport, the British government arranged for 10,000 Jewish children to be transported from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland into British foster homes, hostels, and families. While these children were spared the fate some suffered, very few ever made their way back home.

Helga Waldman

Helga Waldman and her sister Irene left their father in Berlin (their mother was previously deceased) for England in the fall of 1939. The two sisters were taken in by the Attenborough family and remained with them until the end of the war. While living with the Attenboroughs, Helga began taking ballet lessons. This photograph was taken during that time.

After the war, Helga and Irene learned that their father had been deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and murdered. The sisters had an uncle in the United States who took them in after the war.

Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by Herman Waldman, husband of Helga, formerly of St. Petersburg, Florida

the danish rescue

The lives of Danish Jews were left relatively intact following the Nazi occupation of Denmark in 1940. This changed when the Nazis declared martial law and took direct control, and the Danish government surrendered on August 28th. In response to worsening conditions, non-Jewish Danish citizens began to hide Jews in coastal homes and refugees were ferried to nearby Sweden using local fishing vessels. Approximately 7,200 Jews and 680 non-Jews were rescued within just two weeks, leaving the majority of Danish Jews unscathed in the aftermath of the war.



Eight-year-old Steen Metz in Denmark, before being deported

Steen Metz was only eight years old when Hitler occupied his native Denmark. Unlike most of the country's Jews, his family was caught and imprisoned in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. As a Survivor, Steen is immensely proud of his heritage for the Danes' action to ensure the survival of Denmark's Jews.

Steen Metz of Sanibel, Florida



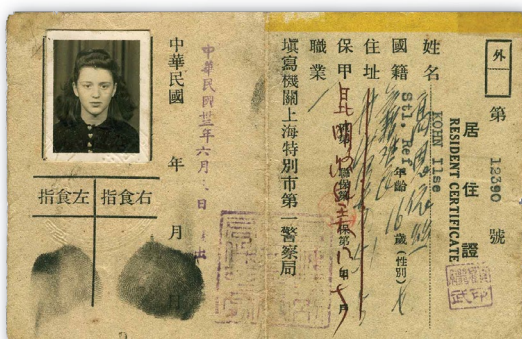
Allan Hall was born in Cracow, Poland, in 1935. After the Nazis occupied the country, Allan and his parents fled to Lvov, and then to Warsaw. His father passed as a German and was able to rent an office with the assistance of a German official. He could also move freely about because he possessed false identity papers. Allan and his mother were forced to spend over two years hiding in the office closet during the day because the headquarters of the German Air Force happened to be located in the same building. After the war, Allan and his family emigrated to the United States. He graduated from the University of Florida and he and his wife raised their family in Miami Beach.

Scan the QR Code to hear Allan talk about his time spent in hiding.



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.

1946



Shanghai, china

Although allied with the Nazi regime, Japanese authorities in China allowed exiled Jews to emigrate to Shanghai without a visa. However, pressure from the Nazis eventually led these authorities to separate the growing Jewish community into their own ghetto. Despite their poor living conditions, ghetto residents managed to send information about Japanese troops to Allied officials.

Resident certificate of Ilse Kohn (maiden name of Betty Grebenschikoff)
Betty Grebenschikoff of St. Petersburg, Florida

"There were so many people and so much noise everywhere... They ate, drank, argued, and washed their children outdoors... People just walked around them as if it were nothing out of the ordinary. Instead, we were the ones who had come from a different planet... It was a long way from our carefully nurtured, sanitized existence in Berlin."

- Betty Grebenschikoff, of St. Petersburg, Florida

upstanders

Courage and Sacrifice



Raoul wallenberg (sweden)

Swedish diplomat and businessman Raoul Wallenberg was recruited by the United States War Refugee Board (WRB) and appointed as the secretary to the Swedish Embassy in Budapest, Hungary. He was sought out to help further the efforts of Sweden's campaign to rescue the Jews of Nazi-occupied Hungary. Wallenberg was assigned to grant protective passports to those on a specific list, but he went out of his way to hire Jews, bribe officials, and arrange for aid to be given to death march prisoners. Wallenberg saved thousands of Jews before his capture by the Soviets in 1945.

