

Holocaust Chronology

Starred (*) entries refer to events described or alluded to in *Night*.

1933

- The Nazi party takes power in Germany. Adolf Hitler becomes chancellor, or prime minister, of Germany.
- The Nazis “temporarily” suspend civil liberties for all citizens. They are never restored.
- The Nazis set up the first concentration camp at Dachau. The first inmates are 200 Communists.
- Books contrary to Nazi beliefs are burned in public.

1934

- Upon President Hindenburg’s death, Hitler combines the positions of chancellor and president to become “Fuhrer,” or leader, of Germany.

1935

- Jews in Germany are deprived of citizenship and other fundamental rights. The Nazis intensify persecution of political dissidents and others considered “racially inferior” including “Gypsies,” Jehovah’s Witnesses and homosexuals. Many are sent to concentration camps.

1936

- The Olympic games are held in Germany; signs barring Jews from public places are removed until the event is over.

1938

- German troops annex Austria. Nazi gangs physically attack Jews throughout Germany and Austria, on Kristallnacht (the “Night of Broken Glass”).

1939

- In March, Germany takes over a neighboring nation, Czechoslovakia.
- On September 1, Germany invades Poland.
- World War II begins in Europe.
- Hitler orders the systematic murder of the mentally and physically disabled in Germany and Austria.
- Polish Jews are ordered to register and relocate. They also are required to wear armbands or yellow stars.

1940

- Nazis begin deporting German Jews to Poland.
- Jews are forced into ghettos.
- Germany conquers one nation after another in Western Europe including the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Belgium, Luxembourg and France.
- With Germany’s backing, Hungary annexes parts of Romania, including Sighet and other towns in northern Transylvania.

1941

- Germany attacks the Soviet Union.
- Jews throughout Europe are forced into ghettos and internment camps.
- Mobile killing units begin the systematic slaughter of Jews. In two days, units murder 33,771 Ukrainian Jews at Babi Yar—the largest single massacre of the Holocaust.
- *Hungary deports 17,000 foreign and “stateless” Jews. Several thousand are used as slave laborers. The Nazis massacre the rest.
- The first death camp at Chelmno in Poland begins operations.
- Germany, as an ally of Japan, declares war on the United States immediately after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

deportations. It takes nearly a month for the Nazis to put down the uprising.

1942

- At the Wannsee Conference, Nazi officials present the “Final Solution”—their plan to kill all European Jews—to the bureaucracy.
- Five more death camps begin operation in Poland: Majdanek, Sobibor, Treblinka, Belzec and Auschwitz-Birkenau.
- March: About 20 to 25 percent of the Jews who would die in the Holocaust have already perished. The ghettos of Eastern Europe are emptied as thousands of Jews are shipped to death camps.
- The United States, Britain and the Soviet Union acknowledge that Germans were systematically murdering the Jews of Europe.

1943

- February: About 80 to 85 percent of the Jews who would die in the Holocaust have already perished.
- *April: Jews in Poland’s Warsaw Ghetto strike back as the Nazis begin new rounds of

1944

- *March: Hitler occupies Hungary; by June, the Germans are deporting 12,000 Hungarian Jews a day to Auschwitz.

1945

- *January: As the Russian army pushes west, the Nazis begin to evacuate death camps, including Auschwitz.
- *April: American forces liberate the prisoners in Buchenwald.
- *May: World War II ends in Europe with Hitler’s defeat.
- About one-third of all the Jews in the world have been murdered and the survivors are homeless.

1946

- An International Military Tribunal created by Britain, France, the United States and the Soviet Union tries Nazi leaders for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Nuremberg.