Miep Gies (netherlands)

After being laid off from her job as a typist, a neighbor arranged for Miep Gies to work for Otto Frank as a customer service representative for his business, Opekta. In return, Gies swiftly agreed to help Frank hide his family for the duration of the war, tending to the family's needs while continuing her regular work with the company. Gies managed to retrieve his daughter Anne's diary after the family's discovery and arrest, and she gave it to Frank when he returned after liberation as the sole survivor of his family.



Sir nicholas winton (great britain)

In 1938, 29-year-old stockbroker Nicholas Winton went to Prague at the urging of his friend Martin Blake, a member of the Committee for Refugees from Czechoslovakia (present-day Czech Republic). The committee provided assistance for the thousands of people who became refugees once the Germans annexed the region. Upon his arrival, Winton was asked to help with the cause. After visiting refugee camps and reading reports about the violence against Jews during Kristallnacht, he also learned of the efforts of British organizations to rescue Jewish children on the Kindertransport. He became determined to organize a similar initiative for Czechoslovakian youth. Winton began this endeavor in 1939 and rescued hundreds of children. His personal scrapbooks indicate that over 600 were brought to safety in Great Britain, though the total number is unknown.



oskar schindler (germany)

A businessman from the former Czechoslovakia (present-day Czech Republic), Oskar Schindler initially intended to take advantage of the war's victims by employing residents of the Cracow ghetto in his enamelware factory, due to the low cost of their maintenance. Upon discovering what happened to those who were deported, however, Schindler made use of his connections to ensure the safety of his workers. Schindler kept 1,200 of his workers safe from certain death when the ghettos were liquidated.



irena sendler (poland)

A senior administrator at the Warsaw Social Welfare Department, Irena Sendler used her position to provide aid in the form of clothing and medicine to Polish Jews, avoiding suspicion by having them register under fake names and with fake illnesses. Sendler worked with Zegota, the Council for Aid to Jews, to bring food, medicine, and clothing to those confined in the Warsaw ghetto. She assisted with smuggling children out of the ghetto and helped to secure hiding places for them. Sendler was eventually arrested and tortured, but she refused to betray her comrades. She was eventually sentenced to death but later released when activists bribed officials.



chiune sugihara (japan)

Upon Germany's invasion of Poland, thousands of Polish refugees found themselves at the office of the Japanese Vice Consul, Chiune "Sempo" Sugihara, located in Kaunas, Lithuania, as Japan was the only transit country available to those seeking asylum through the Soviet Union. Without explicit instruction, Sugihara issued upwards of 1,800 visas to these asylum seekers, regardless of whether or not they had proper documentation. Sugihara issued at least 2,140 visas before his office was ordered to close.



the final solution



Intytut Pamieci Narodowej

The Nazis established different types of camps including forced-labor camps, transit camps, prisoner-of-war camps, concentration camps, and killing centers (death camps). Between 1933 and 1945, Nazi prisoners were forced into thousands of concentration camps in Europe. Inmates of the camps lived under extremely poor conditions. Meals consisted of watery coffee, meager bread scraps, and “soup” that was little more than watery broth. The bunks were overcrowded and the lack of sanitation and proper medical care resulted in widespread cases of disease. This was in addition to grueling ten to fifteen hour days of forced labor on factory floors or out in the elements. Those too weak to work were punished or killed outright, and those who were deemed unfit to work during initial selections were never given the chance to survive.



Samuel Schryver knew that surviving imprisonment in the Westerbork Transit Camp meant that he had to fend for himself. He took a chance and intimidated the camp cook into giving him extra rations, assuming he'd die of starvation even if the cook didn't kill him in response. Calculated risks such as these were necessary to survive long term imprisonment within the camps.

Scan the QR Code to hear Samuel Schryver tell his experiences in Westerbork.

Samuel and his fiancée Henriette de Leeuw in Amsterdam, Holland. Henriette was deported to Sobibor and murdered in 1943.
The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Samuel Schryver, formerly of Clearwater, Florida



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The “Final Solution of the Jewish Question” meant the planned murder of European Jews. Six killing centers were established in the occupied territories: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Belzec, Chelmno, Majdanek, Sobibor, and Treblinka. Chelmno and Auschwitz were located in the area of Poland annexed to Germany. Auschwitz had more than one complex as well as many subcamps, while Majdanek functioned as a concentration and death camp. Chelmno was the first killing center to start operating in December of 1941 with people murdered in gas vans. In other death camps, stationary gas chambers were used. In places such as Auschwitz-Birkenau, prisoners were led into a gas chamber where Nazi camp staff used the chemical Zyklon B to kill men, women, and children. At other killing centers, such as Chelmno, carbon monoxide gas was used to murder victims.

Millions of Jews from all over Europe were brought by boxcar (and sometimes passenger trains) to the killing centers, where they were led into gas chambers. Prisoners were deceived about the reason for their deportation from the ghettos. They believed they would be able to live and work. At the killing sites, they were told to shower but instead were gassed to death.



camp (taken at liberation)
Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by Dot Altman and Virginia Freeman



Bergen Belsen concentration camp after liberation
Dokumentationsarchiv des Oesterreichischen Widerstandes

Operation Reinhard was the code name given to the planned murder of the two million Jews living in the *Generalgouvernement* (“Government General” – the interior part of occupied Poland not annexed to Germany or to the Soviet Union). The killing centers with gassing facilities at Belzec, Sobibor, and Treblinka were part of Operation Reinhard, as well as several forced-labor camps and a concentration/death camp at Majdanek. The Operation ended with a mass shooting of Jews at several sites, including Majdanek, on November 3rd, 1943, known by the Nazis as the “Harvest Festival”.



Ella Rogozinski, née Lucak, was born in Svalvea, Czechoslovakia, to Frieda and Adolph Lucak in 1927. She had three siblings, Helen, Olga, and Otto. Ella was transported to the Kolomyja ghetto in 1941, then sent to a forced labor camp in Budapest, Hungary, from 1941 to 1944. She was next deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau in Poland in 1944. Ella was immediately separated from her mother, father, and brother but managed to remain with her sisters. They were assigned to the “Kanada” detail, sorting the possessions that Jews and other prisoners brought with them to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Ella and her sisters survived a death march to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp and liberated on April 17, 1945. In addition to one aunt, Ella and her sisters were the only survivors of a large family. Ella eventually emigrated to the United States and settled in Jacksonville, Florida.

Scan the QR Code to listen to Ella describe her deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau.



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.

Majdanek became the first of these camps to be liberated during the Soviet advance on Poland on July 24th, 1944. In response to subsequent Allied victories over Axis forces, Reich Leader of the Nazi Party Heinrich Himmler ordered all prisoners to be evacuated, rather than leaving them to be liberated and able to testify to Nazi war crimes in the aftermath. Beginning in January of 1945, 56,000 prisoners were forced to march westward toward other camps. Exposed to the elements without food, clothing, or sleep and often shot when they could walk no more, 15,000 died during these “death marches”.



A warehouse full of shoes and clothing confiscated from the prisoners and deportees gassed upon arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau.
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Lydia Chagoll and the Comité D'Histoire de la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale

fighting back

Resistance



Members of the French Resistance fight in the streets of Paris

Under the command of Charles de Gaulle, the Free French Forces (FFL) numbered at over 400,000 strong. As the Resistance's ground unit, they fought the Nazis for the entirety of France's surrender and occupation.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Pearl Tubiash

Throughout Nazi-occupied Europe, large resistance groups coordinated efforts for the defense and sabotage against the Nazis and for the rescue of persecuted people. Underground resistance groups sprang up in Jewish ghettos in Eastern Europe with the goal of organizing uprisings and escapes. Other groups sprouted throughout Belgium, Denmark, and beyond. One notable example is the French Resistance. In addition to providing Allied troops with military intelligence and coordinating sabotage attempts, the Free French Forces fought alongside Allied troops during the invasion of Normandy, eventually liberating Paris on August 25, 1944.



SS troops guard members of the Jewish resistance captured during the suppression of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943

Other resistance occurred in Warsaw. The Polish *Armia Krajowa's* ("Home Army") attempts to incite an uprising in 1944 and return Poland to its London-based government-in-exile saw Nazi soldiers terrorize and kill over 18,000 participants and 180,000 civilians, scorching Warsaw to the ground in the aftermath. Czech resistance faced similar backlash. In retaliation for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich, chief of the "Final Solution" and the namesake of "Aktion Reinhard," Nazi soldiers killed 15,000 Czech citizens and razed the towns of Lidice and Lezaky.

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland, from United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



Lillian Bielski, née Tickin, escaped the Lida ghetto in Belarus with her father, brother, and stepmother before joining the Bielski *otriad* and living in the surrounding forest. She married Tuvia Bielski in the woods where they remained until the end of the war. Under the leadership of the Bielski brothers, over 1,200 men, women, and children were saved. After the war, Lillian and Tuvia emigrated to Palestine and, in 1956, came to the United States.

Scan the QR Code to hear Lillian describe her husband Tuvia Bielski's leadership in this 2001 interview.

Lillian and Tuvia Bielski, ca. 1946

The Lillian and Tuvia Bielski Family Foundation



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.



A group of partisans from the fighting unit of the Bielski partisan *otriad* on guard duty at an outpost in the Naliboki Forest, located in Belarus

Alongside stories of individual and national resistance are stories of partisan resistance. The Bielski brothers formed their own *otriad* ("partisan detachment") after fleeing into the Naliboki Forest to escape persecution, encouraging other Jews to do the same. Though they did actively fight back, Tuvia Bielski valued saving lives over fighting Nazis and welcomed any Jew that came their way. Jews who escaped to join partisan groups were often rejected by non-Jewish partisans because of prevalent antisemitism, making groups like the Bielski *otriad* even more important. The Bielski brothers managed to survive the war with a group of 1,230 men, women, and children.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Moshe Kaganovich

liberation

“The things I saw beggar description. ...The visual evidence and the verbal testimony of starvation, cruelty and bestiality were... overpowering. ...I made the visit deliberately in order to be in a position to give firsthand evidence of these things if ever, in the future, there develops a tendency to charge these allegations merely to ‘propaganda.’

- General Dwight D. Eisenhower, in a letter to Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, April 15, 1945



American soldiers and prisoners at the newly liberated Buchenwald concentration camp, April 12, 1945

Permanent collection of The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by James Sargeant

By January 27th, 1945, Auschwitz had been liberated, and within the next few months, so were most of the remaining camps and subcamps. The Germans intended to hide their crimes by removing surviving prisoners, but in their hasty escape they left behind thousands of dead bodies and emaciated inmates. Allied troops and relief workers attempted to recuperate survivors through medical treatment and much needed food, yet many died. Allied soldiers finally grasped the full extent of the atrocities that had been committed over the war years and began to collect evidence of crimes against humanity in preparation for the upcoming trials of the perpetrators.



Scan the QR Code to hear United States veteran Lawrence Fuller of St. Petersburg, Florida, describe his experience as a liberator of a concentration camp.



Take a photo of this QR Code with your smartphone to link to our website and films.

Lawrence Fuller

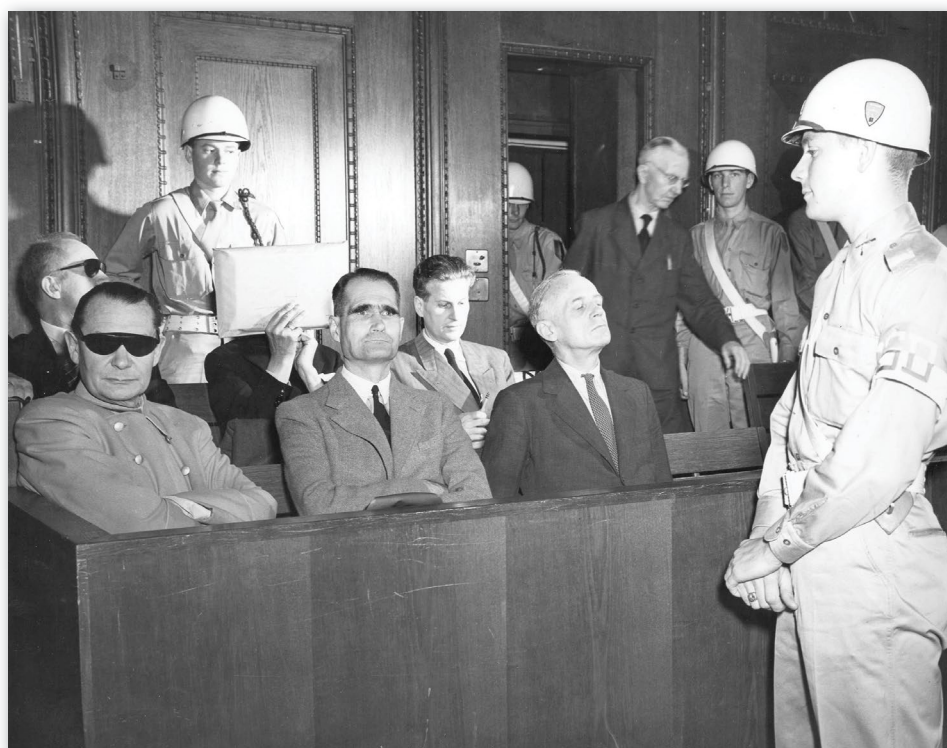


Emaciated, newly liberated prisoners at Buchenwald concentration camp, May, 1945

The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Helen B. Michell

pursuing justice

The Nuremberg Trials



Defendants in the dock at the International Military Tribunal for War Criminals at Nuremberg, Germany. There were 24 defendants at the IMT, although only 21 appeared in court. The verdict was delivered on October 1st, 1946, with 12 defendants sentenced to death. Three defendants received life in prison and four received terms from 10 to 20 years. Three defendants were acquitted.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

In the aftermath of the war, over 200 Nazi war criminals were indicted on charges of conspiracy, crimes against peace, war crimes, and/or crimes against humanity as defined by the London Charter. The first trial of the Nuremberg Trials, the International Military Tribunal (IMT), tried major Nazi war criminals from November 20th, 1945, to October 1st, 1946. The remaining war criminals were tried for their involvement in Nazi political, economic, and social endeavors over the course of twelve subsequent trials. These tribunals included the Medical Trials from December 9th, 1946, to August 20th, 1947, for physicians charged with enacting the Euthanasia Program and for performing medical experiments on prisoners of war without consent. Subsequent trials were held for the leading officials of major industrial companies for the forced labor of prisoners of war, former *Einsatzgruppen*, and German armed forces.

Judge Harold Sebring at the Nuremberg Medical Trials

Judge Sebring was one of four judges to reside over the Medical Trials. He practiced law in Miami and Jacksonville and served on the Florida Supreme Court from 1943 to 1955. After his retirement from the Florida Supreme Court, he served as dean of Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Florida, until his death in 1968.

At the Medical Trials there were 23 defendants, with 20 of those being medical doctors. The verdict was read on August 20th, 1947. Seven defendants received the death penalty, five were sentenced to life imprisonment and four were given terms from 10 to 20 years. Others were found not guilty.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



The atrocities of the war and the visibility of its perpetrators during subsequent trials finally spurred the international community to action. On December 9th, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly convened to formally outlaw genocide in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in an effort to prevent such a tragedy from ever happening again.



The defendants were held at the prison next to the Palace of Justice, and were kept under constant surveillance.

Corbis-Bettmann

aftermath

DP Camps and Emigration

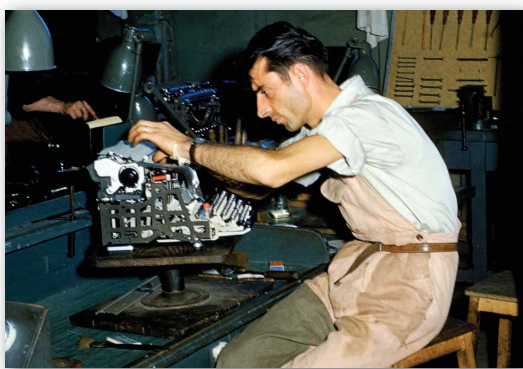
At the end of World War II, the Allies classified an estimated 11 million people as “displaced persons” (DPs). The United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), founded in November 1943, assisted in the repatriation of millions of refugees. By the end of 1945, more than six million DPs had returned to their home countries. Between 1.5 and 2 million people did not have a home to return to or did not want to return to countries that had become Soviet-controlled.



Children walk from the food distribution building in the Brudermühl DP camp in Austria

At first, many Jewish DPs faced being housed with non-Jewish Nazi collaborators. Growing concern regarding these camps led President Harry S. Truman to authorize Earl G. Harrison, former Commissioner of Immigration, to conduct a formal investigation into the state of living conditions within the camps. In response to these efforts, 80 separate centers were established and Jewish DPs were given priority under the U.S. immigration quota. Resettlement in Palestine was recommended. While Britain slowly followed through on these policy changes, 35,000 to 40,000 DPs were resettled in the U.S. between 1945 and 1948. Many of the DP camps were closed by 1952, though the last remained open until 1957, twelve years after the war ended.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Nordico Museum Der Stadt Linz



A Jewish DP learns how to repair typewriters in an ORT workshop in an unidentified DP camp

Welfare assistance programs were made available to DPs in addition to vocational training programs through the Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT) workshops.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Elinor Rosenstein Gabriel

Assembly centers, known as displaced persons camps, were established in Germany, Italy, and Austria as a means of caring for DPs during their resettlement. Poles constituted the largest group of DPs with an estimated population of 842,000, many of them former forced laborers. A number of DPs from Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, and Ukraine feared returning home due to their collaboration with the Nazis during the war. Nearly 250,000 Jews, mostly survivors from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, as well as others liberated from concentration camps and killing centers, lived in Jewish DP camps as they had no home to which they could return.



A playpre

Displaced Persons (DP) camps became centers of cultural and social life with theater and music troupes, sports clubs, and newspapers. Jewish holidays were widely observed and celebrated among the Jewish DPs. Residents of the Pocking DP camp in Germany staged a play for Purim in 1946. From right: Magda Quittner, Mickey Quittner, and a fellow DP named Alex. Magda and Mickey eventually settled in Sarasota, Florida.

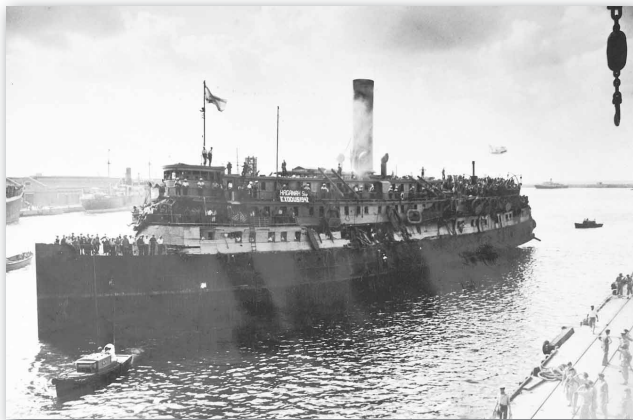
The Florida Holocaust Museum, donated by Survivors Magda and Mickey Quittner, formerly of Sarasota, Florida



Workers at an agricultural training farm in Germany

Agricultural training farms to prepare DPs for life in Palestine were set up in many DP camps. Kibbutz Nili was built on the former estate of Julius Streicher, publisher of the Nazi antisemitic newspaper *der Stürmer*. Survivors were given the farm along with supplies by authorities in the U.S.-controlled zone of Pleikershof, Germany. DPs at the kibbutz raised crops and livestock. Kibbutz Nili was led by Noach Miedzinski. His wife Sara gave birth to their daughter Ruchana while living on the kibbutz.

Ruchana Medine White of Parrish, Florida



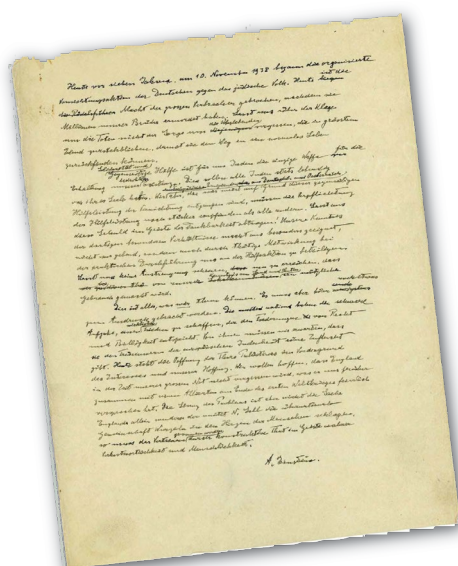
View of the Exodus 1947 arriving at the Port of Haifa, Israel

Changing geopolitical boundaries and the devastation of war left some Survivors reluctant to stay in Europe. Others feared the persistence of antisemitism. A large number of DPs desired to emigrate to Palestine, but emigration quotas imposed by Britain remained restricted. In response, the Jewish Brigade Group and former partisans formed the Brihah (Hebrew for “flight” or “escape”) organization. Scholars estimate that approximately 150,000 Holocaust Survivors from Eastern Europe were able to board ships to Palestine, though British authorities intercepted and turned back many of the ships. This campaign became known as “Aliyah Bet.”

Avi Livney

With the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948, all limitations on Jewish immigration were immediately lifted.

Each country had its own immigration quotas. The plight of Holocaust Survivors attempting to emigrate to the U.S. changed after the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, and ultimately 96,000 Survivors were admitted by 1952. Others emigrated to Australia, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa, and South America.



Einstein letter

This draft of an open letter was written by Albert Einstein. It was later printed and published in its final form on November 16th, 1945, in *der Aufbau* to coincide with the seventh anniversary of Kristallnacht. *Der Aufbau* was a journal printed for German-speaking Jews and was founded in New York City in 1934.

The grandfather of our donors, Dr. med. Siegfried Kurt Glaser, was an acquaintance of Einstein before the war in Germany and a proofreader for *der Aufbau*. He assisted Einstein with the composition of the letter in 1945. The letter was a plea to the Jewish community of the time to render assistance to Survivors of the Holocaust while calling on Great Britain to open immigration quotas for Survivors to emigrate to Palestine. An excerpt from the letter reads:

“However, we emigrants from Germany and Austria, who - due to this mutual assistance - escaped the annihilation must perceive the obligation to render assistance even stronger than anybody else. ...Today the opening of the gates of Palestine is in the foreground of our interest and our hope. We hope that England in a time of our great distress will not forget what she and her allies have solemnly promised...”

Original letter donated in loving memory of our grandparents, Kurt and Emily Glaser, and our parents, Werner and Rosa Cohn, by Peter Cohn and Irene and Steven Weiss. From generation to generation, we will never forget.

never again

Lessons For Today

Holocaust education leaves room for us to reflect on the the subject and take responsibility for the kind of hate that produced it. Studying history also facilitates awareness of the fact that tragedies like this have and *will* continue to happen over and over again unless we take action. It is important to remember that prejudice is not a thing of the past. It continues to affect our world today. We must take a stand and set a precedent of zero tolerance for acts of injustice and learn to accept and celebrate the diversity of others.



The history of the United States is replete with racism and discrimination. Despite the end of slavery, segregation has affected every aspect of life since the Emancipation Proclamation was issued in 1863. It was only deemed "unconstitutional" within the last century, following the landmark decision during the *Brown v. Board* case on May 17th, 1954. Even with that mandate, meaningful desegregation is a process that continues to this day. One Mississippi school was ordered to desegregate as recently as 2016.

City of St. Petersburg, Florida



Cemetery in Rwanda where, among others, genocide victims are buried

While millions of others were killed by the Nazi regime, it is important to remember that "the Holocaust" only refers to the genocide against the Jewish people during World War II. Other genocides continue to occur. Over the course of 100 days in 1994, 800,000 people were killed during an ethnic cleansing as part of the events of the Rwandan Civil War. Just as with the Holocaust, there was much criticism over the indifference and inaction of outside actors toward the conflict, exemplifying that history tends to repeat itself if we do not learn from our past.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Jerry Fowler



Burning of a village in Sudan

Acts of genocide are still being committed. The first genocide of this century occurred in February of 2003 when the Arab Khartoum government of Sudan responded to a rebellion by targeting non-Arab tribes in the Darfur region of Western Sudan, attacking rebels and civilians alike. Government-sanctioned militias known as *janjaweed* enforced a "slash and burn" policy that ransacked and razed entire villages and murdered hundreds of thousands.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Brian Steidle, ca. December 2004

As a member of civil society, your actions matter.

The history of the Holocaust raises difficult questions about human behavior. By learning about the individual human beings who suffered and died, you can ensure that the Holocaust and its lessons will never be forgotten. It is essential that future generations understand the terrible consequences of unchecked hatred, so they are prepared to stand up and speak out against it. If we are able to integrate the lessons of the Holocaust into our lives, we can help build a better and safer world for future generations.